



Tomorrow's Leaders Today

The good news from HELM and higher education institutions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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What can we create together?

2009 HELM Leadership Fellows conference focuses on creativity in vocation, in faith, and in life

So many situations in the church call for creativity. How do you create a vital community? How do you revitalize a congregation? How do you create a community of young adults? How can you do ministry in a new way? How can you provide a seemingly impossible-to-create ministry to reach the seemingly impossible-to-reach community?

Creativity – in our work, in our faith, and in everyday life – was at the center of the HELM Leadership Fellows conference, held November 6-8 in Dallas.

Three guests, each with backgrounds in creative fields and the church, helped students contemplate creativity during the weekend. Each approached creativity from a different angle:

- Bill Thomas is a musician and actor serving as associate minister and music director at Church of the Valley in Van Nuys, Calif., explained his belief that faith is a “human’s encounter with the divine.” He also talked about the value of having a mentor to improve your craft. In his case, one of those mentors was Bill Cosby while Thomas worked on “The Cosby Show.”

- Sherri Emmons, soon-to-be published novelist and managing editor of Indianapolis-based *DisciplesWorld* magazine, explained how documenting the family stories of her mother led

to the creation of her upcoming fictional novel.

- Thom Schuyler, country music writer, recording executive and associate minister at Woodmont Christian Church in Nashville, explained how creativity led him into the big-money music production scene – and the challenges he faced balancing business and songwriting.

“The resource staff was especially articulate and attentive, passionate about what they do and sensitive to our world

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Texas Christian University’s SALT (Spirituality And Leadership Training) program equips Disciples students for spiritually grounded transformational leadership in congregations and non-profit organizations. HELM’s Dennis Landon and Brad Lyons visited about leadership and change with (from left) Sarah Tatlock, Erin Taylor, Phillip Short, TCU Associate Chaplain Jeremy Albers, and Ben Goss on November 8.

Barton College, Week of Compassion help students see church dealing with disaster

WILSON, N.C. – Barton College students are learning first-hand how the world comes together to deal with natural disasters through a partnership with Week of Compassion.

“Campus Compassion,” funded by a College-University Grant issued by HELM and by the Oreon E. Scott Foundation, is designed to educate and motivate young adults to respond to the global needs of the world.

“As Disciples’ ministries operating in different manifestations of the Church, Barton College and Week of

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Seeing the results of the HELM Leadership Fellows Program

By Krista Johnson

HELM Leadership Fellow alumna (2005)

For years my friends and I have talked and dreamed about becoming leaders in our church and having the opportunity to shape the future of our church. I know the opportunity to be a HELM Leadership Fellow made a huge impact on me, and the opportunities that I have had to grow as a young leader in the life of the church.

This past year I joined the Week of Compassion Advisory Committee, and this spring I served on a committee to call our new Associate Director for Week of Compassion. Even though I have begun to serve in additional leadership roles like this within the church, I must admit that sometimes it feels a little intimidating to sit in on conference calls with regional ministers, national staff, and directors of organizations. They introduce themselves with impressive titles and speak casually about their vast experience in the church. I explain that I'm a graduate student and chronic Disciples intern, but in my mind I'm wondering, "what do I, as a young person not planning on going to seminary, bring to the table?"

However, as the search committee process continued I became more confident, realizing that I did bring something. I began to speak up more in meetings and to trust that there



A 2005 Chapman University graduate, Krista Johnson spent a year in Palestine before pursuing a master's in conflict transformation.

were skills and experiences that had brought me to this place. Connections that I was exposed to as a HELM Leadership Fellow gave me the background and tools that helped me to be an effective young leader in that context.

Recently I was sitting and chatting with a few other former Leadership Fellows who had similar experiences. We had all grown together through college as Leadership Fellows and had gone on to do other work in the church. Some have taken the seminary route and are serving local churches, others have gone to work overseas through Global Ministries and come back to tell the story, and others have moved forward in a call to lay ministry. Looking back at where we had been

and where we are now, we realized that we were no longer simply dreaming of becoming leaders in the church. We were in many different contexts looked to as leaders in the life of the church.

I believe it is no coincidence that so many of the young leaders in the church today have experience as HELM Leadership Fellows. I believe that the connections, the confidence-building, the challenge, and the support provided through the Leadership Fellows program provided us with the very tools that enable us to be seen as leaders in the church today.

Bethany College's Hull receives T. A. Abbott Award for Faculty Excellence

Bethany psychology professor John H. Hull is the 2009 recipient of HELM's T. A. Abbott Award for Faculty Excellence.

"Dr. Hull embodies precisely the qualities listed in the criteria for this award. His passion and his accomplishments as a teacher, scholar and mentor to his students, and his commitment to faith and service to his fellow women and men, stand out as primary reasons for his achieving this honor," stated Darin E. Fields, Bethany College Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty. "John Hull is unquestionably one of the finest professors at Bethany College. He serves as an unsurpassed example to his students and colleagues of a life of continuing education and service."

The 26th recipient of the T. A. Abbott Award, Hull was selected by the HELM Board of Directors for his keen ability to inspire students to-

ward excellence through teaching and personal example, his demonstration of an educational philosophy that focuses on wholeness of person, his continued commitment to grow and learn within his academic discipline and his manifestation of a personal faith. Hull joined the Bethany College faculty in 1976.

Hull received a \$1,000 cash gift for the purpose of Hull's continued growth as a teacher and scholar and a plaque noting his recognition.

The T. A. Abbott Award was established through a gift to the Higher Education and Leadership Ministries from the descendants of the Reverend T. A. Abbott, who served as an administrator and faculty member at Culver-Stockton College. Nominees must be full-time teaching faculty at Disciples-related institutions of higher education. Hull is the third member of the Bethany College faculty to be honored with the award.

BARTON

Compassion have a responsibility to find new ways to engage young adults on the journey of spiritual maturity, social consciousness, and faithful stewardship," said Hollie Woodruff, chaplain of Barton College. "Exposure to the needs of the world is a critical piece of that journey. We want to create an innovative strategy to explore what working relationships can emerge between Week of Compassion and Disciples-related colleges and universities."

The program includes a spring-break mission trip to the Gulf Coast where cleanup from the 2005 hurricanes continues. Students also decided to support a medical mission to Liberia in April.

The year-long pilot program will conclude next summer with a retreat hosted by Barton College that will involve chaplains from all Disciples-related colleges and universities. Woodruff hopes this retreat will be a springboard for other Disciples-related schools to become more involved with Week of Compassion.

FELLOWS

views and visions of faith,” said Georgia Kuss, a senior at Kenyon College. “The discussion generated by the group and the resource staff is always my favorite part of the conference, but this year it was particularly fulfilling.”

In one of those moments when the spirit transforms a normal discussion into a holy discourse, one Q-and-A session evolved into a frank conversation about race and class in the church, citing both the progress society has made so far and the progress still to come.

“The speakers spoke so honestly from their life experience and teachings, and I can apply that to my own life,” said Sarah Cheon, a junior at the University of California in Berkeley. “I feel I’ve learned more about myself through these people than I could have through hours of solitary reflection.”

“They all had unique stories, but they shared the theme of expressing God, knowing God in ways that aren’t at first obvious,” said Allie Lundblad, a sophomore at Oberlin College. “The theme of creativity affects all of us, whether we think of ourselves as artsy or not. To live your life with purpose is to live your life with creativity.”

Jesse Stephenson, a junior at Transylvania University, appreciated the timing of the conference in his academic career. “The theme was well-crafted and extremely relevant to my own life right now as I begin thinking about what direction I should take after college. They offered us their own narratives and advice they have picked up along the way, which was extremely insightful as each of us begins our own narrative.”

Worship also encouraged students to think differently: On Fri-



Allie Lundblad (foreground), Alison Simon, and Cambria Findley-Grubb let their creativity flow through words and drawing during Friday night's worship service.

day night, students were encouraged to draw or write whatever came to mind while in a spirit of prayer. Saturday night, students read their favorite scripture aloud and reflected silently on how it affected them personally.

Saturday afternoon took the conference to downtown Dallas, where students had two radically different options for engaging their creativity: the Dallas Museum of Art provided tangible examples of creativity, while Dealey Plaza challenged students to contemplate different theories of the Kennedy assassination.

The Leadership Fellows Program creates a strong community using formal methods such as workshops but also through communal living. Students stayed up until the early morning hours talking or playing games, including a



Bill Thomas



Sherri Emmons



Thom Schuyler

spirited football game in the midnight hour. When they finally slept, they slept in the church's youth center. Saturday's dinner also gave students the opportunity to meet several HELM Leadership Fellows alumni living in Dallas-Fort Worth.

“The sense of community that this group created within the very first day was amazing,” said Chapman University sophomore Charisse Knorr. “By the end of the weekend I wanted to stay another week.”

The resource staff also became part of the HELM community.

“Until I experienced the weekend, I wasn't clear why HELM wanted me to stay around after my presentation,” Thomas said. “Getting to spend time listening to the young adults of our

church was inspirational, and worshipful. They were extremely empowering, to each other, and to me. I wish that every young adult had the opportunity to apply for this program.”

Taking the energy and lessons from a conference isn't always easy, but TCU junior Caroline Hamilton had high hopes. “If the dynamic of this weekend could be the dynamic of our church *en toto*, we would be growing, thriving, thinking, and doing the work of God.”

Most of the conference was held at Northway Christian Church, which provided accommodations for the group and tremendous hospitality. HELM joined the Northway community Sunday morning for worship.

If you know a student who will be entering a four-year college or transferring from a community college to a four-year college in 2009 - a student you believe has leadership potential for the church and the world - let us know. We will send information on how to apply for the HELM Leadership Fellows Program. It provides mentoring on or near campus, annual educational workshops, summer internships, a grant

to help pay for the student's education, and the opportunity to discover his or her role in the future of our church.

To pass along the name of a potential applicant:

- call us at 314-991-3000
- e-mail helm@helmdisciples.org
- fax 314-991-2957.

Please send your nomination by February 1.

On campus

Transylvania president Shearer retiring in June 2010

LEXINGTON, Ky. — After 27 years in office, Transylvania University President Charles L. Shearer will retire in June 2010, the longest tenure in the university's 230-year history.

"During Charles Shearer's tenure, Transylvania has been transformed," Board chair William T. Young Jr. said. "When he became president in 1983, the university had a enrollment of fewer than 700 students, a minimal endowment, and an aging physical plant. Today, Transylvania's enrollment is at our comfortable capacity of about 1,100, the endowment stands at \$115 million, the campus has been essentially rebuilt, and the university is ranked among the leading liberal arts colleges in the nation. This transformation has been driven by Charles's leadership, attention to detail, dedication, and incredible enthusiasm."

Young noted that Shearer's 27-year tenure is remarkable in comparison with other college and university presidents across the country, whose average tenure is 8.5 years in office, according to the American Council on Education. He also said that Shearer has graciously agreed to stay on as president beyond June 30, if necessary, until the right candidate is identified and appointed. He will also continue to play a supportive role for the college.

A committee will be appointed immediately to oversee a national search for his successor.

Drury honors noted death penalty opponent Prejean

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — Drury University presented Sister Helen Prejean with an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters October 15. Drury honored the nun and author for her commitment to justice, her courage in telling her story as well as the stories of victims, victims' families and death row inmates.



SHEARER

Sister Prejean began her prison ministry in 1981 when she dedicated her life to the poor in New Orleans. She became pen pals with a convicted killer of two teenagers who was sentenced to death row and was facing the electric chair. Sister Prejean visited him often and became his spiritual adviser. Her eyes were then opened to the execution process of Louisiana.

Sister Prejean turned her experiences into *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty* in the United States, which was nominated for a 1993 Pulitzer Prize. It was then developed into a film in 1996. She has witnessed five executions in Louisiana during her ministry efforts and now educates the public about the death penalty.

Chalice Camp connects seminarians and new clergy to mentors

LEESBURG, Ind. (DisciplesWorld) — While seminary students receive plenty of instruction in biblical studies and theology, the practical details of performing weddings, funerals, baptisms are often learned on the job.

How does a small minister immerse a tall member during baptism? After a church member dies, when and how often should the minister visit the family of the deceased? How should left over communion elements be disposed of?

Thanks to Chalice Camp, a weekend retreat, seminarians and new ministers can gain practical skills before they are called on to perform the rites and ordinances of congregational life. Perhaps more importantly, the camp builds special relationships between those preparing for ministry and those who have been at it awhile.

Around 50 students and ministry mentors gathered at the Indiana region's Camp Barbee. Some were attending for the first time; others came last year and returned for the newly-added second learning track focusing on topics like church administration, conflict management, and interviewing for a ministry position.

Besides the hands-on training in funerals, weddings, communion, and baptism, students had time for one-on-one conversations about clergy life.

HELM Board's Edwards named 2009 Faithful Servant

Dr. William Edwards, a member of the HELM Board of Directors and the Ohio Regional Minister, is the recipient of the 2009 Faithful Servant Award, Given annually by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, the award recognizes individuals who have given an extra-measure of service to causes in the whole church.



EDWARDS

Inquire, Explore, Conclude, Persuade, Engage

Lynchburg College students will learn to: Inquire, Explore, Conclude, Persuade, Engage. These are the five goals of a new initiative recently adopted by LC faculty.

"It's about helping the students develop into capable and self-aware critical thinkers by the time they graduate from LC," said English professor Richard Burke. "We let students know, even before they come here, what the essential purpose of the LC education is."

Burke noted that many faculty members already work toward these goals, but this will be a systematic approach by all faculty to ensure that every student receives extensive and ongoing instruction in critical thinking. Secondly, this approach will make it relatively easy for students to see connections and draw distinctions among different disciplines.

"We will be giving student learning a prominence in our promotional materials that it doesn't quite have at the moment," Burke said. "Frankly that sets us apart from most other colleges."

The goals, to be implemented in fall 2010, reflect the faculty's desire "to see our students develop into independent thinkers," he said.

While critical thinking skills have long been central to LC's capstone Senior Symposium, this emphasis from freshman year onward will help students be ready for their senior year.

More news at www.helmdisciples.org.



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