

CORNERSTONE

A Christian Journal of Literary Arts at Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design



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Christians
Care

Worker
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Sex Trafficking

Environmental
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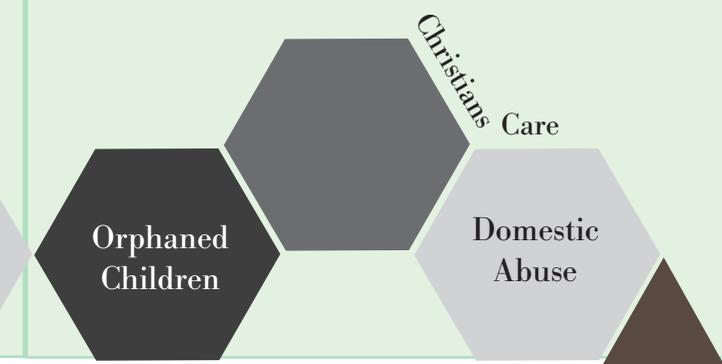
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Mission Statement

Cornerstone Magazine seeks first and foremost to celebrate the Christian Gospel by presenting its richness and beauty to Brown and RISD students and faculty. Open to those of all denominational persuasions, we provide a literary and artistic outlet for followers of Christ. We publish works of art, prose and poetry that exhibit intelligent and creative approaches to current events, history and Christianity in general.



Letter from the Editor

Christians Care

In light of the current emphasis on societal injustices, Cornerstone has come together as a staff to produce our first thematic issue, titled “Christians Care.” Our faith compels us to address deep-seated injustices in society. But before you dive into the collection of literature in the pages to follow, allow me to present a somewhat radical view of the intersection between social justice and the Christian faith.

The Gospel provides us with the firmest of foundations for why we should have a desire to display God’s justice, love and mercy to disadvantaged and abused groups in our communities and around the world. We should care about suffering, and this is an essential part of our faith. But even more so, we should care about eternal suffering. This means that as Christians, we should harmonize our advocacy efforts with evangelism, because the former deals with what ultimately are temporary afflictions. Lastly, the Christian fighting for social justice should do so in tandem with personal holiness. God cares just as much about both justice in the world and our holiness, and so should we.

The Bible clearly calls us to care about people for whom questions about poverty and justice are more than ink on pieces of paper but concerns life and death. Many passages speak to this but I want to focus on one I feel is instructive - Amos 5. Amos was a prophet from the southern kingdom of Judah. He was called by God to pronounce judgment on the prosperous northern kingdom of Israel. After declaring God’s punishment on various nearby nations, including Judah, Amos turns to judge Israel in Amos 2: 6-8 and the rest of the book is a proclamation of God’s justice and His condemnation of oppression. In Amos 5, God rebukes Israel for turning “justice into wormwood” (v7), afflicting the poor for individual gain (v11) and refusing to help the poor (v12). Notably, however, insofar as God’s rebukes go, they are focused on the oppression that the Israelites conduct on the poor, rather than the fact that there is inequality at all.

Incidentally, the concluding exhortation of the chapter for justice to “roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (v24) was made famous by Martin Luther King Jr in his speech “I Have A Dream.” Five years later, just a day before his death, King delivered another speech where he said,

Bull Connor next would say, “Turn the fire hoses on.” And as I said to you the other night, Bull Connor didn’t know history. He knew a kind of physics that somehow didn’t relate to the transphysics that we knew about. And that was the fact that there was a certain kind of fire that no water could put out. And we went before the fire hoses; we had known water. If we were Baptist or some other denominations, we had been

immersed. If we were Methodist, and some others, we had been sprinkled, but we knew water. That couldn’t stop us.

King alluded to the Biblical sacrament of baptism as the point of resolve and unification for the Civil Rights Movement that could not be quenched by opposition. He did this because he knew that it was the firm foundation upon which he could rest his movement. King strongly believed in the words of Paul to the Colossian church that in Christ, there is no distinction between nationalities, ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses; Christ is all, and in all. This should very much propel us to combat oppression in our various circles.

Why, however, does God not seem to explicitly rebuke the disparity between the rich and the poor, but only active abuse of the latter? It is because ultimately, the disparity stems from a sinful heart that would justly result in eternal judgment while the abuse is a temporal affliction. This is not to say that God is not concerned about issues of poverty. He calls His followers to commit themselves to the betterment of society, but we should do so out of compassion, not necessarily an effort of undoing an injustice. More importantly and clearly put forth is the call to evangelism. As much as we are concerned about the issues of this world (and rightfully so!), we should be all the more concerned about the pending eternal judgement that many would face in the age to come.

There is no distinction between nationalities, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses; Christ is in all.

This is why when Jesus describes His mission quoting from Isaiah, He said,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.
(Luke 4:18-19, NIV)

Note the verbs used by Jesus: “preach,” “proclaim,” “set free,” and “proclaim” again. The third of these, “set free,” is directed at the oppressed which once again echoes God’s condemnation of oppression. The other three, however, are verbs of speech, and the focus here is clearly on the preaching of the Gospel. Christians should be as concerned about the eternal fate of the people in the world as they are about their present well-being. Our primary mission as disciples of Jesus should be to proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the world.



Embrace
Lydia Yamaguchi '13

Alleviating poverty and fighting against social injustice are good insofar as they are also used as instruments for this to take place. Notably, however, a Biblical worldview would ultimately trace the root of societal grievances to a rejection of the Gospel. Hence, it is only with a right understanding of the Gospel that the vision of true human flourishing as iterated by Jesus above will be fulfilled. Where Christians differ is how exactly we think this plays out practically in terms of political systems and public policy. On the other hand, we should agree that the Gospel is the essential underpinning in all of that. In your bid for fighting against the ills of the world, have you lost track of the centerpiece that God has given us, the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes?

On a more individual note, as followers of Christ, working for social good must be done jointly with a commitment to personal holiness. One should not fight for racial justice without acknowledging one's own unconscious racial biases. Such a lifestyle, for all the "good" that it may do, is displeasing to God. Ironically, it contributes to some of the same problems one professes to combat. While God indeed has used sinful, unrepentant individuals to bring about a degree of human flourishing in this world, ultimately, each one of them will face His judgement. As Christians who care, let us be ever cognizant

of the habitual sins that plague us, not putting ourselves on a pedestal as if we have arrived at a level of self-righteousness. Let us strive for personal holiness as much as or even more than we do for global justice. And let us remember that when He comes, He will right every wrong, wipe away every tear and there will no longer be any death, mourning, crying, or pain.

In one sense, as Christians, we should be more committed to addressing injustice than anyone because we know the intended design of our Maker and how we have messed that up. True human flourishing can only be achieved by living as God's people under God's rule. Let me invite you to this vision that God has set for us. I pray that you will join us in living out His kingdom as followers of Christ.

In Christ,
Nicholas Chuan

Editor-in-Chief
Nicholas Chuan is a junior concentrating in physics and philosophy.

Journey

ISABELLA MARTINEZ

They sat on the bank of a dark gray river. The water lapped at the dirty grass that lined the edge of the banks, threatening to drown the vegetation all together in the disgusting sludge. A dank fog rose up from the river, blotting out the bright lights on the other side and giving the entire scene a ghostly appearance.

It wasn't a nice effect. Anyone who happened to look down towards the river from the noisy road would probably wonder what the hell those four teens were doing. Some might decide that the youths were involved in some sort of illicit activity. But, truth be told, most would not care. Because that was the type of place this was. People rarely cared about others.

Which is why the small group of four was so unusual. Four people not only having a conversation but meeting again and again to talk with each other? Perhaps they actually cared about each other – or pretended to do so.

“What do you think it's like?” one of the girls said suddenly. She was not remarkable in any way. The gray light bleached away all color from her face and made her hair an ugly mass of shadows. But something in her voice carried a hint of it which would have attracted the undivided attention of anyone else on their side of the river.

“What are you talking about H?” asked the other girl. This one didn't have that hint of something in her voice. It was harsh, almost cruel. But H didn't seem to mind.

“Across the river,” replied H. She strained her eyes, trying to see more than just dim lights.

“Warm,” answered one of the boys instantly. There was a note in his voice that seemed to signify a shiver, as if he were cold and always cold.

“Warm?” the second girl pulled a face that the others could barely see in the dim light. “Do you even remember what warm is, B?”

“Don't you?” B asked her.

The second girl's gaze darkened and she didn't reply.

“It's like...” B searched for the words. “It's like every muscle in your body relaxes, and you stop fighting yourself. And you don't need to think about being cold because you aren't...”

“I think you made it up,” said the second girl harshly. “I don't think it's possible.”

B's face fell and H frowned at her.

“You don't need to be mean, C.”

“I'm not being mean,” C insisted. “I'm being realistic.”

Finally, the fourth youth spoke. He'd been seemingly ignoring the conversation, taking long drags on a rolled up tube that could be a cigarette, could be a joint. But he suddenly spoke up, and said in a halting voice, “Can we...can we even be realistic...here?”

“I think we can,” said H softly. “I think we're still real.”

“I thought we were beyond real,” said B seriously. “Aren't we...? Didn't we...? In a hospital or from a gun or...”

“And it doesn't matter anyway,” C snapped. She was getting annoyed with them. This talk made her heart pound uncomfortably. “What's the point of talking about what is real or not real? Or even about the other side of the river? We're stuck here.”

“I think we can,” said H softly. “I think we're still real.”

“I thought we were beyond real,” said B seriously. “And it doesn't matter anyway,” C snapped. She was getting annoyed with them. This talk made her heart pound uncomfortably. “What's the point of talking about what is real or not real? Or even about the other side of the river? We're stuck here.”

“What about the Bridge?” asked H suddenly.

“The Bridge?” C actually laughed. “Don't be stupid, H. People like us don't get over the Bridge.”

The Bridge gleamed tantalizingly just down the river. It was the only thing that was clear through the gloom of the day – or was it night? It was this Bridge that gave the youths enough light to see as they sat on the edge of the river. Sometimes, people could see others crossing the Bridge, where they disappeared into the mist forever.

“How would you know?” asked H.

“Don't be stupid,” C repeated.

“Everyone just knows.”

“But why?” H insisted.

“Cut it out, H,” C complained. “What are you going to do? Try to cross the Bridge?”

H hesitated, her eyes on the dim lights across the water.

“You would?” C's eyes got wide. “H! No one ever comes back! What if it's even worse there than it is here?”

“It can't be worse than here,” H replied stubbornly. “I want to see color again! I want to feel warm!”

“Color? Warmth?” C shook her head. “Those are things we made up back when we were there. They don't exist. At least we know what to expect here. We have no idea what lies on the other side of the Bridge.”

H suddenly stood. Her mind was made up. Maybe it had always been made up.

“I'm going to try,” she said fiercely.

“Who's coming with me?”

C shook her head and looked back at the river. “You're a fool.”

H looked at B. B rubbed his arms miserably, looking at the grey water and said, “I don't know, H...what if C's right? What if it's colder there?” And he didn't stand.

But the fourth boy stood, flicking the almost finished roll into the river. “I'll go,” he said. “May...maybe you're...I'll try.”

H nodded at him and set off towards the Bridge, following



the bank of the river. Soon B and C were far behind them.

“Why are you coming, T?” H suddenly asked.

T shrugged and mumbled something. H paused and leaned closer. T cleared his throat and tried again, “Because...because I remember light...real light.”

Soon, they were below the Bridge. It was then that they realized their mistake. By following the bank, they were now below the Bridge. Facing a long and slippery slope to the entrance of the Bridge. But H was determined, she rolled up her sleeves and began to climb – pulling on weeds and grasping at roots to pull herself up. T followed much more slowly. Several times, one or the other slid. Once, H mis-stepped and slid into T. They froze, both trembling, until she got back her breath and kept climbing. A while later, T almost fell all the way down the bank when a tree root gave way. But H stopped and waited for him.

Finally, they pulled themselves up onto the road. For several minutes, they lay on the ground – too exhausted to stand. But something made H look up, her eyes growing wide. Across the bridge, faint but unmistakable, she could hear music. For the first time in who knew how long, she could hear notes and instruments and singing. T heard her gasp in wonder and raised his head; he didn’t hear anything, but he could see light. Real, soft, warm and yellow light at the end of the Bridge.

Together, the two youths stood and stepped cautiously onto the Bridge.

No one stopped them.

They began to walk, going faster and faster as the music grew louder and the light grew brighter so that neither could mistake the vision of the other.

The Bridge seemed to get longer and shorter at the same time. Even more than when they had been climbing the riverbank, time seemed to bend and morph.

Suddenly, they stepped through the last vestiges of the mist and burst into a light so dazzling that both youths were forced to close their eyes. Warm air filled them with every breath, washing away the pain of the journey.

“Welcome home,” said a soft voice that sounded like bells and a laughing stream and like music all at once. “We’ve been waiting for you.”

Hope and Tobias opened their eyes to a world full of color.

Isabella Martinez is a junior concentrating in Biomedical Engineering.

Love In Action

ALANA FELTON

When I walked into Trinity Presbyterian Church on the first day of tutoring with Love in Action, there was a crowd of children playing rambunctiously. They were of all running about, giggling, squealing, tickling one another, and braiding each other's hair. A group of elementary aged girls were in the corner dancing to their favorite pop songs, while a group of boys were chasing each other. I was a bit nervous being surrounded by so much energy at 10am on a Saturday morning.

The leaders of LIA led me over to one of the oldest girls in the bunch, Dorbor, and said that the two of us would be working together. They thought it would be rewarding and sentimental to have us paired together for four years until we both graduated.

I was surprised by how quickly Dorbor warmed up to me. She excitedly led me to her workspace and we immediately jumped into her math and English homework. I remember asking her what she wanted to be when she grew up and she said, "I want to go to Duke to study biology."

I was surprised by how clear her vision for the future was. When I first heard about LIA, I was told that most of the students came from the homes of Liberian refugees who were not used to the American school system and needed extra help with their school work. This was also true for Dorbor, but she was incredibly focused on achieving her goal in a way I had not expected.

As the weeks passed, I realized that this desire for success actually came from her parents' heritage as refugees. Her mother had invested time, money, and energy into her daughter's education, because she had never had that. I realized that tutoring Dorbor was part of a plan that had already been set in motion.

Pieces began falling into place. Her grades in math steadily increased. Her writing skills flourished as she sent me papers to look over during the week. But even more surprising was how my relationship with Dorbor developed.

Now, each week when she sees me, she hugs me. She is happy to see me, and I am just as excited to work with her. It is not that tenth grade math is riveting or that revisiting

topics such as allegories, rhyme, and onomatopoeia are particularly enlightening, but that I have noticed I am actually making a difference in her life, and she is changing my life. Through LIA I found a friend. We are from very different backgrounds. I am a country girl from a rural public school in Central Pennsylvania who is studying at an Ivy League University, and she is an inner city high school student and a child of Liberian refugees. Yet, despite all odds, God found a way in His divine providence to connect us.

I have no right to keep my time to myself as it was never wholly mine, but God's.

Although I had joined LIA from a somewhat selfish standpoint of wanting to feel good by doing good, God had transformed that desire into a passion for tutoring. Almost unbeknownst to me, He had changed my heart to make me want to serve Him by serving Dorbor. In Matthew 5:16, Christ calls us to "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

I had always heard Matthew 5:16 and wondered what exactly my light is. But, from working with LIA and specifically with Dorbor, I have realized that my light is my passion for serving the Lord. This is a passion that the Lord gives to me and that I use in order to give back to Him. God gave me the opportunity to work with Dorbor, he uses her cheerful, encouraging spirit to build me up just as He uses my education and desire to help to build her up.

Hebrews 13:16 says, "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." This verse points the focus back to God from whom all good things come. I have no right to keep my time to myself as it was never wholly mine, but God's. In fact, the sacrifices we make, as mentioned in Hebrews 13, are really just returning to God what belongs to Him. His rewards for our sacrifices are even greater than the time, money, and energy we give up. I have come to realize that the time God has given me at Brown is a gift and that through this gift I must share with others, and LIA has become an extremely rewarding way of doing just that.

Alana Felton is a sophomore concentrating in Slavic Studies.

A large, dark wooden cross stands prominently in the foreground, set against a bright sun with a significant lens flare effect. The background is a vast, snow-covered field under a clear blue sky. The sun is positioned to the left of the cross, creating a strong glow and radiating light rays across the scene. The cross is composed of two thick, dark wooden beams. The overall atmosphere is serene and contemplative.

Bear one another's burdens,

and so fulfill the law of Christ. Gal 6:2

Springtime
Sujay Natson '16



We love because He first loved us. 1 John 4: 19

Compelled By Love

JESSICA ZAMBRANO

Love One Another

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.
(1 John 3:16-18, NIV)

Are Christians today a reflection of God's love and justice? I think many non-Christians, when looking at the body of Christ, would say not; that we are hypocrites. And I have to agree with them. Our downfall is that we make love and justice about us; we try to administer them out of our own strength and goodwill, loosely guided by the Word of God on certain issues. It's like we've forgotten that the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love people. When we lose sight of the Gospel like this, of what we should care about and why, it's easy to be led astray by nationalism, political parties, and even the ideas of fellow Christians. One thing I've been particularly hurt by in the past few months is Christian apathy and silence on social justice issues. We tiptoe around race, poverty, and immigration in an effort to remain neutral, but God doesn't call us to neutrality; He calls us to boldness. When we realize Christ's love for us, we love Him and love others more deeply. We are compelled by love. We become aware of our position in Creation, that we are sons and daughters created in the Father's image. The Father is Love and Just, and so He created us to be love and just also.

We tiptoe around race, poverty, and immigration in an effort to remain neutral, but God doesn't call us to neutrality; He calls us to boldness.

God's love for us compels us to love Him and others. His love is unconditional and sacrificial. We are called to love one another as Christ loved us, and our love for one another is evidence of the love of God in us. We can love unconditionally and sacrificially, a perfected love, when our source is God. He is our definition of love, and he calls us to lives of active love. Love radically changes how we see those around us. When we love, we genuinely care about people. Our love for others, which comes from God, compels us to seek justice. Saying "I love the impoverished/immigrants/marginalized/refugees/etc." is not enough. Saying "I'll pray for you!" when you are able to act, give, or serve is not enough. God gave His only Son for us; we are commanded to sacrifice our time, resources, and privilege for another. And we are commanded to love without reservations or fear. In the Christian life, this is not optional. It's not for a small group

of Christians; it's for everyone. The Bible even goes so far to say that if we don't obey this command, we cannot love God. Just as we were created in God's image of love, "the Lord is a God of justice," and so we should be a people of justice. We actively fight for justice because our love compels us to and the Word of God commands us to. Isaiah 1:17 says, "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow." Increasingly, our university, nation, and world are impassioned to seek justice for various issues. What would it look like if the body of Christ joined in these causes, compelled by love?

There are great organizations motivated by and acting in faith. One example is International Justice Mission (IJM). IJM is an international social justice organization, with a prominent human trafficking ministry. Typically the problem with international aid organizations and Christian mission trips is the top-down Western approach that is used, providing temporary resources and workers that are out of touch with the actual needs of the local communities. Contrary to this, local workers compose 95% of IJM's staff, and the goal is to empower community members to fight for justice in their own nations. Founder Gary Haugen established IJM as a response to his time in Rwanda after the genocide. IJM was founded on the premise that these people "did not need someone to bring them a sermon, or food, or a doctor, or a teacher, or a microloan. They needed someone to restrain the hand with the machete—and nothing else would do." The Gospel is a call to active, bold love. Proverbs 29:7 says, "The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern." Will we be Christians that care?

Am I doing my part or living a life of hypocrisy? I've been trying to be more intentional about seeking justice compelled by love and urging my fellow Christians to do the same. I find myself bringing it up in conversation with anyone who will listen to me. I recently found a group of like-minded Christians with regards to this, and we are pioneering an IJM-inspired anti-human trafficking student group here at Brown. I'm also trying to be more active in non-Christian social justice movements, locally and nationally, because I don't think our extending of God's love has to be explicitly religious, with the sole agenda of converting people. Rather we should love with pure intentions and the genuine passion for humanity that God has; love for Love's sake.

We must recognize that human love and justice are imperfect. We will never be able to bring about true justice from our efforts. That's why it's so important that social justice efforts should be compelled by Love, with a capital L, God's Love. Because His Love triumphs all.

Jessica Zambrano is a junior concentrating in Urban Studies.

croWned

OLUGBENGA JOSEPH

given
the amount of
melanin
in the skin i'm in
sometimes it's hard
to be
sweeter than cinnamon

society has soured
its image of black men
the only thing it sees
is the color of our skin
and,
naturally,
this is a problem
that's in dire need
of a solution.

so...
what do we do
to reconsider this society,
that is severed
by man's hu(e)bris
...and malice and avarice?

what do we do?
as we work towards
a world we've never known,
where neither life
nor death
is determined
by skin tone?
because
fasting and prayer
won't do much
in isolation-
we'll need corresponding action
to reach racial reconciliation.
we need to stop
looking at others
and start delving deep within
and wonder why we
still associate
sin with melanin.

we cannot forget
those words in Genesis
that all men
were made
In His image and likeness.

and so to say,
Black Lives Matter
is a reminder
of our origin
so let us love us
like He loves us
Until we see the Lord again.

Olugbenga Joseph is a senior concentrating in Education.



Reclamation

GIANNA USON

how do i celebrate my salvation through Jesus—
in Whose name my ancestors were tortured?

i refuse to believe that my God would support
the erasure of my people's history
the acts of inhumanity
and then call it a victory

because He wouldn't

Jesus is not a Western construct
meant to further a self-seeking agenda
not an idea meant to enslave a people
nor an ideal meant to oppress

the Son of Man is not a master used to control us
but Who the Master used to free us

and though this anger is valid,
it is not enough to invalidate His work on the cross
for it was the same crooked system
of oppression
of marginalization
of racism
of injustice
that put Him there

my God is not a colonizer's god—
He is for us, the poor and powerless
and we are descendants of the King

Gianna Uson is a sophomore concentrating in Computer Science.

Collide
Lauren Galvan '16



When Feet May Fail

JOSHUA WANG

Before the sun rose on that Saturday morning, I quietly left my room and got on the bus to TF Green airport. I didn't tell anyone where I was going. My mind had been operating in a haze for several days, ever since I found out that one of my close friends was dying, possibly within a few weeks. With the help of my parents, I booked a flight home for the long weekend to see her, potentially for the last time.

My friend's name is Kristy Cheng Esporo. She was a youth counselor along with her husband Noel at my church during my middle school and high school years. It was well known that Kristy's spiritual gift was prayer, along with her trademark grins and catchphrase "Let's ask God!" She was the one who first started me on my journey of real faith, from my hopeless 7th grade self to who I am today. I could go on forever with stories about Kristy, but suffice it to say that she is an energetic woman of God who has been like a second mom to me (or older sister, depending on what age she feels like). This story is about the weekend I disappeared from Brown to go see her.

Kristy has been battling an abdominal cancer (Leiomyosarcoma) for the past 8 years. During that time, she has undergone several forms of treatment, including multiple rounds of chemotherapy. A year or two ago, she stopped treatments, because doctors could not find a suitable method. But this fell right in line with her longtime mantra to "Leave it all up to God." That previous Wednesday, I found out that Kristy's health was rapidly deteriorating. Her body had been unable to process solid food for the past two weeks, and the frequent bouts of pain did not allow for long periods of rest. While I was on the plane back home, I was so afraid of what Kristy's condition would possibly be like, since Noel had not divulged any details. I began to pen a letter of thanks and encouragement to her, since I might never see her again.

When I first arrived at their house, Noel burst into tears when he saw me, and hit me with two pieces of information: Kristy didn't feel like seeing anybody at the moment, and that she had forgotten who I was. I didn't know how to react. My parents had recently visited Kristy and informed her I was coming to visit, getting a big smile in response. But in just a couple days, she had forgotten who I was completely? I couldn't even imagine how much her illness was affecting her. It was at this point that doubt really set in. I had already begun to wonder whether I was doing the right thing, ditching everything I had planned in Providence to fly back home to see one person. And now, having just arrived, I learned that I may not even get to see her that day. What was I thinking? God must be telling me that I should never have left campus.

Then Noel, wiping away his tears, told us that the only way we could help the situation was to pray. "Pray,

pray, pray. Pray for...I don't even know what to pray for. Just pray." If even Noel, my role model and spiritual leader, was at loss for prayer, what was I supposed to do? So I just prayed. I begged God to let me see Kristy one last time. I pleaded for my trip to not be in vain, and for God to grant Noel wisdom and peace.

After some time in prayer, we were told that Noel wanted everybody upstairs in the bedroom. To pray over Kristy. So upstairs we trooped. Seeing Kristy in her current condition completely froze my heart. The woman who taught me how to hold a paintball gun and how to dive and slide was barely sitting up, supported by her husband. She was skin and bone, and staring vacantly ahead, disregarding the people walking into the room. Noel, with his spirit and wisdom, encouraged all of us to make a circle and hold hands, and proceeded to begin our session of prayer. I knelt by the head of the bed, and grasped his hand with one of mine. With my other hand, I gently held Kristy's, as reassuringly as possible. Although, upon hearing Noel begin to pray, the reality of the situation hit me, and feeling the weight of the presence of God, I broke down into tears. Once I began to weep it was nearly impossible to get myself under control. I couldn't fully describe what was happening to the others praying alongside me, but I know for certain that those present could feel something greater in the room with us. It's not a feeling that can generally be conveyed or called upon at will. Regardless, I could hear how the Holy Spirit was moving through each one of us from the way people were praying, even the self-professed first-timers. I can't say that there have been many instances in my life where I've been in the presence of such moving prayers. After a long while, Noel ended our circle of prayer. When I opened my eyes and lifted my head, I met Kristy's eyes as she was looking around at us prayer warriors. Noel whispered in her ear, "This guy flew all the way here to see you," to which she closed her eyes and shook her head. I could only smile because my spirit felt uplifted, and I was once again reassured that God is good.

The rest of the weekend was a rollercoaster of emotions, although one theme was abundantly clear to me: God is faithful, and we are called to place our trust wholly in Him. Over the next couple days, Kristy's health improved to the point where she could sit up in a chair on her own, and hold conversations. She shared with me her plan to show her family (some of whom are not Christians) how God is powerful, by stopping her treatment of painkillers. She wanted them to see that God has the power to strengthen her, that she did not need to rely on anything of this world like man-made drugs. She wanted her family to know that her faith in God was real, not some delusion. Kristy told me that regardless of what happened after pulling the painkillers, whether God healed her or took her home, she was confident that the glory of God would be revealed to her family.



When I first booked the flight back home, I was thinking about how to prepare myself mentally and emotionally to provide some sort of support for Noel and Kristy. I was preparing myself to be the reassuring friend, sacrificing my time and money because I loved them. I was totally unprepared for the spiritual renewal God had in store for me. In the time I spent at Noel and Kristy's house with a cancer patient and her numerous caretakers, I learned so much about faith. I saw, up close and personal, what it was like for a marriage to be tested to the limit, and what it looked like when both spouses are willing to have complete faith in one another and in God. Ironically, I was the one reassured by Kristy, with her unwavering belief that God's plan for her is good and in motion. Kristy used to live such an active lifestyle, filled with activities like rock climbing, rally car racing, and paintball. And then, all these things were taken away from her and her body began to waste away. But despite this, her spirit remains unbroken, strengthened even, and somehow she is still able to inspire those around her. There have been so many people that, upon meeting Kristy or reading her blog, are simply amazed by this woman of God and her faith.

...one theme was abundantly clear to me: God is faithful and we are called to place our trust wholly in Him.

Sparrow's Way
Lauren Galvan '16

This isn't to say that the road God places in front of us is easy and free from trouble. In fact, as was extremely plain to me, many times we feel and see so much pain that we wonder how this can possibly be what God wants. And yet, somehow, God gives us enough strength to cry out 50 Him for help. God blesses us in so many ways, and He just wants us to trust Him to carry us when we inevitably fall.

(link to Kristy's blog: <http://kristyesporo.blogspot.com/>)

Note: Inspired by C.S. Lewis's Problem of Pain and A Grief Observed

Joshua Wang is a senior concentrating in Mechanical Engineering.



Our Spiritual Sojourn

ROBERT MIDURA

Cosmic fabric
woven so fine,
Conceals the presence
of the Divine.

Looking inward
we manage to discern
The spark He left
within to burn.

Endless chances
to achieve the goal,
To chisel and mold
our very soul.

His whisper helps us
to understand,
His desire to gently
guide our hand.

Our celestial family
gazes from above,
Our innermost essence
now radiates love.

We've gained the wisdom
we needed to learn,
To our Heavenly Father
we'll finally return.

Robert Midura is an HVAC mechanic in Facilities Management at Brown University.

One of God's Greatest Gifts

KEREN ALFRED

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.
(John 1:3, NIV)

I believe that the world is God's creation. The idea of "creation" – the act of making something or bringing into existence – resonates with me because I enjoy making things. I always had a craft box and spent time cutting construction paper or making friendship bracelets. As much as I love the process of crafting jewellery or art, I love even more seeing the joy in people around. Seeing someone smile when a ring fits her well or hearing someone say he still has the card I designed for him makes my day. However, I am also protective when it comes to my creations. I want to bring joy to people but I also want my work to be appreciated for what it is worth. I will be honest, there is probably a lot of pride in that statement (something I'll have to address) but I cannot deny that I feel strongly about my creations. I make things to be enjoyed and I am sad when it seems like my gift and the time I put into that gift are not appreciated.

I think this is how God feels about his gifts and the earth is one of his greatest gifts to us. This is at the heart of why I care about the environment and enjoy studying it. When I learn that biologists are confused about whether certain ecological processes are ordered or not, it points me towards how awesome God is. No one fully understands how the earth functions but it does so beautifully. Just think about New England seasons or coral reefs in the tropics or something as simple (or as complicated) as an insect searching for food in a flower. God put all these things in place as a part of his creation.

But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.
(Job 12:7-10, NIV)

Going back to me giving gifts to my friends – God wants us to use the natural resources he has blessed us with. He made them for us to survive, to enjoy, to use to help others. Just like it gives me joy to see someone wear my jewellery, we bring God joy when we make use of his gift of the earth. This is why I'm not a proponent of the idea of keeping landscapes "pure" at the expense of humans. There are very serious problems in this world - unequal distribution of resources, lack of access to basic needs, exploitation of people in general and I'd be a fool to say that we should place the needs of people second to the needs of the environment. But here's the catch - I do not think there should be a hierarchy. I wish we would not put humans against the environment because we cannot pretend that we do not rely on the earth's natural resources and processes. We shouldn't have to improve quality of life for everyone at the expense of the environment or vice versa. I believe they can and should be done simultaneously.

God wants us to use the natural resources he has blessed us with. He made them for us to survive, to enjoy, to use to help others.

I do not expect everyone to drop what they are doing and start studying environmental science or go picketing for a fossil-free world or even switch to reusable to-go containers at the dining hall. I do think that Christians who doubt that God has anything to say about how we interact with the world need to rethink that stance. Our planet is one of God's greatest gifts to us – I challenge you to think about how good our existence would be without it. If we mistreat this gift, what does that say about our regard for God and how he blesses us?

Keren Alfred is a sophomore concentrating in Environmental Science.



More Than Money: Poverty As a Spiritual Problem

OLUGBENGA JOSEPH

I spent the first two weeks of 2016 at the middle of the world: Quito, Ecuador. Specifically, I volunteered at the Working Boys Center, a full-service Catholic organization that serves some of the most impoverished families in the nation's capital. During my brief sojourn, I had the opportunity to interview the founder, Padre (or John Halligan), and Madre (Miguel Conway). As Christians, and as Americans who have been working in Ecuador for 50 years, they had a lot of insight to offer me regarding their work, and the pervasiveness of poverty to a people.

Here are segments of the conversation that ensued. Comments have been edited for brevity and clarity.

OJ: How would you describe the work of the Working Boys Center (WBC) to someone who has never heard of it before?

Padre: We're inspired by the gospels. We work with families of working children to transform their lives from misery into prosperity, [which is service] work we've been doing for 50 years.

Madre: If I were describing the work to people who have never heard of it before two essential things for me are the person [a]s the focus, and enabling that person to have self determination, be in charge of his own life--not be a charity program, giving him what I got and then he becomes dependent on me. The second thing, is the focus on the family. [That] is the most necessary part of our work because you can't win the individual as if he wasn't born into a family.

In a family there is love and understanding. In an organization there are privileges and obligations. This is not an organization, it is a family. A family of families.

OJ: What brings you to this work at the Center? What was like before you lived in Quito, Ecuador?

Padre: I had a vocation as a kid to be a Jesuit...I became a Jesuit...so I felt the desire to go overseas and work with poor people. When I was in theology in the last stage of training, I came with the idea of working with the Indian communities in Chinbura...a guy put me in contact with kids in the city...I was 32 when I came here, 34 when I started the center.

Madre: I also grew up in a Catholic family, I had the good fortunate as growing up as a teenager in the 50s, there was a positive feeling in the United States, and while there was a conflict in Korea, the economy and country...we grew up believing everything was positive. We were a very positive thinking generation. Kennedy created the Peace Corps. I was a math teacher in high school. I requested...

any kind of involvement in Latin America, and in 1967, Padre approached our community and we responded. We were welcomed here. Ecuador was a country with a lot of virtue and a lot vice, the vice being the poverty in which many of the people did and about which most people weren't doing anything. I came here to help [Padre] to help him with the work. It's easy to fall in love with the work because it is all about the kids...I just remained here after I came because my religious community missioned me here. I've been here since 1967, 49 years.

OJ: One thing you mentioned to the volunteers at the center is the idea of poverty as both a economic and spiritual problem. Could you expound more on that?

Padre: I would be very happy if you broadcast the fact that poverty is a spiritual problem rather than an economic one. There is a movement, even among Christians, to consider the works with poor people some kind of a business that has to be organized according to how many assets we have to allocate to changing the situation of poverty, as if there were something on the market we were buying such as education or money or health. [T]hen it becomes some sort of weird human endeavor, almost like making money...or running a successful business. The church is very much into that heresy when Christ just told us to love one another, and by love I mean care for one another.

And so poverty as a spiritual problem is what's going on in the souls of the poor people, and the souls of the people who let poverty continue. For instance, if our families... have never had the experience of prosperity, they're going to continue that kind of life. They will be glad for a handout, a business...a bargain on food. And they stay the way they are. Their attitude is not a need for change in order to glorify God, to become better so that they can love... so they can try to get to heaven by helping others..

Most of the rich people in the world are apparently satisfied with the little bit they can do for the poor because that is all they can afford. [They believe] "I can't be sacrificing [a college education, a decent house, and so forth] to spend money that I don't have on poor people, huh? I don't want to give people false promises. I'll help you get an education, kid, I'll help you feed your kids everyday. I don't want to commit myself unless I can really make it a go".

That is what we have listened to. Reinterpreted Christ's message to "Love thy neighbor as thyself". And the great commandment is "Love God, and love your neighbor". It's not, "Get a budget and act according to a sustainable program for loving others."

Madre: Anyone of us can say, “Well look at the church, or look at the government, or look at the other guy.” I think that you and I, and Padre all suffer from our own grade of spiritual poverty. And we have an obligation to examine ourselves and to see to what extent that is true, because if I can really face myself I am going to stop pointing the finger at you, because I have something to deal with in myself. To what extent do I seek really the good of poor people at some sacrifice to myself? Those people who have done great works for the poor have had to face themselves first. Don’t call yourself Christian if you’re so focused on yourself that it is about “me first”.

Padre: We talked about the rowboat [analogy].

[A man] is sitting there [in a rowboat] watching the scene. He has one rowboat and there are thousands out there [at sea]. If he puts that rowboat down to the middle of them, the rowboat is going to go down. Everyone is panicking, and he is going to go down with them.

Does he have a right not to row out there? [After all] he’s got to save himself. That’s a reinterpretation of “Love God and love your neighbor.” “I’m saving number one and I have a right to do that. I have a right to be sustainable. If I set myself on fire we’re all going down to the bottom of the lake!”

But if I obey God’s command, maybe...I’d send 1000 rowboats out there following me. But all [God] wants me to do is to get that boat out there.

Madre: I think that is the important thing; do your part.

OJ: What is the most valuable lesson you’ve learned from your service work at the Center?

Madre: I’ve learned the great power of loving because it transforms people’s lives. The Center is all about loving the people who come to you.

Padre: I’ve learned that God is amazing. He even takes evil and turns it into some kind of good. The poverty that is

all over the world is a huge opportunity to show love.

OJ: What advice would you have for undergraduate students interested in doing work like yours?

Madre: Come!

Padre: Do it! By doing it, God will reward you with more lights in the darkness.

Madre: In line with our belief that God puts us all in a place at a time for a reason, that’s a good question to ask God. “How and why did you bring me here”? Think about it. You gotta figure it out.

I’ve learned that God is amazing. He even takes evil and turns it into some kind of good. The poverty that is all over the world is a huge opportunity to show love.

OJ: Finally, what is your life verse?

Madre: Matt 11:25 , John 16:15-16

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.
(Matt 11:25, NIV)

All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me because I go to the Father.
(John 16:15-16, NIV)

Padre: “Don’t be afraid,” because my temptation in life is to criticize and do nothing.

Olugbenga Joseph is a senior concentrating in Education.



In Deo Speramus

ANNA DELAMERCED

when everything else around me
comes crashing down
You stand firm

when everyone else around me
fails to keep their promises
You always stand firm

no one who hopes in You
will ever be put to shame

this i proclaim

no one who hopes in You
will ever be put to shame

this i take in faith

when everything else around me
drags me down

You always pull me up
no one who hopes in You
will ever be put to shame
this i proclaim

no one who hopes in You
will ever be put to shame
i take in faith
in nothing else
but in You
in You
in You
alone

You are my God
my One True Hope
the anchor of my soul

no one who hopes in You
will ever be put to shame

this i proclaim

no one who hopes in You
will ever be put to shame

this i take in faith

when everyone tells me not to
still i will sing

In Deo Speramus

In Deo Speramus

Author's note: The motto of Brown University is In Deo Speramus, which is Latin for "In God we hope." For me, In Deo Speramus means that even if trials come my way, God will never abandon me. This poem is also inspired by Psalm 25:3, in which King David tells God, "No one who hopes in You will ever be put to shame." Sometimes Christians may feel ashamed to declare that God is their Savior, but we are called not to be ashamed, because God is our hope. We can hope in God because we know that He stands firm.

Anna Delamerced is a senior concentrating in Public Health.

Yes, You Are My Lord

OLUGBENGA JOSEPH

Yes, You are my Lord
Yes, You are my God
Yes, You are my Lord
Yes, You are my God

Each and every day
Yes, You are my God
To You alone I pray
Yes, You are my God

Father, Spirit, Son
Yes, You are my God
May Thy Will be Done
Yes, You are my God

Died that I might live
Yes, You are my God
For that my life I give
Yes, You are my God

Open up my eyes
Yes, You are my God
Help me to be wise
Yes, You are my God

I surrender all to Thee
Yes, You are my God
Turn and transform me
Yes, You are my God

Your fire burns in me
Yes, You are my God
May the whole world see that
Yes, You are my God

*Olugbenga Joseph is a senior
concentrating in Education.*

All of the Lights
Sujay Natson '16



Composing Liturgical Space: A Design Thesis

MATTHEW BARLEY

I want to begin by asking you to think about your weekly church service and the space in which you worship. Does the spatial design work with or against the liturgical worship experience? What if there was a way to spatially communicate the progression of feelings we experience within the different parts of liturgy? Is there a way to use architecture as a tool to gain a deeper understanding of God and how He is transforming us by worship and liturgy? These are the questions I address in my Interior Architecture design thesis at Rhode Island School of Design.

Liturgy, or Christian worship service, is composed of six components: The Call to Worship, Atonement, Supplication, Proclamation, Eucharist, and Benediction. Although different denominations of Christianity practice each component with varying levels of emphasis, all have the same underlying structure to the service.

In this article, I will briefly outline the six components of trinitarian liturgy and offer a possible design solution that complements each component, all with the hopes of bringing people closer to God and uniting the body of Christ.

Design Solution for the Six Components of a Worship Service

The Call to Worship

The liturgical service formally begins when clergy or an elder summons the congregation to worship and asks God for His presence during service.

Supplication
Matthew Barley '16



I have designed the the Call to Worship space with four sides, to remind the participants that God is drawing people from the four corners of this earth and the community to worship Him. In this space people should feel deeply meditative as they prepare to worship God. To facilitate this, the space will be dark with a few candles burning. Two walls will be covered with mirrors from floor to ceiling, with semi opaque glass suspended in front of the mirrors, creating the illusion of an infinite box. This material effect will suggest that the participant is part of a large history of saints that have come before and those in the future.

Transitions

To facilitate my correlated liturgical spatial experience, I am proposing the congregation move from space-to-space as they progress through the service. When it is time to transition to the next part of the liturgy, the congregants will sing as they move to the new architectural space. As the congregation becomes acquainted with the spaces these movements and songs should appear like waltzing through the architecture.

The Atonement

When believers privately and/or publicly confess their sins and ask for forgiveness. Typically, Catholics and Orthodox Christians confess to a priest, whereas Protestants confess silently to God.

This space would consist of three separate confession areas. Each confession area will feel like a hallway that ends with the participant kneeling at a large glass window. They will be constricted, yet, bathed in light. Here is where the participant confesses sin; when they are finished they turn and leave the space, and the light that once blinded them now illuminates their path.

Supplication

This is when prayers are offered for the congregation, for the regional body of Christ, and for believers around the world. It is common for tithes and offerings to be taken during Supplication, as believers show their gratitude towards God for the blessings He has given them.

This space is designed around two primary functions, Prayers and the sacrament of baptism. It will be much brighter than the previous two spaces, signifying that the church has been washed clean of sins and is now in the presence of God. Because people will be primarily praying in this space, incense will be burnt to signify the congregation's prayers ascending. The upward moving smoke will be a visual manifestation



of what we are offering to God. A counterbalancing action will be happening with natural light, shining down from many windows of various shapes and sizes in the ceiling and upper walls. The baptismal font will be located in the center, and around this the congregation will gather.

Proclamation

This is a public proclamation of God's Word. It is composed of readings from the Old Testament, New Testament and an Epistle. As the preacher speaks, God changes our hearts, minds, and actions as we cling to Christ's redemptive work in each of our lives. I have designed this space to have the "traditional sanctuary" feel where the congregation can sit down, if they chose to do so. In my thesis design, this is the one space where all the congregants are offered a seat. To emphasize God's word coming down to His people, angular forms from a central point in the ceiling will expand to the exterior parts of the space. The material used will be concrete to create feelings of permanence and solidity.

Eucharist

Defined as a meal of thanksgiving, this is where believers remember Christ's death and resurrection by partaking bread and wine, as representations of His body and blood. This is a sacramental meal, meaning that it is a rite that institutes saving grace. This is a time when Christ mutually indwells us and our fellow believers.

This space is round in form to represent oneness in the body of Christ and our oneness to Him. The unbroken circle also represents God's inability to break his promise of saving us. Additionally, the circle allows the entire congregation to see each other all at once, as well as have easy access to the Altar in the center of the room,

from which the bread and wine are distributed.

Benediction

Lastly, the Benediction is a peaceful sending out of the body of Christ. This is a prayer and a song of blessing spoken to the congregants at the end of the service. This is the closing component of transformational liturgy that changes the participant from a dirty, broken sinner to a cleansed, exalted child of God.

The benediction space is the final room, the congregation is being sent back out into the community. This space will have four transparent glass walls that symbolize the sending out of the people to the four corners of the world. In addition, the glass walls allow for the maximum amount of light creating a completely bright space. The space will be smaller than most of the space, yet comfortable. There will be bright colors to represent the joy that comes from God's saving grace. The participant will stand in the space with hands raised singing a final song.

Liturgical spaces are meant to be reexperienced over and over while each time God reveals more of himself to us.

This new typology of Liturgical Space will catechize the participants, by requiring them to interact with distinct spatial qualities for each moment of liturgy all while drawing them closer to God spiritually, individually, and as a corporate body. Like a good piece of music or a fine painting, liturgical spaces are meant to be reexperienced over and over while each time God reveals more of himself to us.

Matthew Funk Barley is a graduate student at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). He will graduate this May and earn his Masters of Design in Interior Architecture.

Altar Call

LILY GEORGE

Do you know what an altar call is?
Back then, I'd pray to accept Jesus
into my heart every time, because
what if the last time didn't take?
Faith is operative in every human being

I want to have my mother's faith. She's one
of those weird mountain people, you see.
She holds snakes on Sundays
and once had to explain to an NPR reporter
the mechanics of why when one bites you
that means there's something wrong.

Tell me, what does "do" mean?
If you try to bring something, you get nothing.
If you bring nothing, you get everything.
Behold, the calculus of the gospel!
Where am I supposed to go with that?

My plane crashed and I couldn't see
out the window because of the flames My friend
the other pilot he was next to me and burning
The control panel was dripping here onto my thighs
I didn't think I was going to die I thought
he was dead and that I was dead I prayed
the Lord's Prayer and then the door opened
and I was pulled from the burning

You ever hear of something called a controlled burn? When the fire
rages and finds an already scorched earth, you are saved

I think: If I write Bible verses on index cards
and tape them to my bathroom mirror, things will change.
But nothing will change you, only the deposit
of an energy in your heart, the mechanism
from which all change stems

So what does God want? Does he want me to change
or does he just want me to want to change?
You are becoming wood and stone

I am so tired I can't lay down. Why is God hiding?
the mechanism within each of us
called the human heart is from which
everything in life extends It locks
onto things you find beautiful and says Feed me.

Your roommate tells you she's been raped.
You are simply bodily present.

You begin to meet little needs. You wonder
about the ways you could become glue. Listening
is something we can always do better on This is not
just about your individual heart This is about institutions
and oppression The nature of faith an empty hand
is such that it binds you to things.

You know how the Earth is spinning all the time?
I don't understand the calculus of it, I don't
even think of it, but that doesn't stop it from happening.
I don't have to spend each moment rejoicing
that physics is the way it is.

You don't believe right Why do you worry
about believing right? Even faith is gift.
Even my repentance needs repenting of.
You're an unproductive vine, but faith
is the vehicle of salvation, not the reason for
It is what our hearts are reaching towards

*Lily George is a sophomore concentrating in
Computer Science and Literary Arts.*

heaven's eyes

ANNA DELAMERCED

i can't see you but i want to know that
you are there (should i feel it in my bones?)
like meeting a friend for coffee and a chat
or catching up with a brother on the phone

i can't see you but i want to know you
like a child who knows his mother's hands
even when his eyes are closed through and through
(but sometimes i really can't understand)

one day i hope, i trust, to touch your face
like a boy waiting to be adopted
jumping into his new father's embrace
gasping that he had always been wanted

what's seen now, is here temporarily,
but what is unseen, lasts eternally

Anna Delamerced is a senior concentrating in Public Health.

God Wants Us to Pursue Him In All That We Do

SUJAY NATSON

As a freshman entering Brown, I was lost.

In a school without a core curriculum, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the more than 500 courses I was allowed to take under the open curriculum in the first semester itself, especially when I was deciding what concentrations to pursue and how that decision will play into God's will for my life.

Even though I entered Brown intending to study Physics, I could not resist checking out all the other options it had to offer.

So my first semester at Brown was composed of classes in Physics, Politics, Business and French – I was a freshman who had too many interests and wanted to pursue all of them. I look around at this amazing world that God had created and as a Christian, I just felt the need to understand as much about it as I humanly could.

Each and every one of us has been blessed with gifts and personally, I wanted to make use of them to pursue my interests to the best of my abilities. In a sense, this was the verse that kept guiding me:

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.
(Colossians 3:23, KJV, emphasis added)

Fast forward to now, as a senior concentrating in Political Science and Geology, I look back and am grateful for how God has worked in guiding me to pursuing the interests I had.

During my junior year, I was talking to my concentration advisor and just listing out the areas where I felt most interested in – politics, law, human rights, geology, space etc. –to get an idea of what kind of career I might want to pursue. While listening, I learned that environmental law existed at the intersection of many of these areas.

Environmental law is an area where both the sciences and the law coincide to make an impact not just the well being of people but also the Earth and all of God's creation. The laws and policies enacted and the actions that follow them have a broad reach that I feel I should care about not only as a human but also as a Christian.

From the beginning of creation:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
(Genesis 1:15, NIV)

Man was placed on Earth and one of the first tasks God gave us was to care for the environment.

Moreover, in Psalm 24:1 it states, “The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

This isn't our world to begin with - we don't own the Earth. The Psalmist states that the Earth belongs to God and we're simply the caretakers.

Just take a look around. The pollution from Man's activities, the destruction to the environment and the many small (but collectively significant) activities we partake of on a daily basis, so that we can live a better life, at the cost of the environment - don't do justice to the task God gave us in taking “care” of the environment. I, as a Christian, need to do more to protect this Earth, created by our God.

As a student in college, I can only do so much. Yet, when I think of how God can make use of my talents and being blessed with the undeserving privilege I have here at Brown, my heart yearns to do more.

This isn't our world to begin with-we don't own the Earth. The Earth belongs to God and we're simply the caretakers.

With that upon my heart, I enrolled in a class called 'Engaged Climate Policy at the UN' last semester– working as a researcher on climate change policies. Through the class, I published a report together with my colleagues on how diligent developed countries were in following up on their promises to provide \$100 billion in climate finance to developing countries. This \$100 billion is meant to fund the many adaptation projects that are sorely needed in developing countries deeply affected by climate change and are unable to fund themselves.

At the end of the semester, my classmates and I had the unique opportunity to travel to Paris to take part in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties 21 (COP21). While at the conference, I worked with the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) helping to analyze legal negotiation texts from a scientific perspective and providing briefs that were used to advise negotiators with. The negotiators of different countries and organizations were all discussing on what should and should not be in the final Paris Agreement that will have a broad impact on all parties to the UN - essentially all the UN countries.

This was probably one of the first times where I saw the tangible impact my skills and knowledge acquired over

the years in college could have in a real world setting.

At the end of the first week, I left to finish my finals at Brown, but the conference went on. A week later, I got the news that a new climate agreement had been reached - the first in over 20 years. Not perfect, but it is still a substantial policy outcome that will pave the way for more action to be done in the years to come.

I continue to work as a climate change policy research assistant at Brown's Climate Development Lab and it's a fulfilling experience for me, knowing I can do my part in sustaining the environment.

If environmentalism is my way of caring for the Earth that we live on, then space exploration is my way of caring for all of God's creation that exists outside of it.

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the
skies proclaim the work of his hands.*
(Psalm 19:1, NIV)

Space, outer space, is just an observable marvelous statement of God's majesty. The more I learn about it, the more I feel awed by the incredible care with which God created the universe. Thus I, as a Christian, feel the need to learn more about it.

Since my youth, I've been fascinated with space, developing an interest in astronomy as a kid and eventually pursuing it in a competitive manner all the way through high school. One of the reasons I chose Physics at Brown was so that I could potentially pursue Astrophysics as a concentration here. While my academic concentration declaration did not exactly line up the way I intended initially, I found my way of chasing this fascination with space through other means.

In one of the business classes I took as a freshman, I decided to tackle the problem of 'Why aren't more people interested in space?' as a business problem. Working together with a friend of mine, we designed an app that would introduce more teachers and thus students to the wonders of space. Yet, that was not enough. In my sophomore summer, we decided to reconvene and tackle the bigger problem of why society as a whole isn't interested in space exploration. We concluded after a semester-long independent study that it's because most people simply don't see a connection between what they study academically and space exploration.

Traditionally, space education is perceived as just exclusively for scientists/ engineers/ mathematicians - but we wanted to break down that barrier. We wanted to make it something that people from diverse backgrounds can still take part in.

Thus began Metaplaneta - a creative think tank that tries to explore an interdisciplinary approach to space exploration. Together with a fellowship awarded to us by Brown, a friend and I convened our junior summer and

implemented workshops in Singapore, Japan and here at Brown, on how we can make the connection between multiple academic fields and space exploration.

*If environmentalism is my way of caring
for the Earth that we live on, then space
exploration is my way of caring for all
God's creation that exists outside of it.*

My junior summer research for Metaplaneta ended up taking me to interview various professionals from space policy experts at the UN Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) meeting in Vienna, Austria to the chief scientist of the European Space Agency (ESA) in Noordwijk, Netherlands and finally to businessmen involved in the space industry at a conference in Munich, Germany amongst others. The aim of the summer research was to find a proof of concept for Metaplaneta, which we did, and in the process made numerous network connections who'd help us later in our workshops.

Our workshops incorporated professionals and students from diverse fields such as architecture, business, politics and science amongst others, to solve problems in space through an integrated design approach (IDA). Not only were the students and professionals able to learn from one another, but it also encouraged the students to make a connection between their non-science/math backgrounds and space. Overall, the workshops had the cumulative effect of getting people excited about space, a realm of God's creation which I feel all humans should indeed be excited about.

In fact, one of the speakers we had in the event we organized at Brown, Space Horizons 2016, was a Christian theology professor from Germany who spoke about the intersection of space and religion - it got many in the audience to think about both religion and space with a new perspective.

As I continue to plan what shape our venture Metaplaneta might take after graduation and how my involvement with environmentalism will evolve, I'm still left in astonishment how far God has brought me and where else He'll take me.

I am doing what I can, to pursue my passions "heartily" as I would to the Lord and not simply for myself or towards Man.

In the end, I want to be able to say, just as Paul did:

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished
the race, I have kept the faith.*
(2 Timothy 4:7, NIV)

Despite being a graduating senior (by God's grace) I am still a little lost - I care deeply about many issues, maybe too many. But then again, why should a Christian ever stop caring?

*Sujay Natson is a senior concentrating in
Political Science and Geology.*

“This course has completely changed how I view apologetics and sharing the gospel.”

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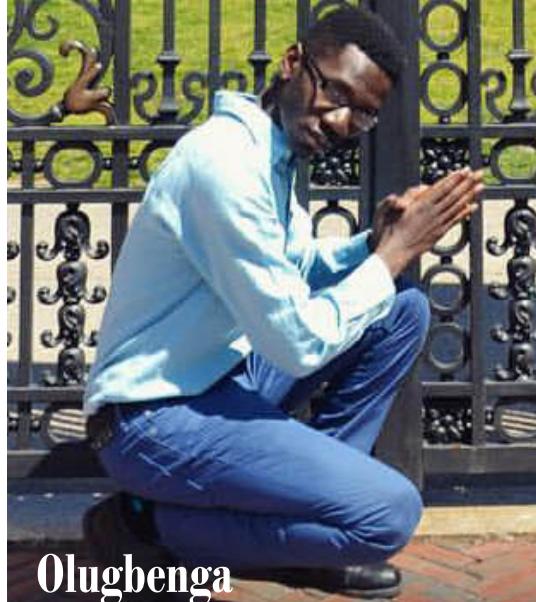


RZIM
ACADEMY

Senior Farewells



**Anna
Delamerced**



**Olugbenga
Joseph**



**Emily
Jang**

During these past four years of college, God has been teaching me to treasure Him above all things. He is worthy of all praise because He saved us from our sins and gives us life, hope, purpose and joy. I've enjoyed being a part of Cornerstone Magazine because we strive to share this good news with the Brown community. Love God, love others, and in all that you do, do it for the glory of God!

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?
(Mark 8:36, NIV)

At Brown, I have learned that in order to find my purpose, I have to surrender my pride and personal preoccupations. It's in this submission to God that I've begun to find true freedom.

My time at Brown has taught me to view Christianity more as a call to compassion than a set of beliefs. Being surrounded by so many resilient and passionate people of all religious backgrounds has inspired me to pursue active love (which I've learned can take on so many forms) in all that I do.



Ministry Profile:

Christian Union

KYLEN SORIANO

Christian Union (CU) is a national ministry that focuses on transforming culture by developing the next generation of global leaders. CU believes that culture follows leadership. If the world's most influential leaders primarily come from top-tier institutions, then it is most important to build foundations at these very places. CU does this by creating opportunities for students to build leadership skills within Christian communities. The hope is for students to leave CU with the tools to pursue their professional and postgraduate careers with a kingdom-mindedness and a desire to shape the cultures that surround them.

This takes the form of on-campus, student-run ministries, such as CU@Brown. Our programming consists of weekly Bible courses where students wrestle with Scripture from historical, theological, and critical perspectives. These courses are led by a ministry staff member and are designed to encourage discussions regarding Scripture. We also organize a weekly large group session where we gather as an entire ministry to learn and discuss relevant topics together. CU@Brown operates under a student executive team that coaches other student leaders, who in turn instruct their respective committees. Here, students gain practical leadership skills, while building up their personal relationships with Christ.

Since the beginning, we have been focused on reflecting Christ's glory on campus. In turn, God has been faithfully providing for us as we have grown to nearly 40 members. We pray that no student at Brown goes through their four years without some interaction with the Gospel. We firmly believe that CU provides a platform for students to share our spirit of love and community. We invite you to seek God's will for Brown's campus by joining us in our efforts to do so.



A Prayer for Brown and RISD

REVEREND KIRSTIN BOSWELL-FORD
Associate University Chaplain for the Protestant Community

*Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.
Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
(Psalm 90: 1-2, NIV)*

We worship you and give you praise, knowing that you, the great author of all creation, know us so intimately that the very hairs on our head are numbered and beloved by you.

You embrace us with Agape, the selfless love of creator to created, and as an outpouring of this love, you gave us the precious gift of your son, Jesus. Through your son, Jesus, we know that we have been given abundant life, and by His example, we have been shown how we are to live our lives.

As we who profess to be followers of Christ seek to embrace the greatest commandment--loving God fully, and loving our neighbor as ourself--we pray that we might be shining examples of faith in action for the world to see.

God, help us to stand firmly against all that is not right in your eyes. Help us to stand firmly against all injustice and wickedness in both high places and low. Help us as we seek your healing for this world; praying for the day when justice will roll down like a river, and righteousness like a mighty stream!

Amen.



But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

AMOS 5:24