



# LOGOS

a publication of CAPSR,  
the Community Association of the Pacific School of Religion

November  
2006

## A SAMPLING OF THIS ISSUE'S OFFERINGS:

"Although we have witnessed 6 years of this style of leadership for our nation, it is disappointing to see this style become more and more common at PSR. I hope that PSR as a community can reject the binary language that has become so pervasive in the political and social discourse of the U.S."

-John Davis, Binary Thinking, page 12

"I am thankful for family because they are so blankety-blank-blank stupid. I am thankful for family because they eat the green beans that I push aside due to the stench that wafts from their putrid green grossness."

- Matthew Harris-Gloyer,  
Confessional, page 14

"I couldn't understand being in Uganda while in America. I was used to this in Uganda but I couldn't figure out why things were like this here."

-David Ofumbi, Emily's Interview, page 5

The Dismantling  
Racism Commit-  
tee (DRC) report  
to the PSR Board  
of Trustees,  
pages 6-9

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"And that Quidditch sounds like a game I could really get into - I love any sport that combines high speeds and the threat of serious bodily injury with minimal protective equipment."

-Pierre, page 3

"Right now, some members of the PSR community continue falling through the cracks."

-Andy Schwiebert and Ryan Baum, Kudos, Facts, and Cracks, page 13

"I started cooking Wednesday night, baking pies. I baked the largest turkey I could find. I didn't know how many to expect, so I just cooked a bunch of food. I still don't know how many came, but the house was full and there was enough food for all."

-Sheryl Butler, A Thanksgiving Story, page 15

**Extry! Extry! Read all about it!**

**SPECIAL EXTRA-LONG EDITION!**

*16 stellar pages!*

**You did it! You saw the need for submissions to keep Logos alive and butt-kickin', and you stepped up to the submission plate. Way to go! Keep it up!**

**READ MORE INSIDE....**

### From the Editor

Editing Logos takes time and creativity, but it also takes a significant investment of ethical energy on my part. Offering some element of transparency into my job as Editor-in-Chief of Logos, I wish to confess that this issue has caused me to struggle with the ethics of my job more than any issue so far (a challenge I welcome).

Editing is a practice in ethics. With every word or image I put or don't put on the page, I am making choices. Not only is my editing job a choosing of what to include, but also how it should be formatted on the page, and where in the issue each piece should be placed. My job is to successfully answer the battery of questions I pose to myself with every issue:

- How can I fairly represent the content people gift to me and to this community?

- What is a fair use of space? Is it ethical for me to use more paper to spread the content out into a more relaxed formatting?

- What goes into those choice spots on the front page?

- What do my choices about fonts and paragraphing and spacing imply about my regard for the submissions?

- What voices does Logos share? What voices are not being shared in Logos? How can we get more voices here?

- How much can I change the words and grammar of submissions, without losing their authors' intentions?

- What are the ethics of editing and placing images?

- My journalism teacher taught me the 'Seven Elements' that must be in a story to be considered 'newsworthy:' proximity, timeliness, conflict, consequence, human interest, prominence, or sex. I apply these in my layout choices. I also try to follow the classic newspaperly demands of concise, accessible language. (I almost wrote 'verbiage' there, but caught myself.) But, it begs the question, What journalistic standards apply to Logos? Is Logos a newspaper or a newsletter or a literary journal?

- What are the effects on me of doing this job of editing? (I know it's hard for me to turn off my editing, even when I'm sending text messages on my cell phone!) Am I driving myself insane by being hyper-critical? (Or am I not being critical enough?!)

- Will readers ask themselves all these questions, and hold me accountable to choosing wisely? Can I use transparency in my editing here to encourage deeper media criticism and analysis beyond Holy Hill?

One morning at work years ago, I turned on the computer and opened up my home internet page, set to the BBC international news page. I was horrified to see, in the image adjacent their top story of the hour, graphic pictures of the torture scenes at some of the military prisons in Iraq. I had not asked to see these images, and so my immediate response was to rationalize them, to stifle my nausea, because, hey, I was at work, with a job to do.

My editorial ethics became clear to me in that moment of outrage. As much as I want to share the important news that my readers need to know to change their lives and end this violence, I did not want to repeat this trauma onto them in such a way that I would force them to become numb to seeing these images pop up in the most casual of settings. Words as well as images can have dramatic or traumatic impact.

I pray that my choices in this issue, and in every issue, serve our community's needs for this newsletter, and I thank you all for honoring me with your trust in my editorial ethics.

-Audrey deCoursey

## Logos Submission Guidelines

### Who can submit

All members of the Pacific School of Religion community are invited to submit to Logos: students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, family members, and supporters of PSR.

### What to submit

Original work of interest to the PSR community:

- Articles: opinion pieces, news, feature stories
- Reviews: books, movies, concerts, albums, lectures
- Poetry, Prayers
- Event and group announcements
- Drawings
- Photography: artistic, news-related, social events
- Questions for columnists

### How to submit

Email: [adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu](mailto:adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu)

### When to submit

Upcoming Priority Deadline: **December 6**  
December Theme: **Family**

### Issue Spotlights 2006-2007:

February: Love and Conflict

March: International Women

April: Fun

May: Reflection on the Year Gone By

### More guidelines

-Please limit submissions to 1,000 words.

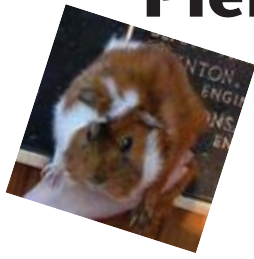
-Publication is subject to the needs of the newsletter and the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief and Logos Editorial Board. The Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Board reserve the right to edit submissions for publication.

**-If you have any questions about submissions, feel free to talk with the Editor-in-Chief or email her at [adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu](mailto:adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu).**

*Thanks. We look forward to hearing from you.*



## Pierre's Corner



**We're reunited, and it feels so good! Dear readers, please accept my humblest apologies for my column's absence last month. The recovery from my unfortunate nipple infection was far more exhausting than I had anticipated, and my energy output was significantly lower than the usual Herculean levels. Naturally I had to find some different ways to fill my newfound abundance of leisure time. My normal pursuits of bungee-jumping and spelunking were simply out of the question.**

**I asked Maggie for advice, and she recommended that I tackle the Harry Potter book series, thinking that it would keep me occupied for quite some time. Given the fact that she's unnaturally obsessed with those books, I thought they were worth a look. I was immediately captivated by this vivid world full of new possibilities. And that Quidditch sounds like a game I could really get into – I love any sport that combines high speeds and the threat of serious bodily injury with minimal protective equipment.**

**I thought the characters were great too. I found myself drawn to Hermione because she is, like myself, incredibly smart. I found myself drawn to Harry because he is, like myself, unbelievably cool. And Ron, well, he's sort of a doofus, but likable enough. But my favorite character by far was Ron's pet rat Scabbers.**

**If you aren't familiar with the books, you should know that each student at Hogwarts is allowed to have one magical animal companion. Harry has an owl, Hermione has a cat, bumbling idiot Neville has a toad, and Ron has Scabbers, the aged rat who has been a loyal companion to all his siblings before him.**

**I read the first two books with extreme excitement, anxiously anticipating every word of Scabbers's heroic adventures. You humans may not realize this, but rodent characters in popular books and movies are few and far between. I was overjoyed by the knowledge that my furry cousin was active in these famous stories and portrayed in a positive light.**

**But then came Book Three, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. Tragedy. Betrayal. The harsh reality of our rodent-prejudiced culture rears its ugly head. Scabbers, my inspiring literary role model, turns out to be a murderous villain.**

**This is more than just a creative twist to surprise readers: it is the literary manifestation of hundreds of years of rodent oppression. What sort of message does this send to readers, especially young ones, whose rodent experience is limited to what they read in books and see on TV? Concerned creatures everywhere can no longer stand idly by while entire groups of animals are misrepresented again and again in this insulting manner. I ask you all to join me in my call for more honest and equitable rodent representation. Together, we can make a difference.**

# EMILY'S INTERVIEW: DAVID OFUMBI

*Hey you! Yeah, you! Get to know your fellow PSR community members a little bit better. Below is an interview I, Emily McGaughy (Ejoye), conducted with David Ofumbi. There will be more to come, with other PSR students, staff and faculty in the future. Readers enjoy!*

*Ejoye: Will you tell me about your first day on campus?*

David: As someone coming from Africa, the whole thing was about the weather. I was told California, of all the states in the US, is like Africa. So I expected hot weather. It was cold and raining - freezing cold! The first thing I went to get was warm clothes. I thought they deceived me! After I got warm clothes things normalized.

*Ejoye: What do you miss most about Uganda?*

Well I have found out that when you grow up in an environment, it becomes a part of you. I've been missing what's all along been a part of my life: friends, routine, how I used to talk. There's this tension between what's not here and getting used to here. And of course I miss my wife. We were only one year married when I left. We were just getting to [know] each other and that process was brought to a halt. And my grandmother--I miss her. I have gone back and been able to see her, at least, but I love going to her and hearing what she has to say. To me, there's a big lesson I learn in her life. I see my history and all the strength in her through our interactions and I miss that. When I go back home, I do things her way. (Laughs). Also, before I came here I was involved in ministry. When I talk to my team members, I want to be there physically. I feel my presence would do a lot more. And at the same time, I'm learning how to let people develop and discover themselves. That's the way you build trust.

*Ejoye: What have you discovered about yourself at PSR?*

David: First of all, I'm still discovering myself. When I came I thought I would fit in so many groupings and forums. Every other time I listened, I realized they weren't just sharing what was in their mind, but everything they were saying was related to their histories, experiences, etc. I could not engage with their conversations without knowing their experiences. To know people you have to journey with people, and

it takes time to share journey. I need time to listen and hear so I don't just jump into the conversation without knowing. Even if I found common ground, those grounds had social location and context. For instance, racism: I realized the way people discuss racism here is historical, within the structure of the US. I cannot assume certain things. I am very cautious. My perspective is located in my social location and I need to understand the social location of those I'm with. Slowly I'm discovering my voice, but when I came here I was shocked!

*Ejoye: How so?*

David: When I came to the US, I had an image that was always projected to me. I knew, oh boy, I would find A, B, C, etc. Somebody took me to People's Park. I was blown off. People there were crazy and homeless and I couldn't figure out why those people were homeless because what was the problem? That was not an image that came to me about the US when I was in Africa. People have an image of America as heaven. There are places here that are just like Uganda. They told me during orientation to not move at night alone. I couldn't understand being in Uganda while in America. I was used to this in Uganda but I couldn't figure out why things were like this here.

*Ejoye: Have you figured out what contributes to the homelessness and craziness that you witnessed in People's Park?*

David: People tell me life is expensive and most people cannot afford housing, therefore homeless is the result. I didn't find that satisfactory. I see mental cases too. I wondered why? I hear drugs, child run-a-ways, lack of education. People cannot get a job that accommodates them. I also found out that many people reach out to them around here. I'm still not satisfied with why people are on the streets, here and in Uganda. Changing these things...there needs to be a huge coalition.

*Ejoye: I find drug addiction is rarely talked about at PSR. Are drugs a problem in Uganda? Which ones?*

David: Cocaine, marijuana, hashish, heroine. They are beginning to be a problem. In the villages, no. In the towns, yes. It has entered among the youths. It's the second biggest problem, second to HIV/AIDS.

*Ejoye: How as a pastor would you reach out to a youth involved with drugs?*

David: Wow. It's a part of growth. I need to understand the dynamics of their growth and the stage they are in. One of the things that makes the drugs sell especially in Africa is at that age, these are people who have not realized who they are. They have been told the drugs enhance their self-fulfillment. This is my ministry approach: friendship. I build friendship to create trust so that the youth should not come to me weighed down by guilt. I would want to take that away, so that he or she could see the reality of their life. When they come to me they want to confess first. That's motivated by guilt. People come to me with all kind of addictions...you know, pornography, lots of things...but when they come to me in trust instead of guilt, their healing process begins. People struggle with guilt more than the drugs! They want acceptance more than they want a solution. Once they get acceptance and know someone is there for them, they will say hey, what is this that I'm in? I try to live among the youth...play, laugh...there's too much of a bad gap between youth and parents. I try to have buddies.

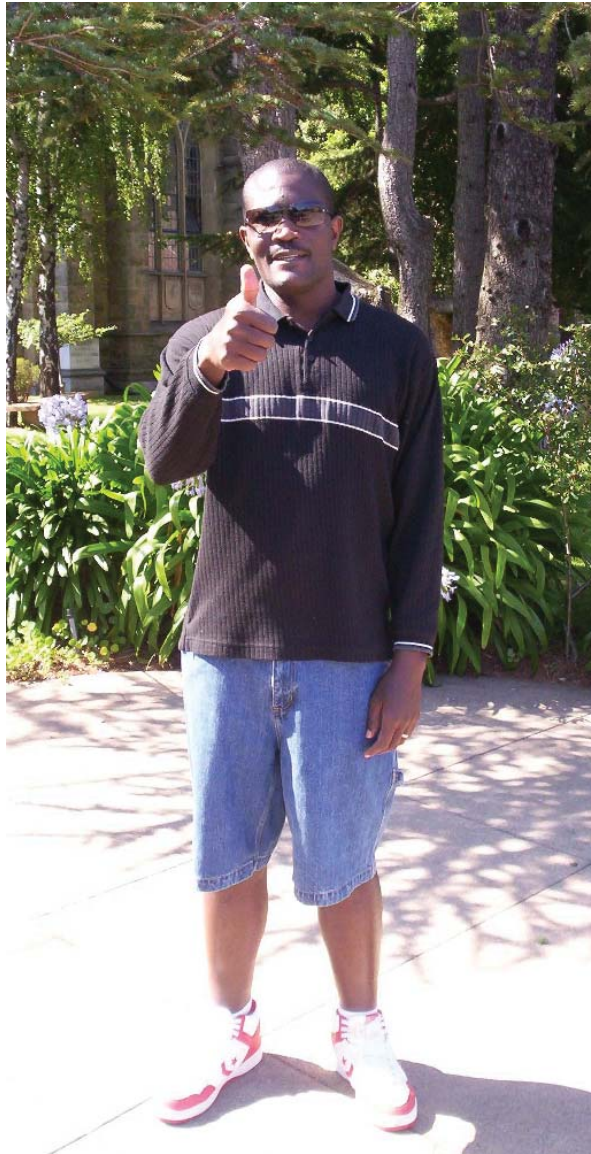
*Ejoye: What kind of music do you like?*

David: Agghh...music. One principle that underlies my life: I have disciplined myself not to restrict myself in any box; therefore I do not have preferences for many things. I don't have preference for music. There's no music I hate and none I would say is better than the rest. I think gospel music, yes. When I look at it in terms of impact in my life, it's gospel and old hymns. Contemporary music...I used to dance with the youth. Before I became a serious Christian I went to the dance clubs every night. I would dance everything that came on the floor. I was in tune with all music

and styles of dance. Now, it depends on the lyrics and sounds, but I don't have preference. I tend to move beyond the box.

*Ejoye: Tell me the three classes you've enjoyed the most.*

David: I enjoyed Spiritual Disciplines. It is directly connected to what I'm trying to do back home. OT/NT: I found the amount of information relevant. Art and Religion: I wanted to drop it the first time I attended. I went to Doug Adams twice and both times he consoled me. I struggled. But when I met the TA Cecilia, she helped me. She showed me the bigger picture of the art class so I was able to understand where I was going. I did my final project on Andy Warhol and I couldn't even begin to understand him at first!



*Ejoye: What do you pray for the most?*

David: Let me tell you about my prayer life. I grew up with people who prayed. They told me that God answered their prayers. I wanted God to answer my prayers instantaneously. But that was not my experience. Sometimes I would pray, forgot what I had prayed for and then that thing would happen when I had long forgotten about it. I thought maybe God was trying to teach me something. One thing I realized: it's not so much about asking God for A, B, C, and D. The primary thing is trusting God before even asking and knowing that God is able to give you what you need. If

there's anything I'm praying for, I'm praying for a life that trusts God so that I am able to see God in the midst of all situations. Do you think you can pray to God after you have seen the divine glory in the midst of a mess? Or put it this way, can God be present in a mess? What if you see both a mess and God simultaneously - how do you pray?

Dear PSR Family:

On Monday, October 16th, my good friend Claire Richardson stood up during the campus wide assembly on Goal #2 of the Strategic Plan (Dismantling Racism and building Cross-Cultural Competence), and asked for information regarding the events of last spring. Claire is a first year student who was not present in the spring of 2006 when the "Even Here..." litany was produced after incidents of prejudice at PSR and the wider GTU exposed the racial injustice operative in our midst. As we are all aware, there is work to be done. Claire, like many first-year students and transfer students deserve to know the facts, deserve to see the correspondence that took place between groups, deserve the opportunity to be adequately informed as we engage this work as a community.

Before the 2006 PSR Board meetings, a docket went out to all trustees with a memo detailing the incidents of last spring. The memo was put together by Diane Thomas and Jeffrey Kuan. After hearing requests from many students to know more about DRC's work and the incidents of last spring, Dr. Kuan and Ms. Thomas asked Jerry Vallery (PSR's Board Chair) if they could forward the memo on to students. Mr. Vallery confirmed the request. On behalf of the student body, I would like to thank Ms. Thomas, Dr. Kuan, and Chairman Vallery for their willingness to share this document with students. I encourage you to look over what is included here as the work of Dismantling Racism and Building Cross-Cultural Competency calls us all --each and every one.

Faithfully Yours,

Emily Joye McGaughy  
Student Trustee, Pacific School of Religion

### Memo

**To:** PSR Board of Trustees  
**From:** Diane Thomas and Jeffrey Kuan for the Dismantling Racism Committee (DRC)  
**Date:** September 28, 2006  
**RE:** Events at PSR Spring 2006-Fall 2006

We have been asked by the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Jerry Vallery, JD, to provide an overview of the events at PSR that led to incidents this past spring and extending to this fall that relate to racism on the PSR campus. You have been provided a compendium of documents that tell the story; we will just add a synopsis to those documents in historical perspective. Mr. Vallery has asked us to be present at the board meeting when this is discussed and we will be happy to answer any further concerns, as we are able.

There have been efforts over the years to address issues of race and racism at PSR. Different manifestations of committee structures were in place in the last two decades or so to address these issues. While progress was made, albeit little, issues of racism persisted on campus. Since the fall of 2000 there has been an active group of people working to raise these issues with greater energy and resolve. This group included faculty, staff, and students. The current committee structure is a task force of the President, who appoints the co-chairs. Since 2002 the group has also included the participation of trustees (Kathleen Jimenez and Kelvin Sauls) and has reported to both the Educational Resources Committee of the Faculty and the President's Council. We have also had a working relationship with the Trustees Committee on Cultural, Ethnic and Racial Sensitivity. The two of us have served as the co-chairs of this committee for the greater part of the period.

Part of the work of the group has been organizing campus-wide events that sought to raise awareness of the problem of racism as experienced at PSR. These involved various lectures, small group discussions, active group problem solving, and theatre pieces based on research into real incidents that happened on the campus followed by group and small group discussions. We also used a film series of popular films to help spark discussion and another series of three PBS films (*Race—The Power of an Illusion*) that looked at race from a scientific perspective and in social context. Last spring, we brought in a group of PSR alumni working in cross-cultural settings to talk about their experiences and how their PSR education did and did not prepare them for such work. We have trained a group of facilitators to help with the difficult feelings and conflict that necessarily arise when these realities are faced. We have oriented each new group of students to DRC and the work of dismantling racism at PSR, and addressed the issue of white privilege with them.

In January of 2004, at the request of the DRC and the Board of Trustees, President McKinney wrote to the General Commission on Religion and Race of The United Methodist Church to ask for their assistance in auditing our campus in relation to issues of race and racism. Many people on the campus had a role in assembling the massive amount of data needed to prepare the Commission for the audit that occurred April 14-16, 2004. Board members received the full audit report at the October 2004 meeting.

Working from the audit information and other realities, DRC was able to resource the board, staff, and faculty conversations and processes that led to the new five-year Strategic Plan that was finalized in May of 2005. This plan included dismantling racism and creating cross-cultural competency as one of its four goals. The DRC worked through the summer to create an action plan for the 2005-2006 academic year with specific objectives within this goal. This plan was given to the Administrative Staff at the end of August 2005—two months ahead of the stated deadline for such plans. Although we had only a small budget of about \$7000, we worked towards each of the objectives as well as we could with the constraints of time and resources. Our plan had very specific targets within an overall set of objectives.

In the fall of 2005 we attempted to influence the development of the Progressive Christian Witness Project (PCW) that was gaining momentum on campus. Those efforts are detailed in the letter of February 21, 2006 to President McKinney. We were frustrated with what we felt was a disregard of the need to make this central project reflect the commitment of the school to dismantle racism. We were frustrated that while we had an action plan ready to be discussed and funded, we had received no serious funding while PCW's budget had grown and was being discussed at a level equal with the centers. The rollout of the PCW that occurred at Earl Lectures 2006 was stunning in its lack of faces of color, analysis of anti-racist theology or representation of history or current scholarship of people of color. The full range of voices and theological perspectives in our community was missing. We felt that issues we have raised with the PCW team were almost completely ignored. Criticisms of PCW, from within and without PSR, particularly from racial-ethnic people, were considerable. The Earl Preacher, Prof. Kwok Pui-lan, even asked, "What is the color of Progressive Christianity?"

While the Administrative Staff did meet with DRC to discuss the issues of the letter, it was not until April 5th that we received a letter from President McKinney apologizing for the long silence and suggesting some future directions for PCW that would be more inclusive. In that letter is the following recognition: "Deep in PSR's culture is a tendency to pretend that all is well, even when it is not. This tendency is perhaps most evident on issues of our own racism as an institution and as individuals."

One of DRC's objectives was to secure an adequate budget to accomplish its work. The committee was often frustrated with the insufficient funding for its work. Nonetheless, the DRC continued to deal with ongoing incidents of racism, to orient new students to the reality of racism on the campus and PSR's stated goal to dismantle it. We sponsored a provocative lecture in September 2005 dealing with White Theology and worked with a group of 12 students in a follow-up contextual education class. We further trained facilitators to try to deal with yet more frustration arising out of defensiveness and wounds among students, faculty and staff. We sponsored an

*(Memo continues on page 8)*

*(Memo continued from page 7)*

evening of “Conversations on Hip Hop: Prophetic Voice, Body and Spirit,” with more fallout.

The DRC did what we could do to further several pieces of our action plan. We met with admissions and recruitment staff to suggest places to recruit and ideas for making PSR more attractive to students of color. We asked that Administrative Staff look at the racial makeup of PSR Merit Scholarship recipients and make changes. However, much of what was proposed in the action plan remained unaccomplished.

It was clear “on the ground” that frustration was building, that the dismantling racism goal of the strategic plan did not seem to be getting very far in making a difference in the lived experience of the campus community. It was out of this context that a group of African American and African women, the Sister Circle, meeting on their own as part of a group that formed itself and facilitates itself, realized that many of them were having negative, painful and harassing experiences in and around PSR and the GTU. Because PSR has a stated goal of dismantling racism, this was particularly egregious to have happening on our campus.

This group of women created the “Even Here...” litany and shared it in chapel on April 25th. The group of women as well as men was dressed in traditional African attire. Immediately after chapel that day President McKinney had to leave on a 10-day trip. Thus, there was no response to the litany from the administration.

The group of women who initiated the litany met with DRC at our May 3rd meeting. Because there had been no response from the administration, they asked us to help them plan a Day of Mourning. From the beginning, the day was seen as a dignified, sometimes silent protest of the administration’s lack of action on their stated goal of dismantling racism at PSR. On May 5th, President McKinney sent out a brief email restating that PSR had a zero tolerance policy for racism. On May 8th, Dean Mary Donovan Turner released a letter with her view of the situation and her concerns.

The Day of Mourning and Silence occurred on May 9th. It included the wearing of mourning clothes, a silent lunch hour for prayer and meditation, and a brief gathering out on the quad where those who wanted to could express their grief over PSR’s institutional racism. Students, faculty and staff of all races were present. Dean Turner came briefly to the gathering, but otherwise no Administrative Staff was present. The call to mourning also included a call to ask others to let the PSR administration know about their frustration, and Administrative Staff received various phone calls, emails and letters in response.

The DRC continued to meet and give President McKinney our thoughts and concerns about how to move the dialogue forward. On June 6th, three of the women who created the litany sent a memo to the DRC and President McKinney with follow-up concerns and constructive suggestions. It included a call for President McKinney to meet with African and African-American students about their experiences of racism on the campus and what constructive ideas they could share. It also suggested a Town Hall Meeting on Racism in the fall.

At the end of July, President McKinney sent a letter to DRC. In it, he stated that he was sorry that he had not acted sooner in the spring. He also stated that he was prepared to meet with the African and African American community in early September and to convene a Town Hall meeting in the fall. The September meeting has occurred and the Town Hall meeting will happen during the fall Board of Trustees meeting.

The events of last spring revealed to us that, in addition to the lack of sufficient funding for the work of dismantling racism, the structure of the committee we have been operating under was also inadequate. Hence, we proposed to the President and the Faculty a new structure that is broadly representative of the PSR community. The new committee will be better empowered to the work of dismantling racism and with an increased sense of accountability to the constituencies. The new committee will assume responsibility in early October.

We acknowledge that the work of dismantling racism is enormously challenging and along the way we have made mistakes, too. But the work must go on for the good and the health of our institution.

*The following document was distributed on April 25, 2006, on behalf of those in our community suffering racial oppression. We are publishing it here to offer a fuller context for new PSR community members seeking to understand the important discussions about racism at PSR. This Litany gives voice to the experiences of our community in a way second- or third-hand retellings cannot. Nonetheless, this is a painful document to read, and we want to acknowledge the potential this reprinting has to reawaken trauma. The Editor and Editorial Board welcome feedback about this and every choice we make about what we publish.*

*- Audrey deCoursey, Logos Editor-in-Chief*

## Even Here...

*"Dismantling racism and building cross-cultural competence. PSR will equip leaders with the values, skills, and commitment to cross-cultural competency necessary to build anti-racist institutions and dismantle systemic racism in society and model this commitment and work in its own campus community." - excerpted from the PSR Strategic Plan*

Today, African and African American people across the entire GTU wear the attire of our cultural tradition as we stand against the racist energy of PSR and the wider GTU. How about instituting a Tradition of Boldness that thinks BEFORE it speaks?

- Even here an African Catholic nun in full habit (including crucifix) can enter the CDSP refectory for dinner and be asked if she is the new cleaning lady.
- Even here an African American woman, putting bags in her car, can be approached by a white female student who says, "I'm late for class, can you just take my keys and park my car?"
- Even here people consider themselves oppressed even as they are the oppressor.
- Last week, Even here, an African American woman on this campus wore a head wrap and received derogatory comments.
- Even here a professor will insist the Black woman in Song of Songs is white
- Even here we are no longer welcome at Allen Temple (an African American church) because of the racist comments of a PSR student
- Even here students can take core classes and rarely hear the scholarship or discuss the art of people of color.
- Even here all faculty of color, not just those of African descent, endure inconceivable racial comments and exclusion from staff, faculty and students.
- Even here African and African American music, culture, and spiritualities are misappropriated and de-historicized.

Misappropriation (theft) of music and other expressions of culture by a dominating culture is a manifestation of colonial thinking. Of hegemony. Or, to speak plainly, "white privilege." It is saying that the taker of the cultural artifact has some (God-given?) right to not only take another's beliefs and history, but to refashion that belief, ideology (theology) and history into something else - then, claim that construct as their own.

If one has any understanding of the traditional "African American Church," then one has come to understand that in worship, it is all about Jesus. It is this deep bond with Jesus that is a common thread of many (colonized and oppressed) Third World people. It is the understanding of this man that gives hope to the hopeless. It is shameful to oppress the hopes and dreams and history of another by a reversal of the mimetics inherent in colonialism.

We urge all who enjoy the music, symbols, rituals, and speech acts of cultures other than your own to spend time in an in-depth engagement of that culture so that the expressions of a specific community become known in their fullness and life.

.....  
: We deplore these individual manifestations of race but the larger issue is the culture of PSR that perpetuates :  
: a climate of racial hostility. These incidents have happened to individuals BUT represent the tolerance of racist at- :  
: titudes/ideologies that thrive in this environment. :  
: We applaud the work of the Dismantling Racism Committee but PSR must be MORE than verbally invested in :  
: the work this body is doing. DRC cannot continue to be a committee "off to the side." :  
: .....

# A CONVERSATION ON WORKER JUSTICE AT PSR

## Binary Thinking

by John Davis

CFO, Pacific School of Religion

Those who attended the October 17th chapel service presented by the Seminarians for Worker Justice (SWJ) witnessed a passionate and powerful example of PSR's dedication to worker justice. Unfortunately, truthfulness and accuracy were needlessly sacrificed in order to strengthen what is already a powerful argument for fighting for worker and immigrant rights.

More than a year ago, PSR's president and CFO met with representatives from SWJ to discuss concerns regarding adequate wages and benefits for employees and contractors across the GTU and to strategize regarding best approaches to work toward improvements. During this meeting, we had a very frank and constructive conversation that included a description of PSR's current benefit package and dedication to protecting those benefits, an explanation of our current wage scales and cost of living policies, and a discussion of the particular challenges faced by PSR and other schools across the GTU.

While we supported the idea of advocating for a statement across the GTU that expresses our commitment to principals of providing adequate wages and benefits employees, Bill McKinney and I expressed concerns about whether Berkeley's living wage policy which applies to certain companies doing business with the city of Berkeley was the best measure for the GTU community. Berkeley's living wage policy assumes a benefit contribution of \$1.89 per hour, while PSR's policy of providing fully paid health insurance to employees and dependents amounts to an hourly contribution of \$7.29 (almost four times the suggested contribution included in Berkeley's policy). In addition, PSR's retirement contribution of 14% means those at the lowest end of our wage scale receive an additional \$1.40 per hour in non-taxed income. Considering other components of our benefit plans - including vacation, sick time, family care time, short and long term disability, and dental benefits - provides further support to the position that Berkeley's policy may not be especially relevant at PSR.

The SWJ representatives also advocated that the GTU and member schools only hire contractors who adopt Berkeley's living wage. PSR contracts for landscaping and parking services on a continuing basis. We have advocated for improved working conditions with these contractors in the past, including participating in contractor employee grievances, and will continue to do so in the future. It is not clear to me, however, that an all or nothing policy that requires us to fire these long term contractors and contract with a firm simply because they have adopted Berkeley's living wage policy is necessarily the best way to help those individuals holding these jobs. Instead, I have advocated for continued dialogue with the contractors and have resisted efforts to increase the use of contractors, regardless of the financial benefits.

I will be the first to admit that PSR's policies are far from perfect, however, I believe we have a record of commitment and action to improve wages and benefits whenever possible, and have exhibited a preferential option for those most in need. That commitment continues as PSR carries on its leadership role over the past year to advocate for a GTU-wide policy, through the GTU CFOs and the Council of Presidents.

In addition, the following changes were implemented in our own policies and procedures:

1. Raised our minimum wage to \$10 per hour (subsequently raised further for CPI)
2. Tied the minimum wage to the Bay Area CPI to insure that this wage is not eroded by inflation
3. Instituted an immediate review of employees classified as temporary, and made this an ongo-

*(continues on page 12)*

# A CONVERSATION ON WORKER JUSTICE AT PSR

## Kudos, Facts, and Cracks

Andy Schwiebert and Ryan Baum,  
Student Organizers, GTU Seminarists for Worker Justice

On October 17th, the PSR community was host to a chapel service that focused on worker justice in the US, the Bay Area, and here at PSR. Seminarists for Worker Justice (SWJ), a student group in which we both play an active role, met and planned the service in consultation with the Worship Planning Committee. In worship, we called on our community to enact a Living Wage Policy that would ensure that all PSR employees and contracted workers (regardless of employee status) be paid a wage at least commensurate with the City of Berkeley Living Wage ordinance.

<p><u>City of Berkeley Living Wage Ordinance:</u> \$11.39 per hour, plus a medical benefit equivalent to at least \$1.89 per hour - or - not less than \$13.28 per hour without medical benefits</p>
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Important issues of working poverty, race and class in our society and community were lifted up in the chapel service. But our group made at least two errors that we wish to note: 1) We failed to recognize the many efforts that members of the administration, trustees, faculty and staff have made toward greater justice in wages and benefits at PSR; and 2) we made a factual error with regard to the hourly wage for kitchen employees at PSR.

Over a year ago, SWJ convened a chapel service in which two kitchen workers shared their personal stories about working at PSR, informing the community that some kitchen workers were paid \$8/hour without benefits. We also talked about the need for a living wage policy to ensure that

all campus employees receive just compensation, regardless of their employee status.

A few days before that chapel service last year, our group met with Chief Financial Officer John Davis and President Bill McKinney to share our concerns about just compensation at PSR. In that meeting, we learned of the many ongoing efforts John, Bill, faculty, trustees and others have made to continually revisit the issue of just compensation for work. For example, significant efforts have been made to protect costly health benefits and Cost Of Living Increases (for most of those PSR employees on the lower end of the wage scale) from budget cuts. Since that initial meeting last year, John and Bill have continued to play proactive roles at PSR and in the wider GTU, where our group has also raised these issues.

To correct one misstated fact that we raised in our chapel service: we said that some kitchen employees with temporary status were making \$8 an hour with no benefits for up to 18 months. The truth is that recently, the PSR administration raised the minimum wage paid to employees at PSR, including temporary kitchen workers, from \$8 to \$10. And, in fact, most kitchen employees are making above \$10/hour, plus a very comprehensive benefits package. For that mistaken fact and for failing to mention that the majority of employees here at PSR—including most in the kitchen—have a comprehensive benefits package, we apologize.

We applaud these efforts and are grateful that PSR leads the way at the GTU both in word and deed on just compensation for work, especially in the area of benefits packages for permanent employees. For that reason, we want to apologize to the administration on behalf of our group that we did not adequately recognize all of the many efforts that have been taken to address this complex issue over the years. The administration at PSR is a partner in the struggle for justice in the workplace.

We do not condemn our president, CFO, or Board of Trustees as people or as administrators, but we challenge the notion that our good intentions are enough to prevent economic injustice at PSR. Indeed, our history has

(continues on page 13)

# A CONVERSATION ON WORKER JUSTICE AT PSR

*(Binary Thinking, continued from page 10)*

ing part of institutional review policies performed by the Support Staff Personnel Advisory Committee (SSPAC) to prevent any abuse of this classification.

4. Approved a Renewal Leave program for all staff, which provides 4 weeks of additional paid time off for every 5 years of employment.

The perceived need for sensationalism at the October 17th chapel was not limited to the characterization of PSR's position. The opportunity to celebrate significant successes by the organized hotel workers in San Francisco and Claremont was diminished by the statements that "management caved" and "all demands were met." I question both the language and accuracy of these statements. Having been part of many negotiations in the course of my career, including those surrounding labor contracts, I have experienced such all or nothing, win or lose language as both inaccurate and detrimental to a persistent and sustained effort to improve wages, benefits and working conditions.

I applaud the passion of the Seminarians for Worker Justice as well as other individuals and groups working for social justice on PSR's campus and beyond, and it is just such action that sustains my hope that religion can be an agent for positive change. However, more and more I'm dismayed by the attitude of arrogance that dismisses dialogue and insists there is only one valid viewpoint or strategy. Although we have witnessed 6 years of this style of leadership for our nation, it is disappointing to see this style become more and more common at PSR. I hope that PSR as a community can reject the binary language that has become so pervasive in the political and social discourse of the U.S. Few of us would accept President Bush's assertion that a Democratic win is a terrorist win, however we are willing to employ similar either/or arguments when they fit our own agendas. I try to constantly remind myself that my solution is not the only solution, but I have seen more and more examples of members of our community who are unwilling to discuss any possible solution other than their own.

In my vision of progressive Christian leadership, activism, accuracy and civility are not mutually exclusive. Can PSR engage these issues in a way that doesn't look for a quick and easy win, but that engages us in thought and action that is sustainable - and maybe even revitalizing over the long term?

• *Excerpts from the sermon by*  
• *Ryan Baum at the October 17th*  
• *PSR Chapel Service co-hosted by*  
• *Seminarians for Worker Justice:*

• What if we took the revolutionary  
• risk of the Samaritan man? What  
• would happen if we got close  
• enough to those in need that our  
• hearts were moved? What if we  
• got to know a few of the millions  
• of men and women who know  
• working poverty as a daily reality  
• of life in the USA?

• According to the US Census Bu-  
• reau, 37 million Americans were  
• living in poverty in 2005. That's  
• 7.7 million families and 12.9  
• million children--17.6 percent  
• of all American children--living  
• in poverty. 46.6 million people  
• are without health insurance, 8.3  
• million of whom are children. In  
• short, the working families of this  
• country are stripped, beaten and  
• half-dead, lying in a ditch.

• If we think the Civil Rights  
• Movement of the 1950s and 60s  
• accomplished its goal of abolish-  
• ing second-class citizenship in  
• this country, we are sadly mis-  
• taken.

• Now is our opportunity to act  
• boldly and concretely against rac-  
• ism and poverty at our institution.

# A CONVERSATION ON WORKER JUSTICE AT PSR

If we as a community are to confront our racism, we must also be willing to confront our classism. We must ask ourselves, “Would our community feel less outraged that our Black brothers and sisters are mistaken for cleaners and parking attendants, if we as a community valued cleaners and parking attendants as we value students and clergy - if we affirmed the dignity of all work, regardless of whether it is done in the kitchen or the classroom?”

....

We call on our President and Chief Financial Officer and the Board of Trustees to establish a Living Wage Policy that will guarantee a living wage for all employees of PSR, including contracted workers and temporary workers. Our nation looks to us to be the religious vanguard of a new civil rights movement in this country.

If not us, who? If not now, when?

• (Kudos, Facts, and Cracks, continued from page 11)

• shown that they are not. We are proud of our school for making the strides it has already made in addressing economic disparity on our campus, and we rejoice in the fact that many employees are receiving wages and benefit packages that far exceed even those enjoyed by Berkeley city employees. But it is the role of SWJ as an organization to continue to stand with those at PSR who cannot claim such privileges.

• Teodoro - who has worked in the PSR kitchen for close to two years - shared his story with us last year in worship. For roughly a year, he worked at \$8/hour with no benefits as a temporary worker before receiving his permanent employee status, a raise to nearly \$10/hour and full benefits. Teodoro works a second job in a Berkeley café on the weekends, lives in a two bedroom apartment in downtown Oakland with as many as 5 other roommates, and saves what little money he can to support his mother and 13-year-old daughter back home in Mexico.

• Right now, some members of the PSR community continue falling through the cracks. The minimum hourly wage of permanent employees is not commensurate with the City of Berkeley ordinance. Contracted workers caring for the lawn are paid \$7.75/hour, without benefits. Kitchen workers—albeit a few—continue to work at \$10/hour without benefits, with little clarity about when their benefits will kick in. Our concern is that our institution provide good jobs with decent wages.

• Of course, the issues involved in labor relations and financial management are complex, and Seminarians for Worker Justice does not claim to have all of the answers when it comes to addressing PSR’s financial issues. We do, however, continue to believe that a permanent, comprehensive and enforceable living wage policy is the best way to guarantee that whatever the intentions of PSR’s current or future administrations, our institution will live up to its Judeo-Christian values.

• The members of Seminarians for Worker Justice offer our humblest apologies to those who feel that the October 17th chapel service was unfair, misleading or demonizing of the administration in any way. We recognize that the service did not present the overall financial picture of PSR in all of its complexity, and we welcome opportunities to be educated further on this subject. At the same time, we must emphasize that the service was not a lecture or an intellectual study of PSR policy. Its purpose was to worship the God of justice we Christians encounter in the Hebrew and Greek Testaments and to call the community to further the work of God’s redeeming justice in the world.

• SWJ continues to call on the whole community—administrators, trustees, faculty, students and staff alike—to work toward a permanent, comprehensive and enforceable Living Wage Policy at PSR that will cut down on the number of cracks workers here might fall into, bring our community closer to greater equity, and strengthen our voices as religious leaders in the fight against working poverty in our community, nation and world.

To: Those who have ears to hear  
From: Under the Chapel  
Logos Confessional # 4: I am thankful for family  
By: Matthew R. Harris-Gloyer  
14 November 2006

That great American civil holiday at the end of November draws near again. Turkeys and pilgrims, Indians and pumpkin pie. Mmmmm....pumpkin pie. I love (or at least very much enjoy) pumpkin pie, especially with some whipped cream on top. Some of my favorite childhood memories are of eating pumpkin pie in the kitchen with my brothers and cousins after a family football match, as the aunts and uncles drank their cheap coffee and had 'adult conversation.' I also remember having to write an essay entitled "What I am Thankful For." It seems like I had to write one of those essays every year at this time. It is in this vein in which I continue.

But, before I continue, a brief preface for those of you who are new. This is my first confessional that I have written for this 2006-2007 school year. Those of you who are not new may remember that I have written that these 'confessionals' are part humor, part commentary, part autobiography. You may recall that in the past year I have confessed to partaking of frolicking upon the PSR lawn, and that I am an advocate for peace, and that sleeping through life has left me confused and frustrated when major events shift the PSR world, which I have created in my own image. These confessions I make to you, dear reader so that I may gain another level of accountability, but also for your personal edification and for the betterment of this PSR community, God willing.

With my preface complete, we move onward with my confession.

I have a confession to make: I am thankful for family.

I am thankful for family because they are frustrating. I am thankful for family because they are wrong. I am thankful for family because they are so blankety-blank-blank-blank stupid. I am thankful for family because they eat the green beans that I push aside due to the stench that wafts from their putrid green grossness.

I am thankful for family because we are all trying to do the right thing. As I am marching in the streets and writing letters to my Congressional representatives demanding an immediate end to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, my little brother is carrying a gun and commanding a platoon of armored humvees. Indeed, we are both following our conscience to the best that we know how. My faith and my religion inform me that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are wrong and that what my brother has chosen for a vocation is wrong. And, I am thankful that my brother has been able to give me a fresh perspective. He is involved in a vocation that I understand to be about death and destruction and against God. And, he is following his conscience to the best of his ability.

So, I am thankful for family. When I go home for Thanksgiving, I am going to play a game of football and hopefully not get hurt. I am going to have "adult conversations" whilst drinking cheap coffee. I am going to think about turkeys and pilgrims and Indians and this great American civil holiday. And, I am going to eat pumpkin pie in the kitchen with my brothers.

Mmmmm...pumpkin pie. I love pumpkin pie.

## A Thanksgiving Story by Sheryl Butler

On Thanksgiving Day several years ago, I was sitting alone in my large four bedroom home in Bellevue, Nebraska, feeling depressed. My kids were with their father, so I figured there was no reason to fix anything special for dinner, so I sat and sulked. I felt so alone. As I sat there, overcome by waves of self-pity, a different thought managed to slip into my mind. "You are not the only person alone on Thanksgiving. You have a large home - why don't you have an open house next year and invite everyone to dinner?"

The following year I made some flyers announcing a Thanksgiving open house and put them around town. I started cooking Wednesday night, baking pies. I baked the largest turkey I could find. I didn't know how many to expect, so I just cooked a bunch of food. I still don't know how many came, but the house was full and there was enough food for all. Some brought something to contribute, some just came. Since Bellevue is an air force town, there were several single airmen that came because they had no family in town. Some simply had no family, or their family had rejected them because they were alcoholic, gay, or merely because they were different.

When I became ill, I became too sick to cook, and then I could not work, and eventually I could not keep my home. I have missed the Thanksgiving open houses, and the amazing people that would come to share.

I was thinking about the Thanksgiving open houses last year, as a student here at PSR, while I wandered down the hill. At the bottom of the hill I ran into Alex, a homeless man who is often on the corner, sweeping it and asking for change from passers by.

When I first met Alex it was right after hurricane Katrina had devastated New Orleans. Alex told me that he had invoked the name of Thor a week before Katrina and that is why the hurricane struck. Alex warned me that you have to be very careful when you invoke the names of the gods. He asked me where I was from and when I said Kansas, he told me the Kansas quarter just came out and it had a buffalo on it (which I didn't know). He then took a small pouch and emptied it on the sidewalk, pouring out change and small items, including a charm-size Thor's hammer. He found a Kansas quarter and gave it to me.

I would have many more interesting conversations with him, but a week before Thanksgiving I had stopped to visit with Alex and put some change in his cup. As I was beginning to head back up the hill, he told me that they were going to be cooking a turkey across the way in the alley. He said I was welcome to join them for Thanksgiving dinner. I thanked him, but I was going to be out of town. I don't know if the dinner in the alley actually took place, as much of Alex's reality seemed to exist only in his mind. It didn't really matter, though. I was touched by the invitation as I remembered my Thanksgiving open houses: how little it actually cost me, and how much more I received.

There will be a community Thanksgiving dinner here at PSR. Again, I will be out of town. I wonder, however, who is being invited to our dinner?

# HALLOWEEN AT PSR



*PSR Quad Invaded by Strange Beasts and Beings, October 31, 2006: Dogzilla, below; Steven Peele and Martin, left; Korma the Jester, right. Photos by Patrick Rogers.*



## PSR CHRISTMAS DINNER

Friday, December 8  
Location: CDSP Refectory (right across GTU bookstore)  
5:30 pm: doors open to guests; 6 – 9 pm: dinner & program.

### RSVP for the PSR CHRISTMAS DINNER

Important—please answer the two questions below with your RSVP; Deadline is Friday, December 1.  
(1) Total number of guests coming with you (\*if under 18 yrs old, give us their name, gender & age. Children under 12 will receive a special treat from a special guest).  
(2) Food preference: VEGETARIAN or CHICKEN (if you don't indicate your preference, we'll assume you prefer chicken & are not a vegetarian).  
E-mail Donnel at [dmiller-mutia@psr.edu](mailto:dmiller-mutia@psr.edu) or call 510-849-8257.

## THANKSGIVING POTLUCK @ PSR

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD  
3:00pm

D'Autremont Dining Hall

Fresh Roasted Turkey &  
Homemade Stuffing Supplied  
(Vegetarian dishes provided)  
Please bring a side dish or dessert

Festivities begin at 3pm  
with "Songs of Thanksgiving"  
and Prayer before Dinner.  
Then enjoy delicious food,  
fun and fellowship !!!!!!!!!!!!!  
Entertainment & Games after Dinner  
Feel free to bring your friends and family  
For more info please contact  
Patrick Rogers 954.336.4592  
or email [PatRogersCPA@aol.com](mailto:PatRogersCPA@aol.com)