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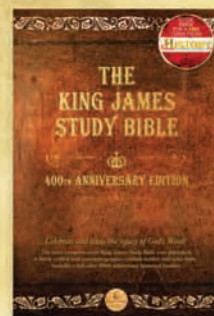
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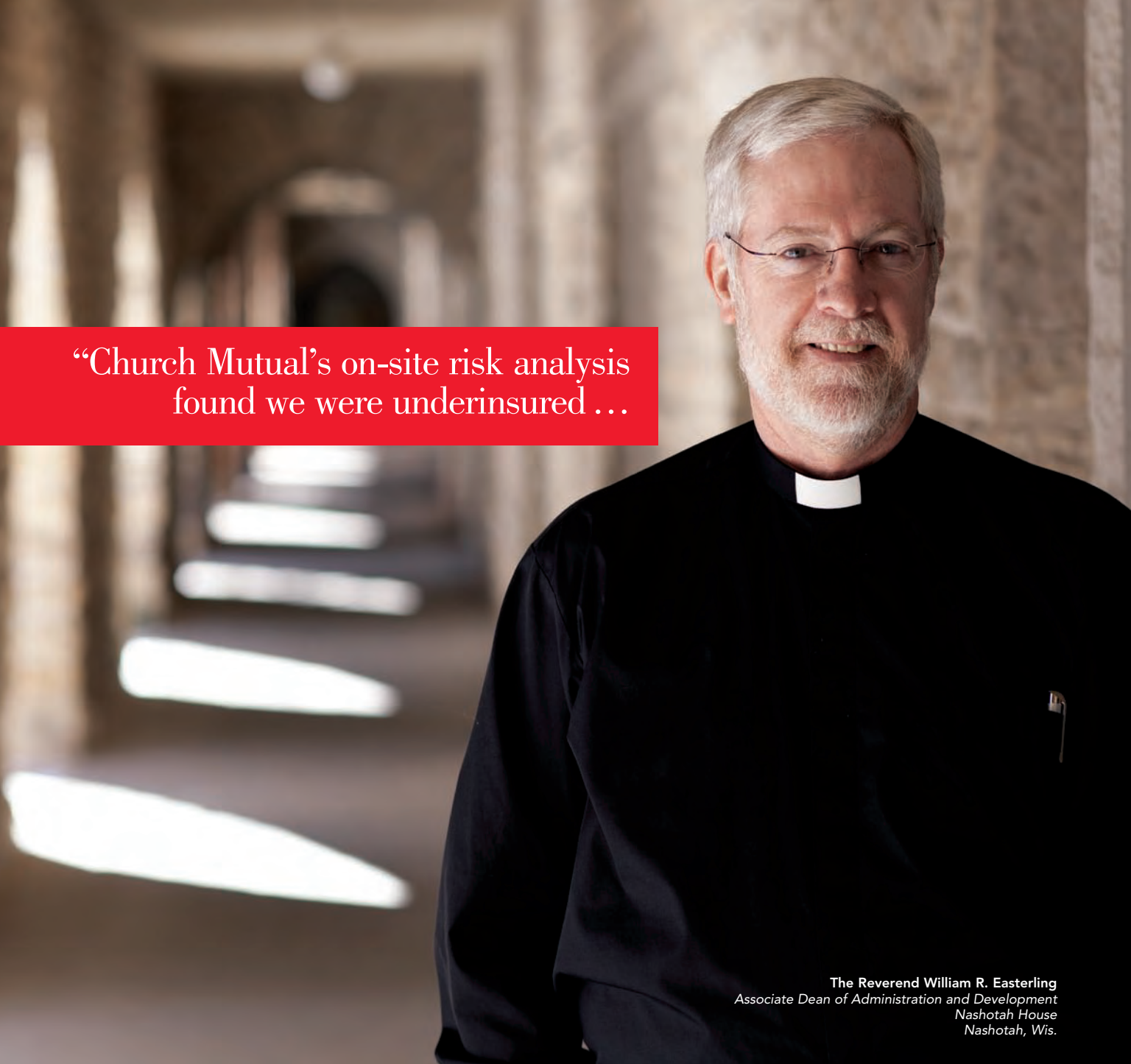


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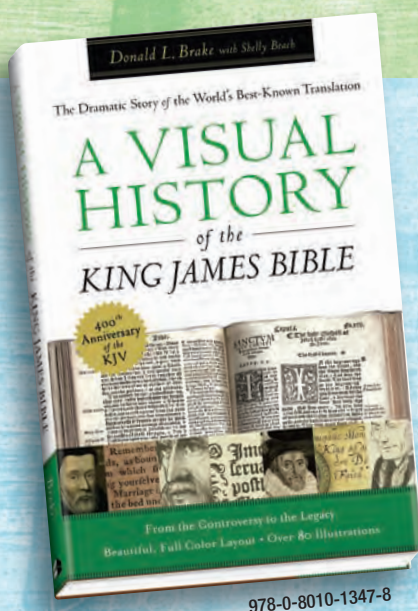


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Your Eyes on God's World

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

In recent issues, for example, we spotlighted Iraqi Christian refugees who are looking to Europe for a safe haven and Egyptian believers weighing the impact of regime change. In this issue, Tim Stafford reports from Ethiopia on Christian efforts to fight a frequently misdiagnosed foot disease (page 54), and Rob Moll details the pressures on microfinance organizations in India and Africa (page 23).

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

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

Fortunately, we have had some help. Several organizations help with costs, access, and in-country travel. In this issue, we are grateful for connections made through the board of John Stott Ministries that opened the doors for Tim Stafford's special report on the foot disease podod.

Such assistance encourages us as we plan future reports of gospel growth in the uttermost parts. That is why I want to encourage you as a CT “fellow traveler” to prayerfully consider what you can do to invest in this expanding work.

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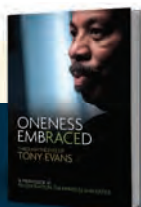


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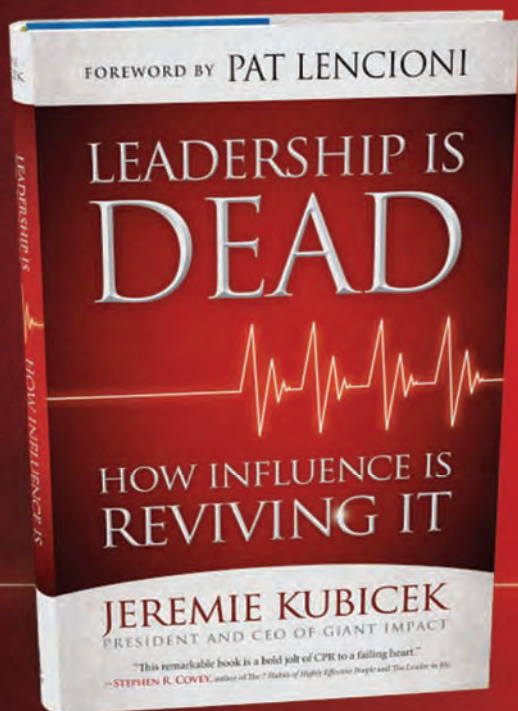
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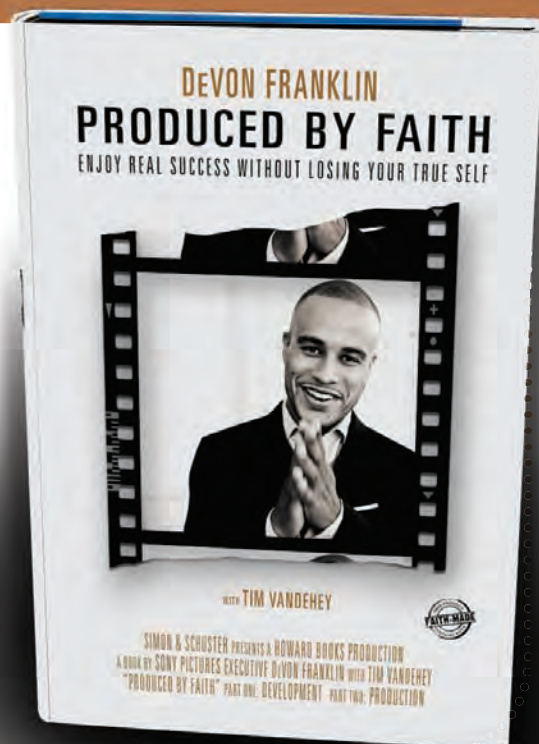
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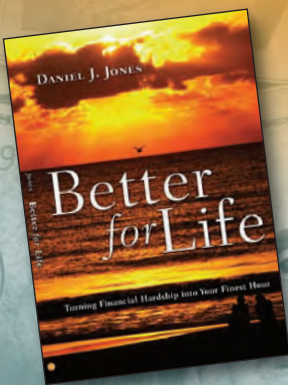
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Happy Surprises

They seem to be piling up with this issue.

IN HIS COVER STORY on the esteemed King James Version Bible translation (page 30), Mark Noll reminds us that the predominance of the KJV was never a given, and it became for a time the universal English translation in large part because of power politics. He shows that much of what we take as good and holy—or professional and polished—is a product of forces that are no more than happy surprises. Take the cover story itself.

It began with a question from an advertising exec: “Are you going to have an article on the KJV anytime soon?” We pride ourselves on *not* taking editorial direction from advertising. The wall between advertising and editorial should remain high, for obvious reasons. But frankly, I am no respecter of ideas. I will take a good one wherever it comes from. I’ll admit, the KJV hadn’t been on my radar.

My problem was that I had no idea what *Christianity Today*’s take on the translation’s 400th anniversary would be. When I presented the idea at a staff meeting, someone suggested asking a highly regarded historian like Noll to write on what the world would be like without the KJV. I liked the idea but said the approach would be too speculative for such a serious fellow as the Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame.

I was wrong, and am glad I was. The article ended up being not so much speculative as highly informative. What else would one expect from Mark Noll?

Another serendipitous event is the release of the 100th issue of *Christian History*, which, as Providence would have it, is also about the KJV. We no longer publish the magazine; it is now in the capable hands of the Christian History Institute and managing editor Chris Armstrong of Bethel Seminary, who edited the magazine for two years when it was with CT. (Visit ChristianHistoryMagazine.org for more information.) On a more poignant note, the lead story is by Ken Curtis, founder of the institute and the magazine, who died during the production of the centennial issue.

New columnist. Leslie Leyland Fields has contributed three memorable cover stories to CT: “The Case for Kids,” on big families; “The Myth of the Perfect Parent,” on childrearing techniques; and the Genesis Award-winning “A Feast Fit for a King,” on food ethics. Now she brings her elegant writing and spiritual wisdom to you every other month in her new column, *Stones to Bread*, beginning in this issue on page 66.

Next month: Journalist Richard Ostling unpacks the issues surrounding the historical Adam debate, Andy Crouch talks to Eugene Peterson and Peter Harris about the environment, and Tony Carnes looks at the emergence of “Christian” gardening.



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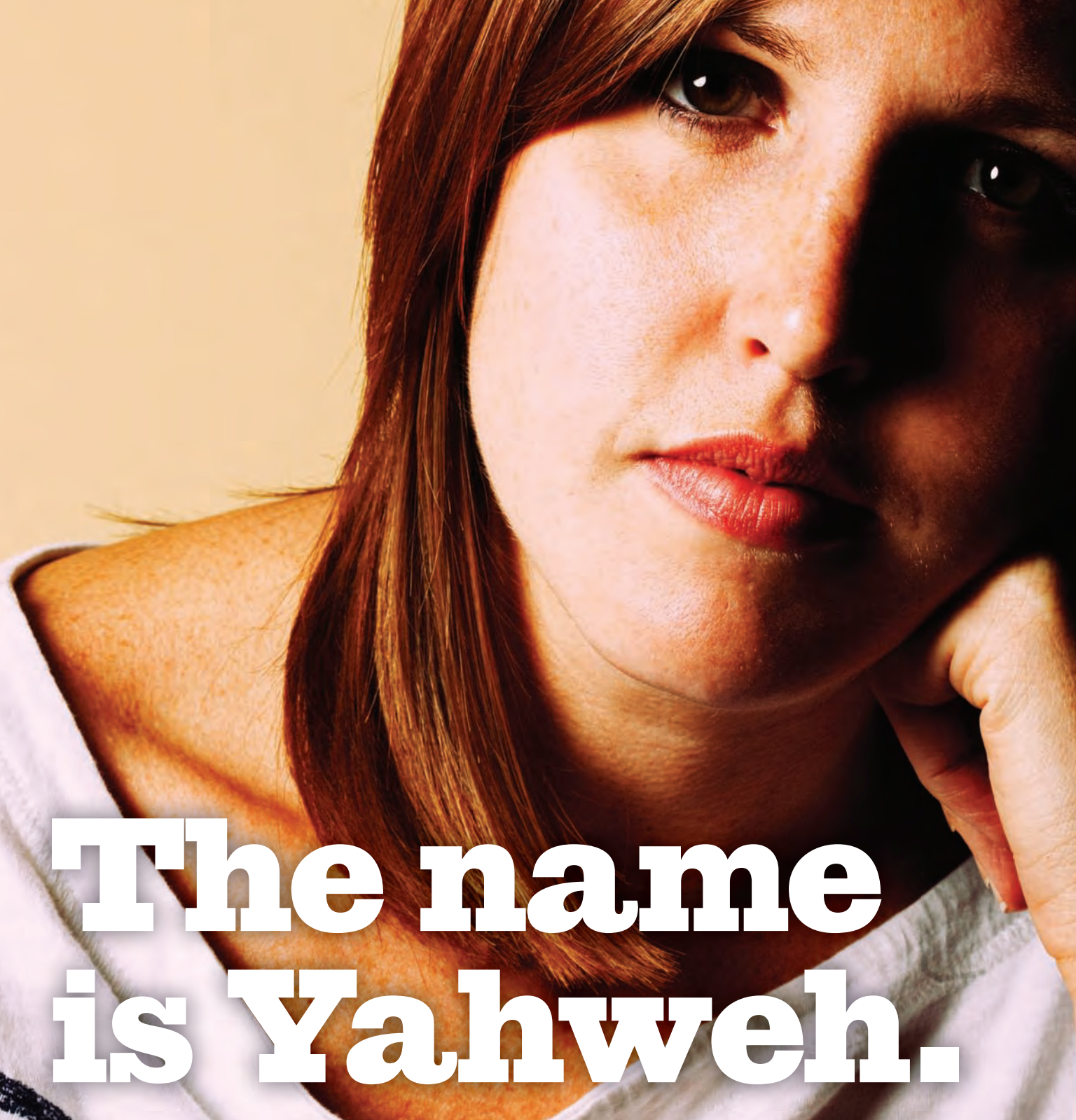
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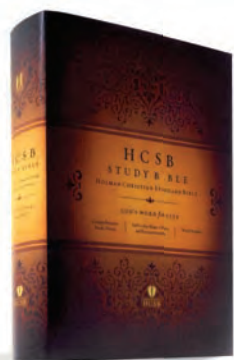
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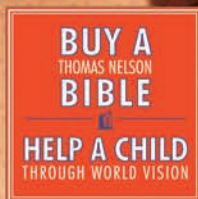
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BRIEFING

REPORTING & DISPATCHES
FROM THE CHURCH
WORLDWIDE

SPOTLIGHT: Reformed Rap and Hip-Hop



Lecrae

The Grammy nominee and cofounder of Reach Records (the label of several Reformed rappers) is the genre's crossover hit.

➔ Not since Maranatha! and contemporary praise emerged from Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel in the 1970s has a genre of Christian music become so associated with a specific stream of evangelicalism. And while not all Christian rappers are Reformed, nor do all see themselves as preachers and teachers working in a musical medium, the growing edge of the movement is explicitly taking its cues from Calvinist leaders. Several tracks have included direct references to (and even sermon clips from) John MacArthur, John Piper, C. J. Mahaney, and other pastors, and Curtis "Voice" Allen's recent rap on the Westminster Catechism (with theologian D. A. Carson) went viral in March—as did his Heidelberg Catechism rap last October.

NOTABLE RAPPERS



Trip Lee

The Lecrae protégé is taking a break from music to intern at Mark Dever's Capitol Hill Baptist Church and named an album after Justin Taylor's Reformed überblog, *Between Two Worlds*.



Shai Linne

Know anyone else with a song defending limited atonement? ("If saving everybody was why Christ came in history / With so many in hell, we'd have to say he failed miserably.")



Flame (Marcus Gray)

The Grammy nominee is getting a master's degree in biblical counseling from Southern Seminary and grew up in the Word of Faith movement.



Voice (Curtis Allen)

Drew attention (and some criticism) to Reformed rap when he performed at Piper's Bethlehem Baptist Church in 2006. Now he's an assistant pastor in Maryland.

Is it the sound of Reformed resurgence?

While hip-hop has become a staple of young Reformed conferences, it's not yet the dominant sound and it rarely appears in Reformed churches, said D. A. Carson. "I doubt that hip-hop with Reformed lyrics will ever become a primarily congregational corporate worship medium. It is a performance medium, and as such it is very useful for communicating with certain groups of people. . . . But that does not make it inappropriate for the more limited goals that it achieves quite strikingly at the moment."



WHY IT HAS CAUGHT ON

The genre allows the rapper to cram loads of biblical and theological content in a single verse. I think we love hearing the Scripture 'preached' lyrically. Second, there is a 'cool factor,' which has helped bridge generational and cultural divides. But we can't explain this without acknowledging the sovereign workings of God.

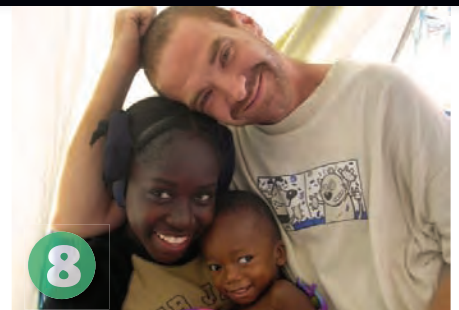
— Thabiti Anyabwile, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Grand Cayman

Reformed hip-hop is a theologically driven masculinity movement. It says no to the prom songs to Jesus in ccm, no to whiny emo Christian music for hipsters, and no to empty, shallow, individualistic Christian music lacking theological content produced out of Nashville.

— Anthony Bradley, associate professor of theology and ethics at The King's College and author of *Liberating Black Theology*

Martin Luther, the first reforming rapper:

In the 1500s he used rhyme, meter, and melody to teach the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and other truths, and "to give the young . . . something to wean them away from love ballads and carnal songs and teach them something of value in their place."



GLEANINGS

Important developments in the church and the world.

1 Crucifixes allowed in public schools

ITALY State-funded Italian schools can display crucifixes in classrooms without violating pupils' religious rights, according to a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights. The decision concludes a three-year court battle over two public schools' refusal to remove crucifixes from classrooms. The court said the crucifixes are part of Italy's cultural heritage, and that removing them could "rob the Italians of part of their cultural personality." The European Center for Law and Justice supported the decision as upholding Christian tradition, while the Italian Evangelical Alliance disagreed, calling crucifix displays a tool of Roman Catholic cultural supremacy.

2 Abortion clinics regulated as hospitals

Abortion clinics in Virginia will have 280 days to tighten safety guidelines following a bill effective July 1. The bill requires most of the state's abortion clinics to comply with hospital safety regulations, rather than as doctor's offices (as they are currently classified). The move makes Virginia one of the most restrictive states for first-trimester abortions and could close 17 of the state's 21 clinics, according to abortion advocates.

3 Bible battle over Allah resurfaces

MALAYSIA In an ongoing battle over the use of the word *Allah* by non-Muslims, 35,000 Bibles shipped to Kuala Lumpur were held for several months before provoking rare public protests by Christians. The Malaysian Home Ministry

asked the Bible Society of Malaysia and the local branch of the Gideons to stamp "The Good News Bible is for the use of Christians only" in Malay on the covers of the books along with serial numbers and official ministry stamps. The Christian groups rejected the compromise as a desecration of their sacred text.

4 Churches burned in wave of violence

ETHIOPIA More than 10,000 Christians were displaced and 69 churches burned to the ground in a rare conflict with Muslims over allegations of Qur'an desecration. More than half of the burned churches were part of Ethiopia's Pentecostal Word of Life denomination. The Ethiopian communications minister said only two churches were burned and the violence was an "isolated incident." Ethiopia's population is 44 percent Ethiopian Orthodox, 19 percent evangelical and Pentecostal, and 34 percent Muslim.

5 Court: Church lawsuit can proceed

A California church has grounds to bring a lawsuit against the city of San Leandro for denying its zoning request even though the city's zoning law is neutral, according to a ruling by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Faith Fellowship Foursquare Church had sued San Leandro for not allowing the church to construct a building on land it purchased in an industrial area. A judge previously dismissed the lawsuit, concluding the church could use other solutions than a larger building to accommodate its growth. But the appeals court said the previous ruling ignored the church's belief that the entire congregation should worship together in one

location, thus violating a Supreme Court ruling that "courts should not inquire into the truth or falsity of stated religious beliefs."

6 Churches no longer a surrender option

The U.S. Marshals Service has canceled a program that let U.S. fugitives surrender at churches, because it didn't fit the service's mission. More than 34,000 non-violent fugitives in 20 cities surrendered through Fugitive Safe Surrender since 2005, when the program started in Cleveland. The program, which cost \$250,000 annually, paired marshals with churches in scheduled events where fugitives could surrender in neutral church environments and be tried for crimes. A spokesman for the Marshals Service said funding for the program was dropped because the service wants to target violent crime.

7 Baylor allows non-Baptist board members

The governing board of Baylor University, the largest Baptist institution in the world, can now comprise 25 percent non-Baptist Christians. The change means non-Baptist students—the majority of Baylor's student body—can be represented in governance, according to regent chairman Dary Stone. The Baptist General Convention of Texas will still elect 25 percent of the board and will continue to provide \$2.8 million of Baylor's annual operating budget.

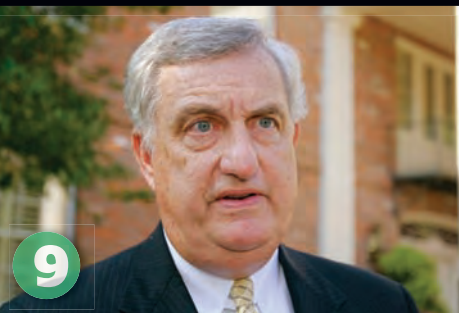
8 Jailed missionary released

HAITI A U.S. missionary jailed in October over a property dispute was released after five months in jail. Danny Pye had lived in Haiti since 2004 and ran an orphanage in southern Haiti. Pye complied with judges' orders and signed over assets a few days after being jailed, yet was subsequently held "pending

GO FIGURE Islam

60
Monthly conversions in Pakistan from Christianity to Islam. Most are in response to the country's blasphemy law.

AsiaNews.it



compiled by Ted Olsen

QUOTATION MARKS

“How I practice my religion is something not for the American people. . . .”

Gary Locke, U.S. Commerce Secretary and appointed ambassador to China, as U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf demanded he worship at a Chinese house church “to stand with the dissidents who are being persecuted.”

AFP

“There’s very little Christ, very little Jesus, in these people who are fighting Rob Bell.”

Eugene Peterson, explaining why he endorsed Bell’s new book, *Love Wins*.
Patheos

“[I’m] alarmed to be a repository of other people’s hope. . . . It’s something I shall have to resist if I survive.”

Christopher Hitchens, on becoming an atheist hero amid his cancer treatments.
The Telegraph

“Offering someone support as they choose to live their life through the filter of their faith rather than their sexuality is now considered not only offensive, but also dangerous.”

Alan Chambers, president of Exodus International, on Apple removing the group’s iPhone app for “being offensive to large groups of people.”

ManhattanDeclaration.org

“What happens after the two cheeks have been turned? I do not know what else. Let nobody think that the silence of Christians is weakness.”

Solomon Adebara, founder and General Overseer of Nigeria’s Fountain of Grace Ministries, on Muslim attacks on Christians in the country’s north.

Sunday Tribune

9 University president pleads guilty to fraud

Palm Beach Atlantic University president Lu Hardin resigned suddenly in mid-March, three days before a court appearance where he pled guilty to wire fraud and money laundering. Hardin, who previously served as president of University of Central Arkansas (UCA) for six years, could face 20 years in prison for forging a letter to UCA’s board of trustees saying the school could give him a yearly \$200,000 bonus. Hardin will be sentenced in late spring or early summer.

10 Foster agencies scrutinized

Religious foster care agencies in Illinois are under investigation for possibly breaking anti-discrimination laws by turning away potential foster parents who are gay. Lutheran Child and Family Services (LCFS), Catholic Charities, and Evangelical Child and Family Agency could lose state funding if the Illinois attorney general and other investigators decide the agencies are in violation. LCFS said if necessary it would change its policy to serve gay couples in order to retain state funding; Catholic Charities in Washington, D.C., and Boston closed long-running foster care programs following similar discrimination claims. The investigation started after a gay couple was turned down as adoptive parents for a child last fall; defenders say Illinois has more than 50 other foster agencies that license gay couples.

11 Parents jailed for objecting to sex ed

GERMANY A couple and two fathers are the latest Christians to be jailed for not complying with state school regulations for their

children. The parents, Heinrich and Irene Wiens and unrelated fathers Arthur and Edward Wiens, were sentenced to six-week jail sentences after refusing to send their children to four-day sex education programs that promote a “very liberal view of sex,” according to the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF). Five families are protesting the sex program and have been jailed repeatedly, said the ADF, which is appealing the issue to the European Court of Human Rights.

12 Prominent pastor murdered

HONDURAS A high-profile pastor who was shot, likely for either his cell phone or the two schnauzers he was walking, has drawn attention to the high murder rate in Honduras. Friends of Carlos Roberto Marroquín say he had received death threats, which are common for Christian leaders in the increasingly violent country. Marroquín, who was the founding pastor of the Pentecostal Church of God in the country’s second largest city, San Pedro Sula, is the second pastor to be murdered this year; Raymond Fuentes, pastor of the New Jerusalem Temple, was shot in January.

13 Pastor, soccer star husband leave church

BRAZIL Caroline Celico, a former pastor of Renascer (“Reborn in Christ”), and her husband, Brazilian soccer icon Kaká, left the 2-million-member denomination in December. Renascer’s founding couple was arrested in Miami in 2007, charged with money laundering and tax evasion, pled guilty to smuggling, and was sentenced to five months in jail and five months under house arrest. Brazilian publications speculate that Celico and Kaká left because of that scandal. Kaká reportedly tithed more than \$1.3 million to the church; the couple now lives in Spain.

GO FIGURE Persecution

3/4
Religious persecution in the world that is directed at Christians.

2/3
Among countries where Christians are persecuted, those where persecution is getting worse.

Aid to the Church in Need



Weeding the Plants: Ghana's church planting boom has left denominations struggling to keep opportunists, such as convicted rapist 'Jesus One Touch,' out of pulpits.

CHURCH LIFE GHANA

Magic Words

Churches confront fake pastors. By Shirley Quaicoo in Cape Coast, Ghana

Denominations in Ghana are under pressure to tighten their ranks against a crop of pastors with dubious credentials, many of whom mix Christianity with the practices of traditional fetish priests.

"The phenomenon is serious," said Isaac Mills Owoo, South/West Sector Head of the Ghana Baptist Conference. "People with ulterior motives are entering the ministry . . . as a way to get rich quickly." And religious freedom protections prevent church leadership from stopping such pastors unless their activities are proven to be criminal.

Some pastors consult the dead in their television broadcasts. Others charge "consultation fees" of 50 cedis (US\$35) or more in a country with a minimum wage of about two dollars a day.

"As I was growing up, I was made to understand that consulting the dead was sorcery," said Nana Esi, a seamstress who worships at

a Methodist church in Cape Coast. "Now it is being practiced in the church."

Many Christians are wondering whether the source of power in these churches is God, traditional African religion—where a priest manages a shrine and controls gods (spirits residing in physical objects) that can solve health or spiritual problems—or outright deception. Kwaku Bonsam, a prominent fetish priest known for challenging pastors to contests of supernatural power, has claimed in several interviews that he has assisted 1,000 pastors with supernatural powers for church growth.

In January, an Accra circuit court sentenced Nana Kofi Yirenkyi, or "Jesus One Touch," founder of Jesus Blood Prophetic Ministry in Accra, to 10 years in prison for the rape of his own 10-year-old daughter. In February, police arrested pastor Vincent Bassaw, general overseer of Fountain Living Waters Church

in Takoradi, for impregnating a 15-year-old student.

These are only a few of many such cases that have made headlines.

"The problem is that these 'men of God' profess Christ Jesus and do appalling things," said Ebo Sackey, chairman of the Central Region branch of the Ghana Journalists Association. "Bad news is news, and there is a lot of bad in the circles of these new churches. . . . You wonder whether they deserve to be called churches."

The vice president of Ghana, John Mahama, recently expressed concern about the situation at a church leadership conference, calling on clergy and Christian education institutions to crack down on rogue pastors.

According to Mills Owoo, the Baptist conference now requires that pastors have at least a theology diploma. "Now there are rigorous background checks by the Baptist Bible schools to get those with suspicious characters out."

Christiana Aba Tachie-Menson, registrar of St. Nicholas Anglican Seminary in Cape Coast, said student priests are carefully monitored, and anyone who falls short of the character of a priest is dismissed. "We aim at not only producing pastors but pastors worthy of the call," she said.

Many Ghanaians still come to these dubious churches, seeking solutions to problems of unemployment, marriage, and childlessness. Kweku Adu, a second-hand shoe seller in Cape Coast, said he does not care where these pastors get their powers: "If only he can solve my problem, I am ready to be part of that church."

Government figures indicate that more than 69 percent of Ghana's 24.5 million people profess Christianity. "As a church, we have made it a priority to educate our members about the activities of these false prophets and how to identify them," Mills Owoo said. "And we just hope and pray that they don't fall prey." ☩

GO FIGURE Megachurch

4,000
Attendance at the
100th largest church
in America in 2000.

8,000
Attendance at the
100th largest church
in America in 2010.

Church Growth Today

EVANGELISM

Urban Planters

Who fills the pews of the Big Apple?

By Bob Smietana

The new church business is booming in downtown New York City.

In 1975, there were only about 10 evangelical churches in Manhattan. Now there are more than 200. Four out of ten were started after 2000, according to the New York City Leadership Center.

These city churches attract thousands of worshippers every Sunday. Who is filling the pews?

David Fitch, associate professor of evangelical theology at Northern Baptist Seminary, believes churches like Tim Keller's megachurch, Redeemer Presbyterian, aren't reaching new converts, for the most part. Instead, they are attracting Christians who have moved to big cities like New York.

"The attractional dynamics that often typify these kinds of church planting depend largely on existing Christianized populations," he wrote in a blog post in January.

In 2008, Scott Thumma, a sociologist of religion at Hartford Seminary, surveyed 400 megachurches and asked where congregation members had come from. About one in five attendees said they had either rarely gone to church before or had dropped out for several years.

In a comment on Fitch's blog, Keller said that Redeemer's first attendees were mostly unchurched, because there were few evangelicals in Manhattan in the late 1980s when the church started. But starting in the late 1990s, "for every one New Yorker/secular person who came to Christ, we saw 2-3 others join who were coming from other churches," Keller wrote. "Without that, we would be a quarter to a third the size we are now."

"[Today] you can gather a church without actually evangelizing the

residents," Keller wrote. "I'm glad we started up before that possibility presented itself."

Thumma said churches like Redeemer often intensify the faith of attendees—which can feel like a conversion. "They made a decision to get more serious about their faith—this new brand of Christianity," he said. "But almost no one going to megachurches is truly from the ranks of the unsaved."

Thumma, co-author of *The Other 80 Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators into Active Participants*, said that intensifying nominal Christians is a good thing for church plants and older churches alike. "There are an awful lot of people in churches who are marginal," he said.

Church planting isn't an either-or business, said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research in Nashville. "You have to have church people if you want to reach unchurched people," he said. "The issue is whether those Christians come as customers or co-laborers."

Trying to attract only unchurched people isn't a great long-term strategy, said Rodney Stark, co-director of the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University. "It's like trying to sell football tickets to people who don't like sports," Stark said.

Planting churches in response to changing demographics makes sense, said Stetzer. "There's an opportunity to reach non-Christians [and] empower Christians to help reach non-Christians," he said. "Migration always presents opportunity." ☩

RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

Hunger Strikes

Spike in food prices shifts attention to market access.

By Rob Moll

The skyrocketing international price of grains and other foods has Christian development groups redoubling efforts to connect farmers to local markets.

PASSAGES



Selected
Michael Lindsay

As president of Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. Lindsay, 39, is a noted sociologist at Rice University and author of *Faith in the Halls of Power*.



Resigned
Barry Minkow

'Fraudbuster' pastor of Community Bible Church in Mira Mesa, California, in March after agreeing to plead guilty to insider trading.



Died
B. N. Nathanson

Abortion doctor turned pro-life activist, in February at his home in New York City. He was 84.

The World Bank's index of food prices rose 17 percent from August to November of 2010. In Bangladesh, where 37 million people can't afford more than 1,800 calories per day, families spend nearly half of their income on food, according to a World Vision survey.

Just as rising prices led to the overthrow of Haiti's government in 2008, analysts link food prices to the recent political turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa.

The anger directed at politicians began in the stomach. While estimates vary, the number of hungry people around the world is nearing 1 billion.

"After decades of progress, high prices are increasing world hunger," says David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. Since 2008, the number of hungry has increased by 33 percent, or 250 million people.

No one fully understands why prices are rising, but Beckmann says most agree on four main contributors: developing countries eating more grain-fed meat; bad weather decreasing harvests; greater use of grain for ethanol; and investment banks trading in food futures contracts.

In March, Roger Thurow, author of *Enough: Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty*, was in Kenya, where farmers are entering the hungry season—when prices double as crops are planted but not yet harvested.

The problem is that farmers' grain storage is inadequate, or there is no transportation to local markets. "When you talk to African farmers," Thurow says, "they recognize that post-harvest issues are big." Farmers, he says, are asking, "How do I get the best price?" But you need developed markets and communication for price discovery."

Such development is in the works, says Suzy Cheston, World Vision's senior director for agriculture. Government campaigns are successfully identifying regions where crop yields can most easily increase. However,

[continued on 22]

Briefing [from 21]

"There's food and there's access," Cheston says. "How do we ensure people have access? It's having markets that work."

Growing more food doesn't reduce hunger on its own. For example, Ethiopia's booming harvests in 2005 collapsed prices, causing farmers to lose money and not plant the following year. Famine followed.

That's why in Bangladesh, World Vision is providing inputs, such as seed and fertilizer, to help more than 40,000 farmers grow food. But it's also linking farmers with training services in markets, microfinancing, and marketing techniques. "It's a paradigm shift," Cheston says, "that markets are part of the solution." ➤

ABORTION CANADA

Choice Targets Priest sues pro-life watchdog for defamation.

By Sarah Pulliam Bailey

A recent lawsuit filed by a Catholic priest in Quebec threatens to shut down a pro-life website, challenging the role of watchdog sites and how they

determine who is pro-life.

Raymond Gravel has filed a defamation lawsuit against LifeSiteNews, a website based in Canada that has labeled Gravel "pro-abortion" and "pro-homosexual." Gravel says he is against abortion and blames the site for his leaving parliament under pressure from the Vatican.

Gravel once voted against a bill that would have made an assault on a pregnant woman also an assault on the unborn child, saying he is against "recriminalizing" abortion. He also represented a party that is pro-choice and favors gay marriage.

American pro-life Democrats saw a similar situation when they were targeted by pro-life groups after voting for the 2010 health-care bill. The legislation became a litmus test for pro-life groups such as the National Right to Life Commission. (Pro-choice groups, such as NARAL Pro-Choice America, do not consider health-care reform to be an abortion-related issue for identifying pro-choice leaders.)

The pro-life movement has often tried to humanize the abortion debate by promoting ultrasounds or retelling the pregnancy stories of women, but singling out individuals

DISCUSSION STARTER Church-State

Prompted by the recent deaths of two children whose parents relied on prayer rather than medical intervention, the Oregon House unanimously approved a bill that removes legal protection from homicide charges for parents who choose faith healing rather than medical care for their sick children.

can create challenges. Watchdog sites can highlight internal divisions in the pro-life movement, says Michael New, political science professor at the University of Alabama.

"With any social movement, it helps to have an enemy. Individuals make decisions, and sometimes they suffer political consequences for doing so," New said. "Personalizing the debate can be effective." He noted that lawsuits against ideological websites are rare.

Activists with Lila Rose's Live Action have singled out Planned Parenthood employees in undercover videos that suggest they might be racist or cover up statutory rape. Josh Brahm, host of the Life Report podcast, says it's easier to focus on individuals than on the organization.

"Some [Planned Parenthood] employees might have negative attitudes related to race, but how can you prove that an entire organization is racist? It's easier to talk about [founder] Margaret Sanger," said Brahm. "It's certainly less controversial to go after a group than a person. It can come across as less harsh."

In this case, the future of the site could be at stake. The editor of LifeSiteNews says the \$500,000 lawsuit could shut the site down. ➤

UNDER DISCUSSION Topics in the current debate.

compiled by Ruth Moon

Should parents have a legal right to faith healing for kids?

YES

"Government safeguards children but there is reason to be wary of its intervention, given that it is increasingly less respectful of home-schooling, nurses who object to abortions, and adoption agencies that insist on mother-father families."

STANLEY

CARLSON-THIES,
president, Institutional
Religious Freedom Alliance

"These laws could be used as a club by anti-religious zealots and be open to misinterpretation; religious people pray for healing often. It is wiser to judge on a case-by-case basis versus a blanket law that could be over-interpreted to the detriment of religious freedom."

DAVID STEVENS, M.D.,
CEO, Christian Medical
and Dental Association

"In general, government should avoid imposing burdens on the free exercise of religion and accommodate faith-based objections to laws. But civil law protects the vulnerable and promotes the common good, so not all religiously motivated conduct can be tolerated or protected."

RICHARD W. GARNETT,
professor, Notre Dame Law
School

"It is sad to prosecute parents who have lost a child, but the threat may make them seek medical care in the first place. Some states require parents with a seriously ill child to notify authorities so they can intervene, which is less intrusive on parents' conscience."

THOMAS C. BERG,
professor, University of
St. Thomas School of
Law (Minn.)

"Everyone has the right to faith healing for themselves, as a matter of privacy as well as religious freedom. But in a case of serious illness, a child's right to life trumps a parent's right to religion. Faith healing should complement, not compete with, proper medical care."

JOHN WITTE JR.,
professor, Emory Law
School

"A faith exemption involves lawmakers in saying when a religion is okay and when it's not, and that's the kind of judgment we don't want legislators making. We should stick to classic, common-law definitions of homicide, including defenses, and leave it to juries to decide."

DAVID WAGNER,
professor, Regent University School of Law

NO



Growing Too Fast? Women in Andhra Pradesh, India, line up for new loans. Some take on too much debt, causing loan default rates to skyrocket.

MISSIONS

Staying on Mission

While scandals rock the microfinance industry, Christian nonprofits diversify their efforts to help the poor. By Rob Moll



icrofinance may be falling victim to its own success. Since starting in the 1970s, microfinance—the practice of providing financial services, particularly small loans, to the world's poorest—has grown rapidly worldwide.

Today, experts estimate there are 665 million client accounts at more than 3,000 financial institutions. About 188 million of these accounts are in India, while 27 million accounts are in Africa. Microfinance organizations are likewise diverse, from the multibillion-dollar Grameen Bank of Bangladesh to Christian groups such as Opportunity International, based near Chicago, and Kiva.org, which matches lenders and borrowers with loans that average \$382. Microlending, savings, and

insurance programs have been the darling of overseas poverty-fighting agencies.

Now scandals threaten to tarnish the reputation of these programs across the board. In Andhra Pradesh, a southeastern Indian coastal state, officials say 85 borrowers killed themselves because they could not repay high-interest loans. Some of these borrowers were pressured and harassed by collection agents.

In addition, some microfinance founders are suspected of exploiting the poor for quick profit. Last year, SKS Microfinance Ltd., also based in India, raised \$350 million by becoming a for-profit, publicly traded corporation. The move made a few SKS executives and early investors very wealthy, which critics say undermines the poverty-fighting purpose of such programs.

The microfinance industry has attracted larger institutions interested in a quick buck, says Susy Cheston, senior director at World Vision, which operates Vision Fund with more than 600,000 borrowers in 40 countries. Vision Fund mostly operates through non-governmental organizations, not deposit-taking micro-banks. Cheston says, "In India, [microfinance is] growing too much too fast, with new providers coming in who [are] interested only in profits."

Meanwhile, Nigerian officials say Africa's microfinance organizations face both high loan-default rates and corrupt officials who exploit lending for personal benefit.

The reputation of the industry has declined so badly that Muhammad Yunus, who received the Nobel Peace Prize for founding Grameen Bank, wrote recently

Bank on Wheels: For clients in remote areas of Rwanda, Urwego dispatches its mobile bank truck for deposits, withdrawals, and loan payments.



in *The New York Times*, “I never imagined that one day microcredit would give rise to its own breed of loan sharks.”

BEYOND BORROWING

While not directly tainted by these practices, Christian microfinance leaders say they are responding to the scandals by keeping the needs of clients topmost. This means doing more than lending money to the poor. It also means reaffirming the spiritual dimension as essential for addressing greed, corruption, and exploitation.

“When I came into the industry in 1992,” says Dennis Ripley, a senior vice president at Opportunity International, “the early institutions were about providing loans to build the businesses of the poor,” not making quick profits off the poor.

After graduating from seminary, Ripley believed his call was to help the church help the poor rather than serve as a full-time pastor. Eventually he joined Opportunity, which was among the first organizations to operate chartered banks to meet the needs of poor people, especially women in small business.

Opportunity made heavy investments in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union. It soon learned that many people valued a safe place to put their money more than a loan. “If you offer people a loan versus a savings account, 70 percent prefer a safe place to save their money,” Ripley says. Opportunity is now one of the oldest and largest industry players, with 1.4 million loans outstanding and more than half a

million savings accounts at the end of 2009.

The mission shift toward savings also has required lending organizations to become regulated banks. Banks that hold savings deposits cannot become dependent on wealthy donors to fund their day-to-day operations and still meet the legal requirements to protect the money of their depositors.

The drive to better serve the poor had unintended consequences. It became clear that lenders could earn significant profits by providing loans, savings accounts, and related services with almost no competition. Ripley recalls that when Opportunity started providing these services, multinational corporations approached its leaders to learn how to tap into the so-called “fortune at the bottom of the pyramid.”

THE TRANSFORMATION LENS

Today, microenterprise leaders are more likely to have an MBA than a divinity degree. Jeffrey Lee is an example.

Lee, chief executive of Urwego Opportunity Bank in Rwanda since early 2009, worked for 30 years in retail and commercial banking in the United States and South Korea. Nine years ago, Lee promised God that he would tithe one-tenth of his life to Christian work.

Lee contacted Sammy Mah, until recently head of World Relief, to express his willingness to serve with the evangelical agency. Mah told him about a joint venture that World Relief, Hope International, and Opportunity International were

starting in Kigali, Rwanda, named Urwego (meaning “a ladder up” in the local Kinyarwanda language).

Just when Lee was ready to relocate to Rwanda and take on leadership at Urwego, it looked as though he would not be needed; other leaders were already in place. But Opportunity arranged for Lee to visit the country for a few days. “I arrived, and the Lord prepared me. I saw the opportunity of serving the least of these brethren and using financial services,” Lee says. By the end of 2009, the bank had more than 30,000 clients with an average savings balance of \$60.

Around the time Lee stepped into leadership at Urwego, Opportunity was making public a detailed explanation of its ministry model. Called the Transformation Lens, the organization’s 2008 white paper describes seven aspects of transformation:

- **Dignity:** Recognizing a person’s respect and unique value.
- **Authority:** Empowering a person’s informed choice within the moral will of God.
- **Security:** Reducing fear, threats, or violence, while increasing economic and spiritual security.
- **Adequate provision:** Helping provide access to necessities of life for families.
- **Purpose, hope, and meaning:** Developing a person’s potential and his hopeful attitude.
- **Freedom and appropriate boundaries:** Enhancing human rights and God-given freedoms.
- **Authentic relationships and love:** Building stronger relationships within families, communities, and markets.

Urwego’s goal is for every program or product to fulfill at least three of the seven aspects of transformation. (Many programs address all seven, but three are necessary to move an idea forward.)

Last year, Lee and the Urwego staff dreamed of launching a new initiative: to supply \$1,800 loans for motorcycle taxis that a borrower could pay off in one year. The program debuted in March 2011, and the bank is gearing up to make up to 25 motorcycle loans per week.

Meanwhile, Lee has his eye on obtaining a \$200,000 grant from a United Nations agency to set up mobile phone banking for small-scale farmers in hard-to-reach areas.

HEART OF THE MISSION

Given the move toward banking, faith-based microfinance groups face a challenge: how to be a for-profit bank while keeping the heart of a Christian organization.

Some don't see the for-profit status as an issue. At Urwego, the bank's shareholders (Opportunity International, Hope International, World Relief, and World Relief-Canada) share basic goals. Peter Greer, chief executive of Hope International, says, "NGO or for-profit, I don't think that's the key issue. The bigger issue is not the format but the focus."

Mark Russell, author of *The Missional Entrepreneur* and editor of *Our Souls at Work*, also consults for microfinance organizations. "They have a high degree

relationships, not financial transactions or loan volume, that drive short-term profits. "When our leadership team meets, we begin with prayer and end in prayer," says Lee. "And all our client meetings begin and end in prayer."

BOTTOM-UP INNOVATION

Hope International likewise supports programs outside formal banking, including 65,000 informal church-based savings groups.

These groups help people save as little as 10 cents a week in a joint account, and provide a small financial cushion for their members. Collecting savings in a local bank account also allows the local economy to put money to use that would otherwise

and education. These improvements occur when World Vision's microfinance programs are linked to its health care, child protection, and agriculture projects.

Opportunity has focused on deeply impoverished rural areas that other microfinance organizations have avoided for being unprofitable. In February 2010, Opportunity received a \$16 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that will allow its banks in Africa to use technology such as cell phone banking to help farmers get the best price as they sell local fruits and vegetables and cash crops such as coffee beans.

Perhaps more importantly, the grant also paves the way to provide financing for farmers. Roughly 65 percent of the labor force in sub-Saharan Africa is engaged in agriculture, yet the continent is a net food importer. The first step in helping African farmers feed Africans is to give them the financial wherewithal to make better use of seed, fertilizer, water, and technology.

Providing credit to farmers is not enough. Africa is a graveyard for such programs. Farmers are a huge risk to banks, because if the rain does not fall, loans go unpaid. Crop insurance can reduce this risk. MicroEnsure, an Opportunity subsidiary, developed an insurance policy for the smallest farmers. Using satellite weather data, the policies automatically pay when the rain fails to reach a certain level.

Critics note that the changes in the industry have opened it up to abuse and ill-gotten profit. Yet those changes have also opened up the possibility of agriculture finance in Africa, which could contribute to ending the continent's famines. Given recent history, the changes will encourage both.

It isn't the potential for profit that caused the microfinance industry's problem, but rather profits wrongly pursued, ministry leaders told *Christianity Today*. Christian microfinance institutions have operated nonprofit lending organizations as well as full-scale, regulated banks—all while serving some of the poorest people on earth.

For Christian microfinance institutions, then, the goal is to stay on mission. ☩

'If we limit what we do to economic transformation, we are no different from secular organizations. So we are intentionally producing social and spiritual transformation.'

~ Jeffrey Lee, Urwego Bank, Rwanda

of intentionality," he says of microfinance groups that are faith-based. "They are able to have a tremendous effect in their clients' lives."

One of Urwego's key methods is to forge many ties between personal transformation and economic growth. Urwego creates such ties by supplementing its programs with financial education. A Crown Financial Ministries video on budgeting and related biblical principles is played in the banking halls.

Lee says, "If we limit what we do to economic transformation, we are no different from secular organizations. So we are intentionally producing social and spiritual transformation."

Changing lives works in all directions. "People think that transformation takes place only in the field," Lee says, but he wants bank employees also to be transformed. "Without being transformed," he asks, "how can you be transformative?"

The bank developed a corporate transformation plan, including staff devotions twice a week. It has set up an incentive system that focuses on building quality

have been stuffed into mattresses or hidden underground. Even small amounts of funds held jointly may be loaned out to local businesses.

"We're equipping people to save money," Greer says. "We're doing it through churches in creative ways, which is producing incredible results." Many of these savings groups touch on other core purposes, such as Bible study or HIV/AIDS care and prevention.

Researchers are conducting long-term studies on the benefits of microfinance programs. Their goal is to uncover how to improve the programs for maximum impact in reducing poverty. Currently most program benefits go directly to individuals. But the potential to reduce poverty at the community level grows as more people participate in the programs.

At the grassroots, World Vision provides complementary services that focus on children. The agency's For Every Child campaign hopes to raise \$100 million for 1.7 million loan clients. This would improve the lives of 5.7 million children by improving their nutrition, health care,

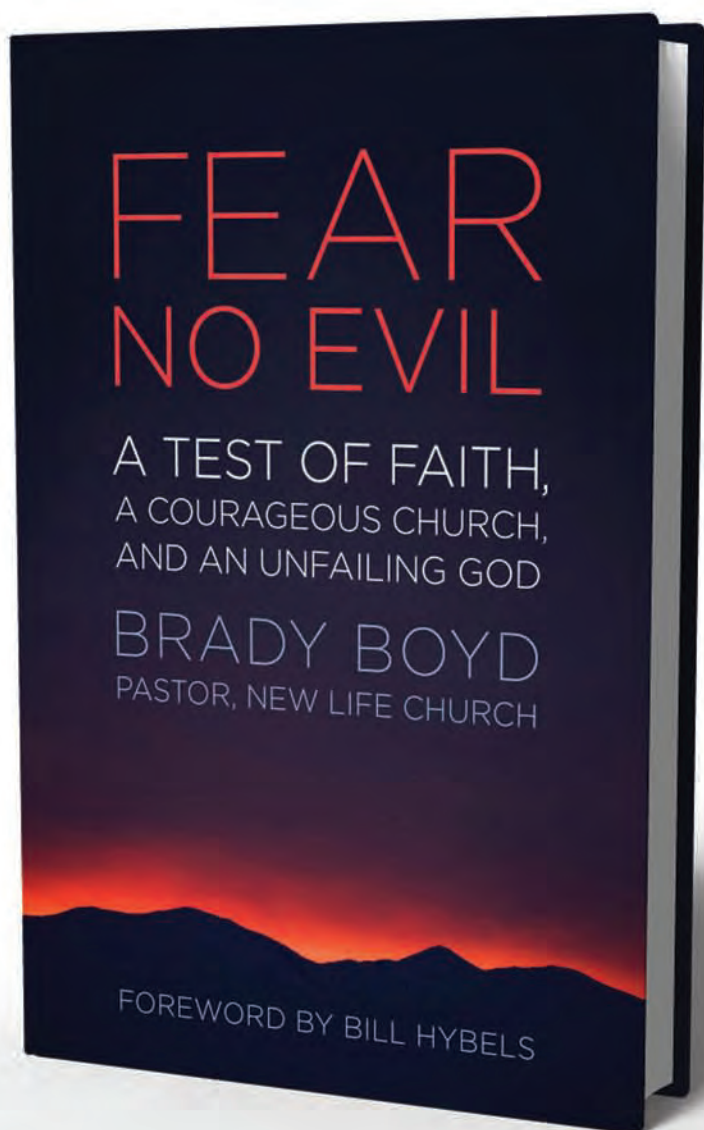
Rob Moll is a CT editor at large and author of *The Art of Dying: Living Fully into the Life to Come* (InterVarsity Press, 2010). He was formerly employed by Opportunity International.

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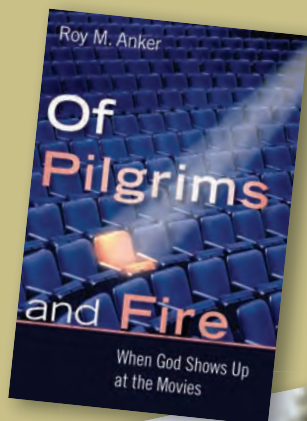
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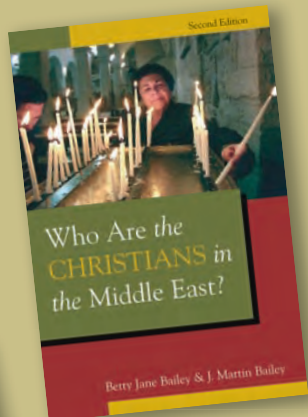
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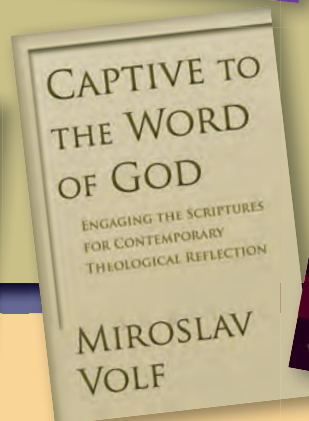
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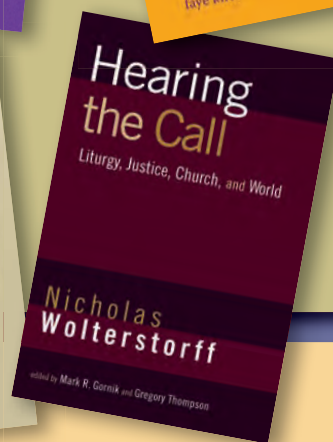
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YOU ARE IN CHURCH on Sunday morning, and it's time to say the Lord's Prayer. All goes smoothly through, "Give us this day our daily bread." But what comes next? The congregation hesitates. Should we ask forgiveness for "our debts" or for "our trespasses"? If you have ever been in this situation, you know something of what Protestant church life would be like in a world without the King James Version.

By contrast, we experience all the time what the world *with* the KJV has become, though we don't always realize it. The impact of the KJV on common English is tremendous, and it works on three levels. Many well-known words and phrases from the KJV

still sound "biblical": "Alpha and Omega," "Ancient of Days," "graven image," "not live by bread alone," and "seventy times seven," to name a few.

A second level of vocabulary contains expressions that came into common usage because of the KJV, but whose biblical origin is now obscured: "apple of his eye," "city set on a hill," "a house divided," "propitiation," "the quick and the dead," "reap the whirlwind," "scapegoat," and "two-edged sword."

A third level includes words and phrases that most of us would be surprised to learn were fixed in our language because of the KJV—words as common as *adoption*, *advertise*, *beautiful*, *feel*, *fishermen*, *glory*,



horror, housetop, mortgaged, mystery, nurse (as verb), scrape, and suburbs.

Almost all of these words and phrases were used in translations before the KJV. But because they appeared in that version, they were in the English language for keeps.

Hesitating during worship and perusing these vocabulary lists raise an intriguing question: What if there had never been a KJV? Or, consider a scenario that comes closer to reality: What

wording from the not-so-reliable Greek manuscripts the KJV's translators used.

Or consider Bible memorization, once a mainstay of Protestant devotional life and now enjoying a welcome comeback. From about 1650 to 1960, when Protestants memorized the Twenty-third Psalm, they would always recite the last verse this way: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." But if

the KJV had not become the favored translation, the memorized words would have depended on translation preference.

For at least 50 years after the KJV's completion in 1611, various editions of the Geneva Bible, published in 1560, were just as popular. Geneva's adherents liked the down-home flavor of the translation and its helpful marginal notes. They would have memorized, "Doubtless kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall

remain a long season in the house of the Lord." Protestants who wanted to connect with their Catholic neighbors would have memorized this, from the Douay-Rheims translation: "And thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life. And that I may dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days."

But Bible readers who wanted to use an officially authorized text—which the KJV never was—would have memorized the Bishops' Bible of 1568: "Truly felicity and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of God for a long time."

Of course, Protestants would have continued memorizing Scripture even with several popular translations in existence. But they would have done so privately, since public recitation with several translations could be haphazard—much like it is today. And we would have lost some small sense of connectedness in the church and the broader culture.

CONTENTIOUS BEGINNINGS

Issues of even greater importance arise when we speculate what would have happened if the KJV had not come to dominate the English-speaking world.

The base-line Christian conviction is that widespread knowledge of Scripture is very good because the Bible singularly communicates the message of God's salvation. All the better if widespread knowledge of Scripture enriches the languages into which it is translated. But in many ways, having several competing translations (as is the case in the English-speaking world today) didn't create problems.

In fact, this was the case for at least a half-century after the KJV. The Geneva Bible long continued to be used in Scotland. It and the Bishops' Bible supplied the abundant scriptural material found in Shakespeare's plays. John Milton used the Geneva Bible as a main source for *Paradise Lost*, as did John Bunyan for *Pilgrim's Progress*. In the New World, Pilgrim leader William Bradford quoted from the Geneva Bible in his *History of Plymouth Plantation*, and Roger Williams drew scriptural proofs from it for his famous tracts on religious liberty.

At least until the mid-17th century, other English speakers

Protestants would have continued memorizing Scripture even with several popular translations in existence. But they would have done so privately, as public recitation with several translations could be haphazard—much like it is today.

would it have been like if the KJV had always been only one among several competing English-language versions of the Bible? What difference would it have made for Christians from 1611 onward? For local churches? For the influence of Christianity throughout the English-speaking world?

For one, corporate worship would have been more awkward. The example from the Lord's Prayer shows what would have been even more confusing. The inclination to say, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," follows the KJV, which borrowed the wording from Miles Coverdale's 1535 translation, the first complete Bible printed in English. But if you instinctively say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who [or 'them that'] trespass against us," you are following William Tyndale's English translation from the 1520s. When Tyndale's rendering was modified by Thomas Cranmer for the 1549 Anglican Book of Common Prayer, "trespasses" came into common use as well.

The liturgical uncertainty from having more than one English translation is even more obvious in our ecumenical age. The Douay-Rheims New Testament, published for Catholics in 1582, completely left out what the KJV would render, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." Rheims omitted the phrase because it is not in the Latin Vulgate, the source for its translation. Yet this confusion points to an irony: Most scholars today

agree that in omitting these words, the Rheims translation came closer to the best-attested Greek manuscripts than did the English



The Monarch's Bible: King James I, who detested the Geneva Bible, commissioned the KJV in 1604.

Shakespeare, Aesop, or King James?

Which of the following phrases are from the King James Version?

1. "There is method to my madness."
2. "Love is strong as death."
3. "In the twinkling of an eye."
4. "A plague on both your houses."
5. "Gave up the ghost."
6. "We turn not older with years, but newer every day."
7. "The wisdom of Solomon."
8. "As pure as the driven snow."
9. "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt."
10. "O ye of little faith."
11. "A cloud of witnesses."
12. "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."
13. "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."
14. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
15. "When a thing is funny, search it carefully for a hidden truth."
16. "Seek, and ye shall find."
17. "Go, and do thou likewise."
18. "God helps those who help themselves."
19. "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another."
20. "Train up a fig tree in the way it should go, and when you are old sit under the shade of it."
21. "What goes around, comes around."
22. "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."
23. "It is easy to despise what you cannot get." (The origin of the idiom "sour grapes.")
24. "There is no new thing under the sun."
25. "Don't count your chickens before they hatch."



Answers

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. This phrase is actually inspired by the words of the character Polonius in Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i> : "Though this be madness, yet there is method in it." | 13. Martin Luther King Jr. |
| 2. Song of Solomon 8:6 | 14. Matthew 26:41 |
| 3. 1 Corinthians 15:52 | 15. George Bernard Shaw |
| 4. Shakespeare, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> | 16. Matthew 7:7 |
| 5. John 19:30 | 17. Luke 10:37 |
| 6. Emily Dickinson | 18. Benjamin Franklin, from <i>Poor Richard's Almanack</i> in 1757 |
| 7. Matthew 12:42 | 19. Charles Dickens |
| 8. Shakespeare again. His writings are probably second to the KJV in sources for popular English idioms, including "hobnob" and "wear my heart upon my sleeve." This one is a combination of two different quotations: "as white as driven snow," from <i>The Winter's Tale</i> , and "black Macbeth will seem as pure as snow," in <i>Macbeth</i> . | 20. Charles Dickens |
| 9. Abraham Lincoln | 21. Folk saying, source unknown |
| 10. Luke 12:28 | 22. Mohandas Gandhi |
| 11. Hebrews 12:1 | 23. Aesop's <i>Fables</i> , from the tale "The Fox and the Grapes." Fox cannot reach the grapes he desperately wants and says, "The grapes are sour anyway!" Hence, the moral of the story: "It is easy to despise what you cannot get." This is an example of how a phrase originated with the KJV (cf. Ezekiel 18:2), but the idiom got started later. |
| 12. Mark Twain | 24. Ecclesiastes 1:9 |
| | 25. Aesop's <i>Fables</i> |

continued to use the Bishops' Bible, the Douay-Rheims translation for Catholics, and several other versions.

Neither did having many translations adversely affect the character of Christianity in the first half of the 17th century. The English civil wars of the 1640s and '50s involved intense debate over doctrine and church practice, but they were not prompted by controversies over Bible translation. The New England colonies intentionally built a society around the Bible, but their efforts did not depend on using one translation.

Leading biblical scholars, including David Daniell and David Norton, have demonstrated that the KJV won out in Britain and America not because popular opinion demanded it but because of machinations within the English printing trade—and some high-level political maneuvering. Since Bible printing was a potentially lucrative business, conflict over who would become “the king's printer” and obtain the Bible-printing license was intense. Eventually the prize to publish the KJV included the right to monopolize the market for all Bibles, which meant excluding competing translations.

On the political side, the Geneva Bible's great offense was not its translation but its notes. The Bible, with its clear Roman type, handy division of the text into verses, numerous woodcuts, pithy and direct prose, forceful annotations, and relative cheapness, had been the first widely popular English translation. At least 140 different editions (not just reprintings) appeared between 1560 and 1644. More extreme Protestant groups found it inspiring. Their marginal communities particularly liked its annotations, which stressed spiritual struggle oriented toward the believer's rewards in heaven and urged true believers to obey God rather than earthly monarchs when the two loyalties conflicted.

Those annotations made the version anathema to King James. His desire to commission a new translation came directly from his sharp dislike of the Geneva Bible. James was infuriated, for

example, with the “argument” that the Geneva editors supplied for the Book of Exodus.

They called it a narrative in which “the King and the

country grudged and endeavored bothe by tyrannie and cruel slavery to suppress” God's people, against whom Moses and the Israelites resisted heroically. James's bishops objected just as much to Geneva notes that interpreted Scripture as attacking prelacy, church hierarchy, and the prerogatives of bishops. Norton has summarized the secret of the KJV's political triumph well: “The Church and the State were not so much for the [KJV], or even for a uniform Bible, as they were against the Geneva Bible.”

Norton has also shown that for more than a century after its publication, the KJV was unremittingly criticized. Some criticism concerned its theological implications. Tyndale, for example, had translated the Greek word *ecclesia* as “congregation.” Puritans and others who believed Anglican bishops regularly overstepped biblical bounds long continued to prefer Tyndale's rendering over the KJV's “church,” a more formal word implying firm organizational structures. Likewise, while the Geneva Bible did translate *episcopos* as “bishop,” it added a note to 1 Timothy 3:1 that Anglican bishops found offensive and reformers wanted to keep: “a bishoppe”—“note: whether he be Pastor or Elder.”

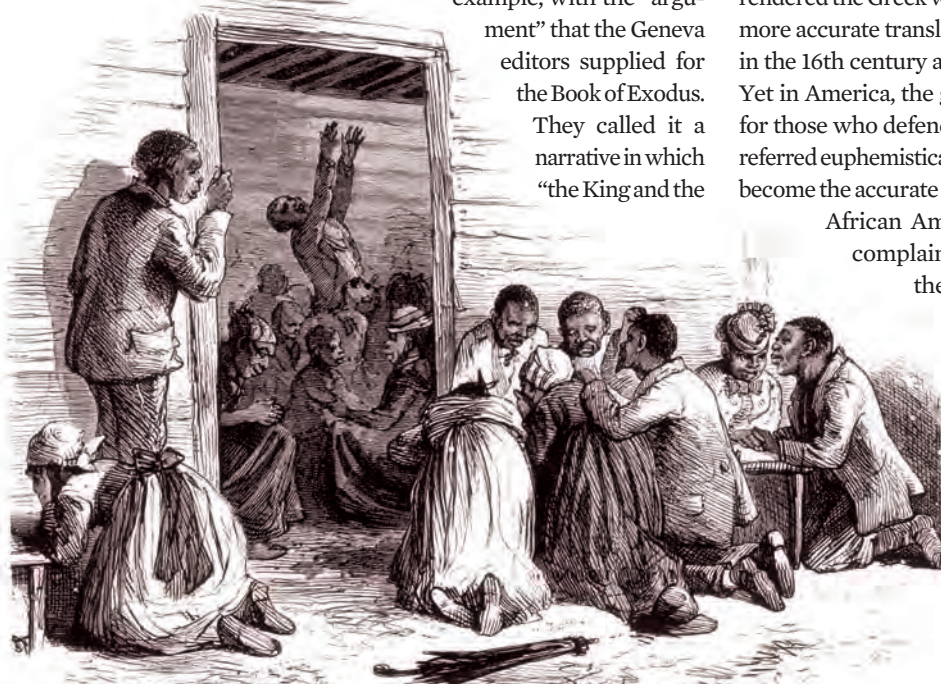
Surprisingly, in light of the now almost universal praise for the KJV's prose, the language was deemed too Latinate, too churchly, not churchly enough, too Hebraic, not Hebraic enough, and so on. Yet efforts to revise or replace the KJV never came to fruition—not because there were too few suggestions but rather too many. Not until 150 years after the KJV's arrival did English speakers begin the chorus of praise for its literary beauty. If continuous competition had existed with many versions available, it may have intensified Protestant theological controversies and encouraged more attempts at making new translations.

PROBLEMS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

American history might have skipped several dark chapters if the KJV had not become the dominant Protestant translation. Many of the worst chapters concern slavery. The KJV regularly rendered the Greek word *doulos* as “servant.” “Servant” and the more accurate translation, “slave,” were already differentiated in the 16th century and became even more so as time passed. Yet in America, the gentler word “servant” provided a cover for those who defended slavery as a biblical institution. They referred euphemistically to their “servants” long after “slave” had become the accurate word for a person held in chattel bondage.

African Americans and abolitionists had a bigger complaint against the KJV: Quoting verses from the KJV was often good for getting abolitionists labeled heretics. The KJV's unquestioned authority meant that those who could quote chapter and verse also gained great authority for their positions. Defenders of slavery were expert at quoting passages that showed Abraham holding slaves, Paul sending Onesimus back to his owner

Slaves and ‘Servants’: The KJV translated the Greek *doulos* as “servants”—a euphemism that American slaveowners used to defend the practice.



American history might have skipped several dark chapters if the KJV had not become the dominant Protestant translation. Many of the worst chapters concern slavery.

Philemon, and many more. These passages regularly trumped efforts to use biblical reasoning rather than straight biblical quotation: for example, that slavery in Bible times was usually of white people, or that broad scriptural principles (like the Golden Rule) spoke against the slave system in the U.S.

In 1899, Henry McNeal Turner, a bishop with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, called for a new translation. He charged that “the white man” had “colored the Bible in his translation to suit the white man, and made it, in many respects, objectionable to the Negro. And until a company of learned black men shall rise up and retranslate the Bible, it will not be wholly acceptable and in keeping with the higher conceptions of the black man. . . . We need a new translation of the Bible for colored churches.”

Women made similar complaints throughout the 19th century. What we would call feminist objections were of two kinds. Some objected to the whole character of biblical revelation, in whatever version. Many contributors to Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *The Woman’s Bible* of 1895 made such complaints. Others were more concerned with issues of translating the words for “man” and “mankind,” issues that still incite debate.

In 1837, abolitionist and suffragist Sarah Grimké had these issues in mind when she professed her entire willingness to live by the Bible, but also her ardent desire for a new translation:

Almost every thing that has been written on this subject, has been the result of a misconception of the simple truths revealed in the Scriptures, in consequence of the false translation of many passages of Holy Writ. . . . King James’s translators certainly were not inspired. I therefore claim the original as my standard, *believing that to have been inspired*. [emphasis in the original]

CLASSROOM CONFLICTS

The KJV’s popularity as *the* Protestant Bible in a nation where Protestants organized most public institutions created a broad set of problems. When tax-funded public education began in the U.S., educators properly sought ways to teach morality as part of the ordinary school experience. In the Protestant minds of these pioneering educators, the Bible was by far the best source for encouraging morality, so they mandated Bible readings as part of daily instruction. But because the KJV was so instinctively their preferred Bible, they simply equated Bible

reading with reading the KJV. Protest against use of the KJV in schools was therefore taken to be a protest against the Bible. When this confusion was joined with rising worries about the increasing waves of non-Protestant immigrants to the United States, violence ensued.

In the late spring and early summer of 1844, deadly riots left parts of Philadelphia in ruins, with several Catholic churches burned to the ground, more than a dozen people killed, scores wounded, and many millions of dollars in damage. The conflagration was sparked by a request from Philadelphia’s Catholic Bishop Francis Kenrick that Catholic schoolchildren be excused from reading the KJV and be allowed to use the Douay-Rheims instead. When nativist groups twisted his request into a charge that the pope wanted Scripture removed from Philadelphia schools, rioting broke out and lasted off and on for almost two months.

In 1859, a similar situation erupted in Boston. The Eliot School Rebellion started when 10-year-old student Thomas Whall refused to recite the Ten Commandments from the KJV at a Boston public school. An assistant to the principal bloodied Whall’s hands with a rattan stick. Whall’s priest and parents did not object to reciting the Ten Commandments as such, but they did object to the mandatory use of the KJV. Great bitterness resulted. School authorities accused Catholic parents of subverting morality, while Catholic parents blamed school authorities for tyrannizing students.

Jews also resented that their children were forced to hear readings from the KJV at tax-supported schools. Before the Civil War, Rabbi Isaac Wise of Cincinnati half-facetiously suggested that, if reading the Bible in school was judged necessary for the health of the republic, the most neutral solution was to read the original versions in Hebrew and Greek! A few years later, other Jewish and Catholic leaders joined Wise to support the Cincinnati school board’s decision to eliminate KJV Bible readings. His reasoning, however, went further than Catholic objections: “We are opposed to Bible reading in the schools. We want secular schools and nothing else. . . . [The state] cannot impose any religious instruction on the citizen.”

Now for the thought experiment. If Protestants had been using multiple translations of the Bible, would school leaders have defended the use of any one translation so aggressively? Might Catholic parents have agreed to a rotation of readings from different translations? And would Jewish leaders have spoken up so strongly for a secular education?

A WORD FOR THE PEOPLE

Especially knotty questions arise regarding the public quotation of Scripture and scriptural allusions that for centuries enjoyed great power in Britain and North America—and that continue with considerable force to this day despite dwindling public



Reform-Minded Woman: Christian abolitionist Sarah Grimké disliked the ‘superstitious reverence’ given the KJV, calling for a new translation in 1837.

Bible knowledge. The main question: Would the biblical material have been as widely recognized or worked as potently if Christian communities had used multiple translations instead of one?

For biblical allusions to work, an audience must have biblical knowledge in general, not the KJV in particular. For example, when Herman Melville opened *Moby Dick* with the sentence, “Call me Ishmael,” and when more recent authors chose titles like *Absalom, Absalom* (William Faulkner) or *Gilead* (Marilynne Robinson), they were relying on general biblical knowledge for which the KJV was not indispensable.

But when *Moby Dick*’s Father Mapple delivers his riveting sermon on Jonah and the great fish, his text comes directly from the KJV, his diction is Hebraic in imitation of the KJV, and his sermon is filled with allusions to other KJV texts. *The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway’s title from Ecclesiastes 1:5, took a nearly exact quotation from the KJV (modernizing “riseth” to “rises”) that would have lost much of its force had it come from the Geneva Bible (modernized: “The sun rises”) or from the Jewish Publication Society’s 1917 translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (modernized: “The sun arises”).

Scriptural quotations in recent political rhetoric have drawn from modern translations instead of the KJV. On January 12, 2011, President Obama effectively quoted the Scriptures twice in his memorial speech for the victims of the Tucson shooting. The quotation from Psalm 46:4–5 (“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God . . .”) came from the New International Version. The other, from Job 30:26b (“when I looked for light, then came darkness”), used words identical in the NIV and the New Revised Standard Version. Similarly, when President George W. Bush addressed the nation immediately after the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster on February 1, 2003, he made good use of Isaiah 40:26 (“Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens . . .”),

which he quoted in words from the NIV that again differ considerably from the KJV.

Yet before roughly 1970, the emotive power of public quotation from the Bible depended much more explicitly on the KJV. On August 26, 1963, in one of the most famous public moments in American history, Martin Luther King Jr. liberally wove Scripture into his “I Have a Dream” speech. His quotation from Amos 5:24 (“justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream”) was from the Revised Standard Version, only slightly different from the KJV. His words from Isaiah 40:4–5 (“Every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low . . .”) came

directly from the KJV, with a slight rearrangement of phrases.

Exact quotation from the KJV was at the center of the greatest public address in American history. In his Second Inaugural Address of March 4, 1865, Abraham Lincoln quoted or paraphrased the Scriptures four times. The most important of these quotations concluded his meditation on the sovereign rule of God over the desperate strife that had enveloped his country. For that purpose he used the exact words of the KJV’s Psalm 19:9b:



Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with this lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said “the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

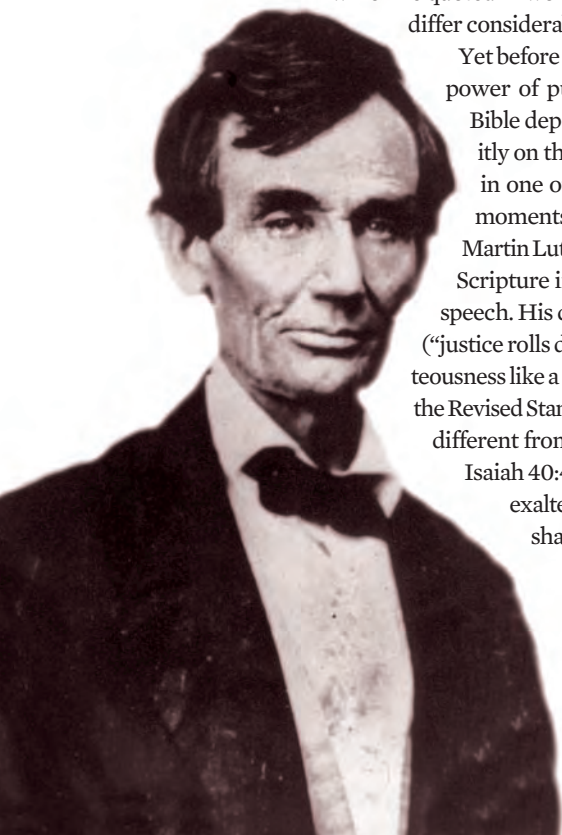
Lincoln’s text in the Geneva Bible is close to the words in the KJV: “the judgments of the Lord are truth; they are righteous altogether” (modernized). But if listeners had needed to pause to think about *which translation* Lincoln’s words were coming from, it would have weakened the effect.

MIXED BLESSINGS

On other uses of Scripture, assessment is complicated. A strong case can be made that the predominance of the KJV made this one translation singularly powerful for those in dire times who desperately needed to hear from the Lord. Despite the use of the KJV to support slavery, the translation was often—and remains—the favored Bible version for many African American communities. The reason is because it was often indispensable, as it was for Julia A. J. Foote, an evangelist in the latter half of the 19th century, who was converted while reading the KJV and found strength in it throughout her life. Her autobiography recounts a sad day on which her husband left for a long sea-voyage: “While under this apparent cloud, I took the Bible to my closet, asking Divine aid. As I opened the book, my eyes fell on these words: ‘For thy Maker is thine husband.’ I then read the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah over and over again. It seemed to me that I had never seen it before. I went forth glorifying God.”

Albert Raboteau recounts a similar story from about the same time that concerns a freed slave in Beaufort, North Carolina. The still-illiterate woman “carried a big Bible about with her through the woods and swamps”; her former mistress had helped her by turning “down the leaves at the verses she knew by heart, and often she would sit down in the woods and open the big Bible at these verses, and repeat them aloud, and find strength and consolation.”

Just as obviously, the widespread Bible knowledge that the KJV’s predominance stimulated could work to undermine Christian norms. William Jennings Bryan, for example, came to the



‘This Mighty Scourge of War’: Lincoln quoted from the KJV liberally in arguably the greatest speech in U.S. history.

I thank God that I was raised on the KJV. Part of my gratitude is aesthetic. In my ears, none of the modern translations sound nearly so good as, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.'

attention of the American public after his memorable speech at the Democratic National Convention in 1896. The speech ended with this famous declaration: "Having behind us the producing masses of this nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, the laboring interests, and the toilers everywhere, we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."

In the same way, Theodore Roosevelt electrified his supporters in 1912 at the founding convention of the Progressive Party with a rousing peroration almost as well-known as Bryan's: "Our cause is based on the eternal principles of righteousness; and even though we who now lead may for the time fail, in the end the cause itself shall triumph. . . . To you men who . . . gird yourselves for the great new fight in the never-ending warfare for the good of humankind, I say in closing . . . : We stand at Armageddon, and we battle for the Lord."

Clearly the fact that one translation enjoyed near universal currency strengthened the effectiveness of these speeches. But just as clearly, Bryan and Roosevelt were trespassing on holy scriptural ground. In a strict sense of the term, they prostituted powerful images that gained their power from the Scriptures that were given to all people of all political persuasions at all times and in all places.

What would have been the difference for allusions to Scripture if there had never been a dominant KJV? What did it mean for an entire people to mostly encounter the Scriptures in only one translation for such a long period of time?

**KJV in the USA:
President Obama
was sworn into office
using Lincoln's KJV.**

How best to summarize the unfathomable imponderable of "what might have been"? In the history that really did take

remember the darker side.

When the KJV became the cultural and literary standard for the entire English-speaking world, it was easier to focus on the literary excellence of the translation without stopping to face the divine imperatives and promises that are any Bible's primary reason for existence. The pervasive cultural presence of this Bible also made it easy to exploit scriptural words, phrases, images, and allusions for their evocative power, even when those uses contradicted the Bible's basic spiritual meaning.

Yet even soberly considered, the immense good accomplished in and through the KJV is a marvel. When the KJV became the cultural and literary standard for the entire English-speaking world, the spiritual impact of the Bible was certainly enhanced because the scriptural message was carried far and wide via an all-pervasive cultural standard. The substance of divine revelation that lay immediately beneath the words of the KJV could also exert a dramatic public impact for good, precisely because this translation so dominated the English-speaking world.

For myself, I thank God that I was raised on the KJV. Part of my gratitude is aesthetic. In my ears, none of the modern translations sound nearly so good as, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"; "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven"; "There was a man sent from God whose name was John"; or even, "and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." The economy, balance, and force of such language deserve great respect, whatever the message.

But, of course, the message is the most important thing. No one who grew up with the KJV can separate the aesthetic from the *kerygmatic* (Greek for "aiming to preach the gospel"). Yet Christian believers who had that privilege should always be grateful for how the translation communicated the message

so powerfully: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21); "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

These are translated words. But for centuries and for millions, they have also been the words of life. 

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Orthodox
**Metropolitan
Hilarion** offers
evangelicals
more than an
olive branch.

From Russia, with Love

Interview by
Timothy C. Morgan



HILARION ALFEYEV, the Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, located 80 miles northwest of Moscow, has a very big job. As head of external relations for the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, Hilarion is responsible for talking to global Christianity on behalf of the 150 million people in Russian Orthodoxy worldwide.

Given his gift for languages, Hilarion arose as an easy pick for the job by Russian Patriarch Kirill. This year, the Russian-American Institute, a faith-based educational and support organization (formerly the Russian-American Christian University), helped Hilarion interact with a cross-section of evangelicals around the United States for the first time. *Christianity Today* deputy managing editor Timothy C. Morgan interviewed Hilarion while he was in Washington, D.C.

What's the purpose of your trip?

To establish contacts and to find common positions. Often we are in circles in our own ecclesiastical environment and don't communicate with those who might be our allies.

With regard to evangelical leaders, until recently we didn't have any systematic collaboration or dialogue or conversation. Many evangelicals share conservative positions with us on such issues as abortion, the family, and marriage.

Do you want vigorous grassroots engagement between Orthodox and evangelicals?

Yes, on problems, for example, like the destruction of the family. Many marriages are split. Many families have either one child or no child.

There are many incomplete families, not to speak of various homosexual unions, which are equated with the family. This completely changes the whole picture of human relationships. It directly affects the future of many nations. The sign of a spiritually healthy nation is that it expands—it grows. If it shrinks, it is a very clear sign of unhealthiness.

There is a perception that religious freedom is declining in Russia. Is the perception true?

It's a completely wrong perception. We have to ask what we mean by religious freedom. If it's a freedom for the sects, including dangerous sects, to buy time on television and to propagate their ideas, then I think we no longer have the freedom that existed in the beginning of the 1990s. But I think freedom was sometimes not used in a proper way. For example, I remember how every morning Shoka Asahara would preach on Russian television. He was later condemned to death in Japan for organizing a terrorist attack in the Tokyo underground.

With regards to traditional churches and religions: They have complete freedom of action. There is the law on the freedom of conscience, which makes

Multilingual Metropolitan:
Hilarion Alfeyev uses his
conversance in seven foreign
languages to keep Russian
Orthodoxy connected to
Christians worldwide.

‘Secularism is dangerous because it destroys human life. It destroys essential notions related to human life, such as the family.’

~ Metropolitan Hilarion

a subtle distinction between traditional churches and religions that never existed in Russia. Religious communities are given a 15-year probationary period precisely for the reasons I described. They can act freely during this period. They can organize services. They can publish literature. They can do missionary activities. But they are not registered with the juridical status. After 15 years, they can be registered.

Is it the government’s role to regulate minority groups like Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Church of Scientology? Or should the Russian Orthodox Church have influence there?

We should have some influence in this process, and we have a mechanism of dialogue within our government. For example, there is the interreligious advisory council to the Russian president. This includes representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, Protestants, Islamic leaders, Jews, Buddhists, and others, who gather on a regular basis. One of their tasks is to monitor the development of religious freedom. They can give advice, if asked, to the president or to the government about how to deal with various sectarian movements and so-called new religious movements. Of course, they have only advisory status.

What about the activity of Christian groups coming into Russia, setting up shop, and trying to reach people who have not heard the gospel?

In many cases, the activity of foreign missionaries in Russia might be profitable to people, because there are many social problems. But whoever comes with missionary purposes to our country must first learn our history, our tradition, and see how to correlate with the existing Christian churches. We distinguish between mission and proselytism. Mission, for example, is when you go to a foreign country where Christianity was not preached and you preach Christ. But when you come to a country where there is an established church that has existed for centuries, then you have to respect it. Ideally you have to come into contact with her and work together with her.

Such work brings very positive fruits.

Generally after the election of Patriarch Kirill, the ecumenical climate and inter-Orthodox climate changed drastically. He made a direct appeal to the Patriarch of Constantinople to come to work together on various issues that are still dividing us, to come to a new type of relationship built on mutual trust rather than competition. And I think so far it’s worked well.

How do you describe the model for church-state relations in Russia, and how could it be improved?

I don’t represent the Russian Federation. I represent the Russian Orthodox Church, which includes other countries—Ukraine, Moldova, Belorussia, Kazakhstan. And in each of these states, the model of coexistence between the church and the state differs.

Our relations with the Russian political authorities are now based on two principles.

One principle is the separation of the church from the state, a mutual noninterference in internal affairs. This means that the government doesn’t interfere with our life. And, we do not interfere with political processes. For example, we do not and cannot support one particular party against another party; we cannot say that this party is ours and this party is not ours, because we have to be inclusive. We are prepared to include members of all political orientations, except for extremists. And this is why, for example, some members of the Communist Party are Orthodox believers. This was not possible 20 or 30 years ago.

The other basic principle is collaboration. We build our relationship with the state to collaborate in those areas that are related to people’s lives, and where such collaboration is necessary and welcome. For example, on all the issues I mentioned—family, demographics, education—we have a constant dialogue with the government in order to assist each other and people in their daily lives.

For example, the demographic crises cannot be addressed only from an economic or social point of view. They have to be addressed also from the spiritual point of view; we cannot change the declining demographic unless we

address it from different angles, unless the whole society and all healthy forces of the society are involved. And this includes the government. If we succeed in creating an alliance between at least four pillars of society—politics, education, the church, and mass media—then we can change this tendency.

Do you believe the government is staying within the boundaries?

Yes. We don’t feel any pressure coming from the political authorities.

How do you view Russia’s Soviet period? Some say church leaders made the wrong choices in that difficult time.

Well, when I became a priest, the Soviet Union was still in existence. I didn’t live in the time of the severe persecutions, when the church was being exterminated, when priests and bishops were killed or imprisoned or sent into exile, when churches were ruined, monasteries closed. But I started my ministry in the time when the church was still under very strict control by the state, and I remember how difficult it was for Christians to be Christians on a daily basis. Many were hidden Christians.

What insight do you draw from that period?

Some people say that the church made wrong choices. I don’t think this was the case, because the church had to exist under the conditions that were set without consulting her.

This was the same situation that existed in the first centuries of Christianity. For example, we read how the early fathers tried to prove that they were loyal citizens of the Roman Empire in spite of its pagan character. Addressing the pagans, they said, “We do not bow to the emperor’s statues, because this is not allowed by our tradition, but we pay honor to him in all other respects, and we are loyal citizens of the state.” This is what the Russian Orthodox Church from the time of Patriarch Tikhon on tried to tell the Soviet authorities, that a person can be a believer and at the same time be a loyal citizen of the state. Of course, the situation of total control of church life by the Communist regime was a very unhealthy situation. But this was the only situation in which the church could live.

Sometimes official representatives of the church had to pay the price in order for the church to exist. For example, in the 1960s and '70s, the church was heavily involved in ecumenical activities, in what were called peacemaking activities. Representatives of the church went abroad. They engaged in various meetings, for example, dedicated to disarmament. If asked whether there were persecutions of the church in Russia, they strongly denied it. But in exchange, the church had the possibility to exist. Theological seminaries functioned. Monasteries functioned.



A choice between two evils—is that how you would describe it?

It was a choice between two evils.

What role can the Russian Orthodox Church play in world evangelization?

Christ created his church not just for private use but also for missionary purposes, and the church has a missionary imperative that must be embodied in the concrete forms of preaching and evangelizing.

Some say you can be a practicing Christian in your home and your family, but you should in no way exhibit your Christian commitments in your public life, especially if you are a politician. I believe that a Christian should be a Christian everywhere. And if he is a Christian and a politician at the same time, then his political agenda should be motivated by Christian values.

In our country, some people say the church exists in order to provide certain services to people when they need them: to baptize children, to marry couples, to organize funerals, and to do services in the church.

I believe that the role of the church is much more inclusive. For example, very often nowadays our church will publicly express positions on what's happening in the country.

Some people ask, "Why does the church interfere? It's not their business." We believe that the church can express its opinion on all aspects of human life. We do not impose our opinions on the people, but we should be free to express them. And people will have to choose whether to follow or not to follow,

whether to listen to what we say or to ignore it.

Church leaders worldwide are challenged by secularism and Islam. Which do you see as a greater threat to global Christianity?

Secularism.

If we speak about Islam (and of course if we mean moderate Islam), then I believe there is the possibility of peaceful coexistence between Islam and Christianity. This is what we have had in Russia for centuries, because Russian Islam has a very long tradition. But we never had religious wars. Nowadays we have a good system of collaboration between Christian denominations and Islam.

The picture is different in many other countries, and recently, even the European Parliament publicly recognized that Christians are persecuted and discriminated against in many countries, including in Islamic countries. This is a problem we have to address. Yet I believe that on many essential points, especially in many aspects of moral teaching, Christianity and Islam are allies, and we can cooperate in those fields.

Secularism is dangerous because it destroys human life. It destroys essential notions related to human life, such as the family. One can argue about the role of the church. One can even argue about the existence of God; we cannot prove that God exists to those who don't want to believe that God exists. But when the difference in the world outlook touches very basic notions such as family, it no longer has to do with theological

Restoration: Since 1990, more than 15,000 Russian Orthodox churches have been restored or built.

truths; it has to do with anthropological issues. And our debate with secularism is not about theology; it's about anthropology.

It's about the present and the future of the human race. And here we disagree with atheist secularism in some areas very strongly, and we believe that it destroys something very essential about human life.

What is the way forward to address secularism?

We should be engaged in a very honest and direct conversation with representatives of secular ideology. And of course when I speak of secular ideology, I mean here primarily atheist ideology.

Of course, one has to distinguish between those representatives of secularism who are atheists and those who are believers, because some of them are believers. And here there is another problem: the influence of secularism on contemporary Christianity, the problem of liberalization of theological and moral standards within many Protestant communities.

But if we speak about atheist secularism, we must have a dialogue with these people, and we must say to them that of course you have the right to believe in what you believe, but we also have the right to believe in what we believe. And we have the right to teach people and to openly proclaim our system of values. There should be no ideological monopoly of secularism in contemporary society. This is one of the themes, maybe the main theme, of our dialogue with the European political structures. ☩



{ DISCIPLESHIP }

Joining

I

F THE BAPTISTS who raised me in rural North Carolina taught me anything, they taught me to love Jesus and the Bible. Hard-working farmers and factory employees, my people had high hopes for me. They stressed education and sent me with care packages to go out and see the world. But however far I might go, they made sure I knew that Jesus and the Bible were at the center of everything. Jesus was our Lord and Savior, the ultimate answer to life's biggest questions and my heart's deepest longings. In Sunday school, I learned that you find Jesus through the Bible. The Good Book was our constant companion. We memorized it chapter and verse.

As others showed me more than 2,000 verses about the poor, my people's passion for Scripture moved me to connect discipleship with justice. Jesus had clearly invited his followers into a new relationship with God: "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). What's more, Jesus made clear that this new relationship entails personal transformation: "No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again" (John 3:3). These realizations interrupted my assumptions about how I relate to other people. The more I paid attention to the Bible, the more it seemed my relationship with Jesus was inseparable from my relationship to those rejected and overlooked by society. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat," Jesus said. "I was a stranger and you invited me in . . . [W]hatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matt. 25:35, 40).

So I followed Jesus to Rutba House,

How liturgical prayer is saving our community from burnout.

By Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

This leads us to pray, because we need help. We've tried to fix our friends, just as we've tried to fix ourselves, but we've seen enough to know this is a dead-end street. Jesus saves, but he doesn't wave a magic wand and make everything all right. Before long, we realized our prayer resources were inadequate. We needed deeper wells to drink from. We found them in the ancient Christian practice of liturgical prayer.

TURNING TO LITURGY

A couple years after starting the Rutba House community, I received a letter from a Benedictine community in Minnesota. They were encouraged to hear about Christians like us living together and working for peace and justice. But they knew from over 1,500 years of experience that living in community can be difficult. They invited me up to their place, offering to pay my way. Someone had been listening to our prayers.

A brother at the monastery handed me a copy of *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, which has given order to many monastic communities since the sixth century. Not six sentences into the first page, I recognized the voice of a fellow Bible lover: "Let us arise then, at last, for the Scriptures stir us up . . ." What followed



the Eternal Song

a new monastic community in Durham, North Carolina. Communities like ours take root in cities, open our homes to the homeless, visit prisons, garden abandoned lots, and cook big pots of soup to share with neighbors—because we want to welcome Jesus. The Bible I was taught to treasure prepared me to find Jesus in a place like this. But when Jesus comes knocking around here, he brings friends crushed by poverty, racism, drugs, abuse, prostitution, and exploitation. We welcome them in, figuring God has brought us together, but we are never quite sure how to make it work.

was a call to community that echoed at every turn the words I'd hidden in my heart. Here at the monastery, too, the Bible pointed to Jesus.

And to prayer. The Benedictines also had a set of common practices—a tradition of spiritual disciplines—that shaped and disciplined their love of God and Scripture. A bell rang from the church at the center of the monastery, and I followed men in black robes to midday prayer. "O God, come to my assistance," a solemn voice intoned. "O Lord, make haste to help me." I was caught up in the liturgy, its rhythms soothing my weary and anxious soul.

RIGHT • COURTESY OF COMMONPRAYER.NET

LEFT • MEL CURTIS / GETTY

As an evangelical, I grew up knowing that the turning point in life is a conversion experience—a radical encounter with the living Christ that turns us away from sin and selfishness, toward the life we were made for. When I got to know the Benedictines, I learned they too were adamant about conversion. According to the *Rule*, when a brother or sister joins the community, they promise three things: stability, obedience, and *conversatio morum*—the monastic rhythm of prayer and work that is, itself, a way of conversion. Benedictines believed in a conversion experience that happened not once but upon every return to their common prayer. Reminded of Christ's sustaining power, they drew from liturgical prayer the strength to endure. This, I began to see, was the sort of everyday conversion our community needed.

FINDING A NEW 'WE'

The Benedictines weren't the only group to share their liturgical traditions. A Franciscan we met on a peace delegation to the Arizona desert opened his breviary and taught us prayers. A few Episcopalians

once in a while, you realize, *that could be me*.

Early on in our communal life, we read about Antony of Egypt, who left relative privilege to brave the desert and do battle with the Devil. Praying among the "wild beasts" of the abandoned spaces, Antony learned the limits of his own strength and the incredible power of Jesus' name. Praying as part of a "we" that included Antony, we saw our economically depressed neighborhood as an "abandoned place" in our society. Though the demons of addiction and systemic injustice looked fierce, Antony's life emboldened us to pray and live with the confidence that Jesus would prevail. Sustained by the new we, that great cloud of witnesses, we persevered in our work.

ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD

Neighborhoods like ours—where blatant injustice reigns—anger you to the point of saying, "No more. This has to stop." Some activists march and hold sit-ins, go to city hall and to jail, because of abstract ideals. But most people alongside whom I've been handcuffed are driven by injustices they have witnessed firsthand. I'll never forget the night when, trying to stop an execution, I went to jail beside a man exonerated by DNA evidence after 15 years on death row. All he said was, "I hate being locked up. But I can't stand here and watch them kill a man like me."

Among the songs today's activists inherit from the civil rights movement is a spiritual that says, "We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes." This especially resonates when people you know are suffering. Though you might like a vacation, just the thought of escaping while your friends have nowhere to lay their heads, no food to eat, leaves a bitter taste.

This is why so many activists, Christian and secular, experience burnout. There's always more to do and plenty of reasons to do it. So we press on, reach down deep, and try to give a little more. Good people have died doing this. I've seen it with my own eyes.

But we do not have to despair. One of the most important lessons I've learned from liturgical prayer is that, by God's grace, we have all the time in the world to do the work of Christ's kingdom. We pause for prayer morning, noon, and evening as a confession that our work depends not on our efforts, but on the faithfulness of a God who has already redeemed the whole creation. We pray with Archbishop Oscar Romero, martyr of El Salvador, "Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us. . . . We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own."

Like the past, whose wisdom guides us, the future, too, is a gift. We do not achieve it through our efforts but receive it gratefully, as we learn to sing the eternal song resounding around the throne of God. "Holy, holy, holy!" we cry, with angels and archangels and all the saints who have gone before us. "Heaven and earth are full of your glory." Then we resume our work until it is time, soon enough, to gather and sing again. This is the sort of life you can go on living forever. ☩

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove is co-compiler of *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* (Zondervan). His work was featured prominently in *Christianity Today's* 2005 coverage of the new monasticism movement.

We pause for prayer morning, noon, and evening as a confession that our work depends not on our efforts, but on the faithfulness of a God who has already redeemed the whole creation.

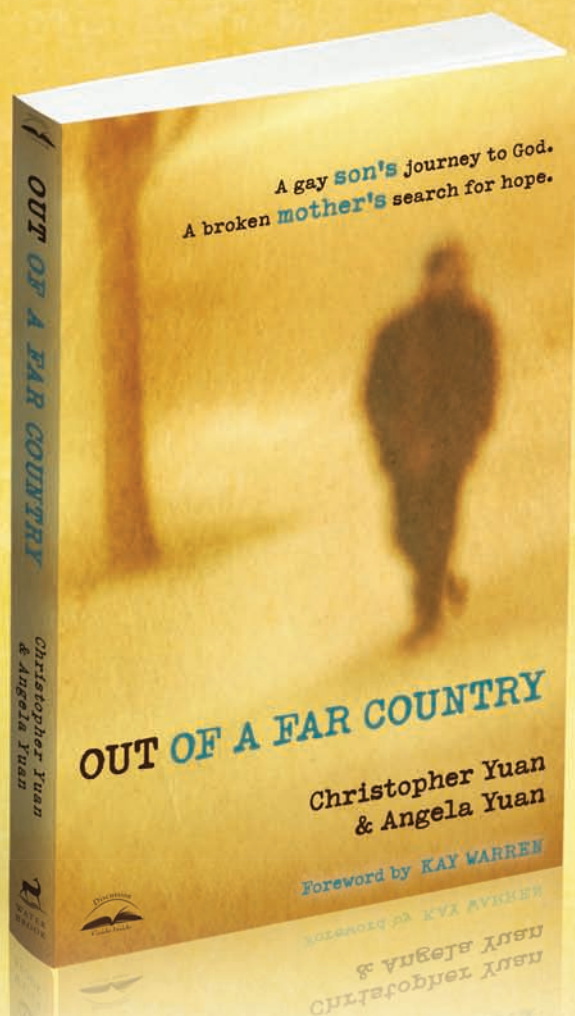
joined the community, bringing the Book of Common Prayer (which, incidentally, borrowed heavily from the Benedictines). Contemporary movements like the Northumbria Community in England and the Community of Sant'Egidio in Italy shared their liturgies. We started piecing together a daily rhythm of prayer, gathering before work in the mornings and before going to bed at night. It was a great gift to have better words than we could individually think up at the end of a long day. A mentor said to us, "Even if everything else falls apart, you know you get to come home and pray together."

At the heart of every liturgy, we found a familiar prayer: the Our Father. We learned that it had been the core of fixed-hour prayer since the earliest document of Christian teaching, the *Didache*, which instructed believers to say the Lord's Prayer three times a day. It echoes throughout the creeds that helped us affirm our faith, the Psalms that taught us to wrestle honestly with God, and the ancient prayers we prayed with the dead, who are alive with us in Christ. This new "we," stretching across history, also stretches across time zones, like a relay team passing a prayer baton around the globe each day, manifesting the church's unity. Liturgical prayer teaches us to remember sisters and brothers half a world (or half a millennium) away.

This family of faith remembers its "saints" on the day of their death, celebrating the manifold ways they took up their cross. Their heroic examples help new monastic communities like ours perform what some call "incarnational evangelism." Recall that God put on human skin to reclaim creation as his own. Jesus moved into the neighborhood, as Eugene Peterson says, much like Rutba House moved into Durham. But the particularities of time and place shape every life with God, and our neighborhoods don't look much like the Galilee of first-century Palestine. Evoking the saints in our daily prayers taught us how God has claimed human lives throughout history. After 2,000 years, we have many inspiring examples. Every

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A FAMILY'S TRIUMPH



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—Dr. Philip G. Ryken,
president of Wheaton College in Illinois

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*But while he was still a long way off
his father saw him and felt compassion
and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*

LUKE 15:20



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From Fear to Faith: Pastor John Monger's fear of death led him to Christ at age 17 in war-torn Bhutan. Today he fearlessly ministers to refugees in Texas.

ON A HOT SUMMER SUNDAY morning, 30 people gather in a small apartment in Austin, Texas. Primarily refugees from Bhutan and Nepal, they range in age from 3 to 106. Some arrived in the U.S. 10 days ago. All leave their shoes in a pile by the door. They begin by singing an enthusiastic chorus of *Kati Mahan*—"How Great Thou Art," in Nepalese—from a handwritten folder of songs.

Their host, Bhim Monger, delivers a sermon, alternating between English and Nepalese. Monger, who has gone by "John" since becoming a Christian 18 years ago, tells his living room congregation that they are now free from oppression, free to live openly in Christ.

Monger and his congregation represent a global movement initiated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to resettle more than 100,000 Bhutanese expatriates who have lived in camps in Nepal since the 1990s. Some 60,000 of them will end up in the U.S. over a five-year period ending in 2012. The U.S. Office of Immigration Statistics records the arrival of 13,452 Bhutanese refugees in 2009, a 153 percent increase from 5,320 in 2008. Nearly 200 of them have landed in Austin and the surrounding Travis County; Monger

says about nine Bhutanese families live in his apartment complex.

Mountainous Bhutan, a small country located between China and India, maintains a strict "one nation and one people" policy regarding ethnicity and the official Buddhist religion. According to the U.S. State Department, no refugees have been permitted to return to Bhutan, despite at least 15 negotiation attempts between Nepal and Bhutan. Refugees who have re-entered Bhutan to demonstrate for the right to return have been arrested, reports UNHCR. Bhutan's government, a democratic monarchy, calls the exodus voluntary and maintains that the refugees are non-nationals with no guaranteed right to return.

Leaders in the refugee community—including Monger—are critical players in resettlement success, according to World Relief, a Christian agency that specializes in helping refugees. Its Fort Worth office has seen some ethnic churches begin as refugee gatherings. When established local churches partner with these groups, immediate needs are met and the refugee community builds self-sufficiency. "As refugees exit [resettlement] programs, a community of support has already been developed for long-term adaptation," says World Relief Field Director Dale Williams.

POWER INSIDE THE JUNGLE

"Jesus was a very strange name for me in 1992," Monger says. Then 17 and living in Bhutan, Monger noticed a younger boy who always smiled—unusual during a year when citizens' violent demands for democracy were met with violence by the monarchy. "I was always expecting that one day I would die, because the army may come,"

{ PROFILE }

Migrating Ministry

One refugee pastor is key to the resettlement of Bhutanese in Texas.

By Alicia Cohn

Monger says. The boy, a Christian, gave him a booklet called “The Wonderful Love of Jesus Christ” and invited Monger to a church in the jungle. “There was no church building,” says Monger, “but there was power inside that jungle.” That’s where Monger came to Christ.

His conversion helped with his fear of death and made him a fearless if brash spokesman for his new faith, but also separated him from his Buddhist family. At a Christmas celebration, the Bhutanese police arrested Monger and other believers, giving them a choice between renouncing Christ or death. Monger fled to Nepal, where he began evangelizing in refugee camps, for which he says he was arrested. He then spent 15 months in a Nepalese prison, where he says he was often beaten for expressing his faith.

In 1996, religious freedom ministry Voice of the Martyrs and others intervened by drawing attention to Monger and other Christians trapped in Nepalese prisons, resulting in his release. Monger moved to Nagaland—India’s only predominantly Christian state—and attended Kohima Bible College, where he met Tia, whom he married in 2004. They returned to Nepal and, in 2005, founded Restoration Ministries, which focused on Bible training, discipleship, and church planting.

Four years later, at midnight on September 9, 2009, Monger, Tia, and their son stepped off a plane in Austin. They had no food or furniture in their new apartment. But it was a new beginning.

A GROWING CHURCH

Monger greets new refugees in their own language and finds a way to make them comfortable, sharing his testimony along the way. Nate

Kreutter of the Multicultural Refugee Coalition (MRC), an Austin-based nonprofit, says Monger is “probably serving a couple hundred refugees” in his community. Sunday services have long since outgrown Monger’s apartment; his congregation, now with some 80 members, currently uses the facilities at Austin’s Cornerstone Church.

One member, Manisha Rai, arrived in Austin with her family of eight in early 2010. At one Sunday service, she wore a *Hannah Montana* T-shirt that seemed better suited to someone half her age, but her greetings were warm and unselfconscious. She was in constant motion during the service to provide water, distribute songbooks, organize children, or help someone locate a passage in a borrowed Bible.

“I am so excited to help Pastor John,” says Rai, who has known Monger since 2003. “Even though I was a Christian, I did not know the Word of God. He taught me how God works in the lives of human beings.”

After church, Rai and Monger often drive others to buy food and household items, but money is tight. “[Refugees] get 5–6 months of [government] funding and if they don’t find a job, things start getting really dicey,” says Kreutter. Monger drives and speaks English, but many refugees struggle with both the language barrier and transportation.

Additionally, many stores do not accept refugees’ food stamps. And negotiating health care is difficult; government agencies apply for refugees’ initial Medicare coverage, which usually runs out after about eight months. (For Tia’s recent pregnancy, the Mongers turned



Multifaith Evangelism:
Monger reaches out to
Hindus and Muslims
who now live in Texas.

to MRC to find a doctor.)

Churches in the Austin area, including the nondenominational Gateway Church where Kreutter is a team leader, have contributed Nepalese-language Bibles, clothes, gift cards, and furniture to Monger's congregation. After hearing Monger's testimony, individuals have provided used computers (valuable for contacting family back home) and a used van.

Students from the University of Texas at Austin transport refugees from across town to Monger's apartment on Sunday and practice English with some of the refugees. Monger is helping two students with an interest in Bhutan to plan a missions trip.

"He blesses and ministers to us a lot more than we do to him," says senior Lauren Manson. "The refugees don't have the mindset that they are victims or the needy ones."

Still, their needs are plenty. The Texas heat is an adjustment for many Bhutanese, yet some don't use their air conditioning because they can't afford it. John works part-time as an interpreter, and Tia works at a local hospital, which requires her to miss Sunday mornings. But the Mongers are known for their generosity—he gives away many of his belongings—and for cultivating a spirit of giving. He prepares a meal mixing Bhutanese and Indian cuisine for everyone at Sunday worship.

REACHING THE NATIONS

Refugees can apply for a green card after living in the U.S. for one year, and for citizenship after five. Monger says that once he becomes a

Monger greets new refugees in their own language and finds a way to make them comfortable, sharing his testimony along the way.

citizen, he hopes to "travel to the nations," including Bhutan, where he wants to convince his father to become a Christian.

Monger's ministry is already reaching the nations by reaching the various ethnic groups in his apartment complex. Despite past persecution from Hindus, the Mongers reach out to local Hindus, as well as to Muslims and people of other faiths. Occasionally, someone—typically a

Hindu—will tell him to stop preaching, claiming it's against the law to proselytize. Area Hindus have gone so far as to try to keep new Christians from leaving their apartments to be baptized.

Chris Merrell, pastor of global outreach at Austin's Hill Country Bible Church Northwest, describes Monger's evangelism style as bold and blunt: "In his own culture, he knows how to speak to them and what their needs are on a totally different level than what any of us could. His lead-in is generally something like, 'Your name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. You're not alive.' He'll just start a conversation with that, and it's pretty fascinating to watch."

Refugees keep arriving, and many of them soon make their way into Monger's circle and his Sunday morning services, where the pastor says there's no particular structure except for one thing: He always ends with a call to the Father's house, a welcome invitation for any refugee.

Alicia Cohn is a freelance writer and a former intern at *Christianity Today* magazine.

MAX LUCADO

TAKES ON

THE BIG QUESTIONS OF LIFE.

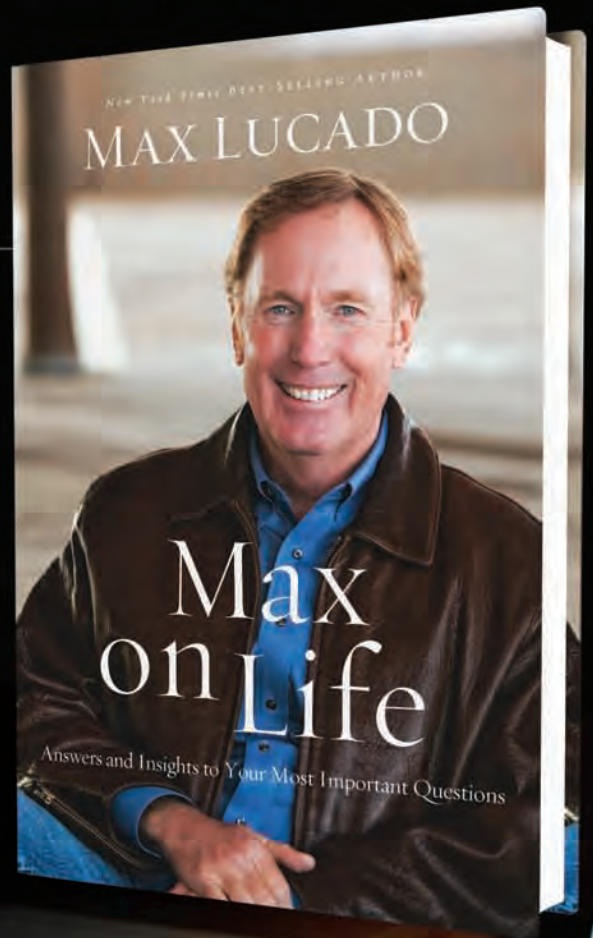
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- ✦ *Why do I worry so much?*
- ✦ *How do I know what God's will for me really is?*

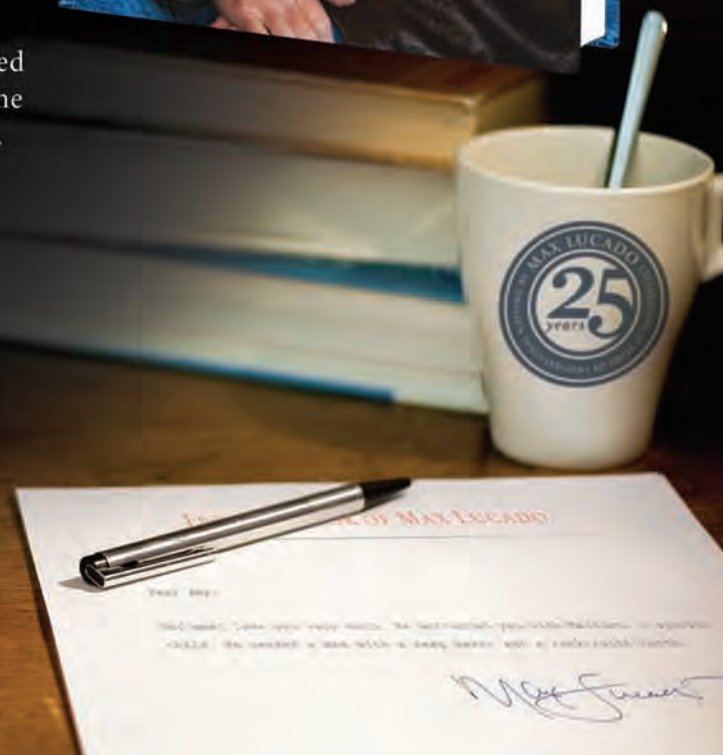
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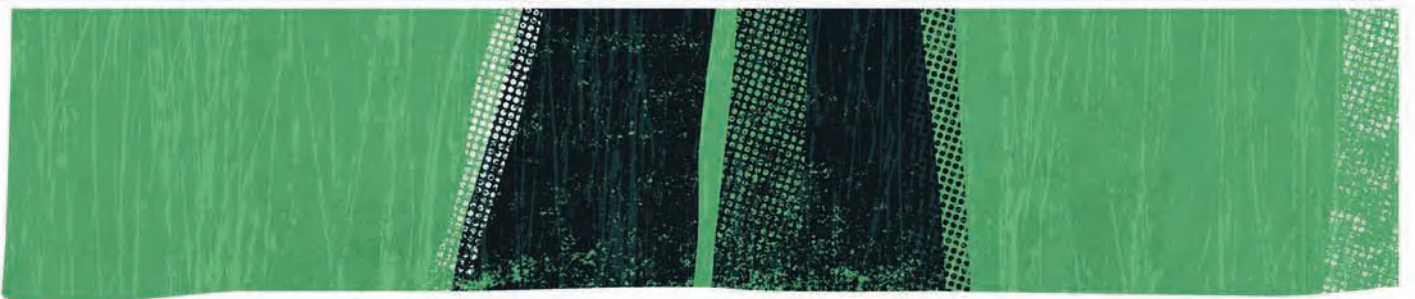
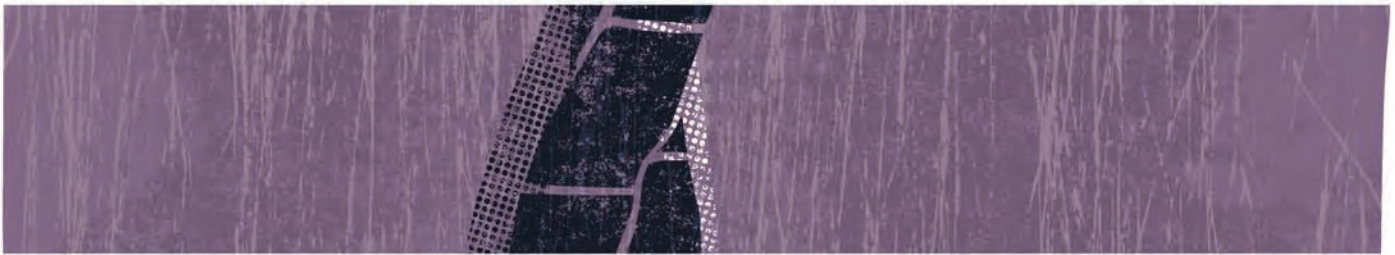
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The Seven Levels of Lying

We lie more than we think.
And that's part of the problem. By Sarah Sumner

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VERY PERSON ON THE PLANET at times is an Oscar-winning liar. Haven't we all lied without being caught? As the Bible says, "There is no one righteous, not even one . . . Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit" (Rom. 3:10–13). My husband and I, aware of this reality, have made a pact. If either of us lies to the other, we are committed to confessing the lie within three days.

Perhaps my most common lie is to tell myself I can do things in less time than I actually can. And lying to myself in this way sets me up to lie to others. How many times have I told my husband that I would arrive at a certain time and place when in my heart I wasn't genuinely committed to following through on my word? I told him that I'd be there, but I wasn't. My husband has learned not to trust me, because my actions don't always line up with my words.

To justify myself, I'd like to view my tardiness as a minor character flaw. In other words, I'd like to be untruthful about the selfishness that characterizes my way of managing time. Early in our marriage, I argued vehemently that lateness and lying are unrelated matters. I didn't want to see the truth because the truth indicted me.

It's not fun to be reminded of the humbling fact that everyone needs to be prompted, indeed, regularly goaded, to be truthful in our speech and in our hearts. All of us are susceptible. We all know what it's like to take refuge in the escape route of lying. When it goes unchecked, we hardly even notice how far we have drifted. We've probably all seen a leader who intimidates and blames instead of owning the mistake that everybody knows the leader made.

Lying is more perilous than it seems. It's more Satan-like than Christ-like. Jesus referred to Satan as "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). By contrast, Jesus declared himself to be the Truth (John 14:6).

AREN'T THERE EXCEPTIONS?

The prophet Jeremiah said, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick" (17:9, NASB). What's so indicative of our human fallenness is the universal tendency to minimize the treachery of lying. We want certain forms of lying to be okay. We are quick to remember Rahab and Corrie ten Boom, citing them as saintly liars. Or maybe we say that refusing to lie is somehow itself unloving. More than one person in reading a draft of this article expressed a concern that if we all told the truth all the time, we'd be rude. The 1997 Jim Carrey comedy *Liar Liar* comes to mind. Carrey's character gives a comical rendition of what happens when people are so honest that they don't edit what they say about others.

There's a big difference between blurting out rude thoughts and being truthful, just as there is between gentle tact and gentle lying. I wonder if we're defensive about everyday "white lies" because

I wonder if we're defensive about everyday 'white lies' because we are too lazy to find creative ways to speak the truth in love.

we are too lazy to find creative ways to speak the truth in love. My sense is that most of us are defensive about our lying because we are defensive about ourselves. We are slow to face the truth of the contrast between our character and God's.

According to the Scriptures, God himself "does not lie" (Titus 1:2). In his holiness, he is incapable of lying. As the apostle John put it, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Lying can't be other than sinful because God can't do it. If lying were ever righteous, then there would be something righteous that God can't do. It is clearly not God's plan for people to harbor darkness or deception in their hearts. Even though God might use us when we lie, it doesn't mean we are not sinning when we do.

Rahab was commended not for her lying but for her faith (Heb. 11:31). Her good deed was that of welcoming the spies in peace. By faith she risked her life, trusting that the spies would later save her and her family, even though she was a harlot. Rahab feared the Lord. She trusted the living God more than she feared Jericho's king. But she did not trust God to the point of watching how he would save her if she replied to the king in truth.

Something similar can be said of Corrie ten Boom, who saved a number of lives by hiding Jewish people from the Gestapo. Indeed, she was remarkably heroic. But when she lied, she wasn't imitating God. Ten Boom's situation—like many other situations—was so tangled up in sin that it seems like her best option was to lie. What ten Boom's case shows is not that lying is honoring to God, but rather that human circumstances can degenerate into something so depraved that lies get mixed in with acts of faith.

To some, the stark conclusion that all forms of lying violate God's holiness will sound unreasonable or extreme—too black and white—and dismissive of the intellectual difficulty of the matter. I see the main problem as spiritual. I think we find it hard to confess the evil of lying because we fail to embrace the full goodness of the Truth.

Part of the debate extends to whether we can even know the truth. Yes, God alone knows with 100 percent accuracy exactly what the full truth is. But given that we're created in God's image, we are endowed with the ability to know. Even as fallen human beings, we can know what truth is. There is wisdom in the adage, "Everybody knows what truth is because everybody knows how to lie."

"People know what they're willing to know," says Dallas Willard, echoing the prophet Hosea.

It is no coincidence that being truthful about sin was socially prohibited in Hosea's day, right when the culture of God's people was deteriorating. Likewise, in our decaying civilization, the word *sin* has become taboo, even among some Christians—even among Christians who loudly cry out, "Injustice!" In our day, ironically, we speak of the great need for social

justice, but we say little about repenting of the sins that make the world unjust. We aren't talking much about the lies that imperil people's safety.

It is painful to be truthful, because there is much to grieve in this shattered, beautiful world. In order to be truthful, we must be willing to grieve—that is, to face hard truths that are disappointing and upsetting. It's tempting to pretend that things are better than they are, as if the world were not in dire need of Christ's salvation. It's also tempting to despair and fall for the opposite lie, that things are just so bad they are hopeless.

Whatever tempts us most—whether it is a white lie of social convention, a lie embedded in a broken promise, a workplace lie of self-preservation, a lie mixed in with an act of faith, the lie that the world is fine without Jesus Christ, or the lie that Christ's salvation isn't enough—the temptation to lie is very real. And lies, as we shall see, tend to proliferate.

THE SEVEN LEVELS OF LYING

J. Budziszewski, author of *What We Can't Not Know*, mentions "the seven degrees of descent." I call them the seven levels of lying:

1. You lie.

A single lie can become a match that lights a bonfire. Unless we confess the truth about our lie, we are probably on our way to Level #2.

2. You self-protect.

That is, you lie about having lied. If you lie about one thing, it is likely you will lie about another. As Budziszewski puts it, "Lies are weaklings; they need bodyguards."

3. You develop a habit of lying.

A liar at this level might, just out of habit, lie about something trivial for no benefit.

4. You self-deceive.

You now believe the lies that you are telling others. We can lie so effectively that we even lie to ourselves. We self-deceive.

Take note: Just because we are deceived—honestly and truly—by the wiles of our own crookedness does not mean we are innocent or exempt from the need to repent. On the cross, Jesus said, “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Jesus’ prayer suggests that sins committed unknowingly are still sins in need of forgiveness. Lying is sinful even when we do so subconsciously. It’s important to understand that self-deception is self-imposed. To be deceived by someone else or shielded from the full truth is not the same as self-deception. Self-deception is a vice.

Pontius Pilate self-deceived by telling himself that truth is inaccessible. When face to face with Jesus, Pilate guardedly asked, “What is truth?” Pilate had a motive for not wanting to know the truth. Pilate wasn’t willing to be seen in the light of the truth of his own cowardice. Pilate’s very question was pitted against the truth of his own poor character in contrast to the innocence of Jesus.

At Level #4, a person enters into denial. He stops looking at his internal moral compass and therefore ceases to feel guilty anymore.

5. You rationalize.

Now you not only believe the lies are not lies, you justify the lies as a positive good. Now the lying is not just part of normal life, but a virtue—it helps the company grow, it saves jobs, and so forth. This is the type of thinking that contributed to the scandals at Enron and WorldCom, and to the 2007 subprime housing debacle.

Level #5 lying is especially tempting at the leadership level. One of my mentors warned me to be careful in taking on the deanship at A. W. Tozer Theological Seminary. He said, “The higher up you go in an organization, the harder it is to tell the truth.” A lot of times the lie is justified for the sake of the institution or some other larger good.

Level #5 lies happen in the personal realm too: “You don’t understand,” says the adulteress. “My husband and I never had a real marriage. We have had 30 years of cohabitation and child-rearing, but nothing like what I have with my new lover. He and I are experiencing love for the very first time. This is not adultery. It is love.”

6. You develop your technique.

The main technique is to compartmentalize. You start isolating statements, ignoring what was said in other contexts. Level #6 liars are often found in the upper echelons of bureaucracy. A Level #6 liar might smoothly move from one constituent to another, saying each of these things, swearing in each instance that he is telling the truth:

“This institution is going to stay true to our stated core values.”

“Please don’t pay attention to our stated core values; those were written by a committee who no longer works here.”

“Core values reside in people. It really doesn’t matter what is stated on paper.”

“Don’t let those stated values stop you from giving; it’s long been public knowledge that I myself disagree with three or four of them.”

“I can assure you that our stated core values serve as our guiding compass.”

7. You see it as your duty to lie.

Level #7 lying flips duty on its head, making lying mandatory. For example, in a dysfunctional family that operates at Level #7, grown siblings might kowtow to a parent for the sake of keeping dark family secrets hidden. In organizational life, Level #7 executives repeat corporate lies and say to their lieutenants, “Beware of self-anointed whistleblowers; they are critical and self-righteous.”

Level #7 liars stone the prophets (John 16:2).

Because people are created in the image of God, we can’t simply lie without trying to seem truthful in some way. That explains why Level #5 liars take pains to rationalize their thinking and Level #7 liars assume the pseudo-upright posture of being dutiful.

TRUTH AND THE ANTICHRIST

God’s disdain for lying isn’t whimsical (Prov. 12:22). Lying is sinful not merely because the Bible says it is wrong. The Bible says lying is wrong because untruth violates Truth. Since Jesus is the Truth, it is antichrist to lie. If everybody lied all the time, there would be only chaos. No community.

God’s way is for people to dwell together with each other in community and also in communion with God. When we lie, we breach our connection to other people and violate our relationship with God. God wants us to be truthful as a way of cultivating our closeness not only with him but also with other people we can enjoy.

Pastor Bill Hybels once said something to the effect that pastors who journal don’t fall. That statement makes sense to me, because journaling is a means of telling oneself the truth. As long as we don’t lie to ourselves, we can manage to stay out of Level #4. But in order to stay out of Level #3 and Level #2, we need people to confess to when we lie at Level #1—which is what my husband, Jim, and I try to do.

And of course, we can daily seek truth by echoing the prayer of King David: “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23–24).

Sarah Sumner is dean of A. W. Tozer Theological Seminary in Redding, California, and author of *Leadership above the Line* (Tyndale).

The Foot-Washers of Ethiopia

A mysterious disease, misdiagnosed for decades, finds healing in Christian hands. By Tim Stafford in Dembi Dollo, Ethiopia

PHYSICIAN LARRY THOMAS remembers a luncheon two years ago in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where many folks interested in a dreadful, newly discovered disease called podokoniosis—“podo” for short—met for the first time.

“As we were about to eat, I asked, on an impulse, if anyone would mind if we thanked God for the food. The response was startling,” says Thomas, also the founder of Tropical Health Alliance Foundation. “Not only did everyone want to pray, they began to share about their faith. We soon realized that we were all fully vested Christians.”

Not everybody interested in podo is a Christian. But a thread of Christian faith and mission runs through everything that’s being done to fight the disease. A remarkable diversity of believers are involved in the fight—the man who first discovered the disease, the octogenarian doctor who developed treatment for it, and the leaders of today’s scientific research. Add the activism of Catholic sisters and a highly successful young entrepreneur with a line of hip shoes, and the unfamiliar disease is at last gaining the world’s attention.

Podo is grotesque. In severe cases, the victim’s feet appear to be turning into cauliflower—horrible, rotting cauliflower—or something that grows under a rock in 20 feet of water. These are nightmare feet, seeming to bubble and melt, producing unbearable odors.

An estimated one million Ethiopians suffer from podo, as do perhaps three million more, mostly Africans. In affected areas—typically mountains with red volcanic soil—1 out of every 20 people have it. A village of 2,000 will have 100 victims, permanently disabled. In certain areas of Ethiopia, the podo infection rate surpasses that of HIV/AIDS.

Though prevalent and severe, the disease was not identified until 35 years ago. Doctors had been diagnosing the symptoms as infectious elephantiasis until a Christian doctor named Ewart Price realized that the diagnosis didn’t fit.

Using geological maps, Price connected the symptoms to Ethiopia’s volcanic soil. Then, examining tissue samples, he found tiny silica crystals embedded in victims’ lymphatic tissue. He guessed that the silica found its way through the skin of feet and ended up scarring or blocking lymphatic channels, causing swelling and deformity. (Filarial worms create this problem in infectious elephantiasis.) Price’s deductions still remain the best explanation for the cause

of the non-communicable disease. Exposure to soil is surely crucial, but other factors, such as genetic predisposition, likely play a part.

For a long time, Price’s discoveries prompted little reaction. The first organized responses to podo began 14 years ago, and then in only a few remote parts of Ethiopia. The disease made the World Health Organization’s list of neglected tropical diseases in February.

Why so long? By and large, those who cannot afford shoes are most susceptible. Podo is almost unknown in urban areas and rarely if ever infects soldiers or tourists. Gail Davey, the leading researcher on podo, puts it succinctly: “It is clearly a disease of the most voiceless.” Because of the stigma, many victims hide. So the disease remained invisible until some people determined to see it. This is their story.

BLEACH, WASH, DRY, REPEAT

In 1997, at age 84, physician Nathan Barlow returned to Ethiopia. Two decades earlier, he had fled the country upon the government’s decision to nationalize all hospitals. For those 20 years, Barlow worked in the Central African Republic and Congo. As early as the 1950s, he had encountered Ethiopians with podo, but there was no effective medical treatment for it.

Upon returning to Ethiopia, Barlow sought effective treatments, and more victims came out of hiding for help. Barlow founded the Mossy Foot Project, which is headquartered in Soddo, in southern Ethiopia.

The project operates 15 weekly clinics using space provided by government health centers. Ethiopians recovering from podo provide much of the patient care. They teach others how to avoid the disease and how to treat it, and make house calls when patients go missing. Mossy Foot begins each clinic with Bible reading and prayer.

In 2001, Davey and her husband left England to teach at Addis Ababa University. In their first year, the British embassy asked her to evaluate a funding proposal from Mossy Foot Project. Davey visited the project in Soddo and “was immediately struck by the patient-led nature of the work.” She also realized she had found a researcher’s dream. Here was a disease severely affecting millions about which almost nothing was known. Reports of it sprang up from many regions, but nobody





Healing Touch: Larry Thomas holds up the healthy foot of a podo patient. It may take a month of treatment for diseased feet to heal.



had mapped it scientifically. How exactly the disease worked was mysterious as well.

However, it was

clear that research could direct immediate, effective action, in both treatment and prevention. "It's terrific that there really is something to do," Davey says. "I like to see that there is a clear end result."

Davey realized her students in public health could help conduct research as part of their coursework. Using the excellent records kept by Mossy Foot at Soddo medical clinics, students working under Davey began to chip away at the research problems. The team received research grants from Britain's Wellcome Trust.

Davey became an advocate for patients. "I haven't been able to leave it at research," she says. "Morally, you can't sit back and fiddle with a test tube.

"We were led by God to Ethiopia," Davey says. "We didn't know our roles there when we arrived. I strongly believe God led me into

the work of podo. Christians are somehow drawn to this work, serving the poorest people and the most voiceless."

Meanwhile, the Daughters of Charity Catholic order had established medical clinics in remote areas. Cora Bruin, a Dutch medical anthropologist, visited one clinic while on vacation, and was fascinated that conditions such as goiters were common.

Later, Bruin turned her attention to elephantiasis. Using medicine to treat filarial worms accomplished nothing. Bruin dug deep into medical literature and discovered Price's work. That led her and the sisters to the Mossy Foot Project. Now, using techniques borrowed from Mossy Foot, the Daughters of Charity are beginning the slow process of stopping the spread of podo and, through education, training, and Christian discipleship, enabling people who are healed to return to normal life.

Thomas recalls visiting the sisters in Dembi Dollo, in western Ethiopia. "I went around with them as they washed the feet of those with podo. I knew I couldn't do it with the joy that they do."

One of their patients is Dembi Fedasan. Twenty years ago, when

she was 15, her feet began to itch and swell and ballooned to an enormous size. Soon she couldn't go to school because of how painful it was to walk.

She knew what she had. Many people in her community had it too.

As Fedasan's feet became infected, a horrible stench followed her. She stopped going to the market and socializing. Nobody would marry her or her siblings. The stigma from her disease had infected her whole family tree. In a society that depends on every available hand to work the fields, Fedasan could contribute almost nothing to community life. She stayed at home, isolated and ashamed.

Three years ago, Fedasan learned that treatment was available at Dembi Dollo. She lives 120 miles from the nearest clinic, too far for her family to afford bus fare, so she moved into town and works as a maid. Already the simple treatments—foot baths, bleach sterilization, lotions, pressure bandages—have made a difference. Fedasan dreams of someday keeping animals and hoeing crops.

10,000 SHOES A MONTH

Missionary doctor Barlow died in 2004 at age 91, but Mossy Foot



A Hidden Horror: Podo is 1 of 16 neglected tropical diseases, which in total afflict 1 billion people.

continues under Ethiopian leadership with support from Barlow's daughter Sharon and her husband, Jim Daly.

Besides its focus on care and prevention, Mossy Foot gives away shoes specially made in its workshop. (Many people with podo cannot wear standard shoes.) It distributes supplies like soap and bleach, shoes for children of podo victims, and also offers job training and microenterprise loans for patients to support themselves.

The next chapter of the story introduces Blake Mycoskie, a young entrepreneur from Texas who started a number of successful small companies and, with his sister, competed on the reality television show *The Amazing Race*.

In 2006, Mycoskie vacationed in Argentina. While admiring a local style of footwear he thought could be adapted to American tastes, he noticed poor children running around barefoot. As a Christian businessman, his compassion

kicked in, and a business model emerged.

TOMS Shoes was launched with the promise that for every pair of shoes sold, another pair will be given to an impoverished child. The idea was an immediate hit.

Nowhere is the model more appealing than in Ethiopia, where

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a pair of shoes can change a life. After visiting Dembi Dollo, Mycoskie called Thomas. "I thought, *if we all worked collaboratively, we could make a big difference*," says Thomas. "There's so much yet to be done. How many times in this era do you have a chance to be a pioneer?"

TOMS targets its shoe distribution to the children of podo patients, who are five times more likely than the general population to get podo. Through Mossy Foot alone, TOMS distributes 10,000 pairs of shoes a month.

Some podo activists express some nervousness about TOMS. They give TOMS high marks for its willingness to flex and learn, but can't forget that TOMS is a for-profit company. TOMS brings resources that outstrip what small foundations, churches, and individual contributors can do. Some, like Thomas, are nervous that the charitable impulse might give way to the profit motive down the road.

A HEART FOR ETHIOPIANS

A disease like podo has minimal impact on the world's economy. It does not make a single Westerner vulnerable to infection. It remains invisible until someone is outraged enough to do something.

That brings together a surprising mix of people (businessmen, physicians, missionaries) with eyes to see, something that Thomas noticed in the initial lunch in Addis Ababa. He first experienced Ethiopia when he sponsored medical specialists for an internship at

'Christians are somehow drawn into this work, serving the poorest people and the most voiceless.'

~ Gail Davey, researcher,
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

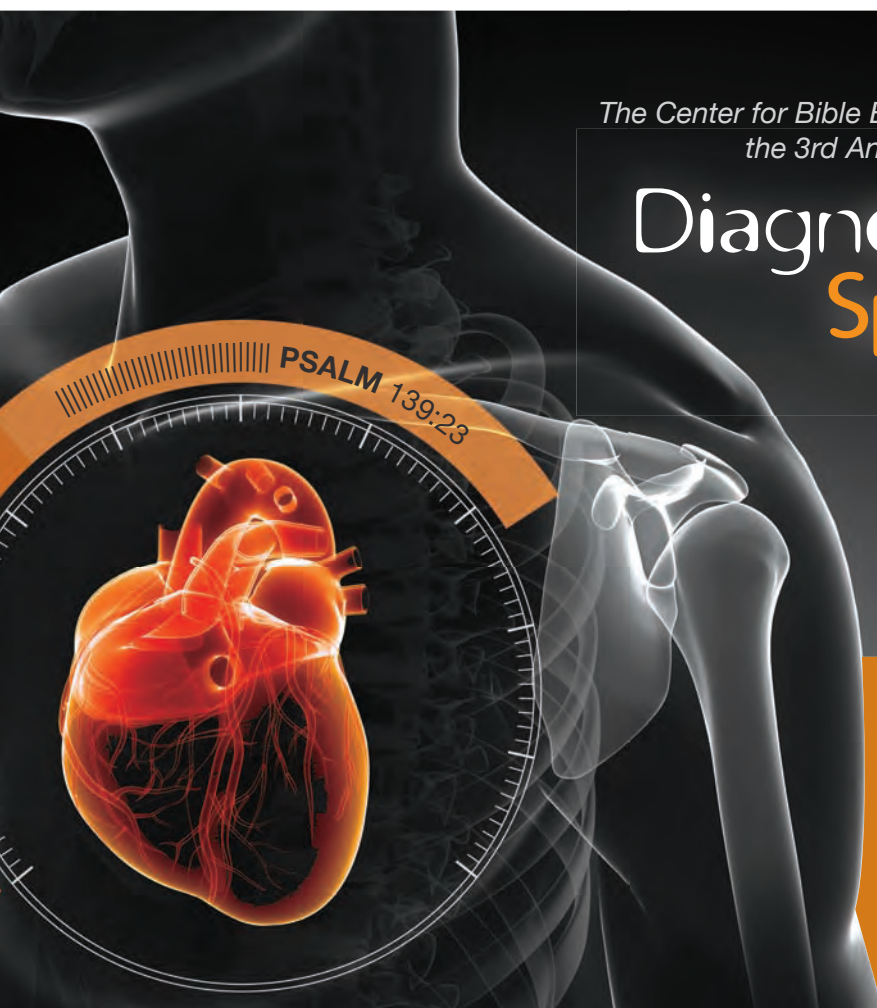
a Seventh-day Adventist hospital in Gimbi. Some of the sponsored doctors met the Daughters of Charity in that town and formed a partnership. Inspired by their effective collaboration, Thomas began raising money at his home in Loma Linda, California, through an unusual partnership between Adventist and Catholic churches.

Thomas first encountered Dembi Fedasan on the streets of Dembi Dollo. She had just begun treatment, and her feet were still enormous. A photographer, Thomas couldn't help himself. "I got down on my hands and knees to take pictures of her feet. I felt when I left that I hadn't handled that very well," Thomas says. "I thought, *this lady has a lot of dignity to allow me to do this*."

Evelyn, a Daughter of Charity, sent Thomas an updated photo of Fedasan's feet. He hardly recognized them. They had shrunk dramatically due to treatment.

Since then, Thomas cannot stop working through his foundation to support podo patient care. He is still a full-time physician in Southern California, but his heart is in Ethiopia, where the invisible are becoming visible, and lives like Fedasan's are being changed. ☩

Tim Stafford is a senior writer for *Christianity Today*. To learn more about podo and the organizations fighting it, visit MossyFoot.com and www.thaf.org.



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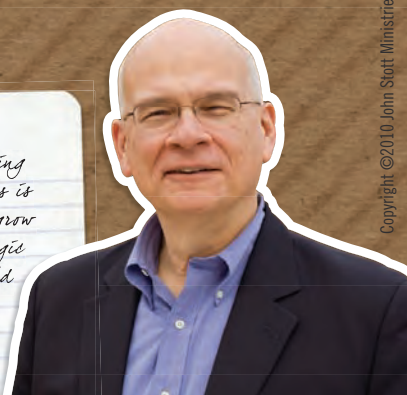
Today, at least 75% of the world's Christians are non-Western, or living in what is called the "Majority World." This means Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. But 80% of Majority World pastors have no formal biblical training. And they're trying to bring biblical truth to areas suffering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

We invite you to help make a difference. Select a project to fund, tell your friends about our work, and pray for the Majority World. To begin, visit our website at www.johnstottministries.org/CT

We are the U.S. affiliate of Langham Partnership International, founded by John Stott.

The growth of the non-Western church is going to change the world. John Stott Ministries is a leader in equipping the global church to grow in maturity. I can think of no more strategic work. They have my full support and should have yours too.

Tim Keller, Bestselling author and pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City



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VIEWPOINTS

OPINIONS AND
PERSPECTIVES ON
ISSUES FACING
THE CHURCH



Great hymns will survive the waves of populist worship in every generation—and so will the best of the new songs of those generations. God did not give us one form of worship for all times.

Clay Clarkson
Monument, Colorado

Notes of Praise

I loved *Christianity Today's* worship music package [March]. One of my greatest frustrations in churches is the near-obsessive focus on praise songs. Our church's worship team sings about one hymn per month, and accompanies it with a concession to the "older folks" in the congregation. At age 43, I have not begun to consider myself "older."

Why must relevance and hymn-singing be mutually exclusive? To exclude hymns alienates an entire class of church attendee, telling hymn-lovers, "You are not welcome here." As this group is generally older, local churches push out some of their greatest resources in terms of time, talents, and treasure.

BOB MACLEOD
Orlando, Florida

I completely share T. David Gordon's appreciation for our rich hymn heritage ["Pop Goes the Worship," March]. The younger generation's minimal exposure to this heritage robs them of a chance to make a wise choice.

C. S. Lewis, in one of his best-known quotes, crafts an analogy that applies to their situation: "Our desires [are] not too strong, but too weak," he writes. "We are

... like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

I enjoy many contemporary praise songs, but feel badly for those who have never waded into the salty tides for which Gordon is so passionate.

RON OGDEN
Winona Lake, Indiana

Gordon mentions the change from music as a participatory experience to a passive one. This is due, in my experience, to worship being thought of as entertainment. Also, not mentioned in *CT's* worship package was the volume of contemporary music, which is often unpleasant and harmful to the ears. The volume makes it difficult to sing along.

DOTTIE PARISH
Loveland, Ohio

Gordon's argument reminds me of those who believe the KJV is the superior Bible translation because of its refined language. Yet the KJV was written in the vernacular of 17th-century England in language the common person could appreciate. The same could be said about much church

TOP 3 What got the most comments in March's *CT*

30%
**Pop Goes the
Worship**
Interview with
T. David Gordon

13%
**The Trajectory
of Worship**
John Koessler

10%
**The Hymns That
Keep on Going**
Robert T. Coote

READERS' PICK The most praised piece in March's *CT*



**In Praise of
Confidence**
Mollie Ziegler
Hemingway

music written since the Reformation.

Before the advent of mass media, church music was arguably "pop music," in that it was the music of the people. Luther's organ hymns were for the people; hymns at the Wesleyan revivals were suited for non-instrumental singing; Baptist hymns of the 20th century reflected the gospel and country tastes of the rural South. Popular tastes have always shaped church music.

Great hymns will survive the waves of populist worship in every generation—and so will the best of the new songs of those generations. Thankfully, God did not give us one form of worship for all times. He left it to the Spirit to give each generation its own expression of worship. Gordon would do well to listen to the Spirit in today's generation.

CLAY CLARKSON
Monument, Colorado

Gordon makes many laudable points, but like many traditionalist "worship warriors," he argues from essentially an aesthetic perspective, when the real problem with contemporary Christian music is its creation, or rather the motivation thereof. The vast majority of contemporary Christian music is written to be recorded and sold—to make money. One cannot love both God and mammon.

JAMES ELSTON
Auburn, Alabama

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

CT'S EDITORS WOULD LOVE TO HEAR THEM.

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After I'd made fun of praise choruses, calling them "7/11 songs" (7 phrases sung 11 times), a pensive friend said to me, "You would never make fun of someone who prayed simply. Why would you disparage those who sing to God simply?"

Then I heard a pastor explain that the command to sing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5) is a sub-point of being filled with the Spirit, as is the command to submit to each other. Thus, the older generation—hymn snobs, like me—should submit to the younger generation, learning to appreciate the simplicity of spiritual songs. And the younger generation should submit to the older generation, learning to love hymns. Can we not, as editor Mark Galli said, learn from one another's worship? What glorifies God is not only worshipful singing but the love we show by submitting to one another.

DEE BRESTIN
Kansas City, Missouri

I read with great interest "Worship in Black and White," about racial reconciliation via hymns, and "The Hymns That Keep on Going." It struck me that the 28 hymnals in the latter were all from white churches. In light of racially diverse hymnals, I wonder what the results would have been if the *African American Heritage Hymnal* had been consulted? Would all of the top 27 still make the cut?

ANDREW PAYNE
Midlothian, Texas

Evangelical Syncretism

Witchcraft accusations in Africa are harmful ["Warning on Witches," Briefing, March], but in our Western context we sometimes miss biblical teachings about demons (e.g., 1 Cor. 10:20), who are apparently sometimes active in connection with human agents (e.g., Ex. 7:11–12; Matt. 24:24; Acts 8:9–11; Rev. 13:13–15). My own experiences in Central Africa incline me to wonder if, despite some syncretistic excesses there, we in the West have not committed our own syncretism with deism.

CRAIG KEENER
Professor, Palmer Theological Seminary
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Proper Confidence

In light of the many assertions these days concerning faith, doubt, and certainty, Mollie Ziegler Hemingway's "In Praise of Confidence" [March] was refreshing. For both those who declare that "the opposite of faith is doubt" and those who assert (with certainty) that "the opposite of faith is certainty," might not the simplest answer be that the opposite of faith is "no-faith," or unbelief?

Along with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, we can assert with "proper confidence" (Lesslie Newbigin) that "faith alone is certainty. Jesus Christ alone is the certainty of faith."

MARK JALOVICK
Cable, Wisconsin

compiled by Elissa Cooper

WORTH REPEATING

Things overheard at CT online.



READING AFTER THE UPROAR
Have you read Rob Bell's new book, *Love Wins*?

13%
Yes, and I appreciated it.

6%
Yes, and it concerns me.

2%
Yes, and I'm ambivalent.

28%
No, but I plan to read it.

51%
No, and I don't plan to read it.

Total votes: 707

(Online polls do not represent a scientific sample.)

CUYLER BLACK / INHERITTHEMIRTH.COM



"It is sad that this unfolded and will taint the reputation of our school and other Christian schools, but one man does not make a school."

Erica, on the resignation of Lu Hardin, president of Palm Beach Atlantic University.

CT Liveblog: "Fallen Christian College Head Pleads Guilty to Wire Fraud, Money Laundering," by Trevor Persaud

"Parenting has always been a challenge, but with mass media and marketing, it has become a real jungle. We all struggle between living in the world and not being of the world, but never so much as with our kids."

Suzy, discussing today's culture in relation to the book *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*.

Her.meneutics: "Toddlers, Tiaras, and Surviving Princess Mania," by Sharon Hodde Miller

"She says the way we are born is what we should embrace; actually, we were born into sin and should hate our flesh. God doesn't say to us, 'You're perfect the way you are, don't change.'"

Nadine S., disagreeing that pop star Lady Gaga's lyrics contain the gospel message.

CT Entertainment Blog: "Going Gaga over the Gospel?" by Mark Moring

"If Jesus returned today, he wouldn't take the bus to Washington to lobby for additional aid for the needy. He would head straight to his church and ask why his people were not doing more."

Neil, arguing that Christians, not government-funded programs, are responsible for assisting the needy.

CT Politics Blog: "Evangelicals Issue Warning on Budget Cuts," by Alicia Cohn

Good Christian [Bleep!]

The provocative title of a proposed TV show is not the problem. We are.

A

REPORTER from a major television news outlet recently called *Christianity Today* to ask how offended we were by the title of the proposed ABC television show *Good Christian Bitches*. We declined to comment on such a leading question.

The proposed show is certainly provocative. The American Family Association called it “a Christian-bashing version of *Desperate Housewives*,” stating that “ABC has no reservations about creating hate speech against Christians, but you can be sure they would never consider a show called *Good Muslim B-tches* or *Good Jewish B-tches*.” Meanwhile, Parents Television Council president Tim Winter called the *b*-word “toxic.” He said it’s “used to degrade, abuse, harass, bully and humiliate women. . . . Regardless of whether the title ultimately makes it to broadcast, ABC has publicly proclaimed its values”

The groups’ indignation is understandable, even though at this writing, ABC has not yet committed to the show, and may change the title if they do.

Nevertheless, it’s not so much the show’s title but its premise that should get our attention. The show is based on a book of the same name by Kim Gatlin, a professing Christian from Dallas, whose circle of Southern Baptist friends engages in a lot of gossip, some of it quite mean-spirited. “All Southern girls are taught to love Jesus, but just because we’re Christians doesn’t mean we’re perfect,” she told *Newsweek*. Gatlin says her book’s title “is not mocking God. It’s mocking those of us who love God and don’t always make the best choices to honor him.” On her website, Gatlin says she intends to “put a voice to the downside of gossip . . . but with a message that she hopes will resonate with women everywhere.”

Her book’s title is in bad taste, but her subject demands our attention.

The book’s title is arresting precisely because it should be an oxymoron. Unfortunately, even “good” Christians do and say nasty things, which look ugly to fellow believers and puzzle a watching world that rightly believes Christians should be above gossip, slander, and general meanness.

Sadly, gossip runs rampant in local churches. We even gossip in prayer requests: “We need to pray for Bob and Sally. Did you



hear that he had an affair? And that Sally just found out?” (One rule of thumb on this point: If you’ve not been asked by the parties involved to bring a private matter before others for prayer, then don’t.)

Proverbs reminds us of what experience shows us time and again. Gossip “betrays a confidence” (11:13), “separates close friends” (16:28), and poisons our “inmost parts” (18:8). Paul names gossip in a list of heinous sins that includes “envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice” (Rom. 1:29). The prohibition against gossip is even included in the Ten

Commandments: “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”

Martin Luther came down hard on gossip when writing about the eighth commandment in his Large Catechism. He did not focus so much on the “false” as on the “against thy neighbor.” The commandment is an application of the broader command to love our neighbors as ourselves. Even saying something true about the personal or private affairs of another can violate the spirit of this command. Luther’s counsel? Unless you are in a position of authority—either in the church or the state—with the responsibility to judge, you should keep it to yourself. Even if it is true.

Interestingly, the New Testament Greek word *diabolos* means both “slanderer” and “devil.” Luther, who was unusually sensitive to the role the Devil plays in our lives, called gossip a “detestable, shameful vice . . . to which the Devil spurs us on.” Slanderers are “not content with knowing a thing, but proceed to assume jurisdiction, and when they know a slight offense of another, carry

it into every corner, and are delighted and tickled that they can stir up another’s displeasure [baseness], as swine roll themselves in the dirt and root in it with the snout.”

The analogy speaks for itself. The drive to judge—even when preceded by, “Who am I to judge, but . . .”—deforms our spirits.

Perhaps *Good Christian Bitches* will illuminate a temptation that lures individuals in every church and Christian organization. We shouldn’t be asking so much whether the show’s title is offensive but rather whether it’s true.

Sadly, gossip runs rampant in local churches. We even gossip in prayer requests: ‘We need to pray for Bob and Sally. Did you hear that he had an affair?’

*Charging
into Sin?*

What's wrong with credit card debt?

IT'S A LACK OF FAITH

Ron Blue has written 15 books on personal finance and is president of Kingdom Advisors, which advises Christian financial professionals (*MasterYourMoney.com*).

The Bible offers many warnings about debt, but it never says that borrowing money violates God's commandments. It may, however, be unwise to do so.

Carrying credit card debt violates two biblical principles. First, debt presumes upon the future (James 4:13–15). When we use credit card debt, we assume money will be available to pay off the debt in the future.

Second, using credit card debt may deny God an opportunity to provide. Isaiah 55:8–9 says God's ways are not our ways, that his plans are higher than ours. When we use credit card debt as a quick solution, we effectively deny ourselves the opportunity to let God meet our needs.

In addition, credit card debt is very expensive. Unpaid balances on credit cards can carry monthly interest rates upwards of 25 percent. The cost to carry an unpaid balance from month to month means that you are paying a monthly premium on that balance. If you have a \$2,000 outstanding balance on a credit card, and you pay only the monthly minimum, it will take you 32 years to pay off that \$2,000. You will have paid the enormous sum of \$10,000 to buy something that cost \$2,000.

Financial choices and predicaments are always symptomatic of other issues. Some of the more common issues that lead to credit card debt include a lack of contentment, a lack of self-discipline, the search for security, and the search for significance.

The bottom line is that we should avoid putting a lender in the place of God by depending on them to meet our needs, and we should not play God in our own lives by deciding that the only way to meet our needs is to borrow.

God wants us to be obedient to his commands, but he also wants us to be wise in how we live. Ephesians 5:15–16 (NASB) says, "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil." When we make unwise choices, such as accumulating credit card debt, we must live with the consequences. However, we can also trust that God will work out his good purposes as we walk through the tough disciplines of living within our means and paying off the debt we have accrued (Rom. 8:28).

IT'S DANGEROUS

John G. Stackhouse Jr. is Sangwoo Youtong Chee Professor of Theology and Culture at Regent College in Vancouver.

Although credit can be a useful tool, accruing credit card debt is dangerous.

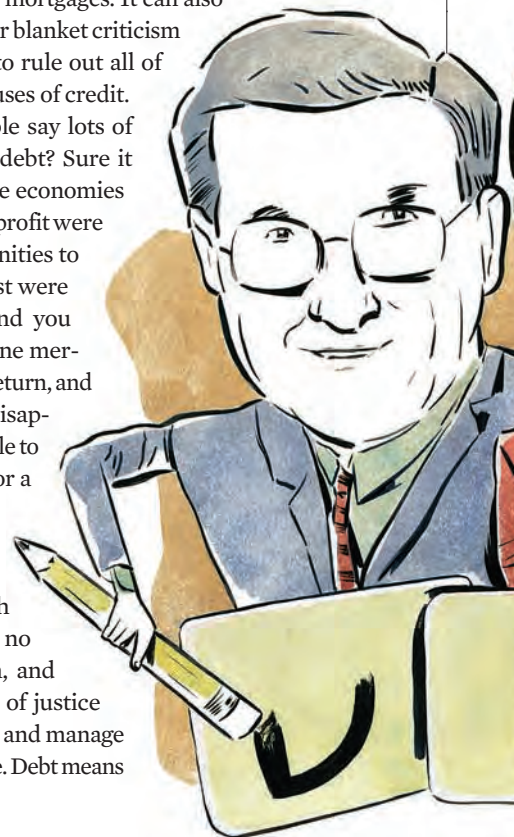
God called human beings to cultivate the world (Gen. 1). We are to take what is already "very good"—even if now fallen—and make it better. Doing that as well as we can means making use of resources in the best ways we can. One of those resources in a modern economy is credit.

Credit lets people escape from poverty. Microfinance loans to people in developing countries have been popular among Christian charities for some time, and we can only hope that they increase.

Credit lets people enjoy a home decades before they could save up the money to pay for it outright—and that's why few critics of credit card debt ever criticize mortgages. It can also fund education. To offer blanket criticism of debt as immoral is to rule out all of these manifestly good uses of credit.

But doesn't the Bible say lots of negative things about debt? Sure it does. In the subsistence economies of the Bible, margins of profit were small, and the opportunities to make a lot of money fast were few. One bad crop, and you would be wiped out. One merchant caravan doesn't return, and your business would disappear. Then you'd be liable to indentured servitude for a long time.

It is all the more dangerous to incur debt in a society with no welfare structures, no bankruptcy protection, and no large-scale systems of justice to regulate the wealthy and manage the economy even a little. Debt means



you are under the authority of someone in particular, and if that someone is sufficiently powerful and ruthless, you are in grave danger indeed.

The Bible gives, as always, good advice. And the Bible must be interpreted contextually. In the economic contexts in which the Bible was written, debt was dangerous and best avoided entirely. But in our economic situation in North America, debt can improve the quality of life for oneself and for others if managed well. In developing countries, prudent use of credit can make the difference between literal life and death, and between liberty and slavery.

Yet biblical teaching not only addresses what is right and wrong, but what is wise and what is foolish, and what is prudent and what is risky.

Credit card borrowing is among the very worst ways to borrow any significant amount of money. We all know why. It's too easy—just hand over the card. It's too accessible—almost anyone can obtain a card, and most of us can get quite a few. It's too extortionate—interest rates are shockingly high relative to almost any other kind of loan. That's why they print them in the tiniest possible fonts.

So I have a mortgage. I have had educational loans, and my sons have them now. I have made use of car payment plans. And I have a line of credit.

But I never, ever incur credit card debt. I pay off my cards every month, so the companies make not a dime off me in interest.

While debt isn't necessarily immoral, credit card borrowing is dangerous—for everyone.



IT'S POTENTIALLY IMMORAL

Mary Hunt, author of several books on financial responsibility, founded Debt-Proof Living, a website on escaping debt (DebtProofLiving.com).

The Bible speaks at great length to the fact that as believers, we are stewards—financial caretakers. None of it belongs to us. But God wants to develop us into savvy stewards. Jesus says, “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much” (Luke 16:10). The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30) tells how God entrusts each of us with different financial assets, gifts, opportunities, and industriousness. We will be held accountable for how we’ve invested those in this life.

That doesn’t necessarily mean never accruing debt. If that were true, what would we do with Scriptures that suggest that lending is a part of daily life (Ps. 112:5; Luke 6:34–35; Ps. 37:21)? Being able to lend money to others is seen as a blessing (Deut. 28:12). If lending is permissible, borrowing must be as well.

The Bible also warns us to get out as soon as possible, because debt puts us in bondage (Prov. 22:7). Debt, if any, should be paid off as soon as possible because “the wicked borrow and do not pay” (Ps. 37:21).

So while the Bible does not forbid debt, its emphasis on stewardship suggests some rather strict guidelines:

1. The borrower should have resources readily available to repay the debt. With a mortgage, the collateral held by the lender (the property) secures repayment of the loan. But credit card debt is unsecured. Here is the test: If you do not have enough money to pay your entire credit card bill in a single month, you’ve violated this guideline. You’ve allowed yourself to slip into the lender’s bondage.
2. The cost of the debt should be reasonable. The average credit card interest rate is currently 16.82 percent (IndexCreditCards.com), a rate that could hardly be considered reasonable. Paying the balance in full during the grace period precludes paying any interest, while offering the financially mature person financial flexibility and opportunities.
3. Borrowers should pay off debt as soon as possible. It is difficult to fit long-term credit card debt within this guideline.

Carrying credit card debt within the guidelines is, at best, difficult, but the test is simple: Am I able to pay the entire balance in full in a single month? If the answer is no, you need to put that card far, far away until the day you’ve reached a level of financial stability that allows you to operate within biblical guidelines. Otherwise, I believe your debt will become immoral. ✚



People of the Nook

What Bible smartphone apps tell us about the Book.



A COUPLE OF SUNDAYS AGO, my husband, son, and I enacted a mini-drama from a script that has likely played out in every churchgoing family in America. Never mind that we live in Kodiak, Alaska, thousands of miles from the rest of the country. Electronics, we know, are borderless.

During the sermon, with our heads intently bent over our study Bibles, my husband and I glanced down the pew to see our teenage son leaning over his cell phone. Texting during the sermon? My husband, later claiming self-defense, drew his own cell from his holster and began furiously sending texts to the other end of the pew. Teenage son didn't respond, which drew more urgent messages. No response again. By now we were steaming toward a march around the center pews to snatch the offensive item from the perpetrator's hands. Thankfully, "we'll get him later" prevailed.

By now you've already guessed the ending of this vignette. The response to our accusations: wide eyes and sly protestations of innocence before whipping out the cell phone—with the Bible fully downloaded on it. Ah, the snarky pleasure on his face.

It's true: I'm a dying breed. I've been lugging around this doorstep version of the Scriptures partly for its inconvenience. It reminds me of its import and my commitment to the words I so laboriously carry. But since this event, I've downloaded the Bible on my iPhone, and, like millions of others, have begun to use it, which has caused me to wonder: Are we Christians still people of the book? And if we're becoming instead people of the Nook, does it matter?

The moment the new icon appeared on my screen, I scrolled to Habakkuk and read it from start to finish. I chose that particular book for a reason. Just three weeks before, I watched breathlessly as my brother-in-law unrolled the Habakkuk scroll, one of

the first pulled from the Dead Sea caves in 1948, on my living room rug. It was at least six feet long, on delicate parchment. I even touched it. Before you report me, or worse yet, doubt me, let me assure you: the scroll is a facsimile. It is a fake so real, with such exacting detail—burn marks, frays in all the right places—it bears a stamp to foil attempts to heist and pass it off as real. (Disclosure: My brother-in-law directs the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation.)

I viewed the scroll with head-spinning confusion: One of the most ancient



documents reproduced through the most advanced technologies to look and feel as aged as the original. Its appearance instantly reminded me of the Bible's historicity, the marvel of its faithful passage through the centuries, the significant cost in human lives for its preservation.

I did not consider these things while scanning Scripture on my three-inch screen this week. It's hard for me to remember that these words that now accompany my daily tasks, accessed at my slightest whim, cost anything more than money. It's hard for me to remember that the words in this book,

now sharing the same battery and housing as my photos and games, in the same purse compartment as my lipstick and breath mints, have any history behind them at all.

But as I paged through Habakkuk's horrific prophecies of Israel's coming destruction, I came to these final verses: "Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, . . . and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation" (3:17–18, *ESV*, emphasis mine).

My breath stopped. My eyes stung. These 2,500-year-old words delivered through a state-of-the-moment widget spoke to the oldest human problems—the problem of suffering, the problem of trust. I needed these words; a friend had just died. I needed them then, and I will need them again.

This unprecedented ability to carry the words of God almost weightlessly everywhere I go, and to read them on the same device that helps me manage my life, strikes me as utterly theologically fitting. I am reminded of the priesthood of all believers, and the Scriptures' self-definition as the "words of life"—meaning, surely, at least this: words that are to inform and infuse every part of our lives, commingling with breath mints, photos, and phone calls.

We may forget at times the lineage of these words, but our eagerness to put the Scriptures onto scrolls first, and onto electronic screens much later, is more than a love of invention and gadgetry, I believe. It's a timeless need for life-giving truths. It's love for the Book.

Our eagerness to put the Scriptures onto scrolls first, and onto electronic screens later, is more than a love of invention and gadgetry.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF
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THERE BE DRAGONS

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Worship must also look back. Since early days, Christians gathered for worship have been, as Justin Martyr described it, reading “the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets,” and afterward listening to the presider “instruct and exhort to the imitation of these good things.”

Christian self-understanding has from the beginning been illumined both by what Jesus’ closest followers wrote and by the Hebrew Scriptures that foreshadowed Jesus’ work.

It is one of my pet peeves that orchestras at major Independence Day celebrations play only the final few minutes of Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*. I understand the need to keep the program moving, but without the rest of Tchaikovsky’s music, the finale is “sound and fury, signifying nothing.” It is only the climax.

The same is true of the Christian message. Without paying attention to what has gone before, the great final act may be thrilling, but incomprehensible. We are actors in a great drama, but we don’t know how to play our roles unless we study the earlier acts the Playwright has written.

A recent news item disturbed me. The Church of England Synod voted to simplify its baptismal service to make it more understandable to the unchurched friends who attend baptisms. The Diocese of Liverpool clergyman who proposed the revisions complained that people just didn’t understand references like this: “Through water you led the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land.”

Some CT readers might wonder what that is doing in a baptismal service. But remember

1 Corinthians 10. Paul tells his readers that their ancestors “were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the [Red Sea].” Paul says these stories were written as an example to us, and for most of its history, the church has taken Israel’s liberation via the Red Sea to foreshadow baptism. During the Reformation, Lutherans and English Protestants continued to connect the New Testament sacrament of baptism with the Old Testament story of deliverance from bondage through water. Luther’s 1521 baptismal service put it this way: “You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh with all his army in the Red Sea, and you led your people Israel through it on dry ground, thereby prefiguring this washing of your baptism.”

Calvinist Protestants also connected baptism and the Old Testament. Just as God marked the children of the Mosaic covenant by circumcision to show that they were part of his chosen people, he has now chosen baptism to set apart the children of the New Covenant. That is how the Scots Confession of 1560 explained it.

These Reformation Christians saw the importance of connecting the dots. The same God who saved Israel at the Red Sea and who commanded that a covenant people be marked by circumcision is at work in your baptism. If you know God’s great works of mercy and his faithfulness to his promises, you can have even greater faith. So these Christians resisted the perennial temptation to marginalize the story of Israel.



But what about contemporary communication? That is what worried the clergy from Liverpool. Press reports singled out two items: the reference to the Red Sea and the necessity of being born again. Those things would confuse visitors who come to witness a relative’s baptism. Perhaps, but what have we repeatedly heard about communication to postmoderns? That it must be pictorial? That it must

use symbols and images? Are there more powerful images of rescue than the children of Israel passing through the Red Sea? Are there more powerful images of personal transformation than being born a second time?

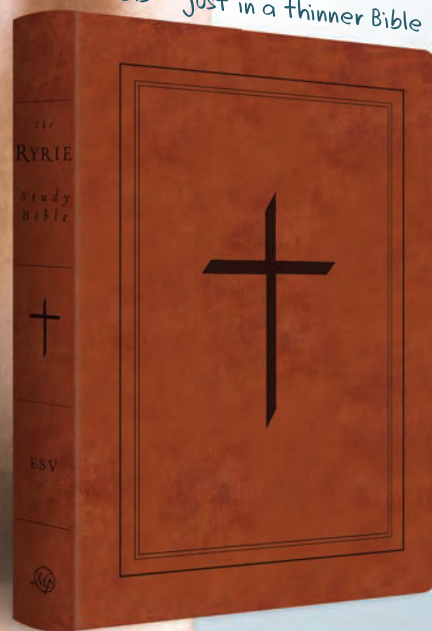
I recently interviewed Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, a well-known spokesman for Eastern Orthodoxy. I asked how Orthodoxy was reaching out to the unchurched. Ware said Orthodoxy’s “most important missionary witness” is its worship. “To those who show an interest in Orthodoxy, I say come and see. . . . We start from prayer, not from an abstract ideology, not from moral rules, but from a living link with Christ expressed through prayer.”

Orthodoxy’s sensory worship is far more difficult to penetrate than the Anglicans’ modernized baptismal liturgy from the year 2000. Ware’s “come and see” poses a challenge to the rest of us. Rather than strip our worship of ancient words and symbols, why not capitalize on their richness and mystery, and their ability to speak to the heart longings that secularism can never touch?

We are actors in a great drama, but we don’t know how to play our roles unless we study the earlier acts the Playwright has written.

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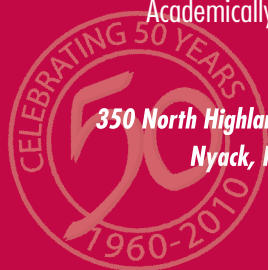
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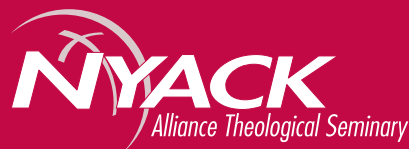
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CT REVIEW

BOOKS, MOVIES,
MUSIC, AND
THE ARTS



Reforming the Reformed

Calvinists, says one Calvinist, misunderstand some of their history and theology. By Roger E. Olson

Type "Calvinism" into any web browser and you're likely to find multiple misconceptions about Calvinism and Reformed theology. Ironically, many come from the pens and mouths of Calvinists themselves. In *Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition* (IVP Academic) ★★★★★, Kenneth J. Stewart demonstrates that confusion and misapprehension reign among adherents as much, if not more, than among outsiders and opponents.

Stewart, professor of theology at Covenant College, a Reformed school in Lookout

Mountain, Georgia, knows the terrain. *Ten Myths*, an extremely well-researched and lively tour of Reformed theology's history, sets the record straight regarding Calvinism's heroes, legends, beliefs, and fluctuating fortunes. The movement, Stewart argues, is currently riding the latest of six "waves of Calvinist resurgence" since the French Revolution. But all is not well. "It is no time," Stewart warns, "for triumphalism."

Much to my surprise, I discovered the author, a dedicated convert to Calvinism, chastising many who proudly call themselves

Reformed. Even when writing about non-Calvinists' misconceptions, he seems intent on calling the new Calvinists and their leaders to a course correction. "We need fewer angular, sharp-elbowed Calvinists who glory in what distinguishes their stance from others," Stewart argues, "and a lot more supporters of the Reformed faith who rejoice in what they hold in common with others." What non-Calvinist wouldn't agree?

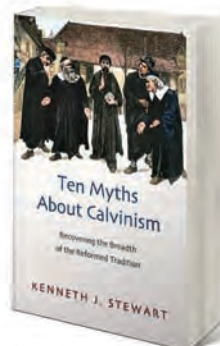
I should confess before continuing that I am one of those non-Calvinists, although I have tried to maintain a friendly, irenic tone. I find Stewart's approach refreshing; it gives me hope that both sides can be self-critical and fair as they discuss their differences.

ROOM FOR DEBATE

Four of Stewart's ten myths are held by many Calvinists themselves. First, John Calvin and his Genevan experiment do not determine the entire Reformed tradition. According to Stewart, "Calvinism" is something of a misnomer. Certain Reformed leaders disagreed with Calvin's theology and did not regard him as their spokesman. After Calvin, the movement branched off in several directions, not always remaining strictly faithful to his example.

Stewart's second myth might also come as a shock: Calvin's acolytes do not uniformly share his view of predestination. Many Reformed theologians have argued for single predestination (God has marked some for salvation) rather than Calvin's double predestination (God has marked some for salvation and some for damnation).

The third myth is that TULIP must be the benchmark of the truly Reformed. (TULIP stands for the doctrines of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.) Stewart's thorough history shows that the acronym probably was coined around 1913. Many



enthusiastic converts among the “young, restless, and Reformed” will be shocked to hear a sympathetic voice arguing that “TULIP cannot be allowed to function as a creed.” According to Stewart, Reformed theologians past and present have wrongly turned this five-point doctrine into a “Procrustean formula”—an inflexible yardstick of belief.

Stewart’s fourth myth is that Calvinists dislike revivals and awakenings. He attributes this misunderstanding to contemporary Presbyterian and Reformed dismay over the manipulative methods used by some revivalists, pointing to the targeting of 18th-century evangelist Charles Finney by anti-revival Calvinists. Stewart recalls the leadership of Calvinist heroes like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield in the First Great Awakening of the 1740s. “Today, by contrast,” he laments, “so many have adopted the view that revival is a dark secret, a part of our Reformed family history best kept in the closet.”

Neither I nor any informed critic of Calvinism has held or promoted any of Stewart’s myths. Admittedly, however, many

Stewart calls for all Calvinists to be more historically aware, to stop thinking of Calvinism as a system derived straightforwardly from the pages of the Bible.

untutored persons, not least among them committed Calvinists, have fallen under their sway. Stewart wrote this book in large part simply to correct his co-religionists.

Calvinists need not worry, however, as *Ten Myths* also defends the Reformed tradition. Stewart does not belong to the revisionist crowd that apologizes for Calvinism’s most controversial doctrines. He has not abandoned Calvin, predestination, or TULIP. He affirms Calvin as a major part of the Reformed tradition while arguing, like many of his Reformed contemporaries, against slavish imitation. He embraces the doctrine of predestination as unconditional election of all individuals, either to heaven or hell, while contending for enough breadth within the Reformed tradition to favor single predestination. And he

criticizes TULIP mainly for its ungenerous language and extreme interpretations, preferring, for example, “definite atonement” or “particular redemption” to “limited atonement,” because the latter seems to limit the value of Christ’s death.

SENSE OF HISTORY

By correcting contemporary Calvinist myths about Calvinism, Stewart intends to overcome a “self-imposed ghettoization” that may evidence “an unacknowledged remnant of the fundamentalist era of the early twentieth century.” He calls for all Calvinists to be more historically aware, to stop thinking of Calvinism as a system derived straightforwardly from the pages of the Bible. However, he still affirms the essential Calvinist view of

MY TOP 5 BOOKS ON FORGIVENESS

By Catherine Claire Larson, author of *As We Forgive* (Zondervan, 2009)



FREE OF CHARGE

Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace

MIROSLAV VOLF (ZONDERVAN)

When it comes to contemplating forgiveness, Volf’s works stand head and shoulders above the crowd. Here he puts forgiveness into the larger context of the generosity of God and the generosity that God, in turn, desires of us.

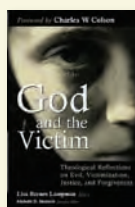


FORGIVING AS WE'VE BEEN FORGIVEN

Community Practices for Making Peace

L. GREGORY JONES & CÉLESTIN MUEKURA (INTERVARSITY PRESS)

Muekura’s first-hand experiences in post-genocide Rwanda and Jones’s theologically rich insights create a thought-provoking and practical guide. Notable themes include community, truth-telling, and the burden of memory.



GOD AND THE VICTIM

Theological Reflections on Evil, Victimization, Justice, and Forgiveness

EDITED BY LISA BARNES LAMPMAN (EERDMANS)

I own two copies of this collection of essays from theologians, experts, and practitioners since my first is unreadable from all the underlining. Unlike so many examples of mere exhortation to forgive, this book breathes with compassion for victims.



HELPING PEOPLE FORGIVE

DAVID W. AUGSBURGER

(WESTMINSTER JOHN KNOX PRESS)

This book should be in the hands of all clergy and counselors who grapple with how to encourage others to forgive. The discussion on moving toward mature reconciliation is more than worth the price.



FIVE STEPS TO FORGIVENESS

The Art and Science of Forgiveness

EVERETT WORTHINGTON (CROWN)

Worthington, one of the world’s experts on forgiveness, gives a straightforward self-help guide. His depth of clinical research is matched only by his personal experience of wrestling with forgiving those who murdered his elderly mother.

God's sovereignty over salvation known as *monergism*—that God saves people without their cooperation. One has to wonder if his call for a more generous, conciliatory Calvinism augurs any willingness to seriously reconsider its substance.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of *Ten Myths* is the final chapter, titled "Recovering Our Bearings: Calvinism in the Twenty-First Century." There Stewart's agenda becomes clear. He writes not so much to answer Calvinism's critics as to urge several adjustments to contemporary Calvinism. Clearly he believes that even misunderstandings of Calvinism can teach Reformed Christians important lessons.

Stewart chides major personalities of the current Calvinist upsurge for thinking as though it "appeared Melchizedek-like, 'without genealogy.'" He names two heroes of the mostly 20-something crowd of new Calvinists, John Piper and Mark Driscoll, as culprits of this de-historicized vision of contemporary Calvinism. Stewart concludes that the new Calvinists need to recognize how their movement "stands in succession to and dependency on... earlier movements." Recounting the stories of five earlier Calvinist upsurges, he calls on contemporary Calvinists to admit interdependence between past and present, show loyalty to both, eschew triumphalism, and practice unity and forbearance.

Young, restless, Reformed Calvinists—indeed, all of Geneva's progeny—ought to heed the sage advice of this Reformed theology professor and scholar of Calvinist history: "If a Calvinist movement stresses *only* the reiteration of ideas and doctrines from long ago, its tendency will be antiquarian and fogeyish; its devotees might actually wish to be living in a different time and place! On the other hand, if a Calvinist movement glories *chiefly* in its affinities with the contemporary scene... the necessary link with historical markers of the movement may be very hard to locate."

In fact, *every* Christian movement needs to recognize that there is really nothing new under the sun—a recognition that cultivates humility and willingness to learn from past mistakes.

Roger E. Olson is professor of theology at George W. Truett Theological Seminary and author of the forthcoming *Against Calvinism* (Zondervan).

Cherry-Picking from the Past

Christian claims about America's origins need grounding in historical fact. By Matt Reynolds

The title of John Fea's new book comes phrased as a question. This is a judicious choice, for the author, a Messiah College historian, does not venture to resolve the contentious debate over Christianity's role in midwifing American democracy.

Many people bring predetermined conclusions to the question posed by this volume, **Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?: A Historical Introduction** (Westminster John Knox Press) ★★★★★. But Fea counsels humility, pleading that "the question cannot be answered with a simple yes or no."

Fea exhorts readers to greater curiosity about what testifies to a nation's "Christian" identity. Is it demographic dominance by professing Christians? Citizens and leaders of authentic Christian character and conviction? Laws, customs, and founding documents embodying Christian principles?

Addressing such questions, Fea practices admirable fair-mindedness, giving each side its due. Although amply critical of intellectuals, activists, and pundits who peddle the Christian nation thesis, he allows that they have "a good chunk of American history on their side."

Studied impartiality of this sort often yields dreary exercises in forced evenhandedness. Happily, Fea's passion for objectivity avoids this pitfall. Indeed, the book fairly brims with judgments both specific and, at times, surprising.

Did the American colonies protest British tax policies and declare independence for Christian reasons? Not especially, although revolutionary pulpits thundered with broadsides against tyranny. Did the Constitution reflect Christian governing principles? No, but state constitutions tended to privilege Protestantism. Were the Founding Fathers Christians? Yes and no. Most proclaimed a creator God who governs the

world providentially. Virtually all thought Christian morality essential for the cultivation of virtue and public spirit. But many doubted Jesus' divinity and other core teachings.

Fea also sketches a helpful history of the Christian nation narrative, showing how feuding factions—northern abolitionists and southern slaveholders, fundamentalists and Social Gospellers, contemporary conservatives and progressives—have defined and appropriated America's contested religious heritage.

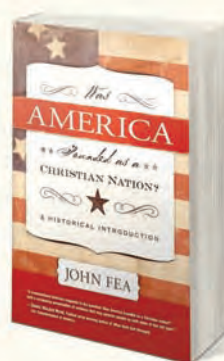
In presenting the past disinterestedly, Fea rebukes the habit of "cherry-picking from the past as a means of promoting a political or cultural agenda in the present." Washington's Farewell Address doesn't validate the Religious Right's blueprint for society, any more than Jefferson's bowdlerized Bible validates the Left's alternative.

Here Fea's commitment to balance falters slightly. He singles out several Christian nation apologists, devoting sustained attention to their historical misrepresentations. But despite acknowledging forthrightly that secularists sometimes massage evidence, he provides fewer examples.

Sensible Christians understand that America's past, present, and future are inexplicable apart from Christianity. Just as sensibly, if sometimes hyperbolically, they discern among American elites widespread indifference and hostility to this reality. In emphasizing the purveyors of Christian nation fantasies, Fea lets these elites off the hook a little too easily.

But this is a forgivable offense. Sufficient unto the day is the revisionism thereof. If Fea succeeds in dislodging this nettlesome speck from the Christian eye, he can tackle the secularist beam some other time.

Matt Reynolds is CT associate editor of books.



TEMPTED AND TRIED

Temptation and the Triumph of Christ

RUSSELL D. MOORE

(CROSSWAY, 208 PAGES)

Maybe you tear up when you think about the words you screamed at your kids this morning. Maybe you've deleted the history cache of your computer this week, promising yourself that you'll never access those images again. Maybe you carry that empty snack bag with you in your purse to throw away later so the people in your office won't see it in the wastebasket. Maybe the prescription drugs in your desk drawer right now are the only things keeping you sane, but you fear they're making you crazy. Maybe you just can't stop thinking about the smell of your coworker's hair or the clink of the whiskey glass at the table nearby.

Maybe what you're tempted to do is so wild that my publisher wouldn't allow me to print it here, or maybe it's so tame that I wouldn't even think to mention it. I don't know. But I think I know what's behind it all.

You are being tempted right now, and so am I. Most of the time, we don't even know it. And in every one of those moments, we want either to overestimate or underestimate the power of that temptation. We overestimate it by thinking something along the lines of, "I have these feelings, so therefore I'm predestined to be this kind of person." We underestimate it by thinking something along the lines of, "I'm not tempted to do anything terrible—like adultery or murder. I'm just struggling with this small thing—biterness over my infertility."

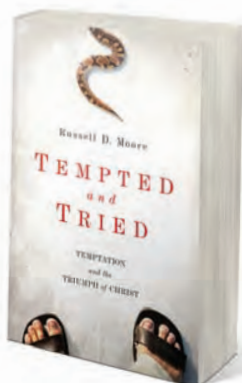
The gospel, though, brings good news to tempted rebels like us. . . . The same Spirit who led Jesus through the wilderness and empowered him to overcome the Evil One now surges through all of us who are joined by faith to Jesus. We overcome temptation the same way he did, by trusting in our Father and hearing his voice.

The danger we face presently isn't cognitive but primal. The demons are thinkers. They know who God is, and they tremble before that truth (James 2:19). Mere intellect cannot ensure that we are "led not into temptation" or "delivered from evil." . . . We are

not simply overcoming something about human psychology. We're wrestling against the cosmic powers (Eph. 6:12), grappling with an animal-like spirit intent on devouring us (1 Pet. 5:8).

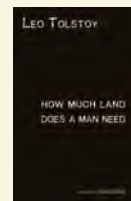
. . . Some of you reading this now will recognize the good news of what's written here, and you'll abandon it all for an orgasm or an ego. But maybe some of you who believe yourselves to be freaks of nature will cast this burden off as you see a Christ who identified himself with you even in temptation.

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HOW MUCH LAND DOES A MAN NEED

LEO TOLSTOY, TRANSLATED BY BORIS DRALYUK
(CALYPSO EDITIONS)



"An elder sister rode out from the city to visit her younger sister in the country." So begins Leo Tolstoy's story, presented in Boris Dralyuk's striking new translation (with the Russian text on facing pages).

Clearly we're in the realm of the folktale, refashioned in the late style that also gave us "The Death of Ivan Ilyich," "Master and Man," and *Hadji Murad*. But the Devil, who appears early on ("The devil sat behind the stove and heard everything"), is real, as is the insatiable, self-destructive acquisitiveness of the protagonist, Pakhom—uncomfortably familiar, perhaps.

THE ALPINE TALES

PAUL J. WILLIS (WORDFARM)



Paul Willis, whose poetry I love, induced me to plunge into an eco-fantasy with a heavy dose of mountain climbing, set in the Three Queens wilderness of the Cascade Mountains (and profoundly Christian in its inspiration). I read the first two of these four linked novels in the mid-1990s and looked forward to the next installment. It has been a long wait, but now, thanks to WordFarm, the entire set is available in a big, handsome volume. Take it on your next trip to the campground—or settle down with it, as I did, in the comfort of your own bed.

LIFE, THE UNIVERSE, AND EVERYTHING

An Aristotelian Philosophy for a Scientific Age
RIC MACHUGA (CASCADE BOOKS)



Someone should send a copy of Ric Machuga's book to Stephen Hawking, who claims that science has rendered philosophy irrelevant. *Life, the Universe, and Everything* is the equivalent of a class offered

by a master teacher. (I hope it will be available before long via The Great Courses or a competitor.) For a sample, take a look at Chapter 9, "Are Humans Really Free?" It's one of the best treatments I've ever seen of this endlessly debated and endlessly obfuscated subject.

Christianizing the Social Network

Tim Challies looks at emerging technology through a theological lens. Interview by Matthew Lee Anderson

Blogger Tim Challies understands both technology's potential and its potential seduction. He uses emerging tools to keep his 15,000 visitors updated daily at Challies.com. His new book, **The Next Story: Life and Faith after the Digital Explosion** (Zondervan), considers our reliance on technology and how it impacts our faith. Matthew Lee Anderson spoke with Challies about how Christians might think theologically about technology.

You write that we are “molded and formed into the image of what shapes us.” What risks do technologies like Facebook and YouTube pose to the Christian life?

When technologies give us an ability, they also give us a desire. Before Twitter or Facebook, none of us cared about moment-by-moment updates from friends. But with the new tools, we've grown to desire—and sometimes even demand—that sort of information. YouTube heightens and preys upon our desire to see and be seen. It makes us exhibitionists, telling us that any part of the human experience can be someone's entertainment.

You point out that the “new Calvinists” gained influence by adopting technology. How do you see those tools shaping the movement?

You can't really understand new Calvinism apart from the Internet. It allowed us to hear from these people in an unprecedented way.

We seem to have short attention spans, and much of what we're learning and hearing comes through social media. Far more people are getting John Piper in 140-character chunks than are listening to his 45-minute sermons, which means we're not learning in more holistic ways.

Is a specifically Reformed understanding

of technology possible?

If it is, I don't know that I want to major in it. But certainly, I am Reformed in my understanding of God's sovereignty over all creation and my heightened sense of human depravity. A Reformed understanding would take into account God's sovereignty even over

technology as the starting point and ending point. God saw fit to allow us technology, and God cares

how we use it. Our job is to ensure that we're using technology in a way that's subject to his authority.

Does the emphasis on depravity lead to a stronger sense of caution or skepticism toward new technologies?

I think Reformed theology causes us to expend more effort understanding our sinfulness. That might give us a different starting point when we look at technology. We might have more reasons to doubt ourselves, but we also need a heightened sense of God's sovereignty.

You seem ambivalent about the “rise of the images,” which some Christians have praised for creating a more holistic, less rationalistic faith than the print culture brought about. How should Christians relate to images?

The Christian faith is carried by words. Jesus Christ is not the picture—he's the Word. And we have to acknowledge that God saw fit to record Scripture for us in words. We don't have to fear images, but we should be wary of them.

The promise of the Internet was universality. You emphasize the role geography plays in the formation of our communities. What role

should distance and proximity play in choosing a church?

The problem actually goes back to the automobile, which gave people the opportunity to attend commuter churches rather than community churches. The ability to attend church a long ways away forced people to rethink church.

But in a world shaped by the Internet, people find their hearts drawn to churches a thousand miles away rather than a short drive away. As a result, they relate to people through chats and forums rather than face to face. It leads to a very mediated form of church community.

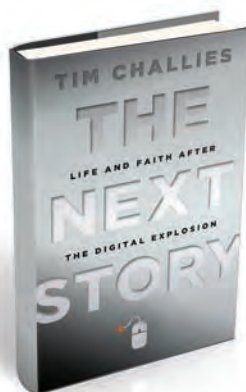
You defend the role of authority in culture against the “radical egalitarianism” that the Internet promises. Do you think this egalitarian ethos undermines biblical authority?

The Internet has certainly flattened authority. We don't care about book reviews from experts anymore as much as we care about the quality of reviews. If we see authority flattened online and everywhere else, we expect to see authority flattened in the home and the church. The ideology of digital technology is this disruption of hierarchy, so we import that into other areas.

It seems clear from Scripture that authority is built into human experience, that God intends for there to be hierarchy. We should celebrate authority and use caution toward anything that might disrupt it. At the same time, there is not necessarily anything wrong with particular authority structures being dismantled. The idea that we make decisions based on more amateur book reviews isn't necessarily wrong, but it is noteworthy.

In the final section, you mention using tools to help you focus more. What's the problem with that?

We tend to think that when technology causes a problem, the best way to solve it is with more technology. It's fine to get rid of technology or become less dependent on technology. But we shouldn't assume that there is another technology that can bring peace where we're finding conflict.



King James Goes to the Movies

Two documentaries look at the making of the kjv. By David Neff

If you like swashbucklers, Norman Stone's 90-minute **kjb: The Book That Changed the World** (new on DVD) ★★★★★ may be the best way for you to observe the 400th anniversary of the publication of the 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible. There are plenty of men in tights, not to mention clerical robes. They whisper political intrigues, plan to (literally) undermine the government, ride horseback through muddy fields, clang swords, and meet in solemn assemblies. Veteran actor John Rhys-Davies (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the Lord of the Rings) "presents" (in the British sense) the story with theatrical flair that teeters on the brink of self-parody.

Producer-director Stone (*Shadowlands*) arranged shooting locations—such as Sir Robert Cecil's historic home Hatfield House, Church of the Holy Rude in Stirling, and the Bodleian Library—that help ground the dramatic reconstructions.

The film presents James Stuart—

also known as King James I—as a brilliant monarch who took control of the political and religious landscape of England from his first moments on the throne. Unlike other monarchs, says Oxford don Peter McCullough, James had no learning curve, since he had previously wrestled the competing political and religious factions of Scotland into submission. Indeed, the young king showed that he could keep the factions off balance by interrupting the Puritan spokesman at the Hampton Court Conference, calling his proposals "a litany of dullness blown out your buttocks," and then giving the participants whiplash by granting the Puritan request for a new Bible translation and putting the opposing Anglican bishops in charge of the project.



If you aren't the swashbuckling type, Jerry Griffith's 42-minute **kjv: The Making of the King James Bible** (2010) ★★★★★ may be your choice. The film

has minimal historical re-enactment and substitutes a focus on the language choices faced by translators. It does not, however, ignore the political tensions of the 17th century.

The Latin Vulgate translates the opening verse of Psalm 23, *Dominus regit me*, as "the Lord rules me." Such language fits the thought world of a monarchy. God is a king. The king is like God. And so forth. But the Geneva Bible, a KJV predecessor beloved by 16th-century English Protestants, portrayed God as a shepherd in the language now familiar to us. Such language choices not only made for a more accurate English rendering of the Hebrew text, it expanded the believer's view of God's tender care.

Perhaps this film's greatest asset is Adam Nicolson, author of the 2003 book *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible*. His knowledgeable, witty commentary and chipmunkish charm provide an excellent framework for this even-tempered documentary.

David Neff is editor in chief of CT.

MY TOP 5 MOVIES ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT

By Russ Breimeier, freelance film critic and currently unemployed



CINDERELLA MAN

2005 | RATED PG-13

DIRECTED BY RON HOWARD

This movie, about 1930s prizefighter James Braddock, is packed with a lot of heart. Behind the realistic bouts and sports history is a loving family man willing to do whatever he can to provide for his wife and children, even if it means sacrificing his dreams and pride.



ERIN BROCKOVICH

2000 | RATED R

DIRECTED BY STEVEN SODERBERGH

Based on the true story of an unemployed mother of three who forced her way into a job as a legal clerk and built an anti-pollution case against a California utility company. *Erin Brockovich* has become a name for someone with tenacity and perseverance.



THE JOURNEY OF NATTY GANN

1985 | RATED PG

DIRECTED BY JEREMY KAGAN

Disney's adventure demonstrates how tough the Great Depression was on kids, namely the teenage girl of the title who journeys across America to reunite with her father. Grounded by strong performances, including a young John Cusack.



TOOTSIE

1982 | RATED PG

DIRECTED BY SYDNEY POLLACK

This light-hearted, quirky comedy stars Dustin Hoffman as an unemployed actor who pretends to be a woman for a full-time role in a soap opera. Beneath the hilarity is a sobering reminder that landing a job sometimes requires thinking outside the box, to say the least.



UP IN THE AIR

2009 | RATED R

DIRECTED BY JASON REITMAN

George Clooney is stellar as a veteran hatchet man who has lost his ability to form meaningful relationships, living a life on the road. Ultimately this is a poignant drama about identity and what defines us. If we are nothing more than our occupation, what remains when that is gone?

TWO MINUTES WITH...

Rebecca St. James



Christian pop-rock star Rebecca St. James has long been the poster child for the abstinence movement, preaching purity and singing "Wait for Me" for more than a decade. Now 33, St.

James is newly married (as of late April). After writing books and acting in films (most notably the pro-life movie *Sarah's Choice*), she just released her first studio album in more than five years—a worship project entitled *I Will Praise You*. CT's Mark Moring spoke with St. James.

You're known for your abstinence message. How will that change now?

I'll still sing "Wait for Me," but now I'll be able to tell the end of the story. Getting married is the fulfillment of that purity message. And for that message to have its true power, this wedding had to happen in God's timing, not mine.

Did you ever doubt your own message of remaining abstinent?

It's not that I doubted the message. But I struggled with loneliness and even feeling a bit embarrassed, being in my 30s and not married. I've questioned, "God, do you have somebody for me? Have I written the song about nobody—in my case, anyway? Maybe it was just a song for other people to sing?" A few years ago, I felt like God called me to take my hands off of that dream to get married, even if it was his will for me to remain single. That was a grieving time, where you kind of die emotionally, going, "Woe is me."

It's been almost five and a half years since your last album. Why now?

I've had some time away from the art form of music, enough to appreciate it in a fresh, new light. They say change is as good as a holiday, and I think the change of focusing on films and books predominantly for a while really refreshed me for music.

It's a straight-up worship album, not a pop album. Why?

Worship has always been an essential part of what I feel called to do. For this album, I wanted fresh worship songs to engage people with God.



On the Road Again

Emmylou Harris suggests God drives a hard bargain on this leg of her journey. By Josh Hurst

In 2005, Emmylou Harris released a greatest-hits package with the subtitle *Heartaches and Highways*—an appropriate image for an artist whose life and music have embraced the familiar metaphor of life as a road, a journey, even a pilgrimage.

Her new album, *Hard Bargain* (Nonesuch Records) ★★★★★, actually begins with a song called "The Road," a title that can be read literally and metaphorically. The song blends her own story of the early days, playing alongside Gram Parsons, with biblical echoes and philosophical overtones. Harris sings of wandering in the wilderness before crooning that "for everything there is a season." The song's cornerstone lyric sounds like the confession of a weary pilgrim who's still making progress: "But down here under heaven, there never was a chart / To guide our way across this crooked highway of the heart."

The rest of *Hard Bargain* sounds like a travelogue written along that crooked highway, and the journey is as fraught with heartache as it is rich in grace and joy. "New

Orleans" is a surprisingly spirited song about Hurricane Katrina; rather than a song of devastation, it is one of resilience. "Darlin' Kate" is a sweet remembrance of Harris's departed friend, folk legend Kate McGarrigle, that finds joy in the prospect of a heavenly reunion.

But the artist who once cut an album called *Stumble into Grace* is sure to give the last word to a love divine. On the title song—a Ron Sexsmith cover—Harris, carried along by sprightly banjos, sings of a Love that won't allow her to give in to sadness: "When the world is breaking my heart, you drive a hard bargain."

Harris made the album with producer Jay Joyce, who lends it a simple elegance but also some country grit. "The Road" works a country-rock backbeat that's a far cry from the sleepy sound of 2008's *All I Intended to Be*. Joyce also contributes the final song, called "Cross Yourself"—a fitting last word for an album that mostly rests on holy ground. ➤

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





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BOOKS

► RADICAL TOGETHER

Unleashing the People of God for the Purpose of God

DAVID PLATT (MULTNOMAH)

★★★★★ Building on his best-selling book *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*, pastor David Platt challenges churches to seek the glory of God as churches, not merely individuals. Calling into question our devotion to “good things” that distract us from the “best things,” Platt reminds readers that the gospel that saves us from work saves us to work. Along the way, he clarifies the need for grace—not guilt—to be our motivation as we make disciples of all nations. —Trevin Wax

► THE LEGACY OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE

Celebrating 400 Years of the Most Influential English Translation

LELAND RYKEN (CROSSWAY)

★★★★★ English professor Leland Ryken celebrates the anniversary of the King James Version by recounting the translation’s history and influence throughout the world. This book is an extended apologetic for the literary superiority of the kjv and other translations that hold to the same philosophy. In Ryken’s demonstration of kjv influence, however, it is not always apparent if the ubiquity of kjv references is directly attributable to the translation quality of the kjv or simply more evidence of the power of the biblical text. —Trevin Wax

► HITLER IN THE CROSSHAIRS

A GI’s Story of Courage and Faith

MAURICE POSSLEY AND JOHN WOODBRIDGE (ZONDERVAN)

★★★★★ Many evangelicals know church historian John Woodbridge for his masterful scholarship. Surely very few know about his personal connection to an astounding World War II heirloom: a golden pistol owned by Adolf Hitler. Nearly six years ago, a news notice of the weapon’s impending auction triggered a flashback, sending Woodbridge scrambling to locate surviving relatives of the devout young soldier who snatched it up and gave it to his father. With award-winning journalist Maurice Possley, Woodbridge reconstructs the adventures of Ira “Teen” Palm—whose team raided Hitler’s Munich apartment—and the golden gun this man of faith found in lieu of the Führer. —Matt Reynolds

MUSIC

STEVE BELL

► ‘KIN·DNESS

(SIGNPOST)

★★★★★ Steve Bell, to whom the lazy lyric is anathema, delivers another selection of smart poetry on his 16th album. He penned some lyrics, some are inspired by the works of others, and several are by his favorite contemporary artists. Highlights include the title cut written by Brian McLaren: “Christ has no body here but ours / No hands no feet here on earth but ours / Ours are the eyes through which he looks on this world with kindness.” And in “Birth of a Song,” Bell croons his own lines: “Author of the mysteries / Ecstasy of blazing suns / And swooning moons and these crooning / Winds and water, earth and fire.” —Mark Moring

MICHAEL ANTHONY MILTON

► THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR

(MUSIC FOR MISSIONS)

★★★★★ Michael Anthony Milton writes books, leads the Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina, and hosts a Bible study program on DIRECTV. Oh, and he’s a singer-songwriter in the folk genre. Here, Milton and his collaborators—including Michael Card—have crafted a varied set of songs, tackling bluegrass, light rock, and country. It skews too heavily on the side of mellow material, but pulls off some unexpected moments, including the arresting strings and piano in the closing track, “Eclogue for the Church Triumphant,” which, heard free of Milton’s reading of Revelation 21:5, reminds me of no less than the Lou Reed/John Cale collaboration *Songs for Drella*. —Robert Ham

ON TV

► FREEDOM RIDERS

PBS | NOT RATED | MAY 16

★★★★★ Martin Luther King Jr. is the most well-known face of the civil rights movement, but a small group of blacks and whites who boarded two buses in May 1961 were equally courageous. This American Experience documentary tells of those brave souls, who intended to ride through the Deep South, deliberately but peacefully violating Jim Crow laws along the way—by sitting together in whites-only establishments. They were met with racism and mob violence, but continued their brave quest in a saga that ultimately pulled in the police, governors, the National Guard, the Kennedys, and a watching world—and, in the end, was a major victory for civil rights. —Mark Moring

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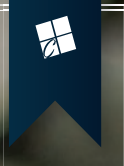
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The decision to attend seminary or graduate school is rarely as simple as finding the perfect program and signing up. Today's graduate students tend to be older, and their lives are already full of professional, family, and church responsibilities. Given the complexity of daily living and the ubiquity of the Internet, the practicalities of distance learning can be very attractive: earn the degree without quitting one's job or uprooting the family, complete coursework at any hour, and do it at a reduced cost.

"One of the first things prospective students look at is how accessible the programs are: can they stay in their current ministry context and go to school without relocating? This is a huge concern for our students," says Joseph Dworak, director of Admissions and

Strategic Initiatives at Bethel Seminary (with locations in St. Paul, San Diego, New England, and Washington, D.C.). Just as important is whether the degrees offered through Bethel's InMinistry Distance Learning program are compatible with their own professional goals.

"Typically, those in ministry place a high value on godly stewardship," says Rick Walston, president of Columbia Evangelical Seminary (CES) in Buckley, Washington. He adds that students "carefully weigh their priorities in an attempt to determine if the tuition is a good investment of their finances."

One of the other pressing questions, Walston observes, concerns academic integrity. "Students want to know that they will receive a solid education that is comparable to the traditional classroom setting. In many cases the same curriculum and professors are

used in the traditional classroom as well as through distance learning, thus assuring the prospective student that the education itself is virtually identical."

Geographical distance doesn't always drive students toward distance learning, observes Mary Lowe, dean of the Erskine Virtual Campus (EVC) at Erskine Theological Seminary (with campuses in Due West and Columbia, South Carolina). Jobs and other responsibilities can also prevent people from committing to traditional on-campus programs regardless of their proximity. These students "express interest in taking courses in a manner that allows them to continue working in their places of ministry," Lowe says, and they appreciate the "anytime, anywhere" flexibility that online classes offer. "They are also looking for quality course content and professors who will guide them through areas of interest that

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will impact their work and ministry.”

Program options and delivery systems vary widely. Seminaries that are accredited by The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) are required to structure most master’s degrees so that “at least one year of full-time academic study or its equivalent” is completed on campus, according to the ATS Standards of Accreditation. To comply, these seminaries have constructed their Master of Divinity (M.Div.) and Master of Arts (M.A.) distance programs so that the equivalent number of credit hours—totaling one-third of the M.Div. and one-half of the M.A.—are taken on-site, usually through periodic intensive courses. For instance, distance education students in Bethel Seminary’s M.Div. and certain M.A. degree programs complete their online courses in the fall and spring and then come to campus for one-week intensives in January and June.

As much as possible, distance education providers strive for continuity in course content. Through the

Erskine Virtual Campus, students may take online courses that can be applied toward any of the seminary’s M.Div. and M.A. programs. “Erskine Theological Seminary seeks to align its [curricular] building blocks with the standards required by the ATS, which stipulate that schools must ‘provide opportunities through which students may grow in personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness,’” Lowe says. “We want solid theological education of the same quality as offered in our on-campus courses, we want pedagogical soundness in course delivery so students maximize their learning, and we want online courses to form students spiritually just like [our] on-campus courses. In essence, although the delivery system is different, the content, process, and goals are identical.”

At the Grand Rapids Theological Seminary (GRTS) of Cornerstone University (Grand Rapids, Michigan), students may take up to five distance education courses toward any of the seminary’s master’s degrees. “Most

[GRTS] students will take at least a couple of online or distance classes during their degree,” observes Graham McKeague, director of Admissions. And oftentimes, McKeague adds, “The full-time GRTS faculty also teach the classes for our online degrees.”

At Northwestern College in St. Paul, all of the course requirements for two of its master’s degrees can be completed online. Whether students choose to work as part of an online learning group or do an independent study, all coursework must be completed during the semester. However, the curriculum is the same regardless of the chosen format, says Michelle Ulland, senior admission counselor. “Our admissions staff is very attentive to the individual needs and goals of prospective students. They are eager to make sure the student finds a right educational fit, rather than just fit someone into ‘our program.’”

Flexibility and specialization have always been hallmarks of Columbia’s degree programs. All of them—from an associate’s to a doctoral degree—are completed via distance learning

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and with no residency requirement. Coursework consists of self-paced study under the guidance of a faculty mentor, allowing students to pursue highly specialized majors or interdisciplinary studies as fits their educational goals. “Not only may students select mentors from our faculty, but also . . . pastors or educators from their own denominations or fellowships,” Walston says. “They may also build their curricula specifically to study the beliefs taught by their own denominations or fellowships. This is

level of accountability, she says, “primarily through access to student support services staff and by creating opportunities for ongoing contact with professors and other students.”

“Learning at a distance requires students to be disciplined about setting aside time to work through their classes,” agrees Bethel’s Dworak, noting that weekly assignments are one way to help students stay on track. Additionally, Bethel students “receive excellent support from our staff throughout the

technical abilities.”

Admissions officers want to make sure that prospective students understand both the benefits and the challenges of online study. “In general, we want to discourage prospective students from thinking of online degrees as the path of least resistance,” says Grand Rapids’ McKeague. “Often we describe what online degrees are *not* like in order to emphasize what they *are* like. For example, they are not any less academically rigorous, they typically require more discipline and motivation to complete than in-residence degrees, and they are not for everyone.” McKeague reports that he also asks potential students if their family, friends, and church support their decision to take seminary classes. “You will need their support to get through the tough times in the program,” he says.

One of the most frequently raised questions about distance education is relational: Does online study deprive students of meaningful relationship-building experiences? This issue is one reason why many schools employ the cohort model. “At the core of a quality distance education experience is the cohort, a group of adult learners who journey together through their degree work at Bethel Seminary,” Dworak says. “This group is critical to the success of its individual members, who are on campus but twice a year.”

Students in the M.Div. and M.A. programs at GRTS complete their core Bible and theology coursework as part of a cohort of 15 to 18 students who work closely with a faculty advisor. Progressing through these core classes as a group “is important for building relationships and community as they learn together,” McKeague says. Fostering “an environment for our students to build relationships with each other as learners, and with faculty, is a significant step in providing a quality education.”

Discussion boards and chat rooms can help students cultivate interpersonal connections as well. “We have found that the organic development of communication within a class group—students and instructors—becomes an enriching part of the distance-learning

One of the most frequently raised questions about distance education is relational: Does online study deprive students of meaningful relationship-building experiences?

especially important for the person who desires to become a full-time minister with a particular church.”

Because there is so much diversity in terms of program options, requirements, and delivery systems, prospective students are urged to examine any school’s distance-learning programs carefully to ensure that their educational and professional goals will be met. Prior to enrollment, students who want to teach at the undergraduate or graduate level “should first speak to prospective employers about what they require,” advises Walston. When the goal is ordination, missions, or some other form of church or parachurch ministry, “we advise students to communicate with the ‘gatekeepers’ of the careers or ministries they wish to pursue and find out if the specific organization will accept the prospective student’s distance education degree.”

Students are also encouraged to honestly assess whether a distance education would be a good fit for them personally. One challenge in distance learning, Northwestern’s Ulland says, is “the personal discipline required to stay on track with studies without a weekly face-to-face time; a great deal of self-discipline, motivation, and time management are required for success in the program.” Northwestern helps students maintain a healthy

entire process. Students who are at a distance cannot drop by campus to receive student support. Our InMinistry team is readily available online and by phone to help students register, to answer advising questions, and more.”

The technologies required to participate in distance education can sometimes be a barrier to learning. So schools ask prospective students to take this into consideration; they also reach out to those who need a little extra help. At Erskine, “We provide our students with a number of options that assist them in overcoming [any] fears related to technology,” Lowe reports, including “an online orientation, email and telephone access to a live help desk . . . [a] course that incorporates technology . . . and a tutorial that guides them through the course management system.”

To aid prospective students in discerning whether or not online study would be a good fit, Erskine has developed a self-administered Online Learning Readiness Assessment that’s available on the school’s website. Lowe says, “We counsel students to consider online learning readiness, self-directedness, technical limitations, and personal barriers that might inhibit a successful learning experience. We also counsel them to consider the technology requirements in terms of hardware, software, and their own

experience,” Northwestern’s Ulland says. She also points out that distance education students can interact with others on Moodle, the school’s Internet-based course management tool.

While many point to isolation as being a hazard of distance learning, “Some would argue that disconnection is not just a byproduct of online education, but may in fact reflect a national crisis,” says Erskine’s Lowe, who also serves as executive director of The Association of Christian Distance Education. “It is not a foregone conclusion that face-to-face classes generate natural community,” she points out, as some students use personal electronic devices to multitask incessantly while on campus, and others must leave immediately after class to meet the demands of their job, ministry, or family. “One of the trends we have noticed in online classes is the intentional effort students put forth to connect with one another, engage each other, and reflect more deliberately with course

content, professor interaction, and peer contribution.”

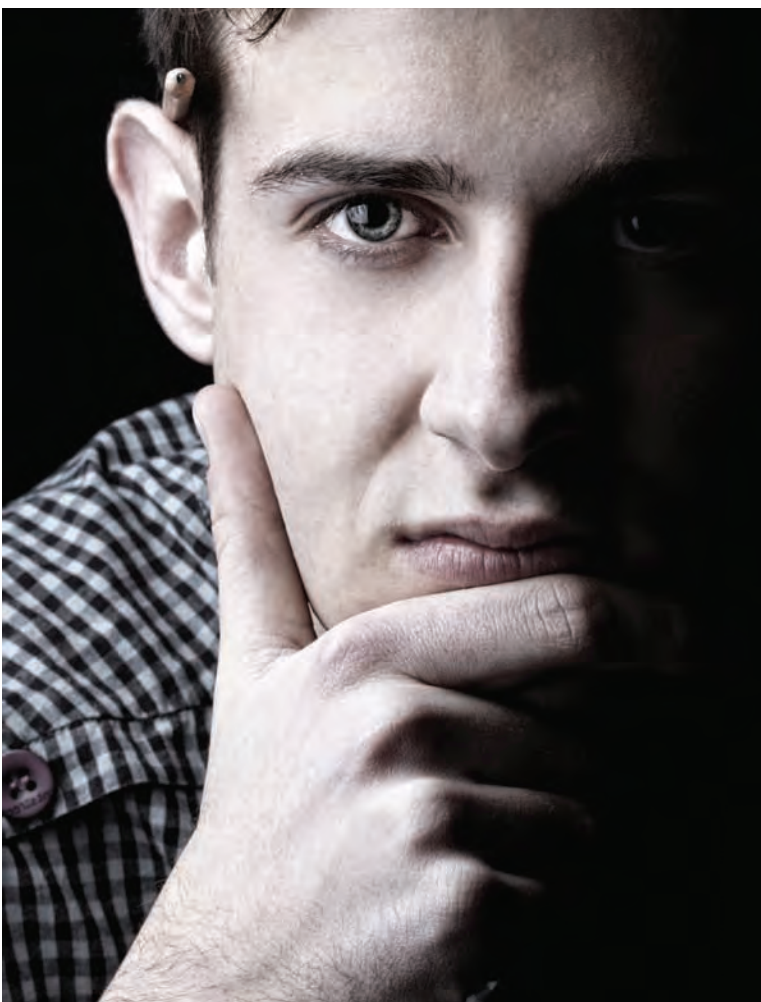
Seminary curricula, particularly for the M.Div. degree, include spiritual formation as a critical component of preparation for ministry. For Bethel’s distance education students, “The cohort model is essential to this process—spiritual formation is tough to do in isolation,” Dworak says. “The cohort members know each other very well, and a community is built that allows for spiritual formation to take place during intensive classes, online chats, and more.”

EVC students are expected to participate in online journals, discussion boards, or chat rooms. Sometimes, Lowe reports, the discussion board becomes a prayer room in which students post prayers, prayer requests, items for praise, and words of encouragement to one another. “In one research study conducted with Erskine Seminary students, the issue of community formation in online courses was self-reported to be instrumental in

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spiritual growth," she says. "The terms used by study participants to describe their online interactive experiences included *uplifting, prayerful support, encouragement, and reinforcement.*"

And relationship-building efforts between students and faculty members offer another context in which spiritual growth can blossom. Walston says Columbia's mentorship model

gives students "far more access to their mentor/professor than students typically have at traditional seminaries. Often, CES students and their mentors develop longer-term friendships, and their interactions during their degree programs become enriched by their personal interaction."

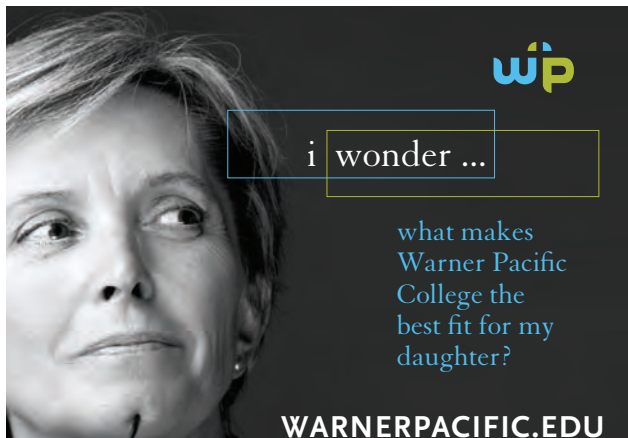
For those who are prepared to meet the challenges of distance education,

the benefits can be immensely rewarding. "The first and perhaps most obvious benefit is that such students do not have to uproot their families and careers," Walston says. "They can remain gainfully employed in their ministry and keep their family solidly in their community while they earn their degree through distance education."

Grand Rapids' McKeague agrees: "For those who could not [otherwise] gain access to a seminary-level education, it can be a very rewarding experience and a real answer to prayer."

In addition to the convenience and accessibility it offers, distance education may in fact enhance the direct application of coursework to ministry. "Traditional practices of theological education hold that students should be extracted from their ministry and relocated to a somewhat re-created sense of theological campus ministry," Lowe says. "Some studies have indicated that students feel it is more effective to stay in ministry while completing theological programs at a distance."

Bethel Seminary's Dworak has

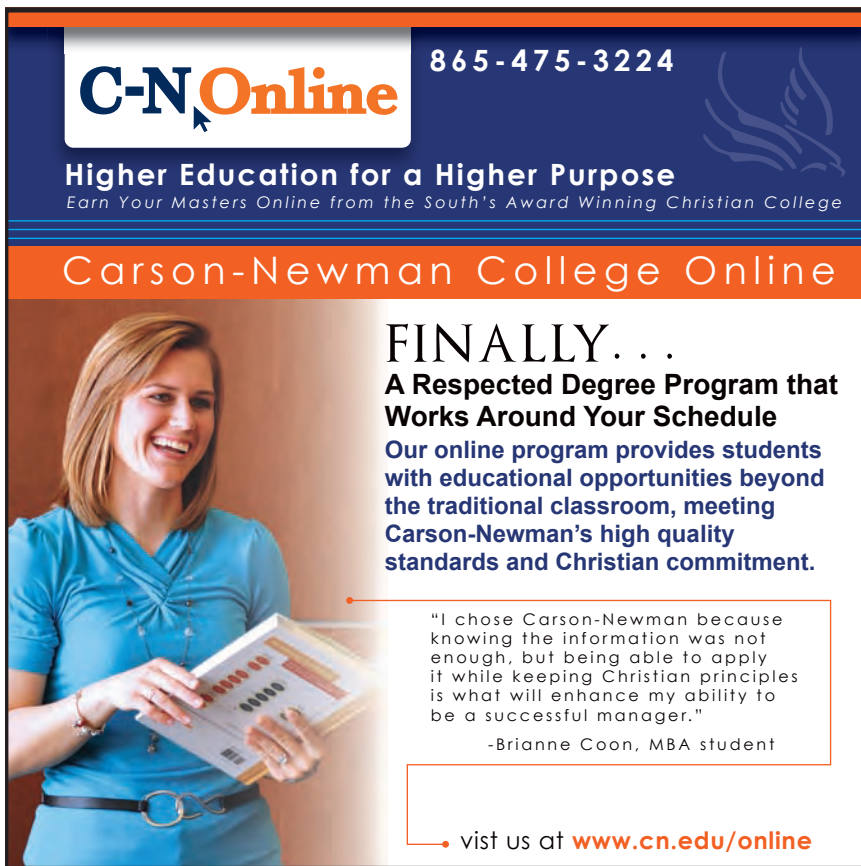


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observed a similar dynamic. "Each of our distance students already serves in a ministry context, so every day they enjoy the opportunity to instantly apply what they are learning," he says.

The key to a successful distance education, Walston argues, is self-motivation and the ability to set both short- and long-term goals. "Those who know how to set goals for themselves and are able to reach those goals will be more successful than those who do not. These people are often ambitious but also realistic."

Northwestern's Ulland agrees. "Like any educational endeavor, the student who has made a serious commitment to his or her education will succeed. We have seen great success stories emerge, from stay-at-home parents to busy executives to senior citizens," she says. "Success is determined much less by a particular profile than by a willingness to work, exercise self-discipline, and be dedicated to their studies."

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

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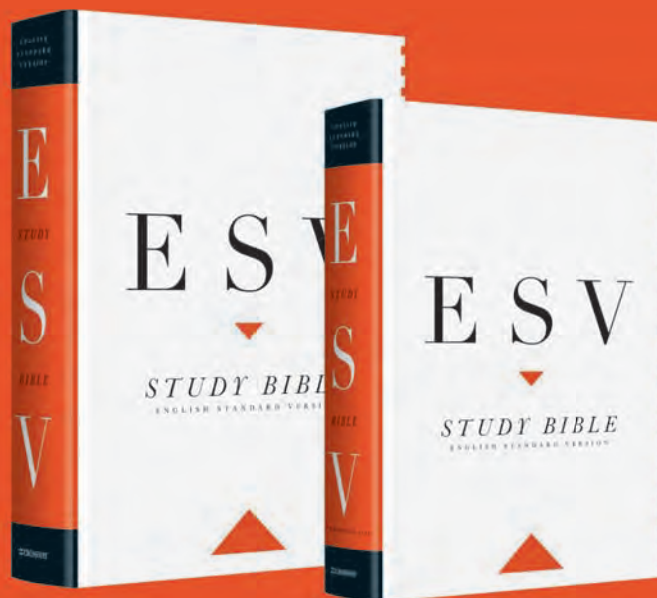
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One student's experience of the benefits of distance learning.

My heart's desire was always . . . to attend seminary right after Christian college.

However, God had a different curriculum for me that involved entering the work force first and ministry later—at the age of 38," says Gary Kniseley, a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) student at Moody Theological Seminary in Chicago. As pastor of Family/Children's Ministries for a church in Rockford, Illinois, Gary admits that his work and family demands once made seminary seem out of reach.

"The first year of ministry was exciting, but I longed to further my education. I knew that attending seminary was vital to [my preparation] to serve as a senior pastor," he says. As Gary surveyed his options, he kept returning to Moody because of the flexibility it offers through distance education. Moody's M.Div. degree may be completed through a combination of online and modular classes. In addition, evening, weekend, and directed (independent) study options are also available. "[Moody] makes every effort for distance learning to take place," he says. "As my wife and I prayed about this, we saw how this could work for me."

Gary's schedule has been rigorous, but the modular format (whereby students come to campus for one week of intensive study) has worked well for him. Courses begin with six weeks of pre-class assignments in preparation for the week spent on campus. "I certainly enjoy the modular format as it allows many students to gather on campus several times a year and stay

in contact," he says. "I [now] have four friends in Minnesota, Texas, Vermont, and Indiana. . . . I count them as close friends and comrades in ministry."

Another benefit of the modular format is that he never had to miss a Sunday while he was pastoring.

Not surprisingly, Gary's ministry work is demanding. "I was pastoring and putting in at least 50 hours a week . . . and trying hard to keep my family a priority. However, God slowed me down as I went

back to school," he says. The distance format of the coursework enables him to fit his studies around the ministry and time spent with his family.

Another benefit Gary has experienced at Moody is that "you gain a close relationship with the professors in such a short period of time. They have provided me great flexibility in so many formats to complete my schooling."

After six years of part-time study, Gary looks forward to graduating with his M.Div. degree this May. He says he does not regret the extra time he took to finish: "This pace allowed me to mesh my schooling into my ministry over the long haul. I believe it allowed me to mature as a pastor and learn to shepherd the flock of God like I never would have planned."

"Moody has long been highly respected for embracing the authority of God's Word, and it shows in everything they do with a spirit of excellence," he says. "I'm very proud of the quality of education I received. . . . Moody truly understands the rigors of those striving to complete their education at a later point in life."

—K.F.



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Paul Louis Metzger engages those outside the faith.

Paul Louis Metzger knows what it means to feel shunned. Sometimes mocked for his faith in his youth, he now says, “I have often felt like an outsider. And I’ve seen my wife, a native of Japan, treated as an outsider.”

Breaking down walls is at the heart of Metzger’s work as professor of theology and culture at Multnomah Biblical Seminary—and especially as founder and director of the seminary’s Institute for the Theology of Culture: New Wine, New Wineskins.

He wants to see “authentic expressions of holistic faith lived out” in a diverse culture, and pursues that by engaging various faith groups and secular organizations in conversation. Metzger, author of several books, including *Consuming Jesus: Beyond Race and Class Divisions in a Consumer Church*, is also passionate about racial reconciliation.

Evangelical civil-rights leader John M. Perkins says that in a divided society, “God is creating a post-racist people who are loving God first and sharing his love, and Paul is one of them.”

➤ **Hometown** Portland, Oregon

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➤ **Church** Imago Dei Community

➤ **Reading now** *Les Misérables*

➤ **Your hero** John M. Perkins

➤ **Favorite movie** *As Good as It Gets*; *To End All Wars*

➤ **Favorite Bible verse** Romans 8:37–39

➤ **Hobbies** Reading, listening to the blues, traveling

question & answer

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Such activities probably aren’t popular with everyone.

I’ve been called a heretic by the Right for befriending gays, Unitarian Universalists, and Buddhists, and a religious bigot by the Left for holding firmly to biblical truth.

Do you want to change the church?

No, I want God to change the church and me. So often, church and theology are shaped by gaining and maintaining power, which is what the “take back America” thinking is often about. We have a lot of things to repent of. In American Christianity, power brokering often replaces brokenness. If we are going to break through divisions, we need to listen to people on the other side first. Why should they listen to us if we don’t listen to them?

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