

LETTERS

— to a —

YOUNG

PASTOR

*Timothy conversations  
between father and son*



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EUGENE H. PETERSON

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# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

1. Eugene H. Peterson, *Run with the Horses: The Quest for Life at Its Best*, commemorative ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2019).
2. 1 Timothy 1:2, NIV.
3. Franz Kappus, introduction to *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rainer Maria Rilke (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2000), 5.

## THE FIRST LETTER

1. Melody was a music director at Colbert Presbyterian Church.
2. Lynn was Eric's first wife. She was involved in Colbert Presbyterian Church when the church was first formed.

## THE SECOND LETTER

1. The series of lectures here referenced as "Follow the Leader" was eventually published as *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

## THE THIRD LETTER

1. Eugene's reflections in these letters occasionally made their way into his later books. A few paragraphs here would eventually be adapted for his memoir *The Pastor: A Memoir* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2011), 315.
2. Psalm 40:4.

## THE FOURTH LETTER

1. By "Search," Eugene is perhaps referring to the Center for Organizational Reform (COR), a ministry (now defunct) that helped individuals and

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institutions pursue health and resilience. Both Eugene and I did work for COR over the years.

2. Eugene revisits this story of John Henry Newman in his memoir *The Pastor* (page 225).

### THE FIFTH LETTER

1. Eugene may have picked up this quotation from Dorotheus of Gaza from Kathleen Norris's book *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith* (New York: Riverhead, 1999), 32. Norris doesn't cite it. Eugene was pretty fluent in patristic literature, so he may have quoted from a primary source.

### THE SIXTH LETTER

1. James Michener, *The Source: A Novel* (New York: Dial Press, 2014).
2. Isaiah 34:13; 35:7, KJV.

### THE SEVENTH LETTER

1. *SPU*: Seattle Pacific University.

### THE NINTH LETTER

1. Wendell Berry, "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front," accessed September 20, 2019, <https://cals.arizona.edu/~steidl/Liberation.html>.
2. Thomas Lynch, *The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade* (New York: Penguin, 1997).
3. Thomas Lynch, *Bodies in Motion and at Rest: On Metaphor and Mortality* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000).
4. *Some doubted*: Matthew 28:17; *went back to fishing*: John 21:1-14; *three-hour walk to Emmaus*: Luke 24:13-35.

### THE TENTH LETTER

1. Audio for these talks is included in *Creation and Gospel: From the Garden to the Ends of the Earth*, available from the Regent College bookstore.

### THE THIRTEENTH LETTER

1. 1 John 3:2. Eugene is paraphrasing here, probably from memory.

### THE SIXTEENTH LETTER

1. Lynn was a music director for Colbert Presbyterian Church.
2. This letter appears in Eric E. Peterson, *Letters to a Young Congregation: Nurturing the Growth of a Faithful Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2020).
3. Matthew 13:24-30.

## NOTES

### THE TWENTY-FIRST LETTER

1. Jeff Berryman, *Leaving Ruin: A Novel* (Orange, CA: New Leaf, 2002).

### THE TWENTY-SECOND LETTER

1. Ultimately published as *The Jesus Way*.
2. S. K.: Søren Kierkegaard.

### THE TWENTY-THIRD LETTER

1. Martin Buber, *Israel and the World: Essays in a Time of Crisis* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).
2. Annie Proulx, *The Shipping News: A Novel* (New York: Scribner, 1993).
3. It won both: the National Book Award in 1993, and the Pulitzer Prize in 1994.
4. Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (New York: Picador, 2004).
5. Leif Peterson, *Catherine Wheels* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2005).
6. Eugene is alluding to 1 Kings 19:18 and Romans 11:4.

### THE TWENTY-FOURTH LETTER

1. This phrase is found in Psalm 91:6.
2. Ultimately published as *The Jesus Way*.
3. Wallace Stegner, *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2010).

### THE TWENTY-FIFTH LETTER

1. John 14:5; 20:28.
2. Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).
3. Eugene H. Peterson, *Tell It Slant: A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in His Stories and Prayers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

### THE TWENTY-SIXTH LETTER

1. Philip Larkin, "Church Going," in *Philip Larkin Poems: Selected by Martin Amis* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011).
2. *In awkward reverence*: from a part of "Church Going" not quoted above.
3. George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2008).
4. George Herbert, *The Country Parson: His Character and Rule of Holy Life* (Boston: James B. Dow, 1842), 11.
5. H. Stanley Wood, ed., *Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).
6. Eugene here is anticipating Eric's forthcoming sabbatical.

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### THE TWENTY-SEVENTH LETTER

1. Up until this time, I had kept my relationship with Eugene pretty quiet; I found that my relationships with people were complicated if they knew too soon that I was the son of Eugene Peterson. “Coming out of the closet” here is a reference to when I stopped being so careful about it, having become more confidently established in my personal and pastoral identity in distinction from him.
2. Matthew 25:40, 45.

### THE TWENTY-NINTH LETTER

1. Eugene here is referencing N. T. Wright’s multiple-volume series *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992–2013).
2. Richard Lischer, *The End of Words: The Language of Reconciliation in a Culture of Violence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

### THE THIRTIETH LETTER

1. As quoted in Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini, eds., *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 117–118.
2. William P. Young, *The Shack: Where Tragedy Confronts Eternity* (Newbury Park, CA: Windblown Media, 2007).

### THE THIRTY-FIRST LETTER

1. Eugene seemed to be in a shorthand mood when writing this letter. To address any confusion: RC = Roman Catholic; HS = Holy Spirit; mss = manuscript; TV = television; ok = okay.
2. SanDisk flash drive.

### THE THIRTY-SIXTH LETTER

1. Bill Robinson, *Incarnate Leadership: 5 Leadership Lessons from the Life of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009).
2. Karl Barth, *Letters: 1961–1968* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981).
3. Exodus 1:8 and Acts 7:18, KJV.
4. Anne Tyler, *Saint Maybe* (New York: Ivy Books, 1992).

### THE THIRTY-SEVENTH LETTER

1. Psalm 21:6, NRSV.