

ETC.

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INTERVIEW: SARAH JEONG ON
REGENT'S NEW PASTORAL
FORMATION TEAM



THE NEXT CHAPTER FROM
REGENT'S
**DUNGEONS
& DRAGONS**
CAMPAIGN
BY JONATHAN LIPPS

"THE LAST FREE PLACE" -

**HANGING OUT WITH THE
ANARCHISTS OF THE CALIFORNIA
DESERT**

**AND SOME OTHER ASSORTED
NONSENSE...**

THE LAST FREE PLACE

DRYDEN DEMCHUK

Slab City lies 150 miles east of San Diego, deep in California's Sonoran Desert. The settlement takes its name from the group of concrete slabs on which much of it stands - slabs left over from a United States Military base which was demolished in America's post-war years. In the later half of the 20th century, these slabs became a popular spot for snowbirds, squatters, and anyone seeking a counterculture or off-the-grid lifestyle to set up residence. Today, the area is populated almost entirely by mobile homes and campers, with a few semi-permanent structures - a church, a hostel, and an "internet cafe". Almost every structure in the area also serves as an art establishment. Trailers are painted in psychedelic patterns, fences are filled with political jokes and vulgarities, and surrealist sculptures made of scrap metal and car parts litter the roadside.

I visited Slab City in early June as part of a larger road trip through the southwestern United States. I have been aware of the settlement's existence for a few years, due to a personal interest in American counterculture, though I never imagined visiting the area until I found myself travelling west to LA from Phoenix for unrelated reasons. This region of the California desert has more than one sinister skeleton in its pocket - enough to make me slightly wary at the prospect of spending too much time there with my blatantly obvious Alberta licence plate, but the entire point of my road trip was to get off the beaten path and explore a bit of the desert's underbelly. I didn't exactly go to California to visit Disneyland.

There is an eclectic fusion of ideologies present in Slab City's creative efforts. A Christian Center is among the more permanent-looking buildings in the city, and a bus-stop-like structure welcomes visitors into the city with a colourful "God is love" slogan. All the while some residents prefer to display "God is dead" or other anti-religious slogans around their properties. One property bore numerous wooden signs which sought to explain in dripping white paint why COVID is a government conspiracy, while another argued that Trump is a fascist and that evangelicalism is the real conspiracy.

Tourists are given mixed signals regarding whether or not they are wanted around the site. Numerous signs point towards "gift shops" and "visitor centres" though when the signs are followed they often lead to dead ends, or point towards rusted mobile home doors which seem better left closed. The residents varied in their disposition when they saw my Honda Civic on the town's dirt roads. Some smiled, others stared suspiciously, none went out of their way to be welcoming.

I interacted directly with two residents while I was in the city. One was an elderly man who seemed to be in charge

of one of the more popular art establishments - a surrealist outdoor art gallery known as "East Jesus" (which can be found on Instagram). As I walked through the gallery, I overheard a conversation coming from an adjacent trailer. A young man seemed to be aggressively relaying his hatred for capitalism to an unspecified audience. Eventually, an older man exited the trailer and took a seat at the entrance to the gallery. Temperatures were approaching 120 degrees Fahrenheit, but the man wore jeans, leather boots, a button-up shirt, and a leather vest covered in various political buttons and patches. His long grey hair and beard framed a sunburned but friendly face. Since visiting the area I have learned that this man is colloquially known as the "Wizard" of East Jesus. I hadn't known his moniker at the time, but I smiled when I walked past him and we exchanged a friendly "hello".

The second resident that I interacted with was inside a mobile home, and I never saw their face. Walking back to my car from the East Jesus site, I passed a gated yard with a sign welcoming tourists in. There was mention of a gift shop, yet again. Against my better judgment I walked through the gate and found myself in a yard surrounded by three trailer homes that were arranged in a triangle. The yard was full of scrap metal and garbage, and I wasn't sure how much of it was intended as art. Wooden arrows directed me along a path which wound through the three trailers. One was full of books on a variety of occult topics, another carried taxidermied animals arranged to look like they were having a tea party. I didn't go inside the third trailer.

As I left the marked path to return to my car I heard a noise of movement from the third trailer, and an obviously groggy voice suddenly shout to me: "is someone there?"

I wasn't sure how to answer this disembodied voice.

"Yeah... sorry I'm just leaving."

"No no its fine... would you like to come in and see the gift shop?"

At this point in my visit, I had grown very skeptical of these repeated "gift shop" offers. I wasn't sure what sorts of souvenirs were being sold and, as badly as I wanted to find out, my better judgement prevailed.

"No thanks... I'm just on my way out. Thanks!"

The sun was setting low on the desert horizon. I didn't feel like I needed to stay in the area after dark - maybe next time.

I passed a few more residents as I drove out of the area. No smiles or waves.

NOTES FROM THE UNDERDARK, EP. 2: "CALL OF THE KADEMENES"

JONATHAN LIPPS

Our first proper D&D session started out simply enough: Rianne arrived at Highbury Monastery with an urgent request for our other heroes (Evendur, Orwin, and Fenn). We were to return at once to the Kademenes Academy in Nauem, where civic turmoil there was putting our shared alma mater at risk. Armed with traveling gear and sufficient rations, we set out, encountering muddy and dismal conditions on the road. Despite some false starts, we made it to the village of Krunu where we found a D'Muge priest, one Brother Dimos, willing to share his temple with travellers of his order.

And so, the first day passed without death by devil chicken, though there was a rather strange series of utterances from our paladin Orwin (who felt it necessary to boast loudly about his persuasion abilities, wanting to be the one to find lodging for the night). Nonetheless we enjoyed the hospitality of Dimos, whose town, we learned, had recently been the subject of mysterious attacks and disappearances. Feeling pity for these people, Fenn encouraged Rianne (the keeper of our purse) to share some silver with them, given that we could not stay and help due to our mission. Seeing this donation take place without having been consulted, Orwin threw a childish tantrum in full display of our hosts (evidence, no doubt, of his vaunted persuasion), and had to be physically carried off by Fenn.

It cannot be said that fondness for Orwin changed tack, because after insisting to be in the lead, he lost track of the path and enmeshed our party in dark woods, where near-silent flapping noises were the only harbinger of a sudden attack by the deadly, mind-destroying Cornix! (Yes, my friends: a devil chicken! Or, more accurately, a devil crow.) If not for some quick crossbow work by Fenn, and Evendur's stealthy retreat into good knife-throwing position, our party would have been lost. Orwin, for his part, and despite his best efforts, ended up nearly dead, face-down on the ground, revived only by a prayer of healing from Fenn.

Thanks to some sensibility on the part of Rianne, we

had soon lit a torch and found our way out of the dark forest, passing eventually into a more open land where we felt we must stop and make camp for the night to rest and heal. In an attempt to make up for his various embarrassing missteps throughout the day, Orwin took first watch. Unfortunately for him (perhaps being too deep in reconsideration of his life choices), he missed the sudden onslaught of two lightning-quick Kotopio (think devil ostriches)! Catching the party unawares, they ravaged Orwin and left him draining life on the ground. Once awake, the rest of us were able to poke them sufficiently with swords, finishing these marauders off without suffering too much damage. But Orwin was basically gone. Fenn, with deep sorrow and pity replacing the irritation in his heart toward Orwin, once again knelt down, and prayed a Prayer of Recovery. His prayer answered, Orwin's ghastly pallor retreated and he appeared to be in stable condition, though in a deep unconscious sleep.

And so we leave our heroes: exhausted and harried after not even two days on the job, with Orwin just back from death's door and everyone else keenly aware of our vulnerability. Will we make it to Nauem? How are we meant to help the Kademenes Academy once we get there? What is Orwin's deal anyway? These are questions for the morning, and for our next episode. For now, we rest.



INTERVIEW: SARAH JEONG, PASTORAL FORMATION TEAM

1. Tell us a bit about yourself! Where are you from? How did you end up at Regent?

Hello, I am Sarah (Eunseul) Jeong. I was born in South Korea and immigrated to Vancouver in 2009. I studied Psychology at UBC, and I actually used to visit the atrium and the library often with the campus leaders who were attending Regent at that time. After graduation, I went to Madagascar for short-term missions for a year and 6 months again. I came down with chronic fatigue towards the end, and in that way, God granted me an intimate time in personal prayers and in community, and He had revealed his will for me to go to a seminary (although, Regent is a theological graduate school to be exact) over other paths. What He prepared for me was good and wonderful, and I'll be going into my second year of the Diploma of Christian Studies in the Fall while I continue this role to oversee the Pastoral Formation Team and to support the students.

2. Would you rather fight one hundred duck-sized horses, or one horse-sized duck?

One horse-sized duck. If one hundred duck-sized horses pile up and come against me, I would be divided in one hundred pieces. I heard horses can get quite violent... Can I use weapons in this fight? I will poke the horse-sized duck with a spear and give a bit of damage right under the beak around the neck. Hope it won't be able to fly though.

3. Tell us a bit about the team itself - how did it begin? Who else is on the team?

Last year, the team first began as a grant proposal project to refresh the Master's of Divinity program with a focus on pastoral formation. It transitioned into the Pastoral Formation Team (PFT) thanks to the donors' support. With the central goal of spiritual and personal formation of the pastoral students, whether they are in MDiv, MATS, or Dip, we hope to grow to support it through a growing team of pastoral mentors, research, workshops or panel discussions, and more. Dr. Mark Glanville leads the team as our Pastoral Theologian, and Audry Goertzen is our fantastic Administrative Assistant.

4. What role do you fill on the Pastoral Formation Team?

My role is the program coordinator of the PFT, an overseer of the team's ongoing initiatives and events to better equip the pastoral students. Some of the initiatives include social gatherings, lunchtime workshops, and a convening for pastors and church leaders planned for the following year. Another side of my job is supporting and encouraging the students with a call to ministry. Although I may not have all the answers for their concerns and suggestions, I hope to be their point of contact and connect them to resources around or outside the College, whether it'd be passing notes to Claire (Dean of Students) or Ann (Academic Advisor), or refer them to Dawn and Mardi (pastoral mentors) or Kaeli (MDiv RCSA Rep).

5. What specific needs does the Pastoral Formation Team hope to meet in the Regent community?

The PFT seeks to create an intentional community for students who plan to serve as pastors or ministers in any setting in the future, whichever degree they are pursuing. In a short term, it enables our team to have more effective communication with them, and hence providing an easier access to resources. Also, by creating a network of the future pastoral leaders, we would like to form support systems and accountability for the spiritual health of the leaders and of the Church.

6. Why should Regent students care about the Pastoral Formation Team?

Regent students should care about the Pastoral Formation Team for two reasons. One: if you are students who may find yourself in church leadership one day, we exist to serve you, even if you're not an MDiv student. That means some of the workshops or gatherings that we plan are open to you as well, and would give you practical insight and skills for serving the Body of Christ in a position of leadership, and connect you with others with similar callings. Two: if you are not a student who will ever be in church leadership, you should still care because you want church leaders who are equipped, healthy, and supported. We seek to form the next generations of pastors in ways that they'll be ready for what's to come, or at least able to remain healthy, ethical, merciful, and loving when facing things they don't know how to lead a church through.

HAIKU #1

To convey one's mood
in seventeen syllables
is very diffic

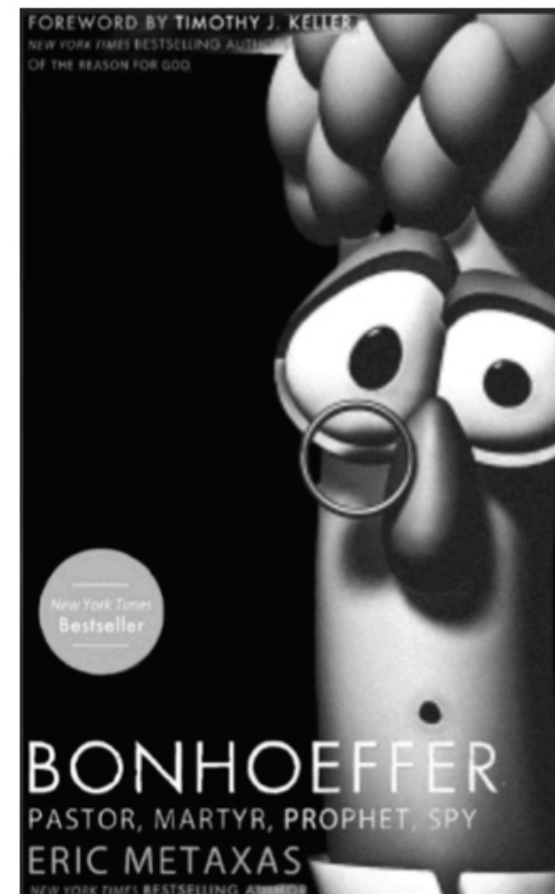
- DR. JOHN COOPER CLARKE

DAD JOKE OF THE WEEK:

HOW DO YOU KNOW A JOKE IS A DAD JOKE?

IT'S APPARENT.

NEW IN THE REGENT BOOKSTORE...



A SELECTION OF MARTIN LUTHER'S BEST INSULTS:

"You say, 'What comes out of our mouth must be kept!' I hear it - which mouth do you mean? The one from which the farts come? (You can keep that yourself!)"

From *Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil*, pg. 281 of Luther's Works, Vol. 41

"Take care, you evil and wrathful spirits. God may ordain that in swallowing you may choke to death."

From *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, pg. 111 of Luther's Works, Vol. 40

"You are a crude ass, and an ass you will remain!"

From *Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil*, pg. 281 of Luther's Works, Vol. 41

"You sophistic worms, grasshoppers, locusts, frogs and lice!"

From *Against Latomus*, pg. 150 of Luther's Works, Vol. 32

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR SUGGESTIONS?
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All submissions are subject to proofreading edits and may be returned for more substantial revision. Visual art must be submitted in digital format. No promises can be made about the quality of printing, but black and white line art will reproduce best.

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