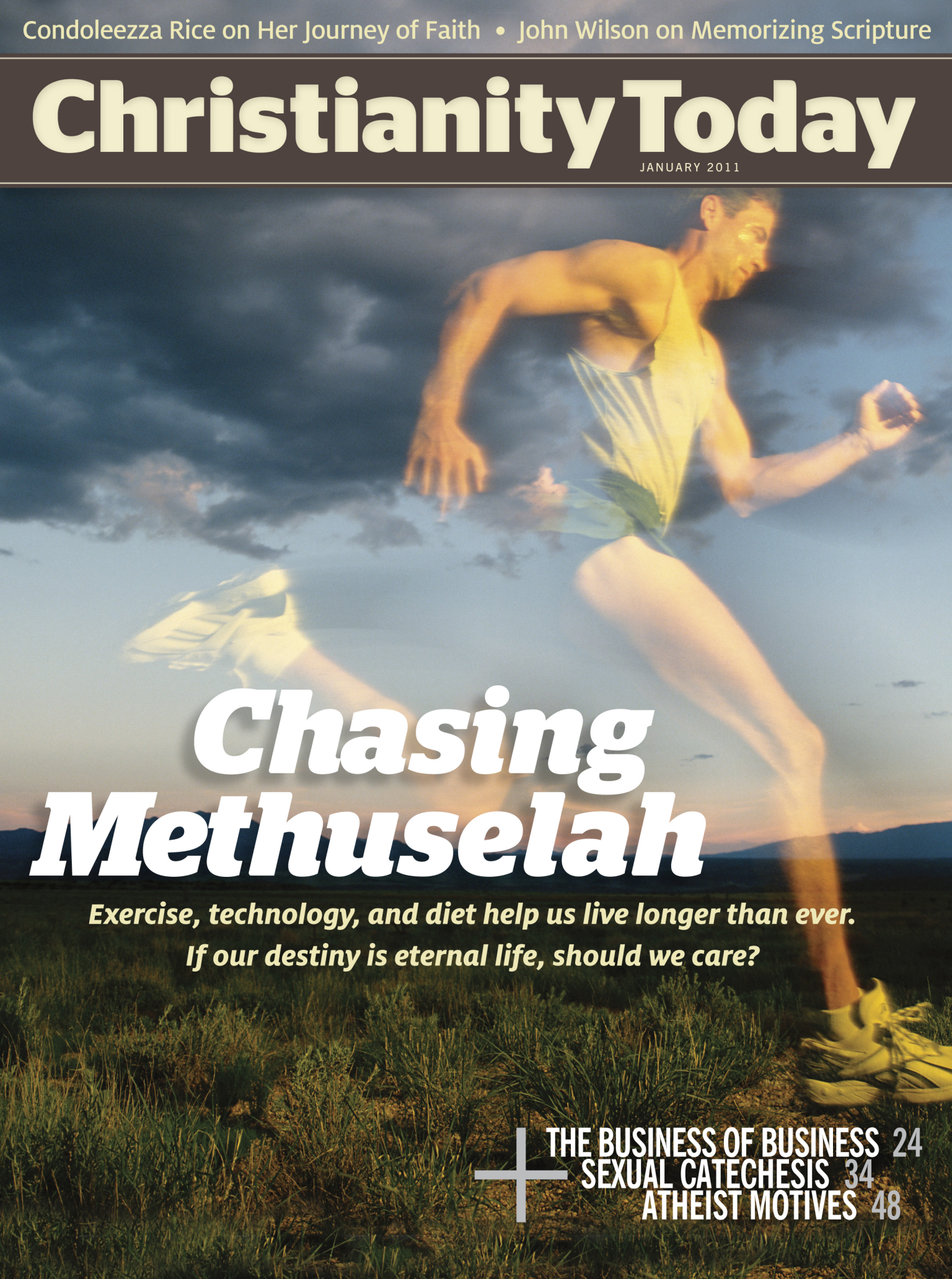


Condoleezza Rice on Her Journey of Faith • John Wilson on Memorizing Scripture

Christianity Today

JANUARY 2011

A full-page photograph of a male athlete in a yellow singlet and green shorts running through tall grass at sunset. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. The runner is in mid-stride, with his right leg forward and his arms pumping. The overall mood is one of determination and endurance.

Chasing Methuselah

Exercise, technology, and diet help us live longer than ever.

If our destiny is eternal life, should we care?

+

THE BUSINESS OF BUSINESS	24
SEXUAL CATECHESIS	34
ATHEIST MOTIVES	48

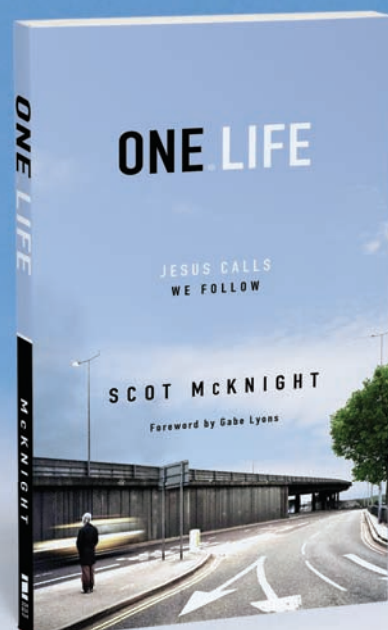
Will **you** choose to live the **ONE.LIFE?**

What would happen if you abandoned your religious rut and really followed Jesus? Bible reading, praying, and going to church are all good, but did Jesus have something more exciting in mind?

In Scot McKnight's newest release, *One Life*, he presents a radical spiritual challenge to a new generation of believers like you to go beyond the flatlands of religion and soar to new heights—to exchange the bounds of “Christian” living for an abundant life in Christ. Visit theonelife.org to find out more.

One Life is available wherever books are sold.

 **ZONDERVAN**
.com



ENGAGING MIND & CULTURE

IDEAS MATTER IN MINISTRY.

A thought – a single idea- can redraw the map of the world... and change the destiny of a life. You know how powerful ideas are and you want to make a difference. *Talbot can help.*

Engaging Mind and Culture is a Doctor of Ministry track designed to give you the tools you need to engage the minds you minister to and those you would like to. It will give you access to the resources of the world's largest Christian Philosophy program. This is an opportunity to be mentored by some of the ablest minds in evangelicalism today: J.P. Moreland and Garry DeWeese. Their goal is to help inspire genuine spiritual and intellectual maturity in you, and your people.

In Talbot's D.Min. program, you will:

- Study at home in the context of your present ministry.
- Join us for a two-week class, on campus, once a year for three years. This schedule is designed for those in full-time ministry.
- Progress through the program with a cohort of 13-24 classmates who share your passion.
- Learn from guest lecturers such as Doug Geivett, Craig Hazen, David Horner, Scott Rae, and John Mark Reynolds.
- Learn to think "Christianly" in the midst of worldview conflict and cultural chaos; develop necessary tools to lead in the areas of ethics and politics; develop skills to defend your faith and to equip your church for cultural engagement, and much more.

Gain confidence in engaging worldviews in a way that is culturally conversant, theologically informed and philosophically savvy.

**JUNE 2011 COHORT
OPENINGS AVAILABLE
DATES: JUNE 6-17, 2011**

**Visit our website at www.talbot.edu/dmin
to learn more.**



"The bottom line for me is that you have confidence and competence to engage an increasingly secular culture. I want your church to turn outward, impacting and penetrating the surrounding area where it is planted."

— **Dr. J.P. Moreland**
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Q.

Who are winning Muslims to Christ in Mindanao and planting churches among unreached tribes and nations on other islands of the Philippines?

A.

Native missionaries trained and sent out by indigenous evangelistic ministries.



Q.

Who provides financial support for indigenous evangelistic missions in the Philippines?

A.

Since 1953 Christian Aid Mission has provided financial help for scores of indigenous missions working on Mindanao and other Philippine islands. Support is now being sent to 72 ministries that deploy over 1700 missionaries.

Q. How is Christian Aid financed?

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

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

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

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

Christian Aid

... because
we love the brethren.

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

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

434-977-5650
www.christianaid.org



BRIEFING



- 9 Spotlight** The top 10 news stories of 2010.
- 10 Gleanings** The CIA releases files on shooting missionary plane, Muslim zoning controversy might bar Chicagoland house churches, and Nebraska church leaves ELCA over agricultural proposal.
- 12 Headlines** **MISSIONS** Boarding schools for missionary kids see lower attendance. **CHURCH LIFE** Verdict prompts churches to re-assess ministry risks. **12** **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM** Bhutan will likely legalize Christianity. **13** **HIGHER EDUCATION** Ties that bind students to denominational schools loosen. **14**
- { In Depth }** **RECONCILIATION** Sudanese Christians escalate efforts to forestall violence after independence vote. **15**

FEATURES



- 18 Chasing Methuselah** **TODD T. W. DALY**
Anti-aging technology is more effective than ever. Should Christians care?
- 24 The Meaning of Business** **INTERVIEW BY ROB MOLL**
Christians in the marketplace, says Jeff Van Duzer, are not second-class citizens of the kingdom.
- 28 Connoisseur for Christ** **CHRISTINE A. SCHELLER**
What inspires art enthusiast Roberta Green Ahmanson to give away millions.
- 34 How to Teach Sex** **STANTON L. JONES**
Seven realities that Christians in every congregation need to know.
- 40 Changing Forever How You Think** **JOHN WILSON**
Recovering the lost art of Scripture memorization.
- 44 The Enduring Church** **JENNIFER POWELL MCNUIT**
Believers in every age worry about the collapse of the faith.
- 48 Unreasonable Doubt** **JIM SPIEGEL**
The reasons for unbelief are more complex than many atheists let on.
- 50 A God-Sized Food Bank** **NICOLE RUSSELL**
The Big Reach Center of Hope offers a lifeline to Ohio's rural poor.

VIEWPOINTS



- 57 Letters** Readers respond to the November issue of CT.
- 59 Where We Stand** Cracks in the Crystal Cathedral
- 60 The Village Green** Gary Hoag, Andy Bales, and Ron Sider consider whether Christians should give money to street people who ask.
- 62 Throwing Inkwells** Mollie Ziegler Hemingway probes the purpose of Christian catechesis.
- 64 Past Imperfect** David Neff judges southern Sudan's history a fitting prelude to independence.

CT REVIEW



- 67 Books**
- Fred Sanders's *The Deep Things of God*
 - Roger Lundin: My Top 5 on poetry for the soul
 - Bo Caldwell's *City of Tranquil Light*
 - Excerpt: *Wise Stewards*, by Michael W. Austin
 - Wilson's Bookmarks
 - Interview: Condoleezza Rice
- 72 Movies**
- The Devil in Tinsel Town
 - Wesley
- 73 Music**
- Two minutes with Brandon Heath
 - Amos Lee's *Mission Bell*
- 74 Quick Takes** More media of note

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 7 Inside CT** Mark Galli connects the fountain of youth to the Fountain of Life.
- 80 Who's Next** John Sowers addresses the fatherhood gap.



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



Keep the Conversation Going

Beginning in October 2009, *Christianity Today* engaged its readers in “The Global Conversation”—a year-long discussion of issues that face the church around the world, led by observers from Ghana to Singapore, and responded to online by voices from Korea to Kenya. If you didn’t visit *ChristianityToday.com/GlobalConversation*, do so right away.

The conversation was sparked by the vision for October 2010’s Lausanne Movement conference in Cape Town. In last month’s issue, CT veteran writer Tim Stafford reported on the “Teeming Diversity” at that meeting.

We are eager to keep an open—and global—conversation going on our pages. This experience has us addicted. The messages from Syria, Spain, Sri Lanka, and Sudan (see my column on page 64 of this issue) humble me, motivate me, and give me insight. Perhaps you’ve had the same experience.

The Lausanne Movement made last year’s conversation possible by opening their international network of church leaders. We also have plugged into overlapping networks, ranging from World Vision to the World Evangelical Alliance, from John Stott Ministries to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Our international networks continue to grow.

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

You can make your tax-deductible contribution—of any amount—by check or online. Make checks payable to *Christianity Today*, and put “CT Global Excellence Fund” on the memo line, or visit *ChristianityToday.com/donate*.


David Neff, Editor in Chief

Send checks (U.S. dollars only) to:
Christianity Today
Attn: Donor Relations Box CT0111
465 Gundersen Drive
Carol Stream, IL 60188

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

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

Christianity Today
Founded 1956

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Celebrate the legacy of the Bible with Thomas Nelson

Join the celebration at www.KJV400Celebration.com.



LEGACY

THOMAS NELSON IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST, LARGEST AND MOST RENOWNED BIBLE PUBLISHERS, WITH A 200-YEAR HISTORY AND A MISSION TO "HONOR GOD AND SERVE PEOPLE" IN ALL THAT WE DO. YOU CAN TRUST OUR EXPERIENCE AND LEGACY IN PUBLISHING BIBLES THAT ARE TIMELESS, TRUSTWORTHY AND TRUE TO THE ORIGINAL WORDS OF GOD.



QUALITY

Every Thomas Nelson Bible with the House logo is guaranteed for life. Thomas Nelson proudly stands behind the quality of craftsmanship of every Bible we create with a lifetime guarantee. To learn more about how to care for your Bible and our lifetime guarantee, visit www.thomasnelsonbibles.com/guarantee.



HEART

Join Thomas Nelson in putting God's Word into action by helping others. Learn how you can change the world and share your stories of compassion at www.SeeGodsWordinAction.com.



Quality • Legacy • Heart
THOMAS NELSON

Look for the HOUSE

WITH EVERY BIBLE FROM THOMAS NELSON, YOU ARE GUARANTEED A LIFETIME OF QUALITY, A LONG-STANDING LEGACY OF RELIABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY BIBLE PUBLISHING, AND HEART-FELT INSPIRATION TO CHANGE THE WORLD.



TRUSTED FOR
ACCURACY, BEAUTY & CLARITY



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

ThomasNelsonBibles.com

Going on a Short-Term Mission Trip?

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

Circulation Statement

Statement required by the act of August 12, 1970, section 3685, Title 39, United States Code, showing ownership, management, and circulation of *Christianity Today*, published 12 times per year at 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. Price per year: \$24.95. Publication No. 109-740. The names and addresses of the publisher and editors are: Publisher, Keith Stonehocker, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188; Editor in Chief, David Neff, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188; Senior Managing Editor, Mark Galli, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. The owner is Christianity Today Intl., 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. The known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

	AVG NO. COPIES EACH ISSUE DURING PRECEDING 12 MOS.	ACTUAL NO. COPIES OF SINGLE ISSUE (AVG. NO. PUBLISHED NEAREST TO FILING DATE)
Total No. Copies	142,670	140,500
Paid Circulation		
1. Mail subscriptions	117,628	107,133
2. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	3,242	1,433
Total Paid Circulation	120,870	108,566
Free Distribution		
1. Free distribution by mail	14,153	26,195
2. Free distribution outside the mail	1,662	1,197
Total Free Distribution	15,815	27,392
Total Distribution	136,685	135,958
Copies Not Distributed (Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled)	5,985	4,542
Total	142,670	140,500
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circ.	88%	80%

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. *Keith Stonehocker*

CHRISTIANITY TODAY INTERNATIONAL

A Not-for-Profit Communications Ministry

President and CEO Harold B. Smith
Executive Administrator Paulette DePaul
Executive Vice Presidents Keith Stonehocker
 Carol Thompson
Senior Vice President Terumi Echols • Vicki Howard
Vice Presidents David Neff • Marshall Shelley
 Amy Simpson

Advertising Terumi Echols • Peggy Gomez
 Jillian Hathaway • Walter Hegel • Julie Kaminski
 Toks Olawoye • Christina Payton • Stacy Smith
 Sandra Sundin • Hazel Ziebell

Web Analytics & Commerce Kathy DePue
 Judy Gill • David Lee • Mark Selvidge • Nick Tanner
 Jacob Walsh

Circulation Operations Adrian Carrion
 Diane Kielma • Sherry Kyle • Kathryn McQuaid
 Nancy Nance • Tim Platek

Financial Operations Jim Fuoss • Gary Johnson
 Sandra Johnson • Philip MacDonald • Judy VanZanten

Human Resources Norma Bormann • Jaime Patrick
 Paul Ross • Richard Shields • Arlene VanGelderren

Production Cynthia Cronk

Customer Support Pamela Ferrill

Technology Clayton Anderson • Stephanie Benware
 Valerie Broucek • David Dougherty • Mark Gortowski
 Kividi Kikama • Julia King • Emily Mohnkern
 Kent Oxley • Theresa Phillips • Stephen Swithers

Board of Directors

FOUNDER, HONORARY CHAIRMAN Billy Graham
CHAIR John A. Huffman Jr.
PRESIDENT AND CEO Harold B. Smith
 Miriam Adeney • John N. Akers • Sandra C. Gray
 Eugene B. Habecker • Alec Hill • Darryl L. King
 Charles H. Kwon • John Ortberg • Samuel Rodriguez
 John M. Sommerville

Editorial/Advertising Offices

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

Manuscript Policy

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

Permissions

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

Australian Agent

MediaCom, 14 Eton Road, Keswick 5061, South Australia

Indexes

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

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

Subscription Rates? Gift Subscriptions? Address Changes?
ctfulfill@christianitytoday.com • 1.800.999.1704 or write
 Christianity Today, P.O. Box 37060, Boone, IA 50037-0060

Find every issue of Christianity Today back to 1996:

Use code 0095753 at:
CTLlibrary.com/offer/CTsubscriber
 to get a special discount.



**AZUSA PACIFIC
UNIVERSITY**

PROVOST

Azusa Pacific University (APU) is currently accepting applications and nominations for the position of provost. Reporting directly to the president, the provost is the chief academic officer of the university and works collaboratively with administrators and faculty to further the academic mission of APU. The ideal candidate will provide dynamic and passionate leadership not only to the academy, but also to the university.

Founded in 1899, Azusa Pacific University is a comprehensive Christian university committed to *God First* and excellence in higher education, while at the same time pursuing marketplace innovation. APU offers 53 undergraduate majors, 37 master's degrees, 21 credentials, 7 doctoral programs, and 5 certificates through the university's seven schools and one college. Current total student enrollment stands at more than 9,200. As an evangelical Christian institution, APU affirms the supremacy of Christ in all areas of life and expects its employees to model Christian values.

U.S. News & World Report's America's Best Colleges 2011 ranked APU in Tier 1 of the National Universities category. APU was the highest ranked school from the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities. *U.S. News* also recognized APU as 1 of 23 institutions nationwide for best first-year experience. The university's vision of preparing Christian leaders for transformational scholarship is global in scope.

Confidential review of application materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made. All applications should be submitted prior to January 14, 2011. For a complete opportunity profile and description of the application process, refer to the Provost Search webpage at www.apu.edu/provost/search/. Please direct questions to provostsearch@apu.edu.

Azusa Pacific University, in compliance with federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, disability, national origin, status as a veteran, or any other characteristic protected by law in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.



Stay Young! Live Longer!

That's not just a silly promise of our culture.

T

HE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH is a legendary spring that promises to restore the youth of anyone who drinks its waters. Tales of such a fountain have been recounted since the days of the Greek historian Herodotus.

Closer to home, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León is said to have been searching for the fountain when, instead, he bumped into Florida.

Today Florida is an icon of both youth and age, known as a playground for the young (Disney World! Epcot!) and where the elderly enjoy their final years in the sun. As such, it is an icon of another icon: our bodies.

While we aren't looking for a mythical fountain of water, we are constantly searching for a fountain—that is, a source—of youthfulness. The usual places to look have been exercise and diet regimens. But more and more, technology is trying to give us an age edge. Just as this issue was going to print, Harvard researchers announced they had successfully reversed the aging process in mice—and hoped to replicate the results in humans.

We are fascinated by this prospect because getting old is a drag on the mind and body. I know of where I speak. The older I get, the more I see the wisdom in granting status to elders(!), but I admit that when I look at the athleticism and energy of the young, I'm envious. And I'm hardly alone. To paraphrase Augustine, it appears we were created with a God-shaped yearning to be young—to enjoy life with all our faculties at full wattage, and to do so forever.

But we have also been created with God-shaped bodies designed to live a mere threescore and ten, fourscore at best (Ps. 90:10, KJV). As we get older, our bodies become divinely fashioned icons of our mortality—and thus point to something God has prepared for us beyond this life.

So it appears that the yearning to be young and the reality of growing old are both divine reminders of the reality that transcends this life. In the meantime, we live in this tension between the already and the not yet. This month's cover story, "Chasing Methuselah" (page 18), helps us consider how those who believe in eternal life might regard our culture's passion for eternal youth.

Next month: Collin Hansen explores one of the most thorny issues facing Bible translators working with Muslims: what titles to give Jesus that won't shut down conversation; Katelyn Beaty interviews Mark Regnerus (famous in these pages for his 2009 "The Case for Early Marriage") on his most recent sex study; and the best books, movies, and music of 2010.



Do You Feel Alone as a Woman Leader?

IF you're a capable, called, and gifted Christian woman in leadership, join the conversation at GiftedForLeadership.com.

This blog, along with downloadable resources, will help you safely converse with other women about the issues you face. You'll walk away feeling encouraged, supported, challenged, and definitely not alone!

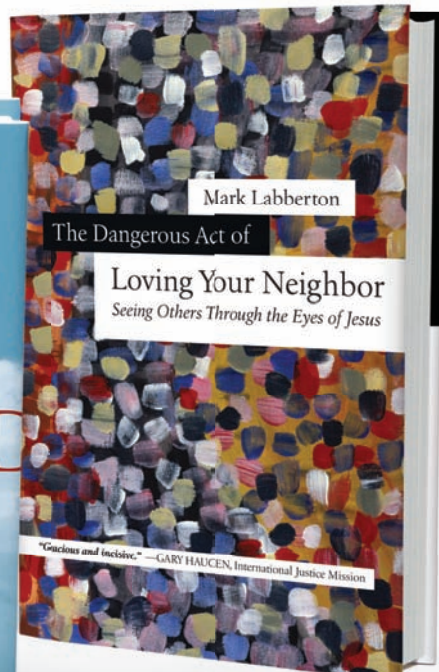
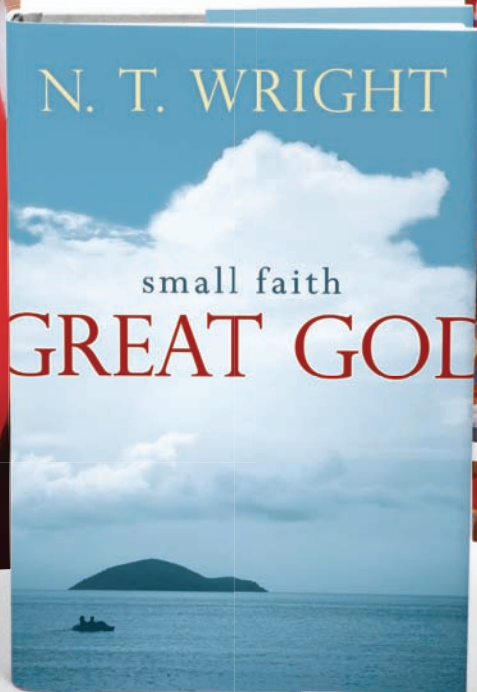
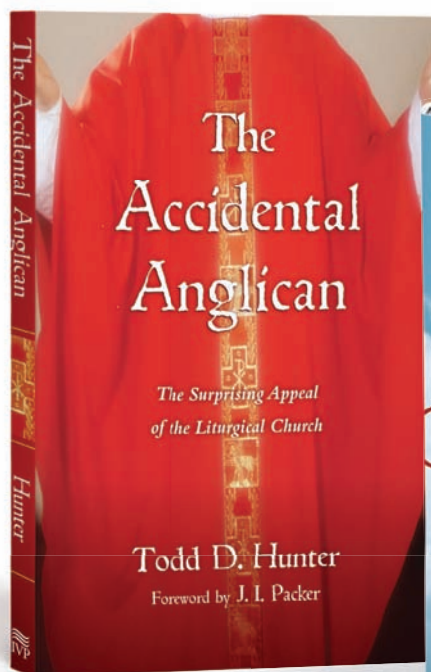


Join the
Conversation
Today!

A service of
CHRISTIANITY TODAY
INTERNATIONAL

www.GiftedForLeadership.com





A VOICE FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

The Accidental Anglican

Todd Hunter chronicles his unlikely journey from the Jesus People movement and national leadership in the Vineyard movement to eventually becoming an Anglican bishop. He explains why an evangelical Christian might be drawn to the liturgical way. Foreword by J. I. Packer. 138 pages, paperback, 978-0-8308-3839-4, \$15.00



Todd D. Hunter is the director of west coast church planting for the Anglican Mission in the Americas (AMiA). He is also a teacher, writer and consultant for his ministry, Society for Kingdom Living.

Small Faith—Great God

N. T. Wright gives counsel to those who are distressed over the weakness of their faith. With ample reference to the images and stories of Scripture, Wright describes the true role of faith in times of trial and leaves us with a profound truth: it's not great faith we need, it's faith in a great God. 176 pages, hardcover, 978-0-8308-3833-2, \$18.00



N. T. Wright is research professor of New Testament and early Christianity at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Among his many published works are *The Challenge of Jesus* and *Simply Christian*.

The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor

Mark Labberton argues that perceiving our neighbors not as potential threats but as people made in the image of God is the first step in our work of realizing God's kingdom. 236 pages, hardcover, 978-0-8308-3840-0, \$20.00



Mark Labberton is director of the Lloyd John Ogilvie Institute for Preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He served for sixteen years as senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley in Berkeley, California.



Author of *The Dangerous Act of Worship*

BRIEFING

REPORTING & DISPATCHES
FROM THE CHURCH
WORLDWIDE



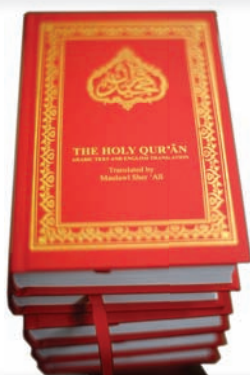
Aid groups rush to help an already-hurting **Haiti** after its 7.0-magnitude earthquake, raising \$750 million in a mere five weeks. But scandal over Baptist missionaries' efforts to move 33 children to the Dominican Republic becomes a major plot line and raises questions about "amateur" aid.

Thousands of global evangelical leaders gather in **Cape Town** to discuss missions, highlight evangelicalism's global diversity, pray for religious liberty, and build relationships that will likely bear unexpected fruit in the decades to come.



10

Terry Jones, the pastor of a small church in Gainesville, Florida, sparks worldwide condemnation when he threatens to **burn a Qur'an**. He later promises never to burn one.



SPOTLIGHT: TOP 10 STORIES OF 2010

The events, people, and debates of the past year that have shaped, or will significantly shape, evangelical life, thought, or mission.

3

In a closely watched case, World Vision wins its **employment** case at the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled 2-1 that the organization can fire employees who aren't orthodox Christians. A loss would have caused turmoil for faith-based organizations' hiring rules.

4

Midterm elections halve the number of pro-life Democrats in the House of Representatives. Activist groups say the vote is a backlash against March's health-care reform bill, which also prompted new state abortion funding restrictions and the rise of the tea party (whose social concerns are still unclear).



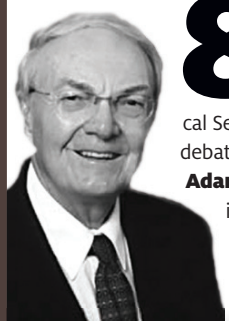
9

Christian musician **Jennifer Knapp** announces she is in a same-sex relationship, spotlighting questions of pastoral response to gay Christians.



6

The Deepwater Horizon **oil spill** shifts the creation care debate. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary dean Russell Moore calls it a "defining moment" comparable to *Roe v. Wade*, and oversees SBC resolution calling for "full corporate accountability."



8

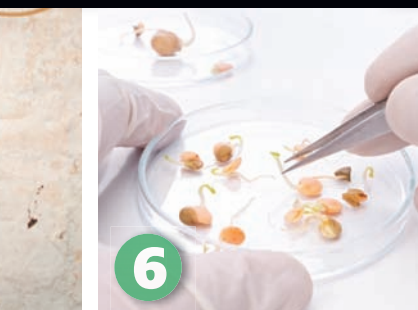
Prominent Old Testament scholar Bruce Waltke resigns from Reformed Theological Seminary under pressure amid debate on the **historicity of Adam**. "If the data is overwhelmingly in favor of evolution," he said in a video for BioLogos, "to deny that reality will make us a cult."

The U.S. Supreme Court rules against the Hastings College of the Law chapter of the **Christian Legal Society**, saying the school's policy that student groups must open all positions to all students—even those who oppose the group's core values—"is a reasonable, viewpoint-neutral condition."



7

American evangelicals find themselves at odds with African Christians over **Uganda's proposed anti-gay bill**, which would punish homosexual acts with life imprisonment or even the death penalty.



GLEANINGS

Important developments in the church and the world.

1 CIA releases report on missionary plane shooting

A recently declassified report from 2008 shows numerous incidents of misconduct by a CIA program responsible for accidentally shooting down a missionary plane in 2001. The report by then-CIA inspector general John Helgeson reveals that after telling the Peruvian military to shoot what they thought was a drug-smuggling plane, CIA officers inaccurately portrayed the incident as an "aberration." In fact, procedural violations led to the downing of several other planes prior to the incident that killed American missionary Roni Bowers and her infant daughter. The report also showed that the CIA kept evidence on the case from investigators.

bishop in the Anglican Communion, announced in October that he will resign in January 2013. Robinson's election deepened the conflict within the Episcopal Church and the wider Communion. Robinson, who at 65 will be much younger than most departing bishops when he steps down, said the seven years of continual controversy were an added strain. The Episcopal Church ordained a second openly gay bishop, Mary Glasspool, in May 2010, a decision Robinson said took the pressure off him to remain in office.

4 Court quashes Jews for Jesus suits

A Florida judge has ordered attorney Barry Silver to pay damages to Jews for Jesus, ruling that Silver had filed three equally meritless and nearly identical suits against the organization. Since 2003, Silver has alleged that Jews for Jesus misleads Jews to persuade them to become Christians. The ministry's attorneys countered that Silver was grinding a personal axe against Christianity. Judge Edward Fine ordered Silver to foot the bill for Jews for Jesus' court costs and fees.

5 More Anglicans head for Rome

UNITED KINGDOM The Vatican announced in November that 50 Anglican priests, including five bishops, plan to leave the Church of England for the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Benedict XVI has opened a special clerical category for Anglicans who object to recent developments in the Anglican Communion. These "personal ordinariates" will let them retain many Anglican distinctives while

belonging to a church that maintains opposition to female priests and gay clergy. In Baltimore, an entire Episcopal parish voted to switch to Catholicism for similar reasons.

6 Church bolts over ELCA agricultural proposal

Anselm Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheldon, North Dakota, voted in November to leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Far from the first church to take that step in recent times, Anselm Trinity's complaint is unique: Its members object to the denomination's resolution expressing "concern" over genetically modified seeds. Many North Dakota farmers use modified seeds, and Anselm Trinity does not believe the denomination needs to get involved in the issue. Most departing churches report concern over the ELCA allowing clergy to have homosexual relationships.

7 Methodist pastors can still bar members

The Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church said it would not reverse a 2005 decision that permitted a Virginia pastor to refuse membership to a gay man. Pastor Ed Johnson had been placed on an involuntary leave of absence after saying he would minister with, but would not accept as a member, a homosexual man who wished to join South Hill United Methodist Church. The council reinstated Johnson later in 2005 after affirming a minister's right to determine who could and could not become a church member. Several regional Methodist bodies have pressed for reconsideration, but the council said it is not the proper venue for changes in church law.

8 Muslim zoning controversy may bar churches

Attempts by Muslim worship centers to open in the western Chicago suburbs have prompted a zoning debate that may impact existing house churches. DuPage

2 Woman sentenced to death for blasphemy

PAKISTAN A Punjabi court sentenced Asia Bibi to death in November, making her the first Christian woman to receive the death penalty under Pakistan's blasphemy law. The case against the 45-year-old field worker, and mother of five, concerned derogatory remarks she allegedly made against the prophet Muhammad in June 2009. Human rights groups and Christian organizations widely condemned the sentence, which revived calls for the law's repeal. Pakistan's minister for minority affairs said the blasphemy law will remain due to security concerns, but expects Bibi's appeal for clemency to be granted.

3 Polarizing Episcopal bishop to resign

Gene Robinson, bishop of New Hampshire and the first openly gay

GO FIGURE Discipleship

48%

Evangelicals who listed violence, hatred, bigotry, intolerance, and lack of love as negative contributions of the Christian population to American society.

25%

Americans in general who listed such failings of the Christian population. Evangelicals were also the group least likely to say they couldn't think of negative contributions.

Barna Research



compiled by Ted Olsen

QUOTATION MARKS

“Any . . . effort, display, event, etc. that seeks to limit or remove a woman’s right to choose her options in the case of pregnancy will not be supported.”

The Carleton University Student Association, in removing a student-led pro-life group. The association would only recognize Carleton Lifeline, it said, if the group dropped its opposition to abortion.

Macleans

“I have been commissioned [by seminary students] to write many a passionate condemnation of America’s moral decay as exemplified by abortion, gay marriage. . . . Clerical authorities [must] see these as a greater threat than the plagiarism committed by the future frocked.”

“Ed Dante,” a pseudonymous employee of a custom-essay company, on his customers.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

“She says to her teenage kid, ‘Here’s a fetus.’ . . . No question that affected me, my philosophy, that we should respect life.”

Former President George W. Bush, on his mother showing the then-17-year-old his miscarried “brother or sister.”

NBC

“The song in white hands was never grounded in faith. Its words were simplistic; its tune was breezy. And it was simplistically dismissed.”

Glenn D. Hinson, anthropologist at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, on “Kumbaya,” which has become the “all-purpose put-down of the political moment,” according to *The New York Times*.

County is temporarily not enforcing its zoning regulations on places of assembly while the Islamic Center of the Western Suburbs applies for a permit to meet at a home for worship. The county, facing a lawsuit after denying another Muslim prayer center near Naperville, has proposed a law that would ban groups meeting in unincorporated residential areas. While the proposed ban may please disgruntled neighbors, religious leaders say the changes are too broad, given that the majority of the county’s churches outside municipal boundaries are located in neighborhoods.

9 Catholic seminary opens near Havana

CUBA President Raul Castro attended the debut of the first Roman Catholic seminary to open since the island’s Communist revolution in 1959. The San Carlos y San Ambrosio Interdiocesan Seminary had inhabited a building in Old Havana since the 18th century until the government evicted them in 1966. Then-president Fidel Castro promised to back the project when Pope John Paul II visited Cuba in 1998. The new seminary, southeast of Havana, is one of two Catholic seminaries on the island.

10 Malaysia debates pork in school

MALAYSIA Ten-year-old Christian Basil Beginda touched off a nationwide debate one November day when he brought fried rice with pork to his public school in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. Eating pork is forbidden in Islam, and though the predominantly Muslim nation has no laws against non-Muslims eating it, Beginda was caned by an assistant principal. The subsequent debate reached Malaysia’s parliament. Some argue that Beginda is legally a Muslim, but others say that Muslim or not, the punishment

was too severe. The assistant principal apologized after Beginda’s mother protested.

11 Christian flag fracas in North Carolina

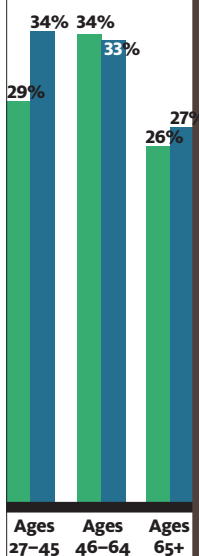
A group in King, a town northwest of Winston-Salem, wants the Christian flag and only the Christian flag to fly at the city’s war memorial. The city council took the flag down over the summer when a local veteran complained, then restored it in October after thousands of residents protested. But when the council agreed in November to restore it as part of a display of many religious flags, the King Memorial Preservation Foundation made its position clear: return the Christian flag and keep other religions’ flags out.

12 HUD: ‘Christian roommate’ ad okay

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) dismissed a complaint in November against a Grand Rapids, Michigan, woman who advertised at her church for a “Christian roommate.” The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan called the ad discriminatory, and the Alliance Defense Fund sent HUD a letter on her behalf. According to WOOD TV in Michigan, HUD found “no reasonable cause” for the complaint.

13 World Vision supervisors convicted of stealing aid

LIBERIA A U.S. federal jury found two former supervisors of World Vision’s Liberia offices guilty of conspiracy, fraud, and other charges concerning their embezzlement of more than \$1.4 million in aid. World Vision uncovered the actions of Joe Bondo and Morris Fahnbulleh in 2007, after an anonymous tip said food and funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development were being diverted. A third World Vision supervisor, Thomas Parker, has been arrested in Liberia and is fighting extradition.



Barna Research



MISSIONS

Boarding Bust

Schools for missionary kids see lower attendance. By Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra

New reports of child abuse drew attention to missionary boarding schools this fall but overshadowed the current trend: how rare such schooling is today.

About 30 missionary kids abused between 1950 and 1990, many at boarding schools in Africa or Asia, received a formal apology from Presbyterian Church (USA) leaders in October. About a month earlier, New Tribes Mission (NTM) released a report detailing the abuse of at least 50 missionary kids who had boarded in Senegal in the late 1980s.

Yet of the estimated 150 schools worldwide that serve missionary kids today, no more than 30 still offer boarding, said David Wilcox, an international director with the Association of Christian Schools International. “Even among those that offer boarding, for all but a handful, the boarding students are the minority of students they serve,” he said. For example, Faith Academy in the Philippines has

about 575 students, but only about 80 students board, he said.

The “significant and measurable shift” in where missionary families send their children to school has been gaining momentum for a number of years, and it isn’t due to fears of abuse, said Steve Moore, president of the Mission Exchange. Many groups, including the International Mission Board and the Christian and Missionary Alliance, have adopted stringent child safety rules over the past decade.

In addition, the motivation for dorm parents has changed. In the past, some personnel at boarding schools were placed there because they were failing as missionaries, unable to learn the language or fit in with the culture, Wilcox said. “That is totally a thing of the past,” he said. “Now more people have been called to the ministry [of dorm parenting].” This helps curtail the potential problem of abuse.

Instead, other factors have influenced the trend toward less

➡ **Schooling Shift:** Fewer missionaries are sending their kids to boarding schools, thanks to improved homeschooling resources and migration to urban centers with day schools.

boarding, including better resources for homeschooling and migration to urban centers, which have day schools. Almost all missionary kids who now attend boarding schools are in high school seeking the extracurricular activities that large schools offer, said Wilcox.

No parents ever wanted to be separated from their children, said Nita Zelenak, spokesperson for NTM. “Years ago, missionary parents often had to choose between giving their children a good education and keeping them at home.”

Today, NTM runs seven boarding schools, but just 9 percent of their 860-some missionary kids use them. A much higher number—50 percent—are homeschooled, Zelenak said. (The rest attend day schools.) Today NTM offers courses on homeschooling during candidate training and often has certified teachers available in the field.

While no NTM boarding schools have closed for lack of students, some have closed for other reasons, such as political unrest, she said.

Some schools have been closed or turned into day schools because of population shifts, Wilcox said. Missionaries follow the people into urban locations, which offer the options of day schools, both local and international, that were not available in isolated locations, he said.

“It’s a totally new ball game; kids are [boarding] because they want to go rather than because the mission policy forced the parents to do so,” said Wilcox. “We can all rejoice in that.” ➕

GO FIGURE Family

42%

Weekly churchgoers who say a marriage where the husband provides for the family and the wife takes care of the home and children is the more satisfying way of life.

25%

Occasional churchgoers who say this.

Pew Research Center

CHURCH LIFE

‘Chilling Verdict’

Churches re-assess risk management policies.

By Ken Walker

A \$4.75 million judgment against a Tampa congregation in connection with a teen’s injuries on a church-sponsored skiing trip is raising awareness of the

risks facing churches in a litigious society.

"It's a chilling verdict for everyone concerned," said Simeon May, CEO of the National Association of Church Business Administration, which spotlighted risk management in a recent series of seminars nationwide.

"It's very sad that a boy was hurt and that the relationship between his family and church is broken," said Laura Kubenez, director of the child protection ministry at Woodside Bible Church in Troy, Michigan. "I hope the impact is to alert churches that they have to have a [safety] plan and procedures in place."

The mother of a then-14-year-old boy sued Idlewild Baptist Church after he suffered serious spinal and nerve injuries in a 2003 skiing collision at a North Carolina resort. She alleged inadequate instruction and supervision. In late September, a jury awarded the family \$5 million, assigning 95 percent of the fault to the 11,000-member church.

Although executive pastor Brian McDougall declined to comment on whether Idlewild plans to appeal the verdict, the news prompted considerable reaction from insurance carriers and church business administrators.

Mark Russ, a senior vice president with Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services in Itasca, Illinois, thinks megachurches are particularly vulnerable. He says their rapid growth and complex ministries, mostly geared toward reaching the unchurched, do not fit "off the shelf" coverage.

"I'm finding an epidemic," Russ said of megachurch insurance shortages.

Since verdicts like Idlewild's are rare, GuideOne Insurance executive Eric Spacek said churches should be more concerned with injuries related to inadequate property maintenance or the removal of snow and ice hazards.

"We see 10 times as many people being injured in falls on church

property as cases of child sexual abuse," said Spacek, whose Iowa-based company insures approximately 43,000 churches.

The Tampa verdict demonstrates that ministers and church leaders need to diligently oversee activities like youth outings and mission trips, said Glenn Wood, pastor of administration at Seacoast Church in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. A multi-site, 13-campus operation with 10,500 weekly attendees, Seacoast's staff will also need to inform volunteers of the verdict so they know that "these are the times we're living in," he said.

"It is also going to require us to do a little due diligence and make sure we have the right kind of [insurance] coverage," Wood said. "There can always be glitches."

No matter their size, churches must weigh insurance decisions on the nature and frequency of activities against net value of their assets, said church law expert Richard Hammar.

"If a church has a youth program that has frequent meetings involving several minors . . . provides counseling, or hosts community activities," said the attorney, "then its liability risks are increased, and it should be looking for higher insurance limits." ☛

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM BHUTAN

Bhutan Budes

Buddhist nation will likely legalize Christianity.

By Compass Direct News

For the first time in Bhutan's history, the long-isolated Buddhist nation's government seems ready to grant official recognition and accompanying rights to a miniscule Christian population that has remained largely underground.

Chhoedey Lhentshog, the authority that regulates religious organizations, discussed at its December meeting how a Christian organization can be registered to

represent its community, according to agency secretary Dorji Tshering.

Thus far, only Buddhist and Hindu organizations have been registered and thus are permitted to openly practice their religion and build places of worship.

Asked if Christians were likely to enjoy the same rights soon, Tshering replied, "Absolutely"—an apparent paradigm shift in policy, given that Bhutan's National Assembly banned open practice of non-Buddhist and non-Hindu religions in resolutions passed in 1969 and 1979, respectively.

"The constitution of Bhutan says that Buddhism is the country's spiritual heritage, but it also says that his majesty [the king] is the protector of all religions," he added, explaining the basis on which the nascent democracy is willing to accept Christianity as one faith among its citizens.

According to a source who requested anonymity, the government is likely to register only one Christian organization, and would expect it to represent all Christians in Bhutan—which would call for Christian unity in the country.

The government's willingness to recognize Christians is partly aimed at bringing the community under religious regulation, said the anonymous source. Thus, its policy shift is evoking a mixed response among the country's estimated 6,000 Christians.

Last month, a court in south Bhutan sentenced a Christian man to three years in prison for screening films on Christianity. The government is in the process of introducing a clause into the country's penal code that bans conversions by force or allurement.

Though never colonized, landlocked Bhutan has historically seen its sovereignty as fragile due to its small size and location between India and China. It has sought to protect its sovereignty by preserving its distinct cultural identity based on Buddhism and by discouraging social tensions and unrest. ☛

PASSAGES



Died

Howard O. Jones

First black associate evangelist of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, at age 89. Jones was also the first president of the National Black Evangelical Association.



Resigned

Marvin Olasky

As provost of The King's College, to focus energies on being editor in chief of *World*, a biweekly news magazine.



Resigned

Darlene Zschech

As pastor and worship leader of Australia's Hillsong Church. She and her husband, Mark, will start as senior pastors of Church Unlimited, a Pentecostal congregation near Sydney.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Generic Christian U.

Ties that bind church schools are loosening.

By Bobby Ross Jr.

Faith-based universities with historically strong denominational ties—Nazarene, Mennonite, and Southern Baptist schools among them—are enrolling fewer students from within their own ranks.

Paul Corts, president of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (cccu), said the trend, seen even in institutions with “very strong, close connections” to denominations, is bound to shape future denominational leadership.

For example, at 18 schools associated with the Churches of Christ (non-instrumental), members of associated churches composed 70 percent of first-year students a decade ago. By fall 2009, that figure had dropped to 53 percent, according to a study by the Harding University Center for Church Growth.

The perceived high cost of a Christian education alongside

drops in denominational loyalty have contributed to the changing demographics, said Corts and others.

“So many people now think that everything is just a different flavor,” said Mike O’Neal, president of Oklahoma Christian University, a Church of Christ school. “If I’m a Methodist, generally I don’t care that a university is Nazarene or Calvinist or whatever. The perception is, we’re all alike.”

At Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Mennonites represent 45 percent of undergraduates, a decline from previous decades, said president Loren Swartzendruber.

“We know from surveys that a Mennonite student who attends a Mennonite college will be far more likely to be active in a Mennonite congregation as an adult,” he said. “Consequently, this trend not only impacts potential leaders but general membership.”

Over the past decade, the proportion of Nazarene students at Point Loma Nazarene University has dropped from 30 percent to about 20 percent, said Scott N. Shoemaker, the San Diego school’s associate vice president for enrollment.

“The loyal adherence to attending

DISCUSSION STARTER Modesty

The Transportation Security Administration modified its screening of airline passengers, introducing “backscatter” x-ray machines that can see beneath passengers’ clothing. Those who opted out received an “enhanced pat-down.” The government insisted the procedures are necessary to prevent terrorism, but many, including some Christian leaders, called upon passengers to resist.

a denominational institution has certainly been diluted through the weakening of historic ties to the church and its clergy,” he said.

Union University, a Southern Baptist school in Jackson, Tennessee, has bucked the trend “with intentional outreach to Baptist students,” said Rich Grimm, senior vice president for enrollment services. Its entering class is about 65 percent Baptist.

However, Grimm said that by design or not, “There are a number of schools enrolling significantly fewer Baptist students.”

Amid heightened competition for students, some universities acknowledge marketing more aggressively outside their denomination. Phil Schubert, president of Abilene Christian University in Texas, said that his school is no less determined to reach out to its Churches of Christ base, “but we’re also making a direct appeal to students who [value] our brand of Christian education.”

Much of the evidence of the trend remains anecdotal, Corts acknowledged. “I don’t know that anyone has done a detailed study on why it’s the case,” he said. The ccu might conduct just such a review. 

UNDER DISCUSSION Topics in the current debate.

compiled by Trevor Persaud

Should Christians resist airport body scans and pat-downs?

YES

“We [the members of BarlowGirl] have chosen to opt out every time. As a woman concerned about modesty, I don’t believe anyone, not even the government, has the right to see my body. We need to feel safe without our privacy being violated.”

ALYSSA BARLOW,
musician and modesty advocate

“I recommend that people eliminate all discretionary air travel and tell the airline each time they choose not to fly because of the security procedures. That’s what in the end won the Montgomery Bus Boycott—economic pressure.”

RICHARD LAND,
president, SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

“The only effective resistance is to scorn the shame of nudity by preemptively undressing completely prior to the scan. But as Christians are habituated to the moral constraints of modesty, the most effective resistance will most likely come from non-Christians.”

READ MERCER SCHUCHARDT,
associate communications professor, Wheaton College

“Whether convicted to object or submit, we must treat all with kindness—our fellow passengers and the agents who are equally uncomfortable. Emotions focused on personal wrongs can only detract from our common cause of preventing another terrorist attack.”

PENNY NANCE,
CEO, Concerned Women for America

“We get into these situations because we make snap judgments about technology instead of thinking things through. It is a red herring to ask whether Christians should resist or not; the issue is much larger. Christians are not engaging thoughtfully enough with technology.”

ROSIE PERERA, faith and technology columnist

“We are commanded to love our neighbors. This requires that we take responsibility and do our part to ensure their safety. The new screening measures are a small price to pay to prevent future acts of mass murder.”

JOE CARTER,
online editor, First Things

NO

Rock the Vote: In the village of Nyal in southern Sudan, a resident receives his voter registration card. A 60 percent turnout is necessary for the referendum results to be valid.



RECONCILIATION **SUDAN**

The Rush to Reconcile

Are peacemaking efforts in Sudan enough to prevent violence if the South votes for independence? By Tony Carnes



On the second Sunday in January 2011, the fate of 8.2 million southern Sudanese will be put to vote: whether or not to pursue independence. The referendum comes six years after the end of a civil war that cost two million lives. But the prospect of renewed violence is real, causing Christian leaders and others to redouble their efforts at reconciliation.

"It is our golden choice. It is time to choose now," said Joseph Garang Atem Zorial, the Anglican bishop of Renk, a town along Sudan's north-south border. He joins hundreds of religious and political leaders working to make the election fair and fraud-free. He also believes this is the best

chance for self-determination in southern Sudan, whose citizens have been subject for decades to rule by an Islamic majority.

There is little doubt what outcome Bishop Joseph favors. "I am campaigning for separation," he told *Christianity Today*. According to a recent survey, a majority of southern Sudanese support political independence. Bishop Joseph's view is that 95 percent of southerners will vote for it.

Local referendums in oil-rich Abyei and in the border states of south Kordofan and Blue Nile allow advisory votes on political separation. But preparation for the critical vote in Abyei, where the border is in dispute, is behind schedule and it is unlikely to occur on January 9.

Many factors make separation

necessary, according to southern Sudanese leaders, including the following:

- **Poverty:** Sudan's national government exports about \$35 million per day of crude oil, mostly from the South. Very little of the oil wealth gets shared with southerners, despite the 2005 peace agreement that required the North to do so. More than half of southern Sudan lives on less than \$1 per day. Economic development has stalled for decades.
- **Religious discrimination:** Sudan's national leaders support a version of Islamic law (Shari'ah) that creates a climate of chronic discrimination against Sudanese Christians and other minorities, especially in the areas of

housing, employment, and education.

- Political repression: President Omar al-Bashir is under criminal indictment by international courts for using the military to suppress minority groups throughout Sudan. He faces charges ranging from ordering genocide to committing war crimes in Sudan's Darfur region, where at least 200,000 have died since 2003.

"We don't want to go back to war," Bishop Joseph said. "[But] the unity we had been looking for has failed, so now it is time for separation."

The national referendum has a global character. During the war years (1955–2005), hundreds of thousands of southern Sudanese fled their nation. They are now spread across the globe from Sydney, Australia, to Omaha, Nebraska.

Many of them, including Sudanese American John Dut, expect to vote. During the war, Dut, then 10 years old, escaped death after his village was attacked. He lived in Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp for 10 years and was one of the 3,800 so-called Lost Boys of Sudan to resettle in the U.S.

before September 11, 2001, after which the resettlement program was suspended until 2006.

In November, Sudan's government hired Dut to conduct voter registration in Omaha, where a large number of Lost Boys now live. Dut, who has returned to southern Sudan six times since 2002, told *CT* he is happy to work for the government. But his hope centers on the church.

"The church has peace in its hands," Dut said. "The peace we have now came because of the American churches. For me, the churches here in America have a value: when they speak out, the world will listen. Whatever life the Sudanese have now, it comes through the church."

ENFORCING NEIGHBORLINESS

In 2005, Sudan's civil war ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which required the upcoming referendum. Since then, Sudan's church leaders have poured time and energy into helping southerners reconcile with their former enemies.

Rwanda has become an unexpected

inspiration for many Sudanese Christian leaders. They point to the failure of many churches during the 1994 genocide to stop the killing and promote reconciliation. Anglican Archbishop of Sudan Daniel Deng Bul Yak told *CT* during a recent U.S. visit, "We come to inform the world that we should not allow genocide to take place like what happened in Rwanda."

One new reconciliation effort trains Sudanese military chaplains to serve in the People's Liberation Army. It aims to preserve the peace throughout southern Sudan's 10 states, which are spread across 247,000 square miles (about the size of Texas). Based in Nairobi, Kenya, African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM) has established five centers in Sudan for training chaplains and other Christian leaders. Founder Celestin Musekura is a Rwandan pastor who returned to his country after the genocide to promote reconciliation among church leaders who took part in the killings.

"In Rwanda, we church leaders were surprised by the group pride and collective evil perpetrated even by the police and

Constructing Peace

One Olympic athlete's efforts to build relationships between Sudan's Christians and Muslims. By Moses Wasamu in Nairobi, Kenya



Muslim students from Sudan's Darfur region are volunteering to work alongside a Sudanese Christian athlete and other believers to build new schools and a church in war-ravaged southern Sudan.

Olympic 1,500-meter competitor Lopez Lomong, who came to the United States in 2001 as a Lost Boy of Sudan, gained international acclaim for his advocacy on behalf of Darfuri Muslims during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. As a member of Team Darfur, he spoke out against the Sudan government's campaign to drive Darfur's residents off their land in the country's western region. Lomong was the most prominent Sudanese athlete at the 2008 Olympics, serving as the flag bearer for the U.S. team during the opening ceremonies.

But Lomong also dreamed of helping his remote village, which he had fled in 1992, by enabling southern Sudanese to build a new church there. Lomong partnered with Sudan Sunrise, a Kansas-based ministry that seeks reconciliation between Sudanese Muslim and Christian refugees. During the civil war, Sudan's government conscripted thousands of Darfuri Muslims to fight in the South, so animosity between Darfurians and southern Sudanese runs deep.

Sudan Sunrise founder Tom Prichard started his ministry among Sudanese in Kansas. Now his ministry works inside Sudan and Kenya.

In late November, it brought together about 130 Sudanese Muslim and Christian youth in Nairobi, Kenya, for dialogue. "What we are doing is a catalyst to spur people. It is showing the character of Christ," Prichard said.

The event also featured Christian rapper Emmanuel Jal, a former Sudanese child soldier, and Valentino Achak Deng, whose story is the basis for Dave Eggers's novel *What Is the What*. The attendance of three Muslims from Khartoum, each of whom spoke in favor of self-determination for southern Sudan, was a highlight of the summit.

Sudan Sunrise established new relationships with Sudanese Muslims through its relief work in Darfur. The organization partnered with the Darfur Students Association at the University of Juba in southern Sudan's capital to get donated aid into Darfur's overcrowded camps. Later, Sudan Sunrise asked Muslim students to help build the church in Lomong's village of Kimotong, and many agreed to. "Our efforts are like yeast. This is an idea that is growing," Prichard said.

Lomong's goal is to raise \$129,000 to build Kimotong Reconciliation Church as well as a community center that will provide food and drinking water. Initial construction work has already begun. ➦

Moses Wasamu is a newspaper editor based in Kenya.

army,” Musekura told CT. “Now, our Rwandan and Sudanese team wants to make sure that the southern Sudanese police chaplains are aware of the realities and how to deal with them.”

Tribalism, nationalism, and racism among police and soldiers can affect the whole church. “In times like this, people become more political than Christian,” said Musekura.

The team currently is teaching chaplains that peace comes from having a common mindset. “It isn’t for the church to demonize or to be more patriotic or nationalistic. The church must not become

believe the Islamic legal code turns Christians and others into second-class citizens.

Christians in the North are severely restrained in terms of property ownership, church construction, mercy missions, and education. For example, the northern government requires Christian schools to hire a teacher to instruct students in Islam. Bible distribution is restricted.

“The Arab-Islamic government wants to impose Islamic identity,” Daniel Adwok Marko Kur, the Catholic auxiliary bishop of Khartoum, told CT. The North has not shown any signs of “relenting its policy of Islamization and Arabization.”

During a recent dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Renk, religious leaders agreed to hold public prayers prior to the January referendum as one way to ease tensions. Bishop

Joseph said, “Muslims and Christians have a strong commitment to prayer. We say to the Muslims, ‘You pray according to your way. When you go to your mosque, pray for a peaceful referendum.’ We believe in the power of prayer. It is the only weapon we have.”

In Sudan’s vast undeveloped rural areas, tribal tensions run high over grazing land and drinking water, which are in short supply.

According to Ramadan Chan Liol, general secretary of the Sudan Council of Churches, a recent conflict between two communities in southern Sudan took at least 700 lives, including women and children.

Recently, Christian women from both tribes met and decided to do something. “The women went to the men and told them, ‘We are no more going to have children if you are killing them,’” said Chan. “The church women forced the men into an agreement.” Men from both sides agreed to cease fighting.

In June, the Sudan Council of Churches issued a statement calling on the governments of the North and South to make protection of people in tribal areas a higher priority.

WITNESSES FOR PEACE

The possibility of another north-south war after the election is very real to Sudanese Christians; recent history underscores their concern.

In late December 2007, Kenya held a watershed presidential election. The results were contested, triggering massive violence. More than 1,200 people were killed, many thousands were injured, 300,000 were left homeless, and 42,000 homes and businesses were damaged. A United Nations fact-finding team determined that while problems at the polls were real, poverty and discrimination fueled the violence.

African leaders believe that a visible Christian presence in Sudan is critical to sustaining peace during the voting season and immediately afterward. Many Sudanese hope Westerners will learn from the Rwandan genocide.

Musekura spoke for many of his Sudanese colleagues. When violence began to erupt in Rwanda, he said, many mission agencies told their missionaries to leave the country. “It was a failure of the church and seen by the Rwandan church as abandonment by the body,” he told CT.

He gave two reasons for the riskier path of staying in-country. First, “the presence of the international eye of shame may prevent troubles. Second, if the missionaries leave and then come back, they will have no real authority. Sudanese will say, ‘You care for us only when [it’s] safe for you though not safe for us.’”

Musekura and his team have accepted an invitation to be on the ground on election day as Sudan Council of Churches observers. He said, “I am called to them in Sudan in life and death.”

Geoff Tunnicliffe, secretary general of the World Evangelical Alliance, is also assembling a team of evangelicals to monitor polling locations during the vote. Renk’s Bishop Joseph said, “We want the global church standing with us.”

Anglican Archbishop Deng, meanwhile, is visiting churches in the North and South during December, preaching self-determination and reconciliation. ✚

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

‘The church has peace in its hands. The peace we have now came because of the American churches.’

~ John Dut, a Lost Boy of Sudan resettled in the U.S.

so political that it misses the neutrality to be salt and light,” said Musekura.

Since police in southern Sudan are often on the frontlines of neighborhood fights, the chaplain training also explores “how to speak prophetically to tribalism.” One Sudanese trainer asks police chaplains to imagine that “you are police, enforcing neighborliness.”

This principle has a larger application: “Remember,” Musekura said, “even if we separate as a nation, the North is still our neighbor.” The Sudanese reconciliation team recognizes that the North fears that an independent South will be a hostile, armed threat.

“We are reminding police about biblical resources for building a community of forgiveness.”

TRIBAL TENSIONS

The largest African nation, Sudan has more than 600 tribal groups subdivided by skin color, language, religion, and geography. Sudan’s population of 41 million people is 70 percent Sunni Muslim.

In major cities, Christians and Muslims have gathered to discuss pressing issues surrounding the referendum. For Christians, the overriding issue is Shari’ah law. They

M

OST OF US will not be as fortunate as Madame Jeanne Calment. The Frenchwoman died at the age of 122 on August 4, 1997. Somewhat of a local celebrity in her hometown of Arles, Calment took up fencing at age 85 and was still bicycling into her second century, attributing her longevity to a diet of port wine and olive oil. Her story bears testimony to the fact that humans are living longer. Due

primarily to medical advances that have nearly wiped out tuberculosis and smallpox, lowered infant mortality rates, and improved sanitary conditions, life expectancies for most people in the 21st century have doubled since the middle of the 19th century.

Chasing Methu

Yet these increases in longevity have been accompanied by a host of age-related diseases, including Alzheimer's, dementia, incontinence, decline in vision and hearing, and the irretrievable loss of muscle and bone mass. Even the remarkable Ms. Calment spent most of her final two years in bed.

While the chance of reaching the upper biological limit of 120 years is extremely remote, the prospect of a greatly extended and healthy life is alluring. Nearly 100 million Americans currently use anti-aging products and practices. Among these practices are special diets, such as "The 120-Year Diet" from Roy Walford (who died of Lou Gehrig's disease two months before his 80th birthday), plastic surgery, vitamins, mineral supplements, human growth hormones, and other hormones like melatonin, testosterone, pregnenolone, and estrogen. *Good Housekeeping* recently conducted laboratory tests on 90 anti-aging skin products alone. The editors used an advanced complexion analyzer and other scientific measurement tools to compile the "Anti-Aging Awards," announced in the October 2010 issue. The following issue included an article on how to "age-proof" your hair.

Most gerontologists assert that such remedies don't really slow the aging process. But what if we found a way to stay healthy and active well into our hundreds? What if it were possible to actually reverse the effects of aging—to heal arthritis, regain bone and muscle mass, and cure dementia by replenishing brain cells? With the promise of emerging genetic technologies, we may no longer need homespun remedies like port wine and olive oil. Nor will we need costly concoctions or impossibly expensive diets that only disguise age. Over the past decade, the search for the fountain of youth has moved from legend to laboratory.

For the first time, researchers have been able to slow aging in multi-cellular organisms and animals through selective breeding, dietary restriction, and genetic manipulation. One of the most promising avenues of aging research is the link between fasting and aging. Starve an animal, and it lives longer—it ages more slowly.

Molecular biologist Cynthia Kenyon, for example, has doubled the life span of the worm *C. elegans* by altering a single gene, the result of which mimics reduced food intake. "I wanted to be those worms!" said Kenyon. She exclaimed that even a moderate increase in life span would be like having the body of a 45-year-old at age 90. "If our company could make a pill, everyone would want it," she said. Her company hopes to make a pharmaceutical that mimics the genetic experiment in humans and allows consumers to enjoy the longevity benefits of fasting without having to drastically alter their diets. Moreover, that longer life may include health and vitality, assuaging fears that lengthening life would only prolong old age's attendant afflictions.

Other biologists have produced a six-fold increase in the life span of *C. elegans* by manipulating a pair of genes researchers believe control free-radical metabolism. Another promising avenue is the development of the enzyme telomerase. The enzyme enables cells to continue replicating beyond a finite boundary known as the Hayflick limit, since our bodies' cells (called somatic cells) die after reaching this limit. While many have expressed doubts concerning the viability of telomerase, a recent study has reignited hope. Last November, Harvard scientists announced that they had successfully reversed the signs of aging in elderly mice by using this therapy. Expecting to simply slow aging in the mice, lead researcher Ronald DePinho reported

*Exercise, technology, and diet
help us live longer than ever.
Should those who look to
eternal life care?*

By Todd T. W. Daly

selah





that “we saw a dramatic reversal—and that was unexpected.” Mice given telomerase actually generated new brain tissue and rejuvenated other aged bodily tissues, and recovered the physiological characteristics of younger mice. While it is still not clear whether this therapy will extend the lifespan of mice or simply enable them to live healthier into old age, such discoveries increase the hope that this technique can be applied to humans. Researcher Michael Fossel believes telomerase therapy will be widely available for life extension by 2015.

Medical success stories like these have captured the attention of aging baby boomers and venture capitalists alike, spawning life-extension organizations like the Methuselah Foundation, Centagenetix, and Elixir Pharmaceuticals. Elixir, for example, identifies “longevity genes” that it hopes will yield drugs to slow aging and reduce the disease and disability that accompany it. The University of Connecticut has given Elixir’s researchers an exclusive license to patent applications related to Stephen L. Helfand’s work. (Helfand has identified a gene known as Indy—the “I’m Not Dead Yet” gene—that doubled the life span of fruit flies.)

A healthy life span that extends beyond the Bible’s “threescore years and ten” (Ps. 90:10, *KJV*) is an enormously attractive prospect, particularly for a culture obsessed with youth and fearful of death. And it’s not just the broader culture that seems to want to stave off death. A fair number of Christians are fascinated by the prospect.

In 2009, Pat Robertson’s Christian Broadcasting Network aired a program entitled “Anti-Aging ‘Secrets’ Revealed.” It featured Harry Lodge’s bestseller *Younger Next Year*, which discusses how certain lifestyle choices promote cellular growth. A more recent *CBN* article discussed how Christians can “beat the clock without needles, surgery, or spending much money.” It revealed tips from Doris J. Day, “one of America’s top beauty doctors,” who works primarily with Hollywood stars.

Extending life past current biological limits would have enormous social, political, economical, and ecological ramifications. Such treatments would introduce a host of moral questions, including whether the pursuit of longevity is appropriate when millions of children still don’t have access to basic immunizations. Despite these unseen and complicated issues, most anti-aging researchers embrace a technological determinism, says Steven Austad, biologist and author of *Why We Age*: “If science uncovers therapies that can do it, those therapies will be employed. This is one genie that has no chance of being put back in the bottle.”

The more fundamental question is whether human aging is a malady in need of a cure. Should we

treat aging as a disease? Is there anything wrong with hoping to live to age 150? And, particularly for Christians, is it wrong to want to live past threescore years and ten?

PROLONGING ONE’S DAYS

Scripture suggests it is not wrong to want a long life. The Old Testament describes the “prolonging of one’s days” as a reward for obedience (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:33; Prov. 3:1–2). Conversely, the dwindling length of human life in the first few chapters of Genesis suggests that wickedness shortens life (e.g., Gen. 6:3). Indeed, the wicked will not live out half their days (Ps. 55:23). However, the Bible also reminds us that wisdom can prolong one’s limited life span (Prov. 9:11). Either way, the writer of Ecclesiastes laments that the wise and foolish alike must die (2:16).

The New Testament shows that the teachings and resurrection of Jesus relativize the significance of one’s life span. Worrying won’t lengthen life by even a single hour, says Jesus (Matt. 6:27). Paul echoes this when he proclaims that “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Yet Jesus’ ministry included extending others’ lives by healing the sick and bringing the dead back to life (Luke 7:14–15; 8:52–55; John 11:38–43). Thus, Jesus confronts us as one who sought to undo life-shortening disease, but who also conquered death by succumbing to it.

Biblically speaking, while God is the giver of life, he does not indicate a normative life span. Nor does he guarantee that an obedient life will be a long one. Moreover, in light of Christ, the emphasis in Christian living is on what you do with your life, not on how long you live.

But what about the aging process, which inevitably ends in death? To ask whether aging is a disease is, essentially, to ask whether we should develop technology to attenuate the aging process.

One common Christian approach emphasizes healing as a gift and calling of the church.

This approach justifies



ISTOCK

using technology to overcome the deleterious consequences of the Fall (Gen. 3). One might conclude that Christians have theological warrant for waging an all-out technological battle against death and aging in hopes of regaining Methuselah-like longevity (Gen. 5:21–27). Augustine famously proclaimed that Adam was able not to die before sin, and unable not to die after. Yet it would be hasty to assume that Adam and Eve did not *age* before they sinned. Augustine noted in *City of God* that while Adam suffered no bodily corruption before the Fall, he could eat from the Tree of Life, “lest age decay him.”

That aging itself may be part of God’s plan for creation gains support when we consider Jesus Christ, God in human

Christ, the incarnate Word, came to rectify.

Based in part on 2 Peter 1:4, which speaks of our participation in the divine nature, Athanasius repeats a well-known formula: “Christ was made man that we might be made God.” Athanasius argued that part of this transformation involves the human body. He did not blur the distinction between God and the human creature. Christians hold to the promise that one day we will be like Christ (1 John 3:2). Athanasius, like many in his day, was suspicious of the material and favored the spiritual. Still, he affirmed that the way to redemption, opened up by the Incarnation of Christ, begins by attending to the body.

For Athanasius, the best example of this transformation was the desert ascetic Saint Antony. Antony displayed powers over disease, demons, and, seemingly, death itself. Athanasius especially noted Antony’s ability to restore the proper order of body and soul. Antony did so, says Athanasius, by fasting, which restores the soul as rightful leader of the body. Antony thereby regained some of that bodily integrity and resistance to aging found in the Garden of Eden. Athanasius notes that Antony lived to 105, many of those years in the harsh conditions of North Africa’s deserts.

Athanasius is not alone. Many early Christian thinkers believed that the body could be effectively slowed down by fasting, thereby putting on a little of the incorruptibility enjoyed by Adam. But Athanasius also realized that any discussion of a return to Paradise must be balanced by the promise of a future resurrection body. Only Christ can clothe us with immortality. Again, longevity has its limits.

For the desert fathers, the goal of fasting was not to live longer. Rather, it was a crucial first step in submitting the body to the soul. This, in turn, brought the soul into submission to God. Only after one had effectively quieted the impulses of one’s body could one most effectively begin to till up the hardened soil of one’s heart. Fasting has a way of laying bare our ultimate commitments, of helping us see the things that so easily entangle us.

For the early church, then, fasting was a way to experience the freedom Christ has given us. In particular, this meant freedom from the fear of death, freedom to enjoy the presence of God, and freedom to love others. Indeed, Jesus himself practiced a lengthy fast at the beginning of his public ministry, and assumed that fasting was an integral part of his disciples’ lives (Matt. 6:16–18).

Thus, while Athanasius recognized that slowing down the aging process was possible, it was never the primary goal. He always subsumed it under the broader Christian discipleship project. Bodily practices were an entry point into the transformation of one’s soul, and intricately involved in the development of the whole person.

RADICALLY DIFFERENT NARRATIVES

The point is not that the desert fathers recognized a link between fasting and aging well before it was “discovered” by scientists. Still less is this essay an argument to pursue life extension through the more “natural” means of fasting. But it is clear that behind these competing visions of longevity lie divergent notions of flourishing and what it means to

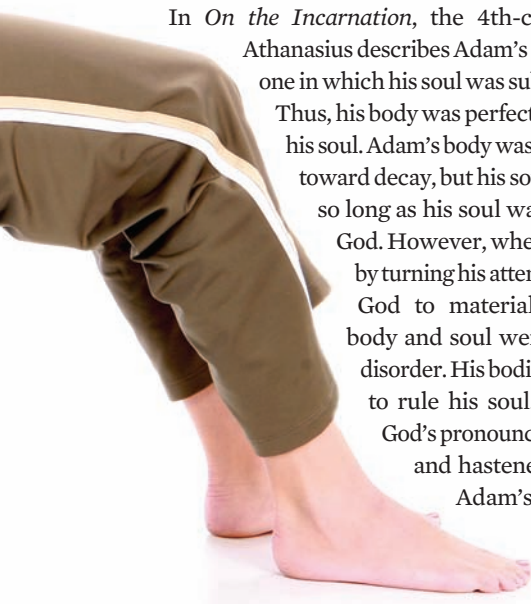
Should we treat aging as a disease? Is there anything wrong with hoping to live to age 150? And, particularly for Christians, is it wrong to want to live past threescore years and ten?

flesh. Theologian Karl Barth argued that we cannot discern human nature from science, philosophy, or the social sciences. Rather, we find what it means to be human in Jesus as attested in Scripture. That Jesus ate and drank and aged indicates that it is good and fitting for us to be temporal, finite creatures. We do well to remember that Christians look forward to a bodily resurrection after death, made secure by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Longevity is not an absolute good.

It might appear, then, that the Christian faith has no vested interest in greatly extending healthy lives by slowing human aging. But that conclusion would be too simple. In fact, we find the deepest insights into the relationship between aging and our eventual resurrection in the writings of the early church fathers.

WISDOM FROM THE DESERT

In *On the Incarnation*, the 4th-century bishop Athanasius describes Adam’s original state as one in which his soul was submitted to God. Thus, his body was perfectly submitted to his soul. Adam’s body was always tending toward decay, but his soul slowed aging so long as his soul was submitted to God. However, when Adam sinned by turning his attention away from God to material creation, his body and soul were thrown into disorder. His bodily desires began to rule his soul. This brought God’s pronouncement of death, and hastened the decay of Adam’s body. It’s this condition, said Athanasius, that Jesus





have—indeed, to be—a human body.

The modern biomedical project is fueled by the idea that our bodies are morally neutral. They are subject to the whims of our will, profoundly shaped by the liberal understanding of freedom as freedom from limitations—hence, the unquestioned pursuit of technology to slow or eliminate the aging process.

For example, in *The Quest for Immortality*, researchers S.

to the autonomously rational decision making process that is understood to be the sine qua non of modern morality.”

In light of the Christian narrative, current attempts to extend life have confused the Tree of Knowledge for the Tree of Life, from which we have been cut off. But life has come to us through another tree—the Cross—through which death has not been eliminated but conquered.

Current attempts to extend life have confused the Tree of Knowledge for the Tree of Life, from which we have been cut off. But life has come to us through another tree—the Cross—through which death has not been eliminated but conquered.

Jay Olshansky and Bruce A. Carnes assert that the quest has moved from folklore to legend to a frenetic scientific search for biochemical keys that will unlock the secrets of aging. They believe that some of these chemical compounds will probably be available during the lifetime of today’s younger generation.

That some researchers are trying to produce a pill that mimics fasting without requiring fasting illustrates how the modern world has disconnected body and soul. The assumption is that a restriction in food intake will reduce one’s quality of life. Thus the body has little formative role in the development of one’s character. The body is merely a myriad of genetic pathways subject to our technological control.

As ethicist Joel James Shuman of King’s College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, rightly notes, contemporary bioethics “has tended to accept uncritically the biomedical view that the body is a largely passive object . . . irrelevant

Indeed, ethicist Oliver O’Donovan of New College in Edinburgh says that Christ’s incarnation, death, resurrection, and exaltation serve to vindicate the created order. This both underscores the goodness of our embodied finitude this side of eternity, as well as provides a picture of our future bodily existence in Christ’s presence. As Brent Waters observes in *The Mortal Flesh: Incarnation and Bioethics*, “It is this eschatological hope that enables Christians to consent to finite limitations, for through the gift of the Spirit, they have received the freedom to obey the constraints of their finitude, because these limitations have already been vindicated, redeemed, and taken up into the eternal life of God.”

In light of this promise, Waters concludes, “Christians should also resist the rhetoric of treating aging as a disease to be prevented, treated, and cured.”

Christians who choose to engage in regular fasting, and thereby increase the chances for an extended life, might, paradoxically, become the kind of people for whom an extended life is no longer a driving concern. We subsume the quest for a longer and healthier life under the greater goal of being formed in Christ’s image.

In another paradox, our spiritual formation is grounded in the Incarnation, which affirms the goodness of embodiment. We work toward the future in which we will behold God in his glory—not as disembodied souls but as living, glorified, embodied beings who continue to image the One who eternally bears the scars by which our salvation has been secured. ☩

Todd T. W. Daly is assistant professor of theology and ethics at Urbana Theological Seminary, Urbana, Illinois.

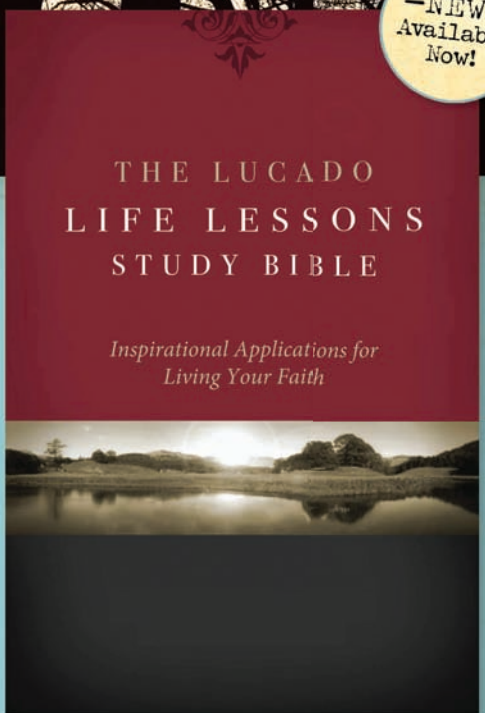
Go to ChristianBibleStudies.com for “Chasing Methuselah,” a Bible study based on this article.





Life Lesson #104:
Today they learned
Family Roots
run deep.

—NEW—
Available
Now!



MAX LUCADO

EXTENDS TO YOU A PERSONAL INVITATION:

Experience the heart of Jesus in your everyday life
with the new *Lucado Life Lessons Study Bible*.

Let the heart of a pastor guide you to the heart of Jesus. Come in. Sit down.
Share a few moments with Jesus. Know His heart. Feel His love. Live your faith.



Companion Bible to Max Lucado's *Outlive Your Life*.
Outlive Your Life DVD-Based Small Group Study &
Participant's Guide also available.

Available wherever books and Bibles are sold.

Also available for your eBook reader.



TRUSTED FOR
ACCURACY, BEAUTY & CLARITY

Look for the HOUSE

WITH EVERY BIBLE FROM THOMAS NELSON,
YOU ARE GUARANTEED A LIFETIME OF QUALITY, A LONG-STANDING
LEGACY OF RELIABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY BIBLE PUBLISHING,
AND HEART-FELT INSPIRATION TO CHANGE THE WORLD.



Quality • Legacy • Heart
THOMAS NELSON
www.ThomasNelsonBibles.com



The Father's Business: Jeff Van Duzer offers a model for what God wants from Christians in the work-a-day world.

DESPITE MANY BOOKS and conferences in the past decade that frame business as a divine calling, churches still wonder how best to support the businesspeople in their midst, many of whom feel demeaned for not doing “real” ministry. Jeff Van Duzer, in *Why Business Matters to God (And What Still Needs to Be Fixed)* (IVP), offers businesspeople guidelines for how to think about their role in God’s plan. *Christianity Today* editor at large Rob Moll spoke with the dean and professor of business law and ethics at Seattle Pacific University about whether the free market system is still the best provider of goods and services, and how churches can help businesspeople face ethically complex choices.

Why does God want people to go into business?

Two answers: to provide goods and services, and to provide meaningful and creative jobs.

Those are two different purpose statements. One has an internal focus, and one, external. Externally, business is the only institution that creates economic value. A university provides intellectual capital

but does not make things. Business takes the ideas and commercializes them. It relies on an array of values from other institutions, but it’s the only one that adds value into the system. Business plays a key role by creating products and services.

But not every product a business could make is equally valid in the eyes of God. So a Christian in business should ask not only what will maximize the bottom line, but also what product or service could be made, given the core competencies under his control and the assets he is managing, that would best serve his community.

The second piece is that God designed humans to work. They are made in his image: God is a worker. And God’s work is creative and meaningful. Business is not the only institution that creates opportunities for work, but it is certainly one of them, and this recent recession would suggest it is a very important one.

What is the purpose of business?

A business should serve—internally, its employees, and externally, its customers. A business exists for certain purposes. One purpose is to provide meaningful work. Another is to provide meaningful goods and services. It does not exist to maximize return on capital investment. There are a variety of things you might include that enable you to achieve those service goals, but you should not do anything that runs

BRIAN SMALE



{ THE CT INTERVIEW }

The Meaning of Business

Christians in the marketplace, says **Jeff Van Duzer**, are not second-class citizens of the kingdom.

Interview by Rob Moll

afoul of limits. A broad understanding of the notion of sustainability might be shorthand for describing limits. As business pursues what I think are its godly purposes, it must do so in a way that does not transgress the “do no harm” standard of sustainability.

The third purpose is partnership. It’s a call for business to recognize its place in a system of institutions that collectively pursue the common good. The common good allows for the flourishing of the community and the individuals who make up that community.

Haven’t we seen a flood of books over the past decade arguing that business is not only a legitimate calling for Christians but even a high calling? Why the need to continue highlighting this theme?

There has been emphasis on the broader understanding of vocation and calling, and a broader concern about a dualistic—Monday through Friday versus Sunday—Christianity. Even in our church, every now and then we will hear that someone is being called to “Christian ministry,” and you know they are not talking about accounting.

Businesspeople often complain that the church subtly communicates that their calling is a necessary evil or at best a second-class vocation. Is this a legitimate complaint? If so, why do churches approach business like this?

Yes, it is [a legitimate complaint]. The entire world is the Lord’s, and all the work we are called to do is ordained by him, in service to his kingdom. There are a lot of people who have done sociological studies and have written about how businesspeople feel demeaned by the church, though I think the church is getting better.

What can churches do to communicate to businesspeople the value of their calling?

Church leaders need to understand and learn about what is involved in the day-to-day lives of parishioners. They need to know how theology applies in the lives of people; if they don’t know their lives, they can’t apply their theology. Hold a conference and invite business leaders to talk about the challenges they are facing. Go to the workplace and ask questions.

Leaders need to be careful with their language. There has been improvement, but there is still a tendency to refer to some things as ministry and others not.

Pastors need a richer understanding of the pluses and minuses of capitalism. They know the minuses, which often enough are true. But it comes across as if businesspeople are dancing with the Devil. Another thing churches can do is celebrate Christians in different professions.

Businesspeople complain about the church's attitude toward business. But don't businesspeople see the church as wishy-washy, touchy-feely, or out of touch with the real world?

Absolutely. I talk about this in the context of the call to partnership. Various institutions tend to see themselves as godlike. They demand loyalty and insist on the extension of their characteristics into other spheres. Government and the church can be disdainful and distrustful of business, and certainly business is disdainful and distrustful of government. We need to see other institutions as common allies in support of a common mission for the good of humanity. We would then say to business [institutions] that they shouldn't apply their metrics, like efficiency, to an artist or a church committee. There are other values embedded in the nature of those institutions that need to be respected.

You say that the free market is in the best position to deliver goods and services. In today's economy, can we be so confident that this is still true?

Don't make my claim stronger than it is. I certainly don't claim

The best way you can unleash creative juices is to help employees understand that their work connects to something bigger, something that has long-term value.

godlike status for markets. In fact, I think the free market is one of the great idols of our age, particularly among Christians in business. The market's claim is to send price signals to allocate resources. That is just one of a number of goods that society should hope to have, and it's a long distance from shalom. Government should play a significant role in creating some protections against bubbles and other things that distort market signals. However, relative to state-directed economies, the free market is more efficient at allocating resources.

Some socialist democracies, like the Scandinavian countries, have managed to produce goods and services as well as further the common good, offering an array of social services like free health care and free education. Isn't this a better economic model for society, given your ideas?

I sometimes get accused of being a socialist. But there is a fundamental difference between the view of business I argue for and a socialist economy. In a socialist system, the government is directing the economy. I'm not talking about that. What I'm saying is that individual Christians should align their vocations toward godly desires.

Every system has a mix of government direction and the free market. There are a number of ways government can help the market run more efficiently. Different cultures draw the line in different places. I'm addressing Christians in their world and in business.

Your vision for Christian business would not be recognizable in many business schools.

There is a significant minority movement in business in which people are saying that business has to be about more than just maximizing the bottom line. You can find it in what's called creative capitalism or conscious capitalism. None of those ideas are precisely what I'm advocating. But they are not so far away that someone would look

at mine and think I was from Mars.

Some argue that your idea—that the purpose of business is to help the common good—is old, and that “maximizing profit” for its own sake is the new idea. Do you think this is true?

Historically, maximizing shareholder value as the purpose of business has not been the prevailing view. The notion of maximizing shareholder wealth dates back to the 1970s. Companies that existed before that had a different initial understanding of what they were about. This is a recent and fairly destructive idea that came about through various and complicated reasons.

Do any companies practice business in the way you advocate?

It's hard to tell. A lot of what I'm talking about is motivational. We have Costco here in Seattle. Its mission statement—“To continually provide our members with quality goods and services at the lowest possible prices”—aligns directly with what I'm saying. As a practical matter, shareholders have done very well. It's possible that the CEO goes home at night, laughs, and says that what he's really about is maximizing returns—but I don't think so.

Would someone following this model be at a competitive disadvantage?

I don't ever want to suggest that doing the right thing will always redound to the bottom line. The phrase “good ethics is good business” is true most of the time. If all ethics made money, we would never teach ethics at business school. Increasingly the value and wealth of a company is tied up in the creativity of employees. Even if the only thing you care about is making money, you want to unleash those creative juices. The best way you can unleash creative juices is to help employees understand that their work connects to something bigger, something that has long-term value. A model that tells you to think about how your company can best serve the community is also the model that's most likely to tap into employees' creativity.

Most Christians are employed by businesses that don't follow your model. What is your word for them?

This is the most important question churches could be talking about today. If we live in a fallen world, how do we live in this messy middle? When is it okay to compromise? When do you pay a living wage and ride the company into bankruptcy because it's the right thing to do, and [say], “If God wants to rescue it, then he will”? Or, when do you say you want to pay a living wage, but you just cannot make it pencil out?

Christians can't accept a position of compromise until it is the very last option. They have to strain for that creative solution that allows them to do it all. Then, when they are absolutely forced to choose the lesser of two evils, they have to acknowledge that nonetheless, they are choosing evil. That should call them to confession, repentance, and a deep longing for the day when we won't be living in this kind of world anymore.

I wish the church would help us think through principles about how to navigate this messy middle. I try to provide a theology that will help businesspeople understand how their activity can fit into the overall scheme of God's kingdom work.



The Word of the LORD stands forever.

1 PETER 1:25

Two conferences hosted by Union University in 2011

READ THE BIBLE FOR

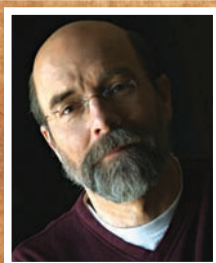
LIFE

Part of the initiative by
George Guthrie to improve biblical literacy
in the culture and the church

April 15-16



David Platt



Michael Card

KJV400

Legacy & Impact

A celebration of the broad cultural impact of
the **King James Version** in honor
of its 400th anniversary

September 15-17



Timothy George



Leland Ryken



John Woodbridge

Sponsored by The R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies
For more information and to register visit www.uu.edu/centers/biblical
or contact Brian Denker 731.661.5579 | bdenker@uu.edu | Jackson, TN

UNION  UNIVERSITY

EXCELLENCE-DRIVEN | CHRIST-CENTERED | PEOPLE-FOCUSED | FUTURE-DIRECTED

Connoisseur for Christ

Roberta Green Ahmanson, alongside husband Howard, has likely contributed funds to, and made possible, projects that you favor. What inspires the art enthusiast to give millions away?

By Christine A. Scheller

Photos by Greg Schneider

IN ITS 2005 LIST of the 25 most influential U.S. evangelicals, *Time* magazine described former religion reporter Roberta Green Ahmanson and husband Howard simply as “The Financiers.” Indeed, that is what they are. But these are no ordinary philanthropists. Roberta, 61, and Howard, 60, are among a rare breed of donor who invests as much intellectual and emotional capital in the projects they support as their Fieldstead and Company philanthropy does vast sums of money. (One source who declined to be identified estimates Fieldstead’s annual giving in the low eight figures based on its projects and staff size.) While Howard’s name is at the fore of their notoriety, as heir to his father’s H. F. Ahmanson & Co. savings and loan fortune, Roberta’s passion and intellect have shaped a good deal of their giving in the quarter century they’ve been married.

Consider Fieldstead’s \$20 million investment into Roberta’s hometown of Perry, Iowa. It was Roberta’s vision that

led to an elaborate restoration of the historic Hotel Pattee and the installation of an iconic downtown gateway by acclaimed sculptor Albert Paley. So too did Roberta’s vision secure Paley gates at the Orange County Rescue Mission’s Village of Hope in Tustin, California—and at the Ahmansons’ meticulously designed beachfront home in Corona del Mar. *Orange County Register* sources valued the

home at \$30–\$35 million last January.

The Ahmansons’ critics focus on their support for conservative causes like Proposition 8 (their donations totaled approximately \$1.4 million in 2007–2008), and for conservative thinkers like the late and much reviled Christian Reconstructionist Rousas John Rushdoony. The secular media especially have made and repeated these criticisms over the past decade.

For example, in a scathing 2004 *Salon* profile of Howard, “Avenging Angel of the Religious Right,” Max Blumenthal took pains to show that the Ahmansons’ ultimate goals are theocratic, a charge that has been widely disseminated. Roberta at once denies and defends the claim: “I never was, and I don’t know if Howard ever was either. I’m afraid to say this, but also, what would be so bad about it?”

Blumenthal wrote, “[Howard’s] money has made possible some of the most pivotal conservative movements in America’s recent history, including the 1994 GOP takeover of the California Assembly, a ban on gay marriage and affirmative action in California, and the mounting nationwide campaign to prove Darwin wrong about evolution. . . . And besides contributing cash to George W. Bush’s 2000 presidential campaign, Ahmanson has played an important role in driving Bush’s domestic agenda by financing the career of Marvin Olasky, a conservative intellectual whose ideas inspired the creation of the new White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.”

Meanwhile, Blumenthal described Roberta as a “warm,



Docent of the House: Roberta and Howard Ahmanson's in-home art collection ranges from old masters to modern experimentalists. What unifies the collection are its rich Christian themes.

refreshingly humorous . . . spokesperson and indefatigable guardian" of her husband. But he failed to either understand or to communicate the depth of her contribution to their work.

Howard, who has Tourette syndrome, rejects Blumenthal's portrayal of his marriage. So do numerous sources who know the Ahmansons well and describe them as equals. "Sometimes [Roberta] has to confront me when I have Tourette-related issues," said Howard, "but she is not really a 'caretaker.'" Roberta added that the *Salon* profile was "full of lies" and won numerous corrections.

Furthermore, critics and supporters alike may be surprised to learn that Ahmanson is not opposed to domestic partnership rights

for homosexuals. She said, "Marriage is something that has had a long definition in history. . . . The thing I'm most concerned about is that religious institutions maintain their freedom of association and their freedom of religious practice. The Catholic Church, for example, should not have to perform same-sex marriages." After Proposition 8 was overturned, she said, "Everyone knew how the judge would rule. It's headed for the Supreme Court. Always was."

In 2005, *The Guardian* ran a sensational article titled, "Anti-Gay Millionaire Bankrolls Caravaggio Spectacular," covering an exhibit sponsored by the Ahmansons at London's National Gallery. The writer repeated many of Blumenthal's charges and likewise failed to

communicate Roberta's primary role in the project, not to mention her deep commitment to the arts.

DISCOVERING REALITY

I became familiar with the Ahmanson name not through *Time* or *Salon* but at St. James Anglican Church in Newport Beach, where the couple was lauded for investing in the church's legal dispute with the Episcopal Church. Howard and Roberta were members for a dozen years before joining Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach, and although Roberta is currently between churches, she describes former St. James rector David Anderson, president and CEO of the American Anglican Council, as her pastor.

Meeting Roberta for the first time last winter, when she was in New York speaking at the International Arts Movement's Encounter conference, I too found her to be a warm and generous conversationalist. Our discussion quickly turned from art and philanthropy, topics she covered in her conference talk, to mutual friends to the bipolar diagnosis that she and a member of my family share.

The interview led to a three-day stay at the Ahmanson guesthouse, where conservative luminaries like Anderson, Olasky, Thomas Oden, and Terry Mattingly had stayed before me. The well-appointed, art-filled home is located around the corner from the main residence and across the street from another that houses their private offices and Roberta's extensive dish collection.

On the weekend of my visit, Howard was driving Roberta's red Range Rover to Hillsdale College in Michigan to collect their son David, who was completing his freshman year after a tutor-led primary education. Roberta stayed behind to host a lecture by Dallas Willard at their home. Afterward, she would meet her family in Michigan to begin a classic cross-country road trip before flying to Rome, where she would speak at a conference on Catholic philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand's philosophy of love. Next, they would return home and host a week-long celebration of the completion of their elaborate three-year home reconstruction, the subject of *The Orange County Register's* interest.

To say Ahmanson's passion for art permeates every space she inhabits is to underestimate her commitment. As we toured the main house, her running commentary on its extensive collection rivaled anything an art historian might offer. Although she was fighting a cold during frenzied preparations, she picked me up in Howard's Toyota sedan to tour the Village of Hope, a traditional housing program whose Paley gates, sculpture, and stained glass showcase her artistic vision.

Ahmanson chairs the board of the five-year-old Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA) in NYC and belongs to the Collectors Committee at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. She began arranging furniture and pictures when she was a young child and fell in love with painting in eighth grade, but love of art is not what drives her. Her life's primary animating force was found in her strict Regular Baptist upbringing: her desire

"to know if there was a God and if it mattered."

She found the answer "painfully" at Calvin College, from which she graduated in 1972 before earning an M.A. in English at the University of Michigan in 1974. "When I was 21, I admitted that there was a God and that I believed Christianity was true, that it was the best description of reality. That's how I think of it, and if there were a better description of reality, I hope, with C. S. Lewis, that I would embrace it. But it keeps proving itself to fit.

"Once you start on that path, you want to understand the world. It connects to my journalism, because what we believe shapes what we do. It shapes the art we create, the buildings we create, the institutions we create, the governments we create. All those things grow out of what we believe to be the nature of reality. So it's the biggest question."

Ahmanson taught (unsuccessfully, she

murdered an associate. The same newspaper that vilified its sponsors published an admiring review that said, "There is a frisson of the transgressive about Caravaggio's art, a morbidity as much spiritual as it is—to modern eyes—sexual and social."

Dawson Carr, the exhibit's curator, researched online about the Ahmansons after they had approached the museum to fund Christian exhibits. The art historian was apprehensive about what he found. "I got all of the ins and outs and ups and downs and vitriol and the like, and I just thought to myself, *Oh my goodness, what is this going to be like?*" He discovered that the couple "may be doctrinally conservative, but in point of fact these are not ignorant, mean-spirited, nasty people the way they're often portrayed."

Carr also says their sponsorship of Christian art is vital and that they never tried

'We are probably the single largest supporter of the intelligent design movement, and have been since the beginning,' said Roberta, who rejects theistic evolution because it 'legitimizes naturalism as the mode of understanding reality.'

says) in Canada before moving to California to pursue journalism. At Calvin, she had become aware of the biblical theme that we become what we worship. "We worship dead things, we become dead. We worship the living God, we become alive," she says. "And one of the attributes of that living God is beauty. Beauty leads us to him. We really cannot live without it."

A mutual friend introduced her to Howard in 1984, when she was working at *The Orange County Register*. They married two years later. Conversations with people who minister to the poor taught her that beauty can inspire the downtrodden to improve their lives. Additionally, she says, "We live in an increasingly visual age, one in which art museums have become the new temples, art an alternative to religion. Art can serve God or be an idol. Given who God made me, it seemed that I had a responsibility to get involved in the work and the larger conversation."

This is not to say that the art she supports is saccharine or safe. Quite the contrary. The Caravaggio exhibit featured work from the 16th-century painter's final years, after he had

to influence the content or presentation of the show. MOBIA director Ena Heller echoes Carr's sentiments. "I have learned, sometimes the hard way, that when it comes to religion, people get very personal, very defensive, and slightly illogical, and I have never seen that with Roberta."

ANCIENT CHRISTIAN VISION

Early in their marriage, the Ahmansons befriended Methodist theologian Tom Oden. Some 20 years ago, as they were sitting on their front porch overlooking the Pacific, Roberta asked Oden a question that would lead to one of their most significant projects: "What do you want to do with the rest of your life?" He was taken aback, but had been thinking for several years about a major scholarly project on the ancient church fathers' Bible commentary. He recalls, "Right quickly I said, 'Well, this is the project that if I really could do it, I would feel I'd been most useful.'"

InterVarsity Press publisher Robert Fryling describes the resulting 29-volume Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series,

co-funded by Fieldstead, as “the most significant publishing project in the history of InterVarsity Press.” He says it has been acclaimed by evangelical, mainline Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic leaders, including two popes. “This extraordinary series would not have been possible without Howard and Roberta.” Meanwhile, the Ahmansons are funding another Oden project, the Center for Early African Christianity, whose mission is “to educate African leadership in the depth of African intellectual literary achievements, especially those from the Christian tradition of the first millennium.”

Roberta’s passion for journalism began when she was in high school and has continued throughout her life. She co-authored *Blind Spot: When Journalists Don’t Get Religion*, and Fieldstead funds two projects that relate to this interest and involve Roberta’s longtime friend Mattingly: the GetReligion blog of the Media Project and the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities’ Washington Journalism Center, which Mattingly directs.

Mattingly, for one, doesn’t think Roberta was fundamentally changed by marrying into great wealth. “The lady still reads like a tornado. She’s obsessed with the same kind of artistic and cultural and political and religious stuff. The same person that I knew as a reporter, chasing people around asking questions about all that, is frankly the same person that I know today.”

When pressed, Ahmanson describes herself as a “Reformed Anglo-Catholic” and a philosophical realist. Two-thirds of the way through 2010, she had already read 74 books in the categories Mattingly mentioned, among them William Dalrymple’s *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey among the Christians of the Middle East*; Willard’s *Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge*; volumes in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series; James Davison Hunter’s *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and*

Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World; several books on the arts; several by Pope Benedict XVI; and the fiction of Frank Tallis, Jaqueline Winspear, and Henning Mankell.

Like Mattingly, Olasky knew Ahmanson before she married Howard. When they met, he was an associate journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin working on

in Villars, Switzerland, and then at their California home. The meetings, Olasky says, also informed his thinking about domestic poverty and led to his influential book *The Tragedy of American Compassion*. Newt Gingrich commended the book in his 1995 inaugural address as Speaker of the House of Representatives, and former President George W. Bush, in the foreword to Olasky’s *Compassionate Conservatism* (2000), described him as “Compassionate Conservatism’s leading thinker.”

As Blumenthal noted, Howard and Roberta also have strong ties to intelligent design, which purports that life on earth is best explained by reference to a creator. “We are probably the single largest supporter of the intelligent design movement, and have been since the beginning,” said Roberta. Her perspective on theistic evolution is unflinching: She rejects it because it “legitimizes naturalism as the mode of understanding reality.” Even so, she is not a seven-day creationist, and Fieldstead funds projects at institutions that promote evolution (see “Where Does Their Money Go?,” page 32).

Ahmanson is equally unflinching in her defense of Rushdoony, controversial in part for his belief that the Levitical laws should be applied in modern society. Roberta claims he wasn’t “the ogre” he was made out to be and explains his theodicy as a response to his family’s flight from the Armenian genocide in Turkey. “His whole life project was to try to figure out what could protect

you. In the end, he came down to the only thing that is solid is God’s law. Well, you say the word *law* in the 20th or 21st century, and people break out in a rash.”

Peb Jackson, the principal of Jackson Consulting Group, has known the Ahmansons throughout their marriage. When I asked him about their connection with Rushdoony, he said he hadn’t thought about it in years, but, upon reflection, said, “I think they were perhaps a little bit zealous in reference to their powerful support for Rushdoony in that



The Art Enthusiast: ‘One of the attributes of the living God is beauty,’ says Ahmanson. ‘Beauty leads us to him. We really cannot live without it.’

an article for *Eternity* magazine. Fieldstead solicited Olasky’s help editing the Turning Point Christian Worldview Series, a 16-book collection that was co-published with Crossway Books. The Ahmansons went on to finance Olasky’s summer writing sabbaticals, international research trips, a James Madison Fellowship at Princeton University, and *World Magazine*, of which Olasky is editor in chief.

The second of the Turning Point books, on international poverty, emerged from a series of meetings that Fieldstead sponsored

When pressed, Ahmanson describes herself as a 'Reformed Anglo-Catholic' and a philosophical realist. Two-thirds of the way through 2010, she had read 74 books.

effort. It's really a reflection of the passion that they bring to wanting to focus on the forces in culture and society and faith, and wanting to use their God-given resources to influence those forces."

When asked if it bothers her that their philanthropy is often overshadowed by criticism of their activism, Ahmanson said, "It used to bother me. My husband, for one thing, became a Democrat [in 2009], and he's much more complicated than this kind of cardboard figure that they try to create. Even *The Guardian* must have figured it out, because they didn't do any scare kind of stories about 'The Sacred Made Real' exhibit we sponsored at the same museum [in 2010]. They just left it alone, and the show got nothing but rave reviews, including one in *The Guardian*."

Fred Smith, founder of the Christian philanthropy group The Gathering, says the Ahmansons are generally ten years ahead of their peers in Christian philanthropy. He mentions their foundational support of the pro-life movement in the 1980s, as well as their art patronage and interest in the early church. Smith thinks people don't realize how much



No 'Caretaker': Roberta and Howard share a favorite pastime in their second-floor breakfast nook, which Roberta calls her 'sanctuary.'

Roberta has changed. When he first met her, he says, "She would get angry and just kind of stomp out of the room figuratively and say, 'You guys are never going to get it.' I think

over the years, she's learned to temper that a great deal."

Smith attributes some of Roberta's early frustration to the transition from religion reporter to wealthy patron. "In some ways, she responded by saying, 'Now I have a bully pulpit,' and then went through some of the painful experiences of finding out that you can burn some bridges with this new bully pulpit until you get comfortable with it." He adds, "I think everybody assumes that wealth brings perfection and omniscience. Sometimes the wealthy foster that myth as much as anybody. She's had to grow up and stumbled around some in that, but I think she's growing up. She's not against things as much as she's now for things. I think that's made a big difference."

Roberta Ahmanson is a force of nature. She brings intelligence, passion, conviction, and energy to the projects she pursues, and yet, she is defined even here in terms of Howard; with characteristic mirth, she declares she is amused by this fact. "Well, I am his wife and it's a very important part of my life," she offers. But she is so much more. 

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

Where Does Their Money Go?

Roberta Ahmanson identified her and her husband's most significant beneficiaries:

- The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
- The Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture
- The Center for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia
- Orange County Rescue Mission's Village of Hope
- Perry, Iowa (Roberta's hometown)
- The Museum of Biblical Art
- Faculty development grants at Biola University
- The Center for Early African Christianity at Eastern University
- The Pacific Symphony's Class Act Program
- The National Endowment for the Arts intern sponsorship in the chairman's office
- The Dietrich von Hildebrand Legacy Project
- The Christian Community Development Association
- Food for the Hungry

Recent 990 tax forms for the Ahmanson Charitable Community Trust and Fieldstead and Company include donations to:

- Pepperdine University
- Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation
- International Arts Movement
- Association for Community Education
- Breast Cancer Awareness Foundation
- World Food Prize Foundation
- Heartland Film Festival
- MAP International
- Trinity Christian Community (New Orleans)
- The Media Project

everything **NOW**



It's a wireless, warp-speed, wonderful world.

And the faster it changes, the more you
need Christianbook.com. It's not just the
greatest selection of Bibles, books, and
gifts in the metaverse. It's downloadable
Christian music. It's e-books you can trust.
It's everything Christian. For less.

everything **CHRISTIAN**



{ THEOLOGY }

How



to Teach Sex

Seven realities that Christians in every congregation need to know.
By Stanton L. Jones

Last year, a National Association of Evangelicals Generation Forum held at Wheaton College addressed the goal of reducing the abortion rate both inside and outside the church as it also released its helpful study document Theology of Sex. Wheaton College provost Stanton L. Jones spoke about how churches could deepen and refocus their message about sexuality. The following is a portion of his address.

HERE HAVE BEEN over 45 million legal abortions in the U.S. since elective abortion was legalized in 1973. This loss of human life is roughly equivalent to the numbers exterminated in the Soviet gulags during the Stalinist repressions or the Communist purges in China under Mao—statistics I have used in other contexts to epitomize the depths of human depravity.

What can Christians really do to help reduce abortion? The church's response must be multifaceted:

- We must educate and shape our young people, indeed all of our people in a deeper and truer understanding of sex. Evangelical Christians need to learn to celebrate and embrace their sexuality and to live out their sexuality in holiness, and thus to have no occasion for abortion.
- We must shape the consciences of our congregants and of our communities, especially on the value of human life.
- We must create communities that support sexual restraint and responsibility for the unmarried adults in our midst who often are lost in a “meat-market” culture.
- We must empower church members to be articulate citizens who understand the moral bedrock on which civic law and liberty is ultimately grounded, articulate citizens who exercise their democratic rights to shape the law of the land.
- We need to support those who articulate a thoughtful and effective prophetic witness against killing unwanted human beings.
- We need to extend works of compassion toward children in need of foster care and adoption so that there are viable alternatives for a good life for children spared from abortion.
- We must work to create ways for people to escape poverty and the sense of hopelessness and despair that is too common for many in our culture and from which decisions to perform abortions too often issue.
- We need to contribute mightily to the strengthening of marriage, and strengthen also the support our church communities give to single-parent and broken families in a time when the bulk of abortions are performed not on pregnant teens but on unmarried adult women, many of whom already have one or more children.
- And we must pray without ceasing.

This is a daunting to-do list. I will focus on the first of these calls to action, because a positive, profoundly biblical understanding of sexuality is desperately needed in evangelical churches today.

For a community that prides itself on being “biblical,” it is shocking how out of focus our views of sexuality can be. A biblical view of sexuality is a profoundly positive, profoundly appealing, and profoundly life-affirming foundation from which to address the abortion problem. Evangelicals are fundamentally not anti-abortion—at the most basic level, we are defined by what we are for rather than what we are against. We are fundamentally life-affirming and sexuality-affirming because we celebrate the truths that are ours in Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, we start the formation of our young people’s understandings of sexuality tardily, anemically, ambiguously, and ineffectively. We are stuck in avoidant, negative, sub-biblical paradigms for thinking about sexuality. Our pastors avoid the topic except for the safest messages, which too often are shame-oriented, “just say no” litanies. We engage easily in negative culture-war rhetoric. Sadly, too many evangelical leaders fail to live up to the standards they proclaim and become very public examples of hypocrisy. Competing views about sexuality take advantage of these failures and seduce our youth.

There are two main competing views of sexuality in today’s broader culture. First, there is evolutionary naturalism. This materialistic worldview reduces reality to the physical cosmos. In this view, sex is ultimately meaningless. An evolutionary psychology slogan says, “A hen is just an egg’s way to make another egg.” Sex is merely the mechanism by which genes replicate themselves.

Evolutionary naturalism is a bleak and cold view, so it is little wonder that another view has growing appeal. I call it “postmodern identity formation.” Thinkers like Nietzsche and Foucault posited that persons establish their true personhood by rejecting society’s norms, particularly in the area of sexual morality. Nietzsche promised that “Nature” will “surrender her secrets” when we succeed in “victoriously opposing her by means of the Unnatural.” Foucault commended an “ethos of transgression.” Thus sexuality moves to become the foundation of personal identity.

It is part of the general human condition to long to be our own gods and to construct our own realities. D. H. Lawrence wrote, “[Men] live in glad obedience to the masters they believe in, or they live in a frictional opposition to the master they wish to undermine. In America this frictional opposition has been the vital factor.”

This is Romans 1 lived out as perhaps never before. We rebel now not only against cultural and moral constraints, but also against our most basic biological and physical realities such as what our bodily organs are meant for and even our own fundamental sex as male or female. We rebel also by replacing God and his call on our lives with our sexual behavior, preference, and identity.

Theologian David Bentley Hart accurately characterized modernity’s ideal of personal autonomy this way: “We are, first and foremost, heroic and insatiable consumers, and we must not allow the specters of transcendent law or personal guilt render us indecisive. For us, it is choice itself, and not what we choose, that is the first good.”

A powerful contemporary model of postmodern identity formation comes from my professional organization. A recent American Psychological Association taskforce rightly notes that some religions (including Christianity) lift up a vision that identity is properly found in striving to bring my life into congruence with a transcendent ideal,

something above and beyond myself. In contrast, the “affirmative and multicultural models of LGBT psychology” they espouse are about living in congruence with what we are as we experience ourselves now. They rightly portray a fundamental decision point: Are we to seek conformity with ourselves, or with some ideal outside ourselves?

In the face of these views, what biblical, positive, truthful vision of sexuality is the church to teach? The key elements are that we are embodied, gendered and sexual, relational, made in the image of God, fallen and conflicted, blessed with an objective meaning of sexual intercourse, and souls under construction.

1. We are embodied.

“Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Gen. 2:7).

To be human is to be a physical, biological creature. Christians view all of physical existence, from the grandeur of the cosmos to the particularity of the human body, as the good creation of a benevolent God. Physical existence is not divine, but it is good.

The goodness of embodiment is also grounded in the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Resurrection. If God can become fully human, bodily existence must not be intrinsically evil or incompatible with the perfect good. Similarly, we also can appreciate our embodiment because the final state of redeemed humanity will be enjoyed in resurrected, perfected bodies. We are more than bodies, but we are bodies.

Throughout history, Christian theology has tilted dangerously away from this truth. In ancient times, Christian theology was shaped by Platonic or Stoic philosophy or even Gnostic understandings that denigrated the body. During the Enlightenment, many exalted human reason, which distanced human experience from its grounding in “lower” faculties. Current reactions against Darwinistic understandings of human nature may feed the same dynamic. Instead, we must affirm that to be fully human is necessarily to be embodied, but also to affirm that we are never merely physical. We are bodies, though we are more than bodies.



ISTOCK

How does our embodiment address abortion? Many have puzzled at the downturn of teenage abortion over the past decade. Some speculate that nothing has influenced this more than the proliferation of ultrasound technology, which makes it possible to view the living, moving fetus inside a mother's womb. This growing knowledge about the previously secret life of a very young baby provokes a primal recognition of our shared humanity with the fetus. Knowing that we are fundamentally and irrevocably bodies supports our understanding of very young humans as our brothers and sisters.

2. We are sexual beings.

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). We are not merely generic physical beings but gendered and sexual beings. Some other creation stories in the ancient world viewed sexual differentiation as a mistake. Women were often portrayed as defective forms of men. In contrast, Genesis declares God's creation of gendered people to be the divine purpose, with both sexes made in the "image of God" and humanity corporately, male and female, declared to be "very good." In the ancient world, this was a radical view.

How does this relate to abortion? Scripture views the prospect

of bearing children as fundamental to our gendered natures, and a blessing. Sex is fundamentally intertwined with childbearing. The enormous wedge driven between sex and childbearing in our contraceptive and "sex for recreation" culture has profoundly distorted our view of sexuality.

Scripture also extols the physical pleasures of sexual union (Prov. 5) and links eroticism explicitly with romantic love and intimacy (Song of Songs). The apostle Paul sternly admonishes married couples to fulfill each other's sexual needs, and in a remarkably egalitarian fashion (1 Cor. 7:1–6).

But we must exercise caution here. The concrete implications of sex—procreation, physical pleasure and eroticism, sexual need—are all tied to the physical union intended by God for married persons, yet single persons are no less fully sexual than the married. The Lord Jesus himself is an example of a fully sexual existence as a Hebrew man, but without sexual union in marriage. Scripture gives us little guidance for understanding Jesus' experience of his sexuality, but the biblical teachings that "he was made like his brothers in every way," that he "suffered when he was tempted," and indeed that he was "tempted in every way" suggest that Jesus fully entered into his sexuality as a single man, "yet was without sin" (Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15).

Our sexuality is expressed in but not reduced to the sexual experiences of marriage. All persons are fully sexual as gendered beings with uniquely male or female bodies, beings with sensations, desires, and gender-grounded emotional and cognitive capacities. Gender is only one facet of sexuality, and gender itself is a construct with many biological, psychological, emotional, and relational dimensions.

3. We are relational.

Genesis teaches us to think of human nature as fundamentally relational. The Creator judges the first man incomplete, even though he lives in a perfect environment with perfect work and in a perfect relationship with the triune (and hence intrinsically relational) God. "It is not good for the man to be alone," God says (Gen. 2:18), and God then creates for him the perfect partner. The man recognizes how the woman so aptly complements him, and God declares that because of this reality, "a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Romantic love, then, becomes an important way that we experience this relational reality.

We experience it also in parenting, in friendships, and in other relationships. Relationality is partly grounded in our sexuality. To be sexual is to be incomplete in ourselves, and this incompleteness drives us to relationships. After the Fall, our common human experience is that all relationships, with God and with each other, are fractured. If the primal human sin is prideful assertion of self-sufficiency against God, our sexuality bears witness against our delusions, as our biology cries out that we are not self-sufficient, that we cannot escape the need for a relationship with "the other." Single or married, we know that we are made for relationship.

4. We are made in God's image.

Catherine Beckerleg, a Wheaton College Old Testament colleague, notes that God created the creatures of the sea and the birds of the air according to *their* kinds, and the wild animals and the livestock



according to *their* kinds. But God did not create the first humans according to their own kind but according to *God's* kind—in the likeness and image of God (Gen. 1:21, 24, 26).

The cultures around ancient Israel used creation narratives to establish the descent of the king from tribal deities. The point was exclusion: the king was part of the divine family, and his subjects were not. What an inversion we have in Genesis! It establishes the royal and divine lineage of all humanity. We are royalty! We are all the children of God. To be made in God's image also means that we are moral, rational, relational, and capable of exercising dominion. And if all humans are made in God's image, so are our unborn children.

Sexuality seems explicitly connected to working and living out the image of God. Nowhere is this reflected more clearly than in Genesis 5:1–3, where the declaration—again, remarkably inclusive of both sexes and the entire human race—that “when God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them ‘mankind’ when they were created,” and this is followed immediately by the report that Adam “had a son in his own likeness, in his own image.” The way Genesis 5 mirrors the language of Genesis 1:26 is stunning. The conception and birth of a son to our primal parents parallels the way God fathered the first humans. God's image cannot be reduced to simple procreation, but the act of human procreation is somehow part of what it means to be in the image and likeness of God.

5. We are broken and twisted.

Up to this point, it has all been good. The basic, foundational truths about our sexuality are positive. But that's not the full picture. Humanity is broken and in rebellion against God. This has not eradicated the primal good of human nature, but it conditions all of human experience.

We usually think of sins as willful acts of disobedience, but sin also shows itself in the way every aspect of our being is tinged with ruin, decay, and bondage. Our freedom is bounded by our own “addiction” to things that are less than the fullness and goodness God desires for us. This bondage points not only to our rebellion against God but also to an evil force outside ourselves.

Our sexual longings are grounded in our good capacities for union, love, and pleasure, but are always tainted with selfishness, sensuality (physical appetites disconnected from their transcendent purposes), and the desire to dominate.

This is why we experience a deep sense of conflict in our sexuality. We know the beauty, potential, and realized good of our sexual natures, but we never experience that good distilled and pure. Contrary to sexuality theorists who take what *is* for what *should be*, our brokenness warns us that we can only learn so much about true human nature from observing our sexuality.

6. We encounter objective reality when we have sex.

Contemporary Westerners believe that sexual intercourse *acquires* meaning from what we bring to it. Sex may be an act of love and devotion or of mere physical release or even a purely commercial transaction, depending on the intent of those who engage in it. Sex means, we think, whatever *I* want it to mean.

Ethicist Philip Turner correctly argues that if we believe sexual intercourse has no objective meaning, then we have erased its moral significance. It has become only one among many ways to achieve desired ends. In this scheme, the act itself loses all moral value; only the ends can be judged. Standing in the apostolic tradition, Turner argues instead that sexual intercourse creates a one-flesh union. The creation account, Christ's teaching on divorce, and such pivotal passages as 1 Corinthians 6 and 7 teach us that God made sexual intercourse to create and sustain a permanent, one-flesh union in a male-female married couple.

The fact that intercourse creates a one-flesh union profoundly challenges our individualism. This is not, though, the only such challenge. We learn from the apostle Paul that the marriage union testifies to something bigger than itself (Eph. 5:32): All Christians participate in a mystical body, which is truly the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12), and the consummation of history is not the redemption of a gaggle of individuals but a marriage between the Bridegroom Lamb and his (collective singular) Bride. This reveals a collective identity that none of us properly comprehend. There is more to sex than meets the eye.

7. We are souls under construction.

Who are we, really? To answer that, we need to ask whether the true self is a given that we discover or something that we progressively form. The two great competitors vying for our allegiance in sexuality—evolutionary naturalism and postmodern identity formation—have their answers.

Naturalism is *all discovery*—we are merely what we are—and what we discover is that we aren't much and that we don't matter much. No wonder so many struggle with despair.

Postmodern identity formation is *all progressive formation*—our selves are what we make them through the raw assertion of unbounded human will. Many believe our sexuality, in the words of Turner, “in some way defines the inner depths of the self” and is thus fundamental to the very “powers and abilities [which] the self is to discover, develop, and exercise in the course of daily life.” It then follows that “denial of one's ‘sexuality’ is akin to denial of ‘oneself’ and so also one's basic ‘identity.’”

The Christian vision of personhood takes us in a profoundly different direction: the true self is both discovered and formed.

Understanding our selves begins with the given realities of our lives, by meanings revealed by God and worked out in real community. Further, our selves are grounded in visions of objective realities beyond our selves, visions of virtue and goodness beyond our current abilities. Here is where our formation comes in: in light of what we discover about our selves, we make choices that form us. Our sexuality has meanings and implications that exist independently of what we might think we mean by such acts. We form our selves, our core identities, as we respond to these objective realities and pursue (or fail to pursue) the virtues entailed. Obedience and disobedience mark us and make us.

There is a given nature to the self. Part of what it means to be a self is to discover who we are. Part of this objective reality is our sexuality, one of God's greatest gifts. Proper self formation occurs when our self is submitted to God, who transforms us as we obey

his revealed will and we abide in a relationship with a Savior who indwells and molds us. A self that is only discovered is an undeveloped, impoverished self. A self formed autonomously, apart from God, is likewise undeveloped and impoverished, especially when our broken sexuality is elevated to the core of identity. A self that is discovered and then formed in the joyful, painful, humbling, and intimate process of celebrating the gift of sexuality God has given, dying to one's sin nature, and living in costly obedience to God will be the truest and most real self.

D. H. LAWRENCE accurately prescribed the cure for our disorder: "Men are free when they are obeying some deep, inward voice of religious belief. Obeying from within. Men are free when they belong to a living, organic, believing community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose. . . . Liberty in America has meant so far the breaking away from all dominion. The true liberty will only begin when Americans discover . . . the deepest whole self of man."

Lawrence was dead right in this. Ethicist Gilbert Meilaender adds, "To be human . . . is to learn to live and love within limits—the limits of our embodied, mortal life, the limits of those whose being opens to God. It is to acknowledge, honor, and esteem the particular place—between the beasts and God—that we occupy in the creation."

The Christian church has rightly taught that sexuality is crucial to understanding personhood, and sexual ethics to the formation of the person. We have rightly defended all human life as precious and created in the image of God. We face a daunting challenge in trying to effectively carry our testimony to a secular culture in which people are addicted to thinking of themselves as autonomous beings who can create themselves in their own image. We face a daunting challenge in trying to witness for life in a culture that seems intent on embracing death. We need to seek to deliver faithfully to others that which has been delivered to us: the true revelation of the living God. It is ultimately only in this living Word that we understand human brokenness and its cure.

Stanton L. Jones is provost and professor of psychology at Wheaton College. With his wife, Brenna, he has written four books in NavPress's sex-education series for Christian families, God's Design for Sex.



BUILDING YOUR CHURCH... LEADER BY LEADER

The new and improved **BuildingChurchLeaders.com** provides the tools to grow your people and develop equipped, effective, and energized church leaders.

BuildingChurchLeaders.com's online community provides all the church leader training and support you'll need.



BUILDINGCHURCHLEADERS

To build your church leader by leader, explore the new and improved **BUILDINGCHURCHLEADERS.COM** and take your ministry to the next level.

Shop Wisely. Pay Purposefully.



The Cards that Give to Missions!



Low Rate • No Annual Fee • Gives to Missions • Earns Rewards

Christian Community Credit Union's Platinum Rewards Credit Cards have a mission of their own. Every time you use them for a purchase, you generate a donation to missions & ministries. **To date, Christian Community Credit Union has given over \$2.8 million to international and local missions and ministry projects.** Plus, you earn reward points good for airfare, name-brand merchandise and more.



**Help change lives.
Apply for your card today!**

800.347.CCCU ext. 4275 • myCCCUCards.com/cards
Your Money at Work Building God's Kingdom



Changing Forever How You Think

Recovering the lost art of Scripture memorization. By John Wilson

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME you memorized passages from Scripture? It might have been when you were in eighth grade, preparing for confirmation. Or maybe earlier still, in Sunday school, when you learned the 23rd Psalm. Can't remember when it was? Never mind. It will probably come to you.

Within living memory, as the saying goes, evangelicals unselfconsciously learned Scripture by heart. The value of this practice was taken for granted. Certainly there was a wide range, from back-row pew-sitters who could call on a few salient passages, to silver-tongued preachers who could cite Leviticus and Luke with equal authority. But if, for instance, as a child in the 1950s, you regularly attended Wednesday evening prayer meetings, where the voices of laypeople predominated, you heard Scripture quoted (and misquoted) from memory. And if you listened in, during the Sunday meal after church, when grown-ups who took their faith seriously were discussing—maybe arguing about—theological nuances, perhaps inspired by the morning sermon, you heard Scripture quoted from memory.

What was common 50 years ago has not entirely disappeared, but neither is it common anymore. In part, this change reflects attitudes in the larger culture. We live in a time when memorization is routinely scorned, an attitude summed up in the ubiquitous phrases “rote memory” and “rote learning.” Memorizing, we are told, discourages creativity, critical thinking, and conceptual understanding.

This scorn is odd. It doesn't seem to jibe with our everyday experience. After all, training to be a doctor or a lawyer entails memorization—a lot of it. We don't foolishly assume that the creativity of actors or musicians is crushed by the formidable feats of memory

their art demands. And why is Peyton Manning such a dazzlingly good quarterback? In part because he spends countless hours in the film room, studying defenses, looking for patterns to memorize, so that—in the midst of the action, with a 290-pound lineman who runs like a cheetah and hits like a sledgehammer bearing down on him—he will make the optimal decision in a split second.

What Manning does when he studies game film, what Helen Mirren does when she learns the lines for her next role, is a special case of what we all do from the time we are born, an ongoing enterprise of memorizing and forgetting, largely conducted without conscious intent or awareness. “Whenever you read a book or have a conversation,” the prize-winning science writer George Johnson reminds us—and, we might add, whenever you cross the road, change a diaper, or make love—“the experience causes physical changes in your brain. In a matter of seconds, new circuits are formed, memories that can change forever the way you think about the world.”

The impact of most of what we memorize is not so dramatic as to change forever the way we think about the world. But it is real, and its consequences accumulate over time. Hence the choices we make about what to put in our mind are of lasting importance. “Memorization of Scripture,” Dallas Willard writes, “is one way of ‘taking charge’ of the contents of our conscious thoughts, and of the feelings, beliefs, and actions that depend on them.”

SPIRITUAL TOUGHNESS

A few months ago, a strange little book arrived on my desk: *Scripture by Heart: Devotional Practices for Memorizing God's Word*. I wasn't familiar with the author, Joshua Choonmin Kang, who was described as a pastor and speaker in Los Angeles, the author of more than 30

books in Korean and one previous book in English. This new book, the author said, was first written and published in Korean, after which “I had it rendered into readable English.” Hmm.

At first glance, the book didn’t look like my cup of tea. It was loaded with tidbits of quotation: “Calvin Coolidge put it this way: ‘We cannot do everything at once, but we can do something at once’ (as quoted in *Wisdom for the Soul* by Larry Chang).” I was about to add the book to the giveaway pile, but something kept me reading. Maybe it was Kang’s willingness to champion the unfashionable cause of memorizing Scripture. As I read on, I became deeply absorbed. Never mind the stylistic distractions: This is a wise book, practical, winsome, and above all communicating a vibrant love for God and his Word. I could understand why Willard contributed a foreword.

There was something else, too, what for want of a better phrase I will call a “spiritual toughness.” Kang’s book challenged me. When I picked it up, I was already well persuaded of the value of memorizing Scripture. Hadn’t I learned great swatches of it when I was growing up? But Kang’s

We live in a time when memorization is routinely scorned. Yet this dismissal doesn’t seem to jibe with our everyday experience.

insistence on a daily discipline—no more than 30 minutes and no less than 15 minutes a day, he says, with his characteristic firmness—jolted me. He was talking about a constantly renewed intimacy, a loving rehearsal and renewed exploration of the verses learned “by heart.” And as I began to re-read the book and apply it, I made a distressing discovery. All those passages I had learned long ago? With some exceptions, they were not sufficiently fresh in my mind to recite inwardly.

But does that matter? If you have absorbed the sense of a passage, does it matter whether you know it word for word? And for most of us (myself included), the words, after all, are in translation—nowadays, in a bewildering range of versions. In conversations over the months since I first read Kang’s book, I have recommended it to many friends and acquaintances. Most of them, while listening politely, have not been interested enough to investigate the book for themselves. Several who are either Catholics or were raised Catholic referred to the dreary catechetical experience of their youth. Others have mentioned how they have been blessed by having the Bible instantly accessible and searchable on their hand-held digital devices, the implication being that memorizing Scripture is a waste of time and effort—and perhaps that it is really self-focused, a feat to perform, a substitute for living out what Jesus calls us to do.

Of course it *could* be distorted in that way, just as prayer can easily be distorted. But the fashion among evangelicals to deprecate Scripture memorization—or, more commonly, to ignore it—is itself based on caricature. Kang observes that Jesus was “the beneficiary of habit. He read Scripture in the synagogue (Luke 4:16); prayed early in the morning (Mark 1:35); prayed on high places (Luke 22:39);” and, as a teacher, expounded the Word he knew by heart. “When we commit ourselves to memorizing Scripture,” Kang writes, “we follow in Jesus’ footsteps. We cultivate his lifestyle. We gather our wits and concentrate.”

Again and again, Kang emphasizes that memorizing

Scripture is not an end in itself. “When we meditate deeply on the words of Scripture,” he writes, “we begin to bear fruit,” directed by the Spirit. “The more we commit the Word to memory, the richer our being becomes. The melodious concert of his Word will continually echo within us. Then we’ll encounter the conductor, our Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit, who helps us remember the Scriptures, and the Father, who’ll receive glory through all of this.”

Sometimes I walk downstairs into the basement, hunting for a misplaced book. While I’m there, I come across two or three books I wasn’t even looking for, books that seem to have come magically to hand for this or that project-in-progress.

So too in the chambers of memory. While thinking about Scripture memorization and rummaging around for specific recollections, I have come across many more that I didn’t know I was looking for. Many have been in the form of voices I heard decades ago (by no means all of them identifiable), quoting Scripture: some resonant, some frail, some unctuous, some down-to-earth.

And among them is the voice of my mother, who celebrated her 88th birthday in December. The daughter of missionaries, she grew up at a time when the discipline of Scripture memorization was honored. And she was endowed with an exceptionally good power of memory, so that the practice came easier for

her than for many others. For her, it was (as Kang suggests) first and foremost a discipline of meditation on God’s word. But when she did quote aloud from the Bible, it was always with a sense of dear familiarity.

Today, she can’t quote even a single verse aloud. Completing a sentence of any kind is difficult for her—often she’ll launch into one, get several words out, and come to a halt, unable to continue. Memorizing Scripture isn’t a magical practice that allows us to escape the burdens of our earthly life. Perhaps, in a way that isn’t perceptible to us from the outside, words from the Word continue to guide and comfort my mom in some inner speech. And maybe not. But we are confident in the promises that Willard recalls:

Through memorization God’s words reside in our body, in our social environment, in the constant orientation of our will and in the depths of our soul. They become a power, a substance, that sustains and directs us without our even thinking of them, and they emerge into conscious thought and action as needed. This is what Jesus spoke of as *abiding, dwelling in him*.

Whether or not my mother remembers anything more than scraps of the Word, the Word remembers her, and she abides in him, at his gracious invitation.

Memorizing Scripture can be reduced to technique, competition, repetition without understanding, and other departures from what God wishes for us. But it can also lead us into participation in the “melodious concert” Kang evokes, just as in celebrating the Eucharist we participate in the great feast set before the foundations of time. I am thankful to Pastor Joshua Choonmin Kang for his forceful and timely guide to intimacy with God’s Word. “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” ☩

John Wilson is editor of *Books @ Culture*.





NOT EVERYONE
WHO STEERS THE SHIP
WORKS ON THE BRIDGE.



As a Chaplain in America's Navy, you'll find limitless ways to employ your faith as you help guide the thousands of dedicated men and women who serve our nation. Think of it as a once-in-a-lifetime chance to be true to your God, your nation and your beliefs. To learn more about full-time or part-time opportunities, call 1-800-USA-NAVY or visit navy.com.

AMERICA'S
NAVY

A GLOBAL FORCE FOR GOOD.™

The Enduring

Believers in every age
worry about the collapse
of the faith.

By Jennifer Powell McNutt

IF I WERE TO WRITE about the burdens of the preacher as I have experienced them and as I know them," declared Martin Luther, "I would scare everybody off."

A glance at 21st-century headlines about religion and the church would not have made Luther feel any better than he did in the 16th. We live in a context of ominous bulletins

about the value and place of religion in society. Many people still believe in the classic secularization theory, that modernity inevitably entails the steady decline of religion.

With magazines like *Newsweek* announcing "The End of Christian America," it is easy to give in to fear and the perception of decline. Not only can worries like that become self-fulfilling, more often than not, they also blind one to the enduring nature of the visible church in our world.

It would be hard to find a century when the church and clergy have not faced challenges in ministry and concerns about decline. Just counting the number of historical studies detailing the "crisis"

and "anxiety" of ages past suggests these labels are too worn-out to be descriptive anymore.

Consider the decline that challenged Christianity during the last phase of imperial persecution in the early 4th century, when Christians lapsed or were martyred and churches and Christian books destroyed. The faith ultimately spread and flourished in response. But though imperial persecution ceased with the Edict of Milan in 313, unity was elusive. The church was coming to grips with an ecclesiology of wheat and tares in a fallen world. Some, like Augustine of Hippo, welcomed lapsed Christians back into the church, while the Donatists rejected them.

The church also has dealt with its share of moral decline. The medieval church confronted financial corruption and clerical immorality. Reform efforts starting in the 10th century at the Benedictine abbey in Cluny, France, flourished but eventually led to the same patterns of corruption. Subsequent centuries saw further attempts under the Cistercians and other religious orders. In time, however, the Observant Movement sought to call back even the mendicants to their original rule, regarding themselves, as Reformation historian Heiko Oberman put it, "as the green branches on the languishing tree of the Church."

The pope did not escape condemnation either. "Here reign the

MARK KATZMAN / GETTY IMAGES

Church



successors of the poor fishermen of Galilee; they have strangely forgotten their origin,” observed Francis Petrarch while the papacy was in residence at Avignon. “Instead of holy solitude we find a criminal host and crowds of the most infamous satellites; instead of soberness, licentious banquets; instead of pious pilgrimages, preternatural and foul sloth; instead of the bare feet of the apostles, the snowy coursers of brigands fly past us, the horses decked in gold and fed on gold, soon to be shod with gold, if the Lord does not check this slavish luxury.”

Schism erupted on the heels of the Avignon papacy, when three popes attempted to rule at the same time.

One papal official responded, “Today there is a disappearance, nay, a complete abandonment, of good moral practices, for simony, avarice, the sale of benefices, tyranny, and cruelty hold sway, approved as it were by wont amongst the ecclesiastics.”

Even eras of reform and revival, such as the movement in 16th-century Geneva, saw periods of great turmoil. Though John Calvin found himself welcome when he returned to Geneva in 1541 after a three-year exile, he still faced substantial opposition from congregants. In July 1549, Calvin’s preaching caused a public riot, which historian William Naphy attributes to the spread of xenophobia within Geneva in response to the influx of French refugees. This was not a first-time experience for Calvin. In March 1546, protests interrupted his sermon when he critiqued a group of congregants who had danced at a wedding and lied to the authorities about it. For years, scholars questioned the success of the German Reformation based on similar evidence that parishioners were unable—even unwilling—to live up to the Reformers’ ideals.

Many regard Jonathan Edwards as America’s foremost theologian. But as biographer George Marsden observes, Edwards’s opponents called him a “tyrant” and ousted him from his Massachusetts church in 1750. Edwards had gained international recognition for his role in the spiritual awakening that began in 1734, but tension simmered over questions of inadequate salary, clashing personalities, and theology. Edwards’s insistence on greater restrictions over baptism and alterations of church polity strained relationships even more.

COLORING IN THE PICTURE

If greats like Calvin and Edwards can be expelled from their congregations, maybe religious success does not always look the way we expect it to.

The language of decline has served many purposes. Scholars like Margot Todd have shown the complexity of measuring and analyzing the nature of clergy complaints. In the Church of Scotland of the early modern period, Todd wrote, “complaint was a usual route to improvement.”

E. Brooks Holifield’s study of the history of Christian clergy

in America persuasively challenges the decline narrative by revealing “the tendency of priests and ministers in almost every period of American history to view their office as a calling in crisis.” He offers 400 years of examples of “clerical worries about ineffectiveness, vocational weakness, declining cultural status, powerlessness, and failings of one kind or another.” With that in mind, Holifield concludes that “from the vantage of the gospel, success can be failure and failure can be success.”

My own work on the 18th-century Genevan clergy has also highlighted the complex ups and downs of church life. Concerns over clergy salaries, for example, are perennial and do not necessarily reveal a decline in clerical status, as some have argued. Calvin advocated higher salaries before Geneva’s government on behalf of the underpaid 16th-century clergy. Later, Jacob Vernet argued on behalf of Geneva’s underpaid 18th-century clergy. Likewise, Enlightenment figures like Voltaire described theological divergence in the church, but critical study shows that 18th-century theology and worship life was far more orthodox than they acknowledged.

Pastors in Geneva did push the bounds of convention now and then. Esaïe Gasc, for instance, received a reprimand in 1773 after addressing the crowd at a public festival while wearing a dragon costume. And Pierre Clement renounced his position to write comedies for the Parisian theater. More often, though, one finds pastors like Jean-François Martin, who served faithfully for 32 years until passing away in the pulpit during worship.

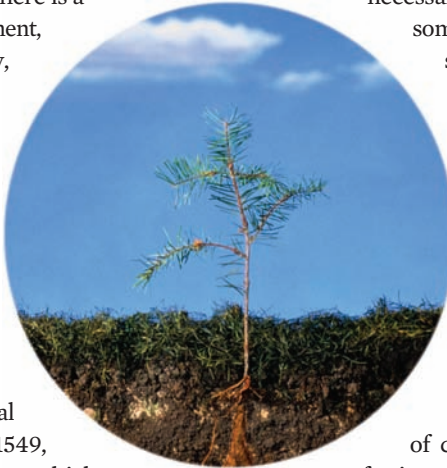
There is no simple picture of steady and inevitable decline. Rather than allowing only negative examples to paint a monochromatic picture of Christianity, we should equally consider evidence of positive service and growth. Milestone years like 2009—the 500th anniversary of Calvin’s birth—seem to bring a sense of vitality even beyond the walls of the church. That year, *Time* magazine listed “New Calvinism” as third in its list of the ten most influential ideas changing the world. In the author’s words, “Calvinism is back.”

Conflicting messages in the media as well as in academic scholarship reveal an ongoing discussion in the West about the true state of religion. While living in Britain, I came across a report on Yahoo! UK & Ireland News: “Secularists meet in London to defy rise in religion.” Organizers had established an award for the purpose of preventing what was described as “an alarming rise in religious meddling in public life.”

Apparently, while Christians have concerned themselves with the decline of the church, secularists have been busy worrying about the growth of religion.

SUBVERTING DECLINE

Scholarly opinion about the state of the church eludes consensus. Even common pronouncements that secularization grew during the Enlightenment era are being questioned in such



works as David Sorkin's *The Religious Enlightenment*. Sorkin argues that during the 1700s, "religion lost neither its place nor its authority in European society and culture."

Those who lack knowledge of Christian history sometimes assume the past was a golden age of belief, and that the church has faced decline only in the current, postmodern age. Sociologist Rodney Stark has sought to overturn this perception in his response to the secularization theory, going so far as to argue that the piety of the past is a "myth." Stark's conclusion may be questioned, but not his trajectory. We need to adjust the interpretive lens of "decline" to accommodate history's complexity. The great cloud of witnesses suffered no less and often much more than we do today, and humanity has faltered in its commitment to God in the past.

Even periods of perceived decline contain evidence of

all challenges and shortcomings, the church has survived, blossomed, and been transformed, sometimes against all odds. It has been restored and revived, it has changed, and it has overcome. In short, the church has endured.

VIGOR IN THE WINTER

As Luther highlights in one treatise, the outcome of the church is not ultimately in our hands.

"We are not the church's guardians," he wrote. "If it were up to us, the church would perish before our very eyes, and we together with it. . . . But it is another who obviously preserves both the church and us."

Perhaps the most notable truth of the history of Christianity, then, is the endurance of the church despite our efforts. On this point, Calvin offers helpful insight in his commentary on Isaiah 6, in which he compares the restoration of the church with the seasons of a tree. The leaves wither in autumn, then blossom in the spring, he notes. This "could not happen, did they not retain some vigor during the winter, though to outward appearance they are dead." He says the church often endures "numerous afflictions" and appears "utterly ruined."

But "there is still some concealed energy, which, though it be not immediately manifest to our eyes, will at length yield its fruit." That hidden energy is supplied "by the word of the Lord, by which alone the Church is sustained."

Buying into the message of decline, then, is not only historically shortsighted, it is self-defeating, particularly when a tradition of endurance is the true history of the Christian church.

Sometimes it is easier to assume decline rather than affirm endurance, when in fact God is at work in the world through the power of the Holy Spirit, preserving the life of the church. Elijah illustrated the human tendency toward despair during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, when he thought he was "the only one left," the last faithful servant of the Lord, though there were seven thousand who had not bowed before Baal (1 Kings 19:14, 18).

John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* points the way toward a new attitude. When Christian and Hopeful were being held captive by Giant Despair in the dungeon of Doubting Castle, Hopeful responded to Christian's despair: "My Brother, let's be patient, and endure a while; the time may come that may give us a happy release." Their endurance is ultimately rewarded when they escape.

When we move beyond decline, empowered to overcome the pessimism of the age, we may take comfort in the assurance of Paul's words in Romans 15:4, that "everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope." ✚

Jennifer Powell McNutt, Ph.D., is assistant professor of theology and history of Christianity at Wheaton College. Her book, *Calvin Meets Voltaire: The Clergy of Geneva during the Age of Enlightenment, 1685–1798*, is forthcoming from Ashgate Press.

If greats like Calvin and Edwards can be expelled from their congregations, maybe religious success does not always look the way we expect it to.

growth. The persistent narrative that considers the 18th century the beginning of the church's downward spiral neglects the concurrent "meteoric rise" (as David Hempton calls it) of movements such as Methodism. What began, in Hempton's words, as a "tiny religious society within the Church of England in the 1730s" matured into "a major worldwide denomination." By the end of the 19th century, Methodism had grown to include more than 30 million people on six continents.

The spiritual awakenings of the 18th century were in no way separate from what happened in the 19th. While traditional work has advanced a narrative of two awakenings, each followed by decline, Thomas Kidd's *The Great Awakening* highlights the longevity of the awakening period: "There was, really, no Second Great Awakening, but rather a long-term turn toward Baptist and Methodist piety from the American Revolution to the Civil War, punctuated by new revivals like the one at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801." We should no longer ignore the 18th century's legacy of positive religious developments.

Revising the narrative of the Enlightenment, of course, leads to a new understanding of what came later. Many historians have focused on the "crisis of faith" as a consequence of the Enlightenment. Few have appreciated what Timothy Larsen has described as the concurrent "crisis of doubt" within Victorian secularism: "Despite the way that the narrative of the Victorian loss of faith has loomed so large in the existing literature, the Secularist movement lost a far greater percentage of its top leadership to reconversion than the Christian ministry lost due to a crisis of faith."

Memories of Christianity over the ages are valuable assets in a culture prone to expecting the worst about the future. Christianity has undergone periods of rise and fall in every century, with documented success and concerns of decline. The noteworthy story of the Christian church is that despite

Unreasonable

The reasons for unbelief are more complex than many atheists let on.

By Jim Spiegel

THE RECENT PUBLICATION of Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow's *The Grand Design* has reignited debate over God's existence. The ironically titled book proposes that the cosmos was spontaneously generated "from nothing," with no God (or gods) required to make sense of existence. Never mind the question-begging: How can nothing produce something, let

alone hundreds of billions of galaxies? Many atheists celebrate this bestseller as further grounds for dismissing religious belief.

Most atheists would have us think they arrived at their view through cool, rational inquiry. But are other factors involved? Consider the candid remarks of contemporary philosopher Thomas Nagel: "I want atheism to be true. . . . It isn't just that I don't believe in God, and, naturally, hope that I'm right about my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that." Could Nagel's attitude—albeit in a more subtle form—actually be common among atheists?

Christian apologists have responded to the New Atheists' arguments—which are often nothing more than a rehashing of traditional objections—with rational arguments of their own. However, they have not talked much about *non-rational* causes of unbelief. We humans are not only reasoning beings. We also have emotions, desires, and free wills, and these influence our beliefs. As important as it is to remind atheists of the rational evidence for God, the real problem in many cases is moral and psychological in nature.

Such a suggestion is potentially offensive to unbelievers. But we still need to ask if it is nonetheless true. According to Scripture, the evidence for God is overwhelming. The apostle Paul says that "God has made it plain" that he exists; his "invisible qualities . . . have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19–20). And the psalmist writes, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (19:1). This naturally prompts the question: If the evidence for God is so abundant, then why are there atheists?

Paul provides at least part of the answer in the same Romans passage, noting that some people "suppress the truth by their wickedness" (1:18). We all suffer from intellectual blind spots created by personal vices and immoral desires. To the extent that we succumb to these, we may be tempted to adopt perspectives that enable us to rationalize perverse behavior.

In this regard, scholars are no different from anyone else. The 20th-century ethics philosopher Mortimer Adler (who was baptized quietly at age 81) confessed to rejecting religious commitment for most of his life because it "would require a radical change in my way of life, a basic alteration in the direction of my day-to-day choices as well as in the ultimate objectives to be sought or hoped for. . . . The simple truth of the matter is that I did not wish to live up to being a genuinely religious person."

Historian Paul Johnson's fascinating if disturbing book *Intellectuals* exposed this pattern in the lives of some of the most celebrated thinkers in the modern period, including Rousseau, Shelley, Marx, Ibsen, Hemingway, Russell, and Sartre. In their private (and often public) lives, these Western intellectual stars were moral wrecks. Could their rejection of God—and, in particular, Christianity, with its exacting moral standards—have been entirely intellectual and dispassionate? Or might the same desires confessed by Nagel and Adler have played a role in their atheism?

As children of the Enlightenment, we tend to heavily emphasize the impact of belief on behavior. But it also works the other way around. Our conduct affects the way we think. On the positive side, as Scripture's wisdom literature tells us, obedience and humility lead to insight and understanding. Negatively, as we indulge in immoral behavior, our judgment will be skewed. Or, as Paul notes, disobedience hardens the heart, which in turn yields futile thinking, darkened understanding, and ignorance (Eph. 4:18–19). In other words, sin has cognitive consequences.

Notre Dame philosopher Alvin Plantinga has developed this idea in some depth. He notes that, like everything else about us, our belief-forming faculties were designed to work a certain way. And given the appropriate conditions, we tend to form true beliefs about the things we perceive or reason about. But some things can impede cognitive function, and sin is one of these. The more we disobey and give ourselves over to vice, the less reliable our belief formation will

Doubt

be, particularly regarding moral and spiritual matters.

Borrowing from some of the great Christian theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin, Plantinga proposes that all humans have a *sensus divinitatis*, an innate sense of the divine. This natural awareness of God prompts us to reflect on him as we experience various facets of life. But the *sensus divinitatis*, says Plantinga, can be “damaged and corrupted by sin,” even to the point that a person denies God altogether. According to this model, atheists suffer from a kind of cognitive malfunction or disease.

FAMILY MATTERS

External factors may also hamper the natural awareness of God and contribute to a descent into atheism. In his book *Faith of the Fatherless: The Psychology of Atheism*, New York University psychologist Paul Vitz, a onetime atheist, examines the lives of the major atheists of the modern period, including Hobbes, Hume, Voltaire, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, Russell, and Freud. He found they had something in common: a broken relationship with their father. Whether by death, departure, abuse, or some other factor, the father relationships of all these well-known atheists were defective. Vitz also examined the lives of prominent theists during the same period (Pascal, Reid, Burke, Berkeley, Paley, Wilberforce, Kierkegaard, Schleiermacher, Newman, Chesterton, and Bonhoeffer, among others). In every case, he found a good relationship with the father or at least a strong father figure.

Life is too complex to make a hard and fast rule about such things. But at the least, it shows that there are moral and psychological dimensions to atheism, ones we cannot ignore. At most, it strongly suggests that atheists can be self-deceived, driven by a motivated bias to disbelieve in God. Richard Dawkins has famously declared that theists are delusional. But if Adler, Plantinga, and the apostle Paul are right, then Dawkins has it exactly backwards.

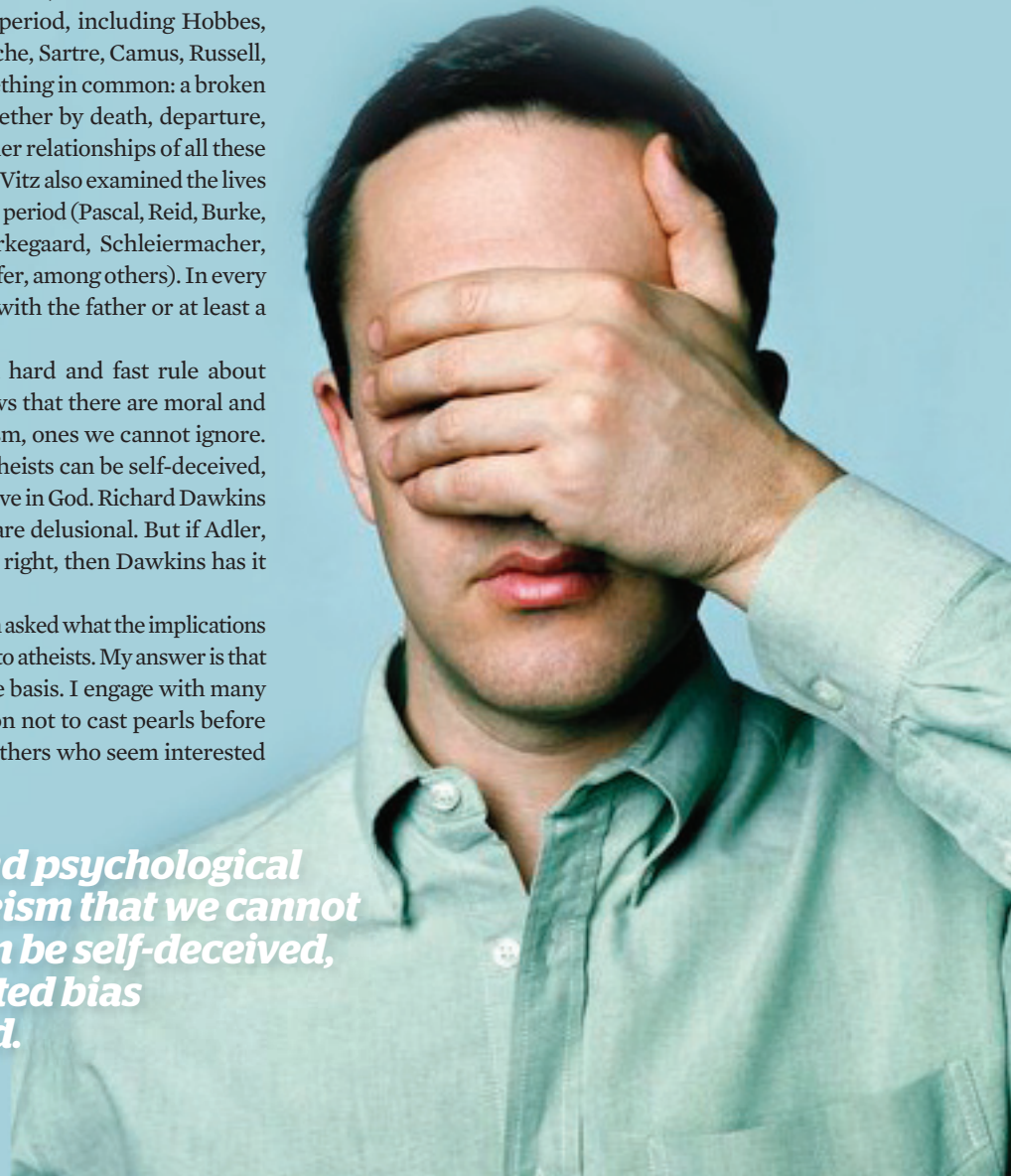
As a Christian apologist, I am often asked what the implications are for the task of defending the faith to atheists. My answer is that one must proceed on a case-by-case basis. I engage with many atheists to whom Jesus’ admonition not to cast pearls before swine clearly applies. But I know others who seem interested

in genuine dialogue, even if they are dogmatic in their disbelief. For such folks, I am always willing to engage in a conversation about rational evidence.

Sometimes atheists convert as a result of reviewing the good reasons for faith. The late Antony Flew, a leading atheist scholar for half a century, came to belief in God because of evidence he considered incontrovertible. And some famous Christian apologists, from Lee Strobel to C. S. Lewis, were former atheists. One never knows how the Spirit may move in a person’s life, sometimes to illumine a mind once darkened by a hardened heart, and perhaps even to prompt faith in a person who genuinely hopes there is no God. ⊕

Jim Spiegel is a philosophy professor at Taylor University and author of *The Making of an Atheist: How Immorality Leads to Unbelief* (Moody).

There are moral and psychological dimensions to atheism that we cannot ignore. Atheists can be self-deceived, driven by a motivated bias to disbelieve in God.





Reaching Out: Warehouse manager Randy Manning, donation coordinator Lisa Wallace, and director Scott Lewis oversee the Big Reach Center of Hope (right) in Mahoning County, Ohio, where clients shop for the food and items they need most.

A God-Sized Food Bank

The Big Reach Center of Hope offers a lifeline to Ohio's rural poor. By Nicole Russell

THIRTY-TWO COUNTIES in eastern Ohio are considered part of Appalachia, and the stereotypical images of that region's poverty—ramshackle houses, dilapidated barns, small businesses and large factories long shut down—are scattered throughout.

Mahoning County, abutting the Pennsylvania state line, about midway between Cleveland and Pittsburgh, is Exhibit A. Some 17 percent of the county's 240,000-plus residents, including almost 26 percent of its children, live below the poverty line.

Shonie Garono knows the situation all too well. In 2008, her husband, Anthony, was laid off from his steel mill job (he remains unemployed), and her income as a hairdresser didn't support the family. Though family members have helped to feed the Garonos' four children, the couple struggles to pay every bill and has come close to foreclosure a couple times.

Cathy and Brian French know, too. Cathy stays home with their four kids while Brian works as a diesel technician, repairing semi-trucks. But as the cost of living rose—and Brian's pay didn't—it wasn't long before the family was falling \$200 to \$300 short in their monthly budget. They have never missed

a rent payment and regularly pay utility bills, but even with scrimping and stretching, they often run out of milk and meat until Brian's next pay period. They have resorted to rolling quarters and dimes to pay for Brian's commute.

Where to turn for help? For these families and many others in Mahoning, the answer is a 22,000-square-foot warehouse in the middle of nowhere. The Big Reach Center of Hope, a 501(c)(3) ministry of Greenford Christian Church, is a food pantry and distribution center situated in a town so small it's an unincorporated dot on the Ohio map. But its reach is indeed big: The center, which serves five counties, has provided food and clothing to nearly 150,000 individuals since its inauspicious opening in 2004, including 70,000 individuals in 2010 alone, making it one of Ohio's biggest food pantries. (The largest, Freestore Food Bank's Customer Connections Center,

based in Cincinnati, serves about 90,000 clients annually.)

Some clients drive nearly two hours to Big Reach. For those who cannot make the trek, the ministry supplies food to 25 partner pantries in the region, giving tentacles to its centralized location.

The largest nearby city, Youngstown, and the rest of the Mahoning Valley area has been especially hard hit by the faltering economy, feeling the impact before most of America,



says Big Reach co-founder and director Scott Lewis: "We knew there was a recession before the government did."

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the Youngstown area's unemployment rate has more than doubled in three years, from 6.2 percent in 2007 to 14 percent in June 2010. By October 2010, the rate had improved to 10.6 percent, still higher than the national average of 9.2 percent. Youngstown's situation is complicated by a rapidly shrinking population, from 166,000 in 1960 to 82,000 today, primarily due to the loss of steel and manufacturing industries.

'I tell our volunteers to envision themselves on the other side. Many of our clients never thought they'd be here.'
~ Scott Lewis, Big Reach director

But while Youngstown has its own food pantries and homeless ministries, Big Reach serves mostly people from the surrounding fields and farms, a microcosm of rural poverty in America. (See "A Developing Nation *Inside* the U.S.," page 54.)

Howard Jones, 66, is the face of such poverty. A resident of nearby Lisbon, Jones had been a millwright at a steel mill, "the whole bread and butter" of the area and an industry that has essentially vanished, for 27 years. When Jones retired, he began visiting Big Reach to fill the gaps left over after Social Security. He estimates that 90 percent of his monthly groceries come from the ministry. "I can't take my wife out

to dinner any more," Jones says, "but God's always provided for me."

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Big Reach's 2004 launch was modest enough. Lewis and other Greenford Christian members simply wanted to help children from low-income families in their church and community. They held a one-day "Big Reach Back to School" event, providing kids with school supplies and families with food, clothing, and personal care products. Soon after, they launched the Giving Tree, a food and clothing distribution center in the nondenominational church's basement.

By 2006, they were providing food and clothing to nearly 8,000 individuals, and the demand kept increasing. That fall, WYTV (ABC's Youngstown affiliate) and local businesses sponsored the

Mahoning County Extreme Makeover: My Hometown to build the Big Reach Center of Hope—complete with offices, a kitchen, and a massive warehouse—in 10 days. The warehouse sits on the property of the church, which paid for about 20 percent of the \$1.2 million project, with corporations and individuals donating the rest in materials, labor, and furnishings.

Today, Greenford Christian provides the center's leadership, staff, some funding, and most of its volunteers. Church administrator Bruce Rhoades Jr. says 23 cents of every dollar given to the church goes to missions; of that, 8 percent—about \$50,000 a year—goes to Big Reach.

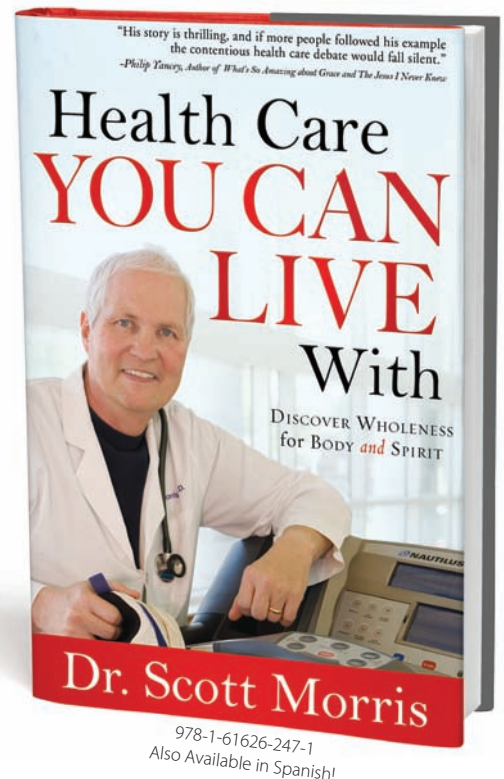
Take Charge of Your Own WELLNESS



As the debate over health care continues, this new book shows the relationship between a person's physical health and spiritual well-being. Written by Dr. Scott Morris, founder of America's largest faith-based clinic for the uninsured, *Health Care You Can Live With* puts a human face on the hot topic of health care.

"(Dr. Scott Morris's) story is thrilling, and if more people followed his example, the contentious health care debate would fall silent."

— Philip Yancey



The rest of the center's annual budget of approximately \$200,000 comes from individuals, grants, and corporations. Its staff are always seeking ways to bring in more food and funding.

SEEING THE OTHER SIDE

When his children were young, Big Reach's Lewis went through a difficult financial time and, as a last resort, visited a food bank. He was embarrassed and feared he'd be looked down upon, but instead he was treated with respect. The experience is seared into his memory: "I want the people here to be treated with respect like I was," says the soft-spoken Lewis, who trains his volunteers to treat each client as a person with specific needs facing a particularly trying time. "I tell them to envision themselves on the other side. Many of our clients never thought they'd be here."

One way staff respect the dignity of clients is allowing them to have a shopping experience rather than handing them a pre-packaged box of food. During Big Reach's twice-a-week distributions, volunteers walk clients through the grocery section, partly to ensure the allotted amount of food is taken. (A family allotment is based on two criteria: the amount of a particular product in stock, and family size as it relates to a serving size of food.) Clients are also allowed to take a limited supply of toiletries. Most families leave with a basket with three or four meals, plus clothing, housewares, and sometimes a toy or two. (*Christianity Today* explored the benefits of client choice at food pantries in the December 2010 issue's news section.)

Katherine Yoder, 40, has been on both sides of Big Reach's

kindness—first as a recipient, then as a volunteer. Five years ago, after a divorce and with little income, she visited the center. "Everyone was so warm and welcoming," she said. "People smiled and asked how they could help. I felt at peace." Now remarried and with a blended family, Yoder volunteers at the pantry. This is another of its dignifying aspects: It allows clients who have logged at least 20 volunteer hours to shop one extra time on distribution days. Yoder occasionally visits as a client when finances are tight, but now mostly takes the food she earns through volunteering.

'IT GETS US THROUGH'

At a recent distribution, some clients lined up more than four hours before the 5 P.M. start. They were as diverse as they were eager. One young couple was in grad school; several elderly men and women were on disability; others had small children in tow, including Garono, who brought her 5-year-old triplets and her mother.

Later, as daughter Julie found a doll she liked in the toy section, Garono spoke of Big Reach as a lifeline: "It's so wonderful. The food, the toys—they help so much, you wouldn't believe. It gets us through."

Clients' financial status varies significantly. Many listed in the Big Reach database report an income of \$800 or less a month. Some have no income; some are living in cars. Lewis says most of his clients come from chronically poor family systems and are unemployed or underemployed. He estimates that 60 percent are on welfare. Though it's not required, Lewis mostly follows guidelines from the USDA's Emergency Food

[continued on 54]



www.ecainternational.org



THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH ALLIANCE

PROVIDING MINISTERIAL

CREDENTIALS,

EDUCATION,

AND SUPPORT

SINCE 1887

Assistance Program. “Most people we help fall below the poverty level,” he says. “I try to never turn anyone away. If they’ve been turned down for food stamps because they are \$10 above [the limit], I take them in.”

Such work takes its toll on the volunteers, who see the pain of poverty up close day after day. “Sometimes they see a friend or family member they didn’t know was struggling,” says Lewis. “It tugs on our hearts.” Though Lewis has plenty of volunteers—some 150 throughout the year—he sometimes struggles to keep them motivated in an environment where clients are in such need and interactions are so emotionally taxing. “You sometimes ask yourself, ‘What are we doing this for?’”

Youngstown Mayor Jay Williams, meanwhile, says he’s “almost moved to tears” by Big Reach’s work. “The level of compassion and sophistication is incredible. It’s a significant force of positive outreach in this community. We are much better off for it.”

Cathy and Brian French agree. In the midst of their struggles, a friend suggested that Cathy visit Big Reach for help with groceries. When she found out clients could volunteer to work, she signed up immediately. “I didn’t feel quite as guilty about going through the line and getting free food because I feel like I’m working for it,” says French. She now volunteers 20 hours a week and says the food she receives provides 60–75 percent of their groceries, which allows her to stay on top of bills.

Lewis hears story after story like that, but still can’t believe it.

“I can’t explain the building being here,” he says. “I can’t explain Big Reach being here. God is in control. It’s a God thing.”

Nicole Russell has written for *Politico*, *Parents*, *Parenting*, *World*, and *Focus on the Family* publications.

A Developing Nation *Inside* the U.S.

The forgotten rural poor face desperate challenges.

The phrase “poverty in America” conjures images of urban blight and plight, but in reality, rural poverty rates are higher than those in metropolitan areas.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, about 16 percent of rural populations (about 8.1 million people) are poor, compared with about 12 percent of urban populations. Children fare worse: In urban areas of 1 million or more residents, 16 percent of children fall below the poverty line, compared with as many as 27 percent in some rural areas.

More than one in five poor children in America live in a rural area, but when media or policymakers discuss poverty, they usually talk about the city. When the Communication Consortium Media Center examined more than 1,400 newspaper articles on federal welfare reform several years ago, not one article dealt with the issue in rural areas.

William P. O’Hare, a fellow at the University of New Hampshire’s Carsey Institute, which conducts policy research on vulnerable children and families, wrote in a 2009 study that “in recent decades . . . rural poverty has been overshadowed by the plight of the ‘urban underclass.’” In the same study, *The Forgotten Fifth: Child Poverty in Rural*

America, O’Hare noted that unlike urban poverty, rural poverty has many guises, including “impoverished rural hollows in the Appalachian Mountains, former sharecroppers’ shacks in the Mississippi Delta, desolate Indian reservations on the Great Plains, and emerging *colonias* along the Rio Grande. The lack of a single image of rural poverty makes it more difficult to describe and discuss it.”

It also makes it more difficult to find solutions. In rural counties, there is typically little work available. Steel mills and other manufacturing plants have been shutting down for decades, and natural resources (ores, forests) are depleted. Dated images of rural folks raising their own crops and livestock have mostly disappeared; 94 percent of today’s rural labor force is engaged in work other than farming—that is, when they can find work. Jobs have moved from agriculture, mining, and forestry to low-skill manufacturing and the service sector, areas that are deficient in rural regions.

“In urban/suburban poverty there are 1,000 people per square mile,”

says Romanita Hairston, vice president of U.S. programs at World Vision. “People bring resources—housing, health care, and increased density for social support services. In a rural area that’s less densely populated, you get the opposite effect.”

Scott Allard, an expert on social welfare policy and poverty at the University of Chicago, says that “while the experience of being poor is largely the same in both suburban and rural areas—people struggle to put food on the table or pay bills—it also tends to be deeper and more extreme in rural areas.”

Logistically, the rural poor have far fewer prospects, says Allard. “They have to commute great distances to find a job. Many don’t have cars, and there is no public transportation. Because the distance is difficult and there are far fewer job opportunities, they face an opportunity deficit.”

Rural flight is also an issue. Many young adults, unable to find jobs or concerned about future opportunities, have fled to cities and suburbs. Left in their wake are communities with a disproportionately aging population. Health care demands rise, property values plummet, schools have trouble finding good teachers, and the cycle continues and even worsens.

Nonprofit organizations—such as the Big Reach Center of Hope—help as much as they can, but as Allard observes, “There are much fewer and smaller nonprofits in rural areas because there aren’t a lot of wealthy people or organizations around. And local government tends to be poorly resourced.”

Hairston believes President Obama’s stimulus package helped some rural poor in the short term, but says the government cannot ultimately solve poverty—which she believes will only worsen without intervention from non-governmental sources and systems.

“If we are not careful,” she says, “we will have a developing nation inside a developed nation. It will take multiple sectors responding to fix it, but not the government. The government should stimulate social services but not be a long-term solution. This is not a country that is meant to live with government intervention for long; our economic foundation is not built on that principle.

“There is a free market solution: We need the nonprofit world—and the church—to come around and help.” —Nicole Russell and Mark Moring

‘The lack of a single image of rural poverty makes it more difficult to describe and discuss it.’

~ William O’Hare

STRENGTHENING LIVES FOR PURPOSE, SERVICE, AND LEADERSHIP



Pepperdine University is a Christian university committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service, and leadership.

Malibu | West Los Angeles | Westlake Village | Irvine | Encino | Silicon Valley | Washington, D.C.

**PEPPERDINE
UNIVERSITY**
a higher calling

www.pepperdine.edu/calling

CHRIST CHURCH CULTURE

CONFERENCE : FEB 24-26
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS. ENGAGING CULTURE.

SPEAKERS



Donald
Miller



Paul
Weston



Andy
Crouch



Frederica
Mathewes-
Green



Makoto
Fujimura



Christian
Smith

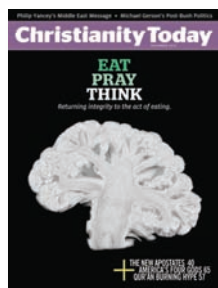
VISIT WWW.STGEORGESINSTITUTE.ORG
OR CALL 615.385.2150 FOR MORE INFORMATION



ST GEORGE'S INSTITUTE
OF CHURCH AND CULTURAL LIFE

VIEWPOINTS

OPINIONS AND
PERSPECTIVES ON
ISSUES FACING
THE CHURCH



If someone serves you spaghetti made with inhumanely raised beef and marinara loaded with processed soybean oils, eat it with a smile. The way of Christ is to prefer others above ourselves.

Adrienne Michelson
Rome, Ohio

Eating to God's Glory

It is hard for me to imagine a more informed, balanced, and fair treatment of the issues surrounding food and faith than Leslie Leyland Fields's "A Feast Fit for the King" [November]. It is too easy for Christians to become obsessed with eating food that is green, sustainable, and local, or contrariwise, to dismiss the whole discussion as distracting from our goal to spread the gospel. Both need to be kept in mind. Leslie has opened up a fruitful topic for thoughtful discussion. I hope this engenders more of the same.

LUCI SHAW
Bellingham, Washington

I applaud Fields for asking us to think critically and prayerfully about what we eat. I'd add that the case for food integrity becomes more compelling given the persistence of human slavery in the supply chains of many grocery stores and restaurant chains. Consider the seven sets of federal convictions for human trafficking in Florida agriculture alone in the past decade. Like the Christian church of the 18th century, we need to remember the high cost of inexpensive goods.

RICK HERDER
Minneapolis, Minnesota

What about all the Scripture passages that address feeding the hungry? Through the green revolution, involving chemical fertilizer and other modern farming techniques, countries such as India have become more self-sustaining in feeding their populations. If I were a farmer and knew parts of the world depended on my production not to starve, it's clear what my moral obligation would be.

Also, what about keeping food affordable for the poor, especially the working poor? It's one thing for those who can afford to be picky about what they eat. It's another to tell the working poor that their food dollar is not going to buy as much because someone mandates shutting down chicken factories. The mandate to care for the earth includes a mandate to care for the neighbor.

BILL NEWCOMER
E-mail

The writer of Ecclesiastes says, "Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes" (7:18). It's essential to remember that the first rule in the Christian walk, besides loving God with our whole hearts, is loving people. I have made the mistake of being so ascetic in my eating habits that I've

hurt people who tried to bless me. If someone serves you spaghetti made with white flour noodles, inhumanely raised beef, and marinara loaded with highly processed soybean oils—well, eat it with a smile.

There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end leads only to destruction. The way of Christ is to prefer others above ourselves.

ADRIENNE MICHELSON
Rome, Ohio

College Bound

My daughter, who has an intellectual disability, will begin her first year at Shepherds College this August ["Why Not College?" November]. I can't begin to express how excited she is and how grateful we are. The program, staff, and students far exceed our dreams for a program that could help Daniela achieve the most independent and satisfying life possible. I will be sharing *Christianity Today's* report with everyone we know.

CHRISTINA GOLDSTONE
Charlottesville, Virginia

Reaching the Leavers

Drew Dyck's superb article "The Leavers" [November] struck a chord. I graduated from college two years ago and already feel myself swept up in my generation's status quo. For most people my age, church is an afterthought, an awkward

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

42%
A Feast Fit for the King
Leslie Leyland Fields

34%
The Leavers
Drew Dyck

4%
A Man for All Evangelicals
Scott Wenig

YAY OR NAY Readers' take on "A Feast Fit for the King"



38%



62%

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

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

ADDRESS CHANGES, SUBSCRIPTIONS: ctfulfill@christianitytoday.com

weekly event that usually ends in boredom and is thus abandoned.

If the community of Christ really wants to curb this growing trend, it needs to embrace this unique life stage with relationships that go deeper than pizza and movies. We don't want to be branded, ignored, or micromanaged. We want to be challenged, mentored, and disciplined.

MIKE STAMAT
San Antonio, Texas

"The Leavers" introduced me to the troubling terms *de-conversion* and *de-convert*, originally used in the 2009 American Religious Identification Survey.

Those of us who hold to the doctrine of eternal security believe de-conversion is a scriptural impossibility. Once-believing souls who fall into the valley of dry bones need only the breath of God (and a little preaching) to finish the work the Lord has begun. The biblical terms *apostasy* and *heresy* cover the bases well and avoid possible discord amongst the brethren.

PHILLIP GRANT
Heath, Massachusetts

Tucked away at the end of Dyck's article are two statements that address the church's greatest need: "Seeker-sensitive services and low-commitment small groups . . . cannot replace serious programs of discipleship and catechism"; and churches should "strive to mature every believer."

Two of the most neglected words in today's church are *discipline* and *accountability*, the two ingredients in a program of discipleship. Many pastors shy away from anything that smacks of accountability or discipline. Discipleship is a hard sell.

Yet believers who are intentionally and systematically disciplined are far less likely to leave. Seems we are better at defining the problem than we are at defining the solution.

CHARLES LAKE
Greenwood, Indiana

A Humble Mind

Thank you for CT's wonderful tribute to Vernon Grounds ["A Man for All Evangelicals," November].

My first encounter with him was at the YMCA, where he always seemed to be exercising. Years later, he led a retreat for our adult Sunday school class. At one point during the weekend, his wife mildly scolded, "Vernon, your brains are showing." Grounds immediately glanced down to where the largest Phi Beta Kappa key I've ever seen dangled out of his pants pocket, and he quickly stuffed it back in.

In recent years, Grounds remained an inspiration as he continued to serve into his 90s. I hope that 40 years hence, I can look back on a life half as well lived.

RUSS KYNCL
Wheat Ridge, Colorado



ONLINE POLL
SUPPORTING THE TROOPS
Do you support or oppose "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the government's law to keep homosexuals from serving openly in the armed forces?

50%
I favor Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

45%
I oppose Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

5%
I don't know.

Total votes: 542
(Online polls do not represent a scientific sample.)

compiled by Katelyn Beaty

WORTH REPEATING

Things overheard at CT online.

"As long as people want to love and be loved and show that commitment publicly, there will be marriage."

Sabrina Messenger, questioning headlines about the death of the religious and cultural institution.

"Marriage in Obsolescence," by Jim Daly

"If Jesus Christ had taken such an approach, we would all be hopeless."

You're Kidding Right, taking issue with theologian Soong-Chan Rah's statement that "before grace can be extended, forgiveness must be asked."

"Boost Your Cultural IQ," interview by Trevor Persaud

"We've reached a point where posting a Facebook status update or wearing a color is considered an act of caring. It's not. Thanks for reminding us."

Sheila, noting that most breast-cancer awareness campaigns are superficial.

Her meneutics: "Don't Think Pink," by Gina Dalfonzo

"Christians . . . are allowing the hypersensitivity of others to silence us. When we allow that, souls perish. Offense is going to come. Let it come."

Julie Canny, on the importance of preaching the gospel in an easily offended society.

SoulWork: "Blessed Are the Unoffended," by Mark Galli

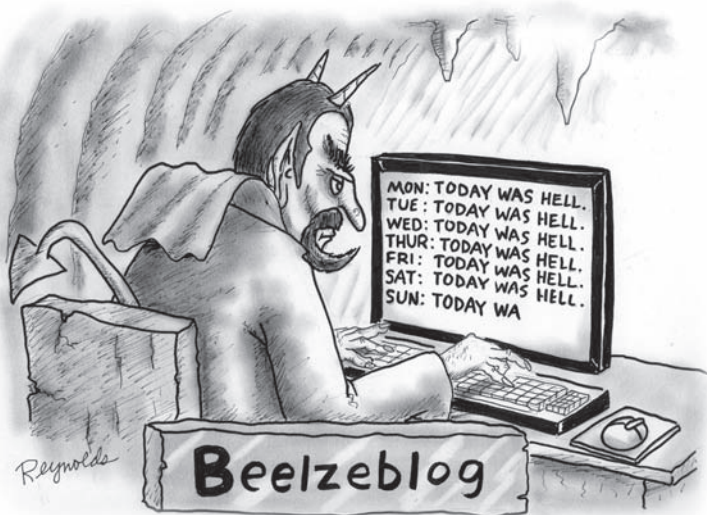
"The concept of poetic license is lost on some people—and the heart of a Pharisee is not the heart of a poet."

J. D., lamenting debates over the theological content of beloved Christmas carols.

"Away with 'Away in a Manger?'," compiled by Ruth Moon

ISTOCK

DAN REYNOLDS



Cracks in the Crystal Cathedral

Why we are better off letting God make the gospel relevant.

THIS PAST OCTOBER, the megachurch prototype of the late 20th century filed for bankruptcy. A 24 percent drop in donations and a \$50–\$100 million debt owed to more than 550 creditors forced the Crystal Cathedral to file. It was a poignant moment in the history of modern evangelicalism.

Robert H. Schuller's famous Crystal Cathedral was built on a foundation of self-esteem. In a 1984 interview with *Christianity Today*, Schuller said that when he came to Garden Grove, California, in 1955, he asked himself, "What human condition exists here that I can have a mission to?" His answer was "emotional hunger." "Because of that," he said, "we have developed our present ministry."

That ministry increasingly was defined as the gospel of self-esteem, which for Schuller meant "the divine dignity that God intended to be our emotional birthright as children created in his image."

It was lost in the Garden of Eden, he explained, but "we hunger for it until we regain it through faith in Christ."

Over the years, many people have caricatured Schuller's theology. Indeed, there has been much to criticize. To be fair, it was more nuanced than many critics imagine. Schuller's root concern from day one was emotional hunger, and the answer was helping people gain a positive self-image, albeit in Christ.

Schuller was tapping into themes of the human potential movement, the rage in the 1960s and '70s, when Abraham Maslow's theories deemed self-actualization the highest expression of human life. Schuller put a biblical and theological spin on it all and, as a result, attracted many to faith in Christ.

But already in Schuller's day, there were concerns. The most scathing critique of this

general cultural mood was from Christopher Lasch, who noted, particularly in *The Culture of Narcissism*, that the new therapeutic culture was leaving people trapped and isolated in the self.

It's like building a state-of-the-art structure. Technology moves at such a rapid pace that as soon as you move into the new building, you immediately find yourself stuck with an architecture that is already

Schuller is not the problem—contemporary evangelicalism is. Schuller was only leading the parade of those who believe they are responsible for *making* the gospel relevant. The lesson is not that Schuller got it wrong or that his theology is out-of-date; it is not that we just need to find a better, more current point of cultural contact. The lesson is that our attempts to find and exploit a point of cultural contact inevitably end in bankruptcy.

This does not deny the need to talk about the gospel in language and thought forms that a culture understands. In fact, we cannot avoid doing this—we are culturally and linguistically bound, ultimately unable to get out of our own skin and see the world in any other way. But we must repress every fearful thought that suggests that making the gospel relevant and meaningful rests on our shoulders. The mystery of why and how people come to faith is just that—ultimately a mystery. Spiritual directors long ago discovered what theologian Karl Barth noted: "As God

awakens man to faith by his Holy Spirit, he himself posits the necessary point of contact." Or, as Peter put it, in describing the conversion of the Gentiles: "God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit..." (Acts 15:8, *esv*).

In fact, it is not only the listener who is deaf and blind to the gospel. The church is equally handicapped, especially regarding what will "work" to achieve genuine conversion. But—God be praised—we have a God who makes the deaf to hear and the blind to see! In every age and every culture, we are wise to trust the God who is rich in mercy and is able to accomplish through his Word that which he intends. ✚



technologically dated, if only in small degrees at first. It isn't long before another developer announces plans for something even more state-of-the-art.

Today both the Crystal Cathedral and the theology that undergird it seem woefully inadequate buildings in which to house the gospel. In an age deeply sensitive to energy conservation, a glass house of worship is a sinful extravagance. In a culture increasingly addicted to the self, the gospel of self-esteem is clearly part of the problem. In short, the Schuller enterprise is filing for bankruptcy on more than one front.

Some are tempted to hit the man while he is down, but this is unwise. Robert

The mystery of why and how people come to faith is just that—a mystery.

*Everyday
Benevolence*

Should Christians always give money to street people who ask for it?

YES, FREELY

Gary Hoag, the Generosity Monk, has dedicated his life to encouraging Christian generosity.

Jesus ministered to social outcasts and the undeserving on numerous occasions, so why don't we? Three possible hang-ups to serving street people have troubled Christians through the centuries.

First, we judge them.

We judge whether or not they are worthy of assistance and what they will do with our aid. Consider this illustration, from C. S. Lewis:

One day, Lewis and a friend were walking down the road and came upon a street person who reached out to them for help. While his friend kept walking, Lewis stopped and proceeded to empty his wallet. When they resumed their journey, his friend asked, "What are you doing giving him your money like that? Don't you know he's just going to go squander all that on ale?" Lewis paused and replied, "That's all I was going to do with it."

Why stop judging those in need? John the Almsgiver (A.D. 550–616) offers an answer. When a person who was not really in need applied for alms and was detected by those administering care, John merely said, "Give unto him; he may be our Lord in disguise."

Second, we hesitate to give freely to those who ask because we fear it may leave us as givers without resources.

I believe many followers of Jesus lack faith to believe that if we empty ourselves of the resources God has provided us, he will fill our cups again.

Paul reminds us, "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God" (2 Cor. 9:10–11).

To be generous "on every occasion" requires faith to believe that God will, indeed, care for our needs if we show his love by caring for others. As Brennan Manning says, "God's call for each of us to live a life of unlimited generosity is rooted in his limitless love and care for us."

Finally, I believe we fail to give freely to all who ask because we value our possessions more than people.

We cherish stuff more than souls. In *The Shepherd of Hermas*, an early church writing, we are urged, "Instead of fields, buy souls that are in trouble according to your ability."

What if we adopted this perspective when it came to our asset portfolios? How many street people could we bless in the name of Jesus if we all gave freely? As Jesus sent the first disciples, I believe he is sending us: "Freely you have received; freely give" (Matt. 10:8b).

May God help us stop judging people; freely give to others, trusting him to provide the resources for our generosity; and stop treasuring stuff over people. In so doing, this postmodern world will see Jesus in our generosity, and we may "rebuild the church" as Francis of Assisi did in his day.

AS A LAST RESORT

Andy Bales is the chief executive of Union Rescue Mission, which works with the homeless in Los Angeles.

Scripture clearly tells us to keep an open hand to our brothers and sisters in need: "You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land" (Deut. 15:11, ESV).

However, experience has taught me that almost all of the folks standing on corners, sitting at the exits and entrances of freeway ramps, panhandling in public, or even coming to churches to connect with the person in charge of benevolence are not truly homeless or impoverished.

My dad, Carl Bales, helped develop a news exposé in Des Moines, Iowa, that showed that many panhandlers were making as much as \$300 per day. The story also tracked the panhandlers as they spent the money on alcohol and drugs.

I know by name more than 400 people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena, and more than 1,000 people by name on the streets of Skid Row, and I have never seen one of these truly homeless people panhandling on a street corner.

I do know folks who panhandle all day, earn about \$300, then walk to their car and drive to an apartment or home.

As the manager of several church benevolent funds over the years, I realized that no matter how many safeguards I put up to make sure the funds were dispensed to people truly in need, I could have spent \$1 million and not made a dent in the need.

People experiencing homelessness and poverty need a caring community. The scriptural basis for this is the story in Acts of Peter and John healing the lame man. The men respond to the beggar's request for funds not by giving him money but by giving him a better gift: the gift of healing.

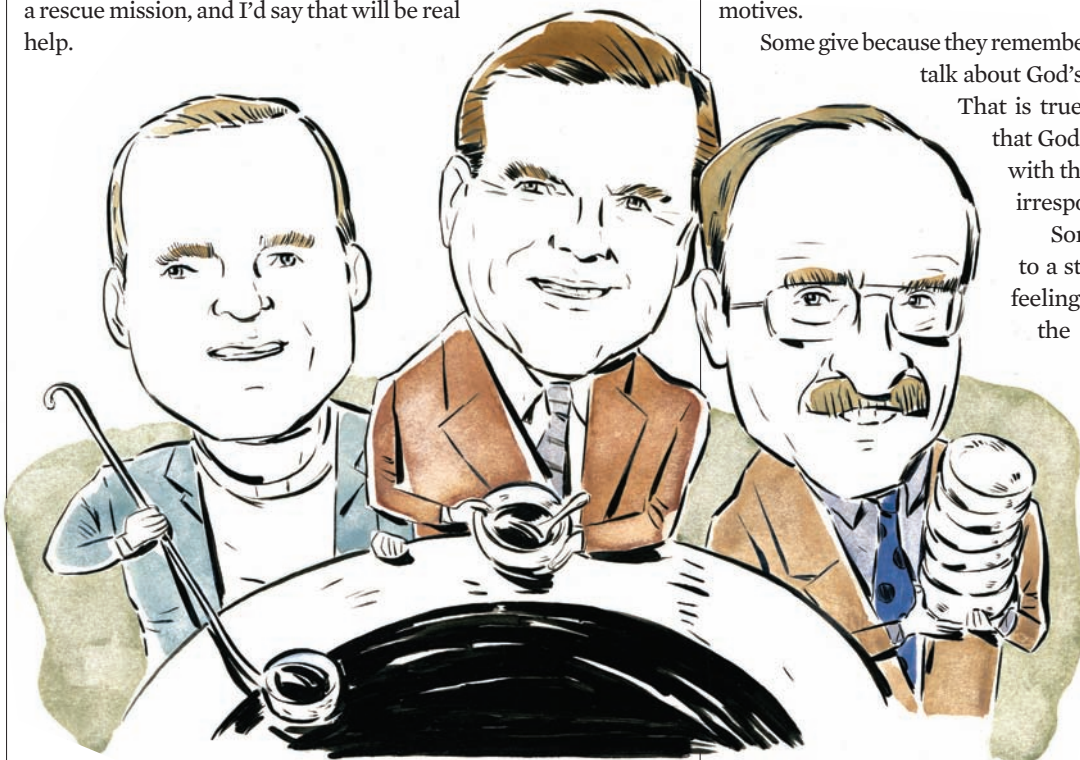
People need permanent help in becoming strong. They need a

connection with Jesus Christ and a faith community.

Giving cash to someone in need is the least helpful and most temporary solution, and should only be a last resort. When someone approaches me and asks for funds to get a place to stay, I connect them with resources, often hand them my card, and ask them to come to our mission. I also work to get them enrolled in a program that will provide not only a roof over their head but also, possibly, a life-transforming experience.

At rare times, giving funds may be the only option. When an elderly lady on the streets of Shanghai approached me for help, I was unaware of services available, and also aware that there is no Social Security for elderly Chinese without family. I gave her all of the cash I had with me.

Now I've been asked to come back and help Shanghai establish a rescue mission, and I'd say that will be real help.



ABSOLUTELY NOT

Ron Sider is president of Evangelicals for Social Action and author of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*.

Everyone asking for a handout is an immeasurably precious person made in the image of God whom I am called to love. But a quick donation is, at best, cheap love.

One reason we should not give handouts is that some people are begging for money to support irresponsible behavior. Some want money for alcohol or drugs. Some beg because they are lazy. I have heard some amazingly convincing stories—and on occasion been taken in. It is extremely difficult to quickly distinguish such persons from those in real need.

Love is acting in the best interests of others. Providing money so someone can continue immoral, destructive behavior is simply not a loving act.

A small, quick handout lets us off the hook from a more thoughtful response to the person's need. Even the lazy or addicted person is made in God's image and needs comprehensive assistance from a loving Christian community. That demands time and financial resources.

We need to change our affluent lifestyles in order to give more generously to effective, holistic programs. Some are desperately poor because of unjust structures that we need to challenge and correct. A handout lets me feel morally righteous while obscuring my obligation to work for sweeping reflection and change.

When we do give handouts, we often give them with wrong motives.

Some give because they remember that hundreds of Bible verses talk about God's special concern for the poor.

That is true and important, but the fact that God demands that his people side with the poor does not free us to give irresponsibly.

Some people toss a little money to a street person to assuage guilty feelings about their affluence in the midst of poverty. The guilt is often warranted. Many rich Christians spend vast sums on themselves even in the midst of desperate poverty. Instead of tossing a few coins to a beggar to assuage their conscience, these people should resolve to live far more simply, give to effective programs that empower poor people, and explore honestly poverty's structural causes.

So what should we do? We must give in ways that truly liberate, empower, and transform.

Rather than hand someone money, we can offer to buy the person a meal and then sit down and listen to the person's story. People almost always need love even more than money.

We should be part of Christian congregations that love the whole person the way Jesus did and operate holistic community centers that combine evangelism and a full range of social programs. Then we can direct or take the person to these centers to get groceries if necessary and—more importantly—to find help for deeper socioeconomic problems. There, staff can gently, appropriately share the love of Christ and invite the person to come to church, where Christians throw their arms around hurting persons as God transforms them for a lifetime.



Flunking Pew's Pop Quiz

Good thing the Last Judgment is not a round of *Final Jeopardy!*



MY FAMILY watches *Jeopardy!* every night. My husband, a well-read man with an excellent memory, gets most of the answers (er, questions) correct.

But I struggle with trivia. Even if I've read the Shakespeare play, I cannot remember the characters' names. I can picture the map but can't recall the mountain range.

So far be it from me to overreact to a Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life survey that showed that Americans are not religion experts. Still, it was embarrassing. Fewer than half of those surveyed could name the Gospels or identify who launched the Reformation. Only 16 percent knew that Protestants traditionally teach that salvation comes through faith alone. While white evangelicals knew this in greater numbers than other groups, nearly twice as many of those surveyed knew that the Qur'an is Islam's holy book as knew what Protestants teach about salvation.

The results weren't all dispiriting. Over 70 percent of Americans know Jesus was born in Bethlehem—a question even CNN's Wolf Blitzer missed while on *Celebrity Jeopardy!* in 2009. It's not that Americans are particularly ignorant about religion. They have about the same command of science, literature, and history facts.

Jews, atheists, and Mormons did slightly better than other Americans. But they still would have received Ds had they been taking an actual test, noted Boston University religion professor Stephen Prothero.

It turns out that education was the single greatest predictor of how well respondents handled the quiz. College-educated respondents got, on average, eight more questions right than those with a high school diploma or less. Religious education helped too, from a college course in religion to regularly attending religious classes as a child. People who reported weekly attendance at church and who said that religion is important to



them also fared better.

While most news stories narrowly focused on who scored the best, some academics questioned the meaning of the test itself. Religion can't and shouldn't be reduced to a trivia quiz, they said.

"What if religion is not primarily about knowledge? What if the defining core of religion is more like a way of life, a nexus of action?" asked James K. A. Smith, a Calvin College philosophy professor.

He may be on to something. Historically, the Christian church has focused on catechesis, transmitting not just doctrine but also lifestyle. From the Greek for "oral teaching," catechesis aims not for knowledge but for conversion, from unbelief to faith in Christ. It goes beyond conversion and baptism: it's through the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins that the Holy Spirit calls us to faith and preserves us in that faith.

A pastor friend of mine told me once about visiting a longtime parishioner, now dying. "Pastor, I just don't know if I am good enough to make it to heaven!" she said. Her words

disheartened him. But once again he told her the good news that Christ had reconciled her and made her "holy, and blameless, and above reproach in his sight" (Col. 1:22, NKJV).

It's easy to dismiss the elderly parishioner as one who hadn't listened to sermons well. But Jesus compares all of us to sheep, who are not known for their smarts. We need to hear Christian teaching over and over.

Rigorous catechesis was prevalent in the early church and again during the Reformation. These days, many pastors downplay doctrine in a misguided effort to fill pews or avoid conflict. Congregations don't require a lengthy formation, and often welcome new members after an hour of instruction, if that.

We learn our faith not by having our knowledge tested but by living it, attending worship, confessing our sins, listening to preaching, receiving Communion, and meditating on the Scriptures.

At least one Pew finding supports this idea. While 45 percent of Catholics didn't know what their church teaches about Communion, the results for weekly worshipers were dramatically different. Nearly 70 percent of white Catholics who attend Mass at least once a week answered the question correctly.

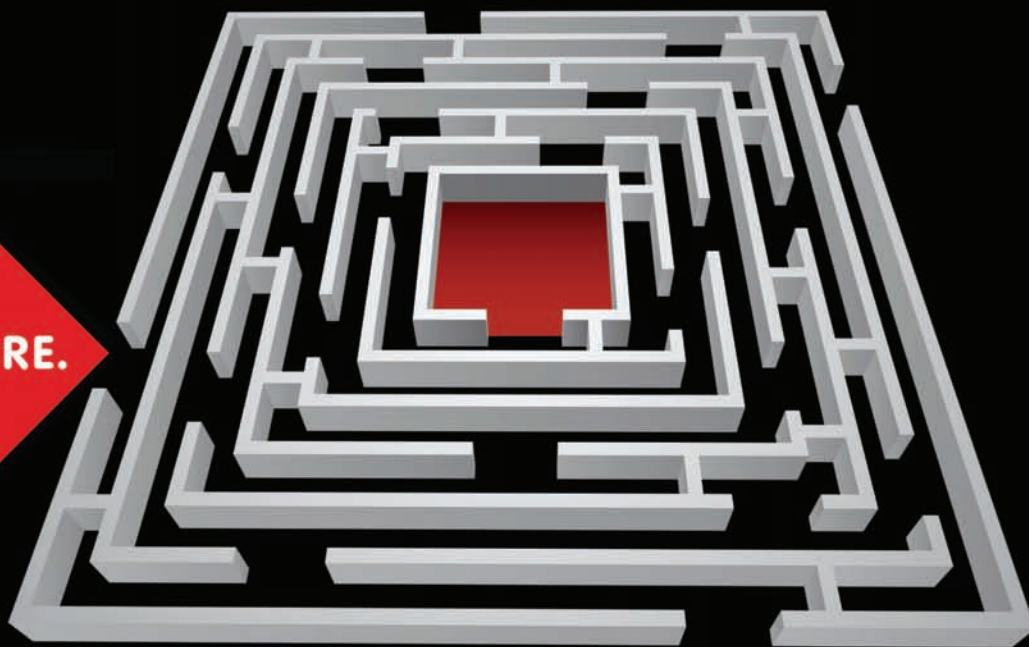
The fact is, we are immersed in a culture of false gods and ignorance. It's not surprising that we fail religious trivia tests. But as theologian Robert Jenson has said, "Catechesis was born as the instruction needed to bring people from their normal religious communities to an abnormal one."

As Paul writes in Romans 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (NKJV). ☩

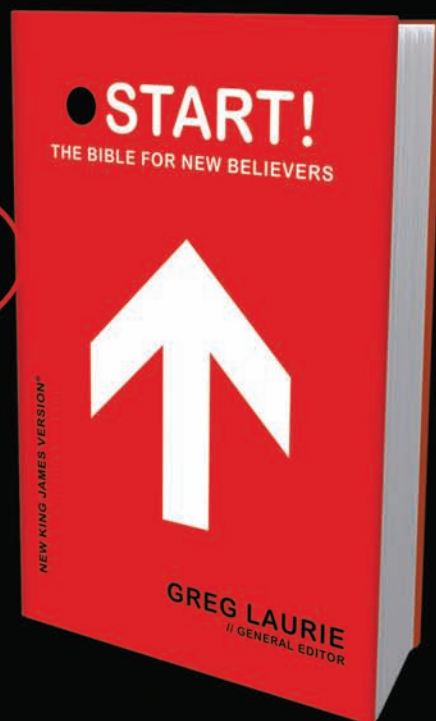
Catechesis aims not for knowledge but for conversion, from unbelief to faith in Christ.

HAVING TROUBLE FINDING YOUR WAY?

START HERE.



Learn more
and download a FREE
Gospel of John at
www.TheSTARTBible.com



// A BRAND-NEW LIFE OF FAITH BEGINS
when we place our trust in Jesus Christ.

But that's just the beginning.

What happens next?

START HERE.

Available wherever Bibles are sold.



TRUSTED FOR
ACCURACY, BEAUTY & CLARITY

Look for the HOUSE

WITH EVERY BIBLE FROM THOMAS NELSON,
YOU ARE GUARANTEED A LIFETIME OF QUALITY, A LONG-STANDING
LEGACY OF RELIABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY BIBLE PUBLISHING,
AND HEART-FELT INSPIRATION TO CHANGE THE WORLD.





Sudan's Politics of Prayer

If there were ever a time for intercession in international affairs, this is it.



ON OCTOBER 23, I was one of 32 people crowded into the temporary office of the World Evangelical Alliance at Cape Town 2010. Twenty-eight of the people were representing the evangelical community of Sudan at what has been hailed as the most diverse gathering of the church ever. The rest of us were there to hear our Sudanese brothers and sisters' hopes and apprehensions as they approached the January 9 referendum on separate statehood for southern Sudan.

The Sudanese representatives said, "Pray, pray, pray." Pray for a fair and free election, without violent incidents or intimidation. As they took turns speaking, almost everyone earnestly repeated that phrase. They meant it.

After 50 years of civil war, southern Sudan has enjoyed a limited peace. The chance to vote for independence was guaranteed in the 2005 peace agreement, but these church leaders were worried.

Whether the southern Sudanese vote for independence from the North or for continued national unity, they have no control over reactions from the government or its proxies. One church leader who lives near the border later told me of a deadly October 31 border skirmish. As northern forces massed near the border, nervous southerners had begun digging defensive fortifications. Northern soldiers crossed the border and shot two southerners who had wielded only shovels. The incident highlights the sense of threat the southern Sudanese feel before this election. Major violence could erupt.

Given south Sudan's history, independence seems attractive. Until the mid-19th century, the South was largely isolated by the great Sudd Swamp. But then a route was opened through the swamp. Missionaries, slavers, and ivory hunters descended. All 46 missionaries died from disease. Then even northern

pockets of Christianity disappeared after 1881, when a Muslim religious teacher proclaimed himself the divinely chosen leader Muslims expected to restore true religion in the last days. His followers carried out a purge.

Christian missionaries returned to Sudan after Britain and Egypt established a new colonial government in 1899. Fearing violence, however, the Brits forbade the missionaries to spread the gospel among Muslims. They allowed only educational and medical work. These restrictions encouraged missionaries



to go south, where Islam was less dominant. There, British policy established English as the official language for education. The British also assigned territory to each denomination in the hopes that a Christian south would counterbalance a Muslim north.

When Sudan gained independence in 1956, Khartoum began to aggressively Islamize the South. The government nationalized mission schools, mandated Arabic rather than English in education, and changed the day of rest from Sunday to Friday.

In the 1960s, political turmoil and social dislocation combined with faith to produce explosive church growth. Regime change in the North brought new restrictions on missionaries and then outright expulsion. Massacres by out-of-control northern soldiers

created massive migration. Nevertheless, in the absence of missionaries, youthful and evangelistic congregations began to flourish. As former missionary Andrew C. Wheeler wrote, "Christian faith and a southern identity became virtually synonymous."

Last summer, Duke Divinity School's Jason Byassee observed the vibrant churches around the southern capital of Juba. In an essay for *Books & Culture*, he wrote of southern Sudanese preachers who identified independence with God's will. "On January 9, we will be like the Israelites marching to freedom," one preacher said. "God put into motion his plan to free southern Sudan from the North. . . . [A]s we walk into freedom in January 2011, we recall that the plan for freedom is God's; yours is to be obedient."

This rhetoric promotes an idea the Sudanese leaders I heard are desperate to downplay. If Khartoum sees southern independence as a Christian issue, things will be much harder for Christians in northern Sudan. The government may take away Christians' access to social services, health care, and education, and could turn a blind eye to anti-Christian mob violence.

In our Cape Town conversations, church leaders repeatedly emphasized that they were only calling for a fair and free election. Unlike the preachers Byassee heard, they stressed church neutrality. If they told their people how to vote, they said, northern believers would risk being tagged as disloyal.

If the southerners vote for independence, it will be important for us to become advocates for Christians in the North. Northern Christian leaders say they fear they will be forgotten, and without international advocacy, they would be subject to Khartoum's deadly caprice.

And remember to "pray, pray, pray." ⊕

The Sudanese representatives said, 'Pray, pray, pray.' They meant it.

BRIGHT MINDS; BRIGHTER FUTURES

At Regent University, student enrollment is up nearly 30 percent. Why? We have a bright future in mind for our students, supported by world-renowned faculty, generous financial aid and uncom-promising, Christ-centered programs. You can be part of a vibrant, innovative academic community compelled by an authentic, relentless mission: *Christian Leadership to Change the World*. Take your first step to a brighter future.

Call: 888.718.1222
www.regent.edu/undergrad



Associate's • Bachelor's
Master's • Doctoral

On Campus | Online



**REGENT
UNIVERSITY**

VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Regent University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associates, baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404.679.4500 for questions about the accreditation of Regent University. Regent University admits students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, disability, gender, religion or national or ethnic origin. Regent University is certified by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to operate campuses within the Commonwealth of Virginia. UNG100751





"THERE IS NO GOD..."

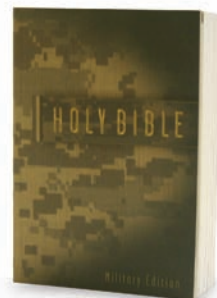
"There is no God in Iraq," says an American Soldier. "I've been here two times and I haven't seen him yet." Or that's the way it feels. **But you can change that. You can help the American Bible Society deliver God's Word to our troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the globe.** Many are in desperate need of the hope and peace that only Scripture can bring. It only costs \$4 to help reach a troop member with God's Word. **Simply clip & mail the *Bibles For Troops* Coupon at right with your gift now, or give securely at (800) 433-8815 or Soldiers.AmericanBible.org.**

They've answered the call. Please answer theirs.

BIBLES FOR TROOPS COUPON

Yes! I want to provide the Good News to a lonely American hero! **Here is my special gift today to help reach troop members with God's Word:**

- () \$20 to help provide God's Word for 5
- () \$40 to help deliver God's Word to 10
- () \$60 to help rush God's Word to 15
- () \$100 to help distribute God's Word to 25
- () \$_____ to help reach as many as I can!



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____

Mail this coupon and your check to:



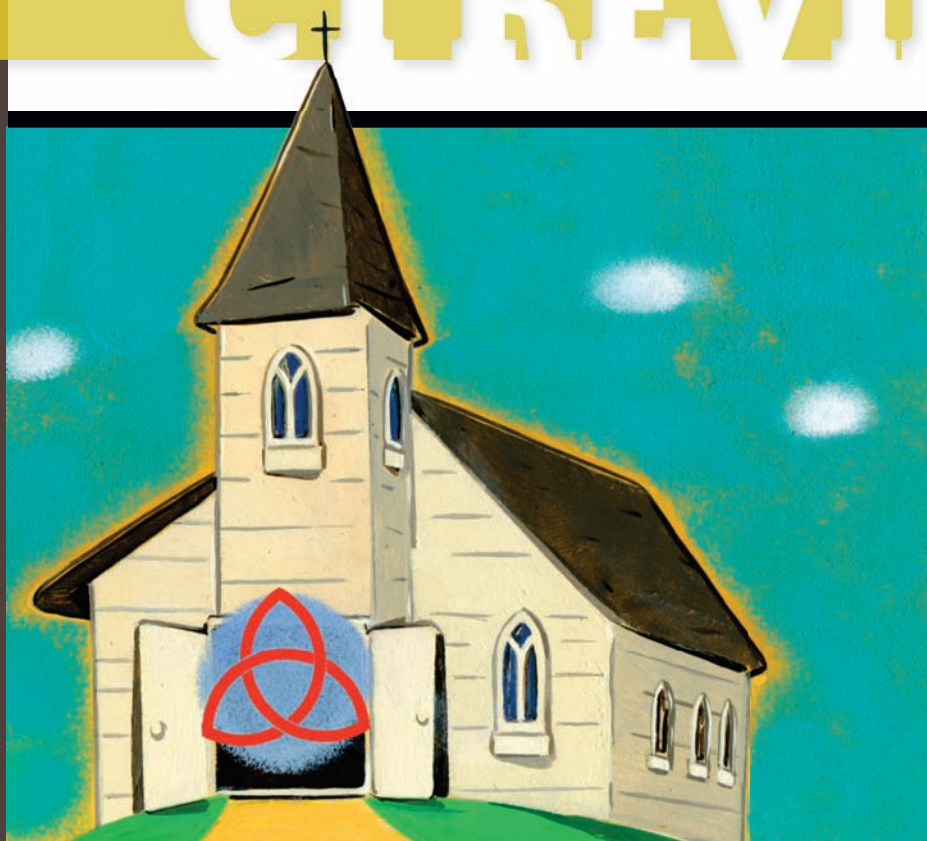
AMERICAN
BIBLE
SOCIETY

**PO BOX 96812
WASHINGTON DC 20090-6812
(800) 433-8815
Soldiers.AmericanBible.org**

RPM111201330011A

CT REVIEW

BOOKS, MOVIES,
MUSIC, AND
THE ARTS



The Center of the Good News

Why we can't understand the gospel—or ourselves—without the Trinity. By Matthew Lee Anderson

As evangelicals, we tend to have a vague sense that the Trinity matters but are not quite sure why. As a doctrine, it seems overly speculative and void of practical benefits, and we'd rather get down to the business of getting more people saved. Questions about its coherence haunt pastors and Sunday school teachers, who often give weak-kneed answers that take more cues from eggs and water than from the revelation of Scripture.

Fred Sanders, professor at the Torrey Honors Institute at Biola University

(and a former teacher of mine), argues in **The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything** (Crossway) ★★★★★ that even though we continue to treat the doctrine of the Trinity as an “awkward guest in the evangelical household,” it is the necessary backdrop for everything evangelicals emphasize. As he puts it, “The gospel is Trinitarian, and the Trinity is the gospel.” His goal is to help evangelicals “embrace the doctrine of the Trinity

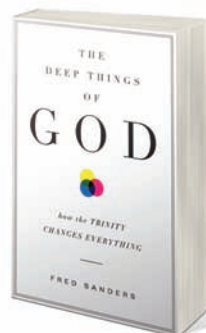
wholeheartedly and without reserve, as a central concern to evangelical Christianity.”

If Sanders accomplished only that, *The Deep Things of God* would be a notable contribution to the burgeoning literature aimed at helping evangelicals become more thoroughly Trinitarian. But he goes a step further, arguing not only that evangelicals need the Trinity to make sense of the gospel, but that we need it to make sense of *ourselves* as well. Our current evangelical milieu notwithstanding, Sanders writes that “evangelical Christians have been in reality the most thoroughly Trinitarian Christians in the history of the church.”

THOROUGHLY EVANGELICAL

The claim is a strong one, but Sanders is not capricious. While he acknowledges that the broader tradition of Christian theology has influenced him, Sanders limits himself to specifically evangelical sources to argue that evangelicals' emphases on a personal relationship with Jesus, devotional Bible reading, and conversational prayer are grounded in tacit Trinitarian commitments. Sanders deploys a surprising collage of sources to make his point. He unpacks the Trinitarian commitments of usual evangelical suspects John Piper, Billy Graham, and Francis Schaeffer, but he also incorporates evangelical outliers like Nicky Cruz, the gang leader turned pastor and author of *Run, Baby, Run*, and reaches back to lesser-known evangelicals, like A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

This charitable and optimistic reading of the evangelical tradition is a refreshing contrast to the constant barrage of criticisms and complaints that evangelicals have grown accustomed to. Sanders is not naïve about evangelical shallowness (indeed, his analysis of evangelicalism's decadence is worth the price of the book alone). Yet the main problem is our alienation from



our Trinitarian roots, which extend “not just into the history of the movement, but into the reality of who we are in Christ.”

This double dynamic is what makes *The Deep Things of God* a unique contribution to the ongoing discussion about the shape of the gospel. There is a temptation in the current debate to focus exclusively on whether the gospel includes social justice or not, to ask only *who* or *what* God has redeemed, rather than reflect about the nature of the God who redeems. Sanders’s contribution is a welcome reminder that regardless of whether the gospel is for society or individuals, its primary purpose is to draw us into the inner life of God. As he puts it, the gospel “not only meets our deepest needs but comes from God’s deepest self.”

THE INNER LIFE OF GOD

On these grounds Sanders guides us—helped by Susanna Wesley, 18th-century preacher Robert Hawker, and the contemporary praise chorus “Good to Me”—to the edge of one of the central mysteries of the faith, the inner life of the triune God before creation. Before God is the God of the gospel, Sanders contends, he is God in himself. “[The Trinity in itself] is the presupposition of the good news, since

There is a temptation in the current debate to focus exclusively on whether the gospel includes social justice or not, to ask only *who* or *what* God has redeemed, rather than reflect about the nature of the God who redeems.

‘God for us’ makes sense only if there is such a thing as ‘God in himself.’” Sanders knows that unpacking the doctrine of the Trinity doesn’t have an immediate practical payoff in terms of converting souls. But as he reminds us, “The doctrine of the Trinity expels a host of unworthy ideas and attitudes about God’s glory.”

After Sanders guides us through “the happy land of the Trinity,” he turns to examine the relationship between the inner life of God and the Good News, arguing that the gospel is nothing less than God’s self-giving to us. It is, in other words, the same size as God. At the same time, the shape of the gospel is Trinitarian. The Good News “is that God, who in himself is eternally the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, has become for us the adoptive Father, the incarnate Son, and

the outpoured Holy Spirit.” Our salvation is unremittably Trinitarian.

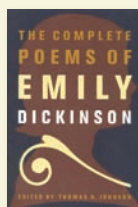
The uniqueness of Sanders’s account of the gospel for evangelical Protestants is clear by the relative absence of language about justification. Sanders expands the horizon of salvation beyond justification to include our adoption as children of God, which he dubs “the mightiest of God’s mighty acts of salvation.” Sanders is explicit that this does not minimize justification but rather puts it in its proper context. Salvation is more, but not less, than justification—and that *more* is our adoption as sons and daughters of God.

WHERE’S THE CHURCH?

Sanders’s arguments are evocative and ultimately persuasive. Yet there are lingering

MY TOP 5 BOOKS ON POETRY FOR THE SOUL

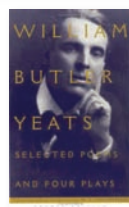
By Roger Lundin, author of *Believing Again: Doubt and Faith in a Secular Age* (Eerdmans, 2009)



THE COMPLETE POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON

EMILY DICKINSON, ED. THOMAS H. JOHNSON (BACK BAY BOOKS)

When it comes to God, Dickinson wrote near the end of her life, “we both believe, and disbelieve a hundred times an Hour, which keeps Believing nimble.” These dazzling, gnomic poems both comfort and confound the soul.



SELECTED POEMS AND FOUR PLAYS

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS, ED. M. L. ROSENTHAL (SCRIBNER)

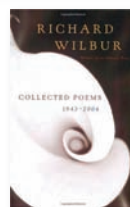
Yeats was a nominal Protestant who dabbled in esoteric religious practices, but his poetry nevertheless bore the imprint of biblical language and logic. Like a mystic meditating on the meaning of Christ’s wounds, he sensed “nothing can be sole or whole / That has not been rent.”



NEW AND COLLECTED POEMS 1931-2001

CZESŁAW MIŁOŚZ (ECCO)

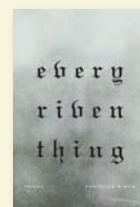
Shaped by the sufferings of Poland in World War II, this Nobel Prize-winning Catholic poet was driven by doubt yet also fueled by the hope that one day we “will rise, in undiminished light, / And be real, strong, free.” A remarkable thinker, an astonishing poet.



COLLECTED POEMS 1943-2004

RICHARD WILBUR (MARINER)

For almost 70 years, Wilbur has been writing poems marked by exceptional wisdom, elegance, and grace. “In the strict sense,” he observes, “We invent nothing, merely bearing witness / To what each morning brings again to light.”



EVERY RIVEN THING

Poems

CHRISTIAN WIMAN (FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX)

Recently published, this collection is packed with deeply personal poems of unusual depth, clarity, and candor. They speak of suffering and seeking in a world in which “God goes belonging to every riven thing He’s made.”

questions. For instance, it's not clear what Sanders wants evangelicals to do differently—other than read his book—to more deeply embed the Trinity into our movement. His strategy of using resources within evangelicalism, rather than turning to tradition, liturgy, and the sacraments, is promising, but left me wondering whether these resources are enough to produce the tacit Trinitarian awareness he suggests we've had in the past. Must we choose between recovering the Trinitarian basis of our own practices and learning more about tradition, liturgy, and church practices?

On a related theme, because Sanders's focus is on our salvation as individuals, there is little discussion about the relationship between the Trinity and the church, an omission that we can only hope Sanders remedies in future projects. For instance, while Sanders alludes to the Trinitarian grounding of evangelical missionary activity, he does not elaborate. The recent focus on the “missional” nature of the church has often been motivated by Trinitarian claims. So this makes for fertile ground for Sanders's contribution to the conversation.

Pleas for subsequent books and clarifications aside, *The Deep Things of God* is a “public performance” of evangelicalism desperately in need of repetition and imitation. Sanders has provided a template of careful exegesis of the evangelical tradition that builds on its strengths while gently correcting its blemishes. As a generous appropriation of distinctly evangelical resources, *The Deep Things of God* moves evangelical theology and church life in the right direction without making it any less evangelical.

More importantly, Sanders helps us peer into the deep things of God without losing our balance and falling into either mysticism or rationalism. His vivid prose doesn't make the topic any easier, but it does make it less intimidating. Sanders writes as he teaches—with a light touch and a joyful concern for his audience's learning and growth, but also cognizant of the dangers that are at hand when we approach the mysteries of God. Sanders is a sober but lively guide to the deep things of God, and evangelicals will benefit enormously from his tour. ✚

Matthew Lee Anderson blogs at Mere Orthodoxy.

Luminous Slice of China

In this historical novel, ordinary missionaries transcend extraordinary circumstances. By Cindy Crosby

To say that **City of Tranquil Light: A Novel** (Henry Holt) ★★★★★ is a missionary novel would be a reason for some people to dismiss it as inspirational fiction, a genre plagued with didactic tomes that serve more as evangelistic tracts than literary works. *City of Tranquil Light* is indeed a missionary novel, but it is much more than that. It's a luminous slice of place and time, bringing to life the Chinese landscape of the early 1900s and its people—and one couple who wanted to make a difference.

Bo Caldwell (*The Distant Land of My Father*) carefully crafts a narrative based on the lives of her maternal grandparents. Her tale brims with contrasts: hate and forgiveness, healing and destruction, evil and unselfish faith. Repeatedly, she shows the ability of ordinary people to respond to extraordinary circumstances with perseverance and relentless courage.

The story itself is simple. In 1906, Will Kiehn, an unprepossessing 20-year-old Mennonite farm boy, travels to China as a missionary. His first-person narration forms the backbone of the novel. Juxtaposed with his words are journal entries from Katherine Friesen, a 21-year-old medical missionary. Thrown together, they fall in love and marry. They move to Kuang P'ing Ch'eng—“City of Tranquil Light”—where they establish a medical mission.

Turning the pages is a sensory experience as Caldwell evokes the sights, sounds, and smells of China. A three-week trip down a canal introduces readers to superstitions: eyes painted on boats to help “see ahead,” gongs banged at dusk to frighten away evil spirits, roosters sacrificed for a safe journey.

Will and Katherine witness practices in China that initially shock and dismay them. But as an older missionary wisely tells

Katherine, “We are here to offer the people the gift of faith, not remake their way of life, even when the change seems necessary and right. . . . Remember that we're guests, and uninvited ones at that.”

Despite numerous difficulties and personal tragedy, Will and Katherine remain in China as hostility toward foreigners escalates under Chiang Kai-shek. The country sinks into depravity and destitution. At one point, the couple cares for 150 orphans. They haunt the village marketplace, buying small children for as little as three dollars apiece, knowing the children will otherwise be sold into prostitution by their starving parents. Somehow, they feed as many as 400 people each day. Bandits loot and kill.

Grief and poverty age both Will and Katherine beyond their years. “There is so much suffering I cannot take it in,” Katherine writes. When the Chinese ask Will why he stays, he replies, “My home is here. And if my belly were full but my heart empty, what would I gain?” In several instances, Will overcomes his anger and bitterness and offers aid to his enemies. “I have learned to do what God places in front of me, whatever it is.”

Resounding through Caldwell's story is the incredible sense of purpose and community that sustains Will and Katherine through grinding hardship. “Again and again we were saved by the people we had come to help and carried through by the Lord we had come to serve,” Will reminisces toward the end of his life.

Historical fiction fans, those who appreciate missionary stories, and those who enjoy a good novel will find *City of Tranquil Light* an absorbing, engaging read. ✚

Cindy Crosby is the editor of the forthcoming *Ancient Christian Devotional: Lectionary Cycle B* (InterVarsity Press, 2011).



WISE STEWARDS

Philosophical Foundations of Christian Parenting

MICHAEL W. AUSTIN

(KREGEL, 192 PAGES)

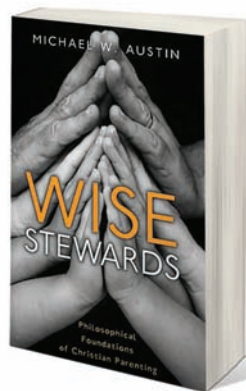
Parents should equip their children to acquire, develop, and practice intellectual virtue, because this is a necessary (but not sufficient) requirement for shalom. But what is intellectual virtue? An intellectual virtue is an excellence of the mind. It is an intellectual character trait that enables one to reason well for the purpose of living well. Some examples of intellectual virtues that Scripture urges us to embody include attentiveness, prudence, teachability, intellectual tenacity, intellectual humility, love of truth, and wisdom. It does not matter whether one becomes a college professor, computer technician, artist, or electrician. Simply by virtue of being human, we live more fulfilled lives and can perform our jobs better if we possess the intellectual virtues and apply their fruit to our lives. . . .

Seeking to develop intellectual virtue in our children is also important as a safeguard against some of the ways in which our culture seeks to influence people. Several years ago, a PBS program detailed an advertising strategy called emotional branding. The strategy is “to fill the empty places where noncommercial institutions, like schools and churches, might once have done the job. Brands become more than just a mark of quality, they become an invitation to a longed-for lifestyle, a ready-made identity.” This program points out that those who are brand managers talk as if they truly are fulfilling the needs people have for meaning, community, and even transcendence. Of course, in the end, it’s only an iPod, a car, or a pair of running shoes. But this works out for the companies, because people have to go shopping again in the attempt to get these needs met.

This is related to intellectual virtue, because in emotional branding the advertiser tries to bypass the rational mind and tap into these longings we possess. They want us to associate these longings with their products or services, and they seek to

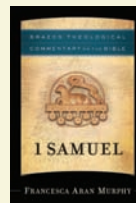
accomplish this by their marketing and advertising. The intellectually virtuous person will recognize that the kind of car one drives is generally unrelated to finding meaningful relationships with other people. We need to teach our children to be careful, critical thinkers, for not only advertisers but also politicians, pastors, and others may use the same methods of persuasion. One of the best safe-guards in these contexts is a sound mind.

Reprinted by permission of Kregel. All rights reserved.



1 SAMUEL

FRANCESCA ARAN MURPHY (BRAZOS PRESS)



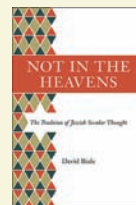
Many commentaries exhibit a strange doubleness. On technical points they are sharp and decisive; on large questions they are evasive. Not Francesca Aran Murphy's *1 Samuel*, the latest volume in the Brazos Theological

Commentary series. Murphy is almost belligerently forthright in laying out her interpretations, making her book a delightful read even when one disagrees. And whereas typical commentary is written with all the verve of an instruction manual, Murphy's prose is fresh, witty, at times exuberant—not to draw attention to itself, but in mimetic homage to the richness of the text.

NOT IN THE HEAVENS

The Tradition of Jewish Secular Thought

DAVID BIALE (PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS)

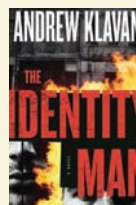


“Secularization” should be understood as a consequence of the Reformation, so the story goes. In a similar vein, David Biale suggests that there is a dialectical relationship between Jewish secular

thought (which was enormously influential in shaping the self-understanding of “modernity”) and Judaism's religious patrimony. Lucid and winsome, Biale's book is also melancholy. “No trajectory toward the future can be charted with confidence,” he writes. “Secularism can make no promise of continuity or survival, but it does guarantee the freedom to experiment, without which neither continuity nor survival is possible.” Pretty thin gruel, isn't it?

THE IDENTITY MAN

ANDREW KLAVAN (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT)



Don't start this novel unless you have plenty of time to keep reading. Yes, as the title suggests, it probes the meaning of identity (and shows why a lot of fashionable ideas about “identity” are destructively wrong), but Andrew Klavan prompts us to think afresh about this subject by telling a story that won't let go. Fast-paced, savvy, violent, laced with allusions to current events and sometimes rising to Swiftian indignation, it is also informed by Christian hope and the astonishing reality of grace.

Condoleezza's Faith

The former secretary of state talks about her sense of higher calling. Interview by Sarah Pulliam Bailey

In 1963, when she was a child, Condoleezza Rice was attending her father's church when a bomb exploded just a few blocks away at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. **Extraordinary, Ordinary People: A Memoir of Family** (Crown Archetype) recounts the segregation the former secretary of state experienced growing up and her life as a daughter of a Presbyterian minister. Rice spoke about faith and foreign policy with *Christianity Today* online editor Sarah Pulliam Bailey in New York City during her book tour.

Did you feel as if God was directing you toward public service?

I don't think God said, *You're going to quit piano and become a Soviet specialist*. It's a combination of circumstances and making choices, but I've always tried to seek guidance. I think I've been much more capable of dealing with ambiguity and what might come in the future as a result of faith.

How did your faith influence the way you conducted foreign policy?

I just asked for guidance. I can remember in difficult times, like when things were really bad in Iraq, I would not say, "Lord, can you help me figure out this problem?" but, "Can you somehow show us a way out of this?" That's how I think about it, not specific answers to specific questions.

You have said you worry about the government trying to legislate morality, and you know that evangelicals care very much about the issue of abortion.

I'm generally pretty libertarian in these matters because Americans are quite good, actually, at finding a way to deal with these extremely divisive

and difficult moral issues. It's not that I'm a relativist.

Has your faith informed your position on abortion?

I'm still coming to terms with it. While I don't think the country is ready for legislation to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, certainly I cannot imagine why one would be in favor of partial-birth abortion. I also can't imagine why one would take these decisions out of the hands of the family.

How do you talk about Christianity in public?

There are very few people who don't know that I'm Christian. I also recognize that it's not something that one talks about in every sentence one utters, because then people start to mischaracterize and caricature those of us who are Christian.

INTERVIEW

How can Christians speak with conviction without alienating others?

It's extremely important not to assault people. Even Christ tried to meet people where they were rather than just being harsh with everybody. He speaks to the woman at the well. We can try to have a lighter touch sometimes.

You say you've had theological debates with your father. Do you still wrestle with some of the Bible's teachings?

Sure. We all struggle with some of the representations of women in the Bible, and yet I know and find remarkable that at the beginning of the faith, Christ's resurrection, it's women who are chosen to tell the first story.

How does your current church involvement shape your spiritual growth?

Bible study is really essential. I've tried reading the daily

passages, and I fall off or don't really engage it. But whenever I've been in a group, it adds to my understanding.

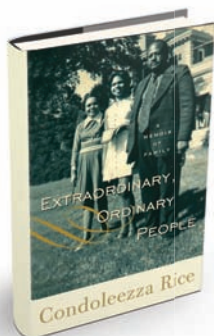
How does your faith help you deal with the interplay between religion and foreign policy?

Jerusalem is a place where the great religions don't so much come together—they clash. Man will use God for his own purposes rather than the other way around. That for me is the most terrifying thing about the combination of religion and politics. That's why I don't see any conflict with being Christian and wanting to see a Jewish state, being Christian and believing there can be a Palestinian state, because the state is the state.

Do you feel comfortable using the word evangelical to describe yourself?

I'm evangelical and I'm proud of it. I consider an evangelical to be someone who professes faith in a way that draws others to it. It's interesting, because here in the United States we have separation of powers and separation of church and state, but we are the most religious people in the world. It serves us well, because when you're religious, you at least know that you have to answer to some higher calling than your own whims or desires. ☩

Go to *Christianity Today.com/go/condoleezza* for an extended version of this interview.



The Devil in Tinsel Town

How Hollywood has depicted exorcism. By Steven D. Greydanus

The new supernatural horror flick **The Rite**, opening January 28 and starring Anthony Hopkins, is the latest in a long line of Hollywood films in the subgenre inaugurated by William Friedkin's 1973 landmark *The Exorcist*. Movies had explored exorcism before 1973, but Friedkin's film spotlighted the phenomenon in an unprecedented way.

The Exorcist represents a pivotal link between the Catholic-inflected piety of Golden Age Hollywood and the demonic world of latter-day horror. It is also the source of much of our culture's awareness of and ideas about possession and exorcism. Real exorcisms in both Catholic and Protestant milieus proliferated in the film's wake, and recent films continue to demonstrate its impact.

The form of exorcism used in *The Exorcist* is from the Roman Ritual of 1614, which remained unchanged until updates in 1999 and 2004. The film's depiction of the rite and phenomenon of possession, though sensationalized, is fairly authentic. Notable elements include the demon's resistance to exorcism and other ambiguities. For example, the victim writhes in pain when a

priest sprinkles her with water—though it is *not* blessed holy water. Placebo effect? Or is the demon deliberately casting doubt on the reality of the possession, the effectiveness of the church's arsenal, or both?

Casting out demons goes back to the time of Jesus, and in cinema, back to the silent era. The 1912 film *From the Manger to the Cross* depicts Jesus healing a demoniac. Cecil B. DeMille's silent *The King of Kings* (1927) opens with Jesus dramatically delivering Mary Magdalene of possession by seven demons.

Although the Devil and satanic cults surfaced in films prior to *The Exorcist*, possession and efforts to cast out demons were rare. But by the late 1960s, the pious certainties of Golden Age Hollywood had crumbled, and a sophisticated jadedness prevailed. Mia Farrow, carrying the Devil's child in *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), flips through the Easter 1966 issue of *Time* magazine with the cover question "Is God Dead?" By the end, neither God nor his agents has intervened, and the Devil is victorious. *The Omen* (1976) likewise ends with heaven defaulting while hell triumphs.

Various *Exorcist* sequels failed theologically

as well as artistically to match the original. *Exorcist II: The Heretic* (1977) floated some bizarre ideas: Catholic leadership distances itself from belief in Satan's existence, while the late Father Merrin seems to have been transformed into a New Age disciple of the censured Jesuit mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. In *The Exorcist III* (1990), the demon from the first two films takes further revenge on Merrin by reanimating his body with the soul of a murderer. Both films depict exorcism in essentially magical terms rather than as spiritual warfare.

Dominion: Prequel to the Exorcist (2005) attempts to match the spirit of the original. Directed by Paul Schrader (a Calvin College alumnus), it recounts Merrin's first encounter with the demon in Kenya. Schrader's pensive, theological approach didn't match studio expectations, and the film was reworked by Renny Harlin as a more typical horror show, *Exorcist: The Beginning* (2004).

At about the same time came two films based on the real-life case of a young Bavarian woman named Anneliese Michel: Scott Derrickson's *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* (2005) and Hans-Christian Schmid's *Requiem* (2006). What distinguishes both of these sober, restrained films is their ambiguity: Is it demonic possession or mental illness? Derrickson takes a forensic approach while Schmid uses a quasi-documentary style.

Taking the documentary angle further, the 2010 mockumentary *The Last Exorcism* offers a *Blair Witch/Paranormal Activity* spin on the material, in which a disillusioned nondenominational pastor who no longer believes in God agrees to participate in a documentary in order to expose exorcism as a sham.

As for *The Rite* (which CT had not yet seen at press time), allegedly "inspired by true events," Hopkins plays a priest who literally has a devil of a fight on his hands. ➤

Steven D. Greydanus, host of *DecentFilms.com*, is a film critic for *Christianity Today* and the *National Catholic Register*.

Strangely Warmed

Before his heart was "strangely warmed," John Wesley possessed a cold and uninspired faith. To the young Wesley, the road to heaven was paved with good works and sincere devotion, but when it came to grace, the early-18th-century preacher was clueless.

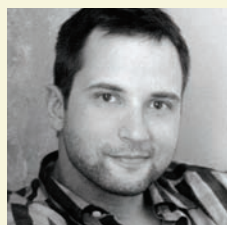
This is how he is portrayed in **Wesley** ★★☆☆, recently released on DVD through Vision Video. The movie, which also depicts the faith journey of John's younger brother (and future prolific hymn writer) Charles, is well written—Ken Curtis, founder of *Christian History* magazine, and Norman Stone, director of the stellar 1985 BBC film *Shadowlands*, contributed to the screenplay—and reasonably well photographed. But while Burgess Jenkins does a nice job as the title character, the supporting cast is mediocre at best, and the film loses some life as a result.

Still, *Wesley* is an informative biopic of the man. Thanks to friendships with several Moravians who helped him understand the true meaning of faith and grace, he became an extraordinary force in church history. (More: *Wesley theMovie.com*) —Mark Moring, CT senior associate editor



TWO MINUTES WITH...

Brandon Heath



Brandon Heath made a splash with the 2008 hit "Give Me Your Eyes." On his new album, *Leaving Eden*, the 31-year-old explores the Fall—including his own—but keeps

turning back to the hope of Christ. *Christianity Today's* Mark Moring spoke with Heath.

Leaving Eden is a dark title.

It sounds dark, but I want people to know that healing has been a big part of my journey in the last three years. It was prompted by a really hard breakup that made me wonder, *Man, am I ever going to get married?* I went to a counselor who said, "Let's go all the way to the very beginning. I want you to mourn the loss of Eden, the root of all of our problems. If you don't ever face it, you'll always hold a little bit of bitterness."

So *Leaving Eden* is really a process of healing—of realizing, yes, we're walking away from Eden, but there are two directions we could go: in the direction of hope, or in the direction of hopelessness. The album moves in the direction of hope.

The title track presents a bleak picture of the world, but the bridge says: "I'm going home / There's no place like home."

Well, I know my eternal destination. I certainly thought about Dorothy and all the fantastical things she saw in Oz. But it wasn't home. It wasn't real. It wasn't permanent. This world, as magnificent as it is, is not home. It's not heaven. That's the point.

What is the story behind "One," the last song on the album?

[Civil rights activist] Dorothy Height had just died, and I thought, *She was just one person, and look what she did.* Most of the social change in our country was brought about by the church. Most people think the church is trying to keep them from changing, but that's not how the church works. We are the ones who are supposed to bring social change. And it's through love and not hate that we get things done. And that can start with one person.



A Cry from the Depths

Amos Lee seeks hope amid ruins. By Andy Whitman

Amos Lee has been through hell and caught a few glimpses of heaven, and he sings about the journey on his fourth album, *Mission Bell* (Blue Note) ★★★★★. Although the biographical details are lacking, the lyrics hint at the collapse of career dreams, long-term relationships, and self-esteem as he sings about being "headed for a breakdown" and "face down on the bedroom floor." What is clear is that *Mission Bell* sounds like an honest and uplifting spiritual wrestling match. If his life is—or was—in ruins, Lee still manages to hobble with a shepherd's crook as a walking stick.

Lee's magical voice comprises equal parts James Taylor-folk warmth and Bill Withers-genial soul, but here he bites down a little harder, most notably on "Jesus," the album's pivotal song and a stark plea for help paired with a gritty gospel vocal. It is soul music in the best sense of the term, a desperate cry from the depths.

Roots music stalwarts Lucinda Williams, Willie Nelson, and Sam Beam of Iron and Wine put in some memorable cameos, but

this is Lee's show, and he wrestles poetically and forcefully with the concepts of a loving God and a life in tatters. The lovely, pensive opener "El Camino" finds him with plenty of time to pray and waste away, while the soulful ballad "Violin" captures him midway between a breakdown and a breakthrough.

Lee's songwriting occasionally succumbs to clichés, and there are moments when the angst-ridden approach swamps the personal, painful narrative. But it's a quibble. This is Lee's best album—his dark night of the soul set to sympathetic musical accompaniment and supple, soaring vocals.

"Look up child, the world is gone," he sings on "Windows Are Rolled Down," one of the album's best songs of regret and hard-won hope. Then he vows to move on with his newfound faith and his broken heart. Everything has been burned away. And Amos Lee has discovered that there is something shining in the charred ruins.



Andy Whitman is a regular contributor to *Paste* magazine and *Image* journal.

BOOKS

SAINT PETER

The Underestimated Apostle

MARTIN HENGEL, TRANSLATED BY THOMAS TRAPP
(EERDMANS)

★★★★★ Though Peter seems to drop out of the apostolic picture in the middle of Luke's Acts, he continued to play a crucial role, argues Martin Hengel, in forming both Jewish and Gentile Christian congregations. In this scholarly, accessible, and brief work, the late professor emeritus of New Testament and Judaism at Tübingen University looks at Peter the theologian, mission strategist, and family man, and how married apostles contributed to the rapid spread of the faith. —Mark Galli

CLOSING THE WINDOW

Steps to Living Porn Free

TIM CHESTER (INTERVARSITY PRESS)

★★★★★ It's no longer news that porn is not only pandemic in the culture but also in the church. And it's not just the young man's problem, but that of older men and even of women. Church planter Tim Chester faces this reality practically and theologically. He offers a five-fold approach that incorporates honest self-examination, suggests effective accountability, and offers a God-centered vision that can sabotage the attraction of porn. —Mark Galli

AMERICAN GRACE

How Religion Divides and Unites Us

ROBERT D. PUTNAM AND DAVID E. CAMPBELL
(SIMON & SCHUSTER)

★★★★★ At 573 pages (not counting 100 pages of footnotes), this is not exactly light recommended reading. But for those who like big studies of American religion, this is your cup of tea. In particular, the authors explore the relationship of religion and politics, and how that relationship has contributed to and detracted from America's common life. Religious neighbors are better neighbors than their secular counterparts, it turns out, but also less tolerant of dissent and supportive of civil liberties. So, yes, the book is full of surprising and seemingly contradictory findings. —Mark Galli

WHO CHOSE THE GOSPELS?

Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy

C. E. HILL (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS)

★★★★★ Sometimes the silliness is so, well, silly, you don't even want to respond—like the speculation in *The Da Vinci Code* that imperial politics and papal manipulation made the four Gospels "Scripture." Until people start believing the fiction. Thus the need for a book like this, in which New Testament professor C. E. Hill of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando patiently unveils the evidence that these four books emerged preeminent because the early church leaders were convinced—surprise!—that they were the most reliable accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus. —Mark Galli

A GOD-SIZED VISION

Revival Stories that Stretch and Stir

COLLIN HANSEN AND JOHN WOODBRIDGE (ZONDERVAN)

★★★★★ Reformed wunderkind Collin Hansen (*Young, Restless, Reformed*) and seasoned historian John Woodbridge (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) team up to give readers a brief and energetic history of revivals. The fast-paced narrative notes time and again the men and women who had a "God-sized vision" for what Jonathan Edwards described as "the surprising work of the Spirit of God" in every age, on many continents. —Mark Galli

NAVIGATING YOUR PERFECT STORM

BOB WENZ (BIBLICA)

★★★★★ This pastor of 27 years and former vice president of the National Association of Evangelicals is dealing with his own perfect storm: In 2005, he was diagnosed with sarcoidosis, an incurable lung disease. So both as pastor and person, he knows about adversity. Thankfully, he avoids the narcissism usually found in this genre, and instead anchors the book in Jesus' farewell discourse, John 13 to 16. Add Wenz's uncommon sense and flashes of insight, and you have a solid and wise book on suffering. —Mark Galli

RE-IMAGING ELECTION

Divine Election as Representing God to Others and Others to God

SUZANNE McDONALD (EERDMANS)

★★★★★ Calvin College theologian Suzanne McDonald wades into the troubled waters of one of the most controversial of doctrines, and emerges not only alive, but with something fresh. Election is not about who gets

into heaven and who doesn't, but, according to McDonald, about who is called to represent God to others, and more to the point, who represents others to God. She argues biblically for the prominent role of the Holy Spirit in election, and the priestly nature of the church's election: "The elect exist radically and intrinsically for the sake of the other," she says, "and to bring blessing to those who are apparently outside the promises of God." This is academic theology, yes, but one that speaks directly to the mission of the church. —Mark Galli

PASSING IT ON

An Autobiography with Spirit

SUSAN G. BAKER (BRIGHT SKY PRESS)

★★★★★ As wife of former secretary of state and White House chief of staff Jim Baker, Susan Baker could have written a political tell-all. Instead, this godly woman wrote "an autobiography with spirit," chronicling how faith in God helped her cope as wife and mother in the public eye. A private woman, but never shy, Baker protested raunchy rock lyrics, organized against homelessness, coordinated prayer for First Ladies, and strove for healing in the Middle East. —David Neff

ON DVD

UNCOMMON VISION: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN HOWARD GRIFFIN

DUCKWORKS, INC. | UNRATED | SEPTEMBER 23

★★★★★ Some stories defy all efforts to make them dull and academic. John Howard Griffin became a writer, a composer, a blind man, a photographer, a monk, a World War II French resistance agent—and most famously, for his book *Black Like Me*, a chemically darkened black man so that he could reveal the segregated South to white America. Grounded in his strong Catholic faith, Griffin did what too few dared: he saw the right path and failed to talk himself off of it. This clunky documentary does little to enliven Griffin's story, but it doesn't need to. —Trevor Persaud

DEVIL

UNIVERSAL PICTURES | RATED PG-13 | DECEMBER 21

★★★★★ Not a mere horror movie about the Devil and evil, this film, written and produced by M. Night Shyamalan, offers more than frights and thrills. Five strangers are trapped in an elevator—and the Devil is using one of them

to punish the others for past iniquities. Tucked inside the story is a lesson in forgiveness as characters are challenged to forgive those who have trespassed against them. Although this PG-13 flick pales in comparison to the hair-tin-gling moments of Shyamalan's classic *The Sixth Sense*, *Devil* asks: Are we willing to confess our own sins and forgive others? —*Jordan Monnahan*

► STILL WALKING

CRITERION | UNRATED | FEBRUARY 8

★★★★★ Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda's latest film fixates on the everyday while telling a deeper story. The Yokoyama family gathers each year to remember the day of their oldest son's accidental drowning. On the 15th anniversary, various narrative threads unwind, capturing the universal dynamic of families and intergenerational conflict—including bitterness, forgiveness, anger, and love. It reminds viewers to treasure loved ones before it's too late. As one character says, "People might die, but they are never really gone." Visually stunning and genuinely acted, *Still Walking* pays homage to an older generation of Japanese filmmakers that has something relevant and meaningful to say today. —*Alissa Wilkinson*

► THE LAST EXORCISM

LIONSGATE | RATED PG-13 | JANUARY 4

★★★★★ In this mockumentary, Cotton Marcus thinks religion is bogus, but that doesn't keep him from pretending to be a preacher who can cast out demons—for money, that is. One day, he decides to own up to his scam, taking a camera crew to his final exorcism for a 16-year-old girl. But when he runs into what appears to be a real case of demon possession, his lack of faith is rocked. Marcus had told his camera crew, "If you believe in God, you have to believe in demons." Now that he sees that demons are apparently real, will he affirm the reverse? —*Mark Moring*

MUSIC

ANDREW RIPP

► SHE REMAINS THE SAME

(CATAPULT / GET RIPP'D MUSIC)

★★★★★ On "Savior," Andrew Ripp sings, "Don't worry about me, cuz I know where I'm going when I'm gone." Even though Ripp incorporates religious lyrics into his songs, his smart and uplifting music is better suited for a coffee shop than a church sanctuary.

Combining soulful Chicago-style blues with folksy Nashville-flavored bluegrass, Ripp's latest album is unapologetically emotive college rock. After recently scoring opening slots for Ryan Cabrera and Robert Randolph and the Family Band, this talented young singer-songwriter is an emerging artist to watch on both Christian and secular pop charts. —*Ron Augustine*

JOSH WHITE

► ACHOR

(BEC)

★★★★★ Mixing worship music with Americana's lilt, Josh White embeds his unpretentious indie song list with plucky acoustic guitars, poignant strings, and airy woodwinds. His kaleidoscope of acoustic instrumentation—blended with his smoky baritone—is a relevant tribute to modern music's folk revival. Still, sweet sacred messages are *Achor's* most compelling component. Whether portraying a doubting Thomas in the bluegrass-leaning "Let Me See Your Hands" or God's gentle sympathy in the warm fellowship of "He Who Feeds the Ravens," White provides fresh winds in the stale sails of modern worship. —*Andrew Greer*

JJ HELLER

► WHEN I'M WITH YOU

(STONE TABLE)

★★★★★ When her dream of playing college basketball didn't pan out, JJ Heller picked up a guitar and started writing music. Sweet, folksy pop flows as Heller sings of faith, hope, and love—including her bond with 2-year-old daughter Lucy: "I could never count all the ways that you change me, Baby / Every day the sky is a deeper shade of blue." On "Kingdom Come," she sings, "All sorrows and sighs / Will fade away into the night / And all will be made new." —*Mark Moring*

DAVID WILCOX

► REVERIE

(WHAT ARE RECORDS?)

★★★★★ David Wilcox recorded his 17th album live to capture the magical spark that arcs between audience and performer. The satisfying result leaves out applause but captures a warm vulnerability. *Reverie* is a masterful work of wit and poetry that finds new metaphors for typical Wilcox fare: soul-stirring emotional lifelines, intimate relational sketches, and poignant stories and snapshots. Apparently no one told Wilcox it's impolite to talk about God and

politics: he prophetically satirizes Christian pride in "Piece of Me" and "Little Fish," and parodies torture and jingoism in "We Call It Freedom." It's incisive honesty that still maintains Wilcox's sensitivity. —*Jeremy V. Jones*

AARON NEVILLE

► I KNOW I'VE BEEN CHANGED

(EMI GOSPEL)

★★★★★ This is a celebration of gospel music, but also of the gospel—a myth-turned-true that has ramifications both cosmic and personal. It changed everything, including the life of this singer. It's the story of Jesus, but also of Aaron Neville. Gospel music is a good showcase for this soulful singer; indeed, he brings sweetness and sensitivity but also authority to everything here. He's singing the power of God, and his own story of redemption. There's warmth and conviction throughout. —*Josh Hurst*

BRIAN DOERKSEN AND CHRISTOPHER GRECO

► PRODIGAL GOD

(DOERKSEN MUSIC)

★★★★★ What if neither son in the parable of the Prodigal Son had it right? What if the father was the wasteful one, squandering his extravagant love? That's the premise of this musical created by worship veteran Brian Doerksen and playwright Christopher Greco. The 23-song project has Doerksen playing the bitter, jealous elder son; Colin Janz as the carefree younger son; Ron Kenoly as the father; and Canadian singer Marika as a fictional slave girl whom the younger son falls in love with and tries to rescue. Style varies widely, though the most common is theatrical pop and some cheesy '80s pop. —*Jeremy V. Jones*

JOSH GROBAN

► ILLUMINATIONS

(143 RECORDS / REPRISE)

★★★★★ Josh Groban's latest album pretty much sticks to the template that his fans have come to expect—and that's a good thing, coming from this uber-talented vocalist. His rich, glassy tenor rises above the warm, understated instrumentals and shines even brighter than usual here thanks to his smart choice of original material. Groban's songs balance a world-weary romanticism with some stirring expressions of faith, particularly on a trio of tunes ("Higher Window," "If I Walk Away," "Love Only Knows") that serve as a centerpiece to this fine album. —*Robert Ham*

Seminary & Graduate School Directory

It can be an exhausting tune. Perhaps you're familiar with this dilemma: You rest a bit too long in the work Christ has done for you and realize you're getting comfortably complacent. So you charge into doing "good" works and find yourself flirting with legalism. You begin to wonder if the song and dance is worth it.

For centuries, Christians have wrestled with their identity as God's people, asking *Who are we? And what do we do about it?* Today, we ask the same questions. Since our works will be accounted for, isn't it important to "do" for God? Or, if God already knows us intimately, shouldn't we just "be" ourselves?

There's no easy answer. But as we seek God's intentions for us, we'll likely find that, lovingly paired, doing and being make a beautiful harmony.

Do. Be. Do? Just one of the many questions you'll ask at Regent College.



www.regent-college.edu/ct
1.800.663.8664
Vancouver, Canada

 **Regent College**
AN INTERNATIONAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF CHRISTIAN STUDIES

THE MASTER'S SEMINARY



**We Train Men
as if Lives
Depended on It**

Information: 800-CALL-TMS
Admissions: rmehringer@tms.edu
www.tms.edu

Seminary Degrees via Distance Learning and Mentorship Studies

- Doctoral, Master's, Bachelor's, and Associate Degrees
- Majors in Apologetics, Bible, Ministry, Philosophy, Theology and more
- Work one-on-one with the mentor of your choice throughout your entire degree program

Download our free catalog at:
www.ColumbiaSeminary.edu

 **Columbia**
Evangelical Seminary

P.O. Box 1189 • Buckley, WA 98321
Email: ces@columbiaSeminary.edu
Phone: 360-802-6437

"Guaranteeing a future for the Christian mind"



Our Distinctive Vision

Academy, Abbey, Apostolate

Seattle Pacific University's School of Theology offers two graduate degree programs to empower you for the challenges of Christian mission and ministry in the 21st century. Both programs offer a distinctive vision based on Academy (scholarship), Abbey (spiritual formation) and Apostolate (service).

SPU's M.A. in Theology and M.Div. Degrees

www.spu.edu/gradtheology



**NORTHWESTERN
COLLEGE**

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

WE'RE ON THE MAP WITH A FEW SURPRISES

Get to know Northwestern College—you may be surprised. Our achievements and culture of scholarship and integral faith shatter assumptions.

- Seven Fulbright Scholars in the past seven years.
- Broad programs of study including international business, digital media arts, engineering and kinesiology.
- World-renowned faculty experts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, hieroglyphics and marine biology.
- Award-winning media communication programs and ownership of 15 radio stations.
- Partner programs in Ecuador, Kenya and India.
- **NEW THIS YEAR** Online master's degrees in theological studies and leadership.

LEADING IN SERIOUS SCHOLARSHIP AND INTEGRAL FAITH

Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minnesota is a nondenominational Christian college propelling the intellectual lives and spiritual growth of its 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students.



651-631-5100 | 800-692-4020 | NWC.EDU

Marketplace

Cost: 72 cents per character (each space and punctuation counts as a character); avg. 45 characters per line. Min. \$61.20 (85 characters). CHRISTIANITY TODAY check-marked box ☒ \$22 each insertion; box around ad \$43 each insertion. Ads set display style: \$425 per column inch. Combination discount rates available for LEADERSHIP and YOUR CHURCH. All classified ads automatically placed on ChristianityToday.com at no additional charge. Prepayment and written confirmation needed to process ads. Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or personal check accepted. Employment ads given priority. All other ads placed in first available issue. Deadline for reservation or cancellation is seven weeks prior to actual issue date. Address correspondence to: The Marketplace; 465 Gundersen Dr.; Carol Stream, IL 60188; or contact Peggy Gomez, Advertising Account Executive, at: 630.260.6202 x4239; fax 630.260.9401; e-mail Marketplace@ChristianityToday.com.

[Employment Opportunities]

SENIOR PASTOR

River Terrace Church (Christian Reformed), located on the edge of the Michigan State University campus, seeks a pastor who will lead the church as it seeks to cultivate hearts and minds to flourish in Christ. (Dr. Clayton Libolt, our current senior pastor, will be retiring later in 2011.) Responsibilities include preaching, worship, and leadership as pastor of the congregation and head of staff. Send résumés and letters of interest by March 1, 2011, to: Search Committee; River Terrace Church; 1509 River Terrace Drive; East Lansing, MI 48823; or search@riverterrace.org. More info at www.riverterrace.org.

☒ **DENTIST** Great opportunity to join a Christian group practice in central Pennsylvania. 570-323-6116. Pass this on.

[Books, Tapes & Films]

☒ **JESUS IS COMING** by V. Lawrence. Order at 877-421-7323 or www.BarnesandNoble.com.

WWW.WIPFANDSTOCK.COM

Your source for great Christian books!

EVOLUTION NEEDS AN ADJECTIVE

Tossing Darwin out of science. An e-book by F.P. Nelson, M.D. www.evolutionneedsanadjective.com.

THE DEEPER CHRISTIAN LIFE AND HOUSE CHURCH MOVEMENT

Books and tapes. Free catalog: 800-228-2665; www.seedsoftheword.com.

HAVE YOU SEEN THE WORD?

Sweet Jesus is the movie that answers the question, "What would Jesus do?" Deluxe DVD/CD set at www.gweniviere.com/sweet-jesus.html.

EVERY CHRISTIAN

should read this book about blasphemy, murder and the Lord in a jury trial. Buy on Amazon or www.GodOnTrial.ws.

R. WATCHMAN

End times book you must read to believe! Like a Thief 4. Limited edition available at Amazon. www.newrev9online.com.

[Retirement]

PENNEY RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

the premier Christian Continuing Care Retirement Community, has served ministers and missionaries for more than 84 years. Call 800-638-3138 or visit www.penneyretirementcommunity.org.

[Travel]

☒ **GOLDEN RULE TRAVEL** is a Christian agency specializing in wholesale and bulk rate airline tickets for church and missionary travel. We try extra hard to save you money! Call 800-950-3599 (FLY) or go to www.goldenruletravel.com.

BOUND FOR BOSTON?

Stay at the historic Christian Conference Center. The Walker Center, ideal for group accommodations or bed and breakfast. Easy commute to downtown/airport. Phone: 617-969-3919; e-mail: Reservations@walkerctr.org; www.walkerctr.org.

LONDON, U.K.

Highbury Centre Christian guesthouse. Quiet location on private road, close to bus and train/tube station. Reductions for missionaries and full-time ministers. www.thehighburycentre.org.

☒ **PILGRIM TOURS:** Exceptional Bible Land Tours to Israel, Egypt Steps of Moses & Joseph, Nile Cruises & Exodus, Jordan, Greece Steps of Paul, Italy, Germany Faith of Our Fathers, Churches of Revelation. 800-322-0788; www.pilgrimtours.com.

[Services]

CALLED TO PREACH?

www.IndependentBaptistAlliance.com; 352-621-4981. We can help with ordination and other topics.

FREE

Grant newsletter for ministries. Here-4-You Christian Grant Consulting. www.ChristianFundingDirectory.com; toll-free: 866-HERE-4-U-1.

**Christian kids on drugs?
Abusing alcohol? Visit us.**
www.notalone.org

[Services]

WRITING, EDITING AND MORE

Don't settle for boring when you can have brilliant. www.CleverSmithWriting.com.

[Education]

☒ **LEARN SPANISH!** Or any of 20 other languages. Conversational study courses with Christian emphasis. www.languagesforchrist.org.

CHRISTIAN DISTANCE LEARNING AT ITS BEST

www.Seminary.ws.

REGUS UNIVERSITY

M.B.A., D.B.A., J.D., M.Div., D.Min., and P.Psy.D. degrees available. www.RegusU.org.

EARN SEMINARY DEGREES AT HOME

Columbia Evangelical Seminary; 360-802-6437; www.ColumbiaSeminary.edu; CES@ColumbiaSeminary.edu.

DEGREES THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE

Associate's through Ph.D. credit for life experience. Low tuition. Accredited schools. For a free catalog: www.lbcs.org; 352-621-4991; or write Liberty Bible College & Seminary; 5480 S. Suncoast Blvd.; Homosassa, FL 34446.

[Business Opportunities]

MOMS HELPING MOMS

work from home! Computer required; www.mykidscount.com or 281-252-8133.

OPEN YOUR OWN READING CENTER

Operate from home. It's needed, it's rewarding. Huge demand. Great results. Earn \$40 to \$120 per hour. Not a franchise. We provide complete training and materials. www.Academic-Associates.com; 800-861-9196.

CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR CHRISTIANS who want to earn a reliable income from home. Please request information from www.FamiliesinFaith.com.

[Ministry Opportunities]

MISSIONARIES

If you are considering changing mission boards, or looking to affiliate with a non-denominational, faith-based, evangelical mission-sending agency, consider serving with Ripe for Harvest. Contact Dr. Tim Smith, 480-373-9387; RFHPhoenix@gmail.com; or visit us at www.ripeforharvest.org.

BECOME A CHAPLAIN

Providing ministry, blessing, and services to people in need. www.chaplainsinservice.com.

BE A MISSION NANNY

Volunteer women needed to serve overseas with missionary families as domestic/childcare help. www.MissionNannys.org.

[Financial Services]

MONEY PROBLEMS?

Call us first. 800-747-9307. Consolidate your bills without a loan. Family Life Credit Services: www.familylifecredit.org (free consultation).

[Fundraising]

☒ DOES YOUR CHURCH NEED MONEY? If so, go to our website: www.churchfundraisinganswers.com.

How are you choosing a college?



ChristianCollegeGuide.net can help you find the school that's the right fit for your teen.

Easily search Christian colleges by:

- location and setting
- programs and degrees
- costs and scholarships
- affiliation
- athletics
- enrollment

www.ChristianCollegeGuide.net

Looking for a Seminary or Graduate School?

With *Christianity Today's* SeminaryGradSchool.com you can find schools by:

- location
- programs and degrees
- enrollment
- affiliation
- athletics
- costs, scholarships and grants

Easy-to-use
search for FREE
information
on schools!

www.SeminaryGradSchool.com

BY KATELYN BEATY



Filling the Dad Gap

John Sowers addresses the root of many social ills.

An early lesson John Sowers learned from his father was how a man smells: “like an odd mixture of Old Spice and musky sweat.” But since his dad moved out when John was 2, the more enduring lesson was that fathers are mostly absent, leaving a sense of abandonment and shame. That sense, believes Sowers, president of the Portland-based Mentoring Project (TMP), is the theme of today’s youth as well as the root of many social ills of that generation. “The story of fatherlessness is powerful, destructive, and really close to God’s heart,” says the 36-year-old Little Rock native.

After discovering God’s father-heart at a Billy Graham crusade and through several male mentors, Sowers wrote his thesis at Gordon-Conwell Seminary on reaching the fatherless. He focused on mentoring, seeing it has spiritual resonance that government programs and men’s ministries don’t: “Mentoring mirrors God’s heart . . . God is taking the initiative and choosing to invest our time and energy into the life of a child.” Then, at the invitation of TMP founder Donald Miller in 2009, Sowers created research toolkits for churches to develop

mentors and reach youth (mostly boys) awaiting mentors in every major city. TMP focuses on faith-based equipping, delegating the matching work to cooperative nonprofits like Big Brother, Big Sister. With just three staff, TMP has hundreds of churches waiting for training, as well as the attention of the White House, which had Sowers speak at its 2009 Fathers Day event. “Whenever I go to D.C., it’s to advocate for this message only,” says Sowers. “God has burdened me with this message. I can’t shut up about it.”

- **Hometown** Portland, Oregon
- **Church** Bread and Wine
- **Family** Kari (wife); Diesel (dog)
- **On your iPod** Josh Garrels, Ray LaMontagne, Bon Iver
- **Favorite Movie** Christopher Nolan’s Batman trilogy, *Inception*
- **Favorite Bible verse** Psalm 68:5
- **Heroes** My mother, grandmother, and wife
- **Hobbies** writing, playing guitar, drinking coffee with Kari

question & answer

Along with eliminating the mentor waiting lists in many cities, what else does TMP want to do?

The big goal [is] having a mentor for every child that needs one. The other goals are found inside that: to awaken the church to the fatherless need; to provide mentoring training for churches; and to build long-term mentoring efforts through sustainable mentoring communities where each church looks after its own tribe of mentors.

I’d like to see mentoring become a part of the DNA of every evangelical church. Fatherlessness is not another cause in the “science fair” of causes, but something that demands our attention, for both social and theological reasons.

How did the White House take notice?

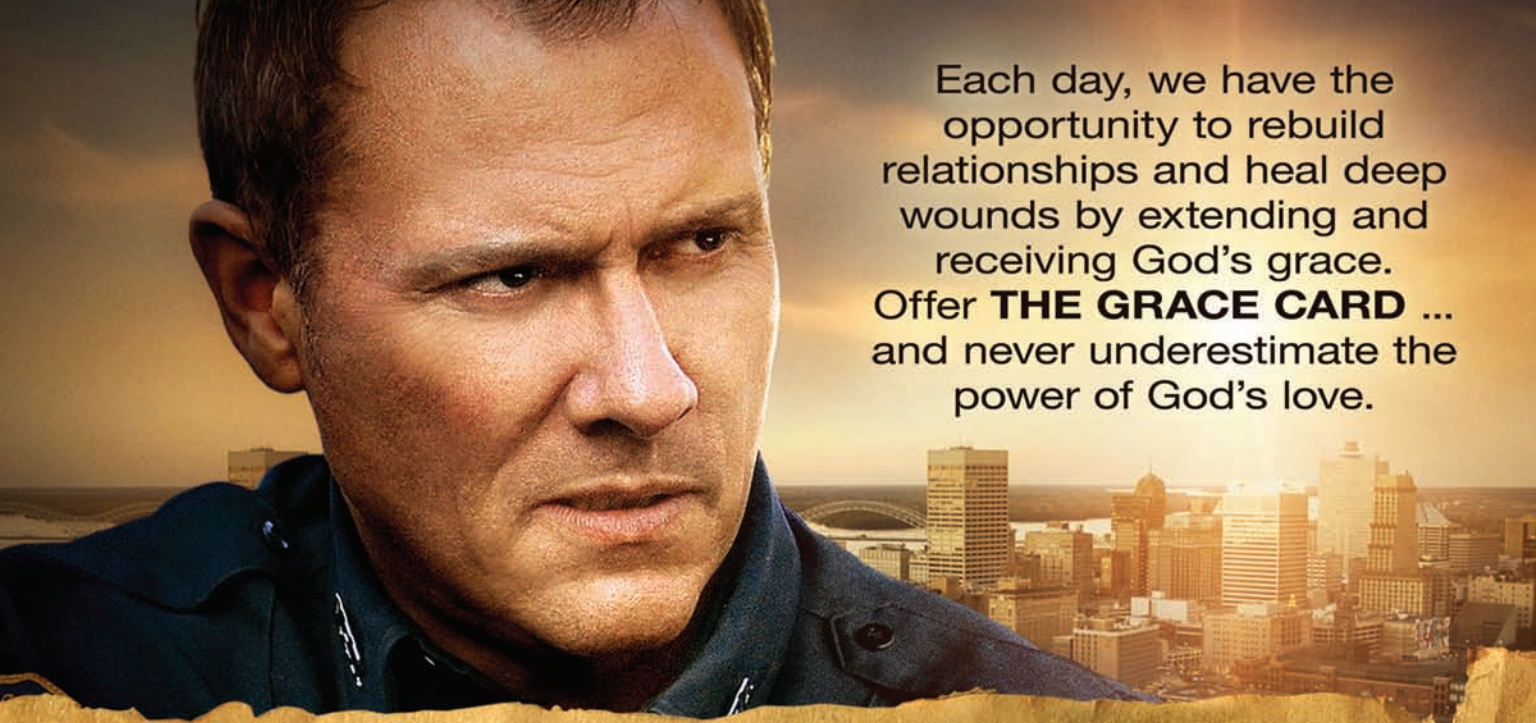
When Don [Miller] was asked to pray at the 2008 Democratic National Convention and was asked to be on the Taskforce on Fatherhood and Healthy Families. When I came to TMP in 2009, I got looped into the conversation.

This past year, the White House set aside money for a mentoring fund. When I was at the White House in June, they announced a fund of \$500 million. [TMP is considering applying for federal funds.] Honestly, whether someone voted for President Obama or not, mentoring is an issue we should all be able to get behind. Obama talks about the importance of dads. Joshua DuBois, his right-hand man on this issue, is a Big Brother, and so are many other White House staff.

Why is fatherlessness a Christian issue?

In the last verses of the Old Testament, Malachi says God will turn the hearts of the children to their fathers and the hearts of the fathers to their children. Those words rang through the prophetic void for 400 years [before Christ]. Whatever Malachi intended, we know this issue is close to God’s heart.

More: TheMentoringProject.org,
FatherlessGeneration.com



Each day, we have the opportunity to rebuild relationships and heal deep wounds by extending and receiving God's grace. Offer **THE GRACE CARD** ... and never underestimate the power of God's love.

MICHAEL JOINER MICHAEL HIGGENBOTTOM AND LOUIS GOSSETT JR.

THE GRACE CARD

WITNESS THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS



"For it is by grace you have been saved ..."
Ephesians 2:8 (NIV)



Be part of a
Grace Awakening
IN THEATERS
2.25.11



AFFIRM FILMS AND PROVIDENT FILMS IN ASSOCIATION WITH GRACEWORKS PICTURES AND CALVARY PICTURES PRESENT A DAVID EVANS FILM MICHAEL JOINER MICHAEL HIGGENBOTTOM AND LOUIS GOSSETT, JR. "THE GRACE CARD" COSTUME DESIGNER LISA THOMAS MUSIC BY BREIT ROWAN EDITOR MARK PRUETT PRODUCTION DESIGNER DARIAN CORLEY DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN PAUL CLARK ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS ANTHONY LYNN HOLMES MARK HODGE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DAVID EVANS ESTHER EVANS PRODUCED BY HOWARD A. KLAUSNER PRODUCED BY JOHN SAUNDERS JOHN NASHAWATY WRITTEN BY DAVID EVANS HOWARD A. KLAUSNER DIRECTED BY DAVID EVANS

PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13
FOR SOME VIOLENCE AND THEMATIC ELEMENTS
www.mfma.com www.thegracecardmovie.com www.parentalguidance.com

AFFIRM FILMS

TheGraceCardMovie.com

PROVIDENT FILMS

GRACEWORKS PICTURES

CALVARY PICTURES

Samuel Goldwyn FILMS

Facebook.com/thegracecard

Twitter: @gracecardmovie

TRINITY

CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
Palos Heights, Illinois

Schedule a visit to our campus in Palos Heights, Illinois, just 30 minutes from downtown Chicago.

www.trnty.edu/destination

START BUILDING MOMENTUM TODAY.

Call 866.TRIN.4.ME or visit www.trnty.edu

M O M E N T U M F O R L I F E



“FROM CARING PROFESSORS
TO ENCOURAGING FRIENDS,
my life at Trinity is shaping me to be
a blessing to those around me.”

Jill Hop '14
Criminal Justice
and Psychology



TAKE A VIRTUAL
TOUR OF CAMPUS
www.trnty.edu/tour