



Summary Of Project

The Environmental Studies graduating class of 2008 worked to raise awareness and implement action on climate change in the Christian community. This awareness project was modelled from the Focus the Nation event which occurred in the United States on January 31, 2008. Focus the Nation is a project in which Colleges and Universities are all working to recognize climate change and challenge their communities to act.

Our one day series of events dubbed “*My Climate. Your Climate. Our Change.*” brought the matter of environmental care to the attention of a variety of audiences. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Calvin DeWitt, is a widely known and respected Christian environmental scientist and was ideally suited to speak to this issue.

A morning session on March 5th involved members of the pastoral community of Edmonton. The goal was to equip the audience with effective ways of communicating to their congregations the need for action against environmental degradation as a scriptural principle of earth stewardship.

“I found the event very motivating. He (Cal De Witt) was passionate and articulate. In fact, I’m strongly considering a four week series this fall in which The River would focus on the issue of creation care and climate change.” -Quote from Pastor Bruce Gritter of the River Community Church, Edmonton



An afternoon chapel session engaged students with issues of climate change and its effect on the global community, and how it relates to poverty. In an afternoon session, De Witt spoke to students involved in the Public Policy Analysis, Ecological Economics, and Environmental Impact Assessment courses at The King’s University College. Dr. DeWitt shared his insight and personal experiences being in a leadership role in his hometown of Dunn where he effectively introduced policies which proved to maintain the environmental integrity of the area in an economically feasible manner, while engaging the whole community. Our main evening event was a public lecture in which Dr. DeWitt spoke to members of the wider Edmonton community about specific ways in which we can act against the anthropogenic roots of climate change. Additionally, we had a panel of three of our own Professors speak about how Climate Change affects their own disciplines.



Climate Change is an all encompassing phenomenon, one which affects more than just the science community. We presented this as a challenge to our audiences, laying out the facts about climate change, and the duty we have as responsible citizens to take action in how we live our daily lives. The event served to spur thoughts and see how creativity and a deep appreciation for creation can develop one into a leader on environmental stewardship.

Here's an excerpt from the President's Report to the Board of Governors:

"A highlight of the winter semester was a conference on My Climate, Your Climate, Our Change, organized entirely as a group project by one of our Environmental Studies classes. The class invited Dr Calvin DeWitt to make presentations to a group of pastors and church leaders, to classes at King's, and to a very well-attended public event in the evening. Watching the students handle the whole event with poise and professionalism gave me one of those precious "it's all worthwhile" moments."

—Dr Harry Fernhout, President of The King's University College



More About Kings:

The King's University College is a Christian Liberal Arts University and has at its fingertips a wide Christian community. The community of TKUC is rooted in biblical foundations and encourage each person to do their part in taking care of the earth. The aim was not to exclude the non-Christian community, as everyone was welcome to all planned events. The goal was to present the challenge of the urgency of climate change and the necessity for each person to take appropriate action.

More about Cal De Witt:

Dr. Cal DeWitt is professor of Environmental Studies, Institute of Environmental Studies, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Recognized as one of the world's leading Christian environmental scientists, DeWitt has written and spoken extensively on the Christian ethic of stewardship. He has spoken at more than 70 North American colleges and universities, and has given major addresses worldwide.

DeWitt is the founder of the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies (www.ausable.org), co-founder of the International Evangelical Environmental Network, as well as a member of the graduate faculties of Land Resources, Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development at the University of Wisconsin. He is also a fellow of the University of Wisconsin Teaching Academy and, in 1995, received the Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching. Through his work on environmental education, he is the recipient of the Friends of the United Nations FUNEP-500 award. In addition, he was the recipient of the Capitol Community citizens award for Land Use Planning, through work he did as Chairman of the Town of Dunn. The Town of Dunn received the Renew America Award in 1995.

By training, Dr. DeWitt is a physiological ecologist and ecosystem ecologist, with a focus on wetland ecology. He has published papers in physiological ecology, wetland ecology, ecosystem modeling, and environmental stewardship. He is also the author or editor of *Earthkeeping in the Nineties* (Eerdmans, 1991), *The Environment and the Christian* (Baker Books, 1991), *Earth-Wise: A Biblical Response to Environmental Issues* (CRC Publications, 1994), and *Caring for Creation: Responsible Stewardship of God's Handiwork* (Baker Books, 1997).

The Focus the Nation: Edmonton ad hoc committee consisted of ten graduating students in the Environmental Studies program with concentrations in various fields including biology, chemistry, theology, and social science.

Conclusions From Evaluation Data

Evaluation

Numbers:

We were reasonably pleased with the numbers of attendees at each of the four events. The goal was to have 50+ for the morning pastoral session, 100+ for the chapel, 250-350 for the evening event and 60+ for the afternoon joint class session. Our actual number of attendees was approximately 75 for the pastoral session, 110 at chapel, 170 for the evening event, and 20 for the class session.

For the class session, we feel that we would have benefited by advertising more thoroughly during target class times in days following up to the events. However, we very much appreciated the enthusiasm numerous professors showed for the event. Two King's professors even cancelled their regularly scheduled classes in order to allow their students to attend the afternoon lecture.

While there were fewer attendees than what we had originally hoped for at the evening public lecture, we would generally consider it a success. We were exceptionally pleased to see the wide variety of people that were present at the lecture. The fact that it was a very intergenerational gathering was encouraging because we were affirmed in our beliefs that the issue of climate change is one that concerns all of us and that we all need to make an effort take action on it. The conference services staff at the King's University was also very supportive and put extra effort into purchasing locally grown ingredients for the cookies that were provided at the event.

Media:

A write up about *My Climate, Your Climate, Our Change* appeared on the front page of the March issue of *The Chronicle*, the King's student newspaper. The event was discussed in a positive light and it was stated that "His [Cal DeWitt's] presentation showed his humor and his passion both for God and the environment." He encouraged the audience to find wonder in nature, for then when things are destroyed, caring will come from the heart. We will include a copy of the article with the submission of this report.

Dr. John Wood, a biology and environmental studies professor at the King's University College, also gave a summary of the project and information about the issue of climate change on the morning radio program on *930am The Light*.

Comments and Feedback:

Following the Climate Change conference, our Environmental Studies grad class received a great deal of positive feedback from numerous attendees of the event. Some of these specific comments include:

- Jeff, a third year Environmental studies student and future president of the King's Science Society remarked that he was inspired by the leadership role Cal DeWitt took in his hometown of Dunn, Wisconsin to prevent excessive development. Jeff exclaims that he "wants to take over a town!"
- Another third year Environmental Studies student, Dan, says that Dr. DeWitt's passion for creation encouraged him to take action to care for the earth.
- A computer software business owner from the Edmonton community wrote a message following the event, "I just wanted to extend congratulations to your class for the superb job of organizing and marketing the Climate Change conference. I have not attended such an event before and was pleasantly surprised to find it a welcoming and very informative evening. The venue was perfect and the speakers offered a range of perspectives that made the sessions balanced and insightful. You should be proud of the work you put into the conference, as you have helped influence the perceptions of myself and many others."
- Eb, an electrical engineer in Edmonton, commented that Cal DeWitt's lecture caused him to consider some of the small ways in which he could take action on climate change. He said, "I will no longer start my vehicle 10 minutes before I need it."

Overall, our team was very pleased with the outcome of the *My Climate. Your Climate. Our Change.* conference. The exceptionally positive feedback we received from a wide variety of people who were in attendance made our efforts seem worthwhile.

"My Climate. Your Climate. Our Change"