

My Visit to Valley Forge Christian College

Today, Valley Forge Christian College (VFCC) graduated 156 students while Pastor Mark Batterson gave a rousing commencement address. I had the privilege of being on campus and speaking to its 1,040 students a couple of weeks ago. It was a wonderful experience, and I decided to write this Strang Report about VFCC on graduation day.

The Assemblies of God college itself is a miracle. When the college received excess property from the government for a dollar, this was challenged in court by an organization called Americans United for Separation of Church and State. A historic Supreme Court case ruled 5-4 in the college's favor, allowing it to keep the beautiful 106-acre campus. I was well aware of this history because I visited the college and wrote about it in *Charisma* 35 years ago.

Charisma was only three years old then, and I was only 27. But I could recognize a good story.

I called it "The Battle for Valley Forge" and predicted the outcome could define the relationship between church and state for years to come. I predicted it would end up in the Supreme Court, and it did. You can read that original article [here](#). A year later, it won first place in news writing from the Evangelical Press Association.

When current VFCC President Dr. Don Meyer invited me to speak in chapel and to several classes a few weeks ago, I jumped at the chance. Although I don't speak to college students often, I know it's important to encourage them and perhaps to provide them with a role model of someone who can pursue a dream, serve the Lord and create an organization that touches the world.

I also wanted to see what had happened to the school in the past few decades. What I saw impressed me. The campus has been upgraded with some new buildings and the others remodeled. The student body has almost doubled under Meyer's 16-year tenure. And there are students from 43 states, including Washington, D.C., and two foreign countries. This fall, the college will have 57 undergraduate majors and six master's degrees.

Dr. Meyer is an impressive leader who was prepared for his job by pastoring and serving as dean at North Central University in Minneapolis, Minn. When he was tapped as president of VFCC in 1997, it was a homecoming because his roots are just outside Lebanon, a rural area in Central Pennsylvania. Meyer has a passion for the campus and the students who had impressed me. Even with all his accomplishments, he quickly says their best year is "next year."

VFCC was featured in *Charisma's Best Christian Universities, Colleges and Bible Colleges*. If you are considering attending Valley Forge, [click here](#) to visit their website. If you or any young person you know is looking for a quality Christian education, I highly recommend VFCC.

During my visit, I was very impressed by the faculty I met, and especially the racially diverse student body. I knew I wanted to communicate in my newsletter what I'd learned, but it is way too much for the few words I can write in my Strang Report. So here's a link to read VFCC's most recent annual report that gives you all the facts and figures.

Dr. Meyer told me, "When I am introducing VFCC to someone for the first time, I always start with our mission statement: 'To prepare individuals for a life of service and leadership in the church and in the world.' And regarding preparation, we follow Jesus' developmental pattern in Luke 2:52, where it says He increased in wisdom (intellectually), stature (physically), favor with God (spiritually) and favor with men/humankind (socially). Everything we do inside and outside

the classroom flows through those four domains.”

In the chapel, there are 48 flags from 48 countries worldwide where alumni serve. During commencement Friday, Dr. Meyer did what he does every year: He challenged the graduating class to increase that number, because the “harvest is (still too) great and the laborers are (still too) few.”

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