

Survivors: A Christian Business Faculty Cloud of Witnesses
PANEL DISCUSSION

Monty L. Lynn, Ken Armstrong, Jack A. Griggs, Tom Head, David Johnson, Philip V. Lewis, Richard S. Lytle, N. Lamar Reinsch, Lisa K. Surdyk

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Many professors survive a long tenure of teaching, but anecdotal evidence suggests that too many fail to flourish and bloom through their years of service. This session will be a panel discussion of educator panelists from seven institutions who have shot the rapids of Christian education for at least a decade, and who not only stayed afloat, but—even after occasionally capsizing—have continued growing in multiple arenas of their life's work.

Survivors: A Christian Business Faculty Cloud of Witnesses

Panel Discussion

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Abstract

Christian business education offers a challenging call. It requires teaching and integrating a diversity of disciplines, advising and mentoring students, contributing to scholarly knowledge, staying current in a constantly-changing global economy, and juggling service duties. Christian colleges typically work their faculty hard and often offer relatively few tangible rewards.

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A Worst-Case Scenario

“I can't find the time to prepare for class, much less keep up with global financial markets, e-commerce, and the latest mergers. I'm out of date and out of touch. So I reuse old notes that I know are dated or uninspiring. I'm hoping for an break over the next hill that will allow me to refresh and update.

My 9:00 seemed to enjoy class today but heads on desks and dead silence suggest that my 10:00 class found it ho-hum at best. Even when I exert effort to be engaging and informative, few students will meet me half way. Some of my students are downright disrespectful. Many students whine about being challenged. Most are under-prepared in math and their writing is atrocious. They just don't invest themselves in their academic work and their remedial needs lower the quality of learning for everyone. Where's the work ethic?!

I already waste a lot of time on technology that regularly craters, leaving me stranded in my office or in the classroom. I really need to update my dusty, minimalist web page. An even larger chunk of my time is spent in university service (a.k.a. committee meetings). Some of it is productive time, and some necessary I guess. But it seems like all I do is go from one meeting to another. Student advising requires another chunk of time. Then there are my kids at home, my spouse, the church needs things done, and not-for-profits are always looking for pro bono service. It's next to impossible to find those rare, high quality faculty members to share the load with us.

As the years silently pass, a generational gulf widens between me and my students. My life and theirs is like a Venn diagram, with my circle migrating East and theirs, West. The liberal arts faculty would prefer that we both migrate off the page. Upper administration seems to be migrating randomly.

I would make a move elsewhere but the heavy service and teaching expectations coupled with my age have eroded my career mobility—I'm honestly trapped. My college has the

word 'Christian' stated in our mission but there are many times when it does not act very Christ-like. I came into this job with great idealism. I don't like the bitter and tired cynic I've become."

Is this description extreme? Hopefully the answer is "yes!" But many business faculty members in Christian colleges may resonate with some elements of it. And while the above description is whiny, it also presents some realities, according to research in higher education.

Personal responses to these challenges will be made by panelists in the session. But to set the stage, we will briefly unpack some of the issues here with a composite of anecdotes, research, and observations. While it might be possible to construct a model of pressures, resources, and faculty burnout, our interest is merely in setting a backdrop for the panel discussion.

Evidence, Anecdotal and Systematic

Influences and Pressures

Business faculty at Christian colleges typically face a number of challenges. There are the standard pressures that most professors face, including: Ever-changing complex disciplines; under-prepared students; high quality and quantity expectations in teaching, service, and advising; family, church, and community responsibilities; ever evolving classroom technology; and for some, increasing research and professional development expectations. Although professors are widely respected, the multi-faceted roles their jobs require increase role conflict and role ambiguity which may contribute to depersonalization and a lower sense of accomplishment (Bess, 1998; Lowenstein, 1991; Lowman, 1993; Pretorius, 1994).

Within a typical professor's teaching duties are many subtle interpersonal challenges. For example, students may differ from faculty in how they define course and degree goals. If unresolved, these differences may lead to resistance of faculty against students and students against faculty. Additionally, faculty often receive ambiguous feedback. In class, they continually have to interpret signals differentiating those students who are "engaged, enthusiastic, or excited about learning and those who are not. Does that yawn mean that the student is bored, tired, or not getting enough oxygen?" (Gates, 2000, p. 481).

Faculty at Christian colleges are often called upon to expand their roles (e.g., Schroeder, 1994). Because of the Christian nature of the institution, and its tuition-driven financing, the institution may hold the bar high on the quality and quantity of service expectations. Students may come to expect more service from faculty for the same reasons. Even in the absence of these pressures, Christian faculty often hold themselves to high work standards and a vision of teaching and mentoring students for effective Christian service and leadership. Some Christian college professors may equate saying "no" to service requests as shirking their calling and escalating a colleague's work load. Students who are under-prepared may have accumulated educational deficits over several years and may need hours of tutoring and advising. Some students may be disruptive and disrespectful (Pitts, White & Harrison, 1999).

Monetary compensation for the Christian college business professor often trails the salary and benefits of business faculty elsewhere and of business professionals. In not too many years, or in some cases months or immediately, students entering the marketplace may be paid more than what their professors' earn. Yet, embedded in Christian education cultures are often values such as excellence and self-sacrifice, self-denial and forgiveness, cooperation, and a healthy (or unhealthy) dose of the Protestant work ethic. Doctorally qualified business faculty are often difficult to find and hire due to the declining pool of doctorates produced and the six-figure salaries currently offered to them outside of Christian higher education (Mangan, 2001).

The spiritual milieu of a Christian institution often provide a warm and collegial environment for faculty members. But there are down sides too. Religious devotion may take on an obligatory cast. The dividing line between church and employer often blur and the politics of work may seep into relationships with faculty and administrators who attend the same local congregation. College politics among Christians can be demoralizing and little support may be felt from liberal arts faculties who may resent the perceived favored-status afforded to "trade school teachers" who may earn higher incomes than others on campus (CUPA-HR, 2001) and who are perceived as promoting shallow careerism and greed.

Female and ethnic minority faculty may feel additional stress working within predominantly white male business faculties (Blix, Cruise, Mitchell, & Blix, 1994; Schneider, 1997). Females and minorities may have fewer mentors and face added institutional pressures that limit their mobility and escalate their workload, such as increased committee service to provide gender and color representation. These influences in turn may allow less time for teaching, research, professional development, and ultimately career advancement (Peluchette & Jeanquart, 2000). Furthermore, minority and female faculty members may face subtle and unconscious (or not so subtle and intentional) prejudice from students and colleagues (Hopkins, 1999). Faculty members with a working spouse have added complications of dual career-progression. Dual-career couples and single parent faculty members often need flexible schedules if they have children, yet even the adaptability of a faculty position do not always provide flexibility when its needed (Freyd, 1990).

Pressures in Motion: The Dynamics of Burnout and Career Plateauing

While a normal life cycle of teachers is to be expected (although they address pre-collegiate teaching, see Huberman, 1989; Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch & Enz, 1999), some faculty members follow a trajectory of career plateauing wherein they engage in patterns of work—such as long hours, emotional exhaustion, mediocre accomplishments—which terminate in burnout. If a realistic preview of faculty life was missing, these experiences may contrast sharply with beginning visions of teaching, thus, accentuating the stress and burnout. Faculty members may fasten onto negative attributions of the actions of others, cynically filtering the vision and communication of the school's administration, blocking cooperation with the administration or other faculty, and adding a drag on faculty morale.

Since research is often the ticket to ride in academics, and Christian institutions offer few rewards or supports for research career mobility may be further eroded (Singh, Misshra, & Kim, 1998). Even relatively mobile faculty may find difficulty leaving one Christian institution for

another simply because of age discrimination and the higher pay differentials which tend to discourage the hiring of senior faculty who do not accept administrative posts (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2000).

Once a faculty member loses career mobility, a sense of entrapment can set in. Job satisfaction may decline further, and burnout may increase with few or no visible escape routes (Bartlett, 1994; Male & May, 1998; Patterson, Sutton, & Schuttenberg, 1987). The passage of time and the bitterness of the faculty member's outlook may create emotional distance from students. The generation gap may produce blame and vocal complaining on the faculty member's part, and resulting resistance from the students—again exacerbating burnout and despair (Lamude, Scudder & Furno-Lamude, 1992).

Student resistance in turn may result in a faculty member having diminished authority and thus increased pressure to earn authority from students (Grant, 1983). Since students learn from observing faculty (Schaible & Robinson, 1995), these maladaptive behaviors and perspectives may be replicated in the students' lives. Taken together, the faculty member may lose his or her ability to see the needs of others and minister to students and colleagues—a prime objective in Christian higher education.

A competitive job market in business and academia, may attract mobile faculty to exit and may also produce a smaller and smaller faculty pool. The exodus of one or more faculty members may produce greater uncertainty and workload pressures among the remaining faculty. The small size of business faculties in Christian colleges often are thrown into crisis mode when there is faculty turnover. Some faculty members may respond to these heavy demands with more work, sometimes to the demise of their physical or mental health or their families.

Some Survive

Somehow, through these academic jungles filled with trip wires and hazards, some faculty emerge triumphant—still idealistic yet acquainted with the “valley of the shadow of death”; impossibly positive in the face of despair; just as happy to be involved in the lives of youthful students as they ever were; intellectually inquisitive; up-to-date in their fields; spiritually alive; physically and mentally healthy, and; with a functional family. Granted, few faculty can claim all of these personal triumphs, even humbly and in weakness, but some emerge with several of these youthful qualities intact, somehow defying the downward trends of dysfunctional life cycles.

A Cloud of Witnesses

What leads to derailed, prematurely plateaued careers and creates the alienation of Christian faculty from their students, their disciplines, their families, and their ministry for God? The worst-case scenario depiction is bleak, but seldom as challenging as the life and work of the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 11:23-29) or of beatified or unofficial saints, some of whom have served as teachers and in other occupations and callings (Ellsberg, 1997). So it's possible to survive the white water of Christian education and still minister. How is faith and biblical

wisdom integrated into faculty careers? What can a surviving faculty member do for a struggling or embittered colleague?

In the panel discussion, a collection of faculty members (the authors) who have invested at least a decade in Christian education will speak to their survival, early warning signs, the threats they've witnessed and experienced and those of their colleagues. They will address how they restore balance and have learned to survive—and sometimes flourish—in their work and personal lives. They will offer a combination of career advice, coping strategies, biblical guidance, and life reflection, responding to issues such as:

- X Career cycles and stages
- X When Christian colleges are not Christian
- X Idols in the camp
- X Dry hole perspectives versus refreshing viewpoints: What to post on the refrigerator?
- X Prayer, spiritual disciplines, and support groups/friendships
- X Coping with busyness and a burden of expectations
- X Family, health, church, and community—maintaining a balanced life
- X Growing young with students
- X How in the midst of a community of faith, we can be isolated from the Lord
- X Spiritual audits
- X Power made perfect in weakness
- X Cynicism versus informed idealism
- X When to say no, when to say yes

A sample of our musings—which may not be offered in the same format at the session—are shared below on selected aspects of staying renewed in Christian business and management education. In the panel discussion we'll explore these and other issues and respond to questions from the audience.

Nourished by Community

Tom Head, Professor of Economics, George Fox University

As we chronicled the many challenges of a career in Christian higher education in the introduction of this paper, I felt again and again that it was my personal story being told. But, of course, it is not my singular story. It is obviously a story we all share, and there is a rich and deep vein of common experience here.

While I have a particular dislike for the so-called reality-based television shows, the survivor motif creatively and usefully came to mind more than once in our aforementioned worst-case scenario. We have all seen the struggles, the conflicts, the competing pressures, the near impossibility of what it is we try to do. Academia is a jungle. Add a dose of the ecclesiastical, and the course we run can at times seem even more bizarre and daunting. Where do we get the courage to go on? How do we find our way?

I have worked in higher education for three decades with twenty-four of those years on the campus of George Fox University. I am a bit startled by the numbers. How is it that I have been

at one institution for such a long time, surviving and perhaps even thriving in my own little way? It is not because I have always been a happy camper. Sadly, I suspect that I have disappointed, irritated and hurt people over the years. I have fallen short of our profile of the ideal faculty member. I have had my crises in faith, my flops in the classroom, and my personal and professional disasters. As in any long career, the story is an involved one, but there is one element that emerges for me as the factor more important than any other in explaining how and why this path has been a good one, certainly for me and hopefully for my students and colleagues. That factor is this: George Fox University is a Christian community.

My university is not an ideal community, but it is a real community. It is truly a community of those committed to learning and practicing the ways of Christ. I am not speaking here of mere words, of names, of mission statements, or of stated values. I am speaking here of the way things really work. I am speaking of a group of faithful colleagues and supporters who follow Christ in both word and deed, with a strong emphasis on doing the deed, walking the walk. In large and small matters, the Kingdom of God takes priority over the agenda of self. Actually, prioritization is not an entirely apt way of putting it; it is more a matter of kingdom eclipsing or transforming self. In this context, professional development means unlearning self-centeredness.

Now, I should be quick to add that I do have a healthy regard for the role of “self.” But the “healthy self” sees its role in a much broader and richer story; it is not an end in itself. As I have observed academic life in the three large public universities where I did graduate work and spent some of my early years as a teacher and researcher, I saw a world in which self-centered agendas predominate. My experience here at George Fox differs in significant ways; three in particular are:

1. Individuals are not viewed as isolated selves, aggrandizing their own careers, but instead as parts of a larger body (1 Corinthians 12:14-26). Each of us has our unique bundle of gifts and responsibilities, but those are functioning as parts of a larger body. The mission is larger than a mere aggregate of personal achievements.
2. In our practice of Quaker decision-making, in which we look for the “sense of the meeting,” we learn the habits of seeking divine guidance rather than promoting one competing proposal over another. One of the better explanations of this way of making decisions was written by a sympathetic outside observer, the Jesuit priest Michael J. Sheeran (*Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends*, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1983). He sees this practice as one which is deeply embedded in Scripture and Christian tradition and which offers much to those who use it.
3. The spiritual economy offers our community a different professional balance sheet. In the life of the spirit, gain may be loss, and loss may be gain. The ups and downs of our individual projects and careers, and even of the institution as a whole, do not constitute the entire story. More than once, my own loss has been the doorway to a fuller measure of effectiveness in my work. My community recognizes and affirms such experience.

I know full well that my own university is not the only place of learning where community is truly found. You, too, have your outposts of the kingdom in a broad array of Christian colleges

and universities. And I know also that a measure of such community can grow in the midst of a secular university. I surely experienced this with my mentor, Kenneth E. Boulding. Yet I also suspect that he paid an earthly price for being the kind of person he was. He was not a self-promoter. He sought and acknowledged insight and truth wherever it emerged, and thus he did not build the kind of research empire around himself that might have resulted, for example, in his receiving a Nobel Prize. He was nominated for the prize and certainly possessed the intellectual gifts and produced the original thinking that qualifies one for such an honor; however, it never came his way. His gaze was seldom if ever earthbound, and his true prize must be a heavenly one. He quietly put first things first. His experience reminds me that an important task for us as an association is to provide a supportive community for our brothers and sisters carrying out their work in institutions that are not faith-based. Their work is demanding, and we need to help each other.

May community, wherever we work, nourish us all.

How I Stay Fresh in Teaching: Reflections

Lisa K. Surdyk, Associate Professor of Economics, Seattle Pacific University

I will share three ways I have been able to stay fresh as a teacher. First, since I view teaching as a primary aspect of my calling or vocation, I keep that in mind when my energy and motivation levels wane. Second, in light of my calling, I learn all I can about effective teaching and apply new methods frequently, as appropriate. The more effective I become, the more I enjoy it. Third, I nurture other aspects of my work and non-work life so that I remember that there is much more to my life than being a teacher.

I knew during graduate school that I wanted to use my degree primarily to teach at the university level. I believe God was calling me to use the gifts and abilities he had given me to be a professor. I started my job at Seattle Pacific University 10 years ago with much enthusiasm, but I quickly realized that teaching full time was more difficult than I had imagined. Still holding true to my calling, I decided to learn more about the craft and focus on improving in areas where I was weakest, according to student and peer feedback. Since then, I have regularly attended teaching workshops on my campus and at other colleges, read books on teaching, spent more time preparing for classes, and I have had peers observe me teaching and offer suggestions for improvement.

I have learned that the most effective teachers are those who focus on student-centered learning and on developing relationships with students. Thus, I have implemented more and more classroom activities that involve student-student, student-instructor, and student-content interaction, and I use more active learning and cooperative learning activities. Further, I use specific learning objectives and clearly communicate my expectations to students so they know what I expect them to be able to know and do and how I expect them to behave. (See reference section below for readings on effective teaching.) As my clarity and organization have improved, not only have students responded more positively, I have enjoyed teaching more. I believe focusing on student learning and relationship development are consistent with God's command to "love our neighbors as ourselves." So I treat students with respect and with their best interests in mind.

Finally, I seek to grow as a person outside of teaching. First priority is my relationship with God, without whom I could not “find enjoyment” in my work or any other area of life, as the writer of Ecclesiastes asserted (Eccl. 2:25). To grow as a Christian I need time away from work, so I honor the Sabbath day each week. Further, I attend bible studies, pray and engage in other Christian disciplines. Second, I prioritize time with my family and friends when I’m not at work. Third, I spend time, usually in the summer, researching and writing about topics such as faith-learning integration, teaching, and biblical perspectives on economics. Similarly, I speak to student groups and church groups about biblical perspectives on economic issues. After such activities, I return to the classroom re-invigorated, not just from having time away from regular teaching, but because I’m excited to share new ideas with students.

Literature in the area of stress and stress management has highlighted the importance of balance in one’s life as a way to effectively cope with stress. People who are committed to roles in several areas of their lives yet have multiple resources to draw upon are more likely to respond in a more positive way to stressors than those who are only developed in a few areas of life (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999; Kobasa, 1979). Actively disengaging from work to focus on other areas of life promotes a more balanced lifestyle providing greater psychological resiliency (Whetten & Cameron, 1998). I have found this to be true in my life.

It is important for deans and department chairs, as possible, to support faculty in their multiple roles, encourage regular periods of respite, and recognize that faculty will be more effective if they are not overworked.

Suggested Readings on Effective Teaching

Boice, Robert (2000). *Advice for New Faculty Members*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Centra, John A. (1982). *Determining Faculty Effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chickering, A. & Gamson, Z. (eds.) (1991). *Applying the Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Feldman, Kenneth A. (1989). “The Association between Student Ratings of Specific Instructional Dimensions and Student Achievement: Refining and Extending the Synthesis of Data from Multisection Validity Studies,” *Research in Higher Education*, 30, 583-645.

Lowman, Joseph (1995). *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching* (2nd ed). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sherman, Thomas M., et al. (1987). “The Quest for Excellence in University Teaching.” *Journal of Higher Education*, January-February.

A Great White Whale: Some Suggestions for Young Scholars

N. Lamar Reinsch, Professor of Management Communication, Georgetown University

A faculty member who teaches business, and who is a Christian, should be an active scholar: (a) in order to serve God (Matthew 22:37); and (b) in order to serve her or his students (James 3:1b). (A third—but less important reason—is that scholarly activity usually makes the dean happy.)

Reflecting on my experience (thus far) as a scholar—experience that is intertwined with my experiences as a teacher, as a university citizen, and as an occasional administrator—leads me to offer the following suggestions. (And I admit, in advance, that I have not always behaved in strict accordance with the advice that I now offer.)

1. Make time for scholarship. Take a cold-eyed look at committees (and other service assignments) and at your perfectionist tendencies as a teacher. Then prune and focus your efforts so as to improve your efficiency. If you have chosen—as I have—to work at a university that emphasizes teaching, that decision will limit the time available for scholarship. But, in the long run, both your teaching and your contribution to faculty governance depend, to a very significant degree, on you remaining active as a scholar.
2. Focus your scholarship on topics that excite you. Don't feel that you have to do "Christian research" (unless that interests you). Franky Schaeffer (1981) argues that intentional attempts to produce "Christian art" almost always result in mediocrity. I suspect that a similar relationship exists in scholarship. So my advice is: (a) to strive toward becoming a more Christlike person; (b) to focus your scholarship on your personal intellectual interests; and (c) to allow God to bring those two dimensions together (or not) as He sees fit.
3. Select a type of research that matches your interests and resources—not those of your dissertation director. Programs that grant doctoral degrees tend (and appropriately so) to emphasize *Discovery* ("What is known or yet to be found?") (Boyer, 1990). But your current interests and resources may lead you toward the scholarship of *Integration* ("What connections can be made among the various discoveries?"), of *Application* ("How can knowledge be applied to consequential problems?"), or of *Teaching* ("What should students know and how can I enhance their learning?"). (In fact, *Integration* and *Application*—not to mention *Teaching*—are probably more needful of a Christian worldview than is *Discovery*.)
4. Within the limits of your situation—and every situation has limits—stretch yourself toward higher quality and bigger questions. You will experience temptations to choose quantity over quality and to choose the well-defined but less-significant problem over the ill-defined and more-significant problem. Resist these. You will do more to serve God and you will feel better about yourself if—when you choose collaborators, when you design projects, and when you submit your manuscripts for review—you aim high. If you're going to invest your time and energy and go sailing on the open sea, don't go in search of one more tuna. Go, instead, on a quest for Moby Dick, your own personal great white whale.

Remaining Spiritually Alive at a Christian College

Jack A. Griggs, A. Overton Faubus Professor of Finance, Abilene Christian University

Teaching at a Christian college or university can be hazardous to your spiritual health. The reasons are numerous. First and foremost, the devil gives special attention to faculty on a Christian campus. The historical success of Christian colleges and universities in helping young people to mature and develop in Christ results in Satan specifically targeting Christian faculty members to bring them down. He is in a constant attack mode. He will ruin a good marriage. He will bring discouragement. He will bring bad health. He will hurt you or slow you down in any way he can. Christian faculty members get special attention from the devil because their potential to do good is so great.

Second, the sheer volume of religious activities on a Christian university campus can be so overwhelming that they become routine, non-spiritually provoking and inoculating against spiritual growth and closeness to God. Feelings of guilt are a frequent side effect as the faculty member ponders how fortunate he or she is to be on a Christian campus.

Third, the occasional, unreasonable and sometimes unrighteous demands and accusations made upon Christian faculty by students, parents and colleagues can be discouraging. For example, an occasional student who fails to complete an assignment on time may express disbelief that a faculty member on a Christian campus could be so unchristian as to reduce his or her grade because the assignment is late.

Fourth, the opportunities for doing good on a Christian campus are so numerous that a conscientious faculty member can work himself into such a state of exhaustion or get him or herself so over-committed that he/she has no energy or time for spiritual refreshment. And the list continues.

So, what is the solution? The adage, “to be forewarned is to be forearmed” is applicable. Rather than accepting the devil’s lie that a Christian campus is a place of refuge, the faculty member on a Christian campus must realize that he or she is a soldier on the front lines with special dangers requiring constant vigilance for him or herself, and his or her family.

The faculty member must avoid physical, mental and spiritual exhaustion. There is no substitute for being along with God without rush and with a clear mind. The faculty member must pursue and obtain a conviction that he or she is involved in work that is so important that the conviction brings serenity and peace. In addition to seeking constant refreshing through prayer and Bible study, devotional literature such as Richard J. Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline*, John Ortberg’s *The Life You’ve Always Wanted*, and Os Guinness’s *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* will bring encouragement.

Renewal through Re-creation

David Johnson, Professor of Finance, Harding University

The stereotypical absent-minded professor is so engrossed in scholarly pursuits that he fails to even acknowledge, much less to appreciate, the world around him. A caricature of the business

professor would likely picture him or her as preoccupied with money, absorbed with thoughts of stocks and bonds, buying and selling, hiring and firing, and so on. As Christian educators, we are obliged to our students to demonstrate a balanced life that confirms our faith in a reality beyond the visible, and that evidences our understanding that “one’s life does not consist of the abundance of his possessions.” Our lives should acknowledge that there are many things of value that cannot be assigned a dollar price, and that God has made us to experience and appreciate the beauty and blessings of His Creation.

When we neglect to do so, we pay a price. The price of self-absorption and too-narrow interests is to diminish the range of meaningful experiences in our lives. Inward focus leads to provincial thinking and arrogance. Excessive concern about personal accomplishments and recognition within this small realm leads to a false sense of importance and isolation. For the sake of living—living long and living well—we have to “get out” more, to venture off the worn highway of narrow teaching and research interests in order to experience the virgin footpaths of re-creation in its true sense. I have two suggestions to make.

First, get some physical exercise. The benefits of a regular exercise program to emotional as well as physical wellness are well known. Taking classes or participating in a favorite sport is a start. Better still, try taking up a new sport for both a mental and physical stretch. Recruit an exercise partner and commit to a genuine schedule with reasonable goals. Take more walks, or even bike to work if possible. Type A personalities should beware turning recreation into another arena for frenetic competition. The result should be rejuvenation, not exhaustion.

Second, get some mental exercise. Although recreation generally implies physical activity, true recreation provides a measure of mental refreshment as well. A high level of mental activity might seem to be everyday fare for educators. However, the realities of heavy teaching loads, multiple sections of the same course semester after semester, student advising responsibilities, committee assignments, and so on may produce mental fatigue without real mental stimulation.

A great way to refresh mental batteries is to become a student again. Learn to play a musical instrument (my current interest is the Highland bagpipes), join a community chorus, take a language class, or study sailing or painting. Part of the mental benefit is the opportunity to enjoy learning again for its own sake. You will also be blessed by seeing life from the standpoint of a student again, and then be more able to relate to your own students. You’ll be a model of lifelong learning, which will impress your colleagues and inspire your students. Any interest you show in art, music and literature will go a long way toward bridging gaps that exist between your business school and your liberal arts colleagues.

Mission, Money, and Motivation

Richard S. Lytle, Dean and Associate Professor, Abilene Christian University

“You did not choose me, rather I chose you to go and bear fruit that will last.” ~ John 15:16

Most of my colleagues with whom I have labored over the last decade in Christian Higher Education have lived lives reflective of Jesus message in John 15:16. I have witnessed unfailing dedication to the mission of Christian higher learning most noted in the areas of teaching,

service, scholarship, mentoring, and counseling. The behavior and lifestyles of my campus colleagues testify that the protestant work ethic is alive and well today.

Just this week I was personally confronted with and had to deal with the broken-ness of one of my own students who learned that her husband of 18 months has been addicted to pornography since he was fourteen years of age. I am not trained as a counselor. Is counseling in my job description? By the way, counseling a broken marriage was not on my agenda that day. The very next night I was privileged to be able to serve as a group facilitator and prayer leader in one of our men's dorms to deal with the World Trade Center tragedy—another night arriving home near midnight! This pattern of behavior for Christian educators appears to be more the norm than the exception. We all wonder—when will we have the time to (1) prep for classes, (2) write that article for public consumption, (3) engage in professional development, (4) read, (5) handle administrative duties, and (6) rest?

These stories abound in our Christian university cultures. They are multiplied in a variety of ways across a variety of settings due to the unique mission of Christian higher education as lived out by faculty who are passionately dedicated to a higher and noble calling: Educating students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. By this we mean being educators who are concerned about holistic education. Education that embraces the worth of competence, character, and community. However, this pattern of behavior that produces tremendous “fruit” for the Kingdom of God is often expected to result in an under nourished environment—high teaching loads, high service loads, and less money than others in the profession. This paradigm is not healthy and is not biblical.

Sustained fruit production always results from good trees growing and developing in a rich and fertile environment. Good soil, water, fertilizer, care, and lots of sunshine are necessary for a good crop to be harvested from the orchard. If the orchard has less water, less sunshine, less fertilizer, and less care than needed, fruit production eventually will suffer. Likewise, an under-nourished environment for faculty will result in less than acceptable sustained “fruit” production for students and other university constituents. Our universities are called to sustained fruit production (Jon 15:16). Thus, we, as Christian faculty with administrative responsibility must provide the rich and fertile environment necessary for such to occur. As we know, the scriptures say “don't muzzle the ox while he is treading out the grain.”

Important elements of this rich environment include but are not limited to: (1) healthy compensation packages, (2) appropriate teaching loads (preps and sections), (3) appropriate number of committee assignments, (4) appropriate resources for faculty development, and (5) appropriate technology and resources for instruction. When these elements of the educational environment are tied to a powerful Christian mission, sustained faculty motivation will increase the “fruit” yield significantly over time.



“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

~ Hebrews 12:1

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