



**Title:**  
Professor of Agriculture

**Employer:**  
Huntington University

**Universities Attended:**  
Wheaton College, B.S. Biology  
Cornell University, Ph.D. in Plant Breeding  
Biola University, M.A. Science and Religion

## Dr. Raymond A. "Raymie" Porter



"It has been a challenge to start a new program that is so rare among Christian colleges."

Read more about Dr. Porter at:  
[huntington.edu/agriculture](http://huntington.edu/agriculture)

Huntington University  
Huntington, IN

Faith, family and farming have always been uniquely connected. The Hauptert Institute for Agricultural Studies promotes a Christian perspective on agriculture—focused on stewardship, sustainability and justice.

*"This is a great opportunity for Christian students interested in agriculture. They don't have to choose between going to a Christian college {or} studying agriculture. They can do both at institutions like Huntington University, and I'm glad to be a part of making that possible."*

# innovating

### How long have you taught at Huntington University and what led you to this school/position?

I just completed my first year of teaching at Huntington University. I came here after 26 years of doing applied agricultural research at the University of Minnesota. After earning my masters in science and religion from Biola University, I was excited about the prospect of starting a new agriculture program at a Christian college, where I could integrate my faith with science by **teaching agricultural science from a Christian perspective**.

There are very few Christian colleges that offer four-year degrees in agricultural fields, so the prospect of building such a program from the ground up was exciting. This is a great opportunity for Christian students interested in agriculture. They don't have to choose between going to a Christian college and studying agriculture. They can do both at institutions like Huntington University, and I'm glad to be a part of making that possible.

We just completed our first year and are growing steadily. We offer degrees in agriculture business and are looking to add a degree in agriculture education.

### What experiences, both personal and professional, prepared you for your role at Huntington University?

I grew up on a farm in Texas, so I knew agriculture first-hand. I also spent most of my career doing applied agricultural research at the University of Minnesota. While I did that, I pursued opportunities to teach (mostly as a guest lecturer) and to prepare myself for more extensive teaching by taking courses in teaching in higher education. The M.A. in science and religion prepared me to think about how to integrate faith and science, particularly agricultural science.

### Are you currently working on any research? What previous research projects have you participated in?

I spent my entire career in research focused on a regional crop in Minnesota (wildrice). Right now, I am still **exploring new research opportunities** in the context of agriculture in this region, which consists mainly of corn and soybean, but also includes a number of other crops that are growing in interest.

### How would you describe your teaching philosophy and style?

My philosophy of teaching in applied (agricultural) science starts with the principle that there is a need to learn basic content, acquire a certain body of knowledge as a foundation on which to build the higher levels of learning. Students may not realize it at first, but there is just no getting around

knowing facts and terms and basic principles in order to learn how plants and animals and ecosystems work. The more knowledge they have, the more they can analyze and synthesize facts and ideas from a variety of sources to achieve **a higher level of learning**.

Part of my role is not only to provide the basic foundation of knowledge, but also to help them see some of the complex connections between those diverse sources of information. As they acquire more knowledge and analytical skills, they will be able to make the necessary connections to come up with new and improved ways of growing food, fiber, and fuel for an increasing world population.

### What do you enjoy most about your work?

I love the ability to teach freely from the **perspective** of a Christian worldview, and I experience the rewards of seeing my students "get it."

### What has been your most rewarding professional experience?

It is a challenge to start a new program that is so rare among Christian colleges. I think much of the reward is still ahead. What I see now is the overwhelming support from area businesses, alumni, farmers and donors that we talk to about this. People are excited to see agricultural studies at Huntington.

### How do you incorporate your faith in your work? How are you making an impact for Christ on the job?

Our program's motto is "Faith. Family. Farming." This resonates with many who are involved in agriculture, because they have to trust God for things that are out of their control, like weather, prices and government. Still, there are ethical and moral issues that confront people who are on the front line of agriculture, like genetic engineering, animal welfare, and environmental stewardship. These come up in discussions in my classes, because many students are already aware of them and are forming their views about them. I want to see that they not only have the facts of these issues, but also that they are **informed by Christian principles and values**.

### What inspires your work and ministry?

For my work, I often go to Psalm 104:14-15, "He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart." For my everyday life and in my work, I am fueled by a truth that John Piper articulated in *Desiring God*, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him."

## What do you enjoy most about your work?

I love the ability to teach freely from the perspective of a Christian worldview, and I experience the rewards of seeing my students "get it."