

Trible's poetic feminism, theologically grounded justice work, and more reader feedback

Letters & Comments in the [February 2026](#) issue

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Trible's poetic feminism

Thank you for shining a spotlight on the pioneering singularity of Phyllis Trible ("[Born a feminist](#)"). Her book *Texts of Terror* opened my eyes and gave me permission to assert my own feminist vision more boldly from the pulpit, at women's retreats, and in church Bible study for both women and men. I love how Susanne Scholz likens the learned and inspired Trible to a poet. Like any good poet, she spoke to the heart of what we know to be true.

—Brook Scott
San Rafael, CA

Once was lost

I am not a devout follower of the century; I have always thought of it as too conservative. But recently I was floundering, wondering how I could talk about the issues of secret police, boats in the Caribbean, and people of all citizenship statuses being treated in inhumane and illegal ways without alienating half of my Mississippi congregation. What I found in recent articles by Liddy Barlow ([In the Lectionary, December](#)) and Michael Woolf ("[When Caesar gets demanding](#)") were clear, concise, scriptural, and powerful objections to the actions of our government in these past months. Thank you!

—Jane B. Bearden
Long Beach, MS

Justice grounded in theology

Douglas Ottati's "[This political moment demands theology](#)" got my attention. At a recent open forum at Candler School of Theology, where I am a student, several of us expressed sentiments similar to Ottati's: grave disappointment at the lack of political formation grounded in theology and adjacent forms of textual criticism.

In the absence of these critical lines of inquiry, I wondered why we are not talking about the very issues Christ insists we must. I am not a Protestant. I do not pretend to understand Protestants, but my fellow students and I have had no problem seeing one another across a myriad of differences. At the forum I was pleased to find a shared passion for justice, resistance, and change—words that are wearily lacking in most of our seminary classes.

—Bryan G. Pepper
Atlanta, GA

Living with pain

When I read Debie Thomas's column about chronic pain ("[Christ in my nerve endings](#)"), I thought of my own 20-year-old injury. Like Thomas, when I was first injured I asked, "Why did this happen to me?" As I grew into my new life, I came to ask, "Why *not* me?"

—Roger Barbee
Woodstock, VA

Debie Thomas never ceases to inspire, and I'm grateful whenever and wherever she writes. This column was painful to read, yet as I read it I found my own pain fading or blending. All I can offer Thomas is empathy and my own poor words of solace: Be faithful to your once quickened heart, and grieve that your pain consumes another more fragile, less hopeful soul. Pray for that one without ceasing, until her pain and yours merge as a single tear on the face of Christ.

—Bob Stephenson
Chevy Chase, MD

Death is for everyone

Burke Gerstenschlager, in his review of *Everyday Armageddons* ("[The apocalypse of dying](#)"), says, "I often found myself wondering who this book is for." I propose that perhaps it is for all of us—for we can all give serious consideration to the blessing of medical aid in dying, just as we accept the blessing of medical aid in birthing.

—Thelma Hoogland
Oak Forest, IL

Ancient singularities

I very much enjoyed Belden Lane's recent essay ("[The night the universe looked back at me](#)"). I wonder if perhaps *singularity* is a more modern term for the kind of event the ancients expressed with a mandorla, the intersection of two circles or arcs (e.g., the early Christian fish symbol).

—Joe McGill
Brownstown, IN

A lifetime of thanks

This letter is for the century family, past and present alike. Before I diminish entirely, I need to let it be known how much the magazine has meant to my theological life. In 1962, when I entered grad school at Southeastern Baptist Seminary at Wake Forest, I accidentally picked up a copy of the magazine, read parts of it in the coffee

shop, and quickly subscribed.

As the years unfolded, I kept each and every issue, and eventually I had them professionally bound. They remained in my office for 55 years, until a couple years ago when I gave them to a pastor. Admittedly, I wept inside as I began to reduce my library. However, to my best knowledge, I have not missed a single issue of the magazine since the fall of 1962. Along the way, I fell in love with the mind, compassion, and writings of the late Martin Marty, and I now possess five large notebooks with hole-punched copies of *Context*, his biweekly newsletter.

Many thanks from this retired pastor who cares about how people think and live.

—Don Stevenson
Hagerstown, MD