

FRONTLINES

1 Shapers

Professors are the *shapers*, and students are the *shaped*. §1

Shapers

Rick Hove, *Faculty Commons Executive Director*



Architects are shapers. In a skillfully nuanced dance they balance aesthetics and function to create new spaces.

In contrast, the spaces architects create are shaped; they reflect the values and intentions of the shaper.

Those who teach are shapers. Jesus taught: "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). One might have expected Jesus to say that everyone who is taught will reflect the material they have been taught. But Jesus noted that everyone who is taught will become like their teachers, like those who taught them.

In our university system, professors are the shapers, and students are the shaped. So after

2 Powerful Presence of Prayer

Prayer makes a difference at the University of Georgia. §2

four years of education, students will reflect, to some degree, the values and intentions of their professors.

This is one reason I watch with interest the unfolding story at Vanderbilt University. Law and political science professor Carol Swain published a summary of the situation in *The Tennessean* (Sept. 15, 2011):

Shortly after graduation last spring, Vanderbilt University's Office of Religious Life quietly deferred its annual approval of several mostly conservative Christian organizations.

Groups affected included the Christian Legal Society, InterVarsity and the graduate chapter of Campus Crusade. These organizations face an uncertain future because of a new policy that prohibits religious organizations from requiring that their leaders share the same beliefs and goals of the organizations they seek to lead. The policy goes one step further by hamstringing Bible studies.

According to a letter from the acting director of the Office of Religious Life, Bible studies are suspect because they "would seem to indicate that officers are expected to hold certain beliefs." The letter goes on to explain: "Vanderbilt policies do not allow this expectation/qualification for officers."

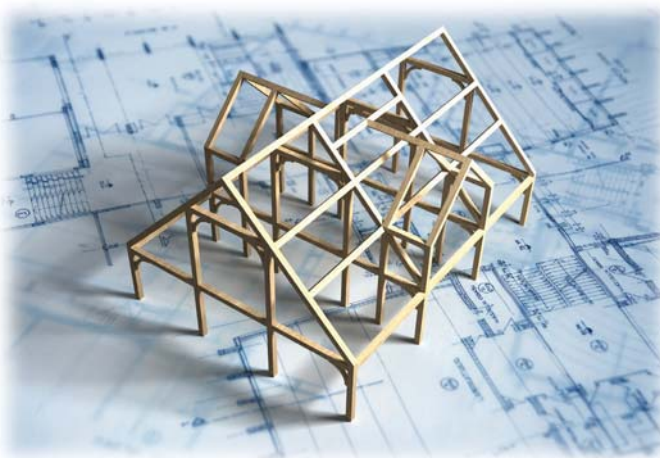
In other words, Muslim groups must allow

3 Making a Lasting Difference

Confronting destructive claims in a secular university. §3

4 Bringing the Gospel Home

Witnessing to family members through the side door. §4



es." When laypeople and especially alumni and donors make their displeasure known, universities listen.

The battle for the American university is real, and Vanderbilt is not unique. Dr. Swain explains that "in the past decade, more and more institutions have been quietly, but systematically, restricting freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly under the guise of non-discrimination."

There is no shortage of professors and administrators who proudly clamor to be shapers, who eagerly desire to impart their ideological legacy to every generation in their wake.

For the sake of the shaped (our nation's students), please join me in asking God to raise a multitude of Christ-following shapers like Dr. Swain, whose voices will be powerful in the public square, and who can bring the hope of Jesus Christ to their students and colleagues.

So much is at stake. †

Executive Director of Faculty Commons since 2005, Rick has also directed the Rice and Duke ministries. He is a *summa cum laude* graduate of both Georgia Tech and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Rick, his wife Sonya, and their three children live in Durham, NC.

Jews or Christians to serve as presidents, and Christian groups cannot require that their leaders lead Bible studies. Vanderbilt (the shaper) asserts that this is necessary for its students (the shaped).

Dr. Swain is the faculty advisor to Vanderbilt's Christian Legal Society. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina, a law degree from Yale, and has taught at Princeton. Raised in poverty in rural Virginia, she has a remarkable faith story. Through the years she has been very active with Faculty Commons.

She has focused media attention on what she calls a "carefully orchestrated assault on religious organizations on college and university campus-

Powerful Presence of Prayer

Ministry Profile: Bill and Jan Hager, Buz and CJ Amason; University of Georgia

Does prayer change people's lives? Dr. Chris Smith (not his real name) thinks it does. A year ago, the University of Georgia professor was a self-described "evangelical atheist." Bitter and argumentative, Chris engaged in informal debates with evangelists who appeared on campus.

Though logically convinced (at the time) of his atheistic beliefs, he now admits, "In my heart, there was always something about this guy Jesus that would never go away."

One of the campus evangelists became a friend who regularly discussed issues of faith with Chris and prayed for him. Eventually Chris underwent a change of heart and told God, "I'm willing to listen again. I might be wrong about all of this."

It was at this point that Chris met a pastor and others from a local church who listened to his arguments and challenged him to reconsider Jesus. A few months later—now a believer in Christ—Chris told his story to other professors



Bill and Jan Hager

Buz and C.J. Amason

involved with Faculty Commons at UGA. He offered himself as a living illustration of the power of prayer to change people's lives and encouraged the other professors to pray for their colleagues who don't yet know Christ.

"Here at UGA, we are focused on creating a powerful presence of prayer for our movement-wide goal of sharing the gospel with 180 professors," explains Faculty Commons staff Bill Hager. Toward that end, they have rallied their troops:

- 15 churches have signed up to pray for 100 professors by name



This fall Faculty Commons has been working to launch a "movement of gratitude" on campuses across the country. Typically, professors are unfairly critiqued by students on Internet sites like www.rateyourprof.com. So when Christian students take the time to say "I appreciate you" and "Thank you for teaching me," it can make a great impact on a professor. What might change on campuses if Christians were known and experienced as the "grateful ones"? How might professors be positively influenced for the gospel if their Christ-following students took the time to say "thanks" and "I appreciate you"?

- 35 professors are praying specifically and regularly for their departmental colleagues
- Christian students at UGA are committing to pray for 5 professors each

Bill and the other Faculty Commons staff at UGA will contact all the new professors this year to welcome them to the university, offer them a copy of *Mere Christianity* by former Oxford professor C.S. Lewis, and take a short survey called, "What Do You Think About God?"

They hope to start conversations about Christ with those who are spiritual seekers, like Chris

was last year. Bill is also inviting the Christian professors at UGA to set a goal of sharing the gospel with at least one colleague this school year.

How many are like Chris, tormented by the prospect that life (in the atheistic worldview) is utterly without meaning? "It's hard to be happy about anything in life if you really adopt that point of view," Chris declares now. "I don't think I really bought it when I was an atheist"

He's glad now that some people were praying for him. †



Miller Learning Center, Central Campus.

The University of Georgia

UGA was founded in 1785 by the Georgia General Assembly and is the first state-chartered university in America. *U.S. News & World Report's* 2011 Best Colleges edition has UGA tied for 18th among national public research universities. *Kiplinger's Magazine* ranks UGA 8th in its 2011 list of the 100 Best Values in Public Colleges.

- UGA is a national leader in the number of students each year who receive the very top national academic scholarships, producing seven Rhodes scholars since 1996 and 21 Fulbright scholars in the past two years.
- UGA is home of the Peabody Awards, presented annually for excellence in television and radio news, entertainment and children's programming.
- Undergraduate enrollment: 25,947
- Graduate/Professional: 8,730.
- Go Bulldogs!!

Photos: UGA Photographic Services ©2011



University of Georgia's Baldwin Hall in Fall color.



UGA professors and students praying for their campus.

Can a Christian Professor Make a Difference?

Faculty Profile: Dr. Heather Holleman, Penn State University



State College, PA is a college town—even its name proclaims the fact—but these days it is a town in mourning. Grieving. Dismayed at the evil revealed in their midst. “It’s as if an undercurrent of sadness and confusion carries us to our classrooms beneath the shadow of that grand football stadium,” relates English professor Heather Holleman.

In the midst of her own sadness, she is finding opportunities to speak God’s words of hope—for forgiveness, redemption, and renewal—to the students, faculty, and staff at Penn State. We asked Heather how God called and prepared her to shine for Him at such a time as this:

As a Christian entering a top research university for graduate work, I knew I might experience challenges to my faith. But I had no idea just how antagonistic the environment would be in a secular institution. Five messages summarized my training in graduate school:

- **Anti-Foundational Thinking:** A professor should cause students to question (and eradicate) any “foundations” from their upbringing, in particular, any traditional, conservative, or religious viewpoints.
- **Post-Christian Scholarship:** Biblical approaches to a text are “outdated and un-intellectual.”
- **Liberal Ideology:** A friend of mine who wanted to identify herself as a lesbian and to offer herself as a resource for anyone curious about the gay lifestyle was applauded. In the same

conversation, I was told it would be “selfish and inappropriate” to identify myself as a Christian.

- **Texts without Authority:** No pure text exists. Because of transmission errors, the Bible contains mistakes and cannot be trusted.
- **Professors as Pluralists:** A professor of biblical studies forbade me from serving as his teaching assistant because my firm Christian beliefs would be unfair to students.

I wondered what would happen if I trusted the Lord and promoted a Christian worldview against these views. Either I would be fired as a teaching assistant, or God would deliver me.

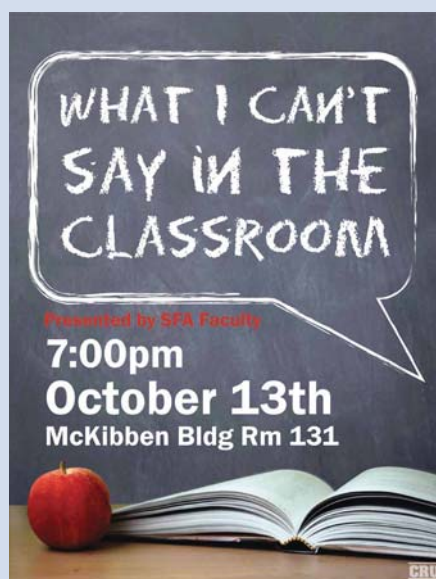
Well, God accomplished immeasurably more than I could imagine: I received the highest teaching awards, finished a dissertation, saw several students receive Christ, and learned that

Christian professors have enormous impact—not just on students—but on the faculty.

When I began teaching at Penn State, not only were students coming to faith by entering into spiritual conversations in my office hours, but also other faculty sought me out to talk about Jesus.

In the midst of recent events at Penn State, Heather has given time in class and her office for student discussion, asking God for appropriate words to point students and their community to Christ. He is the One who offers justice for the oppressed, redemption for sinners, and the power to make a fresh start to all who seek Him. Other Christian professors have come together with Heather and her husband to pray for their campus. They would appreciate your prayers. †

Professors and Their Faith Stories



Four professors at Stephen F. Austin University in Texas recently told their “faith” stories to over 100 students attending the Cru meeting. Here are just a few enthusiastic comments from students who attended.

- I feel like many of my questions about God were answered fully. I will definitely come again! Loved it!
- I had no idea what I was walking into tonight, but God definitely did! Thank you guys for opening your hearts to a bunch of confused “20-somethings”! I am going to be an elementary ed teacher in a year and you are an inspiration and gave me HOPE!
- I really loved it. It was awesome to know that the faculty is concerned about us.



Heather (center) entertains faculty and their children, ministering as a peer, professionally and at home.

Join with us in Prayer

“Is it possible that we do not see God working in mighty ways because we don’t ask him to work in mighty ways?” – Collin Hansen and John Woodbridge, forward to *A God-Sized Vision*

1. Pray God would move in the hearts of thousands of Christian professors, calling them to take the hope of Jesus Christ to their campuses.
2. Pray God would give us wisdom to develop creative, effective evangelism tools for professors.
3. Pray for 10 professor/student mission trips this spring break and summer.

In addition, many of our relatives have heard our “Jesus sales pitch” more times than they care to. What they need to hear now is how our faith makes a difference: in our marriage, our parenting, our view of money, death, trials, or a thousand other topics that faith is supposed to transform. We need to show and tell them how the gospel informs and transforms all of life. It better

be deeper than just “Jesus makes me happy.”

Witnessing to family and others close to us is difficult, but it can be effective for the very reasons it’s difficult. The ones who know us best are likely to see the gospel in a deeper way, if we just can point it out to them and, better still, incarnate it in all we say and do. †

Bringing the Gospel Home

Review by Randy Newman, Faculty Commons Staff Rep, Washington, D.C. Metro Area

What do you write when someone asks you for a book review of a book you’ve written? Phrases like “a must read” and vocabulary such as “indispensable” immediately come to mind. But perhaps a different approach may be more helpful.

I wrote this book because the topic was too painful to ignore. After every seminar on how to evangelize, people say to me, “This is helpful but what do I say to my father? He’s an atheist.”

Or, “My mother’s an alcoholic.”
“My brother’s gay.”

“My sister’s now a Buddhist.”

“My cousin runs an abortion clinic.”

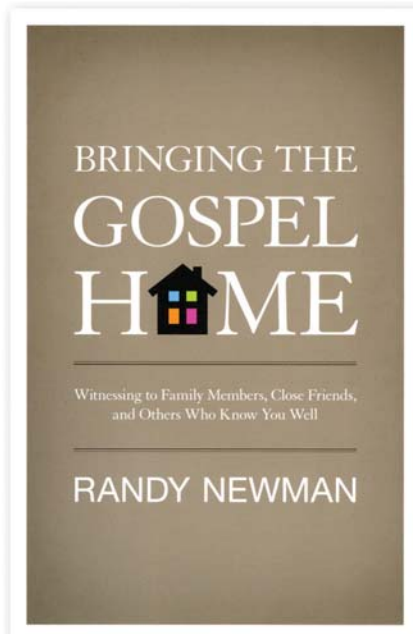
The examples are endless both in their variety and anguish.

People who have tried to share the gospel with a relative offer more horror stories than success stories. But I do observe some patterns. Witnessing to family takes time, requires deeper expressions of love, and often comes through a side door.

Most of our evangelism training models assume we’ll see people only once. But family members keep showing up—for decades. So we need a gradual approach rather than the dump truck method. Perhaps asking more questions, engaging in partial conversations, and building a case rather than just stating it will prove more effective.

Keep in mind that family is the place where love is always assumed but seldom expressed—at least not in ways that people really feel loved. There’s a tacit assumption that we love our family simply because we’re related. We might even say “I love you” quite a bit. But many adult children don’t really experience a sense of love from their parents. We don’t express love all that well to a brother or sister either.

We assume more than we should and the result is a painful alienation that everyone feels but no one acknowledges. So the challenge for a Christian who wants to reach out to an unsaved loved one is to find ways to make sure they feel like a loved one.



Fast Facts:

At the University of California Berkeley two Christian professors greeted over 300 students who showed up for the *Jesus at Berkeley* event.

59 professors, students, and Cru staff met in September for a potluck dinner and to pray together for their campus, the University of Florida.

An academic dean at East Tennessee State University commented, “Our purpose in life as faculty is to let the light of the gospel spread through us across the campus.”

Freshmen at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo received Freshman Survival Kits which included a list of all the Christian professors on campus.



Investing in the Mission

Your financial investment will enable us to build movements of professors and students to take the hope of Jesus Christ to the world. Will you prayerfully consider partnering with us in this great endeavor? All contributions to Faculty Commons are income tax deductible.

Cash donations

Make check to Campus Crusade for Christ and mail to Faculty Commons; 2001 W. Plano Parkway, Suite 2700; Plano, Texas 75075. Or invest online: give.ccci.org/give/View/2271527

Maximize your giving to help reach the world for Christ

Stocks, bonds and mutual funds held for at least a year, which have increased in value since the time purchased, will receive extra tax savings when used as a donation.

Estate Design

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If you need assistance, please contact our Director of Ministry Development, Rich McGee at 214-727-6084 or rich.mcgee@facultycommons.org.



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FACULTY COMMONS

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