



# HOW TO ... ENGAGE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

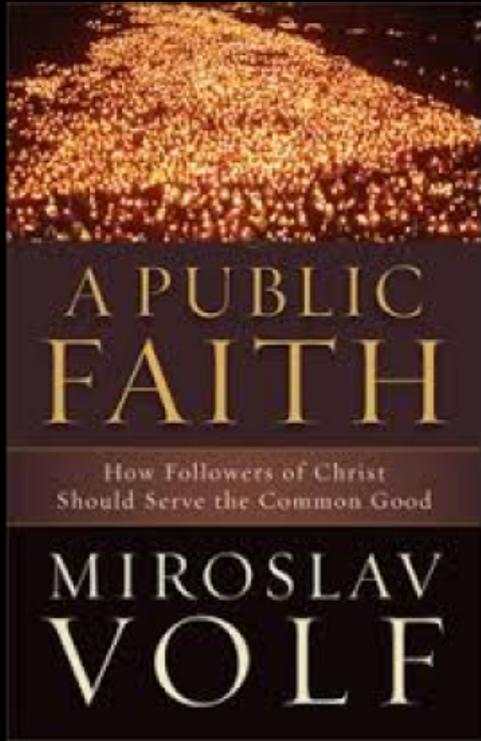
ADM School of Theology, Culture and Public Engagement  
Natasha Moore  
Centre for Public Christianity

24 Apr 2015 8:33:36am

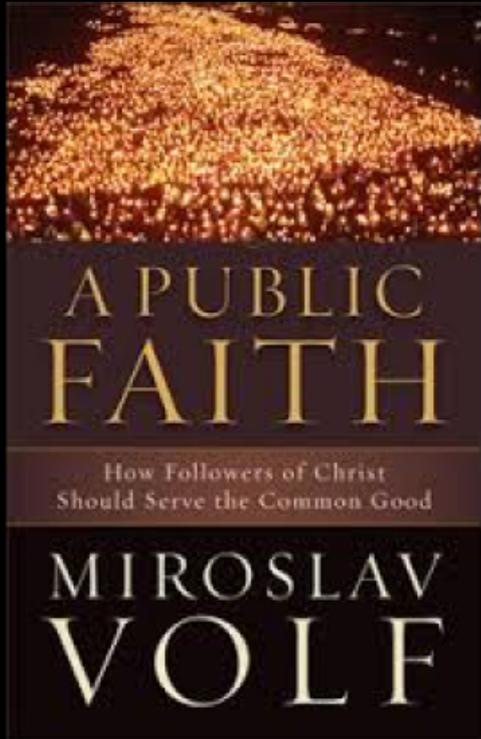
 **Viking:**

I wish it was a Centre for Private Christianity.  
It's your own belief system - you don't have to carry on about it!





It is understandable that Christians seek social influence ... But in the future, Christians will likely exert that influence less from the centers of power and more from social margins.



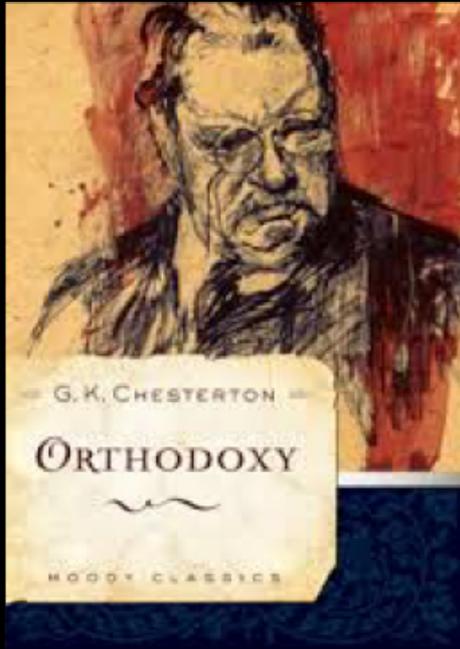
It is understandable that Christians seek social influence ... But in the future, Christians will likely exert that influence less from the centers of power and more from social margins.

For the early Christian communities, to be persecuted was not a cause of alarm but an (unpleasant) occasion for rejoicing. To be tucked in a dark corner outside the public view was not a sign of failure but of keeping good company. Much like many persecuted followers of Christ in the world today, the early churches seemed to have dealt with their precarious marginality with confidence and creativity.

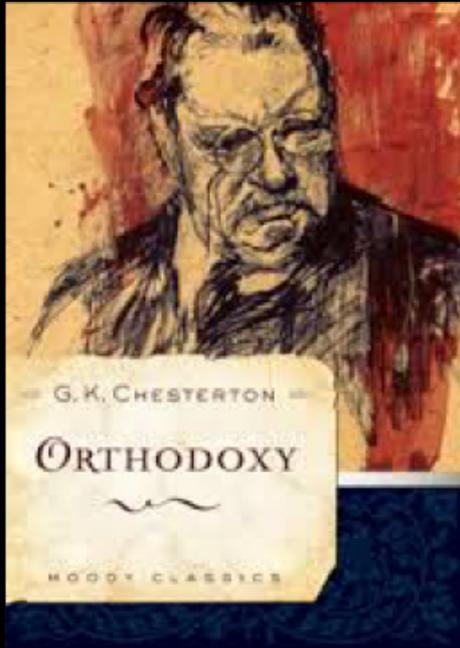


**CONCEDE**

**DEFEND**

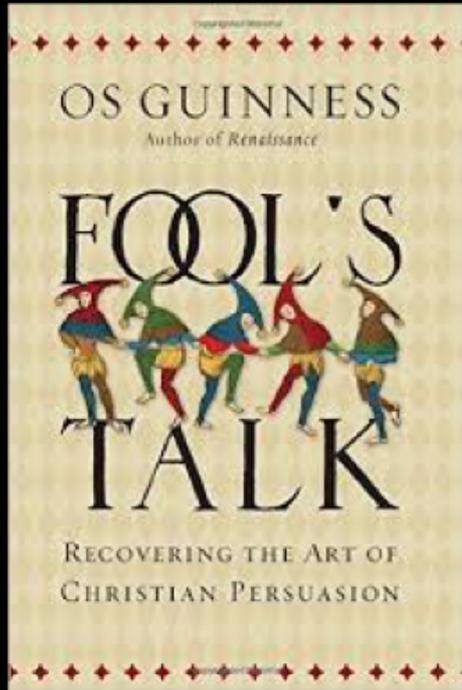


It is very hard for a man to defend anything of which he is entirely convinced. It is comparatively easy when he is only partially convinced. He is partially convinced because he has found this or that proof of the thing, and he can expound it. But a man is not really convinced of a philosophic theory when he finds that something proves it. He is only really convinced when he finds that everything proves it. And the more converging reasons he finds pointing to this conviction, the more bewildered he is if asked suddenly to sum them up. Thus, if one asked an ordinary intelligent man, on the spur of the moment, "Why do you prefer civilization to savagery?" he would look wildly round at object after object, and would only be able to answer vaguely, "Why, there is that bookcase . . . and the coals in the coal-scuttle . . . and pianos . . . and policemen." The whole case for civilization is that the case for it is complex. It has done so many things. But that very multiplicity of proof which ought to make reply overwhelming makes reply impossible.

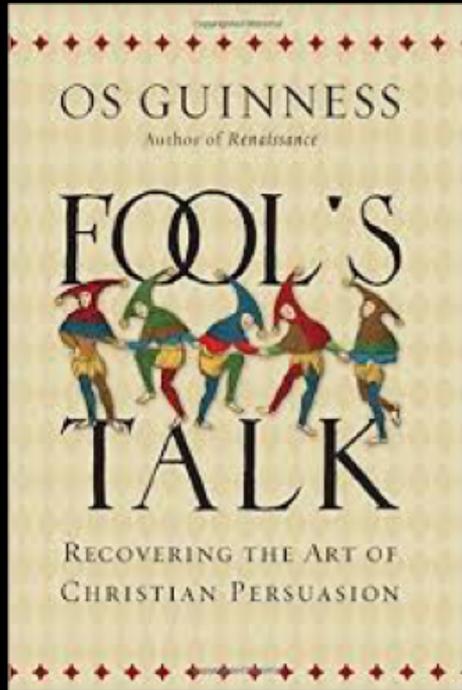


There is, therefore, about all complete conviction a kind of huge helplessness. The belief is so big that it takes a long time to get it into action. And this hesitation chiefly arises, oddly enough, from an indifference about where one should begin. All roads lead to Rome; which is one reason why many people never get there. In the case of this defence of the Christian conviction I confess that I would as soon begin the argument with one thing as another; I would begin it with a turnip or a taximeter cab.

**CRITIQUE**



There are therefore two poles in the unbelieving mind and heart, which I call the “dilemma pole” and the “diversion pole”. The dilemma pole expresses the logic of the fact that the more consistent people are to their own view of reality, *the less close they are to God’s reality and the more likely they are to feel their dilemma*. The diversion pole expresses the fact that the less consistent people are to their own view of reality, *the closer they are to God’s reality, so the more they must find a diversion*. Neither pole is necessarily closer to God, because unbelief as unbelief will not bow to God either way, but the people at either pole are relating to God and to their own claims to truth in entirely different ways.



Expressed like that, it is obvious that most people would prefer to be closer to the inconsistency but comfort of the diversion pole, rather than to the courage and consistency but discomfort of the dilemma pole. In other words most would prefer to live *as if* God were there, with all the benefits that makes possible, even though they deny God in both theory and practice. The reverse is harder to carry off, and for that reason it is also rarer.

# Great Sexpectations: Augustine, Ashley Madison and the Problem of Disordered Love

PRINT EMAIL

Justine Toh NOVEMBER 9, 2015 TOPIC: [Sexual, Contemporary Society, Film & TV](#)

*The Ashley Madison hack may have faded from the headlines but one of its key revelations lingers on in our cultural conversations about sex.*

It's present in more recent offerings like Rachel Hill's book *The Sex Myth: The Gap Between Our Fantasies and Reality* and the romantic comedy *Sleeping with Other People*, currently showing in cinemas.

That this theme should crop up so repeatedly suggests that we need to be constantly reminded of it - no great really, since sex is often something that can (if you pardon the phrase) screw with our thinking, feeling, and desire.

What each of these sex stories reinforces, again and again, is that all of us have great sexpectations that remain unfulfilled.

This is a cruel irony in an age otherwise saturated with sex and its possibilities. Few today dare to insist there's one way to conduct affairs of the heart or lead a satisfying sexual existence. Aside from matters of consent and legality you can have whatever sex you want when you want, with whom you want, and how you want - sex today is a veritable garden of earthly delights.

Or is it? In *The Sex Myth*, millennial journalist Rachel Hill charges that this familiar narrative of sexual liberation keeps us firmly in the grip of the "sex myth" - found equally in media panics over the sexual anarchy of hook up culture and in our tendency to overinvest in sex as the supreme pleasure, as revelatory of the "barbaric truth of human nature" and "a window into who each of us 'really' is."



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## How do we find joy at a funeral?

Simon Smart

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I've been attending funerals lately. Mostly of older people. As I enter my late 40s, significant figures from my childhood are disappearing at an alarming and confronting rate. Even David Bowie is gone! And friends of my parents, once vital and commanding presences, are stooped and frail and might need a hand getting up the stairs. The roll call of those departing is getting longer.

"Because I could not stop for death/He kindly stopped for me", wrote Emily Dickinson. It's a little bit like that, despite our protestations and our impulsive efforts to assist him

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OPINION

## Monkey on our Back: Unravelling the 'Evolution Myth'

By Natasha Moore

ABC Religion and Ethics | 25 Nov 2015

Now that I've noticed it, I see it everywhere.

It crops up in ordinary conversation, talk of workplace politics or weight loss or parenting. It jumps out at me from dating blogs and time management literature, and from the comment threads of articles.

It's a fixture of mainstream journalism, especially when it tries to communicate (and, inevitably, spice up) the results of academic studies published by sociologists or economists or psychologists.

Though its roots lie in the findings of evolutionary biology, this way of thinking and talking about human behaviour is *parascientific* at best.



Evolutionary psychology doesn't come close to an exhaustive explanation of who and what we are as humans. That mystery demands a richer, saner conversation than evolutionary psychology permits.

CREDIT: CARL DE SOUZA / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

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Samuel Moyn

Today's populism, which is once again nationalist and secular, presents conservative Christians with opportunities to gain political advantage over the secular

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## The age of loneliness is killing us

George Monbiot



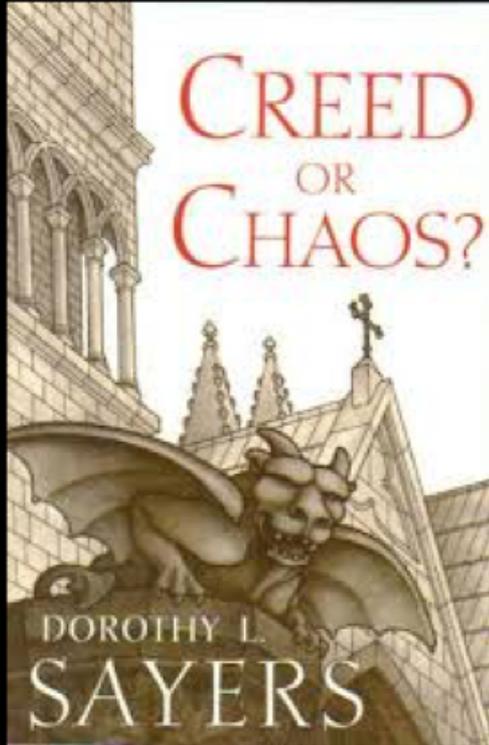
For the most social of creatures, the mammalian bee, there's no such thing now as society. This will be our downfall

● [Seven ways to end loneliness](#)



'Social isolation is as potent a cause of early death as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Loneliness is twice as deadly as obesity.' Photograph: Feri Lukas/Rex





So that is the outline of the official story – the tale of the time when God was the underdog and got beaten, when He submitted to the conditions He had laid down and became a man like the men he had made, and the men He had made broke Him and killed Him. This is the dogma we find so dull – this terrifying drama of which God is the victim and hero.

If this is dull, then what, in Heaven’s name, is worthy to be called exciting? The people who hanged Christ never, to do them justice, accused Him of being a bore; on the contrary, they thought Him too dynamic to be safe. It has been left for later generations to muffle up that shattering personality and surround Him with an atmosphere of tedium. We have very efficiently pared the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified Him “meek and mild,” and recommended Him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies.



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The new Royal Adelaide Hospital. Picture: Dylan Coker

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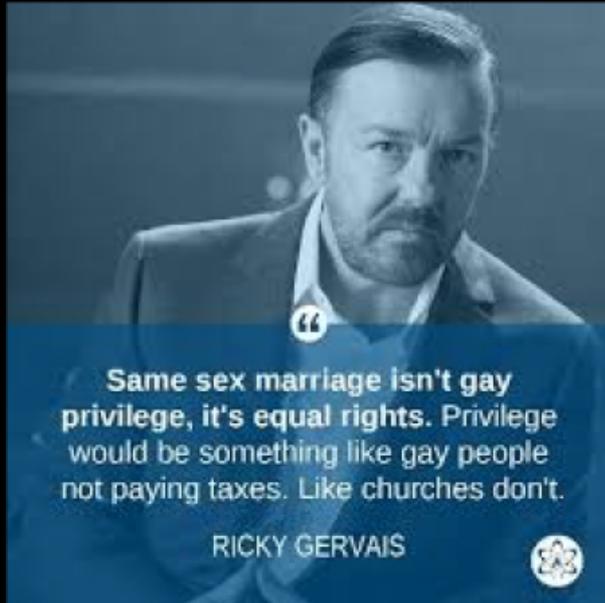
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**CIVIC FRIENDSHIP**



Same sex marriage isn't gay privilege, it's equal rights. Privilege would be something like gay people not paying taxes. Like churches don't.

RICKY GERVAIS



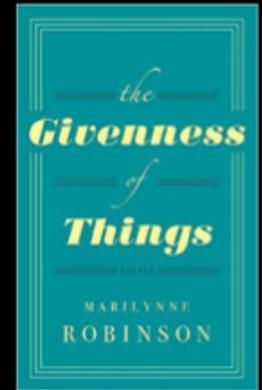
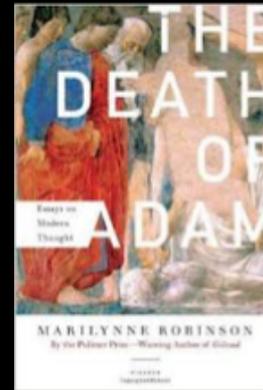
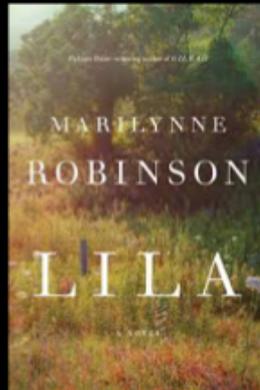
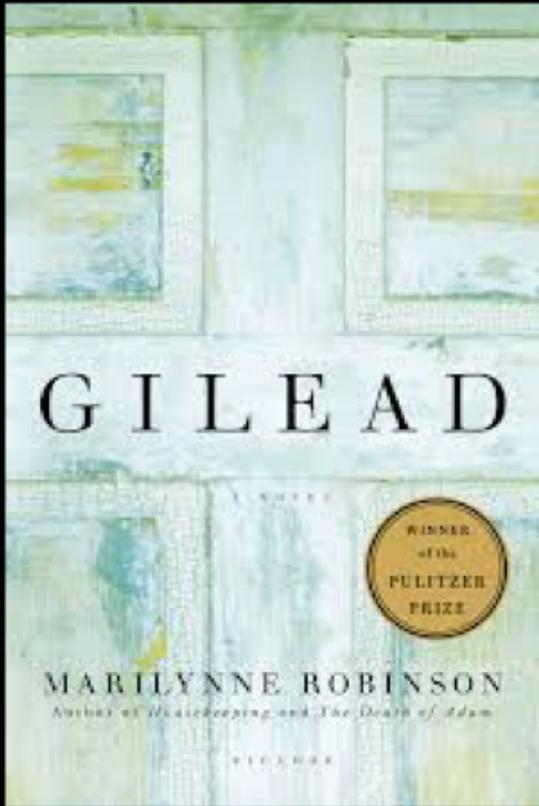
THAT WAS A VERY FUNNY POLITICAL MEME YOU SHARED WITH US

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP WITH FIXING AMERICA

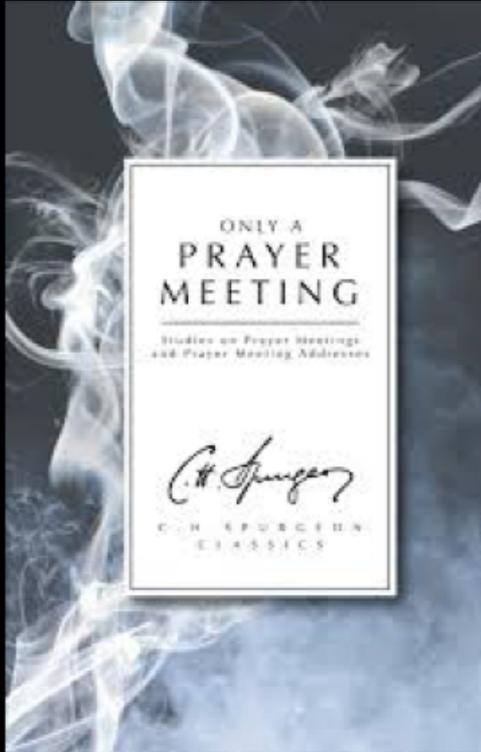




**LEAPING THE GAP**

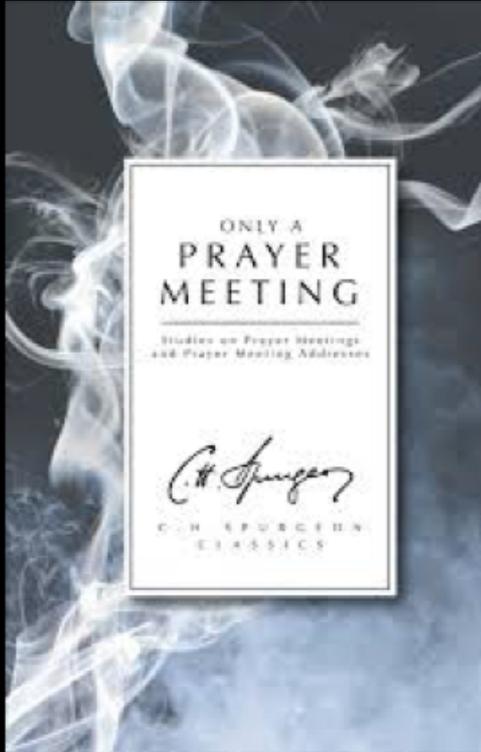






Then, zealously, in dependence upon God, do the little you can do; do it well, and keep on doing it. You and I are not called upon to regulate the world nor to stay the raging sea of human sin. Let us not attempt to wield the divine sceptre; it befits us not. Naturally, you would like to set all people right ... But, my brother, the task is beyond you. Be careful to be right yourself in your own life, and be resolute to bear your complete, honest, obedient testimony to all the truth you know; and there leave the business, for you are not responsible beyond your possibilities.

No one of us is much more than an emmet on its little hill. Now, if you tiny ant were to indulge in serious reflections upon the state of London, and forget to assist in the labours of the insect commonwealth, it would be a foolish creature; but if it will let those great matters alone, and go on doing its antwork, as an ant, it will fill its little sphere, and answer the purpose of its Maker. ... Leave the reins of the universe in the hand of the Maker of the universe, and then do what he has given you to do, in his fear, and by his Spirit, and more will come of it than you dare to hope.



We are like coral insects building each one his minute portion of a structure far down in the deeps of obscurity. We cannot as yet war with those vaunted ironclads which sweep the ocean, and hurl destruction upon cities; and yet – who knows? we may build and build until we pile up a reef upon which the proudest navies may be wrecked. By the steady, simple, honest, Christian upbuilding of holiness and truth – defying no one, attacking no one – we may nevertheless create a situation which will be eminently perilous to the boastful craft of falsehood and scepticism. ... The life of God in man, patience in suffering, perseverance in well-doing, faithfulness to truth, prayer in the Holy Ghost, supreme zeal for the divine glory and unstaggering faith in the unseen God, these are our battle-axe and weapons of war; and, by the aid of the Holy Ghost, we shall win the battle ere the day comes to its close. Till then, O Lord, when our heart is overwhelmed, lead us to the rock which is higher than we are!



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