



CROSSWAYS[®] INTERNATIONAL



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In Heaven's Name, Why on Earth? / *RCL Notes* / *The Challenge of Jesus*

STEWARDS OF ALL THAT GOD OWNS / SEPTEMBER 2017

While working with congregations on their annual stewardship programs, I often ask, "What is your goal for your stewardship drive?" The answer usually given is, "To encourage members to be more generous in their giving."

The emphasis in stewardship campaigns has often been on encouraging generosity--to give more! However, I try to counter this obvious objective by asking the challenging questions Dr. Harry Wendt presents in the study *In Heaven's Name, Why on Earth?* In this topical course, Dr. Wendt challenges typical fundraising efforts by asking, "How can we be generous with what we don't own? How can we give what we don't possess?"

God alone is the Owner and Giver of all life.

Just like the unfaithful steward of Jesus' parable, we hoard possessions because we fear God is not the generous God revealed in the Scriptures. We claim ownership and guard our belongings as if they alone are the source of happiness. Jesus understood this to be a faith issue.

Rather than fundraising, we should ask how to increase our faith in the God who owns everything. When stewardship programs are biblically centered, we deepen our individual and corporate responsibilities to be stewards of all that God owns. If we keep that perspective, we will understand that our human response to God and all that God owns is

one of deep and abiding gratitude. Out of gratitude we grow in responsible stewardship of all that God owns.

So I suggest using the CI course *In Heaven's Name, Why on Earth?* for your fall stewardship emphasis. It will transform the focus of your fall stewardship campaigns.

The Rev. Dr. Gene Orr / Crossways International® Board of Directors

TRAINING SEMINAR IN LAKE MARY, FL

October 18-20 / Holy Cross Lutheran Church / \$200

Early bird registration for *The Divine Drama*® Training Seminar in Lake Mary, FL is now open! This Training Seminar will cover key faith concepts covered in Scripture and help you facilitate discussion of *The Divine Drama*®. Click [here](#) for more information, available discounts, and to register.

October 18: 8:30am - 4:30pm -- Check-in & Presentation

October 19: 9:00am - 4:30pm -- Presentation

October 20: 9:00am - 4:00pm -- Presentation

If you would like to schedule a workshop on any of our Crossways International courses in your community, please call 800-257-7308.

WE'RE REACHING OUT FOR NEW AREA REPRESENTATIVES

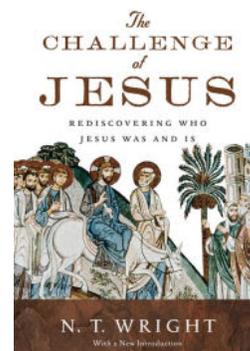
Are you familiar with Crossways International® and interested in helping promote our classes and materials? We need your help! Our Area Representatives exhibit at conferences or seminars in their communities and within their denominations, distribute catalogs to nearby churches to raise awareness of Crossways International, and assist in finding locations to host training seminars or workshops. Please call 800-257-7308 or email info@crossways.org for more information or to volunteer. Thank you!

Follow us on [Facebook](#) to keep up with our latest news and events!

THE CHALLENGE OF JESUS: REDISCOVERING WHO JESUS WAS AND IS / N.T. WRIGHT

It's hard to believe I first read this book 18 years ago because it is still so relevant for readers today. Many of the people in my *Crossways*® class are very familiar with being challenged for their belief in Jesus. Many feel the challenge in their relationships and in the culture of science and forced inclusion. N.T. Wright sets out his own challenge to the reader, to listen closely to Jesus himself and rediscover the challenge he issues to all who acknowledge him as Lord and pledge their life to him. We may think we know Jesus, yet we may have completely turned a deaf ear to the call given by the One who defeated death and is planting a Kingdom with us as his agents.

Wright's use of the full Biblical timeline will reinforce the lessons of *Crossways*. Not an easy read, but a very helpful side resource for people taking their first or second group through section 5 of *Crossways* or *The Divine*



Drama®. Those in your classes who are hungry for more will find this book to be a good way to solidify the impressions formed through their class reading.

Marge Franzen / Lay Minister at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lisle, Illinois

Check out our **Summer Specials** and **Recommended Reading!**

JOIN A CLASS OR WEBINAR

Looking for a Crossways International® class near you? Visit our **Class Map** for locations and details! Interested in starting your own class? We're happy to help you with planning and promotion. Just call 800-257-7308 or email info@crossways.org.

You can also join us online! Our **webinars** provide an interactive way to promote discussion and answer questions. They're the perfect resource for leaders preparing to teach a class within their own congregation, and a great opportunity for learners who prefer to study on their own. Click on a webinar below to learn more!

In Heaven's Name, Why On Earth? Webinar September 19: 10am-Noon (CST)

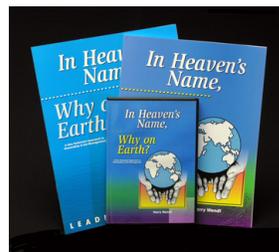
Christmas: The Real Story Webinar October 12: 1pm-3pm (CST)

Praying Like Jesus The Messiah Webinar November 9: 10am-noon (CST)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

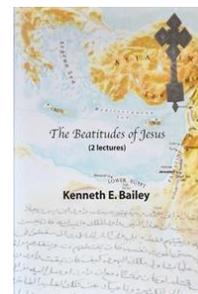
Use ***In Heaven's Name, Why on Earth?*** to examine our management of the resources with which God has blessed us.

This three-unit study of Christian stewardship challenges our understanding of how we manage our lives and resources. We have, in effect, been given nothing, but merely manage what belongs to God--that is, the time, talents, body, and life with which God has entrusted us.



Learn the essential aspects of the theology of Jesus with ***The Beatitudes of Jesus*** DVD.

Placed in their Middle Eastern context, they speak powerfully to every age. Dr. Kenneth Bailey reflects on each of the beatitudes and the key words/themes such as blessed, poor, mourn, meek, earth, righteousness, mercy, pure in heart, and peace.



See who God envisions as our neighbor with the **Earth Marble**. Perfect for class participation incentives, favors at your next event, or workshop completion.



"Kids love the earth marble--not only because it is a marble, but also because it is an excellent visual reminder to them that we all live on the same planet where there are no limits to God's love. I have given out large quantities of these marbles to kids and their teachers during our Sunday morning kids' sermons. One child, upon receiving the marble, replied with the song lyrics, 'He has the whole world in His hands.'" --Pastor John Martinson

[Click here](#) to see an online version of our catalog!
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SHARING GOD'S GOOD NEWS

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY NOTES

"The debtor who has been forgiven so much now goes out and brutally demands that a fellow slave repay him a debt that amounted to a paltry sum--a hundred denarii. A denarius was the normal daily wage paid to a laborer. The difference between the two amounts is enormous and points to the absurdity of the conduct of Christians who have received the great forgiveness of God and yet refuse to forgive the relatively minor offenses done to them by others."



Read more in the Rev. Dr. Wendt's [September 2017 Revised Common Lectionary Notes](#).

DEAR DIARY

What act of love created and recreates this universe and all its creatures? Who am I, and why am I here? I would be amazed if everyone on our planet did not ask or reflect on these questions at some stage during a lifetime. ***In Heaven's Name, Why on Earth?***, a publication of Crossways International®, answers this question very succinctly. It reveals the biblical story of God's love and the profound plan the Creator proclaims to each of us. Remember, none of us is insignificant--or just a passenger on this planet.



I am reminded of the 'chance' meeting (or was it the Divine Connection) of my husband Harry with two vivacious young ladies in the hallway of our Senior Center, Friendship Village. Thus began an enduring and inspiring relationship. During our regular luncheons together, we are encouraged by their hearts and lifestyles focused on Jesus.

On reflection, Suzanne's nurturing family life provided a basis that is reaching its growing potential in St. Mary's Episcopal Church. "[The community here] has taught me how to do this," she states. "It has encouraged and supported me, it nourishes and feeds me spiritually, and then sends me out into the world equipped to be His servant. Each prayer, each song, each warm greeting nourishes me. I am welcome, no matter my sin, or my good deed. God's table is there all the time, with no judgement. I am grateful beyond words for St. Mary's and the community that is not afraid to do the work Jesus has called us to do. I see Him every day--and I feel the warmth of His hugs and the peace of His love."

Janet and her husband lovingly convene a weekly dinner for a large number of needy people in the neighborhood of Calvary Lutheran Church. Thus, the heart of Jesus is so very evident in these modest but gifted women. They are an inspiration and 'gift' to Harry and me, too.

Chloris Wendt / Co-Founder

A PRAYER TO SHARE

Great and gracious God, You made this vast universe in which we live--and You own it. You also made and own each of us. We stand in awe of your wisdom, power, and might.

Inspire us to honor You as the Maker and Owner of all things. Help us to see ourselves as managers of Your creation and the life You are lending us. Empower us to embrace Jesus in humble faith and to walk His Servant-way with joy and peace. We pray in His great and wonderful name. Amen. (From *In Heaven's Name, Why on Earth?* Leader's Manual)

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