



ROCHESTER COLLEGE Church Connections

A Forum for the Churches of Christ in the Great Lakes region

Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring 2004

mission: Church Connections

engage the Churches of Christ in the Great Lakes region and offer a link for them to engage one another

educate the people of the Church of Christ in the Great Lakes region for lives of study and service

empower the Churches of Christ in the Great Lakes region to complete their redemptive mission

mission: ROCHESTER COLLEGE

Rochester College exists to engage students in a vigorous liberal arts education within a Christian community for a life of study and service.

church connections is published in the spring, fall and winter by the Rochester College church relations office, 800 West Avon Road, Rochester Hills, Mich., 48307. Rochester College is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 30 North LaSalle, Suite 2400, Chicago, Illinois, 60602. Phone: (312) 263-0456. Rochester College does not discriminate on the basis of ethnic or national origin, religion, or skin color. The College does not discriminate on the basis of gender except for specific necessary religious principles held by the College and its governing body.

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Rochester names VP for church relations

Rochester College's new president, Dr. Michael Westerfield, made his first major hire only 19 days after being hired himself. On May 17, Westerfield appointed Dr. David Fleer, professor of religion and communication, to vice president for church relations. Fleer's appointment is the first time in Rochester's history that the College's liaison with the Church of Christ has been given a senior management title.

"Strong church relations are greatly important to the College," said Westerfield. "My administration will take significant steps to rebuild and establish substantive relationships with churches."

Westerfield said that Fleer is "uniquely qualified" to lead the new initiative.

"Dr. Fleer brings much passion and an extraordinary number of relationships and connections with a broad-based group of Christian leaders, ministers and churches."

As a demonstration of his regard for the College's relationship with the Church of Christ, Westerfield said Fleer's office would be located next to the president's office in the new administrative suite under construction in the Richardson Academic Center.

Fleer, a graduate of Abilene Christian Univer-

sity, preached for many years in Vancouver, Wash., before joining the religion faculty at Michigan Christian College in 1995. Fleer quickly became one of the College's most popular professors. He also became popular on the local and national lecture circuit, preaching in congregations throughout the Great Lakes region and lecturing at Christian universities such as Abilene Christian and Pepperdine. He played a key role in the establishment of Rochester's world class Sermon Seminar. Fleer continues to edit and contribute to a series of books on preaching (published by ACU Press) and several Christian scholarly journals (such as *Leaven*).

Westerfield said Fleer will invest his energy in several initiatives designed to engage, educate and empower church leaders in the Great Lakes region.

"In addition to the Sermon Seminar, the College will consider hosting events like congregational workshops, a colloquium lecture series, and the formation of a speakers bureau," said Westerfield. "We will use the best academic and spiritual resources inside the College and out to maintain and enhance Rochester's service to the Church of Christ."



Dr. David Fleer

Re-introducing church connections



Dr. Michael Westerfield

Raised in an Air Force family, I had opportunity to be a part of many different congregations. We attended congregations in Mississippi, Louisiana and Nebraska. I also had the opportunity to visit my grandparents' congregation in Arkansas when we made our biannual trek to visit the relatives. The legacy I was given is a healthy respect for the way our churches meet the unique needs of their respective communities. While each congregation differed in some ways, they all were joined through a common love for Christ and a desire to save a lost world.

Our prayer is that this publication will help promote the many good works of our congregations in this area of the country. So many congregations are serving their communities in the spirit of Christ. I am always encouraged when I hear about congregations who are active and working to live the Gospel each day. Some have undertaken food programs, clothing programs, pre-school

services and special services for the elderly, for immigrants, for young people, to name a few. Many of you do these great works regardless of whether you receive any publicity or gratitude. Our desire is not to simply publicize your great works. Our desire is to rejoice with you in the work of Jesus Christ.

This publication will succeed with your help. Please keep us informed about your outreach initiatives, your celebrations, news of members and special projects. Our desire is to make us more aware of the good work going on throughout the Great Lakes region of our country. The more we know about one another; the better we will understand one another. I look forward to reading the issues and sharing with you in your good work.

My prayer is that God can use Rochester College as a resource to promote *positive communication* among our fellowship. In the spirit of Ephesians 4:29, our desire is to promote "building others up according to their needs." May you find this publication a blessing to your day.

Dr. Michael Westerfield
President, Rochester College
mwesterfield@rc.edu

Meet Rochester's new president



Dr. Michael Westerfield

Rochester College's board of trustees named Dr. Michael Westerfield president of the college on April 28.

The Church of Christ and its institutions of higher education represent Dr. Westerfield's history, motives, accomplishments and vision for Rochester College. Westerfield traces his Christian ancestry to the first years of the Church of Christ in America. He traces his professional genesis to his years as a student at York (Neb.) College and Harding University. Westerfield based his entire working career in Christian education: First at York and then at Rochester, where he became provost in 1995.

As Rochester's chief academic officer, Westerfield helped engineer the College's transformation into a regional four-year liberal arts college. The demands of his profession, however, did not encroach on his service to the church. He served the Rochester Church of Christ as elder for several years until he became pulpit minister for the Greater Lansing Church of Christ in East Lansing, Mich.

The following is a **church connections** interview with Rochester's new president.

cc: Describe the ideal relationship between the College and the Church of Christ.

MW: The ideal is for churches to see us as an academic institution that can serve as a resource for some of their needs. We are not a church, but our mission includes service to churches.

cc: Describe your philosophy of Christian higher education.

MW: We are a community of Christian scholars who believe that truth is valuable in whatever form it is revealed. We believe service is the hallmark of a well-educated person.

cc: Some people see the Church of Christ disintegrating to the point that two distinct "groups" now exist, identified by terms like "conservative" or "liberal." Some historic divisions remain deep and wide as ever; for example, the a cappella Churches of Christ and the instrumental Churches of Christ, and the black and white Churches of Christ in the Detroit area. Describe how the College could be an agent for unity.

MW: Rochester cannot make people "get along," but we can be a place where it is safe to dialogue and explore how we can better serve the mission of churches: to lead people to Jesus Christ.

cc: Michigan Christian/Rochester College has long enjoyed close relationships with Churches of Christ in southeast Michigan and northwest Ohio. How will you develop similar relationships with congregations in the rest of the Great Lakes region?

MW: We plan an aggressive effort to serve those churches through workshops and speakers. I also plan to travel to these areas.

cc: Some people say Rochester disowned its Christian legacy during the last ten years. The biggest example of this would be the reaction to the retirement of the Michigan Christian College name in 1997. How do you respond to this assertion?

MW: I believe if people would visit the campus and visit with our faculty, staff and students, they would see we have not distanced ourselves from the Christian heritage of this institution. We must not waste our precious time arguing over "what if" or "what was." We must move forward together with a respect for our differences and our similarities. I am not planning to participate in debates.

cc: A common claim at Rochester is that the College exists to educate Christian leaders to strengthen the Church of Christ in the North. If this is true, do you regard institutions like Ohio Valley College and Greck Lakes Christian College as partners or competition?

MW: I see us as partners. I believe you will see more collaboration in the future, not less.

cc: Some college presidents perceive their role to be opinion leader for the church. Others try to remain objective. Regardless of where you fall on the spectrum, you know that you will be one of the most influential people in the Church of Christ in the Great Lakes region. What is your role?

MW: I am not a theologian. I am not a spokesperson for the Churches of Christ in the region. I am an academic who has chosen to focus his career in the area of Christian education. I am careful not to speak for any one or any group of congregations. We are simply too diverse for such an undertaking.



events:

JUNE

4-5 Women's Conference
Linwood Church of Christ
Detroit, Mich.
(313) 868-7795
linwood.org

5 Gospel Singing Festival
Holiday Park Church of Christ
Monroeville, Pa.
(412) 795-3314
holidayparkcoc.org

6 80th Anniversary Homecoming
Strathmore Blvd. Church of Christ
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
(416) 461-7406
strathmorecoc.ca

20-25 Elevate teen camp
Rochester College
Rochester Hills, Mich.
(800) 521-6010, ext. 3
rc.edu

JULY

11-18 Future Preachers Training Camp
Alkire Rd. Church of Christ
Grove City, Ohio
(614) 875-1028
alkirechurchofchrist.com

AUGUST

14 Sing and Make Music
Alum Creek Church of Christ
Lewis Center, Ohio
(740) 548-0715
alumcreek.org

SEPTEMBER

3-5 Summit family weekend
Columbus Convention Ctr.
Columbus, Ohio
(888) 825-1313
summitcolumbus.com

16-17 Inman Bible Forum
Ohio Valley College
Vienna, W.Va.
(304) 865-6128
ovc.edu

17-19 Christian Singles Conference
Camp Manatawny
Douglasville, Pa.
(610) 777-5852, ext. 5
manatawny.org

Submit events for this listing to Dr. David Fleer, vice president for church relations at Rochester College at dfleer@rc.edu. Host organizations must have a Web site to receive a listing in **church connections**.

fyi:

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Churches of Christ in the Great Lakes region (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin).

Source: church-of-christ.org

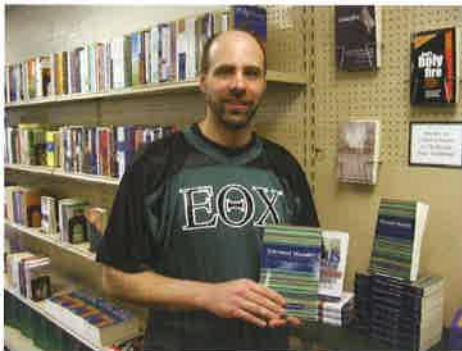
church connections

church elder's survey:

This regular feature will publish your opinions on subjects that concern the relationship between the Church of Christ and Christian education. Your participation is welcome if you are a leader (elder, deacon, minister, or volunteer) in a Church of Christ located in the Great Lakes region. We may select your opinion for publication in this space. The survey question for the next issue is:

Describe how Christian institutions of higher education like Great Lakes Christian College, Ohio Valley College and Rochester College could best serve your church and the community you serve?

Please e-mail your response, along with a digital photograph (optional) to dfleer@rc.edu by July 31, 2004. No phone calls, please.



Dr. Greg Stevenson, professor of religion and Greek at Rochester, holds his new book, *Televised Morality* (Hamilton Books), which examines how popular TV shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* often contain hidden moral messages.

Students complete first spring break mission to Chicago



Nineteen students and one staff sponsor gather for a group photo on campus the morning of their departure for Chicago.

Nineteen students and one staff member participated in a nine-day spring break mission to Chicago and Valparaiso, Ind., Feb. 28-March 7.

"Mission accomplished," said Tim Parker, a junior Biblical studies major from Flint, Mich., and one of two students who organized and led the mission. "We did a lot of good for a lot of people in Chicago and Valparaiso while learning about the methods and opportunities for Christian ministry in an urban environment."

The students coordinated the mission with the Lakeview Church of Christ in Chicago and the Shults-Lewis Children's Home and Valparaiso Church of Christ in Valparaiso, Indiana.

"I hope we started a revolution," said Brad Irwin, the Rochester staff member who sponsored the mission. "In addition to services rendered, this mission set a new standard for how the College can supply fresh resources for local churches as they execute their own God-given missions in their respective communities."

Danny Hardman, a Rochester business professor and veteran missionary to Uganda, will sponsor the 2005 Chicago spring break mission.

faith of our fathers by Dr. Vernon Boyd



Vinewood Church of Christ, Detroit, Mich. During World War II, a flood of members of the Church of Christ from the South migrated north to find work in the factories of Detroit. Many of them settled on the city's west side and formed a congregation at W. Vernor and Vinewood. The 501 people in this photograph were participants in the Vinewood Church's Sunday Bible school. This photograph, donated by Lockie King, who taught the ladies' Bible class at Vinewood, is archived in the Michigan Church History Collection, located at the Ennis and Nancy Ham Library at Rochester College.



resources:

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Rochester's student body voted Ron Cox, assistant professor of religion, Most Influential Professor for 2003-2004. Audiences at local churches also appreciate Cox for his rich knowledge of the Bible and his frank delivery. Cox and his colleagues in business, communication, education, psychology, science, religion and several other fields are available to share their expertise with your church. To arrange for a Rochester administrator or professor to speak at your congregation, call the Rochester church relations office at (248) 218-2144.

ROCHESTER COLLEGE UPDATES

Rochester College represents a wealth of resources for your congregation, from a complete college education based on the doctrine of Jesus Christ to events and services designed to educate, equip and empower the church. Stay informed about the opportunities at Rochester. Visit www.rc.edu or e-mail your subscription requests to news@rc.edu to receive Rochester's free news periodicals.

CHRISTIAN ENTERTAINMENT

Give your congregation and community another reason to fellowship: Invite one of Rochester's traveling entertainment groups to entertain your senses and encourage your hearts. Call (800) 521-6010, ext. 3, to book one of these groups:

- A Cappella Chorus (large choir)
- Autumn (vocal ensemble)
- Chamber Chorale (small choir)
- Company (Christian drama troupe)
- Focus (summer drama and vocal group)
- Pied Pipers (children's improv theatre)

RESEARCH

Access sources for Biblical and topical research and explore the Michigan Church History Collection at Rochester's Ennis and Nancy Ham Library. To access the library on-line, go to www.rc.edu/lib.

CONTACTS

- Alumni: (248) 218-2023
- Bookstore: (248) 218-2076
- Church relations: (248) 218-2144
- Donate: (248) 218-2012
- Enrollment (adult): (248) 218-2222
- Enrollment (high school): (248) 218-2030
- Public relations: (248) 218-2024

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