WIN OR LOSE, IT'S ALL ABOUT FAMILY, AND SHINING THE LIGHT ON JESUS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION." —CHRISTIAN RODEO RIDERS, P. 54

TODAY'S STAY-AT-HOME DAD P. 48
Key memory verses to help you KNOW and SHARE the Gospel

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

- John 14:6

scripturememory.com/TheWay
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MAN ON THE HOME FRONT
As more dads become primary caregivers to their children, many learn to homeschool and navigate expectations
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What does it mean to love our country? Navigating between the extremes of Christian nationalism and disengagement, Richard Mouw sees healthy patriotism as love of country in the context of Christian love of neighbor. Calling us to build a country where all people can thrive in peace, this guide helps us pave the way toward liberty and justice for all.

""

Our civic life requires wisdom, and this book by Richard Mouw helps to supply it page after page. The balance in this book and its tone help show the way to be a good loving Christian and a good citizen at the same time. May their tribe thrive and increase.

—DARRELL BOCK,
Dallas Theological Seminary

RICHARD MOUW NAVIGATES
WHAT IT MEANS
TO LOVE OUR COUNTRY

How to Be a Patriotic Christian

LOVE OF COUNTRY
AS LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

RICHARD J. MOUW
AUTHOR OF UNCOMMON DECENCY

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What stood out as you worked on the rodeo story?

“I sat on bleachers next to a grandpa who was wearing his Vietnam vet hat and who’d brought his grandkids to the rodeo. When the announcer prayed, invoking Jesus, and then the national anthem played, the grandpa and children, along with everyone I could see, reverently bowed their heads, then placed their hands over their hearts and sang along. Despite the craziness we see in headlines, love of God and country is still strong.”

—Sharon Dierberger, whose story begins on p. 54
POINTING TO A DIFFERENT HERO
JUNE 25, P. 60: By what authority does Frank Turek say that the story of the Good Samaritan is not true? Jesus said a “certain Samaritan,” not an imaginary one. To depend on secular history to confirm the Bible is to depend on a broken reed.

Robert Garrett/Louisville, Ky.

A MOST INCONSISTENT FOUNDER
JUNE 25, P. 66: As I read Collin Garbarino’s review of Thomas Jefferson: A Biography of Spirit and Flesh, I was reminded of what Scripture says about men and women being used by God. “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Corinthians 4:7). I’m glad He doesn’t wait until statesmen, writers, inventors, or religious leaders are perfect before He uses them.

Bill Whitfield/Powell, Tenn.

FLEECING THE VULNERABLE
JUNE 25, P. 42: Kim Henderson’s article should be read by all. We need nationwide events before large audiences where someone can give the practical warnings Kim presented so well, arming us all with information that can guard us against these attacks.

Gillett Doggett/Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

Kim Henderson’s article was insightful. A good follow-up would include suggestions for children trying to help their parents while preserving their sense of autonomy.

Michelle Ule/Sonoma County, Calif.

ALIVE IN NEGATIVE WORLD
JUNE 25, P. 28: I needed to be reminded of Janie B. Cheaney’s reference to “the way my pro- and anti-Trump Christian friends talk about each other.” While the times can be discouraging, we need to remember that God is still infinitely bigger than any problems we hear about.

Denis Parsley/Flandreau, S.D.

I must respectfully take issue with Janie B. Cheaney’s comments about President Donald Trump. It is because there is mostly no “respectful disagreement” from the left that he feels the need to be bombastic and confrontational. If the left showed respect and goodwill, civility and productive engagement would be much more doable and rewarding.

Robert E. Heckmann/Canton, S.D.

I really enjoyed Kim Henderson’s column. My wife and I are coming up on 65 years of marriage.

Charles Seamans/Cedar Rapids, Iowa

ANSWERING STRATEGIC QUESTIONS
JUNE 25, P. 12: Thank you for your commitment to keeping the print edition of WORLD. There’s something nice about going out to the porch with a cup of coffee and a magazine—no screens in sight! I hope you’ll keep the magazine for many years to come.

Robin Purvis/Portland, Ore.

I force myself to read each issue from cover to cover, which makes me put down my phone and stop scrolling. Your magazine also enabled me to focus on books once again, which prior to smartphones had been one of my favorite pastimes. I am so grateful to WORLD for inadvertently helping me to regain the gift of books in my life.

Karen Sullivan/Hood River, Ore.
NOTES FROM THE CEO

A CHANGING OF THE GUARD
Recognizing a faithful, stabilizing leader who set the stage for WORLD’s next chapter

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION FOR TIM LAMER, who following this issue returns to WORLD Commentary. Tim took on the interim editor role at WORLD Magazine about six months ago, stepping away—temporarily, he was quick to add—from a role he loved in order to return to the magazine editor seat he left a few years ago. He thought of his role as that of a steward, and in that way, he provided steady, reliable leadership. Immediately, he made quite a few practical improvements to the magazine, even while he set the stage for new editorial leadership to make bigger improvements.

This is Tim’s last issue of WORLD Magazine as interim editor, if the Lord allows our plans to go forward as we expect, and the new editorial leadership team is ready to take over with the next issue. That team, led by Lynn Vincent and Daniel James Devine, will introduce more visible changes with the next issue, and I’d like to share a few of them with you now.

First, Lynn and Daniel intend to bring more deeply reported stories to the pages of the magazine—leaving the daily updates to our Digital and Radio platforms. To find room for such stories, for example, we will devote less space to opinions (fewer Voices columns) and the table of contents, and we will consolidate Quotables and Cartoons into a single page. They’re also making my CEO Notes space a little smaller. I doubt we’ll be getting any complaints about that change.

Second, we’ll devote space to review more books, and—as readers have asked—allow reviewers to go into greater depth.

Third, we’ll continue to review movies, but we’ll include more reviews of programming on the many video streaming services, and we’ll begin reviewing podcasts more deliberately.

Fourth, Lynn and Daniel have created a few new departments that will expand our global reporting and explanatory journalism.

Fifth, accompanying these content changes are some welcome design changes. David Freeland, our art director, has taken steps to make everything more readable. Those steps include using larger type and clearer fonts in the whole magazine and getting rid of some of the clutter that has accumulated since our previous redesign.

There’s more, but even with the space I’m currently allowed I don’t have room to describe it all.

For now, join me in thanking the Lord for Tim Lamer’s faithful service and for this issue, and be on the lookout for the next, when you will be able to see all of these updates for yourself.
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Charter challenge

A teachers’ union in New York sues to stop a competitor

‘VE NEVER BEEN QUITE SURE what I think of charter schools. Sometimes I think they’re our friends. And sometimes I’m irked by their opportunistic claims.

Charter schools are a sort of hybrid of public and private schools. They are independently run public schools that are granted greater flexibility in their operations in exchange for greater accountability with reference to student performance. The “charter” by which each school is established is a performance contract detailing the school’s mission, program, students served, performance goals, and methods of assessment.

Included in all that would be details of the school’s goals in whatever field it chooses to operate. Within a couple of miles of my home, for example, one charter school is dedicated to helping students study the arts. Another has environmentalism as its main focus. A new charter school has only to pick a particular specialty (but not a religious one!) then demonstrate that it can serve students well in that specialty, and that it can sustain such a program year after year.

That’s the raw material for the “charter.” All this goes (with documentation, of course!) to a state agency for approval, revision, or rejection. That agency is key. It may be made up of state legislators, a commission of the state department of education, or a body of retired schoolteachers, for that matter—the actual structure differs widely from state to state.

Schools that gain approval from the state agency become eligible for annual subsidies for each student they enroll. It’s that claim on the public purse that raises concerns. Those subsidies, from the same state source that supports traditional public schools, are supposed to be equal, on a per student basis, to what the state pays per student to the traditional schools.

Charter schools are indeed public schools—but are schools of choice by parents—meaning that families choose these schools for their children. The schools operate with much freedom from many of the regulations typically imposed on traditional schools. But charter schools are accountable for academic results and for upholding the promises made in their charters. If a charter school falls short of its performance goals, the state may close it—and every year, that happens to a handful of charter schools.

But charter schools throughout the nation face even sharper hostility. Labor unions funded by public school teachers are a case in point. The United Federation of Teachers is currently suing in New York City to stop Vertex Academies from opening a new charter high school in a poor neighborhood where academic performance in the public schools is dismal. The Wall Street Journal reports that in the region being discussed, only 7 percent of students entering ninth grade are ready for college four years later.

But New York severely limits the number of charter schools—whether the applications of new charters reflect excellent qualifications or not. The UFT calls the new charter school “a clear end run” around New York’s cap on charters. “Once again,” said UFT President Michael Mulgrew in a statement, “the charter sector is acting as if the rules don’t apply to them.” In other words, the labor union is not arguing that the quality of learning will suffer with a new charter school, but that the number of schools like Vertex is already too high.

Ironically, Vertex Academies has contracted to lease the long-shuttered school buildings of the Blessed Sacrament School, a part of the broad system of Roman Catholic schools that served New York for many years. Valedictorian of the Class of 1968 was Sonia Sotomayor, who later became a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

It would be nice if that historic school could make a little history by becoming a site where educational choice got another chance.
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DISPATCHES

News Analysis Human Race By the Numbers Quotables Cartoons Quick Takes

INCE THE SUPREME COURT reversed Roe v. Wade, ending a precedent that established a federal right to an abortion, pro-abortion lawmakers have introduced a flurry of legislation billed as ways to protect women, specifically granting a right to travel to another state to get an abortion. The bills have a slim chance of becoming law, but Democratic lawmakers say they want to force votes on them before the midterm elections. Legal experts point out that courts have already decided the constitutional questions about interstate travel at the core of the bills, making congressional approval irrelevant.

Three senators from abortion destination states—Nevada, Washington, and New

STRAW-MAN ABORTION BILLS
The right to interstate travel is already protected

by Carolina Lumetta

August 13, 2022
York—introduced the Freedom to Travel for Health Care Act of 2022 in mid-July. Along with banning states from restricting travel for women seeking abortions, the bill would also protect abortionists from being sued by plaintiffs in states where abortion is not legal. Co-sponsor Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., who also chairs the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, said the act is in response to GOP lawmakers’ pro-life stances, which she called “extreme,” “radical,” and “un-American.”

Murray and others said their Republican counterparts have been planning to restrict travel for abortions, but the threat has not yet materialized. One Missouri lawmaker tried to include language in a health bill to stop women from crossing state lines to get an abortion, but bipartisan state lawmakers quickly rejected it.

Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., said Murray’s bill raises an alarm about a problem that does not exist. Of the 21 states with laws in effect or pending to save unborn babies, none have included measures to prevent women from traveling across state lines.

“This seems to be just trying to inflame, to raise the what-ifs,” Lankford said from the Senate floor on July 14. “I come back to the most basic thing—there is a child in this conversation, and maybe this body should pay attention to children, as well, and to wonder what their future could be to travel in the days ahead as well.”

On July 15, three Republicans broke ranks to vote for the Ensuring Access to Abortion Act of 2022 in the House. This legislation would also make it illegal for states to stop women from traveling to another state to get an abortion. But it would allow abortionists to travel to other states to perform abortions without punishment. Democratic Rep. Lizzie Fletcher of Texas, one of the bill’s authors, said the threats to travel “fail to reflect the fundamental rights that are granted in our Constitution.”

Legal experts agree with Fletcher’s statement, which is why the bills are likely redundant. While the Constitution does not explicitly state a right to travel, jurisprudence has consistently upheld it. In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that states cannot stop residents from traveling across state lines, even in the middle of a health emergency.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh addressed the issue in a concurring opinion in Dobbs v. Jackson. Because the opinion returned the ability to regulate abortion to the states, he wrote that state courts must tackle many legal questions in the fallout. But banning travel is not one of those options. Kavanaugh cited cases as early as 1975 in which courts ruled that states cannot pass laws criminalizing things that happen outside their borders, including abortion.

“As I see it, some of the other abortion-related legal questions raised by today’s decision are not especially difficult as a constitutional matter,” Kavanaugh wrote in his concurrence. “For example, may a State bar a resident of that State from traveling to another State to obtain an abortion? In my view, the answer is no, based on the constitutional right to interstate travel.”

A Gallup poll in July reported that more Americans intend to vote this November compared with past midterm cycles. Although abortion has climbed the charts as a top issue for voters—both pro-abortion and pro-life—most Americans are more concerned about the economy and gun policy this year.

Still, Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., told NBC News that even though finding the 10 Republican votes needed in the Senate to overcome a filibuster is unlikely, a roll call vote would let constituents know where each Republican stands ahead of elections in just four months.

“We’re seeing this has dramatically affected the polls in a number of our races,” Kaine said. “My gut would tell me this is a little bit more potent in a midterm than in a presidential [election.]”
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TAPPED OUT

A major drought in the West isn’t generating a lot of political heat—yet

by Leo Briceno

As the American West continues to struggle through a historic 20-year drought, state leaders in California, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, and Arizona are fighting to make ends meet. Ross Hansen, the assistant state engineer for field services at the Utah Division of Water Rights, says it’s a devastatingly simple calculus: The usage exceeds the available supply.

“We don’t have enough to meet the uses that are currently on the books,” Hansen told me. “Every last drop that we have is accounted for and is being fought over.”

But while the drought causes many state leaders to look with concern to an uncertain future marked by dipping reserve levels, its political effect on upcoming congressional elections has been minimal. With other issues crowding the picture in the American West, water conservation’s political appeal has run dry.

Even in areas hit hardest by the drought, candidates running for Congress haven’t made water policy a spotlight issue. Of 76 congressional candidates currently on the ballot at the center of the drought in areas like Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and Southern California, only 18 mention water conservation at all on their websites.

Mark Robertson, a congressional candidate running to represent Nevada’s 1st District, doesn’t list water conservation among his top policy priorities but says he’s well aware of the problem. His policy priorities reflect his stances on topics he’s most frequently asked about—topics like education, inflation, and border security.

“If I haven’t included my feelings on water or my solutions on water on my website that’s a shame, and I’ll be sure to correct that,” Robertson said.

He says that he does talk about water often, mostly to concerned homeowners who fear that their property value is at risk because of drought conditions.

Measuring a drought isn’t easy, especially because varying landscapes collect water differently. The Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI) uses temperature, precipitation, and soil data to determine
the accumulated water excess or deficit in a given area. The lower the number goes, the greater an imbalance there is between water going out of an area compared with the amount coming in. According to the University of Idaho’s application of the PDSI, California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona all find themselves at a –2.0 on the scale, indicating a higher volume leaving the area than entering. By comparison, states like Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina have scores around 3.0.

Jonathan Deason, lead professor of the Environmental and Energy Management Program at George Washington University, says the problem is most readily seen in the shrinking of Lake Mead, Lake Powell, and the Colorado River—three Western sources of water used for power and agricultural production. Mead, the nation’s largest reservoir, hit its lowest point in almost a hundred years at just 1,045 feet earlier this month. If it loses just another 100 feet, the lake could cease to become a source of hydroelectric power for the region. Together, Lake Powell and Lake Mead share a dangerously low storage volume of just 28 percent of capacity, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior.

“Those reservoirs are multipurpose waters,” Deason said. “They produce hydropower, but they also provide water for municipal, industrial, and agricultural purposes. We’re running out of water ... and that’s a problem.”

In Western states, elements like snowfall and rain provide the water needed to fill reservoirs and maintain water supplies in reserve. In turn, that water reserve dictates how states manage water usage. But rainfall isn’t always consistent, and a tip of the scale can put a huge strain on water suppliers. Hansen explained that, similar to money in a bank, what’s in reserve helps determine what the state of Utah can and can’t do on a yearly basis. It’s the same way in many of the Western states.

“An irrigator might realize we’ve had a bad snowpack year and we’re not going to see as much water in our reservoirs,” Hansen said. “Users definitely adjust their use in accordance with what kind of a water year we are anticipating, and that changes year by year.”

Hansen expressed surprise and concern that more congressional candidates aren’t vocally addressing water conservation policy as part of their platforms.

“We have environmental groups asserting that if [water supplies] continue to decrease, we’re going to have environmental air quality issues and health problems. That tends to get people’s attention real quick. ... I kind of think that falls back to politicians. It’s a big deal.”

A wide variety of policy possibilities exists to alleviate the effects of the Western drought but no one clear solution. Proposals include using meters to limit water use, allowing people to reuse used water with oversight, and even an idea called “cloud seeding” to induce clouds to drop precipitation faster.

Deason says he doesn’t find the lack of messaging surprising. He believes that water conservation—while important—doesn’t rally voters as much as other issues currently taking the national spotlight. He suspects that as the drought continues to affect agricultural production, its sting might be felt down the road.

“I think they’re probably focused on more hot-button issues like gasoline prices,” Deason said. “... Actually, over time—a relatively short time—food prices are going to hit people a lot harder. The drought in the West is having and will have a large impact on food prices.”
**ANNOUNCED**

Russia’s new space chief, Yuri Borisov, said Russia’s space agency, Roscosmos, will withdraw from the International Space Station by 2024 and create its own space station. Dimitry Rogozin, Borisov’s predecessor, had previously said that Russia would be willing to discuss keeping its astronauts on the ISS, but only if the U.S. dropped its sanctions against Russia’s space industry. Astronauts have manned the station nonstop for almost 22 years, conducting research in zero gravity and testing equipment for future space expeditions. Elon Musk’s SpaceX company now flies NASA astronauts to and from the space station, but for years NASA paid tens of millions of dollars per seat for rides to and from the station aboard Russian Soyuz rockets.

**CONTRACTED**

Health officials from Rockland County, N.Y., reported on July 21 that an unvaccinated adult contracted the polio virus. Officials said the patient had a vaccine-derived strain of the virus, which he likely got from someone who received a live vaccine overseas. The patient is experiencing paralysis, according to authorities, but is no longer contagious. In the United States, children receive inactivated vaccines, but live vaccines are administered to children as drops in the mouth in some other countries. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, around 93 percent of children in the United States have received at least three shots of the inactivated virus.

**DECLARED**

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus declared monkeypox a global health emergency in late July. That does not necessarily mean the disease is especially transmissible or lethal—just that the WHO plans to invest more resources into combating it. Monkeypox has spread to more than 70 countries, with just under 3,000 cases in the United States. The virus is transmitted by contact with the skin lesions of an infected person. It is spreading primarily among homosexual men. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has sent more than 370,000 doses of a vaccine for the disease to U.S. states.

**RATIONED**

Feeling the heat

Europe seeks to reduce gas consumption as a difficult winter approaches

The European Union announced on July 26 that it will reduce its gas consumption by 15 percent between August and March in hopes of storing enough for winter in case Russia cuts off its supply. In 2021, the EU got about 45 percent of its gas from Russia, according to the International Energy Agency. Right now, the EU member countries plan to voluntarily share and ration gas, but if the EU’s goals are not met, the member states will discuss mandatory regulations.

On July 25, a large Russian energy manufacturer, Gazprom, said it would limit gas supplied to the EU through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to 20 percent capacity. The company had already shut off the gas supply through the pipeline for repairs earlier in the month, and Russia had already stopped or reduced gas deliveries to 12 EU countries, citing supply chain problems, sanctions, or repairs.

A worker turns a valve wheel at a Gazprom gas well in Russia.
The estimated number of birds killed each year in the United States by domesticated cats, according to the American Bird Conservancy. Soon, Toronto could ban free-roaming felines: The City Council on July 6 voted to include cats in a plan pushed by city officials to prohibit pets from being outside the home without a leash. An earlier proposal had allowed exceptions for cats and pigeons, but after hearing from an environmentalist and former city councilor, the council voted to strip the cat exemption. That might be bad news for cats but good news for the city’s birds and small mammals. *Felis catus* may seem cute and cuddly, but domesticated cats are expert assassins. Until recently, scientists didn’t fully understand just how much killing cats were doing. A 2020 South African study revealed that for every one animal brought home by a free-roaming cat, four more kills were left in the field.
“You can easily end up seeing your patients as a bag of blood and bones, or viewing life as molecules in motion. Get to know your patients as human beings, not just as their scans, labs, chemistry, and data.”

Dr. KRISTIN COLLIER, a faculty member at the University of Michigan Medical School and a primary care physician, speaking at a school ceremony for incoming students. Dozens of students walked out of the event because of Dr. Collier’s pro-life views.

“To me, the right choice is to have the courage to let the unborn be born.”

University of Michigan football coach JIM HARBAUGH, speaking at a pro-life event in Plymouth, Mich. Harbaugh says if any of his players were involved in an unplanned pregnancy, he and his wife would take care of the child. “Let that unborn child be born,” he says he told them, “and if at that time, you don’t feel like you can care for it, you don’t have the means or the wherewithal, then Sarah and I will take that baby.”

“There’s a real chilling effect on all of these organizations.”

Liberal scholar RUY TEIXEIRA on the woke culture that has developed at progressive institutions. Teixeira recently left the liberal Center for American Progress, where he worked for nearly 20 years and which he helped found, for the American Enterprise Institute.

“I’m not going to let Canada tell me what I do and don’t put in my body.”

Philadelphia Phillies catcher J.T. REALMUTO on missing the team’s July trip to play the Toronto Blue Jays because of his refusal to get a COVID-19 vaccine, as required to enter Canada. Also in July, 10 players for the Kansas City Royals had to sit out a series against the Blue Jays for the same reason.

“The whole world would be in a much better place if they adopted these systems.”

Conservative MP KEMI BADENOCH, who grew up in Nigeria, on free markets and capitalism. Badenoch, a rising Tory star in British politics, says people shouldn’t look at free markets and capitalism “as being Western things.”
Reliable Green Energy

It's not working...

Does anyone have a gas generator?

Your electric car needs a battery. That'll be $15,000.

In case of fire, spending break glass.

White House inflation plan.

Got no stock tips from Nancy Pelosi. Please help.
Animals on strike
Penguins and otters at Japanese aquarium refuse to eat less expensive feed
by John Dawson

Aquarium inmates in Japan have staged a hunger strike to protest a change in their diet. In May, workers at the Hakone-en Aquarium southwest of Tokyo stopped buying the horse mackerel that had become the dietary staple for both penguins and otters on display. Blaming inflation for high horse mackerel prices, aquarium officials instead began purchasing a cheaper form of mackerel. But the animals refused to eat it. “We could raise the admission fee to the aquarium and fix this issue, but we would like to ... keep our facility a comfortable place for our guests to visit,” aquarium keeper Hiroki Shimamoto said. Aquarium officials discovered that the penguins and otters would consent to eating the inferior mackerel only if some of the horse mackerel was mixed in.

Ramen for votes
A Japanese food chain is offering a tasty incentive to anyone who can prove they voted in the nation’s July 10 parliamentary elections: free noodles for two weeks. A spokesman for the Ippudo chain of around 50 ramen restaurants said it hopes the promise of a fortnight of free noodle refills sparks interest in voting among the nation’s youth, who disproportionately love noodles but have less enthusiastic attitudes toward voting. In October elections last year, just 36 percent of potential voters in their 20s turned out, making them the least-represented age group.

Baby makes two
A Dallas-area woman had a quick comeback for a police officer who stopped her for apparently driving alone in a high-occupancy vehicle lane on U.S. Highway 75. The pregnant woman claimed to a police officer during the June 29 traffic stop that her unborn child should count as a second person for purposes of the HOV lane rules. “I pointed to my stomach and said, ‘My baby girl is right here. She is a person,’” motorist Brandy Bettone told The Dallas Morning News. According to Bettone, the officer said he’d have to write her a ticket anyway, but encouraged the expecting mother to challenge the ticket in court—exactly what she planned to do.
OUTLAWED NO MORE
At long last, one Colorado city has ended its decades-long ban on ice cream trucks. During a meeting on July 1, city councilors in Aurora, Colo., voted to rescind a 1957 ordinance that banned the treat-dispensing vehicles from city limits. The 65-year-old ban called ice cream trucks a safety hazard and a nuisance to residents. Councilman Dustin Zvonek said he only recently learned of the ordinance. He brought the issue quickly to the City Council so ice cream trucks could patrol neighborhoods in time for the Fourth of July weekend.

ICK FACTOR
Singapore’s newest beer has a selling point that probably ought not be. According to its maker, NEW-Brew is made from recycled sewage. Local microbrewery Brewerkz partnered with the nation’s water authority to debut the controversial new blonde ale earlier this year. Brewerkz says the water used comes out of wastewater treatment plants, where it is sterilized by ultraviolet light and screened for particulate matter. The brewery made just one batch, hoping to gauge public sentiment before expanding production. So far, the results are mixed. “I seriously couldn’t tell this was made of toilet water,” consumer Chew Wei Lian told The Sydney Morning Herald. “I mean, it tastes just like beer.”

DUCK DISPUTE
A retired Houston-area couple faces a stark choice in a standoff with their homeowner association: Stop feeding the ducks or leave the neighborhood. George and Kathleen Rowe were served a lawsuit in June from the Lakeland Village Community Association asking for damages of up to $250,000 for violating the deed restrictions on their property by disturbing local wildlife. In the lawsuit, the homeowners association claims that by feeding ducks, the Rowes facilitate the presence of a nuisance animal that damages lawns and defaces sidewalks. Rather than fight their neighbors, the Rowes have elected to move and have placed their property for sale.

PROSCRIBED PARKING
After 36 years of living in their small San Francisco house, residents Judy and Ed Craine recently discovered they weren’t allowed to park in their own driveway. The news came in the form of a $1,542 citation issued by San Francisco’s Planning Department. When the Craines complained, city officials pointed to an ordinance that prohibited residents from parking in their front yards. But the Craines don’t have a front yard. Instead, they have a concrete parking pad they have used since moving in. City officials told them they could get a waiver if they could demonstrate historical use of the parking spot. But when the Craines provided the city with a 34-year-old picture of their daughter standing by the family car, the city said it wasn’t good enough. After more research, Ed Craine found an aerial photo in the city archive dated 1938 showing what appeared to be a vehicle pulling into the home’s driveway. But the city again protested, saying the identity of the black blob in the photo wasn’t clear. The Craines were forced to park their vehicle on the steep street to avoid incurring $250-per-day fines—until media coverage of their plight finally persuaded the Planning Department to issue the waiver.
Raiding Monticello

“Balance” may not mean what the tour guides think it means

IN THE CLOSING MONTHS of the Revolutionary War, as British and American forces worked their way toward Yorktown, a cavalry troop composed of American Loyalists and led by Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton set out to raid the home of Virginia Gov. Thomas Jefferson. A local patriot named Jack Jouett spotted them, guessed their destination, and rode 40 miles through the night to sound the alarm at Monticello. Jefferson hastily packed up some papers and fled—he was a thinker, not a fighter—leaving Tarleton nothing to raid but the governor’s famous wine cellar.

I visited Monticello in the 1970s, when tours were led by blue-haired Daughters of the American Revolution who set Jefferson on an alabaster pedestal. I visited again six years ago, when the program had expanded to separate tours of the house, the gardens, and the slave quarters. On the latter tour, our guide spoke frankly of the author of “all men are created equal” as a perpetrator of an unequal and unjust institution. He was a great man, our guide affirmed, though flawed. This struck me as a pretty good balance between worship and vilification, and largely fair to the man’s character.

But Monticello has apparently been raided again, this time by leftist ideologues who give Jefferson no credit even as a thinker. Instead, he was an exploiter and oppressor best remembered for keeping a slave mistress. The new theme is determined by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, founded in 1923 and now composed mostly of wealthy Democratic donors and officials who want to “balance” the history. According to at least some visitors, “balance” may not mean what the foundation thinks it means.

Most reviews on Tripadvisor are positive, mentioning the beautiful, well-kept grounds and knowledgeable guides—also words like “complicated history.” A significant minority, however, register disappointment: “Very weighted to slavery now.” “The woke tour guide will leave you feeling like [Jefferson] started the KKK.” “I think I heard [alleged mistress] Sally Hemings’ name as much as Jefferson’s.” And this, quoting a 13-year-old boy: “Yeah, OK, I get they were trying to tell us Jefferson was not a good guy.”

Beginning with the New York Post, media took notice, and negative press led the foundation to publish an online statement called “Monticello and Honest History.” Complaints about wokeness are “disappointing and inaccurate, but not at all surprising,” they say. Educating the public is a risky venture, they say, bound to attract criticism from those who want to focus on Jefferson as slaveholder and those who’d rather praise him as statesman. (In 10 pages of Tripadvisor reviews, only one represented the former.) For its part, the foundation promises to remain true to Jefferson’s own vision of education, “bolstered by the exercise of reason and a free conscience,” as the path to human progress.

The guide one happens to draw can make or break a tour, and some guides may not be subtle about their ax-grinding. But there’s no denying the obsession with America’s slaveholding past jump-started by Ferguson and dialed to 11 after George Floyd. Visitors to Montpelier, home of Jefferson’s neighbor James Madison, also report dispiriting tours. “I was kinda thinking we’d be hearing more about the Constitution,” wrote one reviewer (recalling Madison as that document’s chief architect). “But everything here is really about slavery.” Forget “We the People” and “We hold these truths to be self-evident”—everything is about slavery.

To make everything about one thing—whether racism, class warfare, democracy, or socialism—is to diminish all things. Only one idea is big enough to be about everything, and we worship Him so we don’t have to worship earthly heroes. Thankfully, we’ve moved beyond the hero-worship stage. Yet some have overshot even the “Jefferson was a slaveholder, but—” stage to land on “Jefferson was a slaveholder, period.”

How about, “Jefferson was a slaveholder, and, paradoxically, a visionary who expressed the ideal of human equality (endowed by their Creator) in such vivid terms it changed the world.” Fair enough?
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HY DID A COMPANY’S LOSS of almost a million subscribers translate into a stock surge? Because analysts had predicted twice the bleed. For the second quarter of this year, Netflix reported that its total number of subscribers plummeted by 970,000. But since the streaming platform was expecting 2 million to leave the fold during the three-month period, investors saw this as good news.

There’s something to be said for setting the bar low.

**The Gray Man** rings up as Netflix’s most expensive film to date: price tag $200 million, a cost of nearly $1 for each of the platform’s 220 million paying customers...
BIG-BUDGET EXPLOSIONS  A single action scene filmed in Prague for *The Gray Man* cost $40 million to produce.

The film has a strong pedigree. It adapts Mark Greaney’s novel of the same name—the first of an 11-book series out of which Netflix hopes to build a franchise—and it’s directed by the Russo brothers, whose portfolio includes installments of Avengers and Captain America. But if this first film’s one-dimensional characters persist, they’ll find streaming numbers disappointing.

The Russo brothers attempt to give the felon-turned-assassin hero a sympathetic mandate, and flashbacks to Six’s past mitigate his dark career trajectory. The plot also includes a young vulnerable female character (Julia Butters) whose need of rescue complicates but also ennobles Six’s efforts.

But ultimately Six and Hansen aren’t that different. They look alike, communicate mainly in one liners, and dispatch their foes without remorse. By the movie’s end, however, a sufficient number of disreputable characters survive to set up a sequel consisting of more low-bar showdowns.

The film opens in a Florida prison in 2003, where a CIA recruiter (Billy Bob Thornton) offers to commute Courtland Gentry’s (Ryan Gosling) 30-year sentence in exchange for an “indefinite” period of service with the agency. Gentry will become a “gray man,” a hired contractor with no official file who can carry out the CIA’s dirtiest jobs.

Fast-forward to the present day. Gentry has a reputation as an accomplished killer and now goes by the name Six: He quips, “007 was taken.” Before one of Six’s targets succumbs to knife wounds, the dying man gives Six a memory card with evidence incriminating top CIA officials, including chief of station Denny Carmichael (Regé-Jean Page).

Carmichael enlists Lloyd Hansen (Chris Evans), a “sociopath” former CIA agent, to silence Six before he can leak the compromising information. Hansen sends squads of hit men to pursue Six around the globe. Some of Six’s escapes fail the plausibility test, but other engagements are clever. For example, standing on top of a trolley speeding through the streets of Vienna, Six sees the reflections in passing store windows of the bad guys inside the car, enabling him to shoot them through the roof. The fast-paced scenes dart from one exotic locale to the next, but early on it’s clear where the film is going. With occasional help from by-the-book CIA agent Dani Miranda (Ana de Armas), Six will survive every confrontation so he can face off against Hansen in a final showdown.

In an action movie, viewers should expect action, but the film deserves stronger than its PG-13 rating for its language, bloody violence, and scenes of torture. *The Gray Man* majors in transcontinental mayhem with a Teflon hero and a ruthless villain who possess lethal combat skills. There are gun battles in different countries aboard multiple modes of transportation—all with impressive stunts and special effects.

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**Hollywood Crawdads**

by Juliana Chan Erikson


Instead of the novel’s lonely, wild, and beautiful creature, the Kya of the screen (Daisy Edgar-Jones) is too normal. Our wilderness-dwelling heroine should look haggard—bad teeth, uncombed hair, ill-fitting clothes. Instead, the movie Kya looks like she came straight out of an Abercrombie & Fitch catalog. Rather than being either too scared or scarred to engage with anyone, she navigates romantic dalliances with men as easily as she does the marshy waterways.

When one of these men turns up dead, Kya’s naturally the suspect. The film flashes back and forth between her court trial and troubled backstory, and we learn one sad fact: Kya Clark isn’t very different from the townsfolk who keep their distance.

Three sex scenes and an attempted rape ratchet this movie well past its designated PG-13 rating. As they say, the book is better.

**DOG IN A CAT FIGHT**

*Paws of Fury* is tasteless and forgettable

by Collin Garbarino

All the characters in *Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank*, which takes place in feudal Japan, are cats. All except Hank—a dog who shows up on the island nation with the goal of becoming a samurai. The xenophobic cats aren’t happy about it.

Hank gets caught up in a conspiracy, and the thoroughly inept dog finds himself the protector of a village that’s under attack from the evil warlord Ika Chu. A grizzled former samurai named Jimbo decides to train Hank and show him what it takes to be a hero.

The movie pretends to teach viewers a lesson about prejudice, but there’s not much to this thin, uninspiring story. *Paws of Fury* plods through the genre’s necessary plot points with an irritating self-awareness of its own unoriginality. Winking at the cliche doesn’t make the cliche fresh.

At times *Paws of Fury* feels like little more than a collection of cat jokes shoehorned into a martial arts film, but the jokes cause more eye rolling than laughter. The movie is rated PG for action, violence, rude and suggestive humor, and some language. Many scenes cross the boundary of good taste. The scatological humor is relentless, and Jimbo’s catnip drunkenness winks at alcoholism. Samuel L. Jackson, who voices Jimbo, has a notoriously foul mouth, and the script lets him substitute “mother-father” and “fudge” for his favorite obscenities.

British comedian Ricky Gervais was fun as the villainous Ika Chu, but there wasn’t much else legendary in this unremarkable story.

**MOVIES STARRING CATS**

- *That Darn Cat* (1965)
- *Oliver & Company* (1988)
- *Homeward Bound* (1993)
- *The Lion King* (1994)
- *Puss in Boots* (2011)
- *The Secret Life of Pets* (2016)
$FIRST\ GLANCE, \textit{Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris} seems like a Cinderella story for older folks—a humble cleaning lady embarks on an adventure to buy a life-changing dress—but this middle-aged Cinderella turns out to be something of a fairy godmother herself. The film, currently in theaters, adapts Paul Gallico’s 1958 novel \textit{Mrs. ’Arris Goes to Paris} with beauty and warmhearted wit.

It’s 1957, and Ada Harris, played by Lesley Manville, is a war widow in London who makes ends meet by cleaning houses. Her employers take her for granted, and some of her friends do too. Her life has been on hold since the war ended, but she finds a new purpose after seeing her employer’s custom-made Dior gown. Mrs. Harris decides she must have one too, but a Dior dress’s 500-pound price tag is an impossibly large expense for someone like her. The doughty Mrs. Harris, however, scrimps and saves, and after experiencing a little good luck, she heads to Paris to claim her gown.

But Mrs. Harris isn’t prepared for the world of haute couture at the House of Dior, and purchasing a gown proves more complicated than expected. Some members of Paris’ high society resent the disruption her simple virtues bring to their image-conscious world. But others embrace the good-natured Mrs. Harris, inspired by her honesty and love of others. She improves the lives of everyone she meets.

The quest for a luxurious dress is a fanciful plot device, but the movie doesn’t endorse materialism. Mrs. Harris doesn’t think the dress will make her a better person. Many characters ask her why she wants one: Where would she wear it? She doesn’t know. She just wants it because it’s beautiful. Her attempts to buy a dress are reminiscent of Jesus’ parable about the pearl of great price. Her sacrifice for one beautiful object doesn’t make financial sense, but there’s a certain charm to Mrs. Harris’ pursuit of beauty for its own sake.

The movie doesn’t glamorize the wealthy and fashionable lifestyle at the expense of the ordinary lives of common people. It’s quite the opposite. Parisian high society isn’t a happy society. The dream makers at the House of Dior can create beauty, but they don’t necessarily know who they are and what they want. They lack the wisdom that comes with humility. It’s this wisdom that Mrs. Harris possesses in abundance, and she shares it with others, not through lecturing, but through loving.

\textit{Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris} is rated PG—the characters consume alcohol and smoke cigarettes—and the film is fairly wholesome, though in one scene Mrs. Harris’ new French friends bring her to a burlesque show in which women dance in their undergarments.

But on the whole, \textit{Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris} is a delightful movie, with a heartwarming story about a group of people audiences will fall in love with. This mid-century fairy tale reminds us beauty is important and kindness, honesty, and sacrifice for others are the keys to a meaningful life.
FAME AND UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Sci-fi thriller *Nope* highlights the human desire to be part of the spectacle

by Jim Hill

**DIRECTOR JORDAN PEELE** earned a reputation for compelling storytelling in his first two films, *Get Out* and *Us*, by using metaphorical social messages about race as their backbone. In his new movie *Nope*, now in theaters, Peele departs from this pattern to deliver an entertaining and more traditional big-screen summer thriller.

*Nope* tells the story of OJ and Emerald Haywood (Daniel Kaluuya and Keke Palmer), a brother and sister who run a horse ranch in Southern California. The film starts slowly, with the two discovering that a UFO is repeatedly appearing in the skies above their home. More intrigued than scared, OJ and Emerald, with some help from others, embark on a quest to get photographic proof of the aerial visitor in hopes of securing fame and financial gain. But in a fresh take on the UFO genre, they soon discover the ship is not what they thought.

Unlike Peele’s previous directing projects, *Nope* is more science fiction thriller than horror movie. That is not to say this film is tame. Audiences of this R-rated film should be prepared for significant gore, strong language, and intense action.

*Nope* also feels different in that it does not contain overt social commentary on racial issues. Peele has made a more traditional popcorn thriller that seems to make a more subtle statement on contemporary American culture.

The movie opens with an obscure passage from the Old Testament: “And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a spectacle” (Nahum 3:6). Peele uses this passage and the film to indict Americans’ fascination with personal fame—in particular, fame from merely viewing (and recording) the spectacular versus actually doing anything notable themselves.

The main characters in *Nope* all seem more fixated on the notoriety they’ll gain from photographing the UFO than on discerning whether it is dangerous.

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**BOX OFFICE TOP 10**

**WEEKEND OF JULY 22-24, ACCORDING TO BOX OFFICE MOJO. QUANTITY OF SEXUAL (S), VIOLENT (V), AND FOUL-LANGUAGE (L) CONTENT ON A 0-10 SCALE, WITH 10 HIGH, FROM KIDS-IN-MIND.COM**

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<td><em>Jurassic World Dominion</em></td>
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**TOP 10 FOCUS**

Despite being a movie about magic hammers and space gods, *Thor: Love and Thunder* is a very funny film in which we see Thor wrestle with very human problems. He’s been searching for purpose and acceptance, and he discovers what he needs is love. But finding it isn’t easy.

—from WORLD’s full review
ometimes it’s hard to see God’s grace at work. Faithful Christians pray and keep on praying ... straining like Elijah to see that first wisp of cloud. Other times, though, God’s grace breaks in with hurricane force.

For example, take Dr. Patti Giebink, a former abortionist from South Dakota turned pro-life activist and life-saving OB-GYN. In her 2021 autobiography, *Unexpected Choice*, Dr. Giebink describes how as a medical student she absorbed the view that abortion was needed to save women in crisis. But as Christians prayed for her for many years, Dr. Giebink began to question her pro-abortion beliefs. When Planned Parenthood fired her, she began to attend church and study the Bible, finding new life in Christ. Giebink highlights important truths in a post-Roe world—the primacy of prayer in the fight against evil and the power of God’s grace to soften even the hardest hearts. She also shows the need for repentance and grace among pro-lifers. Giebink received death threats from activists on both sides of the abortion debate, including the pro-life side. Her best service, though, is twofold. She invites readers to know the God of life, and she equips them to extend His grace to others, especially those considering abortion.

Tarrants gives readers an inside view into radicalization—how it happens and why, as well as how God can overcome it. He encourages those enticed by tribal thinking to search for ideas outside their comfort zone, to think critically about truth claims, and to make friends who come from different backgrounds.

NBA player Jonathan Isaac saw God’s grace in a very different racial and political context. When an injury sidelined Isaac during his rookie season, he sought the Lord through apologetics resources and his Bible. With a pastor’s help, he became a Christian. On July 31, 2020, Isaac gained attention for refusing to kneel with his teammates during the national anthem prior to a game. In *Why I Stand*, Isaac says he shares his teammates’ concern for racial justice, and readers on all sides of the debate will benefit from seeing him wrestle through the issue. Ultimately, Isaac chooses to stand because he believes the gospel can better address America’s racial problems. “If there was anybody who could point their finger at others for their sin, it was Jesus. ... Instead, he showed love to his enemies. ... That was the message of love I experienced and wanted to share.”

Finally, for an outpouring of common grace, see Grove City College professor Gary Scott Smith’s *Duty and Destiny: The Life and Faith of Winston Churchill*. While Churchill doesn’t seem to have embraced saving faith, God used him mightily to preserve life and liberty in Britain during World War II. As Churchill said in 1940, “It felt as if I were walking with destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial.”

Smith helps readers see the full context of Churchill’s contradictory statements about God and religion. He also compares and contrasts Churchill’s public statements with those of other Christian leaders in Britain, including Margaret Thatcher and William Wilberforce. Despite Churchill’s flaws—for instance, his ego and his racial insensitivity—he persevered in the face of overwhelming evil remains worth emulating: “Never, never, never give up.”
Biblical care for self and others

Authors offer counsel on counseling
by Charissa Koh

WHEN HOME HURTS: A GUIDE FOR RESPONDING WISELY TO DOMESTIC ABUSE IN YOUR CHURCH  Jeremy Pierre and Greg Wilson

Domestic abuse dynamics are complicated and sometimes counterintuitive. Christians can easily apply the wrong Biblical principle to situations—confronting an abuser before making sure the victim is safe, for example. This book overviews domestic abuse dynamics and the relevant Biblical principles to inform helpers, particularly church leaders. It shines when outlining step by step how pastors can care for victim and abuser. The authors recommend church leaders involve others (e.g., trauma experts), but they encourage pastors not to shy away from these complex situations: “If the Lord has called you to care for people, He will be with you as you do it—however confused or clumsy you feel.”

WHEN WORDS MATTER MOST: SPEAKING TRUTH WITH GRACE TO THOSE YOU LOVE  Cheryl Marshall and Caroline Newheiser

Do you ever struggle to find the words to encourage a hurting friend? Authors Marshall and Newheiser have Bible training and teaching experience, but here they address women who just want to help their friends. This well-written book is easy to read and regularly points back to Scripture. The first section calls Christian women to speak truth to friends struggling with sin or suffering, but do so with grace and propriety. Four chapters in the second half demonstrate how Scripture can inform conversations about common struggles—worry, weariness, waywardness, and grief. This book would make an excellent starting place for aspiring counselors as well as women who simply want to support others who are hurting.

THE WHOLE LIFE: 52 WEEKS OF BIBLICAL SELF-CARE  Eliza Huie and Esther Smith

In short, accessible chapters, Huie and Smith take readers through several aspects of “self-care.” They distinguish Biblical self-care—stewarding the body and mind to maximize Christians’ capacity to love God and serve others—from worldly self-care, which often slides into laziness and self-indulgence. The authors write clearly and carefully. They cover numerous facets, including the role of medical care, hobbies, spiritual disciplines, and what self-care looks like in seasons when a balanced life is impossible. The book contains whole-life applications and is designed to use over the course of a year. Not everyone will agree with all this book’s recommendations, but the book will provoke readers to think through their own priorities.

RECLAIM YOUR MARRIAGE: GRACE FOR WIVES WHO HAVE BEEN HURT BY PORNOGRAPHY  Jenny Solomon

Though pornography is a widespread problem, the wives who suffer from it are often overlooked. Jenny Solomon aims to correct this, sharing details of her own struggle to forgive, trust God, and be a faithful wife to a husband who has struggled with pornography. She uses several stories from Scripture to encourage wives to hope in God and practice obedience in trials. She recommends women read the book with a counselor or mature Christian friend, using the applications, discussion questions, and recommended resources at the end of each chapter. Appendices tackle tough questions including whether porn use disqualifies a man from ministry and whether it is grounds for Biblical divorce.
Unique callings

Four picture book biographies

by Kristin Chapman

THE MYSTERY OF THE MONARCHS Barb Rosenstock
For years, scientists were puzzled about what happened to monarch butterflies: Each fall the majestic creatures would disappear but then reappear in the spring. Entomologist Fred Urquhart set out to solve the mystery by tagging butterflies—lots and lots of them. His plea for help led to a network of teachers, children, and citizen scientists helping tag monarchs all across North America. Their efforts in time uncovered the monarchs’ mystery hiding place. Erika Meza’s beautiful illustrations and Rosenstock’s informative endnotes complete this delightful picture book. (Ages 4-8)

KATE’S LIGHT Elizabeth Spires
When Kate Walker’s husband accepted a keeper’s job on an isolated lighthouse in New York Bay, she wondered how she would live without grass, flowers, and friends. But as the years passed, she embraced the rhythm of her unique life and shared in her husband’s work. When tragedy struck, Kate honored her husband’s parting request to “Mind the light” and eventually became one of the first women on the Eastern Seaboard to manage an offshore lighthouse. Emily Arnold McCully’s ink and watercolor illustrations capture the beauty and sacrifice of this true story. (Ages 5-9)

POET, PILGRIM, REBEL Katie Munday Williams
During the 1600s when published books were scarce and women authors scarcer, Anne Bradstreet emerged as the American colonies’ first published poet. Even as she put pen to paper writing poems that ranged from praises to God to passages about politics, Bradstreet faithfully served her husband and shepherded her children. Tania Rex’s muted illustrations reflect Bradstreet’s stoic and simple Puritan lifestyle. Although the book’s text does not incorporate examples of Bradstreet’s poetry, it may pique young readers’ interest in her writings. (Ages 5-8)

THE EYE THAT NEVER SLEEPS Marissa Moss
In 1860, rumors swirled that secessionists were planning to sabotage the nation’s railroad lines. In an effort to protect its assets, the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad hired detective Allan Pinkerton to foil any such attacks, but Pinkerton soon uncovered a much more sinister plot aimed at assassinating President-elect Abraham Lincoln as he traveled to Washington for his swearing-in ceremony. Jeremy Holmes’ digitally rendered illustrations energetically and creatively reveal how Pinkerton outwitted the bad guys to save Lincoln. (Ages 7-10)

Barb Rosenstock’s Mornings With Monet follows impressionist painter Claude Monet as he rises early in the morning to paint the Seine River. The text features strong action verbs and vivid adjectives that convey Monet’s artistic passion while Mary GrandPré’s acrylic and ink illustrations reflect Monet’s characteristic style. The story offers an important message for all budding artists: “Anyone who creates understands—that art is not magic. It is work, and work, and work, and then ... it is magic.”

In Grow: Secrets of Our DNA, Nicola Davies introduces young children to DNA, God’s instructional code for all life. In simple terms she explains what DNA is, what it looks like, and how it works while Emily Sutton’s watercolor illustrations visually amplify the text. Side notes about unique plants and animals will leave families marveling at the diversity and precision of God’s creation, but parents should know the text mentions evolution, and an illustration includes the evolutionary March of Progress. Davies also says humans “grew from a tiny blob.” —K.C.
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A tale of two
t REALLY DOESN’T PAY to get too worked up about the latest pop-music outrage. First, P.T. Barnum was right about there being no such thing as bad publicity. Second, getting people worked up is often the point.
Third, what’s outrageous today is often quaint tomorrow. Rock Believer and Diamond Star Halos, the latest albums by the hard-rock titans Scorpions and Def Leppard, aren’t quaint. Neither, however, will they scandalize or overexcite anyone who came of age before TikTok.

Things weren’t always this way. Beginning in 1976 and continuing intermittently through 1984, Scorpions developed a reputation for racy or downright pornographic cover art that before the rap-era “Parental Advisory: Explicit Content” label was the easiest way to let teenagers know that if they were looking for trouble, they’d come to the right place.

But the band’s longest-serving members, the singer Klaus Meine and the rhythm guitarist Rudolf Schenker, are now in their 70s (with the lead guitarist Matthias Jabs not far behind). And whether they’ve grown wiser or simply know that lascivious old men are creepy, their vice-signaling days are no more.

Musically, from Meine’s razor-edged vocals and Schenker’s guitar-heroic riffs to the songs’ arena-sized hooks and lyrics stamped from the fail-safe rock-lingo boilerplate (which sure beats know-nothing agitprop), little if anything about Rock Believer marks it as the work of musicians long in the fang. Even the songs called “Peacemaker” and “When I Lay My Bones to Rest” mow down everything in their paths. The takeaway: Germany’s most successful high-decibel rockers are not going gentle into that good night.

Among England’s still-active high-decibel exports, Def Leppard has few peers. Furthermore, the group hasn’t had anything egregiously disproitable to live down since its original lead guitarist Steve Clark drank himself to death over 30 years ago.

The title of the band’s new release, Diamond Star Halos, comes from Marc Bolan’s 1971 T. Rex classic “Bang a Gong (Get It On).” As such it pays homage to the one source that more than any other informs the album: glam.

“Glam” initially referred more to the exaggerated androgyny of its practitioners than to the metal-plated bubblegum sounds that they made. But it eventually became a musical catch-all for any loud rock, androgynous or not, that proudly embraced its pop appeal.

Def Leppard’s secret is that they’ve never been content merely to rummage through the bag of tricks bequeathed them by their forebears or even by their younger selves. Some of Diamond Star Halos feels recycled, and the casual theological references land wide of the mark. (God never sleeps, guys, and angels can always lend a helping hand.)

But all of it gleams, and even the two songs that weave the Americana songstress Alison Krauss into the mix play out like the next logical step in the group’s perpetual quest—to make glam great. Again.
A tale of two Elvisses

And other glimpses at the talents of grizzled rock veterans

by Arsenio Orteza

THE RESURRECTION OF RUST Rusty
What this 23-minute EP avails the curious is a glimpse into what might’ve been had punk never happened (and the idea of calling himself “Elvis Costello” never occurred) to Declan MacManus: He and his fellow singing, guitar-strumming partner Allan Mayes would’ve given Brinsley Schwarz and maybe even Rockpile a run for their pub-rock money—that is, if Nick Lowe, not fearing the competition, had continued to approve the pair’s recording such sure shots of his as “Surrender to the Rhythm” (fast) and “Don’t Lose Your Grip on Love” (slow). Jim Ford, meanwhile, who definitely could’ve used the royalties, would’ve almost certainly continued offering up the stellar likes of “I’m Ahead If I Can Quit While I’m Behind.”

I GOT A LOVE Elizabeth King
The Southern Sons and Sister Jessie M. Sherley, Elizabeth King’s D-Vine Spirituals labelmates approximately 50 years ago, recorded “I Know I’ve Been Changed” and “I Need the Lord” the first time. And most of this album’s other numbers share a similar pedigree. Yet none of them, for all of their vintage Memphis-gospel characteristics, sound like retreads. Powered by Mark Edgar Stuart’s bass lines and garnished by mood-stoking organ on every track except the a cappella “Give Me Wings,” the musicianship of the Sacred Soul Sound Section sounds entirely in the moment, a moment crystallized by Jimbo Mathus’ eerie, written-to-order title cut and the husky yet smooth singing with which King puts it across.

SPEED OF HEAT Skunk Baxter
The wait for the first solo album by the possessor of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame’s most impressive and unusual résumé is finally over. That Baxter is a wiz on guitar is a matter of record. What hasn’t been until now is his ability to sing lead (“My Old School”), to make Becker-Fagen songs from his Steely Dan days sound like new (“My Old School,” “Do It Again”), to turbo-charge the Shadows’ “Apache,” or to dilate “The Rose” into a pedal-steel showcase that at nearly six minutes never overstays its welcome. It also doesn’t hurt that by easing Clint Black, Jonny Lang, and his fellow ex-Doobie Brother Michael McDonald out of their comfort zones he gets vocal performances that stand with their best.

AFTERGLOW Terry Britten
Britten has spent his lengthy pop-music tenure in the shadows of those for whom he has penned or co-penned hits, whether career defining (Tina Turner’s “What’s Love Got to Do With It”), or not (Lenny Kravitz’s “Heaven Help”). But his longest-running professional relationship has been with Cliff Richard, and it’s easy to see why: Even in his 70s, Britten sounds a lot like Richard in his prime. (Compare this album’s “Carrie/Devil Woman” medley with the Richard singles on which it’s based.) Because a hook is a hook is a hook, Britten gets away with singing his Tina Turner hits as well. And because no one else has yet laid claim to “Goodbye Cruel Circus,” Britten has that highlight all to himself.

THE RESURRECTION OF RUST Rusty

August 13, 2022

WORLD

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Encore

Why buy the 22-track CD of Elvis: A Film by Baz Luhrmann when for another dollar you can get one of the soundtrack’s two 36- or 37-track MP3 editions? It’s not as if by opting for the slimmer version you can avoid the profanity-sprinkled Doja Cat and Eminem tracks included as youthbait or the thematic import of the multiple permutations of “Suspicious Minds” (because Presley felt “caught” in Col. Tom Parker’s “trap”) and “I Got a Feelin’ in My Body” (because Presley’s childhood experiences of black gospel seeded his own full-body performance style, or something along those lines).

Those who go digital also get the late Shonka Dukureh doing a mean Big Mama Thornton (“Hound Dog”), Leslie Greene doing a mean Little Richard (“Tutti Frutti”), and the film’s star Austin Butler doing four instead of two mean Elvis Presleys. Most thematically important of all: The soft copies end with the same performance of “Unchained Melody” by the real Elvis that brings the film to a shuddering and disquieting close. —A.O.
How did you get started with the pro-life movement?

In 1975 I was a senior at a Montana high school. The final assignment
in a persuasive speech class was to present information on a controversial topic. A lot of our final grade depended upon how well we persuaded our fellow students. I picked abortion and contacted Right to Life in Billings, and they gave me pro-life material put together by Jack Willke and his wife, Barbara. Before I did the speech, I polled the class, and they were about 50/50 on the issue. I presented the facts of what abortion does to babies and mothers. I showed them the remarkable, stunning beauty of life in the womb. After my presentation, my fellow students were unanimous in support of life. That’s how I learned that pro-life education is an effective way to change hearts and minds on abortion.

You worked closely with Jack Willke until his death in 2015. How did that pro-life partnership begin? I got to know Jack and Barbara while serving on the National Right to Life board in the 1980s. Jack was president at the time. When I assumed the role of president of Montana Right to Life, they came out and spoke at one of our conferences. Soon after, they hired me to assist the political action committee director at National Right to Life. Eventually Jack stepped down as president to dedicate his efforts to pro-life education and asked me to help start Life Issues Institute in 1991. We did that work together for about 26 years until his passing.

Can you tell us about an early Life Issues Institute project? One of the first things we did in the early 1990s was poll Americans to learn how they viewed the pro-life movement. We were coming off of abortion facility arson and shootings of abortionists. The American public—with the eager help of the media—had painted all of us as violent, haters, and anti-woman. We suspected that this was the prevailing picture, and the results of the poll confirmed it. It was not pretty, but it was something we needed to hear. We discussed the research in three consecutive meetings in Washington, D.C., with other pro-life leaders and tried to come up with messaging that could counteract that picture. We settled on the idea of emphasizing the rights of both the mother and the child and came up with the phrase “Love them both.” We tested this pro-woman message in university lectures right away. Instead of getting angry, feminists listened to what we had to say. The pro-abortion side has been on the defense ever since.

You saw that pro-woman message spread to other countries? A few years after that, I was in South Africa, presenting a workshop at a national pro-life conference. As my hosts drove me to the venue, I saw signs posted on busy street corners downtown that said “Love them both.” Life Issues Institute and Cincinnati Right to Life had produced those signs in Ohio and shipped them out to other countries.

Today, you still host the Life Issues radio program, but you also used to be involved in a television show. Around 2005, we began to produce 22 episodes a year of a half-hour weekly TV program called Facing Life Head-On. That ran for eight seasons. We picked up three regional Emmy Awards for excellence in programming, a real breakthrough for the pro-life movement. That really helped to mainstream our message. Our goal was to reach women in childbirth bearing years who may not be with us on the abortion issue. The feedback we got showed we were changing a lot of hearts and minds. As host, I wanted to present compelling people and then stay out of their way as they told their stories. We featured individuals with Down syndrome and talked to their families and neighbors. We dealt with adoption issues. We talked with women who experienced abortion—and men involved in abortions. We did a few programs on embryo adoption. Weeks after former Planned Parenthood center director Abby Johnson left the abortion industry, we flew her to Cincinnati to have her on our show.

Why the emphasis on education? Education is the foundation for political and legislative victories. But then you must take advantage of that and elect pro-life people. Now that Roe v. Wade is overturned and everything goes back to the states, that’s going to be very real. In Mason, Ohio, a suburb of Cincinnati, the City Council voted to make Mason a sanctuary for the unborn. After elections, pro-abortion council members got in and reversed that. Being pro-life in the voting booth counts at every level because you never know how far a candidate is going to climb on that political ladder to success. Even Barack Obama started his political career as a community organizer.

You were a founding member of the Men and Abortion Network. In 1995 or so, I received some emails and letters from fathers who were grieving over children lost to abortion. I told Jack: We’re missing something. We understand the women, but it’s also affecting the guys. He said I was right and that I should pursue this. At the network, we helped create awareness about the ways that abortion impacts men. The pro-life movement really caught on. Pregnancy resource centers were quick to incorporate ministries for hurting fathers.

Does your master’s degree in Biblical counseling help your work with post-abortive men? I believe a Biblical counseling model is the most effective way to _
counsel. Without it, you’re limited in how far you can take them: To get total freedom, you’ve got to know that your sins are forgiven. I tell men that forgiveness is not agreeing that the abortion was needed or necessary. It’s not accepting the woman’s decision to have that abortion. It’s just a conscious decision of not holding feelings of hatred toward the woman or the people involved in the abortion.

There’s spiritual warfare at work? Men who have been involved in an abortion experience an enormous amount of anger, grief, and shame. You need to start peeling that off like you peel an onion and tell them that Jesus forgives sins and demands that we forgive others—not just because it’s what we need to do but because it will set us free. And when you can show them in Scripture that forgiveness, serving, and healing all go hand in hand, and add to that the power of the Holy Spirit, it is very effective. Through our Men and Abortion Network website, we referred men to counselors all over the country. I counseled fathers in Cincinnati and saw that so many men are open to the message of Jesus when they’re in crisis.

You are president of the International Right to Life Federation. Tell me about that role. I took that position after Dr. Jack Willke stepped down because he was getting older and it was more difficult for him to travel. In that position, I’ve traveled to Europe, South America, Australia, and parts of Africa. Our goal is to help countries that are struggling to pass pro-life legislation by giving them ideas and educational resources. We once flew down to the capital of Chile to combat legislation that would have legalized abortion. We gave lectures about abortion in front of a packed audience in Santiago’s largest university. The local paper covered the event quite extensively on the front page.

Some countries already have good pro-life laws, but they’re feeling external political pressure. Groups like the European Union, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations are bullying countries that have pro-life laws. Those organizations will sometimes withhold desperately needed funds ... because these countries don’t have pro-abortion laws on the books. Malta, Poland, Kenya, and Chile are some countries I’ve seen take hits because of their pro-life laws. It helps them when America is a pro-life influence. With a pro-life president, we could send a pro-life delegation to the UN, and that would affect life issues internationally.

How have you seen abortion-related political developments in America affect the international scene? America’s abortion laws dramatically impact countries around the world. When I travel internationally for pro-life work, often leaders in other countries will tell me, “Please end abortion in America so that we can end it here too.” I keep in touch with our colleagues around the globe, and they are all as excited about the Supreme Court’s Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health decision as we are. They believe it will impact their country. For instance, Poland has a very pro-life law, but radical feminists, the United Nations, and the European Union are pressuring Polish leaders. Dobbs gives them a leg up. Now they can push back and point to how America realized it went too far with Roe.

Anything surprise you about the aftermath of Dobbs? The level of domestic terrorism pro-life organizations are experiencing and the president’s refusal to address the issue has surprised me. Mr. Biden and the Department of Justice are looking the other way while pregnancy centers and churches burn and are vandalized. The pro-abortion Democrats in the House of Representatives blocked a resolution to condemn this violence, which just eggs on the violence. In Massachusetts, Sen. Elizabeth Warren called for holding pregnancy help centers accountable. Within days, two Massachusetts centers were attacked. If pro-lifers or a pro-life senator had advocated going after Planned Parenthood centers, the media and the government would have gone apoplectic trying to find out who was doing these acts and punishing them accordingly.

What other reactions have we seen at the federal level? We’ve already seen the extremists on Capitol Hill promoting legislation that would invalidate every state pro-life law in the country. We have to counter that. We have a razor-thin pro-life majority in this Senate and a pro-abortion majority in the House. We need to see some changes in the midterm elections: Pro-lifers need to be in control of the Senate to stop the radical abortion laws that are coming at us. So far, that delicate balance will stop tax funding of abortion, but it will not enable us to move forward with legislation to require statistical reporting on abortion, for example, or to strengthen conscience protections for medical professionals.
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Two former Soviet citizens are using their faith, education, and experiences to help their homelands, despite the obstacles

by Sharon Dierberger

photo by Jim Mone/Genesis
ON NOV. 2, 1937, SOVIET SECRET POLICE forcibly seized Oleg Voskresensky’s grandfather, a Russian Orthodox village priest, from his home and family, saying he was under investigation. Instead, that night they led him into nearby woods and shot him.

The murder was part of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin’s anti-religious campaign beginning in the 1920s and lasting until 1941, a time during which the state executed more than 100,000 Russian Orthodox clergymen. Raised in Moscow during the Cold War, Oleg Voskresensky, 65, grew up knowing his grandfather’s story but never allowed to talk openly about it.

Paul Gavrilyuk is 15 years younger than Voskresensky and grew up more than 500 miles south of him, in Soviet Ukraine. He remembers the day his dad returned from work and told him about a woman—a Baptist—who in public had handed him a children’s Bible to bring home to Gavrilyuk. This was after Stalin’s brutal reign but at a time when the state still outlawed religious proselytizing and persecuted Christian leaders. His father—who was not a believer—had to decide whether he would report the woman to authorities or risk being reported himself for not turning her in. He decided to quietly acknowledge her gift and say no more.

Two men: both born and raised in the Soviet Union during the Cold War—one in Moscow, the other in Kyiv. Each took a different path leading to Christ, then across the world to Minnesota and teaching professions, to friendship, and finally, to outreaches back to their homelands. They both say Christ alone saved them, while they continue to worship and practice in Eastern Orthodox churches. These men, Oleg Voskresensky and Paul Gavrilyuk, have independently found ways to help their former countrymen. Since Feb.

BELOW: People gather at Levashovo Memorial Cemetery to commemorate the 45,000 people who were executed and buried there during the Soviet repressions. RIGHT: Oleg Voskresensky.
24, when Russia invaded Ukraine, their zeal to help has only grown.

Their stories illuminate the forces they’re up against: brutal, repressive, national histories; corrupt governments; spiritual darkness; ongoing propaganda; and now, war. But these problems have given each of them a heightened awareness of God’s providence and work.

OSKRESENSKY’S LIFE followed a circuitous path from Communism to Christianity. His mother, a women’s magazine journalist covering women’s rights globally, from the Soviet perspective, and his father, a road construction engineer who traveled widely, were Communist Party members and part of the intelligentsia. They attended Communist meetings and toed the party line. But they were living dual lives.

Officially, they embraced Communist ideology, but years later Voskresensky learned his father secretly attended church and took Communion in small villages far away from Moscow when he traveled. Although his parents spoke somewhat more openly around the dinner table than in public, they hushed their son whenever he raised questions about God, faith, or his grandfather, saying, “When you grow up, you will discover it by yourself.”

Stalin had considered all forms of religion, except atheism, anathema and a danger to the state. Under his crackdown, the number of Orthodox churches—the predominant churches in the Soviet Union and later Russia—fell from nearly 30,000 to under 500. Only a twelfth of the priests survived. As the state killed or sent to labor camps millions of Orthodox Christians, Soviet propaganda proclaimed no religious persecution occurred and that the state was removing only people who broke laws or resisted. Some historians estimate that of the 20 million to 40 million victims of the Soviet regime, between 12 million and 20 million were labeled Christian.

Voskresensky says many men, including his father, served in World War II to prove they were not enemies of the state, as the state had deemed his grandfather. They called this “washing their guilt with their own blood.” After World War II, during the Cold War’s almost 45 years, fear of persecution dictated why many, including Voskresensky’s parents, hid their faith, and why many others abandoned it.

So, in the 1970s, when Voskresensky encountered a high school teacher who dared speak openly about God, as if God was personal and existed, Voskresensky was shocked.

He remembers thinking: “You mean God is not a fairy tale, not an ancient myth? I started thinking of God as reality for the first time and started to look for Him.” Voskresensky calls this teacher the genius responsible for pointing him in the right direction. The state called the teacher a dissident and kicked him out of the country when he was 74. He still lives today in Germany.

Voskresensky remembers engaging in dissident activity himself: climbing a cabin roof with childhood friends and their shortwave radios, trying to hear snatches of Voice of America broadcasts that
the Soviet state tried to jam. “We didn’t automatically believe what we heard,” he explains. “But we at least could consider whether it was true or not. We could start to think critically.”

Differing worldviews competed for Voskresensky’s soul. Classic Russian authors, like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and beautiful art drew him toward the Biblical God, yet for years he followed Zen Buddhism. Looking for advice, one day he motorcycled out of Moscow to an Orthodox village priest. After both determined the other wasn’t secretly KGB, the priest prayed for him and gave him a Bible.

Perestroika—radical political and economic restructuring—and glasnost—increasing openness in Russian society—arrived in the 1980s, during the time Voskresensky met his future wife, Oksana. When he saw how she applied Christianity to everything she did, Voskresensky knew God could change him, too: “Christianity became more than just a philosophy.” The smile in Voskresensky’s voice broadens whenever he mentions Oksana.

Soon, he worshipped regularly at her Orthodox church where services were in the Russian language, instead of the usual Church Slavonic no one could understand. Within two years, he says, he professed faith in Christ. His life’s work slowly began to emerge, centered on his newfound faith.

AUL GAVRILYUK also recalls the state’s religious suppression, but not to the same extent. With a strong Eastern European accent like Voskresensky’s, he, too, speaks articulately—and I can almost see cogs turning as he remembers the past and connects it to how God works.

He tells me his mother and grandmother were devout Christians. His great-grandfather had been an Orthodox...
That meant Gavrilyuk enjoyed the emerging perestroika and glasnost during his formative high school and college years. With society’s new openness, he started to explore Christianity. He got hold of a Bible and read it from cover to cover. When he was 14, a Jewish math teacher at summer camp piqued his interest more with Old Testament stories.

At 15, he and friends started jamming on guitars and singing songs from the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*. He spent class time pretending to listen to teachers while translating and scribbling the lyrics into Russian. “It wasn’t a profound turning to Christ or conversion yet,” he recalls, with a quick laugh. “But it was a step.”

He was 18 when the presence of Christ became real to him, thanks to a teacher—similar to Voskresensky’s experience. Father George was Gavrilyuk’s university humanities teacher who opened the Bible and explained it. “It was like when the Apostle Philip opened Scripture to the Ethiopian eunuch,” he recalls. The teacher talked nonstop about a personal encounter with Christ.

When Gavrilyuk woke one morning and found his desires had completely changed, he wondered if something supernatural was happening to him. Throughout college, he and friends had played a game similar to bridge where winning competitions became quite lucrative. Gavrilyuk had even written a popular book about probability. But on that memorable morning, he no longer had any interest in making money from the game or even playing it again.

He realized he believed the Jesus of the Bible and wanted to pursue Him. He repented of his sins and was quietly baptized, desiring to live Biblically. He met Eugenia, his future wife, who simultaneously was growing in faith. Gavrilyuk started devouring Christian books and began to see how Marxism stifled the human spirit and suffocated history and politics.

As Soviet society became less restrictive, especially after the country’s 1991 disintegration, Voskresensky, too, began voraciously reading Christian works—many by C.S. Lewis, as well as sermons and books by Orthodox authors.

While on a work visa pursuing journalism in America, he first encountered evangelicalism: A young family on a Minneapolis playground invited him, Oksana, and their daughter to their home, and then to their Bible church.

Voskresensky loved the church’s systematic theology and strong Bible teaching. Soon his new community of believers helped send him to Bethel Seminary in St. Paul. He tells me some describe him as an evangelical Orthodox—he both believes in a personal relationship with Jesus and loves the traditions of his church. He continues to worship as an Eastern Orthodox.

After seminary, he eagerly began translating Christian materials into Russian, developing presentations to take into Russian-speaking countries. He traveled to Ukraine, Belarus, Bulgaria, Poland, and Finland, but mostly Russia. His goal: to teach the historicity and veracity of the Biblical Christ.

Initially, some Russians listened to his presentations with suspicion because his evidence was only from Western sources. A priest kindly...
chastised him: “All this is made in America. Make it look like it’s made in Russia—in Moscow—and people may listen.”

The lightbulb went on. Voskresensky changed all his source material, using only works from Russian historians, theologians, scientists, artists, and writers to support Christian truths.

Listeners could now check references and primary sources they understood and were comfortable with. The rational, historical information and evidence appealed to the educated Russian-speaking audiences. Floodgates opened. Soon, Voskresensky got invitations to teach all over the country. The most unlikely came from Russia’s Ministry of Education.

His materials became part of a nationwide fourth grade curriculum throughout Russia called “Introduction to Christian Culture,” part of a religious culture education project the state was developing. “I never even prayed for this opportunity,” says Voskresensky. “God just gave it to me.”

He began training teachers nationwide on how to present his Christian material to children, then enhanced his local credibility more by getting a doctorate in education from a Moscow university.

The Russian Federation has reprinted his curriculum for 10 years now. Children and their teachers from Siberia to St. Petersburg and Moscow use it. Voskresensky’s training talks have led to speaking engagements at Orthodox and Protestant churches, colleges, army bases, and prisons.

AFTER GAVRILYUK earned his undergraduate degree in physics, he pursued a theology doctorate, arriving in the United States with Eugenia to study at Southern Methodist University. He discovered later he was one of the first scholars from the former Soviet Union to formally study religion in America.

Again, a teacher inspired Gavrilyuk, this time a Northern Irish Methodist, professor William J. Abraham, with a bushy white beard and welcoming smile. His intellectual rigor, tireless evangelism, love for children, and investment in students offered a model for Gavrilyuk to emulate. “He was like Paul, and I, Barnabas,” he says. Together, they traveled to Kazakhstan and Costa Rica on missions trips. But Gavrilyuk remained Eastern Orthodox.

For 20 years, Gavrilyuk has taught theology and philosophy at the University of St. Thomas, a Roman Catholic university in St. Paul, Minn., where Eugenia also teaches. He and Voskresensky became friends shortly after he moved to Minnesota.

Like Abraham, his former mentor, Gavrilyuk’s labors don’t end at the classroom. He most recently has been working with Rebuild Ukraine, a nonprofit he began, to bring supplies into Ukraine. It has provided thousands of military-grade tourniquets for the country’s Territorial Defense.

Volunteers and staff transport tourniquets and other items—prescription and first aid drugs, camouflage gear, boots, protective goggles, neck warmers, and raincoats—across Poland’s eastern border to a distribution center in Ternopil. A network of 70 volunteers within Ukraine moves these goods to 60 locations throughout the war-torn country. The network is similar to one Gavrilyuk used to evacuate his elderly parents and about 100 families from Kyiv, shortly after Russia invaded.

“We deliver what people need, not what donors are willing to contribute,” says Gavrilyuk, referring to problems some organizations have when piles of donations arrive that refugees can’t use. Gavrilyuk’s brother works for a social media intelligence company to track and verify supplies get to the right people, all of whom are vetted, so items don’t end up on the black market.

Rebuild Ukraine also funds teacher salaries, facility rentals, and supplies for two refugee schools, in Poland and Montenegro. “We had to do something for these children and their mothers who had to flee Ukraine while their fathers and husbands stayed to fight,” explains Gavrilyuk, getting emotional. “We need more schools for these psychologically shocked kids.”

When we spoke, he was in Washington, D.C., en route to Europe, in part to check on Rebuild Ukraine’s supply distributions and school efforts.

Both Voskresensky and Gavrilyuk vehemently condemn Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Ukrainian war. They also decry Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill’s support of Putin. But they aren’t surprised; the love of power, both say, rules each man.

What does surprise Voskresensky is how many of his friends in Russia believe the state’s version of the war. These are the same childhood friends who would clamber up a roof with him to listen on their shortwave radios for foreign news transmissions, then critically compare them with Soviet propaganda. Now, he says, they seem to have abandoned all critical thinking.

And it troubles him that the same Russians who were concerned about the sources he used for his presentations no longer seem to evaluate their own sources. Instead, they blindly accept the state’s claims. Voskresensky was in Russia when the war began, and when he pointed out tanks were rolling south toward Ukraine, friends told him he’d been brainwashed by the West and no invasion would hap-
pen. When the invasion did occur, even his former newspaper boss denied it was war and simply said Russia wasn’t afraid of Western sanctions.

Since then, Russia has closed or blocked at least 10 independent media outlets over their war coverage. Television controlled by the Kremlin is the main source of news. Yet, many Russians, including government officials themselves, circumvent the government’s internet censorship with VPNs (virtual private networks) to get information from abroad. Despite this, recent reports say most Russians continue to believe the war is just.

“Many Russians believe, like Putin, the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century,” Gavrilyuk adds. He recalls Putin’s popularity skyrocketed in 2014 after Russia annexed Crimea despite Ukraine’s protests.

“Putin is now destroying two countries,” says Gavrilyuk. “Ukraine, of course, but also Russia.” He says Russia is already losing politically, and believes it ultimately will lose militarily and economically.

Voskresensky wanted to return to Russia in May, but the war precluded travel. He hoped to talk with friends there, trying to find some common ground. When he resumes training Russian teachers, he will try to help them guide children on how to think about the war from a Christian perspective that doesn’t publicly denounce the state. “I know at least we’ll be able to agree that war and killing is terrible and causes pain. And pain should alert us that something is wrong and must be changed,” he says.

“And then,” he adds, “I want them to understand that means God’s Spirit is showing us the reality of sin and evil that only Christ can conquer.”
Man On the Home Front

As more dads become primary caregivers to their children, many learn to homeschool and navigate expectations

by JULIANA CHAN ERIKSON and JOYCE WU

PHOTO BY DANIEL KIM/GENESIS
Philip Shea checks his children’s luggage at their Oregon home as they prepare for a trip.
Philip Shea had just returned from taking his daughter to dance class and was answering questions about being a stay-at-home dad when one of his kids interrupted him.

“Sorry, just a moment,” he said, before switching to his parenting voice. “No, we’re not going to clean the hot tub right now. Let Dad finish this phone call first.” When the girl tried to reason with him, he replied more firmly, “I know, everybody says that, but it’s not going to happen right now. I think it would be better if we did it on Monday.”

For Shea, this isn’t just Saturday—it’s every day. The Happy Valley, Ore., stay-at-home dad not only homeschools all four of his kids, he takes them to swim team, does most of the household chores, and tells them when the hot tub is off limits, all while his wife Jess works a full-time job. Dads like Shea are on the rise. Counting only fathers who are out of the labor force to take care of family and have a spouse who’s employed, the U.S. Census Bureau recorded around 204,000 at-home dads last year. But that number goes up to roughly 1.75 million if you include dads who are the primary caregivers of their children regardless of their employment status or their spouses’, says Jonathan Heisey-Grove, president of the National At-Home Dad Network. Historically, economic downturns have led more dads to stay home, according to Arielle Kuperberg, a professor of sociology and women, gender, and sexuality studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The pandemic may have contributed too, as layoffs and hiring freezes kept more men home and virtual school and shuttered daycares left kids with nowhere to go. Not only are more dads staying home, they’re also doing more around the house, and getting more time with the kids. In 2016, the average dad spent eight hours a week on childcare—triple the time a dad in 1965 spent
on his kids, according to the Pew Research Center. Dads nowadays also spend more time doing domestic chores (10 hours a week) than the average four hours his granddad likely did back in 1965. Mothers still do more—in 2016 they put in 14 hours a week on childcare and 18 hours a week on housework.

As modern dads get more involved in home life, they’re not just able to change diapers, they can confidently run the house without any help. But even while American men become more accustomed to staying at home, many still feel the tension of cultural expectations that suggest home-based child-rearing is primarily a woman’s role.

**WHY DO DADS STAY HOME?** Reasons vary, but some couples choose the arrangement for practical reasons. Before Russ Jones left his job as a psychologist to homeschool his three kids full time, he and his wife both had demanding full-time jobs that only got tougher when the pandemic shut down schools and daycare. By May 2020, the dad in northern Virginia said, it was a “no-brainer” that he would be the one staying home, since he had already been doing most of the cooking, cleaning, laundry, and preschool drop-offs. “Once that happened,” he said, “everyone got happier.”

Jones joined a local homeschool co-op where he’s often the only man in a sea of moms, but said the group’s warm welcome made the adjustment easier. “I don’t feel my gender as much as I thought I would because we’re all talking about the same thing,” he said. “We talk about curriculum, or the attitudes of our kids when they don’t want to do something. That’s universal.”

Some also assume that dads run the house differently, but as these men tell it, life isn’t so different when dad’s in charge. Jones said his wife would run the house the same way he does, with only minor differences. “She would stress safety, and I would stress eating everything off your plate,” he joked.

For many families, the decision to have mom as the sole breadwinner has more to do with money than who’s better with the kids. Many wives today out-earn their husbands. The gender pay gap has narrowed, with the American woman’s median weekly earnings at 84 percent of a man’s earnings, up from 62 percent back in 1979. Throw in the high cost of childcare and the hectic family schedules of dual earners, and the decision becomes clearer for some couples.

“It was largely providential,” said Neil Shenvi about going from being a theoretical chemist at a research university to a homeschooling stay-at-home dad. He and his physician wife Christina were expecting their fourth child when they realized having Christina’s mom watch all four kids would be a challenge. Finances also factored into his resignation: “After taxes, my marginal salary would have just barely covered childcare and/or private school.”

The North Carolina dad never planned to stay home or homeschool. But since the switch, he’s come to love schooling his children. “I devote most of my one-on-one instruction to math, and it’s amazing to see how far my kids can go,” said Shenvi, who also tutors in the family’s homeschool co-op.

**SHENVI IS ACTUALLY AN OUTLIER** among stay-at-home dads. A large majority of U.S. fathers who stay home do not have a college degree, according to research from Kuperberg, who analyzed Census Bureau data. And while most at-home dads are married, unmarried dads are in fact more likely than married dads to stay home with kids, she found.

In a study published earlier this year, Kuperberg and her co-authors wrote that “at-home fathers report tensions about not providing for or ‘contributing to’ their families.” Those men feel that way “especially when home because of unemployment or when they are working class and face stronger breadwinning expectations.”

Some at-home dads struggle with shame about not being the provider, while others say isolation has made at-home life tough. “Stay-at-home moms
tend to have a community of other stay-at-home moms all around them, no matter where they live,” said Shenvi. He enjoys the close community from his homeschool co-op but acknowledges it’s “95 percent moms.”

When Shannon Carpenter became a stay-at-home dad in Kansas City, he tried to join the parent groups that were readily available: mom groups. “I sent dozens and dozens of emails that got either ignored,” he recounted, “or a quick No, thank you.”

We checked, and it’s true that many mom groups don’t allow men. One Facebook group in northern Virginia lists its rule in all caps: “ONLY MOTHERS ARE APPROVED MEMBERS.” Even mission statements, curricula, and advice sessions for many of these groups are specifically designed for women. Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) International, which boasts 75,000 members worldwide, is “uniquely called to moms,” said Kelli Smith, MOPS’ director of marketing, so no dads are allowed. At church, the gender divide in the parenting community is similar, with dads bemoaning the fact that childcare is often offered for women’s gatherings but not for men’s.

Most of the dads we spoke to said they had little trouble convincing family and friends of their decision to stay home, but well-meaning acquaintances and strangers didn’t understand and made wrong assumptions. Whenever Carpenter sees a new receptionist working at his children’s doctor’s office, he knows he’ll have to remind the new hire to contact him and not his wife. The same goes for schools that still call and email his wife, even though the dad of three is listed as the first contact.

At the playground with his kids, Carpenter has received strange looks. He and other dads know men unaccompanied by their wives can come across as creepy to women. Shea said that when he’s out with his kids, he receives compliments from people praising him for taking time out to watch them. His dry reply: “This isn’t babysitting, this is what I do.”

Eventually, Carpenter found his tribe. The former elder abuse investigator has been close friends with four other stay-at-home dads from KC Dads Group for 14 years now. Once a year, the men go on a trip with all 16 kids in tow and visit places like the Field of Dreams in Iowa. Carpenter’s Kansas City group is part of City Dads Group, a network with groups in about 40 American cities.

But dads don’t have to be in a dad group for community. Pursuing his interests in apologetics and Biblical critiques of critical race theory, Shenvi has been able to connect to a “broader community, even if it’s mainly via the internet.” He advises stay-at-home dads to find meaningful, productive work outside of the time with their kids, and says that will often come with a ready-made community of people interested in the same thing.

AMERICAN CULTURE HAS BECOME more accepting of dads staying at home, but some immigrant cultures still frown on the idea. The antipathy is mainly rooted in the convention that men be the primary provider. The Chinese, for example, have a specific, derogatory expression in their language for a man who lives off a woman, literally translating as he who “eats soft rice.”

As a Korean American dad, Kyun Chung understands this Asian stigma. For five years the dad from Seattle (see “Adopting against the odds,” May 21) split his time between caring for the kids and working on his startup. But when the pandemic broke out, he shut down his company to stay home full time. It worked well for everyone: His kids got help with virtual school, he got more housework done, and his wife could focus on her full-time job.
But on one visit with his Korean relatives, Chung’s extended family apologized on his behalf to Connie, his Asian American wife, because she had to be the breadwinner. Chung said he and his wife were more amused than offended by the incident.

For Christians who subscribe to traditional gender roles, a stay-at-home dad might raise eyebrows. Does the at-home dad trend conflict with passages that teach a Christian to provide for “members of his household” (1 Timothy 5:8) and teach young mothers to be “working at home” (Titus 2:5)?

Views differ. Denny Burk, a professor of Biblical studies at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, points to Genesis as laying out God’s original design for husband and wife: Adam was to cultivate the land and provide for his family, and Eve, his “helper,” was to bear children, nurture them, and manage the home. While Proverbs 31 depicts a woman who is both a homemaker and employed outside the home, Burk says her employment was secondary to her calling in the home. Ultimately, the Bible “teaches by precept and by pattern that the able-bodied husband who does not provide is giving up what should be his role,” he said in an email.

But Tim Lane, a Presbyterian Church in America minister and president of the Institute for Pastoral Care, argued “there are countless situational factors that call for biblical wisdom in applying passages like [these].” He noted the 1 Timothy passage places the responsibility on the entire family to care for dependent relatives, and says the Titus passage simply teaches women to avoid a habit of idleness and going about from house to house. In the Bible’s pre-industrial, agrarian context, both men and women were “working at home,” Lane says. They divided responsibilities in a way that seemed practical and “that same freedom is [also] upon us [when] many people now work ‘outside’ the home.”

Dads have an important role in leading their children toward a “steadfast, long-lasting, sticky faith in Christ,” added Danny Huerta, vice president for parenting and youth at Focus on the Family. Dads who stay home can be more engaged in their children’s upbringing, he said.

Shenvi has had the opportunity not just to read the Bible and pray daily with his kids, but to use day-to-day moments for discipleship. He has had “some of the most meaningful conversations” with his children during random moments throughout the day, he noted, including car rides to the grocery store. Be it food, money, or politics, he hopes his kids will see every topic through a Christian lens.

Some dads like Shenvi, Carpenter, and Shea see this as their vocation and are in it for the long haul. But for others, it might be just a season in their lives. Chung recently returned to full-time work, taking a job at Microsoft’s Xbox. It had been convenient during the pandemic for him to take care of the kids full time, but after he and his wife adopted two boys from Taiwan, the added expenses prompted him to make a change.

With all four kids returning to in-person school and his wife already working from home part of the week, Chung admitted, “I was getting a bit bored with the minimal intellectual challenges and repetitive nature of being home.” His new position is fully remote, so he’ll still be around when the kids come home, but at the same time, Chung feels conflicted. “The kids are still so young and they still want to hang out with me, so am I wasting this short window in their lives?” he wonders. “My income isn’t necessary, so am I choosing money over family?”

Whatever the decision—to remain a stay-at-home dad or return to work—Chung knew he’d have to deal with some feelings of guilt and doubt. “What’s helped me feel at ease has been the feeling that the job opportunity was ... provided by God,” he said. “It’s just been the way He’s worked in both Connie and my life, and I’m incredibly grateful that He almost made the decision for me.”

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SOME COWBOYS USE BRONCO AND BULL RIDING TO POINT OTHERS...

LIFE ON THE RODEO CIRCUIT
SOME COWBOYS USE BRONCO AND BULL RIDING TO POINT OTHERS TO CHRIST

BY SHARON DIERBERGER IN BUFFALO, MINN.

RODEO CIRCUIT
jumped on top of him. As he tried to crawl pain is often the norm. And a life-altering injury may be seconds away.

Despite the risks and other downsides, those who climb onto a wild bronco or bull embrace this lifestyle: the adrenaline rush, the challenge of beating the clock, the thrill and satisfaction that come with being a cowboy, and for some, the platform to talk about their faith.

For Elsher e, 32, riding has been part of his life since he clambered onto a sheep at age 3. He progressed to calves and worked his way up to bulls and broncos—rough stock, in cowboy parlance. Although he says he may have some natural ability, he credits experienced coaches, especially cousins who were prize-winning riders before him, and adds, “My hometown of Faith, South Dakota, had a bunch of the world’s best bronc riders who all helped me.”

It’s definitely a family affair. Rodeo riders often come from a lineage of cowboys. Elshere is a fifth-generation cowboy, but the first in his line to be a professional rodeo saddle bronc rider.

He admits he was anxious when he started riding bucking broncos at 13: “It was nerve-wracking getting on a wild animal—that’s something you’ve got to push through, overcome … and stay focused.”

Of the rodeo events sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association—the world’s largest rodeo organization—saddle bronc riding quickly became Elshere’s favorite. Other events include bareback bronc riding, bull riding, barrel racing, steer wrestling, calf roping, team roping, and sometimes steer roping and ladies breakaway.

Rodeo is big business: In the past 3½ decades, PRCA has paid out more than a billion dollars in prize money, and most rodeos are multiday festivals with local and national sponsors, kids’ activities, and concerts. The sport claims over 40 million fans—and is growing, thanks in part to the popular (and gritty, rated TV-MA) cable Western Yellowstone and this year’s inaugural bull riding league.

THE RODEO BUSINESS includes breeding broncs and bulls for the job. They come from bloodlines of past champions. Elshere explains how cowboys work with young animals and train them specifically to buck riders off. “When you get to the professional level,” says Elshere, “most of these animals have performed often, so they’ve learned what to do—so we riders know what to do on them.”

Several days before a rodeo, riders find out which horse they’ll ride. They glean as much about their draw as possible—often from friends who may have ridden the animal before—so they can devise a plan for competition. Riders are more likely to get hurt on inexperienced broncs, so if they don’t think the horse is good enough, they may skip the rodeo. Sometimes they can’t ascertain the horse’s quality beforehand. And if a bronc doesn’t buck well, it’s like trying to play golf with a bent club—no matter how good the contestant, winning is unlikely.

One nearly career-ending injury happened to Elshere on an experienced mount. The arena was muddy that day,
and when the bronc bucked him off, it jumped on top of him. As he tried to crawl away through the mud, a hoof came down, kicking him underneath his protective vest, breaking his lower back.

He has since healed, and he considers himself fortunate. A friend, J.R. Vezain, who’d ridden over 1,000 times and was on the brink of qualifying for the 2019 national championship in bareback bronc riding, drew a horse who’d performed only once on the PRCA circuit. The bronco flipped over on top of Vezain, folding him in half, then stomped on him. The incident left him paralyzed from the waist down.

“You have to put your trust in God to be safe every day, to compete and be successful,” says Elshere. “Even if you’re not, remembering everything is done according to God’s will.” Vezain often speaks publicly about how his Christian faith sustains him.

Some fans equate rodeo life with family, faith, and patriotism. Rodeos—like Buffalo’s—often start with a prayer thanking Jesus, then play the national anthem. Sometimes nondenominational cowboy churches offer an arena service on Sundays. Elshere’s wife, Kyndra, a former barrel racer, professed faith in Christ at a cowboy church before they were married.

While rodeos have their share of Bible-believing riders and fans, like most professional sports they have a contingent of hard drinkers and partiers. When Elshere, who was raised in a Christian home, initially entered the pro rodeo scene, he briefly lived the wild life, too, and says he had to repent and make changes.

He grew conscious of setting a good example. Now, he says, his faith undergirds his behavior: “The way you talk, what you do after the rodeo, being a respectful husband and family man … points to Jesus—a hope and lifestyle people might not get to see in other circles.”

One visible moment came unexpectedly. Elshere was struggling immensely at the 2020 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo—the World Series of rodeo—where he was competing as a Top 15 rider. For 10 nights, 10 rides in a row, on 10 of the world’s best broncos, his arm would droop, his grip weaken, then the horse would buck him off. (He didn’t find out until later a bulging disk was pinching nerves in his riding arm.) The rodeo was televised. Millions were watching. He felt like a failure. He took a private moment to exit the arena, kneel behind the chutes,
and ask God for help. Unknown to him, TV cameras captured him praying.

“I hated that I failed as a competitor,” he says. “But God used that moment for Himself—to show we need to put our trust in Jesus.”

For eight summers, he’s hosted a free rodeo camp—Bares, Broncs, Bulls, and Bibles—for teens. Instructors coach youth on skills for riding rough stock competitively and also teach them about Christ. Elshere started the camp after a bronc-riding friend committed suicide. He wants teens to know Jesus gives hope, and that the Bible and mentors can ground them in a sport filled with temptations.

“When you can get a competitive person—young or old—to be competitive for Christ, you know they’re gonna stand strong and be bold,” says Elshere.

ONE SUCH COMPETITIVE PERSON is Dylan Madsen, 29. He used to be one of the partiers Elshere talks about. After a self-described spiritual awakening, for the last two years he’s been a camp instructor for Elshere—in Bible and bull.

That’s bull riding. Madsen is a professional bull rider. “They’re lower to the ground than broncs—not as far to fall,” he laughs.

But it was a bull that bucked him off and jumped squarely on his back, causing a severe vertebral injury in January. Bull riding accidents cause the most rodeo-related injuries: One of every 15 competitive outs ends in an injury, according to the Professional Bull Riders organization. (An “out” is each time a bull and rider charge out of the chute, regardless of whether the rider lasts eight seconds.)

Madsen isn’t at the Buffalo rodeo. He’s taking time off to heal. Meanwhile, he’s building and repairing fences through his company while listening to sermons from favorite preachers such as Steve Lawson and John MacArthur.

Raised on his grandparents’ ranch in Presho, S.D., Madsen climbed aboard his first steer when he was 8. It launched him 12 feet in the air. He landed flat on his back with his wind knocked out, then got up and did it again.

He started competing, and he tried to fit in and please the wrong people. Soon he was drinking and smoking marijuana all day every day, often showing up high for his bull ride, cocky enough to think he could still perform well. “I was living like an arrogant outlaw,” he says.

But he began thinking about God and what happens after death after his buddy Blake died in a head-on collision—a drunk driving accident. He’d already been reflecting on the number of his friends who’d died from drunk driving. A drunk driving accident had left his own mother a paraplegic years earlier. “I kept seeing the inevitable result of the lifestyle I was living is never good,” says Madsen. “I wasted so many years.”

He and Siera, the woman with whom he was living, decided to read through the Bible. He listened to recorded sermons about the holiness of God. Together, the couple began to feel convinced that living together was wrong, and with counsel from church elders, they married. Today, they read the Bible together daily and work out together before heading to jobs.

Madsen hopes to be healthy enough to enter next year’s draft or be a free agent in the new bull riding league, the PBR Team Series, begun this year after Hollywood’s biggest talent agency, Endeavor, decided to diversify and bought the league. The league has eight team franchises in Texas, Arizona, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Oklahoma. Several national stations will televise each competition—where teams of five riders tally points.

The guaranteed salary for franchise team riders is attractive to Madsen. Nor-
"I KEPT SEEING THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF THE LIFESTYLE I WAS LIVING IS NEVER GOOD."

mally, only top individual placers win money—it’s hard to make a living unless you win often. If Madsen doesn’t win enough, or when the time comes to get his vertebrae fused, he says he’ll tip his hat to the sport and walk away.

He’s OK with that. He talks enthusiastically about God getting the glory, and says he’ll still go to rodeos to hand out literature like Ligonier Ministries’ “Crucial Questions” booklets. He views rodeos as his international mission field: Bull riders come from countries including Brazil, Australia, Mexico, Canada, and New Zealand.

AT BUFFALO’S RODEO, Elshere had a good ride—and a safe one. But he’s disappointed: He got a mount that “would have been good for our high school neighbor kid to practice on.” In other words, it didn’t buck well enough to allow for a high score. Not much a rider can do about a weak horse, shrugged Elshere after the ride.

A few days later on a better mount at a South Dakota rodeo, Elshere took first place and $2,700 in prize money. Judges score riders for skill and technique and the horses for difficulty, then the combined top score wins. Most years, Elshere, one of the circuit’s top saddle bronc riders, makes about $100,000, though last year he made about a quarter less with time off from injuries. Entry fees and expenses can top $50,000, so he has to win often—and stay healthy—to come out ahead.

To supplement his income, he and Kyndra work on his family’s 20,000-acre Hereford and black Angus cattle ranch of 850 head. It’s been in the family since 1895. They spend days calving cows, feeding them, and preparing bulls to sell. Elshere loves the lifestyle: up at 5:30, fresh air all day, sitting on a horse, back at dark. Years of wrangling cows, grabbing ropes while practicing bronco and bull riding, and lifting saddles and hay bales has physically hardened all 5 foot, 8 inches of him.

In 2017, Elshere played the role of rodeo legend Casey Tibbs in the documentary Floating Horses: The Life of Casey Tibbs. He says he’s open to more film opportunities but isn’t looking.

Elshere acknowledges rodeos not only pose bodily danger but are tough on family life. He enters about 100 rodeos a year in 100 different towns. Kyndra and daughter Everley travel along in the pickup camper when they can. But tight quarters and traveling with a toddler pose challenges. And traveling solo is even harder.

He wants to ride the circuit until he’s about 42—a long haul for a rodeo rider—until physical demands or time away from family portend it’s time to quit. Already, he’s coaching upcoming young riders, including his cousins’ kids—the same cousins who coached him as a boy. He frequently talks about his strongest motivation: “I’d like to be able to continue this,” says Elshere. “Because really, win or lose, it’s all about family, and shining the light on Jesus for the next generation.”
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UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS

A boy with disabilities overcomes a grim prognosis

by Bekah McCallum

Trinity Anderson was 15 years old when she first met Nate. The infant was wearing a white onesie and lying on an animal-print bouncer, his blue eyes staring blankly at the stucco ceiling. A slow-drip feeding tube had been attached to his stomach.

Nate weighed about 11 pounds, roughly as heavy as a grown cat—half the size...
of a normal baby his age. It was the day before his first birthday.

The boy had suffered a stroke and grade 4 brain bleed right after he was born, with hemorrhaging severe enough to be lethal to newborns. The stroke affected the left side of his body, and the bleeding resulted in hydrocephalus—water in the brain.

In 2015, Nate’s aunt, Trinity’s friend from school, brought Trinity to meet the baby. He had a few threads of hair and no teeth and could not sit up. Trinity says she adored him and held him for most of the afternoon.

A few days later, Nate’s mother asked Trinity if she would like to babysit. She agreed, and the mother taught her how to operate Nate’s feeding tube when she dropped off the infant at the Andersons’ home in Rockmart, Ga.

Babysitting sessions continued and lengthened, lasting days and sometimes weeks. A babysitting request that began on Thanksgiving Day stretched particularly long as the Andersons waited a year, they say, for Nate’s mother to return.

One Friday morning in 2016, a gray SUV pulled into the driveway. It was a social worker: Nate’s mother was losing temporary custody, and Nate was to be assigned to a foster family in Bainbridge, Ga., almost four hours away.

Sherry and her husband John couldn’t abandon the baby. They took classes to become certified foster parents and gained permanent custody of Nate in early 2017. “When we first got him,” said Sherry, “We weren’t looking for a baby. … But the Lord put us where we needed to be at the right time.”

The Andersons’ first order of business was to take Nate to the doctor. A nurse practitioner pointed to an MRI of Nate’s brain and told them three-quarters of the brain was mush. “I just want you to know what you’re getting yourself into,” they say she told them.

When anyone held him, Nate’s eyes shook. Thinking Nate was having seizures, the Andersons took him to an eye specialist. They learned the baby had developed a focusing problem from lying in a chair looking straight up at the ceiling.

The baby would also get “touched out.” Babies cry to be held; Nate cried when he was held.

Though the doctor’s prognosis was grim and Nate looked like he would never develop normally, the Andersons didn’t give up. Sherry’s mother, Wanda, retired and offered to help. Three times a week for several years, Wanda took Nate to therapy.

The Andersons bought developmental toys and propped Nate up with pillows to help him sit upright. At age 4, gripping the handles of his walker, Nate took his first steps. The Andersons celebrated with a trip to Disney World. He used a walker until he turned 6. Now, he walks everywhere. At Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Nate quietly paces up and down the aisle during the sermon. Sometimes he stands beside the preacher.

Nate slept with Trinity every night until her first baby was born. Nate did not wholly approve of the change but has since learned to adapt. Trinity Anderson Cates works as a special education instructor at Nate’s school.

On days when he is frustrated, tired, or hungry, Nate has trouble expressing his feelings and often yells. Gospel songs like “Look for Me at Jesus’ Feet” soothe him. He wears an orthotic on his left ankle and is not potty trained.

“It’s hard. Sometimes it’s very hard. But we’ve never regretted one bit of it,” said Sherry.

This fall, 7-year-old Nate will attend first grade. He can speak, count, play basketball, and recite the alphabet in sign language. At a colossal 3-foot-4, he has a head full of hair and a persistent hatred of change.

When the nurse practitioner first scanned Nate’s brain, she predicted he would never do anything that a normal child could do. “But I guess”—Trinity paused—“she didn’t know the power of prayer.”

—Bekah McCallum is a 2022 graduate of WORLD Journalism Institute
FOUR-DAY BIBLE MARATHON
A ministry aims to read the entire Bible aloud at federal and state capitals

by Carolina Lumetta in Harrisburg, Pa.

At the bottom of the state capitol steps in Harrisburg on a sunny day in May, a team set up a simple podium with a microphone and a livestream camera on a tripod. They arranged white folding chairs around the podium and set up a table displaying stacks of tracts and dozens of Bibles in multiple languages. Table signs read: “Politics Free Zone.”

The team was part of Bible Reading Marathon (BRM), a branch of Seedline International, a Bible translation and distribution ministry. Once every year for 33 years in Washington, D.C., the organization has gathered volunteers to read the Bible aloud—nonstop, cover to cover, rain or shine—in front of the U.S. Capitol. The feat takes about 90 hours to complete. Now the team has begun a mission to take the same challenge to every state capital, starting with Nashville, Tenn.; Indianapolis, Ind.; and Harrisburg.

At the reading marathon in Harrisburg on May 24, the podium was always occupied by either a BRM volunteer, family members who took a field trip to read, seminary students, local lawmakers, or random pedestrians who spontaneously signed up.

Organizer Joe Bavar, 49, works most of the year as an architectural draftsman from Plainfield, Ind. But he uses his vacation days to volunteer as the BRM state director. A couple of years ago, he went to Seedline’s director with a vision: If people can’t make it to the yearly Washington event, why not take the marathon to them? In 2021, he started with his home state, coordinating with Indianapolis Capitol Police, contacting local pastors and legislative chaplains, and filling sign-up sheets.

“Our goal is just to get the Bible out of the four walls of the church, out of the four walls of home, and in front of the people again,” Bavar said in Harrisburg.

“God can do amazing things with His Word, and He’s pleased to hear His Word read.”

Bavar estimated roughly 200 of the 360 reading slots were filled at the Harrisburg marathon, a good rate for the first year in the state. He and his team of roughly 30 volunteers took the remaining slots, taking quick breaks at a nearby hotel for the four days. At dusk, they moved the setup across the street, in accordance with police instructions.

The Bible Reading Marathon at the Pennsylvania state Capitol in Harrisburg
At night police occasionally drove by to ensure operations ran smoothly.

Pastor Jon Gross of Puzzletown Road Bible Church in Duncansville, Pa., brought a vanload of congregants to read passages on May 24. He said he was excited to get the Word of God onto the steps of the state Capitol. Todd Imler brought his wife and youngest daughter. He saw the marathon as an opportunity to remember the country’s Founders and their inclusion of religious liberty in the foundations of U.S. government.

“This is a great social studies lesson!” added Dawn Allen, a homeschooling mom who brought four of her children to help read, run the sound board, and supply snacks and water.

Throughout the day, visitors walked by the BRM table to tour the historic building. Staffers wandered in and out, and a group of Muslim visitors took photos. At the top of the steps, a rally for equitable housing took place. All the while, Christians read from the Bible at the bottom of the steps.

Most government staffers and lawmakers who walked by did not take a tract or engage with the group. But Gary Dull, a pastor of Faith Baptist Church of Altoona, Pa., who helped bring the event to Harrisburg, said reading the Bible out loud in a conspicuous location is important regardless of how many people engage.

“Romans 13 tells us that those in government are ministers of God, to stand against that which is evil and to support that which is good,” Dull said. “If they’re going to do this, they need to hear the Word of God.”

Bavar said results of these marathons have popped up in unlikely places. He said one inmate at an Indianapolis jail who heard about the ministry organized a shorter New Testament reading marathon with her fellow inmates.

By 10 a.m. on May 25, roughly 3½ days after starting, the marathon concluded with the last verse of Revelation and a closing prayer. Bavar said the 12-hour days and late nights are hard, but he plans on adding more marathons each year until all 50 states have their own Bible read-through.

“We’d like to get the younger generation more involved,” he said. “They can take the torch so this doesn’t fade.”
and Ross’ two adult children have chosen other professions.

Great-great-grandfather Ralph Greenhalgh moved to the Ballarat area soon after the 1851 Australian Gold Rush. He supported his family of at least 15 children by tanning hides for pioneers’ saddles, bridles, holsters, and shoes. One of his sons or grandsons built the brick-lined pits where Bruce and Ross suspend hundreds of hides for almost two months in black wattle bark “tea,” infusing the hides with tannins.

Black wattle, also known as black acacia or Acacia mearnsii, is endemic to southeastern Australia. The continent’s indigenous residents used every part of wattle trees for food, medicine, housing, and tools. Pioneers began using the bark’s tannins to leach the water molecules out of animal skins to preserve them and keep them supple. It’s the same method the Greenhalghs use today, with few alterations.

Butchers send piles of heavily salted rawhides to the tannery, where they wait to be processed. Nothing grows in salt, Ross explains. The salt also speeds up the natural oxidizing process on machines the brothers use to slice, skin, shave, and cut. Rust is everywhere.

Ross Greenhalgh, 62, opens a circular door at the front of a huge metal drum perched on its side. Plump hides peek out of a pH-restoring ammonia bath. “We have a very scientific way of telling if a hide is done tanning after the tanning pits,” Ross says straight-faced. “We take a knife and make a slit in the edge of the hide. If it’s got a white line in the middle, it’s not tanned all the way through.”

Only about 10 percent of leather produced in tanneries today uses the three-month-long vegetable tanning method. The other 90 percent get the chrome, or chromium salt, method. It takes only three days of tumbling in a drum with a cocktail of chemicals to come out more pliable, but blue and with less of the classic leather smell for clothing, furniture, and car interiors. The Greenhalghs’ thicker vegetable tanned leather needs to be broken in, but it will develop a patina and won’t crack as it ages.

Bruce, 66, says when his creaking bones seize up, he’ll know it’s time to retire. He has a little house on the Murray River where the fishing is good: “You know what I mean. I throw the line out and go to sleep. The fish are pretty safe.”

The brothers say that increasing environmental regulations make it more costly to stay in business. When the tannery closes, Australia will lose a slice of its heritage. Another small business will be gone with only a street name, Greenhalghs Road, to remind us of the story.

Until then, Ross keeps tanning hides. “I love what I do. If you find something you’re happy doing, you don’t have to make a great deal of money. That’s not important.”

I LOVE WHAT I DO. IF YOU FIND SOMETHING YOU’RE HAPPY DOING, YOU DON’T HAVE TO MAKE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY.
SETTING OUT A WELCOME MAT

Individuals and organizations help Afghan refugees get temporarily resettled in the U.S., as thousands of others wait

by Addie Offereins

N AUG. 16, 2021, Ahmad watched the Taliban march into his hometown in the province of Balkh over Facebook live-stream as his brother videoed the takeover from his apartment. It was night for Ahmad and his wife, Rachel, in Dallas. They asked WORLD to use pseudonyms because they’re concerned for the safety of family members still in Afghanistan.

The next morning, they called Ahmad’s family and told them to burn any pictures of their American daughter-in-law, along with any Western-style clothing, such as jeans and nonreligious books. Ahmad met Rachel when she came to Afghanistan for a missions trip. Along with the Western connections, the family wasn’t sure whether they would be targeted for their ethnicity as Hazaras, one of the most persecuted ethnic minorities in Afghanistan. They didn’t know what might earn them a death sentence. “We didn’t know, and so it’s literally like having conversations like: ‘That picture of your grandchild? Burn it.’”

Ahmad’s family is now in a hotel in Albania, and he is working to get them to the United States, but it’s a slow process. Like many others, their humanitarian parole applications have been stalled or denied. In the meantime, Ahmad and Rachel are making refugees in Dallas feel more at home. They are two of many...
individuals and organizations on the front lines of local welcome efforts helping Afghan refugees cope with an uncertain future.

Since August, about 76,000 Afghan refugees have been evacuated to the United States. Most were granted humanitarian parole—an emergency status that allows an individual to stay in the United States for two years.

Refugee resettlement agencies have helped most of the refugees move into apartments. Ahmad helps pick them up at the airport and takes them to their apartment. Then, he goes on a hunt for a cheap but durable sofa and bed. He drives them to pick up their Social Security cards, get vaccinations, and register their children for school. He and Rachel help them build a home by driving them to a store to find more furnishings. They sit and talk.

“[We’re] just building relationships, because that’s the No. 1 need right now. They are so lonely,” said Rachel.

Afghans on humanitarian parole get access to work authorization. In Austin, the Global Impact Initiative helps Afghan refugees get settled and provides job training. Refugees can sign up for a two-week program to get a commercial driver’s license.

“There’s a big need for truck drivers,” said the organization’s executive director, Anjum Malik. “But the problem was, they’re not familiar with the Western testing style, they’re not familiar with quizzes, most of them don’t have a formal education.”

Shirzoi Hamidi speaks very little English. He and his family left Afghanistan on a U.S. military plane. On Nov. 22, they arrived in Texas. Now Hamidi is learning English and hopes to get his commercial driver’s license to support his four young children. Global Impact Initiative will help refugees like Hamidi find a place to take the driving part of the course and is networking with trucking companies. The group helps them write résumés and learn interview skills.

About 20 minutes away, Hope Clinic provides a different kind of service from a nondescript brick building. About 15 doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants provide primary care. If a patient needs bloodwork or X-rays, the clinic foots the bill. Patients can get medication from a tiny pharmacy.

Afghan refugees began to arrive at the clinic in November 2021. Some had chronic diseases and an empty bottle of medication. “If you come to another country and have diabetes and you don’t speak the language, and you know that you will die if you don’t get your meds, those people are so, so thankful that someone stepped into the gap and talked to them,” said Jodi Schrobilgen, the executive director.

In response to growing criticism of the denials and simultaneous free-handed use of parole for Ukrainians and others, the Biden administration broadened parole guidelines. “Under the new parole guidelines, or criteria, it’s possible more will get approved,” said Samantha Howland Zelaya of the National Immigration Forum. “But there’s not a similarly streamlined program as Uniting for Ukraine.”

The Uniting for Ukraine program allows permanent residents, citizens, or organizations to sponsor Ukrainian war refugees to come to the United States on humanitarian parole for two years. Sponsors must meet income requirements to prove they can financially support the refugee and commit to covering healthcare and other expenses.

“We’re saying that we’re willing to take that on” for Afghans, Rachel said.
A MATTER OF ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

Medical experts weigh in on the ethics and significance of new research on embryos

by Heather Frank

The first group failed to transition control of gene transcription from the mother, a crucial stage in their development, called maternal-to-zygotic transition (MZT). The second and third groups completed MZT but showed decreased expression of several genes critical to further embryonic development. The second group had lower levels of a key metabolic pathway, oxidative phosphorylation, than did the third group.

Hutchins and his colleagues also experimented with reactivating arrested embryos from groups 2 and 3 using resveratrol, a molecule shown to affect embryo development. The researchers examined 23 arrested embryos obtained with consent from women receiving IVF treatment. While some previous studies suggested chromosomal abnormalities contributed to their paused growth, this one found the same rate of chromosomal abnormalities in the arrested embryos as in healthy ones.

The researchers, led by Andrew Hutchins at Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, China, classified the arrested embryos into three distinct groups based on gene expression.

NEW RESEARCH MAY HELP SOLVE the medical mystery of why many in vitro fertilization (IVF) embryos fail to develop fully. A study published June 30 in PLOS Biology revealed metabolic and genetic changes in embryos with arrested development, where these tiny babies typically stop progressing within the first five to six days after fertilization.

On average, 50 to 70 percent of IVF embryos undergo arrested development. Understanding why could enable future technology that reverses or prevents the problem. While pro-life medical experts are encouraged by the study’s approach to human embryo research, they caution against scientists attempting to revive arrested embryos for the use of IVF patients.

The researchers classified the arrested embryos into three distinct groups based on gene expression. Only three embryos made it to the

The researchers, led by Andrew Hutchins at Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, China, classified the arrested embryos into three distinct groups based on gene expression.
blastocyst stage, when the embryo is five to six days post-fertilization and ready to be implanted into the mother’s uterus. “It appears to be possible to overcome this arrested state for some embryos, but much more work will be needed to determine the best strategy for doing so,” said Hutchins in a PLOS Biology news release.

Dr. James Sherley, an adult stem cell researcher and associate scholar at the pro-life Charlotte Lozier Institute, said he thinks the study was performed ethically. Sherley, when evaluating whether a research study is morally sound, first asks if any person is being injured during the process or afterward. As the study’s authors outlined in detail, the embryos were effectively dead, thereby confirming that no human life was unnecessarily destroyed. Sherley next asks if the intent is good. Because the goal of IVF is procreation, he sees the study’s aims to increase the odds of IVF success as a moral good. “This is an example of what we want to see in embryo research,” he said.

Sherley did raise a concern about one aspect of the study: The RNA sequencing data used to compare arrested embryos to normal ones was compiled at the cost of human life. Human embryos donated from IVF clinics were manipulated to obtain genetic information, then ultimately destroyed.

Dr. John Gordon, owner of Southeastern Center for Fertility and Reproductive Surgery in Knoxville, Tenn., and a member of the Christian Medical & Dental Associations, said it’s common practice for IVF clinics to discard arrested embryos. Instead of placing these babies into biological waste, however, his clinic sends them to Sacred Heart Guardians and Shelter in Eagan, Minn., where they receive a burial ceremony. (The website for Gordon’s clinic says the clinic has a “no discard” IVF program.)

Gordon doesn’t see the use of arrested embryos in biomedical research as morally problematic, either, but he does question the authors’ experiment to reactivate them. He believes there is likely a reason why some embryos arrest. Reactivating them could come with a host of unforeseen problems.

“Medicine is full of well-meaning interventions that have resulted in disaster,” said Gordon. He argued it would be almost impossible to assure IVF patients that the use of arrested embryos, if someday a technology existed to coax them to keep growing, was completely safe.

Meanwhile, some pro-lifers oppose IVF altogether. The Roman Catholic Church has long opposed the procedure and in 2008 called the existence of frozen embryos a “grave injustice.”

“If we say life begins at conception ... what we say about abortion applies both to the baby in the womb and to the embryo in the petri dish,” Paige Cunningham of the Center for Bioethics & Human Dignity told WORLD in 2017 (see “Life on ice,” Jan. 21).

While Sherley shares Gordon’s concern about reviving arrested embryos, he doesn’t think the researchers necessarily intend to do so. Instead, he suspects they want to determine how to prevent arrested development from happening in the first place. “It is important to emphasize that the authors of this report did not speculate on either potential strategy, prevention or reversal,” he said.

If researchers move in the direction of developing a preventive treatment for arrested embryos, Sherley thinks this would be an exciting step forward in IVF technology.
A fall outside a diner

God provided an incident in which His name was hallowed

I had just conversed with Renee at the cash register and walked out to the car with my three gallons of water in hand, and next thing I knew I tripped and the whole right side of my head slammed into the bumper of a parked vehicle. The force of it told me my life as I knew it was over. I whispered Jesus’ name a few times. One of the plastic jugs had burst open in the fall, and I was lying in the gutter getting wet.

Which I only really noticed because now a small group of people who had been breakfasting on this sunny morning at the adjoining diner’s outdoor tables were saying, “Let’s get her out of the water.” One minute you’re having a conversation with the cashier, and the next minute everything in your world is changed forever.

By providence, one patron was a nurse. She snapped into nurse mode, which is always beautiful (who hasn’t fallen in love with a nurse as a patient in the hospital?), and sat me on the bench conveniently located inches from my car, asking a few questions: What year is it? What month is it? She helped me to the restaurant bathroom, and as I walked, the blood drained from my head and I heard someone say I had no color. I felt nausea but, strangely, no pain in the skull. My neck and shoulders were stiff.

I thanked the nurse and a waitress with piercing blue eyes and told them God had sent them. Once the nurse left the scene after my assurances that I would see a doctor—Lord, forgive me for that lie—I drove myself home and took to the sofa. My husband prayed. My father prayed. I lay there and waited for the dam burst of pain, the inevitable settling in of a lifelong paralysis that would be all the more horrible for its menacing delay.

It never came. After two hours I instructed my husband to lift my head slowly from the pillow. The result: It was as if nothing had happened earlier that morning. There was no ache of neck or limbs, not a trace of tenderness of scalp to indicate there had been impact. I made circles with my arms and turned my neck side to side, gingerly at first. Nothing. Ah, but what about tonight in bed? I slept unhampered. At daybreak while I was praising God, it entered my mind that I needed to go to the diner and give testimony. Like a certain leper long ago.

When I entered the diner the waitress with the piercing blue eyes was already coming to me, having spotted me through the window. I told her of my healing. I made sure to mention that it was in the name of Jesus, and not God generically. The owner, leaning over the counter, seemed relieved to see me well. Another waitress I had not noticed yesterday beamed at my naming of Jesus and agreed that He is great.

Upon leaving, I checked out the spot where I had tripped, and there was a protruding brick, so I called the township and suggested they fix it.

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). We also know that His purpose is that all men hear of His salvation. Early on the morning of the incident outside the diner, I had asked God that His name be hallowed, His kingdom come, and His will be done on earth. He had heard and answered.

My husband says I must be careful to remember in the months and years to come that I was healed by God. I said that if I ever should explain away this incident as anything but healing, I may as well admit I have no faith, and just be done with any pretense of religion.
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A DRY, HOT FIRE SEASON

Firefighters battle blazes in California and Texas

FLAMES LEAPT FROM TREES AS THE OAK FIRE crossed Darrah Rd. in Mariposa County, Calif. on July 22 (above). Officials in California said the fire burned about 29 square miles of forest land near Yosemite National Park by July 26 and was about 26 percent contained. Forty-two single residence structures and 19 outbuildings burned down as more than 3,000 firefighters battled the fire. Officials closed numerous roads, including a stretch of State Route 140 that serves as one of the main routes into Yosemite, and placed more than 6,000 residents under evacuation orders. Another blaze in California, the Washburn Fire, covered a 7.6 square mile area that included part of the Sierra National Forest. That fire had threatened Mariposa Grove, home to some of the world’s oldest sequoias. It later moved away from the grove and was 91 percent contained on July 26. Meanwhile, in north Texas, officials said the Chalk Mountain Fire near Glen Rose destroyed 16 homes and was 20 percent contained.
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