

WORLD



LONG SHOTS

Sports betting apps grow,
society loses *P.52*

"WE WILL BE HERE UNTIL WE OVERTURN ROE V. WADE." —MARCH FOR LIFE FOUNDER NELLIE GRAY, P. 40



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" . . . who will be able to teach others also . . . "


The New Testament model of ministry was to entrust the gospel to local believers ". . . who will be able to teach others also." (II Timothy 2:2) In many cases, we haven't done that. A study shows western missionaries do most of the front-line ministry, and only spend 18% of their time equipping the local church to teach and lead. This is tragic because we are losing ground in world evangelization, and national missionaries are 23 times as effective as western-sent missionaries.

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Do churches seem ready for the social problems from increased gambling?

“Will Hall directs the Louisiana Baptists Office of Public Policy, and he has a pulse on church ministries that serve as society’s safety nets. I was struck by his concern for them and the strain they’re under from issues already devastating individuals and families. He’s afraid they might break under the weight of the coming sports betting fallout.”
—WORLD Correspondent Kim Henderson, whose story is on p. 52

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IT'S A WONDERFUL CAREER

I'm glad Marvin Olasky's inbox and Twitter feed have been filled with appreciation for what the Lord has done through him for so many years. Thank you, Marvin, for your clear, critical thinking and for helping so many of us raise our game.

Ward Slager/Chelsea, Ala.

When I read Marvin Olasky's column, it elicited two responses: one, regret that he is leaving, even as I acknowledge the providence of God in his decision; and two, regret that I hadn't written before now to say how much I have appreciated him.

Susan Dickens/Greenbrier, Ark.

Over lots of years, God has used Marvin Olasky and WORLD to help me recover from a brainwashed, secular education. I pray for God's continued blessing on him and through him to others. And if he is ever in Charlotte, I'd love to break bread with him.

Sheridan Vickery/Charlotte, N.C.

I have been a reader of WORLD Magazine for decades but have never taken the time to write to any of the editors or senior staff until now. Marvin Olasky has impacted me and my growth in Christ in so many ways. Thank you, Marvin, for guiding me, challenging me, pushing me, and blessing me.

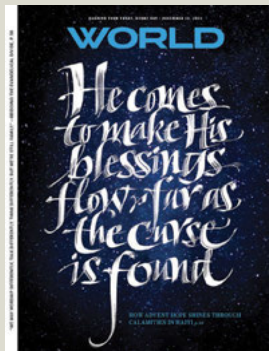
Peter Jacobus/Westminster, Md.

FACING DIVISION, PRAYING FOR UNITY

DEC. 25, P. 58: Thank you for challenging your readers with Sophia Lee's fascinating and thought-provoking three-part series on divisions in American evangelicalism. It has renewed a desire for Christ-centered unity in my own life.

Jace Bower/Staunton, Va.

Sophia Lee called the events of Jan. 6, 2021, an "insurrection," but name a single insurrection in history where



IT'S A WONDERFUL CAREER

DEC. 25, P. 72:

It does appear that Marvin Olasky's career has been wonderful—and eclectic, you could say, for sure. When I received my magazine, I always read it backward so that I could read his column first.

*Inez Kollmar/
Stanwood, Wash.*

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

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the perpetrators were unarmed and had no plan.

Gary Brown/Edmond, Okla.

LESSONS LEARNED ABROAD

DEC. 25, P. 38: We have appreciated Angela Lu Fulton's writing in the past and enjoyed reading her summary of God's provision and grace leading her in every way. Thank you, Angela, for leaving us these uplifting points and good exhortation to zoom out and see how God is calling His people in major ways all over the globe.

*Dave & Barbara Masoner/
Chattanooga, Tenn.*

When I read Angela Lu Fulton's statement, "I imagine how as the globe spins, Christians around the world wake up for their turn to worship," I thought of God hearing His children each Sunday crescendo and decrescendo for 24 hours as the earth spins and His people gather around this globe in corporate worship experiences of infinite variety.

Nick Lazzareschi/Medford, Ore.

EYES TO THE SKY

DEC. 25, P. 20: I so appreciated Janie B. Cheaney's honesty in her column, and I absolutely loved that last paragraph. The thought that our dear Lord may be waiting on "great-grandchildren yet unborn to complete His kingdom" brought a joyful tear to my eye.

Sarah Riddle/Oxford, Pa.

Thank you for an outstanding, encouraging, and Scriptural column regarding Jesus' return. It was a blessing.

Craig Sanders/Fresno, Calif.

THE GREAT RESIGNATION

DEC. 25, P. 15: Your "By the Numbers" page left something out: the number of healthcare workers who quit because of COVID-19 vaccine mandates.

Patricia Brooks/Moscow, Pa.

Read more letters at wng.org/mailbag

With the nation in turmoil...

Why are our political leaders the most neglected mission field in America today?

I've wondered about this for quite some time. When I served as U.S. Secretary of Energy in Washington, D.C., nothing prepared me better for the work that needed to be done for our nation than the hour I spent every week in the Capitol Ministries White House Cabinet Bible Study. Our political leaders desperately need God's Word and yet they are all but forgotten when it comes to evangelism and discipleship. Let's fix that. I am spearheading this bold effort to reach political leaders with the Word of God throughout America! Please join me.

RICK PERRY

FORMER SECRETARY OF THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
FORMER GOVERNOR OF TEXAS



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CHANGE AND CONSISTENCY

Over the years, WORLD’s board has made strategic changes that have kept the mission on track

MORE THAN 40 YEARS AGO, our board of directors established the mission of WORLD, and it has through God’s provision preserved the mission ever since. In all those years, the *mission* has not changed, but our mission *statements* have—as they have followed some of the changes in our methods.

Our original mission statement, at nearly 80 words, seems too lengthy to reproduce here. In the mid-1990s, we managed to cut the number of words in our original mission statement roughly in half, while maintaining the essence of our purpose:

“To report and analyze the news on a weekly schedule in an interesting, accurate, and arresting fashion, and to combine reporting with practical commentary on current events and issues from a perspective committed to the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.”

No mission statement is perfect, but that one captured fairly well both our mission and our methods, including the weekly timing of our print magazine.

By the early 2000s, though, the method of a magazine printed on a “weekly schedule” became insufficient to make good on our mission of delivering news and commentary. At that time, we changed the “weekly” in our mission statement to “timely,” and we changed our methods to include a website that allowed us to deliver content daily instead of weekly.

The board has reframed our mission statement twice since then, leaving us with our current

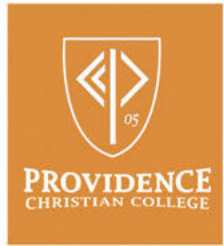
version, which I hope is very familiar to you: “Biblically objective journalism that informs, educates, and inspires.” In spite of its brevity, we believe that statement captures all of the elements of our original paragraph-long statement, while vastly expanding the possible methods by which we should fulfill the mission.

Those methods still include publishing this magazine, now biweekly, and our magazines for students. The method of an early-2000s website became WORLD Digital, with daily email newsletters and a reintroduced commentary section. We’ve added totally new methods—WORLD Radio and its suite of podcasts, WORLD Watch, and some big new things we’ve got planned for our student-age group.

Our original mission statement, comprehensive as it was, did not envision our World Journalism Institute. But we started that program in 1999, fully within the scope of our mission, and it has grown far beyond the vision of the method we originally planned. We believe WJI’s methods will see the same vast expansion in the next few years as WORLD Magazine’s did 20 years ago.

Mission statements change, and methods change, but WORLD’s mission remains the same. ■

Kevin Martin



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A bit of bias

We want to help develop and grow Christian minds

CERTAINLY YOU must have noticed that we've been having some robust discussions recently within the WORLD family, focused in part on the general theme of journalistic bias. It's easy, even among thoughtful considerations by serious Christians, to forget our ultimate goals.

So let me be as transparent as I know how and acknowledge some of our biases and prejudices. We'd like you, committed readers that you are, to be developing and growing what have sometimes been called Christian minds.

Sometimes, WORLD News Group will seek to help you in that development and growth in a somewhat abstract manner. You join us in what feels like a classroom setting, and our faculty will step you through that issue's curriculum. Even when we're abstract, though, we try to be practical.

Most of the time, however, we'll help you in the development and growth of your Christian mind by pointing out examples of Christian minds at work in real-life situations. Because those real-life situations are timely, they come to us on a schedule typically shaped by the day's news. That's why WORLD—on its several platforms (magazine, children's magazines, podcasts, and so forth)—is a news organization.

Some abstract content, some real-life examples.

We almost certainly won't know from week to week where the emphasis will be. We do know the package will look like and sound like news.

And we know that a growing number of readers and listeners like this very practical approach to what many people call a Christian mind, a Christian mindset, a Christian perspective. We hear from more and more of you along the way.

**MOST OF THE TIME,
WE'LL HELP YOU IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR
CHRISTIAN MIND BY
POINTING OUT EXAMPLES
OF CHRISTIAN MINDS
AT WORK.**

John H. Stuart of Winthrop, Maine, for example, writes: "The honesty, creativity, humanity, and individuality of your staff comes through and is much appreciated in today's world more than ever. I get the sense that I am getting an honest take on the news, without the sensationalism that drives other media outlets. In addition, analysis from a Christian worldview helps me think about the news in like manner, not being pushed to and fro by worldly ideologies and vaporous enthusiasms."

And retired missionaries Larry and Linda McAuley chime in: "Thank you for your vision and work in creating a publication that helps so many to understand God and His world. I devour each new issue and pray over the people and situations you feature. We have also ordered the various children's magazines for our grandchildren."

Sonja Ingram of northern Wisconsin says: "Thank you for answering your call to start WORLD magazine. I was forced to read it when I attended a small Christian school, but never enjoyed it then. Now I read every issue cover to cover. The reporting that is done with God's redemptive plan in mind brings such joy and peace to my heart, I eagerly await every issue."

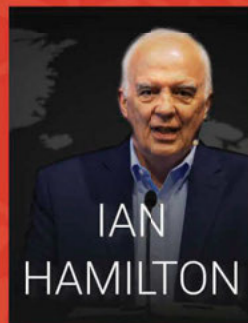
And this good summary from Mari Doerr, who calls herself a longtime reader in Lafayette, Ind.: "I appreciate so many good things about the magazine—but especially the cogent writing and varied story lineup. It's been challenging to learn about the suffering of so many fellow believers in other countries who don't have the freedom to worship God like I have. Thank you for your vision, and developing a strong team to publish the magazine and now the podcasts that I enjoy listening to each day. And thank you for God's World News for children, that my family enjoyed while they were growing up."

So whatever you and your family's news needs might be, keep this in mind: We don't call ourselves "World News Group" for nothing! ■



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DISPATCHES

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A “PARADIGM SHIFT” ON FIRES

The U.S. changes focus to logging and controlled burns

by Daniel James Devine

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION ON JAN. 18 announced a new strategy to fight massive wildfires like those that have devastated communities in the U.S. West in recent years. The Forest Service will launch a 10-year effort to prevent large fires through strategic thinning and prescribed burns—a philosophical shift for an agency that has for decades focused mostly on extinguishing wildfires once they begin.

The \$50 billion plan will address millions of acres of land that pose the biggest wildfire risk to developed communities. A series of costly and highly destructive wildfire seasons in California, Colorado, Oregon, and elsewhere have gutted forests and →

A firefighter sprays water on a controlled burn during the Caldor Fire in South Lake Tahoe, Calif.



MANY FORESTRY EXPERTS HAVE ARGUED FOR YEARS THAT FOREST THINNING AND CONTROLLED BURNS ARE NEEDED.



leveled neighborhoods. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack made the announcement at an event in Phoenix with Forest Service Chief Randy Moore.

“You’re going to have forest fires. The question is how catastrophic do those fires have to be?” Vilsack said. “The time to act is now if we want to ultimately over time change the trajectory of these fires.”

The Forest Service acknowledged the new approach as a “paradigm shift.” Its strategy, outlined in a document titled “Confronting the Wildfire Crisis,” will more than double the amount of controlled burns and logging, focusing on “hotspot” regions where wilderness and urban areas meet. Although these regions—constituting about 80,000 square miles—make up only about 10 percent of fire-prone areas in the United States, they represent some 80 percent of fire risk to communities, according to the Forest Service.

The Agriculture Department says it will cost \$20 billion over 10 years to manage national forest property, and another \$30 billion for remaining land held by federal or state governments, Native

tribes, and private owners. The federal infrastructure bill, passed in November, made available about \$3 billion that will enable the Forest Service to get started. Previously, from 2016 to 2020, the federal government spent \$1.9 billion per year on fire suppression.

Wildfire management in the United States has long focused mostly on fire suppression. Forestry officials seek to eliminate all sources of ignition, and when flames do break out, firefighters launch massive campaigns to extinguish them,

dropping retardant from airplanes or beating back the flames using ground teams. The goal is to extinguish or contain the fire before it reaches homes or businesses.

But years of forest growth, warm temperatures, and chronic drought have made much of the American West a tinderbox, with fires increasing in their intensity and destruction. According to the Forest Service, the number of structures destroyed by wildfires each year, on a five-year average, rose from 2,873 in 2014 to 12,255 in 2020.

Many forestry experts have argued for years that forest thinning and controlled burns are needed to prevent the problem from worsening. John Bailey, a professor of forest engineering, resources, and management at Oregon State University, noted that regular fires are a natural part of the forest cycle. Prescribed burns reduce fine surface fuels such as pine needles, grass, shrubs, and small branches that fuel the intensity of wildfires and aren’t easily removed by other means.

“On a hot, dry, windy day, that’s where the fire just roars—not up in the trees,” he said. “Fire itself, it’s just a great tool for treating that part of the forest bed.”

Opposition to prescribed burns and forest thinning often comes from locals concerned about smoke or how cutting down trees could affect the landscape. Environmental regulations and concerns about liability also discourage private landowners from conducting controlled burns. And environmental groups criticize logging’s effect on wildlife.

“The U.S. Forest Service simply cannot log its way out of the climate crisis,” said Adam Rissien of WildEarth Guardians in a statement criticizing the Biden administration’s plan. The environmental group called for a narrower approach on the “home ignition zone,” the area 100-200 feet from a home.

But Vilsack said the new strategy would be healthier for forests in the long run while minimizing the destructive impact of wildfires on communities.

“We know this works,” he said. “It’s removing some of the timber, in a very scientific and thoughtful way, so that at the end of the day fires don’t continue to hop from treetop to treetop but eventually come to ground, where we can put them out.”

A controlled burn of the native tallgrass oak savanna in Springdale Cemetery, Peoria, Ill.





THE MINISTRY OF THE SHEEPDOG

Texas synagogue standoff puts church security back in the spotlight

by Addie Michaelian in Austin, Texas

STEPHEN WILLEFORD sees church security as a ministry—the ministry of the sheepdog. He confronted and pursued the shooter who killed 26 worshippers at a Baptist church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, in 2017. “Jesus will leave the 99 to find the one sheep, and while He is gone, He expects His sheepdogs to protect the flock,” he said. Willeford travels and speaks about church security and gun rights. “If you don’t think it can happen, you’re fooling yourself,” he said.

Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, had taken steps to prepare for violence before a hostage situation broke out on Jan. 15 during Saturday worship. Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker said training he

received from the FBI, the Colleyville Police Department, and the Anti-Defamation League all helped him remain calm and thoughtful as 44-year-old Malik Faisal Akram held him and three others hostage.

Cytron-Walker let Akram into the synagogue when he knocked on the glass door that morning and appeared to need shelter. This simple act of hospitality resulted in a 10-hour standoff. Akram released one hostage, and Cytron-Walker escaped with the two others when he threw a chair at Akram.

Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker (facing camera) hugs a man after a healing service at White’s Chapel United Methodist Church in Southlake, Texas.

“When I took him in, I stayed with him. Making tea was an opportunity to talk with him,” the rabbi told *CBS Mornings*. “It was during prayer ... I heard a click. It could have been anything, and it turned out it was his gun.” During the standoff, Akram, a British national, demanded the release of a suspected al-Qaeda supporter who is in prison in the United States. Akram was killed when a SWAT team entered the synagogue after the hostages escaped.

The hostage situation in Colleyville has reprompted houses of worship to consider the balance between welcoming all people and protecting their congregations. Cory Knopp, a federal park ranger and Austin Police Department →

member, helped design the security plan for a large evangelical church in Austin, Texas. (WORLD agreed not to name the congregation to protect its security.) Knopp has taught many Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events classes, put on by Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) and Texas State University.

“The important thing at the end of the day is training. We need to stop being reactive or surprised when these things happen,” he said. Knopp believes that a uniformed officer effectively deters many troublemakers, though having covert off-duty law enforcement or security inside is also important.

Twin Lakes Fellowship takes a different approach. After the 2019 shooting at the West Freeway Church of Christ in White Settlement, Texas, the church mapped out security policies that fit the smaller congregation in Austin, Texas.

“I wouldn’t have considered getting a license to carry, but church shootings kept happening in Texas,” says Luke Hoeft, a member of the security team who also serves as the worship and youth leader.

A few armed deacons and volunteers hand out bulletins and watch for anything out of the ordinary, lock the doors during service, and guard the children’s building. A member who retired from the Navy felt led to take charge. Almost the whole security team is retired military.

“Doing something is better than doing nothing. It’s about being prepared with the volunteers that you do have,” Hoeft says.

Gatekeepers Security Services operates a state-licensed armed security school in Texas and has trained and licensed almost 500 church security operators.

“A chair is not the ideal weapon ... something could have gone terribly wrong,” Gatekeepers President Chuck Chadwick said about Cytron-Walker’s escape from his hostage-taker.

Gatekeepers train security operators who wear plain clothes and carry handguns. Chadwick prefers this strategy to churches hiring uniformed officers because a uniform can make them targets for attackers.



Church members train for the worst at Fellowship of the Parks in Haslet, Texas.

**“IT’S ABOUT
BEING PREPARED
WITH THE
VOLUNTEERS
THAT YOU
DO HAVE.”**



Rudi Rudisell heads the security ministry at Riverview Church in Bonsall, Calif. He and his wife started Sheepdog Ministries (the sheepdog is a common symbol in church security circles) and designed a training curriculum with their son. All three have law enforcement and military experience.

“We don’t want to turn people off by being overly aggressive,” Rudisell said. His website describes it as “protecting the flock while inviting the wolves.” Their strategy also emphasizes “layered security” by collaborating with many different ministries like the ushers and Sunday school teachers. Rudisell emphasizes that hospitality and security do not have to be at odds with one another.

So does Congregation Tiferet Israel, one of three synagogues located on the Jewish Community Center (JCC) campus in Austin, Texas. President Joshua Rosenberg says security can be difficult for independent synagogues. At Tiferet Israel attendees must go through JCC security before entering. Strangers stick out from the small congregation. He said the attack in Colleyville reinforced the congregation’s need for vigilance: “It’s a deliberate process rather than an accidental one.” ■



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Taliban fighters talk to a detainee before transferring him to a court in Kabul.

MARTYRDOM

Most dangerous place

Afghanistan now named most dangerous country for Christians by Open Doors

NORTH KOREA HAS HEADLINED the annual World Watch List compiled by Open Doors, a Christian watchdog organization, for almost two decades. But Afghanistan dethroned it in 2021 as the most dangerous country for Christians. Open Doors found that the number of Christians being killed for their faith increased by 24 percent worldwide last year, from 4,761 to 5,898. Open Doors gave both countries the highest scores of 16.7 in every persecution category except violence. The group said Christians' risk of discovery in Afghanistan has increased since the Islamist Taliban now controls every aspect of government. While the martyrdom rate remains low, Open Doors reported families and communities often kill Christians before the Taliban finds out about them. If they are not killed, converting to Christianity is viewed as a sign of insanity, so some Christians are put in psychiatric hospitals.

STAMPEDE

Hundreds of church members had gathered for an all-night crusade at a football field in Liberia's capital city of Monrovia on Jan. 19 when an attack on the crowd triggered a deadly stampede. People trampled over each other to flee the area, many leaving their shoes and other belongings behind. Among the 29 dead were 11 children and a pregnant woman, and others were critically injured. Liberia's President George Weah declared three days of national mourning. A gang of thugs wielding knives and cutlasses assaulted some of the worshippers as they gathered to listen to a popular preacher, Pastor Abraham Kromah.

TRANSGENDER

College athletes previously only had to be taking hormone therapy to compete with students of the opposite sex. But the NCAA announced last month that transgender participation will be decided on a sport-by-sport basis by each sport's national governing body. This brings the NCAA in line with the International Olympic Committee policy. University of Pennsylvania transgender swimmer Lia Thomas was on the men's team for three years but competed on the women's team this season. Thomas, a man, broke several records, igniting controversy and calling attention to the NCAA's policies.

COUP

Burkina Faso's army announced Jan. 24 that it had deposed President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, dissolved the government and the national assembly, and suspended the constitution, seizing control of the country after two days of unrest at army camps in the capital. Roughly 100 soldiers said they have been planning a coup since August, citing the government's inability to combat jihadist attacks and support the military. Troops took control of a major military barracks in the capital city of Ouagadougou Jan. 23. Insurgents said they detained President Kaboré, but the ruling party accused the soldiers of attempting an assassination. Capt. Sidore Kabre Ouedraogo declared military rule on state television and said leaders would create a calendar to hold new elections.

\$5B

The investment announced by American startup Rivian for an assembly plant near Atlanta to make the company's electric SUV.

30

The number of electric vehicle models General Motors has promised to debut by 2025 even after the company paused sales of its electric Bolt after battery fires.

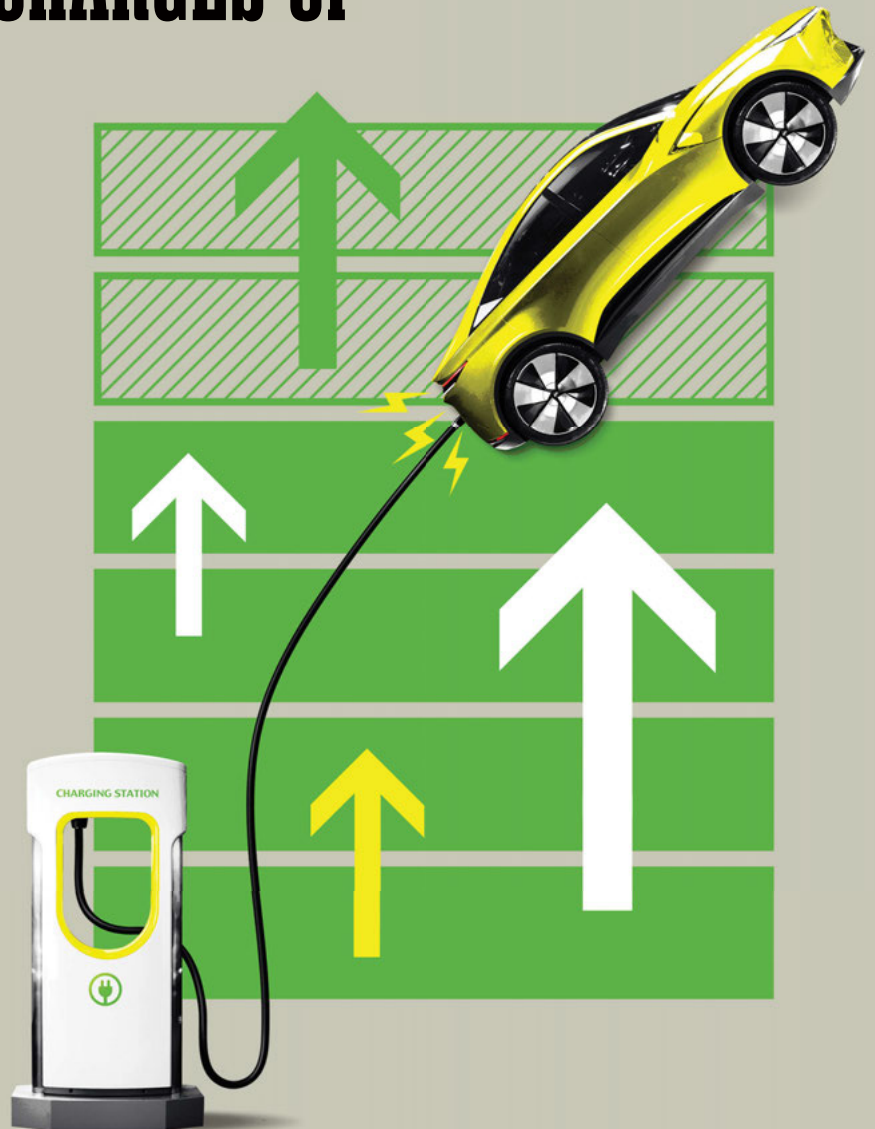
150,000

The number of electric F-150 pickup trucks Ford has promised to produce this year, reflecting strong demand for the nearly \$40,000 truck.

13

The number of years until a New York measure signed into law in 2021 takes effect banning the sale of cars, off-road vehicles, and light-duty trucks with internal combustion engines in the state. Heavy- and medium-duty trucks will have to be "zero-emissions" by 2045.

EV PRODUCTION CHARGES UP



936,172

THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES sold by electric car maker Tesla in 2021. While other auto manufacturers sputtered in search of computer chips, Tesla managed to increase its 2021 production by 87 percent over the previous year. Tesla's success, changing consumer demand, and governments' emission standards are pushing carmakers to invest heavily in hybrid and electric cars. The changing landscape of the auto market poses risks for legacy automakers as well as opportunities for upstarts.

“I’m a God-fearing man. I try not to worry. Fear is contaminated faith.”

Actor **DENZEL WASHINGTON**, star of *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, on the supposed curse on productions of Macbeth.

“You can’t live in fear the whole time. Ukrainians’ skin just gets thicker, and you don’t pay attention.”

VITALIY KYRYCHENKO, owner of the Pink Freud bar in Kiev, on the Russian divisions massed on the Ukrainian border near his home.

“Find an elderly or disabled neighbor and shovel their driveway. Don’t accept any money—that’s our Monday workout.”

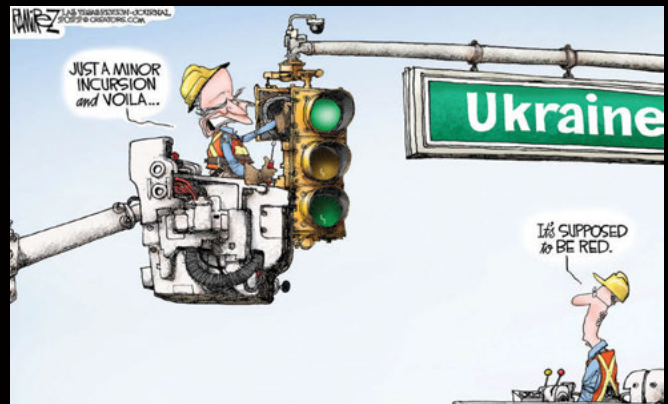
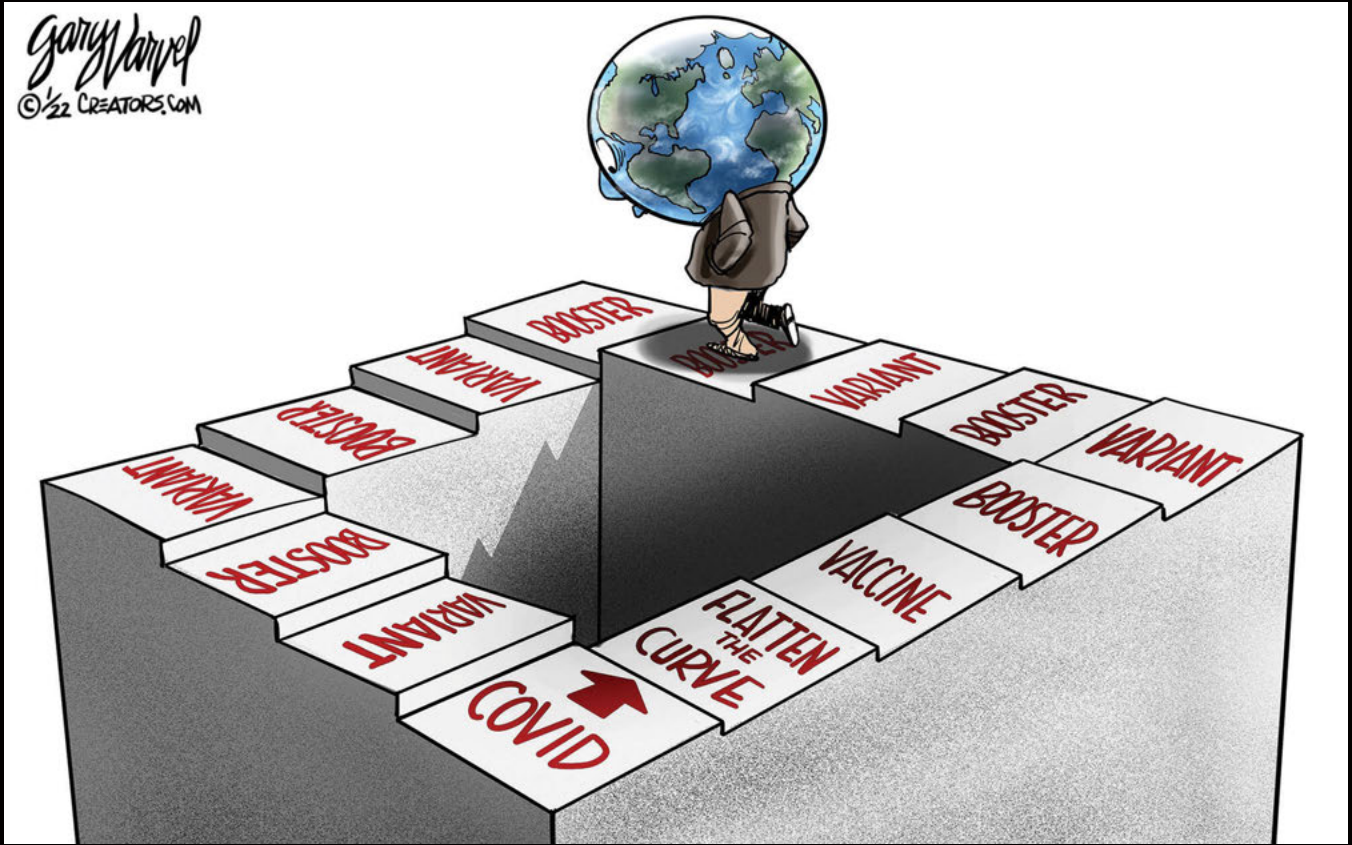
Bethel Park (Pa.) High School head football coach **BRIAN DELALLO** in a tweet to his players when he canceled the team’s weightlifting workout due to a blizzard.

“I have long wanted to ask some emotionally intelligent as well as intellectual people who know about ABBA about why they think our songs have lasted for such a long time—almost 40 years—because I don’t understand it myself.”

ABBA’s **BJÖRN ULVAEUS**, who launched a show on Apple Music to answer that question.

“If I had tried to continue as a stand-up, there’s no way I could maintain a TV career because political correctness has killed comedy.”

Comedian and gameshow host **STEVE HARVEY**, on why he will only do another comedy special at the end of his career.





Fallen arches

McDonald's drive-thru blocked from historic site in Rome

by John Dawson

An administrative court in Italy has barred fast food giant McDonald's from darkening the doorstep of one of Rome's well-known archaeological ruins. McDonald's had sought to open a location next to the Baths of Caracalla, a public bathing complex constructed in the third century. The franchise began construction on the restaurant in 2019 before it was clear whether the government could reject the Golden Arches in the historic heart of Rome. An objection by Rome's mayor halted the project and sent the battle into the courts. On Dec. 28, the court upheld a previous ruling that authorities could block construction near heritage sites if the project dampens the surrounding landscape. In a statement, McDonald's renewed its vow to open 200 new restaurants in Italy by 2025.

PASSING THE TIME

She's 83, and by her own admission she's bored. Dallas octogenarian Barbara Ingram decided to fill her empty calendar by enrolling at Harvard University. "I didn't have anything to do," she explained to KDFW-TV. Ingram applied in the first months of the coronavirus pandemic and completed her first course, economics, in 2020. "At the end, it had math in it, which was hard for me to get back into algebra again," she said. Ingram, who graduated from the University of Miami decades ago, says she's not pursuing a degree. To cheer her on for her spring 2022 class on medical neuroscience, her friends and neighbors erected a billboard in December featuring Ingram in her Harvard sweat-shirt.

MAN ON THE STREET

Investigators in Italy searching for a mob boss got an unusual assist from Google Maps. Police in Italy spotted a wanted Italian mobster on a Google Street View image of a street in Galapagar, Spain, leading to the man's arrest on Dec. 17. Gioacchino Gammino escaped from an Italian prison in 2002 and remained at large until police in Italy received a tip that someone looking like Gammino appeared in an image on Street View, Google's project to photograph driving routes across the world. The tip led to an investigation that ultimately led to Gammino's recapture, which was finally reported in January.



NOT IN THE FORECAST

Some residents of Hamilton, Ontario, awoke Dec. 29 to find it had rained soybeans overnight. “It struck me as unusual, of course,” homeowner Adrienne Van Halem told the CBC. “It’s just gross and messy and surprising to have beans raining down.” Local food processor Bunge took responsibility, saying something went wrong at its nearby oilseed processing plant.

According to the company, a large quantity of soybean hulls accidentally “discharged” and ended up covering the neighborhood. The company sent apology notes and a coupon for a car wash to affected locals.



COURTING TROUBLE

A state lawmaker in Tennessee has apologized after causing a spectacle at a high-school basketball game. During a Jan. 4 game between Lakeway Christian Academy and Providence Academy in Johnson City, Tenn., Republican state Rep. **Jeremy Faison** (Cosby) exited the stands and entered the court to argue the call with a referee. After being booted from the game, Faison attempted—unsuccessfully—to pull down the referee’s pants. On his Twitter account later that night, Faison posted a heartfelt apology, asking for forgiveness and saying his passions had gotten the better of him. “I acted the fool tonight,” he said. “I was bad wrong.”

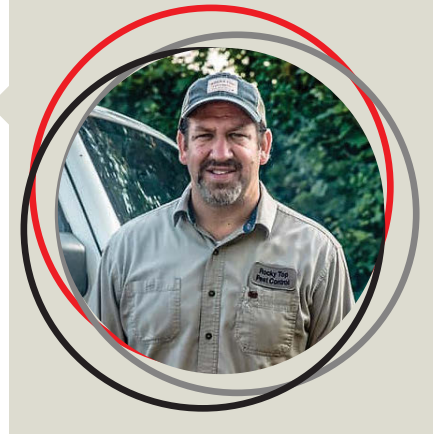


IT’S JUST GROSS AND MESSY AND SURPRISING TO HAVE BEANS RAINING DOWN.



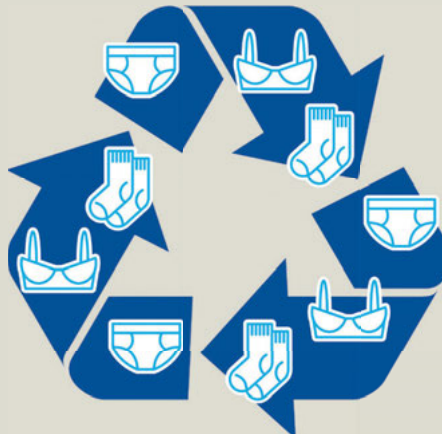
LEANING TOWER OF 'FRISCO

Engineers in San Francisco are rushing to fix a sinking residential tower at the heart of the city. At a city hearing on Jan. 6, structural engineer Ronald Hamburger revealed the Millennium Tower, a 58-story residential building that opened in 2009, was now leaning more than two feet after sinking unevenly into the San Francisco soil. Developers notified the public of the building’s issue in 2016. Despite the building’s tilt, a penthouse apartment sold for \$13 million in 2016. After a provisional plan to correct the tilt failed last year, builders announced a plan in January to install 18 steel piles to arrest the sink and tilt of the building.



WORN, WASHED, AND READY

A supply shortage has forced the Norwegian military to mandate that conscripts return their underwear and other unmentionables after their term of service ends. According to the Norwegian Defense Logistics Organization, garment shortages meant the nation’s military had run short of underwear, bras, and socks to hand out to the roughly 8,000 conscripts who are enrolled in service every year. A spokesman for the organization said the recycled underwear, bras, and socks would be thoroughly cleaned and mended prior to being redeployed to new troops.





Alas, Amazon

How do we weigh convenience against principle?

DO YOU REMEMBER all the old friends who turned up after you joined Facebook? Remember advising your colleagues to drop Alta Vista and set Google as their home page? Remember when Twitter was fun and YouTube was exciting? Remember when you finally joined Amazon Prime and entered the ultimate shopper's paradise?

Since then, the bloom has faded from the Silicon Valley rose. Zuckerberg, Dorsey, Tim Cook, and Brin & Page no longer feature in glowing magazine profiles. Likewise, Jeff Bezos is nobody's dream date, owing to some bad press about conditions for Amazon warehouse workers and drivers. But his creation goes from strength to strength, and credit for that belongs to no one more than Bezos.

He was one of the first to understand the possibilities of internet marketing—that customer data mattered much more than customer dollars. By generating profiles from customers' book preferences, Amazon was eventually able to sell them everything else. In earlier days I would open the site to see a personal message: "Hey Janie! We have recommendations for you!" It was irritating at first, later commonplace.

Now half my friends are Prime members, and it's easy to see why. Imagine the choice for a mom with four kids under 6 years old: Do I shepherd two restless preschoolers, one clueless toddler, and one infant through a shopping expedition fraught with car-seat struggles and necessary items I can't find? Or do I order everything on Amazon and receive it two days later with free shipping?

Amazon was never the only online shopping option, but it's the easiest and most comprehensive. I'm wondering, though: Is it time to sacrifice convenience and slowly back away?

MONOPOLISTIC TENDENCIES, CULTURAL BULLYING, AND CUTTHROAT BUSINESS ARE NOT PECULIAR TO AMAZON, JUST MORE PERVASIVE.

The most successful pioneers of last generation's "information superhighway" are now behaving like 19th-century robber barons. In fact, the comparison is insulting to robber barons because the temptations and rewards of internet dominance are so much greater. Technology that promises freedom and innovation can just as easily bolster tyranny and strangle competition, and Amazon is a prime (no pun intended) perpetrator.

Offering more goods at lower prices is the American way, but Amazon throttles its vendors by withholding sales data and forbidding them to sell their goods cheaper elsewhere, even on their own websites. Controlling 50-70 percent of the world's online commerce offers unprecedented power to exploit. An antitrust suit brought by the D.C. district attorney could start an avalanche of litigation, even at the federal level, but court cases are notoriously slow and compromised.

In the meantime, like most tech giants, Amazon grows insufferably woke. Its production company flaunts an "Inclusion Playbook" pledging to cast actors according to the identity of the roles they play and fill 50 percent of all creative positions by women or people of color. More ominously, Amazon Books blocks advertising for certain high-profile, incorrect titles, and sometimes even bans them altogether. The official reason for removing Ryan Anderson's *When Harry Became Sally* last year (refusing "books that frame LGBTQ+ identity as a mental illness") made no sense, especially when similar books remain. It's almost as if Leviathan is putting undesirables on notice: This could happen to you, anytime, for any reason.

Such concern for the oppressed doesn't reach overseas. An extensive report from Reuters details the ways Amazon has cooperated with the Chinese Communist Party for a wider slice of a huge market. "Cooperation" means spreading propaganda and promoting Chinese culture through the China Books platform, striking negative reviews, and following the party lead for sales and web services.

Monopolistic tendencies, cultural bullying, and cutthroat business are not peculiar to Amazon, just more pervasive. I dislike boycotts; they don't work and they thrust politics deeper into everyday life. And yet I'm wondering if it's time to weigh convenience against principle. Thriftbooks is my go-to for printed matter, but as a source for obscure and esoteric items, delivered right to the front door, Amazon seems indispensable. Is it? Where's the line or the Biblical mandate? What's our responsibility? ■



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CULTURE

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REDEEMING LOVE'S BLURRY LINES

The story of Hosea can't overcome its depictions of immorality

by Collin Garbarino

R

REDEEMING LOVE, currently in theaters, is a faithful adaptation of the 1991 romance novel of the same name by Francine Rivers in which she retells the Biblical story of Hosea, setting it during the California Gold Rush. Devoted fans of the book will probably enjoy this faith-based film, but everyone else can safely give it a pass.

Angel, played by Abigail Cowen, is the prettiest prostitute in a small mining town called Pair-A-Dice. She's so popular the brothel holds a lottery each day to see who will get the chance to hire her. Tom Lewis, in his first feature film, plays Michael Hosea, a farmer who relies on his Christian principles. And just like Hosea in the Bible, Michael →

decides God wants him to marry the prostitute. Michael pays double to buy Angel's time, but he just wants to talk. She initially rebuffs his proposal, but in the end she agrees to marry him and move to his farm 20 miles away. Angel struggles to believe she's worthy of love and abandons Michael more than once.

Redeeming Love left me conflicted. On the one hand, the film feels like a step forward for faith-based entertainment reaching a mainstream audience. On the other hand, *Redeeming Love* still has some problems.

The film boasts production values higher than those typically seen in faith-based movies. The sets, costuming, and cinematography were all quite good. Director D.J. Caruso does solid work, but the movie probably needed to be 20 minutes shorter. The dialogue was only occasionally heavy-handed, and I found myself pleasantly surprised at the acting, despite Lewis' delivery suggesting a Matthew McConaughey impersonation.

Though *Redeeming Love* is relatively well made, not every Christian should see it. I certainly can't recommend taking children or teenagers. The movie seeks to boost its credibility with an authentic grittiness, and all forms of human depravity are on display, some of them quite graphic.

One expects depictions of adultery and fornication in a movie about prostitution, but we also see lying, theft, greed, murder, suicide, incest, abortion, pedophilia, abuse, enslavement, arson, and vigilantism. Though the language is relatively mild, some viewers won't enjoy the violence and disturbing subject matter.

Redeeming Love also tests the limits of its PG-13 rating with prolonged scenes of partial nudity and sensuality. At Angel and Michael's first meeting, Angel walks around the room naked trying to tempt him. We see her from behind. We see her partially reflected in a mirror. We see long shots of Angel with her hair artfully arranged to conceal the parts of her body that would get the film an R rating. Caruso attempts verisimilitude, but the scene distracts the viewer because no one's hair stays in place like that unless it's been glued down. The film also contains two long sex scenes. Again, clever camera work and Michael's hands obscure full nudity.

Moreover, the film's script contains some structural problems. The character Michael hurts the story because he's just too good to be true. His unwavering righteousness sucks the narrative tension from the movie because we don't ever wonder how he will react. Michael is a stand-in for the Bible's Hosea who is ultimately a picture of Jesus, so perhaps making Michael less than perfect wasn't an option, but this approach turns the story into an allegory, and allegories aren't easy to make.



**THE BLURRED LINES
BETWEEN SIN AND
REDEMPTION
LEAVE THE MOVIE
WITH A CONFUSED
SUBTEXT.**



As an allegory, *Redeeming Love* fails to depict the redemption found in the book of Hosea and the New Testament. Hosea's wife is a prostitute who symbolizes the unfaithful people of Israel, and in the New Testament unfaithful Israel symbolizes sinners redeemed by Christ.

But the movie depicts Angel as a victim rather than a sinner. Christ makes whole that which is broken, but if that's the intended imagery, it makes it all the more infuriating when Michael refuses to pursue his wife at the movie's end, claiming she must exercise her free will. The blurred lines between sin and damage and redemption and saving oneself leave the movie with a confused subtext that fails to redeem the relentless depictions of immorality. ■

BESTSELLER The novel *Redeeming Love* has sold more than 3 million copies worldwide.



Delightful intro to Irish culture

by Marty VanDriel

Riverdance: The Animated Adventure (Netflix, rated TV-G) is a welcome way to dip one's toes into Ireland and Irish culture with a film aimed at younger viewers that parents may enjoy also.

Tousle-headed young Keegan has just lost his kindly grandpa, a lively lighthouse keeper who loved to dance and tell tales. One of grandpa's myths warned that the lighthouse's beacon must be kept lit to keep away the Huntsman—a powerful nautical figure who wished to destroy the rivers that provided life to their town.

Keegan and his Spanish friend Moya are swept away to a parallel world inhabited by bipedal Irish elk, whose enormous horns make their Irish jigs a beautiful sight. The two friends must help the elk to stave off the Huntsman, a figure just scary enough to add conflict to the film, without being too frightening for children.

Viewers might wish for more beautiful animation of the village instead of the alternate world, but you will enjoy the Irish dancing throughout the films. The writers have avoided the common downfall of many animated movies that steer too closely to portraying demonic powers and forces sympathetically and attractively. Regrettably, there is one point where blasphemy is used.



DRAC OOH LA LA!

Sony scares up another animated winner

by Bob Brown

THE LOSS OF ADAM SANDLER as the voice of Dracula might have driven a stake through the heart of the *Hotel Transylvania* movie franchise. But don't nail that coffin shut just yet. *Hotel Transylvania: Transformania*, streaming on Amazon Prime, brings more clever and mostly clean fun, with impressionist and YouTube star Brian Hull in his first major gig delivering a Sandler-worthy performance as Dracula.

Groovy sight gags, a timely message, and little objectionable material make *Transformania* entertaining viewing suitable for all but the youngest ages. The PG-rated film has some mildly spooky images, three shots of bare male backsides, but zero bad language.

As in prior *Hotel Transylvania* films, family conflict drives the plot of *Transformania*. Dracula plans to hand over management of the hotel to his vampire daughter, Mavis (Selena Gomez), and her human husband, Johnny (Andy Samberg), but has second thoughts. Johnny figures he'll gain his fangy father-in-law's trust by becoming a monster. A device that transforms Johnny into a dragon also turns Dracula human—and then breaks. Repair requires a crystal from South America.

While Johnny and Dracula trek through the rainforest, each gets amusing opportunities to walk in the other's shoes. Johnny enjoys monster powers, such as flight and mosquito repellency. Dracula suffers allergies and body odor and other indignities of being human, but learns "if you only see the worst in things, you miss the best parts." That's a thought worth sinking your teeth into.



STAR WARS MOVIES RANKED BY BOX OFFICE (IN BILLIONS)

- 7 [A New Hope \(Ep. IV\)](#) [\\$.773](#)
- 6 [Revenge of the Sith \(Ep. III\)](#) [\\$.849](#)
- 5 [The Phantom Menace \(Ep. I\)](#) [\\$1.02](#)
- 4 [Rogue One: A Star Wars Story](#) [\\$1.05](#)
- 3 [The Rise of Skywalker \(Ep. IX\)](#) [\\$1.07](#)
- 2 [The Last Jedi \(Ep. VIII\)](#) [\\$1.33](#)
- 1 [The Force Awakens \(Ep. VII\)](#) [\\$2.06](#)

NEW CHAPTER FOR AN OLD CHARACTER

Boba Fett seeks to be a crime lord who brings law and order for the benefit of others

by Collin Garbarino



WHEN BOBA FETT appeared in *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), he cut a striking figure in his Mandalorian armor. The mysterious bounty hunter quickly became one of the Star Wars franchise's most popular characters despite his relatively minor role as a hireling for Darth Vader and Jabba the Hutt.

The end of the original trilogy left Boba in the belly of the almighty Sarlacc to be digested for a thousand years, but now Disney has decided to resurrect the popular character giving him his own series, *The Book of Boba Fett*, streaming on Disney+.

In this series, Boba Fett (Temuera Morrison) and his sidekick Fennec Shand (Ming-Na Wen) step into the power vacuum left by the death of crime lord Jabba the Hutt. When the duo attempts to install Boba as the ruler

of the desert planet Tatooine, they learn running a crime family is harder than hunting bounties.

Jon Favreau, who did excellent work on *The Mandalorian*, serves as showrunner for *The Book of Boba Fett*. Disney's Star Wars feature films disappointed longtime fans, but Favreau's dusty space westerns have proven to be a bright spot for the franchise. Fans of *The Mandalorian* will enjoy this series too, but because *The Book of Boba Fett* feels familiar, it doesn't elicit quite the same thrill as the earlier series, and some episodes feel rather slow.

Part of that slowness comes from extended flashbacks explaining how Boba escaped the belly of the Sarlacc and how he recovered from his physical and emotional wounds. These scenes feel akin to Disney's recent trend toward rehabilitating classic villains like Maleficent and Cruella de Vil, and it's a little sad to see the iconic character's mystery dispelled. However, the scenes in which Boba and Fennec try to bring order to a lawless planet are much better.

Boba styles himself as Tatooine's "daimyo," but he's one crime lord among many hoping to force the others into submission. Viewers get a glimpse of politics in a world devoid of legitimate government: Criminal families, bureaucrats, and local business owners all must negotiate a new normal to restore some semblance of order. The question is, Who will find themselves atop that new order, and how will they achieve it?

The conflict over who will rule the unruly planet of Tatooine reminds me of Augustine of Hippo's political theories. Augustine was a Christian theologian of the early church, living during the last days of the Roman Empire. In his book *City of God*, Augustine said without justice, a city's government isn't much different from a criminal gang.

Boba might be a crime lord, but he seeks law and order for the benefit of others. He's a man of violence, but the goal of his violence is peace, rather than exploitation. Throughout the series we see an unlikely hero promoting justice in a land that doesn't understand the concept, and the show asks us to consider whether it's better to rule through fear or respect. ■

PET NAME James Herriot is actually a pen name. James Alfred Wight is the name of the British veterinary surgeon.

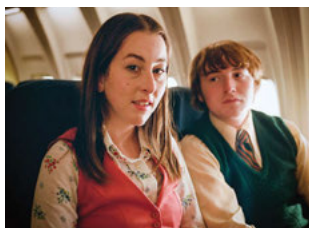
BOX OFFICE TOP 10

WEEKEND OF JAN. 21-23, ACCORDING TO BOX OFFICE MOJO. QUANTITY OF **SEXUAL (S)**, **VIOLENT (V)**, AND **FOUL-LANGUAGE (L)** CONTENT ON A 0-10 SCALE, WITH 10 HIGH. FROM KIDS-IN-MIND.COM

S V L

1	Spider-Man: No Way Home* PG-13	..	2	6	4
2	Scream R	.....	3	9	10
3	Sing 2* PG	.....	1	3	1
4	Redeeming Love* PG-13	.....	6	7	3
5	The King's Man R	.....	not rated		
6	The 355 PG-13	.....	not rated		
7	American Underdog* PG	.....	not rated		
8	The King's Daughter PG	.....	not rated		
9	West Side Story* PG-13	.....	5	6	5
10	Licorice Pizza* R	.....	not rated		

*REVIEWED BY WORLD



TOP 10 FOCUS

Alana is 25 and Gary is 15. This ... causes *Licorice Pizza* not to be the nostalgic masterpiece it should have been. Instead, it is an unfortunate and deceitful piece of “art” that resonates with the zeitgeist of this age. —from **WORLD’s review of *Licorice Pizza***



PETS AND PEOPLE ARE HUGGABLE

All Creatures Great and Small returns to Masterpiece

by Sharon Dierberger

BE READY TO RELAX. Settle in for Season 2 of *All Creatures Great and Small*, a *Masterpiece* seven-part series based on James Herriot’s stories of his own veterinary exploits among lovable Yorkshire characters—both human and animal. It’s every bit as winsome as the first season, one of the best television dramas last year.

What pleasure to be transported again to the pastoral English countryside of 1938 and enter the quaint fictional village of Darrowby, to reengage with Herriot

(Nicholas Ralph) and all the other authentic-feeling personalities. Rumbblings of World War II loom in the background.

Herriot continues to be smitten with a farmer’s daughter, Helen (Rachel Shenton), who was engaged to another man in the first season. He’s still working with his opinionated but kind veterinary surgeon partner Siegfried Farnon (Samuel West), though Herriot’s mother hopes Herriot will move back to Glasgow to take over a vet practice. And he’s still encouraging Farnon’s charming but rascally younger brother Tristan (Callum Woodhouse) to hone his vet skills, affecting many comedic encounters—like when Tristin incites an angry hog to ram a gate headfirst to burst a hematoma so he doesn’t have to lance it himself.

Season 2 (Sundays, 9 p.m. EST, PBS) resumes the first season’s same leisurely pace, endearing eccentrics, and realistic—often funny—situations. Viewers will welcome back Tricky Woo, the pampered Pekinese of indulgent Mrs. Pumphrey. (Actress Patricia Hodge succeeds the late Diana Rigg in the role.) In the first episode, a blue budgie of blind Mrs. Tompkin dies as Tristan reaches to trim its beak. Reminiscent of a parent surreptitiously replacing a child’s dead goldfish with a look-alike, Tristan attempts to replace the bird with another—of a different color.

Characters and relationships blossom. Herriot grows in confidence in his veterinary skills, saying, “Every problem has a solution, I just need to find it.” He pursues Helen and deepens his fondness for the Yorkshire Dales—but has to make decisions about his affections. Tristan faces whether he will pursue the family practice. Mrs. Hall (Anna Madeley), the empathetic and maternal keeper of Skeldale House’s vets and veterinary, plays an integral role as she contemplates life and relationships while caring for her surrogate family. She’s always ready with a calming cup of tea.

Enjoy this heartwarming series where neighbors accept each other’s quirks, people and animal bonds are strong, and outcomes aren’t predictable.

Linguistic humility

Two poets who listened before they spoke

by Emily Whitten



WHEN AMANDA GORMAN recited her poem, “The Hill We Climb,” at President Biden’s inauguration in 2021, her call for unity echoed loudly. Publishers responded by printing 1.5 million copies of the book version which debuted last March. That book went on to rank No. 1 on *The New York Times* bestseller list. It also earned the highest one week sales of any book of poetry ever published.

Why was America so hungry for her words? Was it her left-of-center politics? Youth and beauty on America’s political stage? Both, certainly. But coming on the heels of the political unrest of Jan. 6, Gorman also touched our anxieties with the grace of poetry. Her words blended jazzlike wordplay (rhyming “just is” with justice) with aspirational, timeless phrases: “We are striving ... to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters, and conditions of man.”

Part of her success seems to be this—before she spoke, she listened. *The Wall Street Journal* reported in 2021 that while composing the poem, Gorman studied writings by Frederick Douglass and other classic American writers. That kind of linguistic humility once formed an important part of our education. Poetry critic and host of *The Daily Poem* podcast, David Kern, recently edited *30 Poems to Memorize (Before It’s Too Late)*. In the preface, he argues that older generations relied on what they could remember (not digital databases), and therefore valued minds “full of things that were ... good, true, and beautiful.” Memorizing great works, he says,

can still help readers “inhabit and be inhabited by that which is transcendent.”

This Black History Month, Christians might put one other book in their library cue: *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* by Phillis Wheatley. Published in 1773, it became the first published book of poetry by any African American writer. A pious Christian who wrote her poems as a slave, Wheatley’s brilliance stunned American founding fathers like John Hancock. But Henry Louis Gates Jr. says in *The Trials of Phillis Wheatley* that her popularity faded with racially motivated opposition from Thomas Jefferson. Beginning in the 1960s, Gates adds, many writers black-listed Wheatley for being “too white.”

Wheatley’s neoclassical poems don’t always resonate with modern readers. But homeschoolers might do a fruitful unit study on her, incorporating a kids’ biography and her retelling of the Bible story about “Goliath of Gath.” In addition, all ages might find it worthwhile to “inhabit and be inhabited by” her poem, “On Being Brought from Africa to America.”

’Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,

*Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there’s a God, that there’s a Saviour too:*

Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

Some view our sable race with scornful eye,

“Their colour is a diabolic die.”

Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain,

May be refin’d, and join th’ angelic train.

Some today cringe at the poem’s lack of criticism of slavery. But Wheatley doesn’t portray her enslavement as a “mercy,” full stop. Rather, she sees her enslavement as light, momentary affliction compared to the “wonders of God’s infinite love.”

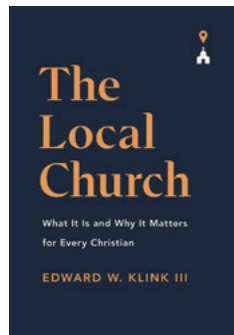
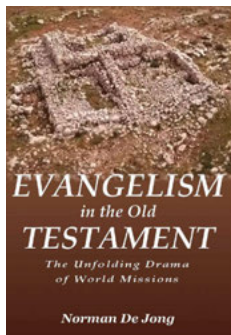
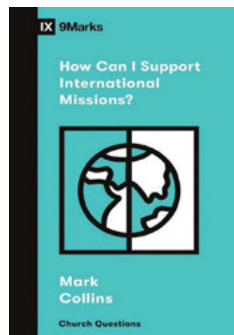
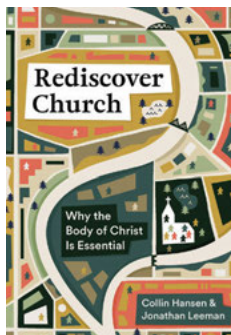
I also appreciate Wheatley’s soft rebuke. “Remember,” she says to the Americans of her day who had forgotten the humanity of “Negro” slaves. And “Remember,” she seems to say to us today, as we’re tempted to retreat into worldly political and racial tribes. God will redeem His people, a chosen race out of every nation and tribe and tongue. And no prejudice, old or new, can undo His work to make us one.

Gorman’s call for unity was good, but Wheatley’s is better. Both proffer poems worth remembering this Black History Month. ■

A vital church at home and abroad

Four books with accessible theologies

by Caleb Nelson



REDISCOVER CHURCH: WHY THE BODY OF CHRIST IS ESSENTIAL

Collin Hansen & Jonathan Leeman

Rediscover Church devotes a chapter to explaining each clause in this thesis: “A church is a group of Christians, who assemble as an earthly embassy of Christ’s heavenly kingdom, to proclaim the good news and commands of Christ the King; to affirm one another as His citizens through the ordinances; and to display God’s own holiness and love, through a unified and diverse people, in all the world, following the teaching and example of elders.” The result is a neat and worthwhile refresher on what church is and how to do it. Church is for making disciples and worshipping the triune God. “You return to church because you belong to God, because Christ gave his body.” Hansen and Leeman expound on that with depth and grace.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS? Mark Collins

Yes, giving money is on the list—but it comes sixth out of the nine ways to support missions that missionary Mark Collins lists in this 50-page booklet. His No. 1 way? Know the gospel. You must share it

yourself too: “You can’t be faithful in big things until you’re faithful in little things.” Collins also suggests learning more about missions, especially by reading missionary biographies. He urges readers to support only a few missionaries because it allows you to know who you’re supporting. Keep up with your missionary personally through letters and phone calls, he says, and then use that knowledge to get the rest of the church excited about missions. Collins’ work may be God’s way of calling some believers to the mission field.

EVANGELISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: THE UNFOLDING DRAMA OF WORLD MISSIONS

Norman De Jong

De Jong’s book looks at some of the most famous scenes in the Old Testament seeking, not moral lessons or theological implications, but how God declared the good news of salvation. Thus, De Jong sees the 10 plagues and Red Sea crossing as evangelistic campaigns directed to Pharaoh, and Daniel’s sojourn in the lion’s den as God’s way of giving Darius the gospel. Some of his instances of evangelism are obvious, like Jonah going to Nineveh. Others will be new to most Christians—e.g., the proclamation of covenant curses from Mt. Ebal in Deuteronomy 27. De Jong doesn’t think that evangelism is the primary focus of these passages, but he convincingly shows that it is always one of God’s purposes in His self-revelation.

THE LOCAL CHURCH: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN

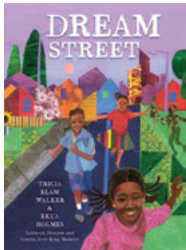
Edward Klink III

“Dr. Klink, can you give me any good reason why a Christian needs the church?” That challenge, issued at a party 15 years ago, has been reverberating in Edward Klink’s head ever since. This book is his answer. Klink begins by clearing away misconceptions regarding the church (it’s not coffee with friends, not a metaphor) and then boldly argues that the church is Christ’s bride and body, His ambassadors and children of His Father. That means it needs to worship (love God), witness (love others), and nurture (love one another). “Your local church is the primary people and place where your relationship with God happens,” Klink affirms. In fact, “a churchless Christianity has no relation to Christ.” Strong words ... and true.

Following the dream

Black History Month reads

by Kristin Chapman



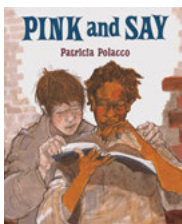
DREAM STREET Tricia Elam Walker & Ekua Holmes

This colorful picture book pairs vivid prose with mixed media illustrations celebrating the beauty of community. Each spread focuses on a resident of Dream Street, where “the houses and the dreams inside are different as thumbprints.” Little girls dream of becoming scientists and authors, while a retired mail carrier lives his dream of never wearing a uniform again: “He tips his big brown fedora and greets everyone with, ‘Don’t wait to *have* a great day. *Create* one!’” The ending affirms how children and

their dreams flourish with tender nurturing. (Ages 4-8)

WE WAIT FOR THE SUN Dovey Johnson Roundtree & Katie McCabe

In this tender childhood story from civil rights activist Dovey Johnson Roundtree, young Dovey Mae and her grandmother join other women on an early morning excursion to pick blackberries. Through shadowy woods they follow the beat of birds’ wings to find the best berry bushes and then fill their buckets as they wait for the sun. Raissa Figueroa’s illustrations vibrantly capture the story’s transition from pre-dawn dark to a magnificent morning sky, using deep blue and purple tones that recede into pink and golden hues. End notes offer additional biographical information. (Ages 4-8)



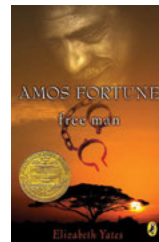
PINK AND SAY Patricia Polacco

The lives of two teenage boys—one black, one white—intersect on a Civil War battlefield where both are fighting for the Union cause. When Pink rescues an injured Say, he carries him past peril to the safety of his mother’s cabin. The boys regain health and strength of character until further heartache separates them. Polacco based this 1994 picture book on a true story passed down through the generations of her family. Note to parents: A character takes God’s name in vain and marauders kill Pink’s mother. (Ages 8-12)

ter takes God’s name in vain and marauders kill Pink’s mother. (Ages 8-12)

AMOS FORTUNE, FREE MAN Elizabeth Yates

This 1950 book envisions what life might have been like for a real-life Amos Fortune after slave traders ripped him from his African homeland, shipped him to the colonies, and sold him as a slave. The plot offers an idealized account of Amos’ years in slavery—kindly masters without the hardships rampant in slavery—before transitioning to life as a free man. In a New Hampshire graveyard his tombstone reads “born free in Africa, a slave in America, he purchased liberty, professed Christianity, lived reputably, and died hopefully, Nov. 17, 1801.” (Ages 8-12)



Afterword



In *The Big Wide Welcome* (The Good Book Company, 2022), Trillia Newbell addresses favoritism, using James 2 as a springboard to show children why playing favorites with people is an ongoing problem that began a long time ago. We might be tempted to play favorites, Newbell writes, because of a person’s abilities, money, or skin color: “We can play favorites for all sorts of reasons. But in the Bible, James said, *Don’t play favorites; choose to love.*” Newbell then points to Jesus and encourages children to “love people like [Jesus] loves people. ... Our churches should be big-wide-welcome places—places where there are no favorites, and everyone is loved.”

In *Made by God* (Harvest Kids, 2021) Tony Evans also exhorts children to love like Jesus and reminds them that despite our differences, all people are equally “made by God—with love.” Using simple terms, he defines racism and challenges young readers to take a stand against injustice. —K.C.



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Grammys delayed again due to COVID

Best Orchestral Performance finalists offer wide diversity

by Arsenio Orteza

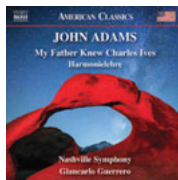
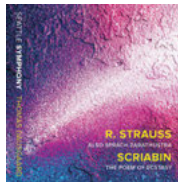
FOR THE SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR, the Grammy Awards are being postponed due to COVID. Whether the judges selecting the Best Orchestral Performance get a correspondingly extended deadline has not been announced.

They could use one. Aside from the usual difficulties in choosing the best of five outstanding performances, this year's deliberations come freighted with a confounding level of diversity.

On the traditionalist front are recordings of Richard Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and Scriabin's *The Poem of Ecstasy* by the Seattle Symphony (Seattle Symphony Media) and *Beethoven's Symphony No. 9* by the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (Reference Recordings).

Ticking the living-composers box, there's the Nashville Symphony Orchestra's recording of John Adams' *My Father Knew Charles Ives* and *Harmonielehre* (Naxos) and the San Francisco Symphony's recording of Nico Muhly's 18-minute, single-movement *Throughline* (Warner Classics)—the latter of which, incidentally, was "composed especially for the legal and physical restrictions made necessary by the COVID-19 virus" and therefore also ticks the zeitgeist box.

Finally, as if the competition weren't appley-to-orangey enough, there's the Philadelphia Orchestra's recording of *Florence Price's Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3* (Deutsche



Grammophon), a performance whose appeal is extra-musically bolstered by the recently rediscovered Price's *au courant* status as the first significant 20th-century composer who was also a woman of color.

Of course, if the voters adhere to the guidelines implicit in the term *best orchestral performance*, neither the works' inherent qualities nor their composers' current cachet should matter.

It should be possible, for example, for a panel of experts to conclude that the Yannick Nézet-Séguin-conducted Philadelphia Orchestra "outperformed" the Manfred Honeck-conducted Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra regardless of whether Beethoven's Ninth—at one time considered unplayable (and unsingable) as written—places greater demands on an orchestra and its conductor than Price's pastorally lyrical, Dvořák-inspired symphonies ever could.

A piece's difficulty, in other words, should not excuse the shortcomings of its interpreters.

But what if, after careful deliberation, the experts conclude that Honeck and the PSO interpreted Beethoven just fine? What chance would the recordings of works by Price, Muhly, Adams, or Strauss and Scriabin stand then?

And even if the Thomas Dausgaard-conducted Seattle Symphony were determined to have matched or exceeded the efforts of their Pittsburgh counterparts, would the slightly superior audio resulting from the latter's having been recorded in a studio give it the edge over the former, which was recorded live in concert?

And how might Muhly's *Throughline*, a lean, ever-morphing piece that emphasizes individual orchestra members (and at times individual orchestra nonmembers) instead of the collective, stack up? "It's easy," Muhly has said, "to get lost in the idea that the orchestra is just this one gigantic roomful of people making a bunch of noise."

Yet isn't that idea, or some version of it anyway, the one in which the classical vettres are supposed to get lost?

Having to listen repeatedly to five wonderful recordings sounds like nice work if you can get it. This year, however, the temptation to envy is easy to resist. ■

MUSICAL ENSEMBLE Every orchestra includes four instrument families: string, woodwind, brass, and percussion.

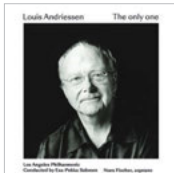
Modern classical

Stiff competition among Contemporary Classical nominees

by Arsenio Orteza

LOUIS ANDRIESEN: THE ONLY ONE Los Angeles Philharmonic, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Nora Fischer

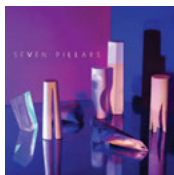
Some clarification: The “piece” for which this album has been nominated for the Best Contemporary Classical Composition Grammy is not the 2½-minute title track but the entire 21-minute suite, comprising an “Introduction,” two “Interludes,” and musical settings of five poems by the contemporary Flemish poet Delphine Lecompte (translated into English by Lecompte herself). It’s hard to say whether the shardlike verse suits Andriessen’s no-holds-barred compositional approach or vice versa, but they do suit each other. And the soprano Nora Fischer engages both with an unflinchingly steely verve.



SEVEN PILLARS

Sandbox Percussion & Andy Akiho

Seven Pillars—the work under consideration by the Recording Academy committee—consists not only of the seven movements on this album specifically titled “Pillar” but also of the four percussion solos interspersed throughout. And even if the voters choose something else (the competition is stiff this year), they will have had fun weighing this piece’s merits as well as the way that Sandbox Percussion (augmented by the composer Andy Akiho and the engineer Sean Dixon) bring it to life.



Anchored by a bass drum that thumps in impressive three-dimensionality, the sounds accumulate, disperse, clatter, and shine as they span the nooks and crannies of the stereo spectrum.

NARROW SEA

Sō Percussion, Dawn Upshaw, Gilbert Kalish

By bringing Dawn Upshaw’s art-song soprano, her accompanist Gilbert Kalish’s expressive pianism, and Sō Percussion’s eerie sound effects to bear on four selections from the 19th-century shape-note hymnal *The Sacred Harp*, Caroline Shaw has found a way to emphasize the universal, as opposed to the merely historical or sentimental, aspects of revival-era pietism. The reshaped melodies that she gives “Wayfaring Stranger,” “There Is a Land of Pure Delight,” “Had I the Pinions of a Dove,” and “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand” might seem disorienting, almost iconoclastic, at first. On repeated exposure, they seem anything but.



ARCHETYPES

Third Coast Percussion, Sérgio & Clarice Assad

If length enhances a piece’s chances of winning the Grammy in question, this 54-minute suite is a shoo-in. If, on the other hand, a piece’s chances are divided by the number of composers that it represents—six in this case—*Archetypes* is doomed. So ignore the odds and concentrate instead on the wit and sensitivity with which the sparkling mallet work and Sérgio Assad’s classical guitar vividly evoke a dozen prototypical figures. “Jester” frolics along to a twanging mouth harp and concludes with a honk. “Caregiver” incarnates pathos with appropriate TLC. “Sage” could inspire deep thoughts. And “Hero” could’ve heralded the Michael Jordan-era Bulls as they took to the court in Chicago.



Encore



The most interesting recording competing for the Best Contemporary Classical Composition Grammy is “Movement 11,” a two-minute selection from Jon Batiste’s latest album, *We Are* (Verve). It’s interesting because, as more than one Recording Academy voter has pointed out, there’s nothing particularly “classical” about it. So why not simply slot it into the Best Improvised Jazz Solo category, where it clearly belongs? Probably because—assuming that there’s a rule against this sort of thing—another Batiste recording (“Bigger Than Us” from the *Soul* soundtrack) got there first.

No controversy attends the other awards for which *We Are* (Album of the Year, Best R&B Album) or selections from it (Record of the Year, Best Traditional R&B Performance, Best American Roots Performance, Best American Roots Song) are contending. Nor should controversy ensue if Batiste wins each one—a likely enough result given that *We Are* is nothing less than a 21st-century *Songs in the Key of Life*. —A.O.



Talking with Sonny

A Lyft ride with some regular
WORLD people

BACK IN OCTOBER, I asked WORLD Radio's Mary Reichard to meet me in the waiting room side of the Asheville airport. "By the baby grand," I suggested.

She texted a quick response—something about the piano and reconstructing a scene from *Casablanca*—but I declined, noting what I perceived could be a tough audience behind the masks and piles of luggage situated around me. Instead, I told Mary I had a surprise for her. One about 5 foot 4, outlined in suede and anchored by a pair of floral sneakers. Andrée Seu Peterson. The woman herself.

Folks in their 50s should probably be past fawning, but too bad, Mary and I blew the curve. While she gushed about a Manila folder filled with two decades' worth of clipped columns, I mentioned unsigned hardbacks I'd hauled across the friendly skies. Andrée smiled politely. She may have even blushed.

"The coverage you did at the Gosnell trial ..."

"Oh, and that one about what the woman was thinking as she drove—'Seventeen Minutes' or something or other ..."

Hey, it's not every day the postage-stamp-sized magazine image that has for years disciplined you with the steadiness of a dripping Keurig goes full-throttle 4D. And (get this) puts your number in her phone contacts.

But before I had time to absorb what was happening, a silver-haired guy named Sonny had us belted into the backseat of his Lyft. He laughed and sang along as we recorded a happy anniversary video for Mary's Joe, back home in Missouri pining for his bride of 31 years. Sonny, it turned out, was once a musician.

What kind of musician? Where? Did you ever record anything?

I BUSIED MYSELF WITH GRABBING BACKPACKS FROM THE HATCH, BUT I HAD MY ANTENNAE UP. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAKING NOTES.

Mary and Andrée took a tag team approach to the discussion, asking and nodding and um-humming with ease. The same gentle winnowing that left Sonny wide open left me as quiet as the Proverbs fool hoping for a wise countenance. Wow, what a seat I had!

Somehow Andrée got Sonny talking about a young niece who had years ago died quite suddenly. Somehow Mary learned he wrote a song about that niece's death. Somehow we ended up parked along Hendersonville Road where we listened to an instantaneously produced recording of said song.

Returning to traffic, Sonny promised to get us to our hotel in a jiffy. My fellow Lyftees took note and decided the moment had come to pivot the conversation. That's when we learned our Lyftor was "spiritual, though not religious."

"What does that mean?" Mary probed. She's a good prober.

Sonny stalled. Well, you know ... Well, you see ...

Moments later we landed outside the lobby, and Sonny landed on an answer. He can be spiritual, he said, without the help of a local church. "I don't go to an organized church."

Like that would fly with these two.

I busied myself with grabbing backpacks from the hatch, but I had my antennae up. I should have been taking notes. In addition to his \$27.59 fare, Sonny was going to get some advice from Andrée, and guess what? He didn't even have to turn to page 70 for it. She slung her words out there in the crisp Asheville air as easily as she slung her carry-on over her shoulder.

"Often it's through the mundane aspects of organized church that you find Christ, Sonny." She stopped to look our Lyft driver square in the eye. "Think about that, will you?"

Sonny nodded and drove away.

The next day, Mary told an audience about WORLD podcast *Legal Docket's* mission—demystifying the Supreme Court—but she was uncomfortable doing it. The business suit she planned to wear was back in Missouri. In the dryer.

Andrée had her time behind the mic, too. She wowed the crowd with words she scribbled on paper scraped together from drawers at the Holiday Inn.

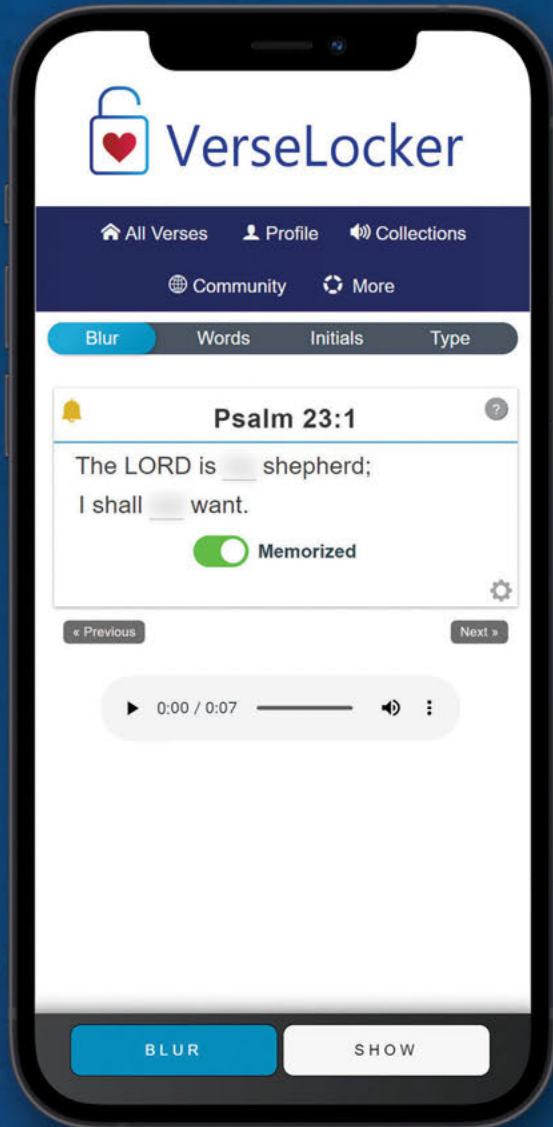
Ah, regular people after all. Still, I thought it might be good to give account of our 11-mile joy ride.

How else would you know to pray for Sonny? ■



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“Your word I have hidden in my heart...” Psalm 119:11

LEGACY M

Pro-lifers are still far from achieving the original goal of the March for Life, but the increas

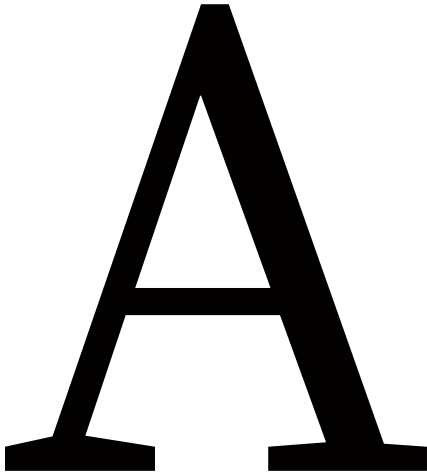


A R C H E R S

ingly youthful crowd gives old-timers hope for the future of the movement / by Leah Savas



A youthful crowd leads the 2022 March for Life on Jan. 21 in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington.



AS SHARON RODI WOVE THROUGH THE densely packed crowd on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., she talked on and off about the weather and the clothes she had worn to fend off the 21-degree chill during the March for Life on Jan. 21. Rodi had foot warmers, hand warmers, and lots of layers underneath her long gray coat, including black faux snakeskin pants. But for once, she hadn't brought her fold-up poncho in case of rain. Good thing the day in D.C. turned out to be sunny.

"This isn't near as cold as it's been in other years. I mean, this is bearable," said Rodi, the National Right to Life delegate from Louisiana and a board member of several pro-life organizations in her home state. "I can stand here now. Other times it's been absolutely miserable. Like it could be this cold and it could be raining."

Rodi would know what D.C. in January could be like. Although she doesn't look it, she's 79 and has attended most of the annual Marches for Life since they first started in January 1974, on the first anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision that effectively legalized abortion throughout the country. That first year, she was 31 and came to the march to represent the pregnancy center she headed up in New Orleans.

It was cold then too: She remembers laughing that year when one of the men in her group admitted he kept his pajama pants on to stay warm. A couple years later, it was so cold that she and some friends ducked in and out of buildings on their way down Constitution Avenue to escape the chill. Most years, she wears a mink coat that she inherited from her mother in the 1980s. And this year, as has become routine, she's got on the Uggs boots

that her daughter gave her a few years back.

Rodi became involved with the pro-life movement after hearing about the *Roe* decision. Her daughters were 3 and 5, and it shocked her to think that the law could allow people to kill their children. "I remember vividly, 'I should do something now or else five years from now this will still be the law,'" she said.

Now, almost 50 years later, it still is the law, but pro-lifers are hopeful that a big change is coming in 2022. On Dec. 1, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the case of a Mississippi pro-life law that protects babies from abortion after 15 weeks' gestation. Many pro-lifers are hopeful that the Supreme Court will uphold the law, giving other states more freedom to enact abortion bans and restrictions.

From where Rodi stood during the noon rally before the march, it was hard to hear the speakers. But she could hear the frequent and thundering cheers coming from the youthful crowd. During the rally, March for Life President Jeanne Mancini laughed and admitted that since becoming president in 2012, she's "never seen such an excited crowd."

**"IN THE
CONTEXT OF
THE TIMES,
EVERYBODY
PROTESTED
EVERYTHING
BY HAVING A
MARCH ON
WASHINGTON."**

Perhaps it had something to do with the anticipation that the Supreme Court might use the *Dobbs* case to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Multiple speakers at the rally alluded to that possibility, one saying what a lot of people were thinking: "We are closer than ever to reversing *Roe v. Wade*."

Old-timers like Rodi have been around long enough to know that the reversal they're anticipating falls far short of what March for Life founder Nellie Gray set out to achieve when she organized the 1974 march. But the event that Gray started as a protest against legal abortion has taken on another role: a way for pro-lifers to pass on the pro-life legacy to the younger generations. Regardless of how the Supreme Court rules in the Mississippi case, pro-lifers recognize lots of work remains to be done, and the march could continue to play a part.

AT THE FIRST MARCH FOR LIFE in 1974, Connie Marshner was a 22-year-old employee of the organization that would one day become the Heritage Foundation. The march was on a Tuesday, but Marshner went anyway because the organization's president gave everyone a day off to go.

"In the context of the times, everybody protested everything by having a march on Washington," said Marshner. But it was a new thing for her and others in her circles: "This wasn't something that respectable conservatives did."

Starting a march for conservatives wasn't founder Nellie Gray's plan either. "Nellie was a good Democrat, she was a good liberal Democrat. ... Totally unknown to the quote-unquote conservatives on Capitol Hill who had been paying attention to the issue," said Marshner.

Gray, a lawyer and a U.S. government employee in the Departments of State and Labor, saw abortion as a humanitarian issue and went to her heroes in Congress who had taken a stand on other human rights questions. Her plan was to have a one-time march on Washington as a way to encourage Congress to pass a law that would undo the *Roe v. Wade* decision. But when her Democratic heroes wouldn't listen, she turned to Republicans and conservatives. Marshner remembers that Gray, who died in 2012, would often talk about how stunned she was when she discovered she'd have to work with people whom she had always seen as political enemies.



Mark and Sharon Rodi at the 2022 march.

When 1974 came and went, leaving *Roe* unscathed, Gray decided to hold a March for Life every year. “We will be here until we overturn *Roe v. Wade*,” Gray would say at the annual rallies, standing before swarms of pro-lifers in her signature red suit and dark permed hair. But her idea of what that would look like was not what every other pro-lifer had in mind. Marshner said Gray’s agenda was clear through the speakers she chose to invite to speak at the marches year after year.

“That was always a point of drama,” said Marshner, explaining that Gray only ever invited speakers who advocated a personhood amendment. Sen. Jesse Helms presented such an amendment for the first time in the 1970s: It required the ratification of 38 of 50 state legislatures and would end legal abortion in the country completely by defining a human person as a person from the moment of conception. Gray opposed anything less, including Sen. Orrin Hatch’s 1981 Human Life Federalism Amendment, which would have allowed each state to determine its own position on the abortion issue.

Some pro-life groups, including National Right to Life and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, supported the amendment as a commonsense solution: They thought more sweeping pro-life measures wouldn’t make it through Congress. “Nellie regarded that as high treason—the idea of returning the issue to the states was high treason,” said Marshner. “She was personhood or nothing.”

The pro-life community was divided. Neither the Helms nor Hatch amendment passed.

Sharon Rodi remembers that part of American pro-life history. She remembers other losses too and knows that the 2022 march isn’t the first one to be marked by a sense of anticipation that something will happen at the Supreme Court.

“As a Supreme Court case would come up, we would think, ‘Well, this is gonna change things,’” Rodi said. New Republican Supreme Court appointments would give them hope too, but the movement had one disappointment after another: Justice David Souter, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, Chief Justice John Roberts.



LEFT: Nellie Gray and Sen. Jesse Helms discuss the human life amendment in 1980. RIGHT: College students attend the 2022 march.

That experience tempers her excitement about how the Supreme Court will rule this summer in the *Dobbs* case. “We’ve had so many disappointments in appointees and then in decisions that we think this is going to be it and is this going to be it? I don’t know,” she said. “I wish it would be.”

But even if this is it for *Roe*, Rodi recognizes that it won’t be the complete victory Gray and other pro-lifers have worked decades for since it will only return the question of abortion’s legality back to the states, the very goal of Senator Hatch’s 1981 bill that Gray opposed.

“We could have had this years ago,” said Rodi. “There are other times in these 49 years when there’s been an opportunity to have a states’ rights amendment and, for many reasons, it went down. Sometimes it went down because people wanted everything: They wanted a human life amendment at the national level; we weren’t going to get that. So therefore we missed getting a states’ rights amendment.” Gray was one of those people, and the anticipated result of this *Dobbs* decision is not what she wanted.

A LITTLE BEFORE NOON the morning of the March for Life, Katie Brown stood with her father on the grassy lawn of the National

Mall in front of the columned Department of Agriculture. The 25-year-old, wearing jeans and bundled up stylishly in a purple coat, scarf, and hat, looked especially petite next to her tall, wide-shouldered father, Hugh Brown. They both work for the American Life League, a pro-life organization founded in 1979 by Hugh’s mother, Judie Brown, that shares Nellie Gray’s ideal of passing a personhood amendment.

Katie and Hugh have both been coming to the March for Life for most of their lives: Hugh since the very first march in 1974, when he came as a 5-year-old. In college, he attended with some buddies from his football team, who together served as volunteer bodyguards for his mom. In the 1990s, Judie sometimes received death threats through mail and fax.

Judie couldn’t be at the march this year, but she explained in an email exchange earlier in the week that she didn’t see the *Dobbs* case as a solution to the problems caused by *Roe*. “*Dobbs* is a flawed law, and so abortion could be regulated but not overturned,” Brown said. “And if it is regulated by the court, per-

mitting some babies to die but not others, that will not be a victory.”

Hugh and Katie share that view. “I think the biggest issue with exceptions is it just kind of—it’s not the ultimate goal of the pro-life movement,” explained Katie, trying to talk over the loud music coming from the rally stage. “Nellie Gray ... founded the March for Life to abolish abortion, not just to overturn *Roe* but to abolish abortion,” she added. When the pro-life movement supports legislation that prevents some babies from being aborted but not others, she said, it’s like “kicking the can down the road.”

“I think a lot of people in the pro-life movement are so eager to claim a victory that they are willing to sacrifice a goal, to maybe shorten the goal post, to claim some kind of victory,” Katie explained. To her, the real victory would be a personhood amendment. Hugh called the idea of overturning *Roe* “false hope.”

But they still see the benefits of a national march that they think won’t go away, regardless of what the Supreme Court rules in the *Dobbs* case.

One of the strongest memories Hugh has of his early years at the march—besides the D.C. cold—is being there with his mother, seeing her speak on the stage, and



“IT’S JUST SO FULFILLING FOR ME TO HAVE THESE SIX GRANDCHILDREN WHO WANT TO GO TO THIS MARCH FOR LIFE, WHO BELIEVE IN THE SANCTITY OF LIFE.”

meeting her partners in the pro-life movement: Nellie Gray and Dr. Mildred Jefferson. Going to the march every year, he said, “was just something that the family did.”

Katie said it was the same for her growing up: She’s one of Hugh’s five children, and they would all attend as a family. This year, she and her father rode in on a bus with two of her younger siblings, who came with a group from their Christian high school, where Hugh coaches football.

“To me, the march also has tremendous benefit with the sheer volume of young people that are there because there are speakers there that speak to very real subjects ... helping people to be able to understand why a baby’s life matters and why it’s not a disposable item,” said Hugh. He said that even when he was a teenager that countercultural message impacted him.

The march hasn’t always been an event for young people. When Sharon Rodi attended the first march as a 31-year-old in 1974, she felt like one of the younger people there. “It was mostly white ... women, and older white women ... women in their 50s and 60s,” she said. She was also one of only eight people from Louisiana who came that year. But, as the years went by, the crowd from her state grew larger and got younger. Rodi estimated that, in a good year, more

than a thousand schoolchildren from Louisiana alone come to the march. This year, two of her own grandchildren came up with their high schools.

Connie Marshner hasn’t been to the march since the mid-2010s. “It’s a long way, and I get tired,” she said, laughing, in a phone call from her home in Fort Royal, Va., a few days before the March for Life. But she remembers noticing the explosion of children at the march when she started going again in the 1990s after more than a decade-long hiatus.

“Instead of being a grim protest march, which was what it was at the beginning, it was a happy gathering of cheerful praising-the-Lord young people,” said Marshner. “It became the rite of passage for every Christian young person. You went to a March for Life if you were sincere about your beliefs.” She called it a “movement builder.”

During the rally before the 49th annual March for Life, Rodi and her husband, Mark, wove through the crowd of about 150,000 people to find their grandchildren, Claire Nash and Merrick Rotolo. To her, spending time with her grandchildren has been the most memorable part of her long history with the March for Life.

“It’s just so fulfilling for me to have these six grandchildren who want to go to this March for Life, who believe in the sanctity of life, despite everything that’s out there today telling them that ... a baby’s life isn’t worth anything,” said Rodi, fighting back happy tears. “And yet as each one of them goes to the March for Life, they come back more convinced of the value of the unborn child.” She said the need to educate people about the value of unborn life will remain long after *Roe* goes.

For Nash and Rotolo, it’s their first time coming to the March for Life. Rotolo said he got chills when he turned a corner near the National Mall and saw for the first time all of the people who had gathered for the march. He said he wanted to come because of his grandma. “I just kind of wanted to embrace her legacy and continue the legacy that she started,” he said.

As Rotolo walked across the lawn of the National Mall with his school friends toward the start of the march, he said he’s hopeful for the outcome of the *Dobbs* case. “But there’s still work to be done,” he said, his cheeks rosy with cold. ■

—with reporting by Esther Eaton



FAR FROM AN EMBATTLED HOME

Ethnic Karen refugees watch their violence-filled homeland in Myanmar from a distance

BY SHARON DIERBERGER *in St. Paul, Minn.*



Police watch as citizens clash with pro-military supporters in Yangon, Myanmar, following the February 2021 coup.

PANOS PICTURES/REDUX

The large, red-brick church with white-rimmed Gothic windows and bell tower topped with a simple cross looms above busy Payne Avenue in St. Paul, Minn. As traffic whizzes by, few passersby may notice that East Immanuel, a Norwegian Lutheran church from 1888, is also home to a second congregation of mostly first-generation immigrants from the opposite side of the world.

Several hundred ethnic Karen with roots in Southeast Asia's Myanmar (also called Burma) attend services here Sunday afternoons at Shiloh Karen Baptist Church. During the January service I attended, parishioners enthusiastically sang mostly in the Karen language, led by women dressed in colorful, fringed, traditional Karen dresses, accompanied in contrast by electric guitar, drums, and piano.

The guest preacher periodically stopped to translate his sermon into English. Young Sunday school children fidgeted as they trooped to the front of the church to sing. Teens congregated in the left-side pews, many still wearing winter beanies because of subzero outdoor temperatures, occasionally glancing at cell phones, but mostly focused on speakers and singing.

St. Paul is home to the largest population of Karen refugees in the United States—about 20,000. Many resettled here from Thai refugee camps where they'd escaped fighting between Karen armed troops and the Myanmar army, which has been ongoing for more than 70 years. After a peace agreement in 2015, fighting lessened until a year ago when a military coup reignited tensions.

Feb. 1 marks one year since the coup in which the military deposed Myanmar's elected civilian government and gave power to Gen. Min Aung Hlaing. Harsh crackdowns on civilian and ethnic protests followed, leading to the army and police killing more than 1,400 people, arresting more than 11,000, and displacing tens of thousands of civilians.

Today, the army continues to commit daily atrocities, create communication disruptions, control trade, and deepen ties with authoritarian powers. Many refugees in St. Paul, who have experienced the cruelty of the Myanmar military firsthand, struggle with how to help those who

remain in their homeland while continuing to assimilate to their new home here.

EH TA MOO, 29, originally from Karen state in southeastern Myanmar, knows what it's like to fear the military in Myanmar. He has lived in America for 10 years, the last six here in St. Paul. It's a stark difference from the primitive Thai refugee camp he lived in for 12 years after he and his aunt fled the fighting in Karen.

With kind brown eyes and soft-spoken voice, Moo shares his story, periodically glancing away to gather his thoughts. Occasionally he pauses, searching for the right English word.

The year was 1999. The Burmese military, comprised of the majority Bamar ethnic group giving the country its original name, had burned down his village,

Jaelo, for a second time. Although villagers rebuilt again, they knew soldiers would return and force villagers to join the army, often killing adults who refused and kidnapping children. Moo's family wanted the 7-year-old to leave the country and get an education—all the village's teachers had already run away.

Civil war between Myanmar armed forces—the Tatmadaw—and other ethnic groups throughout the country has been raging since Myanmar gained independence from British rule in 1948. The 2008 constitution divided Myanmar, with its more than 135 ethnic groups, into seven ethnic states, including Karen (also called Kayin).

The states want self-determination, but the Tatmadaw battles for Burmesization, insisting ethnic groups embrace a Burmese



identity, stop demanding autonomy, and submit to military control. This has been at the root of much of the ongoing strife.

Moo and his aunt escaped with nothing but a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of rice. They walked two full days. A teenage boy noticed Moo's exhaustion, carried him for an hour, and helped him climb into an open truck packed with people, produce, and animals for another day of travel into Thailand. (That Myanmar teen now pastors a church in North Carolina.)

Moo remembers during the journey he feared the Tatmadaw would snatch him, enlisting him to carry weapons or using him for sex trafficking. He said before he left his village, Burmese soldiers tortured his close friend, gouging out his eye. Another friend lost his legs stepping on a land mine. His own baby brother died when the military arrested his mom and forced her to direct them through the overgrown jungle for weeks as she carried her weakened, dying infant.

Four years later, Moo's family escaped Myanmar to join him in the Thai camp, where they lived in bamboo huts and ate mostly rice and beans. Moo attended the camp's refugee school with limited curriculum. He contracted malaria multiple

times, which led to kidney failure. Today he undergoes three hours of dialysis three times a week as he awaits a new kidney. He tells me he feels good. I find out later from others, as is typical for the Karen, he never complains.

He and his family finally emigrated to the United States in 2011, after the United Nations provided applications. Though Moo desperately wanted to come to America, the move scared him: "In the refugee camp, we had no contact with the outside world—no newspapers, no television. We heard people in the West might use us for animal feed." And he feared he would never see relatives and friends again.

Although they trusted God, arriving in the U.S. distressed Moo and his family because of the enormous culture shock: "When we saw New York City, we were overwhelmed and sure we'd made a mistake and cried and cried. And prayed a lot."

AFTER MOO LEFT HIS HOMETLAND, fighting continued. Then, in 2015, Myanmar citizens grew hopeful when they elected the first civilian government, Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy. But the military retained control of three key government ministries—Home Affairs,

Border Affairs, and Defense—and maintained veto power in the parliament. Violence against ethnic groups escalated, especially against the minority Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state.

Myanmar has denied citizenship to the Rohingya since 1982, calling them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, even though they have lived in Myanmar for centuries. Beginning in 2016, after radical Rohingya attacked police posts, Buddhist majority mobs along with the military started openly killing and torturing Rohingya civilians and raping women and girls. More than 700,000 Rohingya, half of them children, fled the country, and UN investigators condemned Myanmar for mass killings and rapes with "genocidal intent."

To the consternation of the United States, Suu Kyi's democratically elected government did not condemn the genocide. Professor Tun Myint, political science chair at Minnesota's Carlton College, notes

BELOW: A young girl weeps during the funeral of her father, who was shot and killed last March when military and police joint security forces used live fire on unarmed, peaceful protesters. LEFT: Karen refugees cross the Moei River Jan. 4 to get food and supplies from Thai donors.



Eh Ta Moo (right) and Pastor Saw Kwah converse together where Shiloh Karen Baptist Church meets in East Immanuel Church. (The bandage on Moo's arm is from his triweekly dialysis.)



that for decades Western governments and media had not condemned previous military genocides against other ethnic groups, including the Karen.

Even after the National League for Democracy won a landslide victory in 2020, ethnic groups remained skeptical, says Myint. That's because Suu Kyi, despite being the face of the new democracy and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, did not appear to support ethnic minorities. Her late father was a Myanmar general considered a hero of Myanmar independence, and she seemed conciliatory toward the military. When Suu Kyi, hailed internationally as a human rights defender, didn't protect the Rohingya, failed to advance civil liberties, and prosecuted journalists and activists under colonial-era laws, ethnic hopes of a democratic awakening waned.

Ironically, despite Suu Kyi's prior concessions to the army, the military sentenced her in December to two years in prison for charges of incitement and violating pandemic rules. Other charges could lead to life in prison.

During the year since the coup, cell service and internet are spotty, especially as the military periodically shuts down both and has increased spying and surveillance. Yet, thanks to the still unreliable internet, Moo says, more people, including the majority Burmese, are able to see through some of the military propaganda. Now eyewitnesses to events post their own videos and updates.

Recently, Moo has started talking daily with relatives in Karen and nearby Karenni state with access to Thai or sometimes Myanmar cell service. On Dec. 23-24, the Tatmadaw led three airstrikes in Karen's Lay Kay Kaw area, displacing tens of thousands more villagers. Many have fled into jungles or Karenni, which the military also started bombing, and into Thailand. Moo's relatives tell him Thailand has started turning refugees away. They say they are afraid to go anywhere because of nightly bombing and mortar attacks.

Myint says the military is primarily targeting members of the ousted democratic parliament who have been hiding

in this region among other civilians. As fighting intensifies, Moo encourages loved ones in Karen to be strong in Christ, including his grandpa who stayed to pastor the Karen. All the Karen I spoke with are frustrated they can't do more personally to help those back home.

MOO'S FAMILY MEMBERS became Christians in Myanmar, raised in the faith for generations. Adoniram Judson, a Baptist missionary who served in Myanmar (a mostly Buddhist country) for almost 40 years, brought the gospel to the Karen in 1827. Moo's great-great-grandpa learned about Jesus from Judson. Moo remembers his father telling him in the refugee camp that life on earth is temporary and being rich or poor didn't matter. What did was being faithful and trusting Jesus.

“I want this freedom and joy for my homeland.”

Today, nearly 20 percent of Karen in Myanmar are Christian. More than 90 percent of the almost quarter of a million Karen in the United States profess to be Christians, most of whom are in the Karen Baptist Church. The Twin Cities have 12 active Karen churches. Each summer, more than 130 Karen Baptist churches throughout the United States sponsor a national youth Bible camp.

From New York, Moo and his family moved to San Diego for six months where he went to high school and endured bullying. Moo defended himself when hit but was afraid he might be deported, so he and his siblings mostly tried to stay invisible and work hard in school. His parents learned housekeeping and factory skills.

A contact of Moo's helped his parents find work cutting up chickens in a poultry factory in Columbia, S.C. The owner had learned that the Karen work hard and never complain. After school and during summers in South Carolina, Moo washed dishes in a Japanese restaurant and soon rose to sushi chef.

But Moo wanted to serve the Lord as a pastor. He finished his Bible degree and with his family moved to St. Paul in 2015 because of the thriving Karen population and job opportunities—including an assistant pastor position—he found through church contacts.

His parents moved to rural Willmar, Minn., with a strong Karen church community. His dad works at a chicken farm while his mom stays home with Moo's 8-year-old brother. They grow vegetables at the house they've bought, and Moo visits monthly. He and his other siblings recently pooled their savings and bought a three-bedroom home in St. Paul where they work full time.

JESSE PHENOW, 29, founder of the Urban Village, a Karen and Karenni community space a few miles away from Moo's church, became passionate about Karen refugees as a college student, befriending and learning from many. He and a Karen family with seven boys now share a duplex. Since the junta takeover, he has personally smuggled food supplies into Myanmar for displaced Karen and is planning another clandestine trip soon, funded by supporters around the globe.

Phenow says he does these risky trips because "this [Karen] community has loved me and cared for me ... and this is one way I try to give back."

Myint, the political science professor, says Karen self-determination depends on democracy prevailing. He hopes the international community follows through on its promises to establish no-fly zones to prevent airstrikes, increase targeted sanctions, and leverage an arms embargo on China and Russia who are supplying weapons and training to the Myanmar military. He knows U.S. support is crucial for world democracies to recognize Myanmar's National Unity Government—the government in exile formed by elected parliament members ousted in the coup.

Moo is earnest when he says he loves democracy. He says he's living the American dream and has come full circle: He graduated from college in the United States, has started another degree program, and works at Community School of Excellence helping immigrant children. In July, he married Synthia, a woman he met years ago in the refugee camp who, after emigrating to North Carolina, wound up in St. Paul.

His pastor performed the ceremony in the beautiful historic Swedish church on Payne Avenue where Moo is assistant pastor. Moo tells me, "I want this freedom and joy for my homeland." ■

KEEPING KAREN TRADITIONS ALIVE

On Jan. 1, thousands of Karen flocked into a St. Paul public school auditorium to watch and participate in a traditional **Karen New Year ceremony**, singing competition, and culture show. One little girl sat cross-legged in her pink Karen dress, watching competitors as she munched Cheetos with orange-stained fingers. From long tables lining the room's back, Karen of all ages—some dressed in traditional garb, others in blue jeans and puffer coats—picked up Karen foods like rice, cucumbers, curried meat, and chili paste.

Saw Kwah, Eh Ta Moo's pastor, appreciates these events. He tries to bequeath Karen traditions and language to his own children and those in the church so they understand and value their heritage and faith, while staying aware of their country's ongoing conflict.

When Kwah himself was 13, he joined the Karenni Army for four years to fight the Tatmadaw, who had killed his father. His mother was already dead.

He somberly recounts army life as a young teen: He rarely had enough food and often felt hopeless, unable to play with friends or see siblings. He had to shoot Burmese soldiers when they threatened Karen villages. Kwah's right hand still bears a self-needed faint purple tattoo—a constant reminder of those years in the jungle.

He became a bodyguard for a general in a Karen refugee camp in Thailand then attended the camp's Bible school. He started teaching and pastoring in the nearby Karenni camp. For 14 years, he lived in camps before emigrating, first to Texas, then Minnesota.

Kwah worries not only for his homeland but for his children growing up here. He focuses on teaching respect and kindness because, he says, at school they learn bad habits: "We want Americans to know we love and serve God and recognize our language is given by God. We want others to value us. We want our children to remember these things." —S.D.



As backroom betting goes digital, states that make it legal may find the stakes are high

by **KIM HENDERSON** in Hammond, La.

AT SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY, the pitcher's mound belonging to Alumni Field lies in the shadow of the press box belonging to Strawberry Stadium. Both arenas, like most of the school, are closed off, cold. The only hint of an approaching spring semester is hurried workers, on all fours, hand-floating concrete in a new section of sidewalk along North General Pershing Street. ■ As students return to the state's third-largest public university, academic fresh starts won't be the only opportunity coming their way. Lawmakers last summer voted to bring betting to the bayous, and mobile sports betting apps are expected to launch in Louisiana any day. Or at least in time for the Super Bowl. ■ David Cranford pastors First Baptist Church in nearby Ponchatoula, and he was president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention when that group went up against powerful political operatives backing the gambling legislation. "We live in a state that is itself addicted to gambling," he said, "and what I mean by that is the state of Louisiana is addicted to gambling revenue, and they will do anything to see gambling expand."

Ill-gotten



LIVE
SPORT BETS

10:30 PM

SPORTS

LIVE

RESULTS

STATISTIC

BETS

TEAM 1

- 03'
- 47'
- 86'

3-2

86:12

TEAM 2

- 14'
- 67' (P)

YOUR BET
WINS!

GET PAYMENT

gain



Customers watch sporting events inside the FanDuel Footprint Center sportsbook in Phoenix.

So will gambling companies like FanDuel and DraftKings. They spent \$1 million trying to get a foothold in Louisiana. They also hired 16 of the state’s top lobbyists to eliminate opposition. They succeeded—mostly—but the rollout has been lengthy because nine parishes opted to keep gambling out. That means online sportsbooks will have to geofence their operations to exclude those areas. The delay didn’t stop Louisiana State University from striking a deal with Caesars Sportsbook, though. Their partnership gives Caesars digital and broadcast sponsorship rights to all major LSU sports, and it represents the first of its kind in the Southeastern Conference.

But Louisiana isn’t alone in its embrace of what has until only recently been illegal, and Southeastern and LSU aren’t the only campuses Vegas intends to invade. Students across the country are using sports betting apps to gamble, and odds are a crisis is brewing.

A RETURN TO GLORY—that’s what sports announcers called Tiger Woods’ 2019 Masters Tournament win. The golf legend hadn’t snagged a major championship in more than a decade and slipping into the green jacket at Augusta National Golf Club for a fifth time seemed unlikely.

Dylan Craig knew all that, but watching Woods shoot 2-under 70 in the opening round made him reconsider the long shot. He decided to put \$100 down and cross his fingers. By the 18th hole, both he and Woods were seeing green.

That 15-fold return remains Craig’s biggest gambling take to date. “Of course, for that one win, there were four or five losses that went with it,” he admits. “But I rarely bet that much money. The most I usually gamble is about \$50 on a game.”

Dorm life at the University of South Carolina introduced Craig to sports betting back when Fantasy Football was the focus. His sports entertainment management major put Craig in daily contact with others who shared his interest, and by the time he went to work as a clubhouse manager for the New York Mets, he was hooked.

“It makes the games a lot more interesting to watch because you feel like you’re a part of something. You’re not just sitting there watching like a spectator,” he says. He describes the excitement of waiting for the outcome as an adrenaline rush. “It’s like riding a roller coaster. You don’t know where the ride will end, but you’re on it.”

At 27, Craig continues to discuss betting opportunities with friends from his undergrad years through a group chat. “A guy will say he’s going to bet \$10 on this game today, and we’ll say cool,

we're going to ride with you. That way we feel like a little community, and I think that's a huge thing now, the social part of it."

But it's the nonsocial aspect of digitized gambling that has addiction counselors worried. No longer are players forced to make public entrances into casinos. Now they can roll the dice with the privacy of a touch screen any time day or night. Apps make betting on sports as convenient as checking Facebook, and gamblers can cash in on more than final scores and point spreads. Proposition wagers, or "props," are made on action that takes place within a game, such as which quarterback will throw the first interception or how many penalties referees will call in the first quarter.

Under the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, things were different. Gamblers had to travel to Nevada or a few other select states to wager on games. That changed in 2018 when the Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional. The justices' 6-3 decision in *Murphy v. NCAA* freed states to legalize sports gambling, and more than 30 states have jumped on the betting bandwagon. Eighteen of those allow online options.

Craig is enrolled at Liberty University School of Law in Virginia, a state where residents are free to use apps to gamble as much as they like, but he describes himself as the kind of player who can take it or leave it. When football season starts, Craig has a bankroll of about \$500, and if he loses it, he's done. "It's the same kind of thing as walking out of a casino when you're out of cash," he says. "That's how smart people should use the apps."

But back in Louisiana, problem gamblers make up 7 percent of the population, according to the U.S. Gambling Research Institute. Their personal losses result in broken lives and homes. In 1996, the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute put the social costs of a problem gambler at \$9,469 per year—which would be about \$3 billion per year for Louisiana. That's triple the amount gambling brought Louisiana in revenue last year. LSU economics Professor Emeritus Jim Richardson says at most it was \$915 million.

Will Hall directs the Office of Public Policy for Louisiana's Baptists. He says gambling has become a generational curse in his state, but it didn't have to be this way: "In 1974 Louisiana adopted a constitution that specifically said the legislature is charged with suppressing gambling in our state. By 1991 it didn't matter because they redefined gambling as gaming, and they've been redefining it ever since."

He's right, and they've done it well. Louisiana is the only state with land-based casinos, riverboat casinos, racetrack casinos, tribal casinos, distributed gaming, charitable gaming, lottery, and pari-mutuel wagering.

Last year's push to add sports betting showed Kathleen Benfield of the Louisiana Family Forum that the relationship between state regulators and the gambling industry is too cozy: "Gambling has replaced the oil and gas industry as the No. 1 revenue generator in terms of our state budget. Regulators have become their cheerleaders. They're so addicted to the revenue that it may need to be dealt with at the national level."

Hall also finds it frustrating when members of the Christian community yoke themselves with the gambling industry. Faith-based Pray.com in September announced retired NFL player Drew Brees would provide exclusive content for its platform. A month later the sports icon appeared in the first of three new ads for gambling app Points-Bet. In the meantime, Americans wagered \$42 billion on sports as new markets went live. The American Gaming Association says the figure nearly doubled what was spent during the same time period in 2020.

LONG BEFORE BREES became a Saints standout, Travis Turner lived a walk-on's dream as starting quarterback for the University of Nebraska. A torn ACL and a herniated disc added some nightmarish elements to those seasons, but his love of football never wavered, and these days the former Husker is happy to be campus pastor at Arizona Christian University, a school he describes as "very sports focused." Still, he believes apps-based betting could be causing problems for students at ACU—problems that may not be obvious for a while: "Usually guys aren't going to be affected until they have a spouse. Then we're dealing with a whole other issue, and that's my fear. Until there's a consequence for the behavior, they won't see it as a problem."

It's those consequences that business professor and legal policy expert John Warren Kindt in 2018 outlined before members of Congress: "Internet

No longer are players forced to make public entrances into casinos. Now they can roll the dice with the privacy of a touch screen any time day or night.



A sports bar patron checks odds on NFL games using a betting app in Hoboken, N.J.

sports gambling places the most addictive form of gambling—real-time gambling—at every school desk, at every work desk, and in every living room—making it easy to ‘click your phone, lose your home’ or ‘click your mouse, lose your house.’”

Pastor Turner has seen the devastation such gambling causes. He and his wife have for decades helped couples strengthen their marriages through mentoring relationships. He’s concerned about the coming generation of husbands and fathers:

“Many are already addicted to video games, and adding a glitzy gambling aspect only makes for nitroglycerin. They’re luring these kids in. Companies give them the first \$200, and it’s no different than a drug dealer giving a first hit.” When online sportsbooks debuted in Arizona last September, they handed out more than \$31 million in those “first hit” promotional credits.

As a marriage counselor, Turner believes gambling, with its financial implications, may cause more problems than pornography. He says debt just hammers another dent in a man’s ability to lead his family, and the cultural situation is grievous: “With phones you have 10 million prostitutes in your pocket. Now you have 10,000 bookies, too. It’s the enemy’s way of taking our focus off of who we are, who God made us to be, and it’s just evil.”

When researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles studied types of gambling by gender, they found the sexes equally attracted to lotteries, but preferential when it came to slot machines (women) and card tables (men). Sports betting stretched the gender gap to an even wider width, with 24 percent of men in the UCLA treatment program having engaged in that form of gambling, compared to only 2 percent of the women.

That's why online gambling ads target young males, linking sports betting to adventure, sex, and success. Industry critics say some apps go even further, using data-profiling software to create personalized potions of sensory feedback and pace of play to encourage compulsive behavior.

When it comes to gambling, the compulsive type can be easy to hide. Friends and family won't notice bloodshot eyes or fidgety legs, but Dakota Henry, chaplain at Baylor University's Beauchamp Addiction Recovery Center, says they can spot something else—shame.

It shows up in slumped shoulders, averted eyes, and silence at the Celebrate Recovery sessions he leads. Groups meet at the center in space that once housed a yogurt shop but now hosts students dealing with all kinds of addictions—pornography, drugs, eating disorders, alcohol, gambling. At the facility's 2017 dedication, university leaders told reporters its placement in the heart of the campus was intentional. Baylor wasn't going to pretend addiction doesn't exist.

But of all the addictions Baylor students confront, gambling may be the most dangerous. It has the highest suicide rate, with 1 in 5 problem gamblers attempting to take their own lives. Lilly Ettinger oversees the center, and she says the path to addiction can begin as early as preschool: "It starts with kids playing Candy Crush and paying 99 cents for loot boxes through microtransactions. It feels like it's skill-based even though it's really a game of chance."

Ettinger believes that's why many young adults view sports betting as harmless entertainment or a socially acceptable side hustle. But she says by the time students show up at the center, chances are they've lost big. "It could be \$1,000 or 10 times that. We've had some who have lost in the six figures. They gamble away hard-earned money that was meant for tuition, or it's an inheritance intended to help them buy a house one day. The amount isn't the issue. It's the new line that's been crossed. They're scared. They feel hopeless."

Ettinger emphasizes theirs isn't a detox program. She refers to staff at the center as "recovery coaches" who teach students spiritual skills like Bible study, prayer, and Sabbath rest.

Henry says they don't spend much time debating whether gambling is a sin. "First and foremost, I say gambling is just not helpful. It actually causes destruction, so let's focus on doing what is good and doing what is helpful."

For recovering gambling addicts, being proactive can mean installing content blocks to prevent the download of sports betting apps on phones and computers. Ettinger says for some, recovery will be a lifelong battle, the kind only won by the

grace of God. "But God grants grace quite freely," she smiles. "There's a responsibility to do the things that encourage recovery, but it's no different than how we all pursue a life of righteousness."

Last semester Baylor registered more than 100 students in its addiction recovery programs. Ettinger says it's naïve to think gambling isn't a problem just because some administrators and pastors aren't addressing it. "Addiction is everywhere, and if nobody is coming to you with these issues, it's not because nobody has these issues. It's because they're ashamed, and they assume they're alone."

INSIDE THE BAPTIST Collegiate Ministry at Southeastern, cushy chairs similar to ones at Baylor's Beauchamp Center sit empty, waiting for students with new syllabi. Pastor Cranford and his fellow gambling opponents, Will Hall and Kathleen Benfield, are there on a quiet Tuesday. They're discussing last year's legislative session when the talk turns to next moves.

Maybe regulations to prevent colleges from forming partnerships with the gambling companies ...

And limit them from advertising when children are most likely to be watching and listening ...

They sit around a table where a wall of windows provides a nice view of Strawberry Stadium. Its bleachers are empty now, but come football season, they'll fill with fans, many of them under 21, the legal age to gamble in Louisiana. If the three around the table are right, that won't count for much against the gambling revolution in motion. Instead, students will need to grasp the truth of Proverbs 1:19, that greed for unjust gain takes away the life of its possessors.

"We've had four hurricanes, two major ice storms, two floods, I think five tornadoes," Hall points out, reciting a litany of Louisiana's recent woes. "I believe all that's going to pale in comparison to the disaster coming from sports betting." ■

“With phones you have 10 million prostitutes in your pocket. Now you have 10,000 bookies, too. It's the enemy's way of taking our focus off of who we are, who God made us to be, and it's just evil.”



LOOKING FOR LESSONS IN 20 YEARS OF WAR

Can we build bridges and live together, in
the face of deep beliefs that divide us?

**MINDY
BELZ
INTERVIEWS
MIROSLAV
VOLF**

MIROSLAV VOLF IS THE HENRY B. WRIGHT Professor of Systematic Theology at Yale Divinity School and director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture. A native of Croatia, he helped found the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek and has returned there to teach. Besides witnessing the genocidal attacks in his homeland, Volf on 9/11 was speaking at a prayer breakfast to mark the opening of the UN General Assembly when planes struck the twin towers. He later became a critic of the Iraq war and the war in Afghanistan. Below are edited remarks from a conversation near the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

During the later war years you taught a course on globalization with ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair. What was that like?

He was an articulate defender of the war in Iraq, in particular, and I thought it was an unchristian and unjust war. He argued that terrorism threatened the liberal order, and I argued that interventionism contributed to the breakdown.

How did teaching the course together come about?

After he finished his term as prime minister, he wanted to continue to be engaged. He had found his way back to faith, and he was most interested in talking about his reading of the Bible. His son was at Yale. The two of us came at this from two morally different standpoints. I have strong pacifist leanings. I can understand just war theory and can affirm it, but I haven't seen too many good examples of it. When Tony articulated his justification for the wars, we had an inside view of how such decisions are made. And how leaders justify what has been decided on grounds that may or may not be moral. The course went well.

Did good things come of it?

I think so. Globalization is pushing people together, and religion is seen as sand in the globalization cog wheels. The thinking goes that we need to tame religion and then globalization can continue. We had important discussions about whether that's right.

In many ways your topic is always reconciliation, in your books, your teaching, and your speaking. Is that what you were talking about at the UN on Sept. 11, 2001?

In many ways the talk was about Christian faith and its potential to contribute to reconciliation. And the role that faith can play as one of the causes of conflict. I quoted a poem by Jewish poet Paul Celan, "Death Fugue." It begins, "Black milk of morning we drink you evenings," and he talks about digging "a grave in the air." I was reciting it as the planes flew into the towers just blocks away, and when we had to leave the building, we came outside to see the black smoke from the towers. It all set the stage for what was coming that day, and the issue hasn't gone away. Can we agree and can we live together, notwithstanding deep beliefs that divide us?

Can we? I would want to say that we can do that.

What did 9/11 teach you about Islam?

After 9/11 I participated in a number of interfaith events, in initiatives between Christians and Muslims—the Common Word, Building Bridges seminars—because I felt that the resources are there and we need to build what can be built. In Bosnia and Croatia I had seen what religious wars look like.

What came as a significant experience is how many people were unable to look



**I CAN UNDERSTAND
JUST WAR THEORY
AND CAN AFFIRM IT,
BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN
TOO MANY GOOD
EXAMPLES OF IT.**



at anything else except the negative side of Islam. That happens in a war situation. If we humanize our enemy, we lose some of the motivation to fight. I understand that. But Christian faith also is about loving one's enemies. So the least thing we could do, I would hope, is not demonize but humanize our enemies. Not to justify their behavior, but as a way to engage them.

How did those interfaith efforts turn out?

For a while it seemed like religion was a significant factor in international relations. One doesn't get that impression now. Local dialogues continue to happen. But I could sense we couldn't do very much about extremists. Moderate Muslims and moderate Christians can find

ways to live with one another, having a great deal of moral commonality. I had zero impact on extremists.

Did your work change as a result of 9/11?

I think it deepened work that I already was doing. The wars in Serbia and Bosnia were religiously coded among Islam, Orthodoxy, and Catholicism. That continues to interest me, seeing the religious roots of conflict.

One of the results is I have started a course at Yale called "Life Worth Living." We take major religious accounts of what makes human life worth living and analyze them with students. We're trying to school them to take these questions as the most significant questions of our lives. These are questions that have been marginalized, both in the broader culture but also in the university. We talk now about education as a means to achieve goals, goals that we set for ourselves. But education in what should be the goals, the ends, is lacking.

For some, with 9/11, these long wars, with what we see now in Afghanistan, we begin to believe we can't control events. Given the wars you've witnessed, how should Christians think of our role in the world when we are tempted to feel helpless?

I think it's a fundamental question. We have to keep in mind the Christian faith arose in a situation in which not much could be done. It is a central feature of Christian faith that it motivates change—which it does!—and engagement. But we forget that when the Apostle Paul speaks of the conquest of suffering he doesn't mean alleviation of suffering, he means the resilience to live victoriously in the midst of suffering.

How do we find hope amid suffering?

Hope we think of as "I'm optimistic." There's a calculus: "If I engage things here or there, things are going to get better, the effect will be as I anticipate." But that's optimism and belief in my own agency. Christian faith is a hope even when the situation is completely without any possibility of change.

Abraham and Sarah cannot have a child, yet they believe, they hope. This newness of hope, notwithstanding circumstances, seems to be one of the great gifts of the Christian faith that we have forgotten how to avail ourselves of. ■

—Mindy Belz is a former WORLD senior editor

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NOTEBOOK

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REBUILDING NOTRE-DAME

Swiss sawmill is a part of this
intensely French project

by Jenny Lind Schmitt

WHEN GAUTHIER CORBAT studied art history as a university student, he had no idea his most important brush with the subject would be in tending the family sawmill and preparing beams to rebuild Paris' Notre-Dame Cathedral.

The 36-year-old Corbat works for Groupe Corbat, a third-generation sawmill in Vendlincourt, Switzerland, two miles from the French border. The day after the April 2019 fire that destroyed the roof of the historic church and →



its famous spire, Corbat heard a spokesman for the French wood industry offer oak for the rebuild and decided he also wanted to participate.

It wasn't easy—after French President Emmanuel Macron's promise to rebuild the cathedral in five years, the project became a matter of French know-how and national pride: Leaders refused offers of century-old oak from other nations. That dashed Corbat's hope of oak from his native Swiss region of Jura being part of the cathedral.

Still, since a large number of Corbat's employees are French, he continued to pursue a role in the project. It paid off, and the Rebuild Notre-Dame de Paris chose Groupe Corbat as one of 40 sawmills—and the only one outside of France—to prepare the 1,500 beams needed for reconstruction.

Corbat's background gave him insight into what was needed to rebuild properly. "When President Macron said they would rebuild quickly, I said, yes, but if they want it with wood, it takes time!" says Corbat. "I think he also eventually realized

Gauthier Corbat stands with freshly cut wood destined for Notre-Dame's spire.



THE OAK FORESTS WERE PLANTED IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES. THOSE PEOPLE PLANNED BEYOND THEIR OWN LIFETIMES.



that with wood it will take longer than expected, and he needs to be re-elected if he wants to see it as president."

Planners expect the cathedral to reopen in 2024.

Notre-Dame's original beams were from 1,000-year-old oak trees. There's not enough of that left in France, but the oaks now being cut are still 100 years old. Project directors in Paris chose the trees from

forests in every region of France. They had to be at least 60 cm (24 inches) in diameter, straight, and without knots, and also had to be long enough from which to cut six-meter (20 feet) long pieces.

Corbat says that France is the only country capable of providing so much high quality oak because of its historically strong culture of oak forests. In October, loggers cut chosen oaks in the French region just across the border from Vendin-court and brought them to the Corbat sawmill to be worked.

While the Corbat sawmill is the only one in Switzerland that could do this work—it's equipped to cut hardwoods like oak and beech; other Swiss mills specialize in soft woods like pine and cedar—the size of the logs pushed the team to its limits. The support structure for the 13-foot-high industrial band saw was barely long enough. The beams are twice the length of those the mill usually cuts, and each finished piece weighs between 650 and 700 pounds.

Cyril Drossard, who is French and has commuted across the border each day for 15 years, cut the 25 timbers destined for Notre-Dame's spire. His work uses his ears as much as his eyes: If the saw begins to "sing," he knows something is wrong. "The work wasn't more complicated than usual," says Drossard, "but I knew I had to cut it just right, and that was a little nerve-wracking."

The cut timbers will dry for a year in the middle of the mill yard. The freshly cut wood smells sweet, like tobacco and vanilla, and each has a pink plastic tag with a bar code denoting which forest it came from and where in the church the piece will end up. After a year, carpenters will bring the well-seasoned timbers to Paris where they will be fitted directly into place in the cathedral.

Corbat gets emotional when talking about being a part of something this historic. For him it's an honor, but also a responsibility to carry on the legacy of planting trees.

"The oak forests were planted in the 17th and 18th centuries. Those people planned beyond their own lifetimes, knowing the next generations would want this wood. It's exactly what we needed for the cathedral, so it's important that we keep replanting and carry on this tradition." ■



PRISONS WITHOUT PROTECTIONS

Women in California prisons sue as the state pushes transgender policies, housing female and male inmates together

by Mary Jackson

INCARCERATED WOMEN IN CALIFORNIA say their prisons have changed since the men moved in. A state law enacted last year prompted an influx of male inmates who identify as female or nonbinary at facilities designed for women. Recent reports from advocates revealed that prison officials installed condom dispensers and posters displaying options for impregnated inmates—abortion, abortifacients, or adoption. Meanwhile, women share cramped cells and bathrooms with men convicted of rape and murder.

“Males keep moving from room to room to violate as many women as possible,” one female inmate said in a handwritten letter to Amie Ichikawa, president of Woman II Woman, a nonprofit advocacy group for incarcerated women. The woman described a male inmate who chose a bunk closest to the bathroom to watch her and other cellmates undress and shower. “If we make a [curtain] out of

sheets, we get written up,” she said.

Woman II Woman and four inmates currently housed at the Central California Women’s Facility in Chowchilla filed a lawsuit on Nov. 17 against the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The women claim the state’s mixed-sex facilities put them in danger of physical and sexual violence and violate their rights to safety, privacy, and dignity.

Now, President Joe Biden is reportedly planning an executive order modeled after California’s law, allowing federal inmates to self-identify their gender and choose between male or female prisons, according to a leaked draft order obtained by The Federalist. Sen. Tom →



Cotton, R-Ark., introduced a bill to stop Biden’s plan, stating it puts incarcerated women at increased risk of sexual assault.

An estimated 1,200 of 156,000 federal inmates identify as transgender, according to a Justice Department official.

In California, 288 incarcerated men had requested transfers to female prisons as of Dec. 15, according to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Officials approved 41 of those requests and denied eight, and 12 inmates changed their minds. Nine individuals in female prisons requested transfers to facilities for men.

Terry Thornton, deputy press secretary for the department, said in an email that the CDCR is deliberate and thorough in its review of gender-based housing requests. A department FAQ page states that transfer requests are reviewed by a committee that includes the prison warden, a legal compliance manager, and custody, medical, and mental health staff members.

The committee is required to assess the inmate’s criminal history but must give “serious consideration to the perceptions of health and safety of the person making the request.” An inmate’s anatomy, physical characteristics, or sexual orientation are not reasons for denial, the department’s website states.

Tracking the number of transfers the CDCR approves is becoming increasingly



WE CAN’T CALL THEM MEN, WE CAN’T COUNT THEM, THEY’RE NOT RECORDING THEM, SO IT’S HARDER TO EXPOSE WHAT IS GOING ON.



difficult. On Nov. 30, the state began recording its weekly population reports based on inmates’ gender identity rather than biological sex. On Jan. 12, for example, 89 inmates at the Chowchilla women’s prison self-identified as “male,” 2,142 as “female,” and 51 as “nonbinary.” At the California Institution for Women in Chino, there were 55 self-identified males, 952 women, and 18 nonbinary.

Lauren Adams, the legal director for Women’s Liberation Front (WoLF) and an attorney representing Chowchilla plain-

tiffs, said the new gender identity reports further obscure the truth about what is happening in women’s prisons, including increased physical and sexual violence.

“We fight with information and data that has integrity and with language. ... They’re trying to take that away from us,” she said. “We can’t call them men, we can’t count them, they’re not recording them, so it’s harder to expose what is going on.”

Krystal Gonzalez, a Chowchilla inmate and plaintiff in the lawsuit against the CDCR, alleged she was sexually assaulted by a male inmate who transferred to the facility under the state law. She said in court documents that after filing a grievance report, prison staff listed her assailant as a “transgender woman” with male genitalia.

The CDCR declined to comment on the pending lawsuit.

Meanwhile, the department states that condoms are only available at female prisons for overnight family visits and when inmates are released after completing their sentence. Sexual acts are otherwise prohibited in prison and result in disciplinary charges. Still, documents obtained by WoLF and Ichikawa of Woman II Woman indicate female state prisons began distributing condoms more widely as men moved in.

A July 2021 document obtained by Ichikawa, first reported by the Daily Caller, described discussions between California Institution for Women prison officials and inmates over condom distribution and other concerns, including wider shower curtains and strip searches by officers wearing body cameras.

The inmate advisory council meeting notes state that condom dispensers were installed “because the Administration believed it was the right thing to do given the makeup of the population.” Condom issuance was later halted after a “decision was made by individuals higher than the Warden,” the minutes said.

Female inmates first alerted Ichikawa about newly installed condom dispensers. “They saw them and were pretty traumatized ... it’s terrifying,” she told me. Ichikawa hopes highlighting such firsthand accounts will help shift the debate: “I think people are slowly starting to wake up and realize this is a human rights issue.” ■

A MONUMENTAL LOSS

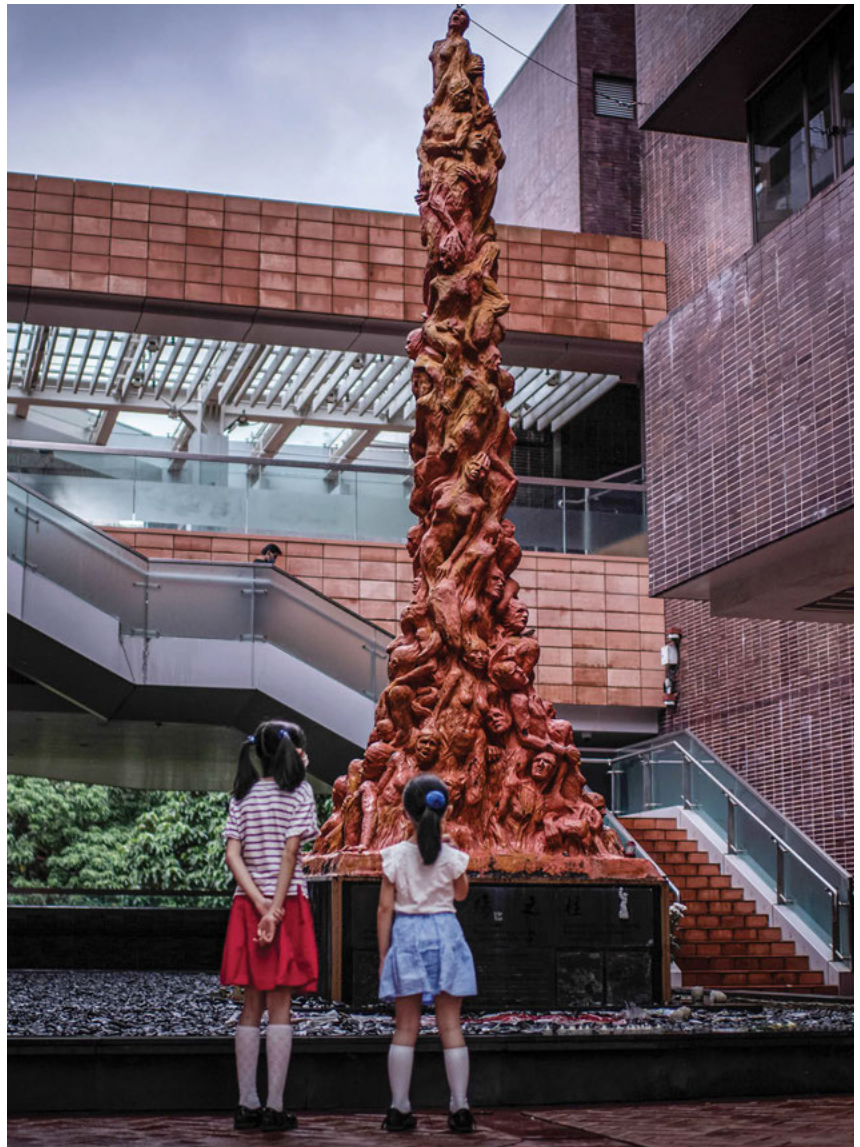
Hong Kong
universities once
displayed memorials
to the 1989
Tiananmen Square
massacre; now they
are gone

by Erica Kwong

THE *PILLAR OF SHAME*—a 26-foot orange sculpture of twisted bodies and faces in agony—stood on the campus of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) for 24 years. It commemorated the victims of China's 1989 crackdown on peaceful protesters in Tiananmen Square. But on the morning of Dec. 23, the monument was nowhere to be seen: Workers in yellow hardhats had dismantled it overnight and transported it to storage.

The next morning, the 21-foot *Goddess of Democracy* statue also vanished from the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) after 11 years on campus. In another middle-of-the-night operation, the college removed the bronze replica of the papier-mâché original which activists had erected in Beijing during the 1989 protests. Lingnan University similarly took down a relief sculpture and painted over an image, both of which depicted the *Goddess of Democracy*.

While HKU and Lingnan University cited safety and legal concerns for the removals, CUHK said it had never authorized the display. The disappearances occurred amid authorities' efforts to scrub the Tiananmen massacre from collective memory. Beginning in April 1989, students held pro-democracy demonstrations at Beijing's Tiananmen Square,



The *Pillar of Shame* statue at the Hong Kong University campus

which Chinese authorities ended on June 4, 1989, by sending tanks to clear the site. The troops killed hundreds and possibly thousands of civilians. To this day, the Chinese government refuses to acknowledge the massacre and attempts to censor references to it in mainland China.

The monuments on Hong Kong campuses once reminded Jeffrey Wasserstrom of the city's freedom of political expression. Visiting Hong Kong, the Chinese history professor at the University of California, Irvine, noted its "night-and-day difference" from mainland China. That the colleges have cleared the memorials shows "just how far the slide toward authoritarianism has gone," he said.

As China's increasing control criminalizes dissent in Hong Kong, the city's

authorities banned the annual Tiananmen candlelight vigil the past two years, jailed pro-democracy activists, shut down the museum dedicated to the 1989 massacre, and pulled books from libraries.

Mourning the loss of the *Goddess of Democracy*, CUHK students held a vigil on Christmas Eve at the spot where the monument had been. Some participants arranged lit candles in the outline of the statue and in the Chinese characters for "democracy." Others played songs, including "Bloodstained Glory," the anthem of the 1989 protests.

Wang Dan, along with 39 other survivors of the Tiananmen massacre, →

condemned the removal of the *Pillar of Shame*, holding the Hong Kong and Chinese governments responsible. Long exiled in the United States, the former student leader of the 1989 demonstrations released a statement that reads: “The survivors’ mission is to preserve and strengthen memory. ... They can dismantle one monument, but we will surely build more!”

Not only reminders of this inconvenient history, the Tiananmen monuments were also an integral part of university life, according to a joint statement issued by 14 college student groups. University administrators’ unilateral decision to remove them is an erosion of academic freedom, the organizations said. They called on administrators to include the wider college communities in deciding the fate of the sculptures.

Although the City University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University have not removed *Goddess of Democracy* statues on their campuses, they have contacted the respective student unions about relocating them.

Censorship of the Tiananmen massacre extends to Disney+, which launched in Hong Kong in November. The streaming service offers *The Simpsons*, except for the 12th episode of its 16th season: The cartoon family visits Beijing and sees a satirical sign in Tiananmen Square that reads, “On this site, in 1989, nothing happened.” It is not clear if Disney+ pulled that episode of its own accord or was following orders from Hong Kong authorities.

Jens Galschiøt, who created the *Pillar of Shame*, is determined to keep the memory of the massacre alive. The Danish artist dropped the copyright to his statue and encouraged others to print 3D copies of it using the digital model offered by the art-activist group Lady Liberty Hong Kong.

At HKU, where the iconic pillar once stood are now several benches shaped like gray oblong stones forming a seating area. Driven out of Hong Kong, the memorials are finding homes elsewhere. The New School for Democracy, which Wang founded, is planning to rebuild the *Pillar of Shame* in Taiwan. Wang is also preparing to open a Tiananmen museum in New York. ■

WALLS THAT BECOME CANVASES

A social-media-driven movement of muralists brings education and advocacy—and beauty—to city streets

by Diana B. Matthews



WHEN BESS HINSON TAYLOR took her preschool son to the local science museum, she knew she wanted to paint a 20-foot-tall butterfly on the 100-year-old brick warehouse next door.

A self-taught artist with a biology degree living in rural Columbus County, N.C., Taylor had painted some indoor murals, but her comfort zone was smaller work. Supported by museum friends and garden and civic clubs, she painted a dozen butterfly murals around the museum in 2020, then six more on Whiteville businesses in 2021.

They became morale boosters during what Taylor called “a hard year on everybody.” One incorporated doodles—expressing love and sometimes loss—by dozens of local schoolchildren. One teacher called it “a healing wall.”

Taylor spent months securing funding and permits, then researching and sketching, then logging miles of steps climbing her scaffold. Instagram users now share her murals with their followers.

Taylor is part of a social-media-driven movement of muralists bringing education and advocacy to city streets, or just beauty to old brick walls.

Murals have played a role in American culture for a century, but social media fuel their current popularity, says Moral Masuoka of Beautify Earth, a nonprofit matching muralists with sponsors in four countries.

A streetside mural comes to the viewer at no cost and at eye level, she said. “It allows the viewer to be part of the art.”

One of Taylor’s inspirations is a British muralist using the name ATM Street Art. Twenty years ago, as a self-labeled Anarchist Trouble Maker, he painted *Americans Go Home* to protest the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now, supported by conservation groups, ATM paints endangered species to show what’s lost when natural habitats are destroyed.

ATM’s 80-plus completed murals promote conversation and conservation from London to Norway to New York. But even while his paint is wet, he fields what-and-why questions from “people from all walks of life, most of whom would never think of going to an art gallery,” he said. Most “have no idea what the species are,” let alone how close they are to disappearing.

ATM has painted in dazzling summer sun that dried his paints on the palette. He’s returned to work after a downpour to find half his primer coat washed off. But he sees himself as “fighting a battle,” he said, and he sees progress as European countries enact more wildlife protection measures.

Murals can also battle crime by instilling respect for neglected neighborhoods, reducing vandalism. The largest public art program in the United States, Mural Arts Philadelphia, began in 1984 to replace graffiti with art. Today, MAP’s 4,000-plus murals not only attract tourists but also foster community resilience, says Communications Director Chad Smith.



**THERE ARE A
MILLION WALLS
THAT NEED
PAINT ON THEM.**



Murals in Philadelphia are big in every way. *Folding the Prism* is a six-stories-tall tribute to the city’s textile history. Most of MAP’s \$11 million annual budget comes from philanthropic institutions, government, tour tickets, and hundreds of donors.

“Art ignites change,” founder and CEO Jane Golden proclaims at every ribbon cutting.

MAP’s apprenticeship program teaches job skills to formerly incarcerated 18- to 24-year-olds while they earn \$13.75 an hour. A Color Me Back initiative pays homeless people to beautify subway stations while obtaining education and public services.

Cara Brown and Cynthia Wallace met while decorating their Murfreesboro, Tenn., church for vacation Bible school and formed Iron Brush Mural in 2019. The name, from Proverbs 27:17, reflects how they sharpen each other’s skills.

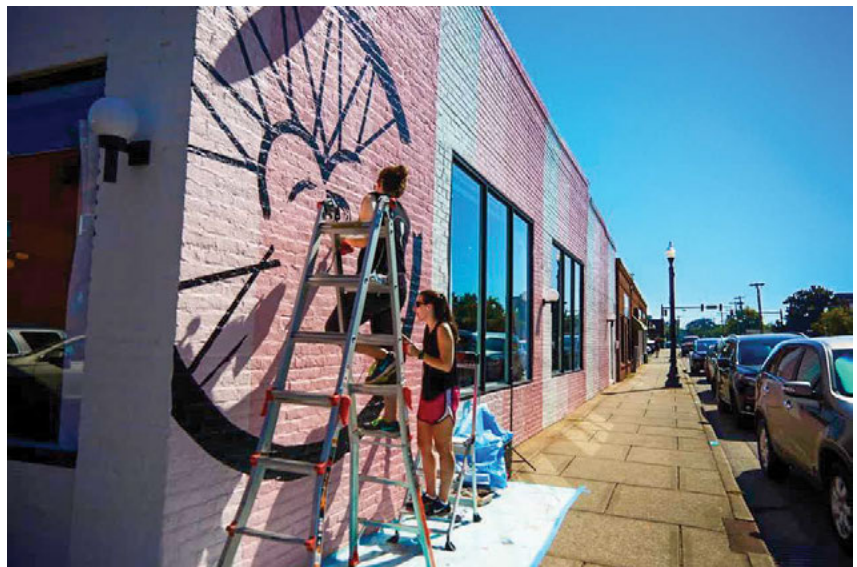
Brown brings a flair for color and energy; Wallace is all about precision. “We both are better artists because we work together,” Wallace said.

They have completed more than 80 murals. Clients want to create a memorable identity for their school, express a Scriptural theme in their church, or attract Instagrammers to their café or antique shop. Iron Brush’s mission is “to create beauty and inspire joy,” and their work often leads to interactions with observers that never would have happened otherwise.

“God gives us each gifts,” Brown said. Murals are her way to “share that with others and bring others joy.”

Wallace appreciates seeing “anything that’s excellent” in other artists’ work. She asks herself, “How can I use my talents for others?”

Even with eight muralists working nearby, Wallace says, the area is in no danger of saturation. “There are a million walls that need paint on them.” ■



Folding the Prism (left); Iron Brush mural (right)

SETTING SIGHTS ON SKILLED TRADES

The pandemic may be driving increased interest in technical education

by Lauren Dunn



A

FTER LOSING HIS JOB DURING THE PANDEMIC and mowing lawns to make money, Joel Zelaya knew he wanted more education but not another student loan. So at age 39, he took a community college course on facility maintenance, learning the basics of HVAC repair, plumbing, carpentry, and electrical skills. He completed the course in November 2021, and by the first week of December, he had landed a job—and a significant pay raise—as an apartment facility maintenance technician in Kernersville, N.C.

The post-pandemic economic landscape may include increased interest in technical education and skilled trades. Though experts note federal data on the field is limited, many technical education programs and colleges are reporting higher enrollment even while class numbers at four-year schools are down.

Students pursuing postsecondary technical education typically receive certificates or associate degrees in applied science upon completing a program in fields ranging from robotics to healthcare to welding to plasterboard.

More people are seeing the value of technical education, especially during the interruptions of a pandemic, according to Alisha Hyslop, senior director of public policy for the Association for Career and

Technical Education. “It has become very apparent, the types of jobs that are essential to keeping our country running,” Hyslop said, giving trucking as an example. “How we get goods from one place to another in our country has been under the spotlight in the last two years like never before.” She also noted, though, that the field has still suffered from the pandemic since it’s harder to move trade classes online.

Interest in technical education has grown consistently for about 20 years, said Timothy Lawrence, executive director emeritus of SkillsUSA and now a consultant with the National Center for Construction Education and Research. He cited TV shows about home renovation, cooking, glassmaking, and other careers for changing younger viewers’



Apprentices in technical vocational training learn about CNC lathes.

taking postsecondary courses in career and technical education. He started classes in fall 2017 and graduated in spring 2019 with an associate degree in applied science, focusing on agricultural equipment technology. He turned 19 the month before graduation.

Several of Brock's classmates went on to work at equipment dealerships. Another started his own mobile agricultural repair business. Brock works on the family farm where he grew up: "Being able to know how engines work and things like that is really nice on the farm."

Some teachers and school officials are finding ways to integrate their Christian faith with technical education.

Janice Gilliam, vice president of the Crown School of Trades and Technology at Crown College, a Christian college in St. Bonifacius, Minn., said that in the fall 2015 semester 13 students participated in the school's inaugural auto diesel program.

Since then, the school has added cosmetology, HVAC, welding, and building construction technology programs. Enrollment has typically grown 3-5 percent annually, though numbers "held steady" during the 2020-2021 school year, she said. About 100 students currently attend the classes, which include 19 credits of Bible courses.

Casey Christopher taught music at a Christian college for years before deciding he wanted to help students learn the trades. In November, he registered Working Faith Institute as a business in Nampa, Idaho. The program is not yet accredited but is working to match prospective students with mentors willing to pass on their knowledge of their field in an apprenticeship model.

The school provides three classes in entrepreneurship and economics, workplace success, and Christian worldview. The school's inaugural two students are studying cabinetry and tile installation.

"We wanted to go back to the Reformational understanding of the value of good work," he said. "We wanted to restore the dignity of the trades, especially in the Christian community." ■

perceptions of skilled trades. "They're actually seeing what that occupation looks like," Lawrence said. "It's sort of gained a little bit of celebrity status."

One of those shows is *Dirty Jobs*, hosted by Mike Rowe, who founded the mikeroweWORKS Foundation in 2008. The foundation awards scholarships to students going into technical education, requiring prospective recipients to sign a 12-statement pledge affirming the values of gratitude, hard work, responsibility, and avoiding debt. So far, the foundation has awarded nearly \$6 million to technical education students.

Ben Brock enrolled at North Central Kansas Technical College for dual credit courses during his senior year of high school. Kansas law allows the state to reimburse tuition for high-school students



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Good fear, bad fear

Fear takes many forms, and it can be really subtle

THE WALL THERMOSTAT of our forced air heating system works on the principle that when the temperature dips below a certain level the furnace kicks on again.

Our city newspaper works on the same principle: It cranks out scary headlines by some calculated mechanism lest COVID fear dip below an unacceptable level. I don't know how they do it, really. How many ways can you recombine the words *deaths*, *hospitals*, *surge*, *vaccine*, and *intensity* in a headline every day?

Are ruinous inflation, trillions in debt, China buying up our farmland, rats overtaking New York City, and Putin on the Ukraine border threatening to steal the limelight? The Committee for Scary Headlines in Suite 300 on Market Street of Philadelphia is undaunted: You will find them busy at their task. And on days when real news is thin, they borrow fear from the future. Consider the last three days' offerings: "Omicron deaths expected to spike," "It might not get easier after omicron," "And next, we have the 'flurona'" (flu-COVID marriage, presumably).

So now we're down to the "might nots" and "expecteds." Some journalism.

Any fearful thing you are made to focus on day after day will become hyper-magnified in your mind. There are 6 million car accidents a year in this country, and 90 people a day die in them. If the Market Street boys wanted to get us to stop driving, they could feature a car crash death a day on the front page. Just saying. The news is what they want the news to be, and it is well to keep that in mind.

Fear has many uses, some good, some bad. Fear can be life-saving: "Don't tickle the lion in its cage." Fear

**IT IS PERVERSELY POSSIBLE
TO CHOOSE FEAR
PREEMPTIVELY WHEN YOU
ARE IN THE BEST OF TIMES.
BUT GOD IS AGAINST IT.**

can be laziness in disguise: "A sluggard says, 'There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!'" (Proverbs 26:13). Fear can be paranoia from a guilty conscience: "The wicked flee when no one pursues" (Proverbs 28:1). Fear can be self-fulfilling: "The thing I feared has overtaken me" (Job 3:25), so we should not give fear a foothold.

Some fear is forbidden by God. Do not fear people who would do us harm, but trust in God instead (1 Peter 3:13-15). Do not fear people's dirty looks but keep on speaking what you know from God is true (Jeremiah 1:8). Do not fear the devil because his power over you is limited: He can only kill you (Matthew 10:28).

Some fear is enjoined. The second half of Matthew 10:28 above discloses a worse fate than being killed. Do you want to be afraid of something? Be afraid of the One who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.

This fear thing gets really subtle. I was once at a retreat on the topic of suffering, where women were sharing heartbreaking stories. One pretty young woman named Maggie raised her hand and said that she is really healthy, has a husband who loves her, and two healthy children—and that she cannot enjoy any of it because she keeps waiting for the other shoe to drop.

That's pretty bad when fear no longer attaches to reality but to hypotheticals. It is fear as self-protection, and it works like this: If I maintain a certain level of fear, then I'll be safe. If I stop for one moment being afraid, disaster will catch me off guard and pounce from the shadows.

So there you have it. It is perversely possible to choose fear preemptively when you are in the best of times. But God is against it. "The fear of the LORD is pure" (Psalm 19:9). "This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

"Now all has been heard: here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). ■

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IZZY HITS THE SOUTH

Winter storm brings snow and ice to the region

IN ROANOKE, VA., a photographer captured Mat Rahsman and his 8-year-old son Roland working their way up a hill in a park as they prepared for a sledding adventure on Jan. 16. Parts of Roanoke reportedly received 8 inches of snow from Winter Storm Izzy. The storm travelled from the upper Midwest to the South and reportedly dumped over 14 inches of snow on Des Moines, Iowa—the most there since 2009—and as much as 10 inches on parts of western North Carolina. Izzy spawned a tornado in southwest Florida that had 118 mph winds and tore across 2 miles of land with a width of 125 yards. The storm didn't stop hikers along the Appalachian Trail. Julia Leveille, an employee at Mountain Crossings near Blood Mountain in Georgia, told the Associated Press that some were planning to hike from Georgia to Maine: "You've got to really like the snow for that, because you're heading north and into higher mountains and you could see some nasty storms."




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Violence against the mainly Christian ethnic minorities of Myanmar is continuing. Families are being displaced and children orphaned as adult males are captured and killed. At least 23 church buildings were burned or destroyed along with more than 350 civilian homes in Chin State between August and December.

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