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FAULTFINDING FRIENDS

Negative criticism of President Obama is getting to be quite a chorus.

Putting together a report card for the first year and a half of Barack Obama’s performance as president reminds me of the fellow whose grades arrived after his first year of college. The record was four Fs and a D. “Looks to me,” his adviser told him, “that you’ve been spending too much time on that one course.”

Except that some of us aren’t sure where we’d award even a D. And no one, on reading that, should respond by saying: “Well, of course. World magazine doesn’t know how to say anything positive about a Democrat.” What’s been overwhelming in recent weeks has been the extent to which criticism of the Obama administration has come from the president’s past supporters.

Two years ago, for example, Juan Williams of National Public Radio could barely contain his excitement when polls seemed to dictate Obama’s election later that year. But two weeks ago, Williams said bluntly: “The problem here is this is an administration that, as Hillary Clinton famously pointed out [during the primary campaign], you may not want to have answer the 3 a.m. call. These are guys who have tremendous vision about legislative achievements and specific things like healthcare, going forward on immigration, those difficult issues. . . . But when it comes to the crisis, when it comes to the Gulf oil spill, the wars, the recession, they feel as if it’s being imposed upon them, rather than taking the helm. That’s what Americans are sensing right here. . . . Are you able to handle a crisis in a convincing way that inspires confidence? And so far, the president hasn’t done that.”

When that’s the best your friends have to say about you, maybe you’d better hunker down and figure out what’s gone wrong.

Much more briefly, listen to Nicholas Kristof in The New York Times: “Let’s hope I’m wrong, but I fear that myopic policies by the Obama administration and its allies may lay the groundwork for a catastrophe in Sudan.” This, from one of Obama’s chief apologists just a year ago, about a president who was supposed to pour sugar on our soured relationships around the world.

Or try Frank Rich, also from the Times. Still a stubborn defender of Obama, Rich says: “Unlike his unflappable temperament, his lingering failings should and could be corrected. And they must be if his presidency is not just to rise above the 24/7 Spill-cam but to credibly seize the narrative that Americans have craved ever since he was elected during the most punishing economic downturn of our lifetime. We still want to believe that Obama is on our side, willing to fight those bad corporate actors who cut corners and gambled recklessly while regulators slept, Congress raked in contributions, and we got stuck with the wreckage and the bills. But his leadership style keeps sowing confusion about his loyalties, puncturing holes in the powerful tale he could tell.”

Or go to Joan Walsh in Salon: “Two stories about President Obama this weekend pushed my growing unease with his recent moves into full-blown anxiety.” In her column, she agrees with others who say the president’s efforts to defend himself sound “whiny and juvenile.”

And now, in a strange twist, a bizarre falling out is developing between President Obama and the mainstream media that loved and admired him into office. Sharp-penned Maureen Dowd observes “now that some in the press have turned against him, Obama is proving very thin skinned. . . . It hurts Obama to be a crybaby about it, and to blame the press and the ‘old Washington game’ for his own communication failures.” Dowd remembers now what she never reported during the campaign, that “Obama was always aloof and distrustful of the press despite the fact that most adored him during the campaign.”

Such clippings would be unremarkable if they had come from Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, or Dick Morris. And they might have been unworthy of comment too if they had all referenced a single issue. But when the president’s loyalists express doubts about his abilities in foreign affairs, waging war, the economy, the oil spill, immigration, healthcare, energy, and governance in general, then something has happened that even some of us oldsters have never witnessed in our lifetimes.
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Must Israel die?

NEWS: Blockade opponents play into terrorists' hands and offer Israel no workable way to survive

By Marvin Olasky

"CHICKS UP FRONT." That line from 1960s campus radicals reflects one of the oldest gambits in the revolutionaries' handbook. The concept: Put in the front lines those whose suffering will produce the greatest: propaganda harvest—women, children, the handicapped, humanitarians.

Palestinians trying to overthrow Israel amply use this tactic. Is a child shot, perhaps by Israeli soldiers, perhaps by Palestinians? Great: Broadcast it to the world and blame Israel. Are poorly armed "pacifists"—only knives and metal rods—killed by bullets as they attempt to break Israel's blockade of Hamas-rulled Gaza? Great: a propaganda windfall.

This is the story behind the new stories we can expect in late June and July as more Islamist flotillas try to demolish Israel's attempts to keep weapons out of the hands of Gaza terrorists. Yes, Israel now has a committee charged with seeing what went wrong in its fatal response to flotilla No. 1, and Turkey has set up its own committee, but by the time a report emerges it will probably be competing with new headlines about new "innocent victims."

The anti-Israel press regularly gives us only half the story. We hear repeatedly, "If Israelis were more reasonable, peace would come." True, but a second clause is missing: Yes, peace would come, because Israel would no longer exist. We hear repeatedly that "People in Gaza (including Christians) are hurting. Israel has Gaza in a vise." True, but
let's add a clause: Israel has Gaza in a vise because Hamas, which rules Gaza, has vowed to destroy Israel.

WORLD has consistently supported Israel's right to exist while also reporting sympathetically on the plight of Palestinians in Gaza, most recently in our May 8 issue. Easing their plight, as long as Hamas uses the small district as a hive for killer bees, is difficult. Even the normally level-headed The Economist comes unglued over this: It proposes "to ask the UN to oversee the flow of goods and people going in and out of Gaza." The UN, which condemns Israel at the drop of a pamphlet?

Nor have liberal groups like the National Council of Churches come up with any workable suggestions. Katharine Jefferts Schori, the Episcopalians' presiding bishop, is specific when it comes to ordaining homosexual clergy but vague on peace in the Middle East: "There are far better ways to protect Israel's security and promote moderate political leadership in Gaza than a blockade.

Let's hope so: Please name one or two.

In 2006 even Kofi Annan, then the UN's secretary general, saw through the "chicks up front" strategy. He conceded that Hezbollah was firing rockets at Israel from positions "located in the midst of the civilian population." The same procedure was evident in Gaza and is evident in the employment of purported pacifists in the flotilla's attempts to end the blockade.

The Israelis, always under pressure, are now letting more materials into Gaza, including 70 truckloads of cargo seized from the first Turkish flotilla. They should have clearly defined standards and avoid any appearance of harassment. But let's not think that they can bring peace by moderating their position. Only Hamas and other terrorists can, by recognizing Israel's right to exist.

The Nazis said they would bring about peace by killing six million Jews. Iranian leaders and their allies are now saying the same. The real solution is for Hamas and others to accept the two-state proposal that's offered. With man, that seems impossible. With God, who over the past decade brought about the conversion to Christ of Mosab Hassan Yousef, son of a major Hamas leader, nothing is impossible. Let us pray. ♦
"There is no God in Iraq," says an American Soldier. "I've been here two times and I haven't seen him yet." Or that's the way it feels. But you can change that. You can help the American Bible Society deliver God's Word to our troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the globe. Many are in desperate need of the hope and peace that only Scripture can bring. It only costs $4 to help reach a troop member with God's Word. Simply clip & mail the Bibles For Troops Coupon at right with your gift now, or give securely at (800) 433-8815 or Soldiers.AmericanBible.org.

They've answered the call. Please answer theirs.
Mass exodus

Fleeing the grip of ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan, an estimated 300,000 minority Uzbeks fled their homes, seeking to escape ethnic purging by mobs of Kyrgyz in the Central Asian nation. Another 100,000 Uzbeks (not including children) spilled across the border into neighboring Uzbekistan. The Red Cross described the chaos as “an immense crisis.” Beginning June 10, violence erupted in the southern city Kyrgyz city of Osh, where gangs raided Uzbek neighborhoods, shooting citizens, looting stores, and burning homes. Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet republic of 5.5 million people, is home to some 1 million Uzbeks. In April a mass revolt ousted former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, and the interim government accused Bakiyev of inciting violence to delay a June 27 vote on a new constitution. The United States maintains an air base in Kyrgyzstan that remains a critical hub for supplying coalition forces in Afghanistan.

Deadly passage

Uganda’s proposed anti-homosexuality bill—which calls for execution for some homosexual conduct—could be dead by the end of summer, but the controversy that has ensnared U.S. Christians continues to unfold. Exodus International, a faith-based U.S. group promoting freedom from homosexuality, released a policy statement in June opposing criminalization of homosexual behavior “conducted by consensual adults in private.” Media reports had suggested that a conference on homosexuality conducted by a group of U.S. Christians last year, including Exodus board member Don Schmierer, helped promote the legislation. Exodus president Alan Chambers expressed regret for not distancing the organization from last year’s conference sooner, and for not heeding warnings that the conference could be inflammatory: “Exodus and I believe in the grace that stands 100 percent opposed to sin, 100 percent for holiness, and 100 percent for all people to have the opportunity to know Christ.” A special committee appointed by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has opposed passage of the bill, which includes the death penalty or lengthy prison sentences in some cases of homosexual conduct, and would require Ugandans to report homosexual activity to law enforcement.

SOUder seat

State Sen. Marlin Stutzman won by a wide margin the GOP nomination to contend for Indiana’s 3rd Congressional District seat in the wake of Republican Rep. Mark Souder’s resignation in May over an affair with a part-time staffer (“Lessons from a broken man,” June 19, 2010). Stutzman gained statewide recognition for his formidable challenge to former Sen. Dan Coats in last month’s Republican primary battle for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Democrat Evan Bayh. In that race he earned the backing of national figures like Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., though he lost to Coats.

Souder served as congressman for 15 years and announced his resignation May 18 after winning his own tough Republican primary when the affair came to light. “I hope God will somehow use this mess to His glory,” Souder told WORLD in a recent email. “I need some additional life changes and, assuming that I am humble enough to let the Holy Spirit use me, I will be back in other—if less prominent—ways.”
Slick politics
President Obama's response to the Gulf oil spill threatens more harm than good

BY JAMIE DEAN

ON THE NIGHT President Barack Obama clinched the Democratic Party’s nomination for the presidency, the candidate said his supporters would remember the June evening as “the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal.”

Barely two years later, the president sat soberly behind his desk in the Oval Office on a recent June evening, trying to respond to a spiraling crisis in a troubled ocean that may take years to heal.

The president on June 15 used his first Oval Office address to offer what he called “a battle plan” to fight the 39 oil spill that has been gushing an estimated 60,000 barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico each day. But the president’s plan—with little power to stop a massive spill that even round-the-clock BP engineers can’t manage—instead puts forth long-term policies that may do more harm than good.

The president’s first step: a moratorium on deepwater drilling. An Obama administration report claimed that seven scientists from the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) had reviewed the recommendation to temporarily ban deepwater drilling in a region already suffering from a tanking seafood industry.

The scientists said that wasn’t true. In a letter to lawmakers, they said they reviewed the plan before administration officials added the moratorium, and that they don’t approve of the ban: “It will not measurably reduce risk further and it will have a lasting impact on the nation’s economy which may be greater than that of the spill.”

Sen. Mary Landrieu, a Democrat from Louisiana, said the ban could impact some 330,000 jobs in Louisiana alone—nearly 13.4 percent of the state’s work force. The state’s Republican governor, Bobby Jindal, pleaded with the president to reverse the ban: “The last thing we need is to enact public policies that will certainly destroy thousands of existing jobs while preventing the creation of thousands more.”

The president’s second step: Set up an independent fund to handle Gulf oil coming into the vulnerable Perdido Bay, Coast Guard officials took the boom and gave it to Louisiana. After a heated meeting that included Alabama Gov. Bob Riley and President Obama, the Coast Guard said it would make up the loss. By then, it was too late: Oil had breached the bay.

“IT WILL HAVE A LASTING IMPACT ON THE NATION’S ECONOMY WHICH MAY BE GREATER THAN THAT OF THE SPILL.”

Coast residents’ claims against BP. Obama said an independent entity would ensure that BP fairly reimburses residents for lost wages and other damages. BP agreed to the request, though many legal experts said the president didn’t have the authority to demand such an entity. And they say a problem remains: Such an entity could become beholden to the administration and take far longer to process claims.

The president’s third step: climate change legislation that makes even some Democrats wary. In his Oval Office speech, Obama avoided controversial cap-and-trade language but hailed energy legislation that the House passed last year. That bill included a cap-and-trade program that would raise energy costs for individuals and businesses.

Though a cap-and-trade provision remains in a proposed Senate bill, Democrats may remove the program to attempt passage of an energy bill this year. Senators still could add the provision later as an amendment.

But some Democratic senators questioned linking climate change legislation with the Gulf Coast spill. “The climate bill isn’t going to stop the oil leak,” Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., told the Bloomberg news service. “The first thing you have to do is stop the oil leak.” Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., agreed: “That doesn’t have much to do with the Gulf.”

Down in the Gulf, local officials continued to express frustration with cleanup efforts, decrying poor coordination between BP workers and thousands of federal employees. Even local efforts seemed thwarted: When Alabama officials ordered protective boom from the Persian Gulf to keep oil from coming into the vulnerable Perdido Bay, Coast Guard officials took the boom and gave it to Louisiana. After a heated meeting that included Alabama Gov. Bob Riley and President Obama, the Coast Guard said it would make up the loss. By then, it was too late: Oil had breached the bay.
Misery index

From a swarming crowd, Haitian earthquake victim Orillus Menard screamed a message for former President Bill Clinton as he toured her devastated town of Leogane: “Since the 12th of January, misery has been killing us.” The misery index is soaring in Haiti as sweltering heat and hurricane season descend. In many ways, little has changed since the January disaster that killed some 300,000 victims and left more than 1 million homeless. While clusters of Haitians remove small mounds of rubble with shovels and picks, massive piles of collapsed buildings remain. U.S.-based contractors have moved equipment to Haiti, hoping to win contracts for rubble removal and reconstruction, but say they are still waiting. The international commission overseeing recovery is still debating how to spend some $9.9 billion in pledged aid. UN humanitarian chief John Holmes says he’s frustrated with the miniscule progress and says the population of tent cities in Port-au-Prince has nearly doubled since the quake. Some Haitians have moved back to the city after finding rural areas depleted of resources, while others are newly homeless—unable to pay rent after quake-related loss of income. Disputes over land for temporary housing sites have stalled plans for them, leaving tens of thousands stranded in camps vulnerable to severe flooding.

Capital crime

Afghan leaders call for execution of Christians

BY MINDY BELZ

A video broadcast in May on an Afghan television station has touched off controversy for Afghanistan’s tiny, mostly invisible Christian population and faith-based workers. Noorin TV footage showed Afghans being baptized and participating with Westerners in Christian prayer meetings held in alleged “missionary safe houses” in western Kabul. The government quickly suspended from working in the country two church-based aid organizations—U.S.-based Church World Service and Norwegian Church Aid—though no evidence connected the groups with the baptisms.

In Kabul, angry protesters demanded the expulsion of foreigners who try to convert Muslims. And in parliament Abdul Sattar Khawasi, a deputy of the lower house, called for Muslim converts to Christianity to be executed: “Those Afghans who appeared in this video film should be executed in public.” Other lawmakers affirmed that the killing of an “apostate” in Afghanistan is not a crime.

President Hamid Karzai’s spokesman said June 1 that he wants to prevent further conversions. Two of the Afghans who appeared in the broadcast have been arrested. Cracking down on Christians and foreigners could aid his effort to lure Taliban leaders into negotiations and shore up the regime.

Noorin TV is funded by the Northern Alliance, headed by political opponents of Karzai. “The government of Afghanistan should be held accountable,” Patrick Sookhdeo, president of Barnabas Fund and a NATO advisor, told me. “It is a signatory to UN mechanisms and NATO is funding its government.”

MINORITY REPORT

When Iraq’s Federal Supreme Court belatedly approved the results of March elections last month, it meant that five seats for ethnically Christian candidates remain in the Iraqi parliament. That may not seem like much, but in the past only one or two were designated and it signifies “greater representation for the Christian minority,” according to a statement by International Christian Concern.

In all, 14 seats out of the 325-seat legislature are held by non-Muslims, five of whom are Christians. In comparison, Christians held two seats last term.

FIVE SEATS: The first session of Iraq’s new parliament.
Q. Who are winning souls and planting churches among un-reached people of Southeast Asia?

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Q. Who provides financial support for indigenous missions in Southeast Asia?

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Q. How is Christian Aid financed?
A. Christian Aid is supported entirely by freewill gifts and offerings from Bible-believing, missionary-minded Christians, churches and organizations.

Q. Do indigenous missions in other countries also need our financial help?
A. Christian Aid is in communication with more than 4000 indigenous missions, some based in almost every unevangelized country on earth. They have over 200,000 missionaries in need of support. All Christians who believe in Christ’s “Great Commission” are invited to join hands with Christian Aid in finding help for thousands of native missionaries who are now out on the fields of the world with no promise of regular financial support.

For more than 50 years Christian Aid has been sending financial help to indigenous evangelistic ministries based in unevangelized countries. More than 740 ministries are now being assisted in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. They deploy over 75,000 native missionaries who are spreading the gospel of Christ among unreached people within more than 3000 different tribes and nations. Most are in countries where Americans are not allowed to go as missionaries.

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Lights off

Each night the iconic Empire State Building (ESB) lights up with colors to commemorate cultural events or holidays—lavender and white for Gay Pride Week, or red, white, and blue for Veterans Day. But when the Catholic League petitioned for the building to light up blue and white to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mother Teresa’s birth in August, management denied the request. After a blitz of negative attention, owner Anthony Malkin said, “As a privately owned building, ESB has a specific policy against any other lighting for religious figures or requests by religions and religious organizations.” But in 2000 the ESB lit up to honor Cardinal John O’Connor and extinguished its lights in 2005 to honor Pope John Paul II’s death. Some 40,000 people have signed a petition protesting the decision. City councilman Peter Vallone Jr. said, “The only person who could forgive the Empire State Building for this boneheaded decision would be Mother Teresa.”

NO KIDS ALLOWED?

A St. Petersburg Times investigation found that Church of Scientology members have brought federal lawsuits, including charges of human trafficking, against the organization for pressuring them into having abortions. Former members said the church interrogated pregnant women, urged abortions for the good of the church, separated couples, and assigned uncooperative pregnant women to heavy manual labor. In her filed complaint, Claire Headley said she unwillingly had two abortions, and in a deposition identified 36 women she said had abortions while working for Sea Org, an elite maritime branch of the church. Headley said that Scientology staff forbids her from calling her husband so he did not learn she was pregnant until six months after she had an abortion. A church spokesman denied the charges.

PROP 8 CLOSER

A California judge heard the final arguments June 16 in a landmark case that will decide the future of Proposition 8, a California voter initiative that banned same-sex marriage. During the arguments last January, advocates for traditional marriage objected that same-sex marriage proponents put the voters’ intent on trial by arguing that people campaigned for Proposition 8 out of bigotry. When U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker sent each side a list of questions to answer in closing arguments, he indicated that voter intent was a factor. He asked if the case had implications for the constitutionality of the federal Defense of Marriage Act—an issue not raised in previous arguments. Jim Campbell, litigation staff counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund and an attorney on the case, said Walker’s questions don’t betray his leanings: “All we can really glean from them is that the judge is carefully considering the issue.”

A decision from Walker is expected within weeks, and likely will be reviewed by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and then the U.S. Supreme Court.

Close enough

The Food and Drug Administration is considering whether to approve a new pill that would terminate pregnancies not just the morning after, but up to five mornings after. The drug, dubbed “ella” (ulipristal acetate), is already legal in Europe. It could prevent a fertilized egg from planting in the womb for up to five days after sex—though proponents describe the drug as a contraceptive, not an abortifacient. The Washington Post described the pill as a “close chemical relative” of RU486, a pill that will abort a baby up to nine weeks into pregnancy. “With ulipristal, women will be enticed to buy a poorly tested abortion drug, unaware of its medical risks, under the guise that it’s a morning--after pill,” Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America, told the Post.
"Freedom from porn." That’s how Apple CEO Steve Jobs describes his company’s policy not to allow applications (apps) featuring pornographic content to run on its products. And Apple’s been putting its balance sheet where its public relations is, removing approximately 5,000 apps with explicit material from the iTunes store earlier this year.

Given how ubiquitous pornography is on the internet and that other smartphone platforms offer it in abundance (not to mention the fact that users can easily jailbreak their iPhones or iPads and run whatever apps they want), the policy may be largely symbolic. But it’s a symbol that’s sparking condemnation from some corners.

After the iPad’s adherence to Apple’s no-porn policy reignited the issue, an editorial in Advertising Age equated the company’s actions to government censorship. And a story in The New York Times argued that the computer business was built on pornography, thus Apple’s stance will likely result in its devices losing market share. But Jobs doesn’t appear to give much weight to either dire predictions or charges that he’s suppressing liberty.

The controversy began when Gawker blogger Ryan Tate fired away at Jobs for being anti-freedom.

Jobs responded, “Yep, freedom from programs that trash your battery. Freedom from porn. Yep, freedom.” He also said, “Users, developers, and publishers can do whatever they like—they don’t have to buy or develop or publish on iPads.”

When Tate replied that he didn’t want “freedom from porn,” Jobs answered, “You might care more about porn when you have kids.” In later correspondence with a consumer, Jobs went further, saying his company had a “moral responsibility to keep porn off the iPhone.”

Jobs revealed that the policy, by targeting parents, may be based as much on shrewd business sense as on moral consideration. If Jobs is right, the demographic least likely to join the Apple revolution—older PC users—could be won over by word of its responsiveness toward family concerns.

The biggest sign Apple’s anti-porn stance may not be the retail suicide that Ad Age and The New York Times suggest it is? Microsoft is following suit. On June 7, the company announced that the new Windows 7 mobile software will not allow apps with content that “a reasonable person would consider to be adult or borderline adult.”

If other electronic companies likewise get the message that a large chunk of consumers would welcome the kind of liberty as Jobs describes, we may soon have more freedom to use technology without fear of being inundated by images that debase sexuality.
**Spelled**
Ohio teen Anamika Veeramani emerged victorious at the Scripps National Spelling Bee June 4 by correctly spelling the medical term stomruhu. The 14-year-old, who receives more than $40,000 in cash and prizes, is the third consecutive Indian-American to win the bee.

**Jailed**
An Iranian court has sentenced journalist Jila Baniyaghoob, 39, to one year of prison and banned her from writing for 30 years. Last year authorities arrested Baniyaghoob, who wrote for several reformist newspapers that have since closed, on charges she spread anti-government propaganda while reporting on the disputed 2009 presidential election.

**Named**
President Obama named an ambassador—at-large for international religious freedom, a position that sat vacant for over a year. Suzan Johnson Cook—a former professor at New York Theological Seminary, pastor, and police chaplain—has no background on international religious freedom or foreign policy issues.

**Rescued**
French fishermen plucked teen adventurer Abby Sunderland, 16, from the Indian Ocean June 12 after storms crippled her boat and left her stranded. Sunderland, whose dreams of becoming the youngest person to sail non-stop around the world alone ended after she had to pull into harbor to repair faulty navigation equipment, said that despite criticism about undertaking the failed voyage, she is “definitely going to sail around the world again or really give it another try.” She may write a book about her adventures.

**Died**
Raymond Franz, a former member of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses who broke with the sect after questioning its teachings and advocating for reform, died June 2 at age 88. Franz’s books, Crisis of Conscience and In Search of Christian Freedom, are often credited with helping expose the inner workings of the secretive group.

**Executed**
Taliban militants reportedly abducted and then publicly hanged a 7-year-old boy June 8 on grounds that he was spying for the Afghan government. The murder may have been an act of revenge after the boy’s grandfather, a tribal elder, spoke out against the Taliban in their southern Afghanistan village. Officials said three years ago militants executed a 70-year-old woman and a child on similar charges.
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"It wasn’t Sen. McCain’s question."

Gen. DAVID PETRAEUS, head of U.S. Central Command, on briefly passing out during a June 15 Senate hearing. The incident happened while Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., was asking him a question.

"Thirteen women in kayaks, clenching knives in their teeth, cutting monofilament fishing line off the mangroves and clearing trash."

LAURA FOX of Key West describing the cleanup of the mangrove island Man Key. Key West residents, frustrated with the government and BP, have taken oil spill cleanup into their own hands.

"What would MacGyver do if he were here?"

JONATHAN METZ of West Hartford, Conn., on his thoughts when his arm became stuck in a furnace for two days. He ultimately attempted to self-amputate his arm.

"That was very strange. I’m not sure I liked it. All my life, I’ve heard, ‘one man, one vote.’"

ARTHUR FURANO, 80, of Port Chester, N.Y., after voting six times in a June 15 village board of trustees election. A judge ordered the unusual system in which each voter casts six ballots and can vote for different candidates, called cumulative voting, in order to help elect a Hispanic candidate.

"I think they've oversold this stuff. The whole movement has taken a giant step backward."

U.S. Sen. LINDSEY GRAHAM, R-S.C., on global warming science. Graham was once a strong proponent of taking action against climate change but now says he would vote against the climate bill he helped write.

"If you're gonna buy a race, you ought to win it."

Commentator RICH LOWRY, on unions spending more than $10 million on a primary challenge to Democratic Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark. Lincoln defeated her more liberal challenger, Lt. Gov. BILL HALTER, in a June 8 runoff election and faces Republican Rep. John Boozman in the fall campaign.
DID ANYONE ELSE READ THIS STORY ABOUT HOW ELECTRONIC GADGETS UNDERMINE OUR ABILITY TO FOCUS AND CONCENTRATE... DARN! THE PADRES LOST YESTERDAY...

AS YOU CAN SEE, THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING WHAT IT DOES BEST!
MOTHER KNOWS BEST
Sheriff's deputies in Pasco County, Fla., knew to trust another's judgment. When Charles Dennison telephoned, 911 authorities were all ears. Until they heard his complaint. The 32-year-old had dialed 911 complaining that his mother had taken his beer away from him. Deputies say Dennison wanted her arrested instead, authorities arrived on the scene and charged the highly intoxicated man with making false 911 calls and booked him into the county jail.

SELLING THE SMELL
If what you're smelling while driving on North Carolina Highway 150 is making you hungry, it's no accident. Advertisers have rigged a billboard along the highway in Mooresville, N.C., to emit the smell of charcoal and pepper during morning and afternoon rush hours to entice motorists to buy steak from a nearby Bloom grocery store. Two fans at the base of the billboard waft fragrances created by charcoal- and pepper-flavored oil from 7 a.m. until 10 a.m. and then again for three afternoon hours beginning at 4 p.m. The image, a fork piercing a piece of steak, is part of what's believed to be the nation's first billboard advertisement to incorporate smell.

EATING ORDER
Yukako Ichikawa's message—clean your plate—isn't uncommon. But Ichikawa isn't giving the order to her children; She's giving it to customers at her restaurant in suburban Sydney, Australia. Ichikawa's posted policy at Wafu, her 30-seat restaurant in Surry Hills, is to give patrons who eat everything on their plates a 30 percent discount. Moreover, restaurant employees tell customers who do not eat everything they order to eat somewhere else next time. Says a statement on Wafu's website: "We are not only committed to serving meals that nurture and respect the body but are actively dedicated to the notion of waste prevention, and take seriously our responsibility toward the environment and sustainability for the future."

NOT-SO-GRAND THEFT
A thief in Perham, Minn., wound up under arrest after a car he tried to steal on May 29 gave him far more than he bargained for. According to police, the unidentified thief eyeballed an Audi 5000 Quattro parked in a driveway with its keys left in the ignition. What the thief did not know: The Audi owner had removed the vehicle's master brake cylinder, rendering it unsafe to drive. Perham police speculate the thief only learned of this problem when he attempted to slow the car down before losing control, ramming into a tree, knocking himself unconscious by hitting the windshield, and ending up in police custody at the local hospital.

LEGAL STEAL
Police in West Yorkshire, United Kingdom, have come up with an ingenious method for preventing a local car from being stolen: Steal it first. Naturally, 25-year-old Marcus Morris thought his Volkswagen stolen when his car was missing after a job interview. But after reporting the purported crime to police, Morris soon discovered it wasn't thieves who stole his car—it was the local police. Authorities say they took Morris' car because he left a window down and because that made the Volkswagen a target for theft. And, adding insult to injury, police charged Morris more than $200 to reclaim his vehicle.
CASTING A SPELL

Now that NBA star Shaquille O'Neal's basketball career is winding down, he's apparently looking for new challenges. But once the NBA veteran challenged a 14-year-old girl on June 4 to a contest, she told him it wouldn't even be close. That's because the legendary center challenged 2009 Scripps National Spelling Bee champion Kavya Shivashankar to a spelling contest. "Are you sure you want to do this?" she asked O'Neal, whom she bumped into at the 2010 Scripps contest. "I did win the national spelling bee last year," O'Neal retorted: "Keep in mind I have my bachelor's and master's, and I'm ready to go."

PROMISE KEEPER

Fulfilling a promise to his mother made nearly 70 years ago, 86-year-old James Livingston has graduated high school. The World War II veteran and Georgia native graduated with the Screven County High School Class of 2010 on June 2 after dropping out 68 years ago to fight for his country. In 1942, Livingston skipped school and went to Savannah to enlist despite being too young for service. His parents allowed him to join the armed services provided he earn his diploma once he returned. In the war, Livingston served as a spare gunner for the Eighth Air Force. "Through the years, I have thought to myself: 'You promised your momma you would get your diploma, but I hadn't,'" the spry octogenarian said. "I've got to do it before I pass away." And now he has.

LIEUTENANT KING

Elvis may have left the building, but now he's on the ballot. Perennial Minnesota gubernatorial candidate Ole Savior announced in June he'd found a man to serve as his running mate in the August Republican primary election: Elvis impersonator Todd Anderson. And while Anderson may admit he has little chance of winning by hitching his wagon to Savior—a four-time gubernatorial candidate—he does say on his website the candidacy may have an upside: "Let's be honest, even if I'm not elected the publicity may help my career as an entertainer."

TANGELA'S STASHES

For welfare queen Tangela Ridgeway, the party is over. Law enforcement authorities in California charged Ridgeway with 16 counts of welfare fraud after discovering the Cerritos, Calif., resident owned not only a business and a home, but also a luxury Maserati sports car. According to the Los Angeles County district attorney's office, Ridgeway, 35, had pilfered more than $60,000 in welfare benefits while concealing her wealth. She also faces 14 counts of perjury, meaning she faces up to 19 years in the state penitentiary.
want his adoring fans to know? Did he have a venereal disease, a taste for witchcraft, an illegitimate son? Not likely. Says Trombley: “He spent six months of the last year of his life writing a manuscript full of vitriol, saying things that he’d never said about anyone in print before.”

“Vitriol”—is that news? Aside from a relationship with his secretary that got too cozy after his wife died, the controversial parts of the work deal with the author’s views on religion, politics, public figures, and other authors: an opportunity to unburden himself of years of pent-up scorn. But if that’s what the autobiography reveals, Twain himself has already revealed it to anyone who looks closely at his work. “As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man” (Proverbs 27:19).

The second half of his life was much more clouded than the first, beset by debt, unwise investments, and the supreme misfortune of outliving all but one of his family: from his little son not yet two years old, to his favorite daughter Susy who had inherited his literary talent, to his loyal wife Olivia whose picture won his heart before they even met. All this, added to a streak of misanthropy acquired early, made him a bitter man. That’s the only conclusion a reader can draw from later stories like The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg and The Mysterious Stranger.

He was no atheist, but his religious thought was a mixed bag. He despised the Catholic Church but revered Joan of Arc (his biography of her being his favorite work); he admired Christ while claiming that the last thing Christ would do today was a Christian; he made respectful nods to the Almighty but saw the biblical God as a product of man’s twisted imagination. What he never seemed to ask himself was why he blamed this God for apparently holding the same view of mankind as Mark Twain.

Anyone who could write so exuberantly and feelingly of “life on the Mississippi” must have begun with an expansive heart. But allowing a “root of bitterness” to spring up makes the heart shrivel. If that’s what the autobiography reveals, it makes a sad apostrophe to an American icon.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY FAMOUSLY DECLARED that American literature began with one book: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. The scruffily virtuous hero, “lighting out for the territory,” is an icon of rawboned innocence and uncompromising honesty, even though he tells some whoppers throughout the narrative. The writing style is still fresh and spontaneous, breathing right out of antebellum America a sense of what we were at one stage of our evolution, and to some degree what we still are. It’s an artful blend of humor and pathos, a deeply human story, and a strong contender for the great American novel.

The man known as Mark Twain has an iconic feel about him too, like Abe Lincoln or Davy Crockett. His life hit the high notes of an all-American success: growing up with the country; a steamboat pilot while barely out of his teens; a young man going west; a literary sensation by his thirties; a loving husband and father, world traveler, household name; passing out of this life with Halley’s Comet at the ripe age of 75.

“There is a perception that Twain spent his final years basking in the adoration of fans,” comments historian Laura Trombley. “The autobiography will perhaps show that it wasn’t such a happy time.”

Autobiography? Though long in his grave, Samuel L. Clemens can still make publishing news—the first volume of a memoir, sequestered at UC-Berkeley for a hundred years, is due in November. The announcement was made about a month after the centennial of the author’s death, stirring speculation about what new light might be shed upon the wise-cracking, white-suited, smoke-wreathed figure popularized by Hal Holbrook. Why did he leave strict orders for these 5,000 pages of manuscript to remain unpublished for a century? What did he not
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A-minus team

When I was a kid, Tuesday night was pizza and A-Team night with my dad (my mother, presumably, had more intelligible things to concern herself with). Cheesy goodness for dinner and cheesy goodness to watch on television—life didn’t get any better for the 10-year-old me. So the soft spot I have in my heart for the wrongly accused soldiers of fortune who could make rocket launchers out of paper towel rolls was always going to outweigh any latent film snobbery I may possess.

For the most part, the movie version lives up to the explosive popcorn (and pizza) fun of the original. It doesn’t take itself any more seriously, and Bradley Cooper, Sharlto Copley, and professional wrestler Quinton “Rampage” Jackson capture the merry masculine camaraderie that made the show so beloved to children of the ’80s.

The nearly indecipherable plot, involving a group of Arabs printing U.S. currency that has no gold backing, may prompt a few laughs (after all, what’s the big threat when the Federal Reserve is doing the same thing?), but here, plot is beside the point. The biggest selling points of The A-Team were always its action sequences and its characters.

On the action front no one can deny that

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Director Joe Carnahan (Smokin’ Aces) knows how to make things go boom. Though it’s difficult at times to follow who is causing the action and why, the technical precision and sheer audacity of the destruction is a sight to behold. As in the television program, little blood is shed, but plenty of metal smashes together in an impressive variety of ways.

As for the team, Cooper may not be quite as handsome as Dirk Benedict, who originated the role of Templeton “Faceman” Peck, but his own blend of smarm and suave create an appealing lothario. Likewise, Jackson gives us a kinder and gentler B.A. Baracus than Mr. T did, but his take on the role works well in this gold-medallionless age. The real revelation though is as the voice of Aslan in the Chronicles of Narnia films, Neeson is the wrong choice for Hannibal “I love it when the plan comes together” Smith. His overwrought American diction distracts and he lacks the rakish sparkle that George Peppard brought to the role. As the lone female lead, the less said about Jessica Biel the better. She may fill out a uniform nicely but her cardboard performance and the negative chemistry she has with Cooper derail every scene she’s in.

But the biggest problem with the film version is material that shuts out a core part of its potential audience. No doubt part of the reason my father made the program a weekly ritual is because it was action adventure we could both enjoy. Things blew up, but no one was hurt. Face was a ladies man, but the romance was never explicit. B.A. Baracus had a bad attitude, but never a bad mouth. Not so with the PG-13 movie in which Bradley Cooper discusses having sex with a married woman and f-bombs and other obscenities proliferate. Unlike last year’s summer blockbuster, Star Trek, The A-Team fails to capitalize on its day – at the movies with dad potential, and poor early box-office numbers are reflecting this lack of foresight. While the film will still be good fun for the dads (and moms) who loved the show, sadly few will feel comfortable sharing it with their kids.

**MOVIE**

Winter’s Bone

by Sam Thieman

“I’M LOOKING FOR MY DAD,” declares Ree Dolly, and as she says the words, a wolf we didn’t even know was lurking uncurls from its sleep and walks into the sunlight. It’s that kind of foreboding atmosphere that makes Debra Granik’s astonishing Winter’s Bone such a taut thriller, but it’s the movie’s soul that makes it worth watching.

The terrifying violence here is almost always implied rather than depicted, and from the beginning we suspect that Ree’s father may have fallen victim to it. He’d better show up soon, dead or alive—Ree has to find him and haul his sorry carcass to court, where he’s to be tried (again) for cooking meth in the depressed Ozarks town where the movie is set.

Ree, beautifully played by Jennifer Lawrence, is a movie heroine like none I’ve seen. She’s a quiet, proud 17-year-old whose main duty is taking care of her much younger siblings and mentally ill mom now that her dad has abandoned them. Her closest fictional relation is probably Batman. There’s a whole web of deceit that Ree has to uncover, and she uses good old-fashioned sleuthing and jut-jawed determination to go where the law can’t or won’t to defend her imperiled family.

There have been maybe a dozen neo-Westerns in the last few years, some of them tremendously accomplished. You can probably add Winter’s Bone to that list. What this movie has that can’t be found in The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford or No Country for Old Men, though, is an old-fashioned heart. Granik and Daniel Woodrell (who wrote the novel the movie is based on) keep us from getting pulled down into despair by human cruelty because they show us human kindness as well—especially Ree’s unflagging love for her siblings and mom.

What Ree ultimately has to do in order to safeguard her family is something you’d probably only see in a Greek tragedy (the movie is rated R for violence and some swearing). But when we see her with her sister and brother, we understand why all the pain and effort were worth it.

Sharlto Copley as “Howling Mad” Murdock. Last seen brilliantly portraying a government worker infected by alien DNA in District 9, South African Copley is indeed hilariously howling mad. Less gimmicky than his television counterpart, his numerous spot-on accents keep the laughs coming, and the scenes of his misdeeds in a mental institution are alone worth the price of admission.

The only member of the original lineup who doesn’t work is Irish-born actor Liam Neeson. Great as he was as Oskar Schindler and

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MOVIE

Toy Story 3

by Rebecca Cusey

EXPECT TO LAUGH while watching Toy Story 3, but bring the tissues. Like last year’s Up from the same company, Pixar, this film tickles the funny bone but also brings a tear to the eye.

Andy (voiced by John Morris) has grown up. Bound for college, he is cleaning out the remnants of his childhood. Woody (Tom Hanks), Buzz Lightyear (Tim Allen), and the rest of the gang find themselves mistakenly donated to a daycare.

In this wondrous world of constant play, they receive a warm welcome from Lots-o’-Huggin’ Bear, a strawberry-smelling cuddle bear. Barbie also meets Ken, who lives the high life in his Dream House but with no one to share it.

There’s trouble in paradise. Lots-o’, far from being the loving bundle of cuddliness he seems, runs the daycare by intimidation and violence. His lackeys, a big baby doll and a monkey—with-cymbals toy, enforce his cold-hearted plans. (The film is rated G, but some very small children may find Lots-o’ and his minions scary.) He banishes Andy’s toys to the “caterpillar room,” a horror-filled classroom of wild toddlers. The toys must make it back home to Andy and end Lots-o’s reign of terror in the process.

Pixar doesn’t disappoint. The film is packed with laugh-out-loud moments, from the moment the plastic toy soldiers set out for a new life to Mr. Potato Head without his potato.

What is unexpected, although perhaps it shouldn’t be with a Pixar movie, is the emotional punch. The last 20 minutes of this silly movie about talking toys becomes a homage to true friendship and a bittersweet meditation on children growing older. There’s a moment when the parents in the theater collectively get a lump in their throats. You sense in the darkness a hundred hands reaching out to caress their children.

Children get older. So, too, do movie franchises. Pixar has done well, giving the characters we have come to love a proper goodbye. We know they’re OK, but as with Andy, it’s time for us to move on.

MOVIE

The Karate Kid

by Alicia M. Cohn

THE KARATE KID BORROWS from the storyline of the original 1984 Karate Kid, although to be accurate, the title should have been changed. This version takes place in China, and the martial art learned is Kung Fu. (In fact, the international title is The Kung Fu Kid.)

Most of the drama in this version stems from dislocation. Twelve-year-old Dre Parker (Jaden Smith) relocates with his mother (Taraji P. Henson) from Detroit to China. Early on, the movie reveals that Dre’s dad has died and his mother works for an unnamed car manufacturer, small details that orient the storyline in the present day and explain why Dre’s mom doesn’t think there is anything to escape to back in the United States.

As played by Smith—a clearly rising young star—Dre is a kid who has turned big talk and quick familiarity into self-defense, the type of personality perhaps uniquely common to America. China, however, is quickly established as a hostile environment for Dre when he incites violence on his very first day at the playground. The bullies in Karate Kid are vicious, particularly Cheng (Zhenwei Wang), a boy who takes his Kung Fu master’s “No weakness, no mercy” mantra seriously. The martial arts violence in this PG movie is pervasive and could distress a younger audience.

Dre responds to the bullies by fighting back: first with empty bravery and then with the help of apartment maintenance man Mr. Han (Jackie Chan). Mr. Han promises Cheng’s ruthless teacher that Dre will fight in a Kung Fu tournament, thus becoming his coach.

Though not as memorable as the original Karate Kid, this version follows the same formula for an underdog athlete movie and models the same message. Mr. Han teaches Dre how to “live” Kung Fu, a lesson that inspires respect and consideration for those around him. And in the climactic scenes of the tournament, Dre learns that winning means overcoming his own fear.

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Exceptional history

Authors Schweikart and Allen use specific detail to make the case for the United States  

BY MARVIN OLASKY

President Barack Obama has said, “I believe in American exceptionalism just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism, and the Greeks in Greek exceptionalism.” Others would certainly agree that each nation has a unique history, but that misunderstands the concept of American exceptionalism: It means that this nation of pioneers and immigrants is different from the European countries built by people who stayed home and emphasized security.

Some say the United States has had a blessed existence, others a charmed life, but for two centuries (except for that little incident called the Civil War) we haven’t had huge internecine conflicts on American turf. For one century now we have eschewed imperialism, taking only enough soil abroad to bury our dead. For 70 years the United States has stood against tyranny: Nazi, Communist, and now Islamist. And in recent decades the United States has slid down the welfare hill more slowly than the Old World has.

Since the Obama years threaten to change all that, it’s notable that a six-year-old history book emphasizing American exceptionalism has hit and stuck on Amazon.com’s best-seller lists. A Patriot’s History of the United States, by Larry Schweikart and Michael Allen, doesn’t try to hide their exceptionalist presuppositions. They expose charlatans from the Transcendentalists to Bill Clinton but use specific detail rather than shrill rhetoric to make their points, including a crucial one: Western individualism is a plus, not a sign of selfishness.

A Patriot’s History contains 928 packed pages, so you probably won’t be able to read every page on this July 4th holiday, but the length allows for many curious asides about life and death. While Aztec statues arise in parts of the Southwest, page five of this history reminds us that “A four-day sacrifice in 1487 by the Aztec king Ahuitzotl involved the butchery of 80,400 prisoners by shifts of priests working four at a time at convex killing tables who kicked lifeless, heartless bodies down the side of the pyramid temple.” While some call the Civil War an irrepressible conflict, the authors point out on page 275 one of the causes: “the growing power of the press to inflame, distort, and propagandize for ideological purposes.”

Schweikart and Allen also point out how seemingly minor changes eventually had major effects. For example, on page 602 they write of “the introduction in July 1943 of withholding taxes from the paychecks of employees. That subtle shift, described sympathetically by one text as an ‘innovative feature’ where ‘no longer would taxpayers have to set aside money to pay their total tax bill . . . at the end of the year,’ in fact allowed the government to conceal the total tax burden from the public and make it easier to raise taxes not just during the war but for decades.”

The authors also raise at times fascinating speculative points. They include the standard defense of atom bomb use to end World War II—an invasion of Japan would have cost more lives—but also comment on what may have happened had five years lapsed before the first use of nuclear weapons: “With civilian and military authorities insufficiently aware of the vast destructiveness of such weapons in real situations, they may well have been used in Korea, at a time when the Soviet Union would have had its own bombs for counterattack, thus offering the terrible possibility of a nuclear conflict over Korea.”

The book concludes with a look at the wellspring of success: “The fatal flaw of bin Laden—like Hitler, Stalin, and even the nearsighted Spaniards of five hundred years ago—was that they fixed their gaze on the physical manifestations of the wealth of the West. . . . American determination and drive, vision and commitment came not from acquisition of material things—though the freedom to acquire things was a prerequisite. Rather, greatness came from an all-consuming sense that this was, after all, the ‘city on a hill’ . . . a fountain of hope, and a beacon of liberty.”

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**NOTABLE BOOKS**

Four books of popular theology reviewed by SUSAN OLASKY

**Big God** Britt Merrick

Britt Merrick, young pastor of the California church Reality, unpacks the stories of the Old Testament saints mentioned in Hebrews 11. He may sprinkle his chapters with surfer slang (he is a surfer and former surfboard maker), but Merrick is biblically solid. He sets the saints in their historical context and describes the faith they exercised, drawing parallels between their lives and ours. This is not an account of exemplary people who have great faith. As Merrick explains in his epilogue, “We can lead lives that are pleasing to God, not because we are great people, but because by faith we can connect with a great God.”

**Surprised by Grace** Tullian Tchividjian

Tchividjian does for the book of Jonah what Tim Keller did for the parable of the Prodigal Son in *Prodigal God*, finding in Jonah a story of “God’s relentless pursuit of rebels.” Jonah, we learn, isn’t so different from religious folks today. Somewhere in the back of our minds we think that God saved us because we aren’t as bad as those Ninevites. Tchividjian peels back the layers of the story to show Jonah’s sin and cultural blinders, God’s grace both to Jonah and the great city of Nineveh, and the connections between this book and Christ. He also shows how Jonah’s story has inspired artists throughout the ages (the book includes many color plates).

**Jonathan Edwards: On Beauty**

Owen Strachan and Doug Sweeney

This slender introduction to Edwards’ theology of beauty is part of the five volume *The Essential Edwards Collection*. Each book in the series takes a topic and explores Edwards’ approach to it. The volume on beauty begins with the beauty of God and moves on to the beauty of creation, Christ, the church, and the “trinitarian afterlife.” The authors quote chunks from Edwards’ writings so the reader gets a feel for his exuberant, poetic style. They also offer clear explanations and applications for modern readers. If you are like me and haven’t read Edwards, these books will serve as little bites of Edwards’ meaty and God-centered theology. Each volume comes with a foreword by John Piper.

**A Gospel Primer for Christians**

*Milton Vincent*

In the short testimony at the end of this useful little book, Vincent writes, “I labored for most of my life to maintain my justified status before God, and I was always left frustrated in my attempts to do so.” God used Romans 5 to reach Vincent with the gospel of grace. Convinced that Christians need to hear and live by the gospel as much as non-Christians, Vincent has compiled reasons (along with proof texts) believers need to preach daily the gospel to themselves, and added two short narrative presentations of the gospel. Think of this book as a catechism that captures the power of the gospel to deal with sin, foster love toward God and our neighbors, cultivate humility, and help us live the Christian life.

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Not so cute

Paul McCartney and other stars make public displays of their ignorance

BY ARSENIO ORTEZA

In a famous scene from the Beatles’ film A Hard Day’s Night, a reporter asks Ringo Starr whether he’s a Mod or a Rocker. Starr answers, “I’m a mocker.” Apparently, so is Paul McCartney.

To be fair, nobody ever called McCartney the Smart Beatle. (That was John Lennon.) But nobody ever called him the Stupid Beatle either (that was Ringo), not even when he behaved like one (filming Give My Regards to Broad Street, marrying Heather Mills).

But when he took the occasion of accepting the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song to insult George W. Bush—“After the last eight years,” McCartney said in a quip heard ‘round the world, “it’s great to have a president who knows what a library is”—one couldn’t help wondering whether the Cute Beatle’s decades of smoking marijuana and not eating meat had taken a toll on his brain.

“There are many things of which Bush may be fairly accused,” blogged the Washington Post’s Charles Lane. “[But] those who smugly deride his ostensible ignorance often inadvertently demonstrate their own.” Lane went on to point out that Bush, besides marrying a librarian, had made increased library funding a top priority as both the governor of Texas and the president.

Of course, neither marriage nor money makes one a bookworm. Reading, however, does. “Mr. Bush’s 2006 reading list shows his literary tastes,” wrote Karl Rove in a 2008 editorial. “Fifty-eight of the books he read that year were nonfiction. Nearly half of his 2006 reading was history and biography, with another eight volumes on current events... and six on sports.”

Rove should know: Besides being Bush’s deputy chief of staff, he competed with him twice in year-long reading contests. Bush lost the first one: 10 to 95, in part because the Bible only counted as one book. His other excuse, wrote Rove, was that “he’d been busy as Leader of the Free World.”

Therefore, McCartney was not merely wrong but egregiously so. Unfortunately, among rock stars such cluelessness gushes forth like BP oil.

On the same day that McCartney mocked Bush, the band Los Lobos—four of whose five members are of Mexican descent—announced it was canceling its June 10 performance at the Talking Stick Resort in Scottsdale, Ariz. The reason: the recent passing into law of Arizona’s anti-immigration Senate Bill 1070.

“The new law,” read Los Lobos’ statement, “will inevitably lead to unfair racial profiling and possible abuse of people who just happen to look Latino. As a result, in good conscience, we could not see ourselves performing in Arizona.”

Los Lobos’ twinges of conscience followed hard on the heels of similar ones recently suffered by Elvis Costello. “It is a matter of instinct and conscience,” wrote the bespectacled singer-songwriter in defense of his decision to cancel two concerts in Israel. The cancellations, he said, were his way of respecting the “sensitivity” of Palestinians “in the wake of so many despicable acts of [Israeli] violence perpetrated in the name of liberation.”

Perhaps, like Helen Thomas, Costello would like to see Israel’s Jews “go home” to the very countries in which they were once threatened with becoming (to quote the title of an old song of his) “Pills and Soap.” And perhaps Los Lobos really does think Arizona police are now authorized to abuse people who “look Latino” the way the Gestapo once abused, well, Jews.

But it seems more likely that they’re simply not thinking very hard. Until they do, they should probably quit making like Paul McCartney and start making like George Harrison—the Quiet Beatle. ✪
NOTABLE CDs

Five new or recent classical releases reviewed by ARSENO ORTEZA

Dark Hope Renée Fleming
It may very well be that Fleming, one of the world’s premiere operatic sopranos, really does enjoy the songs of Muse, Band of Horses, Willy Mason, Jefferson Airplane, Arcade Fire, the Mars Volta, Tears for Fears, Peter Gabriel, Duffy, Death Cab for Cutie, and Leonard Cohen and thus comes by her desire to cover them guilelessly. Chances are, however, she figured that if Susan Boyle could cover rock songs, so could she. But whereas for Boyle rock seems like an accomplishment, for Fleming it feels like slumming.

The Lute Is a Song
Edin Karamazov
Karamazov, it may be argued, is to 21st-century lute music what Marvin Hamlish was to 1970s ragtime: the most popular performer of such music and the only one people know (Hamlish for “The Entertainer,” Karamazov for accompanying Sting on John Dowland songs). Sting returns the favor on this album, but it’s a low point, and good luck telling Renée Fleming’s and Andreas Scholl’s cameos apart. The eight on which nobody sings, however, are enchanting enough to function as gateway music for the lute fan just finding his feet.

Henri Dutilleux: D’ombre et de Silence
Robert Levin
Insofar as the works of serious composers constitute a “universe” of their own, the discovery of the piano music of Henri Dutilleux made possible by this album of performances by Robert Levin and (on Figures de résonances) Ya-Fei Chuang merits D’ombre et de silence a cover story in Astronomy magazine. And Levin’s liner notes are as illuminating to the mind as his and Chuang’s playing is to the ear. So crystalline is their precision and sure their touch that even the deliberately imitative “Homage à Bach” sparkles.

Rhapsody: Chamber Music of Richard Faith
Missouri Chamber Players
Although Richard Faith grew up when serialism was all the rage among composers, you’d never know it from his “Rhapsody for Flute and Piano” or the “Vivace” of his Fantasy Trio No. 1, which have more in common with Eden Ahbez’s “Nature Boy” and Jimmy Webb’s “MacArthur Park” respectively than with anything by Schoenberg. In short, an example of the capacity to delight that serious composition might have developed had it managed to ride out the fads of rock ’n’ roll on the one hand and avant-gardism on the other.
OUR DEAD WEIGHT
Tracing the cost of taxation on a car purchase at a time

In their honeymoon my grandparents drove a black 1930 Model A Ford sport coupe, and my grandfather became an unrepentant car buff ever after. In 1935 he bought a Ford Tudor, and one year later—according to the bills of sale (nearly all of which he kept until his death at age 100)—he traded it in for a Dodge four-door touring sedan.

The Dodge had Dualseal glass and the “DeLuxe Accessory Group A” package (including optional radio and heater). It came to a total price of $911.50, which included a state license fee of $3.35 but apparently no sales tax.

State sales tax seems to have kicked in when he purchased a DeSoto in 1947. He paid $22 tax on a purchase price of $1,930—a little over 1 percent. A Chevrolet Fleetmaster Cabriolet purchased the next year cost him $38.74 in sales tax, almost 2 percent on a purchase price of $1,950 (he was by now paying extra for not only the radio but also white sidewall tires, chrome gravel shields, and a hood ornament). In 1950 he still paid about 2 percent sales tax on the purchase of a Chevrolet Styleline four-door sedan and in 1954 on the purchase of a new Olds 88.

At this point, in the nearly two decades my grandfather had been car buying, the tax rate had hovered at 2 percent or less, but his purchase price had more than trebled. I imagine the joy of the state tax collectors, whose coffers were trebling without the trouble of raising taxes, but apparently it wasn’t enough: When he bought a Pontiac Star Chief in 1955 for $3,286, sales tax had risen to 3 percent ($98.59). But my grandfather was at that point a prototype of 1950s prosperity: A self-employed survivor of both depression and world war, he had not one but two thriving businesses and three children of driving age. Like many American families then, wheels ruled, and taxes remained low.

But in 1956 Congress passed the law creating the interstate highway system. It included new taxes on fuel, automobiles, trucks, and tires for what was projected to be a $25 billion system built over 12 years. (It would cost over $114 billion and take 35 years to complete.) Invoices for the next cars my grandfather purchased—two in 1961—had a preprinted line for “federal tax,” but the dealers rolled it into the purchase price.

Today my grandfather would pay 0.25 percent just in state sales tax to buy a new Chevy. His car-buying history is a small picture of our overall state of progressive taxation. It’s no idle talk, this tax burden we are placing on our future grandchildren. Consider the burden on this granddaughter: For a family car equivalent to the 1961 Chevy station wagon my grandfather bought for $2,500 (about $18,000 in today’s dollars), I am likely to pay well over $25,000, and then to pay a tripled tax rate—more than 10 percent federal and state—on top.

Economists call this deadweight loss: a doubling of the tax rate quadruples the economic cost to society of lost market activity. In other words, when taxes go up—income, sales, property, value added, or other—people simply drop their participation in the taxed activity. As one put it, “it is not value gained by government, but simply prosperity that is destroyed.”

Few of us consider our tax rate, especially sales tax, but it’s perhaps not insignificant that I haven’t purchased a new car in 10 years, and after 1961 my grandfather purchased only two cars, both used. Americans have experienced decades of deadweight loss, well diagnosed as lost productivity by the Hopper brothers in their book The Puritan Gift (see p. 46). Yet tax cuts enacted under the Bush administration expire in six months (Jan. 1, 2011), and some increases will be dramatic at the federal, state, and local level. The tax on stock dividends will go from 15 percent to 39.6 percent. Expect to hear that ending these “tax breaks” is responsible, but the plain fact is that a 1 or 2 percent increase in the rate of U.S. productivity would do more to fill tax coffers than tax increases ever will.
"THE SCOPE OF THRIFT IS LIMITLESS."

— THOMAS EDISON

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WORLD'S 2010 BOOK OF THE YEAR makes a compelling case that the clash between free enterprise and socialism is a moral battle

BY MARVIN OLASKY

Illustration by Krieg Barrie
World’s book of the year is The Battle: How the Fight Between Free Enterprise and Big Government Will Shape America’s Future (May 2010, Basic Books). This succinct work by Arthur Brooks, president of the American Enterprise Institute, is the right book at this moment in U.S. history.

Honoring a book on current political and economic questions is unusual for World. Our books of the year in 2008 and 2009 were The Reason for God and The ESV Study Bible. We generally rate timeless higher than timely—but sometimes we have to pay attention to the immediate. Samuel Johnson said, “Depend upon it, sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.” As the United States careers toward a crucial fall election, The Battle is concentrating minds.

Furthermore, it’s vital for us to understand that the economic issues Brooks analyzes are not just about money. They involve how we live. The Battle shows how Washington power-grabbers have used financial fears to tell Americans how to live—and it shows the rest of us how to fight back. Brooks, like Thomas Sowell, is able to make economics not part of the valley of the shadow of death.

He begins by noting the centrality of enterprise in American culture—and maybe, thanks to our immigrant ancestors, even in our DNA: “Think about it. Immigrants tend to be entrepreneurial, willing to give up security and familiarity for the possibility of prosperity and success. . . . Only a small minority of people from any particular community tend to migrate away from their homeland. . . . America’s vast success might be explained in part by our genetic predisposition to embrace risks with potentially explosive rewards.”

Brooks then skillfully explores polling data to show that at least 70 percent of Americans favor free enterprise, think the top federal tax rate should be 20 percent or lower, and believe that American business success is crucial to have a strong country. Only 22 percent of Americans feel positively about “government regulation of business” while 95 percent have a positive image of small businesses. Given a choice between government policies that promote opportunity and those that “promote fairness by narrowing the gap between rich and poor, spreading the wealth, and making sure that economic outcomes are more equal,” only 31 percent choose the latter.

Those stats lead Brooks to posit two basic coalitions of Americans: The 70 percent coalition opposes big government and supports free enterprise, and a 30 percent coalition opposes free enterprise and prefers government solutions. The 30 percent now control the White House and Congress because they control media and academia: “These are many of the people who make opinions, entertain us, inform us, and teach our kids in college.”

The evidence of media and academic bias is well known to most World readers; for example, Brooks notes that only one out of 12 American Economic Association members supports free-market principles (and only one out of 33 supports them strongly). These professors are having an impact. One poll last year showed that only 13 percent of Americans over 40, asked to choose between capitalism and socialism, chose socialism. Adults under 30, though, “were almost evenly divided, with 37 percent favoring capitalism, 33 percent socialism, and 30 percent not sure (and thus open to persuasion).”

Here’s one more troubling survey result: “In a January 2010 Gallup poll a majority of young adults between the ages of 18 and 34 held a positive view of socialism.” Brooks notes that generational memory may be significant here: Older people identify socialism with Soviet tyranny but younger ones know it only through seemingly harmless college professors. In any event, “this is an enormous opening for the 30 percent coalition.” That coalition gets its way not only by propagandaizing the young but by bribing them: Most pay zero in income taxes and, in the Obama plan, won’t have to pay back student loans if they work for the government (where wages on average are 73 percent higher than those in the private sector).

Brooks also explains how the fall 2008 financial crisis won the presidential election for President Obama and allowed him to develop a narrative with five key claims that many Americans still believe, even though all five are false: “Government was not the primary cause of the economic crisis. The government understands the crisis and knows how to fix it. Main Street Americans were nothing more than victims of the crisis. The only way to save the economy is through massive government growth and deficit spending. The middle class will not pay for the stimulus package; only the rich will.”

This evidence is now familiar to many World readers: We’ve noted the key role of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, both government-sponsored enterprises. The Senate killed a reform bill in 2005 that would have required the duo to eliminate investments in risky assets. (The two biggest recipients of campaign contributions from Fannie and Freddie political action committees and employees: Sens. Chris Dodd and Barack Obama.) Banks buckled under pressure to make risky loans, and “many borrowers, far from being victims, were often too ready to take loans they shouldn’t have, chasing the lure of easy profits on rising house prices.”

The Battle then goes beyond money to note that, “The main issue in the new American culture struggle between free enterprise and statism is not material riches—it is human flourishing.” Brooks notes that “the 30 percent coalition charges the majority with money-grubbing selfishness” but is itself “fundamentally materialistic.” Leftists “believe that it should make no difference whether income comes from redistribution and government edict or from enterprise and excellence as judged by the free market. This is an ideology driven by raw materialism.”
Brooks emphasizes the differences in worldview: "In contrast, the 70 percent majority maintains a worldview that is primarily nonmaterialistic. It understands money as just a proxy measure of true prosperity and personal fulfillment. It emphasizes creativity, meaning, optimism, and control in one's own life and seeks to escape from under the heavy hand of the state. . . . When we reduce the idea of work to nothing more than a means of economic support, we strip it of its transcendental meaning in our lives." Brooks argues that productive work is crucial to happiness: "Americans prefer to find meaning in their jobs rather than through their after-work pursuits."

Brooks here should do more about the importance of biblical faith, since many people who have "earned success" apart

"The main issue in the new American culture struggle between free enterprise and statism is not material riches—it is human flourishing."

from a sense of God's sovereignty and love hit a wall of meaninglessness as they age. Nevertheless, he's right to note that most Americans want equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome: "If you are in the 70 percent majority, you believe that everyone should get a chance to succeed . . . If this leads to income inequality—above some acceptable floor—so be it." He quotes Abraham Lincoln: "I don't believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich; it would do more harm than good. So while we do not propose any war upon capital, we do wish to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else."

That leads to a political plank for the present: Since the 30 percenters "have concealed the central pillar of their ideology—income equality—under a misleading definition of fairness," the rest of us should "expose this fact and reclaim the language of fairness for the free enterprise system." It's vital to make distinctions: "Legal equality, political equality, religious equality—almost all Americans would agree that these values are vital to our nation. But equality of
If we lose the battle

And that, of course, is what Hitler refused to do: He demanded worship. As Metaxas skillfully shows, he manipulated weak churchmen for his own purposes and had his prime propagandist, Alfred Rosenberg, create a plan for a “National Reich Church.” Metaxas quotes Rosenberg’s plan: “The National Church demands immediate cessation of the publishing and dissemination of the Bible in Germany. . . . The National Church declares that to it, and therefore to the German nation, it has been decided that the Führer’s Mein Kampf is the greatest of all documents. . . . On the altars there must be nothing but Mein Kampf.”

Bonhoeffer vehemently opposed such plans and those of the “German Christian” movement, as enunciated in 1933 by Reinhold Krause: Get rid of the Old Testament “with its Jewish money morality and its tales of cattle merchants and pimps.” Rewrite the New Testament so it presents a Jesus “corresponding entirely with the demands of National Socialism” and removes the depressing “emphasis on the crucified Christ.”

Bonhoeffer also opposed liberal Christianity that, like secular totalitarianism, attempts to conform the Bible to the trends of modern society. He criticized such kissing up and criticized “cheap grace” by which an intellectual assent to Christian truth seems sufficient: No confession, repentance, discipleship, or discipline needed.

Metaxas illuminates Bonhoeffer’s belief that “it was the role of the church to speak for those who could not speak.” He fought Nazi attacks on Jews and called for “costly grace” by which Christians would give up comfortable lives to follow Christ’s call: “Costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life.”

Metaxas lays out the cost and Bonhoeffer’s willingness to meet it in nearly 600 thorough but immaculately readable pages. We can pray that none of us will have to face the choices that Bonhoeffer faced. We can pray that if we do, we’ll be willing to pay the price.

—Marvin Olasky

JOEL BELZ’S INFORMAL SURVEY of WORLD readers (May 8, May 22, June 5 issues) showed that 75 percent were pessimistic concerning the future of America, and more than half of those thought that things would become “really bad.” Joel’s attitude, and mine, is that horrible times might come, or might not. God is in control, and none of us knows the future.

But what if? What if we found ourselves living under dictatorship, with our children and ourselves given daily instructions to kill those who disagree? Our runner-up for book of the year is Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy (April 2010, Thomas Nelson), by Eric Metaxas. This year brings the 65th anniversary of the Nazi hanging of Dietrich Bonhoeffer for his attempt to overthrow Adolf Hitler, and that martyrdom is well known—but Metaxas illuminates, mile by mile, the road to full resistance. Early this summer the book rose to The New York Times bestseller list, suggesting contemporary resonance with its 20th century themes.

Metaxas describes a man of aristocratic background and intellectual talent who descended from social and university heights to do the hard work of ministry. In doing so he placed himself on a collision course with Hitler, a man who so envied and hated aristocrats and academics that he devoted his life to forcing them and millions of others to bow down to him.

Bonhoeffer felt secure in the love of his parents and God, but few of his countrymen did. The “higher criticism” that originated in Germany in the 19th century had eaten up most of the land’s seminaries and churches by the 1920s. The liberal theology proclaimed from pulpits left both war veterans and the younger generation searching for a different savior.

Bonhoeffer in 1933, at age 26, understood these holes in souls and gave a radio talk on the problem only two days after Germans elected Hitler to be their chancellor. He said, “Whereas earlier leadership was expressed in the form of the teacher, the statesman, the father . . . now the Leader has become an independent figure. The Leader is completely divorced from any office; he is essentially and only the Leader.”

Bonhoeffer continued his critique of the Führer principle: “If he does not continually tell his followers quite clearly of the limited nature of his task and of their own responsibility . . . then the image of the Leader will pass over into the image of the mis-leader, and he will be acting in a criminal way not only towards those he leads, but also towards himself. The true Leader . . . has to lead the individual into his own maturity . . . He must let himself be controlled, ordered, restricted.”
Honorable mentions

Here are 30 other recommended nonfiction books from the past year (see p. 50 for fiction picks):

Randy Alcorn
If God Is Good: Faith in the Midst of Suffering and Evil
(Multnomah)

Jonathan Bean
Race & Liberty in America
(University Press of Kentucky and The Independent Institute)

Anthony Bradley
Liberating Black Theology
(Crossway)

Michael Card
A Better Freedom: Finding Life as Slaves of Christ
(WP)

Angelo Codevilla
Advice to War Presidents
(Basic)

Steve Corbett
and Brian Fikkert
When Helping Hurts
(Moody)

William Dembski
The End of Christianity (B&H)

Daniel Dreisbach, Mark David Hall, and Jeffrey Miron, eds.
The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life
(U. of Notre Dame Press, 2009)

David Faber
Munich, 1938
(Simon & Schuster)

Anthony Flint
Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York’s Master Builder and

Transformed the American City
(Random House)

Patrick Garry
Conservatism Redeemed: A Creed for the Poor and Disadvantaged
(Encounter)

Peter Greer and Phil Smith
The Poor Will Be Glad
(Zondervan)

David Hall Calvin in the Public Square
(P&R)

Steven Hayward
The Age of Reason: The Conservative Counterrevolution, 1960-1989
(Crown Forum)

Fred Kaplan 1959: The Year Everything Changed
(Wiley)

Timothy Keller
Counterfeit Gods
(Dutton)

Gregory Koukl
Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions
(Zondervan)

Blind Spot: When Journalists Don’t Get Religion
(Oxford University Press)

Allister McGrath
Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth
(HarperOne)

Stephen C. Meyer
Signature in the Cell
(HarperOne)

Darrow Miller
LifeWork: A Biblical Theology for What You Do Every Day
(YWAM)

Rugger Moore
Adopted for Life
(Crossway)

Norman Podhoretz
Why Are Jews Liberals?
(Doubleday)

Robert Reilly
The Closing of the Muslim Mind
(Is)

Jean-François Revel
Last Exit to Utopia
(Encounter)

Jay Richards
Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem
(HarperOne, 2009)

Thomas Sowell
The Housing Boom and Bust
(Basic)

Rodney Stark
God’s Battalions: The Case for the Crusades
(HarperOne, 2009)

Gregg A. Ten Elshof
I Told Me So: Self-Deception and the Christian Life
(Eerdmans)

Bradley Watson
Living Constitution.
Dying Faith: Progressivism and the New Science of Jurisprudence
(Isl)

—Marvin Olasky

income? That’s a fundamentally different kind of equality.” We want fair trials but not a right to be declared innocent. We want all people to have the right to vote but not “the right to see their chosen candidate elected to office.”

Brooks notes that the 30 percent coalition’s use of the word “fairness” is duplicitous: “It implies that equality of outcome is a core American principle, when in fact what Americans believe in is equality of opportunity and the potential to earn success.” He is right to insist that the 70 percent coalition cannot adhere to the minority the fairness issue and merely argue for free enterprise on the basis of economic efficiency: “Fairness should not be a 30 percent trump card but rather their Achilles’ heel. Equality of income is not fair.” A fair system rewards hard work and excellent performance, and gives people on the bottom a chance to rise not by bringing down the top but by striving for excellence.

So who will defend excellence and fight covetousness? Brooks doesn’t defend the Republican Party’s tendency to compete with the Democrats in the race to pander: Voters, he rightly notes, “did not repudiate free enterprise or conservative principles in November 2008. Rather, they punished an unprincipled Republican Party. That leads to a conclusion: “There is a very real threat before us that the 30 percent coalition may transform our great nation forever. One can only hope that the threat will clear our thinking enough to bring forth leaders with our principles at heart and the ideas to match.”
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MICHAEL LEWIS’ BOOK on the handful of eccentrics who prophesied and profited from the financial crisis, The Big Short (W.W. Norton & Company), came out in March this year. Two months later, the Senate passed a financial regulatory reform bill—and Democrats cited Lewis’ book more than a dozen times in hearings and floor speeches leading up to the bill’s passage, repeatedly recommending it. In May Lewis met with Senate Democrats privately, following a meeting he had with Republicans months earlier.

Lewis himself has said he is not the expert on the financial crisis. He told Politico that when politicians or Hill staffers approach him for advice on financial regulation, he responds, “I’m not Jesus, I’m Brian.” (He’s referring to Monty Python’s Life of Brian, where some mistake the lead character for a messiah.) But Lewis has credibility because his first book, Liar’s Poker, based on his time working for the Salomon Brothers on Wall Street, was the definitive insider piece on Wall Street in the 1980s.

The Big Short created a Harry Potter-like craze among Democrats on the Hill, but with immediate real-world impact. The Senate’s bill would ban a practice Lewis hammered in his book: proprietary trading, where a firm uses its investors money to make high-risk bets on its own assets. The Senate wants to prevent firms from selling financial products with their left hand and then betting on the success of those products with their right hand. The House passed its version of financial regulatory reform last year, and now the two chambers will work to hash out a final bill. Both bills impose new regulations on the off-the-books derivatives market that Lewis examines closely; the Senate’s regulations would be more heavy-handed.

Lewis—author of two other must-read bestsellers, Moneyball and The Blind Side—is one of the best storytellers around today, and one of the best at finding stories that no one has told. In The Big Short he introduces several obscure investors who foresaw the subprime tsunami and decided to cash in: Michael Burry, a one-eyed hedge fund manager who has Asperger’s syndrome, and Steve Eisman, a money manager so rude he once told the president of a Japanese real estate firm that his financial statements were “toilet paper. Translate that.”
Lewis also introduces us to another ruthless investor, Gregg Lippmann, who told a critical bank colleague that he was “short his house,” meaning he was betting that the colleague would default on his home loan. We meet Jamie Mai and Charlie Ledley, both 30, who built a multimillion dollar investment operation in just a few years out of a shed in a friend’s back yard. Burry’s fund, betting against the subprime and derivatives market, made gross gains of 726 percent over an eight-year period in which the S&P 500 rose just over 2 percent.

Lewis doesn’t provide or claim to provide a full and conclusive picture of the causes of the crash, but he does paint a picture of an incompetent and malicious culture on Wall Street leading to billions upon billions in losses to the economy. But Wall Street banks weren’t the only ones guilty of greed and conniving—greed and conniving are present everywhere in the American economic system, according to Lewis.

Leading the bad guys is Goldman Sachs. The firm, according to Lewis, made buckets of cash without taking the risk of the subprime loans, and bet against the success of the subprime loans it was packaging and reselling in complex financial products. Now the Securities and Exchange Commission is investigating Goldman Sachs for fraud in such practices. Sen. Ted Kaufman, D-Del., cited The Big Short several times on the floor in April as he excoriated the firm.

Financial professional David Bahnsen praises The Big Short but points out a contradiction in Lewis’ analysis: Firms like Goldman Sachs can’t epitomize both “greed/evil genius” and “utter stupidity and incompetence.” He writes: “One cannot have it both ways. Lewis cannot claim, as he astonishingly and explicitly does, that Goldman Sachs made AIG write credit default swaps on the subprime mortgage industry, guaranteeing AIG’s demise and Goldman Sachs’ flourishing, but then on the other hand claim that the firms had no idea what they were doing.”

Bahnsen also notes that “Lewis does not use his 264-page book to even apply one word—not one single utterance—against the malignant government policies behind much of this malaise.” The Office of Thrift Supervision, which oversees savings and loan institutions, and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, which oversees banks, each failed in their mission—and Bahnsen points out that government policies often promote recklessness.

The pervasiveness of greed and incompetence should come as no surprise to readers of the Bible. What’s to be done? A 24-year-old Harvard graduate, A.K. Barnett-Hart, who Lewis credits in his acknowledgments, wrote her thesis in 2009 on Wall Street’s failures and now works for a Wall Street bank. She wrote to The Wall Street Journal, “How would Wall Street ever change, I thought, if the people that work there do not change?”

Another untold story: HeLa lives on

Let’s leave the world of credit default swaps and floating interest rates for the story about cell cultures and petri dishes told in The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot (Crown, 2010). Henrietta Lacks, the great-granddaughter of a slave and slave owner, died of cervical cancer in 1951, but while she underwent radiation treatment, a doctor took a slice of her cancerous tissue without her knowledge and sent it to his lab for experimentation. It became the first cell line to grow continuously in culture, useful for research that developed the polio vaccine and gene mapping, cells cited everywhere as simply HeLa.

Not until 20 years later did the Lacks family find out that companies were selling batches of this immortal cell line to labs all over the world and making millions. Given the history between the medical community and African-Americans—think of the Tuskegee experiments that began in the 1930s, where researchers recruited black men with syphilis to watch how they died, even after treatment became available—Lacks’ family was livid. The story is so good, bursting with themes of death, resurrection, betrayal, and redemption, you can’t believe so many years have passed before someone like Skloot, a contributing editor at Popular Science magazine, told it.
British authors say
the vision that primed
America's economy is
the one that can save it

BY MINDY BELZ

In the beginning were the Puritans.
And they got it right, say Kenneth
and William Hopper, British authors
of The Puritan Gift: Reclaiming the
American Dream Amidst Global

In contrast to earlier settlers in Virginia
and New England—a largely uneducated lot
who set out for the New World with scant
provisions or planning and succumbed to
disease, hardship, and mass death—the
Great Puritan Migration of 1630 was "a
brilliant exercise that established the
English-speaking people on North
American soil."

While more than enough has been
written about the moral and cultural impact
of the Puritans on American society, not
enough is said about how their faith-based
entrepreneurship laid a foundation for the
economic powerhouse that the United
States would become. The Puritan Gift does
that in what the Hopper brothers—one an
investment banker and the other an
engineer and industrial consultant—call "a
love poem to America written in non-
technical language." The authors told me their
interest began in the 1960s, as Kenneth
gave seminars in factories across the United
States and says he discovered "a Puritan
behind every door"—a common managerial
culture that could be explained only in
terms of the country's religious heritage.

The book, released in Great Britain in
March 2007, predicted the credit crunch
and near financial collapse that engulfed the
United States 18 months later. While it
received abundant notice among academi-
cians and management gurus like the late
Peter Drucker, it's had scant popular atten-
tion in U.S. mainstream media. That may be
partly due to the British colloquial tone of
the authors; but Kenneth, who is 84, and
William, 81, bring to their project rich
experience and one-of-a-kind research in
business and manufacturing, ranging from
post-war Japan to Manhattan's financial
district—along with a rare transatlantic
fondness for America at its best.
The Massachusetts Bay Company, a joint-stock company founded in London by well-connected Puritans who kept careful records, foreshadowed what the authors label “the Great Engine” companies—blue-chip manufacturers that prospered into the mid-20th century (think General Electric, Procter & Gamble, U.S. Steel, and the Pennsylvania Railroad). The New England settlement would cost the Bay Company the equivalent of $40 million in today’s dollars, but by 1640 the company sent 200 ships and 14,000 settlers to Massachusetts.

Led by John Winthrop, the expedition established business and management principles that persisted in early American commerce: careful planning, a disregard for social class in selecting management, an ethic of work combined with a habit of thrift, placing the good of the community above the individual, and a desire to create a kingdom of heaven on earth. “Consider that wee shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this worke ... wee shall be made a story and a byword through the world,” Winthrop told his company. His son would build the first factory in America—a blast furnace—and those principles would launch economic growth through the Industrial Revolution and beyond.

Cotton Mather would one day comment that Puritan "religion begot prosperity and the daughter had destroyed the mother," but the authors go to great lengths to show that the core principles of Puritan commerce persisted well beyond the first generation of Americans and extended to other parts of the world, particularly Asia. A 1917 plaque at the Newport News shipyard is an example: "We shall build good ships here, at a profit if we can—at a loss if we must—but always good ships." Civilian leaders in occupied Japan used the slogan to train post-war electronics workers; one went so far as to help clean the offices of a dirty but promising firm working with less than $600 in capital and in old army huts where staff members held umbrellas over their desks in a rainstorm. The puritanical lesson paid off; the company went on to become Sony.

What changed? The Hoppers believe American business lost sight of the principles underwriting its success, beginning most noticeably in the 1950s and climaxing in 1970—the year Pennsylvania Railroad declared bankruptcy. Specifically, management turned from bottom-up practices to top-down and the "Cult of the (so-called) Expert" took over not only the nation's boardrooms but its business schools. "Management experts" replaced execs with experience on the factory floor. Numbers mattered more than product and quality. One of the new conglomerates acquired the Newport News shipyard in 1969, and had its famous plaque moved to the Mariners' Museum (footnote: It was returned after Northrop Grumman acquired the shipyard in 1986). And mid-century gurus like novelist Ayn Rand—whose hero in Atlas Shrugged declared, "I will never live for the sake of another man"—replaced altruistic business leaders.

As one result, U.S. productivity, which grew at an average yearly rate of 2.2 percent from 1870 to 1970, dropped to 1.1 percent from 1971-1995—the lowest productivity growth of all advanced industrialized nations.

How have Americans survived the productivity slowdown? They borrowed, say the Hoppers. "Credit is to the economy what steroids are to athletes; it enhances performance but, unless used in moderation, at a serious cost to the economic health of the nation."

And that brings the brothers to the current financial crisis, which they trace to "profligate lending" and bad economic policies. Longtime Fed chief Alan Greenspan (an Ayn Rand devotee) comes in for particular criticism: Believing that "the proper role of the central bank was 'to take away the punchbowl when the party is getting good,'" the Hoppers say "Greenspan and his colleagues did exactly the opposite, adding gin, then vodka, and finally a line of cocaine to the bowl. The result has been catastrophic."

But catastrophe is what it may take to concentrate the mind of American business, these authors suggest, and to propel U.S. management—both private and public sector—to take a fresh look at its Puritan roots. ♦
At commencement, Harvard University graduates carry symbols that represent the degrees they’ve achieved. The MBAs usually wave $100 bills, and the audience boos. But last graduation, two-thirds of Harvard Business School graduates carried instead a blue card printed with the “MBA Oath” – a promise they took to hold themselves to a higher ethical standard of business.

In The MBA Oath: Setting a Higher Standard for Business Leaders (Portfolio Hardcover, 2010), Harvard Business School graduates and Oath founders, Max Anderson and Peter Escher, expand the oath’s ideas. The authors argue that if doctors take oaths to “do no harm,” business graduates should, too.

The book is honest about the limitations of the oath and the difficulty of changing an entire business culture. It is most valuable not when it delves into pop psychology (as it often does) but when it makes specific proposals that incentivize ethics. For instance, what if an MBA was more like a lawyer or a doctor degree, with a board that enforced certain professional standards and censured people who transgressed them? What if businesses stopped giving bonuses that rewarded short-term profits over long-term sustainability? These are big “ifs,” but Anderson and Escher make a strong case for a world in which business ethics aren’t, as one person scoffs at them, an oxymoron.
A 15-year-old Baptist, Matthew Paul Turner, bought Amy Grant's secular pop CD against his mother's wishes, threw it away when she caught him, bought it again, tossed it when he felt "particularly close to God," fishied it out of the trash can a few hours later, broke it in a spasm of conscience, bought it again in a moment of weakness, and hurled it out the car window in a twinge of guilt. He bought the album five times.

This is Turner's conflict looped on repeat in Hear No Evil: My Story of Innocence, Music, and the Holy Ghost (WaterBrook Press, 2010). The young Turner believes that God is calling him to be a famous Christian musician. God isn't, but Turner does branch out in his musical tastes and even meets Amy Grant—under awkward circumstances. Turner's rendering of evangelical dialect is pitch-perfect (for examples, "My friend Shawn was incredibly sensitive to onions, dairy, and the Holy Spirit") but the fun is nearly always directed at himself, and affection lends warmth to his satire.

Christians who enjoy his writing likely already believe his argument that Christians should lighten up about music. Turner won't shatter anyone's deeply-held convictions about Amy Grant, but his pangs of conscience and fits of rebellion make for an eminently entertaining Christian inside joke.

On Aug. 6, 1974, tightrope walker Philippe Petit strung a cable between New York City's World Trade Center towers and walked, ran, danced, and bounced between the two. Colum McCann's novel, Let the Great World Spin (Random House, 2009), captures the moment and the lives of the New Yorkers who witness it. We find a priest, tortured by his own doubts but finding "a light, damaged and bruised, but a little light all the same." We meet his brother, who follows him to New York with just an Afghan coat and a copy of Howl. An artist couple try to purge their lives of alcohol and drugs but make a terrible mistake the moment they slip. An Upper East Side socialite bonds with a poor black woman over the loss of their sons in Vietnam.

McCann, who can show the humanity in both a prostitute and a saintly priest, interweaves the characters' stories with the common thread of Petit's walk, telling a tale at once redemptive and sad. McCann says the book was his way of writing about 9/11. In 1974, all eyes were on the towers, but people shared a moment that was not hellish but celestial. "The watchers below pulled in their breath all at once," McCann writes of the moment when Petit stepped onto the cable between the towers. "The air felt suddenly shared."
Looking for novels to read this summer? Here are 10 that I reviewed favorably over the past year.

Let’s start with three that allow you to travel without leaving your easy chair:

**Baking Cakes in Kigali** by Gaile Parkin has a simple premise: Angel runs a cake business in Rwanda that brings her into contact with all kinds of people. Originally from Tanzania, she wasn’t a witness to Rwanda’s genocide, which makes her “safe.” As people visit her apartment to place orders, they tell her about their lives and why they are ordering cakes. Through her gentle probing, she draws from them tales of hardship and rejoicing. If you like Alexander McCall Smith’s Botswana novels you’ll probably enjoy Parkin’s gentle humor.

**The Calligrapher’s Daughter** by Eugenia Kim is a sweeping, beautifully written look at Korea during the first half of the 20th century, when Japan occupied the country and tried to stamp out Korean culture. Nain is the daughter of an aristocratic calligrapher who grooms her for a world under attack both from brutal Japan and from Christianity, which encourages female education. Against that backdrop, Nain grows up, struggling to find her place in this changing world, to understand her mother’s faith, and to reconcile it with all the suffering she and her family endure.

**Wolf Hall** by Hilary Mantel depicts the intrigue within Henry VIII’s court between 1529 and 1535. Mantel casts Thomas Cromwell as the sympathetic protagonist vying for influence against Thomas More, who comes off as a cruel and opportunistic schemer, and against Henry’s high-born friends and relations. Cromwell’s power grew as he helped the king (portrayed as a mercurial man of tremendous appetites and charisma) win a divorce from his queen in order to marry the willful Anne Boleyn. Mantel deservedly won Britain’s prestigious Man Booker prize for this hard-to-put-down read, which ends with Cromwell five years away from his own execution at Henry’s hand, a story she’ll tell in a much-anticipated sequel.
EXT, HERE ARE FOUR MORE NOVELS that would work well for book groups:

_The Help_ by _Kathryn Stockett_ revolves around the daily lives of a handful of women in Jackson, Miss., circa 1964. It’s told from three perspectives: Aibileen and Minny are both black maids, while “Miss Skeeter” is a young white writer. Their stories intersect when Skeeter decides to write a book about the lives of maids working for white families. As the three narrators each see a different bit of Jackson and view the project—both its hopes and dangers—differently, we learn how the stories people grow up hearing and learn to tell work to form identity.

_The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society_ by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows begins in 1946 with an exchange of letters between Juliet Ashton, a young writer with a new book about life in wartime London, and he: publisher Sidney (and his sister Sophie). These breezy exchanges offer a sense of postwar life in England, but an unexpected letter from a man in Guernsey opens up a whole different world to Juliet, who learns how the Guernsey islanders survived the German occupation by setting up a literary society. With the novel made up entirely of letters, we—like Juliet—piece together what happened during the occupation and fall in love with the island’s colorful and courageous inhabitants.

_Still Alice_ by _Lisa Genova_ tells the story of Alice Howland, a Harvard psychology professor married to another Harvard professor. Their lives have been intellectually rich, but in her early 50s she begins to notice odd things: a forgotten word during a speech, momentary disorientation in Harvard Square, odd moments of forgetfulness. As the incidents accumulate she heads off to a memory clinic and eventually hears a dreaded diagnosis: early onset Alzheimer’s. First-time novelist Gencva, a brain researcher with a Harvard doctorate, captures the cruel course the disease cuts through lives, and the healing effects of love and understanding among patients, spouses, and children who come to grips with it.

_Watch Over Me_ by Christa Parrish has lots of story threads—an abandoned baby, an eating disorder, a failing marriage, an unloved teen. Parrish redeems those gritty plot elements with a story about grace for troubled people with messy lives: Her believable Christian characters face marital discord and personal demons—and try to fight them with their own strength. The facade they’ve built keeps others from knowing how deep is their despair—but an infant begins to turn them outward. Throughout the novel the main characters run from God, but Parrish shows (not tells) how God pursues them, even through terrible heartache. She writes with sensitivity and grace.

FINALLY, FOR THOSE WHO LIKE MYSTERY and crime fiction, here are three to die for:

_Red Knife_ by _William Kent Krueger_ is the ninth in a mystery series set in Minnesota’s north country on the border of an Ojibwa Indian reservation. In this installment a white teenager dies of a meth overdose and her father believes the Indian who sold it to her is hiding on the reservation, protected by an Indian gang, the Red Boyz. Former sheriff Cork O’Connor’s mixed heritage allows him to operate—although sometimes uneasily—on both sides of the racial divide. Krueger’s books provide both a sense of place and also a nuanced exploration of sin, family relationships, injustice, alienation, and the positive role the Catholic Church plays in this particular community.

_The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie_ by Alan Bradley has delightful 11-year-old Flavia de Luce as a nontraditional heroine. She recounts in the first person how she stumbled upon, in the cucumber patch of her family’s English estate, a dying man who breathed his last word, “Vale,” into her face. When the police treat her as a child, and after her father is arrested, Flavia sets out to solve the crime. Her amusing narration is filled with thoughts drawn from Gilbert and Sullivan, Shakespeare, Latin, her beloved chemistry, and the Book of Common Prayer. The book’s charms include wonderful writing, a cast of great characters, and a well-imagined postwar English setting.

_A Plague of Secrets_ by John Lescroart (see interview on p. 63) is the latest in an entertaining series of police/courtroom procedurals set amid San Francisco’s weird politics, weather, and food. Lescroart’s main characters, defense attorney Dismas Hardy and homicide lieutenant Abe Glitsky, are close friends and frequent opponents who pursue justice from different vantage points. In this novel Hardy defends from a murder charge the wife of a prominent developer who owns a coffee shop from which marijuana is sold. Meanwhile, because Glitsky is distracted by a life-threatening injury suffered by his son, he fails to oversee properly the case put together by his young subordinates. ∗
Good writing, say four successful practitioners of the craft, requires discipline, having a story to tell—and often a day job

BY MARVIN OLASKY
Wilder Publications, which prints classic books ranging from The Federalist Papers to The Communist Manifesto, and the work of classic authors ranging from Frederick Nietzsche to G.K. Chesterton, puts a warning label on its output: “This book is a product of its time and does not reflect the same values as it would if it were written today.”

I suspect that’s partly untrue. Every book to some extent reflects its era, but both Nietzsche in his mad nihilism and Chesterton in his Christianity transcended the everyday preoccupations of their era. Conservatives prize the thinking of Hamilton/Madison/Jay, and leftists that of Marx and Engels, precisely because their work in part transcended their times.

Wilder Publications is also kind enough to print this humble suggestion: “Parents might wish to discuss with their children how views on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and interpersonal relations have changed since this book was written.” Well, yes—sometimes changed for the better, sometimes not. Looney Tunes has a similar disclaimer on its DVDs.

And yet, as the song from Casablanca goes, “A kiss is still a kiss, a sigh is just a sigh. The fundamental things apply. As time goes by.” True ideas, those we derive from the Bible, are still true no matter how many years go by. And good writers try to tell the truth, even when their publishers are skittish.

At The King’s College in the Empire State Building, I and two of my colleagues, Henry Bleattler and Kiley Humphries, recently asked four writers what they do, why they do it, and when they have time to do it. Two, Bret Lott and John Lescroart, tap into truth by writing novels. Two others, Susan Wise Bauer and Naomi Schaefer Riley, tell about history and religious beliefs.

For all four, the time element is key, and that’s why I’ve divided this feature into three sections. Lott and Lescroart are both graybeards with long, distinguished careers: Their interviews come first and last. Bauer and Riley are still establishing themselves and doing so amid raising young children: Riley has two while Bauer homeschools four (and co-manages two businesses).

The experience of all four shows that good writers have not only talent but also time management skills on loan from God. Only Lescroart is so commercially successful that he can write throughout the day, but he first spent years doing odd jobs, including working as a typist for 11 hours each day in order to have two hours to write.

Part one: Writing while teaching

Bret Lott is a fine writer of literary fiction who hit the bestseller charts when talk show host Oprah Winfrey made one of his novels, Jewel (1991), an “Oprah’s Book Club” selection. He is a South Carolina resident and a professor at the College of Charleston.

Q: What is your writing day like? My alarm clock is set for 5:15 a.m. I go upstairs with my coffee cup and I pray. I start out by praying on my knees and I read the Bible. I sit down at my desk and start working. Working means looking at what I have written the day before and going through it and editing it, seeing what is happening and hearing that voice, and then moving forward with it. Things are always in flux, but a good day of writing ends at 10 a.m. I teach two classes and have four independent studies and other teaching.

Q: What was your day like in 1999 when you got the phone call from Oprah? It was a very long very bad day. I had just finished my ninth book (Jewel was my fourth published) and it was a disaster. I spent all morning talking to my agent about this novel that was due a month prior and what a disaster it was. That day at lunch one of my students died.

Q: Just died? He died in his dorm room. He was 51 years old and he had a brain aneurism. When they found him he was reading one of my novels and had just keeled over. All kinds of mayhem kind of broke out and I happened to be answering the phones for the administrative director. . . . All of a sudden this woman says, “Bret, this is Oprah, we are going to have so much fun!”

The first part of my day: the novel did not work. Then this fellow died. I knew immediately that God is the God of all folks whether you believe in Him or not. It kept me very humbled. This guy dies and you realize a book does not even mean anything.

Q: When you write a story like Jewel that is based on real characters, how do you go about synthesizing the reality with the creativity and the fiction? Jettison the facts. Facts drag you down when you write fiction. On the other hand, I wrote about 50 pages of Jewel and thought I needed to know some things: “What was your favorite radio program when young, what was the first new car that you and grandpa ever owned, what is the best dress that you had when you
were a teenager.” My grandma starts talking about these things and she started telling me about this one time my grandpa took her out on the canoe on this family picnic and he took her into the bulrushes and my grandpa made love to my grandma in the bulrushes. I was sitting in grandma’s kitchen listening to this and I was like, “Grandma, I do not want to know that.” But, it ends up in the novel. It is true. They were a husband and a wife. They love each other.

Q: Did you always want to be a writer? I did grow up looking at author photos and thinking of the romance and glamour of being a writer. I read my brains out and I enjoyed reading but I had a love of being in the outdoors. My freshman year I went to Northern Arizona University in the school of forestry. Then I went to Cal State Long Beach as a marine biology major because I liked to go to the beach. Then I got a D in a physics course. I had to get a C or better in order to continue in a marine biology major. I quit college and became an RC Cooler salesman in Southern California.

Q: Then you decided to get a degree? The only night I had free was Tuesday night and the only course at a little community college that was offered was creative writing. I took this class and I used to wear my RC Cooler uniform to class. The professor was a poet who rode a Harley. This was 1977. He had long flowing hair and John Denver glasses. He parked his Harley right in front of the classroom door. I would walk in, in my RC uniform, and he would just shake his head.

Q: Did he like your writing? I went back to college and then I decided to go to graduate school. He was a professor at Cal State Long Beach and would not even write me a letter of recommendation even though he was my creative writing teacher. I had to scrounge up a couple of letters.

Q: While you were in college, you also became a believer. Yes, I did, when I was at Northern Arizona University. The light bulb of the Holy Spirit went off over my head and after that I was born again. . . . I was a believer before I ever took a creative writing class and my idea of what writing was: an evangelical tool. I could not figure out what is the point of fiction. Fiction is a lie. What am I doing here? I am trying to tell a lie? I had better be in service to the greater good then if I am going to lie. This was a very immature idea of what I was supposed to be doing as a writer. I struggled with this for a long time and I wrote to John White, an old InterVarsity Press author I had met. He wrote back—it is a really important letter in my life—and said, “you must write with the integrity of Christ,” which means you do not pander, you simply see clearly and with compassion the world around you. That is your job.

Q: What advice do you tend to give inquirers about writing? A lot of people think that a writer is some wise shaman and they are ready to have wisdom bestowed upon them. No. I tell them I am struggling with the same problems they are. There is nothing new. There is simply the question of how does that guy hold his coffee cup? Why is she thinking about that dress? What does that car look like in the driveway? These are the things that will build through detail to the actual story.

Q: Do people learn how to write in school? We generally write about themes and symbols. That is not where creative writing comes from. Creative writing comes from the child who wants to have a story. Tell me something I do not know. What is happening? Why am I compelled to read this? That is where a story comes from. It is no secret. It’s just sitting alone at a desk and seeing the thing happen and writing it the best way that you can.

Q: Some critics do not seem to know what to do with your 12 books, since they are not ironic or cynical. Forgiveness, redemption: This is not the language that the world traffics in.

“I sit down at my desk and start working. Working means looking at what I have written the day before and going through it and editing it, seeing what is happening and hearing that voice, and then moving forward with it.”

The easy way is ironic aloofness. The hard way, which I think is much more valuable, is how do you find redemption, how do you find worth and value to life. That is not ironic. It is not cynical. People are not sure what to do with that.

Q: What do you think about Christian fiction generally? Christian fiction needs to be tougher. It does not need to have more sex, drugs, and alcohol. It has to offer a real portrait of the terror that believers have to confront and unbelievers live in every day.

—Interview by Henry Blattier
Susan Wise Bauer also teaches—at The College of William and Mary, where she received her Ph.D. in American Studies—but adds to that the homeschooling of four children. She finds time to write history books that children and adults enjoy reading.

Q: Sounds like your days are busy. What is a normal day for you? We have a master schedule that says what everyone is doing at each hour of each day and that includes which adult is in the house, what each child is supposed to be doing, who is responsible for the kids. My husband and I both do a lot of our work at home so part of our arrangement is that when the children erupt from their rooms at eight o'clock until after lunch, I am on duty. Anything that happens is my problem so that my husband can work.

Q: And after lunch? We swap off. But, as anyone who has kids will tell you, it is not always that neat. It’s also something that changes as our children grow older.

Q: More work or less work as your children have gotten older? The homeschooling duties have increased. I have a lot of help. We have a joint household. My husband and I live in the farmhouse where my parents live and we divided it into two. A laundry room joins the two halves of the house. We meet over the washing machine.

Q: Your latest publication, The History of the Medieval World, is volume two of a projected four-volume series in world history.
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Priorities are what we do. Everything else is just talk!
What led you to tackle this seemingly immense project? As a homeschooling mother I could not find a good world history resource. There were plenty of American history resources, especially for elementary students, but nothing that was global in scope. I thought, “Oh, I will write one myself.” So, I did. I wrote a four-volume world history for children. One day my editor at Norton called me up and said, “You should do this for grownups. You should write a history of the world.” . . . I said, “I am not a professional historian. I teach writing.”

Q: How did you respond? He said, “I would not ask a historian to do something like this.” I had no idea what he was talking about until I got into the project and I realized that if you are a dedicated professional historian with a passion for one particular country and topic, you could never do a global narrative because you would feel that you were shorting that area in which you have expertise.

Q: You write with lots of specific detail. One of my role models, historian Barbara Tuchman, said she distrusts historians who make broad sweeping generalizations about human nature. If you cannot find a specific story to illustrate whatever broad generalization you are about to make, you should not make the assumption. I found myself, especially with the first book, reading lots of sources that said things like, “the ancient Greeks prized philosophy.” I would think, “Where is the story? Where is the person? Where is the book? How do we know this?” I was always trying to ground those general assumptions in a story. When you are working with ancient cultures there is a limited set of stories which are very old which you use to try to figure out what was actually going on there.

Q: You started studying Latin at the age of 10. You can also read French, Aramaic, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. What has been the importance of language in terms of research and writing? Most practically, it means that you are not dependent on others to find out what is being written in other cultures. Anytime you are dependent on a translator, you are absorbing the translator’s point of view and the author’s. It is very difficult to pull those two apart. I wish I had better fluency in more languages than I do, especially working on a world history. It has been quite frustrating to try to deal with primary sources in Sanskrit.

“We have a master schedule that says what everyone is doing at each hour of each day and that includes which adult is in the house, what each child is supposed to be doing, who is responsible for the kids.”

Q: In two adult history books on which you’ve worked, what are some of the things that you discovered in the research process that really surprised you about a particular culture or moment? With The History of the Medieval World, one of the things that really stood out to me was the role that religion plays in every country’s politics. You do not think of Buddhism, for example, as being a big tool of political domination in the Middle Ages, but it was. Every religion was put to use during the Middle Ages as a way to persuade. No religious impulse— including the ones which are all about detachment and giving up political power—is not used in that way.

—Interview by Henry Bleattler
NAOMI SCHAEFER RILEY’S book on religious life at college campuses, God on the Quad, received glowing reviews. She is now writing one book about why university tenure should be abolished and editing another book about pop culture and virtue. Riley, her husband who is also a writer, and their two children, live in New York.

Q: What is a day in the life of a writing couple with two young children? The kids wake up at 6. I drop off my daughter at nursery school, the babysitter comes at 9 or 10, she picks up Emily from the nursery school and is there until 4 or 5, so that gives me maybe four or five hours—maybe two writing hours. Then she goes home, I give the kids dinner, Jason comes home, the kids go to bed, and we start all over.

Q: When did you decide you wanted to be a writer? I was bad at math in school. Academia seemed like a career I wanted to pursue, both because of my family and also it was clear to me from a very young age that my mother had the lifestyle I wanted: She was able to both work and spend a lot of time with her kids. But I like interviewing much better than book research at the library, and I find it easier to write when I don’t have to think of everything off the top of my head. A little bit of advice for people who are reluctant to do interviews: The story writes itself once you’ve called everybody.

Q: What prompted God on the Quad? It started out as one long article about Ave Maria Law School and Patrick Henry College. I turned it in and an editor said it would make a good book. So I started applying for fellowships.

Q: Why this kind of book? There are people who write books much more quickly, but I think the right kind of book for a young person to do is one that involves a lot of research and establishes you as being an expert at something. There are people who start writing memoirs at 23, but I think that this is a much better model for a first book: Pick a topic that people haven’t researched extensively enough, and if you have the energy and you can get the funding, go do a lot of research and interviews and then write. That makes you credible, and otherwise at that age you’re just not. I wasn’t.

Q: What was your timeline for the writing process? I did the research in 2001-2002, and the book was published at the beginning of 2005. So it was a process. It takes a long time.

Q: And not without help. I would come back from each college with tape after tape after tape. I would transcribe all of them, sit there with mounds and mounds of interviews, and think, “Where do I start?” Terry Teachout, a well-known journalist, kindly agreed to be my adviser for this. So I would sit in his office and unload all these stories from my visits, and he would help me think about the themes that I was telling him over and over again.

Interview by Killey Humphries

“There are people who start writing memoirs at 23, but I think that this is a much better model for a first book: Pick a topic that people haven’t researched extensively enough, and if you have the energy and you can get the funding, go do a lot of research and interviews and then write.”
for Young People ages 7-18
Enrollment is $25 per student. The top 100 scoring contestants from each age division (across the nation) will compete in the National Contest, held November 11-13 in Illinois. The Bee consists of oral and written rounds; students may study from KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, or NIV. The Shelby Kennedy Contestant registration closes June 30th.
Part three: Writing popular novels

John Lescroart regularly hits the bestseller lists with his scintillating legal thrillers that feature fallible heroes working amid San Francisco craziness.

Q: When did you start thinking about being a writer? In the 7th or 8th grade, I had a teacher named Mrs. Blay, a believer in the written word. She really drilled the grammar. The bug hit me when she had us write an essay on “What is Democracy?” I got fired up about democracy. The local newspaper published my essay in a big box and a beautiful setting. I went, “This is the coolest thing I’ve ever seen.”

Q: But throughout your twenties you wanted to be a musician. When I got out of school in 1970 I really was taken by the conventional wisdom, which was that no one in 20 years would be reading. It would all be music and magazines. The novel was dead. I became a professional musician, I was a solo player for the first couple of years, then formed a band. I quit on my 30th birthday. I had a ton of demos and a few good songs, but I couldn’t put it together to get a record deal.

Q: In your thirties during the 1980s, you decided to become a writer. I got up at 5:30 and from 6 to 8 every morning tried to write four pages. Then I worked my day job from 9 to 5: I was the head of the word processing department at a large law firm in Los Angeles. Then I ate a paper bag meal and did various typing jobs at other law firms until 11. So my day went from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. I did that for six years and published three books. Nobody bought any of them. I was disciplined, but I lived in a sense of panic because it wasn’t working. The day job was really onerous. I typed literally 11 hours a day. I had bad carpal tunnel. I had wristbands on and wraps around my elbows. It was intense.
Q: Maybe you could list other jobs you had over the years. How much time do you have? I was a bartender in San Francisco, a legal secretary at the Bank of America, a moving man, house painter. From the age of 30 until 45, it was pretty brutal.

Q: You had a crucial moment when you were 41. We went to the beach and went body surfing. Later that night I was delirious: spinal meningitis. A summer rainstorm had flooded the sewers but they didn’t put up any warnings. I was in a coma for 11 days. When I woke up from that, I knew I couldn’t keep doing the 16- to 18-hour days plus trying to figure out the novel. I said if I don’t make it now, I’ll become a lawyer. I took a chance and decided not to just write another book, but a different type of book—a legal thriller.

Q: So you wrote The 13th Juror. It became a huge international sensation—sold four million copies in 1994. That’s when I finally quit my day job. I got a check for $630,000, more than I had made my whole life. That will change your life in a hurry.

Q: People call your books legal thrillers, but they’re really about how humans survive under duress. I try to find a very good duress point to start the book. My books tend to start when people are happy and that lasts for about three pages. character, and things follow organically once you get a good start and you pay attention to the individual scenes. The characters take on a life of their own.

Q: I’ve been in discussions about the relationship between God’s sovereignty and human free will. Seems to me the process is like writing: The writer is the creator, but the characters assert their free will. Yes, you’re right. It’s a tremendous conflict. Often it will almost stop you dead, because you’re trying to shape a plot: If the characters don’t want to be in your template, you have problems. You can’t force them against their nature. Once you get to know these characters they really speak to the author and tell him or her what they are going to do.

Q: When you’re creating antagonists, how do you balance making them believable—not stock villains—while still making readers want to oppose them? Action is character. I try to have several people who are legitimate suspects in a mystery, complicated human people, all of whom have flaws. I have the same kind of flaws occur in people who are factually innocent as in the one person who is factually guilty. My lead guy, Dismas Hardy, is mega-flawed. He has problems being a good father and sometimes he is confused and isn’t always sure what the right thing to do is. I deal with most of my characters on those terms—they’re living in a veil of tears.

Q: Some would-be writers say they need to be inspired. There’s no such thing as inspiration. That’s the answer. I mean there’s inspiration, but it’s not where you start. I’ll write recipes, jokes; I’ll do anything to get the fingers on the typewriter. There are a lot of socks to be sorted and if you focus on how many socks there are to sort, you’ll never write. Don’t think about that. I get up in the morning, go into the gym and work out, then get into my desk by 10:30 and write until five.

Q: It’s work. The writing itself is work, and it takes dedication. The advice I give to younger people or anyone who wants to be in any creative field: Finish something. Finishing is the most important step of being any kind of creative person, because you only solve the problems by getting to the end. Those are where all of those problems come up, and if you solve those problems, you’re a writer, you’re an artist. You have to work through the problems of plot and structure until you get a satisfying ending. Sometimes you’ll get it and sometimes it will be harder. You have to finish.

—Interview by Marvin Olasky
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The rise & fall of Christian charity

MAKE NEW FRIENDS BUT KEEP THE OLD” goes for books as well as friends. “Some are silver and some are gold.” In this issue and throughout the year we emphasize new books, but in May I ran across a golden oldie, Christian Charity in the Ancient Church (1883). The author, Gerhard Uihlhorn, was a German Lutheran theologian and historian who described how ancient Romans thought of work and charity, how the coming of Christianity changed attitudes and behavior, and what went wrong as the ancient church slouched toward medievalism. Readers may make their own judgments as to whether history is repeating itself.

Uihlhorn begins by describing how, in the early A.D. years, “the Roman populace became more and more a work-hating, pleasure-seeking crowd, which cheered every new leader in the hopes of new largesse.” People began seeking a handout rather than a hand up: “The Roman of that day would much rather busy himself as a beggar and sycophant in the hall of some great man, than stick to any ordinary and regular work.”

Roman charity was self-interested: “Of the duty of love . . . of such a compassion as is self-sacrificing for the sake of others, we hear nothing. Even in the making of gifts and presents, it is not the individual, but the State, the town, the citizenship that is regarded. There is plenty of liberality, but no compassion; plenty of good deeds, but none of the works of charity. While one furthers the interests of the State, one furthers one’s own interests, for one depends upon the State; without it, one is nowhere. Here again we find selfishness at the bottom of all.”

Uihlhorn grounds the lack of charity in a worldview that did not see humans as possessors of eternal souls: “If the individual man be only a passing shadow, without any everlasting significance, then reflection quickly makes us decide: Since it is of no importance whether he exist or not, why should I deprive myself of anything in order to give it to him? For the rule of life soon becomes this, that every one makes himself as comfortable in this life as possible; and this implies that he need not trouble himself about the poor and needy, whose existence or non-existence is at bottom a matter of no importance.”

Uihlhorn connects the beginning of a change in thinking about charity, 2,000 years ago, with a spreading realization of God’s sovereignty: “The rich gave what he gave to God, and the poor received what he received from God. Thus the temptation of the rich to exalt themselves above the poor, and the humiliation of the poor at being obliged to receive assistance from others, were removed, while at the same time discontent and murmuring, as well as insolent demands and presumptuous requests, were done away with.”

Through this process both rich and poor learned humility: “The rich became conscious that he only gave back to God what he had first received. . . . Gifts had not the effect, so often occurring in other instances, of separating between rich and poor by increasing and rendering still more prominent the chasm existing between them, but were a bond which united them in God, by making them conscious of their oneness in the one Lord.” As Clement wrote late in the first or early in the second century, “The rich give to the poor, the poor praises God, for sending to him someone by whom his wants are supplied.”
Discernment in giving was as important then and now. Basil, a fourth-century bishop in Cappadocia, noted, “Great experience is required to distinguish between those who are really poor and those who beg only that they may collect money. He who gives to a distressed and sick person gives to God, and will receive a reward. But he who gives to a vagabond and parasite... gives it to men who deserve contempt for their audacity, rather than pity for their poverty.” Ambrose, Basil’s contemporary in Milan, described “the arts of pretended beggars” and emphasized the need “to take care lest the portion that belongs to the needy becomes the prey of rogues.”

Discernment was possible because church deacons “rendered a great individualizing possible in the relief of the poor. Every one received the assistance that his necessities required. Efforts were above all made to render the poor again capable of work, and to put them in a condition to earn their own livelihood. They were directed where to find work, and more kindly and lovingly treated them; never also has she been farther from fostering beggary, and making their life easy to idlers.”

It was important for the wealthy to work, save, and give. Conspicuous consumption was wrong: “Simplicity, contentment, moderation, are required of every Christian. All luxury, all wantonness met with the more disfavor, the more the surrounding heathen world had at that time sunk into an immoderate voluptuousness, a frequently senseless luxury. The first particular by which a woman who had become a Christian was distinguished from her former female friends, was her simple life and renunciation of luxurious dress. The Christian family was distinguished from the heathen by the great simplicity which prevailed in furniture, in domesticus, in eating and drinking.”

Clement put this clearly 1,900 years ago: “The handmaids of Christ should love simplicity. Simplicity is the forerunner of holiness. It smoothens out the inequalities of property. A holy ornament should surround your wrists, the joy of giving and the diligence of the housewife. On your feet should glitter untiring zeal in well-doing, and walking in the ways of righteousness. Your necklaces and chains are modesty and simplicity. Such jewelry comes from God’s workshop.”

But this did not mean a refusal to enjoy the good things God provides. As Uhlhorn notes, “even Tertullian, with his strong tendency to despise the world, describes Christians as possessing and enjoying the good things of earth: ‘We are no Brahmins or Indian gymnosophists, no wild men of the woods, and separatists from life. We are mindful of the gratitude which we owe to the Lord our God. and do not despise the enjoyment of His works. We only so moderate it as to avoid excess and abuse.’”

By the fifth century, though, the church based in Rome had changed: “Alms had totally changed their character. They were no longer a moral, but a religious duty; men no longer gave with regard to their neighbors, to serve and to help them in love, but with regard to themselves, to exercise an influence upon their own relation to God, to gain a reward for themselves. ‘Certainly every one of us does himself and his own soul the greatest benefit, whenever he relieves the distress of others,’ preaches already Leo the Great; and this motive of benefiting oneself and one’s family was ever after

![Early Christians gather in Rome.](image-url)
"The rich give to the poor, the poor praises God, for sending to him someone by whom his wants are supplied."

—Clement of Rome

more and more strongly brought forward in place of self-denying, self-sacrificing love."

Personal involvement by deacons became rare: "A multitude of needy persons, who had formerly been visited and tended by the deacons in their own homes, now found shelter in the hospitals, the poorhouses, while in the case of those who did not require such care, assistance was confined to regular gifts, the dispensation of which was now the task not of the deacons, but chiefly of the head manager of the Church property, the steward. Ministration to the poor in their homes everywhere fell into the background, the diaconate lost in importance, and after the latter half of the fifth century its gradual decay is clearly perceived."

Behind these practical changes lay theological drift: "Nothing more effectively promoted this propensity than the thought that the sin-atoning power of alms reaches also to the other world. It may be said that the doctrine of purgatory...determined more than anything else the charity of the entire medieval period." Uhllhorn criticizes "a generation only too much inclined to release themselves from the moral demands of Christianity by external works...gifts by which the individual members of the church hoped to obtain the intercession of the martyrs for themselves or for the dead. To give or bequeath anything to the Church was esteemed a specially good work, and one sure to secure the favor of God."

In Uhllhorn's summary, "The former Church care of the poor was such no longer. The beneficence of the bishop [was like] the distributions of the emperors and the Roman nobles. When Gregory the Great [Roman Catholic pope from 590 to 604] had corn, oil, wine, meat distributed every month, when he had carts full of provisions driving through the town for the relief of the poor, this looks more like a revival of the old distribution of corn than of the relief of the poor by the Christian Church. The Bishop of Rome had come into the place of the Emperor, the bishops into the place of the Roman nobles; Christian caritas has assumed a suspicious similarity to the ancient kind."

Over time, Uhllhorn shows, church leaders "despaired of the moral transformation of the people in general" and placed more "claims upon those who desired to be perfect Christians. As the universal priesthood of all Christians was replaced by the hierarchical priesthood of the few, so was the holiness of all by that of some few saints." Soon arose "a double ethic, a distinction between perfect and imperfect Christians...Living an avowedly Christian life was now a demand made only of monks or of those who lived a monkish life. Others were indeed Christians, but Christians of a lower grade. Christians properly so called, were only those who had renounced the world—widows, virgins, those who had taken vows of chastity, monks, ecclesiastics... A separation of this kind must have had a destructive effect upon Church life. A Church life like that of the first centuries became thereby impossible."

Why should we care what happened so long ago? Uhllhorn's conclusion is important for modern Christians: "A healthy charity is only possible where healthy moral views of work and property prevail... A healthy charity can neither be attained to where there is an over-estimation of property, where wealth is regarded as the supreme good, poverty as the greatest evil, nor where property is undervalued and wealth looked upon as no real good, poverty as no real evil. For in the former case no one can feel bound to sacrifice his earthly good, for the sake of a higher good, for the service of his neighbor, and the gifts and alms will fail. In the latter these will not indeed be wanting; on the contrary, almsgiving will be enormous, but its right application will fail."

In World we try to emphasize effective compassion, that which helps a person to come out of poverty. Uhllhorn shows the mindset to be fought: "If to be poor is no evil, if, on the contrary, it denotes a higher moral condition than to be rich, the task of charity cannot consist in opposing and alleviating poverty. Almsgiving then becomes a good work in itself, a good work complete in the act of giving and the renunciation of property therein involved, without regard to the application of the gift and the end attained thereby."
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What do these toys have in common? They are noisy and designed for toddler play.

Jules Sylvester works at the nonprofit Sight & Hearing Association in St. Paul, Minn. Every autumn since 1998 she’s gone shopping at a local toy store, sound meter in hand, to test the noise levels of various toys. She pushes buttons and takes a quick reading. Then she buys some of the toys for further testing. Last year she bought 19 toys, including the toys above. University of Minnesota researchers tested the 19 toys in a more rigorous fashion, measuring the noise level close to the toy’s speaker and 10 inches away, to imitate the different ways a child might play with the toy. Fifteen of the 19 toys emitted sounds louder than 100 decibels (db) at the speaker and above 80 db at a distance of 10 inches.

Sylvester estimates that 75 to 80 percent of toys intended for young children have buttons, which mean noise. Is the noise loud enough to be harmful? Pam Mason, head of the audiology practices section of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association says anything above 85 db can cause hearing loss. It’s not just the intensity,
she says, but duration and repeated
duration. Kids who listen all day
long to loud sounds face “a greater
risk of getting a noise induced
hearing loss.”

Since 2004 some toymakers
have followed a voluntary standard
that suggests toys should not exceed
90 decibels at 10 inches from the
speaker. There’s no requirement
that toys meet that standard—and
the standard is silly when applied to
toys meant for babies and toddlers
whose arms aren’t much longer
than 10 inches. They aren’t going to
hold the toy in an outstretched arm,
especially if it is a cuddly toy like
Tickle Me Elmo.

So what should parents do?
Most parents don’t go toy shopping
with a sound meter, so Sylvester
says they need to use common
sense: “If the toy is too loud for
you, it is too loud for your child.”
She also recommends that people
buy toys without buttons; your
kids can make their own noise.
Look for toys that have a volume
control and set it at the lowest
volume. Take out the batteries.
Sylvester says at her house she
sticks clear packing tape over the
toy’s speaker to muffle the sound.

Mason says parents need to
understand that well-meaning gifts
can be dangerous: “Even a mild
hearing loss has huge negative
consequences” for a child,
especially since it can affect speech
development.

How did Baby Einstein and the
other toys score? The Baby Einstein
board book (which a child is likely
to hold near her ear) scored above
111 dB at the speaker and 81 dB 10
inches away. The Fisher Price
mailbox scored above 113 dB at the
speaker and 91.5 at arm’s length.
The LeapFrog maracas (intended for
babies 6 months and up) scored
above 102 dB at the speaker and
above 85 dB 10 inches away.
Sylvester says she’s tested toys from
every major manufacturer in different
price ranges: “There’s no rhyme or
reason why one is loud.”

The origami option

Next time your child complains that it is hot
outside and there’s nothing to do, check out a
fabulous website that has
instructions for doing origami,
the Japanese paper-folding
craft. The website provides
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diagrams for hundreds of different
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Money lines
Websites help individuals raise venture capital online
BY ALISSA WILKINSON

An artist or entrepreneur who wanted to raise money for a project once had to spend a lot of time vigorously networking, setting up meetings, and asking for money. But a few new websites aid this process by hosting project pages with details about the venture, the amount of money needed, and rewards for investors. Contributions can range from $1 to 100 percent, and project creators give rewards to contributors—a CD, a walk-on role in the film, a souvenir—depending on the size of the pledge. A complete stranger might see a project on the website, like the idea or the rewards, and decide to contribute. If the project does not raise 100 percent of its funds by the deadline, investors get their money back.

Two websites demonstrate the possibilities of this model. Recent projects on IndieGoGo.com include a high-school student eager to pay her way to attend a summer theater workshop, and a production company hoping to shoot a web comedy about Christian dating. Kickstarter.com recently made headlines for helping a group of NYU students raise nearly $200,000 to start a Facebook competitor.

Infected implants
Computer viruses have brought down websites and services since the dawn of the internet. But computers aren't alone in their susceptibility to these viruses—University of Reading researcher Mark Gasson says that many implantable medical devices, such as pacemakers and cochlear implants, are also vulnerable. To make his point, he embedded an infected RFID chip in his left hand. (RFIDs are widely used for passport scanning, inventory control in libraries and warehouses, etc.) Gasson's chip would ordinarily have let him access his workplace and cell phone, but the virus in the chip disrupted the connection. —A.W.

Making a mark
The war between traditional print books and their electronic cousins continues to rage—but Purdue professor Sorin Matei's "Ubimark" project may narrow the gap between paper and pixels by embedding text with bar codes in printed books. When photographed by a device such as an iPhone, the codes work as hyperlinks to a website with annotations, online conversations with other readers, maps, and audio versions of the text. The prototype book is Around the World in 80 Days.

But Ubimark isn't just intended for books—markers are popping up in magazines and on bus shelter advertisements, where they may link to shopping websites or other information. Eventually, Ubimark may deliver information for tourists through markings on physical locations, an atlas with stories and testimonials embedded through marks, and more. The goal is to "enhance physical reality" with stories, travel experiences, ratings, and other information. —A.W.
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Dirty biofuels

Environmentalists take action against alternative fuels that were supposed to be green
BY DANIEL JAMES DEVINE

Biofuels in Europe now have more hoops to splash through if they want a tax break. In June the European Union’s energy chief introduced a certification system that requires subsidized biofuels to reduce carbon emissions by at least 35 percent (compared to gas and diesel) after production and transportation emissions are factored in. The source crop—corn, soybeans, or sugarcane, for instance—must be grown on land that was already used for farming in 2008. The rules, which take effect in December, aim to quell fears of land exploitation while working toward the EU’s target of replacing 10 percent of its transportation fuels with “renewables” by 2020, part of a larger carbon-reduction plan for the union.

But while bureaucrats try to fill quotas, some environmentalists are challenging the assumption that biofuels are environmentally friendly in the first place. Friends of the Earth Europe called the new EU policy “folly,” and Greenpeace criticized it for not preventing “indirect land use change,” where farmers rotate existing crops onto new land in order to make way for lucrative biofuel production. The result of this in foreign nations is often deforestation, and subsequently, an increase in carbon emissions. When land conversion is factored in, some biofuels may ultimately increase emissions, not reduce them.

Scientists have revealed other problems with the “green” fuel: One study calculated that ethanol manufactured from irrigated crops in the United States may consume 100 times as much water as gasoline per mile driven. Another demonstrated that biodiesel is much more prone to degrade from anaerobic bacteria than traditional diesel. Environmental groups point out that biofuel crop fertilizers release nitrous oxides into the atmosphere, said to be 300 times more powerful than CO2 as greenhouse gases.

Although estimates vary wildly, biofuels also likely bear some percentage of blame for global food price increases. According to the United Nations, average prices have fallen from their 2008 peak but remain around 70 percent higher than in 2002, threatening families in poorer nations.

In the United States, scientists accused the EPA of inflating the emissions-reducing potential of corn ethanol on paper in order to categorize it as a “renewable” energy source. In response to biofuel industry lobbyists, the EPA this summer may raise the maximum amount of ethanol allowed in standard gasoline from 10 percent to 12 or 15 percent.

The fruit of the womb is a reward, wrote King Solomon in Psalm 127, but he probably had more than tax revenues in mind. Yet that’s all the motivation needed for governments to cover the cost of fertility treatment for infertile couples, according to the nonprofit European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology. While advocating the subsidies, the organization estimated the typical lifetime tax revenues from a European child born in 2005, subtracted government expenses, and came up with a net revenue of about $153,000. That’s an eight-fold return on an average fertility treatment cost of $18,000.

In the European Union, where the fertility rate of 1.5 children per woman is well below replacement level, many nations pay for a limited number of treatment cycles. The subsidies are rare in the United States, though New York covers treatment for certain couples. –D.J.D.
Inside Cades Cove Missionary Baptist Church
in Cades Cove, Tenn., established in 1839.
Atop the pyramid

College sports' present turmoil belies the passing of its greatest coach

BY MARK BERGIN

College athletics are in a state of disarray. Big-name schools are jumping to different conferences in moves that threaten longstanding rivalries, upset decades of tradition and could remake the national landscape to undermine the recent growth of smaller programs.

What's more, the most successful college football team of the past decade has received the equivalent of a backyard whipping from the NCAA for recruiting violations. The USC Trojans will forfeit 20 scholarships, vacate their national championship of 2004, and languish through two years of bowl game ineligibility.

All this within a week of the passing of college sports' most decorated coach. The juxtaposition between media tributes to John Wooden and the news of collegiate turmoil underscores the value of the former UCLA basketball head man's contributions to coaching, athletics, and humanity. Wooden's legacy charts unparalleled success—10 national titles as a coach, one as a player, four undefeated seasons, and a seven-year stretch during which the Bruins lost a total of just five games.

But the coach's legacy is much broader than championships. His life left a mark on countless people who learned from his simple philosophies and exemplary wisdom. Wooden developed maxims and teaching points throughout his three decades of coaching that still inspire industrious living. His Pyramid of Success, a sort of blueprint for winning in basketball or life, drips with proverbial wisdom from the Christian scriptures: "Success travels in the company of very hard work. There is no trick, no easy way."

Wooden never shied from stating his commitment to Christian faith: "There is only one kind of life that truly wins, and that is the one that places faith in the hands of the Savior." But he was hardly heavy-handed in passing on the lessons he treasured. Sitting atop his pyramid is a box with the words "Competitive Greatness." His definition follows: "Perform at your best when your best is required. Your best is required each day."

CHICAGO KINGS

The longest active drought of Stanley Cup glory ended at 49 years when Chicago Blackhawks forward Patrick Kane slipped an overtime goal through the legs of Philadelphia keeper Michael Leighton. But the long-awaited celebration for hockey fans in the Windy City had to wait just a few seconds longer as confusion over whether the puck had breached the net slowly turned to confirmation that indeed the party could begin.

Chicagoans spilled into the streets, motorists honked horns, and the victorious team jetted home to join the revelry. For a sports-crazed city with two underperforming ball clubs, a quarterback prone to complete throws to players in the wrong colored jerseys, and a basketball team in transition, the Stanley Cup was a welcome balm. For the first time in Chicago since 1961, hockey is king.

But rumors of another king could soon displace the city's newfound ice fetish. With the LeBron James sweepstakes slated to open July 1, the Bulls are well-positioned to land the biggest free agent in Chicago sports history—especially given their recent head coaching hire of former Boston assistant Tom Thibodeau, who shares an agent with James.

For all the parties and parades and Michael Jordan sightings at playoff hockey games, the acquisition of James would push the Bulls back on top. —M.B.
A Conversation to Inspire, Equip, and Unify the Church

How Science Supports Christianity and Christianity Explains Science

A Symposium for Pastors, Christian Leaders, Interested Scientists, and Those Pondering the Issues

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Labor pains
Unemployment taking a staycation, says Fed chair
BY JOSEPH SLIFE

Oops. Analyst expectations were wrong—again. Economists surveyed by Dow Jones projected an increase of 188,000 new private sector jobs in May. The actual number, released by the Labor Department June 4, showed an uptick of less than one-fourth that number: 41,000. In all, U.S. nonfarm payroll grew by 431,000 jobs, but more than 90 percent of the positions were in government, including temporary workers hired to assist with the 2010 census.

May’s unemployment rate stood at 9.7 percent, down slightly from April, while the number of “long-term unemployed” (27 weeks or more) stayed steady at 6.8 million people—roughly half the total of those without work.

Despite the sluggish jobs report, Fed chairman Ben Bernanke told a June 7 question-and-answer session sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson Center that the economy has “a good bit of momentum” to avoid a double-dip recession but warned that the unemployment rate isn’t likely to improve soon: “A lot of people are going to be under financial stress.”

EUROFUND
Hoping to ease market jitters that have sent the euro to a four-year low against the dollar, eurozone finance ministers began setting up a huge bailout fund aimed at rescuing members of Europe’s currency union that face a default. Money from the $1 trillion (€750 billion) pool, a joint project of the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, is intended to counter investor fears that Spain and Portugal (and perhaps others) may follow Greece in needing a bailout to meet debt payments.

Germany, which is putting up the largest chunk of money for the EU fund, has been pressing other eurozone nations to cut spending to reduce the likelihood of needing to tap into the fund. Finance ministers urged Spain and Portugal toward structural reforms that would cut outlays for pensions and welfare. —J.S.
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MAILBAG

"GOP idea man" (MAY 22)
My siblings and I all fight over WORLD as soon as my dad brings it home, so we were excited to see our congressman, Paul Ryan, on the cover. Thank you for the great article about his Roadmap for America's Future. If only there were more like him in Washington.

ANNA HARTLAUB, 15, Delavan, Wis.

"Binoculars in the mirror" (MAY 22)
Joel Belz's column about WORLD readers' tendency to pessimism was sobering but not surprising. Remember all the hysteria about Y2K? It was embarrassing and many evangelicals were involved. I am not saying we have nothing to fear. In fact, we are probably heading for tough times. But I think we need cooler heads and a sharper eye for opportunities (spiritual, not just economic) rather than just disasters.

JAMES T. DAVIS
Pohang, South Korea

I would like to cast my vote in favor of optimism, even though I have always considered myself somewhat of a Puddleglum. Maybe my view of eschatology plays into my optimism. For the record, I believe God is supremely in control and things will be getting better, if only a little bit at a time.

CINDY PIMPO
Annapolis, Md.

I think it's very uplifting to expect the events in Revelation, Daniel, and Ezekiel. Our redemption is drawing nigh! Hallelujah!

KATHRYN LEE
Indianapolis, Ind.

It is possible to maintain a strong optimism through our faith in God. However, it does not eliminate a sense that things are going to get worse before it gets better. Man is still foolish. It doesn't mean that God will not take care of us. It just means that probably we are still going to screw things up.

FORREST PARKER
Galveston, Texas

"A profile in social justice" (MAY 22)
I believe André Seu is right regarding government's involvement in charity. I was raised in The Salvation Army. Of all that the ministry does, the most important is its adherence to the faith and outreach in every community as it tries to build self-reliance and a strong commitment to Christian values. It is a never-ending story, and it builds upon the principles laid down by William Booth.

BERT NELSON
Clifton, N.J.

The social justice that I know is a far cry from the redistribution of wealth or political mantras about racism, sexism, and the other “isms.” Social justice considers the whole of society, and the needs of our society are too great for either the private sector or the public sector to go it alone. Sometimes it takes government to give at least the semblance of a level playing field. So, please do not refer to all of us as the “social justice crowd” and we will not refer to you as “right-wing myopics.”

FRED ALLEN SWAN
Indian Orchard, Mass.

"Treadmill books" (MAY 22)
I was disappointed in your review of When Erute Force Fails by Mark Kleiman, who advocates making prison sentences "more

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Unpleasant.” I invite anybody who thinks that being in a medium-security prison is a fun vacation to move into the bunk next to mine for a year or so. Believe me, I don’t need bread and water in a tiny cell without my books (I don’t have a TV) to convince me to never want to come back here.

KENNETH CLAAR
Boise, Idaho

I thoroughly appreciate and enjoy Marvin Olasky’s articles and columns. He has also referred over time to several books by Francis Schaeffer, C.S. Lewis, Tolstoy, and others that have helped me focus and broaden my reading list, and I have been challenged to read them for myself.

KATHRYN GENT BEATY
Newville, Pa.

“Passing the briefcase test” (MAY 23)
Your series of interviews with scholars has been outstanding. I only wish the interviews were longer.

JOE BRUNT
College Station, Texas

“Romance by numbers” (MAY 22)
I was shocked by the review of Letters to Juliet. “Corny and unbelievable?” The movie is all about romance!

JANE COX
Columbia, Md.

“Bigger than Jerusalem Day” (MAY 23)
My wife and I visited many sites in and near Israel last November. It has made the Bible come alive for us and given us an appreciation for Mindy Belz’s recent articles on Israel and the complexities of life there.

BOB & ADRIENNE NAGEL
Wildwood, Mo.

“Escaping the Enlightenment trap” (MAY 22)
Although the “separation of church and state” was a founding principle of the United States, a far more important principle was the “integration of faith and state.” Many of our founders were committed Christians. The vast majority were religious in some form and acknowledged the role of faith in a successful free society. More than just “historically colored by religion,” the American political firmament was built on the prayers and service of faithful, God-fearing politicians.
and voters who understood that without faith our way of life has no hope.

PAUL SCHUH
Silver Spring, Md.

Mailbag (MAY 29)

It was a nice surprise to see a photo of WORLD magazine in Damoh, India. In November 1894, my grandparents William Eagle Rambo and Kate Clough Rambo went to Damoh, bought land there, and started a Disciples of Christ orphanage for boys. If WORLD is being read there, there must still be a Christian presence in the town. Praise God!

BARBARA RAMBO HOSHIKO
Ashland, Ohio

“Delayed, not denied” (MAY 8)

My grandson, Brandon, was diagnosed with leukemia on March 17. Intensive chemo and steroid therapy have been hard on him and his family—on all of us. Andréé Seu’s insights on prayer are profoundly helpful.

BILL SWENSON
St. Louis, Mo.

This was her best column yet. I rejoiced that she is finally set free from her insomnia, but mostly I was blessed with her perspective on prayer not yet answered. I had all my family members read it as it seems each of us is at a place where we are waiting on God for relief, direction, or rescue.

NANCY YOUNG
Phoenix, Ariz.

“Gamble or gimmick?” (MAY 8)

I completely disagree with Janie Cheaney that occasional giveaways may be an effective way to make the point that no material gift can match the grace of Christ. It is growing tiresome seeing stunts like this justified by well-meaning pastors. Where do we draw the line?

DENNIS KLINGENSCHMITH
Canal Fulton, Ohio

“Flame-outs” (MAY 8)

I was interested (OK, depressed) to read how badly almost every state is handling its budget. How do Montana and North Dakota manage to have no debt when the rest have so much? Do they have fiscally responsible leaders and handle money better?

SHARON PESKE
Bemidji, Minn.

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Pastor Tony Evans

Veteran pastor Oliver W. Price shares principles that will help believers rediscover the power of praying together in the presence of Christ.

“Tested by fire” (May 8)
This was a humbling and resolution-inducing article. Merely reading this account of the Christians in Gaza, while I sit sipping hot chocolate, makes me blush to think that people who may despair of life probably complain less than I.

EARL LEELAND PETERSON
North Hollywood, Calif.

“Shadow of death” (May 8)
This article reports a claim from Human Rights Watch that Israeli drones are so precise that the civilian deaths may not have been accidental. What about the tactic of planting military targets among civilians, something that the enemies common to the United States and Israel do without compunction or remorse?

KAREN SCHMID
Lacey, Wash.

“Did you hear the one?” (April 24)
I got a kick out of Marvin Olasky’s column of humor and sincerely hope it won’t be the last one.

LAURA FARRUGIA
Southfield, Mich.

“O Jerusalem” (April 10)
Jerusalem undoubtedly has much value for Israel, but it also has much value for Arab residents who are feeling very pushed around by Netanyahu’s hardline tactics.

PENNY BLAKE
Welland, Ontario

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Minutes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Voice Dial</td>
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<td>Nationwide Coverage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial Period</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other plans available. Ask your Jitterbug expert for details.

Call now and get a FREE GIFT. Try Jitterbug for 30 days and if you don’t love it, just return it. Why wait, the Jitterbug comes ready to use right out of the box. The phone comes preprogrammed with your favorite numbers, and if you aren’t as happy with it as I am you can return it for a refund of the purchase price. Call now, the Jitterbug product experts are ready to answer your questions.

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AGENT JOHN

The complex and expensive procedures of a federally approved paint job

JOHN CAME OVER TO INSTALL my new electric dryer. It was a straightforward operation.

If he had come for a paint job or replacement window, he would have been required to read to me from a pamphlet entitled “Renovate Right: Important Lead Hazard Information for Families.” Then he would have cordoned off the “contaminated” area, put out “Lead hazard area” signs, and laid plastic (not drop cloths) six feet in every direction from the work site (10 feet, if outside). These are the EPA regs that went into effect on April 22 and apply nationally to everyone with a station wagon, ladder, and “handyman” sign. At the kitchen table John consulted his shiny EPA manual:

“Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations: Established as Federal Executive Policy on Environmental Justice. Its main provision directs federal agencies to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law to make environmental justice part of their mission...”

The words “justice” and “minorities” and “mission” seemed a little odd in a painter’s handbook. Almost like the EPA is a priesthood of the environment. Still, I’m sure it is very wise to be careful with lead. How much is reality and how much is special interest-driven is always hard to know, of course.

Wasn’t it another government agency, the FDA, that signed off on a health claim that Frito-Lay chips, which are fried in polyunsaturated fats, may be a blessing because they can help you reduce your intake of saturated fats, and that’s good for your cardiovascular system?

I was amused as John described the protective gear he has to wear. “It’s almost like you’re working in a radioactive area,” he said. “What if you have to go to the bathroom?” I asked.

“Even crazier than that,” he said. “If I need a tool that I forgot in my truck, I have to get out of my little suit—I’ve got this mask on—suit, boots, gloves, hood.”

“It’s a lot of plastic”—John returned to environmental issues—“and it all has to be disposed of. You can’t wash it or clean it.” Drop cloths you shake out at the end of a day? Forgetaboutit. The responsible EPA-regulated contractor takes his contractor’s trash bag, carefully places the hazmat sheeting in it, filling it no more than 2/3 full, and hauls it to the landfill.

And if you are not a responsible contractor? The penalties run high: $37,000 per day per violation. You probably don’t have that kind of cash lying around anymore, because you spent it on the mandatory eight-week course to become EPA-certified. (If you are a company, the bill is $550, of which $300 is for an EPA number.) John was one of 48 in his graduating class. That’s $250 times 48—a nice piece of change for a day’s work in the EPA.

The certification effectively makes John an agent of the EPA, which is fun for me, since I’ve never had a federal agent in my home before. John doesn’t think so. He’s a big states’ rights guy, and also is concerned that his promotion opens the door for a lot of litigation, which will also raise contractor’s insurance. If you built new shelves in little Johnny’s room, and he gets sick, you are a target.

“Right now this seems benign,” John said, “but it sets up a precedent. It sounds good if you say, ‘Teachers must be mandated to report evidence of child abuse.’ But there is still a danger in it.” Will teachers have to report as child abuse someone instructing a child that Jesus is the way?

My house was built in 1912. That means it, and 38 million others, fall under the edict. I’m glad I had the bathroom renovated years ago. John said the new protocol would add $1,000 to the bill—what with his extra costs in time, equipment, gear, and his new HEPA vacuum cleaner. (He owns two, at $1,100 each; filters go for $70, and bags $12.)

Small price to pay for “environmental justice,” I say. If John loses his job, maybe he can join a union. Unions take care of people too. In any case, it’s a good thing John knows electric dryers. ☀

Email: aseu@worldmag.com

MAY 3, 2010 WORLD 95
FINDING THE LEADERS

A new contest: name conservative evangelicals with attractive personalities to inspire the young

How much do any of us remember about the specific content of college classes?

A walk on Manhattan’s Park Avenue, with the Seagram Building on one side and Lever House on the other, reminds me of architecture professor Vincent Scully’s lavish praise of them. Occasionally I remember other professorial lectures. But 40 years ago I met two journalists, and theirs was the gift that kept on taking—taking me to a desire to echo their sardonic negativity about America.

One, Seymour Hersh, was 33 at the time. The other, David Halberstam, was 36. Both had recently won Pulitzer Prizes for their anti-war reporting from Vietnam. I met them before I knew much about them, and then started reading more by and about them. They seemed admirable. First they won my heart. Then they won my brain.

Both Halberstam, now deceased, and Hersh, still ticking, were leftists, but the same pattern is observable on the right. In our April 24 issue we ran an interview with National Review editor Rich Lowry, who said, “It’s very telling how political psychology works: I saw Bill Buckley on his famous television program Firing Line and was blown away by his persona... That’s how I discovered National Review and that’s how I got a political education.”

Lowry and I both worked our way backward: What do these people believe? That’s frequently the case with others as well. And that’s what’s so troubling about conversations I have with many evangelicals of college age and slightly beyond: They frequently cannot think of a single conservative evangelical whom they admire. Some of them in 2008, as they encountered laudatory coverage of Barack Obama, gave their hearts to him, switching off their brains in the process.

Conservative evangelicals over 50 are worried about those under 30. They worry about lack of church attendance and commitment, although—historically—age and children lead many wanderers home. They also worry about a political slide to the left, and it’s too early to tell whether a growing awareness of the reality of sin and the unreality of utopias will do the same. Thus the question arises: What can the elders do to keep the young from being lost at sea?

Like the central figure in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, folks my age have tended to offer the young long and winding stories—but the latter, heading toward wedding ceremonies or other festive occasions, are first bemused and then impatient. We’d do better to show them people a little older than them (up to age 40, say) who think biblically and are already standing up for both liberty and virtue.

An example of such a person is Ted Cruz, the 39-year-old former solicitor general (WORLD, Nov. 7, 2009) of Texas: He could well be a future governor and president. The son of a Cuban immigrant who came too late to an understanding of Fidel Castro, Cruz became a national debate champion and brought a college audience to its feet last fall as he punctured the pretensions of U.S. mini–Castros and offered a message of real hope. But it’s not just in politics and law that people like Cruz can be found. We need them in many fields: From media and the arts, from medicine and science, from business and philanthropy.

So we begin another WORLD contest. I thank those this year and last who nominated compassionate organizations and the best closing lines of books, but now comes something even harder: Nominating a person. Your mission, should you choose to accept it: By July 31 send June McGraw (jmcgraw@worldmag.com) a name and one-paragraph description of an articulate conservative evangelical under the age of 40 who already has a record of accomplishment and seems likely to accomplish more.

We’re looking for people with attractive personalities who are committed to political decentralization, free markets, and Bible–based cultural norms. We’ll research your nominees and interview some. The particular field is less important than the person. Since the proclamation of propositional truths does not engage some younger evangelicals, our goal is to offer narratives of exciting lives, profiling in words and film the most impressive. Please help us find them.
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