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Koinonia

Association of Christians in Student
Development

Fall 2006

Koinonia

Kate Bowman Johnston

James Spiegel

Glen Kinoshita

Todd Ream

Jesse M. Brown

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Association for Christians in Student Development

KOINONIA

Fall 2006



Great Expectation's?

The Cult of Cool

ACSD Regional Updates



Beyond the Mind

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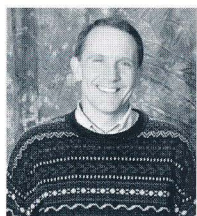
Dr. Tim Herrmann
MAHE Program Chair
765.998.5142
tmherrmann@taylor.edu

Inspire



Cindi Carder
MAHE Program Assistant
765.998.5373
mahe@taylor.edu

The President's Corner



Tim Arens

If you are anything like me, you are wondering, "Where has the summer gone?" Wasn't it just yesterday that I was at the ACSD Annual Conference? Even though it was not "just yesterday" I still have many fond memories of the time spent with you at Indiana Wesleyan University. The hospitality provided by the IWU staff was outstanding and the state of the art facilities on their campus were remarkable. Thank you, Indiana Wesleyan University Student Development Staff, for providing an atmosphere in which we could fellowship, be encouraged, and be enriched.

The Annual Conference is such a large part of who we are as an organization and many decisions are made that help define how we are going to proceed throughout the coming year. This year was no exception as we acted to solidify our yearly operating costs and continued the work on some important initiatives to aid the membership.

The most discussed agenda item at the business meeting was our action to increase the membership dues from \$35 to \$50 for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. This was proposed to offset cost of living increases, maintenance of the web site, the addition of the Growth Journal, increased funds for regional programming, and to ease the expectation for revenue from conference hosts. This increase allows us to improve the standard of services to the membership.

We continue to find our finances to be very strong and as Paul Blezien, our Treasurer, mentioned at the annual meeting, we will continue to use surplus monies that we have to fund strategic initiatives that the Executive Committee believes will enhance the organization. One such initiative is the Members for Non-Faith Based Institutions Task Force. As a result of their work, for the first time this year there was a pre-conference workshop held for these members. We have Sharon Dzik of the University of Minnesota to thank for the effort she made to make it a reality.

There are two other initiatives that remain in process. The first is the Diversity Task force, which has met and provided a report to the Executive Committee for our review and response. Also, the Best Practices Task Force met at the annual meeting and will soon be reporting on their projected outcomes.

There are also two new, recently supported initiatives. First is the publication of a new professional's monograph that will be used for the new professionals within ACSD. Second is a task force that is working on a strategy to promote and develop scholarly research and writing within the membership of ACSD. This will not only be aimed at writing for ACSD publications but also toward our members providing a Christian voice in the larger field of Student Development.

One other development which I am excited about is our move to place two advertisements in About Campus Magazine. One advertisement will emphasize ACSD membership and the other will highlight the annual meeting. It will be interesting to see what impact these have in promoting ACSD in a different market.

All of these initiatives have come directly from the membership. The Executive Committee welcomes your ideas for ways to improve our services to the membership.

What makes being president of ACSD such a great pleasure is serving alongside the other executive members which you have elected. The current committee is comprised of Jane Higa, Westmont College, President Elect; Pam Jones, Belhaven College, Vice President; Paul Blezien, William Jessup University, Treasurer; Edee Schultze, Wheaton College, Secretary; Doug Wilcoxson, Membership Chairman, Letourneau University; and Steve Austin, Taylor University, Editor. Please pray that the Lord will provide guidance and wisdom as we conduct the organization's business this year.

As I write this, the summer is quickly coming to a close and I am trying to make sure that all of the loose ends are tied up before the avalanche of the new year comes tumbling down around me. If you are like me, you are sorry that the summer, as we know it, is drawing to a close. But

on the other hand, the prospect of having students back on campus is certainly energizing as I consider the possibilities of what the Lord will do in their lives this year. In light of these realities I would like to leave you with this thought from Galatians 6:9:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

I pray that you have a great year!
Godspeed,

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

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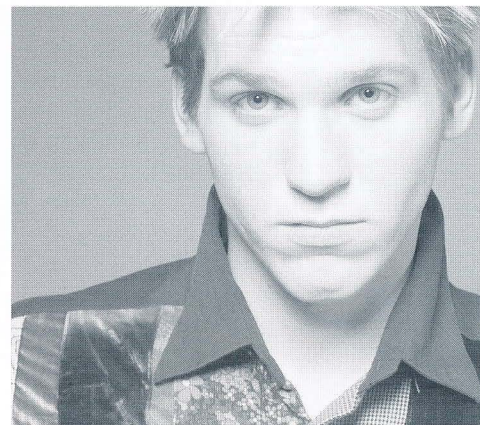
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The Cult of Cool: Rejecting Relevance and Pursuing Faithfulness

by Kate Bowman Johnston



In the PBS Frontline documentary *The Merchants of Cool*, journalist Douglas Rushkoff takes us inside a research facility that tracks trends via “cool hunting.” We see marketers performing an interactive exercise with a group of young boys. They show the teenagers corporate logos and celebrity photos and ask them to comment on the perception and reputation of each among their friends. After silently verifying agreement amongst themselves, the boys deem each “cool” or “uncool.”

When I speak to Christian audiences, whether students or professionals, I use the same exercise with a twist. I project images of Christians who are in the public eye, and I ask the audience to tell me whether these people are “cool” or “uncool.” The responses are eerily universal. Bono: cool. Pat Robertson: uncool. Switchfoot: cool. Carman: So uncool that he’s cool. Ned Flanders: a toss-up, since Flanders himself is not cool, but *The Simpsons* is.

After this battery of images, we assess what our responses actually mean. What do the “cool” Christians have in common? Usually non-conformity, edginess, a slight air of rebellion against the evangelical subculture. What do the “uncool” Christians have in common? They’re boring, they’re often corporate, they play by the rules and never deviate.

The point of this exercise is to demonstrate that Christians are just as susceptible to the lure of coolness as anyone else. Consciously or not, we

identify ourselves with what we consider to be cool while differentiating ourselves from that which we consider uncool. But we tend to make a mistake in addition to this. Because “cool” is today’s currency for attention and acclaim, we have convinced ourselves that being cool can make the world pay attention to our message.

In recent years, cool has become something of an idol for many evangelicals, especially young ones like our students, as well as for older people who think an aura of cool can help them tap into a particular demographic. By way of example, perhaps those of us in Student Development found the youth pastor in the recent hit movie *Saved!* to be an all-too-familiar archetype of what happens when you try too hard to be cool...?

In a slim book called *In the Name of Jesus*, Henri Nouwen describes the three temptations of Jesus as the temptations to be relevant, to be powerful, and to be spectacular. These are our temptations, too. There is a great deal of pressure in churches today to be “effective,” which we mistakenly believe can only be done with relevance, power, and spectacular displays of both. And what is “cool” if not relevant, powerful, and spectacular?

I think this is a problem—not because the traits and behaviors we consider cool are bad in and of themselves, but because ultimately cool is an illusion. It is a smoke and mirrors trick, an unattainable unreality.

I’ve been using the word “cool” a

lot so far, but what does it actually mean? What is cool, anyway?

When I last gave this talk, we were coincidentally just a few miles away from the geographic birthplace of cool: James Dean was born in Fairmount, Indiana, in 1931. But it wasn’t until 1955, when *Rebel Without a Cause* came out, that cool was truly born. When that movie hit the cinemas, youth culture exploded into middle-class white America, and so did the concept of cool.

In Dean and his contemporaries, cool was embodied by the very same characteristics we attributed earlier to prominent evangelicals today. Dean was dangerous, edgy, rebellious, a loner, misunderstood, a rugged individual. He played by no one’s rules but his own.

To flesh out why these traits and actions became synonymous with cool, I want to turn to Thomas Frank’s helpful discussion of it. Frank is a cultural critic whose most recent book, *What’s the Matter with Kansas?*, was highly sought after following the 2004 election. In an earlier volume, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and Hip Consumerism*, he theorizes that “cool” emerged as a consequence of the 1950s boom in mass production and technology-driven mass culture. With those developments came the fear of becoming a cog in a machine, unrecognizable, disposable, assimilated into the Borg. Conformity was simultaneously championed and feared, and Frank says its

evils “are most conveniently summarized with images of 1950s suburban correctness: sedate music, sexual repression, deference to authority, Red Scares, and smiling white people standing in line to go to church.” (p. 11)

By the 1960s, this fear of conformity had been transformed, through advertising and media, into what Frank calls “the countercultural idea: a bleak picture of repressive, homogeneous society and a prescription of transgression, rebellion, and liberation of desire as the solution.” (p. 27) Advertisers began to use themes of individuality, rebellion, and nonconformity as selling points, because they played on the anxiety of the public—and anxiety, more than anything else, moves product.

Advertisers today still know this, so anxiety about one’s coolness has only changed by degree. Obviously, mass culture has become so mass that it is global. It is everywhere. We literally cannot escape advertising. Douglas Rushkoff calls it “a world made of marketing,” and goes on to point out that the typical American teenager will encounter and process over 3,000 discreet advertisements per day—and 10 million by the time they’re 18. (This figure, by the way, was drawn from a study done very early in this new century, just as the Internet was hitting its stride. By now, the number of ads has grown exponentially.) Beyond blatant ads, television, films, and the Internet all feature integrated elements designed to sell “cool.”

Today, the “world made of marketing” still stars the rebel who is cooler than cool. But there is a problem: by and large, cool is communicated to us through the very institutions against which we are meant to be rebelling. Here’s how Frank puts it:

Today there are few things more beloved of our mass media than the figure of the cultural rebel, the defiant individualist resisting the mandates of the machine civilization. Whether he is an athlete decked out in a mohawk and multiple-pierced ears, a policeman who plays by his own rules, an actor on

a motorcycle, ... a soldier of fortune with explosive bow and arrow, a long-haired alienated cowboy gunning down square cowboys, or a rock star in leather jacket and sunglasses, he has become the paramount cliché of our popular entertainment, the preeminent symbol of the system he is supposed to be subverting. (p. 228)

These days, who is it that makes the rules about what’s cool? Advertisers and corporations have formed a symbiotic relationship with teenagers and college students. Rushkoff, in *The Merchants of Cool*, calls it “an enclosed feedback loop.” The deal goes something like this, according to cultural critic Marc Crispin Miller:

The MTV machine does listen very carefully to children. In rather the same way—if I can put it controversially—as Dr. Goebbels, [Hitler’s] ministry of propaganda, listened to the German people. Propagandists have to listen to their audience very, very closely. When corporate revenues depend on being ahead of the curve, you have to listen, you have to know exactly what they want and exactly what they’re thinking so that you can give them what you want them to have. Now that’s an important distinction. The MTV machine doesn’t listen to the young so that it can make the young happy-

young tend to be presented always and everywhere with what is in a way the most seductive thing there is, and that’s a mirror. There’s a mirror held up to them all the time. It’s the mirror as constructed by advertising and TV, but it’s the mirror that tells you that you are all there is to be, or you could be, if you bought what we have to sell. (*The Merchants of Cool*)

Obviously, cool has come a long and troubling way since James Dean was branded as its first representative. It is a commodity, and we buy it like it’s going out of style—which, of course, it is. That’s how cool works. Like all other commodities, the underlying premise is that you can never have enough or be enough. Cool is constantly changing, and so to keep up with it, you always have to buy more, although as soon as you do, the trends change again and leave you in the dust. You have to become a hip consumer.

By the way, do not be fooled into believing that because you are no longer a teenager or a student, you’re exempt from the world made of marketing. It is so pervasive that none of us can escape it. Examining these issues is crucial to your role not only as a Student Development professional but as a Christian, because this is the world that we live in as well. It is our responsibility to discern it and learn to

Consciously or not, we identify ourselves with what we consider to be cool while differentiating ourselves from that which we consider uncool.

er. It doesn’t listen to the young so it can come up with startling new kinds of music, for example. The MTV machine tunes in so it can figure out how to pitch what Viacom has to sell to those kids. Now the

navigate it and inhabit it well, so that we can equip students to go and do likewise. No more sticking our heads in the sand!

See, it was once possible for Christians to entertain the illusion that

we didn't have to deal with such worldly concerns as advertising and coolness. (Of course, that was always an illusion, but it was a tenable one for a long time.) Did God care whether or not you were cool? Of course not, God wanted good Christian boys and girls to behave themselves and definitely not resist authority or listen to rock music or wear Mohawks. I'm sure any of you reading this could testify that among your students, this is certainly not true today—at least not the part about rock music and wearing a Mohawk.

So what changed? When did evangelical Christians get the idea that it was important to care about being cool, and even that coolness can be a virtue?

The fact is, Christians changed right along with everyone else, just in our own self-imposed alternate uni-

neutral—a mere vehicle for a message that can be either positive or negative, holy or sinful. Mainstream culture is sin-infested, evangelicals supposed, so why not create a holy alternative?

This accounts for the Contemporary Christian Music movement that began in the 1960s and still thrives today. Rock and roll was no longer devil music, it was a means to an end. Evangelicalism is its own culture industry, pumping out as many imitations of general market consumer products as the mainstream. Same medium, different message.

It seems inevitable, then, that the same kind of "hip consumerism" that infects the mainstream would eventually appear among Christians, as well. It started, I think, because there is so very much about American evangelical

twist. Here's how a young author named Patton Dodd describes this in his book, *My Faith So Far*:

Evangelical Christians can be an anxious lot. We—especially those of us who grew up with two social circles (church youth group, and public school friends)—are fantastically worried about our status as cultural outsiders. We want to be in. We want to be relevant. But we know we are out. We fear we are irrelevant. We feel we have been given a terrible choice: either Michael Landon and Highway to Heaven or Angus Young and Highway to Hell. For us, Coolness and Goodness are completely polarized. All of the high school and college social terror that exists in the mind of every teenager is compounded for evangelicals. Do we have the right taste? Are our t-shirts hip? Is our hair long enough? We drink socially, if moderately. We read novels. We watch all the independent films. We're trying, really. (p. 17)

This is that nature of our double anxiety as Christians. We want to be cool, because being cool means being taken seriously. But we also want to be good, because being good means taking God seriously. Can we do both, we wonder? We can't be cool by being good—remember our rebel consumer? Goodness is definitely not cool. But maybe, we think, we can be good by trying to be cool.

That's where *Relevant* magazine comes in.

There is a lot that's great and necessary about *Relevant*, a "lifestyle magazine" for evangelicals aged 18-34 that focuses on the latest in music, technology, movies, and popular culture in general. However, it is the most prominent example of the phenomenon I'm trying to illustrate, so that's why I'm focusing on it—*Relevant* is a microcosm of cool. It functions as a lens to examine more closely some of the forces at work in American evangelicalism.

I have known *Relevant's* editor for a long time, and I actually helped launch this magazine as an intern. I got involved with it because like so many, I was trying

So what changed? When did evangelical Christians get the idea that it was important to care about being cool, and even that coolness can be a virtue?

verse. Because despite the stereotype, evangelicals are not exactly the squares we're made out to be—at least not when it comes to technology. *Stephen Prothero's Washington Post* review of Heather Hendershot's book *Shaking the World for Jesus: Media and Conservative Evangelical Culture*, points out:

Far from Luddites, evangelicals were early adopters of the holy trinity of 20th-century technologies: radio, television and the Internet." (2004, p. B9). And here, Hendershot argues that, despite their reputation as anti-modern rubes, evangelicals have actually embraced for decades "any 'modern' means that could be used to spread the Gospel." (2004, p. B9)

So it's not the technologies Christians are afraid of—it's the content. Technology itself is considered

Christianity that is, in the eyes of the general public, tragically un-hip. If you have ever been a teenager, you know what this feels like. It is totally embarrassing. How many of us have yelled at a right-wing televangelist's flickering televised image, "PLEASE SHUT UP! YOU'RE MAKING US LOOK BAD!"

And so, young Christians try to distance ourselves from such raving fundamentalists. We know that our friends, our non-Christian ones (or at least the ones we imagine ourselves making) won't take us seriously—won't take *Jesus* seriously—if we don't differentiate ourselves from the way our elders have traditionally expressed their faith.

So we try to loosen up. But because of the elusive nature of cool, we experience the same anxiety as everyone else—only with an additional

to resolve the tension between wanting to be a faithful Christian, while yearning to participate in popular culture.

That tension is a good tension. It is a necessary tension. For us today, it is the essence of figuring out what it means to be in the world, but not of it.

But *Relevant* tries to resolve that tension for us, by positioning itself squarely between the evangelical Christian subculture and mainstream culture, one foot in each. It fuses evangelical doctrine, traditional evangelical political perspectives, and a few select elements of Christian popular culture with slick, cutting-edge graphics; snarky, ironic humor; genuine celebrity interviews and endorsements; and reviews of all the latest gadgets, albums, and movies.

By all appearances, *Relevant* is just what young evangelicals are looking for. The reader maintains a sense of fidelity to Christian values without having to pass on being a hip consumer of popular culture. But there's that phrase again—"hip consumer."

Virtually the only thing *Relevant* does differently than other Christian publications is that it makes a more effective use of the language of hip consumerism. It contains basically the same content that Christian lifestyle publishing has been producing for years—treacle advice about romantic relationships, superficial reviews of albums. But in *Relevant*, that content is wrapped in hip package—the same strategy that today dominates mainstream mass culture, making us think we can control our anxiety by purchasing the latest representation of what we're told is cool.

Thomas Frank puts it this way: "Hip consumerism recognizes the alienation, boredom and disgust engendered by the demands of modern consumer society, but it makes of those sentiments powerful imperatives of brand loyalty and accelerated consumption." (p. 231) Similarly, *Relevant* recognizes the alienation, boredom, and disgust that young people often experience in evangelical subculture, but it transforms them into powerful persua-

sions for the *Relevant* brand and the products it promotes. It gives us a way to attempt coolness, but not at the expense of goodness, or so we think. *Relevant* eases our double anxiety.

But as usual, that means you have to pay to be cool.

So the pressure is on: Get the right t-shirt to show that you understand the irony of church legalism. "Bible thumper," maybe, or "holy roller." Maybe one that openly states, with boldness and a whiff of desperation, "I AM RELEVANT." They look just like something from Urban Outfitters.

Buy the right albums to demonstrate that although you may have spent your youth jamming to Carman, you now recognize the pre-eminent brilliance that is Sigur Ros. Oh, you haven't heard of them? Well, they're kind of obscure.

But the quest for cool is a proverbial chasing after the wind. Next month, next year, it won't be iPods, it'll be something else. And you can never, ever be cool enough.

(Because remember, the more obscure the band, the cooler you look.)

Display your sensitivity and compassion and non-partisan nature by wearing a ONE campaign bracelet or slapping a bumper sticker on your car that declares, ambiguously, "Love wins."

Pop in those white iPod earbuds so others will know you're up to the minute with technology. So others will know that you're no square. That you're not one of *those* Christians.

Now, this is not to say that it's innately bad to have an iPod or support the ONE campaign. But to believe that these things will somehow buy you social capital, make people take you and your message more seriously, is a lie. It is buying into the mistaken belief that relevance, power, and spectacular displays of both will make your Christian

witness more effective, will help you "impact the world for Christ," as the popular saying goes. But the quest for cool is a proverbial chasing after the wind. Next month, next year, it won't be iPods, it'll be something else. And you can never, ever be cool enough.

The question now is, what choice do we have? How do we break the cycle of consumption and the tyranny of cool? How do we resist the temptation to be relevant, to be powerful, to be spectacular?

Is our only choice to go back to the old ways—burning our "secular" CDs and wearing tidy outfits in order to demonstrate our fidelity to Christ?

No, I don't think so. Others might suggest it—in fact, a recent issue of *Relevant* features an editorial that seems to critique readers for, ironically,

being too much like the world. But "being in the world but not of the world" is not a binary endeavor. It is a both/and proposition.

That is why it is imperative that we develop a worldview that makes a home for movies and music and literature and fashion-things that are often seen as the embodiments of cool, but in reality are so much more. They are part of being human. Which, by the way, is a good thing.

Christians do not have a good track record when it comes to thoughtfully sifting through and discerning popular culture, because we tend to make it about easily compartmentalized choices. It is a lie that sin is "out there," in the world, and that holiness is only found in the church. Every human being is sinful, and every human being is made in the image of God.

SPOTLIGHT FEATURE



Everything that human beings create contains both good and evil, because that is our nature, and so there is nothing that we can cast aside.

So as Christians, we must not cast aside what popular culture has to offer without a second glance. Some evangelicals are making great progress in this area; Taylor University, for instance, along with schools like Calvin and Messiah, are engaging with music and movies head-on, inviting mainstream artists to perform on their stages and discussing movies on their own terms, within the context of a biblical worldview. Following the ACSD conference in June this year, there seemed to be a great excitement growing among other Student Development workers to take up this mandate at their own schools.

But they're not doing it to be cool. In that sense, we also must not embrace pop culture unequivocally as a badge of relevance, as an assurance that we are cool, especially because of the modern demands of being "hip consumers." The truth lies somewhere in the middle, as we separate the wheat from the chaff. Cool is an illusion. The truth is so much bigger and more exciting than cool.

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Kate Bowman Johnston just finished her three-year tenure as the Student Activities Coordinator at Calvin College. She now resides in Philadelphia, PA, where she is working towards a Masters in Library and Information Science.

I want to acknowledge my indebtedness to Kevin Erickson, a student at Whitman College, who wrote his senior thesis about Frank, coolness, and Relevant magazine. He allowed me to use some of his research and observations in my talks about coolness. I have only begun to touch on his wisdom and insights here. Look for a general-market magazine article from Kevin in the next year, where he explores the phenomenon in greater depth!

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE
ACSD 2007

Take a bite out of the Minneapple!
JUNE 4-7

Faith and the Problem of Suffering

By Dr. James Spiegel

Now well into Summer, the Taylor community still mourns the loss of those who died in the van accident on April 26. This tragic event has touched us all in one way or another, and it has no doubt presented a challenge to the faith of many. After all, God is supposed to be all-powerful and all-good. If he is all-powerful, then he can stop such suffering. And if he is all-good, then wouldn't he want to stop this suffering? Yet the pain goes on, and the deaths of our beloved sisters and brother are but the latest horrific chapter in a daily reality all over the world. As Dostoevski once wrote, the earth is soaked from crust to core with the tears of humanity.

For centuries philosophers and theologians alike have wrestled with the problem of human suffering. And many solutions have been attempted. For example, some propose that all suffering is divine punishment for sin. Victims of disease, poverty, and natural disasters are all experiencing the wrath of God. Such thinking was apparent in Jerry Falwell's notorious declaration that with the 9-11 attacks God was punishing the United States for its sins. The problem with this approach is that it forgets that the innocent suffer, too. From Job and Joseph to Jesus himself, plenty of people who are not wickedly rebelling against God have suffered severely.

Another approach insists that suffering is the inevitable consequence of the laws of nature. God had to make the world operate according to certain predictable rules, such as gravity and the laws of thermodynamics. But, unfortunately, doing so inevitably resulted in the possibility of painful accidents and diseases. So human suffering simply results from God making an orderly world. Unfortunately, this approach forgets that God, being all

powerful and all-wise, could have made the world in such a way that diseases and accidents didn't happen. Indeed, he has promised to do just this in the New Earth that awaits us. Furthermore, to say that suffering is inevitable ignores the biblical fact that suffering only came into the world when humans began to sin (the Fall).

Yet another approach focuses on a crucial aspect of the concept of sin. Our rebellion against God—and all of its negative consequences—resulted from our abusing our free will. As with Adam and Eve in the Garden, God presents us with the choice of obedience and blessing on the one hand and disobedience and curse on the other. Sadly, we all choose wrongly from time to time, which results in suffering. So we have no one to blame but ourselves. However, the limitation of this approach is that it doesn't explain why God would allow us to sin as we do. Is our freedom really worth all the pain? Why so much suffering?

These are just a few of the more popular approaches to the problem of suffering. And while I think each of these offers some help in dealing with the problem, each is incomplete by itself. In fact, I believe we do not and can not know the reasons for all of the suffering in this world. But this is not to say that we can't know that there are good reasons in every case. Let me explain.

If we believe in a God who is all-wise, as well as all-powerful and all-good, then he must have good reasons for all that he does, whether this regards the blessings of good health and children or the pain of car accidents and natural disasters. But, one will reply, isn't this a rather cold and aloof way of looking at it? And, anyway, isn't the fact of suffering by itself a reason to stop believing in God's wisdom? Or even to deny his existence altogether?

Some people think so and even give up their Christian faith as a result. But I believe they make a sad and ironic mistake, for Christianity is the worldview that best addresses suffering. In fact, the Christian faith was borne out of suffering—Jesus himself suffered severely, perhaps even beyond what was necessary for our salvation. The prophet Isaiah tags him as “a man of sorrows.” And as for the suffering of his followers, the Bible gives us clues as to its purpose, linking it with character development. The book of James says that the testing of our faith through trials “develops perseverance,” which in turn makes us “mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:3-4). More significantly, suffering gives us solidarity with Christ. The apostle Paul writes, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death” (Phil. 3:10).

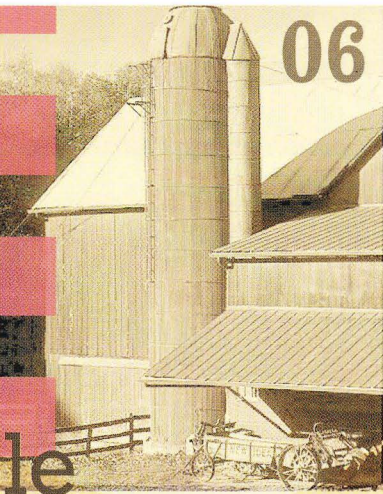
These and similar biblical passages should inform the Christian's perspective on suffering. And when the reason for some suffering is incomprehensible to us, we can still trust that God has his good reasons. Even tragedies such as the April 26 accident somehow fit into the divine plan. We can be confident that this is the case, even if we don't fully understand how it is so.

This article first appeared in the Summer 2006 *Taylor Magazine* and was reprinted with permission from the author.

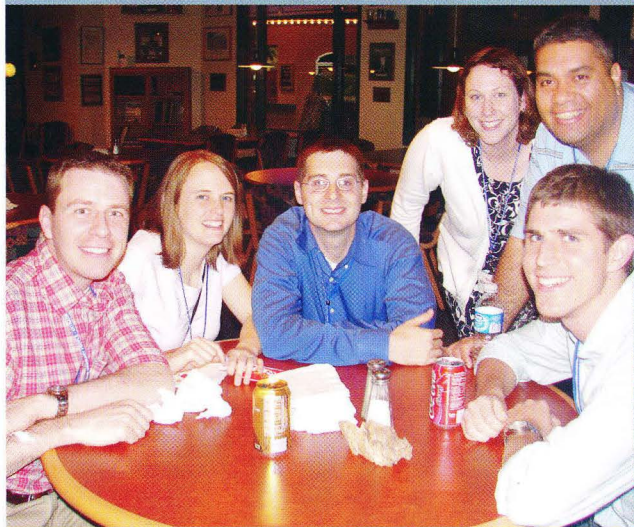
*James Spiegel is a professor of Philosophy and Religion at Taylor University, author of the award-winning *How to Be Good in a World Gone Bad* (Kregel) and, most recently, *The Benefits of Providence* (Crossway).*

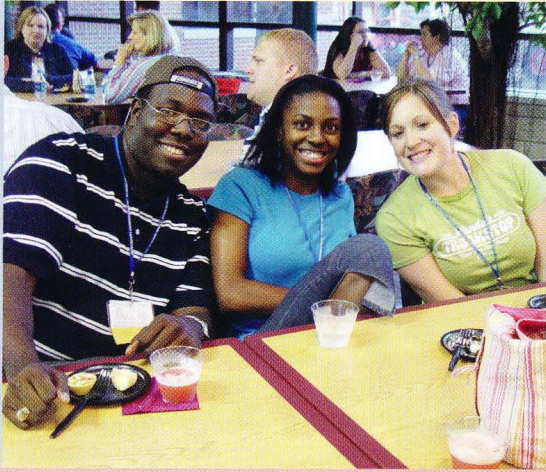
06

ACSD



Ordinary People
EXTRAORDINARY LEADERSHIP





INDIANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Marion, Indiana

Our Place at the Table: The Role of White People in Racial Reconciliation An Interview with Doug Schaupp

By Glen Kinoshita

In any given Student Affairs department, the discussion about diversity and racial reconciliation resonates. From student orientation to residence life, people from diverse backgrounds can be seen intersecting and hence interacting. One of the major themes crucial to racial reconciliation is the role that white people in America have in this process. Not only is it crucial, it is also one of the more difficult issues.

Being White: Finding our Place in a Multi-Ethnic World by Paula Harris and Doug Schaupp (InterVarsity Press, 2004) is a book that seeks to assist white people to engage in a lifelong journey of self-discovery, as well as to help people of color understand some of the challenges white people face on this journey. In this interview, co-author Doug Schaupp shares his thoughts regarding the role white people play in the reconciliation process. Doug has served with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) for over fifteen years. He served as a campus minister at UCLA from 1989 to 1999 and is currently a regional director for IVCF over Southern California. Doug and his family reside in Los Angeles, CA.

Glen Kinoshita: Tell us a little about yourself and some significant aspects of your journey as it relates to your own white identity development.

Doug Schaupp: In regards to the development of my white identity, the first significant factor was when my

family took a trip to Germany which was the Schaupp homeland. We visited the small farming province in Southern Germany where my ancestors left to come to America in the early 1800's. Another key piece of the journey occurred just after the 1992 L.A. riots. My wife and I read a quote in a book that said, "If you are not part of breaking down ethnic divisions you are reinforcing ethnic divisions." We realized that we were not being proactive in breaking down ethnic divisions. We then made a decision to join an African American Baptist Church. That experience was enormously transformative for me because almost everyone in the church was African-American. Through this church I was eventually ordained and served on the ministry staff. After three years of serving at this church we then took a ministry in a Korean Church located in Koreatown. My wife and I were ministers of the English Ministry of about twenty to thirty people at this church. During this time, we also wrestled with how to make our campus ministry at UCLA more inclusive and how to have a multi-ethnic community that is characterized by love, justice and reconciliation. As a white person I have been shaped by all these experiences

GK: You are the co-author of the recently released book, "Being White: Finding our Place in a Multi-Ethnic World." What prompted you to write the book?

DS: Joining the Black Baptist church took my commitment to racial reconciliation from theoretical to practical. Through this I made a deeper commitment to making reconciliation a reality for our campus ministry at UCLA. These two realities, being a member of a Black Baptist church and the campus ministry at UCLA, forced me to ask personal questions that I wouldn't have had to explore otherwise. Within our campus ministry at UCLA we held discussion groups called "race matters." In these meetings we would first separate into our own specific ethnic groups and have an hour discussion about matters specific to our group. Then we would come together as an ethnically diverse group. We learned that in order for multiethnic groups to function well, we needed to be intentional about getting together and having dialogue. In the "race matters" groups, we would have an hour set aside for white people. These discussions led me down a great path of self-examination. I initially thought I would write a book on racial reconciliation. However, what InterVarsity Press really wanted was a book on the white experience. I laughed at first when I heard about it, but then I realized that if I found a co-author this would be a great experience.

GK: How has the response to the book been thus far

DS: As expected there are varied responses. The most negative are from those who reject the worldview that the book offers and, thus, categorically reject the book. These are the people who think this is all just political correctness and we should not be about this topic. Then there are those who are indifferent. These are the folks who say we are all one in Christ so let's not raise problems here. Thirdly, there are people who are zealously supportive. These are the folks who see the book as a paradigm-changing book.

GK: You write in your book about the concept of "Displacement." Could you explain what is "displacement" and why is it significant as it relates to white people in America?

DS: Using Jesus as an example, displacement is the path of the cross where He left heaven and came to earth. He gave up what was rightfully His and became a servant to us. Jesus displaced Himself by coming from heaven to earth. Taking His model we are saying we should leave what is ours and enter another's world. Acts 1:8 tells us to move from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and then to the uttermost part of the earth. Displacement is built into that calling. If you look at the progression of Acts, particularly in regards to the church in Antioch, the experience of displacement was evident where the Jews and Gentiles were commanded to love one another. That became part of the Christian norm. God wanted to break down those walls.

In the United States we have a challenge to not just stick to our own, but to extend across ethnic lines. It might be tempting to stick to our own. As white people slowly become the minority in this country we can embrace that reality as a gift from God and reflect the reality in Acts and love across ethnic lines.

GK: Why do you think it is so difficult for white people in America to grasp the fact that they have a culture? How do you address this in your book?

DS: One of our key values as white people is individualism. We see ourselves as a group of individuals and not a collective entity. In other words, we have a values Catch-22 to seeing ourselves as a collective entity because of our commitment to not seeing ourselves as a collective entity. Secondly, we see ourselves as a blended people from all across Europe and so, therefore, it is strange to be a mutt people. Most White people cannot point to one European country of origin. That leads to dissipation and a vague sense of having a culture.

What I have been trying to do is to ask white people to tell their story and identify cultural values that have been passed on to them. It has been healing for white people to learn about their culture. Ethnic identity is really impor-

tant for racial reconciliation. If you have white people with no sense of their culture it is going to limit how far they can go in reconciliation because they feel inadequate. Part of the reason we haven't advanced is we haven't endorsed white identity as part of the racial reconciliation journey.

GK: Could you address the issue of power and privilege, especially as it relates to the white experience in America?

DS: Again, this is a tough issue for white people because, as I have mentioned in the prior question, we see ourselves primarily as individuals. We see our society as a group of individuals and not in terms of systems and privilege.

In my understanding of privilege there are three levels. First, there is an awareness that privilege exists. Using myself as an example, based on the color of my skin and no other reason, people will give me the benefit of the doubt. It might be when I walk into a bank or into a store or when a police officer sees me in a car. I have the benefit of the doubt based on the color of my skin.

GK: Generally speaking, white people and people of color differ in how they define racism. What is your definition of racism and why do you think we have such difficulty defining it?

DS: Racism is historically a sociological term. We prefer to use the Biblical term, "partiality." In Acts 10 and 11 Peter realizes that God does not practice partiality and James exhorts us not to practice it either. In the New Testament church there was a huge issue when the gospel was made available to Jews and Gentiles. God wanted to break down the walls between the two. Partiality is the preferring of my group or comfort over another person's group or comfort. Racism at a societal level is partiality plus power. This is how things that are biased in our heart get codified in our society such as in our economy, our school system, our government, and our churches. We take a twofold perspective to racism. First, there is an internal investigation and a rigorous self-examination, which is on a personal level. The second perspective is a societal systemic look at racism and

If you have white people with no sense of their culture it is going to limit how far they can go in reconciliation because they feel inadequate.

Level two is standing against racism. It is not just that I have privileges but, where I have access to the system, I stand against the racism.

Thirdly, our book goes a step further to what we describe as plundering white privilege for the sake of justice. We are not just aware of privilege, we are not just standing against it, we are proactively expanding our understanding and use of privilege so we can increase others' access to resources.

adding power to the partiality picture. When I talk to people I ask them which are they more aware of, the personal bias in their heart or is it the systemic power in our society. It is usually a mixed response of one or the other. We are asking people to recognize and deal with both.

GK: What do white people in America today have to offer in the ministry of racial reconciliation?

DS: Biblically speaking, God has

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

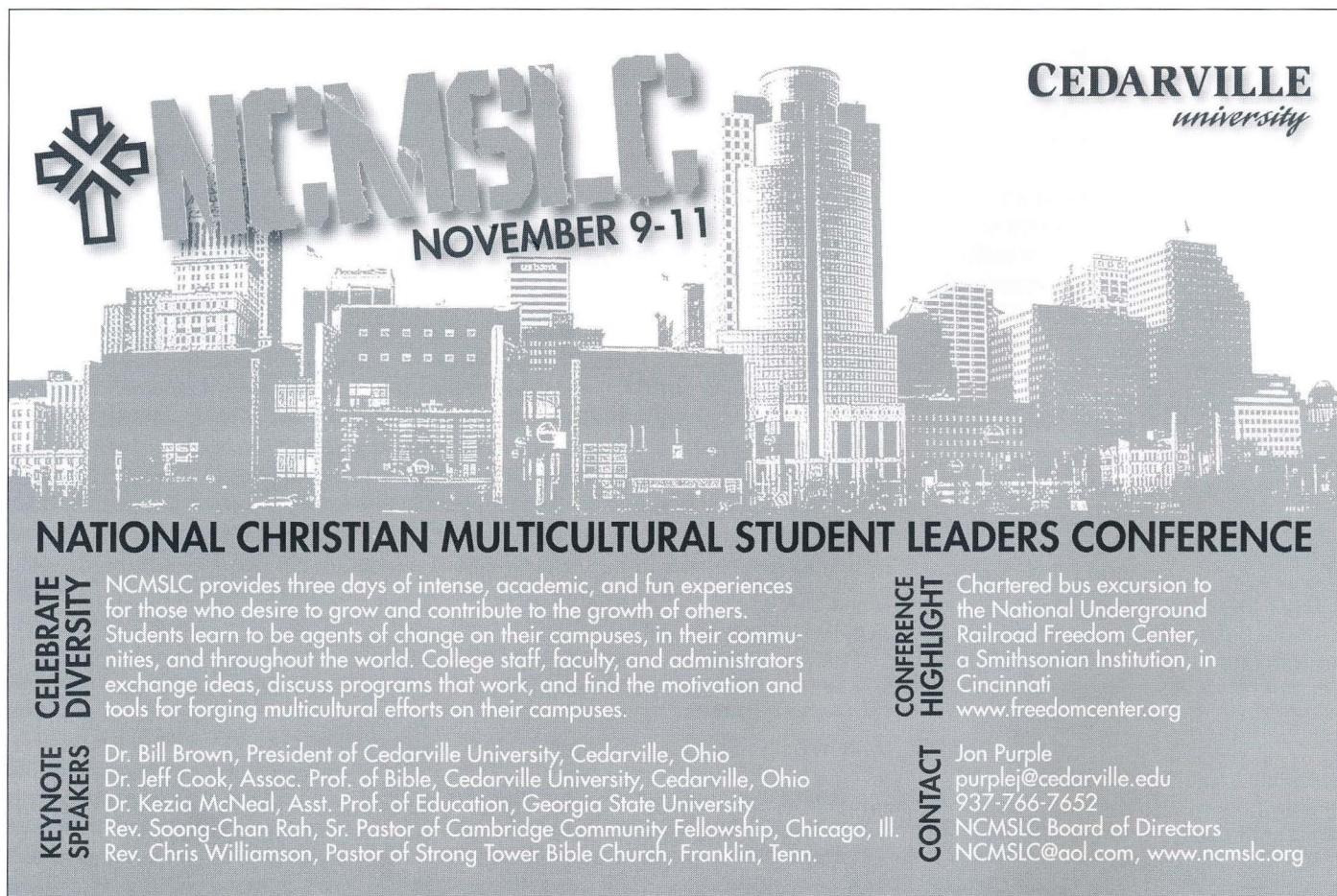
called all people to the process of racial reconciliation; white people are central to the process as well. This is true not because we know all the answers but because we are the majority in this country. If we don't have a Biblical seat at the table then the movement won't get very far because you need to have the majority to have a reconciled people. One of the failures of the politically correct movement is that there isn't a clear definition for where white people should fit in. We have tried in our book to present some clear Biblical parameters for white people's place at the table. This would be of humility and of confidence; of a learner, and yet a contributor; of being blessed and being a blessing.

GK: What do you offer as the goal or vision we should be looking toward on this journey?

DS: For the kingdom of God to be reflected in our world we need the power of the cross to break down the walls between us. That includes gender walls, class walls, and ethnic walls. The New Testament teaches us that in Christ these walls have been torn down when it says that there is neither male nor female (gender), slave nor free (class), and Jew nor Greek (ethnic). Jesus is able to solve these social issues. As members of these Christian communities we can take a proactive posture or a reactive posture. If we are not proactive then we allow the status quo to shape our ministries. I am suggesting that we become proactive and, in love, press through the walls that divide us. The cross will be exalted in our midst as a result. As non-Christians see us working on this the gospel will be shown in its fullness.

Glen Kinoshita currently serves as Director of Multi-Ethnic Programs at Biola University. He has been engaged in the ministry of racial reconciliation for the past fifteen years.

Being White: Finding our place in a multiethnic world, by Paula Harris & Doug Schaupp. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. 192 pages. \$10.40.



NCMSLC
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NATIONAL CHRISTIAN MULTICULTURAL STUDENT LEADERS CONFERENCE

CELEBRATE DIVERSITY NCMSLC provides three days of intense, academic, and fun experiences for those who desire to grow and contribute to the growth of others. Students learn to be agents of change on their campuses, in their communities, and throughout the world. College staff, faculty, and administrators exchange ideas, discuss programs that work, and find the motivation and tools for forging multicultural efforts on their campuses.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS Dr. Bill Brown, President of Cedarville University, Cedarville, Ohio
Dr. Jeff Cook, Assoc. Prof. of Bible, Cedarville University, Cedarville, Ohio
Dr. Kezia McNeal, Asst. Prof. of Education, Georgia State University
Rev. Soong-Chan Rah, Sr. Pastor of Cambridge Community Fellowship, Chicago, Ill.
Rev. Chris Williamson, Pastor of Strong Tower Bible Church, Franklin, Tenn.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT Chartered bus excursion to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, a Smithsonian Institution, in Cincinnati
www.freedomcenter.org

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

Todd C. Ream, Indiana Wesleyan University



Hope is that unsung virtue which reminds us of our potential as human beings at times when that understanding seems distant or even non-existent. We live our lives amidst a whirlwind of competing narratives. Some narratives tell us that we, as a result of our own efforts, can truly have it all. By contrast, other narratives tell us that our best efforts will never be enough. However, hope beckons us to remember that the narrative of creation, fall, and redemption is the only true source of our identity. As a result, hope is part of God's larger plan of redemption for our lives. It helps us to remember we are created with great potential but, because of the fall, our sense of potential often succumbs to a host of temptations. For example, some students pursue the study of medicine not because of the healing power which God offers us, but because the practice of medicine is often financially lucrative. In the same sense, some students withdraw from college because they become convinced that their best efforts will not amount to anything significant. The redemptive power of hope offers a corrective in relation to both extremes. However, the concern with which I struggle is to what extent my efforts as an educator reinforce one or both of these two extremes. When I look at the students I am called to serve, am I able to see their created potential made possible by God's grace? Recently, I discovered that lessons concerning the redemptive power of hope come in the most unusual of places.

In my estimation, northwest Montana

is as good as it gets. The scenery is magnificent and the fly-fishing is even better. For the past couple of years, my family and I have been fortunate enough to spend a few weeks each summer getting to know the people of this corner of a land which rests beneath "The Big Sky." If you come to northwest Montana in the summer you will likely make the short drive to Glacier National Park. If you come in the winter, you will likely enjoy skiing opportunities of which we only dream here in America's heartland. Regardless, only a few visitors to northwest Montana find their way to Bynum—a small community south of Glacier National Park and on the Front Range side of the Rocky Mountains. A recent assessment of Bynum's population listed it as having 71 residents. Choteau, Montana, with a population of 1750, is 14 miles from Bynum. Great Falls, Montana, the closest metropolitan area, is 67 miles from Bynum. Despite its size and its remote location, if you have children who love dinosaurs, you just might find your way to Bynum and to the Two Medicine Dinosaur Center. The Center is housed in an unassuming metal building. However, here you will find "the world's longest dinosaur—a skeletal model display of a *Seismosaurus*—according to the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Other displays include the first baby dinosaur remains found in North America, recently featured on CNN, and the actual remains of other new dinosaur species" (Two Medicine Dinosaur Center Webpage). In addition, here you will also find Jim Gilmore and

his story of hope's redemption.

Jim can talk dinosaurs with the best of them. He can name the various ages and the respective species of dinosaurs. He is well-read in relation to not only the major digs which occurred in the past but also the major digs which are currently taking place around the world. However, Jim, like many of the staff members at the Two Medicine Dinosaur Center, is a volunteer. As a college educator, I am easily impressed by people with a passion for their respective fields. As a parent, I am even more easily impressed by people who are able to share that passion with the next generation. Last year, Jim showed my daughter, Addison (then two years old), some pieces of egg shell and explained to her all about the life of a baby dinosaur. My wife, Sara, and I bought Addison a plastic replica of a baby dinosaur known as "Baby Louie". To this day, "Baby Louie" often finds his way under her pillow at night and on most family trips. Since Jim introduced her to those pieces of egg shell, Addison has also begun to assert that she is a "real paleontologist." As a result, when we returned to Bynum this year, Addison and Jim had to talk about the tools of their common trade—a brush, a hammer, a chisel, and a magnifying glass.

Addison was taken with all of these tools and immediately asserted that she needed her own set. Of all of the tools Jim showed her, the magnifying glass captivated her interest the most. Perhaps her interest in Jim's magnifying

glass came via the way it curiously allowed her to see things she could not otherwise see. Perhaps her interest in Jim's magnifying glass came via the way Jim explained to Addison that his parents had given it to him when he was a young boy. His parents had recognized in him a passion for dinosaurs. On one level, their gift said to him that if he was going to be a paleontologist, he would need to possess the proper tools of his chosen trade. On another level, their gift said to him that they believed that their son could, in fact, grow up to be a paleontologist. Forty years later, the value of that magnifying glass is more symbolic than real. The lab in which Jim works possesses a host of microscopes far more powerful than the magnifying glass he carries in his pocket. However, he never goes anywhere without his magnifying glass if for no other reason than it represents to him a time when his parents helped to extend the hope he had in one day becoming a paleontologist. Invariably, it helped to remind him over the long course of his studies that his hope was real and that he should persist.

Time will tell whether Addison will also become a paleontologist. Being a paleontologist is currently at the top of a list which also includes aspirations such as being a ballerina. Regardless, Jim's enduring lesson to me as a parent and as an educator is to be an instrument of hope's redemption. When my daughter or my students show an interest in a field such as paleontology, is my first response to inquire about how they plan to make a living? Or, do I ask them if they are sure they can learn all of the long and complicated terms that come with such a field? Perhaps the best response is to applaud their passion and inquire as to its source. By getting to know its source, we not only better understand their passion but also learn how we can be instruments of hope's redemption in their lives. No one likely becomes a paleontologist without persisting through some adversity. Hope possesses a redemptive power. When exercised properly, it reconnects us with our potential as beings created in the

image of God. As educators or as parents, is there any more we would want to give than a gift such as a seemingly simple magnifying glass?

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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 affairs 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

REGIONAL UPDATES

North Central Region / Region V

The Annual ACSD Student Leadership Conference for Region V

(Manitoba, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin)

North Central University

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Saturday, October 28th, 2006

The conference is intended for any student leader or professional staff person within the area of student development. Special emphasis is given to leadership issues in residence life, student government, multicultural programs, and student activities. *Contact Marie Wisner at 651-638-6543*

South Central Region / Region 7

SAVE THE DATE!

Ignite '07 Student Leadership Conference for Region 7

(Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)

Oral Roberts University

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

February 16-17, 2007

Keynote Speaker; John Maxwell Professional Staff are encouraged to come and bring student leaders, but are welcome to come without students if too. There will be professional development opportunities in addition to the student conference. *Contact Christy Lehw 817-257-2450*

Region IV / Lake Region

ACSD Regional Conference for Region IV

(Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Ontario)

Huntington University

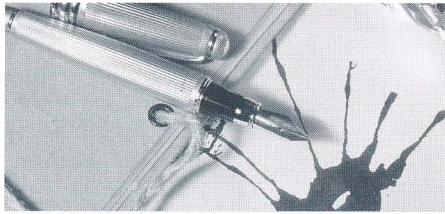
Huntington, Indiana

"As Iron Sharpens Iron, A Friend Sharpens A Friend"

January 12 - 13, 2007

Keynote speaker: Dan Wolgemuth, President of Youth for Christ USA

Registration: \$30 for staff and students. *Contact Jill Godorhazy 765-998-5344*



FROM THE EDITOR'S (VERY MESSY) DESK

Greetings and welcome back to another year of reading *Koinonia*, our ACSD publication. My name is Steve and I am both excited and nervous about serving you as the editor of *Koinonia*. I am excited because I feel blessed to be a part of ACSD's community of learning and fellowship. I have benefited significantly from our organization and value its commitment to faithful scholarship, professional development, and exploration of the breadth of issues in higher education. Ultimately, these are the same reasons that I am very nervous (along with having to drag out the old APA manual of style). I want *Koinonia* to creatively contribute to deepening our faith, assist in equipping us as educators, and be a platform for voicing different perspectives that make us think outside of ourselves and beyond our sometimes narrow vistas. Like the editors before me know all too well, accomplishing this depends on you, or rather, us. Together. Our national conference at Indiana Wesleyan University offered thought-provoking workshops and many rich conversations over coffee with new and old friends. As a result, some of us were inspired to read and research, consider new practices and paradigms, and make new commitments based on our gained insights. The *Koinonia* provides a great forum for you to process and reflect and, ultimately, keep our conversations moving forward. So, please consider submitting an article, some original research, an interview, a reflection piece, or a review to *Koinonia*.

As I write this, students are arriving back on campus in cars stuffed full of everything you could ever need in a residence hall room. As I talk to them, they are equally stuffed full of expectations for the year. Admittedly, I am, too.

Many are the plans in the mind of man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand. Proverbs 19:21

My brother-in-law, Brian, shared some wisdom about "expectations" with me a few years ago. I was extremely stressed about coordinating a large weekend conference. In the planning stages some things had already not gone as planned and I was worried that my very specific expectations of how it would all turn out were in jeopardy. Brian quietly listened to me talk for a few minutes and then said, "It's okay to have expectations. Most important, though, is to be expectant. Be expectant that God will work." I remember a combination of relief and conviction rushing through me after he had shared that simple, yet profound truth. I was relieved from the burden of my own expectations of how it would all turn out. It was the pressure of being unwittingly locked in, bogged down, and set up by my own expectations that had slowly been crushing me. The feelings of conviction shed light on the fact that my expectations had never really been submitted to the Lord. I had chosen to bear the burden alone, asking God merely to "make it so" and bless my event.

It is a sad truth that our own expectations, even in ministry and higher education, can be the things that hinder us and, quite possibly, even lead us into the sin that "so easily entangles." The story of Jonah drives this point home. When God shows compassion and mercy to the Ninevites, Jonah's expectations of death and destruction to his enemies are dashed. In fact, Jonah even admits that in the back of his mind he was worried that

God would be gracious, revealing that his own expectations were not subservient to God's greater plan. In short, Jonah had expectations, but he was unwilling to submit those to the Lord in favor of being expectant that God would do something greater.

As you read this, it is already October. Another opening weekend is in the bag and parents have retreated from campus. Freshmen are being orientated and student leaders have enjoyed the first fruits of relational ministry. Also, by now, some roommate situations have quickly turned from honeymoon to near-divorce, the counseling center is at full capacity, and students, new and all too familiar, have "tested" both our patience and community standards. And, even though it is just October, our expectations for the year may have already gone awry. Our vision, the way we imagined things happening, may seem quite far from reality. In these moments the temptation can be strong to respond with anger and disillusionment to God's lack of delivery on our list of expectations. Or, we may even be tempted to forget God altogether and be paralyzed by our own perceived inadequacy. If you find yourself in this place, whether now in October or on a cold day in February, just remember Jonah and the wonderful truth that expectations are okay, but to be expectant that God will work is far greater.

Sincerely,

Steve Austin
Editor of *Koinonia*

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review:

Carolyn Kettlewell's *Skin Game*

By Jessie M. Brown

One February day in the seventh grade, I was apprehended in the girls' bathroom at school, trying to cut my arm with my Swiss Army knife. It is always February in the seventh grade, that terrible border year, that dangerous liminal interlude (p. 3).

Transitions are difficult to manage; especially as a young teenager when caste-like systems designate youth as popular or unpopular, when older siblings' legacies make one's adjustment to school smooth or hazardous, and when the most important skill to learn is camouflaging oneself against the backdrop of the latest clothing trends. Transitions can feel like the month of February: dark and chilly weather for days on end with no signs of spring.

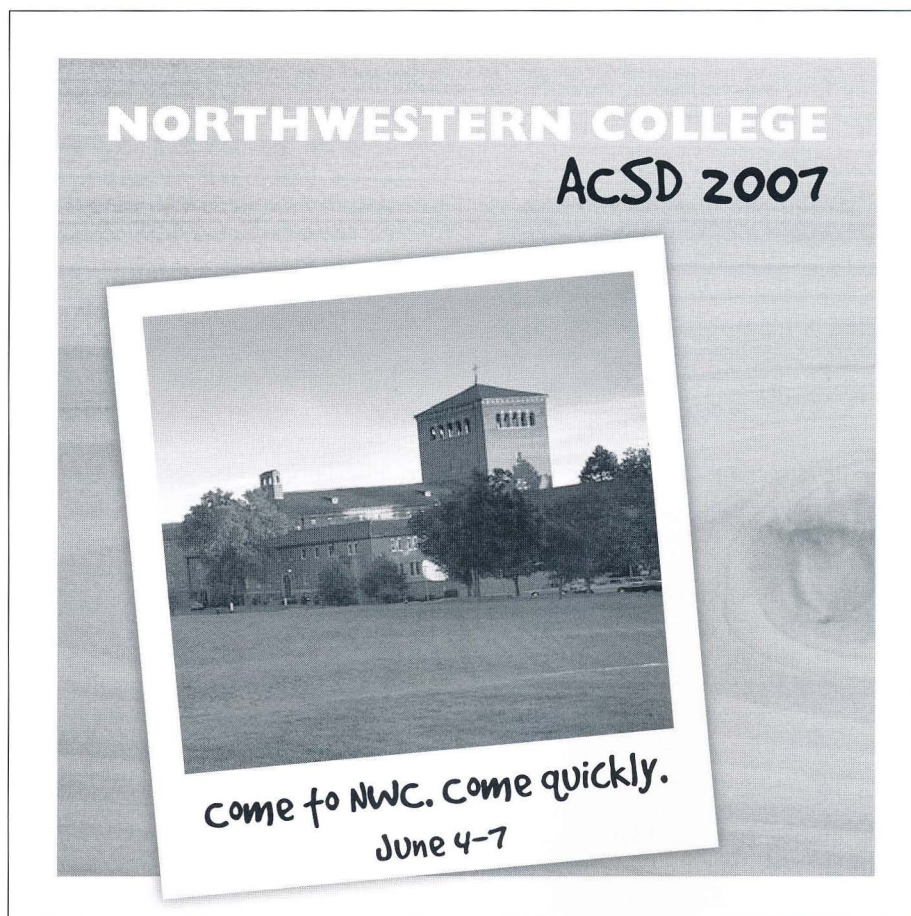
Carolyn Kettlewell's memoir, *Skin Game*, chronicles her struggles with self-harm and anorexia while transitioning from adolescence to adulthood. On the surface, Ms. Kettlewell's teenage issues didn't seem abnormal or sufficient enough to warrant parental concern, yet she struggled intensely with her identity. Ms. Kettlewell portrays this conflict as "neither romantic nor dramatic nor poetic, but rather grinding and unpleasant, like a sore throat" (p. 12). *Skin Game* is written with clarity and depth and avoids being overdramatic. As readers vicariously witness Ms. Kettlewell cutting herself, the descriptions are not intended to make one grow pale. Instead, readers smell the paint and disinfectant in the women's restroom, hear the radiator clank and hiss, and can see Ms. Kettlewell's veins, described as meandering in her arm like "a roadmap underneath her skin" (p. 5). Ms. Kettlewell even adds a touch of humor that takes you by surprise given the gravity of the topic.

You don't read a book like *Skin Game* to witness the shedding of blood just as you don't read *Night* by Elie Wiesel for voyeuristic reasons. *Skin Game* is helpful in making a difficult-to-understand behavior more comprehensible and less frightening. It is instrumental in understanding an action that many students use to manage their pain, hurt or stress. While others have dealt with pain in healthier ways (talking to a trusted friend or family member), Ms. Kettlewell thought those alternatives were more frightening. Even though you may have never thought about harming yourself, you may find some of your own thoughts mirroring

Ms. Kettlewell's because *Skin Game* is more than an insider's view of self-injury. It is a coming-of-age story about the tenuous struggles through which people transition while trying to understand who they are and find their place in this world.

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

Skin Game by Carolyn Kettlewell.
New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. 178 pages. \$11.95.



NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

ACSD 2007 | June 4-7 | nwc.edu/acsd



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.

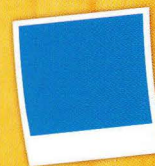
Dr. Darcia Narvaez - University of Notre Dame. She studies and teaches moral development. She wrote the book *Moral Development, Self and Identity*.

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.

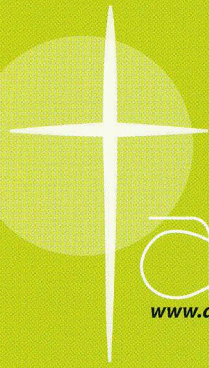
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