

Fall 2003

Koinonia

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and Skip Trudeau

KOINONIA

Fall 2003

Creating Curricular Cohesiveness in the Academy:
Infusing our Sector with Being

Learning Communities at Abilene Christian University:
Integrating Faith, Living, and Learning

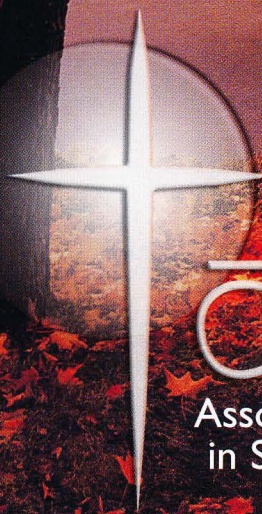
A Conversation with Ravi Zacharias

A Time to Sow, a Time to Reap

To Teach Consumers OR Students

Book Review: *Making the Most of College:
Students Speak Their Minds*

Reflections on New Professionals
and Mid-Level Professionals Retreats



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Be Happy and Do Good

Have you ever had a, "how did I miss that", experience? I did this summer as I was reading a very familiar passage of scripture and God opened my eyes and mind to a new insight that I had not thought of before. I was reading the Ecclesiastes chapter three passage about there being a time for everything under heaven, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, etcetera, etcetera on to the end of verse eight with a time for war and a time for peace. I typically stop here and reflect on how God is able to weave all of these seasons in our lives into a tapestry of life and faith to serve His purposes, but for some reason I read further than usual. As you are probably aware the passage continues on to talk about our toils as workmen, God's ability to make everything beautiful and the fact that even though God has set eternity in our hearts, we still can't fathom what He has done. Then came verse twelve that reads, "I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live."

I was struck by two thoughts. First, dear God, forgive me when I fail to be happy, or if you prefer joyful, content, etc., when I should be. Second, I wonder if we fail to realize the power of being happy or joyful, even in difficult circumstances. Applying this to our work, are we joyful as we serve students and our campuses? Does my countenance portray a sense of contentment and enjoyment about what I do or, do I, via my demeanor, bring those around me down?

Being a naturally inquisitive person I began to explore why it is better to be happy. A simple word search reveals that it is a reoccurring theme in scripture. There are dozens of references to happiness, joy, joyfulness, and contentment. Being a naturally selfish person I will admit that my initial thought was that it was better for me. In reality I think the message of the gospel is that it is better for those around me. If you read further in Ecclesiastes 3:13 you get the sense that the reason it is *better for me to be happy and do good* is so that others will find satisfaction in my toil as a gift from God. It is so simple, yet it is also very profound, would you rather be ministered to by a happy person or by someone who isn't? Which one do we respond to?

I am convinced that happiness, joy and contentment are attractive and contagious. This was brought home to me in a recent encounter I had with one of my daughters. She was describing to me her experience of galloping, for the first time, on one of our horses. It simply was a beautiful experience to see the radiance in her face and to hear the exhilaration in her voice.

Here is the power of being happy. For me who has had this experience, I wanted to experience it again. It was as if I was with her on that horse. If you had never had that experience, you would have wanted to. I pray that God will remind me of this in my work this year.

Another example of a group of people who realized that it is better to be happy and do good is the Wheaton College staff that planned and implemented the annual conference last June. It would have been a great conference because of all of their hard work. It was a much better conference because of their cheerful attitudes and giving spirits. Thank you Wheaton.

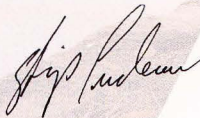
It isn't too early to begin praying for next year's conference and planning to attend. Join me in prayer for the John Brown University staff as they plan for our arrival in June 2004. I also want to encourage you to consider attendance at either the New Professionals or Mid Level Professionals Retreats at the JBU conference. Please be in prayer for these significant experiences as well.

One of the joys in working on the ACSD Executive Committee is working with this group of like-minded brothers and sisters. Please feel free to contact any of us with questions, suggestions or prayer requests. Here are the new and returning committee members for this year.

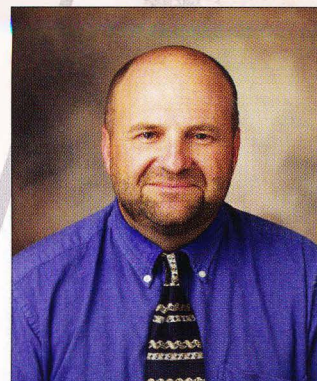
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Janice Trigg, Treasurer
Kim Case, *Koinonia* Editor

Well, in closing, remember to be happy and do the good work that God has called us to. It is better for us, but more importantly, it is better for those around us. It is how we impart God's gift to them.

God bless you all,



Skip Trudeau
ACSD President
Assoc. Dean of Students/
Director of Residence Life
Taylor University, Upland, IN



Skip Trudeau



PERSPECTIVE

Opening of the school year is an exciting occasion on our college campuses. Parents, new students, siblings, RAs, Orientation Leaders, Move-in Teams—campus is a buzz! (And doesn't it seem that the week of "move-in" is always the hottest time of the year?) All of our summer preparations are put to the test and everyone is on full alert to welcome both new and returning students to campus.

I've been directly involved with orientation on my campus for nine years. Overall I feel pretty good about the program we offer. The orientation staff attempts to meet a broad range of needs represented in each new class. There are loud interactive games for those who have high affiliation needs...quieter small group discussions for those who thrive in a more intimate setting...academic pieces that address the achievement needs of students. Orientation offers something for everyone! Yet no matter how many times we have been through orientation and the start of the academic year, it's painfully obvious that we are missing some of our students along the way. The quest to find new ideas that could potentially make our efforts better is on-going.

Where can we turn for insight in examining our approach to new students? This year a lot of my colleagues were sending sons and daughters to college for the first time—some to our campus, but many to other schools. As I have talked with them I discovered that a magical thing has happened—they have a fresh perspective on new students and the needs they bring with them to college. Now when students enter their classrooms or their offices on campus their approach is quite different—perhaps even more attentive to the individual needs that students bring with them.

I must admit that I have been annoyed by the unreasonable expectations of some parents as they move-in their son or daughter. It's easy to be blinded by

the ways we have always done things and easy to dismiss those ridiculous expectations. Somehow hearing feedback straight from a trusted parent-colleague has begun to challenge my perspective. These conversations have helped me see some holes in my program. *Essentially, all parents want to know that someone will be there to love and accept their child.*

I may never have that first-hand experience of sending a child to college, so I need to rely heavily on the perspective of the parents I know who have done so. When I encounter these new college student parents I try to ask them the following:

- How is your son/daughter adjusting to college?
- What has been most helpful?
- Were there particular parts of the orientation program that were impressive to you?
- What things did not go well?
- What did the institution do to put your mind at ease?

This feedback has become one of my most valuable resources in viewing my approach to students as they enter our campus.

What about you? Have you discovered ways to see your program, your ministry, your approach to working with college students through new eyes? This may be the year to look around and find that personal connection that will sharpen your perspective.

Thanks to each of the writers and contributors to this Fall 2003 issue of the *Koinonia*. Maybe you will be inspired by at least one idea that will give you new perspective on your work with college students.

*Kim Case, Koinonia Editor
Associate Dean for Student Programs
Northwestern College, Orange City, IA*

KOINONIA

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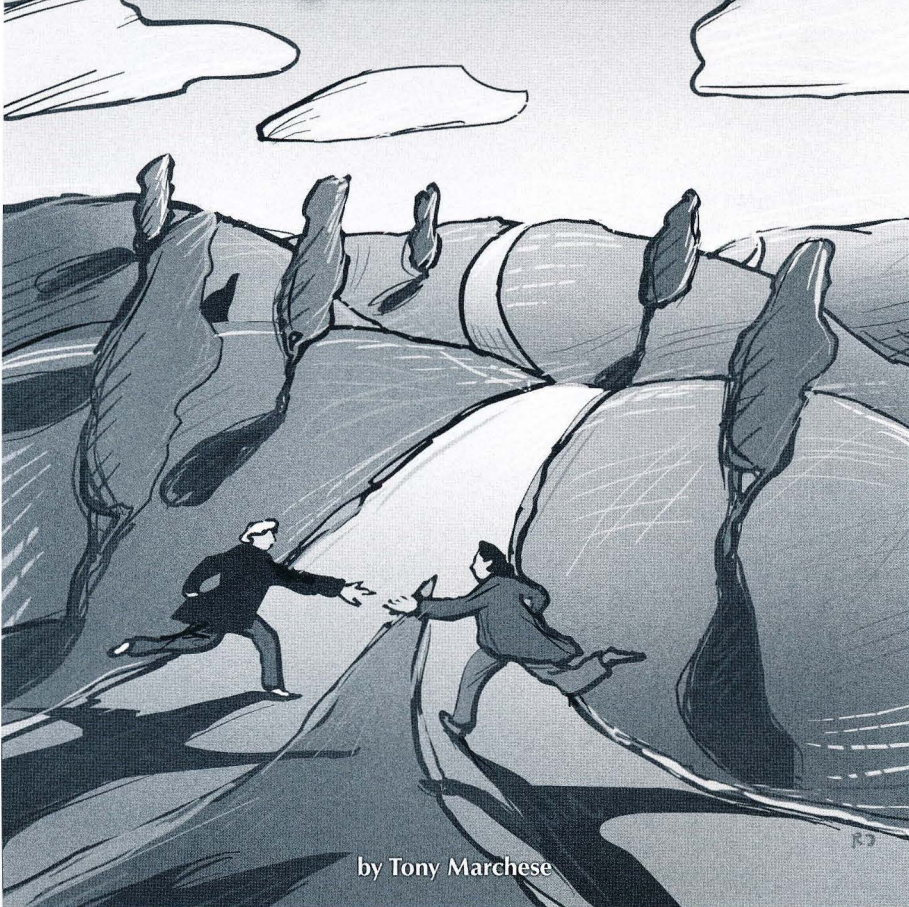
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EDITOR Kim Case
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Creating Curricular Cohesiveness in the Academy: Infusing our Sector with Being



by Tony Marchese

In a previous article, I alluded to the disparity or misunderstanding that often exists between faculty and co-curricular educators within the Academy. Student Affairs educators regularly feel disenfranchised from the larger community of professionals and at times, may even feel as though they are participating in an arduous solitary marathon, sensing the impossibility of winning, but at least hopeful of finishing. The race is taxing and seems unending. It demands a great deal of self-efficacy, resilience, patience, and faith to persevere. I, too, have at times felt the pressure and fatigue of the race and have recently questioned whether our methods of competition are partially misguided. It is we who sometimes feel charged with the infinite task of publicly legitimizing the

redeeming value of our program to the larger community of educators. We eloquently articulate the needs of college students accompanied by an elaborate plan of action that “partners with academics” to provide a tight, relevant, and effective curriculum for our students. Those student affairs personnel present in the room filled with faculty and other administrators anxiously sit on the edges of their seats, critically observing the non-verbal cues of the audience, hoping that the polemical nature of this vast undertaking will produce more student affairs advocates. While this conventional approach can certainly be fruitful and is necessary, perhaps a reversal in posture could be even more worthwhile by altering our “evangelical” methods of conversion and

instead seek a solution that is proactive and not primarily reactionary in nature. I suggest that it is not merely a reformation in practice that will produce a unified view of the value of co-curricular education across faculty and administrative lines, but instead an infusion of *being* (Gk. *Ontos*) into our perspective, thus coloring and shaping our beliefs and behavior and ultimately initiating a coalescence of both curricular horizons consummating in a paradigm that we can, without reservation call “holistic education.”

Today it is in vogue for every department from Physical Plant to First Year Programs to have a mission statement. While these statements can be helpful when used properly, they seldom are able to diminish the prevailing ontological breach between specific departmental objectives and those of the academy. A disconnectedness often exists between the institutional identity, purpose, and guiding values of the school at large and the mission and strategy of Student Affairs. Though we may be quick to point out functional inconsistencies of the “developmental” approach of Residence Life and the more “rules-based” style of Physical Plant and even chide about how they “simply don’t get it,” a similar predicament could quite possibly exist between our guiding objectives/strategies and those of Academics. Rather than instituting a mission statement and other programs that may be semi-divorced from Academics, we should expend greater efforts to translate the overarching, governing themes of our college into the Student Affairs context. To do so would encourage a healthy ontological continuum and eliminate our reactive posture. This infusion of *being* would enable us to function creatively and innovatively within the appropriate boundaries established by our institutions and develop a harmonious collaborative working environment.

Much of our professional training, heavily embedded within the social science tradition, stresses an analysis of the what of reality or of a phenomena (students). We then learn to apply appropriate developmental theories to further explain the phenomena and provide applicable solutions e.g., programming initiatives. Instead of considering only tactile reality, I propose that we take a step back and devote considerable attention to the substance of our thinking. What are the organizational metanarra-

tives of our sector? In what ways do they differ from those of other departments, especially Academics? How are they alike? Are we fighting on the same side, or are we opposing one another? Do we thoroughly understand the identity, purpose, and guiding values of the school? Have these themes of *being* been accurately communicated throughout our own organizational hierarchy? Are residence directors, counselors, and student activities professionals capable of identifying these important themes and equipped to translate them effectively into their own environments? Is it possible that

The being of our institution, the identity, the mission, and the guiding values must inform our doing in order to maintain and cultivate a “seamless curriculum.”

we have allowed the extensive demands placed upon our sector to consume much of our time and in effect, unconsciously ignored this vital component to organizational effectiveness?

I suggest that one solution to the curricular disconnectedness that exists lies not in the formation of more programs, not in attempting to recruit even more faculty to be present in residence halls, but in a reformation of our perspective. A reactionary posture that is regularly driven by changing circumstances will not achieve our desired outcome of a unified curriculum. Our behavior or doing must not be the sole proprietor of our *being*. In his book, *The Truth of Things: Liberal Arts and the Recovery of Reality*, Marion Montgomery says that, “At the heart of the assumption lies that continuing inherited assumption that doing effects being, an assumption that in effect divides and externalizes from human nature its own doing. But in truth, *doing*, in respect to human nature is always and necessarily a movement out of our being toward the fulfillment of that potential being intrinsic—the gift of discrete being itself: the *being* of this specific nature, this intellectual creature, this particular *person* named John or Mary or Maria...”

By applying this principle to our work in Student Affairs, a radical shift in our preliminary considerations may significantly alter the nature of and outcome of our initiatives. The being of our institution, the

identity, the mission, and the guiding values must inform our doing in order to maintain and cultivate a “seamless curriculum.” Whether we perceive the existence of a curricular rift in our school or not, any time invested in investigating and reflecting upon the relationship of the *being* of the organizational culture of your school to that of our sector will only enhance our effectiveness. We have a professional obligation to ensure that our activity in Student Affairs is of the same ontological fiber of the larger governing construct. This affinity should be apparent in our own mission

statements, strategic plans, hiring processes, assessments, programming, construction initiatives, personnel evaluations, etc.

I offer six suggestions to help begin this worthy endeavor.

- First, it would be helpful for the Chief Student Development Officer to arrange a meeting with either the president or provost to discuss (1) institutional identity, (2) purpose, and (3) guiding values. Ask the president specifically how he/she sees Student Affairs effectively realizing those themes in its activities.
- Secondly, critically review all formative/foundational documents of the school to obtain a comprehensive picture of where the school came from, where it is heading, what it values, and ultimately, why it exists. Notice any evolutionary patterns present in the literature. Understanding these patterns will assist in strategic planning.
- Thirdly, identify key players across the disciplines and within Student Affairs and organize a think tank that is charged with the task of exploring the ramifications of a “seamless curriculum.” Begin by discussing the *being* of your institution and encourage collaboration that helps to translate these ontological considerations into tangible objectives that will produce a greater degree of curricular homogeneity.

- Next, carefully compare the data collected to your existing program. Are there discrepancies? Are there obscurities?
- Next, as a staff, begin to translate the prevailing institutional themes of identity, purpose, and guiding values into your policies and procedures. What emerges may look entirely different from your past approach or quite similar. This infusion of “being” into your sector will only clarify professional expectations and provide us with identifiable goals by which to gauge our effectiveness.
- Lastly, by familiarizing ourselves with the institutional ethos and comparing our findings to our own sector and making the necessary changes, we are strategically poised to shape our co-curricular efforts to such an extent that we can transform our schools. When our creativity, innovativeness, and skills are fused with the *being* of our institution, we can function proactively and enjoy the freedom to birth something fresh and new that supports and enhances the vision of the larger organization and uniquely meets the needs of our own students.

The race is long. The race is hard and exhausting. Efforts made to align ourselves with the ontological structure of our college may cost us much: time, energy, even our pride. The outcome though is priceless. As we press on, wondering if we can withstand another mile, we look around and realize we are not running alone. We are running with our colleagues, who like us, are propelled forward by a noble cause, to challenge, motivate, and educate this generation of college students.

Tony Marchese is a Residence Education Coordinator at Messiah College, Grantham, PA. He has worked as a Director of Residential Life (Lee University, Cleveland, TN), Residence Director (Lee University), and as the Director of the King’s Institute (Monroe, MI). He holds a Master of Liberal Arts degree in Philosophy from Lee University and is currently completing the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership (Higher Education) at Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA.

Learning Communities at Abilene Christian University:

Integrating Faith, Living, and Learning

by Mimi Barnard, EdD

Introduction

One of the greatest rewards of teaching at Abilene Christian University is the emphasis placed on the integration of faith and learning, inside and outside the classroom. As faculty, we are encouraged in this effort. Learning community pedagogy offers enhanced opportunities for teaching and learning, for connecting knowledge, and for interaction between students and faculty.

Learning Communities: A Definition and Rationale

Confusion abounds regarding the definition of "learning community," and that is most likely due to the casual way the term is applied within the academy. Is a residence hall, an academic department, or an entire campus a "community of learners?" Is a classroom that incorporates collaborative learning a learning community? Does the faculty or the academy at large comprise a learning community? Though each of these examples does indeed connote the concept of community, none meets the strict standards of definition suggested by Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, and Smith (1990):

Learning communities, as we define them, purposefully restructure the cur-

riculum to link together courses or course work so that students find greater coherence in what they are learning as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty and fellow students. Advocates contend that learning communities can address some of the structural features of the modern university that undermine effective teaching and learning. Built on what is known about effective educational practice, learning communities are also usually associated with collaborative and active approaches to learning, some form of team teaching, and interdisciplinary themes.

Nancy Shapiro and Jodi Levine (1999) add to the ongoing discussion regarding this definition by contributing several basic characteristics they believe are common to learning community initiatives: learning communities organize students and faculty into smaller groups, encourage integration of the curriculum, help students establish academic and social support networks, provide a setting for students to be socialized to the expectations of college, bring faculty together in more meaningful ways, focus faculty and students on learning outcomes, provide a setting for community-based delivery of academic support programs, and offer a critical lens for examining the first-year experience. Several mod-

els of learning communities exist, including paired or clustered courses, freshman interest groups (FIGs), team-taught programs, and residence-based programs.

History of ACU Learning Communities

Learning communities began at ACU in the fall of 1997, after several faculty members attended a conference about this curricular reform pedagogy. Initially, seven learning communities were formed, and these had varying levels of success. Momentum for this initiative grew after the university implemented a First-Year Program, in which several programs were housed, including freshman seminar, advising, student orientation, and learning communities. During the first few months of the First-Year Program, Dr. Vincent Tinto, a renowned proponent of learning communities, visited the campus, and conversations about this pedagogy were energized; additionally, a faculty member was appointed director of learning communities.

Major-Driven Learning Communities

Currently, ACU offers 20 learning communities in which almost 40% of our approximately 1100 students are enrolled. Many

learning communities are major-driven, and all have freshman seminar as one of the classes. The Art, Design, and Faith learning community is made up of basic drawing, two-dimensional design, freshman seminar, and Bible; all art majors are automatically enrolled in this connected set of classes. Likewise, all theatre majors are automatically enrolled in The Transforming Presence: The Christian Theatre Artist, a learning community comprised of theatre workshop, freshman seminar, and Bible. The Bible class for these two learning communities (art and theatre) is a combined section, and the Bible professor reports that he enjoys the extraordinarily creative group projects that come from this particular student cohort. Other major-driven learning communities include Health Science through the Eyes of Faith, which is comprised of general biology, general chemistry, and freshman seminar; and Words, Images, and Power, which connects a freshman mass communication class, national government, introduction to art, and freshman seminar. This particular learning community has annual field trips to the Texas State Capitol and to the Kimball Museum in Ft. Worth.

Non-Majors Learning Communities

While offering major-driven learning community models is a benefit to students, it is also important to consider creating opportunities for students who may have other majors or who may be undeclared. The IdLC or "identity" learning community is comprised of freshman composition, freshman seminar, and freshman Bible, all required classes; three English sections connect to three freshman seminar sections, and all of these students make up one large Bible section. The curricular connections are informed by identity and student development theory. Another non-major specific model is the servant leader learning community, which connects freshman seminar and freshman Bible and has several sections.

Piloting a New Model: Living and Learning in Community

This year, ACU is taking the Bible-majors learning community, Imitating Jesus in Thought, Word, and Deed, to a new level. ACU's Residence Life Education and Housing is piloting a living and learning community in which Bible majors (who

are automatically enrolled in the learning community classes) were offered the opportunity to live on the same floor of a residence hall, Gardner Hall for women and Mabee Hall for men. To date, this has been a tremendous success. Vigorous debate regarding scriptural issues, late-night devotionals, and Bible studies—these are some of the reports that have already come from this group of students. The classes that these students take together include communications with religious emphasis, a freshman Bible (for majors), and freshman seminar.

What Faculty Say About Learning Communities

Bible faculty member: "I teach two large section Bible classes, one of which is part of a learning community. I wasn't too sure about this approach before, but now I am—because of how the students respond to each other and also because of their academic performance. Both sections of students did about the same on the first Bible exam, but on the subsequent exams, the learning community class did better and better than the other non-learning community class. I can only attribute this to the across-classroom connections that I saw among the students. With the non-learning community section, students spoke to others who sat right next to them, but with the learning community section, connections were made across the room. I later found out that these connections were also made in the residence halls, and that support and accountability developed among the students because they were together so often. It's a great way to teach, for students and for faculty."

Theatre faculty member: "Since our department auditions our incoming students before acceptance, we know exactly who our new freshmen will be. And since we do our own recruiting, we also have a pretty good idea of who is interested in becoming a major even if they were not accepted or did not audition. It's great to get all these people immediately collected into a theatre majors freshman seminar class. In addition, they begin developing a class identity by partaking in the beginning acting class and the Bible class that we share with art majors. It is important that freshman theatre majors have a theatre adviser right off the bat. Registering for classes is a very small part of the equation. We have an 80-page handbook that we have drafted for our majors. I

would not be possible to expect an adviser from another area to be familiar with all our guidelines and expectations."

What Students Say About Learning Communities

Female student: "After looking at the syllabus for this class, I was actually pretty overwhelmed at the requirements and amount of writing we'd have to do. However, since I was in the learning community, I felt really comfortable with my classmates and the classroom situation was more enjoyable."

Male student: "Through my experiences in the learning community, I have learned a lot about myself. Since with the learning community we have three classes with all the same classmates, we all got to know each other quite well. I was not afraid to open up in class, and become part of the class discussions. I also tended to form study groups in my spare time for exams for these classes more often, since we all tended to know each other so well."

Female minority student: "Walking into class the first day, I was somewhat uncomfortable. I had never been in a classroom in which I was a minority. I came from a predominantly Hispanic community, so being in a room in which I was 'different,' was a bit intimidating. It only took a few class periods to realize that I had much in common with many of the students. Being able to have a group of people with whom I have other classes was very comforting. In a university where I am a minority, it was great having a group of friends I know I will see and talk to practically every day."

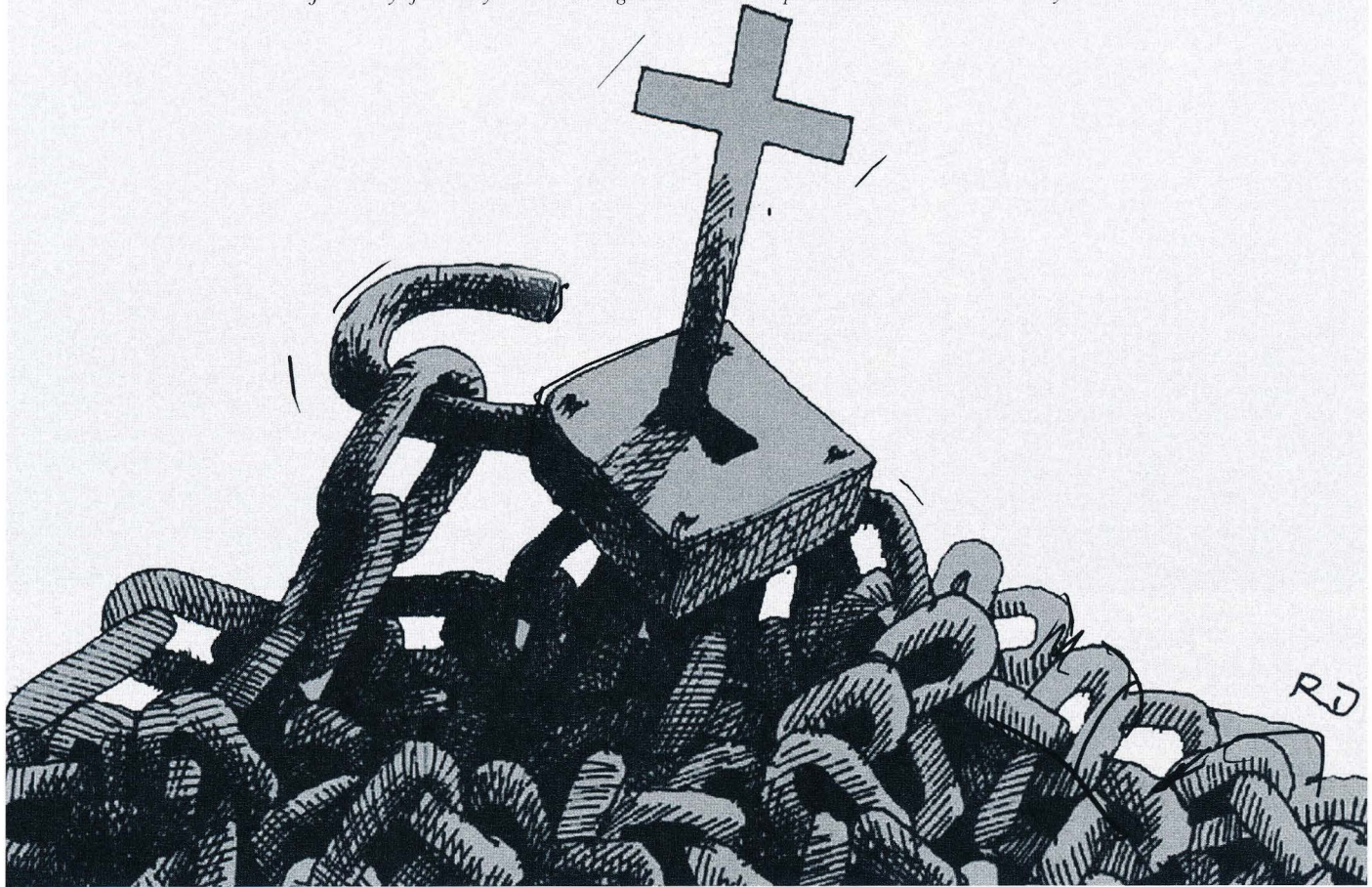
Concluding Comments

Learning communities are a great venue for the holistic development initiative that is permeating the academy, benefiting students academically, socially, and spiritually. This pedagogy has also proven to be an excellent setting for student affairs professionals to connect with faculty members, as many of our freshman seminar classes (we have 52 sections) are taught by campus life educators. Learn more about our program at www.acu.edu/fyp.

Mimi Barnard is Director of Residence Life Education and Housing and Assistant Professor of English at Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX.

A Conversation with Ravi Zacharias

Jim Dailey of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association spoke with Ravi Zacharias recently.



Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias has spoken about the Christian faith in more than 50 countries. In 1983, 1986 and 2000 he was a plenary speaker at Billy Graham's International Conferences for Evangelists, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In this interview he tells how the cross of Christ makes Christianity unique among the world's religions—and how the cross can change our lives.

Jim Dailey: *Recent events have focused a great deal of attention on world religions. How do adherents of other religions view Christianity?*

Ravi Zacharias: Every culture is basically an expression of its worldview and its religion. Theologian Paul Tillich said, "Religion is the substance of culture; culture is the form of religion."¹ In most countries religion has

worked itself into the fabric of the culture. Therefore, when people view Christianity, it is inescapable that they will view it within the framework of their historical experience.

In India, for example, many people find it impossible to separate Christianity from the days of the British rule. That was a national exposure to what they thought was the Christian faith. If you go to certain parts of the world where imperialism had its bad days, then Christianity is associated with imperialistic tendencies.

However, I think much change has occurred in recent times. Some of my good friends in India made a surprising comment to me on the heels of September 11. They said that they were watching America's reaction, and they recognized that they were witnessing a "nation with a Christian ethos" respond to a criminal act. I was impressed to hear how

many of these friends asserted that they were touched by America's patience and its measured response, as well as the number of Americans who attended church services. A prominent Islamic scholar in the United States commented that had such an attack happened in some Muslim countries, there would have been a violent reaction. When people of other faiths make comments such as these, I think it is a credit to the Christian faith.

JD: *How is the cross of Christ perceived by adherents of other religions?*

RZ: It varies. Muslims believe that Jesus did not actually die on the cross. They make that comment based on the Koran. It is strange because, also based on the Koran, they recognize that Jesus had the power to raise the dead, a power they do not attribute to Mohammad, so that's a conflicting response.

As a Christian apologist, I present a defense of the Christian faith in various settings around the globe. I have found that if you build a proper foundation for what the Christian faith is all about, as you lead up to the cross, the listeners sit in stunned silence. They immediately recognize that Christianity stands in stark contrast to everything that other worldviews affirm and assert. They know that true power is being expressed in the cross—restraint, mercy, forgiveness—all when the very One who is offering those things had the capacity to counter instead with force and with domination.

In contrast, consider the radicals in the Islamic movement, for whom power is always present, always political, always military and always violent. The cross will always be a stumbling block to them because it challenges the very core of their thinking. Jesus' way is completely different from theirs. In Jesus' way, winning comes through love and a change of heart.

So the way of the cross is in counter-perspective to every other belief system. The cross seems the way of defeat, but it is the means to victory. It shows meekness, yet it is the ultimate expression of strength. It brings everything that is of eternal value into current perspective.

JD: *In Hebrews, Jesus “endured the cross, despising the shame.”²² The cross was an object of derision and ridicule, yet wasn't this where Christ accomplished His most powerful work?*

RZ: The cross embodied a supreme moment of isolation and public humiliation. The ultimate isolation was the cross of Christ, when He was separated from His Father. But when He cried, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”²³ at the very moment that was probably the loneliest in His earthly sojourn here, He was at the center of His Father's will. In the eyes of humanity, the cross symbolized isolation, separation, expulsion and shame, and yet, in that moment, Jesus was paying the price for our sin, an act that was in the center of His Father's will.

JD: *Other religions emphasize man's attempt to reach God. How does the cross speak of God's divine initiative toward man?*

RZ: The Bible says that we are separated from God,⁴ and salvation does not depend

only on my efforts to get back to Him. This is the classic difference between the Christian faith and others. In Buddhism, you work and work your way into Nirvana, an ultimate enlightenment. In the Islamic faith, it's always “In Sha' Allah,” the will of Allah, if one reaches God. These systems of thought have no assured way of knowing where you stand with God.

The cross is where God's work of justification occurred. We are made just, not of our own selves, but by the work of Jesus Christ. Christ, being made sin for us,⁵ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.⁶ He who knew no sin would be made sin for us that we might be reconciled to God.⁷ We now have access to the Father because of the Son.⁸ In Ephesians we are reminded that those of us who were far off have now been brought near.⁹

The cross is all about the Person and work of Jesus Christ. He says to the onlookers, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?”¹⁰ Pilate says, “I find no fault in this man.”¹¹ The thief on the cross says, “This man hath done nothing amiss.”¹² This is the pure, impeccable Son of God, without sin, without blemish. He carries the work of the cross in His life and in His death. No one except Jesus Christ could have died on the cross to pay the penalty of sin. It would not have worked. And if Jesus had just come and lived a pure life without facing the penalty, there would not be the sufficient sacrifice for sin.

JD: *What is the principle of spiritual union and identification with Christ on the cross? How should it affect our habits and thoughts?*

RZ: The Apostle Paul talks in Galatians about the role of the Law and faith. It is only faith in the crucified Christ that saves us, not obedience to the Law. Paul goes on to say, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”¹³

It is through the empowering of the Holy Spirit that we are able to see this change. Once I understand that the cross was a personal provision for the sin of every man and every woman, I can identify with Christ in the fact that this is *my* Savior taking *my* guilt and *my* penalty. Then, when I confess my sin, receive Him and trust Him, the Bible says that He comes and dwells within me.

We hear so little of this indwelling today, so

little of “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”¹⁴ We have talked so much of accepting and receiving that we have forgotten the intimacy with which He comes and dwells within us. There is no other world religion or worldview that talks in those terms.

In Islam, Allah is seen as distant and totally transcendent. In Buddhism, there is no god. In the core of Hindu thinking, you are, in effect, made to become god. But in the Christian faith, there is the nearness of God. We do not go to the Temple anymore to worship; we take the temple with us. This body is the temple of the living God.¹⁵ There is communion; there is intimacy. We understand that this body is where God wishes to make His residence, and we see the sacredness of the human body.

You cannot take planes and ram them into buildings to kill people. People are individual temples in which God wishes to dwell. Osama bin Laden talks about bombs dropping into mosques, attempting to evoke the anger of the radicals. The teaching of Christ is very different from the philosophy of Mr. bin Laden. It is not the building that is sacred; it is the individual who is sacred. In every life he has killed, he has killed a temple of God.

JD: *How did you come to know Christ as your Savior?*

RZ: I came to know Christ at the age of 17 while living in New Delhi, India, where I was reared. My father worked for the Indian government. Growing up in India, I faced many struggles, not the least of which was academic competition in a highly stratified culture. One day I realized that I really didn't have any meaning in life. So, at the age of 17, I attempted to take my own life by poisoning myself.

Then, when I was recovering in a hospital, a friend brought me a New Testament. Because my body was dehydrated, I was receiving fluids and I could not hold the New Testament in my hands. The Scripture read to me was John 14, where Jesus said to His apostles, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”¹⁶

I knew that whatever else that Scripture meant, it meant more than physical life. I said, “This is the life that I have yearned for.” I made my commitment to Jesus Christ and have never looked back, except to remember how He rescued me and put a new song in my heart—new hungers, new desires, new

life. He put a new hunger into my heart, a hunger for God Himself. Prior to that I was more concerned about success, good grades, good jobs. I was constantly thinking about what others thought about me. God refocused my attention on Himself.

I knew that this was not some kind of motivational therapy but a new kind of relationship. There is a difference between a person who hungers for love and one who has found love. God put in my heart that great hunger for Him, even as I knew that in Him I had already begun the process of being filled. Before I heard those Scriptures I was completely empty. Now I had found through the Person of Christ how I could be filled.

JD: *What is it about the Gospel that excites you as you proclaim the Christian faith around the world?*

RZ: The more I read and understand about other worldviews and other world religions, the more magnificent Christ appears. I have a return invitation from a leading Muslim cleric in a strongly Muslim

country to do two open forums at a university. Absolutely nothing compares to the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So I go there with a thrill in my heart that the Christian message stands so magnificently and so beautifully before a world in need.

I pray for God to open the eyes and the hearts of people in all cultures. Among former Muslims who are now Christians, more than 90 percent of those with whom I have talked have come to know Christ through a dream or a vision. God used their own worldview through which to reveal Christ. We must be men and women of prayer, to pray for the salvation of people all over the world. As we wisely and gently present the Person and the work of Jesus Christ, many people will find Him irresistible.

This article was taken from DECISION magazine, March 2002; ©2002 Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, used by permission, all rights reserved.

Ravi Zacharias will be one of the keynote speakers at the upcoming ACS D Conference at John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AK, June 7-10, 2004.

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- ⁸ Ephesians 2:13,18.
- ⁹ Ephesians 2:13.
- ¹⁰ Cf. John 8:46.
- ¹¹ Luke 23:4.
- ¹² Luke 23:41.
- ¹³ Galatians 2:20.
- ¹⁴ Colossians 1:27.
- ¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:19.
- ¹⁶ John 14:19.

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Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds

by Richard J. Light
Reviewed by Damon Seacott

Dr. Richard J. Light is Professor in the Graduate School of Education and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Dr. Light's book is easy to read and offers great insight and encouragement to Student Development professionals and the faculty members we work together with each day. *Making the Most of College* is not written from a Christian perspective and it does not appear that any of Dr. Light's research was done at a Christian Liberal Arts institution. However, as we are all well aware of, beyond their faith commitment, our students are, for the most part, often not much different from their contemporaries.

In April, 2003, Spring Arbor University (SAU) invited Dr. Light to meet with our campus community. He presented the findings from his book, plus shared information and insights he has gained since his book has been published. Our community found Dr. Light to be refreshing and engaging as he taught us and had fellowship with us.

Making the Most of College gives the reader an appreciation for what's important to college students. For several years, over sixty faculty members from over twenty colleges and universities came together to determine how to answer questions, such as: "First, what choices can students themselves make to get the most out of college? Second, what are effective ways for faculty members and campus leaders to translate good intentions into practice" (2-3)? Through discussion and student interviews answers began to emerge. There are nine primary findings, some being "surprising". These include:

- Learning outside the classroom is "vital"
- A more highly structured classroom setting with quick feedback is desired
- Students are encouraged to collaborate when completing homework
- Mentoring relationships, small-group tutorials, small seminars are important
- Students are greatly impacted by learning from peers who come from different backgrounds
- Working together with faculty members and other students on substantive academic endeavors is rewarding

- Students value writing and want to be taught how to do it better
- Good advising is important
- Foreign language and literature courses are valued (7-11)

Dr. Light observes, "There is a clear lesson here. Students have thought a lot about what works well for them" (11).

Throughout *Making the Most of College* Dr. Light weaves student comments and insights into his research results. He takes the nine findings and develops each area in order to provide greater understanding of the information and how to respond to students. Student Development professionals will find support for many of the services, expectations, and programs we believe to be vital for our students.

The blending of the academic and co-curricular experiences is significantly supported by student response. "Those students who make connections between what goes on inside and outside the classroom report a more satisfying college experience" (14). Dr. Light goes on to explain, "In short, students who are able to integrate the in-class and the outside-of-class parts of their lives can reap great benefits" (22).

We can appreciate the importance of the total college experience, but too often we are confronted with the difficulty of helping students manage their time in and out of class. "The single biggest trouble with time use for nearly all students who struggle is their pattern of studying in a series of short bursts. Instead of spending sustained periods of time engaging with their coursework, they squeeze in twenty-five minutes between two classes" (37). Dr. Light provides suggestions to assist in allowing our students to succeed at managing their time wisely.

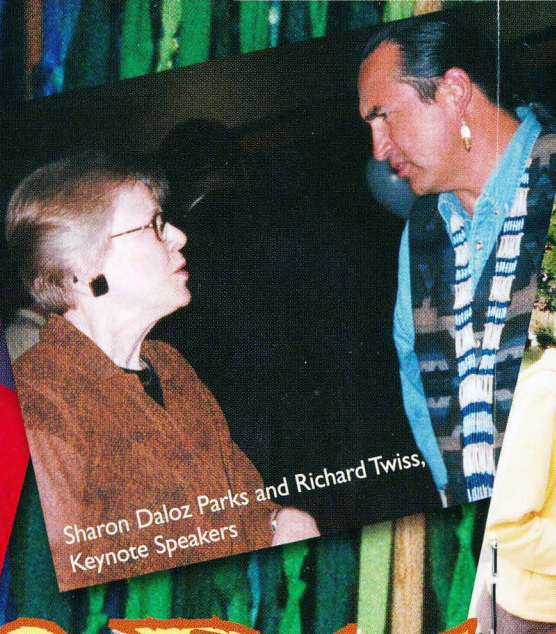
Establishing a healthy community environment is central to the mission of most Student Development departments. Residence Life is a key aspect of community for most of our campuses. Students have strong feelings

Continued on pg 14



Mid-Level Professionals Retreat

Ruth Bamford with Lori Holtmann, Ruth E. Bamford award recipient

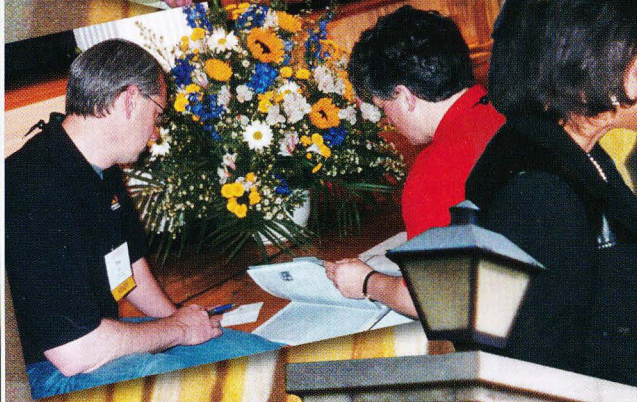


Sharon Daloz Parks and Richard Twiss, Keynote Speakers

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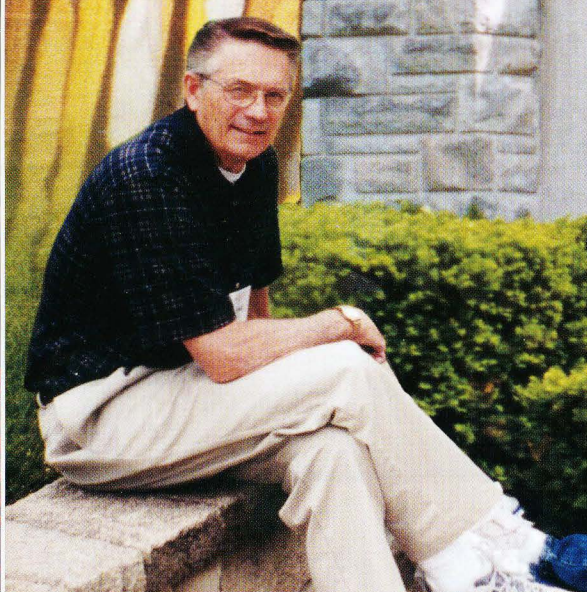
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Jeanne Porter, Keynote Speaker

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Cameron Stone & Fernando Ortega

about who they live with throughout their college experience. According to Dr. Light, "A conclusion seems clear. When given an opportunity to choose whom to live with as an upperclassman, a large fraction of undergraduates choose a diverse set of friends and roommates. They report that their choices are influenced in large measure by first-year experiences with their roommates and dormitory neighbors" (44).

One practice that Dr. Light shares in his book that may appeal to those of us who teach was the in-class assignment of the "one-minute paper". The professor who introduced this teaching tool suggests taking time just before the end of class to complete the assignment. "Then ask each student to take out a sheet of paper and write down, anonymously, brief answers to two questions:

1. What is the big point, the main idea, that you learned in class today?
2. What is the main unanswered question you leave class with today? What is the 'muddiest' point" (66)?

While at SAU, Dr. Light explained that since writing the book, he's realized and been given other ideas for what questions to ask at the end of the class period. Two questions that could be asked in place of the above mentioned questions are:

1. "How much time did you spend in preparing for class?"
2. "Is my speed in presenting in class OK?"

Academic advising is an area that is of great concern to both faculty and student development staff members. *Making the Most of College* supports the validity of this concern and offers a variety of advising opportunities that should be utilized. "Graduating seniors report that certain kinds of advising, often described as asking unexpected questions, were critical for their success" (81). Dr. Light explains the importance of giving significant support to our students, "Advisors play a critical role. They can ask a broad array of questions, and make a few suggestions, that can affect students in a profound and continuing way" (84).

Another topic addressed in Dr. Light's book is diversity, a topic that is continually at the forefront of Student Development. This chapter offers tremendous insights from students who have lived through frustrations, embarrassment, and tension. Fresh, discerning comments are offered on a subject that continues to be a

struggle for college campuses and our society in general. "Diversity can be great when the context is right. But without at least a minimal sharing of fundamental values and skills, the educational value of student diversity may well be negative" (143).

Each of the nine primary findings of Dr. Light's book is detailed in well-developed chapters. Even the areas that focus on specific academic concerns are valuable to Student Development professionals because the point-of-view of students is provided. This allows us to have the perspective of faculty members and a variety of students as we consider issues that impact the various aspects of the lives of our students.

Dr. Gayle D. Beebe, President of Spring Arbor University had the privilege of studying with Richard Light at Harvard. Dr. Beebe states, "I found Dr. Light's book riveting. What particularly impressed me is the scope and impact of his research – the number of schools participating, the ten year process, and the interview-based collection of information. This is a gold mine for anyone interested in maximizing the college education and experience of today's students." The idea for the "one-minute paper" is one particular item that Dr. Beebe has found to be helpful. Dr. Beebe commented, "No matter what I do or teach, I still find the questions remarkably helpful in making real-time corrections to a course or seminar."

Please take time to read Richard Light's *Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds*. You will appreciate the content, how the content is presented, and the anecdotal accounts by students. Dr. Light is an outstanding communicator; as a writer and as a speaker. As Christians in today's American culture it is wonderful to read a book, not specifically written to Christians, that offers such vital information in helping our students develop into people who are authentic, articulate, humble, and faithful.

Damon Seacott is Vice President for Student Development and Learning at Spring Arbor University, Spring Arbor, MI.

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MID-LEVEL PROFESSIONALS RETREAT

by Wayne Barnard

The first annual Mid-Level Professionals Retreat was held in conjunction with the 2003 ACSD Conference at Wheaton College. What began as a request from ACSD membership became a reality through the work and commitment of mentors and participants. The weekend was truly a remarkable partnership in learning and development. I want to personally thank my colleagues, Pam Jones from Belhaven College, Eileen Hulme from Baylor University, David Tilley from Houghton College, and Joe Brockinton from Asbury College for joining me in this new initiative. Working side by side with friends and colleagues is always an amazing blessing from the Lord; our collegial relationship really is *koinonia* (fellowship).

I also want to acknowledge the first graduating class of this new retreat. God provided an amazing group of mid-level professionals whose hearts and minds are fully engaged in the special work we call student development. As mentors we were reminded of the call of God in the hearts of many women and men of faith who devote their lives to the holistic development of students for the glory of God's Kingdom. So we thank and bless the life and work of Mark, Gina, Scott, Andrew, Mimi, David, Todd, Rick, Julie, Don, Jana, Melanie, and Jo. May God continue to grow in you the deep resolve to be faithful in your lives as women and men, as spouses and parents, as supervisors and those who are supervised, and especially as His vessels through whom He is doing a mighty work.

Your comments about our time together will serve as constant reminders of what the Lord was able to do in just a few hours:

"The most poignant memory for me from the weekend was the fellowship of the Spirit we shared, culminating in our Sunday morning worship. I was encouraged in my calling by the Lord's ministry through those who attended."

"Ten days out from our time together, I think back and would be bold enough to assert that this weekend was the most significant professional development since grad school. It is also the single most valuable investment any institution has made into my professional life."

"There was so much gained that I am still processing everything. It was a tremendous benefit to hear from the mentors who have many more years of experience, yet were down-to-earth and real about all aspects of their work. The whole retreat was challenging and inspiring. It made me re-examine why I do what I do. It was the best time of professional development I have had in my work in higher education."

"MLPR was both encouraging and challenging. When it ended, I was tired and renewed. Each mentor possessed great depth in the field, yet were vulnerable and accessible. For someone searching for a worthwhile professional investment of time and money, MLPR should be a high priority."

"I'm smiling as I remember our time together. For me, the experience was: intellectually stimulating, socially fulfilling, and spiritually meaningful. Thank you for investing in my life."

Wayne Barnard is Assistant Provost for Student Development and Dean of Campus Life at Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX.

A Time to Sow, a Time to Reap

by Robbie Castleman

Sometimes patience is the key to a fruitful harvest

Latche all over! There's just too much to do in twenty-four hours," Sarah moaned as she recounted the burdens of a long day to her husband. Bill meant well, but the helpful hints on time management and job consolidation that he shared brought less than a thrilled response.

"I just can't believe Mary is gone!" sighed Fred, a recent widower. "How will I ever make it without her?" Explaining the ease of microwaving or housekeeping shortcuts would hardly be an appropriate response to Fred's grief.

Information is usually not the first thing someone needs in dealing with life's trials and weariness. This is also true in evangelism. Evangelism is the process of bringing God's good news to tired and weary people, of offering the love of God to people whose hearts are broken.

Unfortunately, when opportunities to offer the good news arise, many Christians either say nothing or say something totally inappropriate.

Try this little test. Select the choice that best describes what your response would be if the following statement was leveled at you.

"Well, I don't understand how you can say 'God loves us' when the world is in such a mess!":

- A. Launch into an earnest sermonette on the existence of God.
- B. Mumble an ambivalent argument, clear your throat, and change the subject.
- C. Zero in on the real issue: the reality of original sin. Expound on Paul's understanding of the Fall, and end by quoting the "all fall short of God's glory" passage from Romans.
- D. Speak a little more slowly and loudly about the blessing of the justification, sanctification, and glorification of the

Christian. If there is time, expand on the idea of imputed righteousness. And use these terms so people realize how much they have to learn.

- E. Ask about "the mess." What does this person see as "the mess"? Where is this person's unhappiness with the messy world? Listen for hints or confessions of an inner, personal mess.
- F. Just keep listening as the person continues.

In training others for evangelism, I have found that most people acknowledge the need for sensitivity, listening skills, and seeking to apply the gospel to a person's need or hurt. "E" and "F" are both good choices.

However, I also have observed that many people really do "B" (mumble) or "D" (talk in religious language) because they feel inadequately prepared for engaging in apologetics ("C" or "A"). Considering that information is not what people usually look for first when they are hurting, vulnerable, or sharing feelings, defending the facts of faith can actually kill the conversation. A monologue that makes the evangelist feel good may be harmful to the spiritual health of another. In the distrustful and skeptical hearts of people today, religious reasoning is rarely the starting point of a spiritual journey.

Grace or Truth

I heard a Christian physics professor defend Christianity on a state university campus a few years ago. He has been nominated for the Nobel Prize more than once, has pages of academic accolades, and became a Christian well into his faculty career. After listening to his brilliant multi-point presentation of why he found Christianity credible, I spoke to this professor and his wife. I asked him what first got him to consider the Christian faith. His answer was very different from what he had shared that night.

His journey to faith began after the death of his child. He noticed that his wife's grief began to give way to some hope and healing that he could not understand nor experience. When he asked her about it, she confessed that she had been attending a Bible study with friends and had become a Christian. He was surprised, intrigued, and open to anything that would comfort his pain and emptiness. He, too, began to

share his grief within this new circle of friends. They opened their hearts and the Scriptures to this professor and his wife.

He felt free to ask questions, seek the truth of the Christian faith, express doubts, and finally trust the Lord, because his feelings of grief were accepted and shared. Empathy preceded answers. His evangelists were first listeners.

After the professor finished, I thanked him for this personal story of faith. And I suggested that this part of his life's story be included in what he shared with others about the Christian faith. I encouraged him to remember that grace opened the door of truth for him. This is true in the hearts and lives of most people who need to hear the gospel.

Jesus is the perfect Evangelist. He is full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14). His grace opened the door of truth to many in the Scriptures. He refused to cast a stone and then told a woman to "sin no more" (Jn. 8:1-11). He drew crowds by healing and then preached the Kingdom message. Jesus began His most famous sermon with the grace of the Beatitudes before the truth commands of righteousness (Matthew 5-7). Grace moved the Savior close to people. Truth then moved them close to Him. This is the model of evangelism we need to imitate in our world today.

Being "full of grace and truth" is not easy for any of us. Our problem is that we are usually more full of one than the other. Either we are full of truth and answer questions that haven't been asked, preach to people who just wanted to talk, and reduce the gospel to an outline of facts, or we are so full of grace that people can't begin to see or hear the radical distinction the truth of the gospel demands in our lives.

The evangelist who takes time for grace believes the Lord has already been at work in another person's life. This trust is more important than the evangelist's own presentation, knowledge, or training. Grace helps us wait and listen to a person until we hear the question behind the comment, feel the hurt under the protest, or see the place where faith can grow.

Evangelism that speaks truth at the right time comes from the confidence of the evangelist in the power of the gospel alone to save (Ro. 1:16). The central issues of the gospel are the person, death, and resurrec-

tion of Jesus Christ. Our confidence in His work must overwhelm any tendency we have to make the "foolishness" of the gospel sound "wise" (1 Cor. 1:18-25).

The ultimate good news is found in a person's friendship with Jesus. Our friendship of grace creates a place for these two friends to meet.

With Jesus as our model, how do grace and truth look as we encounter people in the secular world today? They look a lot more like a personal relationship than a religious program. Traditional evangelism methods like booklet gospel presentations, mass appeal events, or even door-to-door campaigns are only appropriate for a very small percentage of seekers. Many people today lack the basic foundational beliefs (the existence of God, the idea of sin) that make this type of approach effective.

Knowing the Soil

Well-prepared "good soil" is hard to find in today's workplace, college campus, or neighbor's living room. We have to accept the need for "weed-killing," "rock-moving," and "ground-plowing" to prepare a place for the seed of the Word to grow. We also have to pray to keep the stealing "birds" away from the sown seed.

This, of course, is a summary of Jesus' parable and teaching in Lk. 8:4-15. Both good agriculture and good evangelism require patience for the harvest.

In *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?* James F. Engel, a seasoned expert in evangelism, offers a summary of the process of a person's heart becoming good soil for the seed of the Word. His "Engel Scale" helps chart an individual's progress in becoming a Christian. It can help us be patient and insightful during the process of planting the seed-truth of the Word.

Part of evangelism is being close enough to others to see the reality of God's *work of creating faith* (Eph. 2:8-9). The Engel Scale helps us gain an understanding of where a person might be in their journey of faith. This concept can help us pray for others appropriately. It can help us be prepared for speaking a good word at the right time (Prov. 15:23).

Consider an individual's movement through the Engel Scale. Think of friends, relatives, co-workers, neighbors, students,

and others who might be near a place on this scale. How does a place on the scale affect how to pray for a particular person? Or how to socialize with an individual? Or how to relate the gospel to them in terms they can appreciate?

I live in a part of the Bible Belt, and much of the evangelism I do begins with people who are aware of the gospel's basic facts, but have little understanding of its implications. Jesus can be on a car's bumper sticker but have nothing to do with the driver's business or family life. Balancing grace and truth when dealing with issues of lifestyle and the lordship of Christ requires much prayer and the development of a trusting friendship.

I have known Tom for two years. This lonely student has moved from having no initial awareness, and then genuine interest in the faith. This process happened by living with three Christian guys in the same apartment and being drawn gently but intentionally into their world. Roommates became friends and a whole new community of friends has resulted.

Tom now grasps the implications of the gospel, and this has made him reluctant to surrender his heart. Even though he now attends church regularly and is faithful in attending a seeker's Bible study (he has a positive attitude to the gospel), Tom has yet to yield to the Lord Jesus. Looking at this scale has given me a hint of why that he's "just not ready." It could be that he has yet to experience an awareness of a deep personal need.

Being Patient

Being aware of the sequence reflected in the Engel Scale has given me new patience with this student in the process of his faith journey. It has also given me a better focus in my prayers for him.

Knowing how to pray for someone can help us be faithful in our opportunities for friendship and witness. And it can keep us patient through the process so that people don't become projects and evangelism doesn't become a program with a "success or failure" end. God is faithful. Scripture reassures us that no one who belongs to the Father will be lost (John 17), and that those who belong to Him have been known by Him since before the foundations of the world (Ephesians 1)! He seeks

the lost (Luke 15), and desires that none perish (Jn. 3:16, 10:28).

So we are not alone in evangelism. God goes before us to help prepare the good soil for His own Word. God's Word uses the imagery of the harvest to reflect His faithfulness when results are unseen for a time.

"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty" (Is. 55:10-11).

No one can predict the time of another's journey "out of darkness and into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). But it is a special joy to see some come to full harvest in a single season. Peter, a Chinese student, began "off the scale," without any openness to the supernatural. In his worldview the universe is entirely material; "what you see is what there is." No creator, nothing beyond the natural world, no room for spiritual life in the world of the heart.

I asked Peter a lot of questions to help him examine the reality of his experience of life. It did not verify what he assumed was truth.

We began with the idea of the moral fabric of the universe: What makes something good or evil? If the system determines itself, why are some things right or wrong? By the work of grace, some home-cooked meals, a Chinese-language Bible, and praying friends the universe began to open. The possibility of "something more" existing beyond the material began to take this computer scientist to the throne of grace and truth.

Peter's conversion took less than a year. Some people start two steps away and it takes a lifetime.

Hearing the Same Words

I remember an older woman in our church who came to a workshop I gave on evangelism. The class was learning how to share the gospel in non-religious terms. I had made the point that it is important for people to hear the good news in the language of real life. Many people just hear the words and they sound like the same words they have heard all of their lives, so they don't respond because they don't think they hear anything new.

I went on to say, "People can sit in church most of their lives and never really know Jesus. Well, sitting in a garage doesn't make you a car. Sitting in church doesn't make someone a Christian." A short time later, during a practice session, Beth raised her hand for help and said, "Robbie, I just discovered something. I'm like a person in the garage thinking they are a car. I don't believe I have ever really become a Christian. What should I do?"

I asked her what made her come to this conclusion. As she talked, she clearly expressed her need to yield her life to Jesus Christ. She had been challenged and decided to act. Two years later this dear woman dies of a painful cancer without complaint or fear. More than a few people heard her testimony of coming to Jesus after years in "the garage."

Others begin by needing a positive attitude toward the gospel. Cultish legalism wounds people with guilt and a lack of grace. Or religion can be used as a weapon when dysfunctional family dynamics make the "gospel" anything but "good news." These wounded seekers need time to discern the difference between what they have experienced and the true gospel. Seeing the difference between religion and a relationship with a loving God can begin with friends who are willing just to have fun together. Learning to trust people, let alone God, can take some time. Learning to be trustworthy in a friendship can be the very best mark of an evangelist to the spiritually wounded and lost.

Listening and asking questions can be the grace of the Gospel's germination in the good soil of a person's heart. Speaking the truth in love and in the language of everyday life lets the power of the gospel bring the seed to full flower. Our confidence in God's unseen work can help make us patient and prayerful. Gratitude for our own salvation can make us faithful.

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Dr. Robbie Castleman is Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies and Theology at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, AK. She will be a featured speaker at the ACSD Conference at John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AK, June 7-10, 2004.

Thinking Theologically: To Teach Consumers OR Students

by Todd C. Ream

I pay . . .” As student affairs professionals, the majority of us have likely worked with at least one student that prefaced his or her argument with this assertion. The underlying assumption is that one’s ability to pay a particular fee, tuition, room, board, etc., establishes a contract between the student and various agents of the college. Numerous editorials have seized upon this thought process on the part of our students making the argument that our students are part of a larger narcissistic and self-interested generation. Such editorials often go on to claim that the demands of this generation of students are eroding the very standards upon which institutions of higher learning were established. By contrast, I would like to suggest that institutions of higher education have shifted the nature of the relationship they share with students from one which is covenantal to one which is contractual. As a result, the usage of assertions such as “I pay” may simply be a reflection of the level of our students’ sensitivity to the informal expectations of the institutions in which they find themselves.

Informal expectations exist in ways similar to what is often referred to as the hidden curriculum. On one level, students examine documents such as academic catalogs and student handbooks to learn of formal expectations. On another level, students learn of informal expectations by virtue of the experiences they share with individuals such as student affairs professionals. A near seamless relationship might exist between formal and informal expectations at certain colleges and universities. However, higher education scholars tell us that most of our institutions are defined by gaps of varying size between these two types of expectations. In addition, the courts have recognized such gaps by placing more stock in informal expectations than in formal expectations as being definitive of the official practices of a particular institution.

While assertions such as “I pay” fail to be recognized by formal expectations beyond the standard fee schedule, they invariably find a place in informal expectations. Students thus learn by virtue of their experiences that the contractual nature of the “I pay” assertion establishes credible rationale from which to make an argument.

For Christian student affairs professionals, one way we can learn to see the presence of the contractual rationale in our decision making is to compare it with the covenantal rationale we learn through our reflective practice of common worship—particularly through the Lord’s Supper. The contractual rationale is premised upon two independent and individual parties coming together under an arrangement pertaining to an exchange for a service such as an education for a particular price. Through the Lord’s Supper, we learn that our well-being as individuals is inextricably tied to God but also to one another as members of the body of Christ. We are all bearers of the created image of God and by our Christian profession of faith we seek to appreciate this presence in one another. A covenantal rationale for education is driven by the nature in which students join with individuals such as student affairs professionals in a mutual acceptance of obligations. In simple terms, student affairs professionals are to fulfill their obligation, in partnership with their faculty colleagues, to teach. Students are obliged to fulfill their obligation to learn.

The problem with the contractual rationale in relation to education is that it affords a student with the opportunity to unknowingly limit his or her identity to that of a mere consumer. Such a limitation potentially leads to opportunities for student affairs professionals to work with students in a term-related or, even worse, unjust manner. For example, while the covenantal rationale is binding and

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remains in place long after students graduate and leave their alma mater, the contractual rationale ceases to exist when the terms related to the payment and the delivery of services expire. In addition, while the covenantal model binds us as student affairs professionals to our students regardless of their ability to pay, the contractual model can lead to unjust forms of differentiation between students based upon the ability of those students to pay.

Invariably, payments need to be made for fees such as tuition, room, and board in order for a particular college or university to persist. However, the opportunity for students to informally learn the language of "I pay" and to take on the identity of a consumer is arguably more dangerous to the student than to any particular college or university. By contrast, the covenantal rationale we learn through reflective practices such as the Lord's Supper forms within us the habits that lead us to ask not only more of our students but also more of ourselves. Our identity as student affairs professionals and their identity as students are inextricably tied together by virtue of the common origin we all share by being created in the image of God.

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For Further Reading

Bok, Derek, *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

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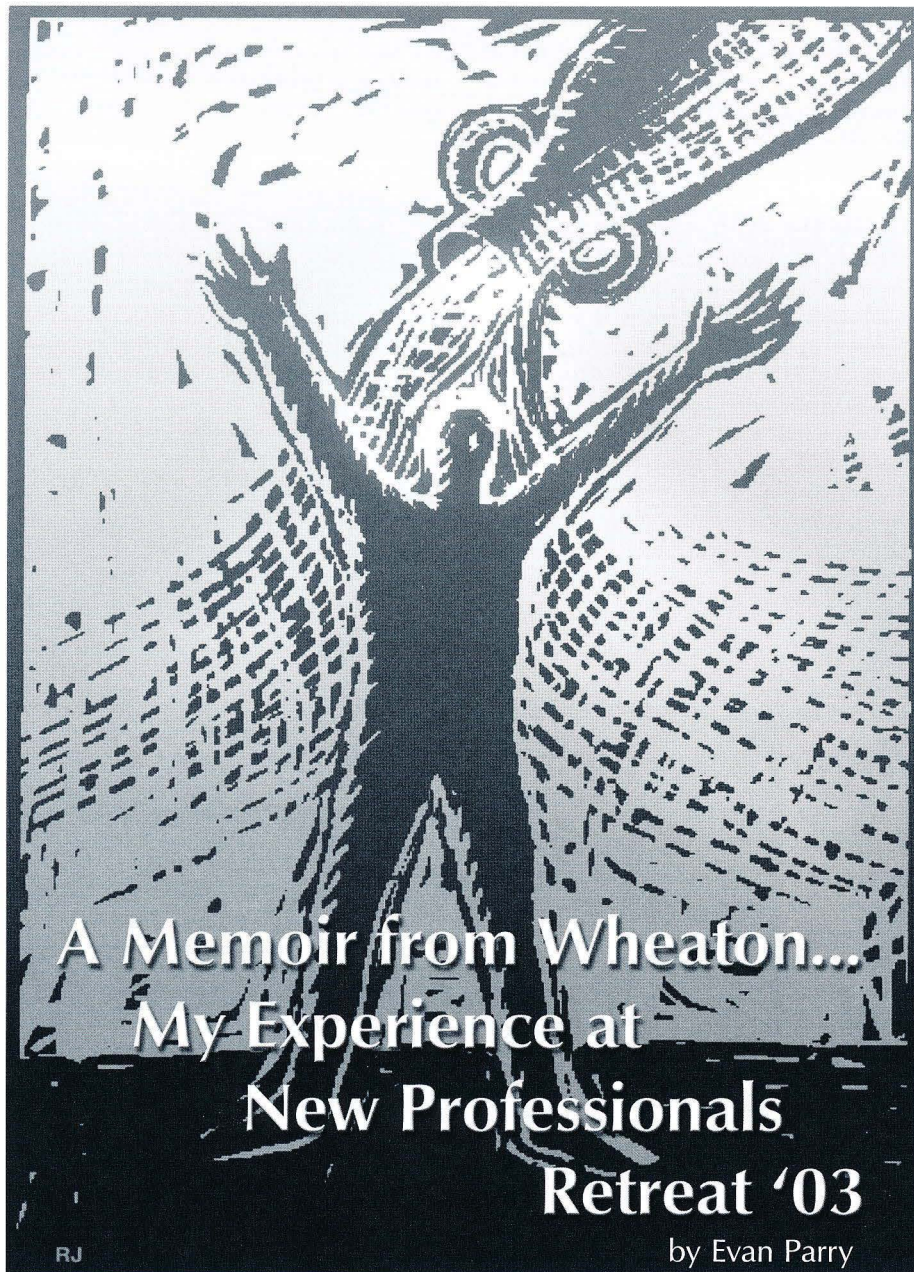
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A Memoir from Wheaton... My Experience at New Professionals Retreat '03

by Evan Parry

As I look back at my experiences thus far as a “new professional” in college student affairs, I cannot help but reminisce about the recent New Professionals Retreat at Wheaton College, and the need that it met for my calling concerning my life’s vocation. While my initial expectations were set on developing a greater understanding of the field of student development as a whole, and also to confirm my calling as a leader in this specific capacity on a college campus, I was intensely driven to seek out something even deeper.


While several areas of student affairs were helpful in my career excursion, including: *practical small group learning and interaction, historical information about student affairs, and its role now; more clearly defining my supervisory style, and pursuing a greater understanding of the unwritten and unspoken rules of professionalism*, my most valuable gift that I received from my experience was much more difficult to uncover. In fact, the inspiration and focus of writing this article did not arrive in my mind until several days after the conference had ceased. What is this gift that I attained from this experience, you ask? SIGNIFICANCE. An encom-

passing affirmation of significance concerning the ministry God has blessed me with, by way of fellowship, networking, and renewing my focus concerning my identity as a servant of Christ; this came to my realization after my time at New Professionals Retreat 2003.

Although we as servants of Christ come together to celebrate community and renew our strength for the calling to invest our time and energy in the lives of college students all over the country, we truly do not have anything of any value without the significance that derives from so many different directions in life; the greatest of which, being our *identity in Christ*. Renown philosopher and theologian, Blaise Pascal, offers a great perspective concerning this subject, whereby one receives meaning and purpose through our divine identity: “Not only do we know God by Jesus Christ alone, but we know ourselves only by Jesus Christ. We know life and death only through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ, we do not know what is our life, nor our death, nor God, nor ourselves.” In the arena of student affairs, I believe one of the main focuses of our calling is to provide, and be, resources for students to develop a sound identity in Christ during these critical years of great influence, which include providing students with a clear and concise description of what it means to be a positive contributor to society by way of our selflessness. As the apostle John writes, “The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life,” which is obviously instructing us to relinquish the right to ourselves, whereby we are in harmony with our Creator’s wishes, but also on the most profitable path concerning our own growth; this became even more conscious after reuniting with many individuals who shaped my thinking in college, like my resident director, newly acquired friends, and executive committee leaders, of whom were all full of grace and knowledge.

Thus, brings me to my next point; significance in *fellowship*. While we were all in the mood to unwind and hit the town after insightful small group sessions and thought-provoking seminars with “seasoned professionals,” one cannot help but think that our own experiences were also shared by hundreds of others before us

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The ACSD 2003-2004 Web Placement Site will again include both candidates seeking positions and institutions with positions available. Placement services are available only to current ACSD members prior to the annual ACSD conference in June.

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who came to reaffirm why they invest their lives in such an atypical manner year after year. These experiences include: *ardent conversations after dinner about our struggles and victories in life, to the early morning walk's to Starbucks with our NPR leaders who filled our minds full of hope and insight for the future about our line of work. And the late night boisterousness of playing games in the infamous Crusader Room with the very same individuals we just spent every waking moment with, to the afternoon rendezvous' at lunch with small group members who make you feel like you have all been friends since grade school. I believe the fellowship with fellow RDs, Associate Deans, and those who are eons beyond where many of us are as student affairs professionals, subtly gave us all gifts of truth that often do not feel tangible, but*

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are always available to us when the presence of God is among a group of people who desire growth in order to effectively contribute to someone else's life; I perceive this as an act of bestowing significance upon someone. This was a piece of the gift I received at NPR.

Yet another aspect of this epiphany of significance stems from the idea of networking. Although networking could be considered a direct component of fellowship in some instances, I perceive networking to be its own separate entity in this circumstance. As a new professional in the field of student development my understanding of networking was quite limited; however, after my experience at the New Professionals Retreat, my comprehension of networking expanded beyond my few initial thoughts. These included: *a set of contacts or connections within my profession, an association with fellow colleagues, and a system of professionals working within the same arena of vocation.* Nevertheless, while these facets are all evident concerning networking, I eventually discovered that these foundational truths were being built upon through the significance that was being revealed through others. Such as, many meaningful observations of leaders and colleagues involved with the

Retreat: being able to observe a simply amazing model of Christian humility by Mr. Dameon Seacott, a delightful glimpse at future executive officers at their prospective institutions by Ms. Kristy Hanson, Mr. Dusty Abshire, and Ms. Mindy Cacopardo, by an invaluable lesson about the need for more individuals to invest in a career in student development by Mr. Barry Loy, a useful description of a true missionary at a state university by Mr. Luke Jones, and also the gracious and effective leadership by Martha Smith, Linda Cummins, Jim Ferreira, and Nicole Hoelfle. Thank you. Truly, you are all more than a set of contacts or fellow colleagues within the profession; you are agents of significance.

So I leave you with the words of Dr. Howard Hendricks, "in the search of good teachers (as we are of life and learning),

always look for "FAT" people. Faithful. Available. Teachable." Let us strive to be "FAT," plump enough to regularly bestow a gift of significance to all students, faculty, and above all, the amazing God we serve. Remember, we are not just making a difference, but we are contributing to the greater good of a legacy of love that Christ began with His sacrifice at Calvary. For we can only discover our true significance from another, being Jesus Christ, or in the vessels that he lives inside, which are those people who touched my life at this year's New Professionals Retreat.

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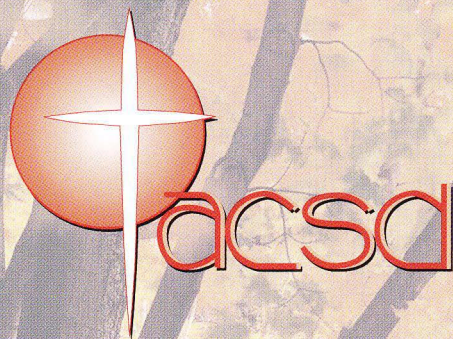
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