Until His Love Breaks You
It Cannot Remake You
Reflections on Freshman Year
by Graham Thompson

Christianity and Human Rights
Enter Text Here
by Melissa Hesselgrave

Brunch Sonnet
Enter Text Here
by Samantha McGirr
ABOUT THE COVER

In 1972, Walter Mischel conducted an experiment at Stanford’s Bing Nursery School in which he tested children’s self-control through the mechanism of delaying gratification. Each child entered an otherwise empty room, and one marshmallow was placed on the table in front of her. Then the experimenter left the room.

The child was told that if she waited for 15 minutes without eating the marshmallow, she would be given a second one. Approximately a third of the children were able to exert self-control, and they, at the end of 15 minutes, were rewarded with another marshmallow.

When Mischel conducted follow-up studies years later, he found that those who had successfully delayed gratification had fewer behavioral problems, higher capacity to pay attention, and less difficulty in relationships. These children out-scored the children who ate the marshmallow before the 15-minute mark by an average of 210 on the SAT.

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/05/18/090518fa_fact_lehrer

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Our Purpose

Vox Clara seeks to provide a platform for believers and non-believers at Stanford to engage in dialogue that inspires a lasting response to the Gospel message. We believe it is important to address issues of faith in the University community. As Jane Stanford’s words on the wall of Memorial Church warn:

“There is no narrowing so deadly as the narrowing of man’s horizon of spiritual things. No worse evil could befall him in his course on earth than to lose sight of Heaven. And it is not civilization that can prevent this; it is not civilization that can compensate for it. No widening of science, no possession of abstract truth, can indemnify for an enfeebling hold on the highest and central truths of humanity. ‘What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’

We find spiritual truth in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who became man, died, and rose again for the salvation of all. Through Him we interpret and understand the world in which we live. Vox Clara seeks to express to the Stanford community that religion is not a set of rules that threatens our freedom or creativity but rather is the hope that pervades our entire lives.

Simply put, we are trying to provide an account of the hope we cherish within us. We do not wish to impose our beliefs but instead to propose our views to everyone at Stanford who is searching just as we are—searching for purpose, for truth, and for Love. As we seek collectively, we will strive to speak with a clear voice and voyage together, elevating each other’s lives in the process. From different Christian traditions and each with our own experience, we at Vox Clara have come together to explore how faith illuminates life and how life enriches faith. We invite all to join us in this important conversation.

Vox Nostra

A note on our name

In the words of C.S. Lewis speaking on Christianity, “it is at her centre, where her truest children dwell, that each communion is really closest to every other in spirit, if not in doctrine. And this suggests that at the centre of each there is something, or a Someone, who against all divergences of belief, all differences of temperament, all memories of mutual persecution, speaks with the same voice.”

We at Vox Clara celebrate this voice of Jesus Christ and believe that His is the true voice. It forms the foundation of our hope and strength. For this reason, we have chosen “Vox Clara,” a Latin phrase meaning “clear voice,” as the name for this organization.
The other Sunday after Mass we go to brunch. DeLuca’s on Park and Broadway. The girl seats us by the window. Manhattan sun fills the wine glasses and bounces stars off the silver crescent on Grandmother’s hand. She still wears her wedding ring. The girl asks for orders. Two o’clock seems late for pancakes, but coffee is grand anytime.

Three meals a day, and all this life lived in between. What holds us to this world when love calls out to brunch. DeLuca’s on Park and broadway. Fills the wine glasses and bounces stars off a cup of espresso, steam rising like prayer over the remains of the day.

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

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SAMANTHA MCGIRR
Samantha McGirr is a senior majoring in English. Her interests include Modernist poetry, journalism, and Dundie chai lattes.

DAVID CARREON
Grew up in California and now is a second year medical student at Stanford. He aspires to grow in loving God with his mind, and so has avid interest in deep conversation, blogging around the blogosphere and wrestling with hard questions. He is thankful to GK Chesterton for “A Defense of Rash Vows” which inspired the character Monday and has also provoked him to take a few rash vows himself.

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Forum of Christian Thought and Action at Stanford
Paradise and Prudence

by Cecilia Jojola

Prudence is knowing what to want, and what not to want.¹

As young adults and college students, the world and its countless opportunities are at our fingertips. We never seem to be short on things to want. And if we cannot decide what we want on our own, there are always the social norms, academic pressures, and seemingly infinite advertisements to tell us what we “should” want. Day-to-day life is a series of these choices, a constant interplay between desiring and obtaining the objects of our desires. But life is more than just an endless chain of decisions, and the intent of our decisions often goes beyond the immediate gratification and satiation of the desire itself. Behind every conscious action is a choice, behind every choice is an immediate goal, and behind every immediate goal is an ultimate aspiration. Thomas Aquinas writes extensively on this virtue of discernment. If our aspiration is to desire God, then prudence involves developing a pure heart, a good conscience, patience, and each day presents us with an opportunity to practice these virtues. To live in love of the Good takes time and a sincere faith. To desire what is best, to desire Life and to grow in the virtue of prudence involves developing a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. To live in love of the Good takes time and patience, and each day presents us with an opportunity to practice this virtue of discernment. If our aspiration is to desire God, then our earthly choices become tools to help us see and pursue that Magnificence which dwells both within and beyond ourselves.

We need only look around to know that not every person chooses the same ultimate goal. Some choose philanthropy, others wealth, and others fame. Some select honor, power, beauty, or even fear.² Numerous lives have been spent chasing fulfillment through the principles mentioned, but are those objects actually capable of providing the fulfillment their pursuers seek? An ultimate goal is expected to satiate desire beyond all desire, a mighty task for any one achievement. With that in mind, it is reasonable to assume that an ultimate goal must be something greater than ourselves, for how could we expect anything inferior to our being to fulfill us? If a goal is tangible or our intellect can master it, then the delight of achievement is sure to pass quickly and soon have us looking for another ambition to entertain. Aquinas agrees with this assessment, stating:³

…No particular good can satisfy our will, but only God who realizes every goodness that creatures realize in their own particular ways. Even the common good of the universe of which man is a part, is not man’s ultimate goal, for it too has its ultimate goal God.

Of course, there cannot exist in man, an intrinsic and inherent part of his being, any goodness that is not created and finite… but the good a man can entertain as object (of his knowledge and love) is infinite and uncreated.⁴

Aquinas’s statement brings to attention an important and often overlooked fact: that, in the context of this earth, we are finite beings. We pine for the good things, and when we finally find them we wish even harder for them to last…but things in this life are, by their very nature, meant to pass away. The truly fulfilling good will not only satisfy all desires but would be incapable of perishing, which is why God, the Eternal, stands as the ultimate goal.

Does the impermanence of our nature and aspirations then render joy in this life valueless? Not at all! It is through this life, with our imperfect intellects, tangible bodies, and fulfillable wills that we are able to experience all that God has made for us. It is those moments of appreciation for creation and experiences of love that allow us to catch shimmering reflections of the Divine. Our time on this earth may pass, but we must remember that we were given this time and life as a gift. The choices we make and intentions we pursue can be more than just impermanent objectives we chase, if in them we look for God.

Our actions, manifestations of our choices and driven by our innermost desires, have the power to bring us closer to or farther from the one Entity with the capacity to grant us the all-encompassing fulfillment we seek so fervently. At times, the joyous, the good, or the beautiful may seem far away, and sometimes it is because we make it so. It may not seem apparent that God is always around and within us, not always easy to want what is right. To desire what is best, to desire Life, and to grow in the virtue of prudence involves developing a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. To live in love of the Good takes time and patience, and each day presents us with an opportunity to practice this virtue of discernment. If our aspiration is to desire God, then our earthly choices become tools to help us see and pursue that Magnificence which dwells both within and beyond ourselves.

²Ibid, pg. 174
³Many would say they pursue happiness itself, but let happiness be considered a state of the soul contingent upon achieving a goal, rather than a goal in and of itself.

Resplendent and unfading is Wisdom, and she is readily perceived by those who love her, and found by those who seek her… For taking thought of her is the perfection of prudence. Wisdom 6:12,15

Note: The Book of Wisdom is considered Deuterocanonical by the Roman Catholic tradition and Apocryphal in most Protestant traditions.

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will declare all your wondrous deeds. Psalms 9:2-3

Our souls waits for the Lord, who is our help and shield. For in God our hearts rejoice; in your holy name we trust. May your kindness, Lord, be upon us; we have put our hope in you. Psalms 33:20-22

CECILIA E. JOJOLA is a Stanford senior majoring in Biology with a minor in Religious Studies. She enjoys dancing, late-night philosophical conversations, and making art. She would like to thank her family and friends for being such beautiful reminders of God’s presence in her life!
As I boarded the plane in my home state of Virginia to leave for a new life in California, I had no idea what life would be like at Stanford. I had a lot of questions: Will I make new friends easily? Will school be too hard for me? Will I make the crew team? Do people like country music at Stanford? I had no idea what life would be like at Stanford.

I was excited to be at Stanford. Classes and crew practice presented new challenges. But after the thrills of being a new student at Stanford calmed down, God began to break me down to nothing so I would realize my need for Him.

During high school God blessed me with an incredible group of friends who were more than friends to me. God brilliantly brought together people from several high schools to Cornerstone, the youth ministry at The Falls Church. My small group of ten other high school guys grew close and we did everything together. After hearing a message about the friendship between David and Jonathan, God blessed me with a similar relationship with my “bro” Luke. Cornerstone was filled with leaders who loved the Lord and served as examples who prayed and mentored us.

God worked through each of us in awesome ways and Cornerstone transformed into a welcoming, fun, and God-honoring place.

But all of this was gone once I came to Stanford. Sitting in my dorm room I found myself comparing new acquaintances to my friends at home who loved the Lord and enjoyed hanging out with me. I felt as though nobody knew who I really was, as though nobody was interested in searching after God. I would even go so far as to say I felt lonely, discouraged, and broken amidst the craziness of school starting. It was during this time that God spoke to me.

At Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), a Christian fellowship on campus, the pastor, David Jones led us through the parables of Luke. During these sermons God showed me that in order for Him to work in my life, I needed to realize my need for Him. I would have to admit that I am a sinner who has nothing to offer on my own. God taught me that I had to rely only on Him for subsistence. I began to realize that my false sense of righteousness was blinding me from my daily need for a savior. I could no longer depend on my friends and youth group for spiritual satisfaction. Realizing this, I was unsure of what to do next.

God was faithful to me during this tough time and drove me to Himself in new ways. Reading God’s word and prayer were something I had always done occasionally but were now necessary and given new life. While my Christian friends were across the country and while I invested in new relationships here, God became my best friend. I discovered new truths and felt at peace with my new life away from those who knew me best.

Looking back on the beginning of freshman year I am thankful that God broke me down and removed the good things in my life that were keeping me from knowing Him more. James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” God drew near to me in my broken state and continues to love and encourage me in numerous ways.

As a second quarter freshman God is still teaching me to admit my complete uselessness and need for Him. God has continued to shower me with blessings like a solid freshman small group, a vibrant church community, connections with ministries like RUF and Cardinal Life, a small group of 6th grade dudes at MPPC, older mentors who routinely pour into me, and service opportunities like homeless breakfast.

In Genesis 12:2 God tells Abraham that he is blessed to be a blessing. In the same way, I believe I am to turn the many blessings in my life into blessings for others.

To answer those questions I had on the plane: being intentional is the way to make real friends. Stanford is hard but God is bigger. I am blessed to be on the crew team and am striving to glorify God by rowing hard. And thankfully and surprisingly, there are many country lovers at Stanford.

We were not made primarily that we may love God (though we were made for that too) but that God may love us, that we may become objects in which the Divine may rest well pleased.” (C.S. Lewis)

“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” Matthew 10:39
In "Turn the Other Cheek," Jesus addresses the issues that I would face as a slave or servant being subjected to physical harm. However, we all know that there are many forms of oppression that reach beyond physical abuse. One of the most concrete themes that Jesus specifically addresses is money. Jesus knows how important money is to our lives and he not only understands the influence that money has on us, but he also knows how to liberate us from that influence.

So, let's jump back into Jesus' time, but instead of being a slave or a servant, I am now an "average citizen." Now, "average" in these days would better be understood as poor. You see, the economic disparities between rich and poor of today's world are no new concept. In the ancient world, the upper percentage controlled all the wealth. They had the power and the wealth to use through the force of their will. Since the rich folks had the armies, the rest of the population feared them. In fact, that fear gave the rich such control that they would tax the rest of the population by 50% to 75% on their income and leave the masses in a situation where they needed to go into debt just to live. I know that many of us have some sort of debt because we chose to enter into higher education and improve our lives, but imagine going into debt because you want to have enough meals to make it through the week. Well, these are the type of people of Jesus' time, and if I am going to be the typical citizen in that time, then my situation would most likely be one of poverty and debt.

The worst part about debt is that you have to pay back what you owe. It's always fine when you get the money to pay for what you need at the moment, but then you have to work twice as hard to get that same money back and interest on top of that; and if you do come up with the money, it is so hard to let go of it. That being the case, most people in my situation never got to the point where they could clear all their debts. Therefore, they would continually owe money to various lenders and live at the mercy of those whom they owed. And now with all that in mind, let us re-enter Jesus' time.

I'm a day laborer. It's not that I am unemployed per-se, but I'm not always employed, if you know what I mean. It's kind of like how you go to Home Depot in the morning and see those people waiting outside for someone to tell them to hop into the truck and come do some work for them. Well, I'm one of those people. And these past few weeks have been rough. Not much work so my debts are piling up and I'm finding it harder to imagine that I will be able to pay them back.

Then one day, Rich man Dives, comes by. Now Dives is blessed. He's got money and he uses it to get more. Plenty of people like myself owe Dives money and when he comes to collect, he gets what he wants. Problem is that I don't have the money to pay him back right now. I try to ask for more time, but Dives knows what he is doing. "I'll see you in court," he commands. And soon after that we find each other before the judge.

I tell the judge that I don't have the money. I plead for more time to settle my debts. But, Dives is determined to get back the money I owe... and I owe a lot.

And it is still not enough. So, the judge adds on to Dives' cruel request: "Your home and all the possessions in it are now to be turned over to Dives." And yet my debt is still not settled. I look around in desperation at the onlooking crowd. Everyone gathered at this hearing knows the direction this is going. I've lost my home and have nothing else to give, but this man still wants to take all I owe. We all know that the only thing left for me to give that could settle my debt is myself. It seems pretty clear that I will not leave this court as a free man.

I scan the crowd for a sympathetic face. I need a savior. The only thing left for me to give that could settle my debt is myself. It seems pretty clear that I will not leave this court as a free man. I try to ask for more time, but Dives knows what he is doing. As I hand over my tunic to Dives I raise my head to make sure that I place the garment in his hand. And then I notice Dives' face. It's turned away.

I look at the judge and he too has his head turned away from me. I scan the crowd and see that everyone has the same reaction. They have their heads turned away in shame!

Without looking in my direction, the judge mumbles something about the terms of servitude and Dives grabs me by the arm to take me away. I leave the courtroom as I enter into a sentence of slavery, but not in the way that I had imagined it.

You see, everyone in this room is a Jew, and in a Jewish context to appear naked before everyone in the room would be turned away in shame! And if someone wants to sue you and take your cloak, they could Jesus humiliate me like this? As I hand over my tunic to Dives I raise my head to make sure that I place the garment in his hand. And then I notice Dives' face. It's turned away.

I don't understand Jesus. I'm confused. I'm ashamed. I'm discouraged. I feel like all hope is lost. I will leave court as a slave, Jesus repeats, "if someone wants to sue you for your cloak, do not stop him, but give him your tunic as well."

I don't know much. But, I do know that Jesus was anointed by God when John baptized him. I know that whatever Jesus says carries God's approval. So... I step. I trust Jesus, so I take it all off. I'm naked. I walk over to Dives with this high hung low. How could Jesus humiliate me like this? As I hand over my tunic to Dives I raise my head to make sure that I place the garment in his hand. And then I notice Dives' face. It's turned away.

And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Matthew 5:40-42

When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not enter his house to take his pledge. You shall remain outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. If he is a poor man, you shall not sleep with his pledge. When the sun goes down you shall surely return the pledge to him, that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you; and it will be righteousness for you before the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 24:10-13

Noah was the first tiller of the soil. He planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

Genesis 9:20-27

And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.
Christianity AND Human Rights

by Melissa Hesselgrave

Those of us who consider the present era one of progress are quick to claim, for ourselves as well as others, certain human rights. Maxims of the Enlightenment - and some of those on compassion are quick to our tongues when we hear of injustice. We are outraged that there are people in this world - despite Cicero and the philosophes, despite the lessons of the American and French revolutions, world wars, genocide, and the United Nations, despite the Gospel itself - living without the most fundamental freedoms or under the strains of striking inequality. Notwithstanding our noblest sentiments, however, this idealistic conception of human rights, as universally applicable and wholly critical for the good of both the individual and society, is deeply problematic. While some rights may seem universal (i.e. universally human), the fact that they are not universally implemented or even valued in the same degree by any two individuals, localities, states, or nations, injures any conception of cross-cultural human rights. The reality is that rights exist only as inalienables, and are, subsequently, enforced, by law.

For the Christian, all of this begs the question of whether there are God-given human rights at all. Many are familiar with the argument that because we are made after God’s image and were created in His divine image, we have certain inalienable rights that are derived from being children of God - Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. It would be a sin against God, therefore, to deny that inborn rights to depriving someone of his or her right to life, for example. This understanding of the basis for human rights ignores critical and complicating aspects of Christian doctrine, however.

The Bible teaches that after the fall of Man, sinful humanity was separated from God, no longer master over the beasts, and thereafter subject to the laws of nature. Sin absolutely strips us of all merit and personal value, making us deserving only of God’s eternal wrath. In this context, the idea of personal human rights don’t mean anything at all. God doesn’t owe humanity anything. Furthermore, humans don’t owe one another anything. How could wretched individuals justly demand fellow sinners to recognize, for example, costly “rights” to health or to safety? When we consider that everything is a gift of the Lord’s grace, the idea of some personal worth is therefore without foundation. The fact that God is no longer owed anything because we are made after God’s image and likeness, however, does not mean that we are entirely free to do as we please, or that no one can judge our actions. Because we are made in God’s image, we are created for Him, to love as He does because He first loved us. In love, God the Father sent Christ himself that for us to believe so. As in all things, God Himself is at the core of the Gospel. Christ’s death was a testament, not to human rights, but to God’s incredible love and perfect grace in the face of human depravity. Indeed Christians are commanded to respect God’s Creation and every individual for reasons of intrinsic worth. Out of our devotion for God, instead, we should seek to love as He does before He first loved us. In 1 John 1:7, the Bible commands us to: “Seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.” In serving one another, we serve the Lord and His divine purpose - not some abstract conception of our own deserved rights.

What is today known as the “Western” modern understanding of human rights derives most explicitly from Enlightenment philosophical theories relating to the innate worth of man and freedom in the human spirit and nature. Since then, conceptions of what exactly constitutes human rights have gone a great length beyond basic natural liberties and range from the narrow to the extremely broad. Michael Sandel, for example, argued that we have “a universal duty to protect the intrinsic worth of all individuals in order that human beings are never treated as a means, but always as ends in and of themselves.”

On the other hand, Peter Lauf, in The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions, claims that the goal for human rights is justice without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, caste or class, religion, political opinion, national or social origin. Positive social rights should be understood as fundamental and also contentions. A positive right is one that entitles the holder to some service or good, while negative rights are characterized by non-interference. While libertarians claim that inequalities are natural and cannot be altered without afflicting someone’s liberty or property, many others consider inequalities fundamentally unjust and amenable through welfare rights. At the broad end of the spectrum promoting welfare rights, Scottish philosopher Francis Hutcheson has claimed that people have a “right to do, possess, or demand” anything contributing to the good of society.

The international community’s conception of these human rights, while essentially normative, acts as the essential framework for substantive human rights law at every level. Although understandings of human rights clearly vary across different societal contexts, international norms largely dictate their enforcement. Domestic realization of human rights often begins with the amendment and subsequent enforcement of broad, internationally ratified principles. The process is by no means absolute or consistent, however. Problems of enforcing human rights have as much to do with theoretical considerations, such as the question of universality of certain rights, as with practical ones, such as institutional capability.

While countries and states cannot be expected to agree on every aspect of human rights or to treat them in the same way, the value of human rights rhetoric lies with the idea that certain rights should be universally observed even as they are not universally understood. Countries disagree about human rights, at least most of the time, because they do not hold the same opinion regarding their purpose. This doesn’t mean, however, that they should be abandoned altogether. While relativists such as Richard Wilson often criticize the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights as “universal only in pretension” and a “charter of an idealistic European political philosophy,” its normative significance should not be undervalued. International standards set the trend in promoting respect and cooperation amongst individuals and across borders.

Christians should take advantage of this revolutionary movement towards global progress by getting involved in stopping injustice and doing so in God’s name. In serving the Great Commission and promoting peace and basic human rights, Christians can help break physical chains as well as spiritual ones. The only source of valuable progress in human rights has been fundamental changes in ideology. Christians have divine authority from the only true King to spread the Gospel and do the Lord’s will across all borders. The Holy Word is a powerful catalyst for profound and lasting societal change, as well as individual change, lending reason and spirit to law and institutions of justice in Christian societies. As A. Belden Fields and Wolf-Dieter Nahr have put it, “‘Human rights’ cannot be pulled out of the air...A theory of human rights must be based upon real human beings rooted in their social contexts.” A dynamic approach to human rights that recognizes the central roles played by human action and consciousness is critical. When individuals bring Christian ideas about respect and justice into their local contexts, through the mechanism of human rights, they can become instruments of great societal transformation.

Jeremy Bentham, known for his theory on utilitarianism, wrote, “Rights are the child of law from real law come real rights, but from imaginary laws, from ‘law of nature,’ come imaginary rights...Natural rights [or human rights] is simple nonsense.” However, Bentham’s claim is valid. Universal human rights won’t exist until they are clearly defined and uniformly implemented by law. Although we cannot honestly lay claim to any inherent, God-given rights, laws that recognize certain rights and demand that individuals be treated equally, and without preference, are not so遥 distant. Christians should take advantage of this revolutionary movement towards global progress by getting involved in stopping injustice and doing so in God’s name. In serving the Great Commission and promoting peace and basic human rights, Christians can help break physical chains as well as spiritual ones. The only source of valuable progress in human rights has been fundamental changes in ideology. Christians have divine authority from the only true King to spread the Gospel and do the Lord’s will across all borders. The Holy Word is a powerful catalyst for profound and lasting societal change, as well as individual change, lending reason and spirit to law and institutions of justice in Christian societies. As A. Belden Fields and Wolf-Dieter Nahr have put it, “‘Human rights’ cannot be pulled out of the air...A theory of human rights must be based upon real human beings rooted in their social contexts.” A dynamic approach to human rights that recognizes the central roles played by human action and consciousness is critical. When individuals bring Christian ideas about respect and justice into their local contexts, through the mechanism of human rights, they can become instruments of great societal transformation.

As for you, were you dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:1-10

Melissa Hesselgrave is a junior majoring in History and the Law. Last fall, she studied abroad at Oxford University and completed a tutorial on human rights. This article is a reflection of the concept of rights that inspired her to write this article.
Finding Home in Another World: Reflections on Life in Ethiopia

by Cathy Hong


And so it began, when six and a half months ago I arrived in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. After a summer of working at summer camp, I drove home, packed my bags, and left less than 48 hours later (a crazy notion in retrospect). I suppose that the positive side of that was that I didn’t have enough time to freak out about the preparation details (minus a few moments of brief overwhelming chaos).

You know it’s crazy how quickly you can adjust to a whole new world: new food, new music, new language, new bugs, new smells, new markets, new toilets, new faces, new clothes, new everything pretty much. They talk about culture shock, and say that you will need to prepare yourself mentally for some of the new things that you will experience when going to a new country. I think that there is a lot of truth in that to some extent, but in some ways, I almost wonder if it’s better to just go without the huge build-up. Sometimes you have to just tell yourself, “Don’t be shocked, just take it as it comes and be open to whatever God may have for you in this new land.” So for the four and a half months that I spent teaching in a developing nation, that is exactly what I did.

After about a month of living and working in Addis, life started to become routine, managing not to trample the woman who was selling her vegetables on a blanket in the middle of the “sidewalk.” Things that initially caught my eye and engaged my curiosity, had somehow become the positive side of that was that I didn’t have enough time to freak out about the preparation details (minus a few moments of brief overwhelming chaos).

This was the world that I found myself in. This was the world that I fell in love with. This was Addis.

I moved to Ethiopia not only to teach, but to learn as well. I guess I just didn’t expect to learn as much as I did. Although life may have looked a bit different than it would in Monterey Bay, Tijuana, or Calcutta for that matter, I found that some things are just universal when it comes to people. Among the many lessons I learned, I realized that everyone desires deep and meaningful relationships, everyone enjoys laughter, everyone scours their knees and bleeds the same red color, everyone faces rejection at various points in time, and at the end of the day we all want to go home to a family unit that feels whole and peaceful. Although my students in Addis dodged goats and donkeys on their way to school, they still had some of the same hopes and fears for the future and they too just wanted to belong. They too just wanted to be loved and valued.

Throughout my life I have learned that at the heart of Jesus you find, justice, generosity, and selfless service. How these muscles of justice, compassion, generosity, and selfless service can truly start to live a life of love. No, it’s much simpler than that. These words are tangible, action-based traits that are built into the inner-workings of my heart.

In conclusion, I will leave you with this verse from 1 John 3:16-18: “If anyone sees a person in need and has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with word or tongue, but with action and in truth.”

CATHY HONG is a traveling learner, seeking to understand more about the beauty that exists through different cultures both at home and abroad. She hails from Monterey, California, but is open to wherever the wind blows next.
We live in a culture that screams to us at every corner, “You are justified in having all of your desires met, and if you don’t have them met, something is wrong.” Thus, our desires can easily come to master us, keeping us in bondage and often escalating out of control. On this topic, Dallas Willard states, “Desire itself is not bad, but desire is not meant to master our lives. It isn’t that desires or feelings are overwhelming, but they are overwhelming if you concede to them time and time again.” In contrast, the way of Jesus—the way of the cross—says, “Not only will you be ok when you crucify your flesh with its earthly desires, but you will find a divine power through the Holy Spirit that dwells in you to live a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control,” (Galatians 5).

The New Testament is full of exhortations to have discipline and self-control. In Matthew 5, Jesus said, “If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.” I actually appreciate that Jesus used graphic imagery when talking about our need for self-control, because it shows he understands how hard and painful it might feel to crucify our desires to sin. In every NT admonishment to have self-control, self-control in and of itself is not the end goal. The goal is always to better know, see, and walk intimately with Jesus, experiencing a life of power, victory, freedom, and abundance. God does not call us to self-control because he wants to keep us from fun or fulfillment. On the contrary, He wants our best, which is a life characterized by intimacy with Him, power, love, and being filled with His Spirit.

We cannot muster up self-control, so how do we get it? Our part is to train and practice self-control to the best of our ability, not letting desire rule over us and always reminding ourselves that we won’t die just because we don’t get our way. But most importantly, God must give us self-control through His Spirit that dwells in the heart of each of His disciples. As we yield to him and do our part, His character will burst forth in our innermost being, producing beautiful fruit in accordance with His nature, including self-control.

We must make every effort to undergird your virtue with faith, your discernment with virtue, and your self-control with discernment. This self-control, in turn, should lead to perseverance, and perseverance to piety, and piety to care for your brother, and care for your brother, to love.” 2 Peter 1:5-7

Jesus taught us what he considers most important in the greatest commandment: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And love your neighbor as yourself. It’s all about love. But God can’t be loved as an object or as an abstraction. Because God is imbedded in all of creation and in every person, God is to be sought, served and loved everywhere. Such a huge undertaking can’t be done with one act of the will. It would take huge personal freedom, a freedom only the most mature enlightened person could come close to achieving. Christian self-control, then, would be different from autonomous self-mastery. It must involve a yielding to the Holy Spirit who is capable of doing all things in and through us. It’s a growth process. It’s payoff is not a trophy. Its simply a necessary virtue on the way to loving as Jesus loved.
Featured Visual Artists

Tim Wolfe

Tim Wolfe is a senior Human Biology major from Granby, Connecticut. He enjoys science and photography which are more connected than you might think.

Winter Water Wheel
Bass Lake, CA
2011

Natalie Uy

Natalie is a junior double majoring in Biology and ArtStudio and hopes to become a doctor. She’s from San Antonio, TX and enjoys drawing, traveling, baking, and shopping.

Are you there God?
Lisbon, Portugal
2010
Vox Clara was inspired by The Augustine Project, which is a growing movement to establish Christian journals at colleges across the country. The Project’s goal is to be a “thoughtful witness to [Christian] faith in the modern university,” knowing that “Truth cannot be pursued in a vacuum.” The Augustine Project was founded by Jordan Hylden, a graduate of Harvard University.

**The Augustine Project**

Vox Clara at Stanford is a chapter of Vox Clara, a Christian non-profit dedicated to building a network of Christian organizations on college campuses across the country that produce publications and host speaking events and conferences for college students. This national organization grew out of Vox Clara at Stanford, its first chapter. For more information, please visit www.voxclara.org.

The Augustine Project:  
*theaugustineproject.blogspot.com*

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**Other Member Journals Include:**

- The Harvard Ichthus
- Revisions (Princeton)
- The Beacon (William and Mary)
- To An Unknown God (Berkeley)
- Closing Remarks (Brown)
- The Pub (Wheaton)
- Religio (Duke)
- Wide Awake (University of Virginia)
- The Fish (University of Chicago)
- Logos (Yale)
- The Dartmouth Apologia
- The Stand (UC San Diego)

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**Interested in submitting an article or other content?**

Vox Clara is currently accepting all types of student submissions, including research articles, opinion pieces, interviews, short stories, book reviews, poems, and photography & art (please take into consideration that journals are typically printed in black & white). We feature this content and archived material on the online version of our journal.

The deadline for articles for the Spring issue is May 16th. We will still accept submissions after this date but they may be postponed to a later issue.

Please submit your work to submissions@voxstanford.org.

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www.voxstanford.org | info@voxstanford.org
Thank you for reading Vox Clara. It is our sincere hope that you come away enlightened about aspects of Christianity. Whether you are a skeptic, seeker, or believer, we encourage you to continue exploring the faith. We leave you with these closing thoughts.

**CLosinG thoUGhts**

True freedom is to be one's true self, but my true self is made for loving, and loving is self-giving. So in order to be myself, I have to deny myself and give myself. In order, then, to be free, I have to give up my freedom. In order, then, to live, I have to die to my self-centeredness. In order to find myself, I've got to lose it.

- John Stott

Freedom is not the absence of restrictions, it is the presence of the right restrictions.

- Timothy Keller

Last summer I had the chance to participate in a bike ride with International Justice Mission to help raise awareness of human trafficking. The third day of our ride in Alabama influenced the way I looked at the remaining five weeks of the trip and continues to impact me today. We were staying the night in a small church in Moundville. Due to some miscommunication, the church had thought we were going to be arriving the following evening instead, so they had organized a gathering on the next night for us to speak to the community about the issue of modern-day slavery. But unfortunately, we were going to have to wake up early the next morning and bike to another city. Rather than cancel the event, members of the church began a phone chain to let the town of Moundville know that the event would be happening in a couple of hours instead of on the following day. Amidst a downpour and at last-minute’s notice, the town came out to encourage us and to learn about God’s call for us to seek justice for the oppressed. They were a community that was connected in love and support for one another and for others; they were a concrete image of the body of Christ.

When we gathered together in the church’s sanctuary, Sean Litton, the director of Field Operations for IJM, shared a story of a young girl that his team had rescued from a brothel she had been held captive in for years. During an undercover investigation, Sean’s team had taken a picture of the girl’s cell. Across the back wall of her cell, the girl had written the first verse of Psalm 27: “The Lord is my light and my salvation—of whom shall I be afraid?” (NIV). I was struck when I heard those words. In the face of daily rape and enslavement, this child held on to her faith in God. God heard her prayers, and He stirred within the IJM team the courage and commitment to bring her rescue.

After the event ended, the other girls on the ride and I headed to a room in the church to get some sleep. When we walked into the room, the first thing we saw was a painting hanging on the wall. Written on it were the words of Psalm 27: 1—the same verse that the young girl had written on her cell. Seeing those words and spending time with the Moundville community made me realize just how connected we are as the children of God. It gave new meaning to my understanding of the passage from Colossians, which says, “Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion and kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. [...] And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” (NIV 3:11-13). As we begin this new year, I pray that we will clothe ourselves in these virtues and in love, knowing that we do so not as isolated individuals but as part of the dearly loved body of Christ.

C. E. Caruthers
President, 2010 - 11