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Kirk-Duggan and Hall's "Wake Up! Hip Hop Christianity and the Black Church" (Book Review)

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Wake Up! Hip Hop Christianity and the Black Church,

by Cheryl Kirk-Duggan and Marlon Hall.

Nashville: Abingdon, 2011. 192 pp., \$21.00; ISBN 9781426703010

*Reviewed by Monika Seweryn, Circulation Services Department, Library,
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Cheryl Kirk-Duggan and Marlon Hall assemble an engaging discourse on a subject of the past shaping the present, and present shaping the future. Both authors are presently engaged and active in molding the present through different venues. Cheryl Kirk-Duggan is educating young (and older) minds in important areas of religious and social impact on society. Marlon Hall, through his creativity and constant exploration attracts people to follow Christ and live out an extraordinary life for the glorification of the Savior. Both writers convey an incredible understanding of today's world and cultures, and try to inspire Christians to enhance their lives, churches, and communities.

Throughout the book, the authors present an in-depth historical background of the creation and shaping of the hip-hop culture. They bring closer the ideas and realities that have shaped the minds of those artists. The desire for *equality* and *good things for all* started a powerful movement in self-expression and a war against the oppressing factors of life. Young people are drawn to the creative ways of expression, and they long for freedom. Hip-hop allows such expression. They try to fill the void in their lives that can only be filled by the Creator, God alone. Christianity can offer the personal relationship with God which people desire. Unfortunately, often churches do not allow strangers with different style of expression into their midst. In the minds of many members of Christian community, hip-hop exposes young people to an anger-driven, riches-desiring and power-loving music that teaches them profanity and hate to the rest of the world. Even though many members can relate to issues presented by Hip-hop music, they are not ready to assimilate this style into corporate church worship. "The immorality and irreligious themes of Hip Hop are not a confirmation that there is not a relationship between God, Hip-Hop, and spirituality; they are evidence of the conversation between the three" (p.86). This genre of music is filled with young people dialogues and cry-outs to God. Those artists are very sensitive and opened to the answers about pain, and evil of this world. They are not afraid to speak the truth, the raw reality of their hearts. This kind of honesty can be offending to church folk, and here is the problem. The Church forgotten how to be honest, and many times is hiding behind the pretense of perfect life. Creativity and honesty should be building blocks of the community in churches, and this could be learned from the hip-hop society.

In the closing pages of the book, the writers try to inspire readers to embrace this hip-hop-"filled" youth and give them a venue to express their pain, irritation, desires through their own venue, hip hop.

“Creativity is inside all of us and is of God! (...) From practicing creativity comes hope. When the church speaks in hope with one another about who God is and what God wants us to do, the faith community can deal with the messiness and work together for the good of all, even those beyond the immediate community.” (p. 153-154)

Creativity is an important ingredient to producing beautiful and captivating art. Hip-hop throughout decades of forming and shaping has been one of the most creative genres of music. Incorporation of beats, movements, words, singing, melodies and such is what attracts many people to this type of music. Creative expression of love, pain, happiness, and sorrow is what Christian communities do (or at least should be doing) during their worship time. Why not take the creativity of hip-hop movement, soak it in the Word and let it inspire many?

The authors bring an analytical and insightful expose’ on hip-hop culture as well as on the attitude of the nowadays church towards creativity of that culture. In a fluid language, this historical account of the establishment of one of the most powerful musical genre of this day, the writers inspire church folk to embrace hip-hop community. Integration of this style into the worship and church community is just the next step in integrating all cultures and styles to the new American Dream. “Wake Up” is a call to the modern church; it is not only a shout out to accept the hip-hop influenced Christianity, but also to become inspired to creativity.

The Insulted and Injured,

by Fyodor Dostoevsky, translated by Boris Jakim. Grand Rapids, MI:
Eerdmans, 2011. 368 pp. \$18.00; ISBN 9780802825902.

*Reviewed by Sonia Blank, Reference Department, Library Services,
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I opened the pages of Boris Jakim’s translation of *The Insulted and Injured* after reading Dostoevsky’s *Brothers Karamazow* as well as some of his short stories. After reading these other writings of the prominent Russian novelist and I anticipated a lack of enthusiasm as I encounter this title by the same author. To my pleasant surprise, the flow and the energy of Jakim’s translation was absolutely refreshing and seemed much more accessible. It is completely faithful to the heart of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s style, and at the same time, because of Jakim’s careful choice of vocabulary, it gives the English readers an opportunity to find themselves more easily engaged in the story.

Boris Jakim is declared to be one of the foremost translators of Russian religious thought and literature into English, and this title is not an exaggeration or over-praise. The success and uniqueness of his translations might be hidden in his passion for the ‘big picture’ of every text with which he works. In *The Insulted and Injured* particularly, Jakim recognizes the various types of communities: the insulted, the injured, and their