



The Mustard Seed



Rehoboth Baptist Church Newsletter ~ June 2016

Are you ready to Dare to be a Daniel?



**RBC Annual Family Fun Fair
August 13th – 11am to 3pm**

DARE TO BE DIFFERENT!

Those who dare to be different for God are destined to make a difference in the world.

DARE TO BE DISCIPLINED!

The better you know Jesus, the better you can help others get to know Him too.

DARE TO BE DISCERNING!

The ability to endure tough challenges and influence others for Christ hinges on commitment, character, companionships, and choices.

DARE TO BE HIS DISCIPLE!

We can point others to Christ by following His example of self-sacrifice and humble service.

DARE TO BE A WITNESS!

A clear presentation of the message of Jesus is essential for people to receive the forgiveness and new life He offers. This is Good News that people need to hear and we must be prepared to tell.

Think about how God can use you to reach others in your life, your family, your neighborhood, your school – if you follow Him like Daniel did.

Go ahead, we dare you!

- from Billy Graham D2BD Lesson one

EVERYONE should be involved somehow, someway.

1. **Pray** for all the workers, good weather, safety, interactions with children and families, and that the Gospel message will be clearly presented. Pray for the preparations, for the day and for a lasting impact.

2. **Invite** your family, friends and neighbors. Put posters in places where children are for example: playgrounds, libraries, schools, the donut shops, etc. Put a sign in your yard; Pass out flyers; Come to Neighborhood Visitation on 6/11 & 7/9 to tell our church neighbors.

3. **Come** to the planning meetings - June 12th and July 24th, following the morning service. Share your preparations, find out who needs help and volunteer.

4. **Sign up** for one of these jobs on the day of the fair:
Trash & Water Watcher, Snow Cone Operator
Watermelon Cutter, Face Painter (2)

5. BE THERE!!!

Everyone needed for set-up and take-down, mingling with the folks and sharing Jesus' love.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.
Daniel 6:10 (nkjv)

Pastor Search Status Update

- * The Search is over!
- * By unanimous vote & joyfull acceptance, We have a new Pastor: **Pastor Stephen Kitchen**
- * Official start date: August 1st
- * Official preaching start date: September 11th
- * Please pray for:
 - Housing
 - Health Insurance
 - Cindy(wife), Rebekah, Hannah, Caleb, Benjamin, Sarah, and Emma Grace
 - The equipping of the saints in our church
 - The outreach/evangelism to help us grow
 - And that we all grow in faith and love

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MISSION NEWS

In June we will be praying for Diana Muenzenberger, a missionary with World Venture. Diana teaches missionary children in grades 6-8 at Faith Academy in Makati City, Philippines.

About Diana-

Diana grew up going to church with her Mom, and accepted Jesus as her Savior at age 6. She was baptized at age 10, but it wasn't until her freshman year in high school that she really started to grow spiritually.

After graduating from high school, Diana struggled to find a major of study. In 1991, she entered Philadelphia Biblical University. It was there that God increased her love for teaching and missions, and she sensed God moving her toward education. Diana said, "Each year spring semester at our school had a missions conference, and each year God molded and moved my heart closer to missions."

Diana graduated in 1995, and that summer went on what was supposed to be a 3 week missions trip to Faith Academy in the Philippines. She ended up being there for 9 weeks. God used this trip to burden her heart for missionary kids.

"They call me Miss M," she laughs. "Once a student moves from Miss Muenzenberger, to Miss M, then I know the relationship has become deep!" Diana finds the most fulfilling part of being a missionary is the deep relationships she is able to have with her students.

She is energized by seeing students grow academically and spiritually. "It is so exciting to be used by God to change student's lives," she adds. It is far better to her to see spiritual growth happening in her students.

Highlights from the 2015-2016 School Year-

Outdoor Education Week was held in February, and was packed with many activities. Diana led a squad of 10 girls, 4 of which Diana did not know very well. She prayed for God to give her wisdom in how to make the girls feel comfortable and get to know her. It became a challenge at one point, and Diana was reminded of one of her favorite verses, Psalm 139:3, "You scrutinize my path and my lying down, You are intimately acquainted with all my ways." She was encouraged to know that the God of the universe wants to know her in this way. God showed His faithfulness and goodness throughout the week.

One of the activities involved building a raft, and then racing other squads of boys and girls. Diana was a little apprehensive, but the girls did an amazing job working together. They talked and listened to each other and made a pretty good raft, which almost caught up to the boys raft during the race!

Diana and her girls also visited a local school. They were matched with 6th grade girls, and were able to share the Gospel using colored bracelets, and then prayed with them. They spent 3 days at the school, and many students heard the Gospel. It was a great blessing to know that many did accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Diana would like prayer for the pastor who will follow up with the students at the school, and is so thankful for the spiritual growth in her girls, and their desire to share the love of Jesus.

Classroom Highlights-

Diana's favorite highlights from the school year are her lesson on Andrew Jackson, and the 7th grade Middle Ages role play. When the students studied Andrew Jackson they had to decide "heads or tails" about his presidency. Heads meant he was a democratic, sophisticated, good president. Tails meant he was an autocratic, atrocious, savage president. After looking over several events during his presidency, the students had to decide if his actions were "heads or tails." The debate between the students was thoughtful, intense, and showed great critical thinking.

Her 7th graders each got to portray a character from the Middle Ages. Students were queens, nobles, knights, freeman and serfs. There were wars, and assassination plots and attempts. Diana was the corrupt cardinal, who passed out indulgences, and accepted bribes!

It was a GREAT year at Faith Academy, filled with many blessings from God above. He reaffirmed Diana's love of teaching and love for middle school students.

Changes for the 2016-2017 school year-

Big changes for Diana! This coming school year she will be teaching Philippine Social Studies to 8th graders as an option to U.S. Social Studies. Diana had been working on creating a curriculum (with revisions) for the class, which was approved by the Leadership team at Faith.

Diana is both excited and nervous about teaching something completely new. The only Philippine history in her background is that which intersects with U.S. History and Ferdinand Magellan. She will be doing LOTS of reading this summer! Diana is convinced that this is where God is taking Faith Academy Middle School and herself, and knows that He will equip her to do what is needed.

The school has many critical staffing needs for the coming year, and several of their furloughing staff have large support needs that still need to be raised. It is a comfort to know that our Lord is in control of all things, and that many are in prayer.



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Diana was recognized for 16 years of service at Faith Academy. She had several choices of what she could receive to commemorate this milestone. Diana chose a tray that has Faith Academy's logo on it, which will serve as a reminder of God's faithfulness to her over the past 16 years.

Prayer Requests-

Please pray for Faith Academy-

- the critical need of teachers, and administrative staff
- for the spiritual growth of the students
- for encouragement and strength as Diana prepares for her new course over the summer
- for her health, as she has had problems with her asthma

We are so thankful for Diana's ministry at Faith Academy, her love for the students, and her willingness to serve the Lord.

PHILIPPINES SENDING GROWING NUMBER OF MISSIONARIES

After decades of welcoming western missionaries to their islands, the Philippines is now sending out a growing number of missionaries itself.

It is difficult to get an exact number of Filipinos who have left to evangelize their neighbors and the world, but one sending agency said it has sent out more than 600 traditional missionaries alone. The Philippine Missions Association consisting of evangelical mission's agencies and local churches, lists more than 100 partnering organizations based in the Philippines.

Sandy Eckelberry, a World Venture missionary who has served in the Philippines for about 25 years, attributes much of the growth to a spiritual revival and the locals embracing the Great Commission.

Over the years, approximately 3 million Filipino overseas workers, many who are Christians, have left the islands to pursue jobs as engineers, bankers, caregivers, and other occupations.

The large number of overseas workers is the reason why the Philippine Missions Association began discipleship programs to train workers to also be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

The Philippines is one of a few open countries in Southeast Asia. Because it is an open country, they have people coming from restricted access countries from other parts of Southeast Asia. They come to the Philippines to go to seminary, and then return to their own countries to work among the least reached there.

In a country with 8 major languages, and more than 100 dialects, the local people are blessed with great language abilities, making it easier for missionaries to learn new languages in countries where they serve. Culturally, Filipinos are very hospitable and friendly, which is also a big plus.

Sandy Eckleberry said, "For me it is exciting to see the growth of the evangelical church in the Philippines.

When I came in 1986, there were still a lot of Western church planters, and then eventually that shifted to the role of coaching. Now we are seeing seminaries in the Philippines become trainers for others around Southeast Asia."

Children

by Cindy Williams

Children are a heritage, a reward, a blessing from the Lord to parents. Blessings come with responsibilities – bringing them to Jesus, talking to them about God, teaching them diligently about God's ways and words and the history of God's dealing with mankind and with ourselves personally. This is to be done as we go about our daily lives.

Just as children to a family are a blessing, children to a church family are a blessing from the Lord, with responsibilities. I have prayed for more children for our church family. Indeed, when they all sat on the floor for Pastor Steve Kitchen's children's sermon, there was quite a quiver full of them (see Psalm 127:5). I have a list of 26 children, who have been in at least one of our church services in the last two years, not including the Kitchen Six.

Church family, we have responsibilities! To paraphrase one of my professors in college, the **most** you can do is pray, but that's not all you can do. So, I challenge you to begin by praying for the children in our church and that God will send us more. I'd be happy to share my list of names with you. Pray that God will use you in our children's lives and for God to show you what that might look like. Family Fun Fair is a great time to interact informally with children and families. By fall this year, we need to have more staff for another children's Sunday School class or classes. Children's Church needs teachers and helpers. Nursery needs workers.

Our church goal this year is for every member to discover his or her spiritual gift and to use it for the good of the church body. If you want to explore whether teaching or helping is your gift, see one of the elders. If teaching or helping is your gift and you need some training, see an elder. If teaching is your gift, see an elder for where you can put your gift to work.

Whatever your gift, let's brainstorm about how you can use it.

Cindy Williams

Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." Luke 18:15-17



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You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. Deuteronomy 6:7

"You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Deuteronomy 11:18-19

He established a testimony in Jacob
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers
to teach to their children,
that the next generation might know them,
the children yet unborn,
and arise and tell them to their children,
so that they should set their hope in God
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments;
and that they should not be like their fathers,
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
a generation whose heart was not steadfast,
whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Psalm 78:5-8

Hymn Story

"I think when I read that sweet story of old"

In his Hymns and Hymn Writers of the Church Hymnary, 1899, p. 272, the Rev. J. Brownlie says: "From an account which she [Mrs. Luke] has kindly sent of the origin of her popular hymn, we take the following:

"I went in the year 1841 to the Normal Infant School in Gray's Inn Road to obtain some knowledge of the system. Mary Moffat, afterwards Mrs. Livingstone, was there at the same time, and Sarah Roby, whom Mr. and Mrs. Moffat had rescued in infancy when buried alive and had brought up with their own children.

Among the marching pieces at Gray's Inn Road was a Greek air, the pathos of which took my fancy, and I searched Watts and Jane Taylor and several Sunday-school hymn books for words to suit the measure, but in vain. Having been recalled home, I went one day on some missionary business to the little town of Wellington, five miles from Taunton, in a stage coach.

It was a beautiful spring morning; it was an hour's ride, and there was no other inside passenger. On the back of an old envelope I wrote in pencil the first two of the verses, now so well known, in order to teach the tune to the village school supported by my stepmother, which it was my province to visit. The third verse was added afterwards to make it a missionary hymn."

I Think, When I Read That Sweet Story

I think, when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with them then.

I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,
That His arms had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen His kind look when He said, "**Let the little ones come unto Me.**"

Yet still to His foot stool in prayer I may go;
And ask for a share in His love;
And if I thus earnestly seek Him below,
I shall see Him and hear Him above.

But thousands and thousands who wander and fall,
Never heard of that heavenly home;
I wish they could know there is room for them all,
And that Jesus has bid them to come.

In that beautiful place He has gone to prepare
For all who are washed and forgiven;
And many dear children shall be with Him there,
For "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

I long for the joy of that glorious time,
The sweetest and brightest and best,
When the dear little children of every clime
Shall crowd to His arms and be blest.

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.
Blessed is the man
who fills his quiver with them!
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Psalm 127:3-6

Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, **to bring some of the children of Israel** and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs.

Daniel 1:4-9 (NKJV)



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A Holy Work of God

- Wycliffe Bible Translators

Jon Gauger works with Moody Radio. In July 2015, he went on a trip to Peru as part of a campaign between Moody Radio and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Have you ever witnessed a holy work of God with your own eyes? I am not speaking figuratively or metaphysically, but literally. I had a front row seat to such an event during a recent Moody Radio visit to Peru with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Truthfully, there was nothing that spoke of deity in the cramped office where we stood vying for space with boxes and supplies. There was nothing that hinted at the supernatural in the window that looked out upon Huancayo's gray streets.

Huddled in front of a computer monitor were four jacketed men and women (it was cold). On the screen, via Skype, the easy smile of Rick Floyd brought a special warmth to the room. A linguistic professor at Biola, Rick serves as a translation consultant for Wycliffe. From his home in California, he coached and critiqued a translation of 2 Samuel chapter 1 in the Wanca Quechua language.

The four Wanca linguists at our end had given enormous time and talent to this translation and I was handed a print-out of the first few verses. The dialogue between Rick and the Wanca linguists was animated, gestures flying everywhere accompanied by a frequent nodding of heads.

They were checking and double checking grammar, context, flow, as well as "holes" in the overall reading. Had cultural issues been properly addressed? Was the translation faithful?

An unfamiliar feeling settled over me watching the give and take. This was a rare and privileged moment to which I had no right. My eyes were witnessing nothing less than a sacred scene — the authoritative Word of God showing itself in consonants and vowels and nouns and verbs that had never previously uttered its life-changing message.

Truly, the writer of Hebrews was correct when he said, "The Word of God is living and active."

As for me, I'm in awe of the work God is doing in and through Wycliffe Bible Translators.

For He is the living God, And steadfast forever;
His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed,
And His dominion shall endure to the end.
He delivers and rescues,
And He works signs and wonders
In heaven and on earth,
Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

Signed, King Darius

Daniel in the Lion's Den Quiz

1.) Who plotted to kill Daniel?

- The priests
- The magicians, astrologers and soothsayers
- The army generals
- His fellow administrators

2.) What led to Daniel's being thrown into the lion's den?

- jealousy
- greed
- adultery
- ambition

3.) What was the reason that Daniel was thrown into the lion's den?

- For blasphemy against God
- For speaking against the king
- For praying
- For worshipping idols

4.) Which king had Daniel thrown into the lion's den?

- Cyrus
- Darius
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Belshazzar

5.) What did the king say to Daniel as they threw him into the den?

- Your God will deliver you.
- You deserve to die.
- Fall down and worship me.
- Now where is your God.

6.) How was the den sealed after Daniel was thrown in?

- A stone
- The king's signet
- Wet clay
- Iron bars

7.) What did the king do that night?

- Slept
- Partied
- Fasted
- Listened to music

8.) Who shut the mouth of the lions?

- Daniel
- An angel from God
- God
- Darius

9.) Why was Daniel not hurt?

- The lions weren't hungry.
- The lions had fallen asleep.
- He had done no wrong.
- The king commanded it.

10.) What was done to Daniel's accusers?

- They were hanged from a tree
- They were banished
- They were thrown into a fiery furnace
- They were thrown into the lion's den



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Quiz Answers

1. His fellow administrators 6:1-5
2. Jealousy 6:1-5
3. For Praying 6:12
4. Darius 6:8-9
5. Your God will deliver you 6:16
6. King's Signet 6:17
7. Fasted 6:18
8. An Angel 6:22
9. He has done no wrong 6:22
10. Thrown to Lions 6:24

Steve's Devotional - Never Work for God

The truth is that I often think of myself more as a day laborer than a son.

I believe that I'm a valued, forgiven and acceptable day laborer. I believe that I'm a loved day laborer, Christ died for this day laborer, and God chose me to be his day laborer.

That's no small thing.

I've worked for God for a very long time...longer than you may have been alive. Frankly, I'm pretty good at it. Some even call me "Reverend." That means I'm a very good day laborer in God's fields. I even teach people how to work better in God's fields. That makes me not only a day laborer, but also a foreman of other day laborers.

That's no small thing either.

Some even call me "Doctor Brown" and that means I'm a really, really good day laborer and foreman.

The truth is that I often think of myself more as a day laborer than a son.

I'm not a "doctor." I'm not even a nurse. My doctorates are phony and received for speaking at academic graduations. I always felt they were "crazy doctorates" until I realized that the people who gave them to me thought that I was one heck of a day laborer or they wouldn't have asked me to speak, paid me, or given me the phony doctorates.

That's a big thing.

Frankly, it's not half bad to be a day laborer. The wages are okay and the retirement plan is outstanding. My boss is benevolent and kind, never demanding more than I can give. When I screw it up, my boss is understanding...and isn't even surprised.

And in this business of being a day laborer, that's another big thing.

The problem with a day laborer is...well...you're "just" a day laborer.

Don't get me wrong. I don't mind being "just" a day laborer. I would rather work for my boss than anybody else's boss. In fact, I've tried working for other bosses. They often took advantage of me,

demeaned me, promised me stuff on which they refused to deliver, and sometimes left me feeling miserable and alone.

So when I "switched" bosses, I felt it was okay...better than okay.

I've always been familiar with Romans 8:14-15, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons [and daughters], by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"

I've memorized passages like Ephesians 1:5, "... he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved."

And I've taught Galatians 4:4-7 several times: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons [and daughters]. And because you are sons [and daughters], God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave, but a son [or daughter], and if a son [or a daughter], then an heir through God."

That's not just a big thing...it's astounding.

In fact, the more I think about it, the more comfortable I get with the truth of my standing with the boss. In fact, I've decided that I'm something else. I don't ever have to feel inferior, poor or defeated.

The King of everything isn't my boss... he's my Father.

A day laborer, when the day is over, goes back to his shack. A son or daughter gets to live in the big house. A day laborer stays a day laborer as long as his labor is acceptable. There is a limit to how much even a good and benevolent boss will abide. There is always a chance, even with the most patient of bosses, of the boss saying, "I've had it with you. Get out of here." A son or daughter stays a son or daughter no matter what.

A good day laborer gets a good salary and sometimes, when he or she has been particularly valuable, even gets gifts and bonuses. A son or daughter gets everything.

A day laborer is protected as a "producing unit" on the farm as long as he or she produces...but you mess with a son or daughter and you're in big trouble.

So I've stopped working for God as a day laborer. I'm getting too old for this anyway.

Maybe my being a son instead of a day laborer makes me sound a bit flippant and sometimes even offensive. Maybe I seem to take it too much for granted and appear to be a little too cocky. Sometimes I even take advantage of the fact that I'm not a day laborer and do things that would get a day laborer fired. I laugh a lot and that offends some of the other day laborers, and there are times when I even refuse to work.



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But I don't care. Everybody will just have to deal with it. My Father owns this farm and he loves me and will never kick me out. Fathers don't kick out their children...at least really good fathers, and this one is the best. My elder brother (Jesus) said, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father who is in heaven..." (Matthew 7:11).

If you want, you can have my hoe and shovel, and even my paycheck.

I don't need them. You don't either.

Read John 1:12-13 & Romans 8

Do you think of yourself more as a day laborer or as an adopted child? Describe what that means to you. God, out of his compassion and love, came...and made us his sons and daughters by Christ's sacrifice. Being adopted into the family of God is not about doing more or trying harder. It's never about [work](#). It's all about being welcomed Home by God. It's all about God's grace.

- Steve Brown, Key Life Ministries

Meditations After a Monday at Barnes & Noble

By John Piper

A trip to Barnes & Noble on my day off takes me beyond the Star Tribune and NPR in my daily culture dose of postmodern pronouncements. Consider Sam Harris' Letter to a Christian Nation (Knopf, 2006). It is ranked as the fourteenth best seller in the nation at Amazon as I write (just behind Richard Dawkins' The God Delusion). It begins like this:

Thousands of people have written to tell me that I am wrong not to believe in God. The most hostile of these communications have come from Christians. This is ironic, as Christians generally imagine that no faith imparts the virtues of love and forgiveness more effectively than their own. The truth is that many who claim to be transformed by Christ's love are deeply, even murderously, intolerant of criticism. While we may want to ascribe this to human nature, it is clear that such hatred draws considerable support from the Bible. How do I know this? The most disturbed of my correspondents always cite chapter and verse.

Later he says that not believing that man evolved from lower life forms is like not believing the sun is a star. Our nation is being overrun with anti-intellectual people who scoff at true science. The Intelligent Design movement is a scheme to replace science with religion by people who get PhDs to provide a cloak of respectability for their anti-science agenda. And so on.

What makes Harris' book postmodern and not simply modern is that it treats Christian "fantasies" not merely as rational errors, but as dangerous cultural and political power plays. I have no desire to scoff at this book. There is too much right-wing, radio-show-type Christian scoffing. Besides, I am old enough to be

Sam Harris' father (I was twenty-one when he was born), and that makes me want to rescue a son, not skewer a peer.

Of course, he thinks I am the one who needs to be rescued. My concern for us evangelicals is not that we bash Harris but that we try not to give the impression that we fear science, and that we make clear that we want Sam Harris to have the freedom to say false things about us.

So my dip into Harris' book was good for me. I may even read more. I don't fear it. I wish he didn't fear us. God, he should fear. But I will do all I can to keep my fellow Christians from playing God. As long as Christ's kingdom comes not by the sword but by the Spirit and the Truth, I will resist the unholy union of conscientious church and coercive state. I stand with those who believe that Christ is the best foundation for a view of the state that refuses to enforce Christ. I also stand with those who believe that true science (not presuppositional secularism) will not contradict true biblical interpretation.

Then I looked at Diane Setterfield's novel The Thirteenth Tale (Atria, 2006). I turned it over and read one of the most up-to-date pieces of postmodern counsel I have ever read. At first, I thought it was a blurb for the book from Vida Winter:

My gripe is not with lovers of the truth, but with truth herself. What succor, what consolation is there in truth, compared to a story? What good is truth at midnight, in the dark, when the wind is roaring like a bear in the chimney, when the lightning strikes shadows on the bedroom wall and the rain taps at the window with her long fingernails? No. When fear and cold make a statue of you in your bed, don't expect hard-boned and fleshless truth to come running to your aid. What you need are the plump comforts of a story. The soothing rocking safety of a lie.

No, Vida Winter is not a critic praising the power of this book. She is a character in the novel, and this is a quote from page five. Again, I feel no desire to be clever about the contrast between "hard-boned" truth and the "plump comforts" of a story. My main response is the feeling of wonderment that people today really believe this. And then I feel pity. And then a desire to find some way to shock them out of the trance. What shall we say?

First, this is good writing. Weak metaphysics, but strong metaphors. Listen for the consonance (the hard c's) in, "What succor, what consolation is there in truth, compared to a story?" Feel the sounds: "wind is roaring like a bear in the chimney" . . . "the rain taps at the window with her long fingernails."

Second, the writer of this paragraph has probably never really feared for her life. And almost certainly not for her eternal life. "Plump comforts of a story" will not soothe if you have three minutes before your hijacked plane incinerates you on the Pennsylvania plains.



The Mustard Seed



Rehoboth Baptist Church Newsletter ~ June 2016

Third, I wonder why she equates "story" with the "soothing rocking safety of a lie," instead of asking whether the greatest story might be true? Dorothy Sayers and C. S. Lewis have helped us see that the reason "myth" or "story" have such power is not because they replace truth but because they resemble Truth.

Fourth, I pray that those who see themselves in this paragraph will discover that 2,000 years ago the Truth became flesh and dwelt among us. He is "hard-boned" but not "fleshless." His name is Jesus Christ. He is the center of the true story of God's saving history. It is not the "soothing rocking safety of a lie." That is why his story will bring "succor" and "consolation," not just when the wind howls and the rain falls, but when breath fails and we slip through the lips of eternity.

Thank you, Barnes & Noble, for a good day off.

By John Piper. © Desiring God.

A Big View of God

by Max Lucado

Exactly what is worship? I like King David's definition in Psalm 34:3, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." Worship is the act of magnifying God, enlarging our vision of him, and observing how he works.

Of course his size doesn't change, but our perception of him does. As we draw nearer, he seems larger. Isn't that what we need? A big view of God? Don't we have big problems, big worries, and big questions? Of course we do. Hence, we need a big view of God. Worship offers that. How can we sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy" and not have our vision expanded? How can we sing these words and not have our countenance illuminated? A vibrant, shining face is the mark of one who has stood in God's presence. God is in the business of changing the face of the world! Let him begin with yours!

From "Just Like Jesus"

In the Den of Lions

"Daniel said to the king, 'O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm'" (Daniel 6:21-22).

Daniel 6 brings us to the Persian period of the old covenant era. At the beginning of the seventh century BC, the prophet Isaiah foresaw that the southern kingdom of Judah would be exiled into Babylon but that a ruler named Cyrus would later conquer Babylon

and send the Judahites back to their land (Isa. 39; 45:1-13). In 539/538 BC, this prophecy was fulfilled when Cyrus the Great conquered the Babylonian Empire. Cyrus' general Gobryas captured the city of Babylon and deposed co-regents Belshazzar and Nabonidus, killing the former and exiling the latter (Dan. 5:30). Babylon became a part of the Medo-Persian Empire, and Cyrus installed Darius the Mede to govern Babylon and its territory (v. 31). Darius is likely the ruling name of the Persian general Gubaru.

Unlike the Babylonians, who took people from their homeland, the Persians relocated displaced peoples in their empire back to their own countries (2 Chron. 36:22-23). Many Jews returned to the Promised Land, but many also remained in Babylon, including Daniel, who was in his late seventies or early eighties at the time of the return in 539/538 BC. He remained a key part of Babylonian society and was the chief advisor to Darius (Dan. 6:1-3). The governor's other advisors were jealous of Daniel, but because of the prophet's outstanding reputation, the only way to get rid of him was to outlaw Daniel's piety (vv. 4-5). They told Darius that the advisors unanimously agreed that a new law should be put in place whereby the governor alone would represent the divine for thirty days. During that time, only prayers offered to Darius would be legal. Darius was fooled by these liars—after all, Daniel would never have suggested this plan—and established the law that they had suggested (vv. 6-9).

If we are not careful, we might misunderstand what the prophet did next. When Daniel prayed to the one true God, he was not instigating confrontation but rather going about his normal routine (v. 10). He had prayed before the ban, and he would continue to pray after it. Daniel models how we should respond if we ever face the threat of the state. We should not be unnecessarily antagonistic, though we must obey the Lord regardless of whether the governing authorities permit it. Like Daniel, we should not go out of our way to fight with the ruling authorities, but neither should we bow to ungodly demands. Moreover, when we are faithful to the Lord, He will be faithful to us. He may not rescue us from the lions' den like He did Daniel, but He will save us forever, granting us eternal life (vv. 11-28; Dan. 12:2)

Coram Deo

John Calvin comments on today's passage that true piety is both internal and external. It is "not only the duty of offering to God the sacrifice of prayer in our hearts, but that our open profession is also required, and thus the reality of our worship of God may clearly appear." Daniel was recognized for his piety, so when his piety was outlawed, he was easy to find. Though we should not be cantankerous, the world should know by our actions that we love the one true God.

Dr. R.C. Sproul,
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June 2016

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