

OpenTheo

What's Going Right in the Church?

February 9, 2022



Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

In this episode, Kevin is joined once again by Justin and Collin as they discuss all that is going right in the church. While there are many problems we can—and at times should—point out, there are also many signs of blessing, reform, and faithfulness in the church today. Kevin, Justin, and Collin make a special point to encourage pastors. Turning to books, they discuss two recent books Kevin has read—one book about global politics shifting from left/right to insider/outsider divisions, and the other book about family and civilization. Join the three amigos as they talk on this episode of LBE about many topics from the ridiculous to the sublime.

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Transcript

[Music] Greetings in salutations. Glad to have you with us. Welcome to Life and Books and everything.

I am your host, Kevin Deung, and I am joined once again by our faithful crew. Good to have the whole band back together, Justin Taylor, Colin Hanson. Before we get into our topics for today, just want to thank again Crossway for sponsoring Life and Books and everything and bring to your attention the New Testament Theology series, edited by Tom Schreiner and Brian Rossner.

Say Rossner, Rossner. I read his stuff. I haven't met Brian before.

But the first volume now available from Tom Schreiner, *The Joy of Hearing, A Theology of the Book of Revelation, Second Volume*, also available by Patrick Schreiner, *The Mission of the Triune God of Theology of Acts*. And there are other ones coming up later this year on *Union with Christ and Theology of Luke* and great series. So thank you to Crossway, check that out, and glad to have them sponsoring the program.

Colin and Justin, when was the last time we were all taught? Well, we talk on text fairly often, but it's been a while, a couple months at least. Anything noteworthy, anything, I don't even know the answer to this, anything noteworthy, fun, exciting that you've done since whenever we last talked before Christmas, Colin, the Chiefs, sorry. Yeah, that wasn't fun.

COVID also on Christmas, that wasn't fun. So your family had COVID? Just me and my family had COVID. Yeah, my baby, my infant son did as well.

There's I can tell, same in the test of anything. That's not your wife, you don't just refer to her as my baby. No, no, no, my actual, my actual seven month old baby.

We had symptoms basically, but yeah, that part wasn't fun, but I don't know. I mean, I got to, I taught my class on cultural apologetics at Beeson Divinity School. That was a lot of fun.

So that's my highlight. I want to hear from Justin. Justin, if you say, yeah, COVID ran through our family.

I didn't get it. A number of us had had it a year ago, and despite the vaccines, a number of us got it again. So I want to talk about the transfer portal in Nebraska, how well they've done in the off season.

No, we've won the off season once again, but we won't have to belabor big things. We could talk about that Northwestern Nebraska basketball game. Yeah, that was Northwestern Michigan State game from that's true.

Look at that two weeks ago. That makes me the temporary LBE champion. Yeah, yeah, the thing about the transfer portal, it does give hope for second tier teams.

It must be incredibly frustrating. I mean, it has changed. We'll change college athletics.

You need to recruit your team every year now. You don't just, you get them in. So you got to recruit them for early signing, but that doesn't mean you got to recruit them for final signing.

You can recruit them every month every year. I mean, it fundamentally must change how you think about, well, I better play this guy some. I better not.

If you had a four-year strategy or a three-year strategy, I'm going to break him down. He's going to watch some film. We're going to build him up.

Now you got to think this guy doesn't like it after your one. He's gone. Well, and also think about the NIL stuff that basically boosters are getting together and saying we need to come up with a certain amount of sponsorship that we can give these athletes.

And one of the podcasts I listened to said Adrian Martinez, I'm not Nebraska. Only won three games last year, but they said that he made almost a million dollars in 2020. I mean, so that affects where you're going to go to school.

If you're going to go to someplace where you're not going to make much money or you could be making, you could be doing better than some NFL players. Nebraska was three and nine and didn't they score an equal number of points for and against? Many people have said they are the single greatest team, three and nine team in college. Many people in Nebraska said that.

It's many, many people in Nebraska. Dozens of them. Why is it? Am I alone in this? Just staying on the banter.

Lots of people are hitting the 30 second forward button right now, but I cannot ever remember being less interested in the Olympics than I am right now. And it's a combination of China being a repressive regime hosting the Olympics again. COVID so that there's no fans and you have, I mean, we know more about this than we did two years ago and you're still having, you're having teams mask up within 95 as they're playing each other.

That was the Canada Russia hockey game and that the time changes. I can't figure out when is that? When are these things happening? I already heard about this. It's coming on however many hours later and the winter Olympics.

I do. I love the Olympics, but yeah, it's harder, at least as Americans, some are Olympics. You at least feel like I've shot a basketball before.

I've run around a track. Winter Olympics, I don't know. Maybe it's different in Norway.

Maybe listeners in Norway, you're always skiing and then stopping to shoot things. Maybe you just have an automatic rifle on your back, you know, slipping around the fjords, looking for Elsa or whatever else, but it's different in America. They're just all, we don't go in Bob sleds.

Most of us, we don't go down looshes. So it's harder to relate to some of the sports. Are you guys watching anything of the winter Olympics? I'm trying to imagine Kevin right now in a figure skating routine.

I really quite don't. Don't picture it too precisely. Kevin, I have to, I pick you as a guy who appreciates the art of curling.

Well, curling does have the ironic like, man, these are a bunch of, looks like, what did you say? What's like, dads who are, who are just screaming at this stone and it has a sort of ironic, cool factor, but it still is curling. I knew when it was on, but it seems like there's like 15 round, Robin rounds of curling. I just bring me to the climax of it.

Sort of like Jim Gaffigan said with bowling. Any sport that you can smoke a cigarette in between your rounds. Or the Jerry Seinfeld that was lose or skeleton.

It's like, I don't want to go on the lose. Well, just go. You didn't die.

You want to go with metal. You made it to the bottom of the cell. Everything's more fun though when you're introducing it to your children.

You know, my daughter confidently pronounced that she was not as interested in these snow Olympics. And I thought we really should just change it. They should just be the snow Olympics.

That's much more interesting than Winter Games, Winter Olympics. But I mean, I can, it's interesting when you're, it's amazing how my son after about two minutes is an expert in the luge. Or in, you know, or in jumping because, you know, this is the old block.

Yeah, exactly. You're like, oh, I can't believe it, dad. He hit the side.

He hit the side. And then you listen for sophisticated commentary and it's like, oh, yeah, that was a mistake. He hit the side there.

Yeah. Well, I did watch about 30 seconds yesterday. And then I went over to the Pro Bowl, which was, oh, they're not going to tackle anyone, but it's still football.

And we only have one game left before that sad part of the year. But, you know, they were talking about the, it was one of the cross country skiing things and how the Norwegians were getting shut out. And the guy announcing just said, this is going to be a complete embarrassment for the Norwegians.

Nobody pours more money and more fame into this. No one has built up their program. I just, I, how does this guy know? But he must know, he must travel to Norway for various skiing events.

So that no, no LBE episode has mentioned Norway more times in the first nine minutes than this one. We could, we could try to top it a different time. I mean, skiing definitely that's, that's, that's their thing.

So cross country skiing. I mean, just to get around. I just, it's a big deal in Minnesota.

Yeah. I mean, I think the reminder of, the reminder watching it of the pandemic in part because of it being in China, not just because of the, not just because there's no fans, not because of the masks and things like that. But it's just the whole thing as I was watching, I thought, man, I'm just not in the right headspace to be able to be enjoying this, I guess.

And, and I suppose in some ways, that's the right reaction. And then I was watching the opening ceremonies trying to figure out how is NBC going to do this? And then I just got kind of frustrated about the, the, the gross inconsistencies in our media of what, for financial purposes, people are willing to overlook when it's a different country, like China and focus on when it's our country. So I can understand, but then I just stop and say, Oh, well, this is the first time my son's ever watching the four man Bob sled, or whenever that comes up and like, well, he should watch, I remember watching that for the first time and thinking that was pretty cool.

You should watch, there's a documentary called cool runnings. That's right. Entirely accurate, John Candy was a world class coach.

I remember that. My kids actually watched that a few weeks ago. All right.

Okay. From and the ridiculous of the supply. I'm good to have you with us.

I thought we would try to, to speak a positive note. There's lots of back and forth online and elsewhere about the church and what are the problems with the evangelical church. And certainly there are lots of problems in all sorts of directions and there are, there's a time and place to talk about that.

But let's think about positively because one thing that certainly the Internet doesn't do is push us toward positive story. That's just the news in general. And it's the cable news before that it's newspaper.

Now it's Internet news tells something that's new and faithful people doing the same thing for another five years is not news. So tragedy makes news controversy. Failure makes news.

So we almost always have a jaded sense of what is really going on. And the better we realize we don't really know what's going on, the better we are to take what we do here. So I want us to talk about, and this will admittedly be imperfect as well because we don't have an omniscient view of things.

Only God does. But from where you guys are, what do you see positive? What's, what encourages you about what's going on in the church today? You can talk very small in your church. You can talk about evangelical reform dish, our circles of churches.

Or you can, what do you see globally? But give me some things that have you encouraged when it's easy to just focus on discouragement. Colin? Yeah. So one of the things that I have as a discipline I try with myself is just to remember, like to look at what's around me, to look what's tangible, to look in my community.

And it's an interesting thing to, to be reading the New York Times or to be watching social media and seeing a lot of, a lot of complaints, a lot of lament, some of it worthy, some of it not. And then to go to church and to not be able to find a space to sit or to park because there are too many hundreds of college students and young people who want to be there to hear the word of God and to hear testimony from my friend of overcoming a particular sin. And the grace shown to him by God and by the church and by his friends and by his wife.

And then I bounce over to another church to, you know, since I can't get into my own church to go visit one of my friends nearby and going from a non-denominational to an Anglican service and just being able to sit through a beautiful Anglican service there. My, my life is surrounded by churches that have hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of eager young people in them. And it's not just one denomination, it's not just one necessarily theological persuasion.

Maybe you could just say, well that's unique to Birmingham, Alabama because of some of the things we have here, like Samford University. But I guess there's a, there's a real temptation to both say, well that means the bigger issues must not be a problem. Sure.

But then there's also the temptation to think that whatever I'm experiencing there, whatever we're seeing is, is not real. And then when I'm, when I'm in a class and, excuse me, when I'm in a class and they're just eager seminary students who want to serve the Lord, they want to learn. They're, they're eager to, they're eager to study and they, they show up, they fight off, they bring their kids to class when necessary.

They're fighting off COVID. They're, I mean, but they just, they want to be there. They're eager to read.

They're eager to engage their, I mean that's, that, that's what I get to see. And very little that has anything to do with things that I'm doing. It's, it's just what God is, how God seems to be blessing.

And so that's, that's what I'm encouraged by is the actual ministry or just last night somebody coming over for dinner and asking me, Hey, do you have any recommendations on books related to apologetics because I've been having some questions and concerns about my faith and like, well, yes, rarely do I get set up so well. So absolutely, here's some books that we just produced and, and I think that'll be helpful. Let's, let's get together and talk about that.

So it just seems that when I start looking around and I can focus on, on what God's doing there in my actual environment as opposed to online, it doesn't square very well with a lot of the complaints that I see online. Yeah, I resonate with that. I'll just give three categories where I see really encouraging things.

One, you mentioned at the student level seminary. I know RTS best, but got lots of friends at Westminster and Southern and other places and hear good reports. But the students I have in my classes come from all over the country.

They come from different parts of the world and thinking this course I'm teaching this semester, Scotland, England, Malaysia, Mexico, I had one from Greece before. So it, and they don't have an axe to grind. They're eager to learn.

They're open. They're at least at a place like RTS. They're warm-hearted, evangelical, wannabe reforms.

Some are reformed Baptists, most are Presbyterians. But hey, give us good theology. Give us good exegesis.

And we, and they, when I teach my pastoral ministry class, they all love Don Carson's book about his dad, Ordinary Pastor. So many of them write papers when I, in that class, say this is the best book I've read in seminary. I read it twice.

I made my wife read it. We cried through it. This is what I want to be.

I want to be an Ordinary Pastor. I just want to be faithful over my life. And that's not the exception.

That's the norm. That's really encouraging. And I think about related to that, all of the impressive resources.

Crossway, Justin, thank you. It's a big part of that. There's, there's other really good publishers doing great stuff.

We just had an RTS faculty retreat a few weeks ago. I think this is amazing. I don't know, 45 guys there.

And the stuff that they're working on, some of which is more popular level for people in the church and others, is really a top shelf guys in the, in the guild who are doing excellent work on theology or Old Testament or ancient Near East stuff. I mean, there, there's really a lot of great material being put out. I think there's a rediscovery.

That's too strong a word, but a re-enthusiasm for systematic theology. There's been these biblical theology series, a appreciation for classic theism and all that goes with simplicity and immutability and impassibility. I mean, there, there are a lot of strong doctrinal currents going on that we wouldn't have known weren't as strong, but they

actually weren't as strong 30, 40, 50 years ago.

And then I'll say globally. I'm, I don't travel as much as some people, certainly the last two years, but I've been to a fair number of places and almost everywhere I go, they're telling me stories, whether it's UK or it's the Middle East or it's Brazil or people are telling me stories of we're seeing a hunger for good theology. We're seeing new pastors.

We're seeing new training networks. We're seeing new initiatives for education. Now, there's lots of struggles too, but there's lots of really good things.

And then finally, I'll just say on a local level, yeah, every one of our churches, every pastor can talk about the pains and the hurts. But again, just what I see, by and large, are lots of ordinary faithful Christians who, you know, it's like our church. We're trying to get people to sign up because we want to be a host church for an Afghan refugee family.

And it's a lot of work to do that. And that's what churches all over the country are doing things like that. And I see just here in our PCA presbytery.

Yeah, there's some churches that are more aligned with than others. But almost all of these, I would feel like, yes, go there. Yes, get the gospel there.

Yes, you're going to have faithful brothers preaching. There's going to be men and women and children who are basically moving in the same direction. So there's so many, I think, ordinary things going on at a local level that generally the church, I think, in, you know, a Bible tradition, the SBC, which I don't know as well as my own denomination, the PCA are faithful men and women who are signing up to bring meals to new moms, who are putting in their, their check in the offering plates online, who are volunteering to help teach ESL, who are trying to share their faith at work.

And they got marriage problems and they got kids problems and they got sin issues they have to deal with. But there's a lot of ordinary faithfulness continue to go on that nobody sees. And we need to celebrate that.

Justin, what do you say? What are you seeing? Yeah, I mean, you guys took some of mine. That's, it is encouraging. And I think that those of us who are reformed minded, which all of us are, we want to see the church continually reformed, can so focus on what's wrong with the church? Where are we falling short? And we don't stop in counter blessings and don't offer encouragement for small faithfulness.

I'm in a small church right now. There's usually less than 100 people on a Sunday and there's a woman who her husband left her several years ago, lives by herself. She's faithful.

Godly has really grown in the Lord and she teaches a little Sunday school class. Sometimes it's just our two youngest kids, one of whom has special needs and she's

there every Sunday preparing her lesson, teaching them. And there's no reward for that.

She doesn't get much praise. She certainly doesn't get any money. Nobody on the interwebs has ever heard of her.

But that's an example of tens of thousands of people like that every Sunday, every Wednesday night, a wan of volunteers at churches across the country. Yeah, one of the things that struck me just thinking about this question is that when I was in college and getting involved in peer-at-church ministries, the peer-at-church was sort of my lifeblood and connection and I went to church on Sunday. So church was obligatory, peripheral, but the peer-at-church was sort of where it's at.

And I think that if you were to go to the final T4G conference coming up, the next TGC conference, and you were to bump into somebody randomly and say, "What church are you part of and how are you involved?" I think that our wing of Christendom is very church-centered these days. That's my own subjective observation. Kevin, I know that you and Ted Kluck wrote the book and why we love the church responding to sort of arguments for and practice of church-less Christianity, of course, as an oxymoron.

I don't see that in our sphere. People love the church. They're committed to the church.

They get aspirated by the church, but weekend and week out, they're pouring themselves out and pastors faithfully preparing sermons. I think the sort of peer-at-church organizations that exist right now or exist, a lot of them, and talk about the best. Of course, there's bad examples, but they exist to serve the church.

And think about a conference like Cross, which is trying to propel young people for missions. The sing conference that wants to bring back great hymns and new lyrics that are rich in theology and thoughtfulness. I just think we're living in a golden age.

I mean, it's my summary line still in from Dickens is "It's the best of times. It's the worst of times." But in my little neck of the woods of publishing, this is just a golden age. I mean, you alluded to this a little bit, Kevin, but we're living in the golden age of biblical theology, historical theology.

I picked up Matt Harmon's new commentary on Galatians the other day. It wasn't something like that that existed when I was a student in the 90s that fully evangelical and converse it with all the literature and pastoral, I mean, there may be one or two, but there's just been an explosion of good commentaries and good systematic theologies, good practical theologies on preaching. We're extremely spoiled these days and I think the Lord is blessing us despite all the problems.

Yeah, and you think about some of those categories you guys have mentioned. Undoubtedly, the church, as we see it in our neck of the woods, is healthier on the doctrine of the Trinity. There's more good resources on the Trinity, more people talking

about the Trinity, thinking about the Trinity, retrieving great things from the past about the Trinity than there was a generation ago.

You're absolutely right. There's more focus on the local church than there was a generation ago. I think even the worship wars, though, I think that's an area of reform and a lot of churches is to try to have something richer, deeper, more historic.

And yet a lot of churches are doing that. A lot of churches are trying to say, "You know what? Let's take the best of the new stuff." But, wow, just to have six new songs that have been written in the last year and nothing else to our liturgy is not the way to produce disciples. And then we can take for granted all of the resources and conferences about robust reform theology.

I've heard Liggins say this before about the PCA and I think most people would agree that yes, there are problems in the PCA in some areas of slippage over the past couple generations. But most people would say the PCA now, the average pastor in the PCA is more self-consciously and robustly reformed than when the PCA started 50 years ago. The PCA was an amalgamation of Billy Graham Presbyterians, evangelical conservatives in certain ways and then real confessional reform types.

And there's certainly more of the confessional reform types than there used to be. And you just think about R.C. Sproul. I was telling some of you guys at our RTS faculty retreat.

We were talking about the Sproul biography from Stephen Nichols. Great book, People Should Read It. And we were just reflecting.

Everyone in the room was standing up saying, "What was the first Sproul book they read?" And Sproul has had such an amazing influence. One of the reasons his influence has been so great is because when he started doing his Sproul stuff, there were hardly anyone else doing that. The banner was turning out stuff.

And you have Packer and Lloyd Jones, but really confessional-reformed. Let's pull from the classic Reformed and post-reformation tradition. You didn't have a bunch of people doing this.

And there were a couple decades it was, "You got that. Your gateway drug to Reformed theology was R.C. Sproul." And that was about it. And Piper's been that for another generation.

But now you can find lots of people saying those good and important doctrines. And we shouldn't take that for granted. The things, the good things that are around us, we tend to think, "Well, it's always been like that.

It will always be like that." But that's not the case. It's true, too, on a societal level. It's

easy for people to think, "You know what? Society has basically always been fairly prosperous." And this is kind of how most people have lived in human history.

And you realize, "No, this is an incredible anomaly." You know, Goldberg calls it the miracle of Western civilization in the last 300 years. And that's on a societal level. But we are seeing so many really good things in a church level.

Let me keep going with this theme a little bit, but ask you guys to zero in, in particular, what encouragement would you give to pastors? I know we got lots of people who aren't pastors listening to this, but I'm sure we have a lot of pastors, a lot of church leaders. And it's not an exaggeration to say these last two years have been unusually difficult for pastors. Now, it's always been the case.

I remember when I started pastoral ministry, I was at HB London, would go around and do his pastoral encouragement, seminars. And there was a lot of that because pastors always felt like they were getting beat up. And so, pastors being discouraged is not new.

But I think it is objectively true. There have been a constellation of issues from politics to COVID to masking policies to societal unrest around race and other issues that have made pastoring extremely difficult in the last couple of years. And at least anecdotally, you hear the stories of people say, "I got dozens of friends who are moving out of the pastorate." So, what encouragement would you give to pastors? I have my little speech that I'll give, but I am a pastor and you guys do pastoral sorts of ministry in your churches as elders, but you aren't vocational pastors.

So, I'm really interested what sort of encouragement you would want to give to pastors. Colin? I think about last week, I got a chance to meet with a group from Campus Outreach, which is just amazing. People doing that from all over the country, gathered together here in Birmingham, got to meet with one of Justin's colleagues at Crossway to talk about amazing things that they were doing.

And when it comes down to just the end, what's the encouragement? What's the advice? For Campus Outreach, I was doing a lot of different stuff about cultural trends and things like that. And it's like, "What do you do with this?" I said, "Well, I mean, the word does the word. It's the same word.

It's the same power. The word does the work." And one of the things the word does is that the word creates a community of faith and love that resembles that body of, I mean, that is that body of Christ that is united to Christ by faith. And so, it doesn't really matter.

I mean, you guys know, everybody listening knows that I'm big into different cultural trends, assessing them, analyzing, you know, how do we respond to them. But in the end, the advice is always the same. It's always just, we don't need less Bible.

We need more Bible. We don't need less fewer people looking like Jesus. We need more people looking like Jesus.

We don't need less community. We need more community of love and faithfulness and help and the kind of local church things you guys are talking about there, thinking about that woman teaching Sunday school for Justin's kids. And so, that's the encouragement is that if you look at those cultural trends, you look at history, you would be a fool to try.

That was one of the questions I got from campus outreach. I said, they were asking, "Okay, play this out. How's this going to go?" I said, "Man, you would have to be a fool to try to guess that because there's no way to know." But what I do know is that we keep doing the same things, pressing further into love, pressing further into the spirit.

And maybe we hope some of these things turn around and they start to go in the same direction. But we don't change what we do. We don't change who we are.

We continue to reform as necessary. But the basis of our Reformation is always back to the Word. It's nothing new there.

So, that's the encouragement is, I think we've got two churches yesterday in my community, one on Romans 8, 28 on the sovereignty of God, another on Habakkuk one. Both of them, again, churches packed to the gills with young people and what's happening, a stirring sermon on the sovereignty of God in both cases as our hope when we're confused by what's happening in the world. So, no, it wasn't about, it was just about the Word.

The Word of God is sufficient to do the work of God. Yeah, there you go. It is absolutely fundamental to what we're doing.

Justin, what encouragement do you have for pastors? Yeah, I love pastors and I think it's one of the sadnesses of our time right now that so many pastors are discouraged and I don't think that a lot of us are exercising the gift of encouragement. And I think that we're encouraging encouragement. And so, just maybe a word first for any listeners out there who are not in pastoral ministry.

If you see an opportunity to encourage your pastor, take it. Don't ever worry that their head's going to get big if you tell them that you enjoyed the sermon, that they did a great job or you appreciated this. If you have any sort of inkling to offer an encouragement to your pastor, jump on that and don't suppress that.

Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4-2 that we are to, as pastors, preach the Word being ready in season and out of season. And so, any pastors out there who are doing the work of the ministry, Word and Prayer, in season and out of season, it's easy to do it in season. But to do it out of season as well, the Lord sees and the Lord knows.

And when Paul gives that command to Timothy, he says it, that it's, you're to be doing this reproving and rebuking and exhorting. You have to do those things because people aren't listening and people aren't obeying the Word. And then he adds with complete patience.

I think King James says long suffering and teaching. So Paul knows that this is what pastoral ministry is. It's a long suffering ministry.

It's not easy. There's temptations to check out in the off season. And for those of you listening who are persevering, who are staying faithful, who aren't getting much encouragement, who are seeing no earthly reward, just know that the Lord sees what is in secret.

And then he promises Matthew 6, 4, in the context of giving there, it's going to be revealed someday. He's going to reward you. And ultimately, it's sort of a cliché to say that we do things for an audience of one.

But there's something biblical about that. The person who matters most is God and he thinks of you. And he promises that all these, you know, you're 20 hours of work on the sermon where people think, "What is the pastor doing all week?" The Lord sees and the Lord is going to reward you with more of his presence.

And he will honor your faithfulness. And then finally, just a reminder from 2 Corinthians 4 that these afflictions that you're experiencing, there's no pastor affliction free, those experiences are momentary. They're not going to last forever.

And Paul says they're light in comparison with the eternal way of glory that you can't compare to anything. But the key is that that affliction is actually preparing for that eternal way to glory. It's not just you have a season of affliction and you're going to have a season in the afterlife of glory, but your affliction, you're identifying with Christ, you're staying faithful, even when everything seems to be pressing against you, is working for your good, for your own eternal good.

So the Lord sees, the Lord knows we, if I could speak on behalf of the three of us, we are sorry for so many discouraging things in these days. But please know that you are loved by many and ultimately by the Lord. Yeah, that's such a good word.

And what you said at the beginning there, Justin, is I know from my own experience that the old saying, "Ten attaboys doesn't outweigh one you jerk." It doesn't have to be you jerk. It can just be a pastor conflict or something. It's true.

You can have ten people come through the line and say, "Thank you, pastor. I learned so much. Thank you for your preaching.

I always grow in one person and not that pastors don't need correction from time to

time." But that one, "Hey, what were you thinking up there today? Is going to stick with you more." So yes, if there's an opportunity to encourage, take it. And then I, I just, you know, I preach this, I need to preach this to my own heart as a pastor. You know, I'm thinking in particular about weekend and week out preaching.

I don't want pastors to know what you do is very hard and it really matters. It is, it is very hard for all the reasons that you guys have just been talking about. But I think I've given you guys this analogy before.

Just think about what a pastor does preaching weekend and week out. And a lot of most pastors aren't at churches with multiple staff and they can have people in and out. I mean, one guy might be doing 48 sermons a year.

And he's probably not just doing Sunday morning. Maybe he's got Sunday night or he's got Sunday school or he's got Wednesday night. He's got a devote.

He is, he is always producing content and teaching and doing material. And you think about what politicians do, what a president does. He's got to be a speech maker.

He's got a team of people who research. He's got speech writers for him. He probably gives the same kind of stump speech over and over again.

And yet how rare is it that anyone listens to a politician's speech and thinks, wow, I'm going to, I need to go listen to that again on YouTube. I got to go put that on my headphones when I'm going on a walk. Now part of that is the genre or they feel like they, they, they, they fall into old cliches or can't say anything that's going to seem controversial.

But it's true. They have all of the help in the world to do this. And yet it's very rarely are you being taught something, are you being inspired by something.

And then you have a local pastor. Okay, you got to give a speech, a new speech every single week. You got to say something new.

Obviously it's something old, but you have to go almost X knee Hello in your study, the blank screen every week. Read your books. Look at the languages and do it.

This is very hard. And it's, it's discouraging. I've said this many times publicly when I'm speaking to pastors.

It doesn't matter the size of your church or what people think your influencer platform is we're not immune to this. I get done preaching most Sundays and think, what, what, what am I doing the right, am I in the right job? What did I even just do there? That, that felt like nothing. I told this story before, but I was with Sinclair Ferguson one time, you know, hand out the preaching awards and many of them are going to go to Sinclair.

And he was preaching and he kind of did something extiparaneous because it was a different crowd than he thought. And he did this wonderful thing about the Trinity and he's it was like he was taking us up into the seventh heaven to talk about the Trinity and it got done. And I said, wow, Sinclair, that was amazing.

What a great exposition exploration of the Trinity. And he said, Oh, Kevin, that was a dog's breakfast. I know terrible accent.

Sorry. But a dog's breakfast. I thought, uh, wow, his dog eats very well.

That was a good meal for the dog. But even the great ones feel like what was that? So pastors, you're going to, to feel that. And some sermons are going to be better than others.

I was jokingly say, you know, there's a woman in my last church would come up and tell me if my sermon was, you know, a home run or sometimes she'd say double or, well, you got hit by a pitch, but take a base, you know, you made it. She was a friend so she could jokingly say that. But it's true.

And not every sermon is going to be equally good. But over time it makes a difference just like none of us can look back and, well, what did your mom feed you when you were younger? Well, maybe you remember a special birthday meal, but what happened was you were fed and you were nourished and you grew and you were strengthened. And you may not remember very many specific meals, but over many years you were fed and you grew up.

And that's what we're trying to do with faithfully preaching God's word week after week. Well, we'll go to one last topic here. Anything else you guys want to say about that? All right.

Let's just briefly since life and books and everything, we talked about a couple books. So here's a couple books I've read since the beginning of the year. I don't think you guys have read them before, but let me just give a little synopsis and then see if you have any thoughts.

So this book, I haven't heard of these guys, Alex Hockley, though he sounds like you should be an NFL referee, George, H-O-A-R-E, and then Philip Conliff. I guess they have a podcast. The end of the end of history politics in the 21st century.

There's a famous essay was turned into a book by Francis Fukuyama, the end of history at the fall of the Cold War, which was famously or infamously often misunderstood, but basically arguing we're coming to the end of this sort of history shaping conflict and the only socio-political form that will be left is liberal democracies, something like that. And it wasn't really saying it's the literal end of history, but this is what we have. So this is called the end of the end of history saying, okay, history is back and we're seeing that

this is not the only way in which societies will organize themselves.

And here's what I'd love to get your thoughts on. And these guys are from the left. In fact, this is published by zero books and it says zero books is on the left and wants to reinvent the left.

We are sick of the injustice, the suffering and the stupidity that defines both our political and cultural world. We aim for a new foundation and a new struggle. So these are guys on the left, more or less speaking to people on the left.

But one of the recurring themes throughout this book, and it has resonance for me as we look at politics, but also we look at church issues, they say, I'll just read, the old-fashioned coordinates of left and right don't always work. In their place is an anti-establishment stance outside the arrangements of coalitions and party pluralism. These latter are cast as corrupt.

So we are presented with a binary moral conflict between an honest people endowed with common sense, standing against the cancer that is eating up our country, making the lives of honest people impossible. He says throughout the book that we tend to think everything is left right, but much of our politics has become insider, outsider. And he's, these authors are sort of faulting what they see on the left as an inability to recognize this change.

And so he says they have people on the left a commitment to tolerance and diversity, but they balk at the expression of non-liberal views. While they may often be critical of the government of the day, often critical of it from the left, they are fundamentally at ease and at home in the contemporary world. They have done well out of current arrangements, moreover, their political identities are founded on the idea of being good guys, a less charitable interpretation would even argue that their interest in politics only exists in so far as it allows them to cast themselves as ethical actors.

So he's arguing, they're arguing that yes, left right exists, but so much what we see, and this is really taking a global look at populist movements. It actually has more to do with England and Brexit and Italy than so much about America, though America is certainly in view, but arguing that what we're seeing is insider, outsider. And so those who are the insiders feel like these outsiders are, are rubes.

They don't understand their passions are dangerous. They're uninformed. And then the outsiders say these insiders have the cult of expertise.

They don't understand what it's really like. They don't have ordinary common sense. And that is the conflict.

I'm simplifying to be sure, but I found good food for thought and just thinking about what we see in our world, not only socially, culturally, but even sometimes ecclesiastically. I

know you think a lot about this stuff, Colin, how does that resonate with you? I'm actually surprised and intrigued, Kevin. I I can't remember if I talked about it on this podcast, but one of the things I've been ruminating over in the last few months has been that our politics has shifted away from a left right spectrum to a credential versus conspiracy shifting.

Now, I don't mean that to say pejorative, Lee, it's that there are some group that they default in our epistemological condition where it's hard to know who to trust. They default toward people with credentials, people with the education, the degrees, the position, and then some people default toward distrust toward conspiracy. The challenge is you can find plenty of ammunition on both sides.

I wonder if it's really COVID that has done this more than anything else because I don't think we've we have any comparable- At least accelerated what was already happening. Yeah, I think that that makes a lot of sense. Probably, I mean, you could probably sense the shift between Clinton's mode of politics on the left.

You know, Bubba to Obama. That would probably be the shift toward like the Democratic situation there. Sort of that would affect the insider dynamic, the credential dynamic there.

And that pushed out really what was the traditional Democratic constituency, which was the working class voter. And so then then Trump, you know, kind of he recognizes that weakness in the Democratic platform and shift and he exploits it and then he shifts the Republican party. So you have a political realignment toward credential versus conspiracy.

And then the pandemic drops on that and we're living a real time experiment where the credentials are telling us what to do. But everybody has to sit there and say, okay, but are you right? And then the credentialed people lie sometimes, but it's, you know, supposedly it's a noble lie. But that just feeds the conspiracy because the credential people are supposed to be right.

That's the basis of their authority. So yeah, without going too much further into that, I didn't realize Kevin, I probably read something like this and then I internalized it, put my own little spin on it and then I regurgitated it as if I could thought of it. You maybe did.

You know, just to piggyback on that sort of critiquing both of that. On the one hand, you know, Aaron Ren, his podcast, he's done a lot of reading and thinking about elites and he has some good podcasts about elite theory. And he makes the point and I think we've said this as well.

There are going to be elites. They're just are and he made the point one of them, are you willing to be an elite? Not enough to just say bad elites. Somebody's going to have a

bigger microphone than others.

Somebody is going to be in charge of elite institutions. So the question is, are you willing to be an elite? So it's easy to just, if you're the outsider to act like it's always the inside. It's always the guys up top.

It always is the big poppies. They need to be cut down. And no, there really are people who know more than other people.

There are people who have developed a lifetime of expertise. And if you say, sometimes the loudest people saying we don't need elites, you know, parentheses, but you can follow me and I'll be the new elite. So there's a critique there.

On the other hand, and I've tried to say this and maybe I've not said it well, I do feel like our cultural elites and maybe some of our churchy elites, of which we admit, we're probably more that than not, have had, I think, a failure of imagination to at least try to understand the populist passion, the distrust, the sense that the people in control can't be trusted, aren't looking out for our best interests, are just playing a game that works for them. I don't think all of those are fair critiques. And I think there is a profound difference between conservatism, traditionally understood, and populism, traditionally understood.

In fact, much of the impulse of traditional conservatism is to counteract the passions of populism. And yet, I think if we don't at least try to understand why are people feeling the way they are, why are they drawn to certain leaders like they are, we're exercising a failure of imagination to try to understand what people are feeling and thinking and then respond to it. So Justin, how do you see this insider outsider left right dynamic? Yeah, I think it's really helpful and I'm frustrated these days with using the word conservative just as anything to mean not someone of the left because conservatism is, you guys both know, a relatively defined worldview in ideology and it doesn't just mean somebody who votes for the Republican party.

So that distinction between populism and conservatism, I think, is important, but frequently lost as everybody's just lumped into one category. And I think the death of expertise issue, the three of us resonate with that, we are to varying degrees and whether we like it or not, considered in that elite category. And that's not bragging, it's just we have positions of influence.

And so I think that culturally inclines us towards trusting the credentialed and the expertise, the experts. So when you have something like COVID, our disposition is I am going to trust somebody who spent 10 years in medical school and spends 60 hours a week thinking about this issue versus some guy out there who is googling things or on a Reddit 3 thread and trying to figure out what he believes about infectious diseases. And yet you have this reality that a lot of the experts were misleading and misinformed or

motivated by other ambitions or their own cultural circle pressing in on them.

It wasn't just the rarefied air of neutral science. Right. So we should trust the science in general, but it doesn't work out that way in reality.

So yeah, the second thing is to think about how this maps on to our world of reformed evangelicalism and the way in which there's almost a new credential of being someone who's not recognized by the elites so that you have your own sort of badge of honor by the fact that you aren't published by X, Y, and Z and you don't have to be in certain circles. And there can be legitimate criticisms, but inside outside dynamic, I think ends up explaining a lot of things because as much as some people might want to say what's going on in reformed evangelicalism is just the left and the woke versus the right wing. It's more complicated than that.

It's not a linear thing, but there's a three, if you were to try to graph it out, it have to be a three dimensional graph, I think. Well, I got to, I want to say something quick on that with Justin. Also evangelicalism is not an institution and it does not have in its historically populist and it is not credentialed.

There's there's no way to be so you could say, well, somebody might not be in say our circles, but that doesn't mean they don't have influence. They may have way more influence. That doesn't mean they don't have an institution.

They might have a much bigger institution. That doesn't necessarily mean that they don't have wealth. It could mean that they're far wealthier.

So it's just it's it's less of there's an in and out. It's more that there's just a whole universe of different planets that maybe are kind of orbiting in the same areas. And it's just about are you, you know, whose planet are you on? Go ahead, Kevin.

Yeah. And everything, everything has something to do with the rise of the internet in this. Yeah.

Oh, absolutely. It's it's it's not sufficient, but it is a necessary causal explanation. And I'll maybe try to write about this at some time and we've talked about it before, but the way the internet prizes outsiders over insiders.

Now, it's not to say that the insider elite don't have their own institutional advantages. They they do somebody who's seen as a loose cannon. You can't quite trust.

Well, yeah, it's it is true. They may not get an appointment to your institution. They may not be asked to speak at something because they're not playing by the informal set of rules.

So there are those advantages, but there are huge advantages to being the outsider,

especially when it comes to online because just to use one example, all of us know a lot of people. And I feel like we we try to play by an informal set of rules that says, well, we've we've met these people. You're sort of my, you know, maybe you really are a friend or maybe you were a friend and we sort of moved in different directions, but at least I feel a sense of, Hey, I'm I am it's going to take a lot to trip over that wire that says these people that I know personally in our friends with or have been friends with.

Now I'm going to go on the attack on social media. Now you could say, well, that's that's a problem. That's the good old boys network that's circling the wagons that's protecting your own or on the other hand, you could say, well, everybody does this with you have some some group of people you consider kind of your family, your tribe and some group of people that you wouldn't go publicly to discuss things.

You'd say, yeah, there's a relational dynamic. There's it's uneasy or we'll we'll deal with that offline or just not going to go there. Well, so there's because of that right or wrong, people on the inside maintaining institutions, trying to maybe play night, end up feeling like they can't or it's harder to speak to a lot of things.

Whereas if you just say forget that I'm the outsider, whether it's moving left or right, we might say, you have a newfound power because now you're unconstrained by those sorts of unwritten relational dynamics that all of us feel. And if you are sort of a movement sort of guy or woman and you're connected to 50 different people, well, there's 50 different people that you're going to feel like, yeah, I don't really, I'm not looking to pick this fight in public. If your circle is three, well, you just got 47 more people than somebody else that you can go after.

So these are just the dynamics that are there and why it the the internet prizes the outsider over the insider. And as I said before, the insider has to work with boards and donors and institutions and account checks and balances in a way that the outsider doesn't. Colin? Yeah, real real quick quote here.

I thought what you said there was very helpful and a good example of how these dynamics are playing out would be Candace Owens interview with President Trump recently. And so you have some of the dynamic of Red versus Blue, not conservative versus liberal, but Red versus Blue, Republican versus Democrat. So you have you have her trying to defend him as he's advocating for vaccines.

Then you have a really interesting kind of apology she issues not only on behalf of herself, but really on behalf of President Trump due to her followers being upset about his supportive vaccines. And she responds and says, I don't believe that Trump is on the internet or that he necessarily uses the web to try to find obscure websites. I think that he just relies on typical mainstream sources.

So I don't think there's anything evil going on there. So she's trying to defend President

Trump because he's too old to go find the obscure websites. That's a good example of how difficult it is for all of us right now where you think well we should be able to trust the mainstream sources because they're the ones that have to go through all the vetting process that you just described Kevin.

At the same time they have a letter their own institutional biases that sometimes lead them to not tell the truth. Then at the same time their responses will then the real people you can trust are the obscure websites because they don't have any they wouldn't have the same motives because they're not insiders. But of course they may have a million other motives or lack of impediments to lying there as well.

So I think it just exposes how difficult it is for all of us right now and how jumbled this whole situation is. It feels just largely confused based on what I thought I would have known say growing up in a more stable seemingly stable environment but who knows what the reality was. All right quick we got we got a few more minutes for my second book and then we'll wrap things up very different books.

So this is a conservative Carl Zimmerman family and civilization which first came out in 1947 and is has been republished has an introduction by Alan Carlson who's a family scholar guy and published by ISI books. In this book he looks at three different types of families in history that he says have been dominant in a culture and he argues throughout it's the middle one that's the healthiest one. So he has the trustee family which he describes as being bound by blood rights property name positions for lifetimes you might think of clans you might think of the Hatfields in McCoy so he says very strong thick families but family even comes above any other sort of national understanding governmental authority family is sort of everything so it's very thick but it can be very controlling and the individual becomes less and less it's all about the family.

Then he says there's the domestic family which he's going to say is tends to be the healthiest this might be what we call the nuclear family it's been common in civilized societies it's domestic because it arises under conditions when trade sets in and when the free flowing of values lands goods in person is essential to commerce and then he says the degenerative state in civilization is the atomistic family the individual is freed from family bonds the state is to become much more of an organization of individuals in trustee times the family was held responsible for the individual the individual was accountable to the family and at a mystic times the individual is responsible for himself he alone is accountable to the state or through the state to other persons you think of that famous example the Obama ad the life of Julia which you know talked about this life of Julia and this little branding commercials and it didn't say anything she had no family she came from nowhere she had all of her meaningful relationships were with governmental agencies and and services that the state was providing for sort of the apotheosis of this atomistic family so Zimmerman argues that in healthy societies you have a healthy familyism which he says consists of three things fidelity childbearing into

soluble unity he calls feed ace fidelity proles that's childbearing and then sacramentum you don't have to have a Catholic understanding of official sacrament he just means marriage has an indissoluble unity and I won't read at the end of the book but he has eleven characteristics of family in an atomistic world and it's uncanny how it's it's very prescient because this was written in 1947 and he talks about the rise of divorce and sexual perversion and cultural inhibitions falling against adultery rapid rise of juvenile delinquency all of these things which must have been the size of a man's fist in 1947 compared to what they are now and his his final solution is actually much critiqued by conservatives because he basically falls back on as an academic we just need more great social scientists to research this stuff and come up with good intellectual solutions which is which is unsatisfying but the the point that I just get your take on as we come to the end here is his underlying thesis so set apart the different family units he describes but his underlying thesis is that civilizations deteriorate become decadent douth it might say when family is them becomes incoherent or unknown and he says really you don't have a healthy family life without a healthy religious life and vice versa when we think as Christians yes we need to have Christianity so we get good families but we don't often think about you know what Christianity often not epistemologically but culturally is downstream from healthy family units and I do think one of the things we don't think enough about as a church is these huge underlying issues so he's a big proponent at the end the into solubility of marriage child rearing and producing children as the Lord gives you opportunity it's so easy for us especially in Internet age to feel the the the gusts of cultural breezes that come at it on the Internet and think that that's what is blowing us around when we don't realize massive currents to the river are pushing us inexorably in other directions and to carry that analogy we fight about the gusts of wind that sort of knock our hats off here and there and don't realize the massive cultural currents that are happening underneath us and chief among those is the family you've talked before in your podcast podcast Colin about the the the lack of reproduction the plummeting fertility numbers in this country the renewed not renewed the new understanding of what if what a family is you know even David Brooks article from a couple years ago about the nuclear family was a mistake the these are signs of a hyper atomistic view of the family which is going to lead and continues to lead to cultural decline and Christians ignore these bigger currents at their peril so end of speech Colin Justin does that resonate with you yeah real real quick response there Kevin man this is fascinating we should maybe continue this in a future conversation but it sounds to me like there'd be some interesting interaction between that book and Joseph Henrich's work on the weirdest people in the world the western educated industrialized rich and democratic emergence which he cites as being largely because of the Christian shift away from the clan formation and so I wonder if there's a sense in which the unique contributions positively the west are where there's enough Christianity to break the the the clan dominance but not so much to completely atomize so there's enough Christianity where you're not completely atomized anymore I wonder if it's similar to the unique factors at the outset of the American Republic where there's just enough Christianity to keep virtue

at the center of the Republic in some important ways of course it was missing in other ways but keeping in some important ways but now without Christianity the Republic begins to spin out of control in some ways that republics before it's fun out of control so I wonder if there'd be an interesting interplay there of how Christianity is both a revolutionary aspect that breaks up some versions of traditional culture that are actually deeply oppressive but at the same time Christianity is it's a decelerant from you just reaching where we are in so much of the decadent west of where it's every individual and it's like you talk about a lot Kevin individualism as it's created about Christianity is amazing right but the conditions of western individualism taken to its expressive conclusion is deeply problematic for Christians that's my initial thought yeah and I think there's a lot to that that would resonate in Zimmerman's 1947 book he certainly is seeing Christianity as mainly a positive force but you know a little bit more of a Catholic slant to it that maybe Reformation individualism so it seeds for some of this atomistic which I don't think has to be the case more a Charles Taylor's classic yeah but but yeah you're you're right he's seeing that even at the beginning part of the American Republic there's still a healthy enough domestic family but which has now become thoroughly atomized and I think this is where that Mary Eberstott's works on the family have been instructive because she she helps us to look at it the other way what I just said a few minutes ago that it's Christianity and religious values are downstream from family we think of it as the other way again I don't mean family determines your religion but family structures in the way family is conceived in a country is going to have a massive influence on whether Christian faith resonates or not I mean it just is the case that a atomized expressive individualism view of the family is not compatible with Orthodox traditional Christianity so the degree to which the culture accepts that provides a huge framework for Christian categories to make sense and the more that that's gone and to realize how much family life is meant to shape us we think of what we come into and how we need to create this but family that the existence of a man being married to a woman is supposed to do something and a man having to raise and be committed to children is supposed to be a civilizing effect on male aggression and to hone male leadership in the most appropriate ways I want to hear I want to hear what Justin has to say but I think we should I think we should come back to that topic on a different podcast Kevin because I think it might give people a little bit more perspective to understand some of where you're coming from I think this gives good context in some of your writing because we're trying to deal with a historical and sociological reality of course one of the things that that we read about with fertility by Philip Jenkins in particular is that it's clear religious societies are more fertile and it really you know declining religion leads to climbing fertility which is a man and the declining fertility to declining religion there you go yes exactly so I think I think a lot of people are confused because they don't really understand that sociological historical reality and it's hard to be able to this is the this is the perspective I was trying to bring earlier that when you're reading the New Testament it is both at the simultaneously it is a stirring critique of many aspects of Roman of Roman powder familius or at least at least the understandings of the family in a Roman

context and Jesus relativizes the family in some really important ways and then yet but at the same time it's a complete affirmation of the Hebrew understandings of the family and of course God's original design from the very beginning of the family so that would be a good thing to come back to because I think people are getting caught sometimes when they're reading your work or some other works I think they get confused about those dynamics in which Christianity is both revolutionary and very conservative when it comes to the family Justin land the plane settle this all for us yeah I don't think I can settle it but I resonate with everything that you are summarizing from Carlson the question that's running through my mind is why has evangelicalism struggled to address these issues and I have a working theory for why that's the case and I think that it's compassion I think that it's very difficult to speak prophetically and pointedly on these issues without hurting someone or fearing that you're going to hurt someone so you can say it is good for a man and a woman to have biological children as a pastor you're preaching what about the couple who's crying their eyes out because of infertility or only have adopted children and say it's it's essential that we view marriage as a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman and you've got the woman out there whose husband was abusive and who was disciplined by the church and who left her and I think you can just multiply all of those issues so that fear of saying an intact nuclear family is an essential part of a healthy life and you know the the mother who became pregnant out of wedlock and nobly didn't commit abortion but gave birth to her child even though she lacks the the family support you don't want to imply that that child is defective for life because he didn't have the ideal family situation so that reality I think prevents us or slows us from speaking about something that's very significant is socially almost unassailable I think historically and in terms of social sciences I don't know how to thread that needle exactly though I think Kevin you're doing good work and Colin and I support you cheer you on as you try to do this because you have a prophetic inclination and yet you also have a pastoral spirit at the same time so well I hope that's your case and thank you you're you're certainly right and we've talked about that offline too and you've been very helpful I have an article coming out in Icon later this spring about the the power of the two parent family and you're right how do we stigmatize sinful and society declining behavior without stigmatizing everyone who either does commit that behavior and repents and there's grace or isn't guilty of that behavior but is in a family where it is or through no fault of their own a spouse leaves them and that happens all the time that's really really hard to do to stigmatize the behavior without casting off the people who commit the behavior or let alone who are victims of the behavior to just the the ashheap I think the other reason why it's been so difficult for evangelical Christians that's a very personal pastoral reason which is true I think on a more intellectual level I think because the strength and weakness of evangelical thinking has been its biblicist impulse so there's a good sense to that biblicist I don't use that as an automatic swear word that says bring me to a text give me a Bible verse I don't want to say more or less than the Bible says that's really good and yet at times it means that these larger issues which require some natural law thinking or require this bigger picture civilizational thinking

where you can't just say here's a Bible verse that says how this you know the domestic family is right the trustee family is wrong but they're bigger sorts of issues where we need to bring to bear a biblically informed mind and heart and imagination and yet it's not going to be solved by just exegeting six or seven passages which praise the Lord for exegeting passages but I think that has sometimes the character is somewhat true that that Catholic social ethics has a bit more built-in freedom to kind of think about these things and it would be good for reformed and evangelical voices to be tied to their the best of that biblicist tradition but also have an impulse that says wow we got to really think on a macro level about some of these issues that that aren't going to be solved by just trying to find what you know Ephesians tells us about the family as important as that is as a place to start all right we've gone long so thank you if you have stayed with us we had many other things we didn't get to and Colin and Justin will be back and I'll be back next time with an interview and have a great season at least I feel good about it lined up and we'll have Colin and Justin in and out and other interviews so hope you will stay with us and until next time glorify God enjoy him forever and read a good one

(upbeat music)

(upbeat music)

(upbeat music)

(upbeat music) [Silence]