



LESSON PLANS FOR Living Together

**PRINCIPLES FOR AN INTENTIONAL, CHRIST-CENTERED LEARNING COMMUNITY
CAN BE APPLIED OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

Stories by Anita Palmer

An intentional, Christ-centered community

is like: a) a garden

b) a family

c) a harbor

d) all of the above

Congratulations. You answered correctly.

A garden, a family and a harbor each offer insights into the idea of an intentional, Christ-centered community.

This year, PLNU's School of Education is examining metaphors such as these as it endeavors to strengthen its vision and mission in the context of a Christian university. (See the Q & A with Darrel Falk, dean of the School of Education, on page 3.)

The students the school serves are primarily adults who have their first degree and are moving onto a credential or a graduate degree. These students come to PLNU not only

to further their careers, but also to be nurtured by a caring faculty and staff who bring Christ into the classroom and God's Spirit into the office environment. They seek a harbor, they want to belong to a family, and their budding career is like a garden that needs to be tended.

The idea of Christian community is, of course, something important outside the classroom, as well. In fact, as Christians, we all need a protected place in which to grow. We all need nurturing, watering and time. And a healthy family provides wise guidance within a safe environment where one can experiment and fail, be challenged, and grow toward a Christian world view. Sometimes life blows us off course, or into a tempest, or against rocks that threaten to sink our ships. We need a calm harbor in which we can drop anchor, repair our vessels, restock provisions, renew strength, and regain direction.

So how do we foster this intentional, Christ-centered community?

For School of Education Director of Site Development David Haney, fostering an intentional, Christ-centered community requires servant leadership. Servant leadership refers to the idea that those who have authority ought to

express exceptional humility and willingness to care for others. Jesus washing His disciples' feet is a classic example of servant leadership.

"People probably get tired of me talking about it," laughs Haney. "But I believe that we are an example when it comes to serving others. We need to step up to the plate and take care of people's needs."

In practical matters, taking care of people means we need to be aware of them. "We have to take the time to get to know each other, and, to some degree, to like each other. You have to spend time together," said Haney, who while he was director of PLNU Arcadia emphasized relationships centered on a shared belief in Christ.

His successor at PLNU Arcadia, Karen Davis, also emphasizes a heart of service.

"By serving others, we truly seek the best for them and not for us. Whatever we are doing, we are doing so as God's agent. We believe we are an extension of God's love, authority, grace, truth and holiness. Since we are Christ-centered, we want to magnify the Lord, not ourselves, so others will want to draw closer to God," said Davis.

For the School of Education, this might mean rescheduling a course to a time when most of the working professionals who need to take it are available. It might mean taking extra time to personalize an academic plan. Or it might simply mean having lunch together.

Dr. Don Burnard, director of PLNU Bakersfield, puts it this way, "From the outset, we have been intentionally defining our program as Christ-centered and service oriented. The service orientation really speaks to what we do. Being Christ-centered speaks to who we are."

As part of his efforts to build a Christ-centered community, Dr. Burnard says he meets regularly with his adjunct staff, something not many counterparts in the industry do. He, his staff and fellow faculty explore ways of reaching diverse populations not only academically but also spiritually. It's evident their concern for others runs deep.

One additional metaphor the School of Education is using to understand how to foster an intentional, Christ-centered community is the notion of a "shalom community." What does this mean? Shalom is a peace that comes from just relationships, and shalom communities reflect this.

One thinker who has tackled the concept of shalom is Christian philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff who says that while justice is the ground floor of shalom, shalom goes beyond justice. It's about finding peace through right relationships to God, others, nature and self. Pursuing shalom means seeking joy and satisfaction in the lives God has given us. It means demonstrating kindness and respect in all our relationships, and it results in peace.

As Burnard emphasized, the School of Education seeks to serve its students spiritually as well as intellectually, and pursuing shalom can help achieve that goal. He also stresses the importance of relationships with others in developing shalom.

"In Bakersfield, we have established formal partnerships with all but one of the 43 school districts in Kern County. Our efforts to collaborate with others, disseminating our values and beliefs through these relationships, furthers our efforts to create a shalom learning community," Burnard explains.

Shalom is basic to the Christian walk, whether in the halls of academe, City Hall, the church fellowship hall or around the kitchen table. And it is foundational, the PLNU School of Education believes, to good teaching and learning, to the development of highly qualified, high performing educators of noble character.

So what does it take to foster an intentional, Christ-centered community in the School of Education or elsewhere? It takes servant leadership, concern for others, and the willingness to pursue shalom. While building this kind of community takes time and effort, the comforting images of garden, harbor and family should remind us that it is all worthwhile. ■

Anita Palmer is a freelance writer and editor in San Diego County.

The School of Education wants to connect with its alumni. We need your most recent e-mail address! Please go to www.ptloma.edu/alumni/data.htm to provide us with updated contact information.

SETTING THE COURSE

Q & A WITH DR. DARREL R. FALK, DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND VICE PROVOST FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM SUPPORT

FOR DECADES, POINT LOMA HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR ITS EXCELLENT EDUCATION PROGRAM. WHERE DO YOU SEE THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION RIGHT NOW?

The School of Education's programs are grounded upon the university's Christian calling, and we want to build on that. We're entering a year of transformation. We're working through new vision and mission statements, and we're building our conceptual framework with the outcome in mind: developing highly qualified, high performing educators of noble character in an intentionally Christ-centered learning community.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION? WHERE DO YOU SEE IT GOING?

We're working right now to strengthen the connection between the PLNU undergraduate program and our credentials and master's degrees. Part of our Wesleyan heritage is to be a support network, a scaffolding for our young educators as they transition through different stages of their life journey. We want to provide a safety net, not just for undergraduate and graduate students,



Darrel Falk

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SETTING THE COURSE

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but also for alumni as they grow and flourish professionally. Since PLNU now extends well beyond San Diego into greater Los Angeles and the Central Valley, the safety net extends over a growing geographical area.

WHAT PROGRAM CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS ARE PLANNED?

We're assessing and refining program priorities, organizational effectiveness, candidate advising and use of technology. We're looking at our recruitment methods and how we stay in touch with graduates. We're launching a focus on special education, an area of great need in schools today. And we're looking at reaching out to communities so that the working adult student doesn't have to travel large distances to study with us. For instance, last spring Dr. David Haney successfully launched two programs in Corona and Chino, and we're looking at other locations.

In San Diego County, we're expanding a unique K-12 Partnership Program with local school districts, where PLNU provides research-based program support integrated with state requirements for credential candidates and other young educators. Also, a new educational leadership program, under [Coordinator of the Administrative Service Credentials Program] Beverly Foster's guidance, provides a powerful postgraduate course of study to help prepare professional educators to address many of society's needs.

WHEN YOU THINK OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, WHAT EXCITES YOU?

We want to be recognized for graduate and credential programs that are demanding, rigorous and relevant to the needs of the community. But more significantly, we want to be known as a beacon of Christ's love. We want to successfully prepare teachers, counselors and school administrators who will bring Christ's nurturing love to the children they will impact in their careers. We want to successfully prepare school personnel who, in the shifting sands of a post-modern pluralistic world, have come to recognize that there really is a rock-solid foundation of Truth. It is our hope that the School of Education will be a lifelong learning community founded on the two great commandments: to love God with our entire heart, soul, strength and mind and to love others—especially the children and teenagers whose futures are affected by the quality of our work—as we love ourselves. That says it all. ■

PLNU COMMUNITY MOURNS THE DEATH OF CLARA COLT

Mrs. Clara Elizabeth Colt, primary benefactor of the history and political science department, passed away on July 9, 2005.

Clara Colt had a special place in her heart for Point Loma Nazarene University. Former PLNU President Bill Draper's wife, Francis, was her niece.

Clara's love for God and commitment to PLNU's students led her to give significant gifts to the university. Her donations funded the construction of the history and political science building, Clara Colt Hall. She also gave to the department's academic programs and established an endowed scholarship for departmental majors. These contributions have made her legacy one that will impact PLNU students for generations to come.

Political science professor Ron Kirkemo remembers Clara Colt fondly and with deep gratitude.

"Diminutive in stature but with a large spirit, she was a happy lady who enjoyed being called 'Aunt Clara.' I told her that her donation was an answer to my prayer for funding this building, and she was very pleased to hear that," Kirkemo reported. "Also important," he continued, "she represented both achievement and service, the very model I try to promote in my students."

Clara delighted in contributing to the furthering of God's Kingdom. A member of many community organizations and an active volunteer in her church, Clara will be remembered for her love of others and her Lord.

Born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1906, Clara was the fourth of nine children. After graduating from Central High School in Kansas City, she worked for Millinery Manufacturing Company and John Taylor department stores. She married Leonard Colt in 1950. She and Leonard lived in Chicago, where he ran the Laurel Rug Company, until 1966 when the couple moved to San Marcos, California.

Fittingly, Clara Colt Hall is a versatile, vibrant place. In addition to the main office of the history and political science department, the building includes two classrooms, a spacious meeting room called "The Forum," eight faculty member offices, the Institute of Politics and Public Service, the Women's Studies Center, a pre-law room, a student research room, and a student lounge. Equipped with the latest technology, Clara Colt Hall is an immeasurable asset to Point Loma students and a reminder of what God can do with the gifts of a willing servant like Clara Colt. ■



Clara Colt