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COVER STORY  28
Over there & over here
With a seemingly endless cycle of deployments, Fort Hood, Texas, endures more Iraq War deaths than any other American installation. The toll is wearying and produces a different kind of casualty at home by LYNN VINCENT

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White Hall is the new home of Union University’s biology and chemistry departments and the School of Nursing. Named for lead donor Roy L. White, the $20 million facility is the largest investment of its kind in Union’s 185-year history.

Opening the doors to White Hall is like uncovering a promise of future treasures.

“It will provide incredible opportunities for our students in the days ahead, things we could not have even imagined just a few years ago,” Union president David S. Dockery said at the building dedication in early May. “We are delighted with the prospects that this building holds for advancing excellence in the sciences and the entire academic program of Union.”

The main entry hall, with its red oak paneled walls, leads to nearly 65-thousand square feet of classroom, laboratory and office space. Biology, chemistry and nursing each occupy entire floors dedicated to their respective disciplines.

These departments are nearly finished moving into three undergraduate student research suites, 20 teaching laboratories, a Nuclear Magnetic Resonance facility, 42 offices, seven lecture halls and three conference rooms.

What White Hall affords in the study of sciences is a dream come true for students, faculty and the community. Union students have access to the best laboratory facilities and study opportunities. They learn from faculty who successfully integrate top-tier academics with a Christian worldview in every discipline.
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Labs are equipped with the latest in technology, wireless computer hubs and safety measures which include emergency shut-offs for each room. Many labs are designed for specific studies such as analytical chemistry, microbiology and gross anatomy.

White Hall’s main entrance is flanked with lit display cabinets on one side and a 750 gallon aquarium on the other. The aquarium will contain freshwater fish. The entry leads to a massive three-story interior space with a levels devoted to biology, chemistry and nursing.

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Classrooms in White Hall are designed to take advantage of the latest learning techniques. Some have retractable air ducts for use during classroom experiments.

Workers put the finishing touches on White Hall in spring 2007. In addition to a generous lead gift from Roy White, companies throughout West Tennessee made major gifts to invest in the training of future scientists and health professionals.

Enrollment at Union has increased 52% since 1995. The university now offers more than 100 programs of undergraduate study and is ranked as a top-tier Master’s university in the South by U.S. News & World Report. As students gain acceptance to the nation’s top graduate schools or start jobs with top companies, they take with them an education fully integrated with a Christian worldview.

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The "Pledge of Allegiance" was first published in 1892 and was widely recited in schools soon thereafter. It has been amended several times, and the most recent revision came in 1954 with the addition of the phrase "under God" following the words "one nation." This addition grew out of a desire to include a reference to Deity in keeping with the beliefs of America's founding fathers. The phrase "under God" was aptly chosen because Abraham Lincoln reportedly used the expression, "this Nation under God," in his immortal "Gettysburg Address." For several decades, students in public schools all over America have recited the pledge with the words "under God." Now those words are under legal attack.

William J. Murray, son of famed atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, contends in his latest book, The Pledge: One Nation Under God, that atheistic forces, spearheaded by the ACLU are engaging in a religious cleansing of American society. Murray outlines the history of early-American settlers and their overall reliance upon God in every phase of life. He continues to trace today's secular progression of American society and insists that war is being waged not only for religious freedom, but also for freedom itself. The protection of the "Pledge of Allegiance" and the phrase "under God" is just one battle in this overall war.

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Kill the bill
Congress can’t unscramble the immigration egg, but others can help digest it

CONGRESS AND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION may finally have gotten together to do us a favor. By so much as suggesting that they might pass and then sign into law the immigration bill over which they are now supposedly finding some agreement, they have put the spotlight on something that dare not happen.

There is no immigration bill—not a single possible creation of the present U.S. Congress and administration—that would be better than no immigration bill at all. And the one now before Congress should be opposed on every ground conceivable.

I say that reluctantly, because for a year and more I’ve been hoping our nation might do something creative, constructive, compassionate, and just about the 12 million people who have reportedly seeped through our borders illegally and taken up some kind of residence here, temporary or otherwise.

But the longer the squabble goes on—and it’s far too juvenile to be dignified by calling it a substantive debate—the more it becomes clear that our elected officials are incapable of doing something that is creative, constructive, compassionate, and just.

Even more embarrassingly, they appear incapable of doing anything even halfway simple. Any new law that runs over 1,000 pages is wrong on the face of it, and should be opposed by any and every honest politician. Who can obey a law nobody will ever, ever read?

So in terms of those immigrants who are already here, just don’t pass any new laws at all. Enforce the old laws (if anybody anywhere still has any idea what those old laws are), but don’t make matters worse by trying to do something better when you’ve proven you don’t have a ghost of an idea how.

And maybe, while looking over the old laws that could use that new round of enforcement, see if there are perhaps also some friendly ways of encouraging a few of those 12 million people to drink more deeply from the fountain that is so uniquely American. Find some incentives to nudge them toward learning English. Do things that will make them want to be part of us, not separate from us. Assimilate them. It’s almost certainly too late to do anything else. Find ways to encourage societal units other than the government (in fact, almost anybody other than the government) to do these things—units like churches, Sunday school classes, youth groups, civic groups, school groups, and other volunteer clusters.

The alternative will be to do unthinkable things. Never in our nation’s history have we even thought about removing from among us a group of people of such a size—a population equivalent to that of Ohio or Illinois, and smaller only than the four states of California, Texas, New York, or Florida. Actually doing it would be traumatic. Small and medium-sized businesses, and perhaps even regional economies, would be pulverized. Families would be torn apart—families that right now often show more togetherness and mutual loyalty than so many of our own native family units. It’s worth noting that no one opposing so-called “amnesty” has offered a workable plan for rounding up 12 million people and sending them home.

What about the borders? Secure them, of course, as quickly and authoritatively as we can. Welcome through those borders, at the appropriate places, those who demonstrate a right to come and who have their paperwork in order. Tell the others we’re sorry, and that they should work toward a legitimate application. And yes, show them that we mean it and enforce that denial.

But look over the past of characters promoting the current immigration bill, and your heart will sag. Bipartisanship may have its place, but when you honestly can’t figure out any longer what anyone’s motivation is, it’s probably best to back off. This immigration horse we’re chasing down is pretty big, to be sure; but as a preacher friend of mine said once in the middle of a church business meeting that had gotten overly complicated, “We’ve got more harness here than we’ve got horse.”

It’s a mess. But no one’s ever found a way yet to unscramble an egg. We’re far better off to eat this one, get what nourishment we can in the process, and learn from it how to do things better in the future.
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Remember the Alamo

RELIGION: Is the battle for the Bible really over? by R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.

It was America’s bicentennial year, but not all the fireworks were about the nation’s birthday. That same year, Harold Lindsey, then editor emeritus of Christianity Today, lit a fuse of his own with the publication of The Battle for the Bible.

Lindsey’s book was an exposé of a spreading liberalism within evangelicalism—and with special reference to the Southern Baptist Convention. “At this moment in history the great bulk of Southern Baptists are theologically orthodox and do believe that the Word of God is inerrant,” he advised. Even still he warned that if Southern Baptists committed to inerrancy did not act soon, “the rougher the battle will be, the more traumatic the consequences, and the less obvious the outcome in favor of historic Christianity.”

Southern Baptists did not hesitate. In 1979 they elected Adrian Rogers, pastor of the famed Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, as president—and the battle was joined. What later became known as the “Conservative Resurgence” in the SBC began in earnest, and conservatives eventually captured the boards of all of the denomination’s national institutions. The “Battle for the Bible” was won by those who insisted that biblical inerrancy is so vital to the health of the church that it was worth dividing the Convention over the issue if necessary.

This week the Southern Baptist Convention convenes for its annual meeting in San Antonio. The last time the Convention met here, the voting “messengers” elected Jerry Vines of Florida as president—by 692 votes out of 32,727 cast. Those were days of constant controversy and contested elections.

This year’s convention will be different. SBC President Frank Page, a prominent South Carolina pastor, is expected to be elected to a second term without opposition. Page represents a new generation
and is marked by a low-key style. There will be no long lines of buses from across the Convention idling outside the convention center, waiting for decisive votes to be cast. So much has changed. Adrian Rogers died in 2005. Jerry Vines retired last year as pastor of Jacksonville's First Baptist Church.

The SBC's seminaries, now under the control of conservative trustees and presidents, enroll a record number of young ministers, drawn to the conservative theology. But most of these students were not born when Adrian Rogers was elected in 1979. They were toddlers when the Convention made history in San Antonio in 1988. They are the generation without a living memory of the controversy and what was at stake.

To them, the election of Jerry Vines in 1988 is almost as remote as the struggle of Davy Crockett and the brave Texans at the Alamo.

A group of younger pastors and bloggers is now openly asking the question, Is the "Battle for the Bible" over? Some go further, arguing that the theological issues are settled, health has been returned, and the SBC should move on from theological preoccupations. Are they right?

The SBC is certainly in no danger of an organized liberal takeover. The more liberal elements have largely moved on to other groups and have little to do with the SBC. There will be no rematch on the question of biblical inerrancy in San Antonio.

Still, all is not well. The denomination is losing many of its young people, especially at the crucial transition between adolescence and adulthood. New controversies have emerged even as older fissures have been reopened. A generation that was playing Little League as the "Battle for the Bible" raged now includes some who loudly claim that the Conservative Resurgence has gone too far.

Not hardly. The incipient controversies of the present serve to remind Southern Baptists of what was at stake when we last met in San Antonio—and of where we would be if the Convention had headed in a very different direction. The issue of biblical inerrancy is as important today—and as in need of defining and defending—as it was then.

Southern Baptists will do well to remember what every Texan remembers when reminded of the Alamo: There are some battles worth fighting, some stories worth remembering, and some causes that never die.

G8 summit

President Bush urged 15 major nations to agree by the end of next year on a global target for reducing greenhouse gases. Each nation then would have to decide on how to achieve the goal.

White House officials said. The announcement marked a move away from Bush opposition to global targets on emissions, including the Kyoto Protocols, but drew expected criticism from environmental groups who said it was a stall tactic.

"If we wanted to put things off further, you'd have annual meetings at the UN for the next five years. If you want to accelerate it, we do a lot of groundwork in between the UN meetings so we can bring the work product to the UN meetings," said James Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

TB

Apparently earning frequent flier miles and getting married in Europe were more important to Atlanta attorney Andrew Speaker than following doctor's orders. The 31-year-old personal injury lawyer knew he had tuberculosis, a contagious, airborne respiratory disease, when he boarded a flight for...
Paris last month, but once there learned from doctors that it was an extensively drug-resistant strain considered especially dangerous. Despite warnings from federal health officials not to board another commercial flight, Speaker took four flights within Europe—from France to Greece to Italy to Czech Republic—before boarding a flight for Montreal, exposing dozens of passengers and crew members to the deadly disease, including about two dozen University of South Carolina students who sat near him on a flight home and now must undergo testing (anyone know a good personal injury lawyer?). Federal officials placed Speaker under quarantine in Atlanta, the first since 1963.

New Orleans

"The rich and the poor meet together and the Lord is the maker of them all. . . . Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it," read Desire Street Academy senior Jonathan Rochon, quoting Proverbs 22.

Despite two Hurricane Katrina-related relocations and flash floods in New Orleans’ 9th Ward on graduation day, the inner-city school for boys held its first commencement May 23. Fourteen young men, most of the first in their families to finish high school, received diplomas as rain fell and water rose—again—in 9th Ward streets outside (story, p. 48).

War zones

Two deadly helicopter crashes in less than a week show militants coordinating more ground-to-air attacks on U.S. forces. In Iraq a helicopter with two pilots aboard was shot down near Baquba May 29. As a quick-response team arrived on the scene, one of its vehicles hit a roadside bomb, killing eight U.S. soldiers altogether. In Afghanistan, Taliban militants shot down a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, killing five U.S. soldiers, a Canadian, and a Briton. NATO said troops going to the crash site in southern Helmand province were ambushed, and the unit called in an airstrike "to eliminate the enemy threat." At least: nine U.S. helicopters have been shot down this year, killing 30 military personnel.

For four years, Fort Hood, Texas, the nation’s largest military installation, has operated as a virtual revolving door for Iraq, its major units on second and third deployments into combat. The base has suffered nearly 400 casualties in Iraq this year, and its military community continues to absorb the most war fatalities. "People have begun to face the fact that not everyone comes home," said recently widowed Wendy Weikel. "I saw that at Memorial Day last year. A soldier came up to me and said, ‘I used to think Memorial Day was for barbecues. Now I get it’" (cover story, p. 20).

Venezuela

Despite the threat of riot police armed with live ammunition, tear gas, and water cannons, Caracas demonstrators continued street protests against President Hugo Chavez. Protests began when Chavez refused to renew the license of a popular independent TV station, RCTV, open since
1983 but critical of Chavez. At midnight May 27 a new state-run channel took its place. About 180 protesters were arrested, mostly university and high-school students. Chavez also began warning another independent channel, Globovision, over its protest coverage: "I recommend that you take a tranquilizer, because if not, I am going to do what is necessary."

Billy Graham

- Visitors to the new, presidential-style museum in Charlotte, N.C., honoring evangelist Billy Graham enter and exit the building through crosses as tall as 40 feet high, part of a controversial project that has at times even divided the Graham family. But a May 31 private dedication included former Presidents Carter, Clinton, and George H.W. Bush among 1,500 well-wishers. Billy Graham, 88, suffers from fluid on the brain, prostate cancer, and Parkinson’s disease, and is largely confined to his home in Montreat, N.C. After Graham toured the museum himself, his only complaint, according to son and successor Franklin Graham: "Too much Billy Graham."

Abortion on the big screen

FILM: Cannes festival prize goes to Romanian director by MEGAN BASHAM

THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL’S TOP prize, the Palme d’Or, went this year to Four Months, Three Weeks, and Two Days, a Romanian film about illegal abortion under Ceausescu’s communist dictatorship. The title refers to the age of a baby in the womb when the film’s protagonist helps her friend terminate its life. After beating out 21 other entries, including some by well-known Hollywood powerhouses like Quentin Tarantino and the Coen Brothers, the film’s director, Cristian Mungiu, expressed surprise and delight. Accepting the award from actress Jane Fonda, he exclaimed, "It looks a little bit to me like a fairytale." Earlier in the week he defended the movie’s content at a press conference, arguing that it is not so much about abortion as it is about how Ceausescu’s regime controlled people’s lives down to the most intimate details.

Mungiu went on to say his victory signals good news for small filmmakers as it proves "you don’t necessarily need a big budget and a lot of stars."

Some might say this has been proven many times over at Cannes where big-name winners are the exception rather than the rule, and stories of sadness typically trump lighter fare. As in previous years, themes of loss, death, and aging dominated the 2007 event. Reporters who endured Cannes’ entire 12-day run described the lineup as “bleak,” “dark,” and “depressing.” France’s largest news organization, Agence France-Presse, even called the festival “death-obsessed.”

With the exception of Michael Moore’s 2004 anti-Bush documentary, Fahrenheit 9/11, in the last decade every film honored with the Palme d’Or has focused or tragedy. Last year’s winner, The Wind That Shakes the Barley, told the story of one brother who must execute another during the Irish Civil War; 2005’s top prize went to L’Enfant, a Belgian film about a homeless man who sells his baby on the black market; and in 2003, Elephant, a sparse American-made movie that explored the massacre at Columbine High School, received the prestigious award.

However, Mungiu was accurate on one point when he commented, “This story in which we believe so much, is going to reach lots of people now.”

Since its win on May 27, Four Months, Three Weeks, and Two Days has sold to distribution companies in Britain, Australia, Germany, Spain, Italy, Japan, and South Korea, as well as to IFC in the United States. Previous Palme d’Or winners like The Pianist, Dancer in the Dark, and Pulp Fiction went on to receive wide acclaim and impressive box-office numbers from audiences around the world.

The victory also bodes well for Mungiu’s career. Tarantino (Kill Bill, Grind House), the Coen Brothers (O Brother, Where Art Thou; Fargo), and Steven Soderbergh (Traffic, Erin Brockovich) were virtual unknowns before winning at Cannes.
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**Homeless scholar**

An Orlando teen overcame a lot to graduate in May with a 3.7 GPA. Not only does Daniel Lazzatti have a learning disability but he also has a living disability: He’s homeless. The young man said he’s been living in a shed behind a friend’s house while attending Edgewater High School. After a local television station aired his story, many generous Orlando-area residents offered him cash, cars, and even a permanent place to stay. Lazzatti apparently refused it all, saying he’s not looking for a handout. “If people really use this inspirational story in their everyday lives to make them work better, then I would feel a lot better,” the teen told Orlando’s Local 6.

**Getting their goats**

Two news items from the Oakland Fire Department: First, Oakland police say a gunman with a small-caliber weapon shot dead 15 fire-fighting goats. Second, the Oakland fire department apparently employs fire-fighting goats to munch on undergrowth and weeds deemed to be fire hazards in the Kings Estates Recreation Area. It’s not the first time Oakland’s finest have had problems with their goats. Apparently some California residents have made a habit of taking pot shots at the grazing goats, but the shootings have steadily escalated recently from pellet-gun attacks to small-arms fire. “It just looks like for some reason, someone shot them,” Dave Cronin of the Oakland Animal Shelter said. “It’s disturbing behavior for a lot of reasons. This behavior is often times indicative of much more violent behavior to come.”

**Virgin birth**

Let’s hear it for the girls, at least the hammerhead shark girls. A joint Northern Ireland and U.S. research project found that female hammerhead sharks are able to fertilize their own eggs without the need for a male. Scientists had their curiosity piqued when a baby shark mysteriously showed up in the shark tank at a Nebraska zoo. And while the tank had three potential hammerhead mothers, there was no male in the tank—and none of the three mothers had been around a male in more than three years. Still skeptical, some researchers assumed the mother had simply stored away a male’s sperm from before. But that odd theory had pitfalls too. Usually mothers can only store sperm for months. And a DNA study of the baby shark revealed it had no chromosomal contribution from a male parent. The findings put the shark on the list with some insects and other rare reptiles and fish as animals able to procreate asexually.

**Udderly pampered**

A Spanish farm just outside Madrid thinks it has found the secret to the perfect pint of milk. Owners of the Chirigota farm have instructed farm hands to treat the livestock like residents at a five-star hotel. The cows get waterbeds, sprinklers, and electronic brushes—but the biggest effect on milk quality, farm owners say, is the dulcet tones of Mozart blasted through loudspeakers at milking time. And not just any Mozart. Nicolas Sieber, head of marketing for the milking farm, says that since playing Mozart’s concerto for flute and harp in D major, the cows’ milk yield has increased from about 29 liters to somewhere between 30 and 35 liters every day. “It is relaxing music for them but at the same time it is dynamic, it keeps the cows active,” Sieber said. “The trick is not to have music too relaxing.”

**Head case**

Michael Lusher apparently didn’t know what hit him—until four hours later. Authorities say the 37-year-old man from Altizer, W.Va., was sleeping in his mobile home when a bullet struck him in the head. Lusher continued sleeping for four hours, when he awoke to notice blood coming from his head. Cpl. R.H. McQuaid of the Cabell County Sheriff’s Department told the Associated Press that traveling through two walls slowed the bullet before it hit Lusher: “We’re just glad he didn’t suffer any life-threatening injuries with a head wound.”
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Off course

MOVIES: Third Pirates installment suffers from too much confusion, not enough Jack Sparrow by MEGAN BASHAM

WHEN IT COMES TO an open-ended series, it is generally a good idea to revisit the previous film before embarking on the latest. But in the case of Pirates of the Caribbean, even a review of Dead Man's Chest might not be enough to "savvy" (as Jack Sparrow would put it) At World's End, rated PG-13 for action violence. So many plots and subplots are entangled in this bloated three-hour sea adventure that even die-hard fans will find them difficult to follow.

As we rejoin Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightly), Will Turner (Orlando Bloom), and Captain Barbossa (Geoffrey Rush), they are docked in Singapore to convince one of nine pirate lords to give them a ship and a crew so they can rescue Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp) and the Black Pearl from Davy Jones' Locker.

Their plan is to call a meeting of the "brethren court" of the nine pirate lords in order to free Calypso, a sea goddess imprisoned by a previous court so pirates could have free reign over the seas. Only then, they surmise, can they save their kind from extinction by the East India Trading Company.

In the meantime, the villainous Lord Becket (Tom Holland) still holds the heart of Davy Jones (Bill Nighy) and uses it to command Jones' ship, the Flying Dutchman. While doing the bidding of his employers, he also blackmails the tentacle-faced captain to get his hands on a magical compass that directs the possessor to his heart's greatest desire.

Confused? You will be even more so by three additional story lines in which Will, Elizabeth, and Jack each harbor secret motivations for going along with the chart set forth.

Yet as convoluted as the plot is, the worst sin director Gore Verbinski commits is not in overloading what should be a cheeky character-and atmosphere-driven sea tale, but in forgetting why audiences loved the Pirates franchise in the first place.

A pirate's appeal is based in large part on his status as a renegade. But Verbinski gives us pirate codes, law books, and congresses—hardly the stuff of swashbuckling lore. Granted, the motley assembly double- and triple-cross each other at every turn, but the very idea of some pirate king sitting down with quill and parchment to pen a set of buccaneer regulations seems antithetical to the very idea of piracy. I prefer to imagine they would never read a book, let alone write one.

Verbinski's second most egregious error is how little he features the crowd-pleaser, Captain Jack Sparrow. "Do you think he plans it all out, or just makes it up as he goes along?" one British captain asks another of the flamboyant scalawag. The same could be asked of Depp as an actor, whose expanding loppiness threatens to break the bounds of logic, yet somehow still works. This makes it all the more puzzling that there is so little of him in At World's End. Jack doesn't make an appearance for the first half hour, and then most of his contributions are as bizarre aside sequences.

The good news is, if yet another Pirates sequel is preparing for sail (and the ending clearly suggests that it is), it promises to be a tighter ship without the dead weight of Knightly and Bloom. Then the franchise can set the course it always should have, navigating by its north star, Captain Jack Sparrow.
Numbers game

TELEVISION: National Bingo Night struggles against competition by JOHN DAWSON

THE PROGRAM HAS bells and whistles. It has a gigantic ball twirling about with spinning numbers. It has an exuberant host with an even more exuberant (and annoying) crowd. But it’s still just bingo. On television.

Although bingo is often relegated to smoky halls on Indian reservations, ABC thinks it can make televised bingo into a 2007 summer fad. ABC’s concept for National Bingo Night (Fridays, 9/8 central) is only slightly more complicated than standard five-by-five bingo. As numbers are revealed, audience members and viewers at home who print off cards from ABC.com fill out the squares. Meanwhile, if the sum of all the numbers selected surpasses 500 before someone gets a bingo, another contestant wins $50,000. Those who manage a bingo in the crowd or at home win prizes too.

Ultimately the significance of National Bingo Night might rest in what the show’s success would mean for the American television viewership. The concept of interactive televised bingo must have struck ABC executives as a crazy-enough-to-work concept. The network promoted the show’s premiere heavily and even hired a well-known host (Ed Sanders from Extreme Makeover: Home Edition).

Even so, the ratings numbers weren’t initially encouraging for National Bingo Night. The program finished third, which isn’t necessarily disappointing until one considers that it was beaten out by Dateline and a Dr. Phil special during its hour.

But if ABC can turn its bingo ratings around, it may open up a whole new genre of game show. How about Yahtzee night? Boggle?

Top 10 movies

For the weekend of May 25-27, according to Box Office Mojo

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<th>NO</th>
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<td>Wild Hogs</td>
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Top 10 rentals

For the week ending May 20, according to The Internet Movie Database

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<td>Because I Said So</td>
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<td>Catch and Release</td>
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True grit

From the new release Overlord to the old classics, films now on DVD re-create the glory that was D-Day  by JOHN DAWSON

American soldiers wade ashore during the Normandy invasion, June 6, 1944

Here's one thing you're not likely to see much of in World War II movies: actual footage. And here's one D-Day film you're not likely to have seen despite its being made decades ago: Overlord, an unrated British film that would probably earn an R rating today for occasional harsh language and brief nudity. The British film profiles the life of Tom Beddoes (Brian Stimer), an English recruit, as he prepares for the June 6, 1944, invasion of the European continent codenamed Operation Overlord.

The story of how the film was unknown to American audiences for so long goes like this: Director Stuart Cooper's collaboration with Academy Award–winning cinematographer John Alcott to create a different sort of World War II film produced an initial buzz by winning two awards at the Berlin Film Festival in 1975.

Around the same time, Overlord enjoyed a brief and limited run in European theaters before slipping into obscurity until the Telluride Film Festival in 2004. There, many American critics discovering the film nearly 30 years after its creation heaped praise on Overlord. Two years later, Overlord finally made its American theatrical release in 2006 to a small number of art house theaters. On April 17, Overlord was finally made available to a wide U.S. audience when the film was released on DVD.

Overlord differs from traditional D-Day movies like The Longest Day and Saving Private Ryan in at least two important ways. First is the movie's use of archival footage from documentary and newsreel B-roll. In a masterstroke, Cooper and Alcott used film and cameras similar to the ones used by wartime cameramen to ensure the film could move seamlessly between archived and new shots.

The idea was a magnificent one, especially considering the amount of amazing vintage footage the filmmakers uncovered.

The footage, which accounts for nearly one-third of the 65-minute film, gives Overlord an authentic feel unmatched by previous war films. At times you see young men disembark from landing craft or in dinghies and tossed into rocks by a tempestuous sea during training exercises. At other times, bizarre war machines with what looks like a gigantic threshing wheel on the front purposed to chew up razor wire or the Normandy beach. Or a massive rocket-powered reel-shaped wheel used to detonate mines in the surf.

Those sorts of absurdities may have never been a part of the popular conception of what D-Day was like—but there they are in archival footage.

Another powerful effect of the archival footage: It helps Overlord contrast the parallel storylines of the raging war and Beddoes' lonely wait to enter into action. It's a Junebug versus hurricane scenario in which Beddoes' entire life is blown around...
by war currents. Unlike Tom Hanks in Saving Private Ryan or John Wayne in The Longest Day, the only action available to Beddoes is to wait for his time to jump off the landing craft with the Allied forces and wade ashore. He feels powerless in the face of almost certain death.

In this context, Beddoes tries to convey his feelings to his parents in a rambling letter as he waits for deployment. He's of mixed mind: Part of him seems fixated on his imminent peril. Another part of him focuses on trivialities as a sort of situational anesthetic:

"We all think the invasion can’t be far off. It's like being part of a machine which gets bigger and bigger while we grow smaller and smaller until there's nothing left... I wish I had some news. Yesterday, I saw a fox," he notes, before turning serious again. "I don't think I shall live to see the end of this war. Sounds silly, but this war has killed so many people already. I'm just going to be another one. Of that, I'm sure. I feel it... I didn't know whether I should tell you." Most will be happy that the director wasn’t so ambivalent in storytelling.

D-Day DVDs

Some of Hollywood’s biggest names have been involved in making D-Day projects. Here are some other DVDs to consider on the 63rd anniversary of the Normandy invasion on June 6.

THE LONGEST DAY (1962)
- John Wayne, Henry Fonda, and 41 other named stars help power the epic retelling of the Battle of Normandy from both the Allied and German perspective. The multiple directors tell stories that range in scope from personal vignettes to panoramic war scenes. Based on the Cornelius Ryan book of the same name, which includes over 50 pages of veterans listed as firsthand sources, this classic adaptation—while missing the Spielberg bells and whistles—has not lost with age its rank as the lodestone among D-Day retellings.

WHERE EAGLES DARE (1968)
- Richard Burton and Clint Eastwood star in a tale of an American general taken captive by Nazis before the Normandy invasion. Because the general has knowledge of the Allies' D-Day plans, American and British forces team up for a rescue mission.

THE BIG RED ONE (1980)
- A veteran sergeant (Lee Marvin) leads a squad of inexperienced conscripts through the horrors of the European theater. When confronted with Holocaust concentration camps, a young private (Mark Hamill) must come to grips with his pacifism.

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (1998)
- Held as the quintessential representation of D-Day violence, the Steven Spielberg film follows a captain (Tom Hanks) as he leads a squad on a mission to save one mother the grief of losing all four sons in a single war.

BAND OF BROTHERS (2001)

The time invested (or reinvested for perennial fans) is worth the lesson: D-Day by no means ended the war and a soldier’s work is never done in a day. Bulldog grit and tenacity remain the currency of soldiers everywhere, summed up by Brothers’ hero, Capt. Winters: “We’re paratroopers—we’re supposed to be surrounded.”
"GO and make disciples."

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Louisville, Kentucky

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THE BUZZ » NOTEWORTHY BOOKS

Four excellent Christian children’s books reviewed by SUSAN OLASKY

The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name
Sally Lloyd-Jones

**Content:** A collection of Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments selected and told to reinforce the overall narrative of creation, fall, and redemption.

**Gist:** Although the charming illustrations and simple text announce that this is a collection of Bible stories for children, even adults will benefit as they see God graciously pursuing and saving sinners through Jesus from Genesis to Revelation.

Sometimes Smart Is Good
Dena Fox Luchsinger

**Content:** All people have value because God created them.

**Gist:** In both English and Spanish, this wise and brightly illustrated book asks what is good. It extols the virtues of being smart, strong, and talented, and then says, “Sometimes we meet people who don’t seem to be smart, or big and strong, or talented. They make us wonder what is good. What is always good?” The answers include being kind, being patient, and doing your best.

Erin and Katrina
Nan Sugg

**Content:** Erin experiences Hurricane Katrina with her family away from the Gulf Coast. The next day they clean up and head to church with clothes, books, toys, and food for the storm refugees gathered there.

**Gist:** Children deal with scary events in part by seeing adults responding well. Sugg contrasts Katrina’s ferocity with the calm response of Erin’s parents. Afterwards, as neighbors help each other clean up and show compassion to the needy, Erin sees Christ’s love in action. Some busy pages can make the text hard to read in spots.

Wait Until Then
Randy Alcorn

**Content:** A grandfather teaches his wheelchair-bound grandson about baseball (the Red Sox) and the joys of heaven.

**Gist:** A sweet story that emphasizes themes of bonding between generations and coping with sickness, disability, and death. Lush illustrations help to show how granddad and grandson love good things in this world and let those good things build anticipation for heaven. On his deathbed the grandfather says, “Don’t forget, one day God will make us what we should be and the whole earth what it should be. We just have to wait.”

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Spotlight

In Heaven for Kids (Tyndale, 2006), Randy Alcorn begins a conversation with kids about heaven. He goes from the biblically clear (Is heaven a real place?) to the more speculative (Will we learn new things?). He gives biblically grounded answers and states clearly when he’s guessing about something, with the goal of helping children develop heavenly anticipation. Fourteen-year-old homeschooled Nicholas Rider began working on America’s True Heroes (Island Time Publishing, 2006) when he was 11 years old and attempting to collect autographs from veterans he met. The project grew into a collection of remembrances. The tales are often told in the veterans’ own words. One World War II vet ended his account: “I am sorry I do not want to say anymore. It is an experience I hope you will never have to go through. When I returned to civilian life, I decided to leave my war experience behind. I lost a lot of good friends.” We can be thankful for his service and for Nicho as Rider who cared enough to write it down.

Rider in his bedroom with his grandfather, John Haney. 80
"This could be a blessing. This could be the sign that gets her the help she needs."

**MICHAEL LOHAN**, estranged father of party-girl actress Lindsay Lohan, on her May 26 DUI arrest in Los Angeles. The elder Lohan, who has done jail time for DUI, is a counselor for the Christian anti-drug group Teen Challenge.

 "$79,000"

The amount that former president **BILL CLINTON** is asking the government to cover for telephone expenses in fiscal 2008. Former presidents Bush and Carter asked for $17,000 and $10,000, respectively. Overall, Clinton is seeking $1.16 million for overall expenses from the government this year, much more than Bush and Carter.

 "I thought I was gonna make it this time."

**STEPHANIE GREEN** of Raleigh, N.C., on giving birth in a car on the way to the hospital for the second time in less than two years. She and a friend were just blocks from the hospital on May 22 when daughter Zaria was born. Daughter Semaj was born in a car stuck in traffic 17 months ago.

 "Can I get your number and go out sometime?"

**MILWAUKEE, Wis.**, U-Haul general manager **PATRICK SOBOCKINSKI** on what a thief asked one of Sobocinski's employees after robbing a local U-Haul store. The thief's accomplice had already fled, but the thief stayed to flirt with the employee for a few minutes, leaving only after she turned him down.
ALEX AND BRETT HARRIS are the 18-year-old founders of one of the fastest growing Christian teen sites on the web today: TheRebelution.com. They are the sons of home school pioneer, Gregg Harris*, and the younger brothers of best-selling author, Joshua Harris (*I Kissed Dating Goodbye*).

THE REBELUTION is a teenage rebellion against low expectations — a growing movement of young people committed to doing hard things for the glory of God.

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OVER THERE & OVER HERE

With a seemingly endless cycle of deployments, Fort Hood, Texas, endures more Iraq War deaths than any other American installation. The toll is wearying and produces a different kind of casualty at home: “All I do is go to Iraq, come back from Iraq, and get ready to go to Iraq again.”

by LYNN VINCENT
NOT A DISTANT GRIER: (clockwise from top left) Lt. Gen. J.D. Thurman and his wife at a Fort Hood memorial for soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division; Tanya Figueroa wears a T-shirt and dog tags in memory of her brother, Army Pfc. Gabriel Figueroa; an Army honor guard fires a salute at the graveside services for Army Pfc. Allen B. Jaynes; Bob Bright, the father of Pfc. Dean Bright, receives a hug from soldiers; Spc. Patrick A. Colwell performs "Taps" during a memorial ceremony; Shelly Isler, left, whose brother was killed in April, is comforted by her husband; Pfc. Amber Dougherty outside a Fort Hood Memorial Chapel; an Army honor guard carries the body of Army Pfc. Allen B. Jaynes.
In a tree-starved patch of Texas Hill Country, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle surges three meters across chalky soil and fires its Bushmaster chain gun. A resonant boom splits the air, and elsewhere on the training range, even veteran soldiers glance instinctively over their shoulders at the dark plume of smoke arcing across the summer sky.

The sound of the Bradley's 25mm gun is unique, soldiers will tell you. Not the low blast of a tank or artillery round. Not the popcorn of rifles. The Bradley's gun commands attention with a round, baritone thunder that pulses into your gut at 100 yards away.

On the range, there's no forgetting where you are, even if you close your eyes and lay back atop an idling Bradley as one soldier has done. Earplugs help block the noise of the guns, but not the concussion. Your Kevlar body armor and bulky helmet weigh you down and make you sweat. The air itself is a bellicose cocktail of cordite, diesel, and chalk. You can taste it when you breathe.

Soldiers can squeeze shut their eyes and shut off their ears, but the sensations of battle creep in through the cracks. Even at home, they are at war.

For four years, Fort Hood has operated as a virtual revolving door for Iraq, with its major units, the Army's 4th Infantry and 1st Cavalry divisions, in and out of the shooting war in relentless rotation. Sprawling across 340 square miles in central Texas, the post is the nation's largest military installation. In 2006, it earned another distinction: More Fort Hood warriors have died in Iraq than from any other U.S. installation.

Between January and November 2006, Fort Hood units lost 235 men and women—nearly two-thirds of the post's fatality total for the entire war. Just since WORLD began preparing this story three weeks ago, 16 new names have appeared on the Pentagon's tally of the dead, raising Fort Hood's Iraq toll to 370 as of May 23.

Together, the spiraling fatalities and seemingly endless cycle of deployments.

Revolving Door: 1st Cavalry Division troops being deployed from Fort Hood.
are producing at Fort Hood casualties of a different kind: Grief without healing time. Exhaustion without respite. And a
penetrating war-weariness that is causing even some formerly gung-ho warriors to flag in spirit.
Sergeant Wesley Carter, for one, has seen enough fighting. The 7th Squadron/10th Cavalry soldier joined the Army in July 2003 straight out of high school and almost immediately shipped out for Iraq. He went there again in 2006 and will make a third tour this December.
“All I do is go to Iraq, come back from Iraq, and get ready to go to Iraq again,” he said. “When I’m home, it’s hard to
enjoy doing the stuff I usually enjoy. I don’t even look for a woman to date anymore. I know I’m just going back, so
what’s the point?” The mood is similar among many of Carter’s peers, he says: “They don’t want to go back to Iraq.”
The 7/10 suffered mightily in 2006, once losing eight men over a three-day span last October. Carter said the worst
day for him was Oct. 4, when four of his friends died in a firefight near Taji, about 20 miles north of Baghdad. Although
he’s only 22, Carter’s voice is heavy with experience. He used to be an optimistic person, he says. “Now, I’m not. I drink
more now, that kind of deal.”

Asked to describe the scariest incident that he faced during two combat tours, he hesitates.
“I don’t know,” he says finally, “I can’t really talk about it.”
Does he mean that it’s better if he doesn’t talk about it?
“No, it’s not that. There were so many I can’t really pick out one. I came
close to death several times.”
Capt. Carson Green also feels he cheated death repeatedly during Iraq
tours in 2003-04, and 2006, calling it “a matter of luck” that he wasn’t killed.
Now home at Fort Hood, he wonders how much longer his “luck” will hold.
“I think about it all the time,” said Green, 26, of Cumby, Texas. “It’s hard
to when you’re seeing 1st Cavalry funeral processions going down the street.” 1st Cav is the Fort Hood unit that’s in Iraq now.

Indeed, Green holds his current job because another man died.
On April 18, 2006, a bright young West Point grad named Ian Weikel was killed by an IED. A rugby-
playing, upbeat Christian who was revered by his men, Weikel wore a perpetual smile that sometimes
made him seem a pushover—until a soldier made the mistake of having to find out otherwise.

Near midnight on the day Weikel died, the 7th Squadron commander summoned Green to his office. “He
looked at me teary-eyed and said, ‘I need you to step up and take charge of Ian’s troop,’” Green remembers. “It was all
kind of surreal, an unbelievable moment, to see this 42-year-old senior officer crying. He loved Ian. Ian was his
right-hand man.”

Later, Green sat down at Weikel’s desk to see if he could pick up the thread of the fallen man’s mission. “All
his stuff was there, the way he’d left it. They had taken the notebook he carried in his pocket out of the vehicle. It was
lying on the desk, covered in his blood.”
Moments like that explain the contrasting attitudes of some division-level
senior officers and some Fort Hood soldiers now prepping for their third stint in Iraq. "They're all fired up and ready to go back, and they wonder why you're not so fired up," Green said.

“They’re not the ones who were seeing it every day. They’re not the ones having to pick up their soldiers’ body parts off the side of the road.”

Weikel’s death hit the 7/10 hard, said his wife, Wendy Weikel, a former Army captain. The couple met at West Point during their junior year, married, and deployed to Iraq together in 2003. Mrs. Weikel left the service when she became pregnant. Her husband left for his second combat tour when their son, Jonathan, was 3 months old.

When her husband was killed early in the deployment, it not only devastated his family, it shocked his unit into a new reality, Mrs. Weikel said. "Ian was a senior captain in the unit. He knew what he was doing, tactically and technically. When he was killed, people were like, wow, it could be anybody.”

A similar sense—call it "diminished invincibility”—seems to Mrs. Weikel to have translated to Fort Hood at large. In 2003, she said, there was a confident, post-wide esprit de corps: America had won speedily in Afghanistan, losing just over 100 soldiers; Fort Hood forces would now go and do likewise in Iraq. As the war has dragged on, though, "people have begun to face the fact that not everyone comes home. I saw that at Memorial Day last year. A soldier came up to me and said, ‘I used to think Memorial Day was for barbecues. Now I get it.’”

Richelle Hecker agrees that the unending flow of casualties, combined with the savage deployment cycle, has taken a heavy toll on Fort Hood. “This community is weary,” said Hecker, whose husband, Major William Hecker, 38, and four other men were killed in January 2006 when the convoy they were riding in struck an IED in Najaf.

"Even when soldiers are home from Iraq, they're working horrific hours trying to get prepared to go back. A lot of them are grieving,” she said. "Many have lost friends, and have seen people die. They are not given enough time to mentally and emotionally process those losses."

And while home is usually a place of refuge and comfort, Fort Hood spouses also are in a constant state of tension, Hecker said: They've just arrived and are dealing with household shipments, finding a new place to live, putting the kids in a new school, and getting the lights, phone, and water turned on. Or they're relocating soon and are dealing with those same issues. Or their spouse is not in a unit deploying to Iraq, but might rotate to a unit that is. Or they're working, paying the bills, and raising kids alone, all the while wondering whether this will be the day a casualty assistance officer knocks on their door.

Over the past year and a half, a Fort Hood spouse has heard that knock at least once every other day.

Today, soldiers' survivors are better cared for than they were early in the war. After a friend's husband was killed during the first few days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Debbie Busch, a command sergeant major's wife, offered the widow help and support. Months later, her friend asked her, "Why are you the only one who still cares and calls me?"

Busch investigated and found that throughout the recent decades of peace-time, the Army's casualty assistance programs had grown loose and flabby.

Widows—and some widowers—were receiving some military benefits, but the Army's casualty assistance officers often dropped the ball, failing to follow up in the critical weeks and months after a soldier died.

To combat the problem, Busch in 2004 started HUGS (Helping Unite Gold Star Survivors), a group that trains casualty assistance officers to follow up—and follow through—in the wake of each soldier's death. Sadly, the war has worn on so long that the HUGSS program found ample reason to expand.

Today it operates a Gold Star Family Support Center that offers children's playrooms, emergency childcare, and survivors' support groups. Center volunteers call survivors on the tough days: holidays, birthdays, the anniversary of a soldier's death. The only one of its kind, the center has become a model for the nation.

The Gold Star Center is helping Mrs. Hecker work through her grief. Major Hecker left behind four children.

“When he came home, he was home,” Mrs. Hecker said. “He spent a lot of time with his kids.” That’s the hardest part, she added: “Watching them grieve, each
Fait is "literally the foundation" by which Fort Hood soldiers and their families deal with the realities of this war, said 4th Infantry Division senior chaplain James Carter. "You've heard the saying that there are no atheists in foxholes. I don't believe there are any atheists in a war, period," said Carter, an ordained minister with the Presbyterian Church in America.

Carter said 4th ID Commanding General Jeffrey Hammond tells his 20,000-plus troops that mental and physical toughness are key to success in combat: "But he makes no bones about his belief that spiritual toughness is the cornerstone of his division."

From Carter's discussions with 4th ID soldiers, he estimates that "at least 90 percent acheare to some faith system" related to the God of the Bible. "What I'm seeing is that faith becomes a handle for them to hold onto, especially for those who have lost a friend in combat."

"DIMINISHED INVINCIBILITY": Becker (right) hugs Ursula Pirtle at Fort Hood's Gold Star Center; friends and family members gather at Fort Hood for the 4th Infantry Division memorial ceremony and monument rededication on May 23 (below).

in their own way, and not being able to help them."

Three-year-old Will Becker sees his friend's daddies come home, and keeps asking, "Where's my daddy?"


At Fort Hood, funerals and memorial services are a fact of daily living. "You open the newspaper and see, 'Today's memorial service is . . .'," said Carter. You pick up another newspaper and see, 'Five soldiers killed.' It's a very sobering reality that this is the cost for our freedom. This is the reality of a fight against this enemy."

During a ceremony on May 23, Fort Hood officials added 235 new plaques to the post's Iraq War memorial, one for each soldier who died in 2006. The memorial features two statues, one of an American soldier grieving before the traditional rifle-boots-and-helmet homage to a fallen comrade, the second of a young Iraqi girl trying to console him. The entire monument, created by an Iraqi sculptor, was cast in bronze reclaimed from a toppled statue of Saddam Hussein that once stood in Iraq.

Such small moral victories, along with incremental in-theater progress, keep some soldiers motivated even in the face of yet another deployment. Back at the Bradley range, First Sergeant Brian Bandy, a 21-year Army veteran, oversees most of the training. Behind his Terminator shades, he looks like the kind of hardboiled senior enlisted man who might make a junior officer think twice before addressing him directly.

Bandy's unit, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, will return to Iraq for a third time in December. Asked about the trials of overseas deployments, Bandy laughs out loud, having lost count of how many times he's had to say goodbye to his wife, Anita, and their kids, Lakeshia, 16, and Rashon, 15.

What about going back to a war zone? Is that any different? Any worse? "No," he says, "that's what I'm in the Army to do." In a way, going back this time could be better: "We know we're going back to the area we left. It's no mystery to us. Hopefully it's better than we left it." The ability to witness progress makes it worthwhile, he says.

In the Bradley range control tower, safety glass mutes the cyclic booming of the Bushmaster gun. Over a radio, the Bradley commanders check in from the ground to see if they can grab more ammo, and get back in line to run the exercise again. One young trainee, awaiting his turn on the range, rips open a bag of Cheetos. If the training goes as scheduled, he'll have 30 minutes to finish his chips before mounting up.

—with reporting by John Dawson, at Fort Hood
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Get out the vote

Turkey’s upcoming election will be a test for democracy in the Muslim world
by JILL NELSON

WHEN OSAMA BIN Laden aired his grievances in a taped speech after 9/11, he confused many by his reference to an 80-year-old catastrophe. Historians knew he was talking about the end of the Muslim Ottoman Empire’s reign and the beginning of Western dominance. It also marked the birth of the only Muslim nation in history with a secular government: Turkey.

Now the secular nature of this unique nation is in jeopardy, according to the millions of Turks who rallied in the cities of Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir this past month. Brandishing giant posters of their secular icon, Ataturk, protesters cried out against what they believe to be an Islamic agenda by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Although the nation has prospered under the leadership of AKP during the past five years, an attempt by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to maneuver his man into the soon-to-be-vacant presidential seat ignited a storm of protest. Balance of power could be jeopardized with two devout Muslims running the country, opponents say. The military threatened to intervene and the secular-leaning Constitutional Court also weighed in, ruling that the parliament had not reached a quorum in the vote to affirm Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul because of a boycott by two parties. Gul was forced to drop his bid for the presidency.

In an effort to end the deadlock, parliamentary elections have been moved up from November to July 22, causing a flurry of vacation cancellations as politicians frantically plaster their faces and slogans across the nation’s billboards and ad spaces. Opposition parties—threatening to unite against the AKP—have made their slogan clear: The AKP could use the democratic process to erode democracy. But AKP supporters say ultra-secularism poses more danger than Islamism and tout the party’s economic success.

Turkey is a unique nation of strategic significance. Not only is it situated in the crossroads between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, it also stands out as a beacon of democracy and modernity. While many neighboring countries in the Middle East believe faith and politics should merge, Turkey has gone to great lengths to ensure the opposite.

In 1923 military hero Mustafa Kemal Ataturk defied Ottoman Muslim traditions and established a secular state modeled after those in Europe and the prosperous West. He outlawed the fez and burqa, put an end to the Muslim Caliphate (believed to be the unifying factor among the Muslim community), gave women equal rights, and changed the alphabet from Arabic to Roman.

For the most part, his plan worked. Turkey quickly progressed to economic and social standards on par with Europe. Literacy improved from 10 percent in 1923 to 87 percent in 2006 and Turkey became a major player in the global marketplace.

For that progress Turkey is a “success story” among Muslim nations, according to Hillel Fradkin, director of the Hudson Institute’s Center for Islamic Studies. Turkey, he said, is a “model for making progress which very few of the others have been able to make.” Its democratic government, prosperous economy, and integration into the global and modern world have propelled it ahead of its neighbors. “It would be a tremendous misfortune for itself and for the prospects of the Muslim world if it went in the other direction,” Fradkin said.

But in an ironic twist of predictions, many of the recent strides toward democratic milestones and prosperity have come with an Islamic-anchored party in power. Erdogan’s government—elected in 2002—has passed more than 800 democratic reforms, improved foreign investment, and increased economic growth by about 7 percent in the last few years. Recent polls suggest 70 percent of Turks would vote for Gul—the AKP’s sole presidential nominee—if Erdogan had succeeded in passing a bill calling
"They've almost bent over backwards to help us so they wouldn't receive that kind of name or be perceived as being anti-Christian or anti-democratic." — missionary Jeremiah Mattix

for the direct election of the president. Outgoing President Ahmet Necdet Sezer—a staunch promoter of secularism and former president of the Constitutional Court—vetoed the legislation, sending it back to parliament for reconsideration.

But vocal dissidents have concerns about where the party might eventually lead the nation. Formed as an offshoot of parties previously dissolved by the Turkish court system, the AKP and its leadership have a history of Islamist rhetoric. During a speech made while mayor of Istanbul, Erdogan proclaimed that “democracy is like a streetcar. You ride it until you arrive at your destination and then you get off.” The Middle East Media Research Center lists more than two dozen Islamist statements by Erdogan, although most were made prior to the party's ascension to power in 2002.

A track record of trying to fill the upper echelons of government, education, and the justice system with Islamic conservatives has lent further credence to secularist worries. The outgoing president blocked many of those attempts, but an AKP crony alongside Erdogan could create a stream of Islamists in powerful positions.

Not everyone is leery of AKP’s agenda. Many—including Jeremiah Mattix, a missionary in southeast Turkey—believe the party has sincerely transformed itself and has realized success in delivering what the population wants: “At first many were afraid that this was kind of an ultra-religious party and that it would negatively affect us. Well, not really. In fact, they’ve almost bent over backwards to help us so they wouldn’t receive that kind of name or be perceived as being anti-Christian or anti-democratic.” He believes a militant or nationalistic party in power might be worse and claims the recent slaying of three missionaries in Malatya, Turkey, was as much motivated by nationalistic fervor as it was Islamic extremism.

Jeff Wearden, an English teacher in Turkey who has had two of Erdogan's
niceses in his classes, says he does not believe the AKP has a hidden agenda. He likens the division in Turkish politics to the rift in the United States between secularists and people of faith. He says there are very few “true Muslims” in Turkey and claims the educational system is an indicator of the nature of Turkey's Muslims, where religious high schools resemble parochial schools more than the madrassas in Pakistan where jihad is taught.

Turkey's bid to enter the European Union (EU) has been another popularity boost for the AKP. Although some accuse the party of using the bid for the sole purpose of gaining approval among secularists, others applaud the initiative. A supporter of Turkey's acceptance into the EU, Fradkin believes Europe will eventually deny Turkey's admittance based not only on its composition (99 percent Muslim) but also on its size (a population of 70 million). However, he says the process itself has been beneficial for the nation. “What they’ve needed from the EU they are getting in the form of talks,” Fradkin said. “It's pushed them in the direction of democratic reform, liberalization, and so forth.”

Mattix concurs, noting the strides made in a region where six or seven years ago there were no legal means for church planting. His church in Diyarbakir was originally built as a residence but later allowed to organize

Religion and the state
Timeline of events in Turkey

2001: Turkey's National Security Council issues a ruling that groups missionary activity with communist and Islamic terrorism as national threats.

2002: Recep Tayyip Erdogan's party, the AKP (Party of Justice and Development), gains power, but a prior charge of inciting religious hatred prevents him from holding political office. The law is quickly changed and he is soon named prime minister.

2006: Catholic priest Andrea Santoro is murdered in Trabzon by a Muslim youth.

2007: Jan. 13: Turkish-Armenian editor Hrant Dink, who was convicted in 2005 of insulting Turkish identity, is murdered in Istanbul.

April 13: Three Christian men are brutally tortured and murdered in Malatya.

April 27: Turkey's parliament nominates Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul for the presidency.

April 29: About 700,000 people demonstrate in Istanbul against Gul.

April 30: In a televised speech, Erdogan warns, "We must be careful not to harm the climate of stability we have reached."

May 1: Police clash with leftist demonstrators in Istanbul; 700 people are arrested.

May 2: Erdogan's call to move parliamentary elections to July 22 is approved.

May 6: Gul withdraws his candidacy for presidency.

May 25: President Ahmet Necdet Sezer vetoes constitutional reforms to allow for the head of state to be elected by the people rather than the legislature.

May 29: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew says Turkey's Christians should enjoy the same rights as Muslims: "We do not only want the freedom to celebrate our faith within our churches, but also the recognition of all civil rights, just as our fellow Muslims in Turkey."

—Compiled by Kristin Chapman
as an association (although it is still not declared a Christian church) in part "because of EU pressure that has focused on the southeast in particular and forced the courts to really take notice of our situation and do us justice. They’ve allowed us to localize our church—as legal as it gets."

Father Justo Lacunza Balda of the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Vatican City said the nation has a ways to go before meeting European standards. “I think there are a lot of questions that need to be resolved,” he said, listing among others the composition of the government, the rights of women, the issue of the veil, and the treatment of minorities.

Turkey’s track record on minorities is less than pristine, with government-sanctioned oppression against Kurds improving only since the EU bid began, and evangelical Christians struggling to dodge accusations of radical behavior.

Further complicating matters is Turkey’s military, which has proved to be a powerful instrument—but an undemocratic one, according to some analysts—in ensuring the nation’s secular identity. It has removed four elected governments during the past 30 years, the most recent being the “soft coup” of 1997. The ousted party was deemed undemocratic at its core and dissolved the following year with the approval of the European Court of Human Rights.

Now military leaders are closely watching the AKP, which has maintained a relatively low profile in recent months—even halting any plans to hold rallies in its support. Image is everything for the teetering party, and a crowd of veiled women and Islamic-clad men could undo all it’s worked for in the party’s bid for both European and secularist approval.

But the party will have to do more than avoid rallies to convince AKP critics that its Islamic roots no longer reflect its true colors, as millions of Turks wonder if their secular nation can survive democracy. “No one really knows” which way the party will go if elected, admits Fradkin. “I’ve met a couple of them [AKP politicians], and although you can never be absolutely sure, I was impressed by their sincerity.” Such guesswork is small comfort in this part of the world.

Fog of martyrdom
Details of pastor murders in Turkey are disputed, but the horror and significance for the church is not

In the aftermath of the horrific murders of three Christians in Malatya, Turkey, several pastors began publicly questioning the accounts of extensive torture being circulated across the web and in Turkish media outlets ("No turning back," May 5, 2007). The men were not tortured to the extent some claim, they said, and initial media accounts were likely crafted to scare Christians across the nation. Email campaigns concerning the murders quickly spread both true and false accounts.

“In the beginning, many people really wanted to get the news out to the world quickly, but unfortunately, they grabbed the sensationalized stories from the media and just passed it along. Later the media itself actually changed a lot of those stories,” Jeremiah Mattix said.

Mattix is a missionary serving with a church in Diyarbakir and frequently fellowshipped with Tilman Geske, Necati Aydin, and Ugur Uksel (left, from top). The three men were in close contact with their accused murderers and were led to believe the young Muslims were interested in the Christian faith.

Mattix claims that the body he saw did not show signs of extensive torture and that fellow pastors who examined the bodies of Geske and Aydin saw only a few knife wounds, not the hundreds reported in the press: “Did they do it on purpose? It’s hard to tell. Did the doctor exaggerate that first report on purpose or was the government behind it? Was it a personal thing or was it the media that misunderstood the facts and then passed them on?”

Details surrounding the murders are still sketchy since official autopsy and police reports have not yet been released to the public. And where misinformation and not enough details have been part of the underlying problem, too much information has been the latest source of frustration for local believers. According to Compass Direct, Turkish newspapers recently leaked portions of secret police interrogations and the name and location of a Christian who was supposedly nex: in line on the killers’ hit list. The newspapers also listed several wid claims about the three slain men, presenting them as facts and furthering fears of a vast Christian conspiracy in Turkey.

The pastors of Izmir Protestant Church recently retracted the detailed and widely circulated account of the men’s torture from the church website, explaining that not all of the men “were tortured to the extent initially reported.” But they have kept the descriptive testimony of Dr. Murat Ugras, whose assessment of Uksel’s wounds attests to the likelihood of more torture rather than less: “He had more stab wounds than we could count. That torture had been intended was very apparent. His buttocks, his testicles, his rectum, and his lower and middle back were chipped with dozens of knife stabs. His fingers were repeatedly sliced to the bone lengthwise.” The church leaders WORLD communicated with did not see Uksel’s body and could not verify or refute the report because his body was immediately taken away for burial.

Mattix has endeavored to publicize what he believes is a more accurate version of events but says he doesn’t want believers in Turkey to lose sight of the sacrifice of these men and the potential for the church to be emboldened by their martyrdom.

“The whole incident is being pulled in the wrong direction. People are arguing about the details and exaggerations and missing the big point: We have three brothers who were killed for their faith and were willing to die for it.” —J.N.
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Temperature rising

Gen. Musharraf’s maneuvers to stay in office spark a wave of Pakistan persecution by MINDY BELZ

IN KARACHI A PASTOR AND his wife fled the city after rioters killed 49 people in one day. Another pastor in the port city, Pakistan’s largest, was poisoned, reportedly by a man pretending to be a new convert to Christianity, who dumped him on a roadside for dead (he survived).

At the other end of the country, in the North-West Frontier Province town ofCharsadda, Taliban-linked Islamic leaders issued to local Christians threats of bombings and killings if they do not convert to Islam or leave. In nearby Peshawar a young Pakistani Christian was kidnapped, driven 400 miles and held for 10 days, then suddenly released.

And that was just May.

Pakistan, ruled more often than not by the military in its 60-year history, is losing its law-and-order grip on its 165 million mostly Muslim citizens. Islamist leaders together with Taliban exiles from Afghanistan are forcing the government of President Pervez Musharraf to give ground, not only on protections against minorities but in overall internal security, in ways eyewitnesses say they never before have seen.

Most ominous for Christian believers, who are not named in this story due to the present dangers they face, is a measure pushed before parliament May 9 creating stiffer penalties for anyone who leaves Islam. Under the new Apostasy Act, a male accused of departing Islam will receive the death penalty. Women apostates will be imprisoned for life, or until they “repent.” Those found guilty forfeit all property rights and lose legal custody of their children. And the new measure requires only the testimony of two adult witnesses for a conviction.

At the same time parliament rejected an attempt to amend Pakistan’s blasphemy laws. Under the current law, anyone convicted of blasphemy Muhammad in word, deed, or symbol can be sentenced to death, and one found guilty of “insulting Islam” or “desecrating the Quran,” to life in prison. The laws are often used to punish and eliminate Christians.

Lawmaker M.P. Bandhara received widespread support in Pakistani media when he proposed incorporating into law instead a statement carried at Pakistan’s constitutional assembly in 1947 that “religion would have nothing to do with the business of state.” The blasphemy laws are a more recent invention—they have been on the books since the 1970s—but lawmakers rejected Bandhara’s effort to return to the founding era.

In the National Assembly Bandhara
was booed by the mullahs of the opposition parties known as MMA, an alliance of six Islamist parties. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Sher Afgan Niazi said, “The sacredness of our way of life that is more than mere religion must not be touched upon by anyone. This is the parliament of an Islamic State, not a secular one. No one can dare to present a bill here which hurts the sentiments of Muslims.”

What was striking to observers about last month’s developments was the government reaction to it. According to Pakistan’s Daily Times, “The government did not oppose the [apostasy] bill and sent it to the standing committee concerned. If passed, the bill will override all other laws in force at present.” Pakistan already has some of the strictest laws forbidding conversion and blasphemy. In the past Musharraf has opposed measures that embolden already entrenched conservative-to-radical Islamic clerics and has stood against further erosion of free speech and minority rights.

But now Musharraf is in political death-throes himself. Unpopular for siding with the United States on terrorism—in spite of the $10 billion in U.S. aid his support has brought the country since 2002—Musharraf is under increasing pressure from MMA and the Islamist leaders it represents.

Further, Musharraf frustrated more than just the radicals when he suspended Pakistan’s chief justice in March. Musharraf charged the Supreme Court’s Iftikhar Chaudhry with misconduct and removed him from office. The charges include family use of government vehicles and unlawfully helping his son gain admission to medical college. But it is widely believed that Musharraf removed Chaudhry because he prosecuted anti-corruption cases against state-connected businesses and because he stood to block Musharraf’s bid to win another five-year term in office later this year, when parliamentary elections are held. Such a move currently is unlawful.

The action against Chaudhry has provoked months of street demonstrations and violence, including the May 12 killings in Karachi, weakening the government and strengthening radical elements. But the recent chaos is more than a spasm of political upheaval, according to Elizabeth Kendal of the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission: “It is the inevitable consequence of at least two and a half decades of systematic state- and Saudi-sponsored Sunni Islamization which has continued post-9/11 despite all the rhetoric to the contrary.”

Kendal said Musharraf has “played both hands at once” since siding with the Bush administration in the war on terror, allying himself with the United States in exchange for military aid, while at home staking his political future to the pro-

Christians, who make up 3 percent of the population, say the forecast is coming true more quickly than they imagined. The pastor who left Karachi two weeks ago said that when killings and bombings broke out last month, “local police took no action against those people who were using their weapons so openly and freely. As a matter of fact, the police [were] taking shelter from these gunmen, and the gunmen are part of the government.”

In Charsadda, a district outside Peshawar in the North-West Frontier Province, local market stalls trading in “un-Islamic” commodities like videos, music—even haircuts—have been bombed or otherwise shut down. Girls have been ordered to stop attending school. “It is getting worse, no doubt,” said the wife of a pastor who also has left the country. “Women especially don’t feel safe going out, and even Christian men do not go out alone.” In the North-West Frontier Province, where she is from and still has relatives, “the Taliban is taking a stronghold, and the government says it is doing something about it, but we don’t see it. At the moment the government is not doing much because the religious people are getting too strong.”

The rising strength of the Taliban in Pakistan has direct impact on U.S. forces in Afghanistan, despite efforts to win Pakistan’s aid in routing both Taliban and al-Qaeda from the border region. Local newspapers say fears of “Taliban reprisal” are gripping northern provinces, including local and long-standing jirgas, or assemblies of tribal elders who traditionally rule by consensus.

At one recent jirga in the northern Mohmand region, a Karachi-based cleric named Shaykh Fazal Muhammad told the gathering of about 1,500 men—which included “armed and masked Taliban”—that the mujahideen lacked modern weapons, but were using suicide bombers to fight U.S. forces. One of the Taliban, a youth introduced as Umar Baacha (according to the Daily Times) said: “We will sacrifice thousand more lives to drive out the Americans from Afghanistan.”

UPHEAVAL: Demonstrators carry posters of suspended Chief Justice Chaudhry as they chant anti-Musharraf slogans during a rally in Karachi.

Shariah, pro-Taliban MMA in exchange for votes in the National Assembly. MMA was a minority coalition but has grown disproportionately powerful, reports Kendal, because under Musharraf it has come to hold the balance of power on almost any issue.

“As President Musharraf makes quid pro quo deals with the MMA to advance his agenda, which is to stay in power and in uniform, he empowers the MMA to advance its agenda, the Islamization of Pakistan,” said Kendal. Six months ago Kendal published a WEFA report titled “Musharraf’s Maneuvering” that predicted persecution of Christians would escalate through 2007 as a result.
Mosque-erade
Floridians sue to block construction of an Islamic center they say has terrorist ties by MARK BERGIN

FOR MORE THAN TWO decades, the Islamic Center of South Florida (ICOSF) has operated quietly in an upscale area of Pompano Beach, just east of Interstate 95. But last year when the religious center announced plans to move two miles northwest across the freeway into a low-income, mostly African-American neighborhood, community protest broke out.

City Commissioner E. Pat Larkins, representative of the district where the new mosque would be located, delivered an inflammatory public condemnation of Muslims: “They don’t contribute a nickel to any cause in terms of improving the community. Most black folks see them as people that come in to rape the community and go away.”

That remark sparked outrage from Muslim leaders but did little to alter their building plans. A group of Christians now hopes litigation will prove more effective.

Rodney Wright, a citizen activist and member of a nearby church, filed suit against ICOSF to halt construction last month, alleging the facility would pose “substantial harm to the well-being, safety and health of the community.” The lawsuit, which also names the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and its South Florida chapter as defendants, accuses ICOSF imam Hassan Sabri of close ties to known jihadists and terrorist organizations.

The primary indictment against CAIR is similar, alleging links between the country’s leading Islamic public-relations firm and the Palestinian terror group Hamas. Wright charges that such terrorist connections underlie a conspiracy between CAIR and ICOSF “to spread radical Islam throughout the United States through the use of the Islamic mosque.”

Accusations of a hidden radical agenda are nothing new for CAIR, which often takes heat for supporting questionable Islamic charities and causes but has largely managed to exonerate itself in the public eye. Larry Klayman, a Florida attorney representing Wright, told WORLD that the evidence he’ll present for CAIR’s terrorist links is very strong: “CAIR is a radical organization, and everybody knows it. They’re just very clever at disguising it. They’re smooth.”

Klayman also, at times, has proved a smooth operator with less than kosher objectives. The Jewish evangelical and founder of conservative watchdog organization Judicial Watch has fielded charges of abusing the court system with endless and sometimes frivolous lawsuits against the likes of Bill and Hillary Clinton, Dick Cheney, Osama bin Laden, Fidel Castro, his own Judicial Watch organization, and his own mother. Multiple judges have banned Klayman from their courtrooms for life.

Altaf Ali, executive director of CAIR’s South Florida chapter, says this lawsuit fits squarely within Klayman’s track record of litigious publicity stunts with little legal merit. “If CAIR had any ties with any terrorist group, we would not be in existence. The government would have locked us up,” he said. “This is a very common tactic that many people use today to garner attention.”

Far less common is the attempt of private citizens to block construction of a mosque absent any government proof or investigations into wrongdoing. Reverend O’Neal Dozier, pastor of the nearby Worldwide Christian Center and outspoken critic of Islam, insists the case is a matter of national security.

But some elements of the lawsuit suggest cultural and social factors also serve as motives for the opposition. The suit describes the area of Northwest Pompano Beach as a “black Christian neighborhood” and suggests Islamic religious services are not welcome in such a community. “They’re going to be praying five times a day. That kind of prayer can be very disruptive in a non-Muslim area,” Klayman said. “I’m not saying they shouldn’t be allowed to pray that way, but in this particular area it could create a lot of commotion.”

Dozier has publicly expressed his concern that an influx of Muslims into the neighborhood could have a negative influence on impressionable black youth. Ali contends that the influence would only be positive in a rundown area ravaged by crime and blight. “Many people in the area welcome the mosque because it will provide services to the community,” he told WORLD. “If this complaint prevails, it will be a dark moment in the history of America.”
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It takes a (socialist) village

Clinton's economic plan marks a return to class warfare and the welfare state
SENATOR AND DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Hillary Clinton has unveiled her economic vision. Should she be given the power to implement it, we can say goodbye to the prosperity and opportunity we have enjoyed since the Reagan years.

In a speech at Manchester School of Technology in New Hampshire, Clinton said it’s time to replace President Bush’s “ownership society,” which she called an “on your own” society, with one based on shared responsibility and prosperity.

Clinton said she prefers a “we’re all in it together” society: “I believe our government can once again work for all Americans. It can promote the great American tradition of opportunity for all and special privileges for none.”

Doesn’t such a society already exist elsewhere? It’s called socialism, where government has sought to make all things economically equal and the only equality is that all are equally poor. Wasn’t defeating such a society precisely why we fought and won the Cold War? Why does Sen. Clinton wish to embrace the principles of the losing side?

Clinton has merely updated the old and discredited (except among socialist dictators) Karl Marx saying: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.”

Clinton’s remarks came before students at a school whose purpose is to train high-school kids for careers in the construction, automotive, graphic arts, and other industries. She told them, “We have sent a message to our young people that if you don’t go to college…that you’re thought less of in America. We have to stop this.”

Her assertion is bunk, but it is the typical class warfare bunk that comes from rich white liberals who want to take money from one group of people and give to others who didn’t earn it in hopes they will become loyal Democratic voters.

This is not the philosophy that made America what it is. This is not a land of equal outcome, but of equal opportunity commensurate with one’s talents, interests, and drive.

In his The Wealth of Nations, Adam Smith wrote, “It is the highest impertinence and presumption, therefore, in kings and ministers, to pretend to watch over the economy of private people, and to restrain their expense. . . . [Kings and ministers] are themselves always, and without any exception, the greatest spendthrifts in the society. Let them look well after their own expense, and they may safely trust private people with theirs. If their own extravagance does not ruin the state, that of their subjects never will.”

I am not robbed by people who have more money than me. I am robbed by a government that wants to penalize my industry and give increasing portions of what I earn to people who do not emulate my principles, morals, and ethics.

What have we come to? We once taught our young people the virtues of hard work, saving, personal responsibility and accountability for one’s actions, chastity before and fidelity in marriage, honesty, integrity and virtue—not to mention the Ten Commandments (especially the one about not coveting that which belongs to your neighbor). We now teach them entitlement, victimhood, class envy, and rights to other people’s money. When one robs a bank, it’s a crime. When government takes our money, it’s called a tax. Same result.

Sen. Clinton should consider the wisdom of a former president, who said, “The collection of any taxes which are not absolutely required, which do not beyond reasonable doubt contribute to the public welfare, is only a species of legalized larceny. . . . The wise and correct course to follow in taxation is not to destroy those who have already secured success, but to create conditions under which everyone will have a better chance to be successful” (Calvin Coolidge inaugural address, March 4, 1925).

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Leader of the pack

VISITING CALIFORNIA LAST week, Hillary Clinton gained the endorsement of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, considered by many to be the most influential Democrat in the state and a likely future candidate for governor.

Villaraigosa said Clinton “has a plan to end the war in Iraq” and that her eight controversial years as first lady qualify her for the job. “We should not lose sight of the fact,” he said, “that there’s only one candidate for the presidency of the United States that has literally been there.”

The Villaraigosa endorsement came as Clinton was already trouncing her top Democratic opponents in the polls. A May 25 CRS News/New York Times poll of Democratic voters found that 46 percent favored Clinton, while 24 percent favored Barack Obama and 14 percent favored John Edwards.

The only recent bad news for the frontrunner: revelations that Clinton, who regularly rails against corporate excess in campaign speeches, and her husband accepted $900,000 worth of private flights from Vinod Gupta, CEO of the data company InfoUSA. The number surfaced in a shareholder lawsuit against Gupta that claims he misspent millions of dollars.

Clinton said she followed Senate rules by paying Gupta the equivalent of first-class commercial rates for the private flights. “Those were the rules,” she told the Associated Press. “You’ll have to ask somebody else whether that’s good policy.” —Timothy Lamer
Strong Desire

Two years after Katrina, floods greet a 9th Ward Christian school as it returns to celebrate a triumphant graduation by JAMIE DEAN in New Orleans

For Jonah Leavell, flooding is a familiar foe. The 18-year-old New Orleans native fled his home in the city’s 9th Ward nearly two years ago, as Hurricane Katrina closed in on the Gulf Coast. Less than a week later, large swaths of New Orleans were under water, and miles of homes, including Leavell’s, were in ruins.

Leavell returned to the still-devastated 9th Ward late last month, but this time the occasion was a happy one: Leavell was graduating from high school. That’s a particularly striking accomplishment for Leavell and his 13 fellow seniors, who made up the first graduating class of Desire Street Academy, a Christian school for at-risk, urban boys. The school faced extinction when Hurricane Katrina’s floodwaters engulfed its 9th Ward campus.

The academy, which survived as a boarding school in Florida and Baton Rouge, held graduation ceremonies at the refurbished 9th Ward facility on May 23. The seniors and their displaced families faced a smaller, but familiar, trial on graduation day: another flood. With a week to go before the official start of hurricane season, rain poured and water rose nearly two feet on low-lying Desire Street. Chaplain Reynaldo King reminded the crowd in prayer: “Even when the storms rise in our lives, our anchor holds.”

Presbyterian (PCA) minister Mo Leveett founded Desire Street Ministries (DSM) in 1990 with the goal of gospel-based renewal in the spiritually and socially stormy 9th Ward, which was then one of the most poverty-stricken and crime-ridden neighborhoods in the country.

After 10 years of tenacious youth ministry and discipleship, DSM launched Desire Street Academy (DSA), a Christian school for urban boys, beginning with 7th grade. In a neighborhood full of single mothers in rows of public housing, DSM believed transforming young men was key to transforming the neighborhood and breaking cycles of inter-generational poverty, crime, and broken families.

The school opened at the ministry’s 9th Ward facility in 2002. Sitting on bleachers in the school’s gym on the eve of his graduation last month, Leavell remembered that first day. “We were a little skeptical,” he told WORLD.

Leavell and his fellow classmates had grown up in local public schools, where crime and apathy were the norm. They didn’t know what to expect from DSA.

But Leavell says he quickly knew this school would be different: Teachers were “really up close,” he says, even giving out cell phone numbers for after-school help: “But not just for homework—you could call them for anything you needed to talk about.”

Leavell had plenty to talk about. Living in a tiny house with his mother, grandmother, sister, and three brothers (including a twin), life in the 9th Ward was full of “crime, poverty, drugs, murder, violence,” he says. “I always felt like, ‘I’m going to get away from this.’”

Finishing high school loomed large in Leavell’s plans to get away, and by 2005 some 195 students were enrolled in DSA. But at the beginning of Leavell’s junior year, high school took him and his classmates farther away than he expected.

When Leavell and his twin brother evacuated New Orleans in August 2005 with a DSA teacher and his wife, they thought they would quickly return. In the living room of the teacher’s extended family in Monroe, La., Leavell watched in disbelief as Hurricane Katrina and a broken levee deluged his neighborhood with a wall of water.

All Leavell could think of was his mother, who had been stranded at work
STAYING FOCUSED: The graduates celebrate with Heather Holdsworth, who helped start Desire Street Academy.

during the storm. "We thought we lost our mom," he says. "It's only by the grace of God that we didn't." Leavell's mother safely made it to Baton Rouge, where she eventually settled in a FEMA trailer. The rest of Leavell's family ended up scattered through Texas, Arkansas, and California.

The rest of DSM's staff and students were scattered across the country as well. (Many students and their families had evacuated with the help of ministry staff.) Within a week, Leverett and school officials were clamoring for a way to keep the academy open, even as the ministry's 36,000-square-foot campus sat soaking under water in the 9th Ward.

Less than a month later, the staff transformed a beachside 4-H camp in Niceville, Fla., into a temporary boarding school and arranged pickup points across the South to transport DSA students to the Florida panhandle. Leavell joined more than 80 students, and nearly the entire staff of DSA teachers, at the rustic boarding school in Niceville.

A year later, the school permanently relocated to Baton Rouge, where the ministry purchased a 24-acre tract of property with vacant church and school buildings. The academy serves 65 boarding students displaced by Katrina, and 30 more from the Baton Rouge area.

With large sections of the 9th Ward still ruined and uninhabited, principal Al Jones says, "We're a Baton Rouge school now."

Leavell finished school in Baton Rouge in May, and though being separated from his family and relocating twice in two years was tough, he says, "I always focused on finishing school. That was my main focus." He credits God's grace with his ability to persevere. "There were nights when I cried in bed because I felt like my life was so screwed up," Leavell said. "Without my faith I would have probably given up on everything."

Leavell isn't the only one who didn't give up. Half of his fellow graduates are pursuing vocational training, and the
EDUCATION

other half are pursuing college, statistics Jones calls "quite the accomplishment since some will be the first in their families to complete high school."

Leavell plans to enroll this fall in Jones County Junior College in Ellisville, Miss., where he will pursue an associate's degree in business administration. Eventually he may pursue pediatrics. Ultimately, Leavell wants to be an example to his community and his family, including an older brother who has been in and out of jail: "I want to be somebody who made it."

THE NEXT DAY, KAREN WEBER was glad she made it to DSM. Her son, Byron, was graduating, and she had driven from Houston, where she fled after the hurricane ruined her family's 9th Ward rental home.

An hour before graduation, Weber stood under an awning in front of the gym at DSM, watching the driving rain fill Desire Street. It had been raining nearly three hours, and cars were suddenly stranded in flooding on nearby streets. The Louisiana National Guard rescued at least one family trapped in a car under a bridge less than a mile away.

Flash floods aren't uncommon in the low-lying 9th Ward where the drainage is poor, but the waters were uncanny on this day. Weber thought about the day nearly two years ago when she left her neighborhood as it filled with water.

One of her first thoughts was: "What about the school?" Weber desperately wanted Byron, a junior at the time, to remain in the academy, which she calls a life-saver. "He wasn't doing good" before enrolling at DSA, she says.

Byron evacuated to Atlanta with DSA staff members and stuck with the school in Florida and Baton Rouge.

"He's graduating with a 3.85 GPA," Weber beams. Byron plans to study accounting at Southeastern Louisiana University in nearby Hammond this fall.

Weber said this day was especially poignant since Byron is the youngest of her seven children. Another son was killed in a violent crime in New Orleans several years earlier. "I'm glad Byron could have something different," she said.

WE MUST EXCEL"": Byron Weber (c) with (from left) Drew Brees, DSM Acting Executive Director Danny Wuettifl, Oliver Thomas, and Al Jones.

Spreading Desire

Mo Leverett feels like a veteran of war. The founder of Desire Street Ministries (DSM) labored in the trenches of New Orleans' beleaguered 9th Ward for more than 16 years, fighting the narrowing effects of poverty and sin with a gospel-based ministry aimed at urban youth: "The devil has had dominion there for so long, it's hard to come out unscathed." Leverett told WORLD.

Leverett came out sooner than he expected when Hurricane Katrina ravaged the 9th Ward and scattered the ministry in 2005. Late last year, Leverett, who is no longer with DSM, launched Rebirth International, a New Orleans–based ministry aimed at replicating the DSM model of urban renewal in other poverty-stricken areas around the country.

"I wish this was more of an impulse in the church," Leverett says of urban ministry to the poor. He hopes to educate churches and seminaries on methods for urban ministry and to develop an internship program to inspire a new generation of Christians who will do the hard work of inner-city ministry by living and working in the neighborhoods they serve.

Actually, Leverett says, this kind of ministry is "more than hard work. This is the cross. This is losing your life for the sake of others." But Leverett has learned firsthand: "There's no way for us to advance the cause of Christ without suffering." —J.D.
As the event grew closer, cars continued to plow through the street's standing water and onto DSM's parking lot on higher ground. Inside, the rain wasn't dampening the celebratory mood. Graduates hugged, laughed, and posed for photos with friends, family, and staff members.

The event began 15 minutes late to allow more time for navigating the treacherous roads. Despite the conditions, some 300 people filled rows of seats in the gym and cheered wildly as the graduates processed to their seats on stage.

New Orleans city councilman Oliver Thomas delivered the commencement address, and New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees encouraged the graduates to be godly men. Some of the most moving words came from graduates themselves: Jonathan Rochon read from Proverbs 22: “The rich and the poor meet together and the Lord is the maker of them all... Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Valedictorian Rodney Clark told parents and teachers: “We understand how much you are counting on us to be productive.” He told his fellow graduates: “Jesus loves us, and because He lives in us, we must excel.”

In the parking lot after graduation, Principal Jones smiled as a small crowd watched the street and waited for the water level to subside. The flood didn’t faze him. “We still made it,” he said. Jones, who wears a gold lapel pin reading “No Excuses,” hopes the graduates will excel and be productive. He dreams of seeing the young men return as teachers, pastors, or city councilmen. Most of all, he prays they will “become strong, Christian men and keep the Lord in their life.”

That’s what DSM has taugh: the graduates, according to Leavell: “They’ve taught us how to be good fathers instead of dope dealers, men of God instead of men of the streets.” For those lessons, Leavell can hardly contain his excitement or gratitude: “I just praise God because He’s been blessing me so much, and I give Him all the praise and glory.”

To read more about the history of Desire Street Academy, go to worldmag.com

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New approach to church real estate seeks to dispel civic resentment over lost tax revenue

by MARK BERGIN

TAFFORD, TEXAS, A Houston suburb of fewer than 20,000 people, has 51 churches. On Sunday mornings, the town swells with commuting church members, clogging roadways and public spaces with congestion that civic leaders can’t afford to solve. The tax-exempt houses of worship occupy so much of the city’s seven square miles that tax revenue can barely cover police, fire, and schools, never mind new development. The predicament has pushed government officials to explore legal pathways to block church growth.

In Pittsburgh, the local government has taken a different tack, approaching religious congregations and other nonprofits to ask for voluntary donations. Some give but most do not, keeping these “payments in lieu of taxes” well beneath the potential public revenue businesses could generate on the same land.

Such fiscal realities have soured relationships between municipalities and churches nationwide. The Becket Fund, a nonprofit legal group that defends religious freedom, is flooded weekly with new reports of churches and local politicians butting heads over land use issues. Anthony Picarello, the Becket Fund’s vice president and general counsel, says cities frequently complain of traffic or environmental concerns but often their true beef against churches stems from the loss of tax revenue.

Pastor Jeff Vanderstelt of Soma Church in Tacoma, Wash., believes he may have a solution—one that doesn’t involve bitter public lawsuits or backroom negotiations. For the past two years, Vanderstelt has paid every dime of property tax on his church’s building as if it were a business. That’s because it is.

When the opportunity arose in 2006 for Soma to purchase the building in which it meets, Vanderstelt avoided typical church fundraising efforts. He took no special facilities offering and refused to sock his congregation with a massive mortgage. Instead, he established a for-profit LLC independent of the church and acquired financing from friendly investors at 8 percent interest.

Consequently, Soma does not own its urban campus but leases it from Vanderstelt’s company at a highly discounted rate. And the church is not the only tenant. Telecommunications juggernaut AT&T and a private recording studio lease space in the building’s basement, and other businesses periodically rent the facility for various events, generating enough income to completely cover the mortgage and tax burden. Last year, Vanderstelt’s company operated in the black, donating its extra earnings to the church to provide salary raises for the staff.

The benefits of Vanderstelt’s innovative approach extend far beyond finances. Because Soma’s building is owned by a business rather than a church, schools and other public entities are not wary of using the facility.
for official events or programs. Soma also opens its space regularly for art or music festivals, providing further benefits to the city beyond tax revenue.

That open house philosophy has helped integrate Soma church members into the broader community and has elevated Vanderstelt among the city’s respected business and civic leaders. Predictably, Soma faced no public resistance in acquiring a second building earlier this spring to accommodate its rapid growth. The new facility, purchased with the formation of a second LLC, will lease space to a café and culinary arts school to cover its costs. The city of Tacoma views such expansion as a boon to its finances and purposes.

The prospect of such friendly relations served as Vanderstelt’s primary motivation in creating his unique model. “We knew that every time a new building gets turned over to a church or a property turns into a church, the city loses money,” he said. “We asked ourselves, ‘What would it look like to have the city see our presence as a contribution rather than something that takes away from the city’s tax base?’”

The idea was born in Vanderstelt’s mind due to past experiences at several megachurches, where he witnessed the kind of adversarial relationship that politicians and church leaders often share. During a three-year stint as youth pastor at Willow Creek, a church of 20,000 people in South Barrington, Ill., Vanderstelt questioned the wisdom behind a $90 million building project that exhausted resources and harmed relations with the very community the church aimed to serve.

“We had to hire a whole PR department to deal with all the problems the building caused,” he recalled. “The city was saying, ‘We have to pay for the traffic problems that you’ve created, but you’re not paying to the tax base to take care of it.’ It created a pretty bad image of the church in the community.”

Comparable public image problems exist throughout the country. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), federal legislation Bill Clinton signed into law in 2000, gives churches ample legal leverage to sue cities that attempt to block them from purchasing huge chunks of land for buildings and parking lots.

“We should be willing to bear more pain on our shoulders than we create.”
—Vanderstelt

RLUIPA has proved an important statute in defending the free exercise of religion from undue permit burdens born of anti-religious bias. Prior to its passing, municipalities often gave preferential treatment to large retail stores like Costco or Home Depot over tax-exempt megachurches.

But even pastors who have benefited significantly from RLUIPA protection in court admit that the law has pushed cities to automatically view large churches as pushy neighbors and unstoppable drains on public resources. Picarello said the Becket Fund counsels churches to exhaust every good-faith remedy to land-use disputes before considering a lawsuit. “Litigation is an unpleasant proposition,” he said. “A lot of ministers have a combination of scriptural and common-sense concerns about suing.”

Nevertheless, as the number of megachurches grows, so too does the number of lawsuits. Vanderstelt hopes that his model can help alleviate some of that strain. Several church planters in California have contacted him intent on replicating the idea, and he has begun publicizing it within the church-planting network to which he belongs.

Picarello generally views such conciliatory measures as preferable to litigation but warns that churches offering voluntary tax payments or operating as businesses could create expectations among local government officials that other churches are unable to fulfill. He contends that the philosophical basis for tax exemption, namely that churches provide valuable social services in lieu of taxes, requires a robust defense against politicians who increasingly doubt its merit. Churches paying taxes, Picarello says, might unwittingly legitimize those doubts.

Some municipalities have already made attempts at rolling back tax exemption, but such efforts have little chance of success, according to Evelyn Brody, a professor at Chicago-Kent College of Law and author of Property-Tax Exemption for Charities: Mapping the Battlefield. Brody says that although property-tax exemption is not constitutionally protected, it is so entrenched in societal precedent that “towns are going to have a hard time challenging it in the courts.”

No matter whether churches remain exempt, Vanderstelt believes the onus lies on them to prove they are not drains on society: “When I think about how we live the gospel in our city, one of the primary things that drives that philosophy is that we should be willing to bear more pain on our shoulders than we create.”

He contends that a less centralized approach that avoids massive building projects goes a long way toward accomplishing that noble aim—and carries spiritual benefits, too. “The church is now defined by its existence in a community all week long rather than its gathering in a building once a week,” he said. “It finds its greater identity in its mission in the city. The weekly gathering becomes an equiping and a sending versus the end point.”
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PRISONS

Get into jail free
A federal court ruling has pried open the doors of California jails to Bible study materials by MARK BERGIN

Following his 1997 release from a seven-year stint behind bars, Ronald John has spent the last decade struggling to get his message back inside. As founder and director of Jesus Christ Prison Ministry (JCPM) in Lucerne Valley, Calif., the self-made minister ships his self-published workbook, Change Your Life Biblically, to inmates seeking biblical teaching.

But until recently, many of those shipments never reached their intended audience, bouncing back to JCPM off an overly protective wall between church and state. "Ever since we've been doing this, getting books into prisons has been a real pain," John said. "The heartache of wanting to help an inmate and being refused by the institution is extremely disappointing."

A federal court helped ease such heartache last fall when it ruled that the California State Prison in Corcoran could not bar religious materials from reaching prisoners. Last month, the Pacific Justice Institute (PJI), a nonprofit legal defense organization, parlayed that decision into a broader settlement with the California prison system. PJI negotiated the adoption of a pilot program for screening religious literature and CDs. If proved sufficiently secure, the program will become standard policy in prisons statewide.

The settlement is the first indicator that last fall's court decision has enough teeth to effect sweeping change, potentially widening doors for prison ministries across the country. In his opinion, Judge Dale Drozd ruled that blocking Bible study materials, even on grounds that they may pose a security risk, violates both the First Amendment and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, a federal statute reinforcing the Constitution's protection of free religious exercise.

The Corcoran prison had defended its policy of rejecting JCPM materials because the ministry was not among a list of approved vendors such as Amazon.com. Receiving mail from non-approved vendors forced extra security screening by the prison staff. Judge Drozd found that extra work load insufficient to justify the denial of religious rights.

PJI president Brad Dacus, whose organization represented three inmates and JCPM in the lawsuit, believes the prison's security defense was little more than a smokescreen for anti-religious bias. "If the prison was able to demonstrate that they couldn't take any books at all, because they had to inspect them and they were just short on manpower, and that all books everywhere had to go through some third-party vendor, then we would have had to look at the legitimacy of that argument," he said. "But because the prison already allows all kinds of secular books and magazines to be sent directly to inmates, singling out Bible studies as overly burdensome just didn't fly with us. And it didn't fly with the judge."

Since the ruling and subsequent settlement, Dacus has received thanks from prison ministries across California. He believes the federal court precedent will ripple outward: "I don't believe in hype more than truth will allow, but this case truly warrants excitement for all prison ministries."

PJI chief counsel Kevin Snider, who argued the case before the court and negotiated the settlement, believes all citizens should share that excitement, given that spiritual transformation can significantly reduce recidivism rates: "Even for those who are irreligious, it's in their self-interest as taxpayers to want the doors of the First Amendment to remain open for the purpose of rehabilitating inmates."

More prominent prison ministries, such as Chuck Colson's InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFL), have proven to help inmates reform their lives and avoid repeat incarcerations upon release. An IFL program near Houston, Texas, has reduced recidivism from 22 percent to 8 percent.

JCPM has no statistics documenting its success but receives thousands of letters from prisoners helped by its materials. John calls his daily trip to the ministry's post office box "one of the highlights of my life." Now, that highlight is no longer soured with bundles of Bible study workbooks marked "return to sender."
Our rambunctious nine-year-old daughter has had us rushing to the emergency room over and over again. But thanks to our membership in Medi-Share, we’ve been blessed to see our costs covered. It’s not an insurance company—it’s a network of caring Christians who share each other’s medical expenses. And it works. Dealing with the hospital, with doctors, invoices, payments—the whole experience has been painless. Best of all, Medi-Share is a not-for-profit company, so more of the community’s shared funds can go to help people in need. And that’s a good thing. Because we know our daughter. And we don’t think we’ve seen the last of our friends at the emergency room.”

—Stephan and Lisa, four children, self-employed

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Man behind the marriage battle

Massachusetts constitutional convention and pro-family activists have an opportunity to reverse the status quo.

by HEATHER SCARANO in North Reading, Mass.

His first glimpse of the United States came from an airplane above New York City. He was 7 years old and amazed by what he saw: so many skyscrapers, so little rubble. He asked his mother, “Why are these buildings still standing?”

“Because the war never came here,” she answered.

It was 1949 and Kristian Scheuermann was on his way to Worcester, Mass., where he would live with his mother Mary and her new husband, American Army Lt. Earl Mineau. Kristian’s father had “disappeared” during World War II. His mother married Mineau after he helped liberate the small town of Tützing, Germany, where they lived.

Born in Berlin in 1941, little Kristian knew nothing but leveled cities and bombed-out buildings. When he first saw New York City, he thought to himself, “This must be a wonderful land.”

Kris Mineau’s brown hair has since given way to gray, but his admiration for his adopted country is as fresh as it was in 1949. Now a retired Air Force colonel and decorated Vietnam War veteran, Mineau has new war zones to think about: The tall, lean 65-year-old president of Massachusetts Family Institute currently is one of the state’s most active political operatives and a linchpin in the next round of the state battle over same-sex marriage.

In 2004 Mineau led the largest citizen’s petition drive in Massachusetts history, collecting 170,000 signatures in support of a ballot initiative for a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. The proposed amendment comes before Massachusetts lawmakers June 14 and requires one-quarter of the legislature’s approval to be placed on the 2008 ballot.

At least 27 other states have passed similar amendments, but Massachusetts is the only state where same-sex marriage is already legal. “After four years we’re fighting to reverse the status quo,” said Mineau.

Not surprisingly, the approaching state legislative session has ignited passion on both sides of the marriage debate. MassEquality, the lobbying group trying to block the marriage amendment, launched a $750,000 publicity campaign in May to try to sway votes on Boston’s Beacon Hill. National Democratic political figures have also weighed in, exerting pressure on state and local legislators to change their vote. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean, and U.S. Sens. John Kerry and Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts have all stepped up their efforts to stifle the amendment, both with public statements and private arm-twisting.

The ballot measure passed its first of two required consecutive legislative sessions in January with 62 votes, 12 more than necessary. Mineau believes he has at least 57 “solid votes” heading into June 14. Five votes were lost to retirements from the legislature at the end of its regular session, he said.
FAMILY

MINEAU'S CALL TO THE political arena came after the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court legalized same-sex marriage in November 2003. “Everything I believed in—marriage, God’s word, the stability of society around the world, a husband and wife in a committed relationship to raise children—to see this affront happening in our own country was just absolutely incomprehensible.”

At the time Mineau, who holds a master’s degree in world missions and evangelism from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, was working as assistant pastor for Trinity Evangelical Church in North Reading, Mass.

“The first thing that came to my mind was, well, what have you been doing about it?” Mineau began to work with Massachusetts Family Institute (MFI), a nonprofit public-policy organization broadly committed to strengthening families and promoting Christian values, and since May 2004 he has led the organization. He has put MFI at the forefront of the battle not just over same-sex marriage, but abortion, embryonic stem-cell research, and abstinence education in Massachusetts.

MINEAU'S CHRISTIAN FAITH guides his activism, but that hasn’t always been the case. Like his introduction to America, Mineau’s first encounter with God was sudden and dramatic, and it happened in the air.

On a “gloomy, overcast” day in March 1969, midway through a routine training mission over England, the flight controls of Mineau’s Phantom F4 jammed. The supersonic jet began plummeting toward earth at 750 miles per hour. In seconds the U.S. Air Force captain and combat-experienced fighter pilot had broken through the low-lying clouds at 5,000 feet. He ejected his navigator but his own ejection seat wouldn’t fire.

Out of options and just two or three seconds from impact, Mineau cried out to God for help. That’s when Mineau says he was saved—body and soul. The ejection seat fired, the canopy opened, and the parachute, which normally needs three or four seconds to work, opened in just half a second. The windblast broke both Mineau’s arms and legs. “When I hit the ground,” he says, “they broke some more.”

Within five minutes Mineau heard the crunch of footsteps and the voice of an English villager saying, “I say mate, are you hurt?” Mineau spent the next three months unable to move, both arms and legs suspended in traction, before being transferred back to the United States. Back home Mineau learned that most of his fractures hadn’t healed properly and that surgery was needed to re-break and repair the fractures.

He recalls the doctors telling him, “You can forget about flying—you’ll never fly again. We’re not even sure that we can save your left leg.”

Until that instant Mineau had been using the “power of positive thinking.”

in 1974. But the assignment didn’t last long. Mineau knew he wanted to get back in the air when another pilot challenged him, “Hey Kris, we know why you’re a Jesus freak, you’re a grounded pilot and Jesus is your crutch.”

So six years to the day and hour later, Mineau was behind the controls of a fighter jet again. He completed his Air Force service in 1992 with the rank of colonel.

“Which is amazing,” he says, “for a guy who was in limbo status for six years. All the glory goes to God.”

Mineau applies the same energy and commitment to his work with MFI, and military experience has trained him to be a fighter for the protection of traditional marriage. With no shortage of foes, Mineau counts on support from Lura, his wife of 42 years, whom he describes as “feisty, opinionated, but extremely loving, gentle, and caring.”

Lura copes with the stress and long hours of her husband’s work, as well as the unending interruptions at their North Reading home—the phone is constantly ringing, she says—knowing they are surrounded by people who “cover us in prayer all the time.”

Were it not for her, Mineau says he probably wouldn’t be doing what he’s doing. “The primary reason that I’m in this battle for marriage is because of my wife, what she means to me, what my children mean to me, what my grandchildren mean to me, that’s all marriage.” @ Heather Scarano is a writer living in Wakefield, Mass.

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Silent partners

Does Planned Parenthood help those who victimize underage girls by failing to report their crimes? by LYNN VINCENT

A Planned Parenthood of the Southwest Region, a clock is ticking. Not only does the Cincinnati branch of the tax-funded abortion giant have to respond to the lawsuit a young Ohio woman filed on May 7, but the suit contains some of the most damaging evidence yet of what pro-life activists have been saying for years: that Planned Parenthood clinic workers ignore suspected sexual abuse of minor girls despite "mandated reporter" laws that require them to report such abuse to authorities.

Evidence of the practice has been piling up for at least five years:

► In summer 2002, Life Dynamics (LD), a Texas pro-life group, went public with a nationwide sting operation that caught hundreds of Planned Parenthood clinic workers on tape conspiring to conceal statutory rape. An LD activist posing as a 13-year-old girl made pregnant by a 22-year-old man called every Planned Parenthood clinic in the country.

A call to an Iowa City clinic yielded a typical response: When the "girl" asked the clinic worker whether Planned Parenthood would "tell anybody" of the illicit relationship, the worker replied, "Absolutely no one at all, and you will pay cash for this if you have this abortion, and there is no paper trail." When LD published the results of its telephone operation, Planned Parenthood issued a flurry of statements saying its workers always report suspected sexual abuse.

► In March 2005, the parents of "Jane Roe," a 14-year-old Ohio girl, sued Planned Parenthood for allegedly failing to report the statutory rape of their daughter by her 21-year-old soccer coach. The coach began having sex with the girl when she was 13 and in 2004, took her to Planned Parenthood for an abortion, paying for the operation with his credit card. An attorney for the group said the man actively misled clinic workers, posing as the girl's stepbrother. Regional Planned Parenthood CEO Susan Momeyer called the allegation of rape cover-ups "an old charge without foundation."

► In May 2007, pro-life activist Lila Rose, an 18-year-old UCLA sophomore, visited two Los Angeles Planned Parenthood clinics with fellow activist James O'Keefe, 22. Rose concealed a camcorder in her pocket and pretended to be 15 and pregnant by O'Keefe, who said he was 22. Rose videotaped a Planned Parenthood clinic worker coaching her to falsify her birth date in order to conceal statutory rape. A worker at a second clinic told Rose and O'Keefe that she had been pregnant at age 17: "If I would do it again, I would not continue the pregnancy," the worker told the couple.

Rose and O'Keefe posted their tapes on YouTube, igniting a brief and exclusively conservative media storm. Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California Kathy Kneer admitted to CNS News that the clinic employees had broken mandated reporter laws. Then on May 14, Planned Parenthood of Los Angeles president and CEO Mary-Jane Wagle sent Rose a letter threatening to sue her if she did not remove the videotapes from the internet and turn over the originals.

The latter action shocked Rose, who told WORLD that after receiving the letter she sat on her bed in her dorm room and cried—not out of fear, but grief: "I was just, like, what is the world coming to when this tax-receiving, billion-dollar organization is coming after me, an 18-year-old girl, who just wants to see young girls protected?"

The Rose/O'Keefe videotapes hit the internet just days after the Warren County suit made news in Ohio, and seven years after John Blanks, the biological father of Denise, began sexually abusing her at age 13. In
2000, Blanks began treating his daughter as his wife, the May 7 complaint alleges, forcing her to share his bed. In 2004, Blanks impregnated Denise and took her to Planned Parenthood’s Auburn Avenue clinic in Cincinnati to get rid of the baby. Banks hovered as Denise filled out forms and underwent counseling for an abortion. But after the abortion was complete, Denise found herself alone with a clinic worker and seized the moment to reveal that she had been forced to perform sexual acts.

The clinic worker did not forward the report, and Denise walked out of the clinic with her father, who continued to rape her for at least another year and a half. In 2006, Denise moved away to attend college at the University of Dayton. There, she confided the abuse to her basketball coach, who had noticed that, strangely, Blanks kept showing up at practices.

The coach reported Blanks, who is now serving five years in prison. Denise wants Planned Parenthood to pay for not answering her cry for help, as it was legally bound to do. Her attorney, Brian Hurley, wants finally to unmask what he believes is the abortion giant’s “pattern and practice” of failure to report abuse.

He may have a running start. Hurley is also the attorney in the “Jane Roe” case in Ohio. Last June, a Hamilton County, Ohio, judge ordered the Cincinnati Planned Parenthood clinic to turn over records on all abortions performed on girls under age 18. The order is believed to be the first of its kind in a civil case. The abortion agency protested vehemently and immediately appealed. Oral arguments in the appeal took place on May 15, but the case may take years to resolve.

“I think this is what they do,” said Hurley. “They say, ‘We’re going to outspend you. We’re going to bury you’—unless you have some lawyers who come along and say, ‘No, no: You’re not going to get away with this.”

uncovered in her files a handwritten note that said, “suspect v. don’t ask/don’t tell.” A copy of the note is attached to the May 7 complaint.

Hurley contends the note shows that Planned Parenthood of the Southwest Region has either a formal or tacit “don’t ask/don’t tell” policy regarding the reporting of sexual abuse. “They will argue that the note means nothing,” Hurley said. “But what is the notation ‘don’t ask/don’t tell’ doing in a trainer’s file on how to report sexual abuse?”

Also attached to the May 7 complaint is a photocopy of a “Documentation Form for Suspected Sexual or Child Abuse Report” signed by Cincinnati center manager Laura Providenti. Regarding the case of a 16-year-old girl, Providenti wrote: “Patient reports pregnancy is a result of sexual assault by a stranger.” Instead of reporting the assault to police, Providenti consulted a Planned Parenthood attorney and noted the result: She did not need to tell police “due to physician-patient privilege. We are prohibited from reporting as no severe bodily injury was reported.”

The form is dated 9/30/04, about two months before Denise says she told a worker at the same clinic that she had been raped.

The Ohio teen’s lawsuit produced a grand total of two stories in mainstream media, both in the Cincinnati Enquirer. Meanwhile, the story of Rose and O’Keefe’s videotapes appeared only in conservative media like The O’Reilly Factor, Human Events, and CNS News (CNS captured the tapes for internet posterity before Rose complied with Planned Parenthood’s request to remove them from YouTube).

“If Lila had uncovered dark secrets at Exxon Mobil or Wal-Mart, her expose would likely be the centerpiece of a scathing 20/20 profile on the abuse of corporate power,” said Alliance Defense Fund senior counsel David French, who is advising Rose and O’Keefe. “But this is abortion, a sacrament of the left and in the eyes of mainstream media, Planned Parenthood can do no wrong. The idea that mainstream media stands on the side of regular people policing the behavior of powerful organizations is patently false. Instead they are downright complicit in the abuses of power of those that they favor. You can see that here with the absolutely deafening silence.”

“What is the world coming to when this tax-receiving, billion-dollar organization is coming after me, an 18-year-old girl, who just wants to see young girls protected?” —Lila Rose

Here, Hurley's client’s case has turned up what may be significant evidence: While deposing a Planned Parenthood employee who trains clinic workers on how to comply with mandated reporter laws, Hurley

Alreadry, Denise's case has turned up what may be significant evidence: While deposing a Planned Parenthood employee who trains clinic workers on how to comply with mandated reporter laws, Hurley
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Melissa’s gumption
A homeschooler defies Germany’s strict compulsory school laws by PRIYA ABRAHAM

Melissa Busekros is finally home, but it took almost three months for the 16-year-old German to return. Along the way, she went halfway around the world, through a psychiatric ward, a children’s home, and foster care—all because her parents homeschool her.

Homeschooling is illegal in Germany. A Nazi-era prohibition, the ban grew out of Hitler’s worry that too much parental control would supersede the state’s influence. According to the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), Germany has about 400 homeschooling families. Most teach clandestinely or are in court. Parents who homeschool face fines, imprisonment, and loss of custody of their children.

Despite the risk, when disruptive classes made Melissa fall behind in math and Latin, her parents decided to tutor her at home. She took advanced courses in English and French and sang in the school choir at a community college, but the school she had been attending noticed her absence and alerted authorities.

The family skirted the police for months, even sending Melissa to Australia to avoid the state of Bavaria taking her into custody. But on Feb. 1, 15 police officers in multiple cars arrived at the Busekros home and took Melissa, then 15 years old. “It was like the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia or Hungary,” said Melissa’s father, Hubert Busekros.

In custody Melissa underwent a psychiatric evaluation that found she had “school phobia.” The state placed her in a clinic’s psychiatric wing for two weeks. She complained and said she preferred being homeschooled, but officials told her this was the result of “tyrannical” parents forcing her into it.

After a quick stay at a Catholic girls’ home, authorities then placed her with a foster family Feb. 16. The family “tried to make it good for me there,” Melissa told WORLD. Every week, she was allowed one phone call home and a two-hour visit with her parents at the children’s home. Nonetheless, she said, “I thought I would be home at least by the end of March.”

As the months passed, Melissa decided to resolve matters herself. From conversations with her lawyer and parents, she knew that turning 16 would give her more rights to decide where to live. So on her birthday, April 23, at 10 minutes past midnight, she left her foster family as they slept.

She wrote her foster parents a goodbye letter and took a few belongings, but left behind most of her clothes and schoolbooks. She swung her petite 5-foot, 107-pound frame out her window onto the ground below, then trekked across fields and forest, gradually working her way home in Erlangen some 60 miles away. Not wanting local authorities to know her exact escape route, she declined to give details: “It’s my secret,” she said.

After some three hours of travel, Melissa arrived on her parents’ doorstep around 3 a.m. Her mother was still awake, doing some ironing. With their eldest child gone, the Busekroses found it hard to sleep some nights. Gudrun Busekros gasped when she saw her daughter, and quickly woke Melissa’s two sisters and three brothers.

For now, the Busekroses are happy to have Melissa home. A second psychiatric evaluation found the teenager is normal and not suffering from “school phobia,” which helped along the family’s appeal. On May 16, the family won a major court appeal that returned Melissa to her parents’ custody. Her family plans to educate her from home in hopes that she can enter a university.

In most cases German courts rule against homeschooling families. “They don’t want parallel societies,” said Michael Donnelly of HSLDA, who has been following Melissa’s case. Though private and religious schools exist in Germany, they often teach the same material used by state schools.

Germany’s bias against homescooling is similar to resistance in the United States 25 years ago, said Donnelly, when few states allowed the practice. But U.S. states eventually fell back on a strong American tradition of private education, which Germany lacks, Donnelly said. Melissa’s gumption has helped the German homeschooling cause, but larger battles remain ahead. ©
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The new liberalism

Ideology-free politics may be the wave of the future

WITH CONSERVATIVES IN disarray and floundering for leadership, the pendulum may be swinging back to liberalism. But liberalism today is different from that of its glory days in American politics, the era from Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal to Lyndon Baines Johnson’s Great Society.

The old liberals believed in an activist government, one that rights society’s wrongs, controls the economy, and rights the wrongs of other societies overseas. They waged wars against poverty. They regulated business and tried to tax and spend their way out of economic downturns. They also waged wars against communism.

The new liberals also believe in an activist domestic government, but they are more open to free market economics than their Keynesian forebears. They do want America to right the wrongs of other countries, but a large and influential faction is essentially pacifist when it comes to waging war.

The old liberals had their base in the American working class, with farmers and factory workers, union members and “the common man.” The conservatives, by contrast, were the small business owners and big business owners, the prosperous middle class demonized by the old liberal rhetoric as “the rich.”

But because the old liberals were grounded in the culture of “ordinary people,” they tended to be culturally conservative, upholding traditional values, sometimes—as in what was then the solidly Democratic South—even reactionary values.

New liberals sometimes still employ “rich against poor” rhetoric, but there has been a huge socioeconomic shift. Today the typical American “working man” has prospered enough to join the middle class. Farmers and blue collar workers with traditional values have—thanks to Ronald Reagan and the Christian right—gone over to the Republicans.

The social base for the new liberals is the New Class knowledge workers. Whereas the old liberalism and the old conservatism grew out of an economy that built or owned tangible things, we now have an “information economy.” The highly educated cogs in this machine—high-tech experts, internet entrepreneurs, manufacturers of information such as the news media and the entertainment networks—join with more traditional information conveyers, such as teachers, academics, and artists, to form a new liberal elite.

These new liberals make a lot of money and so support the free markets that make it possible. But they hold to “progressive” ideas, scorning tradition and wanting culture change. Their personal moral values are strongly libertarian, especially in regard to sex. They are mostly OK with pre-marital sex, homosexuality, and abortion. And yet, they can be very moralistic when it comes to the environment, the war, and other social values.

The old liberalism has its holdovers. People with low incomes are still strongly Democratic. So are blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and recent immigrants. New liberals have a strong political interest in policies such as amnesty for illegal immigrants.

On my Cranach blog (cranach.worldmagblog.com), David of Norcal, a self-described liberal, made a telling comment: “New liberals are motivated less by ideology than by simply wanting the party closest to their ideology to win. [They] are practical and would almost sell their souls to win an election because having the right ideals but no power means all the wrong ideals get implemented.” By contrast, he said, “60s radicals were not practical at all” but “were idealists. . . . We are skeptics, cynical yet savvy.”

Postmodernists reject all ideologies. Power is everything. Since truth is relative, there are no overarching truths to guide our actions. The only philosophy that remains is pragmatism. We can act in practical ways to get what we want.

The new liberalism still has remnants of ideology, but the next liberalism may turn politics into a struggle between those who have an ideology and those who have none. Or, worse, between different power seekers who have no beliefs at all.
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Pilot project
A new missionary plane may revolutionize ministry to the underdeveloped world by MARK BERGIN

MISSIONARY PILOT
Dave Voetmann spent a quarter-century looking for places to touch down amid the jungles and deserts of Africa. Now, he has found a permanent airstrip in the open spaces of Sandpoint, Idaho. It's there that Voetmann landed his beloved Quest Aircraft Company and set out creating a plane to reach every tribe and tongue.

The Kodiak, a rugged, single-propeller bush plane, will hit the market this summer at $1.3 million. With pre-orders approaching 100, Voetmann is scrambling to double his manufacturing plant's current production capacity of one per week.

Such demand does not surprise the seasoned aviator, who designed the Kodiak specifically to solve the frustrations of missionary pilots. Voetmann, 72, understands the need to land on narrow and treacherous strips of terrain. He knows all too well the maddening inability to lift off from tight quarters with a full load. "I had to leave people and cargo behind repeatedly, because I just didn't have room," he recalls. "That was a daily occurrence."

In 10,000 hours of flights, mostly over unmapped territories, Voetmann never crashed a plane. But he did push existing technology to the brink of its capabilities. Three times he destroyed propellers when bumpy landings pushed the nose of his aircraft too close to the ground. Rainy conditions only exacerbate problems for Cessna's Caravan model, a popular choice among missionary pilots. "It's too heavy," Voetmann says. "I'd bury it in the mud until you couldn't see what color it was." The only planes ever specifically designed for missionary or humanitarian use in undeveloped backcountry ceased manufacture decades ago.

After his 25 years as a full-time pilot, Voetmann spent 18 more fundraising and maintaining the air fleet for Idaho-based Mission Aviation Fellowship. Much of that time went to locating and repairing old Beavers and Otters, aircraft models long since out of production. The challenges of that enterprise pushed him to create something new. "You can only rebuild a '58 Chevy so many times," he said.

The Kodiak is no broken-down Chevy. Weighing a svelte 3,450 pounds and ratcheting up to 750 horsepower at takeoff, it needs just 700 feet to get into the air and 750 feet to come back down. It can carry a 3,350-pound load between its 10-seat cabin and expanded cargo...
pod. Its turbine engine runs on jet fuel, far cheaper and more available than the aviation fuel used in most small planes. Its propeller is 19 inches off the ground, more than twice as high as the Caravan’s prop. What’s more, the Kodiak is fast.

JAARS, a North Carolina-based organization providing aviation services to Bible translators around the world, considers the plane “the ideal missionary aircraft.” Other missionary aviators have called it an answer to prayer.

Voetmann estimates that about 800 planes worldwide deliver supplies and personnel to remote mission camps on a daily or semi-daily basis. The Kodiak figures to replace a substantial portion of that fleet, ensuring a highly profitable future in that market alone. But other businesses and individuals have taken an interest in the versatile aircraft, too. Voetmann estimates that Quest could reel in as much as $40 million in profits per year, all of which will funnel back into various ministries.

That economic model of establishing Quest as a self-sustaining charitable trust endeared Voetmann to Christian business leaders when he began seeking startup money in 2000. He raised more than $40 million from donors interested only in spreading Christianity. He turned down $20 million from venture capitalists seeking a profit.

To keep production costs low, Voetmann brought on an unpaid board of directors, including former Alaska Airlines president and chairman Bruce Kennedy. On top of agreeing to receive no financial compensation for their work, many board members contributed large sums to the project.

Originally inspired to become a missionary pilot in 1986 after hearing a radio report that Nate Saint and his team of evangelists were missing in South America, Voetmann believes the Kodiak will outdo his previous 40-plus years of work in honoring Saint’s legacy and carrying the gospel to the margins.

“This project will carry on long after I’m dead and gone and will be more strategic than anything I’ve ever done,” he said.
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Atlanta inner-city expert ROBERT LUPTON rethinks ministry to the poor in a new book by MARVIN OLASKY

FOR MORE THAN 35 years Robert Lupton has worked to improve the lives of the poor in inner-city Atlanta. Through FCS Urban Ministries, which he directs, he has started and developed three mixed-income subdivisions with housing for hundreds of families, two multiracial churches, and many businesses and community services.

Lupton speaks from experience when he writes in his new book, Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life (Regal, 2007). "When individuals, like communities . . . abandon self-pity, self-indulgence and blame to face the hard work of building (or rebuilding) their lives, they have taken a giant step toward health. . . . It is a long journey from soft-hearted, one way charity to reciprocal, interdependent relationships." We asked him to show us some of the routes.

WORLD: Some argue that, despite the lying and substance abuse common among panhandlers, it's still "the Christian thing" to give money to all who ask. You write, "Could it be that our reluctance to give to the stranger on the street is much more than a reaction conditioned by cons we have fallen prey to? Could our hesitance be a righteous response from our spirit cautioning us that irresponsible giving is detrimental both to the recipient and the giver?"

Lupton: Giving can be for better or for worse just as love can be responsible

LONG JOURNEY: Lupton stands in front of GlenCastle, a site FCS Urban Ministries restored from an old Atlanta jail to a multi-family dwelling.

or irresponsible. What may seem like a compassionate and loving act may in fact be supporting a destructive pattern of manipulation and dependency. How can we know if our giving is actually helping or hurting? The only sure way is to be in relationship, to know the person well enough to assure that his request for assistance is legitimate and accompanied by accountability.

Obviously, this is not very practical when you walk past a panhandling stranger on the street. If the Spirit prompts you to drop change into his cup, then by all means respond.

Offering to take him to lunch is better—at least you get to know his name and how your money is being spent. But an even better alternative is to offer him a ride to a homeless ministry that is equipped to deal responsibly with men in his situation. It is far more charitable to give a contribution to support a homeless ministry than to drop change into a homeless person's cup. And the very best response—become a ministry volunteer and a personal friend to those in need.

WORLD: You write of your experience with a church's clothing giveaway: "As soon as the first customers came through the door, the spirit of charity that smiling volunteers exuded faded rapidly. A hoarding instinct (the same kind of I-gotta-get-me-ine impulse that seizes looting crowds) took over our customers as they grabbed and growled and stuffed as many clothes into as many trash bags as they could carry. It was pure bedlam. Rules had to be hastily enacted. "Did the rules save the day?"

Lupton: The introduction of rules was like saying "Let the games begin!"

Recipients began immediately trying to figure out ways to beat the system—additional garments for their children who were in school, extra clothes for a sick mother who could not get to the church. In no time we were behaving like temple police, guarding the resources of the Kingdom against the very people we were there to serve. This one-way giving produced an adversarial relationship between giver and recipient that was anything but charitable. The solution was obviously not in developing tighter controls.

WORLD: You then describe the advice you received from a supporting Atlanta church: "Sell the clothes; don't give them away. People will then buy only what they can afford. And if they have no clothing money, they can work in the store and earn what they need. This would produce cash flow, the men said, that would enable us to hire unemployed residents, train them in retail merchandising, and propel them into the economic mainstream." What happened next?

Lupton: The conversion of the clothes closet into a thrift store was the very best decision we could have made. The men's group took this on as a missions project, helped us secure a suitable building, put together a sound business plan, and produced a self-sustaining retail operation that has served the community for more than 20 years now.

The change in the relationship between giver and recipient was dramatic. Recipients became valued customers.
INTERVIEW

Instead of guarding against their greed, we studied ways to attract them into the store—bargain days, latest fashion arrivals, friendly customer service, layaway options. We discovered that everyone loves a bargain but no one wants to be a charity case. And the reciprocal relationship was dignity-enhancing.

WORLD: You write about your ministry's experience in building new homes in a low-income area and finding out years later that many of them had become centers of criminal activity. What did that experience teach you, and what "decisive, corrective action" did you have to take?

LUPTON: Early on we believed that home ownership for poor families was sufficient to produce both pride and self-sufficiency. What we did not realize until some years down the road is that clustering these affordable homes together in one section of the community had the effect of concentrating poverty. Instead of property values appreciating and the neighborhood improving, homes deteriorated and negative attitudes and behaviors that often accompany chronic poverty took root.

Several of the homes we built became hang-outs for drug pushers and thieves. We eventually had to evict the residents, upgrade the homes, and sell them to stable, middle-income families whose commitment and leadership were strong enough to establish positive norms in the community. We learned through painful and expensive lessons that health flourishes in mixed-income neighborhoods, not isolated blocks of poverty.

WORLD: You write about your community feeding program: "Over time our faithful volunteers who sacrificially gave up their time to prepare and serve hot meals and clean up afterward began to ask if the people they served ever got jobs and moved out of poverty. These same people, they observed, were in the food line every week and had been for many months. . . . Was this really helping the poor: to get on their feet or was it fostering dependency?" Once you asked that question, what happened?

LUPTON: Eventually our volunteers asked the recipients to assist with cleaning up after the meal. They also invited recipients to help serve the meals. The distribution of canned goods, which was always a troublesome and often a quarrelsome process, improved as community residents took on a larger role in bagging and passing out the free food. This joint participation helped to improve relationships but it did not address the dependency issue.

Our current solution to these food challenges came with the creation of food co-ops. Community members who elected to join paid a couple dollars per week into a fund managed by the church to purchase surplus food from the city food bank. Co-op members order, pick up, sort, and deliver food for each other in an equitable manner. They often fix meals for each other at the church from the food they have purchased. In this way the poor take ownership and control of their own food program. It has worked quite well. We now have four co-ops with 40+ members in each.

WORLD: You describe a plan to open a big "drug treatment facility in an inner-city community that was plagued by drug abuse"—yet, when you saw that the neighborhood was starting to become gentrified, you opposed building the big facility and suggested that the organization instead buy a large old house or two and create a small program. Why?

LUPTON: A large treatment facility may well provide a much-needed service to a drug-infested neighborhood. But if that community is beginning to stir with new life and gentrification is bringing young professionals back, it is safe to assume that the number of addicted residents will soon be diminishing. In time the treatment center will need to draw its clients from other parts of the city, a practice that the reviving community will likely find objectionable—and for good reason.

If a neighborhood is to regain its health, the number of troubling and troubled residents must decrease. Any program that brings more need (or problems) into the community will find itself at cross-purposes with revitalization efforts. Establishing a treatment center in a large residence or two (as opposed to building an institutional facility) would allow a program to shrink in size and convert back to residential use when the need in the community decreases.

WORLD: You note the tendency of ministries, agencies, and institutions to "become self-serving, even when their stated mission is to serve others. They quite quickly form systems and strategies that favor the interests of the institutions over the people they serve".
and the communities where they are located." How can ministries avoid that common tendency?

**LUPTON:** I asked a group of PhDs in organizational development that same question when I was first setting up our ministry. They told me that I was asking them to "institutionalize non-institutionalization"—an impossible task. But I could retard the process, they told me. Don't hire staff. As soon as you do they will have a vested interest in preserving the organization for their own security. Instead, facilitate visionaries to carry out their callings.

A second suggestion was to avoid accumulating property—it has a voracious appetite for consuming time, money, maintenance, and management and diverts energy away from the mission. Finally, give away as much as we can. Give away credit, ministry rights, assets and instead be a servant organization that decreases so that others may increase. You can see, can't you, why so few organizations are truly self-giving?

**WORLD:** You conclude your book by explaining how those with business experience in areas such as real estate, merchandising, and marketing can use their "vision-casing, deal-making, product-promoting talents" to help the poor and build Christ's kingdom. What's the first step for such individuals?

**LUPTON:** A vision must be worthy of a business person's commitment. Most ministries ask far too little of their highly capable friends—a monetary donation, a scholarship for a needy kid, serve on a board. A vision comparable to one's capacities is more likely to elicit an excited response. A vision that is history-shaping, like transforming a housing project or even a whole neighborhood, or starting a school, a redemptive cause that challenges their abilities, is what captures the imagination of highly successful people.

Also, kings talk to kings. Once a leading businessperson gets involved in an exciting mission, they will inevitably go to their peers and solicit their help. One well-positioned business person can attract an untapped strata of resourced friends into a cause. But the vision must be compelling.

—For more about Robert Lupton's experience in Atlanta, and his insights on Christmas toy giveaways for children, see a profile and an Olasky column in WORLD, Oct. 22, 2005

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COLLEGES: Pregnant athletes often must choose between a child and a scholarship

by MARK BERGIN

WHEN UNIVERSITY OF Memphis student-athlete Cassandra Harding became pregnant three years ago, she hardly fit the picture of a bubbly expectant mother eager to share the news. Harding dreaded the necessary meeting with her track coaches, knowing it would mark the end of her free ride to an education. She initially considered an abortion.

But better a terminated scholarship than a terminated baby. “I’m so happy I have my baby,” Harding said on a recent ESPN broadcast highlighting several stories of college athletes with unplanned pregnancies. After giving birth, the talented jumper walked back onto the track team, proved she could still compete, and reclaimed her scholarship.

Despite that happy ending, the university has taken heat for its policy of revoking scholarships when athletes become pregnant. Harding said that she and the other women on the track team signed a document agreeing to as much. Critics, including some pro-life advocates, charge that such a policy pressures women into having abortions. The Memphis athletic department says it has violated no laws.

Indeed, schools are allowed to make decisions in such cases without NCAA oversight. Athletes often lose their scholarships for sustaining an injury while engaged in some risky extracurricular activity, and many colleges and universities view pregnancy in the same light.

Next month, the NCAA will review its policy of affording schools such independence. Current national guidelines allow pregnant athletes to apply for an extra year of athletic eligibility, effectively providing a second red-shirt season. But that provision is often not enough to keep women from choosing abortion. The ESPN report featured interviews with seven women from Clemson University who said they felt coerced to have abortions in order to preserve their free education.

Such stories raise questions about culpability. Most of the public and media outrage in response to the seven Clemson women takes aim at the athletic department’s policy. Few critics have addressed the athletes’ decisions to choose money over life.

Barbara Osborne, a sports law researcher at the University of North Carolina, told the Associated Press that, while legal, the Clemson policy “smacks of moralizing” and “seems very 1940s and ‘50s.” Other critics call the policy sexist, because it only punishes women for pregnancy and never men. Of course, were any male athlete to gain 30 pounds through foolish behavior, he would likely lose his scholarship, too.

Tennis: Roger Federer began his annual quest to win the French Open with a straight sets victory over American Michael Russell May 22. The Swiss superstar is the only player to twice capture three of his sport’s four Grand Slam events in a single year. But many analysts resist crowning Federer the greatest ever until he masters the clay courts of France.

Olympics: The Austrian Olympic Committee served lifetime bans to 14 athletic officials for their involvement in a blood-doping scandal at last year’s games in Turin, Italy. The committee also warned that any future perpetrators would receive the same harsh penalties, part of the country’s effort to land the 2014 Winter Games in Salzburg.

Baseball: As of May 21, the New York Yankees had outscored their opponents 256-236 and yet occupied the cellar of the American League’s East division with a record of 21-28. By comparison, the Tampa Bay Devil Rays tied for last place with an identical record, had scored far fewer runs (230) and allowed far more (294). Such numbers exasperate Yankees owner George Steinbrenner, who shelled out $200 million for one of the worst teams in baseball.
Dirty Spurs

NBA: Basketball’s latest dynasty can’t keep it clean
by MARK BERGIN

THE SAN ANTONIO SPURS ARE angling toward another NBA championship, their third in the past five years and fourth since 1999. Such dominance approaches levels of past NBA dynasties, an achievement all the more impressive in today’s climate of rampant free agent roster moves.

But the Spurs are not nationally celebrated in the manner of Michael Jordan’s Bulls, Magic Johnson’s Lakers, or Larry Bird’s Celtics. One possible reason: dirty play.

Forward Bruce Bowen has taken heat during these playoffs for kneeling Phoenix guard Steve Nash, a two-time league MVP, in the groin and kicking Phoenix forward Amaré Stoudemire in the calf. The league has investigated past charges against Bowen, aka “ankle breaker,” that he intentionally positions his foot beneath jump-shooting opponents to cause awkward landings and injuries.

Spurs guard Manu Ginobili likewise draws accusations of poor sportsmanship, often delivering dramatic acting performances to trick referees into questionable foul calls.

During the fourth quarter of a 91-79 victory over the Utah Jazz in Game 4 of the Western Conference Finals, angry fans threw debris onto the court after Ginobili’s antics helped him score 11 points from the free-throw line and provoked four technical fouls from the Jazz.

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That '70s show

ENERGY: The House tries a stagflation-era fix for high gasoline prices by TIMOTHY LAMER

THE U.S. CONGRESS—which does not see $250 billion budget deficits as "unconscionably excessive" nor $34 trillion in unfunded Medicare liabilities as any reason to act—has had it with $3.20 a gallon gasoline.

Right in time for the high-travel Memorial Day weekend, the House passed the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act. The measure would, in the event of a presidential declaration of an energy emergency, make it illegal for individuals or companies to charge "unconscionably excessive" prices for gasoline or otherwise take "unfair advantage" of customers. Penalties would be as high as $150 million for companies and $2 million and 10 years in jail for individuals.

The bill passed the House by a vote of 284-141, and the Senate plans to take up a version of it later this month. In the mind of chief sponsor Rep. Bart Stupak (D-Mich.), the vote comes down to a very simple choice: Legislators can either "side with Big Oil" or "with consumers who are being ripped off at the gas pump."

But Stupak's opponents—and energy market analysts—say it is a bit more complicated than that. They note that Stupak's legislation does not define what price would be illegal, forcing gas station operators to guess whether they were in compliance with the law. "I don't know what 'unconscionably excessive' means," said Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas).

Pointing back to the 1970s, opponents also say that attempts by government to control prices lead to unconscionable shortages and unfair long lines for gasoline. Only increases in supply or decreases in demand, they argue, will bring down gasoline prices without harmful side effects.

These concerns led the White House, in a statement, to promise a veto, saying Stupak's legislation "would harm consumers, the very people the bill is touted to protect."

Meanwhile, market forces seemed set to provide some relief at the pump. Several gasoline refineries came back online after being shut down for repairs, and oil prices fell on news that Nigeria's oil unions had ended a strike.
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I quit
SHEEHAN: “Peace mom” gives up by MINDY BELZ

Camp Casey is up for sale. And Cindy Sheehan, the “face” of the anti-war movement, has resigned. She became a household name after her son, Army Specialist Casey Sheehan, 24, was killed in 2004 when his unit came under fire in Baghdad. In August 2005 she staged a month-long sit-in at “Camp Casey” outside the president’s ranch in Crawford, Texas, and demanded an audience with Bush—an invitation he declined.

Despite counter-protests from other parents of soldiers killed in the war, Sheehan won excessive air time, thanks to financial backing from MoveOn.org and image-burnishing courtesy of a high-gloss PR firm backed by liberal activist Ben Cohen of Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream. At one point Sheehan even considered a run for public office. But then the public moved on, including her fan base. Sheehan, disillusioned by congressional reauthorization of war funding last month, sent “letters of resignation” to the liberal DailyKos blog and the Democratic Party on Memorial Day—also a day marking her son’s 28th birthday. She wrote, “I am going to take whatever I have left and go home.”

He’s back
KEVORKIAN: But Dr. Death refuses to take some of his own medicine

Jack Kevorkian helped over 130 people to their deaths and championed euthanasia via push-button mechanics that allowed patients to take their own lives using poison gas or lethal drugs. Eventually his work landed him in jail, and the 79-year-old pathologist, due to be released June 1, has been serving a 10-to-25-year prison sentence for one “assisted suicide” case the court ruled second-degree murder in 1999.

Look for Kevorkian, widely known as “Dr. Death,” to sound off on an early edition of 60 Minutes. Don’t look for him to take some of his own medicine.

Kevorkian, according to his attorney, has high blood pressure, hepatitis C, and heart and lung disease, and he has been described as “terminally ill.” For lesser crimes of decay the good doctor helped others to their eternal destiny. He also pledged to go on a hunger strike if convicted and sent to prison, and starve himself to death—yet didn’t. He has promised to continue his crusade for euthanasia and assisted suicide, according to friends and corrections officials. As Hamlet might say, he may speak daggers to others, but uses none. —M.B.

Close-ups

Anglicans: Two names failed to make the invitation list of Archbishops of Canterbury Rowan Williams to the upcoming Lambeth Conference, a who’s-who gathering of the worldwide Anglican Communion that happens once a decade: partnered gay bishop V. Gene Robinson and Martyn Minns, the newly consecrated missionary bishop to North America from the communion’s largest province, Nigeria. Williams said he excluded them from his list of 850 global church leaders because both are at the center of a controversy over ordination of homosexuals and could disrupt the gathering. Williams later acknowledged that Robinson might be invited as a guest—apparently preferring to risk losing the global south churches who support Minns’ orthodoxy over the North American paying liberal elites.

Patrick Henry College: When a dispute at Patrick Henry College last year led to the departure of a group of professors amid controversy as to whether their views were nonbiblical, three professors in theologically conservative Presbyterian denominations—David Nee, Robert Stacey, and Kevin Culberson—went to their regional presbyteries (conferences of elders) and asked to have their views examined. The presbyteries found all three to be biblically orthodox in their views.
EMPLOYMENT

Director of Development, Covenant Day School (K-12): Seasoned professional responsible for directing a comprehensive resource development program that enhances the goals of Covenant Day School, located in the Charlotte, NC, area. For complete position profile, visit www.covenantday.org. To apply, send resume, cover letter and references to cds@philanthropic-advosy.com.

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**Our problem**

As a USAF chaplain, I recently returned from the mountains in Zabul Province, Afghanistan ("Opium wars," May 12). Thank you for covering the forgotten war. Besides "poor security," the beautiful but remote geography is part of the reason reconstruction is slow. And let's remember that the affluent but spiritually dark parts of our global economy created the market for Afghan poppies. This is "our problem."

—Frederick S. McFarland, Dayton, Ohio

**The size of the gift**

Joe Belz's column on deciding which ministries to support ("Junk the junk mail," May 12) was excellent. The many small contributions we've given do encourage and cost the nonprofits to keep us on their rolls. I like the $100 minimum donation idea, and we've adopted it.

—Bob Ostrich
Ames, Iowa

Belz may have no idea of the damage his column can do. The vast majority of our regular donors give $25 or less. If your readers follow his advice, the funding that provides for solid,biblically and ethically sound organizations such as ours would be vastly undercut. We treasure every single donor and thank them sincerely for gifts of any size.

—Marshall J. Pennell
Executive Vice President
Child Evangelism Fellowship
Warrenton, Mo.

Belz gives good advice here. We're on at least a dozen mailing lists, most of which we disregard without considering. For example, the child of a friend died and in lieu of flowers, as requested, we sent a reasonable, but not very large contribution to a small university. So, now we are on the college's list of "Alumni and Friends." The material they have sent us has long since consumed the amount of the contribution.

—Charles Shull
Hendersonville, N.C.

As the vice president for development at a large gospel rescue mission in the Midwest, let me say that you, the donor, can control the amount of mail you receive; just give us a call and let us know what you'd like. We do solicit extensively through the mail because it is a wise use of resources. For every dollar we spend on direct mail, we see a return of between $2.75 and $10.50 within three months. We also have found that direct mail, at about 65 cents per piece, is the most cost-effective way we can communicate with our friends and supporters. Many people believe we "waste money" on our mailings. Not so; our mailings are the foundation from which we shelter and feed hungry people, and help people get off drugs and alcohol.

—Doug Redford
Grand Rapids, Mich.

I understand Belz's valid points, but as a high school student, it is not financially feasible for me to send gifts of $100 or more. I still believe that God wants me to give to His work, even if I can only give $25 or $30. Many others are in the same financial situation as me. As Jesus' parable about the widow's coin demonstrates, it's not the size of the gift but the heart that matters.

—Kevin Gerard, 17
Lovell, Mich.

My husband and I are on staff with a nonprofit Christian ministry. I do not think that ministry correspondence letters should be called "junk mail." Yes, we ask for financial contributions, but the main reason is to share prayer needs. As for his recommendation to pick a "handful" of parachurch organizations, my concern is that folks will gravitate to Big 10 ministries like Focus on the Family or World Vision and the smaller ministries will be strangled.

—Deanne Closson
Allen, Texas

**Orwell would agree**

The decision of Supreme Court Justices Kennedy, Roberts, Thomas, Scalia, and Alito to use plain language while dealing with partial-birth abortion laws once again confronts society with the metaphysical reality ("Speaking our language," May 12). A pregnant woman carries not an embryo or a fetus, but a living, unborn child.

Language has the power to either mask the truth or reveal it, to mislead the public or foster public awareness. Does he who controls the public's language actually control the public's thoughts? George Orwell would agree—the use of language really does matter.

—Adam Filipiek
St. Louis, Mo.

It was so encouraging to see Justice Kennedy take a firm stand on partial-birth abortion. It reminds us that we, as Christians and as U.S. citizens, need to take a stand for what is right in our nation.

—Erin Grant, 16
St. Charles, Mo.

Thank you to Justice Kennedy for speaking the truth boldly, giving those a voice who have not the ability to speak. May it help to open eyes to this cruelty, and may God turn hearts of stone into hearts of flesh.

—Esther Vanderhoff
Bothell, Wash.
Marvin Olasky closed his column on partial-birth abortion ("Piercing the skull," May 12) by lamenting that in news stories, “fetus was still the word of choice for describing the unborn child. How long, Lord, how long?” I have long wondered why those who support abortion are referred to as “pro-choice” rather than “pro-death.” Indeed, Lord, how long?

—PETE ROSS
Montrouge, Colo.

Knife in the hand

Thank you to Andrée Seu for "Betrayal" (May 12). I, um... (squirm), love Jesus too. Pointing fingers was easier before reading her column.

—HOLLY EMMERT
Houghton, Mich.

Ouch. It was a very powerful column. Every other word out of one’s mouth doesn’t have to be “Jesus” or “God,” but when He’s relegated to the back row in the discussion of important things, then that’s not the place to be.

—KEVIN MILLER
Winchendon, Mass.

Never-ending job?

Cal Thomas asks, regarding Iraq, “Does the United States not suffer a loss of credibility in the world’s eyes for again failing to finish a job it started?” ("Retreat & repeat," May 12). But what is the job? If part of it is to establish democracy, the job is never-ending because the chances of establishing it in a country with little background in Christianity are remote. Maybe we should swallow our pride and leave.

—CRAIG SHOEMAKER
Jenison, Mich.

Term limits

Four years of living in Istanbul have taught me that we should be very careful about the terms “Islamist” and “Islamic government” in reference to Turkish politics. The current government, composed mainly of observant Muslims, has made strides in liberalizing Turkey’s economy, extending human rights to minorities, and negotiating with the EU for membership. In contrast, the “traditional secularist parties” want to prevent women who wear headscarves from attending school, working as a teacher or in any government position, or serving in an elected office. How would Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma...
MAILBAG

Gandhi, or Martin Luther King Jr. have responded to such ridiculous discrimination?

—JEFF WEARDEN
Istanbul, Turkey

They know

• Thank you for addressing the real issue (“Professional dishonesty,” May 5). It’s not whether or not journalists know the truth about abortion or are capable of figuring it out. They know it but they willingly obscure the facts because the facts are totally offensive to anyone with a conscience. The Bible says such people “deliberately forget” that there is a God who will punish their wickedness.

—MICAH DABNEY
Missoula, Mont.

Many victims

• Richard Land (“God & country,” April 21) made several insightful observations on the balance of faith and country and how they are not to merge into religious theocracy. However, I question his assertion that adultery is a matter solely of “consenting adults in private.” Adultery is not a victimless crime. The victims are children, and there is a general coarsening of our culture and a degradation of vows in a legal system that looks the other way.

—ERIC BIERKER
Mountville, Pa.

Correction

• Turkey’s parliament moved forward national elections to July 22 after a constitutional court annulled the parliamentary selection of Abdullah Gul as president (The Buzz, May 12, p. 4). But popular elections remain uncertain.

Letters to the editor

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Tests to measure my field of vision. Tests looking to the right, tests looking to the lower left, tests with pupils at rest, tests with pupils dilated. And in the end there came the pronouncement: ischemic optic neuropathy, which means that sometime during the midnight hours of April 25 the blood supply to my left optic nerve stopped long enough for vision cells to die.

Is it one thing to be told I don't have cancer and another to be told I have lost some sight? Bad news is bad news. A different death, but death nonetheless, was crouching at my door. What then began were gray-shadow days, days of darkness and fear. What caused the blood interruption? Am I at risk for cardiovascular problems? Could this happen to my right eye?

My gray-shadow days have been days of darkened paralysis. I mix metaphors to speak with candor. Given the condition, a pastor like me should quickly fix on a Gospel text where Jesus heals the blind. But not so. Instead, I identified myself with the paralytic lying on the mat, carried by four friends. The man was immobile; his friends were desperate. So desperate that they climbed the roof where Jesus was teaching, clawed through the mud and tiles, and lowered their friend down through the opening. Such determined and desperate faith deserves commendation, and Jesus gives it. In response to "their faith," I.e., the faith of the four (Mark 2:5), Jesus eventually raises the paralytic.

And all the while the paralytic simply lies there. Like me in my gray-shadow days. Days in which the emotional and physical drain of my eye trauma conspired with the endless impossibility of simple routines (cutting my food, shaving my left cheek, signing my name) and paralyzed my spirit. Like the man on the mat, all I was able to do was lie there and allow others to carry me, to have others pray and encourage and provide and love. They did so in great numbers. And it has been their desperate faith, their faithfulness, and their loyal love that carried me back to Jesus.

Unlike the paralytic, my restoration has been slow and gradual. But it has been a restoration nevertheless. With the passing of days, gray shadows have given way to the fair glow of sky blue—the color of hope.

From the start, hope was beyond me. Just as surely as the paralytic could not walk, so in shadow-gray days I could not look ahead. But others could. God saw their faith, and, mercy of mercies, blessed me. And so, while my sight loss remains the same, my spirit has been raised, my heart recreated, my hope renewed ex nihilo. And it has come to pass that in this day, the day of sky blue, darker days that once were are now fleeing away.

In His wisdom, God sees all this, and in His grace He calls it very good. 

—Matt Ristuccia is a pastor in Princeton, N.J.
Caught with their flags down
Some institutions pledge allegiance to a banner all their own

WHEN STANLEY HAUERWAS, THE DUKE University professor dubbed by Time as “America’s best theologian” (“A playful mind,” March 17, 2007), gave a commencement speech at a Mennonite college a while back, he said he was glad that no American flag was in evidence, for “the power of the flag is, by necessity, violent.”

Hauerwas added, “Because there is no flag here, Goshen College is potentially a more truthful, and thus academically interesting, educational institution than those that serve such flags.”

Two questions for asking on June 14, Flag Day: Is a flagless institution likely to be more academically interesting than one that displays a flag? And does showing a flag that represents government’s power of the sword detract from the primary allegiance of Christians to Christ?

I don’t doubt that Goshen is a fine college, and that its reasons for not showing a flag, couched as they are in Mennonite tradition, are far deeper than the anti-flag sentiments of the secular campus left. But even though flags may be on display in front of college administration buildings and at football stadiums, most major American universities these days are essentially flagless.

These days many professors sneer at patriotism. Many don’t want students to become defenders of the flag, so they kick ROTC off campus. Some prefer the president of Iran to the president of the United States.

Does such conduct make a flagless institution potentially more truthful and interesting than one that displays a flag? I suspect not. At some intellectually flagless institutions masses of individualists line up and take orders from the Noam Chomskys of the world. Flag-flying institutions are likely to have a broader diversity of thought. They may even welcome some professors who are neither liberal nor radical.

But the second question remains: Does allegiance to the United States detract from our allegiance to God? After all, the U.S. Constitution does not refer to God, so maybe this is a godless America from the get go. Sure, the Declaration of Independence does display faith in God, but the Constitution assumes God, but wouldn’t it be nice to have that constitutionally explicit?

Well, surprise: It is explicit in U.S. constitutions—not once but 50 times. Every state constitution refers to God.

Here are five examples from the preambles of Revolutionary War constitutions:

► Georgia—“We, the people of Georgia, relying upon protection and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish this Constitution…”

► Massachusetts—“We . . . the people of Massachusetts, acknowledging with grateful hearts, the goodness of the Great Legislator of the Universe . . .”

► Pennsylvania—“We, the people of Pennsylvania, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and humbly invoking His guidance . . .”

► South Carolina—“We, the people of the State of South Carolina, grateful to God for our liberties, do ordain and establish this Constitution.”

► Maryland, 1776—“We, the people of the state of Maryland, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious liberty . . .”

And here are five later examples:

► Minnesota, 1857—“We, the people of the State of Minnesota, grateful to God for our civil and religious liberty, and desiring to perpetuate its blessings . . .”

► West Virginia, 1872—“Since through Divine Providence we enjoy the blessings of civil, political and religious liberty, we, the people of West Virginia, reaffirm our faith in and constant reliance upon God . . .”

► Idaho, 1899—“We, the people of the State of Idaho, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom . . .”

► Oklahoma, 1907—“Invoking the guidance of Almighty God, in order to secure and perpetuate the blessings of liberty . . .”

► Arizona, 1911—“We, the people of the State of Arizona, grateful to Almighty God for our liberties, do ordain this Constitution . . .”

Notice how often the state constitution writers link God and liberty. They did not equate expressions of biblical faith with grappings for theocracy. They knew that an understanding that all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory leads to a separation-of-powers system of checks and balances, the opposite of a dictatorship.

They also knew that if we stopped invoking God’s guidance we would look to our own wisdom or to that of a Supreme Court grasping for supremacy, and we’d be in trouble—as we now are. ©
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