



THE CENTER
FOR BIBLICAL
UNITY

IMAGO DEI

Quarterly Newsletter



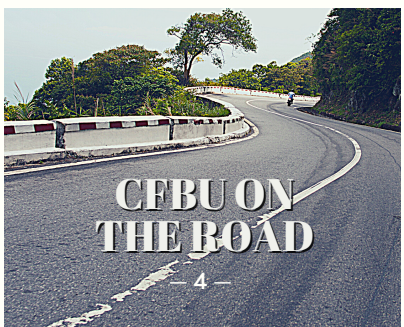
**FAMILY
FEATURE**

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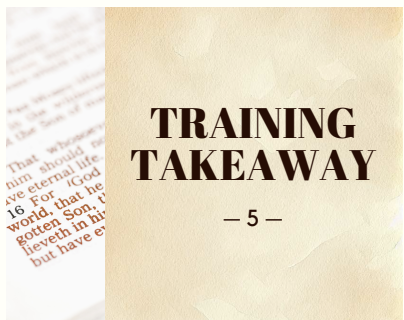
**IMPACT
STORY**

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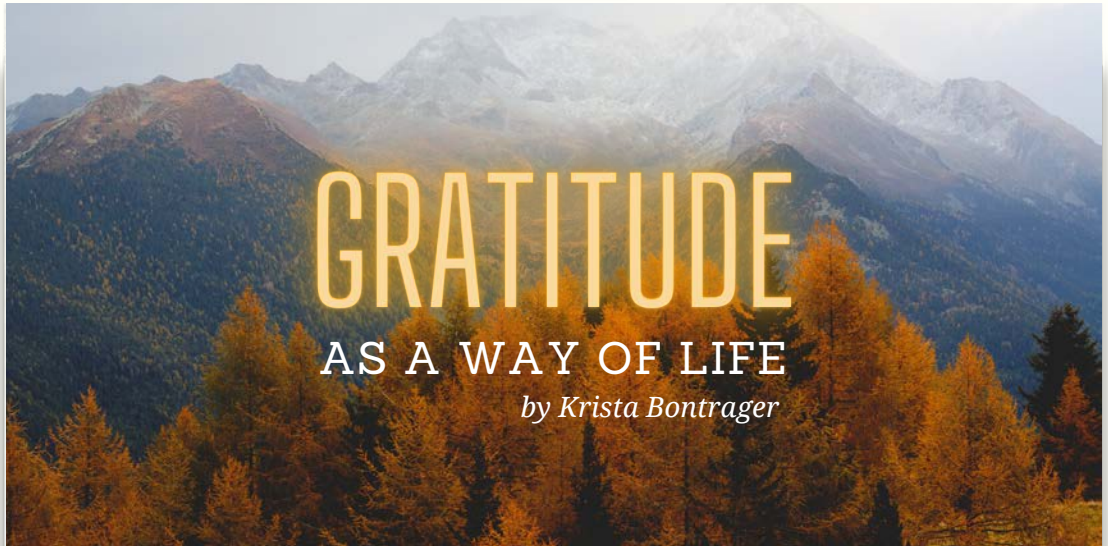
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GRATITUDE

AS A WAY OF LIFE

by Krista Bontrager

When my children were young, I always insisted that they write thank-you notes for gifts. We didn't always do it perfectly, but I tried to emphasize the importance of gratefulness. A posture of gratitude can help build humility in our hearts and stave off the poison of entitlement.

For the Christian, gratitude is the framework of our entire life in Christ. The author of Hebrews put it this way:

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. (12:28-29 ESV)

Gratitude—or thanksgiving—is the appropriate response to God's gift of eternal life. It signals to God and others that we understand every good and perfect gift comes from the Father, including our life itself.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! (Ps. 95:2 ESV)

As we look forward to the holiday season, let's keep in mind that Thanksgiving should not be limited to a holiday. Rather, it ought to be a way of life as we daily look to God for provision.

GROWING THE FAMILY TREE

In 2020, when Lance Cashion was an outreach pastor in Fort Worth, Texas, a colleague sent him one of Monique's talks. "I'd been on the church side of things, dealing with a lot of cultural things going on with racial issues," said Lance. "A lot of folks were reading stuff like *White Fragility*, *How to Be an Antiracist*—all the books that Christians should probably read but not follow." Monique, however, was "talking about all of this very clearly and biblically." He knew then that Monique was a voice to follow.

Commissioned as a Colson Fellow in 2020, Lance attended that year's Wilberforce Weekend with his wife, Kathryn, who was already a fan of *Theology Mom*. Soon after meeting Monique and Krista there, they learned about the brand-new Center for Biblical Unity. "We like to think that we got to see [CFBU] as it was starting to sprout," Lance told us, smiling. "And now it's like a big tree."

Lance recently left his church role to see the sprouting of his own ministry effort: The Forge Room Foundation. Launched in May 2023, the Foundation brings light into the darkness by offering "training in worldview, cultural intelligence, and public theology" to local (Fort Worth–area) Christians. The Foundation's main focuses, so far, are human trafficking and sanctity-of-life issues.

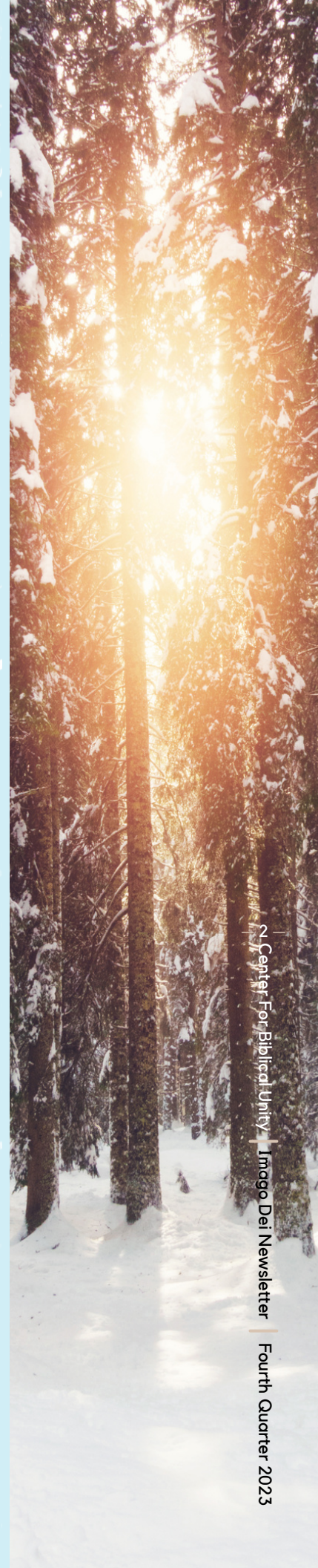
Lance appreciates that CFBU includes these issues under its umbrella, even as it continues to address racial and ethnic issues. "[Krista and Monique] are so adept at tracking cultural issues, speaking to them in real time," he said. "They ... stay on top of all the cultural issues, the bigger issues. However they weave that together, that's pretty important. That's something that I think is a gift from God."

"The Center for Biblical Unity's ministry has made inroads into our ministry lives, which are both our family and everything else," he continued. "It's helped to form and shape the way we think things through biblically, and, of course, that impacts our family and our relationships."

As parents of two children, 12 and 14, they've gleaned wisdom from listening to Monique and Krista. "I hear their conversations ... and I try to use [what I learn] and have those same conversations organically with my kids, and with others as well," Kathryn told us.

Whether modeling productive conversations, addressing tough cultural issues biblically, or providing materials that they can pass on to others, CFBU has become a trusted resource for the Cashions. "I'm not going to be an expert in everything," said Lance, "but I can point people to someone I trust and know, and I can send them to that resource knowing that everything that ministry does is going to be excellent, it's going to be biblical, and it's going to have the right heart behind it."

To learn more about the Cashions' ministry, visit [Forge Room Foundation](#).



YOUR IMPACT

Our impact story for this quarter is going to take a bit of a different spin. Instead of looking at the impact the Center for Biblical Unity is making on others, we are looking at how your prayers, encouragement, and faithful giving have impacted us.

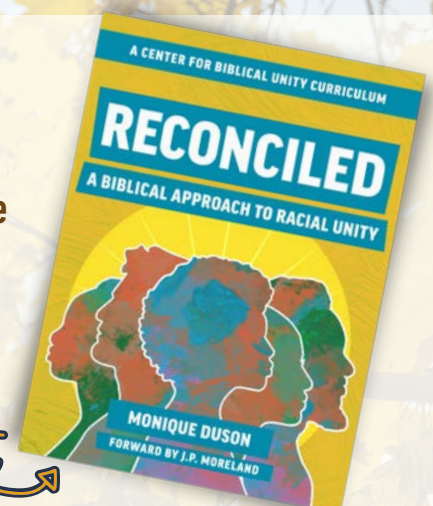
Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 ESV)

This year has been busy. Krista and I have had some amazing opportunities; we've traveled to several states, we've spoken to thousands of people in person and virtually, and we wrote a book. Those are just a few of our many high points this year. We've also had some scary, not-so-fun moments. My brother had a kidney transplant in January, and while we are grateful for the blessing of a new kidney, the transplant and healing process brought dire moments that frightened my family. Krista and I endured sickness a few times this year that forced us to postpone travel, and a small host of other family matters caught us off guard from time to time. Trusting in the Lord in fair weather is easy; relying on Him with the same assurance during the storms of life is more challenging. But that's where you all have stepped in.

During some of our greatest private hurdles, matters we couldn't simply share on social media or talk about from a stage, you've prayed on our behalf. We've received your notes in our inboxes, found your cards awaiting us at the post office, and read your posts on our timelines. Knowing that you're praying for us encourages our hearts and reminds us that we are not alone.

Prayer is the most intimate and important relationship that we as Christians have with God. We are told to pray without ceasing. Thank you for remembering us in your prayers. Your prayers, encouragement, and financial support make an impact on our lives daily. Thank you. We are grateful.

The CFBU **Reconciled** curriculum has guided many schools, churches, ministries, and families through what it means to be reconciled to God and to one another. Focusing on Jesus and the words of Scripture as our foundation, **Reconciled** is a great tool to engage believers, at any stage of their faith, on the truth of our identity as children of God and how that reality should frame our relationships with other Christians. We are family.



OPEN ROADS & OPEN DOORS

In the last three months, Krista and I have had some amazing speaking opportunities. We've traveled to five states, presenting at the Maven Conference - Texas, two Christian-school professional-development trainings, and a youth camp. We were also interviewed for an upcoming Focus on the Family Christian Worldview project! I'm continuously humbled by the doors God opens for us. Every speaking opportunity is a distinct moment to share the gospel.

While I would love to write about all of these, I'll just highlight the two events that had particular impact—both on those we served and, in return, on me.



Arizona Christian University
Professional Development Training



Focus on the Family Headquarters

July 2023

Kidz2Leaders (K2L) - Camp Hope (Atlanta, GA)

The Kidz2Leaders ministry serves youth who have at least one incarcerated parent. Last year, I blogged about my time at Camp Hope, writing about the participants' blatant rejection of both historic Christianity and values like the sanctity of life and sexual purity. That week caused me to reflect deeply on how we can reach a generation immersed in anti-God worldviews.

Kevin (my *Off Code Podcast* co-host) and I returned to Georgia in July to serve with K2L for another week. This time, things were different. Changes in personnel and group structure yielded dynamic impacts that allowed us to appropriately address unique questions and challenges. We worked to answer basic worldview questions: What is wrong with the world? Where can we find truth and answers to the world's problems? What is sin? The students were skeptical that we would push our Jesus on them without being able to "give a reason for the hope that we have." Honestly, it was a rocky beginning. But by the end, with lots of prayer, Scripture presentation, and apologetics, they began asking how they could be assured of their own salvation and have a relationship with Jesus. Please pray that these young people will come to see themselves as Jesus sees them and grow in their relationship with Him. For more information on K2L, please visit www.kidz2leaders.org. (To protect participants' anonymity, we did not display any pictures of camp.)

September 2023

Maven Conference (Frisco, TX)

If I could sum up the Maven - Texas conference in one word, that would be EXPECTANT. Attendees were expectant for what they would learn. Krista and I were expectant to meet family, both those who've walked with us and those we hadn't met yet. In my new talk, "Let's Talk About Race," I shared cultural ideas that parents and leaders should be aware of and biblical principles regarding the issues of race and racism. We are so grateful for Maven and the opportunity to serve at their conferences. For more information on Maven, please visit www.maventruth.com.



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Training

UNWAVERING ON SCRIPTURE

Takeaway

This past August, Monique and Krista had the privilege of leading a training for staff and faculty at Christ Presbyterian Academy (CPA) in Nashville, Tennessee.

CPA is a private college-preparatory school for grades preschool through 12. The Academy provides transformational education through a Christian worldview and offers extensive programs to develop the diverse potential of each student.

In 2019 the Academy launched the Institute for Cultural Engagement, offering students the opportunity to discover the intersection of their passion and purpose to become culture shapers.

Arneal Strain, Pastor of Discipleship & Cross-Cultural Mission, is at the forefront of the Academy's cultural-engagement conversation.

Following the CFBU training, Pastor Arneal shared, "What I found most helpful from Monique and Krista's time

with us was their unwavering focus on Scripture and how they clearly and gently revealed how common approaches to unity in the past from many churches lacked biblical principles and instead followed the wisdom of the world.

"A beautiful commitment to Scripture is what set these ladies apart from other speakers I've heard on this same topic before."

If you are interested in bringing a CFBU training into your workplace, school, church, or organization, visit centerforbiblicalunity.com/trainings for more information.

Whether it's teaching, conflict management, problem solving, or working with families, staff, volunteers, or more, CFBU is here for you. With biblically informed principles, empathy, and transparency, we can lead teams in the tension of grace and truth.

Giving Tuesday is the Center for Biblical Unity's biggest fundraising effort of the year.

Since our beginning, CFBU has created fun and engaging skits to announce new projects for the upcoming year and encourage those who follow our ministry to support these projects financially.

This year, Giving Tuesday is November 28, 2023. As we prepare to unveil our best Giving Tuesday skit yet, please pray about how you can sow into the Center for Biblical Unity and help us further the gospel message of our unity in Christ.

We appreciate your support!

