



Pepperdine University Lilly Project on the Theological Exploration of Vocation

# PEPPERDINE VOYAGE NEWSLETTER

Volume1 Issue1 Spring 2004

## From the Director



Richard T. Hughes

The Pepperdine Voyage, the project on "the theological exploration of vocation" that was funded by a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment of almost \$2 million, has now completed its first academic year. This first issue of the *Pepperdine Voyage Newsletter* is designed to offer an overview of the work the Voyage completed during that period of time.

From its inception, authors of the Voyage designed this project with two overarching goals in mind: (1) to encourage students to ask the questions of vocation: "What is God's call for my life, and how do I discern that call? How can I understand my career as ministry, whatever that career may be? And how can I use my natural gifts and talents to serve other human beings, especially the poor and the dispossessed?" and (2) to encourage students to be open to a possible call to a formal ministry in the context of the church.

The project consists of five



separate components: the curricular component, the co-curricular component, the faculty development component, the ministry component, and the professional schools component. This newsletter will track the work of the Pepperdine Voyage in each of those spheres.

## Curricular Component **Pepperdine Voyage Challenges Freshman and Sophomore Students**

For the first year of the Pepperdine Voyage, the curricular component calls for the project to challenge students with the idea of vocation even before they arrive on the campus. Toward this end, the project sent each incoming freshman student over the summer months of 2002 two readings: *Courage and Calling* by Gordon Smith, and a chapter entitled "Responding to God's Love: Compassionate Service" from Michael Himes' *Doing the Truth in Love*.

Based on these readings, the students prepared their own vocational statements and then discussed both the readings and their statements in their freshman seminar classes during the first few weeks of the school year. Similar activities were implemented for the fall of 2003.

The steering committee of the

Pepperdine Voyage believes that it is crucial to secure parental support both for the Voyage project and for the concept of vocation as opposed to the more pragmatic consideration of career. For that reason, D'Esta Love, University Chaplain, spoke to parents at the New Student Orientation sessions in 2002 about the Pepperdine Voyage, its objectives, and how we anticipate that project might impact their children.

The second year of the project (2003-04) is focusing on students who participate in Pepperdine's international programs. Although that emphasis did not formally begin until this academic year, Travis Weber, a student in the Heidelberg program in the 2002-03 academic year, organized a spiritual retreat that focused on the theme of vocation for students from all of Pepperdine's European programs. Emily and Ezra Plank led the retreat that focused on the theme, "Image is Everything: A Search for Identity." The retreat attracted 123 students from Florence, Heidelberg, London, and Lyon.



Florence, Italy

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PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY  
24255 PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY  
MALIBU, CALIFORNIA 90263