



the gillespies and the Good News

February 2, 2012

Happy 2012! We find ourselves especially aware of the way time flies as we count down the weeks 'til Baby Gillespie is born – only seven left! Please be praying for us as we try to prepare emotionally, mentally, spiritually, financially, and materially for him to come... And pray that we would trust God, as we sure feel the pull to want to be totally prepared for a change that everyone says you never feel prepared for! In this letter we want to share with you about the conference we attended right after Christmas, and the way it is connected to some amazing things God has been doing here at Dartmouth to draw students toward Himself...

Reaching Every Student

After Christmas Jason and I had the opportunity to attend and serve at a Christian student conference in New Orleans where students were challenged to really believe the gospel, live out from it, and share it with others. It was a really fantastic conference, and we were especially excited to take one of our students, Arielle, with us. As you know, we take students to lots of these conferences... What was different about this conference (called *The Remedy*, hosted by a sister organization of Campus Crusade) was that it was specifically designed for students from African American backgrounds. As you can imagine, Jason and I stood out a little bit – it's not very often in rural New Hampshire that we get to be in the ethnic minority! (Check out *The Remedy* video ad at <http://impactmovement.org/events/impact-11/>.)



Why would you have a conference or a ministry targeted toward black students? Isn't that another form of segregation? What about the unity of the Body of Christ? These are questions that we've heard and wrestled with quite a bit as we've been praying for and reaching out to black students here at Dartmouth. Attending and working at *The Remedy* was helpful in distilling for us some of the reasons why it can be helpful to have ministries with different ethnic "feels" to them on a college campus. Try to picture yourself there with us... The first and most obvious difference we encountered at the conference was that no one looked like us. Good or bad, in the US skin color is something we notice about people. The music was totally not what we're used to... fantastic, but much louder than we ever hear at our church or Campus Crusade meetings, with unfamiliar songs, and the after-session concerts were with bands whose styles we don't like very much. There were more subtle cultural differences, too... Many of the jokes told we didn't understand, even though it seemed like most of the students did get them. Numerous references were made to movies we'd never seen, bands we'd never heard of, and family/neighborhood dynamics that were foreign to us. We felt very welcome, but imagine the barriers those things might have been to us if we were new believers or just exploring Christianity.

The reverse of this dynamic – the challenge African American students face in trying to fit into a predominantly white culture – is what we are trying to better understand here at Dartmouth so that we can bring the message of salvation through Christ to within arm's reach of every student. It can be easy to forget when you're part of the majority culture, but the gospel is no more "white" in nature than it is "black", "asian", "native american" or "latino". *May our cultural preferences not be a hindrance to anyone having the chance to come to know Jesus!*

As we have meditated more on Gal 3:20, we have been freed to ask the question, "What will it take to get the gospel to every student at Dartmouth?" It seems like this question is on God's heart, too. Here are some examples of the amazing and unexpected ways that He has been moving in the African American community here on campus: Arielle, whom we mentioned last month, continues to grow in her interest in working with us next year (after she graduates) to reach out to other African American students; Arielle and two other women are now leading two different weekly Bible studies for African American students, with ~15 students attending (last school year there were none, and only two African American students that we know of in any other kind of Bible study); Amy, one of our white student leaders, has unintentionally found herself with the opportunity to talk about spiritual things with almost a dozen African American women in January alone!; there are now five different African American faculty members attending a local (predominantly white) Baptist church together; God has brought a new female faculty member to campus who is both African American and a committed, gospel-sharing follower of Jesus. These are all new things that God has been doing just in the last six months!

That All People Might Love Him,

Faye & Jason

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