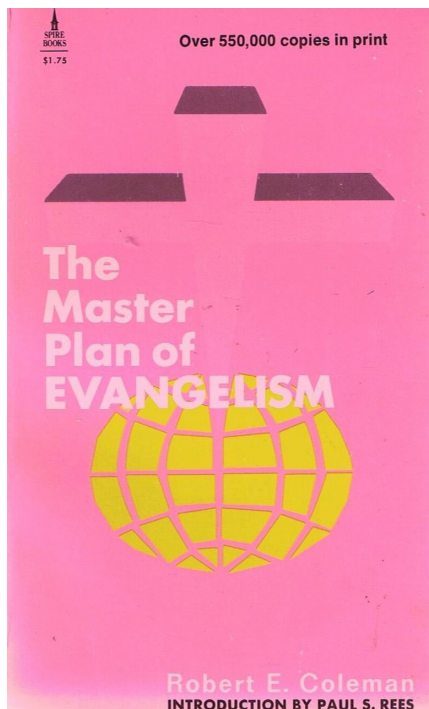


BIRD and KEY NEWS

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

JUNE 2026

A Friend's Perspective



A few months ago I got an unexpected text from Brett, a friend of ours. He had been reflecting on some personal reading he had been doing. Months before he was reading through Robert Coleman's classic *The Masterplan of Evangelism*, and recently some Richard Foster's books on spiritual formation. He wrote to Sarah and I:

"I'm not sure why I hadn't seen this so clearly before, but it gives even greater weight and significance to your ministry. The arts carry a profound importance when it comes to the Gospel and to the work of the Holy Spirit in shaping hearts and lives."

I thanked him for his compliment and told him that all we are really trying to do is "make disciples" of not only followers of Christ but also of people who appear to have little interest in Jesus, or have shown no desire to pursue Christianity. This was an issue I began to wrestle with a few years ago, and will continue to. Brett added thoughts about discipleship related to our work and Coleman's book.

"When Coleman's insights are held together with the vision of spiritual formation, it becomes easier to notice—and more deeply trust—the activity of the Holy Spirit within the spaces we inhabit."

He went on:

"In your case, Friday Arts Project seems to function as a remarkably fluid form of ministry. It feels as though you have lived faithfully within an artistic ecosystem and, in doing so, have offered a trellis upon which others are invited and encouraged to create toward the Creator, where the work of God becomes clearly visible—at least, that is how I perceive it."

It was refreshing to hear this from a friend who is not an artist, kind of on the outside, though he and his wife have become more involved. I appreciate that he was inspired by Robert Coleman's book and could recognize Coleman's ideas in what we do. I read Coleman's book several decades ago. It was a mainstay in my early days of Cru, and even earlier. It was on the shelf, in the bag, or in the pocket of most Cru staff since its founding in 1951. Though it seemed to have dropped off in popularity in the 1990s when I joined staff, I have heard it is making a comeback, confirmed by Brett's words.

He finished his thoughts with this wonderful and humbling blessing:

"My prayer is that the Holy Spirit would overflow in and through you both, drawing others toward the beauty of our King reflected in your lives, and gently inviting them further into the life He has created us to share in Him."

Amen!

There is a change happening in our culture related to church, beauty, the arts, and God. If you have questions or are curious about this, please email me directly and I'd be glad to engage with you about it and even direct you to good sources.

We are so grateful for your partnership in this work with us!

Blessings—

Sarah and Kirk

Please Pray

- » Continue to pray for wisdom for us as we explore finding space to serve and impact artists for Jesus. We (our local church & Friday Arts Project) recently approached an architect about how best to approach finding space. Pray for favor in this search for space.
- » Pray for a developing new mentoring residency program called "Porchcrop" which we are looking to start this Fall. More on this later.
- » Pray for Kirk's mother, Mimi as she has recently experienced some vertigo resulting in some falls. Though there were three broken ribs, they appear to have been healed in the last week. She is slowly doing better and getting back to her old self.
- » 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 or contact us.

Updates

- » Kirk finished his second in-person residency for his Doctor of Ministry from Gordon Conwell Seminary. He has been officially advanced this year as a candidate. Praise God! Still lots of reading and writing to do—the first chapter of his thesis is due in November.
- » Sarah continues to paint her "Artifacts" series. She was accepted into a duo show for 2028. We are also searching for other showings before and after that show.
- » Our garden has produced over 10 pounds of blackberries, and we just picked our first few tomatillos.

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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