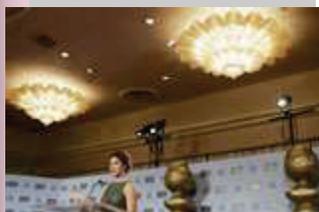


## September 2010 Research Reporter



### **Michael C. Smith, MFA, Ed.D., received a grant of \$7,000 from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA).**

Michael C. Smith, MFA, Ed.D., Associate Professor of Cinematic Arts in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, received a grant of \$7,000 for the production costs of senior capstone (thesis) projects from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA). The Hollywood Foreign Press Association produces the Golden Globe Awards, and this year awarded a record \$1,541,000 in financial grants to 41 film schools and non-profit organizations. Azusa Pacific University received its grant as part of the Higher Education Fellowships and Institutional Support Grants, along with other prestigious film schools such as American Film Institute, New York University, Cal Arts, and UCLA, and was recognized at an annual AFPA luncheon in Beverly Hills, California. APU was one of two institutions of higher education to receive first time funding from HFPA. This grant will fund the HFPA Fellows program at APU, which will benefit 15 to 20 seniors selected through a competitive pitch process. Since the projected median budget for a senior project can range from \$3,000 to



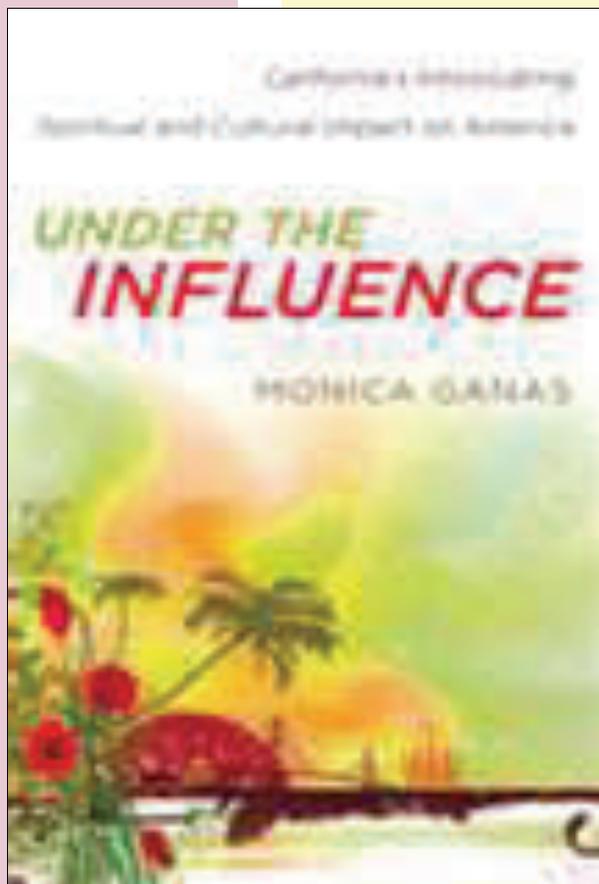
\$4,000 the fellows program will provide funds to help alleviate production costs for capstone projects. Students will then be able to produce festival-ready narrative short films. Dr. Smith says that “it was a great honor to be among the organizations receiving philanthropic gifts from HFPA and to have APU recognized at a function attended by so many Hollywood insiders.” Congratulations to Dr. Smith and the Department of Theater, Film, and Television for this distinguished grant award.—Abbylin Sellers



## ***Under the Influence: California's Intoxicating Spiritual and Cultural Impact on America***



**Monica Ganas, Ph.D.**, Professor of Theater, Film, and Television, describes vividly, sensitively, and competently



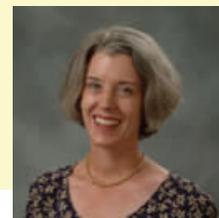
a mythical California that will ring true to her readers in her *Under the Influence: California's Intoxicating Spiritual and Cultural Impact on America* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2010). Her chapters comment on key topics like religion, history, television, sociology, politics, celebrity culture, funerals, marriage, cars, and food, all treated in California's eccentric modes. She defines "*California-ism*" as the "emergent cultural, philosophic, and sometimes pseudo-religious system" that often ends up "determining American national identity through politics, economics, entertainment, social conventions, and even spirituality." She carefully describes the typical "Cal-type" whom all Californians, whether native or immigrants, are tempted to emulate after inhabiting this golden land. By raising her readers' levels of consciousness, she hopes to reclaim a healthier, more authentic home state for the living, breathing Californians she knows and loves.

For example, she boldly declares that "Cal-types create alternate universes via the photo, film, and television industries, and live in them much of the time." One of many examples of this is "the televised docudrama" which fictionalizes history and presents "composite" characters built on many historical figures. The plot "based on a true story" can evolve into anything: "nearly any truth will do." This is because the "docudrama" has been only superficially researched and produced much too hurriedly.

The sad, and sometimes dangerous, outcome is that viewers think they know the truth about an important subject when they really do not.

Another manifestation of the "alternate universes" which "Cal-types" create is the "'imaginary social relationships' between fan and celebrity." These "relationships" can replace the authentic give-and-take of real commitments and the warm hospitality of those truly wanting to cultivate friendships with their neighbors. The speed and flashiness of "*California-ism*" succeeds in "keeping us from thinking too long or too hard about anything." This loss of authentic relationships is accentuated partially because "[h]ow the Cal-type looks is so much more important than how we are, or what we are, or even that we are." She continues, "We don't seem quite sure that we exist without seeing pictures of ourselves. Neither do we seem sure an event has been experienced unless cameras, both still and video, heavily document it."

Her conclusion suggests a prescription for curing "*California-ism*": "we must throw ourselves upon the mercy of the higher power that provides the serenity and strength to live *real* lives in our right minds."—Carole J. Lambert



## “Building a Community of Shalom: What the Bible Says about Multicultural Education”

**HeeKap Lee, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Teacher Education, carefully provides a new paradigm for inclusion in his “Building a Community of Shalom: What the Bible Says about Multicultural Education” (*The International Community of Christians Teacher Education Journal* 5.2 [2010]), an article which he completed at the APU Writers’ Retreat in July 2010. Beginning with the premises “that there is no agreed [upon] definition of multicultural education” and that “multicultural educators tend to see the world as a dichotomy and focus on the power-struggle relationship between the majority and minority,” he proposes the shalom model whose goal is to creatively build a community where each person is honored and respected as a bearer of God’s image. Four interventions radiate from this core understanding: (1) biblical perspectives, (2) cultural competence, (3) contextualized pedagogy, and (4) intentional praxis.

An authentic biblical perspective focuses on loving God and others as oneself which is demonstrated in “reconciliation”: “the overcoming of alienation, estrangement, hostility, and enmity through the spirit of Christ.” Cultural competence includes helping community members first to accept their own ethnic and cultural identities and then aiding them in

relating to others outside of this personal identity. Hopefully they will move from “a one-dimensional perspective to incorporating a multidimensional one.” Contextualizing pedagogy echoes Jesus’s teaching: He adapted His messages to His audiences and their contexts, including teaching in homes, thus understanding their needs and how best to communicate His message in such a way that met those needs. Intentional praxis means applying what is learned to specific, practical situations. “Multicultural education is an intentional intervention where educational and social inequality and unjust treatment are removed,” a humane and practical objective, indeed.

The result of these four interventions should be building “a community of shalom,” a whole, healthy community which reflects ““(upward) peace with God and (outward) peaceful integration within the society of God’s people.”” Dr. Lee concludes his article hopefully by noting that “the change strategy starts from the individual level,” not from the top down. He reminds his readers that each member of the dynamic shalom community can begin immediately to build it.—

Carole J. Lambert



**“multicultural educators tend to see the world as a dichotomy and focus on the power-struggle relationship between the majority and minority,”**



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