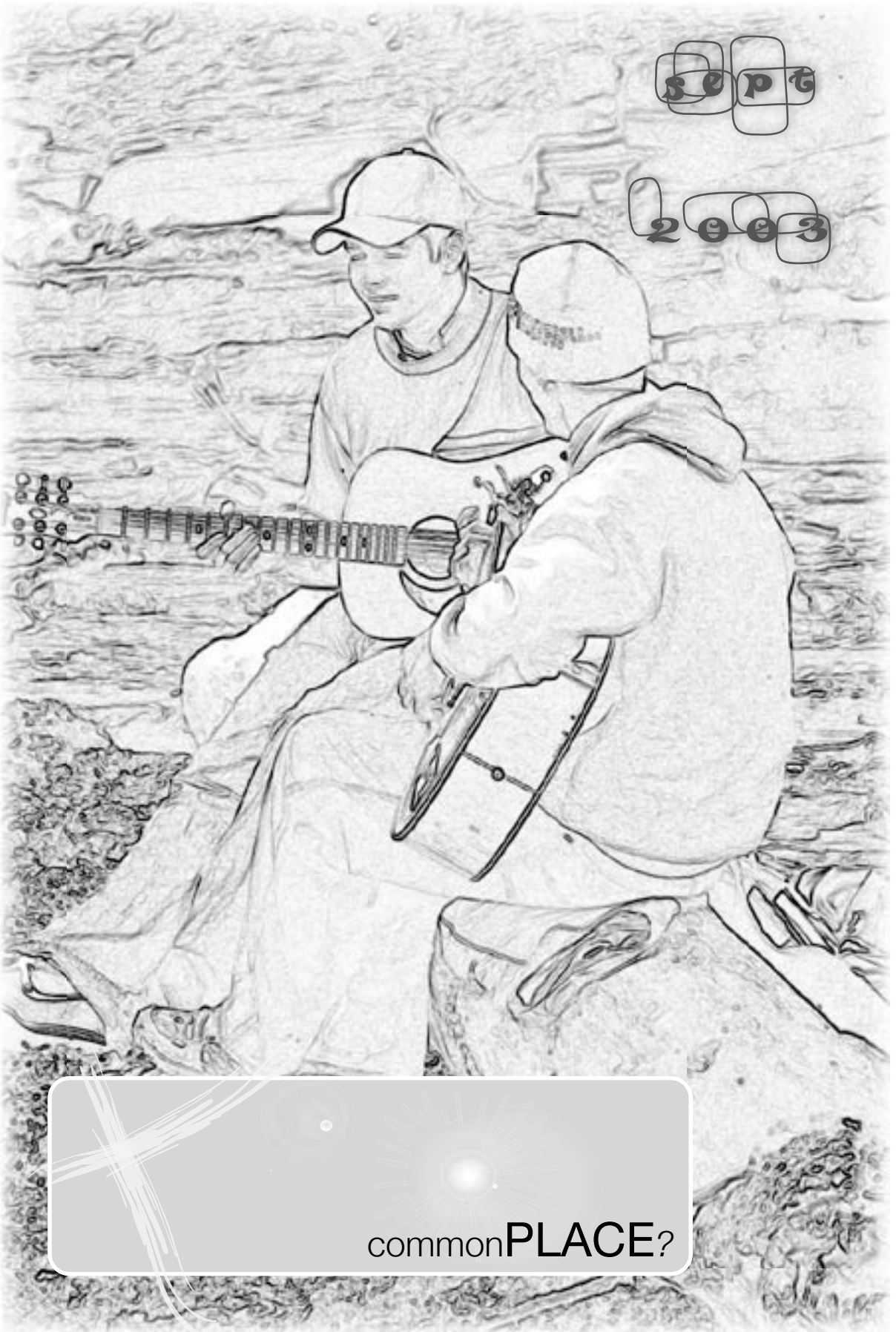


SEPTEMBER

2003



common**PLACE?**

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NOTES

from the editor

Firstly a big THANK YOU to all of you who have contributed. There were so many that some will be appearing in the next issue. This is a bumper issue indeed – guaranteed to raise a few smiles, the odd heckle, and (hopefully) the enthusiasm to contribute. It is no sly advertising gimmick to say that without your contributions there would be no magazine. Truth. Keep them coming to me.

September is a time of reflecting on our core values, building new relationships and starting new projects. That is the closest thing to a theme that I could make out. Who needs themes anyway? To sell (free) magazines? No, you can do that by just putting SEX in capitals. To bring this ramble to a swift conclusion, I will implore you all to 'Have a Fall'. Get involved in stuff (our Retreat is a good solid bet) but not over stressed. Life is too short (or meaningless, if you have been following Ecclesiastes.)

Simon

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NEWS

what's going on?

...**LEADERSHIP SUMMIT** (Sept 12-13th) is looming – for those who were, are or forever will be in leadership...**OCTOBER RETREAT** is a great fun time; David Collins – the main man from Canadian Food for the Hungry – is on board...**TEACHING** we move from the meaningless (Ecc) to the meaningful (our core values) and then onwards... **NEW WEBSITE** is in process – launching before 2004... **WHAT A WEEKEND** – the culmination of many months of planning led to a wonderful Stickman show, a lively Open House, and a heavenly Choir... turn to the **INFORMATION** page for more...





THOUGHTS ON ENGAGEMENT

by James Prette

Engagement is one of our core values. In fact, it could be said that it is what is behind all of our core values. We want to be engaged by God and see Him engage our world through us. One obvious motivation for authentic Christian engagement in our world is found in the 'Great Commission' recorded in Matthew 28:18-20.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 - NIV)

Unfortunately, even though many Christians arrive at this proper place to base a biblical foundation for Christian outreach / engagement, there is great confusion at the point of understanding and applying this passage. People can misinterpret and misuse the 'Great Commission', looking for a programme to fuel human effort and rational strategies for reaching out to peoples with the good news of Christ.

Firstly, The foundation of this passage has to be Christ's proclamation that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to (Him)". The sovereignty of Jesus Christ is the starting point for any understanding of local or global engagement. Our strategies and programmes are useless compared to the unpredictable, daily working of the Holy Spirit of God, who is doing whatever He desires to do on His earth. He is "sovereign". The early believers understood this, so they did not devise great strategies to motivate others for outreach. They fundamentally trusted in the dynamic leading of God in accomplishing Himself what He promised He would do.

Secondly, the greatest misrepresentation of all, in regards to this passage, comes from the misguided idea that Jesus tells us to "go!" anywhere. The word "go" is not in the imperative verb tense in this passage. It is, instead, a first aorist passive participle. It would be better understood to mean "while you are going";

while one is at one's daily business (one's regular life routines), one is to do the imperative, which is to "make disciples of all nations".

Now, there will be people whose hearts desire is to travel to another land and make disciples of a foreign people. This is an authentic Christian enterprise in the tradition of Christian missionaries in the bible, and since the time of the bible, throughout Christian history. Yet, we must not appropriate this passage (Matthew 28:18-20) to be a commissioning to "go". Rather it is the great commissioning for every Christian to be a disciple-maker no matter where they are. It is interesting to note that there may soon be more people "coming" to North America as foreign missionaries as there are missionaries "going" from here to anywhere else. Some will go far afield, while others will stay put. It is normative though, that in our daily passive "going" (wherever that finds us) that we are to be Christ's ambassadors and witnesses to what we have seen and heard.

How then does one make disciples of all nations? One makes disciples of all nations firstly by seeing the Holy Spirit meet and draw people "from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5) to Himself on the day of Pentecost. Again, it is the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, and it has been accomplished. Then, the Church carries this role on by making disciples (learners) through the two present, active participles: 1. "baptising them in the name of the father, Son and Holy Spirit" and 2. "teaching them to obey everything (Jesus has) commanded".

1. Baptising Them

"Baptising" literally means "to envelop" or "immerse". The authentic Christian public rite of inclusion into the membership of the body of Christ is the visible sign of "envelopment" or "immersion" in the water of Christian baptism. But, the word baptizo itself means simply "to plunge, sink, drench or overwhelm" (Bauer, Walter: Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament, 2nd edition page 131) . In Koine Greek literature, near contemporary to the

New Testament, the word is used for being sunk in debt: “overwhelmed with debt” (Plutarch, Galba 21, 3) or to be under siege: “he overwhelmed the city with misery” (Bell. 4, 137). The word does not necessarily mean to perform a ritual of water baptism.

I would like to suggest that in Matthew 28:19 Jesus is not primarily encouraging the religious rite of water baptism, but, rather, using baptizo in the broader sense of enveloping people into the community of faith. I believe that he meant here to encourage us to be such a community of grace, that we would include people through unconditional love into our midst, baptising them into our fellowship, reaching out and welcoming everyone into this body. If the world is drawing ever smaller circles, excluding one another and building walls of hostility, we are to draw ever larger circles to include everyone we meet into this family of lovers of Jesus. I believe that the task of the Church is to be a welcoming body that envelops or immerses people into the grace soaked circle of our community where they can be loved and instructed in “everything” that Jesus has “commanded”. We have received by grace, and we are to extend that free gift of grace, including all who will respond. Those who respond with a desire to follow Jesus with us can certainly demonstrate the invisible reality of it through the authentic visible public rite of water baptism.

2. Teaching Them

What are we to teach them ? What is the “everything” that He has “commanded”? It is the WORD of God; the truth revealed. Jesus is the author of the Holy Scriptures and has Himself spoken through the Prophets and Apostles. We are to be a welcoming community that proclaims the revealed WORD of Jesus Christ found in the Scriptures.

A welcoming community which listens to and proclaims God’s WORD, is a community of *grace* and *truth* . The authentic, historic faith community from Abraham through to today has always been a community of *grace* and *truth* , because God’s nature is *grace* and *truth* . The Apostle John uses these two attributes to describe the very nature of Jesus Christ (John 1:14). Here John is drawing on a key Theological statement of God’s character found in the

Old Testament. In Psalm 89:14 we are told that God is *righteous* and *just* (*emeth*), while also being *loving* and *faithful* (*hesed*).

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. (Psalm 89:14 - NIV)

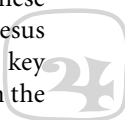
The nature of God is a paradox. The essential nature of God is seen in his *righteousness* (just, right, hard, even, straight, perfect) which always characterises his actions. This *justice* (judgment, governance) is a primary attribute of God. All true judgment finds its source in God, carrying his demands with it. On the other hand, this *love* (kindness, goodness, fidelity, mercy, grace) is not contractual loyalty, but mercy, freely bestowed on unworthy subjects. This *faithfulness* (firmness, certainty, dependability, truth), is an eternal attribute of God, manifest in *hielsgeschie*the (salvation history) and often linked with mercy or love. On God’s left hand is his *righteousness and justice* (judgment, truth), while on his right are his *love and faithfulness* (mercy, grace).

Psalm 85:10 offers the image of these two seemingly opposite attributes coming together in the most intimate of embraces. They kiss each other.

Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. (Psalm 85:10 - NIV)

As Donald L. Williams writes in his essay, When Experience Contradicts Theology, (The Communicators Commentary, p.147)

God’s throne (authority, rule), however, is not capricious. It is founded on righteousness and justice. “Righteousness” for Israel is defined by the covenant obligation to obey the Law. “Justice” or “Judgment” is exercised by God based on his righteousness. God’s throne or rule defines the true moral order, holds us accountable, and judges us accordingly... Moreover, “mercy” (“covenant-love”, see vs.1,2) and “Truth” (“trustworthiness”) go before you (“meet”, “are in front of”) your face. To see God’s face, to be face to face with him, is to see his mercy (Grace) and Truth.



John uses these same Old Testament words (only in their Greek form - *charis* and *alaytheia*) to evoke the Old Testament meaning in describing what we see of God's glory in Jesus Christ. He was full of God's love (Grace) and faithfulness (Truth). "Law came through Moses, Grace (*charis* / *hesed*) and Truth (*alaytheia* / *emeth*) came through Jesus Christ" (John 14:17). We see in Jesus the perfect expression of grace and truth. He welcomed sinners with mercy and grace, and taught the truth (Luke 9:11, 15:2).

The authentic Christian Community is a "baptising" (welcoming) community, full of grace, and a "teaching" (Bible listening) community full of truth. One of the greatest tragedies of the contemporary Church is that we are taking ourselves too seriously while not taking God seriously enough. We tend to be communities of "merit" and "opinion" rather than communities of "grace" and "truth". Jesus explains the dangers of living by merit and opinion instead of grace and truth in 'The Sermon on the Mount'. Jesus says that we must not judge / condemn (*μη κρινετε*) another's behaviour, but that we must beware / test (*prosechete*) false teaching. We are being told here to distinguish people based on their Theology (critically distinguishing between true or false teachers), but not their behaviour (judgmentally differentiating between "good" and "bad" people). This was certainly Jesus' approach as he railed against the self-righteous Pharisees while he befriended outcasts and sinners (Matt. 11: 19). This was also the Apostle Paul's example, as he harshly judged those who would distort the gospel (Gal. 1:6-9, 2:14, 5:12) Tim.1:6,7, 4:1,2, 6:3-5, Tit. 1:10-14). Paul also instructed Timothy to do the same (2 Tim. 4:1-5). He tells Timothy to "correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction". We are all called to rebuke and correct all forms of faulty theology. Of course the instrument for "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training" is not mere human opinion, but rather the "God-breathed" Holy Scriptures.

We tend to practice the opposite approach inside and outside the Church today. It is commonly understood that it is fine to judge someone's behaviour (we tend to be clear about who's good and who's bad), but we think we have no right, nor responsibility, to be

critical of opinions. It is common to believe that one's personal experience is authentic for oneself, though it is not necessarily true for anyone else. Jesus says quite the opposite. He says that we cannot condemn someone's behaviour, and that we must critically examine every truth claim (Matt. 7).

The World's natural pattern is based on merit (we are good or bad based on our public moral performance) and opinion (we have our own private experience of God - our own private truth). Most people think that this is what Christianity is (obeying outward rules and enjoying your own private God experience). It is not. Jesus proclaims a pattern that is Holy (radically different). Jesus' pattern is based on grace (God's absolute full and free gift of acceptance no matter what one's moral performance is) and truth (there are right and wrong ideas about God and reality, and we must critically decipher which is which). Jesus describes the dangers of living by the false religion of merit (Matthew 7:1-14) and the dangers of living by the false religion of opinion (Matthew 7:15-23).

We do not have the responsibility to point out a fellow believer's moral faults. We are to model and teach a devotion to listening to God's WORD wherein God Himself convicts believers of sin by His Holy Spirit. It is not our job to convict one another of sin. It is the Holy Spirit's job. It is not our job to accuse one another of sin. It is Satan's job. It is our job to merely love God and love one another. Sometimes this will mean speaking the Truth in love, but not as an accusation or a conviction. Our faith is not about religious performance. It is about God's welcoming grace. We do have the responsibility to test every idea about God that comes our way whether through teaching or casual conversation. We are to "correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2b). Our faith is not about people's opinions about God. It is about God's revealed truth about Himself.

We need to get away from the tyranny of religious performance. The only cure for living by the tyranny of religious performance is living by grace; receiving grace from God and receiving grace from each other and giving grace to one another. We also need to get away from the tyranny of living by people's opinions



PEOPLE'S PLACE

Enigma & Exploration.

My Experience so far with God

and false religious experience. The only cure for the tyranny of living by people's opinions and false religious experience, is living by truth; listening to God's revealed truth, and listening to and speaking truth to one another.

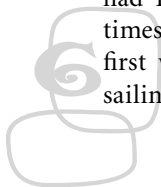
Authentic Christian engagement is in being a community that lives in grace and truth; extending grace and truth to one another, and scrutinising every opinion that comes along. Grace means living under the free gift of absolute, welcoming forgiveness and acceptance, and not under the tyranny of having to perform for God or others. Truth means living under the clearly revealed and taught WORD of God, and not under the tyranny of people's opinions about God. Jesus finishes 'The Sermon on the Mount' by saying: "If you hear this and do it (live by grace and truth), you'll be like a wise man who builds his house on a rock." (Matt. 7:24) But, if we try to live the Christian life by the false religion of merit and opinion, we are fools, with houses "built on sand".

I hope that the core value of 'engagement' will be experienced at 'The Place' firstly through the ways that we individually and corporately recognise Jesus' sovereignty. Then we can participate with the Holy Spirit as He guides us in "making disciples" through welcoming (baptising) people, and through teaching them the WORD of God. I hope that we can be the most welcoming community of human beings that anyone could encounter.

After 'The Place' one Sunday night, I was approached by a young woman who asked me if 'The Place' was "a place that welcomed homosexuals?" I said "I hope so." Then I said, "I hope that we would accept absolutely everybody who would show up here. But, you need to know that we are a community that takes God's WORD very seriously. And, as we welcome each other here, we all come together under the WORD of God, which has a lot to say about all of our sexualities, as well as a lot of other uncomfortable topics."

I grew up in the church and, as both my parents are strong Christians, I have never lacked for faith role models. I have known of God's love and existence for as long as I can remember, and made my first personal commitment when I was around four years old, quietly at night when my mom was tucking me in bed. The stories and tales of the biblical world have fascinated me since I first went to Sunday school, and favourites have lasted still, like the stories of Dorcas and Esther. As I got older, I joined AWANA at my local church, learned verses, played games and became intrigued with the idea of missions. At the time, it was the exotic appeal, but also the dire need, that struck a chord with me. I spent countless summers at Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship's awesome Pioneer Pacific camp, where God became real in the songs, Bible studies, and day-to-day example of the counsellors. These times introduced the majesty of God to me, something I still gape at while hiking, kayaking and snow camping through school. God, at age ten, began to have other dimensions in majesty, forgiveness, and, yes, even fun. My arrival at a private school in grade eight—I had been home schooled or at a Christian school for most of the time before, which meant constant re-enforcing of the Christian belief system—was a challenge that threw me into a new world of difficulties and learning how faith and academics coincide and can compliment each other. I began to realise that I had to learn more about who God meant to me, in a new, more intimate way, than I had needed to before. I was growing up. Now I am nearly finished high school—as of the writing, I have about sixty more days of school—and God has become my Comforter, my Helper, my constant companion and my source of strength and hope. The teenage years are super tough on a person's identity, and there were moments when it was only God who understood. I am learning that questions about Him are good, because the answers, despite the turmoil involved in obtaining them, are worth a lot.

So who is God to me now? This last year, He has had His finger somewhere visible in my life at all times. He gave me an amazing summer, working first with kids at my church and then hiking and sailing with my family, followed by time on the Sail



And Life Training Society's *Pacific Swift*, one of two schooners in the Christian sailing organisation that ply the waters around the Island. I have studied German for four years now, and in October, God fulfilled a dream through a competition, and sent me to Bonn/Koeln/Berlin for three amazing weeks. So God is my dream-fulfiller. He is my strength that has gotten me through late nights of tests, essays and sickness. Though there have been some moments of very difficult sailing, I am learning to paddle my way through whatever comes, because God is looking out for me, whatever confusing stuff happens. Like Esther, I now hope to learn to put my faith in action, while using my German, and gradually to discover more about the enigma that is my God.

Elizabeth (leaving Grade 12)

Poem by Nai

Grasping

For whatever my hands can hold
To save myself from falling.
Upward against an unfailing force.
Relentless in its anger.
Unwilling to give me a chance to breathe.

Sure

Of my own strength
To propel me to the top.
I smile
At every advancement my limbs provide.
Proud of my own might

Reaching

Confident to find my next stronghold.
Clinging
To a rock so perfectly suited for my hand
But it gives way and
I begin to fall.

Fear

Envelopes my heart
As I plunge towards the dark.
I yell
But no one listens.
They are all busy climbing.

Doubting

What I once was so proud of.
How could this happen to me?

Screaming

Pleading for help
He extends his mighty hand
And hoists me up to safety.

Confident

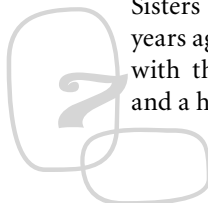
He will always catch me.
At every loose rock
At every slip of my feet.
My strength is for nothing
I will always trust in Him.



"The workers are few." Matt

9:37

You are now entering the mission field, reads the sign above the door, reiterating the point we have been hearing lately here at The Place; Victoria is as much the mission field as the African plains are. We truly are living in the mission field; it is all around us in this fallen world. One organization in dire need of workers, that I have had the pleasure of partnering with in Victoria, is Big Brothers and Big Sisters (BBBS). My experience with BBBS started 2 years ago while I was living in Calgary. I was involved with the traditional mentoring program for a year and a half. My 'little' was a high intensity twelve year



old named Abednego (name changed for anonymity purposes...obviously). Abednego had been waiting for a big brother for almost 2 years and at present there are over one hundred young kids in Victoria waiting to be matched. There are simply too few workers.

I had always thought BBBS is a great organization. I even believed that I might have been good at it, but I never took the extra step to inquire about the programs. When I finally started to seriously consider the possibility, God sort of plunked it into my lap and I happened upon the Calgary BBBS staff at the UofC. I realized that God had his hand in it and it was time for me to step up. I signed my life away then and there! The recruitment process included an orientation, interviews, reference check, criminal record check, training, and choosing a 'little'. All total, it took around 4 months, though it can take more or less time depending on your enthusiasm with the process.

Abednego and I had some ridiculous fun and some epic adventures. It was the classic story you always hear about from mission workers; you go in order to help facilitate change and come back completely changed yourself. In our time together I saw some amazing changes in Abednego, including better grades, improved social skills, the cessation of hyperactivity medication, and improved communication. Abednego began our match quite shy, especially with strangers, but through our various activities he lost most of his shyness and was eventually able to converse well with strangers, including adults. I learned, among other things, that there is adventure to be had in every situation when you think like a child, act like a child, and reason like a child. I also came to a much greater appreciation for God's love of the lost and how he uses ordinary people like you and I to do his work.

Abednego and I came up with a stipulation for our outings that we had to commit some act of kindness during our time together. This began at the YWCA when we helped a young pregnant mother move in. These simple acts of kindness, often coupled with silliness, inspired Abednego to come up with some great ideas for outings consisting wholly of kindness. Our initial foray into this world of creative kindness consisted of an impromptu watermelon/water stand in downtown Calgary in the middle of summer. We set up our stand with signs reading "free watermelon" & "free H2O" and spent an hour by the river on

the running paths refreshing 'passers by'. Human and canine alike, we estimated over 100 skeptical Calgarians were thoroughly refreshed that day. We even made it on the second page of the newspaper for our efforts. Not completely satisfied, Abednego came up with a plan to distribute some free dinner for the homeless of Calgary one night. I handled the logistics, hunted down some generous donations, and we fed 20 homeless on that memorable night. I knew it was to be a success when the first response to our greeting, "How are you tonight," was, "We're sooooo hungry!!"

However these two outings were the exception and not the rule. More often than not we would hang out, play basketball, hit the outdoor ice rinks, or go for a bike ride. It is the time and the love that these kids need and respond to more so than the crazy adventures.

There are three options for involvement with BBBS. The Traditional Mentorship Program consists of meeting your 'little' 3-4 times a week for 3-4 hours. This program is designed as a one-year commitment. The In-School Mentoring Program allows a smaller commitment of once per week at the child's school for the duration of the school year. The third program is a new one, which is running as a pilot in Victoria. It is called Big Bunch, and is designed to get the 'littles' who are still on the waiting list out for some fun. You would be responsible for 3-4 'littles' twice a month. All programs have their advantages and hold massive power to affect some positive change in the lives of these children.

Please, please, please... If you have ever considered the merits of this program, give it some more thought and prayer. This is fantastic opportunity to provide a solid Christian role model (you) for a child in Victoria. If you are between the ages of 19-70 and you would like to find out a little more about the programs get in touch with me or check out the BBBS website. You can e-mail me or have James Kingsley point me out Sunday night. I would love the opportunity to buy you a coffee (or juice); you can fire some questions at me and I can tell you some stories. Thank-you much. God Bless.

Jonny

 jmbratse@ucalgary.ca and www.bbbsvictoria.com

The Postmodern toilet bowl

It began on a dark and stormy night. Well, actually it was only nine-thirty on July 13th and the wind was kinda, um, windy. But it was definitely dim, and almost night and a bit blustery. I drank a coffee before bed to warm me up, which turned out to be a bad idea but I'll get to that later.

There are days when I feel creative genius within me, when I feel capable of writing anything, even perhaps an article for *Commonplace?* Magazine. That being said, there are also times when I can't find the light switch in my bathroom, but I'll get to that later too.

I have been informed that *Commonplace?* Magazine is slightly less sophisticated than the *New Yorker* but of a higher quality than *Harpers*, or the other way around, I can't remember. Regardless, I have decided to undertake what no one before me has dared: I will define post-modernism for all of those, like, er, well, like me, who don't really know what the intellectuals of our day are on about. (Read: Randy says that word a lot and I just nod).

Post-modernism is like a dark bathroom. No, wait, that can't be right. Post moderns don't like narrative. They think it's a construct used to oppress the powerless, whatever that means. Maybe post-modernism is like, well, I guess it can't be like anything if I can't tell a story. Imagine a brief pause as I run for my two-volume *Oxford English Dictionary*. Ah, here it is: "Later than what is modern...." Right.... Okay, surely there is a simple answer to my question. After all, this is supposedly the post-modern era and all I want to know is what that means. I flip back through the dictionary toward M but it stops at N so I go back to the first volume. (How fitting). Okay. *Moderism*: "A mode of expression characteristic of modern times...." Uh huh.... Thanks bunches Oxford.

All right, so far I've established that post-modernism follows modernism and that modernism is a way of thinking that is common in modern times. But aren't modern times now? What does modern mean? That's easy, it's only a few entries earlier in the dictionary. "Of or pertaining to the present...." Hmmm. But I thought that was what post-modernism was supposed to be.

Did I mention that sometimes I can't find the light switch in my bathroom? Yeah, because on July 13th, roughly six hours after my cup of coffee, I couldn't hold it anymore. I rolled out of bed and headed for the bathroom. I knew where the light switch should have been but I didn't want to think too hard because then I would really wake up and not be able to get back to sleep. (A problem that I hear most post-moderns share). So I fumbled my way to the toilet in the pitch black. There, standing roughly in front of the toilet, a little voice inside my head interrupted me:

"You're getting over-confident. You're aim's not that good. Sit down you fool."

Flashback to an earlier conversation that same day:

"Honey, please remember to put down the toilet seat."

"Isn't it just as easy for you to put down the toilet seat yourself? I mean, I go standing up, so shouldn't you raise the seat for me?" The bible's patriarchal, surely there's a verse, I think.

Back to me fumbling through the darkness. The little voice was right and I knew it. My aim was bad. So I sat down. (Here's where the flashback becomes relevant). Needless to say I was wide-awake by then and the bitter irony (or the second or third layer of it), was that I couldn't even complain to my wife.

Uh oh. I think I just told a story. Does that mean I'm not post-modern? Maybe, says the little voice in my head, which I have started to ignore. Or maybe post-modernism is already irrelevant. But what do I know? After all, I can't even find the light switch in my bathroom.

P.S. Since I wrote this I have been informed that there is nothing more post-modern than not having a point, which is funny and sad and maybe not even true.

P.P.S. There isn't a verse in the bible about leaving the toilet seat up but there should be. I mean surely Solomon, with all those wives...

Matthew

Letter re: More Love,

Less Waist Size

I read the article in Common Place by Roxanne regarding being overweight and in church. She has hit the nail right on the head! I cannot tell you the number of times I have had well meaning Christians tell me things like, "God will find you a man if you only lose some weight," or "its obvious from your weight that you are not close enough to God," or my personal favourite, "Dear, I didn't want to mention this to you, but we are starting a Weigh Down program at church and several ladies suggested I mention it to you..." After awhile you begin to get angry or you begin to think that God doesn't love fat people as much as he loves thin ones. Both erodes your faith. With over 33% of adults in Canada classified as obese and some reports claiming 50% of kids are obese, its interesting to note the noticeably few fat people that attend church on any given Sunday at any given church. Even at the Place we are lacking a significant percentage of that population.

Fat is the last great prejudice society has. There are still fat jokes, the "plus sized" clothes are still in a different section of the store than the "normal sized" clothes and the airline industry is toying with the idea of charging fat people more for flying (Southwest Airlines already charges fat people for 2 seats if they are larger than predetermined proportions). Its no wonder its trickled into the Christian communities. I do believe that in this fashoin and thin conscious world Jesus would have been hanging out with the plus size women (the REAL ones, not women over size 6 or whatever the fashion industry classifies it as). There was a song I heard on the radio this morning. One of the lines goes something like this: "Christines depression won't seem to lift because she'll never be as thin as the girls on Friends." Women do laxatives, stick their fingers down their throats and starve for this. we should be doing everything in our power to not let this "disease" creep into our churches.

Thanks for letting me rant.

Alison



Dinner is Served

How do we give back
to a king so humble, so worthy?
a daily step of obedience,
echoing worship, continuing perseverance,
committing to growing that seed:
planted carefully in my soul
responding in faith, blind, reaching forward
here's my life

Ashley



The Healer

From a distance, grace seems buried under some
heap of rocks,
too slippery and thick to move with my weak
hands.
to obey is to submit trust to You -
to trust is hesitation, risking myself.
sleeping in the peace of trusting You,
never knowing who I'll become
finding grace flows out from between the tough
times
subtle, warm comfort in my spirit's joy.
so much easier than fighting,
living surrounded by lies
invisible chains break
falling softly away
grace smiles for me
now i feel the secret.

Ashley



Pentecost: the power of

Intimacy

Acts 2:2-3...Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty wind storm in the skies above them, and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them.

Really, doesn't it make you just a little jealous? Wouldn't we all like a Pentecost experience...of a Paul-like Damascus Road experience? Wouldn't it just add some punch to your Christian life resume? You know...you just happened to be in Thrifty Foods, aisle five the exotic food section, reaching down to the bottom shelf for something that caught your eye...then all of a sudden, zap! You're blinded. As you pull yourself off the floor, three patrons whisk you out of the store. For the next three days you're held up in some bungalow in Sidney. On the third day, a believer arrives, lays hands on you...your sight is restored...better than 20/20...and life has never been the same. Yep! I would say that would pretty much qualify me for some pretty serious Christian work.

We live in a world where bigger is better...we can super size everything. And we tend to do the same with Christian experience...trying to find God only in they big things. We can be like Elijah, expecting to see God in the mighty wind storm, expecting to see God in an earthquake, expecting to see God in the fire...but finally finding him in a gentle whisper. More than anything else, Pentecost is about mysterious, incredible divine intimacy. The Spirit of God passing through the torn curtain of your heart and taking up permanent residence in the holy of holies, the glory has once again returned to the temple. You now, are the temple in which God dwells. Our heart is the Garden of Eden, which had been overgrown since our separation, but since Pentecost the Spirit of God has returned to the garden. God's desire has been fulfilled, that we have intimate communion with him forever...we are one. Our Spirits cry out, "Abba Father." God's own plan from the beginning of time has always been to adopt us in to his own family as brothers and sisters, by bringing us to himself through Jesus.

Pentecost is the power of intimacy with Spirit of God...allowing the Spirit to change us, transform us into the likeness of Jesus...from glory to glory.

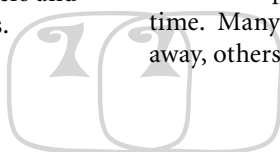
Ron

Letter from England

(Sept 2002)

Today was a very ordinary day in London. Work was work and I was planning my life as usual. Sometimes on my lunch breaks I walk over to the Old Brompton Cemetery down the road. On my first encounter it was like finding my own secret garden, with its overgrown grass, flowers and trees; only mine was filled with tombstones. I did not mind this really. I like to walk down the rows, read the names of those resting below and wonder about who they were. Today though was different. Today I had no place to rush off to and all the time I wanted. On the many times I have found rest under a tree or wondered around reading the tombstones, I had never walked straight through to where the dome awaited. Today this would change.

Today I walked the centre row and read their names. I found to my interest Ann Marie, The wife of George Bush. Funny that name. One year ago this would not have struck my eye but this year it does. Beneath her name lay the words, "The Path Of The Just Is As The Shining Light, That Shineth More And More Unto The Perfect Day". In these times it is hard to connect the name of George Bush and "The Path Of The Just" together; the thoughts of war, death, vengeance, fear and power race through my mind. But I only need to walk a few more steps when I turn to a faded tomb. The only words left legible in memory of a man named John bring it into perspective. I crawl up to the stone and read quite simply, "Peace, perfect Peace." Sometimes the simplest answers are all that is needed. I look up to continue my journey. I recall how one week ago at the Nottinghill Carnival I walked past thousands of people pleading for signatures to petition for the cancellation of third world debt. London is a wonderful place and an awful place all at the same time. Many people considered me a leper and ran away, others had no idea what I was talking about and



yet others walked straight up, signed their names and encouraged what my friends and I were doing.

Since then I have been reading words by Martin Luther King Jr. and I must confess realizing what a spoiled, middleclass, white girl I am. Granted I have realised this in the past but my anger for the apathy and greed in this world has been getting under my skin. King modelled his movement after Jesus' call to love. This I try to follow but I confess it proves difficult at times. Again King takes a principle by Jesus and rams it down my throat. He says, "Christianity had always insisted that the cross we bear precedes the crown we wear. To be a Christian one must take up his cross, with all its difficulties and agonising and tension-packed content, and carry it until that very cross leaves its mark upon us and redeems us to that more excellent way which comes only through suffering."

At this moment I remind myself to keep going, follow God the best that I can and hope that God can use what I give to Him. This thought leads me to find Emelia Eliza, who as her tomb tells of her devotion in a poem written beneath her life which reads,

*Alike are life and death
When life in death survives
And the uninterrupted breath
Inspire a thousand lives.
When a star quenched on high
For ages would its light
Still travelling downward from the sky
Shine on our mortal sight.*

A few more steps bring me to my destination, the dome. To my surprise I do not find the end of my journey but where it unlocks its own secret. All along it is the entrance to the rest of the grounds. More tombs, grass, flowers, trees and to my joy find the homes of squirrels and other such animals playing and running around. The sun is going down and the chill in the night air press me to move on. As I walk back I wonder about their lives, what choices each made, what dreams were achieved and what memories were left behind. The solace I find in this beautiful place comes from knowing that God will use what I give, if I only dare to live.

Jeannine

☀️☀️ Gallery à la Place Baseball ☀️☀️



ANNOUNCEMENTS

events & notices



FOOTBALL(starts Sep 10)

Soccer to the philistines. This is restarting on Wed 10th Sept at 10pm and will run until Christmas. All skill levels. For the nightowls.

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT (Sep 12-13)

This is a MUST for all of you already in leadership (i.e. small group leaders, worship bands, any sort of leading role) - and is an open invite to those of you who would like to be in leadership. We will have a buffet meal starting around 5:30pm on Friday 12th and go on from there. All day Saturday 'til 4pm. I will see you there.

POTLUCK (Sep 21)

An ideal chance to get to know people and enjoy some wonderful cuisine. 4-6:30pm. Sign up at back.

THE RETREAT (Oct 3-5)

The best way of getting to know people in the everchanging community of the Place. This is going to be a great time - we have the top man from the Canadian Food from the Hungry speaking to us on compassion and biblical worldview. A chance to find out what is really going on the world's troubled areas such as Afganistan, Iraq, Ethiopia and numerous others. He has been there and CFH is actively making a difference. As always places will go like hotcakes (which is an odd expression cos if they were too hot then nobody would touch them. Oh well). \$85. All inclusive. Brochures in foyer.

WOMEN'S EVENING EDITION (Oct 6)

Women of all ages are invited to come and bring a friend to the first evening of the new season on Monday, October 6 from 7-9 pm at LPC. 'Accepting who we are and moving into fitness and good health' will be the topic of guest speaker Karen Bogle, a former competitive gymnast and presently a fitness instructor. Free Will Offering \$5. More info call Joan Duncan at 812-3705.

ADULT LEARNING COMMUNITY

At the same time as Mosaic runs there will also be other courses available for signup. Tom Cowan is a confirmed teacher and there will also be a retreat later on. Email communitylife@lambrick.com for more information.

MoSaiC (Weds Oct 1 - Nov 26)

We believe that healthy conversations about God where questions are an essential part of an honest search for God, are a stepping stone toward developing an authentic faith. Our goal is to provide a safe, non-threatening environment incorporating talks, discussions, panels, Q&A times, and small group conversations into a meaningful discussion of the Christian faith.

6:30 pm Dinner 7:30-9pm
Discussion. \$5 per night. Register at
mosaic@lambrick.com



NO PARKING anywhere but LPC carpark or Tyndall. Do not annoy our neighbours!



NO STICKING GUM anywhere in the building. This too is annoying.

WE NEED:

*** Quality drummers and basists (email Launa at placeworship@shaw.ca ***

*** Youth Group Leaders for Access, our teen ministry. Starts in September. Email Launa at placeworship@shaw.ca, Len Ralph at lraph@shaw.ca or Stu at stu@lambrick.com ***

*** Paid children's worker for Tuesday mornings. Contact Vlasta at vlasta@humboldthouse.com ***

YOU NEED:

Accommodation? - check out our bulletin board outside the cafe.

An online Christian UVIC community? - try out www.canadafire.org/sites/uvic



INFORMATION

and getting involved...

SMALL GROUPS

There are many groups running and starting at the Place - from book clubs to bible studies, baseball to Independent parent groups. Groups like these are a vital part of the Place and if you are feeling left out and needing a friendly weekly community then email James Kingsley at:

theplacesmallgroups@hotmail.com

KOINONIA GARDEN PROJECT

Koinonia refers to fellowship, partnership, communication or distribution. This is helpful in leading our garden project to the multi-level cooperative that it could be. The KGP involves making and caring for a practical garden for Pastoral Care to utilize. We also seek to create a fun, friendly atmosphere for those who would like to help and learn more about growing vegetables. For more info contact Kathryn at 592-8450 or kathrynate@hotmail.com

OFFERINGS

Financial support is only one of the ways we can worship God with our life. If you wish to make this easier, more regular and get a tax receipt at the end of the year you can get some envelopes from Simon in the foyer. Rumours of the coming of Interac abound.

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 downtown.

MERCHANDISE

Brian McLaren's books are well worth a read - and we have them cheaper than anywhere. We're not particularly big on the idea of merchandising, however we do have a huge amount of talent at the Place and so you will find all sorts of odds and ends in foyer after the Place including Disclaimer - a Journal of Christian Thought and Art, CDs from various bands at the Place and other fragrant offerings.

VOLUNTEERING

There are plenty of ways you can get involved at the Place. Most of these causes need people throughout the year:

Place Kids Ministry - Kim Williams

theplacekids@hotmail.com

Cafe Suburbia - Dave Booth

dbooth@humboldthouse.com

Facilities and Ushering - Ken Thomson

kenjthomson@hotmail.com

Art and Music Setup - Ant Andrews

canadiandrifter@hotmail.com





T.S. Eliot once wrote, “April is the cruelest month”. He obviously didn’t grow up in Victoria.

September can be cruel in these parts. Desperate students looking for flats, pondering any possible meaning in life, while ignoring their loan invoices. The population of Gordon Head explodes with young vitality. Business at the local Starbucks is resurrected.

Most of us who aren’t students would also have to admit that, for the most part, September – as opposed to January – is the beginning of the year. We awaken from our summer slumber. We take stock. We try to get serious again. Cruel? Sometimes. Chaotic? Almost always.

Amidst the chaos, though, there is something surrounding September that speaks of new possibility. Out of the disorder comes the potential for redemptive change. Even in our darker moments, most of us can sing along with Adam Duritz’s nasally melancholy voice that “there’s reason to believe maybe this year will be better than the last.”

But redemptive change is dependent on a few things.

As basic as it sounds, faith is one of those things.

Jim Wallis, editor in chief of *Sojourners Magazine*, writes, “every important social change begins with someone believing it is possible. Hope always precedes change. Hope is the substance of faith and the only absolutely indispensable ingredient for individual and social transformation.”

Faith is something western evangelicals talk a lot about but practice very little. Frankly, we are more inclined toward comfort and convention. From my vantage point, faith without a sense of risk isn’t faith at all: it is only a dream. Jesus has not only called us to adopt a system of beliefs; he called us to a way of life... one that requires faith. As Kierkegaard once wrote, “Christ did not appoint professors, but followers.”

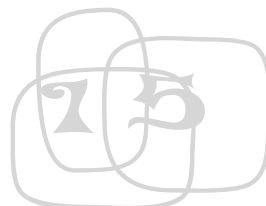
This year, as a community, it is my prayer that we would become agents of redemptive change and spiritual transformation: globally, locally and – dare I say – even personally. Change comes in many packages, through many unexpected doorways. May we be responsive to God’s Spirit as he guides us. And may we develop a reckless hope.

Randy

SCHEDULE

Luke’s parables

Date	Teaching	Title
Sep 7	Eccl. 9:1-16	Community
Sep 14	Eccl. 10:1-11:6	Engagement
Sep 21	Eccl. 11:7-12:8	Beauty
Sep 28	Eccl. 12:9-14	Orthodoxy
Oct 5	Luke 7:36-50	Who needs parables?
Oct 12	Luke 10:25-37	Who is good?
Oct 19	Luke 11:1-13	Who needs prayer?
Oct 26	Luke 12:13-48	Who is it for?
Nov 2	Luke 13:1-9	Who is cast out?
Nov 9	Luke 14:15-24	Who is blessed?
Nov 16	Luke 15	Who is lost?
Nov 23	Luke 16:1-13	Who is trustworthy?
Nov 30	Luke 16:19-31	Who is comforted?
Dec 7	Luke 17:5-10	Who has faith?
Dec 14	Luke 18:1-8	Who is persistent?
Dec 21	Luke 18:9-14	Who is justified?
Dec 28	Luke 19:11-27	Who has?





THE PLACE

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