Mall evangelist touts reasoning of religion

By Kristopher R. Cabalung
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

Religion was again the topic of discussion on the UA Mall yesterday when about 100 students gathered around a Christian apologist who was reasoning how Jesus was the son of God.

Cliffe Knechtle, campus evangelist, has been involved in campus outreach ministry for the last 19 years and said he has been invited to the UA every spring for the past 19 years.

He began yesterday’s discussion with a dialogue:

“A student stepped out of the crowd and said, ‘I believe in God, but I don’t believe in Christ.’ I said, ‘Well that’s great, tell me about the God you believe in,’” Knechtle said.

Labeled as a Christian apologist, Knechtle’s campus outreach ministry focuses on engaging intellectual debate with students defending the logical validity of an omniscient and omnipotent God, and from there, that Jesus is the son of that God.

Eddy Pearson, director of the Baptist Collegiate Ministry at the Regent, 901 N. Tyndall Ave., said he and other Christian groups invited Knechtle to counteract the more controversial, confrontational Mall preachers.

“In light of Brother Jed,” Pearson said, “we want to bring someone who can intellectually challenge students’ belief systems in a respectful way.”

Like the evangelist preacher Jed Smock, who spoke on campus a month ago, Knechtle was openly fielding questions from the crowd.

However, Knechtle’s manner did not attract jeers, taunts or the attention of errant cream pies.

“The crowd applauds him,” Pearson said. “Who does that for a Mall preacher?”

Half an hour into the forum, Deborah Frisch, professor and adjunct lecturer in psychology, jumped into the discussion by asking Knechtle, “Why do you think God’s a he?”

From there, a heated debate began, ranging from ideas such as the ideals and failings of a utilitarian society, the objectivity and subjectivity of good and evil, the deity of Jesus, the validity of the Gospel record, Pascal’s Wager and President Bush.

While believing Jesus was a “very nice guy,” Frisch said she doesn’t believe the historical Jesus rose from the dead.

Despite Knechtle’s reasoning, the issue resulted in a fundamental disagreement.

“There’s no way in hell, pardon the pun, sir, that you’re going to convince me that Jesus rose from the dead,” Frisch said.

But Knechtle and Frisch reached a common ground, agreeing that it is part of mankind’s purpose to make “this messed up world better,” as Frisch put it.

“I think it’s clear that God created us to love and worship God, and...”

By Natasha Bhuyan
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

The University of Arizona, Tucson

Admin to cut budget in 2006

The UA will see a half-percent budget cut next fiscal year along with eight other budget reallocation methods, which will bring in $6 million to central administration, administrators announced yesterday.

The decision comes after months of deliberation among administrators, who said the university must reassess the way it manages money during a time of decreased state funding.

According to a financial bulletin released by President Peter Likins, Provost George Davis and Joel Valdez, senior vice president of business affairs, general funds have fallen by $47 million in the past two years.

“It is no longer possible to absorb this loss by the use of central reserves or the use of funds only temporarily available,” Likins said in the bulletin. “We need a new strategy to restore the capacity of this university to make the investments required to achieve the goals of focused excellence.”

The half-percent cut, which will save the UA $1.7 million, will also come with a 10 percent tax on carry-forward funds, leftover money in departments at the end of the fiscal year.

However, deans and department heads said last month that the carry-forward tax could incite financial mismanagement in departments that do not want to see their funding go to central administration.

“It’s complicated for every college,” said Jim Shockey, associate dean for instruction in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. “A 10 percent tax on one might be a nuisance, on another it might be critical.”

Some colleges will also reduce in size because the provost will sweep faculty lines this spring for fiscal year 2007, saving the UA $2 million as vacated faculty positions may not be filled.

Tuition during summer session will increase to cover higher utility costs, a plan expected to bring in $650,000, while a half-percent increase in the administrative service charge on auxiliary programs will centralize $660,000.

In addition, a 6 percent tax on gifts and donations will...