

# What Happened? What's Next?

Taylor Looks to the Future

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## A Note from the Chair of the Board of Trustees



Dear Friends of Taylor,

Taylor has certainly been the focus of many conversations in the past few months. As Chair of the Board of Trustees, I have received a number of comments from our constituents, directly and indirectly.

The themes and presentations vary significantly. Many folks have been encouraging, as they see the potential for Taylor to be a significant contributor to kingdom work. Some folks believe we are in our last days, and that our current situation is the result of years of poor administration and board misguidance; we have been accused of mismanaging assets and dishonouring the trust of our donors; others are waiting on the sidelines, watching.

Honestly, some of the criticisms have stung (and some may have been unduly harsh), but there is some truth to what has been said. Taylor *had* strayed from its foundational precepts in that we had become less than an effective servant to our churches. We had, to a degree, turned our focus inward instead of outward. We depended upon your gracious and faithful giving to *survive* instead of to *grow*. But although our decision to close the University College has forced us (Administrators and the Board) to assess ourselves in an entirely different light, I strongly believe in a couple of principles that have guided much of my life:

1. When we apply hindsight to past decisions, we will always come up looking less than competent. Sadly, we don't have the benefit of that hindsight when we make

decisions – we simply make the best decisions we can, with the information we have at the time.

2. When we look to place blame for current circumstances, we consume valuable energy that should be directed at rebuilding.

More than ever, we need and ask for your prayers, as we face some significant challenges in the months ahead. It will be with God's provision alone that we become an effective tool for God to further His kingdom. It is so very, very important for you to know that there is not a single Board member or administrator who desires failure of this institution. Trustees, all volunteers, just came through our semi-annual meetings March 5-7, and they were a blessing to me – what a gift from God, to stand arm-in-arm with such caring and gifted people! Our Board sees the potential for Taylor and has given direction to our administrators that will bring this vision to fruition, although it won't be quick or easy.

When our daughter Lauren was born, I could not have told you what she would become or what she would look like as a young lady. I could only have told you how much we loved her, the plans we had for her and the effort we were prepared to put into her life. That is where I am at with Taylor. I cannot tell you exactly what we will look like. I can only say that we are passionate, that we have plans and we are prepared to give it our best effort.

Please stand along with us. Sincerely yours,

Barry Kossowan  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Taylor University College and Seminary

The pain that surrounds the closure of Taylor University College is described elsewhere in this issue of *The Bridge*. Rather than add my own note of loss, I want to use this space to share a personal, positive note.

Knowing that my opportunity would not come again, I enrolled in two university college classes this term. It has been a singular joy to sit with Taylor students as one of them, to share in the unique experience of a Taylor education. Despite very trying circumstances, we continue to learn and grow and serve together, and if you were here to see how these burdens have been borne, I believe you would be proud. Join me in wishing many of these friends *Godspeed* as they move on from here.

Tim Willson  
Communications and Marketing Director  
Editor, *The Bridge*

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# Taylor to Close University College

Taylor President Dr. David Williams shares what happened

by Dr. David Williams

Ever since we announced the closure of the University College we have been inundated with phone calls, letters, and emails, asking "WHAT HAPPENED? The last Bridge was so positive and optimistic about the possibility of the University College becoming a part of the University of Alberta that it was shocking to get a letter at the same time, notifying us that the University College was closing."

First, let me say that I fully appreciate how shocking the news was. I am really sorry that we are in this place, and I wish there had been a way to better communicate what was happening. It is also unfortunate that for many of you, *The Bridge* and our letter announcing that the U-C was closing came so closely together. (That was due to the difference in delivery time for bulk mail and first class postage.)

What I want to do now is to help you understand how we got into this situation. It should be no surprise to anyone who has kept up with Taylor when I say that the University College has not fulfilled the expectations we had when we received university accreditation. This is true on several different levels, but primarily in terms of enrolment. It also did not fulfill the expectations of some of our churches that young

people would be prepared to serve in their local ministries, and it did not fulfill the expectations of some of our churches for the spiritual growth of students. While I can assure you that students were being served in these ways, there was a strong perception that Taylor had lost a ministry focus.

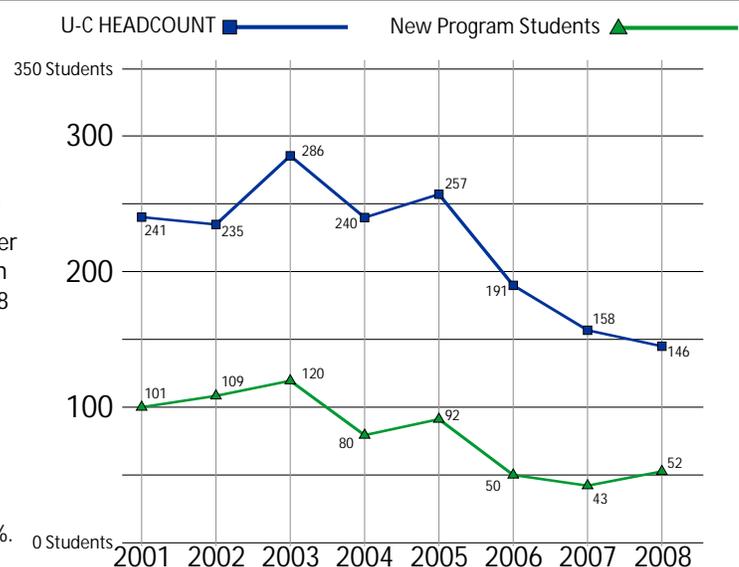
As mentioned, the most significant of these unfulfilled expectations has been recruitment. Enrolment at Taylor has been a major issue since the formation of the university college. Although there was an initial burst of excitement accompanied by encouraging early enrolment, the subsequent drop off in new student enrollment put the institution in an unsustainable position. Many of you became aware of this through *The Bridge* or if you received increasingly frequent fund-raising calls asking you to help us end in the black each year.

Your generosity and faithfulness to Taylor have been displayed year after year, which combined with significant budget cuts, allowed us to keep our nose above water. But our ending in the black (as important as that was) was masking an increasingly difficult situation. The school seemed to be starving, and found it increasingly difficult to attract and keep staff

## Decline: Student Headcount at Taylor University College

**Enrolment Decline:** This chart shows Taylor's decline in enrolment, using headcount (i.e., the total number of students, whether part-time or full-time). From a high of 286 in the third year of the University College, the number of students attending fell to 146 by the fall of 2008, when gains in first-year students were offset by the Spring 2008 graduation of a larger number of fourth-year students. Also shown is the number of incoming program students (i.e., those enrolled in a degree program).

Surprisingly, enrolment rose following the Christmas announcement of the closure of the University College, with 10 new students. Student retention was also at its highest-ever level from the fall to winter semester: 96.9%. At the time of writing, the U-C Headcount is 150.



and faculty, attract and serve students effectively, and adding new academic programs.

For example, one of the problems with our recruiting effort was virtual invisibility in the Edmonton market. The recent name change combined with our new university college accreditation worked together to create a situation in which we were known neither in our churches nor in the broader evangelical community. In an attempt to deal with this, we significantly increased our spending on promotion and visibility; it helped, but it wasn't enough, and it was too late.

Another attempt to deal with our enrolment

## Students, staff and faculty: *Where do we go from here?*

For 150 undergrads and over 60 staff and faculty, the closure of Taylor University College means major changes ahead. Students who are not graduating will need to continue their studies at other schools, and most of Taylor's employees will be leaving. (At this writing, the number of people who will continue at Taylor beyond this school year is still being determined.)

Following Dr. David Williams' meeting with staff and faculty on December 18th, the Taylor community dispersed for Christmas. The staff worked hard to communicate with students, parents, donors, churches and other stakeholders as quickly as possible, and work began in earnest to negotiate favorable transfer agreements with other institutions for the sake of our students.

What followed was a wide range of responses, from expressions of grief to anger, from "Is it too late to do something?" to "Who is responsible for this?" However, the most common comments were those of prayerful support. In numerous phone calls, letters and emails, alumni and friends assured the Taylor community that we were not alone.

No one knew what would happen following the Christmas break, but it seemed likely that many students would decide to transfer immediately to other schools. However, a strange thing happened – enrolment went *up*. From as far away as California, almost a dozen new students made their way to Taylor for the first time, pushing first-year enrolment up to its five-year average.

difficulties was by expanding our degree offerings. Our research indicated that we simply had too few programs to attract a critical mass of students. Program growth had always been in our plans from the very beginning, but due to budget realities we simply were not able to carry out those plans. Program growth is expensive and risky in our competitive educational market, but we determined that without it we simply couldn't survive, so the Board courageously began to do the work necessary to seek out and secure funding for such an investment, in part by mortgaging our greatest financial asset: the land.

It was at this point that things began to snowball. Alberta's then red-hot economy was pushing our costs



Concurrently, other Christian post-secondary institutions such as King's University College in Edmonton and Ambrose University College in Calgary went far beyond the call of duty to find ways to serve our students. Transfer agreements that waived residency requirements, offered scholarships and bursaries and offered other forms of assistance were signed, and numerous efforts were made to host Taylor students at sporting events and open houses.

Taylor faculty have been significantly affected by our situation. A few faculty members have found new positions, but most are still looking; academic positions usually come open once per year, so the timing of the University College closure has been a source of stress.

"It has been a real testing time for the faith and character of faculty and staff," says Dr. David Hall, Academic Vice-President (interim).

Edmonton's economy remains relatively strong, and staff members have already begun finding and moving to new jobs; it is a season of farewells.

While we have no way of knowing for sure, Taylor students appear to be choosing to continue their education at King's University College in Edmonton and Ambrose University College in Calgary in roughly equal numbers; smaller numbers are choosing Concordia, Briercrest, Prairie, Providence, Grant MacEwan and the University of Alberta. TB

out of control. Salary increases were necessary to be competitive; maintenance, facility, and technology costs were escalating as older equipment and facilities were failing and had to be replaced or repaired. As these costs mounted we were forced to revisit our expense and enrolment forecasts; as we approached the end of the 2007-08 budget year, our projections of Taylor's deficit for 2008-09 almost tripled to \$1.8 million, bringing our projected cumulative debt to almost \$5-million; at that level, the future of the entire institution would be at risk.

We simply did not have the resources available to take a chance on enrolment growth, but the Board of Trustees decided to go into a time of prayer and fasting to seek God's will in how to move forward.

It was during this time of prayer and fasting that we hosted our 2008 Alumni Homecoming & Reunion in early July. It was with these challenges in mind that we spoke of dramatic changes happening within the Taylor community, and of the strong belief that God was at work at Taylor to help us better address the educational needs of the church. We were confident that God was working, but we didn't know what Taylor would look like as we came through it. We said that the face of Taylor could change dramatically but through it all we were confident that God was in charge and was bringing about the changes that were in motion.

On the very day that the Board concluded its season of prayer and fasting, we received the call from the University of Alberta to begin a conversation about the possibility of some type of affiliation. As you know, we were ecstatic. We believed that we had experienced a miracle. Those conversations progressed well, though slowly, and the University of Alberta was very supportive of moving forward with the affiliation.

The stumbling block, as it is so often, was money. Taylor didn't have enough money to make the affiliation work, and the U of A was not in a position to fund it (given their own financial realities amid the dramatic economic downturn of last fall). The only source of funding that could make this happen was the Province of Alberta. As we reported earlier, we met

with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology and gave them the information they needed to make cost estimates. We worked closely with them to help them understand what the affiliation would involve and what it would provide for the people of Alberta. They listened. They did their due diligence. They gave it serious consideration on very short notice. But, at the end of the day, they didn't think that the investment made a strong enough contribution to the Province of Alberta to justify the commitment of increasingly scarce resources.

“Enrolment at Taylor has been a major issue since the formation of the university college.”

We were all heartbroken at this result, but the outcome of this eventuality was determined by the Board in our October meetings: Taylor University College was unsustainable, and good stewardship demanded that we no longer put our limited resources into continuing the endeavor.

As painful as this reality is, we want to make it very clear that we don't believe that this is the end of Taylor's educational ministry, nor our ministry to youth and college-aged students. Yes, we are forced to change how we serve our young people and will no longer offer university-level degree programs, but there is still much we can do to serve their educational needs. We will continue to equip students for service—through the Seminary and the E P Wahl Centre, and we believe God is leading us to re-build Taylor College (more about that in the June edition of *The Bridge*).

We are pained by the recent experiences of our journey, but we are excited about where God is leading us. We believe that the future is bright for a three-pronged response to serving the church in developing Christ-minded leaders that make a difference in the world: Taylor College, Taylor Seminary, and the E P Wahl Centre. To better understand what God is bringing to life from the death of the university college, I invite you to continue reading. But, most of all, I invite you to join with us in what we believe God is doing in our midst! 

*Dr. David Williams is the President of Taylor University College and Seminary. You can read more about Taylor's situation online at [www.Taylor-Edu.ca](http://www.Taylor-Edu.ca)*

# Taylor's Financial Situation: An Update

by Dr. David Williams

Ten years ago when I was teaching biomedical ethics there was a statistic that in the United States indicating that over 80% of all the health care costs were incurred within the last week of a person's life. I don't know if that is still true, but I completely understand the sentiment that drives it. You want to do everything you can before you allow a loved one to pass. There is a remarkable parallel to the situation we find ourselves in at Taylor. We realize that when we brought to everyone's attention that we had accumulated almost \$5million debt, it was quite a surprise to some of you. We want to explain as best we can how we got into this situation and "where the money went."

\$5 million is a lot of money: how did we accumulate so much debt? To understand the story we must start with my first semester at Taylor (fall, 2004). In my first semester, we found ourselves with an enrolment of almost 50 fewer new students than we had expected when we created our budget. The implication of that was that we took out a loan against the property with CEIF for just under \$1.5 million; we have carried that debt since then. Over the past three years, with enrolment sharply lower, our revenue from tuition was significantly reduced. The remainder of our debt has been accumulated as we tried to make the UC sustainable and to deal with the issues that we were faced with. We saw those issues as:

- 1) our need to be more closely tied to our constituency,
- 2) our need to address the reality that we were invisible in our primary market,
- 3) a realization that we didn't have an appropriate number of degree programs to attract the students necessary to be sustainable,
- 4) a realization that we were under-serving the students we did recruit in the area of student development, and
- 5) to address only the most emergent issues arising with our aging facilities.

We recognized each of these issues one at a time and acted as responsibly as we could to address the need. To address our constituency relationship we identified and hired a full time director of Church and Alumni Relations, and we more closely attended to the

needs of our alumni association and our alumni. To address our invisibility issue, we significantly increased our communications budget and identified and hired a full time director of communications. To address our need for program growth we pursued the development of a science lab, added a university transfer business program (at the expense of one new faculty member) and prepared the way for other cross disciplinary degrees with the hire of a new history professor and a new theologian. We also developed and launched a new certificate program in Worship Arts. To address the needs of our current students we increased to full time our (half time) residence director and (half time) campus ministries coordinator positions, increasing Student Development by one full-time position, and we invested in updating our current facility and infrastructure (e.g., internet availability).

The exciting thing was that things began to turn around: our students were happier; our name was getting out better; our new student numbers were beginning to increase. We thought we had turned the corner and were on the right track. The problem was that our costs continued to escalate, our facilities needed more upgrading, and the costs associated with continued program growth outstripped what we could realistically pay for; when we exhausted all of the possibilities before us, we had to discontinue the operations of the University College.

As much loss as we are experiencing, we don't think God is finished with Taylor. We believe that God is re-tooling us to provide educational in service of the church for the 21st century. This edition of *The Bridge* highlights some of the things that God is bringing together to use this institution in the future. These are exciting opportunities for Taylor to continue to make a difference in the world.

At this time of our transition we need you more than ever. We need your prayers for sure, but we also need your financial support. With the downturn in the world-wide economy, many people are hurting financially – and that is certainly true of our supporters as well. So, please, if you are able, stand with us financially as God re-tools us for the developing of Christ-minded leaders that make a difference in the world. TB



## Taylor Campus Listed for Sale

Following the announcement that Taylor would wind down its university college programs, administration received numerous inquiries about our facilities. Was there space for rent or lease? Was anything for sale? By February it became apparent that the best way to determine the value of the Taylor campus would be to take it to the market with a public listing.

As Taylor's projected cumulative debt grew to almost \$5-million, the Board had already begun to consider using the southern half of the campus as a way to generate revenue. Recent circumstances have created a situation in which all options must be carefully considered. Our debt stands in the way of ongoing effectiveness and must be dealt with. Please join us as we prayerfully discern the wisest stewardship of our resources.

Taylor sits on a beautiful 26-acre site in southwest Edmonton. Purchased by the school's alumni in the 1960's, the site has been home to generations of students and the Taylor community feels a strong attachment to it. No decision has yet been made as to whether the campus will be sold; once all expressions of interest have been evaluated, the Board will consider the best use of this treasured asset in light of our ongoing needs. TB

## UPDATE ON THE TAYLOR African Missions Trip

May 11-31, 2009

Taylor University College and Seminary students have enjoyed tremendous support as they prepare to leave for Nigeria. Dr. Allan Effa is leading a team of eight people on a trip that mixes ministry with learning, with a special emphasis on discovering more about African Christianity.

Fund-raising efforts, including a bottle drive and a pancake breakfast, as well as donations from Taylor

supporters, have been enough to cover the expenses of the trip.

The Taylor team will be taking something very special on this



*Taylor students grab a quick bite before serving pancakes at Central Baptist Church during a fund-raiser for their missions trip to Nigeria.*

year's trip: 40 solar-powered MP3 players containing the first scripture portions in the Ndolla language – just imagine!

Over the past ten years, teams of students from Taylor have ministered in Zambia, Turkey, Nicaragua, Mexico, Philadelphia, Belarus, India, Philippines and Japan. TB



**ABOVE:** 1. In early March, Taylor students took part in a Donor Appreciation event, personally thanking some of those who have provided scholarships and bursaries. Front row (l-r): Carmyn Effa, Denver Krushel, Lynn Beddoes, Julianna Bienert, Brad Wright, Hughson Ong. Back Row (l-r): Jake & Peggy Leverette, Hannah Grunwald, Walter & Phyllis Brown, Elmer & Ellen Breitkreuz, Sheryl Neuman, Lillian Sass, Vicki Rancier, Thabea Walters, Dr. David Williams. | **BELOW:** 2. Hoopfest 2009 was won by Olds College (men's and women's teams) Here Rochelle Weigl takes a pass. | 3. Phil Seutter battles for control of the ball against Olds. | 4. The Fabulous Re-invention of Sunday School, featuring Aaron Reynolds, was a great success – one of the first events organized as part of the new E P Wahl Centre. | 5. Peter Rollins chats with a guest following one of a series of lectures. Rollins' visit to Edmonton was co-sponsored between Taylor, Edmonton Anglicans and a Pentecostal church – a partnership that was unusual enough to generate an article in the Edmonton Journal | 6. Dr. Allan Effa, serves pancakes as a fund-raiser for the upcoming Taylor missions trip to Nigeria. | 7. Dr. Os Guinness speaks during the 2009 E.P. Wahl Lectures at Taylor Seminary. | 8. Jontue Kuyvenhoven and Shawn Milley are shown rehearsing for the Taylor Performing Arts Department presentation of the play *A Wonderfully-Wasted Life*.



# Alumni Profile - Dave Follack

by Chantelle Olson

Student: BT CTI '67, BRed NABC '70  
 Faculty: '73 - '91: Prof of History, Biblical Studies & English;  
 Dean of Men '73-'81, Assistant to the Registrar '81-'89,  
 Campus Chaplain '89-'91  
 Hometown: Sherwood Park, AB  
 email: vfollack@hotmail.com

*"Never underestimate a student..."*

He thought he would enter the foreign mission field, but instead God brought him to our school. 17 years after leaving to serve as an interim pastor, David Follack realizes that he has been in missions all his life, ministering to those around him.

In eighteen years of service at NABC (now Taylor), David cherished the opportunities he had to build relationships with students. He has fond memories of teaching Marvin Dewey and Jim Leverette... "Great guys," he calls them, though at the time he wasn't always sure what they were getting out of class. Reflecting on how these men have been used by God in the years since they sat through his classes, he muses: "Never underestimate a student."



*Taylor alumnus and former faculty member, Dave Follack, with his wife Vi (also an alum). The two began dating during their student days.*

To improve his teaching methods and relationship approach, Dave drew from his own experience as a student at CTI and the wonderful mentoring example of such men as Ed Link and Willy Muller. Friendly and caring, these men supported Dave through his years as a student; and as a member of the faculty in his turn he strove to emulate their example.

After 12 years serving as an interim pastor, largely a "healing and encouraging ministry", Dave has spent the last five years working with his hands: "my boss is a Jewish carpenter" he winks. Along with his wife Vi, who he started dating at CTI, he continues to minister in their home church, where they lead an adult Bible study and faithfully teach Sunday School. TB



The Jubilee's executive includes Marvin Busenius, Elmer Breikreuz, Rose Garrett, Margaret Benke, Ed Link, Priscilla Busenius & Lil Strangway, Dallas Strangway, and Terry Fossen.

## Join the Jubilee's at Taylor

Taylor hosts a regular gathering of seniors known as the Jubilee's. Many members have strong ties to Taylor (as this grew out of the Alumni Association) but it now includes members from a wide range of backgrounds. Good food, an interesting speaker and meaningful fellowship – all *great* reasons to come!

The Jubilee's Spring Retreat is May 22, 2009, and this year's focus is on prayer; join us if you can!

## Taylor Seminary Looking Ahead to the Fall Semester

As reported in the last issue of *The Bridge*, Taylor is in the midst of a process aimed at strengthening and renewing its ministry training. Discussions, internally and externally, have been led by Interim Academic Vice-President Eric Ohlmann, who has a great deal of experience in seminary education.

Taylor Seminary has suffered, to a lesser extent, the same enrolment trends that have affected the institution as a whole. However, there is a sense that the past year has seen important progress in rebuilding relationships with students and prospective students as well as church leaders. Internal processes and communication have also improved.



Above: Dr. Allan Effa leads a Brown Bag Lunch discussion on Missional Theology. These events have proven to be very popular with local pastors.

Rick Heavenor is the Seminary's main recruiter,

and he is very encouraged by the early indications for fall.

"We are quite a bit ahead of last year, in terms of applications," Heavenor says. "We've also just finalized our list of courses and instructors for fall, and that will also be helpful in helping students decide to come to Taylor."

The fall curriculum continues to carry a strong emphasis on intercultural studies – highly relevant for anyone concerned with an effective cross-cultural communication of the gospel. Old and New Testament courses and numerous field education offerings will also be offered. New this fall is the opportunity to study with Dr. Darren Schmidt and Dr. Jeff McPherson, who have

been teaching history and theology (respectively) in the University College.

(It's worth mentioning that Spring Session 2009 features three main offerings:

- Experiencing Nigerian Christianity, Dr. Allan Effa - *full*
- Pastoral Ethics, Mark Davies, 3 credits - *space available*
- Wilderness Spirituality, Neal Beaven, 3 credits - *space available*)

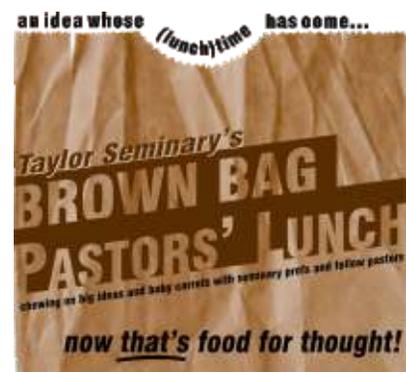
The seminary faculty recently launched a new initiative to serve pastors. The *Brown Bag Lunch* is an opportunity for church leaders and seminary students to enjoy—at no cost—a lecture and discussion on a topic of current interest. The first three of these Brown Bag Lunches have met with significant participation, with topics including:

*The Truth Project: Strengths and Weaknesses*, led by Dr. Randal Rauser, Professor of Historical Theology

*Missions, Down Under: A Critique of the Missional Approach Advocated by Australians Hirsch and Frost*, led by Dr. Allan Effa, Ray and Edith DeNui Professor of Intercultural Studies

*Atonement Wars: An Overview of Competing Theological Understandings of the Atonement*, led by Dr. Jerry Shepherd, Professor of Old Testament Studies

The next Brown Bag Lunch will be held April 23rd, with a discussion led by Intercultural Studies prof Dr. Joost Pikkert: *Are GOD and ALLAH the same person?*



For anyone interested in training for Christian ministry, whether in Greek or Hebrew studies, Biblical studies, theology, missions, youth ministry, pastoral ministry or counseling, we invite you to consider studying with us.

You don't need to study full-time, and you don't even need to pay full tuition if you would like to audit a course (to sit in on classes, not for credit). And if you are an alumnus, ask about taking a course for free! Taylor Seminary is a significant resource to the evangelical church in northern Alberta, and we'd be honored to have you join us as we study and learn together. TB

# New Co-operation Between Carey Theological College and Taylor Seminary

A strategic joint venture opportunity is being explored by Taylor Seminary and Carey Theological College of Vancouver, BC.

As part of Taylor's comprehensive review of programming and seminary renewal, the two institutions have begun to explore the ways in which a partnership could better serve our students and, more broadly, our church constituencies and the evangelical community as a whole.

Taylor Seminary has been training people for professional and lay ministry for decades (as EBS and NABDS), and has a solid reputation for preparing men and women for service. (One recent study found that 90 percent of Taylor Seminary graduates remained in fruitful

ministry for over five years, compared to an average of only 10 percent.) In particular, Taylor's Intercultural Studies program is widely known for its expertise in cross-cultural communication of the gospel. With deep roots in the North American Baptist Conference, the school continues to attract full- and part-time students from many different denominations, and from various countries and nationalities.

Carey Theological College is a ministry of the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada. They have long-standing relationships with Regent College and the University of British Columbia, and they have developed significant distance learning tools that allow students to study online from anywhere in the world.

In a new era of partnerships and co-operation, there is much to explore in a relationship between Carey and Taylor Seminary. Discussions regarding the best way to share our strengths co-operatively will continue over the coming months, with a view to enhancing our similar (yet distinct) educational ministries. TB

## A Word from Carey by Dr. Brian Stelck

As an alum of Taylor (1980s, NABDS), it has been difficult to watch the institution go through some significant challenges. Taylor is a seminary with a rich tradition, excellent faculty, and with a strong emphasis on intercultural studies and a reputation for preparing clergy for the church and for missions. Following my degree I served in prairie churches and was well prepared for mission service in Africa; it grieved me to think that Taylor's ability to offer seminary level theological education in Edmonton would be affected by its financial situation. In response to God's call on us, we make ourselves available to partner with Taylor to ensure that this education for the kingdom, and the work of the reign of God, advances. The firm belief is that each of us will be stronger together than we are alone.

Carey Theological College, where I am President, has already done some really hard work in redefining what it might mean to be a seminary in the 21st century. The direction in which Carey has been developing is contextual, and responsive to the needs of Christians who are seemingly divided by geography—such as local churches from Vancouver or the Prairies, or the ends of the earth. Practically speaking, we have built degree programs with a majority of the course work available online. We are already a seminary which allows students

to take courses from where they live and work. Rather than uprooting their lives and moving in order to complete an advanced degree, they can access seminary education where they live and work.

We can do more together than we can individually. Although there are elements (such as geography, or subtle but notable denominational differences) which may have kept us divided in the past, our vision has to be about building the kingdom. And this goes beyond Baptist denominations—this is work that we can do for the whole evangelical community. Our calling is not about building individual dreams. The 21st century is about how we follow Christ as God advances the kingdom. I pray that together we serve our Lord as faithfully in the future as our predecessors did in the past. TB



*Above: Brian Stelck, President of Carey Theological College, is a long-serving Taylor trustee (and an alumnus of Taylor Seminary).*

# News and Notes



*Above: Some of the students who made the Dean's List stand together following a luncheon in their honour (details below).*

## Alumni and Student News

### Making The Dean's List!

Pictured above are some of the Taylor students who made the Dean's List, having earned a GPA of at least 3.5 in either Winter 2008 or Fall 2008. Pictured are (l to r): David Heavenor, Kody Thompson, Joshua Clayton, Joel Leckie, Cari McIllduff and Genevieve McNab. Other honorees who are not pictured above were: Matthew Cairns, Chelsea Campbell, Carmyn Effa, Eric Franck, Benjamin Hof, Joella Jorstad, Jennifer Lozeau, Genevieve McNab, Dallas Parsons, Theodore Peters, Bronwen Poultney, Lindsey Trueman, Christopher Vanden Brink, Holly Wearmouth, and Spencer Young.

### Serger at Work in the Arts

Julie Serger ('93) recently graduated from Rosebud School of the Arts as a stage manager and designer. She will be working with Edmonton's Citadel Theatre for two shows this year.

### Seminary Alum heading to Ontario

After pastoring at Rabbit Hill Baptist near Edmonton for a few years, Lee Dyck ('04) is moving to a church in Arnprior, ON, close to where he grew up. The church at Rabbit Hill (the oldest NAB church in Canada), was packed for a farewell service for the Dyck family in March.

### Taylor Alum Heads Farm Organization

Kevin Benders was recently elected president of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers. Benders, who farms near Red Deer, AB, has three children with his wife, Sara.

## Faculty and Staff News

### Congratulations, Dr. Darren Schmidt!

Dr. Darren Schmidt successfully defended his doctoral thesis in St. Andrews, Scotland in December. Dr. Schmidt is a historian with a specialization in the history of evangelicalism; he will teach at Taylor Seminary this fall.

### Dr. Allan Effa Heads National Missions Group

Dr. Allan Effa, the Ray and Edith DeNeui Professor of Intercultural Studies at Taylor Seminary, has been elected president of the Canadian Evangelical Missiological Society. The society is made up of mission scholars and practitioners from across the country.

## Alumni Updates

*We hope you will share your news with us -- marriages, moves, careers... we want to note these important events! Please stay in touch by email: [alumni@Taylor-Edu.ca](mailto:alumni@Taylor-Edu.ca).*

## Taylor Prof: Finding God in a #1 Best-seller

When Dr. Randal Rauser first heard about *The Shack*, it was from a pastor who said the book was going through his congregation like wildfire. Upon reading it, he was impressed that so much theological insight was being communicated in such an accessible way. After giving a lecture series on *The Shack* at McKernan Baptist Church in Edmonton, he proposed a book of his own – which was not only accepted, but requested by the publisher within a month (a deadline he was able to meet).

In *Finding God in the Shack*, Dr. Rauser explains why some people have reacted with suspicion or hostility to Paul Young's novel. For one thing, *The Shack* deals in unconventional ways with the doctrine of the Trinity; one of the most frequent criticisms of the book is that its apparent denial of Trinitarian

*If you have ever had a conversation on 'The Shack', whether with an enthusiast or a critic, you will want to invite this skilled and accessible theologian into the conversation. Before you have read a dozen pages you will know why we need to keep company with theologians like Randal Rauser.*

-Eugene H. Peterson  
Professor Emeritus of Spiritual Theology  
Regent College, Vancouver, B.C.

hierarchy is heretical. Of course, Dr. Rauser also explores the controversy over the fact that God the Father is portrayed as a large African American woman, but more importantly, he addresses the key issue at the heart of *The Shack* – the issue of

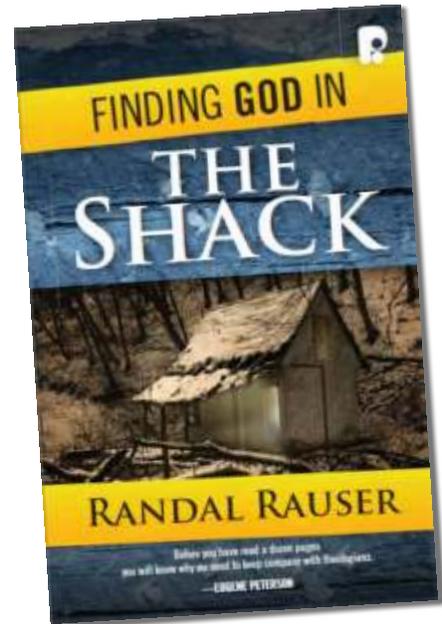
suffering and the promise of redemption.

Dr. Rauser has been a guest on radio talk shows across North America since his book was published, and has also been invited to appear at various publishing conferences and on at least one TV show ("Celebration", on the Daystar Network). The book is available at Christian retailers and online. [TB](#)

*Ed. Note: You are invited to come and study with Dr. Rauser and the rest of Taylor Seminary's outstanding faculty. Part-time or full-time, your studies with us are sure to strengthen and equip you, and you will find the Taylor community to be very welcoming. To get more information on applying, email Rick Heavener: [Rick@TaylorSeminary.ca](mailto:Rick@TaylorSeminary.ca)*



Dr. Randal Rauser (left) teaches theology at Taylor Seminary. He is the author of numerous articles and books, including the recently-published "Finding God in the Shack" (2009, Paternoster). Above: A book signing at Blessings (Edmonton), February 2009.

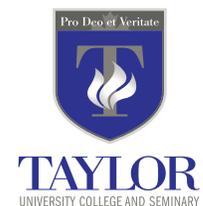


## Grad09 Please Join Us!

Graduation from university or seminary is one of life's milestones, and we invite you to celebrate with us. We anticipate graduating approximately 45 students from Taylor University College, and as many as 13 students from Taylor Seminary.

University College Grad April 25, 2009 | 3:00 P.M. Seminary Grad May 3, 2009 | 3:00 P.M.

These ceremonies will be held at West Meadows Baptist Church, 9333 - 199 Street, Edmonton



## New Educational Ministry Takes Shape Centre Named for Taylor (CTI) Founder E.P. Wahl

Taylor announced the formation of a new educational service in the fall. A visioning process of the board had yielded a number of options, one of which took the institution back to its roots. The new initiative would focus on the non-academic educational and training needs of the local church, and would be named in honour of founder and first president, Rev. Emil P. Wahl.



Rev. E. P. WAHL, President

Given Taylor's financial constraints E P Wahl Centre programming is being developed

carefully; partnerships will lessen the risk and contribute to success, and will also embody the kingdom mentality that lies at the heart of the new Taylor.

The first official E P Wahl Centre event was held in conjunction with Fusion Canada, a lecture with Fusion founder Mal Garvin. Subsequent events have included:

- *Hear. I AM* – a weekend for youth leaders that focused on spiritual renewal, as well as ministry training with author Chris Folmsbee.
- *The Fabulous Reinvention of Sunday School* with Aaron Reynolds (co-presented with Central Baptist Church and the Alberta Baptist Association),
- *Faith in a Post-Modern World*, a series of lectures with Peter Rollins (co-presented with local Anglican and Pentecostal groups), and
- *Challenges to Faith in the Global Era*, the 2009 E.P. Wahl Lectures with Os Guinness.

Future opportunities are expected to focus on

training for youth work, children's ministry, spiritual formation, worship, leadership, and Bible courses. "What churches have described to us is their need for a 'CTI for the 21st Century,'" says Taylor president David Williams. "We believe the E P Wahl Centre will respond to that need."



Above: Professor Marg Daly is developing some of the music and worship training options for the E P Wahl Centre.

Professor Marg Daly, who is the chair of the Taylor Performing Arts Department, is developing the music programs; seed funding will come from a Daly family endowment that had been in place for the University College.

A related piece of the E P Wahl Centre programming has come from another member of Taylor's music department; Diana Wiens is preparing to continue the Taylor Community Choir and to launch a Taylor Children's Choir.

Churches often struggle to find, train and keep volunteers, and the E P Wahl Centre has an opportunity to lighten the burden of ministry through preparation. Our schedule of events will be released later this year – stay tuned! <sup>TB</sup>

# Australia's Fusion Brings Training to North America

## First Course to be Offered at Taylor in May; Long-term Relationship Possible

by Tim Willson

A ministry that began in Australia over 50 years ago is coming to Taylor. Fusion International, which has an enviable record as a community-impacting organization, has been in discussion with Taylor for many months regarding a co-operative training venture. The first training session, known as "Foundations," will run the week of May 10-17, 2009 at Taylor.

Fusion has been working to address serious social needs for decades. Blending biblical insights with social sciences, the organization has developed a network of thousands of Christians who are working together in



Above: This picture, taken from a Fusion International brochure, illustrates the community involvement that is central to their ministry. Fusion's training focuses on three things: Living with God (faith), Living with Yourself (growth), and Living with Others (love).

unprecedented ways to build relationships and bring community renewal. So successful have they been that some of the world's largest organizations have come knocking. Olympic organizers invited them to Athens and to Beijing, and they are being asked again to be part of

the Olympics - this time in Vancouver. They are also working in conjunction with the World Cup of Soccer, the World Expo and with the Commonwealth Games. At the moment, the door of ministry is so wide that Fusion does not have enough volunteers to meet all of the opportunities.

Fusion emerged as a creative response to socially-at-risk young people in Sydney, Australia in 1960, and has since widened its scope to include healthy, caring communities; after all, the needs of young people can't be effectively met in unhealthy communities. Fusion now has over 250 staff and thousands of volunteers in 30 centres around Australia, European bases in the United Kingdom and Germany and work in Albania, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, and the Caribbean. The Canadian office has been taking shape in recent years, and the training that is planned for Taylor in May is aimed at responding to the many needs and invitations that have emerged.

Early in the conversation with Fusion, three members of the Taylor staff went to a training session in Wichita to learn more about the organization. Seminary Admissions Counselor Rick Heavenor, Campus Ministries Coordinator Doug Siewert and Church and Alumni Relations Director Dr. Terry Fossen all attended.

"I was very impressed with what I saw in Wichita," says Dr. Fossen. "It was clear to me that this organization is made up of strong and humble believers from many different church backgrounds, all of whom are committed to redeeming communities. I came back thoroughly excited and eager to find ways to connect Taylor and our churches to what God is clearly doing through Fusion."

In January, Taylor President Dr. David Williams was invited to join Fusion's international leadership for a two-week conference and training session at their headquarters in Poatina, Australia. Like Fossen, Williams was deeply impressed, and describes Fusion as being on the cutting edge of a new movement in missions, both locally and globally.

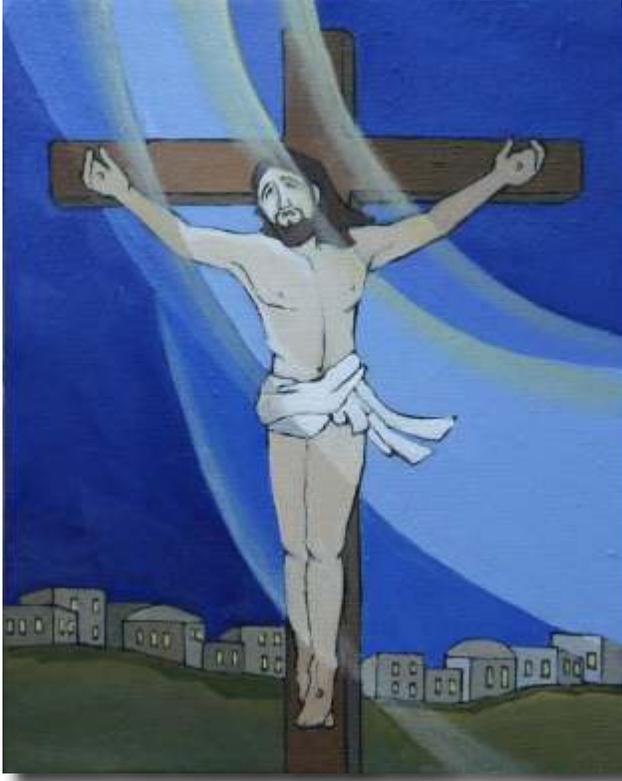
"Fusion offers churches exactly the type of training that we've been hearing them ask for over recent years," he says. "They shape people (young and old) spiritually as they prepare them to make a substantial contribution in the world."

Dr. Williams says the Fusion training is exciting because they have a wide variety of programs that link well with what God seems to be leading Taylor into. "There is a resonance between us, and I believe God has brought us together." TB

*Ed. Note: If you are interested in taking the Fusion training course, visit [www.fusioncanada.ca](http://www.fusioncanada.ca) or call them at 780-481-7333. You can email the office at: [training@FusionCanada.ca](mailto:training@FusionCanada.ca). You can take the one-week*

*course, or one of the Certificate courses (3-month, 6-month or 12-month). Those who take the Fusion training will have the opportunity to be part of Fusion's work at the 2010 Games in Vancouver.*





*Jesus on the Cross (2008),  
Cynthia DeCoste, 8" x 10"*

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Cynthia deCoste is a Maritime artist who created a series of paintings on the life of Christ for Taylor in 2008. These paintings are on permanent display at Taylor Seminary, just outside Stencil Hall; a number of these images have been used by Taylor for greeting cards.

Cynthia's paintings are usually bright and whimsical, conveying the joy of life. In this image, she has captured a sense of grief and humility, and emphasizes Jesus' connections to both earth and heaven even as he is suspended between them.

May God bless you as you contemplate Jesus' death and resurrection during this Easter season.

*Calling All Artists!*

Taylor alumni are invited to submit photographs, paintings and other visual art projects for publication or display on campus. Learn more at [www.Taylor-Edu.ca/creative](http://www.Taylor-Edu.ca/creative)