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
p. 40

Navigating the Evangelical Identity Crisis
p. 46
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

LISTENING TO SEXUAL MINORITIES
A STUDY OF FAITH AND SEXUAL IDENTITY ON CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CAMPUSES

MARK A. YARHOUSE
Author of Understanding Gender Dysphoria
JANET B. DEAN, STEPHEN P. STRATTON & MICHAEL LASTORIA

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 ECOCITIES IN WHICH SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION CAN TAKE PLACE.

ECOLOGIES OF FAITH IN THE DIGITAL AGE

STEVE LOWE & MARY LOWE

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 April 2018

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Shirley Hoogstra
President of the CCCU

ME AND MY THINKING
The Role of Memory in How We Think

PAUL D. FOER

Available March 2018

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Available May 2018

Available January 2018

Available August 2018
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 modeled 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 over with the others 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 their children, and their brothers and sisters, the MESP program students and guests were not acquaintances. They 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 Christian faith and love.

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, story-telling, 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.

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Stay connected with the CCCU on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Vimeo.

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.

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By Morgan Feddes Satre

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By Shapri D. LoMaglio

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DIVIDED WE FALL
Review by Christopher T. Bounds.

UNLOCKING A BRIGHTER FUTURE
Christian higher education can help transform the lives of millions of Americans with a criminal past.
By Heather Rice-Minus

PLURALISM IN AN AGE OF DIVISION
CCCU institutions have the opportunity to lead this important vision.
By Shirley Mullen and Jonathan Haidt and Jessica McBinney

THE LAST WORD
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THE POWER OF EXPERIENCE
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FROM THE EDITOR | MORGAN FEDDES SATRE

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 us 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 Mulas 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 39). 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 Ostreider 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 our 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). History Molly Worthen’s talk from the Forum (page 55) 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.

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.

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ADVOCACY | BESTSEMESTER | EVENTS

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 a 1.4 percent tax on endowment earnings for institutions with endowments that exceed $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 act. 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.

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.

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

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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 international sociology from the University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh, Scotland. He has also served most recently as assistant director of study abroad at the University of Texas, 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 several ambassadors to the UAE, including the ambassador from the United States, as well as members of the UAE royal family. Siefken has been getting better and better every semester. Students are already coming out of the LASP and finding immediate opportunities in the immersive storytelling field, which has a rapidly expanding job market.

THE CCCU’S SCHOLARS’ SEMESTER IN OXFORD NOW OFFERS STEM STUDIES

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 international sociology from the University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh, Scotland. He has also served most recently as assistant director of study abroad at the University of Texas, 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 several ambassadors to the UAE, including the ambassador from the United States, as well as members of the UAE royal family. Siefken has been getting better and better every semester. Students are already coming out of the LASP and finding immediate opportunities in the immersive storytelling field, which has a rapidly expanding job market.

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 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 several ambassadors to the UAE, including the ambassador from the United States, as well as members of the UAE royal family. CCCU students at LASP, which has had VR training incorporated into its curriculum for nearly two years, has 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 LASP 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.

GROUP SELECTED FOR NEXT SCIO SCHOLARSHIP & CHRISTIANITY SCIENCE AND RELIGION 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, denomination- al, academic, geographic, and demographic variety.

Funded by the Templeton Religion Trust and the Blankemeyer Founda- tion, 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 partici- pant’s research project and establish (or bolster) a science and religion stu- dent club at the home institution.

LAFSC CO-DIRECTOR NAMED A TOP VIRTUAL REALITY INFLUENCER

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. 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 several ambassadors to the UAE, including the ambassador from the United States, as well as members of the UAE royal family. CCCU students at LASP, which has had VR training incorporated into its curriculum for nearly two years, has 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 LASP and finding immediate opportunities in the immersive storytelling field, which has a rapidly expanding job market.”

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AROUND THE COUNCIL

SCHOLARSHIP & CHRISTIANITY

In Oxford (SCIO), the U.K. subsidiary of the CCCU, has named the 24 par- ticipants for the Bridging the Two Cul- tures of Science and the Humanities II project. The participants come from a range of universities around the world, including institutions in Can- ada, 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, denomination- al, academic, geographic, and demographic variety.

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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.”


**RUNNERS UP**

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 SIVER
Oklahoma Christian University, 2017

Preston Kemp and Tyler Siver 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. VisualALS (founded by Kemp, Siver, 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.

John R. Dellenback Global Leadership Award

DAVID S. DOCKER

President of Trinity International University, holding a long-time leader in 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 5th 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.

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Forget the stories of born leaders and flawless gurus - this book reveals the actual behaviors of successful CEOs, and shows you how to master them. Packed with myth-busting facts and fresh insights into the CEO mindset, you’ll discover what it really takes to get ahead, the way top leaders actually think and behave, and the traits to develop to power your career and ambition at any stage.

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PHOTO: Top, Dallas Baptist University Photography. Bottom, courtesy of Preston Kemp and Tyler Siver.

PHOTO: Top, Dallas Baptist University Photography. Bottom, courtesy of Preston Kemp and Tyler Siver.
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 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.
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.

TOP: (From left) Sarah Bilaye-Benibo, Gina Rosanova, Alexandria DeJesus, and Marjalee Kolly 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.

Very grateful to be at the cccuforum this week being inspired by so many dear friends. @Gordon_VP
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.

WHERE DOES STUDENT AID COME FROM?
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 generate more than $20 in federal tax revenue through their operations, capital investments, and additional alumni earning power.

$60 BILLION
IN ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

$25.9 BILLION
FROM OPERATIONS AND CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

$34.6 BILLION
FROM ADDITIONAL ALUMNI EARNINGS

$470 MILLION
IN ANNUAL FEDERAL GRANT AID

$2.46 BILLION
IN ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL AID

$166 MILLION
GENERATED PER DAY FOR THE U.S. ECONOMY

To put things in perspective this is ...

This economic activity also generates:

$9.7 BILLION
IN FEDERAL 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

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

DEFAULT RATE
6.3%
CCCU INSTITUTIONS

11.5%
NATIONAL AVERAGE

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.”

![Chart showing CCCU institutions value diverse views and critical thinking.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seniors reported that...</th>
<th>CCCU</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private, Not-for-Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course discussions and assignments included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) “often” or “very often.”</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

![Chart showing CCCU institutions value diverse views and critical thinking.]

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<tr>
<th>Seniors reported that...</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They examined the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue “often” or “very often.”</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

![Chart showing CCCU institutions value diverse views and critical thinking.]

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Seniors reported that...</th>
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<th>National Average</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The institution emphasized encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.) “quite a bit” or “very much.”</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They connected learning to societal problems or issues “often” or “very often.”

![Chart showing CCCU institutions value diverse views and critical thinking.]

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Seniors reported that...</th>
<th>CCCU</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>Public</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They connected learning to societal problems or issues “often” or “very often.”</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CCCU INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.

Seniors reported that...
The quality of interaction with faculty was “excellent” or “very good.”

![Chart showing CCCU institutions provide supportive learning environments.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seniors reported that...</th>
<th>CCCU</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private, Not-for-Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The quality of interaction with faculty was “excellent” or “very good.”</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

![Chart showing CCCU institutions provide supportive learning environments.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seniors reported that...</th>
<th>CCCU</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>Public</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The quality of interaction with academic advisors was “excellent” or “very good.”</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

![Chart showing CCCU institutions provide supportive learning environments.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seniors reported that...</th>
<th>CCCU</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private, Not-for-Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The quality of interaction with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) was “excellent” or “very good.”</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.”

![Chart showing CCCU institutions prepare students for the workforce.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seniors reported that...</th>
<th>CCCU</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private, Not-for-Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They acquired job- or work-related knowledge and skills “quite a bit” or “very much.”</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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, the Christian should not be 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 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 force or law – unless the society itself is 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 Christians, who have long been the majority population in the United States, violate those principles essential to a pluralistic society through denigrating others, by invoking 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.

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 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 Pew poll showed that only one in ten 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 Christians, who have long been the majority population in the United States, violate those principles essential to a pluralistic society through denigrating others, by invoking 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.

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.

There are five elements of pluralism. We have already discussed the first two:

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.

The third element of pluralism is that societal participants should seek to protect others’ entry into the marketplace of ideas. This is the heart of a pluralistic approach. 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. 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 do 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.
INTERVIEW WITH ANGIE THOMAS

From Senior Project to Best-Seller
How a CCCU alumna’s novel is changing perspectives.

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 Saree, 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 Rochester Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary (Rochester, NY), shares her reflection on The Hate U Give.

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.

The Hate U Give is a story helping people – particularly people like your friends at Belhaven better understand when it comes to my fellow Christians. 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?

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ON DIVERSITY

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 her introduction 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.

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.
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

WHETHER 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 are sent as graduates and the kinds of graduates we ought to prepare for today’s world.

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.

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

Yet, 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 can be contended 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 the moment, graduates of CCCU institutions have the competence, skills, and values prepared with the competence, skills, and values to espouse when everyone who counts is home to countless ethnicities and 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 triumphant 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.” We believe 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 believe that truth is ultimately real, and that there is a transcendent truth about which all other truth claims are to be evaluated. We believe that truth is ultimately real, and that there is a transcendent truth about which all other truth claims are to be evaluated. We believe that truth is ultimately real, and that there is a transcendent truth about which all other truth claims are to be evaluated. We believe that truth is ultimately real, and that there is a transcendent truth about which all other truth claims are to be evaluated.

In this moment, graduates of CCCU institutions have something 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.

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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 Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our job is not in a political argument, presenting logical arguments – that would 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.

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 Stein 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.

W E’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 when 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, 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 Hap- piness Hypothesis, has the subtitle “finding modern truth in ancient wisdom.” I read every major work I could find from the Greeks and Romans, the Bible – and what I found was that there are 10 ancient ideas 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 grand 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 Paul? Who else has been so blunt, 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 Ameri- can Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us, a wonderful book by Robert Putnam and David Campbell, they synthe- sized all the research they could find, and they reached this conclusion: “Reli- giously 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 ac- tive 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.

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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.

RECOMMENDED READING

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

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

Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving Through Deep Difference (Jahn Iwazo)

From Bubble to Bridge: Educating Christians for a Multifruit 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 Ware)

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)
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 this has 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 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.

I want you to be successful in your mission for moral education. I know you’re in a difficult situation, but I think your research has brought me to agree with the philosopher David Hume, who said, no, it’s the opposite. Reason is used and ought only to be the slave of passion. The second is fairness and cheating. Every society cares a lot about fairness; every society is very concerned with 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 our culture wars; our trends do tend 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 about in this world. Is there anything that is totally unambiguous? You might think so, but believe me, other people think different. 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 has no analog in the animal kingdom. Those 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 do we argue about trying to speak to what they care about?” They can actually do it, but they don’t think to do it without prompting.
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 orthodoxy wing of each religion was teaming up with each other against the progressive wing of each religion was teaming up with each other against the progres- sive 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 “Community 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 thoughtful on your side. When you do that, the other side suddenly becomes much more willing to give. The implications here are that all political movements must be willing to understand others who hold different views, even if they still don’t result in agreeing with each other’s views—it 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. As Christians, we know that we must take the side of the poor and vulnerable. We must be different. They seek to face these realities with courage and conviction.

Ultimately, 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 your own side. Then you’ll be able to talk and communicate and make progress.
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.

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“IT’S ABOUT OUR LEARNING MISSION. THE ONLY WAY WE CAN LEARN IS BY ENCOUNTERING DIFFERENCE. ... IT’S ALSO ABOUT LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR.”

- 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 any- one 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 encour- age 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 even- ning 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 an- nual 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 compro- mising their own values. They then par- ticipate in diversity training seminars, where they learn how to ask good ques- tions and relate with students of differ- ent 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 recount- ed one incident when a political club in- vited 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 point, 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 we are actively working on repre- senting 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 po- litical 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, pla- radigmatic settings.” This year he set up the President’s Colloquy on Civil Discourse, a three-part lecture series on the Chris- tian approach to truth and disagreement.

“Christian students are perceiving that the nature and parameters of free speech. “We picked free speech in part because the issue doesn’t divide people nearly 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 politics to political science. “We want to approach this in an interdisciplinary way,” says Tay- lor. “Each of these professors can bring in their own insights and experiences.”

The President’s Colloquy is already having positive impacts in the student body. The student government, Associ- ated 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 Presi- dent’s Colloquy provided the perfect partnership opportunity.

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

Each Town Hall covers a topic se- lected to start a larger conversation on- going and repeat them if necessary during the group conversation.

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“I want 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. GCSCA 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 GCSCA, 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 GCSCA to host a series on human sexuality entitled “LGBTQ+ 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 GCSCA consider the compromise a success on the whole. “Every thing GCSCA wants may not necessarily be implemented,” Rowe says. “Our student body elected representatives are thinking sincerely about how our programming 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 programming 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

There 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 De Bray and Gordon’s Davis Metzger both spoke about the benefits of proactive student government plans that aim 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 MCBRINEY is the president and government relations fellow for the CCCU and a graduate of Biola University.
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

I 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’s Social Work Coordinator Lwa 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.
Rick Ostender (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. Peters Child Development Center.

Our first Global Health site is "ROTOM," an acronym for "Reach One, Touch One Ministries," which was founded to reach a forgotten group in Uganda — the elderly. The average life span in Uganda is 62, and the nation’s census has no category beyond age 60. But because of the recent AIDS epidemic, many of the elderly care for grandchildren, so by reaching an elderly person with health care and economic assistance, this ministry has a ripple effect on several other lives as well. The USP students working at ROTOM experience what it’s like to create new health care systems and practices where none existed before.

Next we visit ACHERU, a ministry to another neglected group in Uganda — disabled children. The facility provides medical treatment, physical therapy, and rudimentary education to children in the Kampala area. The ministry also has a ripple effect in society, since in Ugandan society, a child’s disability is typically blamed on the mother, who is often subsequently abandoned by her husband.

This organization has special interest for me because two years ago, my daughter Annalisa spent 2 months in USP and was a student intern here. When Micah introduces me to staff members as the vice president of the CCCU, they nod politely. But when he mentions that I am Anna’s father, enthusiastic smiles light up their faces.

Later, I have lunch with the Global Health students to talk about their experiences so far. They appreciate the fact that their internship supervisors treat them like normal students who are here to learn, not white people — “Munungu” — with assets to dispense (all of the USP students this semester happen to be white). Nevertheless, their status as a tiny minority in this setting is something they are constantly aware of — and something that I have already noticed. After only two days here, I have grown weary of the feeling of being on public display, and I wonder if that feeling dissipates with time.

On Tuesday evening, Lisa’s husband, Eddie, takes me to Momma Robinah’s house for dinner. Every USP student lives with a Christian family in the area, either for two weeks or for the entire semester. Momma Robinah, a widow in her 60s, has been hosting such students for the past 10 years. At her house we feast on traditional Ugandan “tea” consisting of tea, coffee, greens, potatoes, plantains, and love (fortunately, I love live). 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.

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 Awey had a baby girl when living near Mica’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 Mugabe in neighboring Zimbabwe.

After lunch and many farewell’s, 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 earlier is a two-hour jam. For the students who have just experienced immersion, it’s difficult to imagine any place that could be more different from their own. As I arrive home, it occurs to me that the only thing that is the same in both settings 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

SPOTLIGHT

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 Uganda 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.
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.
“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.

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
**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.**

**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 and how it 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 God is breaking in upon Roman authority, a fresh revelation of the nature of God 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.**

**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.

But the Gospel actually has things to say deeper than those details. We have to start where we are. But the Gospel actually has things to say...
“THE VALUE OF OUR IDENTITY AS EVANGELICALS ONLY MATTERS IF IT IS A REFLECTION OF JESUS.”

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 we become conformed to the Evangel – to Jesus Christ? If that’s what we mean by “evangelical” – that we 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 whether “evangelical” or “evangelicalism.” I think that this approach can help nurture the kind of Christian vision and our society and culture, both justice, and beauty, “What’s the relationship between this personal transformation that I hope a CCCU school seeks to bring about their students, pot smokers, the whole gamut. And this “where are we only 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 formation opportunity that this moment offers.

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 pre-supposition 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.”

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?

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 advised 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 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-Christs 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
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 students 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] craved – 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 smartphones 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 criticizing state power rather than necessarily seeking to accru 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 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 ever 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 tried to get the broad, varied history of what it means to be Christian in the 21st century. 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.
This 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 incarcerated 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.
I’m happy today that I don’t have to wear this [sweatshirt],” Jill shared as she threw off her inmate uniform. “It has been a long time since I’ve had the freedom to do this race … and have an opportunity to 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.”

“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.”

When people commit crimes, they must face appropriate accountability, proportional to the harm they have caused. 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 what I have learned, and she feels the same. I am thankful for a second chance at an education regardless of my circumstances. I hope that others who are released with current prison programs like LIFE to inspire people to keep hope alive. Spending more on higher education could effectively reduce the need for incarcerations 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 Prison Fellowship’s 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 21,000 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, 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.
• Meet key stakeholders: 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.
FULLER studio offers Fuller Seminary’s resources at a free online website, showcasing a wealth of theological material from our world-class faculty alongside exclusive releases such as the short film *Bono and Eugene Peterson: The Psalms* and a new podcast series from President Mark Labberton. Video interviews, audio lectures, stories, reflections, and more are available for all to freely draw on for classroom teaching, small group study, or any use.

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**FULLER studio**
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 have happened, 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 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 incompatile 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 exasperation, we can still find ourselves wondering where our 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. You 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. You 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.
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 Americans 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 disagreements 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 needlessly 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 divisiveness, 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.

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.
At the 2018 CCCU International Forum, Andy Crouch gave three directions from Acts 18, 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.

Ronald 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, it 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 another 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’ve 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 every -thing for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Plead 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.”

The Posterity Gospel
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