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BARNABAS

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FALL 2022

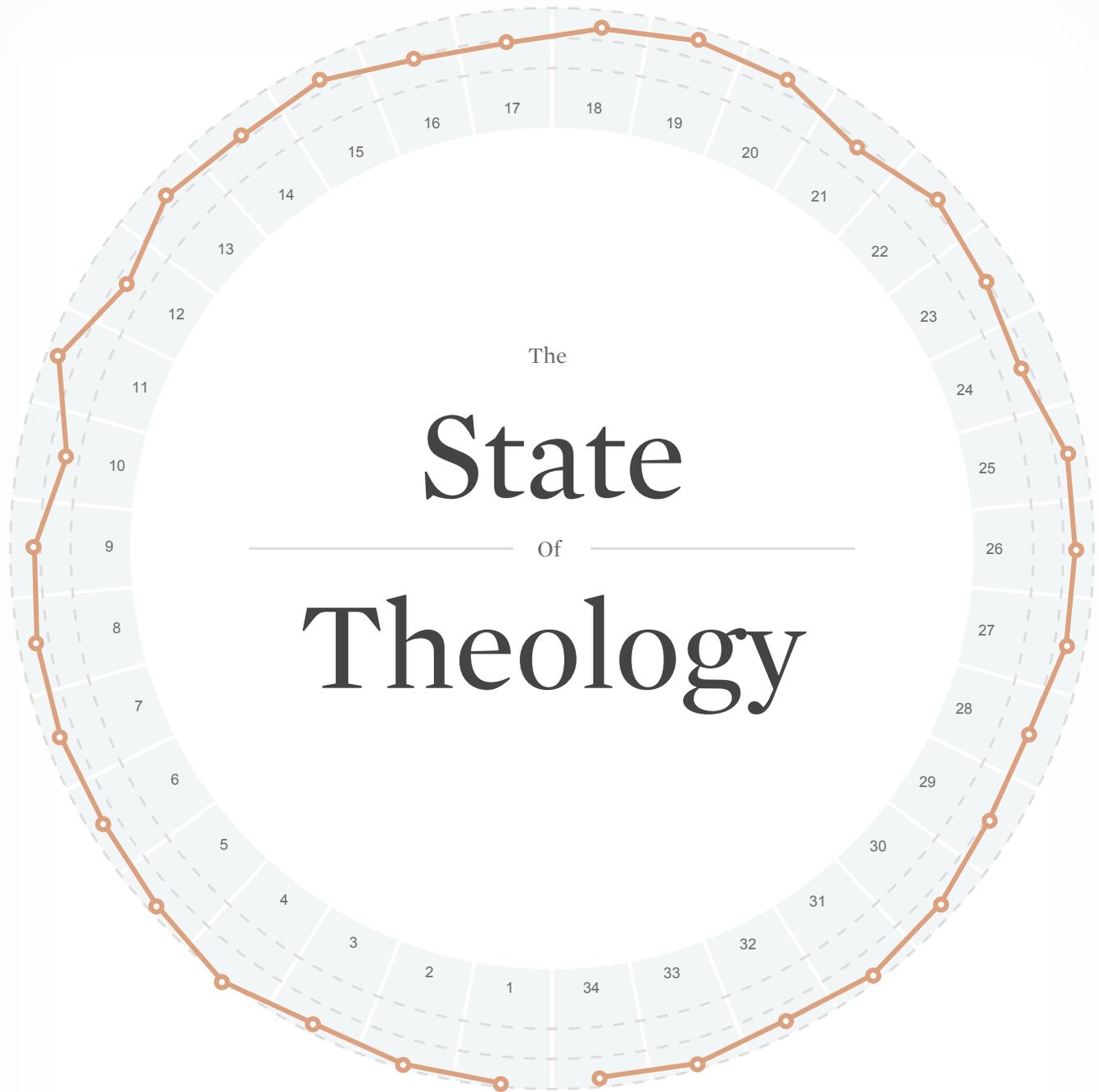
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WHAT DO AMERICANS ACTUALLY BELIEVE?

The State of Theology survey from Ligonier Ministries is rich with information useful for discerning the beliefs of Americans about God, the Bible, ethics, and salvation in a way that goes beyond simple labels and religious affiliations. Our key findings from 2022 are now available. Explore the results for yourself at TheStateOfTheology.com.



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The Good Shepherd

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NEWSBYTES

+ Trinity Baptist Church, Burlington, ON

Trinity Baptist Church marked their Year of Jubilee—fifty years of God’s grace and goodness—on October 22–23, 2022. On Saturday, an anniversary banquet brought together many old and present members and friends. After a meal and fellowship, there was a service of thanksgiving. Hetty Payne (wife of founding pastor, Bill Payne) and Joan Wellum (wife of a founding elder, Colin Wellum) reflected on God’s faithfulness. Stephen Wellum (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) spoke about the impact of Trinity and the ministry of Pastor Payne on his life and ministry. His message was entitled, “The Next 50 Years: Where Do We Go From Here?” On Sunday, Dr. Wellum spoke from Isaiah 40 in the morning (incidentally, the passage from which Pastor Payne’s final sermon was preached) and from Acts 2 in the evening. In addition, a book was published, *A Year of Jubilee*, written by Mark Hudson on the church’s history. Copies are available through hesedandemet.com. Continue to pray for Pastor Josh Mills and Trinity Baptist Church as they look forward to what God will accomplish for his kingdom in the days to come!



TRINITY AT 50: (l-r) Henry van Zanden, Stephen Payne, Carolyn Payne, Hetty Payne, Joan Wellum, Jean Laing, Karen van Zanden.



BROTHERS: (l-r) Trinity elder Jonathan Wellum, professor and author Stephen Wellum and Toronto Baptist Seminary principal Kirk Wellum.



TEA PARTY: The ladies of SGCC hosted a Victorian Tea Party as a unique fellowship time for the ladies.

+ Sovereign Grace Community Church, Sarnia, ON

This summer we were able to undergo a big capital project with the repair of the decaying brick on the outside of our church building. We praise God for his financial provision for a beautiful repair to the building.

In September our ladies hosted a Victorian Tea Party. It was a step back in time at a heritage home with lovely handmade dresses, tea time treats and joyous fellowship. This was a special gathering for our ladies.

Currently SGCC is supporting a Ukrainian refugee couple. They arrived in August and are staying with Glenn & Sonja Tomlinson. They have already secured an apartment and plan to move out in December. We pray that we may have a kingdom impact on this couple!



REFURBISHED: Greenway Chapel at JSBC was recently updated and is ready to serve the church.

+ Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, ON

The Lord is good! After years of planning and renovation, construction in Greenway Chapel is finally complete. We rejoice that the Lord has undertaken to bring us this new, refurbished space, which will be used for prayer meetings, seminary classes, Sunday school and our evening services. It was put to good use in September for the inaugural Bauman Lectures.—*Daniel Morden*

+ Bath Road Baptist Church, Kingston, ON

BRBC has been blessed by the ministries of Tim Mitchell (pastoral intern) and Terry Gerow (interim pastor) as the church continues its search for a new senior pastor. Rejoice with us in the safe arrival of several new babies, strong ongoing attendance, and the Christian love and service evident within the congregation. Please pray for ongoing unity, for our pastoral search, and for a clear vision of how we can best serve the Lord in our community.

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.

DRY BONES REVIVED

Our need for heaven-sent revival. BY ROGER FELLOWS

Read Ezekiel 37:1–14.

Ezekiel was used to strange visions and object lessons. The book opens with a vision of the glory of the Lord. Later he was told to shave his beard and to divide the shavings into three. One third was to be burnt, one third cut with a sword and a third scattered. All this pictured God's judgement on Israel (chapter 5). Ezekiel's wife was to die, but he was forbidden to mourn for her (chapter 24). This prefigured the hardness of the Israelites' hearts, even when taken into captivity. There were others, too many to mention here. So perhaps he had ceased to be amazed. Nevertheless, this was an amazing vision.

Ezekiel was shown a valley full of dry bones. He was also given the significance of what he saw. The bones were the whole house of Israel (verse 11)—a picture of the spiritual state of the nation. There were a few exceptions, such as Daniel and Ezekiel himself, but overall they were devoid of spiritual life. Then an astonishing thing happens—through Ezekiel's prophesying, in two stages, the bones became a mighty army.

What was the lesson for Ezekiel, and for ourselves? There were three things in view. We will mention the first two briefly and focus on the third.

1. Restoration

We won't spend much time with this, but Israel would be restored (verses 12–14). They would never again be totally self-governing, but they would return under Cyrus, would rebuild the temple and would have a large measure of independence as long as they didn't rebel.

2. Conversion

The bones are a representation of our natural state—dead in trespasses and sins. Through the Word of God we can be brought to life, experiencing a spiritual resurrection. That is what happens every time someone is converted.

3. Revival

There are some places in the world where God is powerfully at work growing his kingdom, but not generally in the West.

Any sober-minded Christian will admit that overall the church is in a poor state. It is not too much to say that the church is dead. Of course there are exceptions, as there were in Ezekiel's day. A few do have life and zeal, but mainly the church is dead and dry. There are big churches with lots of "decisions" and plenty of noise, but they are often no more than the rattling of dry bones.

We need revival. It is great to read of times of revival, such as in the eighteenth century under the preaching of George Whitefield and others. Major revivals also occurred in the early and mid-nineteenth century, and on a lesser scale on many other occasions. We should long and pray to see such things in our own day.

Is there anything we can do to bring it about? Despite the claims of some that certain actions will bring about revival, we need to recognize that *revival is a sovereign work of God*. That being said, there are certain features that are usually present when revival occurs and which, it seems, are honoured by God. Here are some:

(a) Humility

We see this in Ezekiel. See verse 11. After declaring that the bones are the nation of Israel, he notes what Israel was saying: "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost." The recognition of their sinful state gave hope that God would work. To bring revival, we don't go about telling people how to do it—there needs to be humility, a recognition of our poor condition. As long as we justify ourselves or make excuses, revival will not come. See Isaiah 57:15:

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Pride always hinders revival.

(b) A high regard for God's Word

What are often called revivals today are more music than anything else. In times of true revival, the preaching of the Word was invariably prominent. We need to pray that God would raise up godly, powerful

preachers. We must pray for those preachers and open our hearts to the messages preached. Preaching will not guarantee revival, but neglect of it will surely be a hindrance.

(c) Prayer

We must recognize that God's power alone can bring revival. Most revivals appear to come in response to prayer.

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

It is God who creates that hunger. Matthew Henry says: "When God intends great blessing for his people, the first thing he does is to set them a-praying." Before the Lord pours on his people the Spirit of God, he pours on them a spirit of suppli-

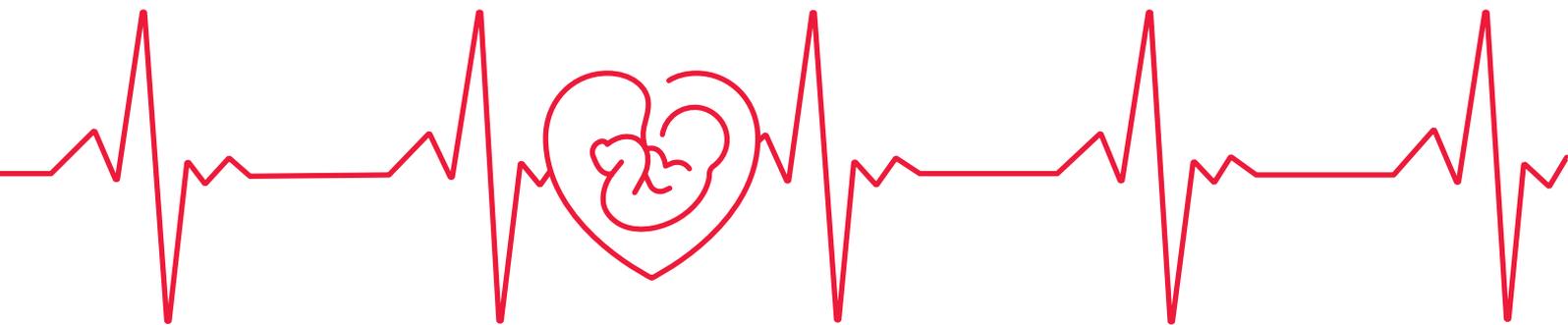
Before the Lord pours on his people the Spirit of God, he pours on them a spirit of supplication.

cation. When God has visited his people in unusual ways, the house of prayer has been filled.

In 1857, the Dutch Church in New York was experiencing a dwindling congregation. They hired a layman, Jeremiah Lanphier to engage in visitation. He did that, but he also arranged for a prayer meeting one Wednesday at noon. The first week 6 attended, the next week 20, then 40 and it continued to grow. He rented a larger building and they met daily. Numbers eventually grew to 10,000, with numerous prayer meetings throughout the city. It is generally recognized that this was the beginning of the great revival that stretched from 1858–1860, reaching many countries throughout the world.

May God stir us up to pray. May he be pleased to revive his people, to bring to life the dry bones that are all around us. **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.



BUILDING A LIFE-AFFIRMING CHURCH CULTURE

A CHALLENGE TO PURSUE A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF EVERY HUMAN LIFE BY SHARON JAMES

June 24, 2022, was a momentous day for which we should give thanks to God—wherever we live.

The biblical conviction that every human life has dignity (because all are created in the image of God) lies at the foundation of the life-affirming medical ethic which has shaped Western culture for 2,000 years.

That biblical ethic was attacked head-on when, in 1973, the US Supreme Court claimed that the US constitution provided a right to abortion. Their decision in the case of *Roe v Wade* ruled that human lives located in the womb were *not* worthy of the protection that other human lives are entitled to.

After nearly fifty years, that ruling has been overturned. The Supreme Court has now, rightly, recognized that the US

Constitution does *not* provide a right to abortion. Decisions about abortion law were handed back to state lawmakers.

Ever since 1973, those involved in the pro-life movement in the US (and in many other nations), have been educating, campaigning, caring for women with crisis pregnancies, offering post-abortion counselling and more. Their work has been driven by the conviction that the sanctity of human life does not rest on capacity or independence, which may be extinguished by sickness or age. It rests on the truth that all human life is made in the image of God. And it has been motivated by the desire to care for mothers—both lives matter!

In the US, pro-life pregnancy counselling centres serve 1.85 million people, and provide almost \$267 million in free services (including 486,000 free ultrasounds, 1.3 million packs of diapers and 2 million

baby outfits) each year. They receive little to no government funding, whereas Planned Parenthood (a leading abortion provider) receives \$618.1 million per year.

All those involved in such pro-life activity had cause to praise God on June 24. It unleashed a storm of political protest, as well as media vilification and violent attacks against pro-life centres across the US. But far from being intimidated, many in the US and beyond resolved to do *more* to provide care for mothers and their children, *more* to inform and motivate a younger generation about the need to protect unborn human life and *more* to argue the case that every person, born or unborn, should enjoy equal protection in law.

As we reflect on this historic moment, it presents an opportunity to consider how we can increasingly build a life-affirming culture in our own families and churches.

1. Praise God, the giver of life, and preach the biblical responsibility to protect life

God has given us a divinely inspired praise manual, and as we sing Psalm 139, we acknowledge that he is the giver of life. “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14).

Genesis 1:27 explains that human beings are distinct from the rest of creation as we bear the image of God. God’s moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments is a perfect expression of his moral character. The Sixth Commandment is “You shall not murder.” As J.R. Ling writes,

Protection of human life is a recurring theme in Scripture. Uniquely in the created order it is only the lives of human beings that enjoy this special protection. The Sixth Commandment, “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13), stands out as a great beacon to protect all innocent human life. ‘Innocent’ here does not mean those ‘without sin’, but those ‘without harm’. Killing is permitted [in the Bible] in the cases of capital punishment, just wars and in self-defence, but killing of the innocent is strictly forbidden (*When Does Human Life Begin?*).

Supremely, Christians affirm the dignity of every human life because God himself, in Christ, became flesh. Christ was incarnate from the moment of conception. If Jesus Christ took on human life as a single cell, our life also begins at conception. God, the giver of life, demands that human life should be protected from conception to natural death.

Sadly, many church leaders are hesitant to preach on beginning-of-life issues. Some fear upsetting those who have undergone abortions; some see it as just a “woman’s issue”; others are uneasy that they are not fully informed on what is a complex debate.

But it’s not difficult to understand that human life begins when the mother’s egg is fertilized by the father’s sperm. Human life should be afforded protection from conception onward. There are many great resources which can be used, including stunning films depicting the wonder of fetal development. We should all be equipped to answer the misinformation put out by those who claim that abortion is a “human right.”

2. Care for mothers

Abortion harms baby *and* mother, and we are called to love our neighbours. This may involve offering care to mothers with crisis pregnancies.

Abortion is usually regarded as a woman’s choice, but one study indicated that 73.8% of women who had abortions felt pressured to do so, 58.3% said they had their abortion to make someone else happy, and nearly 30% said they feared losing their partner if they did not abort their child [G. Veith, *Post Christian* (Crossway 2020)]. Is your church indicating in some way where women with a crisis pregnancy can access help?

When pastors avoid speaking out on abortion for fear of offending women who have had abortions, it can compound the tragedy for those women who carry a hidden burden of guilt and shame, sometimes for decades. Is there also clearly signposted access to confidential counselling where those who have had abortions can be offered the forgiveness, hope and healing that is found in Christ?

3. See children as a blessing

Many today assume pregnancy is something to avoid, rather like a sexually transmitted disease. Bearing children is seen as a barrier to equal rights for women. Babies become “the enemy” and some claim it’s a “human right” to kill them before they are born. Some radical environmentalists go so far as to claim that humans are a “plague” on mother earth, and we should stop having children altogether.

But children are a blessing. God made man and woman “in his image” with the wondrous capacity to create new life. As they become “one flesh” in the marital union, they, in turn, may create a child in *their* own image (Genesis 5:1–3). The conception of each child is a gift from God (Psalm 127; 128:3ff). He gives children as a heritage for their parents for succeeding generations (Psalm 127:3).

With the coming of Christ, we learn that human marriage is a temporary signpost to the eternal reality of the love of Christ for the church (Ephesians 5:31–32). As Christian believers, we are called to make disciples (Matthew 28:18–20), and whether married



Psalm 139: A Psalm of David

You, O LORD, have searched and known me,
You know when I sit or rise;
Every thought and deed lies open
To your all-perceiving eyes.
You have laid your hand upon me,
Guarded me before, behind;
Knowledge so sublime, so
towering,
Far transcends an earthly mind.

Where could I elude your Spirit,
Ever present everywhere?
In the heavens, or deep in Hades?
You are with me even there!
Eastward, westward, still you guide
me,
From your grip I cannot stray;
Nor will darkness hide me from you:
Night to you is clear as day.

For you made my inmost being,
Wove me in my mother’s womb,
God all-wise, who ordered for me
All my days until the tomb.
How profound, how vast, how
precious
All the workings of your will
Countless marvels! Endless mercies!
When I wake, I’m with you still.

God all-holy, judge the wicked,
Break their blasphemous design!
How can I not hate such evil?
LORD, your enemies are mine.
Search my heart, O God, and know
me,
Test my anxious thoughts, I pray;
Take away my sins and lead me
Into everlasting day.

PRAISE 139 © David. G. Preston
8 7 8 7 D, Blaenwern (i.e., the tune
often used for “Love Divine, All Loves
Excelling”)

or not, whether parents or not, we are to bear and nurture spiritual children. Those who are single (or married people unable to bear biological children) may be afforded *greater* capacity for such spiritual fruitfulness (1 Corinthians 7:32–35). But the New Testament *also* teaches us that parents are to bring their children up to know and honour the Lord (Ephesians 6:1–4; 1 Timothy 5:4; Titus 2:4).

So, we affirm the blessing of having children and the importance of parenthood as a calling, while also recognizing that it is not the *only* blessing. There is a shift in emphasis in the New Covenant, but the creation mandate (Genesis 1:28) is still to be fulfilled. Men and women have been made in the image of God and given stewardship of creation. Faithful family life is one means of moving creation toward its appointed end.

Understanding that life is a gift from God guards against excessive individualism, and the tendency to treat children as possessions or property. Many Christians uncritically assimilate the current “contraceptive mentality” which holds that we (not the Lord) are in control of when we have a child. It’s assumed couples can delay having children and then have a child exactly when they want. Some imbibe the thinking that we have a “right to reproduce,” and a right to access artificial reproductive technologies (ARTS) when desired. There is often little awareness of the threat to unborn human life of some contraceptive methods and most ARTS. Some church leaders are reluctant to provide teaching on these matters. But those who realize at a later stage that they have, albeit unwittingly, engaged in procedures that led to the loss of human life, may then feel betrayed and wish they had been better informed.

Any contraceptive method which can act as abortifacients should be avoided (which includes most, if not all, types of hormonal contraception). Many Christians in good conscience believe that other means of contraception (eg. barrier methods) may be used at some seasons to space out their family size. Others disagree, believing that every act of conjugal union should be open to God’s gift of life. Such believers may use natural family planning (NFP), which *never* *conceals* an act of marital union. Modern NFP methods (fertility awareness) are very different from what used to be known as the rhythm method. When used carefully they can be effective in spacing out family size.

The same fertility awareness methods are also helpful in dealing with infertility and they are “life-friendly” in contrast to in vitro fertilization (IVF), which involves

Christ’s incarnation, death and resurrection, forever confirmed the dignity, value and worth of the human condition.

the production of, and then the destruction of, “spare” embryos.

Procreative stewardship “requires that children should be received as gifts from God that are entrusted into the care of parents” (B. Waters) either by procreation or adoption. Today, the medicalization of procreation means that conception, gestation, birth and parenting can be separated. This divides what God designed to go together. The global trade in gametes (sperm, eggs, embryos), as well as the availability of surrogacy, exploits many, and treats babies like products to be bought and sold. People are not property.

But there is dignity afforded to adoption. Throughout the Bible, we see God’s heart for orphans, as well as examples of adoption. Throughout church history, Christians have been at the forefront of those willing to open hearts and homes to needy children. When considering adoption, it should be the needs and interest of the child that are paramount.

In our fallen world families break, but we should not deliberately create situations where children are deprived of a father or a mother. All too often, decisions related to artificial reproductive technologies are all about what are assumed to be adult rights. They minimize the child’s need to know and be cared for by their own parents.

4. Pray about the need to defend life

This is a spiritual battle. We look to God for help. As we pray, individually, in families and as local churches, we lament for those lives lost to abortion. In 2017, it was reckoned that there had been one billion babies killed by abortion worldwide in the past 100 years. When we reflect that every human life from conception is priceless in worth, because made in the image of God, we tremble at the magnitude of that number.

We grieve for those mothers (and fathers and other family members) who have been hurt. We pray for those considering abortion. We pray for those involved in performing abortions (and we can be encouraged by testimonies of those who have seen the horror of what they were doing). We intercede for those involved in the health services who may be put under pressure to engage in abortions, even against their own conscience. We ask God to help lawmakers to do justice and protect

the vulnerable. We pray for God to bring repentance.

As we pray, we may be moved to act.

- Do we know a mother who needs practical help?
- Is there a local pro-life group we could support? If not, pray about the possibility of initiating one.
- Is there a life-affirming pregnancy advice/support centre in our area? If not, pray about whether one could be established.
- Is there access to abortion recovery counselling in our area? Is there a way of making this more widely known to those who may need it? If not, pray about how this could be facilitated.
- Are we well informed about policy decisions being made where we live? Do we use our rights as citizens to engage in the democratic process to protect life? Are we aware that a Western global elite has been pushing a radical pro-abortion agenda onto many nations?

5. Ensure all are treated with dignity

God is the giver of life. As followers of Christ, we know we are indeed “our brother’s keeper,” called to care for and defend fellow human beings. As well as the unborn, that includes those who are sick, elderly, frail and have special needs. In Canada, we are to resist efforts to promote assisted suicide or euthanasia and actively oppose the expansion of this law (legalized in 2016, expanded in 2022). See *Barnabas* (Summer 2021) for more on this issue.

Respect for every human life did not arise from the other world religions, or from secularism. It arose from the biblical conviction that God created man and woman in his own image, and that Christ’s incarnation, death and resurrection, forever confirmed the *dignity, value and worth* of the human condition.

Today the *uniqueness and dignity of human life* is often either openly denied or subtly undermined. We are to bear witness to that foundational and wonderful biblical truth, and as God enables, live it out in practice. **B**

➤ Sharon James works for The Christian Institute (www.christian.org.uk) in the UK. She has written several books including *God’s Design for Women in an Age of Gender Confusion* (EP, 2019), *Gender Ideology: What Do Christians Need To Know?* (CFP, 2019), *How Christianity Transformed the World* (CFP, 2021), and *The Lies We Are Told, The Truth We Must Hold* (CFP, 2022). See www.sharonjames.org.

SORROWFUL YET REJOICING

SUSANNAH SPURGEON'S BOOK AND WRITING MINISTRY BY CARLY BUCHWALD

“Sorrowful yet rejoicing” is a worthy description of the life of Susannah (Susie) Spurgeon who suffered great physical pain due to illness, along with great emotional pain due to the loss of her “greatest treasure,” her husband Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892). Although she was operated on by the famous gynecologist James Young Simpson in 1869, Susie was an invalid for much of her life. While she is often simply remembered for being *the wife of the “Prince of Preachers,”* she was much more than that— Susie changed the lives of countless pastors and their congregations through the ministry of her Book Fund.

Susie’s Book Fund

Susie writes of the beginnings of the Book Fund in her book, *Ten Years of My Life*. It was after Charles had completed his first volume of *Lectures to My Students* that Susie voiced her desire to place it in the hands of every minister in England. Her husband responded, “Then why not do so: how much will you give?” Taken aback by his challenge, Susie responded with conviction and obedience. She found in a drawer upstairs the exact amount of money to pay for 100 copies. Though she did not yet know it, this was how the Book Fund was inaugurated.

Susie’s book ministry came from the conviction that ministers of the Word needed to be physically and spiritually fed in order to feed their congregations. Spending countless hours in her husband’s well-stocked study, Susie mourned over the financial state of many Baptist ministers at the time. Often, they could barely afford to clothe their children, let alone fill their bookshelves. Countless applications were received that revealed the financial burdens these ministers were carrying. Many were earning sixty to eighty pounds a year while caring for multiple children and paying the bills for wives who were ill. Even receiving one book was an invaluable gift for these poor men, hungry to be fed by biblical literature. As one of them wrote to her:

Through the long illness of my dear wife...I have been unable to add a single book to my very small stock for the last two years; therefore any present of a book is most thankfully accepted.... May the Lord raise up many other friends, so that you may be able to help poor ministers yet more and more.

After accepting an application, a parcel would be sent including “seven or eight books, several single sermons and often bundles of stationery that had been donated to her by a generous benefactor. The poorest pastors also received copies of *The Sword and the Trowel*,” writes Ray Rhodes. Susie was a meticulous bookkeeper, tracking every book distributed and every donation received. Her



Susannah (Susie) Spurgeon (1832–1903)

records reveal how 9,941 volumes were distributed in 1886 alone! Her reports on the Book Fund in her husband’s magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*, were not only informative but were beautifully written and saturated with Scripture and rich theology.

Susie spent countless hours answering letters and sending parcels, a taxing process for anyone, let alone a woman suffering a painful illness. In one month, February 1883, she received 657 letters! There were times when her husband had to “place an urgent veto upon the continuance of the labor *at its present rate*,” she writes. Though it was a demanding ministry, Susie could confidently say, “The Book Fund is the joy of my life, and ever since the Lord gave the sweet service into my weak and unworthy hands He has led me by green pastures and beside still waters.” Charles too saw the blessing the Book Fund was to his suffering wife, for it,

supplied my dear suffering companion with a happy work which has opened channels of consolation for her, imparted great interest to the otherwise monotonous life of an invalid. She has entered into this most gracious work with great zest, and continued in it with unflagging perseverance, and, while it has frequently cost her exertion beyond her strength, it has also relieved her weary hours and helped her to forget a portion of her pains. Such an alleviation of her affliction is the most suitable and effective that could have been devised by the wisest affection; for it destroys the horrible suspicion of being useless, which, to a heart full of zeal, is as a sword in the bones.

Little did Charles know that the Book Fund would play a crucial role in carrying Susie through eleven years of a different kind of pain and suffering when God took home “the precious treasure so long lent to her”—Charles himself.

Susie’s books

On January 31, 1892, Charles Spurgeon entered glory to be with Christ his Saviour. This was the beginning of a new kind of pain

and suffering for Susie to face. Sorrowful yet rejoicing, Susie remembered that “the comforting power of the assurance, that even though my precious husband had bidden adieu to the best that earth could give, his being ‘with Christ’ was *far better*.” This allowed her to temporarily temper her sorrows. She found comfort in sharing her grief with her readers who she knew were mourning with her. As Susie wrote to one:

You have strengthened and helped me wonderfully. My loss is your loss, so we could weep together. You loved my beloved, and we could rival one another in his praise. You will miss his dear face, his sweet voice, his gracious, genial presence, not so much as I do, but as truly; and here, too, we mourn together.

While Susie had spent much time separated from her husband due to his frequent travels, this began “the great separation.” She was to learn the life of a widow. “I found that to ‘do the next thing’ was earnestly to set to work at the Book Fund,” she wrote.

In her widowhood, Susie was able to write more than she had before Charles’ death, including a number of stand-alone books and numerous articles in *The Sword and the Trowel*. Her books included *A Cluster of Camphire*, *A Basket of Summer Fruit*, *A Carillion of Bells to Ring*, *Free Grace and Dying Love*, *Ten Years of My Life* and *Ten Years After!* Her inspiration came predominantly from nature. Like Charles, she was gifted with the ability to

Everything she witnessed around her reminded her of the goodness of her God.

look at a bird, a flower or the sea and relate it to the beautiful truths of Scripture. Everything she witnessed around her reminded her of the goodness of her God. Observing birds, for example, she felt that they “sang a ‘symphony of praise’ to God, and she was challenged to join with them in thanksgiving for His provision.”

For Susie, writing “maintain[ed] her equilibrium through sadness and suffering.” She never wrote of her sufferings to receive pity, but saw it as part of the ministry God had entrusted her with:

It seems fit that all should know how God comforted me in my affliction, and in His wondrous pity and compassion uplifted me, from the sorrow of my loss, into the joyful hope of eternal re-union in the land that knows no death.

Susie was so loved by her readers because she invited them into her sorrows, as if sharing a cup of tea with a dear friend by the fire, especially after the death of her husband. Her readers knew her deeply and felt deeply known by her in return. Her writings expressed to those who were experiencing suffering how she herself found comfort in God. In her devotional book *A Cluster of Camphire*, she writes:

I quite understand your feelings, I have fellowship with you in your fear and faintness of heart; but I bring afresh to you, today, the sweet and comforting assurance that your blessed Lord knows all your sorrows, sees all your sufferings, is watching over you with a Divine love and care which knows no cessation, and will, in His own good time, either relieve or release you.

One of her most valuable contributions was compiling, coediting and contributing to the massive four-volume *Autobiography* of her husband. Though she knew there was no one better fit for the

task, she did not feel prepared to embark on this strenuous endeavour. To write of her beloved husband seemed to pour salt into fresh wounds:

Many a time, I feel I must lay down my pen, and give it all up; for in reading and transcribing my husband’s letters, and living, as it were, over again those days of precious sweetness and sympathy, the inexpressible loss I have sustained is recalled.

By leaning heavily on the Lord and the prayers of her readers, she completed the publication of all four volumes of C.H. Spurgeon’s *Autobiography* in 1900. Through these volumes, her other writings and the ministry of her Book Fund, Susie preserved the history of her beloved husband and advanced the gospel message they both cherished so dearly.

Susie’s legacy

Though Susie is predominantly known as the wife of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, it can be said that *he* is so well known due to his wife’s advancement of his legacy. Susan Valerie Barker writes of her:

During the 28 years that Susannah Spurgeon was in charge of the Book Fund nearly 200,000 books were placed into the hands of over 25,000 ministers and many hundreds of thousands of sermons were sent throughout the world... As a result, Charles Haddon Spurgeon’s name became known, not just because he was a powerful preacher, but because his books and sermons were distributed widely in Britain, and, indeed, throughout the world by “Mrs. Spurgeon’s Book Fund.”

Throughout her life, Susie displayed faithful stewardship of all the Lord had given her: her talents, her finances and, most of all, her husband. “Her greatest legacy is her ministry to and love for her beloved husband and her advocacy of his writings and ministry,” writes Rhodes. In a letter to his mother, Charles wrote about his wife, “Susie is a blessed creature and does not attempt to keep me from the Lord’s work but on the contrary she is willing to deny herself for the Lord’s sake.” In her last moments on this side of glory, despite many years of affliction, she was able to muster the strength to declare, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15).

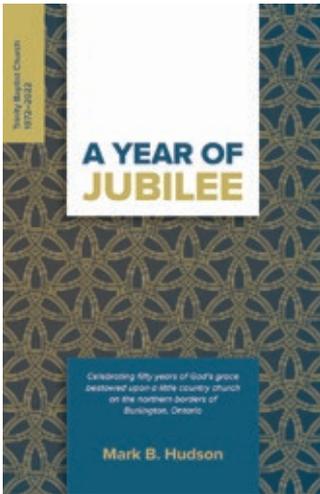
This faithful saint ought to be an encouragement and example to us. Through her faithful life as a servant of the King, Susie showed her readers, then and now, how to do all for the glory of God and how to suffer well by leaning on the Lord for comfort during serious affliction. Her life exhorts us to look to Jesus with the same assurance of hope, serving him faithfully until the day we will see his face and suffer no more. **B**

Suggested reading

- Ray Rhodes Jr., *Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah Spurgeon, Wife of Charles H. Spurgeon* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2018).
- Susannah Spurgeon, *Ten Years of My Life: In the Service of the Book Fund: A Grateful Record of My Experience of the Lord’s Ways, and Work, and Wages* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1886).
- Susannah Spurgeon, *Ten Years After!* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1895).

➤ Carly Buchwald is a wife, a seminary student and a native of Pennsylvania. She is passionate about writing for the glory of God and equipping women in biblical literacy. She and her husband Adam have been married for three years after meeting through cross-cultural missions. They are both pursuing their MDiv at Heritage College & Seminary in Cambridge, ON, and are members at Hespeler Baptist Church.

Reviews OF NEW & RECENT books



A YEAR OF JUBILEE

Celebrating fifty years of God's grace bestowed upon a little country church on the northern borders of Burlington, Ontario (Trinity Baptist Church)

BY MARK B. HUDSON

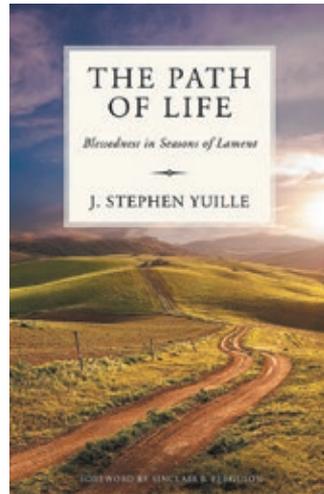
House to House, H & E (2022); 232 pgs
ISBN 978-1774840740

As Trinity Baptist Church in Burlington, Ont., approached its fiftieth anniversary in October 2022, a book was being written by former elder Mark Hudson to commemorate that event—and *A Year of Jubilee* is the fruit of those efforts!

From its founding in 1972 by Pastor Bill Payne and a small group of families, the faithful pastoral ministry of Carl Muller and now Josh Mills, Trinity has flourished into a vibrant gospel work, focused on preaching the whole counsel of God.

Hudson traces the life of the church through the eyes of a leader who helped shape the direction and focus of the church. He provides detailed descriptions of ministries, events and behind-the-scenes discussions, showing how things came about. As with any church, there have been highs and lows, challenges and sorrows, but as Hudson attests, the Lord has worked by his grace in many lives through the faithful ministry of the Word at Trinity.

Appendices further reveal some of the Trinity's ministry focus over the years. An encouraging read! —**JANICE VAN ECK**



THE PATH OF LIFE

Blessedness in Seasons of Lament

BY J. STEPHEN YUILLE

Reformation Heritage Books (2019);

200 pgs

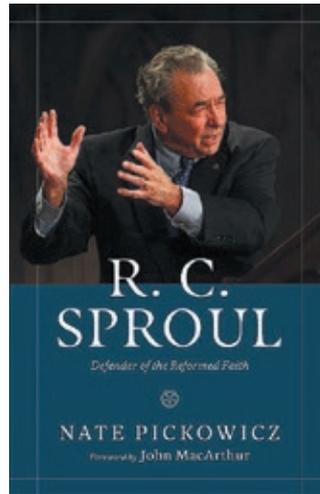
ISBN 978-1601786890

The Path of Life takes the reader through Psalm 119, the longest of the 150 psalms in the Old Testament psalter. This psalm consists of 22 stanzas—one stanza for each letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 119 is structured in the form of an acrostic poem and its dominant theme is the Word of the Lord. At least eight different Hebrew words are used to describe the nature and character of this divine gift to the people of God.

Dr. Stephen Yuille has given us a readable tool to help us work our way through this challenging and encouraging psalm, written in the context of personal suffering, disappointment and opposition experienced firsthand by the author (presumably David).

Yuille writes both as a professor and as a pastor. As a professor, he brings a wealth of biblical knowledge, along with wisdom from the Puritans, Spurgeon, Piper, etc. As a pastor, Yuille brings pastoral experience and practical insight.

The Path of Life would be a wonderful devotional or Sunday School study. It is filled with much food for the soul and the heart! —**DON THEOBALD**



R.C. SPROUL

Defender of the Reformed Faith

BY NATE PICKOWICZ

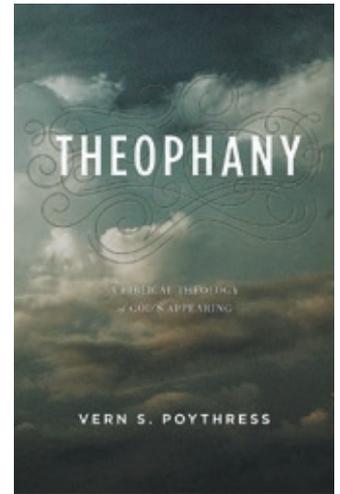
H & E Publishing (2022); 160 pgs

ISBN 978-1774840382

Robert Charles (R.C.) Sproul was born in 1939. He was born again in 1957. He went to be with his Lord and Saviour in 2017. Perhaps few Christians in the last fifty years have been more used by God than R.C. Sproul. And so, this book is of great spiritual profit for anyone who desires to learn more about this wonderful man of God.

Nate Pickowicz has written a brief, very readable and interesting biography. It focuses primarily on Sproul's doctrinal battles, but is interspersed with salient events in Sproul's personal life—his family background, conversion, courtship and marriage to his wife, Vesta, his love of sports and his sense of humour.

This biography is built around key theological battles where Sproul defended the evangelical, Reformed faith from attacks by both foes and friends. These battles were not about secondary issues but the core truths of the gospel. With a spirit of love and grace, Sproul contended for an inerrant Bible, the holiness and sovereignty of God and salvation by faith alone, in Christ alone, for God's glory alone. This is an excellent introduction to Sproul's life and ministry. —**DON THEOBALD**



THEOPHANY

A Biblical Theology of God's Appearing

BY VERN S. POYTHRESS

P&R (2018); 464 pgs

ISBN 978-1433554377

Theophany is a Greek word that means *God appears*. A *theophany* is an appearance of God, who in his essence is pure spirit and therefore invisible to the human eye.

Theophany is a thorough recording and analysis of the numerous and varied appearances of God throughout the Bible. Vern Poythress's study is both informative and edifying. We see this especially in his study in the Old Testament, which prepares its readers for the *ultimate theophany* in the incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. God used various forms such as the thunderstorm, fire, a cloud, etc. to reveal himself in the Old Testament. He also sometimes appears as an "Angel of the Lord" or as a man. At other times, God is referred to anthropomorphically as having a face, a finger, a hand or breath.

Theophany also deals with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Poythress covers *theophany* in the Gospels, Acts and Revelation. I highly recommend this book—it is well laid out and frankly easy to read and understand. Strengthen your faith and thrill your soul by reading *Theophany*! —**DON THEOBALD**

WHERE DO WE FIND OUR IDENTITY?



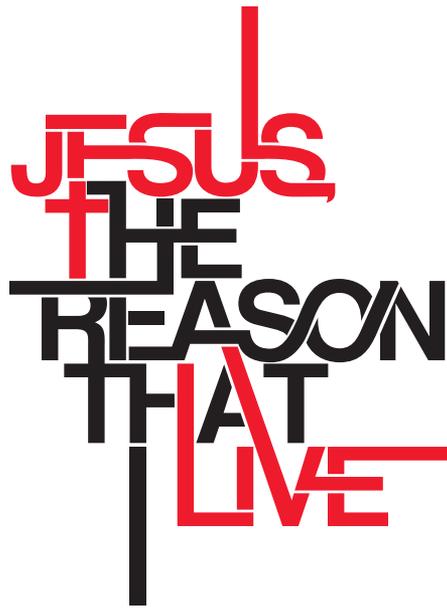
BY DANIELLE GIGNAC >>

“Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15 NIV). When Jesus asked this question, did it give his disciples pause? After repeating what others said about who Jesus was, he asked them to consider if their view differed from that of the crowds. They had walked closely with him and known him far more intimately than anyone else. If anyone on earth knew who he was, it would be them. Thankfully, Peter’s response was different from the crowd’s reaction. He *recognized* Jesus for who he really was: God’s Messiah.

How do we form our opinions of others today? Do we adopt the views we hear others express, or do we try to evaluate for ourselves? There is a strong tendency in our culture to throw labels on people and put them in boxes. While it can be useful to categorize and group for clarity—we all likely feel we belong more to one group than another—more often than not, it merely provides a blanket identity which does not represent the actual individual. This over-simplification caricatures people who have deeply complex personalities. Wouldn’t it be nice if it were as simple as being *Mr. Good* or *Little Miss Hug* (for those who recognize the classic children’s books), with clearly defined and consistent characteristics?

To complicate things further, societal values change over time. The contributions and symbolism of people from the past are reinterpreted and re-evaluated through a contemporary lens. Simply look at all the controversy around public statues, schools and streets named after prominent historical figures. These people once celebrated are now condemned. Our society has a long history of building people up and then tearing them down. The perspective shifts and someone who was once a hero is now a villain. Yet that person didn’t change during that time. So which judgement is right?

While re-evaluation can be useful at times, there is too often a very narrow perspective given to understanding historical roles. We need to look at the whole person and the context in which they were living and working. Current issues bring



different aspects to light, and one black spot on their record according to today’s values tarnishes their whole contribution. The good they may have accomplished is overshadowed by the bad. There is so much intolerance for mistakes or circumstantial difficulties, despite all the talk of tolerance! It would be better not to be put on a pedestal in the first place, since it’s almost inevitable that the role someone plays will be understood in a different light one day. And who wants the interpretations of others, let alone the real mistakes of their past, to be their sword of Damocles,

Jesus knows us far more intimately than any other person ever could, and his approval is the one we should be seeking.

particularly when our culture calls good bad and bad good. The best intentions can be twisted into the worst crimes.

Enter social media, and the question, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” gets really messy. These platforms enable people to present carefully crafted images of themselves in an attempt to get everyone else to say they are who they want to be seen as. But what does that accomplish? All of the time spent on fussing with photo filters and angles could be spent on prayer or service, and real cultivation of good

character could occur. The question that should matter to us infinitely more is, “Who does Jesus say that I am?” He knows us far more intimately than any other person ever could, and his approval is the one we should be seeking.

Immediately after Peter confessed Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus warned his disciples not to tell this to anyone. Sometimes discretion is necessary. Either people would misuse the truth or they would misunderstand it. Jesus had wisdom from the Father to know when the right time for him to be revealed was. We also ought to seek wisdom in knowing what and when to speak, as well as how to present ourselves to the world in the context we are in.

While it would be nice to be *Mr. Perfect*, we may as well recognize that in this world it’s simply not possible for us or others. Even the most virtuous must deal with temptations and difficult circumstances, and one’s actions and decisions may be misunderstood. Instead of perpetuating gossip, Christians can choose to reserve judgement and seek understanding. Just as we would want to be seen through a lens of grace, we should offer that to others. If, instead of holding others to an unreasonable level of accountability, we choose to really try to see them in a more holistic way and to love them as children of God, we may be able to build the relationships that lead to knowing Christ.

We must also be able to answer Jesus’ question for ourselves. Do we *know* him as our Saviour? Do we share this good news, witnessing the truth in love? The world may slander God in its rebellion and sinfulness, but we know the world doesn’t have the final word. Jesus was crucified because of who the people of his time believed him to be, but he rose to life because of who he actually is: the immortal and all-powerful God. “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both body and soul in hell” (Matthew 10:28). It is the Lord’s opinion of us that counts, and it is our relationship with him that determines our fate. Though the world may condemn the righteous, Jesus saves! **B**

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

DAVID (PART 3): AN ARTIST



BY JEREMY JOHNSTON >> God is the supreme artist. He paints skies and seas, he forms forests and fields, and he fashions flora and fauna to fill the earth with beauty. The psalmist David marvels at the work of God’s “fingers,” declaring that “the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Psalm 8:3; 19:1). He stands in awe of God’s creativity as he “fearfully and wonderfully” forms us and skillfully writes the stories of our lives (Psalm 139:14). David also sees divine creativity as God writes the story of history (Psalm 22:28) from Creation to Redemption to the New Heaven and New Earth. Our God is a creator and a maker; he is the one who makes “all things new” (Revelations 21:5).

Both in the world and in the Word, God uses artistic means to speak into the hearts and minds of his people. God’s creativity is clearly seen in Creation, but his creativity is also powerfully displayed in his Word. From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures are bursting with artfully arranged poetry and evocative stories. The Word is more than a prosaic “how-to” manual for the Christian life; it is a work of beautiful truths conveyed to us in beautiful and artistic ways. We often fail to appreciate the creativity of God or the human authors God inspired, missing the eloquence and beauty of the written word and how that beauty impacts us. Yet a careful student of the Word will see that almost half the Bible is narrative (43%), a third is poetry (33%), and only a quarter (24%) is propositional discourse (eg. sermons, speeches, and epistolary prose). Clearly God made us to receive his truth in artistic ways as well as in abstract and propositional ways.

When David committed his grievous sin with Bathsheba, God confronted him with a story rather than a direct condemnation (2 Samuel 12). God used the prophet Nathan to weave a tale that illustrates the gravity of David’s selfish and sinful ways. Although David believed this story to be true, it is important to note that God used narrative to speak into David’s heart. When Nathan said, “You are the man,” David’s sense of guilt and shame were not only powerfully awakened but also fully realized via his poetic imagination.

During Jesus’ earthly ministry, he also used artistic ways to communicate truth to his listeners. For example, when Jesus answered a question about who is our “neighbour” (Luke 10:30–34), instead of providing a propositional definition, he told a story about a man who was aided by a good Samaritan. With this parable, Jesus invited listeners to experience through the art of storytelling what it means to really love our neighbour.

Art is neither a substitute for the Holy Spirit nor an alternative to plain and simple preaching of Christ and his gospel message. The Holy Spirit, however, uses artful means to teach and impact us, to help us understand truth with our hearts and hands, as well as our heads. We are designed to respond to creativity—to delight in beauty and to be affronted by ugliness—because we are made in the image of God, the Supreme Artist who also delights in beauty. May he awaken us to himself and his truth through the beauty of Creation and the beauty of his Word. **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.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD



BY RACHEL THIBAUT >> Sheep have a bad rap! By most people, they are considered to be unintelligent animals. When we hear “all we like sheep have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6), it portrays animals heading in every direction, being difficult to lead. But did you know?

- Sheep are smart—they can recognize up to 50 sheep faces and then, remember those faces for two years. They also recognize human faces.
- Sheep have an excellent sense of smell.
- Sheep are emotionally complex, highly social and incredibly gentle animals.
- Ewes (female sheep) recognize their lambs simply by their bleating.
- Contrary to popular beliefs, sheep are intelligent. They have a similar IQ level to cattle. They can learn their own names and even learn to do tricks.



Here are some other interesting facts about sheep:

- Sheep have rectangular pupils, which allows for excellent peripheral vision.
- They do not have top front teeth.
- There are more than 1,000 breeds of sheep.
- The average length an ewe is pregnant ranges from 144 to 159 days.
- Sheep sleep on average 4 hours a day, alternating between grazing and resting.

Followers of Jesus are pictured as sheep, and he is our Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14). But, how extraordinary, Jesus is also described as “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). He is described as both Lamb *and* Shepherd! Revelation 7:17 says, “For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

The invitation is for all to come to Jesus, who is both sacrificial Lamb and Shepherd: “For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). **B**

THE CHALLENGE

Can you name the shepherds (and 1 shepherdess) listed in the Bible?

> Rachel (“little ewe”) 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.

Answer: Abel, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Laban, Rachel, Jacob’s twelve sons, Moses, David, Meshah, Doeg, Amos, the shepherds who visited Jesus in Bethlehem.

WITNESSING TO THE WOKE (PART 3)



BY OWEN PIKKERT >> In most Christian bookstores, you will find a section on apologetics. Many of the books in this section are essentially manuals for winning people to the faith. Typical strategies include arguments from logic and from science, ways of uncovering fallacies in one's opponents and Bible verses for every scenario. Yet while such books are often heavy on *what* to say, they are often light on *how* to say it. In this article I will commit the opposite error, by being heavy on how to say it without identifying what to say. I commit this error because I am confident of two things: first, that many Christians display a rather unChristian attitude toward people with "woke" beliefs; and second, that the Holy Spirit can easily deliver the right words at the right time.

1. The wrong attitude toward the woke

If I had to pick one word to describe the predominant attitude of traditional Christians toward the woke, it would be *scoffing*. And nowhere is this attitude more visible than in the scoffing heaped on our rather woke Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. We might even say that scoffing Trudeau's wokeness has become a national pastime. This is easily confirmed by endless comments beneath news articles, slogans atop pickup trucks and complaints at barbecues.

Is such scoffing Christian? I think it is not. Many Christians know the first verse of the Psalms: "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers" (Psalm 1:1 ESV). Yet while the wicked's counsel and the sinner's way are widely condemned, the scoffer's seat is not. In fact, some Christians positively praise the scoffer's seat as a place for the dutiful Christian to occupy from time to time. Scoffing, in their view, is a way of warning good people about bad people, and of putting bad people in their place. Scoffing at God's commands is wrong, they say, but scoffing at God's enemies is right. After all, doesn't the psalmist go on to contrast scoffers with those who delight in the law of the Lord? This might suggest that if you delight in the law of the Lord, then you cannot be the bad kind of scoffer. Only those who scoff at God's law are bad.

But if we are to invoke biblical law, then let us invoke the most famous law of all: "As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them" (Luke 6:31 ESV). It is a simple fact that nobody likes to be scoffed, usually not in private and certainly not in public. And if you think there is nothing about you to scoff, then you are certainly mistaken. Because life is so short, vast areas of your life will remain undeveloped, and thus easily mocked. Suppose a professor receives a note from his mechanic. Upon noticing numerous typos, the professor thinks, "What a fool! A grown man who can't even spell!" But meanwhile his mechanic thinks, "What a fool! A grown man who can't even change his oil!" Their mutual scoffing suggests a mutual ignorance of the following fact: a life of books makes spelling easy and oil changes hard, and a life of cars makes oil changes easy and spelling hard. Failure to appreciate this fact suggests a lack of self-awareness at best, and pride at worst.

2. A better attitude toward the woke

When dealing with the woke, then, a scoffing attitude is not simply bad strategy. It is bad religion. Instead, we ought to invoke an attitude that is unreservedly Christian. Perhaps we might take our cue from Jesus: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for

them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36 ESV). Notice that Jesus' verdict on the crowds is quite negative. At the same time, his attitude is one of deep compassion. Jesus saw their shortcomings with greater clarity than anyone, but instead of an eye-roll he offers them his heart.

Harassed and helpless crowds are still with us. Consider, for instance, the findings of the National College Health Assessment in 2019, which analyzed the physical and mental health of over 55,000 respondents at 58 Canadian post-secondary institutions. It makes for grim reading. At some time within the past 12 months, 70% of students reported feeling "very lonely"; 69% reported feeling "overwhelming anxiety"; 52% reported feeling "so depressed that it was difficult to function"; and fully 16% "seriously considered suicide." If you want to picture the average Canadian university student, don't picture a smiling face on social media. Picture a lonely, anxious, and depressed individual, and you are much closer to the truth.

Now there are all sorts of ways to abuse these statistics. To be clear: they do not show that most Canadian students are woke, though certainly many are. They do not show that loneliness, anxiety and depression are solely caused by adopting woke ideas. They do not even show that such problems are necessarily caused by adopting woke ideas. Rather, I simply want to pose the following question: If you are a lonely, anxious and depressed university student, would adopting woke ideas help you with these problems?

For reasons of space, I will focus on a single example. The woke commonly believe that people are ultimately driven by a desire for power. They find this idea in Nietzsche (with later modifications from Foucault), who bluntly stated, "living is simply the will to power" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, sec. 259). For Nietzsche, you can tell whether you lust for power simply by checking your pulse. Now Nietzsche also thought most people are cowards, so they will disguise their lust for power with all sorts of passive-aggressive tricks. But beneath even the most innocent of actions, there lies a power-hungry heart. Of course, the average woke Canadian has never read Nietzsche. But if you start seeing all human relationships as essentially elaborate networks of power games, then this surely cannot help with, say, your feelings of loneliness. Your alleged insight into the motivations of friend and foe alike will produce more of the latter than the former.

I will not dwell on how this obsession with power may affect one's anxiety and depression. I will simply observe that there is nothing very calming nor uplifting about viewing the entirety of past and present as a long and generally fruitless struggle of persons oppressing other persons, fuelled by a lust for power that lies at the very centre of the human heart. Such cynicism, if left unchecked, corrodes one's entire outlook on life. Should a person possessed of such cynicism be an object of scoffing or of compassion? As a Christian, I believe the answer is clear. **B**

➤ Owen Pikkert is pursuing a Master of Divinity at the Canadian Baptist Theological Seminary in Alberta. He previously taught philosophy at the University of Toronto.

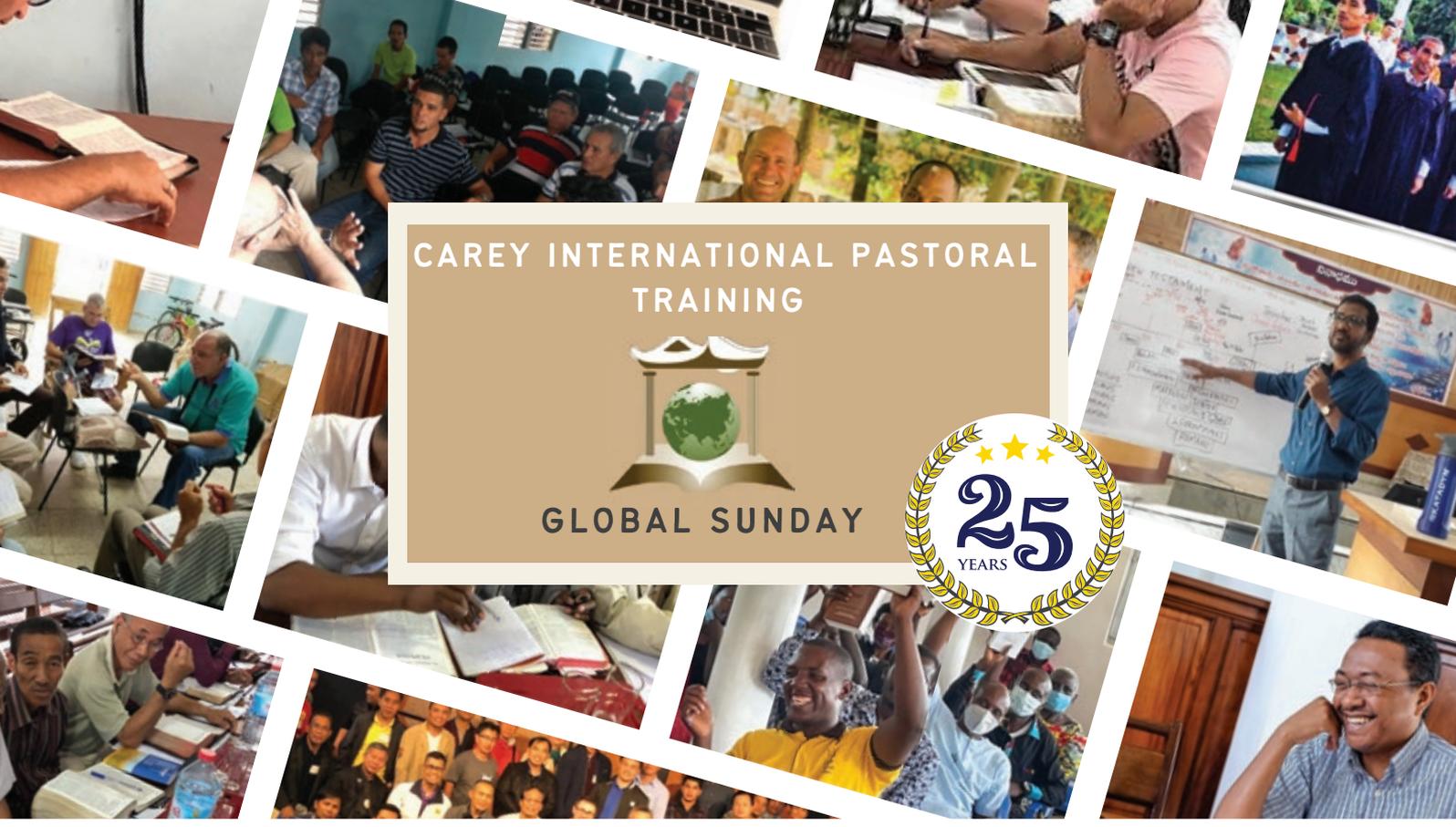


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