

Book Proposal for:

***Beauty Tips from a Seminary Washout,
Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Theology***

By:

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Overview:

What does it mean to *still* be in the 6th day of creation (looking at the science and proposal of physicist Gerald Schroeder, and the theological and philosophical implications of his theory)? What if *everyone's* name is written in the “*Lamb's Book of Life?*” What does the Kingdom of Heaven look like? What economic system does it have? Are Christians called to actually be Anarcho-communists? Does true Christianity look more radical today than ever before?

Covering a span of theological topics and issues spanning Creation to Revelation, beginning to end, and everything in between. Uniquely deconstructed and presented in a fresh way, from “makeup in the hands of an angry God,” to Dane Cook and our funny problem with the word “all”; from perfume to prodigals. *Beauty Tips from a Seminary Washout (BTfSW)* reveals a unique perspective on (most) all things theological from an outsider who tried desperately to be on the inside, and failed miserably at it.

It connects with truths that are both relevant and revolutionary, yet seem both inherent and familiar, BTfSW seeks to do more than simply shift the paradigms, but rather, expand them—explode them, in a hope of revealing the complex simplicity of a God bigger and better than we think, of love deeper and richer than we know, and of truth and hope more powerful than we could ever imagine.

BTfSW achieves this by revealing the honest and open truths and experiences of one who, through his experiences both at Seminary and otherwise—seemingly embodied that of the last and the least. In this way, BTfSW inclusively invites all to partake of the quixotic journey of a modern “madman” who seeks to see life “as it should be” and not merely “as it is.”

My desire is twofold: to reveal inherent worth and value to everyone, and to encourage those who read this book to seek not only truth, but the truth in their worth.

All are Dulcinea, most just believe themselves Aldonza. Time to get crazy.

Target Market/Audience (Intended Readership):

To put shortly, the target market is an inclusive one. While first impressions and marketability would be to those within Christendom, the themes, motivations, conclusions, and overall style of BTfSW are all ones in which embody an inclusivity that both connects to and with those who do not consider themselves “Christian.” This book is for outsiders. Or those who have felt like they're on the outside. This could be for those

within Christianity who don't fully connect with the culture, or for those outside Christianity, who don't fully agree with what they've heard Christianity espouse. Lastly, the age demographic could be expressed as one for all ages, though initially one which could be marketed towards the teenager to mid 40's range.

Table of Contents (Chapter Summaries):

— ***“Introduction, Or: That Which Translates to an Understanding of Meaning and Purpose Behind This Book, Serving Both Metaphorically and Literally (double entendre intended) to Carry the Reader From its First Blank Page to the Beginning of Chapter One”***

The introduction. It all started that one day...if it wasn't for that *one* day...

— ***Chapt. 1 “Theology is like Cosmetics, It All Starts with A Good Foundation”***

On the creation story, and fancy ideas of physicists and Einstein, and what the 6th Day of Creation really looks like, and what that all means to all of us.

— ***Chapt. 2 “The Fresh Fruit Diet”***

A continued look at the original creation. On judgment and trust and the fall and how one thing led to a lack of the second, which led to the third, which corrupted the first. How judgment was part of our nature, how deception led to a lack of trust, and how the fall corrupted both our judgment and our trust.

— ***Chapt. 3 “Makeup in the Hands of an Angry God”***

John Piper (and those in that realm) has a lot to say about the anger and wrath of God. Furthermore—or, simply by implication, the great cosmic mess of things we made at the fall. I've never really understood what this sort of “shaming” has to do with God (even when I bought into it), and further have come to realize that God himself has been one to “cover our shame” when—by rights (whose, I don't have a clue), He very well could have left us to feel ashamed all the time.

I further touch on my backstory and the intentions and implications of how physical scars placed on me (forcefully cut into me, actually), and how “shame” and “deceit” are the two things the fall has placed on us (or forcefully cut into us).

— ***Chapt. 4 “Rock Bottom is the New Black”***

There are quite a few people in this world who—and God bless 'em, have experienced their “rock bottom.” Their moment when they've hit the lowest point of their lives and have learned from it, grown from it, and are all around better for it. I, however, am one of the other sorts who've had too many rock bottoms. Like an old man fighting windmills, I just can't seem to stay down. This is what I've learned along the way and the pain it took to learn it.

— **Chapt. 5 “*Your Body is a Wonderland*”**

On Sex, and Masturbation; on God’s laws, and Man’s laws; on the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingdom of America.

— **Chapt. 6 “*If You Want a Hit, You’re Gonna Need More Cow Bell!*”**

“So there I was...killing them softly with my song. Or rather, being killed, and not that softly either.”—*Hugh Grant, “About a Boy”*

Love is a song that has a rhythm...and so does everything else. (Continued)

On the “Logos” itself, and the “logos” of everything. The reason, logic, meaning, plot and rhythm Himself, and of everything. On stories of teaching 3-6 year olds about music, and what I taught them, versus what they taught me. On wooing, and romance. And Dirty Dancing.

— **Chapt. 7 “*You Can’t Spell ‘A Prodigal’ Without Prada*”**

On everything I’ve learned both inside and outside school, about the Prodigal, on God’s heart and the heart of the father, on how there’s three sons in the story, on how two of them are prodigals, and—how calling a Christian an “older prodigal” can be one of the most insulting things you can say to them.

— **Chapt. 8 “*My God, What is that Smell?? ‘That’s the Smell of Desire, Milady.’”***

On forgiveness, on the Kingdom of Forgiveness, on the “power” that Jesus bestowed on His followers, on the revolution of forgiveness, and on the woman in the Gospel of Luke—who broke her perfume and cried at Jesus’ feet; who went away forgiven—free, not because she was repentant, but because she was accepted.

— **Chapt. 9 “*The Good, the Bad, and the Nothing*”**

On the Never-ending Story, the Nothing, and the children’s story “The Fire Cat” and how I really am “good for nothing.”

Which is to say I’m good.

But for nothing.

And further on the story of Joseph and just which actions are good, and which are evil, and what God does with both, and who we are in the midst of all of it.

— **Chapt. 10 “*Well I’m Sure Somebody Loved Hitler, But...*”**

On love...Hitler...and Roald Dahl.

A continuation on forgiveness, on my back story and abuse, and what love truly does.

— **Chapt. 11** *“Dane Cook and Our Funny Problem with the Word, ‘All’”*

My humbling admission to once enjoying Dane Cook; and how that connects to an old newspaper cover page from 1898 hanging in a men’s room at a local coffee shop. How “Not a single casualty sustained” translates to “300 men killed and 600 wounded.” And ultimately, how “All things” gets translated to “all manner of things.” How all, seems not to actually mean, all.

— **Chapt. 12** *“Shaving Off Hell”*

How a discussion about Matisyahu led to an angry argument about Hell. On “the Law” and “the Lawyers.” On beards and Hell, and the implications of both.

— **Chapt. 13** *“Bowties are cool, but the ending is Better.”*

On Doctor Who, hating the ending, and Revelation and how its (mis)interpretation has basically encapsulated the misinterpretation of the gospel. On the finality of shame and deceit. On who Revelation is to and what it’s for and why YOU are so important to IT (as opposed to IT being so important for YOU).

— **Conclusion** *“Whitewashed Tombs and Tombs Washed White, False Profits and False Prophets”*

A conclusion. How it all wraps up and what it all means. How questions and questioning led me to be called/labeled a false prophet and a wolf in sheep’s clothing while at Seminary. How I seemed to garnish more support after leaving Seminary than I ever did while at Seminary. Why I left, and why I don’t regret it (both my time there, and leaving).

Author Biography:

I began this book when I dropped out of Denver Seminary during my 3rd semester, close to 7 years ago. Since then, I’ve entered my 30’s (currently midway mark), pursued multiple entertainment careers, maintained a website with regular writing (leavinglamancha.com), had 2 kids, went *back* to grad school, eventually attained a Masters degree in Applied Philosophy with an emphasis in Christian Theology, and have been teaching multiple philosophy courses on the collegiate level for over three years. These include everything from Critical Thinking, to Introduction to Philosophy, to Ethics, with an average semester of about 5 courses, 2 of which are geared as bridge courses for high-schoolers. Because of this, I’ve not only connected with a varied age range of individuals (from teenage to “boomers”), but have maintained those connections. Often giving guidance and ministry.

Oh, and I finally made my way to becoming an ordained Reverend.

And I’ve fostered communities of these individuals built around a sense of truth in vulnerability.

“Everything brought to the light becomes light,” (Ephesians 5:13) and I wish to bring that light to everyone I connect with.

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I make truth accessible, and raise Hell just to reveal it's nothing to fear.
I connect with Don Quixote and correlate my passion with that same quest, that
"Impossible Dream."
And the world will be better for this...

Book Introduction.

Life's funny. How many things in your life are mirrors?

That... may make more sense once you've gotten to know me. I don't think I've ever truly known what I wanted to do or who I wanted to be. When I was younger, I wrote it down: "Rockstar Pediatrician Stunt Driver Explorer" only for years later to add, "[comma] and consultant."

What does that have to do with this book? Well, I'm still torn between whether I should be writing this introduction before I write the book, or after I write it. Maybe I'll end up deleting most of this and start from scratch.

I suppose I should explain the title. Beauty Tips from a Seminary Washout Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Theology.

It all started that one day. I can't tell you exactly when it was, but I just know it *had* to have been that *one* day.

I should've never let my mind wander and lose track of time, swishing with Listerine for 79 seconds after brushing my teeth instead of the recommended 60.

Or maybe it was obsessing too long over my hair to get it to look just right.

Or spending a week and a half watching all four seasons of Battlestar Galactica on Netflix.

Maybe it was not getting the job I thought totally made sense for me for the first time in my life.

Or deciding the best option was to go back to school to get my Masters.

Or determining that the best school to attend was a place that I knew, I just *knew* I wasn't going to fit into, but both got in a week before classes started *and* got in specifically *because* I didn't fit the mold.

Or taking a job which does anything *but* provide a regular, steady schedule which allows me to maintain sanity, keep in contact regularly with friends and family, write, eat healthy, work on hobbies, keep the house tidy, hydrate.

Or maybe it was having one too many beers and then a couple more, one too many times.

Or having to deal with a death.

Or, or, or—the point is, even though it seems so long ago, there just *had* to be a day, a point, something, that sparked one thing or another; a cause that led to an effect that led to another cause and effect which eventually brought me to this point. At least that's what I think looking back.

A different place.

A different person.

I wish I could tell you just what it was that did it, but that's just it, isn't it? You never really know where you're going to be, or what you're going to be doing that moment

(maybe those moments) your life changes (or rather—more aptly, **life changes you**) forever.

And like anything, eventually, it all starts to feel...normal. You adapt, you push through it, you survive and find yourself just surviving; living just to survive until you find yourself pondering ways, daydreaming possibilities that would give your life, give yourself some sort of purpose and meaning.

Maybe I should up and move to San Francisco.

Maybe I should record my music and see if I can really get into playing at bars and such until I'm opening for Black Rebel Motorcycle Club.

Maybe we should have a kid. (Did that, had two in fact).

Maybe we should get a puppy. (Oh, your friend has a chocolate Labrador puppy they have to find a home for?)

Until one day, sitting down and looking at the world around you, pondering your own life and present existence, you decide to write a book.

I've never considered myself a writer—hell, I've never considered myself much of anything, but I have felt that at the core of my being, whatever I am to be, whatever I am and have always been, I am a voice. Where that's worked is in relating to people. It's worked with examples and subjects of which to provide insight into, discuss, write about. Where it hasn't worked—at least of late, has been formulating some cohesive, theologically focused whole; comprising of everything that is me in thought and mind and spirit.

That is...

until that *one* day. That one day recently, that I was driving and reminiscing to avoid thinking about the disheartening feeling surrounding being in this place and time in my life. You know that sort of reminiscing where every good that was in your life seems all the better than it actually was; where you long for something good again, something real, and you're tired of playing make believe and pretending all that is presently terrible really isn't?

That was the moment where the title “Seminary Washout,” came to me. I smiled to myself and loved the idea of just accepting the truth and considering myself thusly—making mental note that I had to look up the definition for “washout” when I got home, just so I could be sure it was the appropriate term. I loved it so much because it made me think of the musical *Grease*, specifically the song, “Beauty School Dropout.” And while I had yet to get home and look up “washout,” I had a vague understanding that washout was quite different than the term “dropout,” and that washout was a more appropriate description (in ways I hope to convey at some point during the course of this book) to myself and my circumstances than merely calling it “Seminary *Dropout*.”

I began writing this very introduction in my head, moving things around, mentally saving things for the epilogue of the book rather than give them away in the introduction, when I realized that I didn't want this book to merely be about my failed time in Seminary. I realized I could use it as a framework to organize my thoughts into that cohesive,

theologically focused whole that had been so elusive to me. I could use the subject of my being a Seminary washout as a means to convey something much more, something much bigger than the mere subject of washing out of Seminary; in short, Seminary washout could be secondary to something far better...

Ever since I saw Dr. Strangelove, I've always seemed to fancy subtitles—when done right, to the titles themselves. They're a tool which tends to express clarity or better—demand intrigue to that which may or may not illicit it on its own. I love that feeling a witty subtitle gives (when used appropriately, and done right) in conjunction with the title itself. Because as I said, when done right, it should add both clarity, yet intrigue, a mystery that gives way to curiosity. As such, I end this introduction and begin this book, with the only subtitle I feel captures the spirit and heart of it, whilst still not really giving anything away, thus illicit a desire from you—the reader, to (if you've made it to *this* point) continue on forward.

And so I present:

***Beauty Tips From a Seminary Washout, or:
How I Learned To Stop Worrying and Love Theology***

The truth is, I don't think I've actually stopped worrying. But it's gotten easier not to. And here's where life is funny. I don't think I could've every predicted, nor would I believe where I find myself today. Whether it's what I'm doing, what I've done, where I'm at, who I'm with, what I believe, all of it. But what is and has always remained the same is this: my heart for people. I don't know how true this story is, but I was told that I didn't dress in scary halloween costumes when I was younger because I knew what it felt like to be scared, and I didn't want to put that on other people.

And as the years have changed since I began this book (and so have I), that heart remains the same.

And so has this introduction. See, initially, I wanted to convey these profound and nuanced theological points I *didn't* learn *at* seminary, but learned by attending, or on my own. The things seminary doesn't teach you, dogma doesn't teach you, church probably doesn't teach you, the “faith” doesn't teach you. Theology that is actually good news. But as much as I can and will talk about all those points, that's not the heart of this book. That's not it's theme. And that's not the reason for it. This book exists to convey a (one could call it theological) message summed up in two simple words: **you matter**.

You *matter*.

This may be a bit spoilery, but I hope that what you come to realize is that you don't need to make yourself beautiful in order to matter. You don't need to make yourself matter.

You don't need to *make* yourself.

That was one of the biggest lessons I've learned, and it wasn't from seminary.

So with that, let me spend the rest of the book showing you WHY [those two words are true].

Before I do that, however, I'm compelled to convey that I may not be able to address the question of specifically "*how*," (you matter) but that's not for me to do. That question is the right question you should be asking. And that question is the one you must seek on your own.

Fair warning, that quest may just be the end of you. This book may show you the end of you. Which may actually be the beginning of you.

And that's good news. (That'll make sense later.)

See you on the other side.

"The soul survives it's adventures..."