



April 2008.Issue 4

L'ABRI ... STILL A SHELTER

AT A GLANCE

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EVENTS

John Craig Lecture April 25
John Calvin: Treasure or Tyrant?

Matt Epp Concert April 26

L'Abri Canada
2008 Terms

June 2 - July 24

September 2 -
November 10

By the time you receive this month's newsletter, our spring term will be drawing to a close. Our students, after twelve weeks of inhabiting the same house, eating meals at the same table, and sharing in the daily pattern of work and study, will be leaving us to return to their own homes and particular routines. We wish each of them well. More than this, we will miss them. As is so often the case, it is not just our students that benefit from living in community and pursuing honest answers to honest questions. All of us, staff and students together, have been stretched and shaped, challenged and even changed, by sharing life together even if only for a little while.

While there are many things that I could share from this spring term, I thought it most helpful to introduce you to one of our students and have her reflect on time spent with us. Cindy Keung, a teacher and Vancouver resident, spent most of the spring term at Canadian L'Abri. Just prior to her departure, I asked her about her L'Abri experience...

MR: With Vancouver fading behind you, what was your first thought coming out to L'Abri?

CK: I was crossing Vancouver waters on the BC ferry, making my way to L'Abri on Bowen Island. I thought, "What am I doing?" I wanted to put my car in reverse or even carry it over the line up of other cars and drive back home. I was scared. I was fearful of exposing myself to a group of strangers – people I've never met and had no rational reason to trust. I was also fearful of facing myself.

MR: Fast-forward a little. What were your first few days like, and what did you come to recognize as God's purpose for your being at L'Abri?

CK: Once I arrived, it took me a few days to get real about myself. And yet, as I met with loving friends here at L'Abri, wisdom prevailed. They could see through me and could graciously lead me to "get to the point." God is clever too. He knows very well what I need and has met me right at the heart of my emotions, thoughts and being. God continues to impress me, especially during the times when I want to talk around my issues and escape meeting Him in that true, honest place.

(continued p3)

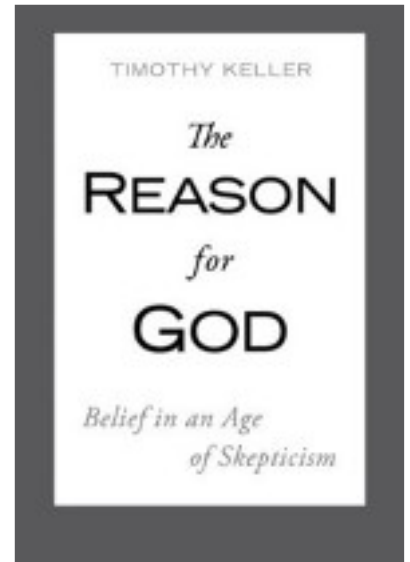
If you'd like to apply as a student please visit our website for more information about our branch and a broader treatment of what to be mindful of as you consider joining us on the island. Alternatively you may call or email us, but keep in mind that as we are often engaged outside of the office, email is usually the more effective form of communication.

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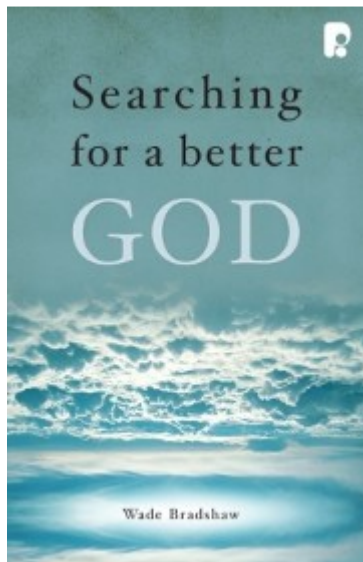
Mark's Recommended

True enough, there are some great non-theological books to read this spring. My own list of these includes *Deep Economy*, by Bill McKibben (environment and economics); *All for a Few Perfect Waves*, by David Rensin (biography of American surf legend, Miklos Dora); and especially *Three Cups of Tea*, by Greg Mortenson with David Oliver Relin (a fascinating account of how a failed attempt to climb K2 led to the building of 50 schools in rural Pakistan and Afghanistan). What is also true this spring is that there are some exceptional theological volumes available as well. Let me draw your attention to three that I'll be reading...

Tim Keller's, *The Reason for God*. Following a spate of anti-God volumes by the likes of Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris Daniel Dennett and Christopher Hitchens, Keller's apologetic for Christian faith comes as a welcome reminder of the rationality of believing in God. Written for 'skeptics and the people who love them', Keller, who is based in Manhattan and ministers to thousands through Redeemer Church, provides a solid word in defense of orthodox Christian faith. In the first part of this book, he addresses seven culturally popular arguments against God's existence. In the second part, he shifts toward supplying reasons for believing in Christianity. Keller builds a general argument for believing in God, culminating in the work of God in Christ. This is an outstanding volume that I suspect many will be talking about for some time to come.



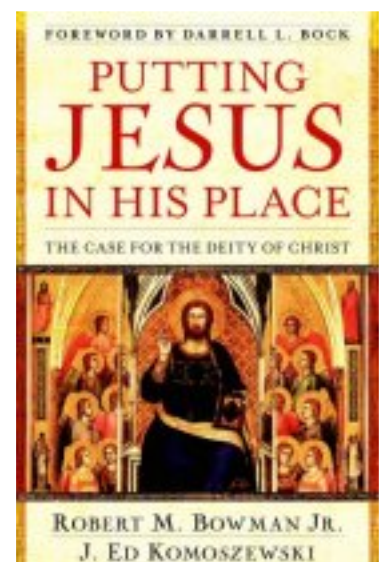
Spring



Wade Bradshaw's, *Searching for a Better God*. One of the strange realities of our postmodern moment is the widely-expressed but seldom commented upon belief that we are somehow better or more moral than God. In this new volume, former L'Abri worker, Wade Bradshaw, examines the diminishment of God in the current culture, exposes various caricatures that have been adopted, and shows us how some of what we consider to be the 'unethical' actions of God are in fact necessary and comport with his being morally upright. For those struggling with doubts concerning the character of God and for those desirous of knowing God better, I am confident this volume will prove to be a helpful and encouraging read.

Reading

The Bowman Jr/Komoszewski volume, *Putting Jesus in His Place*. Recent works of fiction and non-fiction have introduced us afresh to early Christian history and to the figure of Jesus. While it is helpful to learn about the origins of Christianity, yet much of what has been served up in such works constitutes a serious undercutting of orthodox belief regarding the divinity of Jesus. Contra Dan Brown and Elaine Pagels, etc., comes this fine restatement of the case for Jesus' divinity. Detailed but not dry, this academically respectable yet clear and readable summation of the biblical witness to Jesus' uniqueness is at once informative and affirming of the central belief of historic Christianity: that Jesus is divine. Should you be looking for a current but careful study of Jesus' deity, then check out this book (and its website: <http://www.deityofchrist.com/>).



L'ABRI STILL A SHELTER cont'd

MR: As you worked through questions and issues how did being at L'Abri help you?

CK: Practically, L'Abri has provided a daily structure of meals, breaks, work, study and play. It has helped me get out of bed in the morning; appreciate the ability to work; and get my brain juices going. Furthermore, it was during work times where I found that we could chat candidly and share some of our deep cares with one another.

MR: Many have been surprised at how the structure of our day facilitates meaningful interaction with others. Of course, the possibility for such interaction exists outside of L'Abri too, but it is not always so deliberately sought after. Can I ask you to reflect on what you learned through joining this community? Can I also ask you what you have learned afresh about God as you engaged Him in such a community-setting?

CK: First, community life is challenging. But it is also rich and helpful. Our daily interactions have been humorous yet tense, difficult yet freeing, full of laughable, silly moments yet sometimes still guarded. As we play bocce ball and cricket, as we sigh, laugh and roll our eyes at each other I see again how each person is unique in his/her own way; how each provides a new perspective on life. In many ways, we have journeyed together, "iron sharpening iron," even when we don't know that this sharpening is happening. I also realize that even as we guard ourselves and wear our various masks, we are all hurting in our own way and I can trust God to lead each of us.

As to the second question, I see again that God is indeed a personal God – encountering us in very personal ways. Furthermore, I think I really do want to believe that God works in us in times of pain. It is during times of sorrow and even despair that we have the opportunity to cry out for His mercy, learn the true meaning of grace, and cling to Jesus as needy children. These times are hard but this seems to be part of how God claims us for Himself. I say this because the core issues that I have struggled with played themselves out at L'Abri as they have in certain every day situations. I have been compelled to ask myself some hard questions and to realize some difficult things about how I will deal with personal hurt and pain. This wasn't expected at all even in the midst of not knowing what to expect. But in all of this, I think God delights in us when we find ourselves helpless and in such need of Him.

MR: As spring term concludes and we begin to prepare for our summer term, let me ask you, what should those looking to join us in the summer expect and, finally, what will you take with away from your time at L'Abri?

CK: L'Abri is not a place where we should expect to be "healed" overnight of our struggles. It is indeed a "shelter," a safe place to ask questions and a safe place to face the reality confronting you. For me, it has been a safe dwelling. And I will take with me, all my experiences here and process them – perhaps for a very long time-- and when I look back, I will see God's glory in every step of this journey.

Not everyone can come to L'Abri. Not everyone needs to. Those of us who live at L'Abri and are privileged to spend time with students like Cindy do know this. But if you are looking for a safe place to ask your questions and you harbor a desire to engage your issues in a community-setting, then perhaps you ought to consider a term or some portion of time at L'Abri. For more details about Canadian L'Abri, please see our website or email our office.

-- Mark Ryan

We are often asked how people may donate to the work of Canadian L'Abri. Canadians may send their donations to our main address (cover page). We issue tax deductible receipts for gifts sent to our ministry. For tax deductible receipts in the U.S. send the donation to Rochester L'Abri with the memo "for Canadian L'Abri".

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Praying Through May 2008

"I call on you, O God, for you will answer me."
Psalm 17:6

Please join with us as we mindfully bring ourselves and our cares to God our Father. Each day is marked with a specific prayer suggestion. Our serving families appear regularly as a reflection of our deep and continuing need for God's daily provision of grace that we might be more like His Son, Jesus.



				May 1	2	3
				Harden Family	Bowen Island churches	Canadian Board
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Scheibe Family	Day of Prayer for L'Abri Canada	summer helpers Celeste & Jeannie	upcoming summer term lecturers	Harden Family	Bowen Island community	Canadian Trustees
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Scheibe Family	Day of Prayer for L'Abri Rochester	summer helpers Celeste & Jeannie	upcoming summer term students	Harden Family	Bowen Island churches	Canadian Board
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Scheibe Family	Day of Prayer for L'Abri Boston	summer helpers Celeste & Jeannie	upcoming summer term work-study	Harden Family	Bowen Island community	Canadian Trustees
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Scheibe Family	Day of Prayer for L'Abri Greatham	summer helpers Celeste & Jeannie	upcoming summer term community life	Harden Family	Bowen Island churches	Canadian Board