

CCU Review

of BOOKS, CULTURE, MEDIA, LIFE

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COLORADO CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY

Grace and Truth

February 2019

Tolle Lege!

Dear friends,



Reading a powerful book can change your life, which is why we publish the *CCU Review* — to point you toward important and powerful books — new and old.

Consider the life of Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis — otherwise known as Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD). We think of him as one of the great fathers of the early church — and he was, perhaps the most influential theologian in church history outside of the apostles themselves. Augustine’s driving ambition led him to keep climbing the career ladder until he came within earshot of the Roman emperor himself. His spiritual journey took him from philosophy to philosophy, yet nothing satisfied. He had tasted career success and worldly pleasure, yet these things he found to be empty. As he wrestled with his own moral and intellectual problems, his search for truth and meaning came to a pivotal moment.

In his classic, *The Confession*, he tells what happened next. He staggered through a park with a huge emptiness in his spirit. In the garden of a villa in Milan, he heard some child singing, ‘*tolle lege, tolle lege*,’ translated ‘*take up and read, take up and read*.’ He then went to a bench and opened a book that contained the Scriptures. He read the first passage on which his eyes fell. It was the book of Romans. He said, “it was as though the light of faith flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled.”

This was the turning point in his long, life-changing spiritual quest — reading the words of a powerful book.

In this edition of the *CCU Review* we begin with Dr. Jason Ney’s review of *The Complete Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* — a fitting meditation as this is the 160th anniversary of the birth of Holmes’ creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. We end with Dr. David Kotter’s review of John Stott’s magisterial and bestselling classic, *The Cross of Christ* — a book worth delving into as Lent and Holy Week approach.

In between are reviews of Os Guinness’ new book *Last Call for Liberty* by Dr. Tom Copeland; a thoughtful piece by Michael Plato reviewing Jordon Peterson’s *Twelve Rules for Life* and why young men are gravitating to his writings; former CCU faculty member and president of the John Jay Institute, Greg Schaller, treats us with an overview of the foundational and seminal text of the modern conservative movement — Russell Kirk’s *The Conservative Mind*; Dr. Stephen Shumaker reminds us of the abiding relevance of Homer; and Eric Hogue reviews James Emory White’s *Meet Generation Z*, on the new generation entering college this year.

All of this is to whet your appetite and introduce you to some new, important, and perhaps life-changing reads. So, *tolle lege*, my friend.

Yours in His service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Sweeting". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DONALD W. SWEETING, Ph.D.

President

Colorado Christian University

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CCU Review

The CCU Review of Books, Culture, Media, and Life, a values-driven journal of peer-reviewed scholarly and creative work, is published semiannually by the Office of the President and the Communications and Creative Services department. While emphasizing articles of scholarly merit, the CCU Review is a collection of reviews and essays that are informed by and further enhance the values of Colorado Christian University as outlined in our Strategic Priorities and our Statement of Faith. We welcome suggestions on reviews and essays that are centered on ideas of interest that further the mission of CCU as a Christian, liberal arts university.

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The Complete Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

REVIEW BY DR. JASON NEY

Assistant Professor of English

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In 2012, *The Guinness Book of World Records*, having tabulated that Sherlock Holmes had appeared in films and on television 254 times, awarded the character the distinction of “the most portrayed literary character on film and TV.” That number has unsurprisingly grown over the ensuing years. Most recently, the critically excoriated parody *Holmes and Watson* opened in theaters on Christmas Day, but if you find more serious and well-regarded adaptations appealing, you can choose from three current TV options: the BBC’s global hit *Sherlock*; *Elementary* on CBS, which features a female Watson; and HBO’s *Miss Sherlock*, a Japanese interpretation that reimagines both Holmes and Watson as female characters.

What makes Holmes, a fictional creation who first appeared in print in 1887, so durably appealing?

Why are Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s 56 short stories and four novels featuring Holmes and his sidekick and chronicler, Dr. John Watson, still in print, selling healthily, and engaging new generations of fans and scholars around the world?

The answer lies, in part, in what makes the mystery genre itself appealing: the exciting narrative structure that the search for an unanswered question provides. Even though Conan Doyle’s mysteries are well crafted — Zach Dundas, author of *The Great Detective: The Amazing Rise and Immortal Life of Sherlock Holmes*, rightly notes how Conan Doyle’s

short stories “ratchet open and slam shut with Swiss-watch precision” — the Holmes stories remain compelling and inspiring primarily because of their central character.

We live in an era of increasing anti-intellectualism that ranges from the highest levels of power in Washington, D.C., to the shallow thinking and poorly researched (or flatly made-up) claims asserted daily by countless users of Facebook and Twitter, making the old adage about how a lie can travel around the world before the truth can get started more accurate than ever. This problem has led some cultural critics to label our society as post-factual, and even post-truth. Subsequently, Jesus’ commandment to love the Lord with all our minds and Paul’s exhortation in Romans 12 to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” carry a renewed urgency. Holmes, while certainly an imperfect model for this principle (first-time readers might find themselves surprised to discover that Holmes, when not on a case, uses cocaine to keep his mind stimulated), still demonstrates to all who encounter him how a rigorously exercised mind can successfully discover the truth, which both exists and is knowable.

Before the narrative’s central mystery even begins in “A Scandal in Bohemia,” Conan Doyle’s first Sherlock Holmes short story, Holmes says to Watson:

“You have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room.”

“Frequently.”

“How often?”

“Well, some hundreds of times.”

“Then how many are there?”



*Conan Doyle's
Sherlock Holmes
stories also carry an
important message
for our current
cultural climate
... the relationship
between reason
and emotion.*

– Dr. Jason Ney

“How many? I don’t know.”

“Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed.”

This exchange encapsulates why Holmes can frequently deduce truths Watson cannot, such as in “The Speckled Band” when he tells a woman who has arrived to ask him for help, “you had a good drive in a dog-cart, along heavy roads, before you reached the station.” When she “stare[s] in bewilderment” at him, he calmly explains, “The left arm of your jacket is spattered with mud in no less than seven places. The marks are perfectly fresh. There is no vehicle save a dog-cart which throws up mud in that way, and then only when you sit on the left-hand side of the driver.” Conan Doyle’s stories are filled with such feats of Holmes’ logical deduction, and the characters are always amazed at his intellectual prowess — as has been every generation of Conan Doyle’s readership.

This virtually universal admiration for Holmes from the stories’ increasingly diverse audience provides a glimmer of hope in cynical times, showcasing how a renewed mind, over and against the whims of superficial ideological trends, is intrinsically appealing and an accomplishment toward which we should all aspire.

Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories also carry an important message for our current cultural climate, a lesson rooted in a tension authors had been exploring in fiction since the first modern novel, *Don Quixote*, was published in 1605: the relationship between reason and emotion. In the novel *The Sign of the Four*, Holmes makes his position clear when he tells Watson, “love is an emotional thing, and whatever is emotional is opposed to that true cold reason which I place above all things. I should never marry myself, lest I bias my judgment.” For Holmes,

emotions can complicate and hamper his pursuit of the truth. While he could be rightly criticized for veering too far toward reason by denying the valid emotional components of humanity’s identity — which, for the Christian, reflects a part of the image of God in which we are made — his placement of reason above emotion is a welcome reprieve from the “feelings first” approach taken toward all manner of decision making by characters in popular narratives across our current media landscape, an unfortunate reflection of the paramount importance so many of us place on our emotional status.

Conan Doyle argues through Holmes that without emotion taking a back seat to reason, truth cannot be effectively discovered. What Christian could disagree with that? When we allow our faith to be driven primarily by our emotions, our relationship with our Lord becomes nothing but chaos, subject to the whims of the least reliable part of who we are. But if we apply renewed, well-reasoned thought to our faith, we can weather the storms of emotional turmoil by recognizing and embracing the unchanging truths embodied in the Word, Jesus Christ.

Conan Doyle’s stories remain unmatched because of their precision in showcasing how desirable and exciting the pursuit of truth can and should be. If Sherlock Holmes, a secular character, can exhibit a relentless drive to reveal the earth-bound truths at the core of the mysteries he investigates, how much more should we rigorously pursue a deeper understanding of the greatest and most perfect mystery of all — the character and nature of our Lord? ■

REVIEWER BIO



DR. JASON NEY

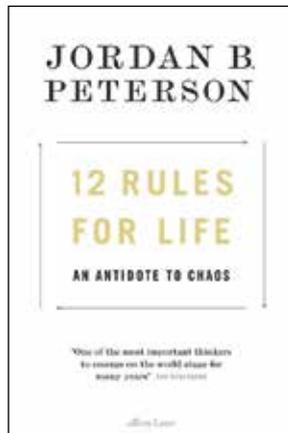
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12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos

by Jordan B. Peterson

REVIEW BY MICHAEL J. PLATO

Assistant Professor of Intellectual History and Christian Thought



Jordan B. Peterson is that rarest of things: He is an academic who has become a rock star in an age when even rock stars are having a tough go of it. Traditionally to be a rock star, you had to write rebellious music which threatened to overturn the establishment,

and of course sell millions of albums. Things are a little different these days. For one thing, the idea of 'record sales' has become something almost quaintly passé, and rebellion has become so cliché and banal that it is now used to sell everything from shoes to phone contracts.

Yet on campuses across the globe, and even at CCU, many students, especially young men, have been whiling the hours away in dorm rooms in front of their computer screens; not playing video games, as one would assume, but watching YouTube videos (the true mark of celebrity in our age) of a Canadian psychology professor. So what is the rebellious, revolutionary message of these ponderous classroom lectures from the north that has become so attractive to our fickle youth? Is it that we're not gonna take it anymore, or that we should fight for our right to paaar-tee? Actually, it is more things like 'sit up straight' and 'clean your room.'

Peterson's rise to celebrity was unexpected, but also somehow inevitable. A professor of psychology and a practicing clinical psychologist

at the University of Toronto, Peterson first gained notoriety in the fall of 2016. The Canadian federal government had just passed Bill C-16, legislation which added "gender identity or expression" to the Canadian Human Rights Act. The purpose of the bill was to prohibit discrimination based on these new categories of identity. Peterson saw it as a first move by the government toward 'compelled speech.' It was a law not merely protecting a minority group, but forcing people in general to use the new and arbitrary pronouns that many in the transgender community were now using to identify. Political correctness had finally gone too far.

Peterson put out a short YouTube video expressing his fears concerning this development, and its threat to free speech. The turmoil and the attention has been growing ever since.

On the one hand, there have been protests and demonstrations against him at his own university and at others he visits, as well as a petition by his colleagues to have him removed from academic tenure. On the other hand, he has a rapidly growing body of admirers and supporters. He has garnered huge audiences from his interviews with Ben Shapiro, Joe Rogan, Bill Maher, Russell Brand, and most notoriously, Cathy Newman of Channel 4 in Britain. Put simply, he is one of the most polarizing figures on the world stage today.

A recent documentary put out by the CBC, Canada's national broadcaster, was titled *Shut Him Down*. His celebrity has been further fueled by his posting of several hundred classroom lectures on YouTube, the starting of his own podcast interview show, and most recently, by his global book tour for *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*.

Like the man, the book has created a divisive reaction. Many conservatives have responded warmly to it, while many liberals despise it, and have condemned him as an ideologue, an anti-progressive bigot, and an unscholarly hack. One wonders if half the left's irritation with Peterson may be his position as an academic and his anti-establishment rhetoric — a combination the left has seen as inherently theirs.

So what really explains Peterson's popularity, and what are we to make of his new book? For one thing, he has moved far beyond the gender pronoun issue which first brought him celebrity. Indeed, *12 Rules* doesn't even mention the topic (at least not directly). The key figure in his thinking is the psychologist (and sometimes mystic) Carl Jung (1875–1961). Like the popular mythologist Joseph Campbell (1904–1987) and the poet and men's movement leader Robert Bly (1926–) before him, Peterson articulates Jung's psychology of archetypes in an engaging way.

Jung claims that what he calls the collective unconscious (the instincts and “memories” of the human race) is the core foundation of all the world's major religions, philosophies, and art, which express in similar ways the same abiding truths about the human condition.

Peterson spends a great deal of time in *12 Rules* explaining the psychological and social insights and wisdom of classic texts of Western literature and spirituality, including the Bible and Christian church history. Put simply, he shows how stories from Scripture, literature, and history can be applied directly to the contemporary problems of his readers.

Another aspect of Peterson which has made him so appealing, especially to young men, is that he is seen as a kind of father figure. This taps into a prevailing issue of our time, namely our culture's low estimation of fathers, and our lack of substantial male role models.



Some have pointed to his paternal advice, which he delivers without talking down to his listeners, as what makes him so attractive.

I think there is something more to it than that. He is simply a different kind of masculine figure from what we have seen for a long time. He is not a steroid-injected, hyper-macho action star that we see in so many of our movies (such as Dwayne Johnson and Vin Diesel). Nor is he the hyper-successful alpha male who never admits defeat (think of Donald Trump, Steve Jobs, and the fictional Tony Stark). He is certainly not the bumbling, if well-meaning, incompetent (from every sitcom) dad.

Peterson is a man who has experienced physical harshness. He grew up in hardscrabble northern Alberta, and he is a man who practices carpentry and likes to work with his hands, yet he is not afraid to show his intelligence as well as his physical competence. He has published over 100 scientific papers and is well versed in science, philosophy, religion, and literature. For Peterson, real men read books.

He also shows us that men can suffer and fail, but that they can learn from these stumbles and grow, even if they are deeply wounded. As a teacher, Peterson guides, rather than asserts, he instills rather than demands, he is firm but he is also compassionate. He takes the problems of the young men of our culture more seriously than just about anyone else, and he gives useful advice, drawing from his understanding of psychology as well as the wisdom of the ages.

One other aspect of Peterson's thinking that I have noticed, but which has seldom been commented on, is his deeply Canadian sensibility. Having gone to the university at which Peterson teaches, when I read him I recognize his connection with thinkers such as Harold Innis (1894–1925), Northrop Frye (1912–1991), Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980), and George Grant (1918–1988). These names may not be very familiar to an American audience, but they make up a distinct intellectual tradition which has developed in the northern part of this continent. These thinkers (sometimes called the Toronto School) were characterized by a deep suspicion of ideology, a strong sense of the impact of media and environment on thinking, and a concern with universal human qualities. All of these traits and concerns are deeply

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— Michael J. Plato

unpopular in much of the academy in America and Europe (as well as much of Canada) at present, and they are all found in Peterson.

All of the above qualities which characterize Peterson are found in his *12 Rules for Life*, which came out earlier this year, and has already sold over 2 million copies.

The structure of the book is quite simple. Between a short introduction and conclusion are 12 chapters, each of which concentrates on one of 12 psychological rules for life. Peterson illustrates each rule with a variety of examples drawn from science, psychology, literature, myth, religion, and personal anecdote.

It has been described as a ‘self-help’ book, but *12 Rules* does not tell you how to make more money, how to attract friends, influence people, or improve your marriage or love life. While there are some practical “tips and tricks,” the real goal of the book is to introduce the reader to the universal and eternal moral framework that forms the basis of our civilization and even our biblical faith. In his opening, he refers to the great Russian and anti-Soviet author, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008), who derided as a “pitiful ideology” that “human beings are created for happiness.” Peterson takes Solzhenitsyn’s cue that “a deeper meaning” is required to make sense of our lives.

Yet deeper meaning is not going to be attained on a whim or in a moment of instantaneous insight. It takes time. But that doesn’t mean we can’t begin with baby steps.

Peterson tells us that telling the truth is not easy, and requires knowledge and skill, but we can all begin on the road to truth by simply not lying. “Start to stop doing what you know to be wrong,” is the moral imperative of the book. “Start stopping today.”

The diversity of what Peterson covers in his search for deeper meaning is so broad that it is impossible to summarize in a review. Some snippets might help paint a picture of what he is getting at.

The rules themselves seem for the most part to be quite commonsensical. “Make friends with people who want the best for you.” “Set your house in perfect order before you criticize the world.” “Tell the truth — or, at least, don’t lie.” Some of them appear a little more offbeat: “Do not bother children when they are skateboarding.” “Pet a cat when you encounter one on the street.”

Yet on closer inspection, we can begin to see how these simple and unconventional rules pertain to deeper realities. Take Chapter 10, “Be precise in your speech.” Here he notes that chaos and destruction typically do not enter our lives all at once, but more often accrue unnoticed bit by bit. Usually this happens when we are careless and let things slide, or we sweep them under the rug and everyone agrees not to discuss them. But this will only lead to dragons, which feed off of these “crumbs,” until they get so big, no heroic knight will be able to fend them off. Yet so much of this potential destructive chaos could have been avoided in the first place by a greater attentiveness to our vocabulary and grammar. As Peterson writes:

If you identify things, with careful attention and language, you bring them forward as viable, obedient objects, detaching them from their underlying near-universal interconnectedness. You simplify them. You make them specific and useful, and reduce their complexity. You make it possible to live with them and use them without dying from that complexity, with its attendant uncertainty and anxiety. If you leave things vague, then you’ll never know what is one thing and what is another. Everything will bleed into everything else. This makes the world too complex to be managed (p. 281–282).

This is the kind of rule English teachers have been trying to drill into essay-writing students for eons, but Peterson gives it weight by grounding it in cosmic and personal significance. *12 Rules* is filled with many other modest ‘tips’ which carry great consequence.

Peterson's book is not without its problems, however. From a philosophical point of view, he is sometimes wonky. His use of the concept "Being," for example, which he claims he derives from the philosopher Martin Heidegger, is problematic. He does not properly define the term (which he uses throughout the book) and he seems to use it in a variety of ways which Heidegger wouldn't have. Also, in the chapters when Peterson is critiquing postmodernism, he often confuses Marxist thinkers and postmodernists. Peterson assumes too broadly that the latter is the result of the former, when in fact Marxists and postmodernists were quite distinct and often at each other's throats.

From the Christian perspective, Peterson is also difficult to reconcile with orthodoxy. His interpretive approach to the Bible tends toward the gnostic.

Influenced by people such as Jung, as has been mentioned, Peterson sees Scripture in purely philosophical and psychological terms. Not that this is entirely a wrong thing to do, but he does not see it as at all historical. For him, the Bible is a collection of useful and meaningful "tales," like tales from other religions, not a record and document of God's saving plan and actions in real space and time.

An aspect of Peterson's work that is troubling is his heavy reliance on evolutionary psychology. Often he will start with some laboratory observation of some "lower animal" and draw conclusions about human behaviors. Again, while there may certainly be many helpful comparisons to be drawn between humans and animals, sometimes it can go a little too far. The problems of humans are not just the problems of lobsters writ large.

To be fair to Peterson, he is not some Darwinian determinist, like atheist commentators Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett. Quite often he subordinates science to the greater truths of art, philosophy, and religion. Peterson is not afraid to talk about the human soul and spiritual values. He also maintains a strong moral sensibility which

he grounds in an understanding of a transcendent reality, rather than a socially constructed one.

Yet any orthodox Christian reading his books or listening to his lectures should use discernment. David French, in his review of *12 Rules*, astutely notes that while the book may not be aimed at Bible-believing Christians, it is helpfully directed "at people who've been wrongly taught to scorn Christianity."

It is difficult to say whether Peterson's influence will be enduring or only short-lived. He could very well disappear as quickly as he emerged. Yet while he is here, he represents a combination of traits which is unique amongst media 'personalities.' As a figure of controversy, he is exposing the hypocrisy and tyranny which has been making the academy an increasingly unsettling place to be. As a teacher he points us to the wisdom of the past, even as he uses modern science and trendy social media to do it. As a persona, he is directing many young men to a healthy (if unfashionable) understanding of manhood. As a prophet, he speaks against the madness of our age, and as a spiritual pilgrim he is a friend of Christianity, if not of Christ Himself. But then who knows what is in store in the future? There is a lot that has proven to be unexpected about Jordan Peterson. ■

REVIEWER BIO



MICHAEL J. PLATO

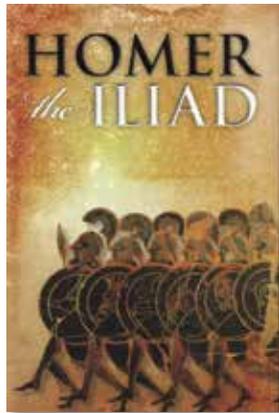
Michael Plato (Ph.D. candidate, VU University Amsterdam) is an assistant professor of Intellectual History and Christian Thought at CCU. His research interests are often cross-disciplinary and include the history of Christian philosophy, contemporary Continental philosophy, the philosophy of media and popular culture, and the future of humanity.

The Iliad: Of Humanity, Justice, and Civilization

by Homer

REVIEW BY DR. STEPHEN A. SHUMAKER

Professor of Politics



Nothing seems more heretical in these times than asserting that the West has proved the most interesting and resourceful civilization in the history of mankind. At the fountainhead of that civilization stand two great epics of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and the Bible. Books that birth a civilization are rare. Reading them should be, *prima facie*, worth a lifetime of effort and reflection. End of argument.

That said, among the endless reasons for reading the *Iliad*, let me suggest that it sheds significant light on three current cultural concerns: the intellectual fad of transhumanism, the ‘social justice warrior’ movement, and the critique of Western civilization as an irredeemably oppressive ‘patriarchy.’

To be educated by the *Iliad* is to recognize that there is nothing new or advanced — or even particularly insightful — about today’s “cutting edge” cultural agendas. The West began by reflecting on these very issues and then transcending current conclusions.

So foreign to our contemporary culture is the warrior world of Achilles, Agamemnon, Hector, and the Olympian gods. The central figure, Achilles, is a demigod warrior who — unjustly dishonored by his ally, Agamemnon — turns on his friends, and watches in cold, calculating hatred as the enemy nearly decimates his former allies.

At the last second Achilles allows his childhood comrade, Patroclus, to grab his armor and fight to save the day. Patroclus does so but at the cost of his life, leading Achilles to blame himself and go berserk on the battlefield in his attempt to satisfy his bloodlust, bitterness, and grief. As Achilles shines in heroic prowess — “as something more than a man” — he slays Hector, his friend’s killer.

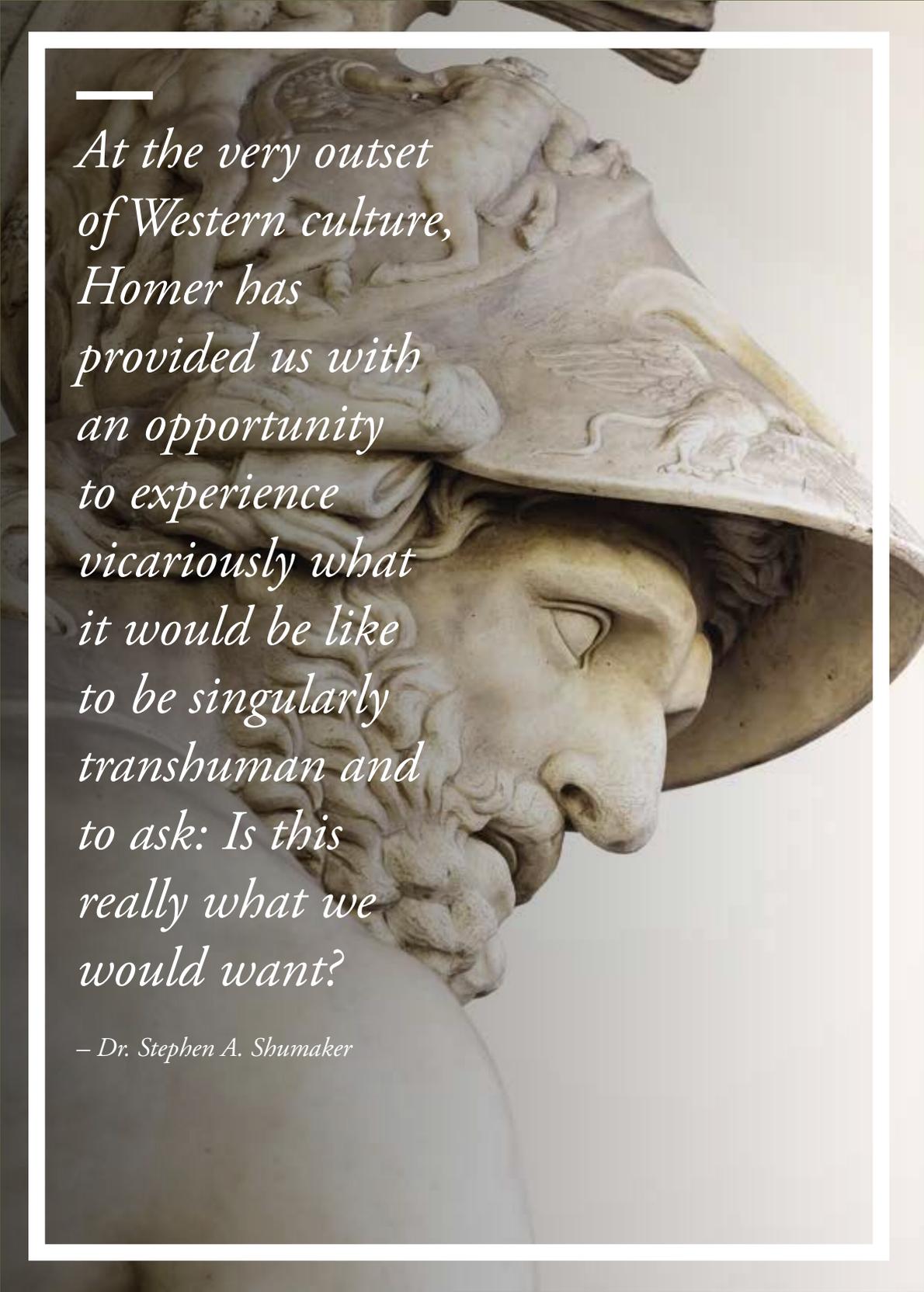
The poem ends with Achilles’ reconciliation with his mortality and former allies, but only after he spends days dragging around the corpse of Hector (in futility) and facing Hector’s father, Priam, in the silence of the night. There Homer has Achilles play the role of a god, but only that of Hades who presides over the dead.

Achilles finally obeys Zeus in returning Hector’s body for burial after Achilles recognizes the suffering and strength of Priam in suing for his son’s body from the very man who has killed 50 of his sons in all. Upon Achilles’ reconciliation, he presides over the funeral pyre of Patroclus and the funeral games held in Patroclus’ honor.

TRANSHUMANISM

Achilles, the son of Peleus and the goddess, Thetis, has inherited a transhuman condition so longed for by trendy thinkers and popular movie culture today. He is no mere mortal, but a hero in the precise, technical sense: He’s a demigod with singular warrior prowess as a result. He’s a transhuman.

At the very outset of Western culture, Homer has provided us with an opportunity to experience vicariously what it would be like to be singularly transhuman and to ask: Is this really what we would want?



—
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— Dr. Stephen A. Shumaker

Zeus' overarching plan is to honor Achilles as such, and Achilles learns the hard way that attempting to transcend his humanity, though tempting, is ultimately tragic.

To be fully transhuman one would have to exist like an Olympian Zeus — immortal but solitary, powerful but friendless, no one his genuine equal.

By contrast, to be merely human means mortality and guaranteed suffering, but as Achilles learns, such suffering provides a common bond among mortals. It forms the basis for friendship and community, and affords an opportunity to admire and be admired for a new kind of heroism: the deliberate, noble acceptance of one's mortal suffering.

Such nobility is distinctly human, something no Olympian can experience, and therefore rare and precious. Not without its own pathos, Homer depicts Zeus alone on Mount Ida contemplating the warring armies of humans below. Human existence, though tragic, is a worthy object for divine contemplation. Achilles learns that being human is enough.

SOCIAL JUSTICE WARRIOR MOVEMENT

Achilles' education and transformation in the *Iliad* has further relevance for our times as he appears quite literally as the first 'social justice warrior' in the West. It is Achilles with uncompromising moral indignation who punishes Agamemnon's 'patriarchy' (for the injustice perpetrated against him.)

Arguably, this is the center of the *Iliad*: how it is that an extraordinary, godlike hero can psychologically turn on his friends and community, and coldly calculate their demise without remorse. The poet's insight is that the natural human concern for justice can transform into a monstrous, all-consuming obsession with injustice and with punishing others out of wounded pride.

Blinded by such pride, social justice warriors, like Achilles, effortlessly justify the destruction of thousands as part of their moral crusade: *Fiat justitia ruat caelum!* As the 20th century has proven, social justice warriors, when sufficiently empowered, end like Achilles and Hades in presiding godlike over their numberless dead.

WESTERN CIVILIZATION AS 'OPPRESSIVE PATRIARCHY'

Much of the current secular university is obsessed with Western culture as irredeemably oppressive, because it's hierarchical. It's a 'patriarchy' of white, heterosexual, Christian males reigning solely through abusive power.

Interestingly enough, Agamemnon's rule in the *Iliad* reflects the heart of such a patriarchy, as his rule is based explicitly on his military supremacy which allows him to oppress Achilles unjustly despite his incompetence. The *Iliad* analyzes and rejects such rule while offering an alternative vision of politics both on the shield of Achilles' new armor and in the manner in which Achilles presides over the funeral games.

We see neither a politics obsessed with punishing unjust abuse of power nor with an unjust reliance on mere power, but rather a legitimate hierarchical society suffused with multiple hierarchies based upon competence in various human skills and activities: society as an orchestrated contest for excellence. Homer offers this alternative vision as genuine civilization at its finest.

The *Iliad* is endlessly rich and fascinating, and if nothing else, a timeless resource for reflecting on our "advanced" times. Perhaps it is even an ancient voice from our origins that hints in profound ways at the biblical meaning of humanness, of our longing for justice, and of the potential heights of human civilization itself. ■

REVIEWER BIO



DR. STEPHEN A. SHUMAKER

Stephen A. Shumaker (Ph.D., University of Dallas-Irving) serves as professor of Politics in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. He has worked extensively with Great Books education at the undergraduate and graduate levels and is currently the coordinator of CCU's new Augustine Great Books Honors Liberal Arts program. Much of his work centers on the comparison and contrast between various worldviews as articulated in the Bible and various Great Books of the Western world.

The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Elliot

By Russell Kirk

REVIEW BY GREG SCHALLER

President of the John Jay Institute

Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Elliot* is an essential part of modern conservative political thought. Completed 65 years ago, Kirk's book is devoted to recognizing the common thread that unites conservative thought. His survey begins with Edmund Burke and continues to mid-20th century thinkers.

What is conservatism and what are those who claim the label of conservative actually seeking to conserve?

These questions are as important today as they were nearly seven decades ago, when Kirk began an exploration into the concerns which culminated in his dissertation and ultimately his important work: *The Conservative Mind*.



Russell Kirk

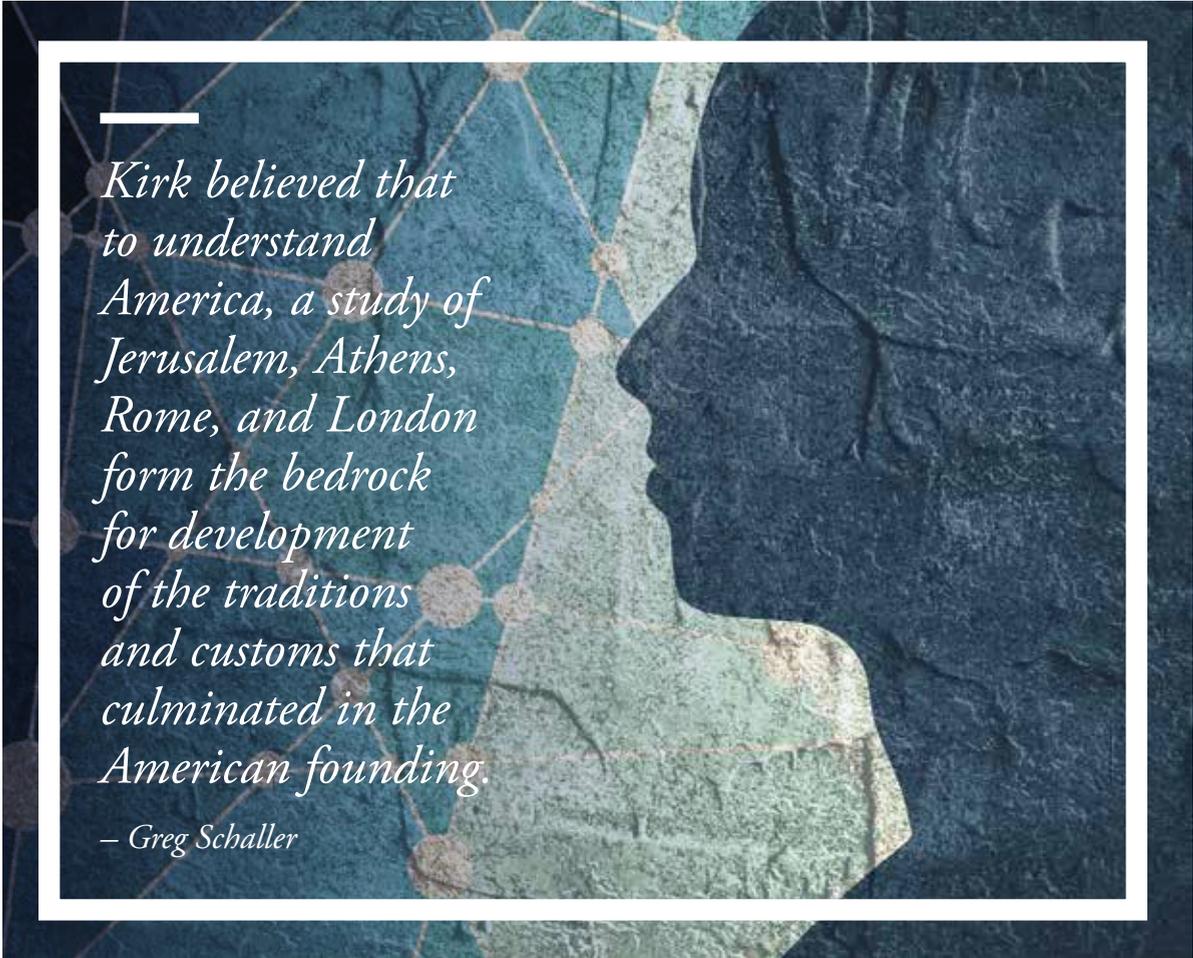
Today, much like in the 1950s, many argue there is little, if any, consistent thread that binds the various strands of 'conservatism' together.

Modern conservatism can be broken down into several predominant ideologies: traditional conservatism, libertarianism, religious conservatism, neoconservatism, and a hybrid American conservatism. Those attuned to the modern debate amongst these groups can rightly ask whether or not there is a tie that binds them together.

For Kirk, developing a cogent theory of conservatism was important in the wake of the rising influence of modern liberal political theory, which had transformed political thought from the time of the Enlightenment. In his mind, modern political theorists had made a radical, and incorrect, departure from traditional philosophy in four key ways:

- Meliorism: a belief in human progress and ultimately the perfectibility of man
- Contempt for tradition and formal religion, both being hindrances to progress
- Political levelling: order and privilege are condemned in favor of total democracy
- Economic levelling: a push for radical redistribution of property and wealth.

In order to confront this pivot, Kirk thought it essential to answer the questions about what conservatism actually is. First, if we seek a return to a conservative order, we ought to "know the tradition which is attached to it." Second, even if a conservative order cannot be restored, we should be familiar with conservative ideas "so that we may rake from the ashes what scorched fragments of civilization escape the conflagration of unchecked will and appetite."



Kirk believed that to understand America, a study of Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, and London form the bedrock for development of the traditions and customs that culminated in the American founding.

– Greg Schaller

Kirk was greatly influenced by the 18th century Catholic political writer Orestes Brownson, whose influential book *The American Republic* (1866) developed a theory about societies holding two constitutions, one written and one unwritten.

The written constitution is the law ordained by the nation or people instituting and organizing the government; the unwritten constitution is the real or actual constitution of the people consisting of the long-standing traditions, mores, and customs.

Kirk draws extensively from Brownson by arguing that constitutions rely heavily on historical experience and are the product of gradual development. To understand America properly, this contextual development is essential.

Indeed, Kirk was so convinced of the superiority of this unwritten constitution over the written that he wrote that “no matter how admirable a constitution may look upon paper, it will be ineffectual unless

the unwritten constitution, the web of custom and convention, affirms an enduring moral order of obligation and personal responsibility.”

Kirk believed that to understand America, a study of Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, and London form the bedrock for development of the traditions and customs that culminated in the American founding. It was these traditions that were under attack and in need of restoration and protection.

For Kirk, the culmination of these cultural and political traditions are the essence of conservatism. He narrows down the key components into six essential ‘canons.’ These are:

- A belief that a divine intent rules society as well as individual conscience, “forging an eternal chain of right and duty.” Within this framework, political problems are, at their root, religious and moral.

- An affection for traditional life, as distinguished from the narrowing uniformity, egalitarianism, and utilitarian aims of most modern theorists.
- The belief that civilized society requires orders and hierarchy. The only true equality is moral equality; all other attempts at leveling lead to misery and state-sanctioned tyranny.
- The understanding that property and freedom are inseparably connected. Modern attempts at economic leveling are not economic progress. When we separate property from private possession, liberty is lost.
- Man must put a control upon his will and his appetite. Man is too often governed by emotion more than by reason. Because of this, adherence to tradition provides a sound check upon man's impulses.
- Societies will inevitably alter, but Providence is the proper instrument for change.

When Kirk began his exploration of the nature of conservatism in the 1950s, most academics concluded that there was little tying these groups together, instead believing that they were mostly disparate thinkers, largely writing in isolation from one another.

Up to that point, scholarship largely concluded that writers and thinkers like Burke, John Adams, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Alexis de Tocqueville, Brownson, and T. S. Eliot were operating in isolation from each other. However, Kirk believed that they were, in fact, joined in their inclination “for the old and tried against the new and untried.”

It took Kirk four years of research and writing to connect the dots of the seemingly disparate thinkers and writers, concluding that the consistency in their thought rested in their agreement on the importance of these six canons. *The Conservative Mind* demonstrates convincingly that there had been

a significant conservative tradition in America since the founding of the republic.

A frequent theme throughout much of Kirk's writing is an emphasis on the “permanent things.” For Kirk, these are the enduring truths of human existence, which directs both the order of the soul and the order of the people. There are, he wrote, “certain permanent things in society: the health of the family, inherited political institutions that ensure a measure of order and justice and freedom, a life of diversity and independence, a life marked by widespread possession of private property. These permanent things guarantee against arbitrary interference by the state.” Absent the maintenance of the permanent things, Kirk feared that we were nothing more than “the beasts that perish.”

Kirk did not despair of our current political and cultural climate. In fact, he possessed a degree of restrained optimism for America. He believed that the United States possessed the fundamentals that might make possible a restoration of the “permanent things.” America has “the best written constitution in the world, the safest division of powers, the widest diffusion of property, the strongest sense of common interest, the most prosperous economy, an elevated intellectual and moral tradition, and a spirit of self-reliance unequalled in modern times.” ■

REVIEWER BIO



GREG SCHALLER

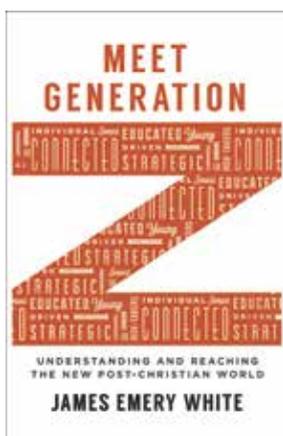
Greg Schaller is the president of the John Jay Institute, a post-baccalaureate fellowship program based in the suburbs of Philadelphia, devoted to the cultivation of principled Christian leaders. Prior to joining the John Jay Institute, Schaller taught Politics at Colorado Christian University.

Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World

by James Emery White

REVIEW BY ERIC HOGUE

Vice President of University Advancement



What many believe to be the latest definable generation has arrived on the population scene. Seventy million youth born between 1999 and 2015 make up what is referred to as Generation Z (Gen Z). Due to the frenetic pace of today's culture, what

used to take decades — deliver impact, redirect society, and reprogram population's lifestyle ideologies — can now take just days. This cultural reality, in combination with Gen Z's shocking moral and social characteristics, becomes the template for Dr. James Emery White's work entitled *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*.

White delivers a thoroughly researched and well-studied narrative detailing the most significant cultural challenges ever to arrive on the doorstep of the Western church and its extended Christian community.

As history portends, the men of Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32) understood the times and what Israel ought to do. These 200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command, joined David for battle at Hebron to return Israel to godly leadership and influence. In the same vein, White's work is determinatively focused on deciphering a generation that is constantly connected to a digital screen — their morals, radically individualistic personality, agnostic religion and politics, and goals.

White's work is both revelation and recipe for the reader. The early chapters give themselves to interpreting the most recent Gen Z discoveries while supporting and highlighting the author's previous work in his book entitled *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated*. Each chapter focuses on numerous Gen Z characteristics — many revealing stark atheistic realities wrapped with heart-wrenching comprehensions.

White compels readers to grapple for sound remedies, solutions, and biblical apologetics to address each cultural category in what he calls "the second fall of the majority rule of the nones."

In referencing political strategist Doug Sosnik, the author expounds upon the reality of the United States going through the most significant moment of change since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. He agrees with Sosnik: "We are going to look back at this period of time and see it as a 'hinge' moment — a connection point that ties two historical periods in time, one before and one afterwards."

Performing as both pastor and counselor, White succinctly describes each Gen Z characteristic in the early pages. He then turns coach in the later chapters, as he instructs the reader to welcome this sovereign opportunity to comprehend the arriving Gen Z realities with an ‘Issacharian’ wisdom and Christ-like attitude. He cajoles the reader to be intentional in knowing how to live during these times, knowing what and how to think, how to act or not act, and the manner in which to live. White then compels the reader to embrace this appointed era with a situational responsibility to be educated, straightforward, and winsomely engaged.

For the church and Christian education, the celebratory arrival of Gen Z’s populous thinking to university campuses and its cultural and political acceptance deliver a direct threat to the doctrine of humanity and religious liberty. Gen Z’s challenge goes beyond ideologies, cultural morals, and generational trends — this last generation embodies a bold Garden of Eden narrative with a direct, unapologetic, and intentional attack upon what it means to be a human being. White explains his concern: “I have long told my graduate theology students that the doctrine of

humanity is, by far, the most pressing doctrine of our day in regard to culture. It is the one area of Christian thought that is most challenged by the world in which we live.”

White highlights that Christology’s history is full of doctrinal and theological councils and synods for the present-era church to reference and draw upon for clear biblical apologetics in the midst of changing world cultures. However, there is little historical reference when searching for creedal positions on the doctrine of humanity and a consensus apologetic that addresses created sexual origins and their continuance, stem cell research, human cloning, and gender identity.

The church, and its by-product of Christian higher education, is being forced to run into, or run from, these cultural discussions and debates.



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— Eric Hogue

Like Origen, Athanasius, Luther, Barth, and Brunner of generations past, Gen Z is mandating today's church leaders, denominations, evangelicals, and Christ-centered higher education institutions like Colorado Christian University to, as White states, "examine and elucidate the doctrine of humanity in ways that confront both changing morals and new technological frontiers."

If you desire to be more than a cultural bystander or nominal Christian, then this book is a must-read. White has delivered an engaging, compassionate, grace-laced and data-filled page-turner, one that describes a generation that doesn't feel the need to reject God — rather it simply ignores Him altogether! To note: Dr. White includes three talks (appendices) taken from his time as a senior pastor at Mecklenburg Community Church in North Carolina. The first appendix addresses gay marriage. If the church's heart and gospel-soaked passion is to intentionally and lovingly relate, connect, and evangelize a generation dealing with sexual dysfunction, dysphoria, and open sexual rebellion, then Appendix A is reason enough to buy *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*. I believe the men of Issachar would have done so as well. ■

REVIEWER BIO



ERIC HOGUE

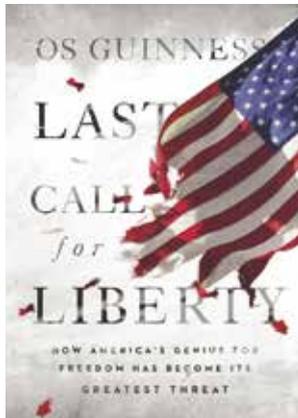
Eric Hogue (M.A., Liberty University and Seminary) serves as the vice president of University Advancement. He oversees all university fundraising efforts including campaigns for annual, capital, endowment, planned gifts, alumni, parents, and athletics. He is known for his roles as a former political candidate, practicing theologian and pastor, and long-tenured radio, television, and media professional. Prior to joining CCU, he served as the chief development officer of William Jessup University in Rocklin, California.

Last Call for Liberty

by Os Guinness

REVIEW BY DR. TOM COPELAND

Professor of Politics



Alexis de Tocqueville visited America in 1831 and published the two volumes of his *Democracy in America* in 1835 and 1840. In the now-famous book he offered astute observations and keen insights into what made democracy and freedom work so well

in America in its early days.

Although British author Os Guinness has resided in America far longer than de Tocqueville ever did, he is cut from the same cloth. Guinness has offered trenchant critiques of American politics and culture in a series of books, the latest of which is *Last Call for Liberty*. It is perhaps his loudest clarion call yet for protecting, preserving, and educating for freedom.

Guinness warns that “America’s genius for freedom has become its Achilles’ heel” (p. 8). That is, the freedom of the spirit of 1776 has allowed a different concept of freedom, founded on the French Revolution of 1789, to take root in America. The consequences are potentially dire, and Guinness calls us to face the crisis, concentrate our minds, and “reexamine the character and condition of freedom.” For those who love liberty, this is an important book.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

In the course of 286 pages, Guinness challenges Americans to answer 10 fundamental questions about freedom, captured in the chapter titles. The first few are philosophical: “Do You Know Where

Your Freedom Came From?” “What Do You Mean by Freedom?” “Have You Faced Up to the Central Paradox of Freedom?”

In these chapters, Guinness raises important points about the Hebrew Exodus as the template of freedom, society, personhood, and justice, and about biblical covenants as the model of the best governments.

He then turns to what one might call freedom apologetics: “How Will You Make the World Safe for Diversity?” “How Do You Justify Your Vision of a Free and Open Society?” “Where Do You Ground Your Faith in Human Freedom?” In Chapter 6 (on diversity) Guinness provides an excellent overview of how Americans have come to a “sea change” in how we view religious freedom, pointing to efforts to reduce, remove, rebrand, or reimagine it. This is a timely and local issue for Colorado Christian University, as we are located just minutes down the road from the Masterpiece Cakeshop, whose owner, Jack Phillips, recently won a United States Supreme Court case on religious freedom, but who still faces persecution.

Guinness also turns to the praxis of liberty: “How Do You Plan to Sustain Freedom?” “Are You Vigilant About the Institutions [and Ideas] Crucial to Freedom?” These chapters highlight the needed support of our most vital institutions — the Constitution, separation of powers, and limited government — and responses to challenging modern ideas — identity politics, tribalism, political correctness, and social constructionism.

1776 VS. 1789: DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF FREEDOM

The key to understanding the book's subtitle ("How America's genius for freedom has become its greatest threat") is the author's distinction between two concepts of freedom: 1776 and 1789. Our cultural and political battles are not really left vs. right or Democrat vs. Republican, Guinness insists. The battle is over the consequences of implementing these different concepts of freedom.

He suggests that the freedom of 1776 is "freedom for" (what he calls "positive" freedom). What he is referring to is usually called "freedom for excellence" — the freedom to make choices in line with God's commands — a definition emerging from the work of Thomas Aquinas. The more we choose to be like God, the more free we are. Guinness agrees that this is true freedom, because we are not actually free when addicted, in debt, and in bondage to rudeness, rage, and resentment. That certainly is true of 1776, as John Adams, among others, made it clear that the Constitution would require a moral and religious people.

Guinness says that the proponents of 1789 favor "freedom from" (or "negative" liberty), and that indeed is a central tenet of classical liberalism. But I would argue that the more important side of the 1789 view is positive freedom, or "freedom to," though not as Guinness explains it. The freedom "to be all that you can be" encourages — no, it requires — the right to choose an abortion over life, to choose your marriage definition, to choose your gender. If there are obstacles to those choices, then government must step in to set you free. Indeed, government may claim that it knows better than you do what you need or want to be, and it may coerce your behavior as a consequence.

Guinness says that the spirit of 1789 sees freedom as a progressive force exercised through government control, a utopian vision of perfectibility, carried out by elites (p. 90). Elsewhere in the book he highlights the danger of Friedrich Nietzsche's and Saul Alinsky's view that freedom equals power. This was the danger of totalitarianism in the 20th century, and it is the danger of progressivist totalitarianism today. It is the voice of the cosmopolitan elite, the bans on supersized drinks and plastic straws, the government bureaucrat saying, "I'm from Washington and I'm here to help."

The spirit of 1789 only favors individual freedom as determined by the elite.

Although I disagree with his particular characterizations of these competing definitions of freedom, fundamentally Guinness is correct that the spirit of 1776 is one of individual freedom lived in light of communal responsibilities and in pursuit of the common good, while the spirit of 1789 is one of radical individualism and sovereignty in contravention of real accountability. The Founders' idea of freedom has been abused, twisted, and transmuted to such an extent that true freedom is in real and critical danger. The spirit of 1789 is dangerously close to replacing the spirit of 1776.

BACK TO THE GARDEN

So what should our response be? Guinness concludes with a call to explore again "the Hebrew notions of creation and covenant that lie behind both American freedom and the U.S. Constitution." He sternly warns that failing to do so will cause "all the flowers that grew directly from those roots ... human dignity, freedom, justice, equality, Constitution, the separation of powers, and forgiveness ..." to die (p. 270-1).

Guinness notes that freedom as power becomes freedom without principle, freedom without responsibility, and freedom without boundaries. And so, Americans return to the Garden of Eden, the serpent still tempting us with the idea of total freedom. "Did God really say ...?" ■

REVIEWER BIO



DR. TOM COPELAND

Tom Copeland (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh) serves as professor of Politics in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. His academic interests include world politics, free markets, student travel courses, and art history. He teaches a wide range of courses in international relations and American government and serves on the faculty advisory board of the American Enterprise Institute's Values & Capitalism project.

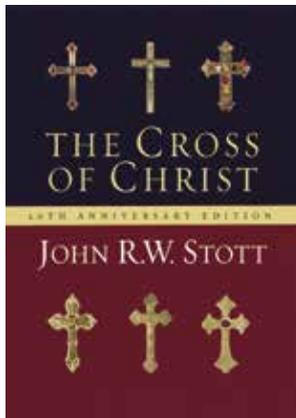
The Cross of Christ

by John Stott

REVIEW BY DR. DAVID KOTTER

Dean of the School of Theology

Professor of New Testament Studies



“Depend on it, Sir,” wrote British writer Samuel Johnson in 1777 in reference to the impending execution of a friend, “when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.” This gallows humor came to mind as I was reading

John Stott’s *The Cross of Christ*, not with respect to Jesus, but in light of my own coming death. When I was younger (less aware of my own mortality) I enjoyed scuba diving and skydiving. These pastimes produced in me a great fascination for the mechanics of parachutes and air tank regulators. In the same way, Stott focuses on the most important aspect of the Christian life: the cross of Jesus Christ. With precision Stott answers questions about why Jesus died, how the atonement took place, and what difference the cross makes (or should make) for the life and death of every believer.

The book is divided into four sections: “Approaching the Cross” addresses the centrality of

the cross in the Bible; “The Heart of the Cross” shows the problem of forgiveness posed by the infinite holiness and mercy of God; “The Achievement of the Cross” describes not only the salvation of sinners, but also the conquest of evil and a revelation of the true character of God; and finally, “Living under the Cross” applies the cross to all areas of life.

Stott begins with the casual observation of the odd reality that Christians tend to put crosses on necklaces, lapel pins, tombstones, and church steeples for all to see. One might wonder why Christians would not instead choose the manger that held the incarnation, or a boat from which Jesus taught crowds in Galilee, or even the moved stone that proved the resurrection. Nevertheless, he demonstrates that from the second century Christians favored the sign of the cross even in the face of severe opposition. With a careful study of the New Testament and Isaiah 53, Stott shows this reflects the emphasis of the apostles and builds a foundation for the careful study of the cross in the rest of the book.

The single chapter, “Why Did Christ Die?” is worth the price of the entire book. Stott begins with the proximate cause of the Roman soldiers who literally nailed Jesus to the cross. Then Stott steps back to examine Pilate, who protected himself by delivering an innocent man to death. Behind Pilate

With precision Stott answers questions about why Jesus died, how the atonement took place, and what difference the cross makes (or should make) for the life and death of every believer.

The cross also helps us understand ourselves by keeping us from a low self-image (in light of the great sacrifice Jesus willingly made) as well as pride (because we caused the death of Christ).

– Dr. David Kotter



were the Jewish priests full of envy and anger. But even their participation depended on the greed of Judas Iscariot. Yet, we must see ourselves and our envy, pride, greed, and other sins as the fundamental cause of the cross. The author reveals that the ultimate cause was God: The Father gave Jesus up and Jesus gave Himself up to die for us. Stott declares, “As we face the Cross, then, we can say to ourselves both ‘I did it, my sin sent him there’ and ‘he did it, his love took him there’” (p. 61). At this point even the most casual reader should recognize that this book is more than a theologian playing with words, but rather a pastor unmasking our role in the most important event in history. Precision in theology leads to humility and heartfelt worship.

Many Christians may not recognize the problem of forgiveness and ask, “If I am required to forgive others, then why is God not required to forgive me?” Stott contends this reveals ignorance of the seriousness of sin and the majesty of God.

In another humbling chapter, Stott biblically unfolds the gravity of human responsibility and the infinite reality of God’s holiness and wrath. When both are understood simultaneously, “The Cross appears so obvious that we are astonished we never saw before” (p. 110). He closes this section with an intricate, but important defense of how penal substitutionary atonement resolves the problem of forgiveness.

After a joyful chapter examining how the cross achieved salvation for sinners, Stott concludes with a sobering admonition, “Yet the responsibility of Christian teachers, preachers and other witnesses is to seek grace to expound it [the cross] with clarity and conviction” (p. 203). Later in the section Stott addresses the conquest of evil and how the humble Christ of the first century rightly reigns as the victorious conqueror over all enemies. In the same way, Christians are called to overcome Satan by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony (Rev. 7:11, p. 251).

Beyond this glorious perspective of the nature of God in Christ and of ourselves as redeemed sinners, the final practical section of the book shows how churches understanding the cross become communities of celebration. The cross also helps us understand ourselves by keeping us from

a low self-image (in light of the great sacrifice Jesus willingly made) as well as pride (because we caused the death of Christ). This right understanding allows us to be both self-affirming and self-denying in due proportion. Loving our enemies and suffering patiently become much more than moral commands with a clearer understanding of the cross.

Stott concludes with a chapter on the pervasive influence of the cross, and any believer who has made it through the book likely will be unable to ‘unsee’ the unescapable effects of the cross throughout all of life.

A key strength of this book is the amazing clarity of the writing of Stott and the clear objectives of every chapter. Not only is the central topic riveting, but the unfolding of the argument can be easily followed. Lay Christian readers should focus on the central ideas, and not be daunted by Stott’s refutation of errors along the way.

This is a book not only to read, but to reread. Every Christian would benefit from reading this book with friends. Then reread the book alone for the sake of personal worship and humility. For the love of God, do not wait until the last fortnight of your life to gain a greater understanding of the cross of Christ. ■

REVIEWER BIO



DR. DAVID KOTTER

David Kotter (Ph.D., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) serves as professor of New Testament Studies and the dean of the School of Theology. His primary research is focused on the areas of intersection between theology and economics.

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transforming students to impact
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Our Strategic Priorities were adopted by the CCU Board of Trustees to serve as a guiding compass for the University. They direct the implementation of CCU's Mission and provide context for our first priority — an enduring commitment to Jesus Christ and His kingdom. The Strategic Priorities provide a point of convergence for every member of the CCU community and for every aspect of life at CCU, from how we teach and learn in the classroom to how we live with and serve others.

- Honor Christ and share the love of Christ on campus and around the world
- Teach students to trust the Bible, live holy lives, and be evangelists
- Be a magnet for outstanding students and prepare them for positions of significant leadership in the church, business, government, and professions by offering an excellent education in strategic disciplines
- Teach students how to learn
- Teach students how to think for themselves
- Teach students how to speak and write clearly and effectively
- Give students significant opportunities to serve our Lord while they are at CCU and to help them develop a lifetime habit of such service
- Impact our culture in support of traditional family values, sanctity of life, compassion for the poor, Biblical view of human nature, limited government, personal freedom, free markets, natural law, original intent of the Constitution, and Western civilization
- Be seekers of truth
- Debunk “spent ideas” and those who traffic in them
- Ask God to multiply our time and ability to the glory of His great name
- Be a servant of the Church
- Become a great university

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