

Winter 2007

Koinonia

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KOINONIA

Winter 2007



The Changing Face of Evangelicalism

Educating Contentment

Creative Wisdom



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Beyond the Mind

The President's Corner



Tim Arens

I am sitting in my office looking out the window at the first real snowfall of the winter and watching some students have a robust snowball fight in the plaza. The snow has provided these students a nice way to relieve some of the stress that the end of the semester brings with exams, papers, and projects soon to be due. More on snowballs later....

Earlier in the fall I had communicated with you about the Executive Committee leadership transition that was taking place regarding the President-Elect position. If you remember, Jane Higa decided that, due to personal reasons, she should resign as President-Elect. To compensate for this vacancy the Executive Committee decided to nominate Barry Loy, Dean of Students at Gordon College to fill this role upon the approval of the membership. After unanimous membership approval we are currently in the transition process with Jane and Barry.

I would like to thank Jane for the excellent leadership she has provided to the Executive Committee and ACSD. She has made a lasting contribution to the leadership of the organization and her input on the committee will be missed. At the same time, I am pleased that Barry will be joining us to provide the leadership that ACSD will need in the coming years. His longevity in the organization, expertise, and experience will be great assets for the executive leadership. I know that he would appreciate your prayers as he hits the ground running in this new role.

The Executive Committee met in October for our fall meetings at Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Northwestern College is the site for our 2007 Annual National Conference, and it was our privilege to interact with the staff there regarding their preparations for the conference. It was obvious that they are working hard to create an excellent experience that will spiritually and professionally challenge us. Please continue to pray for them as the conference approaches.

There were many significant issues that

we considered at our fall Executive Committee meetings and I am going to highlight a few important items upon which we acted. One responsibility we take very seriously is the election of future officers to provide leadership for ACSD. I am pleased to say that the slate of candidates for this year's upcoming elections is already completed. You will hear more about that in the spring issue of *Koinonia*.

The ACSD Diversity Task Force had submitted a report to the Executive Committee that we discussed at length. While we have made some progress over the years, it was obvious to us that there are still significant issues that must be addressed in this area. Matters of diversity are of great concern and we are committed to addressing them in a way that will bring lasting change to ACSD. The first step in this process involved three of our officers, Edee Schulze, Secretary; Jane Higa, President-Elect; and Steve Austin, Editor, attending the National Christian Multicultural Student Leadership Conference (NCMSLC) in November. This meeting was for the expressed purpose of having a conversation with our members of color regarding diversity-related matters and ACSD. There were 35 ACSD members who participated in this discussion, which provided many excellent insights, ideas, and suggestions that the Executive Committee will be taking under consideration.

The second step is to seek the help of an outside organization to conduct a "diversity audit" of ACSD. This audit team will be asked to provide feedback as to how we can improve in this crucial area. Our goal is to begin this process sometime in the spring of 2007. I would like to thank all who are participating in this conversation to improve ACSD in regard to diversity related matters.

We continue to work on the new ACSD website. We have contracted a web design firm to design a new and improved site that will offer more up to date functionality for us. Unfortunately, the process is taking longer than we had anticipated, yet, as I write this the site is almost complete. It is my hope that it will be fully functional by the time you are reading this.

I began by talking about some of our students relieving their stress by having a

snowball fight. I am sure that all of your lives are filled with the activities related to finishing a semester and also the final details for starting the next semester as well. With those things come stress, pressure, and anxiety. It is my prayer that you will be able to find some "snowballs" to throw during this stressful time of year. My prayer for you at this time comes from Paul's words to the Thessalonians. "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all time and in every way. The Lord be with you." (II Thess. 3:16)

Godspeed,

Tim Arens
ACSD President
Dean of Students
Moody Bible Institute
Chicago, Illinois

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The Changing Face of American Evangelicalism

by Dr. Soong-Chan Rah



One of the most significant developments in the new millennium is the dramatic shift away from a Northern/Western hemisphere-centered Christianity to a Southern/Eastern hemisphere-centered Christianity. As Philip Jenkins asserts in *The Next Christendom*: "Over the past century [the 20th century] . . . the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. . . . Christianity should enjoy a worldwide boom in the new century, but the vast majority of believers will be neither white nor European, nor Euro-American." Fifty years ago, if you were asked to describe a typical Christian in

Latin-American Christianity continues to increase dramatically.

These changes are not only occurring globally, they are also occurring locally. Many sociologists predict that by the year 2050, the majority of U. S. residents will be non-white. National trends also seem to indicate that the Christian population in America will be more non-white than white before even that landmark year. The trend of a non-white majority America will hit the churches faster than it will hit the general population. Contrary to popular opinion, the church is not dying in America. It is alive and well, but it is alive and well among the immigrant and ethnic minority communities and

story that I had heard or concern that was raised seemed to assume that the city of Boston represented the worst of an impending post-Christian era and that secular humanism had completely overtaken that region.

But when I arrived in Boston, I found a very different scenario. I found that Christianity was not only alive in Boston, it was flourishing. In 1970, the city of Boston was home to about 300 churches. Thirty years later, there were over 600 churches. The net gain in the number of churches was the growth of the number of churches in the ethnic and immigrant communities. While only a handful of churches in 1970 held services in a language other than English, thirty years later, more than half of those churches held services in a language other than English. Why was it then, that the majority of the country viewed Boston as a spiritually dead place?

At one point during my time in Boston, a group of very sincere young men and women came from a prayer group in the south to pray for revival in the city of Boston -- because they assumed that Boston was such a spiritually dead and oppressed place. There was a sense of pity and concern expressed by these well-intentioned believers for a pastor who was struggling in a city with such spiritual oppression and lifelessness. But that was not the Boston I knew. The Boston I knew was filled with vibrant and exciting churches. New churches were being planted throughout the city. Christian programs and ministries were booming in the city. But this spiritual vitality was not as evident among the

Contrary to popular opinion, the church is not dying in America. It is alive and well, but it is alive and well among the immigrant and ethnic minority communities and not among majority white churches in the United States.

the world, you could assume that the typical Christian was an upper middle-class, white male, living in a Midwest suburb. If you were to ask the same question today, that answer would more likely be a young Nigerian mother on the outskirts of Lagos, a teenage boy in Mexico City, or a University student in Seoul, South Korea. European and North American Christianity continue to decline, while African, Asian, and

not among the majority white churches in the United States.

In the early 1990's, I left my hometown in Maryland to begin seminary studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in New England. In preparing to move to the Boston area, my home church in Maryland took the time to pray that I would not lose my faith and spiritual passion in a region of the country that was perceived as spiritually dead. Every

white churches.

At the corner of Massachusetts Ave. and Beacon St. in Boston sits an awe-inspiring building. It is the type of church building that you associate with the rich tradition of a church in New England. When you walk up to that corner, you can't help but be somewhat intimidated by what must be an impressive history for that church building. But when you turn the corner you realize that the building is actually a façade. The outer walls of the church remain, but the actual building behind the walls had been demolished and a luxury condo now inhabits the space. There is the appearance of an historical church, but the reality is that the church is long since dead.

Throughout the cities of Boston and Cambridge, you'll see buildings that may have had an impressive history but now host a very small group of worshippers on a Sunday morning. Usually, these churches cannot afford the heat to meet in the thousand person sanctuary. Nor would it be appropriate for fifteen to twenty elderly whites to meet in a thousand person sanctuary. Within a half mile radius of that church, there would be fifty churches (most of them immigrant, eth-

about fifty worshippers, our congregation (multi-ethnic with the largest group being Asian-American college students) of two hundred fifty worshippers, a Haitian congregation, a Cape Verdean congregation, and a Friday night gathering of Chinese international students. The white churches are dying in the city; the immigrant, ethnic, and multi-ethnic churches are flourishing.

But while the demographics of American evangelicalism are undergoing dramatic change, the theological dialogue and church leadership remains centered among American Christians of European descent. We need to face the inevitable: we are looking at a non-white American Christianity in the immediate future. The American Evangelical church needs to prepare for the next stage of its history.

In the last few years, I have had the opportunity to visit and speak at a number of different Christian colleges. Oftentimes I'm asked to speak on the topic of racial reconciliation and multi-ethnicity. I raise the question that, given the changes in demographics in both global and American Christianity, why do the demographics of Christian colleges more accurately reflect American



Christianity, it is irresponsible. If these schools are indeed preparing leaders for the next generation, then for these students to have limited or no exposure to minority faculty mentors is to short-change their education. What will the future of the American Evangelical Church look like? It won't look like the faculty, staff and student body of most of our Christian colleges and universities.

Dr. Soong-Chan Rah is the Milton B. Engebretson Assistant Professor of Church Growth and Evangelism at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL., and the former Founding and Senior Pastor of Cambridge Community Fellowship Church, a multi-ethnic church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Born in Korea, Soong-Chan studied at Columbia University, graduating with a B.A. in Political Science and History/Sociology. He has also received a Master of Divinity from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and an M.A. in Theology from Harvard University. Prior to founding CCFC, Soong-Chan helped plant churches in Washington, D.C. and worked with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He enjoys spending time on college campuses and watching Dora the Explorer with his daughter. Dr. Rah will be a keynote speaker at our upcoming ACSD National Conference in June.

The consistently poor record of minority faculty hires at Christian colleges is not only disappointing, it is irresponsible. If these schools are indeed preparing leaders for the next generation, then for these students to have limited or no exposure to minority faculty mentors is to short-change their education.

nic minority, or multi-ethnic churches) that are crammed into much smaller spaces. In the building that housed our church in Cambridge (right down the street from that large empty sanctuary), there were five different congregations meeting in a small cramped space. There was the host congregation of

Christianity from fifty years ago? This is not only among the student body, but extends to faculty and staff (maybe more so). Why are there not more minority faculty members at these Christian institutions of higher education? The consistently poor record of minority faculty hires at Christian colleges is not only

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Gratitude for the Opportunity to Serve:

A Letter to the ACSD Community

By Jane Hideko Higa

You recently received an email from our President, Tim Arens, regarding my decision to step down from my role as President-elect of ACSD. This was a decision that was difficult for me to make. I counted it as a high honor to have been elected to serve the membership of this fine organization, and I struggled with the decision to step down from such a responsibility. In the end, I had a deep peace that this was what God wanted for me in this time in my life.

I have become convicted that the death of my husband, Paul, created a space in my life that should not be immediately filled with more to do. In fact, I believe that it is only in that space that both healing and clarity of call for the next years of my life will occur. So thank you for your understanding, and for Barry Loy's willingness to stand in for the rest of my term.

The days since Paul's passing have been challenging. I have been amazed by the love of friends, colleagues and family, and for the ways in which they have been an extension of Christ here on earth for me; such comfort, such love, such care. I have also realized there is much about this journey that now, as a single person, I will need to learn to walk alone; and with God by my side, I am learning, one step at a time.

I have also come to know God's faithfulness in a deep new way. First, His faithfulness in what He has given me--30 years of marriage to Paul who always encouraged me to be an independent person; a satisfying career in student development that continues to give me a great sense of satisfaction

and meaning; and two wonderful adult children who have so much of Paul in them. I also have come to know of God's faithfulness in the midst of suffering and loss. When I can't pray, I know others are praying, and that He is faithful to my present as well as my future. I am so grateful.

I also find myself more committed to the vision that led Paul's life and work. He spent his whole career working in the Los Angeles County Probation department, first in juvenile hall and at the end of his life as the Chief of Los Angeles County Probation. At his memorial service, Father Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, said:

From his early years in youth ministry to his 32 years of service in the Probation department, he knew what troubled the world--and wanted it to be different. He knew that an idea had taken root in the world and it was at the root of all that was wrong with

it. And the idea was this: That possibly there were lives out there that mattered less than other lives. Paul Higa literally spent his life standing against that idea. And so, with God and Jesus, Paul imagined a circle of compassion and then he imagined no one standing outside that circle. And so to widen that circle, he stood outside it with the poor, the powerless and the voiceless--with what Jane calls 'his heart for the poor.' He stood with those whose dignity was denied, he stood with the damaged and forgotten, with the easily despised and the readily left out; he stood with the demonized so that the demonizing would stop. He stood with the disposable so that the day would come when we no longer threw people away. He stood with the traumatized, the mentally ill and those whose burdens were more than they could bear. He stood with those on the margins, hopeful that the day would come when the margins themselves would be obliterated.

May each of us in student development have the eyes that see students as Christ would see them, and then widen our circle that all might be included and find a safe home for their burdens, their brokenness, their unique ways of giftedness.

Thank you for all the ways in which you do this each day--for the students you work with, and for each other. I am so grateful to share this calling with each of you.

May each of us in student development have the eyes that see students as Christ would see them, and then widen our circle that all might be included and find a safe home for their burdens, their brokenness, their unique ways of giftedness.

Educating Contentment

By Kevin Johnson

Psalm 23 is, quite possibly, one of the most well known chapters of the Bible. It would be quite a task to try and count the number of times that this poem has been printed in some form or other. There is something about David's words in this poem that resonate with the longings of the human heart.

Psalm 23 has been described as a portrait of what it looks like when a human is caught up in living their life with God. It paints a picture of a soul that has anchored itself in God.

The poem begins with these familiar words: *"The LORD is my shepherd."* The psalmist defines the relationship. The LORD is the shepherd. He is the guide. He is the leader.

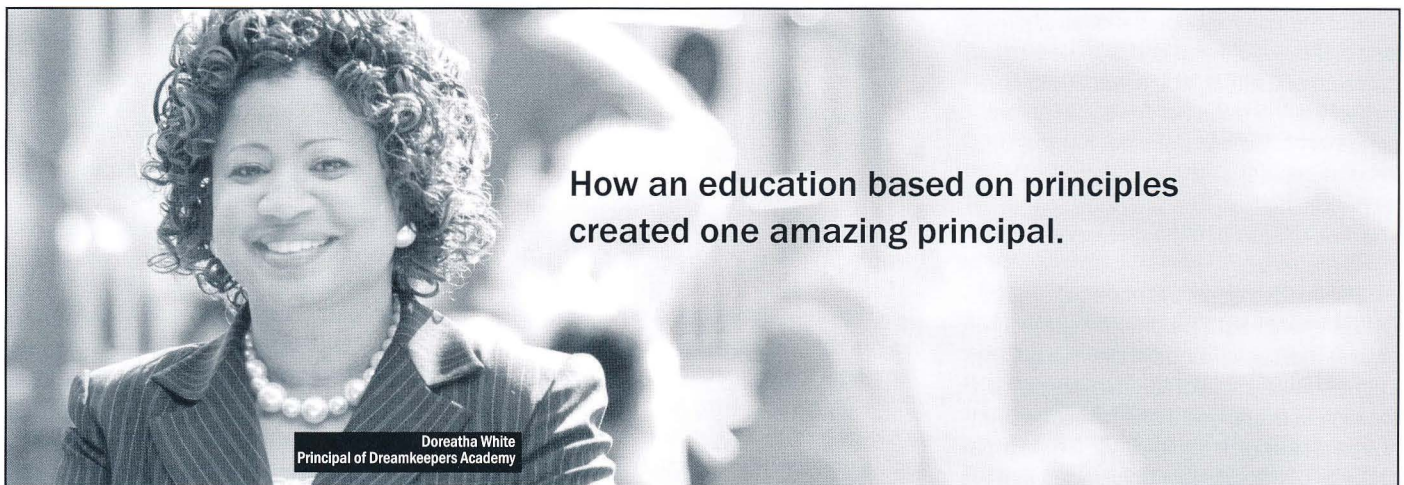
Then the poet makes a fascinating

statement: *"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."* Some Bible translations express this phrase like this: *"The LORD is my shepherd, I have everything I need."*² The original Hebrew language communicates the idea that the poet's basic human desires are filled and that there is nothing lacking in his life that he needs.³ The psalmist is not stating that everything he could ever desire has been given to him. Rather, this is a statement about satisfaction. According to this poet, one of the characteristics of those who know that God is their shepherd is that they have learned the art of contentment.⁴

And that is the rub. Especially for us who work in Christian higher education. We live in a culture that excels in creating discontentment. Tim Kimmel has noted

that "keeping the average family discontent is vital to our economic system."⁵ Every day some of the brightest minds in our country go to work with the mandate to make us think that we are discontent or, at least, we should be entertaining the possibility that we are not satisfied and, therefore, need something more.⁶ These folks flood us with a multitude of messages, images and commercials. It is incredible to think that millions of dollars are spent each day to catalyze dissatisfaction in my life. Needless to say, the 'discontentment industry' is booming business these days.⁷

When it comes to cultivating discontentment in our lives no area is off limits: our cars, bodies, relationships, technology, food, fashion, reputation, sexuality, bank account—just to name a few areas. John Ortberg notes that we are continually confronted by messages that say: "Use me! Buy me! Eat me! Wear me! Try me! Drive me! Put me in your hair! The things we can obtain just for more hair satisfac-



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REFLECTION

tion are staggering! You can wash it, blow-dry it, condition it, color it, straighten it if it's too curly, curl it if it's too straight, wax it if it grows where it shouldn't, or Rogain it if it doesn't grow where it should."⁸ Who would have thought that a whole industry could develop around the purpose of making people feel unhappy about the state of their hair?!

Ortberg suggests that we now find ourselves living in a society that operates by the "philosophy of Cookie Monster"—the famous character from the children's show Sesame Street.⁹ Cookie Monster's approach to life is rather simple: "See cookie. Want cookie. Eat cookie." Then he repeats the cycle over and over again. He has an appetite that is seldom satisfied. One of the key words in his vocabulary is "MORE". *Cookie Monster is the ultimate consumer* and we live in a society that is able to produce 'mini-cookie monsters' with alarming efficiency.

Discontentment is very a powerful fuel. It drives human behavior more than we dare to admit or realize.

But the psalmist speaks of another way of life—a life that is dominated by contentment. He is "not in want". He is thrilled that he does not have any unmet needs in his life. He does not need a faster computer or a new hair color. What he needs, he has. The shepherd of his soul has offered him the privilege of a satisfied existence.

Psalms 23:1 seems like a pipe dream. Contentment might be one of the most elusive realities of modern day living.¹⁰ Yet, I am beginning to wonder if this is one of the significant issues that Christian education must address these days. Could it be that one of the greatest challenges that we face as student developers is the challenge of helping students learn the art of contentment?

Dallas Willard notes that, for most of us, our "wanters" are broken.¹¹ They need fixing. We want the wrong things and we often are unaware of this. C.S. Lewis argued that human beings are creatures who are too easily satisfied by trivial things like sex, money, fame, and material possessions.¹² Lewis noted that this satisfaction does not actually last for very long. In fact, it actually breeds more dissatisfac-

tion. Our "wanters" are broken. A significant element of Christian spiritual formation is the transformation of our "wanters". This kind of transformation is a great need on our campuses today.

Considering this, here are some of the questions that I am asking of Christian higher education these days:

- Do the ways in which we deliver education, curriculum and student services reinforce personal consumption?
- Do our programs create "contented people"?
- How much of our programming is driven by the dissatisfaction of students?
- Does the broader "culture of discontent" shape education or does education shape the "culture of discontent"?
- How do we make sure that a student cannot leave our campuses without being asked about the state of their "wanter"?
- Do we provide too many options in our cafeteria? What kind of people do our cafeterias produce?
- How are we training our potential graduates to say "enough" to a culture that asks them to become consumers?
- How do we help our campus communities learn contentment?
- Do faculty and staff embody the "art of contentment"?
- How concerned are we about addressing "broken wanters" in ourselves and in our students?

Ultimately, these questions are about the kind of people we are forming on campus. Contentment is, at its heart, a character issue. There are few easy answers to this kind of discussion. The fact is that this kind of transformation takes time and dialogue. Maybe one of the best gifts we can offer our students is some guidance in thinking through their desires and appetites. What do you really want out of life? What does your "wanter" say about the kind of person you are becoming? Where does your satisfaction come from? It is a wonderful joy to see a student experience the deep satisfaction that comes from living with an appetite for God and his kingdom purposes. "Appetite audits and adjustments" might be a key discipline in the journey of learning how to live life with God.

In Psalm 23:1, the poet holds up a rather strange, but beautiful, vision of being human. It is a vision which reminds us that following God leads to one of the deepest experiences of contentment that a human can know.

When someone is being guided by the loving leadership of God they can genuinely say that "the LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want." It is these people who will have something beautiful and prophetic to say to our culture.

We serve a God who is able to satisfy us down to the deepest recesses of the human heart. We have the opportunity to invite students to experience this contentment for themselves. This is a sacred privilege.

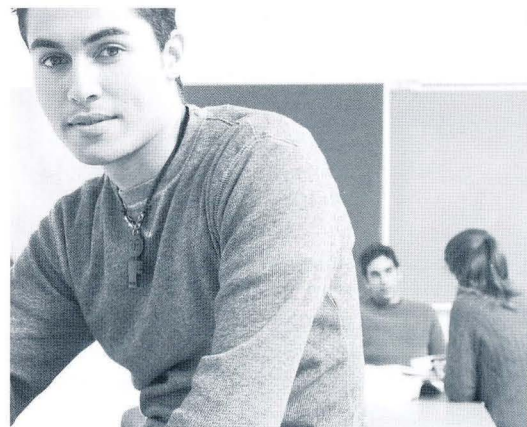
Kevin Johnson serves as the Director of Spiritual Formation and Campus Pastor at Tabor College, located in Hillsboro, Kansas.

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Thinking Theologically: The Seasons of Hope's Redemption, Part II

Todd C. Ream, Indiana Wesleyan University



At the heart of our vocation as student life professionals resides hope's persistent challenge to us to do our part to raise within our students the level of awareness of their created potential. As beings created in God's image, each one of our students possesses a certain sense of potential—potential that they themselves are often unaware of. God calls people to live in community for a reason. On our own, our understanding of our potential is limited to our imaginative capacities. In the right community, our understanding of our potential is subject to the imaginative capacities of individuals who have dared to dream of things on our behalves, which we are still struggling to understand. In some seasons, the challenge which such a community might pose to our imaginative capacities is affirming in nature. In other seasons, the challenge which such a community might pose to our imaginative capacities is corrective in nature. Remembering that the seasons of hope's redemption are defined by the larger narrative of creation, fall, and redemption, we recognize we are called to offer our students both affirmation and correction. We may feel most comfortable with affirmation. However, correction is equally necessary if, for no other reason than a less than full utilization of one's potential is a tacit acknowledgment that the fall, and not redemption, is the end to God's story. As student life professionals, we are called to help our students see such a story to its completion.

Personally, the call to see such a story to its completion was initiated by Professor Janet Norden in whose Spanish 1401 course I was enrolled in the fall of my sophomore year at Baylor University. As a transfer student, I unknowingly enrolled in a course with the most demanding Spanish professor Baylor had to offer. In addition, her course met five days a week at 8:00 AM. While I would like to think I do not have too much difficulty making it to work here at Indiana Wesleyan by 8:00 AM each day, walking across the Baylor campus by 8:00 AM at that point in my life was, well, a struggle. With my substandard attendance in Professor Norden's course, so went my grade. As hard as I found it to believe at that time, a strong correlation existed between the level of effort I was exerting and the grade I was earning. To her credit, Professor Norden pulled me aside after class one day and politely, yet pointedly, shared with me that unless my level of effort increased immediately, I would not likely make it through her course. Recognizing I was new to the Baylor community, she also shared with me that unless my level of effort increased immediately, I would not likely make it through Baylor with an education. While some student life professionals may look back on such corrective remarks and find them harsh, Professor Norden's motivation was to paint a clear understanding of the gap which she imagined between my potential for academic success and my current resignation to academ-

ic mediocrity (perhaps failure is the most appropriate descriptor). Quite simply, students often cannot imagine their created potential unless someone compares an impression of it with their current perception. While Professor Norden's remarks did not unleash the intellectual potential of an Einstein or an Oppenheimer, they did awaken me to the possibility that I should hope for more in terms of the utilization of my created potential.

Regardless of this awakening, I have found it hard at times to follow the example I saw in an educator I came to admire. While more reasons invariably exist, I would offer that at least two reasons reside beneath my reluctance. First, I fear that those of us who serve as student life professionals allow our own sentimentality to present itself as Christian compassion or faithfulness. If the redemptive power of hope demands that we raise in the minds of our students a sense of awareness of the gap which separates their current performance and their created potential, then truth must be spoken. Low achievement must be addressed as the squandering of a gift which we are called to use but only God can give. By contrast, a culture of niceness is one which knows no other end than short-term emotional comfort and more often than not the comfort of the student life professional and not the student. We have all had teachers who also struggled to utter an affirming word. However, such examples stand in contrast to that of Professor Norden.

THINKING THEOLOGICALLY

In her we see someone who believed a student could do more and, thus, be more. I fear that for the sake of my own emotional comfort, I too often fail to address similar disparities in the lives of some of the students I serve.

In addition, I also fear a subtle propensity for low expectations precludes student life professionals from seeing the created potential of the students we serve. Out of a desire to keep them from the pain which comes from failure, we encourage students to take the safe or more secure path. In truth, real growth in terms of our created potential comes when we explore dimensions of that potential which were previously hidden from us—again, when we are made aware of the gap which separates our current use of our potential and our created potential. In an attempt to keep some of my students from experiencing the pain which comes from failure, I have found myself artificially imposing limitations for which no true justification exists. While these limitations may preclude students from experiencing failure and thus pain, they also preclude students from achieving their created potential. As student life professionals we can ill-afford to succumb to the temptation of teaching our students to live in a world in which they know success without the real possibility of failure. It is one thing to set students up to fail. However, setting students up to fail is not all that different from times when we set them

up to succeed without even the possibility that they might fail.

Once we face these challenges within ourselves, we must still face the challenge which often comes in terms of the current state of the student culture in higher education. Although the fabric of today's student culture is perhaps best described as a tapestry woven together by several different strands, the strand of student consumerism has a pronounced sense of presence. Students who embody such an understanding assume that the terms of their educational experiences are not that different from their retail experiences. However, rarely does a consumer experience a sales person who is willing to correct his or her inclinations. By contrast, our vocation as student life professionals is driven by the desire to raise within our students the level of awareness of their created potential. At times, such a sense of awareness comes by virtue of affirmation. At other times, such a sense of awareness comes by virtue of correction. Invariably, the latter will bring us into direct confrontation with student consumerism. Personally, I am grateful that a professor such as Janet Norden was willing to correct and, thus, challenge my sense of created potential. I only hope that for the sake of the created potential of the students I serve that I can find the courage to not only affirm them but also correct them.

Todd C. Ream, Ph.D. is the Director of The Aldersgate Center at Indiana Wesleyan University. Prior to coming to Indiana Wesleyan, he served as a research fellow, a chief student life officer, and a residence director. In addition to the "Thinking Theologically" column in the Koinonia, he has contributed articles to Christian Scholar's Review, Educational Philosophy and Theory, the Journal of General Education, and New Blackfriars. Along with Perry L. Glanzer, he is the author of *Religious Faith and Scholarship: Exploring the Debates* (forthcoming from Jossey-Bass). He invites your remarks and suggestions concerning this particular contribution or concerning topics for further exploration. You can reach him at todd.ream@indwes.edu.

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Since January 2002, Huntington University has taken students to visit historic Civil Rights Movement locations in the South and learned about the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I have been privileged to share in this class and journey on three different occasions. Each year, before leaving on the tour, we have viewed and discussed several segments of the *Eyes on the Prize* documentary, and we have read and discussed both *Selma, Lord, Selma* (Webb & West, 1997) and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, *Why We Can't Wait* (1964). Then, Dr. Norris Friesen and I have loaded our students into vans and spent the next nine days traveling through the South talking with history-makers and visiting institutes devoted to remembering the struggle for civil rights.

The experience starts off in Memphis, Tennessee which many people consider the end of the Civil Rights Movement. After Memphis, we travel to infamous places in Alabama like Ole Miss, Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma. Eventually, our group arrives at the birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Atlanta, Georgia. While I have many reflections about our trips and even more stories to share about the Civil Rights Movement, this piece encompasses only reflections and *brief* stories about the courageous men and women in the struggle for equality.

In Memphis, Tennessee, we visited the Lorraine Motel where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot and killed by James Earl Ray on April 4, 1968. Contrary to U2's *Pride*, it was in the evening that Dr. King was assassinated. The former motel catered to black clientele and was transformed into a comprehensive Civil Rights museum in 1991. The most powerful sight at the Lorraine Motel is room #306, the last room that King stayed in. The room was returned to the original condition that it was in while King was helping black sanitation workers who had gone on strike for better working conditions. As we looked into the room and saw the dishes, cups, disheveled sheets and pillows on the floor, it was easy to imagine Dr. King lying on the bed reading the

Why We Can't Wait: A Civil Rights Journey

By Jessie Brown



day's news. *Precious Lord, Take My Hand*, by Mahalia Jackson played quietly overhead. King was shot while standing on the balcony outside his room.

On the third day of the trip, we toured part of downtown Birmingham, Alabama including Kelley-Ingram Park, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, and the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, where four girls were killed by a church bomb on September 15, 1963. The peak of the Civil Rights movement took place at the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" only two weeks earlier. It was here when Dr. King delivered his famous *I Have a Dream* speech on the steps on the Lincoln Monument. When the lives of the four young girls were taken, many people were discouraged and deeply saddened because the four girls were such innocent victims of racist violence.

Two years later, Dr. King wrote his famous *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*.

This concise letter outlines the basic tenets of Dr. King's philosophy of non-violence. You also can hear his frustration boil as he described why it is not possible for African-Americans to wait any longer for integration to occur; a new strategy needed to be employed: children were used in marches. If you have ever seen pictures of marches in Birmingham, you will see pictures of boys and girls being sprayed by fire hoses or bitten by K-9 units. While using children was a terribly frightening and risky idea, it helped bring an end to segregation in the most segregated city in the south. Dr. King, Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and other leaders were convinced that if young children were permitted to become Christians and church members, they were able to make the choice to march in demonstrations.

The Voting Rights Museum in Selma was a part of the fourth day's trip. It was here during 1964-1965 where voting rights came to the forefront of America's

conscience. Voting for most African-Americans in the south was very difficult. Most African-Americans were not registered to vote and were prevented by doing so by shortened office hours at the registrar's office, excessive poll taxes and difficult exams that covered the most minuscule details of the U.S. Constitution. Even more unfortunate, many times African-Americans were kept from registering to vote by the threat or reality of violence. Imagine the worst image regarding the KKK or lynchings; most of these took place in the southern states as a way to "keep blacks in their place."

Many people consider Montgomery, Alabama, the fifth leg of our journey, as the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement. It was here that the Montgomery Bus Boycott took place and history was introduced to Martin Luther King, Jr. and a quiet seamstress named Rosa Parks. For 381 straight days, African-Americans boycotted the public transportation system and walked to work, walked to their churches, and walked to the grocery store. African-Americans were not permitted to sit in the front 10 seats of the bus and had to enter the bus through the back door. Tremendous momentum for change took place after the boycott had defeated a segment of public racism and discrimination in the South. Through the help of a newly formed Southern Christian Leadership Conference, many new acts of civil disobedience soon followed: sit-ins at restaurants and libraries, wade-ins in public pools, strikes and boycotts of stores that did not cater to African-Americans.

During the last days of our trip, we visited The King Center, Dr. King's childhood home and Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Each year we have attended Dr. King's boyhood church for a commemoration service and had the opportunity to see many leaders of the current Civil Rights Movement including the late Mrs. Coretta Scott King. During the service held at Ebenezer Baptist Church in 2006, three women shared some of

their personal stories about Dr. King including Miss Dora McDonald who was Dr. King's personal secretary from 1960 until his death. She answered his phone, typed and returned letters, scheduled appointments and defended his privacy from unwanted guests. It was touching to hear Miss McDonald speak with such tenderness about her relationship with Dr. King and she still considered it her responsibility to look after King's family since his absence.

Encountering the past racial struggle and present impact on our society has given me and my students a new awareness and appreciation of the realities of diversity. This new awareness has led to continued conversations about how our shared journey impacted each of us personally, which has led to powerful changes in attitudes for the present. Each time that I have taken this trip, I am reminded of the struggles that our nation has had over the years, but I am even more reminded of the tremendous amount of courage displayed by common people in their struggle for equality.

Jesse M. Brown is the Assistant Dean of Students at Huntington University and can be contacted at jbrown@huntington.edu.

A note of thanks is due to Dr. Steve Messer who teaches a similar course at Taylor University. Dr. Messer helped Dr. Friesen during the initial stages and planning of the course.

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Shattered Prism

By Erin Giesche

"but love sees no color,"
they chide,
peering through rose-colored glasses
"let us-the spectrum of beauty
in this celebration (of watercolor)-lay
ourselves
out in the downpour so that we will all be
washed away"

so the Artist,
the Master Painter,
weeps
as His painstaking,
loving strokes
that once flew to create such life
now run into one another,
diluting, tainting, becoming blurred
and enveloped in chaos

He weeps because His painting
is never as beautiful as intended
when color is ignored

for the spectators
who saunter through
the gallery only glance
over His lifeblood,
His masterpiece-that which
He poured the fullness
of Himself into-and
murmur of the necessity
of viewing art objectively

His tears fall
because they are blinded
in the bland strangling fog
and refuse to raise their eyes to the heavens
to His love,
His arch of promise,
shouting with color

in the name of justice
Truth is denied
in the name of peace
Truth is smothered
in the name of "love"
Truth is ravaged

but He is love
and love is not colorblind

love believes in the light
stands through the rain
sings in silence
sees and embraces
every and each
beautiful precious intricate solitary
color

Creative Wisdom: Sitting at the Feet of our Students

Excerpts from *Blessed Journey: An Anthology of Students' Writing While Traveling on the Road of Racial Reconciliation*

By Glen Kinoshita

As Student Affairs professionals, we often wear many hats. In the midst of our roles of doing administration, instruction and service, we are also learners. You could say we are students in the midst of students. One truth that has stood out to me through the years, as we have sought to understand the life processes of college students, is that these very students are our best teachers. We learn from their transitions in life, their struggles, their questions, and their writing. For years students would come to me with their written pieces, enthused about their process on paper. I would read them, enjoy them, and then file them away. Little did I know that I was assembling jewels into a treasure chest that would bloom years later into a student anthology. The result, *Blessed Journey: An Anthology of Students' Writing While Traveling on the Road of Racial Reconciliation*, was distributed as a commemoration of the recent ten-year anniversary of the Student Congress on Racial Reconciliation, held annually in Los Angeles. This anthology is a collection of poems, essays, letters, and school newspaper articles. All the pieces reflect students' processes as they wrestled and have grown in regards to reconciliation in the Body of Christ.

Students come to us from a wide variety of life contexts. Be they from diverse cultural, ethnic, regional or socio-economic backgrounds, poetry is a language that transcends these boundaries and resonates in the hearts of young people everywhere. Listed below are poetry excerpts from the *Blessed Journey* anthology. These pieces reflect the experiences that students no doubt encountered during their time in their Christian college/university. As you read them, ponder the issues these students raise in their writing. What do the questions they ask in their poems reveal? Can we discern the layers to their life reality or the challenges they face in regards to culture and ethnicity? What are the conflicting paradigms revealed in their writing?

Our challenge is to move forward. Put on your student hat. As you encounter those ubiquitous questions, issues and expressions students bring, remember: they are our best teachers. Their wisdom is often hidden in their creativity.

Glen Kinoshita is the Director of Multi-Ethnic Programs at Biola University and a frequent contributor to Koinonia. He can be reached at glen.kinoshita@biola.edu.

Down The Road

By Ivannia Soto

Arriving, Easter morning
to the drones of an organ on stage.

Hymn #138
In remembrance of history
over 2000 years old.

I join the members,
planted in their pews.

Together,
we sing in militaristic unison,
"Then sings my soul,
my Savior, God to thee..."

But...down the road

Awaking at sunrise,
to journey the pebbled road
leading to the place of conversion.
Arms outstretched,
inviting me.

Inside,
cloths of purple,
hands lifted,
bodies swaying.

The beck-and-call,
robust A-men's of a people
waiting to meet the Moses of their
salvation.

And I ask
along with you,
"Why must 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning
be the most segregated hour in America?"

Are You Afraid Of My Blackness?

By Stephanie Bailey

Are you afraid of my blackness?
My pride, my step, my strut.

Are you afraid of my blackness?
My strength, my rhythm, my voice.

Are you afraid of my blackness?
My curves, my hair, my eyes.

Don't be afraid of my blackness-
it's a wonderful surprise of vibrant

shades of history,
of soul, difference, and uniqueness.

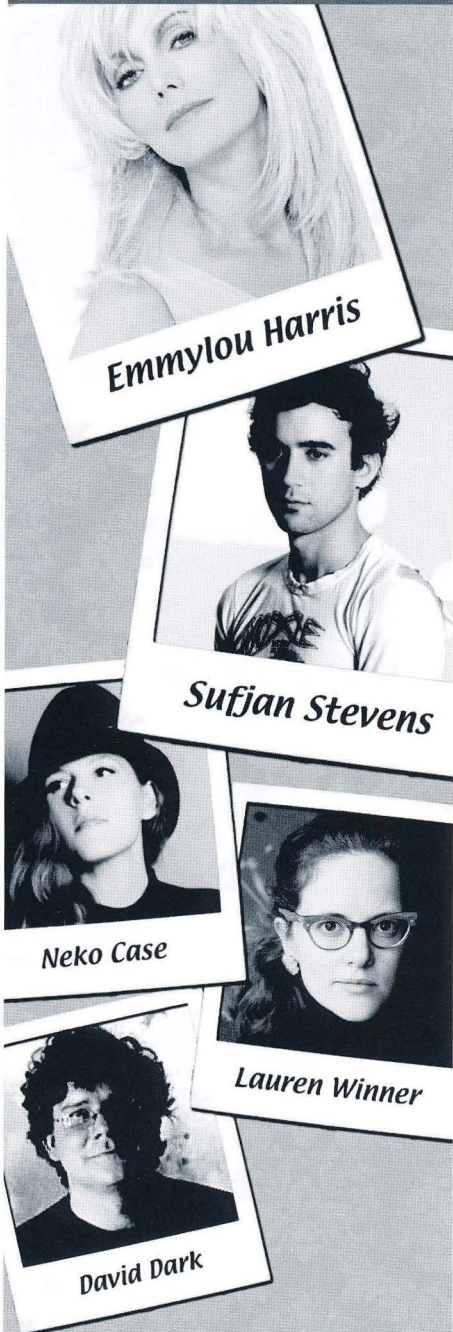
I love my blackness-
the way I sing, the way I stand,
the way I move.

You can't shame my blackness-
I am proud, I stand tall, I am strong.

God created my blackness!

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POPULAR CULTURE

Festival of Faith & Music: Seeking to Remember

By Kirstin Vander Giessen-Reitsma

At the Festival of Faith & Music in 2005, author David Dark gave a keynote address using a quote from Jack Kerouac as a point of meditation: "And so I struggle in the dark with the enormity of my soul, trying desperately to be a great rememberer, redeeming life from darkness."

As an icon of rebellion and individualism, Kerouac certainly stood outside of mainstream Christianity in the sixties, but perhaps his expression of complexity and struggle is one that the Church is coming to realize as prophetic. While Kerouac was struggling to be a "great rememberer", it could be said that the average Christian was forgetting to remember what he or she forgot—that is, that light became all twisted up with the darkness when humanity chose knowledge over obedience. And let's not pretend that such an oversimplification is a thing of the past. Even within our own hearts and experiences lies the temptation to judge a film's integrity based on the number of swear words or to validate a musician based on profession of faith. We crave the comfortable safety of the sacred-secular paradigm, where the line between good and evil is less like a precarious tightrope and more like a wide boulevard we can stroll without fear of being accosted by "the world."

But then an R-rated film provokes powerful discussion among our students or an agnostic songwriter calls us out of a moral haze to a clearer understanding of repentance or grace. And we are confronted with a choice less "safe" than that of black or white, good or bad: either God is the origin of all things good or the origin of nothing

at all. "All things good!" we affirm with first Genesis conviction and then we realize: this big God can choose to be revealed through anyone, anywhere. Likewise, the shadow of death is infuriatingly uncooperative when it comes to staying in the box. How in the world are we supposed to be discerning within such a dizzying tangle of competing realities, when some of the most incomprehensible knots lie right in the center of our own hearts? And furthermore, how in the world are we supposed to meaningfully engage students in this difficult task?

These difficult questions and others were the topic of formal and informal conversation at the last ACSD conference in June at Indiana Wesleyan. The dominant sense among the community that gathered there, particularly in a workshop called "Engaging Popular Culture and Developing Discerning Leaders through Student Activities and Campus Programming" led by Steve Austin, Jeff Rioux, Ken Heffner and Kate Bowman Johnston, was one of holy discontent with the way in which the sacred-secular model of approaching culture underestimates how God is working in the world.

Out of this national conversation among Christian student development professionals, a biennial event is emerging and growing as a space for mutual challenge, encouragement and discovery. In 2003, the Festival of Faith & Music kicked off its inaugural gathering in order to apply the tough questions specifically to popular music within a community for whom popular culture is a primary love and concern. Listeners, producers and musicians have come together with results

greater than the festival committees could have anticipated. Here's an excerpt from a response to the 2005 event written by Steve Stockman, author of *Walk On: The Spiritual Journey of U2*:

There are moments when the space blows up to a size that is way beyond our normal daily allowance. In that space the energy of mind and heart and soul is quickened and vocabulary falls effortlessly onto the pages of dreams and discernment. It might be the place where songs and poems are caught, where the plots of novels are conjured and where the artist sees colours shimmy and shake into beauty. In the space, life takes a perspective that transcends and divine grace drenches. Life gets a little more sorted, redemption visits and births new convictions. The Festival of Faith and Music at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan has become such a sabbatical for me. As I moved between seminar, concert, creative worship and conversation I found myself in a community whose lungs had been filled with a short, sharp burst of oxygen that might just keep me spiritually alive for months to come.... For thirty-six hours we shared something above us, underneath us and surrounding us, and we basked in the sacred space.

The Festival is intended to be a space where both listeners and professionals alike can address profound questions about how to create music that is thoroughly faithful, with an eye toward discerning the light of the Kingdom wherever it may be seen. The festival organizers and attendees concur with Calvin Seerveld, who contends that "the conversations of a few superstars do not change the pattern of pop song and rock music on the air waves and in the record shops. It takes a generation of artists with a common perspective to shape an alternative artistic style."

But perhaps this begs the question: what's wrong with what we have? Why

do we need an "alternative artistic style"? The reasons are many, some of which you may already sense.

Because popular art has become commodified, with new material being sold to the largest and highest paying demographic. Because the Christian faith community has tended to respond from a position of defense, rather than a position of joyful conviction that the definitive victory already belongs to Christ. Because contrary to the cotton candy music coming out of too many circles (including the Church), people still suffer, injustice still exists, and we still haven't been able to trade our dark glasses for crystal clear.

Thankfully, the news about popular music isn't all bad, and we believe the Festival of Faith & Music is one of the bright spots. From the Festival's mission:

The Festival of Faith and Music is the gathering of a community of pilgrims who are on a journey to hear, promote and create the music of epiphany—music that catches our breath with its discovery of delight in the ordinary, eternity in the exceptional. We seek to revel in the mystery of the art form, comprehending it better through shared stories and experiences, allowing it to surround

and teach us. We seek to be conscientious listeners, agents of renewal and prophets of the Light.

Consider this an invitation: to all who long to create and support a more cohesive vision for Christian faithfulness in popular music, please join the ongoing conversation that will continue next March at Calvin College. But don't let the big names fool you—you're not joining the hippest new cultural movement. You're choosing an old, old path begun at the creation of the world that passes right through the cross, out of the tomb and into the Holy City. This is what we are trying to remember.

Kirstin Vander Giessen-Reitsma is the Student Activities Coordinator at Calvin College. She also serves as one of the publishers of Catapult Magazine, located at www.catapultmagazine.com, an extremely thoughtful web-zine that explores Christianity, art, and popular culture.

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REGIONAL UPDATES

North Central Region / Region 5

Get a Job! Workshop

Northwestern College, Roseville, MN

This workshop is for students who are interested in pursuing professional positions in student affairs after graduation. Writing a resume, preparing for an interview, job searching, and graduate school programs are some of the topics addressed. Student Life staff from the regional schools will be available to talk with students about their own journeys into student life positions. In addition to the workshop, a scholarship to attend the National ACSD conference will be awarded to a graduating senior pursuing a position in student life. *Applications will be available in January.*

South Central Region / Region 7

Ignite Conference

"New World Order: Millennial Leaders for Change"

February 16-17, 2007

Oral Roberts University, Oklahoma City, OK

Keynote speakers are Dr. John Maxwell, Tim Elmore, and Pastor Napoleon Kaufman with musical guest, Jeff Deyo. *For more information, visit the website www.ignite.oru.edu or contact Christy Lehew at C.Lehew@tcu.edu.*

Northwest Region / Region 9

This year George Fox University began the Acts Six Scholarship Initiative program to bring about meaningful change in the area of student leadership and diversity on campus. This initiative first started as a partnership between the Northwest Leadership Foundation and Whitworth College and the name comes from Acts 6:1 - 7 in which lay leaders were chosen to take care of the needs of their community. In this spirit, Act Six students are selected and given the necessary skills to return to their urban communities and meet the needs of the urban cities they represent. There are three partnerships that exist and compose the National Act Six program. They are George Fox University and Portland Young Life, Whitworth College and the Northwest Leadership Foundation, and Crichton College and the Memphis Leadership Foundation. Every year up to ten students are selected as part of a cadre who will begin their academic career nine months after being selected.

Beginning in the fall of 2007, George Fox will

provide full scholarships which include tuition, room and board, and a book allowance for ten students from urban Portland. Students are selected using a four part strategy:

- ✦ Locally recruit and select diverse, multi-cultural cadres of promising urban student leaders
- ✦ Intensively train these groups of students in the year prior to college, equipping them to support each other, succeed academically and grow as service-minded leaders
- ✦ Send the teams together for four years of fully funded education at partner colleges
- ✦ Provide strong campus support, ongoing leadership and vocational connections to inspire scholars to serve their home communities

For more information about this program please visit the website at www.actsix.org.

West Region / Region 10

Student Congress on Racial Reconciliation

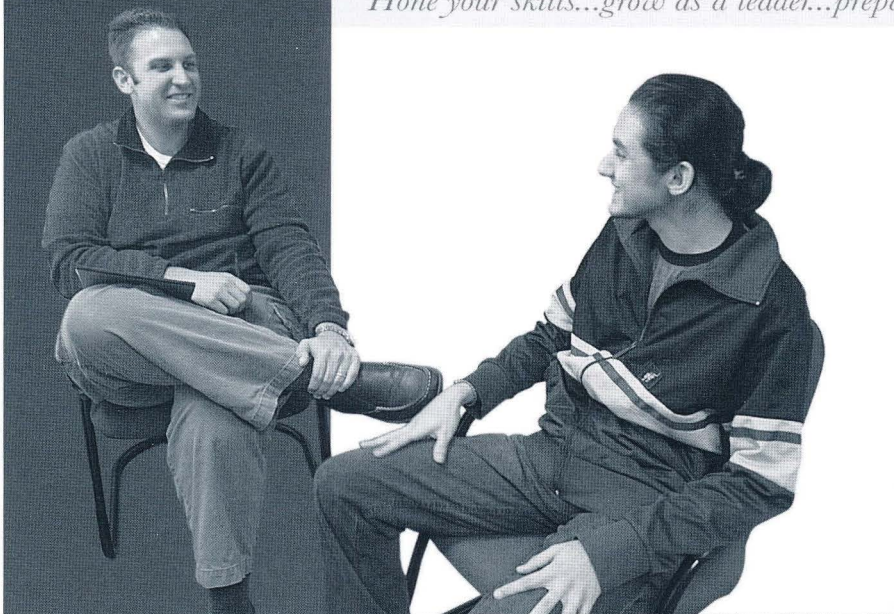
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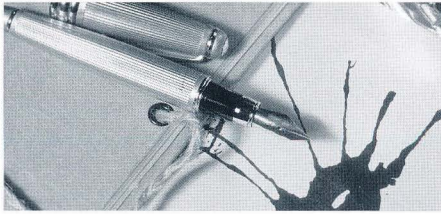
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FROM THE EDITOR'S (VERY MESSY) DESK

I must confess that I do not think I am a "Christmas" sort of guy.

I got annoyed in mid-November when department stores insisted on playing Christmas music. It was bad enough that I was reeling with some type of memory loss wondering what happened to October. Evidently, I could not just enjoy the month of November and Thanksgiving without being fast-forwarded into the "Christmas" season.

I am not a fan of the Christmas crowds. I walked into the local Wal-Mart to get juice, eggs, and some paint samples (a typical Wal-Mart shopping list) and I suddenly found myself a human bumper car, swerving and jostling my way down the aisles as if my life depended on it. I guess this is, at the very least, better than the smaller specialty shops where the Christmas season clerks appeared out from around every corner. Like a bad game of human whack-a-mole, they popped up repeatedly and asked if I had found everything I am looking for. No, but I could use a rubber mallet.

I felt completely drained by the fourth Christmas party of the season. "Only five more to go," I tried to weakly reassure myself. Good thing my wife, Deb, loves keeping track of the family calendar and all of our "special events" or I could have easily forgotten them. Accidentally, of course.

I completely detested and refused to make a "Christmas wish list" to e-mail out to my family members. This drove Deb absolutely crazy. I think she thinks I am just too busy or too lazy to do this. No, I just found myself unwilling to do it. Don't get me wrong, I can walk into Best Buy and wear out my finger pointing to all that I want - from DVDs to flat-screen televisions. Somehow, though, typing all of that "stuff" down in the form of a "wish list" e-mail is embarrassing.

Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today, in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10 - 11

I could go on with example after example of what makes me believe I am not a "Christmas" sort of guy. Some people would loudly declare me a "Scrooge" for just thinking these things, let alone writing them in some article. Who knows, maybe I am a bit "scrogish" when it comes to Christmas "stuff". I certainly do not see myself above or more-Christian than those who do happily hum along with Christmas music in November, revel in the craziness of Christmas shopping, enjoy every Christmas party, or those of you who send out Christmas wish lists demanded by family and friends. Some people are simply energized and propelled toward the Christmas season through some or each of these things. I am just not one of them.

This season, though, something that *did* cut through all of what I would call the "Christmas clutter" and made me excited about celebrating Christmas was my five year old son, Jaxson.

Jaxson practically sat on top of me as I tried to put our fake Christmas tree together. He eagerly pulled each ornament out of the box and delicately hung it on our tree. I smile uncontrollably while looking at our tree: heavily decorated and laden-down with ornaments until about five feet up, where it becomes absolutely sparse. This disparity of decoration marked where Jaxson's grubby little hands had ended their reach.

Of course, Jaxson is the typical five year old who believes every present is his or, at the very least, should be opened by him. This made me laugh

as well as made me a bit edgy. I mean, I could not guard the presents under the tree too closely while grading my finals. Right before Christmas, he insisted that a freshly delivered and unwrapped box was his present. As my wife opened the box and pulled out a pillow, he remained hopeful and dove into the cardboard ocean swimming through the packaging, all the while believing that somewhere in the box was something for him.

Perhaps where Jaxson has energized me most about Christmas is his budding understanding of what it all means. Since December, we had been reading a few different books retelling the nativity story and he started to get it. Recently, I picked him up from school and as we drove home I asked him if he knew why we celebrated Christmas. Without hesitation, he exclaimed that it was "Baby God's birthday". Yes, son, it is baby God's birthday.

As you read this now, Christmas has passed. However, I hope that as the New Year settles in and the clutter of life that makes you crazy piles up, you are continually reminded of the meaning of it all: Baby God loves us and is with us. Emmanuel. That, alone, is good enough news for the whole year!

Sincerely,

Steve Austin
Editor of *Koinonia*

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Keynotes

Donald Miller - Author of *Blue Like Jazz*, *Searching for God Knows What* and *Through Painted Deserts*.

Dr. David Walsh - University of Minnesota. A Psychologist, educator, author and parent, Walsh is also the president and founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family based in Minneapolis.

Lakita Garth - Social commentator and media consultant. Garth speaks on issues such as race relations, politics, feminism, and AIDS. She is one of the country's leading abstinence advocates.

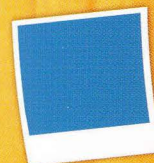
Dr. Darcia Narvaez - University of Notre Dame. She studies and teaches moral development. She wrote the book *Moral Development, Self and Identity*.

Rev. Dr. Soong-Chan Rah - North Park Theological Seminary. Rev. Rah is the founding and former Senior Pastor of the Cambridge Community Fellowship Church (CCFC) in Cambridge, MA.

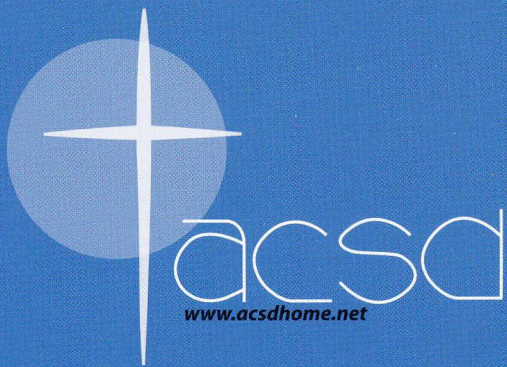
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