

Andrea Velazquez
 Dr. Cha
 Bible 102.04
 January 14, 2014

Vocational Essay

Growing up, I never had any knowledge of religion. I didn't have a God to believe in, and didn't know about Christ. But when I did find out about Christ, I always thought he was somewhere far away, to where he was unable to acknowledge me. All this changed just a couple of months ago, when I arrived at ACU. Having no friends from back home attending ACU, I was forced to step out of my comfort zone and try to communicate with the people that do go here. Right off the bat, I noticed something peculiar about the people here. Why are all these people so happy? I would ask myself. I was so confused. I wasn't used to all the joy around me. Anyway, I later found out why all of the people here were so happy and smiling all the time. They all had one thing in common – they all had Christ beside them, and they knew it. I wondered how good a person has to be to be able to have Christ walk next to them.

As the days went by, my bond with the new friends I made grew stronger. They weren't just any friends though. I now know God put them in my life so they could introduce me to Him. One friend in particular invited me to church one day, but I declined the offer. She didn't give up. She was persistent, and soon enough I started to attend church every week. She took off the blindfold I had worn for years, and helped me see the true light of Christ. My life wasn't the best, but this new view of life changed me.

Although my walk with Christ had barely begun last semester, I am happy to say that I am now a Christ follower.

My initial reason for attending ACU was because of my English teacher from high school, Mr. Johnson. His way of teaching not only encouraged me to be a better person and strive to be happy and ambitious, but to also seek knowledge and truth in life. He was my first role model. Someone I hoped to be like when I grew up. He told me great stories of how ACU shaped him into the great man he now is. He didn't just teach me how to write an essay. He taught me ways in how to never grow old. He taught me to be a life-long learner. My application to ACU was the last one I sent, but the first one I got a reply to and accepted. I couldn't help but to follow in his footsteps on attending ACU.

What I expect to learn in this course is to be able to understand some of the meaning behind the stuff that's in the Bible. I have never read anything from this part of the Bible, so I also expect to, obviously, read the Bible, but to also connect with my peers with discussions on similar thoughts we have about the Bible. I expect to be baby-fed the thoughts and ideas you are supposed to come up with as well.

Thinking about the future tends to make my palms sweaty. But I guess what I aspire to do after graduation is to, for once in my life, not to be given free toys from church at Christmas time, but to be the one who is giving them. To give back to the community that gave me free school supplies. To be someone that helps people recognize that they are not worthless, just as I once thought of myself. After I graduate, I aspire to make a difference.

Sarah Matthews
Personal Essay
1/17/12

조아라-사도(1) 원복

Hello my name is Sarah and here are a few things about me. I am the second youngest of four in my family. My oldest brother is about to graduate from TCU, my twin sister is going to Baylor, and my younger brother is still in high school. My parents both work, my mom is a speech and debate coach and my father is in finance. We have a pet dog, turtle and bearded dragon. During the summer we let our turtle roam around the backyard but we have to watch him closely or he will escape. I love to crochet, knit and sing. I also read a lot and watch Audrey Hepburn movies. I was co-valedictorian of my high school class, I tied with my sister. My parents are both very intelligent and I think I get my love of learning and reading from them.

I grew up in a Christian home but it took until about the eighth grade for me to make my faith truly my own. All of my siblings and I attended a school that was Christian in name only. It is very refreshing to be at a place where the faculty and the majority of students say they are Christians and actually live it out. I feel like I have grown in my faith in the short time I have been here and I am excited to see how God will continue to move in my life.

Because my brother is attending TCU we have been down to Texas many times over these last four years and I absolutely fell in love. At first Baylor was my first choice but the more I learned about Abilene Christian University, the more it became my favorite. I first heard about ACU my junior year and decided to apply because it was a Christian school in Texas and the applications opened in the summer so I could finish it before senior year started. A few months into the year I learned that two teachers on staff at my school went here and their son, who was in my class, was also planning on coming here. Hearing what their experience here had been like really helped me in deciding to come here.

I want to be a pediatrician and thought that a faith based college for my undergraduate degree to really be cemented in my faith before going off to medical school. Abilene Christian has not only a wonderful Christian foundation, but a great science department and pre-med program as well. I came down with my mother to visit one last time before I made my final decision between Baylor and ACU and all the pre-med students I talked to said they had also been faced with the same decision I was facing and choose ACU because of the Body and Soul program. I think God was sending a pretty clear message so I choose ACU and have been loving it ever since.

Richie Elmore

Abrahamic Faiths

16 January 2014

Vocational Essay

Many Christians have what they call a "home" church, a place where they have spent a majority of their life, a place they call their "second home". However I do not consider myself as having a "home" church. While I was baptized and completed all of my sacraments at Saint Thomas More Catholic Church in Austin, Texas, I have not returned there for a while. I would say my family (including myself, here in Abilene) has been "church shopping" for the past several years. When compared to many families of other students at this university, my family looks oddly irreligious. Through primary school, we attended a church service at least once a month, maybe prayed as a family twice per year (Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners), and rarely discussed the Lord outside of a church setting. Christianity, while important, was never the most important part of my family. As I have been exposed more to other Christians with deep roots in their faith, my journey has taught me so much about what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Many students at Abilene Christian University have a background with the Churches of Christ, and result in coming here because of their affiliation. However, that was not the reason for choosing this university. Today I am still not entirely sure of why I chose Abilene Christian University. When college application deadlines approached and I had to make a decision, my sister Amanda who attended Abilene Christian University for two years persuaded me to research and apply here. She cited a sermon she once heard in church, that while many parents boast of their children attending a nationally ranked university and getting what they claim to be the best education possible, in reality the parents with students attending universities that encourage spiritual growth should be the ones to boast. I had originally planned to attend a secular state school. Because of my interest in mathematics and our proximity to the University of Texas at Austin, my mom had dreamed of me graduating from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in engineering. After researching the program, and although the University of Texas at Austin is a very prestigious school, I did not feel called to attend. My application to Abilene Christian University was later approved, and I made preparations to attend. I believe the Lord decided for me, and guided me here. My freshman year I came to this university with the intention of graduation with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. But over the past three years I have grown a heart for the international community, and since then have changed my degree to international studies (Latin America and East Asia concentrations) and Spanish. Whether through teaching English as a Second Language, ministering to, or even just befriending the international students, I have never felt happier with my studies and extracurricular activities. Two years ago when I wrote my vocational essay for the Acts-Revelation class, I had much different plans for my future. I had thought I wanted to pursue a public administration graduate program at either Baylor University or Yonsei University, but now I want to focus on global studies, language, and linguistics. My future is not entirely mapped out, and looks rather blurry, but I do not worry because I know this is where I belong. I am exactly where the Lord wants me to be, and I have never been happier.

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Danielle Baker

BIBLE 211.04

TR 12-1:20

My walk with Christ has been fairly bumpy this past year. Around the time I left in November 2014 I had actually lost my faith. I believe this is why I started having health issues in the first place honestly. The same day I had openly declared my disbelief in Christianity was the same day I began having chest pains. Not a single medication I tried in the two weeks following that day helped, not the narcotic, anxiety medications, nor the antidepressants. As a matter of fact, the last antidepressant I tried made me suicidal, which is the biggest reason I left. My family and I decided it would be best for me to try to understand my health issues at home with family in case something like that were to happen again. "Coincidentally," after a few months of searching for truth and trying more medication, I had regained my faith and gotten my chest pain under control.

Although I was not at ACU when I rediscovered my faith, the people I met at the university played an enormous role in getting me back on track with God, which is why I chose to come to ACU in the first place. On my first visit to ACU, before my senior year of high school, I knew there was something different here. There was something different in the people, and I knew God was the reason. I saw the incredible faith people on campus have, and I wanted my faith to grow strong like theirs in an environment that would both spiritually and intellectually challenge me. A couple years and several struggles later the faithful Christians at ACU proved that this has been exactly where God has wanted me to be.

Even though I was struggling with my faith last year, this class was teaching me how to have a confident faith by asking the hard questions and looking deeper into the

Danielle Baker

BIBLE 211.04

TR 12-1:20

text of the Bible. Now that I have come back to believing in God, I am hoping that being in your class this year will now make my faith even stronger and more durable. I want to be able to ask the difficult questions without losing my faith and turning my back on God. Last year ISIS had murdered two of my best friend's younger cousins, and that event was in large part what caused me to feel like I needed answers to life's most difficult questions before I could have a solid faith in God. This year, I am just hoping to be blessed enough to receive answers, but I no longer need them to have faith.

The events of this past year have caused me to rethink my future. I believe this time last year I was saying I wanted to open a dog rescue and a rehabilitation center for at risk youth, and that may still be in my future somewhere down the road. However, since I became a Christian again I have felt a pulling at my heart to write a book about my journey with God, the doubts, the proof, and everything it took to get where I am with God today. I have started writing a little this school year, and I hope that I will be able to at least get most of the way done with the book before graduation. Honestly, though, I feel like there is at least one person in particular who I am actually supposed to reach by writing this book, and my hope is that I will one day be able to meet that person. Until then, I want to be open to hear whatever God calls me to do after graduation.

Elisabeth White
Dr. Cha

My journey with Christ is unique, just as everyone's is. What makes mine different though is the struggle I have had to have a consistent way to learn about him. When I was young my family was very involved in my church and I went to Sunday school and service every week. Unfortunately the congregation had a falling out and split up. That was probably around the age of ten and from then on I no longer went to church. It was not until I was able to drive that I made my way back to church, but when I got there I felt like my level of knowledge was much less than the other people my age. This intimidated me, but I did not want it to keep me from going to church. From then on I found myself in the nursery on McKinney Bible Church most Sunday mornings. While I felt like I was doing a good service, I still did not feel like I was getting closer to God.

I decided to share with you my struggle of knowing more about Christ and forming a relationship with him because that very struggle had a lot of influence on me deciding to attend Abilene Christian. I had originally wanted to go to the University of Oklahoma. I thought I wanted the big football school and I knew they had a medical program that was fairly good. It had been more than a year since I toured ACU, I liked the school, the faculty was warm and inviting, but for some reason I thought I wanted something different. It was not until May twenty third that the little voice in the back of my head (God's voice) lead me to believe I belonged here. The campus is charming, the Body and Soul Program is as good as it gets, but most importantly ACU is a place that integrates Christ into the classroom. That is what does it for me, because as long as I know Him, I know I am going to follow the right path and I am going to be taken care of.

My hopes for this class are to have a better understanding of the Bible. I know a ton of different verses that I enjoy applying to my life, but as we discussed on the first day of class I do not know the context of those verses. I love to learn new things and the Bible is something that I would say I am pretty ignorant of. I look forward to becoming more acquainted with the text and strengthening my faith in learning the stories of the New Testament. I am a person who likes to be relatable, I think I will have a great time relating these old stories to my present-day life.

As far as my aspirations go, I have always had a heart for service. I was a huge participant in non-profits back in my hometown, but I never really saw that as a career for myself. What led me to my desire for medicine was actually a friend of mine who was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. I was the only friend of hers who would go to all of her appointments with her and was not afraid of spending the night at the hospital with her. I love the environment of the hospital, it has never scared me. Since discovering my passion I have done quite a bit of job shadowing in the emergency department of a downtown Ft. Worth hospital. The pace of emergency medicine is like nothing I have ever experienced before and I really hope to call it my career one day. I hope my calling for service, geared with my ambition to learn medicine will make me a great physician one day.

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2013년 1월 1일

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Noemi Palomares

I grew up in the Spanish-speaking Church of Christ, or *Iglesia de Cristo*. I was born in the pew, as a professor describes people like me. I went to church service every Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday night. As soon^{as} I started to read fluently around four, I got my first white, little Bible. My father made me read the Bible everyday, and when he would come home from work I was to summarize what I read for him or else I would be in big trouble for not reading. As I grew a bit older, I had to memorize Bible verses, sometimes entire chapters at a time.

6월 14일 10시
4월 14일 10시

That was the type of surrounding I grew up in. My dad became a preacher later in his life, and at the age of fifteen, my family and I became domestic missionaries in La Joya, Texas. I always held faith and the church as important aspects of my life. Yet, it is when that faith became truly mine that I began to rediscover what I had lost through routine; that is, I had rediscovered a personal relationship with God when I allowed room for doubt in my life.

4월 14일 10시

I decided to come to ACU because my older brother came to ACU. I graduated high school a year early, and I had dedicated myself to working at a retail store. I knew I wanted to go to college, but distractions kept me from thinking about college until six months before school started. I applied and decided if I did not get in, I would join the military. But, I got accepted. Although I began college with "Business major" stamped on my transcript, it did not take me too long to realize what my favorite class was – my freshman Bible class on the Life and Teachings of Jesus. The material captivated me, the professor enthralled me. I could not wait for my MWF one o'clock class. That fall, I changed my major to biblical studies.

1월 14일 10시
4월 14일 10시
2월 14일 10시

In a way, I transitioned in to what my family raised me to do: study Scripture and devote myself to the Church. So you can imagine my surprise when my father was against my new major. Sadly, this was the case only because I am a woman. In the midst of this tension, I delved into my undergraduate studies with passion (sometimes discontent) and discovered my ability to do and like research. My studies led me to some doubt and uncertainty in regards to certain issues, but I also gained a more personal faith through the struggle, which built upon the faith my parents passed on to me.

4월 14일 10시

I am now a senior; I have decided to go on to graduate school to pursue an MDiv degree. My overall goal is to become a Bible or theology professor someday. I wish to walk alongside students as they struggle to work through difficult questions that arise from a theological education. I also hope to encourage other Latino/a students in their theological education, since I know what a trial it can be, especially for women. This will be a part of my vocation within Christian ministry.

4월 14일 10시
2월 14일 10시