

David Seamon Joins IPC as Director, Youth Ministries

IPC is very pleased to welcome David Seamon who joined the staff in October as our new Director of Youth Ministries. A native of Tennessee, David is a graduate of Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville. He also has a Master of Divinity with Honors and a Diploma in Youth Ministry from Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City. We welcome David and his fiancé, Birmingham native Allison Waite.

Following is a recent interview with David.

Tell us a little about your childhood.

I am the product of a post-60s counter-culture couple. I was born in Marietta, Georgia, and I am the second oldest of four children (I like to refer to it as the "upper middle child"). Sandwiched between two sisters and a brother, coupled with a low attention span and a high amount of energy produced an imminent and unsafe situation for my family and me. Somewhat of a class clown I was in and out of trouble in school which led to being in and out of trouble at home. It didn't help much that my older sister walked around with a halo above her. Still, I turned out okay although I can't take much credit. My childhood was filled with people who by the grace of God invested themselves and saw something in me that I could not.

When did you first feel that you were called to the ministry?

I don't think my calling was one specific 180-degree conversion (maybe it was and it just took time for me to develop the ears). But it seemed to be more of a gradual conversion...or conversation; an internal poetry expressed between my head, heart, and gut which found expression and reference with and by those in my life. One such person was my youth pastor, Dave Vallandingham. High school was a time where I began to break away from nursing off my parents' faith and discerning who I was. I had no idea why I was attending church other than there was always a pretty good basketball game afterwards. However, I connected with Pastor Dave very quickly, and he became my mentor as well as my best friend. He did not see me as merely a student or some kid in our youth group, but when I hung around him I felt as if I were a peer. This feeling brought about a responsibility in my mind to be involved in the youth ministry. Despite my instability at times as a teen, Dave gave me the job of doing the announcements through video, skits, and just about anything in between. This somewhat small opportunity was considered such a vital part of my life. I was given trust and respect by him and the others in the youth group. Pastor Dave put a lot of trust in me and began to give me more responsibilities, which I gladly accepted. As I was becoming immersed in the life of the Church, I began to sense a calling in my life in youth ministry.

I remember struggling in my late junior year of high school over the calling of being a youth minister. As I expressed this to Pastor Dave, he took me under his wing and began to show me as much as he could about the highs and lows of youth ministry. I knew then how blessed I was to have such a mentor as Dave in my life who truly befriended a punk teenager. He was "God's skin" to me and I knew I wanted to be that for others in this tumultuous time of life. I learned from him that a youth minister is not a baby-sitter for teenagers until they get old enough for "big church," but a friend and mentor to teenagers who helps form and mold youth into strong mature Christians while being teenagers.

Your resumé came to us through a member of the search committee. Tell us how that happened.

I'll have to warn you this story is a little tricky, but I'll try to explain the best I can. I went to seminary in Kansas City. While I was up there I met Allison Waite who is now my fiancé. We actually met through her double cousin (no, not second cousin but double cousin. Allison's father's sister and her mother's brother married thus making Sarah her "double cousin"). I told you it gets tricky. I knew Sarah through a mutual friend. One day Sarah told me that she got a new job at a coffeeshop, and it was a great place to study. As a coffee enthusiast and all-around nerd, my friend and I visited this place. When I didn't see Sarah, I called her, and she said she was on her way there and that in the meantime I should meet her cousin Allison who was working there now.

I must admit I did not give off the best impression. There were two ladies working there at that time and I was sitting there staring at each of them while listening to Sarah on the phone giving me a description of her cousin. Allison caught me staring and asked "Can I help ya'll with something?" I immediately noticed the southern twang that I so missed while stranded in the "sweet tea-less" Midwest. I clumsily explained the situation and why I was staring so much. That moment started a three-year succession of bumbling and stammering my way deeper in love with a lady who has

shown grace every step of the way.

Ok, so you're wondering what all this mushy stuff has to do with finding IPC. Bear with me. I'm getting there. So for about a year of our relationship, Allison and I dated long distance. She moved back to Birmingham to start graduate school at UAB in the Physician's Assistant program. After I graduated seminary in May, I began planning on moving down to Birmingham and hopefully finding a people with whom I could live out my calling. Sarah (the double cousin) had met and married Will Mason, ironically an old friend of Allison's in Birmingham. Sarah and Will both live here and teach music/instrument lessons. It just so happened that they were teaching Jim and Ellen Walker's kids when they heard about the opening at IPC. Will called me (I was in KC) and told me about the position. I won't bore you with anymore details, but if you thought that story was long wait till you hear about the interview process (kidding).

So your fiancé is the reason that brought you to Birmingham?

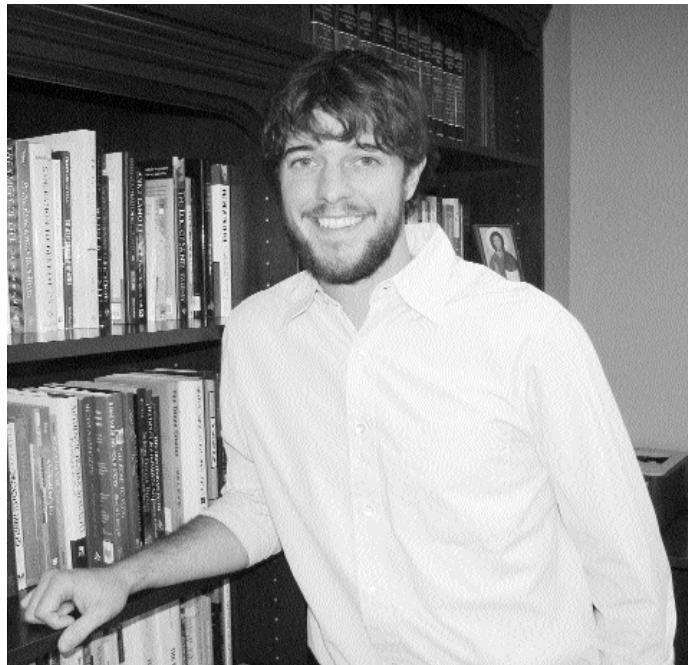
She and now IPC who has also shown so much love and grace as they are allowing me to engage in the realities of their lives thus forming new patterns and practices in my life.

What dreams do you have for the youth program?

I have a lot of dreams, but they have not been programmatic ones. I dream that we may embark on the journey of congregational and community discovery as a youth group united and engaged in missio Dei (mission of God) and that this missio Dei should envelop every program, vision, word, and deed of the group. We are participating as a group listening, waiting, praying, fasting and discerning where God is at work and how we might participate.

By participating in the work of God, I hope that the youth ministry will take on God's suffering love as the core of our identity. I hope that we will yearn to have such a relationship with God and others that it flows as a natural expression of our identity. I love how Michael Frost puts it:

"To practice the presence of Christ right under people's noses, where the wonderful aroma of Jesus can be sensed...When we allow our lives to be 'read' by people with whom we have proximity, they need to be able to see the story of Jesus unfolding in our pages...Our allegiance to Christ unfurls slowly, over multiple interactions, by which time the reader is so far into the book of our life that they can't put it down."



David Seamon, Director IPC Youth Ministries

"I hope that we will yearn to have such a relationship with God and others that it flows as a natural expression of our identity."

--David Seamon

The dream of ministry is not to watch and to imitate, but rather to join in and identify with one another as well as with God.

I hope that we may learn the stories and traditions of our past not to gain answers but to learn postures - ways of positioning ourselves that allow us a greater chance of catching God at work among us and help us cultivate new ways of being in our world.

I hope that these postures will invite us into a rhythm of life that is shaped by certain practices such as compassion, hospitality, table fellowship, justice, environmental stewardship, play, etc. It's a little too early to tell what this will look like, but I believe that the answer lies in God and us and the engagement between God and us.

There's more...

You'll have to go to the IPC website for the rest of the article. Find answers to the questions, *"What's on your iPod?" "Do you have any pets?" "What do you like to do in your spare time?"* and *"Are you an Alabama or Auburn fan?"*

Go to: www.ipc-usa.org

Click on David Seamon's name on the homepage.

*Continuation of interview with new IPC Director of Youth Ministries
David Seamon (from the November issue of The Window)*

What's on your iPod?

I looked and I have 841 artists. So rather than give you all of them, I'll just give you a sampler:

Sigur Rós, Flight Of The Conchords, David Ryan Harris, O.A.R., Need to Breathe, Yael Naim, Robbie Seay Band, Aretha Franklin, Bright Eyes, Frou Frou, The Gabe Dixon Band James Morrison, Jump Little Children, eastmountainsouth, Ingrid Michaelson, Anthony Hamilton, Bon Iver, Age Pryor, Tom Petty, Daft Punk, Stevie Wonder, The Beatles, Ben Harper, Feist, The Police, Peter Gabriel, MAE, The Eagles, U2, Johnny Cash, Nickel Creek, Mika, Matisyahu, Gnarls Barkley, James Taylor, Bob Marley, Kansas, Run DMC, Bon Jovi, Jack Johnson, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Damian "Jr. Gong" Marley, We the Kings, Earth Wind & Fire, The Postal Service, Ace of Base, Prince, John Legend, Firehouse, Derek Webb, Switchfoot, Ray Charles, The Temptations, Kanye West, Explosions In The Sky, Goo Goo Dolls, Counting Crows, Regina Spektor, Colbie Caillat, Edvard Grieg, Ludwig Von Beethoven, Felix Mendelssohn, Camille Saint-Saëns, Gianni Schicchi, Antonio Vivaldi, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Antonin Dvorak, Johann Sebastian Bach, Sergey Rachmaninov, Gabriel Fauré, Common, Brian McKnight, Luther Vandross, Marvin Gaye, The Weepies, Ani DiFranco, Aqualung, Architecture In Helsinki, Athlete, Blue Merle, Cat Power, Chris Thile, Coldplay, Damien Rice, Dayroom, The Dears, Death Cab For Cutie, The Decemberists. The Doves, Elliot Smith, The Fray, Guster, Howie Day, Imogen Heap, Joshua Radin, Kings of Convenience, Mates Of State, Medeski, Martin, & Wood, Midlake, Minus the Bear, Neko Case, R.E.M., Radiohead, Regina Spektor, Rusted Root, Sia, Tegan and Sarah, Teitur Lassen, Venice is Sinking, Wilco, 13 & God, Amos Lee, Dave Barnes, Dave Matthews Band, Gavin DeGraw, Jason Mraz, John Mayer, Martin Sexton. Matt Wertz, The Pat McGee Band, Rob Blackledge, Bebo Norman, David Crowder Band, Pedro The Lion, Brad Paisley, Bob Dylan, David Gray, Iron & Wine, Ray LaMontagne, Cream, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Eric Clapton, Freddie Mercury, George Thorogood, Grand Funk Railroad, Grateful Dead, The Guess Who, Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Buffett, John Lennon, Journey, Led Zeppelin, Lynard Skynard, Pink Floyd, Queen, Santana, Steppenwolf, The Allman Brothers Band.

Do you have any pets?

Yes! I have the largest and most stubborn Weimaraner named **Franklin**. (We affectionately call him "Frank the Tank.")

Are you an Alabama or Auburn fan?

Oh that's easy....Tennessee. For those of you who haven't ripped up this paper yet, I'm really more of a Georgia Tech fan, but I must cheer for Tennessee because my brother goes there. If I had to pick a school though, I would definitely pick Alabama. That is Allison's team and so I guess it will soon be mine in some weird way (Allison and I did go to the Tennessee/Alabama game last year and I can't begin to tell you how many times some older man would come up from behind and place his shoulders on us shaking his head saying "A house divided ya'll...a house divided.")

Finally, what do you like to do in your spare time?

I enjoy playing most sports (basketball, football, golf, baseball). I also love hiking and fishing. There are times, however, when nothing beats a good book or a trip to the museum. Over the past couple of years I have really started to dive into graphic design and I would love to learn the banjo.