

# FRONTLINES

§1

A WINDOW INTO THE STRUGGLE FOR AMERICA'S UNIVERSITIES

SEPTEMBER 2011

FACULTY COMMONS-CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST

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For better or for worse, professors have a profound influence on college students. §1

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## Where do they run?

Rick Hove, Faculty Commons Executive Director



If you enjoy people watching, one of the best venues is outside a freshman dorm on move-in day.

Heat and humidity are standard fare, as is the long line of mini-vans, rambunctious siblings, and a new-in-the-box dorm fridge. But what makes this spectacle mesmerizing is the interaction between parents and their soon-to-be-free freshmen.

Most parents contrive to prolong this ritual, being sure their child has everything they'll ever need, like a dustpan and batteries for the emergency flashlight from Grandma.

Students, on the other hand, itch to bolt to new friends and adult freedom. Only Mom and Dad realize that at this moment their relationship with their child changes forever.

When difficult times or questions come, where will these students run? One place is to those they esteem as the local resident experts—professors.

My friend Adam attended an elite private liberal arts university. The day his parents dropped him off they scarcely had religious aspirations for him.

Adam's dad had occasionally taken him to a Unitarian church, where asking deep questions was a highly cherished skill. Oddly, answers weren't pursued, but Adam became a master at asking questions.

As his freshman year unfolded, these questions began to torment him. Now Adam actually wanted answers. Where did he run to pursue these answers? His faculty advisor.

This professor was very willing to help. He was a devotee of Jainism: an Indian religion similar to Buddhism. Adam's professor confidant strongly encouraged him to become a Buddhist.

So Adam decided to follow his professor's advice. For one month he immersed himself in Buddhist practices and readings. At the end of the month, however, he wasn't very satisfied.

Of the hundreds of professors at this university, Adam knew 2-3 who were Christians. One was quite well-known for his care for students. In fact, he would frequently visit students at their dorms or even pray with a student if appropriate. Though he was not his advisor, Adam sought him out.

They went to lunch together, where the professor told Adam these questions, which have

puzzled humanity for millennia, would never sustain him in life. What he needed was the love of God shown in God's Son, Jesus Christ.

One month later Adam gave his life to Christ. And now, years later, our paths have crossed. As he told me his story, he added that this professor is still doing the same thing today as he did for Adam—bringing the hope of Jesus Christ to students and the university.

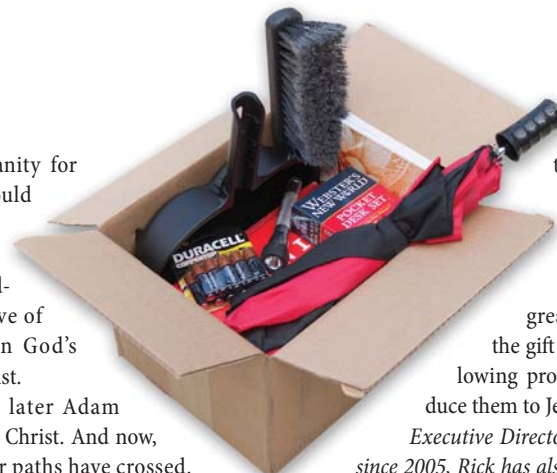
This story reminded me yet again of the importance of our faculty mission. Where would Adam be today if there had been no Christian professor at that university?

What happens when students run to the resident campus experts for answers and there is no Christian presence anywhere in sight? Even a small community of Christian professors can make a huge difference for students like Adam.

One reason we care so deeply about building movements of Christ-following professors at every university is because we care deeply about students.

Every inquisitive, seeking student like Adam should have the opportunity to know professors who find Jesus Christ satisfying and true.

This fall 4-5 million young people are transi-



tioning to adulthood as they begin their freshman year. How many of these students will receive the great gift Adam received: the gift of a caring, Christ-following professor who can introduce them to Jesus? †

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.



## A New Name!

In early 2012, the name Campus Crusade for Christ is changing in the U.S. to Cru.

You might be thinking, "Are you nuts?" You may be saying, "It's about time!"

Two words in Campus Crusade for Christ have been problematic for some time. First, "campus" doesn't describe the diversity of our ministries. Second, the word "crusade" elicits negative reactions with many audiences.

So the change was made to help us more effectively share Christ with the world. The new name Cru isn't short for "Crusade" and doesn't stand for anything in particular. Just as Starbucks and Kinkos have become synonymous with coffee and copies we hope that over time Cru becomes associated with the love and message of Christ.

A variety of resources are available to answer questions you may have at [ccci.org](http://ccci.org).

Faculty Commons, the professor outreach of Cru, will continue to take the hope of Jesus Christ to the university and the world. †

Holly left her professor with an English/Arabic Bible. "I truly believe she will come to follow Jesus one day," Holly affirms, "and possibly be a huge influence in the politics and the elite of this country. Please continue to pray for her and her salvation!" †

§2

## An Unexpected Friendship

Cru staff member marvels at how God uses her in the life of prominent Middle Eastern professor!

Cru staff member Holly Ashman helped lead a team of U.S. college students to a prominent Middle Eastern university this summer. They all took a political science class and looked for opportunities to tell their fellow students about their faith in Christ.

Holly shared the gospel with students too—but also with the professor!

Professor Umar's (name changed) car accident launched their unusual friendship. When Holly offered sympathy after class, Professor Umar confided, "But the doctor said my baby is OK. I've already had two miscarriages. I don't want to lose this one too!"

Holly wrote her professor a letter, thanking her for teaching them, and sharing with her King David's poem in Psalm 139. "I believe our deepest desires are to be fully known and fully loved," Holly explained, "and the only person who can do that perfectly is God."

Holly added, "Maybe you are the reason I came to the Middle East. I am so glad I've met you." (Muslims are big believers in fate.)

The day after Holly delivered her letter was the last day of class. Professor Umar sought Holly out, hugged her and told her it was the best letter she had ever received from a student. But Holly could tell she didn't feel well.

*"Who would have thought I would go to the Middle East to share the gospel with one of the most influential professors of politics in the Arab World?"*

"I kept praying that she would open up to me and talk to me after class," Holly remembers. "As she walked out, I followed her." Finding a hidden corner, her professor confided, "I'm losing my baby!" She asked Holly to come home with her, to

provide support through the painful ordeal.

On the hour-long drive to her home, the professor confided her struggles and failures to Holly. Once home, she asked Holly to sit by her bed. "I'm going to pray for you out loud," Holly explained, and she prayed the truths found in Psalm 139.

Later that night, Professor Umar lost her baby. She contacted Holly and asked to see her one more time before Holly left for home. "I've been thinking a lot about spiritual things," Professor Umar told Holly. "Who can go to heaven? Is there enough room for everyone?"

Holly explained that the foundational difference between the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian faiths is their understanding of who Jesus is. He was a Prophet. He was Messiah. He is God. His death on the cross made it possible for all who believe in Him to go to heaven. And He totally transforms our lives!



Cru students and staff on summer outreach in the Middle East co-led by Holly Ashman (far right).

# Zero Out of 50!

Faculty Profile: Walter Bradley, *Distinguished Professor of Engineering, Baylor University*



During my undergraduate and graduate years at the University of Texas, none of my 50-or-so professors identified themselves as followers of Jesus. Some non-Christian professors, however, were quite uninhibited in ridiculing Jesus and the Christian faith.

This troubled me. It also motivated me to see if there was indeed a reasonable basis for following Jesus. Happily, I found in the writing of C.S. Lewis and others the assurance that I needed.

I realized I had the opportunity to be for my students what no one had been for me—a pro-

fessor known as a follower of Jesus. Midway through the first semester I taught, I prayerfully crafted a short end-of-class speech. I included several of my personal interests and my Christian commitment.

That day in class I was excited and apprehensive. When I finished my lecture five minutes before the end of class, I could have talked about my faith. Instead, I panicked and dismissed the class early.

I went to class 22 times in a row with this same intention, failing again and again. Finally, before the final exam, I did it!

I told the students how much I had enjoyed teaching them, that I was a Christian, and that I would like to visit with any of them who might be

curious about why. I had no takers; but it was a faith barrier which, once broken, would never again be so difficult. I told each successive class something about myself and my faith.

One year I taught a business calculus class. Since one-third of the students were Jewish, I considered skipping my speech this time. But after praying about it, I felt led to once again identify myself as a follower of Jesus.

That night the Dean of Students called. As my heart pounded, Dean Campbell explained that the “Campbell twins” in my class were his sons, and they told him what I had shared that afternoon.

He was calling to thank me! He was a Christian; his sons had not been walking with the Lord, and God had used my brief comments to rekindle

their interest in following Jesus. He had called every Bradley in the phone book (22 to get to “Walter Bradley”) to thank me.

Now, for 41 years I have included a simple statement about my faith as part of my classroom introduction—resulting in many opportunities to encourage young believers and clarify the gospel to non-believers. †

*A founding professor of Faculty Commons, Dr. Bradley is an outstanding role model, excelling in academics while actively pursuing opportunities to share Christ. He pioneered faculty ministry and continues to encourage professors all over the world to take the hope of Jesus Christ to their universities. He would appreciate your prayers as he undergoes treatment for chronic lymphocytic leukemia.*

# Fighting Poverty with Coconuts

By Dr. Walter Bradley, *Baylor University*

I decided for my last lap, so to speak, to change my research focus: what could I do to help the poorest of the poor have a better shot at survival? I asked God to give me some ideas.

A former doctoral student suggested I help the 11 million extraordinarily poor coconut farmers around the world. The typical farmer has 6-8 children, owns about 5 acres, and harvests 5,000 coconuts a year. This brings in only \$500 a year. I

prayed, ‘Please God, let there be something useful and interesting about coconuts.’

My students and I found that the coconut’s components of husk, pith, oil, and shell all have numerous possible applications in gardening, packaging, and building materials. We can even craft car parts—trunk liners and door panels—from coconuts.

Coconut fiber is cheaper, greener, and has

better mechanical properties than polyester. We could potentially triple the income of poor coconut farmers!

Developing technology with patents allows us to create and maintain a significant price for the coconut fiber and shell, and this profit will bless the farmer and the community. For example, working through local churches we can provide school vouchers for their children or supply fertilizer that can double their annual crop yield.

It’s a kingdom-building ministry: help people in a holistic way by meeting both spiritual and economic needs concurrently? †



11 million coconut farmers worldwide, most have 6-8 children, own 5 acres and harvest 5,000 coconuts annually for \$500.

# 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. Ask God to raise up a new generation of Christ-following professors from among the 50,000 undergraduate students who are involved in Cru groups around the country.
2. Pray that Christian professors will actively join with Cru staff to reach out to the incoming freshman class.
3. Choose a discipline, perhaps your own or maybe one God puts on your heart. Ask God to raise up Christian scholars and professors to bring the hope of Jesus Christ to that area of study.

# Whiter Than Snow: Meditations on Sin and Mercy

Review by Rick Hove, *Faculty Commons Executive Director*

In this collection of meditations on brokenness and grace, author Paul Tripp writes about the familiar world of the “if only . . .”

*If only I had the confidence to say what I really feel...*

*If only I had more friends...*

*If only somebody mentored me when I was young...*

*If only I didn't experience such back pain...*

*If only I had a different family growing up...*

*If only my spouse didn't...*

The land of the “if only” seduces us, as no shortage exists of circumstances we each wish were different about our lives.

But the unforeseen danger of the “if only” way of life is that it deceives. It woos us into thinking that what is broken about the world is “out there” — some place, or someone, or some reason far, far away.

If only this and this and this were different for me...

The truth, however, resides much closer to home: what is most broken in my world IS ME.

Unafraid, Dr. Tripp proclaims what friends, your spouse (if you’re married), and you (on your better days) already know: you are broken.

If this were his only message, his short devotional book would never be the popular seller it is today. After unabashedly naming the problem, he then, step by step, reveals a much-needed solution.

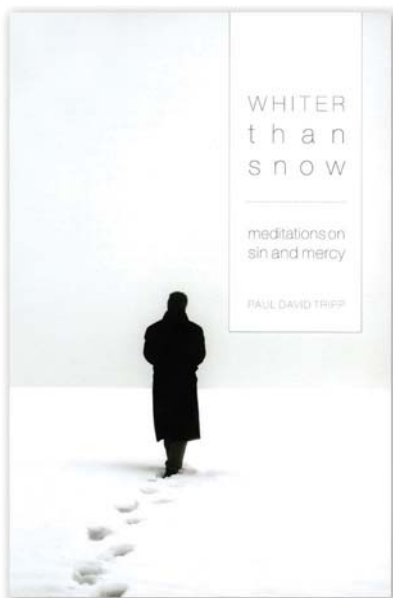
Each of the 52 two-page devotionals in this wonderful book concludes with two reflective questions. The first exposes what is broken; the second illumines the way forward, which is inevitably connected to the mercies and work of Christ.

These penetrating questions generate long, heartfelt discussions in small groups and provide fodder for many reflective devotions. Ponder them yourself. Then invite your friends to explore them with you.

In many ways, ministering to professors is unlike any other evangelism and discipleship min-

istry. The world of the academy is quite unique.

But a professor’s journey through sin and brokenness to the respite of an all-sufficient and satisfying Savior has much in common with our own spiritual journeys. Professors love this book. I think you’ll grow fond of it, too. †



# 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

Please make your check payable to Campus Crusade for Christ and mail to our office: Faculty Commons; 2001 W. Plano Parkway, Suite 2700; Plano, Texas 75075  
You may give via check or credit card online at: [give.ccci.org/give/View/2271527](http://give.ccci.org/give/View/2271527)

### Maximize your giving to help reach the world for Christ

Securities 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. Please see: [give.ccci.org/pages/Stock\\_NonCash\\_Gifts.html](http://give.ccci.org/pages/Stock_NonCash_Gifts.html)

### Gift and Estate Planning

Professionals at the Great Commission Foundation are available at no charge to you: [www.gcfcc.org](http://www.gcfcc.org)

To assist you in any of these ways, please contact our Director of Fund Development, Rich McGee at 972-516-0516 ext. 125.



# Fast Facts:

Christian faculty at Cal State Fullerton helped host a welcome kick-off event for incoming freshmen.

University of Alabama at Birmingham Christian professors are challenging colleagues to have one gospel conversation a month with students and faculty.

40 Christian professors at Clemson University placed an ad in the student newspaper this month professing their belief in Christ.

Professor Julianna Marten at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County went on a 2011 spring break mission trip to Panama City with students she discipled.



# FACULTY COMMONS

### Frontlines

Faculty Commons is the faculty ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ. We want to hear from you. Please contact us via email at [frontlines@facultycommons.org](mailto:frontlines@facultycommons.org). Faculty Commons, 2001 West Plano Parkway, Suite 2700, Plano, Texas 75075; Phone: 972.516.0516; Web: [www.facultycommons.com](http://www.facultycommons.com)