



CURRENTS

English Ministry Vol 9 March 2005

From the desk of . . .

Joey



I've been a member of 24-Hour Fitness Club for about 54 weeks now. I joined with the weekly goal of working out three times a week. Sometimes I accomplish that goal, sometimes I don't. The reason I joined and set these goals wasn't to get "buffed," "ripped" or to have a "six-pack" - though all of those *would* be nice. What prompted me to join over a year ago was the then sad realization that my once baggy pants were no longer baggy and that my health and energy level were not up-to-par. I was also convicted that I wasn't treating my physical body as the, "temple of the Holy Spirit" (cf. 1 Cor 6:19) with the care and regular exercise it needed to function properly and well. Amazingly - *definitely* by God's grace - over the past year I've seen my waistline shrink, my health improve, and my mileage increase in my runs! But in doing so I've also had to plan working out into my busy schedule, and even given up - or cut down - on some other things I enjoy (playing my PS2 football game or watching the same ESPN highlights for the third time) to make time for working out.

My commitment to working out could be your commitment to a musical instrument (piano, flute, violin, guitar, drums), a certain club (speech and debate, community service), a team (tennis, volleyball, badminton, swimming, etc.) or any other sort of activity. We commit to these activities and in doing so we see the improvement, the

growth and results as we pour our time and energy into these things - at the cost of other things and opportunities (such was the case for me and working out).

But sometimes I wonder, *Do we commit that same energy, devotion, passion and time to our spiritual health - to improving our relationship with Jesus?* Do you ever wonder how your relationship with God would be - how great it could be - if you put as much energy and time into your quiet times ("hang time") with Jesus as you do practicing that musical instrument, or preparing for SATs, or researching stocks or IMing? OR if I spent the same amount of concentration in reading and understanding God's Word as I do updating and editing my fantasy basketball roster, wouldn't I know God so much more? OR if I spent the same energy on developing my character as I do on my hair clothes and outward appearance, wouldn't my love for Jesus grow so much more? I sometimes wonder for us as a congregation and for myself...

When I get physically sick, I pretty much drop back on things (like working out) so that I can rest and recover. Looking at it from a spiritual perspective, perhaps some of us aren't as "spiritually healthy" as we should be or could be. Perhaps for some of us God is calling us to take a break and drop some activities so we can "recover" in our relationship with God. Can we say "no" to other things, and spend extra time to be right with God? Hopefully, we aren't one of those people running full-speed ahead with their lives leaving Jesus in the dust behind.

What's Happening?!

Easter Worship (Baptism) Service

We will be joining with the Chinese congregation on Sunday, March 27th, to worship together as well as to celebrate those getting baptized on Easter Sunday.



Summer Plans?

Never too early to start thinking about summer plans! This summer we have two missions trips, one to Macau (month of July) and one to Mexico (6/24-7/1). Applications are available now and are due April 3. The Children's Ministry will need volunteers and leaders to help out with their summer VBS (Vacation Bible School) camp (6/27-7/1). Please see Pastor Kenny or Joey for further information.



Birthdays

Celebrating birthdays in March:

Kalin Tchiang (3/1), Dave McCarter (3/2), William Tai (3/4), David Tsao (3/7), Margaret Hsieh (3/10), Dan Huang (3/12), Elizabeth Yue (3/16), Jessica Lo (3/16), and Jensine Lee (3/17).



Celebrating birthdays in April:

Jessica Chien (4/8), Angela Jen (4/11), Carol Tsai (4/29), and Connie Chu (4/29).

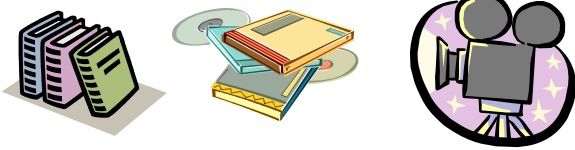


Currents needs your help!

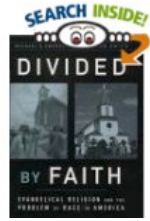
Enjoy graphics design? Enjoy writing? Please see Pastor Kenny or Joey if you're interested in contributing or helping out with our *Currents* newsletter - whether with design, reviews or articles of your own!



REVIEW



Are Evangelical Christians helping to close or rather helping create (inadvertently) more the racial division in our country? That's the basic question authors Michael Emerson and Christian Smith seek to answer in their book, *Divided By Faith*. Both are sociology professors: Emerson at Rice University and Smith at the University of North Carolina, and, both are evangelical Christians.



Extensively phone interviewing over 2,000 evangelical Christians across the country and then personally interviewing another 200 more face to face, Emerson and Smith sought to identify the reasons why despite the best efforts of Christian leaders and churches to combat racism, the racial divide seems to be getting worse rather than better. Their answers will definitely surprise you and perhaps might even shock you.

Emerson and Smith found that for most white Evangelicals, their main way of interpreting or processing life experiences is through a grid or lense comprised of the following main values and beliefs: "accountable, freewill, individualism." Essentially, white Evangelicals tend to look at racial discrimination as a matter of poor personal choices and a break down in personal relationships rather than recognizing or even considering that there might be larger, structural forces within our institutions and society that perpetuate racial

discrimination and economic inequality in spite of the best efforts of individuals to choose otherwise. Thus, the very values and beliefs which most white evangelicals have (i.e. accountable, freewill, individualism) actually contribute to continuing rather than ceasing racial differences.

This book, more than any other I have read so far, helped me get a better understanding and grasp on why so many white and African Americans seem so far apart on this issue. In particular, it helped me to see the race issue and struggle from their perspective rather than my own. And, lastly, it helped me become better aware and recognize the ways in which I perpetuate (often times unknowingly) racial stereotypes and discrimination.

A side benefit was in getting me to think about how Asian American interpret or process life events? What are the values and beliefs which we use to help 'make sense' of life experiences? In addition, it also got me thinking about bi-lingual churches in general and wondering whether we need to do more than merely encourage the building up of personal relationships between people of different congregations or do we additionally need to address the structural issues or the way the institution itself is structured in order to promote and foster greater unity in the church?

Each issue we'll be re:viewing something (books, movies, music, current events, etc.) of relevance for Christians living in the 21st century. Have any suggestions or have something you would like to see re:viewed? Interested in contributing a review **yourself**? Please contact PK or Joey.

In each issue of our newsletter, we'll be shining the spotlight on someone in the English ministry at CFC. This month, **Paul Yuan** will be...



In the Spotlight...

Nicknames(s): Yuantrouble, Pooall
Hobbies: Car stuff, shooting pool, bowling, building stuff, guitar
Words used to describe you: Consistently wrong, blessed, easy going, weird, nice



Favorites (brief explanation why)

Movie - *Happy Gilmore*, still remember the first time I watched it, and so does Mike ☺
 Song - Anything *Switchfoot*
 TV show - Over the years *The Simpsons* has always been good
 Sport - I like watching Basketball, but I like playing baseball because half the time you're sitting in the dugout eating.
 Type of food - Fatty foods
 Ice cream flavor - Butter Pecan or Rocky Road
 Comic strip - *Calvin & Hobbes*
 Bible verse - Proverbs 3:5, I think it was the first verse that captivated me
 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding"



This or That

Wendy's or McDonald's	"McDonald's"
Jeans or khakis	"jeans"
Beach or mountain	"beach"
Night owl or early bird	"night owl"
Dogs or cats	"dogs"
Tacos or hamburgers	"tacos"
Shoes or sandals	"shoes"
Pepsi or Coke	"Dr. Pepper"



Word association

School . . . Procrastinate
 Friends . . . Great
 God . . . Even Better
 Hungry . . . Jack in the Box
 Cute . . . Jamie
 Laugh . . . Monica's chuckle



Some Thoughts from Paul

Something most people don't know about you:

"I'm a minesweeper addict. I think I used to play everyday until I could beat my sister's score. Then she would beat me in 5 minutes, and I'd be at it again for 5 months."

An encouragement you'd like to give to people:

"God is faithful He is good, He gives us joy even in our trials. If God is with you, who can be against you? Blessed are the poor in spirit."

Long term plans beyond 2005 (Lord willing):

"I don't really have any plans...I try not to think too far ahead."

An epiphany (or time/experience when God's presence was very real):

'Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.'

C.S. Lewi

"When I read this the other day, I realized how I always put my faith below so many other things in my life and then I realized that I had to choose a side. It was black and white that Jesus wants all of us not just on Sunday, not just around others, but every aspect of our lives. I have such a long way to go, but it gets better every step of the way. Every time I give a little more to Jesus, he blows my mind."

Stay tuned. You might be the next person to be In the Spotlight... (or, if you'd even like to recommend someone, le either Joey or PK know)

- An epiphany (or time/experience when God's presence was very real)

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