Hong Kong on the brink / Refugees at the Rio Grande

FAST AND FURIOUS

MISSIONARY: Saving 100s of babies
PITCHER: 51 wins in a row, then despair
MARRIAGE: How to make it to 65 years
I had spent 8 years traveling the world filming Ark Hunter, a documentary on my search for Noah’s Ark, when I decided to put it on the shelf and shift my attention to porn. Yes, porn.

I was at church one Sunday morning when my pastor quoted a study that nearly 70% of Christian men are hooked on porn. I leaned over to my wife and said, “This is serious! We’ve got to do something about this.”

Over the next two years, my wife, Tiana, and I worked tirelessly on creating the Conquer Series - a cinematic small group study that we hoped would help men find freedom from pornography.

As I was filming the Conquer Series, I didn’t think men would watch it. Why would guys join a group in their church to talk about their porn problem?

I was wrong.

Today, the Conquer Series is helping more than one million men in over 80 countries find freedom from pornography.

I recently met one of these men, Bryan, at a conference for Conquer Series Leaders. Less than two years ago his story was bleak. His struggle with pornography was about to end his marriage. Bryan explains,

“I tell people that when I was in my addiction, it was like I was drowning in a pool surrounded by my friends and no one even knew. I was helpless and hopeless.”

Thankfully God intervened,

“But God, in His mercy, let everything come to the surface so we could see how He could work a series of miracles.”

Bryan told me the transformation that they had seen in their marriage,

“I am now over 20 months 100% clean of porn, sexual addiction and lust in general. God rescued and redeemed me in November of 2017 but not until I had utterly destroyed my wife and our life. He miraculously turned me around and she saw what He has genuinely done and then He turned her heart.”

Bryan handed me this card his wife, Celia, had given him as he left for the conference. I took a photo of it while standing in the lobby.

Bryan’s testimony is why my team and I come to work every day. We want to see that transformation throughout the Church! The exciting thing is, that once these men find freedom, they don’t stop there. Bryan now leads 15+ men through the Conquer Series every Thursday evening.

He explains, “Some of these guys are fresh out of prison, some are in different levels of leadership, and both groups are really authentic and transparent. It is amazing!”

If you’re currently in the fight for your relationship, know that God wants to do something amazing in your marriage, like he has done for Bryan and Celia: “We now live the BEST LIFE we have had in ALL my life and the 19 years we’ve been married. God is SOOO gracious and it’s time I turn this back on the devil in a BIG WAY.”

While I was traveling the world in search of a big wooden boat, God had other plans. He wanted me to go on a quest deep inside the human soul, starting in my very own heart.

“For it is God’s will that you should be sanctified.” -1 Thessalonians 4:3

If you long for healing in your relationship or want to help couples struggling with pornography then I hope you’ll get the Conquer Series. Use it in your men’s group. If you decide not to use it, return the DVDs within 14 days and you’ll get your money back. There’s no risk. Doing nothing is a far greater risk.
FEATURES

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Democratic candidates for president try to appeal to an ideological audience that pays attention to early campaigns, but will that hurt the candidates in the longer term?

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ON THE COVER: Illustration by Krieg Barrie
Notes from the CEO

Our local public radio station, a National Public Radio affiliate, is hosting a forum next week titled “Public Media: Building Trust in an Age of Mistrust.” They describe the event as “an evening of candid conversation and behind-the-scenes glimpses into the role of ethics and rigorous journalism standards in one of our country’s most respected newsrooms.”

There’s no question that we live in an age of distrust, especially distrust of news media. They got that part right. And it’s appropriate for those of us in the news business to ask ourselves what we must do to build trust, because trust must be built, especially once it has been broken.

Trustworthy journalists accurately describe the reality they are reporting. That requires both a willingness to “call it as you see it,” and the ability to see properly.

We all know journalists who call it the way they want it to be. And as journalists, like our reporters and editors at WORLD, it would be the kiss of death for trust if we stopped calling it as we see it.

But there’s more to it than that. If our perspective is wrong, what we think we see may not be real. So reporters may be entirely sincere in their inaccurate reporting, because they’re seeing all wrong. I think this happens even with serious news organizations, because they don’t rely primarily on the Bible to tell them what’s real.

WORLD’s journalists don’t always get it right, because we do have feet of clay, but our commitment is to provide sound journalism, grounded in God’s Word. That’s what we mean when we say we seek to practice biblical objectivity. That kind of journalism is trustworthy journalism.
Is there hope for your family? Yes there is, and we want to describe it at this conference:

- To inspire the rising generation to be hopeful for what is ahead.
- To show how to fully enter into God’s plan for the family.
- To explain why this is the most exciting investment they can make.
- To encourage one another to make the biggest investment of our lives in the two most important institutions God has established—the church and the family.

At this conference we will not only expose the chaos of rejecting God’s ways, we will reveal from Scripture the pleasant and fruitful ways of God in a biblically ordered family.

This conference is designed to draw you to fully embrace Jesus Christ in all of His ways, rejecting the world’s wisdom, being filled with the Spirit.

A consecrated life is the key to family life.
At Southwestern Seminary, ministry doesn’t wait until graduation; it starts on day one. Weekly evangelism teams led by professors. Monthly gatherings focused on church planting, missions, and revitalization. Annual mission trips to unreached, unengaged people groups in hard-to-access places. Thousands of churches in the Fort Worth-Dallas metroplex. A community of God-called men and women. These things make up the place we call home on Seminary Hill.

Our training ground isn’t confined to the classroom; ministry begins now.
If most of us American evangelicals are still flummoxed by the ethical dilemmas of the 2016 presidential election, we should be studying hard and getting ready. Things could be even more challenging in 2020.

The record shows that a significant majority of U.S. evangelical voters resorted to so-called “lesser of two evils” thinking as they headed to the polls in November 2016. Most of these folks weren’t ready to anoint Donald Trump as their choirboy conservative. But they were emphatically convinced that Hillary Clinton—with her 30-year record of radically liberal alignments—was much more objectionable.

It’s a sorry way to elect your leaders. “Your candidate is worse than mine!” is a pitifully bankrupt motto as we enter our nation’s 59th presidential election. But it’s pretty much where evangelical Christians within WORLD’s readership find themselves. It’s a race to the bottom.

I share the anguish. I’ve edited this column for 33 years—and never found myself harder pressed to suggest, “Here is a Biblically principled path. Follow it.”

Indeed, I’ve voted in 15 presidential elections, and have to admit that in almost every single contest there’s been some element of the “lesser of two evils” thinking in play. But never in all those 59 years has it dominated the discussion the way it does right now.

I’ll admit as well that I’ve been a polling booth partisan to the extent that only twice in those 15 elections did I wander across the line and vote for the Democratic candidate. (Yes, I felt a little guilty about that when both of them won!)

In recent years, though, the Democrats have made my choices easier, not harder. When all 26 of the originally registered Democratic candidates this time around warmheartedly maintain their support for abortion on demand, there’s not much sorting or ranking for me to do. Abortion may not be the “single-issue” cause that evangelicals have often been known for. But it is certainly one of the top three. For the Democrats not to give their rank-and-file membership a single opportunity to support a pro-life candidate seems incredible. (And maybe it’s not so astute politically. A pro-life Democrat just might provide the margin that party needs next year to unseat Donald Trump.)

So let’s switch parties, even at this early date, and consider the view at the bottom of that other barrel. Four years ago, there was a whole lot we didn’t know about Donald Trump, and some of what we did know was grievously distressing. Somehow, though, we learned enough to hand him a squeaker of a victory—and to open the floodgates to learn a whole lot more. For many committed conservative evangelicals, there’s been enough good stuff to accumulate some pretty long lists of Trump’s positive accomplishments. Such achievements—usually focusing on personnel appointments (especially judges), on religious liberty, and on undoing years of silly and costly federal regulations—WORLD has duly reported here.

Way too often, however—like in his visit to West Virginia just a few weeks ago—our president also manages to cloud these good things with behavior that is arrogant, untruthful, divisive, and even blasphemous. I know I speak for many WORLD readers when I say bluntly: If we had a choice in the matter, we’d take it.

But haven’t we just also said that all 21 of the Democratic candidates are also unfit—by their own testimony? (I know I said 26 earlier in this column, but some candidates have dropped out.) So I am simply reminding us that the choice apparently waiting for us as American voters next year will only minimally touch on clear-cut moral differences. It will be a bottom-of-the-barrel event. Everybody falls way short of our ideal.

All of which is to say we should stop fussing so much about the “lesser of two evils” approach to our electoral process. The great God who rules soveraignly from His heavenly throne has always worked with flawed leaders.

The great God who rules soveraignly from His heavenly throne has always worked with flawed leaders.
Radius exists to train missionaries to fulfill the Great Commission by aiding the local church in pre-field training. The Radius Missiology Conference is uniquely suited for potential missionaries and church leaders who want to better understand current issues in missions and their part in fulfilling the Great Commission.
ONE RACE ONE BLOOD
BIBLICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ANSWERS

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Answers Center at Ark Encounter
Williamstown, KY

SPEAKERS: DR. VODDIE BAUCHAM | KEN HAM
DR. CHARLES WARE | JOHNNY HUNT | JOE OWEN
DR. TERRY MORTENSON | DR. GEORGIA PURDOM
BODIE HODGE | MUSIC BY KEITH & KRISTYN GETTY

ONE BLOOD

An Answers Conference for
PASTORS & EVERYONE

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TRUTH
UNCOVERING THE LIES WE BELIEVE

March 27–28, 2020
Answers Center at Ark Encounter
Williamstown, KY

FEATURED SPEAKERS
Kay Arthur, Jackie Hill Perry,
Ken Ham, Dr. Georgia Purdom

SPEAKERS Phil Johnson, Erin Benziger,
Camille Cates, Amy Spreeman

AnswersForWomen.org
Powder keg
Police and protesters clash in Hong Kong during escalating pro-democracy demonstrations on Aug. 25. Police used water cannons and tear gas against protesters, some of whom threw bricks and molotov cocktails. For more on Hong Kong, see p. 42.

KIN CHEUNG/AP
Cucumber time
COPING WITH WASHINGTON’S SILLY SEASON
by Marvin Olasky

I read the news today, oh boy /...I just had to laugh / I saw the photograph (the Beatles, 1967).

British and American journalists since the 19th century have known August as “the silly season,” the time when both Parliament and Congress are out of session: less political news, more opportunity to fill pages with accounts of trivial or frivolous matters. So we’ve had photos of bare-chested Vladimir Putin, a dozen people squeezing into a phone booth, massive vegetables, escaped cows, and dogs on surfboards.

This year, though, bad news abounded, and not just in big news about Iran and North Korea. More than 20 local governments in Texas faced ransomware attacks. A Kansas University professor faced federal charges for working full time for a Chinese university while also doing U.S. government–funded research on energy at KU. An Australian appeals court upheld convictions against Cardinal George Pell for sexually abusing children. The Sun reported Nature Ecology & Evolution’s discovery that “extreme weather conditions may be encouraging an increase in angry spiders.”

Many other cultures refer to the silly season as “cucumber time,” after the vegetable harvested then that doesn’t have much substance. It’s sauregrünkzeiten in German, okurková sezóna in Czech, enat ha’amelafennon in Hebrew, and agurketid in Danish. So imagine you’re Carla Sands, sitting pretty during cucumber time as the U.S. ambassador to Denmark. You wore an actress in the 1980s on the TV soap The Bold and the Beautiful and in several trashy movies, most notably Deathstalker and the Warriors From Hell. In 1990 you became a chiropractor and married a real estate mogul who died in 2015.

Why are you in Copenhagen? You poured yourself into fundraising for Donald Trump, most notably at a July 2016 party for 200, each of whom donated thousands of dollars to attend. You contributed at least $250,000 yourself plus a postelection $100,000 for Trump’s inaugural committee. That bought you the ambassadorship to a small country whose innovators gave us LEGO sets, insulin, wind turbines, loudspeakers, and Danish Modern furniture.

It was a pretty good gig with no heavy lifting until Aug. 21. The problem: Our president had decided the United States should buy Greenland, the icy island three times bigger than Texas but with 28 million fewer residents. Greenland’s 57,000 seem content with our president and ignore some of his administration’s accomplishments: judges, pro-life policies, respect for religious liberty. Besides, as Joel writes, Trump’s idea was “absurd.” Trump, showing again that hell hath no fury like a president scorned, said the prime minister was “nasty.” But Ambassador Sands looked as cool as a cucumber in a photo she posted of herself standing next to Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeppe Kofod. Sands tweeted, “Denmark is an enduring friend and important partner.” Kofod retweeted it. That’s what diplomats do. People are crashing chairs on each other’s heads, and diplomats report “a frank and open exchange of views.”

Joel Belz’s column four pages earlier in this issue raises the right questions. I’ve always liked “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” that story by Denmark’s leading literary export, Hans Christian Andersen. The key debate these days: Is our president the naked emperor or the boy who blurs the truth? Søren Kierkegaard, Denmark’s leading philosophical export, once declared (maybe tongue-in-cheek) “boredom is the root of all evil.” If that’s true, we owe President Trump big time, because with his tweets Washington scribes rarely have a dull day.

On Aug. 21 our president not only fought Denmark but took no issue with some blasphemy when he tweeted, “Thank you to Wayne Allyn Root for the very nice words.” Root had said “the Jewish people in Israel love [Trump]. They love him like he is the second coming of God.” Jews, sad to say, are unlikely to love him that way, since they don’t acknowledge the first coming. But even if that were accurate, wouldn’t it be better for Trump to say, as Paul (and Barnabas) spoke to Ephesians about to worship them, “We also are men, of like nature with you”?

Still, it’s easy to become exasperated with our president and ignore some of his administration’s accomplishments: judges, pro-life policies, respect for religious liberty. Besides, as Joel writes, what’s the alternative? Tucker Carlson with his move to Fox News has become a flamethrower, but on Aug. 20 he
rightly pointed out the embellishments in Joe Biden’s new autobiography: “Remember that this man, this former coal miner and civil rights leader, is the single sanest person running for president as a Democrat this year. Meditate on that for a minute.”

The Christian necessity amid this morass is to remain cool as a cucumber, and remember that no Washington intrigue keeps us from loving God and loving our neighbors. To quote another song that references journalism, here’s a line from Don McLean’s “American Pie” (1971): “Bad news on the doorstep / I couldn’t take one more step.” But step we must. Back to Kierkegaard, and a statement I apply both literally and metaphorically: “Above all, do not lose your desire to walk... I have walked myself into my best thoughts... The more one sits still, the closer one comes to feeling ill.”

We must walk with Christ. Kierkegaard again, from his book Provocations: “The Bible is very easy to understand. But we Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand, we are obliged to act accordingly. Take any words in the New Testament and forget everything except pledging yourself to act accordingly. My God, you will say, if I do that my whole life will be ruined. How would I ever get on in the world?... Dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the living God. Yes, it is even dreadful to be alone with the New Testament.”

**Note to readers**
Right now we’re working on stories not only for the next issue but also for our annual Roe v. Wade issue in January. One of the stories will be the gratifying but complicated tale of how buildings once devoted to killing unborn babies are now centers of pro-life activity. We’ve already identified 15 cities where that’s happened: If you know of others, please email lhickman@wng.org.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

$572 million

The amount Oklahoma Judge Thad Balkman on Aug. 26 ordered Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiaries to pay for the drugmaker’s liability in Oklahoma’s opioid drug crisis.

38%

The portion of U.S. children ages 6 to 12 who regularly played team sports in 2018, down from 45 percent in 2008, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association.

$1.32 million

The sales price for a 125-year-old dime sold at auction in Chicago on Aug. 15. The 1894-S Barber Dime is one of only 24 ever made.

$35,000

The minimum amount guide companies must charge climbers at Mount Everest under newly proposed rules. Authorities in Nepal hope new regulations will cut the crowding on the world’s tallest peak that contributed to 11 fatalities this year.

1 in 5

The number of American high-school students vaping last year, up 78 percent from 2017 (see p. 12).
cancer research, medical centers, educational institutions, and arts and cultural centers. He ran as the Libertarian Party’s nominee for vice president in 1980 and, with his brother Charles, donated to many conservative or libertarian politicians and organizations such as the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute. Koch had a net worth of $50.5 billion.

Peruvian archaeologists have revealed a possibly 3,800-year-old mural from one of the oldest civilization centers in the Americas. The wall was found in a public ceremonial building from the Caral civilization, once found in the Huaura province near Lima, Peru. It shows what appear to be a humanoid frog and the figures of people as well as four human heads with snakes around them and a seed with a face. According to interviews from the BBC, this could represent the tribe waiting for rain during a famine. Experts agree that the Caral civilization began to decline around 1800 B.C. and believe this mural might point to the reason why.

Federal prosecutors say Fredrick Brown, a former military records technician, cheated thousands of U.S. servicemen of millions of dollars through an extensive identity theft plot. Brown and four conspirators allegedly took pictures of individuals’ information from a medical records system and passed this on to contacts who used the data to break into the servicemen’s banking accounts. They allegedly transferred money from the accounts to bank accounts run by hired associates. According to the court documents, the group targeted older and disabled veterans who were likely to receive better benefits. The five defendants are now in jail, and the Justice Department says it is working to provide resources for the plot’s victims.

A jury in Maricopa County, Ariz., awarded former Planned Parenthood employee and whistle-blower Mayra Rodriguez $3 million in a wrongful termination lawsuit. Rodriguez said the clinic at which she worked failed to report an abortion performed on a minor impregnated by an adult as required by state law and falsified the records and charts of other patients. She filed complaints, and the clinic then fired her, claiming to have found narcotics in her desk. Rodriguez said the drugs were not narcotics but medication she had not yet transferred to the purchasing department for disposal, a common practice. “I hope my case is a lesson to employers who abuse their power: Sometimes the underdog wins and justice will be done.”

David H. Koch, chemical engineer, vice president of Koch Industries, and billionaire known for his staunch support of libertarian politics, died on Aug. 23 at age 79. Koch was one of four sons of Fred Koch, who made a fortune by setting up oil refineries around the world in the 1930s. David Koch battled prostate cancer for 20 years and donated to the tribe waiting for rain during a famine. Experts agree that the Caral civilization began to decline around 1800 B.C. and believe this mural might point to the reason why.

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‘Of course.’
Former Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID, D-Nev., to Vice News on whether “Medicare for All” and decriminalizing border crossings are bad ideas. Both have become popular positions among 2020 Democratic presidential candidates (see p. 36).

‘It’s taken my joy of this game away.’
Former Indianapolis Colts quarterback ANDREW LUCK on how multiple injuries have led to his retirement at age 29.

‘Her hatred for Israel overcomes her love for her grandmother.’
Israel Interior Minister ARYEH DERI after U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., requested permission to visit her aging grandmother in Israel, then declined to come after Israel approved the humanitarian trip. “It turns out that it was a provocation to embarrass Israel,” Deri said.

‘It’s complicated.’
U.S. Secretary of State MIKE POMPEO on reports that ISIS is gaining strength in Iraq and Syria. Pompeo told CBS News: “There’s certainly places where ISIS is more powerful today than they were three or four years ago. But the caliphate is gone, and their capacity to conduct external attacks has been made much more difficult.”

‘These are really radical experiments on human bodies such as never has [been] done before in the history of humankind.’
Endocrinologist MICHAEL LAIDLAW on giving puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to transgender children.
Okay, who wants to play a game of cops and justice-involved persons?

Wait, what?
Playing through

Visitors to Rochester Cathedral in southern England may not hear the gospel, but they can get in a round of golf. Officials at the 1,300-year-old cathedral installed a nine-hole miniature golf course in the nave in a bid to attract families, one of a number of gimmicks the Church of England has tried to stem falling attendance. The AFP news service reports that Norwich Cathedral has a helter-skelter ride in its nave and that Lichfield Cathedral turned its floor into a replica of the moon’s surface. Rachel Phillips, one of the cathedral canons, told AFP that the mini-golf course has boosted the number of visitors to Rochester Cathedral by 80 percent.

‘The TV Santa Claus’

Some late-night prowlers wear ski masks and steal property. Police in Henrico, Va., are investigating a different type: This one wears a television on his head and leaves televisions on area front porches. In August, police released video from one homeowner’s doorbell camera of the man dropping off an older 13-inch television. “He wants to be known as the TV Santa Claus. I don’t know,” homeowner Jim Brooksbank told WTVR. In all, more than 50 outdated television sets were discovered on Henrico front porches on Aug. 11. For now, police are calling the actions simply a prank. “It’s summer, and people are getting ready to go back to school,” Brooksbank said. “Maybe TV man was just ready to strike and put a little humor in our lives.”

Law and consequences

Did Ohio accidentally and temporarily legalize marijuana? It’s complicated. On July 30, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed a law legalizing hemp in the Buckeye State. The law distinguished between legal hemp and illegal marijuana based on levels of psychoactive THC. In August, officials in Ohio’s capital city Columbus said they didn’t have equipment that could test THC levels, meaning authorities could no longer prosecute misdemeanor marijuana cases because they could not prove in court that marijuana was not hemp. On Aug. 12, state Attorney General Dave Yost said his agency would foot the bill for private lab testing for cases involving amounts that would merit felony charges. Yost said he hopes to outfit Ohio cities with testing equipment by year’s end.

A stinging pursuit

Police in Germany received an assist from a swarm of wasps while apprehending a suspect on Aug. 12. According to police in Oldenburg, Germany, officers nearly arrested a 32-year-old suspect but lost him when he jumped from a balcony. While the suspect briefly evaded officers, his leap left him in a wasp nest. As he fled from the attacking insects, the suspect jumped into an inflatable pool where police caught up and arrested him.
Flying horses

Move over dogs, now horses can fly too. According to a rule published by the U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. airlines may no longer ban miniature horses trained as service animals from flights. Prior to the August ruling, some domestic carriers had prohibited miniature horses and other unusual service animals from flights. According to the Department of Transportation, because miniature horses are listed in the Americans with Disabilities Act as service animals, airlines cannot prevent them from flying in the main cabin with their owners.

The first shall be last

Race officials have disqualified two triathletes who crossed the finish line holding hands. Two British women led the pack of elite athletes during an Olympic qualification event in Tokyo. Approaching the finish line, Georgia Taylor-Brown and Jess Learmonth held hands, apparently in a display of friendship in order to share first place. But race officials found a seldom-cited section from the rules published by the International Triathlon Union that says athletes who attempt to create a contrived tie will be disqualified. As a result, both Taylor-Brown and Learmonth were disqualified and third-place finisher Flora Duffy of Bermuda was named the winner.

The eyes have it

Scientists from the University of Exeter in the UK have developed a new tactic for keeping seagulls away from tourists’ lunches: stare at the birds. In an Aug. 6 release, researchers revealed that staring down the birds helped delay the seagulls from attacking a plate of french fries by about 21 seconds. According to lead author Madeleine Goumas, most seagulls would not approach the food left out for them. Of those that did, the birds that were not being directly watched by a nearby human stole the french fries much quicker than the watched birds.

A $98,000 smile?

Citizens of Porirua, New Zealand, were not feeling jovial after the city spent about $98,000 on a corporate branding exercise that left the city with a smiley face logo. The New Zealand Taxpayers’ Union criticized the Porirua City Council logo, calling it a “limp and childlike smiley face,” and questioned the necessity of the city’s 5 percent tax rate increase. “Councils do not need to engage in corporate branding exercises,” the Taxpayers Union said in a release. In response, a spokesman for the city claimed the city council needed a new logo in order to connect with the youthful population of the city. The city said the new logo is just one part of the city’s rebranding effort.

Balancing act

Chase Bank is making a number of Canadian customers very happy following a decision to forgive credit card debts for certain card holders. In order to speed their effort to withdraw from the Canadian market, officials with the U.S.-based Chase Bank say they will wipe out all balances for Canadian Amazon- and Marriott-branded Visa cardholders. Ontario resident Douglas Turner told the CBC that he had owed more than $4,600 on his card: “I was sort of over the moon all last night, with a smile on my face.”
The only way forward

THE SOLUTION IS SPIRITUAL IF THE GOAL IS PEACE AND FELLOWSHIP

Does the date Aug. 20, 1619, mean anything to you? It’s the day the first African slaves were traded into North America.

As recorded by Jamestown settler John Rolfe, a Dutch warship “brought not anything but 20 and odd Negroes, wch the Governor and Cape Marchant bought for victuale at the best and easiest rate they could.” Rolfe made an honest mistake, as the ship was armed under Dutch colors. But current research identifies the White Lion as a British privateer that had confiscated the slaves from a Portuguese trader bound for the Indies. The stop at Jamestown was perhaps an afterthought. The sailors needed provisions and the “20 and odd” bought enough for them to get to Bermuda.

The human cargo hailed from Angola, a Portuguese colony. Their countrymen had traded with Europeans for decades, and many were baptized Christians. Some earned their freedom after years of indentured servitude, on the same terms as poor whites. But too soon the expedient hardened into an evil system whereby millions of Africans were kidnapped and carried across the Atlantic as chattel. The system corrupted all it touched, kindling a slow fire that blazed into our most costly war, and haunts us still.

This month, on the 400th anniversary of the White Lion’s arrival in Jamestown, The New York Times Magazine introduced its “1619 Project,” with the stated purpose of reframing American history. Everything wrong about America, from “the brutality of American capitalism” to “the sugar that saturates the American diet” can be traced to August 1619. The Times is planning further essays on this theme, plus development of a school curriculum in cooperation with the Pulitzer Center.

The keynote essay by Nikole Hannah-Jones begins with her father, a WWII veteran who was discriminated against both in the Army and out, but proudly flew the stars and stripes in his segregated backyard. “He knew that our people’s contributions to building the richest and most powerful nation in the world were indelible, that the United States simply would not exist without us.”

Hannah-Jones then traces the black experience in the New World, with its many outrages and tragedies, concluding with, “Our founding fathers may not have actually believed in the ideals they espoused, but black people did.” The very concept of civil rights would be unthinkable without them.

The essay is worthwhile, though flawed. While the history is largely true, it’s also selective. Those ideals, whether or not the founding fathers believed them, provided the rationale for emancipation and (much later) full citizenship. But the 1619 Project as a whole is likely to harm, not help.

Racism, rooted in the African slave trade, is said to be “America’s original sin.” An original sin is the primary fault from which every other fault stems. For that, we should look to the misapplication of American freedom, which translated into expanded opportunities to exploit as well as to succeed. Exploitation is not essentially racist. It is egotistic and acquisitive, and no one is exempt. America’s original sin is actually the Original Sin. Racism is an effect, not a cause.

What to do? Proposed solutions are mostly about money. But the problem is spiritual not material, and so is the solution: forgiveness.

Is forgiveness fair? No, but Someone who was owed a much greater debt showed us that forgiveness is the only way out of the bondage of sin. “For freedom Christ has set us free.” To forgive centuries of wrong, traces of which persist to this day, means to lay it down and walk away. The history still stings, but the farther you walk the less you will feel it, especially when walking toward the light.

What do we want—fellowship, or alienation? Peace, or warfare? Our Father desired peace and fellowship with us enough to pay dearly for it. Guilt must be borne, and the one to bear it was His own Son. He considered the gain worth the price. God willing, may my brothers and sisters, so long out of Africa, make that reckoning. I can never compensate them, but Christ can.
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A brand new podcast from WORLD Radio is here. It’s called /T_h  e Olasky Interview.

WORLD has given us the privilege of sitting in, and I am very grateful. These interviews are well worth your time.”—iTunes reviewer

There’s always been more to the interviews you’ve read in the magazine and heard on The World and Everything in It.

Now, you have full access. The new podcast is in. Season 1 guests include Charles Murray, Ron Sider, Lauren Green, Bill Bennett, and others.

Listen anywhere you typically enjoy podcasts.
The man *The Wall Street Journal* dubbed the King of Clean Comedy is back with a new Amazon special, *Quality Time*. And fans will be glad to hear that while the material is all new, Jim Gaffigan hasn’t changed his tune. Much.

Along with being clean, the famously Catholic father of five adheres to an old-school definition of inclusiveness. That is, he makes the kind of self-deprecating jokes about his weight, his wife, and his laid-back parenting style you might have heard on Johnny Carson back in the day. Only with a fresh spin.

What you won’t hear are the routines that have come to characterize modern late-night comedy. Nothing about race (unless jokes about his own extraordinary paleness count). Nothing about divisive current events. And certainly nothing about politics.

When it comes to his career, Gaffigan seems to harken back to the old Michael Jordan observation that Republicans (or Democrats) buy sneakers too. Fans would be hard-pressed even to guess where he falls on the ideological spectrum, and Gaffigan likes it that way, telling the Daily Beast earlier this week, “I don’t want to grab some soap box on a certain issue if there might be nuances to it.”

Even though *GQ* headlined a 2018 interview with a claim that the comedian didn’t vote for Trump, if you read carefully, he never really says that. Instead, he offers a hilarious description of his fellow New Yorkers accosting him on the street screaming, “You did this!” until he finally wonders, “Did I do it?”

It’s a typical wily Gaffigan...
sidestep to the media’s perpetual drive to force every public figure to carry a party banner.

His approach seems to be working. In spades. This year he’s ranked No. 3 on Forbes’ list of highest-earning comedians, just behind his friend Jerry Seinfeld.

However, while the fundamentals of his style are holding strong, that doesn’t mean his comedy hasn’t evolved over time. His last special, Noble Ape, dealt with a particularly tough blow his family suffered in 2017: his wife Jeannie’s brain tumor. With Jeannie’s help (she’s his writing partner), he developed a set that was surprisingly tender, hilarious, and yet classic Gaffigan.

Things seemed to have settled down in Gaffigan world, because if the new special feels a little less specific to experiences in his and Jeannie’s household, it’s also a little looser. It feels as if he’s gaining confidence that he can take the audience to weirder, less tried-and-true places, as with an extended sequence about horses.

The more digressive and random the equine jokes become (and they become highly digressive and random indeed), the funnier they grow. It’s the mark of a master of the craft when the awkward and even nonsensical content feels intentional.

Despite the Wall Street Journal billing, Quality Time contains a bit of mildly bad language. As his previous shows did. Think the kind of thing you’d hear on any prime-time sitcom. And he calls out the name of Jesus once. But it’s while praying for rescue during a bear attack. So if we’re giving him the benefit of the doubt, it’s not a taking-the-Lord’s-name-in-vain situation.

What fans will really notice is that Gaffigan seems to be getting comfortable moving further afield from the old “fat dad, lazy dad” bits he’s best known for. The new material might be a little racier than the old hot pocket bits, but it’s all within the context of married fatherhood.

And that is what really makes this special, like his previous ones, special. It’s not that he doesn’t swear. As Gaffigan quipped to Stephen Colbert, nobody pays to hear someone not curse for an hour. It’s because he finds the funny in those experiences—family, marriage, parenthood, and, yes, good old-fashioned American overeating—we still hold in common.

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**MOVIES & TV**

**Overcomer**

Overcomer, the Kendrick Brothers’ new release, is billed “from the creators of War Room.” That 2015 film reached No. 1 in its second week at the box office. But look for the next movie that Alex and Stephen make to be marketed as “from the creators of Overcomer.” Genuine and compelling, Overcomer is the Kendricks’ best effort yet.

At a Christian school, basketball coach John Harrison (Alex Kendrick) finds himself coaching a cross-country team with only one participant, Hannah (Aryn Wright-Thompson), who has asthma. Hannah has lived with her grandmother (Denise Armstrong) since infancy, and she hides a sinful secret. Other characters also struggle with grief and sin. John prioritizes sports success over everything else. Thomas (Cameron Arnett), hospitalized and dying, regrets selfish choices that have hurt many people.

**Box Office Top 10**

For the weekend of Aug. 23-25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Angel Has Fallen</td>
<td>$17,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Good Boys</td>
<td>$6,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Overcomer*</td>
<td>$1,300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fast &amp; Furious Presents: Hobbs &amp; Shaw</td>
<td>$3,600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Lion King*</td>
<td>$1,300,000</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ready or Not</td>
<td>$3,800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Angry Birds Movie</td>
<td>$1,320,000</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark</td>
<td>$2,600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dora and the Lost City of Gold</td>
<td>$2,310,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Once Upon a Time in Hollywood</td>
<td>$4,710,000</td>
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*Reviewed by WORLD
It’s strange when you realize just how much the ever-increasing levels of sex, violence, and ugliness in modern entertainment have altered our experience of watching adult-targeted dramas. Take, for instance, the new indie, *After the Wedding*.

A gender-reversed version of a 2006 Danish film, it weaves an intriguing mystery around two powerful, dynamic women, each alpha females of a sort, though in different spheres.

Isobel (Michelle Williams) runs an orphanage in India. In a certain respect, she’s exactly what we picture when we imagine people who give their lives serving in impoverished regions. Her flowing palazzo pants, low-maintenance locks, and zen meditation practices give off a distinct air of Earth Mama. Yet she’s so much more than the cliché, chatting up corporate boards for “suitcases of money” and roaring, “I’m not here to teach you compassion!” like a mother bear when arrogant donors try to come between her and her children. Which is exactly what she thinks wealthy Theresa (Julianne Moore) is doing after she summons Isobel to New York and strong-arms her into staying until she’s ready to decide how much funding she wants to give Isobel’s charity.

Theresa, too, is no easy caricature. Her high-powered, demanding professional life doesn’t stop her from being a loving, engaged mom. Sure, she drives brutal bargains and snaps at her assistant, but she also reads her children bedtime stories, worries her sons are playing violent video games, and gets teary thinking about her beautiful daughter Grace’s upcoming marriage. Still, Theresa isn’t the type to do anything without a purpose, especially a seemingly impulsive act like inviting Isobel to Grace’s wedding. When Isobel arrives and realizes she knows Theresa’s husband, Oscar (Billy Crudup), a renowned sculptor, we start to suspect what it might be, though the knowing makes the revelation no less riveting. The two women circle one another, each subtly trying to indict the other with suggestions that their life choices make them the more ideal version of womanhood.

I won’t spoil the mystery, except to say that as it unspools, creating gut-wrenching emotional stakes for all the characters, *After the Wedding* is as surprising as much for what isn’t there as for what is. Namely, no sex scenes, save Oscar sweetly romancing his wife when he finds her in the bathtub (no nudity or anything inappropriate is shown). So why did I keep steeling myself to see them? Because *After the Wedding* is clearly meant to be a prestige drama. It stars two critically acclaimed actresses at the top of their game. It centers on people with cultured, urban lives. It depicts two women grappling with a charged, unspoken rivalry. And these days, an A-list release like that—about marriage, money, and ambition—without significant R content is almost unheard of. If the film’s PG-13 rating didn’t also come with a fair amount of profanity, it would be quite the unicorn indeed.

Along with being brilliantly acted, well-paced, and intelligently crafted, *After the Wedding* is the rare film that explores tricky topics like class differences and femininity without feeling like it’s pandering. At first it seems the filmmakers want us to envy and resent Theresa’s 1 percenter status (playing with those conditioned expectations again!). But as we come to know her better, we remember that God blesses some with the ability to make wealth. And that wealth creates jobs and funds charities.

Further, we see a depiction of unplanned pregnancy where the only choice is how best to give the child life. “I just knew I couldn’t take care of you,” one character says of her choice not to be a mother, “and bringing you into the world was the best that I could do.” The frequent bad language notwithstanding, those are expectations upended in the most wonderful way.

See all our movie reviews at wng.org/movies
Trends and patterns

THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIANITY

by Marvin Olasky

Glenn Stanton’s The Myth of the Dying Church (Worthy, 2019) points out that, contrary to numerous big-media proclamations, atheism and agnosticism are not growing wildly, and more young adults are attending Biblically faithful churches than attended a half-century ago. Liberal churches, though, are hemorrhaging, and formerly evangelical churches that embrace homosexuality—Seattle’s EastLake is one example—often lose members.

You Found Me (IVP, 2019) goes over the same ground Stanton does: Author Rick Richardson’s subtitle is New Research on How Unchurched Nones, Millennials, and Irreligious Are Surprisingly Open to Christian Faith. But while Stanton emphasizes the importance of sticking with Biblical doctrine, Richardson prioritizes social outreach. His example in a “Hope for the Future” section is a Colorado church that provides thousands of kids with school supplies, free clothes, and free haircuts and takes 140 bags of food to an elementary school every Wednesday.

Dustin Messer’s Secular Sacraments: Finding Grace in the World and Sin in the Church (Center for Cultural Leadership, 2019) punctures the balloons of the Rob Bells who further “an age of autonomy” by abandoning Biblical teaching. Messer rightly says “the real adventurers are those who set sail for the risky land of Christian orthodoxy, … who subject their thoughts, behaviors, and passions to an exclusive Sovereign.”

In The Wealth of Religions (Princeton, 2019), Rachel McCreary and Robert Barro push back against the secularization hypothesis, which suggests that increases in income, education, urbanization, and life expectancy lead to less religious belief. That’s not true historically in Western culture: For a time, more wealth led to more time and resources to pour into religious study, and more belief led to more long-term thinking rather than immediate gratification. In a virtuous spiral, that resulted in more work effort and thrift.

One other factor is significant: “Protestantism’s stress on individual reading of the Bible led to higher literacy and, thereby, promoted economic development.” But, as the Bible shows regarding ancient Israel, over several generations people start saying “We built it” rather than “God built it.” The result can be increased self-satisfaction and less prayer and worship. It’s not clear whether America is still spiraling upward or heading rapidly downward.

Harvey Klehr’s The Millionaire Was a Soviet Mole: The Twisted Life of David Karr (Encounter, 2019) tells the surprising story of a man who moved from Communist journalist to muckraking columnist to public relations counsel to corporate executive, but remained throughout an egotistical liar who left behind four wives. Klehr believes David Karr was a Soviet agent who created such a tangle that the KGB eventually killed him.

Joel Beeke and Christopher Bogosh’s Dying and Death (Reformation Heritage, 2018) is a succinct and solidly Biblical summary of how to prepare rightly for what’s inevitable. William Boekestein’s The Future of Everything: Essential Truths About the End Times (Reformation Heritage, 2019) briefly describes our own personal ends and what the Bible says about the world’s end and redemption. Boekestein favors burial, not cremation: He notes how the first cremation in America came in 1876 and was “accompanied by readings from Robert Barro push back

Charles Darwin and the Hindu Scriptures.”

In The Drama of Celebrity (Princeton, 2019) Sharon Marcus tells of well-known people, starting with actress Sarah Bernhardt in the late 19th century, who became objects of mass fascination but could not cheat death. Human Liberty 2.0 (Post Hill, 2019) by Matthew Daniels emphasizes noncelebrities. He tells stories of little-known people who have used the internet to promote the dignity of humans created in God’s image.

Carles Boix’s Democratic Capitalism at the Crossroads (Princeton, 2019) sees technological change increasing inequality and notes the inadequacy of a universal basic income (UBI) that would deliver dollars without dignity. Boix points out that a UBI could reduce work incentives, keep structures of inequality unchanged, and erode motivations of individuals to school themselves and develop character: “Working confers a dignity that the reception of a public handout does not.” —M.O.
BAD BLOOD: SECRETS AND LIES IN A SILICON VALLEY STARTUP  John Carreyrou

Wall Street Journal reporter John Carreyrou covered Elizabeth Holmes and her Silicon Valley startup, Theranos. Here he tells the story of a charismatic and attractive female CEO who raised piles of money, attracted prominent supporters like former Defense Secretary James Mattis and former Secretary of State George Shultz, and sold her idea to companies like Walgreens. One problem: Her product—a blood testing method requiring tiny bits of blood—didn’t work. Carreyrou shows how Theranos began with a promising idea that proved hard to execute, which allegedly led the company to embark upon a massive fraud.


Drawing from diaries and other primary documents, McCullough takes the reader back to the 18th and 19th centuries when the U.S. opened the Northwest Territory to settlement. Through the lives of colorful individuals—including Manasseh Cutler, a congregational minister and scientist from Massachusetts—he tells about the settlement of Marietta, Ohio. Christian belief motivated many of the settlers, and McCullough shows how these beliefs led to a ban on slavery and support for public education. Critics note that McCullough skips the Native American perspective, but this settler story highlights other underreported aspects of history.

BILLION DOLLAR WHALE: THE MAN WHO FOOLED WALL STREET, HOLLYWOOD, AND THE WORLD  Tom Wright & Bradley Hope

Two Wall Street Journal reporters tell the stranger-than-fiction story of Malaysian Jho Low and how he pulled off one of the biggest heists in history, siphoning $5 billion from Malaysia’s state-owned investment fund, 1MDB. With the help of Goldman Sachs and other financial institutions, Low funneled money into private Swiss bank accounts and used it to party with celebrities like Leonardo DiCaprio, buy properties in New York and Los Angeles, and finance movies like The Wolf of Wall Street. The book follows his meteoric rise and then rapid descent as scrappy investigative journalists unraveled the con. To this date, Low is still on the run. —reviewed by Angela Lu Fulton

ONE LIFE AT A TIME: AN AMERICAN DOCTOR’S MEMOIR OF AIDS IN BOTSWANA  Daniel Baxter

Daniel Baxter has spent his medical career caring for people with AIDS, first in New York and for two periods in Botswana. When he first went to Africa in 2002, the epidemic was in full swing. He left in 2008 but returned in 2013, with many sufferers receiving antiviral drugs. With sensitivity and a fine eye Baxter paints a ground-level picture of AIDS, focusing on individual stories. The book recounts his changing perspective as he cares for patients and families with attitudes and beliefs far different from those of his patients in the U.S.

AFTERWORD

Who Loves? by Jami Kaeb (The Forgotten Initiative, 2018) is a series of three books dealing in age-appropriate ways with how it feels to be in foster care. Who Loves Baby? is a board book with illustrations showing “Judge loves Baby” and “Community Workers love Baby.” Though sad, it’s good to know that resources exist to help children talk about their hard reality. Who Loves Me? offers slightly more information for a pre-K or kindergartener-age child. I Am Loved offers short chapters and more detail, especially about emotions, for elementary-aged children.

Our Baby Will Be Different by Beverly Jacobson (CreateSpace, 2017) is a hopeful book for preparing children for the birth of a baby with disabilities. “Most babies have busy little hands that open and close. Our baby will be different... But after she is born we can still hold her hands and kiss her fingers.” —S.O.
Show me the way

BOOKS FOR TEENAGE GIRLS reviewed by Mary Jackson

CHOOSING LOVE IN A BROKEN WORLD
Heidi Johnston

Johnston understands that today’s teenage girls daily encounter distorted ideas about love, sex, and marriage and it takes courage to pursue the love God outlines in the Bible. The book will help them see how God’s plan for relationships is far greater than what the world conveys and how broken relationships stem from turning love into something so much smaller than it is intended. Johnston writes with honesty, clarity, and respect, differentiating between feelings and covenantal love and addressing common myths about sex. Each chapter ends with talking points that parents can use to open communication with their daughters. (Ages 13-16)

SEX, PURITY, AND THE LONGINGS OF A GIRL’S HEART
Kristen Clark & Bethany Beal

Sisters Kristen Clark and Bethany Beal open this book by telling of their first exposure to pornography as young girls. They write candidly about their resulting questions and struggles with sexuality. The book addresses the world’s distorted and confusing messages about sex and purity, but instead of offering a formula for dating and relationships, Clark and Beal draw from Scripture and anecdotes that point girls to the gospel. They emphasize “we’re all sexually broken” and carefully address topics like porn, lust, erotica, masturbation, and same-sex attraction, concluding with discussion questions and an appendix on sexual abuse. (Ages 15-18)

CONFIDENT MOMS, CONFIDENT DAUGHTERS
Maria Furlough

The pressure to look perfect keeps increasing, and Furlough believes mothers play a key role in enabling their daughters to walk securely and confidently in Christ. She shares openly about her struggles with body issues, dieting, and social media and incorporates interviews with a pediatrician, nutritionist, and a Christian counselor who offer practical tips. The book also addresses worldly lies about appearance while admonishing moms and daughters to prioritize godliness over physical goals and praise God for their bodies as His “wonderfully made” temple. (Ages 15-18)

PRICELESS
Jen Barrick with Linda Barrick

Jen Barrick begins this book by sharing how her life changed at age 15 when a drunk driver struck her family’s van, injuring everyone. She spent five weeks in a coma and suffered a serious brain injury that changed everything, except her love for Jesus. One consequence of Barrick’s injury is she “feels aloud,” and the book resulted from her and her mother Linda’s interactions about her emotional struggles. Formatted as a 30-day devotional, Priceless tackles common “roller coaster” emotions teenage girls face with corresponding Psalms, recitation prayers, and encouraging truths. Teen girls will appreciate Barrick’s honesty and relatability. (Ages 13-16)

AFTERWORD

In Between Us Guys (New Growth Press, 2019), Joel Fitzpatrick offers fathers and sons a guide for talking about what it means to be a man in light of the gospel. Fitzpatrick avoids moralistic messages and macho stereotypes and addresses topics like girls, sex, money, strength, and failure with a clear emphasis on creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. Geared for boys ages 6-12, the book’s short chapters are arranged for fathers and sons to read aloud together and include Scriptures, discussion questions, and suggested activities. A follow-up to Trish Donohue’s Between Us Girls (New Growth Press, 2016), this book counters current cultural beliefs about manhood and provides a starting point for fathers who struggle with talking to their sons about important topics. Fitzpatrick writes, “If we fail to ground our sons in the finished work of Jesus for them, we will miss the point.” – M.J.
In a world of distractions, we must remember that which is “of first importance.”

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Karl Zinsmeister, vice president of publications for the Philanthropy Roundtable, was editor in chief of The American Enterprise from 1994 to 2006, and then George W. Bush’s chief domestic policy adviser. Earlier, he was a history major and a national champion rower at Yale. He has written 13 books, including The Almanac of American Philanthropy, and now lives on a houseboat with his wife: They have three children and three grandchildren.

Tell us about the houseboat.
Washington is a wonderful city in many ways, but it’s button-down and staid. Very interested in success and power. I feel privileged and blessed that I can work with my brain for much of the day, but I often want to do something more concrete. Living on a boat is part of that.

And you built houses, right? I was a freelance writer, and it was the best way to establish my career. I was able to write on exactly what I wanted to write about. I didn’t have a steady income, so I also worked as a carpenter, buying old junk houses nobody else wanted in Washington, camping out in them before I got married, fixing them up, and selling them. It was a bit of a death wish, but I did that eight times, including when my family started to arrive. It kept us in groceries and diapers in those lean years.

On to your work in philanthropy: Surveys show many Americans believe the charitable service that happens across America just happens, and would happen even if religious people and organizations weren’t doing it. You’ve learned that’s not true. I’ve walked through the data and asked specific questions: Who, for instance, adopts children? Christians are 2½ times more likely to adopt hard-to-place children than the rest of us. Who runs homeless shelters? Religiously inspired groups now provide 6 out of 10 beds for homeless people in major urban areas. A predominance of the selfless work in our society today comes out of religious motivation. Without that we have a much colder, much more selfish, much more heartless society.

The giving patterns reflect that. People who attend weekly religious services most of the time contribute four times as much as nonattenders. And yet, 57 percent of Americans say that if those religious folks weren’t active, these charitable works would happen anyway. Communication gap? There sure is. Many feel that religion is not only unnecessary but negative. I would hope those who don’t have a personal faith would at least see that religious people act very differently than others. Different priorities. Different principles. In most cases, pro-social as opposed to antisocial behaviors, but that reality is increasingly lost in public debates.

Yep. Your book has fun facts like this: 14,000 Starbucks outlets in the U.S., 350,000 religious congregations. We probably hear more about Starbucks than churches. We do. When I go to a city, I love to go to local churches and see what I can learn about local culture by attending services. I attended a service in a drab, 1950s-style public high school in Santa Monica. It was a wonderful service helped by people spending a lot of energy to transform the auditorium interior into a semi-sacred space in short order—and then breaking it all down when they’re done. All kinds of churches all over the country go through this every weekend. They’re meeting in schools; they’re meeting in shopping centers; they’re orphaned congregations that meet Saturday nights in somebody else’s church.

Not boggled down with bricks and mortar? I understand buildings can become a terrible distraction, but for thousands of years, human beings sacrificed to have sacred structures. Our current spatial mismatch is weird, and we need to solve it. Many of the big churches in big cities are empty or attended by 15 little white-haired ladies on Sundays. Maybe we could do a swap: Those white-haired ladies could get a nice intimate little church where they can meet and have fellowship rather than rattling around in a huge stone cathedral they can’t even heat properly. Then, we get those big, booming churches out of the strip malls and into the space that was built to make you feel you’re in heaven for an hour and a half.

Often the people who own those churches are hostile to evangelicals. Some people are so stubborn, they’d rather have the church desacralized and turned into a condominium or a bar. This is happening in large numbers. But churches are the places where AA
meetings get held. Churches are where the art fairs take place. Churches have day cares. That doesn’t happen anymore when the building becomes a restaurant, a condo, or a bar. Once you’ve lost these big, open, communal spaces in the middle of a New York City or San Francisco or D.C., you never have a similarly available public space.

So, philanthropy has a role here: Donors can help churches outbid the condominium folks. Yeah. And it isn’t just the physical vessel. The burgeoning churches, almost by definition, tend to have good leaders with a more orthodox theology. They have energy. They make demands on people. Many growing churches are like the Marine Corps: The harder you make it, the more people love it and want to be part of it. That’s important in theology as well. Leaders need training, but the average person coming out of seminary today comes out with about $50,000 worth of debt. That’s a big, heavy stone. What if they didn’t come out with debt, if we could give them continuing education to freshen their skills without having to abandon their congregations? What if we could have paths for second-career pastors, those who had a career in business, or academia, and suddenly felt the call, and would like to become pastors? That’s hard to do today. If you had night classes, if seminaries were more open to video instruction, you could train more second-career people.

Can churches help people get jobs? A lot of people don’t know how to get that first step on the employment ladder, and we also have many small businesses desperate for welders, truck drivers, nurses, or day care workers. One Florida nonprofit uses churches as venues to match employers and employees. People walk out the door with an offer after sitting down for mini-interviews. And, once they’ve gone to church and gotten a job, it’s easy to invite them back for worship.

What about college students who want to work with charities and philanthropies: Any career opportunities there? It’s wide open, a green pasture. Philanthropy is a really exciting and important part of American culture with all kinds of room for social invention. If you’re able to find new solutions to old problems, it is tremendously satisfying. The downside is you don’t have a boss, a road plan, or a clear recipe book. You have to be self-sufficient, improvisational, thinking on your feet. But if you have any of those qualities, and you want to make your world better, and you’re not focused on the almighty dollar in the short term, there are tremendous opportunities. Donors give away $410 billion every single year in this country, voluntarily, without anybody asking or pushing it.

Sometimes people are pushing. A little pushing is good. But nobody has legal power to coerce you. Philanthropy provides social venture capital that does things we can’t do with government or corporate money. There is all kinds of room for people with entrepreneurial ideas about how to start job fairs at churches or so much else. 

‘Donors give away $410 billion every single year in this country, voluntarily, without anybody asking or pushing it.’
Nostalgic glow

ONCE UPON A TIME’S SOUNDTRACK IS A TRIBUTE TO GENRE-FREE ’60S POP by Arsenio Orteza

It has become a cliché to refer to Quentin Tarantino’s Once Upon a Time in Hollywood as a “love letter”—to Tinseltown, to Tarantino’s youth, to 1969 itself (just in time for the year’s 50th anniversary!). But even with its smattering of gratuitous violence, the film is better described as a fairy tale (hence its title’s first four words).

What is a love letter is the film’s meticulously textured Columbia Records soundtrack. And what it’s a love letter to is the era in which the thrilling combustibility of genre-free 1960s pop was accessible to anyone within earshot of AM radio.

Interspersed among high-energy, period-piece hits by Neil Diamond, the Bob Seger System, Chad & Jeremy, Roy Head & the Traits, Mitch Ryder & the Detroit Wheels, the Box Tops, and the Rod Evans–era Deep Purple (twice) are ’60s air checks—in appropriately tinny mono and replete with ads—from “Humble” Harve Miller and the Real Don Steele, DJs on what was from 1965 to 1980 one of Los Angeles’ hottest Top 40 stations, KHJ (“Boss Radio”).

Miller shills for Mug root beer then spins “Hector” by the Village Callers. “The Real” Don Steele hawks Tanya tanning butter; spins Simon & Garfunkel’s “Mrs. Robinson,” Los Bravos’ “Bring a Little Lovin’,” and Dee Clark’s “Hey Little Girl”; reads a weather report; and ad-libs an announcement for an upcoming Class of ’58 high-school reunion.

The soundtrack’s tone, however, is set by Paul Revere & the Raiders, who are represented by “Hungry” and “Good Thing” (both Top 10 hits) and “Mr. Sun, Mr. Moon” (which only made the Top 20 but enjoyed a kind of parallel-universe popularity when rewritten as the Swingy Doll theme). More importantly where both Tarantino’s film and the year 1969 are concerned, both “Hungry” and “Good Thing” were produced by Terry Melcher, the son of Doris Day and, along with the Beach Boys’ Dennis Wilson, an acquaintance of an LSD-dropping hippy ex-con and aspiring singer-songwriter named Charles Manson.

It was Melcher’s former house on Cielo Drive in which four of Manson’s followers murdered Sharon Tate, Jay Sebring, Wojciech Frykowski, and Abigail Folger on Aug. 8 and 9, 1969, allegedly as payback for Melcher’s refusal to land Manson a recording deal.

Melcher died in 2004, having unwaveringly maintained that his dealings with Manson were strictly business. It’s a claim of which some observers have been skeptical (for reasons made clear in the new book by the investigative journalist Tom O’Neill, Chaos: Charles Manson, the CIA, and the Secret History of the Sixties).

Whatever the truth, Melcher has long symbolized the good-vibrations-vs.-hearts-of-darkness dualism at the core of the ’60s pop-music scene. And his association with music featured in Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, tenuous though that association may be, casts a pall over the soundtrack’s otherwise almost too heartwarmingly nostalgic glow.

Exactly one week after the Tate murders, Creedence Clearwater Revival took the stage at Woodstock and turned in a performance that by all reliable accounts was one of the tightest and hardest hitting of the entire festival. The band’s just-released, complete-and-unabridged Live at Woodstock (Craft) confirms that assessment.

The set kicks off with “Born on the Bayou” and, in keeping with the title of the penultimate number, keeps on chooglin’ for almost an hour, gradually winning over a crowd that, in his autobiography, John Fogerty describes as having just been “put to sleep” by the Grateful Dead.

The group’s secret? Playing sober, a footnote that may be the biggest wake-up call of all.
New or recent CDs
reviewed by Arsenio Orteza

LOVE WILL FIND A WAY  Philip Bailey
The soft-focus production stands in stark contrast to the clean, crisp edges of Bailey’s hit-making days with Earth, Wind & Fire and Phil Collins. The falsetto, however, remains recognizable if not quite the same, as do the Curtis Mayfield covers (anachronisms no matter what Bailey thinks) and Marvin Gaye’s “Just to Keep You Satisfied.” Recognizable but better than the original is the Return to Forever cover. Recognizable but weirder is Talking Heads’ “Once in a Lifetime.” Coming from a Gospel-Grammy winner, it may be profounder too.

SEEDS OF CHANGE (EXPANDED EDITION)  Kerry Livgren
If Epic/Legacy had waited one more year, they could’ve touted this expanded, MP3-only edition of the best album by anyone associated with Kansas (Kansas included) as a 40th-anniversary treat. But better early than never. What’s doing the expanding? Horns-boosting and occasionally measure-adding remixes of all seven songs. What’s the reward of listening closely enough to notice such negligible differences? Getting to hear Ronnie James Dio, Steve Walsh, LeRoux’s Jeff Pollard, and Ambrosia’s David Pack give thrilling voice to Livgren’s newfound Christian faith twice.

LATE NIGHT FEELINGS  Mark Ronson
The failure of the Miley Cyrus collaboration “Nothing Breaks Like a Heart” to approach the popularity of Ronson’s 2015 Bruno Mars collaboration “Uptown Funk” isn’t exactly inexplicable. Four years is a long time for the attention-deficit generation to stick with a DJ who isn’t Avicii, and Cyrus is nothing if not divisive. Still, it’s not only Cyrus’ finest 3½ minutes but also the best song that Stevie Nicks never recorded. Consider it the cake of an album a-swirl with delectable pop-soul icing.

HOTEL LAST RESORT  Violent Femmes
“The obvious, the silly, and the true,” wrote Orwell in Nineteen Eighty-Four, “had got to be defended,” and Gordon Gano’s just the man for the job. Cases in point: the obvious “I’m Nothing” (a ramshackle reminder that square pegs despise round holes), the silly “Sleepin’ at the Meetin’” (aka “Way That I Creep,” disinterred from Gano’s Under the Sun), and the true “Adam Was a Man” (a folk-punk exposition of Genesis 2 and 3). As for the minor-key “God Bless America,” it combines all three.

ENCORE
When the Call burst onto the scene in 1982, its combination of whomping beats, prophetic lyrics, and the late Michael Been’s rock-operatic vocals earned the group comparisons with U2. And while the similarities made the Call a hit among Christians whose tastes exceeded the boundaries of CCM, it also gave short shrift to what made the Call unique (its intensity for one thing) and probably didn’t help the group to win over radio-station programmers either.

Collected (Universal),a new three-disc compilation, features tracks not only from every Call album but also from Michael Been’s solo work, making it the most comprehensive Call anthology to date. Listeners whose familiarity with the band starts with the first of its two Hot 100 singles (“The Walls Came Down”) and ends with the second (“Let the Day Begin”) will be pleased to discover deep cuts that cut deeper. “Walk Walk” is one, “You Run” another. Progressing pilgrims have rarely rocked harder. —A.O.
## What Makes Us Unique?

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<th>God’s Word is Central</th>
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<td>Celebrate the world through God's eyes. Our comprehensive preschool through high school program thoroughly integrates Bible with the study of history, geography, science, literature, art, and music while helping children learn a biblical worldview.</td>
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<th>Engages the Whole Family</th>
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<td>Nurture the joy of learning for the entire family as you share inspiring read-alouds, simple hands-on projects, and gurgling science experiments. Take a family outing or plan a historic vacation. Dad is encouraged to lead family devotions using the Bible texts in the daily lessons. Our curriculum can be taught to children at several different grade levels all at the same time, resolving the issue of how to split your time among your children and keep track of many different topics.</td>
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<th>3</th>
<th>Enhances Retention with Hands-On Activities</th>
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<td>We all remember what we learn when we experience it. Utilizing simple hands-on projects, children not only read about important concepts and places, but also discover them with fun activities such as history notebooks, timelines, cooking, nature walks, and science projects.</td>
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<th>Wholesome Classic Literature</th>
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<td>Timeless classics and inspiring biographies that develop character are read aloud for the whole family to enjoy together. Our curriculum packages also recommend wholesome grade-appropriate books for independent reading to inspire your child's love for learning.</td>
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<th>Structured Mornings with Flexible Afternoons</th>
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<td>It is not all about school. We know families have other responsibilities. Our efficient yet complete schedule leaves time for life and service. Use the afternoon for trips to the library, shopping, laundry, family outings, or good old-fashion outdoor play.</td>
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Emerging frontier
WHY TRUMP’S GREENLAND FORAY WASN’T SO HAREBRAINED

When I first read the headlines, I thought it was a joke, some SNL parody that wandered onto the front pages: “Trump inquires about US buying Greenland,” reported CNN mid-August.

The tabloids took it in satirical stride, too. “Trump wants to buy Greenland,” led a New York Daily News cover piece, “But Denmark says he just can’t af-fjord it.”

The preposterous, purchasing the vast island, an autonomous territory of Denmark, turned out to be serious. President Donald Trump admitted he had floated the idea with advisers—including the White House counsel—since last spring. Yet again, the president made parody out of protocol, chiding the prime minister of Denmark for “blowing off the U.S.” and canceling a scheduled trip to Denmark because she wouldn’t sell.

But here’s a news flash for those of you who think I can only say negative things about the Trump White House: Buying Greenland was not a harebrained idea. One estimate put its worth at $533 billion, or about the equivalent of one year’s U.S. military budget. Here’s why the United States might seriously undertake it.

Geographically, Greenland is part of North America, though it’s always been incorporated into Europe. Its land mass dominates the North Atlantic, and 90 percent of its population is Greenlandic (or North American), with only 10 percent Danish or other Nordic people groups. It’s more Canada than Copenhagen.

There’s also precedence for such a purchase. Look only to the other side of the Arctic Circle, where President Andrew Johnson purchased Alaska from the Russians in 1867 for $7.2 million. That’s $125 million in 2019 dollars—only a fraction the value of Greenland, a land mass larger than Alaska, potentially more resource-rich, and situated more strategically inside the Arctic Circle.

From the vantage point of the North Pole, Greenland sits like a sentry thrust into the Arctic Ocean. It occupies a flanking position against the vast coastline of Russia. As the polar cap melts and the rich resources of the Arctic become more apparent, and up for grabs, future Americans might have thanked Donald Trump for securing so strategic a base.

Meanwhile, the United States in all seriousness is losing the Arctic. The most important global issues of coming decades, notes Johns Hopkins professor and American Enterprise Institute scholar Hal Brands, “are the return of rivalry between great powers and the intensification of climate change.” Sitting at the intersection of both trends is the Arctic.

Whether you conclude climate change is short- or long-term, man-made or cyclical, its effect in the Arctic today is undeniable: Greenland has experienced its biggest ice melt this summer, losing a record 12.5 billion tons in a day. It again has faced threatening wildfires. According to new atmospheric monitoring, more than 100 “intense and long-lived wildfires” have burned above the Arctic Circle since June, emitting enough carbon dioxide to equal Sweden’s entire annual emissions.

With a melting polar cap is a race to ply its navigable waters and plumb its resources. Russia and ascending Chinese forces may one day threaten the northern extremities of the American homeland via the Arctic. Already an international battle is underway for control of Lomonosov Ridge, an unusual underwater formation likely to prove rich in oil and gas and other resources. Russia and Denmark have lodged competing claims for sovereignty over it, and a team of scientists in 2015 concluded the ridge is attached to Greenland. The United States appears to be on the sidelines, and could be checkmated by Russia and China together pressing Denmark for concessions.

Into this emerging frontier, the United States has the opportunity to shape the Arctic for good. That’s what happened when it decided in the aftermath of World War II to take on also-outraged projects in Europe and Asia. The Cold War might have taken a different turn without Alaska in American hands.

But in the end, Trump himself turned a serious proposition into a joke again, tweeting a vast Trump Tower superimposed on Greenland’s rocky escarpments with a promise “not to do this” to Greenland.

Indeed. Because in the Trump era we don’t have foreign policy, we have foreign policy episodes. Stay tuned for the next show.
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– Bill F.

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FEATURES

PITCHING TO THE LEFT
Democratic candidates for president try to appeal to an ideological audience that pays attention to early campaigns, but will that hurt the candidates in the longer term?

**BY JAMIE DEAN** in Hartsville, S.C.
One of the more awkward moments at a recent Christian conference in Atlanta came when an announcer enthusiastically introduced Elizabeth Warren as the senator “from the great state of New Hampshire.”

Warren is from Massachusetts.

The senator is also a frontrunner in the early stages of the Democratic presidential primary race, but the mistake is understandable: With more than a dozen Democratic candidates in the 2020 field, it’s easy to confuse the details.

Warren bounded onto the stage at the August candidate forum sponsored by the Black Church PAC, but she didn’t correct the announcer’s error. Instead, she raised her hands and proclaimed, “This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice!”

A day later, another awkward dynamic unfolded at Jerusalem Baptist Church in Hartsville, S.C., where Democratic candidate Pete Buttigieg was giving his own stump speech: In a packed fellowship hall at the historic black church, the overflowing crowd was overwhelmingly white.

That’s especially problematic in an early primary state where black voters are crucial for Democratic hopefuls.

Buttigieg didn’t mention crowd composition, but he quickly mentioned faith. “It’s time to assert once and for all that God doesn’t belong to a political party,” he declared. Buttigieg, who is gay and Episcopalian, talks openly about his religious beliefs, and he told the crowd he would run a campaign based on values: “And those values are going to take us in a pretty progressive direction.”

Even some Democrats might call that an understatement. Indeed, the early stages of the Democratic presidential primary have been marked by candidates making hard turns to the hard left on some big policy questions.

That might be a way to advance in a primary, but it could leave the Democratic nominee in an awkward position next fall: Will the same positions that woo hard-core supporters in a primary race win swing voters in a general election? Do those positions gel with most Democratic voters?

And as some Democratic candidates emphasize faith, what does that mean for religious voters who don’t agree with them on certain core issues? Will candidates calling for toleration offer toleration themselves?

The starting gates are just opening in the 2020 contest—and anything could happen—but the Democratic candidates mounting a challenge to President Donald Trump are on their marks, they’re set—and they’re already going.

During the first lap of a presidential primary race, an early test of a candidate’s views on thorny issues often comes via televised moments that some must dread—a debate moderator’s command to “raise your hand” if you support a certain position.

It doesn’t leave much room for nuance.

The moment came quickly on the second night of the Democratic primary debates in June. (With so many candidates, the debates spanned two separate nights on prime-time television.)

The night before, a candidate near the back of the pack had vaulted to front-page attention with an eye-popping proposal: Former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro called for decriminalizing illegal entry into the United States.

The next evening, NBC debate moderator José Díaz-Balart told the second round of candidates, “Raise your hand if you think it should be a civil offense, rather than a crime, to cross the border without documentation.”

Eight out of the 10 candidates raised their hands.

But in that moment, current Democratic frontrunner Joe Biden crystallized the primary dilemma with a gesture of his own: The former vice president raised his finger instead of his hand, asking the moderator for a chance to explain his hesitation.

By mid-August, more than a dozen candidates had supported decriminalizing illegal border crossings, including Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.—the two candidates ranking just behind Biden in national polls.

Several second-tier candidates joined them, including Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., and Pete Buttigieg (the mayor of South Bend, Ind.). Texan Beto O’Rourke was among only a few candidates opposing the move.

In a later interview with CNN, Biden clarified he believes migrants seeking asylum should have an opportunity to present their cases, but he stood by his opposition to dropping the current criminal statute against illegal entry.

The whole flash point befuddled at least one Democrat with some experience in national politics: Former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., told Vice News in
late August that decriminalizing illegal entry would be a problem for Democrats in a general election. “People want a fair immigration system,” he said. “They don’t want an open-door invitation for everybody to come at once.”

Reid, who retired in 2017, also expressed frustration over a slate of Democratic candidates pushing Medicare for All—a proposal he thinks won’t pass Congress. Still, Sanders and Warren are among the candidates endorsing a plan that would abolish private health insurance. Biden opposes the move (he favors keeping the Affordable Care Act) and has become an outlier on a position once considered unworkable by Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Other Democratic candidates taking more centrist or moderate positions on hot-button issues haven’t broken out of the pack yet in substantial ways, though their views might be more in line with more voters.

In July, an NPR/PBS/Marist poll found that American voters oppose decriminalizing illegal entry into the United States, 66-27 percent. Two-thirds of Democratic voters favor a healthcare plan that might include a public option but that doesn’t eliminate private insurance, according to a CBS poll in July.

Also notable: Some political observers have noticed some Democratic candidates spend more time attacking Biden and his ties to some Obama-era policies than making their case against President Trump.

It makes sense that Biden’s opponents would try to knock off a frontrunner, but Tim Miller, the former communications director for Jeb Bush, offered his analysis to

The poll positions of candidates could shift in lots of unexpected ways as the race moves beyond the ‘spring training phase,’ when only the most devoted fans follow the teams closely.
Politico after the July Democratic debate: “It’s mind-boggling that there would be several candidates taking shots at Barack Obama when he’s broadly popular, Trump isn’t, and the whole point of this enterprise is beating Trump.”

So why the hard-left turns?

Henry Olsen, a political analyst and senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, notes that in the early stages of a Democratic primary, moderate or independent voters aren’t typically the ones paying the closest attention.

Party activists and more liberal party members tend to follow campaigns, donate money, and volunteer time earlier in the process: “So they [the candidates] are leaning left in a logical way because you have to build a base before you build a majority.”

That gives Biden some leeway to position himself as a moderate who could woo critical swing voters in a general election, but the former vice president already has shown the power of the leftward pull during the primary.

A major example: While Biden has long supported legalized abortion, he also supported the Hyde Amendment for decades. The legislative provision bars the use of federal funds to pay directly for abortions in most cases. As late as May, Biden’s campaign confirmed he still supported the ban. But after withering criticism from his Democratic opponents, Biden caved. He said he now opposes Hyde. None of the Democratic candidates embrace a pro-life position.

Kristen Day of Democrats for Life of America expressed her group’s “extreme disappointment” at Biden’s move: “With all the major candidates fighting to be the most extreme on abortion, there is a wide-open lane for a candidate to bring an alternative position.”

Democratic candidates might avoid that wide-open lane in the primary race, but some are veering onto another part of the track: They’re talking about religion.

In some cases, it hasn’t been a major push: Kamala Harris has talked about attending both a Hindu temple and a Baptist church when she was growing up. (Her husband is Jewish.)

Bernie Sanders has long said he’s not actively religious, but he has referenced his Jewish background and the need to fight white nationalism.

Biden has discussed his Catholicism and says it helped him through his son’s death. Julián Castro has also talked about his Catholic background. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., says Christian faith helped her deal with her father’s addiction. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, D-Hawaii, was the first Hindu ever elected to Congress in 2012.

Others speak about religion more often on the campaign trail: When addressing church crowds, Elizabeth Warren talks about her background in the United Methodist Church, and she’s invoked Matthew 25 when talking about policies to help the poor.

Cory Booker’s campaign has hired a South Carolina pastor to reach out to churches in the early primary state, and he delivered an August address at Mother Emanuel AME—the Charleston church that endured a mass shooting and nine deaths at the hand of white supremacist Dylann Roof.

Booker seems at ease talking to church audiences, but he has also sometimes used Scripture for unsettling ends. Last summer he decried Trump’s nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, warning how the justice would rule on “a woman’s right to control her own body.”

The senator invoked Psalm 23 to condemn approving a presumably pro-life and conservative appointment to
the high court: “We are walking through the valley of the shadow of death.”

New Age guru Marianne Williamson has cast the election in spiritual terms, speaking less about specific policy plans and more about how the “wonkiness” of other candidates won’t deal with “the dark psychic force” she says Trump has brought to the country. Williamson says “only love can cast that out.”

Some have laughed off Williamson’s unusual candor, but Google searches about the candidate soared during the debate. Even if Williamson (who has been polling at less than 1 percent) doesn’t make it much farther in the race, she’s likely piqued the interest of plenty of Americans concerned about a divisive and ugly moment in American politics.

Meanwhile, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg was the first candidate to hire a faith outreach director for his campaign. Some pundits were surprised when Buttigieg’s campaign announced it had hired a Unitarian Universalist for the job: Shawna Foster said her job would be to reach out to all faith groups.

Buttigieg has spoken openly about his same-sex marriage and his membership in an Episcopal church. He rejects historic, Biblical teaching about homosexuality, and he’s attacked Vice President Mike Pence for his traditional views on sexuality.

“That’s the thing I wish the Mike Pences of the world would understand,” Buttigieg told a group at an LGBTQ Victory Fund event. “That if you got a problem with who I am, your problem is not with me—your quarrel, sir, is with my creator.”

Buttigieg’s quarrel goes beyond theological debates to how religious Americans should be able to practice their theological convictions in public spaces. Indeed, nearly all the Democratic candidates have endorsed the Equality Act, a measure that has passed the House but likely won’t gain traction in the Senate—unless the Senate unexpectedly flips to Democratic control next year.

The bill would essentially prohibit any form of perceived LGBTQ discrimination in public spaces and doesn’t include any religious exceptions. Religious freedom advocates say such a measure could threaten Christian colleges, adoption agencies, and perhaps other religious institutions seeking to operate according to Biblical convictions.

Michael Wear, an evangelical and the faith outreach director for President Barack Obama’s campaign in 2012, says the Equality Act and the issues surrounding it raise major questions the Democratic candidates must face: “What is their vision for how religious groups hold onto historical traditional sexual ethic? What is their vision for how they fit into society?”

Broadly speaking, Wear says the Equality Act “suggests that LGBT rights should win out every time…and that’s just not a responsible approach.”

For now, political analyst Henry Olsen emphasizes that, despite months of activity, the real action in the primary race is only beginning.

The candidates will spend months parsing through dozens of issues that haven’t gained as much attention yet, and potentially clashing with the president they hope to get a chance to run against next year.

Olsen says the poll positions of candidates could shift in lots of unexpected ways as more voters begin to pay attention and the race moves beyond the “spring training phase,” when only the most devoted fans follow the teams closely. Now it’s time to start watching the regular season, but “there’s just a lot of time to come,” he says. “Loads of time.”
As protests in Hong Kong turn increasingly bloody, local pastors and churches consider how to support the democracy movement while working for peace.
On a stiflingly hot August night, about 100 Christians gathered outside the Government House, the official residence of Hong Kong’s chief executive. Holding plastic LED candles and led by a youthful worship band, they sang a Cantonese hymn based on Amos 5:24.

“Let righteousness run down like a never-failing stream / Justice like a river / God does not only reside in the Temple / He shows compassion to the oppressed / God’s tabernacle is among the people.”

Rather than facing an altar, the worshippers faced a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire. Behind it, Chief Executive Carrie Lam may or may not have been listening. Around the tree-covered Government Hill, police officers watched over the quarters. The event organizers did not know if Lam was at home that night, but they hoped the professing Catholic would hear their songs.

The worshippers prayed for peace in Hong Kong, for the injustices in society, for injured and arrested protesters, and for the country’s leaders to walk in wisdom and God’s will. Around 9:30 p.m. they walked down the hill singing “Sing Hallelujah to the Lord,” an unofficial anthem of the city’s ongoing pro-democracy protests.

This was the sixth Saturday the group had worshipped outside the Government House. They planned one last worship session the following week.

As Hong Kong citizens lead what has become a monthslong protest for greater freedom and democracy in the region, Christians are navigating their role in a politically fraught movement. During the earlier, more peaceful protests, some pastors took a prominent place in the front lines, standing between protesters and police to defuse tensions. But as demonstrations have turned increasingly violent, with protesters defacing government property and police striking back with anti-riot measures, many churches have moved to the sidelines, playing supportive but peaceful roles: Churches have opened their doors to provide sanctuary for protesters, spoken out against police brutality, and held worship and prayer nights.

Some churches with closer ties to the government are reticent to speak out, and others have tried to stay neutral in the belief that Christianity and politics shouldn’t mix. Views on the
protests are also split between generations—older people tend to be more pro-establishment—and some pastors worry about offending congregants.

The protests have broad support in Hong Kong, with more than a quarter of Hong Kong’s total population coming out for a massive protest on June 16. At stake is Hong Kong’s future: In the Sino-British Joint Declaration, China promised that after it reacquired Hong Kong in 1997, it would give the region a high degree of autonomy for 50 years. But year after year, China refused to let Hong Kong citizens vote for their own leaders. Today citizens can only vote for half of the seats in the legislature, while the other half and the chief executive are chosen by pro-Beijing interest groups. Hong Kongers of all stripes believe their government is increasingly beholden to Communist interests in Beijing, and worry about a full-scale Communist takeover.

If that happens, Christians in particular have much to lose. In mainland China, churches are enduring a fierce crackdown on their freedom to organize and worship openly. A similar fate could befall churches in Hong Kong should the Chinese Communist Party decide to strip the international financial hub of its autonomy and make it just another Chinese city.

Dark clouds rolled over Hong Kong on Sunday, Aug. 18, as thousands upon thousands of people dressed in black streamed into Victoria Park for a demonstration organized by the Civil Human Rights Front. As rain began pouring down in torrents, umbrellas popped open, transforming the park and the surrounding streets into a patchwork of color.

Hong Kong’s protests originally centered on a proposed extradition law that would see Hong Kong citizens sent to China to face trial. Today, protesters have five demands: the complete withdrawal of the extradition bill (Lam only suspended it), the withdrawal of the “riot” label for the June 12 protests, the release of all arrested protesters, an independent investigation into police actions, and universal suffrage.

The Hong Kong government has responded to the protests with heavy-handedness rather than dialogue, propelling even more people to take to the streets. Police have fired 1,800 rounds of tear gas and beaten unarmed protesters. One officer shot a beanbag round that severely injured a woman’s right eye. Protesters have also escalated the violence, throwing bricks and gasoline bombs and setting fires outside police stations.

The Aug. 18 march remained peaceful, however. Protesters of all ages marched through the wet streets chanting, “Five demands, not one less!” and “Hong Kong people, add oil!” (The latter phrase is an idiom that means, “Keep going!”) Organizers estimated 1.7 million people turned out to the march.

Along the protest route about a mile from Victoria Park stood Chinese Methodist Church, a large, triangular building whose doors were open to allow protesters a respite from the rain. The building buzzed with activity: Volunteers ushered people upstairs to use restrooms, and protesters sat on benches or on the floor, sometimes taking off their wet shoes to dry their feet. First aid medics set up a station at a table.

Yuen Tin-Yau, the church’s former pastor, said that for the past 15 years the church has opened its doors during large protests. He first got the idea in 2003 when he participated in a protest against a controversial anti-subversion law. The protesters came unprepared, and many hadn’t brought water, underestimating how long it would take for 500,000 people to exit Victoria Park. As Yuen marched past the Methodist church, he wished he could unlock the building and provide a place of rest for the protesters.
So at the next protest in 2004, Yuen was ready. The church started opening its doors to let protesters use the restroom, drink water, or just sit inside the air-conditioned building. The church held prayer meetings and provided spiritual care for protesters who came in. When police fired tear gas during the 2014 demonstrations known as the Umbrella Movement, Yuen opened the church and invited first aid medics, who helped protesters wash the chemicals out of their eyes. Other times, the church provided sanctuary for protesters at pro-government marches.

Now about 50 other churches in Hong Kong are also opening their doors. On Facebook pages and WhatsApp group chats before protests, activists share lists of churches that plan to be open.

The day before the large rally in Victoria Park, thousands of marchers flooded the streets of Hong Hum, a working-class neighborhood in Kowloon where Youngman Chan has pastored Abundant Life Christian Church for more than 30 years. The event organizers had received permission to hold a march until 5:30 p.m., and as the end time approached, a crowd of noisy protesters and media remained around Whampoa Station.

Some waved British colonial flags while others waved blue flags promoting Hong Kong independence (only a minor subsection of protesters support independence). Someone from the window of an apartment building threw a water balloon at the protesters, who responded by shining laser pointers at the window.

Chan, dressed in black, urged the crowd to disperse. “I belong to this community,” he yelled from the middle of the road. “I am a pastor of this community for over 30 years, and I don’t want to see any tear gas in my community tonight.” He then turned to the reporters: “Please, reporters, go! If you go, then the people will go.” Instead, reporters turned their cameras to Chan.

The pastor took off at a quick pace to his church, stopping on the way to tell protesters with riot gear to go home and keep things peaceful. Eggshells lay in front of a pro-Beijing lawmaker’s office where protesters had thrown eggs at a sign. At the entrance of a tea shop, owners had set a cardboard box full of free water bottles and energy drinks. The box came with a handwritten sign: “Five demands, not one less!”

“The role of the Christian is to maintain peace and do justice,” Chan said. “We try to love everyone; we don’t want to see anyone hurt by violence. Of course, we also want to say whoever has power must not abuse it, and the police so far have not been doing the right thing.”

Reaching his church, Chan strode upstairs to preach at the evening service.

Chan is part of the Pastoral Care Group, a network of pastors from various churches and denominations. The group formed during the Umbrella Movement protests to provide support and act as a peacemaker during tense demonstrations. During the June 12 protest, about 35 pastors in their clerical collars stood on the front lines, placing themselves between police in riot gear and angry protesters.

The clergy tried to reason with both sides, asking everyone to refrain from violence. To de-escalate the tension, they sang “Sing Hallelujah to the Lord.” Pastor Wu Chi-wai, another member of the group, said Christians gained the respect of people who had previously considered churches too otherworldly to care about their community.

“In Hong Kong when the people are oppressed, what is the spiritual response?” asked Pastor Wong Siu-yung, the head of the group. “We don’t think it’s just holding prayer meetings. We need to go to where the oppressed are and be with them. Their demands are also our demands.”

Yet as the violence has escalated since July, pastors see less space for them on the front lines: Angry protesters are less willing to listen to reason, and police respond more aggressively, indiscriminately firing tear gas at close range. So they have taken a step back, opening their churches to
provide sanctuary and finding alternative ways to protest peacefully.

After a violent day of protests on Aug. 11, the Pastoral Care Group sent out a message the next morning asking for pastors to convene. At a noon meeting at Chinese Methodist Church, 350 Hong Kong pastors showed up. At 3 p.m. they held a press conference denouncing police brutality and then marched to police headquarters, where they held a 48-hour vigil with prayer and worship. Wu said some of the police staffers encouraged them, while others called them “cockroaches” and “rubbish.”

Wong believes Hong Kong churches are undergoing a spiritual awakening as they’ve shifted their focus from church growth and programs to what is happening in Hong Kong society. The future of Hong Kong will affect churches as much as anyone. Before this year’s protests began, Ying Fuk-tsang, director of the divinity school at Chinese University of Hong Kong, wrote about the dangers of the proposed extradition law: Even though the government said Hong Kong citizens would not be extradited for religious crimes, Chinese authorities have often used trumped-up economic crimes to arrest Christians. This means that a Hong Kong Christian could be sent to stand trial in China for taking a short-term mission trip to mainland China or just for tithing at a mainland church. The extradition bill would be used to control and restrict religious liberties.

“You can see that the situation of the mainland Chinese church will become Hong Kong’s in the near future,” Wong said. “Will Hong Kong seminaries need to have their curriculum approved by Chinese government? Will we need to have our sermons censored before we preach?”

Some churches have taken a more pro-establishment stance. They stress that violence on both sides should be condemned, and they believe the protesters’ actions have disrupted Hong Kong’s stability and economic prosperity. They point to Romans 13, which tells Christians to obey authorities, and Matthew 5:44, which tells them to love their enemies.

One example: the Anglican Church. Historically, it has run many of the schools and social services in Hong Kong. That has led to a close relationship between the church and the Hong Kong government. During the Umbrella Movement, Archbishop Paul Kwong caught flak for preaching that pro-democracy advocates should stay silent the way Jesus remained silent before His crucifixion. Kwong is a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, China’s top political advisory body.

The Anglican Church had previously stated its support of the extradition bill, saying that offenders must be brought to justice by whatever means necessary. Kwong later issued a letter criticizing the government for “ignoring the real wor-

‘THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN IS TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND DO JUSTICE.’ —YOUNGMAN CHAN
ries and fears among citizens.” More recently, Kwong called on both sides to stay calm and not defy the law.

Yet Kenny Ng, a member of the Anglican Church who is in his 30s, said the church’s statements are worded just like the government’s official statements. He and a group of other young Anglicans organized meetings for members of the church to pray and air their grievances.

On a recent Friday night, about 50 Anglican Church members sat in a circle inside a church on Hong Kong Island to share their thoughts about the Anglican Church’s response to the protests. Some lifelong churchgoers cried as they described their feelings of hurt and betrayal. Some said they were thinking of leaving the church.

“We just want the church to allow for political subjects to be discussed,” Ng said. “The church hasn’t responded to society well: It’s not just a matter of being pro-democracy or not, it’s about your conscience, what you feel is right.”

How the protests will end is unclear. Yang Guang, a spokesman for the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, claimed the violent acts of “Hong Kong’s radical demonstrators” show “signs of terrorism.” Chinese officials claim the United States and other Western countries are behind the protests, and official media show video clips of the People’s Armed Police performing drills and exercises in the neighboring city of Shenzhen. Many believe Chinese leaders will take some sort of action before Oct. 1, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

Francis Yip, an associate professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong’s divinity school, doesn’t think a Tiananmen Square–style military takeover of Hong Kong is likely: Unlike in 1989, today’s world is highly interconnected, with cell phone videos able to quickly broadcast to the world what is happening. When unrest hits regions inside mainland China, the government typically shuts down the internet—but that is unlikely to happen in an international financial hub like Hong Kong.

What’s more probable, Yip said, is an escalation of government-sanctioned violence meant to create an atmosphere of fear. He pointed to the July 21 attack at the Yuen Long subway station, where a mob of suspected triad gang members in white shirts beat protesters and bystanders while police looked the other way. Yip believes the goal was to “terrify people so they will say, ‘Let’s calm down and not go out on the streets.’”

(Yip also mentioned that Beijing could resort to a legal maneuver: The Basic Law, Hong Kong’s governing document, states that if the Hong Kong government is facing political turmoil it cannot contain, China can apply its own laws in Hong Kong.)

Most Hong Kong citizens I spoke to viewed the future pessimistically. One theology student involved in the protests said, “I would rather die as a Hong Konger with freedom than become a submissive [Chinese] citizen.”

Where can the Hong Kong people find hope?

Wong, the Pastoral Care Group leader, has been preaching about hope from the pulpit. But for the past few weeks, he’s first had to ask whether he has hope himself. Recently he’s been preaching from the book of Ezra, and said he’s found comfort in the Word of God: Even though God planned to rebuild the Temple, in the book of Ezra, Chapter 4, opposition caused construction to stall for 17 years. Yet God remained in control, even if things didn’t happen within man’s time frame.

Wong related that story to Hong Kong’s struggles. Even though man may view the Chinese Communist Party as an unstoppable force, God is still in control. The Communist Party can’t stop God’s will for Hong Kong: “We can wait a minute or 17 years, but it’s just a yellow light. Afterward will come a green light when we see God’s will come to pass. This is our greatest hope.”
Carlos Benjamin Dubon-Moro says that when someone shot his brother multiple times, he had no idea if those bullets were meant for him or if it was a random act of violence. The 27-year-old Guatemalan father of three said he had been receiving threats after campaigning for a political candidate before the shooting. That’s the problem in Guatemala, he told me: You just never know—and you better get out before you find out.

So Dubon-Moro fled Guatemala for the United States. He knew that, by doing so, he was taking a gamble—a gamble that he would make the dangerous journey to the United States safely, that the government wouldn’t deport him, that an American judge would grant him asylum. What he didn’t expect was for the U.S. government to send him right back to Mexico.

Dubon-Moro is one of about 20,000 asylum-seekers placed under a new U.S. policy called the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), better known as “Remain in Mexico.” This policy, which currently faces lawsuits challenging it, radically changes the way the U.S. asylum system has historically worked and is part of the Trump administration’s continued effort to make it harder for Central American migrants to gain asylum in the United States.

Under MPP, the government now sends asylum-seekers from Spanish-speaking countries back to Mexico for the duration of their court proceedings instead of letting them wait in the United States with a sponsor. Since April 16, officials have sent about 9,000 migrants back to Ciudad Juárez, about 6,000 people to Tijuana, and about 4,000 people to Garita Mexicali according to a Mexican government report.

Pre-MPP, immigration officers would interview asylum-seekers about their fears, then release them on bond to sponsors based in the United States, who promise to make sure they show up to court. Officials would track them via a GPS ankle bracelet. Churches all across the U.S. border cities have been temporarily sheltering and helping these people until they reach their sponsors (see “Offering the love of Jesus,” Aug. 31, 2019).

Post-MPP, those responsibilities have shifted heavily toward churches and shelters in Mexican border cities—except they aren’t sheltering these asylum-seekers for a night or two, but for weeks and months with no end in sight. Taking care of these migrants has been extremely straining on Mexican churches and shelters, which have significantly fewer resources and funds than U.S. churches.
Currently, about 10,000 migrants are stuck in Juárez, where people are capping out shelters and hotel rooms, renting basements and lots, or sleeping on the streets. These asylum-seekers have family members, relatives, or friends who can take care of them in the United States—but very few have connections in Mexico. When the U.S. government sends them back to Mexico, these people wander out into the streets with no money, no food, no place to sleep, and no social network.

Some lawyers and advocates say MPP fails to comply with the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980, which allows asylum-seekers to fairly exercise their right to seek asylum and protects them from returning to countries where they would face “danger of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” They also say that MPP has resulted in more family separations—in several cases, a father and children older than 18 were sent back to Mexico, while the mother and younger children were allowed to stay in the United States. In other cases, children who crossed the border with an adult who’s not their parent or legal guardian—typically grandparents, older siblings, or another relative—were also separated.

Meanwhile, thousands of people are now stranded in border cities rife with kidnappings, murder, robbery, trafficking, and extortion. These are cities that the U.S. State Department itself is recommending Americans avoid due to extreme violence. There, migrants are particularly easy and obvious targets—they have darker skin, distinct facial features, foreign mannerisms, and strange accents. Even without those detectable traits, they’re easy to spot when lining up at the port of entry for court or walking into shelters. Kidnappers know that most have loved ones in the United States, which makes them lucrative hostages.

Legally, those who fear returning to Mexico can request an interview with an asylum officer. But the standards for “reasonable fear” are nearly impossible to meet: Ninety-nine percent of interviewees are sent back. Taylor Levy, a pro bono immigration attorney in El Paso, said one client and her children had been kidnapped twice in Juárez. The woman managed to pay both ransoms, and though she showed asylum officers evidences of the ransom payments, the government still sent her back, saying just because she’d been kidnapped twice in the past does not mean she’s likely to be kidnapped again.

Levy said she once watched a group of men snatch a family right before her eyes. When she tried to intervene, the kidnappers threatened her as well. So Levy thought of her two adopted daughters and stood, helpless and devastated, as the kidnappers dragged the family away: “I can’t stop thinking about them, ever. There’s just rampant, rampant amounts of kidnapping [in Juárez]. I know my life is in danger every time I go over there.”

‘There’s just rampant, rampant amounts of kidnapping [in Juárez]. I know my life is in danger every time I go over there.’

—IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY TAYLOR LEVY
saw the same fear among the migrants in Mexico. When I last saw him in late July, Dubon-Moro was staying at Pan de Vida, a ministry that serves at-risk kids and single mothers in a poverty-stricken neighborhood in Ciudad Juárez. Very few dare to venture outside the compound: Sometimes they hear gunshots outside or rumors of another migrant murder in the neighborhood.

Pan de Vida first opened its doors in March to one Honduran family sleeping on the streets. Then two more families came asking for shelter, then another, and another, and soon Mexican officials were sending people over by vans. Today, about 240 asylum-seekers live in Pan de Vida's tiny, bare-bones housing units surrounding a dusty, sun-fried courtyard. Dubon-Moro shares one of those units with eight men, one woman, one boy, and two girls from Guatemala and Honduras. Everyone in that unit had been sent back to Juárez under MPP, which was first implemented in El Paso in March.

I asked them for their first court dates: “Aug. 26.” “Sept. 30.” “Nov. 6.” “Nov. 13.” Those are just the preliminary hearings—they’ve got at least two more court dates before the judge makes a final ruling—that’s many, many more months of waiting in a city where they feel unsafe. But those dates are still relatively early—some people have court dates as far out as June 2020.

One 32-year-old man, Miguel Angel Ventura Lux, said he and his family left Guatemala because of gang threats. He used to run a small cafeteria, but local gangs demanded he pay them $390 every two weeks—or die. His wife, son, and daughter left first in February. He stayed behind to wait for a loan. That was a bad decision: Single male migrants have very little legal protection in the United States. Custody. When he tried to apply for asylum through the port of entry in Juárez, Customs and Border Protection officers turned him away. He said one female officer told him, “Men don’t cross by port of entry. They cross by the desert.” So he paid a coyote $4,000 to help him cross the desert, but he couldn’t keep up with the group because of an injured leg.

U.S. Border Patrol agents found him. He said he spent a month in detention, where he shivered under freezing temperatures, drank water from the bathroom sink, and watched an agent kick one migrant “like a dog.” The government then sent him back to Juárez, where Lux faces a dismal future: He has spent all his money. He says he can’t get a work permit in Mexico because federal officials took his ID away, for reasons he does not know. He doesn’t know when he’ll be able to join his family members, who crossed before MPP took full effect and are currently waiting for their court hearing in Seattle while immigration officials monitor them via a GPS ankle bracelet.

MPP drastically lowers his chances of winning asylum, no matter how strong his case. Very few U.S. lawyers are willing to travel across the border, and most refuse to accept clients who are out of the country. Currently, only about five immigration lawyers are willing to travel frequently to Juárez, a city with 10,000 asylum-seekers. Given how complicated immigration law is, asylum-seekers without legal representation have less than a 10 percent likelihood of succeeding.

The Trump administration claims that MPP is necessary because most asylum-seekers fail to appear at court—but studies show the opposite: Almost 6 out of 7 families show up for their initial court hearing, and more than 99 percent of those who have attorneys show up. DHS has stated that MPP will discourage false asylum claims—and that may be working: Many migrants who came to the border due to economic reasons (which don’t meet asylum qualifications) are realizing that they don’t stand any chance of asylum. Faced with threats of starvation, violence, and death in Mexico, a significant number are taking the bus back home. As for those who truly fear for their lives, MPP won’t deter them—but instead punishes them for seeking asylum.

Here in Pan de Vida, MPP doesn’t seem to have drained the asylum-seekers’ resolve to try to get into the United States, despite all the hardships. Dubon-Moro’s wife was pregnant when he decided to flee, so she stayed behind with her two boys. Three days before I met him, his wife gave birth to a baby girl and sent him pictures of his newborn through WhatsApp. He said he dreams of reuniting with his family, but one thing is clear: “There’s no way I can go back to Guatemala.”

Other folks also told me they cannot return to their home countries. In Juárez I met 21-year-old Manuel from Honduras (he asked me to use only his first name for fear of his life), who said he fled Honduras after drug cartel members tried to kill him. Back home, he had worked as a security guard for a man who prompted an investigation on a local drug cartel. He said the cartel exacted revenge by gang-raping his then-seven-months-pregnant girlfriend, then chopping her into pieces in front of him and stuffing her eyeballs and tongue into his mouth. Thanks to some friends who came to his rescue, he said, he was able to escape into the mountains.

Manuel tried to seek asylum in Mexico, but he said, on a bus ride from Oaxaca to Puebla, a group of men dressed in Mexican military uniforms tried to kidnap him and several other Hondurans on the bus. Realizing that he wasn’t even safe in Mexico, he came to the border to seek asylum in the United States. As he told his story, his voice rose with emotion: “I didn’t choose this life of seeking asylum. It was not a choice. The violence in Honduras—you don’t see anything like that anywhere else in the world.”

Another Salvadoran man, 42-year-old William (who also asked me to use his first name only because he fears for his life), lifted his shirt to show me scars stretching from chest to belly button. That’s the handiwork of MS-13 in his neighborhood, he said. He too said he never planned to seek asylum, “but the U.S. is the closest and safest place for me.”

Despite all the gory and tragic stories I heard among the asylum-seekers, I saw people still clinging to hope. Most of these asylum-seekers identify as evangelicals: They say they have faith in God and the Bible—and thus they hope. Whenever someone leaves the shelter for a court hearing, everyone is abuzz with good wishes and anticipation. When the person sends good news, everyone rejoices.

It gives them one more day’s strength to hope. ☝
On a Tuesday morning, a loud bell echoed across Mary Slessor Academy in Calabar, the capital city of Cross River state in southern Nigeria. Students wearing navy blue and green uniforms scurried to line up for morning devotions and announcements.

On the fenced property sat different classroom blocks for nursery to high-school students. In front of the high-school block, students sang praise songs and hymns. One teacher led a Scripture reading and shared words of encouragement.

“You should not try to compare yourselves to anybody,” she told the students before they marched off to classrooms for the day. “Be the best you can be in your academics, in whatever you do.”

The academy is one of several institutions and monuments in Calabar named after Mary Mitchell Slessor, a 19th-century Scottish missionary whose influence on the region was profound. Slessor surpassed the expectations of female missionaries at the time by carrying the gospel and promoting development in a territory previously considered too dangerous, even for her male counterparts.

At the Mary Slessor Roundabout in the center of Calabar stands a tall bronze statue of the missionary carrying two babies. It’s a record of how she confronted traditional beliefs by stopping the killing of twins. Today, some twins in the region are named after Slessor in a gesture of gratitude.

Her sincere desire to improve the community more than 100 years ago left a trail of schools, hospitals, and empowerment centers that honor her work to this day. Her courage in doing gospel ministry and culture-shaping work, often in the face of threats and opposition, remains an example for others following in her footsteps.

Slessor was born in 1848 in Aberdeen but grew up in the slums of Dundee. When her father, an alcoholic, died of pneumonia, she worked 12-hour shifts at a jute mill to assist her family.

The Slessors attended the Wishart Church in Dundee, under the United Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church established its Calabar mission in 1846 when Hope Masterton Waddell, an Irish clergyman serving in Jamaica, led a team to the region.

The denomination published a monthly magazine, Missionary Record, which chronicled mission efforts across Africa, China, and Jamaica. Slessor was already teaching Sunday school and worked with a youth club. But copies of her mother’s magazines fueled her desire for overseas missions.

In 1876, the 28-year-old redhead boarded the SS Ethiopia in Liverpool. She sailed for about five weeks to the Calabar port city of Duke Town. She remained stationed in the town, which had become an active base for the growing number of missionaries.

Slessor easily picked up the local Efik language. In Mary Slessor—Everybody’s Mother, Jeanette Hardage writes that she abandoned her Victorian-style...
ONE WOMAN'S LEGACY

Mary Slessor and her children
dresses, which were uncomfortable for the tropical climate, for simple cotton ones. She also began to eat the local food, allowing her to send more money back home to support her family.

Slessor worked as a teacher and served at a dispensary, but she longed to extend her mission to unreached communities farther away.

She took her first furlough in 1879 after coming down with a case of malaria. When she returned, she was reassigned to Old Town, where she enjoyed more freedom working as the village’s only missionary. She traveled to nearby villages, working alongside residents and dispensing medicines while sharing the gospel.

In 1883, she left again for Scotland on another sick leave. Upon her return, she urged the mission to send her into the Okoyong territory. Mission leaders were hesitant, since villagers in the region had previously rejected and killed some male missionaries. But they ultimately approved her request.

She settled into the Okoyong community in 1888 and remained there for about 15 years. There she learned about the prevalence of witchcraft, drunkenness, and superstition. One traditional practice she helped to end was the sacrificing of wives and slaves whenever a local chief died.

In one instance Etim, the son of a local chief, died after being crushed by a log, and the witch doctor blamed another village for the bad fortune. After the local chief took several captives from the village, intending to kill them, Slessor kept two of the prisoners hidden in her home for at least two weeks. “The chief’s son was buried, and not one life was sacrificed,” noted Charles Ovens, a missionary carpenter who witnessed the ordeal. “Such a thing was never known in Okoyong before.”

She also fought vehemently against the killing of twins. Locals at the time believed one child out of every set of twins or multiple births harbored an evil spirit. They abandoned the children, sometimes in clay pots, in the bushes. They also banished the mothers from the community.

Slessor rescued hundreds of the children left to die and adopted several of them, bringing them into her home.

“Ma was the ideal mother,” one of her adoptive sons, Dan Slessor, wrote of her in 1948. “With us she was not the mistress or the missionary worker, she was our mother and the home our family.”

Mary Slessor introduced trade between the territory and the rest of the state—a move that further endeared her to the community, where local trade disputes often ended in bloodshed. (A *palaver*, or trading conference, ultimately became a synonym for idle talk.) Slessor noted in one of her letters back home in 1890: “Having work, they have fewer palavers, and such as they have, they have begun to settle by arbitration instead of by the sword.”

In the territory’s village of Akpap, Slessor’s two-story mission home is deteriorating but still stands on a hill, open to tourists. Inside the home, her living room has remained intact. Two cots for some of the children she adopted stay intact. Two cots for some of the children she adopted remain in the bedroom.

Portraits of her hometown of Dundee still hang on the walls. A short distance away, the community’s historic Presbyterian church is named “Mary Slessor’s Parish.” Outside the church stands another statue of Slessor holding a set of twins.

Slessor became the vice consul of Okoyong under the British protectorate that began in 1891. She presided over a native court and helped to settle local disputes, a role she already played informally.

The formation of an industrial training center in the region was also Slessor’s idea. In 1894, the mission launched the Hope Waddell Training Institution, where students learned printing, tailoring, and carpentry, among other trades.

The institution is still active to this day as a high school, with its 19th-century British brick-and-stone architecture. It has several notable alumni, including Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria’s first president.

Akpap remained Slessor’s home even as she extended her mission to regions within Cross River state and into other neighboring states, including Abia and Akwa Ibom. As she traveled with the gospel, she continued to set up schools, vocational centers for women, and hospitals in the communities she visited.

Despite her sick leaves, Slessor continued to have bouts with fever and malaria and suffered from boils, blood poisoning, and other health problems. She died in 1915 at the age of 66, having never married.

At that time, word of her work had already spread, earning her the title of “White Queen of Okoyong.” At her death, flags flew at half-mast in her honor, and she was buried at a cemetery for whites in Duke Town.

In 1997, the Scotland-based Clydesdale Bank printed Slessor’s portrait on the 10-pound note. Three years later, Cross River state named her one of its 100 “millennium persons.”
The village of Akpap in Okoyong has become a tourist attraction because of Slessor’s mission home. It remains a small community with narrow tarred roads. Different groups emulating her work have sprung up over the years, but the community has struggled to maintain development.

A past government project to set up a clay-kilning factory close to Slessor’s house sits abandoned. In 2016, an independent Mary Slessor Foundation shut down after operating for more than 10 years in the community. Eme Mitchell, a descendant of the town’s local chief, launched the foundation with her husband in 2002. Her great-great-grandmother, Ma Eme Ete, was a friend of Slessor’s. Ma Eme aided Slessor’s work in the territory, although she never converted to Christianity.

The foundation ran a skill-training center, an agricultural processing unit, and a medical clinic. Eno Idopise Atakpa obtained a tailoring certificate from the foundation in 2015 and opened his own shop in the village two years later. He is now training three people in the small space to help grow his business. “I hope that if I manage the place [well], there will be more progress than this.”

Some of the twins living in the community are a testament to Slessor’s legacy. One, 20-year-old Dan-Slessor Bassey Akiba, lives with his grandmother in a small mud home in the village. Some other members of his maternal family also adopted Slessor’s name as a sign of personal gratitude.

Akiba and his twin sister, Mary-Slessor, are the second generation of twins born in their family since Slessor helped to end the killing of twins.

It’s a story his mother repeatedly tells him: “It was by God’s will she came to stop the killing of twins.”

Akiba finished high school in 2017 and hoped to study electrical engineering, but he’s been unable to afford continuing his schooling. To make ends meet, he now works as a barber’s apprentice in the village.

Back in Calabar, Mary Slessor Academy traces its beginnings back to a Sunday school gathering the Scottish Presbyterian missionaries led on Hawkings Street in Old Calabar. The missionaries willed the school over to the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, and the school moved to its current location in 1963, beginning operations as the Calabar Preparatory International School. It relaunched as Mary Slessor Academy in 2005, and now has more than 1,000 students enrolled.

Ahead of final term exams in July, some of the high-school students gathered in a physics lab, practicing at drawing a rectangular prism.

The academy built its mission statement on Slessor’s work and on an excerpt from Romans Chapter 8: “Therefore, there shall be no condemnation for they who are in Christ.”

“Her idea was a twin baby should not be condemned just because they are born twins,” said Edet Inyang, the school’s principal. “We strongly believe that no child is good for nothing or beyond rehabilitation.”

Inyang said children who disobey the school’s policies must first sit in with a committee that includes the class teacher, a pastor, and a counselor. They are expelled only if the misconduct continues, he added.

The school also serves as the headquarters for a twins club, where twins meet monthly and celebrate Slessor’s legacy each year.

Slessor’s legacy is even evident 400 miles away in Abuja, Nigeria’s capital city. There, James Bassey lives with his wife in a two-story home.

The 55-year-old Cross River native traces his roots back to Slessor, who adopted his maternal great-grandmother, Alice. He still has a steel bed he said Slessor gave to Alice at her wedding.

Bassey, a church deacon, said he determined to work to preserve Slessor’s legacy when he realized his lineage traces back to her single act of adopting his relative.

“She went ahead and stopped wars, she judged between warring factions, she saved twins labeled as evil,” he said.

In 2015, he marked the centenary anniversary of her death with a celebration that featured donations to orphanages and the stories of people she helped to save. This year, he hopes to launch a program he calls Real Tour Africa, which would seek to involve youths in fighting some of the ills still facing the continent, such as human trafficking and illegal migration.

Bassey ties the project to Slessor’s initial mission: “God is about everything that concerns humanity. Slessor was so special because she took that which concerns God personally.”
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—Lynn M.
Jon Peters, who in 1989 set the record for the most consecutive wins of any high-school baseball pitcher—51—gave pesky reporters a lot of God talk: “Anytime I felt that the media were getting too close ... all I had to do was mention God, and you could see them step back.” Peters regularly thanked God during interviews, because he didn’t want the world to know that he was full of fears and had even attempted suicide.

Thirty years later we spoke with Peters at Fireman’s Park in Brenham, Texas, where he set the record. He talked about his years of alcoholism and his divorce—but also explained how eight years ago he started believing in Jesus for real. Here’s his story of high-school pitching with national news outlets filming, a life crumbling, and hope returning.

It was April 28, 1989. Five thousand people packed the stands inside Fireman’s Park, home of the Brenham Cubs. Outside the right field fence, high schoolers sat in lawn chairs atop a plywood platform rigged up on a forklift. Networks ABC, NBC, CBS, and ESPN waited on top of the first base dugout, ready to watch Jon Peters make baseball history.

The 6-foot-2-inch right-handed pitcher needed one more victory to trump the record of 50 consecutive wins. Peters walked to the mound with his green cap pulled low over his eyes. He wore No. 21 on his dark green baseball jersey—the number of the seven-time Cy Young Award winner Roger Clemens.

“What do you think?” Peters thought as he readied to throw the first pitch. He threw a fastball. Strike. After that, he was in the zone. Baseball was his “happy place.”

By the fifth inning Brenham led 9-0, one run short of the 10-run mercy rule. Peters had done his job from the mound, garnering 12 strikeouts and allowing no hits. With two outs, the
talented pitcher stepped into the batter’s box. Peters drove in the clinching run, and his team went crazy. Journalists rushed the field with cameras clicking and lights flashing.

“I didn’t want all this hoopla,” Peters remembers. He had the record, but he was most excited for the nosy reporters to leave. The day before he’d been in a big fight with his girlfriend and tried to commit suicide by swallowing three-fourths of a bottle of Tylenol. He was terrified reporters would find out who he really was. So he mentioned God, and they backed off.

Peters craved affirmation but knew from his childhood baseball years that sometimes attention brought shame. He remembers when his pants unsnapped as he struck out trying to hit a ball on a tee and fell into the dusty dirt. Try as he might, the chubby Peters couldn’t refasten them. Dejected, he walked back to the dugout amid his teammates’ laughter.

In high school he sought affirmation from his girlfriend. He was insecure and often told her they should break up and date other people. He hoped she’d say no and tell him how much she loved him. One time she took his suggestion and went on a date with one of his friends. The day before his record-breaking game, Peters found out and attempted suicide. His big win brought them back together but only for a week. That summer Peters turned to alcohol to fuel his waning confidence.

Even after high school the Brenham community gave Peters some of the affirmation he wanted, but not always for the best. Peters was 19 when a police officer pulled him over for drinking and driving. He was a freshman at Texas A&M, back in Brenham with his roommate, driving 86 miles per hour. The officer checked his driver’s license and asked, “Are you the baseball pitcher?” When Peters said yes, the officer wished him a safe trip and let him go.

“I should have been in jail,” says Peters. Despite the high expectations of people in his hometown, Peters never made it through another full baseball season. At A&M he fought a cycle of arm injuries and recoveries that ended prospects of a professional baseball career. He saw his injured arm as a relief and an excuse to leave baseball. He would never again have to face the possibility of losing a game: “I was relieved because I didn’t have to prove anything.” He hoped this quiet departure from the field would cement his status as the high-school phenom rather than the college failure. But his high-school reputation faded, and his drinking habit escalated.

In January 2011 a friend from Alcoholics Anonymous invited Peters to a Christian men’s retreat. Although hesitant to accept, Peters remembered his counselor’s advice to “be open, be honest, and be willing.” He went but almost left during a small-group session when he felt judged for his alcoholism and divorce. He stayed because of his counselor’s advice.

At an evening chapel he heard about human brokenness and the need for a Savior. Peters says that during a visual exercise he closed his eyes and imagined Jesus with open arms telling him to jump. In that moment, he felt he finally understood God’s unconditional love, despite his brokenness: “It was like hope turned on.”

His ex-wife noticed a change in him. After their daughter’s soccer game, she was frustrated with the coach and asked Peters if she should email him. He told her to think about it and suggested talking to the coach in person. His ex was surprised: “What in the world has come over you?” He was the one who had filed for divorce in 2010 and been too prideful to reconcile. Suddenly, he was recommending humility and restraint.
Jon Peters is now remarried and lives in Houston, where he works as a business development manager. He coached baseball for a few years after college but hasn’t coached recently: He prefers to watch.

Neither of his children has taken up their dad’s sport, but both are athletic: His 16-year-old daughter Kylie swims competitively, and his 12-year-old son Jake has played basketball and soccer. Jake played baseball for one year but told his dad it was “just too slow.” Peters says this doesn’t bother him: His main concern is for his kids’ salvation. He wants to support them in whatever sports they choose and love them regardless of their athletic success.

Peters attends four or five AA meetings each week and speaks at churches and schools not about his former glory but about God rescuing him from alcoholism and despair.

Occasionally, Peters makes the 75-mile trip back to Brenham to watch his old high-school team take the field. On some days, he spends a whole game catching up with Brenham friends. When he’s not in a talkative mood, he sits alone in the upper deck so he can focus on the game. He says he likes to watch the pitchers’ mechanics and sequencing.

On this day, Peters stands in the shade of the first base dugout at Fireman’s Park. The number 21, once printed on his green Cubs jersey, is now retired on the green outfield wall. Tallest of the tall, with a shade of the first base dugout at Fireman’s Park. The number 21, once printed on his green Cubs jersey, his white stethoscope hanging from his neck, he sits alone in the shade of the first base dugout at Fireman’s Park. The number 21, once printed on his green Cubs jersey, is now retired on the green outfield wall.

Peters walks through the hot Texas morning to the pitcher’s mound, his head glowing red through thinning hair. Sweating slightly in his long gray pants and royal blue polo, he winds up and throws the baseball toward home.

Juliet was the hottest month ever recorded according to a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report. The scientists said July’s sizzling heat wave soared to an average global temperature 1.71 degrees Fahrenheit above the 20th-century average. The previous hottest month on record was July 2016.

But Roy Spencer, a meteorologist and principal research scientist at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, said NOAAs analysis is wrong, because it’s based on a limited and “error-prone” collection of mostly ground thermometers. His own website chart, based on satellite recording of temperatures in the lower atmosphere, shows the July increase as only two-thirds of a degree Fahrenheit: “not terribly alarming.”

Google “July heat record,” though, and it’s clear that every major network and newspaper is mega-alarmed. The Washington Post was typical in ignoring Spencer and quoting Petteri Taalas, secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organization: “July has re-written climate history. This is not science fiction. It is the reality of climate change.”

The Post included in its coverage some almost-stranger-than-fiction stories: An overheated German riding his motorbike and wearing only a helmet. Two drug dealers in Belgium stuck in a cocaine-filled container and calling police to get them out before they roasted to death. But critical thinking from Spencer received nary a mention.

That’s not fair. Spencer has a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, was a senior scientist for climate studies at NASA, and received NASAs Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal for global temperature monitoring work with satellites. He should not be excommunicated from national media just because his books, including Climate Confusion, have criticized “global warming hysteria.”

That’s especially so because much of the alarm about climate change packs a big political punch. As Secretary-General Taalas put it, the climate “will worsen in the future without urgent climate action.”

Translation: more central governmental power. The claim of climate change activists that life will become harder if our days become hotter may be true. But history shows that governmental control over all aspects of our lives will certainly give us great grief.

The Bible tells us that God created climates and created humans to be His designated gardeners. The Bible does not take a position on this current debate. WORLD will try to report both sides of this issue.

—Leah Hickman and Hannah Harris are completing WORLD internships
Roger Frisch had it all. A lengthy career as violinist and associate concert master of the acclaimed Minnesota Orchestra. A supportive, talented wife, Michele, principal flutist of the Minnesota Opera. Three adult children successfully launched. A fulfilling teaching post at a local Christian college.

But in 2007, at age 56, Frisch's right arm started involuntarily quivering on a music ministry trip to China. He recalls, “It came on quickly. It progressed quickly. Real panic set in.”

Two years of deteriorating steadiness and more than a dozen doctors later culminated in a visit to neurologist Joseph Matsumoto at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. Within 30 minutes, Matsumoto diagnosed him with essential tremor, a benign but progressive neurological disorder that could eventually render professional performing impossible.

When medication didn’t work, Frisch knew any hope to extend his career entailed the radical next step: brain surgery.

Renowned Mayo neurosurgeon, Dr. Kendall Lee, told me he’d been in Asia and saw a Japanese surgeon stop a patient’s tremors by lesioning, or damaging, part of the brain. Lee wanted to stop Frisch's shaking by implanting electrodes to interrupt the tremor-causing impulses without harming tissue, a technique called deep brain stimulation.

Frisch recounts how in December 2009 he lay strapped to the operating table, his head propped up and immobilized by a bolted-on halo. He remained awake for the entire surgery, violin and bow in hand.

The surgical team planned to measure precisely Frisch’s tremors while he played by using an oscilloscope attached to a first-ever “accelerometer” that Mayo engineers had innovatively created from inner workings of a Wii game accessory toggled to a $75 violin from eBay.

Lee drilled a small hole in Frisch’s skull and manipulated a lead with an electrode down into the correct region of the thalamus. He directed Frisch to draw his bow across the strings. Frisch complied, trembling noticeably less, but not enough to play smoothly.

After checking with Frisch, Lee in a surgical first inserted a second electrode on the same side of his brain. Frisch again drew his bow and pulled a long, steady, beautiful note, and then another. The tremor had disappeared.

Michele Frisch recalls that day: “We had a huge prayer team all over, but I had lots of time to think about what could go wrong.”

The revolutionary surgery included implanting a controllable pulse generator under his collarbone. It allowed Frisch to play nine more years with the orchestra. He and Michele have taken numerous overseas ministry trips, especially to Ukraine, performing and sharing their faith.

Frisch says, “Performing gives us credibility to speak.” He paraphrases what Itzhak Perlman said: “I’m just a dumb violinist. If I want people to listen to me, I have to play first.” Frisch considers playing beautiful music his spiritual calling card to share Christ.

Last August, after 44 years with the Minnesota Orchestra, the same length as his marriage, Frisch retired. He anticipates God presenting more music ministry opportunities overseas and perhaps in the Twin Cities. Michele likes to cite Olympic runner Eric Liddell’s quote: “I feel God’s pleasure when I run. That’s how Roger and I feel... We feel God’s pleasure when we play.”
When flames engulfed Notre Dame Cathedral last April, people around the world mourned the destruction of France’s national symbol. The greater tragedy, wrote Pastor René Breuel for The Washington Post, is that a church was on fire. “More than a national icon or a touristic spot, cathedrals such as Notre Dame reveal their soul when they house singing and baptism, confession and pardon, preaching and prayer,” he said. In America, the most iconic landmark is the Statue of Liberty, not a church. But church buildings have long served as sacred spaces in the country. And America is losing them, one by one.

Real estate developers are snatching up the properties and converting them into luxury condos. The developers often incorporate the church’s features, like the stained glass windows or the bell tower, into the hip new home designs rather than demolishing the structure in favor of cookie-cutter housing. But while the exterior may look the same, the interior differs in form and purpose. Buildings once intended for religious and social benefits (whether a wedding, the Lord’s Supper, or a 12-step meeting) are now limited to private use. It’s happening in cities such as Boston, Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco, as well as in smaller towns.

The word church in the Bible refers to a body of believers, not a building, so the church-to-condo movement raises the question: Does it matter when a neighborhood loses the physical space where worshippers gather? Pastor John Slye of Grace Community Church in Arlington, Va., thinks it does: “These are sacred spaces that were prayed over, labored over, and dedicated to the work of Christ in that particular community.”

Although each property has its unique story, churches sometimes decide to sell because of the pressure from the denomination’s governing body that wants the financial benefit. Matthew 21 tells the story of how Jesus cleansed the Temple area in Jerusalem because merchants turned a house of prayer into a robbers’ den (making money the priority). In some parts of the country, megachurches are flourishing, and streaming technology allows people to watch services without even getting out of bed.

Attendance at mainline denominations is on the decline: The 2018 General Social Survey says the trend has been going on for 20 years. A 2015 study by LifeWay Research estimated that 3,700 Protestant churches closed in 2014. But that study also found that new church plants, often Biblically oriented, outpaced the closures: 4,000 opened their doors that same year. New church plants often forgo owning a building and meet in places like schools, movie theaters, and coffee shops.

When Liz Laird moved to Washington in 2005, a city she’d lived in before, she started working for various Christian ministries and became concerned that many of the newer congregations didn’t have a long-term, physical space. She saw them searching for temporary space every few years in
a rapidly changing city with rising rents. It ate up resources, exhausted pastors, and saddled churches with a sense of rootlessness.

With so many old beautiful church buildings in prime locations sitting empty much of the week, Laird knew the big gathering places could be put to good use. In 2017, she co-founded Sacred Spaces Conservancy, a nonprofit that works to help congregations with buildings preserve their physical spaces and use them for the good of the city. For example, Laird hopes to pair a Syrian refugee ministry that doesn’t have office space with a mainline congregation that is thinking about renting out its building for financial reasons.

Laird says church buildings could be rented out for all sorts of purposes, religious or non: day care centers, soup kitchens, art and theater programs, and classroom space. A church with a Sunday morning service could share its building with one that worships on Saturdays or Wednesday nights. Sharing a space can be touchy, but it can also bring together people with different backgrounds, economics, and races: “The kingdom of God is actually greatly improved when I’m worshipping with people who don’t look like me and whose life experience isn’t like mine.”

Last year the financial website 24/7 Wall St. declared the Waterloo–Cedar Falls, Iowa, area America’s worst place for African Americans to live. White people there have higher employment and earn almost twice as much as blacks, who have less education and higher arrest rates. Sarah Helleso, 25, is a member of Orchard Hill Church in Cedar Falls. She said residents have noticed the divide for a long time: “There are people in Cedar Falls who won’t go to Waterloo, and then people in Waterloo who have no interest in going to Cedar Falls.”

In 2013, Orchard Hill Church partnered with Harvest Vineyard Church in Waterloo to create a community development organization to serve downtown Waterloo. Out of that came a social enterprise, Try Pie. It’s a bakery that employs 13 high-school girls—some black, some white, some Asian—from Waterloo and Cedar Falls. After school the girls come to the downtown Waterloo bakery, leave their stuff in cubbies, and gather by the office to read a Bible verse and pray. They then put on hairnets and aprons. Large windows take up two of the kitchen’s walls, so people passing on the street can see the girls starting to bake.

Inside, all smells like flour and crust, and the counters and floor are spotted with flour and squished blueberries. The girls laugh and chat as they work, mixing ingredients or rolling out dough on the stainless steel counters. They develop friendships, learn about financial responsibility, and gain job skills.

One of the first bakers was Aquayla Lumpkin. She worked there for a year and a half while learning budgeting skills with her mentor. She set up a savings account before she left for college to study criminal justice. When her car later broke down, she was able to pay for the repairs because of her savings account. Now Lumpkin is a Try Pie staff member. She helps the girls participate in community projects like planting flowers—a simple act but a symbol of hope. The same goes for baking pies: no advanced degrees required.
Two years after they married in 1954, Charlotte and Dick Griffiths moved to the jungle of Indonesia to translate the Bible into the Hatam language. Living among the isolated tribe intensified normal marriage stresses but also brought them closer to each other and to God. Dick, now 90, has dementia, but Charlotte remembers both hard times and good times.

Difficulties came early. Charlotte had scored higher in their translation school, so at first she tried to handle the project while her husband worked on their hut and the airstrip. But the demands of caring for their home and child made her progress on the Bible painfully slow. Eventually, they realized Dick needed to take over. He made the translation his sole focus, working to get each passage perfectly right. This eased the process and a point of tension in their marriage.

When their first daughter was young, Charlotte remembers, she felt jealous of how happy the baby made Dick. She said he confronted her about this, and she saw her sin and repented. On Charlotte’s first birthday overseas, her frugal husband gave her a plastic garbage disposal instead of the perfume she wanted. She got over her disappointment by “considering what he was thinking: keeping within our budget carefully and realizing I was going to need one.”

On other occasions, she appreciated his thoughtfulness: Dick arranged for the missions plane to bring a wood stove from the Sears catalog so Charlotte could bake bread. She said, “Hatamers began dancing in our yard when, for the first time, they saw smoke going out that chimney instead of filling the house!”

The work was tedious and slow: Dick translated a Bible passage, then paused to teach it to the newly Christian natives. Meanwhile, Charlotte cared for their home and growing family. The Griffithses taught their four children to enjoy the jungle but dress up for dinner and remember their manners in case they one day returned to the United States. Charlotte remembers bonfires in the cool mountain air and the family eating homemade pizza and singing as one of the children played the guitar. On Fridays the family hosted game nights and invited the station’s other missionaries: “Our house would rock with laughter.”

But missionary life was not easy. Charlotte said she and Dick had strained communication and conflicts that forced them to keep close accounts with God and each other: “These ‘rocks’ became the things that drove us together, not apart.” The Hatam noticed: One man asked Dick to “train” his wife so they too could have a happy marriage. One woman told Charlotte, “Your husband treats you like a brother,” meaning her husband cared for and defended her as a brother would a sister in that culture.

Dick turned 70 in 1998 and had to retire, with the translation still unfinished after 42 years of work. Dick was devastated to leave his life’s work unfinished, but Indonesian believers continued the work: By 2009 the translation was done. Dick and Charlotte, back in the USA, now have four children, 15 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren. One of their sons lives with them and helps Charlotte care for Dick. She says she is still learning to fight her selfishness and bring to God even routine matters like planning a menu to please both men (one raised in Asia, one in Philadelphia).

Charlotte said Dick still has a sense of humor at age 90 and loves to hold her hand. She is thankful that God preserved her marriage as she learned to be “continually going to God privately with these things that were bothering me... I found He was my best friend.”

(Second in a series on long marriages)
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Scheming for God

[Aug. 3, p. 42] I got to the description of 20schemes’ “Ragged School of Theology” and tears started flowing. I love the Hope Awards and am so glad 20schemes won the International category.

—REBECCA PEARCE on Facebook

Thank you for reporting on events around the world from a Christian worldview, especially Marvin Olasky’s recent reports on Scotland. Your in-depth and analytical stories are a breath of fresh air. We in the U.K. don’t have any news sources that challenge us to consider the impact of our behavior, and we are worse off as a result.

—CHRIS JOHNSON / Huddersfield, England

Forge fires and watered gardens

[Aug. 3, p. 46] The Forge Center for Virtue and Work is in my backyard, and I hear about it often. The process is slow and the numbers are low, but real change is happening. I like to support ministries that try to move people into a better life rather than just subsidize the destructive life they have.

—TONY McCORD on wng.org

I am touched by WORLD’s annual Hope Awards. I often find myself wondering, “Why aren’t ministries like these central to our churches?”

—STEPHEN KEMP / Ames, Iowa

Stranger danger

[Aug. 3, p. 8] To be fair, Trump’s tweets telling those four Democratic representatives to “go back” to their countries of origin have a very tongue-in-cheek tone, and they were often reported out of context.

—KEN ISGRIGG on wng.org

On ending well

[Aug. 3, p. 5] I first read Bill Davis’ book, Departing in Peace, when my husband was suffering from a very rare form of Parkinson’s disease. God’s presence was evident, but it was not easy watching him die slowly. The Lord mercifully drew my husband into His arms on Christmas Eve 2018. Christmas Day in Paradise—who could ask for a better gift?

—DELORES TULFO / Tacoma, Wash.

A hearty amen to this column. We need to have honest conversations about end-of-life issues, for they are becoming more complex every day.

—B. THOMAS HAYGOOD / Lindale, Texas

Oberlin’s fervor

[Aug. 3, p. 16] The specifics of the college’s actions seemed at first so outlandish that I did some online research. It confirmed the worst and more. The moral fallout and Oberlin’s complicity should shock us all—or not, given that higher education no longer seeks to discover truth regardless of political implications.

—CECILIA MERZ / Boise, Idaho

Seeing eye to eye

[Aug. 3, p. 26] I am thankful for articles like this that give hope and doable examples of how to be united as Americans and human beings. Simon Tam has great wisdom for such a young man.

—HOLLY McMILLAN on wng.org

A religious place

[Aug. 3, p. 30] Mindy Belz’s short column about coverage of religious persecution is quite the exposé.

—JOHN MOERMAN on Facebook

The pull-out quotation caught my attention. I am not willing to die for any “belief.” Jesus died to purchase our lives with His life. He died for people. I would die for Him, but not for a mere belief.

—FRANCES BENNETT / Quarryville, Pa.

Play like a genius

[Aug. 3, p. 19] I loved this review of Yesterday, about the only man who remembers the Beatles. It captures this delightful film so well!

—VIRGINIA CROOK SCHOFIELD on Facebook

A man over the moon

[July 20, p. 50] Your article about the faith journey of Apollo astronaut and moon walker Charlie Duke was wonderful.

This was a great but somewhat sad time in American history. In 1969 I joined the Air Force. I wasn’t a Christian then, and my life drifted down wrong paths; but, somewhat like Duke, Jesus found me in the quagmire and pulled me out.

—MARK J. ANTHONY / Monument, Colo.

Almighty science?

[July 20, p. 5] Claims that science provides all knowledge, wisdom, and understanding reflect scientism, not science, and should be rejected. Christian faith does not conflict with science, but science and faith enhance our understanding of the world in complimentary ways. May we approach both with humility.

—MICHELLE OLS / Northborough, Mass.
God has spread all of creation before us to inspire us to study it, and given us enormous curiosity about it. We must continue to study and explore the universe through science.

—MARTHA BALL / Pittsburgh, Pa.

Glorious by design
[July 20, p. 16] Wonderful column about some of the most glorious of God’s little creatures. The flagrant beauty of hummingbirds, sunsets over the ocean, and wildflowers in the desert have always seemed to me a conclusive argument against a mindless, accidental nature.

—JIM STEWART / Camptonville, Calif.

Career and calling
[July 20, p. 57] There are so many stories of how people loved in places like Kingdom Home in Uganda grew up and became leaders in their own cities and countries for generations afterward. Thank the Lord for those willing to invest in those who otherwise would be trapped in a hellish evil.

—JOSEPH BADGER on wng.org

Reading for refreshment
[June 29, p. 34] I am always so grateful for your book reviews. I picked up Herman Wouk’s Winds of War, thinking I might be bored, but I was so wrong! I laughed, I cried, and now I’m enjoying the miniseries. And your interview with Rosaria Butterfield prompted me to pick up The Gospel Comes With a House Key. I am enjoying it immensely.

—LAURRYN McDANIEL / Sellersburg, Ind.

A ‘positive good’?
[June 29, p. 16] Perhaps the woman holding the sign, “I don’t regret my abortion,” wouldn’t be so proud had her placard said, “I don’t regret killing my baby.”

—SANDRA BLANCHARD / Zeeland, Mich.

I was going through boxes and came across “must save” back issues. It reminded me how much I love WORLD! I’d like to read the articles online, but instead I just read the headlines online and wait patiently for my beloved magazine to arrive in the mail.

—JANET PICCIONE KLEPPER on Facebook

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In the same month of August, these two things happened to me: I paid $239 to a New Jersey court for the dubious pleasure of holding my cell phone in hand while driving in plain sight of a cruiser. Second, a Korean woman I don’t even remember who knew my late husband and happened to dine with a distant acquaintance, asked said acquaintance about me, and ended up writing me a check for $200. So it was kind of a wash, financially speaking.

If you are of a mind to do any thinking about God’s working in your life, what conclusion would you draw? Partly that depends on where you put the “but” in the sentence, right? I mean, you can say, “I got a windfall 200 smackers one day in summer—but lost it all on a traffic violation.” Or you can say, “I lost a couple hundred dollars on a traffic ticket—but got it mostly back in the form of an out-of-the-blue gift!” It’s all in the way you look at things, I guess.

But the “wash” thing keeps bugging me in some fundamental philosophical way—the way that through six-plus decades it seems that monetary gains and losses have cancelled each other out on balance. Nothing went quite the way I envisioned: I made sizable stupid money blunders, and sizeable unexpected gains. Some of those losses were for innocent mistakes, and almost all the augmentations were unmerited. There has been no closely correlated one-to-one correspondence between my wits and my money. The old adage has borne out: “Easy come, easy go.”

Ben Shapiro chides cultural snowflakes: “Facts don’t care about your feelings.” I propose a similar axiom: “Cash doesn’t care about your deservingness.” Don’t worry about money, because money isn’t worried about you. Jesus spoke of the fickleness of Lady Lucre this way: “moth and rust destroy... thieves break in and steal.”

My Great Depression–scarred maternal grandmother was a world-class money worrier and had amassed a fortune in nickels and dimes by her nineties, only to be pressured into handing the whole caboodle over to my father’s failing furniture business, which tanked anyway. How many needs and pleasures did she deny herself and others to make that fortune that took wing in a moment?

When I was a widow (that was a 14-year stretch), and totally unemployable except for writing, for some reason I wasn’t worried about money. And it’s a good thing too, because it would have been a waste of perfectly good brain cells: A total stranger from Texas phoned and said the Lord had put it on his heart to buy me a car. No thank you, I have a car, I said. Hmm, he said, then I’ll send you a check. The next week I got $25,000 in the mail. I wasn’t aware I would need it, but God was.

We may take these boons when Heaven grants them, and be grateful. My brother and his wife were subsisting on bread and yogurt and faith during seminary and missionary support-raising days. Then his father-in-law uncharacteristically phoned to say he bought them a Citroën CX, which unbeknownst to my brother was in 1983 one of Citroën’s most expensive models (copied by Rolls Royce). Later, at a café in Ales, France, the father-in-law joked with a couple of his buddies: “So how do you like that? I bust my butt all year working at the restaurant, yet I drive that crummy little jalopy, whereas my son-in-law here, the prayer merchant, drives that big fancy Citroën! There’s something wrong here!”

“No at all,” said my brother. “It’s quite normal.”

“What do you mean, it’s normal?” the elder asked.

“I reached into my handbag and pulled out my pocket Bible and turned to the book of Ecclesiastes. ... I read out loud: ‘To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and happiness; but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God’” (Ecclesiastes 2:26). (Marc Mailloux, God Still Loves the French).

Seek first the kingdom of God, and He will take care of you. It’s the only thing you can rely on. &
This fall brings the 50th anniversary of a guest lecture I attended while in college. The speaker was Herbert Marcuse, known in 1969 as chief theorist for the Marxist new left. Marcuse’s most famous book, One-Dimensional Man, argued that capitalism exploits people and nature and turns art and culture into commodities. I applauded, not knowing then the universality of sin and the historical fact that socialism is even more prone to lead to dictatorship and war.

Marcuse’s analysis was one-dimensional, as is one outgrowth of Marxist analysis, the “privilege walk” exercise now standard at many U.S. colleges, including Christian ones. Amy Julia Becker, author of White Picket Fences (NavPress, 2018), describes what she went through at Princeton along with 60 other students. “If your ancestors came to the United States by force, take one step back. If your parents or guardians attended college take one step forward.”

If you know Becker is white, you can guess the rest of the story: “With every step forward, I feel my heart thump a little harder... All of us who advance to the front of the room have white skin.” Becker is right to report that some structural injustice based on race is real. I’ve witnessed white police differently treating groups of white and black teens. So it’s important to understand the importance of privilege—but the privilege issue is complicated.

I’ll pick on White Picket Fences not because it’s a bad book—to the contrary, it’s well-written and well-intentioned—but because Becker at first accepts today’s one-dimensional clichés. And yet, her own story of upper-class privilege shows elements of the opposite. It came with a dad who commuted from Connecticut into Manhattan on weekdays, ran long distances on weekends, and essentially ignored her. In high school she felt his absence “in my gut” and “started involuntarily vomiting my food after every meal.” Furthermore, “the pressure I had internalized from teachers and coaches and friends overwhelmed my system so much that it simply ceased to function.”

Eventually Becker required emergency hospitalization. Doctors never determined a physical cause, but after her hospital stay she still fainted regularly and vomited after every meal. She notes how “my peers shared my obsession with the scale.” They received good grades and gained acceptance to elite colleges, but did their “years of binging and purging and shame” show privilege or misery?

Becker has cared for a young daughter with Down syndrome and a middle-aged mother-in-law with liver cancer. Becker was privileged to hold a trash can while her mother-in-law “vomited, draining her tubes of blood and bile after her surgery,” and to spend “the night by her side to make sure she didn’t lurch from bed.”

Happily, Chapter 9 of Becker’s book takes a gospel turn. Without the hardships of her mother-in-law’s death and her child’s unanticipated difficulties, her future might have left her like Matthew in one of Caravaggio’s paintings, “counting the coins of my existence, unable or unwilling to look up into the light... The real privilege of my life has come in learning what it means to love others, that love involves suffering and sacrifice and sleepless nights and tears and heartache and great gifts.”

Marcuse’s One-Dimensional Man introduced to Americans a concept now fashionable: “intersectionality,” the idea that to get a whole look at unfairness we have to add up the influence of race, class, and sex. But those still leave us in only one dimension based on externals. We should at least add on a second dimension that takes note of other factors, such as growing up with two loving parents rather than with a single mom or with parents who are cold or absent.

Oct. 10-13 brings the eighth biennial International Herbert Marcuse Society Conference. Tenured Marxists will converge at the University of California Santa Barbara to present academic papers on topics such as “the dialectics of resistance today” and “Can violence play a role... for precipitating system change?”

Conference organizers recommend lodging on the UCSB campus at the Club & Guest House for $199 per night. Backup is a nearby hotel for $139 or $159 per night (“includes hot breakfast buffet”).

Crucial question: Will any of the participants have perceived God’s love, and thus moved into a third dimension based on the privilege of loving others because God first loved us?

Marcuse lectures at an event in 1967.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>$100–$227</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Person</td>
<td>$200–$454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+ People</td>
<td>$250–$555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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— Cameron & Roanna, members since 2017