

European Academics Gather to Worship, Learn, and Grow
The 2025 Academics in the Alps Conference
Report from The Leadership Anvil

Daryl and Teri McCarthy
www.leadershipanvil.org

Teri and I have organized conferences for academics for over 30 years. But we have never experienced such a beautiful combination of worship, fellowship, intellectual engagement, and eager attentiveness than we saw at the recent Leadership Anvil Academics in the Alps Conference.

On August 25-28, more than one hundred academics and their families gathered in Switzerland surrounded by the majestic Alps for the 2025 Academics in the Alps Conference. They came from 22 countries across Europe and as far away as Kazakhstan with the largest delegation coming from Romania. All this was possible because of those who prayed and supported this work.



The conference was marked by an earnest hunger for more of God. We were moved by the humility of these academics and their deep desire to be closer to Christ. Several participants asked Teri to pray over them. She anointed some with oil as she prayed for them individually. One young man said, “*I want to build a life of*

prayer. For me, taking Jesus with me in class, at work, on a hike, or whatever I do, was life changing. I knew the theory, but the practice was so far from me. Now I am inspired to do so.”

The participants represented a wide-range of academic disciplines ranging from hard sciences such as astrophysics to medicine to the humanities and social sciences, such as education, literature, and philosophy. During one session we gathered in related fields to share the challenges faced and best practices we have discovered.

Each morning Dr. Dirk Jongkind, from Tyndale House in Cambridge, took us on a deep dive into St. John’s writings teaching us to trust Jesus more. Dr. Daniel Hill **(right)** from University of Liverpool unpacked what it means to follow Jesus as an academic and to be faithful in all the temptations which plague the world of scholarship. Dr. Michael Romanowski, who taught in the Middle East for fifteen years, taught us the importance of preparing the soil of our students and colleagues to receive the seed of the Gospel. In the final session Teri summed up all the messages and closed with a challenge that we are to be “little arks” (like the Ark of the Covenant) carrying God’s presence wherever we go. At the beginning of each session Drs. Emanuel and Alina Balaceanu, along with Dr. Maria-Magdalena Dutu, wonderfully ushered us into worship as we sang praises to our great God.

We were blessed to have all but one of our Leadership Anvil board members at the conference—Letta Jean Taylor along with her husband Skip from Montreat, NC, Terry Miller, Burleson, TX, Brian Burnett, Indianapolis, IN and Dr. Per Ewert and his wife Therese from Sweden. They all worked hard all week, serving the participants in a thousand different ways, modeling servant leadership. Therese Ewert led several sessions for wives, “Bringing Glory to God as the Wife of an Academic.” The women were thrilled with these special times together. **(Right, Teri and I with Letta Jean Taylor [chair of the Anvil board], Terry Miller, Brian Burnett, Dana Stanciu, and Skip Taylor).**

Dana Stanciu, our Leadership Anvil Conference and Publishing Coordinator, who lives in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, gave meticulous attention to detail. Her excellent organizational skills lifted much of the burden for planning and leading the conference from our shoulders. Many participants said it was the best organized conference they had ever witnessed. That was because of Dana.

Besides paying each speaker an honorarium and their travel expenses, we pay for their spouses to come with them as well. We also invite them to bring their children. This lets the participants see the speakers not just as



outstanding scholars, but to also see them in their marriages, as parents, and as brothers and sisters in Christ. It changes the atmosphere of the conference.

Here is what some of the participants said after the conference:

- *This is not just a conference, but a whole movement. It was more than an event – it was an environment in which His Word was exalted, with fellowship and a sense of security, and understanding was created. -- Lithuania*
- *The times of worship, the morning Bible studies, the powerful messages, the fellowship with the other participants, and even the opportunity to go hiking in the breathtaking Swiss Alps all made this one of the most remarkable conferences we have ever attended. -- Romania*
- *It was so powerful and needed, a very unique opportunity. This conference helped me to recenter myself in Him and to regain a clearer sense of His perspective on life and ministry. I return home encouraged, strengthened, and more determined to continue the race—and to run it well. -- Serbia*
- *The presentations targeted exactly my spiritual and academic concerns. -- Romania*
- *I loved the conference. I think it is the only international European conference for evangelical academics and it was a big success. -- England*
- *The Alps conference is a well, where academics and leaders can tank-up in faith and fellowship – with Him and with each other. -- Switzerland*
- *This conference had a profound impact on me, as I often felt very alone in my faith. This conference showed me that I am not alone—that there are other academics who also face similar dilemmas and difficulties. Everything I learned was infused with a fresh and positive spirit. Also, I am deeply grateful for Teri McCarthy for being such a strong female leader and an inspiration for all of us women in academia. -- Romania*
- *It fills a niche on the Europe-wide level not really met by the other conferences. This was one of the most refreshing and inspiring events I've attended. --Germany*
- *There are few occasions like this, where evangelical academics can meet in a "safe space", and be encouraged in our ministries and daily work. -- Sweden*



Initially, I indicated to the group that we would not have another Academics in the Alps conference. But there was a bit of an uprising—a very positive, affirming, “we must have a 2027 conference” uprising. We were surrounded by participants saying, “There is no other conference like this one. As academics, we need this time for spiritual and intellectual growth because nobody else is addressing these issues for us like this. We need this conference!”

Teri and I hadn’t fully realized the important role the Alps conference fulfills for European academics nor had we realized how truly unique the conference is. Most academic conferences, even the Christian ones, are heavy on the cerebral, but are mostly lacking in worship, prayer, and spiritual encouragement.

But somehow the Lord has graciously helped us—far beyond our own limited capabilities—to put together a gathering that combines intellectual challenge with biblical instruction, spiritual edification, heartfelt worship, warm fellowship, obedience to Christ, and a vision to spread the Gospel. And all this with fellow academics from countries across Europe. We treat academics as whole persons—persons with minds, but also with souls and bodies, living and working in relationships with others. For instance, we take one afternoon for hiking in the Alps. Even the most introverted academic comes back down from the mountain having built connections with other introverts. So it works!

Only God could make all this happen in the amazing way that it did. Suddenly, we saw more fully than ever before that the vision the Lord gave us for the Alps conferences several years ago is indeed bearing fruit.

However, none of this would be possible without the generous support of all our prayer partners and donors. So many people assured us of their prayers. The budget for the Alps Conference was \$80,000 and the Lord’s people provided all that was needed, on top of our on-going operational budget. We are so grateful for all the prayers and for all the donations that made this possible. Thank you! We stand amazed at what God’s hand has done. As the old song says, “Little is much, when God is in it!”



Drs. Daryl and Teri McCarthy
Mobile: 913-980-4427
Email: daryl@leadershipanvil.org;
Email: teri@leadershipanvil.org
Website: www.leadershipanvil.org



THE LEADERSHIP
—ANVIL—
EQUIPPING ACADEMICS AND LEADERS