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SemChronicles (Tyndale Seminary), 4, Issue 7 (March 2000)

SEMChronicles

March 2000

Volume 4 Issue 7

The Arts and Christian Communities

by Sandra Rayner



In one of my classes, someone asked, "Should we be involved in ministry which includes arts like dance and contemporary music? If we are involved with the arts are we not becoming "like the world" by pandering to our culture?" This article is about the many conversations surrounding these important questions.

Often at the beginning of this discussion we encounter the question, "What is the relationship between Christianity and culture?" This question has been asked for centuries; it preoccupied the early Church. Do you view culture as dangerous? Do you see culture as a frontier to be transformed by Christ? Perhaps you're asking, what's culture got to do with it?

Clifford Geertz defined culture as a system of shared meanings. Our culture shapes our worldview. From this worldview come our beliefs and from our beliefs come our actions. Culture ascribes values. It teaches us what is beautiful, what is ugly or what is important. What is important in Canadian culture? Is it money? success? As a Canadian, is it better to make waves or not?

Communication is the exchange of messages using the shared meanings of our culture. The way we understand one another is coloured by our culture. Can you think of a time when you meant one thing and it was taken to mean something else? We live in many cultural units: our family, gender, generation, and church family are all different sub-cultures. There are complex rules surrounding how we communicate in a particular cultural group.

The arts have their own communication rules which are often different than the rules of church cultures. In a church culture, emotions may be viewed as undesirable; the arts often evoke emotional responses. The body may be considered a source or cause of evil; the body is an integral part of many art forms. At times, what is new is preferred over what is traditional; C. S. Lewis called this chronological snobbery. Other church families may view change as

suspicious. This can be helpful, and protect a church from Corinthian craziness, or it may be unhelpful if 'don't change' becomes the eleventh commandment. What are the rules in your church family? How do these communication rules effect the way people respond to the arts?

How we hear a message reflects our diversity as individual people. We learn in different ways. Some of us are more visual and learn by seeing; others prefer learning by hearing, or learning by doing. The arts impact people in different ways because of the different ways we learn.

Jesus used stories to communicate with people. During the story of the Good Samaritan, we are shown both what it means and what it looks like to be someone's neighbour. The listener can imagine what a neighbour should be like. Narratives also invite the listener's participation. When Jesus asks, "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?", we want to answer, "THE SAMARITAN!"

God creates and He is creative. Therefore, we have an inheritance of creativity. The arts are a form of communication which may support or challenge cultural values. Recently, a piece of art censored at this school was the image of an aborted baby. When Paul said to think on the noble or the beautiful, he may not have meant to think on these things to the exclusion of certain ugly realities of the world. Maybe you agree with the censoring of that painting. Whatever your opinion, such artistic communication invites us to think critically and that is useful in a world which would have us follow rather than think.

Creativity is a important gift and tool. Yet why must creativity always be seen in such a utilitarian light? Yes, we can use the arts to provoke discussion and to communicate powerfully, but perhaps the arts exist simply for our enjoyment and the pleasure of our Father.

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Cultural Questions

by Heather Weir, editor

How should Christians engage North American culture? The more I try to answer that question, the more questions I have. It is difficult to engage our culture, but unless we do we are neither salt nor light. If we cannot ask hard questions in seminary, where can we ask them?

Many North American Christians have retreated into their own comfortable sub-culture. This sub-culture is often a cheap imitation of the pop culture it condemns. Do Christian artists engage the wider culture, or does this extensive sub-culture limit them to preaching to the choir? How supportive are we of artists who do attempt to address those outside the faith? If Christian artists must only address the Christian community, must Christian teachers teach only in Christian schools? Where does the segregation end? Are we cutting ourselves off from Canadian society?

It would be nice if all the right answers to these and other challenging questions were just given to us. But they are not. If we are to go from seminary and effectively minister to people in the world we must struggle to find a balance between relating to the world, yet being separate from it. We cannot look to other people to give us easy answers; we

must learn to think critically and wrestle with these difficult questions ourselves. However, we cannot just ask questions, we must search for answers and try to live them out.

To find answers we should begin by listening to what scripture says about issues. We also cannot ignore what other people have written and thought about culture and Christianity. Discussions with others who are dealing with similar issues can further help us to ask the right questions or even see situations from a different perspective. The answers to our questions will come from prayerful consideration of all these sources.

Christian leaders should learn to think critically then teach others to think critically. Christian people engage Canadian culture daily at work and at school. They all face different situations and different questions as they attempt to live out the gospel. We cannot provide the answers they need for every situation, rather we must provide them with the means of making appropriate decisions. We cannot be salt and light in the world without dealing with tough issues and questions about the interface between faith and culture. If we fail to engage our culture, we have failed to preach the gospel.

Nuked Hearts?

by Selena Liu

The other day I was looking in my fridge, contemplating what I could grab and eat to stave off my hunger for awhile. I came across a pizza pop and said, "Naw, that'll take 2 minutes in the microwave" and I grabbed a piece of fruit instead. One bite in, I said to myself, "Yikes! Now 2 minutes is too long for me?" I remember way back when my brother and I got our first home computer. It ran on audio tape. My brother would press play on the machine, then calmly say, "Hey, wanna go watch TV? After the Twilight Zone's finished, the computer will be ready." Today, 30 seconds is like a lifetime. We don't want to take the time to do anything.

How does this attitude now cross over into what we see as "vision" for the future? If you still don't know it yet, our theme this year has been "Set Our Hearts on Fire." I have a hunch that subconsciously what we mean by that is "Yeah God, light a match and throw it on me NOW." We expect then to immediately burst into flame and have that heart of fire we want. We don't want to contemplate that it may be more of a

spark from below, that twitches and moves, until it slowly begins to rise up within us. In this "microwave" culture, we no longer value or remember that God works most powerfully in those who persevere. In Dutch Sheets' book Intercessory Prayer, I was moved by his story about a woman who had been in a coma for a year and a half. When someone pleaded with him to pray for her, he went to her bedside and prayed. They were told there was no hope, but he ended up there every week for a whole year. She eventually woke up and miraculously, none of the damage predicted had happened. God provided a miracle, but not instantaneously. This story convicted me. How long would I have prayed? When would I have given up? Let us not forget that most answers to prayer do not come as instant miracles, but through the fighting of faith and PATIENCE. And through that process, God will fan into flame that love and trust in Him that we desire to burn within us. We want hearts that are on FIRE, not nuked.

Dance and Worship

by K. V. Robinson

“Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre” - Psalm 149:3

I have a great passion for dance. My mother tells me that I began to ask her if I could take ballet lessons when I was three years old. I asked so much that she finally gave in when I was four. I then went on to get a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from York University. It hasn't been until recent years, however, that I have really explored the amazing spiritual potential of dance, and truly integrated it with my faith. I have begun to choreograph dances to both contemporary and traditional Christian music. I have also choreographed movement to The Lord's Prayer.

One amazing thing about dance is the freedom you feel when you express emotions such as joy or even anger in a physical manner. Using our whole bodies to express ourselves involves a greater depth of experience. To pray The Lord's Prayer through movement is to pray in a whole new way, and bring a new experience to the words. To dance the Psalms is to experience the essence of the Psalms; it is to begin to fill in the blanks that are too difficult for words to express. Not only are the Psalms rich with words of praise to God, but they are also rich with words of lament and suffering. Both of these extremes of human experience can be expressed through dance. Dance can help us to understand the Psalms in a deeper way. Dance can help us express our own emotions through the words of the Psalms.



Dance can be as simple as the movement expressed in Psalm 134 - “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD.” It could also include dancing for joy by yourself in your living room while listening to songs of praise. If you have a favourite Psalm, try making up gestures or simple movements that relate to the words, or how the words make you feel. Then do the movements as you recite the Psalm to yourself. Think about how this intensifies the message of the Psalm as you internalize it through the combination of memorizing the words and expressing them with movement. This exercise can be done with Psalms of praise and lament. To express sorrow, fear, or anger through clenched fists or to be bent over with your hands over your face while listening to the words of such a Psalm is to experience it with your whole being. It can be exhausting, but very therapeutic for the soul.

I began a dance group with the Junior and Senior High girls at my church last year. I am helping these young ladies learn that dance can not only be fun, but it can be used to bring praise to God. I choreographed our most recent work to ‘Our God is an Awesome God’ by Rich Mullins. For this song I used modern dance and some sign language. There are so many ways we can use our whole bodies to deepen our experience of worship to God, as well as to interpret Scripture in new ways. May you discover the depth of the art of dance and “offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship” (Romans 12:1).

Student Council Elections

Executive Positions:

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Administrator

Coordinator Positions:

Missions
Cross-Cultural
Prayer
Worship
Social

For more information please see the position descriptions posted in the Seminary Lounge.

Nominations or applications must be completed by Wednesday, March 29, 2000.

Elections will be held the week of April 3-7, 2000

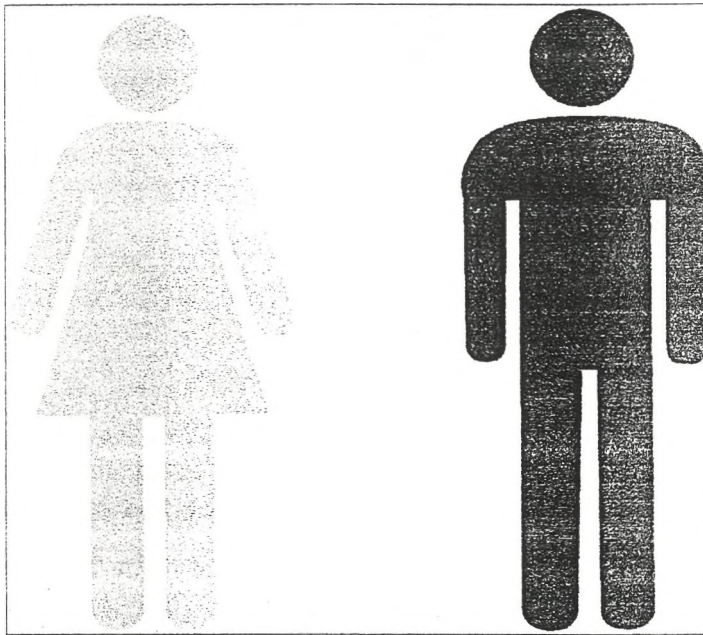
Questions?? Contact Karen Robinson at extension 2703.

Ministry and the Married Man

by J.M.L., Staff Writer

In the last edition of the SEM Chronicles we read about the advantages and disadvantages of being a single person in the ministry. This month's issue will focus on being a married person in the ministry. Believe it or not, there are both advantages and disadvantages to being married while in the ministry. While I believe that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages, I feel that it is necessary to consider both points for those who are considering whether to pursue marriage or not.

I have talked to many fellow seminary students who are married and I asked them how they feel about being married and being in the ministry. The responses I have received (being a married Pastor myself) were what I had expected. The greatest response I received was that men were very pleased to have a loving wife who would encourage, support and pray for them in their ministry. Dr. Matheson insightfully commented that "being married gives me two sets of gifts because my wife has different gifts than I have



and therefore I am able to draw from her gifts." I heard frequently that men thought having a wife who stayed home and raised the children was an even greater blessing. Given somewhat hectic schedule of a pastor, the husband knows that his children are in the best care possible and that his wife is always available to spend time with her husband whenever he has a free afternoon.

I talked with many male married students about this issue, but I was unable to locate any women in ministry with husbands who played a supportive role. Does this mean they do not exist, or did I not search hard enough? I have met many women pastors, and none were married, except a woman who co-pastors with her husband in a Salvation Army Church.

Back to the issue at hand. Not all of the men I talked with commented on having a wife stay at home as a great advantage; but let's face it, I think that most

people would like the idea of having one of the spouses (husband or wife) stay home to take care of their children. Another overwhelming response encouraging marriage while in the ministry was that being married and having children makes it easier to relate to the majority of the people one serves as a pastor. I know that through education and experience one could gain enough knowledge to address issues that they do not have first-hand experience with, but experience in marriage is an asset in ministering to others.

The support of a spouse has advantages, but there are also disadvantages that should be considered. As stated in the articles of last month's issue, being married limits the amount of time available for ministry involvement. Another disadvantage of being married is that many times a church will hire a married man and then expect that his wife will also give many hours of her time to the ministry. This puts pressure on the man's wife to do things that she may not have any interest in.

Husbands and wives can be very supportive in the ministry of their spouse without being directly involved in church activities.

In order for a ministry marriage to be fruitful there must be some major commitments from both parties. The first commitment, which I feel is the most important, is that both man and woman must be willing to commit their lives to the ministry. Serving the Lord is not always easy, serving the Lord as a career can be difficult and it can break up a marriage if the commitment is not mutual. Second, with the demands placed on a person in ministry there MUST be daily time set aside for the husband and wife to spend together talking and praying for one another. Without this time, the pastor (whether husband or wife) can find that they are spending more and more time with church related things and before long they need to reintroduce themselves to their spouse. A third important note to remember is this:

MARRIAGE IS A LIFETIME COMMITMENT. Therefore a pastor must be willing to give up his/her ministry if the spouse feels that it is having a negative impact on their marriage. As important as one's calling to the ministry is, the calling to a marriage is even more important. I am certain that God would be less disappointed if a person were to quit their ministry for their marriage rather than quit their marriage for the sake of ministry.

In my view marriage is a wonderful thing. The love and support of a spouse makes serving in the church a whole lot easier. My wife has sacrificed immensely so that I can fulfill God's calling on my life. Being married has made my role as a pastor somewhat easier because I always have someone that I

can turn to in time of joy and pain. I have a 'built in' accountability partner who knows me very well and does not think I am without fault. I fully believe that marriage has more advantages than disadvantages when it comes to ministry. However, I believe that whether married or not, if you commit your ministry to Christ it will be fruitful and rewarding. Married people, stop feeling sorry for those who are not married, and please stop playing Cupid. If a single person wants your help they will ask. I hope and pray that whether you choose to marry or remain single that "whatever you do (and however you choose to serve God) do it all for the glory of God" 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Ministry and the Married Woman

How many of you are out there - married and in ministry while your husband is not in the ministry? We are a rare breed, and I'd like to address some of the issues I've had to face while being in ministry while married to the best husband in the whole world.

Often, when we speak of women in the ministry, much of the discussion is focused around their ministry. I am so glad that in many places women are continually being encouraged and affirmed in their ministry. There has been evidence of fruitful ministry by women and this has been acknowledged and celebrated.

I would like to suggest that this is logically only half of the discussion. I have noticed that much of the cooking, cleaning, shopping for birthdays and anniversaries, shopping for groceries, laundry, and maintaining family ties falls on the women in most marriages. Caring for children consumes an enormous amount of time. While these things may appear unrelated to our work in the ministry, they are very much related to the number of activities possible in one day!

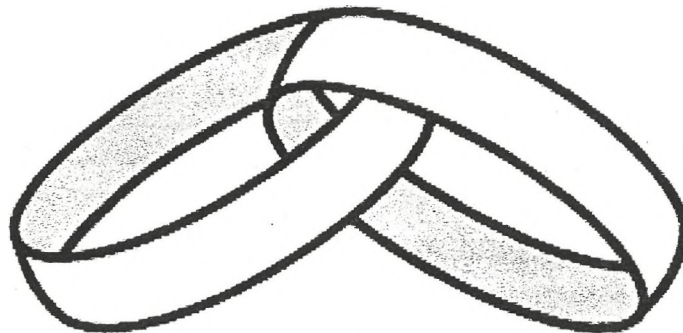
I have spoken to many people about this. One professor of mine told his entire class that we ought

to encourage women in ministry. He openly affirmed that women should "get out there and do all that a man can do." I spoke with him afterward and told him my struggles and the struggles of other women. Would he in the same breath next time also affirm that men

should provide women time to do all that a man can do? My professor was silent on that point. Another professor said a similar thing in class. Again, I mentioned my struggles. He encouraged me, and said that as a married man he needed to be home in the evenings more. I smiled

and thanked him for this acknowledgement of the issue. But my heart said, "*How generous! You're going to be HOME more! Can your wife prepare for and go to a speaking engagement or Bible study freely? Who feeds your kids?*"

This is not just an issue for men in ministry. Many men consider their career to be more important than tedious household affairs. I pray that this has not been a male bashing article. This is not about submission and spiritual headship. I am not a radical feminist. I'm simply asking husbands to provide opportunities for wives to blossom!



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am responding to Mario Gaulin's Letter to the Editor published in the last issue of the SemChronicles.

Like Mario, I serve Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord over all. In my life I try as much as is possible (even though I am prone to failing) to allow the Lord's Word to have full authority in my practice and lifestyle. In my theology (although I see through a glass darkly) I try to sit under the Lord's Word, allowing it to shape what I believe about Him, what I believe about His body and what I believe about the world that He has created.

I love and respect Mario because I know he honestly believes and holds to these things as well. However, we believe that the Lord's Word speaks differently on the issue of women in the family and in the church. I grew up in a denomination where women were not allowed to have authority in the church or in the home. I still live in a family that is complementarian. My brother is pursuing ordination in a complementarian denomination. My personal beliefs have changed in the last ten years. I have struggled to come to an understanding of this question through my study of the Word, and actively engaging serious evangelicals in this debate, both in person and in print. I feel, as I am sure that Mario does, that this is a really important issue. I have come to realize that there are people who truly love the Lord and desire to seek Him on both sides of the debate.

I have recently switched denominations, and have again chosen a denomination that is egalitarian both in its view of male/female relationships and in its practice of ordination. However, my family has not changed. It does not help our family relationship if any member of my family pulls out a Bible and says this is how the Lord made it. We all love the Lord, and acknowledge the authority of his Word, but we honestly believe different things about women and men. It is helpful to dialogue about what we believe, but it is not helpful to bash one another with biblical authority.

I have and will defend Mario's right to speak his mind as a complementarian. I would caution him, however, that I believe he has done a disservice to Christ's kingdom on earth by phrasing his letter as he did. We need to allow for the divergence of opinion that exists in the Lord's church in this matter. In such times as this, we need Christians who will stand together in a culture that really needs to see love and unity between brothers and sisters - NOT hard and fast divisions over disputable issues. Those who take the Word of the Lord seriously have found no consensus on this subject. I was offended by this letter because I felt that it did not allow for this latitude in opinion.

Respectfully your brother in Christ Jesus,
Timothy Ferrier

Student Council Note

An Update From the Treasury

Last month we took up a collection for a missionary in Rwanda named Antoine Rutasiyire who had come on some hard times. I am pleased to announce that we were able to send him a cheque for \$263 through African Enterprise, the agency he is affiliated with. I am sure this was greatly appreciated.

Also this past Christmas you generously gave \$230 for needy students. This amount was matched by the Seminary Student Council and was used to assist four students.

Thanks to all who donated. You made these things happen.

Colin McFarland
Treasurer, Seminary Student Council



Jesus, May He Find You Tonight

by Selena Liu

Last summer, I served in North Africa, in a country where it is forbidden to believe in anything but Islam.

July 27, 1999

La Coniche is obviously where the rich people go. I've never seen so many pools right beside the beach before! We didn't go inside, but there were all these fitness clubs everywhere along the beach. Outside, however, were some poorer children in dirty clothes sitting on the benches. Some of them followed us and asked for money. I didn't give them any money, but when I saw the little girl, I just bent down, took one of the little plastic bracelets off my wrist and put it on hers. The look on her face, the smile, was just priceless. Soon after, another young girl came and tugged on my shirt and I did the same with her. I will treasure those smiles always. I think they were happier to have received a bracelet than money. Sometimes I forget that these little ones need the joy of toys too.

When we were trying to figure out what to do next, there was a man sitting next to Matt. We were joking with him that we wanted something fun to do, and he said (but with a smile on his face) "It is forbidden to have fun for 40 days because the king has just died." But eventually, he asked us if we wanted to go to church! We said quite enthusiastically "YES!" wondering where he would take us. But the church was old and boarded up. Lord, it made me wonder today if people think about You when they see this church. I think it must, even if it's not open. I pray that you are using it. Since I am a woman, I could not speak to this man, but I gave him a tape. Lord, please speak to him with this tape. He seemed to be so lonely, thinking, searching. But why did he bring us here? Perhaps he enjoys walking around in the garden and wandering around this church, asking why it is forbidden for him to find out what Christianity is all about. And maybe, he's talking to You. Jesus, may he find You tonight.

A Map of the World

A discussion with Dr. Kessler and guest reviewer Peter Kovacs

by S. R. L., Staff Writer

Sometimes the most unlikely things lead to the choice of movies to review; in this case, it was Dr. Kessler's chance discovery of the advance release of a soundtrack by musician Pat Metheny while at a conference in November. The music definitely contributed to the sense of profundity of the themes engaged in 'A Map of the World'. As we discussed this movie, our respect and engagement with it grew. Dr. Kessler observed that this sense of groping at the meaning and value of the movie points to its superb and enigmatic quality. We only scratched the surface of the film in our discussion. The movie was full of significant moments and lines; there were far too many to absorb in only one viewing.

One striking aspect of the movie was what Dr. Kessler labeled the "cinema verite" quality of it. From the initial scenes and throughout the film we had the impression that what we were watching was real. Instead of escaping reality, we felt pulled into the midst of reality. Careful cinematography, the

Tyndale @ the Movies



overall lack of glamour of both the characters and the story itself were integral to achieving this confrontation of the viewer with "raw life".

One of the significant lines was, "Friendship is strong and durable." Sigourney Weaver plays the role of a woman who was looking after her best friend's daughter when the little girl drowned. What follows is the process of growth in the life of this woman. This growth occurs while she is in prison awaiting trial. During this time she reflects on her life, and also experiences some restoration through the common experiences of women in prison. It is the story of her internal journey, of the impact this ordeal has on her family, and of the unity with which they emerge from the experience of pain, separation and change. We witness her movement toward wholeness though her journey is filled with difficulties, sacrifices and moments of excruciating pain. This is just one theme among many in this excellent and important film. Four and a half stars.

The Back Page

Tyndale's TOP 10

More Bulletin Bloopers...

Just for Laughs

** The Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

** Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the BS is done.

** The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the church breakfast next Sunday morning.

** Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

** A songfest was hell at the Methodist church Wednesday.

** The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The Congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

** Thursday night Potluck Supper. Prayer and medication to follow.

** A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

** Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

** Don't let worry kill you, let the church help.

** Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

** The senior choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.

The top ten activities which suddenly become very important and must be done immediately when deadlines for essays approach:

10. washing all the dirty dishes
 9. removing the dust bunnies/kangaroos behind your desk
 8. updating your photo album
 7. watching the wonderful TV shows only on tonight
 6. reading the novel that has been sitting so long on your shelf
 5. seeing the movie you've heard so much about
 4. repotting the plants
 3. updating your resume
 2. attending the seminar on dealing with the habit of procrastination
- And the number one activity that must be taken care of immediately when an essay deadline is near:
1. getting a new high score on all the games on your computer

SemChronicles is published monthly for the Tyndale Seminary community with the support of the Seminary Student Council. If you would like to write for the SemChronicles, please contact the editor, Heather Weir, Box 539 and watch for the staff meeting announcements. Comments and ideas are always welcome.

Please ask the editor for permission before copying any material published in the SemChronicles.

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