

Christianity Today

AUGUST 2011

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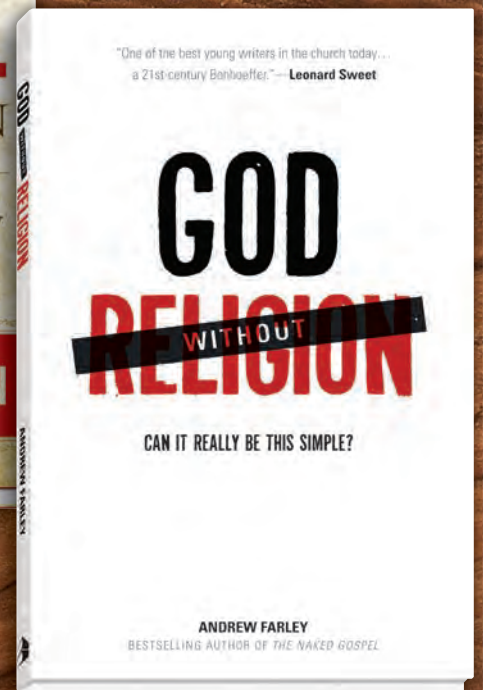
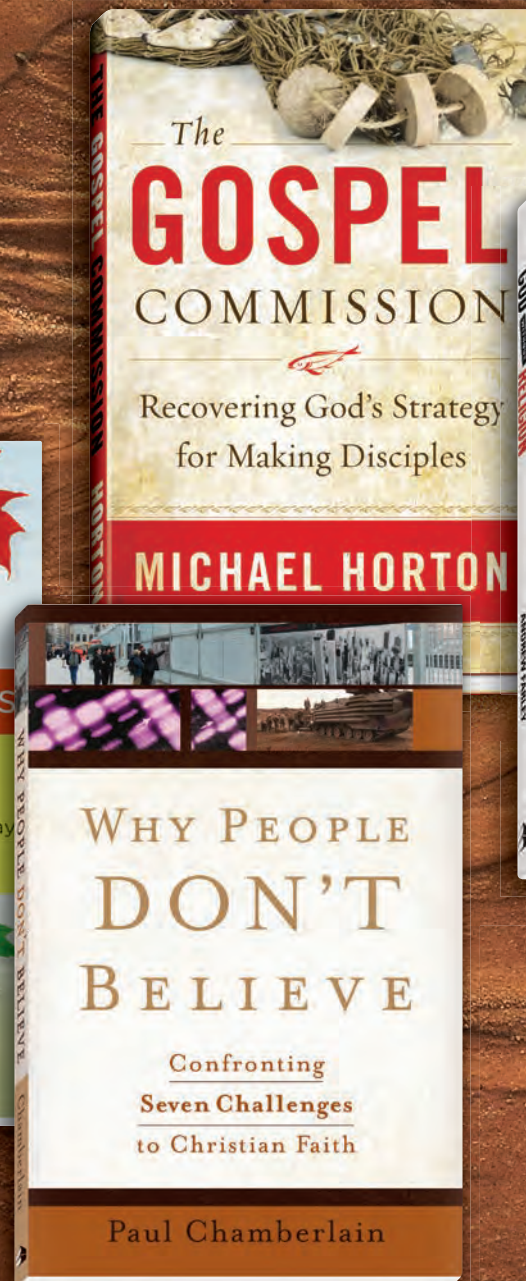
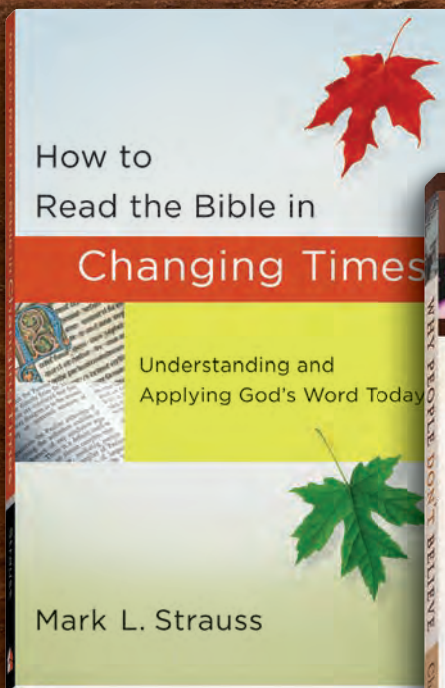
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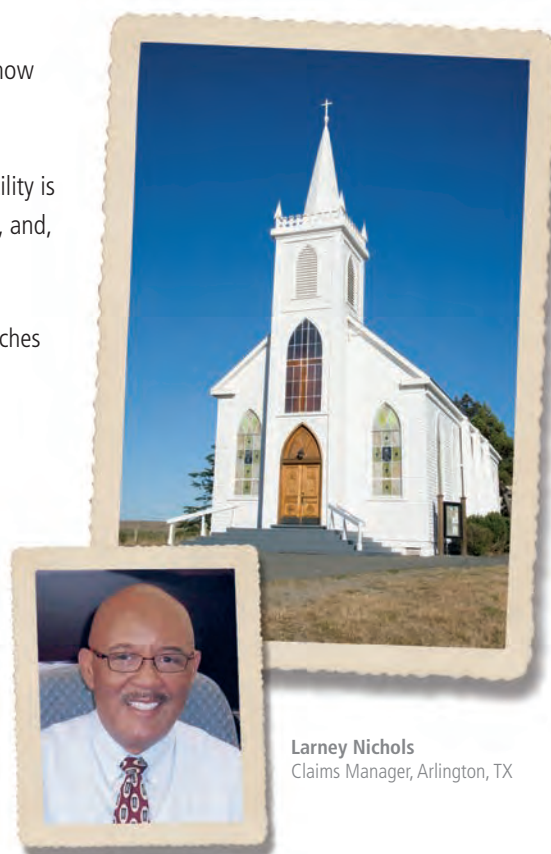
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Your Eyes on God's World

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 a recent issue, for example, CT senior writer Tim Stafford reported from India about the revival that has brought India its largest-ever Christian population. We also spotlighted the tricky position of Syria's Christians—who prefer the dictator they know to the “democracy” they don't. In this issue, Matthew LaPlante reports from Ethiopia about the tribal custom of killing *mingi* (cursed) infants, and Christians' efforts to save their lives (page 40).

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 have helped with connections and costs. In this issue, however, it is your direct contributions that have helped underwrite the travel costs associated with Matthew LaPlante's trip to Ethiopia. Results? This issue's report, plus two yet-to-be-published stories.

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

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

David Neff, Editor in Chief

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Do They Like Us?

Yes, so let's move on.

T

he topic of this month's cover story has been a topic of conversation among CT editors for years. We've had our share of contributors who see *Christianity Today* as a vehicle to present a respectable evangelicalism.

Other writers want to use CT to scold evangelicals whenever they embarrass us in public. So, yes, we've had to wrestle with the cover story's thesis time and again. But we're ready to move on.

A movement that casts anxious glances to see how it's doing in the eyes of others is in either childhood or adolescence. It's either anxious to please authority figures, or fears the disapproval of peers. In both cases, it's not yet acting like an adult. It's time for evangelicals to put away childish things. I hope the cover story ("They Like You," page 20) goes a long way in both bolstering our sagging self-esteem and giving us confidence to act like adults.

Adult here means people who know their calling and spend their energy fulfilling it. They don't worry about what people think, nor do they take constant readings of how they are doing. Periodic feedback and reflection, of course—we do want the gospel to be *heard*. But enough already.

The fact is that in the end, people don't care if we are cool. They don't think it an improvement to call ourselves "Jesus followers" instead of "Christians," let alone "evangelicals." They don't care that we sing hymns. They don't mind if we wear skinny ties or long dresses or teetotal. What people care about is whether they are loved. By God. And by others.

The question we want to debate in this hallway and these pages is not, "Are we making a good impression?" but, "How can we love the people for whom Jesus died?"

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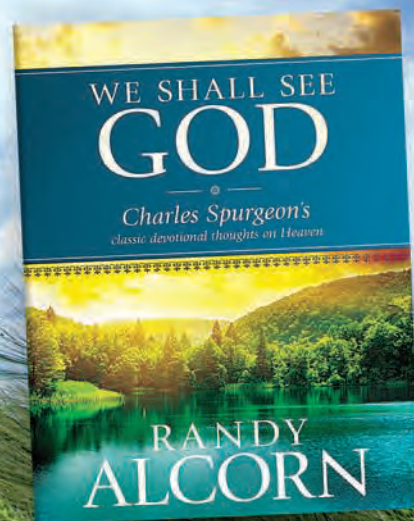
Next month: The 9/11 Tenth Anniversary Issue: Russell Moore on memory and forgiveness; J. Dudley Woodberry on how missions to Muslims have changed in the past decade; and Andrew White, the "Vicar of Baghdad," on how Christians can relate to Muslims in the coming decade.



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SPOTLIGHT: Polling Global Evangelical Leaders

➤ **LAST OCTOBER'S GATHERING** of 4,000 evangelical leaders in South Africa resulted in the "Cape Town Commitment." Now the Lausanne delegates are speaking again as the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life releases its survey data from the meeting. It showed unanimity where you'd expect it, on issues like the exclusivity of Christ and the need for evangelism. But some differences emerged, too.

Two out of three Global South leaders believe Jesus will return in their lifetimes, and 73% believe in the **Rapture**. **Europe** was the only region with a majority doubtful of the Rapture.

60% of **Asia-Pacific** leaders say wives must always obey their husbands. That's similar to the Mideast and sub-Saharan Africa, but not the Global North (42%). Leaders globally say **women** don't have to stay at home and raise children (63%). Every region but the Mideast said women can serve as pastors by 70% or more.

81% of all leaders said the **government** must take care of very poor people who cannot take care of themselves. Only 56% of **U.S.** leaders agreed.

While most of the Global South is nearly unanimous that society should discourage **homosexuality**, **Latin America** is the only region where a majority said society should accept it.

42% of leaders in **sub-Saharan Africa** say **short-term missions** are very valuable. Only 20% of Western leaders agree.

Mideast leaders are the most wary of **political involvement**, but 65% say religious leaders should speak on politics. Most Global South leaders (58%) said the Bible should be the official law of the land; only 28% of Global North leaders agreed.

Global South vs. Global North

RESPONDENTS WHO SAY . . .

	GLOBAL SOUTH	GLOBAL NORTH
I share my faith weekly with someone of another religion.	34%	16%
Christian schools in my country are good at nurturing Christian faith.	39%	54%
In five years, the state of evangelicalism will be better than now.	71%	44%
Evolution has occurred, guided by God.	34%	50%

Note: "Global North" was defined in this survey as Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.



GLEANINGS

Important developments in the church and the world.

1 Court: Explain wave of Christian complaints

UNITED KINGDOM The European Court of Human Rights asked the government in June to state formally whether it believes four British Christians have had their religious rights violated. Two of the four faced discipline at work for wearing cross necklaces; the other two received sanctions for refusing services to homosexual couples. British courts have repeatedly dismissed their complaints. Trevor Phillips, chairman of the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission, told *The Telegraph* that Christians do face discrimination but that politically motivated faith groups often blow it out of proportion. The Evangelical Alliance UK disputed Phillips's remarks.

collective bargaining if it might interfere with their first responsibility to a religious mission. But the NLRB found that the Catholic school is not a "church-operated institution" and lacks a "substantial religious character." The NLRB issued a similar ruling against Manhattan College in January. Both schools argue their inclusion of non-Catholic faculty and students is evidence of church teaching, not secularism.

4 Refugees improperly quizzed on religion

CANADA Refugee advocates are criticizing immigration officials after details emerged about a Chinese Christian's 2007 hearing. The refugee board denied the man's religious refugee status because, it said, he could not describe what Jesus was "like as a person" beyond creedal statements. Canada's Federal Court upheld the refugee board's decision this year, but admitted that the questions were "somewhat awkward." The court also recently ruled that an Egypt-based visa officer had made bad decisions when interviewing four Eritrean nationals, such as asking two professing Pentecostals to name the "seven gifts of the Holy Spirit."

2 Trial suspended for massacre suspects

PAKISTAN Nearly 70 suspects in the massacre of Christians in Gojra have a year of freedom on bail after the Anti-Terrorism Court suspended the trial because a key witness fled the country. The August 2009 attack, triggered by rumors that Gojra Christians had desecrated the Qur'an, left ten Christians dead and almost 100 homes burned. Witnesses have reported facing intimidation, and several have already fled the country.

3 Colleges deemed not religious enough

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) decided in May that Chicago's St. Xavier's University cannot prevent its adjunct faculty from unionizing. Federal law allows religious schools to prohibit

5 Lawmakers mull limiting abortion

RUSSIA Parliamentarians are considering legislation that would outlaw free abortions at state facilities and require a prescription for the morning-after pill. While abortion was common during the Soviet era, a pro-life movement has recently materialized, spurred by a resurgent Russian Orthodox

Church and concerns over Russia's dangerously low birthrate. The United Nations says Russia has the highest abortion rate in the world, and the country's abortions significantly outnumber births.

6 Denominational funds eliminated

The Christian-focused investment firm FaithShares liquidated four of its five exchange-traded funds on July 15. Due to lack of investor interest, the firm said it shut down funds supporting the denominational values of Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, and Catholics. A general Christian Values Fund remains active.

7 College drops national anthem

Indiana's Goshen College decided in June to drop its brief experiment with playing the national anthem before athletic events. The 117-year-old Mennonite school has in the past rejected "The Star-Spangled Banner" as too entwined with military imagery and nationalism, which pacifist Mennonites traditionally reject. In February 2010, Goshen started playing an instrumental version of the song; now, after a year of debate, the school is looking for an alternative that honors both American and Mennonite traditions.

8 Karnataka Christians demand justice

INDIA The state government of Karnataka will furnish funds to its Christian community for the first time, earmarked to promote community development and help rebuild churches. Karnataka churches suffered numerous attacks in 2008 and 2009, and observers accuse the state government, dominated by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, of being too lenient with those responsible. "Christians want justice, not money," said Indian archbishop Bernard Moras, according to Asianews.it.

GO FIGURE Abortion

100,000
Babies saved from abortion through Focus on the Family's Operation Ultrasound program, which provides grants for machines and sonography training, since its 2004 launch.

Focus on the Family/
The Denver Post



compiled by Ted Olsen

QUOTATION MARKS

“When [people] believe that their religion answers to a superior God than that of others, the nation is in peril.”

Raila Odinga, prime minister of Kenya, addressing the country's Pentecostal Assembly of God.

KBC

“This is an unforgivable act to divide the nation.”

Son An-shik, a South Korean Buddhist leader, on President Lee Myeong Bak kneeling in prayer at a Christian national prayer service.

KoreanBuddhism.net

“I don't think it's a very religious story.”

Darren Aronofsky (director of *Black Swan* and *The Wrestler*), on his planned \$130 million film about Noah's ark. (2007's *Evan Almighty* ark film reportedly cost \$175 million.)

[Independent Film Channel](http://IndependentFilmChannel)

“Most of them are bi-vocational . . . so most aren't able to get to the Convention and the state meetings because of their job schedules. But times are changing now . . .”

Fred Luter, the first black pastor to serve as first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, on why the denomination has 5,000 African American churches but few minority leaders.

Time

“He who tears down that temple, may God judge him and his offspring.”

Serbian Orthodox Church Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro, in Christmas comments about the possible demolition of a local church. He is now on trial for hate speech.

B92

9 Justice Dept. contests ccm star's parsonages

The Department of Justice appealed a U.S. Tax Court ruling that trumpeter Phil Driscoll can claim a parsonage allowance on two homes. The IRS had earlier determined that Driscoll could claim his primary residence in Cleveland, Tennessee, but not his second home. At issue is whether the clergy tax exemption of “a home” is singular or plural. Driscoll, a Grammy Award winner with dozens of Christian albums, has already served time in prison for multiple counts of income-tax evasion during the years at issue.

10 Catholic island wants divorce legal

MALTA A modest majority of voters (52.7%) in the overwhelmingly Catholic island nation approved a non-binding referendum to make divorce legal. It is now up to the Maltese parliament to enact the legislation, which would allow divorce for couples who have been separated for at least four years. Malta, where nearly three-quarters of the population goes to Mass on Sundays, would be the last nation in Europe to allow divorce.

11 Belgium eyes minority sects

BELGIUM A proposed law may outlaw some “sectarian” religious groups. The law, according to Belgian newspaper *De Morgen*, penalizes “the abuse of vulnerable persons.” Lawmakers who support the measure want to use it to root out religious practices they consider “physical or psychological subjection” or “techniques susceptible to alter one's capacity of discernment.” Critics say the law's wording is vague and would serve as an excuse to discriminate against minority faiths. The Evangelical Alliance of Belgium said some Pentecostal groups

have been mislabeled “cults” in the past, but alliance members now have sufficient state recognition to avoid running afoul of such a law.

12 Victoria debates church-state questions

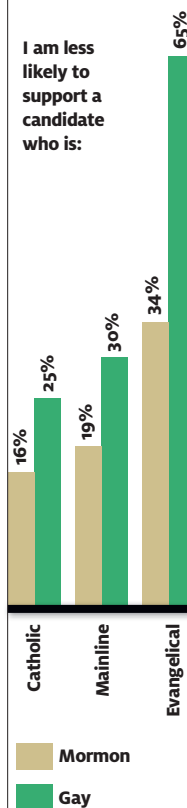
AUSTRALIA Public education in the state of Victoria is fielding heavy criticism because more than 90 percent of the teachers in its Special Religious Instruction program come from the Christian group ACCESS Ministries. Detractors accuse ACCESS of proselytizing in class and say the state should take its cues from the United Kingdom, which replaced Christian-focused classes with “world religions” education in the 1970s. Meanwhile, Victoria's Legislative Assembly changed its new anti-discrimination law. Among the changes, it no longer requires religious organizations to show that adherence to religious doctrine is an “inherent requirement of the job” if they wish to discriminate on religious or sexual grounds.

13 Anglicans retain faith but not building

CANADA Four Anglican churches in Vancouver lost their final chance to keep their buildings when the Supreme Court of Canada declined to hear their appeal. A British Columbia appeals court in November had ruled that the properties—worth \$20 million—belong to the Anglican Church of Canada, not the congregations. The churches (which include St. John's, the largest Anglican church in Canada) left the denomination in 2008 over the blessing of same-sex unions and other issues. “We've always said from the get-go that we might have to choose between our faith and our buildings, and we chose our faith,” Cheryl Chang, chancellor to the Anglican Network in Canada, told the *National Post*.

GO FIGURE Politics

I am less likely to support a candidate who is:



Pew Research Center



Delayed Departures: Resettlement agencies laid off staff after a new Department of Homeland Security screening disrupted refugees' flights to the U.S.

REFUGEES

Canceled Flights

New policies threaten resettlement agencies.

By Susan Wunderink

More than 77,000 refugees were expected to come to the United States in 2011. Instead, fewer than 55,000 will arrive, because of new security screening implemented abruptly this winter.

Like many other resettlement offices, the World Relief branch in Durham, North Carolina, relies on per-refugee grants to pay staff. When no refugees arrived in Durham between late February and April, the office cut employee pay by eight hours a week. Nationally, World Relief and Church World Service offices have experienced significant layoffs because of a new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy.

In February, World Relief Durham was preparing for new refugees when the arrival flights were suddenly deleted from the tracking system. Resettlement director Andrew Castle found there were hundreds of unexpectedly canceled flights, attributed to a new DHS

policy that requires a pre-departure check to make sure refugees are still eligible to come to America.

"It seems . . . that even the State Department was somewhat caught off-guard," said Dan Kosten, chair of the Refugee Council USA.

The delay can last past the expiration of refugees' medical clearances, requiring them to start much of the resettlement process over again.

In the past, similar screenings took place six months to two years prior to a refugee's flight to the U.S., says Kosten. He explains that DHS was concerned that during the long processing period, "refugees could be pulled into activities that would disqualify them."

The number of cases on hold because of terrorism concerns rose to 373 per month by May. Because the 2001 Patriot Act defines "material support" to terrorists very broadly, refugee families who have paid ransoms, been victims of armed robbery, or provided medical care

to members of certain groups, for example, have to wait indefinitely for admission or green cards.

Many of these refugees are Christians. Emily Gray, executive director of World Relief DuPage in Wheaton, Illinois, says refugees can revitalize the American church. "About 15 refugee churches have started in the 30 years we've been working here," she said.

After this summer, it may be more difficult for Christian refugees to reach the U.S. The Lautenberg Amendment, which expedited resettlement for persecuted religious minorities in Iran, the former USSR, and Indochina, expired on June 1. The program has admitted thousands of refugees every year.

The State Department responded to resettlement agencies' concerns about the low number of arrivals by guaranteeing funding for 60,000 refugee admissions, ensuring that agencies will be able to retain staff.

Agencies are trying to undo the damage, even as they celebrate the 60th anniversary of the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention.

But the effects will likely be far-reaching. Gray says her office's job-creation program will be underfunded because of the reduced number of participants. Castle worries that property managers will be unwilling to sign future contracts for refugees after he had to cancel six apartment rentals this winter.

"In the long run, these security screenings are a good thing," said Castle. "[But] it didn't happen right, and it's had a devastating effect across the refugee network."

GO FIGURE Catholicism

8.6
Catholic marriages
per 1,000 U.S.
Catholics in 1972.

2.6
Catholic marriages
per 1,000 U.S.
Catholics in 2010.

Our Sunday Visitor

PUBLISHING

Gender Debate

SBC pastors denounce
NIV. By Bob Smietana

Southern Baptists have asked their denomination-owned retail chain to stop selling a best-selling Bible translation, saying

it contains errors when it comes to language about gender.

Church delegates passed a resolution at their June annual meeting in Phoenix criticizing the 2011 update to the New International Version (NIV) as an “inaccurate translation of God’s inspired Scripture.” They asked LifeWay Christian Resources not to sell the NIV 2011, which avoids using male terms in passages where context suggests that both genders are intended, except where the pronoun in question has messianic allusions.

“This is as big as it gets,” said Tim Overton of Halteman Village Baptist Church in Muncie, Indiana. “This is the Word of God. . . I don’t think we have the luxury of not speaking to this important issue.”

But the convention’s resolution committee disagreed, declining Overton’s resolution when it was first submitted.

Committee member Russell Moore, dean of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told delegates that he has concerns about the new NIV but didn’t think it “rose to the level of needing to be addressed.”

Moore authored a 2002 resolution against a previous update, Today’s New International Version (TNIV). In that case, LifeWay’s leadership decided not to sell the edition.

The TNIV was a publishing flop, in part because of opposition from groups like Focus on the Family and the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Critics felt that the Committee on Biblical Translation (CBT), which produced the NIV and TNIV, had broken a promise they had made to James Dobson and other conservative leaders not to produce a gender-inclusive NIV.

But this time, members of the CBT reached out to critics like Moore.

That didn’t lead critics to embrace the new NIV. But it seems to have muted the criticism.

Douglas Moo, Blanchard Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College and spokesman for the CBT, said the Southern Baptist resolution

was unfair.

He said that the committee, comprising both complementarian and egalitarian scholars, followed the same translation standards as groups like Wycliffe Bible Translators. Their goal, Moo said, was not to appease TNIV critics but to create an accurate translation. “That was our only agenda,” he said.

Zondervan and the CBT have taken a wait-and-see approach to the possibility that LifeWay might drop the latest NIV.

“[We] will continue to sell the 2011 NIV while working through the process of review with our board of trustees,” said LifeWay spokesman Micah Carter.

“Resolutions are statements of opinion by messengers at a particular convention,” said Frank Page, president of the convention’s executive committee. “They are not legally binding.”

Zondervan plans to stop publishing the older NIV, said Verne Kenney, executive vice president of sales. But some pew editions are still being sold during the transition period.

“We’re doing that as a convenience to churches.”

CHURCH LIFE

Purity Practices

Old safeguards face coed workplace.

By Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra

The sexual escapades of powerful men are back in national headlines, highlighted recently by former Rep. Anthony Weiner, former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and former International Monetary Fund chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn.

Evangelical leaders have long maintained safeguards. But the days when a man could run a major organization or a government office

without being in close proximity to women colleagues are past, said Michael Lindsay, author of *Faith in the Halls of Power*. “As laudable as Dr. [Billy] Graham’s practice was—to never meet privately with a woman—it’s a practical impossibility in today’s workplace environment.”

That includes parachurch ministries, where women are climbing the ranks. In the past seven years, six women became presidents of evangelical colleges, Cherie Harder was appointed president of the Trinity Forum, and Joanna Mockler chaired the board of World Vision.

And while infidelity trends have been stable for the past 20 years, studies do show that more members of the opposite sex in the workplace is linked to more infidelity, according to W. Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia. “A private office with a glass window can solve a lot of problems,” he said.

Refusing to eat or travel alone with someone of the opposite sex are strategies that Michael Hyatt, former CEO of publisher Thomas Nelson, said he uses to protect his marriage. He also talks about his wife often and positively, something he calls “the best adultery repellent known to man.”

“Men who are wise will be intentional about this,” Hyatt said. “It’s naive to think that somehow we can be so sanctified that we don’t have to take into account our biology.”

But some of the boundaries men put on their workplace behavior can have unintended consequences for women, said Halee Gray Scott, a professor at Wesley Seminary and A. W. Tozer Seminary, who last year completed a dissertation on women leaders of evangelical organizations.

“It’s a big problem for women to grow [professionally] because they can’t be mentored, and can’t get into these informal networks where the guys go out to lunch or golfing,” she said. “This lack of access affects their careers, because the business or

[continued on 14]

PASSAGES



Appointed James Liske

As CEO of Prison Fellowship on June 6. He was previously senior pastor of Ridge Point Community Church, known for its prison ministry, in Holland, Michigan.



Died Richard R. Wynn

Former president of Youth for Christ USA, on March 25 in Florida. He was 71.



Appointed Gordon MacDonald

As chancellor of Denver Seminary. A noted pastor and author, he served as interim president during the 2008–2009 academic year.

Briefing [from 13]

ministry relationship is built on trust.”

Informal interactions generate a sense of community, Scott said. “If you look back to Genesis and how women and men are created to be co-laborers, I get this image of men and women looking at the work, not at each other. . . . We need to learn how to redeem being co-laborers.”

However, no company policy will be foolproof. “Fear [of getting caught] can only motivate somebody so far,” said Lindsay. “You’ve got to have some other reason you’re upholding your moral standards.” ☩

IMMIGRATION

Status Check

Pastors say Alabama law will crimp outreach.

By Ken Walker

Alabama’s strict immigration law doesn’t take effect until September 1, but pastor Carlos Aybar saw fear spread around suburban Huntsville as soon as Governor Robert Bentley signed it in June.

“Everyone is affected, but mostly

the teenagers and kids who were raised here and feel this is their country—their home,” said Aybar, pastor of Restoration Foursquare Church’s Spanish-speaking mission in Madison.

The most controversial provision prohibits knowingly offering rides to undocumented residents; others place restrictions on hiring or renting property to them.

“It will definitely affect the Hispanic church,” said Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. “They will be fearful of even using vans to pick up [church] members.”

“We call it the ‘Clergy Criminalization Act,’” said Luis Cortes Jr., president of the Philadelphia-based Esperanza network. “I’m shocked the church didn’t speak against it.”

In its aftermath, many did. More than 150 ministers in the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church signed an open letter decrying it. At its annual meeting in mid-June, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) adopted a resolution advocating ministry to everyone regardless of immigration status.

States that place tighter controls on immigrants may face unintended consequences. Arizona missionary

DISCUSSION STARTER

Evangelism

An Illinois circuit court recently ruled that a Baptist group could legally distribute anti-Catholic leaflets at a Catholic festival. Meanwhile the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals said that it was unconstitutional to restrict passing out Christian tracts at the Arab International Festival in Dearborn, Michigan. So now that such festival evangelism is legal, the question is: Is it effective?

Fernando Amaro said membership in the SBC’s Phoenix-area Hispanic congregations plunged 12 percent in five months after the state passed its controversial immigration law last year. “If you lose income, budgets are not as they’re supposed to be,” he said.

Alabama legislator and retired United Methodist minister Mac Buttram of Cullman thinks many pastors are misreading the bill’s wording and intent. He said it does not require humanitarian workers to determine anyone’s status.

Whether the law will take effect remains in doubt. A legal expert believes it could run afoul of a state religious-freedom amendment adopted in 1999, as well as conflict with federal law.

“Immigration is a federal matter, and state law may be preempted,” said Douglas Laycock, a University of Virginia law professor. “That’s the argument in [Arizona], and it may be the most favorable argument [here].”

Regardless of court maneuverings, United Methodist bishop William Willimon thinks ministries will continue aiding others. “Our Spanish people need help,” said the North Alabama Conference leader. “It’s like [Peter said] in Acts: ‘We must obey God rather than men.’” ☩

UNDER DISCUSSION Topics in the current debate.

compiled by Ruth Moon

Are tracts, fliers, and street evangelism effective tools?

YES

“Proselytizing in public is as old as the New Testament. Jesus preached at public gatherings, and Paul preached in the marketplaces. Paul recognized that some preached Christ with good motives and some with bad; nevertheless, he was pleased Christ was preached at all.”

JERRY ROOT,
professor, Wheaton College

“It’s rare for a non-Christian who has never heard the gospel to read a tract and get saved. But if you use the tract to open up a conversation, you can find out someone’s felt needs and meet them where they are. Personal evangelism is often most effective.”

DANNY LEHMANN,
evangelism representative,
YWAM Global Leadership
Forum

“Yes, if it isn’t distracting from the event, is sensitive to cultural differences, and is done with kindness and respect. No, if you are loud, arrogant, and aggressive, don’t genuinely love the people you are sharing with, or haven’t bothered trying to understand their point of view or listen.”

BOB ROBERTS,
pastor, NorthWood Church

“God spoke to Balaam through a donkey. I reckon God can also use a tract. But I’m not sure that makes it God’s favorite medium. The best evangelism happens through relationships, sharing dreams and fears. The gospel spreads like disease—through breath, touch, and shared life.”

SHANE CLAIBORNE,
founding partner,
The Simple Way

“These measures have little positive effect, but considerable potential for irritating their targets. Billy Graham’s team learned long ago that the best way to get the unconverted to his services was to have them brought by friends.”

WILLIAM MARTIN,
senior fellow for religion
and public policy, Baker
Institute, Rice University

“Street evangelism is based on a wrong assumption that evangelistic ‘success’ is praying a certain prayer. We’re called to ‘make disciples.’ Some methods of evangelism are actually counter-productive to disciple-making, such as most distribution of tracts and fliers.”

CHARLES ARN,
president, Church
Growth Inc.

NO



Hard Times: Roseland Ministries in Chicago had to close its day shelter (above) due to budget cuts, even though experts say chronic unemployment rates are at their highest since the Great Depression.

MINISTRY

Shrinking Circle of Protection

Homeless shelters and feeding programs are cut despite best efforts by churches and ministries. By Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra

If you happen to be a homeless man on the South Side of Chicago, there are precious few places to go during the day to escape snow or rain or heat—the public library, the train station, and, until recently, Roseland Christian Ministries Center.

“For 20 years, we had a drop-in center,” said Joe Huizenga, the ministry’s director of development. “It was aimed at men in the Roseland community—homeless folks who have some sort of mental disability, maybe veterans who couldn’t find services. Roseland had a high number of homeless and displaced men who had nowhere to go during the day.”

Roseland Christian Ministries, which also runs an overnight shelter for about 80 women and children, worked with the Chicago Department of Human Services to staff the drop-in center. Doors were open from 9 A.M. to about 10 P.M. every day; about 80 to 100 men walked through them to find lunch, dinner, and a place to belong.

“It was just somewhere to go, something to do,” Huizenga said. “It would give them a sense of community and belonging.”

The benefit to the community was two-fold, he said. In addition to sheltering and feeding the men, the center worked for containment.

“The children and elderly folks who lived in the neighborhood didn’t have 80 to

100 folks with drug addictions and mental illnesses on the street,” he said.

The state paid Roseland \$300,000 a year for staff and food supplies. Three years ago, the budget was slashed to \$190,000. Huizenga cut the hours and number of meals. Doors were open just five days a week, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Only one meal was served.

A year later, the state completely eliminated Roseland from its budget. A church in the suburbs stepped forward to help, giving enough money to staff the program for a few months. The hours were even shorter, from 2 P.M. to 5 P.M. each weekday. But it was not enough, and in June, Roseland had to shut the doors to the men’s daytime shelter.



It is a story that's playing out in hundreds of places across the country this year. Since 2008, the recession has shrunk

state budgets. At least 31 states have projected shortages for fiscal year 2012, a sum of more than \$86 billion, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Some of those shortages are enormous. Nineteen states report gaps of 10 percent or more of their general-fund budgets. Alabama and Nevada have shortages larger than 30 percent.

Thirty states have raised their taxes, while 46 have cut services, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. And assistance for the poor is not exempt from cutbacks—31 states have restricted health insurance eligibility or reduced access to health care for low-income children or families. Thirty states have cut expenses for medical or home care for poor elderly or disabled people, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

"Human services isn't organized like, say, teachers," said Ron Baiman, director of budget and policy analysis for the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. The services provided directly by the state and staffed by state workers can better maintain their funding than can community agencies and nonprofits, he said.

"Most of the actual services [in Illinois]—75 percent—are non-state-provided," Baiman said. "They're privatized, farmed out to nonprofits." This trend

Bargain Shopper: A mom peruses the thrift center at Roseland Ministries in Chicago. The number of thrift or resale stores, now at 30,000, has grown 7 percent since 2009.

started in 2000 under the Bush administration, when many Christian charities and larger churches began signing government con-

tracts to provide such services.

Since these faith-based groups are diverse and rely on multiple sources for financial support, it is harder for them to organize. They do not have a strong track record for moving legislation forward.

The same problem occurs on a federal level, said David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. People who struggle to put food on the table and the groups that help them don't have a strong lobby in Congress, Beckmann said.

To raise awareness, Beckmann joined author-activist Jim Wallis (Sojourners) and Tony Hall (the Alliance to End Hunger) in a March 29 public fast that drew 15,000 participants as well as endorsements from top evangelical groups. Participants skipped at least one meal and committed to pray. In 1993, Hall raised public awareness when he undertook a 22-day water-only fast at a time of sharp government cuts in anti-poverty programs.

In addition, Bread for the World convened a small group of Christian leaders who wrote an open letter to Congress, calling its members to form a "circle of protection" around the hungry and the poor. More than 60 Catholic, mainline, and evangelical leaders have signed it.

In June, 300 Bread for the World members walked into the offices of their

representatives in Washington, D.C., to ask that budget cuts exclude programs for the poor and hungry.

"We need to reduce the deficit, but shouldn't do it on the backs of the poor," Beckmann said. "It isn't necessary."

All the programs that help poor people add up to about 20 percent of the federal budget, he said. The House-approved budget cuts \$4 trillion in taxes over 10 years, and a disproportionate amount of that (two-thirds) comes from programs focused on helping the poor, he said.

"It's just not right," Beckmann said. "Just the food stamp [program] . . . they're proposing to reduce by \$130 billion over 10 years. Every church in the country is collecting and distributing food to hungry people. But it all amounts to about \$5 billion in food. Five billion dollars in 10 years is \$50 billion. Just the proposed cut to food stamps would take away from poor people more than twice of all the food that churches and charities can provide."

Instead, Beckmann said, cuts should be made in the other 80 percent of the budget. "There is nothing in the Bible that says you can't tax rich people, but there is a lot that says you shouldn't be hard on poor people."

INCREASING NEEDS

At the same time budget cuts are squeezing relief agencies, more people are coming to them for help. "The tough times have really affected us," said Andy Bales, chief executive of Union Rescue Mission, which works to feed and house the homeless in Los Angeles. "We've tripled the number of families we serve since October 2008. We've doubled the number of people housed and doubled the meals we serve."

Other major Christian groups note the same worrisome trend. Salvation Army shelters and programs in the New York area have seen a 40 percent increase in clients since 2008, according to Major Evan Hickman.

Not only the poorest of the poor, but also "people who have never asked for help before" are coming for help, said Hickman. The "misery index"—the sum of the unemployment rate and the inflation rate—stands at 11.29, the highest it's been since the Reagan-era recession of 1984.

Cutbacks in city, state, and federal

spending forced the Salvation Army to turn down contracts for adoption services and group homes in New York when the contracts came up for renewal. At the end of June, the Salvation Army expects to return one of the contracts to the Division of Juvenile Justice.

"[This program] has been about \$600,000 in the hole each year, so we've had to make a critical decision," Hickman said. "We could not continue to operate with that severity of cutbacks."

The government's inability to pay for services is making Union Rescue Mission wary of doing business with the government, according to Bales. "We've not been paid yet" for the four winter shelters operated from December 2010 to March 2011, a loss of \$305,000, Bales said.

"Not only will it not be paid in June, it looks like we may not be paid until after July. We don't know if we're going to be paid back at all for the work we did for the county and city."

Bales said the mission is actively considering how to increase private support,

rebounded 3.8 percent from 2009.)

At Union Rescue Mission, it's the shrinking of gifts from individuals and corporations that is pinching day-to-day operations.

Some shelters are taking drastic measures, Bales said: charging for basic services. In April, the mission began charging \$7 daily for a bed that used to be free. And, like Roseland in Chicago, the mission had to cut the number of meals served.

"It can be nearly a thousand people that we feed three times a day," Bales said. "We moved to one good lunch a day for everyone but families with children."

In addition to a private and public funding squeeze, the Salvation Army general fund, which pays for non-emergency services, loses momentum whenever donors switch the designation on their donations to "disaster relief."

"We did see a wonderful response to these disasters, the tornadoes and flooding, but those monies are separate," said Jeff Curnow of the Salvation Army in Chicago. "When they give to a disaster, that's all

bless him and do the right thing. So we always look at how we are doing our ministry—are we doing it in a God-honoring way, and do we trust him to provide for us?"

The hope seems to be that God will provide through other local agencies. Bales hopes other local missions will step up to provide the meals that Union Rescue Mission no longer can. "We know a couple other missions cut way back on services as the recession hit. Now that we're through the worst of [the recession], we're hoping they'll step up and do more meals."

Back in Chicago, Roseland is developing partnerships with three churches that will help provide more meals to the poor. Huizenga is also working informally with a neighborhood woman who provides two meals a week paid for out of her own pocket.

Another emerging model is to rotate services, where, for example, each church provides one meal per week. Huizenga said, "[It] becomes a pretty good opportunity for churches to come together around the least of these."

Asking churches and other charitable organizations to pick up the slack won't do the job of caring for the chronic poor completely, said Galen Carey, vice president of government relations for the Washington office of the National Association of Evangelicals.

"There is definitely more need," he said. "My church has significantly increased donations to the food pantry, because so many people are coming. At the same time, churches face the same economic pressures everyone else does, so there are of course limits."

Although some churches could give more, Carey said that all of a church's financial philanthropy represents a small response to poverty. "It doesn't in any way counteract the government budget cuts that—we believe—are not in keeping with the extensive biblical mandate to care for the poor."

Carey and other faith-based leaders believe the neighborhood church and local governments have very different responsibilities, but have at least one big goal in common—defeating poverty. ✚

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra is a freelance writer from the Chicago area.

'My church has significantly increased donations to the food pantry, because so many people are coming. At the same time, churches face the same economic pressures everyone else does, so there are of course limits.'

~ Galen Carey, National Association of Evangelicals

because there is greater risk that their seasonal shelters, which house up to 800 people each night, will be closed. "Our [break-even] margins are too small," he said. His organization is thinking of moving away from any dependence on government funding.

EMERGING PARTNERSHIPS

Moving away from that funding is not as easy as it might sound. Private charitable sources are also drying up. Total charitable giving in 2008 and 2009 fell a combined 13 percent from 2006 and 2007, the steepest decline in 40 years, according to Giving USA, a consulting firm for nonprofits. (Preliminary figures for 2010 show that giving

we'll use that for. We're hunkered down. There's no doubt about that."

A Salvation Army food bank that used to be open every morning is now open one day a week, Curnow said. A soup kitchen that provides hot meals to people in shelters or on the street had to reduce the number of meals served. Some Salvation Army offices are under a hiring freeze. Some ask employees to take a week of unpaid vacation. Travel is restricted, as are printing and supplies. Most offices have frozen pay increases, he said.

"We need to continue to keep things lean," Curnow said. "We're also convinced that God owns it all and that he will honor and bless ministries when we honor and

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They Like You

What Americans really
think about evangelicals,
and why we don't believe it.

By Bradley R. E. Wright

A

AMERICAN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY is ready for its Sally Field moment.

The actress's 1985 Academy Award acceptance speech is famously quoted as, "You like me! You really like me!"

But we often forget that Field was accepting her second Oscar in five years. She had already won the recognition of her peers. What she really said in 1985 was, "I've wanted more than anything to have your respect. The first time I didn't feel it, but this time I feel it, and I can't deny the fact that you like me, right now, you like me!"

Similarly, somewhere along the line we evangelical Christians have gotten it into our heads that our neighbors, peers, and most Americans don't like us, and that they



THEY LIKE YOU

like us less every year. I've heard this idea stated in sermons and everyday conversation; I've read it in books and articles.

There's a problem, though. It doesn't appear to be true. Social scientists have repeatedly surveyed views of various religions and movements, and Americans consistently hold evangelical Christians in reasonably high regard. Furthermore, social science research indicates that it's almost certain that our erroneous belief that others dislike us is actually harming our faith.

So, come on. Join me on stage to exclaim, "You like me, right now, you like me!" No takers? How about at least, "You don't hate me"?

The feeling of being disliked and alienated has worked its way deep into the evangelical consciousness. We feel it in our bones.

If you have trouble believing this, you're not the only one. My wife and I live in a university town, and the Bible study we host in our home includes a number of graduate students. During one dinner, several students got into a lively discussion about how much people do not like evangelical Christians because of all the stupid things we do.

I had just finished researching this topic for a book (*Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites... and Other Lies You've Been Told*), and I explained that non-evangelicals' views of us are less negative than most evangelicals assume—certainly less negative than what I was hearing in the room. If I could convince anyone of this, I thought it would be them. As fledgling academics, they had learned to appreciate statistical evidence, and I described in detail solid survey research. And these students knew me personally and trusted my judgment. But after I disappeared into the kitchen for a few minutes, the group returned to the nobody-likes-us discussion. The feeling of being disliked and alienated has worked its way deep into the evangelical consciousness. We feel it in our bones.

PERSECUTION COMPLEX

In 2009, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life surveyed Americans on, among other things, discrimination in the United States. Evangelicals agreed with Americans overall that Muslims in America face a lot of persecution (58 percent of both groups said yes). But evangelical respondents identified themselves as the second-most-victimized religious group, with 43 percent saying there's a lot of discrimination. This ranked discrimination against evangelicals as worse than that against Jews (38 percent), Mormons (26 percent), and atheists (24 percent)—and blacks (37 percent) and women (38 percent). Among the general population, however, only 27 percent agreed that American evangelicals face much discrimination.

Last month, another Pew Forum survey, of evangelical leaders worldwide (see Spotlight, page 9 of this issue), found that while American evangelicals are less likely than their overseas counterparts to say conflict between religious groups is a problem in their country, they are more likely to see non-Christians and especially the nonreligious as unfriendly toward

evangelical Christians. American evangelical leaders are twice as likely as their Global South counterparts to consider the nonreligious unfriendly toward evangelicals (68 percent to 33 percent). European leaders are about in the middle (54 percent view the nonreligious as unfriendly toward them).

Why do American evangelicals feel this way? One possible answer comes from the work of Christian Smith, a sociologist at the University of Notre Dame. In a landmark three-year study published in the mid-1990s, Smith and his colleagues sat down with 130 churchgoing Protestants to talk with them for a few hours about their religious behaviors and beliefs. Time

and again, the interviewees had stories of unfair treatment at the tip of their tongues, especially stories involving schools, government, and the media. One woman complained that "schools have completely removed anything that has to do with Christianity or God or the Bible or any

of that. And then they will let in books like *Heather Has Two Mommies*, real secular and anti-moral books." Another woman lamented that "Christians are mocked and made fun of by mainstream America. I have even experienced that opposition personally from friends, in subtle ways, thinking me very odd to prefer to go to a church activity over a movie."

Smith concluded that the perception of conflict makes the movement strong and distinctive. Evangelicalism, he wrote, "thrives on distinction, engagement, tension, conflict, and threat"—hence the name of his book: *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. In fact, said Smith, if we take away the tension evangelicals feel, the movement "would lose its identity and purpose and grow languid and aimless."

AGREEING WITH THE CULTURE WARRIORS

It doesn't appear that evangelicals actually experience more oppression than others. In a 2006 study, about 1 in 3 evangelicals said that they hear negative remarks about their religion often or occasionally. That's close to the national average of 29 percent. (For Mormons it was 60 percent, for Jews 38 percent.) If evangelicals do not actually hear many more negative remarks about their faith, it might be that we're simply more sensitive to hearing them.

Regardless of our personal experience, evangelical Christians' sense of being disliked is reinforced when we hear others in our group, especially leaders, telling us we are disliked.

It is easy to point fingers at the evangelical leaders who have made the most headlines fighting a culture war. At the same time, leaders who have fought against the politicization of the movement and the very notion of culture war have made the same argument: Because we keep crusading against *Heather Has Two Mommies* and just about everything else, we've lost the cultural goodwill we might once have had.

Two studies in particular have influenced this view. In the first, in 2002, George Barna interviewed 270 non-Christians, asking for their impressions of 11 different groups in society. His list included a somewhat random mix of professions, political groups, and religions. At the top end, Barna found that military officers and ministers received the most favorable impressions. Below

them, born-again Christians, Democrats, and real-estate agents received the next most favorable impressions. At the bottom end were actors, lawyers, Republicans, lesbians, and evangelicals. Very last, far below any other group, were prostitutes.

Barna presented these findings with alarm. He wrote that they showed that non-Christians are “dismissive” of evangelicals, and he concluded that this negative view was “one reason that evangelical churches across the nation are not growing.” His study went viral. It was featured in *The Atlantic Monthly* under the title “Evangelicals and Prostitutes,” as well as in various articles and blogs, all part of a rallying cry for Christians to reform their image in society.

Should we believe this study? In a word, no. George Barna, in his time with the Barna Research Group, produced plenty of accurate and useful studies; this happens not to be one of them. I’ve already critiqued the study in a recent book, so I won’t pile on here. But it’s worth pointing out a paradox in the findings: the non-Christian respondents in Barna’s study reported having rather favorable opinions of “born-again Christians,” who ranked third out of the eleven groups. Barna’s training is in theology, and in his work he emphasizes a difference between born-again Christians and evangelical Christians. In some studies, this is a helpful distinction. But most Americans would be hard-pressed to accurately explain the difference between the two; some survey researchers even use the terms synonymously. Rather than illuminating a religious conflict, this study seems to show identification problems.

David Kinnaman (the new head of Barna Research) and Gabe Lyons (of the Q conferences) have significantly advanced the concept of evangelical dislike and, more generally, Christian dislike. For their 2007 book *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity . . . and Why It Matters*, they surveyed 440 young people (ages 16–29) who did not affiliate with Christianity—atheists, agnostics, and members of other religions. They asked these “outsiders” about their impressions of Christians. Thirty-eight percent of outsider respondents had a bad impression of “Christianity” as a religion, 36 percent had a bad impression of “born-again Christians,” and 49 percent had a bad impression of “evangelical Christians.” Only 3 percent said they had a good impression. From these data, Kinnaman and Lyons concluded that “Christianity has an image problem.” They also argued that society’s views of Christians are becoming increasingly negative over time (“Just a decade ago the Christian faith was not generating the intense hostility it is today”), and that young people in particular view Christianity in a negative light.

The findings were dramatic and hailed by church leaders as a wake-up call. But these researchers haven’t been the only ones who have asked how people view Christians, especially evangelical ones.

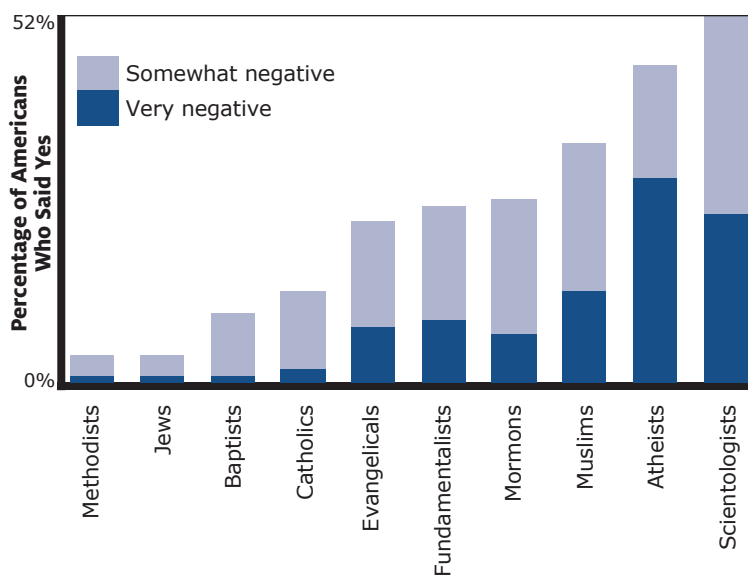
FEEL THE WARMTH

“I’ll read the name of a group and I’d like you to rate that group using something we call the feeling thermometer,” researchers for the Faith Matters survey told participants. “Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and

warm toward the group. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don’t feel favorable and don’t care too much for that group. You would rate the group at the 50-degree mark if you don’t feel particularly warm or cold toward the group. Feel free to use the entire extent of the scale.”

In the 2010 book *American Grace*, political scientists Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell presented the Faith Matters weather report, which was generally sunny and mild. Jews, Catholics, and mainline Protestants received the highest thermometer scores from non-members (i.e., from non-Jews, non-Catholics, and non-mainline Protestants respectively), coming in at 58 to 59 points. Muslims, Buddhists, and Mormons received the coldest ratings, at 44, 46, and 47 points. Evangelical Protestants came in at the middle, at 52 points, just above the nonreligious, who were at 51 points. (The Faith Matters survey also found that evangelical Protestants rate their own group at a “colder” level than do members of any other religion. Somehow

Do you have a negative view about people in this group?



Gallup 2008

we’ve become the low self-esteem religious tradition.)

A quick glance at the Faith Matters data tells us that in general terms, American Christianity does not have an image problem, since Catholics and mainline Protestants evoke the warmest feelings. The problem, if it exists, is with evangelical Christians (whom Jews and the nonreligious placed at 46 degrees). Other sources of data, however, suggest that there’s something funny going on with the term “evangelical Christian.” Namely, the use of the word *evangelical* might prompt more negative feelings than other terms that identify the same group of people.

We see this negative connotation of the word *evangelical* in the Barna and *UnChristian* findings, where “evangelical”



THEY LIKE YOU

Christians receive much less favorable impressions than do “born-again” Christians. We also see it in a 2008 Gallup study that asked Americans how they viewed a wide range of religious groups (see chart on page 23). Among the general population, about 25 percent had a negative view of evangelicals. Among non-Christians, 50 percent had a negative view. But only 11 percent of the general population viewed Baptists negatively,

manipulative, fanatics, and greedy.” Yet some of the harshest language came from people who couldn’t even define what an evangelical is—they just knew they didn’t like them.

Ellison’s findings harken to a classic sociological study of racial and ethnic discrimination. In the 1940s, sociologist Eugene Hartley asked college students about their attitudes toward different groups. However, his list of groups included several fictitious or otherwise unknown groups, such as the Danireans, Pirenians, and Wallonians. A good portion of the respondents reported having antipathy toward these fictitious groups. So they didn’t like people who not only had they never met, but who didn’t even exist.

In light of this evidence, does evangelical Christianity really have an image problem? This is a subjective judgment; two people can look at the same data and come to different conclusions. I am surprised at the relatively low percentage of non-Christians who expressed unfavorable opinions about evangelicals. After all, these are people who have explicitly chosen not to accept a Christian worldview. Furthermore, people seem to be reacting against the tainted label *evangelical* more than against evangelical Christians themselves who, when referred to using different terminology, receive much warmer reactions.

BETTER ALL THE TIME

But are attitudes toward evangelicals getting worse? Here, the data over the past two decades are rather clear, and the answer is, no. They’re getting better.

As the chart on the left shows, the Pew Forum found anti-evangelical Christian sentiments highest in the 1990s, when about 40 percent of all Americans and 50–70 percent of non-Christians held an unfavorable opinion of evangelical Christians. By the turn of the century, however, attitudes had grown substantially more favorable. Now, only about 20 percent of all Americans hold unfavorable opinions of evangelicals, as do only about 35–40 percent of non-Christians. This marked change has held steady over the past decade.

Likewise, the age group that views evangelicals most negatively may also be counterintuitive. It turns out that it is old, not young, people who hold the strongest anti-evangelical attitudes. In 2007, when the Pew Forum released its most recent data on the question, 45 percent of non-Christian respondents ages 50 and over expressed unfavorable opinions of evangelicals. This was meaningfully higher than the 36 percent of young respondents (ages 18–29) and the 32 percent of middle-aged respondents (30–49) who said this. While popular discussion focuses on young peoples’ attitudes, the story here isn’t “losing the next generation” but rather “what Grandpa is cranky about now.”

LEARNING FROM LIP PIERCINGS

Does it really matter that evangelical Christians assume the worst when it comes to how others think of us? Actually, it probably does—a lot. To understand why, we need to thank Henri Tajfel, an esteemed 20th-century social psychologist. Tajfel was a Polish Jew who, during World War II, joined the French army and was captured by the Germans. Somehow, despite acknowledging being Jewish, he survived the war in

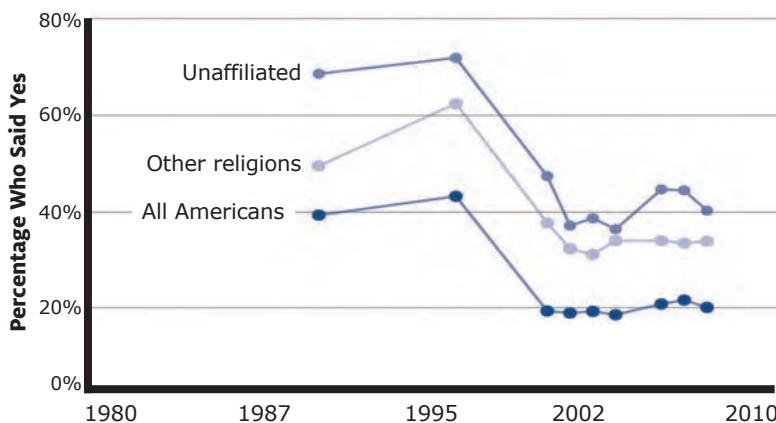
People seem to be reacting against the label evangelical more than against evangelical Christians themselves.

as did only 26 percent of non-Christians. Here’s the catch: The great majority of Baptists are evangelicals.

What do people think of when they hear *evangelical*? Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, wanted to find out, so in 2008, he asked 1,007 randomly selected Americans a simple question: “In your own words, how would you define exactly what an ‘evangelical Christian’ is? Please be as specific and complete as you can in your answer.”

In the most common response, 36 percent of the respondents reported having no idea what the term meant. This alone cautions us about relying on this label in research. Another 8 percent made a negative comment but without giving a substantive definition. The remaining answers were all over the map—including people who thought that “evangelical

Do you have an overall unfavorable opinion of evangelical Christians?



Times Mirror Poll 1990, Pew Surveys 1995–2007

Christians” meant any Christian who evangelized, was devoted to their faith, was politically conservative, or relied on the Bible. In all, only a little over half of the respondents (56 percent) could offer any type of substantive definition—even a wrong one (like very strict Catholics or angel worshipers). Some of the respondents described evangelicals in harsh language, using terms such as “psychos, stupid, narrow-minded, bigots, idiots,

prisoner-of-war camps. When he returned home at the end of the war, he found that his entire immediate family and most of his friends had been killed in the Holocaust. This profound experience led him to dedicate his life to studying intergroup relations with the aim of reducing intergroup conflict.

Tajfel’s social identity theory assumes that people derive some of their self-concept from their group memberships. For example, you can think of yourself as an American, a woman, a Red Sox fan, a pickup-truck owner, and so on. Because group memberships are important for our sense of self, how we perceive the groups to which we belong directly affects how we see ourselves.

Tajfel’s theory assumes that most people think positively of the groups to which they belong. As a result, we tend to have an “in-group bias,” having overly positive views of our groups and unduly negative views of other groups. This process, according to Tajfel, sets the stage for intergroup conflict, with each group thinking they are superior to the other groups.

But what happens when people view their own group negatively, as many evangelicals seem to? According to Tajfel, this situation creates emotional and mental tension. Since people are driven to see themselves in a positive light, and our self-concept is tied to our group memberships, then feeling bad about our group makes us feel bad about ourselves, and something’s got to give.

Tajfel identified four strategies that people use to reconcile this type of situation: (1) Work to raise the status or quality of the group to which you belong. This can take the form of protest or other collective action. (2) Hide your association with the group, so as to avoid any stigma associated with it. (3) Distance yourself from the group or leave it altogether. (4) Disengage from non-group members, spending more and more time with members of your own group, by whom you feel affirmed.

Various studies illustrate these response strategies. In one, psychologists studied people with prominent body piercings in visible parts of their body (i.e., other than their earlobes). These prominently pierced people anticipated that mainstream society would view them as “weird” and reject them because of their appearance. In response, some took extra pride in their appearance, working to define it as “cool” and “meaningful.” Others developed subcultural groups, spending more time with other, similarly pierced people. Others, however, hid their piercings around other people or removed the piercings altogether.

Another study examined Hispanic students attending predominantly white colleges. Some of them joined Hispanic student associations, thus intentionally spending more time with fellow Hispanics. But others distanced themselves from their Hispanic identity to be more comfortable around Anglos.

Applying Tajfel’s work to evangelicals and their negative group image, we can expect evangelicals to adopt any one of the four strategies in varying degrees. Some might hide their affiliation with Christianity, choosing to be quiet about their faith with others for fear of rejection. Others, unable to reconcile their participation in Christianity with what they view as society’s rejection of it, might leave the faith altogether. Finally, some might choose to avoid non-Christians, spending more

time in “holy huddles.” In this way, they receive the affirmation they crave and avoid perceived condemnation from outsiders.

Some evangelicals today, meanwhile, are strongly advocating that Christians reform their image in the world by acting more Christlike. No doubt we should act more Christlike, but an emphasis on “acting better” to create affinity between evangelicals and others might be misguided if that affinity already exists; it potentially overstates and even creates social barriers and conflict. Furthermore, this emphasis might actually deter evangelism, reduce commitment to Christianity, and even drive some Christians out of the faith.

If American evangelicals do have an image problem, it’s not our neighbors’ image of us; it’s our image of them. The 2007 Pew Forum study found that American Christians hold more negative views of “atheists” than non-Christians do of evangelical Christians. (The most recent Pew survey

What American Evangelical Leaders Believe

GROUP	They dislike me	I dislike them
Pentecostal Christians	2%	8%
Catholics	7%	15%
Orthodox Christians	14%	17%
Jews	42%	18%
Buddhists	35%	55%
Hindus	40%	56%
Muslims	73%	61%
Those who are not religious/Atheists	68%	67%

Note: Respondents were not asked about “dislike” but whether groups are unfriendly toward evangelical Christians in the U.S. and whether the respondent had an unfavorable opinion of the groups.

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life’s Global Survey of Evangelical Protestant Leaders

found similar attitudes; see the chart above.) Now, I am not a theologian, but this seems to be a problem. We Christians are called to love people, and as I understand it, this includes loving people who believe differently than we do. I’m not sure how we can love atheists if we don’t like them.

Ultimately, evangelical Christians might do well not to spend too much time worrying about what others think of us. Christians in general, and evangelical Christians in particular (depending on how you ask the question), are well-regarded in this country. If nothing else, there’s little we can do to change other people’s opinions anyway. Telling ourselves over and over that others don’t like us is not only inaccurate, it also potentially hinders the very faith that we seek to advance.

Bradley R. E. Wright is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Connecticut. His most recent book is *Upside: Surprising Good News about the State of Our World* (Bethany House).

The **Foundation of the Evangelical Mind**

Christian scholarship must be rooted in the person and work of Christ, says historian **Mark Noll**. Interview by David Neff

IN 1994, Wheaton College historian Mark Noll published *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*—“an epistle from a wounded lover” that decried the anti-intellectualism of evangelical religious culture. Noll’s newest book, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Eerdmans, released in August), devotes far less space to criticism and offers instead a foundational vision: The basic truths of Christian faith are the key to Christian scholarship. *Christianity Today* editor in chief David Neff recently spoke with Noll (now teaching at the University of Notre Dame) about the book.

Although it’s not the main subject of *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*, most people will want to know: Are you more optimistic today about the state of the evangelical mind than you were 17 years ago?

I am more optimistic, though not overwhelmingly so. The problems endemic to modern Western culture undercut Christian thinking the same way they undercut every other kind of serious intellectual life. The tendencies among evangelicals that undercut serious reflection are also still pretty strong—for example, the populism and the immediatism, the idea that if there is a problem, we have to solve it right away.

Those are strengths in other contexts.

Exactly. That’s very important to say. Almost everything in the evangelical world that undercuts serious and sober thinking actually plays a productive role in some other aspect of evangelical life. I never wanted to make a categorical statement that thinking is the most important thing. But it is important.

There are a lot of factors that show commendable and very serious improvement. The trajectory is moving in a positive direction. Christian philosophers have done very significant work. The number of Christian colleges that make serious efforts continues to grow. The evangelical seminaries, which have broader purposes, nonetheless encourage a lot of good, solid thought. And there certainly are many more people willing to identify as Christians, either as evangelicals or as classical Christians, in the broader academic world. Christian publishers put out more and better books. Parachurch agencies like InterVarsity Graduate and Faculty Ministries are doing much good work.

My own sense—and maybe it’s just a historian’s genetic pessimism—is that we have a long, long way to go until there is a serious intellectual contribution from Christians across the broad stream. But things are moving in the right direction.



You write that “come and see” is Christ’s invitation to us to do science.

The premise of the book is that people who trust Jesus Christ for personal salvation and for the hope of the church in the future should rely on Christ to provide the basic standpoint from which to look at intellectual problems. What does this mean?

It means, first of all, to recognize that everything exists because it was created by Jesus. John 1, Colossians 1, and Hebrews 1 all make the same statement: It’s not just that the Lord God in some general sense created everything, but that *Christ* created everything. We also have the amazing statement in Colossians 1 that all things hold together in Jesus.

In the Gospels, we also have repeated injunctions that when there’s an issue to be explored, it should actually be examined. In John’s gospel, when Nathanael asks whether “anything good” could come from Nazareth, Philip replies, “Come and see.”

Or take John the Baptist in prison. His disciples come and ask Jesus, “Are you the one that we are looking for?” And Jesus says, “Tell John what you have seen and heard.” The great opening of 1 John says, *This is a book about what we have seen with our eyes, heard with our ears, touched with our hands, about the Word of Life.*

My appeal is not for a simple Baconian empiricism that treats observation and experience as the only pathways to valid knowledge. Instead, the appeal is that following Christ means having an open mind that can be fruitfully informed by what we experience in the world. Scientists do this through the experimental method. When responsible examination of nature takes place, the examiner discovers not just nature, but nature as created by the Son of God and sustained by Providence.

From a basic Christ-centered focus, the attitude toward the study of nature requires great openness and willingness to learn. The relevance of Christ for science is to realize that everything that exists in nature comes from Christ, but also that the life of Christ gives us a way of exploring nature that involves openness to what we experience. So, “Come and see.”

Especially regarding scientific controversies among evangelicals, you seem to be suggesting that slowing down may be the best way to move ahead.

Many of the problems that have taken place in the so-called conflict between religion and science come from hasty conclusions. Right back to the Middle Ages, we have a long series of purportedly new discoveries in nature. The response by church leaders has often been, “This can’t be possible.” Only a little while later would Christian people say, “Here’s how it is possible.”

Neither Martin Luther nor John Calvin was at all willing to believe that the earth might move around the sun. But two generations later, all Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics agreed that in fact the earth did move around the sun. It would have been

ideal for people to respond to the ideas of Copernicus and Galileo by saying, “Well, let’s take our time and evaluate this apparent contradiction with Scripture as carefully and as patiently as possible.” What took place instead was an unnecessarily dogmatic reaction.

I’m not qualified to speak in detail about current problems. As a historian, I am qualified to say that less denunciation and more effort at patient study is the best way forward.

You write that “for scholarship that is Christian, the essential ingredients are the same as for family life, politics, community service, economic activity, medical care, or any other activity that would be Christian”—meaning ingredients like prayer, service, Bible reading, preaching, catechesis, and fellowship.

Christian scholarship has to begin with Christianity, just as Christian parenting, Christian publishing, and Christian politics all have to begin with Christianity.

Much of our difficulty in the academic realm has come from not taking problems back to the Christ-centered foundation. This is one of the reasons I spend a fair bit of time in the early chapters spelling out the Christological affirmations of the great Christian creeds. The creeds are important not because they have any special status themselves, but because they were hammered out with intense discussion and have been used productively for centuries.

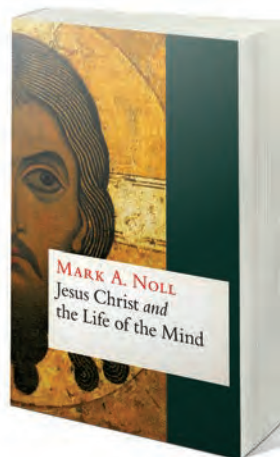
The way forward for Christian people is to bring the challenges in family life, politics, and ethical spheres of all sorts back to the foundation. If that’s the way forward in other dimensions of life, it’s also the way forward in intellectual life.

You say that “doubleness”—the idea that not every problem can be reduced to a single solution—is one of the key ways to frame Christian scholarship. What do you mean?

The whole point of the book is that believers in Christ should take seriously who Christ is and what Christ has done. As a historian, I’ve been drawn to the great Christian creeds as the most succinct and powerful statements of who Christ is and what Christ has done. The great relevance of the Nicene Creed and the Chal-

cedonian definition is to affirm that Jesus Christ was fully human and fully divine in one integrated person. But we know from moral and ethical reasoning that God and humans are different. God is the Creator, and humans are the creatures. There’s a huge gap between humanity and divinity. Yet Christianity says that in Christ, that gap doesn’t exist. The lengthy debate leading up to Nicaea and Chalcedon was over how to state that what can’t be together really was together.

While people can certainly see and know things clearly in this world, if we assume we can know things perfectly, the way God knows things, we delude ourselves. God is



Following Christ means having an open mind that can be fruitfully informed by what we experience in the world. When serious examination of nature takes place, the examiner finds not just nature, but nature created by the Son of God.

not just bigger than we are; God is qualitatively different. And yet we know from the work of Christ that we can have fellowship with the divine. We can know God in Christ.

From the basic Christian story, we can approach all of life with the awareness that within one thing, two things may actually be going on. The great Lutheran mantra was that a Christian believer is simultaneously justified and a sinner. The Calvinist tradition uses the word *concursum*, which means that two things are happening at once. The Christian religion begins with two things happening at once. The human Jesus and the divine God both offer the Word of Life. And it's not two people offering the Word of Life, it's one person. If that doubleness defines the most important thing in all existence, how God revealed himself most fully to humankind, then why not expect lesser things like scholarship, science, history, and psychology to reflect the same pattern?

How does this idea apply to history?

To take the Christological perspective on historical work does inspire confidence that historians can, at least potentially, discover some aspects of what really happened. Yet for all sorts of reasons—the Fall, certainly, but more importantly, the way in which the Incarnation brings together apparently contradictory things—historians should be very careful about presuming to know too much.

Christian historians should never presume to have god-like knowledge about the past. As 1 Corinthians states, we see reality “through a glass darkly.” Our knowledge is true and yet beclouded—two things at once. Both the cloudiness and the confidence come from the same place, which is a reflection of what the Incarnation means.

How does this mesh with your views of Providence?

A Christian has to affirm Providence, but a Christian historian should not assume to know the mind of God about most particular events. In fact, there are all sorts of bad examples in history where people have falsely made that assumption. In the modern world, there aren't too many examples of Christian historians who have employed particular examples of Providence well.

For most historians, I think it's wiser to affirm a general sort of Providence and yet not presume that you as an individual can know what God intended for any particular situation in the past.

Or to use Providence as a shortcut to avoid looking at social context and economic forces.

Right. Providence, in my view, arises from the message of salvation that says God works all things together in Christ. That's the main providential message. But for history, science, and

other domains, the “come and see” principle means that you really have to do research to find out the meaning of the past.

On the other hand, you suggest that social science, denying Providence altogether, can too easily become reductionist.

Some of the difficulties in social science have to do with the conditions in which that discipline arose. In the second half of the 19th century, there was a strong flight from Providence—from solid and misguided ideas of Providence alike.

The alternative was confidence that studying humanity could make the same strides as studying nature. That confidence was only partially justified. The difficulty with social scientists' overconfidence is that in a modern secular world, God is left out completely. And not just God but also the work of redemption. So I try to show that Christian social scientists who are conscious of the foundation in Jesus Christ will not want to be reductionist. It's possible that multiple explanations can work for a single phenomenon because of the multiple explanations required to speak of the Incarnation. I'm willing to let the sociologist and the psychologist and the economist work out what these things might mean for them. But what counts as a distinctly Christian approach to social sciences is something that again and again goes back to the foundation of Christian faith, not something vaguely theistic or vaguely modern.

You write about how non-Western historians include supernatural analysis in their work. How does that fit in with your views about how to talk about Providence as a Western historian?

Come back in about 40 years, and we'll have a good answer. But I've been really helped by perspectives from a few African historians. The late Ogbu Kalu was the leader in that group. Ogbu was a well-trained historian who studied and wrote about Henry VIII at the University of Toronto, but he was also a Presbyterian elder in Nigeria, where charismatic phenomena were routine. In his inaugural address at McCormick Theological Seminary, he challenged Christian historians to see Clio, the muse of history, in sacred garb. In other words, don't go too far toward treating Providence only as general background, but instead allow Christian confidence and Providence to come into the foreground. Unfortunately, Ogbu died before he could show too many examples of what he meant, but his appeal was a good one. Voices from the non-Western world have been a great stimulus for serious thinking about how Christian historians should go about their tasks. ☩

Go to ChristianBibleStudies.com for “The Foundation of the Evangelical Mind,” a Bible study based on this article.

Beyond Credit Card Shredding

More congregations than ever are hosting Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University. Now he's looking at their budgets, too.

By Rob Moll

IT'S DECEMBER 28, two days after the last Sunday of 2010. Dick Giesler has just reviewed the year's financial numbers—three years after the start of the country's worst economic disaster in nearly a century. Giesler, administrative pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church in Gurnee, Illinois, is fully aware of the challenging financial position of both the church and many of its members.

But Giesler is aware of something else. In addition to his administrative responsibilities, Giesler leads the church's two weekly meetings of Financial Peace University, a personal finance course produced by radio

and television host Dave Ramsey. More than 800 people have taken the course since the church started offering it three years ago, and at least 250 of them do not attend Immanuel. In those meetings, Giesler has heard the stories of mounting debt and seen struggles with budgeting. But despite the personal challenges, for the third year in a row, giving to the church is up more than 5 percent, placing Immanuel among the minority of congregations that have seen giving rise since the economic downturn.

"I can't attribute it to anything specifically other than Financial Peace University," Giesler said, "and obedience to the Lord's principles about handling money."

SHREDDING THE DEBT

Giesler himself is a former Financial Peace student and enthusiastic convert to Ramsey's financial system. Ramsey preaches frugal living, generous savings, and, most of all, avoiding debt. (If you must borrow to buy a house, Ramsey instructs, make it a 15-year mortgage.) Giesler's office displays a clear, cylindrical tower about two-and-a-half feet high. Inside are the remains of 950 credit cards representing millions of borrowed dollars that Financial Peace students have repaid through Ramsey's program. During the 13 weeks of the class, he

says, attendees typically pay off \$6,000 in debt and save an extra \$2,000. Often, members sign up for a second course.

Among the members are Chris and Amy Rupert, who now lead classes with Giesler. Chris, a software engineer, was introduced to Ramsey because of his initial concern about government debt—not his own. A Christian book on economics mentioned Dave Ramsey's 2003 book *The Total Money Makeover*. Chris bought it and read it in a day.

"I got sick of getting to the end of the month and finding we were spending into a deficit," Chris said. "We make good money and had nothing but a pile of debt to show for it."

The information in Ramsey's curriculum is not new or unique, Chris said, but it is trustworthy and gave them a plan.

"What I like about Ramsey is that it's about behavior modification and small steps," Chris said. "We make the same [amount of] money, but now we spend intentionally, and giving is on the list."

The program had a marital bonus, one that nearly every couple in the class mentions. "Amy bore the bulk of stress with budgeting, because I just did not pay attention," he said. "I was not engaged in my marriage as I should have been."

THANKS FOR THE MINISTRY

Throughout the course, a series of 12 videos plus one more on tithing, Ramsey returns to a few phrases. Children do whatever feels good, he says, but adults create a plan and follow it through. Another is, "Live like no one else today, so that later you can live like no one else." He rails against a consumer culture that people fail to resist,





trapping them with loads of stuff and debt. "It's stooopid!" he shouts.

Ramsey has been giving out this kind of advice for 20 years, born out of stooopid behavior of his own. In his 20s, making \$20,000 a month with a real estate portfolio worth several million, Ramsey says his wealth left him dissatisfied. But he didn't have to face the burden of wealth for long: banks called his loans early, and Ramsey was forced to declare bankruptcy.

The churches he had attended looking for meaning he now turned to for financial help. A new Christian, he resolved to live differently, especially with his money. And he began telling others about his newfound, debt-free, frugal lifestyle. He self-published his Financial Peace curriculum in 1992, the same year he landed a spot on a then-bankrupt Nashville radio station.

For the first decade, Ramsey and his company, Lampo Group, lived in an uncomfortable tension between being Christian and being featured on secular radio stations. That tension followed him to the Fox Business Channel, where callers regularly thanked him for his "ministry" and asked God to bless him. (Fox ended the show in 2010, but Ramsey is still a regular guest on many of its programs.)

"I had radio stations say, 'We love the show, but does he have to talk about God all the time?'" said Bill Hampton, Lampo Group's executive vice president.

True Believer: Dick Giesler fronts attendees the \$99 if they can't afford Dave Ramsey's materials.

The organization changed after the attacks on September 11, said Hampton. As the country turned to prayer following that day, Ramsey and his organization committed to integrating their faith into their financial teaching. "This is who we are," Hampton said. "This is truth, and we're going to be a business that operates in truth."

Ramsey doesn't claim that his financial principles are based on the Bible. But he talks about his personal faith, incorporates Scripture into his teaching, and speaks about the spiritual dimension of material things. "We found that people respect the consistency of the message. We don't beat people over the head with the Bible," Hampton said.

Still, integrating the Bible makes good business sense: While military bases, corporations, and other non-religious groups host Financial Peace classes, the majority of the 20,000 held last year were at churches. (About 251,000 families took part last year; 1.3 million

have done so in the organization's history.)

IRREVERENT INVESTOR

Ramsey has his critics, most of whom are concerned with his investment advice. He is a severe critic of Biblically Responsible Investing (BRI), which strongly discourages people from investing in products that make money off of abortion, gambling, tobacco, or pornography. One financial adviser says he received e-mails from Ramsey "forcefully telling me not to tell people about BRI."

The Financial Peace curriculum calls such investing "a slippery slope." The financial adviser said, for instance, "If you no longer invest in funds that might invest in a company that supports abortion, you would also need to stop banking, because nearly all banks contribute to United Way, which supports Planned Parenthood. . . . [D]on't choose these funds out of guilt. Don't make poor investment decisions to choose these funds."

"It's a very sad reflection on the church when good ethics is deemed a slippery slope," said Christian financial adviser Gary Moore. "Pastors should be very careful about his teachings."

"Values-based investing is a good concept," Ramsey stated in an e-mail interview. "However, I recommend that you invest in funds that have a five-year or longer track record of strong rates of returns, and few of these funds have that."

Another financial adviser listed as an "Endorsed Local Provider"—someone who does business "Dave Ramsey's way"—said Ramsey's advice often goes overboard. "My recommendations are specific to the client," he said. Some should probably invest outside the stock market, but such advice would get him delisted from Ramsey's organization, which recommends only stock investments.

Most people who have gone through Ramsey's program probably don't recall the details of his investing advice. For them, it's about quitting credit cards and budgeting. These simple but often dramatic behavior changes are unquestionably changing families around the country, as they did when Larry Burkett and Ron Blue were the top personal finance gurus of the conservative Christian world.

"You're not free until you're financially free," said Chuck Bentley, CEO of Crown Financial Ministries. But that's more than just free from debt and credit cards, he said. A human definition of financial freedom is financial independence. For God, "financial freedom is the freedom to serve only one master. You're free to be Christ's slave and no longer controlled by money, regardless if you have a lot or a little."

Like Ramsey, Crown offers practical help, from a budgeting system to online bill paying. But Bentley said it's most important to get someone's heart in the right place and not simply deal with overspending. "The rich young ruler was probably debt free. But Jesus challenged his heart regarding his wealth."



'Churches see the pain that finances cause in people's marriages and families.'

~ Dave Ramsey

Rob Leacock, administrative pastor at Christ Church Assembly of God in Fort Worth, Texas, has used material from both Financial Peace and Crown Financial Ministries. While Financial Peace focuses on getting out of debt, Leacock said, Crown's "focus is what the Bible says. . . . In a perfect world, we would do Crown first and get the biblical basis." Then Financial Peace would provide a more step-by-step approach of putting the biblical principles into action. The people who had already gone through Crown classes, Leacock said, responded best to the Financial Peace classes.

COURTESY OF LAMPO GROUP

ENDING THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

In September, Howard Books will release Ramsey's next book, one that has more in common with Peter Drucker than Larry Burkett. *EntreLeadership* signals Ramsey's efforts to translate his expertise in personal finance into the areas of leadership and small business. (He has been conducting *EntreLeadership* conferences since 2005.)

Meanwhile, Ramsey's Lampo Group (*lampos* is Greek for "give light" or "shine") has been quietly reshaping Ramsey's church outreach. The Momentum curriculum, aimed at pastors and church leaders,

shares many of Financial Peace's themes: eliminating debt, saving, and giving. But it looks at church budgets, too. Perhaps most controversially, the program argues that churches should not conduct capital campaigns for any purpose. Instead, Ramsey argues, churches should just teach members to mind their finances.

"In the capital campaign model, you're tapping the few members who are giving and you're asking for more," said Hampton. Instead, he said, "If you free resources, families will give. They want to; they just don't know how to fit it into their budget."

The argument convinced the leadership of the 1,200-member Christ Church Assembly of God. Leaders had been planning a capital campaign in order to pay off the debts from two new buildings. Then, in September 2009, leaders talked to Ramsey's Momentum staff.

Executive pastor Stephen Blandino said Momentum consultants told them, "If you have a capital campaign, and your people are in debt, how will you reach your goals?"

The church instead signed 763 people up for Financial Peace. During the 13-week course, attendees paid off \$951,899 in personal debt and saved another \$219,274. The church asks for annual pledges to its building fund, but hasn't yet launched a capital campaign.

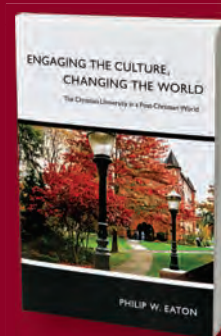
"We want to eliminate our [church] debt, but we want to help our people get rid of their debt," Blandino said. The church's use of Ramsey's programs, he said, "is about how we change the culture of our church when it comes to how we think about money." ☩

Rob Moll is a *Christianity Today* editor at large who writes frequently on finance.

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Philip W. Eaton

Author of *Engaging the Culture, Changing the World* (Intervarsity Press, 2011) and president of Seattle Pacific University



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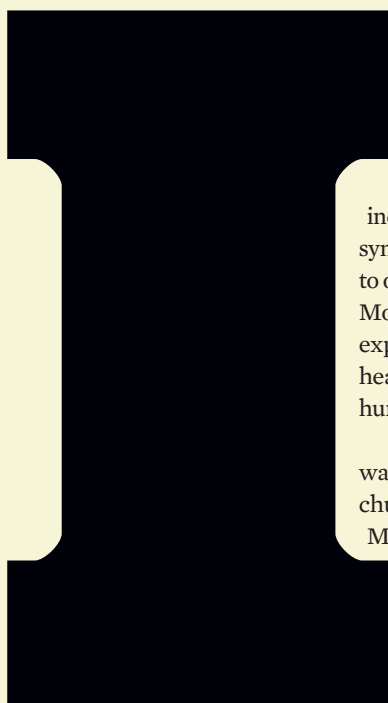
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God Has a Wonderful Plan for Your Body

It includes sex, diet, and sports—but so much more.

By Matthew Lee Anderson



IN SEPTEMBER 2010, Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, ignited a blogging and media firestorm by arguing that yoga and Christianity are incompatible. “The embrace of yoga,” he wrote, “is a symptom of our postmodern spiritual confusion, and, to our shame, this confusion reaches into the church.” Mohler’s critique went over as well as one might have expected among those who practice yoga either for health or spiritual growth. He reportedly received hundreds of responses, most of them negative.

The controversy regarding yoga wasn’t new. In some ways, it rehashed an earlier kerfuffle surrounding emerging church leader Doug Pagitt, who was invited to debate John MacArthur on CNN in 2007. Once again, the battle lines were clear: MacArthur dismissed yoga as a degraded form of spirituality incompatible with the Christian life, while Pagitt embraced it as a way of integrating the body into a relationship with God.

Whatever we make of yoga’s relationship to Christianity, it functions as a cultural bellwether within evangelicalism and its offspring. Pagitt and those who affirm yoga do so out of a genuine attempt to cultivate a holistic faith, one that resists a dualistic division of body and spirit. This movement might be understood as an extension of Eric Liddell’s famous suggestion in *Chariots of Fire*: “I believe that God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run, I feel his pleasure.” If running, why not yoga? While nearly all evangelicals want to affirm Liddell’s sentiment, there is obvious disagreement over precisely which activities are commensurate with it and which are not.

Evangelicals clearly need some boundaries. Yoga (if only for health benefits) has been normalized for most mainstream Christians in the West. But what about the next fitness craze? In late March, ABC News reported that a small but earnest group of women had taken to “Christian pole dancing” classes. “God gives us these bodies, and they are supposed to be our temples and we are supposed to take care of them,” instructor Crystal Dean said, “and that’s what we are doing.” Apparently, Dean didn’t see any incongruity in gyrating suggestively to Matt Redman’s worship music.



PHOTOS • ISTOCK



DISCOVERING THE BODY

The benefit of such controversies is that they force evangelicals to seriously evaluate and articulate the proper place of the physical body within both our spiritual practices and our theology. Dissatisfaction increasingly ripples forth from within the evangelical movement, suggesting that this discussion is long overdue. As theologian Michael Horton has written, “It would seem that the critics of modern American religion are basically on target in describing the entire religious landscape, from New Age or liberal, to evangelical and Pentecostal, as essentially Gnostic.” Against those who traffic in “quasi-Gnostic” notions of “salvation of the soul,” Horton suggests that genuine Christianity is a “crude, earthy religion.”

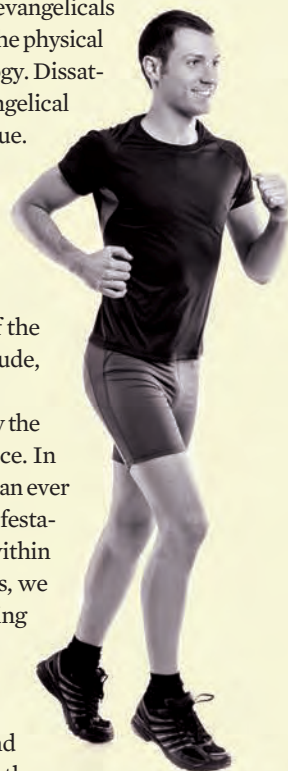
Such critiques, while powerful, sometimes downplay the unique dynamics of evangelical spirituality and practice. In some ways, evangelicals are more interested in bodies than ever before. Attention to physical healing and physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s presence has long prevailed within the charismatic wing of evangelicalism. But nowadays, we see a revived concern for corporeal existence sweeping through the broader movement: Consider our heightened sensitivity to the physical needs of the poor and our growing appreciation for beauty and the arts.

This blossoming interest in the body’s needs and expression takes many forms. Witness, for instance, the renewed evangelical emphasis on dieting, or the burgeoning awareness of ethical dilemmas in the production, distribution, and consumption of food. Our fondness of sports doubtlessly manifests the seriousness with which we enjoy the pleasures that come from embodied living. What’s more, a younger generation’s fascination with liturgical forms of worship—Robert Webber spotted this phenomenon nearly 20 years ago—has slowly infused many evangelical churches. Last March in St. Louis, BiFrost Arts—a new organization devoted to thinking through the ways that worship shapes the body—hosted a conference that aimed at liturgically minded Presbyterians, but also drew a number of curious mainstream evangelicals.

Perhaps the most significant indicator that evangelicals are warming to the body is the retrieval of the spiritual disciplines, helped along by writers like Dallas Willard and Donald Whitney. Willard in particular, in books like *The Spirit of the Disciplines* and *Renovation of the Heart*, has articulated a scripturally shaped spirituality that infiltrates every part of the human person. This movement has reached the point of gaining institutional support, both inside and outside the academy.

PIECEMEAL THEOLOGY

Renewed evangelical interest in the body has perhaps been most evident—and problematic—in our teaching about sex and sexuality. Starting in the 1970s, evangelicals experienced what some scholars have described as our own sexual revolution. After the publication of Marabel Morgan’s *The Total Woman*, manuals designed to maximize marital pleasure flooded the evangelical book market. Seeking to justify physical pleasure amid stereotypes of prudishness and repression, evangelicals embraced literalist interpretations of the Song of Solomon, arguing not only that God made sex good, but that Christians should have more frequent and pleasurable sex than anyone else—a sort of sexual apologetic, if you will.



At minimum, this is an expansive Christianity, a Christianity attempting to move outside the church walls into every part of our lives—especially the body.

The downside is that evangelicals have sometimes been clumsy in our efforts to see how the Word should shape the flesh. Our approaches to the body have often proceeded in rather piecemeal fashion. Whatever trend happens to be in vogue at a particular moment, Christians readily respond with a “Jesus approved” version. When dieting became the rage, Christian dieting shortly followed. As yoga gained popularity, Christian yoga started up. And as the sexual revolution unfurled its banners, Christians sought scriptural warrants for indulging the pleasures of the flesh.

While Christianity clearly impinges on every aspect of our bodily lives, the piecemeal approach to a theology of the body has significant drawbacks. Beyond the fragmented understanding of the body that comes from attending only to diverse activities and functions, the absence of an overarching theological backdrop risks reducing our ethical teachings and pastoral care to mere legalism. We lose the sense that Christianity proposes more a distinct way of life than a moralizing list of dos and don’ts.

What’s more, dividing our theology of the body into separate examinations of sex, yoga, or other experiences runs two additional risks: focusing narrowly on Scripture, we affirm only what its text explicitly allows; or, focusing narrowly on physical enjoyment,

There is a higher good than even pleasure, and that is the mutual relationship of love.

we indulge a pleasure-seeking “spirituality” untethered from the biblical witness.

Evangelicals desperately need, then, an ordered account of how Scripture informs our understanding of the human body and its uses. But with few exceptions—like James K. A. Smith and Amos Yong—evangelical theology is still playing catch-up.



As Westmont College theologian Telford Work recently pointed out in these pages, the theology of the body is one of evangelicalism’s least developed doctrines.

FINDING NEW RESOURCES

The difficulty of moving from practice to theology has never been clearer than in our approach to sexuality. Culturally, sexual pleasure has become an inviolable good that trumps every other consideration when pursued by consenting adults. When Northwestern University sexuality professor J. Michael Bailey recently hosted a live sex act after class for students, he defended it on grounds that he would not “surrender to sex negativity and fear.” A measure of negativity and fear has doubtlessly marred evangelical teaching about sexuality, but our unease also reflects a healthy appreciation for humanity’s fallenness. We cannot ignore how thoroughly sin has corrupted all of creation, very much including our sexual appetites.

Further poisoning our culture’s lust for pleasure is a frightfully egoistic mentality: Nothing, we say, should deter us from sexual fulfillment besides absence of consent or avoidance of bodily harm (and sometimes not even the latter). Unfortunately, many evangelicals have adopted, if sometimes uncomfortably, just such self-centered attitudes. Most prominently, Douglas Rosenau, author of the best-selling book *A Celebration of Sex*, endorses a “healthy sexual selfishness.”

The challenge for an evangelical understanding of sexuality, then, is to articulate the nature of pleasure and its relationship to sexuality such that we become neither libertines nor prudes. We need to develop an account of the body that avoids treating

it as an instrument of personal pleasure bound only by a commandment not to harm others. Otherwise, we end up allowing hedonistic, self-centered attitudes to infiltrate our teaching and ultimately undermine our witness.

To develop such a theology, evangelicals should look deep into our own tradition, using the resources we have at hand. But we should not be afraid to consult other sources of Christian teaching. Probably the work that stands readiest for evangelical dialogue is John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*, a compilation of weekly radio addresses the pope gave between 1979 and 1984. It has been influential within Roman Catholicism, but evangelicals have had virtually no engagement with it. Glenn Stanton of Focus on the Family has been something of a prophet crying out in the wilderness. From what I can tell, his 2011 pamphlet from Ascension Press—*A Christian Response to the Sexual Revolution: An Evangelical Discovers the Theology of the Body*—constitutes nearly the whole of printed evangelical reflection about this unjustly neglected topic.

LEARNING FROM JOHN PAUL

The challenges of learning from the pope's work as evangelicals are many. Beyond substantive disagreements about the doctrines of justification, the authority of the church, and the contents of the canon—some of which are more applicable to *Theology of the Body* than others—many evangelicals will balk at affirming the sacramentality of marriage and the pope's teachings about contraception.

But there are benefits to us reading John Paul's work. Perhaps most importantly, it manages to merge theology, pastoral reflection, and practical teaching in a way that orients the reader toward genuine transformation. The pope confronts moral questions without lapsing into moralism, folding them into a broader account of the human body and human sexuality. And he does this precisely to accomplish something beyond a truthful articulation of a theology of the body. As John Paul puts it, "the Christian *ethos* is characterized by a *transformation of the human person's consciousness and attitudes*" toward the body and sex. *Theology of the Body* is a catechesis designed to encourage personal transformation; the text has a meditative quality best appreciated from within. Hence, those interested in coming to grips with the work would be best served by going *ad fontes*, direct to the source itself, rather than relying on its many expositors.

Theology of the Body provides a way of speaking about sexuality that avoids both profanity and prudish silence. When pastor John MacArthur wrote four blog posts critiquing Mark Driscoll in 2009 for his teaching about sexuality, he contended that Driscoll had turned the poetry of the Song of Solomon into "scurrilous soft-porn." Driscoll's approach, which Driscoll has described as "frank but not crass," reflects a pervasive desire among young

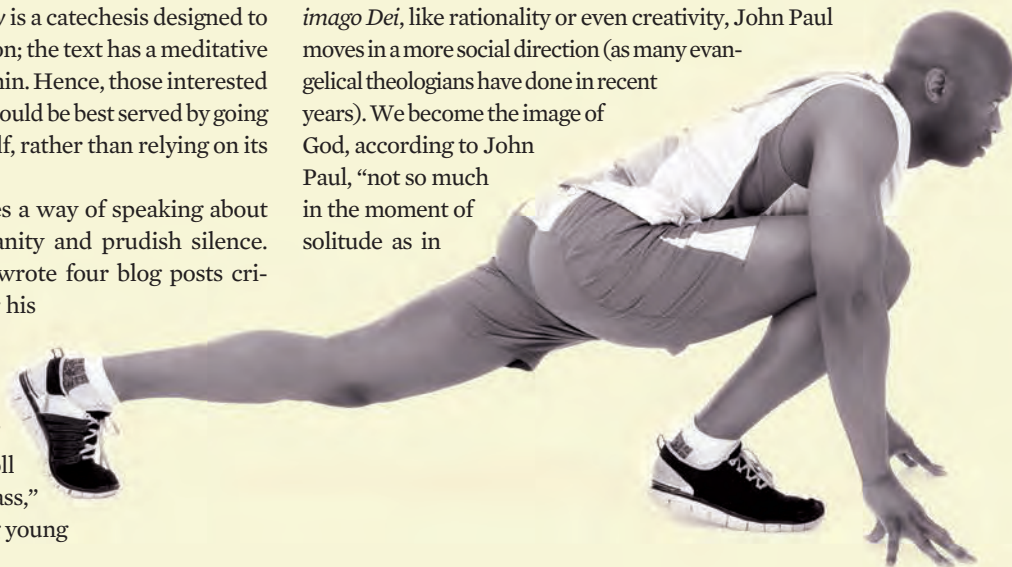
John Paul II provides an account of sexual pleasure from which evangelicals can learn, even if they have difficulty swallowing other elements of his theology.

evangelicals to have candid conversations about sexuality. But while instruction about the technical aspects of sexuality has its place, the church has its own way of speaking about sex—think Genesis 1, Ephesians 5, and the Song of Solomon—that preserves its mysterious dimensions. *Theology of the Body* provides some resources for navigating that dilemma.

Perhaps most importantly, John Paul II provides an account of sexual pleasure from which evangelicals can learn, even if they have difficulty swallowing other elements of his theology. There is no hesitation in proclaiming the goodness of sexual pleasure. But he affirms neither contemporary understandings of pleasure nor the deficient theories of human nature that stand beneath them. Instead, sexual pleasure is meant to accompany the more fundamental meaning of the human body, which is "a witness to creation as fundamental gift, and therefore a witness to Love as the source from which this same giving springs."

This love to which our bodies bear witness is one in which "the human person becomes a gift and—through this gift—fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence." This is a radically different way of framing sexuality than the sanctified egoism that limits our pursuit of pleasure only where it harms other people. And unlike the evangelical bestseller *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage*, John Paul doesn't fall prey to describing sex as a *need* or an impulse within a relationship. Treating sex this way undermines the unique freedom we have through self-mastery and continence, which are essential qualities if we wish to give ourselves away in a relationship of love. By locating sexual pleasure in this context, John Paul defends its goodness without making it utterly necessary to human flourishing, much less the central pursuit of human life. There is a higher good than even pleasure, and that is the mutual relationship of love.

Beneath this understanding of sexuality is John Paul's account of what it means that humans are made in the image of God. Rather than appealing to an individualist notion of the *imago Dei*, like rationality or even creativity, John Paul moves in a more social direction (as many evangelical theologians have done in recent years). We become the image of God, according to John Paul, "not so much in the moment of solitude as in



While the idea of a 'Jesus-shaped' sexuality might sound scandalous, it points the way toward a gospel ideal: men and women freely subordinating their pursuit of physical pleasure to the good of another.

the moment of communion.” The same self-giving love that constitutes the inner life of the triune God is on display in the original created order and through the redemption of the body brought about in Christ’s death and resurrection.

In other words, John Paul’s understanding of the “image of God” imparts to marriage (and, albeit in a different way, the vocation to celibacy) its sacramental character. The body, in this view, is “a visible sign of the economy of Truth and Love.” As the pope puts it, we are a “body among bodies.” We belong to the material world. But our awareness of being embodied, and our ability to give ourselves freely in love, differentiates us from all other embodied creatures. Not until the end of *Theology of the Body*, it’s important to note, does John Paul speak of marriage as a “sacrament” in the sense that Catholic theologians use the term today. Much of the early part of his account is given over to highlighting the *sacramentality of the body*—the way in which, through our self-giving, it makes visible the image of God.

JESUS-SHAPED SEXUALITY

At a minimum, this account of the sexual dimensions of the body has a depth that our sex manuals and pastoral teachings have sometimes lost. But it does so only because it points to the more basic relationship of mutual self-giving at the heart of creation: that between Christ and the church. When Paul expounds the profound mystery between husbands and wives in Ephesians 5, he reminds us that its primary referent is Jesus and his people. Christ has given himself for us, and when moved by the grace of God, we respond with grateful self-giving, to him and to others. While the idea of a “Jesus-shaped” sexuality might sound scandalous, it points the way toward a gospel ideal: men and women, possessed of a servant mentality, freely subordinating their pursuit of physical pleasure to the good of another.

This account of the body also provides important resources

for the single and young, who suffer most when sexuality is reduced to an animal impulse or an essential element of human flourishing. Exhorted to remain chaste within a culture that ridicules chastity as socially and biologically self-defeating, it’s no wonder young evangelicals struggle to live sexually upright lives. A theology of the body patterned on the self-giving of the Cross, though, can begin to reframe the conversation surrounding sexuality and human flourishing, suggesting patterns of embodied life in which the single and married can equally partake.

An evangelical theology of the body would also help counteract the sloppy spirituality whose increasing popularity undermines the distinctness of our witness. The way to minimize yoga’s appeal as a spiritual practice is to recover an understanding of the body that makes the practices we see in Scripture more compelling. Such a theology could also take on a more evangelistic tone: If ever the dignity and status of the body were in question, it is now, and evangelicals have an opportunity to welcome bodies of all sorts, giving them an intrinsic dignity and worth they may not have elsewhere.

When Paul exhorts the church at Rome to “offer [their] bodies as living sacrifices,” he is commending to them a spiritual act of worship. Our bodies, and what we do with them, matter to God. They’ve been given as a gift—a gift meant to be returned to his service. As evangelicals, the pattern for our sacrifice must be the pattern of the Cross, and the power for our giving must be the power of the Resurrection. Otherwise, our ethics will be moralism and our spirituality will be disconnected from the unique revelation of God to man in the incarnate person of Jesus Christ. ✚

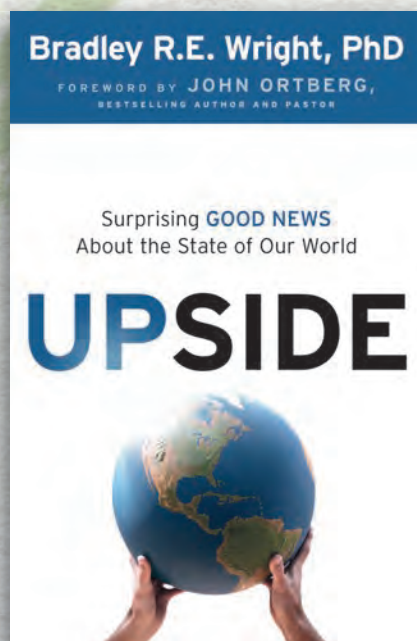
Matthew Lee Anderson is author of *Earthen Vessels: Why Our Bodies Matter to Our Faith* (Bethany House). A graduate of Biola University’s Torrey Honors Institute, he blogs at MereOrthodoxy.com.

Go to ChristianBibleStudies.com for “God Has a Wonderful Plan for Your Body,” a Bible study based on this article.



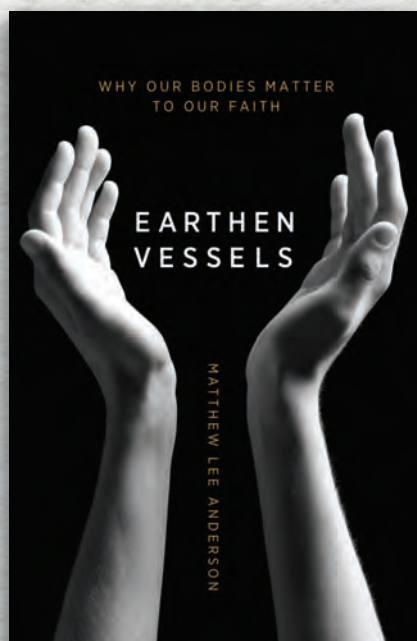
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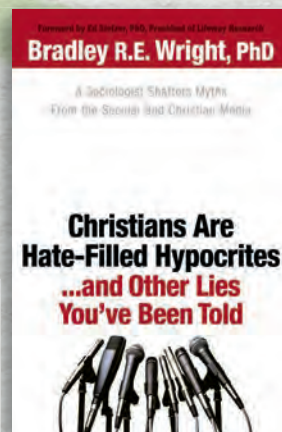
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Upside by Bradley R. E. Wright, PhD



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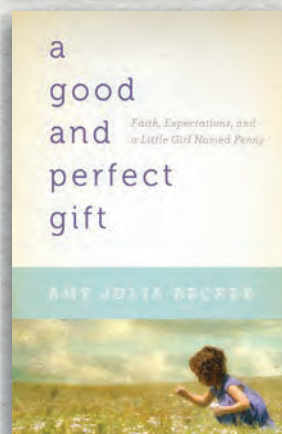
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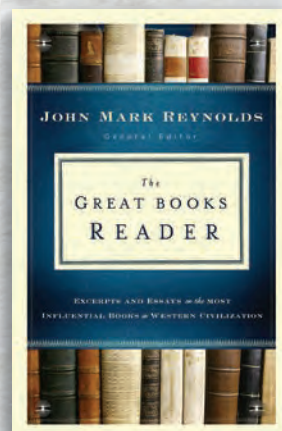
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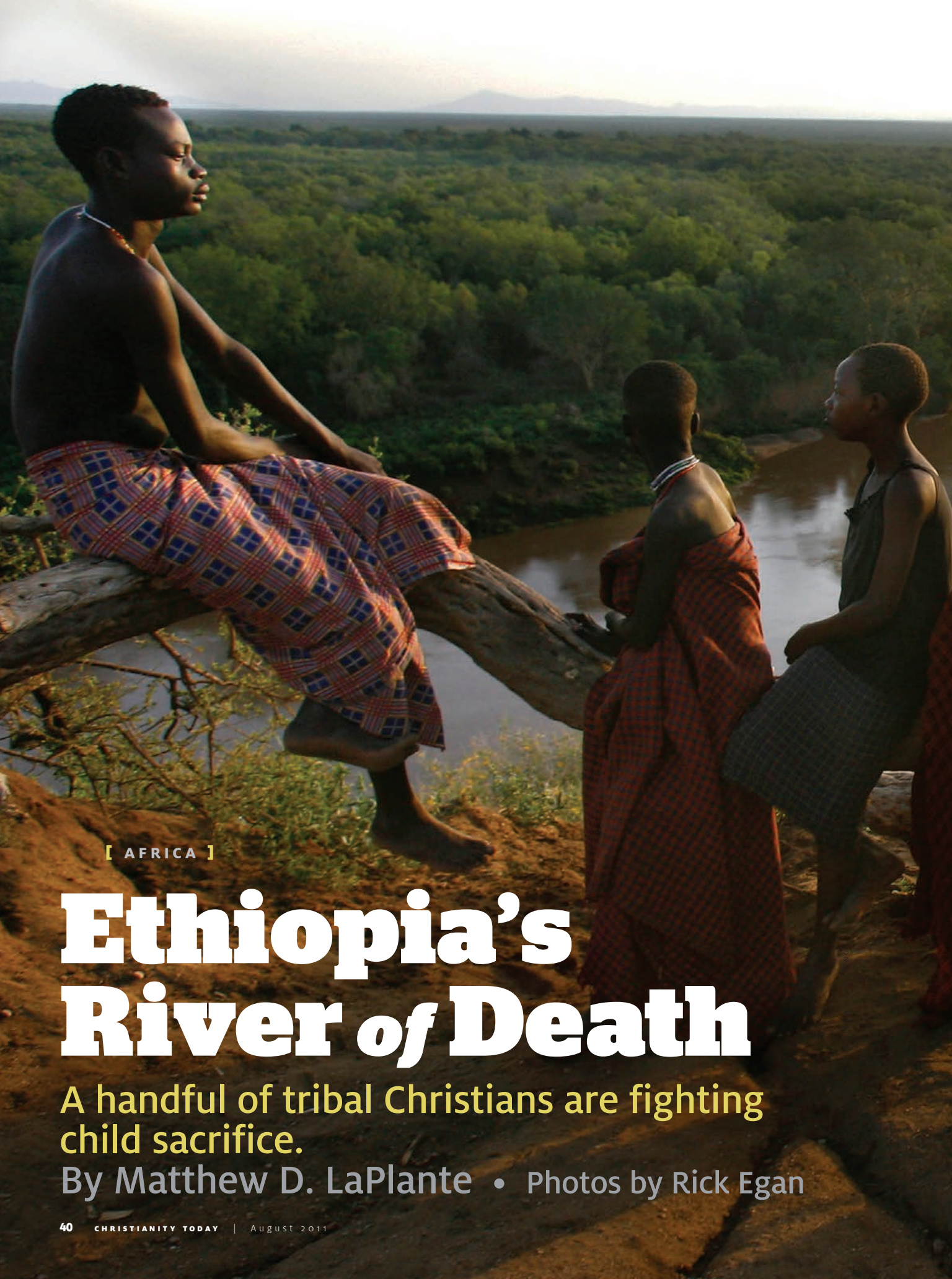
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[AFRICA]

Ethiopia's River of Death

A handful of tribal Christians are fighting
child sacrifice.

By Matthew D. LaPlante • Photos by Rick Egan



Dead Zone: Children of the Kara tribe look across the Omo River, where mingi killings take place. The tribe has a population of under 10,000.

THE HEALTHY INFANT BOY'S top teeth came in before his bottom teeth. For this, elders of the Kara tribe in Ethiopia's primitive Omo River region determined that the child must die.

The child was *mingi*—"cursed" according to superstition. With every breath, the elders believed, the boy was beckoning an evil spirit into their village. It was the sacrifice of one child for the good of the entire tribe, a rite that elders had witnessed for untold generations.

Less clear was what to do about the boy's dead twin. After some debate and an examination of goat intestines, the elders decided the dead twin must have been *mingi* too. They dug up the corpse, bound it to the living boy, paddled a canoe into the center of the swiftly moving Omo River, and threw them both into the cold, brown waters.

That was five years ago. Several years ago, regional officials had begun taking action—threatening prison for those complicit in *mingi* killings. But at best, officials are equipped to step in only after a child has been murdered. So, in the villages of southern Ethiopia, a region the size of Texas with few roads or infrastructure, a few concerned tribespeople started an orphanage for cursed children. Yet the orphanage is mired in controversy, and meanwhile, few have challenged the underlying fear of *mingi*.

But one small band of Christians in one tribe, along with other supportive Christians, has pledged to protect these cursed children until *mingi* is no more. They are determined to show tribal elders that there is something "stronger than *mingi*"—the power of Jesus Christ. Earlier this year, I traveled to the hard-to-reach Ethiopian river valley to hear their story.

MODERN-DAY CHILD SACRIFICE

Bona Shapo, a tribal elder, took me to where mingi children are being sacrificed. He steered his dugout canoe through the crocodile-infested waters of the Omo River, guiding the craft beneath a crumbling precipice near the stick-and-thatch village of Korcho. Across the river, Colobus monkeys whooped and howled, stirring Marabou storks from their perches on a stand of acacia.

"This is where they do it," says Bona, who had stood on these muddy banks the day the boys were thrown into the river.

There has been little modern research on mingi. Elders single out for death children who are born out of wedlock, have damaged genitals, or whose top baby teeth emerge before the bottom ones. Kara elders believe keeping this traditional practice is crucial to tribal survival. Allowing a mingi child to live among their people, they fear, will cause the rains to cease and the sun to grow hotter.

"If they have mingi, there will be no water, no food, no cattle," Bona says. "But when they throw the baby away, everything is good again. So yes, it is sad, but we are thinking about the village, the family, all the people."

Tribal parents tolerate the killing. After Erma Ayeli gave birth, elders took her newborn. She was not permitted to nurse him, hold him, or see him. "I think he must have been a beautiful boy," she says. "I wanted to keep him."

Her chin sinks into the colorful beads draped around her neck. Erma still grieves over her son's death—but she does not question it. "There was no other option," she says.

Sex outside of marriage is acceptable among the Kara. But if a woman becomes pregnant before participating in a marriage ceremony, as Erma did, her child is considered *kumbaso*—a mingi curse that occurs when parents fail to perform the appropriate rites before conceiving.

As Erma speaks, her hands fall to her swollen stomach; she is pregnant again.

"It was an accident," she cries. "I don't want to lose this baby, too."

This time, at least, she has reason to hope that her child might be spared. Far from her village is an orphanage for mingi children. Erma has pleaded with village leaders to let her child go there. Either way, she will not be allowed to see the baby. "This time, I think, I might have a girl," Erma says.

FAILED DETERRENT

The criminal case of another young mother, Mashi Limo, shows how difficult it is to stop mingi practices. The beads, animal skins, and jewelry that Mashi once wore have been replaced by a tattered shirt and loose-fitting skirt. She is indistinguishable from the other inmates at the prison in Jinka, the regional capital.

Yet everyone in the ragtag penitentiary knows who she is. "The mingi mother," says one guard. "Yes, we all know what happened to her. It is very sad."

Back in her Kara village, it is well known that Mashi did not kill her cursed infant; she was far too weak after the birth to do so. Other women took the baby away.

But when the police arrived, Mashi took the blame. Within days, she had been sentenced to three years in prison. She had no attorney; there was no trial.

Mashi is conversant only in her native language. She has never been to school. When she is finally released, there will be one place to go—back to the village. And so, under the watchful eyes of several other Kara prisoners, Mashi stands by her story.

"What they say is false," she says of those in her tribe who have proclaimed her innocence. "I did it all myself."

Asked if she deserves to be in prison, the teenager sinks her face into her hands. "I hate it here," she says. "I wanted to keep my baby. That was not allowed. This is our culture."

The government succeeded in putting someone behind bars for a mingi murder, but there has been little deterrent effect. Solomon

Ayko, a lanky young Kara man who has witnessed several mingi killings, told me, referring to tribal elders, "Before they did it in the open. Now it just happens in secret."

It is extremely uncommon for police officers to make the arduous trip from Jinka to any of the far-flung Kara villages. Officers who make the trip discover that villagers strongly support mingi killings.

Korcho village elder Ari Lale described to me how some mingi killings, in addition to drowning, are carried out. Some 15 years ago, a cursed baby had been born. The elders asked Ari to take part in the child's execution. "The baby was crying," Ari says, "so we put sand in its mouth, and he was still trying to cry but couldn't anymore." Soon the child was dead.

Ari counts his participation in the boy's death as one of his proudest memories. "All the families would thank me for throwing away that baby," he says. He and others have found different ways to carry out the killings to avoid detection. He says, "After the baby is born, we keep it alone in the house, and we do not give it water or milk."

Without nourishment, the infants die quickly. There is little that can be done to prove that a baby wasn't simply stillborn. Ari appears to be pleased with this solution. Yet he balances his pride with lament. "They are human," he says. For all the praise he got for carrying out the first killing, Ari says, he would have preferred to let the child live—if only there had been another way.

CONTROVERSIAL SOLUTION

For a younger Kara man, Shoma Dore, mingi killings were simply part of his generational heritage. "I didn't realize there was anything



Rescued Toddler: Tanique, a mingi child, now lives in a Banna tribe village with a Christian family.

“The rains stopped for a short time. The people rose up and said, “You must get rid of her. Throw her into the bush.” But I said, “Do not throw your child into the bush.””

~ Kaiso Dobiar

Mother and Foster Child:
Kaiso Dobiar holds Tarika,
a 2-year-old mingi child.
Their tribe is one of Ethiopia's
26 unreached groups.



wrong with it.”

Not, that is, until Shoma left the tribe to attend school. When he returned from Jinka two years later, he realized how wrong it was. Shoma found others among the Kara’s educated youth who had come to the same conclusion.

“There are many important and good parts of our culture,” says Aryo Dora, one of about 30 young Kara who joined Shoma to ask elders to stop the mingi killings a few years ago. “There is also a sickness in our culture, and we have to change ourselves.”

Their plan, developed with the help of a team of Westerners, was simple: If mingi children could be sent far away from the village, they would pose no risk to the tribe. That is how the orphanage began. Today, more than 30 mingi children live together in a small, single-story home in a quiet Jinka neighborhood.

Still, the process of placing a mingi newborn with the orphanage is gut-wrenching for the mother.

On a bright May morning in Korcho village, dozens of women are on their knees, grinding sorghum into flour, but Zelle Tarbe is working inside. It has been six days since she gave birth to her baby boy. The shock of having him taken away is still evident in her face. Nonetheless, she says, she feels fortunate, “because my son is alive.”

Zelle was able to spend a few short moments with her baby before orphanage officials spirited him away. “He was so sweet and beautiful,” she says. “But I did not give him a name, because he was mingi and could not stay with me.”

No one, least of all Zelle, would argue that the rescue mission isn’t preferable to death for mingi children. But the orphanage has

nonetheless been a controversial solution.

A group of American Christians had supported the orphanage for two years, but this spring they decided to withdraw their backing, believing the orphanage’s director was using orphanage funds for personal benefit.

Then, orphanage leaders accused the Americans—who had helped arrange the adoption of four mingi babies—of stealing the children from their families. The adoptions were, in fact, legal under Ethiopian law, which treats mingi children as abandoned. But orphanage leaders have argued that the birthparents surrendered their babies under cultural duress and have the right to reclaim the children.

Regardless, adoptions and orphanages don’t address the fears that instigate mingi killings. Even with support from Westerners, the rescue and shelter system is able to save only a fraction of at-risk children.

Tribal leaders in Korcho say about 20 mingi children have been born into their small village since the orphanage opened. Orphanage workers say they arrived in time to save only about half of those children.

Last year, mission leaders learned that a woman had given birth to a mingi boy, whom tribal elders had promptly attempted to kill by ripping out his umbilical cord. The wounds quickly went septic. Evacuation by air was the only solution. Chartering the aircraft cost \$3,500.

“That was the sum of all the money we had,” said Levi Benkert, an American and one of the mission’s former leaders. “We couldn’t be certain that, even if we did it, he was going to live.”

They did it anyway—and saved the boy. An online fundraising

“These babies are like influenza. If it is not stopped, it can kill many people. That is what they believe. When things go badly, the people believe this more than ever.” ~ Andualem Turga

effort quickly recouped the costs, but rescue mission officials knew they couldn't sustain those sorts of expenses.

“We did our best,” Benkert says. “We saved as many children as we could. And we continue to pray for them every day.”

CHANGE FROM WITHIN

In light of orphanage scandal and government inaction, several tribal Christian families have turned to foster care.

Foster care keeps mingi children closer to their birth families, which can show elders that mingi poses no threat to a village's prosperity. German missionary Andreas Kosubek, who has ministered to the Kara for six years, believes Kara parents genuinely love their children. “These people are really good people,” says Kosubek. “They are not doing this because they are evil, wild, dumb monsters. They fear for the lives of others in the tribe.”

From Kosubek's point of view, the only thing that will overcome the fear is helping the Kara believe in something “stronger than mingi.” Ultimately, the 29-year-old evangelist would like to see the Kara come to Christ—though few villagers have taken up his offer to accept Christ, and many openly mock his pitch.

Kosubek is undeterred. He figures the next best thing to leading the Kara to Jesus is serving them like Jesus. Since 2005, he has organized medical mission trips into the tribe's villages. “Our main goal was to help these people really get to know Jesus, but we cannot do that unless we approach them with humility and a dedication to service,” he says.

Kosubek recognizes the need to end mingi killings but doesn't feel called to condemn tribal elders. “Before we judge, we have to ask ourselves what we have done to help these children.” If the mingi killings are to end, he believes, the change will have to come from within the tribes.

That's what happened with the Banna, another Omo River tribe.

In a mud hut in the village of Alduba, Kaiso Dobiar dips a ladle into a tar-black pot of coffee and stirs the simmering brew. She is proud to be Banna, and she follows many of her tribe's customs and beliefs. But Kaiso is also a Christian, a member of the Kale Heywet evangelical denomination, which has 7,700 churches nationally. Wary of idolatry, she and her husband refused to perform the rites mandated by tribal leaders before they conceived.

“My children are mingi, in that way of thinking,” says Kaiso, who is fostering two additional mingi children in her home.

A petite toddler crawls onto Kaiso's lap, reaching over to help stir the pot. “This is Tarika,” Kaiso says. “She is 2, and she is mingi.”

Tarika was born without the appropriate Banna ceremonies, but her birthmother refused to give up her daughter for six months.

“Then the rains stopped for a short time,” Kaiso says. “The people rose up and said, ‘You must get rid of her. Throw her into the bush.’ But I said, ‘Do not throw your child into the bush. Give her to me.’”

Sharing this hut with Kaiso's family is Tegist, another mingi child. Kaiso says her foster daughters cannot play with other Banna children and must remain in her family's compound.

“They will have to stay here until they are older,” Kaiso says. “After that? God, he knows.”

Missionaries first came to the Banna decades ago. Today, Christians compose just 1 to 2 percent of the tribe's population, but their collective devotion has been enough to eliminate almost all mingi killings within the tribe. With little money or other means of support, the Banna Christians have accepted responsibility for scores of mingi children.

Many, like Kaiso, are already caring for one or more mingi boys and girls. One family has taken in 17 foster children.

They do so at great risk to their own families. “What are you doing protecting those children?” an angry neighbor screams from beyond a stick fence as Kaiso steps

out of her home. “Tell us why!”

LONG JOURNEY AHEAD

The Banna have not faced drought or a significant bout of disease for years. That, local Christians say, has prevented their neighbors from lashing out. But if the tribe's fortunes were to change, its leaders would be swift to identify a culprit, says Banna tribesman Andualem Turga.

“To these people, these babies are like influenza,” Andualem says. “If it is not stopped, it can kill many people. That is what they believe. When things go badly, the people believe this more than ever.”

Uri Betu tries not to think about such things. She is unwavering in her obligation to the two mingi children who live in her home—and any others who need her care.

“We do not worry,” Uri says as she watches her pair of 2-year-old foster daughters, Tariqua and Waiso, play in the yard. “This is what God has called us to do.”

Over time, Uri prays, the Banna will see that the presence of mingi children in their midst is unrelated to weather patterns. Perhaps, she says, that recognition will help bring them to Christ. And, God willing, other tribes that practice mingi child sacrifice will follow.

Still, Uri knows, “There is a long way to go to change the beliefs we have had for so long.”



Uncertain Fate: Mingi children Tegist and Tarika are still at risk of being killed by tribal elders.

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SIGNS *of the* END TIMES

Our pursuit of justice in the present foreshadows the perfect justice of an age to come.

By David Neff



THE CHURCH in which I grew up talked a lot about the imminence of the Second Coming and the Day of Judgment. We focused on being personally prepared—confessing our sins and our faith in Jesus, and cultivating our particular forms of piety. Our drive was to convert souls for heaven.

In preparing so assiduously for the last days, we missed something important: our responsibility to address the real needs of desperate people. If the world and its ills will soon pass away, these needs will feel less urgent. I have come to believe, however, that the Bible's vision of eschatology discourages such forgetfulness. Living in the last days means relieving the needs of particular people, and confronting the ills of all humanity.

The Bible frames help for the needy as a sign that God's kingdom has invaded this present age. In this light, acts of justice and compassion are a form of gospel proclamation. What follows are six big ideas that connect biblical eschatology, biblical justice, and gospel proclamation.



Biblical eschatology is about justice.

It is impossible to believe that a good God would ignore injustices committed against the people and the planet he loves. The psalmist frets over the fact that the wicked prosper. "[A]lways free of care, they go on amassing wealth," laments Psalm 73. "Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure . . ."

It is all so unfair! The evil amass wealth by grinding the face of the poor, but I have kept myself pure—and look what my life is like! Yet the psalmist finds comfort in a passionate belief that somehow God will set things right: "Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin."

Only later in biblical history, in the shadow of Babylonian captivity, would such intuitions ripen into detailed pictures of justice. The prophet Micah, for instance, anticipated the eventual restoration of his homeland after assaults by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. In his description of the "last days" (his term), nations experience the rule of law—God's law—rather than the rule of tyrants. People turn swords, a symbol of war and bloodshed, into plowshares, a symbol of peaceful cultivation of the land.

Micah offers a wonderful picture of tranquility and prosperity: "Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid" (4:4). This is not a picture of God's people sipping lemonade in the shade; vines and fig trees are the foundation



RICK BEERHORST





of economic prosperity, enabling everyone to provide for themselves and their families.

In the next chapter, Micah predicts the birth of the Messiah, intimating a nexus between the last days, the reign of peace and prosperity, and the Savior's coming. So too, in Isaiah's eschatological vision, do the promises of peace, justice, and messianic deliverance intersect. Isaiah describes God's servant, whom we understand to be the Messiah, as bringing justice to all the nations, Gentiles included. Through his ministrations, "[t]hey will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

Daniel gives us the earliest portrait of the Last Judgment and the resurrection of the dead, "some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). He presents a graphic vision of God's people oppressed by evil powers, and then pictures God, One like a Son of Man, and the archangel Michael making everything right on a global scale. But here's the genuinely new element: Justice does not extend just spatially to the whole world, as in Micah and Isaiah. It also extends back through time, rewarding the righteous dead with everlasting life and punishing the wicked with everlasting contempt.

As in Daniel, so in Revelation: God will defeat the evil powers. In Revelation, he uses plagues like those deployed to liberate the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. But Revelation takes the Exodus story beyond Egypt and makes it cosmic. Now the war is fought, and won, in heaven, with Michael and his angels defeating the Devil and his angels. And the outcome greatly resembles what the Old Testament prophets had predicted: the establishment of God's city and the healing of the nations.

Biblical eschatology is about justice. It was developed out of a concern for justice. And as God revealed these visions of justice in the last days, they gradually became universal, cosmic, in scope.



Biblical justice is about eschatology.

Actually, the whole of the Christian faith is about eschatology. Consider this passage from German theologian Jürgen Moltmann's *Theology of Hope*:

From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. The eschatological is not one element of Christianity, but it is the medium of Christian faith as such, the key in which everything in it is set, the glow that suffuses everything here in the dawn of an expected new day.

When Jesus comes preaching the kingdom, healing, and casting out demons, his actions are understood by the religious leaders, and even the demons, as a sign: He is the Messiah, sent to inaugurate God's reign. Recall when John the Baptist sends word from prison, asking if Jesus is indeed the promised Messiah. "Go back and report to John what you hear and see," Jesus tells John's messengers. "The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor" (Matt. 11:4–5).

This answer combines two promised outcomes of the Messiah's

coming: physical healing (even resurrection) and relief of economic privation. B. T. Roberts, founder of the Free Methodist Church, said that if a church isn't preaching good news to the poor, it is not a Christian church.

But there is still more going on here: Jesus was using Jubilee language, echoing God's promises in Isaiah 61. The Lord has anointed him to preach good news to the poor. In the coming kingdom, there would be no indentured servants, no slaves, no sharecroppers, no economic bondage whatsoever. Instead, each would have his own means of production. That's a vision of justice, and Jesus connected his own messiahship to that vision.



Biblical eschatology is not about the end of time, but the world's divine destiny.

In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), *eschaton* often means "outcome"—not a terminal point in time but the new world that God is bringing about.

In the ancient pagan view of history, we are trapped in cycles—the seasons of year, the rhythms of fertility, the circle of life. Transcending this sense of futility is the Hebrew and Christian notion of history, in which the world is moving toward ultimate reconciliation, restoration, and harmony with God. When Paul calls Jesus the *eschatos Adam*, the "last Adam," he is not placing Christ chronologically, but proclaiming him to be the culmination of the new humanity.

When the Hebrew prophets write about "the end of days," they reorient Israel from God's saving acts in their past to God's saving acts in the future. The liberation from Egypt and God's care in the desert foreshadow the future restoration of his people with Jerusalem as his throne. It is an upbeat message.

By contrast, the community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls emphasized not salvation, but disaster, judgment, and vengeance, a time when the godless will be annihilated. Supposing itself a "last days" community, it sought isolation from a wicked society for the sake of vindication on the imminent Day of Judgment.

Jesus and his followers had a different emphasis. Rather than isolation, they chose involvement. They heralded the fruits of his ministry as harbingers of God's rule. Of course they talked about God's judgment, but it was John the Baptist, not Jesus, who warned of "the wrath to come." Jesus talked a lot about judgment. But his stress was definitely on the coming salvation. We can share in that positive message by doing deeds of justice.



Our work for justice announces the kingdom's arrival.

Our usual translations of Romans 14:17 say that the kingdom of God is about "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." But the Greek word *dikaïosune* can as easily mean *justice* as *righteousness*. Unfortunately, the translation *righteousness* has overtones of personal piety, like the dietary and calendrical holiness Paul discusses in this chapter. We need a stronger contrast between these works of piety and what constitutes the essence of the kingdom of God. Take William Barclay's

translation: “For the kingdom of God does not consist in eating or not eating, and drinking or not drinking. It consists in justice and peace and joy—and all in the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit.” For a more traditional version, look at the Douay-Rheims Bible: “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Justice is the essence of the kingdom. Thus, when Jesus brings justice, it is a sign of the kingdom. And when his followers pursue justice, they witness to the kingdom.

When Jesus acted miraculously to bring healing or justice, people saw his kingdom foreshadowed. Take the miracle of Zacchaeus’s conversion, for example. When Jesus came to his house, Zacchaeus announced that he would correct the abuses he had committed as a Roman tax collector. He promised to reimburse many times over those he had ripped off. Jesus responded by announcing that “this day” salvation had come to Zacchaeus’s house.

What did Jesus mean? Certainly not that Zacchaeus had earned salvation by good works. Instead, Jesus was affirming that Zacchaeus’s actions demonstrated that the kingdom and its values had entered this particular place and household.

The restoration of economic justice became an ongoing sign of the kingdom’s presence. In Acts, when the apostles and early followers of Jesus had all things in common, it was a sign of the kingdom. When a division arose over the treatment of the Hellenistic widows, and the apostles made sure they were properly taken care of, that too was a sign of the kingdom.



Acting sacrificially for justice is a faith-filled wager that God will make good our sacrifices.

Biblical justice, like salvation, comes at a cost. Walking the road of discipleship, of justice, demands more than cheap grace. The Bible’s basic metaphor for what God is doing in our world is redemption, buying the freedom of someone enslaved. Since we don’t live in a slave society, we tend to miss that meaning.

Redemption is a costly transaction. Just as Jesus lost his life in paying the price for our freedom, people who work for justice often lose their lives and fortunes. Think of the sacrifices made by Mother Teresa, who worked with the poor and dying of Calcutta, and Albert Schweitzer, who famously left behind fame and success as a theologian, physician, and musicologist to run a leper hospital in Africa. Think of earlier reformers like William Wilberforce, who lost social standing and health in his work to end the slave trade.

Will God compensate their losses and richly reward their efforts? Yes, he will. Jesus told the rich young ruler to sacrifice all his possessions and give them to the poor. This worried Peter; “What shall we have?” he asked. Jesus reassured him with these words: “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”

If the universe is to regain its harmony, if all is to be reconciled, there must be a final, comprehensive justice. God must restore and reward in the age to come those who sacrifice for justice in the present age. Just as Jesus’ resurrection vindicated his sacrifice, the final judgment and restoration will vindicate his followers who have sacrificed for the good of others.



Jesus’ parables of judgment are often about justice.

Several of Jesus’ parables link the themes of judgment and justice. Look, for instance, at the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18. We often spiritualize this story, counseling people to forgive because they have been forgiven. But we cannot ignore the specific subject matter: debt relief. To prevent permanent pockets of poverty, God had instructed the people of Israel to forgive debts every 50 years and return land (the means of production) to its original families. But this servant, forgiven his massive debts to the king, refuses to forgive the comparatively trifling sum owed him by a fellow servant. He refuses to spread the justice and comes under the king’s judgment.

Look next at the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25, perhaps the most famous judgment parable. Both the sheep and the goats are puzzled by what the Lord says. They did not see Jesus in the needy persons they encountered. But the relevant question is whom they served. Did they serve themselves? Or did they serve the imprisoned, the hungry, the sick, and those trapped in poverty?

Then consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In Luke 16, Jesus tells a story of economic disparity, about the suffering and death of a poor man. Then comes the judgment. We find Lazarus resting in Abraham’s bosom while the rich man roasts in hell. We don’t know why Lazarus is so poor, or the rich man so rich. But we know they are neighbors, and that the rich man fails to obey God’s command to love one’s neighbor as oneself. Once again, we dare not ignore the interplay of economic justice and judgment: Failing to help the poor, beyond causing suffering and death, can leave one liable to hellfire.

In Jesus’ parables, those who refuse the Good News are not rejecting an intellectual proposition. They are rejecting the person who embodies God’s coming kingdom. Jesus didn’t attack those who misunderstood him, but rather those who did understand and refused to live out the implications of the Good News. As Eugene Peterson observed in a recent interview, “The only people Jesus threatens are the Pharisees. But everybody else gets pretty generous treatment.”

JOINING THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Ever since the moment Christ ascended to heaven, Christians have agonized over his promised return. Almost unceasingly, they have pondered when it will come and what it will signify. But whatever the eschatological future holds, we hold the eschatological present firmly in our hands. As a Presbyterian friend of mine says, “I’ve resigned from the planning committee and joined the welcoming committee.”

If my six theses are correct, then being on the welcoming committee involves acting for justice, in both personal and structural ways. The justice that Jesus announced and the justice he pursued were clearly understood as heralding the coming kingdom. Only God can bring this kingdom to its fullness. But we are called, like those bridesmaids in another parable, to go out and welcome it, shining light on the Bridegroom’s path with lamps of justice. ✚

David Neff is *CT* editor in chief. This article is adapted from an address given at Houghton College in March 2011.



[DENOMINATIONS]

It's no longer just about raising a hand to God. It's also about reaching out a hand

A New Kind of



Pentecostal Power: Students from Southwestern College visit Santiago, Dominican Republic, to work with kids at Latin American Childcare, which serves 300 schools and nearly 100,000 children in 21 countries.

T

O GET INTO the minds of today's Pentecostals, visit a classroom of ministers in training, 20-somethings getting their first taste of practical ministry. Recently I posed several questions to a large group of them in one of my practicum classes: *What are the changes going on among North American Pentecostal believers and Pentecostal churches today? In what ways does the new generation of Pentecostals differ from earlier generations? In what ways is it similar?*

The first response was immediate. A young student named Emily said, "For years, Pentecostals had an inferiority complex. They felt as if they were the weird uncle of modern Christianity, as if they were not quite accepted by peer denominations. Today it is different. Pentecostal churches have become more accepted and now are part of mainstream Christianity. That may be good—in some ways, not so good."

Indeed, Pentecostalism in North America has come a long way. It has moved from a faith to and of the disenfranchised to one that is recognized if not fully accepted across the board among evangelicals. From the movement's origins among a few adherents in the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles (1906), Pentecostalism grew to some 12 million adherents by 1970, and now incorporates some 600 million worldwide in its various expressions, a fourth of all Christendom. David Barrett's monumental *World Christian Encyclopedia* states that in 1900, only seven-tenths of 1 percent of Christians were Pentecostal; today, approximately 25 percent are.

Another theme emerged in my classroom. As a student named Ross put it, "There is a new Pentecostalism emerging, a more meditative movement, a more social justice movement, more concerned about the outside of the church rather than [what goes on] inside."

Ministry practitioners, denominational leaders, and scholars whom I have talked to have noted three prominent trends in North American Pentecostalism: a marked decrease in speaking in tongues in public worship; fresh developments in Pentecostal eschatology; and a broader engagement in compassionate ministry and social concern.

All three trends deserve comment, but I want to highlight the last trend: On numerous fronts and in an increasing number of ways, Pentecostals are engaging in compassionate ministries and social change.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF AWAKENING

"There is a huge awakening for social concern today," says noted Pentecostal leader Jack Hayford, "especially from age 30 and down.

to the needy. By Robert C. Crosby

Pentecostal

It is profoundly present, and it is a welcomed renewal.”

But, says Hayford, this isn't the first time Pentecostalism has seen such a groundswell of compassionate ministry. Hayford, a leader in the Foursquare Church, cites the hugely successful “commissary ministry” of Pentecostal revivalist Aimee Semple McPherson: “It touched millions during the Depression. It has significantly marked our movement. It spread over the first half of the 20th century.” McPherson's compassionate work was carried out from the Angelus Temple in Los Angeles and through numerous “lighthouses” that sprung up across the nation.

Still, for many years North American Pentecostals were gun-shy about using terms like “social concern” and “social justice.” Some feared losing a spiritual edge by embracing the “social gospel,” identified with Walter Rauschenbusch and mainline theology. Many worried that a social justice emphasis would undermine the message of salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In addition, some

felt the idea was too politically volatile and smacked of socialism.

Globally, however, Pentecostalism has not been nearly as reluctant. Pentecostal ministry in Brazil, Chile, and other Latin American regions, for instance, includes reforming education and agribusiness, among other social arenas. Much has been written of the undeniable “social lift” Pentecostalism has brought to vast numbers of disenfranchised communities.

In the book *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori identify “progressive Pentecostals” as a group of “Christians who claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and the life of Jesus and who seek to holistically address the spiritual, physical, and social needs of people in their community.” From their research, Miller and Yamamori report that since 1980, Pentecostals and charismatics have contributed over \$2.3 billion and 250 million people in goods and services in over 100 countries.

WHOLE-LIFE TRANSFORMATION

Though Pentecostals have demonstrated an accelerated interest in social issues, especially in North America, Pentecostalism has never abandoned social concern. One of the longest-standing social efforts has been Teen Challenge (*TeenChallengeusa.com*). Established in 1958 by the late Assemblies of God minister David Wilkerson, Teen Challenge is the oldest, largest, and most successful drug rehabilitation program of its kind, with 233 centers in the U.S. and over 1,100 centers in 82 countries with some 25,000 beds available for people in need. Scholars debate how to count and compare its recovery rate with that of similar ministries, but all agree that it's no less than that of Alcoholics Anonymous, and much better than that of many secular programs. A vital part of the recovery process is prayer for conversion and baptism in the Holy Spirit: an infilling of the believer subsequent to conversion and accompanied by ecstatic signs (*glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues, is the sign most often cited).

A Dream of a Center

An interview with the head of one of the most effective Pentecostal social missions in America.

The dream first took shape in Los Angeles in 1994, when Tommy Barnett, pastor of Phoenix First Assembly of God, extended his church's outreach. He bought an abandoned behemoth of a building, the 360,000-square-foot Queen of Angels hospital complex, and, with the help of his then 20-something son, Matthew, started the Dream Center (*DreamCenter.org*). Today the center is a joint effort of the Assemblies of God and the Foursquare Church.

The nonprofit outreach involves hundreds of volunteers and staff, carrying out over 250 ministries that weekly touch over 40,000 people living in the inner city. Ministries include food trucks, a shelter for human trafficking victims, a mobile medical clinic, and the Dream Center Academy. In 1998, George W. Bush visited it and called it “a model for faith-based organizations.” Pastor Barnett has seen the movement spawn almost 200 similar “dream centers” staffed by Pentecostals in cities and towns across the nation. Robert Crosby interviewed Matthew Barnett for CT.

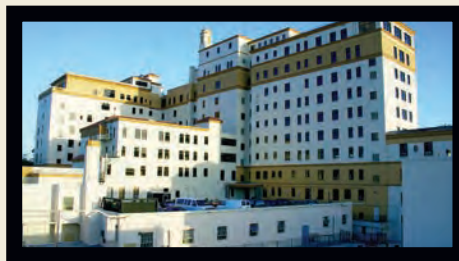
What is the Dream Center's mission?

Being a 24-7 church in the community—a church that never sleeps, meeting all kinds of human needs.

What are some newly launched ministries at the Dream Center?

We recently opened the largest rescue center in America for human

trafficking, with 60 beds. To our knowledge, prior to this there were only 39 beds [at one site] devoted to this kind of effort in the country. We now also have an on-site college that is regionally accredited. It serves as a bit of a “Peace Corps” and niche college experience.



LA's Dream Center

How has the recession affected the Dream Center?

It has been one of the worst, yet one of the best, things America has faced. Pastors and churches used to believe that what they needed to do to succeed was build bigger buildings than other churches. Now they are rediscovering that real ministry is among the people of their community. During the recession,

the police started asking the Dream Center for help. This is a switch. Before the recession, we averaged one new family asking for housing every two weeks; now we have six to eight families coming every day.

How has the Dream Center affected the part of Los Angeles in which you serve?

Early in our ministry, after we had rescued seven students in need of housing and meals, Child Protective Services in our area sent us a letter with a mock receipt to indicate the amount of money our help was saving them. Their estimate for monies saved by taking care of seven students for one year? \$493,000.

To give you an idea of the impact God is having on our community: The

Another longstanding Pentecostal outreach is Latin American Childcare (*lacc4hope.org*). Founded in 1963, it is the largest integrated network of evangelical schools in Latin America and the Caribbean, incorporating 300 schools and projects that reach nearly 100,000 children in 21 countries. The community's shared vision incorporates "transformation" through the gospel of words and deeds, "education" through equipping children with knowledge and skills for real-life contexts, and "compassion" through nutrition and health-care programs. All of this is designed "to equip them with basic skills for competing in, and transforming, their society."

Still, social action has "very definitely" taken on a new role among Pentecostals and their churches today, says Assemblies of God general superintendent George O. Wood. He oversaw a crucial change at the organization's 2009 national convention in Orlando. Wood says, "The AG in 2009 added 'compassion' as the fourth element for its reason for being—in

Pentecostalism now incorporates some 600 million worldwide in its various expressions, a fourth of all Christendom.

recognition that Jesus came to glorify God (worship), save the lost, make disciples, but also serve human need. The AG has entrée into 80 countries that would [otherwise] be closed to traditional missionaries, but are open to compassion workers. Our churches increasingly have focused on the poor in practical ways: food banks, Adopt-A-Block, mentoring programs for children of prisoners, assistance to single mothers, and so on."

Two recent expressions of Pentecostal social concern are the Los Angeles-based Dream Center Movement (see below) and

Convoy of Hope (*ConvoyofHope.org*), a Springfield, Missouri, faith-based organization with a "driving passion to feed the world through children's feeding initiatives, community outreaches, disaster response, and partner resourcing." In 2010, Convoy brought aid to nearly eight million people in the United States and worldwide, providing clothing, food, medical assistance, and other needed resources via outreaches and disaster response.

In its 16 years of service, Convoy of Hope has helped over 43 million people in more than 100 countries, and given away over \$227 million in food and needed supplies. This movement has joined forces with churches, businesses, and government agencies to carry out the Convoy mission. Currently, over 88,000 children receive assistance from Convoy's feeding initiatives in El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Nicaragua, and the Philippines.

Convoy of Hope is considered a reliable "first responder" organization in disaster

Echo Park area of LA, in which the Dream Center is housed, used to be one of the most crime-ridden regions in the country. It was recently named one of the "50 most livable cities in America." Crime has been significantly reduced.

How do you staff such a large ministry?

Seven thousand people a year come from churches across the country to volunteer. In fact, we have 18 churches here volunteering this week alone. They come, they serve, and they go back fired up to meet needs in their community.

What is one of the most effective ministries you carry out on a weekly basis at the Dream Center?

Adopt-A-Block. In essence, a group of people meet every Saturday morning and go to the particular block in the city they have "adopted," knock on doors, and ask, "Is there anything we can do to serve you?"

What is the average age of your volunteers and staff?

We have 200 full-time one-year volunteers and 75 paid staff. About 95 percent of them are college-age. This is a youth movement. For example, a 20-year-old currently runs our Adopt-A-Block ministry, which enlists 700 people in compassionate ministry every Saturday.

Why has the center's approach to engaging communities caught on with so many Pentecostals?

People in our community know more about what we are *for* than what we are *against*. They know we care. Pentecostals used to say, "We will let the Catholics take care of the social work; we will focus on saving souls." Today, people in the church want to attach themselves to a church with a mission.

Our approach is this: Don't look for your cause. Just use what you have in your hand, and your cause will find you. Honestly, what we do is so easy to reproduce. It is finding the joy of ministering to people who can give you nothing in return.

No doubt there are many thousands of stories of lives reached with Christ's love through the varied efforts. What is one of the most recent ones?

Six months ago, a young man was dropped off at Skid Row at age 18. His foster parents left him there, having told him that since he was too old to receive government support, he was of "no use to them anymore." We found him in tears. Just hearing of his need

led to us taking him in and starting one of our newest ministries, Emancipation Home. It is a housing wing designed specifically for young men like him.



'Our approach is this: Don't look for your cause. Just use what you have in your hand, and your cause will find you.'

~ Pastor Matthew Barnett (right)

relief. Its resources include a fleet of tractor-trailers, a 300,000-square-foot World Distribution Center (based in Springfield), six international distribution centers, over 22,000 partner churches and organizations, and over 325,000 volunteers. Convoy has responded to the recent natural disasters in Japan, Missouri, and Alabama.

THE NEW REALITIES

What has contributed to the increased attention to social concern in North American Pentecostalism? The reasons are complex, but a few stand out:

Christianity's new center. Miller and Yamamori characterize Pentecostalism as “a major new social movement that is shifting Christianity's center of gravity to the developing world.” Pentecostalism arguably thrives amid adversities extant in places of violence, corrupt politics, and poverty. As developing-world Pentecostalism has become better known in North America, so have its social needs and demonstration of social concern.

Demographics. While the predominantly white U.S. Pentecostal denominations have seen their growth rates level off in recent years, non-white churches are exploding. This is especially true for Hispanic congregations. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, says, “By the end of the 21st century, the majority of Pentecostals in North America will be non-white [some say this will occur as early as year 2050]. For decades American Pentecostalism has been predominantly white and rural. It will soon become primarily ethnic and urban.”

Rodriguez notes that Pentecostals have traditionally held “a vertical worldview of their faith, focusing on personal beliefs and a salvation that prepares one's soul to make the Rapture. White Pentecostals have said, ‘I receive the power of God to live a holy life in order to go up in the Rapture.’ Ethnic Pentecostals on the other hand say, ‘I am saved by grace, but I also receive the power of God so my family can be transformed, and so we can overcome social ills and gangs in our neighborhood.’ The priorities of this [ethnic Pentecostal] community



The new Pentecostals ‘stand at the nexus of both dynamics—salvation and transformation, covenant and community, righteousness and justice, Billy Graham and Dr. Martin Luther King.’

~Samuel Rodriguez

are issues of life, biblical marriage, education, sex trafficking, immigration reform, poverty alleviation—all under the canopy of the Great Commission.”

Developing theology. Jürgen Moltmann, professor emeritus at the University of Tübingen, Germany, and widely regarded as the leading living theologian of pneumatology, says, “Theologically, the Pentecostal movement has come of age!”

“During the past two decades or so, Pentecostal theology has emerged and is about to establish its place among other traditions,” adds Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. More specifically in recent years, Pentecostal theologians have

focused on eschatology, especially the Lukan view centered on the messianic prophecy in Isaiah 61. This passage is rife with social ministry significance and images, including, “The Spirit of the Lord . . . has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; . . . to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; . . . to comfort all who mourn” (ESV).

A generational shift. Rodriguez says there has been a shift that has drawn younger Pentecostals “to both the vertical and horizontal planes of the Cross.” The new Pentecostals “stand at the nexus of both dynamics—salvation and transformation, covenant and community, righteousness and justice, Billy Graham and Dr. Martin Luther King.”

Billy Wilson, executive director of the International Center for Spiritual Renewal, an alliance of Pentecostal and charismatic leaders, says, “In my opinion, this generation has the strongest horizontal desire to change the world of any other one in history.”

SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CONCERN

In the new book *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century*, contributor and noted Pentecostal scholar Stanley Burgess says that it's time for Pentecostals to “take seriously a commitment to Christian social justice.” He notes that when a distinguished teacher among the Jews asked Jesus, “Teacher, what

must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25–37), Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. “Jesus follows the parable with the statement, ‘Do this and you will live.’” Burgess concludes, “We can no longer separate Jesus' command to [Nicodemus] to ‘be born again’ from his social injunctions in order to inherit eternal life.”

It's apparently a message that Pentecostals now hear loud and clear. 

Robert C. Crosby is professor of practical theology at Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida. He writes a column for *Patheos.com* called “Catch the Current” and is author of several books, including *More Than a Savior: When Jesus Calls You Friend* (Multnomah).

Steven Mosley's **CHOSEN GARMENT**

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Ken Robillard, Senior Pastor
Calvary Chapel Roseville, CA

"Our parishioners were mesmerized."

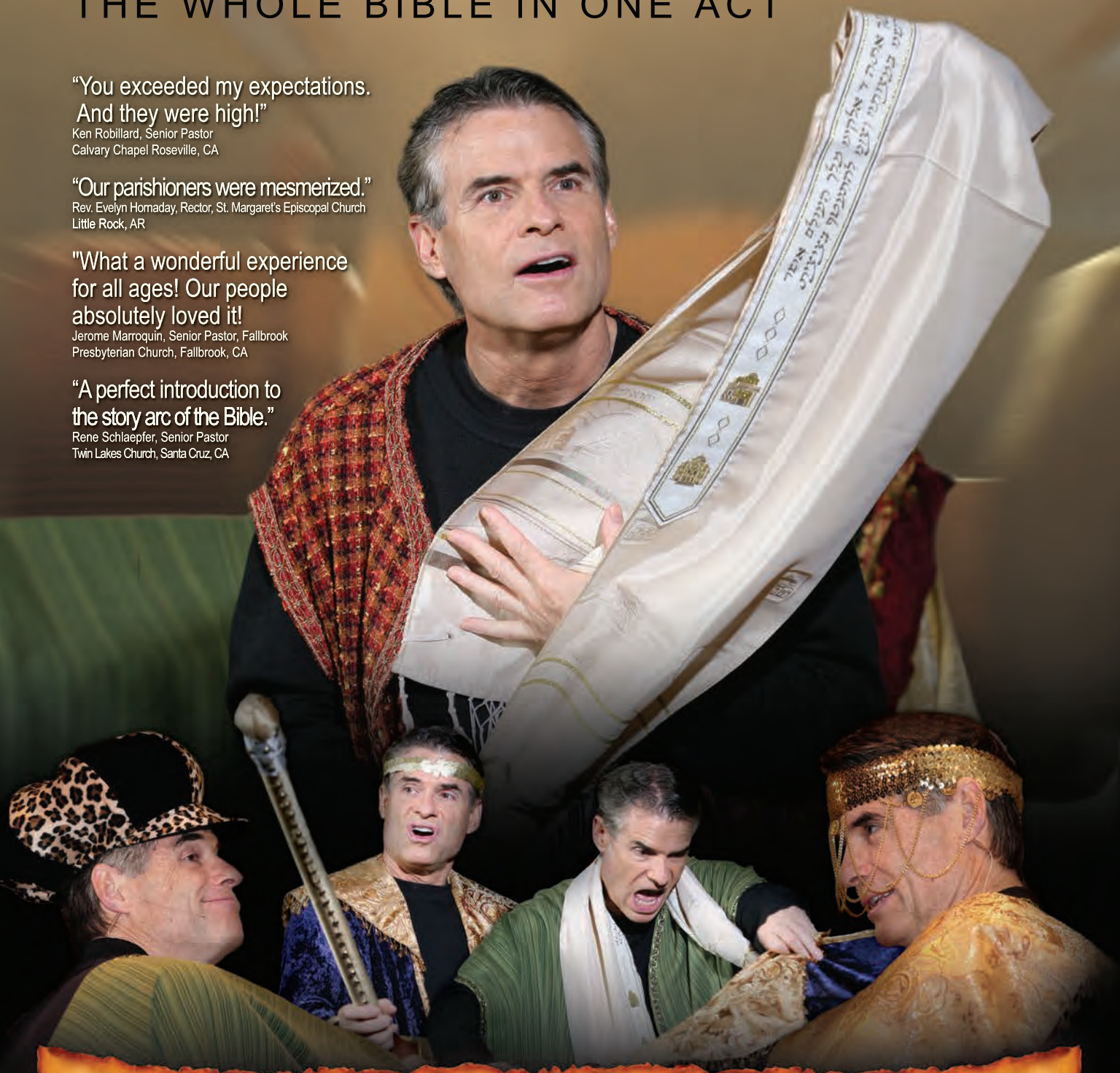
Rev. Evelyn Hornaday, Rector, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church
Little Rock, AR

"What a wonderful experience
for all ages! Our people
absolutely loved it!"

Jerome Marroquin, Senior Pastor, Fallbrook
Presbyterian Church, Fallbrook, CA

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Rene Schlaepfer, Senior Pastor
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[OUTREACH]

The Price Is Right

A church-based pay-as-you-can café in New Jersey may be the future of feeding the poor.

By Catherine Newhouse



Good Eats, Great Price:
Chef Rachel Weston and
the Better World Café team
serve up healthy fare for
a diverse clientele.

BRAD GUICE

"It's a little scary," says Kathy, who asked that her full name not be used. "The rug was pulled out from under my feet."

Kathy isn't alone. In some communities surrounding Edison, 27 percent of the population lives below the national poverty level.

For Kathy and many others, a church in nearby Highland Park offers a unique solution. A Better World Café, one of a handful of "pay-as-you-can" restaurants in the United States, provides clients with good meals and job training, among other things. Hosted at the Reformed Church of Highland Park, the idea for the restaurant was hatched in 2009 in a group working to meet local needs.

At one meeting, Lisanne Finston, executive director of Elijah's Promise, a faith-based nonprofit, discussed "food insecurity" just when the recession was pushing more people into food pantries. Someone mentioned hearing about restaurants where customers pay only what they can afford. Jean Stockdale, executive director of Who Is My Neighbor? Inc., another New Jersey faith-based nonprofit, Googled the concept. Then she e-mailed Denise Cerreta, founder of the One World Café in Salt Lake City, arguably the country's first pay-as-you-can restaurant.

"It seemed like a solution for a lot of problems in our town and for the low-income families in our area," Stockdale says.

Stockdale and Finston pursued the plan, and A Better World Café opened in October 2009 at the church.

TABLE TALK

When customers enter A Better World, a greeter explains that the café's posted prices are only suggestions, and that meals can be earned with volunteer work. One hour of volunteering earns a voucher for one meal. A whiteboard displays the daily menu—soups, breads, salads, sandwiches, and desserts. And there's always a free dish, such as pasta with vegetables or rice and beans.

Customers line up with trays and order from servers. A cashier totals the suggested price and asks, "Would you like to pay that amount or something different?" What they choose to pay is accepted; some give above the suggested price.

Eight tables seating six each foster dialogue. "People like it that conversation is encouraged," says chef Rachel Weston.

It's a diverse crowd. Nearly 30 percent of Highland Park's residents were born outside the United States, compared with 11 percent nationally, and there are pockets of poverty all around.

Every week, some 3,000 people visit the church—senior citizens taking classes; Jews, Buddhists, and Christians from ethnic congregations who use the facilities; members of clubs, exercise groups, and support groups for everything from debt to addiction. Many stop by the café, where on any given day, the homeless mingle with businesspeople, refugees, and students and professors from nearby Rutgers University.

Highland Park mayor Stephen Nolan likes what he sees: "When somebody sits at a table and breaks bread with another and learns about them as a person, that enriches the community."

A Better World is one of 16 pay-as-you-can restaurants in the U.S. (see "A Growing Model," page 58). Many such eateries provide food and opportunities to gain job skills to people of all income levels.

"One of the best ways to help people get back on their feet is by giving them a way to serve others," says Seth Kaper-Dale, pastor at the Reformed Church of Highland Park.

Volunteers prep and serve food, wash dishes, clear tables, and work the cash register—gaining marketable skills, the kind that helped Kathy

KATHY HAD BEEN out of the job market for about 25 years—instead staying home with her three children—when everything fell apart. The 50-something resident of Edison, in north-central New Jersey, had worked part-time as a file clerk to help pay for her three daughters' college tuition. But she left that job after her father died and her husband suffered a heart attack. Then her husband left, leaving Kathy without an income to provide for her children.

get back on her feet. She now has a \$7.50-an-hour part-time cashier position at a local grocery store.

"I don't know how I would have been able to adjust to a [paying] job right off the bat. I hadn't worked in so many years," she says, calling A Better World "God's handiwork."

Michael Shawe says the café sustained him after he graduated from Rutgers in May 2010. He volunteered a few times a week while looking for a job. "I was very vulnerable and could have really fallen on my face," he says. "But there was this safety net in the form of A Better World. They were very supportive." Shawe now works as a residential counselor.

Elijah's Promise also runs a traditional soup kitchen in nearby New Brunswick, but Finston believes that model is flawed, because it segregates low-income people from kitchen staff and volunteers. She prefers a model where low-income clients can dine and network with potential employers.

But can a restaurant that lets customers set prices sustain itself? At A Better World, first-year expenses ran 13 percent higher than income, resulting in a \$13,000 loss, higher than the projected 10 percent deficit. The café will eventually need to break even to stay open.

Still, the concept mostly works. Weston estimates 1 to 2 percent of customers try to cheat the system, while 15 percent pay above the suggested price.

Once in a while, the café has to stop people from taking advantage of the system. Last year, high school students repeatedly took large

servings of the complimentary dish while paying only 50 cents for the to-go box. Weston told them the café was running out of the dish and no longer offering it to go. The students said they understood and quit coming. In another incident, a customer refused to pay for his meal and became angry when told the café didn't operate like that. After Weston talked to him privately, he agreed to contribute or have the complimentary dish instead.

A Better World keeps costs low by using volunteers, buying in season, minimizing waste, and using donations of fresh produce from Farmers Against Hunger, Rutgers Against Hunger, and community gardens. Chefs use every scrap. Instead of throwing out the greens on top of beets, they sauté and add them to grilled cheese sandwiches and soups. Leftover food is frozen or canned.

Chefs avoid buying perishable foods and those that have limited use in recipes. "If you can't think of at least five different things to do with a product, you shouldn't buy it," Weston says.

BEYOND THE 'CHARITY APPROACH' Finston says Christians have too long "focused on the charity approach versus the justice approach. At A Better World, instead of giving handouts, we ask how we can help people feed themselves."

Bread for the World president David Beckmann says Christians need to "share our

bread with the hungry, not throw our crumbs to them." He visited a Christian pay-as-you-can café in Nebraska and noticed the sense of community among those who otherwise wouldn't have crossed paths.

"It's not just a matter of giving someone a bag of groceries," Beckmann says. "It's sitting down at a table and talking to them. It's dignity as well as assistance."

Beckmann doesn't think such cafés will replace soup kitchens any time soon, but says they can complement other ministries. He would like to see more such restaurants before rendering a verdict.

"It's not big enough now to propose it as an alternative to any system we have in place. Let's get more of them. Maybe it could be something bigger."

Kaper-Dale says he'd like to see the movement grow, cautioning that churches should partner with an organization with food service experience rather than jumping into the project alone.

"The idea of a church providing an endless meal is so biblical," he says. "Coming together around food and making sure that food is prepared lovingly and served in a way that's accessible to everyone—that's a very special and theological thing." ⊕

Catherine Newhouse is a magazine journalism and international studies student at the University of Missouri.



A Growing Model

A Better World Café isn't the first of its kind. The One World Café in Salt Lake City, which has used the pay-what-you-can model since 2003, is the template. Founder Denise Cerreta has since trained others to launch similar establishments.

There are now 16 such cafés in the United States; 5 of those opened in the past year alone, and another 40 or so groups are considering opening their own. Three of the new restaurants are run by Christians, including The Forge in Abilene, Texas, where pastors come in daily to pray with guests. About 50 guests have come to Christ or rededicated their lives to him, says owner MaryAnne Monteith.

Panera Bread Company has opened three cafés called Panera Cares. Run by the Panera Cares Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the cafés—in Portland, Oregon; Clayton, Missouri; and Dearborn, Michigan—all operate in the black. Profits help fund a job training program for youth. Project manager Kate Antonacci says the model works because the cafés are in economically diverse neighborhoods, reaching both those who need an affordable meal and those who can afford to pay extra. Says

Antonacci, "It's amazing how much can happen if you give somebody a little of your time and show you care."

It doesn't always work. Ervin Peretz, founder of Terra Bite Lounge in Kirkland, Washington, says the café ran smoothly for about a year until the recession hit, and then he had to list prices on the menu. He says teenagers sometimes abused the café, while loiterers made some paying customers uncomfortable, driving them away. Not everyone felt obligated to add to the anonymous donation box. Peretz has sold the café.

Salt Lake Community College anthropology professor Jude Higgins says the ones that succeed do so because customers view one another as community-conscious, and a sense of mutual cooperation inspires people to be more generous. When people from different backgrounds sit together at such a restaurant, they grow closer to their community and each other, and the cycle builds on itself.

Says Higgins, "People overwhelmingly commented that they paid because they liked the philosophy, and they believed in the philosophy."

—Catherine Newhouse

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where Americans
are no longer
allowed to go as
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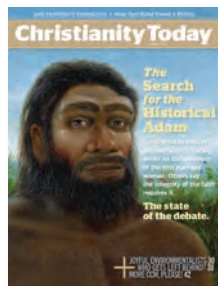


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Whether Adam was one man, one who led thousands, or a name given to the several thousands, it was by Adam that sin entered the world. The problem now is that sin is kept here by me.

Dave W. Reesor
Calgary, Alberta

A Heated Family Talk

Thank you for the eye-opening and unbiased "The Search for the Historical Adam" [June], and for your editorial, which affirmed a high view of Scripture without implying Christians must bury our heads in the ground. I don't know what to think about the debate—so much theology rests on the earth having been created perfect and subjected to death by sin—but I appreciated *Christianity Today's* plea for patience and warning against knee-jerk reactions.

LAURA TUCKER
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Journalist Richard Ostling quoted me with the preface, "Back when genetics played little part in Adam disputes . . ." Actually, my 1994 *Christian Scholar's Review* article treated genetic arguments extensively. In the 1980s, Francisco Ayala and others "proved" that the diversity in major genes required a bottleneck population of 100,000 individuals, common ancestors to both chimpanzees and humans. This approach is now discredited, as our understanding of genetic diversity shows that common ancestry does not explain the human-chimp similarity.

The proof for a single-pair origin for

Adam and Eve is even stronger now than 20 years ago. We now know that about 25 percent of human-chimp DNA does not align, and that the human and chimp Y chromosomes are very different.

I don't think it is possible to prove more than a narrow bottleneck. But that bottleneck is growing even narrower. Our exploding understanding of the genome, and the layers of ingenious coding it contains, is making the Darwinian assumption of common ancestry less and less obvious.

JOHN A. BLOOM, PH.D.
Academic Director, Graduate Program
in Science and Religion
Biola University, La Mirada, California

If we limit the Bible's truth to scientific provability, we have more problems than Adam and Eve. Virgins don't conceive, and dead people aren't raised to life. We must understand that the foolishness of God is wiser than men's wisdom (1 Cor. 1:25). Scientists have been wrong before and will be again. Knowing that "every word of God is flawless" (Prov. 30:5), our efforts are better applied to understanding scientific findings in light of his Word.

KAREN M. COX
E-mail

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

57%
The Search for the
Historical Adam
Richard N. Ostling

16%
No Adam, No Eve,
No Gospel
CT Editorial

9%
Who Gets Left
Behind?
Matthew Dickerson

READERS' PICK The most praised piece in June's CT



Hardworking Sloths
Carolyn Arends

Skirting a literal Adam due to genome evidence solves nothing. What about Noah? If the Flood really happened, then all subsequent humanity descended from one man and his sons and their wives.

How far are we willing to go in denying Old Testament events and express New Testament references to them? Jesus himself said, "As it was in the days of Noah . . ." Are we saying that Jesus was "tied to the [erroneous] views of his day," just like Paul?

THOMAS F. HARKINS JR.
Fort Worth, Texas

CT editorializes, "We don't need another fundamentalist reaction against science." But we also don't need another fundamentalist reaction against the biblical narrative. Francis Collins, brilliant as he appears to be, is fallible. With a presupposition of macro-evolution, it's little surprise that Collins and company see evidence for human descent. Given the same data, would other brilliant people see something different painted on the genome canvas? I think so.

JERRY PIERCE
Flower Mound, Texas

A hen lays a fertilized egg, and some weeks later—all because of the DNA embedded in the egg and sperm—a walking, cheeping, seeing chick emerges. As a kid on the farm, I found it incredible. I still

do. That's why I have no anxiety about the eventual conclusion of the Adam debate. Whether he was one man, one man who led several thousand, or a name given to the several thousand, it was by Adam that sin entered the world. The problem now is that sin is kept here by me.

And, of course, the Good News is that a remedy has been provided.

DAVE W. REESOR
Calgary, Alberta

Worshipping Ourselves

I enjoyed "The Cultural Medium and the Christian Message" [June]. Previously on staff at a SoCal megachurch, I invited an unchurched friend to a Sunday worship service. Afterwards I asked, "What did you think?" He replied, "A little too *American Idol*." I almost spit my coffee on him. Noting the aromatherapy fog, high-tech lighting, and worship leader who "worked the crowd," another friend quipped, "It's as if they are doing everything they can to distract from worship." Cultural accommodation exacts a price.

JIM GOLDING
Irvine, California

Earthward Bound

I found Matthew Dickerson's "Who Gets Left Behind?" [June] stimulating. I noted at a recent conference that proclaiming the gospel is not just for the salvation of individual souls—though it is that—but also for the reconciliation of the world. Scripture clearly states that Christ came to reconcile all creation to himself

(2 Cor. 5:19–20), which makes our message more, not less, compelling.

A lifelong cover-to-cover reader,

WAYNE PEDERSON
President, HCJB Global
Colorado Springs, Colorado

The problem with "Who Gets Left Behind?" is that it completely leaves out the Book of Revelation, specifically chapters 6 to 20, which indicate God's wrath will be poured out on earth's inhabitants. Since we are told that Christians are "to be saved from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10), the logical, and biblical, conclusion is that we will be taken out of the world in the Rapture, just as Noah was "taken out of the world" into the Ark as earth's inhabitants were destroyed.

JOSEPH FORD
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Sloths in the Pulpit

I wholeheartedly agree with Carolyn Arends ["Hardworking Sloths," June]: The difficult foundational work of ministry is spending unhurried, attentive time with the Lord. Church leaders are generally quick to say when a member is unhappy with my performance, but they haven't asked me, "Are you spending time with the Lord?" If the pastor doesn't practice private acts of devotion, the public acts of ministry are hindered. Thank you for reminding us that God is looking for faithful leaders, not efficient ones.

LEON H. JOHNSTON
Lacombe, Alberta

THERE! THAT OUGHT TO
DISPEL THE MYTH THAT WE'RE
AN ELDERLY CONGREGATION
THAT DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO
REACH OUT TO YOUNG PEOPLE.



ONLINE POLL

**BROKEN
VOWS**

Should marital
infidelity disqualify
candidates
from office?

18%

Yes, because
adulterers have
tendencies that
should be avoided
in any politician.

24%

Yes, because
politicians take
oaths, and that
person has broken
a marital oath.

9%

Maybe;
no candidate
is perfect.

28%

Maybe;
it's one element
to consider.

9%

No, if it
happened a while
ago and the
parties reconciled.

11%

No, not unless
infidelity is
rampant and
recent.

Total votes: 352

(Online polls
do not represent
a scientific sample.)

CHRIS CARMICHAEL / SACREDSDANDWICH.COM

compiled by Elissa Cooper

WORTH REPEATING

Things overheard at CT online.

"It's fair to express disagreement, but not with generalizations like 'enjoy your sexuality' or 'don't be such a prude.' Those aren't biblical arguments."

Philip, on debates about whether masturbation is sinful for single Christians.

Her.meneutics: "The Cult of the Orgasm,"
by Anna Broadway

"Given that the cyber world seems somehow less real, Christians are emboldened to cross lines they might not cross in person."

Sharon Miller, on how the Internet has created a "dualistic culture" where people feel comfortable doing things online that they would not do in real life, such as committing adultery.

Her.meneutics: "Anthony Weiner, Gnostic,"
by Karen Swallow Prior

"Witness the silent holocaust of the Christians in Sudan. This could be stopped. It might have even been avoided."

Mark Miwerds, on how the violence in Sudan is not being widely acknowledged and urging Christians in the U.S. to prompt leaders to act.

CT Liveblog: "Our friends are being slaughtered,"
says advocate for southern Sudanese,"
by Timothy C. Morgan

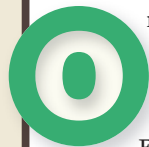
"Forgiveness and trust are not one and the same. If someone repeatedly violates their wedding vows, that person should be forgiven, yet not be trusted with an office one has to take an oath to acquire."

John H. Guthrie, discussing why Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich's past marriages and divorces affect his ability to run the country.

CT Politics Blog: "Gingrich Woos Skeptical Evangelical Voters," by Adelle M. Banks

Good Religion, Bad Religion

A new study reveals we're incurably religious. That's a problem.



Once in a while, we agree with the atheists. The latest occasion is the release of a new study on religion.

In 2007, the John Templeton Foundation made an award of £1.87 million to the University of Oxford for the Cognition, Religion, and Theology Project. The project sought to improve the scientific and philosophical rigor of the study of religion. As the web page announcing the study put it, "Both missions were accomplished with goals exceeded."

The study affirmed the familiar and uncovered a few surprises, such as:

- "Children and adults have a tendency to see the natural world as having function or purpose—even those with advanced scientific education."
- "In early childhood we have a natural tendency to attribute super properties to other humans and gods, including super knowledge, super perception, and immortality."
- "Adolescents and young adults may find religious ideas easier to remember and use than older adults."
- "Religious beliefs and practices might persist in part because they make us more cooperative and generous with others."

A number of media outlets trumpeted the story, many of them treating the obvious as news. The opening of CNN's story read, "Religion comes naturally, even instinctively, to human beings, a massive new study of cultures all around the world suggests."

Then again, this hasn't been obvious to some. The secularization theory—that as societies modernize and become more scientific, people will become less religious—has held sway for nearly 200 years in Western intellectual circles. Now we have another study from perhaps the most respected academic institution in the world that says religion is not only here to stay, but is built into the very fabric of human existence.

As we might expect in a secular age, the

project directors, Justin Barrett and Roger Trigg, made sure we all understand that this study in no way proves God's existence. In fact, Trigg added, both atheists and believers could use the study to argue their side. He said well-known secularist Richard Dawkins "would accept our findings and say we've got to grow out of it."

We would agree with Dawkins and friends.

As much as we might be heartened by scientific evidence that suggests human beings are inherently religious, this is not necessarily good news. As Karl Barth, in his groundbreaking commentary on the Book of Romans, put it:

No human demeanor is more open to criticism, more doubtful, or more dangerous, than religious demeanor. No undertaking subjects men to so severe a judgment as the undertaking of religion. The whole rich abundance of the worship of God, from the grossest superstition to the most delicate spirituality, from naked rationalism to the most subtle mysticism of the metaphysician, is under suspicion both from above and from below. God treats it as arrogance, and men as illusion.

This seems to be the stance of the prophets (see Isaiah 1) and Jesus (see Matthew 23) and Paul (see Romans 1–3). Neither ritual nor ethics nor theology seems to make much of an impression on God. That's because most of the time, religion is an attempt to avoid the living God.

We tend to create rituals and beliefs, rites

and ethical systems to justify our existence, to placate our guilt and fear of death, to make ourselves useful to the world and acceptable to God. In short, religion is our valiant attempt to get right with God while ignoring the fact and way that he has gotten right with us: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ. To continue to work for our justification instead of accepting our justification is the essence of religion.

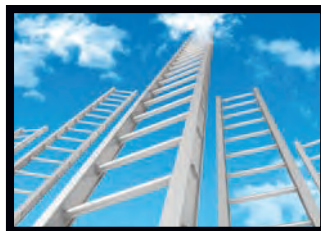
tification is the essence of religion.

But of course, worship has another dimension. To worship, to pray, to teach, to build churches, to feed the hungry—all of these are religious acts. We often say that we mustn't con-

fuse being a Christian with being religious, but it's impossible to be a Christian without being religious. God uses religion—especially preaching, worship, the sacraments, prayer—to communicate himself to us.

So we have to "commit religion" in order to be Christians. This is almost, but not quite, like saying that when we commit sin, grace abounds. As we commit religion, grace will abound. Sometimes when we commit religion, we will be trying to justify ourselves—and for that we need forgiveness. Sometimes we will be rightly using the means of grace given by God. In either case, we should agree with the atheists in the hope that someday we will "grow out of it"—or more biblically, that God will abolish it. For someday, we will not need rituals or preaching or sacraments to know and be known by him. Someday (Rev. 21), God will be in our midst. ✚

Go to ChristianBibleStudies.com for "Good Religion, Bad Religion," a Bible study based on this article.



Neither ritual nor ethics nor theology seems to make much of an impression on God.

*Just War
vs. Technology*

Is it wrong for the U.S. to use unmanned predator drones to kill people by remote control?

IT'S AN UNFAIR FIGHT

Paul F. M. Zahl is president emeritus of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry and the author of *Grace in Practice: A Theology of Everyday Life* (Eerdmans).

America's use of unmanned predator drones to kill people by remote control is laying up for us a harvest of judgment to come. And I don't mean just the judgment of God, but also an enduring hatred of our country on the part of defenseless people, especially in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

There are two primary reasons for this. First, it is wrong to conduct war when one side in the fight does not see the mortal results. The United States Air Force and the CIA operate predator drones thousands of miles away from the intended targets.

From our side, the operation proceeds entirely through the filter of a far-away video camera. There is no possibility of making eye contact with the enemy and fully realizing the human cost of the attack.

This argument is useful against many forms of combat, including almost all air bombings. George Bell, the bishop of Chichester in the Church of England during World War II, used to carry in his pocket photographs of charred human remains from Royal Air Force bombing missions in Germany. He argued that if the British pilots could just look at those photographs, they would refuse to fly any more missions.

The same thing applies to predator drones. A technician can sit in front of a console at Nellis Air Force Base outside Las Vegas and conduct a lethal operation while being entirely insulated from the thing he or she is doing. (Incidentally, the number of innocent casualties of drone attacks may be much higher than official reports, based on credible reports from people on the ground.)

In addition, unmanned predator drones prevent war from being a fair fight. They emasculate the enemy.

I use *emasculate* intentionally, because our victims live in societies where male humiliation is a fate almost worse than death. This method of fighting reduces people on the ground to a condition of absolute helplessness, because they cannot fight back against unmanned drones.

This reduction of the enemy to absolute helplessness is good for us, you may say. It means we can't lose! But it also creates resentment in the people we are fighting. We have a growing concern about this. You can read about it in journalist David Ignatius's *Bloodmoney: A Novel of Espionage*, in which a brilliant terrorist is "born" from a

drone attack on his family and village. A lifetime of revenge is birthed from one "silver glint" way up in the sky that kills without warning or recourse.

People can't be expected to take this one-sided warfare "lying down." This is not a David versus Goliath scenario. It is a case of the Philistines telling the Israelites that they are not even permitted to put a champion on the field.

LET CHARACTER PREVAIL

Daniel M. Bell Jr. is a professor at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary and author of *Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church rather than the State* (Brazos Press).

If the question regarding the use of drones is about the physical or psychological distance between the trigger and its effects, then the answer is no, the use of drones is not intrinsically immoral. Just war as a Christian discipline does not require proximity. One is not required to stare into the enemy's eyes as one pulls the trigger. If proximity were a condition of just war, just war would be a matter of fisticuffs and knives, and the chain of command (a kind of remote control for war) would be pretty short.

This is not to say that using drones and other weapons that enable killing at a distance does not raise important questions. The history of Christian just-war reflection is peppered with a suspicion of weapons that kill at a distance, from archers to airplanes and now drones. But the moral question is not that of physical distance. Rather, it is one of character, of virtue.

The concern with the



introduction of archers and various bows was not that of psychological distance, but of honor and courage. Did those who used such weapons have the requisite virtues to wield them not merely effectively but also ethically?

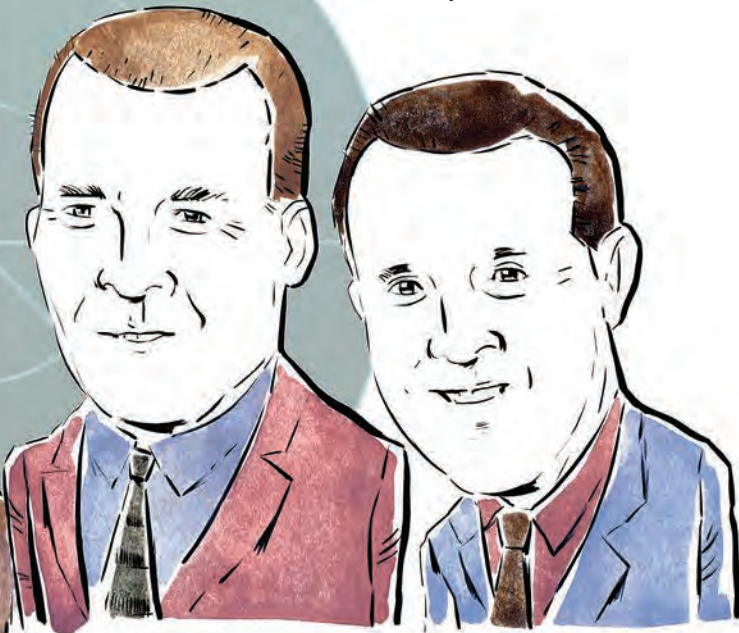
At first glance, the idea that technology like predator drones might raise questions of character and virtue seems odd. After all, we live in a culture that too often acts as if technology can replace character (see the first *Iron Man* movie). So, we think, the key to moral wars is smarter weapons and better technology instead of better people. Yet technology is no better than the people who use it.

No matter how precise the weaponry or how close the trigger to its effects, if the one pulling the trigger is not a person of character formed in the virtues that characterize a just war people, then that technology will only amplify vice.

There are people, even in the military, who are concerned that U.S. military superiority, including drones, may make resorting to war too easy. Again, this is not a question of distance but of character. With less effective weaponry and more military parity, the effects of vice are naturally blunted; with more effective weaponry and fewer obstacles to their use, any deficit of character is more glaring and palpable.

Such superiority and such technology are not inherently unjust. In the hands of a people committed not simply to more effective and less costly (on our side) warfare, but also to justice, prudence, courage, temperance, and charity, it seems clear that technology and distance need not present a problem. On the contrary, they could aid a virtuous people in being more discriminating and proportionate and, thus, more just in their wars.

Therefore, the moral challenge of unmanned predator drones is this: Is the church teaching the virtues and Christian discipline of just war doctrine needed to use such technology and weaponry not merely effectively and efficiently, but also to use it wisely?



FOLLOW JUST WAR RULES

Brian Stiltner is an associate professor at Sacred Heart University and co-author of *Faith and Force: A Christian Debate about War* (Georgetown University Press).

Drone warfare must be evaluated by the just-conduct standards that apply to every weapon technology: Are civilians rigorously protected from attack, and is the destruction minimized? Supporters of drone attacks enthuse that we are “taking out” many top al Qaeda leaders, with no loss of American lives and very few civilian deaths. Critics claim that the weapons are indiscriminate, destabilizing, and highly suspect under international law.

I do not go as far as critics who see only evil in using military methods in the fight against terrorists. But I stand with them in raising serious questions about the use of drones based on just war criteria. While drones are not inherently indiscriminate or disproportionate, American leaders rely upon them too heavily in an age when the public is reluctant to see American soldiers deployed in combat but eager for assurance that terrorist leaders are being killed.

Understanding the deadliness of drone attacks is difficult. The Obama administration said last year that 20 innocent civilians had been killed by drones in northwest Pakistan, in contrast to that government’s assertion of 700. The truth is likely in the middle. A New America Foundation study of the CIA’s drone attacks in this region from 2004 to 2009 concluded that between 830 and 1,210 individuals were killed, of which about 32 percent were civilians.

That means roughly 300 civilians were killed over a six-year period in a mountainous region smaller than Connecticut. No wonder the drone program is controversial. Both the rate and the number are morally troubling. A civilian casualty rate of 30 percent indicates that drones have not been used with sufficient care.

If the United States is going to continue to use military attacks as part of its fight against terrorism, they must be rigorously controlled. Leaders must take care to use drone technology well, supported by good human intelligence and effective international cooperation. The Obama administration has taken note of the criticism, ratcheting down the number of attacks in 2010, using smaller bombs and better targeting technology, and relying on more spies and greater cooperation with Pakistani intelligence services. The percentage and number of civilian deaths has decreased sharply from the previous year.

The United States should continue in this direction. Ideally, drone programs would be run by the Pentagon alone. Drones are military weapons. They ought to be used only in military campaigns under the standards of military ethics and international law. This does not mean that they cannot be used in the asymmetrical “war on terror,” but like everything else about this war, the U.S. attitude has often been to exempt itself from traditional rules of war rather than to find ways to apply those rules to new challenges.

We should be doing the latter. The point is both to avoid killing civilians and to send the right message about how the United States intends to combat terrorism. Rigorously avoiding civilian deaths, protecting American military personnel, and drying up the supply of Islamist terrorists are not mutually exclusive goals. 



A Both/And Faith

Why the narrow way is also expansive.



My friend John Blase is a writer who chooses his words with utmost care. So when I noticed he refers to his wife as his “girlfriend” in his blogs, I knew the quirk was intentional. It turns out the habit goes back to the time when John was asked whether the lovely lady next to him was his wife or his girlfriend. He gave the only answer that made sense: “Yes.”

I’ve been thinking about John and his girlfriend/wife a lot lately, especially when I read my Bible. *Is it faith or works?* I demand of the text, and the answer seems to be: “Yes.” *Is God a God of revelation or of mystery? Is he as close as a whisper or beyond all things?* Yes. *Is the kingdom of heaven now or not yet? Should I be wise as a serpent or innocent as a dove? Should I fall headlong into grace or work out my salvation with fear and trembling?* Yes. Yes. Yes.

A lifetime of evangelical thinking has primed me for either/or questions, breeding a deep distrust of both/and propositions. After all, one of the distinguishing features of Christianity is its insistence that there is one way to God. A wariness of pluralistic worldviews is completely warranted. But if I’m not careful, that insistence can mutate into creating artificial schisms that fly in the face of a God who desires to make us whole in radical ways.

When we fall for false dualities, we end up arguing over whether the gospel is concerned with ministering to the poor or proclaiming the Word. We believe our theology must emphasize either a free gift of grace or a call to holy living. In a myriad of areas, we polarize, dichotomize, and greatly minimize the life God has for us.

In his book *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*, Richard J. Foster argues for a larger, less-fragmented view of life in Christ by exploring six great traditions that have ebbed and flowed throughout Christian history. My

husband and I once used these six “streams” as curriculum for adults at a family camp. It was fascinating to observe the ways that personality and denominational background influenced affinities and aversions to the various traditions.

Our introverts extolled the Contemplative Tradition, with its focus on prayer and meditation. The activists among us couldn’t wait to cover the Social Justice Tradition. Our Pentecostals wondered why we were taking so long to get to the Charismatic Tradition’s exploration of the Spirit-filled life, while the Baptists felt we should begin and end with the Evangelical Tradition and its insistence upon the centrality of Scripture. Most of us were intrigued by the Incarnational Tradition’s assertion that all aspects of life should be lived sacramentally; almost none of us had a natural attraction to the Holiness Tradition, because an emphasis on virtuous living had been so frequently divorced from grace in our past experience.

Foster’s careful analysis showed us how these traditions have informed, provoked, and corrected each other over time. Even in our little camp group, we saw how our various inclinations could help us balance each other; it took all of us to make up the body of Christ. And we could concede that, while we’d always be naturally stronger in some areas than others, there was no excuse for completely ignoring (let alone disparaging) whole planes of life in God’s kingdom.

This insight is easier to write about than

live. Efficient people and organizations are lauded for decisive and focused thinking; they find a singular mandate and stick to it. The paradox that so typified Jesus’ teaching is expansive, complex, and nuanced. It requires mulling and wrestling; it forces huge shifts in paradigm and, eventually, practice. When we are asked to hold two seemingly opposite truths in tension, we experience confusion (which can be painful) before we get to

any sort of cohesion. So, we often bail and settle for one pole or the other, congratulating ourselves for taking a stand, but losing at least half of what God has for us in the process.

Most of us would like our faith to reduce tension. But, according to Jesus (who told us to be anxious for nothing but always alert, to be last in order to be first, to be weak to be strong, and to lose our lives to find them), tension is required.

When my producer friend Roy Salmond noticed that his church included a desire for “vibrant faith” in its mission statement, his musical mind instantly linked vibrancy with vibration. A vibrant faith, he warned his fellow congregants, may necessitate oscillation and tension. In the absence of motion, there’s no music.

I too desire a vibrant faith. So I am trying to remember that the Way is narrow, but the life we’re called to is wide and deep. Still, I can’t help asking: Is following Jesus an act of simple trust, or an adventure of unimaginable complexity?

Yes.



We emphasize either a free gift of grace or a call to holy living. In a myriad of areas, we polarize, dichotomize, and greatly minimize the life God has for us.



Real Happiness

Where a people abandons virtue, government steps in.

Can freedom survive where virtue doesn't thrive? It was an important question for the founders of the American republic, and it is a timely one for today.

The Founding Fathers saw the critical connection: They pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to defend the self-evident truths "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

We understand life and liberty as foundational, but *happiness*? The problem with happiness as it is defined today lies in the little word *hap*, chance. Happiness is circumstantial. It depends on what happens to give us pleasure or fulfillment. But the founders understood happiness in the classical sense of what the Greeks called *eudaimonia*, that is, the result of a life well lived, a life based on truth and virtue.

Christians know something else: true virtue, and hence genuine happiness, is not merely a matter of thinking correctly or behaving properly. As Jonathan Edwards put it, the seat of true virtue is in the heart. Real happiness flows from character and comes to those, as Jesus said, who are poor in spirit, merciful and meek, and who hunger and thirst for righteousness and peace.

Some of the founders were less than fully orthodox in their theology, but they believed this: No person or nation can be good without God. This is why, in setting forth the most radical program for self-government in human history, they appealed not only to nature, but also to nature's God.

True virtue is personal, but it is never merely private. It involves a commitment to civic duty and the common good—traits seen so clearly by Alexis de Tocqueville in the Americans of the 1830s.

"Americans of all ages, conditions, and

all dispositions constantly unite together . . . to found seminaries, build inns, construct churches . . . They establish hospitals, prisons, schools by the same method."

This vision has not been completely lost, but it is at risk today. Narcissistic relativism ("there is no absolute truth") and secular historicism ("the human story lacks ultimate



meaning") have become the norms for private decision making and public discourse. The results are deeply troubling.

While economic cycles of boom and bust are nothing new, there is reason to think that the 2008 economic collapse was the result of a moral and ethical collapse in American life: from Washington (where regulators, according to the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, failed to "stem the flow of toxic mortgages") to Wall Street (where firms pursued bottom-line profits by pushing dangerous securities) to Main Street (where millions of Americans took on unwise loans in pursuit of the good life).

And when a people shows it is no longer capable of corporate virtue and self-government, inevitably government steps in

to fill the void. Thus in the aftermath of the economic meltdown, we saw the historic expansion of the federal government—with federal spending accounting for 24 percent of GDP, the highest level since World War II.

So, how to rebuild a culture of virtue and civic duty? The problem did not begin with elected officials and government agencies, and it will not be solved by them. We must challenge the tyranny of relativism not only in theory but also in our daily lives, families, communities, and businesses. We must show that true happiness comes only from being rightly related to God, the source of truth and virtue.

This is one reason we have spent the last two years with Princeton University professor Robby George and Fox News contributor Brit Hume filming a teaching series on ethics called "Doing the Right Thing." It is a reasoned, intellectual critique of relativism and a roadmap for rebuilding individual and corporate character. We encourage Christian groups and churches to create similar tools, for in the face of massive ethical crises, the pursuit of virtue must become a great national priority.

The church of Jesus Christ has a special role to play in this moment: to speak the truth in love and to demonstrate our love to the world in acts of service and mercy. This is what Carl F. H. Henry had in mind when he wrote in 1947, "We must confront the world *now* with an ethics to make it tremble and with a dynamic to give it hope."

For as Tocqueville wrote nearly two centuries ago, "Nothing shows better how useful and natural [Christian] religion is to man, since the country where it exerts the greatest sway is also the most enlightened and free."

In the face of massive ethical crises, the pursuit of virtue must become a great national priority.



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CT REVIEW

BOOKS, MOVIES,
MUSIC, AND
THE ARTS

King James and Queen Victoria

Even among the skeptics of 19th-century England, the Bible loomed large. By John Wilson

The 400th anniversary of the King James Version has occasioned a slew of books on the impact of this translation and of the Bible more generally, with more still to come before the year is out. It's fitting, then, that 2011 should also mark the publication of Timothy Larsen's ***A People of One Book: The Bible and the Victorians*** (Oxford University Press) ★★★★★, an exceptionally rich and nuanced account of how "the Bible loomed uniquely large in Victorian culture in fascinating and unexplored ways." In addition to deepening our understanding of the Victorians—and briskly

deflating widely held misconceptions left and right—Larsen's chronicle implicitly prompts us to ask questions about the presence of the Bible in our own place and time.

In his previous book, *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England*, Larsen gave us a series of case studies challenging the master-narrative of the Victorian era. This was a time, so we've been told, when it became virtually impossible for a thinking person to sustain any sort of orthodox Christian faith (with the understanding, of course, that this crisis of faith

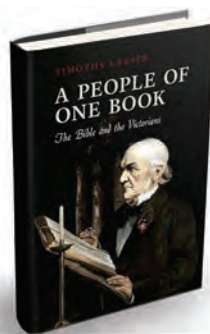
among the elite heralded the inevitable triumph of secular reason and the withering away of religion). But Larsen uncovered the stories of prominent freethinkers, atheists, and allied skeptics who began to lose confidence in the Gospel of Doubt and ultimately converted to or returned to faith.

What makes *Crisis of Doubt* particularly devastating is an unusual combination of massive erudition and serene good humor. Far from being a tub-thumping exercise in setting the historical record straight, it is loaded with wit, a pervasive sense of irony, and an appreciation for the mysterious twists and turns of individual human lives—all this with the warmth of an unobtrusive but equally unembarrassed faith.

Larsen employs the same strategy in *A People of One Book*, with the same result. Here the series of case studies highlights representative individuals from 10 traditions: Anglo-Catholics (E. B. Pusey); Roman Catholics (Nicholas Wiseman); Atheists (Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant); Methodist and Holiness (Catherine Booth and William Cooke); Liberal Anglicans (Florence Nightingale); Unitarians (Mary Carpenter); Quakers (Elizabeth Fry); Agnostics (T. H. Huxley); Evangelical Anglicans (Josephine Butler); and Old Orthodox Dissent (C. H. Spurgeon).

You might suppose that *A People of One Book* suffers in comparison with *Crisis of Doubt* by lacking the element of surprise. After all, even the most die-hard advocates of the secularization thesis would concede that the Bible retained a powerful influence in Victorian England. Aren't these case studies condemned to a weary predictability?

Not at all, and for two reasons. First, Larsen repeatedly upsets preconceptions. We are used to thinking of Catholics as negligent about



the authority of Scripture in contrast to the claims of Tradition. Larsen shows how Cardinal Wiseman persistently made the case that Catholic teaching is more closely in accord with Scripture than rival Protestant doctrines are. (Whether Protestants would find his arguments persuasive is beside the point here.) Specialists may know that for much of the 19th century, Unitarianism in England was dominated by the biblicist strain of the denomination. For most readers, however, it will come as a surprise to learn how Carpenter and her father, Lant Carpenter, “gloried in Unitarian thought being even more thoroughly biblical than that of other Protestant bodies.”

Fry, the Quaker best remembered for her work with women in prison, “referred to reading the Bible simply as ‘reading’ or, to express it the other way around, when she referred to ‘reading’ she meant the Bible.” Along with prison reform her highest priority was “the distribution of the Scriptures,” accomplished via the Bible Society but also by her habit of carrying “copies of the Bible, the New Testament, or Bible tracts to distribute to those who crossed her path in the course of a day.”

Many American evangelicals will be rightly abashed by the overwhelming evidence of intimate familiarity with the Scriptures—not just a handful of salient passages—presented in Larsen’s case studies.

And then there is the extent to which outspoken critics of Christianity were themselves steeped in the Bible. Many years after Besant’s move from atheism to Theosophy, she gave a presidential address in India on the theme “India the Crucified among Nations now stands on this her Resurrection morning.” The speech, Larsen adds, “was not a success,” yet it vividly exemplified Besant’s “lifelong instinct that biblical language added weight to a pronouncement.”

Second, as in *Crisis of Doubt*, these case studies are not merely intended to flesh out a thesis. On the contrary, each chapter is a superb mini-biography attentive to idiosyncrasies, to the irreducible particularity of the human person.

We learn of Wiseman that his self-conscious Englishness endeared him even to many who were congenitally suspicious of Catholics and Catholicism. Moreover, he was fond of his food and had a girth that made this no secret. Such indulgence disappointed zealous Tractarians flush with the romance of neglected spiritual disciplines. Heroic Anglo-Catholics, who were surviving during Lent on herbs, bread, and water, were disconcerted to have the cardinal set before them a dinner consisting of four elegant fish courses. The Tractarian and eventual Catholic convert F. W. Faber quipped that Wiseman had a spiritual side and a “lobster salad side.”

Reading *A People of One Book*, it’s impossible not to compare the place of the Bible in

MY TOP 5 BOOKS ON HELL

By Robert Peterson, co-editor of *Is Hell for Real or Does Everyone Go to Heaven?* (Zondervan, 2011)



UNIVERSALISM AND THE DOCTRINE OF HELL

Papers Presented at the Fourth Edinburgh Conference on Christian Dogmatics, 1991

EDITED BY NIGEL M. DE S. CAMERON (PATERNOSTER PUBLISHING)

These essays stimulated my thinking on universalism, annihilationism (or conditional immortality), the Cross, the number of the saved, the problem of evil, and the key figures of Origen and Karl Barth.



TWO VIEWS OF HELL

A Biblical and Theological Dialogue

EDWARD WILLIAM FUDGE AND ROBERT A. PETERSON (INTERVARSITY PRESS)

A spirited biblical and theological debate between a leading conditionalist (Fudge, author of *The Fire That Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of the Doctrine of Final Punishment*) and a traditionalist (me; my book *Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment* presents this view).

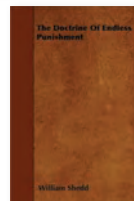


HELL UNDER FIRE

Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment

EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER W. MORGAN AND ROBERT A. PETERSON (ZONDERVAN)

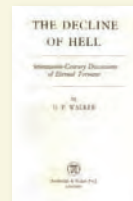
Outstanding essays on history (R. Albert Mohler Jr.), Scripture (Daniel I. Block, Robert W. Yarbrough, Douglas J. Moo, and Gregory K. Beale), alternative views (Christopher W. Morgan on annihilationism, J. I. Packer on universalism), and pastoral theology (Sinclair B. Ferguson).



THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT

WILLIAM GREENOUGH THAYER SHEDD (GENERAL BOOKS LLC)

Though dated, this remains the classic Protestant work on hell. After a brief historical survey, Shedd expounds on “the biblical argument” and “the rational argument.”



THE DECLINE OF HELL

Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment

D. P. WALKER (UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS)

This significant source, which makes for fascinating reading, increased my understanding of some historical predecessors of contemporary universalism and annihilationism.

Victorian England with the place of the Bible today in the United States. On the one hand, many American evangelicals will be rightly abashed by the overwhelming evidence of intimate familiarity with the Scriptures—not just a handful of salient passages—presented in Larsen’s case studies. On the other hand, we should be grateful for the Bible studies, the scholarship, and the preaching that characterize contemporary evangelicalism at its best, strongly affirming the authority of Scripture while avoiding fundamentalism and know-nothing literalism in other guises.

In contemporary American culture outside the church, biblical literacy is notoriously low. But in fiction, poetry, theater, music, and movies, biblical language, biblical allusions, and biblical themes appear far more often than is generally remarked. In many cases, from Iron & Wine’s “Jezebel” to Lady Gaga’s “Judas,” the intent is to argue with or invert a biblical message. At other times there is a haunting echo, the sound of something once believed or hoped for, now remote and yet not entirely renounced.

One of the most striking chapters in Larsen’s book is devoted to Huxley, the gifted and pugnacious expounder and defender of Darwinism and the man who coined the term “agnosticism” after a long dissatisfaction at being lumped together with atheists, from whom he was at pains to distinguish himself. What we don’t usually hear about him (although, as Larsen notes, it is related in Adrian Desmond’s fine biography, *Huxley: From Devil’s Disciple to Evolution’s High Priest*) is that in the mid-1880s, a decade or so before his death, “Huxley abandoned scientific research and embarked on a late, second career as a biblical critic.” He continued to attack the Christian understanding of Scripture and yet “he found his own religious position best encapsulated in Micah 6:8,” in which the prophet asks, “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Larsen quotes Huxley: “Will the progress of research prove that justice is worthless and mercy hateful?” It is not a distortion, I think, to say that Huxley was haunted to the end by that which he rejected. ☛

John Wilson is editor of *Books & Culture*, and a CT editor at large.

Things Left Unsaid

Jesus taught us not to judge others—or ourselves.

By Phillip Cary

There are lots of things Jesus didn’t say. But pastor Will Davis Jr., author of **10 Things Jesus Never Said: And Why You Should Stop Believing Them** (Revell) ★★★★★, focuses on

two main categories: expressions of disapproval and permission to judge. The effect is to counteract judgmentalism against both oneself and others. So Davis aims to comfort Christians who suffer from performance anxiety as well as challenge those who indulge in self-righteousness.

The expressions of disapproval we never hear from Jesus include, for instance: “I’m so disappointed in you,” “This wouldn’t be happening if you were a better Christian,” and “I’ve given up on you.” These have no place in the Bible and, I would add, do not even bear much resemblance to Jesus’ many words of warning and condemnation. Jesus’ words can be scathing and terrifying (just ask the Pharisees), whereas Davis is concerned with people who are not terrified but suffer from low self-esteem. He wants to help them get rid of the tapes they play in their heads that tell them, when they’re disappointed with themselves, that God must be disappointed too.

Then there are examples of the permission to judge that Jesus never gives us: “It’s okay not to love certain people,” “Everyone should believe and act like you do,” and “You don’t have to forgive someone who really hurts you.” The overarching concern here, and indeed throughout the book, is to replace legalism with a life of grace. If Davis gets his way, the church would be a kinder place, one not so apt to wound people.

Perhaps the most important thing Jesus did say, Davis suggests in his first chapter, is “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). He goes on to quote several other passages in which Jesus says, in effect: “I

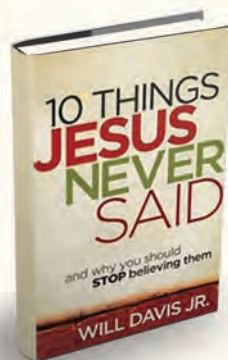
am what you’re looking for.” For my money, this is the best moment in the book.

Other moments are less endearing. In his enthusiasm for grace, Davis sometimes skirts the borders of antinomianism, and more than once crosses over. He teaches the baleful new form of eternal security doctrine, which tries to assure us that those who have once accepted Christ can proceed to reject him, never repent of it, and still be saved. In this doctrine, grace becomes an abstract principle of salvation that floats free of the person of Christ.

But Davis is not really addressing people who fear damnation. He is writing for Christians who feel pretty comfortably saved but worry there’s something second-rate about their Christian lives. Their experience of disapproval is not like being afraid of an angry father, but rather like the guilt induced by manipulative parents who say your behavior makes them feel sad. Davis’s book is about getting free from the devastating emotional effect of internalizing this kind of manipulation. It’s a good story, so far as it goes. But better still, I think, would be to learn to be sinners who fear God and repent.

In his conclusion, which is the second best moment in the book, Davis does give us something better than antinomianism. We are not left with a grace that bears all our burdens while we have no work to do. Rather, Jesus gives us burdens of his own when he says, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. . . . For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:29–30). That yoke is a life of learning, love, and service. It includes hard work and even suffering, but removes the heavy psychological burden of performance anxiety. It’s a good trade. ☛

Phillip Cary is professor of philosophy at Eastern University. He is the author, most recently, of *Good News for Anxious Christians: 10 Practical Things You Don’t Have to Do* (Brazos Press).



BITS & PIECES

Excerpts from recent books.

GOD WINS

Heaven, Hell, and Why the Good News Is Better than Love Wins

MARK GALLI (TYNDALE, 201 PAGES)

The problem with speculation is that it knows no bounds. The universalist idea for solving the problem of unbelief is to speculate that God will eventually win people over after they suffer enough judgment. Why would we not then postulate reincarnation, with people returning to this life again and again until they get it right? Why not suppose that all language of judgment is culturally conditioned, that in the end God doesn't judge anyone for anything? And so on.

The problem with these scenarios is that in the end we know that we've made them up to comfort ourselves in the face of life's sobering realities. When we're alone in the dark, faced with our mortality, such ideas can be of no comfort because we know where they came from.

The apparent contradictions of God's love and justice are in fact two sides of one biblical paradox. Certainly, it's a paradox we have all deeply felt. Looking at the ideas of a loving and all-powerful God and the presence of evil, we wonder how the two can possibly coexist. Looking at the idea of a loving God who calls people to believe in Jesus for their salvation and at the idea of justice, we worry about the fate of those who have never heard of him.

But there are other "contradictions" that we have learned to accept in faith. For example, the Bible doesn't explain exactly how Jesus is both human and divine, nor how the immaterial God created a material world. It simply teaches that Jesus is both human and divine; it simply says that God, who is Spirit, created a material world. Scripture is satisfied to leave paradoxes unresolved.

Likewise, it teaches that God is good and just and powerful, and that the world is full of evil. It does not speculate about the fate of those who have not heard of Jesus or who die before the age of accountability, as troubling as we

find those questions. The Bible simply tells us to believe and share the good news that we have come to know: that God came to us in Christ, died, was raised again to make us right with him, and calls us to be reconciled to him. We are to share that news as far and wide as we can. We can carry on in our lives of love and service assuming that God, in his mercy and justice, will address the situation of those who have not heard.

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WILSON'S BOOKMARKS

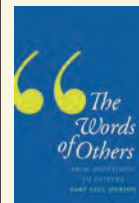


From the editor of Books & Culture.

THE WORDS OF OTHERS

From Quotations to Culture

GARY SAUL MORSON (YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS)



Gary Saul Morson, best known as a scholar of Russian literature, leads us into vertiginous terrain before we're done with the introduction. But the fault is not his—quotation, including quotation within and from the Bible, turns out to be a subject as twisty as the human mind itself—and he maintains equilibrium, even if his readers' heads are spinning. The book advances episodically and (fortunately) lends itself to being absorbed in small chunks, often as brief as a page or less. And while you're at it, you'll find yourself making all sorts of connections with whatever else you are reading and hearing.

THE GOLDEN EMPIRE

Spain, Charles V, and the Creation of America

HUGH THOMAS (RANDOM HOUSE)



In this volume, the eminent historian Hugh Thomas continues the series begun with *Rivers of Gold: The Rise of the Spanish Empire, from Columbus to Magellan* (2004). The church figures significantly in the story, both for good and for ill. It's to Thomas's credit that he neither indulges in self-flattering moralism (as do so many contemporary historians) nor affects Olympian detachment. Rather, he writes with humane sympathy about three decades of conquest and the birth of New Spain, events with consequences lasting to this day.

BUILDING THE BARRICADE

And Other Poems of Anna Swir

ANNA SWIR, TRANSLATED BY PIOTR FLORCZYK (CALYPSO EDITIONS)



This slim collection, first published in Poland in 1974, looks back to World War II and poet Anna Swir's experience of the Warsaw Uprising. Instead of emotion recollected in tranquility, Swir gives us extremity recollected with intensity. She has different voices, ranging from swaggering bravado to knife-like irony; she celebrates fleeting moments of delight and concludes on a note of resignation mixed with hopefulness. This last poem—spoken on the eve of surgery—is titled "Tomorrow They'll Cut Me Open." Nothing saccharine here.

Agents of Translation

Christian colleges should fluently speak the language of both the gospel and the surrounding culture. Interview by Hunter Baker

Pitzer College, a liberal arts school in California, will take secular education to the extreme this fall as it begins offering a major in secularism. Philip Eaton, president of Seattle Pacific University, seeks to counter the secular model of education with a model of life-giving learning in his new book, **Engaging the Culture, Changing the World: The Christian University in a Post-Christian World** (IVP Academic). Hunter Baker, associate dean of arts and sciences at Union University, spoke with Eaton about ways Christians can successfully engage the culture without necessarily blending in.

INTERVIEW

You say that the world needs the Christian university. How would you respond to secularists—or even some anti-intellectual Christians—who would disagree?

The demand at our schools has never been greater. This signals to me that there is something profoundly missing from the secular culture's commitment to education. We have something vitally important for the lives of students and for the health of our society. We have something more to offer them. I am convinced of this, despite the naysayers on both ends of the spectrum.

What about the drive toward seeing college as simply where we go to train for a job?

The university must be seen as a path toward productive lives. The Christian university must master, at the highest levels of excellence, the ability to equip our graduates with skills that matter in the world, abilities that allow them to contribute to society. At the same time, we want to equip them for both productive and meaningful lives. We want to provide them with a vision of human flourishing for their lives and for the world.

Several times you write about not giving students a "stone" instead of "bread." Is something like secularism, what Walker

Percy calls "scientific humanism," the stone?

This metaphor is about our children, our students—the next generation. This is where Jesus puts the emphasis. He tells us that we have an enormous responsibility to teach children well, to equip them, to let them in on the secrets of the tribe, the teachings of our faith. All societies take education seriously. But in our time, we must take seriously both dimensions of this metaphor. There is education that is lifeless at the core: education that cares for skills to succeed in the world, but cares little about passing on a vision for human flourishing. Instead, we need an education that is life-giving, to our students and to the world—bread instead of a stone.

Secular thinking has hollowed out the soul of the educational enterprise. The masters of suspicion—Nietzsche, Freud, Foucault—have triumphed. Under their influence, we have an education based on suspicion about any story that seeks to participate in the true, the good, and the beautiful. The result is a life of suspicion, even cynicism.

You use the image of colliding maps of the world to illustrate the challenge of post-modernism. What is the key to finding a true map of reality?

Recovering the Resurrection is the key. As the Misfit says in Flannery O'Connor's short story "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," the Resurrection changed everything: If it is true, there is nothing to do but throw down everything and follow Jesus. If it is not, then why not live a life of meanness, selfishness, and destruction?

As we look at our surrounding culture, it is clear we have chosen a world without Easter. What would

the world be like if Easter people once again asserted influence in the culture? That is the mission of the Christian university.

You place great value on community formation with regard to the study of Scripture and the pursuit of holiness. Is this a model for spiritual life at the university?

While I chose in the book not to focus on details of particular student programs, or how they relate spiritual life to academic life, I hope integration could be a new paradigm. At Seattle Pacific, we have tried to tap into deep roots of Christian history and teaching, by intentionally centering our reading, study, and worship on the Scriptures. History tells us this can have a profound shaping influence in the life of the community and the surrounding world.

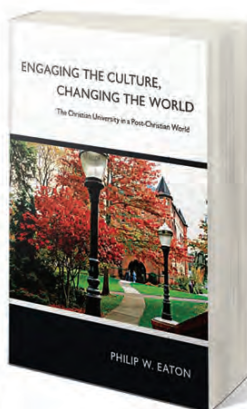
Should the Christian university model holiness as a community?

Yes, I hope so. There is no more effective way to impact the world for good than by earnestly aspiring to be communities of trust, grace, hope, and holiness. People are watching. Universities are not the church. But we must continually draw from the deep and rich resources of our special tradition to create universities that truly matter to the world.

You talk about the divide in higher education in terms of two radio stations. One excludes God from consideration of public matters as a matter of course. The other nurtures a tribal type of Christian identity. You call for a work of translation.

Translation has to go both ways. As Scottish missionary Lesslie Newbigin argued so powerfully, we must learn the language of culture in order to translate the gospel into

the culture. Our separatist tendencies encourage us to drop out of the culture altogether, skip the translation work, and rest on our clichés. Our accommodating tendencies make us shy about speaking the gospel at all. But we must find what I call the radical middle: to learn the culture through and through, and then to engage it boldly with the transforming gospel. ☩



Myths and Reality TV

Pop culture should be able to deliver more. By Naomi Schaefer Riley & Christine Rosen

Myths. Legends. Fairy tales. Fables. Every culture in every era finds a way to express our human need to tell stories about ourselves. We rely on these stories to teach us why we do the things we do, to test the limits of our experience, and to reaffirm truths about human nature.

Reality TV, with its bevy of “real housewives,” super-size families, and toddler beauty pageants, seems an unlikely place to find such truths. But when you move beyond the excess and hyperbole, you find the makings of classic morality tales. Bad characters come to disastrous ends. People struggle with unexpected hardship and either triumph or fail. For some, hard work pays off. For others, failure is swift and cruel.

Before the ubiquity of reality TV, people could easily distinguish between real people and glamorous actors. No one’s marriage really looked like Donna Reed’s or Dick Van Dyke’s or Bill Cosby’s sitcom version. But now, we’re not so sure. We can all be actors. Maybe that couple on the screen really does have

amazing sex every night. Maybe they really do know how to balance work and family and raise wonderful children. Before you know it, we’re looking at our spouse and wondering, “Why can’t we be like that, honey?”

But reality TV can’t relay the message that there are certain habits and virtues that can only be mastered through repetition. Pop culture misleads children by suggesting that everything can happen overnight. The unpopular can become popular. The ugly can become beautiful. The single become attached. MTV’s *Made*, which helps teens “achieve their dreams” of becoming homecoming queen, losing weight, earning a spot in the school play—all projects that take months—can be viewed in one sitting. But the transformation seems instantaneous.

Adults consume a lot of pop culture too. Its appetite for the newest thing is part of the allure: yesterday’s sitcom has-been is on today’s *Dancing with the Stars*; today’s reality show contestant is tomorrow’s co-host of *The View*. But impatience exacts a price: it erodes our ability to appreciate things that take time.

Liberal-minded observers tend to praise the smashing of taboos and the anything-goes extremism of pop culture. Conservatives tend to tut-tut about declining standards and moral relativism. What is missing from the landscape of cultural criticism is a sustained and thoughtful discussion about what popular culture has to teach us about ourselves—our values, our interests, and our hopes—and the ways in which we might reclaim some space for a discussion of things such as virtue and character. Pop culture tackles the full spectrum of human experience: birth, death, love, marriage, hatred, failure, and redemption. Commentary often focuses on the lack of virtue and character. But might it also be possible to create cultural settings that could encourage things such as thrift, compassion, and self-reliance? 

Adapted from *Acculturated: 23 Savvy Writers Find Hidden Virtue in Reality TV, Chick Lit, Video Games, and Other Pillars of Pop Culture* (Templeton Press). Used by permission. More: Acculturated.com.

MY TOP 5 MOVIES WITH GREAT MARRIAGES

By Kenneth R. Morefield, a CT film critic who blogs at 1morefilmblog.com



MAKE WAY FOR TOMORROW

1937 | UNRATED

DIRECTED BY LEO MCCAREY

Leo McCarey’s story of a Great Depression-era couple forced to live apart packs an emotional punch. Only the hardest of hearts will not be broken by the end of this Hollywood classic.



A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

1966 | RATED G

DIRECTED BY FRED ZINNEMANN

The final scene between Sir Thomas More and his wife, Alice, is an exquisite exchange between two souls who love each other more than anything—and who help each other to love God most of all.



ROB ROY

1995 | RATED R

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL CATON-JONES

Plots about husbands who violently retaliate against the men who violate their wives are a depressing dime a dozen. What elevates this one is the way anger at her victimization results in an increased solicitude and tenderness toward each other.



PRIDE & PREJUDICE

2005 | RATED PG

DIRECTED BY JOE WRIGHT

The wedding is the end of most fairy tales, but in Jane Austen’s classic the courtship shows the kind of marriage that will exist in the happily ever after. Elizabeth and Darcy don’t just make each other happy; they also make each other better.



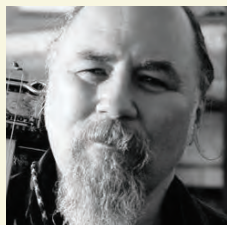
THE BLIND SIDE

2009 | RATED PG-13

DIRECTED BY JOHN LEE HANCOCK

Sean Tuohy may kid about wife Leigh Anne always getting her way, but when complications arise he avers that he wouldn’t have done things differently. A wonderful portrait of how a couple can have different personalities yet share the same goals and values.

TWO MINUTES WITH... Glenn Kaiser



Glenn Kaiser, 58, has been around the block a few times—including those in downtown Chicago, where he serves as a founder and pastor at Jesus People USA. And he still plays a

mean guitar and sings the blues. The former leader of the Resurrection Band has a new solo album, *Cardboard Box*—an ode to Chicago's poor and homeless. CT's Mark Moring spoke with Kaiser about the project.

Do you see yourself in these songs?

Yes. I grew up in a working-class suburb of Milwaukee, and my family was poor. I had friends in the inner city, and poverty was right there on the street. So I've experienced poverty, and it's easier to know what that life is like when you've been hungry, when you've struggled to survive, when you're ostracized because of the clothes you're wearing, when you're looked down on because you live on the wrong side of the tracks.

It's a stripped-down album. Is that an intentional choice?

Yes. I've fallen in love with cigar box guitars. I have a guitar that some guy sent me made out of a bed pan. And I've found objects that I've made into two- and three-stringers. There is something about the issue of being poor, of living in the street, of found objects—of God and me taking stuff that would be thrown away and making something cool out of it. God does that with our lives.

What's the song "Loading Dock" about?

An area in Chicago around Lower Wacker Drive. There's so many homeless people down there, sometimes just because there's warm air coming up out of a grate. It addresses this notion that people who are homeless are somehow all con artists and thieves and drug addicts, and that just isn't true. Some are, but a whole lot of folks are plain old-fashioned poor. Many of them have a mental illness. But they all find places like that, and they congregate and cuddle up against the cold. It's a group of people, but also an area of town, that we have a heart for.



Worth the Wait

Burlap returns a winner after 13 years. By Joel Oliphint

Burlap to Cashmere burst onto the scene in the late '90s with gusto, gobs of promise, and a fresh sound. Singer and guitarist Steven Delopoulos and his cousin, lead guitarist and vocalist Johnny Philippidis, drew on their Greek heritage to blend Mediterranean touchstones with harmony-rich American folk and pop. They gained a devoted following through rip-roaring live shows and a superb debut, 1998's *Anybody Out There?* Burlap seemed poised to become a household name. But years went by with no new album, and members eventually went their separate ways. It seemed that they were one-and-done.

Now, almost 13 years since that debut, Burlap is back and better than ever. Its new album, **Burlap to Cashmere** (Jive Records) ★★★★★, reflects the band's name—its sonic fabric transformed from its rough-hewn origins to a rich, newly textured sound that is at once strong and soft.

On the '98 album, Delopoulos quoted John 3:16 verbatim. Here, he's again given Christian radio plenty of fodder, though now the Scripture references sound less clunky. He name-drops Nehemiah on the foot-stompin' "Build a Wall," quotes Psalm

23 on "The Other Country," and uses *Selah* as an interjection on "Tonight."

Anybody Out There? suffered from the heavy-handed production typical of the day, including cheesy synthesizer and arena-rock drums. The new album's natural production allows acoustic guitars to sound like acoustic guitars—an important detail since the band's world-music influences remain intact (a good thing). "Orchestrated Love Song" suffers from some Precious Moments poetry, but the flamenco guitars and uncommon time signatures are captivating, and the melodies in "Santorini," an ode to Greece, sound like they were snatched right off its exotic shores.

In the American folk category, Burlap's sound takes more cues from Simon and Garfunkel than Toad the Wet Sprocket (also a good thing).

Some bands never reclaim the youthful vitality of their first recordings. Too often, "mature" becomes synonymous with "stale." But Burlap to Cashmere has managed to gracefully age without losing any of its vigor. It was worth the wait. ➤

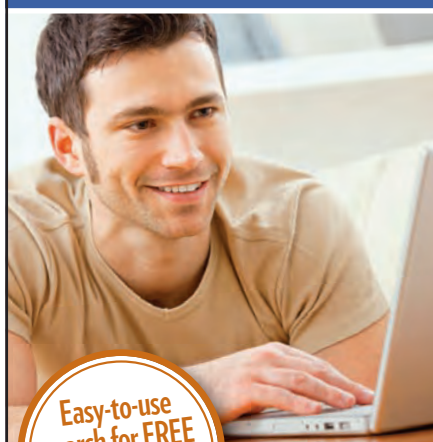
Joel Oliphint is a CT music critic and a freelance writer in Columbus, Ohio.





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BOOKS

▶ NOT A FAN

*Becoming a Completely Committed
Follower of Jesus*

KYLE IDLEMAN (ZONDERVAN)

★★★★★ In *Not a Fan*, Kyle Idleman, teaching pastor at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, critiques a nominal Christianity that distorts the historic faith, focusing on the benefits of salvation while ignoring what it costs to follow Christ. He contrasts “fans of Jesus” (those content to remain passive spectators with a Christian label) with “followers of Jesus” (those who seek a life of submission to Christ’s lordship). Idleman’s book is a restatement of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s emphasis on dying to oneself in order to live for Christ. —*Trevin Wax*

▶ WHY GOD WON’T GO AWAY

Is the New Atheism Running on Empty?

ALISTER MCGRATH (THOMAS NELSON)

★★★★★ Intense opposition by Christians to the “Four Horsemen” of the New Atheism—Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Christopher Hitchens—comes as no surprise. But surely fellow non-believers hold them in high esteem? Not always, argues Alister McGrath. The Four Horsemen and their acolytes still inspire fanatical loyalty, especially within certain online colonies, where the barest hints of heterodoxy bring forth venomous anger. And yet, among more temperate skeptics, McGrath finds growing embarrassment at the movement’s bellicosity and selective historical amnesia. —*Matt Reynolds*

▶ A PARENT’S GUIDE TO THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

*Supporting Your Child’s Heart, Soul, and
Mind during the College Years*

TODD C. REAM, TIMOTHY W. HERRMANN, AND
C. SKIP TRUDEAU (ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS)

★★★★★ Whether you’re shepherding Junior through applications, unloading his belongings into a freshman dorm, or nervously pondering his readiness for academic rigors and extracurricular temptations, *A Parent’s Guide to the Christian College* offers a wonderful resource. The authors bring a wealth of classroom and administrative experience to these reflections on student growth and parental involvement. Exploring the spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions of student development, they affirm that the Christian college exists not merely to mold minds or provide professional training, but also to cultivate Christian character. —*Matt Reynolds*

MUSIC

SOJOURN

▶ THE WATER AND THE BLOOD: THE HYMNS OF ISAAC WATTS, VOL. II

(SOJOURN MUSIC)

★★★★★ This soulful, bluesy collection of Isaac Watts hymns uses alternating vocals and a strong rotation of instruments—slide guitar, Hammond organ, banjo, and more—for a cohesive Americana variety. The best known “O God Our Help in Ages Past” drags, but most arrangements set a fresh, earthy backdrop for Watts’s heavenward, theological poetry. It’s a rich experience musically and spiritually. —*Jeremy V. Jones*

THE SUNRISE

▶ SPREAD THE WORD

(INDEPENDENT)

★★★★★ If you like 1970s Jesus music—Larry Norman, Randy Stonehill, Phil Keaggy, John Fischer, and so on—you’ll like this debut project from Cleveland couple James and Rebecca Mileti. Lyrics address romantic love, social justice, pride, emotional abuse, spiritual transformation, and even include an altar call: “You don’t need to be scared of him, or think you’re not good enough / Whores, lepers, and tax collectors made the cut / So you’ll be alright.” —*Mark Moring*

STUART TOWNEND

▶ THE JOURNEY

(KINGSWAY MUSIC)

★★★★★ Stuart Townend presents community-focused hymns and homegrown folk tunes using strings, woodwinds, banjo, and the lovely vocal accompaniment of folk artist Ruth Notman. Rooted in Scripture as always, Townend’s poetry articulates ancient wisdom; no note or lyric is flippantly placed as he constructs themes of sinners welcomed, eternal grace, and Christ’s warm, deep love. —*Kristin Garrett*

ON DVD

▶ THE GRACE CARD

PROVIDENT | PG-13 | AUGUST 16

★★★★★ In the wake of successful church-made movies like *Facing the Giants* and *Fireproof*, Calvary Church in Cordova, Tennessee, follows suit with a film that includes Oscar winner Louis Gossett Jr. in a minor role, while several unknowns carry the flick. An embittered cop is fighting the pain of his young son’s death 17 years later. At work, he’s just been assigned a new partner—an African American who’s a vocal Christian. The story is predictable, but plays out in a few unexpected ways. —*Todd Hertz*

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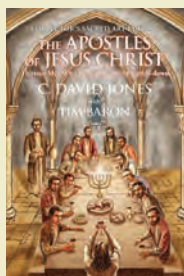
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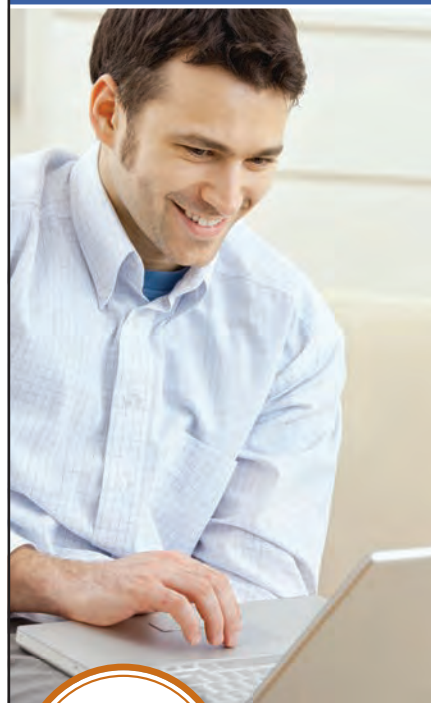
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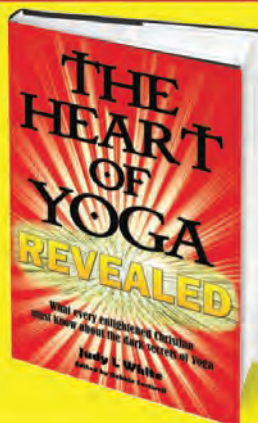


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No More Band-Aids

Shannon Sedgwick Davis hopes to halt genocide.



When Navy SEALs killed Osama bin Laden, many believed the world was rid of its most evil man. Not Shannon Sedgwick Davis. To her, that man is Joseph Kony, head of the notorious Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), known for unleashing unspeakable horrors on innocent men, women, and children in central Africa.

The LRA wipes out entire villages, forcing children to kill their parents and then taking the kids away—boys to be soldiers, girls to be sex slaves.

Davis—an attorney, a former worker for International Justice Mission, and current president of the philanthropic Bridgeway Foundation—says money alone won't fix this problem. She visits areas in the wake of LRA attacks, where she's seen “children with their faces blown

off, knowing they're going to die.” Davis asked herself, “Do we [at Bridgeway] really mean what we say with our mission statement—a world without genocide? I can't continue to just put Band-Aids on bullet holes.” She now meets with U.N. generals, U.S. officials, and other leaders, hoping to stop the madness. “We need to be about ending mass atrocity and this particular evil. That's 90 percent of my work with Bridgeway these days.”

Davis is also a board member of several organizations, including the Elders, Humanity United, TOMS Shoes, and Ben Affleck's Eastern Congo Initiative.

- 📍 **Hometown** San Antonio, Texas
- 📍 **Church** The Park
- 👨 **Family** Sam (husband); Connor, 5, Brody, 2 (children)
- 📖 **Reading now** *Conversations with Myself*, by Nelson Mandela; *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, by Eric Metaxas
- 🎧 **On your iPod** Mumford & Sons; Switchfoot; Peter Dinklage
- 🎬 **Favorite movie** *Good Will Hunting*
- 📖 **Favorite Bible verse** Micah 6:8
- 🌐 **Favorite website** bbc.co.uk
- 🦸 **Your hero** Gary Haugen

question & answer

What do you know of Joseph Kony?

He has set the bar for evil. He blindfolds little boys and makes them shove guns up their moms' vaginas and pull the trigger. Then he takes the blindfolds off and makes them look at the destruction. Stories like that forced me to a crisis point of wanting to take action, and I have been living and breathing that for the past three years.

You've asked the United Nations for help?

Yes. After the 2009 Christmas massacre [in which the LRA killed 321 people and kidnapped 80 children], I met with the U.N. and learned that there had been about 150 LRA soldiers in the area, compared to about 12,500 troops between the U.N. and armies from Uganda and Congo. I said, “You had 12,500 and you couldn't stop 150?” They laughed out loud, and that's when I knew I had to break out of the box of the philanthropic world. As a Christian, it's a box I can't stay in any longer.

So, what have you done?

I have worked with others to get about 30 radio towers in the region so people can communicate with each other about the movement of the LRA. They can warn each other of potential attacks and take cover or defend themselves.

What else are you doing to that end?

Other stuff that I won't talk about, and we're trying to get equipment to the right places so people can protect themselves and possibly bring an end to this—not weapons, but places where they can hide from these murderers.

Is the U.S. government helping?

No, even though it would be much easier to take out Kony than bin Laden. But they say this issue isn't in the interest of our national security. It's in my interest that these children aren't hacked to death anymore. I'm not going to be mad at the U.S. government. I'm just going to work around it.

More: BridgewayFoundation.org, 2myboys.com

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