

Knights Times

December 5, 2013 • Volume 5 • Issue 2 • Warner Pacific College



DIVERSITY ISSUE

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT DIVERSITY?

by Montique Loy

In a Knight Trusts diversity survey at Warner Pacific College, one student asked, "What's the big deal about diversity?" According to NBC news anchor writer Victoria Dufresnois, "The fact that there is some nervousness about diversity isn't new. Our country since its beginning has struggled with the theory of democracy and the practice of minority inclusion. For Sojo, 'what matters is that as a country we continue going forward toward the ideal of democratic inclusion and that policies such as comprehensive immigration reform keep being pushed, because at the end actions speak louder than words.' The annual *Illustration of the Esquire* NBC survey of America which Dufresnois Sojo's article responded to can be found at www.nbcnews.com.

In the Knight Trusts online survey of 76 students, 45 percent said that the college discusses diversity issues too much, compared to 35 percent who found the discussion balanced, and 12 percent who said there was too little discussion on the issue. Anonymous comments were left by students on the survey. Many of the student comments seem to harp at the difficulty of balancing the desire for a diverse community with the fear that diversity efforts

will cause fragmentation. One student commented, "The more we talk about when we're different, the more separated we'll feel." Another student said, "Diversity is a wonderful thing. It consists in what we each bring to the table, not simply in our skin color, gender, culture, etc. I find it disappointing when diversity becomes another way to set us apart from each other. If only diversity could be more of a celebration of what we each offer to our community."

Students also addressed the definition of diversity. One student said, "Diversity, I have recognized, has become an ambiguous term that is thrown around like a loosely defined coin on this campus. Diversity is not something that can necessarily be measured. [...] We have not created enough space for being in a format." Another student's comment suggests a tension of the student body's issue with diversity topics: "I believe students and faculty are undisciplined about what diversity truly is. When it is brought up, it is looked at negatively, because it is constantly being used in the wrong interpretation." Another response: "We talk about diversity a lot, but I don't feel that we're using it or capitalizing diversity a lot. I wish we could do more than talk about things, in a way that's comfortable and accepted by the Warner Pacific

community. It often seems that our minds are wide open, but our hearts are not." Whatever their definition of diversity, students say they experience it on this campus. Over 62 percent of students who answered the poll believe that Warner Pacific is modern to diversity concerns. Fifty-nine percent of students polled said that they experience the most diversity at school compared to places like home, work, church or their neighborhood. Over 57 percent of students who participated in the survey said that diversity in higher education is moderately to extremely important. One student reflected, "People always seem to complain that school teaches us math that we'll never use, but our life skills—I applied our school for teaching this."

A 2009 article called "Why Does Diversity Matter at College Anyway?" addresses the question via a review of the book *Diversity and the College Experience* by Aaron Thompson and Joe Cusco. Citing President Barack Obama as a catalyst for the national discussion, the article states that "diversity is hot on college campuses, too—but not only race, ethnicity, and gender, but also religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and age." Continued on page 13.

FINDING OUR PLACE

NON-CHRISTIANS SEEKING RELEVANCE ON A CHRISTIAN CAMPUS

by Benjamin Irwin

Everyone has a history of experience with spirituality, at different times experiencing zeal, apathy, love, hate, enthusiasm, rejection, doubt, nihil, and disappointment. My own history of these experiences is something I have been reflecting on a great deal during my time here at Warner Pacific. I was born and raised a pastor's kid, moving every few years, and attending every church service, every youth group, every potluck, every fundraiser. I grew up with my family under a microscope of scrutiny from the church going-milk, and thus had a subtly politicized childhood. I felt a profound pressure to be the good Christian boy I was expected to be, while at the same time growing up with a lifetime of negative and even traumatic experiences with Christians.

After high school, I followed a senior's recommendation across the country to Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Liberty is one of the largest Christian universities in the world, and was founded by highly controversial Southern Baptist theologian and conservative pundit Jerry Falwell. Liberal voices like Max Baerenthal of "The Nation" are quick to remind students that Jerry Falwell is a former proponent of segregation and vocal opponent of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement, founder of 9011 on gay's abolition, and the ACLU, and accuser of judge Ted Stubby Tink-Winky as a gay role model. I was completely miserable at this school, and after one semester those feet to go back.

Liberty University was a place where there was very little if any inter-faith dialogue, or even dialogue across the spectrum of Christianity. The beliefs of "non-Christians" and even those liberal Christians were hardly discussed in lectures, and if they were, it was often mockingly. The kinds of books I had access to at the campus bookstore, a sprawling Barnes & Noble on campus, were incredibly censored to include only those that agreed with the school's belief system, as were the kinds of speakers who came to weekly to the school's massive arena convocations. My week-long upbringing in the church and my stint at LU left me

so disillusioned with Christianity by the end of it, that even as someone who wants to believe (as Fox Mulder of *X-Files* would say), I couldn't possibly self-identify as a Christian. I just didn't know how to anymore.

I say all of this to make a point. As someone who wasn't conservative, evangelical, or even particularly religious at all, I was very uncomfortable and very out of place at Liberty and one in the very least that made me grow, but made me decay. Because of this experience, I came to Warner Pacific. In need of a place that would grow me as it votes the hard questions I'd stood up in my complicated history with God. I found this college to represent a multiplicity of beliefs and encourage inter-faith dialogue and hard questions in a way I'd never experienced before.

Even if I've found this college to be a place that makes me at the complicated place I'm at, I know from experience that not everyone here feels that way. Because of the hurt I've felt in the past, my heart always goes to that unbeloved voice that person who feels like an outsider. This is why I've reached out to some of our faculty and students to ask the question: How does a Christ-centered school stay relevant to non-Christian students? The first person I met with was Dr. Arthur Kelly, a pastor who has helped me learn to own my identity as someone who doesn't know what religion has to check. "I learned in teaching here that I can't assume anything about the beliefs or experiences of the people I teach," Kelly told me.

"If the college wishes to engage in truly honest conversations about faith, then we'll reach people in a variety of places in their journey, but our goal cannot be proselytizing or 'fixing' people."

I also spoke to Robert Villegas, a student in the Freshman Year Learning Community where I serve as peer mentor. Villegas is a Latino and an immigrant from the Philippines. Continued on page 11.



Photo by Benjamin Irwin

Lifting His Name Higher

New Associate Director of Campus Ministries Hopes to Change Campus Culture

By Trish Allen

"We lift your name higher" are the words that repeatedly fill the crowded room of McGuire Auditorium on a Tuesday morning. The energy in the air is tangible and reverberates the deep-breathed minds of students. Hands reach high in worship as sunlight streams in through stained glass windows. Eyes light up, smiles break out on upturned faces, and bodies sway to the infectious beat. For many, chapel is a time of meditation, prayer, worship, and fellowship with friends. To others, chapel is a place to catch up on last minute homework, emails, texts, or sleep. For many of us, it is far too easy to mentally check out and vegetate, to become complacent and so feel like chapel is simply another thing students must check off their already busy schedules.

Michelle Lang is here to change that outlook. As Associate Director of Campus Ministries, she is here to be a changing force within the college community. Lang is a part of the leadership team that oversees all of the chapel services throughout the academic year. Essentially, her job is to create opportunities and experiences for students to have spiritual encounters during their time at the college. "That fifty minutes in chapel, to me, is so fun. For people who don't want to be there it's long, and for those who want to be there it's short," Lang said. "What I want to do is make that chapel time, that time spent, the most successful, refreshing, life-giving fifty minutes of your day. I want people thinking, 'I have to go to chapel. I need whatever is there. I need that moment to breathe.'"

Lang is excited about being a part of the change that is happening in Campus Ministries. "Being in a structure that is about creating education with spirituality, that is about contributing to encouragement and change Christian leaders, that feels good to me," she said. Lang also hopes to create an atmosphere in chapel that is receptive to the faculty and staff: "I hit me the other day; there are a

lot of faculty and staff members that attend these chapels. They are coming to get something too. They have work to do and deadlines to meet, just like the students. I want them to feel re-energized as well."

Kelsey Donovan, a junior and a member of the chapel worship team, expressed her thoughts on Lang's influence and involvement in this fall. "Michelle Lang is a passionate, god-driven woman who loves God and wants others to experience His presence in chapel and on campus. She is welcoming and is excited to bring international change to Warner Pacific. When asked about the changes that are to be expected with Lang's new presence in chapel, Jon Ballman, Director of Campus Ministries, responded, "We were excited to have her to join the college as we all are in process of creating programs and services that continue growth towards the vision of what WPC can be. I am excited to have her as a partner in ministry as the college moves into its Christ-centered, urban, diverse mission, and I cannot wait to see how God uses her here."

It is hard not to assess the confidence and strength with which Lang carries herself. She has a way of making you feel instantly at home. She is fierce, full of spirit, and on fire for God. A smile sweeps her mouth as she explains how her experience at Warner Pacific has been both welcoming and enlightening. "I was brought here to help shift the culture, but when you women's part of the culture before, you don't exactly know what that means. It's like trying to go into a Greek restaurant to cook Mexican food. I don't know if I'm close or far. You know, we all agreed that we want to eat food, but I don't know what the menu book was like before I got here, so I'm cooking with blinders on." She remembered when Bob Sand, Assistant to the President's Office, and Jon Ballman called her: "I wasn't looking for a job or change. But when Warner

Pacific called, I had to at least consider the possibility that this was God. I felt her, and Warner's call felt foreshadowing."

Before Lang was Associate Director of Campus Ministries at Warner Pacific, she was a part of an urban gospel band in Seattle, Washington known as Michelle Lang & Soul Wars, which was awarded Seattle's Best Contemporary Urban Gospel Group (michellelang-soulwars.com). Lang is also recognized as having started the SingShot All-City Youth Conference in Seattle, "a three day multi-cultural/cross-denominational event that offers youth and youth workers a regional, high-quality, affordable conference that grows them the opportunity to deepen and declare their faith while empowering and inspiring them with tools to positively affect the world around them" (singshotconference.org). Lang graduated from Seattle Pacific University with a B.A. in Psychology. She serves animated services, especially Shirk and the Lion King. She preaches her life to Christ at a pepper shaker, and she loves to bake. Her specialty is sweet potato pie.

Lang hopes that students will come to her if they ever have any questions about what she does, want to share their thoughts and opinions, prayer requests, or simply have a

chat down chat. "Outside of chapel time, I hope to connect with students. That they look at me and think I heard something in chapel and I want to talk her about it or to talk to her. I treat her."

In a November follow-up interview with Lang, she provided additional reflections about her first months at the college. "Change is difficult; we have gone from a praise team of three people to about ten, which is purposefully diverse in background. Every week someone comes and asks me how they can lead their voice to the worship experience. The community accepted the worship experience for what it was and just kind of went along with it. What I sense now is that people are experiencing something that feels a little more open and they feel that they are now able to add their voices. My job is to navigate how to get those voices in there in the best way possible. Perhaps this is a weird thinking, but a change that I would like to see happen is chapel being longer. Something as simple as another 10 or 20 minutes would help us linger in those meaningful moments of worship or prayer." Megan Michaels, a senior Christian Ministries major, explained her perceptions of the changes: "I definitely like what Michelle is doing. The time spent



Photo by Trish Allen

in chapel is more engaging, integrated, and students are now able to play a bigger role in chapel, which is wonderful."

Students can reach Michelle Lang on Facebook (facebook.com/MichelleLang) or email her at mlang@warnerpacifc.edu.

Service Learning: Becoming co-participants in humanity



BY MOLLIE BERRY

Service learning is about more than the hours required or where it's done. According to sources from servicelearning.org, "Service-Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instructional and experiential learning, and meets civic responsibility and engagement commitments." Tim Ritchie, our Service Learning Coordinator, reminded this idea and said that he was "most concerned with the meaningful engagement of the students."

Yes, service hours are essential. This year when I thought about logging 20 hours of service learning credit, I cringed. I didn't want to spend my time doing something that didn't benefit me. It took me a little time, but I figured out how selfish that sounded. Service learning isn't about me, it's about what I can do with what God gave me to benefit someone else. With the right heart and the right attitude, service learning can be a chance to find something you are passionate about, it can be a chance to make a difference, and it can be a chance to reflect the actions of Christ.

But it's not just a one-way train. Don't go into service expecting to benefit from it or thinking that you offer something from above others. Be there with a genuine attitude, and the experience can benefit both parties. It's a reciprocal action. Professor Tony Krug calls this kind of service learning "co-participating with humanity." We are in community together, and each party has something that can benefit the other. Maybe what you have to offer is a physical need, like food, clothing, or physical labor, whereas the other party has knowledge, life experience, or wisdom to offer. As Krug once

told me, "Don't go into these situations thinking, 'What can I give them?' but rather, 'What can they give me?'"

There are many great opportunities to participate in service learning. On Commute Day of Service in September and MLK Day of Service in January, there are various teams and activities in which students can get involved. The campus Hood drive is another way to serve either by giving blood or being a part of the team that helps the people who donate. Another way to serve is the winter in Hot Chocolate Ministries. Senior T'rah Allen said this about Hot Chocolate Ministries in a video on Facebook after serving: "Every time I participate in the Hot Chocolate Ministries, I come away feeling changed, blessed, and touched by these wonderful people that I meet on the streets. It's amazing to me what a small cup of hot chocolate and a warm smile can bring."

Many clubs and organizations on campus offer ways for students to get involved in an activity that is beneficial to the community. Ritchie said that the service learning team has been collaborating with clubs and organizations on and off campus to offer more ways for students to participate in service learning. Earlier in the semester, Warner Pacific partnered with the Oregon Food Bank during Hunger Awareness month, Hot Chocolate Ministries partners with the Portland Rescue Mission. A service organization on campus called HOPE2 works with Shared Hope International in bringing awareness to sex-trafficking in Portland and find a way for students to be involved. The service learning team continues to encourage and develop these partnerships.

BY ETHAN MORROW

Before July of 2013, an adult could have paid sex with a minor in Oregon, get caught, and walk away with nothing but a misdemeanor. In order to change this reality, a service learning group of Warner Pacific students partnered with Shared Hope International and other advocates in the Northwest for a March 2013 lobby day at the Salem capitol building. Shared Hope was founded in 1986 by Linda Smith, a former congresswoman, in an effort to fight sex trafficking on the front lines. Shared Hope works to prevent sex trafficking before it happens through the community education and training, to assist victims of trafficking through the implementation of safe houses and women's programs, and to bring justice by posting legal action that protects women and children and punishes the perpetrators. This March 2013 lobby day was fundraising Shared Hope's mission to bring justice through proper legislation.

At this event, we lobbied for Senate Bill 673 (SB673). This bill was drafted to make it a felony on the first offense if an adult was caught soliciting sex with a minor. Our day at the Oregon Capitol included a prayer outside of the capitol building in Salem, a senate hearing, and individual conversations with Oregon's senate members. I can honestly say that our activities at the capitol that day had a huge impact on the senators and how they voted.

Unfortunately, the fight didn't end on that day. The bill was amended, still making it only a misdemeanor to pay for sex with a minor in certain instances. In June of 2013, I got a paid position with Shared Hope International, working as their Awareness Associate, and we continued the fight to re-extend this bill, re-amending the felony provision.

I started a social media campaign that engaged with people all over the United States. I implemented a change.org petition that people could sign, and their position letter would automatically be sent to Oregon state senators, encouraging them to make it a felony to purchase sex from a minor. Shared Hope International told the press about the Oregon bill and the dangers of passing it with its current amendment. In a matter of days, this bill was getting national attention. In a little over 24 hours, 625 people signed our petition. Through the efforts of advocates and Shared Hope International, the Oregon senate heard our plea. I watched the miracle happen as the bill was re-amended, making it a felony, in every instance, if an adult purchased sex from a minor. In July of 2013, Governor Kitzhaber signed the bill into law.

Every year, Shared Hope International addresses their Practical Response Challenge report cards. They give every state a grade from A to F, according to the laws and services they have in place that respond to domestic sex trafficking involving minors. In 2012, Oregon had a D. I can now proudly announce that on November 7, 2013, Oregon received a B grade. The Warner Pacific community contributed to this beautiful, historic change by lobbying for SB 673. Because students spoke up, the senators took action, and we helped them make the decision to pass this bill. And for that I am thankful.

The fight is never over. If you want to get involved and put an end to sex trafficking in the United States, go to www.sharedhope.org/join-the-cause/ and learn more. Also, Warner Pacific now has an anti-human trafficking club, HOPE2 (Human Opposed to Porn and Exploited and Sold), contact Benjamin Iwan or Lauren Walls for more information.

YOUR STORY MATTERS

Photos and Story by Tim Jackson



FACES IN THE CROWD

Laren Copeland—clearly uncomfortable walking into her high school cafeteria in Modesto, California on the first day of school. She was one of only three students from her old middle school: the other 2,700 were just faces. “There was a panic to stick close to faces I remembered,” Copeland recalls. She somehow found herself sitting by the three people she knew from middle school, and she didn’t even consider them friends.

Here at Warner Pacific, Copeland is once again a freshman. She has started to face and adapt to a new school and is finding a whole new set of friends. This time she is alone, and communities have to be found beyond facial recognition. The next thing one would look for is how people present themselves, what they look like. Language, skin color, grades, dress, diet, or favorite activities often contrast a community or clique. This is why when we meet a new person, we start asking them what

signed misapprehension. Shouldn’t we celebrate that rather than act like it isn’t there?”

We certainly represent a large range of the color spectrum. A *Diversity Today* article published on April 25th, 2012 stated, “[Warner Pacific College’s] student body is among the most racially diverse in Oregon.” The college won the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) *Achieving Award for Advancing Racial Harmony* in February of this year. According to a recent press release, over the last ten years we have seen the number

of students of color grow from 13 to 26 percent, and 43 percent of Warner Pacific’s new employees during that same period were persons of color, well over the CCCCU standard. The newest incoming class (the class of 2017) is made up of many aspiring and entry-level students, 5.2% of whom are from multicultural backgrounds, according to Dr. Dale Scapp, Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing. That means that over half of the class is the minority, making the minority the majority. Though we’ve reached an impressive benchmark,

the enrollment team is not stopping there: “We’re working towards advancing the mission and vision of the college by targeting students from various ethnic backgrounds and geographic locations,” Scapp said.

However, fulfilling the mission for diversity goes against our human nature to look for what is similar in the crowd of faces around us. The problem is not that most students aren’t accepting of people from different backgrounds, rather, the struggle seems to be that we do not always know how to interact with people who are different from us. I would argue that the next step is simple in theory: to go beyond the demographics and begin to include in the fact that we can all announce that we are different without any judgment.

STORIES MATTER

I like to think of a new person I’ve never met before as a book. Although the first cover can be captivating, the story contained within is what allows the new attachment to take place. Every person has a history of culture; they hold pages that have yet to be opened and read. Take the following three students: Honey Ali, Jeppoon Soa and Pua Macarena Vilar Pao. They were all born on different continents, and they have lived worlds apart from their now annual college. Ali was in my FYE class (now FYLC), so we naturally met through the college curriculum. Soa was a bit of an outsider in the Upper Warman Hall his first year as an international student. All it took to break the ice

for us was asking about his military experience in South Korea, and I started reflecting on how it might compare to my experience with the U.S. military. Pao was the one person I didn’t know until I interviewed her for this story. It would make me sad if I had let a person like Pao walk out the doors after graduation without even getting to know her name, yet there are still people on campus I know only as a face, a front cover, and nothing more. What would it take for me to step out and meet more than my usual cliques of friends? As John F. Kennedy said: “There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long-range risks of comfortable inaction.”

HONEY ALI

Honey was born in Nagale Berana, Ethiopia. “I got the name because I was born under a tree that had honey dripping from it; they celebrated my birth by eating honey.” However, her birth also shows that life in Ethiopia isn’t always as sweet as honey; as her parents wanted a boy but received a girl. “It was disappointing to them,” Ali said with a frown. “That’s the culture. If you have a son, your name will be carried on.”

As a female in Ethiopia, she was expected to do more practical things like smother the farm and taking care of the younger ones. Ali’s grandmother raised her. She was one of 14 kids to take care of after Honey’s uncle died. “As a community we raise each other, like we raise each other’s kids.”

Parking Pass Pride

by Becca Schröder

A STORY OF CONFESSION AND REDEMPTION

As a writer graduating this December, I confess that I have attempted to get away with not having a parking pass nearly every semester of the two years that I have attended this college. My first semester I pulled it off by using visitor

grubbing, but by second semester, campus security inevitably found out I was a student, and I quickly racked up over \$100 in parking tickets. I even managed to get a \$40 ticket instead of the usual \$20 ticket.

How did I accomplish this? By parking in the reserved president's spot for as long as I was running late to an important class presentation in A.F. Gray. My third semester I found out I could park along 66th Avenue for free, and I was so proud that I had found a legitimate loophole to getting a parking pass—until the only available spot was always at the end of the street. This time I got a \$250 parking ticket from the city of Portland since the very end of my bumper “obstructed a handicapped ramp” (it covered a few inches of the dip in the sidewalk that is there for wheel-chair access). Paying off that ticket took all of the money I had saved for Christmas presents, and it created a lot of stress for me that holiday season. But I am happy to announce that after three semesters of wretched parking experiences, it only took one parking ticket at the beginning of this semester to convince me to stop the antics of avoidance and start paying for a parking pass.



Photo by Tim Jenkins

Some of the reasons for not getting a parking permit are pretty understandable.

When asked about his experience, one junior said, “Ugh, parking here is hell. I’m not going to pay sixty-some-dollar to have the option to park in a tiny parking lot where people hit you, or in a geared parking lot.” In an interview, he continued, “What the heck? It’s gravel!” He went



Campus Safety Supervisor Paul Harman's Favorite Parking Excuses:

- “Nobody told me I had to get a permit.”
- “I forgot my permit in my other car.”
- “I didn’t see the sign that said this was a visitor’s spot.”
- “My car is in the shop.”
- “I’m just washing my car.”
- “I can’t park on the city streets because someone will steal my car and I can’t afford a permit.”
- “I was just taking a pss.” (For an hour?)
- “That’s not my car and I have never driven it on campus. In fact, I like to class.” (The following week, Harman saw that student driving toward A.F. Gray driving the vehicle in question.)

on to say that he parks along 66th Avenue, though every once in a while he is forced to park a few streets further down where there are open spots, which has caused him to be late to at least a handful of classes each semester.

Even students who do not feel as though it is a personal attack so their pride to purchase a parking pass experience parking problems of their own at times. Senior Mallie Berry described a very stressful day that all stemmed from forgetting to transfer her parking pass from her car to the vehicle she was borrowing for the day while her car was in the repair shop. “There was no parking on 66th so I had to park far away. I was late for class, and I was worried about getting a ticket from the city all day,” Berry recalled with a grimace.

So, is having to purchase a parking pass normal? Not at Concordia University; parking there is free for all students, faculty, and staff. Still, each student is required to have a current parking permit, which they obtain by signing up online. If students fail to get

their free parking pass, they are subject to a \$25 fine and being moved each time they park on campus. Concordia University is an exception to the rule, however, and other private colleges such as George Fox University charge upwards of \$80 for a year-long parking pass. Larger schools like Portland State University are in another price range all together; passes from \$345 to \$369 for a year parking pass. PSU student Nicholas Collin explained that since his only ten class these days a week, he always leaves himself an extra twenty minutes to find reserved street parking. But this strategy still costs money. “Even parking in street spots only trying to park for less than a couple hundred bucks per semester is impossible,” Collin said.

WPC students learn from the mistakes of those that have come before you when trying to park for free. Vinit Kaylae Kraver to obtain a parking pass for a mere \$60 per academic year. Or, learn the hard way: pay more money in the long run, and feel constantly stressed about all the free spots being taken or getting caught parking in the president’s spot.

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According to the research of Thompson and Caine, diversity is important in our lives because it promotes equality in our society by improving one’s capacity to “solve some problems that might be impossible to solve when working through a single-issue lens.” When differing backgrounds and experiences are represented and embraced, it creates an environment that encourages self-compassion and empathy for others.

“Sustainable performance in today’s diverse workplace requires our ability to leverage differences and find the ability to relate to people from different cultural backgrounds.” The WPC article can be found in the Educational Services at www.wpc.edu.

Dr. Angela First interviewed with Dr. Darmond Glenn, Vice President for Community Life and Career Development Office, he said “Here’s the thing about diversity: it’s not just about diversity—it’s about how we can bring together a collective representation of different ethnic groups, but it’s really about looking at issues of access, opportunity, power, justice.”

Dr. Darmond Glenn

and how that diversity and representation promotes our college. Dr. George Fox University is the best academic Christian College About Malala and Afghanistan even though characters is important as a means diversity goals aim to challenge and improve people and build healthy through critical exploration of the world.”

“This world deserves” Glenn said, “diversity. People often think diversity work only means teaching about the culture. It’s really about valuing each person for who they are, and they may be completely as individual things that they want to be realized.”

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POLITICS

AND

Religion.

RESOLVING

THE

TENSION

by Kate Dornham



If you love your neighbor as yourself and you want your neighbor to have a sense of freedom in your society—if that's part of your core values—then what you vote for should also take into consideration your neighbor.

—Dr. Steve Carver

groups with differing opinions. And it requires a conversation focused more on discussion than the pointing of fingers.

There's a whole range of issues to consider before establishing our political identities. One of the major issues, for example, is the quality and reliability of the information that acts as the foundation for our identity. Dr. Carver stated,

"News sources have a tendency to fire up their base with certain code words while the bigger issues of our society remain untouched." By focusing on issues that divide the public, political players are able to secure a vote from a particular group, regardless of whether or not the politician will have any power to change the issue once elected. By finding the "us versus them" complex, politicians are able to secure their seat in office.

Dr. Gobbe also finds a disconnect between politics and good information. But the disconnect has less to do with the objectivity of the news and more to do with the objectivity of the viewer. "We feed ourselves to think that we can look at things objectively or take information and sort of weigh it, but what we tend to do is justify where we're already leaning," Dr. Gobbe said. "Only by actively seeking out information and ideas contrary to our own, can we shed some light of objectivity."

In regard to the "us versus them" complex that plagues American politics, Dr. Carver stated, "If people want to draw attention to it, then clearly it will exist, but I'm not sure that it has to—it certainly doesn't have to be from a biblical perspective." Carver went on to say that calling attention to the differences between one person and another for political purposes isn't something that can be found in the gospels. However, it is something that is readily depicted in the news.

Often there is a stigma associated with individuals who openly speak about their religious affiliations in the political realm. But if I've learned anything from my own experiences, it is that religion is not an inferior way for a person to come to public judgment. However, it is also not a universal one. Resolving the tension that exists between religion and politics means recognizing our influences, our biases, and the public space in which we all live.

There may be a moral issue about which the Bible has something to say, but it doesn't tell us how to approach the issue in the political sphere.

—Dr. Luke Gobbe

shorthand of the federal government this past October on account of an inability to make an agreement across party lines in regard to the federal budget. Instead of negotiating through their differences, officials became participants in a high-stakes game of chicken. Siebens states, "A public space comes into existence only when individuals agree to act in concert." It certainly does appear that legislators are no longer concerned with the fundamental concept of a public space.

The "us versus them" complex becomes difficult to dismantle when recognizing the Other entails recognizing something that is contrary to your religious beliefs. Dr. Luke Gobbe, Associate Professor of History, stated, "There may be a moral issue about which the Bible has something to say, but it doesn't tell us how to approach the issue in the political sphere."

It becomes even more difficult for a person to view the society as a whole when their tax dollars are being used to help fund something they see as immoral. Dr. Carver responds to this by asking, "What citizen in a society can say 100% of my tax dollars go exactly where I want them to go?" Carver offers the subject of abortion as an example: "No one is being forced to abort that I'm aware of. You choose to exercise it or you don't. It's a personal choice. Whether or not it should be allowed, of course, is the bigger question."

In this case, both sides could afford some commonality with the other. On one side of the issue, we have abortion seen as synonymous to murder. And on the other side, we have members of society who believe that if abortion were to become either illegal or defunded, it would not deny a woman's choice to have an abortion but her choice to have a safe and legal operation. Of course, divisions within a society are not limited to the subject of abortion. Other popular dividing issues include gay marriage, immigration, and health care.

It's important to recognize that living in a pluralistic society entails differences of opinion. This means that not all of the laws or all of the taxes will be universally agreeable. The question of whether or not these laws and taxes are universally ethical is something that is in need of debate, but this debate requires conversation between

my recognition of the other, I can confidently identify as both a religious and a pro-choice individual.

Tobin Siebens is an author and essayist whose works focus on (but are not limited to) ethics and the politics of identity. In his book, *The Saylor and Other Subjects: On Ethics, Autobiography, and Political Movements*, he defines politics as "a world held in common by its participants which entails the participants are concerned with the form of life created by politics." The inability to recognize society as a whole is often seen in Christian extremist groups but is not limited to these groups, and it is certainly not limited to Christians. Politics in American society has a tendency to place an emphasis less on commonality and more on dissimilarity.

According to Siebens, "At a certain point, ethics is about the inability to see differences; first, the difference needed to rationalize decisions, second, the differences that destroy human solidarity." An example of this can be seen in the

I am both a student at Warner Pacific College and an advocate for a political movement that supports choice—abortion being one of those choices. The tension that exists between the two is one I'm very well aware of. I hear it in the silence that ensues when I inform my fellow students of my place of education and the religious affiliations of this college. That silence surfaces after I inform my classmates of my choice of internship and the political stances of the organizations. The silence is surprisingly similar despite the two different contexts and makes it very clear that I am a member of the "us" and the "them" in the "us versus them complex" that is so prevalent in American society.

The tension between how I choose to identify politically and how I might choose to identify religiously is not limited to my own circumstances and especially not to the topic of abortion. It is a tension that everyone will encounter when establishing their own political identity.

TASTE OF THE ISLANDS

by James Cook



Photos by Sophie Agustin.

Hot oil jumps over the pot as I drop the lumpia in, and Pi'i Miller hands me a piece of thick paper to cover it. It's about 2 p. m. on November 5, and the Pacific Islander Club is preparing for its first event of the year, Taste of the Islands. Some club members are in Miller's apartment with me, frying lumpia roll. One is stuffed with meat and vegetables, which Kiki McDonagh made the night before, and the other with banana and peanut butter; Miller and Sophie Agustin made those. Fried rice with spam and sausage as well as desserts are on the counter behind us, all made by Jondi Harris. Once everything is cooked, we carry as much as we can across campus to the SUB.

In the SUB, the community comes together to experience Taste of the Islands. Multiple kitchens and efforts are finally put together on tables in the SUB as prospective students visiting for Campus Preview Day and current ones begin to fill their plates. There's Kalua pig (a version of pulled pork), Shoyu chicken, chicken Katsu, and Spam Musubi, all accompanied by rice. Someone's grandmother even made pineapple upside-down cake, and there's more than enough for everyone. Island and reggae music is playing, until Harris announces the first dance. A few women from the club go up on stage to perform the Hawaiian Cowboy dance. They continued through the *Palehua*, *Tala mai e le lagi*, and other Pacific Island dances. The women eventually pull me into the *Tahiti-Tahiti*, an audience interaction dance where I shake my hips the best I can. Some of my peers in the club learned these traditional dances by the time they could walk, and performed them regularly with family. Paired with a generous home cooking tradition, these events are filled with beauty and depth.

As things wind down, I sit with club leaders Miller and Agustin. "We practice two times a week, have family bonding time a couple times of week," says Agustin. Extra dance hours are included as needed, especially in preparation for the Luau on April 14th, now in its fifth year. How much time do you put into PI club, I ask. "Phew, too much to tell," Miller says. What makes those hours worthwhile?

"There's a genuine interest and care for each other," says Agustin. "It's the closest I feel to home," Miller adds. All of the members—too many to name—will be putting in many hours to prepare for the Luau, the larger dance, dinner, and family event in early April. Believe me when I say that those words do not describe how good this luau is. The Pacific Islander Luau is good.

The Luau was my first experience with the club. The richness of the food and culture hooked me, but I was nervous about my dancing abilities and didn't join. When Miller and Eddie Petrie finally convinced me to join, I found the club inviting regardless of my skill level. Not only do they perform and celebrate like family, I saw that the club respected each other like family. This character easily transcended the multiple ethnicities, Islander and not, represented in the PI club.

The spirit behind these traditional foods and dances is the same as it is in their countries of origin: the spirit of kinship. Taste of the Islands was only a taste of the character of the Pacific Islander club. I strongly urge that you attend the Luau event in April and feel the love for yourself. In the words of J.R.R. Tolkien: "If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world."

If you're interested in joining the Pacific Islander club, contact Sophie Agustin at sagustin@warnerpacific.edu.