

critique

A Ransom Fellows

2013 Issue 5

The Square Halo Issue



What does it mean to be a creative individual who is a follower of the creative God? *It Was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God* strives to answer that question through a series of essays which offer theoretical and practical insights into artmaking from a Christian perspective.

A Christian looks at the world through the eyes of one who has a restored relationship with the Creator, and receives a new vision affecting every area of life—including the creative process. The Christian worldview is foundational to the approach a believer

IT WAS GOOD
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CRITIQUE



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ABOUT CRITIQUE: Critique is part of the work of Ransom Fellowship founded by Denis and Margie Haack in 1982. Together, they have created a ministry that includes lecturing, mentoring, writing, teaching, hospitality, feeding, and encouraging those who want to know more about what it means to be a Christian in the everyday life of the twenty-first century.

Except where noted, all articles are by Denis Haack.

RECEIVE CRITIQUE: Critique is not available by subscription. Rather, interested readers can request to be added to Ransom's mailing list, which is updated frequently. Donors to Ransom Fellowship, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-deductible ministry, are added to the mailing list automatically unless requesting otherwise.

Everyone on Ransom's mailing list also receives *Notes from Toad Hall*, a newsletter by Margie Haack in which she reflects on what it means to be faithful in the ordinary and routine of daily life and gives news about Ransom's ministry.

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A Roman mosaic of Pope John VII from 705 CE looks over the shoulder of a cartoon of and by Ned Bustard reading *It Was Good: Making Music to the Glory of God*



Imagination Matters



One of the reasons I have sworn allegiance to Christ as king is that I believe the ancient prophets. Their words echo down the passage of time to shatter my complacency with judgment on evil and to halt my despair with the promise that in the end God's glory will undo all that is wrong. It does not make the brokenness less horrible but it does permit me to hope.

One such prophet, Habakkuk, was a contemporary of Daniel, but not as well known. There is a legend that, while Daniel was in the lion's den, Habakkuk provided him nourishment, but this seems doubtful at best. Habakkuk left a short book for his legacy, but it is timeless.

Habakkuk lived in a time of social change, when standards were slipping among the people of God. The law existed, he said, but it was "paralyzed" (1:4). Perhaps this was because the consciences of people were hardened or because the law's meaning had been reduced to a series of comfortable legalisms. His main complaint, however, was about God who he saw as idle, especially about justice (1:2-3). As far as Habakkuk could see, God was failing to act.

God's response was that Habakkuk was blind to reality. "Look," he told the prophet, and "see" (1:5). And by the end of their conversation Habakkuk did see differently, and recorded the "oracle" he "saw" for posterity (1:1). The prophet's mind was changed, true, but this was not merely a cognitive exchange or the addition of new information—Habakkuk's imagination was enlarged. Now, he saw, God "shook the nations" (3:6), "split the earth with rivers" (3:9), and "trampled the sea" (3:15).

For Habakkuk, as for us, imagination matters.

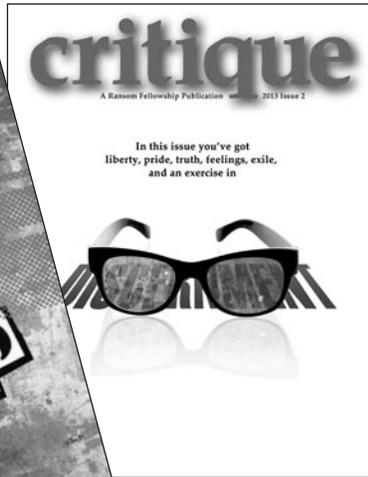
I do not remember my first introduction to Square Halo Books, but I do remember being impressed that this small publishing house existed to help enlarge the imagination of the people of God. Nor have I met Ned Bustard, Square Halo's creative director though I consider him a friend and kindred spirit. This is not a mega organization but it is a passionate one, intent on helping restore beauty and art to their rightful place in the Christian life. Which is precisely what is needed if we are to truly see reality—including God and ourselves—truthfully.

One of the essential aspects of Ransom's vision has been the conviction that our calling as Christians is to be faithful in the ordinary and routine of life. The people of Square Halo exhibit that sort of faithfulness and, as a result of their publications, my imagination, though still feeble and distorted, can better comprehend a tiny glimpse of

God's "splendor" (Habakkuk's term, 3:3) that covers the heavens. Sometimes in this darkened world, glory appears as a mere shimmer, like a firefly on a moonless evening, and so is easy to miss. We need sharp imaginations to catch it.

Seeing God wrongly is not merely a theological or philosophical difficulty, though it is that. Seeing God wrongly means all of life will be distorted, like a GPS that works but is a few degrees off. A few degrees do not sound like much, unless you need to be rescued.

Square Halo is not the only source of books on art, but it is one that Christians should keep in mind when planning their reading. That is something you do, isn't it—plan your reading? Every six months or so I pause and review what I've read and try to plug the imbalances I always find in my list. Books on art and beauty need not be all we read—even if we are artists—but if we want our imagination enlarged, they can be a good place to begin. I recommend Square Halo because I am convinced the people doing that quiet, lovely work are not just in love with beauty and art and creativity, they are in love with the God of all beauty who made us in his image, so that beauty and art and creativity in this broken world can resound to his glory. ■



To the editor:
I enjoy *Critique*...
but really, can a more annoying background for a text be found than what you have on p.17 of your latest issue [*Critique* 2013:3]? Don't you want people to READ what your contributors WRITE?

Appreciative yet eye-strained,
David Sherwood
Providence, RI

Denis Haack responds:

So glad you like *Critique* and actually want to read what I write.

We failed to catch the difficulty before the issue went to press—how the design looks on the screen isn't always the same as it looks in print. That isn't an excuse, of course, but it is the reason. If we had caught it in time the background dots would have been lighter. Sorry.

Having said that, I suspect the punkers would have liked the page as it appeared in print.

To the editor:

Thanks so much for sending copies of *Critique* 2013:2. I'm so glad you make it tasteful and interesting visually.

You could have cited several better people to show the integrity of Christianity as a worldview in your excellent article on de Botton but you gratuitously chose to cite me. Thank

you very much. It is an honor. *3 Theories of Everything* is out in English, Russian, and Polish,

and coming in Hungarian, Spanish, Norwegian, Japanese, and Chinese. I keep praying God will use it.

God bless you, dear brother. I hope you are well.

Love in Christ,
Ellis Potter
Switzerland

Denis Haack responds:

That *Critique* is made tasteful and visually interesting is due entirely to the creativity and faithful work of our superb art designer, Karen Coulter Perkins. I am always pleasantly surprised how she takes the articles I send her and develops images that capture the essential themes we are trying to communicate. It is a gift I cherish, especially since I believe the graphic content to be as important as the prose.

I'm very pleased that *3 Theories of Everything* is doing well, and I cited it in the hope that even more of my readers would get a copy.

I have been informed that you will be a plenary speaker at the next Rochester L'Abri Conference (February 14-15, 2014). That is a good reason for people to attend. And it just might, by God's grace, after so many years of long distance friendship, allow you and me to finally meet!

To the editor:

Hello, just wanted to let you know that I have found your Bible study materials very helpful over the years and am now using them as I serve in Tanzania. I think I was first introduced to them while in college through a campus ministry beach project (with the Coalition for Christian Outreach).

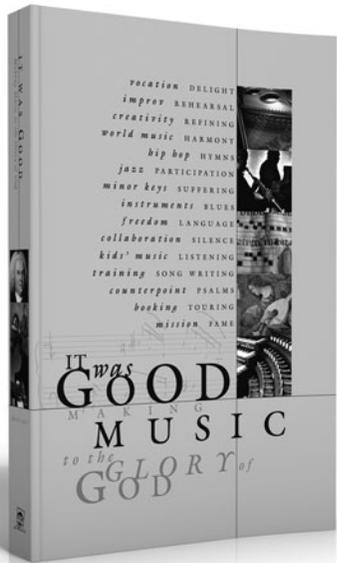
I was a Bible major and familiar with basic exegesis, and found your Bible study guide to be one of the most clear and succinct presentations of the things I had learned. Right now I am working with Wycliffe Bible Translators in northern Tanzania. Our project serves eight languages in the Mara region. My role is in the Scripture Engagement department and one of the projects I am working on is a class on basic hermeneutics for local Bible colleges. In this region where pastors often have very few resources and little training, I am hoping to use an inductive Bible study method as foundation for the course. In my research I have found nothing explaining how to study the Bible in Swahili, the language that most pastors are using. Once again, I am finding your resources very helpful. *The Practical Method of Bible Study* PDF book [on Ransom's Web site click on Publications / All eBooks and scroll down] has been a great resource and will certainly be cited in my course material.

Thank you for making it available.
Jeff Robinson
Mara Cluster Project
Musoma, Tanzania

Denis Haack responds:

Thank you for writing, Jeff, and I am delighted to learn our materials are of help in Africa among God's people there. May God be pleased to have his word bear fruit—there and here, world without end. ■

Good Music in God's World



I am not one for mixed tapes. It's not that I don't like them—when a friend occasionally makes one for me, I'm delighted. I always try to listen to the selections carefully. What I mean is that I don't make them myself—they turn out to be my current favorites and, by the time I'm finished, that list is obsolete.

Still, I have an 18 track selection of music that I not only recommend, but I would ask you to stop reading this, log onto NoiseTrade (<http://NoiseTrade.com/ItWasGood>) and download it for free. Please. Do it now.

Then get a copy of *It Was Good: Making Music to the Glory of God* published by Square Halo Books. The music goes with the book, and together they are must reading/listening for Christians who want to be discerning about music. Each track is music produced by one of the musicians who contributed a chapter, and together they make a lovely immersion into creativity.

I was delighted about the first in this series, *It Was Good: Making Art to*

the Glory of God, and equally delighted by this second volume on music. Each chapter explores a different aspect of the topic, from silence to listening to improvisation to instruments to touring to harmony and much more. Written by musicians, theologians, songwriters, and musicologists, it becomes a valuable resource for both musicians and those of us who cannot make music but cannot live without it. Reading this book is like hearing from the other side—from those writing the music or recording it or playing it live—so the experience of music is less fragmented and we are better able to see how it can all play out to God's glory.

At the creation, God instructed those of his creatures made in his image to tenderly care for his earth and to cultivate it. Cultivation involves work and is related to the ideas of culture and creativity. As Ned Bustard notes in his preface:

...at the end of the day, art gets made by the people who show up and do the work.

There is no way around work. As many times as I try to sit down and make art without putting in time and effort, I run right into the truth that it takes hard work to make good work. I often hope that lightning will strike and the first thing that comes out of my pencil will be brilliant. But I have found that happens so rarely that I have been inspired to pen a proverb: good ideas are built on top of the detritus of bad ideas.... It is the slow trudge through one failure after another that gets us up to the top of the mountain where the air is clear and Beauty can be clearly seen.

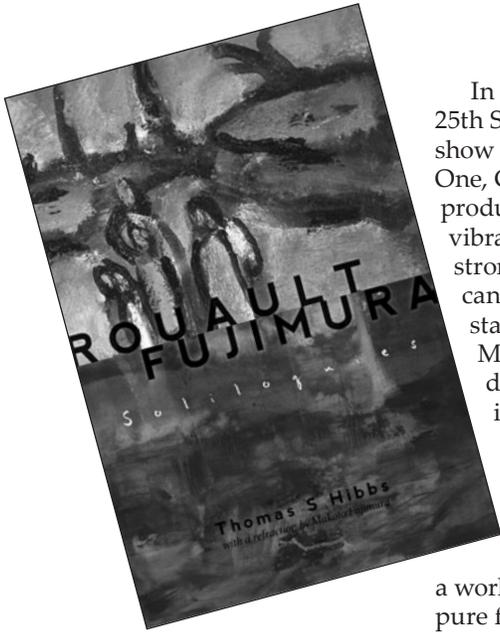
And that is a good thing. The hard work of making is our work. Work was our calling before the Fall, and it still is today. We were made to work and are called to work to the glory of God at whatever we are given to do. And as reborn followers of Christ we are particularly sent out in our day for "rightly ordered cultural labor, the creational task of making and remaking God's world. We are (re)made to be makers." [p. 3]

Music is part of what is to be cultivated as part of our original calling as human beings, and this is why music is so essential to our humanness. It isn't that music merely makes existence nicer, though it does. It is that music is actually central to our being persons, to our very existence. And because we are made in God's image, it is also, somehow, mysteriously a reflection of his existence and essence as well.

I recommend *It Was Good*—both volumes—to you. Don't miss either. Or the music that goes with *It Was Good: Making Music to the Glory of God*. ■

Book recommended: *It Was Good: Making Music to the Glory of God* edited by Ned Bustard (Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books; 2002) 324 pages + resources.

Form and Abstraction, Beautifully



In 2009, the Dillon Gallery on West 25th Street in New York City held a show featuring the work of two artists. One, Georges Rouault (1871–1958) produced expressionistic paintings of vibrant beauty and stark forms, with strong black lines making some of the canvases assume the appearance of stained glass windows. The other, Makoto Fujimura (b. 1960), produces delicate paintings on paper using ancient Japanese techniques, with colorful washes from hand ground pigments, laying thin sheets of gold and silver foil on the surface to add yet another layer of depth. “Rouault depicts a world on the verge of dissolving into pure form,” New York art historian James Romaine notes. “Fujimura builds and stretches his materials and abstract forms until they give birth to images in the viewer’s mind. Yet in both artists’ work, we see the world enriched by a creative imagination rooted in faith.”

Rouault-Fujimura: Soliloquies, published by Square Halo Books, records something of that exhibition and allows those of us who could not attend at least a hint of what we missed. It is a luscious book, full of color reproductions of both artists’ work. Though brief, it contains two essays on the art, the exhibit, and the artists: one by Thomas Hibbs (dean of the honors college and distinguished professor of philosophy at Baylor University) and a shorter one by Fujimura. Neither essay is pedantic but both helped me understand what I was seeing and allowed not just a surface interpretation of the artworks but a glimpse into what motivated and

shaped the artist who produced it.

I have found that *Rouault-Fujimura: Soliloquies* is one of the few books in my library that I return to frequently. Occasionally to reread, but more often, having read the essays, to thumb through the book slowly, allowing the carefully crafted forms and abstractions, the vital colors, and the faith-informed imagination of the artwork soak into my soul.

If you know an artist or someone who loves art, give them a gift of *Rouault-Fujimura: Soliloquies*. And get a copy for yourself—it is like a gem that rewards repeated examination. ■

Book recommended: *Rouault-Fujimura: Soliloquies* by Thomas S. Hibbs and Makoto Fujimura (Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books; 2002) 63 pages.

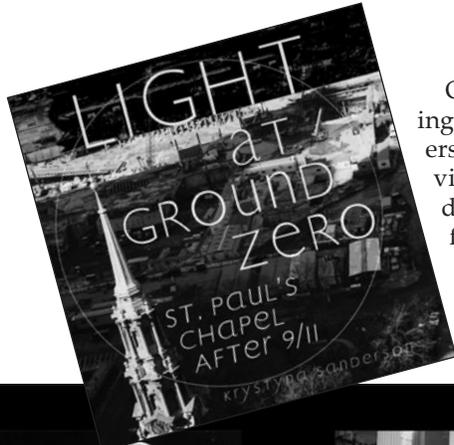
RESOURCE

Hearts and Minds bookstore is a well-stocked haven for serious, reflective readers. When ordering resources, mention Ransom Fellowship and they will contribute 10 per cent of the total back to us. ■

Resource: *Hearts and Minds bookstore*, www.heartsandmindsbooks.com



Quiet in the Center of a Storm



On 9/11 Americans watched in growing horror as planes flew into skyscrapers in lower Manhattan, as desperate victims hurled themselves to their death to escape the fires in the top floors, and then as the towers, seemingly against logic, collapsed on themselves into a tangled mass of crumpled steel, burning rubble, dust, and bodies. Over the next



days, weeks, and months, emergency workers dug through the smoldering mess trying to find first, survivors and then, when hope was past, the dead. The images of Ground Zero and of the

workers attempting to clear the many tons of debris from the site have become iconic metaphors in the shared American experience of the twenty-first century.

Less well known, close to one of the buildings of the World Trade Center complex, a small church, St. Paul's Chapel, somehow escaped destruction. It became a place of rest and restoration for the weary workers at Ground Zero. Musicians came to quietly play, congregants and friends brought and served millions of fresh meals, shoulder and foot massages relieved pain and tension, and pews were set aside so that much needed naps could be had. The chapel became a place of quiet in the very middle of a deeply tragic and traumatic storm of death and terror.

Light at Ground Zero, published by Square Halo Books, tells the story of St. Paul's after 9/11 simply, through pictures accompanied by texts of Scripture. From the beginning of the tragedy, the rector of St. Paul's invited a photographer he trusted, Krystyna Sanderson, to record her impressions for posterity. *Light at Ground Zero* is part of that record of memories that should not be forgotten. Sanderson records her impressions in words in a brief preface:

The ashes of those who perished were everywhere—on the boots of the relief workers, on our clothes, in the air we breathed. We all knew we were walking on holy ground. Like diamonds that are created when carbon is under tremendous pressure, diamonds of heroism and love emerged from the explosion of 9/11. I witnessed these diamonds emitting a luminosity too bright to capture on film, a light that lightens the darkness of disbelief, shock, incomprehension, and grief, the light of God's love and mercy and grace.

Get a copy of *Light at Ground Zero* for your coffee table, and one to place beside the bed in your guest room.

We simply cannot have too many reminders that, by God's grace, places of quiet actually can exist in this broken and sad world. ■

Book recommended: *Light at Ground Zero* by Krystyna Sanderson (Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books; 2002) 99 pages + notes on photographs.

Scholarly Musing



Since Christ is Lord of all, the Christian faith has something substantial to speak into every aspect of reality, life and culture. The world and life view revealed in Scripture provides a foundation for the possibility of flourishing in daily life and the advance of careful scholarship. Square Halo Books, with its emphasis on faith and the arts, has published two books in which the scholarship to which I refer is on thoughtful display.

Objects of Grace is by James Romaine, who teaches art history at Nyack College and is the cofounder of the Association of Scholars of Christianity in the History of Art. The book consists of thoughtful and probing conversations that Romaine hosts with ten artists. Discussing their art and influences, art philosophy, the process of craftsmanship, and the pursuit of their vocations, Romaine allows us to listen in as contemporary Christian artists talk about not just what they make but what's behind it.

Objects of Grace is lovingly produced, with numerous color reproductions of

the artwork under discussion. The styles represented vary widely, including artists Dan Callis, Sandra Bowden, Edward Knippers, Erica Downer, and Makoto Fujimura. Romaine assumes the reader is conversant with art history, contemporary art, and aesthetics, so some of us will need to do some research and thinking as we read—but the effort is worth it.

Romaine: [David] Goa [who spoke at a meeting of Christians in the Visual Arts] noted that

Creation is neither a battleground nor something to overcome. But we too often miss the point of art, and life, is to dwell in the presence of God.

Sandra Bowden: *Art serves as a point of departure, a kind of visual pilgrimage. Both formal and narrative elements can offer a place of meditation, a focus for contemplation where we are invited to dwell in God's presence. If the artist is successful, and the viewer is willing, the work can be a place where the finite meets infinite, and where the intimate and ineffable intersect.* [p. 27]

In *C. S. Lewis and the Arts*, edited by Hendrix College art historian Rod Miller, ten scholars write essays, the sort we would expect to find in academic journals, probing aspects of Lewis' work and thinking on the arts. Miller's contribution, "Mirrors, Shadows and the Muses: C. S. Lewis and the Value of Arts and Letters" includes this thoughtful insight:

Lewis wrestled with the value of arts and letters, and how to judge them, for at least two excellent reasons. The first,

commented upon in many places by Lewis, is the pretension that often results when culture is elevated above its proper place. This situation typically arises, however, because of the second reason: the aestheticization of culture. When culture, and its concomitant products, are aestheticized, reduced to mere subjective emotional reactions and responses, several things occur. The first is that criteria for evaluating, for judging, any cultural product are also aestheticized. If the aesthetic is the goal, the only measure of value, of quality, is aesthetic stimulation...

What, then, is the alternative? How might one avoid the problems related to the aestheticization of culture, of arts and letters, and the resultant meaninglessness and violence? It is to consider beauty in the very old sense as being deeply informed, indeed a manifestation of, the Ideal, Truth. That is to say, far from being merely a reflection of our lowly physical, sensual responses, Beauty is a glimpse of the eternal as made manifest; it is, in short, the splendour of wisdom. [p. 72-73, 74]

Miller's discussion and insights are far more expansive than this brief excerpt suggests, but no less rich. As are the rest of the essays in *C. S. Lewis and the Arts*. ■

Books recommended:

Objects of Grace: Conversations on Creativity and Faith by James Romaine (Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books; 2002) 173 pages.

C. S. Lewis and the Arts: Creativity in the Shadowlands edited by Rod Miller (Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books; 2013) 167 pages.

RESOURCE: *INTRUDING UPON THE TIMELESS*

Meditations on Art, Faith, and Mystery



THE ROAD TO EMMAUS BY BARRY MOSER

For the generation growing up today within the cultural thrall of postmodernity, it is almost impossible to fully grasp what it means that the world has shifted from a culture of belief to one of unbelief. Even many of us who saw the transition progressing missed its significance. Many of my peers who are believers still talk, for example, as if coming to faith for a young adult today is largely unchanged from their own experience forty years ago. This is one reason a subtle disconnect erodes the space between the local church (which my peers lead) and so many young adults. Faith in an era where disbelief is normative is fundamentally different from faith in an era where belief is normative. The need is not for different content—historic orthodoxy remains

orthodox—but for a different context, one brought into authentic tension with the conditions of life under postmodernity. Without listing the reasons why, essential to this necessary context for authentic faith today are biblical categories that were not high on the agendas of Christians of the previous era: mystery, art and creativity, a sanctified imagination.

Gregory Wolfe, founder and editor of *Image*, describes the loss for the wider culture:

A culture is governed by its reigning myths. There is an increasing sense these days that materialism, whether of the Left or Right, cannot sustain or nourish our common life. Religion and art share the capacity to help us renew our awareness of the ultimate questions: who we are, where we have come from, and where we are going. In their highest forms, religion and art unite faith and reason, grace and nature; they preserve us from the twin errors of superstition and rationalist abstraction. (p. 17)

It was into this cultural context that *Image* was launched, a quarterly journal dedicated to explore art, faith, and mystery. In the opening pages of each issue, Wolfe pens an editorial statement. It is not a summary of the issue's contents but the brief (1500 words or so) ruminations of a Christian humanist, a believer who is committed to the humanities,

to literature and art as an expression of God's image in humankind. The purpose of the column, Wolfe says, is "to keep the stress on meditation and reflection, to provoke thought rather than to exhaust it," to provide a "brief impression that opens up space for further thought" (p. 13).

Intruding Upon the Timeless, published by Square Halo Books, collects the first 34 of Wolfe's editorial statements from *Image* (along with 17 lovely black and white engravings). The topics range widely: liturgy, Thomas Kinkaid, Flannery O'Connor, the Internet, weaker brethren, Walker Percy, *American Beauty*, the Eucharist, aesthetics and criticism, and so much more. Scholarly yet accessible, full of a rich network of ideas concerned with what some might say is High Art and Letters, I commend *Intruding Upon the Timeless* to you. The essays can be read in any order, always reward unhurried reading and reflection, and are brief enough to be read aloud with friends for an evening of discussion and conversation. ■

Book recommended: *Intruding Upon the Timeless: Meditations on Art, Faith, and Mystery* by Gregory Wolfe, engravings by Barry Moser (Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books; 2003) 168 pages.

Enlarging Imagination: The Art of Ned Bustard

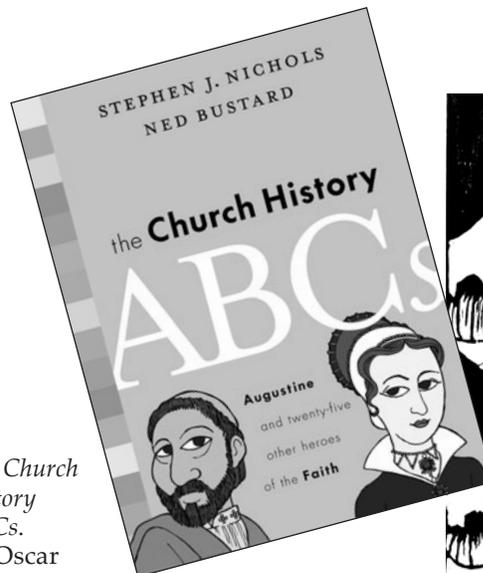
One of my earliest memories concerning art involved the exquisite woodcut block prints of Albrecht Durer (1471–1528). I'm uncertain where I came upon them and have wondered if it might have been in an old Bible at my grandparent's home. I was stunned by the beauty of the prints and by the idea that works like this could be made by scoring and cutting a block of wood and transferring the inked image to paper. It began my lifelong love of block prints.

Which is one of the reasons I was drawn initially to Ned Bustard. He too makes block prints—he uses linoleum rather than wood—and is involved with a series of efforts that together take seriously the Christian conviction that the truth of reality expresses the goodness and beauty of God. (If you'd like to see the process that's involved in making linocuts, I'd recommend watching "Scott Avett & The 2011 Tour Poster" on YouTube, or "Scott Avett Printmaking" on Vimeo).

I recently had a chance to talk with Ned Bustard and wanted to let you listen in on our conversation.

DH: How would you describe your art—particularly your linocuts?

NB: I have often described my style of illustration and my block prints as "faux gothic." I take great delight in medieval art and find their woodcuts a constant source of inspiration. If you look at a piece like my *Simul Justus et Peccator*, I think you can see the obvious influence of those long-dead craftsmen on my work—especially in the eyes. To see my style worked out in a non-printmaking way, take a peek at my children's book,



The Church History ABCs.

Oscar Wilde said, "Talent borrows, genius steals." And though I wouldn't claim to be a genius, I would claim to be a thief. An example of that is seen in my Noah's Ark pieces. In them I steal outright from the artist Sadao Watanabe. In the larger collaborative piece, *And Such Were You*, I also steal from Katsushika Hokusai—twice!

Speaking of collaboration, I think it is crucial to point out that I wouldn't have made any of these block prints without the training, help, and encouragement of the artist Matthew L. Clark. A dear brother and friend, he taught me how to do this technique and has pulled nearly all the prints with me. He is a talented artist who should get truckloads more attention than he does.

DH: How did you discover your creative gifts?

NB: I would say that my mother discovered my aptitude for art. She encouraged me by signing me up for art lessons and buying me drawing books and such. It is funny, to me the phrase "creative gifts" sounds so mystical.



AND SUCH WERE YOU

I would not normally discuss "my creative gifts." I don't think of myself as gifted. I see myself as a visual plumber. I do the work, and if it doesn't leak, I'm happy. I don't smoke, but I often describe my artwork as "smoke and mirrors"—one day everyone will realize that I am just faking it. But until then, I pretend to be an artist. And if Screwtape is right, eventually I may end up becoming what I pretend to be!

DH: Were there any signposts along the way that pointed you towards a vocation in the arts?

NB: Well, failing college math was a big one! I was going to school to take over the family business, and my lack of skill in logical spheres made it obvious that my brother, and not I, should take over the company. In high school I had a great deal of positive feedback for my art. It was a Christian school so there



SIMUL JUSTUS ET PECCATOR



THE MADNESS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR
BY MATTHEW CLARK



CREATION, FALL, REDEMPTION, CONSUMMATION
A COLLABORATION WITH MATTHEW CLARK



EVEN IF
FROM REVEALED: A STORYBOOK BIBLE FOR GROWN UPS



BAPTISM OF CHRIST
AFTER OTTO DI

wasn't a huge art program, but there were plenty of jobs around for me to do. And I remember my dad introducing me to the idea that a person could have the job of a graphic designer when I was in middle school. That was probably when I realized I could be something when I grew up. Ironically, the graphic designer that he introduced me to when he explained the idea was a *former* graphic designer. He was a minister from our denominational seminary. Though no one said this to me, what I extrapolated from this was that if you were serious about being a Christian, you went into "full-time Christian service," not art. It would take years and years (as well as Francis Schaeffer and Madeline L'Engle) for me to get over this sacred/secular dichotomy and eventually embrace the idea that art is a legitimate calling for the believer.

DH: What inspires you to begin, to imagine a linocut print?

NB: That is hard to say. Sometimes it is just the desire to make "real art." The copy/paste world of my graphic design company is very rewarding, but the grittiness of printmaking and the accidents of the medium have their own special appeal. Sometimes it is a desire to visually codify a concept. For example, a while back I made a whole series of prints on the Beatitudes. And this past spring Matt Clark and I did a large print that communicates the idea that the whole Bible is one big story—*Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation*. Sometimes it is the need to have

Christmas presents to give to people. I whipped up a pear print last year (just a pear, nothing deeper than that) and it is quite possibly the best received of all my prints. Recently necessity has inspired my printmaking. I have needed to fill holes in a new book I'm developing. Then last week it was in response to the request for a show of my work—and my realization that I don't have a large body of work that I could hang in a show and have that show make sense as one cohesive collection of prints. So I have begun a new series on famous literary characters—Sherlock Holmes, Harry Potter, Robin Hood, etc.

DH: What is the book you are developing? Is it for Square Halo?

NB: Yes, it is called *Revealed: A Storybook Bible for Grown Ups*. The book is like a children's storybook Bible, but with all the stories that they never tell children—stories of genocide, dismembered bodies sent in the mail, incest, rape, decapitation, murder, etc. This will be a book for people who might have grown up in the church, but gave up on her story because they thought it was too childish. My hope is that they might come back and reread the Bible and see that it is relevant to the big issues in life.

DH: Besides the *Revealed* book, what new projects are you working on?

NB: I'm getting the ball rolling on Square Halo's final *It Was Good* book—*It Was Good: Performance Arts to the Glory of God*. I'm just starting to come up with a list of topics for that volume and praying for writers to pop up who can cover those topics. I am so thankful for my friends Alan and Diana Bauer for having the vision (and making the sacrifices) to start our company. It has been a fabulous experience to see God

work through our handful of books.

We have also just set up a gallery in partnership with The Trust Performing Arts Center called the Square Halo Gallery. It's a great first step to achieving a ridiculously impossible dream I have had for many years: founding a museum in Lancaster for contemporary art by Christians. You can learn more about the gallery at www.facebook.com/SquareHaloGallery.

Through my design company, I have lots of new things happening. Coming out this fall I have a new, two-volume history workbook for kindergartners and first graders called *Bede's History of ME* and *Bede's History of US*. Bede in this case is not the dead historian from England but instead a ball of red yarn and two googlie eyes who teaches kids about what happened when. Also this fall, a set of four storybooks and accompanying workbooks for grade school students will be released. These books teach about geography with the help of the two main characters—Mr. Longitude and Mr. Latitude.

In printmaking, I have the *Revealed* prints and the literary characters series I mentioned earlier. In addition to them, my daughter Maggie and I are working on expanding my Noah's ark series so we can have shows. She is doing block prints of the cute animals on the ark and I'm doing prints of the ark. I might do Noah getting drunk, too.

I will soon begin work on a series of posters for The Row House 2013 Fall Forum series. The Row House is an organization inspired by the work of L'Abri that hosts monthly forums, concerts, and gatherings that "engage believers, inquirers, and skeptics in an atmosphere of hospitality, civility,



THE SOWER
AFTER VINCENT VAN GOGH



ALICE WITH MR. LONGITUDE AND MR. LATITUDE



and whimsy." Besides believing wholeheartedly in their mission of "engaging current culture with ancient faith," doing design work for them allows me to shed all the constraints I usually work under and make some insane posters.

This past year I began working as staff designer for CIVA (Christians in the Visual Arts) and am on the board of ASCHA (Association of Scholars in the Christianity of Art). I am delighted to be working with both organizations because I feel like they are two sides of the same coin. CIVA looks to support Christians in the visual arts and ASCHA looks to support art historians talking about Christianity in the visual arts.

Wow, all that makes it sound like I am really busy! But mostly I am trying to figure out how to feed my family and serve the church.

DH: Tell us a bit about yourself.

NB: I have a fabulous wife, Leslie, and three daughters: Carey Anne, Maggie, and Ellie. We homeschool (except for Carey—she is now at college in New York City). I have two dogs. I live in the West End of Lancaster—a city in central Pennsylvania that is (sadly) much too far from anyplace I could sail. I am the owner of an illustration and graphic design firm called World's End Images. I enjoy collecting art, books, and music. I'm third generation Irish-American. My grandfather was a preacher for 40 years. I have written a number of books for Veritas Press (besides the *Bede* books I discussed earlier) including *Legends & Leagues* or *Mr. Tardy Goes From Here to There*, *The Sailing Saint*, *Ella Sings*

Jazz, and a historic novel *Squalls Before War: His Majesty's Schooner Sultana*. My bathroom sink is clogged. Most of the rooms in my home need at least the trim painted. I'm terribly near-sighted. Your article, "When a Stick becomes a Staff," had a huge influence on me and on my wife. I've never been to Laity Lodge. I like James Bond novels and Roland March mysteries. I grew up at Grace Reformed Episcopal Church and now am a ruling elder at Wheatland Presbyterian Church. *Foyle's War*, *Sherlock*, and *Doctor Who* are my favorite TV programs. I enjoy dark chocolate and red wine. In my office I have two mermaid sculptures, a ship's wheel, and three bins of my kid's LEGOs. I have obsessed with Narnia since I was in first grade.

DH: In addition to your graphic design for World's End Images and your printmaking, you are the creative director for Square Halo Books, Inc. Since Square Halo publishes works on art and faith, you are in a unique position to gauge the embrace of the arts by the evangelical Christian community. What are your impressions?

NB: From my perspective, it seems that the evangelical Christian community has gone from a disdain of art when I was young (because we "don't want to polish brass on a sinking ship") to an embrace of the visual arts today. That could be seen as a good thing, but it actually bothers me since I don't see this change coming from reading Schaeffer's *Art and the Bible* (or perhaps *Art for God's Sake* by Phil Ryken) and embracing the arts because they understand the theological reasons for valuing the arts. It seems to me that, generally, that visual art in the evangelical Christian

community is there because the larger culture is so drenched in eye candy, so we follow the culture's lead. I'd prefer that our tribe be hostile to the arts than embrace them without thinking.

But it is hard to speak in generalities. I'd rather tell you about my small spheres in the evangelical Christian community. In the sphere of my church I have set up a gallery, had it shut down, and have been asked to set it up again. I think that speaks volumes to your question. Also, the amount of art going on in my church has fluctuated over time. We've had nearly a dozen artists that I have worked with to encourage through a music and arts small group to having just one young artist that I am now mentoring.

Within the sphere of my family and friends, I have been generally appreciated, and some of them have even bought art for their homes. And in the homeschool sphere I have worked hard to introduce that community to all the great Christian artists I know through CIVA. Some have been welcomed, and some have been proverbially burned at the stake.

DH: You are a father as well as an artist. Are there things parents who are not artists can do to encourage their children to love beauty?

NB: During a visit in our home to give his interview for *It Was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God*, Ed Knippers unintentionally gave us a phrase that has been a rallying cry to us for developing the love of beauty in our children's lives. He encouraged us to strive to give our children not just an excellent classical Christian education, but to also work to give them poetic underpinnings. It has been our goal ever since to try to figure out what "poetic underpinnings" were and then how to build them into our kids' lives.

We have chosen to teach our kids about beauty through poetry and art. My wife Leslie is a great lover of poetry and art. She has read poem after poem to them as they grew up. She gave them fine art postcards to look at while toddlers. We read fine art board books

to them. Our walls are covered with original art. And together we have taken them to many, many museums.

But the secret is that you have to like those things too. Kids can pick up if we are telling them to eat their broccoli while not eating it ourselves. So don't try to force museums and whatnot on your kids "because it is good for them." Pick things that you like and then share them naturally. My friend Matt Clark loves bugs. He sees God's beautiful design in every wing and stinger, so he takes his kids on walks and they collect bugs and take them home to draw them. Do whatever will work with your family culture. One strategy that we found useful was to go to museums and ask the girls to pick out one—and only one—piece of art in each room that they liked and explain why. They missed out on a lot of art in each museum, but they had more fun with it, and remembered more than if we had forced them to study every piece.

Disclaimer: Leslie would want me to make sure that your readers know that we allow our kids plenty of pop culture, too. Along with the fine art board books we also read Sandra Boynton board books. We eat candy bars and vegetables. It is all about trying to keep things in balance.

DH: Most of the prints of yours that I've seen have strong biblical referents. That reminds me of a comment Edward Knippers made that he saw himself as a "servant under the text of Scripture." Yet never do I get the impression that either of you are mere illustrators of Bible stories—the works seem to unpack a deeper level of meaning. Is this something that is intentional on your part as the artisan?

NB: Yes, I am quite intentional in my work about trying to inject into the pieces spiritual truths. Often I am afraid that I am overly didactic, and crush the art with the content. I am always cramming concepts into my art. Usually I do that through using classic Christian symbolism. An example of this can be seen by returning again to *Simul Justus et Peccator*. In that piece there is a black bird (sin), Adam's apple (sin), a candle (the light of God's Word), a mirror (God's Word), thirty pieces of silver (sin,



THE MOCKING OF CHRIST
BY EDWARD KNIPPERS



VIOLATION



SMOKE AND MIRRORS
A SELF PORTRAIT

guilt for Christ's death, and the three X's can allude to pornography/lust), a prisoner's outfit (bondage to sin), the Jesus sash of Sunday school art (being clothed in the righteousness of Christ), and—of course—a square halo (signifying a living saint).

I often think about my pieces as illustrations. But as we are discussing this now, when I step back, I can see that I do a great deal of tweaking to the Scriptures when I depict them. For example, in my recent piece called *Violation*, I show Bathsheba's husband as a skeleton. Certainly in that piece I am striving to present the viewer with a deeper level of meaning beyond just illustrating David's sin.

DH: Is there a way people can purchase your prints?

NB: The easiest way is through my Etsy store (www.etsy.com/shop/WorldsEndImages). But the way it works is that the art is only up for a limited amount of time, and if it doesn't sell, I have to pay to repost it. So I often let work drop out of there. If folks don't see something they would like to buy, they can e-mail me and perhaps I'll still have what they want and I can repost it.

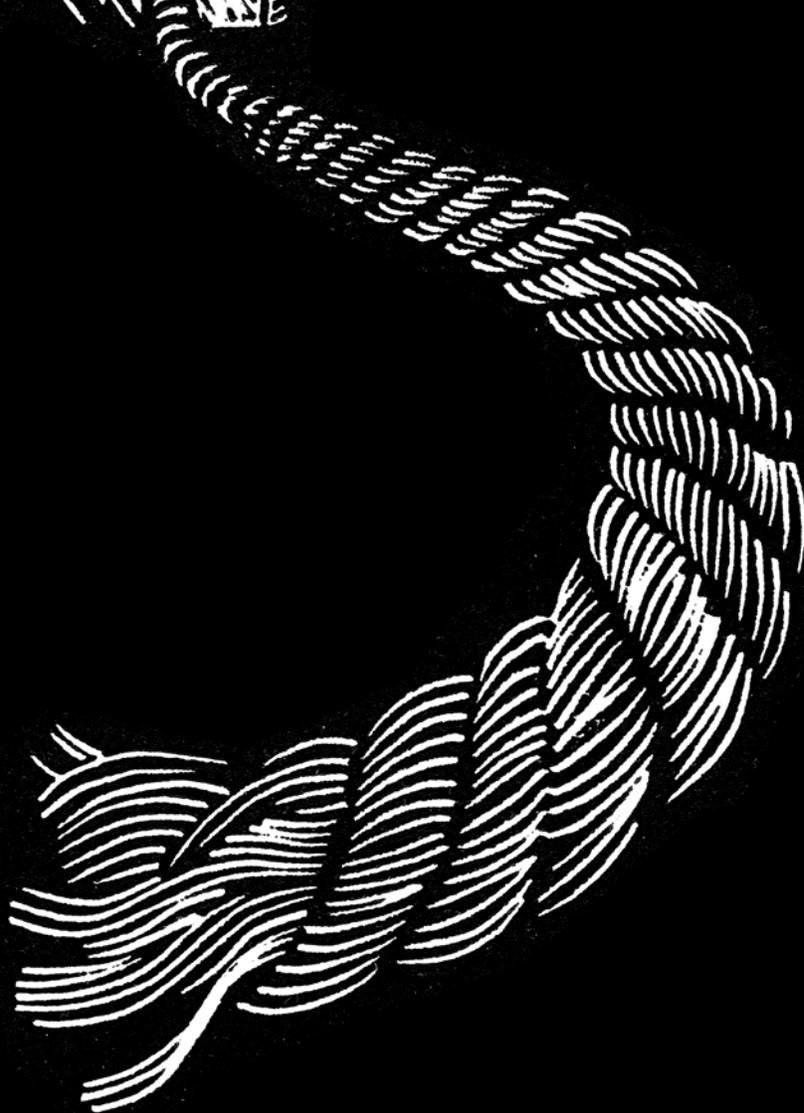
DH: The linocut of yours that moves me most deeply is titled, *Rahab*. Perhaps the reason is that it reverses our roles. She is usually depicted as the scandalously promiscuous woman

who was saved by grace, always with the impression given that, since someone much more low class and tasteless than I can be saved, there is hope for the likes of me, a sinner but not really all that bad compared to her and actually fairly respectable. Your depiction turns that rendering on its head so that Rahab, now framed in light, appears to be throwing a lifeline to me. How did you determine how to depict her?

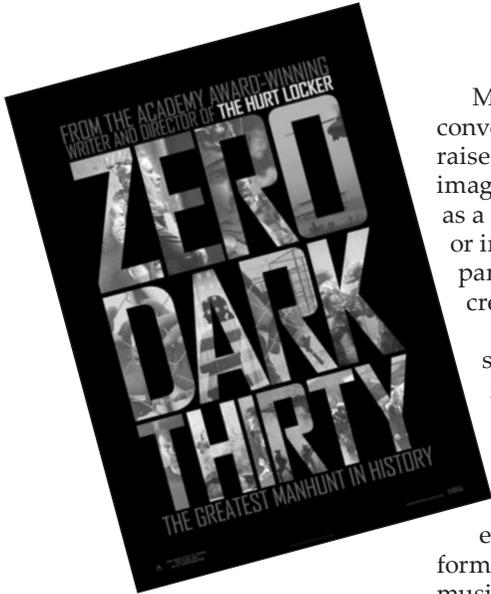
NB: It took me a while to get to that final composition. Before this print, I pulled an edition of an entirely different block. But I ditched that one because it did precisely what you said—it allowed the viewer to look down on Rahab. Although she was a prostitute, Rahab is a grandmother to Jesus. We need to look up to her. I reflected while making this second print that, to take the offer of salvation, we need to humble ourselves and, as "nice" people, receive the Gospel from a whore. So my idea was to catch her having just risen from serving a customer. Clutching a sheet to her breasts, she quickly throws the rope out the window for the spies. I put a light behind her to give her a halo of sorts. That way, we see her as a *holy* hooker. The rope is a stylized letter S, since what she is offering to the spies—and to us—is no less than salvation. ■



Artwork: All illustrations are by Ned Bustard unless otherwise noted.



A Discussion Worth Having



From the beginning, art has shown itself, in all its multiple forms, to be a window of insight into the deepest recesses of meaning and significance in life. It helps us see with greater clarity the nature of reality, and without art we find ourselves dehumanized and less certain of our place in the creation. Good art invites us into conversation with the artist about things that matter most.

Sometimes in this conversation the work of art raises questions explicitly. One example is a 1897 painting by Paul Gauguin. If we read the work from right to left we see images of women, from an infant on the right, though the flowering of youth, into middle age, ending with an elderly figure on the left. And in case we might miss his meaning, the artist includes three questions in the upper left hand corner: "Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?" They are good questions, important questions, questions every generation, individual, and culture must address, and which we still struggle with today.

Most of the time, however, the conversation in art involves work that raises questions implicitly. What is imagined here? Do I see a bit differently as a result? Still, whether explicitly or implicitly, questions are raised as part of the rich expression of human creativity.

The questions we ask are essential milestones on the path to finding truth and goodness, both as a society and as individuals. Film is particularly good at raising questions, and the best films do so with great power if we have ears to hear. Unlike any other art form, movies blend story, dialogue, and music with audio and visual effects so that questions are not just raised, but are set loose in a social context that tends to naturally provoke conversation and discussion.

Kathryn Bigelow's film, *Zero Dark Thirty* (2013), has gained a lot of media attention for raising uncomfortable questions. It is, as the story of the killing of Osama bin Laden, a film with an entirely predictable ending. Nevertheless it manages to hold our attention through gritty realism and superb craftsmanship. Set in recent history, it seems larger than life because it simultaneously records an American victory, serves as a witness to an American tragedy, and reminds us of a questionable episode of American ethics.

Bigelow has come in for a lot of criticism because she included scenes of torture in the film. Prisoners are subjected to vicious beatings; waterboarding; forced nudity before members of the opposite sex; prolonged sleep, water, and food deprivation; and threats with attack dogs, among other things. Some critics have maintained that *Zero Dark Thirty* asserts that these so-called

"enhanced interrogation techniques" produced intelligence that was helpful in tracking down Osama bin Laden, but that is inaccurate. The film depicts these techniques being used by American agents on terrorist suspects. The film is rather ambiguous in the utility of torture during interrogation, and shows the hunt for bin Laden as primarily involving a very long and frequently frustrating process of careful detective work on an international scale.

Still, *Zero Dark Thirty* is a troubling film, and one that should prompt serious discussion. The questions it raises—implicitly and at times, explicitly within the dialogue—are important ones that Americans in general and American Christians in specific should not sidestep. These issues are too important to be left simply to secret presidential executive orders. How we answer them will reflect how America is seen in the world, and will reveal our deepest moral convictions as a society. We need to have a serious conversation in America, but so far our partisan polarization is preventing us from having it. I am grateful to Kathryn Bigelow for producing a piece of art that is powerful enough to catch our attention as a society. I hope we do pay attention and have that conversation. These are questions that define us as a society and a people and touch on ethical issues that get to the very heart of our ideals of justice.

How do we define torture? What is the line between justice and vengeance? If all people are created equal, how must even enemies be treated? Is it possible to win against terrorism but lose our soul as a nation? How do we define just war?

The just war tradition goes back to St. Augustine (354-430), bishop of Hippo in North Africa in what is today Algeria. Augustine lived as the Roman



Empire crumbled, and so the clash of armies in warfare was a reality. He was concerned to think through the topic of war in distinctly Christian categories. In doing so, he developed the theological and philosophical framework for what became the just war tradition, which was to be distinguished from alternatives such as pacifism (a principled adoption of non-violence) or militarism (where a person is merely swept along with the popular societal approval of some conflict).

As it has developed and come to us today, the just war tradition addresses both the justification of going to war or entering some conflict and how to then conduct the conflict in a just manner. There are five conditions necessary for justifying a war in the first place:

1. **Legitimate authority**—it is not for individuals or groups to determine to go to war but magistrates in legal office under law.
2. **Just cause**—the cause of the conflict must be sufficient to warrant armed conflict as a proportionate response in either defending rights or in an offensive action taken to stop a greater evil.
3. **Right intention**—the objective must be to establish peace and a love or pursuit of justice, not the hatred of an enemy.
4. **Last resort**—every possible effort must be made to resolve the issue before resorting to war. And
5. **Probable success**—there must be a reasonable and high probability of success in winning the conflict.

And then the just war tradition identifies two conditions necessary for the just conduct of war itself:





- **The principle of discrimination**—the threatening forces must be attacked while the innocent must be spared and protected. And
- **The principle of proportionality**—the scale of the attack must be kept minimal so that no more damage is to be inflicted than is truly necessary.

The questions raised by the film *Zero Dark Thirty* are important and, though I am no prophet, the news suggests to me that these issues are not going away any time soon. Those of us who are Christians can be grateful they have been raised because we bear a responsibility to seek justice in our broken world. The Scriptures call us to responsibility so that, as individuals in conversation with friends and colleagues, and as citizens encouraging a conversation in the public square, part of Christian faithfulness in seeking justice involves discerning whether our nation's policies and wars are just.

Let me suggest four things that need to shape our faithfulness in pursuit of this task, two negatives and two

positives.

1. Resist politicization. One reason it is so difficult to discuss these things is because our society—and many within the church—have been politicized. By this I mean they tend to see just about everything in terms of the political process. The test is to bring some issue up and see how quickly someone raises politics. We must resist this as Christians for several reasons. First, it is an idolatrous mindset. Everything is related to God, not to politics, which is only a tiny slice of life and reality. Second, politicization undermines the discussion by switching it from a pursuit of the truth and justice to the scoring of points and the taking of sides. And finally, it perverts our perspective by suggesting that politics can solve the deepest problems of the human heart. Rather, politics in a democratic society reflects the hearts of its citizens and leaders. This means that culture is always more influential and important than politics, and the gospel always trumps both culture

and politics.

- 2. Resist cynicism.** Challenges like this seem to somehow automatically incite a cynical response today. So remember, we are talking about being faithful, not about changing the world. Being faithful is our calling, changing the world is God's prerogative alone.
- 3. Be people of prayer.** Each week in our liturgy we recite the Lord's Prayer. When we pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we need to mean it passionately.
- 4. Seek integrity, credibility, and civility.** "When asked to summarize the challenge facing the church today," Os Guinness says, "I often answer that it can be stated in three words: integrity, credibility, civility. First and foremost, we face a challenge of integrity in terms of whether we are faithfully living out the good news of God's kingdom in the way Jesus has called us. Second, we face a challenge of credibility because the educated elites of our day, shaped by the



Enlightenment, see us all, in Richard Dawkins's term, as 'faith-heads.' It is time for every follower of Jesus to love God with all our minds and to show that we think in believing and that we believe in thinking. Third, we face a challenge of civility in terms of how we respond to one the world's greatest issues: how we live with the deepest differences of others. Do we really defend truth with love? Do we truly love our enemies and do good to those who wrong us? Or do we respond in kind and join so much of the culture-warring ugliness of our day?"

Even if you don't enjoy war movies, I urge you to watch *Zero Dark Thirty*. The questions it raises are too important to be ignored.

May we be found faithful as God's people to stand for justice, even at cost. ■

Source: Os Guinness from "Found Faithful: Standing Fast in the Advanced Modern Era" in Renewing the Evangelical Mission edited by Richard Lints (Eerdmans, 2013) (p. 91)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How did you react to *Zero Dark Thirty*? Why do you think you responded as you did?
2. Consider the film as a piece of cinematic art. In what ways were the techniques of film-making (casting, direction, lighting, script, music, sets, sound, action, cinematography, editing, etc.) used to get the film's message(s) across or to make the message plausible or compelling? In what ways were they ineffective or misused?
3. With whom did you identify in the film? Why? With whom were we meant to identify?
4. What approach to warfare and conflict have you adopted as an ethical position: pacifism, just war, etc.? What brought you to this conviction?
5. Do you find Americans engaging in thoughtful conversation about the issues raised in *Zero Dark Thirty*? If no, why not?
6. Do you find American Christians engaging in thoughtful conversation, careful Bible study, and prayerful reflection on the issues raised in *Zero Dark Thirty*? If no, what seems to be the biggest obstacles?
7. Is it possible for a Christian to oppose some conflict as unjust while supporting the troops involved in the conflict?

Zero Dark Thirty credits

Starring:

Jessica Chastain (Maya)

Joel Edgerton (Patrick)

Mark Strong (George)

Reda Kateb (Ammar)

Director: Kathryn Bigelow

Writer: Mark Boal

Producers: Kathryn Bigelow, Mark Boal, and others

Original Music: Alexandre Desplat

Cinematography: Greig Fraser

USA, 2013; 157 minutes

Rated R (language, strong violence)



G is for
garden, gown,
and lady Jane **Grey**,
queen for nine days

When I was just a little girl I taught myself Greek and Hebrew. I used to write letters to the Reformers like Ulrich Zwingli (skip ahead to "Z" and you'll see). I was a great niece to King Henry VIII. His son, Edward VI, was the next king. A very godly king. Edward VI died after just a few years on the throne. Since I was part of the Reformation, I was put on the throne as England's queen.

I only lasted nine days until—Mary's army marched through the gates. Then I was put in the Tower of London. Just before I died as a martyr, I gave my sister my Bible. Inside it I wrote, "Rejoice in Christ, as I do. Follow the steps of your master Christ, and take up your cross."



**MORE ARTWORK BY NED BUSTARD
OF SQUARE HALO BOOKS AND WORLD'S END IMAGES**

Here is a smattering of color works by Ned Bustard (interviewed on page 8). Clockwise from top left: Four acrylic paintings inspired by details from the famous Irish calligraphic masterpiece, *The Book of Kells*; An illustration from Stephen J. Nichols' children's book *The Church History ABC's* featuring the brave protestant queen, Lady Jane Grey; A watercolor painting, *Monster Under Glass*; A depiction of the good dwarf Trumpkin from C.S. Lewis' *Prince Caspian: Return to Narnia*; A large woodcut made in collaboration with Matthew Clark called *And Such Were You*. Included in a chapter about "Good" in the book *It Was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God*, this piece shows animals that have all been historically associated with sin and vice in Christian art being the ones God chose to preserve from destruction.