

*Statement of Faith, Mission, and Purpose*

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*"Hope College seeks to recruit persons of outstanding ability and character who are dedicated to excellence in teaching and scholarship, are committed to the ideals of liberal education and who have a mature understanding of and commitment to the Christian faith."*

The handbook reflects the Hope College mission statement, which is as follows:

*"The mission of Hope College is to offer, with recognized excellence, academic programs in liberal arts, in the setting of a residential undergraduate, coeducational college, and in the context of the historic Christian faith."*

In other documentation I have sought to convey my academic credentials for teaching, service, and scholarship as well as my passion for undergraduate education in chemistry. In this personal statement I will seek to convey my personal passion for Jesus Christ as it relates to the mission of Hope College and my purpose in applying for a tenure-track faculty position in the Chemistry Department at Hope.

I was raised in a "culturally Christian" home, regularly attending a series of United Methodist congregations, where I developed a solid head knowledge of the Bible and learned to live a Christian lifestyle. I was always a "good kid" and intellectually assented to Christ as my Savior at about eleven. In college, far from home, I was not happy in my childhood denomination and soon ceased all church involvement. Things were going far too "well" on Saturday nights for me to worry about Sunday mornings, which was all church really was to me at that point. I lived a very selfish and rather indulgent lifestyle throughout the rest of my undergraduate time. It was at a point of personal crisis as I was transitioning from my bachelors to masters studies at Virginia Tech that I returned to Christ and truly surrendered my life – accepting Jesus as Lord as well as Savior, and making the move from intellectual assent to personal commitment.

I spent the next year in a non-denominational evangelical community congregation before finishing my MS and moving to New Jersey for the summer, where I was baptized in the Atlantic Ocean by a Baptist pastor friend just before commencing my doctoral studies in Rochester. In Rochester I became involved in a non-denomination congregation with Assemblies of God roots and there helped launch an inner-city servant evangelism ministry with six other men. That ministry grew to include hundreds of ministry workers in dozens of teams across more than a dozen congregations citywide, across racial, socioeconomic, and denominational lines, and continues. This experience in servant-evangelism, and my own newfound role in servant-leadership (as a team then district leader, and a teacher/trainer as well), proved transforming and has shaped my outlook of living a life spent on behalf of others.

I believe my faith in Christ, my right personal relationship with God made possible only by Christ's singular atoning sacrifice, and the Christ-like attitude of loving service to believer and nonbeliever alike impacts all areas of my life. That includes, perhaps especially, my professional life. Indeed the only time I ever wavered in my commitment to both chemistry and academia was a brief time when I contemplated leaving graduate school for full time ministry. It took some prayer and soul searching and a wonderful retreat weekend to realize that God had me exactly where He wanted me. Gifted to teach. Gifted to do research. And with a heart for college age students springing largely from my own heartache and wayward times in college. I am now more confident than ever of my calling to excellence in the academic arena, at a primarily undergraduate chemistry department with a primary focus on teaching, but with a strong value of and support for superior

undergraduate research as a means of the deepest education, with the end goal of shaping knowledgeable, broadly educated, competent lifelong learners for a life of usefulness and service to their God and their neighbors, training each one up in the way they should (individually) go.

I believe that I will be a witness and role model first and foremost by my conduct, values, and actions, but also by a willingness to share my faith explicitly in the appropriate contexts, respecting others, seeking unity in the Body of Christ, but also willing to stand for truth in a world where the acceptance of falsehood is often deemed tolerance. I am committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service – to department, university, community, congregation, neighbors, mankind, and God, and intend to strive to serve my students and all those I influence by spurring them on to their own personal best as men and women living for God and others.