



## *I beg to differ . . .*

The picture to the left is of two Chinese characters, the first for "danger" and the second for "opportunity", (ostensibly) signifying "crisis" . . . at least according to many books and websites That is, a crisis is comprised of both danger and opportunity. I say "ostensibly" because several critics have pointed out the

problems with that association from a linguistic point of view ([one such can be found here](#)).

Whether the Chinese character for "crisis" is made up of the above two characters or not, and therefore, whether or not the combined meaning has some etymological merit, I agree with the underlying assertion of the argument -- that in crisis there is both danger and opportunity. And I was reminded of this earlier this week when I attended the press conference releasing DU's Strategic Issues Program for 2009: "Architecture for Immigration Reform".\* The chair, James Griesemer, talked about the panel's recognition that the issue of immigration is often framed as a problem to be solved, but that it could better be seen as an opportunity to be seized.

And what I appreciated about that characterization is that, rather than looking back, it looked forward. Sure, there are problems associated with immigration (or any pressing issue, whether personal or global), but we achieve little by remaining hobbled by "what brought us here". We have a situation -- any situation -- before us; we have but little real choice but to move forward. We should understand, to be sure, what brought us to this point. But the call -- I would say divine call -- is to proceed, to make things better. What have we learned? What are the circumstances that need NOW to be addressed? What changes shall we make?

The Strategic Issues Program report looks at those questions, to be sure. And it poses a number of concrete recommendations for consideration. But this process is not just a bureaucratic, or public policy, process. I believe it is a life-skills process, one that is grounded in hope, not despair. As the documentary title about the Civil Rights Movement implied, Keep Your "Eyes on the Prize".

There seems a strong tendency that, at the time of year when natural light wanes, people celebrate with light. Or, similarly, when so much vegetation dies back, or goes dormant, that which is evergreen is raised to cult status. We do not surrender to the darkness. We differ with the natural, or culturally-condoned, order. We light our candles, confident that we can move forward. May they burn brightly!

Blessings,

Gary

\* Coverage of the press conference, and a link to the full report can be found at the [DU Today website](#)