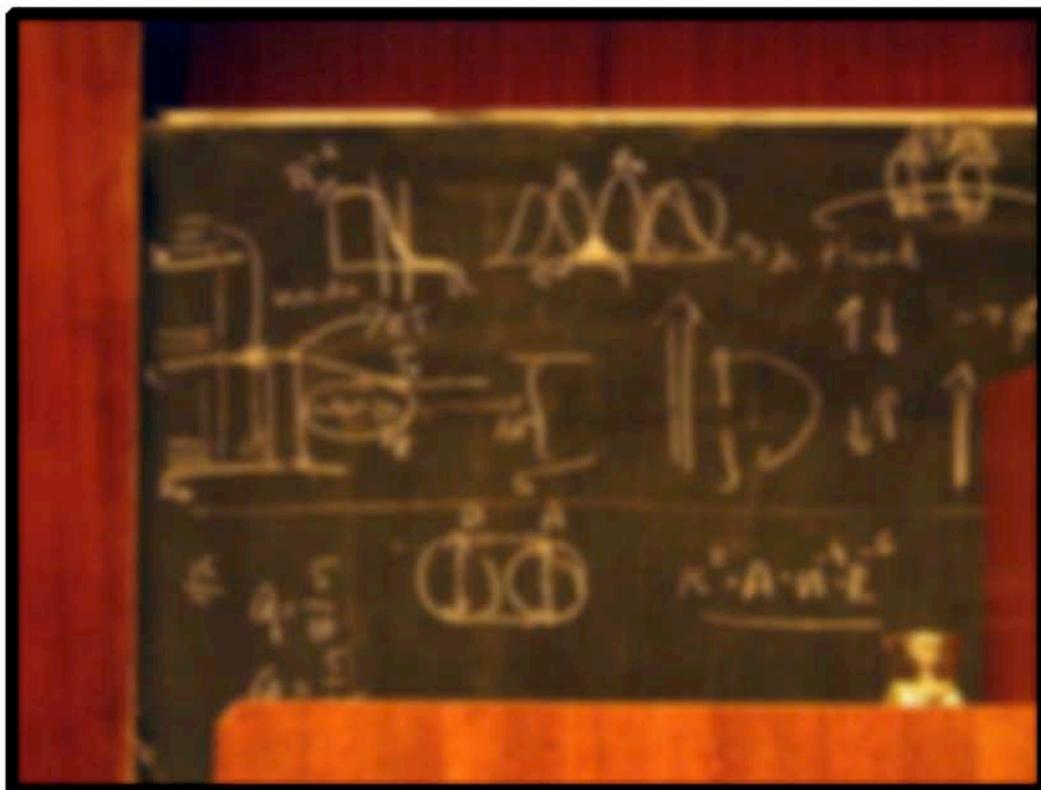


SERENDIPITY

PERSONALITIES OF PCC

SPRING 2005



BECKMAN • CONNOR • HOUSTON • NORMAN • WELLS

I n t r o d u c t i o n

Serendipity was born of necessity.

“Some Things About Mr. Pribble” was born of necessity.

Some things simply must be, and this “publication” is one of them. Yes, Mr. Pribble, there really is a student publication called *Serendipity*; and yes, you were interviewed for it. No, we had no idea it actually existed that night, but somewhere in the interview, a story insisted that it be written; and in the fabric of the universe, we found *Serendipity*.

Mostly, *Serendipity* is a “thank-you” note from us. We’ve thoroughly enjoyed Writing Seminar this semester and all previous, and we appreciate your time and effort which goes towards helping us — in such an individual way — become better writers. (And we thank Mrs. Pribble as well for parting with you every Tuesday night!) As several of us graduate, we will always remember the influence you had in our lives — every time we pick up a pen to write.

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To Simply Do

By: Keith Beckman

“There was a 1957,” he chuckles, as I ask him when he was born. Dr. Carlos Alvarez has travelled far in the time between his birth in Lima, Perú and now.

Dr. Alvarez is a biology and chemistry professor at Pensacola Christian College in Pensacola, Florida. He spent his childhood in northern Perú, near the Ecuador border, where his father worked for the customs office. His family then moved back to the Lima area, where he lived through high school, college, and his first round of graduate school. With this background, he knows what it takes to make the journey from life in South America to life in the United States. I asked him how his family felt about his living in the States.

“It’s a pride thing for them,” he said. Having a son who’s “made it” in the States has fulfilled and exceeded his parent’s goals and expectations for him. He’s worked hard to get to where he is, and has consistently held himself to a standard of excellence far above what was merely necessary.

Alvarez’s high school education, and what he made of it, went a long way towards opening the doors for his higher education. He went to San Andreas’ School, a Scottish Presbyterian mission school outside of Lima, where he received formal training in English. His senior year, he took a placement test to ascertain which upper-level English class he would take: *A*, *B*, or *C*.

He tested into the *A* class. However, there was one class higher than *A*: the notoriously-difficult “Cambridge” literature class. It was already filled, so he remained in the *A* class. Soon finding it too easy, he asked the headmaster if he could transfer into the “Cambridge” class. It

turned out that one place had been vacated, so Alvarez was able to take a now-empty seat in the far back of the room; and for his last year of formal English instruction, he studied Beowulf, Chaucer, and Milton — entirely in English.

Another influence which drew him to pursue his current educational accomplishments was his cousin, Ulises Moreno. In 1973, when Alvarez was a sophomore in high school, Moreno graduated from Cornell University with a Ph.D. in Plant Physiology. Meaning to employ his expertise to the benefit of his own country, he returned to Perú to study potato physiology. Alvarez visited the Andes with his cousin for a week-long trip to his cousin’s potato fields. “That’s how my *long-life* affair with potatoes was started,” he grins.

His cousin became a professor at the National Agricultural University at La Molina, on the outskirts of Lima. Alvarez, intending to study agriculture (and potatoes in particular) under his cousin, prepared extensively for the entrance exam. Out of the two hundred students actually admitted to his program, and the two thousand admitted to the school that year, he scored the highest. He finished in four years with his B.S. in Agricultural Engineering, took a professorship at the university that year, 1980, and two years later began working towards his master’s in the same field. He taught and studied at the university for the next seven years, earning his M.S. in 1989.

His time teaching and studying wasn’t so mundane as it could have been, though. He worked independently as an agricultural and agrochemical consultant, which provided some welcome additional funds; and he continued making visits to the Andes with his cousin and a researcher from the United States, Dr. Clanton Black.

The Andean roads, sometimes little more than burro-paths, were treacherous driving at best, with no guardrails to prevent a vehicle from slipping off into an abyss with one slight misturn. One of these roads was so narrow that the lefthand tires were only inches from a sheer drop. Alvarez’s door (a lefthand door) was slightly ajar, which understandably made him

nervous. However, when he opened it a bit to shut it more firmly, the car took a lurch which swung him, clutching door handle and open window, over a several-thousand-foot drop. Luckily for him, the air conditioning had been non-operational. "If I hadn't had the window down, I would have been dead," he said wryly.

In 1983, when Dr. Black began visiting the Agricultural University from the United States to study potato physiology — which does seem to be the primary botanical interest in Perú — Alvarez got to work with him. As the only student in the lab who spoke fluent English (thanks to his "Cambridge" class), he became Black's *de facto* chauffeur, tour guide, and field assistant. Over the next three years, while Black worked on his project and occasionally took two-week excursions back to Perú, he and Alvarez developed a friendship which led to an invitation in 1986 for Alvarez to serve a yearlong stint in Black's lab at the University of Georgia. This and his now-piqued interest in plant biochemistry resulted in his deciding to move after graduation — on an international-student scholarship program — to Georgia to earn his Ph.D. in Biochemistry.

But for all his scientific experience, his interests reach far beyond the laboratory, or even the potato field. In addition to earning his Ph.D., he's studied Greek in order to be able to understand the Bible more thoroughly on his own. While teaching and working on his master's by day, he attended night classes at a local seminary; and once in the States, found a pastor willing and able to continue tutoring him in Greek. In fact, one ambition he has yet to give up (and, not in the habit of giving up anything, likely never will) is his book. Growing out of his own Biblical studies is an interest in the inroads to his own language the Bible has made. He plans to write a history of the Bible in Spanish titled, of course, *The History of the Bible in Spanish*, and to be written, of course, in Spanish.

Alvarez's life-defining interest, though, is his teaching. As any of his students can tell you, he loves his job — I think he has more fun in undergraduate teaching labs than he did working on his own research. Just as I asked him

to share his favourite aspect of being a teacher at PCC, Dr. Geoffrey Holloway, his office-mate, walked in. "I get to work with some of the most talented students anywhere," Alvarez was saying. "You guys are just —" Suddenly, Alvarez snatched a fun-size Snickers bar out of the air — it had been hurtling over my head and at his. "And the fact that my office-mate keeps giving me chocolates," he said as he unwrapped the candy and popped it into his mouth.

When I asked him what his advice to a teacher would be, he told me, "Be as good as you can in what you do. This may be unorthodox, but I don't think you need all this education training. Just care for your students and know your stuff." And that he does. Besides loving his job, he's good at it. Holloway describes him as "one of the better biochemists I know," and appreciates that he goes out of his way to master material beyond his own specialty. Dr. Shane Smith, Dean of Basic Sciences and Engineering at PCC, thinks that one of the characteristics which has made Alvarez such an adaptable and thorough professor is his aptitude for learning. Not only does he keep up with new developments in biochemistry, but he constantly broadens his knowledge. When he teaches a class outside his field, he studies the material first so he knows it inside and out; then he teaches it to his students. "That's one characteristic of Dr. Alvarez: nobody has to teach him," said Smith.

His servant's heart is the one characteristic everyone seems to mention. Seldom a day goes by without at least one student meeting with him for advice, and he's always willing to take time out of his schedule for them. Mrs. Loli Cunningham, a family friend of the Alvarezes, said, "He loves to serve people. Who doesn't like a person so willing to serve?" She says that "he sees his students as his mission field." Indeed, his testimony is more than evident in his willingness to help.

"Not only is he smart, but he strives to see his students succeed," says Fadeke Oyeniya, a pre-medical student at PCC. Another student, Gloria Gonzalez, recalls a special birthday present she received from him when she was get-

ting ready for her graduate school admissions test.

“He asked me what I was planning on doing, and I said I was going to take the GRE, but I didn’t have the money to go buy a book.” She couldn’t study until she could buy the study guide, and the GRE is not a test to wing. “Well, it was my birthday the next week,” she continued, “so he called me into his office and said, ‘Happy birthday,’ and handed me a GRE book.” When she tried to refuse, he just said, “Keep it, take it!”

He truly believes anyone can be what he has become and do what he has done, and this con-

fidence is transmitted to his students. “He expects a lot from his students. He believes in giving one hundred percent, a hundred and twenty if possible,” said Cunningham. All that he requires of his students is effort, and he will work to make their success possible. “Study. Develop your brains,” he urges. Explaining his own accomplishments, he doesn’t claim great intelligence, but just good old-fashioned stick-to-it-iveness. “I was a doer,” he said, and what he has done, by simply doing, rather than sitting idly on his abilities, far outstrips what anyone resting on mere intelligence and talent can hope to accomplish.

Eccentricity and Excellence

By: Brittany Wells

Dr. Kurt Grussendorf paces back and forth at the head of his “World History Since the 1900s” classroom, gesturing with his hands, as he calmly explains to his eager pupils the government programs instituted by Franklin Delano Roosevelt during the Great Depression. All eyes are on him, when unexpectedly, he begins laughing to himself, and breaks out into a random chorus of “Happy Days are Here Again.”

“What in the world is going on here?” you wonder in dismay, when another student leans forward to pat you on the back, and reassures you, “Don’t worry, he always does that.” It doesn’t take one of his students long to realize that he’s no ordinary history teacher. He’s “Dr. Grussie.”

Affectionately dubbed “Dr. Grussie” by his history students at Pensacola Christian College, the eccentric history professor was born in 1950 in Grand Rapids, Minnesota (not to be confused with Grand Rapids, Michigan, he points out), where his German grandfather immigrated in 1870.

Dr. Grussendorf did not always dream of teaching history. Growing up in the 1950s, his

family owned a summer cabin, completely furnished with beds, tables, and chairs crafted during World War II by German POWs. He admits that since there was no television in the cabin, he would spend most of his days reading.

His two favorite authors were Herman Melville, for his short stories, and Emily Dickinson, who is by far, the “greatest poet” in Dr. Grussendorf’s opinion. It was from his reading — and his father’s and grandfather’s stories of Germany and World War II — that he developed a passion for writing and history.

“I wanted to be a writer,” Dr. Grussendorf contemplates, reminiscing on his boyhood. As a man, he has written about five short fiction stories, all of which were published, and several poems.

Aside from writing on his own, Grussendorf has written for A Beka Book curriculum, an educational arm of Pensacola Christian College’s ministry. Kurt first came to Pensacola Christian College in 1984 as a student, although he had already attained a doctorate from a secular university, the University of North Dakota. While teaching at a Christian school in Jupiter, Florida, Kurt heard about PCC. He lived in the Coberly residence hall for men on campus and studied undergraduate history courses. He wanted the Christian perspective on history.

While at PCC, he developed a friendship with Dean Walter Grubbs, who encouraged him to get an M.A. in Church History. Because PCC

did not offer a Master's degree in Church History, he took this advice and moved once more, this time to South Carolina, to attend Bob Jones University. After acquiring his Master's degree in Church History, he contemplated on whether or not to go back to Pensacola.

Instead of going back to PCC, he took a teaching position at Faith Christian Academy in Hendersonville, North Carolina. While there, the Lord began to work on his heart. He wondered if he should be teaching on a higher level because he had already acquired a doctorate from another college. After about a year teaching at the private school, he trekked back down to Florida to apply for a position at PCC, and this time, staying for good.

Some fond memories of living for three months out of the year in the family's summer cabin include their cat, Sam. Dr. Grussendorf describes him as having yellow eyes and black

fur. He recalled one instance where a little field mouse crept across the floor of the cabin, and the lazy cat opened one eye to watch him, but wouldn't move. Kurt's mom forewarned, "You know, there's only one thing that will make him budge." The two of them watched as the little mouse scampered over to Sam's food and started munching. Sam cared then. Sam stumbled over his paws to chase him out.

Angela Valica, a history teacher and co-worker of Dr. Grussendorf, says that if she had to describe him in one word, it would be "eccentric."

"He's always understood me," she says. "He taught me that it's okay to be yourself, and still be a history teacher at the same time." Dr. Grussendorf may be eccentric, but he loves his students and is passionate about what he does.

Kurt Grussendorf is proof that eccentricity and excellence can exist in the same man.

Proper Perspective

By: Rachel Houston

The teenage boy stands before the painting, his mouth forming a small "o." For several seconds, his eyes wander back and forth over the scene. "Wow," he finally whispers softly.

I too stare at the picture. It's Jesus. His face is wrinkled with compassion as he bends over, leaning with outstretched hand to pull Peter from the angry waves.

I glance at the name etched in the corner of the painting, but I already know that this is one of Brian Jekel's works. What's more, I also know a bit about the man behind the name.

Brian Jekel is what many would call a master artist.

His colleagues and students often praise his perseverance, dedication and work ethic and those character traits that have led to Jekel's increasing prestige as an artist. Just last year, Pensacola Christian College gave him the title,

"Artist in Residence" — a distinction given to only three others in the PCC faculty.

But Jekel is much more than a college professor — he's often praised for his ability to successfully balance a variety of duties. Brian Jekel is respected because he's a talented artist, a family man, and a dedicated Christian.

It is Jekel's artwork that most often catches the attention of the public. A left-hander himself, Jekel fits the stereotype often associated with lefties: he's extremely creative. Although he's only fifty-one, he's already produced over 800 Bible illustrations and more than 3,000 pieces of art for *A Beka Book*.

Jekel's artistic skills are evident not only in quantity, but also in quality. He's won best of show awards in Florida, Colorado, and Washington. His works have also been recognized by publishers including Moody Press, Regular Baptist Press, Scripture Press, and Standard Publishing. Some of his paintings have been published in *Artist's Magazine*, *Society of Illustrators Annual*, and a book titled *Best of Portraiture*. He has even been a member of the Society of Illustrators.

But Jekel isn't only an artist; he's also a

committed family man. Colleagues and students alike notice how much time Jekel spends with his wife and seven children.

“He’s a dedicated father,” says Joe DiGangi, an art professor at PCC.

Each day the Jekel family eats two meals — breakfast and dinner — together. Jekel also leads his family in devotions.

Jekel’s involvement in his family doesn’t stop there, though. He frequently drives across state lines to watch his sons’ sporting events, usually wrestling.

Of course, Jekel admits that parenting can sometimes be tough. In fact, when I asked him what one of his greatest challenges was, he said: “raising my son Justin.” Even so, Jekel’s love for his family is evident in his tone of voice. I hear his voice grow warmer as he repeats his children’s names and ages. He makes sure to mention the majors of his three oldest children, even though I don’t ask for them.

Although both art and family are important to Jekel, it is his faith that plays the most important role in his life. His passion for Christ perhaps most clearly evident in his paintings — the majority of which portray a Bible scene.

But Jekel also has an influential Christian testimony. Many of his fellow art professors describe him as being wise and Godly.

“He’s dedicated, hard-working, and he tries to honor and glorify God,” says DiGangi.

Because Jekel is a Christian, and acknowledges the presence of sin, I asked him what he views as his weakness.

“Sometimes it’s impatience with myself,” he answers. “And then perhaps with others who are interested in trivial things.”

David Russell, one of Jekel’s colleagues, agrees with this confession, but says that Jekel is “more compassionate to students now.” Russell remembers hearing rumors about some of Jekel’s earlier teaching at the college.

“After projects were all turned in, he would put them up on the grating in front of the whole class. Then he would knock all of them off onto the floor until he came to the very end. ‘This one is an example of good work,’ he would say.”

Jekel grins as he admits that the rumor is

true, but he does add: “It could have been worse. I once had an art teacher who did the same thing; only he did it with paintings that were still wet.”

Even today, Jekel is a sometimes impatient with students. He says his two pet peeves are “laziness and giving up.”

But graduate student Greg Hewitt also believes that Jekel is more patient now than he used to be. He’s heard that Jekel “used to have more of a temper and sometimes it carried into his teaching.”

Once, when Jekel was teaching a drawing class, two of his students decided to complete a project in comic-book style. The other students lavished attention on the two boys, often laughing and joking about the pictures during class. Jekel, however, simply ignored the two class clowns and avoided helping them on the project. After grading the pictures, Mr. Jekel placed the drawings on his desk and told the students to pick up their work.

Within minutes, both cartoonists approached him. “Where are our drawings?” they asked.

Jekel pointed to the far corner of the classroom. “In the trash can,” was his quick reply.

On other occasions, Hewitt has seen Jekel display what he called, “righteous, purposeful anger.” During one art show, Hewitt noticed some students that had untucked shirts, baggy pants, unshaven faces, and long hair. Jekel asked them leave because they were being “disrespectful.”

“It wasn’t appropriate attire,” Hewitt explains. “Especially since they were former students.”



Brian Jekel was born in Atkinson, Wisconsin in 1951. His father was a speech and history teacher while his mother was “just simply a homemaker.” By 1959, the Jekel family had moved to Illinois. Brian also had two younger siblings, Jim and Karen.

Jekel leans back in his chair as he reminisces his childhood. “I was always very active with things that kids do,” he said. In particular, Jekel remembers “climbing trees, going hiking,

fishing, and getting into trouble in neighbor's garages" (He refused to elaborate on that last statement).

It was around the age of 8 that Jekel first became interested in drawing. "The drawing started kind of early because of the long winters," he explains. At that time, his favorite drawing subjects were animals and cars.

While Jekel was in elementary school, he parents suggested that he learn how to play an instrument.

"I went to the first day of class," Jekel recalls, "and in my mind I was going to play the trumpet. But all the trumpets were taken and all that was left was a baritone. So I ended up having to lug this like 50-pound baritone for blocks!" Jekel thought the incident was especially unfair because he happened to be the smallest one in his class.

It was during those years that Jekel also joined the Boy Scouts. His most memorable scouting experience was a 10-day, 100-mile canoe trip on the boundary waters of Minnesota and Canada. Jekel described the area as "nowhere land."

In the summers, when Brian's father had three months off of teaching, the Jekel family would go on vacation.

"My grandmother bought a pair of neighboring cabins at a place called Trump Lake in Northern Wisconsin," Jekel explains. "We would spend our entire summer up there working the cabin, cleaning it up. We would live in one and rent out the other."

When Jekel was in sixth grade, his family moved to Mankato, Minnesota, a place just south of the twin cities. Throughout his late elementary and high school years he enjoyed a variety of sports including softball, running, swimming, wrestling, and especially football.

He maintained an interest in football — continuing to play even in college. In a way, football later influenced him to change his major.

Jekel had enrolled at Mankato State University as a pre-med major, but he soon learned that there was a great demand for teachers.

"There was a teacher shortage in the late 60s

and they predicted it would continue into the early 70s," Jekel remembers. "When I saw that medicine was going to take me a long time to finish all my schooling, I kind of swerved over and went into physical therapy and sports medicine."

In 1973, Jekel graduated with a major and minor in those respective areas. He expected to get a job right away, due to the teacher shortage, but somehow he couldn't find any available positions.

"I graduated with honors and that didn't help," says Jekel. "There were just no jobs."

Jekel was so desperate that he decided to interview for a teaching job in Australia. For some reason, which Jekel has yet to figured out, this particular school was only interviewing applicants from California and Minnesota. Even so, Jekel wasn't too optimistic about his chances of securing the job.

"The interview was kind of an average interview," Jekel states with a shrug. "I'd felt better about other interviews that ended up going nowhere so I figured, 'Well this was just an interview experience.' A month later, I got a call saying that they wanted me down there."

For the next three years, Jekel taught physical education and science in Australia. He also coached various sports, including rugby, cricket, and Australian-style football.

Once again, it was Jekel's love of football that persuaded him to return to the U.S.

"I was very happy about living in Australia," Jekel says. "But the thing that I missed was football and I wanted to coach [American] football."

Today, Jekel admits that his motivation for moving back to America was "dumb," but in 1977 he went to the travel agency and sat down to wait for an agent. That's when he noticed some interesting brochures on a table. He discovered that a trip from Canberra to Minneapolis would cost \$1200, but a trip through the southeast orient, the Soviet Union, and Northern Europe cost the same amount.

Jekel decided to be adventurous and spend the next couple of months traveling. He was able to take a ferry across the Sea of Japan to

what was then the Soviet Union. During his Transiberian train-ride across the Soviet Union, he passed through 10 time zones.

While in Moscow, Jekel toured the Kremlin. He also visited Leningrad (St. Petersburg today) and saw the Winter Palace, which includes the Hermitage — often considered one of the four great art galleries in the world.

Even then, Jekel didn't imagine that painting would one day be his life's work.

"I always liked going into galleries and museums," he admits. "But I never saw it as being part of my life. Outside of just kind of drawing and sketching during all those years, I didn't really pursue art. It didn't look like a way to make a living."

After Jekel's time in the Soviet Union, he attempted to cross the border into Poland. It was there that he had what he called his most dangerous experience. Authorities claimed his passport was not "accurately stamped" and nearly arrested him. After some tense moments, they finally allowed him to pass.

When Jekel finally returned to the United States, he worked as a substitute teacher in a public school. It wasn't a good experience.

"The public school had changed in the 8 years that I'd been out. It had become . . . more liberal in its philosophy," Jekel observes. "There was a persistent problem with teachers being threatened. Teachers weren't being backed and students weren't disciplined . . . so I said, 'I've got to get out of this.'"

So Jekel began traveling around the United States searching for something he would enjoy doing. One day, while at a laundromat in Denver, he picked up an art magazine. One of the ads for an art school near Denver kind of "jumped out" at him.

"I thought, 'Well I'm not doing anything else let's just see what an art school looks like,' says Jekel.

Jekel packed up some of his drawings and went to see the director of the school, Philip Steele. At first, Jekel was amazed by what he saw.

"I was expecting 18–20 year olds, young masters," he states. "I was 27, a late starter, and

I was surprised that they all looked kind of like beginners to me. I didn't see anybody that really stood out."

Encouraged, he decided to attend Rocky Mountain School of Art for a year just to "see what happens." Within that year, he was asked to become an assistant teacher.

During that second year, Jekel assisted Phil Steele, a talented artist who had been trained by the same teacher as Norman Rockwell. It was during his time as an assistant that Jekel met Marlene, a first-year art student who had just graduated from Denver Baptist Bible college.

At first, Jekel simply noticed that Marlene was a bit friendlier than the other students he helped. "Rather than just shaking her head, 'yeah, yeah, yeah,' she would kind of actually talk so we always had a little bit of conversation."

Then, Marlene asked Jekel if he would attend church with her. According to Jekel, Marlene's church was having a Sunday school contest where the class that invited the most guests would get a free meal.

Although Jekel had attended a Congregationalist church when he was younger, he admits that going to Marlene's church was actually "the last thing" he wanted to do. But, because "she seemed sincere," he decided to go and "help her with the count."

Jekel enjoyed the sermon and atmosphere so much that he continued visiting the church with Marlene, even after the contest was over. By the sixth Sunday, he knew he needed to act upon what he'd heard.

"The Holy Spirit finally kind of took hold," Jekel explains. "Up till that time, it was words, just more religious words. I'd heard this stuff before, but this just seemed like a different slant."

When it came time for the invitation, Jekel suddenly felt timid.

"It was a smaller church, he explains, "and I'd never saw anyone come forward ever. So when the invitation was made I was thinking, "He's asking me to come forward, but I haven't seen anyone come forward. Do I do this?"

At that moment, Jekel felt a strong convic-

tion to go forward. Suddenly, he felt scared and he discovered he couldn't move.

"It was at that moment when I couldn't move my feet that I realized that there was a Satan," he states. "It never really occurred to me that there was a real Satan or a real devil before and at that moment it felt like his hands were reaching through the floor and holding my feet."

Jekel didn't go forward that night, but for the next three days he was petrified.

"When I would walk to school and back, I really thought that there was going to be some truck or some car that was going to careen out of control and I was gonna get killed. And I knew that I wasn't going to go to Heaven."

By Wednesday, Jekel had had enough. He went to the pastor of the church and asked him if he could talk. That day, he began a personal relationship with Christ.

Eventually, Jekel married Marlene and they moved to Olympia. "I was just trying to make my art work, and I was just getting nowhere with it," Jekel recalls. One Saturday in 1981, Marlene went to a friend's house to wash laundry. While she waited for the dryer cycle to finish, she noticed an issue of *Sword of the Lord* and began reading. In the back of the publication she noticed an ad for an illustrator at Pensacola Christian College and told Jekel about it.

Jekel then went to see his pastor. "He was from Tennessee Temple and he said he hadn't really heard much about [Pensacola Christian College] because it was a pretty new school, but what he did hear seemed to be good."

Jekel decided to answer the ad. He went through a telephone interview process, submitted his portfolio, and was soon offered the job. The Jekel then took a step of faith.

"We kinda came down — not ever visiting, not knowing anybody down here, and none of our family ever lived down here," Jekel states.

Not only did Jekel work as an illustrator for A Beka Book, but he also worked as a art teacher — even though he'd never earned a degree in art.

In 1991, the administration asked Jekel if he would consider getting a graduate degree. Jekel agreed and began looking for a school that had a

good art program. He finally found Marywood University in Scranton, Pennsylvania. There was only one problem — it was a Catholic school.

When Jekel explained his decision to Dr. Horton, the president and founder of Pensacola Christian College, Dr. Horton only said, "I'm sure that school will be more conservative than a state school." Eventually, Jekel graduated with a Master of Arts degree in studio painting.

Today, Jekel says he still loves his work. "I would not trade my job in even if I got paid 10 times more." Jekel says he draws encouragement from his job as well. "There are a lot of rewards — I get feedback from people who use these illustrations on the mission field, in Bible studies. It's been a blessing. It keeps me going when I get down."

One thing that Jekel especially enjoys is the time he spends with his students. "So many talented people come here," he says. "They're more of a blessing to me than I am to them. The talent here surpasses what I saw in Denver. It's thrilling. The kids that come through here are so good."

Sometimes Jekel works until 9:00 p.m. During the day, he frequently walks the halls of the art labs, peering through the glass windows, observing students as they paint. His white hair, slow gait, and faint smile are a familiar sight on the second floor of the Communicative Arts Center.

But his dignified, reserved, and almost expressionless exterior sometimes make him seem aloof.

"He's austere, almost unapproachable," says Hewitt. But he also admits that he might have problems relating to Jekel simply because he himself is timid.

Other art students agree with Hewitt, however. Many are so in awe of Jekel's talent that they feel they didn't deserve his attention.

Hewitt puts these students' feelings into words: "Wisdom just exudes from him, so you're almost afraid to bother him with your petty problems."

Jekel probably doesn't intend to scare others, but I could understand how his composed manner might intimidate his students. Just look-

ing into his clear eyes made me feel as if he knew something about me that I myself didn't know. Perhaps his eyes are simply the eyes of a master artist.

I do know that he describes himself as "more of a listener than a talker," but he talked with me for an hour.

Despite Jekel's numerous accomplishments, he still has several goals for the future. What's first on the list? "To perhaps turn out a good painting someday." I wonder at that response for a moment, but Jekel continues: "To see my kids grown and serving the Lord." He concludes

with: "To keep my health so I might be able to travel once my kids are grown." He can't resist one last quip: "That will be when I'm about 65."

Jekel also says that in part, he hopes to be remembered as "someone who walks the walk."

But perhaps he has already accomplished that goal. When people ask Hewitt, "What do you want to be?" he readily responds: "I'd like to have Mr. Jekel's life — family, teaching, and painting."

In other words, a picture-perfect balance.

FIRST IMPRESSION

By: Amanda Connor

I had never met Dr. Charlene Monk before April 4th, 2005. I had heard various opinions from some of her students, and I had come away with the impression that Dr. Monk was akin to a judge, sitting high on a platform, a black robe billowing about her. But when I entered her office on that Monday afternoon, I left with a very different impression. From the moment I came in, she was friendly and inviting, and prepared to answer my questions.

She was not a judge, but I found her to be a professional woman, one who takes her work and responsibilities seriously. As a member of Pensacola Christian College's Speech faculty, Charlene has taught every speech class at least once, and has directed approximately thirty-five productions for the college.

But she did not always know that she wanted to teach. Upon graduating from high school in 1969, Charlene attended Bob Jones University as a Christian Education major, a program designed to give a Biblical foundation for students who may desire to work in any area of the ministry. It was during her freshmen speech class that she fell in love with speech and changed her major. During her four years as an

undergrad at Bob Jones, Charlene worked as a director in many of the college's plays and speech productions. "I love visualizing the production before. It's the aesthetic element," she says of her love for directing.

After Charlene had graduated with a bachelor's degree in Speech Education, she continued her education at Bob Jones, earning a master's degree in Dramatic Productions. For a summer, she volunteered as a stagehand at the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival. She then moved to Wisconsin, where she taught speech at Maranatha Baptist Bible College for two years. In 1977, Charlene felt the Lord was leading her to move on from Maranatha, and at the same time, a man named Dr. Arlin Horton was looking for teachers to help out in the music and speech programs at his three-year-old Christian college. The Lord worked, and Charlene became a member of the PCC faculty in the fall of 1977.

While teaching at PCC, Charlene earned her doctorate in Theater from Louisiana State University, spending one year of residency and four summers in Louisiana. Knowing that the Christian approach and the secular approach to theater clashed forcibly, I asked Charlene how she dealt with the different worldviews.

"I was never harassed. My professors came from the old school of theater, which was conservative. They were true liberals, in that they were open to every belief. They may not have agreed with me, but they were open for me to express my opinion."

She then spoke of her interactions with fellow theater students.

“From day one, many were aware that I came from a Christian college. Of course they would ask you the bars to have a drink, but I said no several times, so they quit asking.” Her very firm beliefs and boldness in stating them most likely arose from her solidly Christian childhood.

As I asked Charlene about her life, I found that not only was she very much a professional, but that she was proud — though not prideful — of her life and all that it entailed.

She was born on August 5, 1951 to Mr. and Mrs. J. Charley Monk in the town of High Point, North Carolina. Her father was a pastor for a total of sixty-seven years, forty of which he served in the same church. She was saved at the age of five and most of her activities involved the church, whether it was the choir, youth group activities, or the church volleyball team. She never rebelled against her parents or the lifestyle in which she was raised, as children of ministers often do; rather she stayed faithful throughout her teenage years.

As I sat listening to Charlene tell of her childhood, I could not help but have a feeling of admiration mingled with a prod of conviction. Charlene was a strong intelligent woman who had never doubted her God, unlike me, who had struggled with my own faith, often questioning, often doubting. But in spite of those differences, I felt a connection.

Like me, Charlene was a serious child, who could be found reading indoors rather than playing outside. And like me, Charlene seemed more comfortable as an individual than as a member of the crowd. She always had her friends and her family, but those things never dictated her life. She tried to stay sensitive to God’s leading and follow her heart.

As I continued to ask questions, Charlene exuded a natural confidence—something that

has allowed her to be comfortable with herself. She has been single all of her life, and not once has she regretted it. To her, singleness is a calling and she enjoys it immensely. “To me it’s like, ‘Lord, if You want me to be married, You’re just going to have to bring him to me, because I am just having too much fun doing what I’m doing,’” she says.

Charlene is definitely not a stereotypical spinster. She keeps busy with her work and her hobbies — reading and cooking — during the school year and spends the summers traveling. She has been to eleven countries and forty-eight states. She traveled with PCC ensembles for ten years and been on three cruises, with plans for a fourth to Alaska this summer.

Her independent spirit was evident during a trip to Israel. She and some other Campus Church members were at the Jordan River when Charlene set her backpack down. A second later, it was gone. As the day wore on, another member of the tour group spotted a man wearing the missing bag. Charlene and her friend approached the man, who did not speak English, and told him that the bag was hers. When he refused to hand it over, Charlene took it from him, opened it up, and showed him her passport. The man then willingly gave the bag back. Dr. Horton, who was also on the trip, teased her saying, “Don’t mess with Monk, she’ll get you every time.”

As my time with Dr. Monk closed, I had disposed of my former, stiff impression of Dr. Monk and replaced it with an admiration for such a capable woman. I had met a woman with whom I not only shared some similarities, but more importantly, I had met a woman I could emulate. She is a woman wise, strong, and content. Her life could be summed up in a phrase spoken by her friend of twenty years, Miss Sandra Brazil. “I think you could give her any job, and she’d do well.”

Some Things About Mr. Pribble

By: Keith Beckman

Mr. Jeff Pribble is an instructor in the Commercial Writing department at Pensacola Christian College. For some reason, he is named almost every time a writing student here is asked who their favourite teacher is. Want to know why? Here are a few things about Mr. Pribble, gleaned from a short interview.

Teaching

Mr. Pribble the Teacher is as important to his students as Jeff Pribble the Writer, though both are unanimous favourites. His knack for catching the Writer struggling out of grasp in each one of his students makes him a greatly-appreciated mentor.

Besides his time teaching at Pensacola Christian College, his current venue, he taught for a semester at Capital City Baptist School near Lansing, Michigan. His initial employment as an English teacher soon gave way (due to his wider-than-most — though he would demur — musical talent) to single-handedly administering the K-4 through high school music program, band and all.

Writing

He's written as a matter of course since around second grade (when he had a teacher who emphasized poetry in her teaching). Besides poetry, which he has written feverishly since then, some scattered fiction and nonfiction dot his juvenilia.

Between kindergarten and third grade, he placed in three young author contests, taking first prize in second grade (*The Outer Space Machine*, written and illustrated by Jeff Pribble).

Juvenilia aside, he considers his first good, or acceptable, piece to come from high school — a sci-fi short about time travel. (He was writing a lot of sci-fi at the time.)

His third-grade teacher, Miss Linton, was a

still-remembered inspiration to his writing. She would read several times a week to her class (probably more than she was supposed to): things like science and math got little showing in the face of reading and writing.

Miss Linton required her students to keep journal throughout the year. Since then, he's journalled spottily, and more completely during traumatic times. In 1996 he began, for the first time since Miss Linton's third grade class, journaling in earnest. I'm sure she's proud.

When asked why he writes, he thought for some time, and answered, "Because it's the only way I know of to grapple with the life issues I stumble across." This is especially so in his private journal, "which occasionally gives birth to longer pieces." Many issues, he says, are better resolved on paper. You can go through all the shoulda-coulda-wouldas, "and of course, we're all better on paper."

He also has a few book ideas saved for when he finds time and inclination for them. Rather tongue-in-cheek (maybe), he began talking about a book of anecdotes gleaned from nine years of grading student's papers, which he'd publish along with his "comments" (snide remarks, most likely). He grinned, and said, "There are even some from students in this class."

He's also compiled a book of poetry — approximately forty pieces, some lengthy — spanning about 150 pages, for which he's not yet sought publication.

One serious idea, though, is a layman's book of theology; which is "one of those books of nonfiction going around in the back of your mind," he says. He'd like to deal with "problems unique to the West," and his cultural experience does make him a qualified judge of what problems are uniquely Western. There's no proposed title yet. "I've had some ideas for titles," he said, "but they're in my journal, so I don't have to remember them."

Reading

First, he made me define what I meant by a classic. I said a classic had "stood the test of time." "*The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Red Badge*

of *Courage*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and some of Melville's works" is the reading list he gave me. However, he also enjoys contemporary literature (meaning, written within the last ten years). In fact, the must-read he gave was Lemony Snickett's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* children's series.

His introduction to *Unfortunate Events* was rather accidental. On a trip to Saudi Arabia, he read all four books he brought on the flight and in the first few days. Needing new reading material (since you can't go on a trip and have nothing to read), he went to a big, "Americanized" bookstore in Al-Khobar, a little town a quarter of a mile from the Persian Gulf. Browsing the shelves (and, as anyone who knows him could have predicted, he was in the children's section), he ran across the first few books in the series. Quite a way to stumble across a must-read, eh?

I asked him if there is a particular style of writing he prefers to read (and my assumption was that he'd tell me it was children's literature). "You know, Keith, It's good writing that stands out to me." He doesn't feel that a personal distaste for any genre or style of writing would be legitimate. If something is written well, it is deserving of attention and can provide enjoyment.

Cultural Gradient

Mrs. Pribble (Ghada) is from Jordan. Mr. Pribble is from Michigan (or Ohio, depending on if you rate born or raised more highly). Needless to say, the cultural differences have added some rather "unique" elements to their marriage. For instance, he enjoys washing dishes.

Now, most wives would kill their own husband if they could replace him with one who wanted to wash the dishes. However, in Arabic culture, a man washing dishes is *ayb*, or deeply socially inappropriate. When they had been married about a month, he decided to help Ghada out by washing the dishes for her. She entered the kitchen to be shocked by the horrifying atrocity that was her husband actually washing dishes. Distressed, she told him he was never to wash dishes again.

Something of an insulted husband at that moment (he describes his "love language" as "Acts of Service"), he couldn't understand why she didn't appreciate his help. She's gotten used to it now, though, and thoroughly enjoys his *ayb* assistance.

Her culture didn't affect only him, though, in the early stages of their courtship and marriage. He does have a paternal grandmother who is Jewish. She didn't (as may have been expected) exactly approve of the addition of an Arab to the family. As well, many of her relatives — matriarchs and patriarchs both — didn't care for the addition of an American to theirs (even those who didn't know of his 1/4 Jewish heritage).

They've all "come around" now.

Courtship

He doesn't believe in lollygagging. After dating for six months, Jeff and Ghada were engaged; and they married six months later. However, during that time, they were separated from each other over the summer and during part of the school year (while she finished up her undergrad). They wrote a lot, especially Jeff (generally a letter a day from him, while she wrote approximately weekly — less a writing person). He did say that her weekly letters were more than sufficient, being "very full-bodied, very bold," and commenting on his own stock of "coffee jargon."

Oh, and back then, calls to Jordan were \$1.25 a minute, so they couldn't exactly "reach out and touch someone."

Travel

Unrepentant possessors of a healthy *wanderlust*, Jeff and Ghada spend their vacations on the road, trail, and otherwise on the move. In the summer of 2003, they were passing through upstate New York on their way to Montreal, Canada. There, just north of the Catskills (also "very beautiful"), they came upon a "really desolate place." Driving slowly through it, they took in the scenery of that "most beautiful place on earth." Though they are both spur-of-the-moment planners, they plan (though "not

concretely,” he qualifies) to camp out there some day.

Travels for the Pribbles involve more than road trips, however. Mrs. Pribble being from Jordan, they’ve taken more than one excursion to the Middle East. And while most people, when thinking of Middle-Eastern food, would be inclined to mention falafels, or something with lamb, he’s eaten some of the oddities of Arabian cuisine.

Very unique, expensive, and otherwise hard-to-find dishes can be found at weddings; and throughout the Middle East, it’s quite appropriate to crash a wedding. Anyone can go to any wedding. He’s done it five or six times, for the free food.

The oddest food he’s ever had was a raw ground goat flank dish at a wedding in Syria. It was spiced and coloured with bright red roasted poison sumac berries (the poison evaporates with roasting). “Have you ever seen a brain on a plate?” he asked. “It looked like a brain: quivery-looking, gelatinous. It was very red,” though the red was due to the sumac, not blood. “It was well-rinsed,” he assured me.

“Did you like it?” I asked. “I have to admit I did,” he replied. He ate three to five forkfuls, but “there was better stuff.”

Childhood

“I have a lot of stories of my childhood: most of them involve my sisters.” (He was the oldest of four children, and the only boy.) “You can have a lot of fun as the oldest,” he grinned.

His dad had a three-foot bamboo cane used “for the procedure” of spanking. Jeff got ahold of it and took it to his bedroom — a “dungeon-like” basement room with one tiny, block-glass window at ground level. He then invited his sisters to participate in the “spanking machine”.

His pitch was this: if they ran around the chair at which he sat and let him swat them with the cane as they ran by, they’d be toughened up for their real spankings, so the spankings from mom and dad “wouldn’t hurt at all.” He had his fun the first time, but when he decided that fun wasn’t fun unless you did it again, he was caught; at which point, his dad

“reenacted the spanking machine.”

Bad Habits

“I really, really hate to return phone calls,” he admits. And if the call is of a non-academic nature (so no teacherly duty obliges him to return it), you’d better call back. Well, if his wife got the message, too, she’ll make sure he calls you.

Pet Peeves

“I don’t like title pages much,” he states. Any of his students could agree. I’ve torn off more than one paper’s title page after forgetting he didn’t want them.

He was hard-pressed for a moment to think of any more pet peeves. “Pet peeves are things that pop up in life and I try not to think about them,” he said. Of course, that said, he did begin rattling off a list.

“Cupboard doors open.” (He’ll always close them.)

“Lights on in an empty room.” (He’ll look around for rooms with lights which need turning off.)

And last, “It really bugs me when people leave my tools out in the rain.” Somehow, I don’t want to discover the punishment for invoking this pet peeve. It was spoken with a much more principled vehemence than the others, which makes me think that leaving his tools out in the rain earns seventeen years hanging in a cage over a precipice somewhere.

Schedule

“As late as I possibly can,” he says quickly, as soon as I ask him when he likes to get up. Hmm. I guess he’s always struck me as a morning person. However, he declares himself “mostly a middle of the day person.”

He likes to start winding down around eight or nine (winding down means showered and changed and sitting around reading a book: “I like to maximize my reading time.”). He often reads until late, “which may explain why I’m not a morning person.” Yes, it may. That’s why most of us writers are not morning people.

Miscellaneous

He's lived in Pensacola for 14 years, but he'd like to someday live in Michigan, the upper peninsula, in a "fairly deserted area": someplace like Copper Harbor, "a little tiny middle-of-nowhere place."

He loves listening to guitar music. In fact, mandolins and banjos are even reasonable facsimile. He just purchased a new CD, "Concertos for Mandolin and Small Orchestra" by Vivaldi. "I was pleasantly surprised that there was classical music for the mandolin.

Dreams

In the past year, and even past six months, his goals have metamorphosed. On considering his spiritual and Biblical heroes and the influence they had, he realized they made their mark in one-on-one situations. "That's why I like teaching," he said. "I'd like to do that as much as possible." As most of his students would attest, he definitely makes an impact.

Eventually (and he says in the next fifteen or twenty years) he'd like to start a private children's library. He does really mean to do it when the whim strikes, and "wherever I happen to be at the moment." Membership would be fee-based, and every member would be allowed unlimited checkouts.

"There would be fairly strict rules," he qualified, "mostly involving taking care of the

books. And there would be penalties." The word "penalties" came out with an unexpected relish, and a look of glee came over him as he described the blackboard which would be there for sentences, such as "I will not leave books on the floor," to be written.

The library's collection will be seeded with his personal collection, comprising at the moment over 1,300 children's books: "Good ones," he says, since all those he didn't care for have been sold or given away. He predicts (and with pleasure) spates of aggressive book-buying in the future to bring the collection up to size before the library starts.

Besides the books, he's planning to bring in other people, especially children's writers, to hold story times. The gem of his library, though, will be the personal touch. As a child, he was frustrated time and again by the lack of a personal recommendation by librarians who rarely frequented the children's section. He loves being able to give a kid a list of four or five books and have the kid come back later, bubbling with enthusiasm, telling him his predictions were perfect.

I'm taking my kids.

So there you have it: some things about Jeff Pribble. Now can you see why he's his students' favourite teacher?

Leaving D.C.: Entering God's Providence

By: Nikki Norman

"My greatest accomplishment?" John Taylor asked. He leaned back in his chair and wrinkled his forehead in thought. "I can't really say that I've done anything great —" he trailed off. "But I think —" He sat up straight again. "To have lived is a great accomplishment — I think the

Lord giving me an opportunity to get out of inner city Washington D.C. You get tunnel vision there. God, in His providence, led me out of there. I've drilled into my kids you can do anything you want if you want it badly enough."

I had to agree. If there's anything John Alton Taylor has done, it is live. The son of a sharecropper-turned-park caretaker, he moved from Maryland to Washington D.C. when he was only 17 days old, to emerge 19 years later with a wealth of experience.

After graduating from high school, John took the Civil Service Commission Test, and his name was posted on a bulletin board along with the names of many others who had passed. He

shrugs off the fact that he was chosen to be in the CIA saying, “They just picked my name off a board.”

He then took the ESI (Extra-Sensitive Investigation), passed, and was given a 15-page job application for the CIA. He passed background checks and underwent a second interview, after which he received the position of courier. He spent a year sitting around reading newspapers waiting on a position to open up, got bored, and decided to take a job with the United States Information Agency. Why? Because he was 18, and they paid more money.

He spent the next year producing “Voice of America” radio shows that were broadcast into Communist bloc countries. The shows were actually retransmissions of radio shows broadcast here in the United States. The purpose of the shows, according to John, was “to give people in Communist countries during the Cold War an impression of America at its best—of democracy, of the capitalist system being productive and fueling economy.”

Bored again, John wanted to spice life up a little by joining the Air Force. For the next four years, John was a Force Status Controller. That means he knew the when and where of each of five B-52's loaded with nuclear warheads that hovered over the North Pole 24 hours a day. He reported this information to the Pentagon, and they reported to the President. It was during these first years in the air force that John married his wife, a beautiful woman named Regina. Between duty assignments, he flew home and got married, left again to settle into his new station, and sent for her as soon as possible.

Then, after receiving new orders, John became the youngest staff sergeant to train air crews to respond to execution orders. He taught six-man crews to receive, decode, and authenticate orders and launch nuclear warheads. One of John's favorite memories about this job is the time he was away from his base in Texas attending a conference in California. During a routine Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI), the Inspector General landed at his base and put each of his crews through a simulated test to determine if they had been properly trained to re-

ceive, decode, authenticate, and execute orders. Back in California, John knew his crews could be undergoing the ORI. His heart dropped when his name was announced aloud during the conference to see if he was present. He recalls thinking, “Oh no. Here I am, the youngest man in here; and this is going to be embarrassing.” To his surprise, news followed that each of his crews had passed inspection.

After leaving the air force, John and Regina spent the next years moving place to place raising their three children, while John finished Bible college and acted as assistant pastor of a church. After their children graduated from college, they finally settled in Pensacola, Florida. John spent time there working on a Master of Bible Exposition and a Master of Divinity degree. He says now all he is working on is maintaining his sanity. He teaches Bible classes at Pensacola Christian College, and he and Regina also enjoy traveling when he is not teaching. “She drags me all over the country,” John says with a broad grin.

But his love of teaching and his love for the Lord is evident when he tells me why he likes his job so much. “To get paid to talk about the Savior—that's exciting. Being able to talk about the Lord is a privilege.”

And he knows how much of a privilege it is, considering he spent many years without the Savior. When his son, Keynone, was born with hydrocephalus (water on the brain), John and Regina watched Keynone endure five unsuccessful surgeries. Then, the doctor who operated on Keynone decided he couldn't do any more surgeries for them because he couldn't bear to lose the baby. Finally, after a sixth surgery, Keynone began to show progress, and no more surgeries were required.

John recalls telling his wife during this time, “We need to find God.” But in a way, God found them.

The assistant pastor of a local church visited their house when John's sister-in-law was visiting. John and Regina were not home, and his sister-in-law turned the man away. He knocked again the next week, claiming later he'd forgotten that he already knocked on their door. That

night, all three were saved by God's grace; and John's life-long sacred romance began.

He felt that he should get more education and attended Northland Baptist Bible Institute in North Dakota, where he earned his graduate of theology degree. Later he received his two master's degrees from Pensacola Theological Seminary, and he now teaches Bible at Pensacola Christian College.

John's love for the Lord is obvious in the way his office mate, Mr. Rob Small talks about him. According to Rob, most of the time, their office conversation centers on their classes — subjects, issues, and doctrines. "The Bible says 'Iron sharpeneth iron,' and it's good to have good, godly counsel from each other," Rob said.

But John's counseling doesn't stop there. When I asked him what advice he would give me or any other college student about life, he chose to share Hebrews 13:20–21 with me: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shep-

herd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

In the brief time that I've known John Taylor, I have seen on his face and in his eyes how grateful he is that God brought him where he is today. And John has been willing to follow from step one. But he is careful not to feel too secure in his comfort zone. He told me, "My biggest fear is doing something that will disqualify me from the ministry." But he knows that God will continue to honor his faithfulness because of how God has honored his faithfulness in the past.

From what I've seen of his testimony and his passion for the Lord and for his students, I've also come to believe that living really is John Taylor's greatest accomplishment.



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