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*"Jessi" Helps Celebrate Our Religious Diversity*  
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It started off as a fairly well behaved approach to evangelizing the students, but it became a time to hear the multiplicity of religious voices on the campus. I refer to the recent "Do you agree with Jessi?" campaign that took place on the University of Wyoming's campus.

It began a couple weeks ago with a myriad of questions written in chalk on the sidewalks across campus, all asking, "Do you agree with Jessi?" The curiosity of students was piqued, letters began appearing in the campus paper debating the question, and even faculty wondered what it was about, although few admitted it publicly. By the following week, hints began to emerge: students wearing green T-shirts saying "I agree with Jessi" appeared in classes, Jessi was actually a person, agreeing with her had something to do with Christianity, and finally, Jessi herself would speak on Thursday. It turned out that the students had spent several weeks organizing this event, and most of the Christian organizations on campus supported the Jessi campaign, not just the more evangelical ones, but also the student Catholic groups and various liberal Protestant groups.

On Thursday, Jessi turned out to be a junior engineering major, and her message was one of salvation. In good evangelical style, Jessi "gave her witness," describing how she had been saved from attempting suicide by believing Jesus could save her. Her talk was followed by a panel of evangelical Christian students whose aim was to answer questions about God's plan for humanity, the way of salvation provided by Jesus.

It was at this point that the evangelical message began to be lost. Contrasting voices

from different religious traditions began to speak up and to discuss their beliefs. Hindus, Jews, Pagans and followers of other types of Christianity discussed their different approaches to the divine realm. In the end, the attempt to put forward a single religious message became a discussion of the multiple nature of religious belief and the need for tolerance of differing views, especially those held deeply and sincerely.

This was an interesting outcome, for it echoes religious activities in the city of Laramie. This fall, the Laramie churches have been working to emphasize the unity not just of Christians, but of all religious believers. Since Sept. 11, a series of regular interfaith services has been held, which include not just a wide variety of Christian groups, but also the local Muslim and Jewish communities. The goal has been to emphasize that despite the town's religious diversity, America's freedom to worship as one chooses unites everyone.

So what has become clear in Laramie and among the students at the University of Wyoming is that this is a moment not for divisiveness, but for coming together. It is the ability to practice different religions, even though they all have exclusivist claims that strengthen this community, and the nation as well.