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Breeding Tadpoles or Growing Whole Students: The Unique Challenge and Opportunity for Christian Higher Education

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Human sexuality was God's idea. In the beginning, God created human sexuality as an integral part of our being made in His image as male and female in order to reflect His glory, to reveal Himself to us, to help us understand our incompleteness and thus our need of Him and each other, and to move us into meaningful relationships through which we can experience significance, security, passion, and pleasure.

In no arena is the transformational power of God more clearly seen than that of human sexuality expressed in the context of healthy relationships. Unfortunately we live in a world obsessed with and addicted to perversions and distortions of God's "good gift" of sex, where the teachings of the Bible are often ignored, ridiculed, and written off as irrelevant, and where those who don't jump on the politically correct bandwagon are demeaned as unenlightened, mean-spirited and intolerant hypocrites.

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to articulate a thorough theology of human sexuality, one can't fully understand the divine gift of human sexuality without considering the biblical teaching on creation, the fall and redemption. According to the early chapters of Genesis God created Adam and Eve in his image so that by God's design we are all image-bearers. All went well in the Garden of Eden until Adam and Eve chose to sin. There are few places where the effects of sin are more clearly seen than in the area of human sexuality. Today we must grapple with the reality that one of God's greatest gifts is now a part of our fallen nature and in need of God's healing hand.

The good news is that Christ died and rose again to redeem His fallen "image bearers." In Colossians 1:18-22 the apostle Paul succinctly describes what Christ accomplished on our behalf:

"Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. He is the first of all who will rise from the dead, so he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and by him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of his blood on the cross. This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions, yet now he has brought you back as his friends. He has done this through his death on the cross in his own human body. As a result, he has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault."

God's redemptive plan was manifested in what Christ accomplished through His death, burial and resurrection. Christ broke sin's power to disrupt and divide relationships, to distort and pervert God's good gift of human sexuality and to rob God's sons and daughters of the ability to enjoy deep relationships with Himself and with each other. He said that "I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10)." In fact he wants that life to be "... exceedingly, abundantly beyond all we can ask or think (Ephesians 3:20)."

The Bible clearly presents sexuality as basic to our human existence and informs our understanding of what it means to be created as male and female. Sexuality provides significant insights into God's character, the ways God interacts with his people and the ways he would have us interact with each other. The broad impact of sexuality is seen when one takes into account its theological, spiritual, physiological, psychological, social, cultural, legal and political dimensions. Sexuality involves a wide array of feelings, thoughts, memories, attitudes and behaviors through which we experience God, ourselves and each other and express ourselves in relationship. (Balswick & Balswick, 2000; Rosenau & Sytsma, 2004)

Given the good news of God's creative and redemptive gifts, the sad reality is that after almost 2000 years Christians are still struggling to develop a theology of sexuality and sexual intimacy that is vital and vibrant and reflects the fullness of God's heart for men and women. Rosenau and Sytsma accurately state that, "Today's Church is still filled with ignorance, avoidance and confusion in this central area of life and relationships. While there are some good reasons for the present state of affairs, our culture continues to be increasingly focused on sexuality. Now more than ever the Church needs to provide a better answer than a simple 'sex is for marriage.'" (Rosenau & Sytsma, 2004, p. 261)

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION TO SPEAK TO THE ISSUE OF HEALTHY SEXUALITY

One of the distinct advantages of Christian higher education is that we have the opportunity and some would say the responsibility to nurture the whole person--intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically--within a biblical framework in ways that cut across disciplines. This gives us a unique opportunity to partner with the broader community of faith in working towards the goal of putting sex back into the context of God's design for healthy sexuality and to speak the relevance of revealed truth into the lives of 21st century men and women in ways that touch and even transform all of who God designed us to become.

The stated purpose of our consultation is to have informed, honest dialogue about the issues related to human sexuality, and to learn how to best honor Christ and engage the culture in meaningful ways. We have been invited to come together for a time of rich interaction, informed and passionate discussion with the commitment to speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). As we openly and honestly address some hard questions and allow "iron to sharpen iron" we will be able to provide meaningful answers to those who struggle with a lack of information and/or misinformation in this critical area.

In a different context, Dallas Willard articulates the challenge of this consultation: “There is serious intellectual (and spiritual) work to be done, and no one is in a better position to grasp the nettle than a Christian who has learned to trust truth because he or she knows that God of truth, in relation to which every field actually does come together. They have a place to stand to confront those from any quarter who falsely contrast Athens and Jerusalem and who, in the name of 'acceptability'—professional or otherwise—seek to shut down the avenues of free and hopeful intellectual and creative activity” (Willard in Poe, 2004, p. 12).

A theology of human sexuality and sexual intimacy is a necessary component of any meaningfully Christian higher education. That’s why we must have informed honest dialogue about human sexuality if we are to equip students to engage our culture and experience the abundant life that God has intended for them.

As we look at the complex and controversial area of human sexuality what might be the role, responsibility and opportunity of Christian higher education? How can we increase our effectiveness? I can best respond to those questions by sharing with you my journey from family psychologist and seminary professor to the world of Christian higher education with The Center for Marriage and Family Studies at John Brown University.

In 1997 I was in my 13th year as co-founder and clinical director of a large community Christian mental health center in Littleton, Colorado when I received a call from John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. They had received a generous endowment to start a center for marriage and family studies and asked if I would consider becoming the founding executive director. This would involve moving our family from Denver, Colorado to Northwest Arkansas, leaving an established psychology practice, to a significantly different part of the country with a different culture and to a sphere of ministry I had little familiarity with--Christian higher education. After much prayer and consultation, my wife Carrie and I decided this was where God wanted us to be so with some hesitation and more than a few reservations, we accepted the invitation.

When I shared our decision with some of my doctor of ministry students at Denver Seminary, one of them asked me if I planned on sending my boys to a Christian college. “Why would you want them to go to a Christian college? What long-term difference do you think it will make in their lives?” This led to an interesting discussion of what that student saw as the pros and cons of Christian higher education and the value of spending thousands of dollars for a private Christian education when one could receive an equal, if not better, education for much less money at state schools with added benefit of Christian students having the opportunity to be salt and light to non-Christian students.

What started out as a seemingly innocuous conversation was used of God to help me realize that as I moved into this new position there were some important questions I needed to ask. Given the fact that students can choose from thousands of schools all over the world to get a diploma or they can choose to stay at home and get a diploma on-line, why should families invest in a private Christian college or university? Is there a “value added” and, if so, what is it?

As I began working in my new position it became clear that while I had ample education and over 20 years of experience in theology, psychology and marriage and family systems, I didn't know a lot about the world of Christian higher education. As a neophyte to this new arena I had a steep learning curve and it didn't take the scientific side of me long to figure out that, even at the risk of exposing my ignorance and naiveté, the best way for me to better understand this vital area was to do some serious reading and ask some thoughtful questions.

At the outset I wasn't sure what questions would be of the most value but through my readings and conversations I came up with a growing list of questions that began to reveal the depth and diversity of perspectives on what comprises quality Christian higher education. I started with some of the administration and faculty at JBU and they were gracious in spirit and generous in their gifts of time and patience. I also talked with friends on the faculties of several CCCU schools. In a short period of time my list of questions included:

What is the purpose of a liberal arts education?

What is the purpose of a "Christian" liberal arts education?

What makes it Christian?

Does it view the Bible as relevant? If so, is it relevant inside as well as outside of the classroom?

Does it meaningfully address the whole person?

What noticeable difference will it make in the graduates?

Is the acquisition of truth more important than the application of truth?

Is what we are doing actually helping students "become conformed to the image of His son" in ways that are semi-visible and even partially measurable?

How do we assess/measure/determine success? Retention rate? Graduation rate? Scores on the GRE? Inclusion in the Newsweek "Best Schools" issue?

What are the marks of an educated person?

What are the distinguishing marks of an educated Christian?

Intellectual Qualities? Spiritual Qualities?

Moral Qualities? Relational Qualities?

Does heart-development have any meaningful place in Christian higher education? Why?

How does it happen? What does it look like? Who does it? How do we know that it is or isn't taking place?

Is "heart-development" really important or is it merely the soft (read semi-insignificant) stuff that we leave to student development while the academicians do the more serious and significant work?

Is truth making a difference in the most visible, most significant and most important areas of students personal and public relationships?

Do we intentionally and prayerfully include this dimension as an important part of the education we provide or do we, de facto, hold to the trickle-down theory of Christian education and influence where we hope that it "happens" during their four years in school?

The results of some research suggests that the divorce rate is at least as high for Christians as it is for non-Christians. Are the relationships of those who spend four years at a Christian college or university any better? Should they be? Do they have healthier marriages and families?

5 to 10 years after graduation what will characterize JBU graduates, what will distinguish or “mark” them as having attended a “Christian” liberal arts school that is different from those who attended a secular school?

In terms of the reading, some co-workers helped me identify what they thought were key resources that would help me get “up to speed” in understanding some of the core issues of higher education in general and Christian higher education in particular. A list of suggested resources can be found in the Appendix.

Through the readings and discussions I concluded that while the major focus of a liberal arts education must address the head or cognitive side of who we are, a meaningfully Christian liberal arts education must also be concerned with the whole person. I agree with Anthony Hoekema when he writes, “Though one of the main purposes of the school is intellectual instruction, the teacher should never forget that the pupil he or she is teaching is a whole person. The school therefore should not just train the mind, but should also appeal to the emotions and the will” (Hoekema, 1994, pp. 223-224).

John Stott often told his students that God didn't call preachers and teachers (and I might add Christian educators) to the business of "breeding tadpoles."

"A tadpole is a little creature with a huge head and nothing much else besides. Certainly there are some Christian tadpoles around. Their heads are bulging with sound theology, but that is all there is to them. No, we are concerned to help people to develop not only a Christian mind, but also a Christian heart, a Christian spirit, a Christian conscience and a Christian will, in fact to become whole Christian persons, thoroughly integrated under the lordship of Christ" (Stott, 1995, p. 119).

Since a significant part of the reason Christ came was to redeem us and restore our relationship with Him and with each other, since relationships are important to God, since in John 13:34-35 (and other passages) Christ clearly stated that the mark of a Christian is our ability to love others as He loves us, since in our Lord's prayer in John 17 He told the Father that His desire was that we be one as He and the Father are one, then one view of what a meaningfully Christian education might be is one that educates and equips the head and heart, the intrapersonal and interpersonal, as well as the intellectual side of who God designed us to be and become.

In 2001 The Center for Marriage and Family Studies at JBU received a grant to host a four-day conference in Eureka Springs, Arkansas to determine what some CCCU schools were currently doing to meaningfully impact the whole student i.e. identify some existing best practices. During those four days with representatives from 17 CCCU schools (list in Appendix) we asked a lot of questions and did a lot of listening. In the context of those rich and warm interactions the participants expressed many mutual concerns and shared some effective existing programs.

In light of what we were learning we began to ask ourselves: Are there more specific and practical ways JBU can increase its effectiveness in educating the whole student? Are there ways to come along side of, encourage, enrich and enhance existing strengths and best practices? Is it possible that an intentional and comprehensive program might have a more significant

impact? Are there ways to measure/assess growth in some of these areas? In other words, how might we at JBU know we're making a difference?

Over time and with the help of many different individuals, the answers to all of our research increased our belief that there might be ways to complement JBU's clear concern for academic excellence and strengthen its commitment to awaken students to the value of, the nature of and the essential components of becoming a whole person including enjoying healthy relationships.

Our next step was to design a 3-year cyclical program that we have called the CMFS University Relationships Initiative. The initiative is based on the conviction that students need to graduate with more than a diploma and career skills to be successful in life and to be effective for the Kingdom. Through curricular and co-curricular components along with the involvement of staff, faculty and administration and existing university programs we believe that we can increase our effectiveness in helping students learn (head knowledge and heart knowledge) what the process and results of sanctification look like intellectually, emotionally and spiritually in the context of their relationship with God, with each other as friends, in dating relationships, in marriage and family, and in the marketplace. We also decided that we would share our results and resources with other CCCU schools to adopt and/or adapt to the culture and mission of their institutions.

Through a grant from a Foundation that shares our vision the funding for the initiative began in the summer of 2003. The CMFS University Relationships Initiative is not designed to do all of the "whole person" programming on JBU's campus. We're fortunate at JBU to have a supportive environment and open system that is substantially free of the "silo" mentality and excessive interdepartmental politics. This has given us the freedom to collaborate with administration, faculty, staff and students as well as with pre-existing programs and departments in developing curricular and co-curricular activities rather than functioning as an independent entity.

An example of this is the CMFS Relationships Week that is presented on campus generally each semester. We bring in nationally known speakers, presenters, authors, actors, etc. to speak during the regular chapel time during the week with additional evening events. The guests are chosen based on their expertise in a particular area consistent with the theme we are focusing on for that year.

Our goal is to expose students to resources and information that will help them grow and develop intrapersonally as well as interpersonally. We utilize the existing structures in the JBU community, such as chapel times and weekly women's and men's meetings, to integrate and present our speaker's message during this week in an organized and logical manner. Students are generally quite responsive to the CMFS Relationships Week and it provides material for discussions both in and outside of classes.

In another effort to avoid the "silo" mentality and build collaboration, we initiated a "University Programming Committee" comprised of individuals from various departments on campus. For example, we have Student Development, Christian Formation, Counseling Center, faculty, and student representatives on this committee. The committee meets once a month to

discuss the various programs each department is working on. The meetings provide opportunity to seek advice and support so that our programs more accurately meet the needs of our student body. A university has a time-limited opportunity to impact students. This committee was formed with the hope of unifying programming in order to have a greater, more lasting impact on a student's life.

An additional reason our initiative aims to work with the existing structure and departments on campus is to help make our efforts transferable. Since most schools don't have a Center for Marriage and Family Studies, our desire is to be available as a virtual CMFS for other CCCU schools. At CMFS we have a unique opportunity to access resources, design programs, and develop methods of impacting students not only intellectually but also spiritually and emotionally that can be implemented on other CCCU campuses. Therefore, our involvement with students, staff, and faculty has to be such that other institutions can adopt and adapt our initiatives to their campus independent of our center.

INITIAL 3-YEAR CYCLE OF OVERLAPPING THEMES

After much prayer, thought, collaboration, and consultation with other campuses and our own Student Development Department, we have developed an initial 3-year cycle of themes. At the outset it's important to note that since we are still in the very early stages of this program, ongoing revisions and improvements are being made. Here's where we are today.

YEAR ONE:

The focus in the first year is on the intrapersonal dimension and helping students develop an appreciation for the unique person God has created them to be. The fact that we are created beings—more than the result of the irrational and impersonal plus time and chance—made in the image of God has significant implications for our identity.

A part of being made in God's image means that we have a mind, will and emotions. There is a growing body of research that suggests that success and effectiveness in the personal realm and in the marketplace is affected by our emotional intelligence (EQ) as much if not more than our intellectual quotient (IQ). During this year we use a variety of means to help students increase their emotional intelligence through the cultivation of healthy emotions and providing opportunities to learn how to deal with difficult emotions such as anger, anxiety and depression. Issues such as self-awareness, appropriate self-esteem and healthy boundaries are also addressed.

An essential part of this emphasis is to help students understand that God loves them, that He delights in them, that they are precious in His sight, and that He wants to cultivate an intimate and growing love relationship with them so that they might experience Jesus as the lover of their soul. We want to help them understand that God is all about intimacy, passion, desire and pleasure and to see how the quality of their vertical relationship with Him affects the quality of all other relationships. We want to encourage them to aim high.

One effective approach we have used was facilitating a dating workshop, which covered topics such as the various conflicting views of dating, the terms that are currently used in dating,

warning signs that the relationship is heading in an unhealthy direction, similarities that are important in selecting a mate, and dealing with conflict in healthy ways. It was team taught by two couples, one of which was newly married and the other engaged. Throughout the evening the couples shared personal examples that illustrated the information they were presenting. These couples were young and able to connect with the students easily. Several conversations occurred and further questions were asked as a result of the evening. An additional workshop that coincides with the dating workshop will be held for engaged couples needing and wanting pre-marital preparation. The program will be a Friday evening and half day Saturday event. Many important topics will be covered, such as finances, conflict and communication, family of origin, stages of love, and expectations.

Beyond the workshops available to the students throughout the year, we also taught on emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and communication styles in an undergraduate family and human services class, which is in addition to an undergraduate relationships class taught in the spring. A professor on campus was interested in the information we were focusing on for the year and felt it was imperative for her class to be exposed to the information. We were guests in her class three times over the semester.

Another mode of contact was through what we call "Life Notes." Once a month we printed information on various topics for the bathroom inserts program JBU has. Every week a new sheet of information on a wide variety of topics is posted in the bathrooms across campus to expose the students to these diverse subjects. This has proved to be a simple and effective way to utilize an existing structure for giving students information on intrapersonal issues.

YEAR TWO:

The focus for this year is on the interpersonal dimension. Our goal is to help students develop their interpersonal skills so as to facilitate the development, healing and restoration of healthy relationships. This includes an understanding of God's desire and sovereign design for relationships including the significance of the relational apologetic (Mark 12: 29-31, John 13:34-35, I Corinthians 13, Ephesians 5:1-2, I Timothy 1:5).

God designed us to be in relationship with Himself and with others. In Matthew 22: 37-40, Jesus says, "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and Prophets" (NASB).

It is interesting that many people regularly enter into friendships, dating relationships, and even marriage without weighing the implications of their decision. They also embark on relationships without skills or know-how and expect things to just "work-out," and at the first glimpse of the relationship requiring work, they leave. During this year we encourage students to build on the intrapersonal evaluation of themselves so that they are better equipped to be relationally mature.

Some of the content for this theme focuses on helping students to increase their understanding and appreciation of a variety of differences including gender, personality, culture

and ethnicity; to enhance their capacity for caring relationships; to encourage their connectedness with God and others in the family and in the community.

Our intentional emphasis on “differences” has been influenced by the responses given by students. Each spring our staff teaches a relationships class called The Psychology of Relationship Development. This class does not merely focus on dating, marriage, family, etc., but in addition to those important topics, we talk about who God created us to be including our personality and gender differences.

At the end of each semester, the students complete an evaluation on the course which includes questions asking what was most helpful and what they would like to learn more about. Over the past six years a majority of the students have expressed a strong interest in learning more about personality and gender differences. The students are eager to understand who they are, who their friends are, who their family and significant others are, and how to best use their differences to enhance their relationships.

Since one of the attributes of a caring Christian is the ability to forgive, we decided that it would be valuable to see if there were ways we could help students grow in their capacity to forgive. We worked with Dr. Everett Worthington to design a 6-hour educational and experiential program for small groups of students in which they would have the opportunity to learn about, discuss and actually apply one approach to forgiveness. Over 30 faculty, staff, and student leaders volunteered to receive 8 hours of training as small group facilitators and over 65 students volunteered to participate in the training.

While our primary interest in providing forgiveness training was to facilitate spiritual, emotional and relational growth in the students we also saw an opportunity to assess the degree to which this program might actually make a measurable difference and so decided to incorporate a research study as a part of the program. We decided that it would be valuable to measure the participating student’s level of forgiveness before and after the training experience to evaluate if the program had any significant effects on their ability to forgive.

Overall, the results suggested that forgiveness training helped students become more forgiving of the person who had offended them. Specifically, students in the forgiveness training condition showed significantly more positive thoughts and feelings toward the offender and showed significantly less avoidance of the offender. At debriefing, group leaders consistently reported that the students in the forgiveness training condition responded positively to the training and found the training to be a significant spiritual experience. Based on these initial results, it’s clear that in a comparatively short period of time students can learn how to become a more forgiving person.

Another part of this year’s theme is providing opportunities for students to learn how to manage the inevitable conflicts that arise in response to differences. We were able to adapt the Peacemaker program (reference in a footnote) and train 39 faculty, administration, and staff including the entire Student Development staff who in turn provided training to all of the 53 resident assistants in the process of helping JBU become a community of peacemakers. The individuals who were trained in Peacemaker have been able to incorporate it into their day-to-

day work environment. Many of the departments represented at the training signed and displayed the Peacemaker poster in a central area as a reminder to all who worked in that department of their commitment to being peacemakers.

Currently we are exploring how to further implement this program on the campus by making it more applicable and generationally relevant to our student body. When considering the concept of being a peacemaker, in light of our culture and the devastatingly high divorce statistic, this program has an opportunity to be literally life-changing for many students who may come from a broken family or who may one day face an ensuing broken relationship.

YEAR THREE:

The focus for the third year emphasizes the areas of human sexuality by looking at God, sex, and culture. Understanding God's design for human sexuality is central to understanding God and to helping us make sense of the many metaphors of Scripture in which God reveals the relational side of who He is—a nurturing parent, a loving marriage partner, a close sibling, and a faithful friend—and it is foundational for us to become all that God has designed us to become.

Some of our goals in this third year emphasis include:

- helping students develop a core theology of sexuality
- helping them understand what it means to be made in the image of God as male and female and thus what it means to celebrate God's goodness in creating humans as sexual beings
- helping students to understand God's plan and purpose for sex in the context of human sexuality
- providing accurate and developmentally appropriate information about human sexuality and dispel myths
- helping students grapple with the struggles of sexual identity and behavior
- helping students to understand how sexuality is expressed no matter what our marital status and for those who choose to marry to enhance their capacity for a loving, supportive, non-coercive, mutually pleasurable, intimate and sexual relationship with their opposite sex marriage partner

An important part of this emphasis is helping students understand the vital relationship between spirituality and sexuality. Jack and Judy Balswick make the critical observation that:

“Being created as sexual persons . . . involves our very being and how we live in relationship to others. In authentic sexual interaction we are mutually responsible for building mature relationships that bring forth the best in each other. Each of us is responsible for our sexual attitudes, behaviors and interpersonal relationships, and when we compartmentalize rather than integrate our sexuality, we risk irresponsibility. It's not something that should be left to chance. We need to intentionally integrate our sexuality and spirituality by carefully assessing our attitudes and behaviors in terms of biblical values” (Balswick & Balswick, 2000, p. 49).

Our hope is that students will grow in their understanding of God's desire that his children experience all of the passion and pleasure He intended when He created us rather than settle for

and/or become addicted to the counterfeit distortions of the real thing designed by the evil one. C.S. Lewis said it well when he wrote:

“If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered [to] us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased” (Lewis).

That infinite joy Lewis talks about includes learning the value of being trustworthy, creating safety in a relationship and developing the capacity for deep intimacy and joy.

As a part of the sexuality theme we invited Dr. Mark Lasser and Marnie Ferree to present on aspects of healthy sexuality and dealing with sexual addictions. During our Relationships Week they spoke twice in chapel about healthy sexuality and were available in the dorms for brief presentations followed by discussions, some of which lasted long after the formal presentation ended. The students were highly receptive and made personal appointments with both Dr. Lasser and Mrs. Ferree. Along with their talks at the university, we also arranged for them to speak on healthy sexuality at a community event for parents and teens.

Examining human sexuality includes understanding sex in the context of healthy sexuality and wholeness. The practice of abstinence is important and is something that we teach and emphasize. However, our greater concern is that students understand that God’s message is more than “Just Don’t Do It!” It’s more than a set of rules and regulations. It goes beyond mere self-control to learning how to cultivate a non-erotic intimacy--intimacy outside of intercourse.

HOW DO WE KNOW IF WE’RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

One of the major questions we continue to ask ourselves is “How do we know if we’re making a difference?” With this in mind, a significant part of our current work includes the ongoing development of an assessment tool to determine what differences we are and/or aren’t making and the long-term impact of the program.

We’ve designed and are continuing to develop the CMFS Student Relationships Assessment (SRA) to measure personal and relational growth and spiritual formation in college students and to be sensitive to changes (hopefully growth) in these areas. The current version of the SRA is a 101-item assessment that can be taken on-line in less than 30 minutes. The SRA is a reliable and valid instrument that measures 19 emotional and relational competencies organized into five clusters: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management, and Spiritual Formation. The results from this survey will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the current programming and training.

Our plan is to have the students take the SRA at the beginning of their freshman year and at the end of their sophomore, junior and senior years. Our long-term plan is to develop a form available for students to take on-line after they graduate. This will provide us with a potentially invaluable longitudinal perspective. As we are able to assess the long-term impact of our

programs, we will be able to improve what we are doing as well as find new ways to more effectively encourage and serve our alumni.

CONCLUSION

The design and ongoing development of this program has been significantly enhanced by the support and validation we've received from the administration, faculty and staff at JBU and at other institutions. One of the biggest surprises has been the enthusiastic responses we continue to receive from parents. On more than one occasion parents have told me that one key deciding factor in choosing JBU was the university's intentional commitment to educating and training the "whole person." They were delighted that their daughter or son would not only receive the highest quality in academic training but also instruction in the difference that Christ wants to make in every aspect of their lives. In addition, we are discovering that the students themselves desire instruction and practical application of these principles in their own lives.

I want to reiterate the fact that what CMFS is doing at John Brown University is just one of many possible responses to what we see as a great need and significant opportunity for Christian colleges and universities. It's not THE answer but is a sincere and focused attempt to move in that direction. We are currently in the process of selecting several CCCU institutions who share our vision and would be interested in collaborating with us by making a three-year commitment to adopt and/or adapt our CMFS University Relationships Initiative program on their campus. We're looking forward to the synergy and accelerated progress that will come through these partnerships.

The issues we discussed at this consultation are foundational for those of us called and committed to meaningful Christian higher education, to going beyond merely breeding tadpoles to speaking to the core of who God has made us to be and become. C.S. Lewis says it well:

"This is the whole of Christianity. There is nothing else. It is so easy to get muddled about that. It is easy to think that the Church has a lot of different objectives -- education, building, missions, holding services.

The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christ's. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose. It says in the Bible that the whole universe was made for Christ and that everything is to be gathered together in Him" (Lewis).

I believe that healthy human sexuality can flourish in a community that educates, equips, encourages, and holds each other accountable to what God has revealed to us. A clear and uncompromising sense of who we are in Christ, as redeemed and adopted sons and daughters of the living God, leads us to go beyond a focus on, or even a preoccupation with, unwise, unhealthy and at times sinful behavior to a realization of what it means to be image-bearers. We are then compelled to engage in an active pursuit of deeper levels of understanding of the pathways and parameters of how God's design of human sexuality can be fulfilled and enjoyed to His honor and glory and for our pleasure.

When God's plan and provision for healthy human sexuality is challenged or compromised at any level, Christian leaders (including Christian educators) must be willing to stand in the gap and take a prophetic role as salt and light to communicate with clarity, compassion and courage the difference that our Lord Jesus Christ wants to make in every aspect of who we were created to be and become.

We have work to do. We have the opportunity to become active participants in creating a new future. Each one of us has something to give. God has something to give us. May we have open minds and hearts to listen to Him and to each other. May we be found faithful. May Christ be glorified through our interactions. May His presence fill this place and make a difference.

Psalm 16: 7-9, 11

I will bless the Lord who has counseled me;
Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night
I have set the Lord continually before me
Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh will also dwell securely.
Thou wilt make known to me the path of life:
In Thy presence is fullness of joy;
In Thy right hand are pleasures forever.

APPENDIX

Suggested Resources Relating to Higher Education Core Issues:

- Holmes, A. F. (1987). *The Idea of a Christian college*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Holmes, A. F. (2001). *Building the Christian academy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Hughes, R. T. & Adrian, W. B. (1997). *Models for Christian higher education: Strategies for survival and success in the twenty-first century*
- Burtchaell, J.T. (1998). *The dying of the light: The disengagement of colleges and universities from their Christian churches*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Fisher, B. C. (1989). *The idea of a Christian university in today's world*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press
- Mannoia, V.J. (2000). *Christian liberal arts*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Marsden, G. M. (1998) *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*. Oxford University Press.
- Marsden, G. M. (1996) *The Soul of the American university: From Protestant establishment to established nonbelief*. Oxford University Press.
- Poe, H. L. (2004). *Christianity in the academy: Teaching at the intersection of faith and learning*. Renewedminds.

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- Burtchaell, J.T. (1998). *The dying of the light: The disengagement of colleges and universities from their Christian churches*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
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- Hoekema, A. A. (1994). *Created in God's image*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
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- Marsden, G. M. (1998) *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*. Oxford University Press.
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- Rosenau, D. & Sytsma, M (2004). A theology of sexual intimacy: Insights in the creator. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 261-270.
- Stott, J. R. W. (1995). *The contemporary Christian: An urgent plea for double listening*. Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press.

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Participating Schools

Bethel College	Oklahoma Baptist University
Biola University	Pepperdine University
Fresno Pacific College	Philander-Smith College
George Fox University	Point Loma Nazarene University
Gordon College	Southern Methodist University
Harding University	Southern Nazarene University
John Brown University	Tabor College
LeTourneau University	Taylor University
Huntington College	