

THE ODYSSEY

a wandering and eventful journey with God

Coming Soon!

- *Theodyssey Guidebooks*, Part I, will be available this Summer!
- Theodyssey classes come to San Jose in Fall '05. Watch for details!
- Check-out our new website, which goes live on May 1st.
- We're working on a 'Virtual Community—a place to connect, learn, and grow on the web. Stay tuned!
- If you're not on our Monthly (soon to be twice monthly) E-mail Update, you can sign-up on the web.

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Volume I, Issue I

Spring 2005

Notes from the Road

Dave Smith

Most weeks I travel to Portland, where I am discipling about 100 twenty-something year olds. It's a different world than I grew up in. I partner with an emerging church, where some 1200 'NextGens' gather each Sunday for worship. I keep a travel journal. Mostly stuff I'm learning about God, myself, and discipling this generation. These random entries give you a window into my experience.



❖ *People next to me on the plane keep asking what I do. I'm a . . . missionary to the 'next generation'. . . Spiritual Director. . . writer. . . 'people grower'. . . leadership developer. People look at me like I'm weird. Probably am.*

❖ *"We'll be landing in Portland in just a few minutes. It's overcast and raining and 52 degrees." I think that's a recorded message.*

❖ *. . . 14 tiny pretzels in the foil packet.*

❖ *First day. Over 75 leaders in the group. Strong spirit of fear, cynicism and distrust. Caught me off guard. Introduced the first section — "Excavation". Many were fearful. The metaphor is too harsh and threatening. They need a more gentle approach. Learned several lessons tonight. Humbling.*

❖ *Lots of bright, creative people. Social workers, grad students, artists, college kids, engineers, architects, musicians, retail workers, teachers, ministry leaders, young moms. . . Some cool hair and body rings.*

❖ *"Authenticity" is used a lot here. Seems to mean, 'a safe place to take-off your mask.' Freedom to be yourself. That's real here. But something's missing. You can feel it. Community is not only a place to take-off your mask; it's also where you are to "put Christ on." We need to talk this through or we'll go nowhere.*

❖ *Like most missionaries, I'm learning the local dialect. Lots of insiders talk at Starbucks. "Venti, espresso, macchiato, double cup, depth charge, spill room, quad shot." Feel like ordering something just to feel part of the tribe. "A small, I mean 'Tall', hot chocolate." I feel wimpy when they ask if I want whipped cream. That's the reason I get it.*

❖ *Many prayed tonight, renouncing the false, destructive beliefs they have about themselves. Several others verbalized prayers of forgiveness, releasing those who have abused or hurt them in the past. They're walking out of shame and bondage. They're courageous. Jesus is healing them.*

(Continued on page 3)



Theodyssey: *Discipling the Next Generation*

Imagine the frustration of groping for a door knob where there isn't one.

That's how Christianity feels to much of the next generation.

Their desire for God is real. But they're not buying the cultural Christianity that's been modeled and marketed to them. They're looking for a 'door handle' — one that opens the way to authentic faith.

I'm a missionary to the next generation.

Most Christ-followers walk through life unempowered and unchanged. It's just a fact. Endless sermons. Frenetic busyness (sometimes, called 'ministry'). Reams of information. Yet, underneath, most Christ-followers' lives are a mess.

For most, the past has a powerful influence in the present. Distorted views of God. *Why did God.* . . . Distorted perceptions of self. *I am unlovable.* And a twisted focus on priorities. *What about me?*

Not sure why we accept selfishness, fear, shame, and anger as a normal part of the Christian life. But we do.

Time to quit calling this 'normal', as if this is what it means to follow Christ. We cannot pass on this diseased understanding of faith to the next generation.

I'm a missionary to the next generation.

They're a tribal culture of intelligent, creative, industrious 20-somethings who are cynical, skeptical, and distrustful about Christianity. And why shouldn't they be? The appeals of the 'unempowered and unchanged' leave them uninterested.

They want real. No religious games. No pretense.

I'm a missionary to the next generation.

According to the New Testament, the normative Christian experience is deep personal transformation. Every dimension of our lives — mind, emotions, conscience, and will. Even, sexuality.

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

I believe it.

Thank you for helping me to stand by the door. It matters!

Schedule of Events

- April 4-5
Theodyssey in
Portland, OR
- April 11-12
Theodyssey in
Portland, OR
- April 18-19
Theodyssey in
Portland, OR
- April 24
Theodyssey Open
House, 1-3 p.m.
Dave and Robin
Smith's
(Kids Welcome)
- May 2-3
Theodyssey in
Portland, OR
- May 9-10
Theodyssey in
Portland, OR
- May 16-17
Theodyssey in
Portland, OR
- June 19-21
Renovare Confer-
ence, Denver, CO
- July 9
Theodyssey Brunch
9-11 a.m.
Campbell, CA

I stay near the door. I
neither go too far in, nor
stay too far out,

The door is the most
important door in the
world –

It is the door through
which men walk when
they find God.

There's no use my going
way inside, and staying
there,

When so many are still
outside, and they, as
much as I,

Crave to know where
the door is. And all that
so many ever find,

Is only the wall where a
door ought to be. They
creep along the wall like
blind men, with
outstretched, groping
hands,

Feeling for a door,
knowing there must be a
door,

Yet they never find it. . .

So I stay near the door.

The most tremendous
thing in the world is for
men to find that door –
the door to God.

The most important thing
any man can do is to take
hold of one of those
blind, groping hands, and
put it on the latch – the
latch that only clicks and
opens to the man's own
touch.

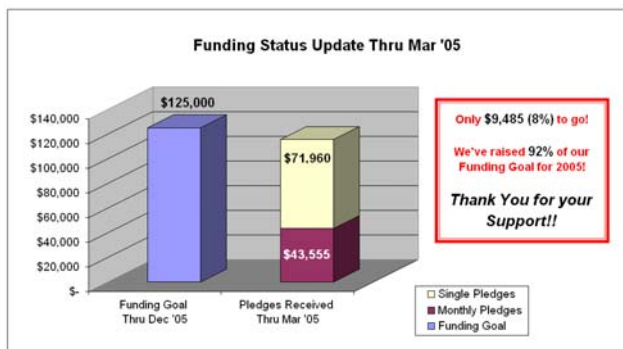
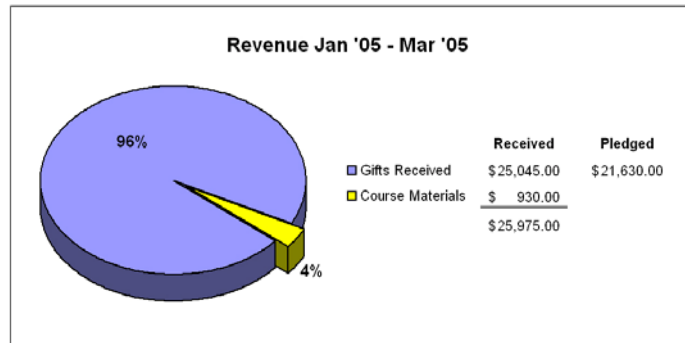
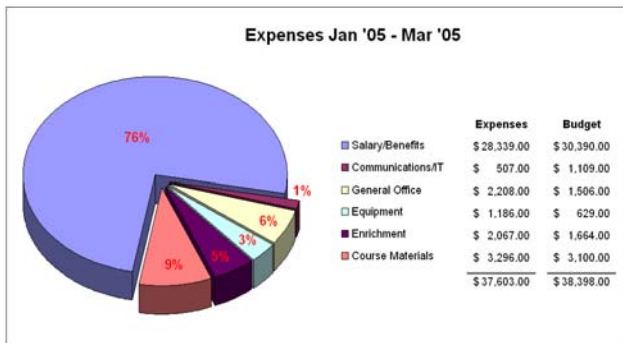
From, *So I Stay Near the Door*,
By Samuel Shoemaker

Notes from the Road (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

- ❖ Feels weird being the 'old guy.'
- ❖ The residue of 'Cultural Christianity is in some people. Past church involvement cloned them to function like 'factory workers'. Focus is on production — to crank-out spiritual results. (As if we can make it happen.) Why is everything reduced to formulas — 40 Days, 12 Steps to Christ, 7 Minutes with God, Four Spiritual Laws, One Minute Bible? What happened to 'mystery'? Funny thing is that it works for a while and gets rewarded in a religious culture. Underneath, most Christians are a mess.
- ❖ "That sounds like bull#*!@%!" These guys swear more than I'm used to in a church situation. They're very real. It's kind of refreshing. No pretense. Christ is inviting them to so much more. A lot of interpersonal obstacles — at least they're starting to get put on the table.
- ❖ Didn't do the Prayer of Cleansing last night. Not the right time. Headed for the airport. Incredibly thirsty. Might be late for my flight — no time to stop. Still had the plastic bottle of holy water sitting in the cup holder. "I wonder if He would really care?" Then I think, "Maybe my hair will grow back." Couldn't do it. Still thirsty. Wouldn't make a good Catholic.
- ❖ I heard that a rain-soaked, lesbian protester picketed outside the worship service on Sunday morning. A group of friends hustling in from the downpour invited her in. She wouldn't leave her sign, so they told her to bring it. Self-conscious, she hugged the back wall. They urged her to sit with them. I heard that she sat in the second row — with her sign (I wonder what it said?). During communion at the end of the service she got up from her pew. She knelt-down and sobbed. God loves her. So do these people. My heart is hard. They're teaching me a lot. I feel humbled.

Quarterly Financial Report



Thank you for your faithfulness!

Your investment in bringing biblical spiritual formation to the next generation — and beyond — is making a difference! Thank you for your gifts!

A Giving Update Letter and giving envelopes are mailed-out at the beginning of each Quarter. Beginning this summer, you will be able to give online!

Every dollar is carefully accounted for through strict financial policies. For a copy of our **Financial Policies**, check-out our website at www.TheodysseyGroup.org

Upcoming Events . . .

Contact Us:

Phone: 408-226-5590

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Email: info@theodysseygroup.org

www.TheodysseyGroup.org



YOU'RE INVITED!

Theodyssey Open House

Sunday, April 24th

1:00-3:00 p.m.

- Drop by for lunch
- Connect with old friends
- And stay in touch with Theodyssey!

The Advisory Group is BBQ'ing, so bring the whole family!

Location:

Dave and Robin Smith's
310 Briggs Ct.
San Jose, CA 95139

RSVP to bambi@TheodysseyGroup.org or call (408) 360-9221

Check out our new website
www.TheodysseyGroup.org

Theodyssey Group

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