

CCCU **ADVANCE**

Shining Light on
Shame p. 30

Wes Hill: The Theology of Marriage
and of Compassion p. 44

Racial Justice: Moving
Forward Together p. 36

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

No Easy Math Problems



By Shirley V. Hoogstra, J.D.

WALKING THROUGH THE National Air and Space Museum recently, I was struck by the heroism and adventure of the Gemini and Apollo astronauts. I was compelled to go back to the Museum because I was inspired by Katherine Johnson, Mary Jackson, and Dorothy Vaughan, the trailblazing African-American women who served a vital role in the space program's early years featured in *Hidden Figures*. While at the museum, I also walked through the *Challenger* and *Columbia* exhibits. These space flights brought heartache that was as heavy as the moon landing was heady. How did this happen? When faced with the space shuttle's problems, why was disaster the outcome?

I asked my friend, who is an upper-level scientist at NASA, these questions. He told me NASA's leaders routinely address hard problems with no existing playbook. It's not a matter of answering simple math problems with a single answer, but addressing complex problems that only have complex answers. Budget and time constraints created a culture at NASA that permitted certain risks to increase; "less than excellent" shuttle tile adhesion became an acceptable standard for the *Columbia* mission. Thus, scientists and administrators did not confront safety problems when the facts warranted, and that resulted in disaster.

"Was there a solution had they confronted the problem?" I asked my friend. Not an obvious or easy one, he replied. But in the case of *Columbia*, he added, had NASA decided they could not bring the shuttle in through the atmosphere safely, everyone would have focused their attention on thinking outside the box and would have likely found a solution to a seemingly impossible problem. Those disasters led NASA to confront and change that culture.

Hard problems without simple answers persist in higher education as well. Examples are everywhere. Take two hard prob-

lems with no playbooks that two leading university presidents faced with two very different outcomes.

Penn State President Graham Spanier hears that a highly regarded assistant football coach, Jerry Sandusky, was seen in the showers with a young boy. Some attempts were made to find out a little more information, but eventually Spanier and other university officials made a judgment call: Keep it quiet. The details were too murky, and the threat to the university's reputation – and its finances – was unmeasurable. But eventually the accusation – and the botched handling of the case by Spanier and others – came to light, anyway. After five years and millions of dollars spent personally and organizationally, Graham Spanier was convicted of a misdemeanor charge for endangering the welfare of children.

Contrast that with Georgetown University President John DeGioia, who also faced a hard decision with difficult facts about disturbing events in his university's history. In the 1800s, Georgetown's Jesuit leaders were involved in the sale of nearly 300 slaves, a financial decision that kept the university afloat. In 2014, Georgetown was renovating part of its campus that included two buildings that bore the name of the two presidents involved in the slave sale. By listening to the growing calls to rectify racial injustice both from the nation and from Georgetown's students, DeGioia and his team recognized they could not just change the names of the buildings; they had to confront the history. Doing so – getting the facts and meeting the descendants of those sold – would be complicated. There would be questions and stories they had not anticipated. There would be unknown financial ramifications by delving into such a big problem. The decision to confront the history would be met with resistance.

However, motivated by the religious underpinnings that allow for contrition in hope, President DeGioia has forged ahead. In April, the Georgetown community and the descendants of the slaves who were sold attended a service of memory, contrition, and hope. There will be more work to be done. Georgetown cannot require forgiveness of those who have been harmed, nor will there be instantaneous reconciliation. But by naming the evil and confronting the mistakes of the past, the prospect for healing is possible.

In both these cases, the presidents had the choice of looking deeply into unpleasant circumstances that would lead to the exposing of human frailty and sin. The one critical difference is that Georgetown University has the resources of a deeply held faith tradition to influence and guide them. While Georgetown's faith tradition was indeed part of its wrongdoing, it is the same tradition that allows for repentance and new life. Religious institutions have the capacity to lead courageously; complex solutions requiring courageous leadership fueled by the power and promise of faith.

We are also the ones tasked with preparing the next generation of leaders who, like DeGioia, will face unknown challenges with a foundation of faith. The problems facing the world are not getting any easier – only more complex. The playbooks are being written in real time. Who do we want in the middle of the big, hard questions? Leaders who are undergirded by a Christian faith-infused worldview that will seek out-of-the-box solutions that include moral and ethical reasoning shaped by the wisdom of God's truth, grace, and love. **A**

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THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (CCCU) is an international association of Christ-centered colleges and universities. Founded in 1976 with 38 members, the Council has grown to 115 members in North America and 65 affiliate institutions in 20 countries. The CCCU is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in the historic Capitol Hill district of Washington, D.C.

THE MISSION OF THE CCCU is to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform the lives of students by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth.

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PEOPLE
Shirley V. Hoogstra
President

Shapri D. LoMaglio
Vice President for Government & External Relations

Morgan C. Feddes
Communications Specialist & Managing Editor, *Advance* and *eAdvance*

Katryn Ferrance
Art and Brand Manager & Graphic Designer

Eziel Wedemeyer
Web Manager

Kendra Langdon Juskus
Copy Editor

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FROM THE EDITOR

A Sweet Song in the Midst of Chaos



Morgan C. Feddes

ON A GRAY February day earlier this year, I was walking toward Union Station, in a rush to catch a train so that I could make my appointment on time, my mind focused on all the things I had to finish when I returned to the office. I'm a fast and focused walker by nature; being in a hurry on a cold day with a lot on my mind only makes me more so. That, combined with the fact that I almost always listen to music or a podcast when I walk alone during the day, usually makes it difficult for anything but car horns or police sirens to catch my attention.


But that day, I heard a sound I hadn't heard for a while because of the winter weather: a bird chirping. I paused, pulled my headphones out of my ears, and looked up. There, nestled among bare branches, was a beautiful, bright red cardinal. As I took a moment to observe him, he sang a few more bars, looked at me, and then flew off – a vivid red against a gray sky.

The memory of that moment has stuck with me over these last few months, partly because cardinals were my grandmother's favorite birds, and partly because of how notable it was that I heard that birdsong over all of the other distractions and noises around me that day. Amidst the noise of the traffic along the busy street, the sound of my own music in my headphones, and the chaos of my own thoughts about my long to-do list at work, that cardinal's song was a soothing sound in a busy moment.

In a lot of ways, that's how I've thought about this issue as we've put it together. That might seem odd if you've looked at the table of contents. True, we have articles that highlight unique and important research CCCU students and faculty are doing, including justice-related research projects conducted by recent CCCU alumni. These projects provide a concrete example of how Christians, especially millennials, can stay involved in the political process despite their disillusionment from the 2016 election (page 60). We also have an article that highlights a scientific research project that not only involves multiple departments (including business, computer science, and English), but also multiple CCCU campuses from across the country in studying wildlife on the Pacific Crest Trail (page 52).

But a large portion of our features cover topics that are multi-layered, difficult, even painful, such as a fascinating and important discussion on shame and its effect on community life (page 30); an examination of why the leaders of the CCCU believe that a legislative effort called Fairness For All may be a way forward in the ongoing debate over religious freedom and LGBTQ rights (page 20); the second in a series of articles examining how white faculty and leaders at CCCU institutions can promote racial diversity and inclusion on their campuses, including the often painful examination of the effects of race and privilege on their own lives (page 36); and a message given by Wesley Hill on the importance of intertwining the theology of compassion with the theology of marriage as we minister to LGBTQ students (page 44).

Yet each of these articles is written by authors who are passionate about their love and service to Jesus Christ and are committed to the growth and development of Christian higher education because they recognize its value – not just to students and their families, but to the cities and states where they are located, and indeed to the nation and the world. The topics they discuss are hard, and we know not everyone will agree with everything presented in this issue. But the writers' commitment to the Gospel and their thoughtfulness as they tackle these topics provide a way for us to continue these conversations in a manner that reflects the grace, compassion, strength, and truth of our Savior's Gospel message. And in a world that seems to be filled with nothing but harsh discord and angry division, that is as sweet as birdsong. 🦋

 If you have comments on articles in this issue, or ideas for a future one, contact us at editor@cccu.org.

MORGAN C. FEDDES is the CCCU's communications specialist and managing editor of *Advance* and *eAdvance*. She is an alumna of Whitworth University (Spokane, Wash.) and of BestSemester's Los Angeles Film Studies Program.

Reader Feedback

Email

editor@cccu.org

Website

advance.cccu.org/

Mail

321 8th Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20002



"A CALL TO LISTEN, RESPOND, AND CONNECT"

Thank you for your research, teaching, and publication in this important area within Christian higher ed. I just finished reading your first article in the CCCU Advance [Fall 2016]. I am both challenged to continue to intentionally improve my own understanding and advocacy, and to more intentionally and strategically address such issues with the small library staff I direct, and to our campus in general. I will also be reviewing your recommended reading list for resources we should have in our library.

You asked for feedback at the end of your article, which I know is often an invitation for criticism, especially around a topic so fraught with strong emotional reactions. Let me be a voice of encouragement and thanks for your work and courage. In light of recent new membership requirements announced by the CCCU that, in my opinion, undermine needed diversity and inclusiveness in welcoming our LGBTQ sisters and brothers, I had strong concerns about the seeming exclusivity of the work and message of the CCCU. Seeing your work, the overview of the diversity conference, and an entire issue of the *Advance* devoted in a positive way to diversity issues, gives me some hope and restores a bit of my faith in the CCCU in this regard. Thank you for that.

May God strengthen and encourage each of you in your continued work and ministry, especially on this important topic.

Steve Silver, M.L.S., M.Mus.

Library Director
Northwest Christian University
(Eugene, OR)



I just read this piece ["A Call to Listen, Respond, and Connect"] in the CCCU Advance – thank you, and good work. I am always encouraged to know that there are other people of faith out there willing to risk their careers by calling out the need for justice.

It has been almost 30 years ago that Hank Allen, Alvaro Nieves, and I edited the first book on "ethnic minorities" (the term back then) and evangelical Christian colleges. I left Calvin in 1996, but kept consulting with Christian colleges and universities learning about the challenges of higher education in a multicultural but racialized society. Thanks for keeping the flame burning.

D. John Lee, Ph.D.

Licensed Psychologist

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AROUND THE COUNCIL

The News of the CCCU

AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN CREDIT UNION GRANTS \$100,000 FOR RESEARCH ON ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION



CCCU President Shirley Hoogstra announces the CCCU's new partnership with ACCU at the annual Presidents Conference in Washington, DC, on Jan. 25.

THE CCCU IS pleased to announce a robust and strategic new partnership with America's Christian Credit Union (ACCU) through a \$100,000 grant that will underwrite research on the economic impact that Christian colleges and universities have in the United States.

"If we want to be effective communicators of the full value of Christian higher education, we must know the vital statistics of how and why Christian colleges impact their locality, their state, and the nation," says CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra. "We are grateful for the leaders at America's Christian Credit Union, who recognize both the value of Christian colleges and universities and the need for this research at this time."

The grant will allow the CCCU to recruit the services of the Philadelphia-based Econsult Solutions, which provides insights into economic problems, policy questions, and strategic thinking.

The group will provide a national impact analysis of CCCU institutions that incorporates quantitative and qualitative information from each institution into a narrative of the aggregate economic impact of members in the U.S.

"At America's Christian Credit Union, we strive to reach, serve, and teach our members and staff through biblical principles," says ACCU President and CEO Mendell Thompson. "Our goal is to be a life-transforming financial institution to those we serve. We are honored to partner with such a strategic organization as CCCU, whose vision and strength continue to shape the future of Christian higher education."

In addition to the nationwide study, the ACCU grant will also enable Econsult to take a closer look at CCCU institutions' impact on a state, as well as how a single institution impacts a local community. California will be the first state

it focuses on, with Azusa Pacific University selected as the individual institution.

"Christian universities generate significant economic benefits for communities that may not be well understood by our neighbors, government officials, and other stakeholders, which makes this initiative so necessary," says Jon R. Wallace, president of Azusa Pacific University. "Our university is appreciative of these efforts by the CCCU and America's Christian Credit Union and is honored to be the first selected for this institutional study."

Going forward, other states and universities will also be able to commission similar research studies. A Canadian concept for this type of research will be explored as well. Data for the national survey is already being collected, and the results of the research are anticipated to be released later this year.

Photo by Warren Pettit

SCIO RECEIVES NEARLY \$2 MILLION FOR ADDITIONAL SCIENCE AND RELIGION SEMINARS

THANKS TO THE unequivocal success of the 2014-2016 Bridging the Two Cultures of Science and Religion seminar, the Templeton Religion Trust and the Blankemeyer Foundation have awarded nearly \$2 million in grant funding to Scholarship & Christianity in Oxford (SCIO), the UK subsidiary of the CCCU, for another seminar planned for 2018 and 2019.

The new seminar, planned for 2018 and 2019, will again offer selected CCCU faculty members from around the world the opportunity to have interdisciplinary training in the study of science and religion amongst the rich historic venues of the University of Oxford. They will also receive funding both for their related research projects and for supporting the development of students through such opportunities as hiring them as research assistants and starting science-and-religion-themed student clubs on campus.

"We are delighted that both the Templeton Religion Trust and the Blankemeyer Foundation have partnered with SCIO in hosting another seminar," says Stan Rosenberg, SCIO executive director and the project director of Bridging the Two Cultures. "Their continued support gives us the opportunity to further advance these important conversations and research opportunities that examine the interwoven relationship between science and religion and the world-impacting issues that they directly shape."

The Templeton Religion Trust funded the first Bridging the Two Cultures, which yielded "timely, original research on a range of topics at the interface of science and theology," says Christopher Stewart, vice president of grant programs for the Trust, which is why the organization partnered with Blankemeyer to host a second version.

The Blankemeyer Foundation says the seminar plays an important role in addressing the points where science and Christianity seem to conflict: "We believe that the seminar will position these scholars and scientists to guide their scientific and religious communities through these questions, ad-



Ignacio Silva, research fellow at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, and at the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion, presents a lecture to attendees in July 2016.

ressing them in ways faithful to both science and Christianity. Everyone benefits if we come through to the other side of tough questions with a better understanding of what is true."

Though the format will remain largely the same as the first Bridging the Two Cultures, Rosenberg says there will be a number of minor changes to help fine-tune the project:

- In order to better facilitate research for the participants, the project will provide funds so that the participant can have a second course release – one paid for by the institution and one paid for by the grant.
- Funds will be provided to assist each participating school in sending student research assistants to study topics connected to science and religion at one of the two BestSemester programs hosted at SCIO.
- The grant will provide funds for the purchase of books for participants outside of North America to help them both in their research and in building a robust library for their campuses.

In addition, Rosenberg says plans are underway to host a colloquium in North America sometime in the spring of 2019. That will bring participants from both cohorts of the seminar together with key influencers from their campuses who work with faculty and students on academic and pastoral matters, such as provosts, student development officers, and chaplains.

JOIN US IN OXFORD!



The application process is now open for **Bridging the Two Cultures of Science and the Humanities II, 2017-19.**

This is a significant opportunity for 25 early- to mid-level career faculty members to experience a robust program that will develop interdisciplinary skills in science and religion.

To learn more and begin the application process, visit www.scio-uk.org/bridging-two-cultures

**Applications are due
September 15, 2017**

Photo by Stan Rosenberg

BESTSEMESTER TO LAUNCH NORTHERN IRELAND SEMESTER IN SPRING 2018

THE CCCU WILL launch the Northern Ireland Semester in spring 2018. The program, offered spring-only, is being developed in partnership with John Brown University, which has operated its own fall-only semester program in Northern Ireland for the past decade.

The CCCU's Northern Ireland Semester will include a peace and reconciliation component befitting its location, says Rick Ostrander, vice president for academic affairs and professional programs.

"Northern Ireland is a land that is rich in natural beauty, culture, and Christian heritage. But it also has a tragic history of religious and political conflict. As such, it affords an opportunity for students to experience in deep ways both the beauty of God's creation and cultural achievements as well as the brokenness of the world," Ostrander says. "Students living in Northern Ireland will experience how those who live out an authentic Christian faith can bring about personal and social reconciliation."

Northern Ireland Semester students will live in Lakeside Manor, a 19th-century mansion located four miles from Belfast City Centre and two miles from historic Queens University. In addition, the program benefits from the warmth and hospitality of the Irish people. Each student will be assigned to an Irish host family for regular visits and weekend outings throughout the semester. A mid-semester break will provide students with the opportunity to explore the United Kingdom and Europe.

In addition to coursework in peace and reconciliation and a related service-learning option, Ostrander said the program will offer general elective courses in history, literature, religion, art, and cross-cultural communication that are appropriate for students in their sophomore year and above.

"Like our other BestSemester programs, the Northern Ireland Semester program will serve to extend CCCU members' educational missions by providing culturally engaging learning experiences that foster students' intellectual and spiritual growth and equip them to live out their faith in the world," Ostrander says. "We are excited to include Northern Ireland as another location in which to offer life-changing experiential learning."

Students crossing the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge in Northern Ireland.



Kimberly Denu speaks at the 2017 Women in Leadership Conference, hosted this year at Biola University.

ANNUAL WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE DRAWS LARGE CROWD

MORE THAN 600 current and future leaders in Christian higher education gathered for the second annual Advancing Women in Leadership Conference in March to commemorate National Women's History Month. The highly successful event was held on Biola University's campus in honor of the 10th anniversary of the Ruby Women program, which honors and celebrates the women leaders who have had significant influence at Biola.

Attendees had the opportunity to hear from CCCU President Shirley Hoogstra, who served as the opening keynote. She was also joined by CCCU presidents Shirley Mullen (Houghton College), Barry Corey (Biola), and Jon Wallace (Azusa Pacific University), as well as several trustees from APU and Fuller Theological Seminary, in a panel discussion addressing the benefits and progress of increasing shared governance by women in higher education.

Additional speakers included Kimberly Denu (vice president and chief diversity officer at APU), Mimi Haddad (president of Christians for Biblical Equality), and Eugene Cho (lead pastor at Quest Church), who gave powerful messages inspiring attendees to note where God is leading and where there is work to be done to educate, protect, serve, and support women and girls around the world.

The CCCU co-sponsored the conference with Azusa Pacific, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pepperdine University, and Biola University. Planning is already underway for next year's event, to be held at Azusa Pacific University on March 5, 2018.

Left: Photo courtesy of Bill Stevenson. Right: Photo courtesy of Biola University.

Government Relations Updates

The following offers a glimpse of some of the items the CCCU's government relations team has been working on over the past six months.



The Office of Civil Rights for the Department of Education (OCR) changed its website on January 18 to include a complete list of institutions that are exempt from various aspects of Title IX compliance, not just free exercise of religion. This was in response to requests from the CCCU and other religious freedom advocates for the change, as the previous list was used by other organizations to target religious institutions who had requested a letter affirming their legal right to exemption from Title IX. The new list now includes fraternities, sororities, and voluntary youth service organizations.



Numerous religious leaders and organizations, including the CCCU, publically support the BRIDGE Act, which would provide temporary legal status to those eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) program so they can continue to pursue their education and work in the U.S.



An upcoming Supreme Court case could decide whether religious organizations not directly owned by a church (but are guided by tenets of faith) must become owned by a church in order to avoid having to function as a secular nonprofit, which would force them to comply to requirements that would encumber free expression of religion. The CCCU filed an amicus brief in the case on behalf of the faith-based medical providers involved, who are arguing that their pension plans are entitled to the church-plan exemption.



A Supreme Court decision is expected this summer that could impact religious organizations' access to government funding. The CCCU has also filed an amicus brief in this case, saying that government contract recipients need to be determined "solely on the merits of which recipient will best use this money to benefit the public."



The CCCU continues to advocate for need-based federal student aid and has asked leadership for both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to support year-round Pell grants in the fiscal year 2017 budget.



A new law has repealed a widely opposed Department of Education regulation that proposed federalizing the oversight of teacher preparatory programs. This regulation, which we wrote about in the Spring 2013 and Fall 2016 issue of the Advance, would have had a negative impact on CCCU institutions and other institutions of higher education. CCCU President Hoogstra submitted public comments twice urging the Department of Education to withdraw the regulation, as well as publically supported Congress' effort to pass the bill.

BY THE NUMBERS

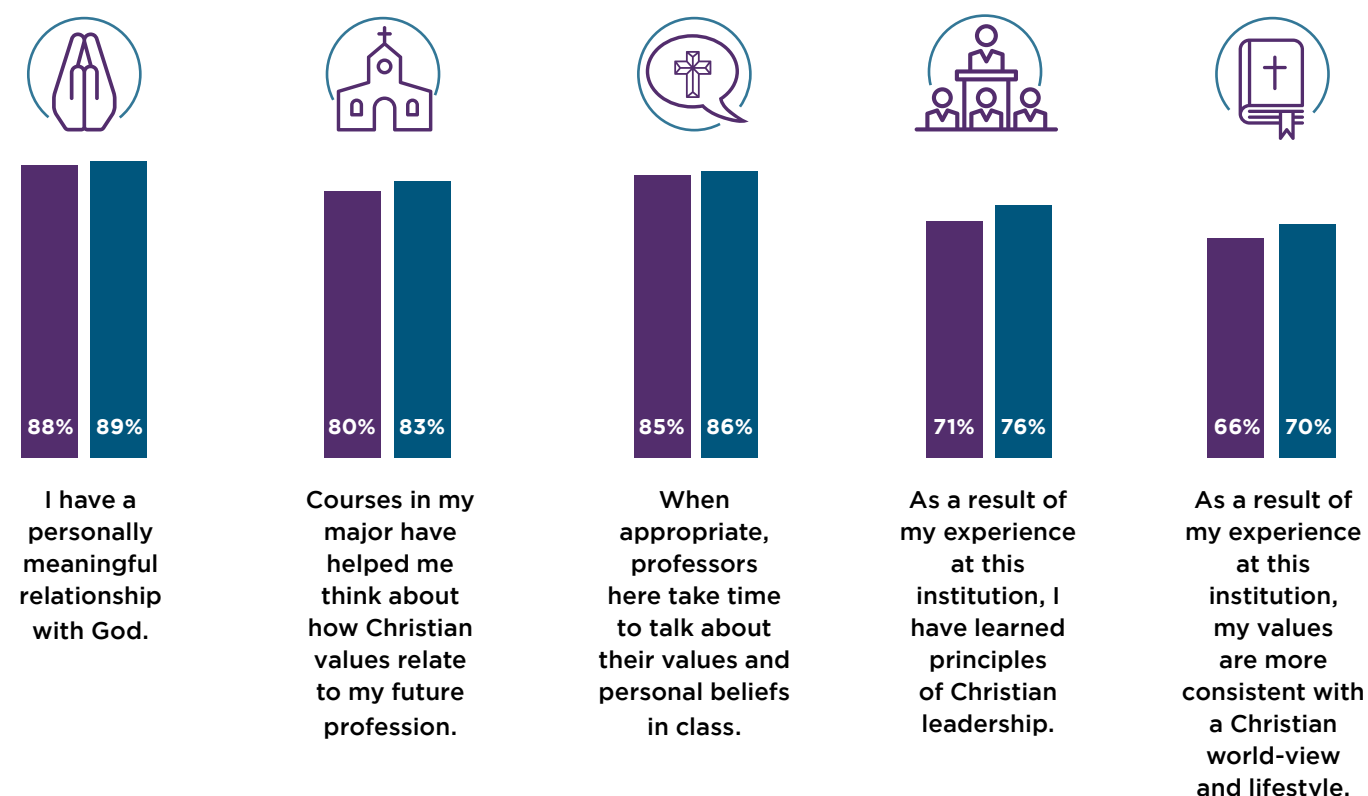
AS PART OF their toolkit for assessing the success and quality of their programs, CCCU institutions have utilized the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) since its inception in 2000. The survey examines undergraduate students' behavior experiences in their first year of study and again in their fourth and final year.

In 2006, the CCCU consortium that utilized the survey added additional questions to measure the spiritual

aspect of campus life for incoming and outgoing students. Below is data from the seniors who graduated in 2012 and 2016. In the sample of consortium questions below, we can see our senior-level students are increasingly strengthened by their interactions with CCCU faculty, with their program curricula, and with their campuses in general. Look for full disaggregation of NSSE data in our first CAP newsletter coming your way soon.

SENIORS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE

Seniors 2012 Seniors 2016



GET INVOLVED IN CAP

The Collaborative Assessment Project (CAP) gives CCCU members a common set of campus assessments that provide empirical evidence proving Christian higher education is indeed a significant and valuable enterprise. CAP's common assessments provide benchmarking data for CCCU institutions and empower participating schools to examine their institutional effectiveness over time.

This year we will administer the SSI (Student Satisfaction Inventory) in Fall 2017 and a free Alumni

Survey in Spring 2018. For more information about CAP membership benefits and fees, visit www.cccu.org/capregistration or contact Nita Stemmler, CCCU's program consultant, at nstemmler@cccu.org.



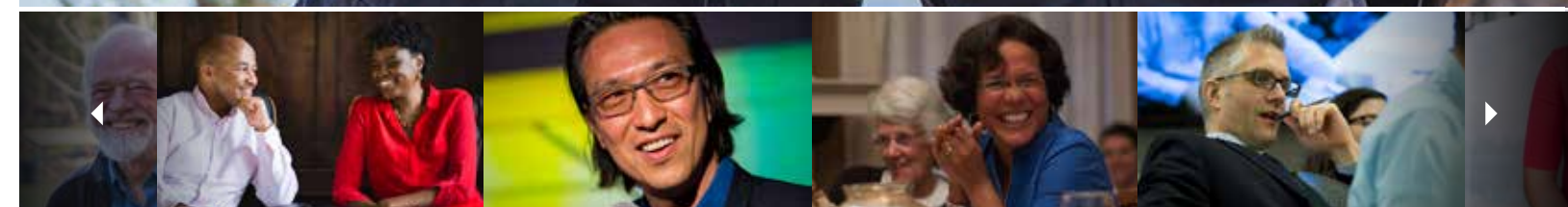
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Reflect on the Psalms with musician Bono, author Eugene Peterson, and Fuller theologian W. David O. Taylor



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Fuller.edu/Studio





For more than 40 years, CCCU presidents have traveled from around the world to gather in Washington, D.C. for the annual Presidents Conference. This year, however, participants had the opportunity to experience something a little different from previous years: an opening night banquet at an active construction site. A catered dinner (complete with hard hats and reflective vests) at the Museum of the Bible, which is scheduled to open this fall, kicked off three days of sessions on topics ranging from religion and the media to athletics to caring for students through shame, doubt, and uncertainty; to women in leadership; to the unfinished work of race and diversity.

COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

PRESIDENTS CONFERENCE

Washington, D.C.
January 25-27, 2017



Photos by Warren Pettit

2017 CCCU YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD



FELIPE SILVA, *Northwestern College*

EDITOR'S NOTE: The CCCU Young Alumni Award is presented to individuals who have graduated within the last 10 years and have achieved uncommon leadership or success in a way that reflects the values of Christian higher education. Featured here are the 2017 award recipient and the two runners-up.

IN THE SMALL town of Vulcan, located in Romania's Jiu Valley, a climbing gym is providing the youth of the economically depressed region not just a new activity to try, but hope for the future.

Felipe Silva, a 2012 graduate of Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, is the founder and director of Fara Limite Sala de Catarare (No Limit Climbing Gym). The gym charges a small fee to students to give the participants a sense that the time they spend there is worthwhile, Silva says. Some of the children have their fees sponsored by donors; in exchange, they promise to stay in school with passing grades and come to the gym at least twice a week. Local officials credit Silva, his wife Janelle (also a graduate of Northwestern College), and the staff at Fara Limite Sala de Catarare for helping reduce the number of school dropouts in the area.

In addition, Silva has been working together with the director of Romania's climbing association to create a five-stage national bouldering competition for Romanian youth, which allows them to compete nationally and internationally in the sport of rock climbing. Already, one of the Silva's students won the Balkan Championship in the country's capital of Bucharest – a pivotal moment not just for the student but for his peers at the gym, Silva says.

"A 9-year-old with limited financial and material means, who before the gym had never travelled outside the borders of his own town, just won first place internationally after a year of climbing," Silva says. "The significance of this for us and for him is huge, and the way it changes his perspective on the world and its 'bigness' is crucial for a better future."

Silva credits his education at Northwestern College for shaping his career path. "Northwestern College gave me the tools to work where I am working today. It's not that Northwestern prepared me for every situation that I encounter day-to-day, but it gave me the tools to deal with them in a godly way. It was not just the academic part of my education that made the biggest impact, but the great example I saw in many of the staff I encountered in my college years."

Photo courtesy of Felipe Silva



JEREMY TOWNS, *Samford University*

DURING HIS YEARS as a student at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, Jeremy Towns' life was profoundly impacted by the people there – particularly his friends on his football team. One such friendship was with his teammate, Jamael Lett, who now serves as an assistant football coach at Samford. Towns says that, aside from his family, Lett has made the biggest impact on his life and his faith in Christ.

"I would hope every kid would have the chance to go to college and meet a Jamael Lett. He helped me gain a sense of purpose and passion for life," Towns says.

In addition to building life-changing friendships and taking high-quality classes, Towns was able to take advantage of Samford's many opportunities to participate in leadership roles across campus before he graduated in 2013. He co-founded a Bible study that turned into a ministry and is now in the process of becoming a nonprofit, and he remains heavily involved in that process.

All of that experience guided Towns through his time as a player in the NFL and into his current path as a student mentor at Putnam Middle School, one of Birmingham's academically struggling schools. Towns is also currently attending medical school, with plans to become an orthopedic surgeon.

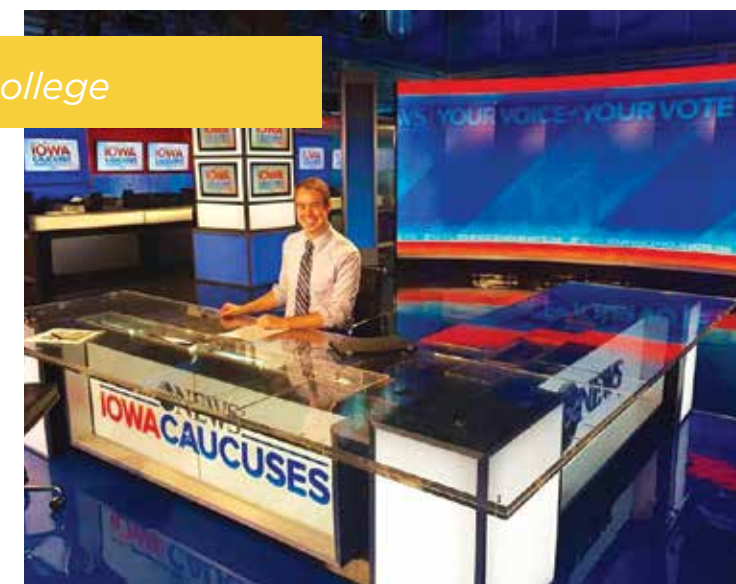
RYAN STRUYK, *Calvin College*

FOR MOST, A double major in political science and mathematics might seem like an odd pairing, but for Ryan Struyk, a 2014 graduate of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the combination has served him well in his role of covering politics for ABC News.

Last fall, Struyk worked as a political reporter and researcher for the 2016 election. He continues to cover politics for the network and also spearheads its partnership with Facebook to combat fake news articles. "After Facebook users flag a fake news article in their news feed, we debunk the stories so they appear with a warning sign that the fake news article has been disputed," he says.

Struyk says his education at Calvin greatly informed his thinking and perspective on his role. "At Calvin, we believe that there is no professional sphere where God is not active. Politics can be a messy business, but ultimately, politics shapes millions of lives every day," he says. "Being engaged citizens is a crucial part of living out our Christian calling. And journalism offers a vehicle for justice and truth to enter the world a little more every day."

Photos courtesy of Jeremy Towns and Ryan Struyk



► Do you know a recent CCCU alumni who should be nominated for the next Young Alumni Award? Contact editor@cccu.org for more information about the submission process.



By Rick Ostrander, Ph.D.

ON ACADEMICS

The CCCU Through a Parent's Eyes

I HAVE BEEN in Christian higher education for a couple of decades and have worked in a variety of roles, including my current one as VPAA for the CCCU. For those of us who work in the “trenches” of higher education, it’s easy to get bogged down in the minutiae of budgets, accreditation reviews, enrollment projections, and the like. So it’s important to take a step back on occasion and examine what’s important, in the bigger scheme of things, about what we do. At the end of the day, why do we do what we do?

Fortunately, that higher-level assessment has been easy for me because, in addition being employed in Christian higher education, my wife and I have four children who have graduated from or are attending different CCCU schools. While this is likely not a record, it does give me an interesting vantage point on our schools and the life-changing impact that they make on students.

So here’s the story of our schools’ impact on the lives of students, as seen through a parent’s eyes. It’s a story of how CCCU institutions have enabled four very different young people to develop their God-given potential and discover their place in the world.

Ryan

Shortly after showing up at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, in August 2009, Ryan met a new friend and future roommate named Tim whose parents were missionaries in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. They quickly developed a close friendship that continues to this day. Ryan decided to major in history because, in his words, he wanted to travel all over the world doing study abroad, and he needed a major with lots of electives to do that.

Ryan spent six weeks with Tim’s family in Cambodia. The next year he spent a semester in Rwanda, studying African history and culture and working with survivors of the genocide. After graduating from Messiah, Ryan spent a year in Ecuador, where he met Hannah, a computer science major from Azusa Pacific University. He followed her back to Los Angeles, began substitute teaching in L.A., discovered that he enjoyed it, and ended up completing his teacher certification at APU. Now he is teaching high school history and coaching soccer in Lompoc, California, and preparing to spend many more years with Hannah.

Messiah College provided Ryan with a group of bright and mature Christian young men as lifelong friends. It gave him the thinking and relational skills to pursue a variety of possible careers, and it helped him to become a citizen of the world who can thrive in any environment. Wherever he ends up, he will always benefit from his years at Messiah.

Tyler

Tyler’s choice of major in college was easy. As a toddler, he made interesting designs out of Cheerios in his cereal bowl; we knew Tyler would be an art major. He chose Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts, because it has one of the best art programs not just in the CCCU, but in the U.S. At Gordon, Tyler was mentored by accomplished world-class Christian artists, such as Bruce Herman and James Zingarelli. He also spent a semester studying art in Orvieto, Italy.

Tyler’s professors taught him to develop skill in a variety of mediums and to dedicate himself single-mindedly to the artistic craft. For Tyler’s senior project, Dr. Z. gave him two blocks of aged black walnut and

patiently guided him as, progressing from chainsaw to chisel to polishing cloth, Tyler slowly transformed the blocks of wood into beautiful human forms. The following fall, he was able to display them at Grand Rapids’ ArtPrize event.

While at Gordon, Tyler also found a group of bright, thoughtful young people who were eager to understand their own Christian beliefs, discover their particular place in the world, and simply enjoy life. Since graduating three years ago, Tyler has exchanged the grey New England winters for San Diego’s eternal sunshine. But the thoughtfulness, artistic skill, and deep friendships that he developed at Gordon remain a part of him.

Rachel

Rachel’s choice of major was also an easy one. She started dancing at the age of five, so majoring in dance in college was a foregone conclusion. That also meant that her choices of Christian colleges were down to just a few from the start, and she decided on Anderson University in Anderson, Indiana.

Now a senior at Anderson, Rachel’s dancing colleagues and professors have become a second family to her. Last summer they had the unforgettable experience of performing in the national collegiate dance competition at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Halfway through her sophomore year, Rachel met a basketball-playing, chapel worship-leading Hoosier named Ben. In May they will get married, two weeks after Rachel graduates. While CCCU schools are not in the match-making business, Rachel is not the first student to discover this value-added feature of a Christian college.

Anderson University provided Rachel with a healthy balance of positive Christian

influence and the room to be her sassy, fun-loving, and somewhat mischievous self. As a result, she has blossomed into a mature and thoughtful Christian woman, although one with plenty of wit and sarcasm.

Anna

Then there’s Anna, our youngest. Despite spending her high school years in Grand Rapids, she wanted to attend a friendly, snow-free college in the South, and she decided on Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee.

Like her brothers, Anna wanted to study abroad, so last spring she studied at the CCCU’s BestSemester program in Uganda. She transitioned from a bustling Lee University dormitory with constant late-night activities to a quiet homestay in Mukono, where she and Mama Harriet would cook meals over an open fire and watch Indian soap operas before retiring to bed at 9:00 p.m.

Working at a children’s clinic under the mentorship of her Global Health professor, Anna developed a depth of spirit and maturity beyond her years. Here is an excerpt from her semester-ending reflection paper:

"I came to Uganda seeking clarity and simplicity and ended up gaining uncertainty and ambiguity. But I have come to see how much of the good stuff of life lies around perplexities, and the ability to question, doubt, and ponder has turned out to be a true gift. After a semester of unanswered questions, I am comforted by James K.A. Smith’s statement that 'I am what I love.' I have grown in more ways than I can express on a few pages, and I might struggle to explain it all to curious, well-meaning people back home. Ultimately, what I have gained from my semester in Uganda is faith in a God who is good, hope that all will be made new, and love for the world in all of its beauty and brokenness."

Anna has since decided that a nursing major isn’t for her and has switched to biochemistry. We don’t know where Anna will end up, but we have already seen the impact of Lee University on her spiritual and intellectual growth.

My wife and I met at a Bible college and finished our degrees at public universities – which is why, perhaps, we are such passionate proponents of Christian colleges and their commitment to impacting the whole person. As a result of their experiences, our children have sharper intellects, deep and lasting relationships, spiritual insight, and a better sense of their place in the world. In short, they have grown as image-bearers of God because of CCCU institutions. If I ever need to be reminded of the infinite value of what we Christian educators do, I need only look at my own kids. ▴

RICK OSTRANDER is vice president for academic affairs and professional programs at the CCCU.



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By Roberta Wilburn, Ed.D., Th.D.

ON DIVERSITY

Going to the Next Level

Opportunities and Challenges Facing African-American Women Leaders in the Academy

OVER THE COURSE of my 35 years in academia, I have come to a point where I have the ability to help change the landscape of higher education through championing the causes of equity, diversity, and inclusion. In reflecting back on my professional journey, I want to present four lessons that might benefit others.

1. Harness the Power of Sponsorship

Prior to participating in the 2015 CC-CU's Multi-Ethnic Leadership Development Institute, I had not given much thought to the topic of mentoring. And as a counselor educator, I had thought about sponsorship only in regard to support given to recovering addicts participating in the 12-step program.

However, after reading Sylvia Ann Hewlett's book, *(Forget a Mentor) Find a Sponsor*, I realized that I have been blessed to have several mentors and at least one sponsor. Hewlett differentiates between the two: "Mentors give, whereas sponsors invest." In fact, the kinds of investments made by a sponsor stretch beyond those of a mentor and include advocating for your next promotion, encouraging you to take risks, and always watching out for your best interests.

When I considered this distinction, it became clear that my former supervisor was more than a mentor – he was actually a sponsor. First, he believed in me when he hired me, even though I didn't have any prior experience working at a Christian university. Second, he made sure that I felt welcomed and would be successful. Third, he advocated for me, gave me honest feedback, and always had my back.

My sponsor was also instrumental in my professional growth and advancement. As a senior administrator, he changed the organizational structure of the entire

school of education and created two new associate dean positions, one of which was designed specifically for me. This same academic leader also recommended me for a very prominent position on a state board.

2. Advocate for Yourself

Over the course of my career, I have had the opportunity to work at several historically black colleges and universities, and I occasionally found myself in professionally challenging situations. In one institutional setting, my supervisor would take all of the credit for projects that I had worked on, such as grant writing, locating funding, and the development of successful programs. When my supervisor also wanted to claim ownership of books I had written that were being sold to local public schools, I decided to finally advocate for myself. We reached a satisfactory resolution regarding the intellectual property of my books when I took the battle, along with all of the related documentation, to the chair of the department, who was an African-American male. He reviewed everything objectively and released the books and ownership rights to me.

It took a lot of courage to stand up for myself, but through this process I also came to recognize that there are times when it is important – especially for African-American female administrators without visible advocates – to muster up the inner gumption and advocate for themselves.

3. Recognize the Impact of Intersectionality and Multiple Identities

The same issues of racism and sexism that I experienced in several of the secular institutions where I worked have been part of my experience in Christian colleges and universities. Indeed, there have been times when

the intersectionality of racism and sexism converged to the point where I couldn't tell which was the predominant force operating. The challenges become even more complex in some situations due to being subjected to the compounding impact of the intersectionality of divergent identities. These complexities are real and deeply felt, because African-Americans who seek careers in higher education are often trailblazers and trendsetters in the field. When we look at the intersectionality of race and gender that many African-American administrative leaders face, the circumstances are compounded. This has been my experience on more than one occasion.

Isolation and lack of support during critical times like these are common among African-American women administrators in higher education. The importance of building support networks is therefore evident, and those networks should be built long before the time that they are needed. Identifying allies and supportive individuals would ideally come from within our institutions, but they may also need to come from the community, churches, and other social networks. Having others who can understand what it is like to be marginalized, oppressed, and face microaggressions in the workplace can be a source of encouragement.

4. Draw on Your Spiritual Strengths

Research has identified faith and spirituality to be important sources of strength for African-Americans. Wilma J. Henry and Nicole M. Glenn advised that "spirituality may be employed as a connective strategy to assist black women in overcoming the issues of isolation and marginalization they experience in higher education." Similarly, Deborah Owens identified the centrality of

faith as she interviewed African-American women about their professional journeys in higher education, noting: "[E]ach woman described her strong faith or spirituality as an important component of her life. Their faith/spirituality provided support, helped them to stay centered, and enabled them to persevere in the face of obstacles, both personally and professionally."

Recommendations for Predominantly White Christian Institutions

Christian universities have the potential to empower administrators and faculty of color by modeling respect, embracing diversity, and encouraging inclusion based on a Christ-centered mission. Where the dominant campus culture is white and often male-normed, the following strategies can help people of color thrive:

- Provide opportunities to connect women of color with others who have

paved the way and been effective on your campus or at nearby institutions.

- Identify white allies and people of color within your university who have a passion for helping newcomers to acclimate and succeed.
- Facilitate training using Hewlett's book to enhance awareness and support for the sponsorship model and its importance in being proactive about professional advancement.
- Ensure that faculty development training equips employees and students with understanding and pedagogical approaches related to topics such as diverse learning styles, non-Western perspectives, and understanding privilege and power.
- Tangibly demonstrate a commitment to building communities that model "a sense of belonging," including respecting a variety of worship styles and faith traditions. 🏡

ROBERTA WILBURN, ED.D., TH.D., serves as the associate dean for graduate studies in education and diversity initiatives at Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington. This essay is adapted from a chapter of the forthcoming book *Diversity Matters: Race, Ethnicity, and the Future of Christian Higher Education* (2017, Abilene Christian University Press) and is used by permission of the publisher.

CONTRIBUTE

On Diversity is a column open to all interested in writing about diversity and inclusion. Proposals and inquiries can be sent to editor@cccu.org.

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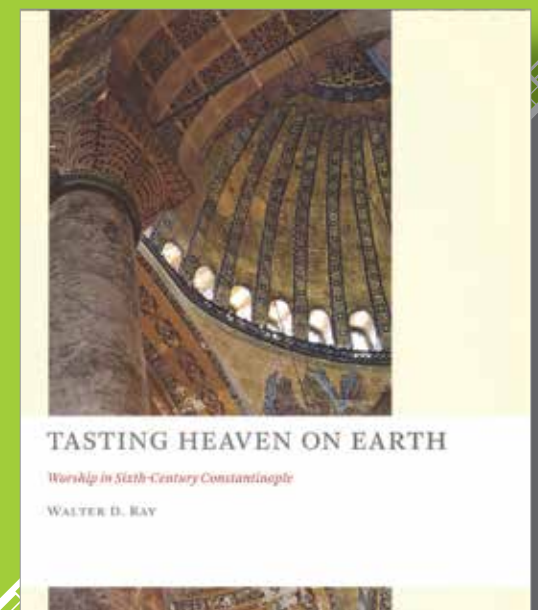


Photo courtesy of Roberta Wilburn

FAIRNESS FOR ALL

In the debate between LGBTQ rights and religious freedom, is there a way forward?

By Shapri D. LoMaglio

T

he CCCU has been exploring a legislative initiative sometimes called Fairness for All. This initiative seeks to find a way to simultaneously combine federal protections for religious freedom and for LGBTQ persons,

two “sides” that have often viewed their protections as being violated by the existence of protections for the other. Specifically, Fairness for All would create legal protections for LGBTQ persons in the basic areas of public space (employment, housing, stores, and restaurants), financial services, and jury duty service, while at the same time explicitly adding to the law the full scope of religious rights ensured by the Constitution.

RECENT FEDERAL HISTORY

The CCCU’s involvement now comes after four decades of debate about whether LGBTQ Americans should have expanded rights under the law. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) was the LGBTQ community’s primary federal legislative effort. ENDA would have prohibited employers from making hiring decisions based on an employee’s sexual orientation (later versions also included gender identity), but would have continued to allow religious employers to hire consistent with their religious beliefs. ENDA was first introduced in 1974 and was reintroduced in every session of Congress from 1994 to 2015. It passed in the House in 2007 and the Senate in 2013, but never became law. With each version, religious freedom advocates – myself included – had to work to ensure the



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religious exemptions remained strong despite offering no support for the base bill.

Less than a year after ENDA passed the Senate in 2013, the Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling in the *Hobby Lobby* case that affirmed the religious freedoms of for-profit business owners. While the CCCU supported Hobby Lobby and believes its case was correctly decided (the First Amendment makes no distinction between the rights of for-profit and non-profit entities), the ruling alarmed many civil rights advocates as an affront to equal rights and changed the legislative landscape for religious exemptions. Long-standing religious exemptions like that in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which has allowed religious employers to consider religion in hiring largely without controversy since its passage in 1964, were suddenly seen as too expansive and, to some, dangerous.

Religious exemptions previously had wide bipartisan support; the Religious Freedom Restoration Act that provided the Supreme Court's basis for a favorable outcome in the *Hobby Lobby* case was originally sponsored by Senator Chuck Schumer (now the U.S. Senate minority leader), passed by a Democratic Congress, and signed by President Bill Clinton. But in the wake of *Hobby Lobby*, religious exemptions were rejected by many on the left, specifically by many in the LGBTQ rights and women's rights groups. The scope of what they viewed as acceptable religious exemptions had narrowed significantly.

The debate became even *more* polarized in the 114th Congress (2015-2016), during which time the landmark *Obergefell* case legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. Instead of reintroducing ENDA, some LGBTQ rights advocates introduced the Equality Act, which would have added sexual orientation and gender identity to almost every section of the Civil Rights Act *without* adding any new religious exemptions to resolve the inevitable conflict this would have created for religious organizations. In fact, the Equality Act would have rolled back some religious exemptions currently in law and would have explicitly prevented the application of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to any of the inevitable legal conflicts.

The First Amendment Defense Act (FADA) was also introduced, which would have ensured the federal government and other federal agencies could not take negative action against people or organizations that defined marriage as between one man and one woman. While FADA's intent was worthy, neither

FADA nor the Equality Act resolved many of the nuanced questions of how expanded rights for LGBTQ Americans could intersect peaceably with First Amendment protections for religious individuals and institutions. Both FADA and the Equality Act have been labeled "winner-take-all" pieces of legislation.

STATE ACTIVITY

While these actions were occurring at the federal level, a parallel track of activity was transpiring at the state level. In early 2015, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and LGBTQ advocates supported a piece of legislation in Utah that addressed the concerns of LGBTQ Utahans while also



Shapri D. LoMaglio

strengthening constitutionally based religious protections.

Only three weeks after Utah passed that legislation, Indiana's attempt to expand religious protections for business owners in the state without offering any protections for LGBTQ individuals created a national outcry. Many viewed it as an overreach; concerts and events were cancelled, leaders in multiple industries spoke out against the bill, and Indiana-based companies and organizations like the NCAA, Eli Lilly, and Angie's List, among many others, threatened to leave the state. Eventually a "fix"

was passed that many religious freedom experts think actually weakened religious freedom law in Indiana compared to before the episode.

There have been numerous overreaches in the other direction as well. Last year, California's state legislature attempted to significantly undermine religious-based policies and practices of the state's faith-based schools. Illinois and Massachusetts have effectively shuttered Catholic adoption agencies there by removing their ability to process only those adoptions consistent with their religious convictions about marriage. And in Iowa and Massachusetts, state officials attempted to prevent churches from operating according to their religious convictions by deeming them public accommodations simply because they hosted spaghetti dinners and other similar functions that were open to the public.

One thing has become increasingly apparent over the past few years: When LGBTQ protections go up against religious freedom, LGBTQ protections usually win in both the court of law and the court of public opinion. The only exception happened when the LGBTQ community and the faith community in Utah came together to find a way forward that protected the rights of each.

So is there a way forward nationally? Is it possible to get out of the winner-take-all paradigm we've been stuck in and secure rights for one group without doing so at the expense of the other? Can our law respect and create space for people who think and live differently than one another? We think Fairness for All may be the solution.

WHAT IS FAIRNESS FOR ALL?

Fairness for All is a legislative construct that would ensure that LGBTQ Americans cannot be denied access to employment, housing, financial credit, social service programs funded by federal money, service in business establishments, or jury duty service simply because of their sexual orientation or gender

WHEN THE COURTS MUST MAKE A DECISION, HAVING SOUND LEGISLATION AFFIRMING OUR RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES MAKES THOSE LIBERTIES MORE LIKELY TO PREVAIL.

identity. But it would also ensure that churches and religious organizations that define marriage or gender differently than the United States government will not be found to be engaging in discriminatory actions simply because of their religious beliefs.

The general idea behind Fairness for All is that religious organizations can continue to hire employees and retain internal organizational policies that reflect their religious beliefs; addi-

UTAH'S BALANCED APPROACH
MORE RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES THAN ANY OTHER STATE

LGBT PROTECTIONS

- Bans employment discrimination, including against transgendered individuals
- Requires reasonable workplace accommodations, including for transgendered individuals
- Bans housing discrimination
- Guarantees access to marriage, even in rural areas

RELIGIOUS PROTECTIONS

- Protects the character of faith communities & buildings
- Adds affiliates, religious societies and educational institutions, & Boy Scouts to existing carve-outs for small employers, religious corporations, associations, and subsidiaries
- Permits churches and religious groups to celebrate marriages & do religious counseling consistent with their faith

PROTECTIONS FOR BOTH

- Protects political and religious expression outside the workplace
- Places political and religious expression inside the workplace on a level playing field

SB 297	Exempts clergy from officiating a wedding	Exempts religious organizations from providing wedding services	Protects objectors from private suits and government penalties	Exempts religious marriage counseling courses or retreats	Allows adoption/foster agencies to maintain existing placement policies	Designates only willing clerics	No revocation of professional/business license for expression in nonprofessional setting	Proactively protects character of religious buildings & wedding services
Delaware	✓		✓			✓		
Illinois	✓	✓	✓					
Vermont	✓	✓	✓					
Hawaii	✓	✓	✓					
Washington	✓	✓	✓	✓				
New York	✓	✓	✓					
Connecticut	✓	✓	✓		✓			
D.C.	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Minnesota	✓	✓	✓		✓			
N.H.	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Rhode Island	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Maryland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Utah	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

SB 296	Exempts religiously affiliated housing	Permits religious/political expression outside the workplace	Gives priority to religious/political expression inside the workplace
Delaware			
Illinois		✓	
Vermont		✓	
Hawaii		✓	
Washington		✓	
New York		✓	
Connecticut	✓	✓	
D.C.		✓	
Minnesota	✓	✓	
N.H.	✓	✓	
Rhode Island		✓	
Maryland		✓	
Utah	✓	✓	✓

Takeaways from Utah

- Secures autonomy over marriage in wake of federal court decision
- Makes good on marriage promise, creating new obligation on State
- Includes the "T," which nixed bargain in Michigan
- Unprecedented emphasis on individual protections, not just Big Religion (see circled checks)
- Concrete measures to allay fears of being fired for "wrong" sexuality or views
- Deliberate decision to avoid forced resignations or firings of government workers

Robin Fretwell Wilson; Image by Robin Wilson & Rachel Koch. Utah State Senate; annotated version available at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf_dev/AbssByAuth.cfm?per_id=148292

Photo by Delane Rouse, DC Corporate Headshots

tionally, they would not be treated differently by the government (e.g., denied government funding or tax-exempt status) because of their views on marriage or gender. In secular employment contexts, an employee's religious beliefs would be respected by their employer unless it puts an unreasonable burden on the employer. Businesses would have expressive speech protections for political or religious speech. For example, a t-shirt printing company can neither be forced to print "Eat more beef" shirts if they are vegetarian, nor "I love Jesus" shirts if they are Buddhists.

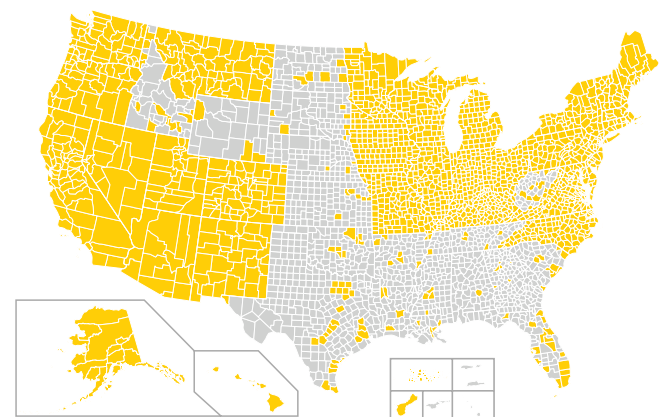
One of the key misunderstandings that has shaped all of the events leading to this point is a broad cultural failure to recognize that civil rights are actually a balancing test. Rights for one person are always balanced against the rights of others. For instance, while we have the right to free speech, we cannot shout, "Fire!" in a movie theater or play loud music in the streets at midnight. Our right to free speech are subject to time, place, and manner restrictions. Thus, civil rights are best crafted with a scalpel, not an axe.

The CCCU, alongside other religious groups, is exploring the Fairness for All approach because we think it is an approach that uses a scalpel, not an axe. We believe that if the right balance can be struck, Fairness for All could preserve more freedom for more Americans into the future. We see this as a God-honoring pursuit in the pluralistic society we live in – a pursuit that protects religious freedom for all, including our members, while acknowledging and respecting the human dignity of all people, even if we disagree.

While many in our country are deeply religious, we are not a theocracy, and therefore we must find a legislative path that allows each person to live according to their beliefs and convictions.

A COUNTRY DIVIDED

■ Almost 60% of people live in a city, county, or state with some form of sexual orientation and/or gender identity non-discrimination law



*map reflects SOGI employment laws

ONE OF THE KEY MISUNDERSTANDINGS ... IS A BROAD CULTURAL FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THAT CIVIL RIGHTS ARE ACTUALLY A BALANCING TEST. RIGHTS FOR ONE PERSON ARE ALWAYS BALANCED AGAINST THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS.

tions. Fairness for All seeks to protect legislatively both those whose religious convictions about marriage and gender differ from the U.S. government's and those who affirm LGBTQ expressions of marriage and gender.

RESTORING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM'S REPUTATION

Such an approach could also help reestablish a positive perception of religious freedom, which has diminished in recent years in large part because of the struggle around LGBTQ rights. For too many, "religious freedom" is simply code for discrimination.

In actuality, religious freedom is a fence, not a hammer. Religious freedom protects us from government imposition on our religious beliefs and practices. It does not impose our religious beliefs on others through law. Religious freedom, when applied properly, is a sacred American value, and if we do not reclaim it, the results in coming decades could have negative consequences far beyond the current intersection with LGBTQ rights.

A recent example of a negative view of religious freedom came from the *New York Times* editorial board. In 2016, the board criticized a long-standing policy at two outdoor pools creating women-only swimming hours a few times a week; this small allowance at two of the city's many pools provides swimming access primarily for Orthodox Jewish and Muslim women, whose religious beliefs do not allow them to swim with men. Instead of celebrating this policy as one that helps the city respect religious and ethnic diversity – values normally celebrated by the *New York Times* – the editorial board criticized it as an unacceptable inconvenience for men.

This kind of thinking fails to recognize the underlying value of religious accommodations, allowing all people to live according to their religious beliefs without being relegated to cloisters or compounds or being penalized by the state. And without a model of some positive example of religious rights intersecting with rights for others, it is hard to foresee a future that is positive for religious freedom. In the last five years

alone, the Pew Research Center has found that the number of millennials who say churches and religious organizations contribute positively to society has dropped by 25 percent.

Fairness for All is an attempt to create this positive example. It is an attempt to show that religious persons are not *against* others having rights. Rather, they are *for* religious persons being able to retain their religious beliefs and practices while still engaging fully in the public square. There are currently too few examples of people being *for* religious freedom without being *against* someone else's rights – hence our current impasse.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Disagreement is not unexpected even among supporters of religious freedom who share the same goal. As we have discussed Fairness for All with leaders across the country, there are some common questions that have been asked.

Should SOGI rights be codified?

First, sexual orientation and gender identity rights (SOGI) are already codified extensively. Nearly 60 percent of Americans live in states, cities, or counties where some form of SOGI protection exists, and 100 percent of Americans live in a country where same-sex marriage is a right under the Constitution.

In other words, SOGI rights *already* exist in law. Federal legislation is the last area where they are not, but our federal courts are moving in that direction. Most recently, in April 2017 an *en banc* panel of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the protections for sex contained in the Civil Rights Act include sexual orientation, and multiple judges around the country have concluded the same about gender identity.

Certainly, the Constitution requires that SOGI rights be balanced against religious rights, so the question becomes: Would we prefer that Congress create this balance through law, or should we just rely on the First Amendment and leave it to the courts?

Gene Schaerr, a Supreme Court litigator and law professor at Brigham Young University's law school, researched how religious freedom fared when the courts interpreted a right embedded in a law passed by Congress versus when they interpreted a right based solely in the First Amendment itself. He found that since 1986 religious freedom consistently fares much better when explicitly protected in a statute. Under Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the Supreme Court heard 11 private religiously motivated conduct cases between 1986 and 2005. Six of the seven that had a statute for the Court to rely on were decided in favor of religious freedom (86%), while only two of the four that relied on the First Amendment favored religious freedom (50%). Similarly, under Chief Justice John Roberts, the Supreme Court has heard seven such cases thus far. Where there is a statute, religious rights have prevailed five out of five times (100%). However, only one of two First Amendment cases have prevailed (50%).

In other words, when the courts must make a decision, having sound legislation affirming our religious liberties makes those liberties more likely to prevail.

Will the religious freedom protections hold?

Even if balanced legislation is created, will the courts chip away at the religious protections? Generally, courts are predisposed against overturning legislation; unless it's blatantly unconstitutional, courts prefer to defer to the will of the people and their representatives. As the statistics above show, if the religious freedom protections in Fairness for All were challenged in the Courts, they would have a very strong likelihood of being upheld.

In addition, University of Illinois law professor Robin Fretwell Wilson, a leading First Amendment scholar, recently surveyed how often religious freedom protections in law were overturned by legislatures. She could find only one example: The Illinois state legislature overrode a state religious freedom law in order to expand O'Hare International Airport. The precedent thus far is that once legislative balances are struck, they tend to last, and the courts tend to uphold them.

But won't the law be sending the wrong message?

Some believe that the law follows culture; others believe the law serves a pedagogical function and teaches. If in fact the law does educate, what should it teach? Is the law where we should seek good theological teaching about sexuality and marriage? Or in a pluralistic democracy, where the law is not supposed to privilege one religion over another (or secularism over religion), is it not a better role for the law to teach that people with different views can live together peaceably and to ensure that churches and other faith-based organizations can live out their theological convictions without compromise?

In fact, Fairness for All is not a statement on marriage or sexual conduct. While *Obergefell* addressed same-sex marriage, Fairness for All simply addresses access to basic areas of public space such as employment, housing, and financial credit. While there are religious beliefs about marriage that intersect with how these play out (hence the need for religious exemptions), the

FAIRNESS FOR ALL IS AN ATTEMPT TO ... SHOW THAT RELIGIOUS PERSONS ARE NOT *AGAINST* OTHERS HAVING RIGHTS. RATHER, THEY ARE *FOR* RELIGIOUS PERSONS BEING ABLE TO RETAIN THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES WHILE STILL ENGAGING FULLY IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE.

legislation itself is not commenting on marriage or sexuality. Rather, it only says that all people should have access to these basic public areas.

Could the legislation even pass?

Is there too much water under the bridge for such a positive, pro-active approach to succeed? While it is true that trying to do this work is like growing a garden where a nuclear bomb has been dropped, Fairness for All remains the most politically viable path forward.

In the 114th Congress, which had a Republican majority and in fact was the most Republican Congress since 1947, the First Amendment Defense Act had fewer total co-sponsors (209) than the Equality Act (220). The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (a balanced approach most like Fairness for All) had the most support, with 262 co-sponsors in 2013. These numbers indicate that protecting LGBTQ rights over religious freedom have slightly more support (even in a Republican Congress) than stand-alone religious rights, but they also indicate that a both/and approach gains the most political support.

The flurry of legislative and court activity around these issues shows that there is a need for Congress to act swiftly. Though no state has passed LGBTQ rights laws since 2009, the number of cities, counties, or towns with such protections has risen from 171 to 336. This year, Ohio and Pennsylvania will both be taking up LGBTQ rights bills. The Trump administration has indicated support for both pro-LGBTQ rights and pro-religious rights. All of this indicates that this is the perfect time for Congress – specifically Republicans acting from a position of strength – to secure religious liberties into the future.

Will this legislation equate sexual orientation and race in the law?
Putting SOGI rights into the Civil Rights Act itself does

CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT: TOTAL NUMBER OF CO-SPONSORS (113TH & 114TH CONGRESS)

HOUSE SENATE

FADA | 209 CO-SPONSORS



EQUALITY ACT | 220 CO-SPONSORS



ENDA (LIKE FFA) | 262 CO-SPONSORS



*the 114th Congress was most Republican since 1947

WE HOPE THAT BY NOT JUST FIGHTING FOR OURSELVES, BUT BY ALSO USING OUR POLITICAL POWER AND PRIVILEGE TO STAND UP FOR THE RIGHTS OF OUR LGBTQ NEIGHBORS ... WE CAN HELP RECLAIM THE GOSPEL'S WITNESS, REMINDING ALL ... THAT CHRIST AND THE GOOD NEWS HE BROUGHT ARE FOR EVERYONE.

not equate SOGI with race under the law. In addition to race, the Civil Rights Act protects people from being discriminated against based on sex, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, or religion – yet the law treats each differently. The fact that they are all in the same law doesn't make them the same as each other. Whether or not there are exceptions is a key difference: There are almost no exceptions for race, but there are more exceptions for other categories. Since there would be a number of religious exemptions in the Fairness for All legislation, it would make SOGI rights more like these latter categories than race.

HOW MAY THIS IMPACT THE FUTURE?

None of us knows the future, of course. But we explore this seeking to be faithful to what we are called to do: to love God and love our neighbors; to seek the good of our cities; to turn the other cheek; to go two miles if we're forced to go one. And we know we're called to be faithful to the mission of the Christian institutions where we work. Fairness for All seeks to allow us to both love our neighbor and preserve the mission of our institutions so that they can contribute to the good of the city, state, and country they are located in. And we hope that by not just fighting for ourselves, but by also using our political power and privilege to stand up for the rights of our LGBTQ neighbors, loved ones, brothers, and sisters, we can help reclaim the Gospel's witness, reminding all citizens – including those holding views different from ours – that Christ and the good news he brought are for everyone.

SHAPRI D. LOMAGLIO is the vice president for government & external relations at the CCCU. A native of Tucson, Ariz., LoMaglio is a graduate of Gordon College and of the University of Arizona's James E. Rogers College of Law.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND SEXUALITY

A Christian Ethicist's View of Fairness for All By Dennis P. Hollinger, Ph.D.

AS WE APPROACH any ethical issue, and especially those related to LGBTQ discussions, it's imperative that we make a set of distinctions from the outset – distinctions between Christian ethics, pastoral care, and public policy.

Christian ethics is the design of God, with expectations of character and action motivated by faith in Christ. It is defined by specific Christian understandings drawn from divine revelation. It's a high and holy calling.

Pastoral care is the care from Christians and the church for people, often when they have failed to live up to God's designs. It involves compassion, understanding, and empathy – qualities which don't define the essence of the Christian ethic, especially when it pertains to sexuality. Too often people reduce Christian ethics down to pastoral care, emphasizing only compassion or empathy, or reduce pastoral care to the ethic, emphasizing only the law of God.

In the realm of *public policy/law* we are attempting to adjudicate rights, policies, and responsibilities in a pluralistic setting. Here, it is important to remember the difference between the right to do something and the right thing to do. Here, we are seeking appropriate strategies for societal issues. The Fairness for All concept is such a strategy.

For a Christian, these three categories are not totally exclusive of each other, but they are not the same realities. They invoke different languages, expectations, and patterns of thought.

As a Christian ethicist and an evangelical Christian, I am committed to protecting both the freedom of religious convictions and actions in my and other communities of faith, while also protecting the civil rights of all individuals, even though their patterns of life may be contrary to my Christian ethics convictions. My approach here is a big picture one that contends that as a public policy strategy we can make a case for both freedom and rights, even when we lament the trajectory of those rights.

Thus, I want to take exception to the verdict of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, in its September 2016 briefing report "Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles with Civil Liberties," that "overly-broad religious exemptions unduly burden nondiscrimination laws and policies." Specifically, I want to suggest that from Christian ethics and evangelicalism there are understandings that

can enable us to affirm a robust freedom of religion with exemptions for churches, religious institutions, and individual believers, and at the same time affirm civil rights for the LGBTQ community.

I'd like to unpack three primary understandings that Christian ethics and evangelicalism put at our disposal, and respond to a couple of anticipated critiques.

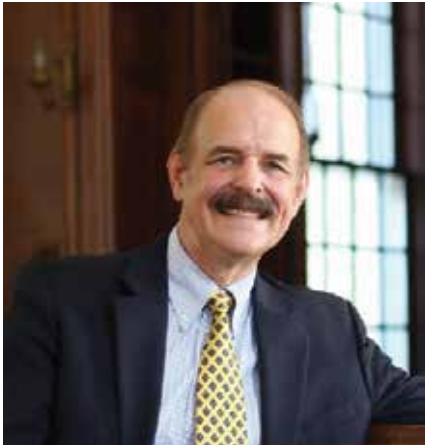
I. Ethical commitments and actions always flow out of a worldview, or a larger narrative about God, humanity, and the realities of our world.

Worldview commitments are simply the ways we put our world together. They constitute a mental map or grand narrative out of which come our ethical obligations in life. Thus, for the evangelical community and other communities of faith that seek to embody particular practices contrary to prevailing cultural norms, the ethical patterns flow from worldview assumptions about God, human nature, marriage, family, sexuality, and the nature of religious communities. That is, they are not arbitrary commands from our God but reflections of larger understandings of the reality designed by God.

All ethical systems flow from some kind of larger narrative, and this is not just a particularly religious perspective. As the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz once noted, there is an interplay between worldview and ethical behavior. Ethics is never divorced from larger perceptions of reality held by groups and individuals. As Geertz wrote in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, "The source of [a religion's] moral vitality is conceived to lie in the fidelity with which it expresses the fundamental nature of reality. The powerful coercive 'ought' is felt to grow out of a comprehensive factual 'is.'"

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights wants to divide action from belief when it states in the previously referenced report, "The recognition of religious exemptions to nondiscrimination laws and policies should be made pursuant to the holdings of *Employment Division v. Smith*, which protect religious beliefs rather than conduct." The notion is that you can believe anything, but you can't have the freedom to live it out.

When this notion is applied, religious liberty is limited by the bifurcation of belief and action. This bifurcation encroaches



Dennis P. Hollinger

Photo courtesy of Dennis P. Hollinger

on something that is at the core of a human being – their deeply held convictions stemming from their worldview. Such encroachment violates something near and dear to human beings, even if their convictions are not widely accepted in the society. Even when other people’s convictions are contrary to our own biblical commitments or are false beliefs and patterns, we still recognize that bifurcation of belief and action violates their convictions, rooted in a particular worldview.

The limitation of religious liberty through the bifurcation of belief and action also frequently ends up actually establishing one worldview over others, hence violating the establishment clause of the First Amendment. It actually gives ascendancy to a secular or naturalistic worldview at the expense of other religious freedoms.

More than two decades ago, the late Father Richard John Neuhaus lamented what he called the “naked public square,” noting in the book by that name, “When recognizable religion is excluded, the vacuum will be filled by *ersatz* religion, by religion bootlegged into public space under other names.” He went on to state, “Because government cannot help but make moral judgments of an ultimate nature, it must, if it has in principle excluded identifiable religion, make those judgments by ‘secular’ reasoning that is given the force of religion.” This in effect establishes secularism as religion.

Let me give a recent example outside of Christianity. This enthronement of secularism at the expense of religious freedom was evident in another context early this year with the European Court of Human Rights. The case involved a Muslim couple in Basel, Switzerland, who refused to enroll their daughters in a school’s mandatory swimming class in which there would be boys and girls together. The couple was fined by school officials.

As the *Boston Globe* reported, the European Court of Human Rights’ Jan. 10 ruling “upheld the Swiss officials’ decision, rejecting the parents’ argument that Swiss authorities had violated the ‘freedom of thought, conscience, and religion’ guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights, which the court enforces.” The Court argued that “the public interest in following the full school curriculum should prevail over the applicants’ private interest in obtaining an exemption from mixed swim lessons for their daughters.”

In addition to limiting the couple’s religious rights that are rooted in their worldview, which is at the very heart of their personhood, the decision seems to have established secularism as the religion of European societies. No one’s civil rights would have been violated by an exemption from the mandatory mixed swimming lessons.

As evangelical Christians we need to remind our society of the significant role that worldviews play in human life. This is a core Christian commitment but pertains to all religions and ethical systems. It is a concept that can be couched in nonreligious language as we speak to the larger society.

II. A second understanding at our disposal for supporting religious freedom and civil rights together is that the primary locus of Christian beliefs and ethics is in the Christian community, not in the larger society.

This flows naturally out of my first observation that ethics is rooted in worldview. If this is true, then the primary locus for worldview expression in ethical thought and action is in the particular communities of faith that espouse and embody their worldview – our churches and institutions.

We, of course, have a long history that might at first seem to contradict this postulate – namely the Christendom model of Christianity that dominated Europe for over a thousand years and continued in various ways long after the separation of church and state. In the Christendom model, Christian freedom was not only asserted, but Christian values and beliefs were given legal privilege. In fact, at times the church had more political power in society than the state. Citizens, whatever their worldview and beliefs, were mandated to live by the religious ethics expectations.

Christendom in history is often raised as the clear reason why religious freedoms must be curtailed so as to not establish one religion over another. Remember that in 19th-century America, we had a kind of evangelical hegemony that functioned much like Christendom, despite legal separation of church and state.

But there are clear resources in Christian history and in sacred Scripture that would call into question the Christendom model in which Christianity is given a privileged place in the public square. Historically, many of us would argue that attempting to impose Christianity on the larger culture actually undermines Christian vitality and ethics. In today’s world, Christian growth and vitality are not most evident in places of established privilege, but rather in places of overt opposition to the faith. China would be just one example of this.

Moreover, the images that Jesus utilized to talk about Christian influence in the world were not metaphors of control or dominance, that is, images of establishment. They were rather metaphors of gentle influence from a presence within the culture, such as salt, light, and leaven.

Those of us in the evangelical community want to emphasize that our way of life – our ethics – is rooted in a particularistic worldview on the one hand, but also in a very personalized faith centered in Jesus Christ on the other hand. Thus, the expectations for Christian ethical patterns will be most explicitly found not in the wider society and its social institutions, but in specific communities of faith.

What this means is that Christians today should not be seeking a privileged establishment of their faith – the Christendom model – but rather the freedom to express their faith in the contexts that are most pertinent to their faith – their churches and various institutions. This doesn’t mean we bifurcate faith from our daily lives or privatize our faith, but our expectations for faith/ethics expressions will not be found in the social institutions of a pluralistic society.

III. A third commitment that can undergird a commitment to both religious freedom and civil rights is human dignity, from which flow human rights.

As Christians, we hold to two fundamental tenets about human nature: we are wonderfully made and terribly fallen. The two must be held together as we reflect on larger societal issues.

The “wonderfully made” understanding, of course, comes from creation in the image of God. Whatever may be entailed in the *imago dei* doctrine, a clear implication, found in several biblical texts, is the dignity of the human person flowing from the image of God (Genesis 9, James 3). This dignity is an intrinsic dignity, not a functional dignity that is dependent on how a person functions in this world.

Even when people in their freedom choose paths of life antithetical to the Gospel and to biblical teaching, they nonetheless retain this intrinsic dignity. The protection of that dignity is essentially the Christian grounding for human rights. People intuitively sense this dignity as well as the accompanying human rights, even if they operate from other worldviews and frameworks.

The best known example is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights from the United Nations General Assembly. The document begins with “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” as the foundation of “freedom, justice, and peace in the world.” Article 1 of the Declaration goes on to declare that “[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” The various rights spelled out by the declaration are rooted in this intrinsic dignity of human persons. The language of dignity went on to find its way into the constitution of numerous countries following the lead of the Declaration.

At one point during the writing of this document, UNESCO brought together a group of philosophers to explore the theoretical foundations for claims about dignity and human rights. In the introduction to *Human Rights: Comments and Interpretations, A Symposium*, edited by UNESCO, Jacques Maritain, a philosopher participating in the gathering, noted the following: “At one of the meetings ... where human rights were being discussed, someone expressed astonishment that certain champions of violently opposed ideologies had agreed on a list of those rights. ‘Yes,’ they said, ‘we agree about the rights but on condition that no one asks us why.’” The philosophers could agree on the language of dignity and particular rights, but could not agree on the foundations for asserting dignity and rights.

Thus, even when people choose paths of life contrary to our faith, we nonetheless seek to affirm their human dignity, and from that dignity come certain rights within society. This puts us in the unusual position of affirming that one’s rights may even entail a right to sin.

Christians have at other times tolerated or even affirmed as public policy, though not as their ethics, policies that entailed freedom, dignity, and the common good with the caveat that choices alien to our faith would be involved. We have allowed for divorce laws, for example, that go far beyond what many of us would believe are the biblical and theological allowances. We have allowed this for sake

of children and order in society. We allow for artistic expression in visual arts, music, and theater that passes beyond our Christian convictions regarding such expressions.

Thus, theologically, we affirm a dignity that is translated into human rights, even when the resulting allowable actions are contrary to biblical teachings or diminish our voice in society as Christian salt, light, and leaven.

Conclusion


All of this of course raises the conundrum of moral complicity: To what degree are we responsible for unethical actions by having some indirect involvement in that action? This is a highly complex discussion in ethics that involves a wide range of issues, from war (the original context of the discussion) to bioethics, to investments, to paying taxes, and the like. Answering this ethical question has frequently hinged on the moral actors’ proximity to the action in question.

What can be said is that allowing for people’s freedom to act in ways that are unethical, but do not threaten the lives of others (i.e. criminality), is quite common. We frequently are indirect accomplices to actions we deem immoral through paying taxes or making financial investments. Allowing such freedom in society over sexuality issues is a strategic move, not primarily an ethical move, though allowing for such freedom does have theological grounding – namely, human dignity.

Considering Fairness for All as a strategic move, I do not believe it means we are supporting lifestyles we consider sin. We are not condoning; nor are we enabling. We are merely attempting to find, in the public arena, a way to support religious freedom and exemptions while affirming human rights, in this case for a group with whom we differ significantly in ethical commitments and actions.

What is needed to move society forward in affirming both freedom and rights and moving beyond the current conflicts? I suggest we embrace what some have termed a “principled pluralism,” or as John Inazu of Washington University in St. Louis terms it, a “confident pluralism.” As Inazu writes in *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving Through Deep Difference*:

Confident pluralism argues that we can, and we must, learn to live with each other in spite of our deep differences. It requires a tolerance for dissent, a skepticism of government orthodoxy, and a willingness to endure strange and even offensive ways of life. Confident pluralism asks that those charged with enforcing our laws do better in preserving and strengthening our constitutional commitments to voluntary groups, public forums, and certain kinds of generally available funding. It also challenges each of us to live out the aspirations of tolerance, humility, and patience in our civic practices.

Inazu adds, “Confident pluralism does not give us the American Dream. But it might help us avoid the American nightmare.” 

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DENNIS HOLLINGER is president and Colman M. Mockler Distinguished Professor of Christian Ethics at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts.

SHINING LIGHT ON SHAME

How campus leaders can guide their communities in combating the effects of shame.

A conversation with Curt Thompson, Angulus Wilson, Steve Beers, and Morgan C. Feddes



Stacksy

Shame, writes psychiatrist Curt Thompson in the introduction to his latest book, *The Soul of Shame*, “is a primary means to prevent us from ... [being] a light-bearing community of Jesus followers who work to create space for others who wish to join it to do so. Shame, therefore, is not simply an unfortunate, random, emotional event... It is both a source and result of evil’s active assault on God’s creation.”

Thompson’s first book, *Anatomy of the Soul*, explored the connection between the field of interpersonal neurobiology and Christian spiritual formation. In his research for that book and in his own psychiatric practice, he repeatedly saw how shame “eventually makes its way to center stage. ... It is ubiquitous, seeping into every nook and cranny of life. It is pernicious, infesting not just our thoughts but our sensations, images, feelings and, of course, ultimately our behavior.”

Though there are certain scenarios in which shame can be beneficial in ensuring appropriate behavior, Thompson’s focus, both in his work and in his practice, is on figuring out what is required in healing shame, particularly for people of faith. He shared some of his research and insights with CCCU leaders at both the Presidents Conference in Washington, D.C., in January and at the gathering of provosts, campus ministry directors, and senior student development officers in San Diego, California, in February.

Following his February presentations, Thompson sat down for the following discussion about how Christian college campuses need to address issues inherently tied to shame. The conversation was held with Angulus Wilson (university pastor at Fresno Pacific University and chair of the CCCU Commission for Campus Ministry Directors); Steve Beers (vice president for student development, athletics, and facilities at John Brown University and chair of the CCCU Commission for Chief Student Development Officers); and Morgan C. Feddes (editor of *Advance*). The transcript has been edited for length and clarity.

MORGAN FEDDES: Curt, I’m particularly interested in your research on shame, and especially in the community aspect of shame. What are some of the things that we as leaders in Christian education should keep in mind when we’re addressing issues that are inherently tied to the feeling and neurobiological essence of shame?

CURT THOMPSON: If you look at the [psychology] literature, shame is understood as an artifact of nature – it just happens to be something that we experience. We don’t like it, but there’s not much we can do about it other than regulate it. But if you read the biblical narrative, it would suggest that shame’s actually not just an artifact – it’s a vector. It’s something that evil is actively and intentionally using to disintegrate the universe and to devour it. There is an intention behind it. ...

Whatever [shame] we have to address [within the community], the first thing that’s going to happen is going to be the activation of my own shame in this process. [We’ll think,] “I’m not going to have what it takes to have this conversation. I’m going to feel stupid, I’m going to feel inept, I’m going to screw this up.”

[What will make a positive difference in dealing with shame is] our willingness to do the advanced work so that when [shame] shows up, we know what’s going on. Then we can vulnerably, confessionally say, “We want to have a conversation about this topic in our community, and I’m really afraid to have it because I think I’m going to screw it up. I’m worried that at the end of the day I’m going to say something that’s really going to hurt your feelings, and I’m telling you this because I don’t want to do that.”

Now, evil does not want us to say that. But I don’t think that after his baptism, Jesus went to the desert *waiting* for the Devil to find him. I think Jesus went *looking* for the Devil. I think Jesus went pursuing those parts of his own story that were potentially going to find their way back into his life and his ministry. So I think



Top: Curt Thompson
Top middle: Angulus Wilson
Bottom middle: Steve Beers
Bottom: Morgan C. Feddes

if we're doing this work – identifying the things about my life where shame has taken root and lives on a regular basis – then when we have these harder conversations and shame shows up, we will know it immediately and we will have the tools available at our disposal to deal with it.

We can't give people what we don't have; I can't expect people to engage in a conversation that is vulnerable if I am not regularly in a conversation of vulnerability with people in whatever vocational domain I occupy. ...

ANGULUS WILSON: I love that framework, Curt. I agree; I think shame is a major tool in three enemies that the believer has – the world, the flesh, and the devil. We have to always be on guard, because shame attacks the soul, and if the world can get me to be ashamed of my Christ, I'm not going to speak for him. If the flesh can make me ashamed in some area of my life, I'm not going to live out the biblical principles that God has called me to. And if the enemy can get me with shame, then I'm not going to be this witness I'm supposed to be.

For campus ministers, we wrestle with how to engage with the enemy of shame in the spheres in which we work. I'm the pastor to the president, I'm the pastor to the faculty, and I'm the pastor to the students. This [shame] is at work in all three of those areas all the time. So I need to be encouraging and need to know, "Am I living my life in such a disciplined manner that I'm aware of what shame is trying to do?"

A second big [aspect] is that as the demographics of our campus change, we are dealing with a diverse student population that's immersed in shame.... [So we have to consider] all the things these students are dealing with – how are we thinking about integrating our faith in such a way into our curriculum that they're able to deal with this? Because if we don't, they become smarter, but they suppress that thing that's eating away at their soul.

CURT THOMPSON: I deeply appreciate everything you're saying. One of shame's primary neurobiological functions is creating isolation – I don't tell anybody, and I'm left in my own head. But I cannot afford to be left in my own head. ... If I don't have people coming to find me, no amount of Scripture, no amount of prayer, no amount of any of this can substitute for my friends who are literally coming to make sure that I don't end up losing my mind.

MORGAN FEDDES: So how do you develop those kinds of relationships when things are good, so that when those hard challenges come, you have that network that will come to you?

CURT THOMPSON: First of all, I think the model that we have in the Gospel is one that invites us into a pace and a place that, given our current world, will take a lot of effort. [Regarding the pace,] Jesus had people who were with him for at least three years, and they were with him, it would appear, more days than not. They also shared a lot of places together. They didn't just come and meet at a certain time – they shared meals together. They shared activities together.

So when people want to start this practice of being known, one way to do it is to pick two or three other people at the most and meet once a week for 90 minutes. [You're] going to hang out, and each person is going to have a chance to tell their story. You get 20 minutes to tell your story every week. [Over time,] you get eight different versions of what it means to tell your story in 20 minutes. People begin to practice telling their story in such a way that they then allow themselves to be open to questions: who, what, where, when, how.

Now, for people who've never done this before, this takes some practice. People think that telling their story is really just giving the surface details about things. ... It's important to know that we're really trying, as hard as it is, to tell the good, the bad, and the ugly. ...

Then, we need to create confessional communities where people are confessing the truth about their life – some of which includes con-

fessing sin or doing things that show my brokenness. Some of it is just things that have happened to me, or things that I feel; things that I sense; things that I dream; things that I long for; things that I'm conflicted about. But I'm trying to tell the whole truth about my life – but not so that anybody can just hear it and then move on. ...

When it comes to our sin, it's important for us to hear someone else acknowledge that what we're talking about really is sin. Neurobiologically, it does me harm if I confess to you something and you say, "That's okay. No big deal." Because in confession, what I'm really looking for – in your eyes, in your body language, in your voice – is for you to be able to say, "You're right, Curt; you were wrong to do that. You're forgiven. I'm not leaving." I need to know you can bear the weight of what I know to be really wrong [with me], and that you will still stay. If it's minimized, it will continue to linger with me.

[We see this] in John 21 with Jesus' reinstatement of Peter. Peter was grieving in his heart that [Jesus] asked him a third time. I could easily see Peter being grieved, because at some point, Peter knows the jig is up: "My little foray into trying to avoid Jesus exploring the truth with me has run out of gas. The reality is, if I loved you [Jesus], I wouldn't have thrown you under the bus six weeks ago, would I?"

I think Jesus knows this. There's this sense in which Jesus says, "Look, if you're going to be a leader in my group, I'm going to need everybody in the group – you included – to know what everybody knows. I know that you're feeling ashamed. I know that you're grieved. We know that you denied me three times. I want everybody to hear that we're good. Now I want you to stop paying attention to that [shame] and pay attention to me. I want you to pay attention to the work that I have for you to do. If I have to say this three or 33 more times in order to get you to be persuaded that this is what you're called to do, then that's how long it's going to take."

Short of that kind of public calling out – pulling him right back through his shame in order for that to be redeemed – if I were Peter, there would always be that seed of doubt: "When am I going to do it again? I'm not really worthy to be a leader."

STEVE BEERS: In the residential collegiate experience, we have a lot of opportunities to have some of these vulnerable conversations. But as the institutional representatives – whether it's a chaplain or a student development professional – at some point, we are thrown into this relationship where we might not have had the opportunity to establish some of those deeper trusting relationships, but we have a responsibility to the larger community to call out sin.

When it comes to our sin, it's important for us to hear someone else acknowledge that what we're talking about really is sin.

We find ourselves in a difficult spot trying to communicate, "No, we're not just doing this because we don't like you. We're not doing it because we think you're a horrible person. We're calling sin a sin, and we're trying to help you think through how you move forward [out of sin]." How do we *not* partner with, in a sense, the Evil One in using shame to beat up the students that we're trying to minister to?

CURT THOMPSON: Yes, that's a good question. I think evil does its best work in the middle of good work being done. It waits for good work to be done and then it joins the parade – twists everything, screws things up. You want to do the right thing. You want to bring a community correction and so forth. Then [we admit], "We're just going to screw this up, however we do it." One thing that is important is being confessional about our imperfect ways of doing things.

STEVE BEERS: Confessing so that the institution and the community can be reminded of that?

CURT THOMPSON: Yes, and that we confess as a community.

STEVE BEERS: What does that look like?

CURT THOMPSON: First of all, every group needs somebody who's going to be willing to step into the center and say, "I'm going to take the lead with this." It is difficult to do these things if you don't. [At a university,] if presidents are the ones who set the tone, then if you don't have a president who's willing to be vulnerable in this way, it will be hard to get the community to move. ...

We can't ask students to go anyplace that we're not willing to go. It is hard work to become institutionally confessional, because it takes time, and it takes the opportunity to get buy in. Of course, the minute that you even start to name it, everybody's going to be nervous, because this is a good thing you're going to do, and evil is going to be right there. [So it's important] to say, "I just want to acknowledge the fact that this is, I'm sure, making people nervous here. Jesus is not nervous about this. He's not worried." ...

We want to bring so much light that there's no space left for shame to hide and do its work.

Evil hates this kind of light; it can't survive this kind of light. When I was in medical school, we worked with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and they had a barometric chamber. If you had a really pressing infection in one of your limbs, they'd put you in the chamber, which basically forces oxygen into tissue. No matter where [the infection] is, there's no place it can go that the oxygen's not going to find it and kill it.

This is what we want to do [in our communities]. We want to bring so much light that there's no space left for shame to hide and do its work. But it takes courage. Peter and Judas both run, both throw Jesus under bus, but [only] one of them is willing to come back.

STEVE BEERS: In the confessional experience as a community, what I hear you say is it allows the act of correction, the act of calling sin a sin [to shift the posture to where] I no longer am judge – I'm a fellow disciple.

CURT THOMPSON: Right, right. But it's hard, too, to acknowledge that this is hard to do. When this [correction and confession] is what you have to do, it will be important for you to have people who are saying to you, "This is really hard to do. But you are not by

yourself with this." ... We need to have people around us who are hearing us, and we need to know that we aren't by ourselves.

There is [also] some comfort, in a sense, in the story of the rich young ruler [in Luke 18]. We live in a world in which Jesus says [to the rich young ruler, who had followed all the commandments and wanted to get into heaven], "The one thing you still lack," and the ruler was downcast, and he went away. Now, we want to continue the conversation; [we want to say], "Wait, don't leave. Let's keep talking." But there's no sense that Jesus went to chase him down. There are times when we are left with unfinished conversations. We wish that we could be close enough [to the person], because we are fully convinced that if you know exactly just how much [we] love you, in the end ... we're going to be able to work this out. But that doesn't always happen.

ANGULUS WILSON: We're living a situation like this now at our institution. Corporately, we did something [that hurt a lot of people.] ... It's been two to three years now, and we're trying to do this [confession and reconciliation]. We've had to meet in town halls; we've had to meet in silos; we've had to come out publicly with statements; we've had to try to reverse some things and some practices.

Shame has been the byproduct of that. ... This [treatment of shame, this] very strong biblical principle that you're talking about – our office has had to carry a lot of that. Meeting with groups weekly in chapel, praying, practicing confession, bringing in clergy from the outside to come and sit in places and spaces. Some of our psychology department [faculty] on campus have been leading groups as well. It's been a very interesting piece. That's why I was so intrigued [at this morning's session] when you discussed Genesis and God coming to find [Adam and Eve] in the midst of [their sin]. I'm literally watching that happen right before our eyes. It's a beautiful thing.

CURT THOMPSON: Shame always requires outside help for healing. My shame needs you. If it's a small thing, I might need only one conversation with you. But, if it's much bigger than a very, very small thing, I'm going to need multiple conversations with multiple people, because shame will come through multiple different doors into my head when I'm left by myself. ...

When you extend this to something that's beyond a single person – when you go to a marriage, a family, a university – now you're talking about an institution that needs outside help, because shame is always going to need somebody outside the system. If the system's just in my brain, I need someone outside the system. If the system is our marriage, I need someone outside the system. Because it's an institution and all the complexities of that, it's going to take a long time. ...

[The recovery time] is something else to know. People have expectations. Things happen and we think, well somehow we should be over this in a few hours, days, weeks, months, or whatever. But there is some benefit in being able to say, "This could take a long time – and that's okay. This is the nature of how important this is. It's a big deal." ▮

CURT THOMPSON is a psychiatrist in private practice in Falls Church, Virginia, and author of *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe About Ourselves*.

ANGULUS WILSON is the university pastor and dean of the Office of Spiritual Formation at Fresno Pacific University in Fresno, California, and serves as chair of the CCCU Commission for Campus Ministry Directors.

STEVE BEERS is the vice president for student development at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, and serves as chair of the CCCU Commission for Chief Student Development Officers.

MORGAN C. FEDDES is the communications specialist for the CCCU and editor of *Advance* magazine.



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MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

How CCCU institutions can lay a solid foundation
for the work of racial justice on campus.

By Nate Risdon, Alexander Jun, Allison Ash, and Pete Menjares

Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part series on how white faculty, staff, and administrators can address issues of diversity and inclusion on their campuses. The first article, "A Call to Listen, Respond, and Connect," focused primarily on recommendations for individuals; it is available in the Fall 2016 issue of Advance or online at advance.cccu.org.

I **T WAS UNUSUAL** to get a call from his older sister this early in the morning, so Oscar knew it must be important. The news was devastating: Their mother had been picked up by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents. Oscar and his family had immigrated to the U.S. illegally when Oscar was a child. Now, in his first year as a college student, Oscar faced a significant crisis that threatened not only his academic success but also his main emotional support system – his family. At the same time, university leaders were having conversations on whether the campus could continue to educate students like Oscar because of the changing political climate.

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Top: Nate Risdon
Top middle: Alexander Jun
Bottom middle: Allison Ash
Bottom: Pete Menjares

At another campus, the vice president for student life received an early morning call from Sheila, one of the leaders on the student assembly and an active member of the campus's Black Student Union. She had returned from the library the night before to find a malicious note, which included slurs against her racial identity, taped to her door. Sheila was angered by the note and worried about her safety, and she wondered what actions the university would take.

On a third campus, Albert attended his first residence hall meeting. As the students went around the room introducing themselves to one another, Albert shared his name and where he grew up; the resident assistant stopped and asked Albert to clarify where he was "really from." Confused, Albert – a fourth-generation Chinese-American – repeated that he was from San Francisco. The RA again repeated the question; this time, Albert replied, "China." Albert would have similar conversations in his classes with professors and students for the next four years of his college career. These racial microaggressions – brief but commonplace behavioral or verbal slights directed toward people of color, intentionally or otherwise – were disturbing on their own, but as the comments added up over time, Albert felt marginalized and wondered if he could be part of the community.

These stories are hypothetical, but they resonate because they could easily happen on one of our Christian college campuses. Some create potential administrative or media crises; others are everyday occurrences that are nonetheless harmful to members of our communities. Is there anything we can do in advance to keep these situations from happening? How are we to speak or act in such situations, especially when remaining silent may place our students, our communities, and our institutions in harm's way?

This article is the second of our two-part series on how white faculty, staff, and administrators can address issues of racial diversity and inclusion on their campuses. In the first article, we discussed our research on white leaders who engaged in anti-racism efforts at CCCU campuses; we identified the common and practical factors that propelled them to pursue that work, as well as how those factors could be useful for other leaders interested in learning more. In this article, we are examining what institutions as a whole ought to keep in mind as they engage this work. Whether

they are facing an unexpected crisis from an act of racial violence on campus, or whether they are proactively educating the campus community about everyday things like microaggressions, we believe it is important for leaders at Christian institutions to act in solidarity with their sisters and brothers of color who find themselves targeted by damaging actions or words.

DEFINING 'SOLIDARITY'

As we in Christian higher education engage in these important and difficult conversations, we must make sure we are on the same page about terms being used. Thus, our research team defines "solidarity" as part of the work to dismantle racism as it is manifested on college campuses. Leaders need not always agree on every aspect of *what, where, when, or how* this work of racial justice ought to be pursued, but they should all agree on *why* we ought to pursue it.

Further, our team defines solidarity as an act of love for neighbor based on the central commandment of the Gospel as described in Mark 12. In response to a question posed by a teacher of the law about the most important commandment, Jesus says:

The most important one is this: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Thus, our solidarity is based in our love for neighbor that goes beyond race, ethnicity, social standing, socio-economic status, or religious tradition. But how, exactly, can we begin to follow this command to love and support our sisters and brothers of color and stand against those who subvert this commandment through racist words, microaggressions, and threats?

KNOW THYSELF: UNDERSTANDING OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

As we consider these words of Jesus, we cannot ignore the final injunction: "Love your neighbor *as yourself*." If we are called to love our neighbor, it is critical that we understand who we are – flaws and all. Key to this is understanding our racial and ethnic identities.

Research has shown that many white evangelical Christians do not take the necessary steps toward a deeper self-awareness in the area of race and ethnicity, which makes engaging with issues of racial diversity and inclusion challenging. Our research and experience argue that though such a journey is difficult, it is profoundly rewarding, because it builds a richer awareness and appreciation of how our society, education, family, religious community, and friends have shaped us. Over time, each of these influences has added layers of identity that we draw from (consciously or unconsciously) to make sense of our surroundings; of the people we meet; of the daily decisions we make. A lack of awareness – particularly a lack of awareness of racial identity – can cripple our development into the healthy, whole people God intends each of us to be.

In our last article, we discussed the idea of understanding the social construct of whiteness, which has created a system of power and privilege through social practices, systems, and norms that made white culture the standard by which other racial constructs were judged. This means that though people of color are continually reminded they are not part of the majority, most white people have not had to consider their racial identity. As a result, when white leaders face the challenge of considering racial identity, they tend to retreat from the difficult – if not distressing – work of understanding whiteness as a social construct.

In our experience, common responses from white leaders addressing these constructs include, "I just don't want to say the wrong thing," or "I can't seem to say or do anything right, so I don't want to become

¹ We debated whether to mention DiAngelo's ethnicity – not to hide that she is white, but rather to affirm that her words are powerful and insightful regardless of the race, ethnicity, and gender of the speaker. We wondered: Will knowing that a white person stated these words lend just a little more credibility to them? Should that even make a difference – is this not the very thinking we are trying to combat? The fact that we spent significant time discussing this suggested it would be worthwhile to mention her ethnicity (in the spirit of encouraging white brothers and sisters to speak up), as well as mention both this discussion and our debate over the use of the term "white fragility" (to highlight that nothing about these topics is "easy").

involved." These statements reflect what scholar Robin DiAngelo, a white woman¹, describes as "white fragility," which is "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves."

Now, we want to acknowledge the tension in using the term "white fragility." We know from our collective experiences that the use of certain words like "fragility" challenges comfort levels; indeed, the white writers on our team have been – and will continue to be – challenged by their own fragility. This is precisely why we are writing about it – not because we want to make people uncomfortable, but because we believe God has called us to engage these challenging ideas that damage the body of Christ, which is inherently both uncomfortable and important. We do not take word choices lightly; know that we struggle with how to speak truth to power, and we struggle with how to speak truth in love.

In the course of our research and experience, we have found that many white people who work in anti-racism advocacy have faced their own white fragility along the way. Since they rarely faced significant racial stress before, they had not had the opportunity, as DiAngelo describes, to "build the cognitive or affective skills or develop the stamina that would allow for constructive engagement" in difficult racial matters. Thus, when they face these moments of racial stress, they instinctively engage in attitudes and behaviors that attempt to reinstitute the equilibrium they are used to feeling. This can happen in situations that range from, for example, people of color speaking unguardedly about their experiences of racism to white people being told their words were racially hurtful, unintentionally or otherwise.

We know there are white Christians who have attempted to engage in racial justice or reconciliation but have given up because of conflict and pain they have felt along the way. But we encourage these leaders to consider the reality of white fragility – not as an indictment but rather as an explanation of why this conflict can become so difficult and painful so quickly. For those who have never been exposed to regular discussions about race or who have never explored their own racial identity, conversations on these topics can be jarring and disruptive. The process can become even more painful if one learns that an attempt to help actually caused more hurt. It's easy for a white leader to throw up his hands and say, "I just can't do anything right." In their new book *White Out*, Alexander Jun (leader of our research team) and Chris Collins have dubbed this feeling as "White 22" – you are white if you do, and white if you don't.

However, if we consider this reality of “white fragility,” white leaders can choose to stay engaged in the difficult racial realities that are present in everyday life for many in their communities and fight the temptation to retreat when feeling discouraged. Like most calls for change, leaders will face significant challenges and see both surprising successes and unexpected failures. Regardless, we must be bold and take courage, knowing that God is with us and will not forsake us. Both successes and failures are opportunities for growth as we listen to the wisdom of those around us and those who have gone before us in this work.

REVISITING HISTORY

Healthy solidarity work begins first with knowing ourselves, but equally important is understanding how the social construction of whiteness has privileged and continues to privilege white society – often without white people fully realizing it.

It is important to remember what is meant by “privilege” here. After all, some may feel that any privilege that existed for whites is long gone. However, what is meant by “privilege” here is not economic status (though that can be part of it). Rather, it refers to how most of our society still measures everyday interactions, relationships, and occurrences through the lens of white normativity – that is, the unconscious cultural concepts and practices that make

In order to successfully engage today's issues, we must face these evils of our past while keeping in mind our trust in the providence, grace, and love of God.

whiteness, or white culture, appear “normal,” and thus cause us to judge things by this unstated and hidden set of norms.

For example, some may long for “the good ol’ days” and wonder why nostalgia has negative connotations for others. A third-generation Japanese-American Christian’s response can be helpful to consider: “Some of your ‘good ol’ days’ were the days that my grandparents were ‘relocated’ to internment camps and lost all of their possessions in the process.”

The history of the United States is full of moments where systemic oppression ensured the social construct of whiteness continued to be the norm by which everyone else was expected to conform. It is painful to study these dark aspects of our history, especially those where the church has been involved. But in order to successfully engage today’s issues, we must face these evils of our past while keeping in mind our trust in the providence, grace, and love of God to help us understand these realities.

RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEM OF ‘CIVILITY’

For much of America’s history, people of color were expected to act respectfully and civilly to the white majority. Today, people of color are more emboldened to speak out when they observe attempts to oppress, marginalize, criminalize, or stereotype them. As a result, many leaders – most of whom are in the white majority – call for “more civil dialogue” in order to avoid labeling and hurt feelings. Though it is true that civility is crucial for meaningful discussion, our research and experience indicate that this critique disproportionately targets voices speaking out against racism. In the December 2016 issue of *The Atlantic*, writer Vann Newkirk argued that:

If calling out racism is largely counterproductive, using a systemic definition like white supremacy is also unacceptable, and stigmatizing or shaming those who espouse racist beliefs is self-defeating, what tools remain? The only form of productive debate that people of color can engage in, it seems, is the gentle persuasion of white people who may or may not hold retrograde views.

Some argue that this insistence on tone-policing is another sign of the white fragility that can make it difficult for us to engage in these topics. People of color who have legitimate grievances must express their deeply felt pain in a way that is more palatable to “fragile ears.”

Jun, our team leader, once heard from a white colleague who shared an honest reflection about his inability to listen to people who shout about victimization and admitted he would be willing to listen only if people were more civil in their tone. Unfortunately, he did not state that he would be willing to challenge himself to listen to others *in spite of* their tone. In other words, his default position was that other people needed to change the way they spoke, rather than that he needed to change the way he listened.

LIKE MOST CALLS FOR CHANGE, LEADERS WILL FACE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES AND SEE BOTH SURPRISING SUCCESSSES AND UNEXPECTED FAILURES. REGARDLESS, WE MUST BE BOLD AND TAKE COURAGE, KNOWING THAT GOD IS WITH US AND WILL NOT FORSAKE US. BOTH SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH.

While there is certainly something to be said about civil discussion, the notion of civility also reveals a problematic ideology about the way discourse ought to occur. In many instances, “civility” is a coded message used by those in authority to signal that the real concerns, hurts, and pains of people of color will only be heard once they calm down. But even seemingly civil acts of protest, such as NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick’s decision to kneel during the national anthem, have been met with critique and disdain. So it would stand to reason that “civility” may not be the issue some people have – rather, the idea of white fragility again is at the core of this resistance.

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

Colleges and universities in the CCCU are predominately staffed by white faculty, staff, and administrators, and the diversity of those employed by our institutions has not kept pace with the increase in student diversity over the last decade. As of 2014 (the most recent data available), the proportion of non-white students in the CCCU is at 28 percent, whereas the percentage of non-white faculty is just under 10 percent. Students increasingly express a desire for faculty who share their ethnic and/or racial characteristics and understand their socio-cultural contexts. They also expect faculty to be culturally literate, advocate for racial equity, and address microaggressions. If our institutions are to be equipped to engage in these issues, all campus leaders should have professional development around matters of diversity and inclusion, intercultural understanding, and culturally sensitive pedagogy.

Fortunately, there are numerous opportunities and approaches available to equip faculty and administrators with the skills needed to do this well, in addition to growing in their personal racial and ethnic awareness and developing intercultural proficiency. Pete Menjares, CCCU senior fellow for diversity, has utilized a number of proven strategies to develop white leaders who are intentional about growing personally and professionally in these areas:

- **Join a professional learning community.** These communities focus on increasing intercultural awareness and competence in racial justice through participation in a cohort with campus peers. When strategically balanced across gender and ethnic/racial characteristics, the cohort can provide white faculty and staff with intentional opportunities for holistic development. With the help of a skillful facilitator, these groups support individual growth needs in a way that is collegial and Christ-centered, and they create safe, non-judgmental places for members to be honest in exploring these difficult concepts.
- **Engage with diverse cultures near your campus.** Virtually every institution in the CCCU has opportunities to explore diverse cultures, people groups, and communities around their campuses. Building relationships with these communities; participating in excursions to cultural centers or exhibits; walking through diverse neighborhoods to take in their

rich sights, sounds, and smells; and attending an ethnic church can all be powerful learning experiences. However, it is important to make sure to move beyond mere appreciation of cultural differences by learning about the unique challenges experienced by these communities.

- **Engage with peers from other CCCU schools.** Professional development events like the CCCU Diversity Conference or the upcoming 2018 CCCU International Forum (which will feature specific sessions devoted to this work) offer opportunities to engage with colleagues in a setting focused on serving the intercultural needs of those in Christian higher education. Additionally, regional colloquia and conferences are expanding their professional development offerings to meet the needs of white faculty and staff interested in engaging in this work.
- **Continue reading.** There is a growing number of excellent books and materials on diversity written by Christians from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. One can either read alone or join a reading group to process what is being read and test ideas together. The point is to read broadly, think critically, develop self-awareness, and be challenged personally, as well as to grow in your understanding of others’ perspectives and experiences unlike your own.
- **Seek out a mentor or cultural guide.** There are few things more important to the growth and development of white leaders than having a trusted mentor or “cultural guide” in navigat-

ing this journey. Whether a mentor of color or a white colleague who is further along in the process, we benefit from being in relationship with someone who is more knowledgeable, experienced, and wise in racial matters and the work of anti-racism.

- **Remain spiritually engaged.** The multicultural journey must be taken with prayer, the reading of Scripture, personal worship, journaling, and an occasional spiritual retreat. This work is difficult; it’s even more difficult if we forget to focus on God, who has called us to it. We must remember that it is God who is reconciling all things to himself (Colossians 1:20) and that the work of reconciliation is something in which we are invited to participate (II Corinthians 5:17-20).

FINAL THOUGHTS

This article is a call to move forward in both rhetoric and action. We ask you to join in solidarity with those who seek justice for people of color on our campuses. Scripture reminds us that God expects his people to care for the oppressed. As we consider how to do this work,

we find both encouragement and challenge in the words of Jesus from the gospel of Matthew:

Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?” The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

NATE RISDON is the program director for the Brehm Center at Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, CA). His research and writing focus on racial justice and equity in Christian higher education. Contact him at naterisdon@fuller.edu.

ALEXANDER JUN is a professor of higher education at Azusa Pacific University (Azusa, CA). He is the author of numerous publications, including the book *White Out: Understanding White Privilege and Dominance in the Modern Age*. Contact him at ajun@apu.edu.

ALLISON ASH is dean of student care and graduate student life at Wheaton College (Wheaton, IL). She also researches and writes in the areas of race and diversity in Christian higher education. Contact her at allison.ash@wheaton.edu.

PETE MENJARES is the senior director of the Institute for Faculty Development at Vanguard University (Costa Mesa, CA) and the CCCU Senior Fellow for Diversity. Contact him at pmenjares@cccu.org or via the web at www.petemenjares.com.



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A NECESSARY PAIRING

The Theology of Marriage
and of Compassion

By Wesley Hill

In connecting the theology of compassion and the theology of marriage and sexuality, Christian college leaders can provide hope for all students.

Thank you to all of you for this wonderful opportunity to address you. I don't take this for granted at all. I think this is such an important gathering of Christian leaders here today, and I'm truly honored to be able to address you. I think of myself as a grateful child of this organization. I graduated from Wheaton College in 2004, and it shaped me into the Christian and the human being that I am today. It equipped me, I believe, to think well about these matters, and I'm brimming with gratitude. ...

I've set myself a difficult task today – a large task. I want to talk about the theology of marriage and sexuality, and I also want to talk about that theology of compassion. You might think, “These are two different topics that deserve several sessions in their own right.” That's true, but I want to try to integrate them.

I was thinking about how to approach this talk, and I have two scenes that have come to mind over and over. They both go back to my years at Wheaton. I came to Wheaton as an 18-year-old freshman in the year 2000, at a time where these issues that we're talking about today were not nearly as prominent – or at least, they didn't feel as prominent. I had grown up in a fairly sheltered, conservative Baptist church in Arkansas. As far as I knew, I didn't know any other gay people. I'm sure that I did, but I didn't know that I knew them.

I came to Wheaton fearful about talking about this aspect of my own life. I had not shared my own story with anyone at that point. I wondered, “Would I meet any other students who were same-sex attracted, or gay, or lesbian?” As far as I could tell in my early days at Wheaton, I didn't. It was not talked about; it wasn't a burning issue as it is for so many of your campuses to-

EDITOR'S NOTE:

*Wesley Hill, author of the books *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality* and *Spiritual Friendship: Finding Love in the Church as a Celibate Gay Christian*, gave this talk to the annual January gathering of CCCU presidents in Washington, D.C. It has been lightly edited for length and clarity.*

day. I found myself coming at it obliquely. I decided to write a paper my freshman year on what the Bible said about homosexuality as a way of working out some of my own angst around this. That seemed to be the way to approach things.

I remember very vividly a conversation with one of my fellow students at Wheaton, who became one of my dearest friends and is still a very close friend today. He began to voice some of his own growing uncertainty around this topic. He said to me, "I see the logic of Christian convictions on so many issues. When I think about a Christian ethical conviction like not stealing or not murdering, I can resonate with the moral logic of that. I can see that stealing from another human being harms them. ... But I can't see so easily the moral logic behind the prohibition that's rooted in historic Christian teaching that Christians ought not to have sex with persons of the same sex. And the reason I struggle with this is I'm beginning to read stories of people who were depressed and lonely and alienated as gay people. Once they came out, once they found a partner, the depression seemed to lift. ... It seems to enhance their life when they find a partner, rather than diminish their life."

I didn't know what to say to him. I could feel the force of that question. What is the moral logic of this? ... That was what a fellow Wheaton student was asking me back in the years between 2000 and 2004, and I didn't know what to say.

The second story that comes to mind is this: I got to my third year at Wheaton having spent three years desperately trying to escape my sexual orientation. I remember long nights in my little prayer chapel in the basement of Fischer dormitory, praying that God would engineer some reversal of my same-sex attraction; that somehow this loneliness would go away. I tortured myself with what to do about it.

I remember trying to date girls while I was at Wheaton. I was hoping if I met the right girl, as I knew so many people did in college, that somehow something would shift, and I would experience some sort of healing and reversal of my sexual orientation. There was one girl that I set a lot of hopes on. We had a good friendship going, and I could maybe imagine myself even dating her. I remember her telling me that she had begun to date another student, and [I remember] the sense of dashed hope, the sense of, "This was going to be my ticket out of this fraught experience of homosexuality, and now that door seems to be closing."

I realized that I was trying to cope with the complexity of my sexuality by not talking about it to anyone, only praying about it. That seemed deeply unhealthy the more I pondered it. I had a professor at Wheaton, Dr. Mark Talbot in the philosophy department, who, when he was about 17 years old, was riding one of those zip lines, and he fell and broke his back. He has been disabled since then and has had to live with ongoing chronic pain. I took a course on the philosophy of Jonathan Edwards with Dr. Talbot. I remember him in class talking about the spiritual experience of living with ongoing chronic pain. He was fairly open about that.



Wesley Hill

I remember one day in class, he said something to the effect of, "You know, when I was in my 20s, I faced a temptation that was so overwhelmingly powerful and attractive, it felt as if the whole world would go dark if I didn't give into it." He didn't say what it was, but he said the only thing he could do in response to that was to scream – I remember he used that verb – scream to the Holy Spirit to keep him from this temptation.

I remember leaving class that day and thinking, "This is a safe person to talk to. This is someone who is not presenting himself as a put-together Christian. This is someone who seems to understand the complexity of being human, the complexity of living between 'the already and the not yet' of redemption and final restoration of all things."

I wrote him an email – and I kept it vague because I wanted to be able to back out at the last minute – and said, "Could we meet? I have something serious going on in my life that I need to talk to you about." He wrote back and said, "Absolutely, come to my office." I remember walking the long distance from Terrace Apartments to Blanchard Hall on campus, going and knowing that I was about to tell someone for the first time in my life that I had same-sex attraction. This wasn't just a topic to write a paper about my freshman year – this was my life. This was my experience.

I got to his office, and I was even nervous sitting there waiting for him because I thought, "Are my fellow students going to wonder why I'm there, what I'm going to talk to him about?" Irrational, right? But that was how I felt. I went in and said to him, "You're the first person I'm telling this to, but I experience

homosexuality. This is not theoretical for me; this is my experience. What hope is there?"

I don't even remember all that he said, but the main gift that he gave me [that day] was the gift of not being surprised. Wheaton, in those days, was not a place where this was very publicly talked about, but even so, he wasn't surprised. I sometimes think of that line from Francis Schaeffer, that Christians should never have the reaction designated by the term "shocked." We have a Gospel that's big enough and capacious enough to handle anything that life throws at us. We should never be shocked by anything. Dr. Talbot was not shocked. He said, "You're not the first Wheaton student who has sat in my office and told me this, and you certainly won't be the last."

That was a turning point. It wasn't a dramatic turning point. There was still a lot to work through, and I'm still working through a lot today; nothing about this has the quality of having arrived. But that was a turning point, and it happened at a school like the ones you lead, and I'm grateful for it.

I've come to think of those two stories as not two separate stories but as related in the task that you're wrestling with today. The one student who asked me, "What is the moral logic behind Christians being opposed to same-sex sexual coupling?" And me, another student, asking my professor, "What hope is there in the midst of the experience of same-sex attraction?" These are not two separate questions; they're deeply integrated. They belong together.

If we're going to think well about these things, we have to grapple with them together. We have to think about theology, and we have to think about pastoral care. We have to think about biblical exegesis, and we have to think about empathy and solidarity. I want to think a little bit with you about how we might hold those together.

I want to start by talking about the moral logic of our Christian convictions on marriage. I want to take us to the most infamous passage in all this: Romans 1. I've just written a chapter on all this for a new book that's just come out from Zondervan, hot off the press: *Two Views on Homosexuality: The Bible and the Church*.

In my chapter in this book, I try to grapple with this question of the moral logic of the biblical prohibitions, and I borrow that language from James Brownson; some of you will know his significant book that came out a couple year ago, *Bible, Gender, Sexuality*. James Brownson is a New Testament professor at Western Theological Seminary in Michigan, and he opens his book by saying that for too long, we have treated biblical texts around homosexuality in a piecemeal fashion. Whether we're on the left or the right end of the spectrum, we've mined the Bible for answers to our contemporary conundrums. He says what we need to do is delve deeper. We need to dig deeper into the moral logic of the texts.

I find that a helpful way of conceptualizing our task. As Christian thinkers, to be faithful to Scripture doesn't mean sim-

ply repeating the words of Scripture. Certainly we're called to preserve the words and to memorize the words and to pass on the words – we can't do that without the Bible. But as we explain Christian theology to students, as we lead them into the fabric of Christian belief, we're trying to expose and uncover the deep moral and theological logic that undergirds what the Bible affirms and says.

I take Brownson's challenge as a good one. We ought not simply to quote Romans 1 and think that our task is finished.

I remember leaving class that day and thinking, "This is a safe person to talk to. This is someone who is not presenting himself as a put-together Christian. This is someone who seems to understand the complexity of being human."

We ought to grapple with the theological engine that is driving Romans 1. What's animating what Paul says there? I want to, if I may, quote from my own essay from this book. I try, in this chapter, to expose the fact that Paul seems to be working with a creational logic in Romans 1.

Now, Brownson disagrees with this; he thinks the reason Paul is opposed to same-sex coupling is because the kind of same-sex coupling that Paul observed in his day was one that was inextricably linked with violence and exploitation. Homosexuality was often practiced in unequal partnerships of master and slave. For Brownson, what Paul is really animated by and angered by is the inequality and the violence, and now that we today know that homosexuality can exist in equal partnerships, we shouldn't think that Paul's words carry the same force today that they did in his day. That's Brownson's case in brief.

I don't think that works, and here's why. Let me read you what I wrote [in this chapter]: "The backdrop for Paul's indictment" – and by the way, it's an indictment of all humanity, not just same-sex practitioners; all of us are included in the story of Romans 1 – "the backdrop for Paul's indictment is crucial for an understanding of its precise contours. Paul appears to be telling a story rooted in Israel's Scripture, and specifically in the Genesis creation narratives. In Romans 1:20, he mentions the creation, and in 1:25, he names God as the Creator. Furthermore,

the imagery he uses – birds and four-footed animals and reptiles in verse 23 – would appear to echo the Septuagint rendering of Genesis 1:20.

“Also in Romans 1:23 are multiple verbal links to Genesis 1:26. In both texts, the same words appear, rendered in English as images resembling mortal being, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles. Aside from these references, the wider context of Genesis 3 is evoked when Paul speaks of a lie, shame, and the decree of death.” Here’s my conclusion: “In short, the story of God’s making the world, God’s giving a command to Adam, and Adam’s subsequent fall form the backdrop for Paul’s diagnosis of the human condition in Romans 1.”

Paul is drawing on the story of creation, and it’s in that context, I think, that we can begin to understand what he means when he calls same-sex coupling “unnatural.” Notice this in verse 26: “For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another. Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

Scholars have spilled enormous amounts of ink trying to understand, “What does Paul mean by ‘nature’ here? Is he talking about individual people who, when they look inside, find themselves to have a particular nature – i.e. heterosexual – and then they willfully rebel against that nature by embracing same-sex sexuality?”

I don’t think that’s it at all. I don’t think Paul is thinking in those kinds of individualized terms. He’s telling a story rooted in the Genesis account. Nature, for Paul, is defined by God’s creative intention. Nature is what we see displayed in Genesis 1 and 2. Nature is the world as God intends it to be. When Paul says that there are people who have exchanged that nature [for what is unnatural], he’s not singling out gay sinners; he’s telling a parable that affects all of us.

We have all exchanged the truth about God for a lie. We’ve all exchanged the worship of the Creator for the worship of fellow creatures. We’ve all become idolaters. John Calvin called our hearts “idol factories.” We’re experts in idolatry. Homosexuality, in this account, is one particularly vivid illustration of a condition that affects us all. It’s one particular way of missing the mark of the Creator’s design. It’s one particular way of falling short of the world as God intended it to be.

That’s the moral logic, I think. It’s not just a creational logic – it’s also a redemptive logic. We see that in 1 Corinthians 6, which is one of the other infamous passages where Paul mentions same-sex sexual activity. He says this in 1 Corinthians 6:9: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you, but you

If we’re going to think well about these things, we have to grapple with them together. We have to think about theology, and we have to think about pastoral care. We have to think about biblical exegesis, and we have to think about empathy and solidarity.

were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the spirit of our God.”

Notice the complementary logic here. If Romans 1 says that same-sex coupling misses the mark because of how God originally created the world to be, 1 Corinthians 6 comes at it from a different angle. 1 Corinthians 6 says that because God is now at work justifying and sanctifying and redeeming people; because God is at work restoring his creation; because God is taking those who have fallen from the design of Genesis 1 and 2 and is remaking them; therefore, among those of you who name the name of Christ, this is not who you are anymore. You’ve been redeemed. You’ve been pulled out of that old life of sin and death, and you’ve been washed clean and made new.

That’s why I think Paul ends this chapter of 1 Corinthians 6 on a note of redemption. “Flee,” he writes in verse 18. “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body.” That’s perhaps a Corinthian’s slogan thrown in Paul’s face. [A Corinthian would say,] “We can do whatever we want with our sex lives because every sin a person commits is outside the body. Paul counters that: “The sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body.”

Not only were you created a certain way, male and female, but you have been redeemed so that now your baptized body doesn’t belong to you. You’ve been purchased by God; you’ve been called out of a life of darkness. Therefore, a baptismal life carries certain expectations with it; certain moral obligations are laid on those who’ve been rescued from sin and death by the work of Christ.

I think that would be my reply to Brownson. I think he’s absolutely right to press us, and I hope you feel the challenge to inquire into the deep theological logic of what the Bible says about sex. Don’t be content with the bare command. Probe deeper and ask about the rationale for the command.

I love what Richard Bauckham says about New Testament ethics, that the commands of God are windows into the world as God has designed it to be and how the world one day will be in the restoration of all things. The commands are, if you like, sign posts. They’re previews of how God wants the world to be and how God has promised to remake the world in Christ.

But I think it won’t do to simply repeat this logic. And I know I’m preaching to the choir here, but I think sometimes preaching to the choir is worth doing. It won’t do to simply repeat this logic to students who are wrestling and crying in dormitory basement prayer rooms, as I was at Wheaton. There has to be a theology of compassionate, pastoral ministry in which this biblical theological logic can be explored in the context of real questions and real humanity.

That’s certainly what I experienced at Wheaton, and it’s my prayer for all of our campuses that this kind of pastoral care for students can happen. I’m encouraged to hear more and more

about small groups ... where this kind of wrestling can happen in community. ... I think our challenge as we think about offering this biblical, theological, moral logic as a gift to our students is how to do so with real grace, real pastoral sensitivity that reaches into the heart of students wrestling [with their sexuality].

One of the things I want to recommend to you – and I expect this will be controversial – but I want to recommend a move away from a *recovery model* of thinking about same-sex attraction to a *vocation model* of thinking about same-sex attraction. Let me say that one more time: I want to recommend to you a move away from what we might think of as a recovery model to a vocation model.

Let me see if I can say this sensitively. When I began to talk with my fellow Christians about my own sexuality, I quickly heard promises that God wanted to restore me to full “heterosexual functioning,” as it was sometimes described. I remember going to a fellow Wheaton grad, who remains a very dear friend, and having her urge me to meet with a counselor who’d profoundly helped her in her life. I went, and this Christian counselor on our first meeting told me, categorically, “I can promise you 100 percent change in your sexuality if you offer this to God.”

The danger in that kind of promise is the danger that always lurks in promises of healing: If you fail to achieve it, the con-

BANK WITH SOMEONE WHO INVESTS IN KINGDOM CAUSES

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, ‘Mine!’” - Abraham Kuyper


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demnation is on you for not having enough faith, for not trusting enough in the promise of God to deliver you.

I want to urge us to make room for stories of profound change. I think Mark Yarhouse's language of "significant shifts along a continuum of change" is something I've heard firsthand from same-sex attracted people. I think of my friend, Kyle Keating, who realized he was predominately attracted to persons of the same sex in high school; he now writes and speaks with me on oc-

Nature is the world as God intends it to be. When Paul says that there are people who have exchanged that nature, he's not singling out gay sinners; he's telling a parable that affects all of us.

casion. Kyle would describe his story as one of falling in love with the woman he's now married to, Christy. He said it did not affect a total reversal. He still prefers to think of himself as in some way bisexual, still attracted to men, but he's profoundly attracted to Christy and is committed to this marriage. I want to hold up stories like Kyle's as one of the ways that Christ can transform a life.

But I don't want to so hold it up that it becomes *the* paradigm for all Christians when they think about how to live well before God with same-sex attraction. My story is one, unlike Kyle's, of really having no significant development of opposite-sex attraction. I first sensed that I was same-sex attracted around 14, 15 years old, maybe a little earlier, and I am still just as same-sex attracted – if not more – today, at age 35, as I ever have been. I want to believe that that's not simply a result of rebellion, that it's not simply a result of closing my ears and heart to God, but that this is the path that God has offered me to walk.

One of the places I often go when I talk with people is to a letter that C.S. Lewis wrote in the 1950s. Some of you will know that beautiful book, *A Severe Mercy*, by Sheldon Vanauken. It's a story of a dramatic conversion out of "happy paganism" into Christianity. Vanauken, after he became a Christian, really didn't know anything about Christian ethics, sexual or otherwise. He moved back to the States and found himself as a Bible study leader, and he didn't know what to say to all the gay people who came to his Bible study and asked him, "How ought we to live now as baptized Christians?"

So Vanauken did what anyone in his shoes would do: He wrote to his friend C.S. Lewis and asked him for advice. Lewis

wrote back – and I want you to hear this. I want you to hear how ahead of its time it is. This is well before the organization of ex-gay ministries. This is well before what I've called the "recovery model."

Lewis says this: "Our speculations on the cause ... are not what matters and we must be content with ignorance. The disciples were not told why (in terms of efficient cause) the man was born blind (in John 9): only the final cause, that the works of God should be made manifest in him. This suggests that in homosexuality, as in every other tribulation, those works can be made manifest: i.e. that every disability conceals a vocation, if only we can find it, which will 'turn the necessity to glorious gain.'"

Lewis goes on a few sentences later to describe a "certain pious homosexual man" who believed that "his necessity could be turned to spiritual gain, that there were certain kinds of sympathy and understanding, a certain social role" which only he could play.

I tell you friends, when I read that – when I encountered that way of thinking about things ... that my calling was to see how God might want to take ... this thing in my life that feels so central and so confusing, that God might want to take that and use it as the thing that would lead me to give myself away in love to my community – that was a paradigm shift for me. It caused me to begin to ask the question: What could a future look like as an intentionally celibate Christian, who wasn't just living in an apartment off by himself eating frozen pizzas on Friday night, but who was devoting himself to a community, devoting himself to friendship, forming thick bonds of kinship with fellow Christians?

That was a revolution in my thinking – that my calling might not be to spend the next 20 years of my life in therapy trying to find the childhood moment where things went wrong. But my calling was instead to find that certain social role that only I can play – that in fact, under God's providence, this thorn in my flesh, this being gay, might in fact be the very way that I could form deeper friendships with my fellow Christians, that I could be led into deeper ministry among my fellow Christians. That was a revolution in my thinking, and I'm still trying to work it out today.

I want to suggest to you that one of the most important things you can do on your campuses is cast a vision of what a hopeful future could look like for your students who are same-sex attracted. For so many of us, when we think about living out our lives in the evangelical church as gay – and as celibate, probably, for most of us – the future looks blank. We can't picture what it would look like because we don't have models of how this goes. I've spent all my life in the church, and I have rarely seen people in their 40s, 50s, and 60s who are talking openly about what it looks like to embrace a vocation of celibacy.

I remember recently talking to a Roman Catholic friend of mine who grew up in the church. He said, "From the time I was

4 years old, it was a huge question in my mind as to whether God might call me to be celibate" – because God might call him to be a priest. As soon as I heard him say that, I thought, "Our childhoods were so profoundly different because it never occurred to me that God might call me to be celibate. It never occurred to me to contemplate the single life." I always simply assumed I'd go to college and meet my spouse like my parents did and live a Christian life by having kids and being part of a family values church. That was the future; that was the path. It never occurred to me that God might have in mind a vocation of celibacy. I apparently never read 1 Corinthians 7.

But this is the challenge for you, to cast a vision – and it doesn't have to be one vision; I think there are 100 different models that this could take for your students – but to cast a vision [for your students]: "This is what a hopeful future looks like for you. If you're same-sex attracted, and you've tried everything, and you haven't experienced one iota of change in your same-sex attraction, and you're wanting to give your life to God in celibacy, that does *not* have to equal loneliness. That does not have to equal isolation. ... There's a life for you. There's a future for you that doesn't simply look like alienation from your fellow believers in the church who seem to be so fixated on the nuclear family."

Finally, I want to leave you with two words that have become particularly important to me as I think about ministry in this area: solidarity and empathy. What I am praying for you is that you will find yourself thinking of your same-sex attracted students not as a liability on your campus, but as people you're in solidarity with.

One of the most moving stories, for me, that Mark [Yarhouse] tells is of being at an APA meeting around a lot of secular colleagues and hearing one of his gay colleagues talk about the need to care for "our people," meaning his fellow gay and lesbian people. Mark said he sat there, and he asked himself the question, "Is that how we in the church think about gay and lesbian Christians? Are they our people?"

Are we in solidarity with them, or are they somehow a pastoral problem to be fixed? Something that we hope that would simply go away? Are we in solidarity with our students who are wrestling in this way?

Finally, empathy – understanding and sharing the feelings of another. As I was flying in last night, I was finishing a book that my best friend recommended that I read, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, by George Eliot. This is a book written by George Eliot before she became the George Eliot of *Middlemarch*. For those of you who don't know her story, she was probably the Victorian era's greatest novelist. She was raised in an evangelical Church of England home and eventually came to reject Christianity in favor of what she called a "creed of human sympathy." She felt that God was actually a hindrance to our being good to our fellow creatures, so she abandoned Christianity.

But her vision of what sympathy means is one that I think we Christians can learn a lot from. In this little book, she has

a novella called "Janet's Repentance." She describes in this novella the story of Janet, who's broken and wounded and wrestling with an addiction and finds herself wanting, in this story, to have someone to confide in. She finally wants to approach the new evangelical minister who's arrived in town, Mr. Tryan. "Janet felt," Eliot writes, "she was alone. No human soul had measured her anguish, had understood her self-despair, had entered into her sorrows and her sins with that deep-sighted sympathy, which is wiser than all blame, more potent than all reproof."

[Janet] invites Mr. Tryan, the minister, to speak with her, and it's among the most moving dialogue I've read, I think, in fiction, but she says this to Mr. Tryan: "I want to tell you how unhappy I am, how weak and wicked. I feel no strength to live or die. I thought you could tell me something that would help me."

"Perhaps, I can," Mr. Tryan said, "For in speaking to me, you are speaking to a fellow sinner who has needed just the comfort and help you are needing."

That's the key to this story. When Janet approaches Mr. Tryan for some help and comfort, when she approaches needing to confess, she isn't met with blame or reproof; she's met with a fellow sinner who understands – a fellow sinner who's in need of the same comfort she herself is in need of:

He saw that the first thing Janet needed was to be assured of sympathy. She must be made to feel that her anguish was not strange to him; that he entered into the only half-expressed secrets of her spiritual weakness before any other message of consolation could find its way to her heart. The tale of the Divine Pity was never yet believed from lips that were not felt to be moved by human pity.

Isn't that beautiful? The only way Janet can ever hope to hear the message of the Gospel, which Mr. Tryan goes on to explain to her, is because she senses first that this person she's confiding to is a person of sympathy – a person who is not dispensing wisdom from on high, but a person who's approaching her in solidarity; a person who's approaching her as a fellow sufferer, a fellow sinner who understands. The only hope she has of hearing the Gospel, the "message of Divine Pity," is from these lips that are expressing human pity. I think that's a beautiful pastoral paragraph.

I want to commend that to you as you think about ministering to same-sex attracted students. Please don't think of us as "over there." Please don't reduce us to the category of "activists" or "projects" or "pastoral fixes." Please think of us as one of you. Please think of us as fellow sinners who need the Gospel of the Divine Pity, who need to be reminded, not only of the moral logic of the Bible's prohibitions, but of the Divine Pity that forgives and cancels those prohibitions and gives us power to live up to them in Christ. Thank you so much. ▮

WESLEY HILL is assistant professor of biblical studies at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. In addition to his books, he serves on the editorial board for *Christianity Today* and writes regularly for that magazine as well as for *First Things* and other publications.

HOW A HIKE *in the* WILDERNESS IS MAKING WAVES

An innovative science initiative draws together multiple disciplines from campuses across the country.

By Morgan C. Feddes



Adobe Stock.

Dawn on the Pacific Crest Trail. Streaks of pink begin appearing on the clouds overhead as the sky lightens; the last light from the stars gradually fades away. In the trees, birds are singing their morning songs, welcoming the new day.

On the trail below, a group of Christian college students and faculty is noting that song. They've been up for close to a half-hour already, having spent another night sleeping in their tents on the trail. They've already packed up camp and have begun their morning research routine: 10 minutes of hiking, 10 minutes of collecting data.

In those 10 minutes of collection, the students record observations on the habitat around them: they count the birds they can see and hear; if they're near a stream or a lake, they'll collect water samples. They deploy automated bird recorders – small digital recorders that are encased in plastic containers and left on the trail for several days to record bird sounds.

And then they begin the cycle again. Over the course of the day, they will hike around 15 miles. They take a break for lunch; in the afternoon, they hike for 20 minutes and record for 10 minutes until twilight, when they make camp, have dinner, reflect on the day, and set their watches to wake them up a half-hour before the next sunrise.

This is the Pacific Crest Trail Biodiversity Megatransect Undergraduate Research Project, a unique and ambitious project based at William Jessup University in Rocklin, California. Throughout the process of collecting and analyzing data, faculty and students from three CCCU campuses across the United States who work in six different disciplines – biology and environmental science, computer science, kinesiology, business, and English – will be involved.

A PROJECT 10 YEARS IN THE MAKING

The Megatransect Project first began more than a decade ago when Michael McGrann and his wife spent the summer of 2004 backpacking through the 1,700-mile-long stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) that runs through California to celebrate the completion of their master's

degrees. While hiking the trail, McGrann – who at that point had completed his bachelor's and master's degrees in environmental science – had a thought: "I could probably do research while hiking the PCT."

In 2006, he and his wife did exactly that – they spent five months backpacking through the California stretch of the PCT again and collected data at more than 3,500 points on the trail for McGrann to use in his doctoral research at the University of California, Davis. He has continued to build upon that research ever since; thanks

to the breadth and longevity of the project, he has published two articles connected to his findings.

McGrann, who now works as an assistant professor of environmental science at William Jessup University, brought his ongoing research project with him. William Jessup now has an environmental science honors program built around the Megatransect project, which gives students the opportunity to have first-hand experience both gathering data in the field and learning how to interpret and use that data for research – albeit in much

smaller pieces than that first summer of data collection.

But even though students aren't covering the full 1,700 miles like McGrann did that first summer, they still experience a lot of ecological diversity. "This summer, we're going to have at least a dozen students – perhaps more – and four faculty engaged [in the project]," McGrann says. "We're going through the Mojave Desert all the way up to Yosemite. ... So that's quite a change in environments, from the desert to the high alpine and everything in between. That is quite the experience for students to collect data across that range of environments."

One attribute that McGrann is able to integrate into the project, thanks to his work at a Christian university, is faith. "I think it's crucial that [students] grow spiritually through this trial and spend time with our Creator as we study creation," he says. "Perhaps there's nobody who has a better calling than a believer with a biblical worldview to do conservation, science, and ecology. ... God calls us to care for creation, to improve the quality of life for humanity through stewarding and caring for the environment, and to study God's creation. God gave us all this diversity to study and understand and learn how he did it."



Michael McGrann and his wife, Amy, pause on top of Mount Baden-Powell along the Pacific Crest Trail during their first hike along the length of California in 2004.

Courtesy of Michael McGrann

ALREADY MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Even as the Megatransect Project continues to take shape, McGrann's research is already making a difference for scientists and wildlife conservationists in California.

Brett Furnas, a wildlife ecologist and senior environmental scientist with the wildlife investigations laboratory of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), completed his doctorate at UC Berkeley while working for the department at the same time that McGrann was working on his at UC Davis. Furnas hired McGrann to help with a field survey during that time and learned about McGrann's research; they've been working together ever since.

"My strengths have been with the kind of mathematical analysis of that data that allows us to get the most out of it. Wildlife isn't the easiest thing to go and count – they move around, and some of them aren't very vocal, so you have to use math to correct for that in order to get really good information," Furnas says. "So we complement each other that I can provide some statistical expertise ... and he generates some really good hypotheses behind how birds are using different habitats, how they're migrating, how they're dealing with changing climates – those sorts of things."

The other unique – and vitally important – aspect that has proven useful in their joint research is the fact that McGrann and the Megatransect research teams can get into places not normally accessed by Furnas or his colleagues. Furnas says that the CDFW usually relies on vehicles and established roads to access different areas for their work and research.

"It's hard to get to some of these remote locations – trails are the best way to get to them," Furnas says. "He [McGrann] is using trail systems to access these really remote and generally high-elevation wilderness locations that my program hasn't been able to get to. ... So it's a natural fit of combining our two data sets, making them stronger together than each one is by itself."

The work has led McGrann and Furnas to publish some research on how migratory birds are adapting to the

Courtesy of Michael McGrann

changing climate conditions in California. Not only is this helpful information for other scientists, but it is helpful for the CDFW.

"We're the trustee agency responsible ... for overseeing a lot of these species and making assessments about whether conservation is important for them, or if there needs to be recovery plans for some of them, or if they're doing okay [on their own]," Furnas says. "Scientific research [like this] really helps us make better decisions."

Because the Megatransect Project provides students the opportunity to use proven research methods in the field, it makes them a natural fit for research projects with CDFW, Furnas says; a few alumni from William Jessup have spent time working with the CDFW after graduation. "It gets them started in their careers, and it's helpful for our work as well."

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL EFFORT

One of the unique features of the Megatransect Project is the variety of departments from William Jessup involved.

Foundational to the project, of course, are the departments of environmental science (which McGrann chairs) and biology. Matt Klauer, who works as an assistant lab technician at the university, first heard about the project when he was a student studying biology at William Jessup. Though he wasn't able to get involved with the project until after he'd graduated, he was able to go last summer and is currently helping with the planning and logistics of the upcoming trip this summer.

"Playing a substantial role in Dr. McGrann's transect has led me to follow my passion for organizing and working on conservation projects," he says. "It is an exciting project and a rare opportunity I am happy to be a part of."

Another department vital to the project's success is the department of computer science. Joseph Liauw, associate professor of computer science, has

been working both to build a database for the research team and to create web-based tools so the team can enter data on-site.



Aaron Sullivan, a professor at Houghton College, hikes in the Klamath Mountains on the 2016 trip.

"THAT IS QUITE THE EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS TO COLLECT DATA ACROSS THAT RANGE OF ENVIRONMENTS."

“It is difficult [for the research team] to rectify any mistakes they made in the research after the fact, so this [web-based data entry] will let them fix mistakes in the field, and it also improves of the integrity of the data we collect,” Liauw says.

The hope is eventually to create some kind of website to make the data easily available to the public. For now, Liauw is using the project as a unique, hands-on teaching tool for his students. “I am no bird expert, but the fact is that data is data, regardless of what kind it is,” he says. “So I remind [students] that we are contributing to this project because there is a great deal of help we can bring. Computing is for the good of other fields, not just for computer science.”

Harry Snodgrass, associate professor of business at William Jessup, has also been involved in the project by utilizing his expertise in organizational management and marketing. He is working on developing the project into a nonprofit organization, as well as developing strategies for both public policy advocacy connected to the research results and marketing strategies toward raising awareness about the project and its findings.

Like Liauw, Snodgrass has found great excitement both in the project and in bringing his students into the work. “I’m really enthusiastic about the possibility of creating a laboratory, of sorts, where students can actively apply the theoretical concepts we talk about in the business classroom,” he says. “As an example, I teach a nonprofit marketing course that deals with the challenges of using corporate models to effect social change. By allowing students to participate in the actual strategy development and tactics execution, I can reinforce the classroom learning and perhaps awaken a career desire in a select few.”

This year, McGrann says, two more departments hope to be involved in the project: kinesiology and English. This summer, the kinesiology department will do a pilot course by sending a few of their students and a faculty member to research the researchers – that is, the students will measure how backpacking through the wilderness is affecting their peers’ physiology as the project progresses.

The English department also hopes to do a similar project, where one or two students will travel for at least part of

the journey to report on the experience through blogging and other articles. Portia Hopkins, chair of the English department, has been involved in the collaboration on the project from the beginning, and while she has yet to have any students participate in the project, she remains excited by the opportunity and encourages her students to get involved.

“For students coming from the science background and students coming from the writing background, for them to be able to share and experience this with each other to find the value in the work the other does is ... something new that hasn’t – as far as I know – been done in this fashion before,” she says. “For the students who get to be the first generation of doing something like this and who get to set the way for those that come along – it could really be a life-enhancing and exciting opportunity.”

All of the faculty involved in this project credit William Jessup’s small size and collegial nature with allowing them to develop such a broad, complex, and collaborative initiative. “I could go to a large research university like UC Davis, but it would be hard to build something like this [there],”

McGrann says. “Here [at William Jessup], it’s easier to have conversations and to share and pool resources across departments to build programs like this. That’s what I love about here – everybody is so supportive, from the administration to the faculty, of collaboration and interdisciplinary work.”

BEYOND A SINGLE CAMPUS

The Megatransect Project’s spirit of collaboration extends not just across departments on William Jessup’s California campus, but to CCCU campuses from New York and Kentucky as well.

Aaron Sullivan is an associate professor and chair of the biology department at Houghton College in Houghton, New York; Ben Brammell is an associate professor in the department of natural sciences at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky. They first connected to the Megatransect Project when McGrann was looking for partners at other CCCU institutions in order to apply for one of the CCCU’s Networking Grants, which provides funding for projects that involve scholars from multiple universities.

Sullivan, who has studied the behavior of amphibians and reptiles throughout his career, had been looking for an opportunity to engage in more applied areas of research such as conservation or biodiversity. Though the Megatransect Project originally monitored bird populations (McGrann’s particular research interest), Sullivan suggested the team develop protocols that would extend the project to include amphibians and reptiles.

As a result, Sullivan and two of his students went into the field with the rest of the team in the summer of 2016 to assist in the collection of the avian data and to test a new method of collecting data on amphibians and reptiles.

“One of the most exciting aspects of the project to me is the opportunity to learn. This approach to large-scale, long-term field ecology is a new approach for me,” Sullivan says. “I had a great time learning about vegetation and habitat alongside the students.”

Erica Barney was one of the Houghton students to work on the project last summer. Though she had never been backpacking before – let alone for a time as long as what the project would entail – Barney’s interest in environmental biology, the natural world, and conservation efforts compelled her to tackle the unique experience.

Beyond the challenges of conducting such extensive field research, as well as identifying flora and fauna in California instead of in her home state of New York, Barney says that challenges unique to the experience reminded her of both the beauty of God’s creation and the power of his provision. “One thing that I enjoyed the most was the simple, yet sometimes emotionally taxing action of finding and pumping water, which often came from really small streams,” she says. “In those moments, it was so visible that God was providing for us. ... As you’re hiking all day, you have a lot of time to think, pray, and reflect on your blessings and relationships – that was a very meaningful experience through this project.”

Barney says that the program’s intentional inclusion of time to read Scripture and journal in the evenings after each day of hiking was helpful, because it gave an opportunity to see how her faith could interact with her work as a conservationist and scientist, as well as allowed her to spend time with faculty and students from other Christian campuses to discuss “what we heard God speaking to us while we were backpacking.”

Barney plans to go back to California this summer to

participate in the next round of the project. “[The Megatransect Project] challenged me to view the work I was doing as something for the greater good – to hopefully provide long-term data showing the effects of climate change, which in the future could promote conservation programs for God’s creation.”

At Asbury University, Brammell, too, had research experience studying amphibians. He, however, was immediately interested in joining the Megatransect Project because of his experience in a different research technique: environmental DNA analysis. In this kind of analysis, scientists collect samples of water or soil and analyze them to determine whether DNA from animals that are elusive or endangered is present in the sample. If it is, that indicates the animal has recently been in the area and can provide scientists with a better idea of where the wildlife might be.

As part of the Megatransect Project, Brammell was able to utilize this technique to research whether a particular – and endangered – species of frog was present in the terrain where the team was conducting its research. He went on the research project in 2015, while one of his students, Ramon Guivas, went in 2016 to search for signs of a different frog. An added challenge for them was trying to do some analysis of the samples directly in the field, Brammell says.

“The nature of this work is really sensitive,” he says. “Most people are filtering samples in a highly controlled environment – but we had to try and do this in a remote field location, something that to my knowledge had not been attempted at that point.”

Additionally, the samples Brammell and Guivas collected over the last two years have provided excellent training opportunities for other biology students back on Asbury’s campus – including looking at the unique and complex genome of the elusive frog species.

“To me, the genome is among the most fascinating and complex aspect of things we’re researching – it clearly explains how God created things and how they came to be,” Brammell says. “This project is also exciting because some of these sequences we’re looking at – our students might be the first to look at them in the world.”

Guivas said that the experience also taught him much about the process of scientific research that he hadn’t previously considered. “I am now more aware that beyond the calculated steps of research, there is a human element, and each

"IN THOSE MOMENTS, IT WAS SO VISIBLE THAT GOD WAS PROVIDING FOR US."



Ramon Guivas (center), a student from Asbury University, and Faith Trowbridge, a student from William Jessup University, hike in the Castle Crags Wilderness on the 2016 trip.



The Megatransect team used environmental DNA analysis to track populations of the endangered Sierra Nevada mountain yellow-legged frog.

Courtesy of Michael McGrann

Courtesy of Michael McGrann

day is an opportunity to foster the growth of another while working on your own understanding,” he says.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Given the relative youth of the Megatransect Project’s existence at William Jessup University, it already encompasses significant scope and impact. But McGrann and his colleagues want to see it grow even further.

“My long-term vision – which is really ambitious – is to complete research surveys along the entire length of the PCT from Mexico to Canada in a single season, using teams of undergraduate students and faculty team leaders,” McGrann says. “I want this to be an honors program, where students are engaged in the analysis, in figuring out the logistics, and in the publication of the results.”

McGrann says he wants it to continue being a collaborative project – something that his colleagues at William Jessup, at Houghton, and at Asbury support wholeheartedly.

“Maintaining a research program at a small Christian liberal arts college can be difficult due to limitations of time and funding, so I have tended to focus on smaller, bite-sized projects that can be accomplished over several weeks, instead of months or years,” says Houghton’s Aaron Sullivan. “This [project] has shown me firsthand what can

be done via collaboration ... to make a huge project like this a reality.”

In addition to helping his own research, Ben Brammell says that an expanded Megatransect Project will be a great asset for his students at Asbury University. “I would love to see a more permanent program emerge, in which we have this as a constant component for both of our departments [at William Jessup and at Asbury],” he says. “We require research internships for our seniors, so this would be a great resource for that.”

McGrann says that he firmly believes this project is one uniquely suited for faculty and students who are part of Christian higher education. “There are not enough believers in the environmental sciences,” he says. “We have a unique motivation as Christian to promote the care for and stewardship of God’s resources. [Creation] is a gift that has been entrusted to us to steward and promote and preserve for future generations. My hope is that this program becomes a catalyst for getting Christians plugged into doing conservation science and ecological research in the long term – because I think there’s a need for believers to be there.”

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MORGAN C. FEDDES is the communications specialist for the CCCU and editor of *Advance* magazine.



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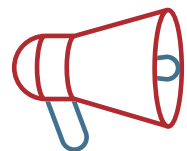
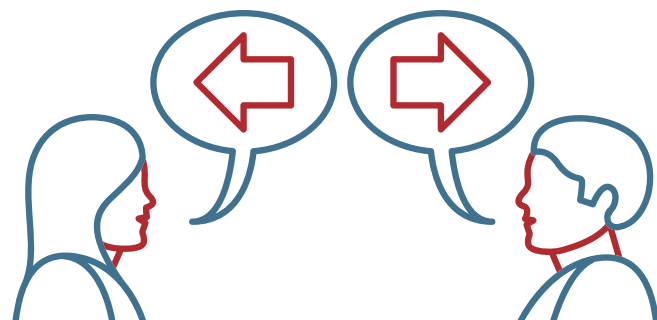
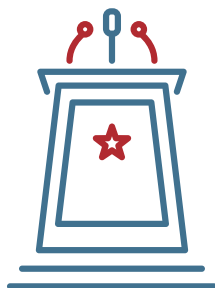
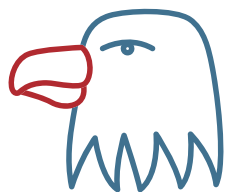
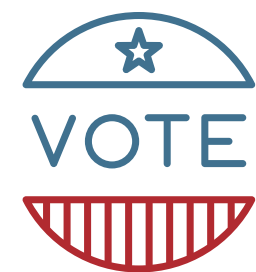
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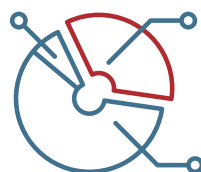
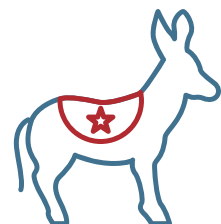
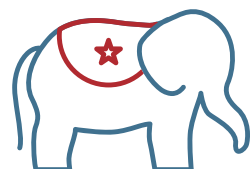
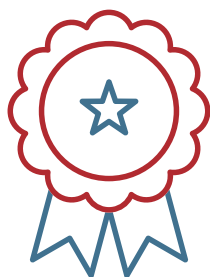
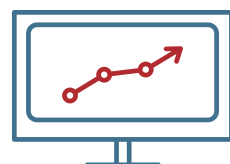
Christian Leadership
to Change the World



STAYING ENGAGED IN POLITICS

Why – and how – we can follow our Christian calling in a divided system.

By Katie Thompson, Jenny Hyde, Chelsea Maxwell, Morgan Barney, Andrew Whitworth, and Kara Dry



FOR POLITICALLY DISILLUSIONED Christians, the 2016 election season did not provide the hopeful, inspiring vision for the next era of American politics that many wished it would. Instead, bitter political rhetoric, deep partisan division, and unprecedented political spectacle animated a particularly ugly election season. For many, it was finally a clear invitation to opt out of political life.

This sentiment was perhaps most acutely felt by young adults. For many Christians in this demographic who are committed to pursuing justice for their neighbors, the election confirmed in their minds that politics is *not* the way to do it. Eager to serve, they turn to their church and parachurch ministries to minister to the most vulnerable.

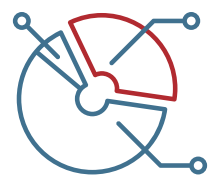
In my work with Christian college students and young professionals, I often encounter an argument that goes something like this: “My citizenship is in heaven, not here on earth. I will obey laws, and I will vote, but there is no value in trying to accomplish anything for the Kingdom of God through politics. Instead, I will serve through my church.”

While this reaction may be motivated by good intentions, a vision of public justice suggests this is an incomplete approach to loving our neighbors. In a *Capital Commentary* article, Center for Public Justice CEO Stephanie Summers writes:

Citizenship is our common calling. In calling us to citizenship, God invites us to develop our abilities to accurately discern the well-being of our political communities. In calling us to citizenship, God also invites us to examine the relations of our political communities to those of other nations in God’s world. In so doing, we tangibly respond to God’s calls to do justice and to love our neighbor.

God calls us to citizenship here on earth, exercised for the well-being of our political communities. This requires that we engage the systems of government as part of our pursuit of justice for all.

Yet in our current political climate, with its deep divisions and bitter rhetoric, it can be difficult for college students – and indeed, for college professors and administrators – to see *how* we can engage in politics in meaningful and impactful ways. What can be accomplished through political involvement today? How can leaders in Christian higher education encourage students – and perhaps even themselves – to remain committed to our call to pursue public justice through political engagement?



THE POWER OF RESEARCH IN BUILDING POLITICAL AWARENESS

In my work at the CPJ, I've had the opportunity to work directly with Christian 20- and 30-somethings who, instead of "opting out" of politics, have committed themselves to pursuing God's good purpose for our political community – what we call public justice. Last fall *Shared Justice*, CPJ's online publication written by and for college students and young professionals exploring the intersection of faith and politics, hired five millennial policy fellows (all of whom are graduates of CCCU institutions) to extensively research and write on three issues of domestic injustice. These fellows are committed to sharing a new and hopeful vision of political engagement with their peers; as part of this article, we have highlighted some of the results of their research, as well as their reflections on how their education at Christian institutions equipped them for these projects. Their work on the policy reports demonstrates a belief that real change can be achieved through political engagement. The issues covered in the reports are often hidden in our own backyard:

- The vast racial and socioeconomic disparities in a juvenile justice system that locks up youth in adult-like prisons;
- The impossible decision that low-income families face when they have a child but their employers don't offer paid family leave; and
- The devastating impact of payday loans on families and children.

Each report shines a light on the injustice, offers a public justice framework for considering public policy solutions, and provides tangible action and advocacy pathways for readers to get involved.

The reports were not written simply to make readers aware of an injustice. Awareness of injustice is an invitation from God to love others more fully. But responding to God's good invitation – taking seriously our responsibilities as citizens – likely means something about our lives will change.

Public justice is achieved when the institutions that add to human flourishing each make their fullest contribution. These institutions include families, religious communities, businesses, and schools, among others. When government and

WHEN GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS COMMIT TO PURSUING PUBLIC JUSTICE, EACH OF THESE DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS IS BETTER ABLE TO FULFILL ITS RIGHT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. SOCIETY FLOURISHES WHEN EACH SPHERE IS IN HARMONY WITH THE OTHERS.

citizens commit to pursuing public justice, each of these different institutions is better able to fulfill its right roles and responsibilities. Society flourishes when each sphere is in harmony with the others.

Now, more than ever, we need Christian 20- and 30-somethings committed to the Biblical call to *do* justice through politics, not just to learn about injustice. We need a generation of Christians committed to a vision of public justice in their communities. This means that we don't just care about the issues that impact our own interests; instead, we work towards policies that promote the flourishing of our entire community.

Christian college students disillusioned with or skeptical of government can find inspiration in the way their peers have written about issues adversely impacting their neighbors. These reports offer tangible steps for action at both the state and local level, which should come as an encouragement to Christians who may feel overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the federal policymaking process. There are easily accessible pathways for engagement with state and local officials available to citizens concerned about the wellbeing of their communities.

When citizens abdicate their civic responsibilities, it is often the most vulnerable who suffer. God calls us to a citizenship that contributes to creating publicly just laws that will ensure justice for all people. Let us be a generation eager to serve our neighbors *through* politics, not absent of it.

The *Shared Justice* policy fellows exemplify a level of civic engagement that our politics desperately needs. It is our hope that these reports will equip college students with a positive vision for participation in political life for the good of all.

KATIE THOMPSON is the Editor of *Shared Justice*, the Center for Public Justice's online publication for 20- and 30-somethings. In 2015 Thompson co-authored *Unleashing Opportunity: Why Escaping Poverty Requires a Shared Vision of Justice* with Michael Gerson and Stephanie Summers. Along with Kara Dry, she co-authored the *Shared Justice* policy report, "What Justice Requires: Protecting Families from Payday Lending." Thompson graduated from Gordon College with a degree in communication arts and a minor in political science

Photo courtesy of Katie Thompson



WHAT JUSTICE REQUIRES: PAID FAMILY LEAVE FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

JENNY HYDE

Throughout my time at Gordon College, I was impressed with the understanding that our vocation is more than a career – it is the sum of the roles to which we are called. For many, one of these roles is raising a family. I personally found the task of diving into paid parental leave fascinating, because I believe it's one area that has perhaps the greatest influence on our ability to live out our other callings.

As a young professional without children, I found it most surprising how little leave new parents (especially fathers!) take. Even in situations where longer periods of paid leave are available, both men and women shy away from using their maximum benefit because they fear losing momentum in their careers. At the same time, a lack of maternity and paternity leave is one of the main factors contributing to workplace dissatisfaction. I don't believe that having an identity as a parent should have to harm one's identity as a worker. If we want to live into the fullness of both of these roles, then our perceptions of paid leave as a society need to change.

Paid parental leave is unique in the fact that it does not have to be a partisan issue. In today's political climate, where divisiveness and hostility seem to run rampant, we can come together around our interest in healthy families. I encourage students and recent grads to think about the issues within these policy reports and to start having conversations amongst themselves. Having taken an active role in researching one of these issues has made me a more thoughtful advocate, and as a result, I can now play a role in breaking down barriers on both micro and macro levels. We all stand to inherit the policy advances of today. If we miss the moment when these issues are ripe, we are doing ourselves a major disservice.

CHELSEA MAXWELL

Families were woven into the fabric of creation, and these relationships are inherent to human dignity. As I started my research on the issue of paid family leave, I knew that the United States' approach was vastly different from that of a majority of other countries throughout the world. However, I hadn't known how low-income families are disproportionately and negatively impacted by the lack of a paid family leave policy. As a result, the policy report that developed was both informative



What Justice Requires: Paid Family Leave for Low-Income Families

By Jenny Hyde and Chelsea Maxwell (The Center for Public Justice)

and a call to action to consider the right role of government in enabling people to fulfill their callings as both parents and workers.

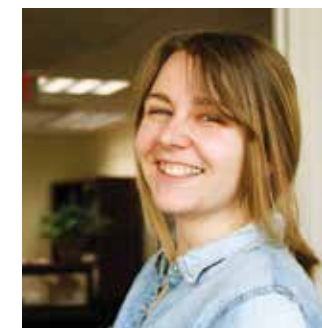
My studies at Dordt College were foundational in my approach to this project. At Dordt, I was introduced to Abraham Kuyper's concept of sphere sovereignty, where the various institutions in life have their own distinct roles and responsibilities. This reformational perspective has shaped how I have engaged politics as I think critically about the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of societal spheres. My education at Dordt also instilled within me the need to constantly consider whose responsibility it is to care for and protect the vulnerable and hurting people in our local, national, and global communities. Though it was difficult, I *wanted* to hold the weight of all of

these tensions in mind as I engaged research and data, and it was important to me to be intentional about how the conversation was framed. Far too often, we resort to economic arguments to make policy decisions. But paid family leave should not be framed solely around economics or how places of work can benefit from the policy. It must be grounded in the normative importance of families.

I believe that the cornerstone of a strong, healthy society is an informed and participatory people. As a Christian, I am called to respect and honor the dignity and worth of people – all of whom bear God's image. As a citizen, I have a responsibility to my community. Working on this project and advocating for paid family leave are ways for me to fulfill my role in both spheres.

JENNY HYDE graduated from Gordon College in 2014, where she received her degree in International Affairs. She currently lives in Washington, D.C., and works for a consumer rights advocacy group.

CHELSEA MAXWELL is a recent alumna of Dordt College, where she earned a Bachelor of Social Work with minors in political science and sociology. She is currently pursuing a Master of Social Work with a macro concentration from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice.



TOP: Jenny Hyde
BOTTOM: Chelsea Maxwell



WHAT JUSTICE REQUIRES: CLOSING YOUTH PRISONS

MORGAN BARNEY

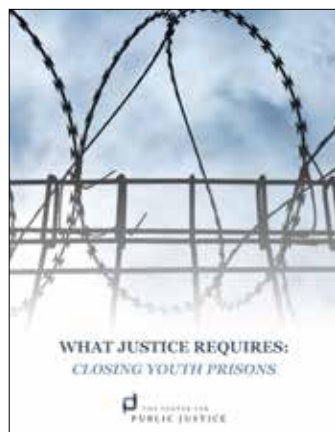
Before researching this topic for the Center for Public Justice, I was unaware that youth prisons still existed in the United States, even though I had previously written a piece for *Shared Justice* on the private adult prison industry. In researching this report, I was surprised to learn that the use of solitary confinement is still a common practice in youth prisons – one of many issues making these prisons a far cry from a system of restorative justice for youth offenders. Because of my research, I desire to see every youth prison in America closed and replaced with community-based alternatives that keep our neighborhoods safe and restore children back to their families and communities.

I am currently pursuing a degree in international studies and community development at Covenant College, which has helped frame my research on this topic. My Covenant education has undoubtedly challenged me to research various political systems and to see how God works in and through them. In our increasingly polarized nation, Christian college students have an opportunity

to stand up against the injustices they observe in their communities by taking the time to educate themselves and invest locally. My work on this policy report was a first step in advocating for the end of youth prisons. However, in order for the closing of these prisons to happen, there must be individuals in place who are willing to engage this injustice on a consistent basis. Thus, we must not shy away from engaging in the political sphere; instead, we need to see politics as a platform for positive systemic change.

ANDREW WHITWORTH

I have researched and written about the juvenile justice system for *Shared Justice* in the past, but I knew very little about the mechanics or details of youth prisons. I knew what we would find in our research wouldn't be encouraging – but I did not set my expectations low enough. I



What Justice Requires: Closing Youth Prisons

By Morgan Barney and Andrew Whitworth (The Center for Public Justice)

was continually shocked by the injustice that pervades the system, which probably reveals more of my privilege than anything else. For youth prisons, injustice is not an exception to the rule; it is built into the system.

During my time at Taylor University, I realized how integral our faith, our intellect, our work, and our communities are to each other. At their best, Christian colleges and universities teach students to live fully integrated lives, both in how we succeed in living out these ideas and how we grow when we fail at them. Thus, I try my best to bring my whole self to my work, which means bringing along my faith.

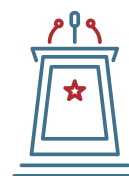
When it comes to matters of justice, Christians have a deep well of Scripture and tradition from which to pull. Christians can – and should – be leaders in these conversations.

We cannot love our neighbors, especially the most marginalized of our neighbors, if we neglect to engage with the institutions and powers that govern our common lives. Not every Christian needs to be a policy wonk or a card-carrying member of a political party, but we do need to recognize our individual and communal relationship to politics. The question isn't whether we are political, but *how* we are political.

Neither the fear nor the despair that characterizes this moment in our political community should be an option for Christians. Our witness is to the Kingdom of God, not any earthly power. Because of this, we do not abandon politics; instead, we bring hope, our calls for justice, and the fruits of the Spirit with us into that space. What a gift for the common good.

MORGAN BARNEY is a junior Maclellan Scholar at Covenant College, currently studying International Studies. She co-founded Save Our Sisters, an organization dedicated to fighting human trafficking in Moldova, and advocates for women trapped in sex slavery.

ANDREW WHITWORTH is a graduate of Taylor University and an alum of the Trinity Fellows Academy. He lives in Washington, D.C., exploring the role of imagination in politics and working to build flourishing political communities.



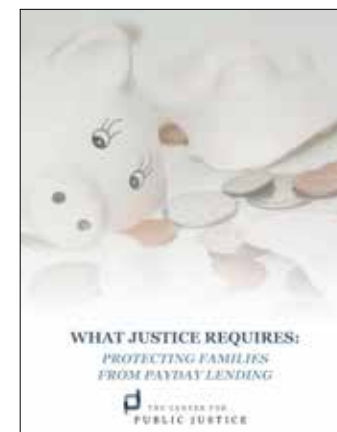
WHAT JUSTICE REQUIRES: PROTECTING FAMILIES FROM PAYDAY LENDING

KARA DRY

As I started my research on payday lending's impact on families and became more aware of its harmful consequences, I asked my friends and family if they had heard of it. I was astounded by how few people were aware of an issue that so blatantly targets and takes advantage of low-income borrowers. Although it is easy to find information about the negative individual financial consequences of payday lending, few published sources discuss the detrimental effects of this practice on children and families.

My Gordon College education has equipped me to approach this issue from a distinct perspective. As Christians, we are commanded to help the poor and to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves; we are called to be seekers of justice.

Furthermore, when seeking a solution to the problems we encounter, it is important that we have a firm understanding of what God intends for his creation. In my studies of both business and psychology, I grappled with the purpose of business and with what it means to have healthy familial relationships according to what Scripture demands. I also considered how a lender should operate, as well as how God intended our



What Justice Requires: Protecting Families from Payday Lending

By Kara Dry and Katie Thompson (The Center for Public Justice)

families to flourish. From this background, I saw injustice in the payday lending business model, and I recognized how it was fracturing families.

A vision of public justice offers insight into possible solutions, rightly recognizing the need for government, businesses, churches, families, and individuals to all fulfill their right roles and responsibilities. As college students and recent graduates stepping out into this chaotic and broken world, we have a responsibility to be aware not only of the issues that directly affect our immediate circles, but of those that are causing harm to people we will never meet. As citizens, we must recognize that part of

our common calling involves loving our neighbors, known and unknown, through political engagement. ■

KARA DRY is a senior at Gordon College studying business and psychology. She is challenged by matters of social injustice and passionate about restoring God's order.



Kara Dry



TOP: Morgan Barney
BOTTOM: Andrew Whitworth

This page: Photos courtesy of Morgan Barney and Andrew Whitworth. Opposite page: Photo courtesy of Kara Dry

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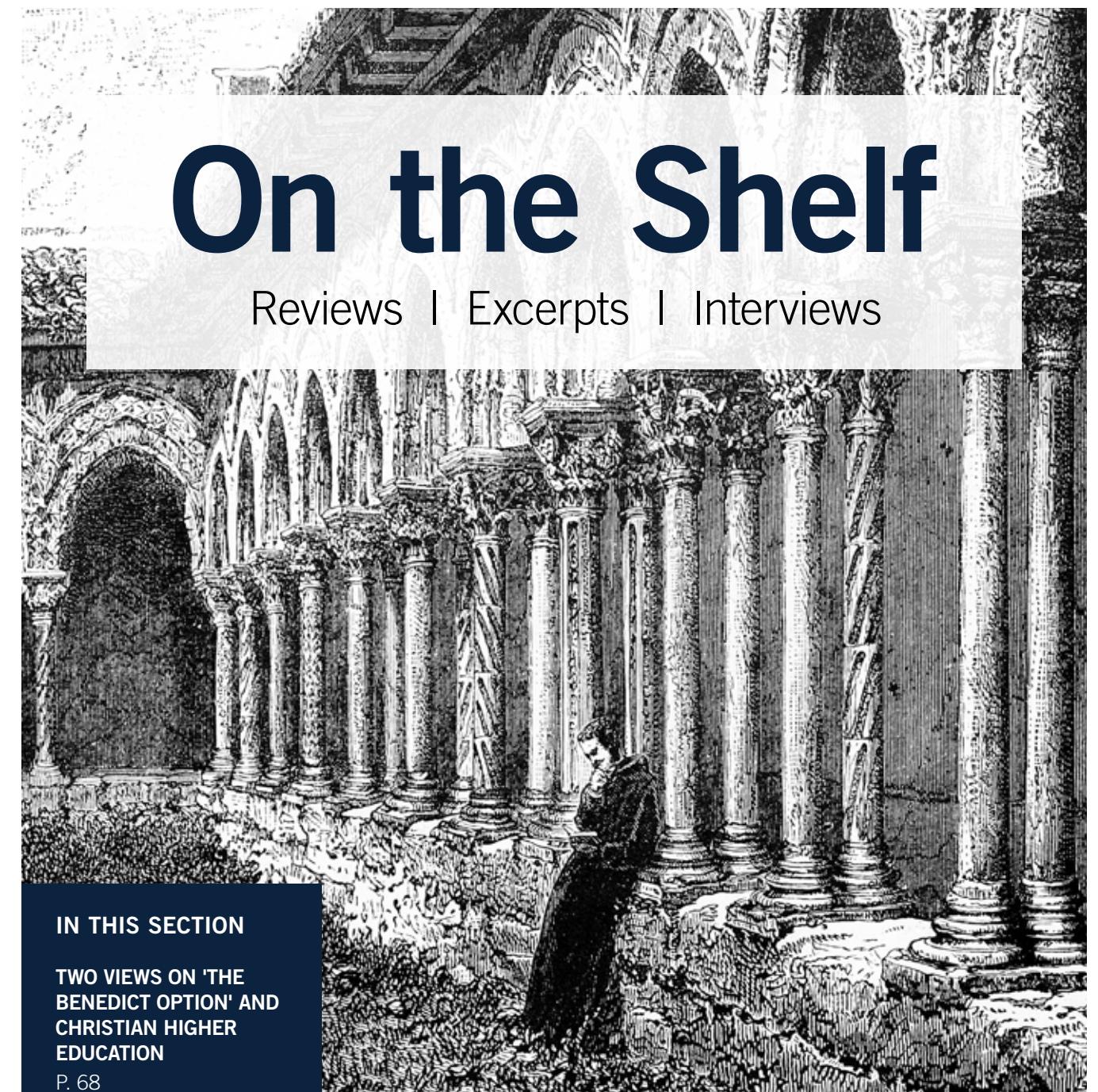
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'The Benedict Option' and Christian Higher Education >

Thought leaders at two CCCU institutions consider what Christian colleges and universities can learn from a controversial new book.



FEW BOOKS HAVE attracted more attention recently than Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*. *New York Times* columnist David Brooks has called it "the most discussed and important religious book of the decade," and as of this writing, it is in the top 10 on the *New York Times* bestseller list for nonfiction.

Dreher, senior editor of the *American Conservative*, argues that contemporary American culture is deeply and irreversibly anti-Christian. While there have always been Christian groups that have been marginalized, Dreher argues, white Protestant Christian beliefs and values that used to shape mainstream culture in America are now largely excluded from the public square. Thus, he believes, Christians should turn away from political and cultural engagement and focus instead on strengthening their families, churches, and schools so that Christian civilization can survive the new "Dark Ages" that are upon us. Just as St. Benedict led Christians living amid the collapsing Roman empire to form disciplined, separate communities that reinforced a particular way of life, so Christians face a similar task today, Dreher says: "[F]orming Christians who live out Christianity according to the Great

Tradition requires embedding within communities and institutions dedicated to that formation."

The Benedict option would seem to pose a significant challenge to Christian colleges and universities in the U.S., many of which have mission statements that speak of preparing students to engage, influence, or transform culture. Indeed, preparing leaders to influence today's culture is the *raison d'être* for many Christian universities.

Dreher's thesis, therefore, raises important questions for Christian higher education. Is the primary task of Christian universities preparing students to go out and change the world, or to form separate resilient communities? If it's the latter, how would our educational practices be different? Is a turn inward a good thing for Christian universities, or is this simply a return to the fundamentalist separatism of the previous century? How do we prepare students to be faithful Christians in a seemingly hostile culture?

To ponder these questions, we have reflections on the relevance of the Benedict option for Christian colleges and universities from two leaders on the front lines of Christian higher education. Matt Bonzo is professor of philosophy and director of the Institute for Christianity and Cultural Engagement at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Trisha Posey is associate professor of history and director of the Honors Scholars Program at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas.

Practicing with Open Windows

NOW THAT ROD Dreher's *The Benedict Option* has officially been released, the reviews and reactions have been coming in fast and furious. Dreher's proposal is rooted in the understanding that the culture wars of North America are over and that orthodox Christianity has been discredited as a culturally significant alternative in our secularizing world. While this may not be a surprise for those of us in Christian higher education, it is still hard to hear and harder to process. With the increased number of religious colleges and the expanding influence that many of our institutions have in research and other areas of engagement, we hoped we had stemmed the tide of secularity. But such a hope seems to be unfounded. In spite of evangelical colleges' turn toward the world and increased use of the term "worldview" in institutional mission statements over the last few decades, *The Benedict Option* claims there is little evidence of the transformation or renewal of the broader American culture through Christian institutions.

Of course, this is not a new claim. One of the reasons Dreher's work is not quite so startling is James Davison Hunter's analysis in his *To Change the World* seven years ago, in which he argued that Christianity's influence upon recent American culture was minimal, as most major institutions of society were already thoroughly secular. In fact, Dreher's work draws heavily on the previous work of several academics, including a vital reliance on Christian Smith's research development of the phrase "moral therapeutic deism" to describe the predominant worldview of today's adolescents. Additionally, foundational to Dreher's work is Alasdair MacIntyre's argument regarding the fragmentation of western morality, as told in *After Virtue*. MacIntyre's argument leaves western culture with a stark choice: Either we follow Nietzsche into the darkness of emotivism, or we retrieve an Aristotelian

ethic in the form of something like a Benedictine community. *After Virtue* suggests we have been heading down the path of cultural upheaval for a long time. We were destined to find ourselves in this time of moral crisis once the modern project failed to produce a sufficient morality. Modernity could never quite find an adequate foundation from which to describe the nature and end of being human. The result is that we have become so morally fractured that it is impossible to find a common framework from which to make and evaluate moral arguments. Humpty Dumpty is not going to be put back together anytime soon.

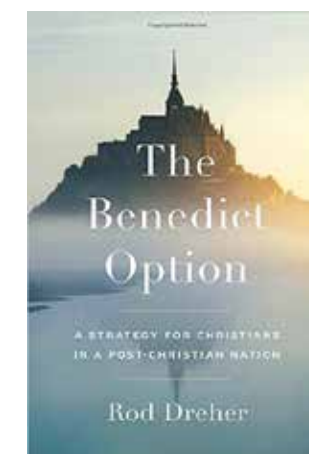
The description of the modern social changes offered by Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age* helps Dreher explain more fully the tension he senses regarding the status of orthodox Christianity in American culture. In modernity, Taylor explains, the world has become imaginable in ways that it had previously not been.

We can now imagine a world without a god; a world without limits; a world with a morally autonomous self at the center. In living into this new world, we see the rise of individualism and the dismantling of old boundaries so that the emancipated self can remake the world.

Given this current state of affairs, Dreher is not arguing that Christianity can't win an argument about the future direction of American culture; he is convinced that there are neither rules of engagement left for such an argument nor a public square in which such an argument can be heard. The depth of the current moral and cultural fragmentation leaves even those looking for something to hold us together cynical. Dreher sees neither of the major political parties in the United States offering a solution for cultural secularization and moral fragmentation. *The Benedict Option* is not trying to rally the troops for one last stand. It is too late to win the culture wars; no "killer" argument can break through the battle lines that surround us. In spite of any optimism that some may have as a result of the recent election, the direction of culture in general has not been altered. The Department of Education may no longer be pushing the same agenda regarding sex and gender that it had under the Obama administration, but the shifts in culture that produced such an agenda have not suddenly disappeared.

In order to conclude the culture wars are over, Dreher also depends on reports from the daily lives of those who reside on the frontlines where secular culture and faith collide. From examples of business owners losing their businesses because they maintain a traditional idea of marriage, to pornographic images being shared via cell phones on elementary school playgrounds, *The Benedict Option* records stories of how bad it may be out there.

These "how bad it is" stories seem to be the point at which several critics react



The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians Living in a Post-Christian Nation

By Rod Dreher (Sentinel)

against Dreher's analysis. Dreher is viewed as an alarmist who is too negative and too limited in his descriptions of secular society. There is wide agreement that the cultural power that Christianity once held in the west has diminished and that the Christian faith itself is being challenged by these changes. The influence of orthodox Christianity has been pushed to the margins. By no means does this mean that individuals don't still believe, but there is a range of positions regarding how much of a threat a secularizing culture is to the how and the what of orthodox Christianity.

For Dreher the threat is real and imminent. *The Benedict Option* argues that our secularizing culture poses enough of a danger that the time has come for a change in approach. We can no longer be satisfied with participating in institutions whose policies and practices undermine the faith. The time has come for a much more intentional approach to Christian community. The spiritual formation of the followers of Christ must be at the heart of these communities. Without such an intentional formation, the next generations will not be prepared when the real darkness of secularism descends.

As someone who grew up in a small Baptist church in the 1970s, my childhood faith was shaped by "how bad it is" stories. As someone who has interest in environmental issues, I continue to hear "how bad it is" stories, such as those given by several speakers at a recent conference, where it was proclaimed we have 15 to 20 years before a complete environmental collapse. Today's "how bad it is" stories are just as hard to process as those of my youth. Part of the skepticism regarding Dreher's warning that orthodox Christianity in the U.S. is at risk may be that there is no easy way to navigate our way through "how bad it is" stories.

However, some "how bad it is" stories are right. Being skeptical of the severity of the threat does not allow us to avoid the question of, "What do we do now?" *The Benedict Option* forces us to recognize that we in the western world are left to deal with Christianity as it remains: the

remains of Christianity. Are these remains the dried ashes of the church, consumed by a fragmented and secularizing age? Or are these remains the seeds of a withered stalk that holds life? At the core of Christianity is the belief that out of death comes life. The kingdom of God is likened to a seed. And though it is scattered upon various types of soil and among the weeds, in faith we know that the kingdom will continue to take root – just maybe not in our garden.

As followers of Christ in any given age, we are called to continue to prepare the soil and plant the seeds. The Christian university exists to do this exact work and thus seems to be exactly the sort of Benedictine community that Dreher is imagining. In a recent article in *Comment* magazine, Covenant College President Derek Halverson noted that most of CCCU's members are best described as liberal arts colleges instead of research universities, and liberal arts colleges find their historic precedent in medieval monasteries. It would appear that the monastic practices are already written deep in our identity as institutions – perhaps even coded into our DNA. Even as our existence is questioned in our pragmatic and cynical age, our identity demands that we continue the slow, seemingly inefficient formation of lives. How does one quantify the removing of rocks from the soil of a self utterly malleable to the whims of a consumeristic, globalizing corporate economy? Such "measurements" can only be taken over generations, not in a handful of years.

The monasteries that were the forbearers of the Christian university produced not only insight into theology but also into the science, politics, and economics that served the world. Likewise, they also formed faithful followers of Christ. Given our current condition, Dreher emphasizes that Christian education must continue to form people like John Paul II and Václav Havel – people who learned how to live faithfully while in exile. Living for

a good that reaches beyond the walls of monasteries is no endorsement of a secular agenda. Israel continued to tell its version of history and sing its songs in a foreign land. Given our cultural exile, the Christian university will need to help its members lament our losses, yearn for home, and live a hope that connects the two. Discerning points of contact and openings in a diverse cultural context into which wisdom can speak is itself a practice learned in community. Even advocates of *The Benedict Option* and its critics are subject to the disciplines of a community that speaks in love.

The reader no doubt remembers the story of Daniel. Raised in exile, Daniel was educated to serve the king and was doing quite well until the force of Babylonian law came down on him through the manipulations of a few co-workers. Daniel 6 records his response to the edict that all people must pray only to Darius: "Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before."

Daniel is not praying to be seen (and praised for it). He is engaged in the practice of his faith behind the wall and in front of the window, and he suffers the consequences – but those consequences are used by God to glorify his name and spread the truth of his power.

May our educational communities build strong enough walls to protect and encourage the practices of our faith, as well as form us as members who live in faith, hope, and love. But may our walls have windows and doors so that we offer the wisdom of living in faith, hope, and love to those watching. Whether we end up in the lion's den or in the king's palace – or both – only God knows.

MATT BONZO is professor of philosophy and director of the Institute for Christianity and Cultural Engagement at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Is the 'Benedict Option' the Best One for Christian Universities?

I MUST ADMIT I am conflicted about the Benedict option and its implications for Christian colleges and universities. When Dreher (quoting Alasdair McIntyre) talks about constructing "new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained," when he rages against the wholesale acceptance of moral therapeutic deism, and when he talks about the need "to construct local forms of community as loci of Christian resistance against what the empire represents," I want to shout "Amen!" like the good Baptist I used to be. I'd like to believe that in my own life, I've lived consistently with my beliefs about these matters. As an administrator at a Christian institution of higher education, I also see the value of the Benedict option in forming my students. And yet I hesitate to see this as a *complete* model for my institution and my teaching, for both practical and philosophical reasons.

To understand why we're even considering the Benedict option at this time, we need to look briefly at the recent history of Christian higher education. Coming out of the fundamentalist movement of the early to mid-20th century, Christian colleges and universities faced the challenge of reclaiming their heritage of Christian intellectualism. In the 1980s and 1990s, Christian scholars such as George Marsden and Mark Noll dared evangelical Christians to embrace the life of the mind and to seek a "seat at the table," so to speak, in places of academic power. Their work was not simply focused on transforming academia, however; they also believed that leaders of the evangelical church had a high calling to woo back followers to right belief and practice through the transformation of their minds.

At the same time that Christians in the academy were doing this work, the broader evangelical church was seeking cultural influence through politics. The Moral Ma-

jority of the 1980s and early 1990s sought to bargain their way to power through participation in – and domination of – the political process. While Christian academicians sought authority through the strength of their ideas, Christians in politics sought power through the strength of the ballot box. And given the relative numbers in each group – a few thousand in the academy compared to a few million in the broader church – the approach of the wider evangelical community was bound to dominate.

In the end, the church lost the "culture wars." The reasons for this are complicated – too complicated to explore here – but when we look around, it's patently obvious that Christianity has lost whatever influence it once had in American culture and society. In this new era, Christian educators have to find a new way, and Dreher's Benedict option might help us forge a path forward. Dreher defines the Benedict option this way: "The Benedict Option is about how to rightly order the practices in our Christian lives, in light of tradition, for the sake of intellectual and moral formation in the way of Christ." It's useful for us to think of the ways in which Dreher's vision of education in the historic tradition of Christianity and the development of shared liturgies in com-

munity might strengthen our institutions and our students for the work at hand.

If we were to refocus our energies from influencing culture to pursuing the Benedict option, then one of the central tasks of our Christian institutions would be to develop ourselves and our students in sound doctrine and Christian history. I am consistently dismayed by my students' lack of knowledge in *basic* Christian doctrine. This, I would argue, means that we must maintain a robust theological education as a central component of our general education requirements.

I'd like us to consider, though, that an even broader appreciation for church history might be required for our new age. Instead of teaching our students only a triumphalist story of the Western church, for example, we need to expose them to the Eastern branch of the faith. We might teach our students about the life of Theodore Abu Qurra. He was a ninth-century Christian who offered an apologetic for Christianity as a minority member of the emerging Muslim empire in northern Mesopotamia. His story might help our students understand how to live faithfully and hopefully as members of a religious minority.

Teaching more church history is a fairly self-evident proposition to those of us who

It's useful to think of the ways Dreher's vision of education in the historic tradition of Christianity ... might strengthen our institutions and our students for the work at hand.

teach at Christian colleges and universities, but orthodoxy must be matched by orthopraxy. We must develop students who not only understand doctrine, but who also live out the truths of that doctrine in their ethical and intellectual lives. This means helping our students understand the value of solitude, Sabbath-keeping, charity, attentiveness, prayer, and community. These habits of being are completely counter to the messages our students are taught by the culture they've been steeped in their whole lives, which means that their education in spiritual practices must pervade every element of their experience on our campuses.

This is where things get difficult. There are both practical and ideological challenges to developing shared liturgies on our campuses. Practically speaking, crafting a common experience for our students that would mimic the communal worship of the monastery would require an enormous amount of coordination at our institutions, coupled with a deep commitment to a shared vision of moral formation. It would mean that every faculty and every staff member and every student would need to agree to this objective for the educational process. We have a great deal of work to do as institutions to develop curricula, pedagogies, and co-curricular programs that reinforce these liturgies.

At John Brown University, we have done our best in our honors program to create a strong curriculum that emphasizes spiritual formation among our students. But we have our honors students for only 21 out of the 124 hours they take at JBU, and at times our campus culture works at cross-purposes with us. For example, one of the central themes of our honors experience is the importance of Sabbath-keeping, but understanding this value is difficult when some study sessions are offered only on Sunday afternoons.

Moreover, parents of our students sometimes show more interest in having their children get good jobs and pursue the American dream than they do in the formation of their children's character. Certainly they want their children to receive a "Christian education," but the questions

Instead of isolating our students in academic 'monasteries,' we should develop students who can create communities in which human flourishing can take place.

I receive from parents are almost always about the jobs their children will have and the salaries they will make. This focus can sometimes influence the majors that are offered and the general education courses that are required at our institutions.

In addition to these practical challenges of developing liturgies for the purpose of spiritual formation, there are ideological challenges as well. Dreher gives us the Benedict option as a member of the Orthodox Church, which values highly the shared worship experience. But such an option is a hard sell for evangelical Christians, who value things like choice, mobility, and independence; the Benedict option runs counter to these ideas. When our faculty and students actually *experience* the benefits of spiritual formation and true life in community, they are hooked. But for Protestant institutions, getting to that place and staying there can be a challenge, though it's a challenge worth taking up.

The most obvious limit is that, unlike monasteries, whose members are committed for life, we have students for only a few years. This may not be a bad thing. One of the potential limits of the Benedict option is that in turning our focus inward, we may limit our students' potential. The incarnational ethic we embrace, with Christ's own suffering and rejection as an example, reminds us that we are called to live and suffer with those who suffer.

As a Christian professor, I've been strongly influenced by Nicholas Wolterstorff's collection of essays, *Educating for Shalom*, written at the time when Chris-

tian leaders were preaching the gospel of cultural influence through political power. Rather than being taught to move up toward power, Wolterstorff argued that college-aged Christians needed to learn to go down toward need. In doing so, they could serve as active agents in the promotion of human flourishing.

In my opinion, this means that, in our pursuit of the Benedict option, one of the central liturgies on all of our campuses should be that of lament. In his book *Prophetic Lament*, Soong-Chan Rah calls the church to lament as he reminds us of God's admonition to the exiles in Jeremiah 29 to "seek the welfare of the city." He argues that, in response to the rejection of the Christian ethos by the larger American culture, we should accept neither isolation nor capitulation. Instead, we, like the prophets of old, should cry out in lament – recognizing the death, decay, and destruction around us for what it is. And, as those who embrace the incarnation, we should step fully into it.

Instead of isolating our students in academic "monasteries," we should develop students who can create communities in which human flourishing can take place. This requires challenging – and lamenting – the assumptions about materialism, tolerance, individualism, and the nature of the human body that are pervasive in our culture. What are the implications of this approach for our curriculum and pedagogy? It means that we have to introduce our students to the enduring questions of human existence through a strong liberal

arts curriculum, as Dreher suggests. It also means that every class we teach – in science, math, art, literature, philosophy, business, theology – should respond to the normative assumptions of our culture and challenge them, if necessary. It means that we have to place before our students, again and again, the deep needs of those who suffer. In other words, our educational goal should ultimately lead to the development of students who are able to act as agents of *shalom* in a decaying world, and even become martyrs in the pursuit of that *shalom*.

So what does this look like in practice? In my first-year seminar class, "Faithful Leaders in Times of Crisis," students learn about and practice spiritual disciplines while they learn about Christians who led during difficult times, including leaders like Galileo, John Woolman, Sophie Scholl, Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King Jr., and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. For

each leader, we look at a spiritual practice in which they engaged and identify the ways in which it shaped them for their difficult work. What's interesting about almost all of these leaders is that they died as martyrs. Their understanding of the need to enter fully into the suffering of creation was central to their counter-cultural existence as persons of faith in the world. By the time we finish the class, students have encountered multiple men and women whose deeply rooted faith bent the arc of history more closely toward justice.

What should Christian education should be about? Not necessarily transforming culture, but developing Christians who live out the incarnate truth of self-abandonment, love for God and neighbor, appreciation for beauty, and movement toward the human *telos* of glorifying God and worshipping him forever. I think Dreher would agree with me on

this. But I would go further than Dreher and argue that precisely because we worship an incarnate God, we must teach our students to walk from our campuses into the deep suffering of the world, especially if that suffering has been created by a corrupt culture that devalues humanity. Some institutions of higher education embrace that devaluation in their curriculum and pedagogies, but we can do better. Like the Benedictine monks who have given us such a strong example of faith during difficult times, we and our students can shine as a light in the darkness, both embracing and living out truth in the empire in which we find ourselves.

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TRISHA POSEY is associate professor of history and director of the Honors Scholars Program at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas.



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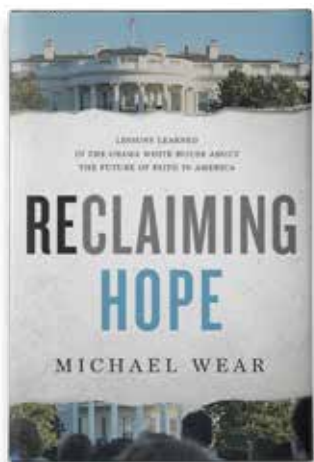
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An Insider's Take on the Power of the Presidency

New Memoir Offers Faith-Based View Inside Obama Administration.

By Austin Still



Reclaiming Hope
By Michael Wear
(Nelson Books)

In his political memoir *Reclaiming Hope*, Michael Wear recounts his involvement in the Obama administration as a member of the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. In the process, he embodies an identity that is uncommon in mainstream media and politics: the evangelical Democrat. Wear's unabashed evangelical devotion juxtaposed with his loyalty to the Obama administration (often despised by many evangelicals) creates an unsettling but necessary deconstruction of faith in American politics – if only for conservative evangelicals. However, this is appropriate, as Wear's is a book written by and for the American Christian evangelical. With this audience in mind, Wear sets out to convince evangelical Christians on both sides of the partisan divide to seek political and social reconciliation by placing their hope in Christ instead of in their political party.

Wear begins the book by meticulously (sometimes tediously) tracing his journey into the left-wing political machine. Once he moves past his account of the political atmosphere, he levels a fairly devastating critique of the Obama administration that he sets about defending for the majority of the remaining text: that the president and his administration “unquestionably failed” in bringing “bipartisanship back to American politics.” His major complaint seems to be with the way the administration handled the legalization of gay marriage. Wear interprets the political maneuverings that surrounded this event as deceptive, and thus dangerously unethical for any politician, left or right. That Obama would change his personal position on the issue seems implausible for Wear. Still, it is worth noting that Wear's criticisms are totally sincere, never fringing on hostile or embittered. Rather, throughout the book he makes a point of noting the ways he admires

Barack Obama as a man, a Christian, and a leader.

In the final chapters of the book, Wear theologically pursues bipartisanship by arguing for a redemptive understanding of Christian hope. Yet, Wear's bipartisan objective is at risk of being undercut by his insistence that the two-party system must remain intact – that citizens must stay loyal to the dominating parties. Wear argues, “In a two-party system of government ... to become an independent is to check out of the system.” For Wear, to choose a third party or to remain independent is to be fundamentally withdrawn. This perspective presumes that politics can only take place in the diplomatic houses of government, that protest and petitioning are, implicitly by Wear's assessment, not engaged forms of political discourse.

Wear clearly defines what he believes to be acceptable and helpful forms of political engagement. “How can someone act for justice in our politics?” Wear queries. His answer is simple: “First, vote. Vote up and down the ballot.” Wear's other suggestions for involvement include: write a letter to your elected officials, host political small-groups at your church to encourage additional letter writing, and invest time and money in advocacy organizations and nonprofits. Here, Wear demonstrates that he is an unabashed proponent of the political structure as it stands, but wholeheartedly against the, for lack of a better term, *meanness* of partisan politics. His answer to this meanness is hope – not hope in political parties, but hope in God.

Ironically, the assessment Wear makes of Christianity in relation to worldly labels and ideologies stands in stark contrast to his exhortations to remain loyal to the two party system: “Christianity is an abolishment of tribes, it is radical in its openness and therefore, in its application.” If Christianity is open and mutable in its practice, ideologies, and application, then how is it unfaithful to engage politically outside of the existing constraints of the two-party, tribal system? This lack of nuance weakens Wear's arguments.

Wear's personal accounts are most intriguing when they grow self-reflective, and self-conscious rather than self-promoting. For example, toward the end of the book, Wear grows troubled over the questionable authenticity of the President's speeches and interview responses, given his own involvement in drafting them. This leads him to question, “[T]o what extent did my service in the Obama administration give people a false impression of the president's goals and convictions?” Unfortunately, he moves past this reflection rather quickly. Had Wear spent more time considering and challenging the artificiality implicit in American faith-politics, his insider perspective might have offered more.

With that being said, the real beneficial work that Wear accomplishes in this highly approachable book is to challenge the idea that an evangelical must be a Republican. Here, I return to those for whom this book was written: evangelicals. Is Wear's a profoundly nuanced perspective? No. Is it the right perspective (and voice) for the intended audience of this book? Yes, and in that sense, perhaps the most redeeming value of Wear's initiative is that he will be reaching an audience that might otherwise shy away from reading a book from an Obama administration insider. Wear is just the right balance of safe and challenging. He is operating with imperatives and assumptions (mostly) that are common to conservative evangelicalism, but he is willing to challenge the notion that these issues have to divide us.

AUSTIN SILL is an academic records counselor at Azusa Pacific University and a recent graduate of Azusa's M.A. in English program.

'Reclaiming Hope' Gives Unique Perspective of Shifting Views on Religious Freedom.

By Jennifer E. Walsh

Michael Wear first met Senator Barack Obama through a chance encounter outside a Washington, D.C. hotel. Wear was an ambitious 18-year-old college freshman at George Washington University, and Obama was just days away from declaring his candidacy for president. Like many college students, Wear, who was a new Christian, was eager to make a difference. He introduced himself to Obama, declared support for his candidacy and his vision, and expressed a desire to work for him. With some determined follow-up with Obama's staff, Wear would go on to do just that, serving first as an intern during the 2008 presidential campaign, then as a White House staffer in the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and, finally, as director of religious outreach efforts in Obama's 2012 reelection campaign.

In his memoir, *Reclaiming Hope: Lessons Learned in the Obama White House about the Future of Faith in America*, Wear enthusiastically recalls the excitement of working for a candidate he believed in. As an intern during the 2008 campaign, he prepared materials to help staff members communicate more effectively with religious voters, explaining, for example, what staff should and should not do during church services. He also recalls the heady experience of hearing his own words voiced by Obama during the high-profile televised conversation with Rick Warren at Saddleback Church. For students who desire to exercise influence in the public arena, success stories like these are particularly inspiring.

However, Wear's stories also help students to understand why many candidates fail to fulfill promises made on the campaign trail. Presidents are the only elected officials with a national constituency, and thus, in the course of governing, they are required to constantly balance the interests and needs of competing groups. Inevitably, any single decision is likely to disappoint many. This was seen clearly in the healthcare debate, as Obama's administration pursued a mandatory contraception requirement without including a comprehensive religious exemption to protect those who found such coverage objectionable. For Wear, the disappointment was not necessarily with the bargaining that inevitably accompanies policymaking but, rather, it was in the willful abrogation of the president's stated commitment to disagree without being disagreeable. In this particular policy debate, for example, Obama's senior staffers regularly mocked or dismissed the sincere objections of religious believers and openly championed the interests of women's rights groups without any consideration for the concerns of faith-based communities. Although Obama eventually ordered his staff to “[f]ix this,” permanent damage had been done. The relationship between Obama and many of

Wear's stories also help students to understand why many candidates fail to fulfill promises made on the campaign trail.

his strongest religious supporters was irreparably breached, and the resulting conflict transformed the concept of religious freedom into a partisan idea.

This unintended legacy of the Obama Administration – the conversion of religious freedom from a broadly shared principle into a contested political football – is poised to impact us for generations to come. Not long ago, Democrats and Republicans joined together to protect the free exercise rights of believers with a near-unanimous vote on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 and a unanimous vote on the subsequent Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000. Between 1993 and 2002, more than a dozen states followed suit. Since the Obama Administration, however, these statutory declarations of religious freedom have been fought along partisan lines as the cultural war over contraception, abor-

tion, and LGBT rights expands into new political battlefronts. Indeed, the fierce political fight over Indiana's 2015 religious freedom bill and the intense debate last summer over a proposed California bill that would have limited religious liberty for faith-based universities suggest that the bipartisan support for religious freedom may be gone for good. This does not bode well for conservative or progressive religious believers who are reluctant to be drawn into increasingly polarized battles.

Although Wear's loss of political innocence could have prompted him to urge readers to withdraw from public life altogether, he instead reminds readers of their Scriptural obligation to love and care for their neighbors and to "seek the peace and prosperity of the city" (Jeremiah 29), as God commands. In addition, he points out the practical reality that the solutions to our complex, systemic

problems almost always require some form of political solution. In advocating civic participation, he urges believers to help shape the positions and activities of political parties by promoting change from within, and to support like-minded candidates by voting in both the primary and general elections. He also encourages volunteer activities in campaigns and in organizations that work within the community, even while acknowledging that people and organizations are imperfect and justice on this earth will remain incomplete. Ultimately, though, Wear ends by acknowledging that which Christian universities advance everyday: our hope rests not on the election of a candidate or the implementation of certain policies, but in Christ alone.

JENNIFER E. WALSH is the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and professor of political science at Azusa Pacific University.

Sanctity in the Ordinary

A new book encourages us to recognize the holiness in our day-to-day routines.

Review by Jamie Johnson

During my first year in campus ministry, I found myself being regaled with stories from a chapel speaker who was doing incredible work in the name of Jesus. His stories were centered on global reconciliation work in situations where he could have easily lost his life. Finding myself simultaneously stunned and skeptical, a flurry of questions began coursing through my mind and heart: How might I boldly serve the Lord in exotic locales? What in the world am I still doing in Newberg, Oregon? Why is my life so boring? What's the cafeteria serving for lunch today?

My work in college ministry often includes this very dance with undergraduates who are looking to change the world while struggling with the monotony of classes, homework, and part-time jobs.

In *Liturgy of the Ordinary*, author Tish Warren provides numerous examples of how the ordinariness of our lives can be viewed as sacramental. In viewing the tedium of our day (bed-making, teeth-brushing, tea-drinking, email-checking, etc.) as holy moments, we see "spiritual formation in its molecular form – not because this is all that matters, but because the only life any of us live is in daily, pedestrian humanity."

Warren begins by explaining how she took up the habit of making her bed as her Lenten practice. The action was antithetical to the important work of her day, and so instead of diving into email, reading the news, or making a to-do list, she made her bed and sat on it engaged in prayer. She writes, "In making my bed I reflected (God's) creative act in the tiniest, most ordinary way. In my small chaos, I made order."

This beginning sets the stage for other small daily tasks dripping with theological

richness. Her premise is that if we can be people who see the minutiae of our day as liturgical acts of worship being done *with* God, we will derive deep meaning in the very things we believe are keeping us from serving God.

For instance, Warren connects dental hygiene to worship, reorienting us to remember that all of life is imbued with meaning because we serve an incarnate God. She writes, "When I brush my teeth I am pushing back, in the smallest of ways, the death and chaos that will inevitably overtake my body ... [because] my body is sacred and caring for it (and for the other bodies around me) is a holy act."

Within the context of Christian higher education, particularly through the lens of student development (and in my case, campus ministry), I believe two chapters should catch our attention: "Sitting in Traffic," and "Sleeping."

"Sitting in Traffic" explores the moments of our day where we have to unexpectedly wait. We are familiar with these moments – the ones that throw our schedule out of whack, that cause us to be late to an appointment, to spend less time with people we cherish or with projects we must complete. But for our students, I think this is perhaps one of the greatest spiritual disciplines needed today.

I hear my students frequently utter the desire to know – *right this minute* – what their major should be, what career they should pursue, who they should marry, and so on. As Warren mentions, we are conditioned by culture to be instantly gratified, and when something takes longer than we think it should, we either give up on it, try to solve the problem ourselves, or assume that God is leading in a different direction. Developing the discipline of waiting "allows us to live in the present as an alternative people, patiently waiting for

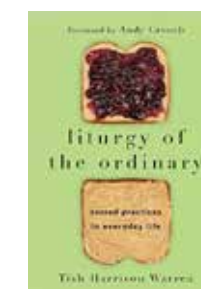
what is to come, but never giving up on our *telos*. We are never quite comfortable. We seek justice, practice mercy, and herald the kingdom to come."

In "Sleeping," Warren suggests that how we treat sleep and our Sabbath rest indicates what we value most in life. Our very "need for sleep reveals that we have limits," but we are taught – and perhaps even conditioned as college students – that being able to function with little rest is something to celebrate. But Warren says this lack of rest is "indicative of a spiritual crisis – a culture of disordered love and disordered worship." As professionals dedicated to the holistic development of our students, Warren reminds us that, "embracing sleep is not only a confession of our limits; it is also a joyful confession of God's limitless care for us. For Christians, the act of ceasing and relaxing into sleep is an act of reliance on God."

Warren's book is a wonderful call to consider the mundane aspects of life as a call to worship; to recognize our holy calling is found not only in the spectacular, but most often in the ordinariness of life, or, as poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only those who see take off their shoes,
The rest sit around and pluck blackberries.

JAMIE R. JOHNSON is the associate university pastor at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon.



Liturgy of the Ordinary
By Tish Harrison Warren
(InterVarsity Press)

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Redefining Virtue in Business

Looking back to ancient texts can redefine how we do business going forward.

Review by Josh Sauerwein

D*esigned for Good* finds its audience among those who take seriously their role to educate students' character, intellect, and sentiments. Brown, who serves as an ethics and economics professor at Asbury University, has given a gift to the many who have the privilege of teaching ethics by offering a unique perspective on the intersection of virtue ethics and the Christian faith. Using Aristotelian language and biblical texts, he aims to rediscover the language of virtue as it applies to business ethics, highlighting the shortcomings of current business ethics and the predominance of utilitarian thought. This work draws us back to a richer conception of good, focused on original design. It moves the traditional ethical thought permeating business schools beyond consequentialist tendencies and into the world of "human being complete."

Using a professor's bank of examples, Brown describes how modern ethical decision-making has lost its way through a hyper focus on efficiency, equity, and enforceability. He suggests the impetus behind such flawed analysis is classical economic thought, with its focus on outcomes, fairness, and individual rights; maximization becomes the goal of good living. This reasoning can lead to skewed moral decisions, but Brown suggests it has also created a meta-ethic of preference: The right to pursue our desires as the ultimate good. This new ethic takes us down a path where self-reliance is confused for courage; where relationships are pursued for outcomes; where value is defined by a price tag; and

the mantra of the hour is, "Be true to yourself." In short, to be rational is to be driven by unbridled desire.

As Brown argues, this reasoning assumes our desires are good; it feeds the glorification of self; it lacks any thought of ultimate design or intended purpose; and – most dangerous – our conception of God becomes a matter of personal preference. Our hearts curve in on themselves. This is where virtue and Scripture enter the scene. Given the Fall, we have a limited capacity to desire good; therefore, moral education must include an education of the sentiments and a proper ordering of our love. This journey begins with a right understanding of God, which requires us to empty ourselves. Brown states that the true question – "Who is Jesus Christ?" – is at the very center of our moral decision-making and development.

Understanding that the pursuit of virtue is the pursuit of character, Brown uses Micah 6:8 to weave virtue ethics into the pursuit of Christ. Justice, mercy, and humility are not merely virtues – they are the character of Christ. The pursuit of these is the pursuit of good. Practicing spiritual disciplines can feel like the development of habits, but the motivation and ability to sustain this pursuit requires a relationship with God. This is the fundamental point of diversion for virtue and Christianity. This is also the primary fallacy of preference ethics. We cannot be self-sufficient, and we cannot will our way to the good life of virtue – we simply need a Savior.

Brown ends his book with a question, both for the follower and the not-yet-follower of Christ: "Why should I be moral?" This is a question of motivation. In many seasons of life, pursuing a life of virtue can be economically unprofitable. Therefore, Brown suggests, our motivation must come from the fact that God is good and

has designed us for good works. When our desires conform to his, we become the best versions of ourselves.

Two parts of this work stand out. First is the argument that utilitarianism has led to a meta-ethic of preference. Understanding this meta-ethic's pervasiveness brings into sharper focus the role of Christian business faculty. The teaching of ethics is not a neutral exercise. Rather, in saying that we are espousing the good life, we are fighting against the natural sentiments of autonomy, choice, and self-sufficiency, which are difficult to separate from accepted business practice. Without proper perspective, the marketplace can be detrimental to one's character formation.

Second are the everyday examples to enliven classroom conversation. Instead of being a book that offers moral dilemmas with obvious answers, this volume offers examples that are thought-provoking, nuanced, and helpful in articulating the essence of virtue ethics. With the benefit of the end-of-chapter questions, Brown gives a gift to those of us who teach business ethics.

Overall, this book is an enjoyable and thought-provoking read and a valuable contribution to the field of Christian business ethics. I would strongly recommend it to Christian business faculty, first as a means of crafting meaningful classroom objectives and second as a resource to put into students' hands to frame classroom discussion. In reading this, I am reminded of Hebrews 5:14: "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." Brown's contribution articulates those key links between the practice and training of the senses (virtue), which lead to the solid food and maturity of faith in Christ.

JOSH SAUERWEIN is assistant professor of accounting at George Fox University in Newburg, Oregon.

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THE LAST WORD

Faith that Rises to the Challenge

Bishop Claude Alexander is senior pastor at The Park Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. He gave the following sermon on Daniel 7 to attendees of the annual CCCU Presidents Conference in Washington, D.C., on January 26. It has been edited for length.

THERE IS A SHIFT that must be understood, accepted, and adjusted to: the shift of our place in Western society. We are no longer the center; we are no longer chief; we are no longer the perceived majority. We are at the periphery. We feel like we are on the margins. ...

The calling of our lives might be that of being more exilic and prophetic than settled and the status quo. If this is true, and I believe that it might be, then the import of Christian colleges and universities is even more clear. Christian colleges and universities are not luxuries; they are necessities. The education of men and women who are able to exert influence and leadership within their given fields of study, undergirded by an unshakeable confidence in their Christian faith and commitment to the service of humanity, is an absolute necessity.

But in order for that to be fulfilled in this era, there might be a need for re-imagining the role; a recalibration of the sensibilities and sensitivities that we have. Perhaps it is the preparation of people who have been used to being the home team, the center, the majority to being the exile, the periphery, and the minority. ... The students you are educating will be going into environments where there will be those types of questions. What pedagogy do you give them such that they are able to have a faith that rises to that type of challenge?

Faith lets you look into two worlds at the same time. Daniel's vision [in Chapter 7] is a two-layered vision. The first layer is of four beasts who come out of the sea to exert terror upon the earth, particularly the saints of the Most High. But the second layer is where the Ancient of Days takes his seat on the throne and orders the court. ... Through faith, God is able to show us another layer and level of reality that reshapes the raw data of our lives. It re-frames the pressure; it recalibrates the weight, the trouble, the tears, and the heartaches by answering four questions about God.

The first question is: Who is God? ... Who is God, that we face what we face? Who is God, that we suffer what we suffer? Who is God, that we carry what we carry? ... Notice the name for God [in this passage] is the Ancient of Days. It's a name for God that points to God being the eternal uncreated, unchanging, and timeless one. It speaks to God always being God. ...

Daniel is made to recognize that the beasts were not without boundaries; they were bound within the context of God. ... Authentic faith in God rises to the challenge by recognizing that whatever we face is not without boundaries. It is bound within the Ancient of Days. ...


Another question is: Where is God? Where is God when I'm facing what I'm facing? ... With the beasts raging, each one succeeding the other, Daniel is able to look, and he sees thrones set in place, with the Ancient of Days taking his seat. God comfortably occupies the throne. ... With things being over Daniel's head, they are under God's feet. Daniel is made to know that whatever human power is, it is still under divine power. ...

What is God doing? Within Daniel's vision, there is this juxtaposition of the activity of the beasts and the activity of the Ancient of Days. The beasts are raging, terrifying, threatening, and destroying, and the vision of the Ancient of Days is that of the thrones being set in place, the Ancient of Days taking a seat, the courts being seated, and the books being opened. ... Daniel is made to see God is setting things in place. God is positioning matters of concern and consequence. God is arranging things according to God's purpose. ...

Whose side is God on? ... There's a period where the adversary enjoys a time where he has his way, and in those times, we are tempted to ask the question: Is God really on my side? ... But then verse 22 comes around and says [that] ... God comes and pronounces his favor for the saints. God demonstrates his position with them; he shows forth his power by bringing them victory.

The thing that I have a problem with most as a leader is waiting *until*. It's believing *until*; it's holding on *until*; it's continuing to fight *until*; it's turning the other cheek *until*. ... But for each one of those occasions where I've had to live in the tension, there has been what God has been developing *until*. When God has developed what God has desired to develop, the *until* comes.

When the *until* does come, it comes with great joy. That is the crux of our faith. It is the disciples having seen the Master crucified and being declared to be over, leaving believing that it is done – until Sunday and the women go to the grave site and find the tomb empty. ...

We are those who live in the *until*. Who is God? The Ancient of Days. Where is God? He is confidently and comfortably on the throne. What is God doing? God is setting things in place. Whose side is God on? The side of the saints. How long must we deal with this? Until. 



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