Response

Turning the table

Kevin Finch started Big Table to serve the hospitality industry

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Eating together builds community because it’s hard to sit and share food with people without also sharing a bit of our stories and lives.

I once read a story about a woman who made it her New Year’s resolution to invite 500 guests to her home throughout the year. She gathered friends and strangers around her table for meals and hosted her 500th guest sometime before Thanksgiving. I’ve always thought it was a particularly lovely resolution to make and far more fun than the prosaic goals of losing weight or exercising more.

There’s something special that happens when you sit down and share a meal with someone — a bond develops over breaking bread together. Maybe it’s the fact that even if someone is a stranger, when we eat together, we recognize our common need to put food and water into our bodies to stay alive. Or maybe eating together builds community because it’s hard to sit and share food with people without also sharing a bit of our stories and lives.

When I was growing up, we often went to Chinese restaurants because my parents missed the food of their homelands. In American restaurants, each person orders their own entrée, but in Asian restaurants we always ordered “family style,” where all dishes were placed in the center of the table and shared among everyone there, furthering the idea that sustaining life is a communal affair.

In our cover story, “Turning the Table,” alumnus Kevin Finch ’89 has created a ministry to serve workers in the hospitality industry. Several times a year, his nonprofit, Big Table, brings in guest chefs to cook a seven-course dinner for line cooks, waiters and waitresses, and other hospitality staff. All the people who are normally the servers are served.

I nodded when I read this in Kevin’s story: “To Finch, it’s the kind of kingdom reversal Jesus spoke of in Matthew 20, where the last are now first, and the first are last. Some of the recipients of Big Table dinners have served or cooked thousands of meals but never once been a guest.”

Similarly, SPU alumnus Rick Reynolds ’75 has made it his life’s work to tend to those on the margins. For 28 years, he served as executive director of Operation Nightwatch to tend to those experiencing homelessness before his retirement in June 2022.

I read the results of a disheartening survey this year that found that non-Christians are likely to use the words “hypocritical,” “judgmental,” and “self-righteous” when asked to describe Christians. I have no doubt those perceptions and labels are merited at times, but I’m grateful to be the editor of Response, where I regularly receive alumni updates and stories of those in our SPU community who are living out their faith by serving others in the world.

It’s encouraging to me to encounter people like alumna Jamie Crespo ’12 who runs marathons to raise money for colon cancer awareness after both her father and mother were diagnosed with the disease. And I’m inspired by missionaries like Matt Basinger ’03 and Jacinda Wiley Basinger ’02 who are working to transform lives and expand educational opportunities for students in Papua, Indonesia.

I hope that as you read through this issue of Response, you’ll sense the myriad ways God has worked through people to set metaphorical (and literal) tables in the wilderness of this world.
Turning the table

Kevin Finch '89 started Big Table to serve the hospitality industry

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Rick Reynolds ’75 gave thousands of people a hot meal and a place to sleep
How much do you know about SPU?

At the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. Army opened a fort on Whidbey Island to guard the entrance to Puget Sound and the naval shipyard in Bremerton. Within 20 years, the fort was the fourth-largest military post in Washington, housing 10 officers and 428 enlisted men.

After World War II, the fort was decommissioned, and Seattle Pacific took ownership in the 1950s of the former parade field and troop housing. What was the name of this U.S. Army fort?

“...man again in human form.”

— Ivanka Demchuk

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Last issue: Ukrainian artist

Several readers wrote to ask about artist Ivanka Demchuk, whose work was featured on Response’s Fall/Winter 2021 cover, on our Christmas notecards, and on the pages illustrating our Advent readings.

Demchuk was born and lives in Lviv, Ukraine. Her parents, both doctors, suspected she had some eye afflictions and took Ivanka to see an ophthalmologist when she was a child. Her doctor recommended an unusual remedy for her diagnosis of farsightedness and astigmatism: Demchuk was to cover one eye and paint, color, and sculpt relying on her other eye to increase its visual load.

Demchuk was thrilled with the prescribed treatment and threw herself into art — joining art clubs and pouring over classic paintings.

Eventually, she earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Lviv National Academy of Arts.

Her mother fretted over the unreliable income of an artist, but after art school, Demchuk chose an even more narrow specialty: sacred art.

“My favorite topics are victory and loss; the birth of life and death; motherhood; sacrifice; human transformation,” Demchuk said.

“These themes are close to my heart as they often overlap with current pressing issues.”

Demchuk wants her art to reduce the distance between the creator and creation. “In my art, God comes to man again in human form,” she said. “My saints are placed in modern interiors or imaginary landscapes, close to humans today. We can look at the traditional icons but see in them the people around us.”

Before we went to press, Demchuk wrote to say she and her family were safe, for now, in Lviv, Ukraine. You can find her full interview at stories.spu.edu/Ivanka-demchuk

Email your answer to response@spu.edu by Aug. 1, 2022, to be entered into a drawing to win an SPU sweatshirt.

Last issue’s answers

Congratulations to Annie Kato ’09, assistant professor of management at SPU, for correctly identifying David Anderson as the longest-serving director of choral music at SPU from 1992 to 2018. “I will always look back fondly on my days in the concert choir,” Kato wrote.
Carol Redfield  
Adjunct Professor of Nursing, SPU School of Health Sciences  
I want to provide some background to the article about SPU nursing students working with the Phinney Neighborhood Association [Fall/Winter 2021, “Bringing healing to the table”]. Nursing instructor Carol McFarland brought the first group of student nurses to PNA in early 2020, and I helped advance the partnership between PNA and SPU’s nursing students who completed their 10 weeks of community health hours there under my supervision.  
The nursing students and I were able to get Lahai’s executive director and health care staff to offer medical services at the PNA. (Lahai Health provides a mobile medical clinic to underserved communities in King and Snohomish counties.) We also connected Medical Teams International to the PNA’s hot meal site and secured significant funding from the Evangelical Chinese Church to help cover the cost of MTI’s monthly mobile dental clinics there.  
I wanted to mention these organizations to acknowledge their huge, ongoing contributions to better health in our community.

Steven D. Martinson ‘71  
Lutz, Florida  
I wanted to take a moment to congratulate you on the most recent edition of Response [Fall/Winter 2021]. I was heartened to find such excellent quality articles. The design of the edition is likewise outstanding. In addition to Response, my wife, Elizabeth [Timmermans Martinson ‘73], and I receive university publications from Western Washington University, the University of Washington, and the University of Arizona. Response is the best of those publications. Thank you for this issue.

Paul Andrews ‘70  
North Attleboro, Massachusetts  
In the Fall/Winter Response, I read this observation: “The system of higher education was created by the privileged for the privileged,” which I took to imply a pejorative sense. On another page an observer offered that SPU is made up of rich, white kids.  
I know 50 years makes a huge difference in culture and in the standard of living, but in my four years at Seattle Pacific College, I rubbed shoulders with students whose parents mostly worked in automobile garages, who farmed, who ran small family businesses, taught school, sold insurance, or served as ministers. Many students came from small towns where economic opportunity was modest at best.  
It was also clear in the 1960s that many Free Methodist families — living at the midpoint on the socioeconomic scale or even lower — made great sacrifices to send their sons and daughters to SPC. In the same spirit, they also supported the school financially and sustained its existence. As a general observation, I failed to note any “privilege” in that.

Candy Gray  
Kennewick, Washington  
The article, “When the holidays hurt” was timely for so many. My husband, Fred, passed away of COVID in March 2020. I am a member of a Facebook page for COVID widows and widowers. When I read this article, I knew it would benefit and give some comfort to many in this group. COVID has been hard for so many and the holiday season makes the loss of loved ones even more difficult.
Certainty of an uncertain future

By Pete Menjares

There are multiple characters in the Bible whose stories and paths fascinate me, but Joseph is a character I’ve respected and personally resonated with to some degree. Like Joseph, I expected God’s promises made to me early in life would happen sooner rather than later. At age 17, God spoke to me through a street preacher who told me I was going to be a leader, a pastor, a teacher. That didn’t happen for a long time. In fact, when I started my ministry, I was hired to be the janitor of my church, not the associate pastor.

I began to learn that things don’t always happen the way you expect them to. Sometimes we must be willing to walk through the unknown paths, diligently preparing ourselves for a future that's not always clear to us at each step along the way.

I’ve been thinking about Joseph’s journey preparing for an uncertain future as I’ve been reading the book The Great Upheaval: Higher Education’s Past, Present, and Uncertain Future by Arthur Levine and Scott Van Pelt. It’s a book that SPU’s board, senior leadership team, and campus leaders are reading and discussing as we continually discern the future of higher education and prepare our students to navigate the myriad changes before us.

The Great Upheaval identifies three significant forces that are profoundly changing America: demographic shifts, the economy, and technology.

Levine and Van Pelt note that by 2045, whites will make up less than half of America’s population (49.8%). Hispanics will constitute nearly a quarter (24.6%) of the population. And Blacks and Asians together will represent another fifth (21%) of the nation.

SPU’s demographics already reflect this shift — 61% of entering freshmen in the 2021-22 class are from a historically underrepresented group, and our University is actively working to provide resources and support for these students who might also be the first in their families to attend college or earn a college degree. We have programs such as Ascent to provide support to first-generation students and the BioCORE Scholars Program to provide mentorships, hands-on research opportunities, and a close-knit community to these students in the biological and biomedical sciences.

We know the rising cost of higher education (along with soaring inflation in every other realm) is causing deep anxiety for students and families. For the incoming students in 2021, SPU took the unprecedented move to reduce undergraduate tuition rates by 25%, increased student scholarships, and pledged to cap future tuition increases.

Prior to COVID-19, the internet, personal computers, mobile devices, along with a slew of other technological advances, already heralded us into the knowledge economy. But the last two years radically accelerated the adoption of remote and online learning modules. At SPU, programs such as our newest master of science in nutrition degree provide a hybrid delivery of in-person and online learning to offer graduate students the best of both learning formats. This is in addition to our new, fully online master of business administration degree.

Like Joseph of old, we may not know the precise configurations of the future, but we don’t have to be anxious or distressed over profound disruptions affecting higher education. At SPU, we seek God’s wisdom and diligently prepare and educate students with the knowledge and skills to be adaptive to an ever-changing world.
EVERY YEAR, collegiate engineering teams have the chance to design and build a single-seat, off-road car to race in the Baja SAE competition. The Society of Automotive Engineers limits the teams to a stock 10-horsepower engine, with teams competing to have their design accepted for manufacture by a fictitious firm.

In May, the SPU Falcon Racing team traveled to Cookeville, Tennessee, to compete in events to test their vehicle’s acceleration, maneuverability, sled pull, and suspension.

“My favorite part about the club is that it gives students the opportunity to apply their engineering skills outside of the classroom. Getting more time and experience in the machine shop is definitely a plus as well,” said Sean Barbour, senior mechanical engineering major and team co-director.
Alissa Walter receives Graves Award

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR of History Alissa Walter ’08 won the prestigious Arnold L. Graves and Lois S. Graves Award in the Humanities. The $11,000 award will help fund Walter’s travels to Iraq, Kuwait, and Washington, D.C., related to her research on Iraqi history.

Walter, who specializes in the Middle East and speaks Arabic, plans to draw from Iraqi archival documents and conduct oral history interviews for her forthcoming book on how authoritarian rulers governed Iraq’s capital city of Baghdad from 1950 to 2011. She is also beginning research projects on the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990 and 1991.

Her book will cover the distribution of food rations during economic sanctions in the 1990s and changes to the criminal justice system in the early 2000s, as well as a chapter examining the impact in Baghdad after Americans helped to create a neighborhood council system in the capital following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. (The Graves Award will enable Walter to complete the research necessary to finalize her book manuscript by December 2023.)

The award will also help Walter create a virtual cultural-exchange partnership between students at SPU and students in the Middle East.

“One of my goals as a history professor is to help students develop empathetic understandings of different perspectives and to practice adopting multiple points of view,” Walter said. “To achieve this in my classes on Islamic civilization and Middle Eastern history, I plan to develop ‘pen pal’ relationships between my students and college students in Iraq or Kuwait using video messaging.”
ON APRIL 13, 2022, SPU returned to an in-person showcase for its sixteenth Social Venture Plan Competition after going online for two years during the pandemic. Student teams developed solutions to a wide range of social problems from reducing carbon emissions, to chronic pain management, to vaccine distribution in the developing world.

My Monster Monitor, an app that will make a game of entering necessary data for Type 1 diabetes, won the $5,000 Herbert B. Jones Grand Prize, as well as the Donald B. Summers People’s Choice award of $1,000. Nearly 250,000 children in the U.S. suffer from Type 1 diabetes. Research suggests the disease can be better regulated if a patient engages in the management process.

The My Monster Monitor app creates games using fun monster characters to engage and educate kids about their bodies and their disease. The My Monster Monitor team included senior business administrator majors Faith Stehr, Manny Diaz, and Joshua Erme; junior business administration major Jeanell Vergara; senior visual communication major Jenna Rasmussen; and senior Lydia Porter, who has a self-designed music business major.

Ultropia won $3,000 as the second-place winner of the SVPC. Ultropia seeks to foster global access to clean laundry while reducing water consumption and carbon emissions. The team is developing the first all-in-one ultrasonic washer and dryer to increase access to laundry machines and improve sanitation, all while providing a resource-, energy-, and time-saving product. The Ultropia team was made up of University of Washington students Cody Birkland, a master of engineering student, and Lloyd Dees, a master of entrepreneurship student.

“I was extremely impressed by the level of professionalism exhibited by all participants, and the students’ passion for their projects was especially uplifting,” said returning volunteer judge Frances Walker, a social impact consultant.

The competition is organized by the Center for Applied Learning in the School of Business, Government, and Economics at SPU.
SEATTLE IS A FAR CRY from the humid jungle rainforest of Papua, Indonesia, for Maria Weya, Frans Agapa, Filia Rifurareany, and Jidon Yeimo. All four students came to SPU in fall 2021 on full scholarships from the Indonesian government.

Maria Weya is excited to be at SPU, but admits it wasn’t an easy adjustment. “I wanted to come here because it’s where Jacinda and Matt attended,” she said.

Jacinda Wiley Basinger ’02, and her husband, Matt Basinger ’03, are missionaries in Papua, Indonesia, and it is through their education work on the island that these students found their way to Seattle Pacific University. (Read more about the Basingers’ work on page 35.)

Weya, a global development major, appreciates the diversity of SPU’s student body, its proximity to downtown Seattle, and meeting people from around the world. “In all of the struggles I face here, it’s faith that keeps me strong. I pray. And I call Jacinda, and she counsels me,” Weya said.

Weya says she’s also found a community of people — from her resident advisor, Noha, to her faculty advisor, Assistant Professor of Global Development Mohammad Qadam Shah — eager to assist. “Everyone’s very open and wants to help,” she said. “My family is very proud of me as their firstborn woman who can go to college outside the country. There are so many struggles in Papua for its development, politics, justice system, and economy. I want to be educated so I can be used by God to bless the people of Papua.”

Frans, a computer science major, is the social justice director for Hill Hall’s area council. He plays intramural basketball, soccer, and volleyball, and he holds down several campus jobs, including working as a library assistant and as a staff member for athletic events. He attends Every Nation Church Seattle, where he sings on the worship team.

Frans expected his computer science professors to be serious, but they surprised him. “One of my professors, Carlos Arias, is so funny. I thought the professors wouldn’t even smile. He likes making jokes while he’s lecturing.” Frans is pondering a career in machine learning. Filia Rifurareany is an apparel design major. Jidon Yeimo is an engineering student.

In The Radiance of God: Christian Doctrine Through the Image of Divine Light (Cascade Books, 2021), Professor of Theology Douglas M. Koskela explores the Christian faith through the motif of light and God’s radiance. Koskela invites readers to reflect upon the ways in which God’s divine light is alluring, transforming, and ultimately joyful.

Sara Shaban, assistant professor of journalism, wrote Iranian Feminism and Transnational Ethics in Media Discourse (Lexington Books, 2022), released in January. Shaban’s book examines the news and social media coverage of #WhiteWednesdays, a social media campaign where women wear white to protest to Iran’s dress code. Her critical discourse analysis of the campaign highlights how real representations of Iran, Muslim women, and feminist politics are obscured in favor of news that reaffirms U.S. Islamophobic and xenophobic ideologies.
ADJUNCT EDUCATION PROFESSOR IS FINALIST IN A GLOBAL TEACHER CONTEST

JENNIE WARMOUTH, a second grade teacher at Spruce Elementary in Lynnwood, Washington, and an adjunct professor at SPU’s School of Education, was one of 50 finalists for the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize in 2021. The $1 million Global Teacher Prize seeks to recognize an exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession as well as shine a spotlight on the critical role teachers play in society.

Warmouth was chosen as a finalist from more than 8,000 nominations and applicants from 121 countries worldwide. She works with students from diverse and often low-income backgrounds and has helped her students develop a sense of personal agency and also compassion by creating advertisements for difficult-to-place pets at a local animal shelter. Warmouth’s students have helped to re-home 600 pets, and the work with the shelter has helped her students consider professions in veterinary medicine, neuroscience, education, and creative writing. SPU previously highlighted Warmouth’s work as a National Geographic Grosvenor Fellow in Response (“A long distance relationship,” Spring/Summer 2021).

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I may remember. Involve me and I learn.”
— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

NEW MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NUTRITION DEGREE

THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES is introducing a master of science in nutrition in Autumn Quarter 2022. The new graduate program allows students to deepen their knowledge in the science and application of nutrition, as well as gain knowledge in epidemiology, research methods, and clinical and functional nutrition in four academic quarters.

The nutrition sciences graduate degree is a 33-credit program designed to be completed over 11 months for full-time students, or 22 months for part-time students.

There are numerous ways in which race, age, ability, gender, and other areas of diversity may affect one’s health, so courses for this degree will explore the role of diversity in nutrition research, nutrition recommendations, and patient care.

Core courses will also explore food and faith, advanced metabolism, epidemiology, and research methods; while electives include topics such as disordered eating and non-diet approaches; controversies in nutrition therapy for chronic diseases, and food as medicine: culinary nutrition and healing foods.

Graduate students can either work on a capstone project or submit a traditional research thesis as a final project.

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is not required for this program. View more information at spu.edu/ms-nutrition.
Seeking a breakthrough

BioCORE Scholars are on the cutting edge of genome research

By Lee Fleisher — Illustrations by Matt Chinworth

At Seattle Pacific University, undergraduates find themselves on the cutting-edge of microbiology research from the start. Working side by side with their professors, and sometimes in partnership with the University of Washington, these students are making important scientific discoveries — and charting the course of their future careers.

Zoie Bailey ’22 wanted to be a vet when she grew up. She spent years caring for her pets, but she changed her mind in high school when she became interested in human physiology and anatomy.

Bailey wasn’t sure what type of doctor she wanted to be, but she knew she wanted an undergraduate experience where her professors knew her. “My mother and I toured the SPU campus, and we loved it,” she remembered. “I felt drawn to the school.”

Being a freshman in college — away from friends and family for the first time — can be difficult. Add to that a challenging course load, and students can find themselves feeling isolated, Bailey said.

That changed when she learned about SPU’s BioCORE Scholars Program from one of her teaching assistants. The initiative supports students like Bailey who are traditionally underrepresented in biological and biomedical sciences or who may be the first in their families to go to college.

Bailey benefited from having a mentor during her first year at SPU to guide her through the challenges all freshmen face. When she was accepted into the BioCORE program, her research career at SPU began.

A close-knit academic family

Victoria Bowman ’22 knew she wanted to be a doctor after taking a microbiology class during her senior year in high school. “At that time, I was facing some medical issues. Some of the doctors who cared for me were also researchers, and I knew that’s what I wanted to be.”

Bowman, who identifies as a mixed-race Filipina, believes the BioCORE program connected her to a community at SPU. “I chose SPU partly because I wanted to live in Seattle, but I’ve stayed because of the faculty and students I’ve worked with and the BioCORE program.

“Certain messages have been internalized for me throughout my life,” Bowman admitted, “especially the idea that I had to prove myself because I am a woman and a minority. Growing up, I never had scientist role models, let alone women who were scientists or anyone who looked like me. That changed at SPU.”

Bowman and Bailey became fast friends. In the summer of their first year, they participated in a weeklong project with Karisa Pierce, professor of chemistry and chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, to study metals in different shellfish and water samples.

“I was nervous working in the lab that first time,” Bailey remembered. “I was scared I would mess up or set something on fire. But that summer, I worked with investigators and other students who looked like me. I grew more confident and capable.”
The experience spurred the women to pursue other research opportunities at SPU.

“The professors at SPU are proactive in ensuring students have opportunities to grow and succeed,” Bowman said. “Without them and the BioCORE Scholars program, I might have left the sciences.”

**Immersive class experiences**

Derek Wood had one guiding principle in mind when he designed his senior-level molecular biology class at SPU: “I want to put students in the same environment they will find themselves in when they graduate.”

Traditional lab classes assign students a series of exercises that teach a principle. The students do the same things, and the experiments always work. But Derek, a professor in the Biology Department, designed his class to immerse students in authentic research.

“Over 10 weeks, our students work side by side with faculty on real-world projects,” he said. “They design their protocols, do the work, and analyze and present their results.”

And Derek had access to a research project that could help patients around the world.

*Mycoplasma genitalium* (MG) is a sexually transmitted pathogen. It is present in 4% of the world’s population and up to 40% of sex workers. It was recently identified as a cause of reproductive tract disorders and infertility in women and men. These bacterial infections are inherently resistant to antibiotics and can last for years in the human body.

“Normally, white blood cells from the immune system recognize and react to foreign substances in the body,” Derek explained. “They attack bacteria like MG and get rid of them, but somehow MG alters its shape and hides. Before we can develop more effective treatments, we need to understand how that process works.”

That’s where SPU students can make important discoveries. SPU uses next-generation DNA sequencing and provides this expertise in support of projects on MG at the UW.

Derek broke up his class into six different teams. Bailey’s team studied the microbiome of animals infected by MG. The microbiome — the existing community of microorganisms — and the immune system support one another to promote human health. And it’s the microbiome that teaches the immune system to identify and attack viruses. This field of study is one of the hottest in medicine today as investigators are recognizing the microbiome’s role in preventing disease and promoting good health.

Bowman’s team analyzed cell samples collected from MG-infected pigtail macaques, which share many important features with humans. They carefully isolated DNA from the samples and sequenced it to learn how the microbiome that MG encounters influences its ability to cause disease.

“These students are working on real-world science,” Derek said. “They
I learned how amazing medical research was, and I knew I wanted to be a scientist,” Aguila said.

At the end of her first year at SPU, Aguila was introduced to the BioCORE Scholars Program. Once accepted, she was placed in a cohort of students who took the same science classes, studied together, and performed hands-on research during a summer internship. In addition, Aguila and her classmates were paired with peer and faculty mentors and networked with professional scientists.

“BioCORE brings in several guest speakers. As an undergraduate, it was great to talk with scientists who are working in the spaces I aspire to be in,” she said.

That connection changed everything for her. “I feel like I’ve spent my life proving my intellectual abilities because of the way I look,” Aguila said. “Suddenly I was surrounded by students and professors who looked like me and faced the same challenges I did.” The experience was so rewarding, she became a mentor to the students who followed her, sharing her own experiences and supporting their hard work.

Since graduation, Aguila has continued the research she started as an undergraduate at the University of Washington’s Harborview Lab with Gwen Wood, research assistant professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Aguila was accepted to the University of Washington’s graduate program for microbiology for this fall. She hopes to become a professor and inspire undergraduates to pursue a career in medical research.

“It doesn’t matter what you look like or where you come from — you can become a scientist,” Aguila said. “The SPU faculty inspired and supported me, and I hope to do the same with my students.”

“Many undergraduate students never have the chance to work with next-generation DNA sequencing or the gene-editing tool CRISPR.”

— Derek Wood

Despite a focused effort to build a diverse physician workforce, students of color are still underrepresented in medical schools. The BioCORE Scholars Program at SPU hopes to change that.

Launched in 2016, the leadership program builds community, promotes academic success, and creates mentoring networks for underrepresented and first-generation college students in the biomedical sciences.

The program gave Laarni Aguila ’19 the support she needed to chase her dreams.

Aguila was always interested in science. Originally from the Philippines, she grew up watching her father, a general practice physician, care for a population afflicted by easily preventable diseases. After her father’s death, she moved to Washington with her mother and brother.

“High school, I completed the Running Start program that allowed me to take college credit courses in biology. Lab with Gwen Wood, research assistant professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Aguila was accepted to the University of Washington’s graduate program for microbiology for this fall. She hopes to become a professor and inspire undergraduates to pursue a career in medical research.

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"There is an urgency to understanding the immune response to [the pathogen] MG, and it’s incredibly beneficial to me to have these students in my lab."

— Gwendolyn Wood

“I remember those words every time I do a presentation, and I’m not as nervous anymore.”

Bailey plans to spend a gap year working in a research laboratory while studying for the MCAT, the admission test for medical school. “BioCORE gave me the opportunity to understand what I am passionate about,” she said. “Here, I was able to understand what research is, what it means to be a scientist, and how to build relationships with peers around me.”

Bailey plans to pursue a career as an OB/GYN and as an investigator focused on molecular biology research.

The life of a researcher
Cellular and molecular biology majors at SPU also have the chance to intern at the University of Washington’s Harborview Lab under the direction of Gwen Wood, research assistant professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and Derek’s wife.

“There is an urgency to understanding the immune response to [the pathogen] MG, and it’s incredibly beneficial to me to have these students in my lab,” Gwen said. “Undergraduates like Zoie and Victoria bring energy and new ideas to our investigations. They provide invaluable knowledge that advances our work and helps us apply for future funding.”

Sometimes the work isn’t always exciting.

“I’m isolating protein fragments with Dr. [Gwen] Wood to understand how antibodies bind to different regions of an adherence protein,” Bailey said. “It seemed very tedious at first, but it’s taught me to look for ways our protocols might affect our results. This experience will give me an advantage over someone who has never considered how each step influences the next in research.”

Gwen agreed. “Being an investigator is a hard way of life. We’re inventing new techniques that have never been used for MG before. Our protocols will fail and fail again, but if we can conclude an avenue doesn’t work, that’s actually a win.”

Not all experiments fail, however.

Bowman joined the Harborview Lab during her sophomore year at SPU, when she began a cloning project to delete a gene that encodes a protein in MG that interacts with antibodies in abnormal ways.

“We’ve been cloning DNA fragments and trying to delete the gene since I started in the lab,” Bowman said. Two year later, during Bowman’s senior year, they were finally able to successfully complete the deletion. “Now we can study what happens to the disease. We believe if you can delete the gene from MG, it will become more susceptible to antibodies.”

Bowman plans to continue her work in the Harborview Lab before applying to graduate school. “I am fascinated with genetics and the bioinformatic aspects of medicine. I hope to become a genetic counselor one day.”
FOR THE FOURTH TIME in school history, the Seattle Pacific Falcons hoisted the NCAA Division II West Region women’s soccer championship trophy, as Makena Rietz (17) and Madison Ibale did the honors. SPU captured the trophy in Dallas, Texas, on Dec. 2, 2021, when they defeated arch-rival Western Washington in the regional title game, 2-1. Sophie Beadle scored on a penalty kick, and Claire Neder added the other goal for the Falcons. The victory earned the team a berth in the national quarterfinals. While the Falcons ultimately lost 1-0 to host Dallas Baptist, they still finished with a 19-2-1 record. That was the most wins in a season since the 2008 team went 22-1-2 on their way to capturing the national title.
ATHLETES RECEIVE ALL-AMERICAN AWARDS

They were among the best in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference. They were also among the best in the West.

But five Seattle Pacific athletes — Sophia Chilczuk, Makenna Rietz, Madison Ibale, Alex Mejia, and Hannah Hair — went even further last fall when they were selected among the best in the country by earning All-American awards for men’s soccer, women’s soccer, and women’s volleyball.

Chilczuk, Rietz, and Mejia each picked up double All-American honors.

Sophia Chilczuk was a first-team pick by the United Soccer Coaches Association and a third-team selection for the NCAA Division II Conference Commissioners Association (D2CCA). A senior forward, she led the nation with 17 assists, which also was a single-season SPU program record. She tied the school career record with 34 assists and scored 36 career goals.

Makenna Rietz was on the D2CCA first team and on the United Soccer Coaches Association second team. She scored 13 goals during the 2021 season, seven of which were game-winners. In addition to her All-American honors, Rietz, a midfielder who has another year of eligibility, won the GNAC Player of the Year award.
Alex Mejia

ON MAY 28, 2009, Alex Mejia and his parents were sound asleep in their home in Tela, a town on the northern coast of Honduras. At 3:24 a.m., they were jolted awake by a 7.3 magnitude earthquake — the strongest felt in Honduras in 30 years.

The earthquake happened more than a dozen years ago for Mejia, but talking about it makes it seem as if it was just yesterday.

“The small town where we were living is right on the beach — a couple hundred feet [away],” Mejia recalled. “The threat of a tsunami was definitely real.

“The power was out; everything was out. We could hear the neighbors’ cars; the whole city basically got into their cars and drove up to the mountains just in case of a possible tsunami.”

Despite a series of aftershocks that followed for the next 30 hours, Mejia and his parents decided to stay put rather than head for higher ground. “Luckily, nothing major happened [after the earthquakes],” Mejia said. No tsunami materialized.

Even from the toughest, sometimes harrowing moments, life moves forward. Quite literally for Mejia, who grew up and enrolled at Seattle Pacific, eventually taking a spot on the front line as a forward for men’s soccer. As a senior in 2021, Mejia scored 14 goals. No one else in the conference had more than 11, so it was no surprise that Mejia was named the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Player of the Year. “It’s the preparation. I really worked hard to improve,” Mejia said. “I’m lucky to have good teammates.”

When everything shut down with the coronavirus pandemic, it was up to Mejia and his teammates to work out however they could.

“It was a setback in some ways, but it was an opportunity in other ways,” he said. “At the start of COVID-19, I realized that depending on how long everything was shut down and if people weren’t training or working hard, I could definitely get ahead.

“That’s what I tried to do. Every day, get a little bit better and stay focused.”

Mejia, who helped lead SPU to the conference championship and a spot in the NCAA Tournament, earned two All-American awards, along with his conference Player of the Year honor.

In the classroom, he’s majoring in finance and economics. But before he puts those degrees to work, he wants to see how far he can take his game.

“I’ll see if there’s any interest from MLS (Major League Soccer),” said Mejia, who previously played with the Sounders Academy.

“Obviously, I’d want to play here. But every soccer player dreams of playing in Europe.”

Madison Ibale earned D2CCA first-team recognition. The senior defender helped the Falcons defense limit opponents to just 11 goals in 22 games and post 11 shutouts. Those efforts factored into her being named the GNAC Defensive Player of the Year.

Alex Mejia, who tallied a GNAC-leading 14 goals for the Seattle Pacific men, was voted to the first team on the United Soccer Coaches Association list and made the D2CCA third team. Of his 14 goals, three were game-winners. He also earned two assists.

Hannah Hair is Seattle Pacific’s first volleyball All-American since 2011, as she earned honorable mention status from the American Volleyball Coaches Association. The sophomore middle blocker had 115 total blocks, an average of 1.35 per set to lead the GNAC and rank No. 8 in NCAA Division II for the regular season.
TURNING the TABLE

Many people in the HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY live on the edge FINANCIALLY and EMOTIONALLY, so Kevin Finch ’89 started a nonprofit TO SERVE the SERVERS

BY AMY QUIST

PHOTOS BY BIG TABLE • ILLUSTRATIONS BY IKER AYESTARAN
Executive Chef Bob Rogers with Kevin Finch (right).
Kevin Finch ’89 never imagined what God would do with his hunger. Finch, the founder and executive director of the nonprofit Big Table, recalls his insatiable appetite as a boy.

“If my family was invited to someone’s house for dinner, my mother fed me two sandwiches beforehand so I wouldn’t embarrass the family,” Finch said.

He would often ask their hosts to give his mother the recipe, which usually resulted in a second or third helping from the cook.

“This went on through high school until I went to the home of a new couple in town, and the mother served the most amazing beef teriyaki. When I asked for the recipe as usual, she said no. Seeing my shocked face, she said that instead of giving me the recipe, she would teach me to make it.”

Finch began going to her house regularly to cook, and when he graduated from high school, she gave him a box of all the recipes they had made together.

“My love for food goes deep into my history,” Finch said. “At the time, I didn’t know it would turn into a calling.”

As a student at Seattle Pacific University, he began collecting restaurant reviews from The Seattle Times and The News Tribune in Tacoma. If the article highlighted a dish that wasn’t too expensive, he would rush out to see if he agreed with the reviewer.

“Eventually my English degree collided with my love of food,” Finch said. “By the time I finished my master of divinity at Princeton and took a pastoral position in Spokane, Washington, my reputation had preceded me. Everyone was asking me where they should eat.”

It was a dream come true when Finch’s friend — also the editor of a regional lifestyle magazine — asked if he would write restaurant reviews.
reviews. Over the next two years he also began writing the fine dining pieces for The Spokesman-Review in addition to his pastoral work.

As he frequented restaurants, he started to notice the overwhelming needs of the people who worked in the industry, so Finch began looking for data about what he was witnessing.

“The statistics revealed a picture so much worse than I’d imagined,” he said. “The restaurant industry is the largest aggregate employer in the country and has the highest rates of drug and alcohol use of any industry. Almost 50% of workers live below the poverty line. The rest are only one bill away from going under.”

His first thought was to donate a portion of his article stipends to nonprofits helping people in the hospitality industry, but he couldn’t find any.

“Workers in the hospitality industry greet people with a smile since their job depends on it — but no one could see their need. Behind those smiles was an unbelievable amount of pain and brokenness,” Finch said.

There was no safety net for hospitality workers. Their friends typically worked in the industry, also living on the financial and emotional edge. And the odd hours — nights, weekends, holidays — took a toll on family relationships.

“I wasn’t sure what to do,” Finch said. “I was just a pastor who loved going out to eat and writing about food.”

In the fall of 2006, Finch had what he describes as a divine encounter. He woke from a deep sleep at 2 a.m. He got out of bed and walked around the room in the dark, trying to determine what had woken him. Suddenly, he heard a voice say, “Kevin, I need a pastor for the restaurant industry. Are you interested?”

After separating from her husband in 2011, Nicole Eggers found herself with three young children and only a part-time job to support them in Spokane, Washington.

“We were in dire financial straits. I had no choice but to look for a better job and try to keep going,” Eggers said. Eggers had worked in the food industry since she was old enough to work — at fast-food restaurants as a 15-year-old, and later as a waitress and as a bartender. She was grateful for a second interview at a nice restaurant in town.

“I drove my old car to the interview, and when it was over, I was mortified that the bosses saw me pushing my car out of the parking space. The car didn’t go in reverse, and the convertible top was broken, so the kids and I got drenched every time it rained,” Eggers said.

The restaurant owners had recently hosted a Big Table dinner and learned how the organization cared for the needs of service industry workers in crises. They immediately thought of Nicole and contacted Kevin Finch. He knew of someone who wanted to donate a car, so Finch flew to Seattle and drove the car back to Spokane.

“I got a call from Big Table. They knew about my need and had a car for me. I couldn’t believe it,” Eggers said.

She began meeting regularly with Finch, who listened and offered counsel about her marriage. “Kevin helped me forgive,” Eggers said. “At the same time, my husband was changing, too. Neither of us wanted our marriage to end.”

The two soon reconciled, and Eggers credits Big Table for supporting her through the hardest time in her life. “It wasn’t just a car they gave me,” she said. “It was getting my life back.”

Service workers often lack supportive relationships, Eggers said. “We’re working when other people are in church. We don’t attend dinner gatherings or coffee with friends — we’re there serving. We don’t have time to develop a support network. But the aim of Big Table is not only material help, it’s entering into friendship.”

Eggers will soon complete her bachelor’s degree in psychology, and, after 25 years of service, will leave the restaurant industry this year.

She plans to do an internship in vocational rehabilitation counseling, helping workers retrain for a new position or guiding them through the physical therapy process.

“My outlook has changed completely,” she said. “I now see I have value. I have people in my life to support me. Big Table was the catalyst, an act of grace. I’ve found my way to faith because of Big Table, too. They’ve changed my life in every capacity that someone’s life can be changed. Their mission is true: what they say is what they live.”

Big Table cares for hospitality workers through seven-course dinners where the servers get served.
That night, in the pitch-black room, Finch found himself awake and dialoguing with God. In his mind’s eye he saw an image of a Bible opened to the second chapter of Acts, where it describes the early church.

“I read the passage before me, and two phrases jumped out. The first was that the early Christians ate together. The second was that if anyone had a need, they took care of each other. And then the voice said, ‘That’s how you pastor this group of people.’”

It took three weeks to tell anyone what happened, but Finch eventually started sharing his vision with others, including his uncle, Eugene Peterson ’54 — scholar, theologian, poet, and author of The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language.

“Uncle Gene always emphasized staying in one place and investing in one community,” Finch said. “I was nervous to share my Big Table vision with him, a vision that spans across the nation. But Uncle Gene and Aunt Jan became our first significant giving partners.”

Finch gathered his courage to leave a stable church job with insurance, a pension, and good benefits, and began planning a nonprofit — Big Table — to serve workers in the hospitality industry, which he saw as alienated from the Christian community.

“I thought God was offering me a job guaranteed to fail, because my experience was that people loved to talk to food critics, but no one wanted to talk to a pastor. It ended any conversation almost instantly.”

A few years before, Finch asked a waitress friend why waitstaff wouldn’t talk to pastors.

“As a server, I hate Christians,” she said. “They’re the worst customers, the most demanding, and the worst tippers. They often take up tables for hours so they can study the Bible.”

Finch envisioned a movement where people might see Christians in a different light, one where people of faith offered to meet practical needs with no strings attached.

The first thing people see on Big Table’s website is the statement, “Caring for restaurant and hospitality workers before they fall off the ledge” in bold, capital letters. It’s a ledge many have stepped closer to during the pandemic.

“Restaurant workers live from paycheck to paycheck. If you don’t work an hour, you don’t get paid. If you get COVID, you can’t go to work. That’s your rent. And you get an eviction notice. Or you can’t buy food for your child. There is no safety net for these folks. Once a person falls off the ledge, they’re very broken at the bottom,” Finch said.

Big Table serves people who are currently working. They haven’t lost their homes yet and may be functional alcoholics or using substances. “If we can catch them before they fully fall, we can prevent so much suffering, and it costs so much less than catching someone once they’re on the streets and can no longer hold down a job,” he said.

The public cost to serve a person without a permanent home is often more $100,000 annually, Finch said, but Big Table can stabilize a whole family for under $1,500, keeping their kids in school and their lives intact.

“Workers struggle not because the industry wants to grind people up. On the contrary — it’s the one place almost anyone can get a job, regardless of educational status, criminal history, or English language proficiency. That concentrates a large group of vulnerable people under one roof,” Finch said.

One way Big Table cares for hospitality workers is through a series of seven-course dinners held several times a year where the servers themselves get served.

“There’s an actual big table that seats 48 in each of our cities,” Finch said. (Big Table currently works in San Diego, California; Spokane, Washington; and Nashville, Tennessee.) “We bring in an amazing chef, and the dinner guests are line cooks, waiters and waitresses,
dishwashers, and managers. The people who would normally be restaurant customers — the larger community — serve them for an evening.”

To Finch, it’s the kind of kingdom reversal Jesus spoke of in Matthew 20, where the last are now first, and the first are last. Some of the recipients of Big Table dinners have served or cooked thousands of meals but never once been a guest.

“It’s the marriage supper of the Lamb from the Book of Revelation,” Finch said. “This is what the kingdom of heaven looks like. There are seats for people who could never reserve those seats in their lives.”

Dinners are held in beautiful, donated locations three to four times a year on a Monday night, when industry workers can more easily get off work. Food and labor are usually donated by former guests or volunteers. “We’ve sometimes been able to put on a $20,000 dinner for nothing,” Finch said. “We invite potential giving partners to serve, to hear the stories, and simply get in touch with what it’s like to be on your feet all night.”

Finch recalls the first Big Table dinner in 2009. The day of the dinner, he wondered how he could identify workers with the greatest need. He saw a stack of 3x5 cards on his desk, threw them in his pocket, and drove to the dinner. As the dinner ended, he gave each guest a notecard and asked them to write the name of a person in need of care and assistance. The referral system was born.

“It was God’s inspiration,” Finch said. “It changes the power dynamic immediately. The person in need isn’t asking for help — we’re reaching out to them.

“In a hotline model, people call to get help. But there’s a lot of vetting to ensure the need is legitimate and the help will be used in the way it was intended. In the referral model, we ask people on the ground — bosses, co-workers, or customers — to recommend someone who needs assistance. The referrers are the ones who actually see the need.”

At the first dinner, Finch was surprised to see Jerry, a fast-food restaurant manager, with a blank referral card. Finch later called to ask why Jerry hadn’t referred someone. “I could have written down every single employee’s name,” Jerry told him.

With some prompting, Jerry identified a woman who had recently gone through a painful divorce. Her ex-husband’s last act was to smash her sewing machine against the wall, knowing that sewing was what she loved most.

“Could Big Table buy her a sewing machine?” Jerry asked.

Finch and others wrapped a sewing machine and brought it to the restaurant. Jerry invited the employee out and when she opened it, she began to weep. “Now I can hem people’s pants again,” she said.

“Her response was typical of people in this industry,” Finch said. “Her first thought was for someone else.”

Big Table’s first mission statement spoke of transforming lives. Then a consultant asked Big Table’s board what that meant and whether it was even possible.

“We came to realize that only God can transform lives, but we can be attentive to what God is already doing,” Finch said.

Still, Finch considered what transformation might look like and how to describe that without using unfamiliar and alienating religious language. “I was reminded of John 10:10, how Christ came to give life in abundance. I wondered, Could we make Big Table about moving people toward a life of abundance? What are the points of crisis in people’s lives?

“We identified eight different areas where we see brokenness, everything from mental health to addiction to vocational life. In

**Unexpected 20s**

Ordinary people can bless hospitality workers through Big Table’s initiative, Unexpected 20s. Big Table provides small envelopes — with information about the organization printed on the back — and a customer inserts a $20 bill. The envelope is given to someone working in a restaurant or hotel, ideally someone invisible to others. It’s not a payment or a tip for good service — it’s a gift.

“It blows people away,” Finch said. “The stories from people who have given them out are so fun to hear. And even though the Unexpected 20 is such a blessing for the one who receives it, the real power is for the one who has the envelope and is on the lookout, suddenly seeing all the people who were formerly invisible. It’s a wonderful practice to do with kids.”

Recently, Jill Lemon, Big Table’s associate executive director, handed an Unexpected 20 envelope to a young man in a drive-thru. The teen sent in a message through the website on the back of the envelope that said, “I want to tell you what that meant to me. I’m dyslexic, and the worst job for me in the restaurant is the drive-thru window. I had the most miserable night of my life and was so discouraged, and she handed me the envelope with $20 inside.”

Finch calls Unexpected 20s a “signature participation project,” allowing people to directly participate rather than donate to an organization to do the work.

“We want people to develop their own story of care and join the movement,” Finch said.

Here is a template to print your own Unexpected 20s envelope:
each of those areas, we asked ourselves, What would transformation look like? We call these ‘trajectories of transformation,’ and we actually track those areas in a database. As part of our ongoing care, we set reminders to meet with the care recipients and check in.”

Big Table began engaging professional volunteers — experts in financial literacy, health, and addiction recovery — to consult with care recipients and coach them.

Finch recalls a woman who went to a restaurant manager to praise her waiter, Edgar, for his good service. The manager said Edgar was their best employee but was struggling with untreated multiple sclerosis. He hadn’t seen a doctor in 10 years, and his symptoms were beginning to affect his work. The woman called Big Table. Within 24 hours of meeting Edgar, Big Table set up a doctor’s appointment, and Edgar went home with medication to slow the manifestation of MS.

“We bring more than money,” Finch said. “It’s relationships and a network of doctors, lawyers, financial advisers, and others in the community who can help.”

Laura Lympus, a former SPU staff member, is now Big Table’s executive of expansion, overseeing initiatives to move Big Table beyond its current projects in Spokane, San Diego, and Nashville.

She calls Finch a true visionary. “He’s the ultimate optimist, always seeing good in every person and every idea,” she said. “He has a pastor’s heart that cares for people equally, whether they are care recipients, volunteers, staff, or board members.”

Finch and Lympus’ husband were former pastoral colleagues in the Presbyterian Church USA. “I remember when Kevin told my husband about his vision for a nonprofit that would serve people in the hospitality industry. Later I told my husband, ‘This is either going to be amazing, or it’s going to bomb.’ I had worked in the restaurant industry myself, and I knew how resistant that culture is to the Christian community.”

Finch invited Lympus and her husband to a breakfast fundraiser. When Finch got up and announced Big Table was raising funds to hire their first care coordinator to work with restaurant workers, her heart was pounding.

“As he described the job, I wanted to jump and yell, ‘That’s me!’ I went up to Kevin immediately afterward.”

Lympus became the third employee of Big Table. “As a care coordinator, I loved sitting with people and giving them the opportunity to be heard,” she said. “We call it the power of presence. So many people are lonely and isolated.”

She’s grateful for Finch’s leadership and acknowledges the risks he took to answer this unusual call. “He’s a humble leader who recognizes how critical it is to have a team, but he’s also incredibly fun to eat with. He delights in everything about food.”

For Big Table, the pandemic brought both opportunities and challenges. During shutdowns and layoffs, the broader public was awakened to the plight of hotels, restaurant owners, and hospitality workers. “In 2020, the pandemic shattered the industry,” Finch said. “I got a call from a chef who said he let go of 270 people in one night.”

But 2021 was even more difficult, as government support and public attention dwindled. Staff worked too many hours, often reporting to work sick for fear of financially going under with their minimum-wage earnings. The hospitality industry saw the highest number of workers burning out and quitting as part of “The Great Resignation.”

The pandemic also led to the closure of Big Table operations in Seattle.

“We had a lot of connections in Seattle, including Seattle Pacific University,” Finch said. “But the cost of living in Seattle, among other factors, made it financially unviable. The closure of the Seattle office broke the hearts of our clients and partners, and the needs are worse than ever.”

Finch said Big Table is now considering a hybrid model for Seattle to allow people to continue to care without the cost of a team on the ground. He’s hopeful that affiliate cities, through donors and volunteers, could help the organization grow in a new, sustainable way across the country.

“Seattle could teach us how to expand, if we listen,” Finch said. He hopes to establish an “A-Team” of donors in potential cities like Charlotte, North Carolina, and Phoenix, Arizona. Always on the lookout for fun, Finch envisions the A-Team — based on themes from the old television show — providing early support that will lead to establishing new regional offices.

Big Table serves around 2,000 individuals and their families per year across three cities. Finch’s dream is to expand to 10 cities by 2030.

“What would happen if the community suddenly saw this population of restaurant workers and cared for them? It would create a domino effect,” Finch said. “You’ll start with your waitress. Then you’ll pay attention to your grocery clerk. And then the gas station attendant. And whoever is serving you.”

“I’ve always hoped to create a movement, not an organization, where the larger community sees the need in their midst and responds. That’s how the Holy Spirit works across history. Not because someone was paid to do it, but as a calling. That’s what revival looks like.”
In all things, charity
In 2021, riots broke out at the U.S. Capitol. States battled it out over voting laws. Politicians argued about climate change, and individual Americans clashed over everything from masking requirements to vaccine mandates. Despite the presumably unifying power of faith, even those in church pews across America couldn’t find common ground on most of these issues.

It was a timely year for Oxford University Press to publish Matthew Benton's latest book, *Religious Disagreement and Pluralism*, which he co-edited with Jonathan L. Kvanvig. The book examines the epistemology of religious disagreement and discusses religious diversity and pluralism.

Benton, an associate professor of philosophy at Seattle Pacific University, agreed to an interview with *Response* to discuss how we can navigate difficult religious disagreements and reach for truth and honesty in a time of deep discord.

You teach courses at SPU on logic and critical thinking, advanced logic, ethics and critical reasoning, contemporary epistemology, and the philosophy of religion at SPU. What is your favorite course to teach, and why?

Hard opener! I really love them all. I especially like teaching logic and epistemology.

In logic, students learn about clear ways to reason and how to understand valid (and invalid) patterns of reasoning. This teaches them how to assess an argument and how to think carefully about their own arguments.

It also shows the value of being charitable toward someone’s argument even if they reach a conclusion you disagree with. You can sometimes agree their reasoning is well structured but still disagree with one of their starting points, their premises.

In epistemology we discuss what makes believing something rational. What is the nature of evidence? What is knowledge? And what does it take to acquire knowledge? Reasoning is often related to how one acquires knowledge.

Because we often try to form beliefs based on arguments, we should understand how and why an argument could lead you to more knowledge, if it started with known premises. And we often take for granted what we believe and why, without examining how we got there. For example, if a student in my class believes that community needs can outweigh individual rights, or that evolution is incompatible with Christianity, it can be helpful to examine what their belief is based on, what their evidence or arguments are, including what other evidence there might be for or against it. By doing this, students also come to appreciate strong arguments for views they may not otherwise have carefully considered.
We seem to be living in a time where there is high degree of mistrust everywhere. We don’t trust the press, politicians, or leaders. People argue over what constitutes a fact or truth. How do you teach your students to discern fact from fiction? How do you teach students how to assess what is believably true?

One thing I try to develop is a sense of which sources are trustworthy, and why. All of us tend to think there are truths to be known, or at least truths that we can get a bit closer to, even in the difficult terrain of morality and politics.

The fact that we disagree isn’t an argument that there are no truths to be learned. Often, the big issue is how to proceed given the many voices which disagree — and how to proceed when many ratchet up the disagreements as a way of muddying the waters.

One helpful approach is to learn how people react to different sources of information. We should understand how we evaluate evidence or testimony from experts — the people who seem more knowledgeable than us.

Often, when confronted with evidence that contradicts a view we cherish, we become unwilling to even hear it. Or, we might downgrade the evidence as less important, perhaps not even as evidence against our view. If a student believes her boyfriend is devoted to her, but her roommate tells her he was flirting with another friend, the student might dismiss this evidence out of hand because she doesn’t want to deal with the possibility of betrayal, even though she might have no good reasons to mistrust her usually honest and reliable roommate. Something similar can happen with ideas which may not involve relationships, but which are nevertheless very dear to us.

As a result, people can become more confident of their beliefs even after being shown information that should make them less confident (a phenomenon called belief polarization). This is why so many people, especially in recent decades, seem stuck in echo chambers where they mainly listen to or read news sources which spin things the way they prefer and dismiss all other sources or views before even giving them a hearing.

There are no easy solutions to counter this, but I try to impart to my students in daily classroom discussions that it’s OK to carefully and charitably disagree. Doing so helps them become more comfortable with different ideas. Also, they can see the fruit of treating others with respect and can even end up learning from them.

About 63% of adults in America identify as Christians, but Christians disagree on immigration, abortion, gun control, etc. How can Christians engage with each other when they vehemently disagree with each other?

I think it’s lamentable that American Christians — perhaps the most vocal ones, at least — are so divided in terms of partisan political values, but also on other issues, too. One pattern we see a lot is certain Christians, even some leaders, dismissing others as not really Christians if they don’t share their core values or policy ideas.

Instead of trying to find common ground in Christian values and beliefs — and how to accommodate differences that are compatible with essential Christian commitments — there is a lot of disparagement and shunning. There are appeals to “our” side as exemplifying the “true” Christian take on some difficult issue.

Christians would do better to focus on what essentials unify us, and then to display humility and respectful dialogue in the areas where we can reasonably disagree. There are two kinds of humility that matter here. One is the humility of holding one’s views loosely enough to accept that one might be wrong about them. This sort of humility is expressed by being willing to learn from others and change your mind.

The other kind of humility can manifest even when you are very confident that you’re right. It’s a humility in how you carry yourself; how you treat others whose views you think are quite wrong. It’s not needing to show everyone how right you are and how wrong others are.

Sometimes humility breeds the wisdom of restraint. This sort of humility means we still value those we disagree with. We listen to them respectfully, centering them and the reasons, experiences, and beliefs behind what they hold dear.

Because we often try to form beliefs based on arguments, we should understand how and why an argument could lead you to more knowledge, if it started with known premises.
How can Christians navigate difficult conversations with each other?

An old theological slogan goes: “In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” (It’s often attributed to John Wesley, although I don’t think he said it!)

This advice is only so helpful because it gives us no guidance on how to distinguish what is essential Christian teaching from the nonessential teachings. Nevertheless, it seems many Christians cannot follow it even where its guidance is clear. This slogan invites us Christians to start with the values which unify – for instance, bearing God’s image – before discussing together where that “essential” line might best be drawn.

It also requires of us charity above all. Many Christians have not considered what, at a minimum, makes one a Christ-follower. Many have also elevated contentious secondary views untested by a broader or more conscientious examination of what all Christians share. Then they often want to assess who is aligned with them and malign who is against them.

Instead, Christians have the opportunity to model respect for others for a broader culture that sees too little of that from us. I wish Christians cared more about loving their neighbors, practicing mercy, caring for the poor and the marginalized, and worshiping God in humility, than they do about winning arguments. But even in such disagreements, we can emphasize the things that unite us and engage with greater self-awareness over the disputes that divide us.

Part of this involves us prioritizing others’ voices and listening to their stories, particularly if their backgrounds are different or their perspectives have been historically sidelined or silenced. This is a practiced and embodied way of showing love, and in the best cases, it can lead one to reconsider why it is one accepts a particular view.

You are part of the Honesty Project. What is the Honesty Project?
The Honesty Project is a three-year project based at Wake Forest University and Carnegie Mellon University, supported by a $4 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation. It aims to support new research and collaboration on the science and philosophy of honesty, particularly to discern what honesty is, and what its moral and intellectual consequences are.

I received a small grant from this project to research and write articles on linguistic honesty and on interpersonal honesty. The linguistic part looks at how we represent ourselves honestly or dishonestly in linguistic communication.

Philosophers have discussed lying a great deal but have had less to say about the moral implications of being misleading. How much must one share in order to count as fully honest? Honesty is part of what it takes to know someone deeply in a relationship, and this is the interpersonal part: Truthful awareness of self and others seems crucial for knowing another and being known by them. But are there norms or limits to how open and authentic one must be — with oneself as well as others — to develop deeper relationships? That’s part of what I’m interested in exploring.

Are there situations where it would be unwise for us to be fully honest?
Often, we are less transparent with some people because we don’t want to be vulnerable, or we don’t want to let them in (and sometimes for good reasons). A common cause of this might be a fear of others judging us or a fear of being misunderstood.

We might fear relational consequences by people whom we value or want to remain friends with. This can be particularly painful when, by being forthright and vulnerable, others opt to argue us down or neglect what we value.

In other cases, we might hold back because we’re not sure which version of ourselves to put forward, or perhaps we’re still figuring out who we really are or what we think about some controversial matter. In still other cases, we might go along with what others say to experience a sense of belonging, perhaps acting like we agree and are on their side, even though we disagree or feel like it would be too much to ask tough questions of them.

How should we handle conversations when we have strong disagreements with people?
When we uncover strong disagreements, how best to proceed is probably dependent on the people, one’s relationships with them, and the circumstances of the discussion.

Some people are very good at accommodating divergent views and can remain friendly even while debating difficult topics. Those who are best at this tend to do it with a lot of humility and by practicing and seeing the good in others’ perspectives, even if
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they don’t share them. When this is done well, others tend to walk away from such conversations feeling valued and excited about the ideas, rather than discouraged.

But others will feel slighted if certain people they are close to, or who they want affirmation from, do not side with them, so I think it depends on the topic and those who are disagreeing, especially with regard to how they treat each other.

If people are bad at listening, react defensively, or are poor at empathizing with others’ values, reasons, and experiences, those conversations should probably be avoided, at least in some moments. Avoiding such hot-button topics can even be a way of loving someone, as it can open up other spaces for relating to them on better terms.

Matthew Benton is an associate professor of philosophy at Seattle Pacific University. Before moving to Seattle, he was a postdoctoral research fellow in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, as well as a postdoc and junior research fellow at the University of Oxford. Benton earned his PhD from Rutgers University. His wife, Laura Benton, is a licensed marriage and family therapist in private practice, and co-founder of Unity Collective, a group of mental health professionals offering counseling and trainings integrating faith, race, and mental health. They live with their two children in Seattle.
After two decades of military presence in Afghanistan, the U.S. withdrew its troops in 2021, and Taliban militants took over the country.
Like many in August 2021, Mohammad Qadam Shah was glued to his television, watching the horror unfold at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan: The crush of families attempting to make their way to the terminal, slogging through canals, knee-deep in sewage. The chaos. Babies being handed over barbed wire fences to Marines. People falling to their deaths from jam-packed cargo planes. The explosion on Aug. 26, 2021—a suicide bombing that took 183 lives, including 170 Afghans and 13 U.S. troops.

Growing up Ismaili

Qadam Shah was born in 1987 in Mazar-i-Sharif, a city of nearly 600,000 in northern Afghanistan, just 35 miles from the Uzbekistan border. His family is Ismaili, a subsect of Shia Islam. Their spiritual leader, the Aga Khan, is a billionaire horse breeder who runs an international development organization.

There are 15 million Ismaili around the world, but in Afghanistan, they are a persecuted religious minority. “Historically [Ismailis] have been oppressed, and they have not been able to express themselves because both the Sunni and the Shia (the
leader Osama bin Laden. Two decades of counterterrorism and state-building efforts began in Afghanistan.

In Iran, Qadam Shah’s family faced constantly changing policies toward Afghan refugees. The government initially gave refugees access to education in the early 2000s only to change direction and pass a directive that banned education for all Afghans.

“My family decided to go back to Afghanistan for us to continue our education,” Qadam Shah said. Other families stayed in Iran, but it was the end of schooling for the Afghan children who remained there, Qadam Shah said. [In 2015, Iran allowed Afghan children to attend school once again.]

Back home in Afghanistan, Qadam Shah went to school and now worshipped in a new way: as a Sunni. “We were in a Sunni-dominant community,” he said. “This time I/we had to adapt to that. We had to follow every rule they had.”

A time of wonder

Around this time, Qadam Shah began to wonder more about what he believed. “I think, this time, God put some people in my life,” he said. It was the winter of 2018, and Shaw was in law school in Seattle. “We were desperately looking for some warm place to play soccer,” he said. “I don’t know how, but we found a place [to play] at First Free Methodist Church.”

There he met Sepehr Nafezi, an Iranian pastor who was looking to create an opportunity for Muslims to fellowship together. “We didn’t care about [Muslim fellowship],

PHOTO BY MIKE SIEGEL

Mohammad Qadam Shah teaches global development at SPU.

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competes because of his strong English skills. Qadam Shah’s team won the national championship and was invited to the prestigious international competition in Washington, D.C.

Traveling to the United States opened up his world. “In Afghanistan, I was taught that only Muslims, only we are the right people,” he said.

“When I came [to the United States], I saw proof that these people were coexisting with each other and everyone was doing well,” Qadam Shah said. He began to question other foundational assumptions. “I started to think, What’s my connection with God? What’s my relationship with him? Which of these sects that I practice is the right one?”

After college, Qadam Shah married and started a family in Afghanistan. In 2014, he was awarded a scholarship to law school at the University of Washington in Seattle. It was a busy period for him, studying law and traveling between Afghanistan and the United States — his family in one country, his school in another. “We really had no time to even itch our heads,” he said.

A changing world

Everything changed on Sept. 11, 2001, when three hijacked passenger planes hit targets in New York City and Washington, D.C., with another crashing in Pennsylvania. The 19 hijackers were members of the terrorist group al-Qaeda.


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Qadam Shah entered college as a pre-law student and joined a moot court team where students argue fictional cases in front of people assigned as judges. The second year, he was quickly recruited to compete because of his strong English skills. Qadam Shah's team won the national championship and was invited to the prestigious international competition in Washington, D.C.

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PHOTO BY MIKE SIEGEL

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two main interpretations of Islam) hated them. They didn’t want them around,” Qadam Shah said.

The pressure from religious persecution, coupled with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989, caused Qadam Shah’s family to flee to Iran when he was 2.

In Iran, Qadam Shah went to a Shiite school, not realizing he was Ismaili. “For maybe 15 years or more, I was practicing that without knowing I belonged to this other group,” he said. It is not unusual for Shia Muslims to do this. It’s called *Taqiya*, a measure taken to blend in to the communities where they live. “So, if you are in a Sunni community, be Sunni. If you are in a Shiite community, be Shiite.”

**A changing world**

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we just wanted to play in a warm place,” Qadam Shah said.

“We started to play soccer in the winter, and I got to know Sepehr. I got to know that he is Christian, and he is a pastor.” Since they spoke the same language, Qadam Shah opened up about his crisis of faith. “Very interestingly, he had the same dilemma, the same problem. He had gone through that, and he had found Jesus through that process.”

Nafezi introduced Qadam Shah to Jesus—not as a prophet who died, but as a savior who rose again. “It helped me a lot to look at the world in a different way, to look at my relationship to God in a different way,” Qadam Shah said.

He learned that nothing stood between him and the love of Jesus. The connection was unobstructed. “It took me around one year and then, ultimately, I decided I was going to come to Jesus and have him as my Lord and as my refuge.”

Located across the street from the SPU campus, the First Free Methodist Church mission statement hangs in the lobby: Love people, connect them to Jesus, serve the world.

“It’s one very small sentence, but it has a lot of meaning in it.” It became Qadam Shah’s mission statement, too, leading to his baptism on another chilly Seattle day. “The weather was cold. I was warm inside,” he said. After being baptized, he was presented with a T-shirt inscribed with one word: Connected.

“I felt connected,” he said. “I felt that I am now part of a community that is looking at the world in a very different way.”

In Christianity, there was nothing between him and God. “I don’t need to satisfy prophet Muhammad’s requirement or Ali or Aga Khan. I’m just connected directly to God. That’s why I was so amazed when I saw that T-shirt after baptism that said, ‘Connected.’”

**The cost of faith**

Connection to Jesus came at a cost. At first, Qadam Shah only told his nephew and brother-in-law about his conversion to Christianity, but somehow, his older brother found out. “My brother threatened me: ‘If you come back, I’m going to report you to the police!’” Suddenly, his entire life in Afghanistan was at risk.

“Groups will mobilize to kill you informally before any court procedure. They will either hang you, or they would stone you to death,” Qadam Shah said.

Qadam Shah’s immediate family eventually accepted and respected Qadam Shah’s decision to become a Christian, but they knew he would never be able to return to live safely in Afghanistan again. Qadam Shah applied for religious asylum in the United States rather than face death in the country he loves, and he hoped desperately that he might somehow bring his family to the U.S. someday.

While he waited, Qadam Shah did his best to keep moving forward, earning a doctorate from the University of Washington in 2019 and doing postdoctoral work at the University of Pittsburgh.

In 2020, he joined the faculty at Seattle Pacific University, the same year the U.S. started to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

In August 2021, everything fell apart. On Aug. 6, the Taliban took its first provincial capital and entered Kabul nine days later with no resistance as Afghanistan’s President Ashraf Ghani left the country. Chaos ensued.

At an SPU Senior Leadership Council meeting, Micah Schaafsma, assistant vice president for information technology, heard about Qadam Shah’s family situation and thought he could help.

His brother, Ryan Schaafsma, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, was working to help families evacuate as the country fell to Taliban forces. Ryan’s efforts included work with Task Force Argo, a group of private citizen volunteers who were working to evacuate Americans and Afghans stranded in the country. Many of the remaining Afghans had worked loyally alongside American military during the two decades of conflict in Afghanistan.

Ryan gave Qadam Shah ongoing instructions to pass on to his family: “Have them go to Kabul. Wait there until I tell them to get ready and go.”

“Kabul is no longer safe; we need to relocate your family. They can only take small bags and only what they really need.”

“When they encounter Taliban checkpoints along the way, this is what they should say.”

“At some point we need to take their pictures and send them so that they can be recognized by their clothes.”

Those were tense weeks for Qadam Shah. Finally, in October, with their asylum visas already approved for the United States, Ryan was able to place Qadam Shah’s family on an evacuation list to receive transportation out of Afghanistan. The family flew to the United Arab Emirates and are now awaiting their visas so they can travel to the United States.
Reconnecting to family

Qadam Shah hasn’t seen his family for four years. He is waiting, trying to be patient. He stays in contact with U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell’s office, waiting for word on his family. He’s moved from an apartment in Seattle to a house in a suburban neighborhood. “The neighborhood is so quiet,” he says. “I love it. It’s good.

“I would like my family to experience a life in peace here in the U.S., grow here, and be useful members of our community,” he said. Thanks to technology, Qadam Shah gets to see his family’s faces every day via WhatsApp, and he is longing to tell his family in person about the endless source of love, grace, and forgiveness he has found through his faith.

In the rush to get out of Afghanistan, his family left home with just a few bags and their documents.

“I’ve become a very active buyer at Amazon,” Qadam Shah said. “They basically need everything, and I cannot say no to their requests.” So far, Qadam Shah has said yes to pleas for a scooter, shoes, clothes, games, and a soccer ball.

It’s the things that cannot be bought that he misses the most. “I was remembering those things they didn’t bring... my photos from my childhood.”

It’s been a time of great sadness for Qadam Shah. “Sometimes I just remember my village, my people, my students — I used to teach my close friends. [I think about] the whole country, the cities. Kabul, my friends from there. I was talking to my cousin and said that I didn’t know the next time I was going to see him or when our kids are going to see each other.”

A country going backward

The most frustrating thing for Qadam Shah is that things didn’t have to be this way. He is working on a book, Built to Fail, detailing the failures that led to the utter collapse of Afghanistan today.

“As a person who studies development and political development, I could see there was a path for stability in Afghanistan, but they didn’t take it,” he said. “There were mistakes the U.S. made. There were mistakes Afghan leaders made. Unfortunately, Afghan people had no say in what their leaders decided.

“Throughout history, Afghan’s political future has been decided by others. First Britain, then the Soviet Union, the U.S. Now it’s in the hands of Pakistan, China, Russia, Iran, and countries like that. It’s just sad.”

Qadam Shah worries for Afghanistan’s girls. “For a while, you had hope the future would be different, but now, especially the girls know there’s no future for them,” Qadam Shah said.

His sister, a midwife who is still in the country, is unable to work with the Taliban in control. Two other sisters are teachers, but unable to teach. A niece is a nurse and not working.

Afghanistan’s economy and its health care system have failed. Today, more than half the country faces food insecurity, with 1 million people on the brink of starvation.

“It is just going backwards,” said Qadam Shah. Sometimes the tears flow. “One day I was driving, and I just started to cry for my country. It is in a really bad situation. One feels very helpless when you feel so weak that you cannot do anything.”

He is not alone, however. Qadam Shah has a connection that gives him strength. “I have come to believe very strongly in God’s plan,” he said. It’s a belief that keeps him moving forward, teaching students, and growing in his faith as he waits for his family.

Editor’s Note: In March, Qadam Shah’s immediate family received their visas allowing them to travel to the United States. The family was joyously reunited in Seattle on March 30, 2022.
Young minds: Papua’s most valuable resource

BY COLLEEN STEELQUIST

MATT BASINGER ’03 AND JACINDA WILEY BASINGER ’02 seem like typical parents of college students: helping the young adults get settled in dorms; fielding frequent calls to talk through classes, finances, and friends; reuniting on much-anticipated breaks.

In reality, the Basingers have two young sons who are years from college. But through their education work as missionaries in Papua, Indonesia, Jacinda and Matt are helping prepare a generation of young Papuans to study at U.S. universities, including four who are enrolled at Seattle Pacific this past year.

The couple’s deep investment in these young lives doesn’t end with a high school diploma. Matt and Jacinda happily continue to minister to these students as they navigate college demands and adjust to life nearly 7,000 miles from home.

It’s work the Basingers believe will reshape the remote island they call home. “I think a decade from now, these students will be leaders in Papua, bringing kingdom values and changing Papua in an amazing way,” Matt said.

Indonesia is the world’s fourth-most populous nation. A Southeast Asian archipelago, Indonesia consists of some 13,000 islands stretching more than 3,000 miles from coast to coast. The western half of its most-easterly island is Papua, Indonesia. While Indonesia comprises the world’s largest Muslim population, its eastern islands, including Papua, are mostly Protestant.
Situated on the second-largest island in the world, Papua has spectacular wildlife and natural beauty, as well as a rich, cultural heritage and more than 250 unique languages. It is home to the largest gold mine and second-largest copper mine on the planet.

“This is a really important place for us strategically to work to empower the local community,” Jacinda said. “Because of the resources this island holds, there’s a lot of national and international attention, and many, many people are flocking to Papua for opportunities.”

Despite its natural bounty, Papua lacks basic infrastructure, modern health care, and education. Roads — where they exist — are riddled with potholes. Electricity and internet access are spotty and prone to go out for hours or days at a time. Infant mortality is over 18%. HIV rates are 15 times the national average. This conflicting existence of poverty and wealth stems from a complex history of colonialism, national agendas, and local tribalism.

On any given day in a Papuan public school, most principals are absent, and half of all classrooms lack teachers, often for months at a time. The government-run system, scant on teacher support and accountability, has left 56% of Papuans with less than a primary education. About one-third of Papuans are illiterate, the highest rate in Indonesia. Less than 1% complete college.

“Without a basic elementary education, students don’t have access to higher education,” Jacinda said.

Jacinda, who was born and raised in Indonesia, is a third-generation missionary kid who loved the sense of adventure and purpose she experienced growing up. Her parents, Wally and Joan Wiley, still serve on Papua with Mission Aviation Fellowship, a group that works to share the Gospel and serve people in isolated regions of the world.

“My dad saw a huge need for education because Papuans were not getting opportunities to be leaders in their own context,” Jacinda said. Wally helped start eight schools and five clinics on Papua, including the Papua Hope schools where the Basingers now work.

After graduating from high school in Indonesia, Jacinda applied to colleges and took a gap year to train and serve through Youth With A Mission in India. Cut off from communication, she left the college decision up to her parents.

“On a rainy night in Mumbai, I took a rickshaw to an internet café and finally contacted my parents. They said, ‘We have a surprise for you. You’re going to Seattle Pacific University.’ They selected SPU because of the communication, the support, and knowing that I would have a friend there. One of my best friends from childhood, Ailie [Daniels Dukes ’02], was a year behind me in school, and she applied to SPU. We were roommates all through college.”

Jacinda threw herself into college life in Seattle, earning a degree in theatre and theology and certification in elementary education. She worked as a student coordinator for the SPRINT program, helping to organize student-led service trips.

During her senior year, she met Matt, a chapel worship leader, who also worked in the Student Ministries office. He checked all of her boxes.

“We had back-to-back cubicles, and I saw this incredible young man who was playing guitar and loving Jesus and wanting to work overseas,” Jacinda said.
Matt grew up in near Boise, Idaho. SPU was an easy pick for him with his passion for music, interest in electrical engineering, and attraction to Seattle. A University Scholar, Matt studied great Christian thinkers through his honors curriculum and began to doubt the safe, comfortable direction of his career goals.

“I started to feel this tug toward ministry, to do some active service as a full-time job. But I didn’t know what that meant. I thought I’d have to study theology and be a pastor, which wasn’t that exciting to me,” he said.

“I went to see Anthony Donaldson [then-director of SPU engineering], almost in tears. I was explaining this dilemma about needing to enroll in theology and not do engineering. I finished spilling my guts to him, and he got this big smile on his face. He said, ‘Matt, I was a missionary in India as an engineer. And I’ve been working for the last few years to get a new program started — engineering and applied science with a mission focus — so that people who want to do technical service overseas can get an education really founded in that.’

“It was one of those Holy Spirit goosebumps moments,” Matt said. “That was it — I was in.”

Matt and Jacinda dated for two years, marrying after his graduation in 2003. They lived and worked in Seattle for a couple of years while pondering grad school.

Matt applied to various universities, including a renowned, sustainability-focused program at Columbia University. “You always need to apply to one school that you have no chance at,” he said. “Amazingly, I got accepted.”

He and Jacinda moved to New York City, where she pursued a master’s degree in counseling at Nyack College, and Matt completed his master’s, doctorate, and post-doctoral fellowship in earth and environmental engineering. He worked on a variety of field research and technology development projects in both East and West Africa focused on biofuels, solar power, and water management for remote, resource-limited communities.

In 2012, the Basingers moved to Papua with the support of their sending organization, Mission Aviation Fellowship, and, with MAF’s blessing, transitioned to Colorado-based Paraclete Mission Group in 2017. Jacinda became an administrator and counselor at the dual-language (Indonesian & English) Sekolah Papua Harapan School, established by her father in 2008. SPH began with two teachers and eight students. A grade was added each year, and today, it has 84 teachers and staff (all nationals except Jacinda and her brother, PE teacher Jared Wiley ’07 — married to Teresa Chally Wiley ’06) and more than 350 students from preschool through grade 12. A small percentage of the students live in on-site, family-style dorms.

“It’s such a special place to be, and there’s so much love and care from our teachers to our students — faithful, predictable, ongoing teaching that happens every day,” Jacinda said. “We use global best practices in the classroom so our students aren’t just doing rote memorization, but real, interactive, critical thinking that prepares them to be future leaders.”

Despite its natural bounty, Papua lacks basic infrastructure, modern health care, and education.
SPH also emphasizes character development and positive habits and holds morning devotions and weekly chapel to promote spiritual growth. A hot-meal program, mental health counseling, and a medical clinic ensure low-resource students have their physical needs met as well.

Their first class graduated in 2020, including Maria Weya, a student who started at SPH at age 5 and now attends Seattle Pacific. The track record of the first three graduating classes speaks volumes about SPH’s effectiveness: Every SPH graduate is currently enrolled in national or international higher education programs.

Katarina Krueger ’15, a former Fulbright scholar in Central Java, Indonesia, taught at SPH in 2019. She praised the Basingers’ huge hearts for Papua. “Matt and Jacinda are incredible people,” she said. “They are really dedicated, and they are so good at equipping and empowering Indonesians.”

While Jacinda worked at SPH, Matt co-founded and operated a small, business-as-mission company, Electric Vine Industries. “We grew our team to 95 employees across three provinces. We installed over half a megawatt of solar-powered microgrids to bring physical light to unelectrified, dark places in Indonesia,” Matt said. The solar power decreased dependence on generators and fossil fuels and allowed small businesses to flourish.

But unwavering integrity had its costs: “We were not paying bribes to get permits, and in 2018, we stopped being able to get permits. At the point we could no longer build, we had to close up the company,” he said.

The business’ demise came just as another opportunity arose. The mining companies extracting resources from Papua are required by the Indonesian government to share some of their profits with the province. These funds have been used, in part, to establish a full-ride college scholarship program for local students. The decade-old program, while well intentioned, often missed the mark.

“A lot of students were not successful because they would get a few months of language school in Papua, and sometimes not even that,” Matt said. “It’s crazy. They would be sent to the U.S. with no language or culture training. The attrition rate was so high.

“There was a lot of attention on SPH within the Papuan government,” he said. “It was so clear that the school was head and shoulders above any other educational institution in Papua.”

Government leaders asked Jacinda’s father if he could take the lessons learned from SPH and create a post-high school language program to better prepare students to study at U.S. universities, where the caliber of education is considered among the best in the world. Papua Hope Language Institute was established in 2019, with Matt as its director. While the provincial government partners with multiple language institutes, only PHLI is distinctly Christian (although welcoming to students of all faiths).

PHLI’s initial mission is to equip the best and brightest of Papuan youth to prepare them for higher education — perfect their English skills, sharpen critical thinking, and help students grow spiritually mature in their Christian walks. The majority of the founding class of 60 students are currently studying in the U.S.

Matt believes PHLI will become far more than a language institute as it grows and increases its partnerships with universities abroad. “Papua Hope focuses on education and discipleship, teaching students that they must hold in one hand the richness of Papua, and in the other, the unique challenges faced,” Matt said. “In this tension, they are called to use the blessing of their education to bless others, becoming servant leaders.”

Maria in... 2008 2013 2018 2020

Papua Hope Language Institute is preparing the best and brightest Papuan youth for higher education. Follow the language institute on Instagram @Papuahope.phli.
Matt is a hands-on leader, serving as a de facto parent to his university-bound students. He accompanied 27 students from his first class on a five-hour flight to the U.S. embassy in Jakarta, where he spent a week organizing their visas, and then he joined them for 40 hours of flights and layovers to the U.S. to help them get oriented as they began their studies.

Administrators at both schools have been strategic about selecting U.S. partner institutions to send their students. “We wanted to choose places where we knew the students would be cared for well, equipped both academically and spiritually,” Jacinda said. “So, of course, with our positive experiences at SPU, it was on the top of our list as a partner school.”

Lisa Hirayama, SPU’s assistant director for international admissions, recruited at Papua Hope schools in 2019. “The students are wonderful and had lots of questions for me,” said Hirayama, who was particularly touched by the boarding students who must live far from their families to attend school. “The dedication and sacrifice required of both those students and their families in the pursuit of education is remarkable.”

She has continued to visit prospective Papuan students virtually during the pandemic, and is excited by the SPU alumni at the schools who can represent the University in such a personal way, as well as by the possibility of future study abroad opportunities for Seattle Pacific students and faculty in Papua.

Hirayama also loves how international students broaden perspectives for American students, and vice versa. “International education and exchange are powerful forces for change and growth,” she said. “International students bring the world to SPU, and when they return home, they have a new global perspective and a new level of biculturalism that is equally valuable to the degree they have received.”

“International students bring the world to SPU, and when they return home, they have a new global perspective and a new level of biculturalism that is equally valuable to the degree they have received.”

Lisa Hirayama

PHLI is also working closely with the government and university partners to move toward a U.S.-accredited associate’s degree path to continue to prepare Papua’s top students to go abroad. They also hope to create a local teacher’s college that trains and equips Papuan teachers and administrators to fill the island classrooms that sit empty today.

During a six-month furlough to the U.S. last year, Matt collaborated with two partner institutions in a different way: He was an adjunct professor at SPU for a quarter, teaching development engineering; and at George Fox University, he taught microgrid engineering.

He’s laid the groundwork for a future SPU class where U.S. engineering students would come to Papua to work on projects, staying in the dorms with PHLI students. “It would just be this really neat weaving together of the two worlds,” he said.

Their U.S. furlough also gave Matt and Jacinda proximity to help their students get settled on various campuses throughout the Northwest and to visit and encourage the 40 or so young Papuans currently studying in the States.

While the Basingers made the most of their furlough, they were anxious to return to Papua.

“It’s our joy to live in this multicultural community,” Jacinda said. “To live life together like this has been an invaluable opportunity that has shaped us and allowed us to be a part of shaping others’ lives, too. Being able to learn and grow together ... that’s where the most life transformation happens.”

“Whether I’m doing engineering or working at a school, the calling is to serve Papua,” Matt said. “So, five years from now, I may wear a different hat, but the calling is clear.”

For Jacinda and Matt, Papua is where their love for people and their love of God meet. “How do we enter into systems that are not just and pursue justice?” Jacinda asked. “How do we empower people who have less opportunities? And how do we help people understand who God is and how God sees them and what opportunities they have to be a part of this kingdom work? To be a part of that, no matter how hard it is, is the most fulfilling, exciting work.”
For Jamie Crespo ’12, completing the renowned New York City Marathon didn’t become entirely real until the sign for Central Park came into view. By that point, she had run across all five boroughs of the city and had less than two miles to go.

Jamie typically listened to a playlist during workouts, but on the day of the New York City Marathon, she largely zoned out for the first 24 miles. As she neared the finish line, myriad emotions surfaced, and tears filled her eyes. “I was thinking about my parents and everybody who supported me, because it had taken a long time to get to where I was,” she said.

For one thing, the New York City Marathon’s 50th anniversary event fell in 2020 — and, like so many other events of that year, it had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After months of ardent training, preparation, and fundraising, Jamie patiently waited another year for the opportunity to come to fruition. When she and a handful of friends finally made it to the race in November 2021, she was more than ready to complete the race — and with a finishing time of 5:06:21, she did just that.

Although Jamie initially entered into the world of running in 2015, the hobby took a pivotal turn two years later.

Early in 2017, she noticed her father, Juanito, was inexplicably losing weight. Jamie, who works at an outpatient surgery unit for Kaiser Permanente in Washington, knew that sudden weight loss combined with a pale complexion and a couple of fainting spells could be pointing to something serious.

She prompted her father to go to the doctor for a checkup. Initial tests revealed that he was anemic. Further tests indicated he had Stage 3 colon cancer. After an invasive surgery, he had to undergo nine rounds of chemotherapy.

When Jamie reflects on that time for her father, the word that comes to mind is “strength.”

“He had that spirit of ‘I’m going to beat this,’” Jamie said.

Juanito was still undergoing cancer treatments when, just a few months later, Jamie’s mother, Emmie, went in for a routine colonoscopy. The family was shocked when the colonoscopy revealed the same diagnosis: cancer.

The colonoscopy, however, had caught the cancer early at Stage 1. Emmie’s
early diagnosis meant she could opt for a far less-invasive laparoscopic colectomy.

Jamie, an only child, took leave from her job in order to care for her parents. She remained at her mom’s bedside during her weeklong hospital stay, while her dad recovered from cycles of chemotherapy.

“[Jamie] was always there when we needed her,” her mom said. “My daughter is the one who kept us going during the toughest time of our life.”

Jamie is no stranger to the role of caregiver. Her job is to be with people before they head into the operating room. She takes vitals and assists nurses with necessary tasks, but her favorite aspect of the job is the interactions she has with patients.

“If they’re nervous, I can help calm them down. I can talk about anything from the Seahawks to traveling,” said Jamie, who studied applied human biology with a minor in psychology at SPU.

But sometimes the caregiver needs self-care as well. In addition to the support of friends and family, the thing that kept Jamie going that year was heading out and hitting the pavement — literally. Running proved to be the perfect form of stress relief as she coped with her parents’ cancer.

In the midst of her parents’ cancer treatments and recovery, Jamie ran with a goal in mind: complete the San Diego Rock ‘n’ Roll Marathon. She gave herself six months to train.

“Running isn’t just a physical act. It takes a lot of mental fortitude and commitment,” said Rediet Mulugeta ‘12, Jamie’s former roommate at SPU.

“Jamie’s commitment to running has grown over the last couple of years, and I know running was a gift [to herself] in that season when her family faced many uncertainties.”

Jamie’s parents encouraged her to keep her sights set on her goal, and, in June 2017, Jamie completed her first marathon in San Diego, California. The next year, she completed the Orange County Marathon in California before turning her sights to New York, one of six World Marathon Major races.

Jamie wanted her marathon runs to help others avoid the crisis her family endured, so she ran the New York City Marathon for the Colon Cancer Foundation, raising $3,200 for colon cancer prevention and early detection.

After New York, Jamie applied to become one of the first Colorectal Champions Ambassadors for the foundation. Ambassadors are cancer survivors or family members of survivors who are willing to be spokespeople for colorectal cancer.

Jamie was ultimately selected to be an ambassador for the foundation and spent the entirety of March — Colon Cancer Awareness Month — educating people about the importance of screening for colon cancer at an earlier age. (The American Cancer Society’s newest guidelines recommend colorectal cancer screenings begin at age 45 instead of their previous guidelines to start screening at age 50.)

That same month, Jamie also traveled to Northern California to run the Oakland Marathon. In October, she’ll make her way to Chicago to check off a second Abbott World Marathon Major, leaving her with only four more to go — Boston, London, Berlin, and Tokyo — if she decides to seek the famed Six Star Medal.

Today, both of Jamie’s parents are in remission, and they are immensely grateful for their daughter’s love and care during their respective battles with cancer.

“Jamie gave us encouragement to live and get better,” Jamie’s mother said. “We beat cancer because we want to be there for every accomplishment in her life.”
The night watchman

For almost 30 years, Rick Reynolds ’75 served thousands of people by giving them a hot meal and a place to sleep.

BY JULIA SIEMENS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE SIEGEL

OPERATION NIGHTWATCH’S STORIES are rarely about numbers. If you receive their monthly newsletter or visit their website, you won’t be inundated with statistics of how many people were housed, fed, or cared for that month. Instead, you will read stories of Nightwatch’s street ministers taking the time to sing happy birthday to a woman on a downtown corner. You’ll hear about the ministry’s partnership with churches like Madrona Grace Presbyterian, where 10 guys find sanctuary, safety, and warmth at night. You’ll read about Nightwatch employees working the phones for hours to find an open bed for someone in need.

For 28 years, Rick Reynolds ’75 was at the helm of the interdenominational Christian ministry before he retired in June. His ministry was all about befriending and meeting the needs of one person at a time. And he did that while also building an organization that has served thousands of people by giving them a hot meal and a place to sleep.

Reynolds won’t brag about the numbers, but Nightwatch greatly expanded Seattle’s ability to feed and shelter people each night by providing contract funding to agencies throughout the region. Nightwatch hired street ministers. It created 24 single-room occupancy units for low-income seniors, and this past year, it opened two additional shelters managed by its own employees.

“Rick will stop everything he’s doing to help one person,” said former Nightwatch board member Jim Simpkins. “That’s the legacy that Rick leaves: an agency that’s not reliant on measurable outcomes but goes toward where the need is and helps.”
Reynolds has never been the type to sit down and write a five-year plan for his life. When he attended Seattle Pacific College in the '70s, he thought he'd be a teacher. But he hated student teaching, so he switched his degree to sociology and graduated a quarter late. The summer after graduation, he remembers feeling a powerful sense of call while singing old gospel standards at an inner-city nursing home with his church.

He enrolled in Fuller Seminary Northwest and began volunteering at Nightwatch in the early '80s as a street pastor alongside the organization's first executive pastor, Norm Riggins. They'd wear clerical collars and go into dive bars to pray for people and connect them to resources.

“Bartenders liked us,” Reynolds said. “Now people had a trained professional to blubber on.”

An ordained Free Methodist minister, Reynolds pastors a church in Capitol Hill for 12 years before he knew it was time to move to something else. He phoned Riggins for advice on his next steps, and Riggins said, “You should have my job. The board meeting is next week.” That was in April 1994. Reynolds has been the director of Operation Nightwatch until his retirement this year.

Simpkins has been a friend of the organization for decades. Before he joined Nightwatch's board, the Microsoft program manager saw an online ad in an employee bulletin looking for volunteers, so Simpkins and a friend started driving to downtown Seattle to serve soup in Operation Nightwatch's dispatch center previously located in Belltown.

Today, the dispatch center is in the International District, but the prior center consisted of a small office where 50 to 75 unhoused people gathered to drink instant coffee, eat soup, and wait to receive a shelter bed or hotel room for the night. Simpkins says it was often a volatile place. Fights would break out. Clients were agitated and angry. But he started to notice that on the nights Reynolds worked, there was a calmness to the place. Reynolds is known for having the gift of de-escalation. He will draw near to someone who is agitated and speak quietly until they settle down.

“Rick is drawn toward suffering and tries to figure out how to help. It's an unusual way to go through life, but maybe that's what makes [things] so calm around Rick,” Simpkins said. “We are all suffering in different ways, and he's drawn to us.”

Reynolds sees himself as a work in progress. There's an early story that has shaped how Reynolds views his work and ministry. Nightwatch had a particularly disruptive client who filled the dispatch office with his volume and odor. Shelters didn't want to take him in because of his defiant and inappropriate behavior. One night, the man was jubilant when he got placed for an overnight bed.

“It was probably a new worker who didn’t know his name,” Reynolds said with a laugh.

The man asked loudly if he was beautiful in front of a dispatch center full of clients and volunteers.

“Yeah, you're beautiful,” Reynolds said, hearing snickers in the room.

“Then hug me,” the man challenged him. "Oh, I don't want to do that, Reynolds thought, but he extended his arm for a safe buddy hug. Instead, the client wrapped Reynolds in a full-on embrace that reeked of body odor, cheap alcohol, and cigarettes. He stooped to press his bristly whiskers into Reynold’s face and then turned and kissed his cheek.

Reynolds immediately thought, That was God's moment! I really helped him. It wasn't until later that Reynolds realized he was the foul one in the situation.

“That's not how God loves. That exuberant, unbridled, enthusiastic love that man was showing me was what I needed to be doing. That's the call of Jesus on my life. If I only remember that one story in 20 years, that will be enough.”

There's a “Rickism” scrawled in blue marker across the whiteboard at the Nightwatch office that reads, “Jesus didn’t say that when you wash the feet of the poor you wouldn’t get fungus.”

Reynolds once gathered friends to clean out a hoarder’s apartment because of a bedbug infestation. The apartment was so filthy that the men threw away their clothes after the clean-up. Another time,
he found a 5-pound bag of potatoes hollowed out by cockroaches under a resident’s bed.

“I’ve seen so much fodder for nightmares,” Reynolds said. “It’s not like everybody’s called to this work, but everybody’s called to something. You might not have the stomach for this, but I might not be able to do what you’re called to do.”

A FRIEND WHO UNDERSTANDS

Simpkins loves when his phone rings and Reynolds is on the other end. About a decade ago, Reynolds called Simpkins because he had a blind friend who used a typewriter called a brailler. The brailler had broken and repairs would cost $128. Instead of just covering the cost out of Nightwatch’s budget, Reynolds said he would personally pay half of the repair costs if Simpkins could pitch in the other half.

Simpkins was amused by Reynold’s request and contributed to half of the costs for the brailler. “It was so great — so Rick,” Simpkins laughed. “He sees one need at a time.”

Neal L. had been homeless before but was never willing to admit it until he met Reynolds. Neal bought an RV seven years ago in hopes of paying off student loan debt but doesn’t think he’s made a single payment since. He struggles to keep his phone and laptop charged and doesn’t have heat. But he’s thankful for a roof over his head, a bathroom, and a place to sleep. Neal, who also enjoys serving others without homes, met Reynolds while volunteering at a shelter.

“Everything is a special challenge as a vehicle resident. It’s nice to have a friend who understands what I’m going through and doesn’t judge me for it,” Neal said. “Rick grasps the hardships people go through on the streets. He understands what it’s like for people who are unhoused.”

Both men share Christian faith and a commitment to the 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous, although Reynolds is one of the only nonalcoholics Neal knows who has worked the steps. Reynolds recently comforted Neal with Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:25-34 about not worrying.

“When I read that part of Matthew, it reassures me that I don’t have to have the answer,” Neal said. “I don’t have to figure out how to get out of that mess. I have to get out and do today.”

Every Thursday night around 7, Reynolds picks up Neal from where he sells Real Change newspapers. The pair drive to Little Caesars to buy at least seven pizzas to bring to a tent city. When they arrive, people shout, “Pizza! Pizza!” Tent flaps unzip, and people come wandering out to get hot food and sometimes talk.

Reynolds remembers one night when he sat down to chat with a resident at a tent city. He was casually dressed in his signature uniform: black shirt, clerical collar, jeans, and tennis shoes.

The man got serious and asked Reynolds if he was OK. “Yeah, what do you mean?” Reynolds asked.

“Well, if you don’t have a place to go, I could probably get you in here,” the man offered.

“It was sweet, you know,” Reynolds said. “Homeless people have the capacity for love and care. Some people think that homeless people are something other than the rest of us. In Seattle that’s less and less [true] because people are falling off the edge all the time.”

King County paused its official homeless count for the past two years because of COVID-19 and criticism that the methodology undercounted actual numbers, but at their last count in January 2020, just over 11,700 individuals were counted as homeless. Reynolds acknowledges there are several factors that feed into the problem, but the main issue is simply the lack of affordable housing in King County.

“The average apartment in Seattle is under 600 square feet [and] renting for $2,200. How is somebody who is currently very low income or not able to work ever going to survive when they’ve got to come up with $2,200 each month?” he asked. “Nobody’s going to get stable sleeping outside. As soon as you get someone into a situation where they’re safe and cared for, they’re going to be less of a community problem.”

STREET STORIES OVER OFFICE WORK

Reynolds is happiest when he’s out meeting with people, whether they are friends experiencing
homelessness, board members, or Nightwatch volunteers. But as the director, he has obligations he doesn’t care for as much, such as grant writing and strategic planning.

“I’m not a strategic thinker,” Reynolds said. “My brain doesn’t work that way. I have no doubt that’s held us back.” But Reynolds quickly points out how he’s been assisted by Ann Sakaguchi, whom he calls the “strategic thinker and business mind.” Sakaguchi, who has been Operation Nightwatch’s deputy director since 2003, also retired this past spring.

Sakaguchi says Reynolds is skilled at hiring the right people to come alongside and support him so he can do the relational work that comes so naturally to him.

“I believe God has put these people in the ministry with him to do the things Rick doesn’t like to do and isn’t good at,” Sakaguchi said. Reynolds is rarely at his desk. When it’s time to turn in a grant, she has to find Reynolds and “tie him down” in his office.

When King County last took a count in January 2020, there were more than 11,700 people counted as homeless.

“I don’t know if he likes it, but [the grant proposals are] beautifully written, and then we get grant money,” she said.

Reynolds is a gifted speaker and writer. He blogs about his friends who are experiencing homelessness on the organization’s website (seattlenightwatch.org), and a collection of his best blog entries have been published in his book, Street Stories.

“The lives of individuals are what’s compelling about Nightwatch,” Reynolds said. “The grace they exhibit and the care that comes back to us — it’s mind-blowing.”

When Reynolds started in 1994, he was the only full-time employee. The organization now has nine full-time and nine part-time employees. And then COVID-19 happened.

**PANDEMIC PROBLEMS**

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the ministry. One Nightwatch shelter used to take 50 men. This
was reduced to 20 during the pandemic. It later closed completely after there was a coronavirus outbreak. Now all clients in shelters are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The dispatch center served hot meals in the building until the pandemic forced them to distribute food outside in to-go containers.

When a resident at Operation Nightwatch’s senior housing facility came down with COVID-19, everyone at the center was tested. Twelve scared and upset residents who tested positive had to be moved to a hotel for isolation. “None of the tenants wanted to leave because they thought they were going to be living in tents outside,” Reynolds said.

Reynolds himself was sick with COVID-19 for two and a half months with a fever that lasted nearly eight weeks.

MORE TO COME
Reynolds didn’t want a farewell party to wrap up his years of service to Nightwatch. Being thanked isn’t high on his priority list.

“The personal experience is the fun part of this job and the reason why I’ve kept doing it,” Reynolds said. “You get close to people and learn about their lives — their struggles and joys and dreams and fears — and realize, That sounds a lot like me! We’re all human beings, for crying out loud.

Reynolds has retirement plans to travel to Iowa with his brother to learn more about his family history, but for the most part, he’ll continue do what he always does: meet one need at a time. Reynolds jokes that as he ages, Neal will have to learn to push Reynolds’ wheelchair into tent city on pizza nights.

“Helping homeless people gives me great joy,” Reynolds said. “Why would I want to stop that?”

Editor’s Note: Operation Nightwatch hired Deacon Frank DiGirolamo to succeed Rick Reynolds as its new executive director.
EVEN AS A TEEN, ANNA KRIEGER ’99 excelled at helping children with special needs.

Anna received the Unseen Hero Award from the Rare Sisters Batten Foundation for her work with students Cecilia, 12, and Lilly Fries, 10, in Arvada, Colorado. In 2018, the sisters were diagnosed with CLN3 Batten Disease, a rare and fatal illness. After normal early development, the girls are now blind, suffer from dementia and seizures, and face progressive intellectual and physical disabilities.

“I don’t feel like a hero,” said Anna, who coordinates the sisters’ ever-changing educational needs. “I am lucky to lead the team for Cecilia and Lilly. I find the girls’ resiliency, enthusiasm, and joy for life amazing.”

A SPECIAL KIND OF HERO
BY COLLEEN STEELQUIST

PHOTO BY BETH FRIES

From left: Lillian Fries, Anna Kreiger, and Cecila Fries
News

1970s

**JON SHARPE ’72 AND LAILA OLSEN SHARPE ’73** were recognized with the Marie Green Impact Award for their commitment to the mission of Washington, D.C.’s Museum of the Bible, where Jon is the chief relations officer and Laila is an ambassador for Women of Legacy. Jon was previously co-founder and president of C3 Leaders, an organization for Christian business leaders. Laila formerly served as associate director of Alumni and Parent Relations at SPU, working in the Alumni Office for 16 years before retiring in 2012.

**DALE WINSLOW ’73** retired after 45 years of pastoring Free Methodist churches. He led congregations in Oregon, Washington, and California, and served as superintendent of Illinois and Missouri’s Gateway Conference for three years. Dale and his wife, **KAREN STRAND WINSLOW ’74**, live in Upland, California. Their daughter, **KARMELLE WINSLOW ’00**, is also a Falcon.

**JOHN FORTMEYER ’77** retired after 27 years as founder and editor of *Christian News Northwest*, based in Oregon. John worked for more than four decades at newspapers throughout Oregon and Washington.

At SPU, he edited the campus paper his senior year, and then reported and edited for small dailies and weeklies in Ontario, Astoria, and Portland, Oregon, and

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**OBITUARY**

Ray Bakke called Christians into the cities

**B Y H O P E M C P H E R S O N**

**RAYMOND “RAY” BAKKE ’65**, known as the “grandfather of urban ministry,” died Feb. 4, 2022, after battling cancer. He was 83 years old.

The internationally renowned professor, pastor, and author of *The Urban Christian* and *A Theology as Big as the City*, made it his lifelong mission to call Christians to live out their faith in cities.

Armed with a history degree from Seattle Pacific College, a master of divinity from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and a doctorate in ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary, Bakke was devoted to racial equality and urban ministry.

Bakke pastored inner-city churches and taught at Trinity College and McCormick Theological Seminary in the ’70s. While working on his doctorate, he also co-founded a seminary track for urban pastoral education.

During the ’80s, Bakke taught at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago and worked to end redlining practices in inner cities, which denied hundreds of families access to housing because of racial bias. Bakke founded International Urban Associates in 1989, a network of urban-based church and mission leaders in many of the largest cities of the world.

Bakke was professor of Global Urban Ministry at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia from 1990 to 2001. And he helped found Bakke Graduate University, which offered courses on applying theology to urban migration trends and the growth of major cities.

The graduate school, which offered doctoral and master degree programs throughout the world, required students to travel to other continents as part of the program. Bakke was a professor and chancellor there until he retired in 2011.

“As counterintuitive as it may seem in this exploding urban world, I have learned that the larger and more densely populated that cities become, the more we must be with the people we serve, [and] the more our ministries must be intentionally relational,” Bakke wrote in *Response* in 2011.

“The world has come to our cities. And the world is nothing more than people, people who need our friendship, our caring, and the good news we have to tell about God’s redeeming love.”

Bakke was preceded in death by his wife, Corean Bakke (2021); son Brian Davis (2018); and daughter, Robyn (1965). Bakke is survived by sons Woody and Brian, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.
OBITUARY

Servant-leader Ed Bauman challenged young adults
BY HOPE MCPHERSON

EDWARD “ED” BAUMAN, professor emeritus of electrical engineering, died Jan. 2, 2022, at the age of 88.

Born in Bird Island, Minnesota, Bauman served SPU’s engineering students for 15 years as not only their professor, but also as their mentor and as a servant-leader.

Prior to his time at Seattle Pacific, Bauman served in the U.S. Air Force — rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel and teaching at the U.S. Air Force Academy and at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

When he arrived at SPU in 1985, he quickly developed an electrical engineering program from the foundations laid by emeriti Jim Crichton, Hugh Nutley, and Bob Hughson.

Bauman forged strategic partnerships with local industry partners, including Fluke and Boeing, to help students gain invaluable experience before graduation. Those internships often led to full-time employment, and graduates became major influencers in aerospace, national defense, robotics, and other key areas.

In retirement, Bauman and his wife, Betty, moved to Ocean Shores, Washington. There, they ministered to the young people in their church and in the local schools. Bauman developed an academic mentorship/tutoring program, and he and his wife helped fund their church’s new youth facility.

“Throughout his career, Ed sought to mentor, encourage, and challenge young people to strive for excellence and serve the Lord in their chosen professions,” remembered his SPU colleague Don Peter, professor emeritus of chemistry.

Predeceased by his wife in 2017, Bauman is survived by three daughters, one son, 11 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren.

REBECCA GROOM TE VEDE ’78, an organist and educator, composed four hymn miniatures featured at the Composer’s Workshop annual program of the Federated Music Club in Ponca City, Oklahoma, Rebecca has served as the organist for First Presbyterian Church in Stillwater, Oklahoma, since 1991 and is an adjunct professor at Oklahoma State University. She studied organ, composition, and church music with her father, Lester H. Groom, an SPU music faculty member from 1969 to 1991. She and her husband, John, live in Stillwater.

1980s

NANCY LUDEMAN LURKER ’80, was included as a “Top 25 Women Leaders in Medical Devices of 2022” by the Healthcare Technology Report. As president, chief executive officer, and board director of EyePoint Pharmaceuticals, Nancy brings over 30 years’ pharmaceutical industry experience to lead her company’s mission to improve the lives of people facing serious eye disorders. She and her husband, Dean, reside in St. Pete Beach, Florida.

GREG NELSON ’87 joined the board of directors for Opportunity International, a global leader in providing financial services to lift people out of poverty. Greg served on the board’s Stewardship and Impact Committee for the past year. Before retiring as vice president of Microsoft’s Partner Ecosystem, Greg held a variety of roles there for more than 26 years, including work in engineering, partner and business development, marketing, and sales. Greg was based in Seattle, London, and Paris. He currently lives in Kirkland, Washington, with his wife, LAURIE ANDERSON NELSON ’86.

1990s

Former SPU professor ROB MCKENNA ’90, MBA ’92, gave a TEDx talk, “Becoming a Whole Leader in a Broken World,” at a TEDx event in Manitou Springs, Colorado. He and his wife, JACKIE ESNOUNGH MCKENNA ’93, live in Kirkland, Washington. Rob’s father, David L. Mckenna, was president of SPU from 1968 to 1982.

KEVIN IWERSEN ’92 is the chief information officer for Tyler Technologies in Plano, Texas. Kevin manages technology infrastructures for corporations, state judicial courts, state executive government agencies, and U.S. military organizations, most recently serving as CIO for the Idaho Judicial Branch.

DESIRE WHITE ’99, FNP ’04, designed and opened a clinic for adopted and special-needs children in Tacoma, Washington, which recently celebrated its first anniversary. She is consulting with other agencies to establish additional clinics. Desiree and her adopted children, Mila and Isaac, who have Down syndrome, live in Tacoma. Learn more at her blog, adoptionseed.blogspot.com.

2000s

JESSICA SMITH BESSO ’00 is the chief financial officer and accounting manager at Weinstein A+U, in Anacortes, Washington, before establishing CNNW. John and his wife, Sandy, live in Newberg, Oregon.

SPRING/SUMMER 2022
Michael Tindall key in establishing SPU's computer sciences program

BY HOPE MCPHERSON

MICHAEL TINDALL ’71 graduated from Seattle Pacific College with a mathematics degree the same year IBM engineers introduced the floppy disk for computers. By 1975, he had earned a master’s and a doctorate in computer science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and was an assistant professor of computer science at Colorado State University.

Seattle Pacific took notice of this young alum and computer industry pioneer.

In 1980, SPU recruited Tindall to develop the University’s new computer science program. Tindall returned to his alma mater and served as a professor of computer science for the next 37 years.

Within a year of joining the faculty, Tindall revised the undergraduate computer science curriculum to firmly place SPU on the cutting edge of computer sciences.

Over the next three decades, he taught nearly every computer science course, introducing students to programing languages such as C, C++, Python, and Java. Tindall and his courses became legendary.

“Dr. Tindall taught me how to act professionally, while still having fun doing what I love,” former student ANDREW MOE ’01 remembered.

Tindall retired in 2017, and continued to enjoy playing playing volleyball and tennis, hiking in Colorado, and traveling.

After a two-year battle with pancreatic cancer, Tindall died Sept. 24, 2021, at the age of 72.

Tindall is survived by his wife, ELAINE UNRUH TINDALL ’71, whom he met in a New Testament class as a freshman. He is also survived by their sons, Christopher Tindall and JONATHAN TINDALL ’05, four grandchildren, and siblings DAVID TINDALL ’75, CHERI TINDALL RASH ’78, STEVEN TINDALL ’84, and many extended family members.

Donations in his honor may be made to the Michael H. and Elaine R. Tindall Computing Science Endowment at Seattle Pacific University.
business-to-business products and scaled the sales and operations organization.

PRETRINA MULLINS Med ‘07 has been appointed to a five-year term on Centralia College board of trustees by Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee. She has been a teacher for 27 years, primarily at White Pass High School in Randle, Washington. Pretrina lives in Randle.

HOLLY PATTON OLSN ‘08 founded Perfectly Posh Events, a wedding-planning and event-design company in 2010. Holly and her team were awarded Seattle Bride Magazine’s “Best of” awards for “Best Wedding Coordinator” in 2018 and “Best Wedding Planner” in 2016, 2015, and 2014, along with being named one of the top 10 wedding planners in the Northwest by MyWedding Magazine and receiving the Couple’s Choice award from Wedding Wire for multiple years in a row. She and her husband reside in Seattle.

JOSHUA FRANKLAND ‘09 is a physician at Olympic Medical Physicians’ Children’s Clinic in Port Angeles, Washington. He completed a residency in pediatrics at Seattle Children’s Hospital. He lives in Port Angeles.

2010s

ZACHARIAH BRYAN ’11 is the assistant news editor for The Daily Herald in Everett, Washington. A veteran reporter on the public safety beat, he also leads The Herald’s environmental coverage. Zachariah began working for the newspaper in 2018, following stints writing as a freelancer in Montana; for The Tundra Drums newspaper in Bethel, Alaska; and for several newspapers around the Puget Sound. He lives in Graham, Washington.

ALEX ABBOTT-EMEN ’12 won the 2021 Staff Excellence of the
BY HOPE MCPHERSON

WHEN BOB DROVDAHL ’71 was a ninth grader in Spokane, Washington, he traveled to Seattle with his best friend to visit his friend’s older brother at SPC. The campus made an impression on the young teen. Drovdahl later applied to Seattle Pacific for college and graduated with a psychology degree.

This year, Drovdahl, professor of educational ministry, retired after serving SPU students and colleagues for 44 years — not all in the School of Theology.

“I was first hired as director of SPU’s Camp Casey,” remembered Drovdahl, who, by 1978 had a masters’ from Wheaton Graduate School and was working on a doctorate from Michigan State University. “We were at Casey four years and, in 1982, I was offered a full-time faculty position.”

Drovdahl didn’t consider the move from Camp Casey to the SPU campus as a big shift. “It was a different way of continuing my work with college students during a transformative period in their young adult lives,” he said.

That calling to work with young adults guided his career. “We tend to think of our calling is being in the right place,” he explained. “But the Apostle Paul puts more attention on having the right perspective. Everyone has a ministry, and that ministry can be lived out in any place.”

Over the years, Drovdahl taught students in courses such as Human Development and Christian Faith and Leadership in Ministry. His academic writings focused on integrating faith and learning, and on practicing holiness. In his last year at SPU, he looked forward to his final opportunity to teach University Foundations 1000: The Christian Faith, a course taken predominantly by new and transfer students.

“Bob lives out Paul’s words in Romans 12 every day, including living in harmony with all,” said Richard Steele, professor of moral and historical theology. “I have never met anyone who puts these words into daily practice more faithfully than Bob Drovdahl.”

In retirement, Drovdahl plans to refocus his calling. He and his wife, JOY DEWEESE DROVDAHL ’71, will remain in the Seattle area, where they can support and encourage their grown son’s and daughter’s families, including five grandchildren, ages pre-tween to 20s.
Robert McIntosh demonstrated a long devotion to SPU

BY HOPE MCPHERSON

ROBERT MCINTOSH ‘64 died Sept. 26, 2021, at the age of 79. McIntosh had a multifaceted connection to Seattle Pacific University: He was a former vice president for University Advancement, an emeritus director of the Seattle Pacific Foundation, and he served on the SPU Board of Trustees from 1983 to 1985 and again from 1987 to 1996.

McIntosh’s long devotion to SPU was marked by vision, leadership, wise counsel, and encouragement. After leaving SPC, McIntosh held a variety of business positions in real estate banking, property management, and real estate development. He served on the SPU Board of Trustees for 11 years before becoming vice president for University Advancement in 1996. As vice president, McIntosh had responsibilities that included all aspects of donor relations, parent and alumni relations, fundraising strategies, capital campaign management, and was instrumental in planning SPU’s Downtown Business Breakfast. He also worked closely with the chief financial officer and the SPU Foundation to manage real estate assets acquired and owned by the institution. McIntosh retired in 2008 but continued consulting for SPU until 2012.

For 16 years, McIntosh served on the Seattle Pacific Foundation Board of Directors, and he also served as chair of the Foundations’ property committee. A 2016 resolution recognizing his long service stated McIntosh was “known throughout the business and investment communities for his Christian ethics and his sincere concern for following God’s leadership in his life ...”

McIntosh is survived by his wife, Donna, children KIMBERLEE MCINTOSH FOSTER ‘89 and Kevin McIntosh, grandchildren, and extended family members.

JANE SHIPEK ’14 completed a master’s degree in public health from New York Medical College. Her three-year thesis project focused on the life experiences of incarcerated women in Montana. Jane resides in Great Falls, Montana, and works for the Cascade City-County Health Department.

KATE ISLER ’18 was featured on monpowerment.com for her work as a business leader, author, and gender-parity advocate. After working at Microsoft for more than 20 years, Kate founded a nonprofit, Be Bold for Change, which creates Seattle-area events in celebration of International Women’s Day. In 2020, she co-founded and became the CEO of the marketplace.com, an e-commerce site for women-owned businesses. The 500+ businesses on the platform help women disproportionately affected by the economic impact of the pandemic.

STEVIE SHAO ’19 was featured on the Crosscut news site for her work as an in-demand muralist and illustrator in Seattle, known for a distinctive and vivid folkloric style. Before the pandemic, she had never painted a mural. A sampling of recent projects includes painting murals to brighten boarded-up businesses, as well as parks, restaurants, and bars; shrouding Pioneer Square’s Metropole building in Northwest marine mammals, fish, and birds; collaborating with the nonprofit Urban ArtWorks, Sub Pop Records, and Starbucks; painting a mobile food pantry for Family Works; and designing merchandise like t-shirts and tote bags for local businesses. Stevie was the art director of Lingua, a student-run art and literary magazine, while at SPU.

2020s

KERSHA TAITANO ’20, a digital content strategist for Pacific Daily News, was selected for a spot in GivingTuesday’s Starling Collective, an international cohort of grassroots leaders. During their six-month program, she will develop The Inspo Initiative program to help high school students and young adults who live on Guam learn more about college options and connect with people working in industries they hope to pursue professionally. She lives in Dededo, Guam.

KARA SMITH DNP ’21 is a nurse practitioner resident at the Yakima Medical-Dental Clinic in Yakima, Washington. The practice is part of the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic, a network of community health centers focused on underserved migrant and seasonal agricultural workers, with over 40 clinics in 18 communities across Washington and Oregon.
In Memoriam

CLARAELLEN COLLINS ANDERSON '54 died Sept. 27, 2021, at the age of 90.
ROXI ANTHONY ’90 died Jan. 8, 2022, at the age of 77.
LORRAINE ROTTRUP ATKINSON ’52 died Dec. 19, 2020, at the age of 90.
VIRGINIA HAYDEN BAIMA ’79 died Nov. 25, 2021, at the age of 64.
RAYMOND "RAY" BAKKE ’65 died Feb. 4, 2022, at the age of 83.
LARRY BANKS ’68 died Jan. 7, 2022, at the age of 78.
EDWARD BAUMAN died Jan. 2, 2022, at the age of 88.
DENNIS BOGART CC* ’66 died Sept. 24, 2021, at the age of 79.
VIRGINIA BONO ’75 died Feb. 15, 2022, at the age of 75.
IRVIN BYERS ’60 died Jan. 18, 2022, at the age of 84.
MARK DENHAM ’66 died Nov. 22, 2021, at the age of 77.
PAUL EMBREE ’48 died Sept. 11, 2021, at the age of 95.
BETHANY WATHNE ERICKSON ’07 died Aug. 22, 2021, at the age of 35.
SARAH EWERT ’17 died Nov. 23, 2021, at the age of 27.
FRANK FURTADO ’61 died Dec. 4, 2021, at the age of 90.
DAVID GRANT ’67 died Feb. 25, 2022, at the age of 77.
SUZANNE HARGROVE ’87 died July 20, 2021, at the age of 70.
LEONA CARLSON HAYES ’55 died Jan. 30, 2021, at the age of 89.
DONALD HODSON ’56 died July 30, 2021, at the age of 88.
PAULENE WIEDMER HOFFMAN ’56 died Aug. 10, 2021, at the age of 85.
DOROTHY MILES HURT ’60 died April 21, 2021, at the age of 72.

Retirement

Kato put academics into practice
BY HOPE MCPHERSON

FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES, SHARLEEN GAY KATO ’84 had her faculty office in Peterson Hall — the same building where her parents, MERLIN GAY ’53 and CHARLOTTE MARTINSON GAY ’52, met in the 1950s.

From there, Kato thrived in her 36-year career, serving as professor of family and consumer sciences, chair of human development and family studies, director of family and consumer sciences, and senior international officer in the Office of Global Engagement. She retired in June 2022.

“It has been such a gift to serve here,” Kato said. “I am grateful for the impact that SPU had on me and on all the students I’ve walked alongside over the years.”

In addition to interacting with students, Kato honed her expertise with longtime professional memberships in such organizations as the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and professional certification in family and consumer sciences-human development and family studies. She wrote numerous textbooks used in college and high school career and technical education programs.

Kato and her students also put academics into practice. For nearly 10 years, just before Christmas, she and her students went to the Philippines for two weeks to serve in a local orphanage and teen home, while also helping area residents build local support.

“I hope my students left SPU feeling empowered, having been assured God loves them and that they were created for a unique purpose,” said Kato.

In retirement, Kato intends to write more, serve in her community and professional guilds, continue leading a community Bible study, travel, and spend time with her three young grandsons.

“Sharleen has been a great colleague and friend,” said Jaeil Lee, professor of apparel design and merchandising. “We celebrate her retirement, but her legacy will live on.”

Her legacy also lives on through her family. Kato’s son, ALEXANDER KATO ’11 teaches at the Seattle Pacific Seminary. Her daughter-in-law, ANNIE HAIGHT KATO ’09, is an SPU assistant professor of management in the School of Business, Government, and Economics. Her daughter, STEFANIE KATO KOSCO ’14, MA-SSM ’16, and son-in-law, COLIN KOSCO ’09, are also SPU alumni. Husband Dean Kato serves on the SPU Board of Trustees.

Marriages


Births

TO MALIEA LUQUIN LOWE-HALE ’13, MFA ’16, and NICHOLAS LOWE-HALE ’14, MA ’15, a boy, Ewan Emmanuel Lowe-Hale, in July 2021. “He is a bright light in our lives,” said the proud parents. His name means “everlasting God with us.”

* Cascade College

NOTES

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM ALUMNI

Marriages


Births

TO MALIEA LUQUIN LOWE-HALE ’13, MFA ’16, and NICHOLAS LOWE-HALE ’14, MA ’15, a boy, Ewan Emmanuel Lowe-Hale, in July 2021. “He is a bright light in our lives,” said the proud parents. His name means “everlasting God with us.”

* Cascade College

 NOTED

RESPONSE

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PHOTO BY LYNN ANSELMI
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SPU ATHLETICS

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DONNA HUTCHINSON MSN ’92 died Nov. 28, 2021, at the age of 76.
JAMES KORNER died Sept. 6, 2021, at the age of 72.
BRENDA PLUMMA JOHNSON died Nov. 18, 2021, at the age of 61.
RONALD KEELING ’70 died September 16, 2021, at the age of 73.
ROBERT KUTRICH ’76, ’88 died Oct. 23, 2021, at the age of 68.
GEORGE LEASOR ’55 died Nov. 15, 2021, at the age of 93.
STEPHEN “STEVE” LEWIS ’74 died Dec. 24, 2021, at the age of 69.
OUNAEB NASLUND MACDONALD ’44 died Nov. 5, 2021, at the age of 98.
VELMA MACDONALD ’51 died Dec. 27, 2021, at the age of 92.
V.O. “BUD” MCDOLE ’52 died April 20, 2022, at the age of 92.
ROBERT MCINTOSH ’64 died Sept. 26, 2021, at the age of 79.
STANLEY MOE SR. ’55 died June 21, 2021, at the age of 92.
CHARLES NEIFERT ’65 died July 6, 2021, at the age of 78.
ALMA NEWSOME ’58 died March 24, 2022, at the age of 86
ROBERT PORTER ’51 died Nov. 4, 2021, at the age of 93.
VIETTA “KAY” STAMEY RIEGEL ’54 died Dec. 16, 2021, at the age of 85.
EVA STILLMAN REDDICK ROGERS ’46 died Nov. 12, 2021, at the age of 98.
JANET SIMS MA ’83 died Aug. 27, 2021, at the age of 87.
LAEL WINCH THOMPSON ’68 died Feb. 23, 2022, at the age of 76.
MICHAEL TINDALL ’71 died Sept. 24, 2021, at the age of 72.
JUNE JILLSON TREMAIN ’53 died Aug. 28, 2021, at the age of 97.
DOUGLAS TULLAR ’50 died March 28, 2022, at the age of 92.
ROGER WALLS ’61 died Nov. 7, 2021, at the age of 82.
DONALD WELK ’59 died Jan. 5, 2022, at the age of 84.

OBITUARY

Frank Furtado: More than just a coach
BY MARK MOSCHETTI

FROM THE WRESTLING MAT to the basketball court, FRANK FURTADO ’61 was a man of a thousand stories.

Furtado passed away in Seattle on Dec. 4, 2021, at the age of 90. For more than three decades, Furtado served as the trainer of the Seattle Sonics, winning two NBA trainer of the year awards during his tenure. Furtado retired in 2000 but continued as an assistant trainer for the Sonics until they moved to Oklahoma City in 2008.

Prior to his years with the Sonics, Furtado attended Seattle Pacific College and graduated in 1961. He went on to George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon, where he earned his master’s in exercise science. While there, he coached football, basketball, and wrestling.

He helped start Seattle Pacific’s wrestling program during the 1964–65 school year. In short order, he built that program into a regional power. His teams finished in the top 20 at the NCAAAs five times, and two of them were among the top 10. Furtado coached 11 wrestlers who became All-Americans.

During a 2016 interview, Furtado recalled a wrestler who was down by a score of 14-2 in his bout against a University of Washington opponent, but then came back and got an escape and a takedown in the final seconds to win.

“The coaches from each team had to carry the guys off. They couldn’t walk,” Furtado recalled. “It brings tears to me because that’s one of those moments when you see two fellas who had extended themselves completely.”

Another story was about the “daily doubles” his Falcon wrestlers would do, going upstairs, downstairs, and through Brougham Pavilion.

“It was one of the big things the guys hated and I loved,” he said, laughing. “I kept a chart of how many laps you made. If you didn’t make more than two (in three minutes), you were in trouble.”

But Furtado was more than just a coach. He also was a teacher, and one of the classes he taught was athletic training, as he shared his knowledge of the many medical and nursing skills he learned in the Navy as a medic during the Korean War in the 1950s.

He is survived by Sarah, his wife of 68 years; children Michelle, Cherie, and Frank III; along with three grandchildren, and one great-grandson.
A Christian table offers fellowship and serves up the good news of the Gospel to a younger generation who increasingly thinks Christianity is a tasting menu of judgment and condemnation. In true Wesleyan spirit, SPU is at its best when it invites students to consider some of Jesus’ radical ideas that challenge the world: Every time you are tempted to judge the sliver in someone else’s eye, remember there is a beam in your own. You have a unique calling and place in the world that only you can fulfill. Love everyone, always!

We don’t need to sell Christianity to anyone. We need merely to invite students to the table to challenge ideas, to challenge one another, and to challenge themselves. At SPU, we can struggle and grow together with rigor and humility. We are going to ask whose voice is missing. Our classrooms and community will feel a lot like the disciples’ table with lots of discordant voices: Are you sure that person should be at the table? Are you sure those two should be sitting next to each other?

This is a really hard place for any institution to occupy in the world today. But the world is hungry for it. Can we create a university in our divided society where students, faculty, staff, leadership, the board, and alumni invite all of the “right” and “wrong” people to come hang out at the table where Jesus presides? Can SPU alumni be known for their grace and hospitality to all? What is the good news that Christianity and SPU and you have to offer?

In the bakery just off campus, there is Maya Angelou’s quote on the wall: “In my experience, people won’t remember what you say; they won’t remember what you do; but they will remember how you made them feel.” At SPU and beyond, my prayer is that we are all able to create spaces at the table where people feel love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Paul Yost is the chair and an associate professor of industrial-organizational psychology at SPU. He is also the director of IOP Applied Learning and Development. Yost’s research and work focuses on strategic talent management, leadership development, and change management.

A place at the table

BY PAUL YOST

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, I met with Seattle Pacific University’s faculty leadership as part of our strategic planning process. I wanted us to think about what was at the heart of SPU, so I asked them if they could imagine a metaphor that best captures who we are as a university.

My past experience revealed that we are good at defining who we are not. We are not a big state university where students can feel lost. We are not a fundamentalist, judgmental university. We are not a Christian university in name only. But we haven’t been as good at stating who we are.

In the cacophony of ideas that usually accompanies faculty conversations, the metaphor and image of a table resonated with the group. Not just any table, but one where Christ is hanging out and everyone is invited. Our statement of faith reflects this.

The metaphor we discussed was not a fence, defining who is in and who is out. It was a table where students, faculty, staff, and the larger Seattle community could be invited to sit down and engage with each other and God. A table is a place where people can form community and be nourished.
Big Love by Charles Mee was SPU’s mainstage student production in April. Directed by Richard Lorig, the contemporary reimagining of Aeschylus’s ancient play, The Supplicants, has 50 brides fleeing to a manor in Italy to avoid marriage to their 50 cousins.
PARENTS: Is this magazine addressed to an SPU graduate who has moved elsewhere? Help us update our records at spu.edu/response.

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To help make a Christian college education more accessible, last year, SPU took the bold step to lower undergraduate tuition rates by 25%, cap future tuition increases, and increase the number of scholarships.

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