

Critique

Helping Christians Develop Skill in Discernment

In This Issue

04 Kissing Concerts Goodbye

Matt Redmond explains why he stopped going to Christian concerts, giving the rest of us an issue for discernment.

06 Remember Not to Forget

Drew Trotter reviews the movie *Memento*.

08 Streams of Praise

An anthology of Christian poetry, *A Sacrifice of Praise*, is reviewed and recommended.

10 IVP References on CD

Commentaries, dictionaries, and other bible study aids captured on a single CD-ROM.

05 Public Faith & Mentors

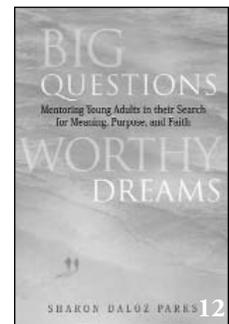
02 Editor's Note

11 Reviews of *God's Name in Vain* by Stephen Carter and *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams* by Sharon Parks. Briefly noted on page five: *Puritan Papers*.

03 Dialogue

14 Bach in a Moment

The joy of understanding Bach's Mass in B Minor, courtesy of John Hodges.



Editor

Denis Haack

Managing Editor

Marsena Konkle, MFA

Contributing Editors

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

Board of Directors

Craig M. Chambers MD
*Dept. of Internal Medicine,
Olmsted Medical Center*

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
for Coalition for Christian
Outreach*

Henry Tazelaar MD
*Professor of Pathology,
Mayo Medical School*

Submissions & Correspondence

Critique considers unsolicited manuscripts of book reviews, articles, and poetry. E-mail at marsena@itis.com or mail with

SASE to:

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

All other correspondence and changes of address:

Denis D. Haack
1150 West Center
Rochester, MN 55902
Ransom_Fellowship@compuserve.com

Copyright © 2001 by
Ransom Fellowship

Editor's Note



Disagreeing agreeably.

Christian discernment does not result in developing a "Christian line" on every issue. Even discerning Christians will disagree at some point(s). Since we want to be faithful in the midst of disagree-

ments, the late philosopher Mortimer Adler's suggestions on how to disagree are worth repeating:

General maxims of intellectual etiquette.

- Do not agree, disagree, or suspend judgment until you can say "I understand."
- Do not disagree angrily or contentiously.
- Demonstrate that you recognize the difference between knowledge and personal opinion by presenting good reasons for a critical judgment.

In order to disagree...

...show wherein the author is uninformed, or...

(An author is uninformed if he lacks some piece of knowledge that is relevant to the problem he is trying to solve. Unless the knowledge would be relevant, there is no point in making this remark. To support your remark, you must be able to state the knowledge the author lacks and show how it is relevant and makes a difference to his conclusions.)

...show wherein the author is misinformed, or...

(An author is misinformed if he asserts what is not the case. The author is proposing as true or as more probable what is in fact false or less probable. This kind of defect should be pointed out, of course, only if relevant to the author's conclusions. And you must be able to argue the truth or greater probability of a position contrary to the author's.)

...show wherein the author is illogical, or...

(An author is illogical if he has committed a

fallacy in reasoning. In general, fallacies are of two sorts. There is the *non sequitur*, which means that the conclusion simply does not follow from the reasons offered. And there is inconsistency, which means that two things the author has said are incompatible. To make either of these criticisms, the reader must be able to show precisely where the author's argument lacks cogency.)

...show wherein the author's analysis or account is incomplete.

(An author's analysis is incomplete if he hasn't solved all the problems he started with, didn't make good use of his materials or see all their implications and ramifications, or failed to make distinctions that are relevant to his undertaking.)

Agreeing, Disagreeing, or Suspending Judgment.

Of these four, the first three (uninformed, misinformed, illogical) are criteria for disagreement. Failing in all of these, you must agree, at least in part, although you may suspend judgment in the light of the last point.

Congratulations

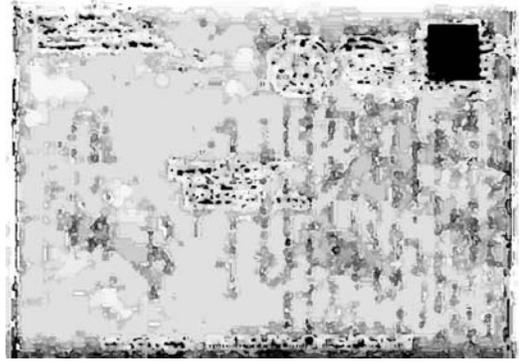
Critique's Managing Editor, Marsena Konkle, received her Master of Fine Arts in July from Vermont College. Besides her work with this publication, she is presently completing her first novel. I understand her parents are very proud.

Logos Academy, where *Critique's* Contributing Editor David John Seel, Jr serves as headmaster was one of two Dallas schools profiled in *Christianity Today* (May 21, 2001; pp. 50-57). The article, "Two Schools of Thought" is worth reading and includes a photo of Dr. Seel. ■

~Denis Haack

Source: Adapted from *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer J. Adler & Charles Van Doren (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster; 1940, 1967, 1972) p. 156-167.

Dialogue



On homosexuality and Old Testament law.

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:
marsena@itis.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 appreciated Mardi Keyes' open comments regarding homosexuality and how Christians often distort the message of the gospel because of what seems like a lack of love in our treatment of the issue. We are all sinners who rely on the grace of God to forgive all our transgressions. Personally, I am more at risk of sinning at a church social where the possibility of gossip is frequently present than I am in any gay bar.

The difficulty for Christians today is that we often don't embrace the whole gospel but become selective. Some Christians are deeply concerned about personal morality by which I mean avoidance of sexual sins, placing God first in one's life, spreading the news of personal salvation to others, etc., while living as if Jesus' admonishments to turn the other cheek or give the clothes off your back to someone else does not apply to them. Others seem keenly interested in God's call for social justice but perhaps are less comfortable with the idea that certain sins may not be a product of cultural evolution. When we look to the speck in our brother's eye before dealing with the beam in our own, we open ourselves to suspicion of committing the greatest sin in American culture today, that of being intolerant.

We should not be accepting of homosexuals because their dispositions are morally neutral. We should be accepting because they are fallen humans just like us.

Keith Winkle
Anchorage, AK

This letter is in response to articles published in *Critique* (#4-2000, #1-2001, & #4-2001) on Old Testament (OT) law. The articles considered a letter addressed to Dr. Laura that consisted of several questions illustrating the absurdity of treating OT law as authoritative today. Denis Haack wrote two subsequent hypothetical conversations with "a

friend" considering some of the questions raised in the letter to Dr. Laura; this is intended as a reply by the friend.

I appreciate the opportunity to have this conversation about a hard topic often ignored or avoided in Christian circles. I think your point about the importance of choosing carefully the place and time to discuss controversial issues was important and well put. I also find no fault in your treatment of those aspects of OT law that you've mentioned, but I am dismayed by your omission of what seems to me the most blatant and disturbing problems of OT law. These problems are (I believe) the basis of the questions in the original letter to Dr. Laura.

First, your treatment of OT law seems to separate the "precept" aspect of the laws from their "penalty" aspect, and then ignores the penalty aspect. Yet it is the harsh penalties (very frequently, death) that made many of the questions in the letter to Dr. Laura so outrageous. For example, an OT law specifies that the penalty for working on the Sabbath is death by stoning (Exodus 31:15, 35:2; Numbers 15:32-36). This law would not be controversial but for its horrible, uncommensurate penalty.

Pretending the penalties either didn't exist or are not worth mentioning because they don't apply to us today is not a fair way to consider the moral quality of these laws. The killing that was required for trivial violations (e.g., gathering sticks on the Sabbath) deserves some explanation. The lack of discussion in Christian contexts about the moral significance of all of the killing either commanded by God (e.g., as penalties of the OT laws, or as direct instructions to leaders such as Joshua), or performed by God (e.g., the plagues of Exodus) sometimes makes me

continued on page 16...

Kissing Christian Concerts

A music lover raises interesting questions for discussion.

This will not be a rant. When I first tried to write this, that was the result of my efforts. I am not sure anyone has written anything critical about *how* Christian concerts are done. To be sure, the question of *if* they should be done has been discussed since the phenomenon surfaced years ago. Since I am unsure if the subject I am about to broach has ever been formally discussed in the Christian community, I do not want to set a precedent of ranting. Rather, a plea is what I would prefer to offer. A plea for discernment.

For years I have gone to concerts done by Christians. I have seen most of the popular bands and soloists in the Contemporary Christian Music market over the past fifteen years. Some were entertaining, some were not, and few were what I consider high-caliber talent. But regardless of how talented they were, there was one thing that almost all of them did during their time on stage: talk. And when I say talk, I mean lots of it. Much more than at any other kind of concert. If I went to see the symphony, the talking would be at a minimum. The only form of communication might be a program given to the patrons so they can follow along. When I went to see the Rolling Stones in '89, I don't remember a word Mick said, if he said anything besides maybe introducing a song, but I do remember the songs—as a matter of fact I will never forget them.

Why is it that when someone goes to what is called a “secular” concert, there is not the expectation of the entertainer talking about their world view at length

and then calling for others to believe the way they do? There are many ways to answer that question I suppose. Maybe they don't know how to articulate their world view. Maybe they just don't care. Or maybe they came to play music, and as a musician that is what they want people to enjoy.

Is the Christian concert about the music? Or is it a means to an evangelistic end? I'm afraid that most of the time the second answer is the most truthful. I believe that most Christian musicians do not think enough of their craft to let it stand alone. So, they throw in an altar

We need to recover the understanding that art—whether it be music or drama or literature—is worthy of our attention. Christians should have the highest standards in this arena.

call or a worship service or a sermonette in order to justify the enterprise.

Someone might ask if there is harm in doing a concert so that people will hear the gospel. I have two answers. First, is it honest to invite someone to a concert with false motivations? Do you want them to hear music that is good, knowing they will find pleasure in doing so, or do you want them to get saved, and their love of music is a way of getting them in a position to hear how? If you are invited to a Bible Study only to find out it's an Amway meeting and you are being targeted as a partner, how would you feel? I applaud those who are concerned for unbelievers, but I would argue that evangel-

ism should primarily flow out of friendships. Let's leave the “bait and switch tactics” for the pyramid schemes. Also, a musician should be able ply their art and let it stand on its own. We need to recover the understanding that art—whether it be music or drama or literature—is worthy of our attention. Christians should have the highest standards in this arena.

Music as a creative force is powerful stuff. I once heard someone say, “give me the songs of a nation, I care not who writes its laws.” Parents, pastors and politicians all point to the power of music over the young people of this

country as a reason for censoring people like Eminem and Marilyn Manson. Is their music the only music that is powerful? Are their concerts the only concerts that are influencing our kids? If they are, then shame on us for not giving them something better.

We were created in the image of God so we could reflect His character. God is a creative being who delights in our efforts to be like Him in our creative tendencies. This ought to tell us that the making of music is something that never needs to be dignified by an evangelistic sermon or an altar call. Good music can stand on its own especially if it is music done in light of the glory of a creative God who delights in creation. ■

-Matt Redmond

Matt Redmond, a Birmingham, AL, native, lives with his wife Bethany in St. Louis where he is a student at Covenant Theological Seminary.

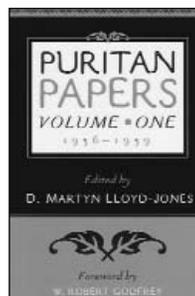
Copyright © 2001 by Matt Redmond.

Goodbye

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Using Redmond's own words, identify the statements in his piece that are key in understanding his argument, his reasons, and his conclusion.
2. What has been your experience with Christian concerts? What musicians have you seen in concert? To what extent does your experience parallel the author's?
3. Where do you agree with Redmond? Where do you disagree? (Be sure to discuss areas of agreement before detailing areas of disagreement.) Discuss the questions he asks in his piece.
4. Has the how of Christian concerts been adequately discussed by Christians? What resources on this can you identify? To what extent is the topic discussed informally? To what end?
5. Do you find Redmond's argument(s) compelling? Why or why not?
6. "I believe that most Christian musicians do not think enough of their craft to let it stand alone," Redmond writes. "So, they throw in an altar call or a worship service or a sermonette in order to justify the enterprise." Do you agree? Why or why not?
7. Assume that the majority of Christians attending Christian concerts are comfortable with the talking that takes place on stage. To what extent is that important? To what extent is this merely a matter of personal taste? To what extent, on the other hand, is this an issue of far more than taste—say, for example, an issue of dishonesty in selling tickets to a concert, only to have a significant portion of the evening consist of talking instead of music? Or a failure to adequately appreciate the significance of art, which needs no justification? Or a way to trick non-Christians into hearing a gospel presentation?
8. How effective are Christian concerts in terms of evangelism?
9. Some Christians might argue that every opportunity to explain the gospel—including at Christian concerts by the musicians—should be taken. How would you respond?

Briefly Noted



by Denis Haack

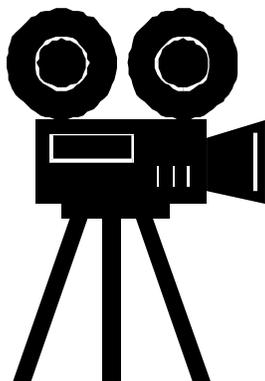
Beginning in 1950, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones began hosting a series of gatherings that came to be known as "The Puritan Conference." For nearly thirty years evangelical scholars such as J. I. Packer (who had been influential in launching the effort) met to read papers and discuss the rich theological and spiritual heritage that is found in the teaching and lives of Puritans such as John Bunyan, Richard Baxter, and Stephen Charnock. Now 23 papers from four of these annual conferences have been published, allowing thoughtful readers access to them. *Puritan Papers* can serve as an introduction to the Puritans, and as an opportunity to reflect with evangelical scholars on some of what we can learn from these voices from church history. It will also help to rectify the unfortunate and unfair reputation the Puritans have suffered over the years, such as this barbed comment from Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*:

Maria: Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of puritan.
Sir Andrew: O, if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog. ■

Book reviewed: *Puritan Papers: Volume One (1956-1959)* edited by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing; 2000) 320 pp.

The Darkened Room

Remember Not to Forget



by Drew Trotter

A review of Memento

Immanuel Kant, the famous 18th century German philosopher was known for his obsession with order, an obsession that enabled his Königsberg neighbors to set their watches by when he took his afternoon walk—exactly three-thirty every afternoon.

One day, Kant had to discharge his faithful servant Lampe who had been with him for many years. The event was so painful, however, that Kant could not get Lampe out of his mind, and this troubled him greatly. He is reported to have made an entry in his memorandum book as a result: “Remember: from now on the name of Lampe must be completely forgotten.” (*The Little, Brown Book of Anecdotes*, ed. by Clifton Fadiman, pp. 320-21).

Memento, the best film to be released this year, is about memory, truth, forgetting, revenge, perspective. But wait a minute: let me back up.

The movie starts with a shot of a man’s hand holding a Polaroid fully developed. Slowly, the viewer realizes the image is fading, even though the hand shakes the Polaroid from time to time as one does when trying to speed its development. There are more shots: extreme close-ups of blood running and of an empty shell casing, and you begin to feel that something is strange here as the Polaroid continues to fade.

Suddenly, the Polaroid moves backwards into a camera held in the man’s other hand, the blood flows into the back of a second man’s head, the shell casing leaps

into a gun held to the second man’s head, a shot is fired in backwards sound, and the screen goes blank.

So begins one of the most stunning rides in recent American movie history. *Memento*, directed by Britisher Christopher Nolan from a short story concept told him by his brother Jonathan on a cross-country car trip, is the story of Leonard Shelby, an insurance claims investigator who surprises two men raping his wife and in the ensuing struggle is knocked senseless, saddling him with a condition known as anterograde memory loss—he remembers everything prior to the attack, but cannot make new memories except by extreme repetition (which only seems to serve to remind him that he has this condition). He never remembers people, where he is staying, why he is in a room, what he just said (or someone just said to him)—everything is forgotten within minutes.

Not surprisingly, this makes Leonard unusual and a target for those who feel they might be able to use him for their own ends. A motel clerk rents him two rooms and then even tells him of the scam because he knows Leonard will not remember. But his “condition,” as Leonard (played masterfully by Guy Pearce, the Australian actor who was the straight-laced Lt. Exley in *L.A. Confidential*) constantly refers to it, renders him available for more deadly games, and the plot turns around his inability to remember, how others alternately help and use him, and whether or not he will fulfill his goal—to catch and



Film Credits

Starring:

Guy Pearce

(Leonard Shelby)

Carrie-Anne Moss

(Natalie)

Joe Pantoliano

(Teddy)

Mark Boone Junior

(Burt)

Stephen Tobolowsky

(Sammy Jankis)

Jorja Fox

(Catherine Shelby)

Harriet Sansom Harris

(Mrs. Jankis)

Larry Holden

(Jimmy Grantz)

Director:

Christopher Nolan

Writers:

Christopher Nolan

Jonathan Nolan

Producers:

Christopher Ball

Aaron Ryder

and others

Original music:

David Julyan

Cinematographer:

Wally Pfister

Costume Designer:

Cindy Evans

115 minutes

Rated R for violence, language and drug content.

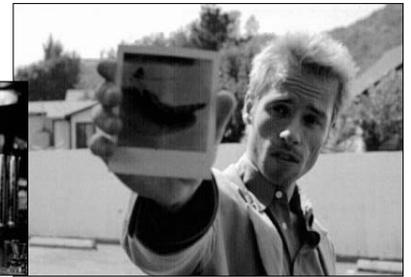
kill his wife's rapists and murderers.

To this point the movie sounds like a standard-fare film *noir*, and on many levels it is. Shot in seedy Los Angeles, populated almost entirely by morally bankrupt characters, even costumed in cheap or sleazy clothes, this film is one of the best *noirs* in some time. A complicated plot with murders, mis-steps, conspiracies, and revenge-takings galore, one can view the movie at that level and eat one's popcorn, too.

But *Memento* asks so many deeper questions of modern life and postmodern philosophy that to treat it as a simple movie is to miss the opportunity to think deeply about memory, truth, perspective and their relationship. To delve too much into these matters would endanger giving away the plot, but suffice it to say that the idea of choice in forgetting is a major theme of the plot.

Why do we forget what we do? Is it to protect ourselves? How important, for instance, is it for us as Christians to remind ourselves of our pasts so that we never forget what we were and are without Christ? Do we create a fiction of ourselves as righteous only because God's Spirit has worked in us to tri-

Memento asks so many questions of modern life and postmodern philosophy that to treat it as a simple movie is to miss the opportunity to think deeply about memory, truth, perspective, and their relationship.



umph over sins that used to beset us more easily? These are questions that Leonard is forced to ask in a secular context, that *Memento* spurs us to ask of ourselves in a very different way.

And the questions abound. Leonard spends his life focused on one thing and one thing only: revenge. In fact everyone in the film seems to want revenge on someone or something else: Teddy is a former policeman who deals drugs; Natalie's main purpose in the film is to get revenge for the death of her boyfriend.

Leonard's grotesque tattoos, one of his means of reminding himself of things he wants to make sure not to forget, include things like "Memory is Treachery" and "Find

Him and Kill Him," reinforcing revenge as the basis for his life. At one point Natalie asks him why he wants revenge so badly since he'll only forget that he got it anyway so he won't enjoy it. His answer is stunning: "It doesn't matter if I remember it; my wife deserves justice."

The form of the movie supports the problem Leonard has and gives us his point of view by, after the opening sequence, shooting each sequence in normal linear time but shuffling the sequences so that the next one explains what just happened, not vice versa as in a normal movie. Interspersed with these color sequences are black and white sequences of Leonard on the telephone telling a story that explains much of his rationale for what he does.

While this is confusing, that is the point: Leonard has chosen to blur fantasy and reality and that choice has severe consequences.

This is a dark, hard movie to watch, but well worth the time and effort.

Remember not to forget to see *Memento*. ■

~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.

Copyright © 2001 by Andrew H. Trotter, Jr.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What was your initial or immediate reaction to the film? Why did you react that way?
2. What is the significance of this story? Why bother telling it? Why is it worth reflection and discussion? What does it reveal about humanity as created in God's image in a fallen world?
3. With whom did you identify in this movie? With whom are viewers meant to identify? Discuss the different characters in the film and their significance to the story. Are there any truly good people in the film? Who? Why do you think so?
4. How do you answer someone who says that truth "is only a matter of your perspective"?
5. The film is made up of a great many sequences—which made the greatest impact on you? Why?
6. 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?
7. Might the film be a useful point of contact for discussion with non-Christians?

Streams of Praise

When Ransom Fellowship sponsors Bible studies and seminars, we always include what we call “discernment discussions,” sessions in which the group discusses a short story, movie, or article. The idea is to link what we believe with what we do, to bring what we are learning in the Scriptures into tension with our culture. To read the world, in other words, as we read the Word.

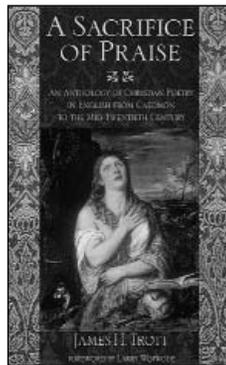
Occasionally I ask members to bring poems to read which we can discuss. Any poem will do, as long as it’s not a Psalm, as long as it is a published work that speaks to them. This assignment, for some reason, is always greeted with groans (especially from the men), and the complaint that they can’t do it because they haven’t read poetry in years. All the more reason to read it now, I say.

Poetry is an art form far too precious to be ignored. Dig out the old poetry anthology from college and the books of poetry collecting dust, spend an evening leisurely going through them, and be prepared to read one poem to the group. Interestingly, the poetry evenings always turn out to be deeply moving (even for the men, by the way). And so far, at least, no member has ever brought merely one poem to share with the group, but several.

Yet most Christians tend to slight poetry. For one thing, we tend to read the Psalms not as poetry, but as teaching which happens to be in poetic form. So we don’t relish it as poetry, or interpret it as poetry, but rather treat it as if its form did not matter. But it does. Many of us also slight poetry because we are busy,

and so imagine we haven’t the time. Strange idea. If you think about it, an easier case could be made for the proposition that poetry becomes more essential as we become increasingly busy.

One way to immerse yourself in poetry is with a good anthology. One anthology that all Christians should consider adding to their libraries is *A Sacrifice of Praise* edited by James Trott. A poet himself, Trott decided to begin the collection “to know how the Christian poet should write and speak to his own ‘tribe’ in his own ‘tongue’... We who speak English have thirteen centuries of Christian poetry behind us. Christian poetry in



Christian poetry is a deep and broad stream of praise, frequently poured out by men and women who died for the faith.

English is a deep and broad stream of praise, frequently poured out by men and women who died for the faith in a context of persecution... This stream or tradition of Christian poetry includes every genre, form and style from private meditations and psalms to great public works of literature on epic scales.”

A Sacrifice of Praise is arranged chronologically in nine chapters, each period, genre, and poet introduced by Trott in a way that gives us a context for the poems to follow. Footnotes are also provided to help interpret Old English words and phrases.

The earliest Christian poet who wrote in English was an illiterate herdsman who lived from 658-680. Caedmon, the story goes, escaped from a

party at which each person was to tell a story or sing a song, because he could do neither. That night, alone, he had a vision during which he found himself praising God in verse.

*It is meet that we worship
the Warden of heaven,
The might of the Maker,
His purpose of mind,
The Glory-Father’s work
when of all His wonders
Eternal God
made a beginning.*

Entering a monastery, Caedmon turned the Scriptures he heard read aloud into verse. The poem he received in the vision,

the only one clearly attributable to him, has been remembered through the centuries simply as “Caedmon’s Hymn.”

My favorite Christian poets are included in *A Sacrifice of Praise* (though not, of course, all my favorite poems). Such as Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) from “Pied Beauty:”

*Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled
cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout
that swim...*

And Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894), sister of painter Dante Gabriel and model for a number of the Pre-Raphaelite artists, from “An Emerald is as Green as Grass:”

*An emerald is as green as grass;
A ruby red as blood;*

*A sapphire shines as blue as heaven;
A flint lies in the mud.*

*A diamond is a brilliant stone,
To catch the world's desire;
An opal holds a fiery spark;
But a flint holds fire.*

And the seventeenth century Anglican cleric John Donne (1572-1631), from "A Hymn to God the Father:"

*Wilt thou forgive that sin, where I begun,
Which is my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive those sinns through which
I run
And doe them still, though still I doe deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
for I have more...*

I don't care for all the entries in *A Sacrifice of Praise*, of course, but such is the nature of anthologies. In a few cases I would even have argued some of the pieces be omitted to make way for better poems. On the other hand, I have made pleasant discoveries while browsing the collection. Been introduced to new poets of whom I wish to read more, and found poems which have fired my imagination. One discovery was the appropriately shaped poem by George Herbert (1593-1633) named "Easter Wings:"

*Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poore:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me...*

Or, if like me you have trouble remembering

the Commandments, the clever versification by Ralph Erskine (1685-1752):

1. *No God but me thou shalt adore.*
2. *No image frame to bow before.*
3. *My holy name take not in vain.*
4. *My sacred Sabbath don't profane.*
5. *To parents render due respect.*
6. *All murder shun, and malice check.*
7. *From filth and whoredom base abstain;*
8. *From theft and all unlawful gain.*
9. *False witness flee, and slandering spite;*
10. *Nor covet what's thy neighbor's right.*

And most of all, I am delighted to be introduced to the poetry of Phillis Wheatley, born in Africa in 1753, and shipped to America as a slave at the age of seven. Sold in Boston to a tailor named John Wheatley, she was educated by his wife who quickly realized her abilities and made study her chief duty. Phillis Wheatley went on to learn Latin and Greek, as well as English, and when she was 18 traveled to London, where she published her first book of poetry. Later freed, she married another freed slave, John Peters. She died at the age of 31. Here's an excerpt from "Thoughts on the Works of Providence:"

*As reason's pow'rs by day our God disclose,
So we may trace him in the night's repose:
Say what is sleep? and dreams how passing
strange!
When action ceases, and ideas range
Licentious and unbounded o'er the plains,
Where Fancy's queen in giddy triumph reigns,
Hear in soft strains the dreaming lover sigh
To a kind fair, or rave in jealousy;
On pleasure now, and now on vengeance
bent,
The lab'ring passions struggle for a vent.
What pow'rs, O man! thy reason then
restores,
So long suspended in nocturnal hours?
What secret hand returns the mental train.*

*And gives improv'd thine active pow'rs again?
From thee, O man, what gratitude should
rise
And, when from balmy sleep thou op'st
thine eyes,
Let thy first thoughts be praises to the skies.
How merciful our God who thus imparts
O'erflowing tides of joy to human hearts
When wants and woes might be our
righteous lot,
Our God forgetting, by our God forgot!*

A Sacrifice of Praise is a good introduction to the great stream of Christian poetry which is part of the heritage of the people of God. "And nothing can contain," novelist Larry Woiwode notes in the Foreword, "the outpouring of poetry that carries us on a current that is our true source of power, ordained by hands other than ours from before the beginning of time, and that onrushing stream is the tradition pouring through the chapters of this book; it is pouring out of centuries past and will keep pouring in thunderous collusion to His glory into centuries to come."

We recommend *A Sacrifice of Praise* to you. ■

~Denis Haack

Book reviewed:

A Sacrifice of Praise: An Anthology of Christian Poetry in English from Caedmon to the Mid-Twentieth Century edited by James H. Trott, Foreword by Larry Woiwode (Nashville, TN: Cumberland House Publishing; 1999) 763 pp. + bibliography + indices.

IVP References on CD

Christians who desire to be discerning take Bible study seriously. And serious students of Scripture will want to use good reference books as they study the Bible. God raises up teachers among his people who are gifted in probing the meaning of the text, and to ignore their ministry is to scorn the Spirit who is at work in the church. Christianity is not primarily an individualistic affair but is a covenant community in which we need one another's gifts if we are to grow in grace.

This is not to suggest, of course, that those cut off from gifted teachers will find God's word closed to them. It is instead an argument against refusing to learn from scholars who love God and his word by not taking advantage of what they would teach us. Using dictionaries to gain insight into the meaning of words and phrases, commentaries to unpack the flow and interpretation of the text, theological works to set it all into the wider perspective of a Christian world view, and atlases and histories to bring geography and culture into sharp relief—all this and more is at our fingertips if we will avail ourselves of it.

On the other hand, a subtle danger lurks in this process. So many resources are so easily available today that it is easy to slide in our study of Scripture—a form of “slothfulness”—so that we don't actually study the Bible so much as simply allow the resources to tell us what to think. Using resources in Bible study must help us focus on hearing and responding faithfully to the text.

Sometimes, however, Bible discussions sound less like believers submitting themselves to the text than a debating society in which members quote their favorite scholar as the final word on each issue. I mention this danger not as an argument against using resources, but as a reminder to use them properly. They are a gracious gift of God, and we should be grateful that we live in a period of history when so many reference works are so readily available.

Over the past few years InterVarsity Press has been

Christianity is a covenant community in which we need one another's gifts if we are to grow in grace.

publishing a series of helpful reference tools for serious Bible students. Now the entire collection is available on CD-ROM, bundled with a copy of the Logos Bible Study program. *The Essential IVP Reference Collection* includes:

New Bible Dictionary
New Bible Commentary
New Dictionary of Theology
New Bible Atlas
New Dictionary of Biblical Theology
Dictionary of Jesus & the Gospels
Dictionary of Paul & His Letters
Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments
Dictionary of New Testament Background
The Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament
The Bible Background Commentary: New Testament

Hard Sayings of the Bible
Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

All thirteen references consume a fair amount of hard drive space. If your computer is limited in this regard, the program can be easily loaded onto your computer while allowing all or some of the books to remain on the CD. Installing the program is simple, except for the minor irritation of being required to first shut off not only any programs that happen to be running (an expected step when installing new software), but the desktop wallpaper and screen saver as well (an unexpected step). The program is easy to run, and like most computerized Bible study programs, the result is simply to have the text and graphics on the screen instead of on the page. The advantages, as you might guess, are ease of use, simplified and speedier searches, and the ability to copy and paste material from the references directly into a word processor.

I am delighted to have resources bundled in *The Essential IVP Reference Collection* on my computer. The only drawback that I can think of is that the books, all available in hard back, look mighty fine on a bookshelf. ■

~Denis Haack

Resource reviewed:

The Essential IVP Reference Collection: The Complete Electronic Bible Reference Library (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; 2001). CD-ROM.



A Religious Garden

In the spring of 1994, I was interviewed by the emergency medicine group in which I am now a partner. Besides the usual questions, there were two that surprised me. They regarded my opinion on scientific creationism and abortion. I answered the questions as truthfully as I could, all the time thinking, “This shouldn’t be happening in a job interview in America.” Yet the physician who asked those questions understood that religion matters and because it does, it cannot be limited to a merely personal sphere. Or as Yale Law Professor Stephen Carter says, “A religion that makes no difference in the life of the believer is not a religion worthy of the name” (p. 189).

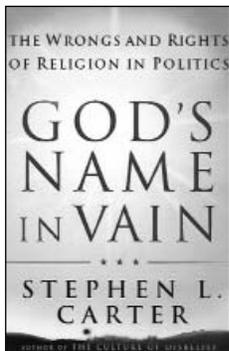
In the book, *God’s Name in Vain*, Carter explores how religion should be allowed to participate in the square of public debate and politics. His answer springs from a vision of religion as a moral institution, counterbalancing the

power of the state. Religion is “...subversive of the culture it inhabits. As long as religion avoids the temptation to join its authority to the authority of the state, it can indeed play a subversive role, because it focuses the attention of the believer on a source of moral understanding that transcends both the authority of positive law and the authority of human moral systems” (p. 30).

When religious institutions behave in a partisan manner, when they accommodate, when they compromise, they can no longer be subversive. A religious community that adheres to a particular political party’s vision of society might not necessarily be adhering to God’s vision for society. A religious organization that finds itself within the power structure of the state may find it increasingly difficult to criticize that state.

Just as the press serves to alert citizens to injustices committed by the state, the First

Amendment protects various religious communities so they can flourish unhampered by state interference, developing their own transcendent morality which can then be usefully brought to public scrutiny. Carter asserts that earlier Americans understood this concept well, using the illustration of a garden of religion being protected by a wall of separation from the state. Within this garden religionists could work in community toward a better understanding of God and morality, and when ready venture into the wilderness of the state, to affect change. Earlier Americans not only felt comfortable injecting religious imagery and convictions into public



The Christian life should not be about getting the right candidates elected or advancing the right agenda.

debate, but used their morality to create tremendous political change.

Things are different now because Americans poorly understand the First Amendment. Rather than being a metaphorical wall of protection around religion, it is seen as protection for the state from religious extremism. The problem is that the state, having all the power, doesn’t need protection.

Religion was a driving force behind the abolition of slavery, the crusade to aid the impoverished, and the civil rights movement. Each of these major political causes is seen by most as worthy and noble causes, yet the First Amendment today is used by liberal organizations to silence the political voice of religious organizations hewing to conservative politics. This is an abuse of the law and may hamper future progressive causes.

Carter explores “issues over which religions might choose to resist” (p. 121): when

a country with the military might of the U.S. should use that power; how and why religious communities should resist popular culture.

In the chapter, “Measurism,” Carter warns against the postmodern practice of accepting all moral values as equally valid unless there are statistics to back up one’s claim, leaving us “capable of asserting moral positions and hewing to them strongly, but utterly incompetent in defending them in ways that are persuasive...” (p. 138). Until we learn to argue our case persuasively in religious and ethical language, which opens the eyes of our opponent to a God he had previously not seen, we will be serving a limitless God in a limited way.

Unfortunately, the book leaves a few key questions unanswered. For instance, if earlier Americans had little difficulty injecting religion in politics, what happened? No matter how appealing Carter’s vision is of religion in politics (and I must admit it is very appealing), it will be difficult to bring religion back to the public square until we see why it was forced out in the first place.

God’s Name in Vain is written by one who truly believes “the Christian life should not be about getting the right candidates elected or advancing the right agenda. [It] should be about living in a way that Christ’s light shines forth” (p. 115). *God’s Name in Vain* clarifies how that vision can become a reality in the public arena of our nation. ■

~Keith Winkle

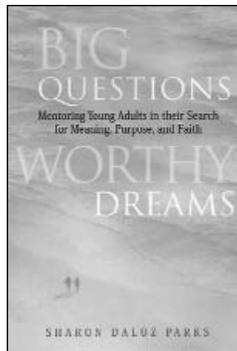
Dr. Keith Winkle is an emergency medicine physician who lives with his wife, Debbie, and two daughters in Anchorage, AK. Copyright © 2001 by Keith Winkle.

Book Reviewed: *God’s Name in Vain: The Wrongs and Rights of Religion in Politics* by Stephen L. Carter (New York: Basic Books; 2000) 256 pp.

Information Rich,

In a recent *About Campus* article entitled “The New Student,” Professor Fred Newton profiles today’s young adult college student. His insightful analysis includes a statement that today’s young people “receive extensive and rapid exposure to a vast and ever-increasing level of informational activity [but] have received less hands-on mentoring from parents or other adult figures.” I, too, have had countless conversations with “twentysomethings” that confirm Newton’s observation. They consistently articulate a desire to connect with parents and other adults—even with older adults, that vast mysterious cadre of human beings virtually unknown to them. You could say that young adults are information rich and mentor poor.

Social psychologist Sharon Parks takes up this theme in her latest book, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*. Parks’ latest work culminates thirty years of research on young adult development in the North American context. As she explains in the preface, *Big Questions* began as a re-write of her acclaimed 1986 work, *The Critical Years: The Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By*; however, “critical shifts have taken place (in North American culture) that call forth deepening understanding of the anxieties and aspirations of young adults” as they construct their lives. Among these critical shifts, she mentions the economy, the extension of the life span, the technology/communications explosion, and the rise of religious plural-



ism. She argues that it is increasingly necessary to understand the holistic nature of faith, defined as “the activity of making meaning,” in order to effectively mentor those who are forming and being formed by the world views around them.

Parks’ understanding of the role of faith as meaning-making characteristically occupies a critical space in the landscape of the book. Briefly, this is the notion that the way to form a faith is to question it, examine and grow in your appreciation for other faith expressions, then reformulate a new, critically examined faith of your own. Parks states that

Parks’ snapshots of how young adults come to maturity is compelling and challenging as we consider how this discussion might influence church and ministry-based mentoring communities.

although she remains concerned that young adults will be willing and able to move to the third step of reformulation upon completion of the questioning and examination stages, she is more troubled that young adults today “are not being encouraged to ask the big questions that awaken critical thought in the first place.” Thus, she concludes that “swept up in religious assumptions that remain unexamined and economic assumptions that function religiously, they easily become vulnerable to the conventional cynicism of our time or the economic and political agendas of a consumption-driven yet ambivalent age.”

Parks is not interested in providing a Christocentric, orthodox overview of human development and faith formation. She does, however, write with clarity, depth, and passion out of her own more pluralistic yet *spiritual* world view about

the persons and context in which young adult formation occurs. As such, she provides challenging yet biblically dissonant material for the discerning evangelical reader.

In the face of such a potentially calamitous cultural reality, Parks vigorously argues that “mentoring communities” play a—perhaps even the—pivotal role in the faith and world view formation of young adults.

Individual mentors, she explains, have not outlived their usefulness; they are most helpful when the entity into which the protégé is being introduced is

static and well-defined. However, “if one is going to be initiated into a profession, organization, or corporation and the societies they serve as they could become, then only a mentoring community will do.” In other words, according to Parks, if you need the protégé to be encouraged and managed, get a mentor. If you need the protégé to be encouraged and inspired, find a mentoring community.

This artificial distinction breaks down in that certain individual mentors cast vision and inspire their charges and certain mentoring communities maintain the status quo and dull the passions of their members. It is not Parks’ purpose to drive such a wedge between the two—she is merely drawing brief comparisons for the purpose of illustrating the cumulative power of mentoring communities. To Parks, the features of a mentoring

Mentor Poor

environment include:

1. A Network of Belonging—A trustworthy place where the young adult can try and fail or succeed while experiencing support and challenge.
2. Big Enough Questions—An attitude of inquiry where questions of meaning, purpose, and faith are welcome and pursued with vigor.
3. Encounters with Otherness—Experiences with those “outside one’s own tribe.”
4. Habits of Mind—Habits that invite genuine dialogue, strengthen critical thought, encourage connective-holistic awareness, and develop the contemplative mind.
5. Worthy Dreams—Imagined possibilities that orient meaning, purpose, and aspirations within the young adult.
6. Access to Images—Images of truth, transformation, positive selves/others, and interrelatedness.
7. Communities of Practice—Humanizing practices that include hearth, table, and commons.

Parks concludes the book with a vision for

how mentoring communities might function in various spheres of life such as higher education, professional education, the workplace, travel, the natural environment, families, and religious faith communities. Her snapshots of how young adults come to maturity in these contexts is compelling and challenging as we consider how this discussion might influence church and ministry-based “mentoring communities.” Such visionary application resonates with the Biblical framework of transformational being and hopeful becoming as both the process and goal in the Kingdom of God. Perhaps such practice would lead to an environment where young adults are both richly informed and mentored. ■

~Donald Guthrie

Donald Guthrie, Ed.D., is Vice President for Academics at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis.

Copyright © 2001 by Donald Guthrie

Book Reviewed:
Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith, by Sharon Daloz Parks (New York: Jossey-Bass; 2000) 288 pp.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Do you participate in a mentoring community? To what extent does your group reflect the features of a mentoring environment that Parks describes? How do these features compare with the Biblical notion of the Body of Christ?
2. How does your church or ministry relate to young adults in general? To what extent are they made to feel welcome, asked to consider big questions, invited to imagine worthy Kingdom dreams, and engaged in “humanizing” Christ-honoring hospitable practices? Where and when do young adults participate in the life of the church or ministry? What is the relationship between how often they are “grouped” by themselves with how often they are integrated in multi-generational activities? How are their interests represented during decision-making opportunities?
3. Do you know young adults who are information rich and mentor poor? How might you and your church respond to those who exemplify this reality?

Order From:



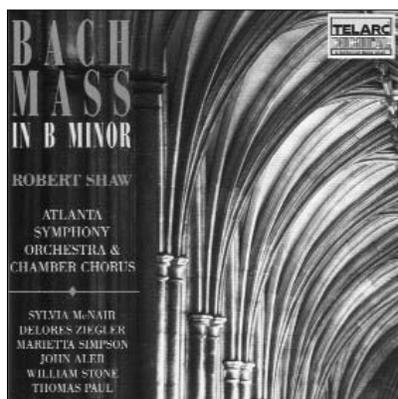
Distinctive Books and Music

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 portion of the proceeds will be donated to Ransom Fellowship.

Bach in a



A Glance at the Mass in B Minor

Bach was born in 1685 into a quite renowned musical family, so it shouldn't be too surprising that he spent his 65 years as an organist, choir director, and composer, nor that several of his children became fine musicians themselves. He wrote an incredibly large body of compositions that covered all the forms, instruments, and styles of his day, including cantatas, oratorios, passions, masses, and chorales for the church; orchestral concertos and

suites, concertos, keyboard works for clavier, harpsichord, and organ; and solo and chamber works for all sorts of various instruments. Unfortunately, many of his works have been lost over the years. His widow even found manuscripts being used after his death to wrap fish at the local market.

Even with numerous compositions, he was best known in his lifetime for his virtuoso organ playing. It seemed he could play anything, and improvise whenever called upon. Unlike his contemporary GF Handel, Bach was a "homebody" in that he seldom traveled far from his workplaces. While Handel was composing works in England and enjoying a cosmopolitan career, Bach seemed to be concerned with his local church, his 22 children, and his composing and playing, unconcerned about being known internationally.

I would like to offer one piece of his for our consideration: his Mass in B minor. Bach sets the text of the mass to music in quite a different way than his renaissance predecessors. In order to understand this difference, I would suggest listening first to one of Palestrina's settings, the graceful and radiant *Pope Marcellus Mass*, written at the end of the 16th century Italian renaissance. Listen in particular, say, to the Gloria movement, a setting of the text:

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth; we praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you...

Notice how Palestrina's setting has a clear, transparent texture? Each line's entrance moves step-wise, that is, there are few large leaps from one note to the next, mostly syllabic style, that is, generally one note per syllable, and the parts have no aggressive rhythms or dynamics. Each word is said only once. The tone of the work is gentle, calm, and radiant, encouraging reflection, and contemplation of the beauty of the sounds for their own sake. Imagine hearing this work in St. Peter's church in Rome, and you'll get a sense of the awesomeness of the sound. There are no instruments, rather it is sung in the "chapel style" or "*a cappella*."

Next, listen to the same text set by JS Bach in his Mass. Immediately we are set upon by the full baroque orchestra, trumpets, strings, timpani, and woodwinds in a dance-like celebration. Jaunty rhythms everywhere, melismatic opening statements from each voice entering (that is, many notes in succession all sung on just one syllable), and each choral group enters singing the words, "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*" over and over, as though stating the theme/text one time only would simply not be joyful enough. Also, there are trills, frills, and a generally ornamented time of it, bringing to mind the sort of ornaments one might find in the high baroque churches in Germany and Italy, compared to the clear, unadorned but graceful lines to be found in high renaissance churches and buildings in Florence or Rome.

Notice too, how when the text changes from, "Glory to God in the highest!" to "And on earth peace..." Bach switches musical gears in order to offer peaceful, restful music. This sort of tone painting is to be found throughout this work, and in baroque choral music in general. The melodies reflect the meaning of the words being sung. One of the characteristics of this period is the opposite of the high renaissance: the words and the emotions they engender dictate the manner and tone of the music, rather than the order and form of the music dictating how the text is to be sung.

Toward the end of this movement, you will find a great example of Bach's counterpoint. He

Moment

sets the text, “*Et in terra, pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*” or, “And on earth, peace to all men on whom His favor rests.” Each entrance is with the same melody to begin with, and then each makes way for the next entrance without departing the scene. The eventual 4-part counterpoint is elegant and a marvel, giving the listener a great example of Bach’s ability to weave unity and diversity together into one fabric without ever losing either. It also seems to keep the listener whole by simultaneously amazing the mind as well as charming the heart with its gentle expressiveness. This is Bach’s great genius: his music reflects his view of the world that man is made up of both mind and emotions, and the creation is both unified and diverse at the same time.

Listen to the setting of the text “*Et incarnatus est*” or “And was incarnated” from the Credo of the mass. Notice how the melodic lines interpret and reflect the text? As each choral section enters, its line descends to us just as He did in His incarnation, and when they get to the words, “*ex Maria virgine*” or “of the virgin Mary,” notice how gently she is treated, as the most mysterious of all conceptions (which are plenty mysterious already) takes place.

Compare the setting of the “*Crucifixus*,” ending with “*passus, et sepultus est*” (died and was buried) with the beginning of the next movement that follows directly on its heels, “*Et resurrexit*.” Perhaps this is not going to be heard as quite the emotional roller coaster it was when it was first heard, what with the film scores and rock music we hear daily today, but for the day, it was quite impressive, and still is when played well in the concert hall or live sanctuary. Listen also to the suspensions (a sort of harmonic dissonance) found on the first beats of each bar, resolved on the second (and usually on the syllables “-fixus”). The physical pain of the event is recalled, as well as the emotional pain of those who witnessed it. This is a very powerful way to include the listener in the experience, vicariously placing him or her at the foot of the cross.

The Bach Mass in B minor is one of the great works of western civilization, and can justly be spoken of in the same breath with Shakespeare’s plays, and the paintings of Rembrandt. These are just a few

of the many discoveries to be made listening to this great work, hardly scratching the surface of even those movements I have mentioned. I hope these initial thoughts will whet your appetite to listen carefully to the entire work. Below are four of my favorite recordings to consider:

Bach Mass in B minor:

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Robert Shaw, conductor on the Telarc label - #80233; or: Helmuth Rilling conducting on the Hanssler label - #92070

Pope Marcellus Mass of Palestrina:

The Best of the Renaissance—The Tallis Scholars Uni/Philips - #462862; or: Pope Marcellus Mass/Mass Aet—Oxford Camerata Naxos - #550573 ■



~John Hodges

John Mason Hodges is Associate Professor of the Arts at Crichton College, Memphis. His background is in orchestral conducting, and performs occasionally with his Ars Nova Chamber Orchestra, and as guest conductor for various instrumental and vocal ensembles. He lives in Memphis with his wife Day, and their son Mason.

Copyright © 2001 John Mason Hodges

by
**John
Mason
Hodges**

Dialogue cont.

continued from page 3...

wonder if there is an unspoken agreement to avoid the issue. It troubles my conscience that we dismiss this issue, as if we're ashamed.

Another aspect of OT law brought up in the letter to Dr. Laura had to do with the laws that regulated the buying, selling, and treatment of slaves and sanctioned this barbaric, cruel treatment of fellow humans (Exodus 21:1-11, 20- 21, Leviticus 25:39-46). The question that (to me) cries out for a cogent answer is, why is God establishing laws at all recognizing any aspect of slavery, rather than laws forbidding it? It is an inescapable conclusion that establishing laws regulating slavery is implicitly accepting its practice. One could hope for a clearer moral example to be set by God. By omitting any recognition of these problems, I think you are "missing the point" of the questions posed in the letter to Dr. Laura. What an absurd sense of priority that slavery is permitted while gathering wood on the wrong day is a capital offense!

The idea that laws (ancient or modern) should be a "moral compass," should be "life-affirming," or should demonstrate a high moral standard are very hard for me to integrate with the more outrageous OT

laws. If a political regime today imposed laws with such draconian penalties or with such disregard of the rights of individuals, it would be denounced with great moral outrage by nearly everyone. So how can I understand the ethical and moral value of these OT laws? Our conversation has (so far) failed to respond to these issues.

I look forward to discussing this with you further.

Bob Stevens
Los Alamos, NM

Denis Haack responds:

As I noted in my articles, my answer, though spread out over two issues of the newsletter, was still incomplete—other issues needed to be addressed, including the ones you raise. Though I am sorry you feel "dismayed" at my response, I would still have begun the conversation as I indicated, making clear that radio-talk show personalities are not the final word on Christian belief and practice (#1-2001), and explaining how as a Christian I must adopt Jesus' view of OT law (#4-2001).

Since the entire thing was originally published as a discernment exercise for our readers (#4-2000), and since I don't have space here to even begin answering what you have raised, I invite reader response to

Bob Steven's thoughtful letter. How should the Christian respond to such questions? What resources might we use to formulate an answer? Are there even more issues that need to be addressed? I will compile reader's responses in future issues of the newsletter, when we can give an answer the space it deserves. And as thanks to those who send something, we will send you a copy of our newest reprint by Mardi Keyes.

Critique is not available by **subscription**; rather it is sent 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.

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.

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.