



ACTS Seminars graduation 2003 — Faculty and Graduates



The Northwest Baptist Seminary graduates with the ACTS Faculty

Monday evening, April 21, 2003 was a great time of celebration for the ACTS Seminars family. There were 83 men and women that graduated from Trinity Western University's ACTS Seminars. Of those graduates 17 registered with Northwest. The students have worked diligently to complete their various programs and that diligence was rewarded on Monday night as they received their diplomas and degrees. The ceremony was held in the Abbotsford Pentecostal Church and the atmosphere was definitely celebrative.

Graduations at ACTS are always colorful occasions as the faculty and students present themselves in their full academic regalia. The various colors of the gowns and hoods represent the various schools from which they have graduated as well as the various disciplines in which they have studied.

It is important to remember that this graduation represents the culmination of one more phase in the overall process of the development of a ministry leader and the commencement of the next. The studies that these graduates have undertaken here at Northwest@ACTS together with the mentoring they have received from faculty as well as from pastors and church leaders in their own areas of ministry have served to better equip them to serve more diligently, effectively and compassionately. As they move on into the next phase of ministry leadership development they will be using their skills, knowledge and relationships to carry out the call that God has placed upon their lives to be His servants.

NORTHWEST@ACTS COMING EVENTS

ACTS SEMINARIES SUMMER SESSIONS	APRIL 28 - AUGUST 21, 2003
SEE WWW.ACTS.TWU.CA (CLICK ON ACADEMICS > COURSE SCHEDULES)	
PTH 621 — TRANSITIONAL PASTORAL MINISTRY (2 CR) - DR. DOUG HARRIS	MAY 12-16, 2003
OMI 667 — CREATING A HEALTHY, EVANGELISTIC CHURCH: EVANGELISM EXPLOSION (3 CR) - DR. VERN MIDDLETON & PHIL HARRIS	AT ACTS SEMINARIES
FEBBC/Y CONVENTION 2003 - FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH, VANCOUVER	MAY 27-29, 2003
FEBCAST CONVENTION 2003 - FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, DRUMHELLER	MAY 30 - JUNE 1, 2003
SMARTER FAMILIES CANADA CONFERENCE 2003, TWU CAMPUS	JUNE 5-7, 2003
PASTORS' & MENTORS' DAY—FEATURING EVANGELICAL HOMILETICS SOCIETY	OCTOBER 16, 2003

NORTHWEST BAPTIST SEMINARY

7600 GLOVER ROAD, LANGLEY, BC
V2Y 1Y1, CANADA

PHONE: (604) 888-7592

FAX: (604) 513-8511

E-MAIL: CONTACT@NBSEMINARY.COM

WEB: WWW.NBSEMINARY.COM

NORTHWEST DEPENDS ON THE GRACIOUS GIFTS OF ITS FRIENDS, BOTH CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS




NORTHWEST NEWS

NORTHWEST BAPTIST SEMINARY@ACTS

...RECRUITING, TRAINING AND SUSTAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MINISTRY LEADERS

NORTHWEST PEOPLE

RAJ VANNADIL AND HIS WIFE KIM, KYOUNG SOOK CAME TO NORTHWEST@ACTS IN 2000. RAJ GRADUATED FROM THE MASTER OF DIVINITY PROGRAM THIS YEAR



What was life like as you grew up?

I was born and brought up in a Hindu family in Kerela which is in southwest India. There were four children—three brothers and one sister. The community was small and everyone knew everybody. There were Hindus and Muslims, but no Christians. I was the youngest in the family—and very religious. We visited many Hindu temples and participated in religious festivals and rituals at home. We did not have much materially, but family was very important. I had no awareness of Christianity during this time.

How did you come into contact with Christianity in such a context?

When I went to high school, I became very interested in communism just as my older brother got involved in communism in college. We were attracted by the idea of equality and did not like the Hindu concept of caste.

When I went to college, I became very disappointed in communism because I could not find what they were teaching. So I went back to Hinduism and became more religious.

During this time my brother went to a Christian meeting to criticize, but met Christ. He gave me a book called *Who is He?* Jesus taught that we should treat everyone as equal because in God's kingdom all are equal. God loves everyone whether they are rich or poor, high caste or low caste, Indian or western. Jesus taught we should share our wealth with the poor because all people were equal. This was my first encounter with Christianity.

When I accepted Jesus as my savior, it all happened in one day. My brother gave me the book in the morning and in the afternoon I read the book. When he came home, I asked him many questions about Christ and his life, and that night, Feb 6th 1986, I accepted Christ Jesus as my personal savior.

FROM HINDUISM TO CHRISTIANITY... FROM INDIA TO PARKLAND FELLOWSHIP

What attracted you to Christianity?

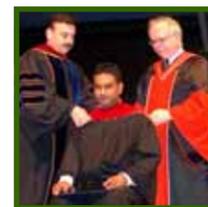
In Hinduism people have to seek god — god does not seek people. Salvation has to be earned, — give money, do rituals — because nothing is free. But Christ came to save me. I do not have to do anything, because he paid the price. The book my brother gave me said Jesus would change my life — and he did. I cannot explain this rationally. I used to fight, but then stopped when Christ became my savior. I used to argue and suddenly stopped.

How did your parents respond to this?

My friends thought I was insane or I was brainwashed or had done this for American dollars. Also, when Christ changed my life, I did not keep quiet, but started to witness to my community. This got me into trouble. Hindu fanatics warned me that if I continued, I would be killed. I was nineteen.

I had to leave home after three months. This was very hard because I was very close to my family and my mom. My brother and pastor told me to go into mission work. I had no other place to go. There was no sense of call, but there was nothing else I could do. I didn't hear any word from heaven but when I saw the need of people lost without Christ, I could not resist or do anything else except to commit my life for God's service.

We prayed for my mom and now she is a Christian.



Raj's Graduation

Where did you go to the mission field? What kinds of things were you doing?

I had to go to another state, about a ten-hour bus journey away. I had to learn two languages – English and the local language. We had to depend upon God for our daily needs. In order to provide food we had to sell Gospel books to Hindus and Muslims. This was very hard, but I learned how to trust in the Lord during those difficult years. I had a joy in my heart that God had changed my life and I wanted others to have this delight also.

How did you get from India to Singapore?



For three years I was a missionary and then I returned home. I thought of doing a secular job and using this to support my involvement in ministry. But at the end of the day, I never went into secular work but continued to do God's service, even though it was very hard to depend on my mom (Hindu then) and do God's work. For the first ten years of my Christian ministry, I did not receive any money from any one. But God was faithful and provided for my needs. My brother helped me and sponsored me to go to a small Bible College in Singapore, where I did two years and then completed a bachelor's degree.

Is that where you met your wife?

No. I joined the ship Doulos, led by Operation Mobilization. My wife was also on this ship and so we met in Italy while serving on board. I was the first Indian that she met. Her name is Kim, Kyung Sook. She is from Kwangju in South Korea.

Kyung Sook was a dental hygienist in Korea for six years. She was involved with Evangelical Student Fellowship and Evangelical Medical Fellowship, working among students. Before joining the ship, Doulos, she worked among Arab Muslims in London. But she always had a thought in her mind to go to the Middle East to work among Arab Muslims. We got married in Korea and then returned to Singapore where I worked in a church.

How did you decide to come to Canada? How did God provide you with the means?

When we were thinking about Northwest@ACTS, we learned that we had to have \$10,000 for admission. We had no money. So we prayed and shared with our friends. If God wanted us to go, He would provide the funds. We had a difficult time with visas in Singapore. I could work there, but my wife would have to return to Korea. We had no money but could not stay in Singapore. So we had to trust in God. We were living in a very nice house. The owners were trying to sell it and just at that time they succeeded. The owner gave us back all the money we had paid in rent and this came to about \$9,000. So God provided for our needs.

How did you learn about ACTS?

While I was in Singapore, I went to my brother's house and looked through a book that lists seminaries that emphasize missions. As I looked through it, I saw ACTS. One thing I noted was the way several denominations were working together. This impressed me. This was the only place I applied and by God's direction I was accepted into the Master of Divinity. So for the last three years I have been working to complete my training.

Which church are you attending and how did you link with them?

When we came to Canada, we found a new society and new people.

During our first two months we visited several churches, as we prayed for God's direction. Many churches we visited would not even come and talk with us. We did not feel welcome. We met Dr. Kent Anderson at Seminary and he suggested we try Parkland Fellowship. So we attended and felt very welcomed. The people accepted us and were warm and friendly, taking an interest in our lives.

As you have attended this church, have you been involved in any ministries?

I am an official intern and have been assigned many different responsibilities. This includes preaching, working with youth and working with children. My relationship with the senior pastor is very helpful. I feel trusted and am involved in so many things.

Tell me about your relationship with the Senior Pastor. How has this helped you to understand the pastoral role?

Pastors have a great impact in people's lives. I meet with the pastor eight times a semester. I can talk with him about many things that are happening in the church. Many people are looking for help. As my mentor he taught me that integrity is very important. We must stand for our convictions. It may be hard, but I have to stand for them. At the same time I have to have compassion, because people are hurting and broken. They need a pastor's support.

You are planning to graduate this April. As you reflect on your Master of Divinity training, what are some of the highlights?

One is leadership development. I see so many Christian leaders falling from their positions. I learned as a leader that character is most fundamental. We are the examples. Once pastors had a high respect, but not anymore. So I must demonstrate that I am a person of integrity and good character.

All of the professors came here not just to be academics, but all of them have experience as pastors and Christian leaders. They have Ph.D.'s but they are teaching out of their spiritual experience. This is most important to me.

What will you be doing after graduation?

We are Canadian immigrants now and hope to become Canadian citizens. We want to make Canada our home. For the next few years I want to be an associate pastor, because I must learn under a mentor, another senior pastor. There is much more for me learn in the practice of ministry leadership, as I am involved in it. This will help me become more effective as a pastor. If everything works out well, then after this we would hope to serve as missionaries. India is our first priority. However, there are thousands of East Indians in Vancouver and perhaps God might call us to minister among them.

How can people pray for you?



Pray that God will help us to keep our focus on the Lord and that we would not lose our desire to serve. We want to be an example for others to follow Jesus, reflecting God's love in our lives. We do not want to fall, nor do we want to boast in ourselves. Pray that God will keep us in the right way and enable us to be His instruments.

May God bless you and Kyung Sook as you move ahead by His grace to fulfill your calling together. It has taken a remarkable community to help you mature as a Christian leader—the influence of your brother, your colleagues, meeting your wife, college in Singapore, your friends in Parkland, and faculty at Northwest@ACTS.

PRESIDENT'S PAGE



Building coalitions is part of our human reality. Businesses do it and we call them partnerships or mergers. Politically we often hear the term 'allies'. Recent events have brought into our consciousness terms like the 'coalition of the willing' that opposes the 'axis of evil'. But what about the Christian world? How do we build coalitions that honour God and advance His Kingdom?

As a group of Evangelical Baptists we have determined to work together around a common set of biblical convictions and we call this voluntary relationship 'The Fellowship'. We have things in common that bring us together to accomplish an agreed mission.

In 1987 our churches in our two Western Fellowship Regions agreed that we should work cooperatively to train ministry leaders. We entered into a coalition with two other denominations and formed 'The Associated Canadian Theological Schools' (ACTS). Now this cluster of Seminaries numbers five, with the possibility of adding a sixth.

When we began ACTS we established seven key 'Believers' Church Theological Principles' as the primary foundation for our coalition. Since then, as new theological issues emerge, we have added four more theological affirmations. It is on these principles of biblical truth that we make decisions about our curriculum, the hiring of faculty, and our strategic development. We have a common mission that binds us to this task:

To develop godly servant leaders who have a love and burden for people based on a strong commitment to Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the ministry of His church; who will energetically strengthen, revitalize and actively multiply communities of effectively ministering believers in Canada and around the world.

Over these past fifteen years we have discovered wonderful synergy and increased trust as God has enabled us to work coopera-

tively in the task of equipping ministry leaders. We can achieve more and do it more efficiently by working together, than by working independently. Yet in our collaboration, we find our own vision and values being strengthened.

What theological values guide us as Evangelical Baptists in discerning with whom we should form coalitions for ministry? The New Testament offers several criteria to help us:

- i. we must preserve "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:-3), even as Jesus prayed in John 17. So we must ask whether the differences we perceive are sufficient to warrant a lack of cooperation with other parts of the body of Christ?
- ii. Paul envisions the church as 'the body of Christ' (1 Corinthians 12). He celebrates its diversity, acknowledging the contribution of each part. So if we accept others as genuine Christians and part of the body of Christ, how can we justify not collaborating with them?
- iii. in the New Testament Jesus commands us to follow him. This requires humility and a commitment to his principles, rather than our human traditions. Jesus refused to be bound by the traditional Sabbath and fasting practices of his contemporary religious leaders. New wine required new wineskins. So we must ask whether our commitment to religious tradition or practice is standing in the way of our obedience to Jesus;
- iv. we must be careful lest we find ourselves sponsoring 'another gospel' that is not a gospel. This was Paul's concern for the Galatian Christians. So we must identify what is central to the gospel and hold firmly to it (cf. Romans 14);
- v. it is difficult to understand clearly how we might work well together with another Christian group that discerns their mission or way of understanding God's work differently. Paul struggles with this in Galatians 2. For him the key question is this: is God at work in that ministry? (Gal. 2:8). If He is, then Paul is eager to extend to that group "the right hand of fellowship", to recognize God's grace and gifting for ministry. So if we truly agree that God is doing His ministry in and through this other Christian group, then is it right to withhold the "right hand of fellowship"?

Great wisdom is needed as we test these principles and develop coalitions that will advance God's Kingdom work in the ways that honour Him as well as enable us to advance our mission as Evangelical Baptists, and nurture our theological vision through Northwest@ACTS.

