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ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES Al Salz, Angela Scalll, Alan Wood
THE WORLD MARKET Connie Moses
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I ’  ﯀ you can know for sure about the emperor Darius of Persia—and this is true whether you’re reading the historian Herodotus, the book of Daniel in the Bible, or Wikipedia—it’s that he was no softy. But having established that historical fact, let’s also stipulate that Darius was demonstrably too much of a pushover to be a good fit in the contemporary Obama administration. Show him the facts, and he was willing to change his mind.

What kind of emperor is that?

I can’t help thinking about Darius in a current Washington setting simply because he’s so obviously the first public figure who comes to mind as a guy who thinks it’s part of his duty to check up on the prayer lives of his citizens. Just like the Internal Revenue Service under Barack Obama, Darius considered it appropriate to scare the daylights out of people whenever someone said, “Let us pray.”

/Th d, I say, between Darius then and the Obama IRS lieutenants now is that when Darius discovered the error of his ways, he confessed his wrongdoing and took dramatic steps to make things right. Through a highly public proclamation, Darius made it clear that Daniel was free to pray without restriction. And the people who had been so zealously snoopy about Daniel’s prayer life were gobbled alive by the very lions who were supposed to feast on Daniel.

When details in May began to confirm the report (see “Agent exegesis,” June 15, 2013) that the IRS had, in so many words, asked applicants for tax exemption to describe the exact contents of their prayers, a chill raced up the spines of millions of taxpayers. It’s one thing to have the IRS ask for documentation about charitable giving. It’s bad enough for Uncle Sam to inquire about what other boards your board of directors might serve on, or to ask how much your nonprofit is paying its top people. It’s outrageous—no, it’s past outrageous—for the powerful tax agency to share the list of your organization’s donors with the media and even with organizations that oppose you.

/Th story spilling out of our current IRS is alarming on many fronts—but none more unsettling than the in-your-face threat to the First Amendment’s guarantee that government will do nothing to limit the free exercise of religion. When, as part of that scenario, we learn that the same folks are scheduled to take over the management of our new healthcare system, it’s understandable when you see uneasiness turning to terror.

Darius had the good sense 2,400 years ago to say he was wrong. Darius, in fact, issued a decree: “In all my royal dominion,” he said, “people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for He is the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and His dominion shall be to the end.”

No, I don’t expect anything quite like that from the IRS. It would be nice, though, to hear them admit they were wrong. ☞

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WORLDVIEW

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MAY 30: Scripps National Spelling Bee winner Arvind Mahankali stands under a shower of confetti after winning this year’s Bee in National Harbor, Md.

CHUCK MYERS/MCT/LANDOV
Friday, May 31

Tech support

The Obama administration lifted sanctions on the sale of mobile phones, laptops, and other technology to Iranian citizens. The move came less than a month before Iranians were set to elect a new president, and as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad prepared to leave office. U.S. officials hope expanding access to technology will help Iranians expand their ability to communicate under an oppressive regime.

‘K-N-A-I-D-E-L’

Arvind Mahankali won the Scripps National Spelling Bee by correctly spelling knaidel, a German-Yiddish word for a type of dumpling. The 13-year-old had finished third the last two years after stumbling on words with German origins. But this time, he said, “The German curse has turned into a German blessing.”

Wednesday, May 29

Living nightmare

Two pro-abortion nurses testified before Delaware legislators about “meat market–style assembly-line abortions” at Planned Parenthood of Delaware. The former employees described unsterilized instruments, filthy surgical rooms, untrained staff, and disregarded women. “It was an absolute nightmare,” said Jayne Mitchell-Werbrich. Abortionist Timothy F. Liveright denied wrongdoing, but a day later the office of Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden filed a complaint against him, calling Liveright a “clear and immediate danger to the public.”

Internal combustion

Twenty-five Tea Party groups filed suit against the Obama administration, as scandal grew in the IRS. The IRS admitted it had targeted conservative groups for extra scrutiny and delays. Less than a week later, an audit found the IRS spent $49 million on 225 conferences in a two-year period. One bill for a single conference topped $4 million.

Thursday, May 30

Partner in crime

A Pennsylvania judge sentenced Pearl Gosnell to prison for helping her husband, Kermit Gosnell, in his “house of horrors” abortion center. The judge sentenced Pearl Gosnell to seven to 23 months for helping her husband perform illegal, third-trimester abortions, including one on a 14-year-old girl who was 31 weeks pregnant. Kermit Gosnell received three consecutive life sentences for the murder of three babies.

Guilty

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales pleaded guilty on June 5 to the premeditated murder of 16 Afghan civilians during a rampage last year. Bales told a military judge, “There is not a good reason in the world why I did the terrible things I did.” Defense attorneys say Bales was under the influence of drugs and alcohol at the time of the killing spree. He is attempting to avoid the death penalty with his open confession.
Sunday, June 2

Pyramid scheme

Egypt's highest court declared unconstitutional the laws used to elect the country's parliament and to draft a new constitution. The Muslim Brotherhood had dominated both. The practical effects were unclear: The judges said the constitution isn’t annulled, and parliament may remain seated until voters elect a new one. Still, moderates and religious minorities hope the decision will bolster efforts to oppose the country’s Islamist direction.

Anti-riot police stand guard in front of the Supreme Constitutional Court

Monday, June 3

Lautenberg dies

The Senate’s last remaining World War II veteran died after a bout of viral pneumonia at age 89. Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., served five terms in the Senate. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said he would appoint a successor to Lautenberg’s seat until the state holds a special election in October to fill the vacancy.

Twisters return

Storm-weary Oklahomans grieved again, as officials reported 18 people died in a series of overnight tornadoes west of Oklahoma City. The twisters came less than two weeks after a massive tornado killed 24 people south of the capital. Volunteer efforts continued, including hundreds of Oklahoma Southern Baptists serving meals, wielding chainsaws, and comforting survivors.

Delivered

A 23-year-old woman in the Czech Republic delivered what is believed to be the first naturally conceived set of quintuplets in the European country’s history on June 2. Alexandra Kinova had four boys and a girl via cesarean section at a Prague hospital. Doctors said Kinova had no complications and gave the babies a 95 percent chance of a healthy life. Kinova had already had one child prior to the birth of her five youngest children.
Won Adam Nelson, one of the most decorated shot putters of all time, finally won an Olympic gold medal on May 30—nine years after he placed second at the 2004 Athens games. The International Olympic Committee gave the award retroactively after disqualifying Ukranian Yurii Bilonog for using performance-enhancing drugs. Nelson and Bilonog had tied for the best throw, but Bilonog won gold for the longest second-best distance. Nelson, 37, retired three weeks before he was awarded the gold medal.

Rice rises

After months of withering criticism for her response to the Sept. 11, 2012, attacks on the U.S. consulate in Libya, UN Ambassador Susan Rice accepted a promotion. President Obama announced Rice would replace resigning National Security Adviser Tom Donilon. Some Republicans sharply criticized the appointment, saying Rice mishandled public communication about the attacks in Benghazi, but others said they would work with the new adviser.

Military maneuvers

Chiefs of every military branch testified before Congress about a growing sexual assault crisis. A Pentagon study estimated 26,000 troops experienced “unwanted sexual contact” in 2012—up from 19,000 in 2010. (The study is based on anonymous surveys.) The number of sexual crimes reported in 2012 was 3,374. Military chiefs resisted calls to remove commanders’ authority to decide when to pursue a sexual assault case within their chain of command. Some lawmakers want independent military attorneys to decide when to prosecute cases.

Building funds

The Czech Republic’s highest court upheld a government plan to pay billions of dollars to religious groups for property the former Communist regime seized from them in the 1940s. Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish congregations had been fighting since the fall of Communism in 1989 to recoup assets like farms, woodlands, and buildings that have remained in the state’s control.

After the deluge

Floodwaters in Germany and Central Europe continued, while authorities reported at least 13 dead, thousands evacuated, and billions of euros in damages. Heavy rain triggered flooding in parts of the Czech Republic, Austria, and Germany. For some German regions, it was the worst flooding in centuries.

Wednesday, June 5

Rice rises

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Tuesday, June 4

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Died: Hall of Fame defensive end David “Deacon” Jones, the NFL’s original “sack master,” died on June 3 at age 74. Jones is credited with coining the term "sack" for a defensive player’s tackle of an opposing quarterback behind the line of scrimmage. Jones, who was named to eight Pro Bowls and six All-Pro teams, played from 1961 to 1974 for the Los Angeles Rams, San Diego Chargers, and Washington Redskins. He was part of the Rams’ “Fearsome Foursome” defensive line, which Dick Butkus called “the most dominant line in football history.”

East meets West

Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived at a private estate near Palm Springs, Calif., for weekend meetings with President Obama. White House officials called the casual atmosphere “a shirtsleeves summit,” but human-rights advocates urged Obama to ask Xi for the release of 16 Chinese prisoners of conscience, including those imprisoned for defending religious liberty. It wasn’t clear if the leaders discussed human rights, but the pair vowed to confront climate change.

Collapse in Philadelphia

Cleanup continued at the site of a vacant building that collapsed onto a neighboring Salvation Army store in downtown Philadelphia, killing six people and injuring at least 13. City officials charged crane operator Sean Benschop with involuntary manslaughter, and said toxicology reports showed Benschop was high on marijuana the day the four-story building he was dismantling collapsed.

Friday, June 7th

Hold all calls

The Obama administration acknowledged a National Security Agency (NSA) program tracks the telephone records of tens of millions of Americans. The revelation came after government contractor Edward Snowden leaked the information to two newspapers. (Snowden had gone to Hong Kong prior to leaking the information, then checked out of his hotel on June 10 and disappeared from public view.) The president defended the surveillance program and said the NSA tracks phone numbers and durations of calls—not the content of conversations. Some Republicans and Democrats defended the program as a protection against terrorism, but other lawmakers called it a sweeping intrusion of privacy.

Dispatches, News,

Thursday, June 6
Spain rules France

Tennis legend Rafael Nadal defeated fellow Spaniard David Ferrer to win his eighth French Open title and become the only man to win the same Grand Slam tournament eight times. Nadal’s triumph came just months after injuries kept him out of last year’s U.S. Open and this year’s Australian Open. The victory places him in third place for all time Grand Slam wins—five behind Swiss great Roger Federer. American Serena Williams won the women’s title, her 16th Grand Slam victory.

Saturday and Sunday, June 8-9

Change of guard

A handful of Boy Scouts donned uniforms to march at the head of Utah’s gay pride parade in Salt Lake City. The move came a little more than a week after national delegates of the Boy Scouts of America voted to open membership to homosexual youth. A local Boy Scout leader said Scouts weren’t allowed to wear uniforms to advocate for social or political causes, but it wasn’t clear if the group would face discipline. Meanwhile, leaders at a handful of churches announced they would end their partnership with the Boy Scouts, and leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention expected to pass a resolution urging congregations to end ties with the organization.

Taliban terror

Seven Taliban insurgents launched an attack on NATO’s operational headquarters at the military section of Kabul International Airport. All seven insurgents died during an hours-long battle with Afghan security forces that prevented more deaths. A day later, a car bomb outside the Supreme Court building in Kabul killed at least nine people and injured 24. The Taliban had vowed to target government employees in its annual spring offensive.

Ohio terror

A grand jury indicted Ariel Castro on 329 charges related to kidnapping, imprisoning, raping, and torturing three young women for more than a decade at his home in Cleveland, Ohio. The charges include two counts of aggravated murder: Prosecutors allege Castro caused captive Michelle Knight to miscarry unborn children by starving and beating her. The charges could carry the death penalty.

Defiant

A South Carolina teen on June 3 recited the Lord’s Prayer during his valedictory address in defiance of school officials who tried to ban prayer at graduation ceremonies. Valedictorian Roy Costner IV stepped to the microphone and ripped up his approved remarks, speaking instead about his upbringing in a Christian home. Deafening cheers greeted Costner’s recitation of the Lord’s Prayer, and Liberty High School officials said no action will be taken against the teen.

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June 27 Call it bad timing. Just as the European Council today opens a two-day summit to debate the merits of Turkey’s membership in the pan-continent government, the mostly Muslim country has been accused of stifling dissent. Early-June protests across the country were met violently by riot police who injured at least 4,000 (see p. 20).

LOOKING AHEAD

June 29 As Zimbabwean elections approach, many fear the national plebiscite will produce an identical result to elections of the past three decades: a violent victory for despot Robert Mugabe. Writing in The Guardian, human-rights lawyer Dewa Mavhinga said, “There is little point in holding elections that, in essence, will be without choice, and that can only result in another round of bloodshed and destruction.”

June 29 The Rolling Stones will appear at a British pop festival for the first time in more than 35 years when they take the main stage of the Glastonbury Festival today. Frontman Mick Jagger said he plans to camp out in a tent at the Woodstock-style event during the three-day festival in Somerset. U.K. Headline shows are usually attended by 250,000 or more people, but the Stones could draw even more.

July 4 Battered by Hurricane Sandy on Oct. 29, Liberty Island—home of the Statue of Liberty—will reopen to tourists just in time for Independence Day. The hurricane left the famed statue intact, but the island’s infrastructure was badly damaged by the consequent storm surge.

July 6 When cyclists hit the first true mountain stage of the 100th Tour de France today, the question may not be “Who will win?” but “Will it matter?” From 1998 until 2010, only one Tour de France champion has been free of doping accusations, and eight titles were vacated. British cyclist Bradley Wiggins—who has never been charged with doping—will attempt to defend his title in the 2,161.7 mile cycling race.

Returned A Tennessee woman who never met her father received his driver’s license on May 29—45 years after he died in a helicopter crash in the Vietnam War. Army Capt. Michael Momcilovich’s driver’s license was found about 10 years after his death in May 1968, but it took decades to locate his family. Two Vietnam veterans presented Kristin James, who was 15 months old when her father died, and the man’s brother, Mark Momcilovich, with the charred license.

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Turkish spring?

Erdogan turns up the heat, but protests continue against creeping Islamism in Turkey

BY JILL NELSON

The images from Turkey that lit up social media sites the first week of June shocked observers. One picture in particular went viral and was displayed on a large billboard in Izmir, Turkey: Police are firing tear gas at a woman in a red summer dress, highlighting the excessive use of force against protesters in a country largely viewed as a beacon of democracy in the Muslim world.

What began as a peaceful demonstration against the demolition of a park in Istanbul’s Taksim Square turned into widespread protests against police brutality and the creeping authoritarianism of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Erdogan called the demonstrators “looters” and “extremists,” predicting an end to the unrest by the time he returned from his North Africa tour on June 7. Instead, he was greeted with grim statistics: three deaths, thousands of people injured, and mushrooming protests in more than 70 cities.

Fikret Bocek, a pastor in Izmir and a 1998 graduate of Westminster Seminary in California, described the mood at demonstrations in his city as peaceful and festive, “much like New Year’s Eve or the Rose Bowl in the United States.” He said more than 10,000 people in Izmir were gathering each evening to sing, socialize, and dance while vendors sold food and drinks.

But some evenings didn’t end quietly: At about midnight on June 4, police began firing orange tear gas at the crowd in Izmir. “They were just singing and chanting and suddenly they attacked and wanted to kill us.”
There were civilians behind the police—men with sticks and knives,” Serhat Tuna told me. He barely escaped the violence. Other cities experienced similar brutality and thousands were hospitalized for injuries across the country.

“For 12 years the Turkish people said OK, but enough is enough,” Tuna added. “We just want them to please protect the secular system in Turkey. We don’t want to be part of Islamic rule like Iran or Saudi Arabia.”

Bocek said he saw evidence of AKP supporters and police working hand in hand against the demonstrators. He says the AKP only works for the 47 percent that voted the party into power, ignoring the rights of the other half of the country.

One week prior to the demonstrations, the government passed a law restricting the sale of alcohol and issued a warning about public displays of affection, increasing concerns about Erdogan’s Islamist aspirations.

Media muzzling has added another black mark to public opinion of the AKP. Turkey has more jailed journalists than any other country, and Erdogan called Twitter a “menace” that was being used by extremists to spread lies. On June 4, police arrested 29 people in Izmir for using Twitter to publicize police whereabouts. They were freed several days later.

During the first few days of protests, CNN’s Turkish affiliate aired a documentary about penguins instead of reporting on violence in the streets, fueling anger among protesters who accused the media of self-censorship.

After a week of demonstrations, protest representatives met with the country’s deputy prime minister and presented a list of demands that included the dismissal of police chiefs, a tear gas ban, the release of detained protesters, and the cancellation of plans to demolish Gezi park.

The U.S. State Department encouraged Turkish officials to “refrain from unhelpful rhetoric and unhelpful comments that will not help calm the situation,” but Erdogan showed no signs of backing down upon his return to Ankara. “These protests that are bordering on illegality must come to an end as of now,” he warned. So far his combative stance has only fueled the resolve among protestors.
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Must the Sun Set on the West?

At present *Must the Sun Set on the West* is a 10-part lecture series. It explains how the Bible created the modern world. Tackling topics such as “From Martin Luther’s Vicarage to Hugh Hefner’s Harem: Turning Men into (Play)boys and Women into Desperate Housewives,” an Indian philosopher examines why history’s greatest civilization is falling apart.

The lectures became *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization* (Thomas Nelson), which has 144 reviews on Amazon.com.

Dr. Ted Baehr, Publisher of MOVIEGUIDE® (www.movieguide.org) in Hollywood has urged that this content be turned into a dramatic feature film. The recent Gay-Marriage law in Minnesota has confirmed Dr. Mangalwadi’s thesis. From August, Minnesota’s Christian florists, caterers, photographers, renters, and employers will be required to suppress their conscience in order to serve gay-marriages and gay “spouses.”

When a majority decides that the Bible is “bigotry,” will tithes remain tax exempt? In every ‘nation under man,’ loot of public funds, bribery, and tax evasion become endemic. To corral corruption, a profane state cannot appeal to conscience; it has to become coercive.

THE FILM

The year 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the Reformation: the birth of the modern world. Therefore, the film’s viewer will join a group of international scholars on a pilgrimage to the soul of Western civilization. The heroes who created the modern world and celebrities who dismantled it will wrestle with why an American President puts his hand on the Bible to take the oath of a secular office.

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‘Everything is sort of built in a way that to me suggests intelligent design.’

Novelist **Stephen King**, in an interview with National Public Radio, on his belief in God. He said evidence for God was in the stars, sunrises and sunsets, and “the fact that bees pollinate all these crops and keep us alive and the way that everything seems to work together.”

‘This is just plain wrong.’

U.S. Sen. **Barack Obama**, D-Ill., in 2005, on the Patriot Act’s allowing the government to go on what he called “a fishing expedition through [Americans’] every personal record or private document—through library books they’ve read and phone calls they’ve made” with “no rights to appeal the need for such a search in a court of law.” As president, Obama has defended the National Security Agency’s gathering of millions of Americans’ email and phone records.

‘The only thing that would have made him happier than seeing all of you here would be if this was a fundraiser for his next campaign.’

**Bonnie Lautenberg**, widow of the late Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., on how pleased he would have been to see the number of people gathered at Park Avenue Synagogue in New York for his June 5 funeral.

‘I’ve been in so many gangs around here, Mr. President, I need to get some tattoos.’

U.S. Sen. **Dick Durbin**, D-Ill., a member of the “Gang of Eight” working on overhauling the American immigration system and granting a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants.

‘Being polite is better than being rich.’

**Mallory Crandell**, daughter of Mindy Crandell, who allowed 84-year-old Gloria MacKenzie to cut in line to buy her Powerball ticket in Zephyrhills, Fla., on May 18. The widowed great-grandmother won the $590 million jackpot—the largest ever—and elected to take a $371 million lump sum payment.
HELLO, VERIZON?
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"SHARE EVERYTHING"
PLAN.

THE PROMISE THEN
IF YOU LIKE YOUR HEALTH
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KEEP YOUR HEALTH CARE PLAN...

THE REALITY NOW
WE CAN'T KEEP
OUR PLAN.

WHEN YOU SAID THIS SUMMER
WE'RE GOING TO RELIVE OUR
FLORIDA VACATION, I THOUGHT...

HOME MOVIES

THE CHICAGO WAY.
They don’t call boat captain Matt Potter “Mako Matt” for nothing. On June 3 Potter and his crew caught a 1,323-pound mako shark off the coast of California, quite likely a record size catch from a rod and reel. The man who reeled in the shark, Jason Johnston of Mesquite, Texas, had not really wanted to go on the trip, considering himself more of a hunter than fisherman. But he gave in to a friend and ended up with what may be a record haul, if validated by the International Game Fish Association. Potter told Field & Stream that crew members knew they were dealing with a big fish from the moment they saw its fin: “We’ve caught a lot of 800- and 900-pound fish, and this thing looked like it could have eaten any of them.”

In Brunete, Spain, if you don’t pick up your dog’s droppings, you may just get a package in the mail titled “lost property.” The town has deputized a group of volunteers to scour the park in search of dog owners who don’t clean up their pets’ messes. After spotting a culprit, the volunteers engage the perpetrator in casual conversation and get the name of the dog. From there, the poop is scooped, the name cross-checked with a city database, and the feces are mailed back to the owner. The plan seems to be working. In February, 147 droppings were mailed back to owners. And the town has reported a 70 percent drop in unattended dung.

Mark it up to unintended consequences. Because of a tweak in European Union regulations, the German language has lost its longest word. The word, Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz, means “law delegating beef label monitoring” and was used to describe a particular code in the German province of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. But as the EU law changed on June 3, the 65-character word died along with it.

Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz
PAST AND PRESENT
When Marion Shurtleff of San Clemente, Calif., bought a Bible at a local bookstore in March, she at first ignored the old handwritten notes folded neatly into its pages. Then, in May, Shurtleff, 75, took a closer look and was amazed. The old notes had her name on them and were penned in her own handwriting. “I hollered. I started shaking. I cried. I had goose bumps,” she explained to KCAL-TV in Los Angeles. The notes were actually an essay she wrote for a Girl Scout merit badge 65 years ago. Even stranger: She had been living in Kentucky at the time she wrote the paper. The California retiree says she can’t explain how her essay traversed both time and space to come back to her, but she says she will try to track down the person who gave the Bible to the bookstore.

CHEWED OUT
The bad news: For chewing a pastry into the shape of a gun at school, 7-year-old Joshua Welch earned a two-day suspension. The good news: He also earned a lifetime membership in the National Rifle Association. The kerfuffle began on March 1 when the suburban Baltimore youngster tried to chew his Pop-Tart into the shape of a mountain. His teacher, however, thought she saw a gun in the pastry Rorschach. The school’s zero tolerance policy meant that young Joshua had to endure a two-day suspension. But at a May 29 fundraiser for local Republicans, state lawmaker Nicholas Kipke presented Joshua with a lifetime membership in the NRA that cost the delegate $550.

COMING ON DOWN
Federal investigators didn’t have to use undercover video to determine that Cathy Wrench Cashwell’s worker’s compensation claim was bogus. They say they knew when they saw her on The Price Is Right spinning the big wheel for the Showcase Showdown. Back in 2004, the Fayetteville, N.C., postal worker claimed a shoulder injury sustained at work had left her unable to do her job. But, as fraud investigators learned, she was well enough to compete on The Price Is Right in 2009 and also go ziplining as part of a Carnival Cruise vacation in 2010. Cashwell pleaded guilty to fraud in federal court on June 3.

ODD EXHIBIT
It’s four pounds heavy and gross, but that doesn’t mean the Ripley’s Believe it or Not museum doesn’t want it. A Ripley’s spokesman said the oddities museum would be happy to add the football-sized hairball surgically removed from a 400-pound tiger to its collection. Ty the tiger needed surgery to remove the giant hairball from his stomach in May. When officials with Ripley’s museum in Orlando, Fla., heard about it, they called tiger owner Vernon Yates to see if he’d be willing to sell it. Instead, Yates offered to donate it. According to spokesman Edward Meyer, the giant hairball will likely go on display at the Panama City Beach, Fla., location.

QUICK CUTTER
If Honda’s answer is a 130-mpg lawnmower, the question must have been asked by Top Gear. After hearing a request by presenters on the popular BBC car show, engineers at Honda got busy designing the world’s fastest riding lawnmower. Working with mechanics from Top Gear, Honda’s Team Dynamics racing team designed and built the FH2620 and debuted it on the Top Gear website in May. The lawnmower is fitted with a one-liter motorcycle engine, the steering column of a Morris Minor, and the back axle of a go-kart. If the monstrosity proves drivable, it will likely appear on the next season of the show.
What’s the Great American Novel? Publishers Weekly asked that question of its bookish readers last March. The top three contenders (in ascending order) are about a teenage boy drifting down the Mississippi with an escaped slave, a self-made millionaire hitching his dreams to the woman he loved and lost, and a 9-year-old girl and her older brother confronting racism in a small Southern town. Can you guess the titles?

The term “Great American Novel” traces back to an essay published in The Nation, January 1867, by author and critic John DeForest. Surveying the literary scene at the time, DeForest could find no likely candidate or author for the GAN title: Washington Irving was too cautious, Fenimore Cooper too boring, Nathaniel Hawthorne too artsy and high-minded. None of them captured the spirit of “this eager and laborious people, which takes so many newspapers, builds so many railroads, does the most business on a given capital, wages the biggest war in proportion to its population, believes in the physically impossible and does some of it.”

This energetic description skirts a darker side of America: the avaricious and desperate side which, according to historian Page Smith, is inseparably linked to the opportunity mindset. In America, anyone could succeed, which also meant that anyone could fail. And if you failed, it was your fault; failure could not be blamed on an oppressive system or greedy landlord. For every entrepreneur building a city or business, there were a dozen rootless young men roaming the vast continent like Ishmael in Moby-Dick (a “Great American Novel” that DeForest overlooked), searching for a foothold or escaping a bind.

Escape is the undercurrent of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, published 14 years after DeForest’s essay and the first novel to give full voice to the headlong, rough-hewn spirit of America. But, like its author, it is deeply pessimistic. The only hope for our hero at the end is to “light out for the Territory” before his Aunt Sally adopts and civilizes him, “and I can’t stand it. I been there before.”

To Kill a Mockingbird, always a top contender for the Great American title, is more positive about human nature—or some humans, at least. It’s a rare reader who doesn’t find the ideal father figure in Atticus Finch, or empathize with Scout and Jem as they confront the ugly attitudes of their little town. But ugly attitudes are common to all cultures and times, and confronting them is the challenge of literary heroes worldwide, from Jean Valjean to Yuri Zhivago. Though the premise of racism is rooted deep in our national conscience, there’s nothing particularly American about the theme.

That’s why, if our Great Novel is supposed to be expressive of American energy (and American overreach), The Great Gatsby gets my vote. Gatsby has its detractors, due to an overly literary style, a thin plot, or a lack of sympathetic characters. Still, no novel better captures the fraught nature of the American dream: boundless opportunity, sometimes tragically misdirected. The title character has chosen the girl of his dreams, Daisy Buchanan, to complete himself; he has “forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath,” and of course it all goes wrong. Jay Gatsby is famously difficult to get a handle on, both for his fellow characters and for the reader. That’s because the self-made man is empty at the core.

Disillusion haunts the final pages. In the closing paragraphs, narrator Nick Carraway imagines Long Island as it must have appeared to the first European explorers: “man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent … face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.”

Reader, be warned: No material prospect, however grand, is big enough for the dream we were made for. We have an object “commensurate to our capacity for wonder,” and then some: the One who created that very capacity. The Great Gatsby reminds me that wonder is not a cheat; it has its match, and a home for the restless heart.
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In 2006, five years after purchasing the network from Fox (and eight years after Pat Robertson sold what was then known only as The Family Channel), The Walt Disney Company rebranded ABC Family Channel with the tagline: A New Kind of Family. Since then, they’ve backed up the slogan with a slate of shows that feature teen sex, teen pregnancy, abortion, homosexuality, and bisexuality.

With their new drama, The Fosters, which airs over the summer season, the network is pushing the boundaries of “family entertainment” yet again, adding gay parenting and possibly trans-genderism (more on that below) to their list.

With Jennifer Lopez executive producing, The Fosters stars Teri Polo and Sherri Saum as Stef and Lena, a lesbian couple raising a biological son (David Lambert) from Stef’s previous marriage, as well as adopted fraternal twins (Cierra Ramirez and Jake T. Austin). As the show progresses, they also add a troubled teen girl fresh out of juvie and her angel-faced little brother to their brood.

Despite a few after-school-special-type problems—dealing with ADD, sharing prescription pills with friends, and...
angst over meeting a birth parent—nothing in the plotting or character development of the first two episodes suggests growing up with lesbian moms is anything but idyllic. Even the high school the kids attend offers a kind of fantasy, located only steps from a sunny beach where the gorgeous, perfectly tousled students can surf the waves after class. If that weren’t enough catering to teen notions of paradise, later, one of the moms offers to buy her son condoms, good-naturedly ruffling his hair and sighing, “You’re growing up so fast,” when the boy blushes at the suggestion.

Those few problems on the show that are related to the parents’ uncommon domestic arrangement springs from ignorance and intolerance outside the family rather than anything intrinsic to having only one gender guiding the children’s development. Yet although the show presents as idealized a view of new millennium nontraditional family life as Father Knows Best did of 1950s nuclear families, there’s no denying that The Fosters makes for engaging viewing.

You’d have to have a heart of stone not to hope that Callie, an abused girl who’s bounced from foster home to foster home all her life, has finally found in Stef and Lena some adults who can rely on—or at least some adults who will treat her better than her previous guardian, a gun-toting heterosexual male who’s trying to exterminate him and extract his DNA.

On the adult side, Polo brings an impressive balance of toughness and tenderness to her role as a divorced woman struggling to do her best by her kids that’s likely to resonate with moms of all ideological backgrounds. And, of course, appealing to viewers of all ideologies (or, even more, to viewers who’ve yet to form ideologies) may be largely the point of shows like The Fosters.

In 2012, The Hollywood Reporter commissioned a study that found that 27 percent of TV watchers say shows with homosexual characters have made them more accepting of gay marriage and homosexuality in general. The poll found that gay-promoting programming was particularly influential on younger viewers, with 38 percent of respondents under 35 saying shows like Modern Family and Glee have made them more accepting of gay marriage.

That same year, GLAAD (the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) singled out three youth-targeted networks—Teen Nick, MTV, and ABC Family—for their positive portrayal of homosexuality in their annual “Where We Are in TV” report. GLAAD found that a full 55 percent of ABC Family’s original primetime programming in 2011 featured LGBT storylines. One wonders what percentage the network has reached now with The Fosters and whether Pat Robertson ever regrets his decision to sell.
After directing two epic Civil War films in *Gettysburg* and *Gods and Generals*, Ron Maxwell with *Copperhead* narrows his focus to a small community in upstate New York but delivers a film as tense and combustible as any of his battle films.

Abner Beech (Billy Campbell, *The Rocketeer*) loves his town, loves the Union, hates slavery, but is dead set against going to war with his Southern brothers. That sets him at odds with almost everyone in this close-knit community, some of whom, to put it mildly, passionately despise the Southern states.

Take, for instance, the unfortunate son of Mr. Beech, who sets his romantic sights on a local schoolteacher who won’t allow him to court her unless he starts going by Tom instead of Jeff because, well, Jefferson Davis is the president of the Confederacy and that association would just be too much for her. And she is the temperate one in the family.

Her father Jee, as portrayed by Angus Macfayden, abhors slavery and its practitioners with such rabidity that he comes across as more of an exaggerated abolitionist archetype than a fleshed-out human being. Several other supporting characters, notably Avery (Peter Fonda), serve as not much more than mouthpieces for historical arguments or other one-dimensional functions.

Playing the titular copperhead, though, Campbell delivers a masterfully affecting performance, conveying as much with his eyes in introspective moments as he does with his voice when he finds himself compelled to challenge his neighbors.

Maxwell offers up an illuminating piece of PG-13 historical fiction that will appeal to history buffs and those curious to learn more about a relatively unknown dynamic in American history but that falls short of realizing its dramatic potential.

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MOVIE

*Copperhead*

BY MICHAEL LEASER

CIVIL WAR STORYTELLER

In his first two Civil War films ( *Gettysburg* and *Gods and Generals*, based on the first two books of the Jeff and Michael Shaara Civil War trilogy), Ron Maxwell focused on why good, ethical men choose to go to war. With *Copperhead*, based on an 1893 novel by Harold Frederic, he wanted to ask, “Why do good, ethical, moral men choose not to go to war?”

According to Maxwell, “this book is an exploration of dissent in the North.” People who disliked Northern dissenters “gave them this name, copperhead, which was the name of a Southern snake that will definitely kill you if it gives you a good bite. This anti-war movement, they called themselves Peace Democrats, and then later on in the war, some of them accepted the name [copperhead] as a badge of honor. The copperhead in the movie is just a farmer who happens to be a Constitutionalist and a Democrat. He doesn’t believe in slavery. He thinks it should be abolished. He believes in the Union, but he doesn’t think war is the answer.”

Considering how righteous dissent is so respected in our culture, Maxwell says he thought it would be fascinating to examine a case where “the dissenter is not justified by history. He stood up against the Republican party, which was waging war against the South to save the Union and to emancipate the slaves. How much do you really believe in dissent when the dissenter has not been vindicated by history? It’s a more provocative kind of question, and it also raises the question of how universally and not just in 1862 in upstate New York but how easily we dehumanize people with whom we disagree.”

If *Copperhead* proves successful enough at the box office, Maxwell believes he may finally be able to direct *The Last Full Measure*, the last story in the Shaara Civil War trilogy. “So much time has gone by that now we’ll have to do a completely different cast, regrettably. The actors are so wonderful, but now they’re just too old. I can get away with being too old,” he muses, “but they can’t.” —M.L.

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NEW FOCUS: Lucy Boynton, who plays the character of Esther, and Maxwell.
Reviews › Books

Tyrants real and imagined

From ludicrous to lively, five books about leaders

BY MARVIN OLASKY

Both sides of the cultural war dream nightmares about their opponents setting up a dictatorship. The latest from the left (July 1 publication date) is Frederic C. Rich’s Christian Nation (Norton), which starts with John McCain winning election in 2008 and soon dying: Sarah Palin takes over and Christians set up a religious tyranny, murdering thousands who rebel. The evangelical fascists destroy parts of San Francisco and invade the last holdout, Manhattan. It’s all ludicrous, but a major publisher is propelling it into the marketplace: Will Hollywood be far behind?

To read about real tyrants, see Koenraad De Wolf’s Dissident for Life: Alexander Ogórodnikov and the Struggle for Religious Freedom in Russia (Eerdmans, 2013, English edition), a readable biography of a courageous Christian who stood up first to Communists and then to Putinists. Norman Gelb’s Herod the Great (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013) is a pungent biography of the Stalin-like dictator 2,000 years ago, with a subtitle (Statesman, Visionary, Tyrant) that shows Gelb’s attempt, like some Stalin apologists more recently, to balance out the bad and the good.

The United States until now has been spared tyranny, and one of the reasons is the example George Washington set in saying no to pleas that he seize power: Logan Beirne tells that story well in Blood of Tyrants: George Washington & the Forging of the Presidency (Encounter, 2013). If you’ve never studied South American history, Marie Arana’s Bolívar (Simon & Schuster, 2013) is a lively start: Simon Bolívar liberated six countries from Spanish rule, but “the George Washington of South America” had neither the willingness to walk away from power nor the faithfulness in marriage that set a good example for future leaders.

Political treadmill

Most Jews vote Democratic, against their material interest, partly because they’re worried about evangelicals establishing a “Christian nation,” but also because of a history lesson passed on from parents to children: Franklin Roosevelt purportedly stood up for Jews against reactionary interests. Barack Obama’s anti-Israel position includes previously unpublished interviews with Jewish leaders whom then died at Auschwitz.

African-Americans show no signs of leaving the Democratic plantation, and one of the reasons lies not in left-wing conspiracy but in mostly white evangelical churches. Aliens in the Promised Land, edited by Anthony Bradley (P&R, 2013), includes excellent essays examining why many integrated churches and other Christian institutions overlook minority leadership. One of the chapters, by Carl F. Ellis Jr., brilliantly outlines the clash of values between African-American achievers on the one hand and those with subsistence or nihilistic values. Ellis shows how to tell Bible stories in a way that makes sense to urban men who have treated Scripture with contempt.

Republicans also helped the Democratic surge by dithering on healthcare reform when they controlled both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. The Heritage Foundation 20 years ago offered a good healthcare reform proposal that emphasized a decentralized approach and an individual mandate to buy insurance, with federal tax credits helping out. (Some conservatives attacked the mandate then, and almost all attacked Obamacare’s mandates.) Lee Edwards tells the story of Heritage and Ed Feulner, its head for 36 years, in Leading the Way (Crown Forum, 2013). Edwards shows how Heritage changed American public policy analysis through the provision of concise and timely background analyses. —M.O.
NOTABLE BOOKS
Four science fiction/fantasy novels reviewed by JOHN OTTINGER

The Legend of Eli Monpress Rachel Aaron
Aaron combines lighthearted comedy with an epic quest to save a soul. The thief Eli Monpress has one goal: to increase the bounty on his head. But as his value rises, so does his fame, leading the Spiritualist Court—the arbiter of spirit-based magic in the kingdoms—to send Miranda Lyonette to hunt him down. The novel questions whether ends justify means and if an amoral man can achieve redemption via self-sacrifice. Will Eli destroy himself to save a young girl from the demon entwined in her soul? Cautions: mild, occasional profanity and bloody violence.

The Emperor's Soul Brandon Sanderson
In this Hugo-nominated novella, Sanderson ponders the themes of art's influence and moral rebirth. The forger Shai understands objects so deeply that she can change their fundamental natures. When the bolt from an assassin's crossbow leaves an emperor brain damaged, his advisers task Shai with creating a replica of his soul to reanimate his still-breathing body. Should Shai remake the emperor as a lover of righteousness or return him to his epicurean life of indulgence? Will she make him a David or a Saul? And should such an act be undertaken without the subject's self-will?

Christians will appreciate how the complex magic system aids the theme of spiritual renewal.

Quintessence David Walton
In an alternate Age of Exploration, the world is flat, alchemy is a respected science, and Europe is embroiled in religious turmoil. When his daughter is attacked and poisoned, Dr. Parris embarks on a voyage led by unscrupulous alchemist Christopher Sinclair to find a cure—and discovers a lost world containing primordial matter granting extraordinary powers. Walton (see sidebar) uses the story to consider scientific ethics and debate: Why are Christianity and science competing ideologies in the modern world when once they were not? The pro-Christian conclusion drives the action-adventure plot, which finds evil in the acts of men—not God—and it is the material man wishing to best God who discovers that life consists of more than his mortal coil. This thrilling novel blends fantasy, philosophy, and science.

Blood Song Anthony Ryan
Abandoned by his noble father and raised by a priesthood of warriors, Vaelin is dedicated to the Faith. But the blood song sings through Vaelin, calling him to a destiny that may destroy him, his warrior brothers, and his religion. Ryan explores how—and if—a moral, faithful man should disobey his rightful king and his religious leaders. When is fighting for a cause a just war, and when is it merely political self-aggrandizement? Vaelin must tread the fine line between love of his country and his religion and true virtue. Well-developed, relatable characters and suspenseful fight/battle scenes enliven this fast-paced fantasy in which faith, politics, and personal morality collide. (Cautions: rare swearing, a few implied sexual encounters, and the potty humor of young boys.)

To see more book news and reviews, go to worldmag.com/books

David Walton, a member of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and father of seven children under the age of 13, writes science fiction because it is “a genre of literature that trades in profound issues like human origins, the nature of truth, the certainty of death, and existence beyond our physical bodies.” He says Christian writers “shouldn’t abandon this rich genre to the secular world.” His first novel, Terminal Mind, won the Philip K. Dick Award, and he recently published Quintessence (Tor Books, 2013), “a fantasy novel exploring the conflict between scientific and religious modes of thought.” He says, “I hope Quintessence will help challenge the genre to treat religious beliefs in a more realistic and honest fashion.”

Walton says the novel “doesn’t preach. The characters struggle. They doubt. They wrestle with discoveries that seem to conflict with what they believe. That’s something anyone can relate to, regardless of their religion or background.”

—John Ottinger III edits
Grasping for the Wind, a science fiction and fantasy blog

JUNE 29, 2013 • WORLD 35
At the end of the day, living for Christ is what really matters, regardless of what you do or where you live. That’s why at BJU we’ll help you thoroughly prepare to follow Christ in whatever ministry or vocation He calls you to. To learn how you can follow Christ at BJU, visit us at on.bju.edu/follow.
Os Guinness, 71, spent the first decade of his life in China, where his parents were missionaries eventually forced out by Communists who seized power in 1949. Guinness became a journalist and a scholar, settling in the United States in 1984 and gaining fame as a noted speaker and the author or editor of more than 30 books. His latest is *A Free People’s Suicide: Sustainable Freedom and the American Future* (IVP, 2012). Here are edited excerpts of our interview before Patrick Henry College students.

**Was your father ever able to return to China?**
He went back the last year of his life, just short of 90. It was a “Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace” experience. He met people he’d led to Christ 50 years earlier, and he came back so filled with joy he was ready to go.

**Seeds sown many years before can produce a bountiful crop.** Many people today talk about “legacy,” as if we can figure out what it is we’ve done—we don’t know. We’re faithful, we obey, we do whatever the Lord tells us, and the fruit may be beyond the horizon.

**Journalists have a tendency to look at the surface rather than what’s down deep. Do you recall a favorite story from your time with the BBC when you were able to get at the essence of things?**
We covered the role of religion in Ronald Reagan’s election. In 1979 I was next to a *New York Times* reporter who asked, “What are you covering?” I said, “The rise of the Christian Right and Reagan—” “Oh, come on, there’s no story there.” Just three months later they were doing full-page spreads on that. It’s a typical example of how *The New York Times* is so tone deaf spiritually; They didn’t pick up what was happening.

**Do they pick up now on what is happening?**
In *A Free People’s Suicide* you quote John Adams saying, “Is there a possibility that the government of nations may fall into the hands of men who teach the most disconsolate of all creeds: that men are but fireflies and this is all without a

As the West declines, says author OS GUINNESS, Christians will need to be a faithful counter-culture engaged with a world very different than what we’ve known

**BY MARVIN OLASKY**
father?” Is that where we are now? What Adams gloomily foresaw, we’ve arrived at. Look at our postmodern philosophies—a lack of a foundation for human dignity. We’re starting to reap the harvest of that—abortion, maybe—but we’re yet to reach the full harvest. If we go on with the views of Peter Singer and many of the New Atheists, America will lack a foundation for human dignity.

In A Free People’s Suicide you discuss “the golden triangle.” What is that? Probably the most original part of the book. If you go back to the Framers, there’s nothing more brilliant and more daring that they did than reckoning they could sustain nothing more brilliant and back to the Framers, there’s part of the book. If you go on

probably these students should move to isolated places and become survivalists? No. Not at all. I’m reading now about people who lived at an age when the world they knew had gone. Daniel—after centuries in the Promised Land, living as the chosen people, Israelites are in a pagan empire with Jerusalem destroyed. Daniel serves God even in that pagan empire. We’ve got to engage with faithfulness at the very heart of power, still.

You quote Thomas Jefferson saying, “It does me no injury for my neighbor to say that there are twenty gods or no god; it neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.” Does it do us no injury for our neighbors to become polytheists or atheists? I think Jefferson is dead wrong on that. He could say that because most people in his day were Christian; whereas today, some of the worldviews have no place for human dignity—and the notion that ideas don’t have consequences is utterly foolish.

How then shall we live in this society where people have ideologies and theologies that, in essence, say it is OK to pick our pockets and break the legs of unborn children? If you read the last essay of Immanuel Kant, he talked of perpetual peace. If you read the last book of Nietzsche, one hundred years later, he talked about a war of spirits. We’re much closer to Nietzsche than Kant. Kant was wrong. In this age of a war of spirits, it’s not just little private religious preferences, but entire ways of life elbow to elbow with other ways of life. That requires of us as Christians that we really know how to wage spiritual warfare, not just have intellectual arguments. So many different positions now, and we need to know them, what the consequences are likely to be, and how to argue with them persuasively.

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Also, your church can send 10 missionaries for $500 a month. That’s a mission budget that will amaze your missions committee, and it’s good stewardship, too.

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The pianist Alex McDonald, 30, made his orchestral debut at 11, earned a Doctorate in Musical Art at Juilliard, and recently competed in the 14th Van Cliburn International Competition in Fort Worth, Texas. Currently teaching piano at Texas Women’s University, he is also an articulate and reflective Christian. McDonald spoke to WORLD after the first of his two Cliburn Competition recitals.

Yesterday you performed Haydn’s Sonata in B Minor, Liszt’s Sonata in B Minor, and Toru Takemitsu’s “Rain Tree Sketch II.” Do you have a sense of how well you did? The heart rate goes so fast onstage that it’s really hard to say. I’m going to listen to the recording and try to compare what I heard with how it felt and then make some adjustments.

What considerations go into selecting a jury-friendly program? The jury changes every four years, but you want to demonstrate variety so that you don’t come off as one- or two-dimen-

sional. And your main consideration should be to program what makes you look good.

What do the competitors do in their downtime? I doubt anyone is spending time with anyone other than their piano right now. I don’t really enjoy social events during a competition because it’s such a stressful time, and I think the other competitors feel similarly. Cliburn does their best to make it warm and welcoming, but it’s a little bit like The Hunger Games out there. Only we’re not killing each other. The jury is killing us [laughs].

What benefits would you hope to reap from a “good showing”? My No. 1 goal would be to have a mixture of playing and teaching. I would love to eventually be tenured at a secular school.

What role do you think church music should play in one’s experience of worship? In modern churches, we have a graven image of what the experience of God ought to be like, and we want our music to simulate that experience in us. It could be an organ or a praise team—either can create a God experience that may not have any of God in it at all. But people will feel like they’ve worshipped. And because the existential experience of God is more important to us than the [actual] experience of God, we’re satisfied—wrongly, I would add. If it feels impossible to worship God through styles that are uncomfortable to us, it’s because we’re asking the music to do for us what is actually an issue of the heart. The problem with the “worship wars” is that they’ve hidden the real issue: We are in love with ourselves, and we blame the music.

To hear one of the pieces performed by McDonald at the Cliburn Competition, go to worldmag.com/2013/06/yeast_in_the_dough

Was that conviction why you spent 10 years living in Boston and New York City? A lot of people in Boston really love the music. So I guess I loved Boston for its sincerity. New York had more to do with my church there. I went to Redeemer Presbyterian, where Tim Keller is [senior] pastor. I really appreciated his teaching because of how comfortable he is relating our beliefs as Christians to academia and to the arts.

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What benefits would you hope to reap from a “good showing”? My No. 1 goal would be to have a mixture of playing and teaching. I would love to eventually be tenured at a secular school.

Why a secular school? There need to be more believers in secular academic environments. I had an opportunity to pursue a teaching job at a Christian college, but I didn’t because it’s really easy for me to cloister myself. What we see Paul and others doing in Acts is entering the cities, dialoguing with the cultures, and embracing the fact that a little bit of yeast is worked through the whole dough.
NOTABLE CDs

New or recent pop-rock releases reviewed by ARSENIO ORTEZA

Live: The 50th Anniversary Tour The Beach Boys

It wasn’t polite to point out last summer when the tour was generating good vibrations, but the shows’ best lead vocals weren’t the many provided by Mike Love and Brian Wilson but the few provided by Al Jardine, the backing-band members Darian Sahanaja and Jeffrey Foskett, and the late, pre-recorded Carl and Dennis Wilson. Live, the multi-sensual ambience covered a multitude of age-related lead-vocal shortcomings. This audio document, however, emphasizes them. Worse: Sahanaja and Foskett have been consigned to the cutting-room floor.

The Bright Spots Randall Bramblett

Just as calling Bruce Cockburn “Canada’s Best Kept Secret” got old fast, so has referring to this well-preserved, AARP-eligible Georgia native as “beneath the radar” ever since he revived in the late ’90s the solo, soulfully roots-rocking singer-songwriter career he abandoned right after America’s bicentennial. The fault, dear listener, lies in the radar. How else to explain the failure of his approach—sandpaper vocals probing the unpredictability of sanctity (John the Baptist’s included) amid juke-joint rhythms and blues—to capture the popular imagination?

Till I Can Make It On My Own Georgette Jones

The voice of George Jones and Tammy Wynette’s only child makes up in sheer loveliness what it lacks in instant recognizability, and on this album she honors both her mother and her father by embracing 13 of their greatest solo and duet hits with exquisite sensitivity. Four of them feature male duet partners, each of whom does the memory of her late father proud. And to hear her bring a daughter’s perspective to “D-I-V-O-R-C-E” is to savor the salt in the wound.

Volume 3 She & Him

This latest installment in the M. Ward-Zooey Deschanel musical marriage made in heaven kicks off with “I’ve Got Your Number, Son,” an exuberant homage to Phil Spector’s girl-group Wall of Sound circa the Ronettes’ “I Can Hear Music.” Sure, Ward and Deschanel are retro. But no more so than this wonderful album’s three cover songs—Ellie Greenwich’s “Baby” (Track Three), Karen Chandler’s “Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me” (Track Nine), and Blondie’s “Sunday Girl” (Track 11), all of which have long been overdue for refurbishing.

To see more music news and reviews, go to worldmag.com/music

SPOTLIGHT

If 2009’s 98-track anthology Keep an Eye on the Sky was too much of a great thing, this 21-track soundtrack to a documentary that may or may not do for Big Star what Searching for Sugarman has done for Sixto Rodriguez might be too little. Regardless, the excavators and compilers of these alternate mixes deserve credit for giving these inexplicably underappreciated power-pop pioneers one more chance to shine.

Whether it’s the nine selections from #1 Record (1972), the four from Radio City (1974), the three-and-a-half from Third/Sister Lovers (1975), the two from post–Big Star Chris Bell (one of which touts Jesus), or the one from pre–Big Star Alex Chilton (1970), to hear these Memphis visionaries singing and playing as if they really believed big stardom was within their reach is to love them—and to miss them more than ever now that both Bell and Chilton are gone.
Summer reading lists surround us, many of them commendable, like those you’ll find in this annual books issue of WORLD. Yet if the term “summer reading” conjures only escapism, a luxurious time to indulge in reading that soothes and affirms, these recommendations may not be for you. We’ve deliberately focused on good if a little challenging reads on topics not well covered in mainstream conversations, on the bestseller lists, or in the front-of-the-bookstore kiosks.

There’s no harm in reading for pleasure and relaxation, but there’s danger in overdoing it. “We can never obtain the mind of God by relying on our own reasoning,” said David Wilkerson, founding pastor of Times Square Church in New York. Having the privilege to love the Lord with “all your mind” means reading against the grain of one’s own thinking. Books that transport have their place, but we also want to read things that provoke us to think wider and deeper, to renew our minds (Romans 12:2).

So while scanning the season’s book lists, notice what worthwhile reads aren’t making the Top 10. Here’s one genre: American history classics. Peter Berkowitz, senior fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution, recently pointed out that the nation’s leading law schools have stopped using /The Federalist Papers/. At Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and Berkeley, schools that Berkowitz points out “produce many of the nation’s leading members of the bar and bench,” it’s no longer required to read any of these classic essays set down by our Founders and first-generation constitutional scholars. That means the three judges President Barack Obama has just nominated for the all-important U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit—all graduates of Harvard Law School—may not have mastered, or even read, them.

The 85 essays that came to be known as /The Federalist, or The Federalist Papers/, were written by James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton. Seized by the importance of making the case for ratifying the U.S. Constitution, the authors wrote under the pen name Publius and published most of the articles in leading newspapers—often three and four a week between October 1787 and August 1788. Due to popular demand (imagine!), a New York publisher collected them into two volumes in 1788 ahead of most states’ voting on ratification.

The collection forms “an incomparable exposition of the Constitution, a classic in political science unsurpassed in both breadth and depth by the product of any later American writer,” said historian Richard B. Morris. It reveals the thinking behind the Constitution, and shows the architects themselves—both their flaws and their genius.

“What is government itself,” asks James Madison in /Federalist 51/, “but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. … You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself.”

A long time ago I highlighted that selection in my political science 101 textbook classic, /American Government: Readings and Cases/ (mine is the seventh edition; it’s now in its 18th). In 62 selected readings this survey book focuses on 17 Federalist essays. Yet, according to Berkowitz, exposure to the Founders has fallen even further since my undergrad days: Besides the law schools, political science departments at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Stanford no longer require undergrad or doctoral candidates to study /The Federalist/. “The progressive ideology that dominates our universities teaches that /The Federalist/ like all books written before the day before yesterday, is antiquated and irrelevant,” he writes. Robbing students of what Berkowitz calls a truly liberal education, “our universities also deprive the nation of a citizenry well-acquainted with our Constitution’s enduring principles.”

By nature we are prone to forgetting first principles and prone to ease. Summer is a wonderful time for rest and restoration, but given our country’s precarious political state, throw in some U.S. history for grist along the way.
Tears Water the Seeds of Hope

Chapter 15 Excerpt

Are You There God?

I have heard it said that life on earth is but a blip on the screen of eternity, and that God uses our challenges to build character in us. Having faced many challenges in my life, I know that each has shaped the person that I am today. I also believe that we would be like spoiled children, had we never been forced to grow in maturity and character by enduring and overcoming hardship. But Martilena seemed to have been born only to suffer and die, without ever having had the chance to grow in faith or maturity. And there were thousands more like her dying every day. This was creating a serious conflict within me that I could not ignore. I believed in the truth and validity of the Bible, but one passage was becoming a formidable stumbling block for me:

21 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 22 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 23 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 24 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 25 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:25-33

Could we tell the people of Guatemala not to worry about what they would eat? Many of those we served were sincere Christ followers, yet it was clear that “all of these things” were not being given to them. It was becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile a loving God with the suffering we faced. I remembered the joyful, faith-filled months following our experience at the new church years earlier and wondered if we had made a mistake. If God was good and loving while at the same time ever-present and all powerful, why had He not answered the prayers of these faithful hard-working people?

I also remembered our successful years prior to really knowing Christ. Children were dying then, just as they are now, while we obliviously increased our wealth. It occurred to me that perhaps the starvation in the world was not God’s fault. He had created a world in which there was enough food to go around more than once. But it was not evenly distributed. God gave us free will and, as a result, we live in a broken world where there is greed, corruption in government, overconsumption by those living well and apathy toward the plight of the poor. Perhaps it is not God who is responsible for the hunger in the world.

I wanted so badly to explain away my doubts but what about the mudslides of Nicaragua? Many had died instantly. Hundreds of lives were lost in the massive rivers of mud and rock that had buried their villages. Throughout the history of mankind there have been tsunamis, earthquakes and tragedies of every kind which have raised the same question. Why God? I continued my search for answers, realizing that I was not willing to give up the faith that had been the source of so much joy.

I heard on the news one morning, when our country was deep in mourning and sorrow after the events of September 11, 2001, that church attendance was soaring and Bible sales were increasing at astonishing rates. The tragedy had reminded our country of its need for God. A people, reeling in the aftershock of unthinkable tragedy, resorted to faith and prayer.

The devastation of hurricane Katrina created a mission field for thousands who were now taking their first mission trips, sharing hope and establishing a love for serving God and those in need. Stories of new faith and the joy of serving filled communities throughout the United States. Likewise, hundreds of people had been blessed and changed for life by the mission field they had experienced with us in Guatemala. God uses specific circumstances to effect change in our lives and to call us to the purpose He has planned for us. We each have different but important batons to carry as members of God’s relay team. Often the hardest part of joining the team is identifying which baton is ours to carry, be it in our own household, our home town or on the opposite side of the world. This is why God often uses heart-breaking situations to help us identify our batons.

I concluded that God can bring good out of tragedy. If we believe that He is omnipotent and is ultimately in control, then we have to believe that He allows tragedy because He thinks that the good He can bring out of it is worth the suffering that it causes. I am not callously attempting to minimize the suffering of those left in the wake of enormous catastrophes. Those in the midst of hardship and loss as a result of these tragic events would be appalled by the idea that God was using them to draw others to Himself and His purpose. My theory would not seem fair to them, nor does it to me. No one can claim to have all the answers. But we must come to terms with the fact that the word faith itself means believing in things that we have reasonable cause to accept as true, even though there is no proof. If we could knock on heaven’s door and simply ask God for the answers to all of our questions and doubts, then our trust in God would not be by faith, but by knowledge. We have incomplete understanding by our nature as human. If we presume to comprehend all matters of God and eternity from our limited perspective, then we are like the ant that thinks all there is to the universe is what he can perceive.

So I chose faith. I had seen God at work in many ways. I had seen miracles and answered prayers. I had felt God’s leading and presence throughout our journey, and I had seen Him call laborers to join us in His mission field. At the end of the day, I continued to believe in an omnipotent, omniscient, good and loving God. There was much to be done and another phrase had become words to live by for our ministry:

“Onward Christian Soldiers.”

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"I couldn’t get enough of this book. I simply didn’t want to stop reading it. I was completely drawn in from start to finish...Kim Tews did not sugar coat anything nor did she hold anything back. I found her story to be riveting and convicting. Tears Water the Seeds of Hope provoked, inspired and challenged me all at the same time. I highly recommend this book"

~ Pilar Arsenec- National Book Critics Circle

Available at amazon.com & barnesandnoble.com
Superb reporting and storytelling about a modern-day underground railroad make Melanie Kirkpatrick’s *Escape from North Korea* WORLD’s Book of the Year

**BY MARVIN OLASKY**

Since so many excellent books emerge each year, we try to select a Book of the Year that is not only terrific but timely as well. Timeliness can be immediate, medium-range, and long-term:

- North Korea’s threats have made international headlines over the past year, homosexuality’s advances have been a torrid domestic story, and the future of Hispanics in America is a central question in Washington’s policy debates. Three excellent books supply more light than heat on these topics: Melanie Kirkpatrick’s *Escape from North Korea* (Encounter), Rosaria Butterfield’s *Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* (Crown and Covenant), and Samuel Rodriguez’s *The Lamb’s Agenda* (Thomas Nelson).

- Over the next few decades, the relationship of wealth and poverty will continue to be a vexing domestic issue, and the future of China is probably the key to whether the world will be at peace (with occasional terrorism) or at devastating war. Peter Brown’s scholarly *Through the Eye of the Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 A.D.* (Princeton) gives us perspective on the former topic, and Noah Feldman’s popularly written *Cool War: The Future of Global Competition* (Random House) is a thoughtful analysis of the China-America future.

- In the long run, nothing really matters except who God is, and nothing poses both a harder test for Christian faith, and greater evidence for our desperate need of God’s grace, than the enormity and normality of evil. Michael Reeves’ *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (IVP) shows us how
tracks

ESCAPE FROM NORTH KOREA

THE UNTOLD STORY OF ASIA’S UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

MELANIE KIRKPATRICK
the Trinity is the basis for love and true communication. Peter Longerich’s *Heinrich Himmler* (Oxford) deals with the Satanic opposite: It’s a 1,000-page look at the bizarre Nazi who murdered millions with the goal of creating a Reich that would last 1,000 years.

And so our short list includes those seven books and three more our Books Issue committee found meritorious: Jonathan Last’s *What to Expect When No One’s Expecting* (Encounter); Lawrence Wright’s *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief* (Knopf); and Anne Applebaum’s *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944-1956* (Doubleday).

Deciding on our Book of the Year was not easy, but we’re reporters and we eventually had to acclaim a great entrepreneurial reporting accomplishment: Our No. 1 is former Wall Street Journal editor Melanie Kirkpatrick’s *Escape from North Korea: The Untold Story of Asia’s Underground Railroad*. Kirkpatrick tells one of the most tragic but also heroic stories of our time, documenting the ways desperate North Koreans flee their country, with many dying in the process or ending up in concentration camps. She then shows how an “underground railroad” out of North Korea helps escapees survive in China, with Christian churches and homes providing most of the “depots.”

In the interview excerpted in WORLD’s Nov. 17, 2012, issue, Kirkpatrick explained that North Korean escapees learn to “look for a building with a cross on it.” Chinese Christians are putting their own lives in jeopardy, because “it’s against the law in China to help a North Korean—even giving somebody a meal is against the law.” Kirkpatrick spoke of “Mary” and “Jim,” a devout Korean-American couple from the Midwest. After successful careers and the graduation of their kids from college, they decided several years ago to devote the rest of their lives to helping people in China. Their church and the organization they work for, Crossing Borders, supported them, and today they run a string of orphanages in northeast China and a shelter for young women.

*Escape from North Korea* impressed our Books Issue committee of five WORLD journalists—Emily Belz, Janie Cheaney, Susan Olasky, Warren Smith, and myself. Emily called it a “well-written, untold story. If someone has little or no knowledge of North Korea and its history, she weaves that whole saga in so seamlessly.” Janie also praised it, “especially in light of its spooky relevance right now,” as North Korea flashes its nuclear weapons.

Warren called the book “journalism at its best, combining an important issue, meticulous reporting, and great storytelling.” He pointed out that the Christian church has played a key role in fighting totalitarianism: “Solzhenitsyn documented the heroic behavior of Baptists and other Christians in the Soviet Gulags. The Roman Catholic Church played a key role in Poland’s Solidarity movement. Christians today are similarly risking their lives, and Kirkpatrick documents that: *Escape from North Korea* describes “what we can pray will be the last great battle in this century-long war against totalitarianism.”

Congratulations to Melanie Kirkpatrick. And here’s a rundown of our other nine “short list” books for 2012-2013, in chronological order of publication:
You can learn more about Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert by reading the interview of author Rosaria Butterfield in WORLD’s March 8, 2013, issue—and more than 50,000 people have watched the interview on YouTube. Butterfield shows how God changed her from a lesbian and tenured professor to a person “willing to be considered stupid by those who didn’t know Jesus.” She notes, “Conversion put me in a complicated and comprehensive chaos. I sometimes wonder, when I hear other Christians pray for the salvation of the ‘lost,’ if they realize that this comprehensive chaos is the desired end of such prayers.”

Butterfield has good advice for Christians: “We don’t see God making fun of homosexuality or regarding it as a different, unusual, or exotic sin.” She has good advice for churches, which “would be places of greater intimacy and growth in Christ if people stopped lying about what we need, what we fear, where we fail, and how we sin.” Her story is particularly compelling because she doesn’t try to pretty it up: “I didn’t choose Christ. Nobody chooses Christ. Christ chooses you or you’re dead. After Christ chooses you, you respond because you must. Period. It’s not a pretty story.”

Peter Brown, author of Through the Eye of the Needle, has spent half a century studying the last centuries of the Roman Empire, and his 800-page book shows it. Brown sees positives in the rise of Christianity and connects theological heresy to political and economic nuttiness. Pelagius, for example, thought humans did not have hearts of darkness, so if the rich just gave away their money, they and those enriched could have perfect lives. Augustine, though, reminded the poor that the rich who were evil would not get to heaven, but the question for a poor person should be “whether you will enter. What if, as well as being poor you are greedy; what if you are both weighed down with want and on fire with avarice?”

Brown summarizes Augustine’s view that “pride, not wealth, was the true last enemy of the Christian. The real division of the world was not between the rich and the poor. It was between the proud and those who were enabled by God’s grace to be humble before God and before their fellows.”

Even many Christians find the Trinity confusing, but Delighting in the Trinity is the clearest and best-written explanation I’ve ever read. Michael Reeves notes, “If God was a single person, salvation would look entirely different. He might allow us to live under his rule and protection, but at an infinite distance, approached, perhaps, through intermediaries. He might even offer forgiveness, but he would not offer closeness.” The Holy Spirit is as essential as the Father and the Son, because we need the personal touch and the experience of tasting and seeing that the Lord is good—and the Holy Spirit gives us both.

Reeves draws the contrast with Islam: “The Quran is a perfect example of a solitary God’s word. Allah is a single-person God who has an eternal word beside him in heaven, the Quran. At a glance, that seems to make Allah look less eternally lonely. But what is so significant is the fact that Allah’s word is a book, not a true companion for him.” Writers have an adage, show, don’t tell: The Quran is all about telling, but God the Father showed by sending His Son.
5. **OCTOBER** Anne Applebaum’s *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-1956* shows how Soviet forces transformed disparate European countries into a Communist bloc through increasingly brutal tactics. She challenges the notion among some historians that the Cold War and Western aggression pressured the Soviets into harsh repression in the Eastern bloc—instead she puts the blame on totalitarianism itself as a flimsy system that requires harsh repression. *Iron Curtain* includes engrossing human drama but is heavy in its depressing detailing of how would-be dictators chew up liberty slice by slice, at first appearing benevolent. Applebaum observes Soviets’ attacks on Protestant and Catholic churches: “Religious leaders were a source of alternative moral and spiritual authority. Young people were taking too long to become enthusiastic communists, and religious people were not dying out fast enough.”

6. **JANUARY 2013** When Paul Haggis, a successful Hollywood screenwriter and director, finally reached the coveted status of “OT III” in the Church of Scientology, he obtained the privilege of learning the secret origins of his faith. His half-hour in a locked room with the sacred text resulted in confusion and dismay. That dismay forms the climax of “The Apostate,” a piece of long-form journalism by Lawrence Wright, published in *The New Yorker.* “The Apostate” became the opening chapter of *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief.* In this fascinating blend of investigative reporting and celebrity exposé, Wright delves deeply into the career and legacy of L. Ron Hubbard and dredges up a twisted tale.

Though marketed as a religion for the rich and famous, Scientology progresses on the backs of the rank and file, who surrender most of their rights upon signing a “billion year contract.” Wright does his best to understand how otherwise intelligent people could fall for such an evident scam, but as he claims no belief system himself, his interpretation falls short. *Going Clear* is nonetheless instructive for Christians, as an exploration of the deceptiveness and gullibility of the human heart without Christ.

7. **FEBRUARY** Jonathan Last’s *What to Expect When No One’s Expecting* makes interesting the dismal science of demography. Last shows that population growth has been slowing for two generations and, if present trends continue, world population in several decades will begin shrinking. Some countries have a head start: Japan may be half its current size by the end of the century and Italy now has more deaths than births. Many middle-class Americans have an informal one-child policy, and some upscale professionals go further by having a dog rather than a kid.

The results of this failure to look ahead will be treacherous materially and psychologically, as even China is realizing. Countries will not have enough young people to support their elders. Elders will eat and drink without thinking of what comes after that, but will be less merry without the delights of grandchildren. Last notes but does not preach about reasons for the birth dearth, such as feminism and careerism: His tone is sorrowful, not angry, because he knows we still have time to reverse the curse.
8. FEBRUARY I kept reading Heinrich Himmler to find a magic bullet, the one psychological twist that led to a sadistic brain. Peter Longerich doesn’t make it that easy, but laboriously details dozens of strands. Himmler, born in 1900, was in 1914 describing captured Russian soldiers as “vermin.” In 1927 he orated, “The Jews have used capitalism for their own ends. ... Our aim is to establish a powerful, nationalist, socialist German workers’ party.” In the 1930s he emphasized “de-Christianization” because principles of Christian mercy would not allow “Germanic” virtues to prevail against Jewish and Slavic “subhumans.”

Himmler consciously set out to plan anti-Christian rites, much as Robespierre did during the French Revolution. “Name consecration” would replace baptism, with a swastika flag-draped altar and a “consecrator” intoning about “the mission of our German blood / that grows eternally young from the German soil. / We believe in the nation, the bearer of this blood / And in the Fuhrer ...”

Himmler did have praise for Islam, “a religion that is both practical and appealing to soldiers,” for it “promises them heaven if they have fought and fallen in battle.”

9. APRIL The Lamb’s Agenda: Why Jesus Is Calling You to a Life of Righteousness and Justice displays the thoughtful understanding of Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. It will help some anti-immigration conservatives understand why the increased number of Latinos in the United States is likely to benefit evangelical churches rather than weaken them.

Rodriguez’s Lamb’s agenda transcends the desires of either donkeys or elephants. He criticizes those who put their hope in “another bailout, stimulus package, or new political movement,” and has the right understanding of church-state relationships: He’s against Christian groups begging for government funding, and never wants the government to put pressure on churches to change what they do—but he also wants officials to recognize that Bible-based poverty fighters help the needy “in a more constructive and holistic manner than government ever can.”

10. MAY Some pundits describe the U.S.-China future as one of inevitable conflict, while others fantasize about utopian cooperation. Noah Feldman’s Cool War assesses the mutually advantageous economic relationship but doesn’t assume, as some did about the British-German relationship a century ago, that countries won’t fight an economically irrational war. Feldman points out that Chinese leaders don’t allow free elections but don’t embrace dictatorship either: They have institutionalized transitions of power through 10-year generational shifts in which elderly leaders voluntarily retire and those about a decade younger take over.

Although stories abound of corruption among the elite and their children, Feldman sees China perhaps moving to institute the rule of law and protection for human rights. He falls short in not taking into account China’s most important change over the past 15 years—the dramatic surge of Christian belief—and its most atrocious desecration, forced abortions under the one-child policy. Without Christian influence China’s nationalism is likely to turn violent. With it the Chinese discipline of mind, tenderized by Christ-centered hearts, could be a blessing for all its trading partners.

For the sake of more than a billion souls and for world peace, we should pray that God’s grace will continue to spread in China.

—with reporting by Emily Belz, Janie Cheaney, and Warren Smith

PREVIOUS WINNERS

2008 Tim Keller, The Reason for God

2009 English Standard Version Study Bible

2010 Arthur Brooks, The Battle


2012 Rodney Stark, The Triumph of Christianity
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WORLD readers are interested in many different types of books, and the same is true of WORLD writers. Thirteen writers on the following pages contribute brief reviews of 2012-2013 books that particularly caught their interest in categories they particularly like…

ILLUSTRATION BY KRIEG BARRIE
Portraits of grace
Three biographies testifying to God’s work in mankind // BY JAMIE DEAN

IN THE LIFE OF MARTYN Lloyd-Jones (Banner of Truth), biographer Iain Murray notes the Welsh minister preached to thousands, mentored a young J.I. Packer, and met the queen of England. But Murray also notes what mattered most to a man many consider one of the greatest preachers of the 20th century. “The two greatest meetings in my life were both prayer meetings,” Lloyd-Jones said. “I would not have missed them for the world.” Murray has condensed (and partially rewritten) his previous two volumes on Lloyd-Jones into one volume that makes the minister’s story more accessible to a wider audience. The story includes Lloyd-Jones’ leaving his medical practice for the ministry, his 30 years at Westminster Chapel in London, his danger-filled ministry during World War II, and his life-long insistence on preaching, prayer, and fellowship as the center of church life. (The book includes many moving excerpts from his sermons.) Lloyd-Jones’ own words serve as the theme of Murray’s work: “My whole life experiences are proof of the sovereignty of God…. The guiding hand of God! It is an astonishment to me.”

■ SHUN HOPWOOD’S Law Man (Crown Publishers) shows the remarkable ways God’s providence pursues some people. The former prisoner tells his story of robbing five banks and serving hard time. Hopwood also tells about using that time in a prison cell to study law and to write legal briefs that would win over the Supreme Court.

Hopwood writes about prison with a surprising sense of humor, but he also underscores the harsh reality of life in “a metallic world” he compares to Lord of the Flies. Though his parents and other prisoners talked about God with Hopwood—and though they pointed out his remarkable experiences in prison—Hopwood resisted faith. After prison, his life took more exceptional turns, and he writes: “I was seeing a sort of layer of love out there that kept sending me the right person and the right opportunities.” Law Man shows how Hopwood came to recognize this layer of love as the grace of God.

■ IN SEVEN MEN: And the Secret of Their Greatness (Thomas Nelson), Eric Metaxas uses short, biographical sketches to show a common characteristic among great men: a Christian willingness to sacrifice for the good of others.

George Washington gave up the chance to be a king. William Wilberforce sacrificed political power to fight slavery. Eric Liddell risked a chance at an Olympic gold medal to honor the Sabbath day. (Metaxas shows how the second half of Liddell’s life was even more stirring than the first.) Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave up his life to resist the Nazis. Baseball great Jackie Robinson forfeited the right to retaliate against insult. Pope John Paul II spoke against embryonic stem-cell research, though he had a disease researchers claimed such research could cure. And Charles Colson gave up his reputation as a political shark to serve men in prison.

These short profiles might make especially good reading for young men heading to college this fall. Metaxas shows the importance of “the courage to do the right thing when all else tells you not to do it.”
Grand stories
A look at Nixon as VP, a tour of New York’s Grand Central Terminal, and a history of Thomas Becket’s battle with a king
BY EMILY BELZ & TIMOTHY LAMER

Three history books are on our short list, and here are three more—one hugely entertaining, one engaging in its account of realized architectural beauty, one relevant to our own church/state battles—that could also have made it.

The entertaining history read is *Ike and Dick* by Jeffrey Frank (Simon & Schuster), the story of President Dwight Eisenhower’s relationship with his vice president, Richard Nixon. Frank, from a *Washington Post* background, charts their awkward, combative, and one-sided relationship through Eisenhower’s presidency and beyond—and even the conversations between first lady Mamie Eisenhower and second lady Pat Nixon are cringe-inducing.

Frank tells the story mostly from Nixon’s perspective and almost generates sympathy for the man. The author contrasts Eisenhower—popular war general with television-era charm and without (so it appeared) a political bone in his body—with the crass, insecure, politically calculating Nixon. Nixon does Eisenhower’s dirty political work, while Eisenhower floats along and allows Nixon to suffer any repercussions by himself. Frank portrays Nixon over the years as desperate for Eisenhower’s approval, which he never obtains, though Nixon mythically describes Eisenhower saluting him on his deathbed. Frank makes readers feel they are looking into an oncoming train.

Eisenhower initially tried to get Nixon to resign from the ticket soon after he had chosen him as a running mate. He then kept Nixon at a distance throughout his presidency, with a sad result: Nixon “was beginning to understand that when it came to his own future, the only one he could rely upon was himself, and his own devices.” We watch Nixon before he crossed major legal lines and wonder what Eisenhower, or anyone, might have done in those years to steer Nixon away from his desperate machinations. Frank barely touches on Watergate because he doesn’t need to, and Nixon’s life comes across as less malevolent than tragic.

Grand Central: *How a Train Station Transformed America*, by Sam Roberts (Grand Central Publishing) is the engaging book about the celestial-ceilinged station that celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Roberts tells how the station was built and continues its history up to the present day, looking at how it survived demolition attempts in the ever-changing city. When officials sought to raze the terminal in 1954 in favor of a skyscraper, a group of architects wrote a letter pleading for the terminal’s preservation, saying, “It belongs in fact to the nation. … The most exacting architectural critic agrees in essentials with the newsboy at the door.”

Grand Central—with trains and shops and restaurants—was one of the first multi-use buildings in America, and one of the first places to sell “air rights,” real estate literally in the air above the train platforms. It fared much better than its sister terminal, New York’s lovely Penn Station, which suffered demolition so the concrete-silo Madison Square Garden could emerge. Roberts describes Grand Central’s secret stairways, its back-door exit that only presidents use, and its nuclear-fallout basement, currently the deepest basement in
New York. The book is very approachable, with pictures throughout. (You’re best off buying the actual, mini-coffee-table-type book, not an e-book.)

**JOHN GUY’S** *Thomas Becket: Warrior, Priest, Rebel* (Random House) chronicles the 12th-century clergyman’s rise from middle-class Londoner to loyal chancellor of Henry II to bitter enemy of the same king. His murder by Henry’s minions rocked Europe and continues to reverberate today in battles over religious liberty.

*Becket* is not a hagiography. Guy admires Becket but also tells of his imperfections, some of which seem to stem from insecurities over his middle-class upbringing. Guy skilfully tells the story of Becket’s rise, and the book becomes a true page-turner when we see Becket become an archbishop. Becket was first thought of as Henry’s man in Canterbury, but he turned out to be more like his predecessor Anselm: a bulldog in defense of the church and its liberties.

Becket and Henry quickly clashed over the issue of “criminous clerks”—priests and other church officials accused of crimes like murder and rape. Becket wanted them tried in church courts as was becoming customary in Europe, while Henry wanted them to face royal justice. Had the battle not gone beyond this issue, Henry would have been biblically correct, although Guy doesn’t say so or seem to think so. But Henry’s true endgame was royal control over the church in England, and he soon tried to require the church to obey other “ancestral customs” that were made up out of whole cloth. Henry wanted, among other things, veto power over appeals to the pope and over some sentences of excommunication. He also wanted control over international travel by priests and temper tantrums, fumed that among his courtiers “not even a single one is willing to avenge me of the wrongs I have suffered.” (The more famous phrasing, “Who will rid me of this turbulent priest,” is an 18th-century invention, according to Guy.) “It was essentially just bad luck,” writes Guy, that a few lesser knights took Henry’s outburst literally, made their way to Canterbury, and murdered Becket.

What Becket couldn’t gain in life he was able to achieve as a slain hero. With a country and an entire continent enraged, Henry backed down on the issues of criminous clerks and appeals to the pope. Henry, writes Guy, “simply had no choice.”

Becket was a man and an archbishop of his time. He didn’t have the benefit of coming after Abraham Kuyper’s strong elucidation of “sphere sovereignty”—which recognized that the church, the state, and the family each has a sphere of authority that is not mediated by any of the others. God has given the state the authority to bear the sword against criminals (Romans 13), regardless of whether they wear a clerical collar.

This means Becket’s legacy is mixed. We see it today in business owners who are defending religious freedom against the Obama administration’s Henry-like contraception and abortion drug mandate.

We see [Becket’s legacy] today in business owners who are defending religious freedom against the Obama administration’s Henry-like contraception and abortion drug mandate.

over revenues from vacant bishoprics and abbeys.

These overreaches were intolerable to Becket, and Guy shows us how the two clashed through several years of Becket’s exile and even during a veneer of peace that allowed Becket to return to Canterbury. Finally, in 1170, Henry, during one of his many tantrums, fumed that among his courtiers “not even a single one is willing to avenge me of the wrongs I have suffered.” (The more famous phrasing, “Who will rid me of this turbulent priest,” is an 18th-century invention, according to Guy.) “It was essentially just bad luck,” writes Guy, that a few lesser knights took Henry’s outburst literally, made their way to Canterbury, and murdered Becket.

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This means Becket’s legacy is mixed. We see it today in business owners who are defending religious freedom against the Obama administration’s Henry-like contraception and abortion drug mandate. But we also see it in bishops who didn’t seem to recognize the state’s legitimate authority to prosecute sexually predatory priests. (Protestants have problems in this regard, too.)

Becket was a hero who stood up to a tyrant, but, alas, he was also a usurper.
War wounds
A closer look at three costly—but pivotal—battles spanning U.S. history
BY EDWARD LEE PITTS

THREE BOOKS tell the stories of three famous assaults—one that created America, one that preserved it, and one that freed a continent.

In Bunker Hill: A City, a Siege, a Revolution (Viking), Nathaniel Philbrick tells how militiamen carried their muskets to a 65-foot-high hill on the Charleston peninsula near Boston. They used pick axes and shovels to build a rough fort and placed hats filled with musket balls on the ground between their feet. When cannons on nearby ships blasted the redoubt, the colonials grabbed fistfuls of hay to plug the gaps.

Then the British climbed the hill, easy marks with their bright red coats. Colonial officers told their men to hold their fire and aim low. Whole lines fell, and others stepped over the “dead bodies as though they were logs of wood.” When waves of British finally reached the breastworks, provincial soldiers “grabbed the still-warm barrels of their muskets and began swinging them like clubs.” The British took the hill, but with half of their 2,290 soldiers killed or wounded, American general Nathanael Greene wrote, “I wish we could sell them another hill at the same price.”

That effort made colonials realize they were “fighting to create a new nation.” Eighty-eight years later, fighting to make the division permanent, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee told George Pickett to strike the Union enemy dug in more than 1,000 yards away across a Pennsylvania field. In Gettysburg: The Last Invasion (Knopf), Allen Guelzo tells how about 13,000 Confederate soldiers stepped out of the woods, their bayonets sparkling in the afternoon sun. The Confederates had little protection when the Union line opened up on them: Some 836 bullets pierced one 16-foot fence plank.

It took 19 minutes for the survivors to run that gauntlet and reach the Union side. Like their Bunker Hill predecessors, soldiers turned the barrels of their rifles into clubs—and the Union line held. When one retreating Confederate general was asked where his brigade went, he wordlessly pointed to the sky. “Not all the glory in the world can atone for the widows and orphans this day has made,” Pickett said about the charge that soon bore his name.

On a summer day 81 years later, more than 130,000 Allied soldiers boarded an armada of nearly 7,000 ships and headed across the English Channel to assault German-occupied Normandy. In Rick Atkinson’s The Guns at Last Light (Henry Holt), we learn that riflemen carried an average of 68.4 pounds on June 6, 1944, German machine gun fire riddled the beaches, and some GIs used corpses as steppingstones to navigate the 6.5 million planted mines. “Fire everywhere it seems,” one officer scrawled on an envelope. “Prayed several times.”

Much went wrong: Tanks designed to be seagoing with inflatable canvas skirts plopped in the rough waters and sank. One battalion lost 27 of 32 tanks to the ocean, entombing nine officers and 137 men before they fired a shot. But the GIs did not get pushed off the beach, thanks to stories like this veteran’s: “A guy in front of me got it through the throat. Another guy in front of me got it through the heart. I run on.” D-Day cost 8,230 U.S. casualties, but in less than three hours the Allies cracked Hitler’s Atlantic Wall.

American troops watch activity on Omaha Beach as their landing craft approaches the shore on D-Day.
Aging badly

Two books celebrating 50th anniversaries in the past year offered cures worse than the disease  
BY WARREN COLE SMITH

Two movements that helped define the last half of the 20th century—feminism and environmentalism—owe much to books that celebrated 50th birthdays in the past year: Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* and Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*. Both highly readable books also left a legacy of controversy and—critics say—massive destruction.

Friedan ignored other forces contributing to unhappiness, including narcissism, a sense of entitlement, and the rapidly expanding secularization of American culture that colleges such as Smith helped bring about. Culture, like nature, abhors a vacuum, so the hole the departure of religion left in American life rapidly filled with ideologies such as feminism. Author Janice Shaw Crouse, who met Betty Friedan just before Friedan’s death in 2006, found her a “lovely lady” whose “ideas had terrible consequences,” including no-fault divorce and legalized abortion.

Rachel Carson’s call for ecological awareness also morphed into an ideology with terrible consequences, including a virtual ban of the pesticide DDT in 1972. Until then, 30 years of DDT spraying in North America and Europe had virtually eradicated malaria in developed countries, but *Silent Spring*’s dire (and largely discredited) warnings of cancer in humans and the thinning of egg shells in birds stopped U.S. production and export of the chemical.

The ban on DDT cost thousands of U.S. jobs and “may have killed 20 million children,” according to Robert Gwadz of the National Institutes of Health: “That’s what he told National Geographic Magazine in 2007. Today, nearly 250 million people suffer from malaria, and nearly 1 million people a year die from this preventable disease. Almost 90 percent of malaria cases are in Africa: Paul Driessen, a senior policy analyst with the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow and the Congress of Racial Equality, notes that “this anti-DDT campaign was led by wealthy, white activists from countries that were made malaria-free in large part because of the very pesticides they now target.”

It’s telling that India and Africa have similar climates, and in the 1940s and ’50s had similar rates of malaria, but today the incidence of malaria in India is a fraction of Africa’s—in part because when DDT was banned in the United States, production and usage migrated to India, which is now the world’s largest producer and its largest user.

Take first *The Feminine Mystique*. The idea for the book came to Friedan when she surveyed some of her elite Smith College classmates in preparation for their 15-year class reunion in 1957. She found these mostly rich, mostly white, mostly suburban housewives to be mostly bored, and—according to Friedan—very unhappy. Friedan attributed that unhappiness to the fact that they were wives and mothers: “We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: ‘I want something more than my husband and my children and my home.’”
Commodity control

Two books highlight two different approaches to Africa’s resources

BY MINDY BELZ

WHEN Xi Jinping became president of China earlier this year, his first trip abroad was to visit three African countries. China, with the fastest growing economy in the world and the world’s largest population at 1.3 billion, is not surprisingly the lead buyer of the world’s resources. Also not surprisingly, writes Dambisa Moyo in Winner Take All: China’s Race for Resources and What It Means for the World (Basic), “the Chinese are on a global shopping spree.”

But why is poverty-stricken Africa its first stop? Africa is rich in minerals, metals, oil, and land. Trade between China and the African continent has grown—from $10 billion in 2000 to $90 billion in 2009—as the Chinese lay hold of Africa’s resources to better their own growing population.

When China goes shopping, it’s not all good. What at first looks like capitalistic fervor is at the end of the day a state-run monopoly, points out Moyo. China’s three leading investors in Africa are state-owned oil companies. They’ve been accused of land grabs and backdoor deals in Africa and elsewhere, deals that benefit corrupt leaders rather than kick-start development.

China’s sweetheart deals are creating an “axis of the unloved”—developing countries rich in commodities destined to remain poor in political and economic capital.

What’s jarring about Winner Take All is that, even as Moyo sounds a warning for the West to wake up to China’s global commodities grab, she seems to think it could be a good thing. She’s hard on Africa’s former colonial powers but doesn’t condemn China’s neocolonialist spree.

Still, the Zambian-born economist, who also wrote the best-selling Dead Aid (2010), writes a fast-paced book with a scholar’s flair minus the pedantry. It’s a good read for experts and college students alike, for heads of NGOs and heads of church mission teams who want to understand how China is changing the African landscape.

Drilling down to where many Africans really live is the work of former Wall Street Journal reporter Roger Thurow’s The Last Hunger Season: A Year in an African Farm Community on the Brink of Change (Public Affairs). Thurow sees Africa as “the final food frontier,” a continent of untapped resources, but his perspective is vastly different from the resource-shopping Chinese.

Thurow takes us through a year in the life of several smallholder farmers in western Kenya. Leonida Wanyama is up at 4 a.m. most mornings to tend her family and her meager crops. She’s caught like others in a cycle of misery, eking out too little grain from poor ground, praying for rain to survive the hunger season (called “Wanjala”) before harvest, then apportioning her small harvest for her family until the next planting—from three meals a day to two then one, or only tea. So pervasive is the hunger season (stretching anywhere from one to nine months) that Thurow meets children named Wanjala because they were born during that time.

Leonida joins with other smallholder farmers in a microfinance co-op supervised by the One Acre Fund, a nonprofit launched by Yale graduate Andrew Youn in 2006. They get better seed, learn about soil nutrients and improving yields, and develop business skills that help them utilize the bigger harvests each begins to take in.

The year brings challenges and crises, but along the way these families learn to beat what Thurow calls one of Africa’s cruelest ironies: “Hungry farmers,” he writes, ought to be an oxymoron. By Christmas, Leonida is setting out two tables of food under a shade tree in celebration for her growing bounty and new skills.

Besides these compelling real-life stories, Thurow hits on the larger lesson. It costs five to six times more to deliver a ton of maize (corn) to Africa than to provide the continent’s smallholder farmers with seeds and fertilizer to grow an extra ton themselves: “Emergency aid won’t prevent the next famine; only agricultural development will.”

The Chinese may focus on Africa’s vast natural resources, and the United States may bank on its ability to fix famine, but Thurow captures the crucial ingredient to moving Africa from exploitation to stewardship: its human resources.
Pushing against paradigms
Science books proposing new perspectives on drugs, death, and design

BY DANIEL JAMES DEVINE

In an era when uppity scientists like to portray establishment thinking as settled truth, it’s worth pointing out when free thinkers try to unsettle the establishment. Here are books by three researchers bent on challenging status quo science.

In Bad Pharma: How Drug Companies Mislead Doctors and Harm Patients (Faber and Faber), Ben Goldacre upends the naive assumption that the world of drug research is a land without bias or blemish. Drug companies fund trials to test the effectiveness of their medicines, but tend to publish flattering results and withhold data that’s unflattering. The result is “publication bias,” where medical literature is filled with positive studies that, taken together, suggest a drug works better than it really does. Example: During an 18-year period, the FDA tracked antidepressant trials showing 38 positive outcomes and 37 negative. In published literature, though, only three negative trials showed up, and 48 were portrayed as positive.

Since Goldacre is himself a doctor, he writes as an insider and patient advocate who seemingly delights in poring over arcane medical studies. Yet he transforms mundane data into an intriguing exposé, and offers important cautions to doctors: Watch out for the superfriendly, gift-laden drug reps who work for large pharmaceutical marketing departments. Watch out for drug studies ghostwritten by the industry. For the rest of us: Watch out for shiny ads promoting expensive new drugs that may be no more effective than old ones.

Another doctor, Sam Parnia, wants to improve the lives of patients, but he’d also like to know what happens when they die. His book, Erasing Death (HarperOne), argues for the unorthodox conclusion that the human mind or consciousness “could be a separate, undiscovered scientific entity that is not produced by the brain.”

The latest resurrection science shows death is an hours-long process that can be reversed. Parnia uses science and patient testimony in an attempt to assess multiple accounts of out-of-body experiences, where, in some strange cases, patients accurately describe hospital room events (from the vantage point of the ceiling) that took place while they were lying without a heartbeat or brain activity, waiting to be resuscitated.

Philosophical spiritualism influences Parnia’s vantage point, however, and out-of-body experiences aren’t doorways to truth, since patients have reported meeting not just Jesus but Krishna and the Hindu god of death, Yamraj. But the book’s mind-brain research—including the discovery that some drugs temporarily restore consciousness in brain-damaged patients—is fascinating.

Speaking of death, there’s no greater monument to dead things than the fossil record. Neo-Darwinists say the record is evidence of macro-evolutionary change over time, but Stephen Meyer in Darwin’s Doubt (HarperOne) explains Charles Darwin himself was mystified by the sudden appearance of novel and numerous animal forms in the fossil layer now known as the Cambrian. Interpreted by evolutionists to be one of the oldest fossil layers, the Cambrian should display fossils illustrating Darwin’s “tree of life,” showing transitional forms branching off a common ancestor. Instead, the Cambrian is more like a green lawn, with all the blades of grass (the animals) sprouting at once.

Meyer, a maverick who helped launch the intelligent design movement, shows how both fossils and theories of genetic evolution fail, by laughable odds, to support the idea of macroevolution by random mutations. Working within a uniformitarian, old-Earth interpretation of the rocks, he argues that intelligent design is the most reasonable explanation for the fossils and complex DNA we observe.
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Road signs
Three books geared for millennials wrestling with cultural questions // BY ANGELA LU

In *The Road Trip That Changed the World* (Moody), Australian author Mark Sayers looks at the wandering, experience-based attitudes of millennials (those who became adults around the year 2000). He traces them back to the novel Jack Kerouac wrote in 1951, *On the Road*, and chronicles how American culture shifted as automobiles allowed escape from family responsibilities. He writes that finding “kicks” was key, with even Christianity seen as just one stop on the journey to personal fulfillment.

Sayers points out how today’s media continue to preach that the journey is more important than the destination. But he counters that the destination gives the journey value, and that destination is the cross.

Despite his references to tweets, YOLO, and LeBron James, Lee gives a sound old-school message. He tells readers the good life isn’t getting what you want, but living the way God created you to live: *The prosperity gospel rests on false promises to bring wealth and blessings, but the good life rests on the gospel, reading the Bible, and getting connected to a church community. While The Good Life is good for unbelievers, it also helps Christians return to the basics: Its chapter on reading the Bible caused me to stop, put down the book, and open up my Bible app.*

In Brett McCracken’s *Gray Matters* (Baker), due out in August, the author of *Hipster Christianity* digs into how Christian millennials engage in culture. With many 20-somethings running from their parents’ legalism and embracing all of culture, McCracken asks readers to think deeply about the gray areas of culture and to seek to glorify God through good gifts of sustenance and culture.

The book is broken up into four sections—food, music, movies, and alcohol. Each section looks at Christianity’s history with these matters before delving into questions Christians should consider as they decide what to consume. Will pursuing this activity lead fellow believers to stumble? Is it edifying? Are you using it to fulfill a desire in an unhealthy way, or does it point you to Christ? McCracken, pointing out that the answers are different for each Christian, sprinkles the book with his own personal experiences and memories: *The movie section is the book’s strongest.*

Gray Matters’ target audience seems to be Christian hipsters, and some readers will not be interested in McCracken’s discussion of artisanal cheeses and indie music. But his analysis of cultural issues is something all serious Christians of this generation need to think about, rather than just mindlessly consuming whatever is placed in front of them.
Paranormal push

Deluge of supernatural young adult novels produce plots with mangled biblical truths

BY JANIE B. CHEANEY

The book publishing industry has been shaky for the last few years, with most segments recording slow sales. One exception is YA, or Young Adult, a category that barely existed 20 years ago. YA titles topped all the bestseller lists for most of this decade, led by the phenomenal success of Stephenie Meyer’s Twilight and Suzanne Collins’ Hunger Games series. Both have spun off dozens of imitators in the subgenres of paranormal romance and dystopian sci-fi, respectively.

“Paranormal romance” usually depicts a world like our own, in which the general population is seeded with figures who look human but claim supernatural origins and powers. Anne Rice created the genre with her vampire novels, but Twilight, with its numerous sequels and movie versions, shot it into the mainstream. Quickly wearing out the vampire theme, paranormal authors have mined the lore of the ages for other supernatural beings, such as werewolves, shape-shifters, angels, even mermaids. Demons are an especially durable brand that’s grown in popularity: I searched my public library’s list of YA novels under the heading demonology, and saw that of the 130-plus titles listed, almost all were published after 2007.

Cassandra Clare leads the pack with her Mortal Instruments series, a never-ending saga of Shadowhunters: half-angel creatures (Nephilim) whose mission is to seek out and destroy the demons among us. The first Mortal Instruments novel, City of Bones, is scheduled for a big movie opening in August, but Clare is not sitting on her laurels. A new series that tracks the Shadowhunters through their Victorian phase has scored again with Clockwork Princess (Margaret McElderry Books). Another winner in the demonology field is Laini Taylor, whose Daughter of Smoke and Bone (Little, Brown) follows the fraught love affair between Karou, a reincarnated chimera, and Akiva, a Seraph. Though a better writer, Taylor equals Clare in edgy, profanity-laden dialogue and sex. Somewhat tamer, but almost as popular, are Sherrilyn Kenyon’s Chronicles of Nick (latest installment: Inferno, St. Martins), whose protagonist discovers at the age of 14 that he’s a demon-slaying immortal with a zombie-stalking girlfriend.

The library list reveals another interesting trend: The titles are weighted heavily toward biblical terms, such as Highway to Hell, Last of the Nephilim, Soul Thief, Original Sin, The Temptation. Some of these versions are satirical, reflecting Karl Marx’s maxim that history repeats itself first as tragedy and then as farce. What began with sublime Dante and earnest Anne Rice descends to the ridiculous with Prom Dates from Hell. Many of these novels plunder pagan mythologies as well, but the biblical palette, with its complex moral colors and apocalyptic shades, seems to be one that neither authors nor readers can resist.

Biblical themes are mangled when the Protagonist is left out, as God always is. I suspect these authors are subconsciously trying to capture the Bible’s drama without its truth, but that very fact says something: perhaps that the essential story of fall and redemption is written on every heart.
Winsome whodunits

Three light-hearted cozy mysteries offer gentler fare for lazy summer days /// BY LEIGH JONES

Cozy mysteries, the gentler subset of the genre ruled by embittered detectives and grisly crime scenes, can offer satisfying whodunits for a weekend in the hammock. Set mostly in small towns with relatable protagonists, they have more in common with Dorothy Sayers than Dennis Lehane. But they have their pitfalls: too little realism, too much saccharine romance, and often, too many cats. These three selections manage to avoid most of those problems to get at the best cozies have to offer: a good, clean mystery with a few laughs and a satisfying ending.

James Runcie’s Sidney Chambers and the Shadow of Death (Bloomsbury) has as its protagonist a Church of England priest living in 1950s Cambridge. Chambers becomes an amateur detective quite by chance, of course, when a woman asks him to investigate her lover’s death: He then unravels the mystery from his unique perspective as a man people trust, using his powers of observation and insight into human nature to lead him to the right conclusion. His sincere effort to work out his faith with fear and trembling is satisfying: When his close friend Amanda asks him whether seeing terrible things ever shakes his faith, Chambers says, “Not in God. It shakes my faith in people.” One word of caution: Chambers’ biggest flaw is his tolerance for homosexuality, which tracks more closely with today’s Church of England position than that of 60 years ago, but the treatment of a gay man includes an unexpected twist and a dose of redemption.

In The Christie Curse (Berkley Publishing Group), Jordan Bingham is a recent college graduate with a degree in English and few job prospects that pay well enough to make a dent in her student loans. When she responds to an ad for a research position in her hometown, she has no idea the job will turn her into a sleuth, past the obvious digging she must do to discover a previously unpublished Agatha Christie play. Mother and daughter authors Mary Jane and Victoria Maffini, who write under the pen name Victoria Abbott, spin an entertaining tale with strong characters, no gaping plot holes, and just enough humor to keep the protagonist from taking herself or her situation too seriously. Warning: This book does include cats, but only as an annoyance to Bingham, and they don’t provide any help in solving this well-developed mystery.

The puzzle in Buried in a Bog (Berkley), a quick read by prolific cozy author Sheila Connolly, has less to do with crime than with what the main character will do with her life. In what could pass for today’s version of a coming-of-age tale (young adult with no plan or prospects seeks meaning and purpose), Maura Donovan travels from Boston to the tiny Irish village where her grandmother grew up to discover more about the extended family she never knew she had. Along the way, she learns the value of community, where everyone knows everyone else’s business and relational ties span generations. Maura’s angst wears a little thin halfway through the story, but the descriptions of the Emerald Isle offer a nice distraction. Like all three of these selections, this book is the first in a series, another hallmark of the cozy mystery.
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Books tell of sins and swings in the sports world // BY J.C. DERRICK

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Ruthless. In Seven Deadly Sins: My Pursuit of Lance Armstrong (Atria), David Walsh paints a picture of the Lance Armstrong who didn’t just cheat to “win” seven Tour de France titles, but would engage in character assassination, destroy careers, lie under oath, and sue those who told the truth. Armstrong stopped at nothing to get what he wanted, and Walsh stopped at nothing to expose him as a fraud: “The need for inquiry is overwhelming,” Walsh wrote in London’s Sunday Times when Armstrong began his ascension in 1999.

Walsh was almost the only one interested in asking questions—most journalists were busy cheerleading—so he embarked on a 13-year quest to find the truth and tell it to the world. He makes the case that Armstrong’s doping may have caused his cancer, which ironically became the reason so many fans and journalists refused to believe he was anything but a hero. (Warning: Seven Deadly Sins includes bad language, as do the other two books I’m reviewing.)

In The Big Miss: My Years Coaching Tiger Woods (Three Rivers Press), longtime golf coach Hank Haney writes about his six tumultuous years coaching the planet’s most talented player. Haney takes readers from his first meeting with Woods in 1993, to when he became the golfer’s swing instructor in 2004, to calling it quits after the 2010 Masters—a period in which Woods won 31 out of 91 tournaments, including six major championships.

Haney’s account at times bogs down with gossip and detailed information on the mechanics of a golf swing, and he adds few facts about Woods’ 2009 scandal, but the 100 days each year Haney spent with Woods gave him insights into one of the world’s most famous yet reclusive athletes. Haney also explains how Woods’ obsession with the Navy SEALs led to an injury and threatened to take him from the game of golf in the middle of his prime.

Tom Dunkel’s Color Blind: The Forgotten Team that Broke Baseball’s Color Line (Atlantic Monthly Press) tells the story of an integrated, Depression-era baseball team in Bismarck, N.D. Owner and coach Neil Churchill, a car salesman, piled up wins (68 in 1935, against 23 losses and four ties) against anybody who would play his barnstorming team of six white players and six black players, including future Hall of Fame pitcher Satchel Paige.

Dunkel rambles in some places with extraneous information, but his work adeptly pulls back the curtain on the Depression, race relations, and a team that was integrated 12 years before Jackie Robinson broke big league color barriers. ©
E.B. White said, “Analyzing humor is like dissecting a frog. Few people are interested and the frog dies of it.” That quotation notwithstanding, here are reviews of three joke books, starting with Now That’s Funny! Jokes and Stories from the Man Who Keeps America Laughing (Reader’s Digest) by Andy Simmons, humor editor of Reader’s Digest and former editor of National Lampoon. Here’s one of its jokes I like: A man goes to his doctor’s office and says, “Give it to me straight, doc. I know I’m sick. How long do I have?” The doctor says, “Ten...” The man says, “What? Ten months? Ten weeks?” And the doctor says, “Nine... eight...” Simmons offers up interviews and insights from some of America’s renowned comedians, including Woody Allen, Robin Williams, and Jerry Lewis. Though many of the legends’ stories are not as funny as one would expect, Don Rickles talks about the time he asked Frank Sinatra to come over to his table at a nightclub and say hello so that he, Rickles, could impress a girlfriend. Sinatra obliged by stopping by and saying, “Hey, Don, how are you?” Rickles jumped up from his seat and shouted, “Not now, Frank. Can’t you see I’m with someone?”

Jim Kraus is a joke book, pure and simple. Each numbered day has a main joke, followed by a blooper and a quotation. Goofy blooper example: “Fire Chief Stone spoke to our seniors and said they should all remember the ‘Five Ps’ of cold-weather safety: protecting people, protecting plants, protecting pets, protecting exposed pipes, and practicing pire pafety.” One quotation from Laugh-a-Day: “Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, amateurs built Noah’s ark. Professionals built the Titanic.” Much of The World’s Greatest Collection of Clean Jokes (Harvest House Publishers), by licensed marriage and family therapist Bob Phillips, does not live up to the first part of its title, and much of it isn’t very funny. That being said, Clean Jokes does provide a gem or two, such as, “Once during a debate Abraham Lincoln was accused by Stephen Douglas of being two-faced. Without hesitation Lincoln calmly replied, ‘I leave it to my audience ... if I had two faces, would I be wearing this one?’”

Lincoln probably also knew the answer to this question: “What’s more clever than speaking in several languages?” Answer: “Keeping your mouth shut in one.”

—Albin Sadar is a New York City humor writer and commentator on WORLD Radio
Self-published standouts

The top 10 self-published books to cross WORLD’s desk this year

BY MARY SUE DAOUD & SUSAN OLASKY

We winnowed down to 15 the more than 100 self-published books recently sent to WORLD, and those became the core of this final list of 10 that display clear writing and storytelling.

- These Are the Generations
  Mr. and Mrs. Bae (not their real names) as told to Rev. Eric Foley (Dot W, 2012)
  This winsomely written true story of a multigenerational Christian family shows the North Korean dictatorship’s all-encompassing hatred of Christianity, and the courage of underground Christians who risk everything to follow Christ.

- Through Dark Rivers: A Journey Through Loss to Joy
  Susan Erikson (HouseErikson, 2012)
  Erikson’s poems and hymns, focusing on loss of fellowship with God and other lesser losses, reflect this world’s sorrows and yet shimmer with hope.

- Warrior Monk: A Pastor Stephen Grant Novel
  Ray Keating (CreateSpace, 2010)
  The “warrior monk” in question is an ex-CIA agent who settled into life as a Lutheran pastor, saving lives and taking care of bad guys (who get saved). Note: This amusing, suspenseful action novel includes occasional swearing.

- Discovering England From One Inch Above the Thames
  Jim Payne (Lytton, 2012)
  Payne’s absorbing account of a kayaking journey through England describes the places he stayed and the people he met.

- Beneath the Chippewa Mountains
  A.K. Brennan (Scherzo, 2011)
  In a way reminiscent of the classic Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH, Brennan tells of a mouse whose husband had gotten entangled with an up-to-no-good weasel king, so she and her children decide to move back to the Chippewa Mountains.

- The Garden and the Ghetto: Stories and Reflections from the City of Refuge
  Jeff Deel (Westbow, 2011)
  This collection of well-written, encouraging stories from City of Refuge, a Christian ministry located in Atlanta’s worst neighborhood, helps us enter into the lives of staff members and residents.

- Compelling Interest: The Real Story Behind Roe v. Wade
  Roger Resler (eChristianBooks, 2012)
  Resler combines careful research into the background of Roe v. Wade and interviews with dozens of pro-life experts.

- Guinea Pig for Breakfast
  Andrea Gardiner (Grosvenor House, 2012)
  Gardiner, a Scottish-trained doctor and fine storyteller, describes in lively prose the poor people in Ecuador she has served. She writes of becoming pregnant, marrying, adjusting to new motherhood, treating machete cuts and strange skin diseases, making hard adjustments to Ecuadorian culture, and finding grace despite her personal failures.

- Tea and Trouble Brewing
  Dorcas Smucker (Amazon, 2012)
  A collection of sprightly essays by a Mennonite woman with six children and a house full of visitors. Each essay captures the details of an experience, a season of life, or the joy of sitting down to a quiet cup of tea.

- Psalms for Caregivers
  Darlene Saunders (WinePress, 2012)
  Saunders knows from personal experience how important it is to turn to God in the midst of troubles, and her short meditations on the Psalms provide a guide for doing so.

—Mary Sue Daoud is a Patrick Henry College graduate who majored in literature
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Three male children’s authors are oddly optimistic about children’s, and specifically boys’, reading habits despite the distractions of smartphones and iPads. “I have no fear of the device,” said Jack Gantos, Newbery medal-winning author of Dead End in Norvelt. Gantos has been visiting schools for the last 25 years and watching children’s reading habits. “The crop of readers we have now is greater. They read more widely, more in-depth.”

Kevin Emerson, author of The Lost Code series most recently, said the problem of technology is no different than when he was growing up: If he had been able to sneak an Atari video game console into school, he would have. But he couldn’t, so he read.

Jon Scieszka, perhaps best known for his children’s book The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales, said apps can’t replace a book: “Walking around here you see 100 great books that can only be books.” “If you write good books, you will have readers,” Gantos said.

The authors appeared at BookExpo America, an annual gathering of major publishers, authors, librarians, and booksellers in Manhattan. Their bright outlook about the future of books was a sentiment that was widely (and perhaps unsurprisingly) shared at the BookExpo.

Publishers seemed more confident about the coexistence of digital and print books. Publishers Weekly, in its daily reports on the expo, noted that “the digital business had leveled off,” and “there is a sense that print and digital can, and will, coexist.”

Despite the optimism, boys do lag behind girls in reading, according to Scieszka’s project called Guys Read (guysread.com). The project is an effort to get boys reading regularly, eventually on their own volition. Scieszka’s website has a curated list of books that might interest boys, under categories like, “At least one explosion,” “People being turned into animals,” and “Funny.” He’s said previously that because most elementary school teachers are women, they don’t always know what books to give boys.

A mom asked the authors how to get her son reading. Gantos said he thought it was critical for families to set the example and read in front of their children. He said his family would all go to the living room after dinner and read. “You had a general sense, if you have a spare moment, why not pick up a book?” he said.

“The role model piece is huge,” agreed Scieszka. “Get more men reading in public.” “Use humor as a welcome mat and then, boom!” said Gantos. “There comes the theme, boom! There come the characters.”

“Boys can be really trapped in their interior in elementary and middle school,” Emerson said. “They’re very quiet, not as verbal as girls. A lot of my characters are trying to find their way out of their shell.” Emerson said he reads a lot of boys’ writing to learn how to write for them. “It’s super annoying because they’re smart and they have these amazing ideas,” he said.

“Kids are much more sophisticated [today], just from what they watch on television,” said Scieszka. “We watched Gilligan’s Island.”

Gantos concurred. “Kids don’t want just one dimension anymore.” He recalled that when he was growing up, the array of children’s literature was more limited: He read Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys. Scieszka remembered comic books. Emerson remembered reading the Choose Your Own Adventure series.

“There’s so much more available now,” said Scieszka.
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Digital dynamite

Once a curious novelty, e-books have exploded in popularity

BY ANGELA LU

ORLD’S 2000 BOOKS ISSUE explored the then-unprecedented idea of electronic books, heralding it as an opportunity for Christian authors to get their books out without the cost and hassle of going through the publishing process: “E-books are where the internet was in 1994: Everybody knows something really cool is coming, but they don’t know exactly what.”

Thirteen years later, many writing newcomers are publishing e-books, often losing money in the process but sometimes finding a market. Karen Baney, a software engineer by day and Christian romance writer by night, made $75,000 last year from selling her self-published e-books. No publishing company, no marketing team, just a laptop and business savvy.

Baney penned her first novel about a romance set in 1800s Arizona in 2010, and has since written three more books in the Prescott Pioneers series, as well as a contemporary Christian romance novel and a book on how to market self-published e-books. If she had pursued the traditional publishing route, “I might be lucky if I had one book out, and I’d probably make a royalty of about 12 percent.” Instead she keeps 60-70 percent of e-book sales.

As e-books make up a larger portion of book sales—an Association of American Publishers’ StatShot study shows that 22.6 percent of book sales in 2012 were e-books—more authors, both professional and amateur, are turning to self-publishing e-books for creative freedom, high royalty rates, and convenience. The question now is how to make a book stand out in the ever-growing crowd.

One experienced writer, Brian Godawa, the screenwriter of To End All Wars, is self-publishing a biblical fiction series that originated from an unused screenplay. Godawa wrote the screenplay for a movie about Noah, but realized the movie would cost too much and would have to compete with another upcoming Noah movie. So Godawa turned the screenplay into a novel and published it himself. He decided to skip the traditional publishing process because “I’ve been published, I’ve had movies produced, but still I come up with a novel and I have to start from square one when I’m trying to get a publisher.”

Realizing that readers enjoy series, he wove together a larger storyline, looking at Genesis’ mention about the Nephilim, giants that were the offspring of the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men.” From that he created a fictitious narrative based on major Bible characters such as Enoch, Noah, and Joshua.
It took about a year to finish the first book, *Noah Primeval*, as he had to adapt the screenplay, hire editors and cover designers, and figure out how to market the book. But after that “each of the three books [in the series], took about three months of full-time writing, and the great thing about it was I didn’t have to wait a year for each book to come out. I could release them as soon as I finished writing, so I got my series going within a year.”

The books have stayed at the top of biblical fiction rankings on Amazon since their release in 2011. He said he’s made about $20,000 from book sales, which has supplemented his income as he works on other movie and writing projects. His hope is that as more people get excited about the stories, Hollywood will get interested, and he’ll already have the scripts ready for production.

Struggling writer Ann Miller tried breaking into the publishing world for 10 years with her coming-of-age Christian romances, but found that as more authors and readers bypass traditional publishing companies, publishing houses are cutting back and only looking for bestsellers written by well-known authors. “I started despairing,” Miller said about her difficulty landing a book deal even with the help of an agent. “Before I was too proud to self-publish because I thought, ‘I got a degree, I can do this.’”

In early 2012, Miller swallowed her pride and hired a freelance editor and a proofreader to look through her writing, make changes, and clean up the manuscript. A friend painted her book cover. Miller uploaded her book onto Amazon’s Kindle Direct Press (KDP) and Smashwords, a self-publishing platform. She gave away for free her first book, *Kicking Eternity*, to get readers interested in her series. She priced the next three books in the series at $4.99 and released them in succession, hoping that once readers bonded with the characters they would want to continue reading. So far the free e-book has had 83,000 downloads and Miller has earned about $2,000 in e-book sales.

The relative ease and convenience of self-publishing with low start-up costs has flooded the market with e-books, including many low-quality works. The number of e-books sold per month jumped from 3.9 million in January 2011 to 22.6 million one year later, according to the Association of American Publishers. The competition makes marketing e-books all the more important—and most authors have to do it themselves.

That is where Baney said she was able to get ahead. With her business background, she was able to pin down her target audience and pricing strategy before even writing a word of her book. She researched the best self-publishing platforms and marketing tactics. Then she published on several platforms: Kindle Direct Publishing, Barnes & Noble’s Nook Press, Kobo Writing Life, and Smashwords.

Once the book was live, she advertised on Twitter and Facebook, paid for advertisements on e-book discovery sites such as Digital Books Today and World Literary Cafe, and offered free copies of the book for bloggers or readers to review. Baney found the most important marketing tool was word of mouth through her writer’s network and new readers. She made sure each of her books included links to the rest of the series.

Both Baney and Godawa used Amazon’s KDP select program, where the authors agree to release their e-books exclusively to Amazon for 90 days. In exchange, Amazon places their book on Kindle’s Lending Library and allows authors to give away their book for free for up to...
five days. Free promotions garner larger readership—Smashwords has found that free e-books get about 100 times as many downloads as priced e-books—and the book’s ranking gets a boost, allowing for greater visibility.

Then the authors try to keep up the momentum for their books through ads or guest posts on blogs as the e-book returns to the regular price. Godawa mentioned that after giving his book away for free for two days, he increased his sales by 200 percent for six to eight months afterward. Recently Amazon changed its algorithm so free e-book sales only count as 1/100 of a normal book, and high rankings are more difficult to come by.

Godawa says another helpful feature on Amazon is the “Customers who bought this item also bought” section on each book’s page. He realized that his niche religious fiction would show up on the pages of other similar books, and that also helped him sell more books. Godawa views Amazon as a one-stop shop, as it lets him create an audiobook of his series and print copies of the book through CreateSpace.

It’s not just writers benefiting from self-published e-books, but readers are also more eager to buy them. The biggest advantage is the lower prices. Traditionally published e-books cost around $9.99 while self-published are usually priced around $2.99. Authors know low prices attract readership, but on Amazon, if e-books are priced lower than $2.99, their 70 percent royalty drops down to 35 percent.

The downside for readers is searching through the hundreds of poorly written e-books to find the gems. Baney tries to help readers find new writers through her website Christian eBooks Today, which runs lists of free e-books, allows writers to guest blog about their upcoming book, and gives readers a chance to recommend their favorite e-books to each other. But some things never change: As Godawa says, what “sells the most is good storytelling.”
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Replanting time
Pastor finds he can reap harvest in an unlikely place for church growth

by Josh Blount

Scholar Charles Murray notes that in the “upper middle class, while religiosity has declined, it hasn’t declined as much as it has in the white working class. The bottom has fallen out of religious observance in the white working class” (“American abyss,” WORLD, Nov. 3, 2012).

One of those working class areas lies along Randolph Street in Charleston, W.Va., an urban road with little to attract the attention of a passing traveler on Interstate 64. The street begins on the northern bank of the Elk River, just before its rolling waters flow into the larger Kanawha, and cuts a diagonal slash northwest. The buildings that line Randolph Street are squat, brick or metal-sided, grimy and faded. Three vacant lots are strewn across the first six blocks.

Directly across from one of those vacant lots is Randolph Street’s only sign of recent elegance: a stately two-story brick structure, with classical columns and stained-glass windows, that has just undergone a new expansion project, an auditorium designed to seat 350 people. Randolph Street Baptist Church, or Randolph as its members call it, looks out of place next to a Sherwin-Williams paint store—but that out-of-place sense is what drew Jason McClanahan to the church’s pastorate in 2007.
McClanahan and his wife Ginger had already planted a church in Columbus, Ohio, the state capital. Lanky, energetic, and passionate about church planting, McClanahan was a West Virginia native interested in going elsewhere and starting a new church in a growing and preferably affluent area. Charleston—a capital city with a declining population in a declining state—was not on his radar.

Then McClanahan saw an ad from Randolph’s pulpit committee: “It was seeking someone to “replant” the church. Founded in 1923, Randolph has stood at its present location since 1926 and seen its membership fall to about 40 people, most over the age of 50. After he read the ad, McClanahan became convinced God was calling him to Randolph and Charleston. “Appalachia may not be the most glamorous of church planting options, but there is a clear and distinct need.”

For Randolph’s pulpit committee and members, McClanahan was a man who understood their heritage and “would not look down on us.” Convinced a fit existed on both ends, McClanahan became Randolph’s new pastor in September 2007. Fifty people sat in the wooden pews to hear McClanahan preach his first sermon, laying out a vision for “a church that is going to multiply, that is going to plant churches.” People looked at him with an “Are you serious?” look on their faces, but some young couples began to come, and average attendance grew to 233 in January 2011.

Two things stood out to Randolph’s visitors and brought them back: solid biblical preaching and a rich church community life. When Keith and Elizabeth Pickard relocated with a 6-week-old baby and joined Randolph, church members painted the walls of their new home and brought meals: “We didn’t have to cook for two weeks.” When Randolph founded an Academy of Biblical and Theological Studies to train church members and future pastors, it drew Alabama native Jarod Bare to Charleston, and he came away with a sense of connectedness: “If you don’t eat lunch with somebody [on Sunday] you end up hanging out with them later that day.”

Randolph now has more than 300 people attending, 11 men training to become pastors, and McClanahan thinking long-term: “The ultimate fruit of this is going to be a generation or two down the road. ... I long for the day when my grandchildren or great-grandchildren can live in a region that is full of healthy local churches that value the supremacy of God over all things.”

—Josh Blount is an associate pastor in Franklin, W.Va.

Heavy weapons

One in three American children is obese: The percentage has nearly tripled in three decades. We debate soda bans and genetically modified organisms (GMO). We herald healthier menus at school cafeterias and fast-food joints. But we seldom hear how obesity is addressed at home.

Enter Dara-Lynn Weiss and her daughter Bea, who stepped on a scale at the pediatrician’s office: 93 pounds. The doctor pulled Weiss aside, showing her a girls’ body mass index chart. At 4 feet 4 inches, Bea, 7, was obese. The label was shocking: “This word put our family in a whole different, more alarming category,” Weiss writes in her memoir, The Heavy: A Mother, A Daughter, A Diet (Ballantine Books, 2013).

Weiss, a Manhattan media producer, recalls how she grew concerned as Bea’s weight shot up between ages 3 and 6 and she scarfed down “adult-size plates of food.” Weiss writes, “By staying silent, we were leaving her to find her own path in the dark, which wasn’t helping her at all.”

Weiss embarked on a year of grueling calorie-counting. School lunches, birthday parties, and Starbucks hot cocoa on a cold day became problematic. Bea floundered and complained. Friends questioned Weiss’ methods—particularly how she rewarded Bea’s progress with Diet Coke and hundred-calorie cupcake packs.

In April 2012, Weiss wrote in Vogue about her awkward quest to curb Bea’s overeating. Parenting blogs erupted over the glossy spread that pictured Weiss and a slimmed-down Bea in designer garb. Critics likened Weiss to Tiger-mom Amy Chua and predicted Bea would battle eating disorders in her teens.

Weiss now says she regrets involving her daughter in the magazine photo shoot, but defends the measures that helped Bea lose 16 pounds. “People are so critical of childhood obesity, and then you try to do something about it—to help your child—and they’re critical of that too,” she told The New York Times.

After a year of dieting, Weiss and her husband rejoiced when Bea returned from a three-week summer camp without gaining a pound: “We’d taught her how to eat properly, and she’s taken those lessons and then you try to do something about it—to help your child—and they’re critical of that too,” she told The New York Times.

Weiss story focuses on something largely missing from the public debate over childhood obesity: parental responsibility.

—Mary Jackson
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Watertight leaks

With the revelation that the U.S. Justice Department secretly obtained two months’ worth of phone records for Associated Press reporters, it’s clear that anonymous phone tips aren’t completely off the record where government investigators are concerned. The situation is even stickier for email, which is only protected from search without a warrant for 180 days. Now news organizations are testing online drop boxes where leakers can securely and anonymously upload documents and messages.

Just two days after the AP phone records news broke, The New Yorker launched Strongbox, a high-security depository that not only receives anonymous tips and leaked documents, but functions as a two-way communications system: Leakers can send messages without revealing their identity, and reporters can reply but won’t know who they’re talking to, or have any way to trace them. Other news organizations with drop boxes include The Wall Street Journal and Al-Jazeera, though some have criticized them in the past for offering poor security. —D.J.D.

Power hacking

Electric utilities are a growing target for international cyberattacks

BY DANIEL JAMES DEVINE

REPS. ED MARKEY, D-MASS., AND HENRY WAXMAN, D-CA., made an uncomfortable discovery after sending a questionnaire about infrastructure security to over 150 U.S. electricity providers: Some power utilities report “daily,” “constant,” or “frequent” attempted cyberattacks on their computers and control systems. Others may experience such attacks but be unwilling to admit it. A third of utilities only answered some questions on the congressional survey, and another third didn’t respond to it at all.

With more utilities implementing automated “smartgrid” systems that are connected to the internet, hackers—many from Middle Eastern and Asian nations—are seeking to infiltrate their networks, possibly in hopes of damaging computers and equipment and ultimately shutting off the power supply. That could be a major problem if it occurred in conjunction with an attack on U.S. soil.

One Midwestern utility told the congressmen, “We see probes on our network to look for vulnerabilities in our systems and applications on a daily basis. Much of this activity is automated and dynamic in nature—able to adapt to what is discovered during its probing process.” Another utility said it withstood about 10,000 cyberattacks each month. No survey respondents reported any equipment damage.

Another vulnerability: A present-day geomagnetic storm (from a solar flare) as large as a known storm that occurred in 1921 could destroy hundreds of transformers. But most utilities responding to the questionnaire said they hadn’t taken any steps to prevent such a disruption, and most don’t own spare transformers.

If power companies can voluntarily improve their security, they may want to make it a priority before Congress does. Markey and Waxman are calling for a federal agency to mandate new utility security measures.

UNAPPROVED HOSPITALITY

Airbnb.com is an innovative web service allowing homeowners or tenants to rent out private bedrooms to travelers for a night or two (or three, or four...). But in May the service met with a major legal setback in New York City when a judge fined a resident $2,400 for renting out part of his condo, ruling he had run afoul of state law. Airbnb had argued that a law preventing private daily room rentals was meant to stop illegal hotels, not private residents. Canadian officials have also cracked down on Airbnb rentals, citing similar code violations. —D.J.D.
Chicago Doctor Invents

Affordable Hearing Aid

Amazing new digital hearing aid breaks price barrier in affordability

Reported by J. Page

Chicago: Board-certified physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical grade ALL DIGITAL affordable hearing aid.

This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of $3,000 competitors at a mere fraction of the cost. Now, most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal clear, natural sound—in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind—without suffering through “whistling” and annoying background noise.

New Digital Hearing Aid Outperforms the Expensive Ones

This sleek, lightweight, fully programmed hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for “all things digital” caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for upwards of $3,000 and today can be purchased for less then $100), yet the cost of all digital medical hearing aids remained out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn’t afford the expense of these new digital hearing aids, which are generally not covered by Medicare and most private health insurance.

He evaluated all the high priced digital hearing aids on the market, broke them down to their base components, and then created his own affordable version—called the AIR for its virtually invisible, lightweight appearance.

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Can a hearing aid delay or prevent dementia?

A study by Johns Hopkins and National Institute on Aging researchers suggests older individuals with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. They suggest that an intervention—such as a hearing aid—could delay or prevent dementia by improving hearing!

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“I would definitely recommend them to my patients with hearing loss” —Amy S., Audiologist, Munster, Indiana

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Goals in mind
Neuroscientists debate objectives behind a splashy $3 billion brain mapping effort

BY DANIEL JAMES DEVINE

In his State of the Union address in February, President Obama announced his support for a massive brain science project, calling on Congress to fund scientists who are “mapping the human brain to unlock the answers to Alzheimer’s.” In its 2014 budget, the Obama administration asked for over $100 million to launch the BRAIN Initiative (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies). The project may cost $3 billion or more over its lifetime.

Meanwhile, the researchers involved in BRAIN are still trying to decide exactly what to research. The original proposal last year called for “reconstructing the full record of neural activity across complete neural circuits,” or more simply, visualizing how neurons interact to create thoughts, emotions, and bodily commands.

The fine print: The technology needed to achieve that goal doesn’t yet exist. Scientists are still trying to understand the circuitry of a nematode’s “simple” nervous system of 302 neurons. A human brain, by contrast, has 85 billion. Existing lab techniques only allow researchers to study one or a few neurons at a time—not the 106 or more involved in a single, complete neural circuit.

Of course, the very purpose of science is overcoming such obstacles. But it would be helpful to know where the spigot of federal funding will flow before turning it on. Right now a 15-person BRAIN advisory group is still debating the best course of action: Should they start by mapping out the nematode’s nervous system as a practice run? Work toward inventing a new, noninvasive lab technique for peering at live, human brain circuits?

Some critics think the entire project is misguided. Our brains rewire their circuits throughout our lives, so “mapping” the brain might be like mapping an ocean with moving islands. (And whatever promoters might say, BRAIN’s primary objective is not to cure Alzheimer’s, although it could yield some clues.)

At a BRAIN planning summit in May, Harvard chemist George Whitesides admitted that among many scientists, “There’s very deep skepticism that this approach, physical mapping at that scale, is going to work.”

Research roundup

ASTRONOMY After four years of hunting for exoplanets, NASA’s Kepler space telescope appears to have bit the stardust. Two out of four $200,000 spinning wheels mounted inside the telescope to keep it correctly oriented have failed, and engineers say a repair effort is unlikely. Kepler has discovered 132 planets beyond our solar system since its 2009 launch.

SPACE If humans ever travel to Mars, they may want to wear lead space-suits. Using data collected by Mars rover Curiosity, researchers found a six-month voyage to the red planet (and another six months back) would expose an astronaut to more than half of the lifetime dose of radiation considered acceptable by NASA. The exposure intensity during the trip would be like getting a CT scan every five days.

GM FOOD Japan halted some imports of U.S. wheat after Agriculture Department officials found a genetically modified variety of wheat growing in Oregon. Seed company Monsanto field tested herbicide-resistant wheat in Oregon nine years ago, but the variety was never approved for consumption in the United States or elsewhere, although it is believed to be safe. It’s unclear whether the modified wheat patch was planted or escaped into the wild accidentally.—D.J.D.
In 1948, Israeli soldiers evicted residents of the Palestinian Christian village of Iqrit in Upper Galilee and three years later, on the eve of residents' return, destroyed the village. The only remaining structure is the Church of Our Lady. Some of the villagers' descendants are now returning to the desolate village, in defiance of Israeli court rulings against any return.
Patriot games

The TIM TEBOW circus is headed for New England  BY MARK BERGIN

When the New York Jets released backup quarterback Tim Tebow in late April, the two-time national champion in college suddenly found himself in a national silence. The phone simply didn’t ring. NFL teams appeared uninterested in signing a player whose 13-month stint with the Jets proved more distraction than production. Tebow took only 50 offensive snaps last season as the team languished to a 6-10 record. The general manager who acquired Tebow and the offensive coordinator who failed to use him were fired. Who would dare take a similar risk?

Enter Bill Belichick. The longtime Patriots coach has snatched Tebow from the clutches of an NFL exit, signing him this month to back up future Hall of Fame quarterback Tom Brady. Unlike the situation with New York, Tebow’s presence on the Patriots’ roster generates no controversy over who will start under center. What’s more, Belichick is not likely to entertain much media inquiry about a player buried in the depth chart. For the first time in his three-year professional career, might Tebow blend in as just one of the guys?

Don’t count on it. The media circus that has surrounded Tebow since the Denver Broncos selected him in the first round of the 2010 draft had all three rings in full operation within hours of the Patriots’ signing. Every sports columnist, blogger, and talking head weighed in on the development, some speculating that Belichick would work his coaching magic on a player yet to prove his NFL passing chops. Others argued the move smacked of desperation for a team whose once explosive offense has slowed in recent years. Some even suggested the signing was just a ploy for the Patriots to gain information about a rival’s playbook.

Never has so much speculation swirled over the acquisition of a backup not likely to see much playing time. Such is Tebow’s curse, the attention and interest in his every move generates undue expectations, undue adulation, and undue criticism. But Tebow doesn’t seem to mind, often using that spotlight to speak of his faith in Jesus. Given the Patriots’ history of deep runs in the playoffs, a roster spot in New England, even one on the bench, could elevate Tebow’s platform higher than ever before. His Christianity is sure to be on display. There’s no hiding light under Super Bowls.

True originals

Not since 1979 has the NHL seen two of its original six teams face off in the Stanley Cup Final. But when the Chicago Blackhawks and Boston Bruins cruised to victories in their respective conference championships, they set up just that—an original six series.

The demarcation of an original set of teams is unique to hockey among the big four North American team sports. Along with the Blackhawks and Bruins, the Detroit Red Wings, Montreal Canadiens, New York Rangers, and Toronto Maple Leafs all joined the NHL between 1917 and 1926 and never relocated or underwent a name change.

Determining a set of original teams in the NBA or MLB poses a greater challenge. In baseball, only the Cincinnati Reds, Chicago White Sox, and Detroit Tigers have never changed name or city. But teams like the Chicago Cubs (formerly the Chicago White Stockings), Boston Red Sox (formerly the Boston Americans), and Cleveland Indians (formerly the Cleveland Blues) might lay claim to some semblance of original status. In basketball, only the Boston Celtics and New York Knicks have maintained the same name and city since the founding of the NBA in 1949.

The NFL is even more difficult for finding originals. The Green Bay Packers are the longest-standing franchise to maintain name and city, joining the league in 1921. Only two other organizations from that era still exist—the Chicago Bears, who were initially the Decatur Staleys, and the Arizona Cardinals, who were initially the Chicago Cardinals. —M.B.
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‘The Fed is the market’

What happens when the price of things no longer reflect their true value?

BY WARREN COLE SMITH

There’s little doubt now that artificially low interest rates are at least a part of the reason for the dramatic stock market rise of the past year. Money has flowed out of the bond market—with its low yields—into stocks, driving stock prices up. Low interest rates have increased margin buying and corporate buy-backs, further driving up stock prices.

Financial writer and venture capitalist Bill Frezza puts it succinctly: “The Fed is the market.” If you don’t believe that, consider this: In May, Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke said he was open to trimming the Fed’s bond-buying program—if the economy continued to improve. That put the bond markets on a minute-by-minute alert for how new economic data would affect Bernanke’s brain. That exercise, in turn, caused U.S. bond markets, usually harbors of tranquility in even rough economic seas, to pitch. The 10-year Treasury bond yield rose 50 basis points in May alone, to 2.1 percent. The 30-year bond was over 3 percent. And on May 31, the day after a bond auction where the yield spiked, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 200 points.

Because everyone in the markets is (so far) making money, and the data are conflicting, it’s been hard to make criticism of Fed policies stick. But we’re beginning to see cracks in the orthodoxy. Stocks and bond yields are not the only things going up. Housing prices are up, too. The Case Shiller/S&P Index released in late May indicates home prices are up 10.9 percent from a year ago, while the rate of home ownership hasn’t changed. Mark Vitner, chief economist at Wells Fargo, worries that the rise in home prices might be the result of investor speculation. He says it’s “troubling” that home prices are going up so much and so fast just four years after one of the biggest crashes in home prices in U.S. history.

The question is: Are these rises in the cost of assets and the uptick in bond yield a return to historic norms, or ominous signs of a bubble, inflation, or both? Frezza thinks the markets “have become a casino.” He said historically markets “aggregated knowledge.” Lots of participants competing with one another would bring out the best ideas and reward them with financial success. Now, though, “the wisdom of the market is overwhelmed by the Fed’s role. The market is no longer a good place to get information.” He said when the banking industry in Cyprus crashed earlier this year, he exited both the stock and bond markets. “I know I’ll miss the peak,” he said. “But I can sleep at night.”

Jared Pincin, assistant professor of economics at the King’s College, is less worried: “I don’t see inflation being a problem.” He said the increase in bond yield is because “risk-appetite is increasing and the demand for bonds is falling, so yields are rising.” He said his greatest concern is that “we’re in a slow growth environment.” This slow growth has created a stubbornly high unemployment rate of 7.5 percent. Add in the underemployed and discouraged workers, and what some call the “true unemployment rate” likely tops 12 percent. The more than 20 million Americans in these categories didn’t participate in the Fed-induced bull market. Neither will the millions of Americans who lost their homes when the housing bubble burst be able to participate in the rise in home prices.

Mark Twain said history does not repeat itself, but it does echo. So will we see an echo of the crash we saw in 2008 and 2009? Frezza says yes. “They’ll keep this charade up through the mid-term election,” he said. “Then this asset bubble will bust.” Others are less sure. But virtually everyone agrees that the housing, stock, and bond markets are being priced by factors other than the underlying value of the assets, especially by the Fed’s policy of increasing the availability of money. And one echo that reverberates throughout economic history is this: The price and value lines can’t stay apart for long without coming back together, sometimes dramatically.
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Numbered victims

Experts try to get an accurate yearly count of Christian martyrs

BY THOMAS KIDD

FAYE PAMA MYSYa, a Pentecostal pastor in northeastern Nigeria, was in his home in mid-May when militants thought to be affiliated with the Islamist terrorist group Boko Haram fatally shot him. Mysa became the latest among thousands of casualties of Muslim-Christian violence in that African nation.

Religious freedom is under attack across the world today, and much of the globe’s religious persecution and violence targets Christians. A 2012 Pew Forum report contends that three-quarters of the world’s 7 billion people live under significant political or social restrictions on religious liberty.

In May, a Vatican official even told the United Nations that some 100,000 Christians—people like Pastor Mysa—lose their lives for the faith every year. However, that number is controversial. The Vatican’s assertion matches a report published in 2011 by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The critical question, to those who dispute the high number, is who counts as a martyr?

According to the Gordon-Conwell study, martyrs are “believers in Christ who have lost their lives, prematurely, in situations of witness, as a result of human hostility.” This may sound like a fairly focused definition, but it allows the Gordon-Conwell experts to include episodes such as the Rwandan genocide of 1994, in which approximately 800,000 people died. Rwanda is overwhelmingly Christian: Both perpetrators and victims of the genocide were of the same faith. Similarly, the Gordon-Conwell estimate includes those who died in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which claimed approximately 5.4 million lives from 1998 to 2007. The Gordon-Conwell study notes that many of the Congolese victims perished from causes indirectly related to the conflict, such as disease and malnutrition.

Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, an expert on global religious persecution, contends that, as awful as the situations in Rwanda and the Congo were, it is misleading to count most of those victims as martyrs. He defines martyrs as those killed for their faith “who would not have been killed had they not been Christians.” By this standard, he thinks that there might only be 7,300 Christian martyrs a year on average—an appalling number, but one that can stand up to scrutiny from secular critics who, according to Schirrmacher, routinely question higher totals such as the Vatican’s.

MODERN MARTYRS:
Mourners and priests gather in the back lot of a Catholic church now turned into a mass grave in Madalla, Nigeria, for dozens killed in a Christmas Day bombing by a radical Islamist sect.

SINKING ROC?
The non-denominational Richmond (Va.) Outreach Center, known as “The ROC,” is one of America’s fastest-growing churches. But legal troubles for two of its pastors have sent the congregation into turmoil. Texas authorities have arrested and charged Pastor Geronimo “G” Aguilar with seven felony counts, including aggravated sexual abuse of a child under 14, in two cases that date back to the mid-1990s. Aguilar has taken a temporary leave of absence from The ROC, as has Pastor Jason Helmlinger, whom police have accused of making threatening phone calls to former church member Allen Caldwell. Caldwell had publicly alleged “inappropriate behavior between Pastor G and some church wives.” Helmlinger reportedly called Caldwell, “yelled profanities and threatened to do bodily harm” to him.

In a statement in May, The ROC’s board of directors said that they consider the charges against Aguilar “completely untrue and unfounded,” and will continue paying him during his leave. Five days later, the board announced that Helmlinger had “voluntarily removed himself from his pastoral duties” while he dealt with his misdemeanor charges, and that he would “seek counseling regarding this issue.” Founded by Aguilar in 2001, The ROC has a weekly attendance of 11,000 on several campuses, a Spanish-language service, and several affiliated social ministries. —T.K.
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‘Scouts in the balance’
May 18 I am a chaplain with the Boy Scouts and “homophobia” is a smokescreen. This debate is not about hate, it is about morality, a question that has been decided by God. The last two points of the Scout law are that they be clean, morally as well as physically, and reverent. If we throw these out, Scouting means nothing!
—GARY F. BENTLEY, Sellersville, Pa.

This article was sad indeed. To think that a group of people would disrupt such a beloved American institution is almost unthinkable.
—ERNST SHIVERS, Snellville, Ga.

‘As she lay dying’
May 18 As someone who recently buried a parent very much like Marvin Olasky’s mother, thank you. This column accurately portrayed the importance of honoring your mother and father, even when it is complicated. My own father’s journey with dementia turned an angry bully into a man who was humbled and confused—and somehow a lot nicer. I can only pray that somewhere in that foggy place of need, he met Jesus.
—ROB HENDERSON, Dandridge, Tenn.

‘Builder and giver’
May 18 Thank you for the obituary of Bob Perry. He was a great benefactor to our ministry in El Salvador, helping build a school, an orphanage, and a large medical center that he asked us not to name after him. Though we often tried to meet him to thank him personally, he said, “Save the cost of the ticket to use in your work.”
—DON BENNER, San Salvador, El Salvador

‘Courtroom horror’
May 4 Thanks for covering the Gosnell trial, unlike the mainstream media. I remember how ABC broke into its programming to report the false speculation that the Aurora, Colo., shooter might belong to the Denver Tea Party. That was news, but a killer of many babies—not so much. It’s laughable and yet so frustrating.
—JACK PAVIE, Sumneytown, Pa.

Notable Books
May 18 Justin Lee’s personal journey is touching but it also illustrates the self-deception and rationalization people use to justify sinful behavior. His book does a disservice to all who struggle with same-sex attraction.
—Igor Shpudeiko, Mahwah, N.J.

‘Terror-fighting tangle’
May 18 I must take issue with your statement that the Boston bombing was “the first successful terrorist attack on U.S. soil since 9/11.” It was the first bombing, but have we forgotten the terrorist shootings at the El Al ticket counter at Los Angeles airport in 2002 and in 2009 at a military recruitment center in Little Rock, Ark., and at the Ft. Hood military base?
—NEIL JOHNSTON, Grand Prairie, Texas

‘A bit rusty’
May 18 I think the reviewer missed the not-so-subtle warning in Iron Man 3 against stem-cell research. It showed how something that begins with honorable intentions can turn into an out-of-control wreck when coupled with mankind’s evil.
—DANIEL KINBERG, Lingle, Wyo.

Send photos and letters to: mailbag@worldmag.com
Mailbag

Thank you for such thorough realism and hopefulness in André Seu Peterson’s series on the Gosnell trial.
—MICHAEL MACAUGHELTY, Monroeville, Ala.

I am praying for Peterson. It must have been painful to endure the testimonies and proceedings of Gosnell’s trial. Her many important observations have challenged us to think thoroughly about the state of our society, one mired in a culture of death.
—GEORGE A. DAMOFF, Farmers Branch, Texas

Peterson illuminated the hypocritical nature of the whole business: the abortion industry splitting hairs over who is on their “team” and who isn’t, and especially the craziness of laws protecting doctors who kill infants in the womb and convicting doctors who kill infants outside their mothers’ bodies.

This type of coverage, along with a refusal to water down or avoid testy topics even within the Christian community, keeps me reading WORLD regularly.
—FRANK NICODEM, Geneva, Ill.

‘Line drills’
May 4 With his latest survey at an airport, Joel Belz proves merely that location and audience dictate the most pressing concerns. Had he performed the same drill at a homeless shelter,

In an obscure corner of the Roman Empire, a Jew called Jesus Christ was crucified. And that might have been that. Except, this was no ordinary man. And the story of what has happened since is no ordinary story. This is the saga of how a people and their faith transformed our world.

Constantine’s troops rout those of Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge early in the fourth century.
—Illustration by Greg Harlin, Volume 3, By This Sign.
perhaps his audience would vote for jobs. If at a public school, his audience might vote for education. And in an evangelical church the answer just might be abortion or gay marriage.

—PHILLIP WOECKENER, Tallahassee, Fla.

‘Heartbreak Hill’

May 4 It seemed to me quite crass to put “Boston terrorthon” on your May 4 cover. Other than that, your recent issues have been very well done.

—JIM VALENTINE, Troy, Mont.

‘Unstoppable’

April 20 The definition of marriage has been eroding for quite some time. It has gone from a commitment between a man and woman to form a lifelong union for the sake of building a family to a commitment between two individuals to stay together for an undetermined period for the sake of meeting their personal needs. At this point it seems of little importance whether the individuals are of the same or different genders.

—RUSSELL BOARD, Saitama, Japan

Marriage seems to the gay community a rational and fair inclusion into normality, but marriage is not legalized friendship with sexual benefits. For those in the thicket of sexual confusion, we as believers need to remember that there but for the grace of God go we.

—EARL PIPER, Greenville, S.C.

I am so grateful for WORLD. Your articles on current topics addressed from a biblical perspective are so interesting, informative, and encouraging to me, including the online items such as John Piper’s two messages on homosexuality.

—JOYCE ROBERTS, Hudsonville, Mich.

‘In all the noise, sounds of silence’

April 20 Thank you so much for Mindy Belz’s very courageous column.

—BETTY NELSON, Riverside, Ill.

Although I have used the word gay myself, I think we as Christians forfeit ground to the world when we deviate from biblical terms for sinful behavior. It should be for WORLD another way to show you don’t “buy” the gay marriage construct.

—MICHAEL MALLIE, Kalona, Iowa

Correction

Christ refused to answer Pilate (“Persecution myth?” June 1, p. 54).

LETTERS & PHOTOS

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Infanticide is the new abortion. I’m not saying infanticide will be the new abortion, but that it is. Wherever abortionists kill late-term babies—across the fruited plain—inconvenient live births occur. And inconvenient live births are taken care of. If your patient is shelling out a thousand bucks to end the life of her baby, you are not about to send her home with a baby and a formula starter kit.

Infanticide was the unseen presence throughout the Gosnell trial, formally listed among the charges but never addressed until Judge Jeffrey Minehart sprung an 11th hour surprise by spelling it out in his instructions to the jury. Till then the two months of heated debate had seemed to be between murder and innocence. When the judge finished his presentation, reporters rushed the defense attorney for clarification. He tossed off a thumbnail sketch while packing his suitcase: Murder involves killing; infanticide is withholding help.

The judge had been more specific in his definition of infanticide: (1) the defendant is a physician; (2) the physician attended the birth of a live child, i.e., a “human being” who was “completely expelled from the mother” and exhibiting signs of life; (3) the physician failed to provide that child care; (4) the physician did so “intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly.”

This took me back to the first week of April when a witness for the prosecution described what she does at her hospital with aborted babies born alive: She administers “comfort care,” which turns out to be draping the baby with a cloth “until it passes.” Why, that sounded positively Florence Nightingale-like. Such wording does not conjure a struggle for life, or a gasping for breath.

After writing for WORLD about “comfort care,” I received this email:

“Your mention of ‘comfort care’ for the babies born alive and then killed shocked me. My 84-year-old mother was put into hospice after she hit her head on a door. There was some bleeding but she was able to move both arms and legs. She struggled to get out of bed. She was very strong—used to taking long walks every day—and her heart was in excellent shape. Yet they put her on morphine and refused to let her wake up—and took away her water until she died after 7 days. This was called ‘comfort care.’ We were all bamboozled into thinking it was the right thing to do. I am traumatized by what happened. Watch out for ‘comfort care’ if you are deemed to be too old in this society. It’s not just for aborted babies.”

I once managed a little café. Anyone who has worked in an eating establishment can tell you horror stories from behind kitchen doors—the “six-second rule,” the dropped dinner rolls quickly salvaged, the human frailty and temptation, the multi-purpose hand towel. If this is the case where the stakes are a $10 sandwich, imagine the pressure to make an abortion turn out right. Add to that the ease with which one can create a desirable outcome—whether the quick slice of Gosnell’s knife, or the self-delusional “comfort care” of a baby left alone until its breathing gently ceases. I made a batch of granola once and sent it to Brooklyn. My guileless granddaughter told me some time later: “You know what happens to the granola you send? We put it in the freezer until it goes bad and we have to throw it out.”

Granola is only granola, and even in this paltry matter, note how a “ceremony” of sorts serves to buffer the reality of a squemish undertaking. The history of infanticide shows the same penchant for euphemism as we have in our day. From ancient Greece we read: “I am still in Alexandria. … As soon as we receive wages, I will send them to you. In the meantime, if (good fortune to you!) you give birth, if it is a boy, let it live; if it is a girl, expose it” (Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, 1 B.C.). Note, he says “expose,” not “kill.”

In Rome an unwanted baby was put in a clay pot and left on the road: Roman “comfort care.” After all, no one killed the child, who merely died of natural causes. @
Excommunicating the why

When references to Jesus hit the cutting-room floor, we all miss out on the bigger story

JOURNALISM 1 AND 2 at Newton (Mass.) High School in the late 1960s: the only journalism courses I ever took, and just behind typing in the eighth grade as the most valuable I ever had. The journalism teacher, Jacqueline Wollan, was a smart and willowy 26-year-old. All the guys were in love with her, and she taught us the six lovely questions reporters ask: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? This leads to a story. Down syndrome kids are highly endangered: Parents abort nine out of 10. Justin and Tamara Reimer did not abort theirs: Elisha is now 16 years old and has given his name to the Elisha Foundation. The Reimers started it in 2005 with the goal of encouraging families that include “special needs” humans.

Elisha Reimer is Eli to his high-school friends in Bend, Ore. — and he has many because, among other talents, he has a great smile and the ability to give joy through hugs. Eli loves Jesus, narrates Bible stories, and in March became the first American with Down syndrome to hike to the Mt. Everest South Base Camp, 17,598 feet above sea level. The objective, in Justin Reimer’s words: “God’s glory and the gospel going forth to the disabled.”

Eli’s story had enough human interest to push three Los Angeles television stations to interview the Reimers upon their return to the United States. Those interviews led to many more, including one on NBC’s Today Show. All good, and you can see a live interview on YouTube, but his dad reports a disturbing pattern in taped interviews: Justin Reimer would give the who what when where of the trek but also the why — to glorify God and show that Down syndrome kids have value — only to see show after show edit out, in Reimer’s words, “any Jesus-related reference.”

One example from Reimer’s memory, so the words may not be exact: Interviewer asks, What is your takeaway from this great adventure? Reimer responds, God who created the Himalayas in all their grandeur also created my son uniquely. … God has a purpose in disability and can display His great works in and through disability. (Since anything you see in WORLD in quotation marks is an exact quotation, I’m putting these statements — none of which made it onto the broadcast — in italics.)

One more example: Interviewer asks, Justin, what was it like for you as Eli’s dad to see him accomplish this historic feat? Answer: I couldn’t help but to think of how God has been so good to us in giving us such an amazing blessing of a child. … I was overjoyed at God’s grace to us. None of that made it into the broadcast interview.

And so it went. Reimer wanted viewers to understand even a possible why for Eli’s disability: God created my son with one extra chromosome and through that He is using Eli to touch thousands of lives. That statement also hit the cutting-room floor. Cy Young Award winner R.A. Dickey told me last year about a similar spiking of the spiritual (“Worship on the mound,” July 28, 2012).

What would Jacqueline Wollan have said about that avoidance of why? When I decided last month to write a column about the Reimers, their adventure, and their media experience, I thought about my high-school journalism teacher for the first time in years. Last time I had seen her was 1968. Where might she be now, 45 years later, if still alive? What would she think about excommunicating Jesus whenever an interviewee mentioned Him?

I googled and — surprise — immediately found Jacqueline Wollan Gibbons. Same person? Yes: teacher at Newton High School. The reason that detail was readily findable: The Denton (Texas) Record Chronicle ran her obituary on March 28, 2013.

I was five weeks late. The obituary noted: “Jackie was a writer, poet, musician, teacher and reformer, whose goal was to reduce anger and fear and to increase love. She served her family, church and community in various capacities, including the Denton Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.”

Hmm. Maybe she wouldn’t have cared about the Elisha Foundation and Justin Reimer’s particular why, since Unitarians do not see Jesus as God — but I suspect she still would have left in those references to Jesus. They’re a crucial part of the story, and she loved stories. ©
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