



Christ Redeemer Church  
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# Christ Redeemer Church

Grace. Truth. Community.

Spring 2019

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## ENLIGHTENMENT NOW

*Pastor Don Willemann, Th.M.*



Steven Pinker’s latest book *Enlightenment Now* is a thought-provoking and impressively researched call to recapture the ideals of the European Enlightenment. While taking issue with a number of points, not the least of which is his assessment of historic Christianity, I cannot agree more on the necessity of reason and scientific pursuit.

Classical Christianity demands the careful use of one’s mind. Faith is not a substitute for thinking but its indispensable companion. After all, the Bible’s foundational claim is that there is a God who is a rational being, “infinite in... wisdom,” as the Westminster Catechism summarizes. This God did not hoard that wisdom but, in an explosion of creativity, made a world filled with wisdom—ready to be discovered and developed. Moreover, as creation’s crowning achievement, He made human beings after His own image, with the mental capacity to understand and make something of that world. Thus the Psalmist exclaims: “Great are the works of the Lord; they are studied by all who delight in them” (Ps 111:2).

Is it any surprise then that the climax of God’s engagement with His world would be called the “Word” (*Logos*, in the original Greek of John’s Gospel, which could be translated wisdom/reason/thought)? Jesus is the essence of God come to us, “in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3).

Thus, the faithful Christian has a high intellectual calling—to ponder and apply the truth of Christ to every area of life.

Doing this is not always simple or easy, but it is absolutely critical. This is why the greatest commandment requires us to love God, not only with all our heart and soul, but also with all our mind and strength (Mk 12:30). This is why the Bible commands that we strive to “renew our mind” (Rom 12:2).

We cannot rely on lazy, childish thinking; we must become mature (1 Cor 14:20). The Bible warns (and social science shows) that we are easily carried away by societal fads and self-delusions. That’s why we need to test our ideas and intuitions by objective reality. Even our faith is never a matter of personal opinion. We must judge what we believe by the historic “faith once for all given” (Jude 3), and do so in an open and peer-reviewed context (the Church; Eph 4:11-16).

There is a false version of Christianity that rejects all this, that says all that matters are the subjective and the “spiritual.” The objective and material are not important, only what you feel in your personal experience, your inner-self. In the early church this heresy was known as “Gnosticism” and was quickly rejected.

So, what does this mean for you? *Think!* Investigate. Research. Read broadly and critically. The answer to bad thinking is not less thinking but more and better thinking. To take things “on faith” may very well not be faith at all, but mere foolishness. The power of faith is not faith itself, but the object of our faith. Truth is always paramount.



## T.S. ELLIOT & THINKING IN CHRISTIAN CATEGORIES

Are you a compartmentalized Christian? When you think of what it means to be godly do you tend to think only of certain areas of your life—those areas that you deem to be the “spiritual areas?”

It was T.S. Elliot that reminded us that the gospel expects us to think in Christian categories about all of life. The Lord Jesus makes it clear that we are to love God not only with all our heart and soul but also our minds. In this he was echoing the words of the *Shema* of the Hebrew Scriptures, Deuteronomy to be exact, where God clarified the requirement of true spirituality.

It is not surprising that God would stake His claim on humanity in such holistic terms. He is God, of course. To

demand anything less would be to deny the unique character of His deity—unique in that He is more than the mere run-of-the-mill tribal deity prevalent in the ancient world. Rather, He is the one true, living God that created all things, including the human mind. Therefore, it is necessary for those that worship Him to do so in a holistic fashion.

Are you doing the hard work of loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind?

*Deuteronomy 6:4-6 “4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.”*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March	Month Long Blood Drive with DHMC
April 5	Men’s Leadership Breakfast
April 10	24 Hours of Prayer
April 19	Good Friday Service at The Quechee Church
April 21	Easter Sunday
April 26-27	Women’s Retreat

<b>Christ Redeemer Church, 10:00am</b> Hanover High School, Hanover, NH
<b>Christ Restoration Church, 9:00am</b> Colby Sawyer College’s Lethbridge Lodge New London, NH
<b>The Quechee Church, 9:00am</b> 1905 Main Street, Quechee, VT



Angels at the 2018 Christmas Pageant in Hanover





## THE GOD OF REST AT WORK

### Drew Matter

Any 80s playlist worth its megabytes will at some point stream the head-bobbing anthem, “Everybody’s Working for the Weekend” by the Canadian one-hit wonder, Loverboy. Clad in neon tank tops, sweatbands and permed curls they reminded us,

*Everybody's working for the weekend  
Everybody wants a little romance  
Everybody's goin' off the deep end  
Everybody needs a second chance*

I am reminded of their lyrics when I consider the role of vocation in the Christian life and the contrasting view of today’s culture. Is work a necessary evil in a broken world or does it have inherent value? Do we work for the weekend or for the week of work itself? If most of one’s adult life is spent at work, one cannot avoid the question if he is to properly appraise a life well-lived in God’s world.

Let’s look first at the “working descriptions” of God Himself in scripture for guidance. Genesis frames the Judeo-Christian understanding of work by asserting that God “rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done” (Gen 2:2). God worked in the act of creation, then as a king he rests to enjoy and rule over all that he made. Mission accomplished; God is resting. The New Testament book of Hebrews seems to affirm the same: “So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God’s rest also cease from their labors as God did from his” (Heb 4:9-10). God worked and now rests (Gen 2), so we too should work so that we can rest with God. Loverboy was right! God himself is working for the Sabbath weekend, and everybody should now follow in his footsteps. TGIF.

...Not so fast. In the Gospel of John, Jesus reminds us that the issue is

more complex. After he heals a man on the Sabbath day of rest, Jesus reminds his angry critics, “My Father is still working, and I also am working” (John 5:17). In the midst of his rest, God is working redemption today in and through Jesus. To follow in Jesus’ footsteps means to receive and join in that work. We can then return to Genesis 2 and read that when he created mankind, “the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Gen 2:15). Genesis 3 reminds us that sin brings futility to work, but Genesis 2 reminds us that work itself is holy and part of what it means to be human. To work today—to create, to organize, to nurture, to produce, to strengthen, to redeem—is to imitate our God at rest who works. It is not a stretch to imagine that the New Heavens and New Earth of Revelation are not free of work, but free of work with futility and sin. When you experience a productive and joyful day at work, that may just be a little glimpse of heaven.

So, what does this mean for our sense of vocation, for our reflection on the value of a workday? First, it means that we cannot disconnect our faith at work from our faith at rest. We cannot set aside the life-giving grace we receive on Sunday just because we make a living in a performance-driven world on Monday. Jesus made heaven known by his actions in a critical, political, prove-it-to-me world. To be a Christian at work means to set our sights daily on the quest to the balance his grace-and-truth in word and his humility-and-boldness in deed. Are there people to whom you need to speak truth more gracefully? Who do you need to be more truthful with? Have you been intoxicated by the world’s empty call for boldness and forgotten the humility that the cross empowers? Have you been lulled into a non-confrontational, false humility and forgotten the call to boldness? The difficulties of work—no matter what that work is—provide an exquisite laboratory for testing out the implications of the gospel. And as a Christian, we are called to

exhibit that grace and truth not because of what our coworkers do or say, but because of what Jesus has done for us and said to us.

Secondly, we need to develop a deeper sense of vocation over that of a simple career. Vocation involves a certain selflessness, a calling to a task or field, an embedding of our identity rightly into a broader cause or organization to produce excellent work for the sake of the world. Career, on the other hand, is often just the series of jobs that provide one their estimation of personal fulfillment. In his book, “The Road to Character,” David Brooks writes: “A vocation is not a career. A person choosing a career looks for job opportunities and room for advancement. A vocation is not about fulfilling your desires and wants...such a person becomes an instrument for the performance of the job that has been put before her. She molds herself to the task at hand.” When we fail to subdue our individualistic pride to the rule of Jesus on Sunday, we empty our Monday work of its deepest corporate purpose and lessen its potential for redemptive impact among colleagues, clients and customers. God calls us to follow him, not in addition to our work, but in the midst of it.

The God who rests from his work is still at work. And we, in his image, follow by working faithfully for excellence in our vocation as we rest in him. We must daily seek to balance the truth and grace—the boldness and humility—of the gospel as we dedicate ourselves, not to our rest, but to our work. Everybody’s working for the weekend, but the Christian works for the week. Our Father is still working, Jesus himself is working, and we his body work in him for the beauty of the earth.

*Drew Matter serves as Product Development Manager at Mikros Technologies and is an ordained PCA minister. Drew and Susie spend their days raising Mary (10), Katherine (8), and John (6), among friends and neighbors in Hanover. They have been members of CRC since 2013.*

## Friends in Focus

### A.G.P. THOMSON

I am from Tuticorin, one of the smallest cities in the state of Tamil Nadu which is in Southern India. My parents are Christian, on my dad’s side I am a fourth generation Christian and on my mom’s side I am third generation Christian. The Christian community in India is not well-known in the U.S., so Christian friends here very often ask: how did you become Christian? Like many here, I was born and raised in a Christian family. Of course being born in a Christian family does not make one a Christian, but my family did point me towards Christ. As a family in India, we began attending CSI (Church of South India). I also went to the same Christian school for fifteen years, where I learned some of the biblical basics.

Although I was from Christian family and went to a Christian school, after 10th grade my situation pushed me more towards Christ and I started reading the Bible on my own, started trusting God more, and put my faith personally in Jesus. It has been a journey since then with many bumpy roads, during which I completed my bachelor’s in engineering and started my career in Information Technology. Like many of you, I have had to work through many distractions and struggles along the way, but I know the Lord guided me in many ways. I have seen this most clearly in the people He brought into my life who have helped me with these struggles in unexpected ways. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). Praise God!

At CRC, I have found a church, which continues to help me to learn and walk closer to God. I am thankful for all the teaching from Pastor Don, the pastoral staff, and the church community. I am particularly grateful for my friends in my men’s group, who continue to walk with me and provide practical guidance and encouragement.

I would like to end with Matthew 7:13-14: “Enter through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” I know I am not perfectly faithful, but God has always been faithful to me.



*A.G.P.Thomson is a Programmer Analyst in Dartmouth-Hitchcock and a regular attendee of CRC. He is part of the set up crew that helps with setting up Sunday services in Hanover." He enjoys playing cricket and tennis and he loves eating biryani.*



## Students in the Spotlight

### YUMI NARUKE

I am a junior at Dartmouth from Columbia, South Carolina. My parents came to the US from Japan, met in college here, and decided to work as dorm parents for the boarding program of a Christian school. Although I was raised in a Christian home, I was surrounded by these students who, for the most part, were learning about the gospel for the first time at our school. Because I lived with them there was nothing I could hide from them. This motivated me to honor Christ through my lifestyle not only in the context of my Christian school but also in my friendships with these students at home.

When I got into Dartmouth, everyone from home was afraid for me because I was going to “a secular school in the North.” However, the truth is that the Christian community I’ve found here in Hanover has been the greatest blessing of my time here so far. Through difficult times, the Christian community has been there for support and encouragement and has spoken truth into my life.

I now see challenging situations as an opportunity for practicing dependence on God rather than my own strength, and I’ve grown significantly more in my faith while at Dartmouth than I did during my four years of high school. I’m excited to see how God will continue to work in me and on campus in my next two years here!

*Yumi Naruke is a junior at Dartmouth from Columbia, South Carolina. On campus, Yumi enjoys studying film and working as a tour guide. She is also involved in campus ministry and Dartmouth’s cheer team. She has also served as a student intern at CRC.*

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