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WAR IS FOR WIMPS p.65

From wireless mics to pastors in ripped jeans, we conceal it.

(Why that's a problem.)

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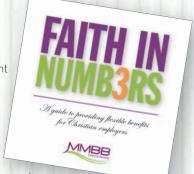
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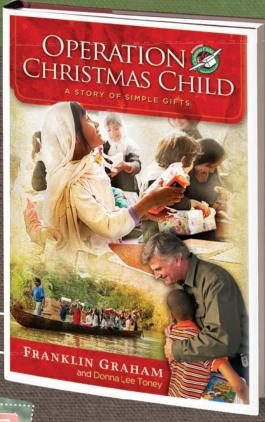
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Josh was enjoying the last days of summer at the Chicago Air and Water Show as we prepared this issue



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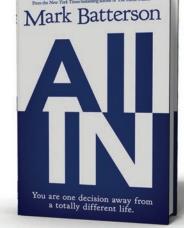
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IS NO WAY TO LIVE.

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If you want to go all out for Jesus, you have to be all in. In his new book *All In*, author of *The Circle Maker*, Mark Batterson shows readers if Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all. To purchase your copy visit zondervan.com or wherever books are sold.









WATER IS LIFE

World Vision provides more clean water worldwide than any other charity, reaching another person with clean drinking water every 30 seconds.

No other essential has a more dramatic effect on a child's life than clean water. In fact, combined with improved sanitation and hygiene, it can immediately cut child deaths by more than half. Water is a key component in our overall model for bringing lasting change and fullness of life to children in need, paving the way for our work in other key areas like nutrition, healthcare, education, and job opportunities.

Thanks to our donors, we have provided ongoing access to life-giving water to more than 12 million people in the last 27 years . . . and we're not stopping there. We're looking for more people like you to help us reach an additional 50 million people in the next 15 years. Join World Vision in sharing water, and fullness of life, with children in need.

If you believe in children, visit worldvision.org today!

Waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

—Isaiah 35:6 (NRSV)



WE BELIEVE IN CHILDREN

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Motivated by our faith in Jesus, we serve the poor as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people.



RUN FOR WATER

"Team World Vision offers your church the opportunity to not only write a check, but to do something much greater."

—Paul Jansen Van Rensburg (JVR), pastor at Willow Creek Community Church

Churches across the nation are uniting under a common mission—running with Team World Vision to provide clean water for those in need. We create lasting change for children and their communities with every mile we run together. We tell the world that we believe in children and in God's calling to help them achieve a full life. Join us in a remarkable journey that transforms the physical, mental, and spiritual lives of everyone it touches. Visit teamworldvision.org today to start a team at your church. Run for water. Run for life.

Visit www.teamworldvision.org to start a team at your church!



her meneutics









Daily commentary from Christian women.

From examining the Christian trend of early marriage to how we should respond to the Trayvon Martin verdict, Her.meneutics examines culture through the diverse perspectives of Christian women. Her.meneutics strives to equip women (and not merely a few men) to engage the world of ideas, cultural trends, and global news through the lens of Christian faith.

Join the Conversation at ChristianityToday.com/Women

EDITOR'S NOTE

IF YOU'RE A LONGTIME SUBSCRIBER, you may have been a bit surprised when this issue arrived. You'll find that all of cr's signature elements are still here: international news delivered with careful, fair analysis; in-depth articles that connect biblical faith to the challenges of this moment in our culture and our churches; and reviews that explore the best of books, art, music, and film.

We've added breathing room to our pages, in the form of wider margins and a simpler color palette. We've adopted the glorious typefaces Periódico and Calibre, among the most intriguing and graceful font designs of the last decade. And as you'll have noticed, we've started calling ourselves what everyone already calls us—ct.

For this project, after a careful search process, we retained José and Nikolle Reyes's firm Metaleap Creative, based in Atlanta. Beginning with their extraordinary work on the music magazine *Paste*, and continuing with award-winning designs for the *Washingtonian*, *byFaith*, and a host of other magazines, Metaleap has raised the bar for clean, clear, and exciting maga-

Metaleap has raised the bar for clean, clear, and exciting magazine design. José and Nikolle's professional excellence is married to a deep commitment to follow Christ in everything they do. They are models of the kind of culturally creative Christians we hope cr can serve and encourage.

We wouldn't have retained Metaleap simply to help us tweak our existing look—we asked them to give us something smart, bold, and beautiful, and we hope you agree they succeeded.

Why make such a big change? Above all, we wanted to convey how serious we are about serving our readers in print. We are totally committed to serving you online, on tablets, and on your phone—and you'll see our new look reflected in those media in the coming months. (Subscribers to cr in print get full access to our digital offerings as well.)

But there's something unique about the print medium, and we don't believe it's going away. There are amazing things that can only happen when you apply four colors of ink to a blank page. You can take this magazine with you to the beach, put it on a coffee table, or hand it to a friend. Something that portable, that visible, and that valuable ought to be worth every bit that it costs and more.

Good design, ultimately, is about making things both useful and beautiful—echoing God's original design for the Garden, full of trees that were both "good to eat" and "a delight to the eyes." We hope ct is both useful and beautiful to you as you cultivate and create in your corner of God's world.



SMARTER, BOLDER, AND A LITTLE BIT TALLER

Yes, it's really different. And yes, it is still *Christianity Today*.

ANDY CROUCH Executive Editor



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ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM CRUFT

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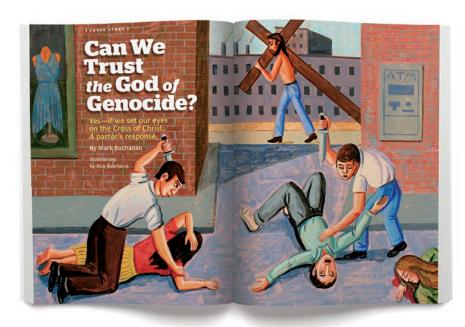
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REPLY ALL



CAN WE TRUST THE GOD OF GENOCIDE?

Genocide is carried out by those who have no morally justifiable reason for slaughtering people—they are protecting their own privilege and power, or feel threatened. Is this really the company in which we feel comfortable placing our heavenly Father?

When God specifically asked his people to eradicate other groups, he had multiple good reasons for it. Unfortunately, Mark Buchanan's article makes no effort to talk about this, nor the deadly nature of sin (even on a corporate level) and the utmost seriousness with which God takes it, nor his wise justice in punishing the overflowing evil of those who died.

James B. Houston Calgary, Alberta, Canada

CLEARLY, MARK BUCHANAN has touched a nerve, as all these comments demonstrate. I've wrestled with this issue ever since hearing the story of Noah and the Flood. Drown everyone (including children and infants) who was not in Noah's family? Whew! The limits of those who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" are

breathtakingly severe. But Buchanan does a great job of pointing to God's goodness, which not only provides for salvation but refuses to allow evil to continue. Both justice and grace are part of God's goodness. And that still, at times, is breathtaking.

Marshall Shelley

ст online comment

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS? cr's editors would love to hear them. E-mail: cteditor@christianitytoday.com Fax: 630.260.9401 Address Changes, Subscriptions: ctifulfill@christianitytoday.com

FATHER KNOWS BEST

SIMON CHAN MAKES a good case for calling God *Father*. But he doesn't address complementing paternal terms with maternal ones, which is biblically appropriate. He writes, "The father-son relationship is the most intimate personal relationship." I would have thought rather that mother-child is the most intimate. Certainly equally so.

God, who transcends human gender, is also Mother. The Trinity transcends yet enfolds gender so thoroughly that when he creates humans, male and female is the beautiful result.

Howard A. Snyder Wilmore, Kentucky

MY MOTHER AND I were both disappointed to read, "The father-son relationship is the most intimate personal relationship."

If women are incapable of experiencing the closest human relationship, we can never understand the closeness of God—at least not as well as a man. Women have not experienced a "fatherly" love for sons to thereby understand God's love for people, nor have they experienced a son's love and respect for his father. At best, women will see this love secondhand. It is a dangerous suggestion.

Abigail Dunn

Boston

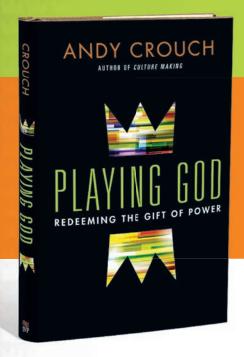
BLINDSIDED BY GOD

HAVING JUST GONE THROUGH surgery for breast cancer, I was amazed and pleased for having no anger toward God. However, upon reading your article, I wept for a long time. Obviously, there is more going on than I realize. Thank you to Peter Chin for showing me what I need to examine to uncover why I don't trust God more.

Kim O'Donnell

ст online comment

DANGEROUS GAME OR DIVINE GIFT?

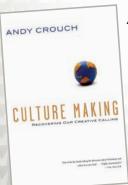


"Andy Crouch wades into the immense topic of power—the powers, institutional power, cultural power, racial power—to offer the alternative Christian perception of power.... In this book worldly power is deconstructed and replaced with a new kind of gospel power."

SCOT MCKNIGHT, Northern Seminary

With *Playing God*, Andy Crouch opens the subject of power, exploring its subtle activity in our relationships and institutions. He gives us much more than a warning against abuse, though. Turning the notion of "playing God" on its head, Crouch celebrates power as the gift by which we join in God's creative, redeeming work in the world.

IVPRESS.COM/PLAYINGGOD



ALSO BY ANDY CROUCH NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK.

"Culture Making is one of the few books taking the discussion about Christianity and culture to a new level. It is a rare mix of the theoretical and the practical, its definitions are nuanced but not abstract, and it strikes all kinds of fine balances. I highly recommend it."

-TIM KELLER, pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City, author, *The Reason for God*

Named one of *Publishers Weekly*'s best books of 2008.

IVP Books

REPLY ALL

SEX WITHOUT BODIES

"SEX WITHOUT BODIES" claims that Christians must affirm that bodies matter to counter the message of LGBTS. Even a cursory acquaintance with the LGBT movement knows that it is deeply engaged with the body. Gays and lesbians historically have been very aware that the sovereign self is no match for the body and its desires.

At times, the church assumes that "salt and light" travels in one direction—from the church to the culture. But the flows happen in both directions. If the church talks far more ethically today about women and gays, it's because cultural movements have been salt and light to so many in recent decades.

Brian Carwana

Toronto

SINCE THE SUPREME COURT decision on same-sex marriage I have read several good articles by Christian writers. None of these comes close to your excellent article. It both recognizes the theological truths of the matter and the practical truths of what is happening. This is a great cr.

Dennis Bilbo

E-mail

THROUGHOUT THE YEARS I found your magazine to be informative, intellectually challenging, and stimulating. I especially enjoy your theological pieces—even if, at times, I might not agree with them wholeheartedly.

I'm an openly gay minister ordained in the United Church of Christ and I consider myself a liberal evangelical. I don't fit your standard target group but I enjoy your magazine and thank God for your ministry. Some of your theological pieces make it into my sermons. Your unwavering commitment to Christianity and its theology is so refreshing and I look forward to every new issue. "Sex Without Bodies" was great (even though I do not agree with the author). The article displays the best part of your ministry: respect for others, your convictions, and grace for all. Thank you for reminding me that we are all united in one baptism by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Kazimierz (Kaz) Bem

Marlborough, Massachusetts

"There are lessons here for all of us who are grappling with how we can personally help lift our neighbors out of poverty. Doug Banister's article is all the more real because of its unexpected—and far from heartwarming—ending. It starkly points out the challenges we are all up against."

Sharon Grigsby, The Dallas News On "Rethinking the \$3,000 Missions Trip," This Is Our City.

NET GAIN Resp

Responses from the Web.



"Things are stable now, but as you say, we are all changed. And wow, do I recognize that pain."

@bethanylanell on her mom's bipolar disorder.

"The Shadow of Schizophrenia," by Amy Simpson.

"Making @CT women's 'Our Last-Ditch Summer Reading List' is like a musician finding out that Willie Nelson put his song on a mixtape."

Tyler Wigg-Stevenson (@TylerWS) on his book getting named on Her.meneutics.

"I reckon solving global poverty is harder than rocket science."

@jgarth22, an actual rocket scientist.

"Solving Poverty Is Rocket Science," online op-ed by Richard Stearns.

"Rather than calling my experience a 'happy ending,' I would instead call it an 'amazing glimpse.' Through the circumstances of the past year, I caught a glimpse of the miraculous and strange ways in which God works. I was reminded, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he does work, although in ways that I cannot begin to comprehend."

Peter Chin, PeterWChin.com

Response to readers of "Blindsided by God," Christianity Today.





Learn more at fmsc.org/CT

PERSECUTION IN THE FORMER SOVIET COUNTRIES IS HAPPENING AGAIN!

AND CHRISTIANS THERE NEED YOU!

In the beginning, they wanted to arrest us all . . . the children cried . . . officials were confiscating Bibles, song books, and computers . . . We were hiding the children in storage rooms and toilets . . . The circumstances were tense . . .

—A recent letter from Central Asia

From 1917-1991, atheistic communism ruled in Russia and her neighboring countries. Then God opened a brief window of opportunity of freedom where the Gospel was preached openly. But now, our brothers and sisters report persecution is on the rise once again. They need our help now more than ever!

SGA-nearly 80 years of Gospel Ministry . . . training in God's Word . . . printing and distributing God's Word . . . supporting national missionaries in unreached regions . . . and much more!

5,000 servants of Christ trained to preach the Gospel

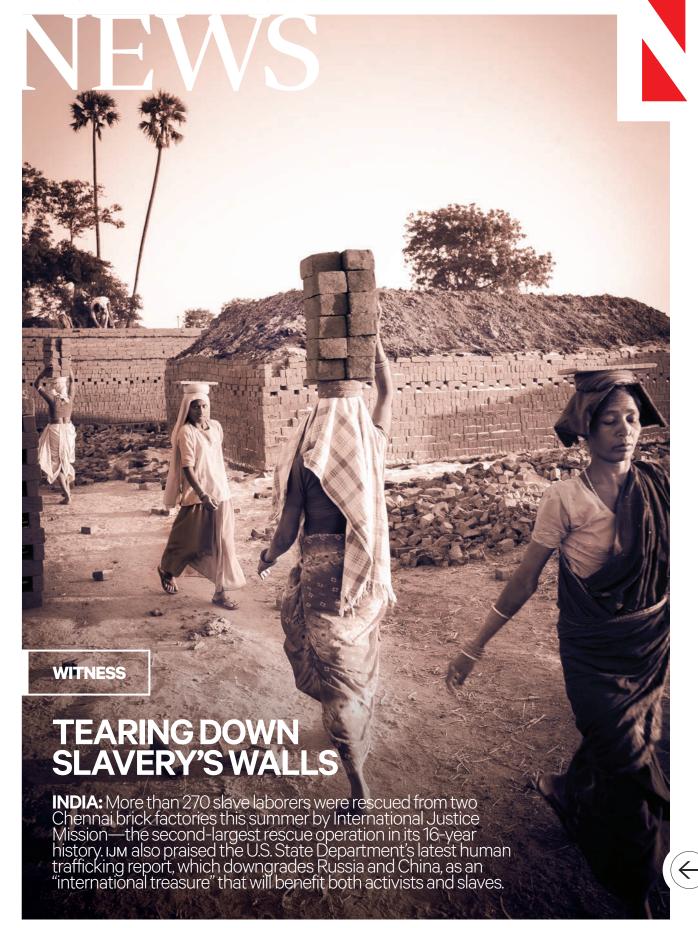
350 national missionary pastors

organizing new churches in 10 countries

orphanage workers
reaching 8,900 children in 112 orphanages

The faithful Bible-preaching churches are undaunted, even in the midst of growing oppression. Tragically, they lack the resources they need to seize the Gospel opportunities that exist. Tens of millions of lost souls are waiting . . . even wanting . . . to hear of Christ's love.

Contact SGA to find out what you can do today!



15

GLEANINGS



A record-setting 1,586 pastors deliberately broke the law last October by endorsing political candidates from their pulpits. They failed

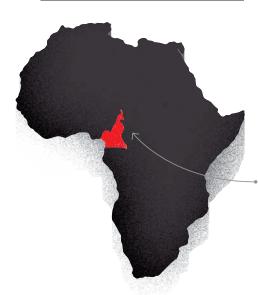


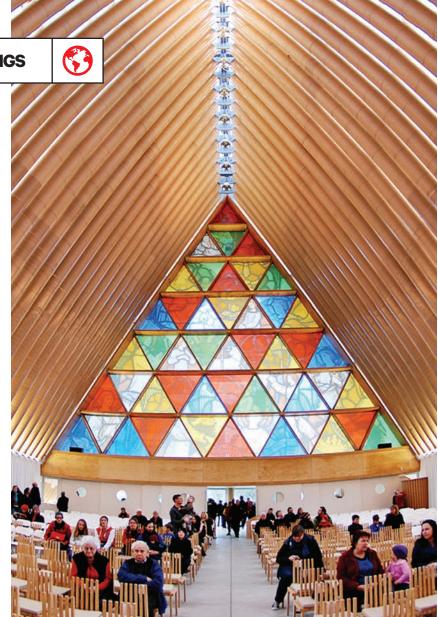
to provoke the IRS, but have gained an unexpected ally. The CAPRO commission, led by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, advised Sen. Charles Grassley (R-lowa) that a 1954 ban on political activism by tax-exempt churches is an "untenable," "disturbing and chilling" regulation of religious speech. Mean-

while, a federal judge allowed atheist activists to sue the IRS for not enforcing the existing ban.

Pro-life organizations spar over pro-gay politician

America's oldest and largest pro-life group has severed ties with an Ohio affiliate for opposing same-sex marriage. Cleveland Right to Life recently added "support for traditional marriage" to its mission statement and public-ly criticized Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio)—who has a strong pro-life record—after he became the first Republican senator to support same-sex marriage. In response, the National Right to Life Committee ousted the Cleveland group, arguing that pro-life organizations succeed because of their single-issue agenda.





CARDBOARD CATHEDRAL

One of New Zealand's most iconic churches, decimated in the 2011 Christchurch earthquake that killed nearly 200 people, has an unusual replacement: the world's first cathedral constructed largely out of cardboard. Meanwhile, Anglican leaders are fighting in court for permission to demolish (instead of rebuild) its famed 132-year-old Gothic predecessor.

CAMEROON

Military closes unruly churches

Only 50 out of more than 500 Pentecostal churches in Cameroon are legal. So claimed the government of the Central African coastal nation after its military shut down dozens of churches in major cities in August. President Paul Biya accused Pentecostal pastors of criminal practices that threaten security, including deaths during healing services. Pastors countered that they were being punished for past criticism of Biya's government.

"179 fake Facebook pages making money on my son's death now shut down."

• Rick Warren, announcing via Twitter how impersonators are diverting financial support from the mental illness fund Warren launched after his son Matthew's April suicide. Dozens more spoof sites remain.

"We respectfully disagree"

So wrote the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, disagreeing with the Tenth Circuit's decision that Hobby Lobby does have free exercise of religion as a for-profit corporation. The ruling, in a separate case, makes it very likely that the legal fight over the HHS contraceptive mandate will reach the U.S. Supreme Court.

.bible

Bible society gets domain for \$185K

"This is the Bible's moment to move from Gutenberg to Google," proclaimed the American Bible Society, which paid \$185,000 to add .bible to the growing list of top-level domain names. Website operators "who have a healthy respect for the Bible" can apply, starting in 2015. Other "Christian" domains pending approval: .church (contested between YouVersion's LifeChurch.tv and Donuts Inc.)..catholic. .cbn, and .christmas.

Sanctuaries sacrificed

In August, churches in Minya canceled Sunday services for the first time in 1,600 years. The reason: Reprisal attacks by Islamists against scores of Christian targets after the military dispersed supporters of ousted president Mohamed Morsi, killing nearly 1,000. Pope Tawadros II said Copts "are considering our church buildings as a sacrifice to be made for our beloved Egypt." The military and UNESCO pledged to rebuild the more than 50 churches affected.

Atheists could be "ministers of the gospel"

A popular tax break for pastors faces a legal challenge that has taken an ironic twist.

> The Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) launched its second attempt to overturn the long-standing clergy housing allowance, an IRS exemption offered to "ministers of the gospel," by compensating its leaders in the same manner as pastors. Then it sued, claiming the pastor tax break was unfair. However, the Justice Department has defended the exemption by arguing it is "conceivable" that atheist leaders would "qualify for status as a minister" if they bothered to apply. Not quite what the FFRF wanted.

MESSIAH:

Baby name banned by Tennessee judge because title "earned by [only] one person...Jeśus Christ.

Rank among fastestgrowing names for American boys in 2012.

Number of boys named Messiah in 2012, placing it between Scott and Jay.

- SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION



"Jesus is merciful, but he's not stupid."

• Cardinal Francis George, defending the withdrawal of Catholic support from an Illinois immigration coalition over its expansion into same-sex marriage advocacy. - ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Non-Christians in the United States and Canada (almost 13.5 million people) who do not "personally know" any Christians.

(This triples to 60% when the survey excludes atheists and agnostics.)

- CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

HEADLINES

Books | United Kingdom

Lionizing Lewis

Patron saint of American evangelicals finally gets his due in his homeland.

hen Rowan Williams sits down to read his favorite books, he sometimes reaches for children's literature.

And the former Archbishop of Canterbury often chooses The Chronicles of Narnia, C. S. Lewis's best-known work. "Narnia is something that people do revisit," said Williams, who published *The Lion's World* in 2012. "Children's books ... are quite powerful tools for grown-ups' imaginations."

Perhaps imagination has been the secret to Lewis's growing popularity in the United Kingdom as the 50th anniversary of his November 22 death approaches. Though American evangelicals were quicker to admire Lewis as a literary hero, more and more UK intellectuals are now embracing him.

"It takes a while in Britain for a great man to be recognized as such," said Michael Ward, a senior research fellow at Oxford University and author of *Planet Narnia*. "But Lewis has been safely dead now for 50 years, and we can afford to recognize him as the major figure he was."

In November, Lewis will be commemorated with a memorial plaque in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner, which honors authors and other cultural figures whose work has shaped English society. A two-day conference on Lewis's works will begin the preceding day.

Alister McGrath, the latest to examine Lewis biographically, believes this anniversary year will solidify Lewis's reputation as an apologist and classicist. At Oxford's recent literary conference, McGrath's sold-out talk on Lewis led to



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Writers honored in Poets'
Corner of Westminster Abbey—
including some of Lewis's
favorites: Jane Austen, John
Milton, Edmund Spenser, and
William Wordsworth.

requests for him to give three more.

"We've minimized Lewis's importance [in the UK], and we have catching up to do [with U.S. evangelicals]," said the author of *C.S. Lewis: A Life.* "Lewis is here to stay; that debate is over. Now there is this sense of, "There is more to learn from Lewis, so let's read him again."

This means reading more than Narnia. Lewis wrote across 13 genres, and his literary criticism is his best work, says Jerry Root, a Lewis scholar at Wheaton College.

Much of it was ill-received due to British faculties being "fairly aggressively secular," said Malcolm Guite, a Lewis scholar and a chaplain at Cambridge University. But he notes that Lewis's actual works of literary

criticism never went out of print. Oxford University Press has three recently published books on the life and works of Lewis. Cambridge University issued its *Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* in 2010.

These are signs that Lewis is becoming firmly established in British culture, said Ward. "Intellectuals are having to reckon with Lewis, even if they happen to find his Christianity unappealing."

But not everyone is so optimistic. Nick Spencer, research director for Christian think tank Theos, is skeptical that secular intellectuals will ever come to respect Lewis fully. Christianity's cultural despisers still pour contempt on Lewis, he said.

"[Lewis] is still certainly seen by some secular writers . . . as 'the great enemy,' said Williams. "[Philip] Pullman's sequence of children's novels is meant as a deliberate counterblast to Lewis. But that's a backhanded tribute to Lewis's stature and influence, to say he's worth fighting."

Despite secular critics, the good news for Lewis is that UK evangelicals have gotten over their embarrassment about him, says Williams.

"Here is, by any standard, someone who is a serious intellectual...who thinks about the society we're in," he said. "It doesn't mean we have to agree with everything that he says. It does mean that we try to take him seriously." Melissa Steffan

Reconciliation

Why Sanford Stayed Calm

George Zimmerman's acquittal created racial havoc nationwide—but not at the trial's epicenter.

hen a jury acquitted George Zimmerman of murdering 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, racially charged protests erupted nationwide. But Sanford, Florida—the scene of the shooting—stayed calm.

Now Sanford pastors are visiting clergy across the United States to explain why.

After Martin's death, the Department of Justice sent veteran mediator Thomas Battles to the commuter suburb of Orlando. In turn, he pulled together local pastors to form Sanford Pastors Connecting (spc).

During the trial, the pastors rotated through the courtroom, four at a time. They agreed to support the jury's verdict, whatever it was, and keep the peace.

A tricky promise to keep, after Zimmerman's acquittal. But solidarity and prayers worked, said spc member Joel Hunter. "We were committed to not just

reacting to a verdict, but to sifting through how we could improve the community."

More than 30 clergy have continued to meet monthly for breakfast at the Sanford Cracker Barrel. That's no small feat, said Jeffrey Krall. The Assemblies of God pastor chairs spc alongside pastor Valarie Houston, whose Allen Chapel AME Church was a center of outcry over Martin's death.

Krall has tried to unite Sanford pastors for 22 years. "It's always been racially divided down here," he said of his city's 55.000 residents.

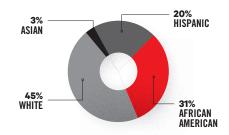
"The issues have not all gone away," said Charles Holt, rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in neighboring Lake Mary. "But what's changed in Sanford is the communication between churches. That's a huge step."

Despite pastors' enthusiasm, some counter that more will be required to forge advances in race relations in Sanford, let alone nationwide.

Parris Baker is not a minister, but was invited to work with spc at its onset. He cut ties as he became convinced that unchurched young people won't be reached through meetings focused on prayer. "While I appreciated those efforts, they were inadequate," he said.

But spc wants to go beyond breakfasts. They plan to launch pulpit swaps, youth worship services, and after-school

SANFORD'S RACIAL DIVIDE



- U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (NUMBERS HAVE BEEN ROUNDED)

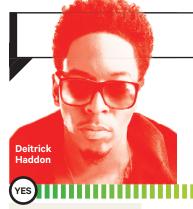
programs so that Sanford youth and law enforcement can mingle.

Meanwhile, they are meeting with pastors in Detroit, Toledo, and Charlotte, North Carolina—among other cities.

"The timing is absolutely right for this," said Derrick Gay, pastor of Sanford's Dominion International Church, who helped organize the tour. "We as the church have been given the ministry of reconciliation."

Gay admits that members disagree over the trial. "We may be divided on what we feel justice should be in this situation, but . . . our feelings were put on the back burner for the sake of this community," he said. "It is essential for us to now move forward."

Angela G. King



Under Discussion

Compiled by Ruth Moon



Q: Is Preachers of L.A. good for the church?

Oxygen's newest reality TV show stars six high-profile pastors "living the God life"—complete with expensive cars and mansions. The National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) warned that the show could prompt an IRS or Senate investigation of church finances.

(NO)

"It shines a spotlight on some of the shameful abuses of those who claim to be evangelical Christians. Instead of fearing an IRS backlash, groups such as the NRB should root out these bad actors. We will invite unwanted government oversight if we fail to police ourselves."

Warren Cole Smith, associate publisher, World

"These guys are so out of bounds from orthodox Christianity, I can't help believing that even nonbelievers will see the wackiness. Programs like this might actually make people realize that normal, evangelical Christians aren't so strange after all."

Phil Cooke, founder, Cooke Pictures

"Pastors must stand committed to not just engaging but reforming culture. Reality TV facilitates an opportunity to shine the light of Christ, but we must ensure that the pathetic does not quench the prophetic."

Samuel Rodriguez, president, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference "Television is a tough medium to proclaim the gospel, because it traffics in the elevation and distortion of personality. There's another, more insidious danger: the temptation, like my own, toward selfrighteous judgment of the shows and their stars."

Tyler Wigg-Stevenson, *author,* Brand Jesus: Christianity in a Consumerist Age

"It epitomizes what is wrong with reality TV— an eccentric slice of life on the fringe rather than the center. We can rejoice if within that menagerie, Christ is preached; but we could rejoice even more if Christ were preached in a very different venue."

Craig Parshall, senior vice president, National Religious Broadcasters



Missions | South Korea

Blessing in Disguise

Travel bans could mature an eager but young movement.

issionaries in South Korea—once the world's second-largest sender of such workers—can resume work in Yemen because their government lifted a travel ban this August. But four other majority-Muslim countries remain off-limits.

South Korea banned citizen travel to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia in 2007, after Taliban operatives kidnapped 23 Korean missionaries in Afghanistan. The captors

executed two before the missionaries were released. Travel to Yemen, Syria, and Libya was banned in 2011 (though the Libyan ban was lifted later that year).

Korean missions leaders have pushed to lift the bans, saying the government should grant greater flexibility to missionaries for their humanitarian work.

South Korea's government has been reluctant. "The duty of the government to protect its citizens is greater than the rights of a few NGOS to go abroad for missionary activities," Chun Woo-seung, second secretary at the Foreign Ministry's Overseas Korean National Protection Division, told *The Korea Herald*.

Korea Crisis Management Service, a nonprofit launched after the 2007 kidnapping, has been editing a lengthy report on the hostage situation which will be released this fall to help churches avoid similar situations in the future, said Kim Jin-dae, its general director.

Dongsu Kim, a Korean professor of Bible and theology at Nyack College in New York, says some churches want the government to support missions work, while others want to work independently. Part



of the challenge: the century-old Korean church has never navigated governmentmissionary relationships before, he said.

"Government learns, and churches learn, and they're on a learning curve," said Kim. "They will behave in a more mature way if the same kind of incident happens in the future."

The 2007 abduction, while tragic,





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South Korea's drop in world ranking for total missionaries sent to other countries. Among top destinations: China, Japan, and Russia.

prompted churches to beef up their crisis management and contingency planning, according to a 2012 report by Steve Sang-Cheol Moon, executive director of the Korea Research Institute for Mission.

The Korean missions movement has grown rapidly since the late 1970s, according to Julie Ma, a research tutor in missiology at the Oxford Center for Mission Studies. Today, 20,000 Korean missionaries are in the field, according to a recent study by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity (csgc).

South Korea also has one of the world's highest ratios of missionaries to church members: 1,014 (vs. 614 in the United States) for every 1 million members.

In South Korea, missionaries (many of

them church planters) are sent out by nearly 60 denominations to 177 countries. The church currently ranks sixth worldwide in number of missionaries sent, falling from the No. 2 spot it occupied in 2006.

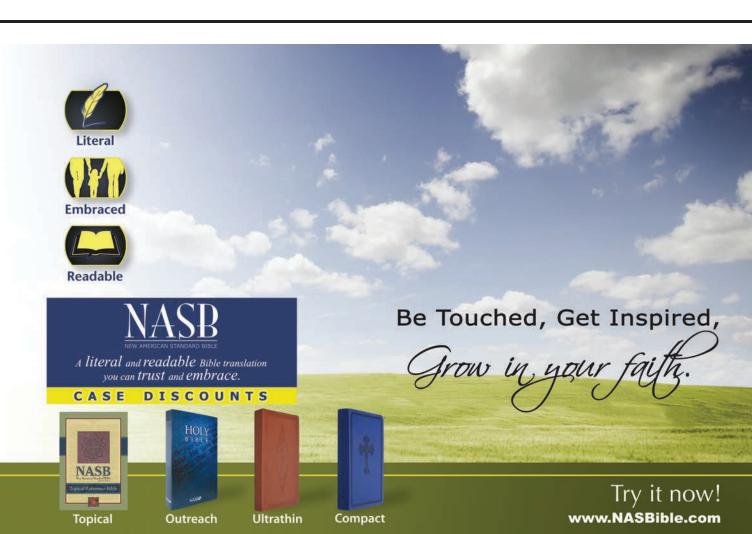
Moon believes this drop is due to churches sending only mature missionaries. This, he adds, corrects the aggressive recruiting of the past.

Donna Downes, professor of global leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary, agrees. "I don't think the change represents a decline in enthusiasm and vision as much as ... an adjustment in pace and perspective so that the movement can mature," she said.

Meanwhile, the current travel bans could help focus Korean missions in areas where missionaries are more accepted and more likely to be successful, Kim said.

"Hindrance or persecution is not necessarily an obstacle, but the opening of a new door to different areas," he said. "The travel bans to those countries are unfortunate. But there are a lot more countries with no travel ban. There are no hindrances. Is it important for Koreans to evangelize all parts of the world?"

Ruth Moon





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I was at another church where the message was grounded in those astounding and miraculous verses that culminate in "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20, ESV). Things were going well until we got to the end, when when the preacher said, "Have you experienced grace?" His tone, and the background music that swelled as he prayed, suggested we were not saved by faith in what Christ accomplished but by a certain type of religious feeling we might have.

Third: I was speaking with a professor at a Christian university, and we were talking about the relationship of grace and good works. At one point he said, "We are saved by grace, yes, but after that, the

It is understandable why we're tempted to shift the message of grace to a form of works. The radical grace outlined in Romans and Galatians seems too good to be true.

of the faith, who one would hope would have a deeper appreciation of grace. And third, they represent what have become the three main alternatives for the simple biblical message of salvation by grace through faith.

It is understandable why we're tempted to shift the message of grace to a form of works. The radical grace outlined in Ro-

doctrine of salvation to believe in. Before we had enjoyed any religious experience. Before we had reformed our lives.

Let's be fair. In fact, salvation is a doctrine that we will at some point believe in as an intellectual proposition. And normally an encounter with almighty God will result in powerful religious experiences. And, yes, there is a measure of truth that life in Christ is a hard and narrow road.

But in the beginning is grace. In the middle is grace. In the end, "all manner of thing shall be well" (Julian of Norwich) because of grace. What I'm hearing time and again, in every corner of the church I visit, is not the soaring message of grace but the dull message of works—that I have to believe a certain theological construct, or have a certain feeling, or perspire in effort *before* I can be assured of God's radical acceptance and my future salvation.

This last month we read another dismal Pew survey about how American churches left, right, and center alike (except the Assemblies of God and a few others) are losing members. The reasons for this exodus are many and complex, but one reason may be that we have forgotten the message that long ago made our hearts grow strangely warm. There was once miraculous talk of the impossible possibility that a way had been made to return to Eden. And the angel standing at the entrance did not demand intellectual or emotional or moral visas to get in. The only passport required was one with a full list of all our sins, each stamped over, blotted out really, with the red ink of grace.



Christian life is mostly about our effort to live a Christlike life."

I pick these three anecdotes for three reasons: First, they are typical of messages I hear in my travels as cr's editor. Second, these were taught by pastors and teachers mans and Galatians seems too good to be true. It's hard to fathom that while we were sinners Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8), or that, before we had done anything, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:19). Before we had created the

MARK GALLI is editor of Christianity Today.

HER.MENEUTICS

Megan Hill, a regular writer for Her.meneutics, lives in Mississippi with her husband and three young sons.



Full Members at Age 1

Are we welcoming children into all of church life?

N SUNDAYS, THE CHILDREN in my church pray with heads bowed, chubby fingers pushed against fluttering eyelids. When the pastor pauses to make a children's application, they square their shoulders and sit taller. And at the service's end, they sing with gusto, "Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." I guess no one told them that young Christians are disillusioned with the church.

The sanctuary door swings both ways, and as many 20-somethings exit Sunday worship, scores of children are toddling in. When we talk about how to increase church participation among the millennial generation, are we looking over the heads of the youngest one?

More than a third of regular churchgoers have kids under 18, according to the General Social Survey. Now is the time when these kids begin forming ideas about what church is and whether it is important to them. Now is when Christian communities should welcome them, not merely into child-focused activities, but into the authentic, multifaceted life of the church.

To do so, we must first look at our own hearts. In American Grace, sociologists Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell propose that "the most important factor predicting religious retention is whether a person's family of origin was religiously homogeneous and observant, or not." If we want the next generation to embrace the faith, parents and extended family have to believe and faithfully practice it themselves.

We have a biblical example of this in Timothy, whose faith "dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother

Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well" (2 Tim. 1:5, Esv). Not much is lost on children, and the first nurture of their souls will come from seeing others demonstrate sincere love for Christ.

They need to see this, not only from parents, but from the entire Christian community: unmarried persons, childless couples, and elderly saints included. In my church, when a child is baptized, the congregation vows to "undertake the responsibility of assisting the parents in the Christian nurture of this child." I know not all churches practice infant baptism, but we can all take the hand of the 4-year-old in the next pew. Each can look into her eyes and say not, "What a pretty dress," but, "What a great day to worship God with you."

Our approach with little ones often amounts to a spiritual bait and switch. We segregate them into child-focused programs and expect they will appreciate Sunday worship when they reach a certain age.

Barna Group president David Kinnaman argues the church ought to change "from simply passing the baton to the next generation to... the entire community of faith, across the entire lifespan, working together to fulfill God's purposes." Even young children can visit the

Children are not lesser members, waiting for a time when they can be really useful.

elderly, give some of their allowance to missions, and occasionally share their bedrooms with a person who needs hospitality. We can tell our children about the widow and her coins or the boy and his fish, teaching them that even a small act is significant to Christ.

If we think of children as merely a long-term investment—if we appreciate them only for their potential, welcoming them as a way to shore up the church roll against lean times ahead—we miss the message of Jesus.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them," commands Jesus, "for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt. 19:14). Children are not lesser members, waiting for a time when they can be really useful. Jesus didn't tell them to come back in 15 years. He drew them to himself, at ages 1 and 4 and 9, and invited them into his kingdom.

One of the best ways to bring our children to Jesus is to welcome them into worship, the place where God promises to meet with his redeemed people. This is not a radical idea. The fact that Paul includes a word directly to children—"obey your parents in everything" (Col. 3:20)—in a letter intended to be read in churches provides a model for us.

The church functions best when it welcomes the little ones. "Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable," writes Paul (1 Cor. 12:22). Kids are whispery and wiggly. They rustle bulletins and get distracted and sing off-key. Yes, they are weak. But God says they are also indispensable. And if we regularly send our children away while the adults worship, we are the ones who miss out.

ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM CRUFT 25



OPEN QUESTION Three Views

How Can Churches Best Support Parents Who Adopt from Overseas?

There are no easy formulas.



Megan Hill Just Be the Church

HE CHURCH doesn't need to do anything. That is to say, the local church most helps adoptive families when it simply pursues its unchanging calling to be what it will be in eternity: a gathering of the redeemed from every language and people, united in worship by a common identity and purpose in Christ.

Sure, churches could set up grants and seminars and support groups. But

ultimately, adoptive families don't need resources that are adoption-focused as much as they need a community that is Christ-focused.

Adoption is scary. Twice now, my husband and I have heard a judge tell us, "Congratulations. He's yours." With a bureaucratic monotone and a literal rubber stamp, we were finally and completely joined to another human being. One who did not come from my womb, or even our country, and who looks nothing like us.

In the ensuing months of panic—Who is this child? Am I really his mother?—I needed my local church to do exactly what

it has always done and will always do.

The church uniquely values children. The rest of the world loves them for their future potential; the church affirms the image-bearers that kids are right now.

In those frightening days following our adoptions, my church—elders, Sunday school teachers, and self-appointed surrogate grandparents—stood around me, reminding me that this kicking, hitting, spitting, screaming child (my child) has a soul that will never die and is precious to our Lord.

My family is transracial and we live in the Deep South. People on the street, in the grocery store, and at the mall frequently question my competency to raise my ethnically different children. But the church encourages me to seek a common identity with my kids in the only place it can be found: Christ.

On a recent Sunday morning, I watched a Korean graduate student talking with an African American grandmother as two blond toddlers cruised between pews. When the local church welcomes people of all backgrounds, it fulfills the Christgiven mandate to make disciples in the nations. The church lives as if our earthly differences are secondary to our new identity in Christ and creates an adoption-friendly culture around this truth.

My husband and I have mentored many couples considering adoption. Invariably, they are most concerned about their ability to become a true family with a child who seems so different. The international adoption process—the mountain of paperwork, the weeks of travel, and the bank-draining payment schedule—eventually ends. But the new family is forever. What gives couples the

confidence to adopt, and adoptive families the strength to continue, is that they have an enduring community around them—a community that is looking unto Jesus and doing its best to simply be the local church.

MEGAN HILL is mother to three children (two of whom were adopted), and a regular contributor to Her.meneutics, *Christianity Today*'s women's blog.

Jedd Medefind Practice Hospitality

VERY ORPHAN'S JOURNEY begins with a tragedy, and usually, it gets worse from there. This is true for the orphans of hiv/AIDS, abandonment, and civil war, as well as for the child entering foster care due to severe neglect or abuse. They have tasted the world at its most broken. If we the church open our lives and hearts to them, we will taste some of that pain as well.

But the orphan—whether literally parentless or simply bereft of the nurture parents should provide—also comes with an invitation. He or she offers the church the chance to grow a culture of hospitality that receives all in the same way we would welcome Christ himself.

Not every Christian is called to adopt or foster or mentor. But every Christian community is called to embody the "pure and faultless religion" that embraces the orphan and the widow in their distress (James 1:27). How do Christian communities do this? By practicing a winsome, sacrificial vision for redemptive hospitality.

Redemptive hospitality is first a matter of the heart. The vulnerable child represents the presence of Christ among us in a special way (Matt. 18:5). Yet often he or she arrives in the distressing disguise of special needs, deep emotional and psychological wounds, and behavioral problems that require uncommon patience. He or she may bring these hurts to Sunday school, youth group, and gatherings with friends.

Complaints from teachers or an annoyed glance from down the pew can wither an adoptive parent's heart. But patience, grace, and words of encouragement to parent and child give new life.

When my wife and I were adopting, several families helped us bear the financial

costs. Our community of faith celebrated and gave gifts. A retired woman did most of our grocery shopping to help carry our happy load of five young children.

Through my work with the Christian Alliance for Orphans, I get to see church communities across the country and beyond living out redemptive hospitality in creative ways. Young adults offer babysitting to give adoptive and foster parents a break. Empty nesters run errands and help with yard work. An orthodontist provides free services to the children in adoptive and foster families. At times, this is as simple as inviting over for barbeque the "extra-large family" or one with special needs that seems to require too much support for typical social gatherings.

All these acts convey something supremely valuable to both parent and child: You are most welcome here. Redemptive hospitality affirms that the responsibility of loving and healing the wounded child is not the task of one family alone, but of the entire church community.

As we do this together, we offer a compelling witness to the world—and to each other—of unparalleled beauty: the redemptive hospitality that declares the true presence of Christ and his kingdom.

JEDD MEDEFIND is president of the Christian Alliance for Orphans. His most recent book is Upended: How Following Jesus Remakes Your Words and World.

Johnny Carr Think Like an Orphan

MAKE A LIVING meeting with pastors to discuss orphan care and adoption. When I first started the work six years ago, many pastors were open to orphan care, but generally more resistant to the idea of adoption. When I first started setting my booth up at church leadership conferences, we had to pull people in to start a conversation.

These days, we can't get the booth set up before attendees begin asking questions and telling stories.

When it comes to supporting families who adopt from overseas, there are two important and practical things any church can do. One is to help financially. Adopting internationally is expensive. The costs typically add up to nearly \$30,000, depending on the country and

agency, requiring a huge investment for any single family.

I see much resistance in local churches to helping families financially. I will never forget overhearing a pastor tell a family, "Our church doesn't help with optional things like adoption." The family was hoping to adopt three siblings from Russia. The pastor was looking at adoption from the viewpoint of the family and not the three children. For them, adoption was not an option—they needed a family.

We must try to see adoption from the vantage of the orphaned child. Local churches won't begin to do so until their leaders do.

The second area where churches can help is in caring for the needs of children once they arrive home. There are wonderful stories of children who have transitioned into their new families and environments without problems. Other families and children struggle, especially as international adoption has evolved over the past 10 years.

These days, most children who are adopted from outside the United States are older or have physical handicaps. In the adoption world, we would consider these "special placement needs" adoptions. Older children process things differently, and adoption can be a traumatic experience for them. The transition can also be tough on families. Likewise, children who are adopted at a young age are entering a culture where most people don't look like them, eat like them, smell like them, or speak their language. So don't be surprised when they don't act like the other 4-year-olds in Sunday school. They might need individual attention and one-on-one care.

Families with "special-needs" adoptive children can feel like a burden to their church. They know it's difficult enough just getting volunteers to staff the preschool, children's, and youth areas. However, if your church has a special-needs ministry, you will be communicating to these families, "You are not a burden—you are a blessing." Just think: your church gets the privilege of caring for formerly orphaned children and families who are living out the gospel of Christ. **CT**

JOHNNY CARR is the coauthor of Orphan
Justice: How to Care for Orphans Beyond
Adopting and the national director of church
partnership at Bethany Christian Services.
Go to Christian Bible Studies.com for "Adoption
and the Local Church," a Bible study based on
this article.

PAST IMPERFECT

David Neff is former editor of ct.



An Old, Old Ethic

Whatever happened to our revulsion at bloodshed?

BORTION BEGAN ATTRACTING evangelicals' attention in the late 1970s. That's when neonatal surgeon C. Everett Koop and apologist Francis Schaeffer hit the road with their film series, Whatever Happened to the Human Race? Abortion on demand, they argued—part of the larger slippage of society's respect for human dignity—could become a new holocaust.

Then, in 1982, InterVarsity Press published New Testament scholar Michael J. Gorman's *Abortion and the Early Church*. It clearly showed, based on our earliest noncanonical documents, that Christians, unlike Roman culture, prohibited abortion and infanticide.

This should have delighted Schaeffer. But when he reviewed Gorman's book for ct, he devoted only 9 lines of copy to affirming its message. He devoted 66 lines to complaining about its epilogue, where Gorman connected the early church's opposition to abortion with its general abhorrence of bloodshed, including military participation and capital punishment. By trying to detach abortion from the rest of early Christians' commitment to the sacredness of life, Schaeffer acted more like an ideologue than a scholar.

Recently other authors have studied early Christians' opposition to bloodshed. And it is no longer possible to deny, as Schaeffer did, that a consistent prolife ethic runs through early Christian writings. Ethicist Ron Sider's *The Early Church on Killing* provides comprehensive source material, while patristics scholar George Kalantzis' *Caesar and the Lamb*, though focused on the church's stance on the military, includes evidence that it opposed abortion.

Christians soon compromised their ethic to suit new social realities, however.

Some were involved in the Roman military as early as A.D. 170. In 378, just 66 years after Constantine showed imperial favor toward Christians, Ambrose of Milan first articulated just-war theory.

In The Sacredness of Human Life, ethicist David Gushee recounts the history of Christian pro-life thinking-and our failure to live up to it. Here's the linchpin of his argument: The sacredness of human life as portrayed in the Bible and the church fathers is not anchored in any particular human quality. Philosophers have tried to locate our human essence in various things, from our ability to reason to our capacity for relationship. But in biblical thinking, humans are sacred only because the Creator-Redeemer God ascribes such worth to them. This theocentric view is vital because infants, those with mental disabilities, and many elderly lack key capacities, yet are still of ultimate worth to God.

How did the church lose its radical commitment to life? One key factor, Gushee writes, was that the apocalyptic framework of Jesus' teaching faded. Jesus promised to come back soon to establish his kingdom. But centuries passed, the Christian population grew, and the kingdom of God became associated with a church endowed with state power and a state blessed by church leaders.

Belief in the sacred worth of all people

It is no longer possible to deny that a consistent pro-life ethic runs through the early Christian writings. does not serve the interests of power. War shifted from a necessary evil to a divine command. "The Christian glories in the death of the pagan," wrote medieval mystic Bernard of Clairvaux, "because Christ is glorified."

Nevertheless, some witnessed against this theological glorification of violence. Francis of Assisi, for example, worked against the barbarity of the Crusades, and Bartolomé de las Casas condemned the cruelties of Spanish colonialism. Gushee treats these men as shining examples of Jesus-like regard for people that European Christians considered less than human.

Tragically, he finds no comparable voice against what he calls "Christianity's original sin"—that is, anti-Semitism. Unlike colonialism and holy war, anti-Semitism was rooted in the earliest tensions between church and synagogue, and persisted well after the Reformation.

Schaeffer worried that Gorman was pushing "some form of [unbiblical] pacifism." Gushee refuses to enter the pacifist versus just-war debate. Instead, he advocates "just peacemaking" initiatives—strenuous efforts toward nonviolent conflict resolution that honor just-war theory's commitment to making war a last resort. If Christians of all stripes put peace-building efforts first, we can help strip war of its religious justifications and cloak human life with the sacredness it warrants.

Sociologist Rodney Stark has argued that early Christianity "brought a new conception of humanity to a world saturated with capricious cruelty and the vicarious love of death." He attributes much of the church's remarkable growth to the fact that it "gave to its converts... nothing less than their humanity." A consistent prolife ethic, by honoring what God honors, makes a powerful witness.

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OF WHAT IS TAKING THE **HEART** OUT OF **PEOPLE**.

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IT'S TEMPTING TO LOCATE MY VALUE IN HOW I PERFORM. TULLIAN'S BOOK COMES AS A RELIEVING BREATH OF FRESH AIR.

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MY GRANDSON HAS A DEEP UNDERSTANDING

OF THE GOSPEL, AND HIS **UNIQUE ABILITY**TO **COMMUNICATE** ITS **TIMELESS TRUTHS** WITH **COMPASSION**AND **INSIGHT** HAVE ALREADY

HAD A PROFOUND

I M P A C T.

— B I L L Y

GRAHAM



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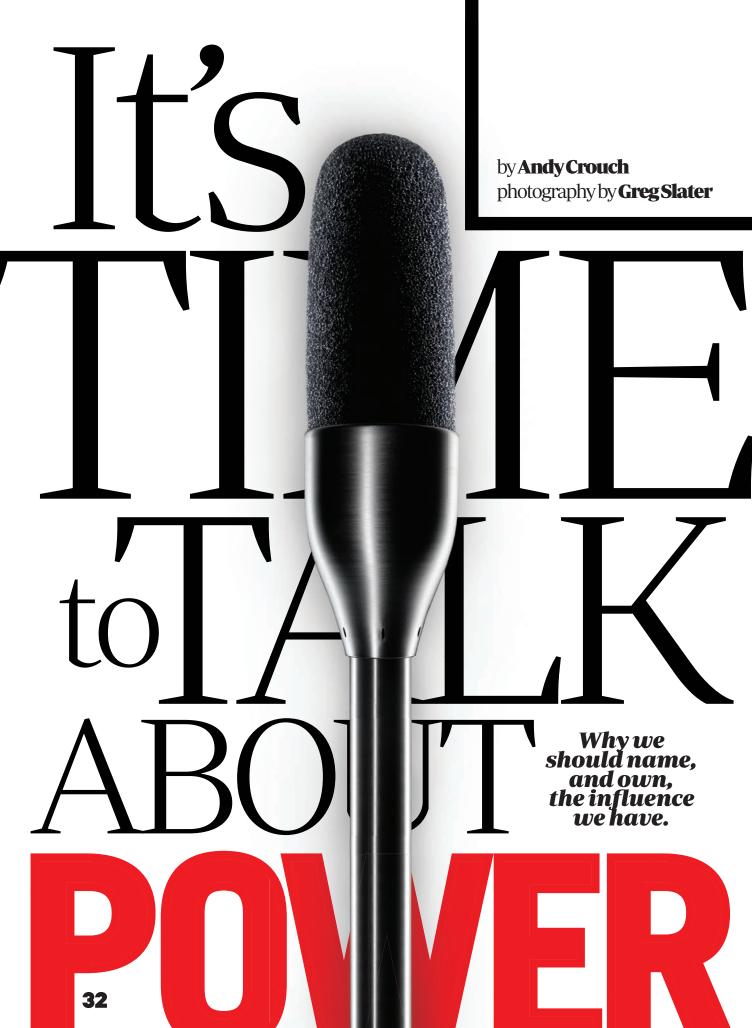
I WILL LEAD A DEEPER CONVERSATION.

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This Sunday, thousands of pastors will prepare for worship. Some of them will wear distinctive clothing—the albs and stoles of liturgical churches echo ancient priestly garments. But many more pastors will wear nothing that marks them out as different from their congregations.

Walk into many of our churches today, especially the ones that are growing fastest and spreading their influence widest, and you could never pick the pastors out of the crowd.

Except, perhaps, for one difference.

Backstage, the pastors have stood quietly while assistants invest them with one single marker of spiritual authority. Looped over their ear is a wireless microphone, mounted with a flexible boom that comes in four different colors to match the range of human skin tones. The microphone itself is 2.5 millimeters in diameter. It is so small you can easily miss it at a distance of more than a few feet. It is, in fact, so small because it is designed to be hidden.

Not every preacher, to be sure, uses this kind of earpiece. In many Pentecostal churches, the microphone itself becomes a valuable prop, held aloft or pulled close to the lips or, at moments of maximum intensity, held a foot away from the mouth to avoid overdriving the speakers. In these settings the microphone is used to deliver sonic force, to tangibly amplify the voice of the preacher. It becomes an instrument in its own right, part of the preacher's panoply of rhetorical power.

But in many churches, the wireless headset sets a very different tone. Its goal is not volume—it is intimacy. An audience of thousands hears not the thundering strains of a dramatically amplified voice; instead, they are able to hear a single person speaking as if that person were talking directly to them, face to face, friend to friend.

A top-quality wireless headset requires both electric power (fresh batteries, hundreds of watts of amplification) and technological power (meticulously designed circuits, expertly equalized sound). And it delivers extraordinary social power—the ability to address thousands with one-to-one familiarity. But once all that power is switched on, a good wireless headset is meant to disappear.

As a frequent speaker, I am grateful for wireless headsets' natural sound, ease, and informality. As a Protestant Christian, I am grateful for the trajectory from the unapproachable altar to the torn veil, the priestly caste to the priesthood of all believers.

But as one who frequently wears what I have come to call the Wireless Headset of Authority, I have begun to worry that it is not just our microphones that are becoming invisible. What is also becoming invisible, especially to those with the most to gain and to lose, is power.

High Power, Low Power

nthropologist Geert Hofstede coined the phrase "power distance" to describe the ways that some cultures prefer the powerful to look and act powerful. In high power distance cultures, power is made visible and tangible, and dramatic differences in power are seen as a natural, indeed crucial, part of a healthy society.

In low power distance cultures, on the other hand, visible hierarchy and signs of power are discouraged. Those with power are expected to treat others as equals, not as subordinates. Charles Tidwell, who has taught Hofstede's power distance concepts, summarizes it nicely: In high power distance societies, "powerful people try to look as powerful as possible." But in low

power distance societies, "powerful people try to look less powerful than they are."

Not long ago I was with a member of Congress, a man who in many ways embodied traditional power—imposingly tall, possessing a confident and deep voice inflected with a proudly retained regional accent. A group of visitors filled every seat at the small table in his office, so the congressman sat in his leather high-backed chair, separated from us by several feet of expansive wooden desk. It was a tableau of power familiar to generations of political and business leaders.

But less than five minutes into the meeting, the congressman became visibly uncomfortable. Suddenly he interrupted. "Wait, this isn't working," he announced. He stood up, lifted his desk chair nearly over his head, and manhandled it over the desk. He set it down on our side of the room, joining the circle at the table. "That's better," he said.

And it was. It was also an astonishing reminder of how the norms of power have shifted. Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill or Dan Rostenkowski, to name two powerful legislators when I was coming of age, would never have rearranged their offices to be closer to strangers. For all their bonhomie, they never would have thought to close the distance in the way that congressman felt necessary.

Our culture's attitudes toward power, or at least toward power's display, have shifted dramatically in a few generations. In the business world, the dress code of corporate leaders slid down a slippery slope from IBM's coat and tie, to Steve Jobs's turtlenecks, to Mark Zuckerberg's hoodie. America, today, is about as low power distance as it has ever been—and so is the American church.

Two Generations of Power

his shift in power distance

in the church is perfectly

illustrated by a father and son.

Dr. Charles Stanley, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta and a pioneer in television distribution through his organization, In Touch Ministries, preaches to this day in a suit and tie, a substantial Bible resting

Atlanta and a pioneer in television distribution through his organization, In Touch Ministries, preaches to this day in a suit and tie, a substantial Bible resting before him on a wooden reading desk. Born in 1932 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, he came of age in a high power distance society and a high power distance church.

His son, Andy, is the founding pastor of North Point Community Church, now a multisite church. In lieu of a sermon from the "campus pastor," most North Point affiliates project his weekly messages in high-definition video. Andy is universally referred to by his first name, has no doctoral degree, and usually wears an open-collared polo. He stands in a pool of light on a darkened stage cluttered with worship band gear, occasionally consulting notes on a café table.

Andy was born in Atlanta in 1958, just as that city began decades of growth that made it the center of a "New South." He came of age in a low power distance culture. And so it is not surprising that he helped create a low power distance church.

But this leads to a crucial insight from Hofstede. The difference between low

power distance and high power distance is not whether some people are more powerful than others. That is true every time human beings gather, whether we like it or not. The difference is whether the powerful want to be *seen* as powerful.

Andy is no less powerful a pastor than his father. Indeed, you could well make the case that even at the height of his influence, Charles did not command as wide recognition, as much access to political and business leaders, and such great influence over an entire generation of church leaders as his son. (Some 12,000 people gather at the Catalyst conference in Atlanta every October, in no small part to hear from Andy and pastors he has mentored and trained.)

But in a low power distance culture, it is especially easy for the powerful to forget their power. A friend of mine was speaking with the senior pastor of a megachurch. "How do you handle the power that comes with your role?" my friend asked. "Oh, power is not a problem at our church," was the reply. "We are all servant leaders here."

It was a sincere answer; this leader's commitment to servant leadership is genuine. His church, like many megachurches, assiduously cultivates an informal, low power distance mindset—the daily wardrobe in its corridors runs a narrow gamut from ripped jeans (on the youth workers) to khakis (on the senior pastor). But I have felt the change in atmosphere when this leader walks into a room. It's as if someone had abruptly turned down the thermostat and shut

off the background music. He is a servant leader. But he is also a person with power.

And this is the problem with low power distance, with the wireless headset and the informality of contemporary offices and dress codes: It can deceive us into thinking that power is not an issue that requires our attention, let alone a matter for discipleship. And the ones most likely to be deceived are the ones with the most power.

The Gift of Power

believe we need a new conversation about power in the church. I say a new conversation because it will be a genuinely new topic for many pastors and laypeople. The three perennial areas of ethics for Christians, Richard Foster reminded us a generation ago, are money, sex, and power. There are volumes of Christian writing on sexuality, and annual stewardship campaigns provide a natural time for sermons and teaching on the stewardship of money. By contrast, there are surprisingly few times when pastors and people directly address power. And this is especially true in churches that participate in the culture of middle- and upper-middleclass America, where we can easily take power for granted.

I also say a new conversation because when we do talk about power, we often talk about it strictly as something negative—something dangerous to be avoided—rather than as a gift to be stewarded. This is surely why a pastor would say, "We don't have power in our church." His preference for the language of "servant leadership" reflects a discomfort with the bare word *power*, with its echoes of force, coercion, and even violence.

But from beginning to end—that is, from Creation to consummation—the Bible is full of references to power. You will often hear pastors say that Jesus "gave up power." And indeed, the climax of salvation is the Cross, where Jesus is stretched out, suffers, and dies, having refused to grasp the power within his reach. But as the early Christians reflected on his life, death, and resurrection, they came to a different conclusion. Precisely because they were witnesses to Jesus' resurrection after a violent death, the New Testament writers could no longer acquiesce to the idolatrous fiction that violence is the

When we in the church do talk about power, we often talk about it strictly as something negative—something dangerous to be avoided—rather than as a gift to be stewarded.

truest form of power. Instead, they had seen with their eyes, and touched with their hands, evidence of a much greater power at work in the world than Rome could muster.

We remember the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet in the Upper Room as a story of humility and servanthood, which is entirely true. We often retell that story as if it involves Jesus "giving up power," as if power were the opposite of humility and servanthood.

But the footwashing, like John's whole gospel, is shot through with signs of power. "Do you know what I have done to you?" Jesus asks. "You call me Teacher and Lord-and you are right, for that is what I am" (John 13:12-13, NRSV). There are no more powerful roles in the disciples' world than rabbi and kyrios-the titles given to Jewish leaders and the lordship ascribed to Caesar himself. Jesus claims them both. He has "come from God and is going to God." He is, John wants us to see, completely at home with power. What he is entirely indifferent to, indeed averse to, are the privilege, status, and perquisites that preoccupy powerful people who have forgotten what power is for.

What would a new conversation about power include?

It would acknowledge, indeed insist, that power is a gift-the gift of a Giver who is the supreme model of power used to bless and serve. Power is not given to benefit those who hold it. It is given for the flourishing of individuals, peoples, and the cosmos itself. Power's right use is especially important for the flourishing of the vulnerable, the members of the human family who most need others to use power well to survive and thrive: the young, the aged, the sick, and the dispossessed. Power is not the opposite of servanthood. Rather, servanthood, ensuring the flourishing of others, is the very purpose of power.

Being this honest, and positive, about power would help us grapple with its dangers. If power is irredeemably negative, none of us would want to admit we have it—which means none of us would be accountable for the power we have. We would conceal our power like a fleshtoned microphone, pretending that power's dangers, and responsibilities, don't apply to us.

But if power is a gift, then we can be accountable for its proper use—to its Giver, and to one another.

Power Play

Casually Curated: Sneakers can be approachable or a marker of status.



Power Play

Round Table: A prop of authority—or an invitation to conversation.



Clothed in Power

n the day when priests were commissioned to serve in the tabernacle, according to the eighth chapter of Leviticus, the people gathered in solemn assembly.

Moses himself washed Aaron and his sons with water in front of the entire community. Upon Aaron he placed a linen tunic, fastened with a sash, a robe, and a richly embroidered ephod with its own sash. On top of these garments Moses placed the breastpiece with its Urim and Thummim. "And he set the turban on his head, and on the turban, in front, he set the golden ornament, the holy crown" (Lev. 8:9, NRSV), Over Aaron's head Moses poured the oil of consecration. Then, after each of the sons was similarly clothed, the smoke of sacrifices rose up before the Lord-a bull, two rams, cakes of breadand the priests were marked with blood on their right ear, right thumb, and right big toe.

This narrative comes to us from the almost inconceivably distant world of a high power distance culture. In every way, Israel's ordination service was meant to mark and set apart those with religious power, the power to represent the people before God and vice versa.

But notice a remarkable feature of this story of high power distance. Before Aaron and his sons were dressed, they were washed. The whole assembly saw them naked, or at least underdressed. Their power, soon to be so directly and richly displayed, came only after their vulnerability and their cleansing. The priests—the ones set apart to be closest to God-were the ones who first came closest to the original vulnerability of human beings before one another and before God. They, like the great High Priest who fulfilled their commission in his life, suffering, and resurrection, took off their outer robes in the presence of the people.

One prescription for power's right use in high power distance communities is vulnerability and accountability. If your church is one where the pastor dwells in unapproachable, sanctified splendor, it becomes all the more crucial that known elders and friends hold your pastor accountable. The Catholic Church, the largest high power distance Christian communion, has been gravely damaged in our time by the unwillingness of its elites

to accept internal and external accountability for the abuses of power that were concealed under priestly robes.

But the converse is also true. Low power distance cultures urgently need clarity on power, a willingness to name its reality. Indeed, Andy Stanley is one of the few megachurch pastors I know who has forthrightly preached about power-his own and others'. He preached a sermon on John 13 that began with the question, "What do you do when you are the most powerful person in the room?" Pastors like Andy are not likely to give up their café tables for imposing wooden pulpits, but they can open up a conversation about power by simply acknowledging what everyone already knows is true. And I have met enough men and women who have worked under Andy's leadership to believe that he largely uses his power in ways that lead to others' thriving and flourishing, rather than simply to bolster his notoriety.

Naming and owning power is the first step toward being accountable for power. This is why, paradoxically, high power distance organizations can sometimes be the least biased in how they distribute power. The most racially integrated large-scale institution in the United States today is probably the American military. Colin Powell became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before Clarence Thomas ascended to the Supreme Court or Barack Obama was elected President. Almost by definition, the military is a high power distance culture. But that very clarity about power meant that when the institution chose the path toward racial equality, it knew how to assess whether it was making progress.

The least racially integrated institutions in the United States, meanwhile, are probably country clubs, even though few still have racially exclusionary policies. Country clubs, with their carefully casual golf-course dress codes, are quite low power distance. They are so low power distance, indeed, that it is very hard to say how one acquires power in them, or enters them. Those of us who grew up outside their enclaves are likely to have not the slightest idea of how to become a member. And in turn, this is why even after racial exclusion is no longer policy, it continues to be reality—the very informality of country clubs makes it impossible for them to change long-standing dynamics of power. Power is not healthier when it is invisible it is just harder to make accountable and fruitful.

All our uses of power will either reflect or distort the image of the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Washed and Waiting

ne pattern seems to recur through the pages of Scripture, just as it does in our daily lives: the pattern of undressing and dressing, washing and clothing. It is a pattern of vulnerability and power, and the two go together. We see it in the washing and vesting of Aaron and his sons. We see it in the Upper Room, when Jesus takes off his outer robe to serve, then puts it back on as he sits down to give a new commandment. We hear an echo of it in his remonstration to Peter: "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me" (John 13:8). We see it the next day, when Jesus is stripped of his ordinary clothing and clothed, mockingly but accurately, in the robes and crown of a king. It reaches its climax when Jesus gives up his life, then receives it back againembracing our uttermost vulnerability, then being raised to the ultimate power.

The pattern continues when the first disciples, once laid low by the death of their Rabbi and Lord, are commanded by him to "stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Clothed with power—invested, like Aaron's sons, with signs of a power beyond their own. Paul writes of Christians' resurrection hope: "While we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor. 5:4, NRSV).

Paul's imagery of nakedness and clothing would have made visceral sense to early Christians, some of whom were baptized naked—naked as the day they were born, and as the day of their death, since baptism was both a death and a birth. Upon emerging from the water, they were vested with a white robe. The

Resurrection will not return us to the Garden's nakedness. Instead, it will usher us into the fuller life of the City's martyrs, clothed according to Revelation in robes of white and vested with the symbols of reign and power.

Indeed, the church began to believe that more power was available to God's redeemed people than they had ever dreamed. "Do you not know," Paul asks the Corinthians, using a formula that strongly suggests they had heard these ideas many times before, "that we will judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:3). Elsewhere, again using a phrase that marks a familiar tradition, Paul writes: "The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:11–12, NRSV).

Like clothing, our signs and symbols of power, whether dramatic or subtle, point to a real destiny. We take up microphones because we are meant to speak with more than merely mortal voices. The wireless headset, with its combination of power and intimacy, is at its best a foretaste of the real power we will know in the City ruled by the Lamb.

All our uses of power, ultimately, will either reflect or distort the image of the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We are meant to imitate the one who became naked so that we might be clothed. He rose from the utter dependence of death with an imperishable body, "more fully clothed"—so that we, too, clothed in his merciful robe, might be fully knowing and fully known in love's embrace. There we will find more vulnerability, and more power, than we ever feared or dreamed.

ANDY CROUCH is the executive editor of ct. His book *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* (InterVarsity) is being published this month.





SARAH YOUNG STILL HEARS JESUS ALLING

Not since My Utmost for His Highest has a daily devotional enraptured the English-speaking world, from cynical intellectuals to sweet grandmas, across the theological spectrum. How Young might change how we think about prayer.

BY MELISSA STEFFAN
ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID BRINLEY

JESUS CALLING DIDN'T SEEM DESTINED TO SELL MILLIONS. AND THEN, QUITE UNEXPECTEDLY, IT DID.

During the first three years after its 2004 publication, *Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence* sold a total of only 59,000 copies, a modest success for a daily devotional from a then-unknown author. But then book sales skyrocketed: 220,000 copies in 2008 alone.

Sales of the book have nearly doubled in each successive year, says Laura Minchew, senior vice president of specialty publishing at Thomas Nelson. As of this summer, Jesus Calling had sold 9 million copies in 26 languages, and Publishers Weekly reported that it remained the No. 5 bestseller of the first half of 2013—for all books, not just Christian ones: It outsold Fifty Shades of Grey.

But even as the book continues to top bestseller lists (and prompts spinoffs, including a devotional Bible, a storybook, and women's, teen's, and children's editions), its author, Sarah Young, remains virtually unknown. Most people seem unaware of who Young is, even if they have read *Jesus Calling*.

Yet not everyone is so enthusiastic that Jesus Calling is reinvigorating interest in the theology behind Young's writings—and, by extension, in Young herself. Young bases her works on listening prayer, a theological practice in which a person aims to hear

messages directly from God. Critical readers want to know: Does Young really think Jesus is speaking directly to her? Is he?

Woman of Listening Prayer

IN A TIME when the size of one's Christian book contract is directly proportional to one's "platform," Young is a marked counterexample. Unlike almost every well-known Christian author, Young refrains from promotional book tours, blogs, and speaking circuits.

But also unlike many of today's bestselling writers, Young suffers from debilitating health conditions. She says the ongoing issues, which never have been properly diagnosed, prevent her from spending time in the spotlight.

In some senses, that's just the way she likes it. Away from the celebrity status that a best-selling book could afford, Minchew says, Young spends her time doing what she loves: praying and listening.

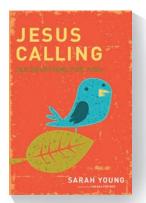
After all these years, she still hears Jesus calling.

However, Jesus is one of the few calling Young; she is not available for interviews, whether in person or over the phone.

After offering ct an exclusive phone interview, Young eventually declined to participate due to additional health setbacks. (She later agreed to answer some of ct's questions for this story via e-mail through Minchew.)

The only real interview Young has given since the release of *Jesus Calling* is a Thomas Nelson-approved Q&A with Minchew herself, who has known Young since 2008. That's when Minchew took over as publisher of Thomas Nelson's gift books division and just before sales skyrocketed. Over that time, Minchew says, she and Young have become "very dear friends," Skyping

From the August 2013 Evangelical Christian Publishers Association bestseller list:



- 1. JESUS CALLING
- 3. **JESUS CALLING** (Large-print deluxe edition)
- 8. **JESUS CALLING** (Deluxe edition)
- 9. **JESUS CALLING** (Women's edition)
- 12. JESUS TODAY

often and e-mailing almost every day. (Such a relationship with one's publisher is one more Young rarity.)

"She is a woman of prayer," Minchew says, "a woman who loves the Lord."

That love manifests itself in Young's practice of journaling, through which she has collected—and later published—messages from God for decades.

Young became a Christian as an adult after studying at Francis Schaeffer's L'Abri in Switzerland, where she says she first experienced the presence of "Sweet Jesus." At that point, she already had earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Wellesley College and a master's degree at Tufts University. Following her conversion, she earned a degree from St. Louis's Covenant Theological Seminary, where she met her husband, Steve.

Together they worked as Presbyterian Church in America missionaries in Japan for eight years, during which Young gave birth to two children. In 1991, after Young completed a counseling degree from Georgia State University (and shortly after she began journaling), the Youngs moved to Australia to work with Japanese immigrants.

Margaret Thatcher, whose husband ministered with Young's husband at Henderson Memorial Presbyterian Church in Perth, describes Young as gentle, interesting, and generous. The two women attended ministers' wives breakfasts and worship services together, but Thatcher says Young stayed in the background.

"Whenever I saw her, [Young] seemed to be encouraging others rather than focusing on herself," she says. "One always had the feeling she was praying for the church always, even if she was physically isolated from it due to illness."

To any healthy person, Young's life may indeed seem isolating. In 2010, Young wrote in a support letter that she sometimes felt as though her skin had "been stuck with a needle or like someone has set fire to it. The pain is so bad I get dizzy."

She battled two co-infections of Lyme disease (including a seven-year misdiagnosis of chronic fatigue syndrome) and mild to severe vertigo throughout her entire service in Perth. As a result, Young says via e-mail, she spent much of her time "living in one room in our home in Perth for about 20 hours a day."

Not anymore. This spring, the Youngs moved from Perth back to Nashville—Young's hometown—partially to seek medical treatment. Now that she has returned permanently to the States, Young told cr in a separate, personal e-mail, she is looking forward to spending more time with her two grand-children, Elie and John, who live in North Carolina.

But even though she plans to stay busy as a doting grandmother and praying author—she currently is writing another yearlong devotional in the same format as *Jesus Calling*—the health setbacks continue.

However, Young also has written that her illness may be part of a spiritual struggle against her family's missionary work and her writing. Young wrote that she struggles to overcome the "trenches of adversity." This was especially true while writing *Jesus Today*, the 2012 follow-up to *Jesus Calling*. She credits that book to the fact that she faced the hopelessness of a serious illness.

That hopelessness is common to many Americans, Young says in the introduction to *Jesus Today*. And it's one reason many readers say they feel more connected to Jesus after reading her books: They help people feel Jesus "right where we are."

Minchew says that's why she thinks her friend's words do come from Jesus.

"I don't know how so many people can read the same page with such different needs and feel like it is speaking to them unless it is them being open to the Lord speaking," she says.

A Promise to Speak?

CHRISTIANS THROUGHOUT the centuries have accepted the idea that God speaks to them, but the specific discipline of listening prayer hasn't been an evangelical strong suit. If book sales are any indication, though, *Jesus Calling* has reignited a fire for the practice—as well as debate over the dangers of it.

Christians always have felt that listening and meditation are important spiritual disciplines, says Richard Foster, founder of Renovaré and author of *Celebration of Discipline*. As a result, they have no reason to assume that God does not respond when they engage him in interactive conversation; that's what real prayer is.

"Listening prayer is the meditative side of that ongoing conversation," Foster says. "We speak with God about our needs, and [then] we listen."

Young told ct in the e-mail through Minchew that her method of listening involves meditating on Scripture and spending quiet time in prayer—"listening and then writing what I feel he is placing on my heart.

"Of course, we don't have audible conversation," she says. "It's a quiet and personal time of praying, Bible reading, and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

But if it's that simple, why is Young's take on listening prayer in *Jesus Calling*, especially the book's claim to contain the actual words of Jesus, ruffling feathers among theologians and scholars?

A man prayed, and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end, he realized that prayer is listening. -søren kierkegaard

Because it's hardly that simple.

Ben Witherington, professor of New Testament for doctoral studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, says Young's writings aren't prayer at all. The Bible defines prayer as a humangenerated activity toward God, he says. If humans do receive a genuine, new word of revelation from God, that's a specific spiritual gift—and not one usually associated with theologically conservative, Reformed Presbyterians. But it isn't the same as prayer.

It could be that Young is the recipient of this particular gift, but the reassuring words of *Jesus Calling* don't seem that revelatory. Young's writings are "nothing that [she] couldn't have gotten from just reading the New Testament," he says.

Michael Horton, J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics at Westminster Seminary California, agrees. He says Young's emphasis on each reader's personal, private relationship with Christ is well intentioned, but the practice could be dangerous because God has not promised to speak to Christians individually. As a result, Horton says, Christians should be concerned about the book on two different levels, in terms of both the method Young uses and the content of her book.

Young exhorts readers, in the "voice" of God, to "focus your thoughts on Me" and to "think about who I AM in all My Power and Glory; ponder also the depth and breadth of My Love for you."

"Come to Me with a teachable spirit, eager to be changed. A close walk with Me is a life of continual newness," Young writes in *Jesus Calling*. "As you focus your thoughts on Me, be aware that I am fully attentive to you."

In another passage, Young writes that Christians who find themselves "in the thick of battle [should] call upon My Name: 'Jesus, help me!' At that instant, the battle becomes Mine; your role is simply to trust Me as I fight for you."

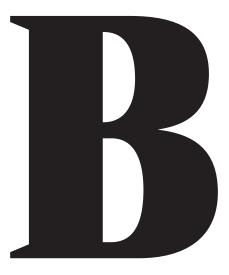
"That's very different from the Psalms, where the psalmist reminds us of God's mighty deeds," Horton says. "[In Jesus Calling] there's not much proclamation of God's mighty works as the basis for our drawing close to God."

Moreover, the constant calls for more and greater trust force Christians to focus on themselves, rather than focus on Jesus by means of the Word—much the way a modern, Western therapist would instruct,

says David Crump, professor of religion at Calvin College. That's not surprising, given Young's own background in counseling, he says. And it wouldn't be as much of an issue if Young simply were producing positive-thinking, self-help devotionals.

"But she puts her thoughts into the first person and then presents that 'person' as the resurrected Lord. Frankly, I find this to be outrageous," Crump says. "I'm sure she is a very devout, pious woman, but I'm tempted to call this blasphemy."

Listening for God Knows What



BLASPHEMY OR NOT, Jesus Calling represents well-intentioned piety that has a long history in evangelicalism. These pietistic movements, which emphasize the emotional and personal aspects of faith, downplay sacraments such as Communion and baptism. The latter are the ordinary means of grace by and in which Jesus has promised to be present through the Holy Spirit, Horton says.

"People are going to discover the presence of Jesus by hearing more of his Word proclaimed and by regular attendance upon public means of grace," he says. "Yet the tendency [of Protestantism] has been to reduce preaching and the sacraments to object lessons."

That reduction is a distinctly American religious quality, says James Danaher, professor of philosophy at Nyack College in New York. And it has left millions of Protestant Christians saying, "I want more."

Young makes it clear that hearing from Jesus is something "more," blurring the distinction between God speaking through Scripture

and Christians speaking to God in prayer. When she first began listening prayer, she was interested in two-way communication.

"I knew that God communicated with me through the Bible," she writes, "but I yearned for more."

According to Paul Miller, executive director of seeJesus and author of *A Praying Life: Connecting With God in a Distracting World*, the word *more* implies that God was not enough for Young, even though she meditates on Scripture and relies on the promptings of the Spirit in the midst of her struggles with illness.

"Sarah has suffered a lot, and when you suffer over a long period of time, the veil between heaven and earth thins," Miller says. "You sense God, you feel him, you experience him, and there's this awareness of God that goes so deep into the soul."

Young says she has come to rely on personal messages from God in her relationship with him. "The more difficult my life circumstances, the more I need these encouraging directives from my Creator," she writes in *Jesus Calling*'s introduction.

Within the same few pages, though, she emphasizes that she "continually [depends] on the Holy Spirit's help" to ensure that the messages she hears are consistent with the Bible, "the only inerrant Word of God."

Similarly, in the introduction to *Jesus Today*, Young writes that she listens selectively and rejects anything unbiblical. "I believe the Bible is the infallible Word of God, and I strive to present to my readers only what is consistent with that unchanging standard."

Young told cr that her books "are designed to help people connect not only with Jesus, the living Word, but also with the Bible, the written Word." That means Jesus Calling is intended only as devotions that point readers to the Bible.

But Horton reads it differently. He says Young seems to claim that she needed "more" than Scripture to have a close walk with God—and encourages others to do so as well. "[It's as if Young is saying,] 'I wanted something more, so here is a collection of the more I received from Jesus,'" Horton says.

But Foster says listening prayer isn't extra; it's just a different discipline that has fallen out of popularity. Listening prayer was a mainstay of Christian thinking about prayer for centuries, but the rise of rationalism—and secularism—in

"IBEGAN TO WONDER IF I, TOO, COULD RECEIVE MESSAGES DURING MY TIMES OF COMMUNING WITH GOD. INCREASINGLY, I WANTED TO HEAR WHAT GOD HAD TO SAY TO ME PERSONALLY ON A GIVEN DAY."

-SARAH YOUNG

society cut off the practice, he says.

Nyack's Danaher, author of Contemplative Prayer: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century, says Christian mystics throughout the centuries have experienced the "undeniable and ineffable presence of God." What's new in evangelicalism is the desire to tie down that experience with words, he says. "There should always be a skepticism: 'These are the words I'm using, but the experience was different than this."

Modern forms of listening prayer first appeared in a book titled *God Calling* in the early 20th century. In *God Calling*, a daily devotional that is remarkably similar to *Jesus Calling*, two anonymous listeners recorded and published the words they say God spoke to them. The so-called "listeners" never revealed their identities.

The book's editor, A. J. Russell (who often is misidentified as the author), wrote that he was "confident that [God] opened their eyes to many things which they and this generation greatly need to know."

However, Russell qualified his

endorsement: "I do not believe in the verbal inspiration of this or any book, but I do believe that these two women have been led and that much of what is written is very clear leading indeed."

Young was inspired to start her listening journal—entries in which eventually became part of Jesus Calling—the year after she read God Calling. "I began to wonder if I, too, could receive messages during my times of communing with God," she writes in Jesus Calling. "Increasingly, I wanted to hear what God had to say to me personally on a given day."

Mary Jean Young (no relation) is a Chicago-area Anglican and teacher who has practiced listening prayer for eight years. She is an avid reader of both *God Calling* and *Jesus Calling*. She says the books appeal to her because she recognizes the voice speaking through the words: The voice belongs to Jesus.

It's no matter that the books are so similar. If the words truly do come from God, one would expect his voice to sound the same, even when speaking across generations or cultures, Mary Jean says.

Michael Farley, director of worship at St. Louis's Central Presbyterian Church and adjunct professor of practical theology at Covenant Theological Seminary (where Young studied), thinks that Sarah Young's use of first person is just a rhetorical device.

"It seems that what she's doing is illumination, [giving] insight into the meaning of Scripture and its application to you," Farley says. "She's unfolding Scripture's meaning by the way that she's rephrasing and explaining and elaborating on the existing content."

A paraphrase is a perfectly valid form of scriptural interpretation, he says. More important, it's one that fits well with Young's Reformed theology.

Similarly, Minchew says Young's listening is no different from a preacher who prays over a passage of Scripture and then preaches on what he believes God is saying.

"Her writing is based on what she has read in Scripture and through prayer," Minchew says. "If you really get into Scripture and let it speak to you and come with a willing spirit, the Spirit will speak to your heart."

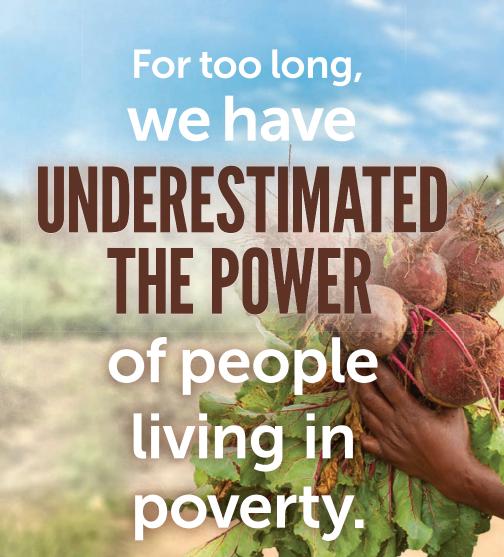
So, if all Christians agree that it is normative for God to speak, the disagreement is merely over method, says Seth Barnes, founder of Adventures in Missions and an enthusiastic supporter of listening prayer. The Bible promises that God speaks through the closed canon of Scripture. But that doesn't confine God to speaking only through the written Word.

"God is going to speak however he chooses," Barnes says. "At the same time, we know God is personal and is very clear in Scripture that 'my sheep hear my voice."

Foster and Barnes both say that listening prayer is more than listening through strained silence. Rather, the practice is just a heightened awareness of how God is speaking at any time.

"If we really believe, as the early Christians did, that Jesus is the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18:15 [The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him], the task is to be silent and listen to the Lord," Foster says. "There's nothing mysterious about it."

MELISSA STEFFAN was editorial resident for *Christianity Today* while reporting this story. She lives in Washington, D.C.



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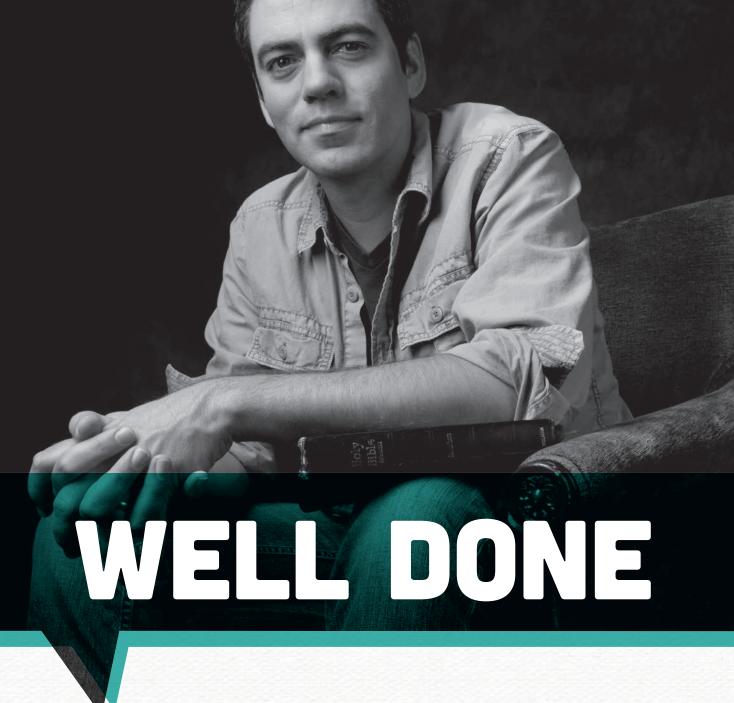
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by Andrew J. Wilson

HOW MILTON, PALEY, AND DARWIN HELP US ANSWER THE QUESTION.

I've only been called by *The Times UK* once. It was late summer 2010, and they had Hawking: God Did Not Create Universe splashed across their front page. Stephen Hawking, the Cambridge physicist, had just written a book arguing that the cosmos had no designer, and the editors wanted a Christian response.

I had written a short book responding to Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion*, but that was it. So when their religion correspondent rang me up out of the blue, and asked for some apologetics for tomorrow's front page, I wasn't as prepared as I might have been. I don't even remember what I said.

In the end, the paper got a last-minute comment from the Archbishop of Canterbury. (I didn't take it personally.) But reading Hawking's comments, and trying to improvise a decent response to them, reminded me how common it is to think that science and belief are at war. For Hawking, the only reason to believe in a creator is to explain the existence of the universe; when you find an explanation, the need for a creator disappears. For Dawkins, Darwinian evolution makes it "almost certain" that there is no God. At the same time, I know lots of Christians who argue the opposite: Since the Bible is true, you shouldn't believe in evolution, or the Big Bang, or whatever. From what I can tell, the battle lines are just as clear in America as they are here in Britain.

DINING WITH THE GREATS

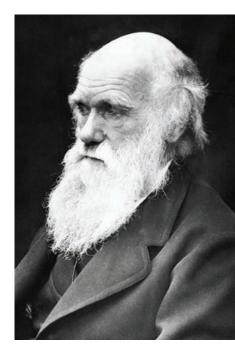
HE KEY ISSUES in the ongoing debate about Christianity, evolution, and human origins can be summed up by three academics who used to watch me have dinner.

I attended Christ's College Cambridge. There, we would eat in a dark, oak-paneled dining room with distinguished alumni peering down at us out of their oil paintings. Three of them in particular—John Milton, William Paley, and Charles Darwin—changed the way we think about the Book of Genesis. They continue to represent three major ways of reading it.

John Milton is most famous for *Paradise Lost*. Composed in the mid–17th century, it is arguably the greatest poem written in English. It describes the beauty of Eden, the deceit of Adam and Eve, and the tragedy of the Fall. In the painting, Milton looked gray and slightly effeminate, but his poetry is bombastic. His account of the invasion of Earth by sin and Satan is dramatic, poetic, and highly theological. In Milton, Genesis is the central explanation for the existence of evil and death in the world.

William Paley, by contrast, was an 18th-century philosopher portrayed as a podgy, red-faced man donning a big black beret. Today he is best known for the watch-maker analogy for the existence of God. Nobody, Paley argued, would look at a watch and conclude it had not been designed. Similarly, it doesn't make sense to look at the world, in all its intricate detail, and conclude that nobody designed it; there must be a divine watchmaker. Genesis, then, is the story of how God designed and created all things. How else could the world have come about?

Enter Charles Darwin, whose oil painting is frightening: dark, stern, and disapproving, his face lined from years of staring at small creatures in boxes, with scowling eyebrows and an enormous Victorian beard. His scientific contribution, however, was enormous. Today his theory of evolution by natural selection is almost



CHARLES DARWIN

universally accepted in the academy, and has been broadly confirmed by studies in several fields. But for many, it clashes directly with the traditional reading of Genesis. Specifically, it seems to clash directly with the way that both Milton and Paley read Genesis, and how many Christians read Scripture today.

"If these walls could talk," we used to say. Imagine being able to get these great figures out of their oil paintings to have their own dinner conversation. Imagine the three discussing politics, or empire, or Genesis. Milton would be talking about the fall of a real human couple into sin and death. Paley would argue from the complexity of creation to design. And Darwin would respond that death has always been here (against Milton), and maybe that his theory displaced the need for design (against Paley). It's a shame the paintings can't come to life and chat, Harry Potter style.

Yet in many ways, a version of that conversation is taking place today in the West. There are those who side with Paley against Darwin: Life is designed, and therefore did not evolve. There are those who side with Darwin against Paley: Life evolved, and therefore is not designed. There are some for whom Darwin rules out Milton: Animals and humans have always died, so there was no Eden, no Adam, no Eve, and no fall. Then there are those for whom Milton rules out Darwin: Yes,

there was, so no, they haven't. Still others agree with Darwin and Paley, but not Milton: Evolution is designed by God, but a literal fall never happened. Some even agree with Darwin and Milton but not Paley: Evolution happened, and a literal fall happened, but the design argument is just a God-of-the-gaps thing, and we shouldn't use it. And many proponents of each view

JOHN MILTON

get rather angry with people who hold a different one. It's all very confusing.

To make a complicated situation worse, there is a tiny minority of odd-balls who think all three of them were essentially right, and who believe in the fall of Adam and Eve, the argument from design, and Darwinian evolution. Odd-balls like me.

WHAT IF ALL THREE ARE RIGHT?

OU DON'T KNOW me, of course. Apart from the fact that I went to Christ's College Cambridge, I could be anybody. So let me just say this, before going any further: I'm English, I'm a pastor and a writer, and I

have two convictions that, in this context, are relevant.

First, I believe that the Scriptures, when interpreted properly with respect to their context, purpose, and genre, do not contain any mistakes. This is worth saying because, in my experience, people who hear that you believe in evolution often assume that it isn't true. Second, I believe

in the general integrity and credibility of peer-reviewed journals, and the importance and value of experimental science. This is worth saying because, in my experience, people who hear you believe in a historical Adam and a historical fall often assume that this isn't true. The result, in my case. is that I have come to believe that Milton, Paley, and Darwin were all fundamentally right in what they argued. In my view, the argument from design, the historicity of the Fall, and the theory of evolution fit together.

The vast majority of people I know think these three are impossible to reconcile. Usually, that's because of death (Milton vs. Darwin), design (Darwin vs. Paley), or descent (Darwin vs. Milton), or perhaps a combination of the three. But I disagree. If we did somehow manage to get the boys from Christ's College out of their oil paintings, I believe they could resolve most of their differences.

Start with death. Milton, in the first few lines of *Paradise Lost*, describes his epic poem as the story

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste Brought death into the world, and all our woe, With loss of Eden, till one greater Man Restore us

In other words, for Milton, death came into the world through human disobedience. Darwin, on the other hand, saw death as having been in the world for millions of years before human beings even existed. So how on earth could they both be right?

Well, it depends what you mean by

death. Darwin was talking about the physical death of plants and animals, and insisting that this had happened for a very long time. (From Genesis, by the way, we know that plants were eaten before the Fall, and there's no indication that animals were originally immortal either.) Milton, following Paul in Romans 5, was talking about the both physical and spiritual death of human beings, which, if you think about it, is also the focus of what God says in the story (Gen. 2:17; 3:19). So although it might look like Darwin and Milton were saying contradictory things about death, they weren't. They just thought about death differently.

The disagreement over design is even more heated these days. On one side, you have those who say that because complex life evolved, it wasn't designed. This is where Dawkins is coming from, along with the people who designed the Darwin fish. On the other side, there are those who argue that because complex life was designed, it cannot have evolved. They would argue that evolution presupposes a random process, and therefore is incompatible with design or a designer. The former quote Darwin, and the latter quote Paley. Again, it looks like the apologist and the biologist could not agree.

But things are not quite as they seem. One, physical causes do not rule out personal ones. That's why the discovery of hormones and chemicals in the brain has not led scientists to write books called The Love Delusion or Love Is Not Great or Unweaving the Spell: Love as a Natural Phenomenon. For another, God frequently designs things using processes that look very random, sometimes over a very long period of time. The Grand Canyon was formed by erosion that might look very random, but it was designed by God. The Rockies were formed by apparently arbitrary movements of the earth's crust, but they were still designed by God. So the use of long-term, apparently random processes does not rule out divine design.

Furthermore, if God is sovereign, then nothing in his world is random, even if it looks that way to us. (Just ask Ahab, who was killed by an arrow fired "at random," just after the prophet Micah had predicted it would happen, in 1 Kings 22:13–40.) And most important, Paley's argument still holds true for the origin of the cosmos, the fine-tuning of the universe's physical laws, and the beginning of information, life, and consciousness. Even if Darwin's

theory was proved right in every detail, it wouldn't make evolution random, and it certainly wouldn't rule out design.

The third issue is the stickiest of all. For Milton. Adam and Eve were real people, created in the image of God: Adam from the dust of the earth, and Eve from the rib of the man. For Darwin, though, human beings share ancestry with other creatures. The apostle Paul, and Milton after him, clearly believed Adam was a historical figure. But modern genetics has added huge scientific weight to Darwin's view, through the study of pseudogenes, "jumping genes," retroviral insertions, and so on. So today, most of us either support Milton and reject Darwin: "We're all descended from Adam, and we're not descended from other creatures," or we support Darwin and disagree with Milton: "We are descended from other creatures, so Adam wasn't a historical person." The first leads to some big problems with science, and the second leads to some big problems with Scripture.

But here are a couple of observations that might help. There is no evidence to say that a pair of Neolithic farmers, formed directly by the hand of God in Mesopotamia, did not exist. There's no evidence to suggest that they weren't the first people, made in his image, with the soullife of God breathed into them. There's no evidence to contradict the claim that they knew God, and were tempted, and sinned, and were exiled, and had children, and died. Not only that, but Genesis doesn't actually say that all human beings are biologically descended from Adam and Eve alone. The people Cain was scared of, and the woman he married, don't seem to be related to him. And if they weren't, then we don't actually know if they were created out of the dust of the earth, created out of creatures that already existed, or created in some other way.



I think, if we did somehow manage to get the boys from Christ's College out of their oil paintings and talking to each other, they could resolve most of their differences.

So, I don't think Milton and Darwin are impossible to reconcile. In fact, I can't think of anything Milton (or Genesis) says about Adam and Eve that is contradicted by Darwinian evolution, as strange as that sounds.

KINDRED SPIRITS TODAY

HERE MAY BE some for whom all of this sounds rather obvious. John Stott, Derek Kidner, J. I. Packer, Tim Keller, and Francis Collins have all more or less taken the same approach. But there may be others for whom it sounds completely bonkers. For some, it will be too liberal (in accepting science too uncritically), and for others, it will be too conservative (in accepting Scripture too uncritically). I've been called both on this issue, and not always nicely.

For me, though, the study of origins—and, for that matter, the more important study of Scripture—involves going through exactly this sort of exercise. It means reading the text for what it is,

asking the difficult questions, and then bringing together the brightest people to talk about them, pulling them out of their oil paintings if necessary. In the case of origins, it means integrating poetic, apologetic, and scientific approaches, and seeing how they shed light on the texts. And then, when we understand what Genesis is saying, it means submitting to the authority of the Word of God, and rejoicing in it.

One day, praise God, we will find out exactly what happened, and how much of what Milton, Paley, and Darwin said was actually true. I'll see you in the queue. **CT**

ANDREW J. WILSON is the author of If God, Then What?: Wondering Aloud about Truth, Origins, and Redemption (InterVarsity) and blogs at ThinkTheology.co.uk. You can find him on Twitter @AJWTheology.



Michael Chitwood had one reason to start running marathons, and it had nothing to do with God.

It was "just me trying to not be fat," says Chitwood, a former elementary schoolteacher. "I had never even run a 5K."

At his first training session for the 26.2-mile event, Chitwood weighed in at 265. The weight came off slowly. And as the training miles increased, so did his sense of God's leading.

"Since my dad died two years earlier, I hadn't felt much like talking to God. And when I did, what did I get? Static," he says. But as Chitwood ran, the sense of God's presence grew. He turned off his running mix and tried to listen to God in prayer.

"The change was slow, but there was definitely a change. Not just with my fitness, but deep inside me," he says. By race day, Chitwood had lost 41 pounds.

"The race was great. I felt more physical pain than I had ever felt in my life. I got passed by a guy with one leg. But I finished under 5 hours, 30 minutes."

Less than two years after his first marathon, Chitwood was training for his first Ironman triathlon—a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bicycle ride, followed by a marathon run, no breaks allowed. One day while out on an 85-mile training ride, he was praying when God, he says, prompted an idea: What if I dedicated my next race to raising money to help kids in other countries?

"It was the most personal experience with God I had ever had," he says.

Chitwood says he doesn't even remember putting his bike away that day. He spent the rest of the day writing down all of the ideas that had come to him on the ride. "The ideas came fully and freely, effortless. I knew that not only would I dedicate my next race to helping children in poor countries, but that God was telling me to get others to join me. Hundreds,

maybe even thousands, of others to join me."

On a friend's recommendation, he looked up the best humanitarian organization he could find, and in a stroke of providence, discovered World Vision had also been batting around a similar concept. His timing perfect, the idea ran



Reason to Run: One in five marathoners runs to raise money to meet the needs of the underserved worldwide.

up the chain of leadership. Within six months, he was heading the first Team World Vision office, based in Chicago.

Team World Vision (Twv) is a fundraising arm of World Vision, the evangelical nonprofit best known for its child sponsorship programs. It recruits runners to enter races of all distances—the longer the better—to raise money for World Vision projects in the nearly 100 countries where it operates. Sponsors commit to a lump sum or so much per mile. Twv joins hundreds of other charity races now used to raise support and awareness for everything from hunger to domestic violence to breast cancer.

In the history of philanthropy, charity running is a relatively new idea. Many credit marathon runner Bruce Cleland for kicking off the trend. In 1988, he formed a team to run the New York Marathon to raise money in honor of his daughter, a leukemia survivor. In 25 years, Team in Training has raised nearly \$500 million for the Leukemia Society.

Today approximately one in five marathoners runs on behalf of a charity. And many of them are like the approximately 80 percent of two runners who are brandnew to marathons.

Like me a couple of years ago.



Leveraging My Good Health

T STARTED INNOCENTLY enough. Carrie Schlough, a two recruiter, was visiting my church to show a video depicting Kenya's desperate need for clean water. Tears welled as I watched mothers wake before dawn to begin their daily search for water.

In communities like these, people spend up to 40 percent of their day collecting water from distant wells and pools, leaving little time and energy to

PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLD VISION

invest in small businesses and children's education. In other words, their bucket list begins and ends with a bucket.

Sitting in church that Sunday, I realized that the longest I'd ever gone without easy access to tap water was when a microburst knocked out power to our neighborhood for five days, including the well pump. What could I, a comfortable, middle-class American far removed from this issue, do?

Schlough had the answer. "I'll be staying after the service to discuss how you can help end one of the world's most lifethreatening, but solvable, problems by running the Chicago Marathon." It seemed like a no-brainer. Why not leverage my good health, run the marathon, and help women like the mother in the video?

It's a good thing I had my health, because in that moment of philanthropic zeal, I had forgotten one critical fact: I wasn't actually a runner. In fact, I hated to run.

Still, I registered for my first Chicago Marathon in 2010 with Twv, the largest charitable organization at the Chicago Marathon. Since its debut in 2005, the team has grown from 95 runners its first year to more than 1,600 this year for the Chicago Marathon alone. They join about 5,000 runners from around the country raising funds for World Vision.



Triple-Bottom Line



HARITY RACES HAVE been a boon for some nonprofits, but many competitive runners see them as a curse. New hoards of zealous runners mean the field is awash with slowpokes like me. The median finish

time for marathons is around five hours. For serious runners, the growing field of walk-runners has devalued what it means to run a marathon.

Josh Cox, the American record-holder for the fastest 50K (31 mile) race, says he doesn't mind the newbies—anymore. "The problem with pros is we put on blinders and stay focused only on the goal before us. Anything else—like raising money for clean water—becomes a distraction."

Despite the seeming lack of stewardship logic, training for marathons has become the most transformative spiritual discipline I've ever practiced.

Philanthropy was something he could do *after* retiring from running.

After Cox's father died of cancer in 2006, "I didn't run for two years," he says. "I thought I'd retire and go into ministry. Spending my life trying to lower my times —what difference was it really making?"

After two years at Biola University, Cox felt God calling him back to running. Cox contacted Chitwood. He sensed that running for Twv would perfectly match his love of running and his desire to make a difference with it.

"My wife and I sponsor three kids through World Vision," says Cox. "Once I met these kids and saw what their lives are like, I realized I could use my running platform to bring attention to the needs.

"It's 2013. If we really believe that all men are created equal, then kids should not still be dying of waterborne diseases. To bring clean water that's going to outlive me and my son—that's generational change."

As my, Chitwood's, and Cox's stories show, people fall into charity running for many reasons. But once we're in it, it's hard to walk away. One reason is the sheer amount of money it generates to alleviate suffering.

Rusty Funk, director of twv for the Chicago Marathon, says that in the seven years twv has existed, it has raised more than \$10 million. More than \$4 million is expected in 2013 alone. That's just a drop in the bucket of World Vision's billion-plus-dollar annual budget. But Chitwood and Funk remain steadfast in their goal of building the team into a steady stream of World Vision's overall funding. Plus, Chitwood says, marathons provide an extra return on investment—a double—bottom line that benefits the runner as much as the people and projects they help to fund.

Training for my first marathon,

I launched my twv fundraising page. I blogged about my training and asked anyone who would listen (even my dentist in between rinse and spits) if they'd support the clean water cause. Asking for money wasn't easy, but compared to training, it was a walk in the park.

Because I was going from couch to finish line, I started training a couple of months before the official season began. Each Saturday a group of Twy runners (many of them like me—pudgy and out of shape, with little or no experience running) met on our local bike path and put in our miles for the day. Every week, we each logged three to four additional runs on our own.

A marathon season requires about 15 weeks of training, assuming, of course, you already have a fit body. I did not. For my first marathon, I logged approximately 40 miles per week over five months.

Some say my time could have been better spent actually being the feet of Jesus instead of training my feet. With the same nine or so hours per week I sank into running, I could have been visiting nursing homes or tutoring children in our community. From a pure cost-benefit analysis, charity running may not seem like good stewardship, given its notorious time commitment.

Yet my experience revealed a different return on investment, one that could only be discovered through the inefficiency of marathon training.

In those first few months, I never enjoyed the runs, but I did enjoy getting to know my teammates as we pounded out mile after mile together, especially as our Saturday runs grew longer. Being a slow runner, I'd ask people about their lives, their work, their families, their ministries—anything to make the time go faster. I started to look forward to our meandering conversations. When else in my life

was I just listening to people—sometimes four or five hours at a time?

The running path became a kind of church for me. Part small group, part quiet time, part worship, part memory verse practice time (I wore out the verse "I can do all things for Christ who strengthens me"). I wasn't just developing my muscles. I was growing spiritually.

That made charity racing a triple-bottom line for me.



Positive Addiction

IN LATE 2012, over lunch with Chitwood, I asked if he could connect the dots for me: Where was the money showing up on my twv fundraising page actually going?

"Come to Africa, and I'll show you," he said.

It was there that I learned why charity

running can be especially addictive—and especially effective. (You can read that story on TodaysChristianWoman.com at todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/august/).

The following June, I boarded a plane for Durban, South Africa, with a team of 13 Twv runners who were registered to run Comrades, the world's oldest, largest ultramarathon-a daunting 54-mile course going uphill or downhill, depending on the year. This was an up-year, which meant runners would head from Durban toward Pietermaritzburg, climbing through the South African countryside. Each runner had hundreds of sponsors back home giving to the same clean water projects funded by their run in the Chicago Marathon. All together, this band of hardcore runners raised more than \$200,000, a record fundraising amount for a single twv event.

By way of comparison, in my first marathon season, I worked the fundraising as hard as I trained and raised about \$9,600.

In the course of my three marathons, I've raised approximately \$14,000. Each Comrades runner, by comparison, raised an average of over \$15,000 in one run.

Anthony Halpin registered to run Comrades after seeing the work World Vision was doing in Kenya two years earlier. "The more extreme an event you do, the more you can get people involved," Halpin says. He joined fundraising forces with teammate Wendy Ploegstra. Together they brought in about \$100,000, at least 20 times more than the highest fundraising level either one of them had achieved raising money for a normal marathon.

The bigger the story, the more people want to be part of it. Try raising \$100,000 for a 5K. It's a tougher sell.

Chad Dykstra decided to run Comrades after he and his wife adopted two boys from Ethiopia. "After our boys came home," he says, "I went for a run with one of them. We stopped by a local river, and my son said, "This looks just like the river we used to walk to for water.'"



Finish!: The author with Michael Chitwood (center) and Paul Courtney (left) at the finish line in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

PHOTO BY PETER MCKENZIE

The week prior to his Comrades race, Dykstra and his wife returned to Ethiopia to visit their sons' family. They learned that they now have access to clean water, but they still have to walk six hours a day and wait in line for it. "There's still so much work to do," says Dykstra.

Steve Spear, a former pastor, ran across America this year to raise \$1.5 million for clean water projects. "If I can run some miles to take away some miles, it's worth it."



All Hands on Deck



ACH OF THESE ultramarathoners' reasons for running for water was similar to what motivated me to run the Chicago Marathon. But they had upped the ante, pushing their bodies to the limit for the sake of people they didn't even know.

Why endure so much to raise money? Why not just ask people to write a check and stay home on race day?

Ploegstra says it's about the process. "Being broken down brings you closer to Christ. There were days in my training when I was hurting so much, and I'd think of how much Christ suffered for me. There's so much value in this process, which you don't get to experience when you write a check."

My last "ask" before running a marathon is always to solicit prayer requests from everyone on my fundraising e-mail list. When the miles during the marathon start to punish my body, my running mate, Anne Weirich, and I do a prayer volley. One of us says a person's first name and their request. We either pray aloud for the person, or if we're too exhausted to talk, we pray silently. It's a simple thing that takes my mind off the pain, but the practice also has made Romans 8:26 come alive: "The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans."

This tradition has carried us many miles. Whatever the results of the prayers, I know this much: in presenting people's requests to God when I myself am in a weakened state—literally begging from



my own poverty on behalf of others—I sense a communion and a camaraderie with God that typically eludes me in my comfy chair at home.

When you register for a marathon, you symbolically sign a release that says, "I

acknowledge that what I'm about to do will hurt. But for the sake of others who suffer daily for lack of clean water, I will suffer in this small way if it can bring relief and blessing to them." Despite the seeming lack of stewardship logic, training for marathons has become the most transformative spiritual discipline I've ever practiced.

Spear calls this "life change on both sides of the running shoe."

"On the runner's side, something happens inside the person. I call it convergence—emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually, all aspects of a person's life are affected in the process of pushing one's body to accomplish this goal," he says. "I've seen marriages restored; I've baptized dozens of people who have joined our team; the stories go on and on.

"On the other side of the running shoe is what the money does for children who finally get access to clean water. Their lives are changed forever."

According to Spear, 98 percent of people can run a marathon and find this type of life change. "They just don't know it yet," he says.

There's an African proverb that runners love to quote: If you want to go fast,

Gushing Success:

World Vision has raised over \$10 million in 7 years through charity racing sponsorships, funding water projects and other development work.

go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

As Spear embarked on his transcontinental run from the Santa Monica Pier in California to New York City, he ran most of the miles alone. Occasionally, family, friends,

and sometimes complete strangers would run with him for a stretch.

"I felt bad because it felt like was I offloading my suffering on them," says Spear. "But I noticed I felt lighter. Our loads lighten when we include others in our suffering. It's a lesson I needed to relearn."

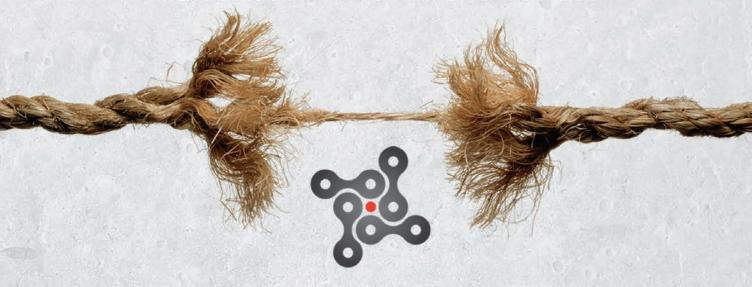
At the Comrades's finish line, I watched for hours as racers from around the world came down the final shoot, often arm in arm and practically in lock step. You'd think they were running a potato-sack race. Granted, after running 11 or 12 hours, most probably needed the other runner to prop them up just to make it to the end.

The longer I watched, the more I connected the dots: Providing access to clean water in the most remote areas on the planet isn't a job for individualists. It's a job for collaborators. It's an all-hands-on-deck endeavor. Every means, all people. Even those stuck in the middle of suburbia with just a pair of running shoes.

MARIAN V. LIAUTAUD is an editor for Christianity Today's Church Law and Tax Group and *Today's Christian Woman*, and author of *War on Women*, on sex-selective abortions.

A SACRED TRUST

A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO SEXUALITY AND THE CHURCH





OCTOBER 9 & 10, 2013 CHICAGO, IL

The goal of U-Turn's LINK Conference is to transform the local church into a gracious, restorative community for today's sexually broken culture. This two-day, inter-denominational event is designed to address topics relevant to the trending moral shift (sexual confusion, orientation, infidelity and addiction), and empower leadership to be graciously unwavering in proclaiming the gospel. If you and your church need help clarifying a biblical way forward on human sexuality, you won't want to miss this conference.

Register at UTurnMinistries.com

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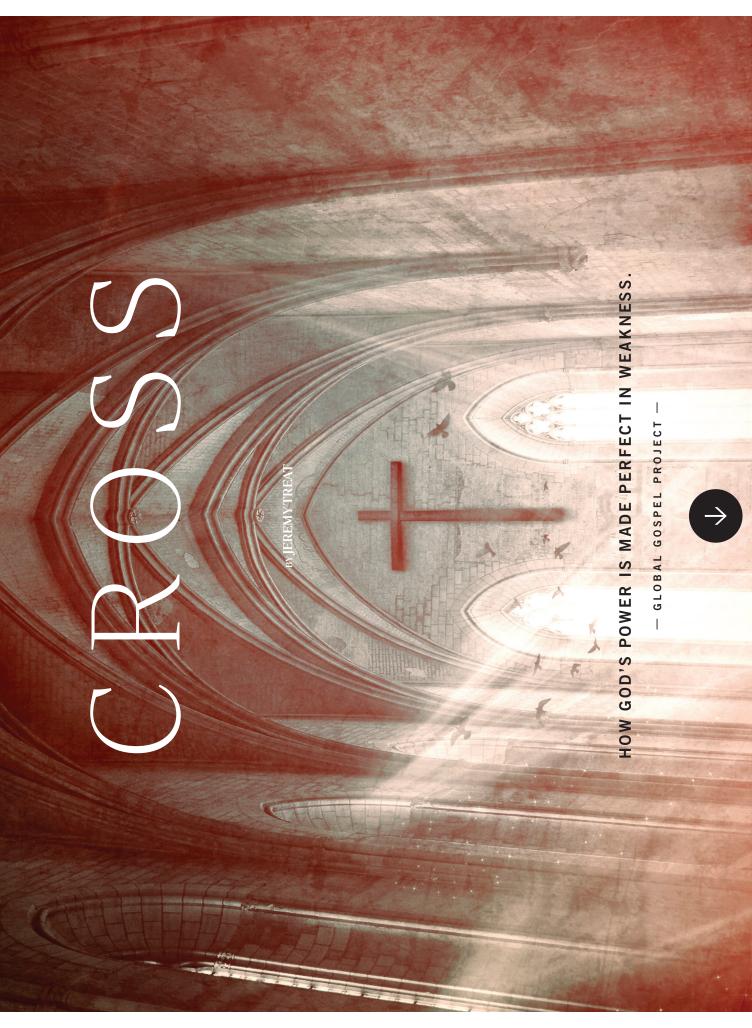
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→ THE FIRST TIME

my daughter opened her eyes was inside an ambulance racing through downtown Chicago. As I held her tight, her blue eyes looked straight into mine, and I knew she was going to be fine. We already had a special bond because I had just delivered her in the front seat of our Honda Civic. It was one of the most glorious moments of my life.

And yet, suffering personified-that is, my wife-was lying next to us on a stretcher. She embodied the pain through which such glory had come. I had witnessed firsthand glory through suffering. Every time I recall the moment, I realize that glory through suffering isn't unique to my daughter's birth. According to the gospel, it's the story of the world.

Suffering is inevitable and unavoidable. Surrounded by cancer, mental illness, infertility, depression, loss, and ultimately death, we ask how God's glory could shine through such tragic circumstances. For most of us, glory and suffering seem incompatible, just like something cannot be simultaneously hot and cold, wet and dry. But Christ's journey from the cradle to the grave reveals a pattern that is stitched throughout the fabric of Scripture. For Christ, Christians, and all creation, the way of glory is the way of the Cross.

THE STORY OF GLORY

WHEN WE LOOK at Scripture, we might conclude that suffering and glory compose a two-step movement: Glory comes after suffering. Certainly at many points, Scripture presents suffering and glory as a linear progression (Acts 2:33-36; Phil. 2:6-9;1 Pet. 1:10-11; Heb. 2:9-10). But it also reveals a more organic and overlapping relation between the two: glory through suffering (John 12:23-33; Rev. 5:5-6).

We see this theme at the very beginning, in the Garden of Eden. God created humanity to fill and subdue the earth for his glory. But things went wrong. Adam and Eve rejected God as king and subjected themselves, and the world, to sin and death. God, however, didn't abandon his plan to establish his kingdom on earth, though the presence of sin required a new route. Genesis 3:15 provides the key: While

the serpent will be crushed by the seed of the woman-the "seed" being Jesus-the seed of the woman will be bruised in the process. The promise of victory includes the price of suffering. From here on, a pattern emerges: Victory comes through suffering, exaltation through humiliation, and, ultimately, the kingdom through the Cross.

Throughout the Old Testament, God accomplishes his purposes through weak people and broken circumstances. He builds a nation from an infertile elderly couple (Abraham and Sarah), names the nation after a backstabbing trickster (Jacob), and grows the nation through a slave-child abandoned by his brothers (Joseph). God uses little David as the humble and even foolish means of defeating a giant, and then makes David a king whose reign is marked by adversity and suffering. And Isaiah 52 and 53 tell of a servant whose sacrificial atonement is framed by glory and exaltation.

All of this points to Jesus, who came to establish God's glorious kingdom through suffering, sacrifice, and service. As Jesus approached his death, he said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). At first, it seems that Jesus is talking about his coming entrance into heaven. But the following verse explains that Jesus is referring to his crucifixion: "He said this to show what kind of death he was going to die." John's gospel builds toward the climactic hour when Jesus' being "lifted up" on the cross is the moment he is enthroned in glory (John 12:23-32; 3:14; 8:28). The Cross becomes the throne from which Christ rules the world.

The Cross also becomes the fulcrum upon which the logic of the world is turned upside down. Shame is transformed into glory, foolishness into wisdom, and humiliation into exaltation. The glory of the Cross shines throughout the rest of the New Testament. Paul says, "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). And according to the Book of Hebrews, God is restoring his original design for creation through the death of his Son, who was "crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death" (2:9). From the bruised heel of Genesis 3:15 to the reigning lamb of Revelation 22, the Bible tells the story of a crucified Messiah who is glorified through suffering.

THE MEANING OF GLORY

WHEN WE LOOK at Jesus, we see that God has accomplished the most powerful act of salvation. He has revealed his glory through the most humble means of a cross. But a question remains: What is glory? And how can it possibly emerge from such a horrific and shameful death?

According to J. I. Packer, glory is "excellence and praiseworthiness set forth in display." The original iPhone, for example, was impressive in its design before anyone ever saw it. But when Steve Jobs unveiled it to the world, it was a moment of glory. Likewise, the glory of God is God's going public with his infinite beauty. As Jonathan Edwards taught, glory is not merely another one of God's attributes or characteristics (along with his holiness, love, power, and so forth). Rather, it is the "admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies." Glory is the dazzling, jaw-dropping, awe-inspiring showcase of God's character to a world darkened by sin. It is the explosive radiance produced by his holiness, love, mercy, justice, wisdom, and power-all of which come together in the most fitting way in the death of Christ.

At the Cross, we see God's justice through the judgment of sin, God's love through the forgiveness of sinners, God's power through his defeat of Satan, and God's wisdom in his upholding of holiness yet making a way for sinners. Christ's death is the ultimate, "Thus sayeth the Lord." It reveals the glorious harmony of God's multifaceted character. The Cross is the crossroads of everything we know about God.

To say that God's glory shines through the Cross is to make a deeply Trinitarian statement. John's gospel says that the Son glorifies the Father (7:18), that the Father glorifies the Son (8:54), and that this loving Trinitarian exchange of glory has taken place for all eternity (17:5, 24). And yet, stunningly, the Cross is where this Trinitarian exchange of glory is put on full display. The glory revealed through selfgiving love at the Cross is a window into the eternal life of the triune God. Through the Cross we see the wisdom of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the power of the Holy Spirit-the harmony of which results in the radiant display of God's glorious self-giving love.

So is the Cross for God's glory, or for our salvation? Yes! There is no competition between God's glory and our well-being. As John Piper famously said, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him." Scripture repeatedly states that God's glory is good news to a world darkened by sin (2 Cor. 4:4). Just as the radiance

perfect despite our weakness or after we have suffered. No, his power is made perfect *in* our weakness.

God certainly can and does display his power through healing and intervention. But it is through weakness that we learn to cling to God's strength. And the "weakness" that Paul speaks of does not refer to sinfulness but to the adversities of ordinary life. In the difficulty of transition,

Paul gives a vision of cosmic renewal: "The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (8:21, ESV).

Many Christians have wrongfully set cosmic renewal and personal salvation at odds. In response to a narrow ticket-to-heaven gospel, many have emphasized biblical passages that speak of God's renewing and reconciling all things. But Paul shows that cosmic renewal and personal renewal are inseparable. Creation longs for the "freedom of glory" that Christians already possess in Christ. God's salvation is aimed at both the church and the cosmos, but in proper order. The church is the focus of salvation and the cosmos is the scope of salvation.

Theologian Robert Letham explains that the "church is to be the spearhead of a renovated and restored cosmos." This means that the renewal of all things rides on the coattails of the reconciliation of sinners. The renewal of creation has begun in the bodily resurrection of Jesus, it advances through the spiritual renewal of God's people, and it will be completed in the physical restoration of the earth.

All this is possible because of the glory of Christ's crucifixion. Majesty and meekness, sovereignty and servitude, humiliation and exaltation—such is the paradox of the crucified Messiah. Our lives are filled with pain and pleasure, glory and garbage, dreams and despair. That's the tension of a world marred by sin yet sustained by grace. The only hope for our world is Christ, the one who experienced the full brunt of sin and death yet overcame them on our behalf. Because he experienced glory in suffering and exaltation through humiliation, so can we.

My daughter—the one "born and raised on the streets of Chicago"—just turned 2. Her middle name is Hope, which my wife and I chose to remember that our hope is in God alone. We can take comfort that God has entered into our suffering, embrace his power in the midst of our suffering, and cling to him with hope that one day he will put an end to our suffering. We are being transformed from one degree of glory to another—by way of the Cross.

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THE CROSS IS THE CROSSROADS OF EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT GOD.

of the sun produces life and flourishing throughout the earth, so the radiance of God's glory is both the source of our salvation and the means for our growth.

OUR PART IN THE STORY

MANY OF US instinctively feel that if we are faithful to Jesus, then life will go well for us. We will find comfort, success, and maybe even wealth. But that's the logic of the American dream, not the gospel. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "A king who dies on the Cross must be the king of a rather strange kingdom." A strange kingdom indeed. And the king who was glorified on the Cross advances his kingdom by calling his followers to take up their own crosses.

Followers of Jesus are bound for glory. But what is true for Christ is true for those who are "in Christ": Glory comes through suffering. Paul says that, as coheirs with Christ, "we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:17, ESV).

Our world operates according to the logic that weakness and power are opposites. But the Cross turns this concept on its head. Christ said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). It's not that God's power is made

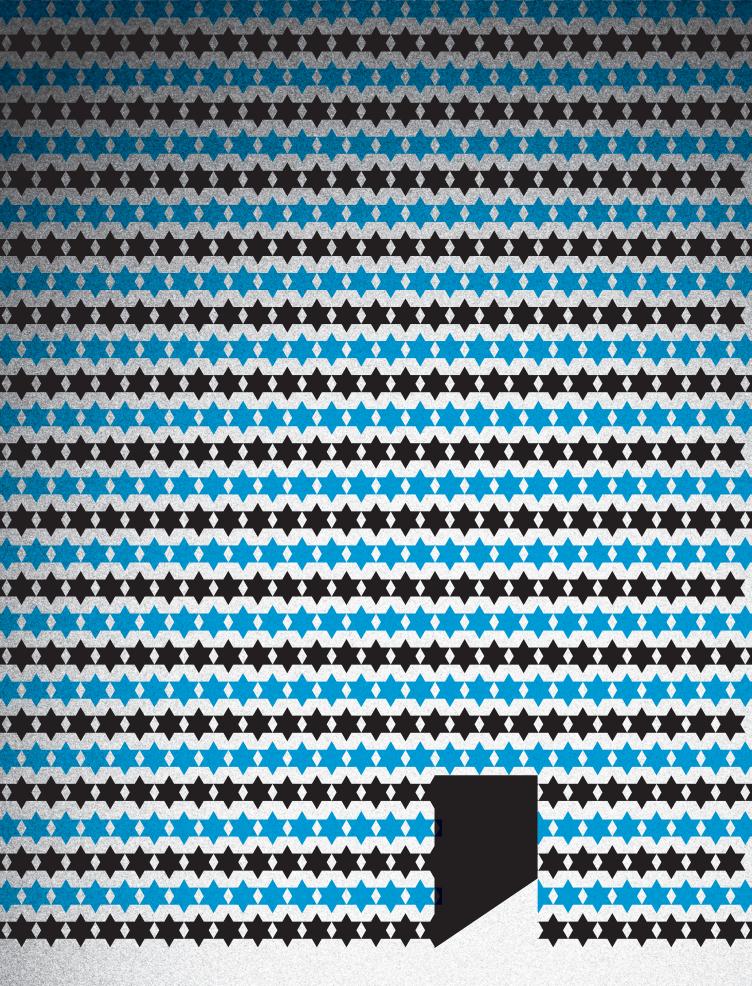
God is our constant. In the frailness of old age, God is our strength. In the darkness of depression, God is our hope. God is not waiting for us on the other side of suffering; he meets us in our suffering.

This doesn't make suffering easy, but it does make it meaningful. God is with us in our suffering, he transforms us through our suffering, and one day he will put an end to our suffering. That is why Paul said, "I can do all things through [Christ] who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13, ESV). He didn't say this from an exercise room but rather from a prison. A bodybuilder may be able to lift a car, but one who is strong in Christ is even stronger, for she can rejoice in suffering. Why? Because our weakness is a showcase for the glory of God's strength.

A GLORIOUS NEW CREATION

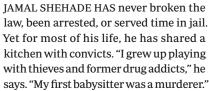
BUT THAT'S NOT all. Even creation is bound for glory. The Bible declares that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God's glory (Hab. 2:14), and it will itself radiate in glory. But as for Christ and Christians, so it is for creation: Glory comes through suffering.

According to Romans 8, our world is destined for glory, but it is presently in a state of decay, longing and groaning for renewal. Yet









Jamal was born into his parents' ministry, a halfway house for ex-prisoners in Haifa, Israel. House of Grace began when Agnes Bieger, a Swiss national, arrived in Israel to work with mentally disabled children. Soon she met Kamil Shehade, a Palestinian Christian citizen of Israel.

Kamil died of cancer in 2000, but he lingers in almost every conversation. The ministry visionary, Kamil was by all accounts a charismatic figure with an enthusiastic faith. In the picturesque port city of Haifa—proudly known as a place where Jews and Arabs have long lived together peacefully—the newly married Shehades were offered a deserted church and crumbling compound in 1982 by the Melkite Catholic archbishop. In Kamil's eyes, it was the perfect place from which to address the plight of ex-prisoners.

As in other societies, ex-prisoners are among the most marginalized people in Israel. Kamil believed that the best way to help them was first to give them dignity by welcoming them to his home, even as he and Agnes began their family.

"Kamil saw the face of God in every human being," says Agnes. Once angry and frustrated, as a young man he had a profound encounter with God. Recognizing him as a visionary and leader, Melkite archbishop Raya of Haifa sent Kamil to Canada for a year of training in spiritual disciplines and social services.

Upon his return, Kamil learned that the mother of an Arab prisoner he knew had become so depressed over her son's imprisonment that she took her own life.



HOW THE HOUSE OF GRACE MINISTRY SHEDS A LIGHT ON THE PLIGHT OF EX-PRISONERS.

BY DALE HANSON BOURKE IN HAIFA, ISRAEL

When her son learned about her death, he also committed suicide. The double tragedy showed Kamil the impact of incarceration on the entire family, not just the prisoner. He realized that once a prisoner is released, he not only has to find a job and rebuild his life; he also has to overcome the shame and guilt brought upon his relatives.

"Family is everything in that culture," says Ron Nikkel, president emeritus of Prison Fellowship International, a friend of Kamil's and a supporter of the ministry. "Many times the problems in the life of an ex-offender started in the home, and when a person goes to prison he shames the entire family and is often cut off. House of Grace takes the absolute opposite approach by welcoming those who are at their very lowest point into a family and showing them love."

More than 30 years later, Kamil's vision lives on at House of Grace, demonstrating "that redemption is possible," says Nikkel.

TRUE PEACEMAKERS

IT'S STRIKING ENOUGH that the Shehades let ex-offenders live alongside their children and grandchildren for three decades. But their outreach to ex-offenders models peaceful cooperation. As Israeli and Palestinian leaders continue high-level peace talks until the spring of 2014, the Shehades practice peacemaking and reconciliation at the grassroots.

"What Kamil started was very unique in Israel—and the entire Middle East," says Nikkel. "He opened the doors of his own home to Arabs, Jews, Muslims, Christians.



To those on the outside looking in, it was astonishing to see Arabs and Jews, exoffenders and a young family, all living in harmony."

While House of Grace does not accept sex offenders or political prisoners, it is the only halfway house in Israel that accepts prisoners of Arab descent. (Four other officially recognized halfway houses are for Jewish ex-offenders.) The Arab minority in Israel has a much higher unemployment rate than other Israelis, and composes a disproportionately large percentage of the prison population. Under Israeli law, all citizens are treated equally, but those of Arab descent often experience discrimination in housing, schooling, and jobs. They have a lower average income and a higher rate of substance abuse than other Israeli citizens.

Bishop Ronnie Crudup, senior pastor of New Horizon Church International in Jackson, Mississippi, has visited House of Grace and supports the ministry. He puts the situation in context: "You have to understand just how astonishing this work is and how tremendously significant it is that this ministry crosses the 'racial divide' in Israel. I grew up as a minority in my country, but no one thought of me as 'the enemy.' In Israel an Arab is not just looked down upon—he is considered the enemy by many Jewish Israelis."

Of the 1.6 million Arab citizens living in Israel today, most are Muslims, but about 120,000 are Christians, like the Shehade family. The prisoners who come to House of Grace are of all faiths—Muslim, Jewish, Druze, and Christian. Each is given the opportunity to practice his own faith, but most help in the church and attend special services there out of respect for the Shehades.

"It's important to us to live out our message of being a bridge between peoples," says Jamal. "It is important that as Christians we respect others and their beliefs."

Recognized by the State of Israel for its work, House of Grace has also been honored by the mayor of Haifa and other Israeli and international groups. Kamil chaired the Middle East branch of Prison Fellowship International and received numerous honors.

"To minister in a context where you are the enemy and yet you earn the respect of the government is amazing," says Crudup. "And to be considered traitors by some of your own people because you welcome in even those who oppress you, that is the true meaning of being a peacemaker."

"I'M NOT GOING BACK TO PRISON AGAIN"

HAMAD ACOUB SITS with the Shehade family at the House of Grace dinner table. He speaks in Arabic, one of the two official languages of Israel, while Jamal translates. He tells the story of how he ended up here.

It's not a story he is proud of. "I've been in prison five times—a total of 23 years." He shakes his head, recalling encounters with the law. "I've mostly been involved with drugs and I've hurt many people.

"I'm not going back to prison again," he declares. "House of Grace has changed me. It has shown me what it means to love your family, to take responsibility, to deal with your problems. Now I see that I have to do my best every day.

"I am married and have three sons. I am 44, but it's not too late for me to be a good father. It's not too late for me to change. That's what I have learned here. They have shown me love and they have given me tools to help me change."

Elias Sussan, a licensed social worker who has served at House of Grace for 27 years, confirms Acoub's story. "We offer treatment and tools to overcome addiction, but there is something far more powerful. The residents are part of a family. They see how a family can work and they are shown how to model love, acceptance, responsibility. Most have never seen anything like this before."

The 16 beds at House of Grace are always full, with a list of 50–60 prisoners waiting to be admitted. Over the years, the ministry has grown, reaching out to the families of prisoners to provide social services, helping other poor Israelis, and expanding to house more and more ex-offenders.

But Jamal dreams of more expansion, possibly opening another House of Grace to meet the growing need. While the Israeli government gives a small allowance to rehabilitate each prisoner, it doesn't cover their care. Private donations make up much of the ministry budget, and Jamal spends part of his time raising support in the United States and Europe. American donations for House of Grace come through Prison Fellowship International.

"So often American evangelicals support Israel to the exclusion of Arab Christians," says Nikkel. "Even the Israeli government praises this work, but for some reason American Christians have not understood or recognized this ministry."

Recently married, Jamal was educated in both Israel and Switzerland. Because



Fresh Start: Above, the old cathedral's worship space.
Center, Hamad Acoub says, "I'm never going back to prison."
Far right, Jamal holds his nephew, Stefan, as Agnes looks on.



of his mother's heritage, he has both Israeli and Swiss citizenship and served in the Swiss army. He says that it is sometimes difficult to be an Arab and a Christian in Israel. But he does not dwell on the negatives.

"Jamal is very much like his father," says Nikkel. "He is very humble and very faithful. Like his father, it's clear he feels the call to this work."

In perhaps the greatest tribute to their parents and the work, four of the five Shehade adult children serve in some aspect of House of Grace. Anya, the only daughter, works with mentally disabled children at the school where her mother first taught when she arrived from Switzerland.

LIVING STONES

BAGS APPEAR ON the steps of House of Grace almost daily. They contain clothes, furniture, knickknacks, extra food, and occasionally cash. They come from residents of Haifa. The city is a religiously diverse metro area of 600,000 people. Its population is 5 percent Christian, which is twice the national average. The people know the good work of the ministry and support it. Haifa's government often refers the needy to House of Grace, regardless of their religion or background.

"We do counseling and provide food and social services to some elderly Holocaust

"To be considered traitors by some of your own people because you welcome in even those who oppress you, that is the true meaning of being a peacemaker."

RONNIE CRUDUP

survivors," says Jamal. "There is a good social welfare system in Israel, but sometimes the elderly just don't have the ability to negotiate the system. So we help them, no questions asked." Nearly 300 families received food and social assistance from the ministry in 2012.

"Sometimes people drop off things that need to be repaired. Residents, volunteers, and members of our youth program learn to do the repairs as part of their training. Then the items are placed in our second-hand store where those in need can 'shop.' If they can pay a little, we let them. They know it goes to help someone who is more in need."

Giving back is a pervasive theme of the residents' rehabilitation as well as House of Grace's youth services. Whether they come off the street, from a violent family, or are just experiencing social problems, troubled youth in Haifa receive therapy,

learn skills to cope with their problems, and—perhaps most important—learn to volunteer at the House of Grace youth program.

"Young people often feel frustrated by their situation and feel powerless. They behave inappropriately because they don't have coping skills. We help them learn to become empowered through volunteering. When you are helping someone else, you experience healing." The program currently helps 130 young people.

House of Grace has become something of a tourist attraction these days. Americans who have seen the work often come back and tell their friends to add a stop to their Israel tour. Nothing could make the Shehade family happier. Christians in the region are often called "living stones," from the reference in 1 Peter 2:5.

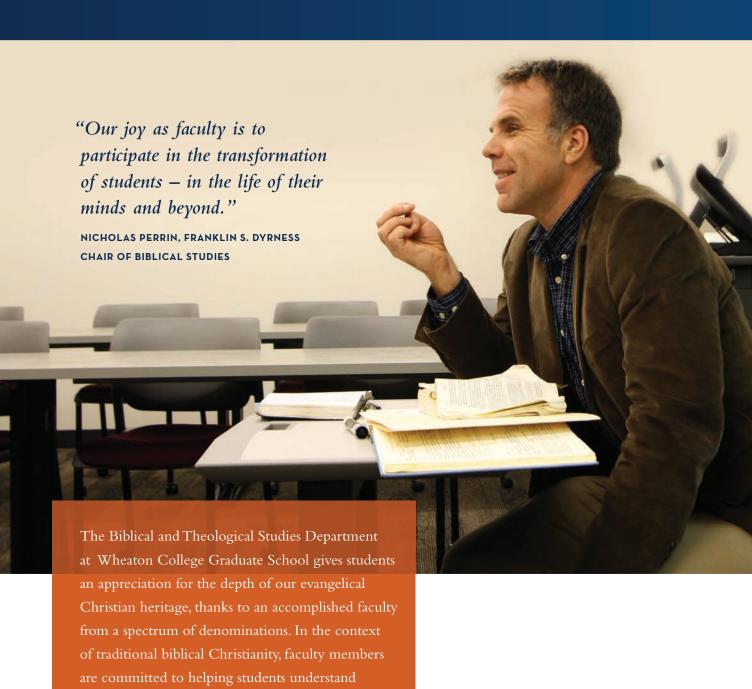
"When people come to the region to see the well-known sites and stone monuments, we hope they will also come meet living stones and hear the stories of real people who are touched by grace," says Jamal. "If they do, they will leave with a truer understanding of why this land is called holy."

DALE HANSON BOURKE'S latest book is The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Tough Questions, Direct Answers (InterVarsity Press), part of The Skeptic's Guide series. She can be followed on Twitter @DaleHBourke or at DaleHansonBourke.com.



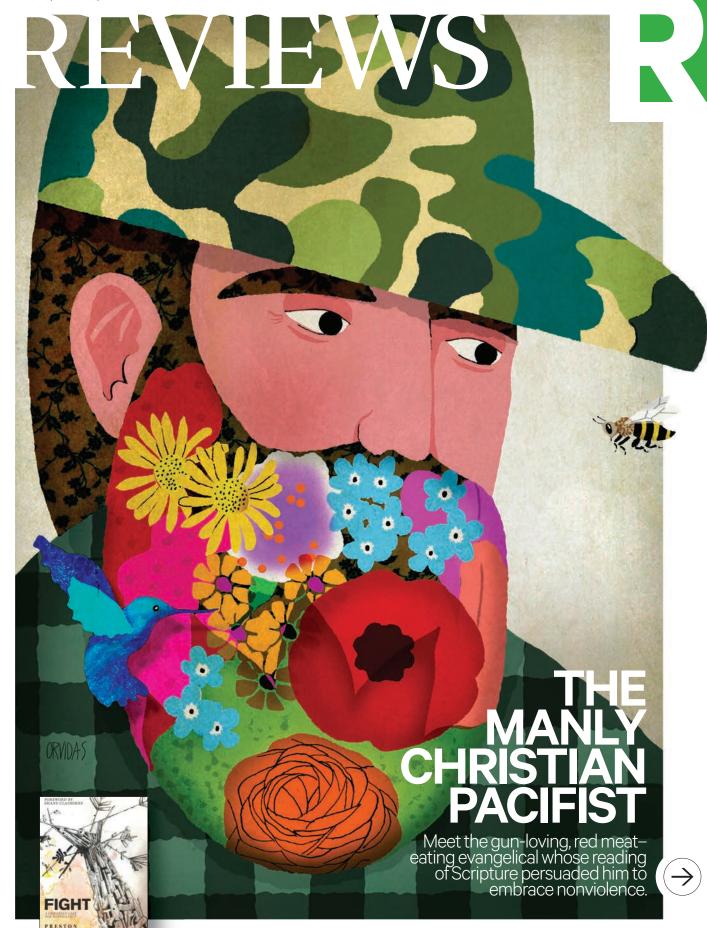


BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL STUDIES





the theological underpinnings of their lives and calling within the context of Christ's Kingdom. We invite **YOU** to prayerfully consider exploring our community at Wheaton College Graduate School.





o Christians really need another book on how we should think about violence and war? After all, this is well-trod ground.

To a considerable extent, Preston Sprinkle, professor of biblical studies at Eternity Bible College in Simi Valley, California, has justified his own contribution. In *Fight:* A Christian Case for Nonviolence (David C. Cook) *****, Sprinkle offers a strikingly powerful, Christ-centered case for nonviolence as a way of life.

Yet Sprinkle hardly fits the usual stereotypes. One tongue-in-cheek headline for the book might be, "Manly Conservative Reformed Republican Commends Christian Nonviolence." The author is conservative, Reformed, and Republican, likes violent movies, owns guns and enjoys using them, and can bench-press 250 pounds. Sprinkle has written a book defending the doctrine of hell, claims the influence of figures like John Piper, R. C. Sproul, and John MacArthur, and in many other ways shows himself to be very conservative.

Everything about Sprinkle's method correlates with his self-described identity. His approach revolves around frequently articulated commitments to the inspiration, authority, and infallibility of Scripture. And he appears unwilling to avail himself of historical-critical analysis, though it might help his case.

In fact, one senses that Sprinkle is a bit surprised by what he has discovered. He confesses that he only began seriously studying these issues after being required to teach ethics. But his reading of Scripture ended up tugging him in the direction of embracing nonviolence.

Making the Case

FIGHT CONTAINS FOUR chapters on the issue of violence in the Old Testament, then four chapters on Jesus and the New Testament, followed by four concluding chapters and an appendix that deal with issues such as the witness of the early church, responses to common objections to Christian nonviolence, and just-war theory.

Sprinkle makes four claims to deal with

the considerable violence commanded or recorded in the Old Testament. First, that God, in deference to Israel's prevailing customs, permitted violence but never established it as an "ideal"; second, that God's coming to earth in Christ intensified the moral demands upon his people; third, that ancient Israel's rules and ethos of war were considerably more humane than those of their neighbors; and fourth, that the Prophets' cries for peace point Israel back to God's Edenic intentions while anticipating the coming ministry of Jesus.

Sprinkle suggests that the Old Testament's most gruesome "holy war" passages may be taken as hyperbolic. In this telling, "kill everything that breathes" was "a stock phrase" that never really meant total slaughter. I doubt that such readings will satisfy criticisms raised by atheists like Richard Dawkins or assuage the consciences of Christian college students.

The New Testament discussion is far more satisfying. Sprinkle situates Jesus' message of the kingdom of God against the violent background of the times, including the Jewish revolts of the recent past and the Roman occupation of the brutal present. With ample biblical citations, he shows that nonviolence is a key difference between Jesus' kind of kingship and the worldly alternative.

Sprinkle takes the Sermon on the Mount seriously. The reader comes away unable to escape the urgency of living, even *right now*, in the radical kingdom way that Jesus teaches and practices. The Cross receives considerable attention, not just as the means of atonement for sin but as the model for how Christ conquers—through suffering love, not violence. Sprinkle rightly highlights how such "cruciform suffering" is urged upon Christian disciples throughout the New Testament. And he

Sprinkle has written a book defending the doctrine of hell, claims the influence of figures like John Piper, R. C. Sproul, and John MacArthur, and in many other ways shows himself to be very conservative.

emphasizes that claims of national loyalty are legitimate only when they accord with the demands of our one true king, Jesus.

He concludes (rightly, in my view) that early church leaders universally advocated nonviolence, and not just because serving in the Roman military would implicate them in idolatry. He notes that even after Constantine's conversion, some church leaders still commended the nonviolent way, even as leaders like Augustine were taking the church down the path toward just-war theory.

Fight offers fairly predictable answers to questions like, "What if an attacker wants to kill my family?" and, "What about Hitler?" In response, he examines the "rhythm" of the New Testament's message of cruciform love, covers nonlethal responses to violence, and weighs the obligation not to kill against competing moral imperatives.

A Developing Fissure

SPRINKLE SENDS PLENTY of cultural signals to vouch for his affinity with conservative evangelicals. But he does not hesitate to rebuke his tribe for what he deems an unbiblical attachment to American nationalism and militarism. By writing this book, he is making enemies in his subculture, and an author's courage to follow the truth where it leads must be appreciated.

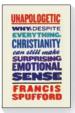
That does not mean I am fully satisfied with Sprinkle's treatment of the problems Christians face in coordinating their allegiance to Christ with responsibilities to families, neighbors, and nations. *Fight* is on firmer ground with biblical exegesis than with classic or contemporary debates about Christians' civic and neighborly obligations in a fallen world.

Perhaps a fissure may be growing deep within conservative Christian America, between those still working from the Christian Right's "God and country" playbook and those whose robust commitment to Christ and Scripture dictates a posture of countercultural nonviolence. This was, after all, the earliest Christian response to the person and proclamation of Jesus Christ.

DAVID GUSHEE is professor of Christian ethics and director of the Center for Theology and Public Life at Mercer University. He is the author of *The Sacredness of Human Life: Why an Ancient Biblical Vision Is Key to the World's Future* (Eerdmans).

Where We're Coming From

Unapologetic: Why, Despite Everything, Christianity Can Still Make Sunse Emotional Sense Francis Spufford (HarperOne, 240 pages)



Francis Spufford explores the emotional life of Christian faith.

few weeks ago I was sitting with a friend, watching a trendy new sitcom that featured a Christian character. Five minutes into the episode, my friend said, "She fits all the stereotypes, huh?" The character was uptight, more concerned about what people do in the privacy of their bedrooms than about the plight of refugees in the Horn of Africa. When we turned off the TV, I said, "Shows like that make me wonder if the writers know any actual Christians."

Not that Christians are never holier-than-thou or hung up on sex. But things aren't so simple. Along with feelings of moral superiority, we also experience shame. We try to live up to our ideals for sexual behavior, but many of us *also* fret over how best to support aid efforts in Haiti—or our neighborhoods. While we're worrying about justice, we're also asking ourselves how to have hope despite heartache. The question is, how do we invite outsiders to walk a mile in our shoes? How do we describe what belief feels like from the inside?

That's the question driving Francis Spufford's book *Unapologetic: Why, Despite*

Everything, Christianity Can Still Make Surprising Emotional Sense (HarperOne) *****. Rejecting the need for yet another defense of Christian ideas, Spufford tries instead to paint a picture of what it's like to be a believer. He describes how emotions that are "deeply ordinary and deeply recognizable to anybody who has ever made their way across the common ground of human experience" are precisely the emotions that make up the Christian life.

A novelist and instructor in creative writing at Goldsmiths College in London, Spufford seems incapable of writing a pedestrian sentence. Each chapter is down-to-earth, chatty, liberally salted with profanities, and laden with allusions to everything from *Star Trek* to Sarah Palin.

And the style isn't ornamental. Religious sensibilities, as Spufford writes, "are not made of glass, [and] do not need to hide themselves nervously from whole dimensions of human experience." When we talk about sin and grace and faith, we're not entering some rarefied realm of discourse removed from everyday life. We are, Spufford contends, trying to describe the sense of guilt that keeps us up at night worrying

that our mean-spirited comment at a fancy dinner party puts us in the same predicament as the guy who tears into his former drinking buddy in a bar fight. We're trying to describe the sense of mystery and elusive presence that frightens and comforts us—or comforts by frightening us—when we listen to the lilting melodies of Mozart's "Clarinet Concerto."

At the heart of Spufford's book is a long, evocative retelling of the story of Jesus, or *Yeshua*. When I sent a copy of the book to a skeptical friend, I told him, "Finishing the *Yeshua* chapter made me want to become a Christian all over again."

Unapologetic wants to make Christianity seem like "something emotionally comprehensible even if not shared; something that provides one good-enough solution to a set of fundamental human needs." Even if you don't pray the sinner's prayer when you turn the last page, the book will have done its work. But—fair warning—you just might want to pray it after all.

WESLEY HILL is assistant professor of biblical studies at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

Wilson's Bookmarks From the editor of Books & Culture.



BEFORE THE DOOR OF GOD AN ANTHOLOGY OF DEVOTIONAL POETRY EDITED BY JAY HOPLER & KIMBERLY JOHNSON (YALE

UNIVERSITY PRESS)
Hopler and Johnson's expansive
anthology extends
all the way from
the Psalms to the
21st century. Most
of the poems are
Christian; others
are written from

another religious tradition, or from skepticism, or from an indeterminate space. "Devotional," the editors explain, here suggests "addresses to the unknown, conversations (albeit one-sided) with the divine, in whatever way the authors have interpreted that term."

THE SKEPTICAL Believer

TELLING STORIES TO YOUR INNER ATHEIST DANIEL

TAYLOR (BOG WALK PRESS)
Longtime readers
of cr may know Taylor from his pieces in
the magazine; others will have become
acquainted with him
through one or more
of his many books,
including The Myth
of Certainty and
Tell Me a Story: The

Life-Shaping Power of Our Stories. Others still, without knowing his name, have profited from his work as a Bible translation consultant. Taylor's new book, The Skeptical Believer, is at once an episodic spiritual autobiography and a brilliant exercise in comic theology (a genre that we could use a lot more of).

THE SOUND AND THE FURRY A CHET AND BERNIE

MYSTERY SPENCER QUINN

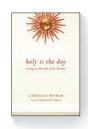
(ATRIA BOOKS)

This latest installment of the Chet and Bernie adventure, The Sound and the Furry, is the sixth in the series. How exactly the superb suspense novelist Peter Abrahams reinvented himself as a comic genius called

Spencer Quinn is a tale that hasn't yet been told, but never mind. Here we have a case that takes the detective team to the bayous of Louisiana. Not even the environmental-threat twist to the plot (again?!) could diminish the pleasure of Chet the Dog's narration and his friendship with Bernie.



Holy Is the Day: Living in the Gift of the Present Carolyn Weber (InterVarsity Press, 192 pages)



The Beauty of Trauma

When death comes close, we learn that life is precious.

Excerpt [The pain and turbulence that attended the] birth of my twins, this crucible-moment in my marriage, cracked both my husband and me open so wide and set in motion a change so radical as to reorient our entire lives. Together, our shared trauma brought to the surface other traumas, some long buried, some oh so hard to even speak-surfaced them and purged them and [smoothed away] the impurities. This process, the trusting, deepened our faith and gave us a newly won perspective, a brighter, clearer vision. Most of all, it gave us a greater conviction of the absolute restoration to come.

There are times in life, as death and near-death show us most poignantly, when you finally fully realize that you can't take anything with you. Not even a

slender power bar. Not even credentials, or knowledge, or feeling. And that is when you are laid the most bare so he can do the most work. As Brennan Manning states, "It is only the reality of death that is powerful enough to quicken people out of the sluggishness of everyday life and into an active search for what life is really about." ...

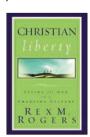
Trauma teaches you that life is precious. The very here and now is precious....Our hesitation to live it to the fullest in God blemishes the gift with "impurities," including, as the metaphysical poets often named it, "the sin of fear." This sin of fear prevents us from accepting grace's full payment for our refinement. When we "burn for God" we realize that life, which can otherwise seem a string of random, transient, and meaningless moments, is actually momentous in God's eternal economy. As a result, we come to fully see that others' lives are precious too....

We grow in value and we grow in thanks. Gratitude and worth are interlinked in worship and praise, in the purpose of our lives and the reason for our being.... In the final act of redemption, God offers his very death to help us see the Real. And in doing so, we [become] a redeemed silver, electric and eternal, the aliveness of righteousness and oneness with him that is the opposite of deadness in sin and isolation from him.

Taken from Holy Is the Day by Carolyn A. Weber. Copyright © 2013 by Carolyn A. Weber. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, PO Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515. www.ivpress.com.

Brett McCracken: My Top 5 The books that most shaped the ideas in his new release, Gray Matters (Baker Books).

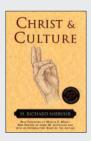




CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

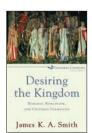
REX M. ROGERS

Former Cornerstone University president Rogers calls Christians to a smarter, less reactionary, and ultimately more effective witness in an always changing, always complex culture.



CHRIST AND CULTURE

H. RICHARD NIEBUHR Niebuhr's classic, with the famous spectrum he presents—Christ "against," "of," "above," "in paradox," and "transforming" culture—is not exhaustive but nevertheless helps Christians think through their relationship to the world.



DESIRING THE KINGDOM

JAMES K. A. SMITH

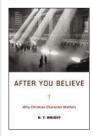
Smith argues that we must explore how our everyday habits of life shape us on the level of affections instead of merely cultivating a worldview through which we can "think Christianly" about everything.



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN & BLUE SUEDE SHOES

KEN MYERS

Though a bit dated (as any book on popular culture invariably is), Myers's classic on Christianity and culture offers timeless insights about how Christians should navigate their relationship to pop culture.



AFTER YOU BELIEVE

N. T. WRIGHT

Wright presents a sprawling but readable overview of Christian character far more inspiring than a checklist of dos and don'ts, but also more challenging than a "follow your heart" free-for-all.



What Is the Meaning of Sex? Denny Burk (Crossway, 272 pages)



Hot and Holy

Why the ultimate purpose of sex is bringing glory to God. Interview by Lisa Velthouse

hen it comes to the Christian view of sex, confusion often abounds. Denny Burk, associate professor of biblical studies and ethics at Boyce College and editor of The Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, is the latest to come forward with a proposal for theological and moral clarity. In What Is the Meaning of Sex? (Crossway), Burk addresses sensitive issues of sexuality—including marriage, gender roles, family planning, and homosexuality—within a framework of biblical ethics. Author and editor Lisa Velthouse spoke with Burk about God's design for sex and the cultural influences that interfere with our seeing and abiding by it.

So. What is the meaning of sex?

The reigning sexual ethic reflects a song lyric from Sheryl Crow: "If it makes you happy, it can't be that bad." This worldview affirms any and all attempts to get sexual pleasure that do not harm others. If it feels good and you're not hurting anyone, how could it possibly be wrong? Many people have severed their sexuality from the objective order that God has created, and they have lost sight of God's purpose for our sexuality. So when people ask what they should or shouldn't do sexually, they are asking a question about purpose—whether or not they realize it.

When Paul commands us to glorify God with our bodies in 1 Corinthians 6, he may as well have said, "Glorify God with your sex." He clearly has in mind the use of the body for sex, so the ultimate purpose of sex must be the glory of God. To enjoy sex for God's glory is to enjoy it in the way God has determined.

I agree with the Christian ethicist Dennis Hollinger that there are four purposes of sex: consummation of marriage, expression of love, procreation, and pleasure. But we must realize that these purposes are subordinate to the ultimate purpose of glorifying God.

Why is marriage central to sex that glorifies God?

When Jesus and Paul talk about marriage and sexuality, they appeal to the Old Testament. But they don't point to the polygamist kings of Israel-not even David or Solomon-or to polygamist patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Instead, they look back to the monogamous union, before the Fall, of Adam and Eve. That's what they present as the norm of human sexuality and marriage. Paul writes in Ephesians 5 that Adam and Eve's marriage (and every other marriage after it) is meant by God to be an icon of another marriage: Jesus' marriage to his bride, the church. So marriage is fundamentally about the glory of God, because it's meant to depict the gospel. It tells a bigger story: husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the church, and wives relating to their husbands as the church relates to Christ.

Is sexual holiness about our state of mind or what we do with our bodies?

It's both. What we do with our bodies is an overflow of what is inside our hearts. That's why Jesus equated lust and adultery in the Sermon on the Mount. But sexual holiness is not merely a state of mind. God intends the body to be his temple—a place where his glory is on display. A Christian sexual ethic must be concerned with bringing both mind and body under the lordship of Christ.

Sexual morality is not a choose-your-own-adventure story. God has revealed his will in Scripture and in nature. Nature, for example, reveals a fundamental biological complementarity of male and female—a heterosexual norm. But nature isn't our sole source for this knowledge; Scripture also reveals God's will through commands and prohibitions. We can't simply have a



private intention to glorify God. It has to match up with God's intended order.

What about the claim that Christians are no longer bound by the law?

Christians often misunderstand 1 Corinthians 6:12, which says that everything is permissible although not everything is beneficial. In most modern translations, the first phrase is set in quotation marks. Why? Because Paul is not expressing a principle of Christian freedom; he's actually quoting some Corinthian men who were justifying visiting prostitutes. It was the philandering Corinthians who claimed all things are lawful, using that slogan to justify their immorality.

Many self-professed Christians simply declare that they can do whatever they want sexually because they are not under the law. But Paul says that this is a perversion of Christian freedom. We have been set free from sin to be slaves to Jesus. Jesus defines what we can and must do with our bodies sexually.



Derek Webb Grows Up

How the embattled songwriter made his way to musical maturity.

n the lyrical countdown that begins his latest album, *I Was Wrong, I'm Sorry & I Love You* (Fair Trade) ****, Derek Webb gives a running tally of the steps he's taken—largely away from the loving embrace of the Christian music industry—since he traded his membership in acoustic pop band Caedmon's Call for a solo career:

It's been 20 years since I rose and cleared my throat.
It's been 10 years since I stood outside the church.

Webb's journey has been increasingly unconventional, musically speaking, since his early days crafting pleasant college folk tunes with Caedmon's Call, now entering its 20th year. On his solo debut, *She Must and Shall Go Free* (2003), Webb wielded his acoustic guitar. But he quickly began to experiment, branching out from the bluegrass, folk, and country roots beneath him.

The next, I See Things Upside Down (2004), was Webb's art-rock record, content to meander, linger, and explore as Webb grabbed an electric guitar for the first time. Mockingbird (2005) knocked on several musical doors that Webb would charge through on later albums. The Ringing Bell (2007), a tribute to 1960s protest music, followed suit.

From there, the journey became either increasingly interesting or increasingly difficult to follow, depending on the listener. Stockholm Syndrome (2009) traded guitars for a laptop, and Feedback (2010)

was entirely instrumental. Those two recordings took Webb farthest from his core audience—Christians who spend time on the fringes of Christian music. But 2012's *Ctrl* began to bring him back. Now, *I Was Wrong*, which officially released September 3, completes the circle.

The Long Way Home

LIKE THE MUSIC, Webb's lyrics have taken the long way home. Webb was always the sensitive, vulnerable member of Caedmon's Call, writing songs about loss and love. But as a solo artist, Webb has blazed trails toward whatever theological or social questions have grabbed his attention.

Without a doubt, *She Must and Shall* Go Free suffered commercially because

The new songs are not musical missives, casting blame on large swaths of Webb's audience.

Rather, they are liturgical pieces that reach out toward the faith he would like to embody.

of Webb's bravado. "Wedding Dress," the hallmark of that first solo album, displays Webb's confessional style with lines like, "I am a whore I do confess / I put you on just like a wedding dress / And run down the aisle to you." Such are lyrics you can write when your music need not fit a "safe for the whole family" rubric.

Each new release pushed farther in this direction, as Webb continued to explore what the label *Christian* meant as a world-upending noun, not primarily as a market-segment adjective. From the singer and his church being a "whore" to lampooning and lamenting the Christian marketplace on *Upside Down* ("T-Shirts"), to questioning nationalism on *Mockingbird* ("A King & A Kingdom") and confronting systems of violence on *Ringing Bell* ("A Love That's Stronger Than Our Fear"), Webb left few stones unturned.

For many listeners, no doubt, some of Webb's lyrics sounded more like casting stones, judging a compromised church. But the tone is softened if you hear the songs as documenting Webb's journey from a kind of musical priest in a sanitized

system, to a musical prophet newly free to explore and speak the truth. And Webb has always insisted that he's writing most of all about his own journey and attendant failures.

The 12 new songs are not musical missives, then, casting blame on large swaths of his audience. Nor are they journal entries, exactly.

Rather, they are liturgical pieces that reach out toward the faith Webb would like to embody—and that he longs for the church to properly model for him and with him. They are not meant to incriminate but to restate the hope of what could and should be within the kingdom of God.

After all the confessions are aired, what emerges is a kind of maturity. The Franciscan priest Richard Rohr has influenced many who, like Webb, came of age in a religious environment of sometimes smothering comfort. In Falling Upward, Rohr writes, "Without law in some form, and also without butting against that law, we cannot move forward..." We grow into adulthood, in other words, by pushing past childish conformity. Over the past 10 years, in that sense, we've watched Derek Webb grow up.

This is perhaps the most important point of all in surveying Webb's career. Elder artists are few and far between, with most songwriters remaining in (or at least affecting) a posture of lovelorn youth for most of their performing lives. Perhaps Webb should now be called not a song-

writer but a songwright—an experienced artist with something true to hand down from his path through struggle.

I Was Wrong, I'm Sorry & I Love You Derek Webb

Time to Stop Running

INDEED, FROM THE outset of his new album, Webb sounds like a new man. On the title track, he sings, "Over all these years, just three things I've

tried to say: I was wrong, I'm sorry, and I love you." Webb has said that these are the words required to sustain a marriage, but here he is singing about the church.

"I have misled you / I have misread you," he sings. "I've cared too much and not enough in the same breath / You've been my hope / My stretch of rope in life and death." It's a more self-aware take on the prophet's call, so difficult to control or contain and so at risk of curdling into cynicism or disdain.

Webb's new album is a homecoming in every possible way. The straightforward melodies, the welcoming language, and the warmer themes all showcase a son who has come home. In "Eye of a Hurricane," Webb sings:

I loved every circle that I ran around my father's house
Even prodigals have a good time till the money runs out
Oh, I always had a choice, I always knew where I was from
But there's a time to stop running and I'm pretty sure that time has come

It's not that Webb's musical and personal odyssey was wasteful, careless, or decadent. Rather, these are the words of an artist comfortable in his own musical skin, a songwright who is finished messing with synths and kicking over theological boundary stones.

At least for now. The wise are the first to insist they have not yet arrived, and Webb admits as much on the album's closing track, "Thy Will Be Done." Though Webb has learned he is a broken man, he is as much a child as ever:

My God and Father! While I stray, Far from my home in life's rough way,

Oh! teach me from my heart to say,

"Thy will be done! Thy will be done!"

Webb, it seems, had to leave the church to love it. He's come back a better man for the journey. I Was Wrong, I'm Sorry & I Love You is a triumphant return.

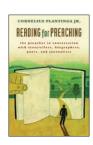
MATT CONNER has interviewed well over 1,000 artists in his career as a music journalist. He currently lives in Nashville with his wife, Lindsay.



New & Noteworthy

In any given month, we at ct receive an impossibly large stack of praiseworthy books, and we can't give them all the attention they deserve. Here are some additional volumes that we believe will challenge, inspire, and edify God's people.

Compiled by Matt Reynolds

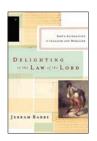


READING FOR PREACHING

The Preacher in Conversation with Storytellers, Biographers, Poets, and Journalists

CORNELIUS PLANTINGA JR. (EERDMANS)

Read good books, and you'll become a better preacher. So argues Plantinga, president emeritus of Calvin Theological Seminary, who builds a case for how immersion in exemplary works of fiction and nonfiction can enrich Sunday sermons. Plantinga illustrates how a steady diet of good reading works to widen the pastor's sympathies, supply scenes of beauty and insights into human nature, and refine his grasp of the subtle rhythms of the English language. Even nonpreachers will find the author's advice on reading immensely helpful.



DELIGHTING IN THE LAW OF THE LORD

God's Alternative to Legalism and Moralism

JERRAM BARRS (CROSSWAY)

Everyone loves hearing about God's boundless grace, but what about the other side of the equation? What about God's law, his unattainable benchmark of holiness? Isn't that a downer? Not so, says Barrs, founder of the Francis Schaeffer Institute at Covenant Theological Seminary. The law, says Barrs, should appeal to us as lovely in its own right, in that it reflects God's commitment to steer us toward righteousness and away from the snares of sin. And it also reminds us, as we inevitably fail to meet its high demands, of the astonishing nature of God's grace and forgiveness.



Mere Anglicanism Conference

Charleston, South Carolina

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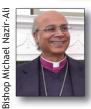


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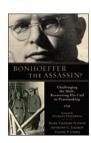
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BONHOEFFER THE ASSASSIN?

Challenging the Myth, Recovering His Call to Peacemaking

MARK THIESSEN NATION, ANTHONY G. SIEGRIST, AND DANIEL P. UMBEL (BAKER ACADEMIC)

When we consider the heroic deeds of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, we are likely to number among them his role in the plot to kill Adolf Hitler—often cited as the consummate example of the "costly" discipleship he preached. But the scholars behind this volume argue that we are wrong, as a factual matter, in making this connection. After examining the biographical and textual evidence, they argue that Bonhoeffer was never truly on board in the plot, and indeed never abandoned his belief in nonviolent means of peacemaking.

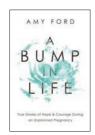


CALLED TO STAY

An Uncompromising Mission to Save Your Church

CALEB BREAKEY (HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS)

Over and again, we hear that so-called "millennials" have a long list of complaints about the church, and that they're departing it in droves. Breakey, a millennial and former journalist, used to feel this sort of alienation himself, before a change of heart led him to embrace the body of Christ with renewed vigor. He addresses the "leavers" in his generation with a passionate call to consider the scriptural arguments for committing to the church, despite its many flaws. Jefferson Bethke, of "Jesus Religion" YouTube fame, writes the forward.



A BUMP IN LIFE

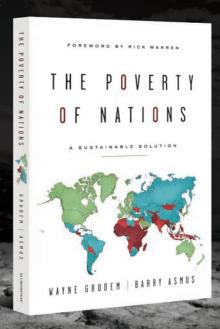
True Stories of Hope & Courage During an Unplanned Pregnancy

AMY FORD (B&H BOOKS)

An unplanned pregnancy outside of marriage can be one of life's most frightening developments. Ford is the cofounder and president of Embrace Grace, an organization providing support for young women who find themselves in this situation and feel like they have nowhere to turn or no one to whom they can confide their fears and anxieties. In A Bump in Life, she offers hope and encouragement through sharing the stories of women who, like her, have endured these trying circumstances instead of choosing abortion.

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TWO ARE BETTER

Ministry, Money, and Mentoring p76

You Can't Learn *That* in a Classroom p82

From Pastor to Professor p90



MINISTRY, MONEY, and MENTORING

How the seminary-church partnership equips future leaders.

eminary is more than just a place to earn an advanced degree. It's more than mastering classical theology. It's where the next generation of Christian leaders are nurtured and fed so they can rise to the challenge of leading the church. But this task is too large and too critical for seminaries to handle alone. That's why it's becoming increasingly important that seminaries and churches work together to educate future ministry leaders, as both institutions offer unique perspectives

and are able to support students in a variety of issues, such as leading a congregation, financing an advanced degree, and providing mentorship.

Here's how the partnership between church and seminary is equipping today's students for long, fruitful careers that will ultimately further the kingdom of God.

Providing Ministry Opportunities

Seminaries are called to grow and develop the future leaders of the church. In order to do this well, seminary students

must be deeply entrenched within the church. "One of our core values is church connectedness," says Wayne Johnson, PhD, director of the master of divinity program at Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois. "Seminaries can do a lot of things really well, but there are some things you cannot learn unless you are in the ministry context and doing those things."

Although Trinity is rooted in the Evangelical Free Church of America, it serves many different denominations and works hard to build relationships

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with each one. And that relationship starts before students step foot on campus. Trinity depends on churches to identify and support potential seminary students. "We are personally committed to the idea that students need to be grounded in the church," Dr. Johnson explains. "Our ideal is that the student is guided and sent . . . and supported by the church. So the church feels like the students are their own."

Once a student enrolls at Trinity, the church-seminary relationship is further fostered through mentoring programs. Trinity has partnered with several churches across the nation that offer intensive internships for seminary students. This type of union assists students by not only giving them real-world experience, but also helping them find permanent placements after graduation. "We encourage all of our students to get prepared for placement," Dr. Johnson explains. "We want to see churches sending students, and we want to see students knowing where they are going [after graduation] because they've already been connected."

One such partnership is with Christ Community Church in Kansas City. The two have built a pastoral residency program modeled on a medical school residency. Christ Community conducts interviews and chooses three candidates a year, and they also provide each student with a scholarship for his or her final year of seminary. In exchange, these students will serve two-year fellowships as associate pastors at Christ Community after graduation.

During these fellowships seminary grads are intentionally exposed to different ministries to give them practical experience. Once they've completed their fellowships, students are better prepared to take on a variety of ministry challenges. "We want to keep our students involved in the church during seminary," Dr. Johnson says. "Then we want to send them out to churches who will continue to develop them. We are working together and hope it is a seamless progression: from the church, into the seminary, and back into the church."

Sharing the Cost

When you add up the cost of college, a graduate degree, and a PhD, it's more than most people can afford, let alone ministry leaders. Advanced degrees

While not every
Christian is called
to enter the ministry,
many are called to
financially support
their local seminary.
... donations from
church members
make it possible for
many seminary
students to continue
their education.

are expensive but often necessary for a deeper, richer understanding of ministry roles. The education that students attain during seminary prepares them for a lifetime of service.

While not every Christian is called to enter the ministry, many are called to financially support their local seminary. And that support doesn't have to come in the form of a substantial annuity or check. Every little bit adds up. According to Brian Blount, PhD, professor of New Testament and president at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, the donations from church members make it possible for many seminary students to continue their education.

"Those who commit their lives to ministry don't do it for the financial reward," Dr. Blount says. "We know they won't have jobs that will pay them well enough to pay off all their debt. That's why it's so vital to have financial partnerships with churches."

Such partnerships allow Union to highly subsidize the cost of tuition for their students. In fact, because of generous donations, Union students who are members of the Presbyterian Church have the full amount of their tuition covered. Committed to the education of students from other denominational backgrounds as well, Union offers financial aid packages that cover up to 75 percent of tuition costs.

But the financial assistance doesn't stop there. In many cases, residential students receive aid for housing and other school-related fees. "Our residential students leave everything behind—jobs, homes, friends—to attend seminary.... We do a very good job of making sure they have very little debt when they graduate and enter the ministry," Dr. Blount says.

Union also strives to diminish the financial burdens of those who attend their commuter campus in Charlotte, North Carolina. These students continue to hold their current jobs while completing seminary degrees on weekends. Because they still receive paychecks and have the support of a sending church, this type of degree program is a perfect fit for a three-way financial commitment between the church, the seminary, and the student. Each partner is responsible for paying a third of the tuition costs, which eases the financial burden for all parties.

Union has worked hard to build an endowment so seminary students can focus on completing their education and furthering the kingdom, rather than on how to finance their education. But the key to keeping the endowment healthy is a partnership with churches and even individual church members. Every gift makes a difference in the life of a student. "This isn't coming from just one individual," Blount explains. "Without individual church members, we could not do what we do. We depend on the generosity of people who continue to write checks year after year so we can educate future church leaders."

Engaging and Mentoring

Ministry leaders are constantly adapting to changes in the culture and their own churches. What they learned in seminary 20 years ago, while still theologically relevant, may not meet the real-world challenges they see in their congregants today. Just as the world changes, the church must also adapt in order to continue reaching people. So ministry leaders need a place where they can receive lifelong support and mentoring, engage, and find new ideas. That's what the graduates of Talbot School of Theology at Biola University in La Mirada, California, can expect to find through Talbot Support Ministries.

"The goal is to maintain and forge stronger relationships with alumni who are out serving in local churches," explains Dr. Clint Arnold, dean of Talbot School of Theology. "We find this helpful



for us, too, as a faculty, because it enables us to have a finger on the pulse of what is really going on in the churches."

Too often people earn their degrees and settle into their new lives while slowly losing contact with their seminaries. But Talbot wants to be more than just the source of a diploma. Instead, they want to be engaged in the lives of their graduates even years after they've earned their degrees.

Talbot has a team that meets with alumni on their home church campuses to help them tackle issues unique to their churches. And while many people have come to rely on technology today, Talbot is committed to fostering relationships. "Visiting the church and sitting down and having a meal together is just so much better," Dr. Arnold explains. "We try to be as personable as possible."

Even though he prefers face-toface meetings, Dr. Arnold acknowledges that sometimes it's not possible to arrange personal visits. And not everyone can enroll in seminary either. So Talbot created online courses to support Christians who desire to dig Ministry leaders are constantly adapting to changes in the culture and their own churches. What they learned in seminary 20 years ago, while still theologically relevant, may not meet the real-world challenges they see in their congregants today.

deeper into theology. Their entire undergraduate biblical study course is offered online and free of charge at biola.edu. Dr. Arnold explains, "We are trying to be much more openhanded with this precious treasure, and we

want to serve the church way beyond our Southern California roots."

Another online tool that's popular with alumni, church leaders, and laypeople is The Good Book Blog. It's Talbot's faculty blog that represents their diverse specialties and shared commitment to biblical authority via posts on a variety of topics, such as spiritual formation, ethics, interpretations of Bible passages, and even a professor's reflections on his father's death. It's a practical resource for anyone looking for biblical scholarship relating to today's culture.

Talbot is actively trying to break free of the campus barrier and engage directly with the church and Christians. "Fundamentally, I would say Talbot is thoroughly committed to the local church, to encourage and support them in any way we can," Dr. Arnold says. "This is why we exist, and it's a part of who we are."

Amy Adair lives in the Chicago suburbs with her husband and three children. She is a freelance writer and editor. Her newest book is *One Thousand and One Tears*.



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YOU CAN'T LEARN THAT IN A CLASSROOM

A pastoral internship provides ministry tools and direction.



old Avenue Christian Reformed Church (CRC) is situated in the heart of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Since 1917, it's been a fixture in a part of the city that's now plagued

with high crime and unemployment. But the church doors have remained open, offering hope and refuge to the community. Across town is Calvin Theological Seminary, home to hundreds of seminary students since 1876. Calvin has worked hard to prepare future leaders to serve in churches like Gold Avenue CRC. The surroundings of the two institutions are radically different, but they're grounded in a common mission: fostering future ministry leaders.

Before receiving his MDiv from Calvin, David Westra served in an internship at Gold Avenue CRC back in 2006. That internship had such a profound effect on him that he became the senior pastor there in 2010. He then made

a commitment to mentor other Calvin graduates through an internship at the church. His desire is to help students apply what they learn in the classroom within an active ministry setting. The



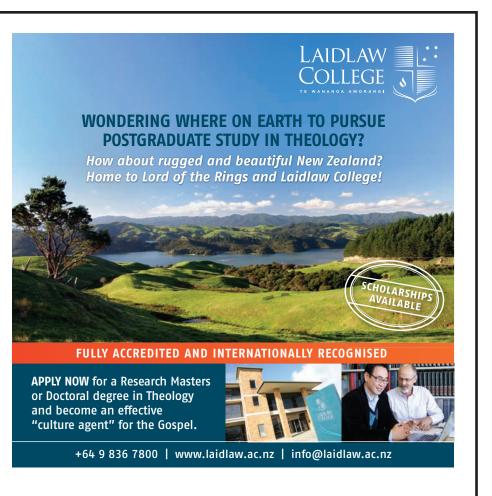
Matthew Burns

church, he says, plays an equal role with the seminary in educating students.

"I'm opposed to the thought that one can learn to proclaim, embody, and live the kingdom of God under the gracious lordship of Jesus Christ—the Christian life—in a classroom," Westra says.

In the summer of 2012, Westra hired Matthew Burns to fill an internship position as associate pastor. The internship lasted 10 weeks, but it was more than just a job. The two men viewed it as an extension of Burns's seminary education, during which Westra was intentional about mentoring Burns. They worked closely together and visited people in hospi-





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tals, jails, and homes. They attended regional meetings with local pastors to pray, share struggles, and network. They also had weekly meetings to talk about Burns's experiences, review church business, and simply pray together.

"I want the intern to have many of the ministry experiences that I have," Westra says. "I'd like for that person to be called 'Pastor' and develop a pastoral identity."

However, that identity is developed not just by standing behind the pulpit on Sunday mornings, but also in caring for people's basic needs. Actions, Burns learned, were just as important as any sermon. Burns helped at the church's weekly food pantry, which gave him experience serving others and helped build trust with the congregation. Even though Burns was technically just an intern, the community openly accepted him.

According to Westra, working side by side with the community is an essential component in seminary education. "Ministering or administrating the purposes of God to and for other people is hard to do in a classroom," Westra says. "It's something that, first and foremost, needs to be learned inside a community where there is deep trust and a mutual covenant of love through the Lord Jesus."

Through this day-to-day work—embracing people in times of crisis and sharing God's love—Burns's education finally took root. Although he was pursuing a master of divinity and was well versed in theology, he'd never applied what he learned to an actual church. The pieces of his education—courses in theology, philosophy, and biblical studies—finally fit together with his love and passion for serving others. The seminary nurtured his love, but the church is where he practiced it.

Burns was also tasked with preaching duties. His professors had explained that one must understand the needs and the context of church members before preparing a sermon. Therefore, a sermon that meets the needs of one church may be completely wrong for another. Burns realized that people who slip into the pews on Sunday morning aren't looking for structured programming or even a perfectly timed church service. They're simply looking for God.

"There was something really

beautiful and refreshing about getting a chance to tell people the Good News of the gospel in as simple a way as possible," Burns says. "To know theology is extremely important; but it's also good to know that sometimes when you're working with people, what's needed is not a quote from text but rather self-aware, self-giving love. It also involves knowing what to do with what you know and [recognizing those times] when what you know may not be as important."

Unlike other churches Burns attended, Gold Avenue's worship service was very free-flowing, with much of the time dedicated to public prayer. There are no pretenses at Gold Avenue, no dress code; and no problem is too large to bring before the congregation in prayer. The sermons are actually the shortest part of the service.

Calvin taught Burns the method for preaching, and Gold Avenue gave him a weekly pulpit with a congregation eager to worship. According to both Burns and Westra, the two must go hand in hand to help a young pastor find his own voice.

While Burns continued to draw on his classes at Calvin, Westra actively mentored him. Each day brought new challenges that the two walked through together. "I believe that if an intern is to really learn from me, then he or she needs to know me, to hear my honest questions, struggles, concerns," Westra says. "That person needs to see me in my frailty and dependence upon the Lord."

After 10 weeks, Matthew Burns finished his internship at Gold Avenue, and Westra hired another intern from Calvin to continue his vision of helping shape seminary graduates. "I'm hopeful that our church will provide a safe, nurturing environment—grace space—in which seminary students can learn to cooperate with God in the nurturing and care of people (body, soul, and spirit), and in administering God's purposes to the lives of those God entrusts to us," Westra says.

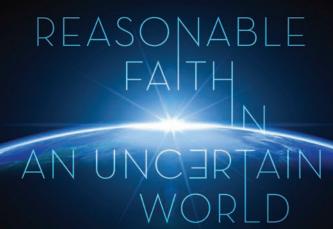
Burns, a 2013 Calvin Theological Seminary graduate, was approved by the Christian Reformed Church and deemed eligible to be called by a church. So far he hasn't found the right fit. But he's eager to find a place where he can grow and develop as a leader.

— А. А.

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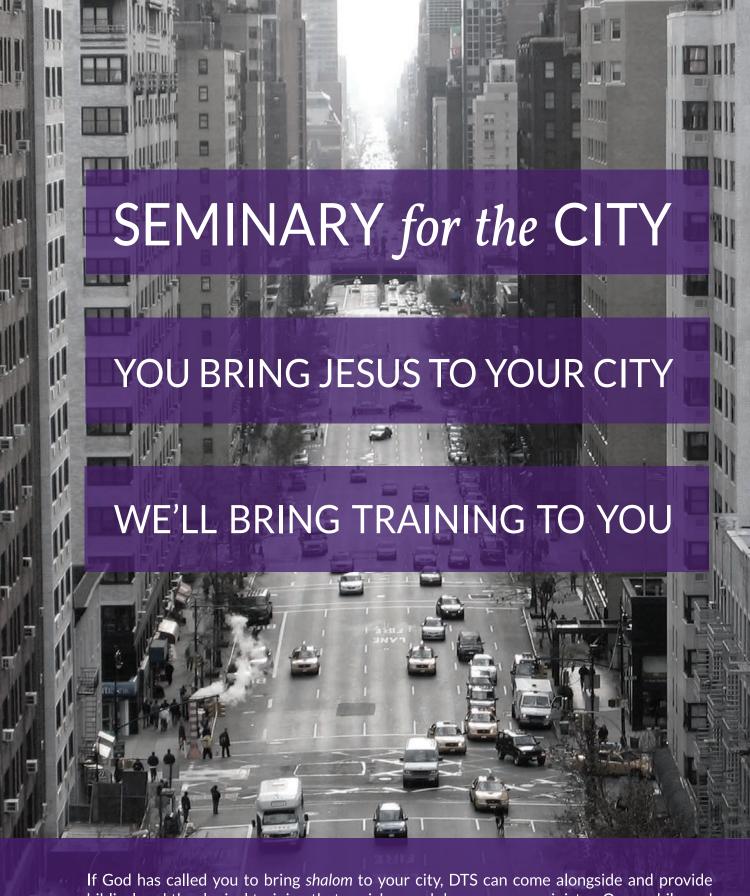
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Two former pastors help connect seminary learning and real-life ministry.

fter 24 years as a pastor, Kurt Fredrickson, PhD, was ready for the next step in his career, and teaching seemed like a natural fit. So when there was an opening at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, he knew he had something to offer the students: pastoral experience. He is now serving as the associate dean for doctor of ministry and continuing education, and the assistant professor of pastoral ministry at Fuller.

"I know the tough stuff of being a pastor," says Dr. Fredrickson. "And that real-world knowledge has made Fuller's program so much better. My years of experience as a pastor get people thinking

more about the connection between seminary and the church."

While Dr. Fredrickson acknowledges that all seminary students need a rich



Kurt Fredrickson

background in theology, he also believes there is room in every program to focus on the day-to-day issues that a pastor will likely face. He shares with his students about the challenges of balancing various demands—preaching, budgets, weddings, funerals—while making time to rest and recharge.

Dr. Fredrickson admits that for the first half of his career, he didn't do a very good job of finding time to rejuvenate. Like so many young pastors, he felt like he had to address every crisis personally. After all, he believed it was the pastor's job to always be available. Looking back, he realizes how unhealthy and dangerous that workaholic mindset can be. "Too many pastors burn out," Dr. Fredrickson admits. "They need a Sabbath and spiritual refreshment."

Fredrickson eventually carved out a Sabbath for himself, a time to focus on

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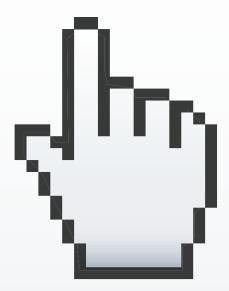
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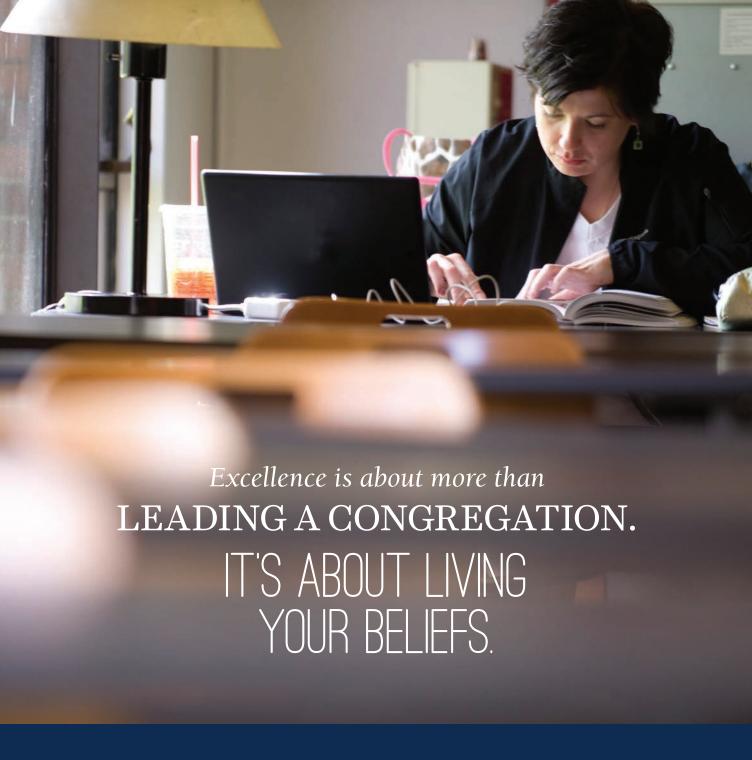
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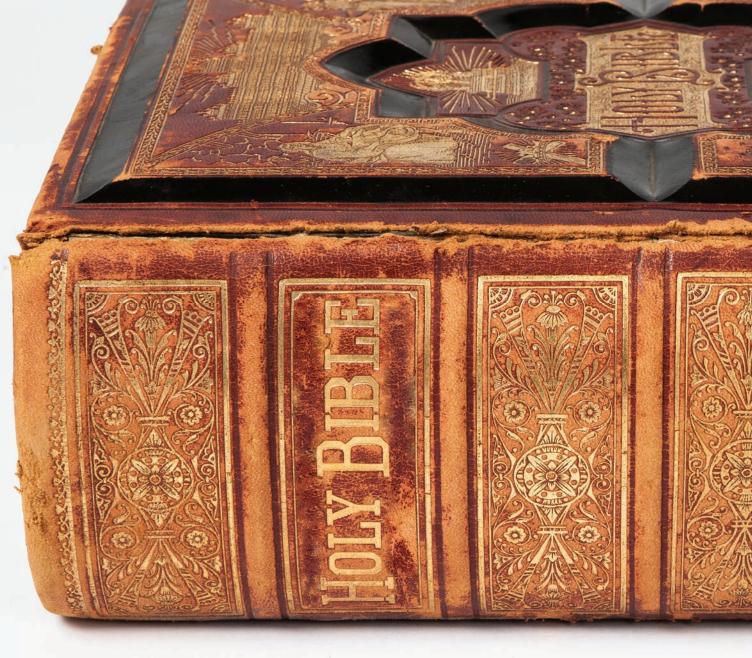
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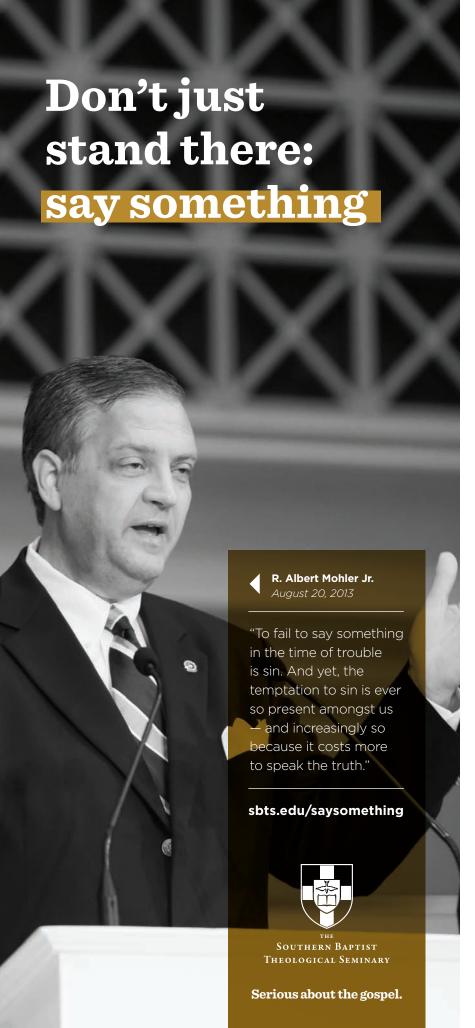
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his own spiritual and family life. But it wasn't until he'd spent years feeling exhausted and drained. He hopes to help his doctoral students—who are pursuing their degrees while remaining active in full-time ministry—to recognize and avoid this condition. Mentoring students to take care of their own spiritual lives is one of the joys he's discovered through his second career as a professor.

He starts by building spiritual refreshment into each of his courses, beginning every class with Scripture, prayer, and hymns. "I don't disconnect worship and intellectual life," he explains. "Those things need to go together. Ministry is head, heart, and hands."

Fredrickson recently wrote *That* Their Work Will Be a Joy: Understanding and Coping with the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry (Cascade Books, 2012), which explores how pastors wrestle with the psychological issues of ministry. He admits the church can be a messy place. Helping pastors find a work-life balance actually keeps the church healthy. "Pastors need to take good care of themselves," Dr. Fredrickson says. "If they are not healthy, they can become toxic people who can hurt others."

It's a stern warning. But with two decades of church experience, Dr. Fredrickson is well-equipped to prepare his students for the struggles they will face. "I say hard things," Dr. Fredrickson admits. "You can give students all these lofty academic ideas, but it has to relate to the real world. Too often the seminary is a lofty academic place, and the church is a practical place where everything happens. There has to be a partnership between the two."

Bridging the Seminary-Church Divide

Dr. Jim Singleton spent nearly three decades as a pastor. Early in his pastoral career, he thought he'd end up teaching full-time. But the years passed and he became deeply involved in his church. Then, in 2012, when he was 55 years old, he received a call from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, Massachusetts: Would he be interested in a full-time teaching position?

It was a hard decision. He loved his church, and he loved being a pastor. But he simply felt called to help shape future leaders of the church. "Teaching is something I've always wanted to do," Dr. Singleton says. "One of my

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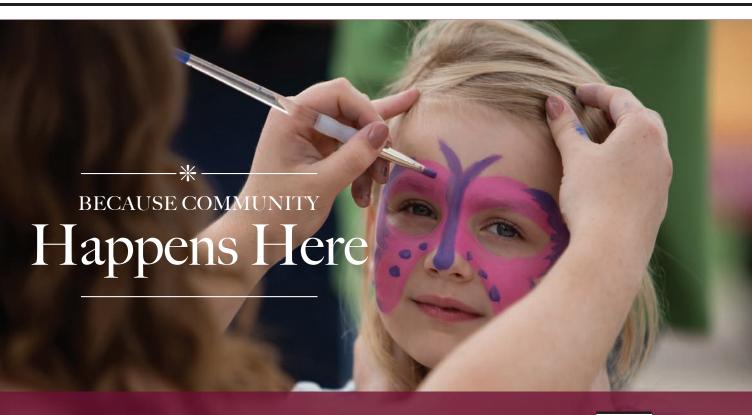




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greatest joys was working with my associate pastors. I loved seeing them grow and develop, so it's a natural thing for me to watch the young students in the seminary grow and develop."

Although he has an advanced degree, Dr. Singleton says the perspective of the church—not academia—has molded his identity and his slant on life.



Jim Singleton

"I think the seminary knew they needed someone from the real world on the faculty, as a way of bridging the issues that sometimes divide the two." Dr. Singleton says.

As the associate professor of pastoral

leadership and evangelism, Dr. Singleton was tasked with helping students understand some of the issues they will face in church life. His introductory course in pastoral leadership is designed to give students a readiness for the daily challenges of ministry. He prepares them for weddings, funerals, and budgets, as well as working with staff

and church members. In the class he covers all kinds of topics, including how to hire and fire staff. On the final exam, students are given a church's budget and asked to identify the five key values of that church based on its finances.

"Most seminary students haven't thought much about leadership," Dr. Singleton says. "They think if they preach well enough, they will make changes. But there is a certain art in leadership that is not intuitive. Most people love the thought of ministry, but many of them are not prepared to lead something."

Although he's taught at Gordon-Conwell for only a year, Dr. Singleton has gained great satisfaction from shaping future church leaders for realworld experiences. "The big lesson is that this is about people and people growing to become like Christ," says Dr. Singleton. "It's messy. It's complicated. But at the end of the day, it is so worth it. You have a chance to observe the Holy Spirit working, and there is nothing more satisfying than that."

— А. А.





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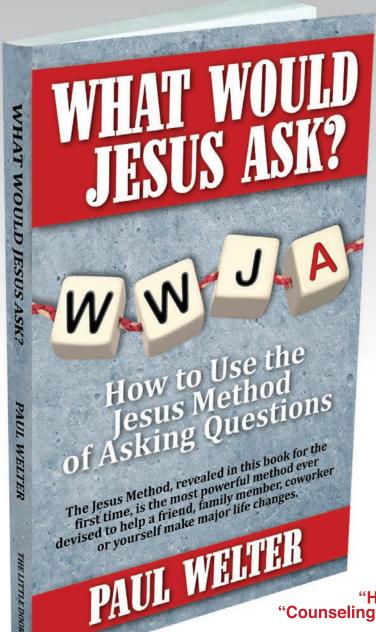
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Tom Hill CGA STAFF WRITER

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I found a few stand-in fathers through music. My safety zone was my bedroom, where I played with G.I. Joes and listened to Johnny Cash. Any Cash album I could get my hands on became my soundtrack. To me, Cash was the wooing voice of God. He sang of wearing black to honor the voiceless, and that he'd wear black until Jesus returns and makes it all right.

MEETING THE MAN IN BLACK

IN 1975, my dad took me to a Cash concert at the Circle Star Theater in San Francisco. After the show we waited with a dozen or so other fans by the side door. A black Lincoln pulled up, but this one wasn't there to kidnap me. Cash showed up soon after and shook a few hands before getting in the car. My dad knocked on the car window. "Mr. Cash, Mr. Cash—you didn't say hello to my son." Cash got out of the car, walked over to me, looked down, and said, "Hello, son, I'm Johnny Cash." Then he shook my hand. That encounter and his music sustained me as I continued searching for a father who would stay.

I moved out my senior year of high school, joined the army, and swiftly got kicked out. I considered becoming a comedian. I would start off slapstick, then pull up the curtain and hit the audience with the truth. In order to do that, though, I needed to know the truth. And I realized I had nothing to say. I wanted to scream but ended up silent.

In 1987, just as I was about to wear out my cassette tapes of *Boy* and *War*, U2 released *The Joshua Tree*. Arguably the Dublin rock band's magnum opus, it helped me center and remember that life was more than smoking pot and doing cocaine. That year, I went to see them in concert (yakked out on coke and tequila, still). The last song of the night was "40."

Out of nowhere, a wind of grace blew over me. It wasn't the lyrics that got me ("I waited patiently for the Lord / He inclined and heard my cry")—I had no idea they were based on Psalm 40. It was the music and the people singing together. Up to this point in my life, I felt like I had been standing in the middle of a circle, punching wildly at the air so no one could hurt me. But here I was drenched in a universal love, and immediately sobered. The mass of voices carried me toward the arms of God.

This moment was profound but fleeting. I carried on, chained to voiceless anger. I graduated from a state college—the first in my family to do so—where I was a resident assistant. I landed an internship at NBC, started a business. But my stabs at a few different careers didn't pan out, and I ended up working for my dad selling garlic for a couple years, then kicking around dead-end jobs. I was starting to realize I couldn't manufacture my own joy.

THE VOICE

ONE NIGHT in 1995, I was driving around listening to Nirvana, flipping off people who were lined up outside of bars. My middle finger was my life statement. With my mouth sealed shut, I was saying that their games were meaningless, even though I couldn't have told any of them what was meaningful.

Later that night, lying in bed in my apartment in San Jose, I heard a voice. It both was and wasn't audible. *Give me 100 percent. You've never given me 100 percent.* I knew right away that it was the God I'd heard about in churches growing up, the God I had started to believe might exist at the U2 concert.

I realized then that I had never talked to God. I had only talked to God's people. In that moment, he was asking me to see him for himself, just like I wanted to be seen for myself. I said aloud, "All right. I'll give you 100 percent." I had nothing to lose.

I got out of bed and grabbed a Bible from the leather-bound, gold-embossed, soft-cover, youth-version, latest-version pile I had collected over the years. The majority of what I had heard in church hadn't stuck, but I did remember that the Psalms were in the middle of the Bible. I devoured their words as if they were the lyrics on the liner notes of a Cash album. They were deep and rich. They had street

I devoured the Psalms as if they were the lyrics on the liner notes of a Cash album. They had street cred. I started to think, Man, this might be true.

cred. I started to think, *Man, this might be true*. Even though I hadn't slept well for years, that night I slept like a baby.

The next morning, I was driving around listening to U2's *Rattle and Hum* when the song "Hawkmoon 269" came on:

Like a desert needs rain Like a town needs a name I need your love. . . .

Like coming home
And you don't know where you've
been
Like black coffee
Like nicotine
I need your love

I pulled the car over and started weeping. I didn't just hear Larry Mullen's drumbeat at the end of the song—I felt it with my being. His bass drum was smashing Satan in the face, each hit loosening his grasp on my life. It called me from violence and combat to chivalry and cocreating. It called me to a strength that was for justice and gave me hope. All the chains I'd been dragging around, all the screaming and no one listening—it all shattered and fell away.

When the song ended, I looked up to see a woman watering her lawn. Sitting in the car, a snotty, sobbing mess, I watched the water fall from the hose, the sun sparkling and dancing off the drops, lighting them up like jewels. They were clear and pure and radiant, and it was ordinary and everyday, right there for me to see. I knew God was there, with the woman watering her lawn, with all of us.

I was raised from the dead by the God of love. It's just that simple in a way I can't deny. I was dead. Now I'm alive. Because my story is now a salvation story, I have a voice. I don't have to duct-tape fruit to the vine. I see the fruit of my resurrection every day. The Work of the People (the media ministry I founded) is living, breathing proof of the fruit that resurrection brings.

Because of union with my heavenly Father, I'm becoming less and less fatherless. It's the truth at the heart of my being a husband and, yes, a father: God wants you to know he loves you very much. God is running toward you with a robe, a ring, and a party. That's about all you need to know.

TRAVIS REED is founder of the Work of the People and lives in Cypress, Texas.



Running to Stand Still

How God saved me through a U2 album and a divine voice.

By Travis Reed, Photographed by Zach McNair

T AGE 13, I was baptized by my first stepfather. The baptism capped off an emotional high I had contracted at a recent church camp. To be honest, I was baptized because I wanted to date the pastor's daughter and assumed baptism was a prerequisite. And, to be more honest, I believed that having my stepfather baptize me might make him stick around. It was the same reason I intentionally lost our basketball games.

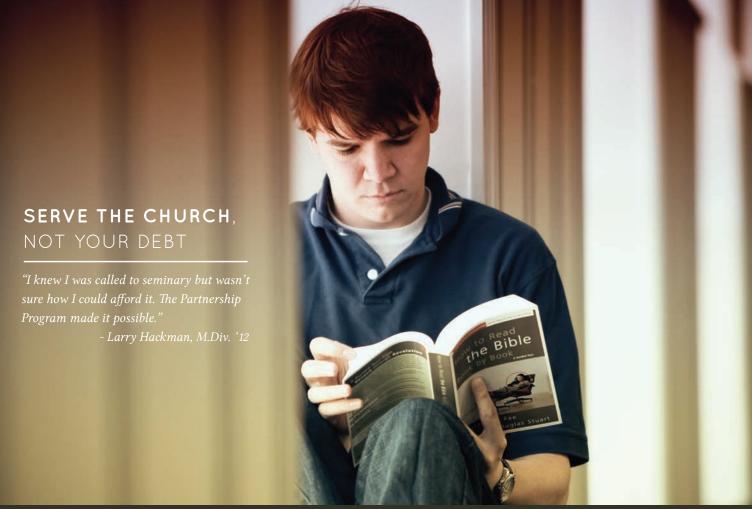
Three days after he raised me out of the font, my stepfather beat up my mom and me and ran off with the wife of a youth leader at our small church. We never saw him again.

Our family didn't talk about the strange events that dotted my childhood. Like the time I was almost kidnapped when I was 8. My parents were hosting a party in our home in Santa Rosa, California, while a friend and I played on our front lawn. A stranger showed up and began talking to us, laughing as she suddenly picked me up

and held me tight. While I screamed, she carried me around the corner, toward a black Lincoln sedan with the back door swung open. Hands emerged from the backseat to pull me inside while the woman started pushing me in. Right then, my dad and his friend arrived. The stranger jumped into the car and it sped away. My mom and dad never mentioned what had happened.

The well-meaning people in the churches that my mom and I cycled through also didn't mention my unusual life circumstances, including four different dads within four years. Whether big or small, in Santa Rosa or Sacramento, they were all suburban churches of the 1970s and early '80s, and they were very interested in saving me. This did not usually mean listening to me. They couldn't be present in the pain I was experiencing, and so my story felt stolen. I was without a father and without a voice.

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