



a publication of kirk irwin and sarah kennedy irwin in ministry with Cru and partnering with Friday Arts Project

NOVEMBER 2024

Sanctify our Imaginations

"Most educated atheists are much more likely to be suddenly ambushed in the heart by poetry than they ever are likely to be converted by a reasoned argument. A lot of what is conveyed by Christianity has to be conveyed in this form because words, even the most beautiful words, can never convey them.

– Peter Hitchens, brother of atheist Christopher Hitchens

Since the pandemic in 2020, we have seen changes happening in people's spiritual interest. For example, we have been hearing some encouraging things related to Bible sales as well as membership in the Orthodox Church. If you research these two things you'll find the sale of Bibles is surging lately, and that the rather traditional Orthodox Church is showing signs of growth, especially among young men.



For several years, Kirk has been a cofounding member of a men's prayer group. One of the members recently sent us a link to an interview between Orthodox Theologian Jonathan Pageau and writer Rod Dreher (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvNM1AefXN0>). Dreher released a book last month called *Living in Wonder: Finding Mystery and Meaning in a Secular Age*. At one point in the interview Dreher said that what has replaced Christianity since its cultural demise has not been atheism but

the occult. This was not a surprise to us as we have sensed this since the early years of our marriage—17 years ago. Moreover, in the same interview Dreher mentioned the importance of the arts in pushing back the rise of the occult—saying that the ways of knowing about the world through the arts and poetry is even more valuable because we have lost the ability to see the spiritual. Dreher quoted Pope Benedict the XVI who said one of the best apologetics of the Church is the art it produces. This is one of the main reasons we work in the arts.

A very clear way of realizing this truth is in the very season we find ourselves: Christmas. God did not communicate to us in His fullest sense through an idea, document, or even a set of regulations—though those all appear in the history of Christianity. No. He chose to appear in physical form, born of a virgin, in a stall where animals lived and ate. And after shepherds were informed of this unique moment and saw the child, they told others, and Luke 2:18 sums it up well saying:

And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

Praise God, it seems His Spirit is moving right now! I pray for you all what I pray for us as we look to share His story with our neighbors—that they would wonder at what we tell them.

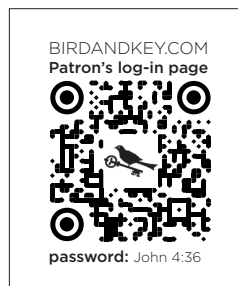
"Loving Father, I humbly ask that you would purify our hearts, renew our minds, sanctify our imaginations, and enlarge our souls. Amen."

—an adaptation of a prayer by Richard Foster in his book *Learning Humility*, given by our rector, Bill Scott each Sunday service.

As this year closes for us, in addition to our monthly shortfall, we find ourselves with some unexpected expenses. We recently needed to get our SUV repaired for \$1200, and I broke my glasses that need to be replaced. As you consider your end of the year giving we would be grateful for your consideration. ■

Blessings—

To access information we share with our patrons, log-in to our Patron's page with the QR code and password shown at right.



Please Pray

- » Pray the prayer with us that we try to pray before every event, "Jesus, help us be a part of someone's **next step** toward you."
- » Please pray that God would continue to provide for our financial support. We dearly love this worthwhile ministry. If you know someone who would appreciate what we do, please share our info with them.

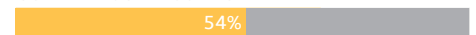
Updates

- » Art Party: Sarah and I just finished coordinating our 9th annual art festival—"Art Party"—right before Thanksgiving. It is our last big event of the year and has taken a large amount of our time and energy. The immensity of this event began weighing more heavily on us a few years back, and this year in particular, we started to look for ways to invite others to assist us. God blessed us with partnerships with other artists and groups that resulted in great attendance.

MINISTRY FUNDING STATS

How close are we to being fully-funded?

CURRENT SOLID SUPPORT



If you would like to partner with us in ministry, visit our giving page on Cru's website: www.cru.org/0402593

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