

May 1, 2020

Dear Willoughby Church,

Grace and peace to you. Thank you for inviting me to share with you a little about Wellspring Campus Ministry here at UBCO Okanagan located in beautiful Kelowna.

This past semester I spoke to a gathering of about 70 Christian students on the topic of “vocation”. Most of these students are evangelical in upbringing, so when they hear a word like “vocation” or “calling”, they instinctively think that their only calling from God is to evangelize. If this is true, I asked them, what does four years at UBCO and thousands of dollars in tuition have to do with your faith? Awkward silence followed. In my talk, I explained how Scripture reveals a Father who loves his broken creation so deeply that he rescues it through the Son and is renewing it now through the Spirit. And he invites his children into this divine action: to bless a broken world. This is your vocation, I insisted—and this why you are at university! I closed with words from the German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “Blessing means laying one’s hand on something and saying, *“despite everyone, you belong to God. This is what we do with the world... We do not abandon it; we do not repudiate it, despise, or condemn it. Instead we call it back to God.”* A number of students came up to me afterwards surprised to hear a pastor speak so frankly about the tragic brokenness of our world, and grateful for being challenged to think of vocation as *including* their university studies as preparation for a life of blessing others.

This sort of broad, deep, and biblical vision is a strength of Reformed campus ministry. It’s a vision desperately needed on our university campuses where many students and profs seek truth, meaning and purpose. Universities are mission fields of enormous opportunity, and I am deeply grateful that our BC CRC congregations want to proclaim Jesus as Lord of the University of British Columbia!

Thank-you, Willoughby CRC, for your support and encouragement. Your partnership in this ministry is a blessing to me as I hope it is for you. God bless you, and in these unsettling times may you as a church continue to lay hands on your community and bless it “saying, despite everything, you belong to God.”

Todd