

IMAGO DEI

THE WORSHIP ISSUE

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WELCOME!

Welcome to the new look of Cambrian Presbytery Youth Insider! This month's issue features excerpts from The Observer, Thoughts and Quotes, and new content from Matthew Woodall!

Out of the Box

Courtesy of The Observer, stories of congregations who brought new energy to their ministries by moving outside of their comfort zone.

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Rethinking Worship

Matthew Woodall, the Presbytery Youth Minister, looks at worship from the perspective of a new generation, and offers insight on how worship might be changing.

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Youth and Young Adults at the February 2009 Presbytery Event worship as a group.

What is Imago Dei?

Imago Dei is the new name for the newsletter formerly known as Cambrian Youth Ministry Insider. Coming from Latin, Imago Dei literally means Image of God. This new name reflects the idea that we are all created in the image of God, and the whole body of God is just as important as any one of its parts.

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So, welcome!! It's good to be able to share with you and to be able to hear what is going on in your congregations. We're always looking for new articles and resources, so feel free to submit your thoughts, concerns, comments and writings to cpyouthminister@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you!

Out of the Box - Spirituality on Tap

At Molly Malone's Irish Pub, there's more on tap than the usual tonight. At 7:30pm, eight people sit in the fireside alcove. Soon there are 20. "Is this the church group?" they ask. Yes, it's Generation Nouveaux from Hillhurst United in Calgary's trendy Kensington district.

"Gen Nou," as it's nicknamed is for "18-to-38-year-olds" to meet others in fun and meaningful conversation." Above the roar of television hockey and loud music in the next room, Lisa MacBeth offers an icebreaker. The icebreaker helps people connect and makes everyone laugh. Two participants make the startling discovery that they have both worked in Mexican orphanages.

The server takes orders for beer, soft drinks, fish and chips; a candy jar travels up and down the long wooden table. Rev. John Pentland distributes paper, invites people to imagine their lives

as a river, and to map on it meaningful moments and important people. Once done, 10 conversations drupt. Life stories emerge, celebrations are shared, stumbling blocks examined. The energy is high.

MacBeth is passionate about Gen Nou. "I think this is the best thing going. it's important for young adults to have a place to talk about things that matter - relationships work issues, travelling," she says. "If other congregations value 20-and 30-year olds, they need to find out what young people are looking for. We want to do meaningful, powerful things. We have powerful things to contribute to the church community, but it takes a lot to hold our attention."

Gen Nou has been meeting now for two years. The core of the group is the same, but every month there are new faces. This age group is a busy one, so travel, work and the pressures of

parenting mean that people can't always attend.

"There is a sense that the church is trying to evolve. It has a unique vibe," Kate Ing, an oil company employee, reflects. "It's not overly structured, but seeks to bring God into our lives. The messages are understandable, inspirint and practical. I was raised in the Catholic Church where there's more routine. Then I attended an evangelical church. Hillhurst is different. It's open-minded. You are asked to use your skills, find your own niche, but come as you are."

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Worship Thoughts and Quotes - Part 1

Music helps me express emotions I didn't even know I had. Jessica, 16; quoted in "Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens"; edited by Dorothy C. Bass and Don C. Richter.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it. Let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord. - Psalm 96:11-12

The great thing is prayer. Prayer itself. If you want a life of prayer, the way to get it is by praying....You start where you are and you deepen what you already have. - Thomas Merton, quoted in "Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens"; edited by Dorothy C. Bass and Don C. Richter

Lord of all pots and pans and things....Make me a saint by getting

meals and washing up the plates! - Brother Lawrence, quoted in "Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens"; edited by Dorothy C. Bass and Don C. Richter.

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." - Luke 11:1

Out of the Box - One Church, Three Styles

Outside St. Mary's Road United in Winnipeg, the sign reads: "An intentional life/a stubborn hope/a journey of faith." Accompanying the words is a picture of a child, her back to the viewer and arms outstretched. She is walking along a slightly winding road that disappears around a bend in the distance.

"The motif of the journey has defined St. Mary's Road," says Don Smirl, a member of the Congregation's band.

The present congregation was born five years ago from the amalgamation of three congregations situated along a five-kilometre stretch of St. Mary's Road. At the time, all three were struggling with questions of congregational survival and their visions for the future. Within the churches, a group of young adults was discussing doing church differently, and one congregation was trying different forms of contemporary worship. As people listened for God's calling, they discerned the need for a variety of worship styles. The sale of two buildings created resources for renovating the third to provide alternate worship spaces.

Sunday mornings, churchgoers at St. Mary's choose from three distinct worship services - or "paths" as they're called. They're

offered concurrently, in different parts of the building so the congregation has a common worship, and to make it easier to schedule volunteers for the children.

The Tree of Life is a traditional service, held in the sanctuary, with organist, choir and standard liturgy. Rev. Susan Tough says there is a "pastoral component" to the Tree path, and believes that longtime members of the United Church should be able to worship in a way that has been meaningful to them. Among 100 worshippers at the Tree service, there are about six families with children and a few people in their 50s and 60s. The majority are over 70.

The Journey Path is a contemporary service held in a hall with a stage, large screen, and sound and projection technology. It makes regular use of video clips but avoids traditional church jargon and liturgy. "The working assumption is that most of those in the room have never heard the Scripture before," says Rev. Russell Wardell. The Journey is an "intelligent worship experience," he adds, with music that "touches the heart." It connects faith to "the world around us." Adam Erhard, a member of the band in his mid-30s, says the services "are relevant to what's happening in my life, to

what's happening in the world." About 170 people attend, most in their 30s and 40s.

The third path is Rainbow, a service designed for children combining worship and small-group time. A Bible story is told, sometimes with puppets or drama. After a short discussion and some singing, the children move into age-based groups to continue exploring the scriptural theme through conversation, crafts or drama. About 45 children and 15 youth regularly attend Rainbow.

"St. Mary's Road is intentionally flexible. "No model is the correct model for all time," says Tough. "It may be the correct model for just six months. We try to be open to the unfolding of the Spirit in this time."

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Worship is a way of seeing the world in the light of God. - Abraham Joshua Heschel

What I Wish You Could See...

Many things I see, many things I wish...I wish you could see what I see...

I wish you could see the look on a young person's face as they walk into a room where they are accepted for who they are...

I wish you could see how much it changes a young person to find out that they can do something they never thought they could do...

I wish you could see the delight in a young person's eyes to have discovered something new in the Bible...

I wish you could see the joy on a young person's face as they discover that they truly are worth loving...

I wish you could see young people sharing, living, moving, breathing, and being together; and the serenity they find in their shared lives...

I wish you could see the simple happiness in a young person's eyes when they are simply with the people they love...

I wish you could see that presence means more to young

people than programming...

I wish you could see the excitement and joy on a young person's face when they encounter the Holy for the first, or second, or thousandth time...

There are many things I wish you could see...but I wish I could see the delight on God's face at the simple proclamation "I Believe" when it comes from a young person's heart...

Book Review - Way to Live

Way to Live is a unique and exciting book to read for anyone who is a young person, or is involved in the lives of young people. Edited by Dorothy C. Bass and Don C. Richter, Way to Live is written by small groups comprised of a teenager or small group of teens, who are then paired up with adult mentors to explore a specific topic.

With topics ranging from bodies, to music, to stuff, to prayer, this book provides a unique and fascinating look at how these groups engaged and explored their topics, then

brought them back to the larger group and shared their learnings, excitement, and fascination at the wide variety of Christian thought and practice.

The chapters themselves are excellently written, with lots of useful information, and an engaging and attractive layout. The book presents an organic, wholistic feel, with insights from both the teens and their adult mentors coupled with quotes and insights from both historic figures and contemporary teens.

Way to Live is a book that every church

should have in their library, every parent should have on their bookshelf, every teen should have on their night table, and every person who is engaged in ministry should have in their hands. It can serve for not only individual study, but also as the basis for a Christian Development class with teens, a confirmation class, or a small group study program. Of all the books I've read lately, this is the most versatile with new insights for everyone who reads it.

Way to Live is available through United Church Resource Distribution, Chapters/ Coles/ Indigo Bookstores, and Amazon, and is published by Upper Room Press.



Rethinking Worship

I am currently enrolled in the Lay Worship Leader's program, run through Calling Lakes Centre. Before I get too far into this article, I need to say that the LWL is not a bad program, it is perhaps misnamed as it is more similar to a preaching program than a worship leadership program; but overall it is a good program and well worth taking.

While I have no quarrel with the program, I am also unsettled because it takes those who are leaders in their congregation, and instead of opening them to new ways of thinking about worship, it reinforces stereotypes that worship happens only on Sunday mornings. We seem to be solely focused on the communal worship time, and not on the possibility that worship could be something more than what happens in church.

Abraham Joshua Heschel says "Worship is a way of seeing the world in the light of God." For youth and young adults, this is especially true. While the importance of worship in community never diminishes, perhaps we need to re-evaluate our idea of community.

If community is in fact a group of people sharing a common goal, and sharing life together, then perhaps community isn't solely found in

church on Sunday Morning. If worship is in fact a lifestyle, or an offering of your best self to God, then maybe worship doesn't necessarily mean listening to a sermon and singing hymns.

Maybe community can be found in a locker room on Sunday morning, or in a group of friends gathered to share in life, laughter, and love on a Saturday night, or in a meeting of two people for deep and influential conversation.

Maybe worship can be giving of your best self as part of a choir, or a sports team, or in choosing to be in community on Saturday night instead of Sunday morning. Maybe worship is more than sermons and songs, maybe it is about recognizing what you are good at, and doing that to the best of your abilities, knowing that in doing so you are giving your best to God.

Our role as spiritual mentors and leaders is not to drag young people to find God in our buildings, but instead to help them be open to the places that God is already present in their lives. Perhaps its not about getting them to come and join us, but instead joining them to say "Did you know that God is already here, in your life, right now? Come on, lets find the places where the Sacred life meets your life."

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