

# theherald

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PHC mission team members with refugee children in Greece



Marvin Olasky and Brad Wilcox

## Newsmakers Brings Prominent Faces

by Bruce Truax

If you missed Newsmaker Interviews from earlier this week, check out these highlights from previous interviews:

Canon Andrew White, former Vicar of St. George's Church in Baghdad

White is a physician turned Anglican priest who grew St. George's congregation to over 6,000 members. He described his relationship with ISIS leaders, many of whom were his friends before the ousting of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

White has used these relationships to mediate almost 50 successful hostage negotiations with the PLO, Hamas, and ISIS.

"The key thing when you're doing hostage hunt-

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# Spring Break? Spread the Gospel

PHC Students Embark on Week-Long Mission Trips to Greece, Honduras

by Meg McEwen

When sophomore Kara Brown spotted the tiny Afghani girl distancing herself from the other children outside the refugee camp in Greece, Brown made up her mind to befriend her. Brown crept around a pillar and poked her head around, attempting to coax a smile from the forlorn figure. It worked. The girl paused between bites of her cheese and crackers to chuckle at Brown's ridiculous antics. She finally laughed

so hard that she fell off her chair, muddying her hand. She looked up at Brown and held up the dirtied hand, signaling with a water sound that she needed to wash it. Without understanding a word that the other spoke, they formed a bond. By the end of the day, the girl began playing with the other children at Brown's encouragement.

"She grabbed my leg and hung onto it, and I just gave her a hug," Brown said. "I was hugging her and I thought *Wow, I didn't realize that I could love someone so much in such a*

*short amount of time.* Before that she wasn't playing and she didn't want to do anything. But now I was leaving, and she ran back to her little friends [who were playing] at the shopping cart. I felt like I did a really good thing."

Brown was one of the many PHC students surrounded by children and adults in desperate need of love this past spring break. Two mission trip teams - the Greece team partnering with Streetlight Ministry and the Honduras team

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## themasthead

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## socialmedia

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## studentgovernment

Hello all, here are some updates on bills we've passed in the past year.

In Spring 2016, the Student Senate passed a bill to have the Red Hill basement hours align with the Barbara Hodel Center hours. Chief Yancey has established extended hours for the Red Hill basement on a trial basis for the rest of the semester. Red Hill basement will be open for the same hours as the BHC for studying purposes.

The Senate passed a bill regarding changing the start time for the first class period after chapel on MWF from 11:30am to 11:15am. In response, Mr. Showalter has informed us that he has enacted that change to begin for the Fall 2017 semester on a trial basis. He'll be looking to get feedback about the change at the end of next semester.

And lastly, the recent Mac & Cheese Resolution was approved by Mrs. Del Mundo, so expect to see mac & cheese more frequently in the dining hall.

*- Tim Kocher, Speaker of the Student Senate*

# An Overview of the Newsmaker Interviews

*Marvin Olasky interviews notable men and women for the 2017 Newsmaker Interviews*

ing is you need to know the bad guys," he said.

White had much to say about U.S. involvement in the Middle East.

"The first thing the U.S. needs to realize is democracies don't work in the Middle East," he said. "What we need is a benevolent dictatorship, like in Jordan... When religion goes wrong, it goes really wrong. And in Islam, both religion and politics have gone wrong."

White was suspended in 2016 as president of the Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East when the FRRME investigated claims that he had paid ISIS to free sex slaves. White denies that any money went to terrorists. This led him to found the Canon Andrew White Ministries and Jerusalem Merit organization.

His main message to Newsmakers attendees was to live boldly.

"I always think, don't take care, take risks," White said. "People say to me 'take care' all the time. I say rubbish!"

Many students found White's words refreshing.

"I think it was a great look at the situation in the Middle East," freshman Andrew Harber said. "He is a good role model to look up to."

**Frederica Mathewes-Green, author and former Vice President of Feminists for Life**

Mathewes-Green spoke about her journey from being a pro-choice hippie to a devout Christian and Vice President of Feminists for Life during its early years.

In college she pursued many alternative religions. While standing in front of a statue of Jesus, she felt the voice of God speak to her. Soon after, she became a Christian.

She became pro-life when she realized abortion didn't work with her pacifism.

"I thought I was a cool person and I wasn't about to hang out with a bunch of pro-lifers," she said. "Then I found out about a group called Feminists for Life."

Mathewes-Green has debated pro-



**Marvin Olasky interviews Charles Murray, American Enterprise Institute author and scholar**

choice advocates but said oftentimes her opponents turned to ad hominem attacks.

"I would talk about everything that was wrong with abortion...then my opponent would talk about how I was a bad person," Mathewes-Green said.

She encourage pro-lifers to remember both mother and child.

"The pro-life movement was so focused on the baby that we didn't think about what was going on in the mother's heart," she said.

**James Ackerman, President of Prison Fellowship**

"We are warehousing men and women in prison," Ackerman said. "The US represents just under 5 percent of the world population, but we have just over 25 percent of the incarcerated population."

Prison Fellowship's main goal is to rehabilitate men and women in prison so they can become productive members of society upon release. Prison Fellowship runs an academy to facilitate their transition back to normal life.

"We use the phrase 'justice that restores.'" Ackerman said. "The whole system is helping you work towards a place where you can be productive."

The four pillars of this academy are presenting the prisoners with the gospel,

dealing with the main reasons for their criminal activity, helping prisoners discover healthy relationships, and training prisoners with practical life skills.

Prison Fellowship also advocates for legislation that helps prisons rehabilitate, not just restrain.

"Our number one priority right now is sentencing reform," Ackerman said.

Previous interviews also included Brad Wilcox, the Director of the National Marriage Project, and Charles Murray, an American Enterprise Institute author and scholar.

Upcoming interviews include Lauren Green, Fox News Chief Religion Correspondent, and Michael Wear, a former Obama staffer, on Friday. Mark Henshaw, a former CIA analyst and spy novel author, and Trevin Wax, contributor to Christianity Today, will be interviewed Saturday. Carl Trueman, Westminster Theological Seminary Professor of Church History, and Janet Vestal Kelly, former Virginia Secretary of State, will be interviewed Monday. Anthony Bradley, King's College professor, and George Grant, founder of Franklin Classical School, will round out the week with interviews on Tuesday.

For more information, visit <http://www.phc.edu/newsmakers>. ♦

# Three Choices for Student Body President

*McGuire, Bock, or Thetford: which ticket will you choose?*

by Hailey Kilgo

With the announcement of the three teams running for Patrick Henry College student body president and vice president, election season is back.

This race is centered around one word: community. Presidential candidate Christian McGuire and running mate Sarah Geesaman are running under the slogan “Finding us beyond ourselves.” Daniel Thetford and running mate Matthew Hoke are focusing on three words: “Practical, purposeful, and personal.” William Bock and running mate Josh Webb are striving for “One campus.”

Thetford and Hoke, along with campaign manager Ian Frith, found themselves united under common ideas that led to them running.

“Matthew and I aren’t running because we think we’re the most successful people,” Thetford said. “We’re running because we have ideas that would benefit the school as a whole, specifically through mentorship, Christian study group and the development class and just an openness that would bring a lot of vibrancy to the community that we don’t have now.”

They would like to implement a mentorship program for incoming students that pairs them with an upperclassman, someone to help them navigate through those first days of being new at PHC. Christian study groups are another key element of their platform. These groups would connect students who would not otherwise get to know each other and would be professor-led. The professor would change yearly, but the groups would remain the same.

To bridge the so-called “credit gap,” they would also like to create a one credit class that allows students to look at all their options for their future in an environment of professionalism and practicality for things like building a resume, writing cover letters, and finding internships.

Bock and Webb’s campaign managers are Shane Roberts and Meridian

Paulton. Some of their policies include a mental health week, a monthly campus event open to anyone, more volunteer opportunities outside PHC, and more reading days as well as more “Bucks for Blue Jeans” days. One of the main platforms for the Bock-Webb ticket is mental health. The two would seek to bring a nurse back on campus, consider more counseling hours, and overall to change the expectations and ethos of the PHC campus to make sure everyone knows “it’s okay to not be okay.”

“I think if anyone here knows me, they know I care about people more than I care about anything else here, and I think if they know William they know he has one of the best work ethics you’ll ever encounter,” Webb said. “I think that when you vote for the two of us you are voting for taking practical and ideological steps towards making this a more unified PHC, a more one campus community and a place where we’re doing our best to live well and enjoying it at the same time.”

Candidates McGuire and Geesaman, along with their campaign manager Keith Zimmerman, share a belief that they can create a campus that embodies their slogan “Finding us beyond ourselves.”

“Our campaign is uniquely equipped to represent the voices of campus from varying social groups,” Geesaman said. “We have connections from people everywhere telling us the kinds of policies that they want to happen, and I think both of us are willing to sit down and have open dialogue with anyone about any topic that they want to bring to our attention. We’d be willing to consider the idea regardless of where it comes from. Our campaign is representing the voices of a lot more than just one group.”

The McGuire-Geesaman ticket is focusing on mental health reform, an increase in admissions, and academic effectiveness. This team would like to hold a mental health week as well as provide ways that the school could fundraise to implement their policies for mental health, such as increased counselor hours or having other



**Christian McGuire and Sarah Geesaman**

Credit: Christine McDonald



**William Bock and Josh Webb**

Courtesy: William Bock



**Matthew Hoke and Daniel Thetford**

Courtesy: Matt Hoke

professionals speak on mental health.

Under academic effectiveness, the team would award a CLA minor to every student who completed the core curriculum, grant the ability to test out of more classes, create a more open dialogue with the registrar office, and increase student-alumni networking. For increased admissions, one of the policies the team plans to invoke is volunteer hours in the office of admissions and more hands-on communication from the executive positions to incoming students.

For more information on the candidates, their policies, ideas and stories go to [www.mcguiregeesaman.com](http://www.mcguiregeesaman.com), [www.onecampus2017.com](http://www.onecampus2017.com), and [www.macgyverthetford.wixsite.com/thetfordhoke](http://www.macgyverthetford.wixsite.com/thetfordhoke). ♦

# Spring Break from Social Media

*This is the fourth story in the Herald's social media series*

by Evie Fordham

The airport security lines to enter the United States were behind us, and the Honduras mission team and I were waiting for our ride home along with the other weary international travelers. Most of the people around me gazed down at iPhones as they lingered by the terminal door, but I hesitated to turn my phone on after an entire week without social media. I had kept it off despite the enticing offer of free Wi-Fi earlier that day at San Pedro Sula International Airport, where the team had a four-hour layover.

So many good things had happened during that week without my phone. I met Honduran friends I'll never forget like Elena the dentist and Gina the volunteer. Our breaks were few and far between during our seven-hour work days in the pop-up medical clinics, but each day went by like a blur. It was a week I felt like I was in the present, focusing on my job at the clinic, and enjoying the company of my team and everyone we met.

I did turn my phone back on that night. My first text was to let my mom know I was stateside again. Then I checked Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter.

The main reason I'm glad we had no access to social media in Honduras was because, without it, our team bonded the old-fashioned way, playing board games and sitting on the porch watching the sun set over the city. We were a motley crew of five underclassmen, two upperclassmen, an alumna, and three nurses from southern Virginia, whom none of us PHC students had met. Most of us students had only made small talk with each other before. In the days leading up to the trip I wondered how we would fit together as a team. But by the end of the week, the full-time employees at the mission house couldn't believe we hadn't been close friends from the beginning and said we acted like a family.

Our days were jam-packed working at the clinics, but our nights were free after



Courtesy: Pixabay

our post-dinner team meeting. The first couple of nights, we split into smaller groups taking advantage of the activities provided by the mission house, like Trivial Pursuit and mancala. But one night, all eleven of us decided to play Bananagrams. Most of us were pretty terrible at it. We must have played at least ten rounds and spent most of those laughing until our sides hurt.

I learned that David Slaughter has quite the competitive spirit, that Serena Liss has an unparalleled ability to make up words, and that Clayton Millhouse can be sassy. After that night, I think we went from 11 people working at the same place to a team.

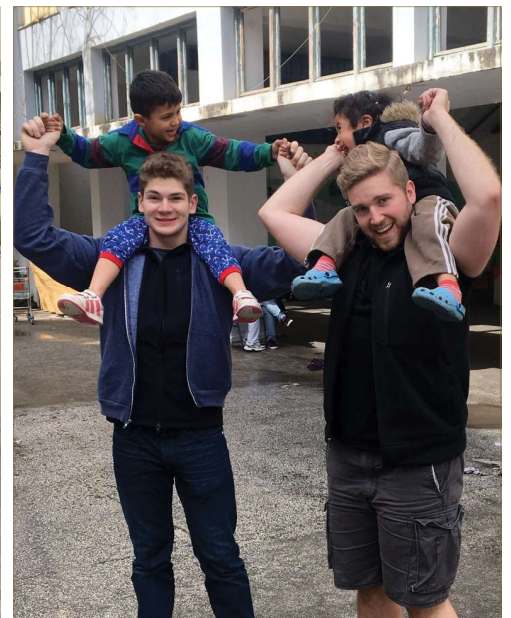
"Our group was definitely able to grow closer because we didn't have the distraction of cellphones," team member Serena Liss said. "We actually had personal interaction with each other by playing games or talking to pass the time... It was important because when we became closer as a group, it was easier to talk openly about our experiences with serving the Hondurans and how it affected our relationships with God."

Team member Elias Gavilan finished a book and read two others during the mission trip, something he doubts he would have done if he had his phone.

"Not having my phone let me personally relax more and focus on God and the mission, but I think the group would have still bonded if we had had phones," he said.

Like most college students, I find myself frequently distracted by my phone. That's why my social-media-free week was amazing, but as someone who works in communications and whose job is to run social media accounts, I don't think I'll be deleting my Facebook anytime soon. I loved how present I was able to be with the people around me without Snapchat or Instagram taking up a corner of my mind, but I already see myself falling back into treating social media as a default activity. At least I'm making the effort recognize and reconsider my social media habits. Overall, my spring break from social media was just what I needed: a chance to remind myself of the beauty of living in the present. Maybe I'll turn my phone off for a week again sometime. ♦





All photos on this page courtesy Julianne Owens

## Love Knows No Language, Students Learn

continued from cover  
with World Gospel Outreach- traveled to their respective countries to give their hands and feet to Christ for the week. Brown spent her time reaching out specifically to refugee children, while other PHC students found themselves pulling rotten teeth and evangelizing in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

“Our goal was to bring a smile to a child’s face, to provide laughter when they may not have laughed recently,” Greece team member Julianne Owens said.

“There’s something so precious about parents watching their children laugh. Many of these children have been through circumstances that have stolen a lot of joy.”

The Greece mission trip collaborated with Streetlight Ministry, a mission that builds relationships in the refugee community by “making a joyful noise.” They organize flash mobs, play songs, have fun, and then share the gospel with the gathering crowd of refugees in the area.

During a soccer game with the refugee kids, Owens noticed that the members of

the ministry knew each of the kids’ names and their backgrounds in the area.

“We were partnering with a ministry that had been there for a long time and that is going to remain there for a long time. We came alongside them for a short season to help get the word out, to help plant the seeds that they would be able to cultivate for a long time,” Owens said.

The Greece team visited all three Greek contexts for refugees seeking asylum - apartments, squats (abandoned continued on page 8

# Refugees Transform Student Perspectives

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buildings acquired by refugees from the government), and refugee camps. Unsanitary conditions often characterize refugee camps, which are dependent on outside aid. The Greece team interacted with Syrian and Afghan refugees and were surprised to learn that the Afghan refugees are generally less affluent and more desperate than the media-hyped, government-funded Syrian refugees. Some of the Syrian refugees arrived and left for Germany during the duration of the mission trip, whereas many of the Afghanistan refugees had remained stagnant, without prospects and in poor living conditions, for a year.

“The refugee camps were heartbreaking,” Owens said. “The kids were so unhealthy. They had teeth rotting out. They had deep scars on their faces. Some of them had black and green eyes like they were dehydrated or fatigued. That was one of the most jarring elements of the trip for me.”

Brown was hesitant to invest as deeply as she wanted to in the lives of the Syrian and Afghan refugee children at first.

“I was worried that we would go and have this great experience for ourselves – get our good little photos for Facebook and stuff – and then leave, having built this expectation for these kids that there is someone who is going to play with me every day,” she said. “Are we just adding to the pile of disappointments in their lives?”

Then Brown met a boy named Mati on the trip while painting kids’ faces. She attempted to paint the right image on his face, but when he looked in the mirror she provided, he became very grave. The 4-year-old boy uttered, “Oh... No good.

No good.”

Brown, alarmed, tried to remedy the situation by letting him paint her face. Mati finally agreed, and proceeded to meticulously paint a mustache on her face before moving on to her nails. He couldn’t pronounce Brown’s name, so he called her “my friend.”

“I had not seen Mati hang out with any adults, so I didn’t know if he had any parents,” she said. “But the last day when we were leaving I met his dad and I met his sister, and his dad seemed like he really cared about him. So, I just thought, *Okay, he has a family*. And I realized that every day he smelled good and was wearing different clothes... I realized, maybe we’re not changing the world, but we’re making someone smile a little. We’re leaving, but we’re not devastating them at the same time.”

Owens was grateful for the fast-paced itinerary full of three to four projects a day, and short rests on the Greece trip.

“I did not go to be comfortable. I did not go to be well-rested, and I did not go to be clean. I was going to be frustrated if that was an emphasis, and I was so glad that it wasn’t,” Owens said. “Our

team had the right perspective... We did get tired and we did get emotionally weary and some of us were very spiritually taxed and physically fatigued, but that was what we were there for, and because you had this team of people who were there for that reason, it created a really strong unity rather than divisiveness.”

**“Our team had the right perspective... We did get emotionally weary and some of us were very spiritually taxed and physically fatigued, but that was what we were there for, and because you had this team of people who were there for that reason, it created a really strong unity rather than divisiveness.”**

**Julianne Owens**

The Honduras mission team partnered with WGO, an organization that partners with local church to provide free pop-up medical clinics in Tegucigalpa’s poorest neighborhoods. Everyone who received

care had to participate in an evangelism session. At the end of each “brigade,” as the two-day medical clinics were called, WGO presented a list of everyone who accepted or recommitted to Christ to the church’s pastor so he could bring them into the fold.

When asked to evangelize at a brigade, sophomore Neil Durning realized that he was not as comfortable with sharing the gospel at first. When he came face to face with kids who needed to hear it, he felt terrified and did not know quite how to approach the subject. However, his translator gave him a few pointers, and he soon realized that the gospel can flow naturally in conversation. God used Neil to bring a few people to repentance and give their lives to Christ that week.

“Evangelism is something I was never comfortable with, but I think after that week I became pretty comfortable with it,” he said.

Senior Clayton Millhouse had worked with WGO in Tegucigalpa three times before leading the team of seven students and one alumna to Honduras.

“The trip was an idea the Lord gave me about two years ago. I sent a few emails, knocked on a few doors, but otherwise, it did not pan out. But when I was down in Honduras this past summer, there were several confirmations from different people that it was time for me to try to organize a trip down there. I was not even asking for the confirmation. I had just been praying that week that the Lord would make it clear what I was supposed to do next in Honduras. And he did,” Millhouse said.

Alumna Elyssa Edwards also accompanied the Honduras team. “My favorite moment from the trip was watching people’s reactions as we helped them. From my perspective, we weren’t doing much - washing hair, giving them a few aspirin, some vitamins, cleaning their teeth, etc. - but it made their day. The Hondurans had a joy and contentment in simple things that is foreign to most Americans, and it was an honor to witness it,” Edwards said. ♦



# The Ground-Breaking Grounds Crew

by Pierre du Plessis

The Patrick Henry College Grounds Crew are the individuals who keep our campus looking beautiful through ceaseless labor. This is the fellowship of Christian brothers who together serve their student community through sweat, blood, and hard work.

The Grounds Crew culture is one of camaraderie. To an outsider, they may appear simply to be a group of relatively silent, flannel-wearing fellows, who drive around in golf-carts with gardening implements sticking out of the backs at precarious angles, and who don't mind braving the elements. However, to someone well-acquainted with their quirks and personalities, the Grounds Crew becomes a brotherhood, a fellowship of guys who enjoy hard work and the feeling of a job well done.

"It's really refreshing to be able to go to work, and it's a bunch of men trying to develop into honorable men," sophomore Dave Rowland said. "These opportunities don't come along as often as they did in previous generations, and I feel very blessed to be able to partake in this."

The current Grounds Crew consists of nine students: Andrew Kelly, Dawson Frasier, Joshua Trepiccione, Neil Durning, David Rowland, Austin Caswell, Daniel Churchman, Elias Gavilan, and me. Kelly and Frasier will be joining the ranks of the dear departed upon graduation this May. Several grounds crew members who have graduated and moved on have become legendary figures who feature in the stories bantered over work by current groundsman. Daniel Kishi, Wilfredo Hernandez, and Ben Davis are but three examples of alumni who have their names signed to the "Walls of Fame" inside the grounds sheds.

Every one of the groundsman have a unique flavor that they bring to the crew.

"I don't know if there is one story in particular that I have involving Dawson, but I just love the way that he goes about life - always laughing about something al-



Former and current grounds crew members

ways with a smile on his face," Rowland said. "We need more people around who look at life the way that he does."

Another example would be Gavilan, one of the three freshmen. His strong work ethic and sense of commitment has been apparent (due to his military upbringing, he claims), as well as his low tolerance level for fast driving.

"My favorite grounds story is the time that Pierre was driving the golf-cart while we were dumping leaves," Gavilan said. "When we got back to where the crew was working, we had lost the tarp somewhere along the way because he had been driving like a moron."

Be it pruning the juniper hedges along the edges of campus, edging the beds next to the BHC, weeding the pansy beds in front of Founders, mowing the beautiful grass all over campus, sawing up and removing fallen trees, painting the soccer field lines, or removing leaves, there is always something to be done. The grass on campus has a special spot in every groundsman's heart, though, perhaps due to the fact that everyone keeps trampling on it - despite pleas from Grounds Crew.

"Walking on the grass, no matter what the grass is like, will make the grass die and form a dirt spot," Caswell said. "None of us wants that."

Each groundsman joins Grounds Crew for different reasons. Some of them joined

for the camaraderie found within it, while others simply applied to the position due to being attracted to being able to work outside and the thought of a paycheck. When asked why he joined, Rowland said that while a lot of people here at PHC are career-driven and have their whole lives planned out (or seemingly so), he is still looking for where exactly he fits in - Grounds has enabled him to fulfill what he sees as part of his mission here at PHC.

"You can always get stuff back - take an extra class, read books later, or change jobs - but the only things that are ultimately going to be worth something is how much we invested in the people around us," he said.

The true essence of the Grounds Crew is most definitely John Terryberry, or as the groundsman call him, Boss.

"He knows how to work hard, and that's a large amount of what I respect about him," Rowland said.

Through the work that they perform, to the community-within-a-community that they have fostered on campus, the grounds crew is a unique facet of student culture -- one which is not valued highly enough by the student body. The emphasis on doing what is needed, even when it is uncomfortable, along with their determination to keep campus looking the best it can, is certainly an aspect of PHC student culture as a whole. ♦

# Learning How to Help the Homeless

by Leah Greenwood

It was the summer between sophomore and junior year for Patrick Henry College student Tim Hsu. Hsu was on his way home from his internship in Silver Spring, Maryland, when he drove past a certain street corner. On this corner, there was an older man in a wheelchair, both legs amputated at the knees, sporting a baseball cap and a cardboard sign.

Hsu kept driving.

A conflict between his guilt and the knowledge that he should do something to help raged inside of him. Two minutes further down the road, Hsu made a U-turn. He parked, bought a water bottle from a neighboring store, and walked over to the panhandler.

He remembered a conversation he once had with a friend who had spent time helping and interacting with the homeless.

“The worst part about being homeless is...standing on the side of the road and people pass by you and ignore you like you’re trash, like you’re not a human being, like you don’t exist,” his friend had said.

With this in mind, Hsu smiled and introduced himself to the man as he offered him the water bottle.

The man’s name was Phil. And, just like every other human being, Phil had a story. The war in Iraq had been gracious enough to take only his legs from him. Now Phil had no way of getting to a nearby hospital to meet his wife, Amy. Amy had cancer, but was being released from the hospital that day.

“Well, I’ve got a pickup truck,” Hsu said. “If you want to sit in the truck, I can fold up your wheelchair, put it in the back, and take you there.”

Phil agreed, and Hsu helped the man into the black pickup. Hsu listened to Phil’s reminiscences, colored with profanities. Phil was laughing and cheerful, until he suddenly sobered and began to tear up. His brother had committed suicide a few years ago, he told Hsu.

When they reached the hospital, Hsu took a few minutes to pray for Phil. Then, not paying any mind to the “No Smoking” sign, Phil lit a cigarette and rolled off in his wheelchair. Hsu climbed back into his car and drove home. He never saw Phil again.

Hsu, who graduated from PHC in 2016, has always had “this vague sense of wanting to help [the homeless], and having an obligation to help them, but not knowing how to.”

Until recently, he would get rid of his guilt of not helping by ignoring it until, eventually, he forgot about it. His interaction with Phil was the tipping point. Hsu realized that, for him, it was an issue of obedience. “I could not escape the fact that if I had continued driving and ignoring that person, I was literally disobeying God, and if I stopped and did whatever I could, that was an act of obedience,” Hsu said.

His instincts have changed from trying to ignore the homeless and forget about them to trying to figure out exactly how he can help them, he said.

Hsu has realized that, though he has been helping the homeless more, he has only been able to fulfill short-term practical needs.

“I’m still learning and I still have a long way to go,” Hsu said. “The fact that I know that I’m doing so much more than I used to for these people, and that I’m probably doing more than the average American Christian does, does not mean that I’m doing all that I can.”

Hsu is trying to get connected with local homeless organizations that help long-term. The people who run these organizations are well-trained and are immersed in the world of the homeless.

“They know what they’re doing, they know what the need is, and they are able to address those needs in a more long-term way than [I] can just by [myself],” Hsu said.

Hsu noted that it is important to remember that not everyone is called into full-time service to the homeless.



Courtesy: Flickr user Travis

“I’ve been trying to balance that burden and that obligation to help with the recognition that I do have other obligations,” Hsu said. He does not always have the time to stop and help every panhandler that he sees; sometimes all he has time to do is pray for them. “The obligation to help them isn’t something that tyrannizes over all other obligations. The calling from God to help people in need like that doesn’t consume every other calling in my life,” Hsu said.

Since he has begun to put a conscious effort into helping the homeless, Hsu has become “more aware and more grateful” for the blessings he possesses that other people do not. To anybody who wants to become more involved with helping the homeless but perhaps is unsure where to begin, Hsu suggested to start with prayer.

“Prayer is the ministry from which all other ministries flow,” he said.

Hsu also recommends getting involved with a local organization which focuses on helping the homeless. “[Ultimately], wherever you are, whatever God has called you to at the moment, and whatever the need around you is, if you have a desire to be used by God and you ask Him to use you, He will, and He’ll guide you in that,” Hsu said. ♦

# The Shack: Who is God?

by Victoria Cook

Mackenzie Philips is like any ordinary boy. He goes to school and to church and does his chores. But, Mack has an abusive father who consistently goes on fierce drunken tirades, scaring Mack and his mother into submission.

“Daddies aren’t supposed to do that to their kids. It ain’t love,” a kind woman says to Mack after his father beats him and his mom.

Mack grows up with the desire to be a better father than his dad, and his relationship with his father drives his deistic-leaning perspective of his heavenly Father and raises some interesting questions in the film *The Shack*.

*The Shack* is adapted from William P. Young’s first book of the same name, which became a bestseller a year after its 2007 release. It quickly became the center of controversy because Young represents the Trinity as three people: Papa (played by Octavia Spencer and Graham Greene), Jesus, and Sarayu.

The film, however, softens much of the theological controversies in the book and is a worthwhile watch for Christians eager to engage in conversations about God and the Trinity.

After suffering the murder of his youngest daughter Missy and isolating himself in grief, Mack (played by Sam Worthington) receives a letter from Papa, the name his wife calls God.

The letter invites him to the shack, the

old hideout of the uncaught murderer. Prepared to have some resolution to his feelings, Mack brings a gun to face off the murderer, only to meet Jesus, who leads him from the cold, dilapidated shack to a cozy one covered in lush ivy and flowers.

Once inside the shack, Mack meets the Trinity. This meeting is where a few theological problems unfold. As Mack tries to understand who he is with, he asked, “Which one of you is-?”

Papa, Jesus, and Sarayu responded, “I AM.” A few other moments like this clear up any tritheistic arguments against the Trinity represented in *The Shack*.

When Mack asks Papa why He let His Son die, Papa says that His Son was never alone, revealing scars on her wrists from the cross’s nails. Sarayu and Jesus also have scars.

While these scars are symbolic of price that Jesus paid, they seem to suggest that God and the Holy Spirit were also crucified, which is not theologically sound. 1 Corinthians 5:21 says that Jesus became sin, which naturally required his temporary separation from God.

“I’ve always loved movies and been a churchgoer,” director Stuart Hazeldine said in an interview with IMDb. “The opportunity to make a movie that bridges both of those worlds was always interesting to me, but it’s hard to find a great story... I loved the fact that this was a movie that takes something invisible, like God and the Holy Trinity, something that is hard to wrap your mind around, and humanizes it.”

While humanizing God may make it easier to understand Him, moviegoers should be wary of theological pitfalls.

What *The Shack* does powerfully is depict Mack honestly in his grief. Mack asks questions that even non-believers ask themselves: where is God when evil happens, and why does God let evil happen? Mack’s healing process centers around God’s love for him and the forgiveness he learns to give.

“As anyone who reads my reviews knows, I am not a fan of the ‘Christian’ genre, because most of those movies lead with a message rather than the story,” movie critic Sister Rose Pacatte said in the *National Catholic Reporter*. “It’s fine to make Christian films, but films about people who happen to be Christian are much more interesting. Here, producer Gil Netter and director Stuart Hazeldine get it right.”

Perhaps *The Shack* connects so powerfully to people because it focuses on asking the hard questions in a way that carries along the viewers instead of dragging them through another theological lesson about why God is right and man is wrong.

*The Shack* focuses on the redemptive and transformative love of Christ. While it does have a few incorrect theological ideas, it is a film Christians need to engage if only to ask the question: If *The Shack* with its theological inconsistencies can move millions to tears and consideration of Christ, how much more powerful would a theologically accurate and masterfully directed film be? ♦



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