

“I was a new Christian struggling with my faith”



Each week we send an essay by Christian professors to more than 1000 of their colleagues across the country. I work closely by phone and email with Dr. John Walkup (*above*) who took early retirement from Texas Tech to disciple professors at Stanford, and Cal-Berkeley.

John has told me how his experience as a college student motivated him to help other professors:

September 1963 — “As a new Christian at Dartmouth, struggling in my faith and more than 2000 miles from home, I hoped that at least one of my professors would identify himself as a believer. None ever did. If only I’d known a Christian prof...”

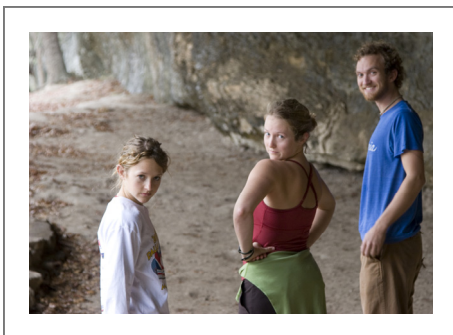
“During my own graduate days at Stanford I met a few professors who were unafraid to identify themselves as followers of Christ. One even hosted a weekly Bible study for students. Their examples played a major role in my decision to embark upon an academic career.”

“When I became a professor, I decided that I would take five minutes during the first class of each semester to share a bit about my background, both academic and personal, with my students.

“In telling them about my life and family I said that as important as electrical engineering was in my life, that it wasn’t my life goal – that it paled by comparison to my faith in Christ.

“Over the years I have had former students stop by my office and tell me how significant that simple statement was in affecting their view of what it means to be a Christian.

—We spent Christmas with our kids in Austin.

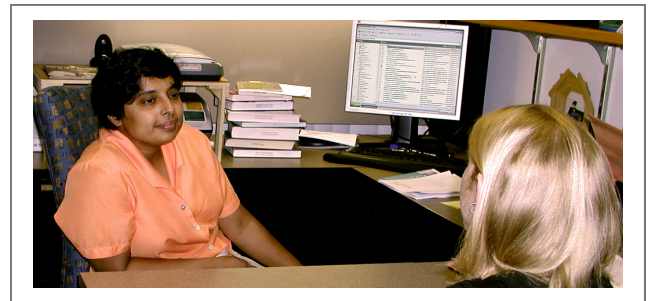


It was a wonderful time of hiking and talking. And no, they still don’t smile for Mom & Dad’s pictures.



A Long Way From Home

Our first essay of the year was by Nandika D’Souza, (*below*), a professor of materials science at North Texas. She thought her story might help fellow professors to look at international students with greater concern:



“When I arrived at Auburn, Alabama from India in 1988 I was overwhelmed by converting currency, finding an apartment to rent that I could afford, registering for classes. I didn’t understand credit hours or GPA. A host of orientation classes left me with more things I could not understand...”

“Last year as I went through a reenactment of Mary and Joseph reaching Bethlehem and needing to seek shelter, not knowing anyone, I was drawn to the notion that each year on our campuses there are students arriving who also know no one, who find themselves in a foreign land.

“On campuses, as we identify the new to campus, there are also many who do not have faith. They come and cling to secular metrics of the American experience—wealth and ambition. These do not fulfill the spirit and thus as they wander through their own Bethlehems, how wonderful it is to share our spirit with them. To offer the manger of a meal, a candy bar, a grin . . . and in that moment to make a statement for Christ of a faith which indeed makes all whole.”