



Profile in Leadership

Associate Professor of Religious Studies Timothy H. Wadkins, PhD, provides students with a global perspective on religion and faith.

As a religious studies major at San Jose State University, **Timothy H. Wadkins, PhD**, wrote his senior thesis on colonial era preacher and philosopher Jonathan Edwards. What was meant to be a capstone, paved the way for his future graduate work in history and theology. He earned a master of divinity degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and a PhD in historical studies from Graduate Theological Union/University of California, Berkeley.

Today, Wadkins' passion to promote religious tolerance is realized on the Canisius campus and in the community through his work as chair of the Center for the Global Study of Religion. Funded by a Peter Canisius Professorship, Wadkins created the program to provide students with exposure to diverse cultures.

"Dr. Wadkins' program is a wonderful example of how learning experiences can be broadened beyond the classroom in ways that help students connect the Canisius mission to people throughout the world," said **Scott A. Chadwick, PhD**, vice president for academic affairs.

In Wadkins' classroom, students enjoy a healthy exchange of religious studies ideas, theories and philosophies. It is an

environment that evokes meaningful discussions about God and values.

Through his immersion courses, students traveled to Third World countries, such as El Salvador, the Philippines and India, where they learned real-life lessons about politics, religion, how different people live and how they practice their faiths.

Wadkins also promotes religious tolerance and dialogue in the community. His Conversations in Christ and Culture Lecture Series, which features talks by internationally-renowned religious scholars, fosters discussions about important issues, and promotes cooperation and understanding across religious, gender and ethnic lines.

"The series is rooted in the values and diversity of its advisory board," said Rev. Elena Delgado, associate pastor for Westminster Presbyterian Church. "As board members, we represent different ministries in the community but bring a collective wisdom to the conversation of faith and justice. When we get together, it creates a synergy of ideas and possibilities that respond to the questions and concerns of our community."

A member of the Canisius faculty since 1992, Wadkins said that scholarship and education are inherently spiritual and holistic endeavors, and believes that the academic vocation is grounded in three desires: to find God in all things, to bring to work a faith infused by love and justice toward the Earth and others, and to help students develop into leaders who are global citizens.

"A liberal arts education in the Catholic and Jesuit tradition is more about how the whole culture of the college is infused by a sacramental understanding of reality," said Wadkins. "Everything we do here at Canisius – the exploration of ideas, lab experiments, research projects, athletic endeavors, justice concerns, service and immersion programs, and especially the various ways that we learn to understand and accept others outside our cultural and religious enclaves – is an engaged effort to investigate, interpret and ethically implement the life-giving presence of the Creator within the creation." ■