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The Author of Faith



Sinclair Ferguson



Jesus came to undo what Adam so disastrously did, and lead us back through the jungle to the garden. He crossed the ravine, the unbridgeable gulf between sinful man and holy God. And He did this as the Second Man, but now the Man of Faith, trusting in and living by

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NEWSBYTES

+ New SGF Canada website

As of late June, the SGF has a new website at www.sgfcanda.com. The new site combines the Carey Conference, Grace Pastors Fellowship and *Barnabas* magazine alongside the main SGF material. It is hoped this new combined presence will emphasize the work of the Fellowship across various avenues, and be a useful point of contact for the SGF community and beyond. This is the first time *Barnabas* has had an online presence and the full archive of back issues is available.

+ Pilgrim Baptist Fellowship, Hamilton, ON

Pilgrim Baptist Fellowship has posted a job opportunity for a new Lead Pastor. Please visit their website at www.pbfchurch.ca/apply for details. Pray that God would lead the right man to them.

+ Churchill Baptist Church, Tottenham, ON

Churchill Baptist Church has a new pastor! Tony Her has taken over the role of pastor from Marino Vereecke, who has retired after serving for some thirty-two years at Churchill. The church voted 100% in favour of calling Tony to minister at Churchill Baptist.

Tony is married to Erica, and they have three young girls. He is currently engaged in completing his master of divinity at Heritage College & Seminary. Tony served as a youth pastor in the past, and he is already exercising his gifts in this area at Churchill. Tony and Erica have started a youth ministry and a moms & tots ministry in the community. Tony and his family currently live in Collingwood. We pray that the Lord would open a door for them to move closer to the church.—*Marino Vereecke*

Do you have news to share (even a “newsbyte”) of what God is doing in your church? Please email your news item to janicevaneck@rogers.com.



+ Ministry in Malawi

We are happy to report that the 700 sets of cloth sanitary pads sewn by members and friends of the SGF were delivered to Malawi. We (David Wharton, Hassan Bell, Stephen Kring and I) were there for their annual Pastors & Wives Conference at the end of May 2022. The director of women’s ministries, Patricia Saulos (right in above photo) was glad to receive the cloth sanitary pads to distribute to needy girls and women. Patricia Saulos would like to make it an ongoing ministry of the Evangelical Baptist Churches of Malawi. If funds are allocated to purchase more fabric locally, she would like to have more pads sewn by a Malawian seamstress. (We also gave her copies of the pattern with instructions). They would then have an ongoing supply of more pads available to be distributed along with a New Testament, as they evangelize through small Bible reading groups in the local churches. A big thank you to all who participated in this project over the past few years.
—*Cheryl Kring*

+ Midland Park Baptist Church, Scarborough, ON

We are thankful for 62 years of the Lord’s faithfulness to the work of the gospel at Midland Park. This milestone was marked by a thanksgiving service held June 26. We are thankful to the Lord for keeping the light of his lampstand continually shining through the years. We are also thankful Pastor Carl Muller was able to be our anniversary speaker. God has preserved us and granted us more than sufficiently the grace of perseverance and steadfastness to stay the course. To him alone be the glory!—*Steve Eusebio*

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST 20–26, 2022 CANADIAN CAREY FAMILY CONFERENCE

Various SGF pastors will be bringing the Word, both mornings and evenings. Be sure to mark your calendars! You’ll want to make this week part of your family’s plans in 2022!
Held at Braeside Camp, Paris, ON.
www.sgfcanda.com/carey

SEPTEMBER 23–25 THE BAUMAN LECTURES

Theme: Living for Christ in a post-Christian culture / Lessons from 1 Peter
Speaker: Dr. Martin Williams
Cost: \$40
Full details online.
Held at Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, ON
www.tbs.edu/bauman-lectures

SEPTEMBER 25 TBS CONVOCATION

Time: 6:30 p.m.
Join the faculty and students of TBS as they celebrate the launch of a new school year.
Held at Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, ON
www.tbs.edu

SEPTEMBER 26, 2022 GRACE PASTORS FELLOWSHIP

Time: 10 a.m.
Speaker: Dr. Martin Williams, Reformed Theological College, Australia
Theme: William Gouge and Cultivating Godliness in the Family
Held at Thistleton Baptist Church, Toronto, ON
www.sgfcanda.com/gpf

PLANNING OR HOSTING AN EVENT? LET BARNABAS KNOW. Email janicevaneck@rogers.com

DIVINE DISCIPLINE

Benefitting from God's fatherly care in our lives **BY ROGER FELLOWS**

Read Hebrews 12:3–17

There are so many blessings in the Christian life—forgiveness, adoption, eternal life, the Spirit's indwelling, to name a few. Paul says we are blessed with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3). With such an abundance of spiritual riches, some are shocked when they find themselves facing trials, hardships, sometimes downright painful and very unpleasant experiences. There are some who would teach that the Christian life should and can be free of such trials. I once heard a well-known Korean preacher say that he could never be poor! Those who swallow such teaching usually end up bitter and disillusioned when things don't work out that way, or they try to imagine that their trials don't exist.

There is, for believers, tribulation and suffering in one form or another. We can define discipline or chastening as the painful experiences that the Lord brings upon his people, not as punishment, but as a means of grace. Let us note that:

1. Discipline is to be expected.

Peter tells us that we shouldn't be surprised by fiery trials (1 Peter 4:12; see also Acts 14:22). To deny the reality of chastening is to ignore a significant part of the New Testament. The apostles expected to suffer themselves, and also warned that all believers could expect to experience trials. Look at the lengthy list Paul gives in 2 Corinthians 11:21–29. The same has been true for those Christians down the ages who have made their mark on the kingdom of God.

2. Discipline is to be valued.

In verse 5 of Hebrews 12, the writer says that we shouldn't regard it lightly. Don't think of it as a surprising glitch. The hand of God is in this painful episode.

(a) *It is a token of love.* See verse 6. That should be true in a natural family, though all parents will admit that sometimes discipline is administered without love. However, God's discipline is always dispensed with love. There is a danger of thinking that trials are a sign of God's displeasure. No, the Lord disciplines the

one he loves (verse 6). This enables us to rejoice in our trials (James 1:2).

(b) *It is a mark of sonship* (verse 7). We might think that the marks of God's fatherhood are provision, guidance and protection. That is true, but if we omit discipline, we leave out an important part of his fatherly care.

(c) *Discipline is for our good* (verse 10).

We benefit from it. It strengthens our character, increases our dependence on the Lord and helps us to persevere. If we fight it and try to avoid it, we may still benefit, but how

By submitting to God's discipline, whatever the source, we are recognizing the sovereignty of God.

much better if we can accept it gratefully, praising God for his love and care.

Of course, we are not masochists. No one enjoys pain or suffering, but we must look at the long-term benefits (verse 11). It is another application of Romans 8:28—all things do work together for good for God's people.

3. The nature of discipline.

With our own children, discipline takes different forms: it might be a rebuke, a deprivation of privilege or even physical punishment of some kind, though that needs caution. So the Lord's discipline takes different forms:

(a) *Persecution.* In the West, we generally don't face physical persecution, though many people in other lands experience imprisonment, beating, loss of home or even death. However, we may experience verbal abuse, ridicule, slander or isolation. These things can hurt.

(b) *Sickness or accidents.* These will not normally come because of our faith, but they are part of the Lord's discipline, and can have a profound, and sometimes prolonged effect on our lives. Of course, unbelievers often experience the same things, but the perspective is quite different. With unbelievers, such things might be an indication of the Lord's displeasure, whereas, with a believer, the same sickness or accident is part of the Lord's loving chastening, as he uses the experience for our spiritual good.

(c) *Disappointments and hurts.* Some such experiences might come through Christians. Believers can hurt us and let us down, just as we can hurt others and let them down. Some of my most painful experiences have come through Christians, often acting quite sincerely.

4. Application.

How can we benefit from the Lord's discipline?

(a) *Accept it as a token of God's fatherly, loving care.* Be determined to profit from chastening whatever form it takes. There is a real danger of bitterness (verse 15). I have seen people who hold strongly to the sovereignty of God, get very bitter and resentful when they saw themselves treated badly by Christians. Others may indeed treat us badly, but we need to see the hand of God in the overall experience. By submitting to God's discipline, whatever the source, we are recognizing the sovereignty of God. Our trials are not the result of some freak accident, nor the work of the devil, though he may be involved. For example, Paul's thorn in the flesh was the messenger of Satan (2 Corinthians 12:7). But Paul didn't ask Satan to remove it, but the Lord (verse 8). As it happened, the Lord refused because the affliction was for Paul's benefit. We can see the same thing in Job's experience (Job 1–2).

(b) *Be thankful for discipline.* That is not easy; but think how wonderful it is that the God who fills and rules the universe, is concerned with creatures like us, and takes the time to work in our lives for our good, and our holiness (verse 10). If we could have planned our lives, what would they be like? Would they include sickness and accidents? Would they include people, even Christians who make life quite difficult at times? Yet the Lord has included such things. Surely he knows best.

May the Lord give grace to see that our trials are not the result of God trying to give us a rough time, but they are tokens of God's loving, fatherly care. Can you rejoice in that? **B**

 Roger Fellows is a retired pastor and continues to minister at churches throughout Ontario. He is an elder at Providence Baptist Church, Burlington, ON.

FEATURE



THE SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD

THE SPIRIT WORKS ON HEARTS AND CONSCIENCES AS THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS PREACHED AND PEOPLE ARE URGED TO COME TO FAITH AND REPENTANCE

BY ERROLL HULSE

Picture the scene in Jerusalem. Here assembled were many of those who had rejected and murdered our Lord Jesus Christ. The heinous nature of their sin came home to their consciences with tremendous power by the Holy Spirit. Could there be forgiveness for them? When the people heard Peter's words about Jesus being made both Lord and Christ, "they were cut to the heart" because Peter had reminded them that they had crucified this same Jesus. They called out to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" The instructions were clear: "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Note that there is a twofold promise made to those who repent: firstly, *the forgiveness of sin*, and secondly, *the gift of the Holy Spirit*. Central to the fulfilment of these promises is the *preaching of Christ*. The Christ who is held before them is the same one whom they had sought to put on the rubbish heap of history. But now Yahweh had exalted this Jesus to be the Lord of history. He whom they had so cruelly maligned now occupied the supreme place of honour and majesty over all the universe. It was up to him whether or not those who had spat upon him should be pardoned for their crime. It was not an automatic matter. Without the assurance of their acceptance given to them by the Holy Spirit, there could be no salvation for these criminals. God will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy and he will harden whom he

will (Romans 9:15–16). This is not to import an idea into the passage. Some of the unbelieving Jews were saved and others continued in impenitence. God's mercy alone made the difference. The Christ-hating Jews in Jerusalem continued in their contempt of Christ and demonstrated their hellish hatred of him by stoning Stephen to death.

Those who appealed to Peter were instructed to repent. This meant that they had to change their minds completely about Jesus. They were also commanded to be baptized. The implications of baptism for them were the same as for converted Muslims today. It was costly because allegiance to the crucified Christ was regarded as treason. It was also costly because the Jews regarded baptism as necessary for Gentile converts only. By baptism, these converts would demonstrate their submission to the very person whom they had previously rejected. For each one it meant passing through the agony of seeking mercy and pardon. The same Spirit who convinced them of their crime also convinced each one, personally, of forgiveness. What for most converts takes weeks, months and sometimes years, was concentrated into hours. This intensification of the work of the Holy Spirit characterizes revival. For each repenting sinner there is the agony of conviction and seeking the mercy of God. This is aptly described in Zechariah 12:10:

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication.

They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child ... On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great.

This weeping was followed by great joy in reconciliation to Christ, and by him reconciliation to the Father. It was the joy of a free justification together with adoption into God's family.

It was the joy too of receiving the gift of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

On the basis of the conversions of Pentecost (and all the conversions reported thereafter in the book of Acts) I would propose two principles:

1. The work of preaching Christ in all his glory as Saviour and Lord and exhorting to faith and repentance belongs to the preacher.
2. The work of applying the gospel to the hearts and consciences of sinners, both in conviction and assurance, belongs to the Holy Spirit alone.

The degree to which a sinner is convicted, the depth of his repentance, the degree of his faith and the depth of assurance to which he is brought, is all the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit alone. The timing of this work also belongs to the Spirit. Peter and the apostles could not even begin to know which souls in Jerusalem would be converted that day. Before the event they had no idea how long such a work would take to achieve. Certainly

nothing of this magnitude and speed had taken place under the ministry of Jesus on earth. This was a work of spiritual awakening directed by Jesus from his throne of supreme authority. In his earthly ministry, even after his sensational miracle of multiplying the loaves and fish to feed 5,000, the people were still in contention about him. More seemed to be leaving him than were coming to him (John 6:60–70).

The above two principles are highlighted by Pentecost. With all his heart Peter proclaimed the gospel. That work belonged to him and to the apostles. But the application of the gospel to the souls of those converted belonged entirely to the Holy Spirit. Only by him could any person that day experience assurance of salvation. The imparting of assurance is something entirely outside the ability of counsellors or advisers (Romans 8:15–16; Galatians 4:6). A counsellor can advise and exhort and pray with a soul under deep conviction, but the experience of peace with God is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The truth of sovereign grace is illustrated by the vision of the valley of dry bones described in Ezekiel 37. Only the Spirit could bring the bones together, put flesh on them and raise them to life. To Ezekiel belonged the work of preaching and pray-

To Ezekiel belonged the work of preaching and praying; to the Spirit, the work of raising the dead.

ing; to the Spirit, the work of raising the dead. This doctrine of sovereign grace is explained in Ephesians 2. When we were dead in sins God raised us up to be made alive “in Christ.” Occasionally we come across Christians who have been converted suddenly through the unexpected powerful intervention of God. In most cases such believers do not struggle with the truth that salvation belongs to the Lord. Sovereign grace is ingrained in them.

In times of spiritual barrenness it is difficult to get sinners to see that they have any need at all. In a period of spiritual apathy, many ministers resort to manipulation in order to obtain visible results. The opposite is true in a time of powerful spiritual awakening. Overcome by an awesome sense of the holiness of God, the problem for convicted sinners is to believe that there could actually be mercy and salvation for them. Then it is of paramount importance that Christ be clearly exhibited as the one in whom the believer has righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). **B**

THE CALL TO REPENTANCE

The Old Testament prophets preached repentance. John the Baptist preached repentance (Mark 1:4). Jesus began his ministry with the call to repentance (Mark 1:15). “Unless you repent,” he declared, “you will all perish” (Luke 13:3). At Pentecost Peter said, “Repent!” Paul declared that God has commanded all men everywhere to repent! (Acts 17:30). So what is repentance?

Repentance is a radical change of mind

Repentance is radical in the sense that it involves a conversion, a turning about from travelling in one direction to take the opposite direction. Repentance is the prodigal actually getting on his feet and heading for home; it is a turning from Satan to God, from darkness to light. Without repentance there can be no salvation. On the Day of Pentecost, it meant the recognition of the sin of deicide. Those who repented changed their minds about the Christ. Instead of vilifying him as they had done before, they now believed him to be the Son of God. Their repentance was publicly exhibited in baptism. Repentance is essential because you cannot continue in the devil’s camp and claim to be a follower of Jesus at the same time.

Repentance is the gift of God

(See Acts 5:31; 11:18). It is a change of mind which turns a man from serving himself and his idols to serve the living God. Repentance is inseparable from faith. This connection of faith with repentance can be seen in the way the two are frequently joined together in the ministry of our Lord and the apostles: “Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15); “Repent, then, and turn to God” (Acts 3:19); “Repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38).

While repentance and faith are inseparable, they are different and are to be distinguished the one from the other. To be turned about is essential, but we are not justified by repentance. It is faith that joins us to Christ. There is sorrow in repentance, but to be sorry about my sin may not necessarily turn me away from it. To repent is to have a decisive change of mind which results in action, but that action is not to be regarded as a merit which puts me in good standing with God. It is the receiving of Christ’s righteousness alone which puts me in good standing with God.

Some try to quantify faith and repentance. *How much faith is needed? How much repentance?* The answer is that a weak faith can take hold of a strong Christ, but faith, to be saving, must join the sinner to Christ. In revival there can be enormous emotional upheavals and deep churnings of soul. But the main point is that the ungodly life must be forsaken (repentance), and the new life of faith taken up. We must enter in by the narrow gate and walk along the narrow path.

Yet again, we must take care never to add conditions. Christ alone saves and he will give his followers everything necessary for faithful discipleship. It is right to warn of the high cost of discipleship as Jesus did (Matthew 8:18–22). To believe may cost you your life, but the Lord is not saying, “Be a good disciple first and then you will qualify for salvation.” You will never by your own merits qualify in any way for salvation. The fact that you are a lost and guilty sinner is your qualification to come in repentance for a complete pardon and the gift of a perfect salvation. **B**

➤ Erroll Hulse (1931–2017) was a pastor, author and visionary and key proponent of the doctrines of grace and the sovereignty of God among Baptist churches in the UK and internationally. With Lyn, his wife and companion in ministry, he had four children. Erroll’s ministry extended to many countries through *Reformation Today* magazine, the African Pastors’ Conferences and many other speaking opportunities. He was a great encourager and believed strongly in the need for prayer for revival. A short biography can be accessed at www.reformation-today.org.

These excerpts were taken from chapter 4, “The centrality of gospel preaching in revival,” in Erroll Hulse, *Give Him No Rest* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2006). Used with kind permission of Sharon (Hulse) James.



IT'S A CRIME!

WHAT IT MEANS TO RESIST THE HOLY SPIRIT
BY BERT KUEHNER

Crimes against humanity dominate headlines. And rightly so. Horrific, they beg for justice. But if crimes against humanity merit our attention, how much more crimes against the God who created humanity?

Consider just one such crime revealed in Scripture: resisting the Holy Spirit.

What does this mean?

What is it to “resist the Holy Spirit”? The phrase is used but once in the New Testament, when Stephen, preaching Christ to the Sanhedrin, reacted to the evident

hostility of his audience, declaring, “You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears: You always resist the Holy Spirit!” (Acts 7:51). Literally, to resist the Holy Spirit is to put the Holy Spirit at arms length by rejecting the invitation, the call or the summons, to repent of our sin and to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour. The Holy Spirit gave us the gospel and draws attention to the gospel’s central Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. So when Stephen accuses his listeners of resisting the Holy Spirit, he is charging them with rejecting the gospel. The Holy

Spirit calls sinners to repentance in two distinct ways:

1. The general or outward call

Whenever the summons to repent and believe the gospel is given, the hearer is confronted with a choice, a decision. We might even say a crisis. They’ve received a *general call* to come to Christ for salvation, an outward call that is inherent in the proclamation of the gospel.

Examples of the general call include Jesus’ invitation, “Come to Me all you who are burdened, and I will give you rest”

(Matthew 11:28) and Paul's declaration that God "commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). The general call occurs not only during preaching, but whenever one believer shares the gospel with an unbeliever or when an unbeliever reads a gospel tract or hears a gospel message on TV, radio or over the Internet.

How will the unbeliever respond to the general call? Acts 7:51-60 informs us what Stephen's audience did. As Stephen preached Christ, they clearly did not like what they were hearing so they stoned him to death!

In Luke 4:14-30, Jesus preached the gospel at Nazareth. When it became clear to the audience Jesus was claiming that Old Testament promises of the coming Messiah were being fulfilled in Him, they "became furious. They got up, drove Him out of the town, and took Him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw Him down the cliff."

In both these narratives, the rejection was violent, but violence isn't essential to become guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit. Simple rejection of the gospel, even polite rejection, is sufficient.

By itself, because of the sinner's spiritual blindness, this *outward call* will always be rejected. "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). No matter how hard we try to persuade people, (and we must try to persuade them), left to themselves they will, in Christ's words, "refuse to come to Me to have life" (John 5:40).

Commenting on Stephen's audience, John Gill wrote,

The resistance made by those persons was not to the Spirit of God in them (for He wasn't in them), but to the Spirit of God in His ministers, in His apostles, and particularly Stephen; not to any internal operation of His grace...but to the external ministry of the Word.

Without God's internal, regenerating work in a sinner's heart, a person will "always resist the Holy Spirit" by rejecting the general call as the gospel is proclaimed to them. In *Barnabas*, Win/Spr 2021 (Vol. 13, No. 1-2), Michael Haykin referred to Aaron Burr, grandson of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, successful statesman and politician. Haykin described how one day Burr's aunt, who had raised him to



The sinner who rejects Jesus has only himself or herself to blame; the sinner who receives Jesus has only God and his grace to thank.

adulthood, pled with him to repent of his sins and trust Christ as his Saviour. Despite those earnest pleas, Burr merely responded "Oh! Aunt, don't feel so badly; we shall both meet in heaven yet; meanwhile may God bless you." This polite refusal to repent was Burr's crime of resisting the Holy Spirit.

2. The effectual or internal call

Why do people reject the gospel? Because they are at enmity with God. Why do people welcome the gospel? Because God graciously works in their heart to change their enmity to glad submission to the gospel. The only difference between sinners who continue resisting the gospel message and sinners who eventually stop resisting is "the grace of God [grace which involves the internal call by the Holy Spirit] which brings salvation" (Titus 2:11). The sinner who rejects Jesus has only himself or herself to blame; the sinner who receives Jesus has only God and his grace to thank. Lydia provides an excellent example of the happy result of the Holy Spirit's inward call to salvation: "The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message" (Acts 16:14).

Where is this taught?

Both the Old and New Testaments reveal God's effective call to salvation. In the Old

Testament, Deuteronomy 30:6 declares "The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts...so that you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul," while Ezekiel 36:26-27 promises "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws."

In the New Testament, we have Jesus' teaching of the new birth. The Old Testament verses just cited were likely among those alluded to by Jesus during his conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-8). To be born again is to be given spiritual life through the regenerating power of the Spirit of God. It is to be given a new heart, a spiritual circumcision, that expresses itself in love for the very Jesus the sinner once rejected. This gift of grace is the reason the one dead in trespasses and sins ultimately repents and believes the gospel. Jesus made other statements which explain the success of the effectual call to salvation: "Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them [physical] life, so the Son gives [spiritual] life to whom He is pleased to give it" (John 5:21); "All whom the Father gives Me will come unto Me" (John 6:37); "My sheep hear My voice and follow Me" (John 10:27); "You [Father] granted Me authority to give eternal life to all whom You have given Me" (John 17:2).

Only the Holy Spirit's effectual call makes these statements possible. He draws us to Jesus by changing our stubborn wills and sin-darkened hearts.

PHOTO: AARON BURDEN

The apostle Paul wrote much concerning the Holy Spirit's effectual call: "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29); "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 12:3); "You were dead in your transgressions and sins...but God made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:1,5); "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ" (Colossians 2:13).

The apostle Peter tells us, "You are a chosen people...a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9); "The God of all grace called you to His eternal glory in Christ" (1 Peter 5:10); "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him Who called us by His own glory and goodness" (2 Peter 1:3).

Why does this matter?

First, because *resisting the Holy Spirit is treacherous*.

God was under no obligation to send Jesus into this world to save sinners. When the gospel is being proclaimed to us, resisting such a gracious offer is a most serious crime against a most gracious God. Neither was God obligated to bring the gospel to our attention. He would have been perfectly righteous in allowing his fallen creatures to perish in the eternal hell we all richly deserve without our ever having been given the privilege of hearing of Jesus. But to say "no" to Jesus' gracious invitation to come to him for eternal life is not only criminal, not only dangerous, but spiritually fatal if unchecked by grace, for "the one without the Son is condemned" (John 3:18). Because the unbeliever "hates the light," they will not—if left to their own will—come to Jesus, the true Light. They will die in their sins.

Second, because *the only remedy for the sinner's rejection is God's intervention*. Stephen rebuked his audience: "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears!" His words amount to "incredibly stubborn," or, as one translation has it: "Heathen to the heart and deaf to the truth!"

Most people aren't as obvious in their stubbornness as was Stephen's audience. But see how Scripture clearly testifies to every sinner's innate unwillingness to submit to the gospel. John declares: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the

world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Paul explains, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins...gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath." He later adds that the unsaved are "darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts" (Ephesians 2:1,3; 4:18). That is why, in Jesus' words, sinners "refuse to come to Me to have life" (John 5:40).

Only God's grace can overthrow a person's stubborn determination to destroy themselves through rejection of the truth. Paul writes, God "made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions!" (Ephesians 2:5–6).

Who was more determined to reject Christ and to wipe the church off the face of the earth than Saul of Tarsus? Yet look

Only God's grace can overthrow a person's stubborn determination to destroy themselves.

what the drawing power of the Spirit did to him and for him (Acts 9:1–9)! Saul rejected the *general call* to salvation when he rejected Stephen's message, but he could not hold out against the Holy Spirit's *internal call* to cease hostilities against Christ and instead submit to him for salvation.

What a case history Paul's is, demonstrating the glorious result of the effective call of God! If Stephen's audience illustrates the crime of resisting the Holy Spirit's general call, Saul's conversion demonstrates the effectiveness of the Holy Spirit's inward call in overcoming a sinner's innate unwillingness to repent and believe! Paul is a great example of the very words he wrote in Romans 8:28–30: "For those who have been called according to His purpose, God works for their good. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son.... And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified." No sinner personally called by the Holy Spirit will ever fail to obtain the salvation offered through Christ.

Third, *all three members of the Trinity deserve unremitting praise for their role in our salvation*. As believers, we appreciate the work of the Father, who planned our salvation through Christ; and the Son, who

gave his life as a ransom for many. We should also appreciate the work of the Holy Spirit, who applied our salvation to us through his internal, personal and effectual call resulting in our being "rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son God loves" (Colossians 1:13). Thanks to the Spirit's internal call, God's elect are "born through the Spirit" (John 3:3–8). They are "saved...by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). Just as the Father irrevocably chose us in Christ, and just as the Son successfully purchased us with his blood, so the Holy Spirit unrelentingly pursued us by his call. Choosing, purchasing and pursuing: "If God [Father, Son and Holy Spirit] is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

Fourth, *the Holy Spirit can do what we cannot*. Our calling sinners to repent and believe the gospel is important. Sinners must hear of Christ and their need of him. And we believers have a responsibility to urge them to "call upon the name of the Lord" (as Aaron Burr's faithful aunt did for him). But only the Holy Spirit's personal, internal call to those sinners will result in their actually "turning to God from their idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). We need not fear failure in witnessing to someone about Christ, because it isn't our job to bring that person to Christ. It's the job of the Holy Spirit. Nor should we take credit for someone coming to Christ, because it wasn't our cleverness, our sincerity or our persuasiveness that brought that sinner to the Lord. It was the effective, inward call of the Holy Spirit to that person. So let us not fear in our witnessing; neither let us boast of our witnessing. Let us ascribe all glory to the Holy Spirit, who effectively calls the sinner to the Saviour!

Conclusion

Resisting the Holy Spirit is a serious crime indeed. We all resisted initially, but for believers, "where our sin [of rejection] once abounded, God's grace did much more abound!" (Romans 5:20). If we have truly believed in Jesus, we have truly "believed through grace" (Acts 18:27), a grace through which the Father planned our salvation, the Son purchased our salvation and the Holy Spirit effectually called us to that salvation! **B**

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ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM

UNITING AROUND THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL
BY HEATHER KENDALL

Just before a motley crew arrested the Lord Jesus, he prayed that all who would believe in him would be united as one. At his death and resurrection, believing Jews and Gentiles became one spiritual body, the church. By faith in the risen Christ, the apostles preached one gospel, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the

Son of God (Romans 10:8–10; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4). Then they baptized only believers who had repented of their sin. Sadly, it did not take long before some turned to a different gospel—“which is really no gospel at all” (Galatians 1:7). This situation has continued to the present day. In this article I shall concentrate on two

distortions of the one true gospel: infant baptism and the union of church and state. First, let us consider the underlying reason for this disunity.

Result of Adam and Eve’s rebellion

As soon as Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden, they were no longer a

loving carefree couple. Adam blamed Eve for their predicament. He also blamed God by pointing out that God had given him the woman. Like Adam, Eve was unwilling to admit that she was responsible for breaking God’s one and only command. She blamed the serpent. Matthew Henry points out:

If man had not sinned, he would always have ruled with wisdom and love; and if the woman had not sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness; and then dominion had been no grievance; but our own sin and folly make our yoke heavy.

I suspect Adam resented Eve for destroying their friendship with the Lord God. He could not have been pleased with her. Because of sin in her heart, I wonder if Eve thought, “I enticed him to eat the forbidden fruit. Maybe I can make Adam do whatever I want.” Resentment festering in the heart destroys the ability to love. An overwhelming desire to control leads to a lack of respect. The sins of resentment and control poison many a marriage. In the New Testament a godly marriage became a picture of Jesus and his bride, the church:

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband (Ephesians 5:31–33).

Because of Adam and Eve’s rebellion, all humans will experience physical death. We also deserve spiritual death. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). But God mercifully promised Adam and Eve hope for reconciliation with him. God told Satan,

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel (Genesis 3:15).

A death to life story

Raising Christ from the dead made the gospel a death to life story. When we repent of our sin and by faith trust that Jesus paid our penalty by shedding his blood on the cross, we also have a death to life story. We are no longer spiritually dead but alive in Christ. Jesus promised Peter, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18).

Satan, however, was furious and made war against those “who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus” (Revelation 12:17). One way Satan does this is by hijacking the gospel, that is, by changing or misrepresenting the gospel from the one and only true gospel of Christ. Divisions occurred in New Testament times and have continued to the present time.

Infant baptism

In 1845, T.A. Warner (*The Two Covenants*) laments,

still the hearts of enlightened Christians are oppressed with the conviction that besides other causes, the efficiency of the church is greatly impaired by her divisions.

He concludes his book by saying,

for he must be a very superficial observer as well as illogical reasoner, who supposes that different denominations can exist, without attaching any importance to the points of differences existing between them, or seeking to maintain those differences.

The one true gospel insists on believers’ baptism (Acts 2:37–39). When some in the church began substituting infant baptism for circumcision, they changed the gospel. How many children have grown up thinking they are right with God because of their infant baptism? Warner

One way Satan does this is by hijacking the gospel, that is, by changing or misrepresenting the gospel from the one and only true gospel of Christ.

points out, “The difference then between the Baptists, and Paedobaptists is an important one, in comparison with which the difference between much and little water dwindles into insignificance.”

The union of church and state

Now let us consider a modern perversion of the gospel. From the beginning of time, Satan has effectively kept people in bondage by uniting religion and the state. Sadly today, it appears as if Satan wants some evangelicals in the United States to fall into that trap. In 2000, Cal Thomas writes, “Conservative Christians ought to stop looking to the state for permission and validation and start looking to God for their commission and marching orders.” Moreover, Cliff Bjork explains:

Our nation’s courts, or the halls of congress, or even the voting booth are not the real frontlines of our battle against the forces of evil. Nor have we been called to wage war in the trenches of public opinion by trying to form “coalitions” with unbelievers who supposedly share similar “moral” concerns. Such skirmishes with the enemy do not enjoy the blessing of our Commander in Chief, nor have they any real prospect of lasting victory....

Neither the Old nor the New Testament supports the humanistic notion that there is a remaining “spark of goodness” within the human heart, yet that is *exactly* what any ef-

fort to bring moral reform to a fallen society through political processes—sans regeneration—would require. Political pressure may be able to change laws, but it is powerless to change hearts.

Without faith, the most morally upright sinners who have ever lived still remain “objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction” (Romans 9:22).

God expects true believers to shine in the world “like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life” (Philippians 2:15–16). We depend on the Holy Spirit to convince unregenerate hearts of their need for the Saviour. I pray that evangelical Canadians do not fall into Satan’s trap. God does not approve of any government or governmental organization dictating what its citizens believe. True believers know that the Holy Spirit alone can perform his heart-changing work.

God desires us to unite in our local churches, and also worldwide, around one Lord, one faith and one baptism. This was Jesus’ prayer for us. Do not allow Satan to hijack the gospel. We are a death to life story. Rejoice in this! **B**

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HISTORICAL AMNESIA AND THE SPANISH FLU

THE DEVASTATING SPANISH FLU PANDEMIC KILLED AT LEAST 50-75 MILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE, BUT IT WAS UNDERREPORTED IN THE WEST BECAUSE OF THE GREAT WAR. BY DAVID HERBERT



Nineteen-year-old Alan Arnett McLeod (1899–1918), was awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) by King George V at Buckingham Palace on September 3, 1918. His heroic actions as a pilot in the Canadian Air Force during and after an aerial combat merited his being awarded this coveted honour. Upon returning to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Second Lieutenant McLeod received a hero's welcome. Five weeks later, still suffering from serious war injuries, on November 6, 1918—just five days before the end of World War I—he contracted the Spanish Flu and died.

Second Lieutenant McLeod was just one of 50,000 Canadians who died of this scourge. The Spanish Flu came in three waves from the spring of 1918 until the summer 1919. It has been estimated that 50 to 75 million people died worldwide but, in reality, the true number will never be known. Fifty percent of the total deaths globally occurred during the second wave, from September until December 1918. Compared to the 16 million killed in World War I (1914–1918), including combatants and non-combatants, one begins to realize

the utter destruction by this pandemic in one year's time. It mysteriously disappeared as rapidly as it had appeared.

When I consider the sudden appearance of the Spanish Flu and how it terrified the people in 1918, I am amazed that, having taught Canadian history for nearly two decades, this topic was never mentioned in the textbooks I used. The historical amnesia that surrounds one of the world's most deadly pandemics is indeed a conundrum. One possible explanation could be that the double-barrelled impact of the Great War and the global pandemic temporarily numbed human consciousness. But the optimism of better times evidenced itself with the emergence of the Roaring Twenties. Nevertheless, this compelling assessment of the Spanish Flu by historian/author Alfred Crosby still remains:

It killed millions upon millions of people in a year or so. Nothing else—no infection, no war, no famine—has ever killed so many in as short a period. And yet it has never inspired awe, *not in 1918 and not since* (*America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 2003, italics added).

One incident, caused by the Spanish Flu that would shape the flow of history for years to come, centred around U.S. president Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924). He came down with the Spanish Flu while attending the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Being quite ill, Wilson lacked the stamina to convince the members of the British and French delegations that leniency should be extended to Germany. Instead, the delegates wanted to place crushing reprisals upon Germany to punish her for starting the war. Their will prevailed and this misguided animosity provided the fodder through which Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) rose to power.

The origin of the Spanish Flu has long baffled historians. Did it originate in the Far East, possibly China, or in Camp Funston, Kansas? Despite this

uncertainty, there is absolute certainty about how this influenza came to be known as the Spanish Flu. An article in *The London Free Press* entitled “Influenza Worse Than Hun Bullets” stated,

It is an indisputable fact that the Spanish influenza epidemic which is now sweeping all parts of the country is daily claiming far more victims than German bullets on the battle front in Europe (October 19, 1918).

Months prior to this article, the Allied and Central Powers had strictly forbidden the media to report the seriousness of this influenza. The rationale for these restrictions was they did not want to undermine the morale of the soldiers on the front lines or the citizens at home. But in Spain, a neutral country, such media censorship was not enforced. The Spanish newspapers, in May 1918, were the first to inform the world of the disastrous effect that this disease was having on the troops. Thus, the name of this virus was to become associated with Spain—hence, the Spanish Flu.

Historians have sought to understand how the second wave of the Influenza—which had mutated and become more virulent—spread across Canada. Firstly, during the final three months of the war, Canada suffered its highest casualties of the war. In order to compensate for these losses, 59,000 soldiers were sent to Europe. On the other hand, many of the 33,000 soldiers who were seriously injured, such as 2nd Lt. Alan McLeod, were sent in crowded troop ships back to Canada. Many, having been inflicted with the Spanish Flu, passed this contagious disease on to their comrades. The ports of entry like Halifax and Montreal were first to record such cases.

An article in *The Globe and Mail* entitled “Third ‘Flu’ Death in Canadian Camp” (October 8, 1918), mentioned the second reason. “The epidemic in the Polish Camp is being held under control...there were 127 cases in the hospital today, a slight

increase over yesterday's report." Canadian authorities promised to train Polish troops for military action in France; they were gathered together in Niagara Falls. The overwhelming number of these Polish recruits came from the United States and brought the Spanish Flu with them.

A detailed description of this nightmarish affliction was given by Dr. E.A. Robertson, a physician at the Jeffrey Hale Hospital in Quebec City. He wrote:

The secondary symptoms were extreme weakness, severe headache and backache, aching of the limbs and pain in the abdominal muscles from coughing. As time went on, coughing became more productive, quantities of blood stained expectoration and nearly pure dark blood were expelled, the respiration became rapid and labored, the face and fingers cyanosed [turned blue], active delirium came on...the whole surface of the body blue, the temperature rapidly fell and the patient died from failure of the respiration.

This quotation, taken from Mark Humphries' book, *The Last Plague: Spanish Influenza and the Politics of Public Health in Canada*, ended with this terse comment: "These victims slowly drowned as their lungs filled with fluid."

In the fall of 1918, an editorial, "The Illumination of Death," appeared in *The London Free Press* (October, 19, 1918). The editor was well aware of the preoccupation with death on the minds of everyone in the face of two harrowing catastrophes: trench warfare in Europe and the Spanish Flu at home. He mentioned that the inevitability of death and its ensuing darkness brought despair, but humanity's greatest need was spiritual light. To that end, he wrote:

Christ himself is that light. He came to bring life and immortality to light through the gospel and, in his dying and raising, he offers people freedom from the enslaving fear of death. We do not overcome death by ignoring it. We overcome death by being released from it and he, who tasted death for everyone and conquered it, can bring true emancipation. **B**

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HAPPY THE HOME WHEN GOD IS THERE



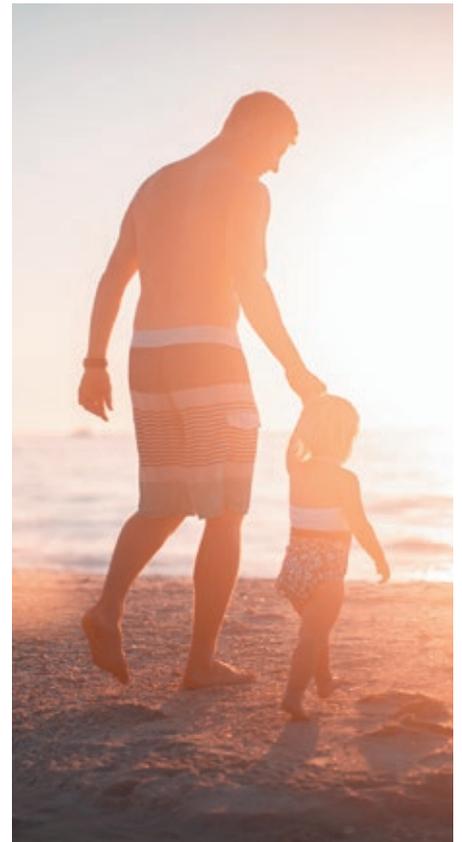
BY DALE NEVELIZER >>

The cultural pendulum tends to swing to opposite extremes. While children used to be seen and not heard, now children are often heard and seen telling their parents off. How can broken homes be transformed into happy homes?

Paul's desire when writing to the Colossian Christians was for them to know that Christ is all and all that we need. The Christian life is lived by setting our hearts and minds on things above and not on earthly things. This leads us to put to death the things of the flesh and to clothe ourselves with the things of Christ. This taking off and putting on applies to family relationships, as Paul addresses children and parents in Colossians 3:20–21, "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged."

Children are to obey their parents. The Greek word for *obey* is where we get our English word *acoustics*. It refers not only to hearing but to doing what we have heard. When Paul tells children to obey in everything, it is in the context of a Christian household whose rules are meant for the glory of God and the good of their children. Children should obey their parents because of the authority their parents have from creation. But they should also obey because of the redemptive factor that it pleases God. In the parallel passage in Ephesians 6:1–3, Paul refers to the promise of a long life that is linked to the fifth commandment of honouring one's father and mother. Under the Old Covenant, that promise referred to the land, but under the New Covenant it refers to a new and abundant life here and hereafter. Children should obey their parents because God is pleased when they trust and obey.

But parents in general, and fathers in particular, are to love their children. Fathers love their children by not embittering or exasperating them. We embitter our children when we are emotionally detached from them or make unreasonable demands on them, thus crushing their spirits and provoking them to anger. But the parallel passage in Ephesians 6:4 teaches that we



... all of life becomes a theatre to lead our little ones to Christ through our life and our speech.

love our children by bringing them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Training involves structure and discipline, and instruction involves verbal instruction. Although this training takes place with times of formal discipline and instruction, it often occurs informally, as all of life becomes a theatre to lead our little ones to Christ through our life and our speech.

We live in a day when families no longer know about Joseph or Joseph's God. Family has been redefined to mean whatever we want, and roles have been reversed where children have become the parents and parents have become the children. But one of the most powerful witnesses of the gospel to our lost world is that we showcase before them the hymn, "Happy the Home When God Is There." **B**

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SEXUAL INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE



BY MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN

>> Words not only bear distinct meanings but the way that they are employed reflects back on the cultures that coin them.

So, for example, one evidence of the hyper-sexualized culture in which we live is the way that the term “sexy”—which used to have a distinct meaning of “sexually alluring”—has morphed into a variety of spheres where the adjective in years past would never have been used: course descriptions, cars and cameras, for example, are all sexy—or not, as the case may be! This usage of this term even among Western Christians is surely indicative that the hyper-sexuality of our culture is reshaping their world as well. Of course, human sexuality is important—too important, in fact, to be misused in this way.

The Puritans on marital intimacy

Now, this overt sexualization of modern culture is, to some degree, a reaction against what is perceived to be Victorian prudishness, sometimes wrongly labelled as “Puritan,” as we shall see. As Marxist historian Christopher Hill once observed, “very few of the so-called ‘Puritans’ were ‘Puritanical.’” More generally, it is a reaction against what is perceived to be the Christian view of sex. But what exactly is that view? To journey through the history of sex in Christianity is to discover a number of differing perspectives. There is the clear delight that Puritans like Richard Baxter (1615–1691) had in sexual intimacy within the context of marriage. Here is Baxter giving advice to married couples in his *Christian Directory*:

“Husband and wife must take delight in the love, and company, and converse of each other.” There is nothing that man’s heart is so inordinately set upon as delight; and yet the lawful delight allowed them by God, they can turn into loathing and disdain. The delight which would entangle you in sin, and turn you from your duty and from God, is that which is forbidden you: but this is a delight that is helpful to you in your duty, and would keep you from sin. When husband and wife take pleasure in each other, it uniteth them in duty, it helpeth them with ease to do their



work, and bear their burdens; and is not the least part of the comfort of the married state. “Rejoice with the wife of thy youth, as the loving hind and pleasant roe, let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love” [Proverbs 5:18–19].

In a lifetime of studying Anglophone Puritanism and its worldview, J.I. Packer was convinced that the Puritans gave to marriage “such strength, substance, and solidity as to warrant the verdict that... under God...they were creators of the English Christian marriage.” Thomas Adams (fl.1612–1653), a renowned Puritan preacher

William Gouge encouraged married couples to engage in sexual intercourse with “delight, willingly, readily and cheerfully,” since it was essential to marital companionship.

in his day, argued: “There is no such fountain of comfort on earth, as marriage.” The Elizabethan Puritan author Robert Cleaver (fl.1570–1613) was of a similar mind: “There can be no greater society or company, than is between a man and his wife.” William Gouge (1578–1653), a leader among London Puritans and a key participant at the Westminster Assembly, emphasized that God intended marriage first and foremost for the mutual aid of husband and wife. “No such help,” writes Gouge, “can

man have from any other creature as from a wife; or a woman, as from an husband.” He encouraged married couples to engage in sexual intercourse with “delight, willingly, readily and cheerfully,” since it was essential to marital companionship. It may well have been Cleaver who came up with the following famous reflection upon the mode of Eve’s creation:

The husband is...to understand, that as God created the woman...so also he created her not of Adam’s foot that she should be trodden down and despised, but he took her out of the rib, that she might walk jointly with him.

The Puritan poet, Edward Taylor (1642–1729), of Westfield, Connecticut, once told his wife that his passion for her was as “a golden ball of pure fire” and that their “conjugal love ought to exceed all other,” excepting only their love for the Maker of marriage. It was thus not fortuitous that when that quintessential Puritan text, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, listed the reasons for marriage, companionship came first. “Marriage was ordained,” we read in chapter 25.2, “for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed; and for preventing uncleanness.” As Packer has noted, Puritan preachers and authors are regularly to be “found pulling out the stops to proclaim the supreme blessing of togetherness in marriage,” which surely entails, among other things, sexual intimacy.

The roots of Puritan views in the Reformation battle

This clear delight in marriage and human sexuality as good gifts from God had its roots in the Reformation. The sixteenth-century Reformation is often remembered as a rediscovery of the heart of the gospel and the way of salvation, but it was also a recovery of a biblical view of marriage and sexual intimacy. The mediæval Roman Catholic Church had affirmed the goodness of marriage but at the same time argued that celibacy was a much better option for those wanting to pursue a life of holiness and serve God vocationally. In fact, at the Second Lateran Council (1139), legislation was passed that only those who were celibate were to be ordained. But it was precisely here that reality collided with theological legislation, for many of those who were technically celibate priests in the High and Late Middle Ages were not able to actually live chastely. As Calvin later noted: “Virginity...is an excellent gift; but it is given only to a few.”

One of the major scandals of the late mediæval church was thus the very household of the parish priest, who was celibate, but not chaste, his so-called “cook” or “housekeeper” actually serving as his concubine. Little wonder that Calvin regarded the Roman Catholic requirement of the celibacy of its priests as “a modern tyranny” and “doctrine of devils.” Calvin’s language, while strident, is not at all out of place. Sexuality has been and still is a major battlefield in the struggle for purity and holiness. And Calvin, wishing to take his guidance above all from the Scriptures, rightly saw the mediæval Church’s position as both out of sync with the Bible and a doorway to sexual scandal.

As was the era of the Reformation, so ours is a day in which there is an enormous battle over sexuality and sexual expression. And if the modern Church is to be wise, she must cleave to the ancient paths laid down in God’s Word. **B**

This article is an adapted portion of a Foreword to Hannah Turill, *The Shameful Act: Marriage and Sexual Intimacy in Tertullian of Carthage* (Peterborough, ON: H&E Publishing, 2022, forthcoming). Used with gracious permission of H&E Publishing.

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WOKENESS AND CHRISTIANITY (PART 2)



BY OWEN PIKKERT >> In the last issue of *Barnabas*, I described wokeness as having much of its theoretical basis in Marxism. To

review: classical Marxism holds (1) people can be divided into oppressors and oppressed; (2) the oppressors have brainwashed most of the oppressed into complacency; (3) the oppressed need to be made more aware of their oppression; (4) such awareness ought to lead to revolution; (5) who counts as oppressor or oppressed is determined by economic class. I argued that wokeness keeps the first four claims and extends the fifth by adding many other groups to the list of oppressed: women, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, the colonized, the physically disabled, those with mental health issues, and so on. It then advocates a variety of practical ways in which the newly defined oppressed can be liberated. These include aggressive affirmative action programs, increased media representation, land acknowledgments, calls for reparations, etc.

In this article, I want to further examine whether the theoretical basis of wokeness is compatible with Christianity. I will argue that, despite one area of compatibility, wokeness and Christianity are at odds over at least two fundamental issues.

1. A compatibility: a recognition of unfair disadvantages

The one area of compatibility that I have in mind concerns some efforts of woke scholarship. Such scholarship examines the various ways in which people can face unobvious, unfair disadvantages due to overlapping identities. By “identities” I simply mean factors such as one’s race, gender, and so forth. Some of the most influential work in this area is that of Kimberlé Crenshaw, an African-American legal scholar at UCLA and Columbia. In a very influential paper, Crenshaw analyzes a variety of legal cases in which the plaintiff was legally handicapped by the fact that she was both black and a woman. For example, in the case of *Degraffenreid v. General Motors* (1976), Degraffenreid, a black woman, claimed that General Motors discriminated against black women in their hiring practices. The court decided that, as a matter of law,

Degraffenreid could only file a complaint that GM was discriminating against women, or that GM was discriminating against black people—but not both. This hamstrung Degraffenreid’s case because, on the former, GM could point out that plenty of white women were hired and, on the latter, that plenty of black men were hired. One can sympathize with Degraffenreid at being forced into a legal dilemma that neither represented her original concern nor allowed her to win.

Now it is both easy and common to make all sorts of fallacious generalizations based on examples such as this. Does this mean that all those with overlapping marginalized identities are automatically disadvantaged? Well, even if that was true in the past, there are some black women today who face considerable advantages from scholarships and hiring quotas. Does this mean that all those with overlapping non-marginalized identities are automatically guilty? Well, there have been plenty of sexist and racist white men, but it seems perverse to start imputing guilt on all white men past and present. Despite such abuses, however, it is still worth considering cases

One of the chief incompatibilities of wokeness with Christianity concerns human nature.

such as those analyzed by Crenshaw, and why one never had to consider them before. Perhaps it is because one took some advantages for granted.

2. An incompatibility: views on human nature

Despite the usefulness of some woke scholarship, however, much of the theoretical basis of wokeness is deeply incompatible with Christianity. One of the chief incompatibilities concerns *human nature*. According to Christianity, human nature is depraved. “The heart is deceitful above all things”, writes Jeremiah, “and desperately sick” (Jeremiah 17:9). Although some of the woke might agree that such an assessment is accurate of *some* people, they cannot truly claim that this is true of *all* persons from birth. This is because the woke

typically deny the existence of any objective human nature at all, instead viewing it as culturally constructed. Human nature, they might suggest, is like clothing: it exists, but it comes in many versions, which are all human creations that reflect specific cultural contexts and values. It is therefore not surprising that clothing varies considerably from one culture to another. You are not born wearing clothes; rather, you are born into a culture that offers you its clothing. You are born just as naked in Fiji as in Finland, but your sartorial choices will probably focus more on T-shirts in the former and sweaters in the latter. And that's just the point: because no one is born wearing a T-shirt or a sweater, it's really just a matter of choice. You might feel a little warm wearing a sweater in Fiji—but hey, you do you.

The same is allegedly true of human nature. Nobody is born with a depraved nature, say the woke, because nobody is born with a nature at all. Rather, you choose your own nature from a variety of culturally constructed options, and those who claim otherwise are simply making a factual mistake. To say things like “everyone is born depraved” or “don't underestimate how depraved you really are” is just like a Finn saying, “Everyone is born a sweater-person” or “Don't underestimate how sweaterish you really are.” Such talk simply reveals the Finn's parochialism. For the Christian, however, human nature and clothing are not analogous. One does not choose depravity as one option among many; rather, one is born depraved, and it is

only by God's grace that this problem can ultimately be solved.

3. Another incompatibility: views on liberation

One of the most wonderful of theological facts is that, through Christ, one can be liberated from sin. Paul puts the matter succinctly: “You have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God” (Romans 6:22). The Christian is now completely free from the penalty of sin, and increasingly free from the power of sin. But notice

Such unlimited liberation is not simply a stepping-stone to some end goal: it is the end goal itself.

that such newfound freedom does not imply that one can do whatever one wants. Quite the contrary: although Christians have been liberated from one master, they are now subject to a much better one. Of course, the Bible also uses other images to describe our new relationship to God. Later on in Romans, for instance, Paul describes us as adopted sons and heirs (8:15–17). But we are still slaves, and as such do not have the right to do as we please. We are instead bound by our Master's will.

Now there is obviously much about this that the woke will reject. They will probably deny the historical and theological facts that make such liberation possible, and the appropriateness of using slavery as a metaphor in any context. But I wish to

focus on a difference concerning the type of liberation at stake. The liberation that Paul endorses is *limited and instrumental*. By “limited” I mean that while Paul endorses liberation from sin, he does not endorse complete liberation to do as one wants. By “instrumental” I mean that Paul takes liberation from sin to be for the sake of a greater goal, namely the glorification of God—a glorification that presupposes that we have become slaves to him.

The liberation that the woke endorse, by contrast, is *unlimited and ultimate*. By “unlimited” I mean that the woke typically think that one should be liberated from anything that opposes the creation and expression of one's preferred identity, so long as one does not harm others in the process. By “ultimate” I mean that such unlimited liberation is not simply a stepping-stone to some end goal: it is the end goal itself. The woke utopia is one where each person is fully affirmed in whichever identity they have chosen to construct. This is totally opposed to the Christian vision of persons submitted to the will of God, a submission which often requires a great deal of self-denial. I emphasize that such self-denial is worth it, being ultimately swamped by “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:17). But it is self-denial nonetheless, not full liberation to live and identify however one pleases. **B**

➤ Owen Pikkert teaches philosophy at the University of Toronto. He is a member of Philpott Church in Hamilton, ON.

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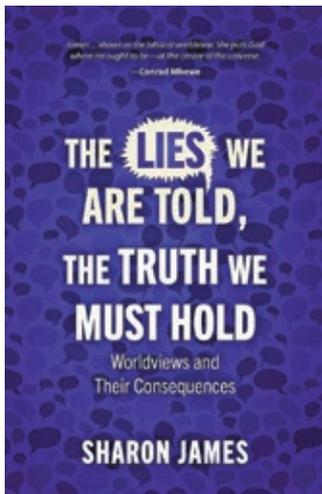
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A QUARTERLY review OF NEW & RECENT books



THE LIES WE ARE TOLD, THE TRUTH WE MUST HOLD

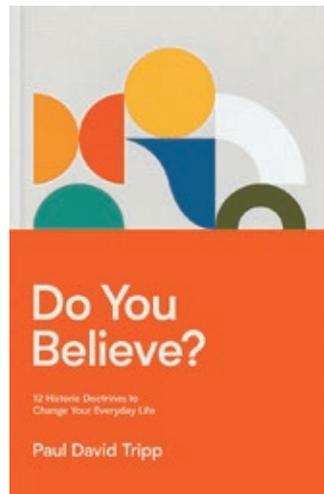
Worldviews and Their Consequences

BY SHARON JAMES

Christian Focus (2022); 304 pgs
ISBN 978-1527107960

Here is a major contribution to understanding why Western civilization is imploding. Sharon James explains the ideas of a host of writers, letting their words speak for themselves, and traces the ramifications of their views. It's hard reading, but only because of the hopelessness emanating from Feuerbach, Darwin, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, Sanger, etc. But she presents their ideas in a way the average person in the pew can grasp: this is not a book for intellectuals only.

Part 1 of James' book will tell you how we got to where we are. In Part 2, James draws out scriptural truths which help us "when the foundations are crumbling"; truths concerning God, our sinfulness and the Way to forgiveness. Herein we also find God's truths about family, work, community and nations. Of special interest might be the chapters on the "death of common sense" and "the compromised church." So, are we left bunkered down, holding onto truth? No, says James in the last section, because Christ is King we must proclaim God's gospel to our despairing world. —DALE COGSWELL



DO YOU BELIEVE?

12 Historic Doctrines to Change Your Everyday Life

BY PAUL DAVID TRIPP

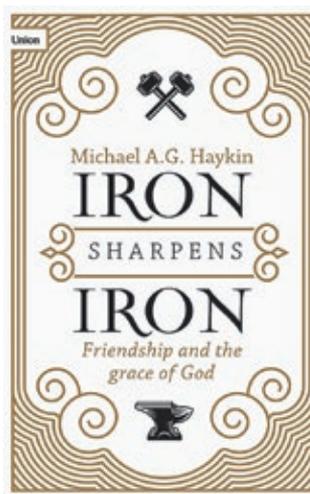
Crossway (2021); 480 pgs
ISBN 978-1433567711

One of the hardest things for a Christian to do is to get what they believe in their *head* to impact on their *heart* and influence their *life*. Of course, the ultimate Agent in this work of transformation and sanctification is the Holy Spirit. But the individual believer has a responsibility to pursue holiness of life with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. The book *Do You Believe?* can be a real aid in this pursuit.

This book, I believe, is a timely gift from God to his church. Dr. Tripp wrote in the preface, "This book is meant to be a training manual on what it looks like to carry what you believe into the situations, locations and relationships of your daily life."

The book is well laid out. Twelve theological doctrines—like the doctrine of the Scripture, of God, of Creation, of Justification, etc.—are soundly and accurately presented. After each doctrinal chapter, is a chapter on how that doctrine is to be practically applied in our everyday Christian walk. If you read only one book this year, I highly recommend you read *Do You Believe?*

—DON THEOBALD



IRON SHARPENS IRON

Friendship and the grace of God

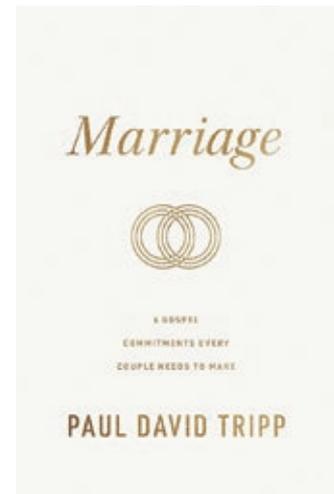
BY MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN

Union Publishing (2022); 120 pgs
ISBN 978-1916899513

Proverbs 27:17 states, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." It is from this proverb that Michael Haykin has derived the title for this wonderful book on the importance of cultivating genuine Christian friendships.

Iron Sharpens Iron seeks to address this much neglected area in the lives of many Christians—especially those of pastors. Our culture is increasingly one of individualism and personal isolation, even in the evangelical church. Haykin writes that our culture does not give "encouragement for the nurture and development of deep, long-lasting, satisfying friendships. Such friendships take time and sacrifice." This book is a combination of biblical examples of friendship; i.e., Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, Paul and Timothy. It also includes historical examples of Christian friendship in the lives of eighteenth-century Baptists like Andrew Fuller and John Ryland.

Iron Sharpens Iron is written in a warm, informative and "sweet" way, yet it is also convicting, challenging and helpful. We neglect this means of grace to the impoverishment of our own eternal souls.—DT



MARRIAGE

6 Gospel Commitments Every Couple Needs to Make

BY PAUL DAVID TRIPP

Crossway (2021); 384 pgs
ISBN 978-1433573101

In my nearly 45 years of ministry, marriage issues and family difficulties have been the preponderance of my pastoral counselling. As a result, I am always on the lookout for good material to read and pass on. One such excellent book is *Marriage* written by Dr. Paul Tripp. This book is an updated and expanded edition of his *What Did You Expect?* (2010).

This wonderful, biblical and practical book sees marriage in the context of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Marriage, therefore, is not an isolated facet of our life, but a practical outworking of the great theological truths of sin, grace, the cross, repentance and forgiveness.

Tripp calls the reader to make six lifelong commitments in their marriage: (1) confession and forgiveness; (2) ongoing growth and change; (3) trust; (4) love; (5) appreciation; and (6) protecting.

Marriage is filled with solid theological teaching, real life situations and practical application. There are also sections on "Marriage and Sex," Q&As and a study guide. This book is a marriage refresher and maybe a marriage saver—to be read and lived out again and again.—DT

BEING A “FOLLOWER” OF CHRIST



BY DANIELLE GIGNAC >>

What if you inherited an immense fortune but had to hide your identity to protect others who would be involved, resulting in someone else taking on your fortune, and you had to simply watch what they did with it? You were rightfully entitled to it, but chose not to take it. Because you had to hide your true identity, you were never treated with the respect you deserved. In fact, you were demeaned and disregarded because of your apparent lowliness. But to demand what you deserved would reveal too much, and so you had to bear, with humility, the results of your choice. You knew your worth, but no one else did, and they treated you as they judged your value to be. Eventually, as you persevered, some would finally see and repent of their own conceit and learn to see and value you for yourself. Those who have read *Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens may recognize this storyline. But do you also recognize elements of the life of Jesus in it as well?

Jesus condescended to become a man to redeem humankind—can we ever truly know what that cost him? What was it like to be God and not only to be limited as a human but to be treated as he was? And why did he do it? To save sinners—to offer life to those who were bound for death. He bore the shame, pain and sorrow of our sin. He refrained from claiming the glory that was rightfully his until the proper time. He was mistreated, misunderstood, abandoned and, finally, crucified. Ah! But he had a plan. His worth would be known, make no mistake. He overcame death and sin, and rose in triumph to regain his rightful place with the Father. To top it all off, he offers his people an inheritance as well.

If anyone ever had a right to live on earth as a king, it was Jesus. Yet in God’s wisdom, he came as a humble servant. He commanded a following, but not in order to improve his station in the world. He drew others to follow him because it was the only way to find life. Jesus was not just a man to be imitated. He is the Lord to be worshipped. Too often we sell him short on this. We talk of what a good man he was: his humility and concern for the poor and sufferers. We say that we follow him in



Today, to gain “followers” via social media is to draw attention to oneself.

our hearts and deeds, but do we really? Yet we limit him to his humanity, when undergirding it all is his deity—veiled from the eyes of humankind who could not see or appreciate his worth. He bore with us, knowing a time was coming when he would reveal himself and redeem the world. How sharply this dignity and long-suffering contrasts with the self-aggrandizing we see in culture today!

Today, to gain “followers” via social media is to draw attention to oneself. The number of followers someone has becomes a measure of their *worth*. It doesn’t matter the value of those followers, as long as it’s a lot. It’s not a secret that web platforms use algorithms which feed off of highly charged and polarizing content to increase the number of “hits” a post or site has. The more controversial, the more strongly people feel about it, and the more attention they give it. These platforms care little for the social effect of amplifying harmful discourse so long as the numbers continue to grow. When things are calm, they’re not profiting, and a flat line is a very bad thing for investors who expect limitless growth. And so, fuelled by this system, people follow each other into ever-increasing darkness.

How do Christians show what is different about being followers of Christ? We would do well to use the wisdom of silence a lot more. Whatever you may think of the stoicism of Rudyard Kipling’s poem, “If—,” there are many lines that we would do well to consider.

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don’t deal in lies,
Or being hated don’t give way to hating,
And yet don’t look too good, nor talk too wise.

What good it would do if more people lived this way! Instead, we see instantaneous and vicious reactions, condemnations and battle cries in our age of entitlement. Everyone has a right to say what they think with impunity, while no one else is allowed to do the same if it offends anyone else. Is the contradictory nature of this type of behaviour not obvious? Of course it’s not, when people don’t bother to assess themselves. Or if there is self-critique, it’s so often a mock form of humility, designed to elicit attention and sympathy rather than seeking to change or grow.

What we really need most often is not verbal sparring, but a mirror: a silent mirror held up to show us ourselves and what we’ve become or could become. So many times Jesus revealed people’s hearts to themselves simply through silence—by allowing them to hear their own words echoing back. Rather than fuelling the fire with words he knew would be twisted against him, Jesus let it die out.

With all of the superficial self-aggrandizement pervading society, Christians ought to be deeper. We should humbly and gratefully consider our inheritance in Christ and what it looks like to follow him. We should carefully assess our intentions and actions. Psalm 139 describes how God knows everything about us. There is nowhere we can go that is outside of his presence and knowledge; to be right with him, and to really seek to be holy, we should pray,

Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!
(Psalm 139:23–24). ■

➤ Danielle Gignac is an architect living in Guelph, ON. She attends Crestwicke Baptist Church.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

“... with his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).



BY RACHEL THIBAULT >> As I write this article, I am sitting in the cafeteria of Juravinski Hospital in Hamilton. My Dad is about to have surgery on his left hip. The last several months have been difficult for him. He has had much difficulty walking, his sleep has been interrupted and his hip joint makes a lot of noises. The doctor told him he has “bone on bone”, “BOB” as my dad calls it! His life has settled into a simple pattern, as even getting into the truck is a very painful event.

Today, the surgeon is going to saw off the upper part of his leg bone (the femur) and insert a titanium ball joint into his femur bone. There will be saws, hammers and drills. He will be given something to make him sleepy. Do not worry. He will not feel anything, as he has a medication going into a space around his spinal column, and that medication freezes everything below his waist. He might hear the construction going on, but will not feel a thing.

As they wheeled him away, I said, “I love you, Dad. See you later.” It struck me that I was handing him over to the responsibility of physicians who would hopefully fix the disintegrated hip. These mere humans were going to cut, and saw, and stitch and staple him back together. I was in total awe of the whole thing, to be honest. But truly, I was resting on Job 12:10 that says, “In His hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.” I whispered to the Lord, “Please heal my dear father,” placing my full trust into the hands of the Great Physician.

I whispered to the Lord, “Please heal my dear father,” placing my full trust into the hands of the Great Physician.

Jesus was the greatest Physician of all time. He performed many miracles—healed the blind and the lame, raised the dead, cast out demons, to name a few. The end of the gospel of John concludes, “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written” (John 21:25).

On December 16th, 2021, I sat at the bedside of my dying mother. She loved the Lord with all her heart, soul, strength and mind. I was able to watch as she crossed the Jordan River and passed into eternity: one minute here, and the next in eternity. The greatest of Christ’s miracles is the salvation he offers through his death and resurrection. When we call out to God, through Jesus, we are putting our trust in this Great Physician. **B**

➤ Rachel Thibault is a wife, mother, homeschool teacher and nurse (when she can fit that in). She loves playing piano and singing. She joyfully serves the church in music ministry.



THE CHALLENGE

I AM

Finish the following “I AM” statements describing the Lord:

1. “I am the _____ of _____ ; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).
2. “I am the _____ of the _____. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).
3. “Truly, truly, I say to you, before _____ was, I AM” (John 8:58).
4. “I am the _____. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9).
5. “I am the _____. I know my own and my own know me” (John 10:14).
6. “I am the _____ and the _____. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26).
7. “I am the _____, and the _____, and the _____. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).
8. “I am the _____ ; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing “ (John 15:5).
9. “I am the _____ and the _____ , says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8).

DAVID (PART 2): A MUSICIAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART



BY JEREMY JOHNSTON >> Music is a gift from God. He created the ear to hear, an atmosphere to carry sound and a mathematically precise universe where acoustics, harmony and pitch are possible. He also gave humanity the creative impulse to make music. We use music for all sorts of reasons—

music to help us relax, or to motivate us during our exercise routines or to mark celebrations like weddings, funerals and birthdays. Music, however, is also prominent in worshipping God, both on earth and in heaven (Psalm 33:3; Ephesians 5:19; Revelation 5:9; 14:3). Why does God command us to use music in worship? One of the main reasons is that music is a powerful art form that helps us channel our joys and sorrows, and leads us toward experiencing and knowing more of the beauty of God (2 Samuel 6:5; Psalm 95:1; 1 Corinthians 14:15; James 5:13). In John Calvin's *Institutes*, he exhorts churches to do more than recite the Scriptures in worship; he urges Christians to sing, "sing till we feel our hearts ascending with our tongues." He goes on to say that singing kindles "our heart to a true zeal and eagerness to pray." Music—particularly singing—is designed by God to motivate and move our hearts.

One of the most famous musicians and song-writers in the Scriptures is David. He is described as "skillful in playing" instruments (1 Samuel 16:18) and, as the "sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Samuel 23:1), David wrote half of the Book of Psalms, Israel's songbook. Although we no longer have the musical scores that accompanied the lyrics of the Hebrew psalter, it is clear that music helped augment, express and redirect the feelings of singers and listeners alike. One has only to think of the melodies underlying some of our favourite modern hymns to be reminded of the power of music to tune our hearts—"And Can It Be?", "It is Well" and "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" just to name a few. One biblical

example of David using music to influence body, mind and soul was when he played music for King Saul (1 Samuel 16:14–23). When Saul was being emotionally and spiritually afflicted, the Bible tells us that "David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well."

As creatures made in the image of God, it is no surprise that we find great benefit and delight in music. God himself sings. Zephaniah records that the Lord exults over his people "with loud singing" (3:17) and in heaven, he surrounds himself with singing servants (Revelation 5:8–10; 15:2–4). This is why David was not only a man after God's own heart, but also a musician after God's own

David valued writing new worship songs because the God he adored was worthy of endless praise.

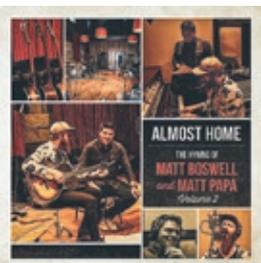
heart. He valued writing new worship songs because the God he adored was worthy of endless praise (Psalms 96:1; 98:1; 149:1). He also invented new instruments to be played by highly skilled musicians (Amos 6:5; Psalm 33:2–3). To David, music was no mere trifling addendum to worship, but a significant way of directing hearts and minds to God.

The melodies and music we enjoy on earth are a foretaste of what we will hear in heaven, a prelude to the glorious songs and harmonies we will delight in when all is made right (Isaiah 35:10; Revelation 5:9). The prophet Isaiah writes that when the Lord saves, we will play "music on stringed instruments all the days of our lives, at the house of the LORD" (Isaiah 38:20). This was true of David; may it be true of us as well! **B**

▶ Jeremy W. Johnston holds many hats—husband, father, professor, teacher, author and poet. He has also written *Barnabas* magazine's arts column since the magazine's founding. He attends Pilgrim Baptist Fellowship, Hamilton, ON.

| mixed MEDIA

FRESH tracks



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MATT BOSWELL & MATT PAPA
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