TRUSTED FOR TRUTH
Trust. It’s something that’s earned. It doesn’t come quickly. It’s the result of being time tested. When the trustworthiness of God’s Word was being challenged, we stood for truth. When many offer faster, easier, and simpler, we embrace deeper, richer, and stronger. Because in the end, we place our trust on the truth that endures. We are The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and we are TRUSTED FOR TRUTH.
Trust. It’s something that’s earned. It doesn’t come quickly. It’s the result of being time tested. When the trustworthiness of God’s Word was being challenged, we stood for truth. When many offer faster, easier, and simpler, we embrace deeper, richer, and stronger. Because in the end, we place our trust on the truth that endures. We are The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and we are TRUSTED FOR TRUTH.
32 Offering ‘the love of Jesus’
With federal agencies overwhelmed, churches at the border are stepping up to help with a flood of traumatized migrants

36 More money or more strings?
A homeschooling innovation brings opportunity and danger

42 Drowning in red
Historic Christian colleges like Nyack College are facing financial crises that are forcing big changes

46 Blaine, Blaine, short-sighted briber from the state of Maine
State constitutional roadblocks to school choice grew out of anti-Catholic hostility and the myth of educational neutrality

50 Life after chess
Former New York public-school student Alex Lenderman, one of the world’s top chess players, mastered the game and embraced the Christian faith in the process
What Jesus purchased
We’ve made it our
What Jesus purchased is precious. We've made it our purpose.

COME STUDY for the church

MBTS.EDU/WORLD
Notes from the CEO

From my nonscientific survey, it seems all the mainstream news and educational organizations dabble in “kids’ news.” But two of them—CNN and NBC—seem more intentional about it and appear to be putting substantial resources behind the effort.

CNN10, the network’s daily show aimed at students, is not quite as bad as you might expect. It seems that the producers are not force-feeding their worldview to viewers. Instead, they prefer a splash of secularism here, a pinch of progressivism there. What’s most subversive is what the program leaves out: any evidence of God’s work in the affairs of the world.

NBC News Learn, the “educational arm of NBC News,” according to its website, is much worse. NBC serves up a worldview stuffed with poisonous adult agendas diced into smaller chunks for kids. Their story selection and age-appropriate subject matter reveals an appalling agenda. I found these headlines (accompanied by video stories on the website) when I filtered stories for sixth through ninth graders:

• “What It’s Like to Undergo Gender Transition in College”
• “Teen Who Defied Parents ... Testifies Before Congress”
• “LGBT Community Worries About What Will Happen During a Trump Presidency”

Admittedly, I cherry-picked those headlines to demonstrate the absurdity of grown-ups who want to impose their obsessions upon the young. But there are many more stories like these, and even the less egregious ones contain overt cultural “lessons.”

God’s World News, the division of WORLD that focuses on fulfilling our mission with school-aged children, wants to fill the void of video news from a Biblical perspective. We’re working toward rolling out a daily video news program for students at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

For our small staff, this is an ambitious project. The effort will be worthwhile if the program allows us to inform, educate, and inspire more students than ever with the wonder and possibility of God’s fascinating world, and his daily work in it.
Whenever, in recent times, the conversation among us evangelicals has turned to the so-called LGBTQ community, two themes surface frequently.

“Can you believe,” folks ask repeatedly, “how fast all this has happened?”

And second: “So where is the LGBTQ movement moving next? I can’t see any more taboos for them to cross.”

Both are thoughtful and legitimate questions. But too much focus on the past may have a tendency to obscure what lies ahead. We are what we are; we are what we have become—as repugnant as that reality might be. What are we going to do about it?

All that’s why I was especially intrigued with a major editorial feature in the July 27 Wall Street Journal highlighting the likely impact of LGBTQ advances on future national policies. The question WSJ editors boldly pose is whether those advances haven’t just put the homosexual community into the American mainstream, but may have put American religious liberty for others in peril.

Yes indeed, that peril is real, says David French, a senior writer for National Review and a columnist for Time. But it’s not because there may be still other groups out there seeking to be recognized as legitimate components of society. It’s more because some of those newly enfranchised components of society are so determined now to make life tough for those who have opposed them. Specifically, the pattern is to remove tax-exempt status from their opponents. Any school, orphanage, publication, student group—or even a church—might lose its tax-exempt status if it doesn’t endorse full homosexual rights. Such entities might be left free to operate with their own moral preferences—but they’ll no longer enjoy the benefits of tax exemption.

French argues that the Constitution’s early placement of the Bill of Rights, including the religious liberty clause, is very deliberate—and that fussing with the tax code on that front is dangerous business. “Every other American law—whether a federal statute, state constitutional provision, state law or university regulation—is subordinate to and subject to review under the Bill of Rights.”

That doesn’t mean every constitutional right is absolute. It is time, French asserts, to be careful.

Altogether unlikely and unnecessary, says Marci Hamilton in her side of the WSJ debate. She is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and CEO of Child USA. And she says bluntly, “Too much harm is done in the name of religious liberty.” She cites cases like the Amish communities where she says children’s education is badly damaged by their parents’ claim of religious liberty; or like the North American Indians who sought the “religious right” to use nerve damaging drugs in their tribal worship services.

But Hamilton weakens her case by citing small and relatively impotent groups. Yes, their rights too are important—and they may carry some limited precedent. But no one should pretend the cases are similar to some bold effort to negate the tax advantages of thousands of organizations and millions of citizens—just because some folks choose not to participate in practices they consider to be out-of-bounds.

Hamilton tries to calm the fears of those who buy French’s warnings. But she spends a little too much space arguing that even if those warnings come true, things won’t be so bad. She scoffs at the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, passed easily back then by Congress and signed by Bill Clinton, but later neutered by the Supreme Court. And perhaps she tells you more than you want to know just by reading the title of her book, God vs. the Gavel: The Perils of Extreme Religious Liberty.

All of which, I think, validates French’s arguments—and suggests we ought to listen to his warning: “Religious Americans are the canary in the coal mine of the First Amendment; they are right to think their freedom is under fire.”

No cause for panic. Just time, if The Wall Street Journal is concerned about religious liberty, for maybe the rest of us to be a bit more thoughtful.
Find it here.

With more than 500,000 products to choose from, Christianbook.com brings the web’s largest selection of everything Christian right to your browser—always at the very best value. Whether it’s books, Bibles, gifts, music, homeschool, VBS, or anything else Christian you’re looking for, we’re here to help you find it.
Troubled waters

BACK-TO-BACK MASS SHOOTINGS IN EL PASO, TEXAS, AND DAYTON, OHIO, BRING A TRAGIC CONCLUSION TO A LONG SUMMER

by Jamie Dean

End-of-summer television this year included an annual ritual that seems counterintuitive for anyone still trying to enjoy the ocean: Discovery Channel’s Shark Week.

Other channels aired Jaws, the 1975 movie about a shark roaming the waters near a New England beach town. Director Steven Spielberg said the mechanical shark malfunctioned during the filming, and he wasn’t able to show it as much as planned.

It didn’t matter. Spielberg realized it was far scarier to portray crowds of beachgoers enjoying a sunny day at the water with no idea a predator was circling nearby: “It’s what we don’t see which is truly frightening.”

On Aug. 3, a sunny Saturday in El Paso turned truly terrifying for a crowd of shoppers at a local Walmart, when a different kind of predator breezed through the store’s automatic doors toting an AK-47-style rifle.
The gunman killed 22 people and injured more than two dozen others. The dead included Jordan and Andre Anchondo, a young couple who died shielding their infant son from the attack. The baby survived.

So did the gunman. Patrick Crusius, 21, surrendered to police, and he later told them he was targeting Mexicans. He also apparently posted a screed online hours before the rampage, decrying what he called the “invasion” of immigrants at the U.S. border. The manifesto appeared on 8chan, a website infamous for attracting white supremacists.

Hours later, more gunfire: Connor Betts, 24, opened fire in a historic district in Dayton, Ohio, killing nine people, including his sister. Police stopped the attack in less than 30 seconds, shooting and killing the gunman outside a crowded bar.

After the bullets flew, so did the accusations: Some critics blamed President Donald Trump for the El Paso attack, citing his use of words like invasion to describe migrants heading toward the U.S. border.

Others pointed out that the Dayton gunman may have supported Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., on Twitter—and no one is blaming the Democratic presidential candidate for the Ohio shooter’s attack.

Still, a wise use of words is a constant Biblical theme. While the New Testament book of James doesn’t talk much about blame, it does talk about blaze. James writes of the tongue: “How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!”

There are reasonable ways to talk about reasonable concerns over immigration, gun control, and other issues. But it’s best to avoid throwing flames, because we don’t know the flammability of those around us. That’s particularly important for public leaders reaching wide audiences. (Please see Marvin Olasky’s website-only column at wng.org/shootings.)

One person apparently absorbing this lesson: the original creator of the 8chan website that hosted the El Paso shooter’s manifesto. Fredrick Brennan, 25, started the site in 2013.

Brennan once wrote favorably of eugenics, and says he developed the views because of a painful medical condition that left him disabled at birth.

After a falling-out with a new owner, he eventually cut ties with the company.

He now says the extremist site should be shut down. An internet cloud service that provided support to 8chan announced it cut off its services for the site after the El Paso attack. The current 8chan operators said they were working hard to find another home.

Meanwhile, Brennan told Wired magazine he has found a new kind of home: a Baptist church in the Philippines, where he now lives. After he left 8chan, he grew deeply depressed, but made connections at a local church, where he also met his wife. He says he finds comfort in Christianity.
The details of his religious beliefs are unclear, but Brennan’s Twitter account now contains a reference to Ephesians 6:12: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness.”

Darkness extended to other corners of the world, as videos surfaced of police in Hong Kong openly beating demonstrators on a subway escalator. The footage came as massive street protests continued in the city and pro-democracy demonstrators pushed back against encroachment from mainland China.

Back in the United States, some affluent parents fearing the encroachment of government regulations apparently devised a startling way to pay less for a college education for their children: They gave up custody of them. A ProPublica investigation reported dozens of parents in affluent Chicago suburbs had transferred legal guardianship of their teenage children to other family members or friends so that the children would qualify for need-based financial aid.

Some Democratic presidential candidates propose free college for all, and many of them flocked to the Midwest in early August for a rite of passage in the party’s contest: the Iowa State Fair.

Candidates flipped the obligatory pork chops and made happy pilgrimages to the famous carved butter cow, but some managed to keep it serious.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., ate his corn dog with gravity, and mystic guru Marianne Williamson explained to an Atlantic reporter why she doesn’t talk much about policy specifics: “The part of the brain that rationally analyzes an issue is not the part of the brain that decides who to vote for.”

Rationality may overtake lower tier candidates like Williamson by the end of August: That’s the deadline for candidates to meet polling and other criteria set by the Democratic National Committee to appear in the next round of televised debates.

Several hopefuls may not survive that particular shark week of sorts—making more room for a focused battle between the bigger fish in the sea. ♦

---

**BY THE NUMBERS**

90%

The survival rate for Ebola patients treated with two new experimental drugs. The usual Ebola survival rate is around 50 percent.

$1.23 trillion

The projected borrowing by the federal government in 2019, more than double the government debt in 2017.

146

The number of judges President Donald Trump has appointed to federal courts, nearly 17 percent of the federal judiciary.

760,000

The number of illegal immigrants U.S. Border Patrol agents apprehended at the southern U.S. border from October 2018 to July 2019.

27%

The share of U.S. millennials in a July YouGov poll who reported having no close friends.
Announced
U.S. Attorney General William Barr, the French government, and Jeffrey Epstein’s accusers want answers as to how the billionaire was able to kill himself in his cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York. Autopsy results could put to rest internet conspiracy theories that Epstein’s wealthy associates orchestrated his death to keep him from revealing their secrets. Officials said Epstein, 66, hanged himself. Officials have questioned why the jail took his self. Officials have questioned why the jail took his life a previous time. Prosecutors had charged Epstein with sexually abusing and trafficking underage girls. Anonymous sources said the guards assigned to Epstein worked extreme overtime shifts and did not check on him for hours before he was found dead. Barr announced a pair of federal inquiries by the FBI and the Justice Department’s inspector general and said the department would continue looking into Epstein’s alleged crimes: “This case will continue on against anyone who was complicit with Epstein. Any co-conspirators should not rest easy.” French officials also demanded an investigation into Epstein’s death but did not confirm whether they had planned to charge Epstein, who had a residence in Paris.

Reduced
The Trump administration finalized new “public charge” rules that will reduce legal immigration to the United States. Ken Cuccinelli, acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, said the policy encourages self-reliance and self-sufficiency. “Our rule generally prevents aliens who are likely to become a public charge from coming to the United States or remaining here and getting a green card,” he said. The rule change requires the government to consider an immigrant’s need for public assistance along with other factors, like education, household income, and health. Cuccinelli said the rule will not change humanitarian-based immigration programs. But it will affect about 400,000 people a year who already live in the United States and want to become permanent residents.

Died
Toni Morrison, Nobel Prize–winning author, died on Aug. 5 at age 88. Born in Ohio in 1931 to an African American family, she showed an early love for literature. Morrison earned her master’s degree in English from Cornell University and became a teacher at Howard University. She took a job as editor for Random House in 1965 and would work there for 18 years while publishing her own books, songs, and essays. Morrison wrote 11 novels, dealing primarily with the lives of African American women and the effects of racism on the vulnerable. She won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993. Morrison also had a distinguished career as an academic and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012.

Blocked
A federal judge blocked three pro-life measures in Arkansas. The measures include a ban on abortions after 18 weeks, a requirement that abortion providers be certified in obstetrics and gynecology, and a ban on any abortion instigated because of a diagnosis of Down syndrome. The American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood filed a lawsuit against Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, claiming the state’s new measures are all unconstitutional. District Judge Kristine Baker agreed and blocked the laws from going into effect during litigation. She wrote that the abortion advocates were likely to win their case entirely in the end. Rutledge has appealed to the 8th Circuit for reinstatement of the measures.
For the last twenty-five years, Samaritan Ministries members have been sharing medical costs while praying for and encouraging one another — all without health insurance. Faithful. Affordable. Biblical.

**Monthly costs**
Ranges based on age, household size, and membership level

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>$100–$227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Person</td>
<td>$200–$454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+ People</td>
<td>$250–$555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

samaritanministries.org/world • (877) 578-6787
‘Those who play with fire will perish by it.’

YANG GUANG, China’s spokesman for its Hong Kong office, in a warning to protesters in Hong Kong.

Policemen shout at protesters at the airport in Hong Kong.

‘This is not a memory. We are still living this genocide until today, in all its details.’

Yazidi lawmaker SAIB KHIDER on the fifth anniversary of the ISIS invasion of Iraq. Even though their homelands have been liberated, more than 400,000 Yazidis continue to live in displacement camps and 2,900 are missing, according to a report from 21Wilberforce.

‘With the rise of college tuition, it is ridiculous that university presidents make more money than the president of the entire country.’

NATALIE KIM, a student at Swarthmore College, to campusreform.org on a report that 179 university presidents make more than the U.S. president’s $400,000 salary. (President Trump has declined the salary.) Seventeen public university presidents make more than $1 million. William H. McRaven of the University of Texas system made $2,578,609.

‘We will get to the bottom of what happened, and there will be accountability.’

U.S. Attorney General WILLIAM BARR on “serious irregularities” at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York City where accused sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein committed suicide (see p. 10).

‘The business will eventually be a break-even and profitable business.’

Uber CEO DARA KHOSROWSHAHI after reporting the largest-ever loss and slowest-ever revenue growth for the ride-sharing company.
Sweat equity

The more you sweat the sweeter you smell. That’s the promise outlined by Portuguese researchers in the journal published by the American Chemical Society. In their July article, engineers from the University of Minho claim to have discovered ways to modify cotton textiles to release a citronella smell when it contacts sweat. As an added bonus, the researchers claim anyone wearing the textiles can ward off mosquitoes by working up a sweat.

Heat of the moment

Rarely have criminals been so pleased to be found by authorities. The AFP news service reports that two alleged drug smugglers became trapped in a metal shipping container full of cocaine in the port of Antwerp on July 24—the hottest day ever recorded in Belgium. They apparently began to panic and fear suffocation, and they called the police to ask for help. It took officers two hours to find the container, and the pair quickly gave themselves up amid the 104-degree heat.

Security alert

An active duty U.S. military member learned in July that while he might be able to board airplanes first, that doesn’t mean his military status allows him to stow a **missile launcher in his checked luggage**. Transportation Safety Administration officials at Baltimore/Washington International Airport found the shoulder-mounted missile launcher during a screening of checked baggage. After authorities tracked him down, the weapon’s owner said he found the missile launcher while serving in Kuwait and had hoped to keep it as a souvenir. After confiscating the weapon, authorities allowed the man to fly home to Texas without facing charges.

The star treatment

KFC franchise owner **Sam Edelman** has a dream. The Australian fast-food restaurateur has petitioned the fancy restaurant review Michelin Guide to review his KFC, hoping that he can earn his first Michelin star. “It’s about time it got recognized as not just a fast food place,” Edelman told Metro.co.uk. He notes that one criterion for Michelin stars is that the cooking is worthy of taking a detour. Edelman said he has customers who come to his Alice Springs, Australia, restaurant from more than 600 miles away. “My KFC is the most remote KFC in the world,” he said, “and that’s what sets me apart.”

A sweet deal

In the future, Halloween may only fall on Oct. 31 if that date is a Saturday. Officials with Snickers are proposing to change the official day of Halloween to the final Saturday of October. The brand’s Twitter account announced the proposal on July 26 and invited Twitter users to sign a Change.org petition. To sweeten the offer, candy-maker Mars said it would give away 1 million free candy bars if the federal government brings about the change despite the fact that Halloween isn’t a national holiday and therefore its date is not set by law.
Testifying against himself

A Cleveland bank robber who passed a note to a teller demanding money July 29 made at least one key mistake. Police say the U.S. Bank teller was stunned that when she flipped over the note she discovered the thief’s name and address written on it. To create the note, the robber apparently recycled a slip of paper he had earlier used at the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles office that included his name and address. According to police, the teller handed him the cash he asked for, thanked him by name, and kept the note. After reviewing security footage and verifying the name and address, police quickly issued an arrest warrant.

Hardened cat love

An elderly cat lover in Ohio is facing a 10-day jail sentence after being charged with illegally feeding stray cats. Nancy Segula, 79, doesn’t deny she feeds stray cats that visit her on her back porch. “I used to have a neighbor that had a couple of cats, and he moved away, so he left them,” Segula told WJW. “I would always feed them and care for them because I was worried about them.” But her neighbors didn’t appreciate her kindness and reported her to police near her suburban Cleveland home. Police began issuing Segula citations. Her most recent citation ordered her to appear before a judge who sentenced her to 10 days in the Cuyahoga County Jail beginning Aug. 11.

Musical movement

City officials in West Palm Beach, Fla., hope that blaring children’s songs from loudspeakers will help drive out a homeless encampment that has taken over a city park. City parks director Leah Rockwell told The Palm Beach Post that homeless people had begun camping on the patio of a city-owned banquet facility, threatening to diminish the city’s ability to rent the building out for events. A homeless man sleeping on the patio told the newspaper that he’ll continue to camp there, but that the continuous loop of “Baby Shark” and “Raining Tacos” is driving him crazy.

From fan to player

During a Colorado Rockies game on July 15, Nathan Patterson walked into a Coors Field fan challenge and wowed stadium workers with a 96 mph fastball. By Aug. 1, the 23-year-old former high-school baseball player had signed a professional contract with the Oakland A’s. Patterson didn’t play baseball in college, but started pitching in a recreational league about a year ago. Since then, Patterson said he’s been training just to see how fast he can make his fastball. Patterson’s brother videotaped the pitching session at Coors Field, and the video went viral on social media. This brought him to the attention of the A’s front office. In an Instagram post announcing his signing, Patterson quoted A’s executive Billy Beane: “How can you not be romantic about baseball?”
It was bound to happen sooner or later. At the church where I help serve dinner for the downtown community once a month, I meet all kinds: street people, addicts, gays, and the occasional cross-dresser. This individual flaunted the figure and clothing of a teenage girl, with the facial hair and facial structure of a man. It wasn’t just the face, though; no one would have taken this person for anything but male, no matter the accoutrement.

We had a pleasant conversation, but later, when making a request for our guest, I used the pronoun “he.” I was immediately corrected: “She.”

“Uh, OK, sorry,” I said. An apology may not have been warranted, but it was automatic. And that was not the time for an extended conversation on gender confusion.

A small exchange, but it indicates the direction we’re headed. How far we can travel in that direction is not so indicative. After reading about it for the last several years, and talking with the one transgendered person I know by name, I’ve come to some conclusions about the social phenomenon known as transgenderism.

My understanding is that a small fraction of the population, less than 1 percent, suffers from genuine confusion about their sexual identity— the brain, somehow, disagrees with the body about whether one is male or female. This confusion, formerly classified as a “disorder,” appears to be a legitimate psychological problem that might, at least in some cases, be successfully treated.

But in 2013 the Netflix series Orange Is the New Black made a star out of Laverne Cox, the first openly transgender person to appear as a series regular. Beginning in 2015, Bruce/Caitlyn Jenner made a very public transition overwhelmingly backed by the media (Wikipedia no longer has an entry for “Bruce Jenner”). “Trans,” once the junior “T” of the LBGT acronym, became the new civil-rights frontier. The advocacy group GLAD, formerly Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, changed its name to GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders, in order to underscore trans inclusion.

Trans became trendy, especially among the young. The rate of self-identification with the opposite gender, or no gender, has mushroomed among school-age children. According to an extensive survey conducted two years ago, as many as 25 percent of California kids are questioning their biological sex.

Given that teens naturally struggle with defining themselves, this is extremely dangerous. Permanent sterility is only one of the possible health consequences of puberty blockers, hormone therapy, and transition surgery, and there’s no evidence that psychological well-being is any better. Recent studies indicate the opposite. I predict that in 10 years, or less, we’ll see a monumental backlash from 20-somethings whose lives were permanently altered, or even ended, by this delusion.

But even now, reality is beginning to push back. Female athletes resent getting trounced by biological men in women’s sports events. Committed feminists resent being labeled as “terfs” (trans-exclusionary radical feminists) when they ask what it even means to be a woman. For the last two years, GLAAD’s “Accelerating Acceptance” report has shown declining acceptance, especially among young people who are usually the first to hop aboard a civil rights bandwagon. In every demographic, young men and women reported discomfort with learning a family member was LGBT, or having such a person as their child’s teacher or family doctor, or sitting beside an LGBT individual at church. In some demographics, the acceptance level dropped almost 50 percent in a year’s time.

Andrew Sullivan, a gay activist with some conservative leanings, believes the trans community’s high-handedness has alienated middle America. He’s for dropping the T altogether, because the interests of Ts and LGs conflict in significant ways, and he fears trans activism will wipe out the progress gays and lesbians have made.

The pushback may signal a return to sanity, or a reaction against the efforts of activists to herd an entire culture into this uncharted territory. It could get ugly. Our challenge and calling is to see the herd as sheep without a shepherd, and worthy of our compassion as God’s anxious and confused image-bearers.
Go. Serve. Lead.

Our regionally accredited programs capitalize on the flexibility of technology while fostering quality student-teacher relationships. Prepare to go, serve, and lead in a world that needs all you can give.

FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO GRADUATE SCHOOL
✓ High school dual enrollment
✓ Undergraduate degree completion
✓ Graduate degrees in Business and Education
✓ Graduate certificates in English, Math, History, and Special Education
✓ Seven seminary degrees, including MDiv and DMin

Maranatha Baptist University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. www.hlcommission.com | 312.263.0456
LEARN TO TELL STORIES THAT WILL CHANGE THE WORLD

MAJOR in Journalism, Culture and Society (Competitive Scholarships Available)

MINOR in Journalism

NYC SEMESTER in Journalism for visiting college students

HIGH SCHOOL Summer Academy with tracks in arts and culture reporting, sportswriting and visual journalism

Learn more and apply at phillipsjournalism.org/programs

The late John McCandlish Phillips at his desk at The New York Times. He is the namesake of the McCandlish Phillips Journalism Institute at The King’s College. Photo courtesy of The New York Times

Journalism lets you meet and report on people who are shaping the future. Journalists themselves write articles, books and films that affect culture. With the help of modern storytelling tools, The King’s College can prepare you for an exciting career in media.

THE KING'S COLLEGE NEW YORK CITY
As long as there are highways and byways to traverse, it’s hard to imagine audiences will ever grow tired of a good old-fashioned road story. Provided, that is, that we’re traveling in good company. With the new PG-13 indie *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, we unquestionably are.

Leaning in to the Mark Twain comparisons it will inevitably draw, the film tells the story of two unlikely friends who set off on a winding odyssey along the back roads of the coastal Southeast. Jawing, cavorting, and fleeing from trouble, they sail through scenic deltas and trek across barrier islands where they meet a host of quirky locals—some allies, some enemies.

Each young man is running from something. Twenty-two-year-old Zak has Down syndrome and chafes at the strict rules of the elder care facility in which the state has placed him. Even though his caretaker, Eleanor (Dakota Johnson), is as understanding and affectionate with him as she is with all her charges, he’s not an old man. He has a whole life to live, and he wants the freedom to choose how to live it. Namely, he wants to be a professional wrestler. He escapes out of a window to make his way to the wrestling school of his idol, the mysterious Salt Water Redneck.

From there he crosses paths with Tyler (Shia LaBeouf), a troubled young drifter who’s fallen afoul of a crew of violent fishermen. If all this sounds like it has the makings of a treacly Hallmark melodrama, don’t worry. The unsentimental script...
doesn’t talk down to the cast or to us. Plus, it’s too funny for that. A blind man who insists on baptizing the pair before he’ll help them does seem to miss some finer points of theology, but as anyone who’s lived in the Deep South can attest, the scene isn’t exactly caricature.

The movie includes some rough language, particularly from Tyler. But it doesn’t feel gratuitous, since his language does at least tell us something about the character’s background and harsh life that differentiates him from Zak and Eleanor, who don’t speak as he does. We know he’s grown up in poverty and has to fend for himself. We know he’s suffered loss and done things he’s ashamed of. We know he still doesn’t make the wisest choices, yet his dirtiness and crudity don’t make him less valuable as a person. And neither does Zak’s extra chromosome. (Parents should be aware that Zak initially goes on a binge of foul language after learning of his parents’ decision to move to New York. He’s ashamed of it, and he’s not a bad person. He’s a gifted, complicated, and troubled young man.)

LaBeouf’s reputation for off-screen antics can sometimes overshadow how talented he is. As with his similar role in Fury, he breaks our heart for Tyler with a few restrained expressions and gestures. These whispers of loneliness and self-loathing are all the more affecting for their subtlety. He and the filmmakers trust us to understand why Tyler needs to be a kind of brother to Zak—why he needs this chance to prove to himself that he can be a good guy—without spelling it out with a big, weepy meltdown.

We get an equally layered character with Zak. Full of his own contradictions and doubts, he isn’t just there to provide lessons to Tyler and Eleanor on how to be a better person. He has his own growing to do, and actor Zack Gottsagen crafts a leading man who is alternately insecure, hilarious, and gutsy.

We live in a culture that too often treats the most glorious creation in the universe—a human being—as disposable. The Peanut Butter Falcon reminds us that whatever our backgrounds or challenges, we all shine with God’s beauty.

Based on an actual lie” is the opening tagline to director Lulu Wang’s second feature film, The Farewell. The PG-rated movie tells the story of a Chinese family dealing with the impending death of its beloved matriarch by not telling her she is dying.

Billi (played by Awkwafina) moved from China to New York with her parents at a young age, but maintained strong bonds with her grandmother, or Nai Nai. Now Nai Nai has stage IV cancer, but is oblivious to it: Billi’s dad Haiyan and uncle Haibin choose to withhold the diagnosis from their mom in hopes of letting her die free of anxiety. They orchestrate an elaborate ruse in which the family will gather in China to celebrate a hastily planned wedding, giving them all an opportunity to bid farewell to Nai Nai.

“Billi can’t believe it. How could it be right—or even legal—to keep this crucial report from her grandmother? Billi’s parents worry her emotions will get the better of her and she’ll reveal the secret to Nai Nai.

Traveling from Japan and America, the family gathers in Nai Nai’s apartment in China. Director Wang masterfully shows the love and respect the family has for this little dynamo of a lady who speaks frankly and teaches lessons with good humor and cheer to all who will listen. Despite their worry over Billi, it is brothers Haiyan and Haibin who struggle most not to break down in front of their mother.

Cultures clash in The Farewell. Billi has grown up in America, and her values and ideas are different from those of her Chinese family. Her parents are unapologetic about their move to America for what they hoped would be a better life, but they seem to live with a foot in each culture. The family members are thoroughly Eastern in religious outlook. How they deal with lies, death, and the afterlife could prompt worthwhile discussions among viewers.

—by MARTY VANDRIEL
Movie

The Art of Racing in the Rain

Judging by the preponderance of paw-print bumper stickers, furry lives matter more than ever. Hollywood has always made animal movies, but no major release is as self-serious about a canine’s “humanity” as The Art of Racing in the Rain. Conceptually, whether or not commercial, the new film is one giant leap for dogkind.

The film presents itself as a traditional family drama. Race car driver Denny Swift (Milo Ventimiglia) hopes to compete on the Formula One circuit. He falls in love and gets married, and he and his wife Eve (Amanda Seyfried) have a daughter. Then tragedy strikes, followed by a far-fetched legal turn of events that sends the second half of the film on a whole new arc.

All the while, Enzo (voiced by Kevin Costner), Denny’s golden retriever, narrates every detail. Enzo laments his inability to talk (to the Swifts), and copes as newcomers monopolize his beloved Denny’s time. (Still, I counted six occasions when Denny smooches his pooch’s head.) Enzo bears the rings at Denny and Eve’s wedding, and pontificates: “If a driver has the courage to create his own conditions, then the rain [the film’s metaphor for adversity] is simply rain.”

Fine. But absurdity reigns. For example, Enzo believes the daughter’s stuffed zebra is demon-possessed. Is this repeated hallucination played for laughs? Nope. In A Dog’s Purpose, at least the human characters learn something about themselves. The Art of Racing in the Rain is all about a dog’s self-discovery. Enzo watches and reflects, preparing to be reincarnated as a person. “Not all dogs return as men,” Enzo says. “Only those who are ready. I am ready.”

Can you guess the ending? The PG rating fails to note brief sexuality and two misuses of God’s name. On a positive note, the film calls pregnancy “amazing…a baby being assembled.” The three other audience members at the showing I attended seemed riveted, shedding happy tears. It’s also sad, though, when people forget their pets’ place.

—by BOB BROWN

Documentary

The Family

The new Netflix documentary series, The Family, could have been an insightful exploration of the poisoning effects of secrecy and political power on faith. Instead, it contributes to the divisive age we live in by turning common failings into Da Vinci Code–style conspiracies and subtly suggesting evangelicalism itself is a threat to the nation.

The “family” in this series is the Fellowship, a press-shy group that ministers to government leaders. The biggest downfall of the series is that, a few brief interludes excepted, it relies almost entirely on the testimony of a single man: author Jeff Sharlet. This would be problematic even if Sharlet hadn’t built his career by suggesting the philandering Pols of C Street represent a wider Cosa Nostra of Christianity. The series provides adequate proof that the Fellowship is committed to, if not secrecy, at least flying under the radar, but it reads sinister motives into the group’s behavior to such a degree it becomes laughable.

Anyone who grew up going to church in the 1980s and 1990s has heard common phrases like “Jesus plus nothing” or expressions of waiting on God for direction. These are not evangelical code language for secret plots. And because pedestrian sins like greed and adultery are appallingly not enough, the show implies that Fellowship members marshaling support for traditional marriage and the sanctity of life is uniquely treacherous.

This is all frustrating because the series had ample provocation to explore far more worthwhile territory. When a Russian Christian sets aside the totality of the New Testament to parrot the Fellowship ideal of courting the powerful because of a single verse in Acts, we cringe from the Biblical illiteracy.

The filmmakers rightly look askance at a positive-thinking, prosperity Christianity and the idea that any believer should have a rock-solid certainty he’s called to great leadership. But then it commits the equal error of calling for evangelicals to prove their principles with political resistance in this present era. It misses that both the resister and conspirator may sin if their foremost concern is with political power at all.

—by MEGAN BASHAM
Last summer I praised Richard Scarry’s children’s books for showing how everyone in Busytown—Stitches the Tailor, Farmer Alfalfa, Blacksmith Fox, and others—could work and contribute. That contrasted with the chance-emphasizing Candy Land game.

This summer my entering-kindergarten granddaughter graduated to The Game of Life. Created in 1960, it has a lot going for it. Everyone gets married. Most have children, represented as blue or pink pegs. Players also learn that it’s good to buy auto and fire insurance.

Some advice seems outmoded. It’s rewarding for everyone to go to college, since graduates get $6,000-$20,000 each payday, while those without college get a maximum of $5,000. College debt goes unmentioned. Some losing tendencies, alas, gain reinforcement: Get $80,000 by winning at the races, $100,000 by winning one sweepstakes, and $150,000 by winning another. Players can spend a weekend in Las Vegas and collect $50,000. How often does that happen?

Those life lessons contrast with the central message of Howard Husock’s *Who Killed Civil Society? The Rise of Big Government and Decline of Bourgeois Norms* (Encounter, 2019). Husock shows how poverty-fighters a century ago promoted an American three-self doctrine: self-respect, self-control, self-govern. He compares that emphasis on honesty, trustworthiness, and truth with a 2012 social work textbook that turns the spotlight not on what the poor can do but on how the rich “oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.”

Husock shows how Robert Hunter’s *Poverty* (1904, republished by Franklin Classics, 2018), America’s first great statistical overview of the poor, emphasized values. He praised those among the impoverished “who are up before dawn... kiss wives and children, and hurry away to work or to seek work. The world rests upon their shoulders, it moves by their muscle.” They differed from paupers “who have lost all self-respect and ambition, who rarely, if ever, work, who are aimless and drifting, who like drink, who have no thoughts for their children.”

That all changed when the emphasis of poverty-fighters became the provision of services rather than the promotion of “constructive norms for personal behavior,” which are “the ethical soil in which individuals and their communities can thrive.” But he doesn’t explain the Biblical origin of those norms.

**BOOKMARKS**


Gopnik quotes from one of the signs with rainbow-hued block letters: SCIENCE IS REAL. LOVE IS LOVE. KINDNESS IS EVERYTHING. But he doesn’t deal with the leading indictment of current American liberalism: 60 million aborted babies since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. How is treating human beings as trash scientific? How is it loving? How is it kind?

Some academics will like Cecelia Watson’s *Semicolon* (HarperCollins, 2019), which praises “the uncertainty that a semicolon permits.” Let’s act toward this generally avoidable punctuation mark the way Lyndon Johnson spoke about economic advisers who told him on the one hand this, on the other hand that. Johnson’s plea: Get me a one-armed economist. —M.O.
**LABOR WITH HOPE** Gloria Furman with Jesse Scheumann

The list of things expectant mothers need to welcome a child keeps getting longer, but this book prepares women for the spiritual implications of birthing new life. Its short chapters contain rich Scriptural insight and meditations on pregnancy, labor, and motherhood. Furman interweaves gospel themes with birth pain, fertility, miscarriage, and adoption, helping women connect their experiences with eternal realities and see how their work fits into the Biblical narrative. She offers hope: “All our groaning will end when we finally see what we’ve been hoping for… the consummation of God’s promised restoration bursts forth in full.”

**THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE WAR FOR THE COSMOS** C.R. Wiley

It’s easy to see how the household as a foundational institution is crumbling, and Wiley puts forth a robust macro-level vision for why it’s worth saving. He dissects words—their origins, implications, and context within history and Scripture—like piety, duty, cosmos, and household. Put together, a picture emerges of the family not as a personal lifestyle choice, but as a microcosm with interconnected duties and dependencies intended to reflect how the Church—the household of God—operates. This book has encouragement for fathers, for family enterprise, and for weary, modern parents in need of restored vision.

**PARENTING WITH LOVING CORRECTION** Sam Crabtree

Crabtree begins this short book with the premise that children are natural-born sinners shaped by their parents’ correction. He defines correction as identifying a problematic attitude or action, then promptly moving the child toward compliance. As any parent knows, that is easier said than done. The book explains the importance of discipline and how Christian parents should go about teaching their children obedience. It addresses some age-specific behaviors, but will be most helpful to parents with young children. In a time when parental correction is undermined, Crabtree offers much-needed Biblically based tools and admonishments.

**HERE, NOW: UNEARTHING PEACE AND PRESENCE IN AN OVERCONNECTED WORLD** Kate Merrick

As Merrick’s daughter was losing her battle with cancer, the family traveled to Israel for treatment. There, Merrick and her husband decided to go “off the grid,” cutting out social media, texting, and email—except for one weekly update—and opted for flip phones only operable in Israel. The couple realized “the connectivity that promised community only resulted in loneliness and burnout.” They found creative ways to enjoy their kids and their immediate surroundings amid difficult circumstances. Merrick’s humor and candor enhance the book’s valuable insight into the temptation technology presents for people to disconnect from real life.

**AFTERWORD**

The publication of Rachael Denhollander’s *What Is a Girl Worth?* (Tyndale) is Sept. 10. It tells her story: The determined and idealistic homeschooled gymnast suffered sexual abuse at the hands of Larry Nassar, the former USA Gymnastics team doctor who molested hundreds of young athletes.

Denhollander, the first victim to accuse Nassar publicly, has become an advocate for others who have experienced sexual abuse. This book gives readers a fuller picture of her struggles and doubts, and the rawness of her pain, confusion, and fears. Denhollander’s experience shows the difficulty victims face in coming forward and why their voices are often ignored or snuffed, even in the Church.

Denhollander also wrote a companion children’s book, *How Much Is a Little Girl Worth?* (Tyndale Kids, 2019, with illustrations by Morgan Huff). It conveys to young girls their true, unchangeable value, as “created and cherished by God… worth everything, even His Son… worth leaving heaven, worth giving His life.” —M.J.

To see more book news and reviews, go to wng.org/books
Award winners

2019 NEWBERY AND CALDECOTT BOOKS
reviewed by Rachel Lynn Aldrich

MERCI SUÁREZ CHANGES GEARS Meg Medina
This Newbery Medal winner centers on sixth grader Merci Suárez as she encounters changing dynamics at school, bullying, and middle-school boy-girl drama. But the real heart of the story focuses on Merci’s family. Her beloved grandfather, Lolo, is also encountering changes as he ages and faces the effects of Alzheimer’s disease. Merci has to learn that growing up means not always getting what you want and sacrificing your desires to support others, especially your family. Although the book moves slowly at points, it ultimately offers a satisfying, heartwarming, and bittersweet conclusion. Cautions: language. (Ages 12 & up)

THE NIGHT DIARY Veera Hiranandani
In this Newbery Honor book, 12-year-old Nisha and her family must leave Pakistan for India after the British relinquish control of the country during the 1940s. Both sad and hopeful, the story wrestles with questions of war through the words and thoughts of a child. Because Nisha’s father is Hindu and her mother is Muslim, the book also tackles questions of religious differences. A historical note and discussion questions at the end make this book a great way to study a lesser-known period of history. Cautions: descriptions of killings that could be disturbing for sensitive children. (Ages 12 & up)

THE BOOK OF BOY Catherine Gilbert Murdock
The Book of Boy, a Newbery Honor winner, is a quirky, medieval adventure story about a boy named Boy and a man trying to collect the scattered relics of St. Peter in order to get into heaven. The book’s plot assumes a medieval worldview, resulting in more than a few theological missteps: Relics are essentially magical objects; people move back and forth between heaven and hell on their own merits; and there are many strange, supernatural incidents. But this is also what makes the book interesting, and it might be a good addition to a unit study on medieval history. Cautions: bathroom humor. (Ages 13 & up)

ALMA AND HOW SHE GOT HER NAME Juana Martinez-Neal
This sweet Caldecott Honor book traces the family history behind a little girl’s many names. Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela thinks her name is too long, so her father tells her about her grandparents and great-grandparents for whom she is named. With each story, Alma sees how her ancestors passed along more than just their names as she recognizes their character traits in herself. With warm, delicately colored illustrations, this lovely picture book celebrates the heritage our families have given us. In a world that prizes autonomy and self-determination, it’s a refreshing story, indeed. (Ages 4-8)

WORLD previously reviewed the 2019 Caldecott Medal winner Hello Lighthouse in the March 2 issue, but the other Caldecott Honor books are also full of warmth and color. Thank You, Omu! by Oge Mora (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018) tells through bright, collage-style illustrations how a grandmother’s generosity and cooking skills make her new friends. Her choice to share what she has not only feeds others but inspires them to be generous themselves.

A Big Mooncake for Little Star by Grace Lin (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018) is a fable inspired by the Chinese Moon Festival. The story explains the moon phases by describing a star that eats a mooncake.

The Rough Patch by Brian Lies (Greenwillow Books, 2018) is a gentle tale about what it feels like to grieve loss and find joy through new friendships.

—R.L.A.
Have you been on a college campus lately? The intellectual and moral challenges awaiting our youth are immense. According to recent statistics, 1 out of every 4 college professors is a professing atheist or agnostic. The majority of professors view the Bible as an outdated book filled with myths. More than half of college professors have unfavorable feelings toward evangelical Christians.

Are the students in your home, church, or youth group prepared for what lies ahead? Sadly, most Christian students are ill-prepared for an aggressive secular campus and culture. It’s time to step up the training of our young people. Stand to Reason will help you do just that. Join us at one of our two-day reTHINK Apologetics Student Conferences in California, Minnesota, Texas, or Alabama.

reTHINK Apologetics will train your students how to stand strong in their faith while living in today’s hostile culture.
When Chinese officials claimed in February 2018 that reeducation camps for Uighurs in Xinjiang did not exist, German researcher Adrian Zenz decided to prove them wrong. He started digging through Chinese government data on the internet—construction bids, hiring ads, local budgets—and found evidence that the government had built massive reeducation camps that held 1 million Uighurs. Zenz, a Christian, views his research as a way to serve the voiceless, including Uighurs who see China eradicating their language and culture. Here are edited excerpts of our interview:

**What most surprised you as you sought evidence that China was detaining Uighurs?** That there is so much. I found information on government websites, private websites, and Chinese media. I realized the importance of looking at the past years to build up a case, with strong evidence from 2014 to 2016 when reeducation was a small-scale campaign. Then it grew gradually, so you could trace the development of the system and the terminology. The key is figuring out the government’s terminology for reeducation camps. Uighurs say, “We’re going to study,” but a key phrase for the Chinese is “transformation through education.”

**What changed after the publication of your research last year?** The Chinese government stopped using that key phrase in issuing bids and official reports. The links to several websites that were instrumental to the report, especially construction bids, went dead. Sometimes I was able to find alternative information at another link, sometimes not. The Chinese have become much more careful in what they put out and how they put it out, but at the same time, the amount of available information has only ever tended to increase over time. So now it takes more sifting. You can’t expect to find documents with the old key terms—you need to find new creative ways of finding the same things. There’s a cat-and-mouse game element to this.

**How much do you think average Chinese citizens know about what is happening in Xinjiang?** They know only the official government line unless they have traveled to Xinjiang. Even if they traveled to Xinjiang, they could get the wrong impression if they go as tourists. They think everything in Xinjiang is safe and beautiful and modern. It’s only when they have firsthand contact with locals that they find out things.

**How could they learn the truth?** Technically they can find out about it from Western media pieces that have been translated into Chinese, but a lot of that is blocked unless you have a virtual private network, which is getting harder to get. Plus a lot of Chinese people think Western claims are exaggerated—the trust in the Western media is not very high. The state was really successful in reducing that in the course of the Tibetan uprising in 2008. When there was any little mistake in Western media reporting, Chinese officials would immediately point it out. That has paid off for them, and it makes spreading the word about Xinjiang really difficult.

**Are you blacklisted from entering China?** I haven’t tried to go back. It’s possible they would let me in, but since the detentions of the Canadians [Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor], a lot of us academics and experts believe that the Chinese state is transgressing some key boundaries. For my own safety and because I have children, I wouldn’t consider going.

**How is the Chinese government changing?** In the past, we had the impression that the Chinese government was intense, but still quite rational. And even though they are still rational and calculated, they have lost certain boundaries. We wonder, where is the limit? Perhaps they are so confident in themselves that they think they can do anything to foreigners, which would have been unthinkable 15 years ago. They are capable of doing anything now, and that requires us to take a step back.

**How does your Christian faith affect your work?** My faith informs what matters to me in life. I have a built-in passion for other cultures and I’ve developed a passion for research. But I don’t believe in doing research for its own sake: I want my life to serve a higher purpose, to serve other people. I don’t just want to live so I can become wealthier and more famous. I want to use the gifting God has given me in His service, and ideally that should benefit other people.

**Do you enjoy doing research like this?** For a long time I thought that research was a fun thing that maybe can get you prestige. But now I realize research can expose entire nations as telling lies. It can expose evil. So I discovered a whole different side to research. I feel God is using this gift in me to achieve good things for other...
human beings. That gives me a lot of purpose.

**How did your spiritual beliefs develop?**
I grew up Catholic, but as I became an adult, I began to lose interest in the ritual of Sunday worship. I had bigger questions in life: What is my life about? Where am I headed? So I left the church, although I generally believed in the existence of God. Later during an encounter with a Korean American pastor in Washington, D.C., I felt the presence of God come upon me very powerfully as he talked to me about where I was headed after death. I was actually shocked to realize that Christianity, which I had been taught my whole life, was actually true. I realized this was the answer to all my questions. Christianity was the foundation of why I exist and why I’m doing what I’m doing.

**What can Christians do to help Uighurs in Xinjiang?**
It’s important that at least some people in Christian circles stay informed. Not everybody needs to read all the news all the time, but some people should really be informed to keep people posted. One of the concerns I have about the North American church is that many people are very poorly informed. They read very little international news and only know about events in their immediate surroundings.

**What would you like U.S. Christians to do when they become better informed?**
Christians can create more awareness. They can take up an issue like the one in Xinjiang or the house churches in China and hold an event concerning it. They can write a letter to a local politician. They can connect with scholars and activists. I’m not saying every church must do everything. But the church sometimes thinks too little about speaking out about matters of justice and leaves that field to specialist organizations and NGOs.

**Do we sometimes pay attention only to things that directly affect us or our purses?**
Yes, often the Church is very much like the society around it, but for Christians that’s not acceptable. We are called to care for others, to look to the interests of others and not just ourselves, as Philippians 2:3-4 says. There’s no way to do that if you’re not even informed. We have a calling to speak out even at the risk of incurring personal loss. That’s what motivates me to speak out.
On July 22, seven months after he announced his retirement, the New Orleans keyboardist and singer Art Neville died. He was 81.

His career spanned six decades and includes accomplishments that reverberate to this day. It’s a 17-year-old Neville, for instance, singing lead on the Hawketts’ perennial New Orleans favorite “Mardi Gras Mambo.” And the albums that he recorded as a member of the Meters beginning in 1969 defined French Quarter funk and contained songs that with the dawning of hip-hop would be sampled hundreds of times.

The Meters broke up in 1977 but not before touring with the Rolling Stones and applying their inimitable syncopation to recordings by LaBelle, Dr. John, Robert Palmer, Allen Toussaint, and Lee Dorsey. Shortly thereafter, Art and his three younger brothers Charles, Aaron, and Cyril (a Meter himself during that group’s latter years) began performing and recording as the Neville Brothers.

In 1989, with a string of stylistically inconsistent and commercially unsuccessful releases on a series of major and minor labels behind them, the Nevilles hooked up with the producer Daniel Lanois to record Yellow Moon, a thematically and aurally cohesive collection of originals and covers that would establish them as a major act. Its combination of infectious New Orleans grooves, syncretic spiritual themes, and boilerplate social protest charted the course that the brothers would follow both in the studio and onstage until Charles’ 2018 death.

But perhaps the most significant project in which the eldest Neville participated was the one that in 1976 brought all four Neville brothers together in the studio for the first time—the critically acclaimed and indisputably unique Wild Tchoupitoulas.

Named for a Mardi Gras Indian tribe whose “big chief” was the Nevilles’ uncle George Landry, Wild Tchoupitoulas featured hooky chants rife with good-natured our-tribe-is-better-than-your-tribe boasting and nonsense syllables such as “Jock-a-mo feena hay” and “Mighty kootie fiyo.” When the Library of Congress added the album to the National Recording Registry in 2012, the occasion marked one of the few times in recent history that a decision associated—if only tangentially—with the U.S. Congress facilitated rather than impeded the pursuit of happiness.

Proof of the continuing influence of Art Neville in general and the Wild Tchoupitoulas album in particular can be found throughout Jazz Fest: The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (Smithsonian Folkways), a five-disc, decades-spanning, 53-track box recently released to celebrate the 50th go-round of an event that has become an annual Crescent City rite of spring second only to Mardi Gras itself.

The box includes three Wild Tchoupitoulas tracks: “Indian Red” (Disc 1, the Golden Eagles), “Big Chief Got the Golden Crown” (Disc 2, the White Eagles), and “Brother John” (Disc 2, the Dixie Cups). And if the “Tchoupitoulas-ness” of the first two is diminished by their being traditional, Tchoupitoulas-antedating songs, the third is a bona fide Cyril Neville original.

Art himself appears three times: first as a Neville Brother (on a rather underwhelming “Yellow Moon”), second as a Funky Meter (heating up “Fire [sic] on the Bayou”), and third as a Neville Brother again (on “Amazing Grace/One Love”).

That last performance, incidentally, isn’t Jazz Fest’s only gospel number. Disc 3 contains four in a row, high-lighted by Irma Thomas’ impassioned “Old Rugged Cross” and the late Raymond Myles’ frenzied take on Andrâé Crouch’s “Can’t Nobody Do Me Like Jesus.”

But the Neville Brothers’ John Newton–Bob Marley medley is the last track on the last disc. And as such it has the final word.

Art and music
JAZZ FEST BOX SET SHOWS THE LATE ART NEVILLE’S CONTINUING INFLUENCE
by Arsenio Orteza
Recent jazz albums
reviewed by Arsenio Orteza

**ANTIDOTE** Chick Corea & the Spanish Heart Band
No matter how closely you scrutinize the revisited songs, “My Spanish Heart” and “Armando’s Rhumba” (from My Spanish Heart) and “Duende” and “The Yellow Nimbus” (from Touchstone), you won’t hear any coulda, shoulda, woulda. Instead, you’ll hear development, especially in the cases of “Duende” (formerly three minutes, now 10) and “My Spanish Heart” (formerly 1½ minutes, now seven). You’ll also hear (or, more accurately, feel) flow, specifically the flamenco kind: The credits include the tap dancing of Nino de los Reyes for a reason.

**SONGS: THE MUSIC OF ALLEN TOUSSAINT** New Orleans Jazz Orchestra
Actually, Allen Toussaint only wrote six of these nine cuts, but they’re among his most famous ("Southern Nights," “Working in the Coal Mine,” “Java,” “It’s Raining”). So one gets a pretty good idea of how Adonis Rose’s predominantly brass ensemble would’ve gone about swinging the Toussaint compositions that they’ve bypassed in order to make room for their original Toussaint-tribute tunes (two) and “Tequila” (which Toussaint, like lots of other folks, recorded). They’d have done so crisply and with verve and imagination. Maybe there’ll be a Volume 2.

**COME WHAT MAY** Joshua Redman Quartet
Aaron Goldberg (piano), Reuben Rogers (bass), and Gregory Hutchinson (drums) respond to the warmth suffusing Redman’s tenor sax with playing of an almost elegant restraint. The payoff: melodies whose muted incandescence sheds just enough light on the titles to make one wonder how the two go together. There really is a sense of surrender, for instance, to Redman’s articulation of the title tune—a sense so palpable that when Redman entrusts that articulation to Rogers and then to Goldberg midway through, the continuity feels spontaneous and inevitable simultaneously.

**REALM OF SPELLS** Jah Wobble & Bill Laswell
Peter Apfelbaum’s sax parts on “Off World Departure” notwithstanding, this marriage of spacey Metal Box bass throb and detached Album studio craft isn’t so much “close enough for jazz” as “farther enough away from everything else.” At times, especially in the 10-minute title track, it approaches every Public Image Ltd. fan’s fantasy jam. Eventually, though, one misses the foregrounded chaos of a Keith Levene or a John Lydon, a chaos without which titles such as “Dark Luminosity” and “Code of Echo’s” come off as a little too accurate.

**ENCORE**
On the Corner Live! The Music of Miles Davis (Ear Up) documents an exhilarating 2015 Nashville concert by the saxophonists David Liebman and Jeff Coffin, the bassist Victor Wooten, the keyboardist Chris Walters, the drummer Chester Thompson, and the guitarist James DaSilva. Its title, however, is misleading. At a combined total of 21 minutes, “On the Corner” and “Black Satin” do set the tone, but they’re the only selections drawn from Davis’ On the Corner album itself.

There are also selections from Dark Magus (with the ecstatic “Moja” for some reason renamed “Mojo”) and one apiece from In a Silent Way, Live-Evil, Big Fun, and We Want Miles. Liebman gets top billing because he’s the biggest name, because he performed alongside Davis during the gestation of these (mostly) funky jams, and because his playing shows no diminution. But it’s DaSilva’s hard, texture-thickening rhythms—like those of the late, great Reggie Lucas before him—that keep the funk roaring. —A.O.
Deporting to death
JIMMY ALDAOUD’S CASE SPARKS NEEDED QUESTIONS ABOUT U.S. REMOVALS TO WAR ZONES

Jimmy Aldaoud was what lawyers call low-hanging fruit. The 41-year-old Detroit suburb resident had more than 20 convictions, the most notable for assault and stealing power tools from a garage in 2012. Family and friends say doctors believed he was bipolar with schizoaffective disorder, plus he was a diabetic.

In the eyes of immigration authorities, the Iraqi national was ripe for deportation. While his parents and an older sister long ago became U.S. citizens, Aldaoud remained a permanent legal resident, homeless and troubled, and subject to removal. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detained him in late May and put him on a commercial flight to Iraq, along with several others.

Family members disclosed on Aug. 7 that Aldaoud had died in Iraq, apparently unable to obtain insulin there and succumbing to diabetes. His death rocked Detroit’s Iraqi Christian community, where Aldaoud grew up.

Cases like his have been pending since 2017 when ICE raided Chaldean sites and detained 114 Iraqi nationals, threatening to deport them to a country where Christians like them continue to face genocide. These Iraqis have lived in the United States for decades but are eligible for deportation because they have criminal records.

Aldaoud was born in Greece, not Iraq, and came to the United States with his Iraqi parents as a refugee at 15 months old. He didn’t speak Arabic and had never set foot in Iraq.

When immigration authorities arrested him in May, they put him on a commercial flight to Najaf instead of Baghdad. Najaf is one of the holiest cities for Muslim Shiites, and a center for anti-American hostility. Aldaoud, who did not speak Arabic, arrived in Najaf without a passport, ID card, or other documents. He had only a little insulin, and no community. There are no Assyrian or Chaldean Christians in Najaf.

Aldaoud lived on the streets, unable to navigate checkpoints or government services without identification. In a video message sent to family and friends in Detroit just before his death, he said he was sick, out of insulin, and had been beaten for sleeping on someone’s property.

Besides questions about why he was sent to Najaf, attorneys involved in the Aldaoud case told me the United States didn’t have to deport him to Iraq at all. A third country had agreed to accept Aldaoud—but U.S. officials refused. Third-country repatriation is not uncommon when deportees cannot safely return to their own country.

“The cruelty is the point for ICE, it seems,” said Steven Oshana, executive director of A Demand For Action, an advocacy group working on behalf of Iraqi victims of genocide. “We had a third country ready to accept him, and they insisted he go back to Iraq.”

ICE has rounded up about 100 Iraqis in the Detroit area, along with Kurdish Iraqis living in Nashville this month, and seems intent on deporting them, too.

Oshana said members of Congress may hold hearings in light of Aldaoud’s death. Already a bipartisan bill in the House could delay Iraqi deportations for two years, allowing the cases at least to go before an immigration judge—given that Iraq remains a war zone and Christians there face genocide.

But Congress and the Trump administration also need to address the ongoing cruelty in such removals. Many involve business owners and heads of families who decades ago were convicted on a firearms violation or a drug charge—legitimate crimes they’ve now served time for. Breaking up families and upending businesses leads to lasting economic hardship for their communities.

Detroit attorney Clarence Doss, who has handled 25 such cases, said some Iraqis received pardons by the Michigan governor, clearing their criminal record and ending the deportation orders. These are erratic, expensive remedies that involve years of litigating nearly every case individually, at taxpayers’ expense.

While deportation orders remain in place, the Iraqis—even though they are legal residents—could be removed by ICE, without notice like Aldaoud, and sent to Iraq, where they have no ties. It’s something Dass said for each is “a source of great mental anguish every day.”
It’s about time the whole family had access to news from a biblical perspective.

We all need to stay informed and educated, but it’s often overwhelming to even try. WORLD produces facts-based, biblically objective journalism. Because truth-seeking resources must reference the ultimate authority on truth.

With annual memberships covering every life stage, your family can remain in the world but not of the world.

I’m comforted knowing that the delivery of the information aligns with my family’s worldview.

—Lynn M.

Get the right WORLD for everyone at gwnews.com.
With federal agencies overwhelmed, churches at the border are stepping up to help with a flood of traumatized migrants

by SOPHIA LEE in Las Cruces, N.M., and El Paso, Texas

Offering ‘the
Heated, politicized language surrounding the border issue reached a boiling point on Aug. 3 when a 21-year-old man opened fire at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, killing 22 and wounding at least 24. Police identified the shooter as the author of an anti-immigrant manifesto published on an online forum where other white supremacists have announced their murder plans. There, the shooter defined his attack as “a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas” and said he’s “simply defending my country from cultural and ethnic replacement brought on by an invasion.”

Meanwhile, hundreds of local churches in border cities from San Diego to Brownsville, Texas, were offering something very much lacking in the current national conversation: Compassion to fellow image-bearers of God. I visited several of them in Las Cruces, N.M., and El Paso, Texas, which share close economic and social ties with Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, El Paso’s sister city. The U.S. Border Patrol’s El Paso sector, which encompasses New Mexico and two western Texas counties, has experienced the largest numbers of asylum-seekers released into the area.

Among those asylum-seekers are children who, after a long day of traveling, look to play. At Heart for the World Church in Las Cruces, I saw five children pop their heads into a vertical row by the doorframe and look up at church volunteer Freida Adams with soft puppy eyes. Adams smiled down at them. “Qué necesitas?”

The kids suddenly looked shy and began fidgeting. One child nudged the tallest boy, and he offered Adams a pretty smile: “Libros?”

Adams nodded. “Esperas aquí! Iré a buscar algunos libros”—“Wait here! I’ll go look for some books.” The boy, who looked to be about 6, hesitated. Adams smiled and leaned down: “Do you want to come with me?” The boy’s face lit up, and he nodded eagerly.

“Come,” Adams said, holding out her hand. He capered over, and as he slipped his tiny hand into hers, she turned to me and whispered, “You see the trust that just happened?” She looked delighted.

It’s common for border crisis volunteers like Adams to see children cling to their parents with tight fists, eyes darting with apprehension. By the time Border Patrol agents release them from holding facilities to shelters and churches, these families have already been away from their home countries for months. Many fled violence, "This is the first story in a series."
persecution, and poverty only to face an administration seeking to deter migrants from entering.

When the Trump administration stopped people from entering the port of entry to seek asylum, thousands sought to cross the border unlawfully and surrender themselves to Border Patrol agents.

The record-breaking numbers of Border Patrol apprehensions have generated public attention to the border. President Trump has repeatedly condemned migrant arrivals at the southern border, calling it “an invasion.” He mocked asylum-seekers as tattoo-bearing, thuggish men who “read a little page given by lawyers” coaching them to fake sob stories—a very different spin from what’s actually happening: Most of the migrants approaching the border today are vulnerable families and children, and a vast majority don’t have lawyers.

For the churches that are doing whatever they can to help this much-maligned group feel safe, the task has not been easy. Often by the time these migrants arrive at churches, they’ve been held in cells under horrible conditions and bused for hundreds of miles from facility to facility, not knowing where they are or what’s happening. Most migrants have heard about U.S. officials separating families, or have been separated themselves. So they hold their children close and refuse to put them down. The kids pick up on their parents’ tension, and they instinctively feel unsafe.

When Border Patrol drops migrants off at shelters, the first thing Adams does is touch the children—she cups their foreheads for signs of fever, bops little noses for signs of a cold, pats their bellies for signs of bloating. Those medical conditions she can fix as a nurse—but not the psychological ones. Once, she met a migrant girl who wailed all day and wouldn’t let any adult hug or console her. But it’s the look of stupor that most worries Adams:

"When she offers a doll to a girl who does nothing but stare back, the kids pick up on their parents’ tension, and they instinctively feel unsafe.

In Las Cruces, Heart for the World Church has been receiving about 20 asylum-seekers every Tuesday since March. Green cots topped with blankets and stuffed toys line the back of a room; the kids’ play tables are piled with coloring books, crayons, and blocks; and an earthly aroma of chicken broth and simmering beans emanates from the kitchen, where volunteers prepare the main meal and pack PB&J sandwiches for the road.

At about 11 a.m., a bus pulled up at the church parking lot, and a group of migrants and their children entered the church, looking apprehensive. Once they all settled onto their cots, Freida Adams greeted them in Spanish: “Bienvenidos! We’re glad you’re here. You’re not in detention anymore. You’re here as our guests.” She then prayed for them.

As Adams spoke, the guests nodded and smiled. I could see their shoulders and facial muscles visibly relax. Their grip on their children loosened, and as the kids gingerly inched toward the Jenga blocks on a play table, they let them go. After a meal of chicken soup and tortillas, the kids ran outdoors to the playground, and soon the parents were pushing their kids down the slide, kicking a soccer ball in the field, or coloring together. It had been a long time since these parents played with their children.

Meanwhile, Adams was on her feet the entire day, taking care of the migrants, checking on medical supplies at the city shelter, and coordinating donations with other churches. I was with her the entire day and didn’t see her eat once. As a former missionary
in Venezuela and Thailand, Adams is used to working with refugees, and she says these asylum-seekers share the same “shell-shocked” expressions. Adams says she knows that a meal and a hug won’t drastically change these people’s lives, but that’s not her responsibility: “What I am is the hands and feet of Jesus.”

Again and again, from church to church, I heard the same response when I asked people why they became involved: “We saw a need. So we offered the love of Jesus.” The alternative—leaving vulnerable families on the streets—is unacceptable. Las Cruces learned that lesson one stormy Mother’s Day, when the city shelter told Border Patrol it was full but the agents dropped 112 migrants off at a bus station anyway, leaving the city to scramble to find room.

And the people kept coming. As one volunteer in El Paso described it, “At first it was 100 people a day, and that was crazy. Then 200 people a day—that was, oh, insane. Then it kept growing and growing to more than 1,000 a day. There was just no capacity anymore.”

Churches take a huge risk in helping migrants. Some have lost members. Maribel Velasquez, pastor of the Spanish-speaking Church of God El-Elyon in El Paso, said she at first had no problem inspiring church members to get on board. In February, when she got the first call that a bus of 50 migrants was on the way to their church, volunteers rushed to the kitchen to unfreeze and fry whole chickens, boil rice, and push the pews aside to make way for cots. They set up a table on the stage to process people and used their own cell phones to call sponsors and arrange transportation.

The need was so great that Velasquez decided to open the church 24/7, receiving about 70 new migrants every day. At any given time, the church hall and sanctuary were filled with up to 90 people who complained of stomachaches after days and weeks of drinking water from the toilet, or ran fevers and colds from icy temperatures in detention centers, or suffered muscle aches after being cramped back to back, limb to limb in grossly overcrowded cells. Women were sick from wearing the same period-stained underwear for weeks. In four months, 7,986 migrants passed through El-Elyon.

Some church members began complaining about the smell. They said Velasquez was destroying their church. Today, only 12 out of the original 80 church members remain. Velasquez doubted herself at first, but every time she thought she wouldn’t make it, every time the church ran out of food or supplies or funds, she saw that “God provided every time—not less, not more.” She took it as a sign that she was doing the right thing. Besides, she said, “Who’s going to be there for them if not the church?” Velasquez began to see her church not just as a shelter but a refuge for people to “connect with God at the altar” and begin the process of dealing with deep wounds and trauma.

Every volunteer I’ve met remarked on these asylum-seekers’ faith. When church volunteers offer to pray for them, they get excited—and often offer to pray for the volunteers as well. One immigration lawyer who’s not religious commented to me, “They’re stressed, but they’re also verrrrry religious. They always say, ‘Dios me ayudará’—God, God, God. God will touch the judge’s heart. God will help me. The judge will know I’m not a liar. They have so much faith in God.”

Freida Adams said something bigger is happening than a mere border crisis: “I believe there’s a movement of Christians coming into the U.S. A missionary force is coming. The Great Commission is theirs, too.” She sees in them a faith that many American Christians have lost—“a deep, abiding faith that’s come not out of comfort or ease but of struggle, persecution, want, fear, and threat. A faith where when all you have is that anchor of God’s presence, that’s enough.” So whenever she hugs the migrants goodbye, she tells them, “You’re here. Go and make disciples.” And whenever she meets other Christians who turn away from this modern great migration, she says, “Don’t miss this. Wake up! Wake up and be ready.”

Five days before the El Paso shooting, Velasquez sent me a text. Her church had been quiet for a few weeks after the U.S. government began sending most of the asylum-seekers back to Mexico under the “Remain in Mexico” program. But that day, ICE called her and told her it would again send 70 asylum-seekers each day to her church. She was back on her feet with other church volunteers, cooking and nursing and leading worship. Then the shooting happened, and ICE temporarily stopped sending them. For an extra safety precaution, she and her husband moved all the migrants remaining in the church to her own house.

“They all fit in your house?” I exclaimed. “Yes, we work it out,” she said. “God is good.”

Asylum-seekers worshipping at El-Elyon church

August 31, 2019 • WORLD Magazine 35
As a young mom, Martha Hazelrigg rarely left the house with her four homeschooled children during school hours. When they did venture out, she coached them to tell inquisitive grocery clerks and shoppers they attended a local Christian school. It was true: Hazelrigg’s children homeschooled through that school’s independent study program. But in 1985, home education was rare, and mothers had legitimate fears that skeptics, even family members, might report them to the government.

Thirty years later, Hazelrigg’s oldest daughter, Christy Harmeson, homeschools her five children without any qualms about leaving the house on school mornings. She usually sees a scattering of families like hers at parks, stores, libraries, and hiking trails. In the San Francisco Bay area, where Harmeson lives, museums, aquariums, and even the University of California Berkeley host “homeschool days” or special classes for home-educated children. These programs sell out quickly.

Homeschooling has gone mainstream. About 2.5 million students—3 percent of all school-aged children in the United States—homeschool,
Homeschooling mother Adria Bishop with her sons Tyler, Austin, and Wyatt
according to Brian Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI). It’s no longer a movement of non-establishment people on the left and evangelical believers on the right: Nationwide, only 21 percent of parents in 2012 cited religious or moral instruction as their reason for homeschooling, down from 36 percent in 2007, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Ray says more families are choosing to homeschool for lifestyle reasons. They might have a child who is a gifted athlete or musician, or one who struggles in a traditional classroom environment. This has changed the face of homeschooling, as these new homeschoolers may not be concerned about government entanglement and may be open to ideas that steer government funding to homeschooled.

Some homeschoolers in California have been using tax dollars to pay for parts of their homeschooling expenses through a charter school program. Homeschooling purists, though, worry that any government money comes with strings that threaten the independence they’ve worked so hard to achieve.

This is an issue bigger than California, however, since 43 states and the District of Columbia allow charter schools—public schools freed from many of the regulations that inhibit innovation in district schools. California is unusual in having homeschool charters, but homeschooling mom Heather Deyden-Littrell notes, “Other states are picking up on what is happening and seeing it as a viable option. It’s becoming more of a wave.”

So far, a few other states offer homeschool charters, but most offer less money than California families receive, lessening their appeal. For example, 10,000 Alaskan students are enrolled in such charters, and districts give parents up to $2,000 in educational funds. More money or more strings: More homeschoolers across the nation will need to choose.

Aendra Bishop, 36, a Sebastopol, Calif., homeschooling mother of three, last year left the Christian co-op she was a part of to join Summit Academy, a homeschool charter program that had recently opened a Sonoma County location. Enrolling was easy: She had to provide her children’s birth certificates and a recent utility bill.

“Homeschooling can be really expensive,” says Bishop: “We already forgo one income and pay for all our curriculum.” The Bishops received $2,800 per child—$8,400 for all three. With those funds, they purchased an iPad, math curriculum, an Oakland Zoo membership, and in-home guitar lessons for one son. They also paid for field trips to Alcatraz Island and Safari West.

The Bishops’ approach illustrates one of the main appeals of homeschool charters: It’s a way to get something back from all the taxes they pay toward education. California allows enrolled families to receive up to $3,200 per child, which they can spend on anything as long as it’s on their charter school’s list of approved vendors. Almost anything goes—except for faith-based curriculum and resources. But parents can still buy religious curriculum with their own dollars.

Those funds make a big difference for some families. Approved vendors offer books, curriculum, STEM kits with science equipment, tutoring services, educational toys, gymnastics classes, zoo and

Nationwide, only 21 percent of parents in 2012 cited religious or moral instruction as their reason for homeschooling, down from 36 percent in 2007.

Austin Bishop, who is enrolled in a homeschool charter program, reads a book.
museum passes, music and horseback riding lessons—as well as less conventional educational enterprises like tickets for Disneyland. Charters require parents to return non-consumable items, like laptops, iPads, and microscopes when their children withdraw from the program.

Homeschool charters differ from virtual charters, hybrid schools, and independent study schools that assign specific curriculum and often offer in-person classes at resource centers. Most homeschool charters let parents pick their own books and coursework. Some offer a set curriculum for those who want it.

Bishop chose her own curriculum, including some Bible-based texts, like Apologia Science: “As a Christian, I was like, ‘What are you not going to let me do?’ I was nervous about that... but it was very hands-off.” She used her own money, not the charter’s funds, to buy overtly Christian curriculum.

In return for the state funding, Adria Bishop had to submit to minor state oversight. She had to meet with a certified teacher once a month (via the internet was OK) and turn in an attendance sheet and work samples from different subjects. Since those samples cannot contain faith-based references, Bishop submitted science worksheets without Bible verses or mention of God.

Pushback to the homeschool charters has come from at least two directions: government and more traditional homeschools.

In May, San Diego authorities accused an Australian man and his partner of using their company, A3 Education, to buy real estate and fund other ventures: A3 ran both homeschool charters and
Authorities indicted 11 people for a “charter scam” they alleged cost the state more than $50 million in education funds. Following the charges, the state froze the assets of all A3 charters, leaving many teachers, parents, and homeschool vendors in the lurch. Adria Bishop was one of them.

A3 Education’s alleged corruption came at a time when California lawmakers were already attempting to cap charter growth. California has more charter students than any other state—660,000, or 11 percent of the state’s 6 million K-12 students.

Because charters aren’t required to hire unionized teachers, California’s powerful teachers unions want to limit them. Controversy over charters spawned teacher strikes earlier this year in Oakland, Los Angeles, and elsewhere. Gov. Gavin Newsom recently appointed a task force to evaluate charter schools’ effect on public schools, and the state Legislature is advancing bills that would limit new charters from opening.

Orange County mother of three Windi Eklund is part of a homeschool charter. She worries that the state might limit her options. She says private homeschool families have been mostly silent about that prospect. “Very few have shown up to support us in this fight,” Eklund said: “There’s this stigma that we’re not really homeschooling.”

Traditional homeschoolers worry about the effect of homeschool charters on their own freedom to educate their children. Christy Harmeson and her husband homeschool privately through a local Christian co-op. In recent years, several of her friends have left the co-op to join homeschool charters springing up in Northern California. She admits the money—nearly $12,000 extra for their one-income family—does sound appealing. But, Harmeson says, “It’s hard not to think the more we take state money, the more the government will say, ‘This is how you have to homeschool’ … and that we are voluntarily etching away our freedom.”

California already requires parents of the state’s 270,000 privately homeschooled children to file an affidavit that registers their home address as a private school. But the state’s homeschool establishment has fought other regulations.

Last year, after authorities accused David and Louise Turpin of Perris, Calif., of torturing, abusing, and neglecting their 13 homeschooled children, state lawmakers proposed two bills to provide more government oversight of home-schooling families. One mandated a yearly fire marshal home inspection and another established a government committee to oversee homeschooling and set teacher qualification standards.

Both bills died. Nathan Pierce, director of operations and legislative liaison for the Sacramento-based Family Protection Ministries (FPM), credits the thousands of homeschooling families who opposed the bills. Pierce said one
In the 1980s and 1990s, Gregg and Sono Harris became familiar faces to many in the growing number of Christian families educating their children at home.

Gregg Harris spoke at conferences and workshops, and the couple’s oldest son, Joshua, became something of a teen icon: He spoke to homeschool audiences, he wrote articles, and he produced *New Attitude*, a magazine for homeschool kids.

In 1997, Joshua Harris gained fame for his wildly popular courtship book *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*. But he wasn’t a one-hit wonder: Harris wrote more books on Christian living and theology, he spoke at more conferences, and he became pastor of the 3,000-member Covenant Life Church in Gaithersburg, Md., before stepping down in 2015.

Four years later, Harris has grabbed attention again, but the headline is dreadful: “I am not a Christian.”

Harris announced his renunciation of Christianity in an Instagram post on July 26, shortly after a separate post announced the end of his 19-year marriage. He apologized to the “LGBTQ+ community” for the Christian sexual ethic he once taught.

The Twitter responses were predictable: “Joshua Harris kisses marriage goodbye,” and, “I kissed Christianity goodbye.” Some may also have wondered: Should we kiss homeschooling goodbye too?

The short answer is no. Harris’ failures don’t mean homeschooling is a failure. But the apostasy of a well-known evangelical is a tragedy, and it’s worth reflecting on what Christians can learn.

Lots of Christian writers have noted the smorgasbord of factors that might have contributed to Harris’ fall: early celebrity, later celebrity, a lack of formal theological training, a sex abuse scandal that engulfed his church, and more.

But apostasy is a terrifying mystery, and it’s impossible to know all the details of how it happens in a man’s soul. Things that are more certain: Homeschooling isn’t a formula for producing godly children, and personal purity isn’t a guarantee of a dream marriage. Only Christ changes hearts and gives the grace to keep going.

Another takeaway: Healthy churches—not occasional conferences—are the best soil for Christian growth. We should value helpful teaching from good books and good speakers, but the ideal diet comes from Biblical preaching in the context of Christians who know us well.

So as the new school year begins, don’t put your hope in homeschooling, but don’t be hopeless about how God can use it. Don’t put your hope in personal purity for relational bliss, but don’t doubt the blessings purity does bring.

In the pursuit of both knowledge and purity, Jesus taught the ultimate reward is the same: “Blessed are the pure in heart—for they shall see God.”

state legislator asked him, “Can you tell your people to stop calling me?”

In FPM’s nearly 35 years of alerting homeschooling families of potentially restrictive state bills, last year’s battle was its biggest. Homeschooling families tend to stay in the background of California’s liberal politics, but Pierce said, “My experience has been that when [they feel] threatened, people... come out of the woodwork to defend their freedom.”

Though both private and charter homeschoolers opposed the legislation that grew out of the Turpin case, they are often on opposing sides. The Virginia-based Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) has spent more than three decades fighting to keep the government out of homeschooling. President Mike Smith warns against taking government dollars for homeschooling: “When you get involved with the state and take state funding, then the state controls education.”

HSLDA sees governmental oversight as antithetical to the point of homeschooling. “Our view is that children and parents do better without it,” Smith said. That belief puts HSLDA and its network of private homeschooling families at odds with homeschool charters taking public funds. When asked about homeschool charters, Nathan Pierce of Family Protection Ministries said his group does not fight “public school battles.”

Homeschooler Heather Deyden-Littrell thinks he’s wrong. She says if lawmakers restrict charters, they will come after private home education next: “It’s strange that there is this line between private and charter homeschoolers. We all need to band together.”
Nyack College, a Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) school in the New York City area, received an independent audit in 2017 with an opinion any institution dreads: “substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a going concern.”

The evangelical school with a 120-year history in New York was looking at looming insolvency, according to the audit, because of its tens of millions in debt and falling revenues.

Nyack has about $70 million in debt, according to its IRS 990 forms, on which it paid about $4 million in interest in the 2017 fiscal year. The 2017 audit noted that Nyack had to withdraw the majority of the funds from its endowment to cover expenses (some of that has been paid back), stopped paying into employee retirement funds in 2015, and has violated its debt covenants. Still, the school has managed to stay open to offer classes this fall.

“They’re good Christian people dealing with a market that’s gone really south... [but] it’s an ugly financial picture,” said Thomas Bakewell, a CPA and attorney who has consulted with dozens of faith-based colleges and universities on financial issues. He also served for 15 years on the board of Lindenwood University while it went through a major financial crisis. (Bakewell hasn’t consulted for Nyack.)

Since 2010, Nyack has lost across its programs at least 1,000 students in its total enrollment, which was down to 2,315 in 2018. Each year since 2016 Nyack has been operating $6 million to $8 million in the red—huge losses for an institution with a roughly $60 million budget. From a random sampling of 990s, most similar Christian colleges operated in the black even with falling enrollment.

When Bakewell looked at Nyack’s 2017 audit, the most recent that is publicly available, what he saw was a “failing college,” but he cautioned that his assessment was based on a 2-year-old audit. Nyack declined to provide its 2018 audit, and New York State Department
Nyack College in Manhattan, N.Y.
University, a Southern Baptist college in Gary Carter, longtime CFO of Union limited pool there for everybody,” said
cult reforms.
learn to be more nimble in making diffi
distinctive product that Christian stu
educational mission as a way to remain a
their Christian commitments and their
falling enrollment (see below).

Some colleges have closed in recent
years, or lost accreditation, or looked to
wealthy alumni and donors for big money
bailouts. Cincinnati Christian University
is one that is facing the possible loss of
its accreditation over its finances amid
falling enrollment (see below).

Financial minds think the best way
forward for these schools is to stick to
their Christian commitments and their
educational mission as a way to remain
a distinctive product that Christian stu
ents will choose. Schools also need to
learn to be more nimble in making diffi
cult reforms.

“It’s just demographics. There’s a
limited pool there for everybody,” said
Gary Carter, longtime CFO of Union
University, a Southern Baptist college in
Jackson, Tenn. “You’ve got to be careful
that you don’t let the tail wag the dog,”
he added. “You have to guard your
mission and your identity, and what’s
happening in the classroom.”

Nyack is selling its aging 107-acre
campus in affluent Nyack, N.Y., about 30
miles north of the city, and consolidating
the entire school (including its affiliate
Alliance Theological Seminary or ATS)
into six stories in a skyscraper in lower
Manhattan, right around the corner
from The King’s College.

The college characterizes the
Manhattan move as a return to its roots
because it began in New York City in
1882, focused on training missionaries. It
moved to the Nyack campus in Rockland
County in 1897. A century later the
school began offering some classes in
Manhattan, and then recently decided
that the aging Rockland campus was “no
longer financially viable.”

Though already straining under debt,
the school in 2016 took out a $55 million
mortgage from a French investment
bank, Natixis, to buy its Manhattan
campus and consolidate the school
there. Students will live in housing in
nearby Jersey City. With extra space in
its Manhattan property for now, Nyack
has been offering its available space at
affordable rents to other ministries like
Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for
Christ) for offices in the city, a
project called CoLab NYC.

The Nyack campus went up for
sale this year, and President Mike
Scales said the school has no partic-
ular requirements on who will buy
the campus. The school has also
recently taken out a $38.5 million
loan from Procida Funding &
Advisors (a non-bank lender) to help
with debt and operations costs,
according to a report in the
Rockland/Westchester Journal
News.

Nyack noted in filings with the
state that the school had found the
Jersey City dorm property through a
philanthropist connected to the
school.

Nyack administration and board
members, as well as officials from
the CMA, declined interviews.

Other financially struggling
schools have taken a similar route of
selling prime real estate and moving,
although usually to less expensive areas.
Fuller Theological Seminary announced
in 2018 that it would be selling its his-
toric campus in pricey downtown
Pasadena, Calif., and building a new
campus in Pomona, an area with lower
housing costs. That would put “a Fuller

Cincinnati Christian University, losing hundreds of students
and millions of dollars, decided in 2015 to focus on athletics.
Now CCU’s accrediting body, the Higher Learning
Commission (HLC), has said the university is in grave
danger of losing its accreditation.

The HLC issued the university a “Show-Cause Order” on
July 11. It lists CCU problems including insufficient faculty,
confused mission, and executive conflicts of interest. Some
of the concerns stem from CCU’s 2015 plan to bring in
more students and funding by building a football team and
a $5 million stadium. CCU grew the number of student
athletes from 150 to more than 400, but the number of
incoming nonathletes in 2017 shrank to 39.

CCU laid off 34 faculty and staff members and hired
David Fulcher, a former NFL player with the Cincinnati
Bengals, as football coach. The faculty-student ratio
soared from 1:21 to 1:37. The graduation rate fell from 42
percent in 2015 to 32 percent two years later. CCU halted
plans to build the stadium. Meanwhile, the football team
struggled: Last fall the team had zero wins and 11 losses
and was outscored 574 to 90.

CCU President Ronald Heineman told me on Aug. 8,
“We’re probably expecting 525 undergrads and 118 in our
graduate programs.” Neither Heineman nor Jonathan
Sams, vice chairman of the CCU board of trustees, was
able to tell me the average SAT scores for incoming
students, but Heineman said the students are “hitting the
minimums” set by the National Association of Intercollegiate
Athletics.

The HLC requires schools in
accreditation trouble to “pub-
lish the Show-Cause Order
prominently on its website,” but
the order is three clicks away
from CCU’s homepage. I told
Heineman it took some search-
ing for me to find the announce-
ment, and asked if he thought the posting met the HLC
requirement. He said CCU has engaged outside legal help
to meet the requirement and that “if it didn’t, we would
switch it.”

Lee Mason, a 1968 CCU alumnus and former teacher,
found out about the Show-Cause Order through Facebook.
He told me the school’s troubles go all the way back to the
1980s. His daughter, Kristina Rickert, graduated in 1990. As
we spoke, he turned to her and asked, “What do you think
about what’s going on at school?” She replied, “My school’s
gone.” —Leah Hickman
education in reach of more people,” then-acting Provost Mari Clements told the Los Angeles Times.

Nyack’s retention has been difficult in the transition, as students don’t know exactly what is going on with the school’s plans. Nyack first announced that all classes and dorms would relocate for the fall 2019 semester, and then reversed course earlier this year and said it would continue operating on the Rockland campus this fall semester, with a planned start at the new consolidated Manhattan campus in the spring semester.

Kaelee Pearson, a rising junior from upstate New York, enrolled at Nyack because she wanted to go to a Christian college close to home that was affordable, and she loved Nyack’s racial diversity (it’s majority black and Hispanic). She has loved her two years at Nyack and was heavily involved in student leadership and other activities. But Pearson decided not to return for this fall semester because of the confusion and lack of communication to students over the campus changes. She said most of her friends have transferred. The school didn’t tell Nyack students about the possibility of a move into the Manhattan campus until November 2018.

“If there was more communication, they would have had a lot of people stay,” she said. “[President Scales] never apologized to us for making our lives crazy.”

She wasn’t sure if her Youth and Family Studies major could continue in the city, and said several of her professors from her major weren’t going to move to the city. (Scales said in a statement that all the same courses would still be offered.) Also, when she recently called the college, she found her financial aid counselor had changed to someone in the Manhattan campus.

“Communication-wise, you’re handling my money and I didn’t even know?” Pearson said. “I’m trying to give them the benefit of the doubt. Financially, they always try to make a way for me to continue going there. … But it is very unorganized at the moment and very uncertain.”

Pearson was also surprised that chapel, which she found a central part of the college’s spiritual community, would no longer be mandatory at the Manhattan campus. Other alumni have voiced concerns about this as well. Nyack said chapel would still take place three times a week in Manhattan, but did not answer a question about making it voluntary.

Instead of returning to Nyack, Pearson decided to take a yearlong internship that began this summer. Afterward she plans to transfer, and she’s thinking of attending another Christian college in Florida, where the cost of living is more affordable.

“I’m just going to trust God and see where He leads me,” Pearson said.

Douglas Oliver has been an online student at Alliance Theological Seminary, which is part of Nyack and shares its campus in Rockland. A member of the CMA, he’s also taught mechanical engineering at secular and Christian colleges. He is upset that schools like Nyack are accepting more students to fill up enrollment—Nyack’s acceptance rate is 98 percent— and Oliver wonders if all those students are college-ready. If not, they may drop out or transfer after incurring debt.

Oliver said Christian institutions in particular have a responsibility not to put students in that position. Right now he’s counseling a couple in his church who are deep in debt after the wife attended a Christian college and never graduated. He also sees the debt-based approach as leading schools to make unnecessary investments in amenities and athletics and thinks colleges should be more “bare bones” to bring debt levels down.

At the same time, colleges desperate for students are giving bigger and bigger discounts on tuition, sometimes as high as 60 or 70 percent. Union’s Carter says that creates its own death spiral because a college rarely can reverse that pattern to lower both tuition and the discount rate.

But big bailouts have helped Christian colleges find new life. When Oral Roberts University was suffocating under $52 million in debt, the Green family of Hobby Lobby wealth stepped in with a $70 million gift, and then stepped in with at least another $40 million in following years. The Greens pledged the funding on the condition of financial reform and leadership changes, and enrollment has been growing.

“Organizations become tradition-bound, and it’s particularly bad in higher ed,” said Bakewell. “They don’t adapt quickly.”
BLAINE, BLAINE, SHORT-SIGHTED BRIBER FROM THE STATE OF MAINE

State constitutional roadblocks to school choice grew out of anti-Catholic hostility and the myth of educational neutrality

BY MARVIN OLASKY

Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back on him who starts it rolling.”

The current drive for school choice illustrates well the slapstick humor of Proverbs 26:27. The U.S. Supreme Court on June 28 agreed to hear a case challenging bans on the use of taxpayer funds to pay, indirectly, tuition at evangelical and other religious schools. Ironically, the ancestors of many of today’s evangelicals erected those stop signs 105-145 years ago.

The bans are called Blaine Amendments: 37 of the 50 states have them. Delaware's is typical: No state money “shall be appropriated to, or used by, or in aid of any sectarian, church, or denominational school.” Given the way government funds now often have anti-religious strings attached, we might see such prohibitions as helpful—but they came into existence in a different era for a very different reason.

Most WORLD features have what journalists call a “face,” a person who can add human interest to what otherwise might be a dry story. This story is unusual in that the “face” is a man who died in 1893, Maine Republican James G. Blaine, the son of a...
loosely Presbyterian father and a Catholic mother.

Blaine became speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1869. He lost that position when the 1874 elections produced a Democratic majority in the House of Representatives for the first time since the Civil War. One reason: Wartime tensions had diminished, while concern about GOP connections to big business scandals had increased.

Blaine wanted to run for president in 1876, but some Protestant voters were nervous about his semi-Catholic ancestry and the charges of corruption that dogged him. Blaine issued a statement emphasizing six generations of Protestant ancestors on his father’s side, and noting that he attended church regularly.

Blaine and other Republicans, such as Sen. John Sherman of Ohio, looked for ways to drive a wedge into the Democrats and excite Republicans. Then, as now, most parents were deeply concerned about the education of their children. Education in America had traditionally been in the hands of private, often church-led schools paid for by parents, with scholarships provided to needy students.

Since the 1840s, though, tax-supported government schools had spread throughout the Northern states. The intellectual leader of the movement was Horace Mann, a Unitarian. He had overcome opposition from Protestants by assuring them that the new, secularized public schools could still include daily reading from the King James Bible, along with generic moral instruction.

That would not have been enough to clinch Mann’s victory but for concern among many Protestants about the growing number of Catholic immigrants, largely from Ireland. Opposition to such immigration, and concern that children going to Catholic schools would grow up to oppose American liberty, led to riots in the 1840s and 1850s, including one in Philadelphia in 1844 that resulted in 13 deaths and the burning down of a Catholic church.

Some writers wanted to stop all immigration, but others looked to public schools to save America. An article in The Massachusetts Teacher in 1851 stated that children of immigrants “must be taught as our own children are taught. In many cases this can only be accomplished by coercion. The children must be gathered up and forced into [public] school, and those who resist or impede this plan, whether parents or priests, must be held accountable and punished.”

The Civil War brought out in the North an emphasis on sacrificing individual rights to preserve the Union. That carried over into the educational debate. Andrew Coulson’s Market Education quotes a statement from California’s education superintendent that children should be taught to consider teachers as “superior to the parent in point of authority.”

Many teachers supported such thinking. The Wisconsin Teachers’ Association declared in 1865, “Children are the property of the state.” In 1866, the National Teachers’ Association (precursor to the National Education Association) published claims that “the duties which a citizen owes to the government are prior to any personal or individual claims.”

Some Biblical Protestants in the North still put theological duties first and emphasized parental responsibility for educating children, but they were outnumbered.

Blaine represented well a generation that embraced a myth of educational neutrality, the idea that school subjects could be taught without any reference to God, as long as the students had a daily Bible reading.

Some theologians opposed that notion. R.L. Dabney, in an 1876 press debate with Virginia’s superintendent of schools, said, “If secular education is to be made consistently and honestly non-Christian, then all its more important branches must be omitted, or they must submit to a mutilation and falsification, far worse than absolute omission.” Leaving God out of teaching, he added, was like “the play of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet omitted.”
Blaine and other Northern Republican leaders were not listening or did not care. They perceived an opportunity to batter both Catholics and Southern whites, two groups largely lost to the GOP anyway, and to win crucial support among Northern advocates of a bland Protestantism. He gained the support of President Ulysses S. Grant, who had only a superficial knowledge of Scripture but hated Catholicism, which Grant called a center of “superstition, ambition and ignorance.”

Grant in 1875 proposed a constitutional amendment that would require states to establish government-funded schools, forbid those schools to teach any religious tenets, and prohibit any government funds from going to religious schools. Blaine introduced such an amendment the following week. Congressional debate was full of anti-Catholic sentiment. Vermont Sen. Justin Morrill sneered, “The Catholics will rave.” Ohio Sen. Sherman said “Priests from the Pope” were fools.

What became known as the Blaine Amendment easily passed the House of Representatives in 1876, but many senators thought the amendment gave the federal government too much power over the states. The Nation, then a new political magazine, favored Blaine’s measure but said it would fail and Blaine did not care: His goal “is not to pass it but to use it in the campaign to catch anti-Catholic votes.”

That prediction was correct: Senators such as William Wallace Eaton of Connecticut showed little desire to further an “election dodge. ... This whole business originated with the Hon. James G. Blaine. ... It was one of his dodges to get a nomination.” Predictions that Blaine would be nominated despite bribery accusations, though, were wrong.

“Blaine, Blaine, continental liar from the state of Maine” has gone down in political history as one of the most effective negative campaign chants ever.

The GOP convention made “clean” Rutherford Hayes its presidential nominee by a slight majority. The Senate then turned down the Blaine Amendment by four votes. That did not end the matter, though. Blaine remained a prominent GOP leader for the next 16 years and served twice as secretary of state. He became his party’s presidential nominee in 1884.

Blaine failed nationally. His involvement in bribery cases sickened many Republicans: They refused to support him and became known as Mugwumps, stuck on the political fence with their “mugs” on one side and their rumps on the other, as the joke went. Blaine lost narrowly to Democrat Grover Cleveland and what Republicans called the party of “Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion.”
Blaine supporters kept alive his bigotry and political strategy by placing “Blaine Amendments” in state constitutions. For example, Missouri’s says no state government body can “pay from any public fund whatever, anything [that would] sustain any private or public school, academy, seminary, college, university, or other institution of learning controlled by any religious creed, church or sectarian denomination whatever.”

Three dozen other states passed similar decrees. They clearly forbid direct appropriations from state government to religious schools. But what about tax credits that put decision-making in the hands of parents rather than government officials? What about tax credits for scholarships that can be used at either secular or religious schools?

Also, does legislative intent make a difference? Blaine Amendments passed not because legislators were against religious teaching but because many incorrectly assumed the public schools would emphasize Protestant teaching. Many displayed a clear anti-Catholicism and hoped Catholic schools would fail for financial reasons.

The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty has detailed the history of many Blaine Amendments and recent judicial interpretations of them. For example, Arizona’s Supreme Court in 1999 examined that state’s educational tax-credit law in light of Article II, Section 12 of the Arizona Constitution: “No public money or property shall be appropriated for or applied to any religious worship, exercise, or instruction, or to the support of any religious establishment.”

The court in Kottermann v. Killian upheld the tax credit, noting that no money “ever enters the state’s control as a result of this tax credit… Thus, under any common understanding of the words, we are not here dealing with ‘public money.’” The Arizona court also noted that Blaine Amendments were a “clear manifestation of religious bigotry … we would be hard pressed to divorce the amendment’s language from the insidious discriminatory intent that prompted it.”

Similarly, the Ohio Constitution now states that “no religious or other sect, or sects, shall ever have any exclusive right to, or control of, any part of the school funds of this state.” But the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that a Cleveland voucher plan was legitimate because school funds would reach “sects” only through the “independent decisions of parents and students.” That’s crucial: Evangelicals should not want government choosing which religious schools receive funding, but empowering parents aids the Biblical injunction to teach children as “you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

The specific funding mechanism is important. Christian schools that directly receive government grants might be forced to choose between forsaking funds or forsaking Christian worldview teaching. Danger resides in any plan using taxpayer funds, because politicians or bureaucrats can exclude Christian schools. Still, the danger is much less in a tax credit plan, because government never gets its hands on the money. Private scholarship plans supplemented by taxpayer funds are also much safer than direct grants.

The U.S. Supreme Court has hinted that it may bury Blaine. In Trinity Lutheran v. Comer (2017), the Supremes allowed government funds to go to a Lutheran school—but the 7-2 decision was on narrow grounds. The vehicle for pounding a stake through the heart of the Blaine Amendments may be Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue.

Here are the facts: Kendra Espinoza and two other Montana moms transferred their kids to a nondenominational Christian private school. They hoped to receive Big Sky Scholarships funded by private donors who would receive a modest state tax credit. But the Montana Department of Revenue, citing a Blaine Amendment, created an administrative rule barring scholarship recipients from using their grants at religious schools.

Espinoza’s legal team claims that regulation runs counter to the Montana Legislature’s desire to make scholarship funds usable at all private schools in the state. They say Montana’s Blaine clause should apply “only to public funds, and not private donations incentivized by tax credits.” They argue that laws requiring religious schools to be excluded from the scholarship program violate the religion and equal protection clauses of the U.S. Constitution.

When Blaine died in 1893, The Washington Evening News stated, “He has carved his name on the rock of enduring fame, where it will remain when the waves of countless years have rolled against it and receded from it.” But 40 years later Blaine biographer Charles Russell gave an accurate summation: “No man in our annals has filled so large a space and left it so empty.”

And yet, as long as Blaine Amendments remain, their originator is only mostly dead. We’ll know Blaine’s space is empty if Justice Clarence Thomas writes the majority decision in Espinoza, for he has forcefully noted that “nothing in the Establishment Clause requires the exclusion of pervasively sectarian schools from otherwise permissible aid programs.” In Mitchell v. Helms (2000), Thomas referred to the Blaine Amendments by noting, “Hostility to aid to pervasively sectarian schools has a shameful pedigree that we do not hesitate to disavow.” He emphasized that “this doctrine, born of bigotry, should be buried now.” If Blaine is buried, states now have the opportunity to fund approaches that favor neither any particular religion nor atheism. They can return authority to parents and give all the opportunity to skip poisoned apples and the poisoning of minds.
The world has about 50,000 neurosurgeons, according to a recent count in the Journal of Neurosurgery, but there are only 1,500 chess grandmasters worldwide.

Jerald Times, director of chess at a New York charter school network, uses the stats to show that being a chess grandmaster might not be as lucrative as brain surgery, but it is harder to achieve.

The chess teacher’s network hasn’t produced a grandmaster yet, but New York schools have long generated a talent pool for champions and grandmasters. Aleksandr Lenderman, 29, is one of the chess grandmasters who attended a New York City public school.

Lenderman is slight and boyish and loves baseball. He also has one of the rare analytical brains that allowed him to become one of the top chess players in the world. He learned the game at age 10 from his German grandfather. Most whizzes now start much younger. His family isn’t wealthy, and in high school he couldn’t afford the elite private coaches that players of his caliber typically hire, but Lenderman still joined the chess elite.

His current FIDE rating (the World Chess standard for measuring players) is 2654, ranking him 10th in the United States and 97th in the world.

In high school in Brooklyn, Lenderman helped lead his public-school team to multiple national chess championships. Author Michael Weinreb captured that story in his book Game of Kings: A Year Among the Oddballs and Geniuses Who Make Up America’s Top High School Chess Team.

Lenderman, who became a Christian several years ago, shrugs off that early fame now, and barely blinks when I mention reading the book about him. Instead, he’s focused on whether he can make it back to the U.S. championships.
New York schools have produced many U.S. chess champions. The program Chess in the Schools began bringing chess to public schools in low-income neighborhoods here in 1986. This past school year, the program was in 48 New York City public schools and taught chess to 6,000 children.

Success Academy, a newer network of 48 charter schools in the city, now requires chess instruction for students in kindergarten through second grade. (After second grade, students can elect to take chess classes and can specialize in chess when they’re in high school.) The network’s chess program has about 10,000 students a year.

The philosophy behind requiring chess: It develops analytical thinking skills, concentration, and self-control. Times, the head of Success’ chess program, says learning chess has similar effects on the brain as learning a language. A study of New York students in 1993 showed that chess improved reading scores, while previous studies showed math improvements. Chess students might be a self-selected group, so those studies aren’t conclusive, but chess clearly improves basic skills like concentration and creativity.

Chess offered those benefits to Lenderman. Famous chess coach Bruce Pandolfini talked about Lenderman and his high-school teammates to Weinreb for his book about the players. Pandolfini pondered their professional future: “Their lives have already been made much better. They’re already better problem-solvers. They’re already tougher mentally. They’re already more creative. They have more things to draw on to get them through the difficulties in life. The benefit will last for the rest of their lives.”

Chess also led Lenderman, whose family is Jewish, into a community that eventually led him to the Christian faith. But that took time as he navigated the all-consuming elite chess world. As a teenager, Lenderman was on the cover of Chess Life magazine for being one of the few young Americans to win the gold medal at the World Youth Chess Championship.

Lenderman racked up championships, but he says he also treated the people around him badly, and he didn’t know God. Weinreb’s book chronicles some of Lenderman’s petulant teenage behavior: shouting at his father after a tough loss and accusing his opponent of cheating.

“I was always not an easy person to deal with,” he says now. That changed over time as he became a Christian, with mentoring from another chess grandmaster: “I needed to grow spiritually as well and learn how to deal with struggles.”

George Kacheishvili, a laid-back grandmaster who also calls New York home, got to know Lenderman at a pivotal moment in his young career after high school. Lenderman felt he was in a slump, like a .300 hitter in baseball dropping to .250, he said. Other coaches weren’t helping. Kacheishvili and Lenderman played against each other in a tournament, and soon Kacheishvili was coaching Lenderman.

“The way he looked at the game of chess is something I’ve never seen before,” said Lenderman. But there was something else: “Something about him was different, just the way he talked to me and everything about him... it felt like he really cared about me.”

Kacheishvili told Lenderman he should be able to make grandmaster “very easily,” which Lenderman had a hard time believing. But because Kacheishvili believed it, Lenderman began to believe it. At 21, he became a grandmaster.

He also began losing better, instead of giving up in frustration. During one tournament, when he was already doing badly, he says, he decided to play a meaningless game “as if it’s going to be a million-dollar game.” For the next year he played well, and gained 100 rating points—a big leap forward.
One day Kacheishvili was complaining about some ailment, and Lenderman suggested reiki—a form of New Age healing. Kacheishvili dismissed reiki with a laugh, and said God would take care of him. Lenderman was surprised that Kacheishvili believed in God.

“My grandpa always told me people who believe in God are people who are not educated,” said Lenderman. “To me Giorgi [the non-Americanized spelling of Kacheishvili’s first name] seemed like a very normal, reasonable person, not someone who just is completely oblivious to everything. And so I asked Giorgi, ‘Do you believe in God?’ And he says, ‘Yes, of course. Only... silly people don’t believe in God.’”

Lenderman began memorizing the Lord’s Prayer, and after he explored Jesus and concepts like sin, he asked to be baptized in the Russian Orthodox Church. He uses an email address with “33” in it to identify with the traditional year for Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Lenderman’s atheist grandfather in Germany, the one who taught him chess, has tried to convince Lenderman he’s wrong about his new faith ever since his conversion. Lenderman’s other set of grandparents are Russian Orthodox Jewish immigrants to New York. He’s hesitant to go into much detail, but his conversion was hard for his family to swallow initially, though they’re more accepting now.

On a typical day in Brooklyn, where he lives with his parents and near his grandparents, Lenderman coaches some individual chess students (making at least $150 an hour) and then studies chess for hours. He also trains in karate, because he thinks exercise is essential for professional chess players, given that they often have to play grueling games that can go for 10 hours. He uses two old laptops to study chess—one is a backup computer if the other one fails.

This fall, as he contemplates a life beyond chess, Lenderman plans to leave the Russian-Jewish neighborhood where he has lived his whole life. He will move to St. Louis and attend college at Webster University, studying data analytics. He wants the degree in order to have career options that may come with stable health insurance and enable him to work less as a coach to make ends meet.

He’s going from New York, the old center of the U.S. chess world, to St. Louis, an emerging center. Wesley So, one of the top American players (and also a Christian), went to Webster, and other top players like Fabiano Caruana, No. 2 in the world, are based there.

Lenderman hopes to improve his chess under the tutelage of world champions like Susan Polgár: “My goal is to try to realize my maximum potential, my God-given talent, which is chess.”

He also wants to grow socially. His two main grandmaster friends in New York, seven-time U.S. women’s champion Irina Krush and Kacheishvili, are very busy. Maybe he’ll make some more friends or meet a girl.

“I want to stay a virgin before I marry, but at the same time, I feel like maybe the fact that I’m almost 30 and I’ve never even dated, that’s also a little too extreme,” Lenderman said. “I just want to get out there in terms of social life. That doesn’t mean I should be staying out till 1:00, drinking... I don’t like party life. But at the same time... I need to get out of my comfort zone a little bit and prepare myself for life.”

Elite chess sometimes temporarily delays a dating life, a dynamic that top players like Magnus Carlsen and Caruana have publicly discussed.

But Jerald Times, the chess director in New York, has worked to show that chess is for everyone, the jocks and the geeks. He has taught in low-income schools, at the elite Dalton School in Manhattan, and in South Africa—and there’s one question he always hears from students: “Is chess for nerds?”

For Times, a key to answering that question is to focus on getting students into official tournaments, which makes chess more of a sport in students’ minds. It’s also where students gain the actual skills touted in so many studies: the burn of competition, the desire to improvise, and the yearning to gain status as a player.

“Abstract reasoning, calculation, delayed gratification—those skills are gained inside of the tournament hall,” Times said.

And that’s where Alex Lenderman feels most at home, even as he goes back to school.
After hearing and reading excerpts for years, it’s exciting to get the full interviews. Marvin Olasky is an experienced journalist and an expert interviewer who asks good questions and lets the other person speak.” —iTunes reviewer

Hear the depth and substance you’ve always wanted from interviews with prominent authors, politicians, thought leaders, and the kind of intellectuals that make you feel smarter just by hearing their voices. You know the type. Marvin Olasky does too, mostly because he’s interviewed them for decades and knows exactly what questions to ask.

Get the full story with The Olasky Interview. Available everywhere you listen to podcasts.
At 7:00 on a Saturday morning in July, dozens of volunteers gathered at the primary health center in the town of Karu. It marked the start of a four-day polio campaign on the outskirts of Abuja, Nigeria’s capital city.

Supervisors for different groups received last-minute reminders on how to verify their team’s work. Team members collected kits for the day that included identity tags, green overalls, and oral polio vaccines.

Nigeria is the only country in Africa where the wild poliovirus is still considered endemic. But the country has not recorded any natural transmission in nearly three years and could be declared polio-free by the end of this year.

Despite the rigorous vaccination campaigns, several challenges still pose a risk for future outbreaks. Polio is a highly infectious viral disease mostly affecting children younger than 5.
Mainly spread through feces, the virus multiples in the intestine and can infect the nervous system, eventually resulting in paralysis. The disease has no cure but can be prevented by vaccination.

At the clinic, all the volunteers teamed up and left for their designated areas. There, they started a routine that continued for the next four hours: knock on each door, introduce themselves as a team from the immunization unit, and ask if families have any children age 5 or younger.

At the houses with children, they dispensed drops of the oral vaccine into each child’s mouth, then marked his left pinky finger with a purple marker to indicate he received it.

At one house where a team knocked, a mother unlocked the wooden guard door with her two young sons in tow. The sounds of a cartoon echoed from the television in their living room. Only the youngest boy, who was 5, received the oral dose. He came forward hesitantly, while his brother watched with a smile and later examined the little mark on his finger.

Team members also used white chalk to mark the outside of each house they visited so their supervisors knew whether they needed to revisit. Often the initial visit was successful, but sometimes families would refuse the vaccine.

Umar Salihu, one of the team leaders I accompanied, said a big challenge they face is parents who mistrust the vaccinations. His team knocked on the door of Oliver Nwokorie, who confirmed he had a 1-year-old son. But Nwokorie was hesitant: He said he’d heard rumors about side effects and the use of expired vaccines.

Salihu spent a few minutes confirming he came from the hospital and explaining how they coordinate the campaign process. Finally, Nwokorie gave him permission to squeeze out the drops into his son’s mouth.

“I wanted to know the density of what they’re giving, reactions to it, if it’s still valid,” Nwokorie told me.

Over the four days of the campaign, some 207 volunteers stopped at 31,304 homes. The volunteers go through a full day of training and receive a $12 stipend for their work. John Nelson Ifeanyi, one of the lead volunteers, said last year the clinic ran the campaign seven times.

The wild poliovirus became a global epidemic in 1996, when it paralyzed 75,000 children around the world. At the time, former South African President Nelson Mandela launched the Kick Polio out of Africa campaign together with Rotary International.

Oliver Christiaan Rosenbauer, the spokesman for polio eradication at the World Health Organization, told me that just 10 years ago Nigeria was the epicenter of polio transmission, with genetic traces found as far as Indonesia.

Since September 2016, health workers have not detected any case of the wild poliovirus in Nigeria. The World Health Organization requires a geographic region to have no new cases of the wild poliovirus for three years before certifying it as polio-free. Outside of Nigeria, only Afghanistan and Pakistan still record cases of the wild virus.

Rosenbauer said vaccination teams in Nigeria still battle to reach communities because of the country’s insecurity, nomadic population movements, and gaps in vaccination campaigns, among other challenges. He lauded Nigeria’s feat as a success story but noted more work remains.

The country still records cases of vaccine-derived poliovirus. This weakened strain of the virus can mutate and spread in communities with low immunity rates and trigger an outbreak.

“The fact that you have a polio outbreak in a given area means you have vaccination gaps,” Rosenbauer said. “So you need to boost community vaccination... to a level the virus doesn’t find any susceptible children.”

Ogah Donatus was washing laundry outside with her 2-year-old daughter playing nearby when the team came to her compound. As soon as they explained their work, she gave the team members permission to vaccinate her daughter.

She told me her three older children had also received all their vaccines, including against infections like meningitis. Despite the worries of some Nigerian parents, she had no qualms about the vaccinations, she said: “It’s a preventive measure from the disease.”
When pharmacist Heather Christ arrived for her afternoon shift at Shoppers Drug Mart in New Brunswick, Canada, she noticed a tower of empty pharmacy trays stacked nearly 2 feet high. The reason, Christ said: shortages. Patients with high blood pressure request a 90-day supply of medicine, but the pharmacist may only give them enough for 10 days. A mom comes to pick up an anti-convulsant for her epileptic child, only to find the drug isn’t available.

When drugstores run out of drugs, “people just get panicky,” says Christ. But that’s nothing new in Canada: Christ sighed heavily and said, “It’s been part of the scenery for so long.” Christ, a 30-year veteran of Canada’s pharmaceutical industry, says the country’s drug shortage has worsened in recent years. More than 1,800 drugs are on Canada’s needed list, according to the official Drug Shortages Canada website.

Last month U.S. President Donald Trump announced plans to allow the import of cheaper prescription drugs from Canada. But Canada doesn’t have enough drugs to share with the massive U.S. market, and the Canadian Health Minister’s office said, “While we’re aware of ongoing state-led initiatives to import Canadian drugs, we weren’t consulted on specifics.”

Given Canada’s preexisting drug shortages, Christ says expanding the market is “alarming from Canada’s point of view.” If the United States drills a hole in the already leaking Canadian drug pipeline, and then tries to fill a tank 10 times the size of Canada’s, the drug supply will run dry. A 2018 study published in the journal *Health Economics & Outcome Research: Open Access* found that if one-fifth of U.S. prescriptions are filled in Canada, Canada’s drug supply will be exhausted in six months.

Christ says Canadian pharmacists sometimes work around drug shortages by adapting prescriptions. They work from scratch to create alternative compounds. The process takes extra time and keeps patients waiting, but shortages leave them no choice.

Christ is allergic to bees, so she carries an EpiPen. When an EpiPen shortage struck Canada last summer, she didn’t feel right getting a new one. She and many other Canadians kept their expired EpiPens. A drug’s expiration date is the time after which the drug could have lost 10 percent of its potency, so an expired EpiPen might still work. But it might not work, and a severe allergic reaction would be the consequence. Thankfully, Christ didn’t have to find out because the shortage ended.

One year later, Canada is running out of EpiPens again. Pfizer, until recently the only company authorized to provide injectors to Canadians, continued to have manufacturing problems. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, the Canadian health minister, has signed an emergency interim order to allow U.S.-based provider Kaléo to send epinephrine auto-injectors to Canada.

That may sound like an easy solution, but it was complicated. The new injectors didn’t have instructions in French for distribution in Quebec. They operated differently than EpiPens, so pharmacists had to spend extra time teaching patients how to use them. The injectors came in packages of two, so pharmacists had to open the packages to redistribute them one per patient.

And Kaléo had to rebuild trust, since it suffered a product recall in 2015.

Why the recurring shortages of other drugs? Opinions abound. Manufacturing and shipping problems. Disruptions in international supply. Discontinued generics in favor of newer, brand-name drugs with greater profits. Lack of suppliers. Government price caps imposed by Canada’s nationalized healthcare system. And the future of Canada’s drug supply? Christ said, “I’m discouraged.” She sees the recurring problems as the new normal: a normal that could be worsened if the United States comes looking for a share.
A sold-out crowd in the Arthur Ashe Stadium in Queens roared as Kyle “Bugha” Giersdorf lifted the Fortnite World Cup Solo trophy above his head on July 28. Inside the arena, which usually hosts the U.S. Open, purple and blue lights cut through the smoke and confetti filling the air to focus on the 16-year-old as he celebrated winning the first-ever Fortnite World Cup, a tournament for players of the popular Fortnite online game. The $3 million first-place prize was the largest ever awarded at a gaming tournament.

Forty million people had competed for 10 weeks to try to reach the World Cup finals in New York City. The finals lasted three days, awarded $30 million in winnings, and showcased the hottest e-sport right now. Colleges, including Christian ones like Olivet Nazarene, have begun offering e-sport scholarships.

In just two years, Fortnite has become one of the most popular video games in history. As of March 2019, the game had amassed almost 250 million players. It pulls in billions of dollars in revenue, even though it is free to download (developer Epic Games makes money through in-game purchases).

Fortnite’s design appeals broadly across age groups. It differs from other popular shooting games by refraining from showing blood. It combines the appeal of online multiplayer games with virtual storytelling: Players can attend live events like concerts with other players inside the game. The colorful design, thematic costumes, and trendy dances that players can earn for their characters have set Fortnite apart as a brand.

None of these concepts is new to gaming, but Fortnite has expanded their reach. It contains three game modes: Fortnite: Save the World (a post-apocalyptic survival game), Fortnite Creative, and the most popular, Fortnite Battle Royale.

Fortnite Battle Royale, a third-person shooting free-for-all, was the focus of the World Cup. In Battle Royale, 100 starting players build their surroundings and then battle. A purple storm slowly closes in, forcing the players into a smaller and smaller space and killing those who cannot move quickly enough. Those who manage to avoid the storm and take out all of the competition earn a “Victory Royale.”

As serious competition began on the second day of the finals, anxious parents, gaming teams, and players’ agents filled the stands. Media swarmed the lower levels of the stadium. In place of the usual tennis court, a two-story gaming station towered above the crowd. The walls were covered with video screens, allowing the audience to see each player’s face as he competed.

Cheers and moans rose with each player’s elimination. Matches often came down to the final seconds of play, accompanied by the announcers’ excited commentary. On the last day, Bugha overwhelmed his competition with elimination after elimination.

Kids who score “kills” on Fortnite might consider themselves virtual heroes, but some parents view them as addicts. The enormous popularity of Fortnite has moms, dads, and teachers alike complaining about children and teens playing the game in class (on mobile phones) and skipping sleep in order to battle online after midnight.

Some studies have suggested video games can improve brain function. Others differ. Some players struggle to control their hobby: A LendEDU survey last year found that Fortnite players on average spend six to 10 hours per week on the game, with 35 percent admitting they’d missed school time in order to play.

Parents tell of teens growing angry when made to put their consoles away. Blogger and former teacher Erika Sanzi wrote that she leveraged her kids’ love of Fortnite as motivation: “They’ll race to get their homework done so they can play.”

The appeal is partly social. As they play, Fortnite gamers typically talk to one another on headsets, creating a virtual, after-school meeting place for friends. (The chat function is unfiltered, though, and players may use it to bully or swear at rivals.)

Fortnite’s violence is cartoonish, but game characters, including some sexualized female characters, do shoot one another with realistic guns. Some research has linked violent video games to aggressive behavior in children, but the data is conflicted. China and Japan have large gaming industries but relatively few gun deaths. —Daniel James Devine
Two years into his first pastorate, Mark Looman sat down to lunch with his wife Dorothy and their two girls. From Mark’s perspective, everything was normal, but over the last eight years, Dorothy’s frustration had been silently building. At that lunch, it became too much: She told Mark she did not love him anymore and walked out the door. “I wasn’t sure if I’d even see her again,” Mark says.

Before coming to the church, Mark had attended seminary. “He would go to work, he’d go to class, he’d sleep, he was consumed with homework, and our relationship just suffered terribly,” Dorothy remembers. The couple had two young children, so she stayed home with them while Mark worked from 3 p.m. to midnight, five or six days a week, while attending classes. Over time, the lack of communication and time together drained the marriage. Mark says, “I can’t even imagine how many nights she just went to bed by herself, had supper alone, put the kids to bed, week after week after week.”

The Loomans wanted to serve God in ministry, so they pushed through seminary. Dorothy desperately hoped Mark would spend more time with the family after graduating and becoming a pastor. Instead, he prepared and taught lessons for Sunday morning and evening services, plus Sunday school and Wednesday evening. He was also the youth pastor, plumber, and janitor in their small Marlette, Mich., church.

One summer Sunday in 1983, things came to a head. Dorothy recalls that even when she walked out, she “knew this was a marriage God put together, and I had no right to break it apart.” She returned to the house. They talked. Mark realized he had to change. He started reading Rekindled by Pat and Jill Williams, a book about revitalizing marriage. After that Sunday conversation there were no more big turning points, both Loomans say, “just lots of slow, hard work.” They took family camping trips and had date nights here and there. Mark remembers trying to learn how to have “soul-building” conversations with his wife on their dates, instead of just discussing the business of the family.

Mark says he looked at Dorothy 10 years later and said, “We are happily married. This is turning into a marriage that is better than I could’ve ever dreamed it could be.” She agreed with him.

After their younger daughter married in 1999, the Loomans began doing devotions together each morning. Today they read the Bible, then rewrite portions of it in their own words before praying through an extensive prayer list. The process usually takes them an hour and a half, and they say this has drawn them close to each other and to God. They also enjoy doing things together: gardening in their raspberry patch, kayaking, and performing in community theater plays.

Now in their 60s, and with pastoral and pastor’s wife experience at four churches, the Loomans agree on advice they’d give to young couples: “You have no idea about how still immature and young this relationship is compared to where it is headed if you will just be faithful, trust God, keep your vows.” After 46 years of marriage, they speak of “heights to be reached and depths in your relationship and feelings of love that will rise to the surface in your 40th year and beyond, you have no idea of when you’re in your 20s and 30s.”
Worldviews change. Cultures change. God’s Word stands forever.

Help us empower kids for Bring Your Bible To School Day:

Sign up your family to participate and be entered to win a trip for four to the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C.!

COUNT ME IN!

BringYourBible.org
Weapons-grade crisis
[July 20, p. 32] Recently I was reading Time next to WORLD, and the contrast jumped out at me. You superbly cover stories others barely touch, from Iran’s verified nuclear capability to pro-life Democrats to 21st-century Anglicans to 19th-century Scottish evangelicals. You fill a huge void.

—DOUG PERKINS / Wilmington, Del.

Almighty science?
[July 20, p. 5] Sadly, many Christian scholars and leaders have adjusted their understanding of the Bible to fit the fad of “theistic evolution.” God’s clear account in Genesis 1 doesn’t need millions of years, reordering, or distorted “evidence” to be true.

—MICHAEL DuMEZ / Oostburg, Wis.

Chrisians should be among the top proponents of rigorous scientific methodology, but in its proper place as a tool for stewardship. I’ve encountered Christians who have adopted an anti-intellectualism that dismisses science as human wisdom.

—PAULINE MARIE FERRILL on Facebook

Good scientists have humility and understand the limits of science, and most scientists I know fit this description. The people who give too much reverence to science are typically journalists and politicians, who use it to build storylines, philosophies, and public policy.

—SCOTT ROGERS / Tucson, Ariz.

A man over the moon
[July 20, p. 50] As a 14-year-old boy, I wept for joy when Neil Armstrong hopped off the ladder onto the moon’s surface. Your article about Apollo 11 reminded me what a glorious time it was to be growing up in America.

—JOHN BOLES / Camden, Ala.

Years ago I heard Jim Irwin, who went to the moon on Apollo 15, describe an encounter with God during a moonwalk and how his view of God grew exponentially. His story helped my faith and understanding grow exponentially as well.

—HELEN MARTIN on Facebook

Life of the party
[July 20, p. 42] Excellent article. I often comment on abortion-related articles in mainstream publications and beg moderate Democrats to speak out against the extremism in the party. It might inspire others to know they aren’t alone, but I never see it.

—LISA AIKMAN ROSENDALE on Facebook

I have been waiting to hear about liberals who reject the sinful aspects of the Democratic platform. What a hard road to navigate.

—CHRISTY DAVIS NORDSTROM on Facebook

Golden state tarnish
[July 20, p. 8] Praying for those in authority is Biblical, but that doesn’t imply, as Paula White prayed, that those who raise questions about the president are “demonic.” Praise God we have a voice in our government, but we can’t lose sight of our primary mission, which is the Great Commission.

—LIZ JONES on wng.org

Marvin Olasky’s great report on California didn’t mention SB 276. The bill would tighten the state’s immunization requirements and undermine doctor/patient privileges and privacy. Many Democrats are patting their own backs for such heroic action.

—LORENA SARUWATARI / Camarillo, Calif.

Career and calling
[July 20, p. 57] Thanks for the article on the Boyds’ Kingdom Home in Uganda. We’ve been drilling wells there for 20 years, and there are many opportunities to serve the people of Uganda.

—BARBARA & LES GUTZWILLER / Harmony, Pa.

There’s more going on here. Many children in Ugandan orphanages have family but are there because of poverty. That’s why the government is focusing on family reunification and promoting adoption. Westerners coming in to run orphanages make this more challenging.

—AMY WALTERS on Facebook

Allies against porn
[July 20, p. 55] It is wonderful to know that some non-Christians are concerned by the prevalence of pornography in our culture. Libertarians don’t understand that only by the grace of God is there resistance to depravity.

—JOHN DEGGES / Salt Lake City, Utah

Eleven- to 15-year-old children becoming perpetrators of sexual assault is a horror, but it’s not surprising. Porn normalizes perversions and objectifies victims.

—KAREN OPP LaBARR on Facebook

Dirty fighting
[July 20, p. 22] If It’s Time to Fight Dirty is a prescription for implementing radical progressive ideas, then it’s also a powerful tool for conservatives to counter them. But things get ugly.
when God’s people think they have to fight dirty to win.
—ERNIE BROGDON on Facebook

Historically, politics in republics are dirty, but that’s better than the histories of socialist, monarchist, and militaristic forms of government. Those usually involve assassination and genocide.
—PATRICK ROWE on Facebook

**Glorious by design**
[July 20, p. 16] The problems with the theory of evolution aren’t just “scientific.” Can this theory explain why we are so moved by beauty? Can it explain why we care so much about one tiny bird caught in a screen?
—BOB HINKLEY on wng.org

**Land of the alienated**
[July 20, p. 26] Have conservative Christians lost their first love? Are we so busy correcting the heresies of wayward churches that we neglect all the other of the Lord’s commands? I agree with Tim Carney: We need a Great Awakening in our churches.
—TIM G. LARSEN on wng.org

**True grit**
[July 20, p. 38] The comment from Rwanda’s Anglican Archbishop Laurent Mbunda was profound: “How do you value me when you don’t value what I believe?” Isn’t this the defining issue of the American culture war? Mbunda’s standard to resolve the Anglican dispute is adherence to the Word of God. Where are our criteria for framing a civil discussion?
—JORGE A. VELEZ / Long Beach, Calif.

**The gentle counselor**
[July 20, p. 63] I was one of many blessed to sit under David Powlison’s counseling for a season. Although his left ear was stone deaf, he heard the still, quiet voice of the Spirit in a way few of us ever will.
—KAREN DAVIS / Exton, Pa.

**Correction**
China researcher Matthew Robertson pointed out some prisoners have blood-borne illnesses that make their organs ineligible for transplantation (“A fatal harvest,” Aug. 17, p. 40).

Read more Mailbag letters at wng.org

---

**LETTERS and COMMENTS**

Email mailbag@wng.org
Mail WORLD Mailbag, PO Box 20002, Asheville, NC 28802-9998
Website wng.org
Facebook facebook.com/WORLD.magazine
Twitter @WORLD_mag

*Please include full name and address. Letters may be edited to yield brevity and clarity.*
The sound of writing
A GOOD WRITER IS A JOYFUL PROBLEM-SOLVER

Harold “Hal” Prince, producer and director, died at age 91 on July 31. It got me thinking about musicals and lyrics and how today’s aspiring writers, including humble magazine columnists, could do worse than study the old heyday Broadway songs. All writing is problem-solving, and it’s fun to see how the best of the best solved their “problems,” and had a blast doing it.

Take Sheldon Harnick (lyricist) and Jerry Bock (composer). Here’s your assignment boys, said Prince: Take the story of a poor Jewish milkman with attitude and five daughters, in 1905 backwater imperial Russia, and tell us how he felt and make us like him. Bock and Harnick’s answer was “If I Were a Rich Man” in Fiddler on the Roof that I still whistle 55 years later while washing the kitchen floor.

I learn more about the craft from this handful of verses than from a lecture: “I’d build a big, tall house with rooms by the dozen / Right in the middle of the town / A fine tin roof with real wooden floors below / There would be one long staircase just going up / And one even longer coming down / And one more leading nowhere, just for show.”

Nothing more to say. We love Tevye instantly, and none of us knows—’cause the songmeisters don’t want us to know—how coming up with these words was deceptively simple, like watching Ginger Rogers do everything Fred Astaire did but “backwards and in heels.” The creators had to rhyme, but that’s just for starters. They had to evoke character and Yiddish sense of humor, all while advancing the story.

An interviewer asked Bock and Harnick: “What is the happiest moment as a team that you can recollect?” Bock replied: “They came when a lyric is finished, and Sheldon sings the song for the first time. There is nothing like that moment.”

Johnny Mercer had a fun “problem” to solve: write for an actress with serious voice limitations (Audrey Hepburn) playing a country bumpkin adventuring in the big city (Breakfast at Tiffany’s). Mercer drafted not one, not two, but three different “solutions” to set to Henry Mancini’s tune. One was “I’m Holly / Like I want to be / Like holly on a tree back home / Just plain Holly / With no dolly / No mama, no papa / Wherever I roam.”

We should always be grateful that instead they chose the following lyrics for the homesick Hepburn strumming her guitar on a Manhattan fire escape: “Moon River, wider than a mile, I’m crossing you in style someday.”

There was some heated discussion about the “my huckleberry friend” detail in the last bar of the song, committee types balking at its out-of-the-blue specificity, and Mercer’s own friend Margaret Whiting suggesting he leave the words out. In the end, Mercer went with his instincts, the studio backed down, and forevermore we have the thrill of that impish insertion with all its rich conjuring of childhood summers and picking wild berries by the river, and subliminal allusions to Mark Twain and American innocence—dispensed in a three-word phrase.

Harnick recalls: “Jerry [Bock] would go into his studio, and write music. Eventually he would send me a tape. ... At some point in the writing I would have an idea..., ‘I don’t want to be handcuffed... I want the freedom to... change the meters...’ And when I gave him my first lyric, and when he gave it back to me, I thought, ‘This is wonderful!... I thought of it as a waltz, he’s done it as something else, and it’s better that way.”

That was the sound of joyful problem-solving, the sound of writing.
Labor days
BUILDING CHARACTER WHILE TRAINING
CHRISTIAN MECHANICS AND TECHNICIANS

In 1968 CBS, facing political pressure, finally allowed on *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* a song, “Waist Deep in the Big Muddy,” that implicitly called President Lyndon B. Johnson a “big fool” for leading America deeper into the Vietnam War. The song has a platoon fording a river that goes from knee deep to neck deep in the Big Muddy—“and the big fool says to push on.”

Forty years later, in 2008, an 8-year-old in Adair Park in Atlanta’s Westside had a bicycle that needed new tires and tubes. Tim O’Mara, who owned a video production company, and his wife Becky, who worked at a local church, wanted to be good neighbors. They offered to fix the bike if the girl would do chores in their yard.

She worked so diligently that she ended up with a new bike—and soon children throughout the neighborhood wanted the same. Before long children learning how to repair and assemble bicycles filled the O’Mara driveway on Saturdays. Five years later Tim and Becky had created a bike shop and gone all-in on a nonprofit that became WORLD’s Southeast Region Hope Award winner in 2013.

By itself that might look like a cute tale about a ministry, but the story of Bearings Bike Shop is more than that. During the past half-century American education has become one-dimensional: Every student is supposed to attend college, even though most students are not inclined to sit in a classroom and discuss abstractions.

Nationally, one-fourth of high-school freshmen now fail to graduate in four years. Half of students who start college drop out during or after their first year. Others hang around, often learning little but piling up debt. Meanwhile, the United States faces a skills gap. Young workers who gain the skills and self-discipline to become technicians and mechanics can readily move from poverty to the middle class. Nevertheless, many liberal politicians and their National Education Association funders are big fools who demand “college for all.”

Atlanta’s Westside is typical in that regard: Becky O’Mara says students without academic aptitude “are told that college is the path... you feel like a failure.” Tim O’Mara has seen how accomplishments change self-perception: “When you give a kid a bike and you start building things for the first time, they’re like, I can’t do this. And then we do it piece by piece. They learn those pieces and then they build a whole bike and all of a sudden their confidence really takes off.”

I saw at Bearings the wall charts that show day by day whether students take care of their tools, show up on time, and display the other “soft skills” future employees will need. Using donated bikes of varying quality, kids who stick with the program also gain “hard skills,” becoming accomplished mechanics with skills transferable to other tasks. About 250 students participated in the program last year.

As students work, they listen to Christian rap and through that, along with spoken-word CDs, many encounter the gospel. Bearings has also seen tragedies. The little girl who earned the first bicycle has had numerous problems. One Bearings regular grew up with a single mom, a dad in jail, a sister who had her first child at age 14, and a younger brother killed this past March. Still, he’s now working with a small-business owner outfitting camper vans.

James Garfield, president in 1881 when American colleges were just starting to turn into German-style universities, defined an ideal college as theologian “Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other.” We can improve American education for students with mechanical rather than academic aptitude: How about an O’Mara fixing one wheel of a bicycle and a student fixing the other?

Classical Christian schools have been a wonderful innovation of the past three decades. Christian mechanics schools and training programs are rare. If you know of a good nonprofit one, please nominate it for next year’s Hope Awards by writing to cko@wng.org. To read about this year’s regional winners, and to vote for the one that moves you the most, please go to wng.org/compassion.
You’re passionate about the gifts God has given you and looking for a college that will allow you to pursue and hone your talents. You want a place that will prepare you for the life to which God has called you. You’ll find it at Union University, where we equip students who don’t want to sacrifice academic quality or Christian community. At Union University, be transformed.

BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY AT uu.edu
THE FREEDOM OF HOMESCHOOLING WITH THE SUPPORT OF A PRIVATE SCHOOL AT A PRICE YOU WON’T BELIEVE

Private Christian Education from $199/month

CALL 800.682.7396