

Critique

Helping Christians Develop Skill in Discernment

In This Issue

- 04 Old Testament Law
Why do we still follow the ten commandments but no longer stone adulterers?

- 05 Apologetics
An excerpt from *Chameleon Christianity* by Dick Keyes on what apologetics means to the average Christian.

- 06 Marketing and Witnessing
Denis D. Haack reviews *The Big Kahuna*.

- 08 Youth Culture, Part Two
Mardi Keyes reflects on the youth culture and on a biblical attitude toward teens.

02 Editor's Note

03 Dialogue

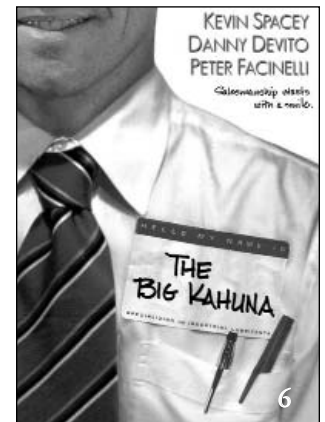
11 Poetry by Daniel Raus

15 Digressions

16 Poetry & Clicks

- 12 Why Do You Get Up?
Do you know what you are called to do? Denis D. Haack reviews two books on calling.

- 14 Bach and Tiananmen Square
Resources that appreciate Bach's music theologically, document Tiananmen Square, and explain the history of Western thought.



Editor

Denis Haack

Managing Editor

Marsena Konkle

Contributing Editors

Steven Garber, R. Greg Grooms, Douglas Groothuis, Donald Guthrie, John Mason Hodges, David John Seel, Jr., Andrew H. Trotter, Jr.

Board of Directors

Craig M. Chambers MD

Steven Garber, Scholar-in-Residence at Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

Donald Guthrie, Vice President for Academics at Covenant Theological Seminary

Denis and Margie Haack, co-founders of Ransom Fellowship

Bonnie Liefer, Director of Communications at Coalition for Christian Outreach

Henry Tazelaar MD, Professor of Pathology, Mayo Medical School

Submissions & Correspondence

Critique considers unsolicited manuscripts only for fiction and poetry. Mail with SASE to:

Marsena Konkle
Critique Managing Editor
 406 Bowman Avenue
 Madison, WI 53716

All other correspondence:
 Denis D. Haack
 1150 West Center
 Rochester, MN 55902

Editor's Note

Sometimes it's the simple things that trip us up. I was reminded of that when my wife asked me to hang some cabinet doors she had removed for painting. She had replaced the hinges with new self-closing ones, so I carefully measured, drilled, screwed, and then discovered I had installed the doors so tightly they wouldn't shut properly. A simple task, but my lack of practice and skill (a blister being further evidence) means I didn't get it right.

Similarly, sometimes it's the simple things that keep us from being discerning. As we are fond of saying in these pages, discernment begins with observing. What's being said? What ideas or values are being demonstrated? A simple task—how hard can it be to observe?—but one that can trip us up if we don't develop and practice the skill with care.

Sometimes we fail to observe because we're busy, and so don't take the time. It's easier, and quicker, to simply go with our first reaction to something instead of making sure we've heard correctly and understood deeply.

Sometimes we fail to observe because we don't bother to ask questions. Or enough questions. Contrary to popular opinion, asking questions is hard work. It is not a skill that tends to come naturally to most people, and so most of us must work at developing it. What's really being said? What do they mean by these words and expressions? Why do they think this is true? Where did they come up with this belief? What difference does it make in their life? How does it fit in with the rest of their convictions and values?

Sometimes we fail to observe because we're tired, and so prefer to simply relax. This can be the case when we settle down to read a book, or listen to music, or watch a movie. Since our days are stressful and full, and this is the first chance we've had to let down, we disengage and allow the entertainment to simply wash over us. This is foolish not only because we live in a fallen world, but foolish in the sense that learning to engage

culture intentionally actually deepens our enjoyment of it. It's not a matter of turning everything into a serious philosophical discussion, but of engaging with culture and people more richly.

Sometimes our failure to observe comes from fear or defensiveness. I talked to a dear Christian friend recently who mentioned she refrained from getting past small talk with a Bahai neighbor because the neighbor seemed happier than she was. "I just don't know what I would say if it turns out she has more peace in her life than I do," she said.

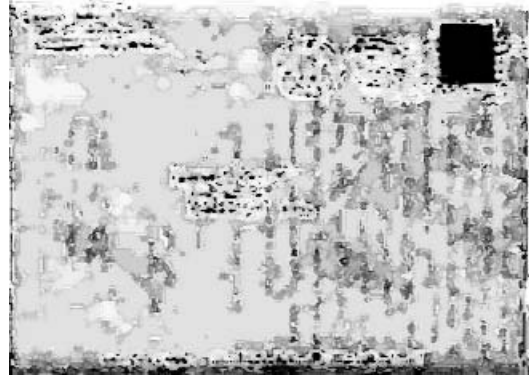
Sometimes we fail to observe because we've been taught that our task is not to listen, but to proclaim. The gospel doesn't change, we're told, so just keep telling it. Besides being a practical denial of the gospel (by demonstrating we do not consider the person we're talking with to be of true significance), it reduces the gospel to a formula. The gospel is unchanging, true, but the gospel is as rich and full as God himself and as broad as created reality, and only by first observing, by asking questions and listening, can we engage our neighbor as a human being, and together explore the fullness and wonder of the truth.

Sometimes we fail to observe because we're sure we already know the answer. There is a difference between observing what non-Christians are truly saying, and assuming we know what they are saying because we've heard some Christian teacher explain what non-Christians are saying.

In any case, observing is a skill to be learned, practiced and developed. Perhaps we should stop thinking of observation as simple, unless we mean the simplicity or effortlessness exhibited by an artist who has bothered to practice the basics of his craft. And then practice some more. ■

-Denis D. Haack

Dialogue



A reader responds to the Intelligent Design movement...

You are invited to take part in *Critique's* Dialogue. Address all correspondence to:

Marsena Konkle
Critique Managing Editor
406 Bowman Avenue
Madison, WI 53716

or e-mail:
Critique_Letters@yahoo.com

Unfortunately, we are unable to respond personally to all correspondence received, but each one is greatly appreciated. We reserve the right to edit letters for length.

I greatly appreciate *Critique* and have for almost three years. I love the movie reviews and your continual call for Christians to be readers of the world. However, your introductory comments to the "Intelligent Design" resources in the most recent issue [Issue #2 - 2000, p. 11.] caused me some concern.

You point out that the main difference between creation science and intelligent design is that the creation scientist begins "with prior religious commitments" whereas the proponent of intelligent design, according to William Dembski, "starts with the data of nature and from there argues to an intelligent cause responsible for the specified complexity in nature." While I recognize both of these statements to be true, I disagree with your implication that intelligent design is superior because of its lack of religious baggage. Instead, as Christians seeking to "prove" God's existence, we are obligated to begin with Scripture rather than with his General Revelation in nature.

As Biblically faithful Christians, we must recognize that there is no neutral, non-religious ground from which we start any scientific endeavor. All humans are religious, and whenever a Christian and an atheist debate, what occurs is a confrontation of entire world views. One either starts with the prior religious commitment that man is autonomous and can understand his world by himself with no reference to the Creator, or one begins with the basic commitment that the God of Scripture is sovereign, recognizing that it is only through revelation from him that we can truly understand our world.

To do as Mr. Dembski says is to practice intellectual idolatry. Jesus Christ reigns now as king over the universe; how dare we be so unfaithful as to make him a mere hypothesis whose validity depends upon the reasoning of his creatures! Instead, we faithfully proclaim

that the God of Scripture exists because he says he does. All men, everywhere, know that he does indeed exist (Romans 1:19-20), and as his people we are to confront ungodliness and idolatry, bringing every thought captive to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Yes, there is obvious intelligent design in nature, but to think that it is obedient evangelism to begin with pagan rules (Empirical Science) and then attempt to jump to Scripture is not faithful reasoning. We declare Christ from the outset; we do not try to sneak him in. We need not fear presupposing Christ, for without the all-knowing God who is the concrete universal at the basis of all reasoning, science cannot exist. The atheistic scientist has absolutely no philosophical reason for the science in which he believes; we do, and we are to give our reason for the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15).

We cannot play by the pagan rules in an attempt to prove God's existence because that tacitly validates man's autonomous reasoning. Instead, we are to destroy all form of thinking and idolatry that set themselves against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:5). My argument is Biblical reasoning which recognizes that unlike man's fixation on proving God's existence, Scripture declares that God exists without attempting to prove it. Instead, Scripture emphatically proclaims that God is and that we are obliged to worship and serve him. That creation science unapologetically begins with a prior religious commitment to Scripture is not a weakness but a strength. If Scripture really is the actual Word of God, and God actually is who Scripture claims him to be, where else but Scripture can Christians possibly begin their scientific endeavors?

Sean F. Sawyers
Jackson, MS

Old Testament Law

Why do we follow certain laws but not others?

Though biblical illiteracy tends to be rather widespread—even among believers—many unbelievers know enough about the Bible to raise questions about how believers understand and interpret the Scriptures. These questions deserve a thoughtful answer, which means it would be wise for Christians to reflect together on how to explain their hermeneutic (how they go about interpreting the Scriptures) to non-Christians in a pluralistic culture.

A recent example of such questions concerns the controversy surrounding some of Laura Schlessinger's comments about homosexuality on her daily radio talk program. Apparently, Dr. Laura used Old Testament texts while speaking against homosexual behavior. In response, a listener wrote the following letter, in essence challenging what they consider to

be her selective, and thus inconsistent, use of biblical law:

Dear Dr. Laura,

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's law. I have learned a great deal from you and try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can.

When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind him that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination.

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the specific laws and how best to follow them.

1. When I burn a bull on the altar as sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord (Leviticus 1:9). The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not

pleasing to them. How should I deal with this?

2. I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as it suggests in Exodus (21:7). In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?

3. Leviticus 25:44 states that I may buy slaves from the nations that are around us. A friend of mine claims this applies to Mexicans but not Canadians. Can you clarify?

4. I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?

5. A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Leviticus 10:10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Have such questions about how you interpret the Bible (especially God's law) ever been raised to you by non-Christians? What specifically did they raise? Were you satisfied by your response? Why or why not?
2. Some would read the letter written to Dr. Laura as being sarcastic or cynical in contrast to being simply an honest question from a friend. Should this matter to the Christian? Should it affect our response? Why or why not?
3. What principles of interpretation do you use to understand and apply Old Testament law? If you cannot clearly verbalize such a set of principles, what specific plans should you make to rectify this lack? If you can verbalize a set of principles, where did you get them? How do you know they are a proper approach to Scripture as God's word? What New Testament texts would you point to as teaching and illustrating these principles?
4. How would you explain your principles of interpretation to an unbeliever using terms they might be able to understand?
5. To what extent does your life demonstrate a thoughtful, joyful, and life-affirming approach to understanding and being faithful to God's moral law?
6. How would you respond to an unbeliever who argues that Christians are hypocrites to be incensed over the legalization of homosexual marriages or over films depicting sexuality or blasphemy when they don't even take their God's law concerning Sabbath rest seriously? Or when they divorce their spouses at virtually the same rate unbelievers do?

Apologetics

6. *Leviticus 20:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle-room here?*
7. *I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of uncleanness (Leviticus 15:19-24). The problem is, how do I know? I have tried asking, but most women take offense.*

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging.
Sincerely,
A Concerned Individual

There are at least two issues here that are worthy of reflection by discerning Christians. The first is the actual controversy surrounding Dr. Laura. (Were her comments wise? Was her tone appropriate? Is talk radio a good forum for such topics? Should Christians support her? Why or why not?)

Though this is not without interest, since it is impossible to reproduce all the necessary facts here for such a discussion, this column will deal with the second issue, namely, what response we would give if similar questions were raised by a non-Christian friend who learned we took the Bible's teaching seriously. ■

~Denis D. Haack

Source:

The letter to Dr. Laura, originally posted on the Internet, was reproduced in "A Bible Quiz for Dr. Laura (no you can't turn the other ear)" by Brian Lambert in the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* (Tuesday June 13, 2000) page F1.

An excerpt from a book by Dick Keyes

Today's society can seldom hear or engage in our direct frontal arguments about God's existence or the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. We have yet to get their attention. As Jesus and Paul did before us, we must be creative and imaginative in presenting God's truth.

One of the most effective apologists to the English-speaking world in our century has been C.S. Lewis (1898-1963). He wrote direct apologetic argument in the early 1940s but then shifted to write narrative with an apologetic edge to it.

Another was G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), one of the most versatile of all recent apologists. Along with direct argument he

ing in debating. What is necessary and desirable is that Christian people both know their own faith and take the ideas of their non-Christian friends seriously. Christians should be caring, curious people whose love for their friends and neighbors drives them to listen to and learn about what those friends and neighbors live for. ■

~Dick Keyes

Source:

Chameleon Christianity: Moving Beyond Safety and Conformity by Dick Keyes (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books; 1999) pp. 68-69.

It is not necessary nor even remotely desirable that all Christians get graduate degrees in philosophy, apologetics, or training in debating.

also wrote history, biography, poetry, drama, novels, and short stories, all the while earning his living as a journalist. In his own exuberant style throughout he commends the humanness, sanity, humor, and fullness of the Christian life.

Would that we would raise up more apologists like Lewis and Chesterton. But the task for all Christians is to be who they are, yet to be people in motion. We who do not know all the answers should model the One who did: He gave few answers but asked many good questions and told unsettling stories. Through these, Jesus called long-held assumptions into doubt and planted seeds of faith in the minds and hearts of people who had been quite closed to his message.

It is not necessary nor even remotely desirable that all Christians get graduate degrees in philosophy, apologetics, or train-



Distinctive Books and Music

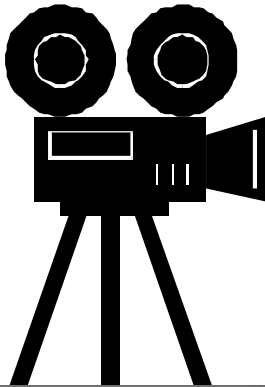
www.heartsandmindsbooks.com
read@heartsandmindsbooks.com

234 East Main Street
Dallastown, PA 17313
(717) 246-3333

All books mentioned in *Critique* may be ordered directly from Hearts and Minds. A small portion of the proceeds will be donated to Ransom Fellowship.

The Darkened Room

Marketing and Witnessing



A Review of The Big Kahuna

by Denis D. Haack

This movie has such a simple plot that most of the action occurs in a single room. And most of the action involves nothing more than talking. Three men talking in a room. In a hospitality suite in a hotel, to be exact, at a convention in Wichita, Kansas. A not-very nice hospitality suite complete with cheap refreshments and a view looking out on a very boring part of town. The three are there to land a big contract with Dick Fuller, the president of another company whom they refer to as The Big Kahuna. Their company sells industrial lubricants. But there is a complication. One of the men is far more committed to Jesus Christ than he is to industrial lubricants.

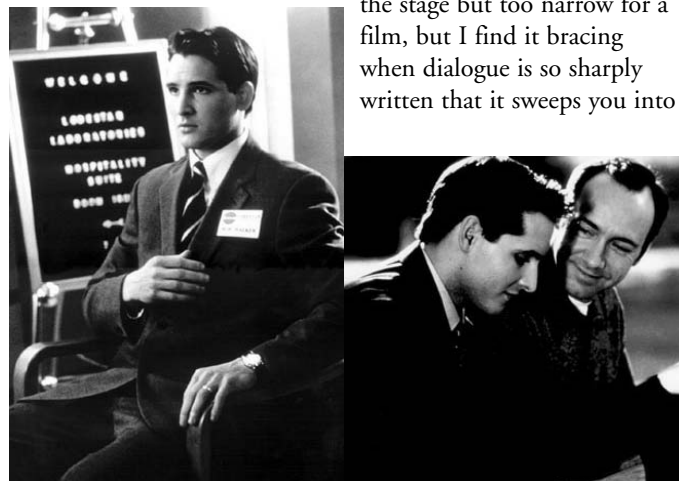
Kevin Spacey plays Larry Mann, a fast-talking, ironic, profane, deeply cynical, a superb salesman for whom nothing seems to matter quite as much as closing the deal. Danny DeVito plays Phil Cooper, Larry's long-time, slightly older and slightly worn-out partner, whose impending divorce is making him wonder whether life in the fast lane is all it's chalked up to be. "I feel like I've been shaking somebody's hand one way or another all of my life," Phil says. And Peter Facinelli plays Bob Walker—young, clean-cut, newly married, nervous about

being at his first convention, and a born-again Baptist.

The three host an open bar in the hospitality suite, waiting for The Big Kahuna to show up so Larry and Phil can work their marketing magic. Afterwards, as they talk about the failure the evening represents, it is discovered that Dick Fuller had shown up, but without a name tag, and that Bob had spent the long evening in conversation with him. Fuller was depressed over the death of his dog, Bob says, and the conversation simply went on from there. "We talked about Christ," Bob says finally, nervous, yet certain he has done the right thing. "About Christ?" screams Larry. "Did you mention what line of industrial lubricant Jesus uses?" When Bob mentions that Mr. Fuller has invited him to join him later at another party, Larry and Phil insist that he goes. "It's like putting me in the deep end and seeing if I can swim," says Bob. "No," Larry replies, "it's like pushing you off a cliff and seeing if you can fly."

The Big Kahuna is a remarkable movie, based on a play, *Hospitality Suite*, by Roger Rueff, who also wrote the screenplay for the film. Some critics and viewers find the scope of the film (one room) sufficient for

the stage but too narrow for a film, but I find it bracing when dialogue is so sharply written that it sweeps you into



Film Credits

Starring:

Kevin Spacey
(Larry Mann)
Danny DeVito
(Phil Cooper)
Peter Facinelli
(Bob Walker)

Director:

John Swanbeck

Screenwriter:

Roger Rueff

Based on play by:

Roger Rueff

Producers:

Gerard Guez
Barbara A. Hall
Joanne Horowitz
Bernie Morris
Elie Samaha
Kevin Spacey
Andrew Stevens

Music:

Christopher Young

Cinematography:

Anastas N. Michos

Costumes:

Katharine Jane
Bryant

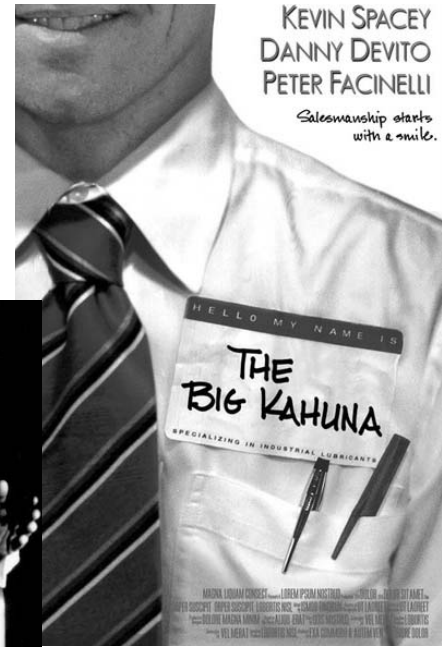
90 minutes

Rated R for language

the lives of the characters. DeVito and Spacey are utterly believable as Phil and Larry. And unlike so many Hollywood productions which caricature believers unfairly, Facinelli depicts a born-again Christian whom you could find actually sitting in a Baptist pew on an average Sunday morning. Near the end of the film, when Phil finally penetrates Bob's armor, his fatherly speech is both tender and compelling. All three characters develop in the course of the film, and it is this development, revealed in the dialogue, which makes the film so satisfying as cinema.

As the final credits roll, we hear the script from an actual advertisement which consists of a series of platitudes given as advice. Though irritatingly bland, the recitation reminds us of two facts. It reminds us that we live in a consumer culture, and that most people are still looking and waiting for their Big Kahuna.

"There are two religions in America, one spiritual, one secular. The first worships in churches, the second at business conventions," Roger Ebert says. "*The Big*



Few films raise so many questions so explicitly or invite discussion about such a range of issues.

Kahuna is about an uneasy confrontation between these two systems of faith." Or as movie critic Michael Elliott summarized in his review on Crosswalk.com: "Is it possible to swim with the sharks and still be a fisher of men?" Relatively few films raise so many

questions so explicitly or invite discussion about such a range of issues: the meaning of life, the nature of human relationships, the essence of sales as a vocation, the relationship of evangelism to marketing, and the place of personal faith and witnessing in the marketplace.

We recommend *The Big Kahuna* to you. Rated R for the language which is nothing but what you'd expect to hear in a hospitality suite filled with salesmen trying to sell industrial lubricants. ■

-Denis D. Haack

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What was your initial or immediate reaction to *The Big Kahuna*? Why do you think you reacted that way?
2. Discuss each of the three characters—Larry, Phil, and Bob—and their significance to the story. What are they like? What are their concerns? How realistic are the portrayals? With whom did you identify? Why? With whom were you meant to identify?
3. Since Bob had been sent by his company to the convention to help close a sale, was his choosing instead to witness on company time an ethical decision? Why or why not?
4. What is the message(s) of the film? What issues and questions are actually raised in the dialogue in the film? What answers are given? How compelling are those answers? Where do you agree? Where do you disagree? Why? In the areas in which we might disagree, how can we talk about and demonstrate the truth in a winsome and creative way in our pluralistic culture?
5. In what ways were the techniques of film-making (casting, direction, script, music, sets, action, cinematography, editing, etc.) used to get the film's message(s) across, or to make the message plausible or compelling?
6. What window(s) of insight does the film give into the way postmodern people see life, meaning, evangelism, and reality?
7. Since the film raises so many thoughtful issues of interest to both Christians and non-Christians alike, what plans should you make to use *The Big Kahuna* as a point of contact for discussion with your unbelieving friends?

Youth Culture &

Adapted from a lecture given by Mardi Keyes at a L'Abri Conference, Feb-2000.

In part one of this two-part series, Keyes explored the contradictory attitudes adults have toward young people, explained the invention of adolescence, and described some important facets of youth culture.

Loss of Identity

Those who construct the youth culture are not motivated by the desire to see young people grow morally, spiritually, intellectually or psychologically. The entertainment and fashion industries are fueled by immense economic interests. They need the youth culture for their very existence and have everything to gain by keeping young people in “adolescent/teenage” mode, isolated from the adult world, and looking to the media to know what to care about, what to buy and how to live.

“Adolescence” has been understood as a unique time, when young people find and solidify a sense of personal identity in relation to, but separate from their parents. Now, the very idea and hope of finding a coherent identity or “self” is being undermined by postmodern academics, but also by changing mores and popular culture.

For example, the fragmentation of life—family breakdown and mobility, the idolatry of “diversity,” a dizzying array of “lifestyle choices,” a world without boundaries created by technology and the media—all these things undermine the idea and experience of a coherent self.

Human beings are no longer considered glorious images of God. We are not even considered persons in the Enlight-

enment sense—the height of evolution, and capable of building a better human society. Pop culture reinforces the post-modern idea that we are only bodies, with diverse and changing desires.

Clothes and fashion no longer express the self, because there is no self. Instead, they construct the self. For example: picture a conversation between a mother and daughter about a dress. The Mother says “this dress just isn’t me.” The daughter replies, “But Mom, just think—with that dress, you could be somebody.”

A new poll by Nickelodeon and *Time*, reports that among 12 to 14 year olds, the 3 most important factors in “fitting in” with peers at school, are (in this order) clothes, popularity, and being good looking.¹ Again, it’s all about externals and image.

And, not surprisingly, national polls show a diminishing commitment to internal character virtues like honesty—which are essential for a strong sense of personal identity. In one survey of 236,000 young people, 25% to 40% of

teens saw nothing wrong with cheating on exams,

stealing from employers, or keeping money that wasn’t theirs. Two other surveys revealed that 65% to 75% of high school students admitted to cheating.

Significantly, the rationale for cheating is a response to the adult pressure to “succeed” at all costs. In that atmosphere, getting good grades is more important than being honest.² Again adults have a lot to answer for. Michael Josephson (in

Ethical Values, Attitudes, and Behaviors in American Schools) rightly points out that the ethics of this generation are but an “amplified echo of the worst moral messages of their elders.”³

Postmodern academics and certain business interests may celebrate the loss of identity, but young people are flooding the offices of counselors—depressed and suicidal. They are escaping life’s pressures and the pain of meaninglessness through alcohol, drugs, promiscuity, eating disorders, cutting, a whole array of addictions and other self-destructive behavior.

Absent Parents

Study after study shows that by and large, parents are very little help to their children in coping with the pressures of youth culture. Many kids start the day having breakfast alone or with younger siblings they are responsible for and then come home to an empty house after school. It is no accident that kids get into the most serious trouble between 3 and 6 pm, when they are alone at home (not late at night, when youth curfews kick in!).

When parents get home, they are too stressed, exhausted and distracted by their own problems to give their kids much attention. Also, they tend to believe that their children (especially teenagers) would rather be left alone.

With the wisdom of social history, Thomas Hines observes, “What contemporary Americans are attempting—providing a prolonged, protected period of childhood and youthful preparation for our offspring while both parents work outside the household—is novel. In the past, when both parents worked, their

Growing Up, Part Two

children did so as well. On farms, work and family life were essentially inseparable. And when schooling became the job of the young, it was usually supported by a nonworking mother maintaining a household that explicitly supported educational values...Our attempt to maintain an elaborate domestic life—with nobody home—is an experiment that seems doomed to fail...”⁴

If parents spend virtually no time with their children, then they cannot really know them or the world they inhabit, and can be very little help to them. Patricia Hersch writes: “The bottom line: we can lecture kids to our heart’s content but if they don’t care what we think, or there is no relationship between us that matters to them, or they think we are ignorant of the reality of their lives, they will not listen.”⁵

Parents Lack Moral Framework

The parent generation produced the consumer culture and invented the sexual revolution, and many are more captive to them than their kids are. In a 1994 article entitled “Youth Outlook,” a teenage girl asked, “If adults use sex to sell toiletries, why shouldn’t kids use it to sell themselves?”⁶

Many parents either avoid the subject of teen sexuality or communicate double messages—discouraging early sexual activity (for health, not moral reasons), while handing out condoms. Others give sermons, but don’t really listen to their kids. Young people mainly learn about dating, sex and relationships from friends, television and movies—though they say they would rather learn from parents.⁷ A developmental psychologist on staff at a large Boston evangelical church told me that many Christian parents bring their children to him and say “you tell them about sex.”

Many adults are afraid and intimidated by their teenage children, believing their kids aren’t interested in talking with them. They tend to leave the room (or the house) when

their sons and daughters bring friends home. In tragic irony, young people interpret their parents’ withdrawal as a lack of interest in them.

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development found: “Young adolescents do not want to be left to their own devices. In national surveys and focus groups, America’s

America’s youth want more regular contact with adults who care about and respect them.

youth have given voice to serious longing. They want more regular contact with adults who care about and respect them.”⁸

A 17 year-old told me that he felt he was expected to rebel against his parents. But he didn’t want to rebel. What he longed for more than anything in the world was a friendship with his dad (a respected Christian leader). The fact that he had to do all the initiating made him feel ashamed.

Christian parents, in their concern, often turn to the church, putting their hope in a youth pastor who will deal with their children. But too many church youth groups just duplicate the culture’s condescension toward young people. Rather than creatively involving them in real responsibilities, serious thought and service, the youth pastor’s job is limited to showing kids that they can have fun without sex, alcohol and drugs—communicating that entertainment and shopping are the only things young people are interested in and can handle.

An 18 year-old girl told me with disgust about “The Teen Bible” full of condescending stories about acne and peer pressure. She knew she was fully capable of reading the “real” Bible. Thankfully, there are youth groups that are much more constructive than what I’ve described.

On the positive side, surveys of young people indicate that those who have “involved, principled parents” are much more likely to share their parents’ values, and reject the destructive elements of the youth culture.⁹ As Hines writes: “there is evidence that if parents do take a lively, though not defensive, interest in their children’s lives, their teens are less likely to commit crimes, use drugs, or become pregnant prematurely. For example, teenagers who have dinner with their families most nights are far less likely to get into trouble than those who do not.”¹⁰

These findings should not be startling, but it seems that today we need the social sciences to tell us what should be obvious!

A Biblical Perspective

The Bible refers to infants, children, young men and women, adults, and the elderly. Each stage of life has its distinguishing experiences, and its particular glory (strengths) and vulnerabilities. But the Bible assumes an enormous amount of natural, casual interaction between all ages. And the Biblical writers frequently command the different generations to imitate the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of each other. In other words, we are all to be models for each other, in positive and negative ways.

We live in a culture where most of life is lived with peers. Age segregation is so much a part of the fabric of life, even in the church, that we take it for granted and think it’s normal. In fact, it is a very recent historical phenomenon, and what began as age segregation, has for many, become age alienation.

When all ages rubbed shoulders together throughout the day, it was assumed that the young would quite naturally and unselfconsciously grow up into maturity through observing and relating to adults in many casual settings. Now we obsess about the

importance of “role models” for our children and formalize mentoring programs because modeling no longer happens naturally in the course of day-to-day living.

Youth Defined

In O.T. Hebrew, the youth is described as one who “shakes off,” or shakes him or herself free.

Proverbs 20:29 says, “The glory of youths is their strength...” Clearly, the Bible does not share our culture’s view that young people are intrinsically weak, unstable, and incapacitated by raging hormones and the temptations of the shopping mall.

Paul assumes that young people are capable of turning from the destructive desires of youth and pursuing “justice, integrity, love and peace together with all who worship the Lord in singleness of mind” (2 Tim 2:22).

John wrote that the young people had conquered the evil one, were strong and full of the Word of God. (1 John 2:14). They were having a significant impact in the cosmic battle in the unseen world. This is heroism of the highest order.

The Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to “let no one despise your youth” (1 Tim 4:11). The church needed Timothy’s gifts, wisdom and leadership, and he was not to feel intimidated by those who despised his youth.

The Apostle Peter announced the birth of the New Testament Church with Joel’s prophecy: The Holy Spirit was poured out, male and female slaves prophesied, the young saw visions and the old dreamed dreams. Young and old needed each other. We still do.

Vulnerability of youth

The vulnerability of youth is the combi-

nation of new freedom and power with a lack of experience in using it. In the process of “shaking free” young adults are exposed to many new voices, appeals, and invitations—both good and evil—and each must choose who to listen to, which path to take, and which community to belong to.

In the Biblical framework, parents are to raise children with this crucial time in mind. By their nurturing, teaching, friendship, discipline, and by the example

Age segregation is so much a part of the fabric of life we think it’s normal.

and story of their lives, parents and all adults should be making wisdom, goodness and integrity beautiful and attractive to the young, showing evil to be unappealing. True safety and security is found not in total withdrawal from the world (including the youth culture), nor in lists of rules and regulations, permissions and prohibitions. True safety can only come from loving wisdom and goodness, which Proverbs equates with love and fear of the Lord.

Whether he realizes it or not, Thomas Hines expresses well the wisdom of Proverbs. He argues that young people “should be treated as beginners—inexperienced people who aren’t fundamentally different from adults, but who, because they are dealing with so many new things in their lives, usually need more help, more attention, and more patience than those who have more experience.” (At the very time when we give them less...)

“In other words, we need to get rid of G.S. Hall’s discredited notion of the adolescent as incompetent, troubled, half-

mad, and dangerous, along with the stereotype of ‘raging hormones’ that gives that old prejudice a pseudoscientific veneer...”

“Youth should be a time for learning that one’s decisions have consequences—although not necessarily irreversible ones. Young people should be encouraged to experiment...They should have the opportunity to try something new and unlikely—and fail at it—without being branded a failure for life...” The Book of Proverbs is very clear about this. Failure is an inevitable part of being human in a broken world. Learning how to fail without being destroyed is a crucial part of what wisdom is about. In the Bible, grace is what makes this possible—God’s grace towards us, and our grace towards each other.

Young Heroes

God’s view of young people couldn’t be farther from the idolatry, envy, exploitation, fear, blame and condemnation of our culture. We learn from the Bible and subsequent history that young men and women are capable of making enormous contributions to the Kingdom of God and human society.

The boy David’s faith put the whole Israelite army to shame. God called the Prophet Jeremiah when he was young. He described himself as “only a boy.”

The young men Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were called to be leaders in the pagan court of the King of Babylon. It took incredible wisdom for them to know where to draw moral and religious lines, and courage to disobey the King’s decrees, knowing death was the punishment, and not knowing ahead of time that God would deliver them.

Mary was probably 14 or 15 when the angel Gabriel asked her to bear the Son of God. In spite of her perplexity and fear, she said “yes” to God. Mary acted with heroic obedience and faith, not knowing whether her fiancé would believe her unlikely story, and knowing that stoning was the punishment for adultery.

In the early 1800’s, a huge spiritual awakening and missionary movement grew out of the prayer meetings of New England college students from Williams, Middlebury, Bowdoin and Amherst.

The book, *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed* tells the story of the French village, le

Young men and women are capable of making enormous contributions to the Kingdom of God and human society.

Chambon, which under the leadership of its Protestant pastor, successfully hid thousands of Jewish children from the Nazis. The high school Bible study group was the communication center of the whole operation. Teenage boys and girls carried messages by bicycle to and from the farmers who hid the children. Not one child was lost.

Many consider the Birmingham Children’s March, organized by Martin Luther King Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to have been the turning point in the 1960’s civil rights struggle. Knowing the dangers, thousands of black school children marched, and were arrested, hosed and attacked by dogs. The “great deeds” of young children bear witness to the power of early formative moral influences, and to the truth of King’s conviction that “spiritual age is not chronological age.”¹¹

Cassie Bernall is the Christian teenager in Columbine who responded “Yes” when the gunman asked if she believed in God.

Her mother Misty refers to the “unlikely martyrdom” of her daughter, because “she was just a teen,” who could be selfish and stubborn. Her mother has wisely resisted the hype that wants to turn Cassie into a “saint.” But the surprise so many have shown at her courage reveals condescension toward the young. Why are we surprised when a teenager acts heroically? Jesus gave children as models of greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven.

These are all heroes we know about, but heroism is not dependent on fame. God knows the heroic choices young people make, day-by-day, though no one else may be aware. And one day, what is hidden will be revealed.

I cannot end without giving thanks to God for his grace, mercy and forgiveness. Some folks, of all ages, have thrown themselves into the destructive elements of popular culture with gusto. Some sons and daughters aren’t ready to come home until their pockets are empty, they’re hungry and have nowhere else to go. But like the Father in the story of the Prodigal Son, God is watching, and runs down the driveway to embrace any son or daughter who “comes to themselves,” and returns home. With no guilt-tripping, or recriminations about the squandered money, the Father throws a party, and will not let his child “quit the family.” He reinstates us as sons and daughters ready to grow into adult responsibility.■

~Mardi Keyes

Mardi Keyes co-directs the Southborough, MA, branch of L’Abri Fellowship with her husband Dick. They are the parents of three sons aged 29, 28, and 22.

Sources:

¹¹“The Kids Are Alright,” *TIME*, 5 July 1999, p. 57.

²*A Tribe Apart* by Patricia Hersch (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1998). pp. 100-101.

³*Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴Hines, pp. 285-286.

⁵Hersch, p. 365.

⁶Hines, p. 271.

⁷“Where’d You Learn That?” *Time Magazine*, 15 June 1998.

⁸Hersch, p.364.

⁹Hines, p. 227.

¹⁰Hines, p. 282.

¹¹“Heartland of Darkness” by Jean Bethke Elstain, *The New Republic* 17 Jan. 2000, p. 35.

A Poem

the smaller my illusions about myself
the bigger the illusions I cast on you
freedom seems to be the hardest road
where to have and not to have
are two sides of the same coin
where giving up everything
is gaining all
where to be or not to be
is no longer the question
the world of illusion recedes
all around is but stony ground
the sky is full of doubt
and the awareness
that I chose this path myself
is the only map I have

~Daniel Raus

Daniel Raus is a poet, songwriter, and musician living with his family in Prague. He works as a journalist and broadcaster in the Slovak language service of Radio Free Europe. This poem is from a book of poetry to be published this year by Navrat Domu, a Christian publishinghouse in the Czech Republic. English translation by Daniel Raus.

Why Do You Get

Several books have been published recently which take as their topic one of the great, liberating teachings of grace, a topic which has been sadly muddled and ignored by the church for much too long. The topic is that of calling, and it is difficult to think of anything more needed at a time when the press of busyness tends to squeeze out of

***Who knows? Who cares? Why bother?
-90's Bumper Sticker***

You must find something that you are willing to die for, or you will have no life worth living.

-Søren Kierkegaard

Slavery is work without any light from eternity, without poetry, without religion.

-Simone Weil

our souls whatever remnants of significance we sense in our fragmented lives. Growing up, my understanding of calling basically came down to three simple—but totally incorrect and unbiblical—assumptions: only people in the ministry received a call, everyone else's work was far less important, and if God called me, I wouldn't like it.

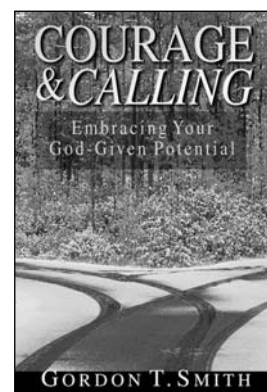
The truth of the matter is that the biblical doctrine of calling defines the "why" for our lives, and provides a deep sense of meaning which transforms the ordinary and the routine of our existence into faithfulness before our heavenly Father who has called us to himself. Our

calling from God defines what we should say Yes to, so we can also know what we can and should say No to—without feeling yanked around by guilt, or the expectations and needs of others. God's call to us will not harm us. It is related to who we are, and to all of our life, since the same God who calls us also made us.

Rather than finding God's call a distasteful interruption, it is the only possible path to fulfillment. "The place God calls you to," novelist Frederick Buechner says, "is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meets." And when we find ourselves in dark times, uncertain times, or periods of endless tedium, a sense of calling can provide the encouragement to face another day.

"The Christian understanding of motivation is one of the deepest, richest, and most distinctive parts of the faith," Os Guinness writes. "Partly expressed in such notions as serving God, pleasing God, and glorifying God, it is developed most fully in the biblical doctrine of 'calling.' The Christian notion of calling, or vocation, is the conviction that human existence contains a life-purpose and a life task, namely that all we are and all we do—our identities, gifts, and responsibilities—have a direction and dynamic because they are lived out as a response to a calling, or summons, from God."

In *The Call*, Guinness develops a series of 26 beautifully written medita-



tions that are designed to be read one day at a time. Thoughtful yet devotional, each chapter helps unfold the biblical doctrine of calling within the specific challenges we

face in our postmodern world. Most books this stimulating and rich in teaching do not necessarily lend themselves to devotional reading, but *The Call* begs to be read aloud, savored, and prayed over, as well as discussed.

In *Courage and Calling*, Dr. Smith, academic dean of Regent College in Vancouver, B.C., is primarily concerned with helping Christians actually find and live out their particular calling before the Lord. Certainly not a "how-to" in the crass sense of that label, it is intensely practical, so that the ordinary Christian can both understand the biblical teaching as well as begin the pilgrimage of finding and living out their calling or vocation. "We must be both realistic and idealistic. We need to discern our vocations, and we must also discern how God would have us fulfill that vocation within the complexities and brokenness of this world," Smith writes. "This means that if we are going to thrive in this world, in the social, economic and ministry context in which we live, our only hope is to live a life that is congruent with who we are, with whom God has made us to be and how God has gifted us, graced us, and thus called us. If we are going to be all we are meant to be, this is where we must begin. Ultimately, we are only true and

Up Each Morning?

faithful to God our Creator when we seek this congruence.”

We commend both *The Call* and *Courage and Calling* to you. Both are excellent, and the two books complement one another well. Read them, give them as gifts, discuss them in small groups, and use them in family devotions. They restore to the church an area of teaching the loss of which has not only wreaked havoc in the lives of many, but has cheapened the gospel before a watching world. ■

~Denis D. Haack

Books reviewed:

The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life by Os Guinness (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing; 1998)
247 pp.

Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential by Gordon T. Smith (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; 1999) 197 pp. + notes + suggestions for further reading.

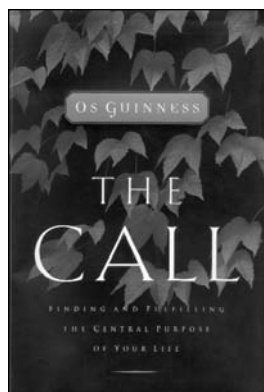


Distinctive Books and Music

www.heartsandmindsbooks.com
read@heartsandmindsbooks.com

234 East Main Street
Dallastown, PA 17313
(717) 246-3333

All books mentioned in *Critique* may be ordered directly from Hearts and Minds. A small portion of the proceeds will be donated to Ransom Fellowship.



An excerpt from *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* by Os Guinness (pp. 112-113).

Human life is not only life on the road but also life in search of home...

For those who live life as a journey and see faith as a journey, calling has an obvious implication. It reminds us that we are all at different stages on the way and none of us alive has yet arrived. Trouble comes when we forget this fact and pretend that life is static and settled, as if everything were a matter of sharp lines, clear boundaries, precise labels, and final assessments. So that some are in, some out; some have arrived, others not...

Certainly we who follow Christ know why we have lost our original home. We know the home to which we are going. And we know not only the One who awaits us there, who makes it home, but also One who goes with us on the journey. But we are still on a journey, and we are truly travelers. We are not wanderers, but we are wayfarers. We have discovered that he is the way, but we are still on the road. Our faith is a pilgrim faith essentially at odds with place and settlement.

In all our testimony this sense of “progress report” or “work in progress” changes everything. Just imagine what we might have been without Christ. Novelist Evelyn Waugh, for example, was notoriously contentious and at times nearly paranoid. Yet he admitted to a friend, “I know I am awful. But how much more awful I should be without the Faith.” C. S. Lewis expanded on this point in *God in the Dock*: “Take the case of the sour old maid, who is a Christian, but cantankerous. On the other hand, take some pleasant and popular fellow, but who has never been to Church. Who knows how much more cantankerous the old maid might be if she were not a Christian, and how much more likeable the nice fellow might be if he were a Christian? You can’t judge Christianity simply by comparing the product in these two people; you would need to know what kind of raw material Christ was working on in both cases.”

[C]alling reminds us that, recognizing all the different stages people are at, there are many more who are followers of Jesus and on the Way than we realize. To forget this and insist that everyone be as we are, at the same stage and with the same stories as ours, is to be a Christian Pharisee. For the Gospels tell us it was the Pharisees who were shocked at those following Jesus. “While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and ‘sinners’ were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.” Exclusiveness and exclusion always result from making a false idol of purity. Pharisaism, in fact, is the result of a perverted passion for theological purity just as ethnic cleansing is for racial purity.

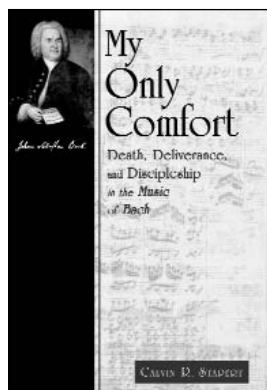
Is this situation any different today? Are we saved by believing in Jesus or by trusting theologically correct formulations of believing in Jesus? Are only creed-carrying pillars of orthodoxy to be counted as true Christians? Or should we expect to find that some of the followers that Christ loves most are as unlikely as the wise men from the East, the loose-living foreign woman at the well, or the centurion from the army of the hated occupying power? Even the best and quickest of the disciples took three years of following Jesus to come close to seeing who he was. And no sooner had they seen it than they misunderstood it and betrayed him. Are we going to make the process simpler, surer, more routine? ■

~Os Guinness

Theological Bach

Most people, even most non-musicians, probably know that Johann Sebastian Bach was a superb musician, a prolific composer, and a committed Christian. What we non-musicians don't know, however, is how to enjoy his music thoughtfully and deeply, beyond simply listening to a piece and taking in whatever seems obvious at the moment. Now, thanks to Calvin Stapert, professor of music at Calvin College, our appreciation of Bach's music can be enriched. In his new book *My Only Comfort*, Stapert uses the *Heidelberg Catechism* to help us understand the Christian world view expressed so wonderfully in Bach's compositions.

Now, readers with some knowledge of the Reformation will notice a bit of a



problem here. Bach was a committed Lutheran and the *Heidelberg* is a Reformed, not a Lutheran catechism. In fact, as Stapert notes, not only is there no evidence that Bach was even acquainted with the *Heidelberg*, there is some evidence that Bach, as a committed Lutheran, held some anti-Calvinist views. In his library was a book, *Anti-Calvinismus*, which summed up its argument this way: "We have shown that the 'reformed' doctrine overthrows the foundation of belief and therefore deserves to be condemned." Stapert uses the *Heidelberg*, nevertheless, because it is the catechism he knows best, and though it is a Calvinist document, it expresses the heart of the "mere Christianity" which flowed from the Reformation. Stapert's book title comes from the first question of the catechism. "What is your only

comfort in life and in death?" Answer: "That I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him."

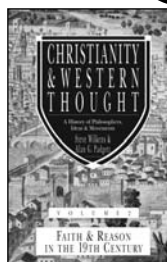
After introducing the reader to Bach's life and work, Stapert walks us through a number of his compositions in detail using the three main sections of the *Heidelberg Catechism* as an outline. "I hope that by providing," Stapert writes, "key doctrinal statements from the Catechism, relevant Scripture passages, literal translations, and commentary on

the texts and music, this book will make Bach's theologically astute, artistically masterful, and religiously devout works more understandable for many listeners and hence make them more available as means for instruction, edification, and devotion."

This is not a book that can be dashed through quickly, especially by non-musicians. It is, rather, a lively, interesting, and well-written textbook designed to help us understand, reflect on, and enjoy serious music. It requires a bit of work, but the effort is well worth it. I can imagine small groups using *My Only Comfort* together,

Briefly Noted

Why We Think The Way We Do



Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas and Movements (volume 2) Faith and Reason in the 19th Century by Steve Wilkens and Alan G. Padgett (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; 2000) 370 pp. + notes + index.

Though many people fancy themselves to be independent thinkers, the truth of the matter is that we are all products of our culture, and thus part of a living and on-going legacy of philosophy and thought. In 1990, Dr. Colin Brown, professor of theology at Fuller Seminary, published *Christianity and Western Thought* (volume 1) covering the period from the ancient world to the Enlightenment, which we recommended in these pages. Now the second volume in the series has been published, covering the 19th century, by two professors at Azusa Pacific University, Steve Wilkins (associate professor of philosophy and ethics) and Alan Padgett (professor of theology and philosophy). The third volume in the series will survey 20th century thought.

Those who wish a thoughtful series of textbooks which survey Western philosophy from a Christian perspective will want to add *Christianity and Western Thought* to their libraries.

Going Too Far

occasionally planning an evening of listening to Bach and discussing one of the chapters of the book. Musicians can help the rest of us understand the more technical or detailed aspects of Stapert's commentary. And churches can use *My Only Comfort* to enrich their congregational worship which would please the author, no doubt, since the book is part of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Series "designed to promote reflection on the history, theology, and practice of Christian worship and to stimulate worship renewal in Christian congregations."

We recommend *My Only Comfort* to you. Be warned though: if you purchase and read this book, you will likely discover it is God's will to also purchase a number of CDs. ■

~Denis D. Haack

Book reviewed:

My Only Comfort: Death, Deliverance, and Discipleship in the Music of Bach by Calvin R. Stapert (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; 2000) 225 pp. + glossary + references + index.

In *Courage and Calling*, Gordon Smith points out that believers need to pursue their work as unto the Lord, which means with a commitment to excellence, truth, diligence, generosity, and Sabbath rest. To be content with mediocrity instead of excellence, for example, or with selfishness instead of generosity is clearly to be less than faithful.

Dr. Smith, however, has a further insight which is important, namely, that each of these characteristics "can be embraced and pursued to a fault." The danger, in other words, is not just that we fall short in our work, so to speak, but that we go too far. "The pursuit of excellence can become perfectionism," Smith notes, "the pursuit of truth, bigotry; and the pursuit of diligence, hectic activity." Some people are not really generous, they are instead, so unable to say No to requests that they are tyrannized by urgent needs. And even Sabbath rest, which is meant to be a great grace, can be turned into a legalism which burdens instead of refreshes.

In our driven culture we are likely to be primarily concerned about slacking off in our work, and perhaps largely unaware of the danger that lurks in the other extreme. Francis Schaeffer often pointed out that the Christian life is like walking on a narrow path between two sharp cliffs. Back away too far from one error and we will fall off the other side. So it is in our work and calling. "We must call one another to pursue these qualities in a manner that is life-giving rather than pursuing them to a fault," Smith notes, "which is deadly." ■

~Denis D. Haack

Source:

Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential by Gordon T. Smith (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; 1999).

Briefly Noted

Tiananmen Square



One of the defining images of the 20th century is the 1989 picture of a lone Chinese man standing still before the tank in Tiananmen Square. Broadcast on TV around the world, the image became of symbol of courage in the face of tyranny. In the documentary *Moving the Mountain*, director Michael Apted brought together the student leaders of Tiananmen Square on the fifth anniversary of the protest to reflect on the protest and its tragic ending. Poignant and compelling, *Moving the Mountain* is a study in leadership, Chinese Marxist dictatorship, moral responsibility, and the deep human yearning to be free.

We recommend *Moving the Mountain* to you. (The film is 83 minutes in length and in English.) And for a further—and in many ways very sad—update on the lives and thinking of these student leaders, most of whom are now studying in the West, be sure to read "Tiananmen, Inc.," published in *The New Yorker* (May 31, 1999; pp. 45-52). All very worth discussing, with both young and old alike.

Send Critique to a Friend

If you know someone who might be interested in receiving a copy of *Critique*, please let us know! Give us their name and address and we'll be glad to send out a copy.

Contact us via e-mail
(ransom_fellowship@compuserve.com)
or mail (1150 West Center, Rochester,
MN 55902).

Redeem Tape

RedeemTape@aol.com

A Poem

the dust of death settles on everything
 the water of life washes it away
 behind everything is the wheel of futility and hope
 decay and love, light and shadow
 indifference and new birth
 maybe everything fits together
 maybe everything clashes
 I cannot change the fate of this world
 nor my own lot
 I just want the water of life
 to wash the dust
 from my soul

-Daniel Raus

Daniel Raus is a poet, songwriter, and musician living with his family in Prague. He works as a journalist and broadcaster in the Slovak language service of Radio Free Europe. This poem is from a book of poetry to be published this year by Navrat Domu, a Christian publishinghouse in the Czech Republic. English translation by Daniel Raus.

Sermons for a postmodern generation

Redeemer Presbyterian Church Tapes

There's a lot of talk today about "seeker-sensitive" churches, but often "relevance" seems to come at the cost of dumbing down the message. Timothy Keller, former professor at Westminster Seminary and now pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Manhattan, proves week by week that one can speak to an unchurched, postmodern audience while maintaining rich biblical and theological content. These are tapes worth listening to. And discussing. And listening to again in order to learn how to communicate the gospel win- somely in a postmodern world.

Ransom Ratings

Design: It's not a website. (But it is on the Internet.)

Content: Upon requesting a copy, they'll send you a catalogue listing messages and sermons on a full range of topics and texts. The prices are reasonable (\$5/tape), they accept credit cards (for orders of 5 or more tapes), and it is possible to subscribe to receive tapes on a bi-weekly basis.

Ease of Use: The large number of tapes can be a bit daunting, since there are over a thousand listed in the catalogue, but then everyone should be able to identify messages by Rev. Keller on a topic or text that is of interest. Or begin a subscription. And for those who prefer non-email, request a catalogue by phoning 212-808-4460, ext. 136, or write Tape Ministry, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 271 Madison, Suite 1600, New York, NY 10016.

The articles and resources reproduced or recommended in *Critique* do not necessarily reflect the thinking of Ransom Fellowship. The purpose of this newsletter is to encourage thought, not dictate points of view.

Critique is a newsletter (published nine times each year, funds permitting) designed to accomplish, by God's grace, three things:

1. To call attention to resources of interest to thinking Christians.
2. To model Christian discernment.
3. To stimulate believers to think biblically about all of life.

Critique is sent free of charge as a ministry to all donors to Ransom Fellowship, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-deductible ministry. Everyone on Ransom's mailing list also receive *Notes from Toad Hall*, a newsletter written 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.