

COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

# ADVANCE

SPRING 2018

MAGAZINE

## BEARING FAITHFUL WITNESS

How the deep roots  
of faith anchor CCCU  
institutions in an  
era of change.

**Pluralism in an  
Age of Division**  
p. 26

**The Power of  
Experience**  
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**Navigating the Evangelical  
Identity Crisis**  
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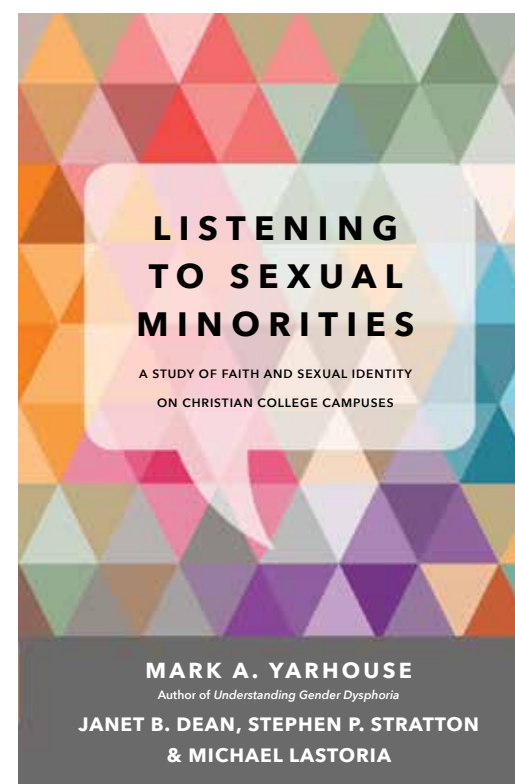
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## Shaping Critical Conversations on Campus and in Culture

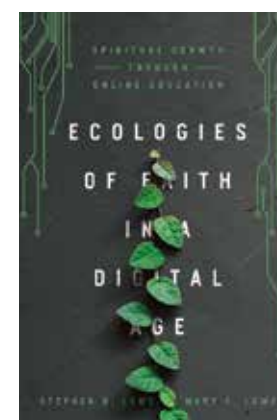


For sexual minority students on Christian college campuses, faith and sexuality can feel in acute tension. Rich with both quantitative and qualitative data, this is an unprecedented opportunity to listen to sexual minorities in their own words.

*"Invaluable for educators, counselors, pastors, youth workers, and the secular public who want to understand LGB+ emerging adults who deeply value and live out their faith. . . . This book allows us to listen in to the actual voices and stories of students on Christian college campuses."*

**SHIRLEY HOOGSTRA**, president of the CCCU

Available April 2018

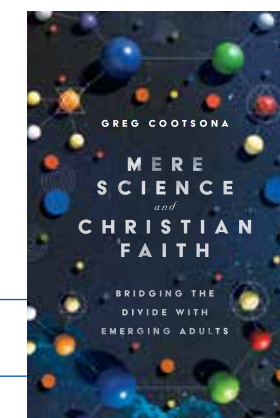


Many Christian institutions have embraced new technologies, especially online education. But is it possible for us to grow spiritually through our digital communities? Steve Lowe and Mary Lowe consider how students and professors alike might foster digital ecologies in which spiritual transformation can take place.

Available June 2018

Emerging adults want to believe that science and faith can coexist peacefully, and Greg Cootsona argues that they can. In this book he holds out a vision for the integration of science and faith and how it can lead us more deeply into the conversations that confront the church today.

Available March 2018



IVP Academic | [ivpress.com](http://ivpress.com)



# Feasting & the Great Commandment

**WE BOARDED THE** bus for what would be a two-hour trip north of Amman to be guests of Sheik Abu Nidal and his wife Um Nidal. Sheik Abu Nidal is the Muslim tribal leader of his branch of 14,000 people. Um Nidal is the mother of eight sons and four daughters and the grandmother of over 30 grandchildren. I had now been in Jordan for four days.

I will admit I had some nervousness when I boarded the Royal Jordanian plane at JFK airport. My perspective on the Middle East was shaped mostly by the reports out of Syria, Iraq, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. So as I rode the bus with 21 participants of the CCCU's Middle East Studies Program – students from dozens of our campuses and the leadership of the program – I wondered what I would find in this 4,000-person village made up of tribal family members. Tribes hold much of the civil society function in Jordan, and we were going to stop first at the tribal meeting house to be greeted by our hosts, their children, and their grandchildren.

Doug and Patti Magnuson are the directors of the MESP program and have 35 years of experience living in the Middle East. They set the tone and model a respectful and humble posture of learning when encountering a new culture. Doug shared the story of a transportation mix-up that resulted in a tense and unpleasant conversation between him and Nidel, the sheik's son and the owner of a tour agency, shortly after he and Patti assumed leadership of MESP five years ago. After that mix-up, Nidel made sure that all the needs of the MESP students were met for the trip into Jordan, even at his expense, for the honor and reputation of his country. When MESP moved from Jerusalem to Jordan in 2014, Doug asked Nidel about his company's services, even though he admitted that Nidel might not want to do business with him again because of the earlier mishap. They were the best prices, and each man was willing to start fresh on the relationship. Nidel and his wife, Erij, invited Doug and Patti to dinner, which began a deep friendship between them. It was Nidel's family that was hosting a traditional Bedouin feast for us.

What a feast and party we had. Um Nidel had been up at 5 a.m. making the *mansaf* (a traditional Jordanian Bedouin dish) with her daughter and daughters-in-law, and preparing the communal platters of rice, lamb, and yogurt. There was laughter and good humor all around as we each attempted to master consuming our delicious meal using only our right hand. The encouragement to eat more was constant. Our hosts delighted in our presence. This is the Jordanian way: to take into their homes the stranger, the foreigner.

This "Jordanian way" is a national value and important reality. Jordan is home to around 1.5 million Syrians, with 655,000 registered as refugees, as well as many displaced Iraqis. Between 2-3 million Palestinians live in Jordan, with over 600,000 having refugee status.



**TOP:** CCCU president Shirley Hoogstra poses with MESP director Doug Magnuson and his wife, Patti (right) and three members of the CCCU's Student Academic Programs Commission during their recent visit to the MESP program. **MIDDLE:** Students in the MESP program regularly spend time in devotions together. **BOTTOM:** MESP students and guests were invited to a traditional Bedouin feast.

Photos: Courtesy of Shirley V. Hoogstra.

**Experiential education is used by God to teach us his truths deeply so we can become people who are firmly rooted in Christian faith.**

Citizenship, employment, and education are complex issues for this nation of just over 9 million people. While Jordan is predominately and proudly a Muslim country, Orthodox, Catholic, Coptic, and protestant churches co-exist there. And the churches are also reaching out to refugees with education, mental health counseling, and job formation. A U.S. embassy official who spoke to the MESP class while I was there stressed the strategic importance of Jordan for the region, both economically and politically.

We knew these facts as we gathered for dinner and later reconvened to the outside patio space around a barrel bonfire for a time of speeches, singing, music, storytelling, and dancing. Out of respect for his guests, Nidel had asked his brothers and their families to be hosts for the evening. Nidel's two daughters, both University of Jordan students fluent in English, came to be with our students. I felt like I was in a Jane Austen novel where all those present at a dinner would appreciate the richness of the evening. And that is what happened that evening. I experienced a level of hospitality and generosity, a level of vulnerability and intimacy, unlike a usual first meeting of new acquaintances. For Abu and Um Nidal and for Nidel, his children, and his brothers and sisters, the MESP program students and guests were not acquaintances – we were family.

In my work as a bridge-builder on behalf of Christian higher education, I think a lot about the great commandment to love God with your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. When I boarded the plane for Jordan five days earlier, I had not expected that I would be so instructed in that commandment by my new Jordanian friends. This feast didn't just fill my stomach; it filled my heart. It also confirmed my conviction that experiential education – whether on our home campus or in settings around the world – is used by God to teach us his truths deeply so that we can become people who are rooted firmly in our Christian faith and live by the great commandment. To quote David Brooks, this makes us "human beings [who] have a devoted heart, and a courageous mind and a purposeful soul." This is Christian liberal arts education at its best. 🙏

## HOW MESP ALUMNI ARE CHANGING LIVES

**HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS** have been part of the CCCU's Middle East Studies Program (MESP) since its launch in 1993, and many have incredible stories to share about how their experience at MESP, combined with their education on a CCCU campus, prepared them for a life of service in many different areas. Here are just a few examples.

When students go to MESP, they fall in love with the local culture and imagine how they can contribute to raising up the next generation of leaders in Jordan and throughout the Middle East. Key to those leaders' success is learning English, so four MESP alumni are working at the American Academy of Jordan, where they teach elementary schoolchildren various subjects in English alongside a Jordanian co-teacher.

Two alumni, who attended different CCCU institutions and went to MESP at different times, married each other and went to Canada to work in a small town in Saskatchewan. When Syrian refugees began to arrive, they were the only people in their small city that understood some Arabic and had a better understanding of Middle Eastern culture. They were asked by government leaders to help these refugees resettle. They returned to Jordan to perfect their Arabic and intend to return to Canada soon to be contributors in bridge-building and help the many refugees coming to Canada.

Another married couple, one of whom is a MESP grad, helps disburse aid to help relieve the suffering and displacement of refugees. The graduate works for USAID, while the other works for UNICEF. They credit their experience in the Middle East with helping them understand the complexity of the region and the significant role the region plays in world stability.

After graduating, a MESP alumnus wanted to get into law enforcement, so he became a police officer in San Diego. But he was so impacted by his MESP experience and his love for international work that he has since become a deputy security officer for the 300+ person embassy in Jordan – among the top 10 largest embassies in the world – where he also supplies security for heads of state and visiting dignitaries.

(From right) Doug Magnuson, MESP program director, and his wife, Patti, pose with a group of MESP alumni.





## FEATURES



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## PLURALISM IN AN AGE OF DIVISION

CCCU institutions have the opportunity to lead this important vision.

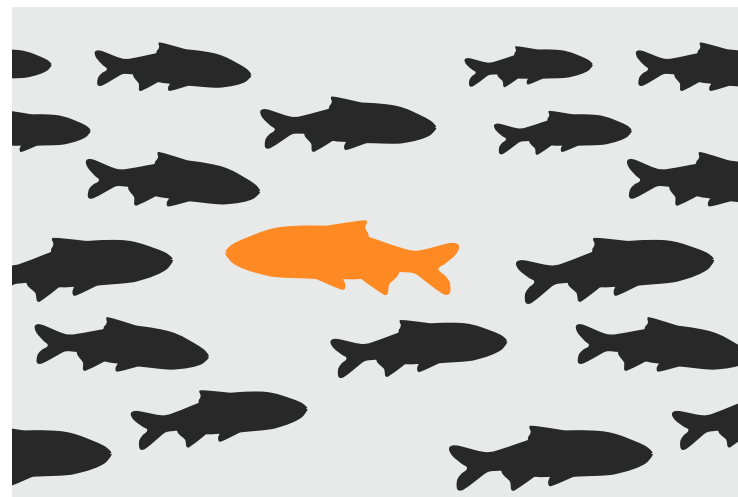
By Shirley Mullen and Jonathan Haidt and Jessica McBirney

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## THE POWER OF EXPERIENCE

How my trip to the Uganda Studies Program offers a small glimpse of the power of immersive, Christian off-campus study programs.

By Rick Ostrander



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## NAVIGATING THE EVANGELICAL IDENTITY CRISIS

Two scholars look beyond the debate over the definition of 'evangelical' to examine the commitment it requires and consider its history.

By Mark Labberton and Molly Worthen



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## UNLOCKING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Christian higher education can help transform the lives of millions of Americans with a criminal past.

By Heather Rice-Minus

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**THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (CCCU)** is a higher education association of more than 180 Christian institutions around the world. With campuses across the globe, including more than 150 in the U.S. and Canada and nearly 30 more from an additional 18 countries, CCCU institutions are accredited, comprehensive colleges and universities whose missions are Christ-centered and rooted in the historic Christian faith. Most also have curricula rooted in the arts and sciences.

**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.

### DISTRIBUTION

*Advance* is published each year in the fall and spring and is mailed to members, affiliates, and friends of the CCCU. It is also available online at [www.cccu.org/advance](http://www.cccu.org/advance). Direct questions and letters to the editor to [editor@cccu.org](mailto:editor@cccu.org).

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# Breathing as Vocation



**AS A SEMINARIAN**, I’ve unsurprisingly found ways to incorporate my studies into unique and applicable ways in my work at the CCCU. For example, I recently took a course on the practices of vocational formation – a concept that is pretty common and deeply important on CCCU campuses. But I took it while also learning Greek. One of the first words I learned is πνεῦμα (pneuma), which can mean Spirit, wind, breath, or inner life. Jesus uses this word in reference to both the wind of the storm outside and the Holy Spirit when he’s talking with Nicodemus in John 3; the Septuagint also uses the word in Ezekiel 37 when the prophet has a vision of dry bones coming to life by the winds and the breath of the Lord.

This has prompted me to think about vocation in an entirely new light. How would I live differently if my vocation was centered around my breath – if I were inhaling God’s spirit and exhaling his power through my work and life? Suddenly, breathing as I write an email, have coffee with a colleague, interview a campus leader on the phone, or craft this essay takes on an entirely new purpose. It’s a reminder of the immediacy of God’s presence; a reaffirmation of his power in our lives.

Our ordinary, everyday interactions are powerful opportunities to connect with and share God’s power. Much of the content of this magazine has been shaped in that light. What does it look like for we as Christians to breathe in the Holy Spirit in all areas of our own engagement with the world? To that end, Houghton College president and historian Shirley Mullen reminds us how and why the U.S. came to be a uniquely pluralistic culture (at least in formation if not always in practice) and why it is vital for CCCU graduates to be ready and able to engage (page 26).

What if we were aware that the presence of the Holy Spirit fills us as we engage in conversations around hard topics? We look at a number of CCCU institutions with programming that is structured in such a way that students can engage with the difficult questions of the day with humility, honesty, and confidence (page 35). We also have included social psychologist Jonathan Haidt’s talk from the 2018 CCCU International Forum (page 31); Haidt’s research on the foundations of morality across cultural and political divides provides a valuable tool. So, too, does Baylor University’s Alan Jacobs with his book *How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds*, excerpted on page 60 and reviewed on page 61.

The CCCU’s study abroad programs provide students an opportunity to breathe in the Holy Spirit as they hone their passions and studies in a unique context away from campus and engage a perspective and curriculum rooted in the Christian faith. Such an experience also has an impact on the professors and administrators leading the program, as CCCU president Shirley V. Hoogstra shares in her column on page 2 and CCCU vice president Rick Ostrander details in his essay on page 40.

Today, one of the greatest questions we face as Christians centers around the term “evangelical.” How do we carry out God’s vocation in our lives in the midst of this? An interview with Mark Labberton, president of Fuller Theological Seminary and editor of the new essay collection *Still Evangelical?*, explores the impact of our social location, the importance of our commitment to the work of Jesus Christ, and the role that Christian higher education can play in all of it (page 46). Historian Molly Worthen’s talk from the Forum (page 51) explores the power of historical context in engaging the next generation of evangelicals (whether they use that term or not).

As always, we appreciate your feedback on the content we include in each issue of *Advance* – we want this to be a tool that helps you in your own vocation as you exhale the πνεῦμα of God in your own work. Have comments on these articles or ideas for a new one? Email me at [editor@cccu.org](mailto:editor@cccu.org).

**MORGAN FEDDES SATRE** is the CCCU’s communications specialist and managing editor of *Advance*. She is an alumna of both Whitworth University and BestSemester’s L.A. Film Studies Program and is currently pursuing her M.Div. at Fuller Seminary.

Photo: Hi Un Kang Haaga.

# Around *the* Council

## CCCU ADVOCACY REDUCES HIGHER ED HARMS IN TAX LEGISLATION



**IN LATE 2017**, Congress considered and ultimately passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. As introduced in the House, this tax reform bill would have had significant negative impacts on higher education, including elimination of the student loan interest deduction, taxing of tuition remission benefits for graduate students and university employees, taxing of employer-provided tuition assistance, and elimination of the American Opportunity Tax Credit and the Lifetime Learning Credit. Thanks in part to significant advocacy on the part of the CCCU and its institutions, the bill ultimately only had a few lesser impacts: a possible decrease in charitable giving due to the increase in the standard deduction, the elimination of bond advance refunding, and an 1.4 percent tax on endowment earnings for institutions with endowments that are over \$500,000 per FTE (affecting about 32 institutions nationwide instead of the 250 that would have been affected by the introduced legislation).

## CCCU SUPPORTS RELIGIOUS PROTECTIONS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION



**ON DEC. 12**, 2017, the House Education and Workforce Committee passed the GOP-authored Higher Education Act reauthorization bill – the Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act. Though there are concerns about aspects of the bill within the higher education community, we appreciate that it includes strong protections for faith-based institutions of education. Specifically, it prohibits government entities from taking adverse actions against institutions because of their religious mission or religious affiliation, and it provides the institutions a private right of action should the government nevertheless do so. It also provides a complaints process should an accreditor take an adverse action because of an institution’s religious mission or religious affiliation. Along with a clear definition of “religious mission,” this legislation provides much-needed recourse should an accreditor violate the existing legal requirement to respect an institution’s religious mission.

Photos: Upper left and right, AdobeStock. Lower left, courtesy of Indiana Wesleyan University.



## ADVOCACY EFFORTS CONTINUE ON IMMIGRATION

**SINCE THE RESCISSION** of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program last September, the CCCU has been actively engaged in urging Congress to pass a permanent, legislative solution. President Shirley Hoogstra joined Senator James Lankford (R-OK), Sen. Angus King (I-ME), Russell Moore (Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission [ERLC]), Galen Carey (National Association of Evangelicals [NAE]), Scott Arbeiter (World Relief), and others at a press conference on Capitol Hill to call for reform. The CCCU has joined sign-on letters through the Evangelical Immigration Table, as well as sent its own letters emphasizing the urgency of a solution. The CCCU’s government relations team has also participated in Hill meetings with congressional offices alongside groups like the NAE, ERLC, and the National Immigration Forum. The CCCU is particularly grateful for the efforts that its institutions’ presidents have taken, including authoring op-eds, contacting their members of Congress, and joining efforts like the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration.



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## AROUND THE COUNCIL

### BESTSEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS

#### CCCU'S SEMESTER PROGRAM IN OXFORD NOW OFFERS STEM STUDIES



**THE CCCU'S SCHOLARS'** Semester in Oxford (SSO) program is expanding its disciplinary offering to include many science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields so that students in these disciplines can take advantage of the high-caliber teaching and research of the University of Oxford.

"An academic organization that endeavors to contribute to discussions of scholarship and Christianity should strive to touch on as many core disciplines as it reasonably can," says Stan Rosenberg, executive director of SSO and of SCIO, the CCCU's U.K. subsidiary. "For some years I have hoped we might begin offering STEM subjects, both out of our long-standing commitment to science and religion and affirming that STEM subjects in themselves are worthy and important. These subjects are not peripheral; they are central to SCIO's mission."

For the Fall 2018 semester, students can take courses in one of the following fields: biological sciences, chemistry, mathematics, statistics, physics, theoretical computer science, and earth sciences.

#### CCCU NAMES DANIEL SIEFKEN NEXT LASP DIRECTOR



**DANIEL SIEFKEN WILL** be the new director of the CCCU's Latin American Studies Program (LASP) in San Jose, Costa Rica, effective June 1.

Siefken, a Spring Arbor University graduate and a 2004 LASP alumnus, has had a productive career in Christian higher education and study abroad administration, with an emphasis in developing and leading programs in the Latin American context. His service at CCCU institutions includes roles in student affairs and study

abroad education at Anderson University (IN) and Spring Arbor University.

Since 2013, Siefken has led study abroad efforts at the University of Texas at Austin, most recently as assistant director of study abroad. He has a master's degree in global and international sociology from the University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh, Scotland.

"After many years working within CCCU schools, and having gained a broad global perspective and deeper Christian faith as a participant in LASP, I'm excited to be able to contribute to the continued growth and success of the program," Siefken says. "I hope to inject a passion for spiritual formation, cultural engagement, and academic enrichment that will challenge CCCU students to put their faith into practice for years to come."

Photos: Top, Courtesy of Grace College. Bottom, courtesy of Daniel Siefken.

#### LAFSC CO-DIRECTOR NAMED A TOP VIRTUAL REALITY INFLUENCER



John K. Bucher speaks at the ZUMEFF Film Festival, the Middle East's largest student film festival, held in February at Zayed University in Dubai, UAE.

**JOHN K. BUCHER** Jr., co-director and faculty member at the CCCU's L.A. Film Studies Center (LAFSC), was named as one of the top 25 influencers to follow in virtual reality (VR) in March by Disruptor, one of the world's top tech web sites.

"I am really honored to be recognized as an influencer in this field. I don't take the recognition and responsibility lightly," Bucher says. "I believe that people of faith should be a part of the cultural dialogue not only on present issues, but also on those that lie before us in the future. I have a passion for technology and virtual reality, but I also want to make sure these tools help us become more human – not less."

Bucher is the author of *Storytelling for Virtual Reality*, which was the top best-seller in Amazon's film and media section the week of its release last August. "Storytelling is one of the most impactful ways to influence culture, and every major technology has only succeeded when people have figured out how to tell stories with it," he says.

Bucher has spoken internationally on the topic of VR storytelling in Malta and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where he was the keynote speaker at the ZUMEFF Film Festival, the largest student film festival in the Middle East. His talk at ZUMEFF was attended by seven ambassadors to the UAE, including the ambassador from the United States, as well as members of the UAE royal family.

CCCU students at LAFSC, which has had VR training incorporated into its courses for nearly two years, have already begun to benefit from Bucher's insight and knowledge as they train to become the future leaders in storytelling and technology. "We were one of the first programs in the world to begin offering training in the area of telling stories with VR," Bucher says. "The VR films produced in our programs have been getting better and better every semester. Students are already coming out of the LAFSC and finding immediate opportunities in the immersive storytelling field, which has a rapidly expanding job market."

To learn more about the CCCU's BestSemester programs,  
visit [www.bestsemester.com](http://www.bestsemester.com).

Photos: Left, courtesy of John K. Bucher. Right, Jonathan Kirkpatrick.



#### GROUP SELECTED FOR NEXT SCIO SCIENCE AND RELIGION PROJECT

##### SCHOLARSHIP & CHRISTIANITY

In Oxford (SCIO), the U.K. subsidiary of the CCCU, has named the 24 participants for the Bridging the Two Cultures of Science and the Humanities II project.

The participants come from a range of universities around the world, including institutions in Canada, India, Kenya, Mexico, the United States, and Uruguay. The selection committee sought to create a cohort that represented the diversity of the CCCU's institutional, denominational, academic, geographic, and demographic variety.

Funded by the Templeton Religion Trust and the Blankemeyer Foundation, project seminars will take place in Oxford, England, in the summers of 2018 and 2019. The program fosters in participants the interdisciplinary skills and understanding central to the study of science and religion.

In addition to attending the summer seminars with lectures from eminent scholars, participants will work on an original research project in science and religion intended for major publication. Funds are provided for a research assistant to help the participant's research project and establish (or bolster) a science and religion student club at the home institution.



YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

ANGIE THOMAS | *Belhaven University, 2011*



Angie Thomas gives her acceptance speech at the CCCU International Forum in February.

**ANGIE THOMAS STARTED** her bestselling young-adult novel *The Hate U Give* as her senior project at Belhaven. The story follows an ordinary girl, one who lives in a poor neighborhood but attends a fancy prep school in the suburbs, and the way her world shatters when she witnesses her childhood best friend being killed at the hands of a police officer.

“When I attended Belhaven, I was a lot like my main character, Starr, living in two different worlds – my mostly black, poor neighborhood and Belhaven, which was in an upper-class neighborhood and where most of the students were white,” Thomas says. “When a young man named Oscar Grant lost his life in Oakland, California, at the hands of police officers, the conversations were vastly different. While some of my classmates sympathized for Oscar, others didn’t understand why there was so much unrest over his death. I wrote the short story that

later became *The Hate U Give* as a way to help them understand.”

“In the midst of national conversations about important issues of race, power, and privilege in our society, it is crucial that Christians not stay silent, but rather speak truth and acknowledge the disparate treatment, inequality, and sin that is all too prevalent,” says CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra. “This is what makes Angie’s contribution vital. The response to her book makes clear that she has found a way to tell a powerful story that is influencing the conversation.”

Using relatable characters and engaging prose, the book addresses issues of racism and police violence with intelligence, heart, and unflinching honesty. It is a #1 *New York Times* best-seller, has received starred reviews from eight literary journals (among the most ever received for a young adult novel), and is in the process of being made into a major motion picture.

Thomas credits her time at Belhaven for helping her shape her view of the world as well as her writing talents. “Attending a Christian college helped me ground my faith at a time where I needed it the most, and it continues to be my foundation,” she says. “As a writer, I don’t shy away from topics, even if they make people uncomfortable, in large part due to my faith – Jesus didn’t do easy work, nor did he come to make people comfortable. This is something I came to understand more while I was at Belhaven.”

Thomas’ next book, *On the Come Up*, will be released in February 2019.

RUNNERS UP



Delana Small serves as a chaplain in the U.S. Army.

**DELANA SMALL**  
*Evangel University, 2008*

As a chaplain in the U.S. Army, Delana Small has been shattering gender barriers in her service to soldiers around the world. Small is the first female Army chaplain to serve in a Special Operations Unit, and she was also the first female chaplain to report to an Army combat arms unit

when she served with the 101st Airborne Division’s “Screaming Eagles.” She has supported hundreds of soldiers and civilians at two different bases in Afghanistan.



Preston Kemp and Tyler Sriver (top) with the VisuALS team and Carl and his wife, Janice.

**PRESTON KEMP AND TYLER SRIVER**  
*Oklahoma Christian University, 2017*

Preston Kemp and Tyler Sriver are part of a team of students and alumni at Oklahoma Christian University who are using their engineering skills to give ALS patients their voices back. VisuALS (founded by Kemp, Sriver, and some of their OC peers) has developed an affordable system that allows ALS

patients to communicate through eye-tracking technology and text-to-speech functionality. The first recipient, Carl (who has since passed away), was featured on *The Today Show*.

Photos: Top, Dallas Baptist University Photography. Bottom left, photo courtesy of Delana Small; Bottom right, photo courtesy of Preston Kemp and Tyler Sriver.

JOHN R. DELLENBACK GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

DAVID S. DOCKERY

**DAVID S. DOCKERY**, president of Trinity International University (Deerfield, IL) and a longtime leader in Christian higher education, was named the recipient of the 2018 John R. Dellenback Global Leadership Award, presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Christian higher education through scholarship, writing, and public influence.

“Dr. David Dockery is a giant in the world of Christian higher education. Not only does he lead by example, but he gladly shares his insights with colleagues from around the world and has mentored many leaders over the years,” says CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra. “His contributions to this work through his books, his articles, his service, and his mentorship will impact Christian higher education for many years to come.”

“To say the least, I have been overwhelmed since receiving the notification that I was to be the 2018 recipient of this prestigious and meaningful recognition,” Dockery says. “I am immensely grateful for this most undeserved honor. I am thankful beyond words to all who were involved in all aspects of this special recognition.”

Dockery has served as Trinity International University’s 15th president since 2014 after having previously served as president of Union University (Jackson, TN) for more than 18 years. He also served as chief academic officer and professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, KY).

Dockery is recognized as a leader in Christian higher education across the country, having spoken at more than 60 colleges, universities, and seminaries, as well as providing numerous institutional consultations. He served on the CCCU’s Board of Directors, including as chair in 2005 and 2006.

Dockery has also served boards of numerous other organizations and institutions, including the Consortium for Global Education, the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities, Christianity Today International, Prison Fellowship Ministries, and The King’s College. Currently, he serves as chair of the Christian College Consortium and as president of the Evangelical Theological Society. Dockery is a prolific speaker and author, having written or edited more than 30 books and contributed to more than 60 others.



David S. Dockery, who received the Dellenback Global Leadership Award in February (above), is known for his leadership and scholarship in Christian higher education.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL CEO OR SENIOR LEADER?



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## AROUND THE COUNCIL

### PHILANTHROPY AWARD

#### AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN CREDIT UNION

**AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN CREDIT** Union (ACCU) was awarded the 2018 CCCU Philanthropy Award, which is presented to individuals and organizations who have made significant philanthropic contributions to the work of the CCCU and its membership.

"America's Christian Credit Union is an amazing organization. Not only are they successful in business, but they love people – which is a driver in their success," says CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra. "For over 60 years, ACCU has combined financial services with a vision and mission rooted in Scripture. Their generosity in supporting a study reporting the social and economic impact of Christian



Leaders from America's Christian Credit Union were on hand for the presentation of the CCCU Philanthropy Award at the International Forum in February.

higher education in the United States has helped the CCCU advance society's understanding of our invaluable contribution."

"We are deeply honored and humbled to receive this prestigious award," says ACCU President/CEO Mendell L. Thompson. "Generosity has been a foundational pillar to America's Christian Credit Union, inspiring God-honoring financial

services to our 145,000 members and enhancing Christian stewardship, especially in the area of Christian higher education. We could not have found a stronger partner than the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities – its impact is both expansive and significant. Our Credit Union, through this 'mustard seed' investment, is honored to join others who have modeled generosity in supporting God's work in the strategic mission of the CCCU."

Founded in 1958, ACCU's founding principle – "To Reach, Serve, and Teach" – has shaped every product and service it offers. Among those services are affordable lending options to help students and families make higher education a reality. ACCU has also partnered with numerous CCCU institutions in various forms of sponsorship, service on institutional boards, and research assistance. These institutions include Azusa Pacific University, Eastern Nazarene College/Trevecca University, Indiana Wesleyan University, Life Pacific College, Point Loma Nazarene University, and Olivet Nazarene University.

Additionally, ACCU has formed a vital partnership with the CCCU, including awarding the CCCU a \$100,000 grant in 2017 to underwrite research for a national report, released in March, that focused on the economic impact that Christian colleges and universities have in the United States.

Photo: Dallas Baptist University Photography

# HIGH INTEGRITY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE FLOURISHING OF AMERICA.

**SHIRLEY V. HOOGSTRA, J.D.**  
PRESIDENT, COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN  
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# 2018 INTERNATIONAL FORUM

The three-day event was packed with content that will impact #ChristianHigherEd for years to come.

**IN JANUARY, MORE** than 1,200 Christian higher education leaders from more than 130 institutions around the world convened in Dallas, Texas, for the 2018 International Forum. The three-day conference was a unique opportunity to meet leaders and experts from a variety of fields, to engage in the challenging questions of the day, and to worship God and fellowship with peers.

The range of topics covered was as broad as the size of the group attending, from examining research on what it means for a community to be “thriving”; to diving into political, cultural, and social trends dividing society and impacting Christian higher education; to hearing firsthand from CCCU leaders around the world on the challenges, opportunities, and innovations they have; to considering how higher education can use its privilege and influence to better their communities; to reflecting how the Gospel’s healing power can be used to address trauma in Christian college and university communities; to engaging a post-Christian society.

With more than 25 plenary speakers and over 100 breakout sessions, attendees had ample opportunity to engage in the topics most relevant to their own work. Group worship and devotions by conference chaplain Andy Crouch framed each day, and Grammy-nominated Christian artist Matt Maher hosted a night of worship as well.



**ABOVE LEFT:** CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Attendees had opportunities for breakout sessions and interaction with peers. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Author Andy Crouch served as the Forum's chaplain. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Andy Westmoreland (Samford University) and Kimberly Battle-Walters Denu (Azusa Pacific University) served as emcees on Wednesday.



Very grateful to be at the #cccuforum this week being inspired by so many dear friends.  
@Gordon\_VP

All photos: Dallas Baptist University Photography.



"If identity is our mission, we falter. If mission is our identity, we thrive." That's a great lesson not just for Christian universities, but Christians in general. #cccuforum  
@AndrewTrue2AU



**TOP:** (From left) Sarah Bilaye-Benibo, Gina Rosanova, Alexandria DeJesus, and Marjalene Kelly were part of a team that led worship on Thursday and Friday. **BOTTOM:** David Dockery (center) received the 2018 Dellenback Award. **BELOW:** The Dallas Baptist University Grand Chorus, led by Stephen Holcomb (front left), kicked off the Forum with worship on Wednesday morning.



**TOP LEFT:** Diane Langberg, psychologist and author. **TOP MIDDLE:** More than 100 companies supported the event. **TOP RIGHT:** Propaganda, Christian poet and activist. **ABOVE LEFT:** Mendell Thompson, President/CEO of America's Christian Credit Union. **ABOVE:** Author Angie Thomas and Shirley V. Hoogstra. **LEFT:** Bishop Claude Alexander.



**LEFT:** Grammy-nominated artist Matt Maher. **MIDDLE:** South Carolina Senator Tim Scott. **RIGHT:** Marlene Wall, president of LCC International University (Klaipėda, Lithuania).





A NEW STUDY FROM ECONSULT SOLUTIONS looks at the overall economic impact of the CCCU's 140+ U.S. institutions, collectively educating 445,000 students, employing 72,000 faculty and staff, and serving 3.5 million alumni around the world.

**\$60 BILLION**  
IN ANNUAL  
ECONOMIC IMPACT »



**\$25.9 BILLION**  
FROM OPERATIONS AND  
CAPITAL INVESTMENTS



**\$34.6 BILLION**  
FROM ADDITIONAL  
ALUMNI EARNINGS

*To put things in  
perspective this is ...*

**\$166 MILLION**  
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*This economic activity also generates:*



**\$9.7 BILLION**  
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TAX REVENUE



**340,000**  
JOBS IN THE ECONOMY



**\$17.8 BILLION**  
IN SALARY AND  
BENEFITS

#### ADDITIONAL SOCIETAL BENEFITS INCLUDE:



**5.4 MILLION**  
COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS  
PERFORMED BY CCCU  
STUDENTS ANNUALLY



**35.2%**  
OF CCCU  
STUDENTS

MORE PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

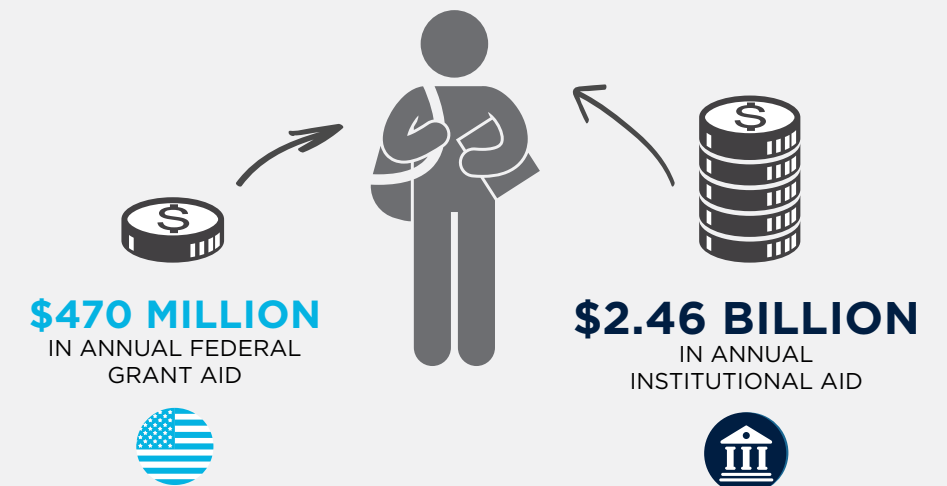


**25.7%**  
OF ALL COLLEGE  
STUDENTS

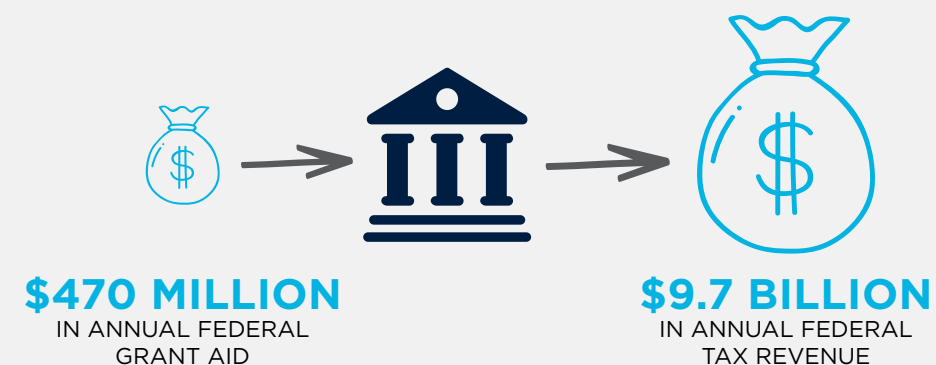
#### WHERE DOES STUDENT AID COME FROM?

To read the full report go to  
[www.cccu.org/economic-impact/](http://www.cccu.org/economic-impact/)

For every **\$1** in  
federal grant money  
a student receives,  
CCCU institutions  
provide **\$5** in aid  
to that student  
through grants  
and scholarships. »



#### HOW DOES THIS BENEFIT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?



For every **\$1** in  
federal grant  
money a student  
receives, CCCU  
institutions gener-  
ate more than **\$20**  
in federal tax re-  
venue through their  
operations, capital  
investments, and  
additional alumni  
earning power.

THE DEFAULT RATE FOR CCCU STUDENTS IS **NEARLY HALF THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.**

**DEFAULT  
RATE**

**6.3%**  
CCCU  
INSTITUTIONS

**11.5%**  
NATIONAL  
AVERAGE



Source: Econsult Solutions, "Building the Common Good: The National Impact of Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) Institutions"



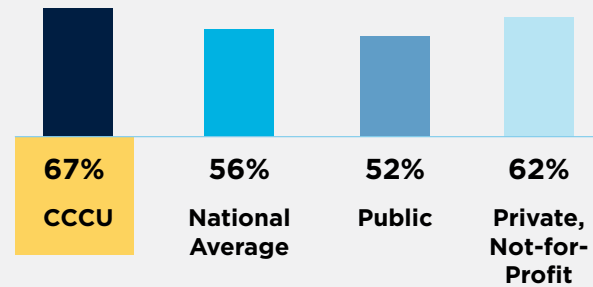
IN A NATIONAL SURVEY ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, CCCU institutions rise to the top.



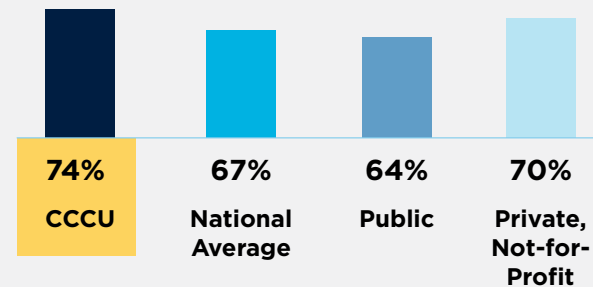
### CCCU INSTITUTIONS VALUE DIVERSE VIEWS AND CRITICAL THINKING.

#### Seniors reported that...

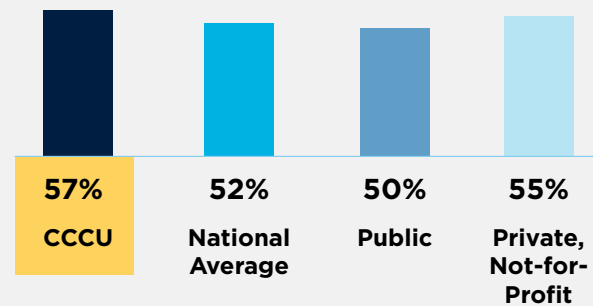
Course discussions and assignments included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) "often" or "very often."



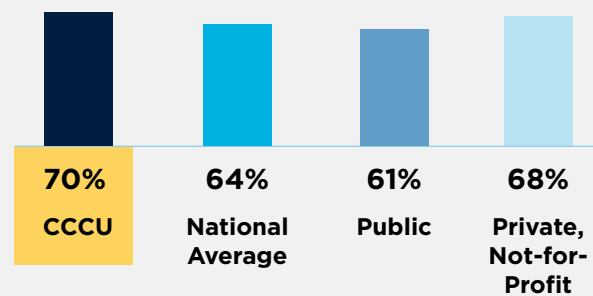
They examined the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue "often" or "very often."



The institution emphasized encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.) "quite a bit" or "very much."



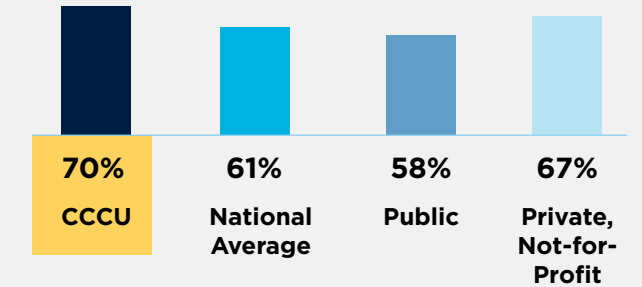
They connected learning to societal problems or issues "often" or "very often."



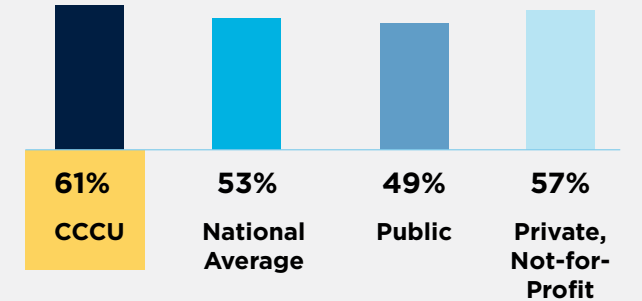
### CCCU INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.

#### Seniors reported that...

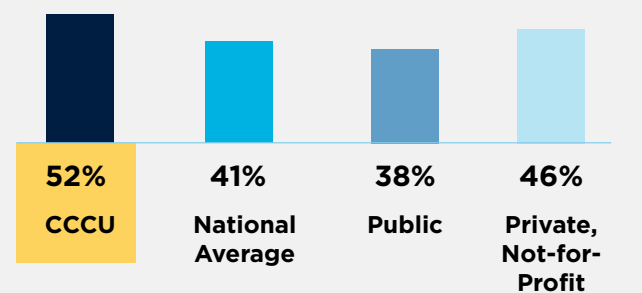
The quality of interaction with faculty was "excellent" or "very good."



The quality of interaction with academic advisors was "excellent" or "very good."



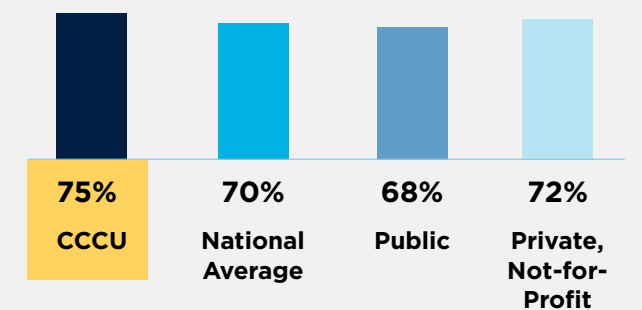
The quality of interaction with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) was "excellent" or "very good."



### CCCU INSTITUTIONS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE WORKFORCE.

#### Seniors reported that...

They acquired job- or work-related knowledge and skills "quite a bit" or "very much."



Source: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), "2017 CCCU Consortium Report"





# Our Commitment to Pluralism Should Not Waver

**FOR CHRISTIANS, THE** foundation for this idea comes from none other than Jesus himself. When asked whether Jews should pay taxes to the Roman government that was ruling over them, Jesus’ deft response in Matthew 22:21 to “give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” not only evaded the political snare that had been set for him, but it also clearly demarcated to Christians that while they were to respect earthly political systems, by no means should those systems capture their chief loyalty. Jesus demonstrated that believers could be involved in both spheres but that there were boundaries around these domains.

These boundaries are the heart of a pluralistic approach. Principled pluralism creates space in society for persons and institutions of diverse belief systems, or none at all, to participate fully in the public square without penalty. It requires five elements:

1. Societal participants must know what they believe.
2. Societal participants must view those with whom they disagree as people to be convinced instead of conquered.
3. Societal participants must seek first to persuade through the marketplace of ideas, not through law.
4. Societal participants should seek to protect others’ entry into the marketplace of ideas.
5. Societal participants must be willing to champion laws that protect those with whom they disagree.

Principled pluralism must be a foundational element of a society with no religious or ideological test. Without a legal or social structure requiring conformity of thought around these matters, there will be those in agreement and those who dissent. History teaches that, where there is dissent, there is conflict. Conflict is ended when one position “wins” over the other, enforcing a purported unanimity of thought through law or force – unless the society itself is positioned to respect and even protect diversity of thought about matters of conscience and conviction.

What most undermines a pluralistic society is ignorance – both of civic knowledge and of religious knowledge. George Washington’s and Thomas Jefferson’s writings affirm the principle that an educated citizenry is necessary to preserve a democratic government free of tyranny. Principled pluralism is challenged by those whose own beliefs are unsettled or unmoored and who therefore view challenges as threats. The conflict that exists in a pluralistic society occurs through the written and spoken word, not through physical feat or battle. The conflict of ideas allows people to make their case about why their political ideology or religion is superior without fear of reprisal. Knowledge is essential because it creates a foundation from which a person can express and defend her ideas and beliefs without fear.

**Pluralism’s great strength is that it does not ask people to weaken their beliefs, political or religious. In fact, it preserves a guaranteed space for them to hold those beliefs – and to live them out in both their public and private lives.**

Ignorance is indeed a great threat in the United States. A 2015 research survey from the Newseum Institute on the state of the First Amendment revealed that 33 percent of Americans cannot name a single right guaranteed by the First Amendment. (Fifty-seven percent named the freedom of speech, 19 percent named the freedom of religion, 10 percent mentioned the freedom of the press, and 10 percent named the right to assemble.)

Another growing and troubling trend among Christians is a lack of biblical and theological knowledge. In 2016, the Barna Group released a report examining how Americans had interacted with the Bible over the previous six years. It highlighted a sharp decline in Bible reading among Americans – while 46 percent reported reading the Bible at least once a week in 2009, that number had dropped to about a third of Americans, and even lower (just 24 percent) for Millennials. The decline carries over to their political views as well. A recent Lifeway poll showed that only one in 10 Evangelicals said that their political opinion on immigration had been informed by the Bible.

This lack of civic knowledge and catechesis threatens our pluralistic society by undermining consensus in the

faith-based pluralism of the Founding Fathers. They understood that our American experiment depends in particular on those in the majority to respect and uphold these principles of pluralism. That is why it is especially regrettable when Protestant Christians, who have long been the majority population in the United States, violate those principles essential to a pluralistic society by citing our national values as synonymous with our Christian values or by attempting to use the force of law to get people to adopt Christian practices.

Certainly, our faith should inform the individual intersection of Christians with politics and the fulfillment of our civic duties. Christians should confidently embrace those aspects of government that do not cause them to compromise their values, and should criticize those aspects that are contrary to Christian values with equal confidence. Where Christians should be the most enthusiastic is in promoting those aspects of government that allow Christians, and those of other faiths or no faith, to practice freely. But we should not blindly adopt or embrace a government or its leaders.

It must always be clear that as Christians, our primary allegiance is not to any person or government of this world.

Pluralism’s great strength is that it does not ask people to weaken their beliefs, political or religious. In fact, it preserves a guaranteed space for them to hold those beliefs strongly – and to live them out in both their public and private lives. Consequently, there should be no greater champions for principled pluralism than Christians.

Without freedom of conscience, freedom to believe, and freedom to live and act on our beliefs, there is no freedom at all. Therefore, whenever we act to defend the freedom of others, ultimately, we are defending our own. So let’s duke it out in the marketplace of ideas, over religion, philosophy, and political ideology, but where our laws are concerned, let’s work together to ensure that the marketplace of ideas remains open to all. 🙏

**SHAPRI D. LOMAGLIO** is the vice president for government and 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. This article has been adapted from LoMaglio’s longer essay in the Aspen Institute’s *Pluralism in Peril: Challenges to an American Ideal* (January 2018), available at [as.pn/pluralism](http://as.pn/pluralism).



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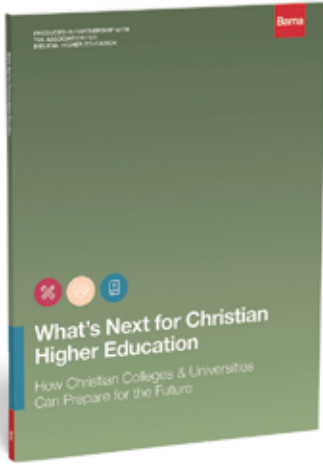
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# From Senior Project to Best-Seller

How a CCCU alumna’s novel is changing perspectives.

INTERVIEW WITH ANGIE THOMAS

Angie Thomas, the 2018 CCCU Young Alumni Award recipient, started her bestselling young-adult novel *The Hate U Give* as a senior project based on her own life experiences when she was a student at Belhaven University in Jackson, Mississippi. (Learn more on page 10.)

Morgan Feddes Satre, managing editor of *Advance*, interviewed Thomas via email about the CCCU award, the impact of her book, and the role of Christian higher education in engaging issues of diversity. Additionally, Deana Porterfield, president of Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary (Rochester, NY), shares her reflection on *The Hate U Give*.



Angie Thomas is the author of the international best-seller *The Hate U Give*. She is the recipient of this year’s CCCU Young Alumni award..

How did you feel when you first found out you had been named the winner?

I was absolutely stunned to learn that I won the award. I’m honestly stunned when I win anything, but this was a new level of shock. To be quite frank, I know that the language in my novel makes some people uncomfortable; therefore the thought of winning an award from an organization such as CCCU seemed far-fetched. However, it was a humbling reminder for me to not make assumptions so quickly, even when it comes to my fellow Christians.

You mentioned that you started *The Hate U Give* as a way to help some of your friends at Belhaven better understand why there was so much unrest over the death of Oscar Grant, a young man killed in California by police who was the subject of the film *Fruitvale Station*. How have you seen this story helping people – particularly people like your friends at Belhaven – understand perspectives outside their own?

I’ve seen and heard of so many instances in which my book has completely changed people’s perspectives to the point that I’m honored to even be in this position. I’ve had people who just simply didn’t understand Black Lives Matter now say that they get it; I’ve had children of white supremacists tell me my book opened their eyes and changed

their hearts. That’s incredible. I often say that empathy is more powerful than sympathy, and I am blessed to know that my book has helped create a little more empathy in the world.

We see countless stories in the news about deaths and situations like those depicted in your book. Why do you think a work of fiction like *The Hate U Give* is able to impact people and make them consider other sides of the story in ways these news stories might not?

I hope that the book makes these stories feel more personal. Why would someone be angry enough to riot in their own community? They took something personally. The anger and frustration and pain that so many of us feel is on a personal level. By showing things from an insider’s view and by placing the reader in Starr’s shoes for 400-something pages, my hope was that it would no longer feel like a political issue. These are human beings, not hashtags.

Photo: Anissa Photography

**"None of the work that Jesus did was easy. Overcoming racism, racial bias, prejudices, systemic racism, and all other forms of bigotry will not be easy. But as Christians, since when should we take the easy route?"**

Like all of higher education in the U.S., Christian colleges and universities have been striving to increase the diversity on their campus at both the student level and at the faculty and administrative level, and have been addressing the opportunities and the challenges that come with such a call. As an alumna of one of our schools, how would you encourage decision-makers on campus to think about and engage these issues?

I would encourage the decision-makers to have hard conversations and deep reflection. I would encourage them to find out what it’s like to be a marginalized person on their campus, and once they do find out, don’t try to explain things away. It makes us

more comfortable to assume that someone is exaggerating, especially when it comes to a topic as sensitive as racism. But we can no longer afford to be comfortable. Since Christians are called to be the light of the world, we should first and foremost address racism on our campuses and our places of worship before the rest of the world addresses it. Be first, not last to make diversity a priority.

Is there anything else you want to add?

None of the work that Jesus did was easy. Overcoming racism, racial bias, prejudices, systemic racism, and all other forms of bigotry will not be easy. But as Christians, since when should we take the easy route?

ANGIE THOMAS is the author of *The Hate U Give* and the forthcoming book, *On the Come Up*, which will be released in February 2019.

THE REVIEWS ARE IN

8 starred reviews from national outlets, including:

*“With smooth but powerful prose delivered in Starr’s natural, emphatic voice, finely nuanced characters, and intricate and realistic relationship dynamics, this novel will have readers rooting for Starr and opening their hearts to her friends and family. This story is necessary. This story is important.”*

– Kirkus Reviews

*“Though Thomas’s story is heartbreakingly topical, its greatest strength is in its authentic depiction of a teenage girl, her loving family, and her attempts to reconcile what she knows to be true about their lives with the way those lives are depicted—and completely undervalued—by society at large.”*

–Publishers Weekly

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2018 Odyssey Award  
2018 Waterstones Children’s Book Prize  
2017 National Book Award Longlist  
2017 Boston Globe-Horn Book Award



# CCCU GRAD’S BOOK OFFERS IMPORTANT PERSPECTIVE ON A TOUGH TOPIC

BY DEANA PORTERFIELD

**I WAS FIRST** introduced to Angie Thomas at the CCCU Forum dinner in late January as she was honored as the recipient of the Young Alumni Award. I listened with intense curiosity as she was introduced and as she responded to receiving her award. To say that I was impressed with Thomas would be an understatement. Her perspective and ability to pull together a complicated topic currently facing our society and deliver it in a narrative is relevant and compelling. I couldn’t wait to purchase her book and begin reading. I left the Forum, purchased *The Hate U Give*, and finished it in two days. I challenge CCCU *Advance* readers to pick up a copy of this book and see what God might show you about your own perceptions, racism, and the unconscious assumptions you and I make every day.

*The Hate U Give* is often referenced as a book about the Black Lives Matter movement, but it is much more than that. The book

delivers an honest and open picture of the challenges of racism, police brutality, and media messaging while also representing varying perspectives of the situation. The reader is inserted into the life of 16-year-old Starr Carter, who finds herself in conflicting communities – Garden Heights, where she lives, and a private prep school she attends in a wealthy neighborhood. This creates an interesting challenge for Starr, who loves both communities but sees in them opposing views on issues of race and injustice. Starr witnesses the deaths of two friends to gun violence – one in a drive-by shooting and the other by a police officer. We are pulled into her struggle of how to speak up publicly, against the police, and with her family and friends.

Starr’s journey as the only eyewitness to her friend Kahlil’s death after they are pulled over on the way home from a party frames the story and brings the reader into a new view of what took place. Starr is faced with the dilemma of trying not to reveal her dual and competing loyalties while still sharing the truth of what she has seen. Starr struggles to find her voice as the media twists what she knows to be the truth, ultimately finding a way to represent the life of her friend and not backing down from those who would want her to change or silence her story.


What I loved most about *The Hate U Give* was the uncovering of truth around differing positions of racism and prejudice. I was challenged to think differently and not assume I understand situations at face value. I was heartbroken by the pain felt in communities and by young people every day. I was challenged to speak up and create space for others to speak. But mostly I was thankful for the work of Angie Thomas, who so eloquently took a difficult topic and created a way to educate my generation and the next.



(HarperCollins)

Yes, there is language in this book that one might find offensive. I would challenge you to set that aside for the greater learning and perspective that can come from reading *The Hate U Give*. If we are open, I believe there is room for the Lord to speak to each of us through the work of Angie Thomas. 🙏

**DEANA L. PORTERFIELD** is the president of Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary in Rochester, New York.



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# PLURALISM IN AN AGE OF DIVISION

The United States was founded on the idea that people from vastly different backgrounds can live together as one nation. This has never been easy, but in this recent period of political and social unrest, CCCU institutions have the opportunity to lead this important vision.

**By Shirley A. Mullen and Jonathan Haidt and Jessica McBirney**



## FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

CCCU graduates are uniquely prepared to share truth in every aspect of society.

By Shirley A. Mullen

**W**HETHER WE GREW up in Sunday School or not, most of us have biblical heroes. For one reason or another, their particular stories speak to us in ways that are specific to our journeys. They inspire us, call us to account, and remind us of God's faithfulness even in the most impossible of circumstances.

If we were choosing official biblical heroes for Christian higher education in this moment, I would nominate Daniel, Joseph, Esther, and Paul. Their stories stand out as models both for the world into which we send today's graduates, and the kinds of graduates we ought to prepare for that world.

Our world, in many respects like the worlds of ancient Babylon, Egypt, Persia, and Rome, is a place where God's children are not necessarily among the privileged majority. Like those societ-

ies, our world is skeptical of established religion; a world of multiple faiths, diverse ethnicities, competing truth claims, political intrigue, international instability, socio-economic inequity, war and violence, fear and hopelessness. The most powerful people shape the "truth," and the "news" is whatever can be made believable to a listening public. Or so it often seems.

This is not the way it was supposed to be. An essential element in the original 18th-century American political experiment was a commitment to the risk of pluralism. At least at the theoretical level, the founders of this country dared to believe that out of difference could come unity – not an imposed unity, but a unity emerging through the free exchange of ideas among human beings endowed by their Creator with the gifts appropriate to this task. It was a radical – indeed revolutionary – set of ideas. Rarely, if ever, in history had

humans believed that people of deeply different worldviews could live in one polity in peace and on equal legal footing. But that was the vision: a confident, responsible, and generous pluralism. There was no sense that difference of opinion, even on one's most fundamental convictions, need stand in the way of political unity and civility.

It should be noted that 18th-century America, when compared with 21st-century America, was relatively homogeneous, and the founding documents did not reckon fully even with the significant diversity that existed at the time. It was certainly more comfortable to be of the Protestant or Anglican traditions than the Roman Catholic or Anabaptist traditions. Neither the First Nations nor African American populations were counted as an equal part of the new national community in the original vision. Those who "counted" in practice were mostly men, mostly white, mostly of British or European descent, and mostly Protestant. There was one sacred text and one moral vision. The theory of pluralism is easier to espouse when everyone who counts in practice is virtually the same.

Meanwhile, 21st-century America is home to countless ethnicities and adherents of all major religions of the world, as well as to no religion at all. Additionally, the various identities of gender and sexual orientation that were hidden under the umbrella of personhood in the 18th century have become visible as independent

## In this moment, graduates of CCCU institutions have something distinctive to offer. They are in the best position possible to be agents of hope in the midst of these turbulent, restless, uncertain, and fearful circumstances.

identities. The Judeo-Christian and classical foundations that united the citizenry of 18th-century America are no longer common ground today.

All too often, fear replaces hope as we face these new realities. Rather than embrace the generous pluralism provided for by America's founders, our society has splintered and polarized. On the one hand, there is a vision of America grounded in a triumphalist Judeo-Christian framework. On the other, there is a secular vision where fundamental moral and spiritual values are privatized and the public square is left with a truncated vision of truth, grounded in rationalistic and scientific "facts." (For a full exploration of this development, see Robert Putnam's *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, 2010.)

Yet that original, risky vision of pluralism still stands. In this fear-filled moment, we need a renewal of hope in the possibility of a flourishing society where profound differences of opinion are compatible with civil dialogue, graciousness, humility, and mutual respect. Indeed, we need a renewed vision of human flourishing that values the differences of opinion as essential if finite and fallen human beings are to come to the richest possible understanding of their world.

In this moment, graduates of CCCU institutions – like Daniel, Joseph, Esther, and Paul – have some-

thing distinctive to offer. Like these biblical heroes, graduates of CCCU institutions have been nurtured in a context where their core identity is grounded in their uncompromising loyalty to God, and where they are prepared with the competence, skills, and sensibilities required to move into positions of leadership and redemptive influence in the larger culture. They are in the best position possible to be agents of hope in the midst of these turbulent, restless, uncertain, and fearful circumstances. There are several reasons for this.

First, in CCCU institutions, we have never given up on the idea that there is a transcendent truth about reality against which all other truth claims are to be evaluated. We believe that there is a truth that transcends all cultural perspectives and identity politics, standing over and against all the narratives about reality constructed from a partial view of the way things are. In short, we have not adopted the dominant post-modern paradigm of the contemporary academy. Rather, we continue to affirm the classical Christian belief that truth is grounded not in abstract reason, scientific experiment, or power, but in the loving life and work of Jesus Christ.

Second, at CCCU institutions, we believe that this truth is revealed to us through nature, through reason,

through experience, through God's biblical revelation, and through the work of the Holy Spirit. We never accepted the Enlightenment belief that the only reliable truth claims are rationalistic and empirical. Thus, in CCCU classrooms, we have not divided truth claims into objective universal truths and subjective privatized truths. We are comfortable wrestling in our classrooms with a variety of kinds of truth claims and spending our energy sorting out which kinds of truth are most appropriate for responding to various kinds of human questions. We also recognize that, because of our fallenness and finiteness, all of our particular explorations will be partial and incomplete. Thus, we can be confident of the reality of ultimate truth, but graciously humble about our own particular grasp of that truth at any moment.

Third, we believe that truth is ultimately personal, rather than abstract. The truth that changes human beings for good arrives not through rationalistic syllogisms or mathematical formulae but embodied in persons. While syllogisms and formulae are important and powerful, it is not until they are connected with redemptive purposes, constructive moral values, and sacrificial love that they can be relied upon to bring healing to the world. Truth, in other words, is incarnational. Just as God revealed himself to this world in



Shirley Mullen (center) is president of Houghton College as well as a professor of history there.

Photo: Courtesy of Houghton College.



the person and work of Jesus Christ, so we must embody truth.

Fourth, we believe that ultimate truth is revealed not in power but in humility and even vulnerability. At CCCU institutions, after the model of Jesus, we prepare young people to pursue truth not so they can wield it over their fellow human beings, but so that they are better prepared to love and serve them.

Finally, we believe that convincing others of truth is the work of the Holy Spirit, not us. We are called to be witnesses to the truth; we are not in charge of making sure that others believe it. This applies whether we are engaging in a political argument, presenting a professional paper, or sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our job is not to “win” arguments, but to present the truth as clearly as we understand it and to ensure that our lives bear out its transformation with integrity. This

freedom allows us to disband our egos and to witness to the truth with grace. It is no accident that our Lord told his disciples that it would be their love for one another – not their eloquence nor their logical arguments – that would convince the world of the truth (John 17). The test of the truth is the quality of the communities it creates.

Like Daniel, Joseph, Esther, and Paul, graduates of CCCU institutions know who they are in God. They are not looking to the culture for approval or validation. They do not confuse this cultural moment or our particular society or nation with the Kingdom of God. They are not tempted to think that our primary responsibility is to protect our way of life or to ensure that everyone agrees with it. They take for themselves Jeremiah's admonition to the Jewish exiles in Babylon that we should pursue the flourishing of the communities in

which we find ourselves, for in their flourishing we will also flourish (Jeremiah 29). They know that God has gifted them with skills and capacities that can be of value to the larger world of human beings who continue to be the object of God's creative and redeeming purposes.

In this moment, when it is tempting to use our constitutional prerogatives to guard our own liberties, may we in the CCCU choose deliberately and in the name of the Gospel to invest ourselves in creating the conditions where the Holy Spirit can be at work in every arena of culture and society, turning our divisions into sources of constructive richness and complexity, and transforming our fear into hope.

**SHIRLEY A. MULLEN** is the president and a professor of history at Houghton College in Houghton, New York.

### RECOMMENDED READING

**Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation**  
(Eboo Patel)

**Adventures in Evangelical Civility: A Lifelong Quest for Common Ground**  
(Richard Mouw)

**Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving Through Deep Difference**  
(John Inazu)

**From Bubble to Bridge: Educating Christians for a Multifaith World**  
(Marion H. Larson and Sara L.H. Shady)

**The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society**  
(Leslie Newbigin)

**Interfaith Leadership: A Primer**  
(Eboo Patel)

**Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle Over Islam Is Reshaping the World**  
(Shadi Hamid)

**Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge**  
(Dallas Willard)

**Nonviolent Action: What Christian Ethics Demands but Most Christians Have Never Really Tried**  
(Ronald J. Sider)

**Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt, and Certainty in Christian Discipleship**  
(Leslie Newbigin)

**Pluralism in Peril: Challenges To An American Ideal**  
(Report by the Aspen Institute)

**Pluralisms and Horizons: An Essay in Christian Public Philosophy**  
(Richard Mouw, with Sander Griffioen)

**Reclaiming Hope: Lessons Learned in the Obama White House About the Future of Faith in America**  
(Michael Wear)

**Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America**  
(Eboo Patel)

**Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth**  
(Leslie Newbigin)

**Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World**  
(Richard Mouw)

# AN AID AGAINST ANTAGONISM

How moral psychology can help us understand the source of difference in a time of great division.

By Jonathan Haidt

*Jonathan Haidt is a social psychologist at New York University's Stern School of Business, examining the foundations of morality and how morality varies across cultural and political divides. He gave the following talk from the main stage at the 2018 CCCU International Forum. It has been edited for length.*

**WE'RE HERE TO** talk about our divided nation. In a sense, I was born to be on the other side of that divide from you and to be opposed to your mission. I was born and raised in a Jewish family in the suburbs of New York City. I was the sort of kid that was so attracted to science that within two years of my bar mitzvah, I started calling myself an atheist. Not just an atheist, but one of those atheists that sees religion, Christianity especially, as the enemy because they [Christians] believe in creationism, and we scientists believe in evolution. Had their books been out in the early 1980s, I would surely have been a New Atheist.

But two things happened that changed me. The first was that I got my first teaching position at the University of Virginia. At UVA, there are a lot of students from the western and southern part of the state. A lot of them are evangelical Christians. I had never actually met evangelical Christians growing up in New York and going to Ivy League schools. They radiated a kind of sweetness, a warmth, gentleness, and humility that I just hadn't really seen before. It was really beautiful, and it touched my heart. And when your heart is open, then your mind is open.

The second [thing] was my research. I study positive psychology, like the causes of happiness. My first book, *The Happiness Hypothesis*, has the subtitle “finding modern truth in ancient wisdom.” I read every major work I could find from the ancient world that dealt with human affairs – things from China, ancient Greece and Rome, the Bible – and what I found was that there are 10 ancient ideas that you can discover all over the world that are deeply psychologically true, and that

the Bible is among the richest repositories of psychological wisdom ever assembled by human beings. So, the first great truth: The mind is divided into parts that sometimes conflict. Who has ever said that more succinctly than Paul [in Galatians 5:17, discussing the spirit and the flesh]? We are moralistic hypocrites. Again, who has ever said it more powerfully and succinctly [than Jesus in Matthew 7:3-5, speaking of specks and planks in the eye]? We all get it when we see those words.

My second book, *The Righteous Mind*, is an exploration into why we are so terribly divided by politics and religion. In the course of writing that book, I read a lot of the research on religion. In *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, a wonderful book by Robert Putnam and David Campbell, they synthesized all the research they could find, and they reached this conclusion: “Religiously observant Americans are better neighbors and better citizens than secular Americans. They are more generous with their time and money, especially in helping the needy, and they are more active in community life.”

I was coming to think of religion in a new way, and as a social scientist, I had to say, “There are many pluses and minuses, and boy, the pluses are quite large and underestimated.” I started realizing that the scientific community at that time was underestimating and misunderstanding religion. I started writing essays for the scientific community saying that religion has been misunderstood and arguing against the New Atheists. I even gave a TED talk on how human beings evolved to be religious; it's in our nature.

**Jonathan Haidt, a social psychologist at New York University's Stern School of Business, was a plenary speaker at the 2018 CCCU International Forum in Dallas, Texas.**



Photo: Dallas Baptist University Photography.



“IF THERE IS A GOD-SHAPED HOLE IN EVERYONE'S HEART, REGARDLESS OF HOW IT CAME ABOUT, THEN IT MATTERS HOW THAT HOLE GETS FILLED.

Let me be clear that while my views on religion have changed, I'm still an atheist. But what I've come to realize is that we have a very important belief in common. It is that there is a God-shaped hole in the heart of each man. Now I happen to believe that came about as a product of natural selection; human beings evolved with religions that gave us a moral order, that gave us civilizations. Many of you don't agree with that – and that's okay.

One thing that we are learning in our incredibly divided country is that we have to look for agreement where we can find it, and we have to find ways to live with people who disagree on certain things if they agree with us on other things that matter.

If there is a God-shaped hole in everyone's heart, regardless of how it came about, then it matters how that hole gets filled. And if you fill it with good stuff – if you fill it with values of service, decency, responsibility, and caring for your family and for others – then things will go well for those people, their community, and their country. But if you fill it with garbage – with materialism, with petty motivations – then things will go badly.

As far as I can tell, Christian colleges do a good job of filling that hole and training students not just in the facts but in virtues. You do a lot more for moral education than we do at secular universities, and a lot of that moral education is for humility, self-control, a sense of service, and serving others before yourself. Boy, are these virtues that we need more of in this country at this time. In fact, an issue that I've been very concerned about these days is what's going on at the secular universities. And it seems as though this God-shaped hole is being filled with a particular kind of political activism that I think is bad for students themselves, for the universities, and for our country.

So I want you to be successful in your mission for moral education. I know you're in a difficult situation in this culture war, and obviously it's impacting certainly all of you who are from the United States. So what I'm about to say is about what's going on in the United States, but all of you operate in a very complicated political space, I'm sure. And things that happen in the United States often spread; our trends do tend to go to many other countries.

The Pew Foundation has been asking a set of questions now and then since 1994, and there are 10 items that they have been asking about repeatedly. So think of it as a basket of opinion items. They take different groups, such as by gender, and measure the difference on these 10 items. In 2004, men and women were about eight points apart; in 2017 they're about seven points apart, so no change. Men and women are not any more different in our attitudes than we were 10 or 20 years ago.

And that's generally true for all of those things with two exceptions: Religious attendance and political affiliation. In 2004 Americans who went to a [religious service] regularly were not very different from those didn't. But by 2017 the gap had more than doubled. So we are coming apart by religion. The same is true for the gap by political party; that gap has also more than doubled so that on average, there is a 36-point difference between the left and the right. We are coming apart. The left hates the right. The right hates the left. We're different kinds of people on the two sides, and we increasingly cannot compromise and we cannot live together. It's a disaster.

Let's talk about what you can do to survive in this incredibly polarizing world. My book, *The Righteous Mind*, describes three principles about moral psychology. And if you understand these, you can use these and apply them in any complicated situation.

The first basic principle is that intuitions come first, strategic reasoning second. Here's how to understand that. That first truth I told you about before – that the mind is divided in parts that conflict – every society knows this. Plato and the Western tradition gives us the idea that

the mind is divided like a charioteer – reason – who struggles to control the passions. But my research has brought me to agree with the philosopher David Hume, who said, no, it's the opposite. Reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.

But reason is not so much a servant like a butler; it's really more like a press secretary of everything else in your mind. We are really good at reasoning not to find the truth but to defend ourselves and reach the conclusions that we want to reach. The basic rule is that when someone says something, you have an instant gut feeling: You want to believe it or you don't want to believe it. If you want to believe it you say, "Can I believe it? Do I have permission?" If you don't, you ask, "Must I believe it?" So we're asking two different questions. We're always asking one but not both.

Now think about everything we argue about in this world. Is there anything that is totally unambiguous? You might think so, but believe me, other people think not. All of these moral social issues are ambiguous. We can see what we want to see. This is why we cannot persuade each other with logic, reasons, and evidence. Once emotions and group concerns come into play, you cannot persuade people with reason alone. You have to speak to the emotions and the intuitions first.

A metaphor I use is the mind is divided like a small rider on a large elephant. The reason is the rider. If you just speak to the rider, there will be no change. You have to change the elephant. You have to build trust and relationships, and you have to appeal to what we share with common humanity. The greatest oratory in our history tends to be that which is, yes, making an argument, but it's all wrapped in beautiful metaphor and appeals to common humanity. Our great orators speak to the elephant while also giving material for the rider.

The second basic principal: Speak to the intuitions. Well, what are intuitions? My own research has been on the theory that my colleagues might call Moral Foundations Theory. What is it in human nature that makes us respond to events in the so-

cial world? Our conclusion is that there are six named foundations of morality.

The first is care and harm. We're mammals; being a mammal means our brains and bodies evolve to care for and nurture. And this is a big foundation of morality, especially on the left – caring, compassion. The second is fairness and cheating. Every society cares a lot about fairness; every society is very concerned to catch cheaters. The third foundation is liberty and oppression. Nobody wants to be constrained or controlled. We rebel against that. The fourth is loyalty and betrayal. We form groups, and we hate people who betray our groups. The fifth is authority and subversion. We have built into us ways of responding within a hierarchy. The last is sanctity and degradation, which has no analog in the animal kingdom. These are unique to human beings. They play huge roles in sexual morality but also in food and things like that.

When people register on my research site, yourmorals.org, those who say that they are very conservative get high scores on all of the foundations of morality. But people who say that they're very progressive, they value care and compassion the most, and they say that loyalty, authority, and sanctity are not part of morality. They reject those. And so this sets us up for the current American culture war. Everybody uses care, fairness, and liberty; although they use them in slightly different ways, everyone uses them. But when it comes to loyalty, authority, and sanctity, those are much more widely used on the right than on the left.

If you want to appeal to people, you need to speak to their concerns – not yours. Research is showing that if you put people in discussion, they spontaneously throw at the other person the things they care most about. But if you say, "Well, how about trying to speak to what they care about?" They can actually do it, but they don't think to do it without prompting.

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**“WE CANNOT PERSUADE EACH OTHER WITH LOGIC, REASONS, AND EVIDENCE. YOU HAVE TO SPEAK TO THE EMOTIONS AND THE INTUITIONS FIRST.”**

Obviously, you're wrestling and adapting to changes around LGBTQ, and I was pleased to see on the CCCU website, and in some of the online essays I found, that the CCCU is working on the issue of how to change, how to adapt, how to welcome the LGBTQ community within the doctrinal constraints you have. I was pleased to see various authors using the language of fairness, care, and protection. So that seems like a very positive sign to me.

The last of the three principles: Morality binds and blinds. I believe we have evolved this particular morality to bind us into groups that are effective at competing with other groups. Many social scientists are fascinated by large-scale cooperation. How does it happen that you get lots of individuals cooperating? In the animal kingdom, the only way you get it at large scale is if they're all children of the same female. They're all siblings; they are all in the same boat genetically. The only species that can do large-scale cooperation without kinship is humans.

Interestingly, whenever you find civilization breaking out on earth, you always find temples first. Once you get agriculture and a little surplus, you get temples. Religion plays an enormously important role in early agricultural societies. The trick that we have is that we can circle around a sacred object, and it's like we're generating an electric charge. It doesn't have to be a religious object. We do it for lots of things. We do it for a flag. We treat the flag as sacred. Then you fight together as a team; your buddies are bound together.

But while we did that in World War II, after the war, what James Hunter, a sociologist at UVA, noticed is that the country was dividing so that the orthodox wing of each religion was teaming up with each other against the progressive wing of each religion and the secular societies as well. This was becoming the new culture war, as he said in his 1992

book, which is still extremely relevant today. He draws on the sociologist Émile Durkheim, who noted that "Communities cannot and will not tolerate the desecration of the sacred. The problem is this: Not only does each side of the cultural divide operate with a different conception of the sacred, but the mere existence of the one represents a certain desecration of the other." We cannot tolerate the existence of the other side.

So sacred value problems are incredibly difficult, but there is some good research on it. I would recommend to you the work of Scott Atran, an anthropologist who looked at sacred value conflicts among Israelis and Palestinians, and with suicide bombers. His general finding is that sacred values are not practical; they're not trade-offs. So if you try to say, "Well, okay, how about if you guys give up the land, but we give you huge amounts of money so we can have a society there," that doesn't help – that makes them angry.

What Atran says is that better than any sort of practical inducement is a symbolic concession. Make an apology that acknowledges the legitimacy of their sacred value, and do something that is painful for your side. When you do that, the other side suddenly becomes much more willing to give. The implications here are that all political movements hold something sacred. That's what brings people together, so they can fight together against someone else. Know what their sacred values are and try very hard to respect them.

Furthermore, to resolve sacred value conflicts, acknowledge that you have done something wrong. Start that way. Do something that acknowledges that you see the legitimacy of their sacred value and you make a concession to them that is a symbolic concession.

If you can do that, suddenly they become much more willing to negotiate, much more willing to be flexible themselves. This advice is obviously very good advice; Jesus said it, too. When you have a conflict, start with yourself. Start by pointing out what you got wrong. Start with the log in your own eye. Then you'll be able to talk and communicate and make progress.

## TALKING IN A DIFFERENT TONE

When it comes to civil discourse on difficult issues in higher education, CCCU institutions are aiming for higher ground.

By Jessica McBirney

**T**AKE A BRIEF glimpse at the headlines in the news or the arguments on social media feeds and it's obvious: Political divisions are deeper than ever. This is particularly true in the U.S., where a recent Pew Research study found that Americans believe there are stronger conflicts between political parties today than between racial groups or economic classes. The gaps in survey responses between members of political parties have risen from 15 points in 1994 to 36 points in 2017.

That division spills over and creates a unique tension on college campuses. Students, faculty, and staff alike have proven they want to be involved in the issues that shape our national dialogue, but an increasing number of speakers or events have caused such controversy that any possibility of civil dialogue – conversation meant to enhance understanding of others who hold different views, even if they still don't result in agreeing with each other's views – seems impossible.

CCCU institutions, however, strive to be different. They seek to face these realities with courage and conviction. As Christians, we know that we cannot shy away from the hard questions of our day nor placidly accept division or schisms within the body of Christ. Jesus said that we will be known as his disciples because we love one another (John 13). Thus, our institutions are working to create spaces where honest conversations about contentious issues can occur, but within frameworks that foster love, build relationships, and seek to make peace. This article highlights just four of our colleges and universities who have had great success creating space for civil dialogue on campus.



From left: Justin Lee, an author and LGBT Christian activist, Jason Moyer, associate professor of communications at Malone University, and Christopher Yuan, author and professor at Moody Bible Institute, were part of the panel, "Gay and Christian: A Dialogue on the Faith-Driven Life" at Malone.

### MALONE UNIVERSITY

When Malone University (Canton, OH) launched the Worldview Forum in 1999, it was designed as a space for thoughtful conversations about theology. However, the Forum soon expanded and encompassed a different goal.

"It became a way of tackling social and political issues and really trying to better understand what a Christian perspective is," says Nathan Phinney, a provost and professor of biblical studies at Malone. "[We want] to construct those conversations not as debates with winners and losers, but as thoughtful conversations that explore the issue."

Each Worldview Forum event features a panel of faculty and outside voices from the community. The university seeks respected experts who hold opposing viewpoints to come together in a conversation moderated by a faculty member.

For example, the 2015 Forum "Black Lives, Blue Lives" featured local law enforcement officers and church leaders. In 2004, Malone invited leaders from a pro-life crisis pregnancy center and the local Planned Parenthood for a conversation on "Fetal Life, Abortion, and Choice." Other recent Forums have addressed Christian

perspectives on capital punishment, the role of the U.S. in world affairs, and political partisanship.

Phinney says the Worldview Forum is one of the reasons he chose to work at Malone. "What impressed me is that [Malone is] intentional about recognizing those voices that aren't well-respected on campus. And they don't just talk about those views; they talk to people who actually hold them."

Opening the door to explorations of alternative opinions and worldviews is a critical piece of the college experience for students. Phinney noted that the Interfaith Diversity Experiences & Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) both show that Malone students benefit from a deeper examination of other worldviews during their college years. The conversations held each year at the Worldview Forum also spark class discussions that give students the opportunity to engage with the opposing perspectives they hear on stage, making it an integral part of the Malone experience.

"It's about our learning mission," says Phinney. "The only way we can learn is by encountering difference." And as a Chris-

Photo: Courtesy of Malone University.



tian university, Malone has additional skin in the game, he says. “It’s also about loving our neighbor – it’s about loving a person created in the image of God, and that starts with knowing about them.”

All Worldview Forum events are open to the public. Those who participate hope to model healthy, respectful civil dialogue to the wider community in Canton.

#### GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

At George Fox University (Newberg, OR), Jenny Elsey, associate dean of intercultural life, often heard students of color express the need for a safe space to talk about the issues and tensions they faced. In response, Elsey and her team created Mathetes, a series of monthly seminars on controversial issues.

The use of the biblical Greek word for “disciple” as the seminars’ title is intentional, Elsey says, because it sets the tone for each event. “We want to ask, ‘What is our role in these conversations as disciples of Christ?’ We’re not here to debate. We want people to walk away understanding the human aspects of these topics.”

The programs are now student-led with support from Elsey and her team. Students pick the topic and speakers each month.

“Students generally know who on campus is the best person to speak into an issue,” Elsey says. “We help them find community members who can also contribute to the conversation.”

The meat of each event is in the extended Q&A time after brief comments

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- Nathan Phinney, Malone University

from the panel. Students verbally ask questions from their seats. The group of about 70 people is just small enough to support a lively discussion in response to each question, and it’s not just the panelists who get to respond – it’s anyone in attendance.

Such an interactive setting is not free from contention. Often what Elsey calls a “pain point” arises – a point of tension that makes people on one side of the conversation feel slighted. Rather than immediately step back from a pain point, Elsey says, moderators encourage students to dig deeper: “What is it about this comment or terminology that’s so sensitive?”

Mathetes facilitators also read a list of ground rules at the beginning of each evening and repeat them if necessary during the group conversation.

George Fox also involves student leaders in their efforts to create space for civil dialogue on campus by holding annual training sessions. Resident advisors and student government representatives watch the video series *Convicted Civil-*

*ity* (created by former Fuller Theological Seminary president Richard Mouw) and learn how to engage in respectful dialogue with others without compromising their own values. They then participate in diversity training seminars, where they learn how to ask good questions and relate with students of different racial backgrounds.

These efforts humanize the “other” in future conversations between students. But they also build a culture of openness and dialogue on campus. Elsey recounted one incident when a political club invited a conservative speaker to campus. Some liberal students were concerned that the school was supporting the views of this guest. Elsey encouraged liberal students not to disengage and critique the conservative event, but to show up and ask questions. “That we had other outlets for a broad range of viewpoints was helpful to them,” she says. “Students could see us actively working on representing a variety of viewpoints.”

#### WHITWORTH UNIVERSITY

Whitworth University (Spokane, WA) first recognized the need for intentional civil conversation when an informal poll revealed that students, regardless of political ideology, were dissatisfied with the level of discourse on campus. They felt they couldn’t talk to their friends about important issues.

Whitworth president Beck Taylor saw an opportunity. “Christ calls us into these messy issues to be peacemakers,” he says. “Christian schools are shaping their students for leadership in diverse, pluralistic settings.” This year he set up the President’s Colloquy on Civil Discourse,

a three-part lecture series on the Christian approach to truth and disagreement.

“We didn’t want to inundate students with weekly opportunities,” Taylor explains. Instead, each of the three events addresses a carefully selected question. The first lecture asked, “Can we still speak the truth in love?” and laid the foundations for dialogue in Christian community. Professors from three departments gathered to discuss the distinctive resources Christians have in the midst of difficult conversation.

The second installment was designed to give students practical tools for disagreement, tolerance, and intellectual virtue. The final panel applied Christian foundations and practical skills to a contemporarily relevant topic: the nature and parameters of free speech. “We picked free speech in part because the issue doesn’t divide people neatly on political lines,” Taylor says.

Each of these three lectures features faculty from different departments on Whitworth’s campus. The departments are diverse – from philosophy to physics to political science. “We want to approach this in an interdisciplinary way,” says Taylor. “Each one of those people can bring in their own insights and experiences.”

The President’s Colloquy is already having positive impacts in the student body. The student government, Associated Students of Whitworth University (ASWU), holds Town Hall events where students gather to discuss difficult issues facing the campus. They had already identified the need to carve out a space for dialogue on campus, and the President’s Colloquy provided the perfect partnership opportunity.

Despite some concerns that the student body would be hesitant to confront these challenging topics, ASWU President Jeff DeBray was sure the Town Hall series would succeed. “There’s never a good time. But with the current political climate, we felt it was necessary to have these conversations, and we felt confident we could do it.”

Each Town Hall covers a topic selected by students and starts with a refresher on guidelines for civil conversation. After an introduction to the topic,



Whitworth University president Beck Taylor (right) created the three-part President’s Colloquy series to equip students with the skills and opportunity to engage the Christian approach to truth and disagreement.

participants break into small groups to talk through a list of questions prepared by a panel of knowledgeable students. The small groups reconvene to share their thoughts and discuss action items with faculty members. For example, in a recent Town Hall on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), speakers ended the session with tips on how to contact legislators about the issue.

“The biggest challenge is always getting a diverse turnout,” DeBray admits. He has sought out different political and issue-based clubs on campus and invited their members to the Town Halls. “People are busy. But I want to seek out diversity to avoid groupthink.”

The President’s Colloquy and the Town Hall series have been launching points for continued conversations among Whitworth faculty and students. They have already begun brainstorming future events and spaces for dialogue on campus. Taylor says, “Whitworth will continue to host debate and discussion on difficult issues – that is the role of any university, but I think as our current colloquy has instructed, it is of particular relevance for institutions that proclaim Christ.”

#### GORDON COLLEGE

Gordon College (Wenham, MA) has long been a campus bustling with diverse political viewpoints and activity. However, in 2015, during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement, the Student Life staff noticed another form of diversity that was not quite as prevalent.

“Seventy to 80 percent of white Americans don’t have a person of color in their

group of friends,” says Nicholas Rowe, dean of student engagement at Gordon. “This is critical, because the demographics of Christianity, in the U.S. and the world, are changing. People of color are already the majority of U.S. Christians ages 19 to 29, and they will drive the conversation of Christian faith expression in the future. How will our white students be part of it?”

Gordon’s Office for Student Life created a *Come to the Table* program as one step to engage this reality. *Come to the Table* assigns students to a small group that meets for dinner four times during the semester with other students of different backgrounds, cultures, and race. Groups are comprised so that half are white students and half are students of color. A pair of trained student facilitators, one a person of color and the other white, leads each meeting and assigns readings about race and reconciliation. It is an opportunity for participants to redirect and educate one another; a safe environment where even uncomfortable questions are welcome.

“We hope it’s a launching point for non-structured conversations, too,” Rowe says. “There’s been considerable interest from white students, which is encouraging, and students of color who are willing to engage.”

Beyond these open table dinner discussions, Gordon cultivates a culture of thoughtful discussion and disagreement through a shared faith in Jesus Christ. Political and issue-based clubs are encouraged to come together across the aisle to hold events and formal debates

A Mathetes panel comprised of students, faculty and community members engage in conversation around gentrification and the role of Christians in civic and community development.



Photo: Satoshi Sethi

Photo: Courtesy of Whitworth University.



for students. Davis Metzger, president of the Gordon College Student Association (GCSA), says, “There’s a vibrant culture of discourse here that’s student-driven.”

GCSA is highly active on campus, voicing the opinions and concerns of students to the administration and working out points of tension. This puts Gordon in the unique position to model respectful dialogue directly with the student body.

Recently, with the help of GCSA, some students at Gordon passed a resolution asking the college to address actions and policies that have inadvertently “caused hurt to the LGBTQ+ community.” Gordon’s leadership did not feel they could honor all of the resolution’s requests, but instead of leaving the students with a simple “no,” Student Life took the opportunity to start a bigger conversation.

“We wanted to honor the spirit of the resolution, because we are committed to helping our students know how to engage in touchy subject matters with respect and dignity,” says Rowe.

In response to the resolution, Student Life staff partnered with GCSA to host a series on human sexuality entitled “LGBT+ in Christian Community: A Series on Sexuality, Scripture, and Inclusion.” Its focus is to delve deep in the historic theological understanding of sexuality, while recognizing the need for better care for those who are part of the LGBTQ community. Rowe believes the event will place the original student resolution in the much broader context

of the theology of human sexuality as a whole.

Rowe and GCSA consider the compromise a success on the whole. “Everything GCSA wants may not necessarily be implemented,” Rowe says. “Our student body elected representatives are thinking sincerely about how our programing and staff can better listen and understand these rising questions. We want to help students feel like they belong.”

The Office of Student Life at Gordon hopes all these campus groups, discussions, and programing serve as models of peaceful and civil discourse for students. Ultimately, these conversations rest on a shared faith that seeks truth and understanding across diverse backgrounds and beliefs. For young Christians, Rowe says, learning how to participate in difficult conversations is a non-negotiable. “Our responsibility is education,” he says, “but also formation.”

### RECOMMENDATIONS

These are just four institutions that have recognized and met specific campus needs with grace and creativity. Every school will face its own challenges and devise its own tools to approach those challenges. However, a few common themes ran through the advice gathered from each of these administrators and students.

#### 1. Think broadly about campus engagement

To be effective, efforts to teach and encourage civil discourse must be campus-wide. Get academic departments, student activities, and spiritual life involved. If students are expected to engage in civil discourse, university leadership must also practice it.

#### 2. Meet students where they are

Some campuses are bustling with students eager to dive into political conversations. Some have students who prefer to fully process ideas before they speak their minds.

Others have students who were raised to avoid divisive topics entirely. Regardless, it is important to lay the foundation for healthy dialogue by reminding the campus community what civil discourse and good thinking look like, as it will help set the stage for later conversations that can be challenging and painful. (For a possible resource, see our excerpt and review of *How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds* by Baylor University professor Alan Jacobs on pages 60-61.)

#### 3. Lay the Ground Rules

In addition to helping students better understand what healthy dialogue and civil discourse are like, event facilitators can help create a good environment for dialogue by reminding event attendees of some guidelines that will help the conversation move forward. Some examples include speaking from personal experience and using “I statements”; speaking truth and personal conviction from a position of love, not of anger; and not interrupting others or cutting off moments of silence when they might be appropriate in the conversation.

#### 4. Get students as involved as possible

Whitworth’s Jeff DeBray and Gordon’s Davis Metzger both spoke about the benefits of proactive student governments that plan events to help students engage in difficult topics. But even if a student government is not in the position to plan civic engagement strategies, utilizing student leadership in the planning process can help administration-led efforts be more effective and interactive.

#### 5. Remember the purpose: Loving God and loving your neighbor

Jesus instructed us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Learning more about God and about each other helps us understand how we can better obey this command to love. 🙏

**JESSICA MCBIRNEY** is the presidential and government relations fellow for the CCCU and a graduate of Biola University.

Photo: Wislene Augustin.

Students at Gordon College engage in a discussion hosted by the student organization ALANA, which provides support to students of color and works to increase campus knowledge of their history, culture, and contributions.



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# THE POWER OF EXPERIENCE

How my trip to the Uganda Studies Program offers a small glimpse of the power of immersive, Christian off-campus study programs.

By Rick Ostrander

**ARRIVE AT** Kampala airport at 4:30 a.m. on a Monday morning, dazed from the two consecutive overnight flights I took to get here. Fortunately my driver, Happy, is here to greet me. That's his real name. One thing I quickly learn is that Ugandans have this endearing quality of using virtues as names – Happy, Innocent, Mercy, etc. The downside, I suppose, is the risk that an individual will not live up to the name.

Fortunately, Happy is just that, and he cheerfully loads me into his sturdy old Toyota van for a 90-minute ride to my destination, Uganda Christian University, home of the CCCU's Uganda Studies Program (USP). I'm here not just as the CCCU's vice president of academic affairs, but as a student, eager to learn about the program and get a taste of what USP students experience.

Of course, that experience begins with jet lag. So I attempt a two-hour nap before grabbing a quick breakfast and heading to the Faith and Action capstone class taught by Rachel Robinson, the USP program director and leader of its General Studies Emphasis. Here I'm treated to a vigorous discussion of James K.A. Smith's *Desiring the Kingdom* as viewed from a Ugandan perspective.

Later, I join a discussion followed by dinner with the USP social work students and their counterparts at Uganda Christian University. It's one of a series of meetings between these two groups throughout the semester – the brainchild of USP social work coordinator Lisa Tokpa (who leads USP's Social Work Emphasis) and Kasule Kibirige, head of the social work department at UCU.

These meetings enable American social work students to experience firsthand the culturally embedded nature of their discipline. The conversation ranges over ethical dilemmas in Ugandan and U.S. contexts and how the social worker's obligations differ in individual-based versus community-based societies. It's the sort of educational experience that students can't get by watching a film about Ugandan social work practices in a classroom in the U.S.

After a well-earned night of sleep, I set out the next morning with Micah Hughes, the coordinator of USP's Global Health Emphasis, and two students to visit some internship sites. In 2003, Micah spent six months in northern Uganda researching the AIDS epidemic and doing community health education; he also participated in short-term community health and nutrition work from 2008-2015. Two years ago he joined USP to start this new track in partnership with Westmont College.

Micah has become adept at negotiating Ugandan traffic. Traffic lights are virtually non-existent in Uganda. Taxis swerve in and out of the only paved two-lane road in the region, and 125cc motorcycles called boda-bodas dart in and out of traffic. The previous day, Micah lost the outside of his rear fender in a roundabout, which now attracts the concerned attention of other university drivers at our departure point. Ugandan vehicles endure a beating, but their owners tend to be fastidious about patching, painting, and polishing up the damage. Fortunately the Toyota SUVs are both commonplace and virtually indestructible.

Jamie Witcher, a student from Westmont College on the Global Health Emphasis at USP, learned from ACHERU (Afaayo Child Health Education and Rehabilitation Unit) staff about pediatric rehabilitation in Uganda.



Photo: Courtesy of Uganda Studies Program.



Rick Ostrander (left) spent an evening with USP host mother Mama Robinah (center right) and her host students Rachael Phillips (center left, Westmont College) and Rachel Land (right, Bethel University.)

Jessica Mount, a senior social work student from Point Loma Nazarene University, joins her supervisor in addressing a group of caregivers at her field placement, St. Peter's Child Development Center.



We meet with the St. Peter's staff over a Ugandan "tea" consisting of tea, coffee, greens, potatoes, plantains, and liver (fortunately, I love liver). We talk about how an internship in Uganda helps students experience just how important cultural context is to social work practices. For example, in America, we have a formal child welfare system made up of foster homes that can be utilized in cases of abuse. But in a society in which a formal network of resources is scarce, our students' supervisors caution the students to consider, "Where are you removing the child *to*?" The new placement might be worse than the situation they are already in, and so the Ugandan social worker's best alternative might be to begin by warning – and reforming – the caregiver rather than immediately removing the child.

Over lunch, I talk with Lydia and Innocent, two Uganda Christian University staff members who assist with USP. As I eat my fish stew (with the fish tail sticking out the side of the bowl), they tell me what they enjoy so much about the American students – their curiosity, their adventurous spirit, and their willingness to jump into any new situation. Of the nine BestSemester programs, Uganda Studies offers one of the most extreme opportunities for cross-cultural immersion. It's difficult to imagine many places that could be more different from a North American middle-class suburb as this bustling East African town.

Photos: Courtesy of Uganda Studies Program.

"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."

#### - USP Alumna

Later that evening, I have dinner with the Tokpa and Hughes families in Rachel's home, where I learn something of both the satisfaction and the challenges of leading a semester abroad program. Lisa and Eddie have been in the process of adopting a Ugandan baby boy since last fall, and since his adoption and visa arrangements are not completed, that has meant over a year of separation from Lisa's family back home. Micah and Avrey had a baby girl when living near Micah's parents in Colorado a couple of years ago, then promptly packed up the family and moved to Uganda.

The next morning, Rachel and I meet with John Senyonyi, vice chancellor (the equivalent of president) of Uganda Christian University. John is a frequent visitor to CCCU presidents' conferences in the U.S. and has worked hard to connect UCU with stateside CCCU institutions. He has also led UCU to resist the emphasis on specialization that characterizes African education and instead incorporate some of the Christian liberal arts emphasis of CCCU schools in the U.S. Much of the success of the Uganda Studies Program, now in its 14th year of operation, can be attributed to the gracious hospitality provided by its host institution in Mukono.

Later I attend the UCU chapel service, which features a somewhat more energetic worship style than one experiences at most U.S. Christian colleges. After a time of worship and announcements, students are treated to a lively sermon about the importance of leaders having the humility to eventually step aside and let others take their place as leaders. It's an interesting sermon topic in a country that has been governed by a single ruler for over 30 years, and its timing comes one week after the overthrow of Robert Mugabi in neighboring Zimbabwe.

After lunch and many farewells, I set off with Happy back to Entebbe Airport. In late afternoon, the narrow streets of Kampala are choked with traffic, and what was a 90-minute drive three days

Uganda Christian University, the host institution of the Uganda Studies Program, hosts community worship every Tuesday and Thursday in Nkoyoyo Hall.



## SPOTLIGHT

### GLOBAL HEALTH EMPHASIS

**THE GLOBAL HEALTH** Emphasis (GHE) allows students from biology, nursing, pre-health professions, and public health disciplines to complete undergraduate degree-specific coursework at Uganda Christian University while participating in global health internships. GHE students complete experiential learning with faculty guided oversight to ensure an appropriate scope of learning that includes internship opportunities with the Ugandan Ministry of Health, pediatrics clinics, herbal medicine, labor and delivery wards, and public health organizations. As students engage in four months of experiential learning, with mentorship from Ugandan and American faculty, they gain valuable insights into the expanding field of global health and gain competencies for future work with diverse populations.

GHE students have the choice to live with local host families or international roommates on campus. In the past two years students have transferred credit to CCCU institutions in epidemiology, microbiology, nutrition, infectious diseases, immunology, and advanced nutrition. GHE courses and internships allow students to cultivate applied knowledge, develop international relationships with local clinicians, and engage broader issues of aid, development, medical missions, and cross-cultural healthcare.



## SPOTLIGHT

### SOCIAL WORK EMPHASIS

**THE SOCIAL WORK** Emphasis offers exciting international field education for Bachelor of Social Work students through a framework of cultural humility, CSWE competencies, and experiential learning. Social work students have the opportunity to conduct junior- and senior-level field placements within partner organizations that serve orphans and vulnerable children, people with disabilities, the elderly, young mothers, refugees, and others.

Unique to this program, field placements are supervised by both a Ugandan and American (MSW) field instructor, helping students to see first-hand how context shapes practice. The social work field experience and accompanying seminar discussions shed light on the rewarding and challenging nature of cross-cultural social work, while simultaneously helping students to translate and apply their professional growth to a Western context.

While the field placement is the focus of social work students' semester, further cross-cultural engagement takes place within a partnership with Uganda Christian University's (UCU) social work department, where USP students learn from their Ugandan peers and UCU faculty about the universalities of social work while gaining a deeper understanding of the critical role diversity plays in the profession.



(From left) Rachel Robinson (USP director), Benon Musinguzi (deputy vice chancellor of academic affairs at UCU), John Senyonyi (UCU vice chancellor, which is equivalent to president), and Rick Ostrander from the CCCU pose for a photo on the UCU campus.

earlier turns into a four-hour return trip. That affords me the opportunity to learn more about Happy, who, like many Ugandans, is a refugee from elsewhere. His parents fled to Kampala from Rwanda, and like many East Africans, Happy speaks four languages, which is 2½ more than I speak.

I do my best to explain to Happy what it's like to have eight hours of daylight for part of the year and 16 hours in other parts of the year. Here on the equator, the sun rises and sets like clockwork at 12-hour intervals the entire year. I also do my best to explain ice-fishing and snow-plows.

Eventually I arrive at the airport and set off on your basic Kampala-Kigali-Brussels-Chicago-Grand Rapids series of plane rides, providing ample opportunity to reflect on the CCCU's commitment to operating semester abroad programs, which it has done since its inception 42 years ago. If Christian higher education is truly about forming the entire person as a follower of Christ, not just providing career skills, then that an extended, intentionally designed cross-cultural experience such as USP is at the heart of what we do.

Jamie Smith's *Desiring the Kingdom* is a book that is widely discussed not only in Rachel Robinson's "Faith and Action" class but throughout the CCCU, and for good reason. Smith's basic point is that true Christian formation happens not by pouring information into the brain but through habits and liturgies that are practiced consistently and communally over an extended period of time. Lived experience is formative intellectually and spiritually, but the transformation takes time, like sirloin tips in a crock-pot, not leftover pasta in a microwave oven.

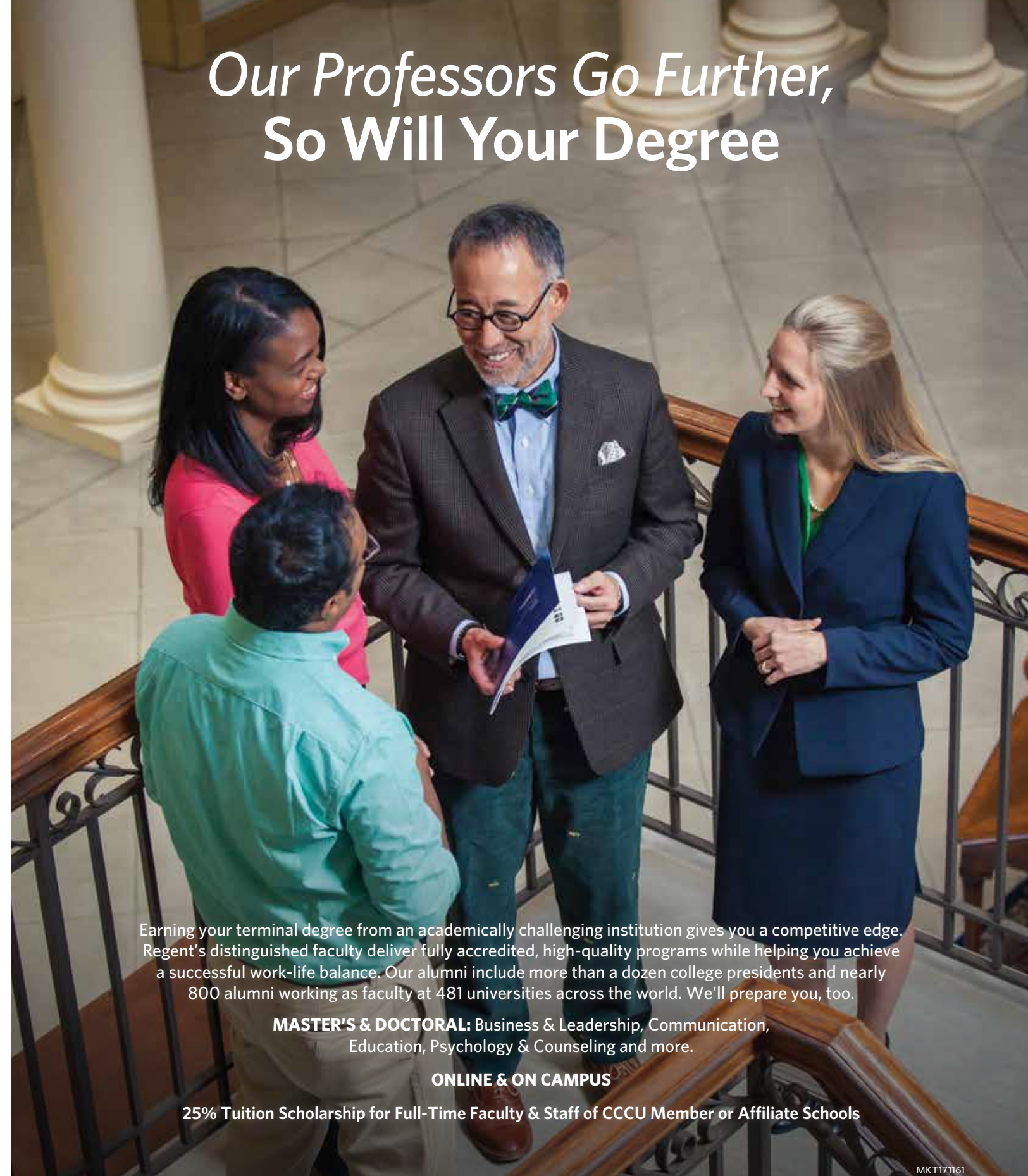
This is why well-constructed, Christian-based, semester-long programs such as USP are so valuable. Students placed in a new environment through USP are engaging their whole being almost constantly by questioning inherited assumptions, developing new practices, encountering new perspectives, and being forced to rely on God in ways they never have before.

Actually, my daughter Anna summed up the impact of USP quite well at the end of her semester there, and her words have stuck with me: "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." I can't imagine a better outcome. 🙏

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

Photo: Courtesy of Uganda Studies Program.

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## Navigating the Evangelical Identity Crisis

Two scholars look beyond the debate over the definition of 'evangelical' to examine the commitment it requires and consider its history.

By Mark Labberton and Molly Worthen

“Referring to oneself as evangelical cannot be merely a congratulatory self-description. It must be instead a commitment and aspiration guided by the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. What now are Christ’s followers called to do in response to this identity crisis?”

That’s the question addressed by a new collection of essays, *Still Evangelical? Insiders Reconsider Political, Social, and Theological Meaning*. The contributors include the heads of major organizations traditionally tied to American evangelicalism, including Jim Daly (Focus on the Family), Mark Galli (*Christianity Today*), and Tom Lin (InterVarsity Christian Fellowship), as well as thought leaders like Shane Claiborne, Lisa Sharon Harper, Karen Swallow Prior, and Soong-Chan Rah.

The book’s editor, Mark Labberton, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, brought together this group of authors in order to have a wide variety of “evangelical insiders” provide reflection on the theological and social implications of the word “evangelical.” Labberton also contributed an introductory essay framing the book. Morgan Feddes Satre, editor of *Advance* (and a current student at Fuller) talked with Labberton about his introduction and how the book can help CCCU campuses engage the question. The interview has been edited for length.





**In your introduction, you talk about how “social location” influences American evangelicalism and can help explain some of the differences we see between conservatives and liberals who also hold traditional evangelical beliefs. Can we learn to see, recognize, and separate out our “social location” views from the truths we study and learn in Scripture?**

I think that we can never separate ourselves from our own location – it's like telling a fish to leave water – because it so defines and circumscribes how we live, where and who has formed us, all of that sort of thing. No one lives in a setting that is unaffected by their social location.

Part of the gift of the Christian faith and scripture is the possibility, however, that our social location can be disrupted by the Gospel as it intersects with us in our specific context. Yet it is easier and perhaps more common for our context to subsume the Gospel, rather than letting the Gospel transform the way we see our social location and the way we respond.

When Jesus declares, for example, in Matthew 4, that “the kingdom of God is at hand,” he is proclaiming that a fresh revelation of the nature of God is breaking in upon Roman authority, into personal circumstances, and into social reality, and recasting all of that. The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' expansion on that very theme: “Let me show you a re-ordered life in light of the

kingdom of God.” That is meant, I think, to be the catalyst for a re-envisioning and a re-indwelling of our social location, so that we come to where we are with a fresh set of loves, hopes, and commitments. Out of this, Jesus' followers are meant to demonstrate a new social reality, to enact an embodied experience of the kingdom of God now.

The church is not and never can be culture-free. But it is right to expect Christian disciples to live differently within culture. The crisis that this moment in evangelical history has evoked is that evangelical leaders and evangelical culture itself have seemed to drown the very Gospel we are called to proclaim and enact. For many, the loudest public voices heard to represent evangelicals seem to have sold out to culture, power, or fame. It leaves many thinking that we evangelicals are opportunists, speaking out of our social location while attributing it to our faith, rather than allowing our faith to reorder and challenge our context and assumptions.

**So as we wrestle with this – with the word “evangelical” and all its social and theological implications, as well as the idea of social location – how can CCCU institutions help their campus communities engage this sort of reflection?**

This is such an important question – I would say it is the central question of Christian higher education, because it's the core of what should distinguish the enterprise. Like any institution of higher education, CCCU schools are committed to the disciplines we study, offering the opportunity for those disciplines to be rigorously engaged and also considered in the light of the Christian faith.

I think being a Christian university should open our imagination, heart, and mind toward the world in light of the enormity and significance of God's revelation in Christ. It should also drive us into even more serious and careful reflection about the implications of our faith in relationship to any given discipline. This is the common work across an institution's life as it is done distinctly by administrators, faculty, and students.

Coming back, then, to the question of social location – it can be that a Christian education again is just a reproduction of a

**“IT'S NOT JUST CRITIQUE THAT THE GOSPEL BRINGS – IT'S ALSO THE VISION OF A GREATER, DEEPER REALITY THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ABOUT AND TO WHICH WE ARE MEANT TO DEVOTE OURSELVES.”**

certain kind of subculture, reinforced again and again. We can all just settle into the frame of that social location, or we can actually allow the Gospel to keep waking us up to the vision of the kingdom of God, which is a vision of radical re-creation in and through Jesus Christ. This brings discovery, imagination, and disruption to all we study and how we study it.

If we let it, the Gospel cracks open the universe. Christian higher education sails and dives into this reality with faithfulness, intelligence, creativity, and hope. We inevitably come to the task of education through a particular lens. But if we let education do its great work, it should cause us to have an ongoing self-critique of asking ourselves again and again: How are we hearing and seeing the meaning and reality of the Gospel in relationship to our studies, our world, and our lives?

For example, Fuller is an institution, as an affiliate of the CCCU, that was founded in Southern California 70 years ago, and it has traits about it that are distinctly Californian, Southern Californian, and strongly white. Those could be the things that drive our scholarship and teaching, but what we strive for is that our teaching and learning should principally be defined by the kingdom of God, which has categories that are dramatically greater, wider, and deeper than those details. We have to start where we are. But the Gospel actually has things to say about an alternative Christian vision of how God sees humanity. How does God see education for the sake of the world, including but not limited to Southern California? How does God see the formation of Christian leaders, with a vision toward a world that is much greater and much different than our classical cultural markers?

Our institutions need leaders who will seek to engage in careful self-critique and then in redemptive hope and transformation. Because it's not just critique that the Gospel brings – it's also the vision of a greater, deeper reality that the kingdom of God is about and to which we are meant to devote ourselves. So we should be marked, I think, by a radical humil-

ity that can admit our location; acknowledge and embrace, but also confess, repent, and lament over the limitations of that; and then open ourselves to the door of a fresh wind of the Spirit that can actually transform our social location to look much more like the vision that Jesus gives us in the Gospels of the kingdom that he's building.

I'm not in any way suggesting this is easy work. But it feels like distinctly Christian and urgent work, that we would want to acknowledge the limits of our location so that we can lean into and be transformed by a vision of the kingdom of God. “Evangelical” is a tag that for many points to self-interested, angry, xenophobic people. No wonder it is so hard for people to recognize Jesus among us.



**Mark Labberton** is president of Fuller Theological Seminary.

Photo: Courtesy of Mark Labberton.



Clearly the dissonance between the popular/media label of “evangelical” and the theological understanding of “evangelical” is greater than it’s ever been. Do you think it’s possible to “take back” the label, so to speak?

Toward the end of the introductory essay that I wrote, I raised the question of whether the real issue is “still evangelical?” or whether it should be a different question: Are we *yet* evangelical? What I’m trying to get at is a shift between something that could be argued over, like you’re describing, or whether “evangelical” should be understood as an aspirational hope. How do I become conformed to the Evangel – to Jesus Christ?

If that’s what we mean by “evangelical” – that I want to be identified in word and deed with the Evangel, Jesus Christ himself, and be transformed into his likeness – then that work remains, regardless of the matching title form of Evangel that might be “evangelical,” or “evangelicals,” or “evangelicalism.” I think those are words that have a derivative value and meaning only insofar as they are an embodiment of the Evangel.

The question I believe matters is: Do we seek to live as Evangel-centered people? Are we wanting to live like people who follow Jesus? Or are we going to simply live like people who are trying to barter over the attribution of certain words, “evangelical” and

“evangelicalism”? The value of our identity only matters if it is a reflection of Jesus.

Do we want to be like Christ? If so, what does that mean for individuals and institutions? This is the central vocation of Christian life. The crisis of the moment is wanting to use the evangelical label and tribe in ways that scandalize and empty the Gospel we supposedly represent.

**So how can Christian colleges and universities help prepare the next generation of evangelicals – whether or not they call themselves that – so that they can be ready to engage this changing culture?**

I hope CCCU schools have a vision for themselves of enacting and demonstrating a commitment to the real Evangel. And that every level, every direction, every system, every cultural presupposition is being held up to the mirror of the Gospel as we ask, “where are we – or aren’t we – in relationship to the Gospel?” As opposed to, “where are we only in relationship to our accreditors, our competitor CCCU schools, our sponsoring churches, our donors?”

How does the Gospel shape our teaching, our relationships, our research, our cultural engagements? How are we bringing Christian faith to bear on any of the various disciplines? How are we letting the Gospel be richly and profoundly present in our reflections and activities?

I think that this approach can help nurture the kind of personal transformation that I hope a CCCU school seeks for its students. I also think it contributes to the formation of true humility that helps students turn toward the wider culture and question with servant hearts for truth, justice, and beauty, “What’s the relationship between this kind of Christian vision and our society and culture, both nationally as well as internationally?”

The great place and hope of CCCU schools right now is that they might embrace in this season of evangelical crisis a fresh opportunity to use this period of inflection as a chance to re-clarify their central enterprise in light of the Gospel – to articulate where they are and where they aren’t on that road, and how they use this crisis to become freshly committed to the transformative educational and Christian formational opportunity that this very moment offers. 🙏



(InterVarsity Press)

**"THE VALUE OF OUR IDENTITY AS  
EVANGELICALS ONLY MATTERS IF IT IS A  
REFLECTION OF JESUS."**



## A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

To successfully engage the next generation of evangelicals, the key may be looking to the past.

**By Molly Worthen**

*Molly Worthen, an assistant professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has focused her research on North American religious and intellectual history, particularly conservative Christianity in the 20th century. The author of Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism, Worthen gave the following talk from the main stage at the 2018 CCCU International Forum. It has been edited for length.*

**WOULD LIKE** to start with a story that happened at L'Abri, the famous Christian commune in the Swiss Alps founded by Francis Schaeffer in the 1950s. I had the opportunity to visit there for a couple of weeks. One person made a real impression on me, and that was a girl named Amelia, the daughter of a PCA [Presbyterian Church in America] minister. She had just graduated from the University of Tennessee and told me that she considered herself “a poster child for the church” – that was her phrase. But she was increasingly uncomfortable attaching the label “evangelical” to herself, especially because she said it led people to assume they knew all about her politics when she wasn’t even really sure yet what her own politics were.

Amelia told me that in her last couple of years of college she took a job at the local coffee shop, and she ended up making friends with all kinds of people who were not like her – non-Christians, gay students, pot smokers, the whole gamut. And this experience really got her questioning a Christian tradition that – at least as she had grown up understanding it – said that all of these people were going to some place not very nice at the end of it all.

So, she asked her father if she could go to L'Abri. He asked her what she planned to study and she told him that she wanted to get back to the fundamentals, but he didn't really seem to get what she meant. She told me, “If Christianity is a tree, I'm after the trunk. And I really think he thinks I want the branches.” She told me that she wished more atheists would come to L'Abri, because she was really hungry to get into it, to hash it out and be forced to

think through everything. She told me, “I want to be assured of my faith. I want to feel the presence of God.”

I think there are three things to note about this story. First, Amelia, like so many of the young evangelicals I've talked to is frustrated with what I'll call “evangelicalism's public political face,” her sense that outsiders automatically assume that all white evangelicals have the same politics.

Second, she grew up learning a very rationalistic, head-focused approach to God that seems to have not quite equipped her for the problems she's trying to sort out now – her relationship with non-Christians and her sense of purpose in a multi-cultural and kind of unpredictable world.

And here's the last point: My conversation with Amelia happened more than



**Molly Worthen** is an assistant professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Photo: Courtesy of Molly Worthen.



**"YOU AS CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS CAN  
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10 years ago. I think this is important, because it seems like every week I read another article about how we are living through an unprecedented moment for traditional Christians in this country; a time of crisis unlike anything we've seen before; unprecedented numbers of young people leaving the church in droves; talking heads pronouncing the label "evangelicalism" just too corrupted, too politicized to be useful. And so often all of this is tied to the outcome of the last presidential election.

Don't get me wrong; the 2016 election was a moment of historical significance, absolutely. But I think that our current political situation has simply shed more light on long-standing debates and divides among evangelicals, and on a struggle of Christian educators to prepare students for modern challenges. That goes back at least a half-century. [In] my archive work at places like Biola and Wheaton, [I read] through the worried letters of educators from across the Christian tradition, about – this is in the 1940s and '50s – how their students are just too focused on their salary and they don't have a sense of ministry. My job as a historian is to tell you it has deep roots. We can recognize this broader context – and I guess it's a matter of judgment whether the broad context is depressing or kind of heartening – while also taking stock of

the way this generation of Christian students is absolutely different from the kinds of students who would have attended your schools in the '40s and '50s.

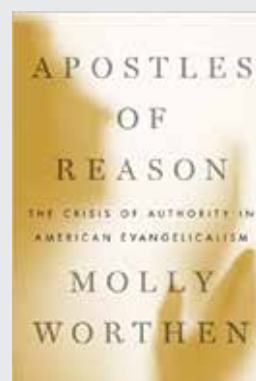
I'll sum it up this way: The thing students seek more than anything is not really a quest for the perfect watertight rational case for believing the Bible. Certainly, there are some students who are still very much preoccupied with these traditional questions of apologetics. But I think the thing they really crave – and it's the same thing most of my students at [the University of North] Carolina crave – is a sense of authenticity. A sense of knowing who they truly are in the world, of being part of a human and humane community that is rooted in place and time and can occasionally persuade them to put down their smart phones and interact as real, living, breathing individuals.

I want to tell you one thing that you as Christian educators can do for these students that I think very few people are in a position to do. And that is to give them a sense of their own history, of where they stand in the broad sweep of Christianity. I think the study of church history has a huge role to play in the future of Christian higher education.

Occasionally, I have the opportunity to lecture on Christian campuses, and whenever I do, I always end up talking with faculty about their college's particular history, its relationship with a particular denomination, with missionary organizations and how that history does and does not shape campus life. I've talked to Nazarene professors who are really proud of the way many churches in their denomination historically held mainstream fundamentalism at arm's length and found ways to make room for a different relationship with science and to approach gender roles differently, in a way that they would call progressive within the bounds of orthodoxy. I've spoken to Anabaptists who want their students to understand the long Christian tradition of critiquing

state power rather than necessarily seeking to accrue more power. I've spoken to Anglicans at Wheaton who are rethinking worship and who wouldn't mind a whiff of incense in the Billy Graham Center now and then.

My impression is that on many campuses, the quest for historical consciousness is experiencing a renaissance. There is a



(Oxford University Press)

new generation of faculty and administrators who want to root themselves in the long sweep of Christian history and transmit a sense of that to their students. Students are hungry for it, especially the huge numbers who grew up in nondenominational or denominationally indifferent churches with a sort of implied myth that all there is to Christian history is: Chapter One, Jesus and the apostles; Chapter Two, the papist dark ages; Chapter Three, that Martin Luther guy; and then Chapter Four, the founding of their own church when Pastor Randy started holding Bible studies in his living room 20 years ago.

Now those are great stories, but I think that learning their own longer, much more complicated history can give students the tools to see how varied and rich evangelicalism really is; to see these supposedly unprecedented challenges of post-Christian society in a richer context; and to see that, if they object to this or that particular evangelical self-appointed spokesperson, no single person can speak for the whole tradition – it's far too messy. And they'll see that if you grasp the breadth of evangelical history – if you even just get a taste of it – you quickly start to see that the labels "conservative" or "progressive" fall apart, and there are standards other than the political check boxes of 2018 for thinking about faith and evaluating faith's relationship to a pluralistic culture.

When I sat down to prepare these remarks, I got the idea to look up Amelia for the first time since I interviewed her many years

ago. She's married with kids, according to Facebook, and from what I can tell she has not left the church. She is pretty active in a Reformed evangelical congregation embedded in the University neighborhood in Knoxville – the sort of church that has been holding prayer services to protest white supremacy and very enthusiastically welcomes religious skeptics on its website in big letters. I immediately had the image of Amelia buttonholing some poor atheist who somehow ended up at coffee hour and finally having those passionate debates that she so craved at L'Abri.

I think so many young evangelicals are a lot like her. They're not looking for reasons to leave Christianity. In fact, they really want to stay. The trouble is that they have so often inherited a pinched, narrow understanding of what Christianity is. So, consider [having] a discussion about how to restore the broad, varied history of what it means to be Christian in the 21st century. 🙏

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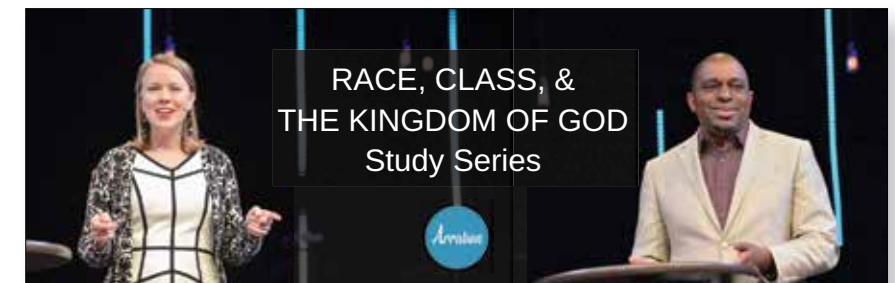
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# UNLOCKING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Christian higher education can help transform the lives of millions of Americans with a criminal past.

By Heather Rice-Minus

**T**his April, we celebrated Easter – an opportunity to reflect and give thanks for the gift of Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross. Because of his suffering, every sinner can experience redemption and become “a new creation.” As Christians, we have experienced the ultimate second chance.

April also presents an opportunity to celebrate redemption in another context: Second Chance Month. Prison Fellowship, the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, and more than 100 other businesses, churches, and organizations are partners in this national initiative to change public perceptions of people with a criminal record – people just like Jill Koski.

In 2016, Jill was incarcerated in a women’s prison in Shakopee, Minnesota. The leaders of that prison embraced Second Chance Month, inviting the incarcer-

ated women to run a Second Chance 5K. Prison officials set the course on the prison grounds, handed out water, and cheered on the dozens of incarcerated women running in honor of second chances.

In 2017, Jill was released from prison and got the opportunity to run in a Second Chance 5K at Concordia University. She was surrounded by hundreds of other runners, many of them returning citizens like her. As a mark of their continued struggle for second chances, Jill sported the same gray sweatshirt she had worn to run in prison the year before. And this time, she was free from addiction, making the most of her second chance.





"Even after they successfully complete their sentence, people with criminal convictions face 48,000 different rules and laws restricting their rights in America, including access to education."

"I'm happy today that I don't have to wear this [sweatshirt]," Jill shared at the finish line, throwing it off, "that I could do this race ... and have an opportunity to not forget what it's like to be behind bars, and the opportunities we all need once we get out. I'm very grateful."

So many people with a criminal record just want a chance to embrace their God-given potential – and to throw off their pasts like Jill threw off hers at the finish line.

#### OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS

The estimated 65 million Americans who have a criminal record, however, face significant barriers, also known as collateral consequences, that prevent them from reaching their potential.

Even after they successfully complete their sentence, people with criminal convictions face 48,000 different rules and laws restricting their rights in America. These limitations include restrictions on access to job opportunities or professional licensing, education, voting, housing, volunteer opportunities, and many other parts of a full and productive life.

When people commit crimes, they must face appropriate accountability, proportional to the harm they have caused. The punishment should fit the crime, but too often in America, the punishment never really ends, lasting long after the prison sentence has expired.

A criminal record functions as a permanent scarlet letter that follows people long after they have served their time. The many obstacles faced by returning individuals contribute to high recidivism rates.

When people can never leave their past behind, they often return to crime. Society must provide a pathway to restoration for those who have paid their debt. This is a matter of justice and public safety. Out of respect and concern for the survivors of crime, we must not fit our prisons with revolving doors; those who get out should be equipped to succeed and never commit another crime.

#### EDUCATION UNLOCKS MINDS AND FUTURES

Access to educational programs is a significant predictor of successful reentry. People in prison generally have low levels of education. Many universities and colleges across the country are conducting education programs in prisons with positive results. Providing access to higher education in prison promotes pro-social values and unlocks second chances so that people can become productive citizens and provide for their families.

Tabatha, an incarcerated woman studying for her associate's degree through Lipscomb University's LIFE program at the Tennessee Prison for Women, writes:

The Life Program has taught me to think better about myself and my life and reach for my goals. Every night after class, I call home and tell my mom about all that I have learned, and she learns things as well. I am thankful for a second chance at an education regardless of my circumstances. I hope that other institutions will implement programs like LIFE to inspire people to keep hope alive.

Spending more on higher education could effectively reduce the need for incarceration spending. Educational programming in prison has been found to reduce recidivism by 13 percent and increase post-release employment by up to 21 percent. These reductions in future crime result in \$5 of taxpayer savings for every dollar spent on correctional education.

In 1994, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act resulted

in the elimination of Pell grant eligibility for people incarcerated in federal and state prisons. Contrary to widespread belief at the time, Pell grants to prisoners never displaced awards to non-incarcerated students. In the last year Pell grants were available to prisoners (1993-1994), only 23,000 of the 4 million grant recipients (or .006 percent) were incarcerated. Sufficient award funds remain available to ensure that all eligible students receive Pell grants. An estimated 772 education programs operated in over 1,200 prisons in the early 1990s, but following the loss of Pell grant eligibility for prisoners, the number dwindled to eight by 1997.

In June 2016, the Department of Education announced its selection of 67 colleges and universities out of more than 200 applicants to participate in the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program, including Christian universities like Nyack College and Mercy College (NY). Clearly, the desire to serve students in prisons still exists.

When asked if she would support Pell grants for prisoners during a recent roundtable, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos said, "I think that's a very good and interesting possibility." This is an encouraging indication, although any action from the Administration is less permanent than what legislation could achieve. If Congress permanently restored Pell grant eligibility as proposed in the REAL Act, more institutions, including Christian colleges and universities, would have increased and sustainable capacity to start or expand education programs inside prisons.

#### THE PART WE ALL CAN PLAY IN SECOND CHANCES

Christian colleges and universities can also help unlock second chances for those who have already served their time. People with criminal records face significant difficulty acquiring admission to educational programs. Some institutions are reconsidering their policies for admission, reflecting a willingness to consider a formerly incarcerated applicant's effort to live a redeemed life.

Some campuses and jurisdictions are even embracing "ban the box" on their applications – removing the criminal history

question from their application altogether and only inquiring about criminal records post-admission, to inform decisions about campus housing, career planning, etc.

Ultimately, Easter and the Gospel message remind us that there are no throwaway people in God's eyes. Through Christ, people with a troubled past can still have a bright future. Prison Fellowship's founder, the late Chuck Colson, was a shining example of someone who repaid his debt and successfully moved forward in living a crime-free and transformed life. There are millions with a narrative like his – men and women who once broke the law, now transformed and replacing the cycle of crime with a cycle of renewal.

If you share a passion for unlocking second chances, join us in celebrating next April. There are lots of opportunities to engage available at [prisonfellowship.org/secondchances](http://prisonfellowship.org/secondchances), including:

- **Spread the word.** Use the Second Chance social media toolkit to raise awareness. Attend an event near you and invite a friend, or host your own on campus.
- **Partner.** Prison Fellowship encourages colleges, businesses, churches and organizations to become official Second Chance Month partners.
- **Donate your signature.** Encourage elected officials to pass resolutions and proclamations designating April as Second Chance Month
- **Run or walk for second chances.** Second Chance 5K events are available in some cities, or the Virtual Second Chance 5K option makes this possible anywhere.
- **Welcome returning citizens and their families to your church.** Host a Second Chance Sunday with your congregation.
- **Grant access to education.** Urge your university to remove questions about criminal history from its admission application, only inquiring post-admission to inform secondary decisions.

Together we can unlock brighter futures for 65 million Americans who have repaid their debt to society.

"Easter and the Gospel message remind us that there are no throwaway people in God's eyes. Through Christ, people with a troubled past can still have a bright future."

**HEATHER RICE-MINUS** is the vice president of government affairs at Prison Fellowship, the nation's largest Christian non-profit serving prisoners, former prisoners, and their families.



Jill Koski, a returning neighbor, has participated in Second Chance 5K races while in prison and after her release from prison.

Photo: Courtesy of Prison Fellowship.





Photo: Taylor Martyn

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# How to Think

An introduction to ‘a survival guide for a world at odds.’

BY ALAN JACOBS

“**WHAT WERE YOU** *thinking?*” It’s a question we ask when we find someone’s behavior inexplicable, when we can’t imagine what chain of reasoning could possibly lead to what they just said or did. But even when we’re not at the point of exasperation, we can still find ourselves wondering where our friends and family and neighbors got such peculiar ideas. And it might even happen, from time to time, in the rare quiet hours of our lives, that we ask how we got our own ideas – why *we* think the way we do.

Such matters strike me as both interesting and important: given the questions that constantly confront us as persons and societies, about health and illness, justice and injustices, sexuality and religion, wouldn’t we all benefit from a better understanding of what it means to think well? So in the past few years, I’ve read many books about thinking, and while they offer varying and in some cases radically incompatible models of what thinking is, there’s one trait all of them share: they’re *really* depressing to read.

They’re depressing because even when they don’t agree on anything else, they provide an astonishingly detailed and wide-ranging litany of the ways that thinking goes astray – the infinitely varied paths we can take toward the seemingly inevitable dead end of Getting It Wrong. So surely, I think as I pore over these books, it’s vital for me (for all of us) to get a firm grip on good thinking and bad, reason and error – to shun the Wrong and embrace the Right. But given that there appear to be as many kinds of mental error as stars in the sky, the investigation makes me dizzy. After a while, I find myself asking: What are these people even talking about? What, at bottom, is thinking? ...

Jason Fried, the creator of the popular project-management software Basecamp, tells a story about attending a conference and listening to a talk. He didn’t like the talk; he didn’t agree with the speaker’s point of view; as the talk went on he grew more agitated. When it was over, he rushed up to the speaker to express his disagreement. The speaker listened, and then said: “Give it five minutes.”

Fried was taken aback, but then he realized the point, and the point’s value. After the first few moments of the speaker’s lecture, Fried had effectively stopped listening: he had heard something he didn’t agree with and immediately entered Refutation Mode – and in Refutation Mode there is no listening. Moreover, when there is no listening there is no *thinking*. To enter Refutation Mode is to say, in effect, that you’ve already

done all the thinking you need to do, that no further information or reflection is required.

Fried was so taken by the speaker’s request, he adopted “Give it five minutes” as a kind of personal watchword. It ought to be one for the rest of us too; but before it can become one, we should probably reflect on the ways that our *informational habits* – the means (mostly online means) by which we acquire and pass on and respond to information – strongly discourage us from taking even that much time. No social-media service I know of enforces a waiting period before responding, though Gmail allows you to set a delay in sending emails, a delay during which you can change your mind and “unsend.” However, the maximum delay allowed is thirty seconds. (Twenty-four hours might be more useful.)

Does it seem to you that I’m exaggerating the problem? Or just blaming social media? Could be. But as soon as I read Fried’s anecdote I realized that I too am regularly tempted to enter Refutation Mode – and the more passionate I feel about a topic, the more likely I am to succumb to that temptation. I know what it’s like to become so angry at what someone has written online that my hands shake as they hover over the keyboard, ready to type my withering retort. Many are the tweets I wish I could take back; indeed many are the tweets I have actually deleted, though not before they did damage either to someone else’s feelings or to my reputation for calm good sense. I have said to myself, *If I had just thought about it I wouldn’t have sent that*. But I was going with the flow, moving at the speed of the social-media traffic.

Maybe you’re confident that you’re not like that. But before you dismiss the possibility, why don’t you just give it five minutes? 🐟

*Reprinted from HOW TO THINK: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds COPYRIGHT © 2017 by Alan Jacobs. Published by Currency, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.*

**ALAN JACOBS** is a distinguished professor of humanities in the honors program at Baylor University (Waco, TX).



Alan Jacobs is the author of *How to Think*.

Photo: Holly Fish.

# An Excellent, Welcome Resource

This is a substantial primer on the hard work of thinking.

REVIEW BY MARK HIJLEH

**IT’S A VENERABLE** idea in liberal arts education: We are interested in teaching students not *what* to think, but *how* to think. And the main distinction of *Christian* liberal arts education is our worldview: We are interested in “thinking Christianly.” In *How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds*, Alan Jacobs, distinguished professor of the humanities in the Honors Program at Baylor University, aims at this general territory via a different route: Better thinking is available to all, but it is not devoid of elements and values at the heart of Christianity.

Note Jacobs’ subtitle: In a world at odds, good thinking and survival go together – they are not luxuries. For Jacobs, thinking is not the decision itself, but what goes into it: the careful assessment of what is and what might be. Thinking requires listening, but not in what Jacobs calls “Refutation Mode” (where we often find ourselves). Meanwhile, shorthand, metaphor, and myth allow us to function – because we cannot cognitively evaluate every circumstance in daily life – but they can also tempt us away from the hard work of real thinking.

A great deal of that hard work involves social interaction, Jacobs asserts. He is concerned about the combative language and imagery around which contemporary debate is framed. We need to be aware of categorizing those who disagree with us as the Repugnant Cultural Other, effectively denying their personhood. Jacobs thinks we are living in an age in which this is all too easy, but being an authentic member of multiple communities mitigates such tendencies. This is probably why Jacobs has come to a complex position on social media, noting that although communication technologies can significantly impede our ability to think well, people “can also talk back,” and thus the platform need not become an echo chamber.

According to Jacobs, we go astray willfully by “a settled determination to avoid thinking.” Thinking can “dig into the foundations of our beliefs” and disrupt the stability of our lives, though ultimately in a good way. Thus Jacobs is suspicious of certain kinds of presumptions and predispositions but by no means against “settled conviction.”

Jacobs is quick to note that being an academic does not guarantee better thinking. But being a teacher (if one goes about it well) forces one into seeing both “all the ways an argument can go right

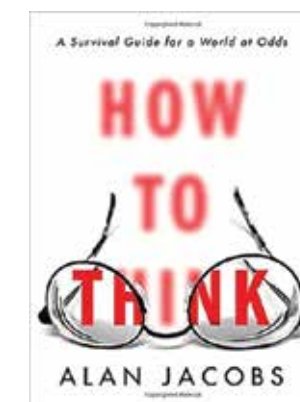
and all the ways one can go wrong.” So this book deftly teaches (rather than tells) us how to think, and especially how to think about thinking. It is a deeply literate and historically informed work, with sources and examples ranging from Terence to John Stuart Mill to C.S. Lewis to Wilt Chamberlain to Leah Libresco Sargeant, and all manner of characters and tidbits in between.

As a prime example, Jacobs summons David Foster Wallace’s review of Bryan Gardner’s *Dictionary of Modern American Usage*. Jacobs praises Wallace’s concept of the “Democratic Spirit” as “one that combines rigor and humility, i.e., passionate conviction plus a sedulous respect for the convictions of others.” This is Jacobs’ answer to the problem of “having an open mind” while maintaining “settled convictions” – or not being ruled by trying to protect the “sunk costs” of maintaining one’s investment in an intellectual position. Wallace’s “Democratic Spirit” transcends this dilemma by reinforcing the fact that we and those with whom we disagree are equally human, subject to error, and thus in need of love.

So, thinking is as much – perhaps more – about character as about rational analysis. Or rather, truly rational thinking involves rightly ordered feelings and dispositions. For Jacobs, it seems that to think well is to love. Going a step further, one may conclude that this is why Jesus is both the greatest thinker and the most loving human as Son of God and Son of Man. The final words of the book’s core are telling and inspiring: “Be brave.”

*How to Think* will be a fine choice for Christian colleges and universities, perhaps as a campus-wide common reading selection or for cultural studies, rhetoric, and even worldview-development courses. Faculty will find a wealth of ideas for contextualizing rightly directed thinking in their classes; students may observe how smoothly historically informed research can flow across the page; and leaders are apt to come away inspired to better the world. Jacobs’ offering also serves as an example of how to write persuasively from a Christian perspective for a broader audience, to promote spiritually and civically healthier communities. 🐟

**MARK HIJLEH** is provost of The King’s College in New York City, New York.



**How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds**

By Alan Jacobs  
(Penguin Random House)



# Divided We Fall

Book offers a needed exercise in evangelical ecumenics.

REVIEW BY CHRISTOPHER T. BOUNDS

**THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY** of the Reformation has inspired both celebration of its contributions and sober reflection on its lasting legacy of division among evangelical Protestants. The question arises: Can Protestants truly claim to be a part of the “one holy catholic and apostolic church”? Some have responded by accentuating a “Mere Protestant” theology, uniting diverse theological and ecclesial traditions around core beliefs. Others have tried to identify biblical, theological, historical, and ecclesial resources within their tradition to help bridge the divide among evangelical communities. *Divided We Fall*, by former Reformed Theological Seminary president Luder Whitlock, is part of the latter category. In his adroit identification of the challenges to the oneness of Christ’s body, he offers steps to overcome its divisions, with application to Protestant churches and institutions.

Whitlock begins by describing the unity and diversity of the church in God’s plan of redemption. He then rehearses Reformed Protestantism’s historically consistent recognition of the church’s oneness in doctrinal and confessional statements, in spite of strong internal disagreements. These disagreements, however, grew over the centuries, leading to schisms and sectarianism. Whitlock then highlights failed efforts among American Presbyterians to heal these breaches.

With this background, Whitlock moves to the book’s strongest, most helpful section: identifying specific challenges facing Christian unity in the Reformed Presbyterian context.

He starts with problems arising from lack of focus on church unity. First is the impediment of “benign neglect”: Churches affirm the importance of unity, but do little about it. Second is the “tyranny of the urgent.” Myopic attention given to internal health too often consumes a church’s energy and resources, leaving little to spend on the larger body. Third, organizational shifts and changing ecclesial culture, especially acute in local church and denominational mergers, can debilitate and erode unity.

Next, Whitlock examines problems caused by disagree-

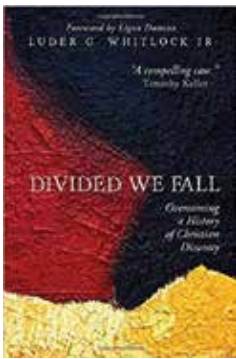
ments among Christians. First is the challenge of differing generational and cultural perspectives. When navigated with wisdom, these can be beautiful expressions of diversity, but they can become polarizing when not handled well. Second is the constant test of theological differences; the more important a theological point is to a group, the more likely division will occur over disagreement. Finally, and relatedly, is the hurdle of churches drawing “too fine a line” between essential and secondary matters of doctrine and social practice. Because theological traditions place boundaries in different places, divisions occur. Churches need to move toward a new “centered set” paradigm, where they identify core commitments, rather than focus on drawing hard lines of inclusion or exclusion.

Whitlock concludes by offering spiritual and practical advice on the non-negotiable work of church unity. Unfortunately, this is the weakest contribution of his book, plagued by needless repetition and failure to capitalize on key earlier insights. Whitlock argues that Christian unity begins when churches and theological traditions love one another as God loves. Without a context of mutual welfare and concern for the other side, Christian communities flounder in relationship with each other. Trust must be built through time spent with one another, engaging in conversation founded upon empathetic listening and a commitment to address areas of polarization. True Christian unity, however, cannot happen apart from the Holy Spirit, who knits the church together. Daily prayer and reliance on the Spirit must saturate the entirety of this work.

Despite weaknesses, Whitlock’s *Divided We Fall* offers a model for fostering church oneness. If evangelicals are going to address constructively their history of disunity, then each theological community must critically reflect upon its history, recognize and repent of its specific contribution to division, draw upon its unique doctrinal and spiritual resources for church unity, and commit to overcome internal and external ecclesial strife.

More specifically, this type of reflective and constructive theological work is critical for institutions in the CCCU as it faces threats to its broad evangelical unity. Trustees and administrations would do well to examine and wrestle with the challenges to unity identified by Whitlock and to draw upon his salient and applicable advice. Without the prioritization of such institutional thought, it will be increasingly difficult to make progress navigating the troubled waters of Christian higher education. ☺

**CHRISTOPHER T. BOUNDS** is Wesley Scholar in Residence and professor of theology at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky.



**Divided We Fall: Overcoming a History of Christian Disunity**

By Luder G. Whitlock Jr.  
(P & R Publishing)



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# The Posterity Gospel

Our Gospel call is not about us;  
it's about the generations that come after us.

BY ANDY CROUCH

At the 2018 CCCU International Forum, Andy Crouch gave three devotions from Acts 15, which describes the Jerusalem Council that fully included Gentiles along with Jews in the church. In his final talk, he reflected on the fact that within a few years, nearly all of the central figures of the Council had been martyred. This is his conclusion to that talk, presented in slightly edited form here.

**R**ONALD HEIFETZ [senior lecturer of leadership at Harvard Kennedy School] writes about “staying alive” in leadership, by which he means avoiding literal or figurative assassination. Once you're assassinated, you are no good to the community you lead. Of course, in one sense, he is right that this should be a concern for leaders. But as Christians, we know he can't be entirely right, because the early church's leaders did not orient their lives around avoiding assassination.

There's a terrible modern idea called the prosperity gospel – the idea that God wants wealth and happiness for me, now, in some kind of predictable way. You can't read Acts, or study the lives of the apostles, and believe that. But there is something in the Bible that's not so far from the prosperity gospel. I've come to call it the posterity gospel.

The posterity gospel is not about individual flourishing or blessing, and it's not about blessing in this present time. It is about the Lord, “the Lord, the God who keeps covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations to those who love him and keep his covenant.” A generation we could never imagine living to see is within the sight of God, and he will keep with them the covenant that we attempt to keep in whatever times we're given.

There is some decision that needs to be made for the posterity of your institution, something essential for its multi-generational impact, that needs to be done in response to the gospel of God and the work of God in the world. Part of what we need to do after an event like this [Forum] is to go back and risk assassination for such decisions.

In doing this, we're given the promise of the great psalm of the posterity gospel, Psalm 22. First-century Jews didn't refer

to psalms by their numbers; they referred to them by their first lines. So when Jesus quotes Psalm 22 from the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me,” he is indeed invoking this psalm's brutal depiction of torture and death. But he is also invoking this: “But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.” And he is invoking the incredible turn the psalm takes – while in no way denying the dust of death, going on to say, “I will declare your name to my people. In the assembly I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one.”

The prosperity gospel has no room for suffering. But the posterity gospel holds, encompasses, does not despise, does not overlook the suffering of God's people. “Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to the people yet unborn: He has done it!”

So remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David – David's posterity. “That is my gospel,” Paul writes to Timothy, chained up in Rome at the end of his life, “for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Preach the word, my brothers and sisters. Be ready in season, be ready out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with complete patience and teaching. Always be sober-minded. Endure suffering. Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry this day, the rest of your life, as many days as you're given. Fight the good fight. Finish the race. Keep the faith. There is laid up for you the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to all who have loved his appearing.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. 🙏

**ANDY CROUCH** is partner for theology and culture at Praxis and is the author of several books, including “*Strong and Weak*,” “*Playing God*,” and “*Culture Making*.”

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