18 The Gift of the Law: How (Not) to Be Free

32 What Does It Mean to Love Your Neighbor?

38 Sola Scriptura

22 When Pastors Hurt
He can’t read, but Nagaraju shares the love of God with his family, friends, and neighbors—thanks to a Talking Bible!

**Bay of Bengal, India.** Nagaraju is a fisherman from India. He has been working since he was a youth and never had a formal education. He cannot read. Two years ago, he received a Talking Bible. He began listening to the Bible for the first time in his life and soon believed in Jesus as his Lord and Savior. His mother, wife, and two children have also become Christians. The family listens to the Talking Bible daily.

Since becoming a Christian, Nagaraju uses his Talking Bible so others can hear the Good News about Jesus Christ. He says, “The Talking Bible creates interest because people have not seen anything like it, and this gives me an opportunity to share with them about Jesus. I play the Talking Bible and share my testimony of what Jesus has done for me.”

Please give a gift today to provide Talking Bibles to non-readers. Families are waiting for their chance to listen. People are eager to share God’s love with those around them. They need God’s Word in their own language.

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FEATURES

18 The Gift of the Law: How (Not) to Be Free
By obeying God’s law, we’re living into the life we’re made for.
by James K.A. Smith

32 What Does It Mean to Love Your Neighbor?
There’s more to sponsoring a refugee family than meets the eye.
by Marianne Van Delft

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE

DEPARTMENTS

Editorial: Beyond Our Fears by Shiao Chong 6
Can we honestly and deeply examine our hearts?

Catch Your Breath: Presence by Janelle Haegert 7
In God’s presence I find rest, not fear.

IMHO: Growing Spiritually When You Don’t Like to Read by Anthony J. Gretz 8
What does growing in faith look like when you’re not a reader?

Letters to the Editor 8

News: Trinity Christian College Student Brings Special Ed to Ethiopia 10

Frequently Asked Questions 17
Discipleship and justice are two sides of the same coin.

Discipleship: Ashes at the Airport by Valerie Van Kooten 21
Observing Ash Wednesday at the airport just might be the best way to do it.

Just for Kids: Thinking Outside the Box by Sandy Swartzentruber 30
Boxes here, boxes there, boxes everywhere . . .

Tuned In: Ruined by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema 34
Ruth Everhart’s memoir of trauma and spiritual recovery.

Relating: What Youth Leaders and Parents Wish Each Other Knew by Rich Visser and Dean Heetderks 36
Nurturing young adults in the church is a shared task.

Reformed Matters: Sola Scriptura by James R. Payton Jr. 38
For Luther and other Reformers, Scripture was the ultimate religious authority.

Punch Lines 47

TOGETHER DOING MORE

When Pastors Hurt by Chris Meehan 22
A full-blown panic attack hit Rev. Rick Nanninga as he was preaching.

The View from Here: What Will I Give Up for Lent? by Steve Timmermans 26
Beyond Our Fears

AS I WRITE THIS, the hearts of many Banner readers are troubled by the political unrest in the United States and the horrific mosque shooting in Canada. Regardless of our political leanings, these events should make us reflect on how to love our neighbors—including refugees, citizens, Christians, Muslims, and the unborn. But the North American church is divided on how best to do this collectively.

Some Christians have felt vilified, misunderstood, and marginalized over the past eight years. And they feel they are being vilified again for their pro-life stance in voting for the new president. Other Christians feel hurt by the victory of a person they regard as a symbol of misogyny and racism. And they are taking their protest to the streets. Still others are unable to make sense of it all. These tensions are dividing Christian Reformed families across the continent.

Can we acknowledge there is hurt and pain all around? Can we, even in disagreement, be gracious to each other? I know there are lives in jeopardy—the unborn, refugees, and others—and that creates a sense of urgency and angst. All lives, in wombs or in war-torn fields, are sacred. This is why it’s so hard to speak into this. But I think we need to pause, for the long-term sake of those lives, as much as for our own spiritual lives.

I believe deep fears are underlying our activism, arguments and, yes, politics, on all sides. And our anger may be masking our fears—the “fight” in our fight-or-flight response. I believe we—conservative, liberal, or neither—need to honestly and deeply examine our hearts. Can we name our fears?

“Blessed are the peacemakers,” said Jesus, “for they will be called children of God” (Matt. 5:9). But God’s peace is not simply a ceasefire. The original Hebrew concept of peace is shalom, in which everything flourishes under God’s love. Shalom-making needs God’s love, God’s work, and ours, requiring time and trust. And shalom-making cannot be done out of fear because fear causes us to divide the world into “us” and “them,” into friends and enemies. “When peacemaking is based on fear,” wrote Henri Nouwen, “it is not much different from war making” (Seeds of Hope). In our zeal for defending various causes—for refugees, for the unborn, for the poor, for national security, for women, for people of color—have we inadvertently turned our efforts into war making? Have we relied on the weapons of the world in our efforts at furthering God’s kingdom?

God’s peace does not come from eradicating our enemies but by eradicating enmity. It comes from getting rid of scapegoating rather than our scapegoats. The real enemies are the devil and the demonic powers. And they love to divide and conquer.

Can we strive for reconciliation, even in our political activism, rather than for a “winner takes all” outcome? The victorious Lion of Judah is the lamb who was slain (Rev. 5:5-6). God’s path to victory so often passes through self-sacrifice.

In my April editorial I will explore what it means for us to be citizens of God’s kingdom while being citizens of an earthly nation. But for now, I think we, regardless of our politics, need to examine ourselves: have we allowed our fears rather than God’s love to drive our politics?

Whatever our fears, Jesus has promised this: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27).

Have we allowed our fears rather than God’s love to drive our politics?

P.S. Watch for our annual appeal in your mailbox or inbox. Please consider a donation so we can keep the conversation going. Thank you!