

Goals of the Fireside Forum

The Goal of our Fireside Forums is to focus our attention on the matters of Christian Wisdom, with the hope and belief that it will stir us to better Community and Engagement. It is a context in which you be invited to consider matters at the intersection of faith and your fields of study within the academy. Specifically, as the Forum is sponsored by us, it will be facilitated from a distinctly Christian vantage point, though those who are not Christians are very welcome to participate. As Forum coordinator, I will make every effort to make our discussions and time together competent to everyone who walks through these doors.

Forum is not your traditional college/post-college church fellowship large group. And it is not meant to serve as an explicit “church group” or a surrogate for local church membership and involvement. Rather we view Forum as a unique venue in which we come together to try and grasp and imagine the implications of the life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ on our work as writers, artists, mathematicians, musicians, scientists, educators, historians, etc. What does it mean for us and our work that “Christ reconciles all things to himself, whether on earth or in heaven” (Col. 1:20)? And how we are to “wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against...the cosmic powers over this present darkness...and spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12)?

Forum is meant to be a place where we can work out such marvelous issues together vis-à-vis the work we do here at Harvard, and in preparation for what God has for us in the future. I’ll strive to make our meetings both heady and hearty. Although we’ll often engage in the level of ideas, my aim will be to move us to be practical and down-to-earth – to bring us to a place where our discussions are really relevant to us. This means, for example, in the course of the year, we’ll:

- 1) have facilitated discussions panelists about what it’s like to integrate their faith with their work, how they maintain balance in their lives, make research and job decisions, and wisely choose research directions
- 2) engage with case studies and role-play a few realistic situations you may encounter during your time here at Harvard
- 3) have members of our community share comprehensibly about their work/research, along with the challenges they faced and do face on their journey

I will consider these Forums successful insofar as they stoke on-going conversations that trickle beyond our evenings together and bring to life, afresh, Jesus’ “Third Way” message in the context of our work-lives. To end, I’d like to invite you to talk with me if you have any questions or suggestions or ideas. I’d love to hear from you.