

A MAGAZINE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

HACKSAW RIDGE | THE LEGACY OF LUTHER



# LIBERTY

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017



## THE CRIES OF THE PERSECUTED

A child, rescued from Boko Haram in Sambisa forest, at a clinic at the Internally Displaced People's camp in Yola, Nigeria.



EDITORIAL

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Hard to believe that it's been 500 years since the Reformation! Or at least since the central, defining acts of Martin Luther, who became the poster boy for a whole phenomenon. The years have simply flown by! Feels like time travel to me; although I only remember back to around the middle of the last century, when Reformation Consciousness was already showing age-related cognitive decay. A little like kindly President Reagan before Senate committees, admitting to not remembering! We loved him for the clever way he invoked memory loss; not realising till years later that he had indeed forgotten--in fact, may have even forgotten why what he had forgotten was important. All I know is that while the American electorate of the Kennedy era had enough memory of the Reformation to fuel considerable public angst at the possibility of a president who might fall into pre-Reformation mode and allow "prelate" or "minister" to tell him "how to act" (Kennedy's words in opposing that danger), [deep breath here; long sentence] it was Reagan who drifted backwards in appointing an ambassador to the Vatican. So much for the principle of Church-State separation and a Protestant sensibility!

Martin Luther, let's not forget, was a priest-theologian at a time when for Europe there was only one church, and an attempt, at least, to have one political power, which worked sword-hand in glove with the church. Although, truth be told, the Holy Roman Empire of Luther's day was, as the old saw goes, "not quite holy nor Roman." It was a last attempt to recreate the Imperial glory of the Roman Empire: which as it decayed and was despoiled by Germanic tribes had passed its prerogatives to an increasingly politicized Roman church.

Martin Luther originally hoped to reform a church which was, no-one

now questions, out of compliance with its own principles, with the holy writings which should have been its charter, and so intent on power that it seldom hesitated to set the civil powers upon its enemies. Perhaps Luther was naive or perhaps the Roman church was not as cognizant of the optics of a situation as it is today. I think the story was mostly driven by the bigger picture.

Martin Luther would likely have been burned as a salutary lesson to other dissidents but for two central realities.

First, the Reformation itself was actually already well underway. Luther was preceded by figures like Wycliffe in England and Jan Hus in Bohemia; both priest-theologians. The old order was rapidly changing. A medieval social structure had largely given way to a population unbound from liege lords; and indeed a middle class of professionals and merchants was blossoming. The Renaissance had created a thirst for new knowledge and implanted a humanistic idealism. This social tinder was ignited by the development of the Gutenberg Press in 1440 and the facility of moveable type, which led to an explosion of reading and learning. For example, by 1500 there were already 30 million books in circulation; a good many of them Bibles. Church opposition to independent Bible study probably only increased the peoples' desire to find out what the oracles actually required. There was much sympathy for Luther and his fellow "Reformers," to use the term now used by both Catholics and Protestants (although at the time "Heretic" was the official appellation!)

Second, one cannot discount the role of the existential threat facing Western Europe. For most of the 15th Century, Western Europe was in

danger of being overrun by a continuing series of attacks from the Muslim Ottoman Turks. At the time the Ottomans had a powerful navy and the largest army in Europe. Istanbul, its capital (captured from the Byzantine Christians in 1453) was five times larger than Paris. A Frankish leader named Charles Martel had previously fought back their invasion of France. They would later lay siege to Vienna. It was a time of dismay. The attacks accelerated, and from 1520 to 1565 seemed unstoppable. But it was not till the Long War of 1593-1606 that the Austrian Hapsburgs finally ended the threat. No wonder that the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V hesitated to force the Elector of Saxony to give up Luther! No wonder he was amenable to the German princes presenting the Augsburg Confession at the Diet in 1530; an event which confirmed the Reformation in Germany.

If you know history, it makes perfect sense that shortly after the Ottoman threat abated the conflicts between newly Protestant areas and the older Catholic ones erupted into a broad-based European war, which lasted from 1618 till 1648. Many factors contributed to this, not least of all the Counter-Reformation, which was codified toward the end of the religious wars by the acts which came out of the Council of Trent in 1545. One should never understate the Thirty Years of religious warfare in Europe, which killed 8 million persons and led to the destruction of the agricultural system and systemic famine. Finally, the warring parties met and settled at the peace of Westphalia in 1648. A total of 109 delegations entered the discussions and out of the peace came essentially the nations of Europe (tweaked a little more by two world wars) and the modern nation-state and the idea of national sovereignty.



People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do hereby declare in Congress assembled, that these United States of America...

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Don't tell me the Reformation was unimportant or is inconsequential today!

One of the enduring myths in the United States is that it is somehow structurally a Christian nation. It is a myth that ignores the Constitution and the fact of "a new secular order." But a larger truth lies behind this assumption. A great many of the settlements that formed it were composed of Protestant refugees seeking a land of religious freedom. A large part of the spirit that animated the move to separate from England came from the First Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s, which stirred Protestant sensibilities. And Protestantism with its best characteristics long motivated the global mission sense and political worldview of this still new republic.

Which brings me to a sort of DeLorean moment.

Today!?

The very idea of the nation state

is crumbling. Failed states, drone attacks that see noborders and accept no jurisdiction, preemptive wars, nation-building passing itself off as police action, terrorists who swallow whole states and subsume them into self-styled caliphates, nations driven to chaos by central bankers and, not least, multinational entities who owe no loyalty and can make or break weak states.

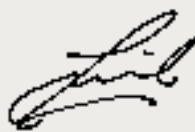
Our latest European Holy Roman Empire is hot-handing its currency, while poking at a bear which remembers an even older schism than the one the Reformation produced. And Brexit reminds us that among other incompatibilities Protestant England was a poor fit.

Again Islam frightens the West with attacks on Christian communities in the Middle East, jihadi beheadings, a tidal wave of refugees and the promise of more sleeper-cell eruptions in cities from Paris to New York.

And Protestant America? Apparently forgetful of its heritage, a

nation seeks alliances that will ever more quickly undo its separation of church and state, and perhaps lead to a rethink of its liberal Biblical, Protestant heritage of freedom for all. 'Tis certain that an awareness of history is shrinking, along with the once Bible-wielding middle class who after the Second Great Awakening of the mid 1800s so surely steered a nation toward a true post-slavery freedom.

Post election 2016, America looks to be changing rapidly. We see "new men...other minds," to quote Tennyson. We need to pray that the Reformation remains in our DNA, and that our future is not backwards.



Lincoln E. Steed, Editor

Liberty magazine

Please address letters to the editor to Lincoln.Steed@nad.adventist.org

DECLARATION of Principles

The God-given right of religious liberty is best exercised when church and state are separate.

Government is God's agency to protect individual rights and to conduct civil affairs; in exercising these responsibilities, officials are entitled to respect and cooperation.

Religious liberty entails freedom of conscience: to worship or not to worship; to profess, practice, and promulgate religious beliefs, or to change them. In exercising these rights, however, one must respect the equivalent rights of all others.

Attempts to unite church and state are opposed to the interests of each, subversive of human rights, and potentially persecuting in character; to oppose union, lawfully and honorably, is not only the citizen's duty but the essence of the golden rule—to treat others as one wishes to be treated.

More than 250 people attended the 2016 International Religious Liberty Summit, held May 24, 2016, at the Newseum's Religious Freedom Center in downtown Washington, D.C. The summit was co-sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the initiator of Liberty magazine, and the Newseum Religious Freedom Center. Panelists included Michael Wear, founder of Public Square Strategies LLC, and former director of faith outreach for President Obama's 2012 campaign; Chris Seiple, president emeritus at the Institute for Global Engagement; and Elizabeth Cassidy, acting codirector for policy and research at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Among the journalists who addressed the issue of effective media engagement were Lynn Sweet, Washington, D.C. bureau chief for the Chicago Sun-Times; Clarence Page, Pulitzer Prize-winning syndicated columnist for the Chicago Tribune, Doyle McManus, syndicated columnist for the Los Angeles Times; and David Cook, Washington, D.C., bureau chief for the Christian Science Monitor.

The summit was live-streamed by both the Newseum and ABC News. Video of the entire event is available on the Newseum's Religious Freedom Center Web site, [religiousfreedomcenter.org](http://religiousfreedomcenter.org). The following is excerpted from a keynote speech given by Frank Wolf at the summit.

# THE CRIES OF THE PERSECUTED

FRANK R. WOLF


I have a grave and growing sense of urgency regarding the erosion of religious liberty at home and abroad. All over this world, people of faith are denied the fundamental and inalienable human right to confess and express their faith according to the dictates of their conscience. According to Pew polling data, more than 70 percent of the world's population, 5.5 billion people, at this very moment live in a religiously repressive country.

While our national interests are complex and manifold, we can be assured that it always befits a great nation to stand boldly with the forgotten, the oppressed, the silenced and the imprisoned. If not America, then who?

This is tragic because religious freedom is not only deeply embedded in our own legal tradition reaching all the way back to the Magna Carta, but is also understood as a necessity for human dignity by the international community.

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



A photograph showing a woman with dark hair tied up, wearing a brown long-sleeved top, sitting on the ground and holding a young child. The child is crying and has their face partially covered by the woman's hand. They are inside a tent, with wooden poles visible. The background is blurred, showing other people and a red light. The woman is looking down at the child with a comforting expression. The child is wearing a light-colored patterned top and purple pants. The ground is sandy and there are some white plastic containers or bowls in the foreground.

A refugee woman from the minority Yazidi sect, who fled violence in the Iraqi town of Sinjar, sits with a child inside a tent at Nowruz refugee camp in northeastern Syria. Proclaiming a caliphate straddling parts of Iraq and Syria, Islamic State militants swept across northern Iraq, pushing back Kurdish regional forces and driving tens of thousands of Christians and members of the Yazidi religious minority from their homes. Picture taken August 17, 2014. REUTERS/Rodi Said



explicitly states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

But tragically, this is not the case for billions of people in the world. The Middle East is aflame with radicalism. Entire swaths of territory are presently controlled by murderous men who have committed unspeakable acts in an attempt to cleanse the region of Christians and other minorities.

The summer of 2014 was marked by the swift and largely unanticipated rise of ISIS. Unspeakable brutality followed. A caliphate was

Iraq numbered 150,000 in 1948; now there are fewer than 10 elderly Jewish individuals living there. The Iraqi Christian community, which numbered 1.5 million in 2003 when the war broke out, is now at 250,000 and falling. Right now, Christian families are leaving Iraq every single day. Many of those who remain have become involuntary nomads in their own land, displaced one, two, even three times.

One man I met told me that he tried taking his wife to a hospital in ISIS-controlled Mosul so she could receive treatment for her breast cancer. When they arrived at the hospital, they were met by an ISIS guard who refused to allow them entrance because they were Christian. They were told that the price for entrance and treatment was conversion to Islam. They refused and returned to their village 16 miles away. Ten days later the wife passed away with her husband and her two sons at her bedside. She was 45.

One Yezidi leader with whom we spoke told us that his pregnant sister-in-law was captured and sold by ISIS. He said, “They were selling the virgin girls for \$20 . . . unbelievable.” In the city of Dohuk I listened to the stories of two young Yezidi girls who had been captured by ISIS and later escaped. Several months ago I met with one young Yezidi girl in my office in Falls Church, Virginia. She had been raped by an American who had joined ISIS who showed her pictures on his phone of his family back in the United States.

In 1944 a Polish-Jewish lawyer named Raphael Lemkin coined the word “genocide” to describe the Nazi policies aimed at the destruction of the European Jews. I believe what is happening in Iraq right now is genocide.

The West missed the genocide in Cambodia, the West missed it in Rwanda, the West missed it in Srebrenica. The West is missing it now in Iraq and Syria, and the West is still missing it in Darfur.

Outside of the Dachau concentration camp there is a sign that says “Never Again” in five languages: Hebrew, German, English, French, and Russian. And yet time and time again, genocide has occurred, and the West has stood idly by.

However, Iraq is far from the only country plagued by religious persecution. These are perilous times for people of faith around the world.

During a trip to Nigeria this February, with colleagues from the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative, we interviewed many Christians from the middle belt and the north. They told of people from their villages being harassed, kidnapped, and killed in attacks from Boko Haram and the militant Fulani herdsmen. They feel forgotten by their own government and by the West and by the Western church.



MAHIA BRYK

Frank Wolfe addressing attendees at the International Religious Liberty Summit.

declared. Christians were told to leave, and if they stayed, to convert, pay, or die. Yezidi men were killed, and Yezidi women and children were bought, sold, raped, and tortured. Religious freedom suffered a devastating blow. Men, women, and children had their lives upended, homes confiscated, and dignity assaulted.

More biblical activity took place in Iraq than any other country other than Israel. The great patriarch Abraham came from Ur in southern Iraq. Isaac's bride, Rebekah, came from northwest Iraq. Abraham's grandson, Jacob, spent 20 years in Iraq, and his sons, the 12 tribes of Israel, were all born in northwest Iraq. The remarkable spiritual revival portrayed in the book of Jonah occurred in the city of Nineveh, which is present-day Mosul. The burial tombs for Jonah, Nahum (whose tomb we saw while we were there, just miles from ISIS-controlled territory), Daniel, and Ezekiel are all in Iraq. Many of the Christians in Iraq speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus.

A phrase not often heard outside of the Middle East is “first the Saturday people, then the Sunday people.” The Jewish community in

Bono, the Irish singer, said that if Nigeria unravels, the refugee crisis will be an existential threat to Europe. A political and human rights activist from Nigeria told us, “Nigeria is very fragile. If these 180 million are displaced, they will overrun Africa. They will overrun Europe. And business interests in the United States will be directly and negatively impacted. Nigeria is ready to break into pieces, and it won’t be violence-free. We are trying to prevent that.”

According to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, some see China’s pattern of persecution against Christians that started in 2014 “as the most egregious and persistent since the Cultural Revolution.” In China, Catholic bishops sit under house arrest, and Protestant pastors and laypeople are in prison for holding services in their homes.

When I slipped into Tibet in the midnineties, what I saw going on there was frightening. Buddhist monasteries are regulated by cadres of police. Simple acts such as possessing pictures of the Dalai Lama are forbidden and harshly punished. At least 140 Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns have poured gasoline on themselves and set themselves on fire in protest of governmental persecution. Ugyhur Muslims and Falun Gong are repressed by the Chinese government simply for following the dictates of their conscience. And the world is silent.

On my last trip to China, all but one of the religious leaders scheduled to meet with me were imprisoned the day before. The only one who made it was later beaten and arrested by the police. As we speak today, Christian lawyers and activists are still being arbitrarily arrested by the Chinese government.

Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Catholic woman, has been in prison since 2009 for making a public profession of her faith. She was imprisoned for an entire year before being formally charged and tried. In 2010 she was sentenced to death by hanging. She just marked her sixth year in prison. And the West is largely silent.

My friend Shabaz Bhatti—the only Christian member of the Pakistani cabinet at the time—spoke out against the blasphemy laws and in support of Bibi. He was assassinated in 2011, gunned down while leaving his mother’s house. The same year, Salmaan Taseer, the Muslim governor of Punjab, was assassinated by his own security detail for the same reason. In addition, the Ahmadi Muslims have been facing discrimination and violence in Pakistan for decades. They are not allowed to call their places of worship “mosques” or publicly quote from the Koran.

In Ethiopia, which sowed the seeds for my lifelong passion for human rights, Christians

face persecution from a host of different sources. And just across the border, in Eritrea, Christians are regularly arrested, beaten, and kept in storage containers in what is known by many as “the North Korea of Africa.” In Egypt the ancient community of Coptic Christians numbering 8-10 million continues to face persecution, and many are leaving in droves for the West. The Baha’i population in Egypt cannot even get driver’s licenses, since they do not fit the government’s narrow requirement of being either Christian or Muslim.

In Europe we see growing anti-Semitism, and it is even in America. A recent study by the Simon Wiesenthal Center finds an increase in anti-Semitism on college campuses across the United States. In a separate report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights from 2005, Nathan Sharansky, a champion for human rights in the Soviet Union who spent nearly a decade in prison, called American college campuses “islands of anti-Semitism” where young students are intimidated into silence and “Israel is epitomized as the epicenter of everything that is hateful in the universe.” A recent poll found that 54 percent of Jewish-American college students witnessed or experienced anti-Semitic incidents last year. These incidents include vandalism, acts of violence, hate speech, and even cases of students being spit upon for supporting the existence of a Jewish state in the Middle East.

In Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter From a Birmingham Jail,” he admonishes the clergy and the church by stating, “I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. . . . When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents . . . ; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows.”

King goes on: “In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love.”

We need to be clear-eyed about the times in which we live, to be thoughtful about the challenges and prayerful about our response and never be satisfied with allowing religious persecution to remain a global norm.

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Frank R. Wolf served as representative for Virginia’s tenth congressional district in the US House of Representatives for 36 years before his retirement in 2015. Mr. Wolf is now Distinguished Senior Fellow at the 21st Century Willberforce Initiative. He gave these remarks May 24, 2016, at the 2016 International Religious Liberty.

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# Hacksaw Ridge and the Religious Nut Who Wanted to Save Just One More





BY BARRY W. BUSSEY

**T**he story behind the movie *Hacksaw Ridge* involves a young U.S. Army medic during World War II, Desmond T. Doss, whose religious conscience recoiled at the idea of killing another human being.

The story is counterintuitive. It is a war movie directed by Mel Gibson, whose movie projects are not shy about accentuating the violent exploits of war; but it is more than that. It is a story of deep religious conviction of a hero who risked his life to save life. It is a Don Quixote-like tale with a twist—it is real, gut-wrenching, transparent, sincere, and effective. In an age that maligns religion as the source of war, this is a story of religion that abhors war, but doesn't ignore or shun those who participate in it. Rather it seeks to redeem what is redeemable, despite the blood, the gore, and the apparent futility of trying. It is a story that is new to this generation but one that illustrates old values of faith, endurance, and duty to God and to humanity. It is a story that raises, yet again, the noncombatancy of those few religious souls among us who are willing to give up public approbation as patriotic warriors and instead submit to the public shame or ridicule that often comes with refusing to bear arms in what the politicians and many churchgoers often say is a "just war."

Desmond was the unlikeliest hero: a loner who grew up in a home with an alcoholic father whose mother took him to church every Saturday morning. She was an ardent Seventh-day Adventist Christian, who ensured that her children were faithful in keeping the Ten





President Harry Truman pins the Congressional Medal of Honor on the Lifesaver of Okinawa.

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Commandments. It was seeing the illustrated Ten Commandments on the wall of his family home that led to Desmond's refusal to bear arms when he was called up to serve during World War II. He remembered the drawing, next to the sixth commandment, that illustrated Cain killing his brother, Abel. *How could a brother do such a thing?* Desmond thought—and he committed himself never to kill another human being.

By all accounts Desmond was a loner. He was introspective. Life was serious, and so was he. Everything about him was nonconforming. His faith community was relatively unknown. He worshipped on a different day than most Christians. He did not drink alcohol or smoke or become involved in the extracurricular activities that many of his classmates were accustomed to. Such awkwardness was not unusual for Desmond. He saw it as part of who he was—not that he was better than anyone, but his motivation was from a deep religious commitment to do the right thing, no matter the consequence. Such a commitment would serve him well on the front lines in Okinawa.

When Desmond was drafted, he refused the rifle. The military was of the view that he should go to a work camp for conscientious objectors, but he refused. "I tried to explain that I was a conscientious cooperator" was how he put it. He sought a place in the medical corps. He wanted to be placed where he could save life, not take life. Eventually the Army did find him a spot with the Medical Detachment, 307th Infantry, 77th Infantry Division.

During the many months of training Doss, was looked upon as strange. Ralph Baker, a litter bearer, noted that Doss "didn't have friends because he was too much out of the mainstream." In fact, John Centola, the company scout, noted that "a lot of people thought he was putting on an act. What kind of religion tells you that you can't do this, you can't do that?" The ribbing Doss received from his fellow soldiers while in the United States was soon to change when in battle. Many would come to owe their lives to this brave "religious nut."

It was Doss's bravery in saving the lives of his fellow soldiers near Urasoe Mura, Okinawa, Japan, from April 29 to May 21, 1945, that became legendary. It is now the subject of the major motion picture *Hacksaw Ridge*, directed by Mel Gibson. For Gibson, Doss's exploits were nothing short of "inspirational." Gibson continued: "To walk into the worst place on earth . . . without . . . a weapon and . . . do his job . . . as a corps medic and save so many lives is remarkable."<sup>1</sup>

Reading the Army's citation of those events, you would think, if you did not know better, that you were reading fiction. When his battalion "assaulted a jagged escarpment 400 feet high," "a heavy concentration of artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire crashed into them, inflicting approximately 75 casualties and driving the others back." Doss remained on top of the escarpment amid enemy fire and carried all 75 casualties "one by one to the edge of the escarpment and there [lowered] them on a rope-supported litter" to safety. One can only imagine what was going through Doss's mind during this heroic act. In Terry Benedict's documentary *The Conscientious Objector* Doss said that as he delivered each wounded man he prayed, "Lord, please help me get one more," and off he trudged through the hail of bullets for the one more—75 in total.

A few days later, on May 2, “he exposed himself to heavy rifle and mortar fire in rescuing a wounded man 200 yards forward of the lines on the same escarpment”—but that was not all. Two days later “he treated four men who had been cut down while assaulting a strongly defended cave.” To do so, he had to go through “a shower of grenades to within eight yards of enemy forces.” There “he dressed his comrades’ wounds before making four separate trips under fire to evacuate them to safety.” This behavior continued almost daily.

Commander Jack Glover, who had told Doss in training, “You’re not going to be by my damn side if you don’t carry a gun,” was now faced with a medic on the frontline in “combat after combat, action after action” who “just absolutely [refused] to allow wounded soldiers to not be treated, refusing to withdraw under any circumstances.” He marveled that Doss “was absolutely fearless as to what was going to happen to him.” Glover was among those whose life was spared because of Doss’s action during the Okinawa campaign. Despite the small-arms fire, the shells falling, Doss reached Glover, attended to him, and then carried him to safety.

Unfortunately, it was on the night of May 21 that Doss’s heroics would come to an end. He again “fearlessly” risked his life when a grenade was thrown into the pit where he was tending to a wounded soldier. He purposely put his foot on the grenade to shield the soldier. The explosion ripped through Doss’s legs. He “waited five hours before litter bearers reached him and started carrying him to cover.” However, as he was being carried off the field he noticed a more critically wounded man and told the bearers to take that man. While he waited for the litter bearers’ return, he was struck by a sniper bullet and “with magnificent fortitude he bound a rifle stock to his shattered arm as a splint and then crawled 300 yards over rough terrain to the aid station.”<sup>2</sup>

Doss’s unflinching courage gained the admiration of all his comrades. When he was lowering the 75 wounded that day in Okinawa, the men below were wanting to know who was behind all of these men getting down to safety. “Some nut up there is getting his butt shot off” was the reply. “What a beautiful nut, huh?” said Glover.

When Desmond was about to be put on an evacuation ship, he realized that his pocket Bible was missing. A number of volunteers risked their own lives in the line of fire to find his Bible—it took some searching, but the Bible was found and returned.

While the Doss story took some time to receive worldwide exposure, its underlying themes are as old as Christianity itself. What should be the Christian response to war? Ancient Christian writers such as Tertullian said that when Christ disarmed Peter He “unbelted every soldier.”<sup>3</sup> However, many scholars today note that the conversion of Constantine to Christianity led to a shift in the Christian thinking on war. Theologians Ambrose and Augustine developed what has become known as the “just war doctrine.”<sup>4</sup> The idea was that war became “just” when two overarching criteria were met: *jus ad bellum*, the parties had a justifiable right to go to war; and there was a *jus in bello*, that is to say, the carrying out of the war would be “just,” not overly brutal.

The brutality of war has become an issue of some debate.

Many writers suggest that “wars were not always as deadly and bloody as they tend to be today.”<sup>5</sup> Augustine pointed out that “the real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power.”<sup>6</sup> In Augustine’s day war was sometimes more akin to a pushing match, not always a wholesale slaughter. The goal of battles was to make the opposing army slaves. However, scholars have noted that from about A.D. 1500 to 1800 there was a military revolution in Western Europe—killing the opponent became the primary focus, rather than catching the enemy for slavery.<sup>7</sup>

By the time the twentieth-century wars were unleashed upon the earth, the slaughter of both the innocent and the combatants was unprecedented. While today in the twenty-first century some nations try to use superior technology to target only combatants, war remains brutal. A prime example is the human suffering in the Middle East. We are also living in a culture that glorifies violence and demands revenge. The current “war on terror” presents one example after another in which vengeance is sought. ISIS kills a Jordanian pilot, and Jordan bombs ISIS targets and hangs a female terrorist in retaliation.<sup>8</sup> A Russian plane is shot down in Syria, and Russia hits back all the harder. Tit for tat remains the modus operandi in carrying out war.

Desmond Doss stands out as one who saw no Christian justification for war. War was, in his mind, evil by definition. No one has a right to kill another, any more than Cain had the right to kill Abel. For Doss his conscience was supreme. No state power could compel him otherwise. Jack Glover noted that if Doss “had been without the belief and without the religious commitment, I think he would have been much less of a person doing his duty.” In Benedict’s documentary Doss said, “I was fighting for freedom by trying to save life instead of taking life, because I couldn’t picture Christ out there with a gun killing people. I like to think of Him out there with an aid kit like me.”

If there were a draft today, and if Desmond Doss were alive and young again, I can envision him on the fields of Syria, among the ravages of Iraq, or on the hills of Afghanistan, tending to the wounded. He left the politics of war to the politicians, the ethics and morality to the theologians and philosophers. His job was to save life. “You can’t always win,” said Doss, “but when your buddies come to you and say they owe their life to me, what better reward can you get than that?”

<sup>1</sup> [www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-3296257/Mel-Gibson-pictured-directing-set-new-World-War-II-drama-Hacksaw-Ridge-expansive-set-located-Sydney-complete-fire-explosions-dug-pits.html#v-8178326174553128589](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-3296257/Mel-Gibson-pictured-directing-set-new-World-War-II-drama-Hacksaw-Ridge-expansive-set-located-Sydney-complete-fire-explosions-dug-pits.html#v-8178326174553128589).

<sup>2</sup> <http://army.togetherweserved.com/army/servlet/tws.webapp.WebApp?cmd=ShadowBoxProfile&type=Person&ID=18825>

<sup>3</sup> Daniel M. Bell, Jr., *Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church Rather Than the State* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27–32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> As quoted by Bell at p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2015/02/03/islamic-state-group-says-it-burned-alive-jordanian-pilot.html>

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Calendar  
Reform  
and the  
Religious  
Liberty  
Crisis of  
1931

BY JIM WOOD

ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES YANG

Current discussions of religious liberty issues echo arguments posed at the League of Nations in Geneva more than 85 years ago. Does religious liberty extend beyond the freedom to choose a particular creed or doctrine? Are believers at liberty to express their faith in their public life? Can we allow the rights of religious minorities to supersede the will of the majority?

In October 1931 the League of Nations' Advisory and Technical Committee for Communications and Transit met to consider proposals for revision of the calendar that, if adopted, would have marginalized all who conscientiously observe a weekly day of worship.

This type of backhanded threat to religion was not new. One hundred thirty-eight years earlier the French Revolutionary Calendar (1793-1805) had replaced the seven-day week with a 10-day period known as a *decade*, thus eliminating all religious holidays and weekly holy days. And just two years before the meeting of the League's committee, Joseph Stalin's government had imposed a calendar (1929-1931) that included five-day "weeks" with similar effects on religious days.

During the post-World War I era there was considerable international interest in calendar reform. The most widely used calendar featured an arrangement of weeks and months and years that was not well suited to the needs of the modern world. Blame it on Julius Caesar.

# THE WANDERING

DAY

Whatever you might think of him—whether the genuine historical figure or the Shakespearean caricature of the man—you've got to give him this: he left an indelible mark on Western civilization. I'm not talking about his famous feats in war or politics or romance. No. From our point of view, his signature accomplishment was calendar reform.

During the era of the Roman Republic the calendar was managed by the college of the pontifices. They had made a mess of things. Their mismanagement had resulted in a calendar that was about 80 days out of sync with the natural seasons.

As pontifex maximus Julius Caesar meant to straighten things out. And as dictator he had the power to do just that. He engaged the services of Sosigenes, an astronomer from Alexandria, who offered a radical change from the traditional Roman lunar calendar.

Caesar approved the idea of a calendar governed by the sun rather than the moon. The calendar that bears his name was a variation—even an improvement—on the Egyptian solar calendar.

The Julian calendar went into effect in 45 B.C. after a confusing year of necessary adjustments. It underwent a few tweaks during the ensuing decades. It turned out to be only slightly imperfect. We're still using it today, with minor revisions credited to a sixteenth-century pope, Gregory XIII.

But our calendar has confusion built in. Months range from 28 to 31 days. Quarters are unequal; one has 90 days,<sup>1</sup> one has 91 days, and two have 92 days. Worse yet, the seven-day week runs its perpetual course through the calendar without regard to either month or year.

Englishman Moses Cotsworth, an accountant from the British railroad industry, devised the International Fixed calendar to iron out the irregulari-



ties passed along by Pope Gregory. Cotsworth envisioned a 13-month year where each month had precisely four weeks. The governments of Great Britain and Canada both published and circulated Cotsworth's plan. He traveled far and wide, garnering support from diverse countries around the world.

In 1924 Cotsworth and his calendar came to the attention of George Eastman, inventor and founder of the Eastman Kodak Company. His interest piqued, he became a leading supporter of the reform, both personally and financially. He saw Moses Cotsworth as "the recognized international authority on . . . the relationship of the calendar to the peace and prosperity of mankind."<sup>2</sup> In 1928 he wrote, "I have observed this movement gather momentum throughout the world, and it seems to me now that it is merely a question of time until all nations meet in conference to agree upon a change. There is no doubt in my mind of ultimate success."<sup>3</sup>

Then in 1929 Elisabeth Achelis entered the picture. Daughter of a wealthy New York businessman, she threw herself and her considerable fortune into the cause. But it was not Cotsworth's 13-month plan that drew her support. She campaigned for a 12-month calendar, adjusted to create equal 91-day quarters. She called it the World Calendar.

While the 13- and 12-month plans were radically different at first glance, they did share two essential features: a year of precisely 52 weeks, plus an additional "blank" day to keep the calendar in sync with the solar year.<sup>4</sup> It was the blank-day element that aroused the opposition of Jewish and Christian religious groups.

The problem was that the blank day, inserted at the end of each year, would be an interruption in the perpetual cycle of seven-day weeks.

The last week of the year would end on Saturday, but the beginning of the following week would be offset by 24 hours to make room for the blank day. Sundaykeeping Christians who went to bed Saturday night, expecting to go to church the next morning, would awaken to find that it was not Sunday.

According to the reformed calendar, the new Sunday would be the old Monday. A year later the same interruption would occur, pushing Sunday to the old Tuesday. This progression would continue, with the effect doubled in leap years. Thus the Christian "Lord's Day" would be a fictional day, broken loose from its historical tie to the resurrection of Christ.

Conscientious Sabbatharians voiced the strongest concerns. Jews and Seventh-day Adventists formed the core of the religious opposition. They argued that the blank-day plan

would cause the true Sabbath to wander through the calendar, creating commercial, educational, and financial hardship to Sabbathkeepers around the world.

Articles pro and con flared across the pages of newspapers, trade journals, and other periodicals. Petitions were circulated. Public debates focused public attention on the issues.

Arguments ranged from modern business and social concerns to biblical chronology. Twelve-monthers and thirteen-monthers took potshots at each other. Reformers and resisters fenced over questions of doubtful relevance. During the run-up to the meeting of the League of Nations committee it became clear that the decisive issue would not be calendar reform *per se*, but rather the effect of a new calendar on the rights of religious minorities.

It was Moses Cotsworth himself who played on the barely concealed anti-Semitic undertone of the conversation, suggesting that if any Jews should desire to keep up their foolish traditions—such as starting the Sabbath on Friday night—they would have to put up with the consequences of their stubbornness.<sup>5</sup>

Charles Marvin addressed religious liberty more directly. An ardent reform enthusiast, he was chief of the U.S. Weather Bureau and vice-chairman of George Eastman's National Committee on Calendar Simplification. In a debate with Rabbi Louis Schwefel, Marvin dismissed Jewish objections to the blank-day calendar by pointing out that the United States "is a Christian nation." Rabbi Schwefel, shocked and amazed at Marvin's comment to a largely Jewish audience, remarked that this was "the first time that such a declaration has been made . . . concerning calendar reform." Marvin then added coals to the fire by declaring, "Free exercise of religion' means no more than freedom of religious tenet and creed."<sup>6</sup>

The League of Nations Advisory and Technical Committee for Communications and Transit was called into session on October 12, 1931. Delegates from 42 countries were in attendance, plus 100 or more official observers. Invitees included Jews and Seventh-day Adventists who were hoping to forestall any calendar change that would impinge upon the free exercise of religion.

The Committee endured proclamations and protestations from a long list of speakers representing all sides of the calendar reform question. As the delegates then proceeded with their deliberations many observers sensed that the tide was running in favor of reform. The delegate from Spain argued that Jewish objections were irrelevant because their Sabbath could not be

MONTH	1st WEEK	2nd WEEK	3rd WEEK	4th WEEK	No 5th or 6th WEEK
	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	
Jan	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	↓ PROPOSED NEW MONTH           29 "YEAR-DAY"
Feb	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Mar	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Apr	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
May	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Jun	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Sol	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
July	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Aug	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Sep	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Oct	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Nov	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Dec	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	

### THE INTERNATIONAL FIXED CALENDAR

In the proposed calendar, every month will be like every other month. One day every year will have no week-day name, but will be called Year Day. Each of the present months will lose a day or so, and a brand-new month will happen between June and July

properly observed on a round world. Charles Marvin attacked Seventh-day Adventists for their insistence on maintaining the integrity of the seven-day week, erroneously asserting that primitive Christians themselves had broken the weekly cycle when they transitioned to Sunday observance.

Emile Marchand, the Swiss delegate, dismissed as mere paranoia the claims of Sabbatarians that they would suffer hardship under the blank-day calendar. He surprised everybody when he offered a narrowed version of religious liberty in which the majority has the right to coerce the minority in matters of conscience.<sup>7</sup>

It was clear that within the pro-reform party there were some who would gladly push their agenda at the expense of minority rights. They considered that any harm done could be blamed on the victims themselves. Rabbi Joseph Hertz, chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, reacted: "This is the argument used by all tyrants in the past to justify their bloodiest religious persecutions—this grim doctrine that the sufferings of the victims of bigotry are not due to the ferocity of the persecutor, but to the convictions of the persecuted conflicting with the laws of the persecutor."<sup>8</sup>

With the focus diverted from the pros and cons of calendar schemes to the larger issue of religious liberty, the Advisory and Technical Committee for Communications and Transit

decided not to approve any revision of the calendar at that time. The door was left open for future consideration of the issue. But for the moment there was no question that most of the delegates were unwilling to support calendar reform if it meant trampling on the rights of religious minorities. Religious liberty was, for the moment at least, safe from the threat of the wandering day.

The 13-month movement soon faded out of the picture, but Elisabeth Achelis continued a strong campaign for her World Calendar well into the 1950s. Convinced that her ideas would promote world harmony, order, balance, and stability, she was "disgusted . . . that reform measures would be refused on the basis of religious grounds."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Refers to an ordinary year. In leap years the first quarter has 91 days.

<sup>2</sup>C. Ackerman, *George Eastman* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1930).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>Two blank days were required in leap years.

<sup>5</sup>Arthur S. Maxwell, "God's Hand at Geneva," *The Missionary Worker*, June 26, 1931, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Government Official, *Advocating Calendar Reform*, Says U.S. Is Christian Nation," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, Jan 16, 1930.

<sup>7</sup>Arthur S. Maxwell, "High Peaks of the Geneva Conference," *Present Truth*, Nov. 19, 1931, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup>A. W. Anderson, "The Calendar Issue Before the League of Nations," *Australasian Record* 14 (December 1931): 4.

<sup>9</sup>Molly E. K. McGrath, "The Elisabeth Achelis Story," [theworldcalendar.org](http://theworldcalendar.org). World Calendar Association—International.

# Loving Liberty

BY MELISSA  
REID

**W**andley Jeune never imagined that a commitment to his faith would result in such life-altering consequences.

Wandley is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian who observes a weekly Sabbath rest from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. He was a popular barber in a suburb outside Newark, New Jersey, before the shop he worked in told him they couldn't hold his chair if he wasn't available to work during the salon's busiest shifts: Friday after 5:00 p.m. and all day Saturday.

A friend of Wandley's told him of a local hotel that was hiring workers in their house-keeping department. He interviewed for a posi-

tion, and was hired. Cautious after his last employment experience, Wandley was upfront about his inability to work on the Sabbath. The hiring manager was nonchalant, explaining he'd need to do so only occasionally during busy periods.

"I was adamant that I could never work a Sabbath shift," recalls Wandley. "I didn't want to be in the same position again."

"I honestly didn't think it would be an issue," remembers Wandley's manager Elona Dhima. "We'd had other employees say they couldn't work certain shifts, even for religious reasons, but they'd all done it when it had come down to it."

A few months into his new job the staff was told by the hotel that the coming weekend would be "all hands on deck." Everyone would be required to work. Wandley reminded his manager of his inability to work during the Sabbath hours. She apologized, but said she couldn't excuse his absence. All employees would need to report to work.

"I told my manager that I had to honor my commitment to the Sabbath, and she responded that if I didn't show up for the Saturday shift, I would no longer have a job," said Wandley. "I was disappointed, but I never for a minute considered working that shift. It just wasn't an option."

A few weeks later Wandley received a phone call from his former manager, asking if he'd like to come back to work at the hotel. She promised that he would never be asked to work during the Sabbath hours again, assuring him that she'd personally make sure of it.

Elona recalls the conversation: "I'd never met anyone so committed to their faith. It really made an impression on me."

Wandley returned to his job at the hotel, and began sharing inspirational books with Elona.

"After he gave me each book, he would quiz me. 'Have you read it yet? What did you think?'"

Wandley and Elona Jeune  
on their wedding day.





**“God has always provided for me, and I have never doubted His love for me.”**

Pastor Paula Olivier with the Jeunes and their daughter, Paula.

laughs Elona.

After several months of Elona’s receptive response to the Christian material he shared with her, Wandley asked if she’d be interested in studying the Bible with his pastor.

“I was open to learning more, but hesitant to meet and study with a strange man,” says Elona. “Wandley was undeterred. He said, ‘My pastor’s wife is a pastor too. You can study with her.’”

Elona began studying with Pastor Paula Olivier of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Montclair, New Jersey. The two women immediately connected over the joy and peace found in a relationship with Christ. Within a year Elona was baptized, and she and

Wandley were married. Today they have a beautiful baby girl, Paula, named after her godmother, “Pastor Paula.”

“I have always been a man of faith,” shares Wandley. “God has always provided for me, and I have never doubted His love for me. But I never in my wildest dreams could have imagined that my commitment to His will would result in Elona’s conversion and our shared life together. I am so proud of my wife and her love for Christ. It’s been an incredible experience watching her grow in her relationship with God, and become an amazing mother to our little girl. I am blessed beyond measure.”

Melissa Reid, is Associate Editor of *Liberty*.



# The Legacy of Luther

BY MICHAEL  
W. CAMPBELL

Recently our family purchased some DNA kits. We did the customary swabs, dropped them in the mail, and waited for the lab to process them. Several weeks later our genetic profile arrived in our inbox. For me there weren't any surprises—I truly come from the part of the world that I thought I was from. My wife, on the other hand, discovered some surprises. She was rather incredulous as she viewed the results.

Many Protestants frequently experience a variety of reactions as they study the life of Martin Luther. In classes that I teach, with students in a Seventh-day Adventist seminary, many express surprise to learn details about his life. They are inspired by his legacy of protest and reform, but then they are equally shocked to learn details such as the fact that he didn't keep the biblical seventh-day Sabbath and the fact that he was not an advocate for religious liberty. Some of my fellow Seventh-day Adventists may be surprised in the same way that we were as we explored our genetic profile. Seventh-day Adventists, the originators of *Liberty* magazine, claim to be heirs of the Reformation. So how does he fit into our spiritual heritage?<sup>1</sup>

Luther definitely can't be ignored. After all, he was the founder of what became known (after the Diet of Spires) as the Protestant Reformation. While it is certainly true there were many Reformers throughout the Medieval period, it is also true that with Luther the "towering edifice of medieval Christianity collapsed."<sup>2</sup> Luther began a personal spiritual

journey. During a terrible lightning storm he pledged that he would become a monk. Several weeks later he fulfilled his pledge, which marked a pilgrimage as monk, priest, and professor. It was after he was ordered to prepare to teach Scripture at the new University of Wittenberg that he made a great discovery. In approximately 1515 he began lecturing on the book of Romans. When he encountered Romans 1:17 and the concept of "the righteousness of God" he realized that this is a revelation of God's righteousness or justice. In other words, he discovered that God does not judge sinners. Until then he hated any thought about "the justice of God"; but now he realized that "the righteous shall live by faith." As he realized that this righteousness is a free gift to sinners: "I felt that I had been born anew and that the gates of heaven had been opened. The whole of Scripture gained a new meaning. And from that point on the phrase "the 'justice of God' no longer filled me with hatred, but rather became unspeakably sweet by virtue of a great love."<sup>3</sup>

It was this new depiction of God's character that caused him to see God in an entirely new way. Gradually Luther won over his fellow colleagues to his new way of thinking. He wished to challenge traditional views, so he composed 97 theses for academic debate. He was disappointed that they did not arouse much interest. He then wrote another set of theses, but this time someone translated them into German and they were circulated en masse. This time he created "such a stir that eventually all of





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The Peasant's Rebellion and other tumults accompanied the religious reforms.

**What made Luther stand out was his willingness to let Scripture reign supreme and challenge both faith and practice.**

Christendom was involved in its consequences.<sup>74</sup> Officially titled *Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*, they attacked the sale of indulgences along with its theological underpinnings with gusto.

At the time the Papacy was in the midst of raising large sums to enrich the papal coffers. Pope Leo X had his heart set on finishing the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome. The Dominican John Tetzel was placed in charge of sales of indulgences in Germany. He claimed that each purchase made the sinner “cleaner than when coming out of baptism.”<sup>75</sup> He encouraged people to buy them for deceased relatives: “as soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.”<sup>76</sup> Luther directly attacked the sale of indulgences with its inherent exploitation. In thesis 82 he argued that if it is true that the pope is able to free souls from purgatory, he ought to use that power simply and freely out of love. In fact, the pope should give his money to help the poor, even if it meant selling the Basilica of Saint Peter (thesis 51).<sup>7</sup>

Ever afterward Luther lived in fear of his life being snuffed out. In an exceptional narrative, one that author Ellen G. White places at the heart of her magnum opus on Christian history, *The Great Controversy* (1858, 1888, 1911), that describes this conflict in nothing short of a continued spiritual struggle between Christ and Satan. In another place she com-

pared the opposition that the early Christian apostles faced as in essence the same as what Luther also faced. A key turning point for her was the Diet of Spires. When faced with the decree of the emperor restricting religious liberty, the people's representatives rejected the decree. In matters of conscience Scripture would reign supreme.<sup>8</sup>

What makes Luther significant is that he was willing to question the established norms of his day in favor of the authority of Scripture. In doing so, he embarked upon a pathway of reform.

### Commitment to Scripture

What makes Luther stand out is his willingness to study Scripture in a new way. The Reformation was not a "shopping list of demands," but instead was a "choreography for a new dance."<sup>9</sup> It turned the world upside down and created new space to think and evaluate then-present realities. In a time of humanism (*ad fontes*) it was a time to return to the sources, which for Luther was the Bible. In doing so, he pioneered a new hermeneutic of Scripture.

The ways in which people interpreted Scripture had changed through the centuries. In fact, the notion of *sola scriptura*, or Scripture alone (and its equivalents) was not unique to Luther. It had often appeared from the fourteenth century onward by both supporters of church councils against the Roman curia, and the supporters of the curia against church councils.<sup>10</sup> Yet what made Luther stand out was his willingness to let Scripture reign supreme and challenge both faith and practice. It is this principle of biblical authority that led to his willingness to translate the Bible into the vernacular. In this way the interpretation of the Bible could begin in a fresh, new way.

Luther recognized the power of Scripture: "I simply taught, preached, wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And then, while I slept, . . . the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a prince or emperor did such damage to it. I did nothing. The Word did it all."<sup>11</sup> Historian Scott Hendrix notes this same significance: It was "putting the Bible into the hands of laity and allowing it to penetrate European culture diversified Christianity to an extent not seen in hundreds of years."<sup>12</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists live and breathe in the atmosphere of Luther's commitment to *sola scriptura*. It is a thoroughly Protestant way of approaching truth. Whereas individuals both before and after Luther's time claim to follow

*sola scriptura*, Seventh-day Adventists take this legacy from Luther seriously.

Martin Luther was a complex individual who taught many things, and who even changed positions and grew in his understanding of Scripture. In some ways he also became embittered, particularly toward the end of his life, through debates with other Reformers about the meaning and significance of the Lord's Supper. Yet despite his flaws he remains one of the most admired individuals in Christian history.

A recent project, named Pantheon, considered every individual on Wikipedia whose page was translated into 25 or more languages. Of the 4,002 such individuals in the arts and sciences who lived prior to 1950, Martin Luther ranked number 5 out of 518 notable people. "Among religious figures, only Jesus, Moses, Muhammad, and Abraham ranked higher than Luther."<sup>13</sup>

The greatest legacy of all, and the one to which Seventh-day Adventists seek to imbibe and model, is his willingness to let the authority of Scripture reign supreme. He was not original in many of his ideas, but he allowed Scripture to challenge his own thinking. He made the Bible available in the vernacular so that others could do the same. While he lived in a world that did not allow for the separation of church and state, in a way he prepared the way for religious liberty and freedom by allowing people to decide for themselves what is truth by studying the Bible.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is an adaptation of material being prepared for a forthcoming collection of essays, edited by Michael W. Campbell and Nikolaus Satelmajer, titled *Martin Luther and Seventh-day Adventism*, forthcoming from Pacific Press.

<sup>2</sup> Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present Day*, rev. and updated (New York: HarperOne, 2010), vol. 2, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> *In ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 68.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Matheson, *The Imaginative World of the Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Mark A. Noll, *In the Beginning Was the Word: The Bible in American Public Life, 1492-1783* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers*, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> Scott H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015), p. ix.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix.



John Wycliffe gives the Bible translation that bore his name to his Lollard followers.

## A Catalyst of Reform

John Wycliffe was called “The Morning Star of the Reformation.”

BY MICHAEL  
W. CAMPBELL

In 1382 John Wycliffe, an Oxford don, was summoned before Archbishop Courtenay to defend himself against charges of heresy. Then an earth tremor shook Lambeth Palace. Each side claimed it was God’s displeasure upon the other. Church leaders were ready to condemn Wycliffe with a list of 10 tenets that were dubbed simply as “heresy.” His writings were placed under the ban.

At the same time historians note that his ideas “provided the most formidable intellectual challenge to the Western church in the later Middle Ages.”<sup>1</sup> At a time when the boundaries of heresy were not well defined, what is remarkable is just how much Wycliffe threatened authorities. What was even more earthshaking than the Lambeth trial were his ideas.

What made Wycliffe’s ideas so dangerous

was his appeal to the authority of Scripture. There were numerous attempts to silence him during his lifetime. His followers, described pejoratively as “Lollards”<sup>2</sup> were pressured to recant. Some did. Those who remained did so at the peril of their lives. Three decades after his death church leaders gathered at the Council of Constance (1414-1418) to condemn his teachings. At that time they condemned Jan Hus, who they claimed taught the same heretical teachings as Wycliffe. Both were condemned to the stake. The first immediately at the council, the latter by later ceremoniously digging up his body, burning it, and removing it from consecrated ground.

So what would cause such a strong reaction on the part of ecclesiastical leaders toward a man who had died decades earlier? In order to better



understand and appreciate his extraordinary life, we must explore his early beginnings.

Little definite information is known about Wycliffe's early years. His family name comes from a Yorkshire village, Wycliffe-on-Tees where his family owned land. At approximately age 12 he came under the jurisdiction of John of Gaunt, one of King Edward III's sons (who as uncle to young King Richard II influenced the throne for a time), and with whom Wycliffe's life would be so closely intertwined.

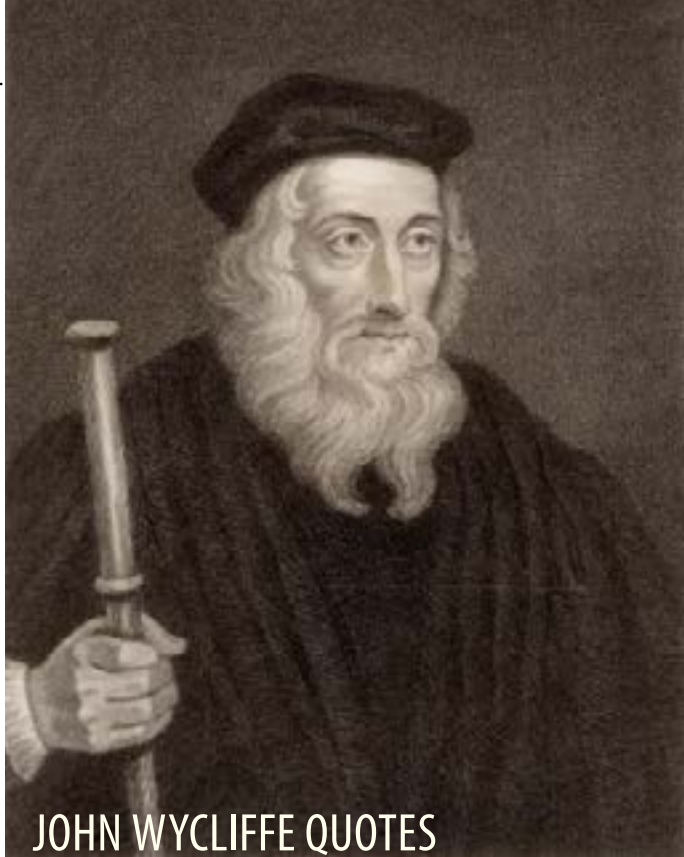
Wycliffe spent most of his time at Oxford University. Historians debate precisely when he was born, but conservative estimates indicate that he most likely was 15 when he began his studies in 1345.<sup>3</sup> This was at a time when universities were a relatively new phenomenon, largely the result of the growth of cities. The earliest appeared in cities such as Paris, Bologna, and Oxford. A student would be required 14 years of study to matriculate through the Faculty of Arts.<sup>4</sup> Wycliffe spent most of his life here. He was "widely recognized as the most brilliant teacher of his time in both philosophy and theology."<sup>5</sup> In particular, he was noted for his erudition and unflinching logic (without a sense of humor).

For a time Wycliffe gave up academic pursuits on behalf of service for the crown. These were crucial and uncertain times for England. French was then the language of the elite. In fact, it was not until 1362, while Wycliffe was still at Oxford, that English became the official language of the courts. It was not until the end of his lifetime that English became the primary language of elementary schools, including children taught at Oxford.

Another significant background influence is the fact that this was a time when the Papacy was divided. Such division advanced French interests at the expense of England, which only created further resentment and resistance toward the papal hierarchy. A series of English statutes (1351, 1353, 1363) sought to limit papal influence in England. One way they expressed their angst was to curb any appeals to courts outside of England and to prohibit the election of ecclesiastical positions independent from the pope.<sup>6</sup>

### Philosophy of Reform

Within this milieu English authorities welcomed arguments by Wycliffe about the nature of lordship or dominion. He expressed these in two major works, *On Divine Dominion* and *On Civil Dominion*. In these works he argued that



## JOHN WYCLIFFE QUOTES

"I believe that in the end the truth will conquer."

"All Christian life is to be measured by Scripture; by every word thereof."

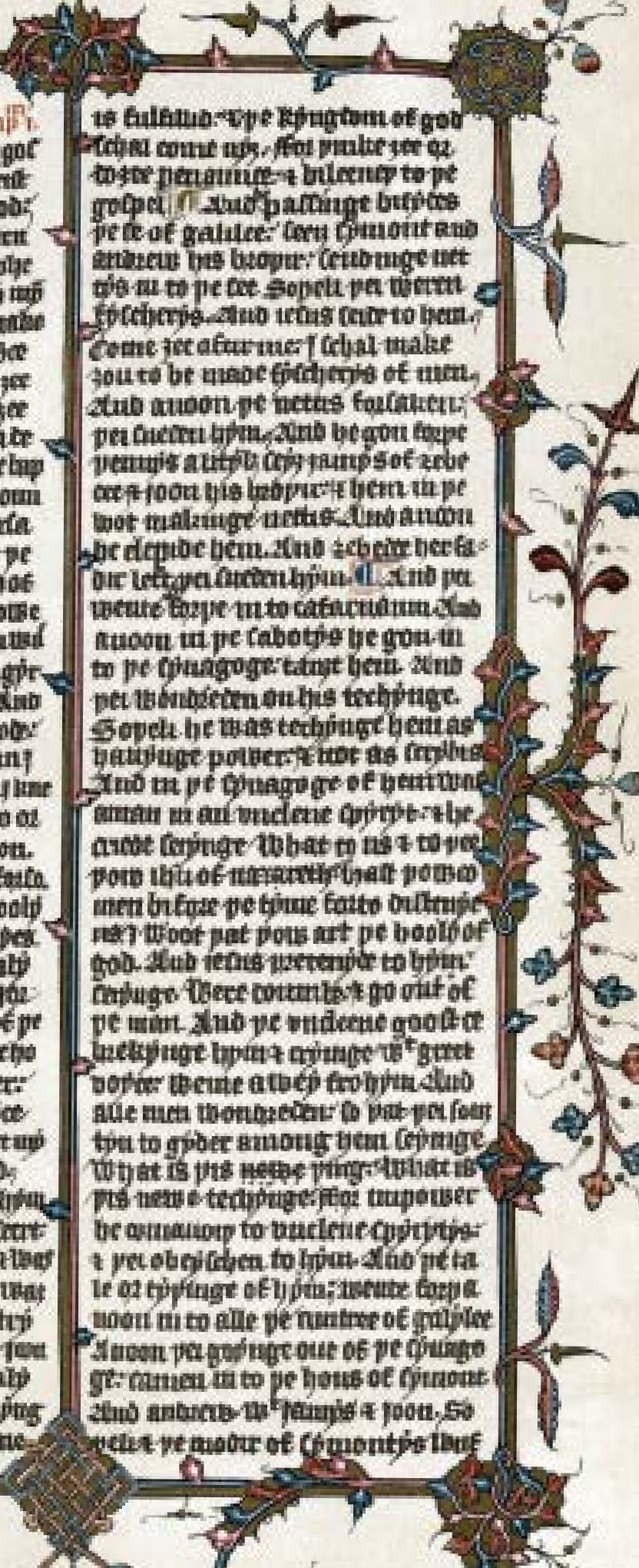
"Englishmen learn Christ's law best in English. Moses heard God's law in his own tongue; so did Christ's apostles."

"Trust wholly in Christ; rely altogether on His sufferings; beware of seeking to be justified in any other way than by His righteousness."

"It is not good for us to trust in our merits, in our virtues or our righteousness; but only in God's free pardon, as given us through faith in Jesus Christ."

"In order to the existence of such a ministry in the church, there is requisite an authority received from God, and consequently power and knowledge imparted from God for the exercise of such ministry; and where a man possesses these, although the bishop has not laid hands upon him according to his traditions, God has Himself appointed him."





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 schal come up. For make ye of  
 to the perauice. & bilence to the  
 gospel. And passage by the  
 se of galilee. Seru Symon and  
 andrew his broþer. Seidunge wet  
 tis to the see. Sopell ye weren  
 fischerys. And icus seide to hem.  
 Come yet after me. I schal make  
 you to be made fischerys of men.  
 And anon ye netes fastaken.  
 ye sueten hym. And he god sepe  
 yemys a wylde cry. Ians of zebr  
 ce. & soon his broþer. & hem in pe  
 wot makunge netes. And anon  
 he clepide hem. And seche her fa  
 dir let ye sueten hym. And ye  
 wente forþe in to cafarudum. And  
 anon in pe saboths he god in  
 to the synagoge. tought hem. And  
 ye wonderen on his techunge.  
 Sopell he was techunge hem as  
 haufuge power. & not as scribis.  
 And in the synagoge of hen tunc  
 man in an uclene cyryt. & he  
 cride seþunge. What to us & to ye  
 pow ihu of nazareth. hast pou  
 men bifore þe þime to us distruc  
 us. Woot þat þis art þe boold of  
 god. And icus weren to hym.  
 seþunge. Were containe. & go out of  
 þe man. And ye uclene god. &  
 lachunge hym. & ayinge is gret  
 dore. weine a wylde fro hym. And  
 alle men wonderen. to þat þe sou  
 þu to gyder among hem seþunge.  
 What is þis newe þing. What is  
 þis newe techunge. for tu power  
 he containe to uclene cyrytys.  
 & ye obelchen to hym. And þe ta  
 le of tyþunge of hym. wente forþe  
 anon in to alle þe nambres of galilee.  
 Anon þe godunge out of the synago  
 ge. came in to the hous of symon.  
 And andrew. & ians & soon. So  
 þat ye madir of comontys luf

all legitimate dominion comes from God. It is characterized by the example of Christ who came to serve, not to be served. Any lordship used for personal profit or gain on the part of the ruler rather than for those who are governed is *not* true dominion. It is usurpation. The same thing holds true for any dominion, no matter how legitimate, which expands its power beyond the limits of its authority. Even ecclesiastical authorities must be sure to collect taxes for the spiritual benefit of their parishioners. Any extension beyond this purpose was simply illegitimate.

In light of the fact that English authorities constantly quarreled with the Papacy, it meant that issues related to the temporal authority of the pope along with matters of taxation quickly became flashpoints. It is therefore no surprise that English civil authorities found Wycliffe's teachings extremely useful to them. Such conflicts led to an English delegation in 1374, during which time Wycliffe went along with other representatives.<sup>7</sup>

Wycliffe insisted that the same limits for religious authorities should apply in the same way to secular authorities. This had unfortunate consequences for Wycliffe, who found himself increasingly alienated from civil authorities. Even John of Gaunt, who exercised his influence to protect Wycliffe, increasingly distanced himself from Wycliffe. Some of his teachings grew more radical. For example, he taught that the true church of Christ was not the pope and his visible hierarchy, but was, instead, the invisible body of Christ predestined to salvation (a point he no doubt drew from Augustine of Hippo). While it is impossible to know precisely who is predestined, he did indicate that God's elect can be inferred from their fruits. The implication was simple: ecclesiastical as well as political leaders, unless they showed fruits in their lives, were reprobate!

It was from this point of reform that Wycliffe insisted upon a return to the authority of Scripture. Only the church can interpret the Bible correctly, he believed. "But this church that owns scripture is the body of all who are predestined," notes historian Justo González, "and therefore the Bible ought to be put back in their hands, and in their own language."<sup>8</sup> This simple logic led Wycliffe to argue for the translation of the Bible from the Latin Vulgate into English. While historians debate precisely to what extent, what is clear is that Wycliffe

« Page from manuscript of the John Wycliffe Bible translation

paved the way for the translation of the Bible into English—a task that occurred mainly after his death. Such translation work of religious works and Scripture into the vernacular was not a unique phenomenon. A century earlier King Alfonso the Wise of Castile ordered the Bible to be translated into Spanish (a process that resulted in the *Biblia alfonsina*). Thus Wycliffe represented a wider milieu of reform as well as a wider impulse to translate sacred writings into the vernacular.

### Controversy

In 1377 the theology of Wycliffe came under increased scrutiny and attack. It was in that year that Pope Gregory XI issued five bulls against him: one sent to King Edward III and the others to the University of Oxford, the chancellor, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of London. Wycliffe was declared a heretic by many at Oxford, and was even briefly incarcerated. Yet his prestige was such that he was allowed to continue his study and writing.

Increased pressure led him to retire to his benefice as rector of the parish church at Lutterworth. The fact that he had earlier received such a gift from the crown in gratitude for his service demonstrates the degree to which such practices permeated the life of the church, even among a reformer such as Wycliffe.<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that it was the proceeds from this ecclesiastical appointment that made his academic career possible. It formed a basis of financial security. Even later on in life, when he needed more cash, he exchanged this appointment for a less productive one and a sum of money.

Yet it was Wycliffe's views about the presence of Christ during Communion that caused the greatest amount of controversy. At the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) the Roman Catholic Church affirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation, the idea that the elements of the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ, which became official church dogma. In his treatise *On the Eucharist* Wycliffe saw this as a denial of the principle manifested in the Incarnation. When Christ became human, He did not destroy humanity. Instead, what takes place in Communion, according to Wycliffe, is that the body of Christ (while indeed present) does not destroy the elements. He argued for a sort of "sacramental" understanding that emphasized the "mysterious way" through which the body of Christ is

present in the Communion service, not just the physical bread.

### Legacy

Wycliffe died from a stroke in 1384. Despite five papal bulls and repeated attempts to stifle his voice, he managed to survive. Part of this was because he had powerful friends, such as John of Gaunt, who came to his aid to protect him. It was partly because of extraordinary circumstances, including English nationalism and the schism that weakened the Papacy.

Still the greatest legacy on the part of Wycliffe was the inspiration he provided to translate the Bible into English. Within a decade of his death the first-ever English translation of the whole Bible appeared. Subsequently known as the "Lollard Bible," it appeared in two versions.<sup>10</sup> After all, it had been the urging of Wycliffe that the Bible be returned to the people. "This English Bible enjoyed notable success . . . as evidenced by the many manuscript copies that survive."<sup>11</sup>

His followers preached God's Word to the people. They continued on a path of reform. Pastors should avoid civil offices. Worship of images, clerical celibacy, and pilgrimages were unnecessary. Transubstantiation and prayers for the dead were rejected. Such tenets were uncanny precursors to the much later Protestant Reformation so defined by Martin Luther. It is no wonder that Wycliffe is referred to as "the morning star of the Reformation."

As a populist movement Lollardism was difficult to squelch. Many were condemned to death. Yet later on it was among the Lollards that the ranks of Protestantism swelled within England.

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Tanner, *The Church in the Late Middle Ages* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008), p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> The word "Lollard" comes from the Dutch *lollen* ("to mumble") and signifies a vagabond or religious eccentric. It should be noted that the closeness of the link between Wycliffe and his Lollard followers is debated, although some recent historians are increasingly sympathetic about this connection.

<sup>3</sup> For an overview of the life of Wycliffe, see Andrew E. Larsen, "John Wyclif, c. 1331-1384," in *A Companion to John Wyclif: Late Medieval Theologian*, ed. Ian Christopher Levy (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp.1-65.

<sup>4</sup> Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, rev. and updated (New York: HarperOne, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 372, 373.

<sup>5</sup> Tanner, pp. 143, 144.

<sup>6</sup> González, p. 412.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.

<sup>10</sup> Tanner, p. 147.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

# Trial By Silence

## The Ordeal of James Arminius

BY MAURICE  
A. ROBINSON

**A** heretic is usually known for his opposition to a confession of faith. Only rarely does a man find himself suspected of heresy when his public witness is orthodox. Such a man was the Dutch theologian James Arminius—suspected of heresy because of his demand for personal religious freedom.

This man, reputed to have been the founder of the theological system called Arminianism, was born and christened Jacob Harmens (or Harmensen) in Oudewater, Holland, in 1560.<sup>1</sup> His relatively short life (died 1609) was immersed

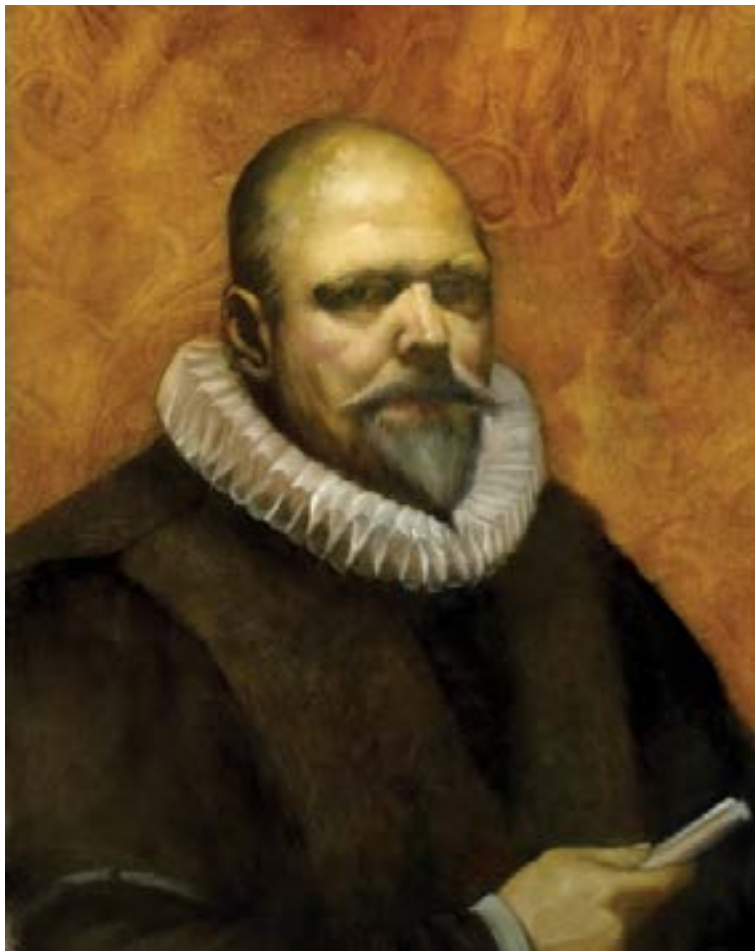
in academic culture. He demonstrated academic excellence at several prominent universities (Leiden, Geneva, Basel), before being appointed professor of theology at Leiden. In 1588 he became pastor of an influential Reformed church in Amsterdam. His pulpit oratory soon became renowned throughout Holland.

Shortly after this appointment, Arminius was urged to defend the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination against the attack of Dirck Coornhert, the former secretary to the tolerant Prince William of Orange (assassinated in 1584). Coornhert had the reputation of being an outspoken “libertine” who favored full religious freedom for all within the Dutch domain.<sup>2</sup> Finding that he agreed with many of Coornhert’s views, Arminius chose not to respond.

He gave no intimation of this altered viewpoint until after 1590, when, while preaching on Romans 7, Arminius suggested there could be other Calvinistic interpretations of the Scriptures apart from those of Calvin’s immediate successors. This mere opinion threw doubt upon Arminius’ orthodoxy, and his Synodical magistrates ordered him to publicly reiterate his ordination vow that he would preach nothing contrary to either the Belgic Confession of 1561 or the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563. Arminius cheerfully complied.

But shortly afterward, while discoursing on Romans 9, Arminius again aroused suspicion by suggesting that that chapter not be used in support of supralapsarian predestination.<sup>3</sup> No proceedings followed, but Arminius voluntarily reiterated his statement of orthodox loyalty. By 1597, concerned over such controversy, Arminius sought resolution of his personal doubts through correspondence with the reviser of the Belgic Confession, Franciscus Junius, professor of theology at Leiden. Junius’ weak replies were hardly sufficient for Arminius, though he maintained dialogue until Junius died in 1602.

Ironically, notwithstanding the previous controversies, Arminius was selected to fill



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Junius' vacancy. This appointment emboldened him to declare his sentiments more openly in classroom lectures. Hearsay concerning his teaching aroused the concern of Franciscus Gomarus, a fellow professor, who in 1603 pressured him into a public disputation concerning Pelagianism<sup>4</sup>—the same heresy of which Arminius had been suspected during his pulpit lecture on Romans. To Gomarus' surprise, Arminius supported the Augustinian refutation of Pelagian errors.

Gomarus, piqued by the result of the debate, suggested openly that Arminius' classroom lecture charges Calvin and especially Beza with making God the author of sin. Arminius countered that Calvin and Beza were not infallible, and that anyone who disagreed with them should not summarily be regarded as unorthodox.

Having found an opening, Gomarus charged Arminius with conditioning the divine decrees upon man's conduct, thereby vitiating grace—a clear contradiction of the Belgic Confession! This charge spread rapidly among the Calvinistic pulpits of Holland, causing such a stir that in June of 1605 a deputation was sent from the Synods of North and South Holland to inquire into the truth of the widespread rumors. The deputies claimed students who had studied under Arminius gave “unusual” replies to questions at their ordination hearing. When queried about the source of their strange answers, they indicated Arminius. The deputies requested a “friendly interview and conversation” about the issue. Arminius refused, since “such a course would inevitably subject me to frequent and almost incessant applications . . . , if anyone thought it needful to pester me in the manner whenever a student made use of a new or uncommon answer, and in excuse pretended to have learned it from me.”<sup>5</sup>

However, Arminius offered an alternative: Should a student's answer ever be considered in opposition to the faith of the church, Arminius was “ready to travel at my own expense to any place where the brethren should appoint” to personally confront that student,<sup>6</sup> upon whom the burden of orthodoxy would rightfully rest—not on Arminius.

But Francis Lansbergius, one of the deputies, continued to demand a declaration of sentiments from Arminius himself. Arminius replied that he was neither responsible to the deputies nor to their synods in this matter, and would not reply to any doctrinal questions unless specifically so ordered by his immediate superiors.

Arminius did offer the deputies a private

discussion of his views on condition that nothing should be made public except that in which both parties were agreed. Since this procedure would defeat the purpose of the deputies' mission, they declined the offer.

The controversy grew. On July 28, 1605, the Elders of the Church of Leiden requested a similar conference, with the additional stipulation that “other persons . . . equally concerned . . . [could] be summoned before the same ecclesiastical tribuna.”<sup>7</sup>

On November 9, 1605, the synodical deputies demanded another conference. But this time the matter was taken up with the curators of the University of Leiden rather than with Arminius. All professors of divinity were asked to respond to nine questions of doctrine. The curators refused, noting that, should anyone be taught “contrary to truth, . . . that person had it in his power to complain to a national synod.”<sup>8</sup> Only after the failure of this mission was the matter revealed to Arminius.<sup>9</sup>

The matter then rested for a full year, but early in 1607 Arminius was once again approached by several deputies, who asked him to divulge his true views “confidentially.” Again he refused, claiming that his answers would be misinterpreted, for “in matters of this description, everyone was the most competent interpreter of his own meaning.”<sup>10</sup> But Arminius did promise to make full disclosure at the national synod in August of 1609, “with no concealment of any area of which they might complain,” the national synod being the only forum “in which it was possible to explain these matters with . . . Propriety.”<sup>11</sup>

But two years was too long. Later in 1607 some ministers asked Arminius to divulge his views to them “in the fear of the Lord.”<sup>12</sup> Arminius declined, stating that there was no cause to discuss anything. However, he did propose to one minister a public conference on the Articles of Religion, with the purpose of “establishing the truth . . . and refuting every species of falsehood.”<sup>13</sup> Not wishing his own orthodoxy to come under question, the minister respectfully declined. At this, Arminius revealed that he had divulged views to individuals, but had halted the practice since what had been told in confidence generally became public knowledge within a short while.

In June of 1607, during the preparatory convention of the national synod, the states' general requested a presentation of Arminius' views in order to establish the correct agenda for debate. After Arminius' refusal, contrived articles

**Arminius countered that Calvin and Beza were not infallible, and that anyone who disagreed with them should not summarily be regarded as unorthodox.**

purportedly written by Arminius were circulated among the delegates. Arminius established that he had written them, and eventually proved that one present at the conference had composed them.<sup>14</sup> The convention then attempted to entrap Arminius by asking him to state publicly with which portion of the false articles he agreed and with which he disagreed. Arminius responded that the convention did not originally meet for such a purpose, and therefore no response was necessary; furthermore, convention rules specifically charged it “not to enter into any conference concerning doctrine.”<sup>15</sup> The issue had to be dropped.

Eventually, in a formal statement before the States of Holland in October, 1608, Arminius presented a strong defense of his refusals:

“I never furnished a cause to any man why he should require a declaration from me rather than from other people, by my having taught anything contrary to the word of God, or to the Confession and Catechism . . . I did not consider myself at liberty to consent . . . , lest I should, by that very act, and apparently through a consciousness of guilt, have confessed that I had taught something that was wrong or unlawful.”<sup>16</sup>

During this period two charges were being developed against Arminius: (1) he refused to declare his beliefs; and (2) he was trying to corrupt the Christian religion through false doctrines. Arminius replied, “If I do not openly profess my sentiments, from what can their injurious tendency be made evident?”<sup>17</sup>

It was then objected that Arminius revealed some beliefs while concealing others. Arminius replied that could it be shown that his “revealed” beliefs were opposed to the church standards, only then should they have grounds for suspecting his “secretly held doctrines” to be contrary; without such proof, such charges were absurd!<sup>18</sup>

Arminius admitted that he did hold some “peculiar views . . . on religious topics, which would not be finally settled until the life hereafter.” But he promised to reveal those views at the national assembly, “that . . . they may be considered together.”<sup>19</sup>

At the end of 1608 Arminius appeared conciliatory:

“I am prepared to confer . . . that we may either agree in our sentiments; or, if this result cannot be obtained by a conference, that we bear with each other . . . and what things they are of which we approve or disapprove, and that these points of difference are not of such a description as to forbid professors of the same religion

to hold different sentiments about them.”<sup>20</sup>

Again he said:

“Some things are of such a nature as to render it unlawful for any man to feel a doubt concerning them, if he have any wish to be called by the name of Christian. But there are other things which are not of the same dignity, and about which [Christians] . . . have dissented from each other, without any breach of truth and Christian peace.”<sup>21</sup>

Should the national synod find him wrong in any particular, said Arminius, he would, “without reluctance, resign my situation, and give place to a man possessed of greater merit.”<sup>22</sup>

Following the settling of preliminary matters, the national synod of August 1609 finally turned to the case of Arminius. But a greater Providence intervened: Arminius, suffering from tuberculosis, died in the midst of his presentations on October 19, 1609. His incomplete declaration resulted in the Remonstrant schism by those who claimed to be his disciples. Enlarging upon whatever Arminius himself may have believed, they developed the system of theology now known as Arminianism.

Maurice Robinson wrote this while living in Raleigh, North Carolina.

<sup>1</sup>Biological details are from either W. R. Bagnall, “Life of James Arminius,” in *The Works of James Arminius*, 3 vols., trans. James Nichols (Buffalo: Derby, Miller and Orton, 1853), vol. 1, pp. 9-15; or from Roger Nicole, “James Arminius,” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. E. H. Palmer (Wilmington, Del.: National Foundation for Christian Education, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 405-411.

<sup>2</sup>Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Reason Begins*, *The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961), vol. VII, p. 495.

<sup>3</sup>The doctrine that the decree of election and reprobation, expressing the ultimate purpose was to be accomplished, namely, the decree of man’s creation and the decree which permitted his fall.

<sup>4</sup>Doctrine of Pelagius, a British monk who lived in Rome in the early part of the fifth century A.D. and who denied original sin and maintained the freedom of the will and its power to attain righteousness.

<sup>5</sup>James Arminius, “A Declaration of Sentiments,” *Works*, vol. 1, p. 195.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 204-208.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>20</sup>James Arminius, “An Apology . . . Against Certain Theological Articles,” *Works*, vol. 1, p. 376.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 376.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*



# WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

BY REUEL S. AMDUR

**T**rinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Missouri, runs a licensed preschool and day-care program. This program includes religious teaching. There is also a recreation area for students. To quote the opinion of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, the state's Department of Natural Resources "offers Playground Scrap Tire Surface Material Grants, a solid waste-management program. The grants provide DNR funds to qualifying organizations for the purchase of recycled tires to resurface playgrounds, a beneficial reuse of this solid waste." This play area is open to the public when not in use for the preschool and day-care program.

The department rejected the church's application for a grant because the Missouri constitution states that "no money shall ever be taken from the public treasury, directly or indirectly, in aid of any church." Trinity Lutheran appealed to the courts. They lost before district and appeals courts. Next stop—the Supreme Court.

A number of issues are raised by this case. While most people will agree with the principle of separation



AP PHOTO/MIKE DERER

Recycled rubber makes playgrounds safer.

of church and state, the issue is one of boundaries. In her book *Liberty of Conscience* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), Martha Nussbaum tries to set some limits: “The modern state is ubiquitous in people’s lives, and if we really tried to separate church from state all the way, this would lead to a situation of profound unfairness. Imagine what it would be like if the fire department refused to aid a burning church, if churches didn’t have access to the public water supply or the sewer system, if the police would not investigate crimes on church property, if clergy could not vote or run for office” (p. 11).

Nussbaum argues that the kind of strict (in her view, rigid) policy of church and state embodied in the government’s decision in cases such as this dates back to the nineteenth century and finds its roots in anti-Catholic sentiment and fear of a Catholic takeover.

While lawyers and scholars such as Nussbaum parse case law to come to a position, here we attempt to look at some of the issues to focus on key points to be considered, in some instances not focusing on legal decisions, in other cases indeed considering them as well.

To begin, consider the role of the Department of Natural Resources. The department has a problem on its hands: a huge accumulation of used tires that need to be disposed of. One solution taken is to provide grants to approved organizations to purchase ground-up

tires for use on playgrounds. This solution has something of a *quid pro quo* quality to it. You help us reduce the quantity of old tires we’re stuck with. We help you to use a byproduct of this waste in surfacing a recreational site. In these terms, any church-state issue appears rather tenuous. The situation becomes even more tenuous when we remember that the general public has access to the play area when not in use by the early-education program.

Yet the Trinity Lutheran program does include a religious education component. How serious is this as a drawback to inclusion of the church in the tire-recycling exercise? Because the general public has access to the grounds, and because the ground tires supposedly make the grounds more suitable, does refusing Trinity Lutheran their request for a grant constitute a disadvantage to the community in general—perhaps even in terms of safety? To put it another way, had the department granted Trinity Lutheran the subsidy on grounds of general welfare in the play area, would the courts have upheld a challenge to that decision?

Nussbaum’s argument in supporting a looser arrangement looks at various scenarios. For one, she comments with approval on a Supreme Court ruling upholding a New Jersey law providing transportation for schoolchildren not only to public but also to other nonprofit schools, most of which would be Catholic parochial schools. Let us for the moment suppose

that the Court had held the opposite. Would the child attending the parochial school have had the right to the bus trip to the public school, across the street from their own school?

She also cites another case, in which New York City used federal money for remedial reading in public and parochial schools. While the Supreme Court ruled against the service provided to parochial schools by 5 to 4, the dissenters and Nussbaum urged that the public interest in children learning to read should be paramount in this case. On the other hand, one might argue that the parochial schools should have the burden of providing their own remedial program. If the government covers it, it relieves the parochial schools of the need to do so and permits them to use its funds for sectarian purposes.

But how far should such disallowance go? Public health nurses provide service in public schools. Should they also go to parochial schools? The general health needs of the community require an adequate level of immunization, and thus the nurses need to get to as many children as possible. In this situation, strict separation can be seen as a health hazard.

Nussbaum argues that the Supreme Court's tilt toward a more rigid separatist position goes hand in hand with a liberal fear of the Catholic Church and a hostility to its ideology. The two come to the same thing to a large extent. In her treatment of this question she attempts to be evenhanded.

On the one hand, she points to the critiques of the church by the likes of Paul Blanshard, whose books *American Freedom and Catholic Power* and *Communism, Democracy and Catholic Power* warned of the danger of the political power and ambition of the Catholic Church. Nussbaum argues that he ignored Catholic thinkers who were firm democrats, such as Jacques Maritain and John Courtney Murray. However, while there were such Catholic thinkers, they can hardly be said to have established the Catholic brand in the past. Nussbaum herself provides the evidence: "Many Catholic bishops in the U.S. openly favored the rise of fascism in Italy and Spain, spoke in glowing terms of Mussolini's achievements, praised Franco, and failed to deplore fascist attacks on liberty. The popular 'radio priest' Father Charles Coughlin, who used his program to fan the flames of anti-Semitism in the 1930s, became a

symbol of what many Americans feared."

The Catholic Church today is still in many ways socially conservative. However, it consciously avoids encouraging extreme behavior. Because of the attacks on abortion providers, it now refrains from labeling doctors and clinics involved as "baby killers," "murderers," and such. The bishops do not want to be complicit in injury or murder of doctors.

We face conflicting pulls. On the one hand, we want religious freedom in all its fullness and we do not want the imposition of faiths in which we do not believe. On the other hand, religious elements are mixed with social goals, which we see as positive. How can we maximize the good and preserve the state's religious neutrality to the greatest extent possible?

Then permit us a third hand. How do we protect churches from the state? To state the obvious, churches that are opposed to gay marriage do not perform them, and the decisions recognizing them should not be seen as a reason to force churches to perform them. Nor do our demands for equality justify forcing the Catholic Church to have female priests.

In Canada, churches and charities were put under pressure by the previous Conservative government to minimize "political" activity. One charity was told that it could not have as its stated purpose to work to abolish poverty. Too political. But it was acceptable for it to work to alleviate poverty. The pressure took the form of threatening charitable status, the ability to issue receipts for tax purposes.

A few religious institutions voluntarily reject tax-free status, but they are very few indeed. How many churches would try to survive without the right to issue such receipts?

Getting back to Trinity Lutheran's play area. How deeply is the wall between church and state breached by some money to cover the ground with shredded rubber for a children's play area? The area is used in a program that includes religious education, but it is also a playground open to the general public. If we really want that wall to be tight, should the state forbid all non-Lutherans from using the play area?

And as for the Department of Natural Resources, what are they going to do with all those tires?

Reuel S. Amdur writes from Val-des-Monts, Québec, Canada.



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"Since then your serene Majesty and your Lordships seek a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed. Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen."

—Martin Luther's reply to the Diet of Worms, April 18, 1521.

