

THE BIG PICTURE

C H R I S T P L A Y S I N T E N T H O U S A N D P L A C E S

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The Big Picture is produced by The Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology in Cambridge, an academic research centre based in Cambridge, U.K., seeking to nurture Christian scholarship and public theology, rooted in spirituality and practised in community, for the glory of God and the flourishing of the church and world.

For more head over to our website, kirbylaingcentre.co.uk.

We regularly produce publications and various resources, and host webinars and other events, all aimed at exploring answers to the question: How then should we live? [Subscribe to our newsletter to stay up to date](#).

To support the work of KLC, [please see our donations page](#).

FORTHCOMING EDITIONS

September/October 2021

This edition will celebrate the centenary of Herman Bavinck's death and John Stott's birth in 1921. Sports will also be featured in a major way with the Tokyo Olympics on the horizon. Deadline for contributions: 15 June 2021.

February 2022

This edition will celebrate the life and work of Hans Rookmaker on the centenary of his birth in 1922. The arts will be our major theme. Deadline for contributions: 15 January 2022.

Even in editions with a theme all aspects of life will be represented. We especially welcome short pieces, imagery (photos and artworks), poems, great recipes, etc. [See *The Big Picture* on our website](#) for stylistic guidelines and submission details.

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The Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology in Cambridge is a Charity registered in England and Wales with charity number 1191741.

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INTRODUCING THE BIG PICTURE

In November 2020, the Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology in Cambridge (KLC) became independent. KLC is all about “public theology,” as our vision statement makes clear:

TO FOSTER CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP AND PUBLIC THEOLOGY,
ROOTED IN SPIRITUALITY AND PRACTISED IN COMMUNITY,
FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE FLOURISHING OF THE CHURCH
AND WORLD.

This sounds, and is, academic, but it is also about life in all of its most practical dimensions.

Gerard Manley Hopkins captures this beautifully in his expression, “*Christ plays in ten thousand places.*” All of life and all of our humanity in its many dimensions come from God and we are called to glorify God in all these dimensions. God is already at work in all of life, but Hopkins’ statement calls us to see and attend to God’s many ways. Sadly, our busyness, and sometimes our excessive focus on “doing for God,” prevent us from seeing and savouring the myriad signs of God’s work.

Sometimes we are also captive to an unbiblical view of what it means to be human. The art historian Hans Rookmaker would ask his students, “Why (to what end) does God save us?” His wonderful answer was, “To make us fully human!” Similarly, the early church father Irenaeus says that “The glory of God is the human person, fully alive!” This is not a call for sinful indulgence, but it is a call to become fully ourselves in the very best sense of the word. Indeed, it is as we become ourselves that we image God and enhance his reputation in his creation.

TBP aims to embody the myriad ways in which Christ plays in our lives. Of course we are all different and we live in different

countries and places, and thus the way in which Christ plays in our lives will be different. Unlike most magazines which are written by others for us, we invite all members of our community and beyond, to write for TBP. As you discover how Christ is playing in your life, your family, your city, your country, we invite you to contribute short pieces, poetry, music, art, photographs, etc. As we do this together we will see from our differences how a huge view of Christ emerges, and how he is at work in so many different ways.

Inspiring as this might be, you may still ask, how do I start? Here is a suggestion. Slow down and come to stillness before God. Then ponder this question: what in my life makes me feel most alive? The answers may surprise you. They will, however, connect you with your humanity and to those areas in which Christ is already playing. Then, write a short piece for TBP about one of those areas, or take a photograph and submit it, compose a poem, do some woodwork, make a piece of jewellery, clean your motorbike, go for a run and then reflect on it, bake a cake and photograph it and send us all the recipe, etc. All these things are part of life as God has made it, and we are called to find and enjoy God in them.

— Craig Bartholomew

THE BIG PICTURE HAS A HISTORY

Years ago in South Africa Craig Bartholomew developed with friends a national movement called Christian Worldview Network (CWN) which had groups around the country, held a national conference each year, published a quarterly which was initially called the *Many-to-Many* and later *The Big Picture* (some editions are found on thebigpicture.homestead.com) as well as *Christians in the Arts in South Africa: A Manifesto* (thebigpicture.homestead.com/files/SAartManifesto.html).

The name of our new magazine intentionally evokes the work of CWN. With the sterling help of Dr Frank Mueller who played a leading role in CWN, we are developing an archive of past editions of the South African editions of TBP which we will be making available in the future. When they are ready, do browse away at your leisure – they are full of gems!

In recent months we have established a regular KLC Coffee Time with South Africans and Heidi Salzwedel of KRUX in Stellenbosch, South Africa, is leading a process to develop and publish a 2nd edition of the Manifesto for today. A South African Black Writers group has also emerged, a very exciting development.

To follow these developments, and more, head over to our website - kirbylaingcentre.co.uk/#subscribe - and subscribe to our mailing list so that you can be kept up to date on important publications, events and various resources from KLC.

THE AIMS OF TBP

1. To educate, inform and inspire readers about public theology.
2. To ground our work in Scripture.
3. To embody with creativity, through art, poetry, music, the written word, etc., the big picture vision of the gospel.
4. To connect with good practice wherever it is found.
5. To build community locally and globally with our friends and partners actively represented in the magazine.

OUR PARTNERS

KLC has many partners. Our major partner in publishing TBP is BibleMesh. Together we are assured of a very large, global distribution. Dr. Benjamin Quinn writes:

“BibleMesh is excited to partner with KLC for the distribution of The Big Picture Magazine. The ministry of BibleMesh began with a desire to help pastors think better about public square issues from a biblical and historical foundation. The ‘all of life’ focus of KLC and The Big Picture Magazine indeed informs and encourages God’s people toward thinking, loving, and acting Christianly in every time and place. We know this will be a blessing to many and we are honored to join KLC in the effort.”



INTRODUCING OUR EDITORS

We are delighted to introduce our editors to you. Do be aware that we will add editors in other areas as TBP develops.

EDITOR: CRAIG G. BARTHOLOMEW

Craig is the Director of KLC and one of the Trustees. Craig is a native South African, and a graduate of Oxford University and the University of Bristol. He is the author and editor of numerous books, and is currently working on a multi-volume project entitled “Old Testament Origins and the Question of God.” Craig is Senior Research Fellow, Adjunct Faculty at Trinity College, Bristol, and supervises doctorates through them for the University of Aberdeen. Craig loves gardening, is passionate about horses and dressage in particular, and enjoys crafts and jewellery-making in particular.



ASSOCIATE EDITOR: ISTINE SWART



Although also attracted to art and literature, Istine opted for a scientific training and taught Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry in schools and tertiary institutions. Her life-long interest in fine arts has been

kept alive through her marriage to the sculptor, Gert Swart. Istine has been sewing and knitting garments for decades and has tried her hand at jewellery-making and making bobbin lace.

ARTS EDITOR: HEIDI SALZWEDEL

Based in Cape Town, Heidi Salzwedel is a practising artist and Art and Design educator with a Fine Arts degree from Rhodes University, Makhandla (2009) and a MA degree from Stellenbosch University (2015). She is



passionate about art, teaching, writing, research and developing community. Heidi has exhibited internationally in Italy and the Netherlands and in local group exhibitions, including the PPC Cement Finalists exhibition (film category) in Cape Town (2016), and the Absa L'Atelier top 100 exhibition (sculpture category) in Johannesburg (2010). She has exhibited regularly at the National Arts Festival with 40 Stones; a faith-based visual arts collective/network. Currently she and others are connecting artists in Cape Town as part of KRUX-South. You can contact Heidi at heidi.liesl.salz@gmail.com.

LITERATURE EDITOR: ANDREW WHITE



Andrew White holds a Ph.D. in English from Washington State University (2003) and has held faculty positions at Wheaton College, the American University in Bulgaria and Eastern Mennonite University.

His research interests include early American literature, early modern English literature, spiritual life writings and Balkan studies. Andrew recently completed an M.Div. (biblical studies) and is seeking ordination in the Anglican Church in North America (Diocese of Christ Our Hope). He currently resides in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, but is a native of the "evergreen" Pacific Northwest.

FILM REVIEW EDITOR: JARROD HOWARD-BROWNE



Jarrod is a lover of great stories, whether told in film, literature, music or design. He is fascinated by the form and structure of film making, particularly when they are used effectively to tell the story (see anything by Wes Anderson

and the masters of Transcendental Cinema). His favourite film is *First Reformed*. He is an amateur permaculture enthusiast and almost never passes up the opportunity to enjoy a table top game with friends.

MUSIC EDITORS: MARY VANHOOZER AND JOSH RODRIGUEZ

JOSH

Known for his energetic rhythms, rich harmonic language, and striking colours, Josh Rodriguez (b. 1982) continues to gain recognition as an emerging composer and collaborator on a national and international scale. Born in Argentina and raised in Guatemala and Mexico, Rodriguez's musical imagination has been formed by the colours and cultures of his childhood. Rodriguez collaborates regularly with film and theatre directors and has received several notable concert commissions in a wide range of musical genres. Rodriguez currently serves as Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the Collinsworth School of Music at California Baptist University. He regularly contributes to various arts & culture blogs and is co-director of Deus-Ex-Musica, an initiative that



brings musicians, pastors, and non-musicians together for concerts and conversations about the intersection of faith and new music. Josh's personal website is: joshrodriguezmusic.com.



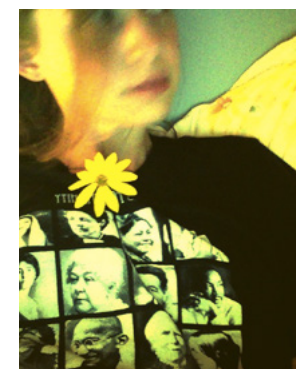
MARY

Mary Vanhoozer is a multi-instrumentalist (piano, violin, hurdy gurdy, and hammered dulcimer) and melodist. A classical pianist by trade, she has performed solo recitals and taught workshops

throughout the United States. Mary's debut album for solo piano, *From Leipzig to LA*, was released in 2018 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and features the complete partitas of J. S. Bach juxtaposed with a commissioned work by Josh Rodriguez: *Partita Picosá*. She has produced three albums of original music: *Songs of Day and Night*, *Bard and Ceilidh* and *Jubilate*, which reflect her love of renaissance dance music and baroque counterpoint, as well as European folk tradition. The degrees in piano performance Mary earned are: a BM from Wheaton College Conservatory, a MM from the Eastman School of Music and a DMA from the Cleveland Institute of Music. To listen to Mary's music and watch her performances please visit: maryvanhoozer.com

POETRY EDITOR: EMMA VANHOOZER

Emma lives and works at the St. Peter Claver Catholic Worker House in South Bend, Indiana. She shares in the community work of hosting a drop-in shelter, tending a community garden and accompanying the marginalized



and houseless through offering hospitality in her house. Emma grew up in Scotland, where she developed an interest in the connections between geographical places and interior landscapes. Spending her early years in a Scottish terrain, she became attuned to the borders and intersections between the wild

and the garden, habitable space. She has companioned herself to poetry, and finds there the enduring invitation both through fragility and rest to inhabit these border spaces. She seeks those poems that wire together the open edge of language with a trust of the earth. Emma welcomes readers to the pages of this journal, and invites them to lingeringly abide here. You can contact her at emma.vanhoozer@gmail.com.

SPORTS EDITOR: P.J. BUYS



PJ Buys is a Canadian ice hockey fanatic and Christian philosopher of sport. He played competitive sports until the age of 19 when, after his conversion, he became an athletically-minded scholar. After receiving

a Bachelor's degree in philosophy at Redeemer University and a Master's in Interdisciplinary Humanities at Trinity Western University (where he captained the university hockey team), PJ played professional hockey in North America for two years. PJ remains active in competitive sport in Ontario, Canada, where he is a championship-winning hockey coach, trainer and consultant at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto. PJ sees it as his mission to reveal the powerful spiritual nature of sports in the modern world so that its God-given purpose (enjoyment) can be redeemed and restored. Contact PJ at pj.buys75@gmail.com.

FOOD EDITOR: DIANA SALGADO

I'm a Jesus follower because of pizza. The first time I attended a Christian church was because my friend told me there were going to be free pizzas after the service. Some weeks



after that date, it became clear that Christ, food and me were going to be inseparable. Now I work in projects to reduce food waste coming from food processing or from overproduction of crops in the south of England. Contact Diana at diana.salgado.foodscience@gmail.com

EDITORIAL

ABRAHAM KUYPER 100 YEARS ON

—Craig G. Bartholomew

Not every edition of TBP will have a theme. This one does. 8 November 2020 was the centenary of Abraham Kuyper's death. Kuyper was an extraordinary figure, and we include reflections on his work from several people, as well as a great deal of other material. More of Kuyper's work than ever before is available in English, courtesy not least of Lexham's publication of the Collected Works of Abraham Kuyper in Public Theology.

Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) was converted through reading the best-selling Anglo-Catholic novel, Charlotte Yonge's *The Heir of Redclyffe*, given to him by his fiancée while he was doing his Doctorate at Leiden University in theology. He served as a pastor and later entered public life as a parliamentarian. With colleagues he founded a political party, became the prime minister, founded a new church denomination, published prolifically, founded new magazines, and helped set up the Free University of Amsterdam of which he was professor of theology and Rector.

Kuyper famously said: "Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"¹ In his life, extensive writings, and his work Kuyper sought to embody this comprehensive vision with Christ at its heart. Kuyper died just after the conclusion of World War I, and he would have had little idea of what lay in store for the 20th century. For all its good gifts and progress the twentieth century has been described as the most brutal in history. One needs only to think of World War I, the Great Depression, the rise of communism, Stalin's brutal rule, World War II, secularism, the nuclear race, the environmental crisis, etc. By the end of the 20th century a state of exhaustion and despair had set in.

¹ James D. Bratt, ed., *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 488.

One hundred years after Kuyper's death, and we are well into the 21st century. An astonishing characteristic of our times is the renaissance of religion, especially in the majority world. Religion has made a major comeback, especially that of Islam and Christianity. Alas, it is too often a privatized form of Christianity that has little idea how to relate Christianity to all of life, or what we call public theology. We desperately need resources that will help us as we think through and practice all of life *coram Deo*, before the face of God. Kuyper is a major resource in this respect. Indeed you could argue that his time has now come.

Dr. Broughton-Knox used to say to me that when we gather around Christ, he stands with his face towards his world. We who gather around Christ are called to spread abroad the fragrance of Christ and to enhance his reputation in all aspects of our lives and cultures. Thus, we are glad to launch our magazine with an engagement with Kuyper, exploring positively and critically what we can learn from him today, as we too seek to regain a comprehensive vision of Christ as Lord of all.



SPRING

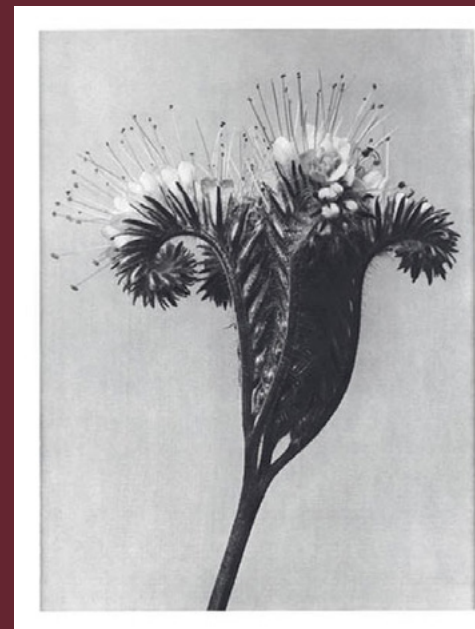
—Gerard Manley Hopkins

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.



—Karl Blossfeldt

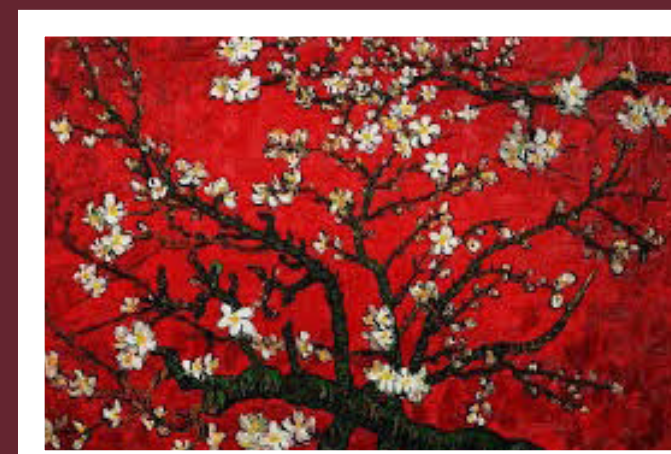
A SHROPSHIRE LAD 2: LOVELIEST OF TREES, THE CHERRY NOW

—A. E. Housman

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.



—Vincent Van Gogh

REASONS TO READ

KUYPER TODAY

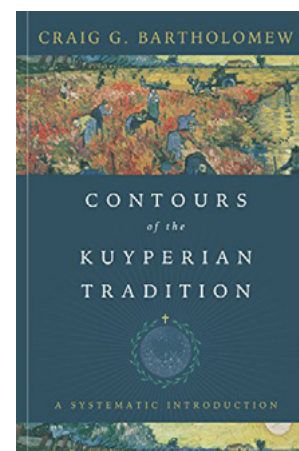
Craig G. Bartholomew,
Director of KLC

INTRODUCTION

Kuyper was an extraordinary figure who is always difficult to describe briefly because he was so very much: a pastor, a theologian, an activist, a prolific author and journalist, and a politician and prime minister of the Netherlands. Courtesy, in particular, of the passion of the late Rimmer

de Vries, whom we miss, more of AK is now in English than ever before. Indeed it was Rimmer who approached me about writing my *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition* and who generously bought me out of two courses to do so. Two notes about my encounter with AK:

Firstly, I grew up in apartheid South Africa and was converted through vibrant evangelicalism of which I became and remain a part. However, white supremacy was legislated across the country and impacted every area of life. And it was done in the name of Christ. With time I began to think hard about the gospel and South Africa. A breakthrough came when I was able to name my faith as a “worldview” which related to all of life, including politics. Around this time I was introduced to the Kuyperians at Potchefstroom and Elaine Botha became a lifelong friend.



“A BREAKTHROUGH CAME WHEN I WAS ABLE TO NAME MY FAITH AS A “WORLDVIEW” WHICH RELATED TO ALL OF LIFE...

The gift of being an Evangelical was that it never occurred to me that the penetrating insights of the Kuyperian tradition could be anything but missional. It was a mystery to me how Reformed institutions could be turned in on themselves; it seemed to me then, as it does now, that the Kuyperian tradition yields a huge, biblical view of mission.

Secondly, I was introduced to the Kuyperian tradition *through philosophers*, i.e. through the tradition of Herman Dooyeweerd. Although I would not label myself as a Dooyeweerdian in the narrow sense of the word, I learnt an immense amount from him and the framework of Reformation philosophy informs my research on a daily basis. It was a great privilege to occupy the H. Evan Runner Chair for over a decade at Redeemer University in Canada, and to teach from this perspective. However, my sense is that Dooyeweerdians often feel that they have moved beyond Kuyper, and certainly I was not pushed to read Kuyper and Herman Bavinck but rather Dooyeweerd and the Reformation philosophers. This in itself is a big task but, in my view, has its dangers. Reformational philosophy emerges out of Kuyperian soil and it is not helpful if such philosophy loses its grounding in that soil. Writing *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition* gave me an opportunity to immerse myself in Kuyper, and I found that experience wonderfully fruitful.

There are many good reasons for reading Kuyper, not least because more and more of him and his colleagues are available in English. Here I explore five of those many reasons.

1. BECAUSE OF HIS EMPHASIS ON PALINGENESIS

Kuyper is well known for reaching for biblical terms in Greek. Alas, they do not always communicate well. One such word is

palingenesis, a jawbreaker of a word. This is a Greek word and how Kuyper leverages it is very important.

In Titus 3:5 *palingenesis* refers to *individual conversion*. The story of Kuyper's own conversion is fascinating. Kuyper was a PK (preacher's kid) and it was only while doing his PhD in theology at Leiden University that he came to a living faith in Jesus. Kuyper's fiancée was preparing for confession of faith (confirmation) and Kuyper was arrogant and dismissive of her orthodoxy. As a gift his fiancée gave him the best-selling novel of the year in the UK, the Anglo-Catholic novel *The Heir of Redclyffe* by Charlotte Yonge. The Spirit did his regenerative work in AK through this novel. Initially he identified with the central arrogant character, but by the time this character comes to repentance and kneels to pray, so too does Kuyper.

The reality of conversion is thus utterly foundational to AK's story and life, and so too ought it to be for us. The Kuyperian and Reformation traditions are intellectually robust and powerful, but they are of little value if loosened from a living faith in Jesus. As John 17:3 reminds us, this is eternal life, that you might know God, not just know about God, but know him cognitively and experientially. All else flows from this and flows back into this. Thus it is important, and I am most grateful, that in our circles we have someone like Mark Roques, who has developed the Kuyperian tradition creatively in relation to evangelism. We must never lose sight of this; the breadth of the gospel that the Kuyperian tradition opens up, is truly good news, *euangelion*, and it needs to be sounded forth continually.

Kuyper's vast devotional writings also bear eloquent witness to the fact that conversion is the beginning of our journey into and with God, and not the end. I argue in my

Contours that the greatest need of this tradition is *spiritual formation*, and I stick by that comment. Huge minds without parallel formation of the whole person in the image of Christ are of little value and easily become unattractive. In my Herman Bavinck lecture given last year at Kampen Theological University, I attend to Bavinck's – and Kuyper's – critique of mysticism and argue that this needs reassessment. As some of us have discovered the imperative of ongoing spiritual formation, we have found that our Protestant Evangelicalism has limited resources whereas Catholicism has a deep and long tradition. In my view we need to engage with that tradition but not uncritically. I have heard it said that spirituality has given prayer back to the church but taken away the Bible. We can never settle for such a situation. We need deep resources for spiritual formation, clearly normed by Scripture. Even as I say this I remind you that spirituality is a practice, not firstly a theory. Reading many books on prayer and spiritual formation will not do the transformative work that ongoing practices will achieve.

If in Titus *palingenesis* refers to individual conversion, in Matthew 19:28 it is used for the renewal of the whole creation. And it is this twofold usage that Kuyper leverages to great effect. A metaphor in Mark's Gospel for becoming a Christian is *entering the kingdom*. In other words, when you become a Christian you automatically get caught up in God's purposes for his whole creation, the *missio Dei*, so that the view of the world issuing forth from conversion is creation-wide. Thus, AK drives a bus through the sacred-secular dualism that so bedevils far too much Evangelicalism, and opens up the whole of life and every aspect of it for Christian service. All the creation and the whole of life are the terrain for the service of God. Every Christian, as Eugene Peterson puts it, is in holy orders. The only question is *where and how* we serve. Later in life, when giving his *Stone Lectures on Calvinism*, on which Peter Heslam has

done great work, AK reached for the word “worldview” to capture this comprehensive vision.

2. BECAUSE OF HIS ATTENTION TO SCRIPTURE

AK had a front row seat as the modern approach to the Bible, historical criticism, took hold at Leiden and conquered most of the western academic world. Indeed, AK is credited with being the first to use the word “modernism.” Where AK was penetrating was in his discernment that historical criticism was one among many manifestations of the Enlightenment worldview. AK recognized that a piecemeal apologetic approach to the enlightenment would inevitably fail, and he recognized the need to counter one worldview with another. At the same time AK never made the mistake of ignoring the many good gifts brought by the Enlightenment worldview.

Neither AK nor Herman Bavinck were biblical scholars. Bavinck recognized the need for good, biblical work to accompany his and others', and arranged as a stopgap for Matthew Henry to be translated into Dutch. Both saw the challenge presented by historical criticism and AK addressed it directly in two articles. Without denying the new insights of this critical approach to Scripture they saw clearly what was at stake if the authority of the Bible was undermined, and so should we.

Nowadays in theology, it is rare to find work that is deeply engaged with the Bible. This is one reason why Bruce Ashford and I recently published our *The Doctrine of*

Creation: A Constructive Kuyperian Approach (IVP Academic, 2020). We want to promote and try to renew a form of theology that is deeply biblically engaged, and throughout the volume you will find small-font sections with Greek and Hebrew, as we endeavour to take the authority of the Bible with utmost seriousness.



— Zak Banjamin, Lorriel Huisie Vlegtuig

Where is such theology to be found? In my view the theologian who is exemplary in this respect is Karl Barth. In one of his volumes in his *Church Dogmatics* on creation, he devotes some 100 pages to rich, small-font theological exegesis of Genesis 1. When I am working on biblical texts I nowadays reach for the index of the *Church Dogmatics* to see what Barth had to say. AK, as I have said, was not a biblical scholar, but he is like Barth in his commitment to engaging with the Bible. For example, in the first of his three big tomes on *Common Grace*, now available through the magnificent Lexham Series, volume 1 is primarily devoted to common grace in the Bible. Some of AK's exegesis is fanciful and more eisegesis than exegesis, but he knew what needed to be done and he did his best.

Within biblical studies and the four Seminars that function as part of KLC, namely, SAHS, SADS, SACS and SAU, we have a significant group of Kuyperian biblical scholars. Mike Goheen's and my *The Drama of Scripture*, draws deeply on the Kuyperian tradition and in particular the work of Herman Ridderbos. If our tradition takes scripture seriously, then such scholars will be in great demand, and amidst our current economic crisis we will be concerned to ensure they are in a position to continue their work. Of course, we will only see this if we are really committed to Scripture as God's infallible Word for all of life, including philosophy and the academic disciplines. Much work remains to be done in this respect. Inter alia, there are resources within the Dutch biblical tradition that need to be excavated and translated, even as we advance this tradition in the present.

3. BECAUSE HE ASKS THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

When I left school I attended a small seminary in South Africa. It inducted me into the Reformed tradition, for which I remain very grateful. However, as is often the case with seminaries, it imparted information more than teaching us how to find answers for ourselves. It was my two years at Oxford University that educated me, teaching me how to explore and investigate for myself. As a professor my educational philosophy could, from one angle, be summed up as "Love the Question." From

day one of a freshman's course with me, I would work to help each of my students find their voice, and to learn to ask their questions, however simplistic. Over the course of their education I would try to help them to learn to ask questions that open up a topic under discussion, laying bare its major components. A key to research is learning to ask the right questions.

What I love about AK and the Kuyperian tradition is that it asks and teaches me to ask the right questions, questions like:

- What is the relationship between nature and grace?
- What is the telos of creation?
- What is the implication of the sovereignty of God for social philosophy?
- What parts constitute a modern society and how do they relate to each other?
- What is a university?
- What is the difference between a seminary and a theology department at a university?
- Who is ultimately responsible for a child's education?
- How does the antithesis manifest itself in different areas of life and what ought to be the Christian response?
- What should apologetics look like in a post-Enlightenment culture?
- How should we approach Christian involvement in a pluralist culture?
- What is the institutional church and how does it relate to the organic church?

And so we could continue. The Kuyperian tradition provides a vocabulary and a

penetrating capacity for asking questions that open up a topic for analysis with nuance.

I take it from this that the Kuyperian tradition is made for the marketplace of ideas. I lament the fact that we have no institution of Christian Higher Education in the UK or Europe. I fully support the establishment of such institutions, but a concern of mine is that too many understandably withdraw in order to do their work, but never re-engage, the very thing they are designed for. Then they turn in on themselves and become unhealthy. Far from the Kuyperian tradition hermetically sealing off the boundaries and group for discussion, in my experience it sets one free to engage widely and deeply, learning from wherever one can. A review of one of my books criticized me for engaging too widely and labelled me ecumenical! I take this as a compliment.

Here again AK is exemplary. I recently published a book chapter on *Abraham Kuyper and Science*, attending in particular to his work on evolution. AK wrote this at the time when his wife died. From the notes he prepared for this talk it is

evident that he consulted some 70 authors, including the leading authorities on evolution in his day in multiple languages, many of whom have entries on today's German Wikipedia.

4. BECAUSE OF HIS FOUNDATIONAL WORK ON THEOLOGY

Within the analytic Reformed Epistemology and Reformational philosophy, the yields of the Kuyperian tradition in philosophy

have been considerable. In the 1980s *Time* magazine reported that God was making a comeback ... in philosophy. It named Alvin Plantinga as the premier Protestant philosopher of religion. The Reformed Epistemologists, rooted in the Kuyperian tradition, have gone on to do truly extraordinary missional work in establishing overtly Christian philosophy in the academy.

Far, far less has this been the case in theology. In my view systematic theology reflects on the great loci of Christian belief in the light of Scripture and the Christian tradition in relation to the major questions of our day. And in my view, as such it yields foundational insights. I differ from Dooyeweerd in this respect in that I see both theology and philosophy as foundational sciences. If this is right, then the absence of major theological work is a serious deficit in the contemporary Kuyperian tradition.

Fortunately, we have Gordon Spykman's *Reformational Dogmatics*, and resources like the *Dogmatics* of G. C. Berkouwer, and the wonderful renaissance of Herman Bavinck's work in recent years – largely a result of John Bolt's labours – and most recently a great biography of Herman Bavinck. There are, of course, other works as well, such as those by Gijsbert van den Brink and Kees van der Kooi, which are becoming available in English.

I do not think one can write off AK and Bavinck as scholastic. This is too easy, and any such critique needs to define its terms carefully. We need a fresh flowering of Kuyperian theology today, and good news is that if *The Doctrine of Creation* sells well, it will become the first in a multi-volume, multi-author Kuyperian Dogmatics.

As a theologian AK's magnum opus is his three-volume *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, only part of which – mainly volume 2 – is available in English. As far as I am aware none of his *Dictaten Dogmatiek* is in English, nor is his *E Voto*, his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism. In his *Encyclopedia* you get a sense of the stature of AK as a theologian and as a philosopher. In order to work out if theology is a science he has to work out just what is a science, and off he

— Tim van Vuuren, *Urban Landscape*





goes. Amongst so many insights David Bosch argues that AK is the first to develop a trinitarian approach to missiology.

There is rich material here that needs to be translated, excavated, and developed afresh for today.

5. BECAUSE OF THE FRUITS OF THE KUYPERIAN TRADITION

For a tradition to be worth inhabiting and nurturing it needs to have shown itself capable of bearing good fruit. In my view this is undoubtedly

true of the Kuyperian tradition; indeed I have argued that its time has come. The Kuyperian tradition has yielded a great corpus of literature and practice which one could rehearse at length, and its influence is found nowadays sometimes in the most unusual places.

Let me be clear that I feel no compulsion to follow the Kuyperian tradition slavishly. It is to Christ and thus Scripture that we return to continually as our final authorities. And it must be noted that in some areas AK got it absolutely wrong. The lowest point of his work, in my view as a South African, was his support of the Afrikaners in remaining separate from coloured Africans. He rightly criticized British imperialism but was absolutely mistaken on the separation of the races in South Africa. This was a time when African converts and intellectuals were trying to find a path as Africans and intellectuals and Christians in relation to European thought and life. AK could have helped here but he did not, and it is a blemish on his legacy. Bavinck was far more enlightened on this issue, and his PhD students – unlike those of AK, I am told – often returned to South Africa able to bring the gospel critically and prophetically to bear on apartheid as it took hold.

Having said this, there is a huge amount to celebrate about the Kuyperian tradition. Let me close with an example. I recently completed a draft article on “Philosophical Hermeneutics” for a Dictionary of the Bible. I argue that thorough Christian work in philosophical hermeneutics is of vital importance for biblical hermeneutics. Where might we look for this? Alas, the Barthian tradition, which is so fertile in theological interpretation of the Bible, is wary of philosophy and disavows the possibility of Christian philosophy. So, not from there. Two other sources come to mind. There is an extraordinary flowering of Christian philosophy in French Catholic phenomenology, much of which is deeply and creatively biblically engaged so phenomenology is clearly one possible source. The other is the Kuyperian tradition. Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, C. Stephen Evans and others have written creatively and courageously about biblical interpretation and there are clearly philosophical resources here for biblical hermeneutics.

CONCLUSION

In my view the time for the Kuyperian tradition has come. We live amidst a remarkable renaissance of Christianity globally and if it is to have cultural depth it needs something like the Kuyperian tradition. Attentive to Christ, holding fast to the Bible, with the Spirit blowing through our work, opening out onto all of the creation as rightly his, this is the time to renew and develop the Kuyperian tradition. My hope is that we will find creative and ambitious ways to do this together.

Veni Creator Spiritus.

Veni, Creator Spiritus

—John Dryden

Creator Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come, visit ev'ry pious mind;
Come, pour thy joys on human kind;
From sin, and sorrow set us free;
And make thy temples worthy Thee.

O, Source of uncreated Light,
The Father's promis'd Paraclete!
Thrice Holy Fount, thrice Holy Fire,
Our hearts with heav'nly love inspire;
Come, and thy Sacred Unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing!

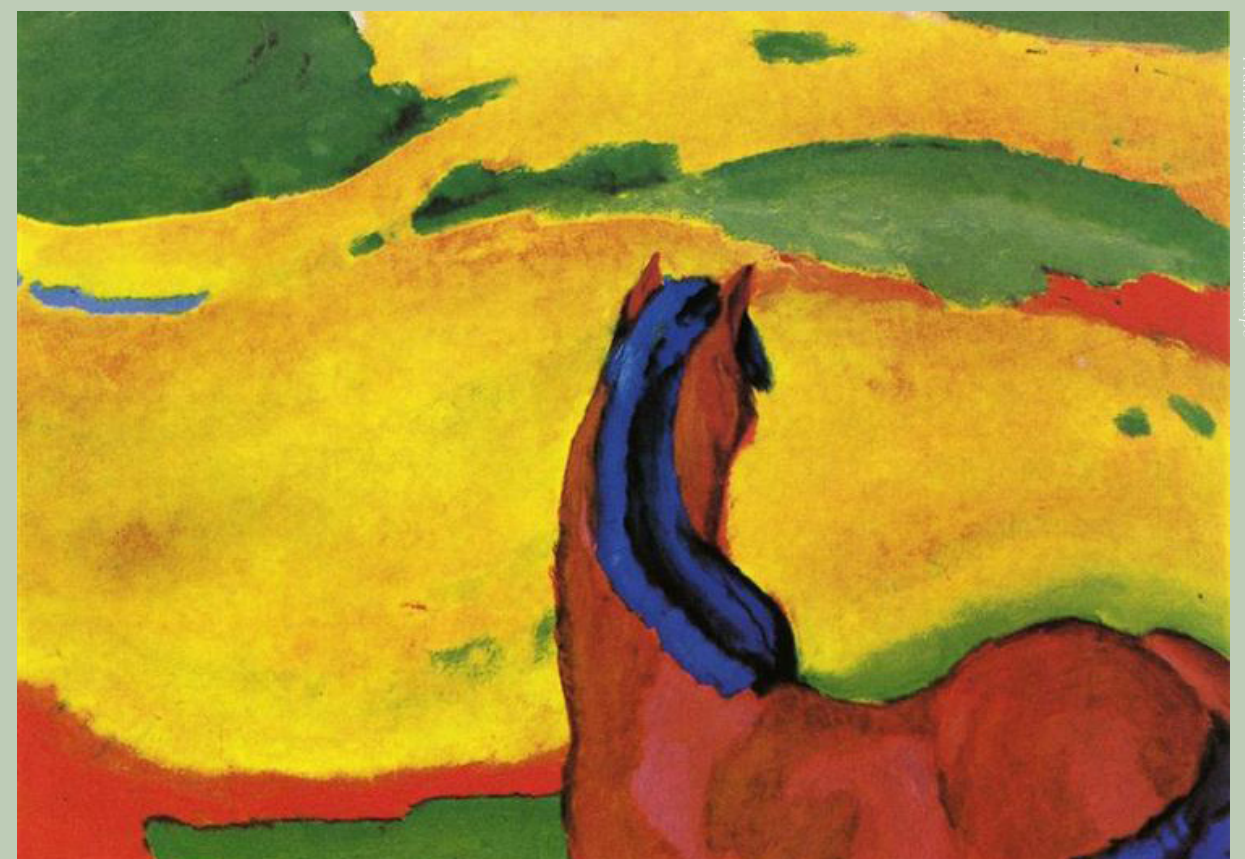
Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
Rich in thy sev'n-fold energy!
Thou strength of his Almighty Hand,
Whose pow'r does heav'n and earth command:
Proceeding Spirit, our Defence,
Who do'st the gift of tongues dispence,
And crown'st thy gift with eloquence!

Refine and purge our earthly parts;
But, oh, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice control;
Submit the senses to the soul;
And when rebellious they are grown,
Then, lay thy hand, and hold 'em down.

Chase from our minds th' Infernal Foe;
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;
And, lest our feet should step astray,
Protect, and guide us in the way.

Make us Eternal Truths receive,
And practise, all that we believe:
Give us thy self, that we may see
The Father and the Son, by thee.

Immortal honour, endless fame,
Attend th' Almighty Father's name:
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost Man's redemption died:
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to thee.





—Walter Hayn

“AT THE HEART OF HEALTHY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY IS THE INSIGHT THAT GOD’S GLORY IS MANIFEST IN THE ORDINARY...

In certain countries a stick insect may be a novelty, but not in southern Africa where they are quite common. What could be more ordinary than such a creature? After all, stick insects look just like a small stick, and thus intentionally elude our, or other predators’, notice. However, the South African/UK artist Walter Hayn *did* take note, resulting in this exquisite piece of work.

As Walter tells the story, some years ago when he was doing his national service in the South African military, he was based in Namibia. He and his fellow soldiers lived in tents, amidst the sort of stifling heat common in Africa. Each day the window flaps were unhooked, allowing a welcome breeze to blow through. As happens in Africa, numerous small wildlife welcomed the opportunity to pay a visit. Mosquitoes, scorpions and a myriad of other small flying beetles and moths were the regulars, but one morning a large stick insect, about 30 cm long, appeared on the underside of their tent roof. Stick insects are not normally so very long, and, bemused, they left it alone and observed it for days. After a while it hardly seemed to move. Finally, thinking that maybe it was dead, one of Walter’s colleagues poked it with a stick. Suddenly it jerked into action and out of its monochromatic body popped tiny but incredibly vivid red wings.

Walter says of this artwork: “I have tried to capture this slightly surreal and dreamlike memory here. Strangely it reminds me of the

crucifixion story. Christ was poked to see if he was still alive while hanging on the wooden stick/cross, and out of his side flowed blood and water.” The painting does indeed have a dreamlike quality with the sombre greens and greys circling around, but, I suggest, there is far more going on in this work than that.

At the heart of healthy Christian spirituality is the insight that God’s glory is manifest in the ordinary, so that we are always, already, standing on holy ground. The problem is that far too often we do not have eyes to see. This humble stick insect is an invitation to open our eyes and to learn to see. As Gerard Manley Hopkins would remind us, Christ plays in ten thousand places, and Walter enables us to see that one such place is in this stick insect. Walter’s memory is not a dream but a *true seeing*, and this painting, like all good art, invites us to see too.

Most of us live amidst the humble glories of God’s creation in a dreamlike state, oblivious to the handiwork of God in which we are immersed. Too much contemporary Christianity detracts from the creation, whereas healthy spirituality brings it gloriously into focus as God’s creation. Walter rightly connects this work with Christ’s crucifixion, his searing death to save the creation from sin and judgement, including the humble stick insect. This reminds me of Rembrandt’s depiction of the risen Christ as a gardener, which, as the second Adam, he surely is.

KUYPER AND THE BIBLE

David Beldman, Associate Professor of Religion
and Theology at Redeemer University

Kuyper was without dispute a prolific author. Two things are crystal clear when you start to dip into Kuyper's writings on any number of topics: (1) Kuyper loved and immersed himself in Scripture and (2) he had a deep conviction that Scripture is able to — indeed *must* — speak to the public issues of the day. I want to explore Kuyper's use of Scripture for *public theology*; that is, how does Scripture speak into the challenges and issues of contemporary culture. To this end, I will describe Kuyper's use of Scripture in a series of newspaper articles that he wrote in 1895, translated and published under the title "Christ and the Needy."¹

These articles arose because of a backlash that Kuyper received against some comments he made in an election campaign about the social divide between the rich and the poor. It seems wealthy and prominent Christians took offence at Kuyper's comments which provided the occasion for Kuyper to defend in a conciliatory way his understanding of the implications of Jesus' instruction in the social realm. Kuyper wanted to answer the quite specific question: What does Jesus have to teach us about our social responsibility to the poor? In this very public forum and in response to political detractors, Kuyper offers a biblical defence for the care of the most vulnerable in society. We can, I think, learn at least 6 (brief) lessons from Kuyper's use of the Bible in response to this very contemporary problem.

¹ Abraham Kuyper, "Christ and the Needy (1895)," *Journal of Markets and Morality* 14.2 (2011), 647–683 (translated by Herbert Donald Morton, edited and annotated by Harry Van Dyke).

First, *Kuyper was careful to frame Jesus' teachings about the rich and poor within Jesus' own social and cultural context.* Kuyper could easily have drawn a random collection of prooftexts from the Gospel accounts to support his point. However, he did not short-circuit the exegetical process and so he briefly outlined the Roman cultural context. This provides a firm footing to compare and contrast the social setting of Jesus with the one which Kuyper was addressing.

Second, *Kuyper carefully situated Jesus' teachings within the larger biblical theological framework.* Kuyper was clearly steeped in the teachings of Scripture, and before even attempting to expound Jesus' teaching on the rich and poor, he delved deeply into the teachings of the Old Testament. He drew particularly on the Pentateuch (Genesis - Deuteronomy), but also on the Psalms, Proverbs, Job and the Prophets. Kuyper establishes that the ministry of mercy which is typified in the second great commandment ("love your neighbour as yourself") is at the heart of Israel's purpose for existence (Israel's mission) in the Old Testament. In the current crisis of biblical illiteracy in the church today, a recovery of biblical theology of the kind that Kuyper effortlessly engaged in is absolutely essential.

Third, *Kuyper's close reading and thorough analysis of the Gospel accounts provided the basis of his understanding of Jesus' social teaching.* Having outlined the cultural and biblical context of Jesus' teaching, Kuyper

turned his attention to the Gospel accounts themselves. He not only expounded what Jesus teaches about the poor but makes keen observations and conclusions from the subtle clues in the text. Thus, Kuyper's understanding of Jesus' teachings on the rich and poor focused not only on what Jesus taught explicitly but also on things like Jesus' humble birth, his upbringing and family relations, who he gathered around himself and interacted with, his priorities, and so on. Such close attention to the details of the Gospel texts through the particular lens of rich/poor yields insights that are difficult to dispute. We can certainly learn from Kuyper's close attention to the details of the text.

Fourth, *Kuyper was aware of the critical issues surrounding the academic interpretation of the Bible, but these are not his focus and they do not deter him from drawing on the Bible as the Word of God for public theology.*

At various points in the articles, he showed an awareness of surrounding issues, particularly related to the synoptic problem (i.e., the problems that arise when comparing and contrasting the Gospel accounts). Where necessary, he engaged these in a fairly nuanced way (or at least as nuanced as he could be in a newspaper article), but he did not allow these matters to sidetrack his attempt to understand Jesus' teaching on social matters.

Fifth, *Kuyper aimed to allow Scripture to speak into the cultural situation of his day rather than trying to justify a particular system from Scripture.* For example, he carefully described how the currents of the Gospel undercut the extremes of free market capitalism on the one hand and those of communism on the other. Kuyper did not try to prop up a particular social agenda but rather listened to Scripture

to see how it might address current issues.

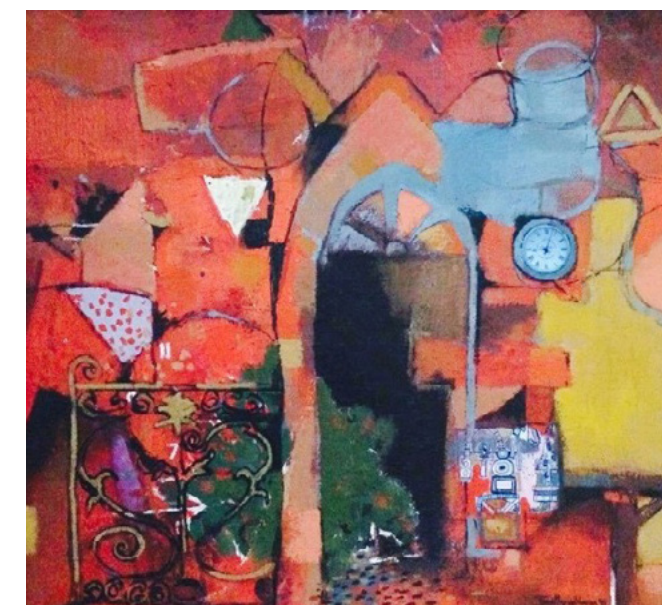
Finally, *all of this demonstrates just how serious Kuyper was about the application of Scripture.* His exegetical and careful analysis of Scripture yielded relevant application. Whether the application had to do with idolatrous structures and systems in society or whether it informed specific practices (like almsgiving, lending principles, or the practice of tithing), Kuyper was insistent that the Word speaks relevantly today.

I hope this brief description of Kuyper's use of the Bible for public theology has not merely been interesting but also, dare I say, inspiring. Too often we have domesticated Scripture and as a consequence have muted the powerful and comprehensive address of God in Scripture. Kuyper offers us a model and tools for listening attentively to Scripture so that it speaks to the challenges of contemporary culture, a model

that is worth retrieving, deepening and renewing for today.



—Zak Benjamin, *Baie Huisies Veld*



—Tim van Vuuren, *Time, Space and Future*

PREACHING THE BIBLE FOR ALL ITS WORTH

Regularly we receive queries about best resources from pastors as they approach a new series on a biblical book. The questions are good: despite so many commentaries being published the best resources for listening to the Bible and *preaching it for all its worth* are not always obvious. The best preaching operates at the intersection of the telos of the passage/book being preached and the life of the particular congregation (see Craig Bartholomew, *Excellent Preaching*). Good preaching must therefore engage in what John Stott called “double listening”: one ear to Scripture, one ear to contemporary life and culture, with the sermon building a bridge between the two. This series, which will eventually cover the whole Bible, aims to provide preachers – and thinking non-preachers – with some of the best resources. We are assuming readers will understand that neither we nor you will or should agree with everything these sources say.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God's Address, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew and David Beldman (Eerdmans), is full of excellent material from leading scholars helping readers and preachers leverage the best scholarship in the service of hearing what God is saying.

JUDGES

David Beldman's *Deserting the King: The Book of Judges* (Lexham, 2017) is a short, accessible, theological introduction to the book. It is not a commentary but would be a good place for the preacher to start to get up to speed quickly on the overall design,

themes and theological message of Judges.

For another accessible little exposition of Judges, Dale Ralph Davis' *Judges: Such a Great Salvation* (Christian Focus, 2000) is a nice, concise and entertaining commentary with personal anecdotes and homiletical insights.

Daniel Block's commentary on Judges (and Ruth) in the New American Commentary series (B&H, 1999) is one of the best commentaries on the book — clear and insightful. Block helpfully identified the “canaanization” of Israel as the theme of the book. A valuable resource for preachers doing a series through the book.

Lawson Younger's commentary on Judges/Ruth (NIVAC; Zondervan, 2002) is also worth purchasing. The nature of this series is that it is oriented to contemporary application and Younger has some good insights in this regard, as well as sound and helpful exegetical work.

David Beldman's 2 Horizon commentary on Judges (Eerdmans) is his third significant book on Judges. It should be in the library of every preacher and student of the Bible. Beldman leverages a literary reading and the rich sociological resources of Philip Rieff's trilogy *Sacred Order/Social Order* to open up Judges in fresh and important ways. Here is first-rate scholarship that will help you hear and preach Judges.

Barry Webb's commentary (NICOT; Eerdmans, 2012) is also worth consulting and comparing with the works of Block and Younger.

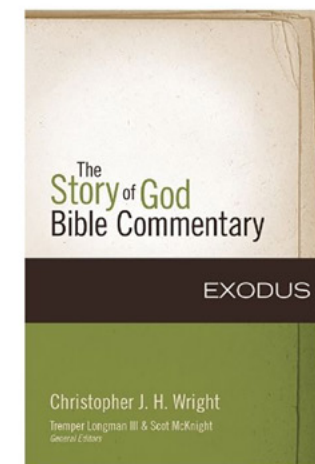
Webb tends to interpret events in the book more positively than sometimes seems warranted, but he is a creative and thoughtful commentator, and his commentary is certainly worthwhile for his literary/theological interpretation as well as many examples of contemporary application.

Trent Butler's commentary in the Word Biblical Commentary series (Thomas Nelson, 2009), weighing in at over 600 pages, is not for the faint of heart. However, as an advanced and more technical commentary which deals with a vast amount of secondary literature on Judges, it is an incredibly valuable resource. If there is a controversial issue in Judges, he will have discussed it (and probably read everything on it). Furthermore, Butler does careful work, has good sensibilities, and is a trustworthy interpreter of the book.

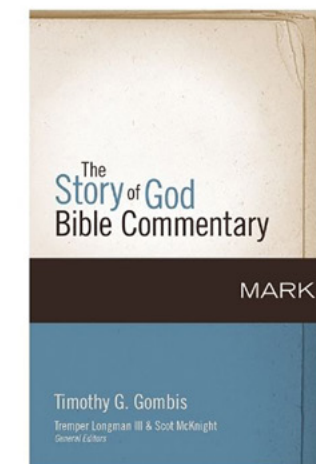
For something completely different, *Lion's Honey: The Myth* (Canongate Books, 2005), written by an Israeli novelist called David Grossman, is an absolutely fascinating reading of the Samson narratives (Judges 13-16). It is a sort of literary-psychological reading of the Samson narratives that creatively opens up aspects of these narratives that those familiar with Samson can easily overlook. Psychological readings have the danger of reading too much into narratives and their characters, but Grossman is acutely in tune with the minute details of the texts and has profound insights to offer. The book is easy to read and it is not long. It would be a helpful supplement for sermons on the Samson narratives.

NEW RELEASES

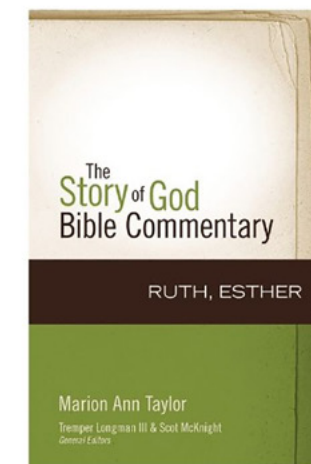
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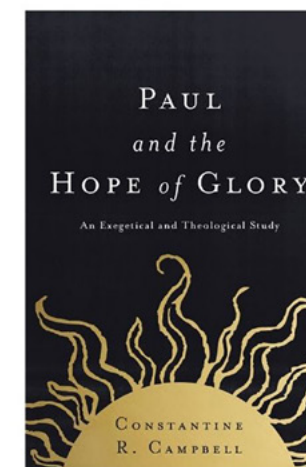
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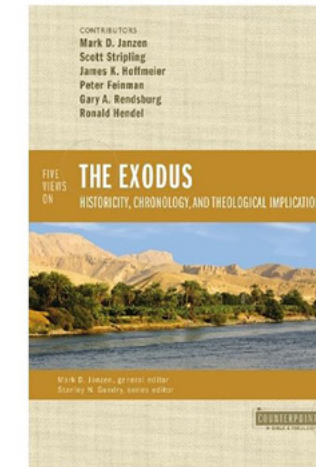
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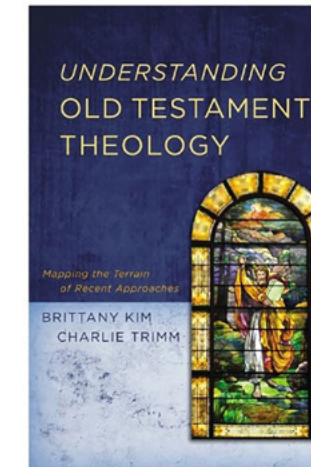
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ABRAHAM KUYPER & THE LAW

Dr David McIlroy

1. SPHERE SOVEREIGNTY

Abraham Kuyper's big idea about society was *sphere sovereignty*. For Kuyper, there was only one absolute sovereign, only one to whom all authority on heaven and earth had been given (Matthew 28:18), Jesus Christ. All earthly authorities were subject to the rule of Christ and their authority was limited in scope and function.

Looking back to the book of Genesis, Kuyper saw that parents have a responsibility to care for, educate and raise their children which is prior to the existence of government. Echoing Peter and John's words to the Sanhedrin in Acts 5:29 "We must obey God rather than human beings!", Kuyper was clear that the church has a responsibility to proclaim and live out the gospel with which government ought not to interfere. In short, the family and the church have their own authority, given directly by God, and separate from the authority given to government. From these biblical ideas, Kuyper reasoned by analogy that there were other spheres in society whose institutions had their own proper authority: education had its schools and universities, health its hospitals, commerce had its businesses, journalism had its newspapers, science had its institutes, the arts had their concert halls, theatres, libraries and museums. There are different goods which human beings have been given to pursue (the goods of love, learning, health, economic flourishing, communication, discovery, culture,

faith and order) and a society is healthy when the institutions in each of these spheres are given the liberty to pursue these goods in an appropriate way. Kuyper clearly saw the danger of the over-powerful government, the absolute State, whether a personality cult like that of Louis XIV or Napoleon of France, a

militarist collective like Bismarck's Prussia, or a revolutionary republic like the one established by the French Revolution in 1792.

Kuyper's idea of sphere sovereignty limits and clarifies the role of government. The goods which government exists to pursue are those of order and justice. Government is to provide a framework for the orderly interaction of the different social spheres and their institutions, government is to regulate the institutions operating in their different spheres, and government is to protect the weak who may be abused in any particular sphere.

2. THE ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

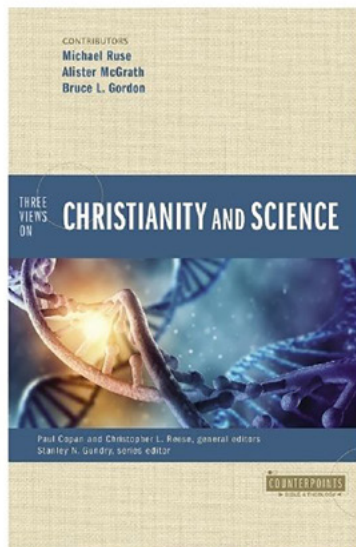
Born in 1837, Abraham Kuyper grew up in the shadow of the French Revolution and Napoleon's conquest of mainland Europe. He was only 10 when the 1848 Year of Revolutions began. The Netherlands was just one of 50 polities affected by a wave of political change more dramatic and widespread than that of the Arab Spring of 2010 to 2012. The outcome of the 1848 revolution in the Netherlands was the establishment of representative democracy, but in many other places the revolutions were suppressed at the cost of tens of thousands of lives.

When Kuyper went into politics, he called his political party, the *Anti-Revolutionary Party*. Commentators have sometimes criticised

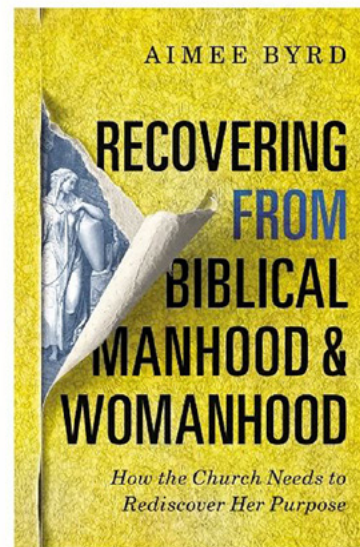
his choice of name, suggesting that he committed the besetting sin affecting Christian involvement in politics, that of declaring most clearly what we are against rather than presenting a positive vision of what we stand for. This criticism is unfair. Through the choice of name, Kuyper was signalling that his



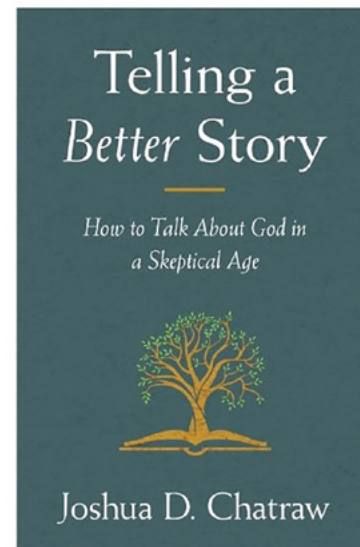
— Zak Benjamin, BergeBlaasBlomme



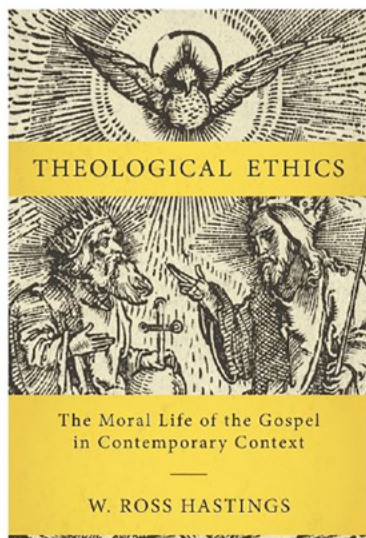
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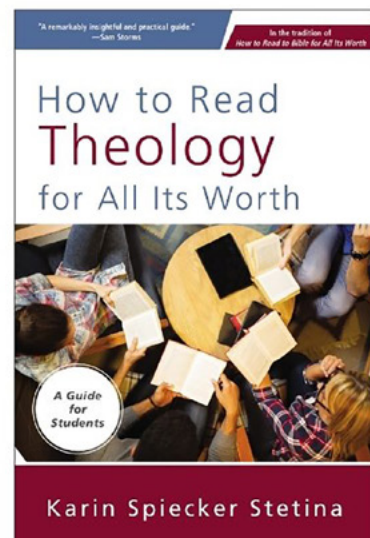
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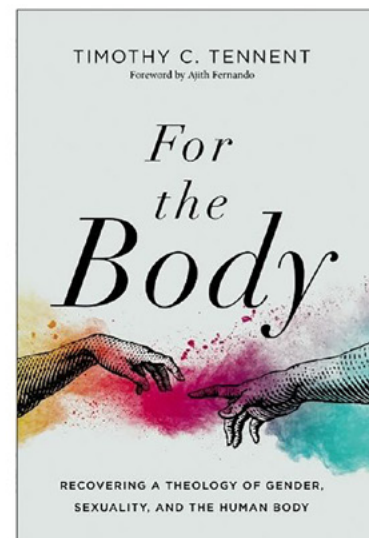
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 ZONDERVAN ACADEMIC

 ZONDERVAN REFLECTIVE

party would be progressive but that it believed in the importance of change being gradual and organic, a development from existing traditions rather than a sudden, violent disruption and dislocation of what had gone before.

Like his contemporaries in Victorian England, Kuyper recognised that the world was changing rapidly. Though he was deeply concerned to maintain Reformed orthodoxy, his vision for society was progressive, seeking to identify a framework of principles within which technological and societal development could be shaped for good. Kuyper's view of politics was similar to that of Edmund Burke, politics is an art in which law-makers whose judgment is fallible attempt to make rules to govern the behaviour of a people who are fallible. Revolutions are destructive because their ideological justification is hubristic, the fatal assumption that *we, the revolutionaries*, know best and can govern perfectly. Kuyper's fallibilism is of a piece with his idea of sphere sovereignty. Because it is not safe for any human being or group of human beings to have total sovereignty, God has, in His wisdom, distributed authority among different groups and institutions, in order that these might limit and temper the excesses and failures of each other. Because of the dangers of concentrated power and dangers of erroneous judgment, laws should optimise liberty of conscience, association and expression. This form of fallibilist liberalism might therefore appropriately be described as "limitism," because of its strong emphasis on the limitations on government.

3. COMMON GRACE

The idea of sphere sovereignty requires that there be limits to law in order that the institutions in different spheres have freedom to pursue their distinct goals according to their own best judgment. Kuyper's fallibilism acknowledges that no-one has all the answers as to what laws should be made or how the different goals of human life are to be pursued. Kuyper's social vision is therefore a pluralist one; it is a "live and let live" approach in which a nation is united by its commitment to a common set of institutions and to a common framework rather than to a single overarching social vision.

On Kuyper's approach, therefore, politics is the art of finding common ground and forming alliances in order to advance the common good. Some theologians understand God's covenant with Noah in Genesis 9 as God's authorisation for post-lapsarian politics. Kuyper drew attention to another feature of that chapter: the rainbow. Kuyper saw the rainbow as the sign of God's grace given to all, regardless of whether they are yet followers of Christ or not. Because our world is God's world, something of what God has created as good for human beings is accessible to everyone. Kuyper called the idea that everyone knows something of how God wants human beings to flourish, "common grace."

Fallibilism means that, because of the Fall, no-one (Christian or not) knows God's will fully. Common grace means that, despite the Fall, no-one (Christian or not) is wholly ignorant of God's will. As a result, Christians can humbly participate in the making of laws, working with others and learning from others, in order to find the optimal solutions to the problems of regulating our common life.

CONCLUSION

Laws were, for Kuyper, rules which promoted justice and the common good. Because of God's common grace, all have the capacity to participate in the adoption of just laws. Because of the Fall, changes in the legal order should be organic developments from existing traditions rather than revolutionary changes. Because God has distributed authority among different institutions, justice is about ordering the interactions between institutions from different spheres, providing a necessary framework of regulation for institutions in their own spheres, and protecting the weak against institutions abusing their authority.

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WHY KUYPER MATTERS TODAY FOR MEDICINE

JAMES RUSTHOVEN

Dr Rusthoven is a distinguished Canadian oncologist who has a PhD in theology and bioethics. He is an Associate Fellow of KLC.

In Abraham Kuyper's day, medicine was still quite primitive by today's standards. For the most part, treatments were judged effective based on anecdotal evidence given credence by the tincture of time. There were no antibiotics. Family doctors were the core of medical care for most communities. Nursing care was only beginning to carve out its own vocational territory, evolving from sanitary commissions and the care of wounded soldiers during the repeated wars on the 19th century European landscape. In this context, Kuyper's notion of sphere sovereignty, particularly as applied to mutually beneficial human social relationships, was not likely considered in the context of medical practice in his day.

In my view, Kuyper's insights have become very relevant and helpful for medicine in the century since his death. As its own sphere of relationships with a primary purpose of patient care, medicine has normative laws or standards of practice. In our day, this sphere of activity continues to unfold as communities of caregivers, interrelating directly with patients and with each other, while integrating multidimensional aspects of care toward a singular goal of care and healing. Today Kuyper might caution practitioners and hospital administrators not to confuse medicine with a business and its primary goal of economic gain. Medicine and business are sovereign spheres he would say; they should not merge but should maintain their own normative distinctiveness. I think he would have warned that the growing commercialization of new therapies could

threaten the sovereignty of medicine, its distinctive rules of practice and the integrity of its relationships.

Cancer care has become particularly complex in recent years. Breast cancer patients often form relationships with surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, nurse practitioners and other specialists, often needing to trust them with administering intensive and risky therapies over months or even years. These relationships are symbiotic; that is, both caregivers and patients derive mutual benefit from the ethical act of caring. Such relationships can also be best expressed through covenantal relating, understood most fully through the scriptural notion of covenant.¹

Like clinical practice, other domains of medicine such as research and regulatory evaluation of new treatments have their own relationships and rules of interaction. Yet these domains can claim a legitimate role within the sphere of medicine if they keep patient care as the primary meaning of their activity.

I think Kuyper would have enjoyed witnessing the spirit of sphere sovereignty taking root as a guide to normative contemporary medical practice, research, and regulation, all improved by appropriate therapeutic applications of biotechnology while keeping a sharp focus on care for the needy.

¹ J Rusthoven, *Covenantal Biomedical Ethics for Contemporary Medicine* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

AND OTHER THOUGHTS ON FAITH AND SCIENCE

Istine Rodseth Swart

Ask a young child, even a very young one, the question: "What is one plus one?" and the answer will very likely be: "Two." Ask a mathematician the same question and the answer may be: "It depends...." Let me take you on a detour to convince you that the mathematician is not trying to be clever, but is pausing to consider the context of the answer.

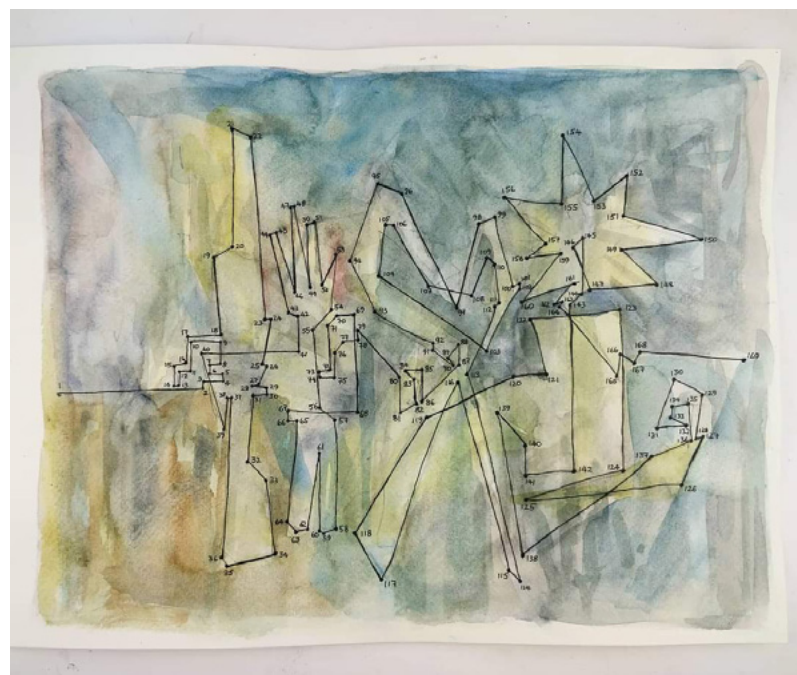
Take a fresh look at a very familiar oddity – an analog clock face. Suppose we begin at 12 midnight, let twelve hours pass and then one more. The hour hand starts at 12, sweeps through 13 hours and comes to rest at 1, so seemingly, $12+1=1$. Describing this as 1pm is our way of indicating that, in fact, more than one hour has passed. The oddity arises because, from the point of view of the clock, there exists no number greater than 12. Of course, if we describe our starting point as 0h00, we will end at 13h00, so indeed $12+1=13$. We will, however, encounter a similar strange phenomenon if we consider, say $24+1$, since in this way of describing time, there exists no number greater than 24.

Now imagine a clock face featuring only 0 (in place of the

12 on the normal face) and 1 (in place of the 6), and no other numbers. The hour hand starts at zero, sweeps down through an hour, then up through another and so returns to zero. Thus, shockingly, $1+1$ appears to be zero. Again, there is a way of indicating that $1+1$ is not "nothing." Mathematicians write this as $1+1=10$, but this is equally shocking if read at face value: one plus one equals ten! In this (binary) number system, all quantities have to be expressed and interpreted using only one and zero (thus $12+1=13$, for example, is

disguised as $1100+1=1101$). We are all very comfortable with "clock arithmetic" and not in the least disturbed by the very odd appearance and behaviour of numbers in computers (that depend on the binary system). Perhaps it would be more unsettling to know that beautiful, logical, provable Mathematics relies on a number system that flows beautifully, logically and with rigorous proofs from a set of axioms – "self-evident truths" – that cannot be proved.

There are two consequences



—Walter Hayn: Messer, Gabel, Schere, Licht, sind für Kleine Kinder Nicht

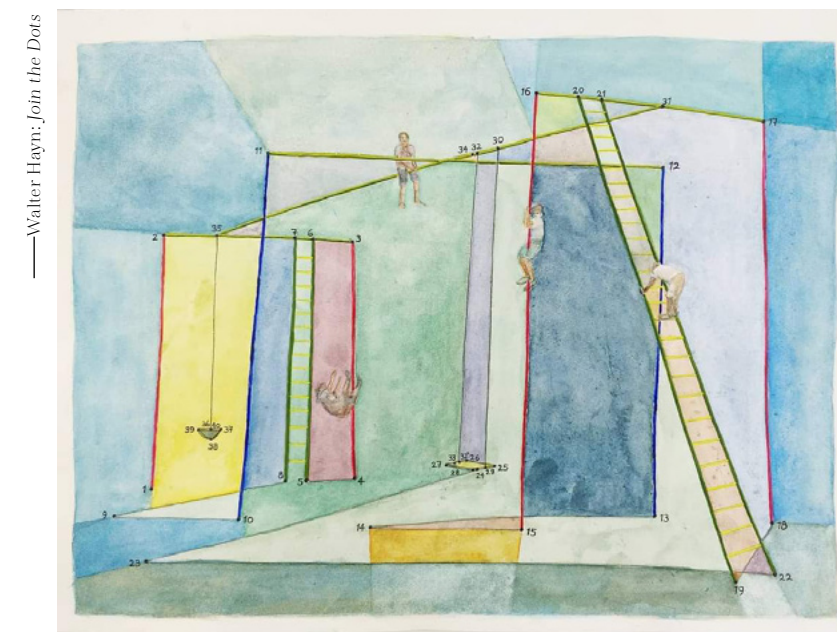
of this fact that are pertinent. Firstly, although different number systems may give rise to unrecognizable Mathematics and sciences: Physics, Astronomy and the like, I have no doubt that they would serve to explore and describe our world and universe as our current number system does. Thinking about what differences and similarities may exist gives rise, very naturally, to the questions: Could we design a number system that is free of inconvenient "self-evident truths" or would we still be forced to accommodate a set of axioms regardless of the choice of number system? If so, would those be the same

axioms, though now disguised by new rules of operation governing different numbers? In other words, are the axioms a consequence of the chosen number system or do they have an independent existence – are they in some sense absolute?

Thus, surprisingly, thinking about Mathematics gives rise to the kind of questions that we would expect in the context of faith and religion: Does God exist because the make-up of our minds predisposes us to the notion of a god, or does God have an existence independent of humans?

Second, if by rationality we mean that we can apply

reason to a premise (or mathematically speaking, prove a premise), then at the heart of number theory there lies an irrationality. This implies that at the very core of Mathematics, and therefore all disciplines, scientific and otherwise, that rely on Mathematics or simply use numbers, lies a leap of faith. And not just a small leap of faith of the kind that we need when we send an article over the oceans by courier, for example, rather a far-reaching one of a similar order of magnitude as required by the belief in an absolute, such as God.



COMMENT ON IMAGES BY WALTER HAYN

Confronted with the unimaginable vastness and complexity of our universe, our attempts to describe, understand and explain it could have the appearance of a child's game to the Creator. Yet, as puny as our efforts may be, and as imperfect as our tools and methods are, since our task is God-ordained and our means God-inspired, we are able to capture and convey a measure of the splendour and intricate structure of the creation.

RECOVERING MEANING

IN ORDER TO RECOVER BUSINESS LEGITIMACY

Dr Sue V. Halliday & Jack W. Harding

INTRODUCTION

A brief word of caution to our understandable desire for life to get back on track after the COVID-19 pandemic: Has the “new normal” we all talked about quickly become something from which we want to wake up entirely? Weren’t there problems with the “old normal?” The weaknesses in the economy and business world, both globally and in the UK, surely mean that we would not want to go back to the “old normal” in its entirety, even if we could. For the “old normal” had many problems, such as growing financial inequality and seemingly insurmountable environmental challenges. We want to take this moment as an opportunity to reframe business as a means to a greater end, namely human flourishing, suggesting that Christians have something important to say to the business world regarding what this “new normal” might look like, and that the Dutch thinker Abraham Kuyper can help us in this as



—Kuyper in 1905

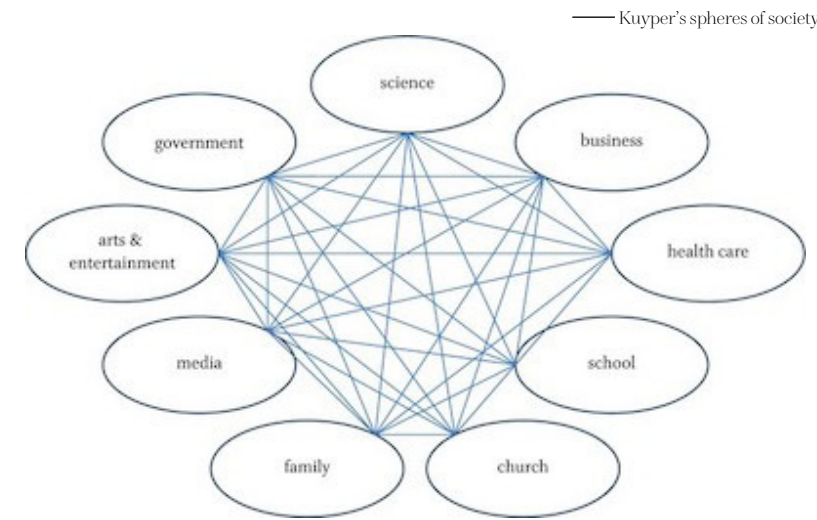
we seek to recover a more robust framework for meaning, society and business. Kuyper was a polymath with a rare calling that led him to involvement in multiple areas of life. A pastor with a sharp philosophical mind, a politician who founded a political party and later became prime minister of the Netherlands, founder of the Free University of Amsterdam and its first Rector, and a journalist who started a newspaper. So Kuyper was not just a thinker, but also a do-er. And one of his guiding principles was that all aspects of reality are connected. Regarding the complexity of the modern world, Kuyper advises us against the temptation of fragmentation: “no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest”¹ – in other words, all of reality is connected. Business is not an island unto itself, any more than is man.²

THE JOURNEY

For our purposes, imagine our global economy as a journey; businesses, societies, and groups within those societies as the boats; and individuals as passengers. The sea right now is the COVID-19 pandemic, yet will not be so forever. The boats keep moving, as they must. People need jobs, shareholders require returns and there is great excitement in innovation and progress. Additionally, we all need to eat and drink, and desire other luxuries and items. Yet is the purpose of the boats merely to provide us with things to spend our time and money on, allowing for our own individual voyages, or is

¹ Abraham Kuyper in James D. Bratt, ed., *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 488.

² Donne, John. *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions: Together with Death's Duel*. Vol. 30 (University of Michigan Press), 1959.



there a shared direction along which we could all sail? Could a revitalised sense of direction become part of a post-COVID “new normal?”

“Old normal” is aptly characterised by sociologist Jacques Ellul: “Our civilization is first and foremost a civilization of means; in the reality of modern life, the means, it would seem, are more important than the ends.”³ In other words, the voyage of Western civilisation has, of late, been confused and self-indulgent, lacking the kind of direction that will sustain it, lacking any clarity about an end goal.

In the world of “old normal,” informed by the 18th century Enlightenment, we basically live as if God does not exist. We have excluded him from our accounts of our current lives as political, social, biological and economic persons. The immediate focus is on health, wealth and personal peace. These, however, are means rather than more meaningful ends such as beauty, goodness and truth – or knowledge of and communion with the transcendent.

Any society is made up of an economy, a political system and its civil and religious institutions. Kuyper calls these areas or elements, “spheres.”

KUYPER'S SPHERES OF SOCIETY

In our world, each sphere is tempted by the devil's offer to affirm itself as god – to become

an end in itself, rather than a means working towards a greater end. If the devil's offer were

³ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (NY: Vintage Books, 1964), 19.

accepted, then the sphere of business would turn a monetary profit at any cost, the sphere of government would grab unprincipled and reckless power, and the spheres of civil society would cease to cast a vision for the good life, or for community and connection, instead affirming individualism and self-sufficiency. The fear that haunts all of us who find solace in these dysfunctional ways of doing business, politics and civil society is that if we were to give up our primary allegiance

to these things we will not be provided for. This is the devil's lie.

However, believing this lie is not the only option. Kuyper is very clear that business is open to common grace as much as any other “sphere,” and therefore is part of something meaningful beyond itself. Just as much as any other “sphere” it finds its place, therefore, in the project of aiming for something more than mere survival; it plays a role in wealth creation in terms of society's enjoyment of “the good life.”

This brings a humbling critique to any business activity we might view as, to use Peter Heslam's words, “speculative activity in finance, burgeoning consumerism, and the prioritisation of wealth above all other concerns.”⁴ This is an economy that has become an end in and of itself. The “old normal” tolerated the world of corporations becoming a dominating sphere, not taking their place as one among other spheres, not fostering wider human flourishing.

Our picture of a voyage raises the question: “Where are all these boats going?” Kuyper's Christian faith answers by finding our compass point and provision in the reality of God. The question of an “end,” that is, setting a course for the journey, is answered not in our own self-determined reality. It was said of followers of Jesus that they left their old lives and “followed him along the way.” All things, be they business, family, church, leisure, are created good and with purpose, as gifts to us. Kuyper famously stated that there is not one square inch of all

⁴ Peter S. Heslam, “The Spirit of Enterprise: Abraham Kuyper and Common Grace in Business.” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 18/1 (2005), 7–20, 8.

creation over which Christ, who is Lord of all, does not say, “Mine!”⁵

Therefore, if God is the creator and sustainer of all, while each sphere operates differently it remains connected to this larger calling and purpose. Jesus pre-empts our question: “Will we be provided for if we see businesses as just one sphere, co-equal to the other spheres?” He answers this and similar questions: “Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it” (Matthew 16:25). In one of C.S. Lewis’ letters he restates Jesus’ message thus: “Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first and we lose both first and second things. We never get, say, even the sensual pleasure of food at its best when we are being greedy.”⁶

THE CHALLENGE

Right now we need to reconnect business to its rightful place within society. This may be a fruitful time for these ideas, the framework of distinct but interconnected spheres. The neo-liberal view that the sole purpose of the firm is to make financially defined profits for shareholders has allowed businesses to be independent, self-sufficient and an increasingly dominant force. Milton Friedman’s influential yet narrow view is that “there is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.”⁷ The wisdom of this view is coming under increased scrutiny both in the UK and in the United States, as was the case before the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, wider “stakeholder” relationships are crying out for a deeper consideration (What about the human need for “meaningful” employment? What about the poor?, What about the locale that the business operates in?, What about the planet?). The challenge is that we in the West are thoroughly pluralistic in our meaning convictions, so how can we distinguish first things from second things, to use Lewis’ language? The question presents itself: Is a

⁵ Kuyper, *ibid.*

⁶ C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*. Edited by Walter Hooper. Vol. III, Narnia, Cambridge and Joy, 1950–1963. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007), 111.

⁷ Milton Friedman, “A Friedman Doctrine: The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits,” *New York Times*, 1970, 33.



—Tim Van Vuuren, *Jonah*

baseline cultural narrative available to unite different individuals (and businesses) in a more purposeful, unified journey?

Kuyper rejects attempts to claim that a Christian worldview should take over the whole culture, steering between the twin dangers of, on the one side, Christianity as a totalising, top-down government system, and on the other side, the pietistic Christian tradition that withdraws from an ungodly world. For Kuyper “Culture ... was not inherently evil, but was ‘perverted good’ and could therefore be ‘radically transformed to the glory of God’.”⁸ In sum, this is what we can now describe as a “Christian” meaning for the goal of human flourishing: transformation coming from making first things first, with secondary things thrown in. Reflection upon what constitutes “first things” will be a necessary task.

WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US?

Much more could be said, but here are a number of “routes” for our collective journey that have been attempted:

1. Liberalism: the individual’s choices are the primary organising principle.
2. Socialism: the group’s choices are the primary organising principle.
3. Religion/metaphysics: systems of “absolute truth” are the organising principle.
4. Happiness: quantifiable happiness is the organising principle.

⁸ Peter S. Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper’s Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 269.

Prominent thinkers Alasdair MacIntyre⁹ and Patrick Deneen call Enlightenment liberalism a failed project. This is because it has lost a shared vision of the common good. Individualism has, instead, eaten away at such shared understandings of life and the gap between the individual and state is decreasingly populated. “Statism enables individualism, individualism demands statism. For all the claims about electoral transformations – for ‘Hope and Change’ or ‘Making America Great Again’ – two facts are naggingly apparent: modern liberalism proceeds by making us both more individualist and more statist ... both move simultaneously in tune with our deepest philosophical premises.”¹⁰

Bob Goudzwaard explained why Enlightenment thinking has not proved capable of providing for human flourishing. It is because “life is meaningful only if there is a measure of simultaneous response to all the norms for human existence. Thus, socioeconomic life should not be separated from the rest of our existence.”¹¹ Although conceived as a light shining out beyond the darkness of wars of religion, it can now be seen to have failed to create human flourishing. Interestingly, Goudzwaard offers a clue to this problem by distinguishing two concepts in Greek civilisation from which “economics” has developed. “Chrematistike” is a notion of self-enrichment, and fits the current independent business approach that privileges shareholder financial profits. The more commonly understood root is “oikonomia,” which contains a much more holistic, biblical idea of stewardship and a care of resources for both now and for future generations.

To repeat, the business sphere is not independent, but interdependent with the other spheres of the social order. After all, to paraphrase Jesus, what profit is it to gain in one area only to lose the whole thing? Repeated failure to create a culture resulting in human flourishing calls for a re-think regarding our society, and within it, business.

⁹ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 17.

¹¹ Bob Goudzwaard, *Capitalism and Progress* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 206.

Kuyper’s route, rather than the routes 1-4 above, is to cast a vision from his understanding of God’s work of common grace in the world, as organising principle, that leads to a holistic, systemic understanding of society. He focuses less on individual rights (although history shows that some level of attention to these is essential) than on belonging in communities, families, religious affiliations, and civil society, including business as a part of civil society, on the many mediating structures between the State and the individual. A subsequent benefit is then that this integrated society, full of mediating structures, might holistically form the individual person as a virtuous citizen.

Additional questions demand consideration within the “human flourishing” motif. Is there a sufficient, unifying vision for the business world that we Christians can develop and communicate that is attractive for those who do not hold to Christian metaphysics? If one does exist, having given it some more thought and definition, could we develop a narrative that could be a contribution from Christians into the post-COVID “new normal” for business? Could this give meaning and so, direction, for businesses as they continue on their journey? For those interested in considering the legitimacy of business post-COVID, work needs doing on the interconnectedness of the economy: clearly connecting economic players such as corporations and the health and well-being both of the workforce and society members at large. Kuyper’s thought can usefully be brought to bear on this task, focused on his understanding of society as an ecosystem of spheres of activity. A biblical framework would require that business affirms the connection with, and necessity of, wider justice and morality considerations in its own core operations.

A once essential pillar of our civilisation that Jesus Christ established and modelled was a vision for the good human life that was surprisingly inclusive. It privileged the poor and the disadvantaged; it measured human value without regard to financial wealth. It gave birth to a truly novel focus on human dignity and eventually, universal human rights,¹² even though this link is now barely acknowledged. Indeed, Jonathan Pennington in

¹² Tom Holland, *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind* (UK: Hachette, 2019).

his commentary on the sermon on the mount considers that Jesus' central teaching directly relates to the search for "human flourishing." He prefers to translate μακάριος, usually "blessed," as "flourishing"; a more accurate way to understand what Jesus says happens when we co-operate with, rather than self-determine, reality. We flourish, rather than diminish, as do others.¹³

Os Guinness outlines what is at stake in our moment:

Our Western nations have both forgotten God and forgotten where they have come from. Now they are attempting to complete the process of severing the roots of Western civilization, destroying its root system, poisoning its soil and ruining its entire spiritual, moral and social ecology¹⁴.

We are not naive to the challenges, yet Kuyper has led us to focus on human flourishing as an end goal for our society. This is something to aim for. The means of this aim are activities in interconnected, interdependent spheres.

For business to operate as a self-enriching process independently from wider norms of justice and morality is for it to miss God's concern for human flourishing. Could this give meaning, and therefore direction, for businesses as they continue on a shared journey, keeping in line with other spheres of human life, committed to the shared end goal of human flourishing?

For, to repeat the whole of the best-known quotation from Kuyper, "Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"¹⁵

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— Zak Benjamin, Huisraad

¹³ Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018).

¹⁴ Os Guinness, *Impossible People: Christian Courage and the Struggle for the Soul of Civilization* (Downers Grove IL, InterVarsity Press, 2016), 222–23.

¹⁵ Kuyper, *ibid.*

MILK & HONEY MANNA & PLAGUES

Diana Salgado



— Jan Kalish, Milk and Honey

"Having a Christian worldview means being utterly convinced that biblical principles are not only true but also work better in the grit and grime of the real world."

- Nancy Pearcey

Around 60 to 70 years ago, many countries were poorer than they are today. For example, 60 years ago only 13% of homes in the UK had a refrigerator. The situation was similar for telephones (land lines) and televisions, items that are very popular nowadays. Some of these countries now have progressed towards more comfortable ways of living, to the point that people can have more than one of each of these items per home. This gigantic economical progression in a relatively short time makes a heavy demand on all of us for a corresponding growth in wisdom to avoid being dehumanised by all of this. Being amused by new technologies and our natural desire to acquire what the neighbour has, can hinder our journey of transformation towards the image of Jesus. It is almost as if "to have" has become a synonym of "to be." So, in some new rich countries, "to have... things" means "to

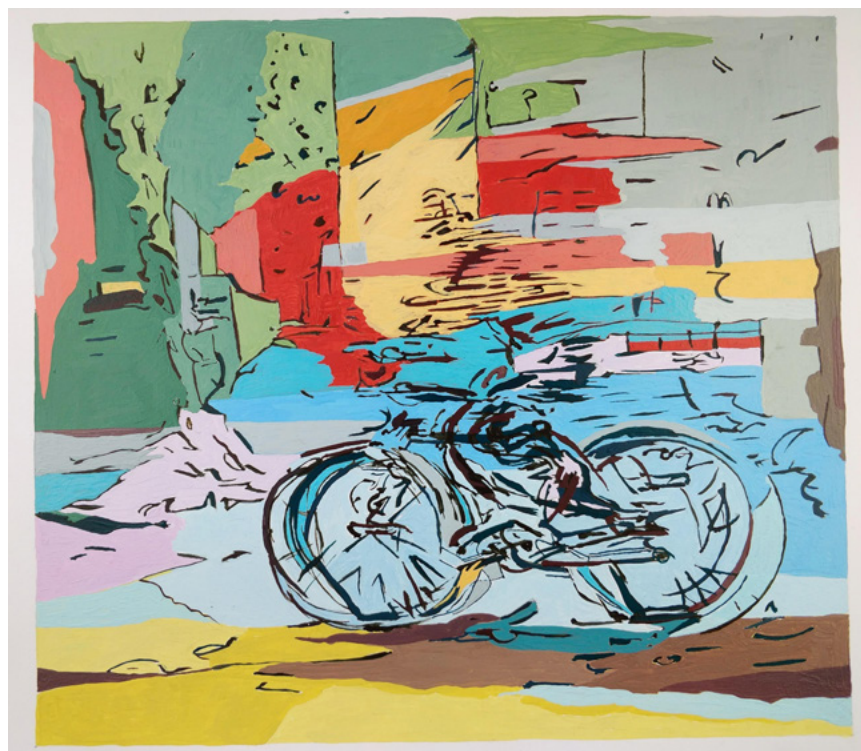
be... respected" and it seems difficult to realise that these two verbs refer to different arguments.

Among the things that can be acquired, of course, is food. Food can be bought in different amounts or of different types: organic or non-organic vegetables, fruits, grains and meats of different classes including exotic animals. Food has become another of these items to indicate prestige, so for example premiumisation of vegetables or fruits is one of the most profitable businesses for growers and food processors. Premiumisation consists of selling the idea that one's product is of better quality than any other, so the stores where these products can be bought and the "character" of the product (like colours and language used) are aligned to an upper-class tone. I can't deny that some premium products are of excellent quality but food

bought in a fresh produce stall may not lack quality either. However, people are willing to pay hundreds of dollars for the most exotic food products from hams made from pigs fed with acorns to more exotic animals like pangolins. The latter are widely believed to be associated with the most recent pandemic.

The aspirations of newly-rich people to acquire status symbols have consequences for other members of our global village. These decisions have impacted the world such as through deforestation, extinction of species and pollution from food packaging among other sources of destruction. So, food is also one of those things that we have the opportunity to corrupt. To what extent does corrupting food affect our health? Have humans violated God's will in matters to do with food and feed? Or what does God want us to eat anyway? Have we brought a plague upon ourselves? Can we go back to manna?

Do join us in exploring food and faith in future TBP editions and do contact Diana, our Food editor.



—Walter Hayn, *Kenilworth Road Cycling*

SLAVES TO A DIFFERENT MASTER—

REIMAGINING TIME, WORK & FINANCES

—David Beldman

For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. You shall not rule over him ruthlessly but shall fear your God.
(Leviticus 25:42-43; ESV).

For it is to me that the people of Israel are servants. They are my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.
(Leviticus 25:55; ESV).

Take a moment and think about those things in your life that most occupy your time, energy and mental space. What things prevent you from falling asleep when your head hits the pillow or from falling back to sleep when you wake up in the middle of the night? There are many bad things in this world that seek to enslave us (substance abuse, toxic relationships, an unhealthy sense of guilt or inadequacy). But can good things enslave?

Leviticus 25 contains laws about the sabbatical year (resting and allowing the land to rest one year every seven years) and about the Jubilee year (a year when debts are cancelled, and slaves are liberated). Ultimately, it is nudging us to think about good things that if not properly put in their place can ensnare and enslave us. It contributes to a vision of a radically new way of life under a

new “slave master” — the Redeemer-God who revealed himself time and again as “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34:6).

Leviticus focuses on three areas of human life that the Israelites needed to reimagine in light of their relationship with their Redeemer-God: time, work and finances. The fact that these three areas are targeted suggest that the Old Testament people of God are not so different from the people of God today — we too share their tendency to become enslaved in these areas.

REIMAGINING TIME

With the sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee, Leviticus 25 brings to completion all the festivals and holy days in the Israelite calendar. Leviticus 23 sets apart one day in seven, a time of rest and feasting every month or two (Passover, feast of firstfruits, weeks, trumpets, booths, day of atonement), and Leviticus 25 now adds to that one year of rest in seven and one year every fifty years (the sabbatical and Jubilee years). If we add to that the morning and evening sacrifices, the Israelites would be sacrificing, resting and celebrating:

- *morning and evening every day*
- *one day every week*
- *a day or several days every other month (or so)*
- *one year every seven years*
- *one year every fifty years.*

These holy days provided a rhythm to the lives of God’s

people. We might be tempted to think that they were the times they gave attention to God and the rest of the time was their own, to do with as they saw fit. Not so. These special times of focus on God provided a regular reminder and a framework for a life in which all of their time belongs to God. How can we think about our daily/weekly/yearly rhythms, special times that we focus on God so that we are reorienting every waking hour as our proper service to God? Practising Lent is one such way! These rhythms can be powerful reminders that we serve a good and gracious master.

REIMAGINING WORK

Work is a good gift from God. But work can enslave us (the evidence is all around us). The sabbatical day and year, and the year of Jubilee suggest that work and rest are important. God wants us to maximize in our work the gifts he’s given us, to work hard and with excellence. But like his rhythm of work and rest, established in Genesis 1, he desires revitalizing rest as part of a balanced way of living. That rest is not just for us, but also for others who work for us, for animals and for creation itself. Leviticus 25 is nudging us to reimagine how we think about the balance between work and rest — it helps us to see that work is important but not ultimate and should not enslave us.

REIMAGINING FINANCES

The bulk of Leviticus 25 is about the Jubilee year — a year when debt is forgiven, and slaves are set free. Christians

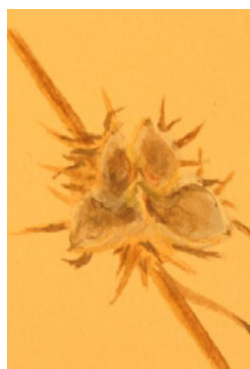
today might be tempted to spiritualize these laws: in Jesus our sins are forgiven and we are set free from slavery to sin. Jesus’ victory does accomplish these things (thank God!), but this is not the takeaway from Leviticus 25. All these detailed laws are teaching something important today: God despises crushing, multigenerational debt, and these laws would prevent a society in which someone could be enslaved to this kind of debt. To be sure, someone might have to work for someone else or work off their debt for a long time, but once in a lifetime the financial reset button would be hit. With God as master, people should not be enslaved by debt.

A DIFFERENT LIFE UNDER A DIFFERENT MASTER

The laws about the sabbatical year and the Jubilee year are setting God’s vision for a world against the vision of life under Pharaoh (no rest and perpetual slavery). God knew that it would be harder to get Israel out of Egypt than getting “Egypt” out of Israel, but through his instruction he offers them a vision of a new way — a way of life and life in abundance. Jesus talked in this way. As our king and master, he too offers a counter-cultural way of abundant life (John 10:10), that should have us reimagining things like time, work and finances (among many other things).

RETREAT REFLECTIONS

A little while ago I went on a five-day silent retreat. As retreatants we were encouraged to attend the daily prayer sessions in the chapel. During one 6pm time, I watched some redwinged starlings perched on the eaves of a building to my right, quietly sounding their liquid call to each other. But all of them sat facing north, as did we in the chapel, all looking out onto a field still golden with winter foliage, down to the willow



Him we live, and move, and have our being".... All things.... Focused away from our small ego existence, focused outward, attentive to God. At times I would sit outside, watercolours in hand, and paint a little something that caught my attention – this leaf, that seed pod, a stone. These were moments of absorption – intent as I was on trying to render faithfully what I saw, while responding emotionally to the entrancement of what I saw, the marvel therein. Caught up again in a focus on this Something

fit what one does with the ability to render something on paper – to practise art-making. You honour the Giver of the gift by marvelling and recording in this way, using the gift as the medium to do so. How do you describe elegantly this gifting? Because gifting it is (as Lewis Hyde mentions in his book *The Gift*) whereby the artist becomes the custodian of this artistic gift.

Furthermore, as recipient of the gift, how do you relate to it? As I understand the

For in the ground of our being, we live Christ's life." So that fundamentally, we grow towards living from a far greater Source than anything our ego can dream up. How glorious is that! And thus, a gentle, encircling kenosis between Giver and Gift Receiver can ensue with the One pouring out itself for the other, and the other returning the emptying of itself by using the received gifting as a means of worship of the

Giver, in this particular context, through a quiet act of contemplation. I desire that. And am therefore

trees beginning to show their slim spring green, up over the poplars sporting ghostly white last season leaf stragglers, and away to the ridge and the darkening sky above.

The view, the birds, those in the chapel, all quietly focused on something beyond ourselves. Yet united. Receptive. Ah, so is this part of what is meant by "In

beyond myself, yet somehow quietly part of it, sitting there in that golden field, or amongst the many fallen leaves and twigs as I painted the newness of the spring growth from last year's stem of the poplar twig.

A stance which a friend by chance called contemplative. A moment of contemplative prayer, actually. A description I have come to view as apt. One for which I am grateful as it seems to

argument Hyde builds, particularly through his referencing of Meister Eckhart in the third chapter of this book, I am left with the astonishing impression that you can let it transform you into its Source. To me this implies a co-operative surrender to the process of becoming Godlike – becoming a truer image of the Creator. Which reminds me of James Finley's statement in Merton's *Palace of Nowhere*, that "No matter who we become, we are nobody.

eager to continue softly with brush in hand, recording, marvelling, being present, slowly becoming in the process, that kind of nobody of which Finley speaks.

Marit Greenwood and her husband live in South Africa. She is an artist who is drawn to contemplative spirituality.

ORDINARY SAINTS

The ordinary saints, the ones we know,
Our too-familiar family and friends,
When shall we see them? Who can truly show
Whilst still rough-hewn, the God who shapes our ends?
Who will unveil the presence, glimpse the gold
That is and always was our common ground,
Stretch out a finger, feel, along the fold
To find the flaw, to touch and search that wound
From which the light we never noticed fell
Into our lives? Remember how we turned
To look at them, and they looked back? That full-
-eyed love unserved us, and we turned around,
Unready for the wrench and reach of grace.
But one day we will see them face to face.

—Malcolm Guite



LET ALL THE WORLD IN EVERY CORNER SING

JOSH RODRIGUEZ INTERVIEWS PAUL MEALOR

Paul Mealar is a prolific Welsh composer whose luminous, effervescent music – including “Ubi caritas” performed at the Royal Wedding Ceremony of His Royal Highness Prince William and Catherine Middleton – is beloved around the world. In 2011, he became the first classical composer to hold both classical and pop chart No. 1s at the same time (in December 2011) for his song “Wherever You Are.” His music reflects an expansive musical language incorporating elements from modal church music and British folk song to contemporary classical and popular music.

How did your musical and spiritual journeys begin? Are they related in any way?

I think, for me, the relationship between faith and music began as a boy growing up on the Island of Anglesey in Wales when I had a near-death experience and, whilst drowning in the water, felt a sudden warmth and peace come over me and I surrendered to death. I was taken out of the water and resuscitated. I, as a nine-year-old boy wanted to find out what that warmth was, and I was led to the church.

On entering St Asaph Anglican Cathedral to meet with the Dean, the choir of boys and men were rehearsing, and I just knew that it was that, singing and composing, that I was being called to do. That was my ministry, in a way. There I joined the choir as a kind of surrogate priesthood.

So death was literally the beginning of new life for you. I'm curious to know: because of this baptismal-like moment, does water have a unique significance for you?

Yes, I guess that is true. For me as a composer, I have always been trying to find that “warmth”

which came over me in the water; that deep feeling of peaceful warmth. Each of my compositions is, in effect, a human reflection upon that warmth and yes, water is incredibly important to me. Weirdly, I had never thought about that before; but I have to be by water – my two homes, one in Wales and one in Scotland are right by the sea AND I have a boat and love nothing more than being in it. People also say that my music has a type of ebb and flow quality to it also, like the water... I am constantly called to water...



—Jan Kalish, Boats at Dusk

What's your first memory of music?

Hearing the St Asaph Cathedral Choir sing “See, See the Word is Incarnate” by Gibbons was the first time that music really “moved me” – I was

nine. However, my first memories of music go right back to my parents and grandparents who always had music on – classical, jazz, country and western, pop, TV tunes – everything went on. They are a very music-loving group of people. And, hymns of course. My maternal grandmother LOVED her hymns and gave me a love of them too. She was always singing hymns.

Some of our readers may not be familiar with classical music. What would you want them to know about this genre and how do you believe listening to this music can enrich their lives?

Classical music, at its very best, is some of the profoundest human utterances to God. If you adore the greatest architecture, the wonder of human painting and sculpture, then you must see how humanity has painted sound in



—Paul Mealar

architectural sculptures to God. Try listening to small sections or movements to begin with – J S Bach and Chopin are good places to start, or the great English church composers, Thomas Tallis and William Byrd. Wonderful music...

While the lasting effect of COVID-19 on choirs and singing groups may not yet be known, how do you envision the future of singing ensembles?

I have absolutely no doubt that we will conquer COVID-19 and find a way to sing safely; however, for now, choirs will need to find ways to raise their voices in praise to God virtually. Technology is getting better and better and soon we will be able to sing in real time, balanced, together. This is not ideal, but it's better than nothing. I long for the day when we can all join together and sing. And, what a sound that is going to be!

What is life “in quarantine” like for you as a composer?

Apart from really missing singing and conducting, friends and my social life, the daily routine of composing hasn't really changed for me. Every morning after exercise and breakfast, I spend four to six hours at my desk and piano, composing music. It's the part of the day I look forward to most. For me, this intense act of drawing something from nothing is almost like praying – it's a profound experience and I come out of my study in a tired but refreshed state.

As an active composer over the past 20 years, what trends or changes do you see in contemporary concert music? Are there any changes that you would like to see?

There have been many changes. Far too many



—Josh Rodriguez

to say here; but the one I am now beginning to see more and more is that composers are not necessarily following a school of composition. Instead, they're hearing what's in their ears and hearts and are writing music, which is fresh and true to them, not following any preconceived idea of what new music should be. And, that is wonderful to see and hear.

How has your Christian faith shaped your musical life and output? Are there aspects of your faith that have been influenced by your work in music?

I think who you are as a person really shapes what you do, if you are true to yourself. In many ways, all of my work is a kind of reflection upon the loving God I see and witness. I am drawn to texts which show this love and compassion. Every time I find a text, I reflect upon it so

that I can compose. And, whilst reflecting, I'm thinking about my faith in a deep way. They are intertwined.

Is there a specific piece of music that you've returned to multiple times and why?

Yes, I think it is my work, "Peace." This is a setting of Saint Francis of Assisi's "make me a channel of your peace." I think it speaks to me so much.

Is there a particular biblical theme or passage of Scripture to which you find yourself returning often?

When I was a young chorister, the Bishop preached a sermon on the Beatitudes. I never forgot that sermon. The Beatitudes are, for me, the essential lifeblood of a Christian. I adore them and return to them daily...

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the

earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

To hear more of Paul's music, including his setting of The Beatitudes, check out his recently released *Blessing* and *Serenity* albums, available for purchase online.

arkivmusic.com/classical/album.jsp?album_id=2299722

signumrecords.com/product/blessing-the-music-of-paul-mealor/SIGCD613/

Email interview conducted by Josh Rodriguez, October 12-13, 2020.



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STREET MUSIC

MARY VANHOOZER

As the music editors of The Big Picture, we wish for our readers to appreciate at a deeper level how music and the arts can enrich faith and the life of discipleship; we hope that an enriched appreciation for music will help bring awareness of the need to support and advocate the arts, and promote live music-making in local communities. Street Music reflects a conversation between the editors and gigging musicians, tackling relevant questions and issues in our world today from the perspective of a working, playing musician. As such, we hope that readers will connect to musicians and engage in the beautiful world of music by listening more attentively.

1. Has there been one piece of music in particular that has given you a sense of comfort and peace in the midst of COVID-19?

Erica Ward, violinist and entrepreneur:

Kirk Franklin's "A God Like You" from his 2011 album "Hello Fear." This music has been on daily repeat for weeks in my home. I first heard it as the opening music to Michelle Obama's documentary "Becoming." I was struck by the celebratory and firm declaration of the certainty of God and his power, especially in the context of a story about the former First Lady's experience moving into a new and drastically different season of her life. It has been a great reminder to me to press on, stand confidently in the person God has made me to be, and celebrate God in the midst of my own uncertainties.



2. When you think about the unique role of a musician in a community, how would you describe how the role has changed post-COVID-19 pandemic?

Robert Nicholson, cellist:

If I may flip the question, what has struck me most is the role of the community in the musician. In the longest period of my life without concerts, the few (masked, distanced) times I've played for actual breathing people have meant a lot – and have felt like coming back to myself. Music is not something I do, it is something we do, as a community; because no matter how hard we work as musicians, the alchemy that turns mere playing into a performance only happens with an audience.

Erica Ward:

I do not think our role has changed – rather, I think many are awakening to the realms of possibilities beyond the traditional role of "musician" in this pandemic season. We have discovered our role much more deeply as messengers and peace-bringers, and are being forced to adapt to new ways to meet our listeners. I think this is especially exciting for musicians of faith, because they have the potential to use their role in a far more intentional and personal way than they might have previously thought about.

CHEF EXPERIENCE

ISTINE RODSETH SWART

There are certain experiences that I feel are only for the not-me, such as travelling to the moon – and having a chef come to my home to prepare a meal. Most unexpectedly, I have the coronavirus to thank for being a very happy participant in a memorable “chef experience,” though the moon visit remains firmly out of my reach.

Whether we succumb to it or not, there is undeniable pressure to celebrate the big round birthdays appropriately. What, then, do we do when lockdown measures rob us of our dreams for the big days, either as the focus of attention or as friends planning to honour the 40th, 50th, 60th birthday of a special person in our lives?

One member of such a group of friends came up with a solution which saw us gathering in the delightful home of the “birthday girl,” being treated to a meal prepared by the competent young chef, Damian Veneruso.



The event put me in mind of “Babette’s Feast,” which is one of my favourite films, although the Scandinavians (my ancestors) are not portrayed in a very flattering light in it.

The pleasures of the day were not only gastronomic. So many livelihoods have been threatened by lockdown restrictions and those affected have had to explore new income-generating ventures. It felt good to support someone who was developing new skills, particularly one as unassuming and endearing as Damian.

One of our number related her first “chef experience” in which a well-known travelling chef liberally salted his demonstration with anecdotes about the luminaries he had fed. Our young chef, on the other hand, kept his ego firmly in check, and maintained an unwavering focus on his guests and the spells he was casting in the kitchen.

Yes, to me, unskilled as I am in culinary arts, what happened in that kitchen

was magic, though the others could engage in informed conversation with the master, who imparted useful technical and nutritional information while skillfully demonstrating his preparation methods.

We reaped the rewards of his efforts in the shape of exotic little butternut and feta phyllo baskets with a sweet chilli sauce, followed by perfectly cooked beef fillet, accompanied by grilled asparagus and roasted baby tomatoes, served with a balsamic vinegar Hollandaise sauce.

You, dear reader, may feast with your eyes on what I had the privilege to taste – and it was good, very good!



—Photographs by Damian Veneruso

MEDITATION ON THE GIFT OF DURESS

—Karen An-hwei Lee

Out of nothing, the gladness of shining nerve, a cloud –
a world motionless
while tilting its way through an airless universe
is the duress of this season, masked
yet the yoke is light
as the hunger of doves for seed, of wolves
and the hunger of a burning world, this ache
sewn in every inch of our flesh,
spindles of lovely elemental soil
where God made life a possession,
spindles of lovely elemental soil
sewn in every inch of our flesh
and the hunger of a burning world, this ache
as the hunger of doves for seed, of wolves –
yet the yoke is light –
is the duress of this season, masked
while tilting its way through an airless universe –
a world motionless,
out of nothing, the gladness of shining nerve, a cloud.



—Jim Rushoven

FIRST REFORMED

AND THE CONTOURS OF SPIRITUAL CINEMA

Jarrod Howard-Browne

The film opens with a dark screen, amidst palpable silence. As minimal intro credits come and go, a small light begins to wax top-centre. The broader image unfurls unadorned, revealing a white cross atop a picturesque, old church building, reflecting the sunlight. The camera slowly tracks up the drive. There are no cuts, no embellishments, just the image growing in frame over a long, patient take. The framing of the film is square, 1.37:1 or Academy ratio to be precise, rather than the expansive wide-screen most modern viewers are used to. This square framing at once forces me to carefully attend to what is right in front of me, while creating a sense of “boxed-in-ness.” The building is historic, beautiful. And yet I am left with a sense of unease I can’t quite place.

I first experienced *First Reformed* in a small London cinema a few years ago.

It has wonderfully haunted me ever since.



Written and directed by Paul Schrader, the film centres around Ethan Hawke’s Reverend Ernst Toller, the ailing minister of an historic Dutch Reformed church in upstate New York, who is suffering what St John of The Cross calls “the dark night of the soul.” Hawke’s performance is a career best, alongside a small and excellent supporting cast, and Schrader’s script is spellbinding in its piercing economy.

Even at a cursory glance one might immediately assume that the movie deals with spiritual and religious ideas. And indeed, much of the film’s content resonates with some of the contours of the spiritual life: endurance amidst suffering, wrestling in

prayer, silence, stillness, the slow attending to everyday things, unease that longs for resolution and, just maybe, the breaking in of the Transcendent Other when we least expect it.

This is certainly true for the film’s plot, dialogue and onscreen action, and yet there is something unspoken, something intrinsic that goes much deeper than the surface content.

You see, as I was later to learn, I was being introduced through *First Reformed* to a type of cinema called Transcendental Style or “spiritual cinema,” which is extensively explored by Paul Schrader in his seminal 1972 work, *Transcendental Style in Film*.

For Schrader and the masters of Transcendental Style upon whom he draws — Yasujiro Ozu, Robert Bresson and Carl Dreyer — spiritual cinema, like the spiritual life itself, is “experiential, not expositional.” This conviction is manifest in the defining characteristic of the Transcendental Style: a prioritising of form over content as the vehicle driving the film. Rather than through overt dialogue, plot or action, it employs a set of film-making techniques and leverages certain style choices and aesthetics to evoke (invoke?) the experience of the spiritual life.

Schrader himself, in his definitive study, lays out some of the techniques used in Transcendental Style: long takes, wide angles, static frames, “boxed” screen ratio, very little to no composed music, minimal camera angle coverage, offset edits, diegetic sound effects, repeated composition, and others. These techniques create space,

through time and subverted expectation, for the spiritual: for stillness, silence and contemplation, while at the same time building tension — creating “a sense of unease the viewer must resolve.”

Every one of these stylistics is employed throughout *First Reformed* to profound effect.

Long takes slow us down, forcing us to almost indwell and attend carefully to what is occurring on screen. Schrader comments that Robert Bresson, one of the fathers of Transcendental Style, in his work, “made ‘waiting’ a verb,” and that as a style it is “a mile marker on the journey toward stillness.”

Where we would expect a composed soundtrack to be used to direct our empathy and move the plot forward, this is almost entirely missing, with the focus instead on everyday sounds like dogs barking, cars driving by, someone sneezing, footsteps, the chirping of birds,

dripping water. This close attention to the everyday, a “celebration of the trivial,” grounds us in the moment allowing the ordinary to open into a space inhabiting more than simply the material.

Unlike most Hollywood films which edit for pacing and tend to anticipate and fulfil the expectations of the viewer, here effective use is made of offset edits, leaving a scene unresolved in the mind of the viewer, the cut coming too soon or long after the action onscreen is over. Our expectations are again subverted and we are forced to sit with the mysterious and awkward.

Forgoing multiple camera angles and aggressive camera movement, it opts instead for a static frame, causing the viewer to have to explore the frame undirected, being more fully exposed to the potential for varied meaning and mystery.



UNLIKELY BEDFELLOWS

ABRAHAM KUYPER (1837-1920) AND CHARLOTTE MASON (1842-1923)

Elaine Cooper



This is then taken one step further as certain static frames are revisited in multiple scenes with minimal adjustments to the mis-en-scène. The two frames above are captured with a static camera. In the first, unaided by any camera movement, the viewer's gaze is made to roam the frame feeling its austere emptiness even as the vacant chair makes room for the possibility of presence. In the second frame the staging remains the same but is now inhabited by the presence of Amanda Seyfried's Mary. And it is this same still frame which later becomes the place in which Toller has his transcendent experience.

Over the first two acts of the film its visual and auditory language goes to work on us, slowing us down, getting us accustomed to silence and stillness, drawing our focus to the ordinary, forcing us to sit with the awkward, subverting our expectations and creating a subcutaneous dissonance that needs rectification.

Enter the climactic component of Transcendental Style. In a cinematic act that breaks every convention established up to

this point in *First Reformed*, the alien movement of the camera, the use of composed music and the changing visuals jolt the viewer into an awareness that this is something other. Schrader describes it as "a Decisive Moment, an unexpected image or act, which then results in a stasis, an acceptance of parallel reality — transcendence." The moment is represented as deeply intimate and utterly alien in the construction of the film expressly because it is an attempt to point to the experience of something Wholly Other.

To be sure, *First Reformed* in particular and spiritual cinema in general are not trying to provide us with an orthodox presentation of the Christian spiritual life. Nor are they laying before us a blueprint or how-to guide for navigating the experience of the Transcendent.

What the Transcendental Style attempts to do is to create space for the spiritual amidst the everyday material, even the painful and profane, via the elements of its form. This is precisely what *First Reformed* does to the viewer.

Employing all the technical tools in its toolbox, the film refuses to relegate us to the role of "detached (or entertained!) observer," and instead draws us along as participants in its unfolding. In the end it provides for us a glimpse into what film critic Josh Larsen describes as "a confession of faith not as faith is often demanded, but as it is experienced... a way of living in mystery, of staring straight into that fixed, unblinking camera, while holding tightly onto whatever hope we have."

For further viewing:

Diary of a Country Priest, Robert Bresson.
Ordet, Carl Dreyer.
Tokyo Story, Yasujiro Ozu.
Winter Light, Ingmar Bergman.

For further reading:

Transcendental Style in Film, Paul Schrader.
Notes on the Cinematograph, Robert Bresson.
Movies are Prayers, Josh Larsen.

Consider... an outspoken Dutch theologian, politician and polymath and a gentle, quietly-spoken English spinster writing on Christian education – what could they have in common? As it turns out quite a lot, besides inhabiting roughly the same period in the 19th century, now being commemorated by their centennials in 2020 (Kuyper) and 2023 (Mason).



Both had ambitious views for making a difference in society. Both understood and tackled secular modernism and naturalism with intellectual insight and energy, writing critiques within their respective contexts, positing instead, the necessity of a Christian worldview. In Kuyper's case, he became, amongst many things, prime minister of Holland for a term, and in Mason's case, putting forward a Philosophy and Practice of Education which gained highly respectful tributes at the end of her life.

Each wrote extensively about education, stressing the primary responsibility and freedom of parents to choose their children's education. They understood the importance of vital links between home and school not only for individuals, communities and the workplace, but for the whole nation. Kuyper wrote persuasively about "spheres of sovereignty" – that the government, family, arts, economics, education etc., each has its own distinct responsibilities and authority. Kuyper helped establish an educational pluralism in the Netherlands at a critical point in its history to protect Christian culture. Mason, a committed Anglican evangelical, in response to the encroaching secularism, was envisioned by the concept of a "righteous nation" and believed that the established church in Britain might be a means of accomplishing that goal.

Kuyper was not only deeply interested in literature, sharing this love with Mason, but was actually converted through reading *The Heir of Redclyffe* by



Charlotte Yonge. Mason for her part, believed that good literature functioned as a spiritual and intellectual power between writer and reader, and as in this case, was actually borne out in Kuyper's own experience!

Both understood in a profound way that the centre of the Christian life is a living relationship with God himself through Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit – that every part of human life exists equally and directly "before the face of God" – we live our lives in their entirety *coram Deo*. This illumination enabled both to stress emphatically that no division was therefore possible between the sacred and the secular in life, including education. Kuyper used "palingenesis" as a precise word to convey the richness in understanding the parallel renewing of the individual as well as that of creation.

Concern for the education of the poor and disadvantaged also emerges in their writings. Mason was inspired primarily by her Christian commitments, and also by Comenius whose dictum "All Knowledge for All People" provided the challenging summons put forward by her into late Victorian British educational circles through booklets entitled *A Liberal Education for All* and *The Basis of National Strength*. However, education for all classes was a dangerous idea... Kuyper too was concerned that education ought not to remain a middle-class privilege, but ought to be a preferential option for the poor, especially when many poor people were Christian. Finally, both understood that biblical truth provided the only plausible foundation for a coherent and unified understanding of the world and the tragedy of the human condition.

Elaine Cooper is involved in education in Cambridge, is a KLC Fellow and a member of its Interdisciplinary Group.

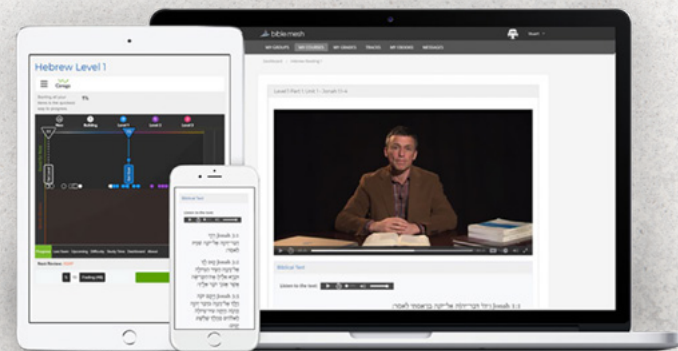


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A N A P O L O G Y FOR SPORTS

PJ Buys

Kirby Laing gets the puck at centre ice, and he is flying down the wing! He rushes in past the blue line, dangles around the defenceman, he winds up for a slap shot. He SHOOTs! HE SCORES! And the crowd goes wild as Laing lifts the Stanley Cup high above his head in victory!

Hold on a second, Kirby Laing playing . . . sports? Kirby Laing lifting the . . . what? The Stanley Cup? Sports? Why should I care about sports?

My friends, “right off the hop” (a term we Canadian hockey players use when the game starts) consider me as an apologist for the jocks, a sort of athletic modern day apostle Paul charged not with defending the Christian faith to the Greek Stoics at Mars Hill, but defending the importance, function and role of sports to the readers of the Kirby Laing Centre. This task will be tricky, much like shooting a penalty kick in rugby from a bad angle, or catching a touchdown pass in the end zone with limited space, because the reality and idea of “sports” conjures up so many different thoughts and images to all of us depending on our experiences, upbringing and perspective of what “sports” are.

For me, writing as a former professional ice hockey player

and proud Canadian, when I hear the word “sports,” I immediately think of the Stanley Cup (hockey’s ultimate prize for the champions), frozen ponds surrounded by tall blue mountains and icy mountaintops, hockey players missing their two front teeth, Wayne Gretzky, and two big brutes “dropping their gloves” at centre ice to engage in a wild swirl of fisticuffs as the crowd passionately cries out for blood, much like the crowds of the Ancient Roman Coliseum as they watched the gladiators fight elephants, tigers and lions to their death.

Or perhaps my British friends across the sea might think of the smell of the freshly-cut green grass of the pitch at Wembley Stadium, the eyes of mesmerized tennis fans robotically following the tennis ball back and forth over the net at Wimbledon, or the beautiful and poetic ritual chant of hundreds of thousands of English soccer fans (or “football” as I believe the British strangely call soccer) singing Swing Low, Sweeeeet Chariot all together at once.

Or perhaps you might see the very same soccer fans as passionate, wild and deranged drunken hooligans cathartically expressing their inner life frustrations through

and into the sporting event for a collective sense of meaning in life. (You wouldn’t be wrong.)

The reality and understanding of sports is unique to each one of us, but please allow me to take a moment to share a little more about myself and my understanding of sports, for I speak from a strange and unique identity as someone with a Master’s degree in the philosophy of sport, and someone who played professional sports: a sort of mixed “athletic/academic” hybrid identity, if you could call it that.

I am a 30-year-old Canadian that grew up playing competitive hockey on the rinks and frozen ponds of Ontario. I have “ice in my veins” as we hockey players would say. My childhood experience is grounded in the reality of cold, snowy, early morning practices, travelling across North America to play the best in the world, and learning how to train, play and fight physically in a world of sport that is truly chaotic. As a kid I was accustomed to playing in front of large crowds full of envious and embittered parents who spend tens of thousands of dollars annually on their kids’ hockey programmes, equipment, training, travel and more for their kid to “make it to the

top.” As of today, the average Canadian parent will spend anywhere from 14,000 to 25,000 dollars CDN a year for their son’s hockey season. Growing up as a skilled athlete, it was not uncommon at all to witness dads fighting other dads in the stands during games, parents cursing or fighting the referee, parents giving the head coach of the team bribes to propel the career of their kid forward, or participating in large “brawls,” which are fights in which both teams leave the benches to engage in a massive “tilly” aka

play professional hockey in Europe and America. However, many experiences occurred that led to my conversion to Christianity at the early age of 20, where I quite suddenly and deftly left the world of sport. In an instant, I found myself in a new world that was very, very different from the previous world I lived in: the world of academics. The Lord led me away from the spiritual incubators of sport (my personal name for sport stadiums) to a Christian university called Redeemer

Columbia, where, after two years of study, I completed my Master’s degree with a final research paper entitled, *The Function of Sport as Ritual in Modernity*. The basic position of my argument is that sports function in modernity as spiritual outlets called rituals in the way they did in antiquity, just in a different form. But we can talk more about those ideas later, because right now it is story time and I am feeling like Walt Disney.

While studying my MAIH at TWU, I tried out for the



PJ on the ice

“scrap” aka “fight” with each other.

After childhood, I played what is called “Junior A” hockey in Ontario, the highest level of competition reserved for athletes from the age of 16 to 20 where they train and compete as adolescents before reaching the “pro” level and age. I played Junior A hockey from the age of 17 to 19, with early aspirations and offers to

in Hamilton, Ontario, where I fell in love with philosophy (a discipline I had never even known before, to be honest).

After graduating from Redeemer with a BA in philosophy and a minor in theology (still a shock to think about to this day), I entered into a Master of Interdisciplinary Humanities programme at Trinity Western University in Langley, British

university hockey team as a walk-on player after four years of lack of competitive play. I shyly admit I had a lot of success, scoring lots of goals and performing well, which led to two and a half years of professional hockey after I completed my degree from the age of 24 to 27.

In conclusion of my brief little Disney tale, today I work as a competitive hockey

“SPORTS CAN BE REDEEMED BY THE TRUTH OF JOY, LEADING TO DEEP FRIENDSHIPS, MORAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, AND PROVIDE A DEEP SENSE OF MEANING AND PURPOSE IN GOD’S GOOD CREATION.

coach in the Toronto area teaching many sports to kids and adolescents of all ages. I do consulting work with the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto where I have access to thousands of unique hockey history artefacts and hockey’s most precious trophies. And I still frequently play many competitive sports like hockey, rugby, football and basketball in my spare time.

So, in future articles, you can expect interviews with professional athletes from several different sports, plenty of stories and numerous ideas talking about the power and function of sport as an idol in society, a structured ritual in which worshippers go to participate in the spirit of chaos to be imbued and imbibed with purpose and meaning in their lives.

But, now in conclusion of my first total post, let me finish by saying this. Over the last 10 years of my life I have noticed and lived in a particularly strong binary opposition that needs to be healed. It is a competitive game played between two different teams that should be allies, not rivals. It is not necessarily a Derridean binary like black/white, but a polarization and division that

has existed for a long time. It is the ever-persistent distrust and competition between Athletics vs. Academics, Brawn vs. the Brains, the Geeks vs. the Muscleheads, and the Jocks vs. the Narps (an acronym that jocks call non-athletic people which stands for Non-Athletic-Regular-People).

These two teams should not compete with each other, but should co-operate. They consistently fight and battle over funding and relevance, each side speaking past or not listening to what the other side can provide. The academic world dismisses the power and importance of the athletic world, and the athletic world often does not see the extreme beauty and richness offered from the world of knowledge and academia.

In the coming articles I hope to share ideas, opinions and experiences which can help bridge the ever-widening gap between the competition of the two teams. Competition can translate into co-operation, leading to a flourishing that can



have an incredibly positive and powerful effect on culture. Although chaotic and inherently idolatrous in nature, sports can be redeemed by the truth of joy, leading to deep friendships, moral and character development, and provide a deep sense of meaning and purpose in God’s good creation. There is great opportunity and potentiality hidden inside the Creation that the sons and daughters of God are called to explore and actualize. I look forward to doing that with my readers.

So, time to strap on our skates, drop the puck, and play! Let’s Go!

THE MOTORCYCLE: A VEHICLE OF BLESSING?

David Beldman

I love motorcycles — especially old motorcycles. It's hard to explain the attraction to the uninitiated, indifferent or antagonistic, but I suppose it is comparable to some people's love for cooking, or long-distance running, or crocheting, or woodworking, or gardening or bird-watching. Part of the attraction is aesthetic and mechanical — old motorcycles are rugged and tough but also elegant and beautiful; they are incredibly intricate but also wonderfully simple; they can be somewhat indulgent but also imminently practical.

Another part of the attraction is the immediate (and often unprejudiced) initiation into a fraternity of riders when one makes the decision to kick a leg over a machine and start riding. I have rarely seen the kind of unswerving loyalty and



self-sacrificial generosity that I have seen and experienced in the motorcycling community (even in the church which should be the most natural habitat of these virtues). Yet another part of the attraction is a deep commitment to skill/excellence and the cultivation of mind/body/spirit I see at play in the realm of motorcycling. Riding a motorcycle requires the kind of skill and focused attentiveness that is becoming rarer and rarer in our modern, technological society.¹ Riding also has a contemplative dimension, as it requires not only attentiveness but also alone time with nothing but your thoughts bouncing around inside your helmet.

What's more, I have met

1. Similarly, see Matthew Crawford, *Why We Drive: Toward a Philosophy of the Open Road* (New York: Harper Collins, 2020).

geniuses who troubleshoot, repair and restore old motorcycles, and I have met incredible artists who customize and build motorcycles with unparalleled precision and beauty. Perhaps this gives a small window into my love for motorcycles. I want to go a step further and suggest that motorcycles can serve as a vehicle for blessing. To do that, I want to dig into the annals of history; the time: the mid-twentieth century; the place: East London, England.

Bill Shergold (1919-2009) was the founder and president of the 59 Club, a motorcycle club established in 1959 for disaffected and socially marginalized youth in north and east London. The club quickly became the largest motorcycle club and even today still boasts some 30,000 members. What may come as a surprise is that Bill Shergold was a priest, and the 59 Club began as a Church of England-based youth club. What

made Father Bill's (the "Biker Priest's") ministry to the biker subculture so successful? I would suggest it was a success for at least the following five reasons.

First, Father Bill's love for motorcycles and the youth was not manufactured but genuine. He had ridden a motorcycle for years before starting the 59 Club and he had a heart for the youth — it seemed only natural to meet these youth where his and their passions intersected. Motorcycle riding and culture was not merely an avenue for evangelism but a good gift from God that Father Bill and the youth of north and east London shared and celebrated.

Second, he could see with clarity that these youth were the kinds of outcasts and marginalized that Jesus no doubt would have pursued in his earthly ministry. From the pen of Father Bill himself:

[Through written correspondence] and above all from the conversations with the boys themselves, I soon began to realize that they were virtually an outcast section of the community. Because of their dress, their noisy bikes and their tendency to move around in gangs, nobody wanted them. Dance halls refused them, bowling alleys told them to go home and change into ordinary clothes. Youth clubs were afraid of them. Even the transport cafes didn't really welcome their custom (Link Magazine, 1966).

Father Bill had the eyes (and



heart) to really see "the boys,"² whom the rest of society found distasteful and would have preferred to ignore and in reality did push away.

Third, the 59 Club was interested in its members' character development — we might say that discipleship was at the heart of the ministry. The history of Christian mission is riddled with "colonial" attempts to "civilize" the "savages," such that gospel transformation often got confused with social relocation. Father Bill and his colleagues represented the British cultural establishment and "the boys" represented a profoundly anti-establishment culture. The temptation would have been to encourage the youth to toss their black leather jackets, cut their hair, adopt more conventional modes of transport, and "convert" to a socially "acceptable" way of life. The 59 Club (rightfully) resisted this model, in spite of pressure to the contrary. Father Bill and his colleagues effectively removed barriers, providing a bridge between the establishment and the

2 It seems to me that the 59 Club welcomed male and female members, though the motorcycle culture had a particular attraction to males.

biker subculture, not so that the youth could be converted to the establishment but to provide a context for authentic community and the common good. This did not mean that Father Bill ignored the problematic aspects of the biker culture — "Respect for others, safety and social responsibility were high on his agenda."³ Like the very best cross-cultural mission, the 59 Club affirmed the creational goodness of the culture while working against the idolatry in it.

Fourth, the 59 Club encouraged its members to integrate their love of motorcycles with the cultivation of Christian virtues. Father Bill's dreaded visit to Ace Café is the stuff of legend now. He became convinced that to reach the biker culture he would have to breach its unofficial headquarters, even if it meant being humiliated or worse (he supposed he would probably lose his trousers or get thrown in the canal⁴).

3 Steve Griffiths, "My Generation: A Story of Youth Ministry to the 1960s Biker Culture," *Journal of Youth and Theology* 1.2 (2002), 73.

4 Ted Brecheisen, "The Ton-Up Vicar: Bill Shergold and The Rise of the Ace Café in London," (March 13, 2004), Eat, Sleep, Ride: eatsleepride.com



He never expected the warm reception he received from the rough crowd at Ace Café, and the inaugural Biker service at Eton Mission soon after was bustling with youth bikers (and news media representatives). With several motorcycles lined up in the aisles of the church, Father Bill urged his listeners to use their machines as vehicles of blessing — to “dedicate their bikes and themselves to God’s service, endeavouring to use the machines in a responsible way.”⁵ Indeed, members of the 59 Club were mobilized, many becoming part of the Volunteer Emergency Service, a nation-wide registry of some 4,000 volunteers. Their unique mode of transport was ideally suited to specific needs (e.g., the quick and nimble delivery of vaccines, medical supplies and blood donations between clinics and hospitals). Not only were the bikers not paid for their service, they had to pay a fee to be on the registry of 24/7 on-call volunteers.

Finally, we cannot underestimate Father Bill’s love for and commitment to Christ and his love for and self-sacrificial service on behalf of “the boys.” Griffiths maintains that this is key: “Perhaps the most effective aspect of his youth ministry came through an absolute dedication to the bikers on a day-to-day offering of pastoral care.”⁶ In answer to an intricate theory about

⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Griffiths, “My Generation,” 71.



the success of his ministry, Father Bill answered simply: “Well that sounds very grand. Actually, I only wanted to show God’s love. [They] were just a nice bunch of boys.”⁷

Father Bill provides a model for cross-cultural, incarnational ministry. He shows us that ministry and mission need not turn us away from our passions but that as we celebrate the wonderful gifts of life (like motorcycles) we might find contexts for participating in Christ’s mission. Father Bill and the 59 Club give us glimpses of the kingdom amidst disaffected youth in post-war British life. They suggest the possibility that even a motorcycle can be a vehicle for divine blessing, that the kingdom can come with the twist of the throttle.

⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, 74.

David Beldman is Associate Professor of Religion and Theology at Redeemer University, where he has taught in the area of biblical studies for some ten years. Prior to embarking on his academic journey, David did an apprenticeship in the electrical trade and became a journeyman electrician. He has never abandoned his love for working with his hands, and uses them in his spare time to work on vintage motorcycles, among other things.

COMING SOON...

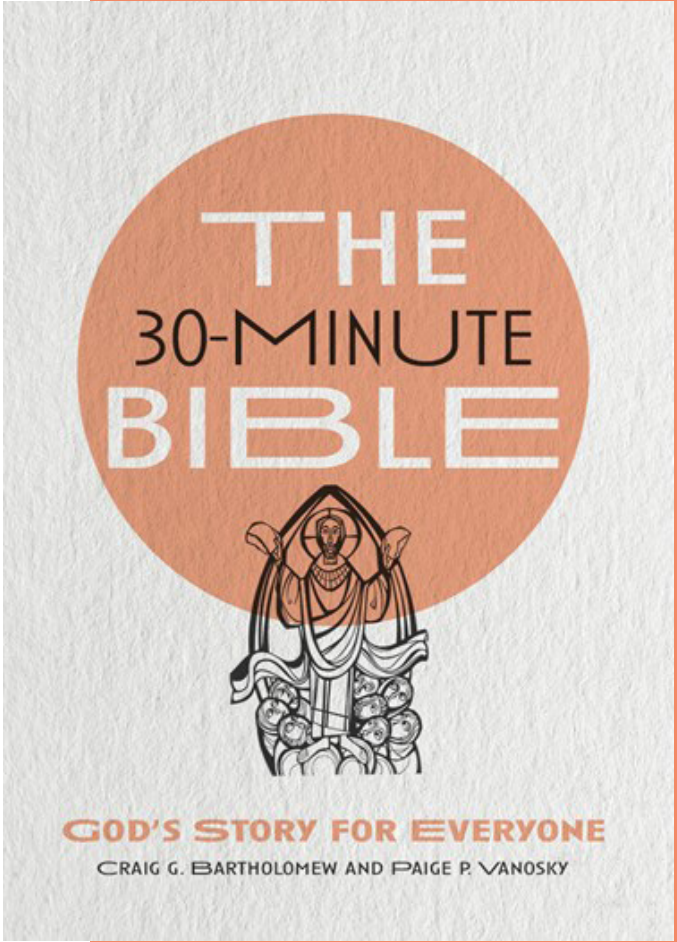
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ABOUT CRAIG G. BARTHOLOMEW

Craig G. Bartholomew is director of the Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology in Cambridge, UK. He has written and edited numerous books, including *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition*, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, *Beyond the Modern Age* (with Bob Goudzwaard), *The Drama of Scripture* (with Michael Goheen), *The Doctrine of Creation* (with Bruce Ashford) and a commentary on Ecclesiastes.

ABOUT PAIGE P. VANOSKY

Paige P. Vanosky is a small group leader and community volunteer. *The 30-Minute Bible* grew out of her own teaching ministry. She lives in Rancho Santa Fe, California.



INTRODUCING TWO OF

OUR KRUX ARTISTS

YDI COETSEE (KRUX ARTIST IN RESIDENCE)

Ydi Coetsee Carstens (b. 1990) received her MA in Fine Arts from the University of Stellenbosch in March 2015. "Studying postmodern art was a daunting experience for me since I grew up with parents in ministry, family members in missions, and myself having a heart for social issues, the poor and the marginalised. During my Master's studies I did an exchange at Makerere University (Kampala, Uganda) which was a real soul-searching experience. Today many of my paintings speak about the segregated communities in my hometown where my father worked as Dutch Reformed pastor to a 'coloured' community." After studying Ydi spent some time at L'Abri, England, and since then has been freelancing and painting. She had her first solo exhibition titled "Bly" or "Stay" in 2018, reflecting on their family leaving the community after 30 years. She has received a number of South African art awards, being a Sasol New Signatures finalist in 2015 and a Top 40 finalist in the Sanlam Portrait Awards in 2017.

"'Feet on a cement floor' reflects on a missions trip I did with my church to our neighbouring country, Mozambique, in 2019. During the three-week trip I was keenly aware of my biases against the trip (having studied humanities in a secular environment, and knowing the postmodern critique against missions and the privileged 'helping' those in Africa). I felt confused about my role and felt my critical mind-set hampering my ability to be present. At the same time, the close communion with those around me and the time spent away from my phone helped me to connect to the concreteness of things - textures, smells, dust - sensory realities. I left the experience humbled, aware of how multidimensional a trip like this can be. I made this painting to grapple with the conflicting voices about missions, privilege, faith and aid in Africa."



Feet on a cement floor. Oil on board. 30cmx30cm.

NTOBEKO MJIJWA



Lupe Fiasco (Portrait). 60x 90cm. Oil on canvas.



Life is a Vapour I. 60x 84cm. Oil on canvas.

Ntobeko Mjijwa was born in Knysna, South Africa. After graduating with a Fine Arts Degree from Nelson Mandela University and a Certificate in Theology from George Whitefield College in Cape Town, Muizenberg, he became an assistant lecturer, teaching South African art and Western African art at Nelson Mandela University. Mjijwa spent two years lecturing at the African Christian University in Zambia, Lusaka, also creating an art curriculum based on a biblical worldview with the help of Dr Voddie Baucham. Ntobeko is currently a member of staff at the Student YMCA Study Centre at the University of Cape Town. He is married to Siphokazi Mjijwa, an administrative clerk and IsiXhosa language teacher.

"The artworks in this series form a combination of concepts and conversations from different contexts which intersect my life. Just as culture manifests as a multilayered entity which includes several voices, I strive to bring these impressions from my surroundings into new company, to be continually shaped anew. The viewer is thus invited to participate in the conversation and its evolving process."

Ydi Coetsee, KRUX Artist in Residence, *Blou Mat*



KRUX is a community of Christian formation tucked in the heart of Stellenbosch – a vibrant university town in the Western Cape of South Africa. Launched by native South Africans JB and Corli Krohn in 2015, KRUX disciples young adults through theological education, mentoring, community and a unique focus on the arts.

Theological Discipleship

Theological discipleship pursues a head and heart knowledge of our faith, a living theology, forged in the fire of community. This is the vital foundation of KRUX.

Culture & Arts

KRUX offers various seminars and opportunities for reflecting on the intersection of faith and culture and facilitates an annual Artists Gathering, which connects artists from across Southern Africa and has brought several international speakers to our shores.

Community

Weekly fellowship meals followed by a short discussion, presentation, or film/music clip and lively conversation is the embodiment of engaged faith-in-community at KRUX.

Mentoring

Mentorship is intrinsic to the theological and relational core of KRUX, whether by means of personal conversation, counselling, small group seminar, or sharing a meal.

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THE SINGING SPOT

MARY VANHOOZER

There is an old Chinese proverb: "A bird does not sing because it has an answer: it sings because it has a song."

In this section, we invite our readers to infuse their daily life with a new song, specifically: a round. A round is a wonderful way of harmonizing with other singers without learning a separate melody line, or knowing much about music theory and improvisation. Rounds may be simple but they can also be extremely complex. For this first issue, we will begin with something simple enough that, when sung as a round with other singers, nevertheless sounds contrapuntal and is very satisfying to sing.

[Please head over here to hear what a round sounds like.](#)

Gloria

(round)



This is a four part round: each part is labelled, 1-4. If there are only two people singing, it is possible for the second singer to enter when the first is starting line 2, 3, or 4.

The text is sung in Latin:

- (1) Gloria! Gloria!
- (2) In excelsis Deo!
- (3) Gloria! Gloria!
- (4) Alleluia, Alleluia!

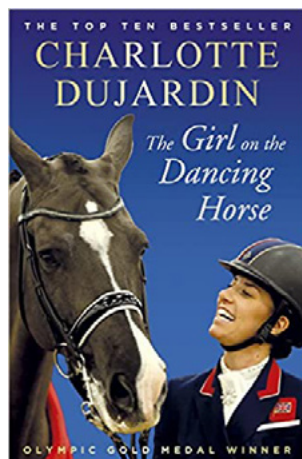
FOUR LEGS MOVE MY SOUL

CRAIG BARTHOLOMEW

Modernity privatized religion so that it became a thing we do in our own or leisure time. We have become so used to this that it makes it hard to see the relevance of Christ for all of life. We need a myriad examples of how Christ plays in ten thousand places so that we can begin to see the glorious possibilities of serving him in every aspect of our lives, and thereby becoming fully human.

My good friend David Beldman loves motorbikes. I love horses. As a teenager I rode for several years and the love for horses has never left me. There is nothing quite like the relationship you develop with a horse.

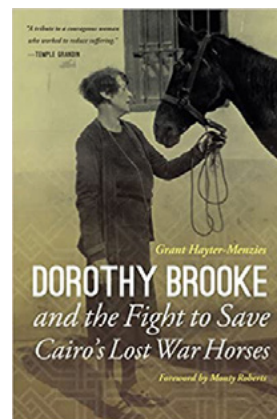
Intuitively I was drawn towards *dressage*, the most classical form of riding. During lockdown



I have spoilt myself by reading books on dressage and watching it on YouTube. In the past the UK was never well known for dressage. And then along came the London Olympics in 2012. The UK won the team gold medal, Charlotte Dujardin won the individual

gold on the magnificent Valegro – do check him out on YouTube, and Laura Tomlinson the individual bronze on her Alf. Carl Hester was a key figure in all of this, and he was part of the UK team (see Carl Hester, *Making it Happen: The Autobiography*, 2014). At Rio four years later Charlotte and Valegro again won individual gold, and shortly thereafter they wonderfully retired Valegro at the relatively young age of 14, at the very top of his game.

What, you might ask, does Christ have to do with horses and dressage? As it turns out a great



deal. Humans have a long history with horses, for better and for worse. It is estimated that somewhere between 14 and 16 million horses were used in World War I. About 8 million died. By the end of the war the life expectancy of a horse on the Western front was 10 days. Horses

also played a vital role in World War II. At the end of the war most UK horses in Cairo were tragically abandoned to their fate. Stationed there with her husband after the war, Dorothy Brooke noted their fate and set up a charity to help them. The story is heart-breaking, searing and profoundly moving and redemptive.

Nowadays in the West we make little use of horses for work. Riding is for pleasure and for sport. And all those ethical issues that are present in sport are present in competitive riding, except that here a living creature is an indispensable part of the package.

At its best dressage is truly beautiful and an art form with rider and horse in exquisite unison. Isabell Werth of Germany is one of the best dressage riders in the world and I loved reading her (with Evi Simeoni) authorized biography *Four Legs Move My Soul*.

However, it takes several slow years to produce a top dressage horse. With prize-money and prestige at stake amidst our consumer culture, the



temptation is to adopt a utilitarian attitude to horses and to take short cuts in their training as long as you get the results.

For example, for several years now a fierce debate has been going on in the dressage world about so-called “rollkur” or hyperflexion, forcing the horse’s head down and towards its chest. Physiologically this is not good for the horse but can win prizes.

The philosophy of riding goes back into ancient history with Xenophon (450-354 B.C.) writing the first major treatise. Current practices in dressage have called forth books like Gerd Heuschmann’s *Tug of War: Classical Versus “Modern” Dressage* (2nd ed. 2018); Paul Belasik’s *Dressage for No Country* (2019); Philippe Karl’s *Twisted Truths of Modern Dressage: A Search for a Classical Alternative* (2017); and Charles De Kunffy’s *The Ethics and Passions of Dressage* (1993). In the latter book you find words like religion, spirituality, and even worldview, cropping up. Kunffy writes: “horsemanship has spiritually, or if you prefer, emotionally or mentally redeeming values. When it is practiced right, horsemanship makes for a beautiful display.” (p. 123)

Christ plays in horses and in our riding of them. We honour him by caring for them, developing their potential, and enjoying our relationship with them to the full.



——James Rusthoven, *The Cathedral at Bayonne*

Cover Artwork: *Untitled* by Mary Abma.

Mary Abma is a versatile artist who specializes in community-engaged artworks and environmental art. Always up for new challenges, Mary seeks constantly to push the edges of her practice and to learn new skills and information. Her artworks, which consist primarily of idea-based works executed in a variety of artistic forms, explore the theme of “place.” Her work embraces her interest in history, her concern for the environment, her passion for science, and her desire to find visual expression for her insights into the living world and the interconnectedness of systems. See more of her wonderful work at maryabma.com.

Various photographs by Jan Kalish.

Jan Kalish, holder of many international photographic awards, studied photography and worked in South Africa before moving to Toronto. She says of her calling:

The premise of my work often originates from 2 Corinthians 4:18: “As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” The revelation of God’s reality in things unseen has had lasting impact on my imagery. In every photograph, commercial or fine art, I try to elicit a hinted glimpse of the extraordinary in the ordinary — a pause in part to provoke celebration of the fleeting details in our everyday.

For more of her excellent photography: jankalish.com.

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