

2-2022

Building a Successful Young Alumni Program through Mentoring at the King's University

Kathleen Dian Busch

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin>

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL YOUNG ALUMNI PROGRAM THROUGH
MENTORING AT THE KING'S UNIVERSITY.

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTORATE OF MINISTRY.

BY

KATHLEEN BUSCH

PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2022



CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This certifies that the doctoral Dissertation of

Kathleen Busch

has been approved by
the Dissertation Committee on February 28, 2022
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry.

Dissertation Committee:

Primary Advisor: Karen Tremper, PhD

Secondary Advisor: Jamie Johnson, PhD

Expert Advisor: Karen Tremper, PhD

Copyright © by 2022 Kathleen Busch
All rights reserved

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my grandma Jennie Busch, who passed away at the age of ninety-nine in July 2021. She was a strong mentor in my life of compassion, faithfulness, and resiliency. Her words and wisdom live on in my heart and mind.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first acknowledge the support of The King's University President, Dr. Melanie Humphreys in the writing of this dissertation. Melanie encouraged, listened, and engaged with me in this research. She generously made her schedule available to travel with me visiting alumni, churches, and university supporters throughout Western Canada. Her position and influence opened doors for me to make this research possible and produced new opportunities for me. She is an inspiring example of a relational leader and a supportive mentor.

I would also like to acknowledge the staff and faculty of the King's University, who, in the midst of a busy season of teaching, took time to share their wisdom both through our online public lecture series and through their writings in the artifact I produced for graduation, a graduation book entitled, "Letters to New Graduates."

Finally, to the sixty-five hundred King's University alumni, alongside whom I have had the privilege of working, I thank you for living out the King's mission and vision in the world. You inspire me each and every day with your words, creativity, passion, and care for our world. It is an honor to serve you as you work to build a more humane, just, and sustainable world.

Special mention also goes out to my dissertation advisor Dr. Karen Tremper, who without her encouragement, this paper would never have been written. Her thoughtful words, compassionate care, powerful prayers, and faithful mentorship during a difficult journey motivated me to keep researching, learning, and writing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
ABSTRACT	VII
SECTION ONE: THE PROBLEM.....	1
Graduated But, Not Engaged	1
Kayla’s Story	2
Disengagement of Alumni after Graduation	3
Lack of Affinity.....	4
Lack of Career Support	6
Lack of Funding for Age-Specific Alumni Programming	8
Lack of Meaningful Relationships with Older Alumni.....	8
Conclusion: Moving From Disengaged to Engaged Through Mentoring.....	10
SECTION TWO: OTHER SOLUTIONS	13
One Size Fits All	13
The Problem of Defining Alumni Engagement	15
University Needs versus Alumni Needs.....	17
A Financial Appeal without Relationship	19
The Silo of the Alumni Office.....	22
Conclusion.....	24
SECTION THREE: THE SOLUTION.....	26
Introduction	26
Life Stage Theory.....	27
Young Alumni Needs.....	32
Characteristics of the Twenty-Somethings	33
Young Alumni Programming at Other Institutions.....	35
Developing Affinity in Young Alumni	37
Identifying the University’s Needs	39
Fifty-Plus Alumni Needs.....	42
What Fifty-Plus Programs Look Like at Other Universities	44
Theological Reflection on Mentoring	49
Biblical Mentorship.....	50
The Roles of Mentor/Mentee	51
Scriptural Examples of Mentorship.....	51
A Theology of Mentorship from the Book of Ruth	55
<i>Naomi and Ruth: An Example of Biblical Mentorship</i>	55
<i>Naomi: Her Losses, Her Suffering, and Her Faithfulness</i>	56
<i>Ruth Chooses Naomi as Her Mentor</i>	59
<i>The Restoration of Naomi and Ruth</i>	62
<i>Ruth’s Place in Jesus’s Lineage and Our Redemption</i>	63
Developing Mentoring Relationships for University Alumni Programs	65

Building a Young Alumni Program at The King’s University	66
Conclusion.....	70
SECTION FOUR: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION	72
SECTION FIVE: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS	74
The Inspiration	74
The Process	75
The Collaboration.....	76
The Costs.....	76
POSTSCRIPT: THE WAY FORWARD IS COLLABORATION	78
APPENDIX ONE: THE ARTIFACT	85
LETTERS OF WISDOM AND BLESSING	85
<i>Chapter 1: Transitions, Mentors and Opportunities</i>	92
<i>Chapter 2: Listen, Pay Attention, Choose Wisely</i>	102
<i>Chapter 3: Build Community and Grow Where You Are Planted</i>	110
<i>Chapter 4: Develop Your Craft</i>	115
<i>Chapter 5: Detours in the Journey</i>	126
<i>Chapter 6: Life-Long Learning</i>	132
<i>Chapter 7: Live the Vision</i>	136
<i>Chapter 8: Don’t Forget to Write</i>	142
<i>Back Cover</i>	151
APPENDIX TWO.....	153
<i>Field Research Dat</i>	153
APPENDIX THREE	154
<i>Public Lectures Stats</i>	154
APPENDIX FOUR	155
<i>Mentor-Ease Proposal</i>	155
BIBLIOGRAPHY	161

ABSTRACT

The transition from university to the workplace, can be a difficult for young alumni. Many graduates are often confused and lost after graduation. While some seem to have a life plan, and a clear direction, others are left wondering where to turn after that degree is granted them. Helping new graduates navigate the transition from university to career is an important role of the alumni office. For those who graduated in the past two years during the pandemic, this transition has been even more difficult. With fewer career opportunities available, work from home orders, and mass lay-offs in many industries, many young alumni feel discouraged about their lack of options. Rather than turning to the university to help with this transition, many simply disengage. In section one of this paper, I will look at the reasons alumni disengage after graduation. In section two, I will examine some of the solutions that alumni programs have tried to implement to engage alumni, and the reasons why many of these attempts have not worked. In section three, I will propose a strategy for young alumni engagement that is focused on developing mentoring relationships with older alumni, as well I will provide a theological framework for the development of a mentoring strategy. In sections four and five, I will outline the creation of my artifact, a book of wisdom and blessings for new graduates, called; “Letters to new graduates.” This book is written to the graduates of The King’s University from the faculty, and staff. In section six, I will reflect on lessons learned along the way, the importance of collaboration, and my personal reflections about the process of researching, writing and implementing this strategy at The King’s University in my role as Manager of Alumni Relations.

SECTION ONE: THE PROBLEM

Graduated But, Not Engaged

The King's University is a Christian University in Edmonton, Alberta. King's was founded by the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in 1979. The university presently has a student population of approximately one thousand (1,000) students and has approximately sixty-five hundred (6,500) alumni.¹ As of March 2021, King's had three thousand eight hundred and sixty-four (3,864) contactable alumni.² I was hired in February 2019 in the role of Manager of Alumni Relations. The position was relatively new to the university (implemented within the last five years), and my role was to devise some engagement strategies to increase alumni participation in the life of the university. The problem was that many alumni were disengaged, and less than fifty percent (50%) were contactable at that time.

When new graduates finish university they are often moving away to start new jobs across the country or begin graduate school. They spread out, and the university often loses contact with these new graduates because of multiple address changes. While many alumni will retain relationships with peers and favorite professors, the alumni office is not always kept up to date with new addresses, phone numbers, or new employment positions. Additionally, many alumni lose contact with the university in the

¹ Alumni is defined by the King's University alumni office as someone who has taken a minimum of twenty-four credit hours.

² Teddy Taylor, Data Manager, The King's University, email to author, March 2021.

first several years after graduation, as they are busy starting careers, travelling, and building families.

In this dissertation I will suggest an engagement strategy for young alumni in their first several years after graduation, which encourages a continuing relationship to their alma mater through mentorship with older alumni. The initial years after university are a critical time for young alumni. A program focused on mentorship can help transition alumni through major life choices, helping them build life-long relationships with their alma mater. This dissertation will focus its attention on The King's University alumni program and will attempt to demonstrate that if King's were able to offer a robust mentoring program to support their alumni's transition from university to career, that this would facilitate deeper connections to the university among alumni, and would assist in building life-long relationships that would meet both the alumni's and the university's needs.

Kayla's Story

Kayla has always dreamed of going to university to become a teacher. Kayla had an active social life at the university and made many life-long friends through serving in various clubs. Kayla has now graduated and is actively pursuing positions in the field of education; however, all she can find are temporary positions. She is having trouble establishing a sense of community in her new city, as she has had to move a few times after graduation to be closer to work. Additionally, her student loans are coming due, and she will need to start making payments. She is feeling overwhelmed and lonely. Kayla learns about a new mentoring program for young alumni at her university through a former class-mate. She decides to reach out to her alma mater for support and inquire

about their mentoring program. She signs up to meet some older alumni mentors in her new city, and is connected with some seasoned teachers, who help her navigate her way and introduce her to other alumni. Since joining her university's mentoring program, Kayla has been able to find permanent work through her mentor, who was a high school principal, and has since made even more helpful connections. She is now feeling supported. She has been able to navigate the transition from university to career much more easily with assistance from the mentoring program. Kayla appreciates the young alumni mentoring network and the connections she has made. She enjoys connecting with the alumni mentors. As she attends alumni events in her new city, she feels more connected to her alma mater. When some other teachers suggest developing a scholarship at the university for future teachers, Kayla is excited to contribute to this initiative, knowing that her university trains, equips, and supports alumni teachers in their careers. After completing five years of teaching, Kayla signs up to be a field instructor to help mentor the next generation of young teachers from her alma mater.

Disengagement of Alumni after Graduation

Kayla's story is an example of a success story for alumni after graduation, based on the university's decision to provide an engagement strategy of mentoring for young alumni and Kayla's desire to join the university mentoring program. Not all alumni however are as successful as Kayla after graduation. The initial years after university are a critical time for young alumni. As young alumni begin their professional lives, they are looking for support to help bridge the gap between university and career. When that support is not provided by their university, they may disengage from their alma mater and find the assistance they need in other places. Some of the reasons that I have identified

that alumni may disengage include 1) lack of affinity for the university, 2) lack of real or perceived career support, 3) lack of funding for young alumni programming, and 4) lack of meaningful relationships with older alumni. While there may be a myriad of additional reasons alumni choose to disengage from their alma mater, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will concentrate on the above four.

Lack of Affinity

New alumni disengage with their alma mater for a variety of reasons. Student experience may influence the decision for some. If an alumnus had a poor student experience, that person's desire to stay connected may be low. Many alumni professionals suggest that the best way to encourage lasting alumni is to connect with them as students and help them have a positive student experience. Researchers David Weerts and Justin Ronca determine that...

...alumni support is predicted, in part, by the alum's perceptions of the quality of his or her current and past experiences with the institution. Indicators such as quality of undergraduate education, extent to which the institution prepared them for a career, and the degree to which faculty members exerted a positive influence, are factors that would predict whether alumni donors deem the institution worthy of their volunteer time.³

Alumni programming happens the moment a student enters the building. Helping students see the positive attributes of being an active alum through bringing older alumni to campus as speakers, mentors, and leaders gives student's examples for success after their degree and helps them see that alumni are valued and supported by the university

³ David J. Weerts and Justin M. Ronca, "Profiles of Supportive Alumni: Donors, Volunteers, and Those Who 'Do It All,'" *International Journal of Educational Advancement* 7, no. 1 (March 2007): 20–34, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ijea.2150044>.

after they graduate. Brian Seewald, an alumni officer from Queen's University in Ontario, stresses that the Queen's alumni office is intentional about connecting with alumni while they are students. He encourages alumni departments to "support [alumni] as students and offer what they need in the first five years after graduation to gain lasting loyalty and affiliation."⁴

Students who had a mostly online experience also tend to disengage after graduation. They often fail to form any type of lasting relationships with other students, faculty, or staff, so that they do not have personal relationships to keep connected to. Online education tends to be viewed as transactional, and thus, no further connection is desired by the alumni after graduation. Since affinity is not developed for their alma mater, they tend not to engage in social activities, volunteer opportunities, or requests for giving opportunities. Glenn Kosse says in his doctoral thesis on "The Relationship between Young Alumni Participation and Giving" for Bellarmine University that "many millennials see university as a transactional commodity and do not have the same affinity as alumni from previous generations."⁵ He also makes a link between online course offerings and giving, saying that "those who take the majority of their courses online have less affinity, and thus less willingness to engage in alumni events or future investment in the university."⁶

⁴ Brian Seewald, Alumni officer Queen's University, "Young Alumni Engagement: Harnessing Generation #ShowMe," (webinar from Queen's University, Kingston, ON, Jan 25, 2018). <https://www.ccaecanada.org/en/resources-hub/40-young-alumni-seewald>.

⁵ Glenn Kosse, "The Relationship Between Young Alumni Participation and Giving," (Master's Thesis, Bellarmine University, 2019). <https://scholarworks.bellarmino.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1077&context=tdc>. 41.

⁶ Ibid., 68.

Most alumni professionals agree that affinity needs to start the moment students walk through the door of the university. Seewald agrees with mentoring but stresses that the Queen's alumni office is very intentional with connecting with alumni while they are students.⁷ He encourages alumni departments to “introduce students to alumni who are doing great things in their careers,” this, he says, “builds pride within the student for their alma mater.”⁸

Lack of Career Support

Many universities offer career support for students. Help with resume writing, interviewing skills, and testing are among some of the work of a university career center. Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem tries to make sure every student is equipped for the transition from university to career through extensive programming. Their website states, “Through career coaching, events, workshops, courses, treks, fairs, self-assessments, and much more, we seek to make sure EVERY student has the tools, resources, information, and most of all a partner to navigate the college-to-career transition.”⁹ In a phone conversation with Allison McWilliams, the Vice President of Career and Personal Development for Wake Forest University, she says that “alumni often fail to take part in these support services while they are students. Then, after graduation they can feel overwhelmed and discouraged as they try to navigate finding a

⁷ Brian Seewald, Queens University, phone interview, Aug 13, 2021.

⁸ Brian Seewald, Alumni officer Queen's University. Webinar: “Young Alumni Engagement: Harnessing Generation #ShowMe,” Jan 25, 2018. <https://www.ccaecanada.org/en/resources-hub/40-young-alumni-seewald?highlight=WyJzZWV3YWxkIl0=>

⁹ Wake Forest University, Office of Career and Personal Development, accessed Dec 27, 2021, <https://opcd.wfu.edu/>.

job and the transition and often feel like the university did not prepare them for the real world.”¹⁰ Witty Sandle, the Manager of The King’s Centre for Career and Calling, was proactive in intentionally including alumni into the mission statement for King’s new career center. “The Centre for Career and Calling helps students and alumni discern God’s call for their lives. It equips them to understand themselves, make meaning of their experiences, and explore pathways to purposeful work in service of a more humane, just, and sustainable world.”¹¹ In conversations with Sandle about the formation of this center, she said she often felt frustrated that she would put a lot of work into preparing courses and workshops for students, and very few would attend. That is one of the reasons that she wanted to include alumni in the mission statement, so that alumni knew that these programs were for them, and they could access the career center after graduation.¹²

While it is possible that the lack of career support may be because a university does not have the funding or the staffing to offer this programming, it has been noted by both McWilliams and Sandle that it is also because students fail to take advantage of the opportunity while they are students. Nevertheless, young alumni may choose to disengage if they do not feel like they had adequate support for transitioning from the classroom to the boardroom.

¹⁰ Allison McWilliams, Wake Forest University, phone call with the author, May 28, 2021.

¹¹ The King’s University, Centre for Career and Calling, accessed Dec 28, 2021, <https://www.kingsu.ca/services/centre-career-calling>.

¹² Witty Sandle, Manager of The King’s Center for Career and Calling, interviews by author, The King’s University, Sept 2020-May 2021.

Lack of Funding for Age-Specific Alumni Programming

A common concern that many alumni professionals face is a plethora of fantastic ideas for alumni engagement but a lack of budgets and staff to implement these ideas. In online discussions with colleagues from a variety of universities, many alumni departments experienced reduced budgets and staffing throughout the pandemic.¹³ Many alumni departments were already experiencing tight budgets constraints pre-pandemic. When budget issues impact the alumni office, staffing and programs are lessened. When I asked alumni professionals about age-specific programming specifically for young alumni, the majority replied that they wished that they could concentrate on specific age-based programming, but that they neither had the staff nor the funds to do this.¹⁴ In the next chapter, I will examine the problem of a “one-size fits all” approach to alumni engagement. Many alumni programs are not able to tailor their programs with age-specific programming and are only able to offer basic programming; thus, they are not able to focus time and attention specifically on meeting young alumni needs. When this happens, the alumni department can lose connection with young alumni.

Lack of Meaningful Relationships with Older Alumni

A final reason for disengagement is the lack of meaningful relationships with older alumni who can act as role models, guides, and mentors for young alumni. When students are introduced to alumni who are established in their careers and are willing to

¹³ This information is the result of online list serve conversations with a number of CCCU alumni professionals during July of 2021.

¹⁴ Field research, interviews with alumni professionals by the author, July 2021.

share their stories and experiences with younger alumni, this builds affinity and connection. In my own undergraduate experience, I cannot think of one alumnus that I was introduced to through my classes, print material, or large group experiences, such as chapel. However, in graduate school, I was constantly being introduced to alumni, who were making a difference in the world, who came in as classroom guests and chapel speakers, and who were introduced through print materials. Once I became an alumnus, having significant connections established helped me to build affinity with my graduate school and with my fellow alumni. Sadly, I do not feel that same affinity with my undergraduate school.

Today, however, my undergraduate school is working hard to establish mentoring relationships as an engagement strategy. They are currently focused on developing mentoring relationships with their mature alumni and new graduates. They have recently begun a new program on mentoring and have partnered with “Ten Thousand Coffees,”¹⁵ a mentoring software platform, to reach out and connect new graduates with older alumni. In a personal email, Johnathan Fehr, the Alumni Director at Trinity Western University, at the time wrote, “Trinity Western University has partnered with “Ten Thousand Coffees,” a professional development platform, to create the TWU Networking Hub. We need people just like you to lead it.”¹⁶

Author Kevin Fleming, in his paper entitled, *The Pots of Water; Emerging Framework for Alumni Engagement*, shares in his research on alumni engagement:

¹⁵ Ten Thousand Coffees, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.tenthousandcoffees.com/>.

¹⁶ Jonathan Fehr, Alumni Engagement, Trinity Western University, email to author, Sept 20, 2020.

As alumni form strong personal relationships with individuals within the university community, their sense of connection to the university strengthens. He cites the examples of two participants, “Tim & John,” for whom he says their connections to their mentors deepened their engagement with their alma mater, “they both talked about the powerful connections they had with mentors on campus and the significant effect these relationships had on their lives and careers.”¹⁷

It stands to reason if alumni have positive affinity with their alma mater when they have mentors and that this affinity and connection is lessened with the lack of an opportunity for mentorship. Thus, providing opportunities for alumni mentorship is a strong engagement strategy.

Conclusion: Moving From Disengaged to Engaged Through Mentoring

In conclusion of this section, I propose that the solution to alumni disengagement is to provide mentorship for young alumni to facilitate deep engagement and lasting affinity. A foundational aspect of building strong affinity with young alumni is best served by providing new graduates positive examples of alumni living out the mission and vision of the university and succeeding in their careers. New graduates need mentorship to learn skills and open doors that will help them launch successfully into their new careers. Young alumni who engage in positive mentor relationships have an increased potential of developing a lifelong relationship with the university that may include volunteerism, philanthropy, and legacy families. Mentors can help meet the needs of young alumni through providing career support, social engagement, and professional connections, which in turn facilitates a deeper affinity to the university.

¹⁷ Kevin Fleming, “The ‘Pots of Water:’ Emerging Framework for Alumni Engagement Examining How Alumni Make Sense of Their Relationships with Their Alma Maters,” *Philanthropy & Education* 3, no. 1 (2019): 119, doi:10.2979/phileduc.3.1.05.

In section one of this dissertation, I laid out the need, problem, and opportunity to deepen young alumni connection through mentoring by stating that young alumni need support after graduation. I observed that the initial years after university are a critical time for young alumni and stated that a program focused on mentorship can help transition alumni through major life choices and help them build a life-long relationship with their alma mater. In section two of this dissertation, I will examine some of the solutions other universities have proposed for alumni engagement. These include 1) a one size fits all approach, 2) the difficulty of deciding metrics to measure engagement, 3) identifying the university's needs, 4) asking for donations without meeting alumni needs, and 5) the alumni office working independently of the rest of the institution. In section three, I will discuss adult life stages with particular emphasis on the life stage of young alumni, as well as the fifty-plus life stage. I will examine other universities' programs, especially those that focus on age specific alumni programming, as well as some of the positive alumni engagement strategies those universities are using to meet both alumni and university needs. I will also provide a theological framework for mentoring using the example of Ruth and Naomi from the Book of Ruth. I will conclude section three with some suggestions for The King's University for developing a young alumni mentoring program. In section four, I will describe the artifact that I produced for The King's University. The artifact is the creation of a book of letters of wisdom to the new graduates of the university from the staff and faculty. In section five, I will lay out the process of developing the artifact, including the inspiration, the production, the costs, and the printing. In the postscript, I will conclude this dissertation with lessons that I learned

throughout this research, my hope for future research, and the development of future alumni engagement strategies.

SECTION TWO: OTHER SOLUTIONS

In this section, I will explore some of the solutions other university alumni departments have provided for alumni programming. Alumni programming has evolved as universities have matured and grown. What once worked well for alumni engagement may not work for future generations. I will begin by discussing the problem of offering a “one size fits all” approach to alumni programming. I will then examine the problem that alumni departments have had in defining engagement, as well as the metrics used to determine success. Next, I will attempt to identify the university’s needs and demonstrate the problems of trying to meet university needs without developing a reciprocal relationship with alumni, in particular when donations are solicited. Finally, I will show the problems that occur when the alumni office operates independently, without the support, understanding, or collaboration of other departments, staff, and faculty.

One Size Fits All

Many universities offer a problematic one size fits all approach to alumni relations that often focuses on what the university needs from the alumni (usually finances), without taking into account the needs of the alumni’s stage of life. I define a one size fits all approach as an engagement strategy or program that the alumni office offers without concern for the individual alumni’s needs.

Each stage of adult life has different and diverse needs, and each presents different opportunities for alumni engagement. A single engagement strategy approach to alumni relations will not work for all stages of adult development. Recognizing the opportunities, needs, and challenges of each life stage will help innovative alumni

relations teams build an alumni program that engages the whole person at each stage of their life, while at the same time meeting the needs of the university. The problem with offering a simplified alumni program is that you may not connect with the majority of your alumni. As mentioned earlier, alumni programs are changing. Event head counts and anecdotal stories are not helpful measurements of success anymore.

Author Bryan Wawzenek, in his article entitled *Listen to the Data*, quotes alumni professional Jimmy Buck, Chief Advancement officer at Deakin University in Australia, who says, “the evidence of a worthwhile program once ended with anecdotal reactions or headcounts.”¹⁸ Since the pandemic, alumni programs have had to shift from event-based to online programming, thus showing the evolving nature of alumni engagement. Katrina Ward, Director of Strategic Outreach and Engagement at University of California, Los Angeles, is also quoted in the article by Wawzenek. Reflecting on UCLA’s response to the pandemic and the need for programming to go online, Ward’s team was able to pull data from zoom meetings and analyse it. In doing so, her team discovered that alumni over fifty were not engaging with online materials. In fact they had no email addresses to even communicate with them. She says, “It’s been really exciting to identify a group through data, create new programs, and then track engagement to see how successful they were.”¹⁹

Most universities do not understand or cater to adult life stages in their alumni programming; however, many are beginning to envision how targeting specific life stages

¹⁸ See Jimmy Buck’s quote in Bryan Wawzenek, “Listen,” *Periodical Currents* 46, no. 4. (Jul/Aug 2020): 28-34.

¹⁹ See Katrina Ward’s quote in Bryan Wawzenek, “Listen to the Data,” 28-34.

leads to increased engagement. Many universities are beginning to offer programs for alumni who are fifty-plus or for young alumni. Offering life stage specific programming is key to building deeper connections with alumni. Raelene Morey is the founder of a digital writing agency. In her article, “Nine Alumni Engagement Best Practices for Higher Education,” she advises, “knowing who you are marketing to and what you are asking from a particular group is important for a successful engagement.” In particular, she suggests that various age groups connect with different marketing platforms. Knowing the target audience’s age, marital status, hobbies, and interests can make the marketing campaign more of a success, as each campaign can be geared to age specific audiences. As a self-identified millennial, she says that millennials prefer social media for engagement as opposed to print material. As a marketing specialist, she notes that “a comprehensive engagement campaign will incorporate each of these social media platforms as well as other mediums preferred by different age groups.”²⁰

I will explore this age-specific programing in further detail in section three of this dissertation. Additionally, I will review successful university alumni program leaders who are creating age-based alumni programming. In doing so, I will demonstrate how creating age-specific programming increases alumni engagement.

The Problem of Defining Alumni Engagement

One of the challenges of alumni engagement is that of trying to find appropriate metrics to measure success. As mentioned above, simply relying on head count no longer

²⁰ Raelene Morey, “9 Alumni Engagement Best Practices for Higher Education,” accessed Jan 27, 2020, <https://pagely.com/blog/alumni-engagement-best-practices-higher-education>.

tells the full story of engagement. In 2018, The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), a professional organization for advancement professionals, began to develop an industry-wide framework for alumni engagement metrics. The task force now suggests four metrics for engagement as an industry standard. These are “communication, volunteer, philanthropic and experiential.”²¹ While measuring alumni engagement is difficult, using these four metrics can give some framework to understanding one’s success in engagement. As alumni programs develop strategies to engage alumni, one can use these four metrics to tell a more in-depth story that will help university boards and supporters understand more thoroughly the work of the alumni department.

In my field research and in my communications with alumni professionals, many felt the effects of the pandemic through reduced budgets and staffing. Many universities struggled financially during this time period and resorted to laying off alumni staff and reducing alumni budgets and programming. The problem with this method was that it left no one in the alumni offices to build relationships, and little financially to restructure and adapt to a changing new world of alumni engagement. Wawzenek recognizes that having some common metrics can help alumni professionals demonstrate to their boards and donors the difference their work in alumni engagement brings to the university. He says, “by turning alumni engagement into data that can be easily presented, advancement professionals can better display past successes and display future growth.”²² Wawzenek goes on to demonstrate that, when an alumni professional from a small college applied an

²¹ “Alumni Engagement Metrics White Paper,” CASE, 2018, www.case.org.

²² Bryan Wawzenek, “Listen to the Data: How Alumni Relations Teams Have Embraced Engagement metrics and Learned More About Their Constituents,” *Periodical Currents*, Vol. 46, no. 4 (Jul/Aug 2020): 28-34.

outcomes based model of tracking engagement using CASE metrics, the data showed that giving went up considerably, as did collaboration with other university departments.

As noted, a major issue in alumni engagement is the lack of universal metrics for measuring alumni success. As alumni programs mature, evolve, and grow, having common metrics will be important for measuring successful and meaningful alumni engagement. Using an outcomes-based approach to these measurements will help alumni professionals better articulate needs for staffing and budget requests regarding alumni programming.

University Needs versus Alumni Needs

As universities grow, so do their needs. Some of the needs of the university may include volunteers, mentors, promotion of the university, and philanthropic support. The problem comes when the needs of the university trump the needs of the alumni, and alumni do not feel like their needs and voices are being heard. If alumni have developed a strong connection and affinity to their university, then they will be more inclined to want to give of their time, expertise, influence, and finances. However, if they do not feel heard, understood, or connected with, then their desire to give back to the university is diminished. Wawzenek from CASE encourages advancement departments to take time to listen to their alumni's needs and respond to them with new programs and activities for engagement. He notes that many development officers make the mistake of just talking at the alumni, rather than listening. He also notes that alumni philanthropic behavior toward their alma mater is on a downward trend all across institutions and encourages advancement departments to find ways to hear from their alumni through surveys and

questionnaires, as well as to follow through on actionable goals for engagement.²³ An example of this might be hearing from new alumni through a graduation survey. Perhaps a school's alumni might be interested in supporting a singular request for funding for a specific improvement on campus, rather than responding to a spring appeal for an unspecified donation.

The University of British Columbia, on their one hundredth anniversary, decided to embark on a ten-year strategic plan to deepen their engagement with their alumni. They had a large fundraising goal and needed alumni buy-in to achieve success. Jeff Todd, the Alumni Director at the time, discovered through alumni surveys that what alumni most wanted from their alma mater was a reciprocal relationship. They wanted something in return for their time, money, and wisdom. Todd listened and built a successful plan for engagement that set out to first meet the needs of the alumni. The results were highly successful with one hundred and thirty thousand alumni engaged and one point six billion dollars (1.6 billion) raised, along with the added benefit of more meaningful engagement with their alumni. "This dual-goal campaign was unique in Canada and exceeded expectations by raising \$1.624 billion and engaging 130,005 alumni." ²⁴

While understanding that both the university and the alumni have needs is a good first step to increasing alumni engagement. Much work needs to be done by making a strong attempt by universities to understand their alumni needs better. Alumni surveys,

²³ Bryan Wawzenek, "Listen to the Data," 28-34.

²⁴ Jeff Todd, "Behind the Evolution: What We Wished We Had Known and What We Learned Along the Way," Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education (CCAEE), accessed April 20, 2021, <https://www.ccaecanada.org/en/?id=3329>.

questionnaires, and individual and group listening tours are great resources to start using in order to begin listening to one's alumni. In Section three of this dissertation, I will more fully delve into how to both meet the alumni's and the university's needs to create reciprocal relationships.

A Financial Appeal without Relationship

Western Washington staff have long recognized that alumni want a relationship with their alma mater before they get asked for donations. In a collaborative paper with staff from the Alumni, Marketing, and Development departments, the three departments make a case for more meaningful engagement. They say that in the old model, alumni were considered engaged when they simply gave to the university or attended an event. They acknowledged that their alumni did not want immediately to be asked for donations upon graduation, especially as they were in their building stage of life. Instead, with support from a wide range of university constituents, including alumni, board members, staff, and faculty, they turned the old model of engagement upside down. They knew that alumni were involved on campus in a variety of ways through athletics, invites from faculty, and clubs, as well as attending events not planned by the alumni department, but they had no way of recording this type of engagement. So, they set out to build a collaborative focus on alumni engagement by “flipping the engagement model on its head with a focus on providing resources and assistance to provide faculty, staff, and student leaders to build the connections with Western alumni.”²⁵ They identified a barrier to

²⁵ Jeniene Bengtsson, Frances Badgett, and Deborah Dewees, “Engaged: Designing a Fully Integrated, Campus-Wide Alumni Engagement Model,” *Journal of Education Advancement & Marketing* 4, vol. 4 (March 1, 2020): 314.

engagement as the perception that the university only wants engagement for philanthropic reasons, yet their goal as the Advancement office was philanthropic. The key to this was building a case for university-wide engagement in a centralized way. Their three-year plan involved gathering all information in one database, equipping alumni with engagement kits for events, and providing promotional swag kits for professors. They believed that strong engagement leads to strong philanthropy. Their 3-year goal remains to raise their alumni giving from five percent (5%) to ten percent (10%) through this centralized system of engagement and through offering smaller affinity-based gatherings with faculty. The result of this more collaborative approach to alumni engagement is still being evaluated as part of their three-year plan to improve engagement in this manner. Their goal is to see a five to ten percent (5-10%) increase in engagement, including in donations. Their end goal is to give alumni a “smooth path to engagement, a sense of connection, and a deeper relationship with their university.”²⁶ They also want to better understand through their data “the journey from undergraduate to engaged mentor, employer, or donor”²⁷

Alumni diversity is also something that is changing as more people of various cultures have access to education, and international students increasingly choose North America as a place to study. One of the problems, according to authors Mary Beth Gasman and Nelson Bowman in their book, *Engaging Diverse College Alumni*, is that traditional models of charitable giving have been formed mostly by white men and that most development teams are staffed by white males, who generally solicit to white male

²⁶ Bengtsson, Badgett, and Dewees, “Engaged,” 317.

²⁷ Bengtsson, Badgett, and Dewees, “Engaged,” 317.

alumni. “They [development departments] have long engaged mainly White alumni and know almost nothing about philanthropy fundraising with diverse cultures.”²⁸ This potentially limits women and other minorities from greater philanthropic involvement as their style of thinking is different. The authors say that “as universities are growing in diversity, so too must a plan for engagement and fundraising.”²⁹ Their book is filled with engaging ideas for philanthropy that connect people of color to ideas that lead to greater engagement from a wider source of alumni diversity. As we see from their research, the old model of philanthropy does not work with the evolving diversity of our universities. Better understanding of specific ethnic and cultures is needed both in the Alumni Office and the Development Office for meaningful alumni engagement.

When the Development Office does not represent both the rising racial diversity on campuses and its gender diversity, problems ensue. While diversity is changing in terms of more ethnic cultures on campus, the make-up of female versus male alumni has also changed with a higher percentage of women in university. Today, King’s graduates female students at nearly double the rate as it does males. By the year 2020, King’s had graduated nineteen hundred (1,900) women, as opposed to eleven hundred and eighty three (1,183) men.³⁰ This statistic is not uncommon among the majority of Canadian universities.³¹ Men and women typically think differently. Having female solicitors build

²⁸ Marybeth Gasman and Nelson Bowman III, *Engaging Diverse College Alumni: The Essential Guide to Fundraising* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 6.

²⁹ Gasman and Bowman, *Engaging Diverse College Alumni*, VIII.

³⁰ Kara Reich, King’s Intuition Research Department, email to author, March 4, 2021.

³¹ “Proportion of Male and Female Postsecondary Graduates by Field of Study,” *Statistics Canada*, last modified November 24, 2021, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710013502>.

relationships with female donors is imperative for building strong relationships with all alumni.

Alumni today want to be known, valued, and heard. The days of generic fundraising campaigns are a thing of the past. As Jay Sharman says in his article entitled, “Five New Ways to Think about Alumni Engagement,” In examining how different age groups approach university financial appeals, “a millennial doesn’t understand why anyone would want their name on a brick on campus. A baby boomer can’t understand why a millennial would give money to a kick-starter project. Yet, universities continue to distribute content that has one message and hope that it will resonate based on the connective tissue of the affiliation of the school.”³² Forward thinking universities are willing and wanting to build strong relationships with their alumni that include age-specific fundraising, diversity in hiring in the Alumni and Development Offices, and listening better to alumni needs, so that they can build programs that address those needs. This means taking the time to get to know one’s alumni and developing reciprocal relationships, so that both university needs and alumni needs can be met.

The Silo of the Alumni Office

The final problem to address is the silo of the alumni department. What I mean by the word silo is that the alumni office often works independently from other university departments. Many universities, as an answer to alumni disengagement developed alumni departments, hired alumni professionals, and allocated a budget for alumni events. This

³² Jay Sharman, “5 New Ways to Think About Alumni Engagement,” *TeamWorks Media*, accessed Feb 18, 2021, <https://www.teamworksmedia.com/blog/alumni-engagement/university-engagement-5-new-ways-to-think-alumni/>.

approach, while helpful and needed, can also perhaps put unrealistic expectations for alumni departments to provide an easy fix to a larger disengagement issue. Many alumni departments struggle to keep up to date and connected with the thousands of alumni their university produces. Between data management, alumni surveys, event planning, volunteer organization, donor acquisition, philanthropic requests, personal visits, and strategic planning, the alumni office has a large portfolio and often limited staff.

However, a trend is starting to occur with universities, such as the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Western Washington University, who are providing examples of more collaborative, campus wide approaches to alumni engagement. UBC has been strategizing for a while about how to build engagement, and they recognized that the current traditional method of combining Alumni Relations with the Development department was not working. Their approach “was bare minimum for reimagining how alumni relations could and should work in the 21st century.”³³ They began instead to work collaboratively with various departments on campus and approached the university administration to prioritize alumni engagement as a campus wide priority. Initial results were that they were able to grow alumni engagement from twenty thousand (20,000) to one hundred and thirty thousand (130,000) yearly connections over a ten year period.³⁴ The other results, which I will explore more in the next section, were exceptional. Western Washington University had a similar understanding of the problem of the alumni office operating independently. They were able to identify the limits of the alumni office

³³ Jeff Todd, “Going Deep: How a new model for engagement transformed alumni affairs at the University of British Columbia,” *Journal of Education Advancement & Marketing* 4, no. 1 (June 1, 2019): 20.

³⁴ Jeff Todd. “Going Deep,” 26.

working solo and began to engage a more collaborative approach in 2019 through a three-year strategic plan.³⁵

Both UBC and Western Washington understood that their current approaches were not working and began proactively to seek support from faculty and staff. They understood that university staff and faculty continue relationships with students after they become alumni, and that these staff and faculty were perhaps the best advocates for partnering with the alumni office in building connections. Both universities encouraged alumni engagement to be a campus wide priority and began partnering with various departments on campus to broaden and deepen engagement. I will discuss further how to prioritize alumni engagement as a university priority by developing a campus wide collaborative approach in section three.

Conclusion

This section of the paper has explored some of the solutions universities have attempted over the years to increase alumni engagement and why these attempts have been met with limited success. The problems identified of increasing alumni engagement through these solutions include 1) offering a one size fits all approach, 2) the lack of a common definition of engagement, 3) not meeting alumni needs, and 4) the limits of the alumni office. Like my counterparts at UBC identified, more advanced solutions are needed to broaden and deepen alumni engagement for future generations of alumni. What worked in the past, needs more intentionality, a greater understanding of alumni needs, deeper relational connections, and an expanded perspective of alumni engagement from

³⁵ Bengtsson, Badgett, and Dewees, “Engaged,” 320.

the whole campus for successful engagement into the future. In the next section, I will focus on solutions to these problems by outlining adult life stages, examining young alumni and fifty-plus life stages, and reviewing age-specific engagement strategies at other universities. I will also provide a theological framework for mentoring, along with suggestions for the development of a young mentoring program specific to The King's University.

SECTION THREE: THE SOLUTION

Introduction

In the previous section, other solutions were examined as models that alumni professionals have attempted as strategies for alumni engagement. As universities have grown and matured, many of these strategies are now met with limited success. Some of the problems these solutions offered were 1) a one size fits all approach, 2) the lack of a common definition of engagement, 3) not meeting alumni needs, and 4) the limits of the alumni office. In this section, I will offer the claim that alumni need support after graduation. I propose that if universities were able to offer a robust mentoring program, by utilizing older alumni to support the young alumni's transition from the university to their career, this strategy would facilitate deeper life-long connection to one's alma mater on the part of alumni, which in turn would help meet the university's needs. I will examine adult life stages, with particular attention to both the young alumni life stage and the fifty-plus life stage. I will then examine alumni needs, as well as university needs and demonstrate how building a mentoring program for young alumni can meet the needs of both the alumni and the university. This section will also look at what other intuitions are doing for specific life-stage programming for both the young alumni and the fifty-plus life stage. I will then present a theology of mentorship as an engagement strategy based on the biblical story of Ruth and Naomi. This section will conclude with a proposal for building a young alumni program specific to The King's University.

Life Stage Theory

Alumni need support after graduation. If universities were able to offer a robust mentoring program to support young alumni's transition, this would facilitate deeper connection to the alumni's alma mater. Understanding adult life stages plays a key role in building successful alumni programs. Universities that understand the needs of alumni in each adult life stage can develop successful programs that build life-long affinity. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have divided alumni into four life stages: young alumni, mid-career alumni, fifty-plus alumni, and retirees. I will first provide some generalized characteristics of each life stage, and then I will provide more specific detail for the young alumni and fifty-plus life stages later in this section.

Young alumni can be defined, according to Allison McWilliams from Wake Forest University, "as those in their twenties who are in their first several years after graduation, specifically those in the first five years after graduation."³⁶ The research group Reeher, in an article entitled, *Increasing Alumni Engagement and Donations at Every Stage of Life*, agrees with McWilliams in defining this alumni life stage as "young adulthood."³⁷ Both say that it encompasses all of one's twenties. The Reeher group, through their research, identifies "social connections, career support, and career and family foundation,"³⁸ as some of the essential needs of this alumni life stage. Allison McWilliams and Katherine Laws, in their book, *Year One*, talk about what alumni need

³⁶ Allison McWilliams, Wake Forest University, phone conversation, May 28, 2021.

³⁷ Reeher Group, *Increasing Alumni Engagement and Donations at Every Stage of Life*, accessed Jan 18, 2021.

³⁸ Reeher, *Increasing Alumni Engagement*, 7.

specifically in their first year after graduation and say that new graduates, who are transitioning from the university, primarily need career and job resources, job networking opportunities, and mentorship.³⁹ To meet these needs for social connections, career support, and mentorship, young alumni will often want to have a strong connection to the university through alumni gatherings, social connections, and volunteer opportunities. Many alumni will have met spouses and life-long friends through university connections and will feel a special allegiance to their university.

After alumni have established careers and families they move onto the next alumni life stage, the mid-career alumni stage, which encompasses roughly the ages between thirty and fifty.

The Reheer Group says: “This age group is primarily focused on career enhancement and personal striving. The older portion may also be moving into a career transition, along with alumni in their fifties.”⁴⁰ Alumni in this period of life are perhaps less engaged in alumni activities but appreciate hearing what is going on with their friends and colleagues. They will typically stay in touch via social media, newsletters, and university magazines. Their giving may be a bit more than their earlier days, but their funds are usually stretched with mortgages and child-rearing. Authors David Weerts and Justin Ronca suggest that alumni aged twenty-five to thirty-five are the least likely to volunteer or donate, while those between the ages of thirty-five to forty-four are the most

³⁹ Allison McWilliams and Katherine Laws, *Year One: How Young Professionals (And Their Managers) Can Thrive in Their First Job After College* (Winston-Salem, NC: Library Partners Press, 2021), 8.

⁴⁰ Reheer, *Increasing Alumni Engagement*, 7.

likely to volunteer.⁴¹ Involving alumni in guest speaking opportunities, hosting events, and invites to events all help to build affinity to the university. Opportunities for graduation completion and professional development for this age range can be an important way to engage with these alumni. Many alumni, who may have been focused on family, may be looking to start Master's programs to help further their careers. While there are some universities that recognize young alumni programs, I had difficulty finding any university alumni programs for mid-career alumni programming.

While alumni programming specific to mid-career alumni are difficult to find, many universities are starting to see the benefits of starting fifty-plus programs and recognizing this life stage. Alumni in the fifty-plus life stage are characterized by the Reheer group as looking for deeper enrichment: "Starting in their forties, many alumni are seeking intellectual personal enrichment, a focus that extends into their seventies and beyond. We also see many people incorporating social personal enrichment into their lives starting in their fifties."⁴² Alumni in this life stage may be looking for new career opportunities, new social connections, and opportunities to give back. Typically, alumni are either settled in their careers or they are looking to make that final career change before retirement and are once again looking to their alma mater to provide insight and connections. Opportunities for further engagement may include public lectures, social events, and leadership positions like board appointments. Parent relationships are important in this stage, as many alumni over fifty have children reaching university age.

⁴¹ David J Weerts and Justin M. Ronca, "Profiles of Supportive Alumni: Donors, Volunteers, and Those Who 'Do It All,'" *International Journal of Educational Advancement* 7, no. 1 (March 2007): 20–34, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ijea.2150044>.

⁴² Reheer, *Increasing Alumni Engagement*, 7.

Trinity Western University has a Parent Relations Program. according to Janice Nikkel, the Executive Director for Alumni and Family Relations, the university will have three to four hundred alumni parents each year out of a student population of approximately four thousand.⁴³ From my phone conversations with alumni professionals, Allison McWilliams from Wake Forest University,⁴⁴ and Susan Buist from Calvin College,⁴⁵ are both offering age-specific alumni programming for this age group and are seeing increased alumni engagement through involvement, event attendance, and increased philanthropy.

The final adult life stage that I have identified is the sixty-five plus age group, known as the retirees. Alumni at this stage may have more time for hosting events, taking in public lectures, and financially giving back to the university. Many retirees have more disposable income after paying off mortgages and helping children through university. Some may choose to offer scholarships or be willing to include the university in their will. For many, their connection to the university may be through their children or grandchildren. Theologian Paul Stevens notes that sixty-five year olds, or those in that last third of life, the retirees, are looking for meaning, purpose, and opportunities to give back, to mentor, to volunteer, and for their financial gifts to have meaning and impact.⁴⁶ Stevens says that turning sixty-five years old or retiring should open up new possibilities

⁴³ Janice Nikkel, Executive Director of Alumni and Family Relations at TWU, personal conversation with author, October 18, 2021.

⁴⁴ Allison McWilliams, Wake Forest University, phone conversation, May 28, 2021.

⁴⁵ Susan Buist, Alumni Relations Calvin University, email to alumni list-serve recipients, December 20, 2020.

⁴⁶ See Paul Stevens, *Aging Matters: Finding Your Call for the Rest of Your Life*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016). 17.

to find one's true calling and a vocation that "better fits one's gifts, talents, personalities, and life experience."⁴⁷ He challenges his readers to consider mentoring the next generation and to help find meaning in this "last third."⁴⁸

While each stage of the alumni life will have different and diverse needs, each stage will also present different opportunities for alumni engagement. Recognizing the opportunities, needs, and challenges of each stage will help alumni relations teams build alumni programs that engage the whole person at each stage of their lives. Gordon Macdonald in his book, *A Resilient Life*, examines the various decades of life and attempts to ask the significant questions of those in that decade. He argues that each decade of life has significant questions that must be worked through. For instance, "someone in their twenties is asking questions of identity, while someone in their forties is looking for answers to disappointments and new callings, while still someone in their seventies is asking questions of validity and contribution."⁴⁹ MacDonald's book provides reflection for the various life stages and argues that significant questions must be asked and answered for resilience and flourishing. The Reheer Group recommends getting to know one's alumni and the unique life stages for strong alumni engagement. "Getting to know alumni of all ages and understanding their needs is the key to improving engagement on a number of fronts."⁵⁰ While the authors at the Reheer Group note that universities are not consumer market strategists, they do stress that some of age-specific

⁴⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁹ Gordon MacDonald, *A Resilient Life* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 56.

⁵⁰ Reheer, *Increasing Alumni Engagement*, 3.

marketing tactics could be useful: “While higher education hasn’t traditionally relied on consumer-marketing tactics...Institutions can learn a considerable amount from the Madison Avenue marketing model: Know your customer, understand his or her needs, and realize that those needs change over a lifetime.”⁵¹

For the purposes of this dissertation, I will focus on the young alumni and fifty-plus stages for building an alumni mentoring program. I will outline each stage in greater detail and provide examples of young alumni programming and fifty-plus programming at other universities in the following sections.

Young Alumni Needs

As new graduates, many alumni are faced with some of the biggest transitions in life. In university, students had friends, a flexible schedule, roommates, mentors, and maybe even a part-time position at the university. Authors James H. McAlexander and Harold F. Koenig, in their article on university experiences, describe the student experience as a time of transformation.

For the college student, the university experience is a time of many changes. For many, going to college means leaving home for the first time. While at the university, students often come into contact with people, ideas, and issues that are novel and challenge prior beliefs and values. This time of transition is also a period of experimentation, as students explore alternative self-concepts, behaviors, and lifestyles. In short, the college experience is transformational.⁵²

Of course, upon graduation, another transition happens, and the new alumni are expected to move out of student housing, find jobs, start paying back student loans, and

⁵¹ Reheer, *Increasing Alumni Engagement*, 3.

⁵² James H. McAlexander and Harold F. Koenig, “University Experiences, the Student-College Relationship, and Alumni Support,” *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* 10, no. 3 (2001): 25.

perhaps move to another city. One of the biggest needs this group has is for community. Thus, networking events, mentoring, and social events provide a vital bridge that help these alumni build community outside of the university. Offering events in various cities helps connect alumni to other alumni in their city. In her book, *Five for Your First Five*, author Allison McWilliams proposes that building community is the most important place to start in creating a life outside of university. McWilliams suggests that community is about “putting down roots, joining groups, and building intentional relationships.”⁵³ She stresses that “it is about adopting an attitude of permanence.”⁵⁴

Characteristics of the Twenty-Somethings

Understanding adult life stages plays a key role in building successful alumni programs. Author Paul Angone, in his book, *101 Secrets for Your Twenties*, describes the twenty-something age as “a decade exploding with intensity and ambiguity, anxiety, and excitement. Purpose and pointlessness... there are so many ‘firsts.’ So much change. So many ‘what ifs, what nows and what the heck.’”⁵⁵ University of Waterloo alumni officer Emily Osbourne, in her webinar on young alumni programming, describes young alumni as the “what’s in it for me” generation.⁵⁶ In his presentation on the future of alumni giving in Canada, Bryan Gower, an American researcher, describes the challenge with this age group as one of being hard to find, specifically: “They move and change

⁵³ Allison McWilliams, *Five for Your First Five* (Winston-Salem, NC: Library Partners Press), 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁵ Paul Angone, *101 Secrets for your Twenties* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers), 15.

⁵⁶ Emily Osbourne, “Setting Your Sights on Alumni of the Last Decade,” (webinar, May 2017), <https://www.ccaecanada.org/en/resources-hub/4066-setting-your-sights-on-alumni-of-the-last-decade>.

addresses and jobs frequently, so they are harder to keep track of.”⁵⁷ Perhaps author Meg Jay sums up the turbulence of the twenty-somethings best when she describes the transition that young alumni face leaving university:

Twenty-first century twenty-somethings wake up with more questions than answers and culturally and psychologically-this is a radical change. Most have spent their lives in school, which means that, for as long as they can remember, life has been divided into semester size chunks. Their days were scheduled and there were syllabi that spelled out exactly how to get an A or a B. Then somewhere around the age of twenty, life opens up, and the syllabi are gone. There are no more sheets of paper to tell you what to do every day, and no more grades to let you know where you stand.⁵⁸

This transition that Jay sums up so succinctly is important for university alumni offices to understand and help young alumni navigate. Universities that understand the needs of alumni in this adult life stage can develop engagement strategies that build lifelong affinity by offering programming that meets real needs. The Reeher Group describes the twenties in the following way in their article on alumni engagement:

Young alumni may not be ready to engage with your university on a financial level, but they do crave engagement. They want social connections, help getting started in their career, and to find a life partner. They’re seeking career and family foundation, and they’re doing a lot of it online. This group is in a frenzy of tweeting, friending and linking-in, and tends to respond well to making connections via social media⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Bryan Gower, “The Future of Alumni Engagement in Canada,” CCAE 2019 National Conference, video session, accessed March 13, 2021. <https://www.ccaecanada.org/en/resources-hub/4267-the-future-of-young-alumni-engagement-in-canada>.

⁵⁸ Meg Jay, *The Defining Decade*, (New York, NY: 12 Hatchett Book Group, 2021), 27.

⁵⁹ Reeher, “Increasing Alumni Engagement and Donations at Every Stage of Life,” Saint Paul, 2010, [Reeher%20Alumni%20Engagement%20Lifestages%20White%20Paper%20\(1\).pdf](#).

Young Alumni Programming at Other Institutions

From my field research, I discovered some universities who were providing young alumni programming. The University of Alberta Engineering Department began a special young alumni program when they realized that one-third of their thirty thousand alumni were under the age of thirty- five. In this program, they offer mentorship, networking, community engagement initiatives, and educational opportunities.⁶⁰ The University of Victoria launched a young alumni council with alumni volunteers who advocate for young alumni programming and work along-side the alumni relations team.⁶¹ Parties, professional development, and education are the three hallmarks of the University of Toronto's young alumni Shaker program.⁶² At Duke University, the young alumni program is focused on inspiring alumni giving.⁶³ Over at Arkansas State, they are focused on athletic programs to keep their alumni engaged. A-State Vice Chancellor for Intercollegiate Athletics Tom Bowen says: "As our new graduates transition from students into their professional careers, the goal of our Young Alumni Program is to provide a supportive bridge that can help them stay connected to our athletics

⁶⁰ University of Alberta, Faculty of Engineering, EnggYac, accessed August 8, 2021, <https://www.ualberta.ca/engineering/alumni/young-alumni-council/index.html>.

⁶¹ University of Victoria, Young Alumni Council, accessed August 8, 2021, <https://www.uvic.ca/alumni/connect/home/young-alumni/council/index.php>.

⁶² University of Toronto, Shaker, accessed August 8, 2021, <https://alumni.utoronto.ca/events-and-programs/shaker>.

⁶³ Duke University, Young Alumni, accessed August 8, 2021, <https://giving.duke.edu/get-involved/young-alumni/>.

programs."⁶⁴ Finally, at Queen's University, they engage students in their last year to ensure their successful launch with programs focused on the transition from university to career. They offer career prep courses in a student's final year that help with resume writing, interview skills, alumni mentoring, and even how to dress for an interview.⁶⁵ For some universities however, time and resources are not enough to offer specific programming. At California Baptist, sixty percent (60%) of their alumni are under the age of forty with no specific programming in place for young alumni.⁶⁶

From my discussions with alumni professionals a common theme of mentoring arose. Janice Nikkel at Trinity Western notes that TWU launched a program called "Ten Thousand Coffees,"⁶⁷ which has a goal to connect older alumni with young alumni for mentoring.⁶⁸ Allison McWilliams of Wake Forest University offers online monthly mentoring meetings to help young alumni network with older alumni.⁶⁹ Brian Seewald from Queens agrees with mentoring, but stresses that the Queen's alumni office is very intentional with connecting with alumni while they are students.⁷⁰ He encourages alumni

⁶⁴ Arkansas State University, "A-State Athletics Creates Young Alumni Program," accessed August 8, 2021, <https://astateredwolves.com/news/2021/7/1/a-state-athletics-creates-young-alumni-program.aspx>.

⁶⁵ Janet Sailian, "Young alumni engagement: Harnessing Generation #ShowMe," accessed March 13, 2021, <https://www.ccaecanada.org/en/resources-hub/40-young-alumni-seewald>.

⁶⁶ Josh Moss, Senior Director of Alumni, Parents, and Donor Engagement, California Baptist, phone interview with the author, August 13, 2021.

⁶⁷ "Ten Thousand coffees," Mentoring software, accessed January 18, 2022, <https://www.tenthousandcoffees.com/>.

⁶⁸ Janice Nikkel, Executive Director of Alumni and Families, Trinity Western University, phone call with the author, July 5, 2021.

⁶⁹ Allison McWilliams, Wake Forest University, phone call with the author, May 28, 2021.

⁷⁰ Brain Seewald, Queens University, phone interview with the author, August 13, 2021.

departments to “support them as students and offer what they need in the first five years after graduation to gain lasting loyalty and affiliation.” ⁷¹

I propose that young alumni programming is crucial to engage this age group to build lasting relationships. Young alumni have different needs than more established alumni, and it is important to acknowledge those needs in order to maintain a life-long affinity. Programming must begin while alumni are still students. Universities must provide networking and mentoring with older alumni in their fields of study. While some young alumni programs focus solely on alumni giving, I believe that offering a more robust young alumni programming that includes mentoring will develop stronger life-long affinity, which in turn will meet the university’s needs for philanthropy and volunteers.

Developing Affinity in Young Alumni

The young alumni stage is a crucial stage for building lifelong affinity for an alma mater. Mentorship with faculty, older alumni, and friends of the university deepens relationships and provides strong connections back to the university. Mentors provide valuable networking opportunities and often help open doors for young alumni through their connections.

In their article on organic alumni, authors Mary-Kay Cooper, Amy Lewis, and Wexing Ford advocate for faculty mentorship and relationship-building with students to support students in becoming engaged alumni. According to their article, “The alumni

⁷¹ Brian Seewald, Alumni Officer of Queen’s University, “Young Alumni Engagement: Harnessing Generation #ShowMe, webinar, Jan 25, 2018.

office can greatly leverage the marketing power of all people around students in the institution. Faculty, arguably the biggest influencer of students within a university, should and will be the most important force for cultivating potential alumni relationships with current students.”⁷² The authors offer a multi voice approach to their paper about changing one’s tactics for alumni engagement. While the authors are all from Texas A&M University in the US, they are each from a different department and bring different voices to the same experience of alumni pull tactics. In 2016, on a very limited budget, alumni director Mary Kay Cooper, began to build an alumni program from the ground up. She soon discovered that traditional push techniques for alumni engagement had limited response. Instead, she began to pull alumni into engagement in more organic ways. She states that the most important way to build affinity to one’s alma mater is through a positive student experience. Universities can do this by planting seeds of loyalty from the very first day students arrive on campus as prospective students.

From the marketing perspective, author Weixing Ford says that one needs to view students as life-long customers of the institution. If students are emotionally bonded with the university that will carry forward when they become alumni. Examples of these pull methods include creating events and engagements that invite alumni into participation. Creating special interest groups like books clubs, invitations to be guest speakers and mentors, and invites to special campus events all show value to alumni and pride in the university. Another example of pull strategy are relationships with faculty. The faculty play a crucial role in helping build affinity. Having good working relationships with the

⁷² Mary Kay Cooper, Amy C. Lewis, and Weixing Ford, “ Development,” *Journal of Education Advancement & Marketing* 5, vol. 1 (Summer 2020): 37.

alumni office and faculty is important. Amy Lewis, Associate Dean of the Business Department at Texas A&M, shares an example of how their Alumni Department worked with the Business Department to increase experiential events. As a result, they brought in alumni as guest speakers and business partners. This strategy connected alumni and faculty, as well as alumni and students. Their paper identifies how to create life-long customers of an institution and provides examples of ways to build positive affinity for the university throughout the campus community.

Creating “swag” (university branded marketing materials like sweaters, pens, hats, and so forth) is a helpful way to develop affinity with young alumni. People love free items. Having swag available in the alumni office for special occasions keeps alumni connected. King’s alumni office begins their relationship with alumni through special alumni socks. There is also swag available for first jobs and newlyweds, along with baby onesies, kindergarten lunch boxes, and special gifts for alumni volunteers and mentors. Swag promotes the university while at the same time provides a gift to alumni for various occasions. Faculty books build a positive connection to the university as well. Having signed faculty books available at alumni gatherings serves to provide a recognition of lifelong learning, while at the same time reminding alumni of the quality education they received. It further provides continued connection to favorite professors.

Identifying the University’s Needs

The university has many needs that alumni, in this life stage, can help meet. As we have established, young alumni are looking for career support, community, networking, and mentorship. Some of the needs of the university may include volunteers, mentoring, promotion of the university, and philanthropic support.

The development of a mentoring program where those who are older can share their experience with younger alumni or students is an important engagement strategy. A mentoring program meets both the older alumni's need for purpose, sharing wisdom, and experience, while at the same time gives back to the university by pouring that wisdom directly into classrooms and students' lives. Jay Sharman says, "Through our work with so many universities we've had a unique entry point to many high profile and wealthy alumni. Nearly every single high net worth individual we speak with would welcome more conversations with the university IF the schools would ask them to share their advice with current students."⁷³ The work of the university relies on volunteers to plan events, host students, help coach, and lead fundraising campaigns. Volunteers are fundamental to the university, and young alumni are often in a position to help meet that need, as they tend to have more time and a desire to stay connected.

The university also relies on alumni to be ambassadors and promote the work of the institution by encouraging students to attend. The King's University Vice President of Advancement, Shannon Tuininga, says, "As an independent institution with limited government financial support, the university's alumni community is an essential component of its future success through philanthropic gifts. Additionally, King's does not have widespread brand awareness and operates in a competitive post-secondary sector making the university's alumni key word-of-mouth promoters and prospective student influencers who can significantly impact enrolment."⁷⁴

⁷³ Jay Sharman, "Five New Ways to Think Alumni Engagement," accessed Feb 18, 2021, <https://www.teamworksmmedia.com/blog/alumni-engagement/university-engagement-5-new-ways-to-think-alumni/>.

⁷⁴ Shannon Tuininga, Vice President of Advancement, King's University, email to author, April 23, 2021.

The university also needs younger alumni with enthusiasm to help promote the university and attract new students. New graduates are often the best advocates for the university, as they are networking, connecting, and building new relationships in their workplaces. With many of King's alumni pursuing teaching, they are in a unique position to promote the university amongst their students.

Philanthropic support from donors makes a significant difference. From supporting teaching, learning, research, and building campaigns, opportunities to give back to one's alma mater are needed and encouraged for future growth, research, and new generations of students. The University of Alberta says on their donation page that when "you invest in the University of Alberta, you change the world for the better. You support teaching and learning, spur research and creativity, and make our communities stronger."⁷⁵ Opportunities to give to initiatives like student scholarships, mental health, and "Giving Tuesday" projects all serve to support the university to help build a better world and stronger communities through education and help alumni stay connected to the initiatives that matter to them. While young alumni will give to small donation requests, the Reeher Group notes, "Our research shows that it's critical to invest in relationships with younger alumni, but that you shouldn't devote significant effort or budget into asking them for donations—and don't expect remarkable fundraising results at first."⁷⁶ Reeher's research suggests seven to nine touch points before making a request for a

⁷⁵ University of Alberta, "Ways to Give," accessed April 22, 2021, <https://www.ualberta.ca/giving/ways-to-give>.

⁷⁶ Reeher, "Increasing Alumni Engagement and Donations at Every Stage of Life," Saint Paul, 2010, [Reeher%20Alumni%20Engagement%20Lifestages%20White%20Paper%20\(1\).pdf](#).

donation. Young alumni need many positive interactions to know that they are cared about as alumni and not just for their future giving potential.

Offering mentorship is a foundational aspect of building a reciprocal relationship with young alumni. Young alumni need mentorship to help them learn skills that in turn help them succeed in their new careers. Young alumni who engage in positive mentor relationships have an increased potential for developing a lifelong relationship with the university that includes volunteerism, philanthropy, and legacy families.

As we have examined the needs of the young alumni, and the university needs, we will now move to examining the needs of alumni fifty-plus. Alumni in this life stage are best situated to act as mentors for young alumni, as their needs are often met through offering wisdom and expertise to others.

Fifty-Plus Alumni Needs

Gordon MacDonald suggests that each adult life stage has “different questions for every age in life, perhaps every decade.”⁷⁷ For those in their fifties, he says, it can be a sobering time”⁷⁸ Catholic Priest Richard Rohr agrees with this statement in an online lecture, entitled “Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life.” In his lecture, Rohr talks about life stages of the spiritual life that are divided by some sort of crisis. In summary, Rohr says, the first stage is about creating order, making a home, beginning a career, making friends, and finding routine in establishing oneself. Then there comes a crisis, or something that undoes you, and in that crisis, you have the

⁷⁷ Gordon Macdonald, “*A Resilient Life*” (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 50.

⁷⁸ Gordon MacDonald, “*A Resilient Life*,” 56.

opportunity to go deep and to enter the second stage of life. He says that “this second half of life is about growth and depth, about working through the pain, it's about learning more deeply to know one's self and to hear the voice of God.”⁷⁹ Gail Sheeny in her book, *New Passages*, calls this stage “second adulthood.”⁸⁰

Many older alumni will have children heading to university, and they may want to financially contribute to needs the university has. Opportunities for educational, social, philanthropic, and leadership positions like board appointments or mentoring may provide purpose and passion for ongoing engagement. A university alumni program needs to provide opportunities for learning, mentoring, and giving back to the university that meet the needs of those entering into these stages. A fifty-plus program has the opportunity to invite people looking for greater depth to engage in more meaningful ways by providing opportunities to engage intellectually and socially. In the Reeher survey, the group notes that, “many alumni are seeking intellectual personal enrichment, a focus that extends into their seventies and beyond. We also see many people incorporating social personal enrichment into their lives starting in their fifties.”⁸¹ The need to develop more social relationships is often a result of many friendships and marriages changing over the years through distance, death, divorce, as well as some becoming empty-nesters as children leave home.

⁷⁹ Richard Rohr, “Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life,” Lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1kXeklcMI>.

⁸⁰ Gail Sheeny, *New Passages: Mapping Your Life Across Time* (New York, NY: Random House, 1995).14.

⁸¹ Reeher Survey, “Increasing Alumni Engagement and Donations at Every Stage of Life,” Saint Paul, Minnesota, 2010, [Reeher%20Alumni%20Engagement%20Lifestages%20White%20Paper%20\(1\).pdf](#).

Keeping older alumni engaged means offering something back to them. The relationship between the alumni and the alma mater needs to be reciprocal. Alumni want and need ongoing engagement in meaningful ways, such as professional development, life-long learning, career support, and social engagement. Additionally, they need opportunities for involvement that have purpose such as mentoring and volunteering. The research from the Reeher survey notes, “The key to engaging with alumni on a number of levels is to determine what your alumni need, what your institution needs, and where those two overlap.”⁸²

What Fifty-Plus Programs Look Like at Other Universities

In this section, I will review fifty-plus programs that are offered at other universities in both Canada and the United States. I will highlight programs from a number of different Christian faith denominations, as well programs from several secular universities.

The first one is part of the same denomination as The King’s University. The Calvin Academy for Lifelong Learning (CALL) program and Calvin University came highly recommended by several alumni industry leaders. The CALL program has had a fifty-plus program for a number of years. While it is currently online and open to anyone, under normal circumstances, it is for Calvin University alumni and friends of the University who are over 50 years old. “CALL has been going strong since the late 1990s. It’s a lifelong learning program, but more for general interest and fun. It’s mostly volunteer-run. Membership and classes are low-cost, and classes tend to meet once a

⁸² Reeher Survey, “Increasing Alumni Engagement.”

week for four-six weeks, an hour at a time. You typically have to be fifty-plus to join.”⁸³

They regularly offer social events, educational opportunities, travel programs, and special interest groups.

Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. also offers a life-long learning program for alumni. While it is open for all ages, Regent’s main alumni engagement strategy is to offer life-long learning that meets the needs of their alumni in all walks of life. Their website says, “Whether you graduated with a Th.M., frequented summer courses with J.I. Packer, or audited a course in the old fraternity houses, you are a part of the rich mosaic that is Regent’s global alumni community.”⁸⁴ Regent’s spring and summer classes are popular with all alumni and are often a meeting place for alumni from many decades. They say, “Since our first summer course in 1969, over 18,000 people have passed through Regent’s doors.”⁸⁵ Regent so believes in life-long learning for their alumni that they offer a financial incentive for alumni to return to campus to audit classes. They say: “Since 1999 we have been pleased to offer this perk to Regent graduates (diploma, certificate, or degree). The discount involves 50% off the audit rate when you register for a course.”⁸⁶

Trinity Western University in Langley BC, my own alma mater, is focused on developing mentoring relationships with their mature alumni and new graduates. They

⁸³ Susan Buist, Alumni Relations Calvin University, email to alumni list-serve recipients, December 20, 2020.

⁸⁴ Regent College, “Life-Long Learning,” accessed April 21, 2021, <https://www.regent-college.edu/lifelong-learning>.

⁸⁵ Regent College, “Life-Long Learning.”

⁸⁶ Regent College, “Life-Long Learning.”

have recently begun a new program on mentoring and have partnered with “Ten Thousand Coffees,” a mentoring software platform, to reach out and connect new graduates with older alumni. In an email that was personally addressed to me, Johnathan Fehr, the Alumni Director at Trinity, wrote: “Trinity Western University has partnered with Ten Thousand Coffees, a professional development platform, to create the TWU Networking Hub. We need people just like you to lead it.”⁸⁷

The University of Manitoba offers a program for alumni aged 60 plus. It is a lecture-based program, where senior alumni have an opportunity for learning new things and meeting new friends. On their website they say, “The series presents opportunities for senior alumni to explore new ideas and share their love of learning. Topics include genealogy, DNA, and privacy; mobile technology; ticks, gender, and politics; President Trump’s effect on Manitoba; eating well for seniors; and the benefits of canola oil.”⁸⁸

At the University of California Los Angeles, the alumni department offers a membership program for alumni, who are over fifty, that meets both learning needs and social needs. “UCLA Senior Scholars Membership is a program that provides older adults (fifty-plus) with an opportunity to connect with UCLA’s academic community. Membership benefits include auditing privileges to sit in UCLA undergraduate courses in various subject areas, as well as exclusive access to Senior Scholar’s networking events.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Jonathan Fehr, Alumni Engagement, Trinity Western University, email to author, September 20, 2020.

⁸⁸ University of Manitoba, “Diversity,” accessed April 21, 2021, <https://news.umanitoba.ca/diversity-key-to-success-for-seniors-alumni-program/>.

⁸⁹ UCLCA, “Senior Scholars Program,” accessed April 21, 2021, <https://www.semel.ucla.edu/longevity/senior-sscholars-program-longevity-center>.

Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem offers “signature programming to help you contemplate the “third act” of your life.” They offer this programming as weekend camps, where “events are designed to guide you to identify, and reach goals for your best life... to help you define your calling and build a roadmap for what’s next.”⁹⁰

At Hope College in Holland, Michigan, they offer a program called Hope Academy of Senior Professionals (HASP). As noted on their website, “It is a peer-led institution for learning in retirement.”⁹¹ This program offers a number of opportunities for engagement including life-long learning, social activities, as well as cultural, travel, and services opportunities. “Through a variety of courses, lectures, study groups, monthly meetings, and cultural and service events, members pursue avenues of study and engage in the exchange of ideas.”⁹²

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids offers a wide variety of programming for their fifty-plus alumni and has over fifteen hundred participants yearly. From their website they state, “It began in 1973 as a vision... to establish a center for lifelong learning to provide pre- and post- retirement educational opportunities to the growing population of those fifty and older. This insight and commitment were ahead of its time, especially when most small colleges were struggling just to maintain their traditional-aged students.”⁹³ The program offers life-long learning,

⁹⁰ Wake Forest University, “Camp Third Act: Developing and Implementing Life-Stage Alumni Personas,” accessed Jan 21, 2021, <https://thirdact.alumni.wfu.edu/>.

⁹¹ Hope College, “Hope Academy Senior Professionals,” accessed April 21, 2021, <https://hope.edu/offices/hope-academy-senior-professionals/>.

⁹² Hope College, “Hope Academy Senior Professionals.”

⁹³ Aquinas College, “Osher Life-Long Institute,” accessed April 21, 2021, <https://www.aquinas.edu/resources/olli-aquinas/about-olli>.

travel, social activities, and opportunities for cooking lessons, theatre excursions, and art lessons. “The Osher Institute is a membership-based, lifelong learning program that offers a wide variety of college-level, non-credit lectures, short courses, and special events for intellectually curious adults over age fifty.”⁹⁴

In reviewing many of these programs, themes of life-long learning and meeting the older alumni’s intellectual needs is common. Additionally, social connections for events, travel, and opportunities to give back through mentorship and volunteering are also common engagement strategies and programs for successful fifty-plus programs.

Building a specific engagement strategy to attract and deepen relationships with one’s older alumni is a win/win strategy. As we have observed, alumni who are over fifty have needs for deeper meaning, passion, and purpose, as well as social and intellectual needs that the university can meet. The university also has needs for mentors, volunteers, recruitment, and philanthropic support. Building a strategy that is reciprocal in nature and meets both the older alumni needs, while at the same time meeting the needs of the university is a positive engagement for both parties. David Weerts and Justin Ronca, in their article on characteristics of alumni donors who volunteer, say “alumni donors who volunteer are excellent prospects for further financial investment in the institution. University development officers cultivate alumni donors by engaging them in increasing levels of activity and commitment to the institution. Serving on an advisory board, speaking to a corporate CEO on behalf of the university, or mentoring recent graduates

⁹⁴ Aquinas College, “Osher Life-Long Institute.”

are all mechanisms that deepen alumni commitment to the institution and may lead to increased levels of giving.”⁹⁵

In conclusion to this section, older alumni in the fifty-plus life stage are prime candidates for helping a university alumni program build an engagement strategy for young alumni based on mentoring. Several institutions are building fifty-plus programs to reengage their older alumni and to offer them opportunities for meaningful engagement. Engaging older alumni also serves to facilitate deeper affinity to the university, which in turn results in the university’s needs for volunteers and philanthropy. A fifty-plus program could address the problem of a university’s losing connection with older alumni before they are financially able to help meet some of the university’s needs for philanthropic support, mentoring the next generations, and investing time into the university. In the next section, I will provide a definition of mentoring, an overview of scriptural examples for mentorship, and then look specifically at the example of Ruth and Naomi in the book of Ruth as a model of mentorship for Christian universities. I will conclude with making a case for building a young alumni mentoring program, specifically for The King’s University.

Theological Reflection on Mentoring

This part of the dissertation will explore the theological premise of mentorship. I will attempt this first by defining biblical mentorship; second by providing an overview of scriptural examples of mentorship; and lastly by examining the mentoring relationship

⁹⁵ David J. Weerts and Justin M. Ronca, “Profiles of Supportive Alumni: Donors, Volunteers, and Those Who ‘Do It All,’” *International Journal of Educational Advancement* 7, no. 1 (March 2007): 20–34, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ijea.2150044>.

of Naomi and Ruth as a mentorship model for Christian universities. I will conclude with suggesting a biblical case for the development of a mentoring program for young alumni at The King's University.

Biblical Mentorship

Author and Professor Dr. Eugene Peterson was a mentor of mine while I attended seminary at Regent College in Vancouver, BC from 1995 to 2001. Dr. Peterson had been a pastor for thirty years. It was with those thirty years of pastoral experience that he came to Regent to teach Spiritual Theology to a new generation of pastors, both female and male. While at Regent, Peterson published several books on pastoral care. These works and the classes that he taught greatly influenced my own pastoral ministry. In his book, *Letters to a Young Pastor*, co-written by his son Eric, he exchanges letters with his son, a new pastor. Through these letters, much wisdom is shared between father and son, seasoned pastor to new pastor, and from the Petersons to their readers. Many of Peterson's letters to his son Eric were also advice we were given in class. In fact, reading through this book is like sitting in his class or at his kitchen table, listening to him once again. His thoughtful wisdom and mentorship lives on in his written words. In Peterson's ninth letter to Eric, dated April 7, 2001, he writes that he is working on his spring lecture for Regent. That lecture was my last class with Dr. Peterson before graduation, and it was on spiritual formation. "Spiritual formation is the ground where we work," wrote Dr. Peterson. "Or at least, where pastoral vocation has its broadest and deepest roots... it is

simply what pastor's do, without calling a lot of attention to it."⁹⁶ As I define what biblical mentorship is, I see it embodied in the life and wisdom of Dr. Peterson, who, day by day, did not seek fame and fortune, but faithfully filled his calling to the church, his congregants, students, and readers by living real life alongside the people he served. Biblical mentorship can be thus seen as a passing on of wisdom from one generation to another through shared life, deliberate teaching, and a willingness to learn.

The Roles of Mentor/Mentee

In their book, *The Elements of Mentoring*, authors Brad Johnson and Charles Ridley provide a thorough and helpful list of what the role of a mentor should look like. The authors provide seventy-five elements of wisdom for a mentor to begin building a mentor relationship with a mentee. They define a mentoring relationship as such:

Mentoring relationships are dynamic, reciprocal, personal relationships in which a more experienced person (mentor) acts as a guide, a role model, teacher and sponsor of a less experienced person (mentee). Mentors provide mentees with knowledge, advice, counsel, support, and opportunity in the mentee's pursuit of a full membership in a particular profession...Mentoring is an act of generativity- a process of bringing into existence and passing on a professional legacy.⁹⁷

Scriptural Examples of Mentorship

Brian Williams in his book, *The Potter's Rib: Mentoring for Pastoral Formation*, says that "though mentoring carries particularly modern connotations, both negative and positive, scripture does in fact offer us a number of relationships that we may legitimately

⁹⁶ Eugene Peterson and Eric Peterson, *Letters to a Young Pastor: Timothy Conversations between Father and Son* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2020), 53.

⁹⁷ Brad Johnson. Charles Ridley. *The Elements of Mentoring: The Sixty-five Key Elements of Mentoring*. New York; St Martin's Press. 2018. 18.

describe as types of mentoring.”⁹⁸ Biblical mentoring is encouraged throughout scripture. In this section, I will review some biblical examples highlighting God’s desire for one generation to impart wisdom to the next and explore some of the specific scriptural relationships exhibiting elders mentoring younger mentees. These examples will demonstrate the importance God places on intergenerational teaching in mentoring relationships.

Beginning in the Pentateuch, God instructs Moses in leading the Israelite people through the importance of passing on God’s commandments from generation to generation. The older Israelites are instructed to teach the children. Moses exhorts the people of Israel in the book of Deuteronomy to teach the next generation the commands of the Lord, while first obeying them themselves. “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NIV)). God clearly places the older Israelites as teachers of the children, and thus we see in this passage God’s heart for mentorship between generations. The commandments are passed from one generation to the next through teaching.

Other passages also support this argument, in which God gives older adults a mandate to teach the next generation. In Proverbs 22:6, parents are encouraged to train their children well, so they will grow up disciplined: “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” In Psalm 145:4, we read that one generation shall teach the next about the ways of the Lord, as one “generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.” Older adults

⁹⁸ Brian Williams, *The Potter's Rib: Mentoring for Pastoral Formation* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2005), 183.

are essential for the passing of faith to the next generation. In Titus chapter 2, Paul writes to Titus, whom he had given the task of teaching discipleship to the people of Crete and encouraging intergenerational mentorship: “Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live... Then they can urge the younger women” (Titus 2: 3-4). In the book of First Peter, the apostle Paul writes words of exhortation to the elders to encourage their mentorship of their young converts, “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care” (1 Peter 5:5). Paul also provides some advice to the younger members of the congregation and encourages them to listen and learn from those who are older, “you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders” (1 Peter 5:5).

In building a theology of mentorship, it is important to note that the passing of faith from one generation to the next is vital to the younger generations’ understanding and knowledge of God. God places older adults in young people’s lives as examples of faith and throughout scripture encourages parents, elders, teachers, pastors, older women, and men to fulfill their responsibility to pass on faith to those who are younger, so that they might know God and love God’s teachings.

Jesus provided an example of mentoring, when he chose the twelve to be part of his life and ministry. For three years he lived and shared life with his disciples. He modeled mentorship, and he taught them many things in those years, so that when His earthly ministry was done, His disciples were prepared to take over the ministry. His final words to them before his ascension were words of commissioning, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20). Jesus spent time with His disciples, teaching and training them in the ways of

the Lord, so that when He was no longer with them, they could know God and pass that knowledge and understanding on to others. Upon His death he commissioned His disciples to teach and train their own disciples about God's ways. These words from the Great Commission in Matthew 28 are also words of commissioning for every believer of Jesus: to go out and make disciples. God desires all believers to make disciples and to teach and train those disciples the ways of Jesus.

Scripture also provides us with many personal examples of mentoring relationships. Moses mentored Joshua, Eli mentored Samuel, Samuel mentored King David, Mordecai mentored Esther, and Pricilla and Aquila mentored Apollos. In each of these examples one generation mentored the next. God used older adults to speak into the next generation for the purposes of training them both for following God and in preparation for a specific vocation or purpose. Moses, as the leader of the Israelites passed on his wisdom and leadership to Joshua, so that Joshua would be prepared to lead God's people into the Promised Land (Deut 31). Eli the priest trained Samuel from the time he was a young boy in the role of a prophet, so that when Eli's time was done, Samuel was prepared to act as God's voice to the people (I Sam 16: 1-13). Samuel as a prophet called out King David as a young shepherd boy to train him to be King of Israel. The Israelite Mordecai mentored his young Jewish relative Esther to prepare her to be queen to a Persian King (Esther 2). Through his instruction and Esther's willingness to obey, the Jewish people were saved from destruction (Esther 4-7). Aquilla and Pricilla were a married couple and co-labourers of Paul the apostle, who encountered a young disciple of John the Baptist named Apollos. They invited him into their home and taught

him about the teachings of Jesus. Their discipleship of Apollos led to him sharing that knowledge about Jesus with other Jewish persons in public debate (Acts 18: 25-28).

Throughout each of these examples, one generation was mentoring the next for specific purposes or vocations. As demonstrated through these stories of mentors, God clearly provides older adults with the responsibility to teach and train the next generation, both in the understanding of who God is and in fulfilling God's purpose for their lives. In the next section, I will look at the biblical example of Ruth and Naomi from the book of Ruth and build a biblical case for one generation mentoring the next generation in both faith and career.

While many of the biblical examples of mentoring involve ministry preparation and men, the story of Naomi and Ruth stands out as an example of a mentoring relationship between two women from different cultures, different religions, and different ages, but shared losses, shared obedience, and shared redemption. Their story and their relationship provide a strong theological framework for building mentoring relationships in a Christian university setting that will equip young alumni in their knowledge of God and their chosen careers. I will now look specifically at the story of Naomi and Ruth as an example of biblical mentorship.

A Theology of Mentorship from the Book of Ruth

Naomi and Ruth: An Example of Biblical Mentorship

Naomi and Ruth provide an example of a cross-cultural, intergenerational mentorship relationship between two women who are connected by shared loss. In this section, I will demonstrate how their relationship provides a theological framework for

learning and creating mutually beneficial mentoring relationships between older alumni and young alumni in a Christian university setting. This section will start by introducing Naomi and Ruth and telling their stories. I will then demonstrate how their relationship provides a biblical example for mentoring in building an alumni mentoring program at a Christian university.

Naomi: Her Losses, Her Suffering, and Her Faithfulness

In the book of Ruth, two women are introduced to the reader, an older woman, Naomi, and her younger daughter-in-law Ruth. These two women are the main characters and provide a beautiful example of mentorship. The book of Ruth is told from Naomi's perspective and provides a woman's lens in which to understand God. As commentator Carolyn Curtis James says, "The book was written from Naomi's point of view. Every event related back to her: her husband's and sons' deaths, her daughters-in-law, her return to Bethlehem, her God, her relative, Boaz, her land to sell, and her progeny. Almost without peer in Scripture, this story views 'God through the eyes of a woman.'"⁹⁹

Naomi, as an older woman, experienced many disappointments in her life, the loss of her home and culture, the death of her husband, and the deaths of her sons. All these experiences caused her to become bitter. But even in her bitterness, she remained faithful to God. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me" (Ruth 1:20-

⁹⁹ Carolyn Curtis James, *The Gospel of Ruth: Loving God Enough to Break the Rules* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 28.

21). Commentator Mary Ann Taylor compares Naomi to a female Job, “who acknowledges that God’s hand is heavy upon her, and gives us permission to voice our own laments... She gives us hope in the darkness as we witness her journey from emptiness to fullness, from death to life.”¹⁰⁰

Carolyn Custis James, in her book, *The Gospel of Ruth*, understands and grieves with Naomi in her losses and disappointment with God. She says, “The real power of the story is this is a story of a woman’s struggle with God.”¹⁰¹ She goes on to say that the reader must acknowledge Naomi’s pain and pay attention to her suffering, her doubts, and her victory in this story. “We owe it to Naomi and ourselves to stop and contemplate the collapsing towers in Naomi’s life—to sit with her awhile at ground zero—for without a better grasp of her sufferings, we miss the impact of her doubts about God and the power of the gospel of Ruth.”¹⁰² Ruth has much to teach the reader about a woman’s relationship with God through her life experience and her faithfulness in seeking God, but first one must be willing to enter into her life of pain and spend some time there.

Naomi’s suffering is great. Once a respected woman of Bethlehem with a husband and two sons, she began to experience many challenges. Starting with a famine that drove her family from their home, Naomi experienced a long series of disappointments. Her home and her financial stability were her first significant challenges. Their loss led her family to the land of Moab, where she was a foreigner. With this move, she experienced

¹⁰⁰ Mary Anne Taylor, *The Story of God: Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 202), 12.

¹⁰¹ James, *The Gospel of Ruth*, 38.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 38.

loss of language, friends, and culture. Then death took her husband, as well as her two sons. It is no wonder Naomi was bitter. Life had been hard on her. But Naomi trusted in God, and with that trust, she decided to return to her homeland. “When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there” (Ruth 1:6).

As Naomi started the trek back to Judah, her two Moabite daughter-laws began the journey with her. Naomi stopped and admonished her two daughters-in-law to go back to their families and to re-marry. Naomi, as a foreigner in Moab, knew that Judah would not be a place for her Moabite daughters-in-law to find a husband. She encouraged the two women to return home. She could no longer provide for what they needed (sons), so she encouraged the women to go back to a world where they could remarry. Jewish authors, Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Tikva Frymer-Kensky say, “Her plea reveals her concern for the welfare of her daughters-in-law, and a strong sense of obligation to them...Rather than releasing herself from obligations to these two women, Naomi is releasing them from obligations to her.”¹⁰³ While the one daughter-in-law returns, the other, Ruth, begs to stay, telling Naomi, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16). Naomi agrees to let Ruth accompany her back to Judah. With this plea from Ruth, Naomi chooses to continue to be in relationship with Ruth and invest in Ruth’s future. Naomi has neither a home nor wealth with which to provide for Ruth, only her faith in God and her life experiences to share.

¹⁰³ Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *The JPS Bible Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 2001), 13.

Ruth Chooses Naomi as Her Mentor

Ruth, a young Moabite widow, chose to embrace Naomi, an older widow, with no security and no home, rather than returning to her country to remarry. Ruth must have witnessed something in Naomi and her faith in God that caused her to cling to Naomi, rather than to the security that remarriage might have brought her. Madipoane Masenya, a South African theologian, says Ruth “dares to challenge the patriarchal status quo by clinging not to a man, but to an old woman, who is a symbol of desolation and insecurity.”¹⁰⁴ Masenya provides a unique perspective on the book of Ruth, as she interprets the book both as a woman and as a South African. As she examines the role of Ruth in this story, she sees the issues that Ruth has and defines them as an identity crisis: “As a Moabite woman married to an Israelite man... As a woman in a world in which female security rested with men (fathers or husbands). Ruth was at a disadvantage. As a young widow whose husband had left her with no sons, her identity was challenged even more.”¹⁰⁵

Ruth and Naomi share many similarities. Both women were widows who were thrust into a world of poverty. Both were childless, Naomi by the death of her sons and Ruth by barrenness. Both experienced the status of being a foreigner, Naomi in Moab and Ruth in Judah. Both desired to know God. These similarities perhaps caused Ruth to choose Naomi as a mentor with an impassioned vow of loyalty to both Naomi and her God. Eskenazi and Frymer-Kensky point out that “most Rabbinic traditions understand

¹⁰⁴ Madipoane Masenya, *Ruth, The Global Bible Commentary*, ed. Daniel Patte (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 89.

¹⁰⁵ Madipoane, Masenya, *Ruth, the Global Bible Commentary*, 86.

that Ruth's vow signifies her conversion."¹⁰⁶ The authors go on to say that Ruth chose to be faithful to Naomi, to care for her out of love for her and for God, in spite of the fact that Naomi was willing to release Ruth from her responsibility to care for her. "What propels Ruth is her unwillingness to abandon Naomi."¹⁰⁷

Despite the many difficulties her circumstances might bring to her, Ruth accompanies Naomi back to Bethlehem in Judah. Once in Bethlehem, she listens to Naomi's wise counsel and forages a living for them in the fields. She follows Naomi's instructions in where to work and whose fields to work in. Naomi's understanding of culture and her passing of that knowledge leads to Ruth's success and favour in her work. She attracts the attention of the land-owner Boaz, and he grants her favour for the devotion he hears she has shown to Naomi. He tells Ruth, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband...May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge" (Ruth 2:11-12.).

When Naomi hears that Ruth has found favour with the land-owner Boaz, she immediately gets excited. Boaz is a distant relative to Naomi and has the authority to redeem Naomi's family through an Israelite custom called a kinsman-redeemer.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Eskenazi and Frymer-Kensky, *The JPS Bible Commentary*, 9.

¹⁰⁷ Eskenazi and Frymer-Kensky, *The JPS Bible Commentary*, 9.

¹⁰⁸ A kinsman-redeemer is a male relative who has the responsibility to help a relative in need or danger. Christianity.com. <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/importance-and-meaning-of-a-kinsman-redeemer.html>. Accessed March 15, 2021.

Naomi's hope is stirred, and she devises a plan for Ruth to go to Boaz and ask him to redeem Naomi's family through marriage to Ruth.

My daughter, I must find a home-for you, where you will be well provided for. Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.(Ruth 3:1-4).

Ruth listens to all that Naomi suggested and follows her direction. While we have already established that Ruth chose Naomi, knowing that she was putting her trust in an old woman without position or power, rather than returning to remarry in her own country, Ruth continues to put her trust in Naomi and follow her advice for marriage. Ruth trusts Naomi enough to approach Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi's, who has status, security, and the willingness to redeem Naomi and her family through marriage. Boaz agrees to be her protector and provider by becoming their kinsman redeemer and Ruth's husband: "I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown" (Ruth 4:9-10).

Ruth as a young, Moabite widow in a new culture, is dependent on her mother-in-law for her future. She is a prime example of a young mentee, who needs the guidance and wisdom of an older, more experienced mentor to help coach and help navigate a mentee's various life's choices. While financial security and status for a woman was dictated by the culture in Ruth's time by marriage, today young women have many choices for career, family, and other life choices. Having an older mentor to help young

alumni navigate life after university is an invaluable resource. The story and character of Ruth is a strong example of the role of a mentee in a mentorship relationship. Trust, willingness to learn, hard work, and determination are some of the important qualities that Ruth provides as an example of a mentee. In Ruth's case, these qualities led Ruth to work, financial stability, family, and status within her new community. Ruth's willingness to be mentored by Naomi led to security, favour in a new land, marriage, and a hopeful future.

The Restoration of Naomi and Ruth

Naomi, like the biblical character Job, experiences a testing of faith through the challenge of losing everything. In the book of Job, the character Job is allowed by God to be tested by Satan (Job 1:12). Satan tests Job's faith in God by systematically taking away all that Job holds dear, his children, his servants, his livestock, and his wealth (Job 1). Job, however, did not curse God and die like his friends suggested. Instead he began to lament. "At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart.-The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:20-21). While God had allowed Satan to take away all that Job loved, he still had faith. God does not leave Job in distress forever. Eventually the test is complete, and God restores Job back to his former wealth, "after Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10). In the book of Ruth we see a similar story; Naomi had lost everything, but continued to trust in God. She was bitter and disappointed, but still trusted. God honours that faithfulness in Naomi and at the end of the book of Ruth, Ruth and Boaz have a

baby. This baby is the hope of the future as it carries on the family name. “The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age” (Ruth 4:14).

Naomi is now restored to her former place in society. She once again has a family, has a home, and a future. This could not have happened without God’s divine intervention and Ruth’s devotion and willingness to trust her mother-in-law with her future. This could not have happened, if Naomi had not been willing to care for Ruth and invest in Ruth’s life. Ruth and Naomi developed a reciprocal relationship, where each looked to the needs of the other. By meeting each other’s needs, they also took care of their own. Mentorship is not a one-way relationship, but a beautiful example of a mutually beneficial relationship.

Ruth’s Place in Jesus’s Lineage and Our Redemption

Ruth’s obedience and trust in Naomi led to her being included in Jesus’s lineage. In Matthew chapter one, we see that Ruth is one of the women mentioned in Jesus’s lineage. Her obedience led to our redemption, as implied through the lineage that traces Jesus back to Ruth and her son, Obed: “Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David” (Matt 1: 5-6).

Naomi, as an older Israelite woman, knew the laws of her people and had influence in her community. Had Ruth simply come to Judah on her own as a widowed foreigner, she may not have had the same level of acceptance as she had with Naomi as her mother in-law. Ruth certainly worked hard and won people’s respect through her love

and dedication to her mother-in-law. When Boaz took notice of her in his field, he had already heard about her dedication to Naomi. Naomi's influence gained Ruth favor in her new land. Naomi's understanding of Israelite laws, opened the door for Ruth's future with Boaz and her willingness to act on God's promises led to generations of people's redemption through Jesus, as indicated through Ruth being included in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus.

As we can see from the story of Ruth and Naomi, mentoring played a powerful and significant role in the lives of both women. The women enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship that indeed brought blessing into each other's lives. Naomi, as an older widow, would neither have had someone to provide for her, nor would she experience family again, without Ruth's dedication. Ruth, as a young widow in a new country, would not have had Naomi's influence to open doors for her, and she would not have met Boaz, who in turn provided for her and gave her a family again.

Naomi as an older woman of faith teaches Ruth the ways of God and helps Ruth discover her future and her eventual role in the genealogy of Jesus. She acts as Ruth's mentor through sharing her knowledge of God, her understanding of God's laws, and her role and influence in a foreign culture, as well as sharing her day-to-day wisdom with Ruth. Naomi provides a beautiful example of what the role of a mentor can look like for young alumni in university alumni programs, while Ruth provides an example of how young alumni might benefit from the mentorship of an older mentor. Through Naomi, Ruth learns about God and faith, and about new customs and provision. Ruth follows Naomi's leadership and finds success in her work, her personal life, and in forming family and community in a new culture.

Ruth and Naomi's story serves to demonstrate a theological framework for the creation of building mutually beneficial mentoring relationships in a Christian university setting. In the next few pages, we will now look at the development of a mentoring program at a Christian university.

Developing Mentoring Relationships for University Alumni Programs

In university alumni programs, mentors also have the potential to play important roles in younger alumni lives. Older alumni have influence, have learned their trade, and can offer their expertise to young alumni. Authors Brad Johnson and Charles Ridley in the book, *The Elements of Mentoring: The Sixty-five Key Elements of Mentoring*, suggest that mentors are key for young people to help advance their careers: "mentors can open doors that mentees cannot open for themselves, they can endorse mentee's membership in important organizations, invite them to exclusive meetings, and sponsor them for work on special or high-visibility projects."¹⁰⁹

The development of a mentoring program where those who are older can share their experience with younger alumni or students is an important engagement strategy that meets both the older alumni's need for purpose and sharing of wisdom and experience the university's need for alumni to give back to the university.. As Philip Easton, a theology professor at Seattle Pacific University points out the Christian university has two main functions; "to do the hard thinking about how Christians can

¹⁰⁹ Brad Johnson and Charles Ridley, *The Elements of Mentoring: The Sixty-five Key Elements of Mentoring* (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 2018), 22.

make the world a better place, and secondly, to equip the next generation of leaders to engage both present culture and the cultures of the world.”¹¹⁰

A theology of mentorship is a foundational aspect of building a reciprocal relationship with young alumni. Young alumni need mentorship to help them learn skills that in turn help them succeed in their new careers. Young alumni who engage in positive mentor relationships have the increased potential of developing a lifelong relationship with the university that includes volunteerism, philanthropy, and legacy families. The biblical story of Naomi and Ruth provides a helpful framework for mentorship from two age demographics, as well as different cultures. Ruth, a young, widowed Moabite commits to learning from her older mother-in-law, a widowed Israelite. Their relationship models a true commitment to mentorship when Ruth leaves her own country to travel to Naomi’s. This story of Ruth and Naomi provides a beautiful example of what a mentoring relationship could look like for alumni at Christian universities. As their example exemplifies, the university can develop a mentoring program based on older alumni mentoring younger alumni that is mutually beneficial to both. In the last part of this section, I will turn the focus of this dissertation to recommendations for a young alumni engagement strategy of mentoring specific to The King’s University.

Building a Young Alumni Program at The King’s University

As the number of young alumni demographics continues to grow at The King’s University, I suggest that King’s begin a young alumni mentoring program designed to

¹¹⁰ Philip Eaton, *Engaging the Culture, Changing the World, The Christian University in a Post-Christian World* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2011).13.

meet the needs of alumni in their first several years after graduation and to help young alumni successfully transition from the classroom to the workplace. Young alumni are King's largest demographic, and this demographic continues to grow each year. I would like to suggest seven actions that Kings can take to develop a successful, young alumni mentoring program.

First, King's prioritize alumni engagement campus wide. As seen through the initiatives at the University of British Columbia and Western Washington University, prioritizing alumni engagement as an all-campus priority can have incredible results. When alumni are prioritized, they feel valued and want to contribute to the university in many ways. This includes the focused building of both a fifty-plus alumni program and a young alumni program.

Second, King's develop an all-campus collaborative approach to alumni relations with staff and faculty of strategic departments with shared access to data management software, as well mentoring software, so that all departments can keep track of mentoring relationships that have been established. A department like Education, which has a high proportion of graduates, can be very helpful in keeping alumni contacts up to date. The education department already has professional mentors established, but the alumni office does not have shared access. Many departments like Education, Athletics, Business, and Environmental Studies regularly invite alumni to campus in leadership roles like mentoring, coaching, speaking, and providing internships. Developing a campus-wide, collaborative strategy for alumni engagement will help increase contactable alumni and provide many more contact points for alumni engagement. Having contactable alumni is a first step in connecting with alumni. Having a shared mentoring database will also help

us keep track of data in one strategic location, so that all departments can update and record mentoring relationships.

Third, our alumni be encouraged to have a greater presence on campus to help students see and know what King's alumni are doing around the world. While many professors and staff invite alumni to campus for various opportunities, the alumni office often hears about alumni on campus after the fact. Training faculty and staff to connect with the alumni office when they are inviting alumni back to campus can help the alumni office stay connected. Offering professors swag bags and other incentives to bring alumni to the alumni office will encourage professors to make introductions with the alumni office, resulting in updated alumni information.

Fourth, while King's started offering alumni awards in 2019, the recipients of the awards were introduced mainly to supporters at community banquets and briefly through social media. A greater intentionality to promote the recipients of the awards to students and other alumni could be taken to showcase the great work our alumni are doing in the world, and encourage the recipients to offer their gifts and skills back to their alma mater through sharing their experience through mentoring others.

Fifth, Alumni Relations continue to partner with the Career and Calling Center to offer students in their final year of studies opportunities for short workshops on topics like resume writing, interview skills, and financial management, as well as connecting students with alumni mentors in their fields of interest. Wake Forest University's monthly connect groups for mentoring are groups Kings can potentially develop to support new graduates specifically in their first year post-graduation. Having older alumni facilitate monthly online groups could serve to connect new graduates with

mentors in their fields of study. Offering professional development or educational opportunities geared especially for young alumni in specific professions may also be welcome. Being able to offer new teacher professional development with one of King's education professors could be well-received, as young teachers often need much support and encouragement.

Sixth, King's encourage alumni to host social events in their own cities in order to facilitate interactions and connections between alumni of various demographics. Offering incentives to alumni event planners to host events may encourage volunteerism. Hosting specific gatherings for new graduates with some favorite professors could also help young alumni meet mentors in their communities. Many professors who travel are willing to meet up at a restaurant with alumni in that city, as long as the alumni office organizes the event. I suggest forming alumni groups in major cities in Western Canada for community development, educational opportunities, and mentorship. If young alumni know that there are others in their specific cities, then they have resources and people to draw on for support. Having alumni groups in major cities means that King's also has further opportunities for hosting events, volunteers to help with professional development, and more established alumni to welcome and mentor new alumni in their communities.

Finally, King's encourage a spirit of mentorship beginning in the student years. If students know that the university is committed to them both as a student and later as an alumnus, the greater the affinity will be for building a lasting relationship with King's that will result in the alumnus wanting to contribute to the needs of the university. Young alumni are valuable assets to their alma maters, not just for their potential philanthropic

gifts, but for their enthusiasm, their giftedness, and their growing experiences. Young alumni are the largest demographic at many universities. Just as Ruth needed Naomi for her leadership, wisdom, and introductions into her new land, Naomi needed Ruth's youthful enthusiasm, willingness to work to provide food and shelter, and her youth and strength. Universities have much to learn from their young alumni, and it is in their best interest to invite young alumni along for the journey into new post-pandemic lands.

Conclusion

Alumni engagement is more important than ever for universities as we move into a post-pandemic world. The last few years have been difficult to navigate for students graduating university and starting their careers. This section has argued the claim that alumni need support after graduation. I proposed that if universities were able to offer a robust mentoring program to support their young alumni's transition from the university to their careers that this would facilitate deeper connection to their alma maters, which in turn would meet the universities' needs. Adult life stages were discussed, with particular emphasis on the young alumni's life stage and the fifty-plus life stage. The section reviewed what other universities were offering in terms of age-specific programming for both young alumni and fifty-plus alumni. A theological review from the book of Ruth was discussed with the characters of Ruth and Naomi examined and presented as an example of a biblical mentoring relationship between a younger person and an older person. Ruth and Naomi's relationship is an example for Christian universities in the development of an alumni mentoring relationship, as it demonstrates how their relationship helped further each person's growth and provided a way forward for each woman. Last, this section offered several suggestions for building a successful young

alumni program at The King's University based on a strategic engagement plan of pairing young alumni with older alumni for mentoring.

Throughout this dissertation, it has been argued that building a young alumni program with the help of older alumni as a strategic plan will lead to deeper affinity to one's alma mater in both life stages. I suggest that by meeting alumni needs and building a reciprocal relationship, the university will have its needs met through more engaged alumni who will contribute through offering their expertise, their time, and their finances. In the next section, I will introduce the artifact that I produced as part of this dissertation. The artifact is a book of letters to King's 2022 graduates from the staff and faculty of The King's University. As a first step in investing in new alumni, this book was created as a form of mentorship between the staff and faculty to the graduating students. The book will be gifted to each graduate as a reminder of their time, having been taught and mentored by the staff and faculty of the university.

SECTION FOUR: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

The artifact that I created is an eighty-page book for the 2022 graduates of The King's University called *Letters to New Graduates*. As my role at the university includes alumni relations, this book is a gift from the alumni office to the graduates to welcome them into the alumni community. It provides lasting words of advice and wisdom in important areas of life from the faculty and staff at the university. As staff and faculty spend several years teaching, coaching, and mentoring students, special bonds are made during one's university life during classes, retreats, activities, and meals shared together. This book was created as a lasting memory of that time spent together and as an encouragement for the next part of their journey as they transition from the university to their careers.

The book was inspired by my own seminary mentor, Eugene Peterson. Dr. Peterson was a professor of mine at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. During his time at Regent, he wrote many letters to his son Eric. These letters were then published as a book, co-written with his son Eric, called, *Letters to Young Pastors*.¹¹¹ It is a series of letters written to his son Eric, as a new pastor, to encourage, coach, and mentor him in his new role.

My book, *Letters to New Graduates*, is divided into eight chapters. Each chapter has three to nine offerings written from faculty and staff on various life topics. The book also contains black and white photographs from one of the staff, which serve as chapter pauses. Each photo is linked to the theme of the chapter.

¹¹¹ Eugene Peterson and Eric Peterson, *Letters to a Young Pastor: Timothy Conversations between Father and Son* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2020).

The book will serve to foster affinity and keep alumni connected to the mission and vision of the university. It is a reminder both of the graduates' time at the university and the wisdom of the people who spent years mentoring them. The book can also be given to donors, faculty, and staff as an encouragement of the type of mentoring and teaching that takes place at King's. The stories contained within the book are filled with wisdom, vulnerability, and practical advice. Each story demonstrates the heart of The King's University for Christian growth in our students and alumni.

SECTION FIVE: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS

The Inspiration

While the artifact created was mainly influenced by the book, *Letters to New Pastors* by Dr. Eugene Peterson,¹¹² Regent College's yearly Advent readers, written by various faculty and staff, and given out to alumni and donors as gifts for Christmas, also inspired me to involve many staff and faculty in the creation of the book. Finally, Allison McWilliam's book, *Five for your First Five*,¹¹³ was also an influence. McWilliams's book is written for young alumni in their first five years after graduation to help with the transition from university to the "real world." McWilliams, in her role as Assistant Vice President of Mentoring and Alumni Personal and Career Development at Wake Forest University, identified the needs of young alumni at graduation and wrote a book to help with the transition after university. These three books provided the muse for me to create this book of wisdom and blessing for new graduates.

As my research on strategies for alumni engagement progressed, I wanted to create something as a gift for new graduates to remind them of the many people who had a role in their growth and mentorship while at King's. So, borrowing ideas from Peterson, Regent College, and McWilliams, *Letters to New Graduates* was born.

¹¹² Eugene Peterson and Eric Peterson, *Letters to a Young Pastor: Timothy Conversations Between Father and Son* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2020).

¹¹³ Allison McWilliams, *Five for your First Five* (Winston-Salem, NC: Library Partners Press, 2017).

The Process

I began soon after graduation in 2021 to ask staff and faculty to contribute to the book. I wanted to have graduation fresh in people's minds, but I also wanted to ask for contributors in the summer, while they potentially had more time to write a piece. I wrote an email to all of King's staff and faculty, explaining the idea and giving several suggestions for types of submissions, ranging from transitions, to parenting, to applying to grad school, to retirement. I let them know that the goal of the book was to provide a lasting legacy of wisdom for the graduates, as we sent them off. I initially received a handful of immediate responses to my request, but I needed to remind people two or three more times throughout the semester to get enough contributors for the book. My final request was sent directly to specific faculty and staff, rather than making an all campus request. The last request produced the most replies and contributions. I think having a personal email sparked more interest and buy in.

Once I had about forty contributions, I was able to group them into themes and then chapters. I decided on a total of eight chapters with each chapter having three to nine contributors. Much work was needed to try and standardize each offering. A fair amount of editing was needed to maintain some sense of continuity and unity. This was achieved through making each font the same, giving each piece a title, adding reflection questions throughout, and italicizing and centering all scripture passages. I also went through and made sure each person's name and title was included. In the table of contents, I deliberately chose not to use personal titles for contributors and listed each author solely by first name and last name. I did this for two reasons. First, after graduation, these new alumni are now able to call their professors by their first names. Second, I did not want to

distinguish between staff and faculty with the doctoral designation, as I wanted to show that mentorship and wisdom comes from all regardless of one's title.

The Collaboration

Once I had all the pieces formatted and in chapters, I then approached some others in the university to help with editing, adding pictures, designing a cover page, and the overall layout and design. Dr. Sarah Den Boer, Executive Associate to the Vice President of Academics and Research, contributed by editing the entire booklet. She further helped with a sense of uniformity. Nancy Burford, Work Integrated Learning Coordinator, added helpful advice on set up for both the front cover and back cover, as well as providing the cover photo. Witty Sandle, Manager for the Centre for Career and Calling, offered her black and white photos for chapter markers. She chose from her numerous collection pieces that she felt went along with each chapter title. Lastly, Scott Vande Kraats, Creative Coordinator from the King's Marketing Department, worked on layout and got quotes for printing. Scott and I decided on the size of the book, type of paper, number of copies, and all the minute details associated with sending the book to print.

The Costs

The cost to publish the book was estimated at eight dollars per book, for a total of sixteen hundred dollars for two hundred copies, plus applicable taxes. The exact cost of the books will not be finalized until the printing is finished. One consideration is whether to include four coloured pages. This will raise the cost of the book by a small amount. The university uses a printing company called Burke Printing, and the book will be sent

to the printers in February 2022. The alumni office will pay for the cost of printing out of the alumni budget. An additional one hundred copies will be purchased for faculty, staff, board, and donors to encourage them with these words of wisdom and blessing. Each year, the alumni office at King's can update the book with new writings from faculty and staff to provide a unique project for the alumni office to give to the graduating class.

POSTSCRIPT: THE WAY FORWARD IS COLLABORATION

The past two years researching alumni engagement strategies has been filled with lessons along the way. I had a strong intuition that alumni engagement needed further research as to how to connect with various age groups and life stages, and that alumni programming could be better offered by this understanding. My initial research focused on examining adult life stages. I began with author Gail Sheeny's research. From Sheeny, I explored theological authors Gordon MacDonald, Paul Stevens, and Richard Rohr, who all examine faith formation based on age. I was then able to research what other universities were doing for programming based on life stages. Calvin Seminary, Wake Forest University, University of Los Angeles, and University of Manitoba provided examples of universities who focused on alumni programming with a concentration on fifty-plus programming. These writers, scholars, and universities all mentioned the wisdom of the older alumni. Fifty-plus programming recognizes that older alumni have entered a stage of life that has more time, stronger financial stability, a desire for mental stimulation, and increased social connections. Universities that started fifty-plus programming saw strong engagement with their older alumni in terms of volunteerism, participation in events, and philanthropy. I discovered the CALL program at Calvin University and arranged a zoom meeting with the Director of the Center for Life-Long learning. She shared with me about the program successes and was forthcoming about their funding model and programming structures. I also had discussions with my own alma mater, Regent College in Vancouver, about their alumni programming through life-long learning. Their spring and summer courses have been very successful at keeping alumni connected to the university through life-long learning and bringing alumni back

on campus every year. Both Calvin's CALL program and Regent's spring and summer sessions involved life-long learning aimed at targeting older alumni engagement. I then focused my attention on developing a fifty-plus alumni engagement strategy for The King's University through offering online public lectures. This initiative was met with positive interaction, and a number of alumni re-engaged with King's as a result of this initiative. We had three hundred and twelve unique attendees in our first ten lectures, with fifty-two staff and faculty also attending. Many people signed up for multiple lectures. It was helpful that this initiative was started at the beginning of the pandemic, as many people were looking for avenues of engagement that were offered from the safety of their homes. Several of our faculty were involved in presenting these online lectures, and collaboration was needed with many institutional departments, including the Development, Marketing and Information, and Technology Departments to help with registration, promotion, and technology.

The next semester, I worked on understanding and developing a young alumni program. I discovered that Wake Forest University had quite a successful young alumni program, and I arranged an interview with Allison McWilliams, the Vice President of Mentoring and Alumni Personal and Career Development. McWilliams wrote the book, *Five for your First Five*, which focuses on alumni development in graduates' first five years. After talking with McWilliams and reading her book, I invited the staff team from King's Center for Career and Calling to join me on a zoom call with McWilliams as she shared about the success of their young alumni programming. From this interaction, I purchased four hundred copies of McWilliams book, which we then gave out at graduation to all our new alumni. I and the team from the Center for Career and Calling

worked together over a semester to identify young alumni needs and to develop a “launch semester” for our graduates. One of our discoveries was the importance of mentorship for helping young alumni successfully launch from the classroom to the workplace. The new launch semester includes monthly group mentoring via zoom with older, more established alumni on a series of topics ranging from applying to graduate school to building community. We also designed a six-part video series of short videos about such topics as resume writing, interview skills, negotiating, and cleaning up one’s social media. This new launch program involved collaboration with our Career Center and with our older alumni for its success. The launch program will begin in January 2022.

My final semester of research was a theological review of mentorship and some field research about some mentoring software. Having discovered the successes of alumni strategies of engaging older alumni in fifty-plus programming and new alumni in young alumni programming, I then wanted to work on the development of an alumni mentoring program. I worked with our Manager of the Career Center, and we presented a proposal for the purchase of some mentoring software for our respective departments. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in our request at the time. However, I have been meeting with various departments on campus to manually add into our existing database the established mentor relationships in those disciplines. What I discovered is that each department has a list of alumni, who they regularly call on for guest speaking, supervision of new teachers, field instructors, proctors, and alumni mentors. While King’s presently has no formal volunteer program, a rich resource of alumni volunteers exists within departments. One of the suggestions from the former Alumni Director of University of British Columbia Jeff Todd was that universities work to build a centralized

system for data management and that this become an all campus priority. His attempts to do this on campus resulted in more contactable alumni, which in turn resulted in increased alumni engagement in volunteerism, philanthropy, and event attendance. This is a strategy that I am working towards at King's as well. I have a goal of increasing our contactable alumni and providing training for various departments to have access to the alumni data management system. If each department can be collaborating with the alumni office to be updating alumni addresses, employment, and record alumni's involvement on campus, then we as a university will have a better appreciation for our alumni engagement. I was inspired by Jeff Todd's ten-year alumni engagement strategy, which started with increasing contactable alumni. From there, he was able to partner with the Development Office to raise over one point six billion dollars (\$1.6 billion) from alumni for UBC's one hundredth anniversary. Important to note is that this was a ten-year engagement strategy, and much work was needed over this span of time to increase alumni affinity, increase contactable alumni, understand and meet alumni needs, and make alumni engagement a campus-wide priority. Only after these strategies were engaged were they able to launch an extremely successful alumni fundraising campaign.

Alumni engagement needs campus-wide collaboration and should be an institutional priority. When institutions can work together to increase contactable alumni, work together to provide life-long learning, and work together to involve alumni in the life of the university through volunteerism and mentorship, then alumni feel valued, heard, and will want to invest in the university through their time, expertise, and their dollars. When alumni engagement is performed by the alumni office alone, it is a difficult job. When it becomes an institutional priority and campus wide initiative, then all staff

and faculty feel a connection to alumni and share in the success of an alumni program. This in turn benefits the university through increased attendance at events, increased volunteerism, and increased giving.

The artifact that I produced for this dissertation is a beautiful example of this collaboration. Having various voices on campus work together on a common book for our graduates serves to demonstrate the importance of multiple voices speaking into the lives of our graduates and alumni. While I compiled the stories in my role as Alumni Manager, it was the years of mentorship and learning from our faculty and staff while alumni were students that show the heart of the university to pass on the wisdom, learnings, and faith from one generation to the next. This demonstrates the way Seattle Pacific author Philip Easton describes the role of the Christian university, “to equip the next generation of leaders to engage both present culture and “cultures of the world.”¹¹⁴

One unfortunate learning was the complexity of trying to work with two university ethics boards. Twice I tried to send out an alumni survey to establish a benchmark for alumni satisfaction and another for the needs of young alumni. While George Fox University IRB gave initial approval for an alumni survey, I had difficulty at King’s. When the questions were sent to King’s IRB committee, they did not approve the survey questions and suggested that a faculty person help me redesign the survey. Unfortunately, trying to gain approval would take a much longer period of time, as I then needed to re-design the survey and seek approval from both institutions once again. In the end, I chose a different type of research that was not survey-based. Eventually an alumni

¹¹⁴ Philip Easton, *Engaging the Culture, Changing the World, The Christian University in a Post-Christian World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 13.

survey will go out to the King's alumni, but not in time to be of assistance in this research.

This dissertation has been beneficial in a number of ways. It helped me launch our online public lectures that have been fruitful in meeting the needs of our older alumni and re-engaging them in the life of the university. From the success of the online lectures, King's is planning to establish a new Centre for Christian Thought and Action, of which I was asked to serve on the steering committee. This new centre will further meet alumni needs by offering life-long learning through online lectures, workshops, and conferences for churches and schools.

Second, this dissertation helped me partner with our Centre for Career and Calling to start a new launch semester for our young alumni. This initiative will help King's better meet the needs of our new graduates, as we develop programming that successfully equips graduates with tools for job searches and interview skills, and connects them with alumni mentors in their fields of study.

Third, the creation of the artifact, the book for our new graduates, showcases the heart of the mentorship that students receive at The King's University. Through stories and wisdom written by the staff and faculty to our young alumni, each letter provides advice, lessons, and blessings written from the people who have invested in these graduates for the past several years.

Looking toward the future of alumni engagement at King's, I plan to continue building up our alumni by providing life-long learning opportunities for mentor relationships, opportunities for greater connection through social events, and many more collaborative and campus-wide initiatives to engage our alumni. I will also want to

further research alumni strategies for increasing alumni engagement in mid- career alumni, those in the thirty-fifty age range. As King's alumni age, parent programming for legacy families is a further area for research, as more alumni have children graduating high school and are sending their kids to King's. Lastly, I would like to continue to research the development of mentoring relationships in a church setting and apply similar engagement strategies to church growth.

APPENDIX ONE: THE ARTIFACT

LETTERS OF WISDOM AND BLESSING

Letters to New Graduates
from
The King's University Community
Graduation 2022

Words of Wisdom and Blessing

Compiled by
Dr. Kathleen Busch
Manager of Community Relations

Special Thanks to:

Dr. Sarah Den Boer
Executive Associate to the Vice President Academic and Research
for editing

Scott Vande Kraats
Creative Coordinator
for design

Nancy Burford
Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Coordinator
For the Cover photo

Witty Sandle
Manager, Centre for Career and Calling
For the chapter photos

Table of Contents

Foreword: Dr. Kathleen Busch, Manager of Community Relations
 Parting Words from “Prez Mel”: Dr. Melanie Humphreys, President
 Congratulations from King’s Board of Governors: Dr. Robert Huizinga, Chair

Chapter 1: Transitions, Mentors, and Opportunities

1. Arlette Zink: A Word Before You Go
2. Neal DeRoo: Welcome to the Real World
3. Lisa Teigen: Seek Joy, Not Happiness
4. Shannon Tuininga: Don’t Let Worry Take Over Your Life
5. Peter Mahaffy: Go Confidently
6. Jeffrey Dudiak: Will I be Happy?
7. David Long: You are Loved
8. Regina Dixon: Looking for a Job, Hoping for a Career
9. Megan Viens: Go and Do Great Things

Chapter 2: Listen, Pay Attention, Choose Wisely

1. Witty Sandle: Who am I and What am I Going to Do?
2. Cathy Jol: Listening for God’s Guidance
3. Tina Trigg: What’s the One Thing You Want Most to Know?
4. Ting Elger: Breathe, Just Breathe
5. Ray Klassen: Is the World Ready for You?
6. Angela Troschke: Live Each Day in Innocent Wonder

Chapter 3: Build Community, and Grow Where You Are Planted

1. Kathryn Debree: Time Management and Balancing Work and Family Life
2. Michael Janzen: It's Cheaper to Buy a New Clutch than a New Marriage
3. Todd Van Driel: Networking and Connecting
4. Glory Ovie: Building a Community, Building a Life

Chapter 4: Develop Your Craft

1. Michael DeMoor: I Have Finished the Race, I Have Kept the Faith
2. Caitlynd Myburgh: Work to the Glory of God
3. Grace Scott: Leadership-What Does a Good Leader Look Like?
4. Margie Patrick: Don’t Psych Yourself Out
5. Henry Algera: Dear ~~Future~~ Teachers
6. Nelson Wiebe: Be the Light
7. Jacqueline Filipek: Congratulations on Learning Your ABC’s

Chapter 5: Detours in the Journey

1. Heather Looy: Life is Messy; Choose Meaning
2. Gerda Kits: When Things Don’t Go as Planned
3. Charles Stolte: My Career Journey to King’s

Chapter 6: Life-Long Learning

1. Susanne Huizing: Be a Life-Long Learner
2. Kathleen Shippit: Yours Is a Story For Others To Hear

3. Danielle Brosseau: Reframing THE Question

Chapter 7: Live the Vision

1. Andrew Rillera: Challenge the Norm
2. Joshua Harris: Be Grateful
3. Joanne Moyer: Choose Defiant Hope
4. Jonathan Nicolai-deKoning: Create Space for All to Flourish
5. Christian Nakano: Loving God and Others

Chapter 8: Don't Forget to Write

1. Ben Oostenbrink: Be Proactive-Send a Text
2. Teddi Taylor: Speak Kindly
3. Catherine Manocha: Show Up
4. Nancy Burford: I Know the Plans
5. Trevor Froehlich: Wherever You Are, Be all There
6. Christopher Peet: Faith, Hope and Love
7. Kristopher Ooms: Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Foreword

Dear Graduates,

This book is a reminder to you of your time at King's. These pages contain letters of wisdom and blessing from the community that has invested in you these past several years. While you may not know all the writers of these letters, their words contain blessings and hope for your future. As you graduate from King's and go on to new adventures, it is our hope that you take not just the knowledge you learned from your professors with you, but the wisdom of all your mentors from King's.

Author Dr. Eugene Peterson was a mentor of mine while I attended seminary at Regent College in Vancouver. Dr. Peterson had been a pastor for 30 years, and with those 30 years of pastoral experience, he came to Regent to teach Theology to a new generation of pastors, both female and male. During his tenure at Regent, Peterson published *The Message Bible*, *The Contemplative Pastor* and *The Unnecessary Pastor*. These works and the classes that he taught greatly influenced my own pastoral ministry. In his book *Letters to a Young Pastor*, co-written with his son Eric, he exchanges letters with his son, a new pastor. Through these letters, much wisdom is shared between father and son, seasoned pastor to new pastor, and from the Petersons to their readers. Many of Peterson's letters to his son Eric were echoed in his classes. In fact, reading through the book is like sitting in his class or at his kitchen table, listening to him once again. His thoughtful wisdom and mentorship live on in his written words.

The book you hold now is inspired by my mentor Dr. Peterson. I hope you will be just as blessed by your professors and the staff at King's as I was by my own.

May these letters of wisdom and stories continue to shape you and bless you to *pursue a better world*.

Blessings,

Dr. Kathleen Busch

Manager of Community Relations

Parting Words from Prez Mel: Dr. Melanie Humphreys

Dear Graduates –

This is a gift. So often when we encounter people, whether it is for a moment, a conversation, a lecture, a project, or a class, we have glimpses into their path or journey. Life on life. I hope that has been your experience at King's. That you will leave here enriched with moments that will gain an almost legendary quality in your heart and mind for the experiences, shifts in perspective, a-ha moments, learning, growth, and change you engaged in here.

I had the opportunity of previewing these pages before writing my own note as your President. Each, whether you encountered them or not, have contributed to your studies at King's. The pages are full of honesty, vulnerability, hopes, and blessings from those just a little further down the path. To be honest, I had no idea what I wanted to do or what job to pursue when I graduated from my undergraduate degree. And, if that is you, let me just reassure you that it's going to be okay!

For my own contribution, I would encourage you to follow your heart. Conventional or unconventional path, where is it that you feel most alive? For myself, I stepped off the conventional path when I went to Lithuania for 10 years. I believe wholeheartedly that if I didn't take the risk and take the job in Lithuania, I wouldn't be King's President today.

What enabled me to risk? What gave me the nerve to step up as President of The King's University? First, I met you. As a candidate for President, I wandered around an interdisciplinary studies conference and asked students about their faculty and staff and vice versa. I decided this place was for real and I could see myself here. Second, I can tell you stories of God's provision that would make your hair stand on end. I could never have imagined the path. It wasn't an easy journey. Small risks lead to bigger risks. Listen and trust God for your present and your future. Courage is a muscle; it must be used.

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: "Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out."

(Romans 12:1-3, *The Message*)

Blessings as you journey,

Dr. Melanie Humphreys, President

The King's University

#prezmel #justwalk #justkayak #prezcrafft

Congratulations from The King's University Board

"Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God."

(2 Corinthians 3:4-5)

Congratulations on this amazing event! You've completed one chapter in your book and are opening a new one. As you head out into your new career or into ongoing education, remember that God is sufficient for all things—that in times of blessing and in times of turmoil, we can turn to Him. That gives us great confidence in those times of turmoil which may happen in your life—that God remains in firm control of our lives and wants the best for us.

Be proud of this moment, be proud of the education you have received, and go forward with that confidence you have through Jesus Christ!

Dr. Robert Huizinga
Chair of The King's University Board of Governors

Chapter 1: Transitions, Mentors and Opportunities

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

A Word Before You Go

Congratulations!! You have a rewarding, degree-relevant career lined up, a life-partner in mind, and the rest of your days planned and settled.

No? Not quite that? Congratulations! Amazing adventures lie ahead. Here is my parting word:

*Commit to the Lord whatever you do,
and He will establish your plans.
(Proverbs 16:3)*

We are not forgone conclusions. We are works in progress. If you do not have it all figured out, it's because God's thoughts are bigger than yours. He leads us slowly to the amazing places that we, in our humanness, may not dare to imagine, may lack the courage to engage.

So, how do you make a start? Frederick Buechner once answered this question in a way that makes sense to me:

*By and large a good rule for finding out is this: the kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. ... The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.
(Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC*

118-19).

So, dear graduate, you have been well trained, well prepared. Let our funny, gracious, and very wise God lead you into a future so rich, so full that you could neither ask for it nor imagine it. In the meantime, set your hand to the work that needs doing and give it your all.

Have you committed whatever you will do to the Lord?

With much love,

Dr. Arlette Zinck
Professor of English

Welcome to the Real World

Remember when you started university all those years ago? Remember how you didn't actually know anything about what university was really like or how to be good at it? Well, here you are, 4(ish) years later, and you are a university graduate. You had some fun along the way, learned a lot, changed some habits, became a different version of the same person you always were, learned some more, did responsible things, did irresponsible things, made some friends, made some enemies, did a LOT. But it all went whirling by and now four years have passed, university is over, and you feel simultaneously like it took forever (what was it like to be in *high school*?) and like it all happened in the blink of an eye, like you earned your degree, but also like you don't actually know anything and are a total fraud who doesn't deserve to be considered a "university graduate."

That is the "university experience." But that is also "life." You've already been doing it, and doing it pretty well, based on that degree you got. I know you don't feel ready for what comes next. I know you fear that you aren't prepared for the "real world." But here's my secret: university IS (in) the real world. You've already been doing it for years. So keep doing what you've been doing, and maybe change a few things if they haven't been working well for you.

And if the first thing you try doesn't work, try something else. This isn't failing, it's living. And it's the best any of us can do.

Dr. Neal DeRoo
Canada Research Chair in Phenomenology and Philosophy of Religion
Professor of Philosophy

Seek Joy, Not Happiness

Dear Graduate,

Congratulations! You did it.

Take a moment and be proud of your great accomplishment; sit back and reflect on the fun times you had at King's! You are transitioning to a new stage of life. The new unknown can be exciting and scary all at the same time. Life will throw lots at us. In my journey I am continuing to learn these lessons:

Seek joy, not happiness.

Seek contentment, not complacency.

Seek quality, over quantity.

Seek creation, over consumption.

One of my favourite quotes is from the wonderful poet, Mary Oliver:

"It is the slow and difficult trick of living and finding it where you are".

God's blessings on you as you learn to find the trick of living...

Lisa Teigen
Student Support and Accessibility Assistant

Don't Let Worry Take Over Your Life

It is so easy to worry, particularly during times of great uncertainty. For me, the transition from being a university student to entering a career was one of these times. Concerns about what to do after graduation, the stresses of starting a new job, choices about marriage and family, paying off student loans, and decisions about purchasing a house or continuing to rent all provided a plethora of reasons to worry. I've spent too much of my life worrying about things and, in doing so, missing out on some of the joy associated with new opportunities, different experiences, and rich blessings that come with each new stage in life.

A number of years ago, my wife taped a small piece of paper to the inside of one of my cupboards that simply reminded me that "worry is the greatest thief of joy." The note is a reminder that worry takes so much from our lives, and I am encouraged to be intentional about experiencing joy throughout the journey of life and not letting worry take that joy away.

I also recently came across another quote that is a reminder of the embellishing nature of worry: "Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday." I would spend restless nights worrying about what tomorrow might bring, only to realize that the things I spent so much time worrying about rarely occurred. Some worry is unavoidable in life, but I have learned to control my worry and I am comforted by knowing that our God loves us, cares for us, and walks with us.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

Reflection Question: What worry do I need to surrender to God today?

Shannon Tuininga
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Letters to Young Graduates from the King's Community

The society each of you is a part of, and graduates into with new and expanded roles, faces so many challenges that are much too big to tackle individually or from the perspective of your disciplinary major at King's. So this poet-chemist would encourage all of you to embrace a tango of stanzas and solutions as you stride confidently forward into professions and new relationships, embodying the King's vision to work together to make this a more just, humane, and sustainable world.

So put on your King's dancing shoes, engineered to groove and spin on surfaces rough or smooth, find a partner, and tango.

tango

synthesize a poem
couple elements with panache
alliterate interactions
compound verbs
to create a motif
feed a mind
nurture a spirit

concatenate with a chemist
steward of matter that
ebbs and flows through life
comprehend its twists and turns
connect the ends of the chain
keep the circle of atom and economy
unbroken

embrace a tango
lead from the heart
stanza and solutions
entwined in action
share each other's weight
improvise steps
to sustain a planet

Dr. Peter Mahaffy
Professor of Chemistry
Director, King's Centre for Visualization in Science

Will I be Happy?

I really hope that you will be desperately happy every day of your life; but you won't be. Life is a roller coaster, and the ride never ends. So long as you care about things, there will be victories and disappointments. So long as you love people, there will be joys and heartbreaks. There will be periods when you will seem to have it all together, and there will be times when life will beat you down. If your happiness is tied to things going well, sometimes it will embrace you, and sometimes it will hide its face from you. That's life.

Way back when I was an undergraduate student, I read a book called *Man's Search for Meaning* by a Jewish holocaust survivor and psychiatrist named Victor Frankel, who had developed a psychological theory called logotherapy. Its premise was that what people really need, and what people should be aspiring to in their lives, was not happiness, but meaning. For if in life you seek happiness conceived of as pleasure, you will, paradoxically, never be happy, because pleasures are a bottomless pit: the more you get, the more you need, and you'll never get enough. But if you seek to lead a meaningful life, and devote yourself to something that matters, something bigger than yourself, happiness as contentment will be a side effect of that.

That is an argument that made sense to me then, and still does today, and I've spent my life trying to live a meaningful, rather than a happy, life. I haven't always been happy—far from it!—but what has kept me going through even my darkest days has been my sense that my life is not my own, but is in the service of something greater than myself. As you set out on what I expect and hope will be your long, challenging, but ultimately rewarding life-path, perhaps you should consider investing in something that will get you through the deep valleys that you too will have to tread. It doesn't have to be something grandiose. You don't need to change the world. You just need to know that even when everything is going wrong, your life still matters. You matter.

“Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the LORD is finished.” 1 Chronicles 28-20.

Dr. Jeffrey Dudiak
Professor of Philosophy

You Are Loved

Those of you that have taken classes with me may have heard me share the life lesson I learned from my mom, and I would not be surprised if you told me that I shared it with you more than once, since I think it bears repeating.

My mom's name was Eileen Daisy Hardcastle, and though she experienced many challenges and hardships throughout much of her life, that was never evident in the way she treated others, particularly me. I have very fond and vivid memories of the many times Mom helped me to know how much I was loved, for in her own unique ways she would say to me, "David, you are the most important and loved person in the world; and you are no more important or loved than any other person in the world." Even as she lay dying of cancer in her hospital bed, I remember her glancing at me in a way that for the last time spoke that lesson to me.

I hope each of you take my mom's lesson to heart as you make your way throughout life. May you know that you are the most loved and important person in the world, and that you are no more loved or important than anyone else in the world. And may you share that gift with everyone that has the good fortune to cross your path.

Reflection Question: Who do I need to express my love and appreciation for today?

Dr. David Long
Professor of Sociology

Looking for a Job, Hoping for a Career

You may come across some job postings that will ask for a certain number of minimum years of experience. Do not let this stop you from applying to those positions as sometimes recruiters may still take interest in your application and would be willing to train you. You can start with a resume template, but do not use it for every application you make. ALWAYS customize your resume based on the job posting. Some organizations use automated programs that detect keywords from your resume based on the job description, so carefully review the posting.

Most importantly, networking is key! Be brave and do not be afraid to put yourself out there. I know it can be intimidating at first, but making connections is key. Introduce yourself and get to know others in the field. Ask them about what they do, what they like and do not like about their roles. You never know what you can learn from that conversation. Who knows, you might even get an offer. What is there to lose?

Reflection Questions: Who do I know in the career that I desire, who might be a good mentor for me? What networking opportunities can I take advantage of this week?

Regina Dizon
Coordinator of Intercultural Student Programs

Go Do Great Things

So you've done it - you've graduated!

I still remember the moment graduation felt real for me. I was packing up my belongings and cleaning out my room where I had lived for the last two years of my undergrad. It was like the last episode of a sitcom show where everyone hugs and says goodbye. I felt relief and pride at having finished what ended up being a five-year journey, being the first in my family to go to and finish university. I had been accepted into a master's program at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs which meant I'd be moving out on my own into an unknown, exciting adventure in a different city and state. And at the same time, I also sat in the tension of sadness. A sadness that the experiences, friendships, and comfort of routine I had was ending. There wouldn't be any more late night trips with my housemates to McDonald's to get comfort food to fuel our studying, no more gathering in our living room as we each got out of class to watch "Law & Order," no more running across campus to get a coffee from the coffee shop before class, waving at friends I passed along the way, no more getting caught in a rainstorm on the way back to my house after class and arriving drenched with squishy shoes. Grief and excitement... a perplexing combination.

It's a time of transition – of a good transition, an inevitable one. As you move ahead into what life has in store for you, remember. Remember the experiences that defined your time at King's. Look how far you've come! You've accomplished so much and have done such a good job! You've defied odds. You persevered and overcame. However it is that you find you're feeling in this moment, know that the memories you have enrich the path ahead. Go do great things!

Megan Viens
Dean of Students

Chapter 2: Listen, Pay Attention, Choose Wisely

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

Who am I and What am I Going to do?

These are big questions, and we can be tempted to try and answer them in a once-and-for-all way. However, who I am and the things I do are a complex interplay of personality, places and people. We are being shaped continuously as our circumstances change, and so we are always *becoming*. At the same time, there are attributes that are *uniquely us*. The New Living Translation of the Christian Scriptures puts it like this: *“Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!” (Psalm 139:14)*

As you transition from King’s, give thanks for your individuality, and recognize that discerning the contours of your vocations is a life-long pursuit. Whether they be calls to careers, relationships, or where you choose to live, vocation way-finding is a dynamic enterprise. We may want streaks of lightning to show us our path, but very few of us get that. Instead, we are given invitations along life’s pathways, and we have the freedom to choose and the freedom to “fail.”

When I was graduating with a history degree, and worrying about what I would do with it, I wish someone had shared words similar to that of Anaïs Nin, the French-Cuban American diarist and novelist. She wrote, *"You have a right to experiment with your life. You will make mistakes. And they are right too."*

So, learn to listen to your life and be intentional about finding one or two wise mentors who will accompany you as you move on. And be courageous. Only the courageous are brave enough to fail and see that as a kind of success.

Reflection: How am I paying attention to my inner voice as I take the next steps?

Witty Sandle
Manager, Centre for Career and Calling
Career and Vocational Counselor

Listening for God's Guidance

In this complex world, God offers guidance. And you may be looking for guidance now that you've graduated. I'll tell you a few of my experiences in this area.

As a teenager in the late 1960's, I was influenced by the Jesus People movement to read my Bible daily and "hear from God." I thought a lot about the many ways God spoke to people in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, Paul ... but how would He speak to me?

At the time, these parts of the Bible stood out:

1. God speaking to Elijah on a mountain in a gentle whisper in 1 Kings 19:9-18.
2. Gideon asked God to direct him using a fleece in Judges 6:37-40.
3. James 1:5: "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you."
4. Proverbs 3:6: "Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths."

I started to practice "listening" for every major decision I had to make. One very dramatic answer came in grade 12 as I was considering what to do for post-secondary.

When I talked to the principal of my high school in 1972 about my goal of "helping people," he suggested I go to Trinity College in Chicago, a school very similar to King's today. But when I told my Dad my plans, he strongly encouraged me to go to the U of A. Which person's advice should I follow?

As I prayed about this, I felt an inner urge to go to the U of A campus and walk around. As I went from building to building, I asked God to give me wisdom, to direct my paths. Suddenly a gentleman stepped out into a hallway and, seeing me, invited me into his office. In our conversation he said that all the problems in the world were because of Christians – they gave people feelings of guilt. He was a Psychology professor, and as I listened, I realized that my goal was to serve people from a Christian perspective. Courses at the U of A would not teach me that. It was a clear answer to my question.

Another clear answer came when my husband and I were considering what to do after we got married. My husband had been with Operation Mobilization and suggested we start a Christian outreach of some type in Edmonton. We prayed for guidance and told various people about our idea. Within months a group of reliable men in the Beverly neighborhood had joined together to help make his suggestion a reality. We rented an old grocery store (where you can live behind and above the store) and started the Livingroom Book Nook on 118th avenue in 1977. In this case, it was through God providing like-minded people who prayed with us and put their money and their skills together that we received our answer.

Not all our answers to prayer were “successful.” At one point we were invited into a joint venture by a lovely Christian couple. The four of us prayed and planned for more than half a year, then agreed to move forward. Eight months after we got things off the ground, we found out that the wife had never been in full agreement, but she had been hesitant to share her reservations with the rest of us. Now she could no longer support our arrangement. This left us high and dry. Painful for all! But in God's plan that venture resulted in our eight years living in the Westlock area, where we were instrumental in bringing Christian programs to our local radio station and where we made life-long friends. What looked like failure at first turned out to be life-giving.

As decisions come up for you, know that God is willing to guide you. Take time to be by yourself, and talk to Him about the choices in front of you. Sometimes it helps to journal or make a list of the “pros” and the “cons” of each choice. Then follow inner promptings that might lead to more information. Listen to trusted friends whose wisdom you respect. And listen for God's whisper. As you move forward, keep talking to God to confirm your steps. Take as much time as you need. You are important to Him, and He will guide you.

Cathy Jol
Textbook Coordinator

What's the One Thing You Want Most to Know?

If you're like many of us, the honest answer to that question is: *I want to know what's next*. Oh, me too! Whether we're talking about big life decisions, the next daily square on our calendar, or even the next hour on our clock, we're often people who live with an eye on the future. And, I'm guessing – even if you don't self-identify as a planner – that as we stand on the threshold (cliff?) of graduation, you're yearning to know what's next.

As you've begun to discover, the amazing thing about living a life fully committed to being where God leads you is that you can be 100% sure that He is going before you and is behind you and beside you. He is the Ultimate Planner. Your time here at King's was not by accident. When I pay attention, I am stunned by the ways God has orchestrated people and life experiences that have prepared me – sometimes decades earlier – for the places He has opened up that I never could have predicted. At the time, many of those moments have seemed very ordinary, unglamorous, or even boring but looking back, I see how much they matter. God is forming who we are all the time. That includes your years here in our community. One of the most important things we can do is to be wholeheartedly present in each moment, exactly where we are, and with the people around us.

So, *what's next*? Just take the next step that is before you (no matter how small or mundane) and trust Him to guide your path. No matter how much we plan, life is full of wildly wondrous surprises – surprises for us, but not for God. So, lean in. Trust fully. And just take the next step. He's already got the one after that waiting for you.

“But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in You.” (Psalm 39:7)

Dr. Tina Trigg
Associate Professor of English

Breathe, Just Breathe

Dear Graduate,

I wish I practiced more stillness and mindfulness, especially when I am deeply troubled. What does this look like? Hmm... it is simply breathing in and breathing out – ha ha 😊. Crazy, I know. But it always works! I promise! Walking also works. I take a walk to a nearby park or somewhere, even when it's cold. When I am confused and tired, walking always gives me clarity.

And then I invite you to start to notice....
 what your body is telling you,
 what the air feels like,
 listen to the birds singing,
 or your mother calling - just kidding!

Anyway, I wish and pray for you:
*that you find joy
 and meaning
 and purpose in your life –*
 whatever it looks like for YOU!

Take care, blessings and peace.

Much love,
 Ting

P.S. Don't forget to BREATHE.

Ting Elger
 Development Administrative Assistant



Is the World Ready for You?

Advice to graduates upon graduation:

Congratulations on completing this stage of your development! Commonly, we are meant to understand that completion of university means that you are ready for the world, that you are equipped with doctrines that could carry you some distance.

Instead, could we consider the question of whether the world is ready for you? For in you is the light that shines in the darkness, and some shadows are not dissipated willingly. In fact, shadows can be hidden behind avatars, text messages, emails, and video chat rooms.

You go out into the world with grace. This grace is no “thing,” no “commodity.” My hope for you is that you take grace as an event, an ever-renewing encounter with God and your fellow people *now*, in the present. The grace you have is in you as child, as sibling, as friend, and as neighbor. All obstacles and limitations have been taken away by the event of grace.

Ray Klassen
Interdisciplinary Studies Director

Live Each Day in Innocent Wonder

Take time to breathe, to live each day with innocent wonder. Learn from the past, prepare for the future, but live in the moment. Make time for your friends and family.

“Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” (James 4:14 NIV)

When you go through trials in your journey, remember that this is where the real growth in your spirit and your being happens.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4 NIV)

Remember to give grace to others, as you do not know what their story is, what they are dealing with, what challenges they are facing.

Angela Troschke
Administrative Assistant Student Life

Chapter 3: Build Community and Grow Where You Are Planted

“Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

Jeremiah 29:4-7

Time Management and Balancing Work and Family Life

Finding a balance between work and home life is a challenge some days. Finding the right tricks and tools is essential in this process. Before the pandemic started, our kids had an evening activity almost every night. Choir, Taekwondo, Cadets, Church groups, and meetings filled our schedules. This meant needing to have meals planned and schedules coordinated at all times! We would get home from work/school, do homework, make and eat dinner, and be back out the door to that evening's activities. Some days one of us would drop off our kids to an activity and rush to a meeting while the other picked them up and got them off to bed. The biggest thing about trying to juggle so many things is not just scheduling but realizing that you may not be able to do this all on your own. It is okay to ask for help from your friends and family. The saying "God only gives you as much as you can handle" needs a slight adjustment. "God only gives you as much as HE can handle." You are never meant to travel the road alone. The song "Breathe" by Johnny Diaz reminds us that in our busy times, we need to breathe and rest in him.

"But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."
(Isaiah 40:31)

Some days are tough and some days are great; but in the end, you need to remember to breathe, rest in him, and give yourself grace.

Kathryn DeBree
Receptionist

It's Cheaper to Buy a New Clutch Than a New Marriage

While I was completing my PhD I tore my ACL, preventing me from driving our standard shift car, since I couldn't manage the clutch. While normally I drove us around, now my wife drove our car, searching for each gear with a typical grinding noise that makes the passenger wince. I thought about helping her with some driving advice, but I could see her already getting frustrated. I imagined the likely outcome of my advice and decided it wasn't worth it. Instead, I held my tongue and said thank you when we arrived at our destination.

We are told to speak the truth in love. Sometimes this means not speaking, even if it's true.

My wife learned to drive the car just fine. What she really needed was just a little practice.

Regards,

Dr. Michael Janzen
Associate Professor of Computing Science

Networking and Connecting

It is never too soon to begin networking! Another word for networking is simply building relationships. In a world where community is key, you can never begin connecting with others too early. Many opportunities come about from a connection with another in some form. When it comes to finding a career, never underestimate how powerful it is to have someone within the corporation be a reference for you. Building these **sincere** relationships with others may provide benefit in the future, whatever it may be. Ensure that you are truly sincere with those around you. Many people can sense if there is insincerity. If you are sincere with all those around you, just like any investment, you may see some fantastic “relational returns!”

Todd Van Driel
Athletics Operations; Head Coach: Men's Soccer/Futsal

Building a Community, Building a Life

I believe in the strength of community – a community of friends who become family and family who become friends. The passage in Proverbs 27:17, “As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend” (NLT) has been a mantra of mine for many years. To me, this scripture reflects the importance of building strong and meaningful friendships that lead to an enriching community.

As new graduates off to start your careers, you should understand the importance of keeping and growing the strong bonds of the community of friends you have established over the years. This community will help to rub off the hard edges of life and job stresses and reduce the anxiety you might feel. Friends who have your best interests in mind, who are funny and silly, enjoying many days and nights full of laughter, joy, conversations, judgmental winks, and genuine love – these all make the road less traveled by you to feel safe and easy. I encourage you to stay connected and bonded with this strong community as you continue on life’s journey, creating many memories to enrich your life.

An excerpt from Margaret Wheatley (*Turning to one another: simple conversations to restore hope to the future*, 2002):

*“Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters
Talk to people you know
Talk to people you don’t know
Talk to people you never talk to.
Trust that meaningful conversations can change the world.”*

Dr. Glory Ovie
Assistant Professor of Education

Chapter 4: Develop Your Craft

“May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us— yes, establish the work of our hands:
Psalm 90:17

I Have Finished the Race, I Have Kept the Faith

*“Say I am less an artist
than a spadeworker but one
who has no aversion to taking
his spade to the head
of any who would derogate
his performance in the craft.”*

- William Carlos Williams (from “The Visit”)

To be clear: I do not endorse hitting people with shovels. Nevertheless, the reason this fragment sticks with me is that it shows a wonderful mixture of pride and humility. The narrator knows he is no great shakes or “big fish,” but he takes pride and satisfaction from the humble work he does. He takes his “spadework” as a “craft” – not merely a task to perform for merely instrumental reasons (to get paid, to satisfy the boss, to earn praise), but as work of artisanal dedication, one worth taking satisfaction in for itself. Some of you might go on to be “great” (big, well-recognized, and well-remunerated successes in your field or profession), but most of you won’t (I know I’m not).

Nevertheless, the work you do in life – and that need not be paid work – can be a craft in which you can justifiably take some jealous pride. You might even have the opportunity to trade in craftsmanship for instrumental success. Think twice. In 2 Timothy 4, Paul’s parting satisfaction is not in his successes – he does not say “I have won the race,” but rather that *“I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”* By all means, go out and be a winner or an “artist,” but prefer being a crafts (wo)man and a *“good and faithful servant”* (Matt. 25) if you have to make the choice.

Dr. Michael DeMoor

Associate Professor of Social Philosophy in Politics, History, and Economics

Work to the Glory of God

Congratulations on graduating from King's!!

We as King's faculty have been asked to write our graduates a letter containing small nuggets of wisdom for you to use in your career and lives going forward – or perhaps use as a really cool coaster on your coffee table (just kidding)... Either way, in writing this letter to you I asked myself: *What would I have loved to know when I graduated that nobody told me?* And it all boils down to one small phrase that I still tell myself to this day... “HARD WORK ALWAYS PAYS OFF...”

No matter whether you get recognition for the brilliant job you have done, no matter how many hours you put in that seem to go unnoticed in your job or in grad school, a central theme to my own life has always testified to this fact that some time or another, your hard work will pay off and mean something. So do everything you do for the glory of God. Do it to make yourself proud. Do it with integrity. Do it in service of God and those around you. In this way nothing you do will be meaningless or mundane, and you will reap the benefits of it sooner or later.

Stay positive and patient, not all things will go your way or be easy in your next phase of life, but know that we are still your community, and we still want you to succeed no matter where life takes you. Know that we are proud of you and are celebrating this achievement with you and your family!

Don't be a stranger...

Dr. Caitlynd Myburgh
Assistant Professor of Biology and Kinesiology

Leadership: What Does a Good Leader Look Like?

John Wooden once said, “*Sports do not build character; they reveal it.*” Developing character has to be practiced, it does not simply appear. In the same way, leadership skills have to be practiced as well. Having the title of captain or CEO does not make you a leader. Leadership is taking the time to get to know those you are leading, it is taking a look behind you once in a while to ensure you are making progress, and more importantly to see if anyone is actually following you.

Leadership is as much about following as it is leading. Strive to be servant leader, one who is willing to put in the extra time and on occasion, do the jobs no one else wants to do. No one wants to make sacrifices for a self-seeking leader, but people will often go above and beyond for the leader who does the same for them. It’s about character, and in the same way that sports does not build character, neither does leadership; but it will reveal it!

Reflection question: who do I know who is an example of the type of leader I want to be? What qualities about them make them a good leader?

Grace Scott
Director of Athletics, Head Coach Women's Volleyball

Don't Psych Yourself Out

Dear (Education) Grads,

Wow, how quickly the last two years have gone by!! I still remember the first-year seminar at the beginning of September 2020 when we were all first introduced to each other. And you will forever be identified as the COVID cohorts, the students who stepped up and learned online even when it wasn't what you expected or wanted. The teacher you dreamed about becoming is now a reality. Undoubtedly your dream and vision of teaching have expanded and deepened. You now know the significance of all that lies beneath the surface (the submerged aspects of the *iceberg*, so to speak) and you are aware of the *formational* aspects of teaching.

You are no longer a student. Switching your thinking from a student to a teacher was no small feat and not for the faint of heart. Instead of experiencing learning activities, you had to learn how to create them. Instead of merely doing the learning, you had to do it, thoroughly engage in the doing, reflect on it, reflect on the reflection when discussing it, and then discern how you might assess the learning. You know you have arrived when that process (and sentence) actually makes sense to you!

And now for the next step, looking for the job and surviving the first year. I have no doubt that you will not only survive but thrive. That doesn't mean the absence of difficulties and challenges. But as you face them, remember a few things – my final words of advice:

First, don't psych yourself out. Believe that your place is in the classroom. You know how to plan, how to teach the content, the importance of classroom relationships, and the professional responsibilities of teachers.

Second, you know who you are. You have spent the last two years digging deep and discerning those foundational beliefs that make you tick, clarifying those passions that you will take into the classroom. An unexamined life too easily leads to indoctrination; you know how to avoid that pitfall. Play to your strengths and spend time in your growth areas. Model for students that no one can be good at everything.

And third, be resilient. Bad days and mistakes will find you. When anyone makes as many decisions in a day as teachers make, occasionally a decision they make isn't the best one. Don't let the mistakes crush you. Don't let the one harsh student comment overpower all the affirming statements. Consider the harsh comment carefully, take what is yours, refuse to take what is not yours, change what is necessary, and then move on. Tough stuff is tough stuff, and not to sound cliché about it, but it is what we do with it that makes us into the teachers we desire to be. Choose to learn and grow from the tough stuff (*growth mindset*), remain gracious and hospitable, and begin tomorrow as a new day.

Go well, my friends, and bless the students who will be so fortunate to have you as their teachers.

Dr. Margie Patrick
Associate Professor of Education

Dear ~~Future~~ Teachers

Congratulations! You are now teachers! This is a time of excitement and celebration. Two years of focused effort, determination, and persistence have brought you to this moment of graduation and provincial certification.

As a B.Ed. program, we have challenged you to **H**onour the call to the vocation of teaching by **O**bserving and implementing sound pedagogic practice to enable student learning, **P**romote student well-being, and **E**ncourage the development of intercultural and interreligious understanding. These have been our outcomes of **H**OPE for you.

It is your turn now.

When your celebrations are over and you begin organising your first classroom, remember to bring a sense of hope. You have been called to be a transformative educator, one who knows how to develop inviting classroom environments that cultivate student growth through nurturing relationships and challenging learning opportunities. You have been called to participate as a contributing member of a profession that values learning, community, and professionalism.

Remember to make your classroom a safe space where all students belong and the whole student is valued. *Remember* that faith is a foundation of identity needing exploration and nurture in the classroom. *Remember* to inspire your students to direct their lives according to worthy visions of how people can flourish as individuals, as a society, and in relation to the natural world. *Remember* to equip your students to notice injustice and wrong, to understand how to analyze its causes and commit to responding. *Remember* to serve your students conscientiously by being well-prepared. *Remember* to fascinate your students with the intricacy of the natural world.

And *remember* that we are all held accountable to higher standards as we bring this hope to others (James 3:1).

Our blessing is on you as you continue this most excellent and significant call.

Dr. Henry Algera
Associate Professor and Dean of Education

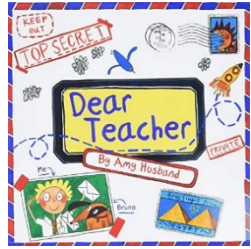
Be the Light

Congratulations grads! As you finish your degree you'll soon be looking to start your career. It can feel like a daunting task, but have faith in your abilities. You are smart, capable, innovative, and will bring unique ideas and perspectives to any workplace. Wherever you end up working, bring your best effort each day. Treat each workday with the enthusiasm and attention to detail that you bring to your first day on the job. Do not complain about the effort of others. Do not let others' lack of effort and initiative affect you. The positive demeanor of one person is capable of raising the workplace morale of an entire organization. By simply working hard and not becoming complacent, you can quickly become a leader. Employees who complain about tasks and salary will get passed over when opportunities arise. However, the patient worker with a positive attitude will watch opportunities appear before them throughout their career.

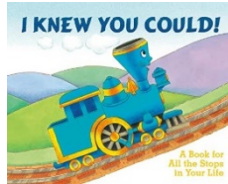
Be positive, be hard-working, be thoughtful, and be compassionate. Show the love of the Lord to those you work with and those you serve. That light will influence others in ways you cannot imagine and will bring joy and purpose to your life.

Reflection Question: What is one thing you can do today to be the light in your workplace?

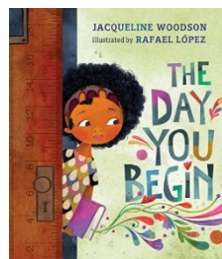
Nelson Wiebe
Coordinator Academic Advising



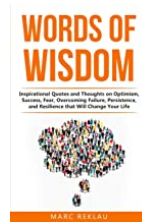
Congratulations on finishing your Bachelor of Education



degree! ! You have learned your s and how to teach them.



This is as a teacher! You are .



Here are a few as you embark on your new career.



you can do for your students, is remind them that



and to say that



. Teach



them to important with their

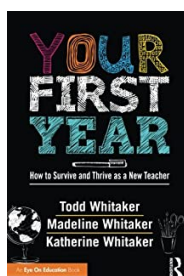
actions and words.



Teach them to



and



might be challenging, but remember that when things are not



working,



and

. It only takes

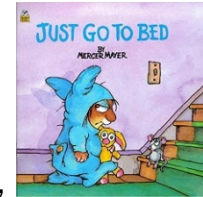
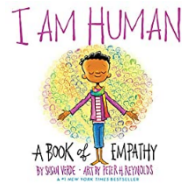
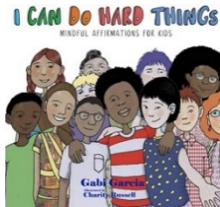


to

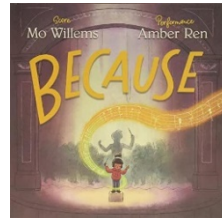
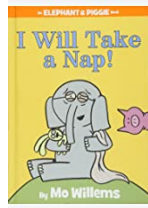


. Do not forget to say to yourself,

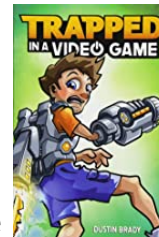
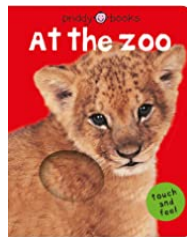




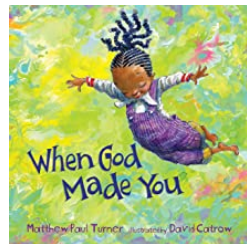
and . When you are tired, or



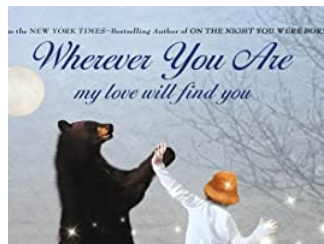
say, sleep matters! At times, it might feel



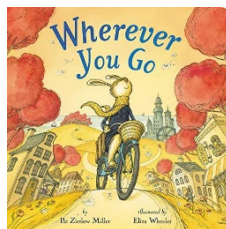
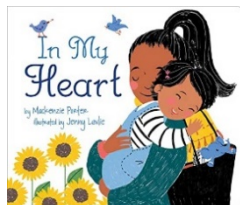
like you are working or are with endless levels



of difficulty BUT , He gave you what you need and



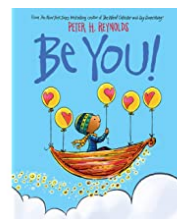
said, .



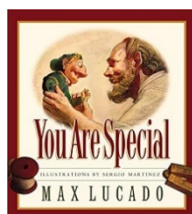
, I know that



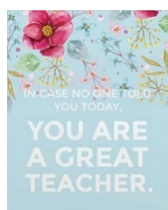
. Remember to always



because



and



.



I wish you all the best,

Jacqueline Filipek

Dr. Jacqueline Filipek
Assistant Professor of Education

Chapter 5: Detours in the Journey

“The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand.”

Psalm 37:23-24

Life is Messy, Choose Meaning

What could I tell you at this transition point on your life journey that would be helpful, true, and also something you are ready to hear? All I can share are the lessons I personally have needed to learn. But we are each our own peculiar mixture of family history, culture, character, skills, values, fears, and goals. So take from these what resonates, discard what doesn't apply, and hold it all lightly for the day when, perhaps, it is your time to learn that lesson.

1. There are times when I sense God's loving embrace, and times when I struggle to believe God is loving, present, or even exists. But wise mentors assured me, and experience has taught me, that sooner or later the light returns to the darkness. And when it does, I discover that my sense of the mystery and beauty of God has deepened, my spirit has become enriched and more resilient. The hardest part of the "dark night of the soul" for me is learning to surrender, trust, and *sit still*, trusting that the dawn will eventually come. *The only way out of the darkness is through.*
2. *Life is messy; be flexible and creative.* Life doesn't fit neatly in boxes, and much of my suffering has come from the mismatch between reality and my expectations or ideals. I now try to be more like a tree flexibly moving with the wind than a brittle wall that breaks when the challenges come.
3. *You can change your mind.* While there are areas in life where commitment is vital (e.g. in a marriage), you don't have to "get it right" the first time around. Explore. Try things. If they don't bear good fruit, change directions.
4. *Search for meaningfulness and satisfaction rather than "happiness."* No marriage, family, career, or relationship will bring you pure, unchanging happiness. Feelings come and go. *Try to love what you do, rather than seek to do only what you love.*
5. *Negative emotions are as much a part of a full life as positive ones.* Avoidance of anxiety, disappointment, or sorrow is not only impossible, it's a waste of energy, and you lose the opportunity to grow from them. One of the hardest lessons I've had to learn is that the surest way to learn from and dissipate my anxiety is to acknowledge and observe it.
6. Nobody, but nobody, is completely good *or* completely bad. *You can learn something from everyone you meet.* And related to this, *we never know another person's whole story*, so who are we to judge them?

7. *The only person you can change is yourself.* You can't make anyone else, not even your spouse or children, change to be the kind of person you think they ought to be. This applies to the trivial (picking up dirty laundry) to the vitally important (overcoming an addiction). But as you reflect and try to change yourself, remember to do so with *self-compassion*. Perfection is neither possible nor required.

Dr. Heather Looy
Professor of Psychology

When Things Don't Go as Planned

God is here. We are loved. It is enough.

Kate Bowler

Some of you may have seen this quote on my office wall. I want to talk about why it's there.

When I came to King's as a student 20 years ago, I was nervous but excited. I had big plans for a degree, and a job, and a family, and I was quite sure that this would all work out. I saw the future stretching before me, sunlit and beautiful.

What I didn't foresee was a series of major health issues, both mine and those of people I loved, starting shortly after my arrival at King's. I won't go into details; I'll just say that I have become too familiar with hospitals and have helped plan too many funerals. Some of my beautiful plans came true nevertheless. Others didn't. Life has not looked like I expected it to, as a bright-eyed young student.

I don't say this to scare you or depress you. My family and I have had a rough run, but everyone's story is different. The fact remains, though, that there *will* be hard times in your life. We don't necessarily hear about this in the “happily ever after” stories, or on social media, where people present a carefully curated portrait of their life. We see the smiles, but not the health concerns, mental illness, worries about loved ones, job struggles, relationship issues, money troubles, and so much more. Life is just *so hard* sometimes, in this broken world. (It's also amazing and wonderful and beautiful – sometimes at the same time.)

These challenges in my life have made me reflect on the verse from Proverbs 3: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” What does it actually *mean* to trust in God? Once, I thought it meant that I could trust God to stop bad things from happening to me. I know now that isn't true. Then I thought that if I just trusted God *enough*, he would take my suffering away. But that doesn't necessarily happen either. What I have come to realize is simply this: we can trust God to be with us, *whatever* is happening. And, strangely, this turns out to be enough.

I want to be careful here. This is not necessarily a comfort you can offer to someone *else* who is suffering. It is quite likely to have the opposite effect. But it is something that I have found can come to you, often inexplicably, in the very depths of your own pain. A realization that God is with you. That you are loved (*so* loved.) That this is – in the teeth of all the evidence – really, truly, enough.

Sometimes, this reminder happens through tangible means. A text from a friend. A hug from a loved one. A gorgeous sunset, or a bird in flight. Sometimes we don't realize until afterwards that God is reminding us he loves us; then we look around, and see the world full of these gifts.

It doesn't take the suffering away. It doesn't seem, from the outside looking in, that this could possibly be enough. But somehow it is.

So this is my prayer for you, as you graduate. That when the hard times come, when things don't look like you expected them to, when everything seems too much, you will remember:

God is here. We are loved. It is enough.

Dr. Gerda Kits
Associate Professor, Economics

My Career Journey to King's

My first job:

...was as a teacher of saxophone at a university in Chicago that had no saxophone students! I couldn't figure out for one whole year why I had agreed to such an absurd position until I got

my second job:

...as a professor of music at a state university in Pennsylvania for which I would not have been considered without my absurd first job. I worked very hard at my second job for one year, won a permanent faculty position and was set to take over the world, but I lost it a week later due to unexpected state legal issues. Naturally, I despaired, but only until the very next day, when I received a phone call asking me to apply for

my third job:

...as lecturer in music theory at a small university college in Edmonton. Naturally, I agreed because I had no other prospects and figured I could work for a while until I found

my fourth job:

...which I never found because I never looked because my third job and Edmonton grew into my professional and personal homes.

So, nothing really makes sense in this true story except my idea of sense and God's idea of sense were quite different, and thank goodness for that. May God's idea of sense also prevail through your various jobs after your university studies are complete.

Dr. Charles Stolte
Professor of Music

Chapter 6: Life-Long Learning

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Be a Life-Long Learner

I consider myself a life-long learner, which is kind of funny since I was told that I would never be able to read. It wouldn't be until grade 3 that the learning professionals around me realized that I had a learning disability. So as my teachers tried to figure out how I would learn in my classroom, my mom would find different ways for me to learn wherever we were. She would read to me. She would point out numbers in the grocery store. We would count seashells and stars and birds. She would create scavenger hunts and let me draw and explore. She would create in me the desire to learn things wherever I was.

Many years later, I would understand that learning doesn't just take place inside the classroom. That we all have opportunities to learn from one another, from works of fiction, from history, from people's life stories, and the list goes on and on. You see, becoming a life-long learner is really about enjoying all that God has put in your life, understanding that every moment we are alive is an opportunity to learn.

So, be the life-long learner you were created to be and stand in awe of all the opportunities we get to continue our education.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Dr. Susanne Huizing
Faculty Teaching Coordinator

Yours Is a Story for Others To Hear

One of my favourite things about working with King's Student Ambassadors is the chance to hear their stories. At the point I meet them (often as prospective students or in their first weeks as university students), they've chosen a program and are ready to dive into something they *want* to learn. During our in-person and virtual recruitment activities, Ambassadors have many opportunities to share the story of why they chose King's, what they are learning, and their goals for the future. Over their years at King's, these stories change. Maybe they take a class that makes a big impact and changes their direction, make friends or start a relationship with someone with different interests and goals, start an inspiring research project, or decide that the next step is something different than they had imagined for themselves. I love seeing the way these opportunities impact what they know about themselves and inform their decisions.

As you move on from King's, remember this: you are not the same person you were when you started your time here, and that's okay. In fact, that's what we're celebrating today! The best part is, you won't be the same person you are today in six months or three years, or 10 years. As you find new interests and accomplish and set new goals, your story will change. Keep sharing it. Invite others into that learning and growing. I assure you, yours is a story for others to hear and celebrate, too.

Reflection Question: What areas of growth in my time at King's am I most proud of?

Kathleen Shippit
Admissions Event Coordinator

Reframing THE Question

You are graduating! How does it feel?

I recall a sense of pride mixed with dread that was only stirred up further when the inevitable question was posed by some well-meaning family member.

You know THE question I'm referring to right?!

Are you going to make me write it?!

Okay, I'm going to write it....

Are you ready?

Prepare yourself!

So... *what are you going to do now?*

Stick with me! NO, don't flip the page just yet!

I'm not actually asking you that question and I invite you to stop asking yourself that question as well.

When I have been at crossroads in my own life, I have tried to resist the focus on doing and reframe the question to one of being. *How do I want to be?* To me, this is a much more interesting question. It is also a question that incites my own curiosity and invites me to consider what is possible.

This was also a guiding question for me as I considered my own sense of God's calling when making family and career choices. I often framed the question this way – what part of me do I want to nurture and develop? Searching with this kind of guiding question helped me to avoid scurrying around finding the next thing to *do* and focus on taking steps that were guided by what was most *meaningful* to me.

*"The LORD bless you
and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace." Numbers 6:24-26*

Congratulations and blessings to you on your graduation.

Dr. Danielle Brosseau

Registered Provisional Psychologist, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Chapter 7: Live the Vision

“And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.”
Micah 6:8

Challenge the Norm

Ideally, the King's community comes together to equip one another "to bring renewal and reconciliation to every walk of life as followers of Jesus Christ, the Servant-King" (King's Mission). We do this with a Vision "to build a more humane, just, and sustainable world."

With these in view, it is my hope that you all will dare to be delightful disruptors, as proud King's alumni. May you challenge warped notions of justice you will encounter in all spheres of life. Question norms of supposed "justice" that merely legalize inhumanity. Attend to the brokenness of the world that often passes as "normal."

But may you also never fail to be a witness to that delightful form of justice, renewal, reconciliation, and humanity proclaimed in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, which has been passed down from the Apostles to us and hopefully glimpsed—however imperfectly—during your time at King's.

The challenge of being a delightful disruptor is immense. We all stumble and we all fall. But there is a profound joy knowing that we are involved with God's work in the world and we are stumbling along the right path—the path of following the Servant-King, Jesus, into his Kingdom.

"In the world you face persecution," as Jesus says, "but take courage; I have conquered the world!" (John 16:33)

As you go about your life, your relationships both personal and professional, I hope you are empowered to activate the courage already within you to embody the justice, humanity, renewal, and reconciliation of Jesus for the sake of the world.

Dr. Andrew Rillera
Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies and Theology

Be Grateful

Be grateful for the beauty that you will encounter in your life. Not appreciative, but *grateful*. The difference is a matter of will. Appreciation is too disinterested for matters spiritual; too passive. This is why you should work, create, love, or have children: to be emboldened by your gratitude for what is beautiful in those things and therefore also to give your life back to the world—God’s world—in the spirit in which it was given to you.

Indeed, when it comes to such things, there will likely be no one for you to thank except God. But to be an adult is to recognize as much (nothing more, maybe): that behind everything beautiful there is an invitation to affirm life and eschew resentment. *Definitio animae honestatis.*

Reflection Question: How can practicing a life of gratefulness enrich my life?

Dr. Joshua Harris
Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Choose Defiant Hope

Dear Graduate,

I have a King's t-shirt that says: "Pursue a better world." This is an ideal that motivated me as a young university student. But I quickly realized that it is a difficult path to follow. So many things in the world that I care about are broken or threatened and they're not easy to fix. Thus, I realized that I would need hope. Hope is not optimism that things will work out but rather imagining a better future and committing to working toward it, despite the odds.

One of my wise theology professors in Bible College taught that love (e.g., in marriage, or loving our enemies) is not just a feeling that happens to come upon us but a choice about how we will act. I concluded that hope is similar. I also concluded that hope often involves defying the status quo. Many of the most innovative and radical solutions to world's problems aren't being discussed at the tables of power, they aren't even in the room, and people working on these kinds of solutions have to shout from the hallway or outside the building.

Thus, hope is often an act of defiance. I realized early in my young adulthood that if I was going to commit myself to the work of pursuing a better world, I would need to cultivate defiant hope within myself. I have done this through faith, community, connections to nature, and sabbath rest, among others.

Reflection question: How do you cultivate hope within yourself and your community?

Sincerely,

Dr. Joanne Moyer
Associate Professor of Environmental Studies and Geography
Director of Environmental Studies

Create Space for All to Flourish

Excerpt from 'A Brief for the Defense' by Jack Gilbert

*We must risk delight. We can do without pleasure,
but not delight. Not enjoyment. We must have
the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless
furnace of this world. To make injustice the only
measure of our attention is to praise the Devil.*

The years following graduation can feel overwhelming. You are often faced with a number of choices about all sorts of things: where to live, how to spend your time, where to give your energy, with whom to spend your time. As you navigate those choices, I would like to encourage you to move toward your future without fear. The years after graduation are a unique opportunity to explore who you are and how you will help build a more just, welcoming, and hopeful world for yourself and those around you. And you have time to figure all that out. Try not to take yourself or your choices too seriously! Put otherwise: make room for joy. Whether you are travelling Central America, working a job you love or a job you can't stand, taking cooking classes, pursuing further study, walking the Pacific Coast Trail, on your own or with someone you cherish, everything you experience in the season after university is a chance to learn a bit more about what you love (and what you don't love), and how your loves will help build a world worthy of the God of Love.

Whatever you come to learn about yourself – what you love, and how you can pursue those loves in the context of God's kingdom of love – remember that there are many others around the world who do not have the same choices that you do. So, insofar as you are able, try to create spaces in your life, your community, and your world where others – *all* others - can flourish.

Reflection question: what do you love? As you pursue your loves, how can you contribute to building a more loving world that reflects the God who is Love?

Rev. Jonathan Nicolai-deKoning
Director, Micah Centre

Loving God and Others

I recall working at a homeless shelter during my early years as a student at King's. The work was very missional, but over time I became desensitized and separated from my work. My wife spent her university years working part-time in retail, which, on paper, was not exactly "missional." However, she was intentional towards her co-workers and became a person in whom they confided, and they would often ask questions about life and faith. She brought hope and renewal to her workspace.

I believe a job or career is often an important vehicle to answer God's call, but it is not the answer in itself. I need to remind myself of this because I can feel inadequate, as I do not have a clear "vocational career" or calling like others appear to have (doctor, teacher, foreign missionary).

Rather, I think our first-hand call is to love God and others, and when we do that, we are fulfilling our vocational calling. Secondary to that, we recognize our gifts, interests, and abilities that will help further fulfill that primary call. So, if you're confused – just start with the big calling and then the other stuff will work itself out.

Reflection Question: What does it mean in my life to love God and to love others?

Christian Nakano
Development Officer

Chapter 8: Don't Forget to Write

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding: in all your ways, submit to him and he will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

Be Proactive – Send a Text

The fundamental reality of graduation is one of substantial change. You are no longer a student and have lost the clear connection that you had with many of your peers. You will not be in the same classes, writing the same exams, or spending time together studying, laughing, or crying.

In the months and years to come, it will be easy to fall away from the people you grew close to at King's. After all, your shared experiences as students have reached their ends. Graduation can shift from one of the most exciting periods of your life, to one of the most isolating.

I cannot urge you strongly enough to work to maintain the relationships and connections you've established at King's. It may be awkward, as you'll need to develop new shared experiences and memories, but the reward will be enduring relationships that you may hold for the rest of your life.

These relationships matter. You matter. It is absolutely worth doing what you can to maintain them. The alternative is so much less fulfilling.

Do something. Send a text. Grab a coffee. Reconnect. Keep the friendships that you've made and be proactive in doing so.

No matter what, know that you are not alone.

Reflection Question: What can I do today to connect with a friend?

Ben Oostenbrink
Development Officer, Annual Giving and Donor Stewardship

Speak Kindly

Other people's words and actions are always more of a reflection of who they are than they are about you. Speak kindly of others, as it's more of a reflection of who you are, than who they are.

Listen carefully to what people say of others, as they are revealing important information about who they are.

Teddi Taylor
Development Information Coordinator

Show Up

Showing up is everything. Having that “breakthrough” moment when you were in the right place at the right time means you showed up to the wrong place at the wrong time a thousand times.

Catherine Manocha
Laboratory Coordinator

I Know the Plans

Dear Grads,

As a new grad, you will have many “next steps and opportunities” to consider. Because you will have so many choices, it might be hard to decide which route to take. I have always found Jeremiah 29:11 to be such an encouragement: *“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD, “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”* One step at a time.

Asking and then trusting in God's direction will make the next steps more manageable and purposeful. And don't forget that alumni support at King's is only an email or a phone call away. I sincerely congratulate you on the completion of your degree; it is such a great accomplishment worthy of celebration!

All the best!

Nancy Burford
Work Integrated Learning Coordinator

Wherever You Are... Be All There.

Everything that has ever happened in history has occurred in a moment we call the present. Moments slip into the past, but that's okay because like pearls on a string, we can make a difference in the world by simply being present – one moment at a time. If you have ever struggled, feeling overwhelmed because of worry about an event, job, debt, not having enough, or if you are worried that your past is holding you back, I have encouragement for you... you're normal. In these moments, I ask myself: am I lacking something right now? Usually I am not – I have a roof overhead, I am well fed, I am not in pain, and my children are cared for. In that moment I take a deep breath and connect with myself. Essentially, I remind myself to be present, right now, right this moment. That usually brings me back to the present from the past or returns me to the present from a future problem (that often doesn't actually exist). It brings me back to peace. It brings me back to the kingdom of now. And in this moment, I have the capacity to take action, and through my actions I can help bring about a better world. I consciously release my grasp of "pseudo control" of the things outside my control and focus on things over which I have power. Acting and executing a plan has demonstrated the best way to get myself out of feelings of anxiety.

What do you say when you talk to yourself? Say nice things!

I have the tendency to be hard on myself, to judge myself somewhat harshly and even unrealistically. I'm learning how to notice my thoughts in these moments. I have learned that the world will make room for you. Will you learn to make room for yourself? I'm growing in this practice. In learning to slow and meditate, I practice noticing without judging. This practice is a barometer to what might be brewing a bit deeper in my soul. Whatever the storm, I am learning how to accept my feelings, which are trying to tell me something important. If I can find time to write a song (a passion that requires all of my attention) or do an activity for which I have great delight, I find myself coming back to the present in a powerful way.

As you go into the world, be yourself. Be in the moment. When you talk to yourself... say nice things! That is how you make history.

Reflection Question: How I am making the world a better place by learning to speak kindly to myself?

Trevor Froehlich
Director of Development

Faith, Hope, and Love

“May you live in interesting times” is apparently a Chinese curse. If so, one could well think we are living under just such a curse! The many crises at present – ecological, social, political, economic – certainly make our times “interesting.” There’s a lot of uncertainty and volatility. Unlike a few decades ago, which were simpler and more stable, today the knowledge gained from your education doesn’t just lead straightforwardly into a job.

What else do you need? King’s, as a liberal arts university, strives to provide you with an education that is more than just knowledge for a job: a breadth of perspective, the ability to think critically and creatively, the skill of being nimble on your feet. That’s something you will need, even more so than the knowledge you’ve learned.

Is it enough? No – but what King’s also is, is a Christian university. The Christian message is that we need faith in a time when cynicism is rampant, hope in days when despair is normal, and love when hate and fear and anger are so ready at hand. Knowledge, perspective, thinking critically and creatively... and faith, hope, and love. These are enough.

Dr. Christopher Peet
Professor of Psychology

A Bright Hope for Tomorrow

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

As much as we may plan otherwise, we all know that there is a good chance that our lives will bring us into contact with things that we would rather avoid. As you graduate from King's, I hope you know that in the years ahead, there will be many things that will test you. Life after university is full of personal challenges, troubling situations, and, yes, darkness. You will also come face-to-face with brokenness, pain, and evil that will shake your belief in a good world and maybe even a good God.

My challenge to you is this:

Do not turn away!

The way through darkness, the antidote to brokenness, pain, and evil is not avoidance; it is confrontation. Confront feelings of personal inadequacy, hopelessness, and blind conformity to the world. Confront what is wrong with the systems and powers of this world and reach out in love to those who are pushed to the margins. In the name of Christ, confront injustice.

My prayer is that during your time at King's, you learned that you are strong enough to stand shoulder to shoulder with the other members of the King's community as we try to bring renewal and reconciliation to the world. So...

Do not ever let someone tell you it is hopeless.

When you feel like it is falling apart, find someone who exudes hope.

Follow Christ as he marches through the darkness, shining light into every square inch of the world.

Because of Christ, you too can be a bright hope for tomorrow.

Reflection question: Who am I going to go to when I need to be inspired by hope?

Dr. Kristopher Ooms
Vice President Academic and Research
Professor of Chemistry

Final words

Graduates, thank you for the role you played and will continue to play in the life of your alma mater. As you transition now from students of The King's University to alumni of the university, know that you are part of a larger network of alumni around the world, serving to build a more humane, just, and sustainable world. You have been mentored and shaped by The King's University staff and faculty, and we send you out now to pursue a better world

With love,

The Staff and Faculty of The King's University

*The LORD bless you
and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26

Back Cover

Alumni Relations is a part of the Community Relations office, which serves alumni, parents, and churches. King's Alumni Relations exists to foster an ongoing connection between alumni and King's. Alumni Relations acts as an ambassador, both of King's to alumni, and of alumni to King's. We offer alumni benefits, organize alumni events and life-long learning opportunities, and we are active on social media. Visit our King's alumni Facebook page and Instagram account to keep in touch with other alumni and keep up-to-date on the life of the University.

Alumni Relations looks for opportunities to serve our alumni, and we want to hear from you about what we can offer that would benefit you as an alum. If you have any questions or suggestions for Alumni Relations, contact us at alumni@kingsu.ca.

APPENDIX TWO

Field Research Data

2/8/2021

Tallies
Contactable Alumni by Age

Age group	Number of constituents	Percent of total constituents
<Unknown>	174	4.50%
Age 20 to 24	591	15.30%
Age 25 to 29	827	21.40%
Age 30 to 34	673	17.42%
Age 35 to 39	492	12.73%
Age 40 to 44	399	10.33%
Age 45 to 49	253	6.55%
Age 50 to 54	233	6.03%
Age 55 to 59	143	3.70%
Age 60 to 64	46	1.19%
Age 65 to 69	16	0.41%
Age 70 to 74	11	0.28%
Age 75 to 79	5	0.13%
Age 85 to 89	1	0.03%
	3,864	

2/8/2021

Page

Age group	Number of constituents	Number of donors	Number of gifts	Total given	Average given per donor	Percent of participation	Percent of total given
<Unknown>	342	46	350	\$107,339.50	\$2,333.47	13.45%	20.45%
Age 20 to 24	659	9	10	\$559.39	\$62.15	1.37%	0.11%
Age 25 to 29	981	34	117	\$16,722.19	\$491.83	3.47%	3.19%
Age 30 to 34	885	35	129	\$39,097.00	\$1,117.06	3.95%	7.45%
Age 35 to 39	884	49	170	\$22,739.19	\$464.07	5.54%	4.33%
Age 40 to 44	906	39	235	\$160,506.00	\$4,115.54	4.30%	30.57%
Age 45 to 49	791	24	211	\$15,304.54	\$637.69	3.03%	2.92%
Age 50 to 54	554	44	299	\$56,378.08	\$1,281.32	7.94%	10.74%
Age 55 to 59	291	41	369	\$73,269.00	\$1,787.05	14.09%	13.96%
Age 60 to 64	97	12	24	\$27,497.00	\$2,291.42	12.37%	5.24%
Age 65 to 69	36	1	3	\$500.00	\$500.00	2.78%	0.10%
Age 70 to 74	19	3	33	\$4,545.00	\$1,515.00	15.79%	0.87%
Age 75 to 79	8	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
Age 80 to 84	2	1	2	\$53.00	\$53.00	50.00%	0.01%
Age 85 to 89	1	1	25	\$500.00	\$500.00	100.00%	0.10%
Total:	6,456	324	1,977	\$525,009.89	\$1,620.40	5.02%	

Note: Since gifts have been credited to more than one constituent, report totals may be inaccurate.

APPENDIX THREE

Public Lectures Stats

- In 2020 we hosted 10 public lectures
- 312 – total unique external attendees (52 employees also attended)
- 208 of these were not actively engaged with King's (no gifts in the past 2 years, hadn't attended an event in the past year, and hadn't volunteered in the past year)
- 89 (of the 208)– people attended 2 or more lectures
- 16 attendees made 1st gift or renewed giving post lecture attendance
- (an additional 4 employees also made new or renewed gifts after attending a lecture)

King's March 2021 Board Report:

Presented by Vice President of Development, Shannon Tuininga

APPENDIX FOUR

Mentor-Ease Proposal

Business Case – Mentor-Ease Software Implementation

Project Sponsor(s)	Kris Ooms, VP Academic and Research Shannon Tuininga, VP Institutional Advancement		
Project Initiator(s)	Kathleen Busch, Manager Community Relations Witty Sandle, Manager Centre for Career and Calling (CCC)		
Project Name	Mentor-Ease Software Implementation		
Project Purpose	To implement a software program for formalizing Mentor/Mentee Relationships between alumni and students.		
Investment Category	Mandatory = cost to purchase/implementation Sustaining = cost for ongoing maintenance Discretionary y = optional costs related to product such as training Opportunity Costs = current costs less new costs	Estimated Costs	Mandatory y = \$4495.00 implementation fee; \$500.00 API integration Raiser's Edge and LinkedIn Sustaining g = \$1788 - \$3588/year <250 Users = \$149/month 251-500 Users = \$199/month 501-750 Users = \$249/month 751-1,000 Users = \$299/month
Opportunity for IrT-enabled change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAAS aligns with cloud first strategy • Data remains in Canada • Enterprise-wide application 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compatible with MS365 tools
<p>Organizational change implications</p>	<p>At present Community Relations/Center for Career and Calling (CCC) have no formalized way to measure or record mentoring relationships. This software would allow both mentors and mentees to upload their personal information, connect to LinkedIn and manage their own mentoring relationships. The software allows for matches to be made by the institution, by the person directly, or by the software itself for people with shared interests. This software will help us connect and stay in touch with more alumni and record their career information. As well, the software can connect to Raiser's Edge which is Development's main software program, which will help Development keep better updated on alumni and their careers.</p> <p>Exploring how King's can connect alumni to current students is one of the operational goals of the CCC. The CCC is committed to connecting alumni to students for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career researching • Information interviews • Networking • Opportunity awareness • Being able to identify alumni willing to give presentations - present their vocational and career pathway stories at events within faculties/across faculties and/or CCC sponsored events. • Attendance at career fairs / networking evenings. • It would be helpful to have a database that can be interrogated for a variety of purposes as well as a single place where faculty and staff can share their existing contacts. <p>MentorEase will help the CCC to deliver on its core vision of equipping and supporting the vocational discernment and professional formation of King's students and alumni towards purposeful work by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building connections through direct communication and one-to-one meetings with a peer. • Equipping students and alumni with direct knowledge of career pathways in areas of interest, acquire knowledge, insights, and experience of occupational sectors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling students and alumni to conduct career research for an ‘inside view’ on career paths, occupations, career sectors and job tasks. • Learning about post-graduation entry points for occupations and careers of interest. • Enhancing the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and connections students and alumni need to transition into the world of work and/or build on the years immediately after graduation. • Giving context to academic studies and co-curricular pursuits. • Expanding career options by learning job search strategies • Increasing self-awareness and understanding of how to navigate making well informed career and vocation decisions. • Expanding horizons by locating career decisions within whole life vocational understanding through the stories of others. • Practicing transferable and self-management skills to improve the ability to make well-informed decisions and the chances of success post King’s.
<p>Scope</p>	<p>Initial participants would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Relations • Center for Career and Calling <p>Initial implementation would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web hosting setup and security • Customized design • Registration process • Matching process • Mentor/Mentee tools • Rules and accessibility features • Progress reports and program evaluations • Administrator tools and report details
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>September 2022 launch – 15.5 to 30.5 days for implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT/Marketing staff to enable the systems and initial set up (10-20 hours) • Administrator training (10-20 hours) • Ongoing monitoring and reporting (4-5 hours per month) • Import/export into Raiser’s Edge for adding/updating contacts (negligible if integrated)

	<p>One (1) year pilot with the following KPIs to measure return on investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-10% of alumni involved in the system for 1st year (300-600 users) • Minimum of 2 departments using the system (Community Relations, Career and Calling) • 80% alumni satisfaction – gauged through surveys and individual feedback • Matches of at least 75% percent • Improved data capture - King's garners Alumni Data and can analyse the types of jobs alumni are engaged in; Raiser's Edge receives contact updates for email, address, phone, etc. <p>Time Commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be time use by IT/Marketing to enable the systems and initial set up. I am unclear as to how much time that would take. • There would also be training needed for any administrators. My guess in 10-20 hours in tailoring the system, another 10-20 hours learning the system and 4-5 hours a month monitoring the system. • There would be additional time for Teddi in Development to learn how to easily import/export info needed for development to use via Raiser's Edge for adding contacts. However: having this info will potentially decrease the amount of data entry time needed in updating contact information.
<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>With ~850 active students and ~6500 alumni and counting, the scope of the software implementation could reach many users if promoted and marketed well and receives alumni and King's community buy in.</p> <p>The software could potentially be used across campus to measure and record mentoring relationships. Potential Stakeholders include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Relations • Center for Career and Calling • Development • Education- teacher mentoring program • Faculty mentoring with new faculty • Student Life student leaders/new students • Board members and new board members • HR mentoring buddies

<p>Critical success factors/dependencies</p>	<p>Success depends on how well it is marketed, promoted, and administered. At present there are many departments that do different types of mentoring, but King's does not have any formal way of collecting this information.</p> <p>Ability of Community Relations to work closely with the Center for Career and Calling and faculty to help promote this tool.</p> <p>Ability to integrate with Raiser's Edge and MS365 tools.</p> <p>Capacity of participating departments to manage the system as well as train and support user adoption.</p> <p>Capacity of ITS and Marketing to implement within the timeframes identified.</p>
<p>Benefits/Risks (including risks of not proceeding)</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases ability to contact alumni equals greater engagement • Demonstrates the success of a King's education by having mentors in various fields • Helps alumni obtain jobs and access career coaching • Bridges intergenerational connections • Helps King's identify potential classroom speakers • Enhances alumni networking • Identifies alumni for involvement in career fairs • Software is much more affordable (<\$5000 1st year) compared to Ten Thousand Coffees (\$20,000) • Canadian based • Company is smaller and more willing to tailor to our programming needs • Mentor Ease is the only one willing to "brand" it with our King's information • It is versatile and could potentially meet enterprise wide needs and goals for mentorship • It is easily accessible and located on our website • User friendly for administrators, mentors, and mentees • Compatible with Raiser's Edge and has the ability to import/export records easily • Links to LinkedIn, thus ensuring up to date data on alumni, as persons using LinkedIn generally keep their career information updated for potential employers <p>Risks:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a small Canadian start-up (2018) with only 4 employees and 50 clients, so there is potential for business issues to arise. However, since King's first connected a year ago, they have grown their company and have some larger clients like Telus.
Other comments	https://www.mentorease.com/

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alberta University of the Arts. "Micro-Credentials." Accessed April 22, 2021.
<https://www.auarts.ca/continuing-education/micro-credentials>.
- Angone, Paul. *101 Secrets for your Twenties*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013.
- Arnett, J.J. "Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teen Through to the Early Twenties." *American Psychologist* 55, vol. 5.469–480.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469>
- Aquinas College. "About Osher Life-Long Institute." Accessed April 21, 2021.
<https://www.aquinas.edu/resources/olli-aquinas/about-olli>.
- Axelrod, Wendy. *Ten Steps to Successful Mentoring (10 Steps Series)*. Alexandria, VA.: ADT Press. 2019.
- Axelson, Rick D., and Arend Flick. "Defining Student Engagement." *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 43 vol no.1 (December 27, 2010): 38-43.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2011.533096>.
- Bengtsson, Jeniene, Frances Badgett, and Deborah Western Dewees. "Engaged: Designing a Fully Integrated, Campus-Wide Alumni Engagement Model." *Journal of Education Advancement & Marketing* 4, vol.4 (March 2020).
- Blake, Jenny. *Life After College: The Complete Guide to Getting What You Want*. New York, NY: Hatchet Book Press, 2011.
- Bruggink, Thomas H., and Kamran Siddiqui. "An Econometric Model of Alumni Giving: A Case Study for a Liberal Arts College." *The American Economist* 39, no. 2 (1995): 53-60.
- Burnette, Josh, and Peter Hardesty *Adulthood 101*. Savage, MN: Broad Street Publishing, 2018.
- Burkett, Larry. *Giving and Tithing: Includes Serving and Stewardship*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1998.
- Bush, Frederic. *Ruth, Word Biblical Commentary (WBC)*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996.
- Calvin University. "Calvin Academy for Life-Long Learning." Accessed December 1, 2020. <https://calvin.edu/academics/call/>.
- CASE. "Alumni Engagement Metrics White Paper." Accessed 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.case.org/resources/alumni-engagement-metrics>.

- Christianity.com. Accessed March 15, 2021.<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/importance-and-meaning-of-kinsman-redeemer.html>.
- Clotfelter, C.T. "Alumni Giving to Elite Private Colleges and Universities." *Economics of Education Review* 22, no. 2 (2003): 109-120.
- Cooper, Mary Kay, Amy C. Lewis, and Weixing Ford. "'Pull' More Than 'Push' for Organic Alumni Development." *Journal of Education Advancement & Marketing* 5, vol. 1 (Summer 2020): 27-40.
- Cox, James C., and Cary A. Deck. "When Are Women More Generous than Men?" *Economic Inquiry* 44, no. 4 (2007): 587-598.
- Cundall, Arthur E., and Leon Morris. *Ruth, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries(TOTC)*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968.
- Drezner, N. D., and O. Pizmony-Levy. "'I Belong, Therefore I Give?' Graduate Students Sense of Belonging and Future Alumni Engagement." *Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Meeting* 50 (2017).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764020977687>.
- Duguid, Iain. *Esther and Ruth (Reformed Expository Commentary | REC)*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2015.
- Eaton, Philip. *Engaging the Culture, Changing the World: The Christian University in a Post- Christian World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011.
- Ebersole, Tim. "Alumni Financial Donations, Life Cycle and Student Activities." PhD diss., Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, 2011.
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234047191.pdf>.
- Eskenazi, Tamara Cohn, and Tikva Frymer-Kensky. *The JPS Bible Commentary*. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 2001.
- Fickenscher, Kira. "Ten Tips for University Mentoring Programs." Accessed September 6, 2021. <https://chronus.com/blog/10-tips-designing-mentoring-program-universitystudents-alumni>.
- Fleming, Kevin. "The 'Pots of Water' Emerging Framework for Alumni Engagement: Examining How Alumni Make Sense of Their Relationships with Their Alma Maters." *Philanthropy & Education* 3, no. 1 (2019): 103.
doi:10.2979/phileduc.3.1.05.
- Gasman, Marybeth. *Engaging Diverse College Alumni: "The Essential Guide to Fundraising"*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.

- Grant, A. M. *Give and Take, Why Helping Others Drives Our Success*. New York, NY: Penguin, 2014.
- Gross, Elana-Lyn. *What Next? Your Five-Year Plan for Life After College*. Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2020.
- James, Carolyn Curtis. *The Gospel of Ruth: Loving God Enough to Break the Rules*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.
- Jay, Meg. *The Defining Decade: Why Your Twenties Matter-And How to Make the Most of Them Now*. New York, NY: Hatchet Book Group, 2021.
- Johnson, Brad, and Charles Ridley. *The Elements of Mentoring: The Sixty-five Key Elements of Mentoring*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 2018.
- Johnson, Brad. *On Being a Mentor: A Guide for Higher Education Faculty*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2017.
- Hope College. "Hope Academy of Senior Professionals." Accessed April 21, 2021. <https://hope.edu/offices/hope-academy-senior-professionals/>.
- Hubbard, Robert L., Jr. *The Book of Ruth. New International Commentary on the Old Testament (NICOT)*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Kight, Chelsea. "What Christian Mentoring is and How to Do it." CRU. Accessed Sept 6, 2021. <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/help-othersgrow/mentoring.html>.
- Kosse, Glenn. "The Relationship between Young Alumni Participation and Giving," Graduate thesis, Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, 2019. <https://scholarworks.bellarmino.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1077&context=tdc>.
- Lau, Peter, and Gregory Goswell. *Unceasing Kindness: A Biblical Theology of Ruth*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Lindley, Daniel. "Focus On Alumni Engagement Metrics." *Successful Fundraising* 23, no. 7 (2015): 7.
- Lukas, Caitlin. "Working Together: Career Services and Alumni Relations." *Periodical Currents* 46, vol.5 (Sep/Oct 2020): 36-42.
- Macdonald, Gordon. *A Resilient Life*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006.
- Mack, Dwayne. *Mentoring Faculty of Color: Essays on Professional Development and Advancement in Colleges and Universities*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2013.

- Masenya, Madipoane. *Ruth, The Global Bible Commentary*. Ed. Daniel Patte. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004.
- Maxwell, J.C. *Mentoring 101*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008.
- Maxwell, John. "Lessons in Leadership from Ruth." Last modified April 8, 2015. <https://www.johnmaxwell.com/blog/leadership-lessons-from-ruth/>.
- McAlexander, James H., and Harold F. Koenig. "University Experiences, the Student-College Relationship, and Alumni Support." *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* 10, no. 3 (2001): 21-44.
- McMaster University. "Older Adults and Life-Long Learners." Accessed January 21, 2021. <https://mira.mcmaster.ca/education/education-and-life-long-learning-opportunities/older-adults-and-life-long-learners>.
- McWilliams, Allison. *Five for Your First Five*. Winston-Salem, NC: Library Partners Press, 2017.
- McWilliams, Allison. *Year One: How Young Professionals (And Their Managers) Can Thrive in Their First Job After College*. Winston-Salem, NC: Library Partners Press, 2021.
- Memorial University. "Alumni Strategic Plan." Accessed March 4, 2021. https://www.mun.ca/psereview/accountability/Alumni_Engagement_Strategy_FI_NAL.pdf.
- Molinsky, A., and S. Pisman. "The Biggest Hurdles Recent Graduates Face Entering the Workplace." *Harvard Business Review* (April 11, 2019). <https://hbr.org/2019/04/the-biggest-hurdles-recent-graduates-face-entering-the-workforce>.
- Monks, James. "Patterns of Giving to One's Alma Mater among Young Graduates from Selective Institutions." *Economics of Education Review* 22, no. 2 (2003): 121, 130.
- Morey, Raelene. "Nine Alumni Engagement Best Practices for Higher Education." *Pagley*. January 27, 2020. <https://pagely.com/blog/alumni-engagement-best-practices-higher-education>.
- Musick, M. A., and J. Wilson. *Volunteers: A Social Profile*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Musick, M. A., J. Wilson, and W. B. Bynum. "Race and Formal Volunteering: The Differential Effects of Class and Religion." *Social Forces* 78, no. 4 (2000): 1539–1570.

- Nouwen, Henri J.M. *A Spirituality of Fundraising*. Nashville, TN: The Henri Nouwen Legacy Trust, 2011.
- Osbourne, Emily. "Setting Your Sights on Alumni of the Last Decade." Webinar, May 2017. <https://www.ccaecanada.org/en/resources-hub/4066-setting-your-sights-on-alumni-of-the-last-decade>
- Ocsai, Suzanne. "The Characteristics of a Biblical Developmental Mentor/Mentee Relationship: Naomi and Ruth." *Mentorship Matters* (Blog), Dec 15, 2013. <https://mentorshipmatters.wordpress.com/2013/12/15/the-characteristics-of-a-biblical-developmental-mentormentee-relationship-naomi-and-ruth/>.
- Parks, Sharon. *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*. San Francisco, CA: Josse-Bass, Inc., 2000.
- Peterson, Eric, and Eugene Peterson. *Letters to a Young Pastor: Timothy Conversations between Father and Son*. Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2020.
- Peterson, Eric. *Letters to a Young Congregation: Nurturing the Growth of a Faithful Church*. Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2020.
- Pollack, Lindsay. *Getting from College to Career Rev Ed: Your Essential Guide to Succeeding in the Real World*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2012.
- Pyke, Robin Pervis. "Naomi and Ruth: 5 Traits of Mentoring." Last modified May 20, 2019. <https://robinrevispyke.com/2019/05/20/mentoring-relationships>.
- Reheer Group. *Increasing Alumni Engagement and Donations at Every Stage of Life*. Accessed Jan 18, 2021.
- Regent College. "Life-Long Learning." Accessed December 1, 2020. <https://www.regent-college.edu/lifelong-learning>.
- Rikleen, Lauren. "What Your Youngest Employees Need Right Now." *Harvard Business Review*. June 3, 2020. <https://hbr.org/2020/06/what-your-youngest-employees-need-most-right-now>.
- Rohr, Richard. *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2011.
- Robinson, Kerry. *Imagining Abundance: Fundraising, Philanthropy, and a Spiritual Call to Service*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014.
- Sharman, Jay. "5 New Ways to Think Alumni Engagement." Accessed April 20, 2021. <https://www.teamworksmmedia.com/blog/alumni-engagement/university-engagement-5-new-ways-to-think-alumni/>.
- Sandberg, Sheryl. *Lean in for Graduates*. Toronto, Canada: Random House, 2013.

- Sheehy, Gail. *New Passages: Mapping Your Life Across Time*. New York, NY: Random House, 1995.
- Stevens, Paul R. *Aging Matters: Finding your Call for the Rest of your Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2016.
- Sunne, Julie. "Who Is Your Naomi or Ruth? (Power of a Mutual Mentoring Relationship)." June 13, 2015. <https://www.juliesunne.com/power-of-mutual-mentoring-relationship/>.
- Ten Thousand Coffees. Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.tenthousandcoffees.com/>.
- Taylor, Mary Ann. *The Story of God: Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020.
- The King's University. "Mission and Vision." Accessed April 23, 2021. <https://www.kingsu.ca/about-us/about-kings/faith-commitment>.
- Todd, Jeff. "Going Deep: How a New Model for Engagement Transformed Alumni Affairs at the University of British Columbia." *Journal of Education Advancement & Marketing* 4, vol 1 (June 2019): 21-27.
- Todd, Jeff. "Behind the Evolution: What We Wished We had Known and What We Learned Along the Way." *Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education (CCAEE)*. Accessed April 20, 2021. <https://www.ccaecanada.org/en/?id=3329>.
- University of British Columbia. "Alumni Strategic Plan." Accessed January 21, 2021. <https://www.ualberta.ca/alumni/media-library/documents/final---alum-public-strategic-plan---august-2019.pdf>.
- UBC Alumni. "Imagine UBC for Life Alumni Affinity Business Process Reengineering Report." Accessed January 21, 2021. <https://www.alumni.ubc.ca/files/pdf/about/bpr/bpr-report.pdf>.
- University of California of Los Angeles. "Senior Scholars program." Accessed April 19, 2021. <https://www.semel.ucla.edu/longevity/senior-scholars-program-longevity-center>.
- University of Virginia. *Life Stage*. Accessed January 21, 2021. <https://alumni.virginia.edu/career-services/life-stage/>.
- Valtins, Karlis, Anita Straujma, and Igors Tipans. "Building Meaningful Relationships with Alumni." *eLearning & Software for Education* 2 (2020): 511-518.
- Wake Forest University. "Camp Third Act: Developing and Implementing Life-Stage Alumni Personas." Accessed January 21, 2021. <https://thirdact.alumni.wfu.edu/>.

- Wake Forest University. "Your First Five." Accessed May 18, 2021.
<https://alumni.opcd.wfu.edu/your-first-five/>.
- Ward, Michael R. "Abundance: Creating a Culture of Generosity." Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2020.
- Wawzenek, Bryan. "Listen to the Data: How Alumni Relations Teams Have Embraced Engagement Metrics and Learned More About Their Constituents." *Periodical Currents* 46, no. 4 (Jul/Aug 2020): 28-34.
- Webb, Michael. *Beyond Tithes and Offerings: A Closer Look at Traditional Giving and Its Impact on Christian Responsibility*. 2nd Edition. Create Space Independent Publishing, 2017.
- Weerts, David J., and Justin M. Ronca. "Profiles of Supportive Alumni: Donors, Volunteers, and Those Who 'Do It All.'" *International Journal of Educational Advancement* 7, no. 1 (March 2007): 20–34.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ijea.2150044>.
- White, Maria. "How Theological Schools Should Raise Money." *Faith and Leadership*, December 7, 2009. <https://faithandleadership.com/how-theological-schools-should-raise-money>.
- Williams, Brian. *The Potter's Rib: Mentoring for Pastoral Formation*. Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2005.
- Wunnava, P. V., and M. A. Lauze. "Alumni Giving at a Small Liberal Arts College: Evidence from Consistent and Occasional Donors." *Economics of Education Review* 20, 6 (2001): 533-543.
- Yancey, Karen. "Nine Character Traits of Intentional Mentoring." April 27, 2018. Assemblies of God (blog). <https://women.ag.org/en/Articles/Relationships/Nine-Character-Traits-of-Intentional-Mentoring>.