

# Critique

Helping Christians Develop Skill in Discernment

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# Editor's Note

One aspect of Christian discernment that is easily overlooked is the need to distinguish between primary or really essential issues, and secondary, tangential ones. After all, if we correctly identify what issues are at stake, but then get distracted away from the important ones by things that matter less, we've failed to stand for the truth in a way that is really crucial.

Sometimes this is fairly simple. If someone asks a question about our faith, for example, but does so in a cynical or hostile manner, they still deserve an honest answer. Refusing to care for them because we don't care for their attitude is an option the Christian dare not choose. It's not that cynicism and hostility are insignificant, but rather that from a biblical perspective, the person and their question are of primary importance.

On the other hand, sometimes secondary issues seem to loom large, especially when they are right in our face. Just because they are secondary in importance for the conversation at hand doesn't mean they are unimportant. Consider language, for example. Profanity and irreverence are important because words matter, first of all, because they reveal what is at the core of our being. Words also make a difference. The rhyme we all used to chant as children—"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me"—is a lie. Words can hurt, and the scars they leave can last a lifetime. What is more, God exists, and that makes blasphemy a fearsome thing.

So, some Christians make a point of asking neighbors and coworkers not to use certain words in their presence. Others are careful not to read novels or attend movies in which such language is found. They are correct in believing that language and manners are important. One wonders, though, if they aren't being distracted by something that is of secondary importance.

When Paul was in Athens he quoted one of their pagan poets, agreeing that people, as created beings, are the "offspring" of the Creator (Acts 17:28). The poet was actually writing about Zeus

in a work which clearly reflected a pagan world view, but that did not distract Paul from reading it, from noting the truth the poet was asserting, and from using it as a point of contact for discussion with the Athenians. The fact that Paul appropriated this quote without debating whether it should be applied to Zeus made his witness all the more powerful. Something the Athenians believed to be true had suddenly—subversively—been turned into a reason to believe in Jesus.

Similarly, is it not possible that someone who has what my mother called a "foul mouth" might say something that's true, and even worth quoting? Might they not make a movie or write a novel which raises questions worth considering and tells stories worth discussing, but with language that reflects the values and manners of Babylon, not Jerusalem?

Some suggest that to ignore bad language is evidence we don't take such things seriously; however, that need not be the case. Language is important, but it is wrong to require Babylonians to first clean up their manners before we'll engage them, their art, and their questions seriously. Not only is it wrong, it is a denial of the gospel of grace. What possible reason could we give for being judgmental about how non-Christians express their questions and ideas if our negative attitude becomes a barrier to discussing those questions and ideas in light of the gospel?

Discerning Christians are concerned about manners, language, and civility, for these things reflect what is in a person's heart. They are also convinced, however, that only the gospel of grace is capable of truly changing a person's heart. And that means they see and treat the non-Christian's manners and language for what it is: important, but secondary.■

-Denis D. Haack

## Critique

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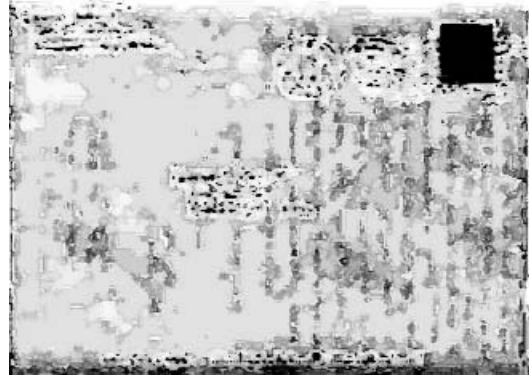
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# Dialogue



## Kudos, Concerns, and a Click.

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

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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.

**W**hen the new and improved issue of *Critique* arrived in January, I wish you could have heard the response of our three teens: "Awesome!" "Wo-o-ow!" "Cool!" We heartily agree—it's quite classy.

We've taught our kids at home for eleven years, and for the last three or four, I've set aside Fridays as current events day, using *Critique* as a source of information, thought and dialogue. I've appreciated your help—for ourselves and the kids—in learning the skills of discernment. Recently another homeschool family visited us from Colorado and was delighted to discover such a resource existed ...And Margie, Toad Hall is a favorite.

Denisse Cameron  
Rugby, ND

**W**e so enjoy your publication, **BUT** I'm concerned with the review of *American Beauty* [Issue #1 - 2000] that your latest missive portrayed. I was disgusted with the awards that the production received. I have not seen it—but I would rather active Christians take the stand that the article in Focus on the Family, "I Don't Do the Titanic," portrayed. I was disappointed in what I read as your tone of approval concerning *American Beauty*. I hope you have other complaints! Is the church to influence the world or is the world to influence the church? Romans 12: 1-2 seems to apply.

Goldie Tutt  
Farmington, NM

[We appreciate your concerns—to see or not to see, that seems to be the question Christians are asking most. While we don't claim the answers are easy or clear-cut, Denis does plan to address more fully the issue of movie-going in future installments of his Babylon series. We hope it will add to the dialogue. ~Marsena]

<http://www.boundless.org>

### Boundless, Focus on the Family

*Boundless* is a web magazine—a webzine, as those who know would call it—produced by Focus on the Family. I first learned about it because Steven Garber, Ransom Board Member and contributor to *Critique*, writes an occasional column called "Knowing and Doing," in which he explores the possibility of connecting what we believe about the world with how we live in it. *Boundless* is designed for Gen-Xers and Millennials, and the articles posted reflect that emphasis.

### Ransom Ratings

**Design:** Very simple, designed primarily for text.

**Content:** Go to the "Boundless Archives" to locate articles by Dr. Garber, all of which we recommend highly. Also note the articles by Sarah Hinlicky, whose thoughtful and provocative pieces often appear in *First Things*. Hinlicky posted two articles in the July *Boundless*: "How to be Subversive—If You are a Guy" (Far from making men unattractive, male chastity goes hand-in-hand with a compelling masculinity) and "How to be Subversive—If You are a Gal" (Feminism created the illusion that there's no room for self-discovery outside of sexual behavior. This virgin proves otherwise.).

**Ease of Use:** Primarily organized to make access to the various articles both quick and easy.

Christian Thoughtfulness

## Your God is Crazy

### A Judge Who Condemns Himself Instead of the Lawbreaker

**O**ften the questions we face in a pluralistic culture require us to develop an apologetic for our faith. A reasonable, winsome defense of what we believe to be true. And sometimes the questions that are raised go to the very heart of things.

Imagine, for example, that you are talking with a non-Christian neighbor, or perhaps a colleague at a table in the cafeteria at work. This is not the first time you've talked about the things that matter most, but this time your friend raises questions about Christ's crucifixion. They don't doubt that it occurred in history, but they do wonder about its meaning. How is it possible, they ask, that the death of a single person so many centuries ago in an obscure province of the Roman empire can have any cosmic significance for us, today? His martyrdom clearly galvanized Jesus' followers, of course, and continues to do so, but isn't that all it really amounts to?

So, in response you explain how God punished Christ not because he deserved it, but to pay the penalty for those things which we have done that are evil, which the Bible calls sin. Evil separ-

ates us from God, who knows no evil, and since God is life, this means that the penalty for evil is death. Christ accepted the death we deserve as God's punishment for our sins, and now that the penalty has been paid on our behalf, we can be forgiven. God is like a judge, you say, who loves the prisoner who appears before him in court, and so takes upon himself the punishment the law demands of the guilty person. He pays the penalty so the person can go free.

Wait a minute, your friend objects. Any judge who does that should be bounced from the bench. They may be loving, but they're also crazy. Any judge who goes to jail and allows a murderer to go free wouldn't be just, but wrong.

"A judge would not be respected," they point out, "if having convicted a criminal and sentenced him to death or imprisonment for life he underwent execution or served the sentence himself. He would be thought to be perverting the course of justice. A father or mother who declared that the children could not be forgiven until he or she had appeased and satisfied his or her wrath by committing suicide would be admitted to a psy-

chiatric hospital. Self-punishment of this sort by a mentally healthy person is inconceivable. Of course God's sense of justice must be both stronger and more justified than a human judge's or parent's. But precisely because God's justice is the justice of holy love, it seems all the more difficult to think that he could do something which would be condemned if done by a good judge or a good parent. Certainly this type of teaching is unlike the style of Jesus, who repeatedly taught about the Father by speaking in parables based on everyday experience and by emphasizing that the Father is good, is like a good human parent—only more so."

And having said that, they wait for your response. ■

—Denis D. Haack

#### Source:

The challenge concerning God as the loving judge is taken from *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal/Evangelical Debate* by David L. Edwards, with a response from John Stott (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; 1988) p. 153.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever been asked a question similar to this? What was it? What answer did you give? How satisfied are you with the answer you gave? How satisfied was your questioner?
2. Does the argument (noted above) against the "loving judge" explanation of the cross expose a fatal flaw in this well-known analogy? Why or why not?
3. In a pluralistic culture which celebrates tolerance, how should the Christian explain and talk about the following aspects of Christian belief? The wrath of God. The just punishment of sinners. The meaning of atonement. The cross and its significance. The possibility of hell.

## Jonathan Edwards

### Directions for the acquisition of Christian knowledge.

**F**irst, be assiduous in reading the Holy Scriptures. This is the fountain whence all knowledge in divinity must be derived. Therefore let not this treasure lie by you neglected. Every man of common understanding who can read, may, if he please, become well acquainted with the Scriptures. And what an excellent attainment would this be!

2. Content not yourselves with only a cursory reading, without regarding the sense. This is an ill way of reading, to which, however, many accustom themselves all their days. When you read, observe what you read. Observe how things come in. Take notice of the drift of the discourse, and compare one scripture with another. For the Scripture, by the harmony of its different parts, casts great light upon itself.—We are expressly directed by Christ, to search the Scriptures, which evidently intends something more than a mere cursory reading. And use means to find out the meaning of the Scripture. When you have it explained in the preaching of the word, take notice of it; and if at any time a scripture that you did not understand be cleared up to your satisfaction, mark it, lay it up, and if possible remember it.

3. Procure, and diligently use, other books which may help you to grow in this knowledge. There are many excellent books extant, which might greatly forward you in this knowledge, and afford you a very profitable and pleasant entertainment in your leisure hours. There is doubtless a great defect in many, that through a lothness to be at a little expense, they furnish themselves with no more helps of this nature. They have a few books indeed, which now and then on Sabbath-days they read; but they have had them so long, and read them so often, that they are weary of them, and it

is now become a dull story, a mere task to read them.

4. Improve conversation with others to this end. How much might persons promote each other's knowledge in divine things, if they would improve conversation as they might; if men that are ignorant were not ashamed to show their ignorance, and were willing to learn of others; if those that have knowledge would communicate it, without pride and ostentation; and if all were more disposed to enter on such conversation as would be for their mutual edification and instruction.

5. Seek not to grow in knowledge chiefly for the sake of applause, and to enable you to dispute with others; but seek it for the benefit of your souls, and in order to practice.—If applause be your end, you will not be so likely to be led to the knowledge of the truth, but may justly, as often is the case of those who are proud of their knowledge, be led into error to your own perdition. This being your end, if you should obtain much rational knowledge, it would not be likely to be of any benefit to you, but would puff you up with pride: 1 Cor. viii. 1. "Knowledge puffeth up."

6. Seek to God, that he would direct you, and bless you, in this pursuit after knowledge. This is the apostle's direction, Jam. i. 5. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not." God is the fountain of all divine knowledge: Prov. ii. 6. "The Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Labour to be sensible of your own blindness and ignorance, and your need of the help of God, lest you be led into error, instead of true knowledge: 1 Cor. iii. 18. "If any man would be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."

7. Practise according to what knowledge you have. This will be the way to know more. The psalmist warmly recommends this way of seeking knowledge in divine truth, from his own experience: Psal. cxix. 100. "I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts." Christ also recommends the same: John vii. 17. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." ■

—Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

#### Source:

This excerpt is part of a sermon given by Jonathan Edwards titled, "Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth." The full text is available online at: <http://www.ccel.org>

The sermon can also be found in: *The Works of Jonathan Edwards with a memoir by Sereno E. Dwight*, revised and corrected by Edward Hickman, Volume Two (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1992).

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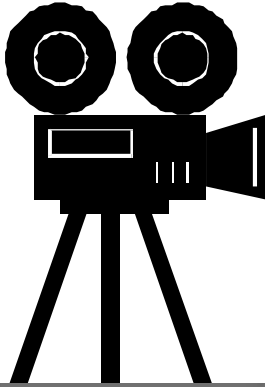
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## Praying Warrior Fathers



### A Review of *Gladiator* and *The Patriot*

by Drew Trotter

A new kind of macho superhero appeared on screens this summer, a kinder, gentler version than the Stallone/Schwarzenegger soldier we remember so well from *First Blood* or *Terminator*. This brave aggressor is a thinker, a father, and a man of faith as well as a warrior. While *Mission Impossible 2* and *The Perfect Storm* demonstrate that the mindless, heartless, superficial (gee, Drew, how do you really feel about it?), special-effects, stunt movie still has big box-office appeal, *Gladiator* and *The Patriot* show that there is a place for larger-than-life characters who are virtuous heroes.

*Gladiator* contains heroism and leadership, the clear opposition of good vs. evil, and tender, faithful love of family. It also has the ever-present, computer-generated special effects to aid star Russell Crowe battle tigers and chariots in the arena. However, unlike movies with intentionally dumbed-down plots, *Gladiator* deftly involves a huge cast of characters with several sub-plots all going at once. Similarly, *The Patriot* centers its story around a lovable, farmer father who is called to resurrect a past expertise at war in order to preserve his family and his country. While using special effects to multiply troops in some of its huge battle scenes, *Patriot* uses a clear, well-written story to capture and keep its audience.

The movies do a commendable job with their history books, especially given the free and easy attitude many recent “historical” dramas demonstrate, but the historical background in each movie is there

to provide the context in which the lone individual triumphs by standing for something he believes is right against overwhelming odds and constant temptation. It is this bravery, this willingness to suffer for good, that gives the movies their appeal. Both movies have their failings. Perhaps the greatest fault results from the depth with which revenge is portrayed as a motive for war. Romans 12:19-21: “Vengeance is mine; I will repay says the Lord,” would make a good study for those who doubt the wisdom of turning the other cheek. Both are simply too long and present some situations and themes too simplistically. The gore, too, in *Gladiator* and especially *The Patriot* can be overwhelming at times.

But what strength of character displayed by Maximus (Russell Crowe in *Gladiator*) and Colonel Benjamin Martin (Mel Gibson in *The Patriot*)! If you see *Gladiator* this summer, enjoy its many virtuous attitudes, its pictures of true and right friendship, of bravery and of resistance to temptation. Rejoice that it shows actions have consequences, and that the accomplishment of great things only comes with self-sacrifice and suffering. Maximus is a thinker, a general who knows his men and outflanks his enemy by using his wits as well as his strength. Religiously, he is a pagan; small statues aid him in his prayers to the gods. But even here there is a bonus for twentieth century Christians for at least Maximus believes in life after death, and much of his life is lived in light of the reality of the afterlife. This is hardly a common Hollywood theme.

*The Patriot* is even more satisfying. While the cross as an image becomes trite through overuse, many other elements in the plot contribute to a thoroughly appropriate Christian context for the film. The church is prominent, from the place of worship where the people politic as much

#### Gladiator Credits

Starring:  
Russell Crowe  
(Maximus)  
Joaquin Phoenix  
(Commodus)

Director:  
Ridley Scott

Screenwriters:  
David H. Franzoni  
and others

Producers:  
David H. Franzoni  
and others

154 minutes  
Rated R for intense,  
graphic combat

#### The Patriot Credits

Starring:  
Mel Gibson  
(Benjamin Martin)  
Jason Issacs  
(Col. W. Tavington)

Director:  
Roland Emmerich

Screenwriter:  
Robert Rodat

Producers:  
Roland Emmerich  
and others

164 minutes  
Rated R for strong war  
violence

as they pray, to the old Spanish mission where the patriots plan their raids and hide out from the British. To have the building that most often serves as a symbol for Christianity portrayed as a place of both righteous action and useful refuge would have been triumph enough, but *The Patriot* goes much further. One deeply sympathetic character, for example, is a pastor who joins the South Carolina militia, declaring “A shepherd must tend his flock and, at times, fight off the wolves.” He dies heroically as well, and, perhaps most astoundingly, comes across as a quite normal person.

The most encouraging religious portrayal of all belongs to Gibson’s character. Orthodox Christianity is not perfectly portrayed in the film; the pastor’s pronouncement of marriage at Martin’s son’s wedding is a good example of political correctness. But as Hollywood films go, *The Patriot* shows an astounding knowledge of, and respect for

***Gladiator and The Patriot show there is a place for virtuous heroes in Hollywood, although the gore in each can be overwhelming.***

orthodox Christian faith. The movie begins with a voice-over: “I have long feared that my sins would return to visit me and the cost is more than I can bear.” Throughout the film Martin demonstrates a deep knowledge of his past sin, and that knowledge contributes to a humility in everything from gentle care for his children to recognition that Cornwallis’ Achilles heel is his pride. He often prays, sometimes in a church before the cross, sometimes as a whisper in the heat of battle. Most movingly, when someone very close to him dies, he is heard to repeat over and over, “God help me, God help me” as the temptation to strike out in anger and revenge assaults him. He is a character who



regularly acts in a selfless manner, who directs a godly and admirable amount of attention to his family and friends. He joins in the battle reluctantly because the taste of killing has soured in him, but he joins in the end nevertheless because he realizes it is the right thing to do.

Both men focus most of all, however, on their families. The concept of “country” is important to both, but in the end both men really fight for the sake of their wives and children. In *The Patriot*, the theme of family love and responsibility dominates so completely that Martin’s wavering back and forth over the question whether or not to fight becomes tiresome. Love for family is the key to Martin’s strength at every moment in the film.

Looking for some encouraging signs from Hollywood? You can’t do much better than the warrior fathers of *Gladiator* and *The Patriot*. ■

~Drew Trotter

*Dr. Andrew H. Trotter, Jr., is the executive director of the Center for Christian Study in Charlottesville, Virginia, where he teaches and writes on theology and culture, focusing on modern American film.*  
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## **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

1. What was your initial or immediate reaction to the film? Why do you think you reacted that way?
2. What is the message(s) of the film? Where do you agree and disagree? Why? In the areas in which you disagree, how can you talk about and demonstrate the truth in a winsome and creative way?
3. 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?
4. With whom did you identify in the film? Why? With whom were you meant to identify? Discuss each main character in the film and their significance to the story.
5. What insight does the film give into the way postmodern people see life, meaning, and reality? How can you use the film as a useful window of insight to better understand your non-Christian friends and neighbors?
6. Might the film be a useful point of contact for discussion with non-Christians? What plans should you make?

## Studying For All It's Worth

**A** Christian can not be truly discerning without Bible study. That's why we sometimes refer to Ransom's goal as helping believers gain skill in reading the world and reading the word. The two are inseparable. Neglecting Bible study, or being too busy to dig into the Scriptures is a sure way to be increasingly molded by the pressures of the surrounding culture. Which is why the apostle Paul warned that living a transformed life in this fallen world requires a mind that is being renewed (Romans 12:2).

This link between discernment and Bible study is not a new idea. Origen, a second century theologian (185-254 AD) wrote:

“Our mind is renewed by the practice of wisdom and reflection on the Word of God and the spiritual understanding of his law. The more one reads the Scriptures daily and the greater one's understanding is, the more one is renewed always and every day. I doubt whether a mind which is lazy toward the holy Scriptures and the exercise of spiritual knowledge can be renewed at all. Many people think they know what God's will is, and they are mistaken. Those who do not have a renewed mind err and go wrong. It is not every mind but only one which is renewed and conformed (as I say) to the image of God which can tell whether what we think, say and do in particular instances is the will of God or not.”

There's another link between Bible study and cultural discernment, namely, the same basic skills are involved in both. We need, for example, to learn to observe with clarity in both cases, observing what the text actually says in Bible study, and what the movie or song or news article is saying if we're to respond to it with discernment. Both involve learning to inter-

pret or to unpack the meaning of what's being communicated. And just as Bible study seeks to end up asking what the implications of the text are for life and culture, so the discerning believer seeks not just to understand the culture, but to creatively speak and live out the truth in a way that can be understood. Since parallel skills are involved, developing skill in Bible study can help us develop skill in discernment—and vice versa.

Though Bible study is important, it's rather difficult to write about without being too scholarly or, if writing for a popular audience, too shallow. *Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible* by Daniel M. Doriani is the exception to this rule. It is scholarly, yet accessible to the average Christian. Dr. Doriani, a professor at Covenant Seminary, has long taught this material to lay believers, and so has honed his ability to explain complex concepts simply, without being simplistic.

**G**etting the Message is practical, seeking to impart skill in Bible study so the reader is better able to dig into the Scriptures, yet the author never loses sight of the wonder of listening to the very word of God. Doriani not only tells us how to do it, he allows us to walk with him through numerous texts so we can listen in as someone who loves the Bible reads it and seeks to understand, worship, and obey. He has also included exercises with each chapter, so the reader can practice the skills instead of merely read about them.

This is a book for serious Christians; for believers who want to know, obey, and teach God's word. It's not the sort of book that can be simply scanned; it needs

to be worked through thoughtfully. If you have never had the opportunity to learn Bible study skills, plan to practice the skills chapter by chapter and do the exercises as you read. If you can work through it with a friend, or in a small group, so much the better, but do master these study skills. If you are fairly experienced in Bible study, *Getting the Message* will not only be a wonderful way to

*I doubt whether a mind which is lazy toward the holy Scriptures and the exercise of spiritual knowledge can be renewed at all.*

sharpen your study skills, but Doriani's clear instruction will help you prepare to pass the skills on to others. ■

—Denis D. Haack

### Book reviewed:

*Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible* by Daniel M. Doriani (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.; 1996) 247 pp. + Scripture index.

### Source:

Origen from *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (New Testament VI): Romans* edited by Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; 1998) p. 308.



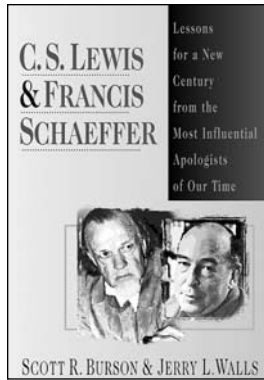
# Apologetic Giants

In 1998, many evangelicals celebrated the birth centenary of C.S. Lewis, arguably the most influential Christian apologist of our times. 1998 also marked the 30th anniversary of the book *The God Who is There* by Francis A. Schaeffer.

Schaeffer's book of apologetics and social and historical criticism sparked many evangelicals to leave their cultural ghettos, to reject their anti-intellectualism, and to communicate the cogency of the Christian worldview to a needy world. InterVarsity Press recently released a thirtieth-anniversary edition of *The God Who is There* with a fine new introduction by James W. Sire and an essay by Schaeffer on apologetic method previously published elsewhere.

Though seminary-trained and possessing a keen mind, Schaeffer was not a practicing academic and never claimed to be. He was a pastor with special gifts in evangelism that in the 1950s and '60s flowered into apologetics as he talked with alienated youth from around the world who congregated at L'Abri.

His many books appeared late in his career, almost as an afterthought—a wise



way to put the ideas into the hands of a wider audience. Schaeffer's works are peppered with arresting personal anecdotes (usually illustrating apologetic and evangelistic encounters) and memorable images illustrating theological and philosophical points. The books were not models of stellar writing. Schaeffer's strengths lay in a passion for God's truth, his apologetic prowess, and the broad appeal of his message and ministry.

Unlike Schaeffer, C.S. Lewis was a convert later in life and never left the halls of the English academy for the pastorate or the mission field. Lewis was an Anglican with no overt connections to Fundamentalism or Evangelicalism. Lewis defended "mere Christianity," or the doctrinal basics of the faith, against modern unbelief. Lewis was a writer through and through. These literary gifts shine through his writings, which are often arresting in their forcefulness. Not only did he reach a large audience through his apologetic works such as *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, *The Problem of Pain* and *The Abolition of Man*, but Lewis also won the hearts of millions through his works of fiction such

as *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the space trilogy.

Both Lewis and Schaeffer attempted to avoid partisan or sectarian disputes in setting forth and defending the core claims of Christian orthodoxy. Yet their theological views differed in several respects.

Schaeffer had little patience with theologians who abandoned biblical inerrancy or the historic doctrines of the Reformation. Although not a young-earth creationist, Schaeffer rejected macroevolution as incompatible with a correct reading of Genesis 1-11 (*Genesis in Space and Time*).

Lewis' doctrinal core was smaller than Schaeffer's. Although he rejected naturalistic evolution, he accepted theistic evolution and thought that the Old Testament contained mythical materials. He never articulated the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith alone, although he stressed the uniqueness of Christ, the historicity of the resurrection of Christ and the need for faith in order to be saved. He also believed in purgatory and in praying for the dead—claims that rankle many evangelicals who otherwise appreciate his work.

The authors of *C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer: Lessons for a New Century*, both teach at Asbury Theological Seminary (an evangelical institution) and appreciate Lewis

## Briefly Noted: Character

by Denis D. Haack.



In 1998 the Dutch film, *Character*, directed by Mike van Diem, won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. The film has been little noticed in the U.S., which is a shame, since it is a powerful and compelling story which raises serious issues worth discussing.

In the film a boy grows up to discover that the father he never knew is a notorious officer of the court who uses the law as a weapon, enriching himself at the expense of the poor. As their lives become intertwined, the young man studies passionately to become a lawyer in order to gain independence from his cruel father and in the end is arrested for his father's murder. (The film is rated R for violence, which though intense, is appropriate to the story; 124 minutes; English subtitles.)

*Character* is a story of law, death, and grace, and of the relationship between fathers and sons. The themes are universal, and we recommend the film to you. And when you discuss it, be sure to compare and contrast *Character's* treatment of law, grace, and death with that depicted in *Les Misérables*. ■

# Resources cont.

in areas that many evangelicals (such as myself) do not. They prefer Lewis over Schaeffer in several key areas.

**R**ather than viewing salvation as a one-time event rooted in saving faith in the finished work of Christ, Lewis presented what the authors call a “transformational” model of salvation wherein one is either moving toward heaven or hell at any given time. They believe that his view of salvation is an entailment of Lewis’ (and their) view of the human will as free or self-determining. (Philosophically, this is called libertarianism.) If so, an Arminian view of human volition leads to a denial of a Reformation doctrine of salvation. Many in the Arminian camp who hold to justification by faith alone as an event to be distinguished from sanctification would rightly reject this conclusion as incompatible with Scripture and historic orthodoxy.

The authors also imply that their view of free will leads to a rejection of biblical inerrancy, since the biblical writers were not completely controlled by God in the process of inspiration. In this, they prefer Lewis to Schaeffer, because Schaeffer affirmed the sovereignty of God in salvation and in the inspiration of Scripture. They accuse Schaeffer of two fundamental errors of apologetics in this regard.

First, they claim that a strong view of God’s sovereignty is unjustifiable philosophically and makes for bad apologetics, since it denies moral responsibility and makes God the author of evil. Second, they charge Schaeffer with not being theologically consistent on the relationship of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. In his apologetic writings, they claim, Schaeffer argued for libertarian freedom.

Yet in his teachings on theology proper, he affirmed God’s absolute control over all events, including human will.

But Schaeffer may not have affirmed a libertarian view in his apologetic against naturalism. To claim we are not machines totally controlled by impersonal factors is not the same as arguing that the human will is autonomous of God’s sovereignty. Schaeffer claimed that humans are not “programmed” by nature. They are moral agents. We live in an “open system of cause and effect” (Christian theism) as

***Like C.S. Lewis and Schaeffer, we must give honest answers to honest questions...***

opposed to a “closed system of cause and effect” (naturalism). God may intervene supernaturally, and humans have significant moral responsibility within the plan of God’s providence.

When Schaeffer argued that humans make significant choices, I believe his emphasis was not on a radical self-determination (libertarianism), but on the fact that we live in a personal universe. God, the supremely personal being, has given persons moral agency and responsibility that would be impossible within either naturalism (which reduces humans to impersonal material factors) or pantheism (which reduces humans to being manifestations of an impersonal deity).

Burson and Walls do not appeal directly to Scripture to support their views of libertarian free will, the transformational view of salvation or the rejection of biblical inerrancy. They argue this philosophically, but often fail to consider good philosophical arguments (outside of

Schaeffer’s own writings) to the contrary. For instance, they fail to engage the important book: Paul Helm’s *The Providence of God*.

The authors do, however, present an excellent exposition of both Lewis’ and Schaeffer’s theologies, apologetic methods and historical settings. The final chapter, “21 Lessons for the 21st Century,” brings together the combined strengths of Lewis’ and Schaeffer’s apologetic efforts. A few lessons stand out.

Apologetics in our postmodern times must emphasize objective reality and absolute truth and not dissolve truth into relativism and subjectivism. Both Lewis and Schaeffer rejected the notion that religion is a private or merely cultural affair. Christianity is only as good as it is true and rationally defensible.

**A**pologetics also demands that we give “honest answers to honest questions” (as Schaeffer put it) to the big questions of life. This requires serious intellectual pursuit and honesty while listening carefully to the concerns, doubts and arguments of unbelievers.

As Christians defend their faith, they should employ a cumulative case



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form of argument, as exemplified in different ways by Lewis and Schaeffer. Apologists draw evidence from many sources—science, history, philosophy, psychology, even mythology (in Lewis’ case)—to build a strong overall apologetic for Christian theism and against rival worldviews. The Christian world view is not proven in one or two strokes, but is rather verified by appealing to a wide and compelling variety of converging arguments. Christianity is shown to be the best explanation for the origin and nature of the universe as well as the human condition and the facts of history. Moreover, Christians must be pastoral in their apologetic practices. We must care deeply for the

lost, not simply desire to defeat their arguments.

Despite my complaints, if this book sparks a new generation of Christian thinkers to engage the thought of C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer for the purpose of defending the faith, it will have made a significant contribution indeed. ■

~Douglas Groothuis

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**Book reviewed:**

*C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer: Lessons for a New Century from the Most Influential Apologists of Our Time* by Scott R. Burson and Jerry L. Walls (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998) 308 pp.

## A Poem

HER LOVER, AT MACHU PICCHU  
Nothing is hopeful here; some sudden death  
is all that greets us, ghosts blown in the wind  
like seed, rooting themselves in our ragged breath.  
On each worn step our separate dreams depend.  
This stone-chambered heart beat red with eager blood  
just yesterday, in temple, market, home:  
passion their native tongue, those lovers wooed  
no differently than we. Always the same:  
Power, pleasure — immortality:  
our old desires lead to the cold and private grave  
just as when trembling virgins closed their eyes,  
laid their heads in this lap of rock, and love  
lifted them out of themselves to Paradise.  
We lie apart in the hot grass; the ghosts approve.

“Something is different,” you said last night,  
last week, and all last month — but you couldn’t name it.  
I said, “Of course,” and made you angry; what  
shibboleth could have drawn you bedward? Damn it,  
by every breath we waste in talk we are diminished!  
Death is our birthright, human cruelty  
our failed claim on this world. Love, we are punished  
fiercely by unkind circumstance; futility

breeds in our dying marrow. You know all this.  
And yet you long for today to be forever,  
for time to give up our flesh, for our first hard kiss  
and churn of desire to happen over and over  
in cinematic self-sustaining bliss.  
You ask too much of life. You ask too much of this lover.

Climb with me now to where we can see the end  
of all we love below us; clench the grief  
hard in your wild green heart, in the bones of your hand  
— then let us go down carefully to life,  
we who are weaker than these strange, worn stones  
where ghosts engage in commerce as we quarrel.  
How can we mourn a constancy we’ve never known?  
How can we claim as ours a thing impossible  
as changeless love? Still, here’s a slender peace:  
Marry me. Let us learn to be calm and kind,  
plant a small garden, fill a little house  
with happy children, put death out of mind.  
A last resort, I know — but what have you got to lose?  
Let us haunt the real world for love, and what we find, choose.

~Jane Greer

*Jane Greer is a public servant in Bismarck, North Dakota.*

## Would Jesus



### How “Christian” is Christian Heavy Metal?

One of the questions I gave my high school students on their Rhetoric Final Exam was “Can Hardcore Music be Christian?” It was a popular choice. A third of the class weighed in. Their responses were thoughtful, articulate, and to the person, supportive of Christian heavy metal music—groups such as Spoken, Living Sacrifice, P.O.D., and Project 86.

What makes music or musical entertainment “Christian?” These are questions being raised within Christian entertainment itself and not simply by confused teachers and parents of adolescents. Earlier this year, *WORLD* magazine discussed the tensions within contemporary Christian music (CCM). Lying behind the marketplace constraints of the music industry are a host of deeper questions that serve to frame our understanding of what it means to be an apprentice of Jesus. Discernment requires our reflection. At the heart of the argument is what it means to be “in” the world, but not “of” it. What it means to be “like Jesus” in the midst of our postmodern, post-Christian culture. To what extent are we to be the same as contemporary culture—read “relevant?” To what extent are we to be different—read “irrelevant?”

Let’s back the discussion up from the emotionally charged issues of whether one likes or approves of the music to the more foundational questions about entertainment, beauty, and apologetics. The measure of a successful conversation with a young adult on these issues is whether one can engage the topic honestly without resorting to judgmental language, sweeping generalizations, and flippant put-downs. As a rule of thumb, if the young adult is put on the defensive, some invisible line of practical love has been crossed. In the end, we may or may not agree, but by God’s grace, one

would hope that we could agree on the substantive questions that shape our shared desire to become like Jesus and to live under his authority. Real disagreement on things that matter is an accomplishment. Too often, disagreement is simply a product of not listening.

It is helpful to acknowledge the reason why music is such an emotionally charged topic when discussed with an adolescent. Music in youth culture serves a role larger than music. It’s an identity trademark. To criticize a person’s music is in effect to criticize the person—and all their closest friends. It’s a criticism that cuts deep. It’s the severest “diss.” In youth culture, identity politics has a musical address. Thus, parents, teachers, and youth leaders must learn to tread lightly and treat the topic itself with great respect. Here we will seek to establish common ground on foundational issues. We will approach the question, “Would Jesus mosh?” obliquely.

### Entertainment

Is entertainment spiritually neutral? We live in an entertainment-saturated culture and an entertainment-centered economy. Think for a moment of the economic impact of entertainment—television, film, music, videos, computer games, sports, and amusement parks, to name but a few. It’s our nation’s largest export. More to the point, entertainment is not something we do in our leisure. It is fast becoming who we are in our life. Reality-TV is hot simply because reality is TV. Entertainment has metastasized into life. Social critic Neal Grabler warns, “We now inhabit a world in which Plato’s worst nightmare has come to pass: the triumph of the senses over the mind, of emotion over reason, of chaos over order, of the id over the superego, of Dionysian abandon over Apollonian harmony. In that world entertainment—fun, effortless, sensational, mindless, formulaic, predictable, and subversive—is at the center of everything.” Consultants and futurists point out that business no longer sells service or information, but experiences and dreams.

# Mosh?

If it's entertaining, we're not supposed to think too seriously about it. We watch TV to "veg out." We put on the headphones to get in the "zone." We don't discuss movies or music concerts; we simply go to be entertained. We mosh and rave when the music takes hold of us in a kind of unreflective trance. Entertainment is not only pervasive in culture; its values are corrosive to discernment.

Does it really matter what we see, listen to, or think? Yes, it does. Age makes no difference in these choices. Spirituality does. Does age have any relevance to whether a PG-13 or an NC-17 rated movie is appropriate? Isn't the core question about our entertainment choices really a question of whether it assists one in becoming more like Jesus? Proverbs warns, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (4:23). The writer goes on to discuss what "guarding" entails: what we say ("corrupt talk"), what we look at ("fix your gaze"), and where we go ("make level paths"). We tend to be woefully naïve about the damage our entertainment choices make to our hearts. Our greatest fear is boredom. Bring on the fun.

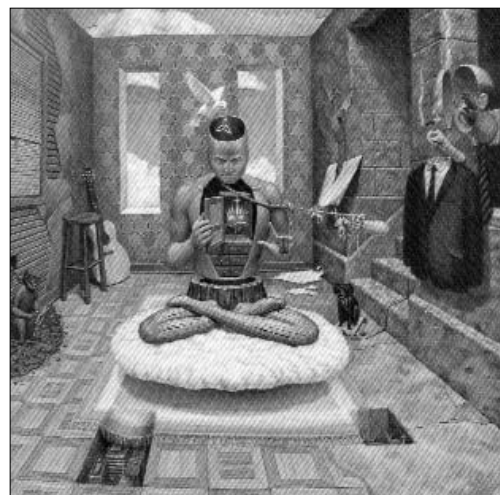
The danger is twofold. First, entertainment dulls our spiritual senses. Sloth is the spiritual epidemic of the modern world—not laziness, but spiritual indifference. Philosopher Peter Kreeft writes, "Diversion's greatest danger is that it acts like a sedative; it keeps us just content enough so that we don't make waves and seek a real cure. It deadens our spiritual nerves, it muffles our alarm system." A lifestyle of entertainment makes the spiritual conditions necessary for self-reflection impossible. It makes it hard to maintain cognitive distance from the taken-for-granted cultural patterns of worldliness. Second, entertainment twists our priorities. In the light of eternity, does it really matter who wins the Super Bowl? Or who wins a million dollars on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" Or who survives "Survivor?" We invest enormous amounts of time, energy, and money into that which will not last. Our lives become centered on wood, hay, and stubble. And yet, we are charged by our Savior to bear fruit that will last (John 15:16).

When we are uncritical about our entertainment choices, we are playing with our spiritual default. What do we think about most of the time? When nothing else is pressing in on our attention to what does our mind shift? The answer to these questions provides an accurate read on the state of our heart. So what are we to think about, if our minds are "in Christ Jesus?" The Bible is clear: "whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy" (Philippians 4:8).

Our minds matter, because our beliefs matter. They are the rails on which our lives run. Thus, we cannot be cavalier about our entertainment choices. An engaged mind, with a discerning biblical world view, and a spiritual concern to guard one's heart will have to be especially present when one goes to movies or concerts. Entertainment is not spiritually neutral. "It sounds like school," one may lament. But such a reaction is only an indicator of the extent to which one has become prey to the ethics of entertainment—turn one's mind off and "veg out." It is the Devil's ploy. Such an uncritical attitude does not help one follow Jesus or develop the mind of Christ.

## Objective Standards for Beauty

**S**o if one desires to be self-reflective and biblically self-critical about one's entertainment choices how does this relate to Christian heavy metal music? My students argued that the lyrics and lifestyle of the artist make the music distinctively Christian. "For hard rock to be Christian, the members of the band must have a personal relationship with Christ," wrote one student. "The audience must know that the band is Christian," wrote another. "Sure Living Sacrifice writes hard instrumental music lines, but their lyrics are pure. Their message is untainted and not filled with profanity. They praise God, not the Devil. Their words might be hard to understand and their music might be consid-



P.O.D.

by  
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ered noise by some, but it is uplifting,” wrote a seventeen-year-old junior. “Do you really believe that a particular sound or genre of music can be morally right or wrong?” wrote another student, who is a serious follower of Jesus and a member of a heavy metal band.

**W**hat constitutes “Christian” lyrics has been a conundrum for the Gospel Music Association (GMA) that gives out Dove Awards, CCM’s version of the Grammy’s. In their definition of Christian music, “Lyrics have to be substantially based upon historical orthodox Christian truth con-

Christian stars Amy Grant and Susan Ashton? These are legitimate concerns, but let’s try to focus this discussion on the substantive underlying questions. Are Christian lyrics enough? Or does a biblical world view speak to the deeper question of musical quality and form?

Historically, truth, morality, and beauty were all considered objectively knowable. C.S. Lewis states, “Until modern times no thinker of the first rank ever doubted that our judgements of value were rational judgements or that what they discovered was objective.” While truth, morality, and beauty are not all

jectivism. But it’s in the air we breathe. Few are even aware that both Christian and nonChristian would have considered such views unthinkable as recently as a century ago. Certainly there were disagreements about what constituted truth—or even what constituted art—but they would have never thought for a moment that such fundamental matters were merely a matter of opinion. It was this view that was challenged at the famous New York Armory show in 1912. What was scandalous then, even in secular art circles, are normative assumptions within many Christian circles today. My

students hold to objective standards in the area of truth and morality, but not music. Recently the directors of the most prestigious art museums in America were asked by

*Directors of the most prestigious art museums in America were asked, “What is art?” None were able to give an answer.*

tained in or derived from the Holy Bible, or an expression of worship of God or praise for His works or testimony of a relationship with God through Christ or obviously prompted and informed by a Christian world view.” Such an emphasis on the content of lyrics has allowed CCM to promote a wide diversity of musical formats. The GMA’s Dove Award nominations include categories such as Pop/Contemporary, Praise & Worship, Rap/Hip Hop/Dance, Rock, Hard Music, Inspirational, and Country. It appears that every possible musical format has found its Christian voice. With this proliferation of musical tastes, it seems particularly intolerant to question a particular musical form, if its lyrics have a modicum of Christian content and its performers a pretense of Christian conviction. And why single out Christian heavy metal? If questions are going to be raised, shouldn’t they be raised about the adultery of Gospel Music superstar Sandi Patti or the divorces of contemporary

known in the same way, there are objective standards that apply to each area. In contemporary society, a belief in objective standards sounds ominously totalitarian. Philosophical nihilism, moral relativity, social multiculturalism, nongender sexuality, and expressive individualism are taken-for-granted assumptions in much of American society. Here truth, morality, and beauty are all matters of personal taste and opinion. Who’s to say what is true or false, good or evil, beautiful or ugly? This is the Nietzschean ethic, which ends in the abrogation of all standards, a view found most commonly in university lectures and pop lyrics. Peter Kreeft warns, “The master heresy is subjectivism. It is the parent of all the others, for only after the objective truth is denied are we ‘free’ to recreate new ‘truth’ in the image of our own desires. Only when we fall asleep to the real world are we ‘free’ to dream nightmare worlds into being.”

Christians, including my students, usually stop short of such consistent sub-

a national newsmagazine, “What is art?” None were able to give an answer. In the end, art is what sells. Market values have trumped aesthetic values. Standards of beauty have been drowned in the universal solvent of kitsch and consumerism. And market values reinforce the subjective values of the masses. Not surprisingly, in high culture as well as low culture, tastes are nose-diving to the lowest common denominator in order to find the largest market share. Pick your context. Andrew Serrano’s crucifixes in jars of urine or MTV’s *Celebrity Deathmatch*—it’s a matter of taste. Or is it?

**W**orld views dictate music as well as art. The music of Igor Stravinsky and John Cage differed from Johann Bach and George Handel because of what they believed about fundamental reality: chaos vs. order, love vs. anger, God vs. self. A similar musical difference is seen in the contrast between heavy metal and jazz—two contemporary musical genres. The music

itself says something about reality. Nine-Inch-Nail's Trent Reznor's ode to suicide in his recent CD, *The Fragile*, is a current illustration of the point. His music is appropriate to his point of view. Thinking "world-viewishly" about music means that one must think beyond the lyrics to the music itself. Christian music need not be "traditional" or "classical," but it must reflect both in its musical composition and presentation a godly view of reality.

### Apologetics

**T**he context of Christian lyrics matters. A Scripture verse written in feces on the wall of a public restroom may constitute evangelism, but one wonders if the context and presentation do not change the message. Holding a Sunday worship service in the atrium of the Mall of America may reach a new audience, but one wonders whether the gospel has simply become another consumer product. Context matters. Jesus became furious over the presence of the money changers' encroachment into the temple courtyard. The convenience which enabled distant worshippers to purchase their sacrifices more easily was lost on Jesus. "My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a 'den of robbers'" (Matthew 21:13). Jesus believed in sacred space. Worship space was different from the marketplace. Right worship demands a right context.

So what of heavy metal? Heavy metal scholar Robert Walser in *Running with the Devil* writes, "Heavy metal is, as much as anything else, an arena of gender, where spectacular gladiators compete to register and affect ideas of masculinity, sexuality, and gender." There is a reason for the overlap between this musical genre and professional wrestling and "Beavis and Butthead." The musical emphasis is on volume, power, and intensity. Melody and harmony are virtually absent. It's a cacophony of rhythm, scream-

ing electric guitars and angry voices. Vulgarity is made public and is celebrated. It is a defiant rejection of all moral demands. "The belief system that underlies heavy metal songs has its roots in American individualism. In heavy metal songs, the right of the individual to do whatever he or she pleases is enshrined among the highest values. Self-fulfillment and self-expression are held high whereas self-restraint and self-denial are scorned as the values of the timid, the dull, and the humorless," writes sociologist Jeffrey Arnett in *Metalheads: Heavy Metal Music and Adolescent Alienation*.

No longer an outlawed musical subculture, metal is now discussed favorably in the mainstream press. *USA Today* recently ran a feature on Ozzy Osborne, who sponsors the traveling summer metal concert series, Ozzfest. This year Ozzfest is headlining groups such as Pantera, Godsmack, Static X, Incubus, and Methods of Mayhem. The article sets Osborne in the context of family life. He is pictured as a loving father with his wife and children. At Ozzfest, he is quoted in the article, "[My children] can watch the chicks flash their boobies."

With the recent musical fusion of rap and metal—rap'n'roll—sexual aggression and adolescent anger are reaching full voice. The culture is male and misogynist. Eminem's hit record, *Slim Shady LP*, promotes a message, "Life's a bitch, who needs to die now?" *Spin's* journalist observes, "Limp Bizkit, Insane Clown Posse, the frightfully articulate Eminem are becoming time bombs of unchecked anger." The events surrounding Woodstock '99 (a.k.a. "Nudestock" or "Rapestock") are described by secular music critics as "historically appalling." Rage Against the Machine's singer Morello described the looting, raping, and burning at Woodstock, as "an outburst of pagan glee." This is the musical context in which we must understand and discuss Christian



Heavy Metal. This musical genre has a social context.

One of my students wrote of attending a Christian hardcore concert by Mindrage. He writes, "After playing a song with the most incredible bassist I have ever heard, they started witnessing to the audience. Some of the crowd started shouting Scripture out. It was awesome." Followers of heavy metal need Christ. These kids will never set foot within a church. Church music—much less J.S. Bach—leaves them cold. Music is at the heart of their culture. To reach them, one must engage in cross-cultural ministry. One must proclaim the gospel in the parlance of the people. The stated mission of Christian heavy metal bands—apart from fame and fortune—is to reach these needy young adults. Another student wrote, "This is the greatest sign to me that a band is Christian. If they stop their songs and just start witnessing to the audience." Relevance, contact, and conversion are the foundational rationale for Christian heavy metal. Good intentions aside, is this enough? Or more to the point, how far can one go to accommodate the culture in order to reach the culture without becoming like the culture? There are no easy answers. But it is clearly the question that must be asked.

Take for example the Dove Award winning heavy metal group, P.O.D. (Payable On Death). Family Christian Store's music magazine, *All Access*, writes, "Currently seen everywhere from *CCM Magazine* to *Rolling Stone*, on television from Bill Mahr's

*Politically Incorrect* to MTV's *120 minutes*, on the Howard Stern show, and climbing up the Billboard Top 200, P.O.D. is making an impact.

Multiethnic California hard rockers with musical ties to Korn and the Beastie Boys, Fundamental Elements of Southtown, delivers a fresh, edgy style with a focused Christian message."

**T**he P.O.D. web page compares their music to Rage Against the Machine and Limp Bizkit. In their opening cut, P.O.D. exposes the allure of the Hollywood life. "Sold your soul for the roll, now you got to pay, forfeit integrity, overnight celebrity, settle for selfish gain rather than dignity, another sucka, why did you trust a playa like me fool, Eternal hustler I'm taking everything and now you know I hate to tell you but I told you so." In their song, "Set Your Eyes to Zion," they ask, "How do you get to heaven? Do you have an answer? Hey, Mr. Deadman, I'll tell you if you want to know." P.O.D. is hard rock with elements of rap included in the mix. The rhythm dominates and the lyrics are spoken with rap-like influence.

P.O.D. is a worthy case study because of their award-winning status within the

## ***When does the admonition not to 'walk in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers' apply?***

Christian music world and their growing crossover acceptance with secular audiences. They are presently on tour, opening for Korn. Without questioning their personal intentions or spiritual integrity, one must ask two basic questions. From what world view does their heavy metal music arise? How do they justify opening for Korn? The language, message, world view, and lifestyle of Korn surely overshadow any intended Christian witness. How does one hang with a group that has songs with unrepeatable lyrics that are full of sexist hatred of women? I showed the lyrics to their song, "Kunt," to my wife. She said it was the most offensive verbal pornography she had ever read. When does the scriptural admonition not to 'walk in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers' apply? Opening for Korn intentionally validates Korn and unintentionally devalues the name of Jesus. Is P.O.D. influencing Korn's audience or is Korn's audience enhancing P.O.D.'s crossover success? When is it irrelevant to be relevant?

Would Jesus mosh? Mosh pits are *de rigueur* at metal concerts. Pits are areas in front of the concert stage about twenty-five feet in diameter where concert-goers "slamdance," their bodies deliberately crashing into one another in ritualized frenzied violence. Frequently bodies collide with such force that they end up on the floor. Concert-goers venture on stage where they dive into the crowd and when caught are passed overhead "body surfing." Raw physicality and self-inflicted pain are dominate themes. The testosterone level is palpable. It's choreographed antisocial aggressive behavior. There are good reasons why heavy metal concerts have been called the "sensory equivalent to war." Bruised and bloodied bodies leave concerts high on animal carnality and social disregard. Would we find Jesus at a heavy metal concert? Perhaps. But his face would be strewn with tears. ■

**~John Seel**

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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.

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