

Praying the word, practicing the faith

Scriptural foundations for spiritual growth

Below: A few Sola Scriptura members hosted a table at the Student Activities Fair, fall 2005.



Although I had a relatively young faith when I arrived at Carleton in August of 2000, I was very excited about connecting with other Christians and discovering how God desired to use me.

During that first week I met a few other first-years who were equally interested in connecting with an on-campus Christian community. That week we scheduled a meeting with Pastor Gary Gilbertson, who I knew to be an experienced and fun-loving pastor in the area.

As we talked and prayed during that and a few subsequent meetings, we felt led to start a new Bible study group on campus that would have a few defining characteristics. First, the Bible would be studied and examined “on its own terms.” Although we recognized there is a valid place for biblical textual criticism and for the evaluation of the Scripture’s internal claims to be the word of God, we desired to focus more on discovering what the Bible teaches on various topics and how that related to our lives.

Second, we all agreed that God

is active in the world today, and we desired to encourage His supernatural expressions and gifts within a biblical context. Thus, for example, we’d pray for people who had physical injuries or sicknesses. On a number of occasions we were blessed to witness healings. For example, one time a football player visited our group with his arm in a sling and we asked if we could pray for him. He agreed, and after we prayed for several minutes, he commented how he felt warmth and tingling in his arm and thanked us for “the energy.” A couple of days later I ran into him at the dining hall and he no longer needed the sling!

Lastly, we thought it would be important to have non-student, outside guidance for the group in order to maintain consistency. This spiritual oversight of the group we felt could be best provided by someone who had ministerial experience. In the first two years Pastor Gary Gilbertson provided this oversight and subsequently we were blessed to have Pastor Gary and Deb Hvass fill this role.

We decided to call this group Sola

Imran Babar '04

“Although we recognized there is a valid place for biblical textual criticism and evaluation of the Scripture’s internal claims to be the **word of God**, we desired to focus more on discovering what the Bible teaches on various topics and how that **related to our lives.**”



Sola Scriptura started with a few students in 2001 and grew steadily with the class of '04. Founding Pastor Gary Gilbertson and Pastor Gary Hvass are in the back row.

Scriptura and it gained increasing traction with students throughout my years at Carleton.

About halfway through my first year at Carleton, after praying regularly with several others for a move of God on campus, we hosted a worship event with St. Olaf in Great Hall (see article by **Christine [Collins] Papai**) and met a number of other committed first-year Christian Carls. Out of these meetings several groups came into being, including Mustard Seed (a praise and worship band), the Areopagus Forum (an apologetics group spearheaded by **Chad Bayse**—see his article) and several small prayer groups.

One of the biggest lessons I learned through this and other experiences at

Carleton is the effectiveness of intercessory prayer, which I am absolutely convinced was the main driving force that led to these huge breakthroughs in the spring of 2001. I still remember groups of believers gathering together at Carleton and St. Olaf to pray passionately for revival. The community grew substantially during my time at Carleton and we witnessed the development of a vibrant on-campus Christian community. As I reflect on this time I am truly amazed by all that God did to transform my life and the community of believers at Carleton.

For me personally, I grew a lot and found deliverance and healing in several areas of my life. I had many hurdles to overcome in my personal/

spiritual walk, but found God’s grace via many avenues, most notably through my Christian friends. Furthermore, I found it vital to be mentored by both Pastors Gary, who provided wisdom to all of us through teaching and discipleship, along with inspiration to gather for prayer and consistent guidance based on their decades of ministerial experience. ♦

Imran Babar '04 completed his Ph.D. in molecular biology at Yale University in May 2011.

He is still in touch with numerous Christian friends from Carleton and considers several of them his closest friends.

