

commonPLACE?

easter 2005





From the Editor



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Welcome/ Bienvenue/ Akam*,
Happy Easter to you all!
(independent of place of
origin). Today is a day of celebration - a
time to (re)consider salvation, new life,
and the pros and cons of getting up for
the sunrise service.

It has been a wild start to 2005 for
Lambrick. Personally I was privileged
to be part of the Hearts and Hands
Vision Trip to Ethiopia. This was an
incredible time to learn, observe the
projects, meet the workers, leaders
and villagers (and a multitude of kids),
and get a grasp of the theology of
compassion used by Canadian Food for
the Hungry (CFHI) and their Ethiopian
equivalent (FHI/E). Over the next few
weeks this cross-congregational group
will present in service, run a slideshow
café night and the next issue of cP?
will have a full report. I believe that
this trip has as much to say about our
continuing church transformation as it
does for our partnership in sustainable
development... As an appetizer, this
issue contains a few stories and pictures
from the trip.

On the wider scale, Lambrick
congregations have recently affirmed
the staff (including Don Crawford as
executive pastor), the teaching team
approach and James Prette's leadership
of this team. These decisions have been
made with the benefit of seeing these
things in action over the last year, as the

church strives to become healthier.

More Place highlights since
Christmas have included: the eclectic
and sold out Place EP (300+ copies); the
birth of more kids into our community
(thus creating both the potential and
need for more volunteers); another
great season of Smorgasbord which,
among other beautiful things, has
seen the emergence of the Hein
'preaching' indoctrination school, the
ongoing Prette sex education, and the
forthcoming Fitterer 'prosperity' gospel;
we have welcomed a handful of bands,
of which the last was indeed first in our
reckoning. Laurell played to a packed
audience last week in the Café and we
loved her!

Lastly, I dedicate the picture below to
Lindsay Gaunt who has helped me edit
and put together this issue (and to our
Wed night crowd, and the recent Spring
Break soccer camp). Also a big 'thank
you' to all you contributors (including
Kristy who sent in the cover photo
that I mucked around with) - you rose
to the challenge of writing 'anything'
about Lonewolf (inspired by James K's
sweater) and social justice, and creating
Place-related brektime fun.

God bless,

*Simon
admin@theplace*

*'hello' in Oromo - an Ethiopian
language



Randy's Easter Reflection:



13 Books that Shook my World

...APART FROM THE BIBLE



“A real book,” observed W.H. Auden, “is not one that we read, but one that reads us.”

I would have to agree with the dead poet. There are all kinds of books: books that entertain us, move us, affirm and encourage us. Then there is the other kind: those books that shape us. These books do not confirm what we already know. In fact, we don't always like them when we are reading them. They strike out at us and break us open. But as a result, we change.

As it is Holy Week – our time of breaking (crucifixion) and new orientation (resurrection) – I have decided to share books that have been a part of my spiritual formation. They hit me when I needed my thoughts, my prayers and my life reshaped.

Now, before I continue with my list, a few disclaimers...

First, this list is personal and certainly not authoritative. These authors (some long dead) are my literary friends, mentors and sparring partners. They may never shape your world. But perhaps as a result of reflecting, you will develop and share a list of books that have changed you (in fact, I would love to see your list ... e-mail it to me at randy@lambrick.com).

Second, these are not the best-written books that have ever been written. Some of them are populist, sloppy and would never be considered for the Pulitzer Prize. In short, eloquence was not a criterion for making the list.

Lastly, I decided to remove several academic texts that – while personally transforming – are probably not accessible to the general reader (if you are interested in this list, talk to me).

Here they are in the order that they popped out of my head... (actually, the list moves from fiction to non-fiction, but that's slightly coincidental).

Fyodor Dostoyevsky – The Brothers Karamazov

If I was stuck on a desert island and could have only one book (next to the Bible, of course) I would choose this one. That being said, also understand something.... it's a crazy book: the story line digresses and rambles. Dostoyevsky introduces way too many characters and does so all at once. It requires patience. But reading the novel is something of a spiritual experience.

I began reading The Brothers Karamazov at a time when I was going through a personal 'furnace of doubt' and by the time I finished I was literally crying, "hallelujah". Through the character of Ivan Karamazov, Dostoyevsky provided atheists with one of the best arguments against the existence of God ever articulated. In turn, the full narrative with its conclusion provides his response that Christ is alive and reigning. To date, it's the best novel I've ever read (sorry, Clive Staples...).

Frederick Buechner – Godric

Through this medieval Saint, Buechner has offered up a vision of sainthood that looks less like a life of rigorous moral bean

counting and something more like turning cartwheels in the Spirit. A word of caution: Buechner is a truth teller. His books are provoking, unpredictable and earthy. Not for the faint of heart.

Douglas Coupland – Generation X / Life After God

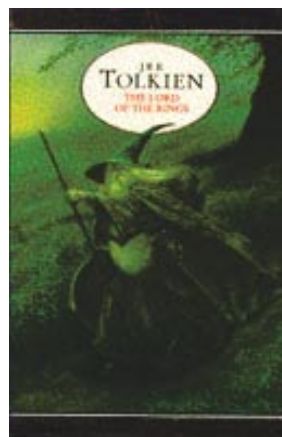
To my mind, no one has captured the disconnect between the gospel and postmodern culture quite like Coupland. He is the consummate Westcoast quester in search of spiritual deliverance, with salvation nowhere to be found. Coupland is on a Pilgrimage without a Canterbury, an Exodus without a Promised Land. He's also the boy next door.

Thus his spiritual strivings are often reduced to gentle irony and playful cynicism. But he has a keen gift in observing and articulating how 'the normal' is frequently ridiculous. But that's not the end. Despite his dismissive attitude, it is obvious that he is still haunted by notions of redemption. It's like he's given up ... but he hasn't.

J.R.R. Tolkien – The Lord of the Rings

Yeah, I know. Since Jackson's epic flicks, these books are 'all the fad' once again. That being said, Tolkien's Middle Earth offers insight into the hidden fundamental truths about **our** universe.

Examples? More often than not, good is small and evil is big. It is easy to give up hope in the face of overwhelming adversity. Power corrupts. Our gospel is, in fact, a "fool's hope". Virtues like loyalty, friendship, courage and perseverance can and – in fact – do change the world. A message for the church?



Brian McLaren – A New Kind of Christian

Of the whack of popular Christian books written about the cultural shift from modern to postmodern, this one is probably my favorite. Written as a conversational story between two friends, McLaren addresses some of the bigger questions facing faith and life (note I wrote “addresses” and not “answers”). At times, his characters speak more like caricatures, but McLaren has employed an excellent genre for exploring some very difficult but exciting issues facing the church today.

Brennan Manning – The Ragamuffin Gospel

How easily we forget the gospel of grace. Its simplicity overwhelms us. We read about grace, sing about it – as pastors we preach on it – but do we ever let ourselves experience and rest in it? This book came to me at a time when, due to exhaustion (I was a youth pastor), I had felt like giving up on just about everything. Manning’s pastoral heart yet prophetic stand cut then cured my soul.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer – Cost of Discipleship / Letter and Papers from Prison / Life Together

“When Christ calls a man,” wrote Bonhoeffer, “he bids him come and die.” This was a personal prophecy. Towards the end of the Second World War, Bonhoeffer was martyred in a Nazi prison camp. His life struck me before his writing ever did.

Prior to his arrest, Bonhoeffer had gathered together a small theological community where he attempted a total integration of prayer, study, theology and spirituality. He taught that the church must be wary of ‘cheap grace’ and embrace a ‘religiousless Christianity’ that comes to terms with



a suffering Messiah as her center and focal point. Above all, Bonhoeffer taught me that spiritual formation can’t be carried off on our own terms. At heart, Bonhoeffer was a pastoral theologian.

Dave Tomlinson – The Post-Evangelical

Do you believe in the Bible, but cringe when church leaders (like myself) oversimplify and trivialize faith? Do you love Jesus, but feel driven to the margins of church subculture? Tomlinson has words of encouraging for you.

Tomlinson woke me from my dogmatic slumber. The whole time I was reading this book I was thinking, “If he is only half-right, I’m in trouble”. That was over 10 years ago. He was more than half right. I’ve been in trouble ever since.

For those who are a little concerned with the title, allow me to say that what Tomlinson calls post-evangelicalism is by no means ex-evangelicalism. In fact, one could argue that post-evangelicals are hyper-evangelicals who are deeply concerned about redemption, the world, the gospel and culture. You don’t have to agree with everything he writes (I don’t), but the book will certainly force you to ask the right questions.

Henri Nouwen – In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership

At a time when every other pastor in America was sounding like the C.E.O. of SHELL Oil and writing books about

being successful, prominent and influential, Nouwen wrote this little book about confession, contemplation and downward mobility.

After twenty years as a professor at Notre Dame, Yale and Harvard, Nouwen left academia to serve as a resident priest at a home for the mentally disabled called L’Arche. He wrote this tiny book during that transition and explores the lessons he felt God was teaching him at that time. The book centers on the three temptations of Jesus, which Nouwen construes as the temptations to be relevant, to be spectacular, and to be powerful. He then responds to each temptation with a spiritual discipline: contemplative prayer, confession and forgiveness, and then theological reflection.

Easily read in one sitting, this book would later become my manifesto for ministry.

Walter Brueggemann – The Prophetic Imagination

Prophetic literature is perhaps the most difficult genre in the Bible to understand.

For this reason, many sincere Christians have shied away from these powerful and altogether necessary books (myself included). Brueggemann gave me a biblical framework for which I could approach the prophets. As I mentioned to a friend a few weeks back, the book has arms and legs and will crawl all over you if you let it. My life has never been the same.

Franky Schaeffer – Addicted to Mediocrity

Although not an artist myself, this short and punchy book on Christianity and the Arts demonstrated how much we evangelicals have missed the boat. Art can be an expression of prayer and devotion, but only if we don't constrain and reduced it to shallow slogans and trite clichés. Artists can bring us theology through the arts, but only when we embrace them into community and listen to them (as opposed to using them for what they can do for us).

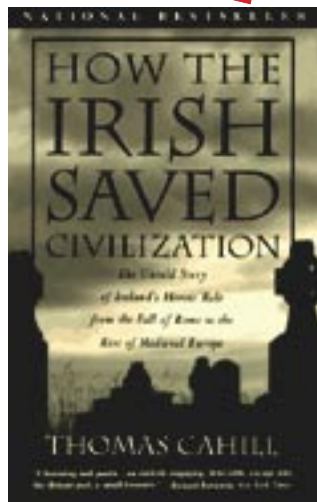
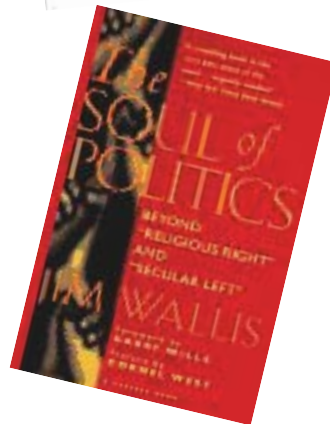
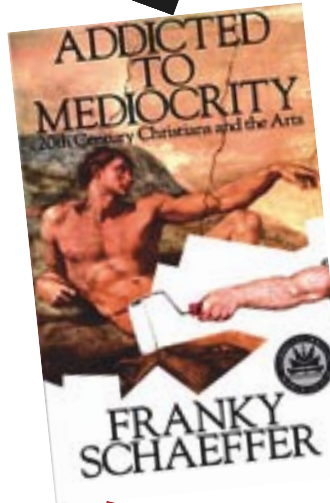
Jim Wallis – The Soul of Politics

How does the church remain engaged in our world, bringing hope, mercy and justice, without being reduced to political pawns wedged between The Religious Right and The Secular Left? In this book Wallis, Pastor and chief editor of Sojourners Magazine, seeks to answer this difficult question. Although this book is several years old and is written from an American perspective, it offers insights and examples that are universal and will bring tears to your eyes.

Thomas Cahill – How the Irish Saved Civilization

This history of the emergence of Christian Ireland is so literate and enjoyable that I almost missed the point. Cahill explores the upheaval and disorientation that followed the Fall of Rome into the Dark Ages and finally through to the surfacing of the Medieval Irish Missionary Movement.

Ultimately, this as a book about leadership. It is full of character studies. Cahill compares the personality and style of St. Augustine (the prominent Christian thinker and leader when the Roman Empire fell) to St. Patrick (who, with devotion, courage and intelligence led Ireland from a brutal paganism to a redemptive Christianity). The book is a calling the church to take stock, courage and to 'grow' visionary eyes that see gospel potential during our time of transition.



AND YET HAVE BELIEVED...

(inspired by John 20:24-29)

The darkness of early dawn
surrounds me.
I don't see.
There's nothing I can touch.
I can't put my fingers in those nail
wounds.
I can't reach through one of Jesus'
hands to come out on the other
side.
I wonder: would the path of the
nails be bloody and caked with
dirt,
Or would the skin have grown
in around the holes, soft and
delicate as a newborn?
I can't reach out my hand and
plunge it deep into his side,
Touching his ribs, reaching up to
the chamber of his heart.
I wonder: would the path of the
spear be bloody and wet with
burst water,
Or would the skin have grown in
around that deep hole, soft and
delicate as a newborn?

I don't know what to do with these
hands.
These hands that have never been
pierced with nails,
These hands that touch the
dishwater, and the dirt, and a
child's hair to make a ponytail.
These hands can't touch God.
They reach: higher, higher;
But only the wind touches them,
Only the wind coils through my
fingers.
I shiver,
The hands tremble.
But just as they're falling through
darkness,
They stop.
The first light of dawn is spreading.
It touches them,
And it is soft and delicate
And warm.

Stephanie M



EASTER REFLECTION

Four years ago my perspective on Easter changed.

I was at a Christian athletic camp and at the end of the camp there was a 24-hour multi-sport marathon (the SPECIAL: Spiritual Principles, Endurance, Confidence In the Almighty Lord) designed to help us learn to glorify God in and through our sports. Throughout the SPECIAL we read portions of Jesus' last 24 hours before crucifixion. We reflected on what it meant to glorify God with our bodies and with our lives and then attempted to put it into action.

It wasn't until Easter rolled around almost nine or ten months later that the experience of the SPECIAL really changed the way I thought of the cross. In the weeks leading up to Easter, as I reflected on the death of Jesus, I kept getting emotional about his sacrifice. What was different for me this time? I thought about my own physical exertion and how exhausted I had been; physically, emotionally and spiritually. But my experience was never meant to "give a taste" of what Christ went through – that is presumptuous and, moreover, impossible. But it forced me to think and reflect. And I reflected that I was able to get through the SPECIAL for a number of reasons. I had a body that was physically capable, I had people encouraging me, and when I was frustrated with people, with circumstances and with myself, I could pray about it and give it to God and trust that he was walking with me each step of the way. Then I thought about Jesus and what his last 24 hours looked like.

His best friends took off on him.
He was whipped and beaten.

He was mocked and scorned.
He was separated from God.

Where was his cheering squad? Who encouraged him? "C'mon Jesus. Keep going! Press on..." I don't understand how it was physically possible to last as long as he did. What gets me is that while it might be possible for someone to go through these tortures for the love of someone else, and in the hope that the sacrifice was being recognized and mourned even as it occurred, Jesus chose the sacrifice knowing that it would be rejected again and again and again.

WHY??

My perspective on the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus changed because I knew I would never be capable of such love. Because Jesus knew I would reject him, yet he still loved me and died for me. Because "while I was still a sinner, Christ died for me." And because I had a tangible and very personal context in which to try and wrap my mind around what He did for me. I recognize my need for him even more.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Hebrews 12: 1-3 (NIV)

Lindsay G



SOD HUT STORY

Close to the end of our first day in the Ethiopian bush we came to a small village of re-settlers who were planning to build a school. They had only been at this place for a year or so and the only building there, besides their grass huts, was an abandoned metal warehouse leftover from the state farm days of 30 years ago. As with the other villages we had visited that day, crowds of children flocked around us. The adults, filled with curiosity, followed closely behind in order to meet us.

David Collins and I walked over to where the men had gathered a large amount of stones to start building the foundation for a school and it was obvious that nothing had been done for quite some time, as grass and other vegetation had grown up around the rocks and boulders. Through Fekadu, our interpreter, they told us that the government had not followed through with supplying them with cement to build the school.

The main spokesman was a man named Kumsa and he told us that they were a very poor village and that they needed the government to come and help them.

David said, "Who told you were poor? You are not poor, you have a rich land and you have everything here that you need!"





It was the end of the day and I was tired, hot, and a little hungry and I was only listening to this conversation halfheartedly. "You're not poor" jolted me right back into the middle of it. How could David tell Kumsa and his fellow villagers that?

David said, "My grandfather lived in a sod shack in southern Alberta 75 years ago, but he wasn't content to stay there, and in time his family ended up in better housing."

I thought of pictures that I had seen in my family's photo album of my Dad's uncles standing beside their new sod roofed shack that they had built in eastern Alberta. They had just left England for better opportunities in Canada and the government had plunked them down in the middle of an uninhabited area 30 miles south of Lloydminster on the Alberta/Saskatchewan border. That was about 100 years ago.

David continued, "My grandfather worked hard and soon there was a school and things just started to get better with all their hard work." He then said, "You men know how to work hard, look at the start you have made on this new school. You work hard to feed your families. You just need to be told that you are not poor and that if you keep working hard that things will improve."

Then he changed tack and asked, "Who is the best teacher in your village?" The men started to converse back and forth with each other with hand gestures and chin pointing and



after a minute or so they indicated a young man probably in his late twenties and said, "Roba... here...he is the smartest man here and he is a very good teacher."

David said, "Then make Roba your village teacher and get him started tomorrow teaching the children and young people everything he knows. Don't wait for the school to be built, start immediately."

Did any of this conversation make any difference to them? Hopefully it will, especially as the Ethiopian Food for The Hungry staff workers continue to encourage the leaders in this village. The conversation sure made an impression on me and I realized that there is every reason to hope for these people.



Geoff G

FLAT TIRE

Four out of five of us were left standing on the roadside in the middle of nowhere Ethiopia, waving good-bye to our driver Tetsuya Morita who was taking our Toyota Land Cruiser's two flat tires with him. We were left wondering what we were going to do while we waited for his return, and so this is my story...

Two hours went by and no rescue. Many kids and adults stopped by and each of us had a little group around us. We were getting tired but they weren't leaving. I was looking for something new to do. We had already exhausted ourselves with talking, singing, tap dancing (just kidding) and I remembered seeing women that morning on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, bent over carrying large bundles on their backs of dried maize stalks or branches. One girl, a teenager who

was with us when we first got stranded on the roadside, had left and came back with a bundle on her back and she was with a younger girl aged 6 or 7 carrying a smaller bundle. The two stopped and put down their load. I was very curious about how heavy these bundles were, so I quickly asked if I could try carrying the younger girl's bundle. After a few awkward attempts to make myself understood the older girl nodded 'yes' and I picked up her bundle to swing it onto my back but I could hardly lift it off the road never mind swing it myself. I had two boys help me put it onto my back. The bundles were like carrying 6 fold-up sports chairs and wow, was it heavy. I immediately put it down and the kids had a little laugh on my account. The fact that the stocks weighed so much surprised me and I reasoned that they all probably started at a very young age and wondered why only the women folk did this kind of burdensome work while the boys and men walked along carefree. Well, the explanation came after I shared this story with Moira Jones upon my return to Victoria. Moira grew up in South Africa and explained that for ages the men were the hunters and protectors of their families and the women did all the hard and heavy work for their families.

As I observed the poverty of the people we met I noticed that they displayed friendliness, acceptance of others, willingness to learn, happy smiles and beautiful faces. Interestingly enough, many faces I saw resembled people I know from home. That resemblance alone made a connection in my mind that God likes similarities in his people and it comforted me in knowing that we are very much the same in more ways than just face value.

Laura G

SOCCER, THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE



There was a village in the Belo region of Ethiopia where no one spoke any English. In every other group of people we met, inside and outside the villages, people knew a smattering of English. Many people were able to answer the question "What is your name?" with the response "My name is . . ." and there was communication. When you know a person's name, you know a great deal about a person, but in this village there was no English.

Ah, but there was a soccer ball, of sorts. A soccer ball that was covered in red dust, because everything was covered in red dust and was possibly more like a general, all purpose playground ball, but it said 'soccer' to me. The ball was lying quietly on the ground. Gingerly, I kicked it to one of the children, who, of course, kicked it back to me. Soon, we had a threesome kicking the ball to one another. We continued kicking the ball with a variety of children and adults joining the game. Picture it with me. A non-athletic, middle aged female ferengi in pants, in the midst of women, who all wore dresses and carried babies, scores of children and men with ridiculous grins on their faces, likely laughing at me. But at that moment I didn't care. I couldn't speak to the children but I could play a game with them. What else mattered? Those decades of watching my own children play soccer have managed to impart some basic knowledge such as how to pass and kick the ball with the side of my foot. On that day in Ethiopia I was fortunate to have enough knowledge of soccer that when the language barriers could not be broken, I could still join in the lives of these people through the universal language of soccer.

Rosemary C

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I was woken by the *adhan** at a time known only to farmers and paperboys. It seemed to hang in the air like the smog belched out by Addis' too-many-million inhabitants. After a few minutes, it dawned on me that this sound was wholly unlike my normal alarm call of squealing tires from an over-revved low-rider almost navigating the corner outside my Langford condo. Oh yeah, I'm in Africa, was my clever conclusion, using as evidence memories of cramped seating, edited movies and an all-too-recent touchdown.

I forced my eyelids up one notch at a time. Chronic myopia saved me from the shock of my leopard-skin bed cover, provided, I hoped, by the hotel's sense of humour. Instead I gazed blurrily at the ceiling, and let the foreign chanting wash over me. Truly a stranger in a strange land, I remembered, paying dues to my rich sci-fi, bookish adolescence and an equally dubious foray into Iron Maiden. Putting these memories firmly but gently aside, I was ready for the day - the sights and sounds, the familiar and the peculiar. So, leaping to my feet with uncharacteristic morning enthusiasm, and donning my eyeglasses, I flung open my curtains to feast my eyes on the wonders of this continent, and to judge my chances of taking out the nearest rooftop speaker with a well-aimed projectile.

The vista I was expecting this was not - instead I looked directly into a storage area, populated by old gym equipment and the remnants of a disco built for 80's-style wedding receptions. Undaunted, I threw on just enough clothes to allow for a wicked sunburn later that day, and headed to the stairs at pace. As I reached floor 6 (of 11), a tightness in my chest caught my attention. A little embarrassed, I hurriedly blamed sleep deprivation and



Air Canada for my lack of fitness. As I crawled slowly up the final few stairs, I had added fast food, work deadlines and a nagging ankle injury to the list.

The view was however was amazing, challenging, breathtaking and strange. As my lungs finally adapted to working at this altitude (7500ft), I wandered like a child from window to window, gazing at the outskirts of the city beneath me, with its corrugated tin roofs, sporadic goats and blue taxis. By now, the sun was beginning to make headway in its battle with the smog, and the city was coming alive in a country in which I would fall in love.

Simon G

*the Islamic call to prayer



WHO'S TEACHING WHO?

God used Ethiopia to speak to me about the purpose of prayer and worship. Amidst all of the poverty and harsh circumstances, wherever the body of Christ was gathered, I heard songs that were sung from grateful hearts, thanking God for His many blessings and His perfect will. Their hearts were clearly visible as I witnessed their physical expressions of praise. There were no rigid, restrained individuals fearing judgment or feeling awkward. Everyone worshipped with unbridled movement. In this area of the world they seemed to think that we exist as a body of believers to glorify God and enjoy fellowship with Him. What a concept! Repeatedly I saw prayer used as a means to thank God for His provision and to ask that His will be revealed. How humbling to compare their prayers to mine...

Amy K

"A STOP DOING LIST"

I think I'm in a post-Christmas slump. Either that or the arrival of spring has caused me to wander into the desert of self-reflection. It's odd. On the one hand, new life is sprouting up all around me with bright greens, yellows, and whites. And while I celebrate the advent of Spring, it is somewhat bittersweet as the freshness of Spring reminds me of those parts of my soul that have been dormant for months, or perhaps that have grown stale from inactivity. Just as going to a funeral often propels people into a new awareness of life, the reverse also happens: new life reminds me of what is old, dying, or dead. And this makes Spring one of the hardest times for me as I grow increasingly restless; caught between a hope in the things of tomorrow and the reality of today.

I made the 'mistake' of reading an article written in December 2003 by Jim Collins. The article is titled "Best New Year's Resolution? A Stop Doing List." The point Collins makes is essentially this: stop doing those things that are not you. Or, in reverse, live with intentionality and integrity. Not just the integrity that comes from a life above reproach, but the integrity that comes from doing what you are on the inside rather than trying to force the inside to conform to external pressures. I suppose if I spoke fluent consultant-ese, I might use the word 'alignment'. Be who you are and let that shape what you do. To drive his point home, Collins poses two questions to his readers:

"Suppose you wake up tomorrow and received two telephone calls. The first phone call tells you that you have inherited \$20 million, no strings attached. The second tells you that you have an incurable and terminal disease, and you have no more than 10 years to live. What would you do differently, and particular, what would you stop doing?"

Heaven forbid that this actually

happen to anyone, but in a way it has. It has happened to me. Although I didn't inherit \$20 million, I have been given everything I need for a life of abundance. My health is good. I know that I am loved and accepted by people who matter to me. My faith gives my life a context to learn and grow. I have clothes, I have access to health care, and I have food in my fridge and gas in my car. In a global sense there is nothing I lack. In comparison to the majority of the world's population, I did inherit \$20 million by virtue of my birthplace, my education, and the opportunities afforded me by a free market economy.

The second phone call was painfully less abstract. The call came to me at work one Tuesday morning in January three years ago. My dad had just been diagnosed with terminal liver cancer at the age of 58. Within a year, the cancer won and my dad passed at 9:00am on Easter Sunday morning of 2002. Although it wasn't my life that was cut short, the process of walking through the death of a much loved parent raised the questions of life's meaning and how to make time count. The same questions that Collins raises.

I am aware that part of my self-reflectiveness comes from my past experiences, but I think the questions are still worth asking. Am I living in alignment? Am I stewarding my \$20 million birthright in a way that connects what I have been given with the most important things in life? Is life about hanging on through the change of seasons: unthinkingly putting away Christmas decorations only to put Valentine candies in their place? Or is there a deeper place of integrity? A place where service, humility, sacrifice, and devotion all intersect in a life of blissful self-sacrifice? Idealistic? Perhaps.

But when the phone call comes for me, I would like to know that I have been faithful to my calling and that I have lived my life for things that matter.

Daryl T

TURNING THE TABLES ON THE WORLD AS A MARKETPLACE

At the wedding feast at Cana, the disciples unknowingly have a glimpse and revelation of what the lies at the end of the journey. That is, the wedding feast of the lamb where the longing and waiting Jesus receives his bride. But at the same time these followers are given an earthly reality. An earthly reality that God, the creator and sustainer of life, loves, desires and blesses authentic community. When He is made the center of community, He pours his Life into community like the miracle of water into abundant, extravagant wine. The disciples discover Jesus not only is the life of the party, but that He is Life. So from this scene of abundant life, Jesus and his new friends journey towards the holy city of Jerusalem.

The first place Jesus visits is the Temple, the "House of his Father." For the Jewish people, the Temple is the sign of the presence of God: God's dwelling place among them. But what does Jesus find in the Temple?

People selling cattle, sheep, doves and moneychangers sitting at their tables.

People had turned his Father's house into a shopping mall, into a place of commerce! Jesus was enraged. Making a whip out of cords, he drove them out of the Temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and threw out the coins. But

we leaf back through the pages of time, the prophet Malachi actually had a glimpse of this scene and foretold it. (Malachi 3:1-3)



Instead of worshipping God, people were making an idol out of money, commerce and stock. The moneychangers were impoverishing those who were already extremely poor because of the temple tax they had to pay with temple money, not Roman money.

Isn't this thirst for money at the heart of so many injustices in our world? Money brings power and power brings money.

Today we are surrounded by a particular culture of money, but I'll even go further and voice Brian Walsh's sentiment from *Colossians Remixed*:

"Globalization isn't just an aggressive stage in the history of capitalism. It is a "Religious" movement of previously unheard-of proportions. Progress is its underlying myth, unlimited economic growth its foundational faith, the shopping mall (physical or online) its place of worship, consumerism its overriding image, "I'll have a Big Mac and fries, super size it", its ritual of initiation, and global domination its ultimate goal."

So right now, we need to wake up to the reality that Jesus is using the whip of cords to drive us from the fact that we have fallen in love with the other and are devoted to it. We have created a global religion, in which the god of worship is money, and our sacrifice is our children and our environment. Instead of using money as a means to help people grow and have access to essential cultural goods, money has become an end in itself. People speak about ethical trading and the "just" and "fair" price of goods. Now the price of goods is whatever sells, and if the profits are greater, then so much the better.

If money was better distributed, if we sought to use it for greater justice and peace to other people, the world could become a better place. Misdirected and misspent, it fuels greater injustices, conflicts and destructiveness. In Cana, Jesus was celebrating the reality of community: a wedding feast, a celebration of love and life. Now He reminds us the real danger of worshipping money and the new global religion it has created.

Jesus was hurt and angered by the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem, "his Father's house." This pain and grief is the heart of Jesus, as he saw the temple of Jerusalem turned into a shopping mall, and today, seeing Globalization the religion of consumerism and the worship of the god of almighty dollar. He sees hearts and bodies that have become like a marketplace, that are no longer a source of life and love for others.

We need to hear afresh, with piercing clarity the words of the prophet Jeremiah.

Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord.' For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, the widow or shed innocent blood, then I will dwell with you in this place. Jeremiah 7:4-7

Ron C

www.thewearypilgrim.typepad.com



"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

Winston Churchill (submitted by Margot S)

The she-wolf called into the stillness of the night. Gray and silver with age and battles long since fought, she paced the crest of the hill with fatigue, having come a long ways. She strained to see beyond the foggy valley and sure enough there they were: white snow capped mountains reflecting the furrowed face of the moon.



She wasn't far; the reality of those slopes was as tangible as the chinook that wafted over them, across the valley and towards the place where she stood. Ice and fire dwelt together on those peaks, warming and chilling the valleys beneath them. She was close, so very near.

The she-wolf howled again, her limbs quivering with the force of her cry. Her wail ended with the soft crash of her knees falling into the moss-covered earth. She felt herself lower and soar simultaneously as her spirit disengaged from her fallen form, rising into the star speckled canopy overhead. The mountains drew her and soon revealed themselves to be more beautiful than the feverish fantasies that had pulled her towards them on her journey.

It always ended the same for the wolves. Their still forms would be found lying on the forest floor. It would be said of them that they had died alone, but that is wrong. It can never be said of them that pass on with the mountains before their eyes that they died a lone wolf. For did not the Mountain Maker declare, "Surely I am with you always, even unto the very end of the age", and did not the wolf Paul say, "I am convinced that neither death nor life... can separate us from the love of God"? If this is true, then the Mountain Maker was with the she wolf when she passed over the valley, proving that she was never a lone wolf.

Sabina B

There was a time, several years ago, when I engaged in Christian service on my own. Harboring an extreme lack of self-worth and very much introverted, my ministry was one-on-one. I did not involve any of the other believers who wanted to accompany me. Looking back, I see how it would have been beneficial to be accountable to others and how mentoring other young believers by example would have been just as worthwhile as trying to reach others for Christ. That is why I was given the moniker: "Lone Wolf."

Narrowgate

// "Good thing they didn't have the pill and abortion wasn't as common when I had you." Mom was a nurse, so her statement of medical facts was understood even at age 5. (Translation: "I guess Mom wishes I didn't exist.")

This was reinforced by the fact she didn't talk or acknowledge my existence except in these short, back-handed comments: "You're lucky we don't spank you because of that Dr. Spock book." (Translation: "Be thankful that you don't exist.")

"You were 10 pounds five ounces. It was a terrible labour. For all that you were fat and ugly and I wanted to leave you at the hospital, but you turned out lovely in the end." (The "lovely in the end" part was translated as "you were ugly and I didn't want you.")

My two older brothers and two older sisters were all spaced 2 years apart and the next to me was 7 years older. The family said I was just oversensitive.

"Mom, how many children did you want to have?" I asked at age 9. Pregnant pause... "Four."

Well, my Mom was rather insensitive, but she turned out lovely in the end. When she was dying we made

our peace. I was asking her a leading question: "Mom, you know what I'm good at?"

"You're good at lots of things." GASP!?! I finally had a single sentence of affirmation to cherish from our 35 years together (36 if you include her hostile womb).

Every lone wolf is alone for a reason. We all crave love and community. I learned early that the family was the other four. They were a community, not me. At school there were a bunch of funny and talented boys. Having no female role model or identification with my mom, I wanted to be a boy. Boys did fun things and were tough. I hid the soft, sensitive, feminine me because I didn't want to be stomped on like the petals of a delicate flower. So I grew up as a "tom-boy." (Translation: less of a girl but not one of the boys either.)

Lone wolf. Is this a pity party? I guess so. Enter the violins. Send in the clowns. Make the point quickly; you are a lone wolf when you grow up believing that you don't exist, you aren't as much a girl as others, and aren't a part of the pack.

I became a Christian because Jesus acknowledges the existence of a lone wolf women like Lazarus' sister. Jesus cared for Mary even though Judas despised her and said she was wasting money. So I was a woman then; because I was soft on the inside and Jesus valued that.

Then came Fundy church: "You can't play hockey or drums because it's too butch," they said. "Change your hair and your clothes and keep house and smile . . ." I tried. A lone wolf tries to fit in but they believe they don't belong. The more they hem themselves in, the more they long to run wild into the mountains and howl at the moon. The lone wolf runs in virgin snow and covers more ground among the tress than the best snowmobile rider or snowboarder on one of those extreme outdoors videos.

I'm making peace about my mother



by finally realizing that even though we had all our material needs and that my parents were married and we lived in a nice neighbourhood, my home was as dysfunctional and abusive as other homes. So it isn't that there is just something wrong with me because I'm me. I don't resent my mother at all; I didn't have enough connection to resent. I will mourn for her soon.

I'm making peace with my femininity by realizing that I was born with gifts in the arts, a sensitive nature, and a thirst for God and for Truth. Sensitivity is not a weakness, it's a gift. You give out of the real you and yes, you suffer, but love really does win out. It's difficult, even painful, to feel beautiful and feminine and know all the while you could be destroyed living that way. I have an excellent therapist and we work on self-esteem issues. But it is Jesus who still shows me what my gifts mean to him and comforts me with His words and presence.

I'm making peace with God about Fundy church. Finally I see Him as the Person Who will make it all okay. The dogma, the goofy lingo, the power abuse, and the criteria for what makes a woman or a Christian, or a church leader is not even relevant. Mary broke the alabaster jar and anointed Jesus with what was on the inside. Tomorrow I pray and seek that I will be made whole. But if I'm broken today, let what is on the inside spill out.

My mother or the kids in school or the Fundy Church or Judas can all hit with nasty words and send me off to the woods by myself, but I keep coming back out to try again. Will I keep craving community and connection? I believe that human beings will draw me out and take off my coyote pelt and help me experience love. At the next Stick Man art show I hope to contribute something besides a frumpy social worker.

Sherry O

AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN FIVE CHAPTERS

- 1) I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost...I am hopeless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.
- 2) I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I'm in the same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.
- 3) I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in...it's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.
- 4) I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.
- 5) I walk down another street.

sent in by Emily T (From: The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying)

BEAUTY

I lit a candle with dinner last night. I ate alone.

My place is not the most attractively colored environment imaginable; the carpet is brown,

People's Place

the lighting is incandescent, ceiling mounted, i.e. as brightly dull as dull. But on this night, for some reason, the entire space changed before me. I experienced the room totally differently than before. It was beautiful. And I realized something; it is not so much the space that matters, but how you dwell in it.

I put music on and did my dishes. I wrote for a little while. I did everything slowly, at my leisure. I prayed while doing it. I made my actions prayers.

And it made me realize that beauty is not what you see; it is how you live amidst what you see; it is how you decide to see it. It is what made the poor of Calcutta beautiful to Mother Teresa; it is what made her beautiful to the rest of the world. And it is what makes me pray that my life, too, may be "something beautiful for God," as Malcolm Muggeridge described her.

This isn't as simple as lighting a candle in a drab room, although that is a telling model of what redemption looks like. Redemption, like beauty, takes common objects and fashions them for glory. And that is why I believe beauty shows us what redemption looks like. It looks like Michelangelo beating a piece of rock into the form of David; Roman soldiers pounding nails into the hands of Christ. Something as common as wood, as elemental as metal, becomes a tool in a process that reeks of violence, but all the while is aimed at producing something of such beauty and depth that it stuns the world.

Beauty begins with the Paschal realization that this night is different from all other nights, precisely because it is this night and not another, precisely because it is a new night, precisely because the Last Man has made all things new.

Matthew D



HUMMINGBIRD LOVE

My cat died last week. He was twenty years old and had grown into a plush companion. Years of squeezing and patting, of whispering sweet nothings in his ears had created a companion who never strayed. I am not a sentimental person, at least not in the conventional sense. If my goldfish had died it would have been a simple flush. There would be no memorial, no funeral. I would not be lamenting that his tiny fins couldn't swim in the turbulent waters as he circled the bowl. Blackie, on the other hand, was faithful and long-suffering and moved with me more times than I can count. Blackie's affection and devotion never waned. He was faithful. This was true love. It is true that I imbued Blackie with human traits. For the most part Blackie was just better at returning love than the people in my life have been. It seems to me experiences with my own kind were lacking in grace. Within the plethora of possibilities under love's umbrella, whether friendship, familial, or romantic love, the whole subject was punctuated with disappointment. I always felt the need to be admired and to be loved, or at least it seemed that way to me at the time. If I said certain things, or behaved a certain way I could be disenfranchised or let go. The objects and subjects of love in my life were twisted into a tableau of grief and loss. A metronome tick-tocking out the same old song.

The afternoon after his demise, my stepfather and I buried the cat just beyond the tiny knoll in my parents' backyard. In January the ground is damp and cold, and digs up a little too easily. As I stood next to the grave with my old pussycat wrapped in his pink jcpenny sheet, waiting to cover him with soil, I felt a new crack in my heart. There were great clods of black dirt clumping to my feet and I

thought, "This is too cold for Blackie. He's going to be uncomfortable." In his later years he craved the heat and at that moment I thought I should have cremated him. The blast of the furnace a more comforting thought somehow as I frantically shoveled that damp soil into the grave.

I attend two churches. I come to Lambrick Park at night and belong to a charismatic church in the morning. I was raised in the Holiness tradition, Free Methodist to be exact. It was a tiny church and it comforted me growing up because it pursued biblical principles in



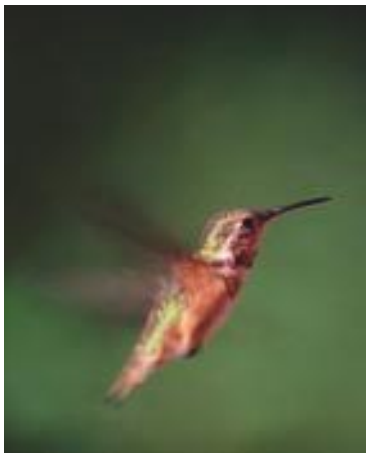
a single-minded way. We were all on the same page. Humility, long-suffering, kindness, gentleness, patience; we all knew what to expect. My experience with the pentecostal church has been unpredictable. Life in the spirit is wild. It was at the Sunday morning meeting an elder took me aside and said, "You want hummingbird love. God's love is different." I imagine I looked puzzled; my feeling of confusion tangible. As I stared blankly at the board member he continued, "Hummingbird love is when you want to suck the sweetness out. God's love is..." To be honest, I kind of went blank and forgot the definition. I couldn't imagine telling a person what kind of love they were capable of. Seems to me it isn't kind. That statement did make me think, "If only I could get past my resentment and disappointment." It was in situations like these when I could go home to my old pussycat and whisper sweet nothings in his ear. My heart always felt pure with my cat - the heart of virtue.

I believe the elder at the church was referring to the deep end of the pool. That end where the disappointment lay inert at the bottom of the pool like a lingcod. It was a very big fish, too big for my little fish tank. It was a story of love betrayed and there was a chorus of boos coming from the shallow end where all the religious men were bouncing in their flotation devices. "It's all your fault Rhonda. You made the deceiver deceive." I'm sure there is a word for women like me down there at the shallow end of the pool, but I don't like flotation devices. And as I stared back, the hummingbird wings beating frantically in my chest, I wanted to tell the old man that I couldn't breathe. Instead I saw shame swimming the breaststroke around the coffee maker. I understood, and not for the first time, that the deep end and the shallow end were not the same in his eye as they were in mine. That big fat fish in the deep end was not even seen by the old sheep. It was my lack of lady-like qualities that he saw, the absence of redeemable sentiment; the happy talk inherent in the respectable church lady, the subjugated, the grateful. If I possessed these qualities I would be worthy of love and respect. My passionate artist's eye could not have been put in that socket by God. No, sin put it there. Is God more heartbroken when we're born or when we die? From my point of view, it's in the living, that's where all the heartbreak happens. And does God really care if we're alive or dead? It's our souls that are immortal, right?

When Blackie died my brother the minister tried to comfort me. He thought I was grieving over missing the comfort of my cat and his solution was to get another cat. I was really grieving over loss; the loss of love in my life to death or failure. It's true that there is no losing God's love. The love that gets lost is the love we bear for each other. I remember praying that God might teach me about love. I have learned since then to keep my prayers simple,

the answers to which I can handle. The cross is my finite mind trying to come to terms with the infinite. And indeed the waters of love are treacherous. More than once I felt like that goldfish with the tiny fins swirling in the turbulent waters of the bowl. At the time of the love prayer I had just wandered in from 20 years in the desert, a self-imposed exile of sorts. It was a humbling experience stumbling around the desert making an ass of myself. I blamed the little church I grew up in, saying that human judgement had fallen and I was at the short end of the stick. The tiny Free Methodist choir belted out "Mercy for me, justice for you." I had offended the religious piety of my fellow believers who then offended me so deeply that in return I took the coward's way out. I was on the horns of a similar dilemma right now, and how would I behave? Blackie, frail old cat that he was, was my comfort. I hadn't thought about my disillusion, disappointment and heartbreak as long as I had that sweet old cat. I believe that with trauma comes the appreciation for the little things and I'd had a wild ride out in the world. The loss of my faculties between sand storms had produced an appreciation for kitty cat love. Blackie and I had unconditional love, a reciprocal acceptance. He never resented me for sobbing in his fur. A hummingbird just can't take that kind of wear and tear.

Rhonda S



EAT MY FLESH AND DRINK MY BLOOD

The Gospel of John chapter 6:52-66 is the account that Jesus gave describing himself as the bread of life. He even said that unless you ate His flesh and drank His blood, you could have no part in Him. There were rumors regarding Jesus; Messiah, Prophet, like the King David of old to drive out the Roman scourge that plagued Israel. Things looked great, until He said, "eat my flesh and drink my blood"! From a Jewish perspective that was an absolutely scandalous thing to say! The Torah (first 5 books of the Bible) strictly forbade the Jews from consuming any kind of blood, let alone human blood. Touching a dead body made you unclean, let alone eating one! "This is a hard saying!" *Many disciples drew back and no longer went about with Him* (verse 66). Honestly, I think that if we were there and heard that for the first time, it might make us somewhat queasy as well. Not so with my ancestors!

I hail from New Zealand and am of Maori decent (who are the aboriginal people of that land: Tangata whenua). We are a warrior culture and in ancient times, now and again, we practiced cannibalism. One of the reasons for this was that if you found yourself in combat with a prominent warrior (who would be heavily chisel tattooed on his face, what we call Ta moko) and killed him, you would cut off his head and put it through a process of preservation. Then you would eat his body. The idea behind this was to make his honor, prestige, courage, skill, strength, goodness, (all summed up in the Maori words Mana, Ihi, Wehi and his Wairua or spirit) your own. You would preserve his head because his moko was not only an artistic expression but actually the warrior's biography: his story carved into his face for all to read. That head



would remind you of his Mana and Wairua that now courses through your being making you more than you were before.

When the missionaries and priests first came to the villages of the Maori, they would sit around the fire and tell the stories of Jesus. I think that this story would make a lot of sense to the Maori. Their eyes would widen and their Moko would come to life in the firelight. They would think, "Jesus, this great chief, who for the love of us, laid down his life in this cosmic, spiritual battle whereby winning our victory! He asks us to eat his flesh and drink his blood to remind us of him." They would understand Jesus invites us to make His Mana our own. Receiving His Wairua into the core of our being making us more, much more than we were before.

As I think about my cultural perspective on this, it gives me some interesting insights into what I'm actually doing at communion time. It also begs some interesting questions: If I eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus, how does that change me? What effect does that have on my thinking, personality, attitudes and values? What effect does that have on my relationships: family, workplace, church, friends, even enemies? Wife, opposite sex and sexuality in general? If I eat His flesh and drink His blood, what effect does that have on the community that I live in? The world I'm a part of? The environment I'm responsible for? All good food for thought, don't you think? And there's probably more that you could think of. So the next time you come to the communion table, eat heartily and drink deeply: like an ancient Maori would.

Paul T

THE SHAPE OF LOVE

It seems to me that the love of God is one of the most controversial topics in the whole of Christian theology. We seem to have a hard time pinning down what the love of God is. We think it means things like 'the desire for all men to be saved' (which is certainly part of what His love entails) and we say things like "I can't believe that a loving God would condemn my kind old grandfather to hell," and we retch at the idea that a loving God would allow (or cause) horrors like the Holocaust or the Gulags or the Khmer Rouge or the bloodbaths of Rwanda.

But the problem is that this sort of conversation begins with assumptions about what love is. The problem then continues by applying these constraints to God, rather than by considering it axiomatic and foundational that God is love and inquiring from that fixed point; i.e. we are to look to the action of God to parabolically describe the action of love.

If we presume that love is primarily the unconditional accommodation of persons and their destructive behaviors, then we must find God unloving since He emphatically does NOT abide the wicked. God is not a doormat.

If we presume that love is primarily the universal provision for our felt needs, then we must certainly once again find God unloving. God will not buy me a Mercedes-Benz. He will not prevent the lazy man from starving.

But when we look to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we find a God who knows men intimately and sees the fullness of their iniquity. We find a God who punishes the sinful man. We find a God who is fair in all His dealings. We find a God who is consistently providing opportunity for restored relationship with Him, a God who makes reasonable demands of us, a God who keeps His covenants. And we find a God who sacrifices His greatest prize; that which is His

very Self, the Son that proceeds from His Being; He becomes the Servant of all men and takes the bullet for all of mankind.

And from this we learn that God is not a passive doormat. No, He is the one who actively lays Himself down. He is the one who causes the boots to fall. As Isaiah writes, "It pleased the Lord to crush Him."

From this, we learn that the shape of love is cruciform. The shape of love is a man whose arms are spread wide in suffering, who in that open-armed suffering is embracing the world.

So it seems to me that when we talk about love, we have to first talk about the God who suffers on behalf of His people. We have to talk about the God who is so pained by the discipline He must, in His loving justice, mete out to a stiff-necked people, that He becomes Israel. He becomes that same stiff-necked people and lays upon Himself that discipline.

And the implications for the Church are extremely disturbing because we find that such a love is demanded of us. We have been baptized into such a love, the love of a man of constant sorrows, a love that raises its wrists to the knife for the life of the world. A love that could motivate such a one as Paul to write "I could wish that I myself were cursed, separated from Christ for the rest of my brethren."

We wince. We would rather stick to platitudes and leave the blood and tears to the Catholics. But then perhaps we have no right to use the word Love; the word does not describe our hearts, nor our vocation as a pious social club. Talk perhaps about biological affinities, selfish panderings, emotional debts and the satisfaction of insecurities; talk about the learned triggers and responses that plague our social politic. But don't talk about love unless you are prepared to talk about the cross; don't claim to have loved until you have been crucified.

Matthew D

SWEAT PANTS, STILETTOS AND WORSHIP

Many of you do not know, although I suspect some of you have noticed, but there is a war brewing here at The Place, and it started some weeks back...

"Cute shoes Launa."

"Thanks Katie. Your black and white polka dot heels inspired me to wear these. I was like, 'If Katie can be smashing then so can I!'"

"Oh really.... You think those are better than mine?"

"AS a matter of fact I think my strappy red sandals kick your black and white polka dot's butt."

"But... is that all you got?"

"Oh no... Katie, you didn't". < two snaps>.

"Oh yes Launa I DID"

"Bring it."

And that was the beginning of a Shoe War. OK, so it wasn't as dramatic as that. It was more like us giggling secretly (I know, hard to imagine Katie and I giggling), and deciding it would be fun to have a continual "shoe-off". But first we had to establish The Rules:

No matter what you are wearing you have to wear some sweet kicks.

Every time we are up for worship, we have to wear a new pair.

We can borrow from friends as long as there is credit given when someone compliments.

Only a select few people can know in the congregation before we reveal it in Commonplace.

We can't tell Randy. ☺

Both of us were curious to see how people would react to this shoe war. Especially what the effects would be. Along the way I have found out some interesting things. BUT mostly we started this because we just thought it would be fun.

For a long time in our church culture, we "dressed" for church. You wore your "Sunday best," and you put on your best outfit and did your hair (or wore your best hat).

Today we have come away from that, in fact here at The Place I find it completely opposite. When someone arrives "done-up", people start judging. Who are they trying to impress? What's the occasion? They're just showing off. They must be single, etc.

One night I had actually had a friend of mine laughingly say, "You don't have to dress up anymore. You're married." That's AWFUL. I don't have to try to look nice anymore because some guy is stuck with me? I think some married women believe that and that's a tragedy. We see them on talk shows all the time.

I've also heard a person say that it's hard for them to come to the Christmas Eve service because it's too distracting for them to see the people doing worship "all dressed up".

True story: I was helping lead worship for the morning service here at LPC and some of the band members were also leading The Place evening service. Some of them had "dressed" for the morning service, and when the 11 am service was over they went home to "dress down" for The Place. When I asked them why, some said they weren't comfortable and wanted to go throw on some jeans. A couple of others said things like, "I don't want people asking me what the occasion is," or "People expect us not to be dressed up," OR (my favorite) "We don't want to send a message that this is the type of church you have to dress up for." Somehow putting your best foot forward is only suitable for job interviews and romantic dinner dates, but doesn't belong in the church any more? Why not?

What I also find interesting is that people demand reasons from others wanting to look nice. Isn't it reason enough that I like taking care of myself? I like putting in the time and effort to

look as good as I can. I also like having the freedom to come before God as I am; when I look and feel like crap or when I look and feel fabulous. Let's be serious, as a society we like things that look nice and we like looking at and having nice things. When you buy a new car or a new motorcycle or a new guitar, do your friends ask you whose attention you're trying to get? Or what's the occasion? Then why, when I wear black stiletto boots, am I showing off?

Katie said the other night that she didn't think she could keep doing the shoe war, that worship is about Jesus, and it shouldn't be about her shoes. I told her she was right, worship IS about Jesus. But the shoes are about Katie and I having some fun. :o) And it is fun. I like dressing up for God. I t h i n k He likes it too.

So, do I have any scripture to back up my shoe war? I could probably find some and manipulate it, but that's wrong. (Bad Launa, bad). I do know, however, that there are over 23 references made to shoes (in some translations "sandals") in the Bible. In the parable of the lost son (Luke 15) the Father blesses his "found" son by dressing him in a fine robe, adorning his hand with rings and jewels, and putting some GOOD shoes on his feet. Nothing says loving like a sweet pair of shoes. Ok, so it doesn't say that, but guys make a note, a 'fine robe', 'rings and jewels', 'good shoes'... us girls, we like that. Either worn or bought for us ;-)

In Song of Songs (7:1) the author notes how beautiful his love's feet are with shoes on. The verse also goes on to say how lovely her thighs are too. And that's where I draw the line. Shoe war I can do, a thigh war? Nooo.

Sometimes I like wearing a hoody and sweat pants, and other times, a good jacket, dress pants and my black 3 inch heels. After starting this I've noticed other girls' shoes. Like my friend Fanny

who was sporting some very stylish black wedged heels, Shannon with hot pink closed toe heels, Rebecca with very cool white high-heeled boots. You see Katie and I didn't start this trend, but maybe, just maybe, we are alleviating some of the judgment these girls were enduring for their good fashion sense.

Ok, maybe I pushed a few buttons wearing bright pink heels, or maybe some girls were coveting Katie's cute vintage inspired t-strap black heels, but I don't think God's upset with either one of us. He loves Kim doing worship with her socks on (she declined the shoe war invitation because she says she is a starving student who doesn't have cool shoes J) He knows that all three of us sing to him with all our hearts. He knows that we are silly girls fooling around. AND He especially knows that

we are having fun, and praising Him. You can do that at the same time you know, even in a funky pair of shoes.

Launa K



Who in their right mind would challenge

someone wearing retro polka dotted, ruffle lined shoes to a shoe war? The one and only Launa Kremler! She's put up a good fight, but we all know that I'm winning. Seriously folks, nothing beats polka dots. When Launa challenged me to a shoe war, I was immediately gung ho about the whole idea. Anyone who knows me well knows that I have a love for funky shoes and am lacking in opportunities to sport them, so I jumped at the chance. Without delay I began running through all of the awesome shoes I could wear and all of the smashing outfits I could wear with them. It was a dream come true... maybe.

After my second Sunday participating in the shoe war, I began to second-guess myself. Are my ridiculously awesome shoes going to distract my brothers and sisters in Christ while they're genuinely

trying to worship our Saviour? It's okay. I know most of you didn't even notice my shoes. There were actually some legitimate questions I had to ask myself though. Are the shoes distracting me from Jesus? Is it okay for me to wear a nice dress with my shoes? The rest of the worship team will all be wearing jeans. Are people going to ask me why I'm dressed up? Are people going to get the wrong impression of me? Not only am I wearing a really cute outfit but I'm singing into a microphone. Are people going to assume that I'm trying to get attention for myself rather than direct attention to God?

But then I thought about why I dressed up and wore my polka-dot shoes in the first place, before any challenges had been made. If we can dress up for a date, why can't we dress up for God? Why does God get our skate shoes and sweat pants, when that attractive member of the opposite sex gets curled hair, high-heeled shoes, make up and fancy duds? Let's be completely honest here. Sometimes it seems like any member of the opposite sex can get the shiny attire if there's even a slight chance of them being husband worthy. If I'm going to come before God and sing his praises at the top of my lungs, why shouldn't I present myself to Him in the best way I possibly can? Obviously God doesn't love you any less or value your worship any less if you're all shabby looking. But God doesn't love murderers any less than he loves the holiest of holy people either. However, He must appreciate and be pleased by the effort to live a sin free life right? Likewise, I'm sure he appreciates our efforts to present ourselves to him in our finest garments. There's a reason why historically people wear their "Sunday best" to church. It's because God deserves the best, and that includes my shoes.

Katie S

JESUS AND STILETTOS: FRIEND OR FOE

Today I did a bad thing. It began with good intentions but we all know where that road leads. I've confessed it to my friends, but still I shake with fear that the granola eating, tree hugging, capitalist hating, sandal wearing, Hornby Island living gang will come, hunt me down and make me vow allegiance to vote Green this election. It all began with a simple errand to the grocery store. I entered with a small list of goodies to purchase and send to my best friend for Easter. That's where I first fell, the candy aisle. I caved when I saw that Bernard Calabou chocolate bars were perched next to the Easter confectionary I was already purchasing. How could I deny Bernard when he was so close? I couldn't. I grabbed the bar and sprang to the check out counter. That is when I lost all control. My nemesis stood waiting for me in the rack beside the gum and breath mints. She was gleaming. She was proud. She was new. She promised bows and pink satin. She promised me secrets of how to dress for my shape and how to get fit without the gym. She promised me movie stars, diamonds and yes, she promised me shoes. Shoes. It was all I could do not to devour her there in the store. Vogue sweet Vogue. So there you have it - I bought chocolate and this month's issue of Vogue magazine. Please do not judge, mock or scorn, the temptation was too great, the price so low - only \$5 for all her promises to be fulfilled. Giving into one of these temptations would be enough for those of you at The Place to shun me. Please, I beg you to understand. Think of your own struggles, your own weaknesses while I explain mine.

Like all of you I crave Beauty, and am on a

continual quest for it. Sometimes I take appreciation in hidden beauty but other times I succumb to the quick fix. Chocolate and Vogue offer me a jolt to the system. They give me the satisfaction of knowing that somewhere beyond my student budget and worn out runners lies a world of French cuisine and haute couture. This month the ladies of the worship team have brought Beauty back to the center stage. The girls have made a point to decorate their feet with the most precious of leathers, the most colourful of shades, and the pointiest of points in an aim to show what shoes are made of. They have worn Minnie Mouse round-toed high heels, and dangerous neon pink stilettos. They have made looking at feet fun and reminded us of another thing for which to thank God. Well why shouldn't we be thankful for shoes? Is He not the one who gives artists their vision? Musicians, their voice? Designers, their style? I do praise God for Beauty whether it is on Launa's feet or in James' speech. Some of you may criticize this recognition of Beauty as being trivial, but to you I ask, What Would Jesus Wear? Sandals? Robe? Maybe. But he also might wear a suit and he might wear snakeskin shoes. The truth is Jesus loves all things beautiful for his Father is the Master of Beauty. To me shoes can be a tangible expression of a vision, and as Christians we believe all good visions come from God, and for that expression I thank Him. When I read Vogue, when I eat chocolate, when I see beautiful shoes I know that there is a great Master, a Visionary, a Style Guru in control of this world showing us in big and small ways that He loves us, that He made us, and that He is beautiful. It is for these reasons I allowed myself to buy the glossy magazine and why I am grateful to the girls in the worship band. We can always use more Beauty and we can always be reminded of another thing for which to thank God. My transgression my cause a tsk tsk or two but I no longer feel guilty. Besides, God is worth dressing up for.

Char H

Your turn. Email your submission to cp@theplace.ca



I D L Y Y T I L I B A L M Y R E V Z B E
 F Q Y L L A E R T Y D N A R K Z S V O N
 Y I Q E S C H A T O L O G Y F I T S U J
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Provided by the Kremers

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|---------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| ABILITY | BALMY | CARRY | DEEPLY | EARLY |
| ANGRY | BASICALLY | CHRISTIANITY | DELAY | EARTHLY |
| ARMY | BEAUTY | COMMUNITY | DENY | EMPLOY |
| AUTHORITY | BELLY | CRY | DESTROY | ENJOY |
| AWAY | BOUNTY | | DEUTERONOMY | ENVY |
| | | | DISOBEY | ESCHATOLOGY |
| FAITHFULLY | GLORY | HEALTHY | IDLY | JEALOUSY |
| FAMILY | GREEDY | HIPOCRISY | INIQUITY | JUSTIFY |
| FINALLY | | HISTORY | | |
| FLY | | HOLY | | |
| FRY | | | | |
| FURY | | | | |
| KEY | LAZY | MARRY | NATURALLY | OBEY |
| KINGSLEY | | MERCY | NEEDY | ONLY |
| | | METHODOLOGY | | ORTHODOXY |
| PITY | QUIETLY | RANDY | SANCTUARY | TESTIMONY |
| POVERTY | | REALLY | SINCERELY | THEY |
| PRIMARY | | REPLY | SORRY | TODAY |
| | | | STAY | |
| UNFORTUNATELY | VERY | WEALTHY | YOUTHFULLY | ZEALOUSLY |
| UNITY | | WHY WORTHY | | |

Welcome to Owen Andrews, son of Anthony and Erin



JULY 21 - JULY 24, 2005

Orcas Island, Washington
Christian Music
Craft Tent, Games, Seminar
Movie, Workshops, camping
Fun for the whole family
www.woodsonginc.com

for more details, see:
David Booth or Phil Troop

A large advertisement for the Cornerstone Festival 2005. It features a black and white photograph of a man singing into a microphone. The text is bold and stacked, listing various activities and dates. At the bottom, it mentions another event in Florida.

CORNERSTONE FESTIVAL 2005
JUNE 30-JULY 3
BUSHNELL, IL.

25,000 PEOPLE
300 BANDS
200 HOURS OF SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS
625 ACRES OF CAMPING
SPORTS
SKATE PARK
FILM FESTIVAL & DANCE CLUB
ART GALLERY
& MUCH MORE

CHECK US OUT AT
CORNERSTONEFESTIVAL.COM
AND SEE THE DIFFERENCE

& CORNERSTONE FLORIDA
ORLANDO, FL MAY 13-14
2 DAYS OF GREAT MUSIC
FEATURING 80 BANDS ON 4 STAGES



Please use Phil's street code when ordering tickets online : 37b2f7

CAFE SUBURBIA

Come experience our own coffee house after the Place every week. Fine coffee, delectable desserts and a chance for relaxing conversation. The Cafe also promotes bands and runs concerts at Lambrick and downtown.

Contact Dave at cafe@theplace.ca

PLACE PRAYER REQUESTS

A team is being set up to pray for our community's prayer requests. If you have a need that you would like us to be remembering in prayer then you can email us at:

prayer@theplace.ca

PLACE KIDS MINISTRY

The Place offers a place for Kids who come with their parents to the Place. There is always a staffed nursery at the back of the main sanctuary. For kids (k to grade 6) there are special groups that meet downstairs and are run by groups of caring, responsible leaders. Depending on the age of the child they will be able to play and have fun, hear stories or watch videos, make crafts and learn more about God.

Contact Lisa and Kathy at kids@theplace.ca

MIDDLE SCHOOL MINISTRY

Andy Renton is going to be working with Middle School ages and will develop what we have been doing with them on Sunday nights. If you want to find out what is going on, or would like to help then contact:

msm@theplace.ca

SMALL GROUPS

There are many groups running at the Place. If you would like info:

Contact James Kingsley at community@theplace.ca

SINGLE PARENTS GROUP

WED at 6pm (6:30pm during Smorgasbord)

Dinner, fellowship, parenting discussion and prayer. Everyone is welcome. Childcare provided. Also watch out for outings to Jazzfest, fierworks, hikes, parks, Splash, Kite flying and so much more!

Contact Michelle at 384-0010 or michmaggiora@yahoo.com

or Penny at 477-8306 or Pennyh@uvic.ca

LPC COMMUNITY GARDEN

Looking towards a fallow season unless someone steps up with some hot veggie ideas.

Contact Simon at 477-9721 or garden@theplace.ca

INDOOR SOCCER

WED at 10-12midnight (LPC)

Our version is fun, co-ed and for all. Free, bring non-marking indoor shoes and up to date medical (!). Contact Justin at:

unforsakensoldier@hotmail.com

SOFTBALL

Mondays

Not confirmed yet, but we normally do it during the summer... ask someone.

VOLUNTEERING

Facilities/ Ushering - Ken Thomson
facilities@theplace.ca

Art and Music Setup - Ant Andrews
art@theplace.ca

Worship and Music - Launa Kremler
music@theplace.ca

OFFERINGS

Our God is a generous God, and He calls us to be a generous people. If you wish to make financial giving easier, more regular or get a tax receipt at the end of the year you can:

- Get some envelopes, and 'number' and a tax receipt...
- "Swipe your tithe" - Interac is available.
- Set up a direct debit

YOUTH MINISTRY

Want to help out?

Contact Ryan at youth@theplace.ca



Youth Programs (at Lambrick)

Thursday p.m. - High School
Friday p.m. - Middle School
Sundays 9 am - Middle School
Sundays 11 am - High School
Sunday p.m. - Middle School

Small Groups

Making LESS of your small group and MORE of your time together

Over the past few months, I've had the pleasure of being part of a round-table discussion on how we understand, practice and ideally realize "community" at Lambrick and the Place. Perhaps one of the most striking outcomes of this discussion was the realization that we have a number of healthy and profound gatherings taking place on a regular basis in the lives of our community OUTSIDE of our Sunday services. Even more radical was the discovery that many of these gatherings fell quite outside our traditional definition of "small groups" and even further from what we used to understand as a "bible study."

What ensued was a semantic meandering through the world of how our language and understanding of small groups and bible studies affects what we actually "do" when we get together! In the end we realized that things aren't always what they seem! In sharing our experiences in various capacities of as "small group" "leaders" and "members" we found that there's a lot more to a "small group" than we've ever really admitted to; paradoxically, there's also a lot less to "small groups" than we've ever been led to believe and expect!

The following tries to make sense of it all and finds most of its emphasis upon establishing an understanding of community that moves beyond a static and unyielding idea of "small groups" and "bible studies." In fact, much of it was written to make it easier for us to live together as a body, as suggestions to be pondered if we are serious about Christ's call to live as one. So give it a read and let me know what you think! This will be posted on www.theplace.ca under the "cP?" forums, but we'd love it even more if you took this article home with you and had some people over for coffee to discuss what implications these suggestions might have on how you relate to each other!

One note before proceeding:

This has been taken from a fairly "point form" list of suggestions that was presented to the leaders of this church. As such, it doesn't read like a well-written essay. We'd ask you to think of it as a collection of nuggets to ponder from those who have been given the blessing of watching our community grow have received the joy of spending time getting our hands into the mix and helping things along! We feel that it is high time to recognize, encourage and promote what we've seen happening and want to share this with you in hopes that it will encourage us all to aid and abet in bringing this community of God-worshippers together in one Voice, with one Heart, and one Mind.

(continued on page 19)

Do you think of the church first when you think of needing or giving help?



ACTS
2:44

CUT HERE

| General Help | Resources to Offer |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Babysitting <input type="checkbox"/> Moving People <input type="checkbox"/> Housework/ Cleaning <input type="checkbox"/> Yardwork <input type="checkbox"/> Painting <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening <input type="checkbox"/> Unskilled labour | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Truck <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Accommodation <input type="checkbox"/> Tools (Household) <input type="checkbox"/> Tools (Garden) <input type="checkbox"/> Clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Ride to appointment <input type="checkbox"/> Car Pool – downtown work <input type="checkbox"/> Car Pool - The Place |
| Food Related * | Other... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food service (e.g. Pot-lucks, Funeral Teas) <input type="checkbox"/> Communal Kitchen <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-making family dinners <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing hampers <input type="checkbox"/> Packing hampers <input type="checkbox"/> Food / hamper delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Helping with groceries <input type="checkbox"/> Canning | |
| Trade to Offer | Community Action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing <input type="checkbox"/> Electrician <input type="checkbox"/> Computers <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> VOLUNTEER-ON-CALL (Specifically for working with other community groups) |
| Skilled Advice | Leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial / debt * <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Wills <input type="checkbox"/> Job Search <input type="checkbox"/> Medical <input type="checkbox"/> Dental <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting <input type="checkbox"/> Environ. / Fair Trade <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Interested in Leadership of this ministry |

PTO

| For Everyone | Application only |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cafe | <input type="checkbox"/> Scripture Reading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music and Art Setup | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Prayer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ushering | <input type="checkbox"/> Communion Serving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer Room Ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery * | <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Teams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toddlers * | <input type="checkbox"/> Sound |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kids (k-3) * | <input type="checkbox"/> Powerpoint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kids (4-6) * | <input type="checkbox"/> Artists |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School* | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Parents Group childcare* | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcomers (before/after the Place) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to talk about this so give me a call... | |

*A criminal record check will be taken

Name:

Phone number:.....

Email:.....

Town/ Area Location (e.g. Duncan or Oak Bay...)

.....

Age Range (optional) - please circle

<18 18-30 30-40 40-50 50-60 >60

University Student: Y / N

Please tick here if you would like to be put on the Place Community eMailout

NB information is confidential and for internal use only and will not be given to other organizations

CUT HERE

What we've come to realize we've valued all along....

What we value is people coming together in the Lord's name for the purposes and glory of His kingdom. We believe that this will look as unique as each person who meets with another. In many instances, there will only be a very small number of people getting together – and they may “only” be meeting for coffee or a jog. But in order to allow the Spirit the room to move us where we are to go we feel it important to stress the value and ease of meeting together rather than the specifics of what these meetings “should” look like.

What we feel has made things more complicated than needs be...

While we feel that biblical study is important and very often a central focus of small groups we feel the Place must move beyond such a specific and suffocating understanding of “small groups” and promote/allow a wider (and simpler, and easier) definition of small groups that resides next to Christ's promise that where two or more are gathered in His name He is present.

Where we'd like to “aid and abet” what we feel the Spirit is already working on...

Above all, what we are suggesting is a very stripped back and simple definition of small groups that allows us to work the very term out of use instead stress time together in the Lord's name. We believe that this is happening all over our congregation already and note that similar stirrings are being felt in many congregations across North America. After meeting, discussing and praying about this “trend” we feel confident that embracing, promoting, encouraging and adopting it would aid in our community's core value and desire to live God's kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven...

James Kingsley and other community “environmentalists” from the neighbourhood.

MAKE SURE YOUR CAR IS LOCKED as there are thieves active around the church area.

NO PARKING anywhere but LPC carpark or Tyndall. Please respect our neighbours!

NO STICKING GUM under chairs or anywhere in the building.

Tell me what song **LAURELL HUBBICK** won a Vibe award for in 2004 and you will win her CD 'Into your love'



Notices

needs

MISSION: MEXICO NEEDS FUNDRAISING HELP!

If you have some spare time and fundraising skills then we need your help. Contact Matt/ Erin at 881-4449 or mattanderinlaird@hotmail.com

SINGLE PARENTS GROUP

Need Big Buddies to help mentor their kids. Contact Penny at pennyh@uvic.ca/ 477-8306.

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH KOREA

Placer now teaching at a Christian school (www.icsptk.org) in South Korea. They need 6 teachers for the 2005-2006 school year. These people need only a bachelor's degree. For more info e-mail Julia at juliahaazen@yahoo.ca.

WORSHIP LEADER

Interested in leading worship for the Providence Community Church? We need someone of strong faith, with a wealth of casual and contemporary songs. A keyboardist who could help lead and integrate our choir into the service. Contact Scott at scottrich@shaw.ca or 519-0799.

events

SMORGASBORD

6:30pm dinner :: 7:30pm course

Wed Apr 6 - May 4 :: The Goal of Discipleship: what it means to live well, to become good, and to find satisfaction in God (facilitated by Rob Fitterer, director CCC)

Too often, Christians treat life decisions as a matter of moral rule-following or Biblical proof-texting. God commands us; we submit. Ethics become negative: Thou shalt not....etc. But for more than fifteen centuries of our Christian tradition, another approach to Christian living has offered joy and guidance to many: it is the pursuit of good character as a means to personal happiness and fulfillment. Jesus pointed the way in the Beatitudes: happy are the meek, the peacemakers, the poor in spirit. Joy is to be the outcome of a holy life. Love is to be the one great commandment for God's Kingdom. We will be guided by three questions: Who are we? What kind of persons should we become? How do we succeed in getting there?

Call office for registration 477-9721

A ROCHA (VICTORIA)

Sunday April 10 1:30pm - Meet at Mill Hill parking lot for a spring wildflowers walk.

Monday May 23 7am-12 :: Birdwatch - Annual "Bird-A-Thon" to help raise funds for A Rocha Canada. Meet at Saanich Community Church.

Saturday May 14 & June 11 - Volunteer days at The Farm, A Rocha Canada headquarters. Group from Victoria to travel together on the ferry.

June 25 - Marine/ Intertidal excursion site tba

For info phone Mike or Susan can be reached by return email or phone 477-5474.

teaching

The Place is taking a break from the Minor Prophets for a while. This has been a great journey through about four hundred years of our Faith history. We heard the voice of God to His people in many circumstances. He speaks to His people in captivity (Daniel), during natural disasters (Joel), in the midst of moral confusion (Malachi), frustration (Habakkuk) and even when we are too comfortable with ourselves and may be ignoring God (Jonah). It's been a fun and challenging series. We will get to the other eight Minor Prophets one day. For the Spring we will listen to what God has to say to us through Paul's letter to some friends in a little church in Colosse. And then, we will examine the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, as we continue to listen to God's Word; read, sung, prayed and preached, and learn to better know, love and serve Him together.

James Prette

| Date | Teaching | Title |
|--------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Apr 3 | Guest Speaker | H&H Group |
| Apr 10 | Guest Speaker | Lloyd O |
| Apr 17 | Guest Speaker | Bruce R |
| Apr 24 | Guest Speaker | Jay G |
| May 1 | Col. 1:1-14 | Thanksgiving |
| May 8 | Col. 1:15-23 | The Gospel |
| May 15 | Col. 1:24-2:5 | Hidden Treasure |
| May 22 | Col. 2:6-23 | Freedom |
| May 29 | Col. 3:1-17 | In His name |
| Jun 5 | Col. 3:18-4:1 | Me and My House |
| Jun 12 | Col. 4:2-6 | Pray for Me |
| Jun 19 | Col. 4:7-18 | Friends |
| Jun 26 | Gal. 5:19-26 | Intro to Fruit of the Spirit |
| Jul 3 | Fruit of the Spirit | Love |
| Jul 10 | Fruit of the Spirit | Joy |
| Jul 17 | Fruit of the Spirit | Peace |
| Jul 24 | Fruit of the Spirit | Patience |
| Jul 31 | Fruit of the Spirit | Kindness |



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