

III. Embracing Tradition

SAMUEL ROUSH Interview

WELCOMED: Tell us a little about your background and what shaped you before Stanford.

Samuel Roush: I grew up in a Christian family, and my parents raised me in the faith. I also lived overseas with my family for my dad's work and ministry, and that had a big impact on me. Because my family moved a lot while I was growing up, they became my main source of stability and the people who shaped me most. Those experiences formed my values, my perspective, and a lot of who I am now.

WELCOMED: How does faith shape your life now?

Samuel Roush: My faith is the biggest part of who I am and who I hope to be. I practice it daily through prayer and scripture reading, and I stay involved in Christian communities, especially Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Grace Presbyterian. Faith is not separate from the rest of my life. It is the center of it.

WELCOMED: What has it been like to live that faith at Stanford?

Samuel Roush: I would say Stanford has both challenged and strengthened my relationship with Christ. Living on your own, away from family, brings new temptations and difficulties, and Stanford has all of that along with its own pressures. But I have also found strong Christian communities here, and those communities have helped keep me grounded and connected to my faith. So the challenges are real, but so is the support.

WELCOMED: Do you feel there is room for faith in public life on this campus?

Samuel Roush: Yes. Stanford feels open to different ideas and perspectives, and I have not felt much pushback against openly practicing my faith. I would not say that my faith is heavily integrated into all of my academic work, but I do feel free to practice it openly. That matters.

WELCOMED: How visible is your faith to other people, and how does that affect your sense of belonging?

Samuel Roush: I try to make my faith visible when people ask about it or seem curious, but I do not try to force it on anyone. I think that has helped me feel that I belong both with people who share my faith and with people who do not. It is possible to be open about what matters to you without making every interaction into a confrontation.

WELCOMED: What communities have sustained you most here?

Samuel Roush: Fellowship of Christian Athletes has been a big part of my faith life at Stanford. It has given me a steady community and helped me stay rooted in the habits and relationships that matter to me.

WELCOMED: What would you say to another student trying to figure out how faith fits into life at a secular university?

Samuel Roush: I would say not to be afraid to talk about how faith shows up in your daily life when those opportunities come. More people than you might expect are interested in hearing about someone else's faith journey. You do not need to have everything perfectly figured out. But it helps to be honest about what matters to you and to look for people who will support that.

WELCOMED: When someone finishes reading your story, what do you hope they understand?

Samuel Roush: I hope they understand that you can practice your faith under any circumstances. A lot depends on how much of it you choose to make visible, but the possibility is there. Faith does not disappear just because you are in a demanding or secular environment. It can still shape your life every day.