



### From Newsletter to Compendium

When I arrived at Valparaiso—just six weeks before COVID upended everyone’s idea of normalcy—one of the first impressions I had of my students was just how busy they all seemed to be. Busyness takes many forms, and among Valpo undergrads, it often looks quite studious and socially-engaged. Everyone wants to engage and change the world, one workshop or extracurricular club at a time. I love that about Valpo. It makes for a wonderfully energetic place to live and work.



David Henreckson, Director of the Institute for Leadership and Service

If we’re not careful, though, I suspect that busyness can become a habit of mind that prevents us from enjoying the untamed and transformative parts of life. Most of my most important turning points in life didn’t have a Google calendar alert thirty minutes in advance.

The Institute is of course responsible for hosting our own set of programming. And I sincerely hope any and all will consider our virtual events. I also hope we can create some space for what we used to call leisure. Leisure isn’t laziness. And it’s not just not doing anything. It’s more about contemplating true and beautiful things. It’s more like letting go, in the way that a daydreaming student in class might let her imagination run wild—taking her to new, unexpectedly thrilling places that the instructor on Zoom has no idea exists.

So, what if we were intentional about creating these occasions for leisure, for letting go and opening ourselves up to the ideas, experiences, practices, and musings of others?

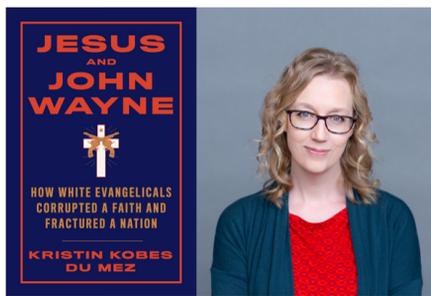
This won’t be a typical newsletter, then. ILAS will send out emails with our regularly scheduled programming (see last Friday’s message). But here, on a monthly basis, ILAS staff, students, and campus friends will share some of their favorite links, poems, stories, podcasts, and maybe pieces of art, riddles, or mathematical games.

Let’s call it a compendium—a storehouse of beautiful ideas and truthful musings. If you want to contribute, reach out to me ([david.henreckson@valpo.edu](mailto:david.henreckson@valpo.edu)) or the ILAS assistant director, Aaron Morrison ([aaron.morrison@valpo.edu](mailto:aaron.morrison@valpo.edu)).

David Henreckson, Director of Valparaiso University’s Institute for Leadership and Service

## September: Faith & Politics

Every month, we’ll offer some resources (essays, podcasts, lectures, poems, etc.) that are loosely related to a theme—often related to our Pathways to Purpose speaker for that month. Not every link implies any kind of endorsement, but we do hope that these resources will draw interest, entertain, provoke (in a good way!), and delight.



## Compendium

Our September 29 Pathways to Purpose speaker, Kristin Kobes Du Mez, has a new book out: *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. In an election season when these topics are perennially relevant, *Jesus and John Wayne* has been attracting national media attention. Check out [Du Mez’s interview on NPR’s Morning Edition](#). ~ David Henreckson

The novelist Jesmyn Ward lost her husband to COVID-19, and penned [one of the most moving--and fair warning, devastating--essays](#) on the grief that followed his death. ~ DH

Heath Carter writes on [“Inequality is a Life Issue: Reflections from Christian Social Teaching”](#) for *Berkley Forum* (a Publication of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs). Carter has written extensively on religion, labor, and inequality, notably in his book *Union Made*. In this piece, he reflects on the history of Christian social activism and thought on economic inequality and considers how the tradition might inform renewed action on universal basic income, a topic of renewed attention during the 2020 election. ~ Aaron Morrison

Harvard moral philosopher Michael Sandel has gained a well-deserved reputation for writing clearly about complicated ethical issues. His undergraduate lecture course on justice typically attracts over a thousand students (!). An [excerpt from his new book](#) looks at how negative attitudes about the less educated have contributed to our cultural and political divisions. ~ DH

Michael Robbins and Lawrence Rubin write on [“Sudan’s government seems to be shifting away from Islamic law. Not everyone supports these moves”](#) in the *Washington Post*. After three decades under a legal code set by Islamic Law, Sudan’s government is announcing a policy of separation between religion and state. This comes as significant news for the region, especially since Sudan’s prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok, [survived an assassination attempt earlier this year](#). Not everyone is pleased with this news, however, and this analysis by Robbins and Rubin gives a deep dive into the complexities of sharia law in relation to the recent history of Sudan. ~ AM

Via (future Pathways speaker) Francis Su, a mathematician at Harvey Mudd College, a reverse poem titled [“Social Distancing.”](#) ~ DH

[The Argument is my new favorite political podcast](#). The name might make you think it’s just another place to showcase political divisions at an uncomfortably high volume. But episode to episode, the cohosts—Frank Bruni, Ross Douthat and Michelle Goldberg--attempt to frame actual arguments, with actual premises, evidence, and coherent conclusions. Typically against each other. The disagreements are civil, but no less serious and often emphatic. ~ DH

Eric McDaniel writes on [“The Republican Convention Was An Altar Call At The Church of White Masculinity”](#) for *Salon Magazine*. McDaniel reflects on the religious optics of the recent RNC, using Kristin Kobes Du Mez’s recent book, *Jesus and John Wayne*, as a reference to analyze the connections between Christianity, white masculinity, and political theater. ~ AM

Want updates on future ILAS Events and Programs? Stay up to date on everything ILAS by following us on social media!

