

FRONTLINES

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A WINDOW INTO AMERICA'S UNIVERSITIES

AUGUST 2016

FACULTY COMMONS-A CRU MINISTRY

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Listening is at the heart of our spirituality, relationships, and mission. §4

Transformed Hearts and Minds

Rick Hove, Faculty Commons Executive Director



President Obama gazed over the saddened assembly in Dallas last month following the murder of five policemen and wondered aloud:

Can we do this? Can we find the character, as Americans, to open our hearts to each other? Can we see in each other a common humanity and a shared dignity, and recognize how our different experiences have shaped us? And it doesn't make anybody perfectly good or perfectly bad, it just makes us human.

I don't know. I confess that sometimes I, too, experience doubt. I've been to too many of these things. I've seen too many families go through this.

But then I am reminded of what the Lord tells Ezekiel: I will give you a new heart, the Lord says, and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

That's what we must pray for, each of us: a new heart.

As great as America's public and private universities are, though they can inform and change minds, they remain impotent to change hearts. Only the Lord can transform a heart of stone into a heart of flesh (2 Cor 5:17, Jn 3:1-8), a heart willing to care about someone vastly different, while contritely acknowledging one's possible contribution to the strife at hand.

Oh how desperately we need top-flight scholars, with minds and hearts fashioned by Christ, to be used for his redemptive purposes in our academic institutions!

Dr. Ken Elzinga, who has taught economics to 45,000 students at the University of Virginia in a career spanning more than 40 years, wrote:

"My thinking ... was profoundly affected about twenty years ago when the faculty at the University of Virginia was asked to write out a teaching philosophy. ... Let me read the first two paragraphs of my teaching philosophy statement, from my UVA homepage:

My colleagues in the department of religious studies might contend that the most prominent image or picture of the Christian faith is the crucifix. For me as a teacher, it's the picture of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples. The scene illustrates the upside-down and paradoxical Biblical principle of leadership—the one who leads should be willing to serve. If you want to be first, you line up last.

are sensitive to great systemic needs, both on campus, across our country, and throughout the world.

Opening Doors in Rome

Dr. Henry "Fritz" Schaefer, University of Georgia professor of computational chemistry (top center), was one of four U.S. professors in Rome this summer ministering alongside Cru summer mission students from Ole Miss. Dr. Schaefer gave a talk entitled "The Big Bang, Stephen Hawking, and God," clearly explaining the gospel and addressing faith and science issues. An Italian student who attended had recently said she would "never, never, never believe in God," but after Schaefer's talk, she told her friend Chiara that the door to believing in God was opening. Chiara is a student leader in Cru, and the day after the talk she walked into her chemistry class to find "God does not exist" written on the board. The professor asked the class what they thought about it—then looked at Chiara for an answer. She bravely told the class that she believed in God, and because of Schaefer's talk the day before, she gave the class a brief defense for her faith. †



I endeavor to apply that picture to my teaching; if I want best to lead a class of students, I should be willing to serve them. My authority as a teacher is linked to my willingness to serve my students."

What a beautiful new heart. Traditionally evangelicals are noted for their emphasis on personal, heart-level transformation through the gospel. And, they historically have been criticized for lacking the compassion and insight to see systemic issues in our country that hurt so many.

We need new hearts that care about individual heart transformation and hearts that

are sensitive to great systemic needs, both on campus, across our country, and throughout the world.

That's what we must pray for, each of us. A new heart. Will you pray with us?

Thank you for joining with Faculty Commons in the great endeavor to see Christ change the hearts of faculty members and grad students to bring His hope to the campus and the world. †

Executive Director of Faculty Commons since 2005, Rick and his wife Sonya live in Durham, NC and have three adult children.

§2

"UTC, My Jerusalem"

Ministry Profile: Jim and Cindy Hynds, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga



When Jim and Cindy Hynds walked onto the campus of University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in January 2014, they were amazed to see how quickly believing professors formed a community to make Christ known. Jim and Cindy had asked Cru students to name their favorite professors. Students named more than 250 professors—and 100 of them were already believers. The Hynds met with those professors and the ministry blossomed.

Realizing that these believing professors did not know each other, Jim and Cindy began monthly luncheons for community and encouragement. They also launched small faculty groups to study God's Word, connect more deeply, and mobilize for ministry.

After spending 13 years with Cru in the Czech Republic, Jim and Cindy had returned to the U.S. to begin the faculty ministry at UTC. Little did they know that God would one day use these professors to help them launch a ministry to faculty in the Czech Republic. With faculty at UTC, they envisioned having influence on their campus, in their community, and also to the world. They discussed Acts 1:8 where Jesus commanded his disciples to go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

An environment of spiritual growth has emerged at UTC. Because of Faculty Commons, professors like Dr. Phil Roundy explain, "I have come to realize that my job is an extension of my faith. Faculty Commons has

shown me how to unify my faith and work."

In January 2016, Jim presented a "First Day Challenge" where he encouraged the faculty to identify themselves as Christ-followers to their students on the first day of class. When the Hynds met with their three small groups, they found that all these professors had done it.

Later, they learned that a student had texted a Cru staff member to report that three of her professors had identified themselves as Christians that first day of class!

The faculty ministry at UTC has now expanded globally. In May, Dr. Lisa Burke-Smalley accompanied Jim and Cindy to Prague, Czech Republic to join the Cru student summer mission and look for ways to minister to faculty there. Highlights included Lisa presenting a "Getting Published" seminar, speaking at a "believing professors dinner," and engaging in many spiritual con-

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

UTC was founded in 1886 as Chattanooga University. In 1969, after several mergers, it joined the University of Tennessee system and became UT at Chattanooga.

- Undergraduates: 10,084 | Graduate students: 1,304
- Ranked #23 in *U.S. News & World Report's* "Top Public Schools" in Regional Universities (South)
- 140 undergraduate majors and concentrations
- 100 graduate programs and concentrations
- Student athletes compete in 17 D-1 sports
- Athletic teams are called Mocs for the Mockingbird, the state bird of Tennessee
- "A Moc is a champion on the playing surface, in the classroom and most importantly, in life."



Jim Hynds (2nd from right) with one of his "trust groups," composed of faculty with a common love for Jesus, a common call to the academy, and a common desire to be used by God to change the world.

versations with professors.

Lisa dreams that "one day Prague's beautiful churches will not just be museums, but filled with worshipers." Jim ponders how that nation could be transformed within one generation if all Czech students knew just one

professor who genuinely loves Jesus.

UTC is the Christian faculty group's Jerusalem, but God has expanded their influence to the world in just two and a half years. †



The LEED-certified UTC library is a five-floor building with 180,000 square feet of space. Amenities include 37 study rooms, 24-hour student space, full-service café, four lounges and over 200 desktop computers for student use.

Sharing Christ Across Cultures

Faculty Profiles: Dr. Joan Mutanyatta-Comar, Senior Lecturer, Chemistry and Dr. Angela Navarro-Eisenstein, Senior Lecturer, Chemistry, *Georgia State University*

Dr. Joan Mutanyatta-Comar remembers “evangelism days” from her years of growing up in Botswana. “It was an open thing,” she explains. “You go out together as a church, door-to-door.”

When she moved to the U.S. and took a job as a chemistry professor at Georgia State University, Joan discovered that her forthright approach to sharing the gospel, though effective in Africa, did not work well on U.S. university campuses. Navigating the cultural differences between Africa and America, particularly in methods of ministry, was a challenge.

But God provided a guide. Joan’s good friend and fellow Christian chemistry professor, Dr. Angela Navarro-Eisenstein (an immigrant herself, from the Dominican Republic) introduced Joan to Faculty Commons staff member Barbara Leckman.

Barbara invited Joan and Angela to Faculty Commons’ *A Common Call* conference where they met other Christian professors from campuses around the Southeast. This event, says Angela, was a turning point for her: “I learned we are not alone.”

Angela loved the discussions of different ways professors can reach out to their students

and colleagues with the love of Jesus. “I don’t have to confront people with Bible verses they might not understand,” she notes. “I also learned that I am just a messenger. I am not responsible for their decisions.”

Joan was intrigued to hear from the other Christian professors how they talk to people about Christ in a way that does not offend American sensibilities.

Following the conference, Barbara provided one-on-one mentoring in evangelism. She sat down with the two and modeled the way she herself explains the gospel. She draws pictures to illustrate as she gently explains the concepts of sin and separation from God.

A little ministry training can go a long way. “We were all fired up!” Joan says. “We started ministering to people.” Both Joan and Angela applied their new knowledge immediately, with each of them leading a colleague to faith in Christ.

And they haven’t stopped. “Angela and I are always on the move, looking for opportunities for ministry,” notes Joan.

As immigrants themselves, they have a special gift for ministering to other immigrants. They understand the need to be accepted and

feel welcome. This usually opens doors for gospel conversations. “Because you are there for them and are showing them love, they are more willing to listen to you,” Joan explains.

Joan and Angela have encountered many

international scholars in Atlanta. “Christ commanded us to spread His gospel to all nations,” Angela explains. The nations are coming to Atlanta, and Joan and Angela welcome them with God’s love. †



As internationals themselves, chemistry lecturers Angela Navarro-Eisenstein (of the Dominican Republic) and Joan Mutanyatta-Comar (of Botswana) work together to welcome other immigrants and share God’s love with them.

Join with us in Prayer

Jesus replied, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.” – Matthew 22:37–39

1. Ask God to work across this country, turning hearts of stone to caring hearts of flesh.
2. Pray for all the freshmen who will venture onto campus this month. Ask God to draw them to Himself and to help them find Christ-following professors who welcome them.
3. Pray that God will use the resources of the university to help heal our nation and world.

A Common Call Conferences for Faculty

In the past 18 months Faculty Commons has hosted ten *A Common Call* conferences across the nation, attended by 220 professors, 40 faculty spouses, and 20 graduate students. They met to explore their common call to have a Christian influence in the university and the world. See acommoncall.org for information on an upcoming conference in your area.

I’m delighted to provide a strong endorsement for A Common Call. As a Christian biology professor at a public university, rarely am I around others who are like-minded in their prayerful desire to be salt and light on the university campus. A Common Call’s focus on practical ministry ideas is important, especially among a group that struggles with connecting heads and hearts.

– Jeff Hardin, M.Div., Ph.D. Professor and Chair,
Department of Zoology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The Listening Life: Embracing Attentiveness in a World of Distraction

Book review by Dr. Jay Lorenzen, Faculty Commons staff and retired professor of Political Science, *Air Force Academy*

Books are to be consumed, not savored. So I don’t read books twice — guilty of the very distraction, the inattention that Adam McHugh warns about in his book *The Listening Life: Embracing Attentiveness in a World of Distraction*. He argues convincingly that listening is at the heart of our spirituality, our relationships, and our mission in the world.

Thoroughly convicted, I’m reading McHugh’s book a third time, learning to listen to it deeply, quoting it widely, and gifting it broadly. When I become a better listener — to God, to others, to texts — I enter into the graces of love.

Scot McKnight, professor at Northern Seminary, also seems to have been similarly affected. “On every page, Adam McHugh offers wisdom that slowly marches us into a deeper kind of life, one marked by listening to God in a way that teaches us how to listen to one another and to ourselves.”

The word “listen” appears in Scripture more than 1500 times. Indeed, discipleship is a journey of ongoing listening, one in which true listening becomes the means for God to break up the “entrenched selfishness” of my own heart. No wonder Jesus said, “He who has ears, let him hear.”

In my information hoarding, I so often “listen for,” less like Jesus and more like a cross-examining attorney trying to catch any inconsistency or to hoard data. But if I can learn to “listen to,” like Jesus did, I’ll resist all my self-promoting, self-centered habits and keep the conversational arrow pointed unselfishly toward the other person.

One of the strongest chapters is about listening to people in pain. I so wished I’d understood earlier what McHugh warns of:

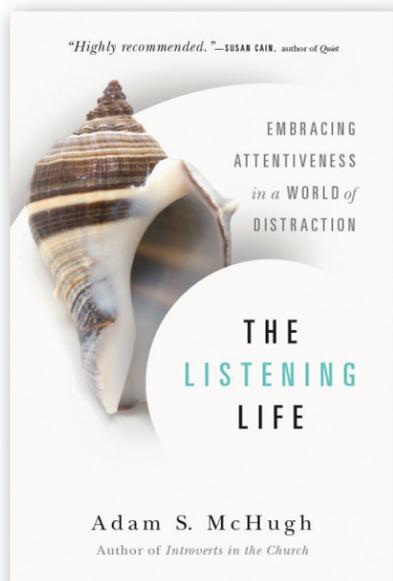
When we try to help someone in pain, we often end up saying or doing things, subconsciously, to assuage our own anxiety. Let’s be honest: we often want others to be okay so we can feel okay. We want them to feel better and move on so our lives can return to normal. We try to control the conversation as a way of compensating for our anxiety. Our approach to people in pain can amount to self-therapy.

Instructively, McHugh tells us not to listen to others in pain to fix their situation (our default). Often we are called to “go down into the pit with them, weeping with them, letting our heart break with the heartbroken, waiting together for resurrection.”

Bonhoeffer said it almost as strongly: “It must be a decisive rule of every Christian fellowship that each individual is prohibited from saying much that occurs to him ... Many

people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians because these Christians are talking when they should be listening.”

Although his book is highly practical, McHugh writes, “I care less about the what of listening and more about the who. Who do I have to become in order to have the capacity to listen?” †



Investing in the Mission

Your financial investment will help us 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 vital endeavor? All contributions to Faculty Commons are income tax deductible.

Cash donations

Make check payable to Cru and mail to Faculty Commons; 2001 W. Plano Parkway, Suite 2700; Plano, Texas 75075. Or invest online: give.cru.org/2271527

Maximize your giving to help reach the world for Christ

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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.



A higher standard.
A higher purpose.

Support Faculty Commons Staff Members

As part of Cru, all of our staff members trust God for their salary and ministry expenses. You can contribute to individuals at give.cru.org by typing their names in the search box.

Fast Facts:

Seven groups of three professors (called G-3s) met every three weeks this spring at *Cal Poly San Luis Obispo* for three things: Biblical content, missional focus and prayer.

Three *UW-Eau Claire* professors met weekly with our staff last spring to study *Mere Christianity* and sharpen their answers to tough questions from colleagues.

A Cru student at *Penn State* initiated a conversation with his professor to share Christ and found the professor to be a believer — led to Christ by one of his own professors!

The president of the *University of Florida* honored the Christian faculty group in March by hosting a dinner on campus and telling his faith story to the 200 attendees.



FACULTY COMMONS
A Cru Ministry

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