

When I went sailing over the holidays, I learned to look at the world upside down.

One beautiful afternoon, I was lying out on the deck of the boat. Out of curiosity I tilted my head back so that the waves were splashing in the sky and the infinite universe floated by below me.

I tried it again at night, when the stars were out and the water was calm. Imagine seeing a ceiling to the universe but an infinitely extending interior. Imagine seeing the world upside down.

In the same way, encountering God brings us to a place that counters our natural instinct. We constantly strive to increase our wisdom and stature, and all the while God is telling us to become like children. Is it he who is looking at things backwards, or are we?

Why does the apostle Paul re-

joice in his sufferings? Why will the first be last and the last be first? Why is it that to gain life we must first be willing to die?

Perhaps these paradoxes were written to capture our attention. We are meant to struggle to understand their meanings. If they are to be the guidelines on which we base our lives, God wanted to make them interesting. An irony lies in that many people consider religion to be just the opposite of interesting.

The essential paradox says this: In raising up ourselves we are dragged down, while in humility we are exalted. Christ, acknowledging his role in our lives, said,

Kimberly Kreiling

Have you been kissed by an angel?

"...my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). In essence, we are successful only when we agree that we will fail.

Our culture sends us the message that we should be capable, successful, and independent. In this context, to say that I think of myself as weak and incompetent sounds like I simply have a poor self-image. But if I really am weak, then shouldn't I come to grips with the truth? For only at the point of realizing my sickened state will I be willing to acknowledge my need for forgiveness.

I have learned not to strive to come to a state where I am finally satisfied with my knowledge. The

opposite is true: if we ever say, "I have figured out how God works and now I'm fine," then we are bound to fall one day to our knees, begging for forgiveness for our pride. For only to the extent of our pride are we capable of being humbled.

The goal lies in becoming aware of our utter dependence on Christ. Then we will find the meaning in his words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Consider this true story. A boy was born with a birthmark that covered half of his face. As a child, he was ridiculed by the other children for his flaw. He believed

comments until his father told him that his mark was the kiss of an angel, and because of it he was blessed. The boy was then transformed by the awareness that he was loved.

Every one of us is flawed. But like the boy in this story, our incompetencies can be the root of our joy.

Alone, on her knees, admitting her shortcomings, the tired soul encounters the presence of a forgiving father. In dying herself, she has become born again.

As long as we parade about with our heads high and filled with images of our own greatness will we remain the nothing that we are without God. It is when we bow in reverence that we become his children, welcome in his presence.

My challenge: turn your world upside down. It's hard to fall if you're already on your knees.

Holt Vaughan

Thank you for the pressure.

Dear Important People,

Hi. My name is Holt Vaughan, and I am a faithful hall counselor. How are you? I'm fine, thanks for asking. By the way, I had a wonderful weekend. Friday night I walked a friend of mine back to his dorm who was too drunk to stand up on his own.

When I got back to my dorm, I put three freshman to bed that didn't know which bed was theirs because their vision was so blurred. Saturday night I was up until 4 a.m. transporting a freshman to the detoxification center in Charlotte. Anyway, enough talking about me—how was your weekend?

I just wanted to compliment you on the fine job you're doing as far as controlling the social life at Davidson. I think it's great that you allow us to have parties, but if it were up to me I think we shouldn't have any parties at all.

I think that the typical Davidson student should not have a life and simply work all the time. This way we could stress all the time, and let the pressure build up so we could be miserable. Then we could flip out or something cool like that.

At least you only allow the students to go out a few nights by controlling the number of parties we have each week. I think it is so wonderful how we have one party a week so that we can plan ahead and zone in on those special occa-

sions. You know what I'm talking about—the pressure that is added to the students' lives who decide they need to go out every night there is a party on the court. I'm sure you know how it is—when there's only one party a week, people feel like they have to go out because there isn't going to be another party for three or four more days.

Anyway, I just wanted to tell you how healthy I think it is for students to study as hard as they can for five nights and then go out as hard as they can on the nights we have parties. Thank God we don't have parties all the time. I mean, if people were stupid enough to spread the parties out so that we have them more often, the parties wouldn't be that big of a deal. Lord knows we wouldn't want to take the pressure off the students by deemphasizing those party nights.

I just wanted to say thank you for keeping my life as a hall counselor exciting. Thank you for keeping the police busy so they can continue to hand out alcohol violations, and thank you for keeping the Davidson students' lives so stress free.

I sure am glad that you keep all of these restrictions because they sure are working well. Please keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Holt Vaughan

Open yourself up to find truth.

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One of the many examples of how Jesus radically crosses barriers is found in Luke 19:1-9. In this passage, a tax collector named Zacchaeus climbed a fig tree in order to see Jesus better.

Jesus befriended him, not even mentioning the fact that Zacchaeus had sinned by exploiting his own people. Instead, Jesus decided to enter his home, an action which created an "ontological union" between the two men. In other words, Jesus was viewed as a tax collector himself.

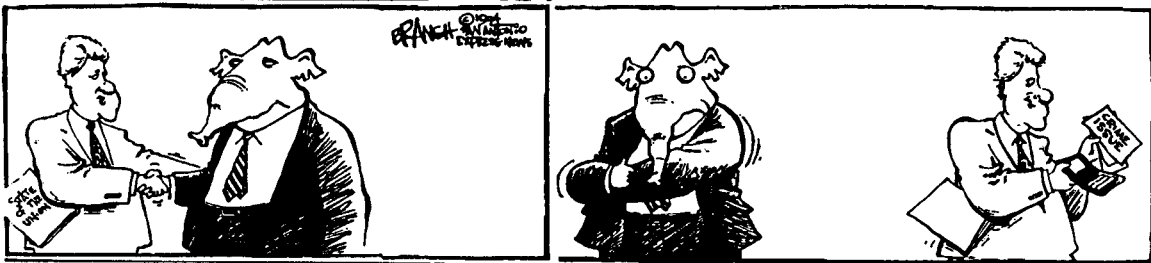
This example might not seem too radical, so I guess I will put it in

a blunt modern context.

Imagine Jesus going to a gay bar, a crack dealer's house, or an adult movie theater in order to befriend all sorts of people. Pretty radical.

In closing, I would just like to encourage you to cross whatever boundaries you may have. Attend a F.L.A.G. meeting, go to Intersarsity or F.C.A., have dinner with an international student, attend a Young Republicans meeting.

Sure, there will be some hypocrisy anywhere we go, but we might be surprised at some truth found in each perspective. Hey, I guess this article is about love.



Chris Edmonston

Why it's embarrassing to be an American.

My first three years at Davidson were spent playing football. You see, I tried really hard to impersonate an athlete during this time period in the hope that I would learn something.

Yet, little did I know that I could have produced a much greater return on my educational dollar if I had spent those many afternoons in front of my television. As a senior, I no longer can play football, and, thanks to the senior apartments and the miracle that we simply call "cable," I now enjoy the luxury of learning as I watch afternoon talk shows.

How could I have been so blind to their wisdom? How could I have ever wasted those three years? How did the United States, or, for that matter, the world, ever make it through centuries of history without these very important people and their very important shows and opinions? If I had the answers to these questions, who knows, I'd probably have a talk show of my own. Imagine that.

It seems like everyone has their own talk show now, anyway. I mean, in a couple of months we can all tune into the "Susan Powter Show." You know her—the short, blonde haired "Stop the Insanity" lady. The one who tells us all how fat we are in the hope of making us feel good, as well as to sell a few thousand more of her \$49.95 weight loss programs.

Gee, I sure am glad that she's qualified to help people. I want to know... "When is it my turn? Where do I sign up?"

I have an over-view of several talk shows—my favorite, to be exact.

Oprah: I know that I am treading on thin ground here, because a lot of people on this campus take their Oprah seriously. But I am here to tell you that while she may seem sincere, and while hers is the best of the afternoon talk shows, she is no different. Her topics are often sensational, shallow, and no one remembers the Michael Jackson interview anymore.

Jerry Springer: Jerry stands as the lone male in the afternoon TV talk show battlefield (Montel comes on at night in our market, Phil's in the a.m.). To put it simply, don't bother watching the show itself, but catch the last five minutes. At the end of each show is "Springer's final thought," where Jerry tells it like it is. He tells us about how assinine his guests are, how stupid their causes are, and that almost everyone in society is scared of someone or something.

Ricki Lake: She is the newest, most sensational, and her show stinks. Don't waste your time.

Jenny Jones: Now, I consider myself a feminist. But this show is a little extreme. Watch Jenny long enough and you could become convinced that every man is a John Bobbit wannabe, a criminal, or a

brainless "Beavis and Butthead" fan. Typical topics are "Why did I marry this good for nothing sports watchin' bum," or, "My husband's having a child with my sister and it's all his fault for seducing her."

What can we, as Americans, possibly learn from tuning into Jane Whitney and listening to our fellow Americans spill their dirty laundry for the entire nation to see?

I don't need to see a woman have an entire hour long program dedicated to her because she claims that she is from Venus for me to surmise that she is a few clubs short of a fifty-two card deck. I don't need them.

And, yet, I keep tuning in. Is it to laugh? I hope so, but I'm not always sure. What I am sure about is that these shows are entertainment—only. I shudder to think that in this huge country there might be someone out there who believes these shows to be factual, important, topical, and that there really could be an outbreak of one-toed hermaphrodites in Atlanta.

The most offensive aspect to me, at least, is when people with real problems turn to or appear on these shows for real answers. In this guise I equate talk shows with televangelism. In a Christian sense, a TV never baptized anyone, never married anyone, and it never "saved" anyone. Likewise, talk shows don't solve problems. On the contrary, they have extremely destructive potential.

At the end of any of the "serious" topic-shows (and you can bet money on this) some pop-psychologist with a hot selling new book will arrive on the set to solve everyone's impotency, marital problems, or mend 20-year-old wounds.

I don't want to offend any psychology majors here, because counseling is needed and important, but how can those who call themselves professionals attack problems and provide solutions for real-life issues as complex and as serious as incest or physical abuse after one hour in a television studio setting? I can only hope that some desperate person doesn't depend on those same "professionals" for real counseling, therapy, or advice.

And yet, I still tune in. It's hard for me to admit, but talk shows make me feel good about myself. I realize how lucky I have been. I laugh at them. I mock them. I point out their hypocrisy as their topics and commercials seem to be designed to prey on lonely and neglected housewives. I snicker as my apartment mates watch Jenny Jones and yell, "Down with men."

These shows are worth their entertainment and shock value only. And I, as well as countless other drone-like Americans, continue to tune in. I can't help but be a little embarrassed.