

Time of study strengthens ministry

Bruce Smith's dream sharpened through Acadia Divinity College education

Acadia Divinity College

WOLFVILLE, NS—Bruce Smith has a passion for hockey, ministry and study. His enthusiasm for the game comes from playing and coaching at various levels.

After 10 years in the banking industry, Smith says he sensed God's call to join the staff of Hockey Ministries International (HMI). HMI is a Christian organization committed to ministering to the hockey community through hockey camps, chapels, clinics, special events, videos, and literature.

Smith worked seven years in Montreal, Quebec, and for the past 18 years in Saint John, New Brunswick. He currently serves as the director for HMI Atlantic Division, coordinating the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League and Maritime Hockey League Chaplaincy and working as the chaplain with the Saint John Sea Dogs. He also brings leadership to HMI's Christian Hockey Camps International, which are conducted across North America and several European countries.

Furthering his education made it onto Smith's radar when he heard about Acadia Divinity College (ADC) in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

"Acadia Divinity College got my attention when I heard and read about a degree program designed for those in 'full time' ministry who wanted to pursue further training and equipping. That was me! So the journey began in 2012 with my arrival at ADC and the opportunity to meet fellow sojourners in the program."

Smith is now enrolled in the school's doctor of ministry program.

"What struck me immediately was the diversity of the students," he says. "They came from across North America and around the world. Male and female, pastor and field staff worker, across a vast range of denominations and ages, with a wealth of background and experiences, all gathering together to share in an education that we all longed for. I was struck with the

quality of the students. So many gifted, intelligent people, from who we all could draw in shaping our own thinking."

Smith adds, "As we began our course work I was so impressed with the caliber of the professors. Their subject knowledge, ability to communicate, and ability to engage my mind have been blessings. I have often wished my ministry colleagues could sit in on the lectures and hear what I was hearing, benefiting from the experience."

Smith's studies have strengthened his knowledge, deepened his faith, and sharpened his skills.

"Each course has impacted my life and thinking," he says. "Time and again I would drive away from Acadia on a Friday recognizing that I was not the same person as the one who arrived on campus Monday morning."

"I have appreciated the range of writers and the diversity of thought on a given subject. I have found myself, after the course work was completed, often going back to some of the books and re-reading them to ponder further the insights and observations. I can say that every course I have taken has impacted my thinking and approach to ministry."

"It has also deepened my faith which in itself has a direct influence on the work that I do." Smith's thesis research is focusing on strengthening the ministry of other hockey chaplains.

Coming alongside those already serving in ministry is why the program exists, says John McNally, associate director of Acadia's doctor of ministry program.

"We come alongside those in settings ranging from pastoral ministry to parachurch service, from chaplaincy to missions organizations, and more. Whatever the context, we help people pursue their passions and callings. Paul's mentoring words from 2 Timothy 1:6-7 come to mind: '...fan into flame the gift of God... For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.'

"We equip Christians to serve



Bruce Smith during his time as a professional hockey player.

Photo courtesy of Bruce Smith

as we develop knowledge, nurture faith, and cultivate skills. Pray about applying to Acadia Divinity

College. Is God calling you to spark your passion with us?"

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