

C U L T I V A T E

Build. Explore. Encourage.



Table of Contents



Looking Ahead, Looking Behind

By Dr. Kay Tronsen

page 7



Young Theologians

By L. E. Warren

page 8



The Great Debate

By L. E. Warren

page 11



Unique by Design

By Heather Wilking

page 14



The Pit Overflowed

By Mikah Leenhouts

page 22



United in Dubai

By Joshua Lee Kueber

page 24



Youth Ministry:

By Dr. Craig Ferderer and Kaleb Barkman

Page 30



Memeing Responsibly

By C. J. Elliott

page 34

Hello & Welcome

The sudden appearance of COVID-19 and the swift measures of social distancing and state quarantine have made building community an increasingly difficult task. The creators of *Cultivate* have attempted to tackle this task through the hard work of creative minds, teamwork that comes with any major project, and an abundance of grace in these world-changing times. In the following pages, you will find the beating heart of *Cultivate*: to build community, explore truth, and encourage creativity.

At *Cultivate*, we believe that a biblically-focused **community** must honor the God we worship as his image bearers. Through this magazine, we aim to provide discussion-worthy content, thought-provoking photos, and encouraging stories to be shared.

We believe that **biblical truth** ought to be strived for and encouraged in a Christ-centered community. *Cultivate* endeavors to produce excellence in sharing the good news of the Kingdom of Christ.

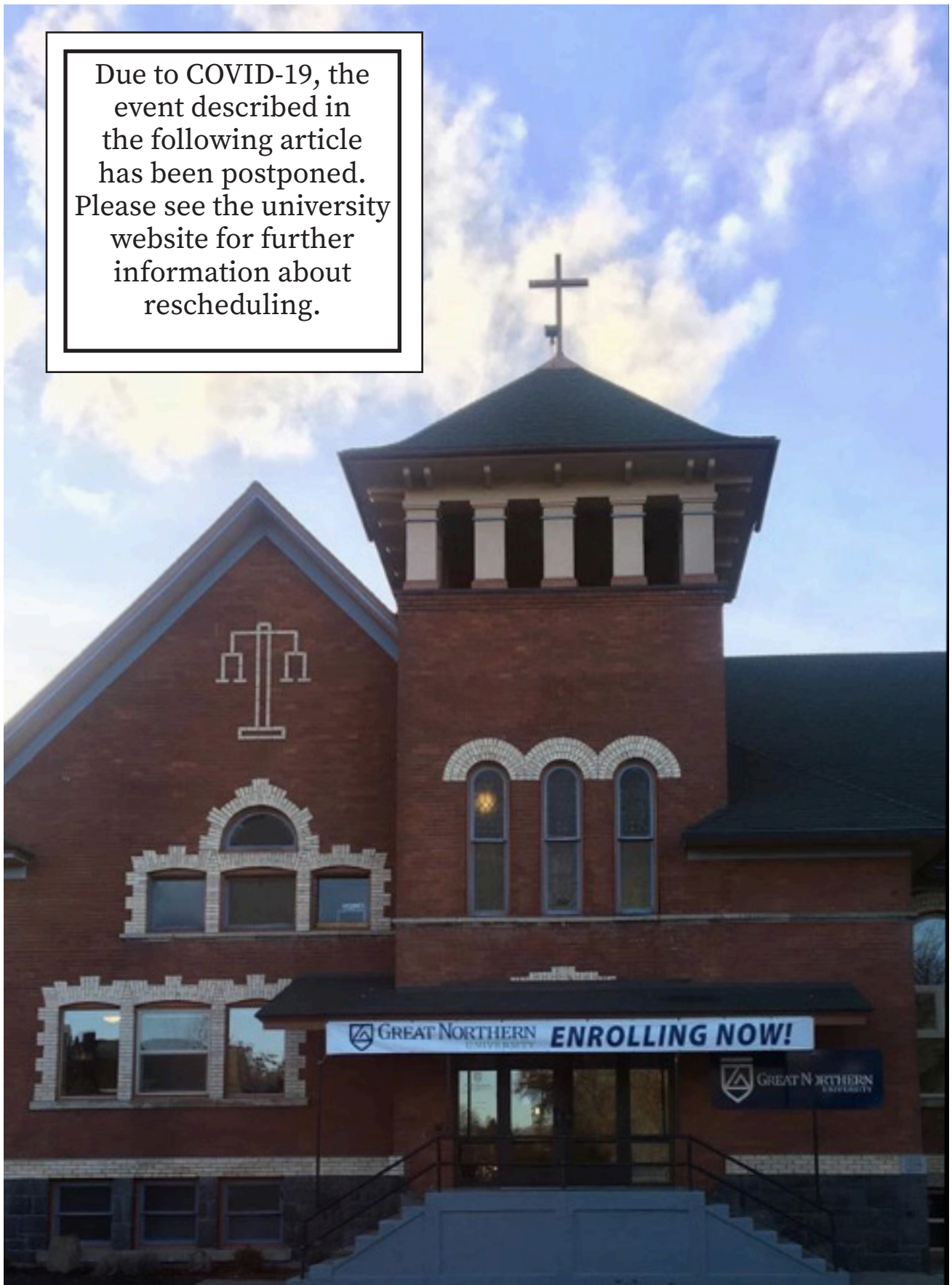
We believe **creative expression** is God-honoring. Throughout this magazine you will find pieces of art from members of our community: creative writing pieces, photography, and graphic design. Each of these pieces is intended to showcase truth, to build community, or to reflect our God-given creativity.

I am thrilled to share this journey with each of you as we continue to grow, to build each other up, to explore the truths around us, and to creatively engage in our world.

L. E. Warren
Managing Editor



Due to COVID-19, the event described in the following article has been postponed. Please see the university website for further information about rescheduling.



LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

A Long Investment and a Time to Celebrate

Dr. Kay Tronsen

Celebrations matter. They mark advances, acknowledge people, and provide a haven for memories. We draw lines around such celebratory times in our busy schedules to set them apart, to offer dedicated space to come together with one focus. Great Northern University planned to do just that. March 31, 2020, was chosen as the date we would gather for an Evening of Celebration from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Fourth Memorial Church’s main auditorium. As President Wendy Liddell expresses it, Great Northern University is a “long investment,” and we have much to celebrate. When asked what she hoped the celebration would accomplish, her voice softened and she nodded slowly as she answered, “We want to publicly thank God for His provision. We want Him to be lifted up and glorified for all that has happened.” She quoted from Psalm 148, “Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.” This, she reminded us, is what we are created to do.

But why March 31st? March 31st marks a milestone, the beginning of a renewed legacy that has involved lots of prayer, people, and vision. Two years ago, the new university submitted its application to the State of Washington for approval to become a university. Final approval was given on August 20, 2018, sparking much celebratory joy as faculty and students gathered outside the door to watch the hanging of the banner that announced Great Northern University was now enrolling students. It was just one step along the path, but a necessary beginning. We have much to remember and much to be thankful for as we look back over the past two years. We had planned to celebrate

the retirement of Dr. Michael Orr, Professor of Communication. Even as we look back, we also look ahead, fueled by the remembrance of God’s faithfulness.

Helping us to look ahead, the special speaker for the event was to be Spokane-native Michael P. Farris, who brings tremendous experience that resonates with our journey. As the founding President of Patrick Henry College, he understands the journey of beginning a new Christian university. He now serves as the President of Alliance Defending Freedom. His biography lists many accomplishments and reflects his involvement in congressional issues that concern Christians today.

In the earlier version of this article, I would have recommended our website’s event page to you to register and plan. Back then, “looking back, looking ahead” was a metaphor for remembering the beginnings of Great Northern University in a physical reality and looking forward into the future. Now, of course, in the new COVID-19 reality, looking back causes us to remember face-to-face classes, actual chapel services, and easy shopping. And, now, looking ahead, we consider our new digital environments and how to engage in community as we go forward, still a community though separated in our new stay-at-home world.

The plan is to reschedule our Evening of Celebration once we are able to do so. So, the title remains. We are still looking back offering God glory and looking ahead offering our trust, a constant reality that never changes.

A LITTLE EXERCISE FOR YOUNG THEOLOGAINS: WHERE IS GOD?

L. E. Warren

As students and faculty at a Christian university, we have the responsibility to regulate how we, as young or aged theologians, present ourselves to the non-technically trained church body and to the secular world. One resource that Bible faculty typically require students to digest is Helmut Thielicke's *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*. He writes that young theologians have a tendency to become prideful in their newfound knowledge of the Bible. We have the responsibility to "do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, counting others more significant than ourselves" (Phil. 2:3-4). In the first part of his book, Thielicke compares theological growth in Bible college students as a sort of puberty. In the second part of his book, Thielicke expounds on the idea that theology has certain diseases that come with it.

Thielicke's first section of this book discusses the fact that theology students at Bible college experience an exponential amount of growth that does not fit into their twenty-something bodies or brains. Thielicke talks about a church-goer who is on fire for Jesus and leads Bible studies with passion, but lacks empathy or pastoral skills. This church-goer then attends Bible college and returns to their home church with their newfound knowledge and scoffs at a newer Bible teacher who teaches with little or no technical training at all. Discouraging and shaming the current teacher, the young theologian feels superior because they are applying the new knowledge they have received, and they are attempting to correct wrong thinking within

their church.

What the young theologian fails to understand that by "correcting others" he or she has made the other teacher feel small and discouraged, which is not the way of the Kingdom of God (23). Thielicke says of this person, "He [the young theologian] may even feel that ordinary Christians just do not understand certain things. . . and that they cannot be explained to them" (20). When Thielicke talks about the conversations between the young theologian and the new teacher, he focuses entirely on the side of the young theologian. However, after this conversation the young theologian walks away feeling triumphant over their "victory" and the other teacher is left with no further knowledge, and a trampled-on faith. Only after a person has a firm grasp on the subject matter, and they become capable of relaying the information in a variety of ways, should they begin to teach others the same material—whether it be math, science, or theology. The young theologian may explain a solution in one way, and if the hearer does not understand, the tendency is for the young theologian to blame the hearer, rather than themselves. They may say things like "you just haven't had the experience I have. Once you do, you will understand it like I do." Thielicke believes blaming is not a viable teaching technique, and it is definitely not Christ-like. The young theologian is still struggling with stunted maturity.

Thielicke goes on to discuss a problem he calls the "theological disease." Thielicke says that the core of the problem is when theologians talk about God as if he were not in the room.



This disease spreads from the classroom to outside conversations when the theologian views debates over theology as things to be won, instead of mysteries to be deepened. To illustrate, the author describes a discussion between two people where the young theologian's goal is not reconciliation, or a mutual understanding. Rather his or her goal is "unquestioningly to crush the man by the impression of an overpowering erudition to which he could never attain, and thus reduce him to a feeling of helplessness" (40). This young theologian's hungry soul is looking for value, not in the eyes of the creator, but in the eyes of the creation. They think that if he or she is better equipped and has a better grasp on theology than others, then they will be respected and viewed as more holy than their fellow believers.

Now, of course, no one wants to admit to having this feeling, but I can say personally with some shame that when I have been in similar debate situations, I have often felt

very high on the idea that I 'won' the debate. These are not proud moments for me. Rather, I can look back and rest my forehead in the palm of my hand and feel guilty that I spoke of God, forgetting he was in the room. If I were to have begun remembering that he was, in fact, in the room, my tactic, without doubt, would have been drastically different.

As Bible college students and faculty, we have so many opportunities to discuss God, but we need to keep each other accountable to speak about God, knowing full well he is right here with us, rather than off ruling the kingdom, out of earshot. We have the obligation to represent God with his grace, love, and abounding mercy to those who do not know him, or who are less technically trained in the art of interpreting the scriptures. We college students and professors have the responsibility to represent God, as he is in the room with us, to those who may have a shallower understanding of him, but not necessarily a shallower love of him.



Photo by Patrick T'Kindt on Unsplash

Photo by Sebastian Staines on Unsplash

CONTROVERSY ON THE SLOPES: SKIING OR SNOWBOARDING

L. E. Warren

Every year, as winter rolls into town, bringing snow, cold winds, and cloudy days, one debate envelopes conversation and resonates in the ears of all participants. This debate has been posed for generations, and has divided many families and friendships. I have personally seen the destruction in relationships that can occur after this very argument has avalanched through a community. The question that divides us seems innocent enough, but carries tremendous weight, “Do you ski? Or do you snowboard?”

While these winter sports are often lumped into the same category by those who do not participate, there are undeniable differences that give each side a sense of pride for their position, and ammunition against the other. Nevertheless, (in my expert opinion) one stands above the other, both figuratively and literally. You will often see snowboarders sitting on their rumps while skiers glide by with graceful ease.

If you dive into the world of snow sports, a common phrase you will hear is, “Skiing is easier to learn, but harder to master— whereas, snowboarding is harder to pick up, but easier to master.” By this, experts mean that skiing is a sport that comes more naturally to the average person because there is more stability and less balance is required. Snowboarding, on the other hand, requires more

balance as one’s feet are set in place. Once a snowboarder has gotten the hang of the balance and unmoveable feet issues, the next thing to learn is how to not crash after jumps. There is no downhill snowboarding Olympic event for a reason; it is just not graceful or worth watching. However, once a skier has gotten the hang of moving on snow, there is much more to learn in order to become a proficient skier. The difficult task of stopping is only the first obstacle in learning how to ski. In order to be proficient, skiers have to learn the static motions between turns,



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Photo by Bryan Walker on Unsplash



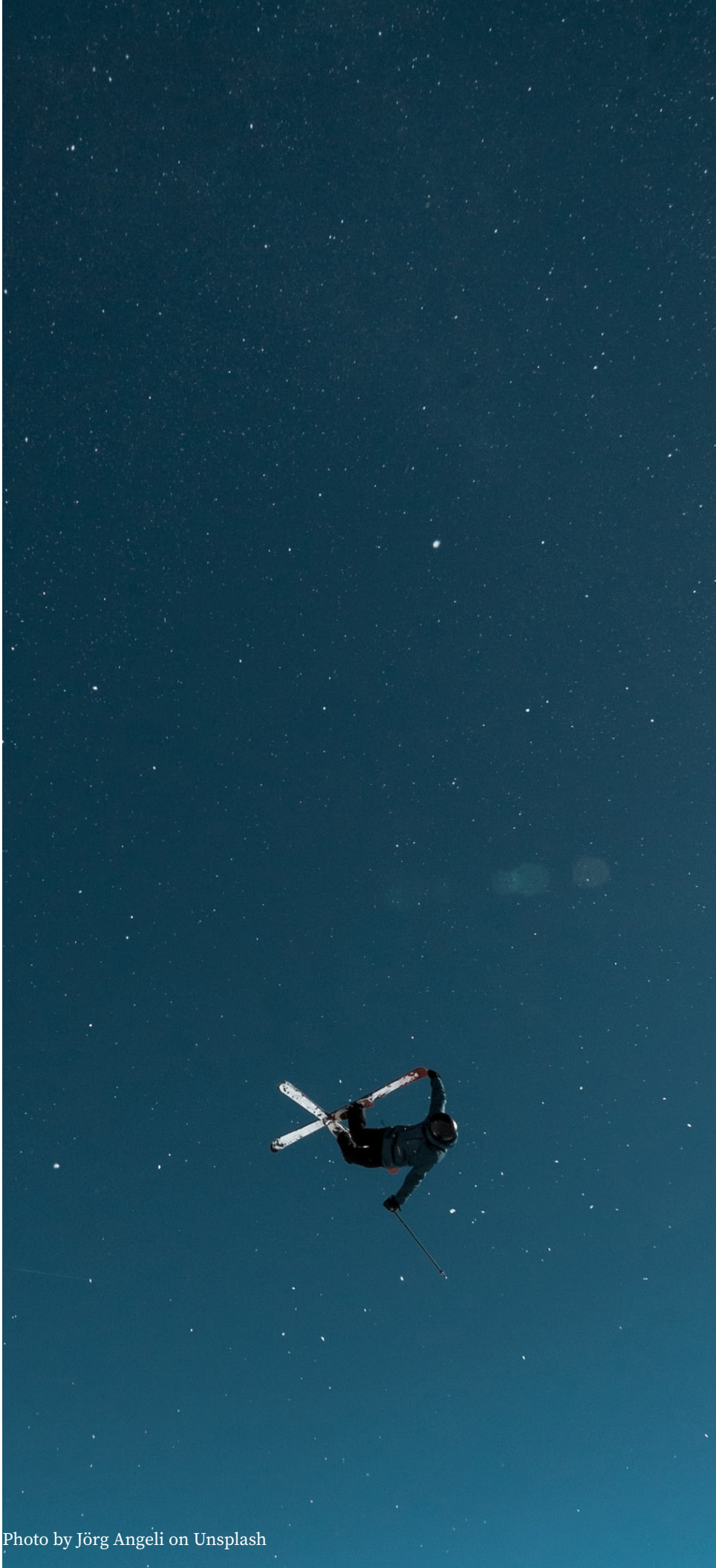
Photo by Vidar Nordli-Mathisen on Unsplash

where to put your hands and when, as well as the graceful turning movements. These things make skiing look similar to a graceful ballet, as opposed to the often ugly falling that snowboarders do.

I interviewed several skiers and snowboarders to ask them why there was this heated rivalry about which sport is better. I was given many petty reasons for each, but it came down to two main reasons. Skiers get frustrated with snowboarders when they plow through mogul runs, the “bumpy bits” that skiers love, ruining the whole concept of moguls with their straight path down the hill, or just in general, scraping snow off the hill. From the snowboarders, the main complaint given was that skiers are uptight and take the sport too seriously, instead of having fun with it. As a skier, I understand both sides of these arguments.

Yes, the beginner snowboarders scrape the top layer of good snow off and leave ice paths wherever they go. And yes, skiers are very proud to be skiers. There is an abundance of pride that comes with mastering such a difficult sport, and there is reason to be prideful in the beauty that skiing displays.

I recently overheard a couple of 12-year-olds participating in a very heated debate about the benefits of the two winter sports. While I’m the first to join in the bashing of snowboarders whenever I hear it, it broke my heart to see that these young boys were so close to actually breaking off their friendship over a preference of skiing or snowboarding. Ultimately, both sides are united in their desire to get out in the snow and have fun, whether it is on one surface or two.



UNIQUE BY DESIGN

Heather Wilking

Have you ever been in a situation where either tension or frustration came out of an interaction with a friend, family member or co-worker? More often than not these quarrels come from a lack of understanding about the effect of each individual's different personality. You, right here, reading this article, have a personality that may seem very different from others around you.

In more recent years, personality tests have been inching their way back to the surface. You may hear friends at church or co-workers asking you if you're an extrovert or introvert like Myers Briggs, what is your greatest strength like we find in Strengths Quest, or what personality 'type' you are like that of the enneagram. All of these tests were designed to help us understand who we are at our core in order to maintain healthy relationships.

The enneagram was first developed by an American-Greek spiritual teacher by the name of G. I. Gurdjieff in the 1900's. In 1916, the enneagram was first presented in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Then, later in the 1970s, it made its way to west Chilean psychiatrists, then made its way to Jesuit priests, and in 1992 it became popularized

in the west. Today we find it all over the place. Church communities are talking about it, companies are implementing it into their work environments, and, even within the counseling sphere, we see this personality test being used. Something that makes the enneagram different than, let's say Myers Briggs, is that it takes the traits learned from the Myers Briggs and examines the motivations behind each personality. A brief description of each of the 9 personality types is listed below.

Anna Sutton, a psychology professor at the University of Waikato, New Zealand, researched the enneagram to see if it is viable. She came back stating that it isn't just another fad that we see but that this personality

test has proof that it works. In her article she states, "One of the things that we know from the enneagram is that we all view the world in a slightly different way and that we tend to make what we see 'fit' with what we expect or want." She also states later in her article that one of the essential parts of the Enneagram philosophy is its emphasis on two things, one being self-actualization and the other being improvements through self-awareness and personal growth.

"Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."

~Augustine





Many would agree with Sutton, especially within Christian circles. We see an added emphasis on self-understanding and how our self-understanding helps us further our knowledge of God, and that is considered wisdom. John Calvin wrote in his *Institutes of the Chirsitan Religion*, "Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves." The enneagram is not some new fad or some random thing to talk about, but it should be utilized as a tool in relationships. Community is strongest when understanding is made clear. A lot of the time that understanding starts with yourself.

Everyone operates out of one type with different key motivations and fears. To complicate this a little more, along with one particular type, you can take it one step further to understand the other personality types closely associated with your main type. The enneagram calls an associated type as your "wing". These wings are the two types that are on either side of your type. You may have some stronger qualities from one wing opposed to the other or you may have an even amount. This can be described as an 8w9. I first operate out of the challenger (type 8) but have also strong qualities from the peacemaker (type 9). You could go even further with the research on your type to understand what you're like when you are healthy and unhealthy. Each type responds out of an opposing type depending on their health. This is really helpful for your growth in understanding more of your personality because it reveals why you act a certain way when you're at your best and when you are at your worst. It gives language for that uncertain change of your mood. To give an example of this, for my 8, when I am at my best I gravitate towards acting like a 2 (the

helper). And when I am unhealthy, I gravitate towards the 6 (the loyalist).

The enneagram is a tool that can reveal the reasons behind why we feel fear, shame, or guilt. It's not just a personality test but something that "exposes us where we need to come to Christ and seek transformation." We live in a world that is full of brokenness, and we do not always know how to "do" life when our self-awareness is stunted by our experiences in this world. By shedding some light on the uniqueness of each individual, we can further the strength of the community that is around us and effectively build up the Body of Christ. Each and every one of us was created by God in very different ways. We do not always speak the same language, and that brings a lot of miscommunication that can lead to heartache. But utilizing the tools we have been given, like the enneagram, I believe we can strengthen our relationships and live more freely in the virtue that the Lord has given us to live through.

If you are in a place where you want to learn more about why you do the things you do, the enneagram is an amazing place to start. I highly recommend reading the book *The Road Back to You* by Ian Morgan Cron, a Christian author who digs into each of the types from a Christian perspective. I have also included a free test link so that you can go to find out at a faster pace what type you are.

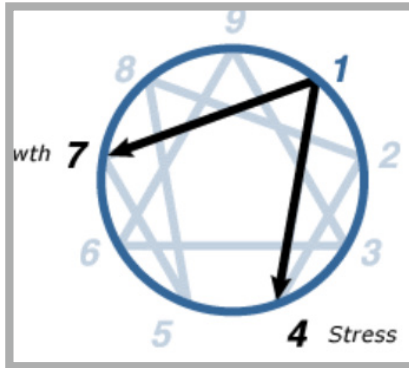
I hope this is a continued journey as you find more out about who God made you to be so you can have healthier relationships and deeper love throughout all parts of your life.

Shalom, Friends!

www.eclecticenergies.com/enneagram/dotest

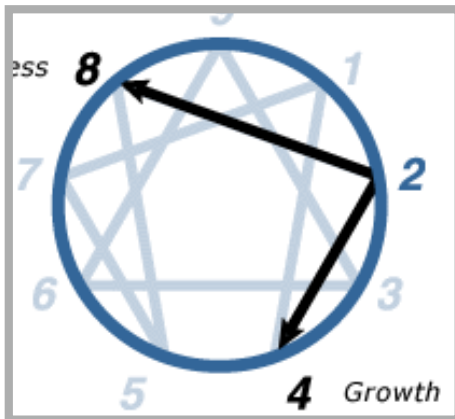
TYPE ONE: THE REFORMER

“Ones are conscientious and ethical, with a strong sense of right and wrong. They are teachers, crusaders, and advocates for change: always striving to improve things, but afraid of making a mistake. Well-organized, orderly, and fastidious, they try to main-



tain high standards, but can slip into being critical and perfectionistic. They typically have problems with resentment and impatience. At their Best: wise, discerning, realistic, and noble. Can be morally heroic.”

TYPE TWO: THE HELPER



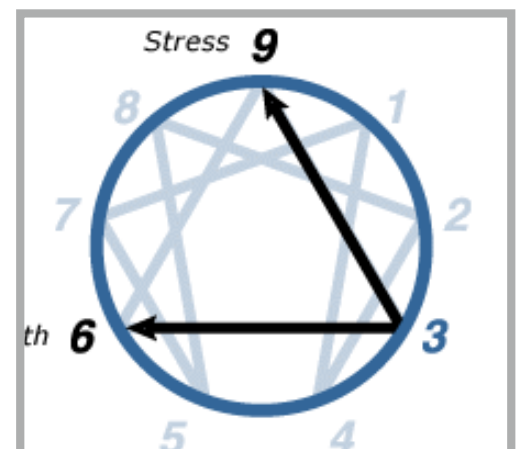
“Twos are empathetic, sincere, and warm-hearted. They are friendly, generous, and self-sacrificing, but can also be sentimental, flattering, and people-pleasing. They are well-meaning and driven to be close to others, but can slip into doing things for others in order to be needed. They typically have problems with possessiveness and with ac-



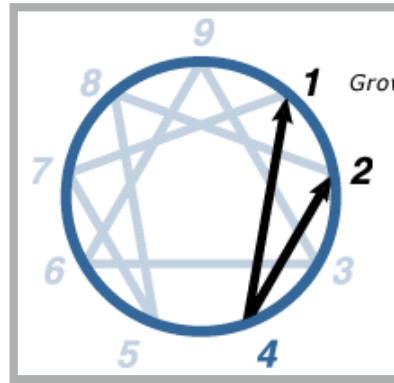
knowledging their own needs. At their Best: unselfish and altruistic, they have unconditional love for others.” Shelby GNU junior

TYPE THREE: THE ACHIEVER

“Threes are self-assured, attractive, and charming. Ambitious, competent, and energetic, they can also be status-conscious and highly driven for advancement. They are diplomatic and poised, but can also be overly concerned with their image and what others think of them. They typically have problems with workaholicism and competitiveness. At their Best: self-accepting, authentic, everything they seem to be—role models who inspire others.”



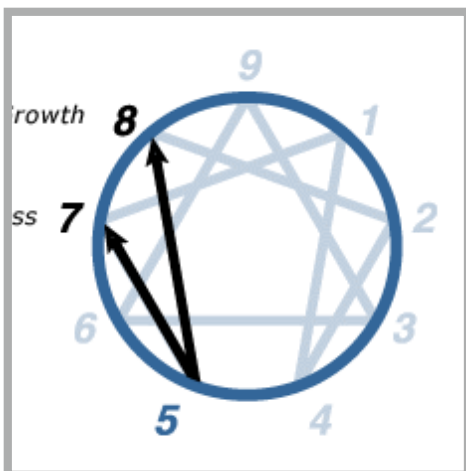
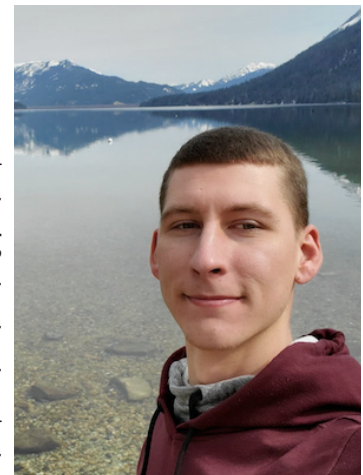
TYPE FOUR: THE INDIVIDUALIST



“Fours are self-aware, sensitive, and reserved. They are emotionally honest, creative, and personal, but can also be moody and self-conscious. Withholding themselves from others due to feeling vulnerable and defective, they can also feel disdainful and exempt from ordinary ways of living. They typically have problems with melancholy, self-indulgence, and self-pity. At their Best: inspired and highly creative, they are able to renew themselves and transform their experiences.”

Lewie, GNU junior

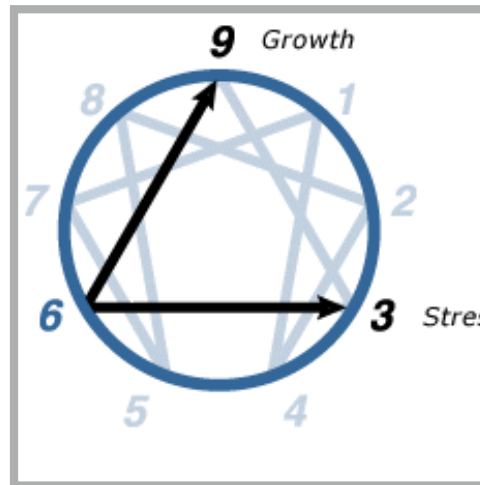
TYPE FIVE: THE INVESTIGATOR



“Fives are alert, insightful, and curious. They are able to concentrate and focus on developing complex ideas and skills. Independent, innovative, and inventive, they can also become pre-occupied with their thoughts and imaginary constructs. They become detached, yet high-strung and intense. They typically have problems with eccentricity, nihilism, and isolation. At their Best: visionary pioneers, often ahead of their time, and able to see the world in an entirely new way.” Daniel, GNU transfer

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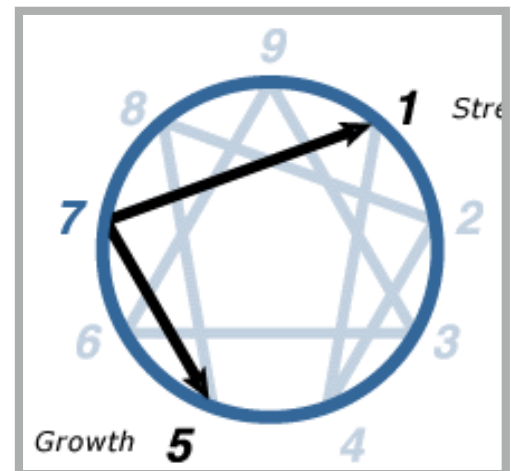
TYPE SIX: THE LOYALIST



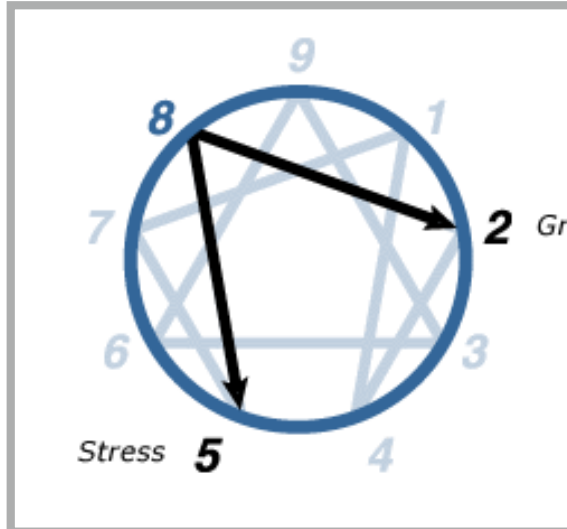
“The committed, security-oriented type. Sixes are reliable, hard-working, responsible, and trustworthy. Excellent “troubleshooters,” they foresee problems and foster cooperation, but can also become defensive, evasive, and anxious—running on stress while complaining about it. They can be cautious and indecisive, but also reactive, defiant and rebellious. They typically have problems with self-doubt and suspicion. At their Best: internally stable and self-reliant, courageously championing themselves and others.” CJ, GNU junior

TYPE SEVEN: THE ENTHUSIAST

“Sevens are extroverted, optimistic, versatile, and spontaneous. Playful, high-spirited, and practical, they can also misapply their many talents, becoming over-extended, scattered, and undisciplined. They constantly seek new and exciting experiences, but can become distracted and exhausted by staying on the go. They typically have problems with impatience and impulsiveness. At their Best: they focus their talents on worthwhile goals, becoming appreciative, joyous, and satisfied.”



TYPE EIGHT: THE CHALLENGER

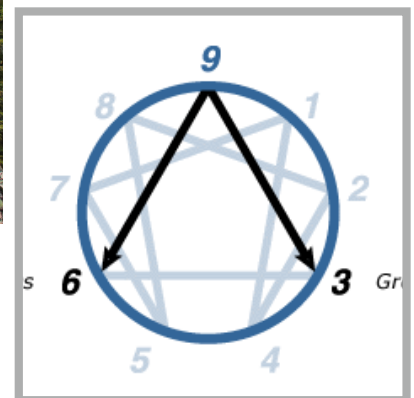


“Eights are self-confident, strong, and assertive. Protective, resourceful, straight-talking, and decisive, but can also be ego-centric and domineering. Eights feel they must control their environment, especially people, sometimes becoming confrontational and intimidating. Eights

typically have problems with their tempers and with allowing themselves to be vulnerable. At their Best: self-mastering, they use their strength to improve others’ lives, becoming heroic, magnanimous, and inspiring.” Heather, GNU senior

TYPE NINE: THE PEACEMAKER

“Nines are accepting, trusting, and stable. They are usually creative, optimistic, and supportive, but can also be too willing to go along with others to keep the peace. They want everything to go smoothly and be without conflict, but they can also tend to be complacent, simplifying problems and minimizing anything upsetting. They typically have problems with inertia and stubbornness. At their Best: indomitable and all-embracing, they are able to bring people together and heal conflicts.” Dee, GNU junior



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THE PIT OVERFLOWED

Mikah Leenhouts

It was Tuesday night, 1:32 A.M. Two choices. Law School. Pastor. He chose. In choosing, he put his stomach in a washing machine. It's been spinning ever since.

Pressing his thumbs into his temples he thought, what will happen . . . what will happen . . . what will happen . . .

Warm night air washed over Jamie's face and touched him on his nose and cheeks. The glowing fire in the town square reflected on his teary eyes. He could not stop looking at the dying fire. Maria slept on the queen in the corner of the room. Again, the terror of his choice hit him like the wave of heat from a car bomb. Car bombs were not uncommon here. This was San Cristobal De Las Casas, Mexico, and the air was thick with hatred.

He remembered the prayers – no, the vows – he made in secret a year ago in a cluttered closet in his dorm at Edinburg Evangelical Seminary.

Jesus, give me strength – they wander in deep, dark waters, they don't know the light, they need to know the light, they need to know you! Please, Lord . . . give me strength.

At times he dreamt of going back to Edinburg in McAllen, Texas. It was only a 20-hour drive from San Cristobal. He'd visit the spots he fell in love with Maria. They could once again sit on the swing under the cedar elm, slowly interlock fingers and push off, looking up at the innumerable leaves that danced like fairies in the summer breeze.

He recalled that swing most often, their long discussions, deep into the night as they

marveled at the Milky Way's depth. They would always conclude those conversations with prayer about their future together, trusting the Holy Spirit to lead them. At the time Jamie wanted to be a Superhero-missionary. He'd go to the 10/40 window, or East Africa, or North Korea – he never thought he'd be called back to his home in San Cristobal.

Eight minutes passed. It was 1:40. A choppy scream shook Jamie from his dreams. He jolted up, closed the curtains—and waited. Maria was still sleeping.

How does she sleep through every time? Jamie thought. What gives her such ease? She sleeps peacefully and I dream of torture with eyes wide open.

His mind was a deep pit. Every night disturbing images were shoveled in. He often wondered why he couldn't fall asleep.

He would often think, why can't I feel the Holy Spirit?

Jamie peered through the long slit in between the two curtains. He saw the familiar face. The next mangled scream was loud.

"Miguel!" Maria awoke and recognized the cry.

Miguel was being dragged into the middle of the square by two large police officers. Miguel held a Bible study every Tuesday night in his home. Jamie and Maria always attended, except tonight. Despite his wife's eager desire to go, Jamie refused.

"Not tonight!" Jamie had said, "Not on a burning night."

As always, Maria tried to convince him.

“What about Paul, Stephen, or Christ himself . . . Isn’t this why we are here?”

She pleaded with him, reminding him of Miguel’s faithfulness, preaching from the Bible every week in Spanish. Not Latin.

“And what if they did catch us?” Maria said, “What if they brought us out? Then?” Before walking to bed, she spoke softly, almost a whisper, “Why are you so afraid to die for your Lord?”

It was 1:50. The officers threw Miguel to the ground like a glass plate. He shattered. Jamie had thrown plates and bowls with similar anger – Paul tells us to stay united in the Spirit binding ourselves together with peace— where is that unity? Is all this even real anymore? The officers proudly wore their Institutional Revolutionary Party badges on their right shoulder. They worked for the mayor, Domingo Lopez Ruiz. Most called him Father Ruiz.

Maria rushed to the curtain. She looked out and inhaled sharply.

“Jesus.” She said it as a plea, not a curse.

An officer held him up from behind, locking his head in place. The other forced his jaw open. Stretched out his tongue. Slice. Gargled screams filled the square. Throwing the tongue on the ground, he slid his government-issued combat knife back into its sheath on his belt.

A guilty sense of relief descended on Jamie and tumbled into his stomach.

If we had gone . . . If we had gone . . .

The officer dropped Miguel and he slumped to the ground like a wet mop. One officer proceeded to pour kerosene over him. The other made the sign of the cross and kissed

a crucifix that hung around his neck. The greasy liquid soaked into Miguel’s hair and his clothes. The match was lit. It fell like a single orange raindrop.

“Jesús, tómelo rápido! Take him home quickly . . .” Streams of tears could not be held back from Maria’s hazel eyes.

The pit was full.

Unity? Didn’t Jesus say, “I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.” Jesus wouldn’t let all this happen . . . but it is happening.

It was 2:00. There was a loud knock. The wood pulsated. Jamie felt each blow. Whether the wood itself or his heart, he did not know. Eyes wide, Maria’s ears were ringing. Chaos. So many things to hear, she heard herself exhale, her friend’s distant wail, knocking, and Jamie whisper, “Sorry,” walking out the door.

The taxi sped off. Maria ran after it. Jamie heard her cries, but he didn’t look back. He didn’t see the officers notice her.

He had decided to enroll in law school.



UNITED IN DUBAI

Joshua Lee Kueber

The Arabian sand blows and gathers in blankets at the feet of glittering skyscrapers and under the tires of fabulous sports cars. The metro trundles along endlessly, picking up Filipino service workers, Indian businessmen, and European tourists. As the malls fill with crowds, the Islamic call to prayer sings out into the night. Meanwhile, 60 teenagers representing 20+ different nationalities gather at the villa of Scott Zeller to study God's word and build community, united in the person of Jesus Christ.



Scott Zeller is the executive pastor at Redeemer Church of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Teens meet in his home every Thursday night because they have nowhere else to go. Redeemer Church of Dubai has met for worship every week for the last 10 years, all without having a permanent church building. The fact that they can meet at all is a blessing. Every month, Redeemer is required to ask the government's permission to meet for services. Thankfully, this has never been denied, but that is only the first difficulty. Another is where they will even meet. The UAE government does not give out building permits for churches very often, and when they do, it's typically done in a political way to win the affections of a people group or to showcase their "tolerance" to the world. Since Redeemer is not a member of one of the major denominations such as Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox, they meet in hotel ballrooms. Ballrooms fit usually around 500 people and require weekly set-up and tear-down crews arriving at four AM and leaving well after the services end. To be able to meet as a body and to have the room required for the 1,000 weekly attendees Redeemer has two services, often meeting in three or four different hotels in a single month.



rishab-lamichhane, man with falcon.



johannes-schwaerzler, Desert road

The 1,000 attendees come from 60+ different nations from all around the globe. Dubai is a city in which 90% of the population are expats. Foreigners. They come to Dubai to work contract jobs on work visas that can last anywhere from one to fifteen years. Indians, Filipinos, Nigerians, Americans, and many more. They bring with them a web of languages, cultures, worldviews, and skin colors. These people come because their opportunities in Dubai are much greater than at home. Not only are they being paid more in Dubai, but for most, their standard of living is much higher. Unfortunately, regardless of whether or not they can keep extending their work visas, they know that they will eventually have to return to their home country, either from lack of a job or simply old age calling them to retirement.

Despite this, and despite the many difficulties they have as a church to meet every week, Redeemer Church of Dubai is united. They are united not because they are similar in background or because it's an easy thing to do, but because they have been radically changed by the person of Jesus

Christ and are united in Him. The Apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians points to the unity that is found in the body of Christ; he tells the believers there that they are to strive for unity because,

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. . . Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

(Ephesians 4:1-6, 15-16. ESV).

Paul is pointing to the fact that, as Christians, our individual identity melts away in importance in light of the importance of Christ. It is Christ who is the most important, and as members of His body, we are called to fight for unity and love. Redeemer Church of Dubai gets this. They have been able to be united as Christians as a body despite the many challenges that the melting pot of Dubai poses for them. This is no miracle, but simple obedience to the Word.

Over Christmas break, I did my GNU internship with Redeemer, and I was able to experience their unity first hand. I was welcomed into a staff of 25 people made up of 12 nationalities, both genders, and a variety of ages. The staff had no office to work in so we

would work together in hotel restaurants and coffee shops, using the free WiFi and bathrooms. On most days, a dozen of us would work on one large table at our favorite hotel restaurant, surrounded by tourists eating English breakfasts while we typed away on our laptops, discussing bulletin designs and the vision for the women's ministry. Despite only being in the country for six weeks, I have never felt so welcomed. The staff at Redeemer is a microcosm of the church as a whole. The staff have unity of vision and unity in relationships that pierces through their cultural differences. I can fondly remember a staff meeting where we opened by going around the table, each reading a verse from Psalm 150. As we went around, we heard a soft spoken Argentinian administration assistant, a biblical counselor from North Carolina with just a touch of ‘drawl’, a Pastoral resident from Southern India, and me, an intern from Wisconsin, all joining together in saying, “Praise Him!”

Redeemers’ unity has many benefits, but one of the biggest is that they as a community are infectious! Redeemer has been able to plant many churches like themselves in both the UAE and neighboring Gulf countries, not because they have used some new church planting strategy or vision, but because they have simply strived to be the biblical church. They have strived to fulfil the great commission by making disciples who make disciples of every tribe, tongue, and nation. Amidst the sea of worldviews and skin colors bursting the seams of ministry in Dubai, they are united in Christ.



David Rodrigo, Dubai skyline



Joshua Kueber, Grande Mosque

HOW DO YOU BUILD COMMUNITY?

GNU's students and faculty were asked this question
after chapel. Here are their responses. . .



“Through using good
tone.”

- F

“Great personal hygiene.”

- G

“Through my work.”

- N

“Having a value for it.”

- K

“Hospitality.”

- C

“Through coffee.”

- M

“Running club.”

- M

“Talking to people and asking
questions as if you care.”

- F

“Sick dad jokes.”

- D



“Physical Contact.”

- G

“Hanging out at GNU to
study.”

- M

“One-on-one conversation.”

- S

“Inviting people over to my
house.”

- M

Professor & Pupil

In our recurring "Professor & Pupil" section we ask members of the GNU community to write on a common topic. This issue is focused on. . .

YOUTH MINISTRY



APOLOGETICS AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Dr. Craig Ferderer

The old adage states, “You can make statistics say anything.” But when multiple research projects over nearly two decades produce the same type of information, one begins to believe that those results have credence.

One such category of statistics relates to how few adults and teenagers in America now have a biblical worldview and a related statistic of the departure of teenagers from the local church. In 2003, George Barna’s research center cited the statistic that only 4% of adult Americans had a biblical worldview. Sixteen years later, in a new survey, Barna and Impact 360 Institute cite the same percentage for today’s teenagers. This should not surprise us. If adults and parents hold such a view (or ‘non-view’) we would expect this to be mirrored in their children. Neither should it surprise us that current trends reveal approximately 60% of teenagers who attend church will depart. The connection of belief and resulting action is obvious.

Multiple reasons have been proposed for the decline in a biblical worldview and the resulting departure from the local church, but I would like to focus on one that keeps being repeated by teenagers themselves. It could be summarized as follows: ‘I have questions that are not getting answered by my parents, Sunday school teachers, and youth workers.’ Various surveys have

identified the types of theological questions with which teenagers wrestle. These are often the top questions identified by adults as well, suggesting that the church at large has not done a thorough enough job of addressing these issues, and we’re reaping the results in the next generations. Here are three of the most repeated questions:

- 1) How could a good and powerful God allow so much evil in the world? If He is good, He would not want evil to happen, and if He is all-powerful, He would do something about it.
- 2) Is Jesus really God, and is belief in Him the only way to heaven? How can every other religion be wrong?
- 3) How can faith in God coexist with scientific facts?

For parents, children’s ministry leaders, youth workers and lead pastors, these are questions to which we must give logical, thoughtful answers. Questions like these are legitimate. Apologetics must be an aspect of robust parenting and the church’s ministry to our children and teenagers. This has always been the case. The Gospels themselves were an apologetic from the first disciples to their world and the generations to follow. Let us be faithful to discuss the hard questions and pass on God’s truth to our generation and the next.



Michael Morse, Two Person Standing Near White Church



You can follow Kaleb's art on Instagram @
[kalebbarkmanphotography](#) &
[bicycle_productions](#)



ART IN YOUTH MINISTRY

Kaleb Barkman

When I began studying youth ministry at Moody Bible Institute in 2017 I felt a conflict of passions. My love for filmmaking seemed to clash with my desire to see the local Church raise up a godly generation. The more I studied, the more my love for filmmaking grew and the more passionate I became about youth ministry. The growing desires made me feel pulled in two separate directions. When Moody shut its doors I began to question if I was actually called to youth ministry. I strongly considered leaving bible college to pursue a degree in film or animation.

As my love for filmmaking grew, my appreciation of art as a whole grew. I realized that I liked all kinds of art, not just video. I picked up writing, photography, and drawing. My college writing course with Dr. Jennifer Mills required me to do something ministry related on social media, so I started an Instagram account focused on reaching teens through poetry and photography. It gave me a chance to publicly express the things I was learning about God, and I loved it. Somewhere between Dr. Micheal Orr's Verbal Communication class and Dr. Craig Federer's Teaching Adolescence class, I started to see that art could also help my preaching.

I began to realize that art could be a powerful tool to teach scripture to teens. For the first time I saw how the Bible was filled with poetry and narratives, and it was beautiful. As my viewpoint shifted I started seeing art as an asset

to youth ministry instead of a hindrance. Maybe pictures, videos, and poetry could all be part of reaching youth with the gospel. This shift in perspective is what persuaded me to stay at GNU after Moody closed. I realized learning about God's word would not only help me be a better youth pastor, it would help me be a more honest artist.

Over the past two years I have used art to reach numerous youth. My Instagram account has given me an opportunity to share biblical truth through captioning pictures I take around town. I have also begun to use short stories, poetry, and drawings to introduce the emotion of Bible passages in my public teaching. Not only is this a way to make my sermons more interesting, but it is also a way to help students put themselves in the original audience's shoes.

Art, like sports or party games, is a way to connect with teens. It is an avenue that can be used to reach students with the gospel. Not every youth ministry major has a passion for art, but I hope this article inspires those that do to use it for discipling teens.

*"Maybe pictures, videos,
and poetry could all be
part of reaching teens with
the gospel."*

MEME-ING RESPONSIBLY

C. J. Elliott

In the last three decades or so, the term "meme" has become synonymous with funny-- captioned images like "Ancient Aliens Crazy Hair Guy" that pop up on your social media feed or are sent to you by friends as jokes. Memes have infected our social mindset so deeply that we now use them as forms of everyday communication in our relationships, but how did we get here? From a professor's PowerPoint slide to the cringey group chat you were graciously included in by your church small-group, memes have transformed our understanding

Peter, James, and John at the Transfiguration (Circa 32 A.D., colorized)



of how communication and internet culture has impacted our society. So how do we update our communication in an ever-growing society that has adopted memes? This is a challenge that is ripe for the active and engaged church of today, a challenge to memeing responsibly.

The term meme is often credited as coined by Sir. Richard Dawkins in his book, *The Selfish Gene* back in 1976. Dawkins, English ethologist, evolutionary biologist, author, and Oxford's

prized professor wrote of memes in terms of evolutionary biology and reproduction. To Dawkins, the term was a way of explaining how one generation obtains, applies, and reproduces ideas from the prior generation. The goal of his work was to express how an idea transmits from one mind to another all in hope of passing along these refined ideas to the new generations to follow. Dawkins thought he had a windfall theory that described how language and concepts were transmitted, almost as if he unpacked the mysteries of epistemology and learning theory. We have witnessed, as well as influenced, the transformation from a socio-evolutionary theory into captioned internet jokes and satire. Dawkins never expected his idea to become baptized by the technology of the internet so deeply. His original idea was quite distant from what we know today. Dawkins may not like it, but memes have grown beyond his grasp, and they will continue to grow.

This growth finds itself presented as society adapts to more image-based, image-biased, social media. It would only make sense that meme culture would adapt to follow the image trend. A meme in today's terms is described as "amateur media artifacts, extensively remixed and recirculated by different participants on social media networks," according to Ryan Milner, a professor in Communications (2018). Artifact is a strange term to throw at people. It rings of old dirty pottery and bones to be unearthed by archeologists in the high deserts of the world. The artifact is the meme (image) itself, whether it is the original post, the remix, or even a new version of the meme. To help explain this "remixing" concept, please enjoy our beloved professor Dr. Floyd Schneider who has become immortalized into two different artifacts (versions) of the same meme.

Internet memes often grow in context when they are shared between people. If one group of



students taking Dr. Schneider's classes this semester contextualized a different word than aliens into this meme, the meme becomes relevant to that group of students. Contextualizing a meme is to remix it, adding to its caption or editing it in some way. The key to understanding a meme is understanding the context, knowing what is added to it over time. Any studious Bible student has the phrase "context is key" branded into their minds, and the lesson is true here. The value of knowledge is knowing the context of what is being shared. Creating a new context can pose a danger. Imagine posting the Floydian meme above but adding a racial slur in place of the word "Aliens." The ability for any internet denizen to add to the context means the message of the meme can change with everyone who shares it. For a church media intern, who might be tasked with creating images for the ministries' social media accounts, this can be quite a risky venture. Many churches may choose to avoid memes because of their easy editability, but this practice is simply avoidance instead of engagement. The church has a command to communicate the Gospel to everyone everywhere, which includes the young netizens of today.

Communicating online is a hard task, one that is often delegated to professionals who train in crisis communication and public relations for large organizations. One such professional, Gretchen McCulloch, an internet linguist, shows that as "we foster shared cultural references, we draw lines between insiders who get our references and outsiders who don't." As Christian communicators, we need to take this warning to heart. As we communicate truth, we run the risk of holding a monopoly on the insider information of the Gospel. The lesson here is about translation and honesty.

If we don't translate the big theological terms of the Bible into language that makes sense to our audience, we become monopolizers of the life-giving truth. This concern is discussed further by Lewie Warren in her review of Helmut Thielicke's book featured elsewhere in this issue; it's worth the read. If we seek to pick up the language of our culture, we must learn how to communicate the Gospel through the language of memes, and we need to speak in a manner that shows how personal Jesus is, not how complicated theology is.

One aspect of communicating with memes is that when you share a meme, it becomes personalized by whoever receives it. The nature of memes is one of open interpretation, meaning the recipient unpacks the context of the meme when they look at it. If we send the aliens meme to a student who knows Dr. Schneider, we can trust that part of that unpacking is understanding the nature of Dr. Schneider and his personality. Dr. Schneider is a part of the context, and, thus, knowing him helps define the meaning of the meme. As the recipient unpacks the meme, they decide if they will share it further. Choosing to transmit it to a further audience, the context of Dr. Schneider's face on an otherwise understandable meme quickly becomes unfamiliar. The difference is knowing the subject of the meme, whose face makes or breaks the message the recipient receives.

A surprising benefit of this personal nature is the almost immediate transmissibility of memes. If someone views the meme in a personal manner, believing it to reflect their context, they will share it further with others who might share the sender's context. It is virtually impossible to control the context to which a meme will be remixed. This

curse is also a blessing as it enables the meme to travel wide and far. For the church, the goal of creating memes should be that of sending clear Gospel messages that can be taken to the far corners of the internet. In a manner, we are already doing this by creating images that have scripture on them with beautiful backgrounds or meaningful imagery. These images may seem slightly dated, but the reality is that these, too, are memes. If we switch from scenery to "template" memes, we bring scripture to the forefront of digital culture. We begin to baptize culture into scripture and contextualize the Gospel into the language of today.

If our beloved Dr. Schneider's meme template is altered by changing "Aliens" to something less kind, it has the potential to send a damaging message. Such a message is then directly associated with Dr. Schneider's face. Ouch! The issue here is that creating memes, if done responsibly, means citing them appropriately, and to the business world that means obtaining the correct license for the content. Being unable to obtain the proper licenses is a scary reality for content creators, as almost everything can be fair game for a copyright lawsuit these days.

To help combat the issue the European Parliament adopted Articles 11 and 13 of The Internet Copyright Law, on the 15th of April 2019. The changes enacted by this law are rather complex, but in short, the law aims to support the content creator whilst allowing some form of remixing of that content. The guidelines on what exactly is and is not infringement now follow what one is using unoriginal content for. If you are doing it as quotation, criticism, review, caricature, parody, and pastiche which is artful imitation, then you're off the hook. Memes might fall under parody or even pastiche, but they could also sometimes miss that mark by a narrow margin. That margin is the line of defense some small content creators have against the impending lawsuits of the world. International law is confusing and outside the scope of this article. I have found that British Youtuber Tom Schott has a wonderful series on the subject matter if you are so interested to dive deeper. The bottom line remains, if the government takes memes seriously, why would not the church?

According to the current edition of the Modern Language Association's rulebook for acceptable writing and citations, the rules of citing memes are almost the same as citing any other work.

If you have the title of the meme, either official or created by the one doing the citing, a short description, the website you found it on, the date it was created or published on the website, and when you retrieved the meme, you have all you need. While this may work for academic papers regarding meme theory or memeology, it misses the core issues previously stated. It fails to address the remixing issue of memes, and it fails to point to the proper creator of the meme. To express why this is important, we will look to the world of art. When authenticating any museum-quality work, it is imperative that the creator of the work in question is not only identified but that the history of that piece is verified. If authenticity is ever established for any work of art, a hefty price tag is likely to follow. Identifying authors and verifying history are two aspects that escape internet memes. Memes exist inside our culture differently than artwork does, even if memes can be very much like art. In an effort to describe how poorly constructed the current requirements are for meme citation, I have undertaken an effort to cite fully the meme that opened this article, the three professors in sunglasses.

First, what is the title? According to the MLA standard, a title can be given or created for a meme if one could not be identified before the date of recording. This means titles for memes can be added by anyone. The meme above could be titled "Peter, James, and John at the Transfiguration" because that is the caption within the image. If accepted, this would mean the meme is self-naming, but the original image of the three professors could exist somewhere with a name of its own. The replicatory nature of memes allows for this type of remixing. Still, the reality is that such a remix and renaming are confusing. The original creator of the meme in question, Turner Perkins, has not given the meme a title. So the meme does, in fact, exist in a nameless state. Titleless or unnamed can be a proper grounding for the work's name, but also the other names submitted by the community also become valid as they don't replace an existing title.

With some form of title identified, the second issue is finding some source of the image. Do we consult the original photographer or the original poster of the meme? Did someone create the meme and desire to be identified as the author? If we think back to the EU copyright law uproar, one becomes quite cautious about misidentifying the author or photographer. Churches are rather

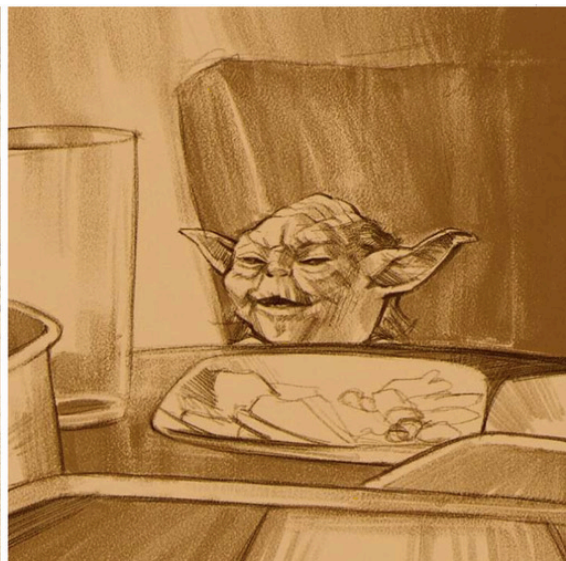
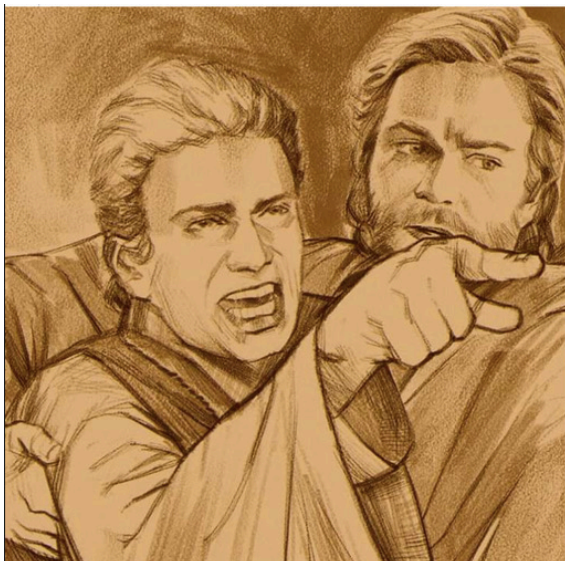


kind to each other about using different concepts of forums for communicating the Gospel. I have never heard of a church worship band getting into legal trouble from using a new Hillsong track for a Sunday morning worship set. Memes don't live in the same climate, but church memes could intentionally work together to create synergy. For our beloved professors in sunglasses, the photographer is lost to history. Mr. Perkins, the meme's creator, graciously grants permission to use the edited image.

Focusing once again on the meme, "The Transfiguration," what about the subjects of the meme? There are three prominent members of academia presented in the above image. Two gave permission for use of this meme in this publication; the third has not yet responded. We may never hear back from him. According to the MLA standards on meme citation, an author such

as myself does not officially need permission to share a meme. Having the source website and publisher of the website is sufficient. This might be a loophole to the Internet Image and Copyright Law of the European Union, but it is helpful. Citation rules need to be reformed, as do broad laws that attempt to police the internet's language. Memeing responsibly means taking into account how the meme's remixed message reflects on the subjects of the meme. In this instance, we need to caution our creation of memes. If we create memes that feature prominent members of our community, we should understand what risks we run with their reputation attached to our transmission.

Consider a wise word from a Great Northern professor, who prefers to be anonymous, included in a meme, "Be ethical in the creation and use of memes; don't steal it from others; don't



do anything that's racially charged, generally insensitive, or if you do so, be aware of your bias and know your expected responses." This quote came from a professor who is well acquainted with antics for better classroom experiences. His role on campus is not only a well-appreciated one but one that balances out our collective worries with memorial quotes and jokes. In preparation for the interview, he admitted that he needed to study up on the topic of memes. Memes are not a frequent form of communication for him. When asked about his attempts to use memes in the classroom as teaching aids, he remarked that he couldn't remember using them before. Aside from a specific type of image, he did recall using other visual aids, saying, "I think that a well-placed picture is fine." He is cautious in the choice of the picture that he hangs up before large groups of students, knowing that legacy is something that can't be changed once it is set.

When asked about using memes in the future, he remarked in the affirmative but added, "If I was doing a lesson, if there was any way I could have a closed circuit where it would not go out into a greater context, you don't need to worry about retransmission." Retransmission is a scary word these days, the thing that is transmitted from point A might be vastly different from whatever was received at point C. The teaching faculty at Great Northern University are not afraid to address the issues of the world, and sometimes that takes a closed door. As far as memes go, our interviewee seems to be open to the idea of using them in the future.

We have a responsibility to communicate truth, and we need to do that to the best of our abilities. That means expanding our repertoire during a time of severe need. If we curb our message in fear of some future retransmission and mixing, then we let the future control us today. We should take the risk seriously, take it for what it is-- a potential worry not an actual reality. We need to know what the finer limits of our communication can be. If we are aware, we can act proactively in a positive manner. This

is more of mastery than it is accommodation to the world. You can master your art of communicating, memes included, and show the world that there is still something positive to say. What you have to say matters, and your communication might be temporary; it has impact when you say it aloud first to yourself and then to the world.

One last note:

When I originally wrote this piece, it was in a world where it seems the Church avoided interacting with the world on social media, specifically in using memes. I wrote this piece both as part challenge to and part persuasion in communicating in a beautiful digital culture. There is no way to express this other than to say my goals have been met. Met even before I could get this article finished! The Church is online now. The world turns, and no one individual can halt its progress. The idea of a "new normal" has set in with the advent of Covid-19, and we have witnessed a mass migration of creative energy into the creation of new memes. These memes respond to the more significant problem of isolation that we face as a human collective. To say this bluntly, the Church is making memes now, and it's not just a coping mechanism. These are not cringey, they are not of ill taste, and most specifically they don't thrust overtones of theology on a population that is currently hurting. The Church has shifted to using the internet for the advancement of the Gospel, and I am wondering whether this makes my effort into a history piece or still a challenge. This article's underlying aim is to equip the reader with a desire and vision to create positive and helpful memes. In essence, this translates to equipping ministries around us to do a better job. The idea of empathy is not hard to grasp when the whole world is thrust into the same calamity. The challenge isn't whether or not we relate to the pain, but rather in how we go about talking about it. Memes may be a temporary beginning to the conversation, but they lighten the tone.

OUR STAFF



Lewie Warren, managing editor, writer, design



C. J. Elliott, staff writer



Dr. Kay Tronsen, faculty advisor



Joshua Lee Kueber, staff writer and design

The staff of *Cultivate* thank you for reading and for your support. Let us know if you have any suggestions or thoughts by emailing us at

ktropsen@greatnorthernu.org



Photo by David Oakill on Unsplash

Great Northern University
Fall Semester begins
Monday, August 17, 2020