



Light

APRIL 2010 • Vol. 60/Issue 4

God's Prostitute: The Heart of God Revealed

I and You

By Abraham Joshua Heschel

*Transmissions flow from your heart to Mine,
trading, twining my pain with yours.*

Am I not—you? Are you not—I?

My nerves are clustered with Yours.

Your dreams have met with mine.

Are we not one in the bodies of millions?

Often I glimpse Myself in everyone's form,

*hear My own speech—a distant, quiet voice—in people's weeping.
As if under millions of masks my face would lie hidden.*

I live in Me and in you.

Through your lips goes a word from Me to Me.

from your eyes drips a tear—it source is Me.

When a need pains You, alarm me!

When You miss a human being

tear open my door!

You live in Yourself, You live in me.

Our interconnectedness with one another is a topic that we unfortunately do not often talk about in church. There are those random sermons or bible studies about us being the "body of Christ," but beyond that we seldom think about how our lives and the way we live them, drastically effects and affects others. Even more rare is the conversation in religious communities about our interconnectedness with God.

We seem to focus on the transcendent but not the immanent, and we often bypass incarnational theology. Strangely, these ideas permeate the whole of our Bible; from Genesis to John from The Prophets to The Epistles. In the section of the Bible called the Minor Prophets, God uses his people and their interconnectedness to call out his story of love and liberation to all who will listen.

I can still remember my shock as I read the book of Hosea for the first time. I was a freshman in high school and had come across the minor prophets in my journey to read the bible from cover to cover. As I read this book, the first two chapters alone made my jaw drop. If this were a movie 90% of the conservative community I was raised in would have banned this book from being played in the local cinemas.

In Hosea, God tells a man to marry a prostitute, and have children with her as a prophecy to Israel about its unfaithfulness. In this short text the heart of God is opened up and revealed. The pain that God feels when his people walk away from him is palpable. The broken heart of God is displayed pouring out his unbroken, unending love. The depth of love portrayed throughout this text is so profound that even 17 years after reading it for the first time I am still overwhelmed.

I cannot think of a better text to follow Easter. Many have spoken of this book as a precursor to the cross of Christ, even calling this book the "Cross of Hosea."

Over the month of April we will delve into the depths of God's love and grace as seen through the eyes of Hosea and Gomer.

(continued on page 2)

(God's Prostitute: The Heart of God Revealed continued from page 1)

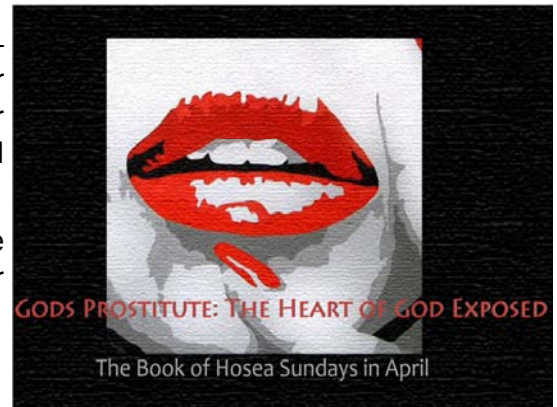
Join us as we are challenged by our own infidelity, and God's faithfulness despite our unfaithfulness. We will be challenged to look at our interconnectedness with one another and with God. We will see how our actions and the actions of others create a ripple effect in the world around us.

Our hope is we will each be brought closer to God; that we will have a better comprehension of his love; and that we will learn to love our neighbor and our God more compassionately.

Join us as we meet God's prostitute in ourselves.

Peace and Hope,

Pastor Rustin



AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER...

By Shelin Wing



Last summer I started attending Bethel on a regular basis and so far I've met some great people. For those I have yet to meet and tell my story... I work in the Music Industry where there's never a shortage of egos. At times, the environment is stressful and one can easily get

tangled in the web of egos without realizing it. Don't get me wrong, I like my job and am fortunate to still have employment as my work involves physical cds. While my job is necessary, (thanks to the people out there who still have an appreciation for those shiny little discs) I can't help but think there has to be more to my life than making discs with music. There is a feeling of wanting to make a difference and doing something more meaningful, but what?

My chance came on Saturday, March 20th when I was on our meal serving team at the San Fernando Rescue Mission. I wasn't sure what to expect, as it was my first experience in volunteering, going to a shelter and meeting the homeless. I was curious to what the people would be like and couldn't imagine what they must face each day as they try to get back on their feet.

But to my surprise, I found the families to be cheerful, gracious and regular people like me. I had hoped serving the meal would brighten someone else's day, but little did I know how rewarding and humbling the experience would turn out for me (add in the valuable bonding time with my new Bethel friends). Serving and sharing the meal with the families helped me see things in perspective. One layoff away and I could easily be in their shoes. I saw how joyful the families with so little were that I wondered how I, as fortunate as I am, always managed to find something to grumble about. I never imagined how something as simple as a meal and fellowship could mean so much to those in need.

As I visited with the families, it gave me the reminder I ever so needed that I should take the time every day to thank God for all the blessings He gives me on a daily basis and show Him my gratitude. What better way to do so than to give time and do what I am able to in helping those in need. I know this is a baby step but hopefully in the right direction that leads to doing many more meaningful things in life.

THIS WEEK!

Theatre Encino is celebrating its Second Annual Ten Minute Play Festival. This year the festival's theme is "Transplantation Society: Stories of Change." There are nine new plays written by great playwrights. Sad...Happy...Challenging...Eerie... The topics and types of plays are quite diverse, but are all unified through the fact that they are engaging change in people's lives.

Join us on Saturday April 17th at 5pm or 8pm or Sunday April 18th at 8pm to see these wonderful works of art. Alongside the 10 minute play festival, Theatre Encino will also be showing Art from local artists that fit with the same theme. The cost for the show is \$15 dollars per person and 15% of the proceeds go to help end homelessness and hunger in the San Fernando Valley. Plus we will be having a great coffee bar with any type of coffee drink that fits your fancy.

Theatre Encino presents
Transplantation Society: Stories of Change
 a ten-minute play festival

April 17th
 5pm & 8pm
 April 18th
 8pm

Theatre Encino
 17500 Burbank Blvd
 Encino Ca 91316

Tickets \$15 at door or call & rsvp at 818.788.2653
 15% of Proceeds Help Feed and Care for the Homeless of San Fernando Valley

Since 1983, April has been designated as National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Bethel is celebrating this month of prevention by implementing some new policies for working with children. Beginning in April each of our childcare workers will be asked to submit to a background check through our insurance agency.

Bethel believes very deeply in its call to reach families with children. Our preschool has been a phenomenal example in that outreach. This vision is also leading us into start the Encino Academy of Arts this summer. With a vision that understands Children as essential to our community, health, and growth, we must commit to protect the children that God blesses us with.

Join us as we take a stand to care for our children in the best, most responsible and safest ways possible.



BETHEL PRESCHOOL

It's been long days and long nights preparing the new toddler classroom. We are almost completed with the project. Thanks to everyone that has lent a hand in renovations. Our goal is to have the classroom opened by May 3rd, if not sooner. This classroom will be for children starting as young as 18 months old. Please contact the Director for details and tuition fees.

The Preschool is hosting a Volunteer Dinner for everyone that has given their time and efforts this year. This event is Wednesday, April 14th at 6:00pm in the Social Hall. It's our small way of giving back and saying thank you.

Next month, we intend to have a fundraiser at The Stand on Ventura Blvd. Anyone purchasing food throughout the selected day has the choice to have a portion of their order towards the Preschool. The date and flyer will be emailed out within the next couple of weeks. We'd love to have the church members participate in this event as well.

God continues to work on this campus in multiple ways. The preschool is almost at full capacity. Praise Him for his vision of this church and preschool. The community of Encino is blessed to have them here!

God bless,

Stefani Ernst

**Time to Retreat!**

May 22, 9:00 AM to sunset, at a beach house on the sand in Oxnard we are having a women's retreat! Please join us as Nancy Anderson leads us through a time of renewal with God. Nancy is a teacher, author, psychotherapist and Christian spiritual leader and we are honored she has agreed to spend time with us. There is no charge for this retreat, just bring yourself and some food to share. Signups will be on the patio beginning April 25. For more information contact Linda Dean, 818 757 7583.



MISSION/MINISTRY



Our Adopted Social Worker Carol Cook has brought a special need for our consideration. Carol is seeking a special offering, to assist one on the young children with expenses associated with High School Graduation, a young lady named Brianna.

Please pray for the Oseguera/Flores family and if you are so led, bring a special offering between now and Sunday May 2nd. Our congregational goal is to raise \$250 toward Brianna's graduation expenses. Carol's letter to the congregation is included below.

Thank you and May God continue to bless you...Genise

~~~~~  
*Letter from Carol Cook, Children's Social Worker II, Department of Children and Family Services*

*I wanted to talk to you about a family on my case load the Oseguera/Flores children. This family came to the attention of our department for neglect from the mother. There are 3 children in the family and currently they are placed with maternal aunt. These children have been through so much since the opening of this case.*

*I was recently able to place the children with family so they are doing even better. When this case first opened the 3 children had never really lived together under the same roof for any length of time, when the children were first placed in foster care was the first time the 3 of them lived under the same roof for an extended length of time.*

*The older child Brianna was not enrolled in high school and had missed a considerable amount of school. Once the children enrolled in school they began to work very hard at obtaining passing grades in all their classes.*

*Brianna has worked exceptionally hard at receiving passing grade and taking extra classes to be eligible for graduation. Brianna will be graduating this May.*

*Some of the expenses will be handled by the caregiver but help is needed for with graduation expenses for Brianna.*

*I would like to solicit the help of your congregation to help this family out.*

*Sincerely,*

*Carol*

**Class of  
2010**



## Carmen's Kids & Co.

The place that's fun to get your hair done

We feature a large flat screen TV, fresh poppin' popcorn, balloons and other special treats



17215 Ventura BL.  
Encino Ca. 91316  
Plaza De Oro (rear main entrance)

**(818) 501-4472**  
Carmenskidsandco.com

**Become our Facebook Friend!**

JEREMY JAMES

JJAMES16@GMAIL.COM

**JAMES CONSTRUCTION & PLUMBING, INC.**  
LICENSE # 812060

4081 BELINDA STREET  
SIMI VALLEY, CA 93063

PHONE (818) 674-0164  
OFFICE FAX (805) 579-0499  
PERSONAL FAX (805) 520-3934



National Business Furniture offers beautiful office furniture and unmatched service.

Visit [www.NBF.com](http://www.NBF.com) to shop our amazing selection, or call

800-558-1010 to order a free catalog.

### OUT ON A LIMB

Consultation ~ Pruning ~ Hauling  
Free Estimates

**Brian Barnett**

(Certified Arborist # WC3277)  
818.324.0353

VINO, WINE & TAPAS - 18046 Ventura Blvd., Encino, CA 91316  
(818) 343-2525

ISAC ORCHIDS ETC. - 3337 1/2 West Sunset Blvd.,  
Los Angeles, CA 90026 (323) 663-0883

MIDORI SUSHI - 17047 Ventura Blvd., Encino, CA 91316 (818)  
995-0888

SKIN SPA - 17401 Ventura Blvd. Encino, CA 91316 (818) 995-3888

THE HAIR GROVE SALON - 8992 Tampa Ave, Northridge, CA  
91324-3521 (818) 886-4444

TORBATI'S ART STUDIO - 17165 Ventura Blvd  
Encino, CA 91316 (818) 907-9811

MERIDIAN'S BODIES IN MOTION - 17031 Ventura Blvd  
Encino, CA 91316 (818) 995-7700

MEHTA FAMILY HEALTHCARE - 17401 Ventura Blvd., Suite A-29,  
Encino, CA 91316 (818) 788-6817

TRUE SLEEP, LLC: SLEEP QUALITY & EVALUATION CENTER - 6535  
Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 105, Los Angeles, CA 90048 (323) 651-5522

THE PERFORMING ARTS GROUP - 17217 Ventura Blvd. Encino, CA  
91316 (818) 783-4509

INVIVO NATURAL HEALTH CENTER - 17203 Ventura Blvd. Suite 1  
(2nd Floor) Encino, CA 91316 Tel. (818) 986-5565

THE AESTHETIC SURGERY ASSOCIATION OF ENCINO - 16311 Ven-  
tura Boulevard, Suite #550, Encino, CA 91436 (818) 986-7900

LOS ENCINOS NAIL SALON - 17039 Ventura Blvd. Encino, CA  
91316 (818) 325-8001

WESTLAKE GOLF COURSE - 4812 Lakeview Canyon Rd., Westlake,  
CA 91261 (805) 495-8437

ONORI ACCESSORIES - [www.onorimusic.com](http://www.onorimusic.com)

EXHART - [www.exhart.com](http://www.exhart.com)

PIERRE SKIN CARE INSTITUTE - [www.pierreskincare.com](http://www.pierreskincare.com)

**CLEANER BY NATURE (The natural alternative to dry cleaning)**

5530 White Oak Avenue Encino, CA 91316-2463 (818) 345-0171

## BETHEL ENCINO ELCA

17500 Burbank Blvd., Encino, CA 91316-1718

818.788.2653

Website: [www.bethelencino.org](http://www.bethelencino.org)

Email: [bethel\\_encino@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bethel_encino@sbcglobal.net)

## Sunday Worship

### 9:00 A.M.

*Sunday School & Childcare available every Sunday.*

**Pastor: Rustin Comer**

**Administrator: Lisa Brown**



**Director: Stefani Ernst**

**Telephone: 818.788.8269**

**Fax: 818.788.1341**

**Email:**

**[blecec@sbcglobal.net](mailto:blecec@sbcglobal.net)**

### NEW WAYS TO GIVE

One of Bethel's goals is to make giving of your time, gifts, and money as accessible as possible.

So we have created a way to give online. Go to the link below and click on "give & serve"

[www.bethelencino.org](http://www.bethelencino.org)

*The Bethel Light is a free publication of BETHEL ENCINO ELCA*