

That's it - Regent, with barely a bang or a whimper we have one more semester of EtCetera neatly tucked away into the archives (please don't check the archives to verify this claim - I can assure you that they are extremely neat and tidy. They are definitely not in desperate need of organization. Definitely not. Trust me), and the end-of-term madness is in full swing around campus. The library is packed, nobody is sleeping, and everyone is commenting on how the term "went by so fast" (people say this about every term, though - one is forced to wonder about why our subjective experience of the term never matches the ideal term length that we all seem to have in our heads).

This was my second full semester as the Editor of EtCetera, and it looks like it will not be my last. I will admit that I felt more comfortable in my position this term - comfortable enough to attempt a few changes, with varying levels of success. I've learned a few things this term which I hope will allow me to continue to hone EtCetera to the needs and desires of the community. I have learned, for one thing, that experimenting with the EtCetera typeface is akin to a new pastor attempting to change the colour of the church carpet - that is, it seems to be a direct invitation for mutiny, sedition, and coup attempts. Lessons learned, voices heard. I have learned that the most popular EtCetera content seems to be that which highlights the stories and unique experiences of individual Regent students. This is something I hope to continue doing in both the paper and the podcast.

The launch of the EtCetera Podcast is perhaps the biggest risk I have taken in my time as Editor, but it seems to have been generally well-received and has been a fun side project for me this term. I would like to thank every guest we had on the show this term (even the mystery guest who got lost when my laptop crashed last week) for joining us on the RCSA couch and allowing us to pick their brain. I would also like to thank the Regent community for being patient with us as we have figured out the medium of podcasting for the first time.

As we prepare to enter into the Winter Semester, a few things might be said about the relationship between EtCetera and the Regent community.

My role, ultimately, is to compile, format, edit, and publish the content that is submitted to EtCetera. Any good Editor will sometimes produce their own content for the publication (as I am doing right now) but I am, ultimately, at the mercy of the Regent community members who are willing to produce content. It may surprise you to find out that every issue of EtCetera comes together by the skin of our teeth - we continue to be able to put issues together by convincing at least a few people to submit their work for each issue, but we do not generally receive enough content to be picky.

What this means is that EtCetera will only ever look like the content that students are willing to submit. If you have ever wondered why EtCetera does not publish a certain kind of content, the answer is simply that that content is not represented in the work that is submitted to us. We are the voice of the Regent community, and we publish what the community gives us to publish - it is as simple as that.

The implication of this is that if you see a need for a certain kind of content in EtCetera, then it is up to you or your like-minded peers to make it happen. A wide variety of possible content does not just magically appear in my inbox every week - it is up to the community to take advantage of the platform that EtCetera provides and produce the kind of content that it deserves.

So be encouraged, Regent, EtCetera is yours, not mine. I've had the privilege of publishing some stellar content this term, and I trust that the same will be true next term as well. So long as the Regent community continues to take advantage of EtCetera, I look forward to another term of thoughts, laughs, rants, stories, verses, and experiences.

Shine on Regent, you crazy diamond.

See you in the new year.

## ON CHARACTER

Steven Gomez

Sometimes the voice in my head gets too loud to ignore: the one that says I simply don't measure up compared to others. It recites like a litany or a creed all the things I have not done, all the accomplishments of life traditionally expected of someone my age that remain unfulfilled. It convinces me (however briefly) that the people I call my friends don't actually think very much of me, and does not let me escape the sensation that I haven't done much with my life, unlike them.

I don't know how to drive. I don't know how to ride a bike. I still live with my mother. I'm clumsy working with my hands. All this time in grad school isn't really productive or setting myself up for a viable future.

In a recent bout of this heavy self-immolation, my friend did the kind of thing that true friends do and took me out to dinner. He offered to listen to that voice, and then offered a different voice and a different view of who I am.

And we talked about other things as well, like the paper I'm writing on re-enchanting culture and the world and the church, and the fantasy novel that's led me to thinking along such lines—which for once isn't *The Lord of the Rings*. We (I mean the Regent community in general now) can rather go on about having an enchanted view of the world, and what it might mean that the world is more than we usually sense or see—that God is active and present in the world. But one of the points of conversation with my friend was the question: What does it mean to have an enchanted view of the self? Of your self?

Falling back on biblical language, you are the "image of God" and "filled with the Spirit": God is inside of you, breathed into you. You are made not simply by your parents or even by your accomplishments. That making continues even now and God continues to have a hand in it. You have been formed and disciplined and nurtured, even as you've made decisions and taken stands and committed mistakes. The Creator does not make you

and then leave you to go on like a windup toy; the Creator continues to walk alongside you as you live.

I'm not sure just how I would answer the question of what it means to have an enchanted view of myself, but I think it involves accepting and seeking to see the truth that God is as active and present in me as He is in the rest of the world. If my making did not stop when I came into existence, if it goes on, then that enchanted view of myself needs to speak louder than the voice that tells me I've made nothing, done nothing, am nothing.

My character is something that has been made, is being made, and is not yet finished being made.

I don't mean simply that character is more important than accomplishments, but that character is an accomplishment in and of itself. Character is the result of a pattern of habits and thoughts, hopefully informed by a lifetime of listening to and responding to the active and present God. You and God, working together, formed the person you are. Your character is the most important contribution you make to the world. I may not have 'done much' with my life, but I have become someone—and am still becoming someone. The person I am now is an accumulation of the people I have been, and I will keep growing into another person still.

I could look back on myself and notice things that I have done, and try to show up the horrible, nagging voice with another litany of actual accomplishments. But it would miss the point. The answer to "I don't know" or "I haven't done" is not "I can" or "I have done", but "I am."

I am as kind as I know how to be. I am sensitive to the pain of the world and to the pain of my friends. I am someone who tries to hope even in the face of evidence and memory. I am someone who appreciates beauty. I am—hard as it is to remember—beloved. Who I am is the only thing I really need to know how to do.

<b>EtCetera Submission Guidelines</b>	EtCetera welcomes submission on any topic, but preference will be given to pieces that are directly relevant to the experiences of the Regent Community, life in Vancouver, or material covered in Regent's curriculum.	All submissions are subject to minor edits, and may be returned if substantial edits are needed.
EtCetera welcomes submissions from all members of the Regent community including students, staff, faculty, and alumni.		All submissions are to be sent to: <b>etcetera@regent-college.edu</b>
EtCetera publishes fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and visual artwork.	Written submissions may not exceed 1000 words in length.	

# HUMANS OF REGENT: STEPHANIE SILVA



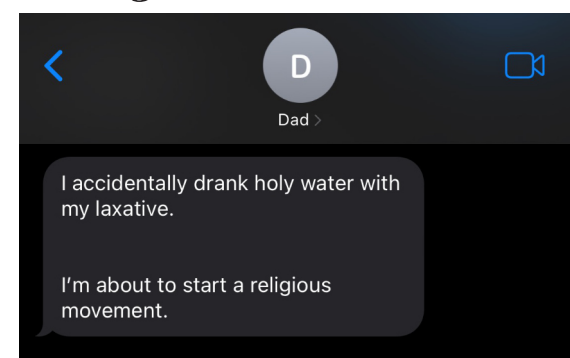
more trouble making new friends here, but God has been very gracious. And I think the community at Regent can be welcoming and warm, so I love that.”

“My needs have been satisfied by God. I have everything that I need. When I’m going through hard days, I have people here to comfort me and to go through that with. That is an important thing that he is doing. I can see he’s showing up. Also, the professors are so welcoming and really want to get to know us and they really want to be a part of our studies as well. It takes the pressure off of academic performance. They know that we are people and we know that they are people too. We are all Christians so we are in the same boat, I can see God in that.”

## OVERHEARD AT REGENT

“I am a grown man who is looking for a paper star to exchange for a cookie. What part don’t you understand?”

## DAD JOKE OF THE WEEK



“I’m a twenty-seven year old Brazilian, who just moved to Vancouver to start Regent. For the past few years I’ve been working with InterVarsity back in Brazil. I first engaged with the movement when I was a student, after I graduated I worked for a company for a while and then started working for InterVarsity as staff.”

“English is not my first language, so feeling comfortable sharing my thoughts and ideas is a struggle. I can understand my professors and do all the readings, but in tutorials, when I have to share my thoughts and experiences, it takes me more time to share just because I don’t have the proper words and I feel a little bit shy. Sometimes I overthink stuff and my own personality can get in the way, so tutorials for me is my biggest struggle.”

“The friends that I have made here and getting to know people has been my greatest joy. Getting to see their experiences and what God has been doing in their lives, and what God is doing now. Sharing your joys and struggles and having this profound sense that God is so much more than the ideas I have. He transcends all cultures and the little box we try to put him in. Getting to meet people from different places reminds me that he is a bigger God than what we think he actually is. I expected that I would have so much

# WORD & CHORUS: REFLECTING ON MY FIRST TATTOOS

JONATHAN LIPPS

I recently received my first set of tattoos. It took me many years to come up with something that I felt was meaningful enough to make a permanent part of my external appearance. Ultimately, I was able to develop a short poem in Koine Greek that hit the mark. What follows is a sort of theological meditation on the that text and its meaning.

The text in Greek:

ἐν ἀρχῇ ὁ λόγος

ἐν τέλει ὁ χορός

And translated into English:

In the beginning [was] the Word

In the end [will be] the Chorus

John the Theologian makes an astonishing claim in the first sentence of this Gospel about the primacy of the ontology of the “Word” (including in its semantic constellation categories like Relation, Story, or Reason): it is coeval with God, in fact it is coextensive with God. Even more astonishing, several sentences later, he makes the claim that this primal category of existence became human flesh—became one of us, in all the important ways that make you you and me me.

The prophet Isaiah declares that the Word of God shall not return void, and trinitarian theology sees this fact as part of the very fabric of reality: the Word proceeds from the Father (as the Son) so as to save, collect, and preserve all of Creation, returning it to its Creator in a joyful reunion. A word that is spoken into nothingness is of no value, for soliloquy is the domain of solipsism. A word that is spoken to a featureless surface and bounces back as a mere echo is similarly void, however resounding. But a Word that is caught by its hearers, that effects change, and that elicits a conversation in response—that is the Word which does not return void.

And so, in almost syllogistic (literally, “together-with-the-word”) fashion, we realize that the point of the Word is to produce many other words in response. The point of the Son is to bring all of Creation into the relation of restored childhood with the Father. The point of the first Word spoken in the darkness is to create the the light necessary for life. And the point of the Word spoken into human flesh is to enable all flesh to speak to God. But do we imagine a cacophony of voices shouting unintelligibly? No! The proper mode of diverse oral unity is not speaking (which can ultimately only mean speaking over one

another) but singing, together. Only in singing are words from multiple parties joined temporally in mutual respect and harmony. They blend, creating something new and better without loss of person or agency. Therefore, the proper auditory image is not the atonal conversation of a debate, but rather antiphony, call-and-response, the bid of the lover and the reply of the beloved. First the Word, then the Chorus. When the Chorus joins the Word, the distinctions between the two matter less than they did before. When humankind joins the Son as children of God, the Son becomes “merely” the eldest brother, the first-born of a new kind of creature. The Word lassos and lifts; it does not return void. It grants existence without being made less itself. The relationship between God and Creation is anything but zero-sum.

The existence of God as Word shows us God as yearning, more than anything else, to be joined in song by other words, by we who have heard the first Word and who have chosen to sing in reply through the patterning of our lives. Each voice that answers the Word in song has its own character, its own timbre, its own language, and these differences are not erased when joined in the mighty chorus with others; rather, they meld into something impossible, individual yet corporate, the distinction between sum and parts having become a category error. The ineffable movement and infinite song of Dante’s comic apex is captured in the χορός, because this word in Greek is the root not only of “chorus” but of “choreography”. When we respond to the Word we do not do so with verbal statements, but with our singing voices and our moving bodies, the inscribers upon physical reality of the Word’s work upon our hearts.

The fact that “Word” is the primary ontological category, not just in the sense of time but also in the sense of preeminence, implies that “Chorus” (known variously as theosis, the beatific vision, and so on) is the primary teleological category, not just in the sense of time but also in the sense of purpose. The Word that spoke the universe into being also apparently spoke Aramaic, through trachea and tongue, creating pressure waves of sound, which reverberated eventually, with many twists and turns, into my ears, transformed but retaining their essence. The choice that remained for me was merely whether to join the Chorus or to remain silent. And in a way it was never really a choice, because whatever else I am, I am a musician. I will always choose the song, the “yes”, over the silence of the void.