



Campus Ministry@Dalhousie

Greetings from the Halifax Campus Ministry!

Thank you to all who support this ministry in a variety of ways. On many levels, this has been both an exciting and challenging academic year, marked by intense spiritual growth. Our campus community is being refined in the fire of God's love and grace. This year, we've worked hard to build on the "foundation" of our faith community, which is Jesus Christ. As we share life together, we are going deep in God's Word, we are opening up our life stories, and we are learning how to become vulnerable and transparent with one another. This is essential, as God calls us to look beyond ourselves and to love and serve the wider Halifax community. In the words of Henri Nouwen, we are becoming God's "wounded healers," God's servants in a broken world. This truly is an amazing journey to be on.

I pray you will be encouraged and challenged, as you read the remainder of this newsletter and hear from two core leaders in our faith community. May God's Spirit continue to unlock our imagination and give us the vision we need to be mature servants of Christ in our communities.

- Rev. Brad Close, Christian Reformed Campus Pastor in Halifax



Meditations on Christian Growth

As I look back at my years of university, they have been a time of many experiences, but if I had to sum them up, I would call them a time of growth. Of course, being young, I've been growing all my life, but I think these years were marked by rapid, sometimes painful, spiritual growth. I would attribute much of this growth to my many first experiences of independence as they were lived within a nurturing and progressive Christian community. An important facet of this community was those who gathered within campus ministry. One of my first lessons, one that I will continue to learn, is that life's choices and debates cannot be painted black and white; in fact, to do so can be destructive. In my experience, campus ministry is a safe place where we can study and discuss these shades of grey; where we can be honest and open about our confusion. I learned, to my surprise, that the act of asking questions and the process of discussing them is often more important than reaching conclusions. To begin to reach the level of vulnerability that makes these conversations possible, intimate community seems to me to be nearly essential. The honesty and hospitality that I've experienced in my faith community in Halifax is beautiful. For the first time I've found a community that can help ease the loneliness that weighs my heart, especially as I find myself far from family. As this intimacy and belonging permeates us, a sense of responsibility seems to establish itself within the students and we are inspired to take ownership of this ministry and to acquire responsibility. Campus ministry provides a unique opportunity for students to exercise their diverse gifts for the uplifting of our community, for the building of God's Kingdom. When I came to Halifax I was blessed to have been raised by loving parents; now God, through the spiritual family on campus and the broader Halifax community, has blessed me with a coming of age.

- Naomi Pleizier, Bachelor of Science with a major in Marine Biology



Home Made: The Gathering of Community

An activity we have as part of the ministry is called *The Gathering*. Every other Sunday we share in a Christ-like familial experience on campus. We bring our delectable culinary masterpieces and in feasting and merry-making we share an intimate meal. Later, we draw together in worship, testimony, and prayer. It is during this time that our struggles, fears, inadequacies are named. Together united in brokenness, fearless in camaraderie, and bold in faith we support one another. We take on the call to confess to one another, bearing each other's burdens, and gaining understanding though it may cost us everything. "Your sins may be as mountains before you; but if you humble your heart and confess your sins, trusting in the merits of a crucified and risen Savior, He will forgive and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. . . . [The work of His righteousness] is peace, and its effect quietness and assurance forever" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 566).

This has been a transformative semester on campus. As a diverse body of believers, we are becoming stretched and redeveloped as missional workers. I have borne witness to many of my friends and peers growing and strengthening their faith; learning a new depth as followers of Christ. The fruit of this growth is apparent in the progressive vulnerability we express towards one another. This is diametrically opposed to our academic structure; a revolutionary act in the midst of shameless individualism. As students, the pressures to meet scholastic expectations move us to unabashed self-centric behavior. When we eat, sleep, meet with others, work, study, or relax our decisions are easily made from what our perceived benefit will be. The focus is not always "What is God calling for me to do in this situation?" Yet, our missional initiative to go forth with love and grace disarms our intent for personal gain. The quality and substance of this foundation for Campus Ministry is radical.

Recently, I was away from the community I so dearly care for. From May to October 2010, I was on a solitary bike trip across Canada for Campus Ministry. I was away from those that ground me, my Christian fellowship. In the vacancy, therein lies a gift: perspective. I got to see the world and came to understand how precious journeying together can be. In isolation, our growth is so very limited to our own understanding. The beauty of what is blossoming in the hearts of students is what calls 'home' to me. "We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing" (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

- Desirée MacNeil, Part-time Campus Ministry Intern & Student in International Development Studies and Journalism



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**Christian Reformed
Campus Ministry in Halifax Society**
2535 Robie Street Halifax, NS B3K 4N3

Our Mission

The integration of faith, learning, and lifestyle in an academic context.

Our Vision

To draw students, faculty, and staff into community - a place - where we encounter the living God, where faith is nurtured, where the world of higher education is engaged and taken seriously, and where those in need are cared for.