

Peace Builder Award Acceptance Speech
Pacific Lutheran University
February 23, 2007

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Chairman & President, Wang Foundation

Loren and MaryAnn, Honorable Vice President Mondale, George and Dion Russell, distinguished guests and my fellow colleagues and students. Grace and I are deeply honored with the Peace Builder Award. Thank you, Loren, for the wonderful introduction and we gratefully accept this award as an encouragement to us in our future work. Thank you.

The true meaning of poverty alleviation stems from the motto of Tsinghua University---*Self Discipline and Social Commitment*.

“Self discipline” begins with an openness to new ideas, a willingness to learn. It requires curiosity to explore uncharted intellectual territory with capacity to understand and honor multiple viewpoints and interests with the new and the unexpected. It requires the courage to accept new ways of thinking, the challenge to construct complex new understandings, such as: the new discovery of a vast community of bacteria and claims on the Antarctic Ocean floor, in an area isolated under ice for ten thousand years; the new possible discovery of the 10th planet etc.

Self discipline means to take challenges and take risks. It can be uncomfortable but persists; where will I step beyond my comfort zone so that I might learn and grow, and go further than I ever thought I could? That is my understandings of “self discipline” from Tsinghua.

“Social commitment” can be easily illustrated by the following story that once happened in Seattle and was told by Loren in a recent convocation speech. The “philosopher” Fred Rogers of the children’s show Mister Rogers used the following story from the Seattle Special Olympics to illustrate the importance of commitment and connection:

For the 100-yard dash there were nine contestants...All nine of them assembled at the starting line and at the sound of the gun, they took off. But one little boy didn’t get very far. He stumbled and fell and hurt his knee and began to cry. The other eight children heard the boy crying. They slowed down, turned around and ran back to him---every one of them ran back to him. One little girl with Down’s syndrome bent down and kissed the boy and said, “This will make it better.” The little boy got up, and he and the rest of the runners linked their arms together and joyfully walked to the finish line.

They all finished the race at the same time. And when they did, everyone in the stadium stood and clapped and whistled and cheered for ...a very long time. People who were there are still telling the story with obvious delight.

And you know why? Because deep down we know that what matters in this life through effort in self discipline is more than winning for ourselves. What really matters is helping others win too, even if it means slowing down and change our course. From these 9 kids, we have learned the essence of social commitment which is the corner stone of the poverty alleviation work at Tsinghua...

Thank you for helping us celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Wang Center. Special thanks go to Walter F. Mondale, former Vice President of the United States whose special luncheon speech has energized us all.