
Living Out the **WORD**

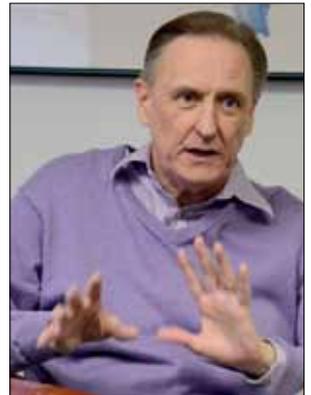


BILL CHRISTIE is in his office at Vanderbilt's Owen Graduate School of Management, taking a break from grading student papers and thinking back on some of the events that have led him to his current vocation. *"So much of what has happened to me in my life has been unexpected."* Bill recalls an influential teacher who awakened in him a passion to learn finance, at a time *"when I really didn't know what I wanted to do."* He remembers being the last person accepted into the University of Chicago Business School's Ph.D. program, a program that started Bill on his teaching and research career. And he reflects on the journey of faith that led him and his wife Kelly to Westminister Presbyterian Church. *"All these things found me...even Westminister found me."*

After a couple of early jobs in business proved unsatisfying, Bill entered his Ph.D. program knowing the outcome would likely be a career in academia. *"I knew I loved doing research as a student; I was less sure about the demands to produce research as a professor. I had also never taught before, and wondered if I could instill the same excitement teaching others as I felt as a student."*

Indeed, Bill remembers two key events in his vocational journey. The first was defending his doctoral dissertation, a multi-year piece of original research, in front of a professor who was world-renowned in the field of finance. The second was teaching his first course at Vanderbilt, in which he knew about half the class was attending only because it was a degree requirement. *"I called each of these my 'what am I doing here?' moments"*, and successfully getting through them helped validate Bill's choice to teach and do research.

Bill has been a professor at Vanderbilt's Owen School since 1989, including a six year stint serving as Dean and Associate Dean. His research has been published and won awards in numerous academic journals, and he is perennially recognized by both students and fellow faculty members as one of Owen School's best teachers. Bill says he can't imagine having to choose between teaching or doing original research. *"I love becoming completely immersed in a study topic,*



Every Member Has a Mission



discovering some new insight about how the world works. But I also love the challenge of engaging students, of bringing that new learning back to them, and getting them excited about it. If I didn't teach, the research would be more mundane."

Bill's faith journey began as a boy growing up in Canada, attending the United Church of Canada with his family. Interestingly, he has known his wife Kelly since they were both 4 years old. Kelly's family came from a Catholic tradition.

Reflecting on the journey of faith that led him and his wife Kelly to Westminster Presbyterian Church he says, "All these things found me...even Westminster found me."

After they were married, neither Bill nor Kelly attended church regularly. *"My faith was there, not my active participation."* After living in Nashville for some time, they tried a Catholic church in town but found the experience unsatisfying. Meanwhile, Kelly was invited to join Westminster's choir for a special performance, and John Semingson encouraged her to make her participation more regular. Bill came along to listen to the rehearsals, and both soon found themselves *"drawn in"* to the church.



After they had been members for a while, Bill was asked to serve as an elder during the time Ben Sparks was serving as the interim pastor. *"Ben's elder training was intense and I really enjoyed it. He was a stickler for us knowing the answers to our ordination questions."* Besides serving on the worship, outreach, and finance committees, Bill jumped into Guy Griffith's Disciples



classes with great enthusiasm. He took Disciples 1-4, then took Disciples 3-4 again with Kelly. He also took Guy's class called *"The Christian Believer."* *"Westminster's educational component is phenomenal."*

Bill credits his enthusiasm for both his work and his personal life by modestly suggesting that interesting things *"keep finding me."* *"Keep your eyes open for things that might interest you"* is his motto, and in the last several years, Bill has especially enjoyed serving as editor of selected financial journals, being a panelist/presenter/chair at professional conferences, serving on dissertation committees, and doing most anything that will allow him to mentor and help others in furthering their finance educations. At Westminster, Bill has gravitated towards working with The Outreach Foundation. His area of interest is not surprising: *"I really like supporting their efforts to build new schools."*

Westminster Presbyterian Church

3900 West End Ave., Nashville, TN 37205

www.nashvillewpc.org
