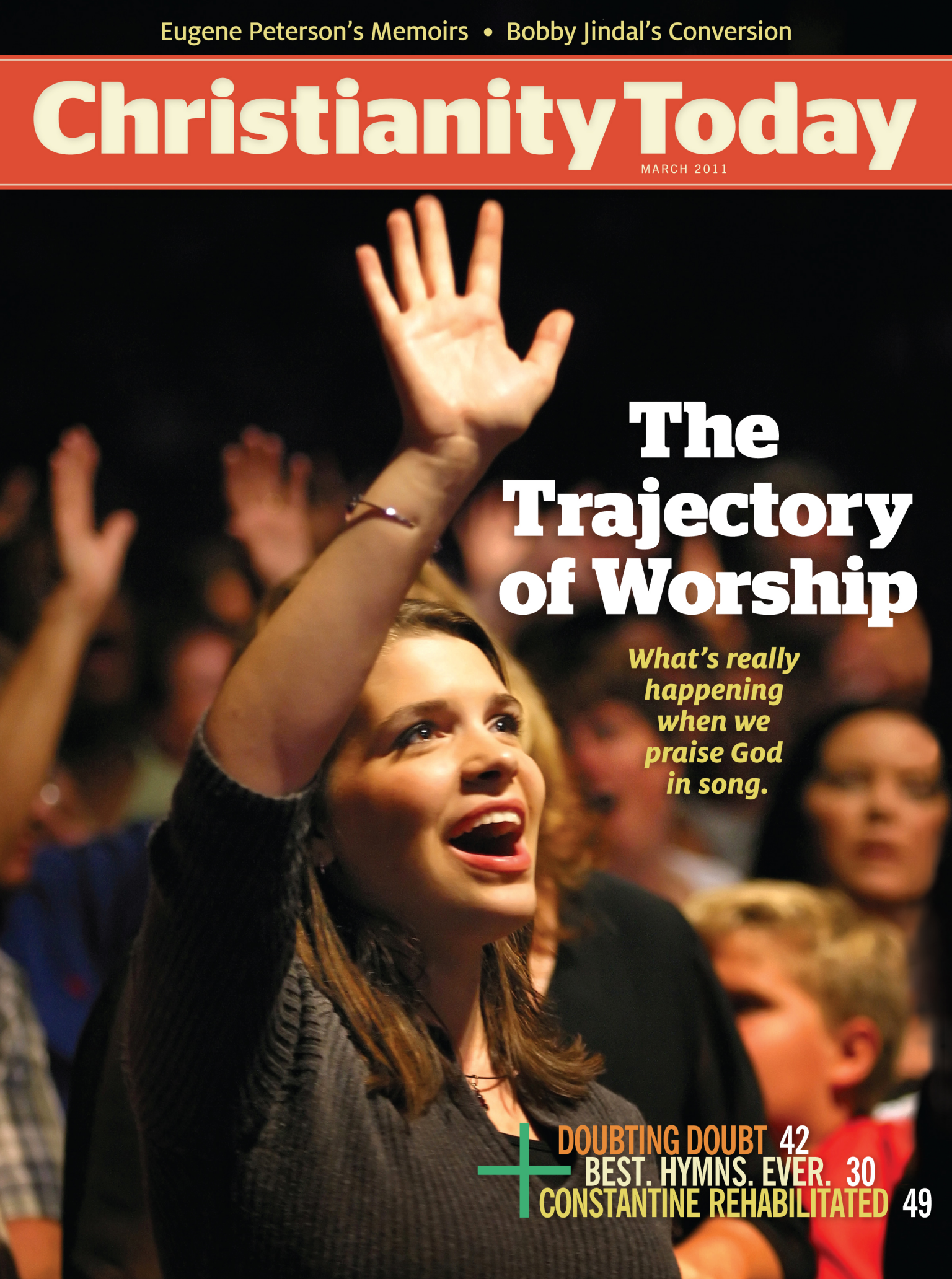


Eugene Peterson's Memoirs • Bobby Jindal's Conversion

Christianity Today

MARCH 2011

A photograph of a woman in a church congregation, her hand raised in worship. She is looking upwards with an open mouth, suggesting she is singing or praying. The background shows other people in the crowd, also with their hands raised.

The Trajectory of Worship

What's really happening when we praise God in song.

 DOUBTING DOUBT 42
BEST. HYMNS. EVER. 30
CONSTANTINE REHABILITATED 49



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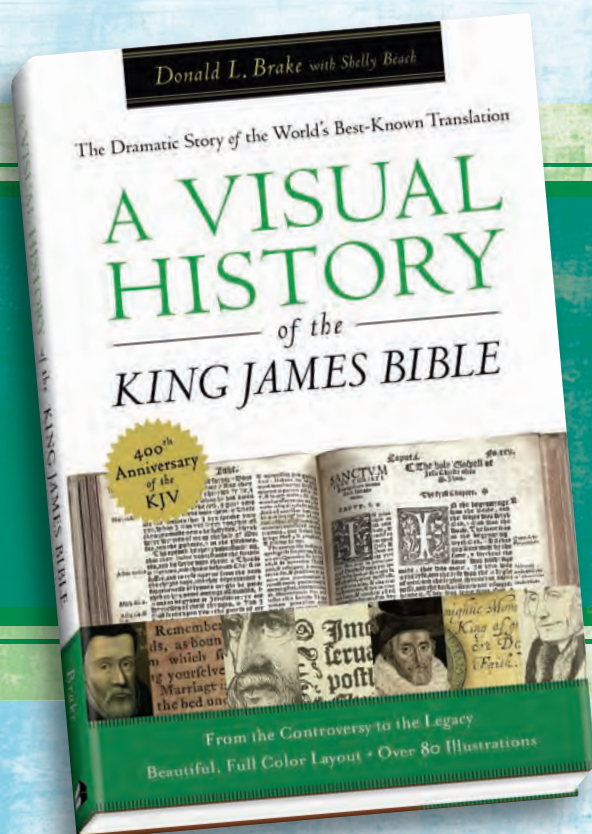
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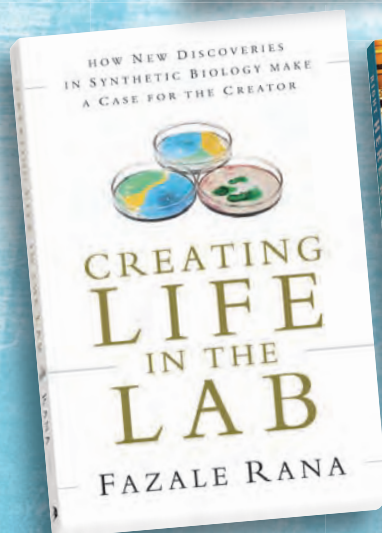


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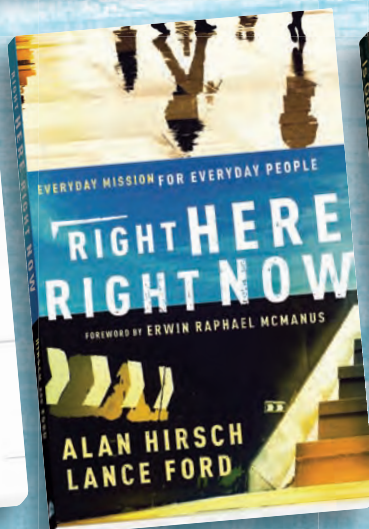
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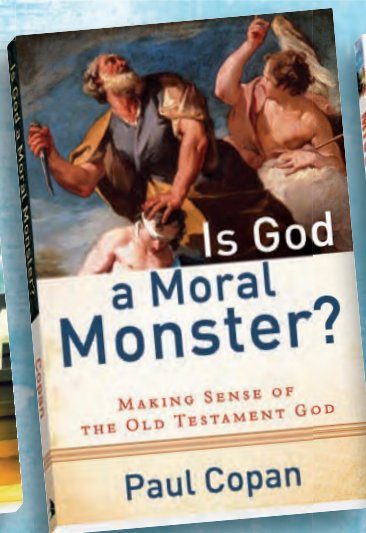
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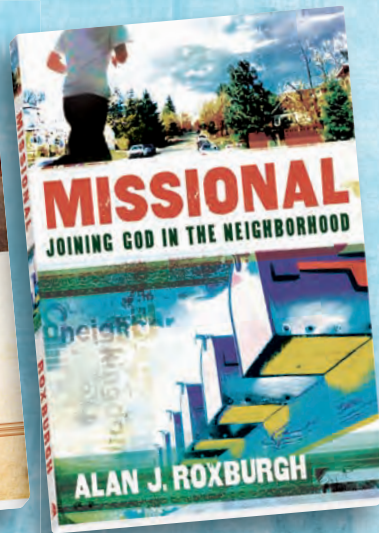
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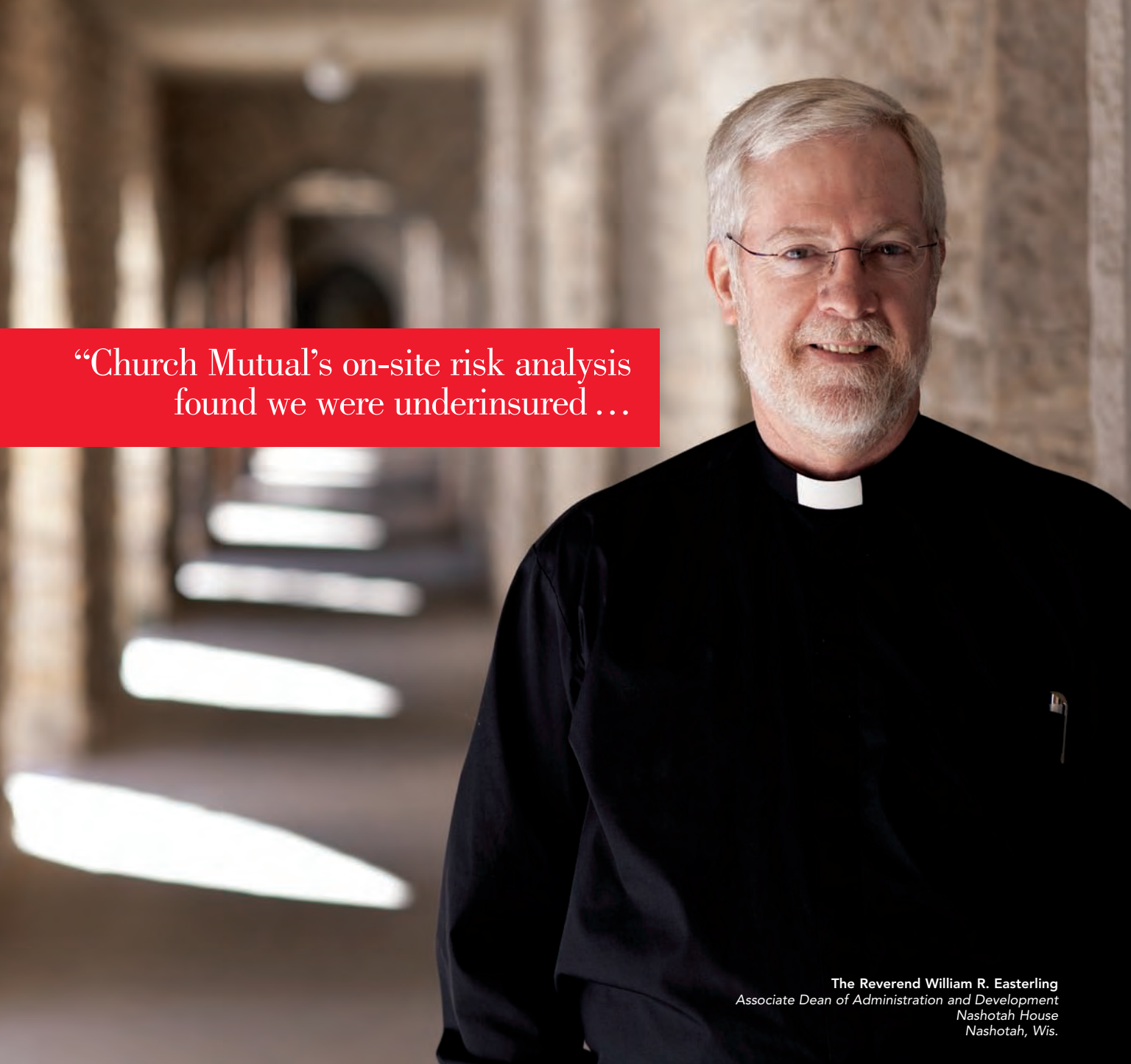


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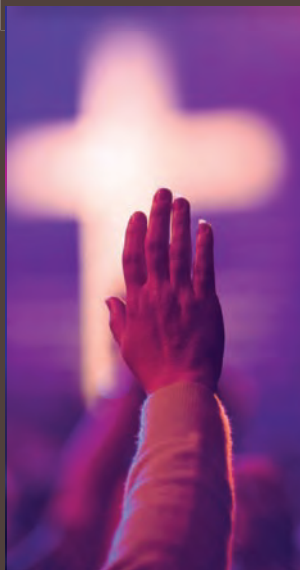
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The Mirror of Truth

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

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

Because many ministries don’t tell the truth about finances, the Senate Finance Committee has asked the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability to lead efforts to recommend remedies (p. 13). Also in this issue, Mollie Ziegler Hemingway rebuts pastors who praise doubt and minimize truth. She quotes Luther: “The Holy Spirit is no skeptic, and the things he has written in our hearts are not doubts or opinions” (p. 42).

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

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


 David Neff, Editor in Chief

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The End of Worship Wars

But we're still learning from one another.



YOU KNOW SOMETHING is afoot when in a three-month span you
receive five unsolicited manuscripts about worship and music—and
all are worth publishing (especially when literally one in a hundred
unsolicited manuscripts we receive sees publication). This is what

happened last fall, and it didn't take me long to decide to pull together at least
four of the manuscripts into a package, beginning on page 18 (the fifth will be
published in a later issue).

The confluence of articles suggests a few things. First, worship music
continues to be a topic that engages us both emotionally and intellectually. I'm
not convinced we're still fighting "worship wars," but we are still living through
a tense truce, if my local congregation is any example. Second, this tense truce
continues to prod people into deeper thinking—as evidenced by the pieces in this
package. What holds the package together is nothing more than this: arresting
thoughts and intriguing ideas about the nature of church music.

As often happens when discussing church music in the pages of *Christianity
Today*, the articles display a bias for traditional music. This is unfortunate,
because we at CT happen to also like contemporary worship music. We strove to
find an article or conduct an interview that would give more space to exploring
the gift of contemporary music, but we came up empty. I'll be frank: When it
comes to contemporary Christian music, I have yet to find authors who are able
to probe its uniqueness with the same depth and insight as those who relish
traditional music. What I usually find is articles that say, "But people like it!"
That's well and good and nothing to discount, but it's not enough for a CT article!
So admitting my limited exposure to this world, I want to encourage those with a
contemporary bias to send us deeper ruminations on the topic.

In addition, we should acknowledge a source that does for worship music
what Robert Coote's article (page 30) has done for hymns. To find out which
contemporary worship songs are the most popular in the U.S., check out ccli.com,
and click on "View CCLI Top 25 Worship Songs." "Mighty to Save" tops the list
and is followed by "How Great Is Our God." (CCLI offers licenses to churches
to use copyrighted music and videos. Twice a year it compiles a list of the most
requested songs.)

In any event, discussions like this are not designed to make the truce tenser,
but simply to help us think deeply and faithfully about the music we use in
worship.

Next month: Ed Stetzer suggests ways to conduct interfaith dialogue
(which more and more evangelicals are engaging in) with love and respect while
remaining true to our core convictions; Eric Miller explores our fascination with
Amish romance fiction; and one man gives his testimony through the ravages of
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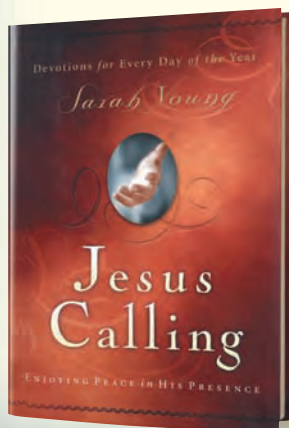


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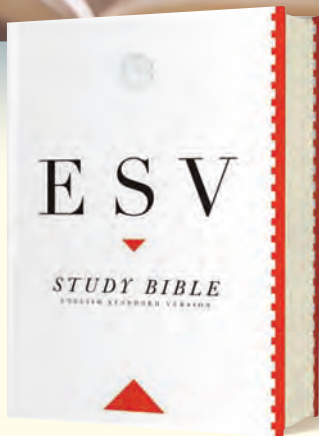
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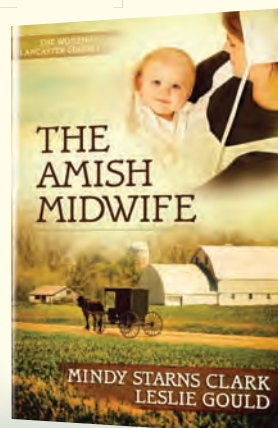


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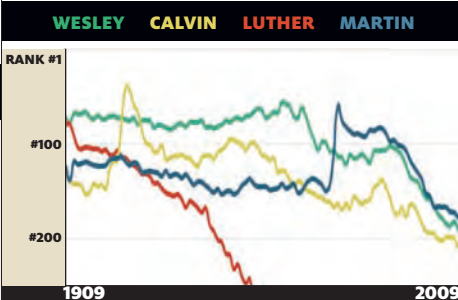
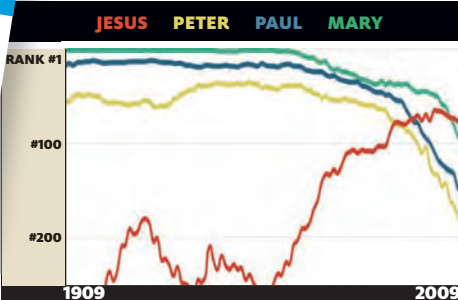
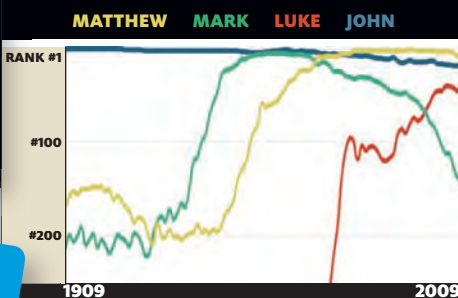
REPORTING & DISPATCHES
FROM THE CHURCH
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SPOTLIGHT: Christian Names

➔ In mid-January, newspapers announced that Pope Benedict XVI had “declared war” on baby name trends, “railing” against secular, celebrity-inspired names. The key quote: “Do not give your children names that are not in the Christian calendar.” As is often the case, the pope said no such thing and spoke simply on baptism as a sign of new birth in the church. But the discussion was launched anyway: Does giving your child a biblical name enhance the child's spiritual development? Does it matter what we name our children?

THERE USED TO BE
SOMETHING ABOUT MARY

Rank of a name's popularity in the U.S., among babies of the gender most associated with it.



Social Security Administration, ssa.gov/oact/babynames/

THE SCIENCE OF NAMES

A series of psychological studies have found that names do matter: we subconsciously stereotype and form expectations of our peers and co-workers based on their first names. “I wouldn’t overestimate the impact of names, but [they] are an important part of first impressions,” Ohio University’s James Bruning said about one of his many reports. He noted that parents often indirectly choose names for their children that reflect expectations that are reinforced throughout the child’s development.

But a 2004 study in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* found that “religious commitment is unrelated to [parents’] selection of prominent biblical names.” Biblical names are no more common among frequent church attendees, for example, than among infrequent attendees. Nor are they significantly more common among evangelicals than among mainliners or Catholics.

Do Names Form Children’s Spirituality?

“Naming can have considerable significance when the parents and the church are intentional about what that name conveys, and celebrate it regularly. There’s something powerful when someone knows your name, which is why we must take time to learn them.”

SCOTTIE MAY,
author, *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey*

“Biblical names or names from Christian tradition can help children see that their own names and stories are deeply tied to the people and metanarratives of the Bible and the church. But no matter what a child’s name, everyone’s is connected to the larger story of God’s ongoing love for us.”

MARCIA J. BUNGE,
director, *The Child in Religion and Ethics Project*

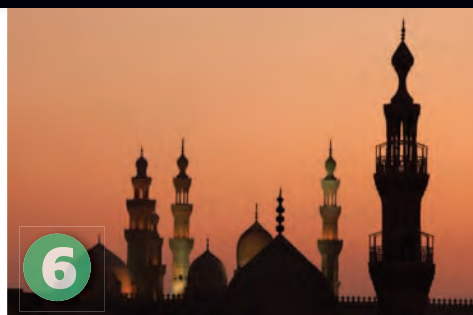
“Peers often will twist names into something embarrassing. But reactions may also give children an ideal to live up to. I doubt a biblical name in itself is likely to enhance spiritual development. Other than momentary envy at my siblings’ biblical names, I don’t think it shaped my own spirituality.”

DON RATCLIFF,
ChildFaith.net

“To me, the letters of a child’s name matter less than the condition of his heart and the content of his character. In today’s world, unfortunately, I believe many children face more challenges from labels based on their last names and the names of their street, city, and/or school.”

DAVID STAAL,
senior editor, *Today’s Children’s Ministry*

HELLO
my name is
Barnabas
* has never ranked in the top 1,000 boy names



GLEANINGS

Important developments in the church and the world.

1 Secession puts northern Christians on alert

SUDAN Southern Sudan's nearly unanimous vote for secession may benefit the mostly Christian South but could create difficulties for Christians left in the mostly Muslim North. President Omar Hassan al-Bashir said Shari'ah law will be strictly enforced in the North if Sudan splits into two countries. Coptic Christians are not concerned because as fellow Arabs they have been treated better than the South's Africans. But one Anglican congregation in Khartoum dwindled to one-quarter its usual size during the January week southern Sudanese voted on independence.

erected in 1913 on Mount Soledad, "sends a strong message of endorsement and exclusion," said Judge M. Margaret McKeown. Meanwhile, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Utah Highway Patrol Association cannot place crosses along the highway to memorialize fallen troopers. The crosses imply state endorsement of a faith, according to the court's unanimous opinion.

4 Wave of Christian converts arrested

IRAN About 75 Christians were arrested in Tehran in a series of raids on Christmas Day and in following weeks. Tehran's governor, Morteza Tamaddon, promised more arrests and called the Christians a corrupt foreign influence. Those arrested are primarily converts from Islam and evangelicals seeking to convert Muslims, rather than the Armenian Christians and Catholics more common in the Islamic republic. According to religious freedom observers, more than 200 Iranian Christians have been arrested since September, when an appeals court upheld the death sentence of evangelical pastor and Muslim convert Youcef Nadarkhani, the first death penalty for apostasy in decades.

5 Lutheran pastors lose pensions

Four pastors retired from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are suing the denomination after receiving notice that their retirement benefit payments were reduced by 9 percent for 2010. The pastors are seeking class-action status; more than 10,000 other church employees who have taken retirement benefits as annuity payments are

affected by the change. The ELCA says its pension plan is exempt from federal laws because it's a church plan, and that the church implemented a three-year reduction to save the annuity. The pastors claim the church breached its contract in reducing payments. The ELCA's publishing arm, Augsburg Fortress, already faces a lawsuit over the termination of its pension plan last spring.

6 Churches may gain same rights as mosques

EGYPT A potential law under discussion in Egypt, first proposed in 2005, would give churches the same legal rights as mosques. Churches currently need presidential approval and security clearance to construct buildings, and permission from local authorities to make repairs—a complicated process that means many churches go unrepaired. Muslims do not need permits to build or repair mosques. There are 2,000 churches and 93,000 mosques in Egypt.

7 Politicians decline civility pledge

The Civility Project, an initiative intended to promote politeness among politicians, is folding after only three members of Congress agreed to sign the project's Civility Pledge. Signers of the pledge, created by Christian publicist Mark DeMoss and sent to every member of Congress and sitting governor in 2007, promise to have civil discourse, be respectful of others, and stand against incivility. News of the project's demise came shortly before the attempted assassination of Representative Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.) sparked renewed calls for civility in Washington, D.C.

8 Missouri Baptists gain foundation, lose director

The Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC) regained control of its estranged foundation and received the resignation of its executive director within days in early

GO FIGURE Islam

23.4%
Percentage of
global population
that is Muslim.

26.4%
The world's Muslim
population in 2030,
if trends continue.

0.8%
U.S. population
that is Muslim. It
is projected to be
1.7% in 2030.

*Pew Forum on Religion
and Public Life*

2 Governor killed for defending Christian

PAKISTAN An influential governor and human rights advocate who stood up for a Christian condemned for blasphemy was shot more than 25 times by one of his security guards. Punjab governor Salman Taseer had declared support for Aasia Bibi, the first Christian woman sentenced to be executed under a Pakistani law that mandates the death penalty for blaspheming Islam. Human rights observers had hoped Bibi's plight would prompt long-sought revision of the law. Instead, popular support for Taseer's assassination (tens of thousands demonstrated to demand the killer's freedom) makes revision unlikely.

3 Courts fell more memorial crosses

After a legal battle lasting more than two decades, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a war memorial cross in California is unconstitutional. The 43-foot cross,



January. Nearly a decade ago, the Missouri Baptist Foundation edited its charter to prevent church leaders from controlling the board; the Cole County Circuit Court decision puts the agency back under MBC control. Soon after the court decision, MBC executive director David Tolliver resigned from his position because of "immoral behavior with a woman." He will be replaced with an interim director named by the convention's board.

9 Church approved near Confucius's birthplace

CHINA Government approval of plans to build a 136-foot-high, multimillion-dollar church near the birthplace of Confucius (above) has sparked protest from hundreds of Chinese scholars and cultural organizations. Critics say the 3,000-seat Gothic church, which would be nearly as tall as St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, is out of style and inappropriate in the historical context of the town of Qufu. The project is intended to help integrate China's estimated 100 million Christians with its Confucian heritage.

11 IRS: Virtual congregation doesn't count
To qualify for church status under the IRS tax code, a religious organization must have regular religious services for a cohesive body of believers to associate in communal worship, a recent ruling determined. The Foundation of Human Understanding had its tax-exempt status revoked after a three-year audit uncovered that the church communicates with followers primarily through radio and Internet broadcasts. The "virtual congregation" does not count as a church, the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals ruled. The foundation was previously granted church status in 1987.

12 Women's group drops Christian label

UNITED KINGDOM The Young Women's Christian Association in the United Kingdom has changed its name to "Platform 51," dropping associations with the word *Christian*. The new name was chosen because the organization is a platform for women, who comprise 51 percent of the world's population. According to the World YWCA headquarters in Geneva, none of the 124 other country branches are planning name changes.

13 Faith groups get Obama money

A Politico.com analysis revealed that over \$140 million of Obama administration stimulus money has gone to faith-based organizations. The contributions included money for food and shelter programs for the homeless, of course, but Politico noted that it also funded a new heating and cooling system for a Methodist church in Indiana. A number of observers note that President Obama's attitude and approach to connecting faith groups to government dollars are essentially the same as those of former President George W. Bush.

10 Religious teaching banned in daycare

CANADA Starting in June, daycare centers in Quebec that teach faith to children will lose government funding. Cultural values can be taught but religious values cannot, leading some religious leaders in Quebec to complain that the process will be too subjective. Christmas trees and cultural traditions are still allowed, said Quebec Family Minister Yolande James, but religious crafts, role-playing games, and songs are banned, including Sabbath observances at Jewish daycares. The government currently pays \$40 per day for each child sent to daycare, and parents pay \$7 per child.

compiled by Ted Olsen

QUOTATION MARKS

"Success is always dangerous, and we need to be alert and avoid becoming the victims of our own success."

Billy Graham, on the evangelical resurgence over the past half-century.

Christianity Today Online

"I liked the parts where some character was once this, but he ended up being that. Like he'd be dissing Jesus, and then he ends up being a saint. That was cool."

Lil Wayne, hip-hop artist, on reading the Bible while in prison on a weapons charge.

Rolling Stone

"To me, this one thing—physical culture and nutrition—is the salvation of America."

Jack LaLanne, fitness guru who died in January at age 96. "Billy Graham is for the hereafter, I'm for the here and now!" he said in 2007.

The New York Times

"That degree of cruelty, there's no way to recount it. For 48 hours my life hung by a thread."

Gao Zhisheng, in a 2010 interview with the Associated Press, published after the Chinese human rights lawyer and devout Christian disappeared again, presumably into government custody.

Associated Press

"While many Southern Baptists share my deep commitment to religious freedom . . . [a] denominational leader filing suit to allow individual mosques to be built is 'a bridge too far.'"

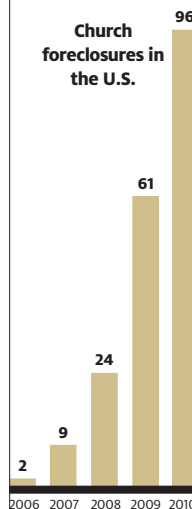
Richard Land, withdrawing as a member of the Interfaith Coalition on Mosques.

SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission

GO FIGURE

Church Life

Church foreclosures in the U.S.



CoStar Group, NPR



Diagnosing Demons: As more Christian sects in Africa make money by identifying and exorcising 'child witches,' missiologists are examining the role of missionaries in witchcraft accusations.

MISSIONS

Warning on Witches

Missionaries may be encouraging witchcraft accusations. By Ruth Moon

A recent rise in the number of people accused of witchcraft—particularly African children—isn't just an issue for missionaries to address, say scholars. It's also a problem they may be contributing to.

An entire track of the annual missiology conference at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School this February was devoted to witchcraft, a topic usually neglected by the field.

"We had thought this was a phenomenon that would die out," said Robert Priest, professor of missions and intercultural studies at Trinity. "Instead we are finding that the conditions of modernity—urbanization and social differentiation under capitalism—are contributing to accusations getting stronger and stronger."

Presenters hope the conference will prompt missionaries to focus more on the subject.

"Most missionaries go out knowing the answer—namely, Christ—without knowing the questions the local people are asking that the local religion answers," said Carol McKinney, an anthropologist who teaches at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics. "Questions like, 'Why did something happen to John and not to Joe when John and Joe were at the same place?'"

Witchcraft often provides answers, whether in traditional African cultures, India, or Papua New Guinea. Someone is accused of bringing evil on another, often because the "witch" is jealous of that person's good fortune.

Missionaries have commonly responded in two ways, said Priest. The power of witches to harm others is dismissed as superstition, but this seldom persuades local Christians to abandon the concept; or the reality of witchcraft is

endorsed by missionaries not wanting to be "post-Enlightenment rationalists" with a non-biblical skepticism of spiritual warfare.

The result is that traditional witch ideas are fused with Christian theology, which obscures the social consequences: Accused witches are often destitute or outcast, and thus socially defenseless. Instead of seeing old women or children as scapegoats, said Priest, Christian leaders suggest that witchcraft participates in genuine spiritual evil and that the accusations are reasonable. "The church is providing the cognitive underpinnings for the past system in the contemporary world."

Priest says the approach is unbiblical. "Nowhere in Scripture do we find anyone attributing affliction or death to a human third party acting through evil occult means," he said. "We're not questioning Satan's power; we're questioning the diagnostic system that blames another person."

When witchcraft is Christianized—by placing it in the realm of the demonic—missionaries unintentionally change the gospel message, said Timothy Stabell, assistant professor of mission at Briercrest College and Seminary. The Holy Spirit then becomes just another source of witch-like power, albeit more potent than local witches or shamans.

"That doesn't work," Stabell said. "If you dig deeper, there's an undertone of darkness, of evil, even when people ostensibly use the same powers for supposedly good things. It becomes very ambiguous."

Cultural background matters. Stabell, who was raised in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and worked for 15 years there, sees witchcraft accusations as often rooted in psychological problems. His African Christian friends interpret them as evil spiritual powers.

"We need to develop a fuller understanding and theology of what sin has done in the world, whether in the West or in Africa," Stabell said.

GO FIGURE Technology

22%
Protestant churches that do not have a website.

42%
Of Protestant churches with websites, those that update them monthly or less often.

LifeWay Research

"Missiologists have not yet done an adequate job of wisely engaging these realities," said Priest. "We have a solemn responsibility to mobilize the effort to rethink our role in this." ☩

FINANCE

Self-Policing Pastors

'Grassley 6' questions given to ECFA.

By Matt Branaugh

A three-year U.S. Senate review of the financial activities of six high-profile televangelists concluded without any penalties, leaving broad questions about the reporting methods of religious groups nationwide.

The eight questions flagged by Senator Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) of the Senate Finance Committee will be probed deeper by a commission led by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

ECFA's advocacy efforts clearly favor self-policing over government intervention. And for some, that raises questions about ECFA's role within the new commission.

"ECFA is probably among the best ... on issues of accountability, but that's not the question," says Rick Cohen, a journalist who has covered nonprofit regulation on Capitol Hill since 1999. "How much are they going to recommend legislation versus a self-regulatory approach? ... They are purveyors of self-regulatory solutions, and they're quite good at it."

In addition, ECFA leaders were asked during a January teleconference how well the group can lead with only 1,500 members of its own. While that membership base represents some of the best-known religious nonprofits, including World Vision, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Christianity Today International, it's a sliver of the hundreds of thousands of religious nonprofits and churches operating nationwide.

Of the "Grassley 6"—ministries led by Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, Benny Hinn, Eddie Long, Joyce Meyer, and Randy and Paula White—whose spending habits sparked concerns, five are not ECFA members. Meyer's joined in 2009.

ECFA President Dan Busby says he is confident that the special commission can thoroughly cover Grassley's questions, which include: Should churches and religious nonprofits file the same annual Form 990 that secular nonprofits file with the IRS? Should specific controls guide pastoral housing allowances? And should restrictions on political involvement by churches and religious groups be eased?

Busby says ECFA already advocates "no" on the Form 990 question. But he says it is open to answering these questions afresh and is soliciting input from a variety of religious faiths and well-respected practitioners.

Cohen says a harder line is likely needed since only two of the Grassley 6 fully cooperated with the review. Successful reform usually involves "a toolkit of solutions" that mix self-regulation and laws, he says. "You need oversight to catch and penalize those who don't follow the rules."

ECFA contends that new laws will create administrative burdens and punish all churches and religious groups, even though it believes improper practices "are not pervasive in the sector," Busby says.

Grassley has said he prefers self-correction within the industry rather than new laws. ☩

PUBLISHING

Profiting from the Past

Will Christian history books ever sell?

By Collin Hansen

Publishers know they can't make much money trying to sell history to Christians.

PASSAGES



Died Samuel Ericsson
Founder of Advocates International and former executive director of the Christian Legal Society, on January 21 after an 11-year battle with cancer. He was 66.



Elected Stephan Bauman
As CEO and president of World Relief. He has served as senior vice president of programs since 2007.



Died Christine Gregory
Former president of the Woman's Missionary Union and a trailblazer for women in Southern Baptist Convention leadership roles, on January 22 in Danville, Virginia. She was 89.

That's especially true of a hardcover about a German theologian that runs 600 pages and costs \$30.

But some 160,000 copies later, Eric Metaxas's biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer challenges the publishing maxim that the Christian market does not support serious history.

Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy has sold briskly through mainstream outlets. Christian bookstores were slower to pick up the book when it debuted in April 2010, according to Thomas Nelson publisher Joel Miller.

Bonhoeffer doesn't match the profile of spiritual growth and practical-living titles that fill these outlets. But now they are featuring the book prominently, Miller said.

"Bonhoeffer's life was so compelling," Miller said of the Lutheran pastor who participated in a plot to kill Adolf Hitler and died in a Nazi concentration camp near the end of World War II. "He was sold out for true and authentic Christianity."

Scholars devoted to studying Bonhoeffer's complex theology have widely panned the work by Metaxas, who previously wrote the popular *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*. But critical reviews have hardly dampened the enthusiastic popular response.

Metaxas, who found the courageous Bonhoeffer to be "more like a theologically conservative evangelical than anything else," appeared on Glenn Beck's Fox News show in December. If anything, the allegations that Metaxas portrays Bonhoeffer as too conservative fit Beck's common refrain that liberals have covered up the real story.

Perhaps the commercial success of *Bonhoeffer* will inspire publishers to consider other history titles. The challenge, according to Miller, is that publishing forecasts still don't indicate widespread clamoring for history and theology.

Meryl Zegarek, working with

[continued on 14]

Briefing [from 13]

Zondervan on the forthcoming book *Hitler in the Crosshairs*, observes that evangelicals flock to contemporary conversion stories, citing former President George W. Bush's book *Decision Points*. It is number three on the *New York Times* Feb. 6 hardcover nonfiction bestseller list, behind *Unbroken*, about a World War II prison camp survivor who became a Christian during Billy Graham's 1949 Los Angeles crusade. "History books that convey both a fascinating time in history and bring to life an individual's faith will appeal to Christian readers," Zegarek said. ☩

CHURCH-STATE

Bricks and Moratoriums

Economy impacts churches' battles to build.
By Bobby Ross Jr.

The city council of Burbank, Illinois, passed a new zoning law late last year banning churches from building in commercial areas. The action came after Rios de Agua Viva, a Hispanic

congregation, signed a \$900,000 contract to transform an old restaurant into its new sanctuary.

The congregation did what many have done before it: it filed a lawsuit alleging violations of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), a 2000 federal law designed to protect houses of worship from discrimination.

More than a decade after RLUIPA's passage, however, many religious institutions face lengthy, costly battles to exercise their freedom to worship, said Richard Baker, an attorney who is representing the Burbank church.

"Churches do not realize the fight they're in," Baker said. "If you go into a commercial district, they say you're wrecking their tax base. If you go into residential, they say you're disturbing their peace."

While the issue is not new, Baker said, "The objections to churches obtaining zoning do seem to be heating up under the [economy]."

Eric Rassbach, national litigation director for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, echoed Baker's assessment: "There are many, many more cases where municipalities are trying to zone out churches to keep their property on the tax rolls. I would suspect it's related to the

DISCUSSION STARTER Hospitality

As debates over mosque construction plans continue to make headlines, churches are asking how to reach out as new religions come to town. Heartsong Church in Tennessee and Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Virginia have hosted Muslim worship communities in their church buildings, prompting the question of how much hospitality is too much.

economy because of tighter budgets for local governments."

In Houston, churches recently raised objections over a proposed drainage fee by city officials. In Mission, Kansas, churches filed a lawsuit after being charged a "transportation utility fee" to help fix roads.

In the case of Burbank, Mayor Harry Klein told the *Chicago Tribune*, "It's obvious—every city likes to see their tax base grow, that's a given."

An alderman in Evanston, Indiana, raised concerns last year about the impact of "storefront churches" on the tax base and proposed an ordinance requiring special-use permits for houses of worship to operate in all business or commercial districts.

"If it had passed, it would have made it impossible for any new house of worship to locate or relocate in the city of Evanston," said Mark Dennis, moderator of the Evanston Pastors Fellowship. The city passed a scaled-down version of the ordinance in December.

Many municipalities "clearly do not understand what is protected under RLUIPA," said Roman P. Storz, a leading RLUIPA attorney in Washington, D.C. "It's up to the church to decide how to exercise religion. It's not up to the city or county." ☩

UNDER DISCUSSION Topics in the current debate.

compiled by Ruth Moon

Should churches lend worship space to other religions?

YES

"The community is our parish; letting faith provoke us into creating a more just, peaceful community is another form of worship. I believe concerns about sacred-profane worship space are always in submission to Jesus' command to welcome the stranger and love our enemies."

JASON MICHELI,
pastor, Aldersgate United Methodist Church

"The church is a people, not a building. No place in the teaching of Jesus or the New Testament refers to the church as a place. The church is the faithful who spend life with Jesus together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is no space that is more sacred than any other on earth in itself."

STEVE STONE,
pastor, Heartsong Church

"Evangelicals are notoriously vague about what constitutes our sacred spaces. Whatever a congregation actually decides to do, the very question can be an important teaching moment. What does it mean to set apart a specific space for the worship of the true God?"

RICHARD MOUW,
president, Fuller Theological Seminary

"While we desire to reach out at a personal level with love, it's not wise to ignore the spiritual realm. Before you do, stop, think, pray, and seek the Lord's discernment, because there are spiritual forces in these divergent theologies aligned against the very truth we preach."

MARK DEYMAZ,
directional leader, Mosaic Church

"Other faiths have used our church's coffeehouse for casual meetings, as that is public missional space. But we don't rent our space for formal meetings of other faiths in our sanctuary."

DAN KIMBALL,
pastor, Vintage Faith Church

"Christians need to be stalwart advocates for religious freedom while not succumbing to the temptation of religious pluralism. People should be free to worship according to their convictions, but it's necessary to recognize that Christianity is not the same as other world religions."

ED STETZER,
president, LifeWay Research

NO



Shouts of Anguish: One day after the New Year's attack in Alexandria, a local Christian protests against terrorism while holding a blood-stained portrait of Christ.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM EGYPT

Hot Zone

Christian minority swept up in historic change as Mubarak era ends. By Cornelis Hulsman in Cairo, with additional reporting by Dale Gavlak in Amman, Jordan

There is much to make Christians in Egypt anxious about their relationship with Muslims. On January 1, a suicide bomb killed 23 people at an Alexandria church, and the February 11 resignation of President Hosni Mubarak signaled uncertain changes that may make Christians' presence more precarious. It's no wonder that the country's Christian minority is praying for peace more fervently than ever.

The demonstrations demanding Mubarak's resignation, which began after the January collapse of Tunisia's

authoritarian government, were a rare instance of the country's Muslims and Christians uniting in common cause.

Many pastors and church leaders had urged Egyptian Christians, traditionally known as Copts, not to participate in the demonstrations in Cairo's Tahrir Square. But there were many examples of Muslims and Christians demonstrating together and protecting churches, mosques, and neighborhoods alike.

"The things that are happening now are against God's will," Coptic Orthodox Pope Shenouda III, 88, said on national television in early February. But many Copts joined

the protests anyway, and even stood guard when Muslims paused for prayer.

As the protests began, Coptic Orthodox Bishop Markos told *Christianity Today* that he walked out on his neighborhood's streets and was soon surrounded by friendly protestors. Markos said, "We are all one. There are no tensions between Muslims and Christians at all in this uprising."

The bishop's statement highlighted the unity between Muslims and Christians over democratic reform. But the underlying issues of religious conversion, intermarriage, and new religious buildings will continue to fuel deep tensions. At a recent congressional

hearing in Washington, D.C., Nina Shea, a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, said, "In Egypt, for the past two years, we've seen a dramatic upsurge in attacks against Copts."

BIG CHANGE

Many Christian leaders believe that the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic political group banned in Egypt, will grow in political power with Mubarak's ouster. The brotherhood maintains strong support among some Egyptians. Religious-freedom analysts believe the leaders of the brotherhood, famous for the slogan "Islam is the solution," could very well usher in repression of all minority religious groups. Christians are Egypt's largest minority,

'Egypt has been like someone sleeping. Now, wake up! Do something better.'

~ a Christian businessman based in Cairo

representing 6 to 10 percent of Egypt's 85 million people. About 90 percent of all Christians in Egypt are Orthodox.

But while most Egyptian Muslims are Sunni, like the brotherhood, they are not as fundamentalist as it is. One Coptic Orthodox businessman based in Cairo told CT that he was surprised that Christians' property was not targeted during the growing protests. "I thought that the first thing to be attacked [by protestors] would be the churches," he said.

"It wasn't like that. In the neighborhood of my parents, there are many mosques and churches. No single mosque has announced anything against us Christians. Very soon, a big change will happen. Egypt has been like someone sleeping. Now, wake up! Do something better."

Egypt hosts a small but influential population of Protestants and evangelicals (more than 250,000), mostly located in Cairo and other major cities. Most are either Presbyterian, Methodist, or Anglican, and many congregations are linked to the Evangelical Fellowship of Egypt. In addition to churches, dozens of ministries and agencies maintain sizable operations in Egypt. SAT-7, the Arabic-language Christian satellite broadcast channel, has 65 employees at

its offices in Cairo.

Terence Ascott, CEO of SAT-7, said, "Our prayer is that the current unrest will eventually result in positive change leading to greater justice, security, and political openness in the country—for all Egyptians."

Egypt's government after Mubarak is certain to be both a blessing and a challenge, said Mouneer H. Anis, bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Egypt (who also oversees Anglicans throughout the Middle East, including Iran). "If Egypt becomes a secular country that really respects the rights of citizenship, there is a potential for the church to grow. But also there is a potential for the church to relax, like what happened in the West.

If Egypt becomes an Islamic state—for example, like Iran—I think there will be difficulties, suffering. The church may become less in numbers, but I'm sure it will continue to be a faithful remnant."

COMPASSION AND DENIAL

For Christians, the national protests come amid continued mourning over the New Year's Day terrorist attack on the Alexandria church.

Coptic Christians' grief over the attack was assuaged by unexpected public acts of compassion by individual Muslims. On Orthodox Christmas (January 6), Afaf Badran, a well-known architect and devout Muslim woman, wrote in an online *Arab-West Report* commentary, "I have just returned from the Holy Virgin Church [in Cairo], where my daughter and I have volunteered to stand as human shields at its gate, and attend part of the ceremonies to give support to our Christian friends. We were first looked at cautiously as exotic attendees, but later greeted warmly and with appreciation."

Dina El-Bawab, a veiled Muslim student, took part in a larger effort among Muslims to offer condolences. "At my university, the student association organized a day of mourning in which we all wore black. They collected donations for the victims in the hospital and their families," she said.

These responses, however, cannot by themselves reconcile religious tensions in

the country. While the governor of Alexandria said the perpetrators were from outside Egypt, Egyptian Christians were not convinced.

The government often blames outsiders because it believes admitting the presence of sectarian tension will only spark more violence. The same strategy was used in the wake of the January 12 attack by a police officer against Christians traveling on a train, killing one and injuring five. "Most of us believe it is something internal, not from anywhere outside," one woman told Compass Direct News while standing outside the Alexandria church.

CHRONIC POVERTY, IDLE YOUTH

The 40 percent of Egyptians who live below the poverty line are a key factor in driving discontent, especially among undereducated, jobless youth.

In November, for example, many young people participated in riots in Umraniyyah, a Cairo suburb, when government authorities tried to stop Christians from transforming a large service building into a church. Umraniyyah, a poverty-stricken quarter, was built illegally on fertile land in Cairo that was supposed to remain agricultural. Dozens of narrow streets are lined with buildings six or more floors high.

Millions of urban Egyptians live this way. In these neighborhoods, idle and jobless youth spend hours in Internet cafes or watching satellite television broadcasts. They are drawn to radical websites, both Muslim and Christian. One youth calls himself "Coptic man" and frequents anti-Muslim chat rooms. Several hardcore anti-Muslim sites provoke Muslim critics, which in turn incites Muslim comments on anti-Christian sites. "We are using the chat rooms to vent our anger," said "Coptic man."

"Coptic man" reads *Al-Katiba al-Tibiya*, a fringe publication that is distributed in many churches but does not represent the stance of the Coptic Church. *Al-Katiba al-Tibiya* first appeared in Egypt in 2004 and is notorious for its inflammatory language. Muslims have similar publications.

The Christian youth who resisted government efforts to stop the building of their church in Umraniyyah also blocked the nearby ring road. They hurled Molotov

cocktails at security personnel. The police responded with tear gas and live ammunition. Two Christians were killed, dozens wounded, and scores arrested, resulting in a strong pulse of Christian anger.

CHRISTIAN VILLAGES IN JEOPARDY

Outside poor, urban areas, the problems for rural Christians are just as worrisome. A century ago, 80 percent of all Egyptian Christians lived in rural Upper Egypt. Today the figure stands at 40 percent, at best.

In January 2010, the plight of Upper Egypt's remaining Christians gained worldwide attention when gunmen shot and killed six Christians and a Muslim guard at a Nag Hammadi church on Orthodox Christmas. One year later, the State Security Court issued a death sentence for Muhammad Ahmed Hassanein after his conviction for first-degree murder and terror-related charges. Two more suspects

young man from town. But ever since Muslims established a Muslim training institute in Farshut, newcomers have come who do not follow the traditional patterns of seeking solutions."

Orthodox Bishop Kyrillos of Nag Hammadi places the blame for the violence on rumors, such as that Christians hide weapons in monasteries and churches. Father Yo'annis of Maghagha in Upper Egypt acknowledges that many Upper Egyptians, Muslim and Christian, carry arms, but he explicitly denies that weapons are stored in church buildings. "The church prohibits this," he said.

WEAKENED LEADERSHIP

Additional recent controversies reinforce the popular belief that some church leaders live above the law.

Attempts at religious conversion are well-known examples. In 2004, an Ortho-

'Our prayer is that the current unrest will eventually result in positive change leading to greater justice, security, and political openness in the country—for all Egyptians.'

~ Terence Ascott, CEO of SAT-7 Christian broadcasting

are awaiting verdicts.

Regardless of the verdicts, suspicions linger. Many wonder whether the Nag Hammadi killing was an act of religious persecution of Christians, or, rather, the result of violations of Upper Egypt's tribal culture, in which blood feuds are notorious.

In October 2009, a young Christian man from the nearby village of Farshut had sex with a Muslim girl. Muslims claim that it was rape and that the bloodbath outside the Nag Hammadi church was an act of revenge that got out of hand. Many Christians, however, argue that the sex was consensual and that the killings resulted from a deep hatred of Christians.

Father Isidorus from Farshut told *CT*, "In the past, the elders of the town, Muslim and Christian, would have met. They would have decided together on a punishment, probably expulsion of the

dox woman, Wafaa Constantine, said she wished to convert to Islam and went into hiding after the church rejected her petition to divorce her husband, a priest. But state security officers found her and detained her for four days in a house owned by the church. In the end, Constantine said she wanted to remain Christian.

For Muslims, the four-day detention indicated that Constantine was pressured by the church. After her statement, she disappeared to a monastery. Muslims were furious. They blamed the government for handing over to the church an adult woman who had clearly stated she wanted to convert to Islam.

Last August, another woman, Kamelia Shehata, also married to a priest, allegedly wanted to convert to Islam to obtain a divorce. She too disappeared. Following the disappearance, local media highlighted a claim of Orthodox Bishop Bishoy, made

in an interview, that Muslims are "guests" in Egypt. (There is a popular Christian belief that only Christians belong in Egypt.)

Pope Shenouda publicly rejected Bishoy's comments. But Egyptian government officials have repeatedly expressed in private their frustrations that the Orthodox Church has become "a state within a state" that flouts the law.

The construction of mosques and churches is another persistent sore spot. In Nag Hammadi, Father Isidorus explains that most of his monastery was built up over the past 30 years by constructing new buildings around 19th-century-era buildings. Many Christians do this to get around highly restrictive state limits on stand-alone new buildings.

But near the entrance of the monastery stands a mosque with a minaret that is taller than the tower of the church. In el-Tur, Sinai, a mosque has been built to rival in size the new church, which had been larger than the area's existing mosques. In Aswan, a cathedral dominates the skyline of the city, where only a few hundred Christians remain. This kind of rivalry among Egypt's Christians and Muslims causes both the state and the church to look weak.

Regardless of how events unfold over the coming weeks and months, unresolved conflicts between Christians and Muslims are working against the kind of democratic change sought by reformers.

After the protests began, the Evangelical Fellowship of Egypt activated its nationwide prayer network, saying their prayers are for "wisdom for all leaders in Egypt—both for the present government and for the future leadership of the country.

"For safety of the young people in Tahrir Square—some of them are Christian, some of them are Muslim. Muslims and Christians are united in their common concern for the welfare of the nation." ☩

Cornelis Hulsman is editor in chief of *Arab-West Report*. Dale Gavlak is a journalist based in Amman, Jordan. Additional reporting by Trevor Persaud. *Christianity Today* has received a grant from John Stott Ministries that supports reporting on international events.

A photograph of a hand reaching up towards a glowing cross in a church setting. The hand is in the foreground, and the cross is in the background, both illuminated by a warm, golden light. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in the church.

The



What's really
happening
when we praise
God in song?

By John Koessler

Worship of Trajectory

THE FIRST TIME I can remember singing from a hymnal was in 1972. It was the year between high-school graduation and college, the year I got my first full-time job. That year my mother's health began to fail, and my world shifted on its axis as I started to follow Jesus. That was the year I began to attend Glad Tidings, a plain concrete bunker of a church, whose colored windows reminded me more of ashtray glass than cathedrals.

Glad Tidings was a Pentecostal church, but of the reserved variety. Their Azusa Street brethren might whoop and dance. Let other congregations swoon in ecstasy, ravished by the Spirit, or speak in the mysterious languages of men and angels. Not the folks at Glad Tidings. It's not that they didn't believe in such things. They were convinced that God had the power to interrupt the service at any moment. He might send them all into a fit of shouting that lasted for days. Indeed, they prayed for such things to occur. But they never acted as if they actually expected he would.

Most of the time, or so it seemed, God respected their suburban sensibilities and kept a polite distance. But every so often the Spirit would stir the congregation the way the angel stirred the waters of Bethesda, and one or two voices would cry "Glory" or "Amen." They were always the same voices, of course. They never made this declaration at any volume that would disturb our decorum. But it

was loud enough for all of us to hear. Just loud enough to let the rest of us know there was glory afoot.

RED HYMNALS AND CAMPFIRE ROUNDS

Glad Tidings was less self-conscious about singing. Three or four times during the service, the entire congregation reached for the old red hymnals in the pew racks and gave voice to their faith. The dog-eared hymnal pages were illuminated by the penciled scrawls and stick figures of bored children. The stanzas below those hieroglyphics depicted the pilgrim life of Jesus' followers as one of wandering and weariness, tears and tarrying.

*We were passing through the valley.
We were camped on the banks of the river.
We were sinking deep in sin.*

The hymn writers helped us get our bearings by pointing to the milestones along the way.

*We were at Bethel with Jacob.
We were drinking water from the rock with Moses.
We were in the Garden with Jesus.*

I wouldn't describe the melodies of those old hymns as pretty.

They seemed strange to me, as archaic as the shape-note harmonies of the Sacred Harp, from which many of them were hewn. They exuded a kind of musty charm for me, the way my grandmother's house did with its ancient wood and iron stove. Something about them reminded me of the songs my father and uncles sang after they had drunk too much beer. Songs with titles like "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and "On the Road to Mandalay." Those hymns rolled along with a rhythm that was so predictable, you didn't need to know the words or the melody to sing them. If you knew one hymn, it seemed, you knew them all. And if you didn't know it, you had only to wait a stanza or two to sing it like you knew it.

The songs we had sung the night before at the Lost Coin Coffee House were different from the hymns we sang in church. The Lost Coin was located in the Sunday school building just across the parking lot from Glad Tidings. At the Lost Coin, we worshiped God with campfire rounds led by a gangly guitar player named Mike who prayed daily for the salvation of Bob Dylan and George Harrison. The songs we sang at the Lost Coin were simpler, based on a handful of chords

The root of my problem is one of vertigo, not aesthetics. What I need is not a change of tune so much as a reorientation along worship's true trajectory.

God spoken of in those songs was not fun but immortal and invisible. He was so holy we had to say it three times. "Man of Sorrows, what a name," we cried, "Hallelujah! What a Savior!" Those were the kinds of songs that caught in your throat and moved you to tears. The kind that made you stand a little straighter and sing a little louder.

Now, 38 years later, I find that I have reached a stage in life where most of the music I hear in church is "their" music, whoever "they" are. That is to say, I have reached a stage in life where most of the music I hear in church annoys me. I do not mean to be a musical snob. Indeed, I think of myself as an eclectic. I was raised on Bix and Beethoven. I came of age in the era of the Beatles. The buttons on my car radio are set to classical, country, oldies, rock, and even Christian music. I think of myself as someone who has been baptized by immersion in the waters of musical diversity.

Yet somehow when Sunday comes, all my musical sophistication dissolves, and I am reduced to that most primitive test of aesthetic values: "I may not know what art is, but I know what I like." Or, rather, "I may not know what worship is, but I know what it isn't." When

the worship leader reminds me that worship "isn't about me," I try to take it to heart. I really do. Nevertheless, more often than not, I walk into church hoping to be a worshiper and leave a curmudgeon. A chastened curmudgeon. A repentant curmudgeon. But a curmudgeon nonetheless.

REVERSING FIELD

I have concluded that the root of my problem is one of vertigo, not aesthetics. What I need is not a change of tune so much as a reorientation along worship's true trajectory. Like most churchgoers, I tend to view worship as something that moves from earth to heaven. We think of worship as something that originates with us, our gift to God. Perhaps this is why so many of us are conflicted about it. We consider worship to be an expression of our personal devotion. So when the musical style or some expression gets in the way, we don't feel like it is our worship at all. It is someone else's idea of worship. Perhaps the worship leader's or that of the majority. But not our own.

The biblical portrait of worship moves in the opposite direction. The trajectory of heavenly worship begins with God and descends to earth. This trajectory is reflected in Psalm 150, where praise begins in the heavenly sanctuary and resounds throughout the domain of God. From there it is taken up by those

on earth, who praise God with a variety of instruments and dancing, until "everything that has breath" praises the Lord (Ps. 150:6).

We find the same trajectory of worship in Revelation 5. John, who has been caught up to heaven and sees an innumerable multitude of angels and saints surrounding the throne of God, hears the angels declaring the worthiness of the Lamb "to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Revelation 5:13 continues: "Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!'"

and a seemingly endless repetition of the chorus. We didn't mind. If anything, their simplicity made them even easier to sing than the old gospel songs. We sang them with enthusiasm. We clapped. We stomped. We sang in antiphonal rounds. We mirrored the meaning of the words with hand gestures. If someone had taken the words of Psalm 119 and fit them to the tune of "Bingo" ("There was a farmer had a dog and Bingo was his name-o"), we would have sung it. All 176 verses.

The songs we sang at the Lost Coin were fun. But *fun* is not the word I would use to describe the hymns of the church. If the campfire rounds we enjoyed at the coffeehouse taught us that we could lift our voices in worship, those old hymns taught us how to lift our gaze. The



In his book *Working the Angles*, Eugene Peterson makes an observation about prayer that applies to worship in general. “Prayer is *answering* speech,” Peterson writes. “The first word is God’s word. Prayer is a human word and is . . . never the initiating and shaping word simply because *we* are never first, never primary.” Worship is by nature answering speech. Like a musical instrument in which one plucked string causes all the other strings to resonate, earthly worship resonates with the worship of heaven. Worship is not our attempt to project our voices so that they will be heard in heaven. Neither is it a performance executed on the earthly stage for the benefit of a spectator God. It is certainly not something we do primarily for ourselves, as if it were a kind of self-amusement or spiritual entertainment.

In a sermon entitled “Praise, One of the Chief Employments of Heaven,” Jonathan Edwards explained, “Let it be considered that the church on earth is the same society with those saints who are praising God in heaven. There is not one church of Christ in heaven and another here upon earth.” This means that when the church gathers for worship, it engages in a heavenly activity. The worshiping church does not merely imitate what goes on in heaven. It participates in heaven’s worship. Like one who walks into the church sanctuary after the service has started, those who worship on earth move into something that is already in progress. We take up a theme that was begun by others before the throne of God, adding our voices to theirs.

Consequently, the worshiping church is part of a much larger congregation. It is one that includes patriarchs and prophets, saints and angels. No wonder Edwards called worship “the work of heaven” and observed, “If we begin now to exercise ourselves in the work of heaven, it will be the way to have foretastes of the enjoyments of heaven.”

A HEAVENLY CONGREGATION

The psalmist’s portrait of worship is noteworthy because it is so specific. One thing is clear from his description in Psalm 150:3–5: It is appropriate to worship God with music. Most believers agree with this. What we often don’t agree on is the kind of music and which instruments to employ in this worship. The reasons for our differences are varied and far more complex than we realize. Some of our differences are a function of culture and taste. We grow accustomed to certain instruments and prefer particular styles. I like the music I grew up with. I hate the music my kids listen to. But personal tastes change. My father was a huge fan of jazz, not the “cool jazz” of today but old school jazz: Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and Fats Waller. As a kid, I hated his music. When I became an adult, especially after my father died, I found that I liked it because it reminded me of him. This is not unusual. Personal experiences shape our musical preference. So do society and culture.

But even deeper reasons remain for our reaction to the music we hear in church. In his book *Resounding Truth*, Duke theologian Jeremy Begbie writes that music not only reflects a social and cultural order, it is also embedded in what he calls a “sonic order.” Music “. . . involves the integrity of the materials that produce sound and of sound waves, the integrities of the human body, and the integrity of time.” “When we hear music,” Begbie writes, “a whole range of elements are pulled together—in particular, our state of mind and body, memories and associations, social and cultural conventions, and other perceptions that come along with the musical sounds. Together, these greatly affect the meaning the music will have for us.”

What does this mean for us as far as worship is concerned? For

one thing, it means that we cannot help being profoundly affected by the music we hear. Music affects us on every level: neurological, physiological, aesthetic, and emotional. When someone says to me, “I just can’t worship to that music,” I believe them. But the psalmist’s description of the worship of heaven suggests that the variety

When the church gathers for worship, it engages in a heavenly activity. The worshiping church does not merely imitate what goes on in heaven. It participates in heaven’s worship.

of musical styles, the instruments used, and the methods the church employs in its worship should exceed the scope of taste.

SIMMERING DIFFERENCES

In light of this, three suggestions arise almost spontaneously. They are not new thoughts by any means, but they bear repeating, given that tensions surrounding worship are always simmering below the surface of congregational life.

First, we don’t have to please everyone when it comes to worship. Given the variety of styles and tastes, it is not possible to please all people all the time. I am certain that the psalmist’s style of music would sound alien to my ears. If that’s true, I don’t need to be ashamed of the fact that I really do hate some of the music I hear in church, nor be upset that not everyone agrees with my judgment.

Second, the quality of music is not always the most important factor in our worship experience. Clearly some music is better than other music. A Beethoven piano concerto is qualitatively better than “Chopsticks.” Part of me wants to believe we should offer God only the best. Yet the worship that moves me most and is the most effective vehicle for helping me to enter God’s presence is not always the best music.

Third, it is not our differences in taste but rather our mutual contempt and lack of respect that have caused the most damage in the church. What has hurt us most has been our unwillingness to acknowledge that all of us have sacrificed in some measure when it comes to the church’s experience of worship.

Worship is not a private practice. It is the chief work of heaven and the duty of every creature. A day will come when our conflict and mutual discomfort over the church’s worship will end. Until then we must muddle through the best we can by reminding ourselves that we are part of a much larger congregation—one populated by patriarchs and prophets, saints and angels, where we are invited to join a chorus that began on the first day of creation. The first notes were sounded by those who surround the throne in heaven. Their theme echoes through the rest of God’s domain. All that remains is for us to add our voices to their song. ✚

John Koessler is professor of pastoral studies at Moody Bible Institute and author of the forthcoming *Folly, Grace, and Power: The Mysterious Act of Preaching* (Zondervan). Part of this article appeared in a *PreachingToday.com* sermon, “The Hallelujah Chorus.”

Go to ChristianBibleStudies.com for “The Trajectory of Worship,” a Bible study based on this article.

POP

Goes
the
Worship



WORSHIP THE CT INTERVIEW

Religion professor **T. David Gordon**
says Muzak has shaped singing in church.
Interview by Mark Moring

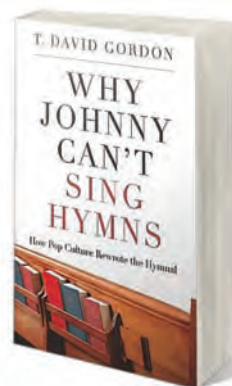
IN HIS NEW BOOK, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns* (P & R Publishing), T. David Gordon argues that modern worship choruses have trumped hymns in many congregations because for decades, we have been inundated with pop music—to the point that many of us don't know better. If you eat nothing but Big Macs, Gordon says, you will never appreciate a filet mignon.

A professor of religion at Grove City College, Gordon takes a media ecology approach, which he describes as the study of “the social and individual human consequences when a new medium is introduced to a culture.” Regarding church music, Gordon says, media ecologists should ask how music, “once a participatory thing, became a passive thing. What happens when people who used to sing folk music around the house are now surrounded by Muzak? How does that alter our sensibilities of music?”

In the context of the church's “worship wars,” Gordon's views may seem controversial and certainly will not stop the feuding. While not everyone will agree with him, his arguments can take the discussion about church music to a deeper, richer place. *Christianity Today* senior associate editor Mark Moring recently spoke with Gordon.

The media ecology approach brings a new perspective to the worship wars.

The wars are still going partly because none of the ways by which people tried to explain the wars were sticking. I think media ecology allows us to better understand the division. You could not explain the change [from traditional hymns to praise-and-worship



RICHARD KELLY PHOTOGRAPHY



songs] on either theological grounds or aesthetic grounds. So I started asking, *On what grounds could we explain it?*

The Reformation also changed worship music, but only after two-and-a-half centuries of serious theological discussion. It hasn't been the same with modern changes; the debate came about *ex post facto*. In fact, proponents of contemporary worship music do not consider singing "A Mighty Fortress" to be sinful, in the way that Calvin and Luther thought the Mass was sinful.

You write that we evangelicals are beholden to "contemporaneity." What do you mean?

Many are promoting an "aesthetic" that it is our duty to patronize living artists and not artists who are dead. Should we also not read books that are more than 50 years old, or enter buildings that are more than 50 years old? Christians aren't abandoning their buildings, and they haven't stopped reading Spurgeon or Edwards or Luther or Calvin. We haven't rejected other art forms that are not new. We've done so only with music.

Have we really rejected it, or do we just prefer modern music?

It's closer to rejection at this point. In every generation, gifted people would write some good hymns, and subsequent generations would enjoy them. Nothing new there. What's new is the notion that you have to have new music in a worship service. That's unprecedented. I'm asking why people feel this emotional distance from hymns that was not felt by generations before.

Today, traditionalists and contemporary enthusiasts both seem to be saying, "We'll do our thing, you do yours, and we'll agree to disagree." What's wrong with that?

It is always appropriate to articulate differences in a manner that encourages Christian fellowship and charity. But those of us who regret all denominational differences, on the ground that they become effective barriers to the highest expressions of Christian unity, also regret that "traditional" and "contemporary" have become their own denominations. So in this sense, it is never good for Christians to simply say to other Christians, "Go in peace, be warm and full." We first should try to understand our differences, then attempt to resolve them. Traditionalists have never excluded the contemporary; they have always encouraged the best artists of every generation to add to the growing, living tradition of hymnody. It is the contemporaneists who are often exclusive; there are some who exclude almost the entire Christian tradition.

I have consistently encountered this irony: Almost all defenders of contemporary worship music are aesthetic relativists ("It's just a matter of taste"), yet they are the ones who insist that the church abandon everything else in the name of what they deem "good taste." But why are they willing to see the church divided over what is "merely" a matter of taste?

You blame the ubiquity of pop music for the shift.

Remember the expression "elevator music"? The first Muzak was used in elevators for people who, when they went to the big city and got in an elevator for the first time, were a little anxious. So the Muzak people decided that with some pleasant background music, people's anxiety would go down. Before long, elevator music made its way into the dentist's office, then the mall, and now as you put gas in your car. We can't tune out the onslaught of pop music; we hear

it as much as five to eight hours a day. People reach a point where nothing but pop music sounds like music.

Are you saying that if we hear enough of it, even if it's lousy, we reach a point where we don't recognize it as lousy?

Yes. Suppose the only piece of music in the whole world were "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." If that were all we had, we would be delighted, because we wouldn't know any better. What has happened with music is like how Billy Graham described religion when he said, "Some people have just enough religion to inoculate themselves against the real thing." Similarly, even music that isn't good still brings us some pleasure. And if we hear enough of such music, we just shrug and think that that's all there is.

That's not true for me. I grew up listening to pop and rock, but I prefer traditional hymns in worship. Suppose someone says, "I have eclectic tastes, but I simply prefer modern worship." What would you say?

Unless an individual chooses to listen to different kinds of music, the only thing that individual will hear (most of the time) is pop. Sure, one's sensibilities can be shaped deliberately, and many of us have developed tastes that we once did not have. (I spent years cultivating a taste for Brahms, whom I now love, and I spent about two years cultivating my appreciation for jazz.) If I did not believe that sensibilities could be cultivated, I wouldn't have written the book; it is, in some senses, a plea to shape them differently from the way commercial pop culture shapes them. But for people who do not take ownership of the cultivation of their sensibilities, other cultural gatekeepers will shape them for them—and in this case, they will shape them to prefer pop.



Apparently you think many have missed that argument. Why?

American evangelicals as a culture don't take art very seriously. We get our political theory from Englishmen like John Locke. We get our economic theory from Scotsmen. But we are very non-European in our refusal to take art seriously. It's the first thing to go when a school's budget is cut. And there's rarely any serious study of aesthetic theory. Consequently, I don't think church leadership has the liturgical or aesthetic or musical training necessary to get a handle on this. So now you have a marketing approach to Christianity: "What do people want? Let's give it to them."

Are all hymns superior to all modern worship?

In the book, I candidly state that many traditional hymns are outright dogs—just terrible. I never give specific examples, however, because there are always some people who love those dogs, and if I call their beloved song a dog, they will never hear anything else I say. I also think some contemporary hymns are very good; I especially appreciate Getty and Townend (e.g., "How Deep the Father's Love," "In Christ Alone").

'What's new is the notion that you have to have new music in a worship service. Why do people feel this emotional distance from hymns that was not felt by generations before?'

Are there objective criteria for evaluating music?

Yes, and there are objective criteria for what makes some music better than other music. Sacred music has special demands beyond aesthetic demands. Some musicologists argue that hymnody is actually a subcategory of folk music—distinguished from classical music because classical music is performance music, beyond the capacity of the average person to produce. But folk music, by name, suggests music produced by the people. It's the way a people join their heritage, and it's participatory in its very nature. Therefore, I don't think hymns should strive to compete with Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* or the solos in Handel's *Messiah*, because a congregation wouldn't be able to sing them. A hymn shouldn't be beyond the capacities of a good, intelligent church to sing. Now, some people are willing to work at singing well, and others ...

Like me? Those who can't read music but enjoy singing hymns?

Hymns should be easy enough to learn for people who do not read music, so people can pick up the melody quickly. When I was a young child and we'd take drives, the family would sing folk music or hymns. If Mom or Dad started singing "Fairest Lord Jesus," we sang along, and before long we were harmonizing. And we couldn't read music. Hymns aren't too difficult to sing; most of them are easier to sing than the contemporary stuff.

I find it ironic that if I'm attending a blended service, the hymns will have the full musical score, though they don't need it, while the contemporary stuff, which is unfathomable without the musical score, doesn't have it. It's just lyrics up on the screen.

Many would disagree, saying modern tunes are easy to catch on to.

They are not really easier to learn than hymns (unless they are profoundly simplistic). They seem easier to some people whose sensibilities have difficulty with anything that is not pop. But musically speaking, they are not, as a genre, substantially easier; they just sound more familiar to our culture. When people describe them as "easy," what they mean is "familiar-sounding."

Many believe that kind of music is more "seeker-friendly."

But it's like reaching the rich young ruler by throwing money at him. The desire to reach the lost is wonderful, but that doesn't mean the strategy is well-suited to the task. I'm not so sure that accommodation to an individual's consumerist preferences is consistent with the gospel call. The gospel doesn't say, "You've got most things right, you just need to throw some Jesus in there." Rather, it says, "You've got everything wrong, because you're not correctly related to God. Therefore, you've got to be willing to give up everything—mother, father, sister, brother, daughter, whatever—to follow Christ. And if not, you're not worthy of him."

Will some people swallow hard and say no to that? Yes. But I'm not sure we should say, "Well, what kind of music do you like? After all, we're just worshipping God here, and we have no standards other than what you like." Saying "it's all about you" isn't the way to go about evangelism.

It might be better to say, "You may wonder why we sang a hymn today written by Bernard of Clairvaux in the 12th century. We do it because we think it's a good reflection on what our Redeemer did. We don't really care whether it's new or old." That might cause a person to say, "Here's one institution in the entirety of our culture that isn't driven by consumer preference. Isn't that curious?"

Your book is going to make some people mad.

Well, it's already done that, even though I thought I was about as gracious as I could be. The purpose isn't to disturb but to ask why, for the first time in Christian history, do we feel so cut off from previous hymnody? I think the media ecology answer is largely correct, because we are surrounded by music that has these kinds of musical qualities, and therefore we expect all music to have those qualities. But why should we allow the producers of commercial music to make those choices for the church?

Oddly enough, some of the people most sympathetic to my book are those who play in church praise bands. They say, "We work our fannies off to find something we are not ashamed to play on Sunday, and you're right—it's hard to find any that's good." These people have been asked by their churches to do it, and so as good church people they are doing it. But they realize that most contemporary worship music has only one virtue: that it's *contemporary*. That isn't enough. It's just not a criterion that trumps all other criteria.

Many younger people are starting to appreciate hymns, and some churches are incorporating more hymns into their contemporary services. What are your thoughts on blended services?

I approve blended approaches only when the alternative is a split church. It's better to blend than to split. But better yet to be entirely unconcerned about whether a hymn sounds contemporary. No other generation was so concerned, and there is no good reason for ours to be so. The commercial forces that shape pop culture should not be the arbiters of how we worship God.





Racial reconciliation happens when we not only sing each other's songs but learn the stories embedded in those songs.

By Reynolds Chapman

Worship in Black and White

WHEN I WAS in middle school, I wanted to be a rock star. When I became a Christian in eighth grade, I was eager to see how my love for music would fit in with my decision to follow Jesus.

(I gradually learned that “star” is not a pursuit befitting Christians.) People in my church wanted me to use my musical gifts too, so I started learning and leading people in contemporary praise-and-worship songs like “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High” and “Shout to the Lord.” As I went to more Christian music festivals, visited different churches, and learned more songs, I garnered a library of hymns and praise-and-worship music.

Meanwhile, sometimes I would hear gospel music on the radio or television, and it struck me as a curiosity—the kind of music to which black people worshiped but that remained mostly irrelevant to me.

When I was a sophomore in college, the theme for the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship regional retreat was racial reconciliation. A few weeks before it began, our campus staff worker told me that they had initially planned on inviting singer-songwriter Derek Webb to speak and give a concert but had changed their minds.

“No way!” I said. “Why?”

She said that when an African American staff member heard the idea, she threw up her hands in frustration—most African American students had never heard of Webb. So the planners decided to re-focus the conference theme on racial reconciliation.

The speakers at the conference pointed us to the picture in Revelation 7:9–10, where a great multitude that no one could count, “from every nation, tribe, people and language,” stands before the

throne and worships the Lamb. They said that if this is the picture of how things will be when everything is made right, we should be living into it now. Christ called us to be one, as he and the Father are one, but Sunday morning is the most segregated time of the week. Our divisions compromise our faithfulness and our witness to Christ.

The retreat initiated a wave of conversations across campus, and soon I saw racial reconciliation as one of the paramount tasks of the church. I was convinced that we had to do away with the old categories of “white church” and “black church.” We needed to be the new, reconciled, unified church. And this meant changing the way we did worship music.

I began to realize that the songs I knew, like “Heart of Worship” and “How Great Is Our God,” were written primarily by and for a white audience. So as a worship leader on campus, I tried to insert black gospel songs and occasionally also a song in a language other than English.

WHAT A BLACK HYMNAL MEANS

In my buoyant eagerness to reconcile the world, though, I put little thought into why the church is racially divided. This led to a hurried jump to seek reconciliation without knowing the journey that preceded me. I had no concept of the black church tradition, and really no interest in learning about it. If the church was going to be reconciled, I assumed, we needed to look forward, not backward.

My attitude began to change when I moved to Durham, North Carolina, and began worshiping at St. John’s Missionary Baptist Church, a historically African American congregation. On the Sunday I first walked into the sanctuary, the congregation was singing “This Is the Day.” We clapped, danced, and repeated the chorus over and over. When we sat down, I noticed the *African American Heritage Hymnal* in the pew rack. Most of the songs in the service came from the hymnal, but sometimes they erupted spontaneously out of the

hearts and mouths of the church members.

As I continued to worship at St. John's, I learned that the songs we sang were much more than songs: They were the annals of the black church. I slowly realized why a special African American hymnal was published and used in our church. The hymnals I was familiar with were, by default, "white heritage hymnals." This hymnal was one record

I began to realize that the worship songs I knew, like 'Heart of Worship' and 'How Great Is Our God,' were written primarily by and for a white audience.

of the story of God's faithfulness in the black church over the years.

I also began to see how the songs we sang in worship told our current stories. During our Wednesday evening services, we have a sharing and testimony time, when we take turns telling of God's work in our lives. I noticed that sometimes instead of speaking, church members would simply begin to sing—and everyone else would join in after the first line. After the song was over, whoever chose it would say, "That is my testimony."

The more time I spent at St. John's, the more I also realized that the people of St. John's are my people, my brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, from whom I had been estranged. Worship at St. John's helped redefine who my "we" is. But if the people at St. John's are my people, then their stories are my stories, and their songs are my songs as well. Sadly, when white Christians narrate American church history in particular, white figures and heroes are often at the center. That has changed some since the life of Martin Luther King Jr., who is increasingly viewed as a hero of all Americans. But at the time, if I wanted to really know myself and my story, I needed to dig deeper. And as a musician and someone who cares about worship, I wanted to see the way songs have told the whole American Christian story—for black and white Christians—and the way songs tell our story today.

STORY BEHIND THE SONGS

I began by reading black historians like W. E. B. Du Bois and James Cone, and listening to black gospel artists like Mahalia Jackson and Thomas Dorsey. A context began to form around songs I had previously plucked up and inserted into my worship sets. And seeing the story that surrounded these songs gave them richer, more robust meanings.

For example, Bernice Johnson Reagon, in her book *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me*, explains how the meaning of the lyrics to "I'm On My Way to Canaan Land" have developed:

*If you don't go, don't hinder me (3x)
I'm on my way, great God, I'm on my way,*

*I'm on my way to Canaan land (3x)
I'm on my way, great God, I'm on my way.*

Those who sang this song in the 19th century, says Reagon, understood "Canaan land" to have both a spiritual and an earthly

meaning, referring to both heaven and freedom from slavery. During the civil rights movement, the lyrics changed to "I'm on my way to freedom land," which referred to both heaven and freedom from segregation. Understanding that these lyrics, along with those of many other spirituals and gospel hymns, have dual meanings allows me to enter into their stories and sing with one mind along with my African American sisters and brothers. Naturally, this is a deeper appropriation than choosing a song from a list and inserting it into a worship set.

Learning the history of the black church has also taught me how to prepare and lead worship. The black church in America was formed, in part, because white churches (as majority cultures are wont to do) assumed that blacks should assimilate into white, Western culture. Thus some African instruments, such as the talking drum, were banned because they were thought to be demonic. This led me to ask, *In what ways are my assumptions and impulses in preparing worship music guided by white cultural bias?* The cross-cultural tensions between black and white churches are, to be sure, complex, but this historical example helped me realize that I could not simply add a few black gospel songs to the worship set, but needed to think about ways to fully integrate black and white cultures into worship.

DEEPER RECONCILIATION

Since the 1960s, more and more white Protestant churches have striven to reconcile with their black counterparts. Their efforts have succeeded in some cases, but not in others. One reason for our failed

The gospel songs we sang were much more than songs: They were the annals of the black church.

attempts may be that we've merely copied the world's way of seeking unity amid diversity.

Multiculturalism is in vogue in the West, where we are surrounded by images of people of many colors holding hands and singing one song. One recent example occurred during the World Cup. During commercial breaks, TV screens featured a montage of the whole world in ten seconds, followed by an image of Bono playing soccer with South African children. It's a common trope used in lots of reconciliation imagery. While the message behind such images is positive, the images can become unhelpful and even dangerous if they are divorced from a story. We see the picture of unity and want to grasp it immediately, without taking the time to know the lives behind the faces in the picture. It's like skipping to the climax of a movie without watching the 90 minutes that lead up to it.

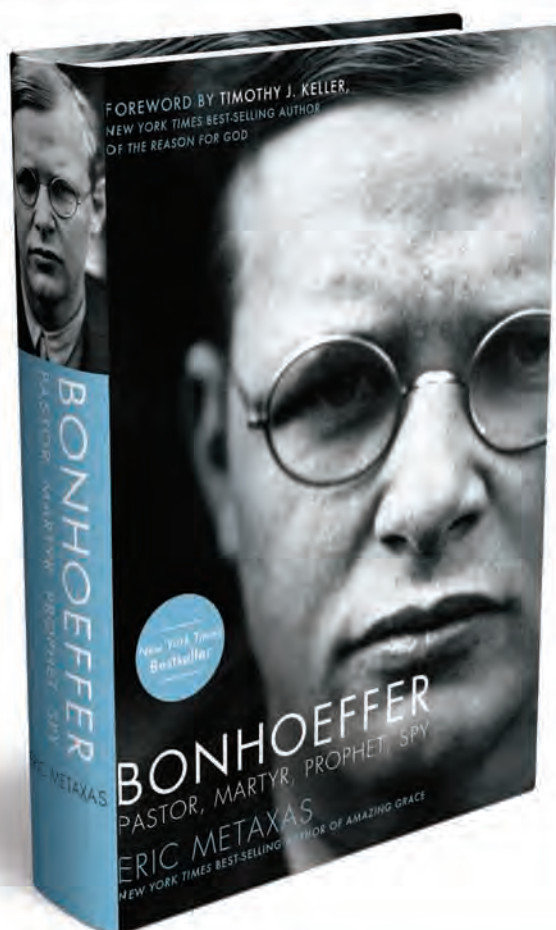
The church's way of multiculturalism requires more patience. Jesus has reconciled us to himself by coming to us, knowing us, eating meals with us, and submitting his life on our behalf. Jesus values our whole life and whole story. So, while picking a diverse assortment of worship songs is a good first step, it is only that. One way of honoring each other more deeply is to know not only one another's individual stories but also the stories of the communities that have shaped us. That means knowing not just the songs but also the stories behind those songs. ☩

Reynolds Chapman works at the Duke Center for Reconciliation.

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The Hymns That Keep on Going

The 27 worship songs that have made the hymnal cut time and again. By Robert T. Coote

There are many ways to identify the most lasting or best loved hymns among American Protestants. But what would we find by looking at all 28 hymnals published by mainline Protestant denominations from the late 1800s to the present? Out of almost 5,000 hymns, how many would appear in all 28 hymnals?

Why limit this analysis to mainline Protestant denominations? For one thing, a comparable series of hymnals from evangelical denominations from the late 1800s does not exist. And the hymnals most widely used by evangelical denominations in the past 40 years have been produced by independent publishers and therefore lack clear precedents.

The hymnals of mainline denominations have much to tell us. The denominations are home to many evangelicals—over one-third of *Christianity Today's* readers belong to mainline churches. And for most of their histories, mainline denominations were the bearers of orthodox Christianity in the U.S. Finally, though some of the denominations have taken a liberal turn on theological issues over the past century, hymnody by its nature is conservative ballast.

Perhaps there are clues, then, among the 13 finalists, as to which songs today will be around in 200 years. Robert T. Coote, senior contributing editor of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, has done the research and presents his findings to CT readers.

T

HE INVENTORY SURVEYED for this essay totals 4,905 hymns, found in successive hymnal editions of the following six mainline Protestant denominations:

- Anglican (Episcopal), four editions, from 1892
- American Baptist, four editions, from 1883
- Congregational (United Church of Christ), five editions, from 1897
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, five editions, from 1899
- United Methodist, five editions, from 1878
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), five editions, from 1885

In some cases, the denominations encompass church bodies that were formerly independent. For the purpose of research, only the hymnals published by the primary bodies were included in the database.

Finalists had to be written in the late 1800s or earlier and still appear in current mainline Protestant hymnals. They had to appear in at least 26 of the 28 hymnals in the inventory. Where an original edition of a hymnal was not available, a revision of the hymnal was substituted. Christmas carols, choruses, and service music are not included in the database.

A typical contemporary hymnbook of 500 to 600 hymns will feature 250 to 300 hymns from the past and 250 to 300 new hymns. Middling hymn-writing may survive a generation or two but ultimately fades away. Of the hymns appearing in the denominational hymnbooks of the late 1800s, only half appeared in the first hymnals of the 20th century, and many more dropped away in subsequent editions. The process has continued through the generations. While historians highlight the great outpouring of new hymns in the Victorian era, our inventory indicates that less than 20 percent of the songs appearing in the hymnals of the late 1800s survive in current mainline Protestant hymnals.

The table (see page 31) presents the 13 hymns that have appeared in all 28 hymnals, as well as 9 others that appear in 27 of the 28 hymnals, and 5 more that appear in 26 of the 28 hymnals. The average date of the top tier of hymns is 1788 (excluding "O Sacred Head"). Still, wide acceptance of these and other hymns did not come until the middle of the 19th century, after a prolonged contest with the once-predominant practice of singing the Psalms. [continued on 32]

Everybody's Favorites: Hymns That Last

Based on a survey of 28 mainline Protestant hymnals, from the late 1800s through the 20th century.

NEAR RIGHT: Denominations typically produce one new hymnal per generation. Six denominations and 28 editions in the survey.	ANGLICAN: 4 EDITIONS 1892, 1916, 1940, 1982 BAPTIST: 4 EDITIONS 1883, 1926, 1941, 1970 CONGREGATIONAL: 5 EDS. 1897, 1912, 1931, 1974, 1995 LUTHERAN: 5 EDITIONS 1899, 1917, 1933, 1978/00, 2006 METHODIST: 5 EDITIONS 1878, 1905, 1933, 1964, 1989 PRESBYTERIAN: 5 EDS. 1885/1911, 1933, 1955, 1972, 1990 NUMBER OF APPEARANCES Christian Life Hymnal Hendrickson Pub 2006 Hymnal of Worship and Celebration Word 1986 Hymns for the Family of God Paragon 1976 The Covenant Hymnal Covenant Press 1973
FAR RIGHT: Recent hymnals that are popular among evangelicals, compared with the hymnals in the survey.	
NUMBER OF APPEARANCES: Maximum possible appearances is 28, as in hymns 1 through 13. Items 14–22 appear in 27 of 28; items 23–27 appear in 26 of 28. All hymns listed appear in current hymnal editions.	

BELOW: 13 in all 28 editions, 9 in 27, and 5 in 26.

			Number of editions in which hymn appears							Current evangelical hymnals			
1	1847	Abide with me: fast falls the eventide <i>H. Lyte</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
2	1779	All hail the power of Jesus' name <i>E. Perronet</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
3	1844	Come, ye thankful people, come <i>H. Alford</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
4	1851	Crown him with many crowns <i>M. Bridges; alt. G. Thring, 1874</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
5	1779	Glorious things of thee are spoken <i>J. Newton</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
6	1745	Guide me, O thou great Jehovah <i>Wm. Williams</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
7	1826	Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty <i>R. Heber</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
8	1787	How firm a foundation, ye saints <i>R. Keene</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
9	1825	In the cross of Christ I glory <i>J. Bowring</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
10	1719	Jesus shall reign where'er the sun <i>I. Watts</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
11	1747	Love divine, all loves excelling <i>C. Wesley</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
12	12TH C	O sacred Head, now wounded <i>Bernard of Clairvaux; tr Gerhardt 1656; tr J. W. Alexander 1860</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•
13	1707	When I survey the wondrous cross <i>I. Watts</i>	4	4	5	5	5	5	28	•	•	•	•

Average date of composition or publication of above texts (excluding #12): 1788

14	1529	A mighty fortress is our God <i>M. Luther; tr F. H. Hedge, 1852</i>	3	4	5	5	5	5	27	•	•	•	•
15	ca. 820	All glory, laud, and honor <i>Theodulph; tr J. M. Neale, 1854</i>	4	4	5	5	4	5	27	•	•	•	•
16	1757	Come, thou almighty King <i>anon and C. Wesley</i>	4	4	5	5	5	4	27	•	•	•	•
17	1836	Just as I am, without one plea <i>Charlotte Elliott</i>	4	4	5	5	5	4	27	•	•	•	•
18	1626	Now thank we all our God <i>M. Rinkart; tr Catherine Winkworth, 1858</i>	4	4	5	5	4	5	27	•	•	•	•
19	1738	O, for a thousand tongues to sing <i>C. Wesley</i>	3	4	5	5	5	5	27	•	•	•	•
20	1719	O God, our help in ages past <i>I. Watts</i>	4	4	4	5	5	5	27	•	•	•	•
21	1833	O, worship the King all glorious above <i>R. Grant</i>	4	4	5	4	5	5	27	•	•	•	•
22	1866	The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord <i>S. J. Stone</i>	4	4	5	5	4	5	27	•	•	•	•

Average date of composition or publication of above texts (excluding #15): 1739

23	1739	Christ the Lord is risen today! <i>C. Wesley</i>	4	4	5	4	5	4	26	•	•	•	•
24	12TH C	Jesus, the very thought of thee <i>Bernard of Clairvaux; tr E. Caswall, 1849</i>	4	4	5	4	5	4	26	•	•	•	•
25	1836	Saviour, like a shepherd lead us <i>attr Dorothy Thrupp in Thrupps Hymns</i>	4	4	4	5	5	4	26	•	•	•	•
26	ca. 750	The day of resurrection <i>John of Damascus; tr J. M. Neale, 1853</i>	4	3	5	4	5	5	26	•	•		•
27	1854	There's a wideness in God's mercy <i>F. W. Faber</i>	3	3	5	5	5	5	26	•	•	•	•

Average date of composition or publication of above texts (excluding #24 and #26): 1810

Hymns [from 30]

WARM ORTHODOXY

One striking observation is that the 13 hymns found in all 28 hymnbooks show a longstanding commitment to the traditional understanding of worship and the Christian message. They focus on such foundational themes as the enduring triumph of the Cross, assurance in the ultimate rule of Jesus, and prayer for the continuing experience of God's love.

In view of the stance of most mainline Protestants in the late 1800s, the spiritually warm and orthodox character of these hymns is not surprising. What is somewhat surprising, given the unsettledness in some denominational quarters today, is that these hymns continue to be valued. Congregations, of course, vary, as do regions of the country. But if the members of mainline denominations are singing these hymns with any frequency and thoughtfulness, a basis for orthodox ecumenism is being cultivated.

Historians and hymnologists regularly tout the role of hymns in providing Christian doctrine, nurture, and reassurance. As Erik Routley put it, "The duty of a hymn is to get the best out of people . . . so they can respond to what the Lord has done." And as George Herbert

(1593–1633), the Welsh orator and Anglican priest, said, "A verse may finde him, who a sermon flies, / And turn delight into a sacrifice."

Hymn-singing in the early decades of the Lutheran churches of Europe took place primarily in the homes of the faithful; hymns enabled families "to meet [the Lord] and to be united with him," as historian Peter Balslev-Clausen recently observed. A friend of mine in England systematically goes through his hymnbook, several hymns at a time, as part of his daily devotions. Augustine summed up the impact of hymn-singing this way: "To sing once is to pray twice."

Each generation sifts the hymns offered by its forebears and passes on the best of Christian hymnody. The hymns of Watts, the Wesleys, and others ultimately replaced the Psalter as a source of spiritual nurture in church worship. In his introduction to *The English Hymn*, J. R. Watson wonders if the Christian community today is witnessing the wane of hymn-singing, as praise songs and guitars take over. Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, is more hopeful. In the foreword to *Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History and Theology*, he acknowledges the current popularity of praise songs (which he characterizes as a contemporary form of the Psalter!). He contends, however, that hymn-singing will be back in strength "sooner rather than later." ⊕

Whatever Happened to 'Amazing Grace'?

Why John Newton's famous hymn failed to win, place, or show.

For a number of years, John Newton pastored the Anglican church in Olney, a lace-making town about 50 miles northwest of London. His parishioners were mostly uneducated men and women. He made a practice of writing poems, including one titled "Amazing Grace," to help them remember the point of his sermons. His poems were published in 1779 as *Olney Hymns*.

In many non-Anglican, independent churches, parishioners sang the hymns of Isaac Watts (1674–1748). Watts's hymns were also sung in Baptist churches, such as the one in London pastored by John Rippon (1751–1836). Rippon, apparently quite the entrepreneur, wished to expand hymn-singing options and bound many of Newton's poems with Watts's hymns, titling the volume *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors, Intended to Be an Appendix to Dr. Watts' Psalms and Hymns* (1787). His collection found much acclaim, with more than 200,000 copies in circulation.

But *A Selection of Hymns* did not include "Amazing Grace." Was this because it does not mention Jesus or God but only "grace"? (The familiar concluding verse—"When we've been there ten thousand years," which includes the word *God*—was a later add-on.) Did Rippon think the language plebeian? Out of four verses of Newton's original (verses five and six were seldom printed), only 11 words are more than one syllable. The late-19th-century hymnologist John Julian, while noting that 61 of Newton's hymns were in current circulation, justified the omission of "Amazing Grace," saying it was "far from being a good example of Newton's work." In any case, "Amazing Grace" went missing from English hymnbooks from the early 1800s, and did not appear in England, with the familiar "New Britain" tune, until 1964.

Across the Atlantic, the situation was quite different. Some historians think *Olney Hymns* came to the United States with Scottish immigrants

who settled in Kentucky and Tennessee. "Amazing Grace" became particularly popular in Methodist camp meetings in the first decades of the 19th century. In 1835, it appeared in William Walker's *Southern Harmony*, wedded to the now-standard New Britain tune. *Southern Harmony* reached a circulation of 600,000—about one copy for every 40 people in the country. However, "Amazing Grace" remained absent in many of the major Protestant denominational hymnals in the North.

From 1947 on, "Amazing Grace" began to migrate from its stronghold in the southern states into the secular mainstream. Gospel singer Mahalia Jackson performed it that year on the radio and subsequently included it in one of her releases. Other singers who made it well known included Judy Collins (who sang it as an anti-Vietnam War protest), Aretha Franklin, Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, and Willie Nelson. Arlo Guthrie sang it at the 1969 Woodstock Festival. It turned up in movies, including *Alice's Restaurant*, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, and *Silkwood*. In 1990 Bill Moyers devoted a documentary to it. It has been heard after national disasters, including the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and the September 11 attacks. The Library of Congress holds recordings by more than 450 artists. Now, everybody knows it.

So how to account for the song's spotty showing in the 28 mainline Protestant hymnbooks? My proposal: Mainline Protestantism in the 19th and 20th centuries reflected the influence of the mother churches in England and throughout the continent. In regard to "Amazing Grace," this is most obvious with *Hymnal 1982*, the Anglican hymnal currently in use. Erik Routley served as a consultant to the committee that produced *Hymnal 1982*. When the inclusion of "Amazing Grace" was broached (it had not appeared in previous editions), Routley questioned whether the members of the committee had been unduly influenced by the media. I picture him, pipe in hand, arching an eyebrow. The committee included it anyway. — Robert T. Coote

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A.

Native missionaries serving with indigenous evangelistic missions.

**Q.**

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The quest for longevity ignores a fundamental Christian belief: this world is fallen. 'Exercise, technology, and diet' cannot prevent car accidents, falls, and natural disasters.

Sandy Haney
Wayne, Pennsylvania

A Delusive Quest

As Todd T. W. Daly noted in *Christianity Today* ["Chasing Methuselah," January], the quest for longevity through medicine ignores a fundamental Christian belief: this world is fallen. Even if we take advantage of whatever the medical community can offer, we have no guarantee that death won't come unexpectedly. "Exercise, technology, and diet" cannot prevent car accidents, falls, and natural disasters.

We might learn from desert father Abba Macarius the Great, who said, "The monk should always live as if he were to die on the morrow but at the same time he should treat his body as if he were to live on with it for many years to come."

SANDY HANEY
Wayne, Pennsylvania

Reforming Business

CT's interview with Jeff Van Duzer ["The Meaning of Business," January] was very welcome. The Reformation brought a business ethic of creating wealth while serving the common good. Calvin's Geneva, faced with an influx of poor Protestant refugees, needed a growing economy to create employment. But government leaders knew that rapid economic growth could lead to exploitation,

so they passed legislation that limited profits in key economic areas. The influx also led to a theological reflection on calling: Calvin once said our work is "our sentry box to the world."

Modern market capitalism is overall not serving the common good because Christian business managers and economists are not doing this theological reflection. The West's latest banking problems have shown our economic model needs reform. Is it right that some CEOs earn 500 times the wage of their lowest-paid employees? Would that meet the Reformers' test of a fair wage? We need biblically based solutions that address these complexities.

DAVID PARISH
Chair, Business Study Group
London Institute of Contemporary Christianity
London, England

God-Haunted Galleries

Many thanks to CT for profiling Roberta Ahmanson ["Connoisseur for Christ," January]. I had the privilege of seeing both the Caravaggio exhibit in London as well as "The Sacred Made Real" in Washington, D.C. I left each gallery with the same regret I feel leaving church services where the Holy Spirit is moving: grateful

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

23%
**Cracks in the
Crystal Cathedral**
CT Editorial

15%
**Unreasonable
Doubt**
Jim Spiegel

13%
**Changing Forever
How You Think**
John Wilson

YAY OR NAY Readers' take on "Cracks in the Crystal Cathedral"



for God's presence, yet knowing the departure is a transition to something less holy. I commend the Ahmansons for their vision and look forward to seeing what they will continue to offer disciples of the visual arts.

SAM DITTMAR
Cleveland, Ohio

Concert on a 3 x 5

Until last year, my experience with Scripture memorization was similar to John Wilson's ["Changing Forever How You Think," January]. Then a friend, terminal with cancer, challenged me to memorize an entire chapter. When she died, I downloaded Romans 8, formatted the verses to fit 3x5 cards, and kept them with me at all times. After a month, I could recite it, and from there I went on to other chapters.

I have tried to pinpoint why this process is so satisfying, and believe it's because that "melodious concert of his Word" has begun to echo within me, and I want more.

LINDA GIANOULIS
St. Paul, Minnesota

Irrational Atheists

If all Jim Spiegel is trying to say in "Unreasonable Doubt" [January] is that many atheists are unbelievers for reasons other than rational objections, he should be greeted with a yawn. Christian apologists are just as plagued by non-rational

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?
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belief motivators as atheists.

But maybe he is insinuating that we don't have to take atheists seriously because we can explain atheism in terms of their moral rebellion or lack of childhood nurturing. If so, he offers dangerous counsel. Few things would serve the church less at this moment than suggesting that we can explain away the reasons people disagree with us.

Let's stop psychoanalyzing to dismiss, and, in the spirit of Christ, begin listening in love. The atheists may just have a point, and we may just miss it.

ALEXANDER BLONDEAU
Rice, Minnesota

I have spent much time trying to convince skeptics of the truth. My arguments seem to fall on the deaf ears of otherwise intelligent people. In August, Rob Moll's "Saved by an Atheist" showed that atheist arguments are not always "against God's existence, but rather . . . against how God and especially his followers act."

Now, we learn that "major atheists of the modern period" had broken relationships with their fathers, while many prominent theists had healthy ones. Since divorce has become commonplace and single motherhood has been exalted as brave, it's no wonder the New Atheism has grown as well.

STEPHEN J. PADILLA
San Antonio, Texas

Handout Ethics

Regarding how Christians should respond to street people [Village Green, January], I have worked with homeless

populations for years and see that money given to street people is almost always misused for drugs or alcohol. Before deciding that a homeless person is helpless, think of the toughness it takes to survive on the streets. These guys are already fighters by default. They just need to change their target and learn to fight for themselves instead of using time and energy to overcome their impossible living conditions. Hope, not cash, is the greatest gift we can give.

MONICA GEE
E-mail

I'm surprised Ron Sider is the Village Green writer proposing not to give to those who ask. I agree that it's better to start a relationship than hand out money, but many needy people have been judged harshly by us "rich Christians" and are reluctant to go anywhere with people they don't know. In a Christian culture where food is sometimes offered only after the homeless listen to a sermon, they have reason to be suspicious. Will we be there after the meal?

Further, about one-third of the U.S. homeless population has mental health issues and may not be able to respond to an invitation to friendship.

BART WANG
Ontario, Canada

Editor's Note: CT's top 10 news stories of 2010 [Briefing, January] included Bruce Waltke's resignation from Reformed Theological Seminary. Waltke resigned due to debate over theistic evolution, and he affirms the existence of a historical Adam.



ONLINE POLL

IN PURSUIT OF LIFE
Have you participated in pro-life activism? (check all that apply)

21%
I have participated in a march and/or protest.

19%
I have held pro-life signs.

19%
I have written an elected official.

5%
I have a pro-life bumper sticker.

10%
I have written articles, blog posts, and/or updates through social media.

13%
I don't participate in public activism.

8%
I am pro-choice.

Total votes: 381

(Online polls do not represent a scientific sample.)

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compiled by Katelyn Beaty

WORTH REPEATING

Things overheard at CT online.

"Sharing a church facility with Muslims communicates a weak faith. Why? Because Muslims believe in sacred space. Just try asking to use a mosque for worship."

Mark Hausfeld, on why renting church buildings out to Muslim groups backfires.

Theology in the News: "Muslims in Evangelical Churches," by Jason B. Hood

"We are in the middle of spiritual warfare—not just on the field of battle against the culture of death, but also within our own hearts."

Chris C., on how the Enemy tempts pro-life activists into infighting and petty divisions.

"Pro-life Challenges, from a Former Planned Parenthood Director's View," by Paige Winfield Cunningham

"Splitting hairs on the modesty of a two- or one-piece swimsuit is pointless. The question is, why would Jesus want you to participate in a competition that says pretty people are better?"

Elizabeth, on the counter-biblical assumptions of modern beauty pageants.

Her.meneutics: "Miss America and the Bikini Question," by Katelyn Beaty

"There is a Yiddish saying: 'Old age, to the unlearned, is winter; to the learned, it is harvest time.' We need dedicated 'wisdom keepers' to share their stories in our churches."

J. B. Watson Jr., on the mighty contributions of elderly church members.

Q&A: "Billy Graham on Aging, Regrets, and Evangelicals," interview by Sarah Pulliam Bailey



"It says on your résumé that you were created in God's image. Very impressive."

The Curse of Blasphemy Laws

An upsurge of democracy should bring religious freedom to the Muslim world.

A

ASIA BIBI must be very special. She is only one out of an estimated 4.75 billion people who live in countries that have what the Pew Forum terms “high restrictions on religion.” Yet in November, Pope Benedict XVI drew attention to her case and in January called on the government of Pakistan to repeal the blasphemy laws under which she was sentenced to die. The pope pointed to the assassination of Pakistani governor Salman Taseer, who had asked Pakistan’s president to free Aasia Bibi. Blasphemy laws, the pope said, served primarily as a pretext for violence against religious minorities.

He is right.

In the West, 21st-century Christians find it hard to understand how Pakistan can have blasphemy laws. But blasphemy laws were long an integral part of Christendom’s own legal framework.

James Nayler was England’s most famous blasphemer. He led a splinter group within George Fox’s rapidly growing Quaker movement at a time when it was, in the words of historian Meic Pearse, “fearlessly provocative.” The Quakers’ “madcap sectarianism” threatened “established order, hierarchy, and property” and provoked harsh responses.

In 1655, in an apparent reenactment of Jesus’ triumphal entry, Nayler rode into Bristol, England, on horseback while his followers sang “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.” After a 13-day trial, prosecutors asked for the death penalty, but the Puritan Parliament voted it down 96 to 82. Instead, they sentenced Nayler to be whipped through the streets of London (310 lashes, one for every gutter he crossed), branded on the forehead with a blasphemer’s B, have his tongue pierced with a hot iron, sent back to Bristol riding backward on a horse, whipped again, then imprisoned indefinitely at hard labor. Horrified at the severity of this punishment, 100 eminent citizens tried to intervene on Nayler’s behalf, but he persisted in his

outrageousness, and “they left him in wrath.”

Although England abolished the death penalty for blasphemy in 1676, it did not repeal its blasphemy laws until 2008. As recently as 1921, a British court sentenced a blasphemer to a fatal nine months’ hard labor, and in the 1970s evangelical activists bullied comedy troupe Monty Python with the law while they were producing *The Life of Brian*.

Pakistan’s blasphemy laws are a holdover from British colonial government, which hoped to keep the peace by banning people from attacking each other’s religions. But when military strongman Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq came to power in 1977, he supercharged the law to demonstrate his allegiance to Islam and bolster his authority. In 1986, Zia’s government added the death penalty to the blasphemy law—not a sign of piety, but an instance of cynical demagoguery.

Pakistan has not yet executed anyone for blasphemy. Death sentences are usually commuted. But vigilante bullets have killed many who have escaped the government’s noose. The laws are popular. Mobs have rallied to show support for Governor Taseer’s assassin.

Muslim scholars say that blasphemy laws have no basis in Islam, blaming colonial authorities for importing a Western concern into the Indian subcontinent. Other scholars say the laws are intended only for Muslims who badmouth their own religion, but never for Christians like Bibi (who credibly denies the charges against her).

Why do blasphemy laws exist? In Pakistan, Zia co-opted religious sentiment for

political purposes. In England, secular authorities believed blasphemy laws protected the state. If the head of the state is also the head of the church, some argued, nonconformity in religion is the same as sedition. In 1676, England’s chief justice, stating that the Christian religion was part of England’s common law, ruled that blasphemy dissolved citizens’ sense of obligation to the government. To speak against Christianity was to subvert the law. Blasphemy laws, it seems, are really more about government power than about God.

In the West, public sentiment against the enforcement of blasphemy laws was not the fruit of clever arguments by Enlightenment deists. Rather, opposition rode a rising tide of individualized piety, especially among Quakers and Bap-

tists. In addition, a dawning realization that Christ’s kingdom is a spiritual one, not to be identified with any earthly political order, led people to believe that the state should tend its own garden while the churches tend theirs. Heart religion, so important to evangelicals, and the secularization of government paved the way for the disuse and eventual repeal of blasphemy laws.

The past few months have seen astonishing uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, and Jordan. Weary of authoritarian regimes, crowds clamor for liberty. In Western history, individualized piety has fostered both religious freedom and democratic impulses. It can be so in the Muslim world. That world is increasingly ripe for democracy—and for the eradication of blasphemy laws. ✚



Blasphemy laws were long an integral part of Christendom’s own legal framework.

Stewardship
Dilemma

Should the jobless tithe on their unemployment benefits?

YES, IF JOYFULLY

Douglas LeBlanc, editor at large for *The Living Church* magazine, is the author of *Tithing: Test Me in This*.

John Densmore, longtime drummer for the Doors, took up tithing after John Lennon praised it in a *Playboy* interview. Years later, Densmore mentioned in an essay for *The Nation* that tithing helped him resist greed. He wrote, "During the Oliver Stone film on our band, the record royalties tripled, and as I wrote those 10 percent checks, my hand was shaking."

My left hand did not shake in 2008 when I tithed on an advance check for my book about tithing, but my soul quaked a bit. I was going through one of the most barren periods of my life as a journalist. I was filled with shame about not bringing more money into our household. I was unsure I could deliver the book.

Who was I to continue tithing? What, apart from a distaste for brazen hypocrisy in myself, moved me past this hesitation? Mostly this: I could not see in the voluntary discipline of tithing the same escape clauses that I would expect in a prenuptial agreement.

There are some reasons for jobless people—or anyone, for that matter—not to tithe. Do not tithe out of joyless obligation to law. Do not tithe if your soul requires nothing short of a New Testament demand to tithe (there is none). Do not tithe under the assumption that God will owe you anything. Do not tithe if you expect to default on a debt. Do not tithe if you will resent God for asking sacrifices of you—unless you intend the tithe, in the spirit of "I believe; help my unbelief," as your invitation for God to purge your resentment.

Do you see a pattern in those reasons not to tithe? If we live in ways that lead to double mortgages on our homes or leave us routinely treating mercurial desires as needs, something more than whether we tithe is at stake. Tithing is not a luxurious option achievable only by those whose financial security is assured. It is the ancient spiritual practice that God uses to begin setting our priorities right, to heal our hearts of greed and fear, and to draw us ever closer into his own boundless generosity.

My prayer for jobless brothers and sisters grows from my vocational desert experience of only a few years ago. May times of insecurity or fear draw you closer to God as your provider and shepherd. May unimportant objects in your life fall away and leave you feeling liberated. May you know, both through worship and through your giving to others, that God will see you through this wilderness. May you discover, in season and out of season, that God has a

deeper purpose for all the blessings in your life than making ends meet. May you sense God's presence of comfort, encouragement, and redemption.

YES, WITH GENEROSITY

Jim Sheppard is the CEO of Generis, a consulting firm devoted to expanding the generosity of churches and ministries.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the recent economic meltdown is long-term unemployment, a reality in which many thought they would never find themselves. For the first time, hardworking, well-intentioned individuals are paying their bills with the income they receive from government checks instead of their profession or trade.

During these tough times, it is easy for churchgoing, typically responsible Christians to fall off the radar as they deal with the shame of being unable to provide for themselves or their families. In these times, it is more important than ever that Christians seek out pastors, leaders, and friends who can provide loving community and accountability to be faithful stewards in times of hardship.

Scripture does not speak directly to the topic of tithing on an income that is not your own, so I am reluctant to say firmly, "Yes, give this much." But the Bible has much to say on the subject of generosity and gratitude. There are four questions church leaders and others can ask to help someone struggling with tithing on their unemployment benefits:

- Do you see unemployment benefits as part of God's provision for your life?
- Are you continuing to practice generosity in every area: time, talent, and treasure?

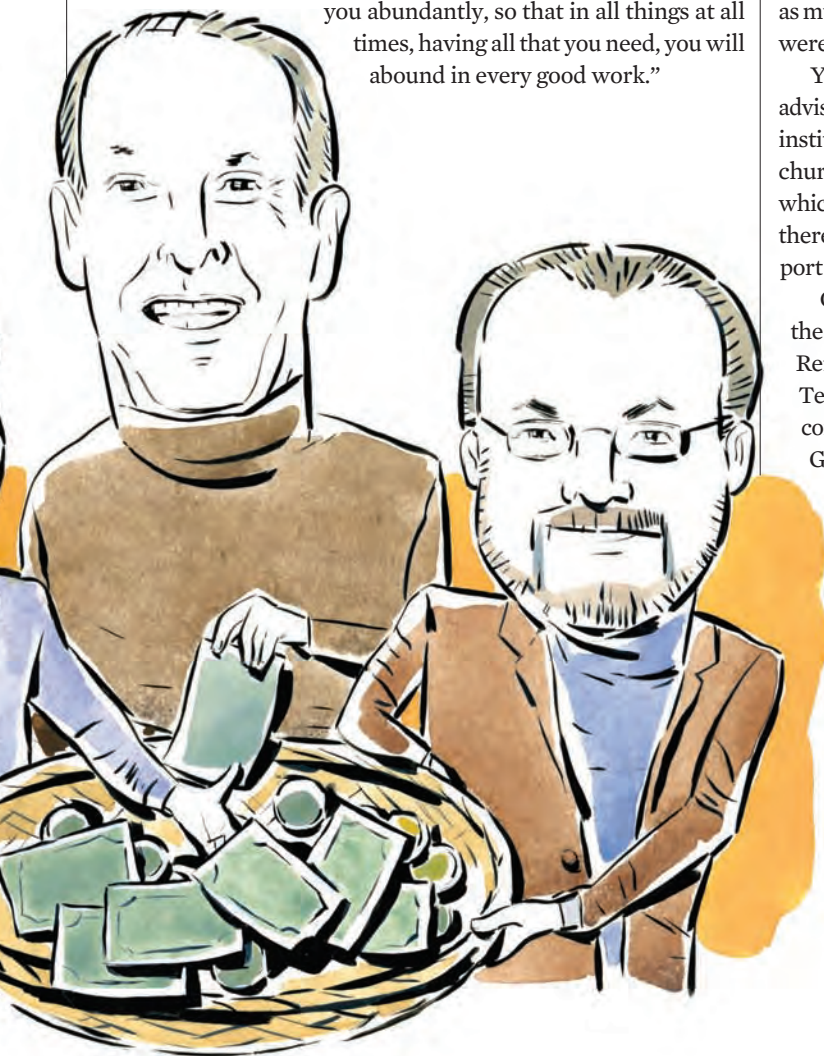


- How does giving a portion of your unemployment benefits differ from giving a portion of your “employed” benefits?
- Would giving a portion of your unemployment benefits demonstrate gratitude that God is providing for you in this season of your life?

Generosity is a condition of the heart. As resources come into the hands of a generous person, he or she can’t help giving them away. It’s second nature. A lifestyle of generosity should not stop when times are hard. If anything, tithing when income is low reinforces gratitude and trust, as it reminds the giver that God can use even the smallest gift to accomplish his will. It also reminds me that I am always dependent on God for my sustenance, whether I have savings in the bank and a regular paycheck or not. This is where Christian community should be most apparent, in encouraging and supporting each other to live out generosity in tough times.

I’m not going to argue that a specific percentage be given, just as I wouldn’t in responding to an employed individual. That is between the individual and God. Living a generous lifestyle is not an obligation but rather an opportunity. It is something I *get* to do for God’s kingdom, not something I *have* to do.

As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:7–8, “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”



AMANDA DUFFY

PROBABLY NOT

Gary Moore is founder of the Financial Seminary and author of *Faithful Finances 101*.

Since I began studying and writing about stewardship 30 years ago, the first person I look forward to chatting with in heaven, after Jesus and my father, is the widow who gave her last mites at the temple.

Yet I’m going to surprise and perhaps disappoint many church leaders (particularly televangelists) by suggesting that I do not believe the financially needy who receive unemployment benefits or welfare payments “should” tithe, even though that is undoubtedly a great act of faith.

The simple reason, to begin biblically and to paraphrase the Great Steward, is that the tithe was created for people; people were not created for the tithe. Moses taught that the tithe was a celebration for the affluent and a gift to the less fortunate, including priests (Deut. 14:22–29). The tithe was created in part to help those on the biblical equivalent of unemployment; requiring them to contribute to the offering when they should be receiving is an unhealthy inversion of the biblical mandate to give to the poor.

When Malachi gave his challenge to “bring the whole tithe,” God was not telling people to fund the temple’s institutional needs as much as to make plenty of food available for those in need. Taxes were levied for temple needs, but this tithe was for something more.

Yet studies from empty tomb, inc. and other Christian financial advisers have long indicated that little giving to churches goes beyond institutional support. We’ve grown comfortable with the modern church abdicating, largely to governments, the extrinsic work for which the tithe was intended in biblical times. Most churches should therefore not expect the full biblical tithe, particularly if it’s to support a comfortable lifestyle for the church’s leaders.

Church history suggests our leaders should be careful adding to the simple assurance of Christ. Martin Luther helped launch the Reformation after hearing a creative stewardship officer, Johann Tetzel, raise funds for the construction of St. Peter’s Basilica. Tetzel confused that “need” with the needs of the blessed ones with whom God most closely identifies: the poor. Luther minced few words in his 95 Theses when attacking the church’s selfishness.

The neighbors we call poor are, in fact, blessed, since Christ more closely identifies with them than with generous givers. By choosing to allocate resources to, rather than expect resources from, those blessed people, the church is relevant and enriching to both the poor and the affluent.

Requiring the poor and unemployed to tithe is an overly legalistic and harsh—and unbiblical—interpretation of Scripture. Still, there is nothing to suggest the poor should never be generous if they feel so led. Should those blessed ones choose to allocate resources (even if those resources come from a government check) to the work of the church, they have God’s assurance that they are so special, the rest of us will seek them out in heaven after we squeeze through the needle’s eye.



In Praise of Confidence

Doubt is to be endured, not celebrated.



WHEN YOU THINK of some of the most passionate, persistent, and eloquent advocates for social change—William Wilberforce, Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King Jr.—you think of men who were confident in the rightness of their cause.

But a new study published in *Psychological Science* says that it's doubt, not confidence, that leads individuals to advance their beliefs and attempt to persuade others.

For their study, Northwestern University researchers David Gal and Derek Rucker asked students to write out their views on animal testing. Yet only half of the students were allowed to use their preferred hand. That's because earlier studies have shown that people have less confidence in what they are writing when using their weak hand. Then students were asked to write something persuasive with their preferred hand. The students who had been induced to lose confidence wrote significantly more words in an attempt to persuade others.

Other experiments were run dealing with vegetarianism and the ultimate proselytizing vehicle: Mac computers. In every case, doubt turned the students into stronger advocates, particularly if the belief was important to them.

The researchers said their work (which was based on earlier studies about enduring beliefs after failed religious prophecies) offers a warning to anyone on the receiving end of an advocacy attempt.

"Although it is natural to assume that a persistent and enthusiastic advocate of a belief is brimming with confidence, the advocacy might in fact signal that the individual is boiling over with doubt," they concluded.

Who doesn't want to think this is true, especially after a quick read of the latest

screed from a New Atheist or, for that matter, enduring an overwritten post on an apologetics blog? It's not news that people reject information that clashes with their beliefs, or that people, ourselves included, can get loud and verbose when challenged. Sometimes lengthy arguments are more about convincing ourselves than about convincing others.

But it's also true that people may argue vehemently simply because they are trying to

really quite beautiful. For too long we have been denying doubt the respect it deserves."

That would have been news to Martin Luther, who also disliked self-righteousness. In his *Preface to Romans*, he wrote, "Faith is a living, unshakeable confidence in God's grace." In a 1525 debate with Erasmus, who praised doubt and accused Luther of seeking certainty, he said, "To take no pleasure in assertions is not the mark of a Christian heart; indeed, one must delight in assertions to be a Christian at all. . . . Take away assertion, and you take away Christianity." Luther pointed to the words of Paul, who so often called for "full assurance," or the highest degree of certainty and conviction.

"The Holy Spirit is no skeptic, and the things he has written in our hearts are not doubts or opinions, but assertions—surer and more certain than sense and life itself," Luther said.

Does that mean that with the knowledge of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, we won't face doubts? Hardly. Scripture is full of stories of people, from Eve to Thomas, who doubted the promises of God. But just because it's human to doubt and we all do it does not mean it should be celebrated so much as endured.

Shortly after the Transfiguration, in which Jesus shone with the glory of his divine nature, he came upon an anxious father. When the father asked Jesus to deliver his son from demonic possession, Jesus told him, "All things are possible for one who believes." The father responded, "I believe; help my unbelief!" Jesus cast out the demon. What a beautiful reminder of how Jesus delivers us from a world of despair and doubt. ✚



convince others of the rightness of an important cause. A lengthy argument might indicate doubt, but it might also mean that beliefs are complex, counterintuitive, or brushing up against long-held errors.

While the researchers argue that enthusiastic evangelism indicates a lack of confidence, others say that doubt is precisely what Christians should embrace.

"The opposite of faith isn't doubt—it's certainty," wrote Pastor Peter Marty in the August 2010 issue of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's magazine, *The Lutheran*. Equating certainty with self-righteousness and arrogance, Marty encouraged everyone to open their minds. "Doubt is

'Take away assertion, and you take away Christianity.' ~ Martin Luther

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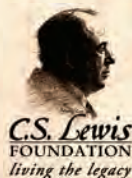
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The Man Who Wouldn't Be Bishop

Discernment and discipline have enabled John Stott to touch lives worldwide.

JOHN R. W. STOTT, a key architect of 20th-century evangelicalism, turns 90 on April 27. Mark your calendar to thank God that day for the man known around the world as “Uncle John.”

Stott's friends have geared up for the event by sharing their memories in two book projects. Curiously, InterVarsity Press asked me—not in any way a Stott expert—to write the foreword for the U.S. editions of both books.

February 2010 saw the publication of *Basic Christian: The Inside Story of John Stott*. Historian Roger Steer collected anecdotes from dozens of colleagues and friends and wove them into an engaging narrative.

March 2011 will see the U.K. publication of another exercise in recollection, a book that was Stott's own idea. Langham Partnership international director Christopher Wright says Stott “felt a more personal picture could be painted by those who knew him more intimately over the years—and he insisted” it should show “warts and all.” Stott asked Wright to solicit the contributions and said “he did not wish to read any of the contributions himself, in order that people should feel free to speak the truth as they saw it.” Stott also asked that the book not be published until after his death, but his publisher insisted on preparing it for his 90th birthday. Unfortunately, U.S. readers must wait until the fall for *Portraits of a Radical Disciple*, as the American edition will be called.

As I read the manuscripts for these books, one thing—or more precisely, one pair of things—struck me repeatedly: Stott's *discernment* and *discipline*. John Stott's enormous influence on evangelicalism, in England, America, and around the globe, was possible because he prayerfully discerned what God wanted him to do (and not to do), and then he focused on those things (and disciplined himself not to

do many other good things).

I saw this focus in a minor way when I came to *Christianity Today* nearly 26 years ago. Stott was one of *CT*'s contributing editors, and so, when we wanted a biblically wise perspective on homosexuality, *CT*'s executive editor suggested that I ask him to write it for us. Stott's reply came back in the negative. He was kind but unequivocal: No, he would



not write for *CT*, because he had decided to focus all his writing energies on completing the Bible Speaks Today series. However, yes, *CT* was welcome to adapt whatever he had already written. Stott's generosity enabled us to adapt a fine article from one of his books.

David Gitari, the now-retired Anglican archbishop of Kenya, experienced Stott's focus in a more puzzling way. In *Portraits of a Radical Disciple*, Gitari tells of his days as a theology student at Tyndale Hall, Bristol. Stott invited him to stay in his London rectory (nicknamed “The Wreckage” or “The Stottery” by some). “I was at the Stottery for

one full month, and to my surprise I met my host only once!” Gitari writes. Stott rose early, breakfasted alone, then went about his pastoral duties or locked himself in his study.

“I had to make an appointment to see him over breakfast during that one month,” Gitari continues. “It was amazing to me as an African that I could stay in a friend's house for a whole month and be able to see him only once and that by appointment!”

The cultural chasm between Nairobi and No. 12 Weymouth Street has been fixed in Gitari's mind for 45 years. But over those years, Stott has become increasingly beloved by Gitari and many others in the developing world. Stott has often focused his laser-like attention on projects that bless the church in those regions, whether building ministers' libraries, educating indigenous scholars, or ensuring that majority-world voices are heard at global gatherings.

Does Stott have regrets? After a fashion. Saying no to so much in order to accomplish so much means doing without—doing without the comforts of marriage, for example, and forsaking the institutional power that would have come with being a bishop.

Musing about one particularly attractive bishopric, he said, “I felt I could not now change the whole direction of my ministry without acknowledging that I'd made a mistake. In declining other approaches, I believed I'd made the right decision, and I had no liberty to change direction now.”

Like the narrator of Robert Frost's famous poem, Stott took “the road less traveled.” Unlike Frost's narrator, Stott did not keep the first road for another day, nor is he “telling it with a sigh.” God blessed the path John Stott so resolutely took. And we all know it. ☩

John Stott on declining a bishopric: ‘I believed I'd made the right decision, and I had no liberty to change direction now.’

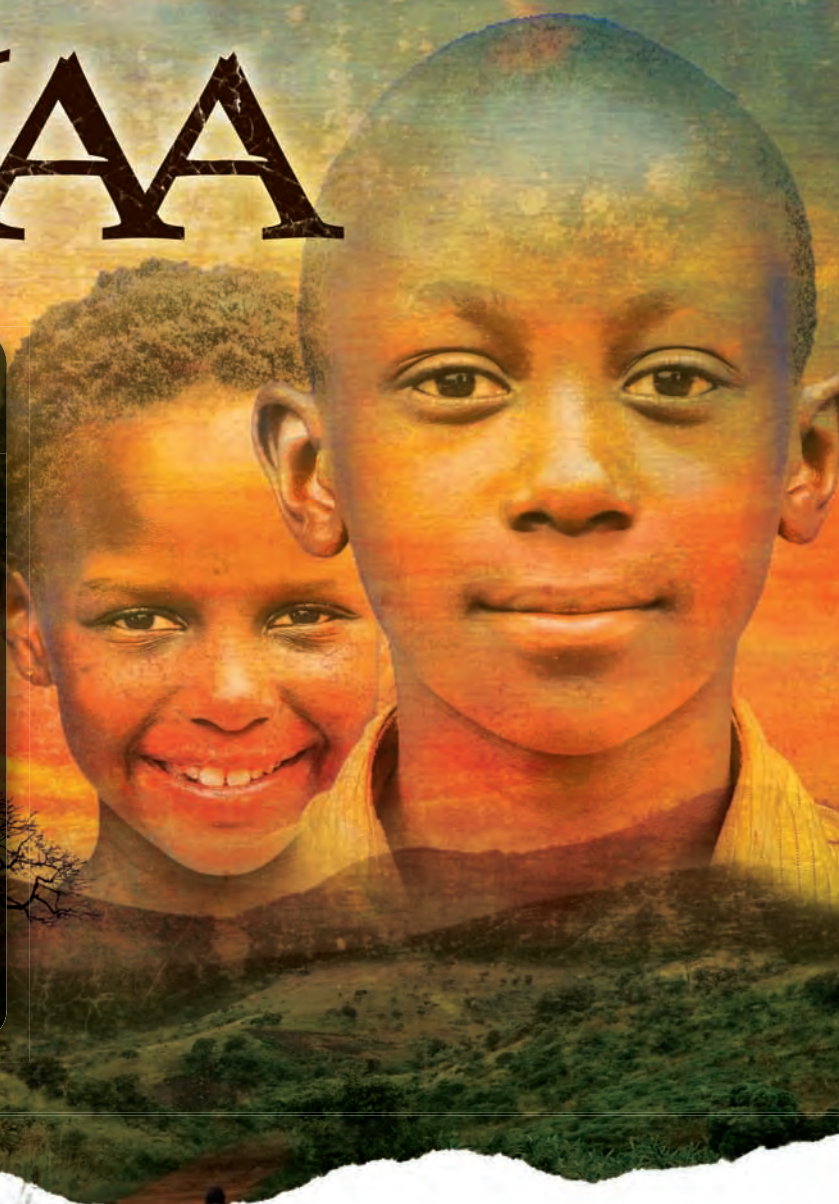
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A Pastor's Journey

Eugene Peterson reads the text of his life, and addresses the parlous state of the pastoral calling.

By Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

On a recent trip to England, I sat beside a young man who, when he learned I am a preacher, started asking questions with a noticeable amount of energy. He wanted to know if my church allowed me to marry and whether I thought women could preach. He asked how I get paid and what I do when I'm not preaching. This persisted for over an hour. Having grown up in a post-Christian culture, this fellow had a vague notion of what a pastor is but clearly had never talked to one.

In American culture, being a pastor is not enough of an oddity to start an hour-long conversation with a stranger. (More often

than not, telling your airplane seatmate that you're a pastor is enough to ensure an awkward silence for the remainder of the flight.) Still, if you spend any time with pastors, even around here, it is clear our vocation is facing something of a crisis. Many pastors aren't sure how to describe their calling or explain why it matters to the rest of the world.

In the introduction to his new book, **The Pastor: A Memoir** (HarperOne) ★★★★★, Eugene H. Peterson addresses this crisis head-on: "North American culture does not offer congenial

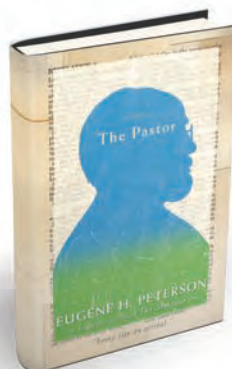
conditions in which to live vocationally as a pastor. Men and women who are pastors in America today find that they have entered into a way of life that is in ruins."

Though the rhythms of his voice are familiar to admirers of *The Message*, this is not Paul or Moses or Jesus speaking in Peterson's contemporary American idiom. It is, instead, Peterson himself, attending to the text of his life—mining it, even, for some understanding of what it has meant to be a pastor. Unless you're traveling in Europe, the book probably won't leave any airline companions in a state of puzzlement. But it is a gift to anyone who has tried answering the call to pastor, and to a church that needs true pastors, whether we know it or not.

THE PASTOR AS PILGRIM

Peterson's own story is rooted in the American West, where he was born and to which he returned throughout his pastorate in a restorative rhythm of annual Sabbath. Since leaving his pulpit at Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Maryland, and his professorship at Regent College, Peterson has retired to his native Montana. In many ways, this is a book he could only have written from home. But the strong sense of place that grounds his narrative does not negate the pilgrimage that took Peterson to New York City as a seminary student or to Baltimore's suburbs as a young pastor.

Indeed, his journey bears witness to a true pilgrimage—not just a tourist's jaunt—because it has been conditioned by an attention to place and an eye for what is happening on the ground. If I were pressed to pull one definition of *pastor* from this story, it'd have to be this: "the person placed in the community to pay attention to 'what is going on right now' between men



and women, with each other and with God—this kingdom of God that is primarily local, relentlessly personal, and prayerful ‘without ceasing.’” This is what Peterson grew out of Montana’s soil to become.

But he didn’t know that when he started. A lover of words, Peterson aspired to write novels in his youth. After setting his sights on the more reasonable profession of professor, he took a side job as the associate minister at a Presbyterian church. “I did it for the money and only for the money,” he confesses, “for I had no intention at the time of being a pastor.”

One thing this story makes clear is that vocation is not so much about what we want as about how we respond to God’s interruptions in our lives. While in seminary, an artist friend warned Peterson against becoming a religious professional. This friend painted a portrait of Peterson as an aged cleric devoid of vitality. Before finding his way to pastoring a church, Peterson was painfully aware of the failure that success in that vocation can be. He didn’t set out for the career of being a pastor; Peterson paid attention to

It is clear the pastor’s vocation is facing something of a crisis. Many pastors aren’t sure how to describe their calling or explain why it matters to the rest of the world.

God until he realized that a pastor is what he was created to be.

Pastors familiar with Peterson’s work on the pastoral vocation—*The Contemplative Pastor*, *Working the Angles*, *Under the Unpredictable Plant*—will recognize his suspicion of strategies to “get things done” and models for church growth. *The Pastor* locates that intuition in the story of one who came to the pastorate indirectly. Looking back, he realizes he was prepared for the work all along. But his models were not pastors. They were his mother, the storyteller, and his father, the butcher. They were the artists who taught him to be a contemplative who resists the efficiency of the market for the sake of his own soul. Peterson’s stubborn

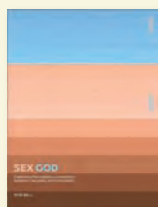
refusal to assume a ready-made vocational identity left room for a broader set of influences than you’d find in the typical seminary or denominational formation program.

These influences cultivated something beyond a critical posture toward church marketing. When called to plant a church in suburban Maryland, he knew not to trust the franchise model retailed by “experts.” (What’s more, he had the chutzpah to assume no one was reading his monthly presbytery reports and so turned them into playful exercises in creative writing!)

Yet this posture was rooted in a positive call that sustained such stubborn resistance. “If we were to be formed as a church after the pattern of Acts, we absolutely had to absorb it

MY TOP 5 BOOKS ON DATING

By Camerin Courtney, author of *Table for One* (Revell) and co-author of *The unGuide to Dating* (Revell)

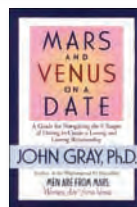


SEX GOD

Exploring the Endless Connections between Sexuality and Spirituality

ROB BELL (ZONDERVAN)

While most books about sex for dating Christians begin and end with “don’t,” Bell outlines the bigger picture of human relationships and what they can teach us about God’s character.



MARS AND VENUS ON A DATE

A Guide for Navigating the 5 Stages of Dating to Create a Loving and Lasting Relationship

JOHN GRAY (HARPER)

After singles kept asking questions that weren’t covered in his classic *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*, Gray penned this follow-up. It draws on psychology, addressing the complexities of dating in a postmodern world.



WHAT WOMEN WISH YOU KNEW ABOUT DATING

A Single Guy’s Guide to Romantic Relationships

STEPHEN W. SIMPSON (BAKER BOOKS)

This rare dating book for men is funny and honest. It looks at the frustration inherent in most people’s dating journey. Simpson, a psychologist, helps readers date like a man instead of a guy (and the women say “amen”).



REAL SEX

The Naked Truth about Chastity

LAUREN F. WINNER (BRAZOS PRESS)

Winner blends personal experience, scholarly research, pop culture awareness, and theological truth to craft a brave treatise on chastity. She candidly discusses her own reluctant journey, deftly avoiding formulas and issuing a compelling invitation to sexual purity.



HOW TO GET A DATE WORTH KEEPING

HENRY CLOUD (ZONDERVAN)

I don’t agree with all of Cloud’s advice, and his tone can be a bit flippant, but he acknowledges the seldom-addressed dating drought in Christian circles. He also debunks many popular myths, such as “dating around is unchristian” and “God will definitely bring the right one to you.”

into our imagination as a story, not a manual.” Peterson resolved to invite suburban Christians to live the story the Bible told.

It worked. Steadily, like a tree planted in good soil, the church plant grew into a congregation. They moved from the pastor’s basement to a carefully designed and beautifully constructed building. People came. Their lives got caught up with one another’s—they even showed signs of being caught up in life-with-God. Peterson had succeeded as church planter. But he had not yet become a pastor. He’d not yet learned to walk with people—to pay careful attention to the ups and downs of their lives—when there wasn’t a building project to bring them together. Growing into this vocation took time. Thankfully, he stayed. And he lived to tell the stories.

The Pastor includes some great stories about a church that welcomed children who had lost their parents and an ex-con who had found Jesus and brought his Alcoholics Anonymous group into the congregation. These stories help you believe in the power of something as mundane as gathering people to worship week after week. But they are not miracle stories. They don’t read like anecdotes to support the case for another church growth model. Instead, the stories reflect the argument behind Peterson’s life work: God is redeeming the world—even raising the dead to new life—through a peculiar people called the church.

In his classic *Diary of a Country Priest*, Georges Bernanos captivated his audience by helping them see through a pastor’s eyes a vision of lives claimed by God. This seeing is important in every age, but especially in an “image culture” so often claimed by the power of the market. Dazed by the latest offering from Apple or YouTube, we long for a connection less plastic and polished. Our hearts are restless for a real church we can see, for a world redeemed in real time. Where do we go to remember that another world—another church—is possible? Peterson’s memoir gives us space to imagine new possibilities in the midst of daily suburban lives. Like Bernanos’s classic, it is a subtle manifesto of hope for our time. ➤

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove is co-compiler of *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* (Zondervan, 2010).

The Vindication of Constantine

The much-maligned emperor receives a much-needed makeover. By Trevin Wax

Many evangelicals view the fourth-century conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine as an unfortunate chapter in church history, one that sabotaged the purity of the early church and ushered in the corrupt Middle Ages. Peter J. Leithart believes this version of church history is a myth. In **Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom** (IVP Academic) ★★★★★, Leithart shows that the early church was not as united as we think, nor was Constantine the villain many have made him out to be.

Along the way, Leithart teases out contemporary implications regarding the church’s role in the world, implications that distance him from scholars like John Howard Yoder. *Defending Constantine* could have been called *Dismantling Yoder*, for although Leithart’s primary purpose is to vindicate Constantine, he devotes significant effort to pointing out the cracks in Yoder’s Anabaptist perspective on Christendom.

Defending Constantine begins as a biography. Leithart argues that the emperor was a sincere believer who transformed the empire by proclaiming “the end of sacrifice.” Citizens of Rome once expressed their support for the empire’s civic religion by making offerings to the city’s deities. In contrast, Constantine’s newfound Christianity insisted upon the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Leithart does not portray Constantine as a power-hungry leader who adopted Christianity for political gain, as some have. Nor is he the saint (or apostle!) some ancient Christians thought him to be. Instead, we see a complex individual who gave preferential treatment

to Christians without dominating church councils.

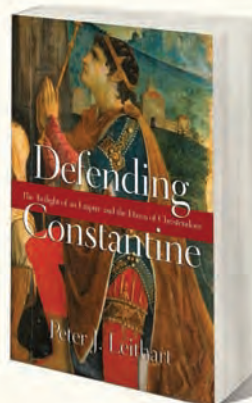
At times, Leithart’s sketch of Constantine is overly sympathetic, a portrayal challenged by the emperor’s hatred for the Jews and his murder of his wife and son. While Leithart notes these unflattering incidents, he is unable to find a place for them in his overall portrait that makes sense of the man.

The greatest strength of Leithart’s proposal comes later in the book, when he demonstrates how Anabaptist thinkers like Yoder oversimplify the issues surrounding Constantine’s reign. By showing, for example, that the early church was not universally pacifistic, Leithart casts doubt on Yoder’s insistence that the so-called uniform non-violence of the early church should be the norm today.

Interestingly enough, Leithart agrees with Yoder’s critique of Constantinianism: It is indeed a heresy that seeks efficiency instead of faithfulness to Christ. The difference is that Leithart does not believe we should name this heresy after Constantine. Instead, we should recognize the great debt we owe to Constantine for “desacricing” Rome and thus allowing Christians to worship without fear of retribution.

Defending Constantine demonstrates the enduring relevance of the “Constantinian moment” of the fourth century. While recent scholarship has focused mainly on the negative results, Leithart swings the pendulum back, reminding us of all the good that God brought from this contested period of history. ➤

Trevin Wax is author of *Counterfeit Gospels: Rediscovering the Good News in a World of False Hope* (Moody, 2011).



KING'S CROSS

The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus

TIMOTHY KELLER

(DUTTON ADULT, 256 PAGES)

The doctrine of substitutionary atonement] will be hard for you if you're among those who struggle with the Christian teaching about the Cross. It's natural to assume that [Mark 10:45] is giving us one more example of those ancient, primitive, bloodthirsty gods worshiped by those ancient, primitive, bloodthirsty societies. In *The Iliad* by Homer, for example, Agamemnon doesn't get fair winds to Troy until he sacrifices his daughter. That appeases the wrath of the gods, and then they let him go to Troy. What Jesus says in Mark may seem to be just another variation on that theme: a savage ancient culture, ruled over by an irritable god, demanding blood sacrifices for the release of innocent slaves and prisoners.

But that's not what's going on here at all. And why not, you may say? If God is really a loving God, why doesn't he just forgive everybody? Why did Jesus have to go through suffering into death? Why did he have to be a ransom?

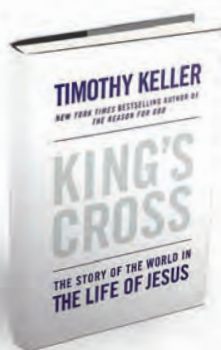
Here's the beginning of an answer: Jesus didn't have to die despite God's love; he had to die because of God's love. And it had to be this way because all life-changing love is substitutionary sacrifice.

Think about it. If you love a person whose life is all put together and has no major needs, it costs you nothing. It's delightful. There are probably four or five people like that where you live. You ought to find them and become their friend. But if you ever try to love somebody who has needs, someone who is in trouble or who is persecuted or emotionally wounded, it's going to cost you. You can't love them without taking a hit yourself. A transfer of some kind is required, so that somehow their troubles, their problems, transfer to you.

There are a lot of wounded people out there. They are emotionally sinking, they're hurting, and they desperately need to be loved. And when they are with you, you want to look at your watch and make a graceful exit, because listening to them with all their

problems can be grueling. It can be exhausting to be a friend to an emotionally damaged person. The only way they're going to start filling up emotionally is if somebody loves them, and the only way to love them is to let yourself be emotionally drained. Some of your fullness is going to have to go into them, and you have to empty out to some degree. If you hold on to our emotional comfort and simply avoid those people, they will sink. The only way to love them is through substitutionary sacrifice.

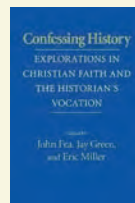
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CONFESSING HISTORY

Explorations in Christian Faith and the Historian's Vocation

EDITED BY JOHN FEA, JAY GREEN, AND ERIC MILLER
(UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME PRESS)

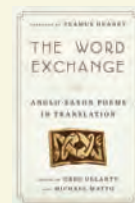


The editors dedicate this excellent collection to "John D. Woodbridge, a Christian scholar and teacher who has inspired us to think about our careers as historians in terms of the Christian understanding of 'calling.'" How that might play out is the burden of these essays, and—as befits a highly contested subject—the answers range widely. The contributors speak from a variety of denominational and confessional traditions; they differ in their politics and their affiliations among the academic tribes. But they are united by their conviction that the "Christian mind" matters.

THE WORD EXCHANGE

Anglo-Saxon Poems in Translation

EDITED BY GREG DELANTY AND MICHAEL MATTO (NORTON)



"Christianity is the sea Anglo-Saxon poetry swims in," the editors affirm at the outset, and their matter-of-fact assurance on this point is one of many virtues distinguishing their splendid anthology. The translations, contributed by more than 70 contemporary poets, face the Old English texts. Many of the poems are riddles. If you share my fondness for this form (offering a pleasure many grown-ups have long forgotten or suppressed as unbecoming of maturity), you'll delight in the "riddle-hoards" gathered here.

ANGER, MERCY, REVENGE

Lucius Annaeus Seneca

TRANSLATED BY ROBERT A. KASTER AND MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM (UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS)



In the sort of project that only an outstanding university press can take on, Chicago has embarked on the Complete Works of Lucius Annaeus Seneca in English translation, with this first of eight volumes. Both as a philosopher and as a playwright, Seneca (4 B.C.–A.D. 65) was an influential figure as long as Latin was the *lingua franca* of the learned. "Because of his ethical writings," the series editors remark, "Seneca fared well with the early Christians—hence the later forging of a fake correspondence with St. Paul." Assignment: Read this volume and explain why Christians are not Stoics.



Bobby Jindal's Vision

Louisiana's governor talks about his conversion and policy priorities. Interview by Sarah Pulliam Bailey

Bobby Jindal has had more than his fair share of crises as governor of Louisiana since 2008, such as the continued recovery after Hurricane Katrina and the Gulf oil spill. Online editor Sarah Pulliam Bailey spoke with Jindal about his new book, **Leadership and Crisis** (Regnery Publishing), which details his conversion to Christianity and offers policy recommendations on issues like the death penalty, immigration, and the economy.

Why did you convert from Hinduism to Christianity?

I'd love to tell you I had a sudden epiphany, but it took me seven long years. My best friend gave me my first copy of the Bible, but it wasn't the Christmas gift I wanted, so I threw it in the back of my closet. The first time I thought seriously about matters of life and death was when my grandfather died. I picked up the Bible to start reading, and I spent many years reading books by authors like C. S. Lewis and Chuck Colson. Years later, my best friend invited me to hear him sing at a nondenominational church on Louisiana State University's campus where

they showed a movie. When I saw the actor playing Jesus being crucified, it hit me that he was on that cross because of Bobby Jindal, my sins. How arrogant for me to do anything but get on my knees and worship him. The most important moment in my life was when I found Jesus Christ.

INTERVIEW

I'd like to explore how your Catholic faith has affected your policies. For example, you advocate the death penalty for perpetrators of child rape. How do you reconcile that with the teachings of the Catholic Church?

We're made in God's image, and it's tragic that the modern world doesn't take the value of life more seriously. I describe the case of a little girl who was brutalized by her stepfather and will never be able to have children. We should do everything we can to go after these monsters. The Catholic Church and many churches teach that the death penalty should be reserved for the most serious crimes, and I agree. I was frustrated when the Supreme Court took this option off the table.

Indiana governor Mitch Daniels called for a truce on social issues until economic issues are resolved. Is this possible?

I think that it's absolutely critical to get the economy growing without raising taxes or increasing the deficit. I'm also proud to belong to a party that stands for the sanctity of human life and traditional marriage. Those values remain important during good and bad economic times.

You are the son of immigrants, and you suggest the first step to stopping illegal immigration is building a fence on the border. Some argue from a Christian perspective that this is not welcoming the sojourner.

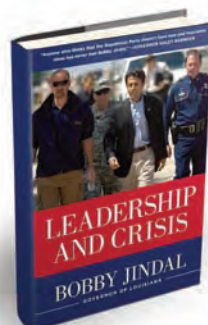
We have to secure the border. It's kind of silly to kick people out when they get an education and they're ready to contribute to the economy, and yet we're turning a blind eye toward folks sneaking in illegally. People contribute their backgrounds and their heritages, their ideas, their customs into America. But we risk becoming the Tower of Babel if we lose assimilation. We can't repeat the mistakes of the 1986 amnesty law. We're sending the signal that we will reward breaking the law.

In your book you talk about the country becoming more secular. What can be done about that?

There are ways the government can create a more receptive environment in the public square. We can make sure our kids are educated in the foundations of Western civilization. But the primary responsibility shouldn't be on our government's shoulders, but on our shoulders as parents and Christians to make sure we're teaching our children foundational values.

I do think our society is hungry for revival. Many institutions we traditionally put our faith in have crumbled, and people realize that material things are not ultimately the source of our salvation. I can't promise

you that just because you're a believer the hurricanes won't come, that there won't be an oil spill. As Christians, we're secure in the knowledge that in the Book of Life, our God wins. He gets off that cross. He beats Satan. We're not called to be despondent. We are called to be salt and light and to be planting the seeds of the gospel. ☩



Letters of Mercy

An unexpected tale of a priest and a convicted murderer. By N. W. Douglas

What does it take to bring healing and forgiveness into lives jaded from deep hurts and old habits? How can well-timed words enable grace to pour into thirsty souls? And how can two very different people spark growth and freedom in each other's lives? Such are the major questions inspired by Klaus Härö's **Letters to Father Jacob** (Olive Films) ★★★★★, a simple and sincere tale of unexpected redemption. The Finnish film (with English subtitles) releases to DVD on March 8.

Leila (Kaarina Hazard), a convicted murderer, receives an early pardon from her life sentence. Taking the only opportunity available, she goes to work for elderly Father Jacob (Heikki Nousiainen), a blind priest who lives alone in a large rectory and tends an abandoned rural church. Instead of housework, he wants her to read letters to him. Jacob lives for his correspondence, passionately embracing his role as an intercessor for all who write with requests. Leila is hard-nosed about matters of faith



and tempted by the shady opportunities of serving a frail, sightless man who doesn't much care for his tin of life savings.

It's a familiar template—a cold individual warmed by the presence of simple folk—but Härö avoids sentimentality. Jacob isn't a perfect little sunbeam overflowing with proverbs and good cheer. He's a tired and faithful man clinging to hope in the face of his own apparent irrelevance, his church having dried up long ago. As Jacob, Nousiainen dances between joy and sorrow; he never falls completely to one side or the other, or

into a generic bittersweet caricature. Instead, what emerges is a delicate and carefully pitched performance that captures the worries on Jacob's mind.

Hazard's stony performance as Leila follows a similar pattern: her grim, silent close-ups betray little emotion but still express a sense of inner anguish. When her barriers begin to fall, the sparseness of her earlier scenes pays off.

The film is rich in themes of forgiveness, of sharing burdens, and of letting go of ravenous guilt. Härö, a Christian, says he "hoped to make a film that would portray faith in a warm and genuine manner. I wanted to tell about us, the average people, in need of mercy and forgiveness for our daily shortcomings, and about hope and respect for life that isn't always what we might have hoped for."

Mission accomplished.

N. W. Douglas, a film student at Simon Fraser University, blogs at filmatical.wordpress.com.

COURTESY OF OLIVE FILMS

MY TOP 5 MOVIES INSPIRED BY BIBLE STORIES

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



A SERIOUS MAN

2009 | RATED R

DIRECTED BY JOEL AND ETHAN COEN

Despite trying to lead an honorable life, Larry Gopnik—a late 1960s, Jewish middle-class job—finds his life falling apart for no apparent reason, which leads him on a search for God's purpose in the midst of suffering.



EAST OF EDEN

1955 | RATED PG

DIRECTED BY ELIA KAZAN

An adaptation of John Steinbeck's novel, the film retells the story of Cain and Abel and, in some ways, spins it on its head. Set in central California during World War I, James Dean plays the infamous evil brother who so desperately longs for his father's affection.



CHILDREN OF MEN

2006 | RATED R

DIRECTED BY ALFONSO CUARÓN

As a man transports a miraculously pregnant woman to safety in 2027, a time in which children are no longer born, the Nativty story plays out in this dystopian world. The child could help scientists solve the infertility epidemic and save humankind.



GRAPES OF WRATH

1940 | UNRATED

DIRECTED BY JOHN FORD

In this historical exodus of the Great Depression, a family of displaced farmers from Oklahoma seeks hope in the Promised Land of California. But as with the Israelites, they find the journey to be long, hard, and, in the end, not what it seemed.



THE DECALOGUE

1988 | UNRATED

DIRECTED BY KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI

This series of short films takes a close look at the Ten Commandments. Through socio-realistic stories surrounding everyday life in Communist Poland, each captivating film explores the meaning of a commandment with intimacy and integrity.

TWO MINUTES WITH... Grant Horner



Now that the Academy Awards are done, people are thinking a bit more deeply about movies. Grant Horner, a film buff and an English professor

at The Master's College, has long done such thinking, and he incorporated many of those thoughts into his book *Meaning at the Movies: Becoming a Discerning Viewer* (Crossway, 2010). Dave Berg, a former producer for *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, interviewed Horner for CT.

Your book says that “the suppression of the truth about the fall of man” led to culture—including pop culture and movies.

The history of human culture is the history of these suppressed truths bubbling back up; that's what I say is the origin of culture. Why do we have culture at all? I think it's to examine and explain the human condition. We can get along with very little: food, clothing, shelter, maybe someone to hug. But we have cathedrals, opera, popular music, sports, comic books, and movies. Why do we spend so much energy on things that are not necessary for survival? I think it's because this repressed truth keeps coming up.

Can you give an example?

In *Pinocchio*, my favorite film, he wants to be a real boy. That's the human quest. We are not what we were made to be. We fill our lives with all these other things that don't really make us satisfied or human. *Pinocchio* is an unwitting fable about wanting to be what we were really made to be.

You say that movies are today's philosophy.

Philosophy is the structure we create to help us understand the world. That's what movies are. Boys get their ideas about how to be a man by watching action movies; girls get their ideas about romance by watching romance movies. Is a raunchy, toilet-mouthed movie a philosophical statement? At the very least, it's a statement that these things have no moral value.



Whispers of Beauty

Over the Rhine's most intimate album yet.

By Josh Hurst

Singing about your marriage woes and eventual reconciliation is about as vulnerable as it gets—but that's just what husband-wife duo Linford Detweiler and Karin Bergquist, better known as Over the Rhine, did on 2005's *Drunkard's Prayer*. Still, their latest, **The Long Surrender** (Great Speckled Dog) ★★★★★, is their most personal yet.

The *Surrender* part of the title is apt, as they reached further out of their creative comfort zone than ever, enlisting ace producer Joe Henry to put the songs to tape. Henry favors an unobtrusive, organic process, and it results in Over the Rhine's best *sounding* album. “Rave On,” for example, was written as a rock song but is here performed as a folk song, finding its tension and momentum from a slow build of intricate sonic details—a finger-picked bass, a distant echo of strings. Henry enlists his son, saxophone player Levon Henry, to perform on a couple of tracks, and additional vocals are provided by a small gospel choir on “Only God Can Save Us Now,” and by country singer Lucinda Williams.

But this is foremost an album not only

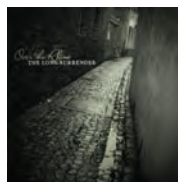
by but *about* Over the Rhine. Detweiler and Bergquist have been chasing the same muse for two decades, and here they're still writing and singing about art and marriage—about partnerships, both creative and romantic. These are songs about desperately broken people, with whispers of beauty and transcendence. These are songs about a grace that transforms.

Those strands run through the record and manifest themselves most directly on the penultimate track, which bears this simple refrain: “All my favorite people are broken / Believe me, my heart should know.” And as is often the case with this band, they are at their best when they are at their most simple. “Undamned” is

among the simplest tunes—and among the most viscerally moving: “I’ve done a thousand things wrong,” Bergquist sings, “But I’m not too far gone / To fall headlong into the arms that love me.”

Call it a love song, call it a prayer, call it a statement of faith. Doesn't matter. In any event, grace gets the last word. ✚

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



QUICK TAKES

More media of note.

BOOKS

► READ THE BIBLE FOR LIFE

Your Guide to Understanding and Living God's Word

GEORGE H. GUTHRIE (B&H BOOKS)

★★★★★ For many believers, the Bible itself appears intimidating, not to mention the hefty, seminary-level hermeneutics books teaching people how to read it. Union University professor George Guthrie seeks to make the Bible accessible by making hermeneutics accessible. Emulating Lee Strobel's approach in *The Case for . . .* series, Guthrie travels the country, interviewing biblical scholars and church leaders about how to understand the Bible. The result is an easy-to-read yet in-depth approach to hermeneutics that focuses on connecting the dots of the big storyline of the Bible.—Trevin Wax

► THE POWER OF ONE

Theological Reflections on Loneliness

ANETTE EJSING (CASCADE BOOKS)

★★★★★ Danish theologian Anette Ejsing uses her personal experiences of loneliness to understand the phenomenon as a Christian. Ejsing shows how Christian experience does and does not solve marital, spiritual, and social loneliness. She concludes by suggesting that loneliness is a form of suffering, and "if Christ is using it to accomplish redemption, then it is our privilege to rejoice in it." —Mark Galli

► GOOD AND BAD WAYS TO THINK ABOUT RELIGION AND POLITICS

ROBERT BENNE (EERDMANS)

★★★★★ Stirred to "indignation" over misguided thinking about religion and politics, Lutheran scholar Robert Benne offers this firm corrective. Rejecting both a fastidious separation and a harmonious fusion between these oft-contested realms, Benne recommends the alternative model of "critical engagement." Blending insights from within and beyond the Lutheran "two kingdoms" tradition, he shepherds believers, voluntary associations, and churches along the winding pathways linking core Christian convictions to contemporary policy options. —Matt Reynolds

ON DVD

► HEREAFTER

WARNER BROS. | RATED PG-13 | MARCH 15

★★★★★ Director Clint Eastwood, 80, has been obsessed with mortality at least since 1992's *Unforgiven*, and this film is no different, addressing dying and the afterlife as directly as any film he's made. But don't be fooled: Eastwood might *think* he's confronting these issues head-on, but he mostly avoids them. The plot is split into three unrelated stories, but all address the notion of death and what comes next. Decidedly irreligious and spiritual only in the vaguest terms, *Hereafter* is a toothless movie that purports to ponder big issues. Unfortunately, it has no voice, no vision, and absolutely nothing substantive to say. —Josh Hurst

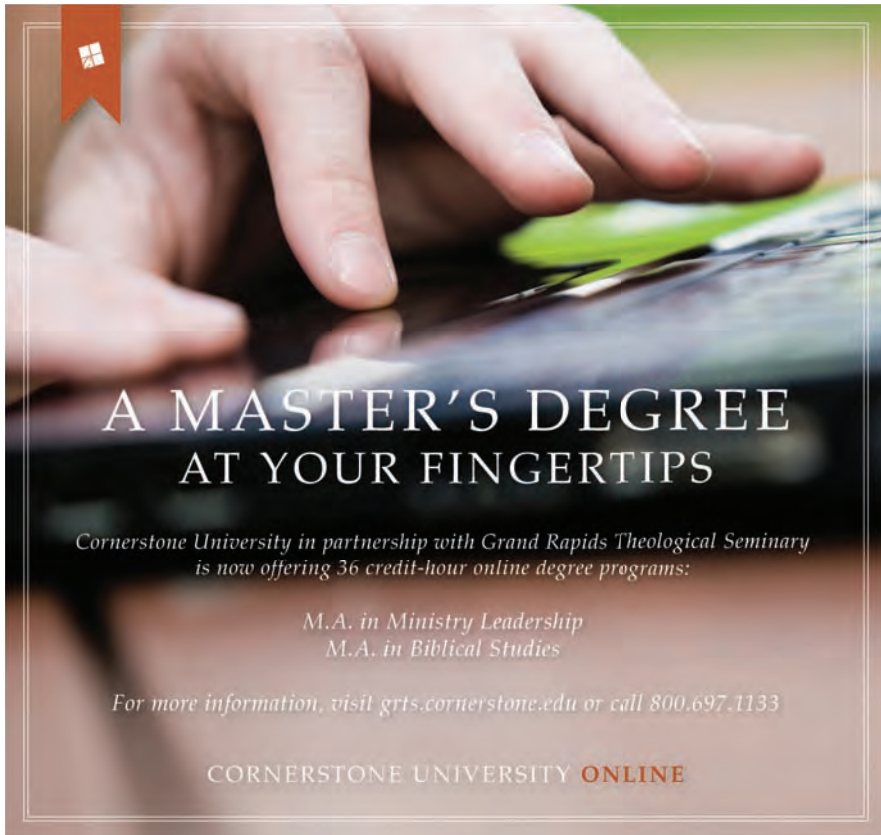
MUSIC

THE WAILIN' JENNYS

► BRIGHT MORNING STARS

(TRUE NORTH)

★★★★★ *Bright Morning Stars* is aptly titled: the tunes brim with the hope of new morning,



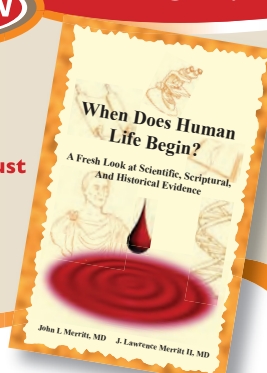
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and at times seem to point to the “bright Morning Star” (Rev. 22:16). The title track refers to the day “a-breakin’ in my soul,” to fathers “in the valley a-prayin’,” and to mothers “gone to heaven a-shoutin’.” Hints of the gospel are sprinkled throughout: “Storm Comin’” encourages the listener to “let it wash away the tears and trouble” and “let love through your door.” Stellar stuff, literally and figuratively. —Mark Moring

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The New Campus Community

Social media's expanding role at Christian colleges.



How Christian colleges are using social media to build community. pg 58

The rise of social media in college admissions. pg. 70

How two college students are using social media to stay connected. pg. 72



Campus Connections

How Christian colleges are using social media to build community.



onnection. Interaction. Community. Three vital elements of the college experience that Christian college professionals

throughout the nation are striving to develop on their campuses. And the newest tool that's helping them create a more connected and integrated higher education experience? Social media.

With 75% of teens and young adults engaged in social media, Christian colleges are realizing that their schools' presence on social media sites is no longer an option. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Vimeo for video hosting, and the photo-sharing site Flickr are now important tools in most schools' social media arsenal.

"We know everyone's on social media," says Kathryn Scott, Marketing Manager at Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois. "We figure people will be talking about Trinity and blogging or posting about us, so that's why we feel it's important to join the conversation. We want to be actively involved in the interaction taking place within the digital participatory culture."

While it's still important for schools to update their websites and keep them current, it's now an essential component for their sites to work in tandem with social media. "Facebook and Twitter are used to direct traffic back to the school's blogs and website," says Scott. "Every time a new story or video is posted on Trinity's blogs, it's automatically sent out

to our social media channels of choice.

Scott realizes the need to produce social media outlets for a wide audience. "We host a number of blogs. Contributors include undergrad students, M.Div. students, admissions counselors, the wife of a seminary student, and the university president," she reports. Trinity's staff even handed over cameras to two incoming freshmen and encouraged them to keep a video blog of their lives leading up to and during their freshman year.

"The summer before they entered as freshmen, they were already blogging about their preparation for college and experience of leaving home," says Scott. "They both documented campus life, including late nights in the dorm, a leadership retreat, meals in the dining hall, and weekends in Chicago."

Faculty-student interaction is also encouraged at Trinity. Although many students and faculty talk back and forth on Facebook and Twitter, most of their electronic interaction is through official discussion boards provided by the school. For some classes, like a class that meets for two intensive days once a month, students are required to use an online discussion board on their intranet.

Trinity's alumni have a special social network site, TrinityTown, and they manage their own Facebook pages. "They are actively participating in connecting with our alumni through posting job listings, wedding and career

announcements, and alumni and university news," says Scott. "They also have an e-newsletter that is well-read and recognized in the alumni relations industry for its response rate and percentage of opened e-mails."

In regard to admissions, Scott says it's all about branding. "Social media is important to how people experience a brand. The traditional means of admissions marketing were by letters and direct mail, a booth at a college fair, or through an ad or feature in a high school magazine or newsletter. Now, students understand your brand by watching videos online and participating."

"The assumption is that the more we engage with them, the more they'll understand who we are, what we offer, and hopefully care about what we have to say," says Scott. "And the more we connect with them in the digital conversation, the more likely they are to come for a campus visit, which is where the in-person engagement happens. That's when they can have face-to-face interaction with professors, current students, and admissions counselors. We work to show prospective students life at Trinity through the stories we show and tell on our blogs and the interaction we have with them through social media channels like Facebook and Twitter. It is our hope that when they step foot on our campus, they will feel that reality matches our online presence."

Social media is also useful when the

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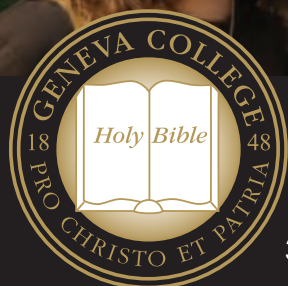


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school needs to quickly get out a short but important message. When Trinity experienced a power outage on campus, the marketing department used Twitter and Facebook to make sure people knew about it. While staff send a daily email of campus happenings—who's speaking in chapel, when the social justice group is meeting or where a poetry reading is taking place—when there's campus-wide info they need everyone to see, they use Twitter as an additional way to disseminate information.

Tim Ellsworth, Director of News and Media Relations at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, found this to be true for a particular event a couple years ago. "A major tornado hit our campus on February 5, 2008," he says. "Students used our Facebook page to let others know they were safe and to share prayer requests."

Outside of such dramatic circumstances, Union finds great value in social media. Enrollment counselors use Facebook to answer questions from prospective students, and often

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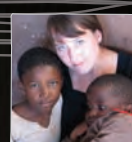
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congratulate prospective students on their acceptance over Twitter. “Social media allows us to provide quick responses to inquiries from prospective students and share in their enthusiasm about coming to the university,” says Ellsworth. “It also provides a place for prospective students to connect with other prospective students.”

Current students make just as much use of Union’s social media. “Students who blog often share devotional thoughts that challenge and encourage fellow students,” says Ellsworth. “Many use Twitter and Facebook to share Scripture passages, prayer requests, song lyrics, meaningful quotes, and other messages that are often a blessing to their friends.”

Additionally, most campus groups use Facebook to publicize events taking place on campus. And although Union hosts an internal discussion forum on their website where professors and students can discuss class readings, announcements, and assignments, several academic departments have their own Facebook and Twitter accounts. “Faculty members also use their personal Facebook and Twitter accounts to interact with their students outside of the classroom. It provides plenty of opportunities for faculty members to interact with their students individually,” says Ellsworth.

Union’s marketing department also makes use of social media. “We post Facebook and Twitter links to all of our news releases. When our faculty members write articles, we link to those as well,” says Ellsworth. “We post photos from events taking place on campus and list prayer requests for members of our community in need. On Twitter, we’ll often retweet some of the messages that our faculty, staff, and students post. We’ll often use social media for advance publicity for various campus events.”

At Warner Pacific College in Portland, Oregon, it’s the students who have led the way in creating an interactive online atmosphere. The admissions department has an official Facebook page that’s been instrumental

in connecting with students. But with the exception of admissions and an alumni page, which are staff-driven, the rest of the Facebook and Twitter sites are student-driven, says Lani Faith, Executive Director of Marketing at Warner Pacific.

“Social media sites from students have cropped up on their own. Examples include clubs like the student activities board, our community service area, sports teams, the business club, and performing arts,” says Faith. “Because it’s a way students build community, they’ve been launching sites instead of waiting for us to do it for them. They’re making it happen and leading us as we intentionally integrate more interactive alternatives within our new web redesign project.”

Last semester, students and staff worked together to launch a social media prayer request portal. Faith explains, “Our spiritual life team has encouraged students, staff, and faculty to send prayer requests via text or Facebook. The prayer team meets once a week and prays for all those specific requests.”

The Warner Pacific admissions staff posts frequently on Facebook—utilizing YouTube videos to give prospective students a glimpse of campus. “All high school students are on social media,” Faith says. “Our presence online really makes a difference.”

Warner Pacific staff also hosts a blog for their school print magazine, *The Experience*. Magazine content is uploaded and posted in a blog format. Faith explains, “While we had previously uploaded the entire contents of the magazine at once, as of March 1, we’ve redesigned it so stories are uploaded once a week. It’s much more interactive, more current, more proactive, and more marketing driven. We have some great stories to tell and this will enable us to push them out into the community in a way that will be consistent, current, and coherent.”

The school sees social media as a way to connect with another key constituency—young alumni. “We just hired a new alumni director who is bringing fresh energy and

vision that is spilling over into the alumni community, making it more alive,” reports Faith. “The challenge is retaining their interest soon after graduation. We’re trying to stay connected to those young alums, and social media is key to our efforts.”

Faculty and staff at Grove City College in Grove City, Pennsylvania, know that while social media has many benefits for colleges, it can have some drawbacks, as well. “It can be problematic if it becomes a substitute for deep relationships, accountability, and serious conversation,” says John Coyne, Associate Director of Residence Life. “Social media also makes it easy to appear more spiritually mature than you really are (i.e. you can make your profile look like you are on fire for Christ, but hide what your real priorities in life are).”

Michael Baker, Communications Associate at Grove City, shares similar concerns. “Our student leaders have shared that social networking prevents students from truly being who they are, because online they can be whoever they present themselves to be,” he says. “Our RAs have been concerned that what students are consuming is superficial and often gossipy in nature, and that our students aren’t being challenged to have deep and meaningful conversation with their peers.” Staff have also observed a potential pitfall specifically for incoming freshmen: When students maintain such constant contact with old friends and high school classmates, they’re prevented from engaging fully when they arrive on campus.

But despite these concerns, staff forge ahead with plans to use the medium for good. Melinda Miller, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at Grove City, posts upcoming admissions-related events, but also highlights interesting happenings related to the campus and alumni communities. “We just posted a link about a young alum who made Pittsburgh’s ‘40 Under 40’ list—a group of up-and-coming young professionals from our region who are under 40,” she says. “We also posted about another

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young alumna who is a comedienne and does a very funny bit about our school, to let alums know where she'd be performing."

Another recent post linked to an article about the discovery of bacteria that utilize arsenic rather than carbon, which featured an interview with a Grove City professor. "We try to post things that show the breadth and depth of our school, our students, our faculty, and our alumni," says Miller. "Whether it's about a swimming championship or poking fun of ourselves that people are now allowed to walk on the grass of our quadrangle, we try to cover a variety of subjects and keep it informative and light."

Jamie Swank, Director of Residence Life at Grove City, tells a story about the power of social media on campus. "We recently held an event that we weren't sure would get a solid response from students. One of our student leaders asked if she could make an event page on Facebook before we spent time and money on advertising. We sold out of tickets in a little over two days without once advertising it to our student body."

Miller concludes, "Our students are overall very positively impacted by the use of Facebook and Twitter. Students receive news and updates in a variety of mediums on campus, but our social media provides the opportunity to share their questions and opinions with the college." She continues, "Through the ability of social media to allow students to endorse events through 'likes,' retweets, ect., our promotions have often been more supported by students due to the credibility it carries once other students carry on our message virally."

Whether blogging, tweeting, or posting status updates, it's clear these Christian colleges are serious about using social media to create a more interactive and informed campus community.

Jill DePasquale is a freelance writer and editor living in the Chicagoland area. She's the former assistant editor of *Ignite Your Faith* magazine, and the marketing coordinator for Outreach Community Ministries.

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Reaching a Wired Generation

The expanding role of social media in college admissions.



Once upon a time, if a high school student wanted information on a college or university, they wrote a letter, made a phone call, or waited for piles of brochures to arrive in their mailbox. Now they launch a web browser and enter a school's name into Google. Since most high school students are using social media, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are providing new opportunities for Christian college admissions departments to

interact with prospective students.

Cristina Herschberger, Marketing Project Manager for Grace College in Winona Lake, Indiana, is using social media to promote new majors, new degree programs, events on campus, and published news items to prospective students. "We use social media to strengthen our brand presence," she says. "Our Facebook page has all of our Tweets on it, as well as other links that people post to the page. On YouTube and Vimeo we post videos that highlight

our campus, prank videos that the marketing interns made, and a video from our capital campaign. These videos are highlighted throughout our website.

"We post to our Facebook and Twitter accounts through Ping, which allows us to update all our social networks at once," Herschberger continues. "We quite often link back to our website. When we post photos to Facebook or videos to YouTube or Vimeo, we make sure that it gets mentioned on Twitter and Facebook."

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Grace includes photos from the large youth conference they sponsor every summer, called “Momentum,” on their official page. They also have a separate Facebook page for the youth conference, and although it’s not an official admissions site, it definitely generates interest among high school students, which can turn into leads for their admissions department.

Although Grace is doing much to draw prospective students through social media, they want to do even more. “Our school does not currently have a section on our website specifically for social media to prospective students,” says Herschberger. “However, we plan to build a social media section where prospective students can get a visual tour of our campus and student body in one central location. This page will give

the user the ability to view videos and pictures, and it will feature a Twitter and Facebook feed.”

Hope International University in Fullerton, California, is also excited about growing their social media presence for prospective students. “We’re moving in the direction of having a Facebook page dedicated solely to admissions and prospective students,” says Katie Gladding, Marketing Manager at Hope. “Currently, the purpose of our Facebook page is for sending messages to our entire HIU community, including alumni, prospective students, current students, faculty, and staff.”

But what HIU’s social media strategy currently lacks in targeting niche groups, it makes up for in depth and breadth. “We currently use Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube,” says Gladding. “We use

Facebook to let our HIU community and prospective students know what’s going on at HIU—events, news articles, announcements. We use YouTube for current promotional videos, and we use Twitter much in the same way we use Facebook.” She adds, “On our Facebook and Twitter pages, we almost always provide links back to our website, and try to include photos whenever possible.”

According to Gladding, social media has been crucial to HIU’s overall community and public relations. She, along with other Christian college admissions and marketing staff, realize the importance of reaching out to prospective students in the places they’re already dwelling online—creating more opportunities for questions, conversation, and the possibility of more new college freshmen on campus. —J.D.



Plugged In

How two college students are using social media to stay connected.

Since the largest social network in the world—Facebook—was created on a college campus solely for college students, it’s no surprise that most college students are regularly liking their friends’ statuses, checking out their photos, uploading videos, and tweeting about what’s on their mind. Here’s how two college students are using social media to stay connected and interact with their school.

When Nicole Van Dyke, a freshman majoring in psychology and sociology at California Baptist University, was a

prospective student, she used Facebook to help her research the school. “I found more information about California Baptist University on Facebook through the group Stepping Stones to CBU.”



Stepping Stones to CBU is an exclusive online community on Facebook for prospective undergraduate students who have expressed an interest in joining the CBU family. It offers a 25-episode video series hosted by CBU students that gives a behind-the-scenes look at the many dimensions of the CBU experience, from learning to living to eating to playing.

“Seeing those videos, along with

photos of the campus and of student life, gave me a better idea of what to expect from my college experience,” says Van Dyke. “It really helped ease my transition into college.”

Now that Nicole is a freshman on campus, she still stays connected via social media, both on Facebook and on CBU’s online academic community. “I follow my professor, who’s also my choir director, on Facebook,” she says. “And my intro to sociology class has online discussions on Blackboard so I’m able to interact with my classmates and discuss things we have gone over in class.”

Derek Murphey, a senior communications major at Northwestern



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College in Minnesota, finds it easy to connect with his professors as well as his friends on Facebook and Twitter. "I am

friends with most of my professors on Facebook as well as a few on Twitter. I will connect in different ways depending on the professor, but most commonly it's in a friendly way and not course related."

Murphey says that most of his classmate interaction on social media is just that—social. There might be encouraging Bible verses or personal testimonies that spark discussion, as well as posts about struggles with the stresses of school and life. Murphey uses Facebook for academic purposes every now and then, but it's mostly to set up face-to-face meetings or study sessions.

Social media is also present at his

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

job. Murphey works for the college radio station, and is especially familiar with the radio station's Facebook page. "We do a lot of advertising and communicating through social media," he says.

Advertising and communicating

are what it's all about when you study, work, and live on a college campus. Social media has allowed these students to log in, comment, and tweet their way to a more connected and integrated higher education experience. —J.D.

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Chasing the Storyteller

David Cunningham's faith informs his filmmaking.

Before he was out of his teen years, David L. Cunningham had seen the world. The son of Youth With a Mission (YWAM) founder Loren Cunningham had visited 100 countries by age 19. Those childhood treks included dining with the rich, feeding the poor, and much in between—instilling him with a desire to tell stories on the big screen.

After graduating from film school, Cunningham made some documentaries before his first indie flick, *To End All Wars* (2001), about World War II POWs who are abused by their captors, caught the eye of a Steven Spielberg associate. ABC then hired Cunningham to direct *The Path to 9/11* (2006), a controversial TV miniseries. The film blamed the 9/11 attacks

on the Clinton administration, saying it had missed the chance to take out Osama bin Laden. The Clintons complained, and ABC cut several scenes. Some attacked not just the film but also Cunningham, his faith, and his parents. Cunningham says there were even death threats.

Cunningham, now 40, is working on *Day of War*, a 3D film about King David and his mighty men, based on the first book in Cliff Graham's *Lion of War* series. Cunningham promises a “major motion picture in the vein of the *Lord of the Rings*.”

- **Hometown** Kona, Hawaii
- **Church** Central Kona Union
- **On your iPod** I ditched it for the iPad
- **Favorite movie** *The Seventh Seal*
- **Favorite Bible verse** Isaiah 43:2
- **Favorite website** Google
- **Your hero** My wife
- **What makes you laugh** My kids
- **Best meal you cook** Eggs, sunny-side up
- **Hobbies/interests** Surfing, anything in the ocean

question & answer

What did *The Path to 9/11* experience teach you?

The fact that my faith was one of the main things used as a so-called weapon against the content was really eye-opening for me. People in Hollywood tried to blackball me. They said YWAM funded *The Path to 9/11*. They said my dad was a snake handler. It got crazy. But it was a great study in the collision of politics, entertainment, and faith. If you're going to be a filmmaker, you need thick skin. The challenge as a person of faith is how to have thick skin but keep your heart soft.

What's your best memory of making *To End All Wars*?

That it was a story of forgiveness in the face of suffering and in the context of war. The fact that it's true blew my mind.

Were you into movies as a kid?

My grandparents believed that if you were in a cinema when Jesus came home, you were going to be left behind. My parents didn't watch movies as kids. My first experience with *Star Wars* was when a kid explained it to me. I didn't see my first movie till I was 12 or 13. And then I was swept away.

I come from a long line of not just ministers, but storytellers and authors. My 96-year-old grandmother has written about her travels. My great-grandfather started 13 churches across the West out of covered wagons. Telling stories is part of me. Then I went to film school, and I just couldn't get enough of it. It became apparent that this was not just a childhood dream but also a deep passion.

How do you understand your calling?

I'm a follower of Christ who looks to him for inspiration and direction, and hopefully can make a difference in a hurting world. Christ was an incredible storyteller, and I hope to follow in his footsteps.

More: imdb.com/name/nm0192289/, lionofwar.com

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