

UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH, RED WING, MINNESOTA
10 A.M. ADULT ENRICHMENT HOUR / SEPTEMBER 19 & 26, AND OCTOBER 3 & 10, 2010

The Second Greatest Story Ever Told

—Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov and the Clash Between Modern Secular Reason and Christian Faith*—

Facilitator: Jamie Lorentzen

Interested in a simple (but not easy) summer read? Settle yourself on the porch or under a tree with 19th century Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky's 775-page *The Brothers Karamazov*. If you can't read the whole book by September, aim to read the first half of the book (or through Book 7). The autumn Adult Enrichment discussions will focus heavily upon Books 5, 6, and 7.

The plot of Dostoevsky's last and finest novel revolves around the accusations against the trial of a passionate and decadent son (Dmitri Karamazov) for the murder of his passionate and decadent father, Fyodor. The swirling action delves into the seedier lives and community in which the Karamazov family dwell (both son and twice-widowed father, for instance, are in love with the same woman; issues of greed and inheritance abound). And at the center of all the hubbub, and what also intimately informs all the hubbub, is the (quite civil) clash between two other Karamazov brothers: the religiously striving Alyosha and the intellectual powerhouse of the 19th century secular reason, Ivan.

The story becomes particularly gripping on social and psychological levels, especially when readers come to realize that, according to Dostoevsky, the world is made up of believers and nonbelievers; and the more cogent the case against Christianity that Dostoevsky makes through the mouth-pieces of his non-believing characters, the more meaningful the case for Christianity he makes for striving believers. And although Dostoevsky makes through the mouth-pieces of his non-believing characters, the more meaningful the case for Christianity he makes for striving believers. And although Dostoevsky's "Better angel" falls on the side of the struggling believer, he never soft-peddles the powerful force and rationale of critics of Christianity that abound in his writings and the powerful force and rationale of critics of Christianity that abound in his writings and his time – rendering his works as compelling a read to the nonbeliever as to the believer.

Session 1 of the 4-week program will offer an introduction to Dostoevsky's life and works.

Session 2 focus: Ivan Karamazov's character and his famous parable of the Grand Inquisitor.

Session 3 focus: the life and times of the book's religious elder, Father Zosima. **Session 4** focus: the book's here, Alyosha Karamazov.

Note: I recommend and will refer to the 1990 translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, published in hard-and paperback editions by Knopf, Borzoi, Everyman's Library, or Vintage Classics.

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