

Augustana College
Chapel of Reconciliation

Ingrid Arneson

3 September 2004

It was a warm and breezy day in Switzerland. It was one of those days that I wanted to bottle for resale. The June weather bore deep into my core and seemed to spread grace to every pore of my body.

As I stepped out of the ecumenical center located just up the street from Lake Geneva, I was on cloud nine. The first day of my internship was done and I was feelin' good.

For those who know me well, I seem to judge the success of my day on how many laughs I received, and this particular day had been stellar. My Australian boss had laughed, the other interns from Malaysia, Kenya, Germany, etc... had all given me courtesy chuckles during the day. I was feeling good... you know, patting myself on the back. Thanking my parents for giving me some wit...

As I crossed the street to wait at the bus stop, I saw him. Anxiety set in. At the time, all that I saw was the turban.

Instant separation.

My walls went up. I diverted my eyes, and decided to walk to the other side of the bus shelter to wait for bus number 5. Whoever this guy was... I was not about to expose myself in conversation – especially when I would have to admit that I was an American – not a popular nationality to hold in Europe at the present moment.

Luckily the bus came without much time waiting and I boarded in the back and he boarded in the front. I felt safe once again.

It went on like this for a couple of weeks. The glances exchanged between this turbaned man of about 25 and I were getting more awkward as each day passed. I began to realize that this uncomfortable problem was not just going to fade away. Shoot. We had to ride the same bus.

The time came when he said hello. Immediately I knew he was an Indian. Breathe. The inevitable question came from his mouth, "Where are you from?"

"Minnesota," I replied. --- I always thought that sounded less imposing.

"Is that on the east coast or the west coast?" he asked.

"Neither," I said, "I live in the middle."

We both smiled and nodded. That is when the walls started to crumble. His name was Bhummanjot. Bhumman for short.

I found out through conversation that Bhumman was a Sikh. Sometimes mistaken as a sect of Hinduism or Islam, Sikhism is distinct from any other religion, and is one of the youngest of the world's monotheistic religions originating in northern India and Pakistan just in the 15th century. He came from a traditional family—a very conservative, patriarchal family.

And so it was—a Western feminist met an Eastern Sikh. We butted heads like rams in their mating season as seen as PBS's Wild America.

But, we agreed to disagree. We became the best of friends. Bhumman was teacher for me. He put a face, a family, a history, a voice, a smell, and a context on what I had once seen as the distant religion called Sikhism. What I had seen as “other” was transformed into person, into brother. The connections of humanity had struck again – connections that I had avoided crept into my life like the rain does into a tent on a stormy summer evening—those nights when you suddenly awake to a trickle of water, sometimes in the corner and sometimes dripping right on your forehead. As hard as you try to adjust the rain fly to keep the rain from getting in, it is of no use. The same was with Bhumman. I resigned myself to sharing our views on brotherhood—and before I knew it I seemed to be dancing in the rain.

I would often times go home from work and wonder why it was that I did not want to transform Bhumman into an ELCA Christian. For weeks this bothered me, haunted me, even frightened me. Was I losing my commitment to my faith, to the Trinity, to the Jesus that I know as Savior?

But, as I stepped back, I realized my commitment to living a faithful Christian life had been strengthened. For me, Bhumman shone brilliantly with the face of Christ.

Bhumman brought the gospels alive for me. Even though his basic knowledge of Christianity was limited, his actions told me the story. I, like Mary, had tried to overlook the gardener near the tomb except for me it has been a strange lookin' guy in a turban. I, too, had wanted to brush him aside—thinking him to be different—even scary.

But, he had said hello. There was no turning back. For Mary, it was Jesus sternly saying her name that caused her to open her eyes to the reality of Christ standing next to her.. For me, it was the timid Indian accented voice that called me out of my sleep – a sleep that I had been floating in for far too long. My eyes were focused on the divine and what was to come, so focused that I was failing to see the face of Christ in those around me.

Who have you overlooked?

It doesn't seem to me that a Sikh in Geneva is an exhaustive list of those who we try to bypass. Maybe it is the staff member down the hall, the student next door, the woman in the grocery store, the cashier at the lumberyard. The list could go on...

Take a look. Take a listen. The eyes, the voice, the smell... and in doing so, I hope you will feel your own ability to shine with Christ's love illuminated. For he calls us into dialogue, into trust, and into his keeping.

Amen.

MORNING WORSHIP

Friday, September 3, 2004

PRELUDE

INVOCATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Allow us space for grace

C: so that we may be transformed.

L: Let us see the face of Christ in our neighbors

C: so that we might learn what it is to love.

L: Give us the power to learn from others

C: so that our actions may share the gospel. Amen

HYMN

“Lord, Let My Heart be Good Soil”

WOV 713

SCRIPTURE

John 20:11-16

MESSAGE

Ingrid Arneson

Hometown: Cottonwood, MN

Majors: Government/Int’l Affairs, Philosophy, Religion

HYMN

“Let All Things Now Living”

LBW 557

BENEDICTION

SENDING

POSTLUDE

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

SUNDAY (9/5)	Worship, 11 am - Pr. Paul
MONDAY (9/6)	Labor Day - No classes or chapel service
TUESDAY (9/7)	Roman Catholic Mass - Fr. Michael Griffin
WEDNESDAY (9/8)	Holy Communion, 10 am - Pr. Paul ACTIVITIES FAIR - Commons Patio - 5-7 pm
FRIDAY (9/10)	Worship, 10 am - Dan Antoine, Senior Speaker
SUNDAY (9/12)	Worship, 11 am - Pr. Paul
MONDAY (9/13)	Worship, 10 am - Pr. Paul Stjernholm, Peace Luth.
TUESDAY (9/14)	Koinonia (those considering church vocations), 10 am - Chapel
WEDNESDAY (9/15)	Holy Communion, 10 am - Richard Swanson, Religion

CHAPEL STAFF

President - Ingrid Arneson
Class Reps. - Seniors...Noel Kahl, Andy Fett
 Junior...Rebecca Lund
 Sophomores....Matt Kruse and Kara Wiechmann
 Freshmen...To be announced (inquire in chapel office)
Publicity Coordinator - Christy Hallenbeck
Service Liaison - Jaci Sutton
Outreach Coordinator - Amy Hanson
Catholics in Action Coordinator - Kyle Mickalowski
Music Co-Coordinators - Kevin Stillson and Jon Larson
Campus pastor - Pr. Paul Rohde
Church Relations Director/Outreach Director - Kate Holmquest
Office Manager - Carol LaCroix

CHAPEL WEBSITE - www.augie.edu/chapel

DAILY TEXT devotionals are available for the taking in the Chapel narthex.
The Daily Text is also available on line.