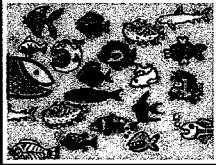


# Depth Perception

Commentary from Design For Ministry™

Reflections on consumerism and culture



Christine Roush

## Swimming Upstream

Chris Roush offers an intriguing look at the journey into and beyond consumerism.

For groups and individuals alike.

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## Swimming Upstream

The following is excerpted from Chris Roush's new book *Swimming Upstream*, Design Group Publishing and Dog-Eared Press, p.4.

How did my priorities get so far out of whack from what really matters to me and to God?

Psychologist Robert Frank asks, "If we would be happier and healthier working shorter hours and spending more time with our families, even though that would mean living in smaller houses and buying less expensive cars, why don't we just do it?" Wow! What a great question! The answer is hard to swallow. Most of us respond with *you go first*, and *I will if you will*. A few strong and noble types have latched on to downsizing and simplifying their lives but most of us find it a very hard step to

take.

Mr. Frank goes on to answer his own question with the word *context*. For Instance, when I served on a mission team to build a home in Tijuana and used a pickaxe and shovel to dig in 95-degree heat all day, the shower at the church where we stayed looked like heaven. That same shower - with the large spider hidden in the back corner, dank, dirty, cracked concrete floor, and old shower curtain - would never be considered heaven in my church in Oregon. Likewise, the beat up old Chevy van we used to travel around the sprawling city of Tijuana would raise a fair number of eyebrows when parked in front of my house in my neighborhood. Our ability to downsize and simplify is deeply connected to context. What fits right in when located

in one place, becomes sub-par in others.

Why is that? Why do we let others set the standards we are willing to live by? We are rugged individualists remember! We tamed the west and pulled ourselves up by our bootstraps. We are the masters of our own lives. So why give other people control over what we buy, how we dress, and what car we drive?

Most of us would probably say *because that is what we like too. That is what makes us happy. Those standards are our standards, and that is how we like to live.*