

COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

ADVANCE

SPRING 2021

MAGAZINE

INNOVATION DURING COVID



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of Innovation**
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Are You Ready to Faithfully Engage with Culture?

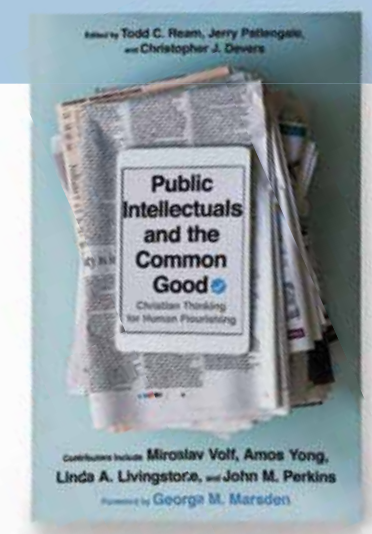
We have the opportunity to use our words and our voices for the common good.



How might we love God and our neighbors through the task of writing? This book offers a vision for expressing one's faith through writing and for understanding writing itself as a spiritual practice that cultivates virtue. Drawing on authors and artists throughout the church's history, we learn how we might embrace writing as an act of discipleship for today.

"When Christians compose with the aim of enacting charity, they listen with humility, they respond to others as fellow children of God, and they demonstrate the discipline required by the metanoic process of writing. Gibson and Beitler offer fresh and worthy models for writers as they seek to embody the law of love."

ELIZABETH VANDER LEI, Calvin University



In the midst of a divisive culture, public intellectuals speaking from an evangelical perspective have a critical role to play—within the church and beyond. Contributors Miroslav Volf, Amos Yong, Linda A. Livingstone, Heather Templeton Dill, Katelyn Beaty, Emmanuel Katongole, John M. Perkins, and David Wright cast a vision for intellectuals who promote human flourishing.

"Whether as theologians, scholars, journalists, or social activists, Christians have been called to identify and argue for a vision of human flourishing that crosses religious and cultural boundaries, making complex ideas accessible for all citizens."

SUSAN VANZANTEN, Valparaiso University



Building the Future

Embedding Innovation in Your Campus Identity



THE WORD “INNOVATION” conjures up images of a new and better future. The pandemic allowed us to witness innovation firsthand, whether in vaccines created in record time or in shifting our own campuses’ ability to be online, in-person (while still meeting pandemic guidelines), or a hybrid of both. Disruption caused by disease, emergencies, or disasters often fuels innovation and invention. Experiencing hardship also spurs human beings to utilize adversity for positive change.

We admire and celebrate innovation. We know it when we see it. But creating a new future is hard work. That’s why I want to explore types of innovation — and obstacles to achieving it — before laying out a road map for creating and maintaining an innovative culture that I think will be vitally necessary for Christian higher education.

LOOKING TO THE PAST FOR INSPIRATION

On its website, the History Channel has an article exploring 11 of the greatest innovations that changed the world. Here are just a few:

- **The printing press.** Communicate to the masses and you change the world. We have seen this most recently in the blessing and curse that is the Internet.
- **Steel.** Steel fueled the industrial revolution and built modern cities.
- **The electric light.** All it takes is a power outage for us to remember a less workable, bygone era. The innovation of wires to power early light bulbs led to electrical wiring paving the way for all other electrical innovations.
- **Antibiotics.** This changed medicine forever. Imagining a world without antibiotics is easier in this moment because of the pandemic. Clearly, the ability to fight infection has improved the human condition without measure.

“We can do it,” I think as I read this list. But it also makes me wonder: What will be some of the innovations of the future that our students need to be prepared for through their time studying at our colleges and universities?

For that, I found the insights from Honeywell to be helpful. You might recognize the Honeywell name from your thermostat, but it is also a premier innovation laboratory. The leaders at Honeywell recently predicted that

the innovations of tomorrow will include air taxis, quantum computing through an open cloud system, robotic cargo unloading, real-time data making work more efficient, a new generation of control system technology, 3D-printed engine parts, and machine learning to fight cyber-attacks. What opportunities for our students!

WHAT DEFINES INNOVATION?

Innovation is happening all around us, including on our campuses. How do we keep up the momentum and implementation to make innovation our culture of the future? The Center for Creative Leadership has drawn a helpful distinction between creativity and innovation: “Creativity is the ability to generate novel and useful ideas, while innovation is a successful implementation of creative ideas.”

Is all innovation the same? In 2018, *People Matters* identified three different kinds of innovation: incremental, adjacent, and transformational. *Incremental innovation* is improving something we already do — certainly important to pursue. *Adjacent innovation* is adding something new to something we do that is already core to our business — like online education in addition to on-campus education. *Transformational innovation* can be disruptive and involves the creation of entirely new businesses that cater to new

Innovations in technology have transformed life as we know it, and continuing technological advancements mean there is plenty of opportunity for CCCU graduates to impact this important field.



markets. For example, think of Amazon’s creation of Amazon Web Services (AWS), its cloud server, which was outside its original business model of selling books and other products.

In higher education, our institutions have been successful at incremental and adjacent innovations that will lead or have created new revenue or efficiencies. Take a moment with your senior campus leaders to mark your success so far. Ask and record the answers to this question: Since the pandemic, what incremental or adjacent innovations has our institution adopted that have generated new revenue, new efficiencies, or the potential for both? You will be encouraged.

FACING THE INHIBITORS OF INNOVATION

While innovations occurred in the midst of the pandemic’s disruption, an innovation culture must continue and grow. Higher education will continue to feel disruption even after the pandemic finally ends, and that disruption must be used to fuel further innovation. As the *People Matters* article suggests, organizations need to go from “grazing” around innovation to creating an intentional, integrated, and optimized culture for innovation. How do we make innovation the DNA of Christian higher education?

Harvard Business Review identified 10 common innovation inhibitors that I suggest would be valuable to review with your leadership teams, deans, and department chairs. For each one, think about the extent to which it applies to your campus (never? sometimes? often?):

1. Our focus on short-term results drives out ideas that take longer to mature.
2. Fear of cannibalizing current business prevents investment in new areas.
3. Most of our resources are devoted to day-to-day business so that few remain for innovative prospects.
4. Innovation is someone else’s job and not part of everyone’s responsibilities.
5. Our efficiency focus eliminates free time for fresh thinking.
6. We do not have a standard process to nurture the development of new ideas.
7. Incentives are geared towards maximizing today’s business and reducing risk.



As the ways we connect with coworkers, customers, families, and friends continue to change, CCCU institutions have a unique opportunity to train their leaders to sustain a culture of campus innovation.

8. Managers are not trained to be innovation leaders.
9. Managers immediately look for flaws in new ideas rather than tease out their potential.
10. We look at opportunities through internal lenses rather than starting with customers’ needs and problems.

How did you score? Is there is room for improvement? What are practical next steps?

BUILDING A LASTING CULTURE OF INNOVATION

The statements themselves create the guide to new behavior. Create within each department, or within the university, a team whose focus is developing long-term strategic ideas to implement. Do not allow fear of undermining current ways of doing things to prevent the surfacing of new ideas. Reward people who develop and implement an innovative idea. Plan regular retreat time for groups to shift from an “efficiency focus” of daily routines to a “fresh thinking” focus.

Do not allow critique and criticism to dominate idea sessions. One idea is to create a process where red cards and green cards are used during meetings. Anyone in a meeting can good-naturedly raise a red card on another team member who names the flaws in a new idea before naming the potential. Raise the green cards to affirm suggested ideas.

Get your students involved. Create student innovation task forces. Ask your students for their ideas as your loyal, engaged, and self-interested “customers.” Form small groups of innovative students who will regularly be an advisory group to departments and administrative leaders. Ask students to think about how their needs could be met better by the university.

Finally, look outside your campus. Identify the most innovative companies in your immediate locale or from your board of trustees and do informational interviews on how they have created innovative cultures in their organizations. Perhaps imbed some of your leaders into business environments to influence habits and future thinking.

The future of Christian higher education depends on the attitude “We can do it.” We have done it, and with God’s guidance and grace, we will. 🙏

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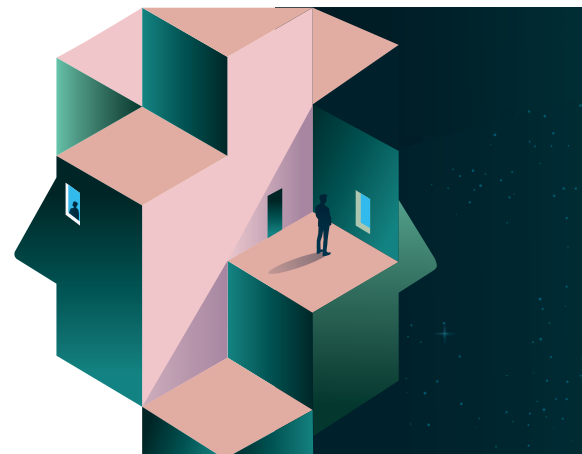
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THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (CCCU) is a higher education association of more than 180 Christian institutions around the world. Since 1976, the CCCU has served as the leading national voice of Christian higher education. With campuses across the globe, including more than 150 in the U.S. and Canada and more than 30 from an additional 19 countries, CCCU institutions are accredited, comprehensive colleges and universities whose missions are Christ-centered and rooted in the historic Christian faith.

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

DISTRIBUTION

Advance is published each year in the fall and spring and is mailed to members, affiliates, and friends of the CCCU. It is also available online at www.cccu.org/magazine. Direct questions and letters to the editor to editor@cccuc.org.

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NEWS FROM THE CCCU

Around *the* Council

CCCU AND SCIO RECEIVE \$2.1 MILLION TO SUPPORT STEM RESEARCH



Supporting Structures is a new project designed to support and enhance STEM research among both faculty and students on CCCU campuses.

THE CCCU AND SCHOLARSHIP & CHRISTIANITY IN OXFORD (SCIO), the CCCU's U.K. subsidiary, have received a \$2.1 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation to launch Supporting Structures, a project designed to support and enhance STEM research among faculty and students on CCCU campuses. An additional \$256,000 grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust expands the reach of the project, enabling the project to offer awards to a total of nine CCCU institutions, who will be selected later this spring.

This multi-faceted project will incorporate training, support, and events for faculty members, students, senior administrators, and the communities that feed into and support these institutions. It will expand research opportunities among existing, pre-tenure faculty members in the STEM fields and offer training to deepen their understanding of and engagement with issues pertaining to science, religion, and society. Additionally, the project has a specific fund dedicated to help participating campuses enhance diversity among their STEM faculty.

The project will also bolster unique partnerships between CCCU institutions and major research institutions and provide funding for campuses to establish student clubs and support undergraduate student researchers in STEM fields, as well as provide opportunities for administrators and other campus-connected communities to engage science, religion, and society issues.



LEARN MORE

For more information, visit www.scio-uk.org/research/supporting-stem/.

FIVE INSTITUTIONS JOIN THE CCCU

In January 2021, the CCCU Board of Directors approved five new members:



Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania



River Forest, Illinois



Ndola, Zambia



Taichung City, Taiwan



Plainview, Texas

Courtesy of Southwest Baptist University

THE LATEST UPDATES FROM CAPITOL HILL

THE CCCU’S ADVOCACY WORK promotes and protects its institutions’ unique position as Christ-centered, nonprofit institutions of higher education that are often in the crosshairs of a variety of issues affecting higher education and nonprofit organizations, and/or challenges to religious character and convictions. In 2020, the CCCU signed onto 109 letters and nine amicus briefs supporting our major advocacy issues. As of February 15, 2021, we have signed on to 10 letters and one amicus brief. Other highlights of our recent advocacy work include:



COVID Relief | The COVID-19 stimulus and omnibus bill passed by Congress in December 2020 included three major policy victories as well as about \$23 billion in funding to higher education. The bill included new FAFSA simplification measures, allowing students to more easily obtain federal financial aid. It also lifted the 26-year-old ban on Pell grants for incarcerated individuals. The CCCU has been a longtime advocate for better access to education and opportunity for those in our prison systems. The bill also included an extension of the \$300 universal charitable giving deduction through the end of 2021, as well as an increase of up to \$600 deduction to married couples.

As of late February, the House Committee on Labor and Education had released a COVID-19 relief bill that would appropriate nearly \$40 billion to public and private higher education institutions alike. The CCCU continues to advocate on behalf of Christian colleges and universities in order to ensure equitable treatment between public and private institutions of higher education.



Title IX | The Department of Education released new Title IX regulations in November 2020, which include “controlled by” language that would affect the religious freedoms of our institutions. The language determines if an institution is “controlled by” a religious organization. The regulation promotes free speech at institutions, ensures equal treatment of religious student groups, and revises discretionary grant programs to specifically include religious institutions.



Immigration | President Joe Biden issued an executive order preserving protections for Dreamers under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals guidance within his first days in office. This order reinforces the temporary status given to undocumented immigrants brought as children and calls the Department of Homeland Security to “preserve and fortify” actions consistent with the law. Senators Dick Durbin and Lindsey Graham also reintroduced the Dream Act, championing the push for immigration reform in Congress. We continue to advocate for policies that recognize the dignity with which God has endowed all people, regardless of their ethnicity, race, or place of origin. We believe a bipartisan, permanent legislative solution for Dreamers from Congress is the best means to provide a long-term solution for these young people and their communities.



Judiciary | The CCCU filed an amicus brief in the case of *Fulton v the City of Philadelphia*. This case involves Catholic Social Services, a faith-based agency that has been serving vulnerable kids for 200 years. But the city of Philadelphia stopped placing kids with foster parents that partner with Catholic Social Services, demanding that the agency change its religious practices or close. We ask the Court to protect the freedom of faith-affirming foster agencies nationwide to maintain their deeply held beliefs while serving those most in need.



LEARN MORE
For more information about the CCCU's advocacy work, visit www.cccu.org/advocacy.

CCCU STATEMENT ON FAIRNESS FOR ALL AND THE EQUALITY ACT

IN ADDRESSING THE CULTURAL tension surrounding religious freedom and LGBT rights, the CCCU advocates for a balanced legislative approach that preserves religious freedom and addresses LGBT civil rights under federal law.

The CCCU supports the **Fairness for All Act**, reintroduced by Congressman Chris Stewart in the U.S. House of Representatives on February 26, 2021. The bill is both principled and pragmatic: It is principled in providing a clear and demonstrable way for people of faith to “love our neighbor” in the civic context, and it is pragmatic in that the bill makes explicit many religious protections that are important to a rich and vibrant civil society. Orthodox Christian convictions are central to Christian colleges and universities, and there must be freedom to practice, teach, and uphold those convictions without penalty.

The Equality Act, as currently drafted, fails to do justice to the rich complexity of moral traditions that are central to the

multifaith and pluralistic world of 21st century America. For faith-based higher education specifically, the Equality Act would restrict student choice in an unprecedented way by preventing middle- and low-income students from being able to take their federal student aid to these institutions. Seven out of 10 CCCU students receive federal funding, and the withdrawal of financial aid, including Pell grants and federal research grants, would have a disproportionate impact on low-income and first-generation college students, as well as students from racial and ethnic minority groups.



LEARN MORE
Read our full statement at www.cccu.org/news-updates/fairness-for-all/

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION SPOTLIGHT: KENYA



AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Africa International University (AIU) was founded in 1983 by the Association of Evangelicals in Africa in Karen, a suburb on the outskirts of Nairobi. Known as the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, its goal was to provide training beyond the basic certificate and diploma levels for pastors in the region. Over time, it expanded its program offerings and received a university charter from the Kenyan government in 2011.

Today, AIU continues in its mission to educate Christ-centered leaders for the transformation of God’s people and the world through innovative programs, research, and community engagement. It offers undergraduate, master’s, and doctorate degrees in a variety of fields, including biblical studies, theology, missions, business, finance, psychology and counseling, linguistics, interreligious studies, and education.

AFRICA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1994 by the Church of the Nazarene, Africa Nazarene University (ANU) was the first Nazarene university established outside North America and offered undergraduate courses in theology and business, as well as a master’s in religion; a year later, it also offered a bachelor in computer science. ANU has continued to expand its program offerings and received its university charter from the Kenyan government in 2002.

Today, ANU offers 26 academic programs, serving 4,000 students from diverse geographical and economic backgrounds. With over a decade of experience in remote and distance learning, ANU conducted its first fully online semester in May 2020 amid the pandemic. About half of the student body is currently enrolled in online learning, which will be a defining element of education delivery at ANU going forward. In September 2020, ANU signed a partnership with Coursera that further expanded its online education offerings, providing students with a transformative online learning experience.



Photos courtesy of Africa International University and Africa Nazarene University

16 CCCU CAMPUSES AWARDED GRANTS FOR INTERFAITH WORK

THE CCCU AND INTERFAITH YOUTH CORE (IFYC) have awarded nearly \$20,000 in grants to 16 CCCU campuses to integrate a newly developed online curriculum, “Christian Leadership in a Multifaith World,” into existing coursework and student leadership development programs.

Together, the CCCU and IFYC are committed to elevating the importance of religious literacy and bridge-building. Through generous support from The Arthur Vin-ing Davis Foundations, the CCCU and IFYC developed an online curriculum to explore the foundation for interfaith engagement, build students’ religious literacy, and equip students to lead bridge-building activities in their communities. Individual \$1,000 grants were awarded to faculty and staff on CCCU campuses to use the pilot curriculum with their students and offer feedback to the CCCU and IFYC on ways to strengthen the activities for future use.



A new curriculum developed by CCCU and Interfaith Youth Core aims to build students’ religious literacy and equip them to lead bridge-building activities in their communities.



LEARN MORE
For more information,
visit ifyc.org/grants/cccu.

Mat Schramm



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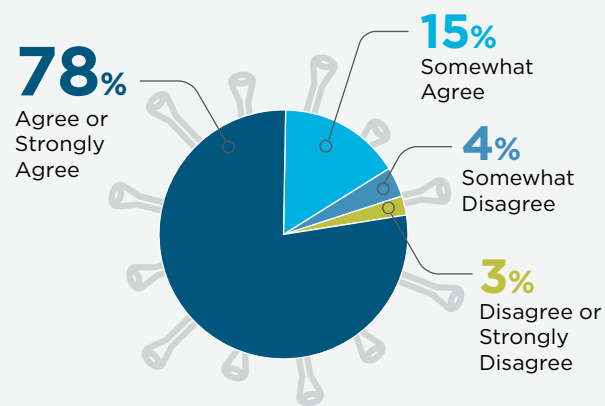


STUDENT PERSPECTIVE CAMPUS RESPONSES TO COVID-19

How do students on CCCU campuses rate their institution's pandemic response? As part of the CCCU's Collaborative Assessment Project, CCCU campuses administered the "Thriving Quotient" survey in Fall 2020 to more than 4,800 students across the U.S. and Canada, focusing on the support, protection, and communication students felt they received from their institution in the midst of COVID-19.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

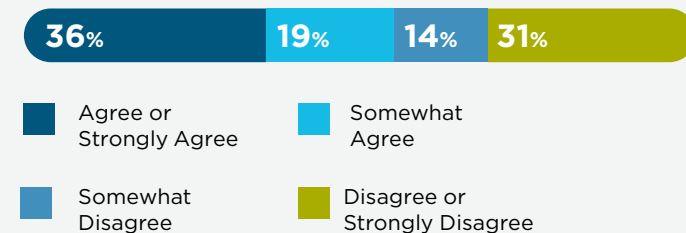
OVERALL, MY INSTRUCTORS HAVE SHOWN CARE AND CONCERN FOR ME AS THEY RESPOND TO COVID-19.



THE STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION AT THIS INSTITUTION HAVE DONE A GOOD JOB PROTECTING STUDENTS FROM THE NEGATIVE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19.

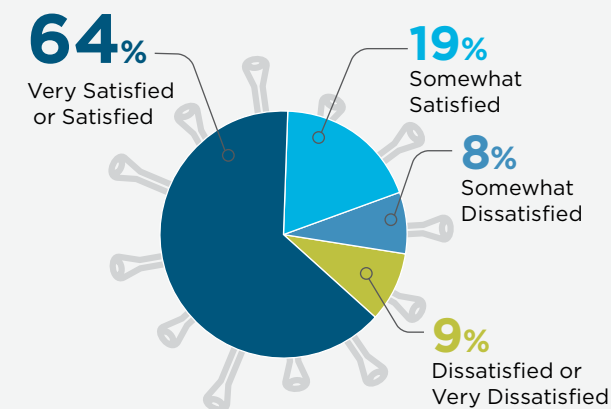


I FEEL STRESSED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19.



SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

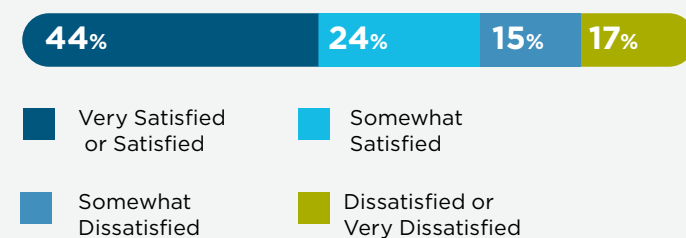
THE SUPPORT YOU ARE GETTING FROM THIS INSTITUTION TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE CHALLENGES OF THIS PANDEMIC.



THE COMMUNICATION YOU ARE GETTING FROM THIS INSTITUTION ABOUT ITS ONGOING RESPONSE TO THIS PANDEMIC.

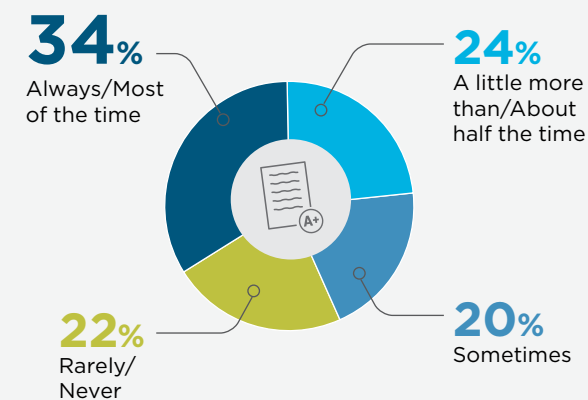


THE INFORMATION YOU ARE GETTING ABOUT HOW CHANGES AT THIS INSTITUTION IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 WILL IMPACT YOUR ABILITY TO PAY FOR COLLEGE.

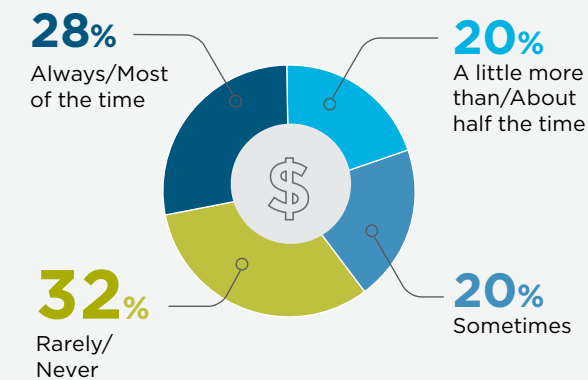


STUDENTS WORRY ABOUT:

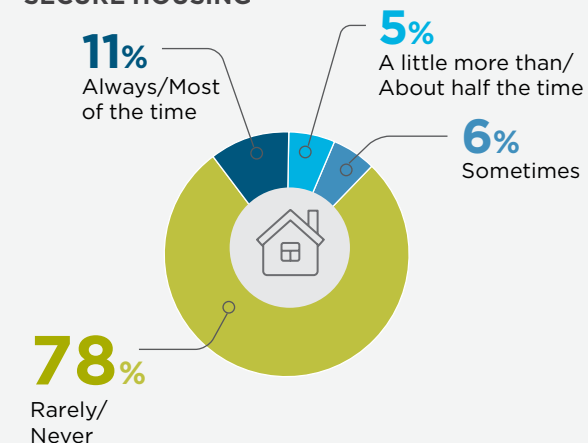
DOING WELL IN COLLEGE



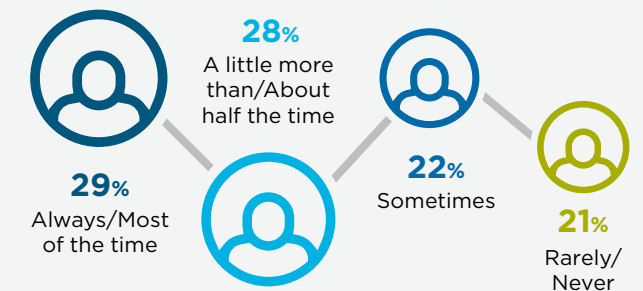
PAYING BILLS



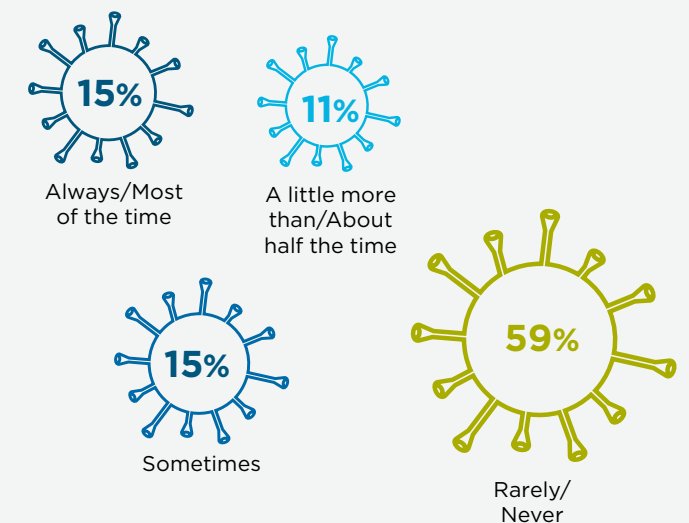
SECURE HOUSING



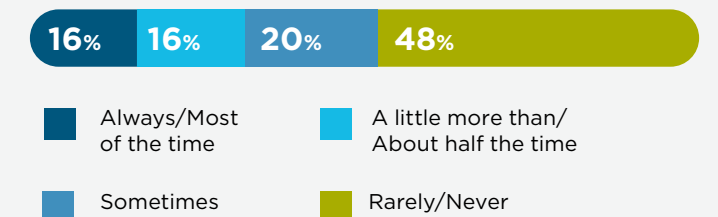
FRIENDSHIPS AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE



ACCESSING AND USING THE TECHNOLOGY NEEDED FOR CLASSES



Theological Exclusivity in a Multifaith World

What's Love Got to Do with It?



ON JANUARY 6, 2021, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of Americans and others around the world watched in shock and horror as a group of domestic terrorists hijacked the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to overturn the U.S. election results and harm members of Congress. Emboldened by conspiracy theories, hate-filled rhetoric, and repeated lies, they sought to take back “their America” from politicians and people who did not look like them, vote like them, or believe like them.

What was particularly alarming to many was the fact that these self-identified “patriots” flew signs that read “Jesus Saves” alongside hanging nooses, swastikas, and other symbols of hate for “others” who they perceived as adding to the demise of “their” country. Never once did they seem to stop to look at themselves and the irony of their actions in relationship to their professed commitment to law and order. As an African American woman, devout Christian, and self-identified peacemaker, I pondered in that moment how the name of Christ had been both dirtied by the stains of venom and hatred and showcased to non-Christians in a way that violently misrepresented Scripture.

As I reflect on that infamous day, I think about the important work that the CCCU does in bringing people from different backgrounds and perspectives together. Recently, the CCCU was invited to collaborate with Interfaith Youth Core on a grant called “Christian Leadership in a Multifaith World.” As an ordained minister, I first pondered if this would be in contradiction to my faith. Would working on a project promoting religious diversity be equated with promoting theological universalism and the notion that all roads lead to heaven? Or could this project invite my theological exclusivity to sit at the table? I was pleasantly surprised that the latter was true.

See, I am convinced that Jesus is the only way by which one can be saved. I wholeheartedly seek to fulfill both the Great Commission (sharing the Gospel) and the Greatest Commandment (loving God and my neighbor). I have years of experience preaching the Gospel coupled with zealous

It turns out that learning and engaging in interfaith work is not only good for society but can also reinforce a student's Christian faith.

street evangelism and witnessing countless comrades do the same. Yet I know that America is not a country with one religion. In fact, our U.S. Constitution says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Simply put, our nation was founded on the freedom of religion, and while I would like everyone to know the love of Christ, not everyone will.

As difficult as this Scripture-based fact is to swallow, *everyone* is still my neighbor, and I am called to share God's love with them. For Christians, loving our neighbors as ourselves is not simply a biblical suggestion or a humanitarian nicety but rather a clear commandment and evidence that one is a Christian. So the answer to Tina Turner's hit song “What's love got to do with it?” is “everything!”

In 2019, while I was completing a Fulbright in Ethiopia, my family and I were invited to the home of a former classmate of my husband's for Ramadan. Ramadan is the most sacred holiday for Muslims, and although she and her family knew we were devout Christians, they invited us to break their fast with them by enjoying *Iftar*, the meal eaten by Muslims after sunset during Ramadan. For some Christians, this might have been taboo, but we knew this was a high honor and, with cultural humility and a healthy dose of curiosity (at least on my part), we accepted. The dinner conversation that

Photo courtesy of Kimberly Battle-Walters Denu

ensued was all about how this Muslim friend used to sneak to church when she was younger, and had at some point prayed the sinner's prayer, yet stopped going when her devout Muslim mother discovered her secret and forbade her to ever go again. Imagine our surprise when she wanted to talk about Jesus the remainder of the evening!

So what does this have to do with Christian higher education, and specifically CCCU campuses? Well it turns out learning and engaging in interfaith work is not only good for society but can also reinforce a student's Christian faith. According to the 2020 Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS), students who engaged in interfaith work were not only better prepared to engage a multifaith and diverse society, but interfaith work reinforced their own religious values. In addition, the Association of American Colleges & Universities found that college graduates who have the ability to understand and work with people who are different from themselves are more marketable to employers because employers want to hire culturally competent staff.

As Christian educators and leaders, not only can we help reinforce our students' Christian faith and make them more professionally marketable, but through interfaith engagement we can help them become more culturally astute and religiously savvy and give them the tools to build lives that respect differences while radiating the light of Christ to a world that desperately needs it. Shalom! 🌟

KIMBERLY BATTLE-WALTERS DENU is the CCCU's vice president for educational programs.



LEARN MORE
For more information and to apply, visit ifyc.org/grants/cccu.

Young Adults Are Ready to Re-examine EVANGELICAL PURITY CULTURE



Rachel Joy Welcher is a columnist and editor at *Fathom* magazine. Her writing has appeared in *The Gospel Coalition*, *Mere Orthodoxy*, *Relevant*, and *The Englewood Review of Books*.

“As an educator of college students for more than three decades, I understand well the difficulties in helping young people sort through the mixed messages from both the church and the culture regarding sex. . . . *Talking Back to Purity Culture* is a book I will recommend over and over, not only to my students but to all who are striving toward a more holistic and biblical understanding of human sexuality.”

KAREN SWALLOW PRIOR, author of *Fierce Convictions*



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Systems Not Silos: Pandemic Resourcefulness

THE HIGHER EDUCATION landscape can sometimes resemble farmland: full of silos. Institutional silos develop wittingly or unwittingly for any number of reasons, like a desire to lighten the load for faculty. Christian colleges and universities may also be more prone to silos; after all, church history is full of examples of a predilection to separate and build silos.

But if silos are endemic to academia, they can also undermine research. Academic silos tend to contain and constrain thought rather than expand or enhance it. Research requires imagination, creativity, the ability to wonder and wander over new terrain, and the willingness to break outside of known boundaries to ask fresh and enriching questions. It also requires access to diverse resources. Silos inhibit both individual researchers, access to resources, and the formation of a rich, productive, and effective research culture on a campus.

Treating CCCU institutions only as like-minded peers and not as full collaborators can unduly limit us. In North America, the CCCU's network of full- and part-time faculty is over 28,500 across a range of disciplines. Already, the CCCU broadens our collective resources through opportunities like Networking Grants for Christian Scholars and Supporting Structures. Perhaps we can expand this further and together embrace an opportunity to collaborate and share resources. New habits and technologies mastered amid COVID-19 make systemic responses plausible and imaginable, as these two examples show.

Systemic Support of Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate research is important: It attracts and forms students, makes curricula exciting, and offers lasting impact for both students and institutions. Many CCCU programs incorporate these opportunities, but their efforts can be hampered by the limits of size and scope.

Undergraduate research depends on scholars offering their research competence to train students. Large universities can support a wide variety of student interests. Most CCCU institutions, however, are not large. Thus their faculty's range of expertise is smaller, presenting hard choices in developing student research opportunities: offer only a few; send students elsewhere for specific opportunities; or press faculty to provide guidance outside of their particular competence.

The first response limits opportunities and perhaps undermines enrollment. The second response — if the CCCU faculty is not part of the research — means students may not witness and work alongside deeply engaged Christians doing top-tier research. The third strategy limits the quality of the experience. It can imply a type of mediocrity, not because the faculty are mediocre but because they are advising outside of their area of competence. Institutionally, we are not setting them up to succeed. All three responses may also convey that the students cannot expect significantly informed research guidance from their faculty. This can be profoundly discouraging for faculty morale, unduly limiting to students, and damaging to long-term institutional health.

Thinking like a system provides a solution. Online tools present the medium for sharing resources by harnessing faculty from across CCCU membership to advise undergraduate researchers within their areas of competence. For example, a student at College A wishes to engage in research for which the faculty in the department lack particular competence. Acting within a broad CCCU system, a faculty member with the specific scholarly competence from College B can step in to offer additional, limited, informal research advising online (with the student's college providing needed oversight, faculty of record, etc.).

Developing such a response requires an expansive view from faculty and administrators to recognize the availability of academic expertise outside their institution, a willingness to draw upon outside advisors, and enabling one's own faculty to serve others. We can build a system for communicating and "trading" faculty competencies and student research needs.

This isn't merely a hypothetical example. A group of honors program directors and deans along with Scholarship & Christianity in Oxford (SCIO), the CCCU's Oxford-based subsidiary, have ongoing discussions developing a project — URN, Undergraduate Research Network — that seeks to offer a way to fairly balance concerns and resources.

Open Access, Information Specialists, and a Library System

Open Access poses substantial opportunity and danger for small colleges as it changes the economic model of journal

publishing from payment at point of use (e.g., buying journal subscriptions) to payment at the point of submission by the author (known as subventions, i.e., required payments, typically ranging between \$500-\$2000, but as much as \$11,000). Originating in Europe but now emerging in North America, this approach might work for large institutions (though that is an open question), but it endangers smaller colleges' ability to attract bright, young scholars if they lack funding for subventions.

There are systemic approaches that could assist in solving this challenge, such as developing a central matching fund for subventions. But for the moment, let me point to a pandemic-created opportunity. Open Access publishing has expanded to meet access needs for students by making many pay-to-use works freely available. Thus, a vast quantity of freely available, serious research material is accessible electronically.

However, navigating Open Access — both publishing and using it — is complex; so complex, in fact, that major university libraries have dedicated library staff with specialist knowledge in order to support faculty and students engaging Open Access. Many small institutions cannot do this alone, but by sharing library staff expertise across multiple campuses, they might accomplish more. Online meetings make this approach viable.

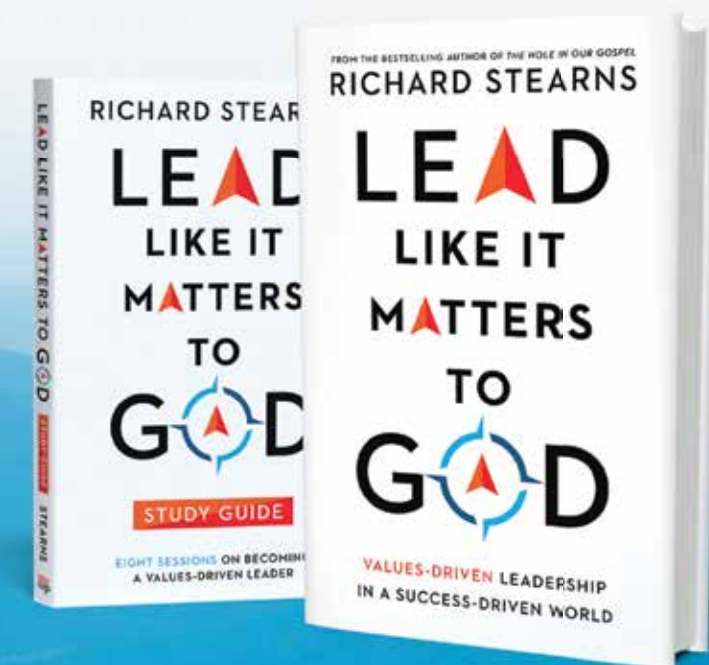
Some may recall Carl Henry's vision in the 1950s to create a major Christian university. His efforts did not pan out. But we can now do something on a larger scale with the tools, technology, and an institution — the CCCU itself — that he lacked. We can provide the impact and benefits a major Christian university might offer by breaking down silos and working together as a system. In doing so, we can profoundly enrich our institutions' research cultures and expand our range of offerings and impact. 📖

STANLEY P. ROSENBERG is the CCCU's vice president for research and scholarship and the executive director of SCIO: Scholarship & Christianity in Oxford, the CCCU's U.K. subsidiary.

Jonathan Kirkpatrick

LET YOUR VALUES DRIVE YOUR LEADERSHIP

*God Is More Concerned with Your
Character Than Your Success*



“Rich Stearns turns the world’s version of leadership upside down to posit that who you are is more important than what you achieve. . . . If you are a person who leads teams in the corporate or nonprofit world, a new graduate or new employee, a pastor or professor, this book is for you.”

—SHIRLEY HOOGSTRA,

CCCU president



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Far We Have Come; Further We Must Go

THE BOSTON COMMON is the most familiar parcel of America to me. For 20 years, I walked across this park thousands of times for my commute to work. I sat on its benches for lunches, and I watched its trees cycle through their beautiful array of colors. This place was home. Then, one day, someone yelled a racial slur at me.

Suddenly, I was a stranger in a strange land.

What transpired at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 made millions feel like strangers in a strange land. How could this happen in America? Many factors complicate the assessment of that day, but the challenges of race are involved. We have certainly come a long way in our national journey toward justice; instead of the Chinese Exclusion Act, for example, we have the Civil Rights Act. Yet the presence of white supremacist groups and the pictures of nooses show there is a long way yet to go. The shocking juxtaposition of waving Confederate and “Jesus Saves” flags tore scabs off national wounds that had never properly healed.

Many discussions about race begin with our equality before God as bearers of his image (Gen 1:26-27). But the *imago Dei* is more than a premise. It is a prophetic challenge to power. In the cultural context of antiquity, the notion of a god’s image was not democratically applied but rather royally exploited. The king alone bore the image of God, as we read in a statement about the Neo-Assyrian King Esarhaddon (7th century BC): “A free man is as the shadow of God, the slave is as the shadow of the free man; but the king, he is like unto the very *image of God*” (emphasis mine). The king concentrated power by conflating religion and royal ideology in literature, monuments, and cultural symbols. Scripture challenges this potent system of *image inequality* and applies the royal language of image to everyone.

What occurred in ancient Mesopotamia recurs throughout human history. The dominance of a group can produce an imbalance in what is viewed as the human ideal and can subsequently shape social institutions and cultural practices. Such values are often extremely powerful because they are implicitly embraced and reinforced. Race has become a defining feature of normativity, whether it is idealized beauty, intelligence, or productivity.

We see this in our own history as well. As America marched toward the Civil War, Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens delivered his “Cornerstone” speech on March 21, 1861. In his justification of secession, Stephens repudiated the idea that African slavery was “wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically.” He argued with vigor to the contrary:

Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth.

This was not simply a matter of individual racism; Stephens was seeking to institutionalize image inequality.

Pastors joined politicians in this repugnant vision. Robert Dabney was one of the most significant Southern American theologians of the 19th century. He was a religious and civic leader of great influence, serving as a Confederate chaplain and chief of staff to General Stonewall Jackson. After the Civil War ended, Dabney addressed the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Virginia about the issue of ordaining the freed African Americans for church leadership. His argument is clearly theological: “An insuperable difference of race, made by God and not by man, and of character and of social condition, makes it plainly impossible for a black man to teach and rule white Christians to edification.” Although the Gospel was undoubtedly proclaimed by Dabney, it was not comprehensively applied. While justification by faith may have been expounded, justice was denied to Black brothers and sisters.

Despite the church’s uneven, and at times lamentable, work and witness, Christ remains our hope. And the Gospel indeed changes lives in precisely the areas of our nation’s greatest plights. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gave birth to a multiethnic people who had a common language and life in Christ (Acts 2:1-12). The apostle Paul then applies the image of God to the hostilities of social conflicts and exhorts us to “put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free, but Christ is all, and is in all” (Col 3:10-11).

The labors of racial justice and reconciliation persist, and will always persist, as long as we live in a fallen world. But this work has a conclusion, where distinctions are preserved but divisions resolved: “And they sang a new song: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth” (Rev 5:9-10).

Christian education plays a vital role in the earthly outworking of that heavenly vision. College campuses increasingly draw people from many racial and ethnic backgrounds and provide rich opportunities for relational proximity. Here is a living laboratory to work out the relational dimension of the Gospel — in crossing racial boundaries, in promoting a biblical vision for justice and reconciliation, and in developing the solidarity necessary for racial healing. But this work must be intentional and not merely incidental. Since our cultural background strongly shapes the questions we ask and

the research we pursue, educators should continue the hard work of peeling back layers of presuppositions to develop curriculum from different cultural perspectives that refract more fully the marvelous creativity of our God who is three yet one.

As I consider the needs of the moment and the work of CCCU institutions, the words of philosopher and diplomat Charles Malik come to mind. His distinguished contributions to human rights conjoined a bright theological imagination, understanding of justice, and commitment to societal transformation. As his faith confronted the worst ills in the world with a hope rooted in another world, he insisted that “the university is a clear-cut fulcrum with which to move the world. More potently than by any other means, change the university and you change the world.” Whether you are a student, faculty, staff or administrator, may God work in and through you to further his work in this world to his glory. ☪

WALTER KIM is president of the National Association of Evangelicals and pastor for leadership at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Virginia. His Ph.D. from Harvard University was in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

Interested in learning more?

Visit the CCCU’s new database of
**Racial & Ethnic
Diversity Resources**
for the Christian higher education community.

www.cccu.org/diversity

Photo courtesy of Walter Kim

CAMPUS STORIES

OF INNOVATION

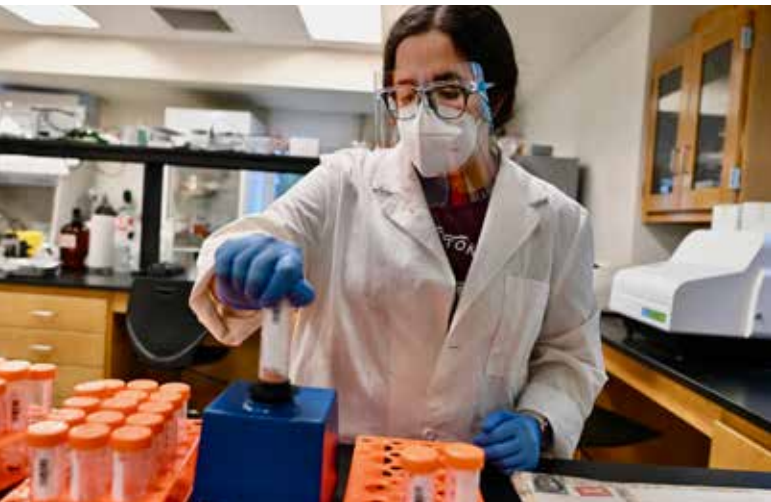
A look at how campuses have met the needs of their students amidst a global pandemic.

AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has continued on for more than a year, a new rhythm of campus life has developed. Administrators, faculty, and staff at Christian colleges and universities rose to the challenge of adapting life on a college campus to a new reality. In a far-from-typical year, CCCU institutions' innovative responses allowed them to help their students successfully and safely complete their coursework and other activities. The following is a collection of reflections from campus leaders across the country on the innovations they used to live out their campus missions in a unique time.



COVID-19 TESTING

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 has been key to keeping campuses open and safe. Here’s how some CCCU institutions have tackled testing.



Belhaven University’s on-campus COVID-19 testing center utilizes faculty and staff to assist in coordinating gathering samples and conducting lab tests on thousands of people each week.

BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY (JACKSON, MS)

BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY built an on-campus COVID-19 testing center in order to track asymptomatic students, faculty, and staff. Opened in early 2021, the center utilizes the expertise of the university’s professors in the chemistry and biology departments, who expanded their roles in order to coordinate, test, and conduct labs on thousands of people each week.

Belhaven was the only university in Mississippi to build a dedicated testing center. Using saliva samples, the center is able to test hundreds of people daily and have results back in just a few hours. This has better enabled the entire campus community to be able to have in-person classes or participate in other in-person work and activities.

The center also utilizes the assistance of student workers. Not only do they help the campus track any asymptomatic spread of the virus, but they are also able to gain valuable experience for future work in medicine and public health.



GREENVILLE UNIVERSITY (GREENVILLE, IL)

THANKS TO THEIR TESTING regimen, Greenville University was not only able to successfully welcome students back for an in-person fall semester; they were able to allow students who wanted to return for the final two weeks after Thanksgiving to do so as well.

A partnership with the University of Illinois Systems SHIELD program enabled GU to test all students, faculty, and staff every week — and even twice a week if needed — using rapid-response saliva testing. Frequent testing on the campus revealed more positive cases in an age category that is largely asymptomatic. More than 20,000 such tests were administered over the course of the fall semester; by the beginning of December, the university had logged 94 total unique positive cases, with 36 of those cases being asymptomatic.

In addition to testing, GU also utilized contact tracing and quarantining practices to limit the spread of the virus. The university plans to continue its rigorous testing regimen through the remainder of the academic year.

Greenville University administered more than 20,000 rapid-response saliva tests over the fall 2020 semester, enabling students to stay in person the entire semester, including after Thanksgiving break.



Photo courtesy of Belhaven University; Photo by Maci Bonacorsi/Greenville University



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY (BIRMINGHAM, AL)

IN DEVELOPING THEIR testing plan for the academic year, Samford University was able to utilize a resource already on campus: the faculty and students at the university’s McWhorter School of Pharmacy.

To assist its work in tracking the spread of the virus, the university launched a clinic to conduct focused testing by identifying common factors among positive cases, such as an event or location, and then identifying others who might share that common factor and testing them for COVID-19.

The program is under the leadership of the dean of Samford’s pharmacy school, and the tests are overseen by two faculty members who are supported by Doctor of Pharmacy students. Thus, the students gain valuable experience in lab procedure and conducting tests, as well as experiencing firsthand the connection between their studies in the pharmaceutical program and the broader work of public health — even as they help keep the Samford community healthy and safe.



Top: Samford University was able to utilize the knowledge and training of both faculty and students at the university’s McWhorter School of Pharmacy to help track the spread of COVID-19 and identify potential common factors to better conduct contact tracing for the campus community.
Bottom: A sign directs members of the Samford University community to a testing location on campus.

Photo courtesy of Samford University

COACHING STUDENTS TOWARD SUCCESS IN A DIFFICULT YEAR

BY SHARRA HYNES
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY



To help its students succeed in a difficult year, Baylor University's student life and student success teams utilized a network of support from across campus to assist them in their work.

WHEN THE COVID-19 pandemic rocked higher education, Baylor University recognized that student retention and success are everyone's responsibility, especially in a pandemic. Even as national trends at private institutions showed student retention declining, the retention rate among all Baylor undergraduates from fall 2019 to fall 2020 jumped nearly one full point to 92.5%, the highest ever for the university.

We correlate some of our success to the fact that a large group of our students had consistent, individualized outreach every week through Baylor's highly successful Bear Care program. Our goal was simple: Increase communication with students who were vulnerable or in distress because of the pandemic and its accompanying restrictions, and then support their needs. With no additional funds or staff, we focused on using existing resources, including employees from across the university who were working remotely and felt called to assist our students.

Program Creation

First, we identified students in need of extra support, focusing particularly on first-year and transfer students who had not yet had a full year on our campus. We also used data from a campus survey that included students who self-identified as experiencing particular anxiety around a number of issues (including the transition to online learning, their move

home, financial challenges, health concerns, and other stressors).

By April 6, 2020, more than 9,000 students were receiving a weekly email, a text message, or both from their "Bear Care Coach," a specific Baylor employee whom students could contact if they needed information, care, or assurance of Baylor's commitment to support them. The average volunteer Bear Care Coach corresponded with 20 students, but some coaches engaged up to 80. Our most vulnerable students were paired with our care team services employees in student life, who could use their roles to support these students more intentionally through the spring and summer. As the pandemic continued, we knew Baylor would be welcoming a group of new students in the summer remotely, so we added those students to the program — bringing our total of students supported to more than 10,000.

Baylor was fortunate to be able to re-open for face-to-face instruction in the fall, but with ongoing uncertainties related to COVID-19, we kept our weekly interaction active through the 12th day of classes. We were intentional about creating a smooth handoff from the program to our existing care team services staff for students who still needed extra support. This proved vital as our care team services staff saw a 68% increase in their caseload in the fall. Pairing the momentum of the Bear Care program with our existing infrastructures and organizations was essential.

Key to Success: Mission-Driven Support

Important to the program's overall success was the support of the faculty and staff, especially those 390 employees who became volunteers and dedicated the time to go through training and engage meaningfully with students in their care. It was so affirming to know that I was surrounded by colleagues who all shared the same mission. This employee commitment to mission is an excellent tool to leverage in supporting students.

Also important was the fact that the Bear Care program had executive-level support from its inception. As other campuses consider student retention and success initiatives, having that support and encouragement from the very top is critical.

Because of the Bear Care program's success, our student life and student success teams can now leverage new ways to effectively support students, including a successful approach to identify students in need and the knowledge that we can call on other staff when needed. In a time of great stress, this program allowed Baylor to live out its mission to educate leaders "by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community" in a meaningful and effective way.

SHARRA HYNES, Ph.D., is associate vice president and dean of students in the division of student life at Baylor University (Waco, Texas).

Robert Rogers



USING A RICH TRADITION OF TECHNOLOGY TO SHAPE A PROMISING FUTURE

BY ANGIE RICHEY
LIFE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

AS COVID-19 continues to reshape everyday life, industries around the world are finding themselves at the crossroads of tradition and innovation, which can be a perilous tightrope. For Life Pacific University, this has been an opportunity to write the next chapter of our nearly 100-year legacy of innovation.

Founded by Aimee Semple McPherson in 1923, the university has reinvented itself multiple times over the past century on its journey from being a Bible training institute to the international university system it is today. The first president was an innovator who developed a global audience through her use of emerging radio and film technologies. She was the first female evangelist on the radio, using a station that she owned, and she purposely integrated film and theatrical elements into her sermons because she knew that dramatic media was the language of the future. She used any and every technology available to her in order to keep the Gospel accessible in any situation.

When COVID-19 forced LPU to send students home for an extended spring break in March 2020, our staff and faculty turned to our founder's legacy for inspiration as we transitioned the entire on-campus experience online in just under two weeks. By the time students

logged back on for classes, 150 on-campus courses had been moved online, a team of success coaches was paired with every student, and the 500-seat Simonson Chapel had been converted into a temporary digital media studio for streaming chapels and classes and for recording webinars, podcasts, and events.

The reward was seeing the LPU community interacting with each other (virtually) as if they were all together in one room. Students and guests joined via Zoom or YouTube LIVE, and speakers had the ability to see their faces and engage with them through a chat feature thanks to larger monitors that are visible from the stage. This opportunity for two-way engagement was fundamental for producing high-quality, virtual events in an attempt to mirror the connection that is found in-person.

Reflecting on the dramatic, sudden shift into a digital experience, I believe that the changes made will help LPU reach more people all over the world for decades to come. We've all become more flexible, adaptable, and aware of the hurdles our students must overcome

in order to be successful. We've invested in emerging technologies and listened to the needs of our students, communities, and churches. Through this investment, we've seen community built and students persevere through the hardest of challenges. May the lessons learned help us lean into innovation and creativity in order to equip more students who will make a positive difference in the world.

To this end, and to continue to develop leaders equipped to tackle the new technological realities of business and ministry emerging from the crisis, the university recently announced the "Media Campaign for Student Success," designed to provide students with access to the technologies and resources necessary for leadership success in the modern marketplace. The campaign includes the creation of the Aimee Semple McPherson (ASM) Digital Media Center, an expansion of the temporary studio assembled to meet needs during the pandemic. As digital communication is clearly the language of our future, this focus allows LPU students to continue to collaborate with the media marketplace throughout Southern California, across the nation, and around the globe, writing the next chapter in LPU's legacy of developing leaders who serve God in the Church, the workplace, and the world.

ANGIE RICHEY is the president of Life Pacific University (San Dimas, California) and a licensed therapist.

RIGHT: Daniel Fernandez, Life Pacific University campus chaplain, welcomes students to a virtual chapel. **BELOW:** LPU President Angie Richey has a conversation with Marcus Robinson, LPU's director of diversity, equity, and inclusion, in LPU's temporary digital media studio.



Photos courtesy of Life Pacific University

CREATING CAREER CONNECTIONS WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING

BY CAROL BROWN
INDIANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY



Indiana Wesleyan University's Life Calling and Career team poses outside on the university's campus in Marion, Indiana.

FACED WITH THE challenge of connecting employers and students during the COVID-19 pandemic — where social distancing limits mean a traditional career connection event isn't possible — our Life Calling and Career team at Indiana Wesleyan University utilized our critical thinking skills to address the challenge of connecting employers and students in a safe and creative way. Our team decided an outdoor tent space would provide employers and students with a safer environment to meet and share information for potential internships and employment. We knew this would be helpful for students looking for jobs, but we were surprised by how much interest this generated from recruiting employers. The registrations for the “tent event” calendar filled up quickly despite

Indiana Wesleyan's outdoor tent event to connect students with potential employers was a great success for all involved.



the pandemic, as many employers were thrilled to have an outdoor recruiting option.

Employers found the outdoor tent to be a festive and fun pop-up style recruiting option, while students seemed less intimidated to meet with employers at the outdoor courtyard tents than in a typical career fair setting indoors. We did move these events to a socially distanced indoor setup when the weather wasn't ideal, but the successful experiment of the tent event taught our team the importance of adaptability and addressing the core need of both employers and students: a human connection.

Our team also utilized technology to help students, offering Zoom appointments for life coaching, resume reviews, and LinkedIn tutorials. New student orientation sessions on StrengthsFinder results were moved into an interactive online format featuring discussion groups for students to learn more about their top strengths. We provided student employees opportunities to hear speakers from other organizations through our SET (Student Employment Training) workshops on Zoom. In addition, we hosted IWU's first-ever “Virtual Internship and Job Fair” in October, which featured more than 50 employers. This

online job fair helped our traditional campus in Marion, Indiana, collaborate with our online school, IWU National & Global, to serve both groups of students and give them a chance to engage a national mix of employers.

Even with economic difficulties hitting multiple fields across the country, our office has seen a steady growth of employment opportunities in health care, education, communications, logistics, and accounting during this time. In fact, some industries have benefited from the needs of the pandemic, so we are helping our students shift their target to the fields that are in demand. Most employers have adapted to remote working arrangements and are offering remote internships for IWU students. Our team maintained a steady marketing campaign to promote resume reviews over Zoom meetings, and appointments are nearly back to their pre-pandemic numbers.

As the pandemic continues to necessitate adjustments to how we do our work, the Life Calling and Career team continues to search for new and creative ways to build relationships with employers and deliver our services effectively to students so they can be equipped and empowered to fulfill their God-given purpose in the world.

CAROL BROWN is the associate dean of Life Calling & Career at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana.

Photos courtesy of Indiana Wesleyan University

MINISTERING TO STUDENTS IN QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION

BY SARAH MOSS
DORDT UNIVERSITY



OVER THE PAST six months, Dordt University Campus Pastor Sam Ashmore has spent hours on the phone with Dordt students in quarantine and isolation. Being alone for days can be difficult for many, so Ashmore makes sure to check up on how students are doing emotionally, spiritually, and mentally.

“I ask, ‘How are classes? How’s your heart? How’s your mind?’” says Ashmore. “But the main purpose behind the call is to pray with the student. We stop right there on the phone and pray for whatever the student needs at that moment, whether that be, ‘Man, studies are really hard in quarantine,’ or, ‘I’m really bored and lonely.’”

Since the beginning of the fall semester, Dordt's campus ministries team has worked hard to provide pastoral support to students who are in quarantine or isolation because of COVID-19. In addition to making regular phone calls to students, the team developed a “Quarantine and Isolation Resources” page that Ashmore sends to every student who starts quarantine or isolation. The page contains many resources, including tips for defending well-being during quarantine and isolation, as well as a link to RightNow Media, the biggest Bible study library in the world.

“We also have a resource that deals with identity — a reminder to students that God calls them his son or daughter. There's a form where students can submit prayer requests, too,” says Ashmore.

Every week, each campus ministries team member has a standing Zoom call where students in isolation or quarantine

can hop on if they want; this includes a Zoom prayer time on Monday, a virtual hangout on Tuesday, a Zoom Bible study on Wednesday, and a virtual lunch on Thursday. Not all students take advantage of the Zoom calls, but they tell Ashmore that they appreciate having the option to log on if they want.

“Even if they don't log onto the Zoom calls, it's nice to know that someone is there for them — that someone cares,” he says.

In addition to providing pastoral care, Dordt's campus ministries team has found a way to provide peer support to students in quarantine and isolation by hiring Carolyn Shonkwiler, a junior psychology and social work major. She handwrites letters of encouragement. Typically, she writes five to 10 letters a day, but at one point she wrote 20 to 40 letters a day. She has also baked chocolate chip cookies that she drops off for students.

“This work study job has provided an opportunity for me to serve in a tangible way,” says Shonkwiler. “I think it's important to have someone reach out and recognize that going through quarantine is hard and that we see them — that they are still part of Dordt.”

Ashmore has noticed that students often want their peers to help carry their burdens and provide a listening ear.

“There is a lot of healing, growth, and creativity that takes place through peer-to-peer support and encouragement. Looking forward, I wonder if there's a more intentional way for campus ministries to take part in peer-to-peer encouragement, truth-telling, counseling, or the like. I see students craving to be



Sam Ashmore, campus pastor at Dordt University, checks in on a student who has been quarantined. This has been an important part of his work in ministering to Dordt students during the pandemic.

known for their authentic selves with their peers, and campus ministries can foster and facilitate this even more.”

Doing ministry during COVID-19 has also shown Ashmore that Gen Z students are quite comfortable with discussing their thoughts and feelings online and through text.

“I wonder if there is a place for text-driven pastoral care on Dordt's campus,” he says. “Not to replace face-to-face interaction, but as a doorway to it. Will students be more engaged if we reach out to them through text initially? That's something I want to ponder and think through.”

SARAH MOSS is the director of communication and marketing at Dordt University in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Jamin Ver Velde / Dordt University

PRIORITIES, POSSIBILITIES, AND PROMISES KEPT

BY ANDREW J. BECKNER
AND OMAR RASHED
ANDERSON UNIVERSITY (SC)

LAST SUMMER, every headline about higher education in every major news outlet told the same story: The pandemic had created a looming enrollment crisis.

But for years, Anderson University (Anderson, South Carolina) has been one of the fastest-growing private institutions of higher learning in the U.S., even in the face of numerous challenges. So our headline was different: “Despite COVID-19 Pandemic, Anderson University Sets New Record for Student Enrollment.”

In fall 2020, we enrolled almost 3,900 students, a jump of nearly 500 from the year before. Anderson enrolled the largest freshman class in its history; experienced a 5% increase in residential students; had freshmen to sophomore retention grow by almost 5%; and saw racial and ethnic diversity reach the highest level in the university’s history. This happened not just because of Anderson’s campus culture, but because our leadership took practical steps that led to a record-breaking enrollment.

Possibility and Promise

If there’s one thing we’ve learned during the pandemic, it’s that there’s no use trying to guess what’s coming next. That’s why Anderson University President Evans Whitaker shared a new vision with the leadership team: Don’t try to predict. Rather, focus on the possibilities, and reinforce the university’s promises and priorities.

Put simply, we made it clear that we’ll do everything in our power to keep campus open (the possibility) while never losing sight of our students’ academic *and* physical health (the promise). Our students and their families responded to that approach.



Through intentional, practical steps, Anderson University (SC) saw increases in both enrollment and retention during the pandemic.

Risk Avoidance vs. Risk Management

We also had to embrace the reality that no organization can fully eliminate risk. Clearly, the stakes are higher amid this public health crisis; failure, in this case, is not inconsequential. Like most universities, we suspended in-person operations last spring. But as soon as the last of our students left campus, we shifted our focus to fall 2020 and the overriding question: How can we safely bring our family back together next semester? The discussion was led by our task force — a collection of faculty and staff professionals with experience in public health, emergency management, crisis communication, and executive leadership. With their insight and the guidance of almighty God, we decided the best course of action was to manage risk rather than try to avoid it.

Hosting In-Person Orientation for First-Year Students

A key early step was proactive engagement with the Class of 2024 and integrating new students into the AU campus culture. Based on the task force’s recommendations, we made the decision to move forward with in-person orientation sessions for first-year students during the summer. It was a challenge, certainly, and involved a lot of temperature checks, health screenings, face covering requirements, and creat-

ing space for social distancing, among other protocols. But it proved to be a crucial step in connecting with students and their families, and we were successfully able to remain free of COVID-19 throughout the summer.

Campus-Wide Commitment

It wasn’t just the enrollment team that was involved in this success. Communications leaders provided clear and consistent communication to our students and their families. The entire campus community displayed incredible adherence to our health and safety protocols, helping us keep our COVID-19 case count low. We hired staff whose sole responsibility was caring for students who contracted the virus — everything from contact tracing to arranging isolation housing and meal delivery. We treated our finances responsibly, ensuring no faculty or staff faced furloughs or layoffs.

Ultimately, as many CCCU colleagues can attest, I think it really comes down to how our faculty, staff, and students embrace our mission. Saying Anderson University is like a family isn’t just a slogan. It’s something all of us truly believe and embrace.

ANDREW J. BECKNER is the executive director of public relations at Anderson University (Anderson, South Carolina). **OMAR RASHED** is Anderson’s senior vice president for administration and brand.

Photo courtesy of Anderson University (SC)

SHIFTS IN TEACHING

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHWESTERN - ST. PAUL (ST. PAUL, MN)

IN THE MIDST of pandemic lockdowns and social distancing, walking outdoors has been a key outlet for many people. Rick Love, an art and design professor at the University of Northwestern – St. Paul and faculty president there, began attending some meetings over Zoom on his phone while he was walking outside and realized that it worked so well, he could turn it into a classroom opportunity.

For his art history class, Love spent some class sessions walking around sites in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, with the help of a friend who filmed him, and engaged with students about the types of art they were seeing over the Zoom meeting. The locations varied from St. Paul’s historic Union Depot station to cemeteries with graves dating back to the 1850s. It allowed students to consider why certain types of art would be located in that part of Minnesota and bring their history studies to a new light.

“It really helped when everyone was nervous [about COVID-19 protocols] in the fall,” Love says. “We know the masks, the social distancing, the protocols all work now, but we didn’t then. ... This felt like face-to-face classroom engagement.”

Love was also able to utilize recordings of himself doing demos for his printmaking classes, making it easier for students to learn new techniques in an “up-close” format while maintaining safe distances. Overall, Love says, the feedback he received from his students was positive, and he plans to continue utilizing the format in his coursework in the future, even after the pandemic ends. He also hopes, once restrictions ease and they feel more comfortable going out to new places, that it will encourage his students to go and explore the sites around them as well.

SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY (LAKELAND, FL)

ONE OF THE BIGGEST pandemic challenges for parents has been to find ways to both support their children with their modified schoolwork and focus on their own work. At the same time, education students have not been able to gain the same classroom practice because of school closures. At Southeastern University (Lakeland, FL), the College of Education developed a program that could tackle both problems for students and employees at the university during the fall 2020 semester.

Known as RISE (Remote Instruction for Students of Employees), the program gave school-age children of Southeastern’s faculty and staff a safe and secure place to complete online coursework during the fall while their parents worked. Thirty-five students from the College of Education supervised the children, assisted with homework, and answered questions, providing them with field study hours for their degree.

Though the program is not currently running, RISE is ready to open again if needed. The program is directed by Cindy Campbell, assistant professor of education, who coordinated with multiple departments across campus to make sure the program could be run safely and effectively.

Photo courtesy of Milligan University

MILLIGAN UNIVERSITY (MILLIGAN, TN)


UNIVERSITY STAFF responsible for cleaning and maintaining facilities have been essential to keeping campus communities safe during the pandemic. At Milligan University, a unique partnership between the housekeeping staff and a freshmen engineering class produced a useful tool that helps protect the housekeeping staff in their important work.

Carrie Floyd, Milligan’s service manager for housekeeping, wanted to find some sort of tool for her staff that could help them safely open and shut doors and drawers, push elevator buttons, and flip light switches — reducing the amount of direct contact they had with high-touch surfaces while cleaning — while also being small enough to fit on a key ring or in a pocket. Landon Holbrook, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, gave the challenge to his students in the Introduction to Engineering course. They used CAD software and a 3D printer to design several options for the housekeeping staff to test and offer feedback.

After a series of revisions to the design based on the feedback, the class produced the final design that the housekeeping staff deemed their favorite. The experience provided a hands-on opportunity both to learn about the entire process of engineering a product for customers and to help the members of the Milligan community. ☺

Freshmen engineering students at Milligan University got a unique opportunity to design, test, and produce a tool to help protect the university’s housekeeping staff from COVID-19.



An illustration of four people wearing face masks on a stylized landscape. Two people stand on a hill behind a large, blue and white globe. One person, wearing a red polka-dot shirt and a blue mask, is on the left. The other, in a blue plaid shirt and a blue mask, is on the right, pointing upwards. In the foreground, two more people are walking. One, in a red plaid shirt and a blue mask, is on the left, gesturing towards the globe. The other, in a purple polka-dot shirt and a blue mask, is on the right, walking away. The background features rolling hills in shades of tan and blue, with stylized clouds and a small orange tree with round fruits on the right.

The International Impact *of* COVID-19

How the CCCU's
international members
have adapted to the
pandemic's challenges.

THE CCCU IS an international community, with 48 members located in 20 countries outside the United States. While we have long valued and shared our global fellowship as institutions of Christian higher education, never before has there been a crisis that has truly impacted the entirety of our global membership at the same time. The following essays, written by the leaders of six international institutions around the world, offer a glimpse of how the pandemic has impacted their campuses — and how our shared faith in Jesus Christ has helped their communities endure the challenges, uncertainties, and opportunities that have arisen as a result.

Faith, Hope, and Resilience Keep Us Going

INSTABILITY. VULNERABILITY. UNPREDICTABILITY. Inadequacy. Unpreparedness. Humanitarian crisis. Fearfulness. These are among the terms often used to describe our situation in Haiti in a normal year. Each year, we brace for natural and human-made disasters. Our faithful tropical storms never fail to make a visit. Ever since the earthquake took its 30 seconds to dance with us and shake us to the core in 2010, it has regularly been sending us waves to let us know it does not leave nor forsake us. Nowadays, political unrest has become the most lucrative industry in Haiti and is occurring more and more often as Haiti's cash flow depletes.

We are used to these types of disruptions. We know how to navigate them with little or no resources at all. They have become part of our everyday life. But COVID-19 has been a different ball game.

In early 2020, we looked in consternation at what COVID-19 was doing to our mighty friends across the Western Hemisphere. Logically, our fate was sealed. How could we in Haiti face such a monstrous disease that brings the best global health systems to their knees? How can we economically withstand such a beast that almost eats up the strongest economy in the world? How can we survive such a villain that shatters the lifestyle of the most established societies of our time? Without any doubt, we could see an unprecedented humanitarian crisis rushing toward us like a lightning bolt.

Like everyone everywhere in the world, we at Emmaus University of Haiti braced for it. We did not have any choice. COVID-19 was making its way to our shore. It was not coming to enjoy our beaches and sunshine. It was coming to take over. It was coming to finish what tropical storms and political upheavals had left of us from the previous year.

We watched what the rest of the world was doing to protect themselves against this giant killer. Quarantine? Social distancing? These are unthinkable for us. Life is lived within community. Also, we must go out daily to earn our bread, and we have no infrastructure to preserve any left over for the next day. We watched as virtual education went viral. This, too, was beyond our capability. No more than one out of 10 students within our student body owns a personal computer.



GUENSON CHARLOT is president of Emmaus University in Cercaville, Acul du Nord, Haiti.

So what has kept us going? Faith, hope, and resilience. Faith in the Triune God. As a community of faith, we prayed and fasted that God would protect us from the wrath of COVID-19. And God answered us. As of this writing in February, 11 months after COVID-19 landed on our soil, it has only claimed 243 lives. This is 22 persons per month, 0.73 person per day. Hunger is deadlier than COVID-19 in Haiti.

Along with faith, hope has been the second attitude that kept us going. We cultivated the same mindset when natural and human-made disasters hit us. We remained optimistic that things would get better with time. Our faith and our hope have prepared us to be more resilient than ever before. We chose not to give up living. We chose not to give up learning.



Emmaus University is located in a small village on Haiti's northern coast a few miles outside of Cap-Haitien, Haiti's second-largest city.

In March 2020, halfway through our spring semester, we had to close our campus. Most of our students do not have electricity in their homes, let alone a personal computer and internet. We asked them to use their phones to complete their work for the semester. Then we realized that more than one-third of them do not have a smart phone. Those with no smart phones had to borrow one from a relative or a neighbor. They handwrote their assignments, took pictures of them, and texted them to their professors. It was not easy, but we did it. We completed the spring 2020 semester. By August 2020, we felt confident and safe enough to be back to campus.

Today, our campus is full of life. Our student body is exponentially growing. Our dorms, especially our female dorm, are overcrowded. Our dining space is becoming too small. Our staff is more enthusiastic than ever. Faith in the Triune God; hope that abounds in the power of the Holy Spirit; and our resilience have kept and will continue to keep us going.

Photos courtesy of Emmaus University

Keeping the Faith in Times of Crisis

LOOKING BACK AT the previous year, the COVID-19 pandemic put digital education into the frontline in the life of our university. In the face of the pandemic's challenges, we set up an array of health and safety measures as well as introduced new teaching and examination methods. Though the situation in Hungary was and is mostly under control, and the rate of infections and deaths is lower compared to several other countries, we Hungarians also feel the daily consequences of this enduring virus in every aspect of our lives.

As a university, the health and safety of our students, professors, and staff members has been our top priority. Since we have over 8,200 students and about 800 employees on seven campuses located in three cities, this has been a formidable task. In March 2020, at the beginning of the first wave of the pandemic in Hungary, we closed our buildings and switched to online education within 48 hours. At the same time, we asked the vast majority of our students living in dormitories to move out and to go home. Special exemptions were made on a case-by-case basis for those who had no proper home to return to or, as was the case for our international students, those who simply could not travel home. As a result, about 30 international students from three continents and 20 countries remained in the dormitory. We had to take similar actions during the middle of the fall semester, when the second wave of the pandemic reached Hungary. Given the extraordinary circumstances, the university did not charge a dormitory fee for two weeks so we could help ease these students' financial burdens.

Thanks to these quick and robust measures, we managed to avoid the spread of the virus within our campuses. As was likely the case of other CCCU institutions, we put much emphasis on the mental well-being of our professors, staff, and students, Hungarian and international alike. A new campus pastor and a team of mental health advisers are now available for our university citizens at all times. Those advisers who speak English are also at the disposal of our international students whom we deem particularly vulnerable during times of lockdown.

As elsewhere, our international mobility programs greatly suffered from the travel restrictions. Here we try to walk on a narrow path: While observing every pandemic-related regulation, we keep our hearts and doors open to those international students who endeavor to travel to Hungary to study for a semester or to seek a degree at Károli Gáspár University. Though international mobility has decreased, we still have a fair number of incoming students from several countries. Some of them have been granted the

Károli Christian Scholarship, which we founded in 2019 to help young Christians living in discriminated minority communities from countries in the Middle East and Africa.

Undoubtedly, the introduction of our online courses will have some advantages for the long run, as both professors and students learn to use new technologies and tools that may be useful even after the pandemic is over. Nevertheless, we also learned in the past year that no matter how advanced the technologies you use, nothing can replace personal contact amongst students, professors, and staff.

As the biggest Protestant university in Europe, we hold fast to our commitment to represent not only our Christian values but our genuine faith that God does not let us down — even in the midst of a global hardship unlike any our current generation has ever known.



ÁGNES CZINE is the acting rector of Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, which is based in Budapest, Hungary.

Károli Gáspár University's campus in Budapest, Hungary, includes a historic building donated by the Hungarian government for educational purposes.



Photos courtesy of Károli Gáspár University

Preparing for Any Season

AT THE ONSET of COVID-19, Africa International University (AIU) closed its campus in March 2020, sending most of the students and staff home as per the Kenyan government’s directive. However, our international students and their families remained on campus, so the AIU community, international partners, and friends joined hands to support them in meeting their basic needs while on campus. Students were allocated small gardens to enable them grow their own vegetables for consumption, reducing their contact with the outside world.

AIU continued to provide spiritual and moral support to our students at home through online chapel services, virtual Christian Union meetings, and Bible study, as well as counseling and psychology webinars. We transitioned over 65% of our students to online and remote learning, except for those who could not get internet connectivity due to their geographical locations, and we were able to administer exams through an online platform as well.

As the year continued, AIU took steps to ensure that the university could continue to be operational during the pandemic. We put up warning signage, added hand-washing points, and provided hand-sanitizer dispensers in our buildings within the campus and hostels. Cleaning schedules and processes were revised and strengthened. Staff who work from offices receive a new face mask every day. Both the university health clinic and the counseling team have also remained open throughout to provide support to anyone who needs it.

The university’s finances were adversely affected because enrollments across the schools dropped tremendously this year. The pandemic’s effect on the church in Africa has particularly impacted the enrollment in our School of Theology, which experienced its lowest enrollment ever. Our prayer is to attract more scholarships for theological courses so that we can ensure the core mandate of the university — to educate Christ-centered leaders in Africa for the transformation of God’s people



DANKIT NASSIUMA is vice chancellor of Africa International University in Nairobi, Kenya.



Africa International University is located in Karen, a suburb on the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya.

and the world — is not affected. Even in the face of these challenges, we were able to hold a virtual graduation ceremony for our graduates — the first such event in AIU’s history. We give glory to our heavenly Father for its success.

The experience has reminded us that we must be prepared in all seasons. The story of Joseph and the great famine in Genesis 47:13-27 has been an apt analogy for the whole world, but especially for the body of Christ and for Christian institutions of higher learning. AIU was in a strenuous financial position because of our dependence on students that come in every semester. We are now seriously reviewing our business model to not only meet the current financial gap but to ensure financial stability in all seasons the Lord will place us in.

Through it all, I have been encouraged by our faculty members. Their quick action and innovation on academic delivery meant we could seamlessly transition from face-to-face teaching to online teaching in order to ensure that our academic calendar was not adversely affected by the changes brought by COVID-19. Staff tackled these challenges and carried out their responsibilities with passion and commitment. Some started working from home; others changed their leave schedules as needed, while still others had extended leave periods in order to adopt and align to the needs of the university and to the pandemic protocols from the Ministry of Health.

But above all, our ultimate encouragement and hope is in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who ordains and controls all things, for with him we are assured that all things are possible.

Photos courtesy of Africa International University

A View of COVID-19 from Australia

2020 HAS BEEN the year of vision and re-vision. Australia’s experience through the COVID-19 pandemic is distinct from that of the U.S. and other countries. By the third week of March 2020, our international borders closed and all our higher education institutions went online (after only three weeks of on-campus instruction for the semester), with varying degrees of effective adaptation. The institutions in the Australian Christian Higher Education Alliance (Alphacrucis College, Avondale University College, Christian Heritage College, Eastern College Australia, Excelsia College, Morling College, Sheridan College, and Tabor College) managed the transition well. Many institutions across the country, reliant on international students, suffered a huge decline in revenue and, by the end of the year, many made significant reductions in their workforce. International education is a key contributor to Australia’s economy. Over the course of the year, various state borders were closed as well. Some colleges and universities had to stay online the whole year because of COVID-19 restrictions. (At the time of writing this, Australia’s borders are still closed to international travel.)

In July (the start of Semester 2, which is equivalent to the American spring semester that begins in January), CHC returned to on-campus classes or hybrid classes with strict COVID-19-safe plans. Students were appreciative of the option to study in-person or online. Many expressed that they missed the joy of community when studying online. Everyone adjusted accordingly, and we completed the year without a single COVID-19 case in our community.

It has been a joy to embrace the opportunities presented through this season — faculty and students were surprised that they adapted well to online learning. We have progressed in strengthening online programs and finding new ways to connect with students and staff during lockdown. We started cross-disciplinary “Connect” groups for students online — in one of these sessions, we had students from across Brisbane and other Australian states, and one from Africa. We also held online staff devotions and daily prayer times, which were well attended. These were points of connection during lockdown, and we continue to hold some of these prayer times in person as well as online.

A continuing challenge that has been observed across our sector is in student engagement. Faculty found students less likely to engage compared to previous years and had to find a variety of ways to connect. As a commuter college without residential facilities, most of our students work at least part time (including the traditional age students). A number of them lost their jobs during this time, and keeping them in their studies was challenging. Additionally, practicums were suspended for



JEANNIE TRUDEL is president of Christian Heritage College, Brisbane, Australia. She is also the chair of Australian Christian Higher Education Alliance (ACHEA).

a semester, so in the second semester, catching up was an issue for some. Our faculty and staff worked hard with organizations and students to get them through. Mental health issues have impacted student engagement as well. However, Christian institutions like ours offer a distinctive as we minister to our students and help them grow in faith and develop resilience.

We were granted an opportunity to grow and demonstrate resilience in 2020 — everyone at CHC had to learn to do things differently, to adapt, and to innovate. Coming together as a Christ-centered academic community helped us navigate uncharted waters. COVID-19 provided a catalyst for change in higher education; we are learning to think outside the box and create value, especially in offering microcredentials.

In the midst of an unprecedented crisis, we have learned to draw strength from our faith in Christ and from one another, and to refocus on our mission and purpose. I see an even stronger case for Christian higher education not just in Australia, but across the globe. What do we need to do in 2021? Continue to innovate in Christian higher education, develop sustainable models, and keep focusing on adding value to the student experience.

Christian Heritage College is in Carindale, a suburb of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia.



Photos courtesy of Christian Heritage College

Momentum in the Midst

IN EARLY MARCH 2020, I was camped out in a Florida hospital room providing support to my mother, who had broken her hip during our family vacation. That was the week we learned that COVID-19 had reached North America. As I spent many hours each day on the phone trying to get a sense of the rapidly changing landscape at home, it became clear that a pandemic the likes of which we had not witnessed in our lifetime was going to affect everything.

Crandall University's campus is located in Moncton, the largest urban center in the province of New Brunswick, Canada.



As I worked from home after returning to New Brunswick, our COVID-19 Working Group recommended that we severely restrict campus access, cancel all events, and transition instruction to an online model immediately. We determined that, with a combination of some diminished expenses and increased fundraising, we could avoid layoffs and end the year in the black, which we thankfully did through God's grace and provision.

As the summer progressed, our province issued clear operational guidelines for post-secondary educational institutions: Classes could include no more than 50 people and students had to sit six feet apart from one another. By virtue of being a small university with smaller classes, and by creating a few additional large classrooms, we were the one university in our province that could offer our courses face-to-face in the fall. New international students whose entry to Canada was postponed began their programs online from home. Athletic competition was not permitted, student events were significantly modified, and chapel attendees had to sit six feet apart.

So far in our COVID-19 journey we have learned several key lessons:

Keep communicating with the board. In times of crisis, the president needs to regularly update and reassure the board. I found that it was also important for me to talk frequently with the board chair so that an off-campus yet knowledgeable voice could speak into our development of policy and procedure.

The tone of fundraising messages is crucial. Crisis-based fundraising worked heading into our June 30 fiscal year end, but our overarching fundraising theme for 2020-2021 is "Momentum in the Midst." This fall, our messaging prioritized celebrating God's financial provision, our new faculty appointments, new strategic initiatives, and the university's growing enrollment. This shift in tone creates donor confidence in the university's ability to adapt to new circumstances and find ways to advance the mission in spite of the obstacles.

Employee morale is key. In the fall, we provided what was probably the largest salary increase to our employees in the history of the university thanks to the generosity of a major donor. We also gave our employees extra days off during the summer and a grocery store gift certificate to fund a summer picnic or barbecue. We prayed together online through the spring and summer. Supervisors kept in close touch with their teams.

Ongoing strategic planning is important. Early on, I decided to have our provost take the lead on managing the day-to-day response to the pandemic through the COVID-19 Working Group. This way, I could focus on leading our plans for future growth and expansion, as we have plans to continue to grow our enrollment significantly as we emerge from the limitations imposed on us by the pandemic.

I remain optimistic in spite of our short-term challenges. The Crandall University community has demonstrated its resiliency, and God continues to bless my *alma mater*. We may be weary, but I believe that our students and our employees will be better leaders as a result of the coping skills we are all developing. If this pandemic is a testing fire that we are passing through, then our future momentum is being forged in the midst of it.



BRUCE FAWCETT is president and vice chancellor of Crandall University in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Photos courtesy of Crandall University

Changing Format, Maintaining Ethos



Jerusalem University College is located on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, Israel.

JERUSALEM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE entered the world of online education for the first time during the fall 2020 semester. For us, it has been a purposeful though seismic shift.

Since its founding in 1957, JUC has been dedicated to creating learning environments at the graduate and undergraduate levels that enhance — rather than duplicate — traditional courses in biblical studies and the modern Middle East. Our educational model takes full advantage of the rich venue of hands-on learning resources in Jerusalem. These include local faculty who represent a cross-section of the voices of the land, as well as in-field access to historic and modern sites and to the living communities of Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and Jordan. For this reason, JUC's curriculum is more analogous to laboratory or residency courses than it is to traditional classroom settings.

So when facing the need to offer only online courses this year, the most immediate question was: How effectively can the JUC ethos be transferred to online learning experiences? The short answer is, while the complexion of our curriculum cannot be replicated online exactly, it can be fairly represented in online formats, at least for some of our classes.

From the start, it was obvious that we should not offer everything that we normally do, but rather choose parts of our curriculum that were less dependent on in-field learning. For example, this fall we did not offer our flagship course on the physical settings of the Bible, which includes 15 days of on-site

visits. By late October, when it became clear that we would be online for the entire year, we began to put together a virtual in-field component for that course so that it can be offered in the spring. We have also created virtual in-field components for several other classes, whether of video or enhanced PowerPoint platforms. Still, to a person, our instructors have said, "We miss being in the field."

We are committed to offering only synchronous courses, on the basis that while our students do not have direct contact with the physical resources of the land, they should at least have personal access to our instructors. The challenge here is temporal: Jerusalem is seven to 10 hours ahead of North America, and an equal number of hours behind our students in East Asia. This narrows the window in which courses can be offered to 6.5 hours per day (3:00-9:30 p.m. Israel Standard Time). Even then, some students start class at 5:00 a.m. or end their day at 3:30 a.m. But kudos to everyone who enrolled! Very few nodded off in class, and the vast majority — and certainly all of our faculty — were gallant in their efforts to maintain the essence of what JUC is.

For the fall semester, we offered courses only for our continuing and incoming master's students and our alumni. This spring, we are also enrolling undergrads from our 70-member-strong Consortium of Associated Schools (many of which are also CCCU schools), at reduced tuition. Our alumni, the vast majority of whom are auditing, are excited for the opportunity. Students taking courses for academic credit, on the other hand, prefer to be in Jerusalem. We understand, and we embrace this as an endorsement of our ethos.

As we look down the road, it appears that online course offerings will remain a part of JUC even when all travel restrictions lift. This is encouraging, not so much because it bodes well for JUC, but because it confirms our mission to meet the ongoing interest among believers in Jesus to become better grounded in the realities of the world of the Bible, and hence more effective in Christian ministry worldwide. ☺



PAUL WRIGHT is president of Jerusalem University College in Jerusalem, Israel.

Photos courtesy of Jerusalem University College

An abstract geometric illustration of a building composed of various colored planes (teal, pink, orange, purple) in an isometric perspective. A small silhouette of a person stands on a central platform. The building has several rectangular openings that look like windows or doorways. The background is a dark teal with small white dots and a few starburst effects.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH *in a* PANDEMIC

Students are struggling but aren't seeking help in traditional ways. How are campuses navigating that reality?

By Abby Perry

IT'S A RESULT that most faculty and staff would have expected after watching their students endure the disruption of COVID-19:

"Due to the long-lasting pandemic situation and onerous measures such as lockdown and stay-at-home orders, the COVID-19 pandemic brings negative impacts on higher education. The findings of our study highlight the urgent need to develop interventions and preventive strategies to address the mental health of college students."

That was the finding of an interview survey study published in September 2020 in the *Journal of Medical Internet Research*. It likely comes as no surprise to most higher education professionals. Even for students whose families did not face illness, death, or job loss directly, the changes in routine and surroundings alone would be enough to have a deep impact.

"PICTURE STUDENTS IN A BASEMENT,"

says Todd Monger, executive director of student development at North Central University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. "No windows, no social cues — even their movies they watch are streamed, so they are never interrupted by the 10:00 p.m. news cueing them it might be time for bed. Students are losing track of time, sleep schedules, eating schedules, and the list goes on. They are socially 'weightless' or numb because they have lost social grounding."

Monger wonders if students' social muscles are atrophying during this time in ways that won't quite become clear until a truly post-pandemic era, like when an astronaut returns to Earth and can't bear up against gravity. There are certainly signs that students are struggling.

An informal survey of academic leaders from 32 CCCU institutions at the end of 2020 revealed that 66% of these leaders have seen similar or even decreased demand for mental health services from students seeking help (whether in-person or virtually) compared to previous years. Yet the same survey showed that 78% of those leaders have seen significant increases in signs that students are struggling (such as missed or incomplete assignments, grade levels below average for the class, higher absenteeism, etc.).

National data tell a similar story. In their fall 2020 survey of student success, Hobsons found that more than half of college students reported their learning experience worsening due to the pandemic and that 68% stated that COVID-19 had negatively affected their mental health. However, 77% of all students surveyed indicated that they had not availed themselves of their college's mental health services.

One could make a few different assumptions about what these statistics mean. It could be that students are experiencing more anxiety and depression but are trying to find their own coping mechanisms without the aid of campus health care leaders. It could be that

students are reluctant to get the help they need because they're afraid to go out due to the pandemic but also feel uncomfortable with telehealth services. It could be that the "basement effect" Monger suggested is just disrupting enough for students to struggle in class but not enough for them to feel the need to seek help.

Regardless of the assumptions, CCCU leaders are continuing their mission to help students flourish in the midst of all circumstances. They model and encourage rhythms not of assumption and reaction, but of observation and response.

"Caring, consistency, and constancy," says Tamela Turner, campus counselor at Judson College in Marion, Alabama. Turner emphasizes the value of reaching out to students on a regular basis, demonstrating clear availability and openness to listening. "We didn't stop [offering counseling sessions] when students were on break," she says. "We knew they were coming back, so we told them, 'we're still here.'"

Turner places the priority not on predicting how students feel or will feel in the months to come, but on creating spaces and opportunities for them to communicate, process, and seek counsel.

Irene Kraegel, director of the Center for Counseling and Wellness at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, takes a similar approach. She notes that it isn't just mental health services seeing lower participation at Calvin; engagement in student activities is lower now than it was during pre-pandemic times.

"I think time will tell," she says. "Is [decreased enrollment in student mental health services] because students are suffering in silence and it feels like too much of a barrier to meet virtually? Some students are feeling like they're in living situations where they don't have the privacy they need for something like virtual therapy. We do offer in-person rooms that students can use for their virtual sessions at our center but there are students who aren't living in town — they're studying remotely. So I think there's a lot that goes

into this, especially since we know that it isn't just mental health services that are experiencing this [lower participation]."

The key, many are finding, is cultivating intentional connection amongst peers. At Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, California, the university's counseling center has launched a Peer Educator program. Lori Lacy, the counseling center's director, says that six undergraduate students serving as interns for the center have taken on the task of promoting mental wellness to other students as part of this program. The students receive academic internship credit in exchange for working 2,000 hours a year providing outreach to the APU student community.

"They can get through [to their fellow students] in a way that professionals can't always do," Lacy explains.

Kraegel at Calvin University has found the same to be true. "Being able to switch to a virtual service model has been really important," she says. "Most of what we've done in the past we've been able to continue to do in a virtual format. We did, this year, bring in a new peer support tool — an app that students could use to support each other virtually. ... It's been an opportunity for students to digitally reach out to each other and show support. That's something we've been working toward for a long time, but I think the timing did end up working out well."

"There have been a lot of students talking and posting about loneliness, anxiety, and depression," says Andy Storms, vice president of student affairs and the residence director of Strong Hall at Ozark Christian College. "But I know that, going into November, our counseling numbers were down. I think everyone was talking about [mental health] but they didn't seek professional help...which could be a recipe for disaster...or it could be that, sort of by the acceptance of talking about it, [students are] getting the care they need and at least don't feel alone."

Peer-to-peer connection seems particularly effective at helping students combat

isolation because of the simple fact that the student volunteers are in the same position as their peers—facing a complete shift in what they expected their college experience to entail. While it doesn't replace the need for professional mental health services, it does provide a unique and meaningful way to share fears and anxieties.

These peer-led collaborations aren't the only way connections seem to be making a difference in student overall well-being. Campuses across the country have found that, especially now, embracing the theology of bearing one another's burdens cannot be overstated.

Storms says that while Ozark outsources professional counseling when student needs can be better met by off-campus professionals, there are many faculty members with pastoral counseling hearts willing to lend an ear to students.

Lacy at Azusa Pacific also notes that on-campus collaborations have provided resilient, meaningful part-

nerships in a time when so much feels fractured. For example, APU's counseling center partnered with APU's human resources department and provost office to provide all new faculty with training on both safety in the curricular setting and mental health awareness.

Lacy says that these training courses speak to specific signs of distress that faculty members can look for while educating students online.

For example, are students engaging? Are they no longer turning their video cameras on during the Zoom meetings? Are they saying things like, "I just don't see the point of doing this assignment"? "We give faculty language to use," Lacy says. "[Statements like] 'I feel how hard this is for you. I've felt that way before. I've found that it's helpful to go talk to someone about it.'"

In this season of tremendous isolation, distance, and uncertainty, counselors and activities directors on many Christian campuses know that community-building is still possible. It's difficult, and perhaps the mechanisms aren't ideal, but staff efforts are bearing fruit. Of the more than 4,800 CCCU students across the U.S. and Canada who responded to the "Thriving Quotient" survey in the fall, 78% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Overall, my instructors have shown care and concern for me as they respond to COVID-19" (for more on this, see page 12). Peer-centric initiatives are further normalizing conversations around anxiety, depression, and other

CAMPUSES HAVE FOUND THAT EMBRACING THE THEOLOGY OF BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS CANNOT BE OVERSTATED.

health issues. Perhaps these efforts and their results encapsulate one of the great opportunities on college campuses today: the chance to acknowledge the difficulties of the times, lament their losses, and mine their depths for the abundant life still promised all the while. 📖

ABBY PERRY is a freelance writer with work in Christianity Today, Sojourners, and Texas Monthly. Find her in Texas with her husband and two sons, and on Twitter at @abbyjperry.



CHARITABLE GIVING

&

HIGHER EDUCATION

IN A TIME OF ECONOMIC
UPHEAVAL FOR CCCU
INSTITUTIONS, ADVOCATING
FOR TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR
CHARITABLE GIVING IS MORE
IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

LIKE MOST INSTITUTIONS of higher education, Christian colleges and universities in the U.S. were facing tough economic realities even before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. But even as institutions ramp up their donor relations outreach among alumni and the broader network of campus connections, changes to the tax code — specifically the charitable deduction — have created even more uncertainty. The following essays explore the impact changes to the charitable deduction can have to donations to Christian higher education and why it is important for all colleges and universities to be involved in advocacy for the charitable deduction.

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WHY THE CHARITABLE DEDUCTION MATTERS

Research shows that smaller gifts to organizations are the most likely to shrink when tax incentives change. That’s bad news for your campus.

By Sara Helms McCarty

THE U.S. IS unusually charitable for a wealthy country; its citizens regularly contribute 2% of its GDP (nearly double New Zealand, next on the list). The \$309 billion given by households supports a wide range of social goods. As of 2019, the top four recipients of giving are religious organizations (\$128 billion), education (\$64 billion), human services (\$56 billion), and foundations (\$53.5 billion).

But this level of giving is never a guarantee. As we will explore below, a key factor to the U.S. population’s level of giving rests in economic incentives. If those incentives change — as they have in recent years — then institutions, including Christian colleges and universities, will likely see a decline in financial donations.

THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF GIVING

One principle of economics is that individuals respond to incentives. Whether you lower the cost of an action or raise the benefit, either step will encourage individuals toward the action. Charitable giving is no different. There are many studies that find that raising the tax deductibility of charitable giving leads to higher levels of

giving, and the opposite is true as well. For those donating dollars to a qualified organization, the additional dollar given costs them less than \$1. If these individuals face a marginal income tax rate of 20%, the dollar of giving (which is subtracted from their taxable income) only costs them $(1 - 0.20) = \$0.80$.

EXAMINING RELIGIOSITY IN GIVING

While there has been plenty of research connected to the economics of giving, my colleague Jeremy Thornton (associate dean and professor of economics at Samford University) and I wanted to take the research on giving even further by considering household religiosity and its impact on giving behavior. We explored giving behavior by households separated by religiosity using data from the early 2000s, a time period that includes multiple tax policy changes, allowing us to see how giving changes in different situations. In our data, the Center on Philanthropy Panel Study (COPPS), roughly 84.4% of individuals report a religious affiliation of Christian or Jewish.¹ Of these, 48% attend services at least twice per month, the threshold we use to identify *devoted* households.

There are large differences in giving behavior across households’ devotion. We find that 82% of devoted households give, compared to 53% of the non-devoted. The giving amounts vary widely, too — on average, devoted households give \$2,055 annually, while non-devoted households give \$498. If individuals give out of a religious motivation, then changing the tax treatment of charitable gifts should matter less. However, for giving that is not motivated by religion, tax treatment matters much more. We find that charitable giving moves inversely to income tax rates, but the change in giving is proportionally smaller than the change in tax deductibility.

GIVING AND CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Key to understanding the impact giving changes will have for Christian colleges and universities is understanding what it means for giving to be “religious.” The COPPS designation defines religious giving as “for religious purposes or spiritual development” — deliberately excluding giving to organizations like Catholic Charities or a Christian university. All other giving — to be clear, this includes giving to CCCU institutions — is secular.

Since gifts to Christian colleges and universities are considered “secular,” changes to giving incentives have a greater impact. Giving directed at secular causes is more responsive to tax treatment than is giving to religious causes. When the tax-price rises, people are less likely to give a secular gift, even though it does not change their religious giving. However, the *amount* given across all kinds of gifts falls when the tax-price rises.

Thus, raising the tax-price will have both a negative impact on the receipt of university gifts and a stronger negative impact on the size of the gifts received. Our research found that increases in the tax-price of giving have the least impact on devoted household giving to religious causes (good news for your churches) and the greatest impact on non-devoted households giving to secular causes (bad news for private, non-religious institutions of higher education). The impact for CCCU institutions likely falls in the middle.

The size of a donor’s gift also affects their likelihood to give when tax incentives change. Large donors are not very responsive to changes in the tax-price of giving, no matter their religiosity. Rather, it is the small- and medium-sized gifts (annual giving of \$50 to \$500) to secular causes that are most responsive — a serious impact on

universities, since many gifts to universities are in this range. In other words, reducing the tax deductibility of smaller gifts has a negative impact on any organizations that rely on donors who give these intermediate-sized gifts — such as younger donors to a university.

RECENT CHANGES TO GIVING TAX INCENTIVES

While the tax deductibility of charitable contributions remains, the dramatic increase in the standard deduction in 2018 due to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act led to a sharp reduction in the percent of households that itemize. In 2018, only 11.4% of households itemized in their tax filings, compared to 31% in 2017. Since only those who itemized in 2018 received the charitable tax incentive, this law reduced many taxpayers’ ability to claim tax deductibility for their charitable giving — thus reducing their incentive to give to secular causes, including Christian higher education.

However, in 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act changed the tax treatment of charitable deductions, now making them available even for non-itemizers. For itemizers, the amount available for deduction is up to 100% of their adjusted gross income, but even for non-itemizers the maximum allowed deduction is \$300.

When the tax deductibility changed, first in 2017 and again in 2020, nonprofit organizations closely followed the policy debate. There are clear implications for private, nonprofit institutions of higher education, particularly those in the CCCU. In order to predict behavior, we can look at past changes in tax law and the resulting behavioral response for different groups.

Given the sliding level of devotion in the United States, it is likely that givers to Christian higher education span both devoted and non-devoted groups. Since giving to education is considered secular giving, it becomes more important to advocate for giving among your stakeholders.

SARA HELMS MCCARTY is professor of economics at Samford University’s Brock School of Business in Birmingham, Alabama.

The size of a donor’s gift also affects their likelihood to give when tax incentives change.



Photo courtesy of Sara Helms McCarty

¹While there is a sizeable Muslim population in the United States, as well as other non-Judeo-Christian affiliations, in the COPPS dataset the number of individuals reporting such affiliations is too low for meaningful analysis. This is why we focus on Jewish and Christian households only.

CHARITABLE GIVING IS CRITICAL TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Colleges and universities need to make sure their voices are heard in conversations about the charitable contribution deduction.

By Terry Hartle

THE MODERN ERA of public finance in America probably began in 1913 when the federal government enacted the Federal Reserve Act after the ratification of the 16th Amendment, authorizing a federal individual income tax. In 1917, Congress authorized a tax deduction for charitable contributions, a provision deemed necessary if charities were to survive World War I. The assumption was that an increase in income taxes to help finance WWI would lead the wealthy to stop making charitable contributions, especially to colleges and universities.

The tax code has been expanded and revised a number of times in the decades since. But the charitable contribution deduction remains a vitally important part of the tax code for all colleges and universities. Indeed, the American Council on Education (ACE) believes that for many colleges and universities the single most valuable federal policy is the charitable contribution deduction.

Few independent colleges and universities receive significant amounts of state support for their operating budgets. Some states provide financial aid that helps students attend these institutions, but when state financial aid is reduced as a result of budget cuts, private colleges must use

even more of their own funds to fill the gap. Private institutions have worked hard to increase such resources for students who need them in the form of college and university grants, scholarships, and fellowships. Indeed, according to a 2018 study commissioned by the CCCU, for every \$1 in federal grant money a student receives, CCCU institutions provide \$5 in institutional financial aid. It is important to keep in mind that a significant percentage of this crucial institutional aid comes from charitable donations. This study reflects trends among private nonprofit higher education in the U.S. as a whole. Without the addition of private donations to the financial aid mix, far fewer students would be able to finance a higher education. Charitable gifts also support teaching, research, and other critical education-related investments.

It's little wonder that colleges and universities spend so much time and effort courting donors in hopes of securing charitable contributions. For many, the donations are critical to their survival.

TROUBLING TRENDS IN GIVING

Enormous contributions totaling tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars generate headlines, but donations of all sizes add up. The Council for Advancement and Support of Education reported that in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, charitable contributions to colleges and universities totaled \$49.5 billion (a slight decline from \$49.6 billion the previous year, an all-time high for charitable giving to higher education). However, more than half of that period was before the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic.

An additional point of concern lies in the fact that less than \$20 billion of those donations from 2019-2020 came from individuals; the rest came from corporations, foundations, and other organizations. This reflects a larger trend: The number of households that donate has been declining for years. A December 2019 article in *Nonprofit*

Quarterly noted that the percentage of American households donating something to a legally recognized charity was 53.9 percent in 2016, down nearly 14 percentage points from the peak level in 2002. A 2019 Independent Sector report shows that donors seem to be increasingly concentrated among the high-income households that already dominate the landscape of charitable giving.

In recent years, Congress has changed the tax code in ways that have the potential to both undermine and enhance tax deductible giving.

Tax reform passed in 2017 sharply increased the standard deduction, which was expected to decrease the number of individuals who itemized and thus simplify their annual tax filing. Since the charitable deduction is of primary interest to those who itemize, there have been widespread concerns that charitable giving to all nonprofits, including colleges and universities, would fall.

In 2020, Congress moved in the other direction when it enacted COVID-19 relief that included temporarily suspending limits on the deductibility of cash contributions and allowing a modest tax deduction for individual who do not itemize their returns. The idea was that these temporary changes would boost charitable contributions in an era of significant economic dislocation. Advocacy will be critical to efforts to extend the pandemic-enacted non-itemizer charitable deduction beyond 2021, and perhaps even to expand it.

THE NEED FOR ADVOCACY FROM HIGHER ED

Debates about the deductibility of charitable contributions rarely pit one set of organized interests against another. And the charitable contribution deduction is one of those rare issues that enjoys widespread bipartisan support across a broad array of ideological positions. Few members of Congress are opposed to increasing charitable giving.

The challenge with advocacy efforts on the charitable giving provision is to make sure that higher education's voice is heard clearly and distinctly. The broad coalition that surrounds charitable giving means that there are a large number of different voices with different priorities in the discussion. And with the enactment of the so-called "endowment tax" in the 2017 tax reform bill, which applies to a relatively small number of well-resourced private colleges and universities, Congress has indicated that there are some donated gifts that should be subject to taxation — a very unfortunate step. While the provision currently affects a very small number of institutions, it's not hard to imagine a future Congress deciding to expand the provision's reach.

All higher education organizations see preserving and expanding the charitable contribution deduction as a central part — perhaps *the* central part — of their tax advocacy agenda and devote considerable time and resources to this provision in the tax code. But in this highly charged political era, we cannot assume that the past will guarantee the future on any issue.

Elected officials have a general knowledge about the importance of the charitable deduction and other giving incentives, but rarely do they hear about the specific benefits these deliver to colleges and universities. As institutions struggle to meet the dire financial challenges posed by the pandemic, it is critically important that higher education organizations and campus officials alike recognize the benefits of such charitable giving incentives and recommit themselves to educating elected officials about their benefits. We cannot take anything for granted. 🗣️

TERRY HARTLE is the senior vice president of government relations and public affairs at the American Council on Education (ACE), where he has served for more than 25 years.

To support the ongoing work of the CCCU, use the response envelope included with this issue of *Advance*.

The challenge with advocacy efforts on the charitable giving provision is to make sure that higher education's voice is heard clearly and distinctly.



Photo courtesy of Terry Hartle

Improving Board Performance

Training and supporting these key leaders is vital for institutional success.

By Bob Andringa

THE MAJORITY OF PRIVATE college boards are under-performing for today's challenges. Over the years, I have trained or consulted with more than 60 CCCU boards. Trustees and presidents need our prayers now more than ever. These proven best practices are critical in 2021.

TRUSTEESHIP

It is disciplined but rewarding work, not just an honor. To be effective, trustees should learn something weekly that helps in their key roles. Presidents can customize recommendations by interest and committee assignment. Most trustees want to learn more about good governance and invest more in it.

BOARD CHAIRS

Board chairs are the key to moving governance from good to great. The role takes at least five hours a week. Chairs manage the board; presidents manage the institution. The chair-president partnership is critical to improving governance. By default, presidents often lead the board if the chair doesn't. Chairs ensure future board leaders are being recruited and developed.

BOARD PROFILE

With wonderful exceptions, Christian college boards are still too white, too male, and too old. Diversity of ethnicity, gender, and age is important. It speaks to the populations we need to attract and retain.



This year it is also wise to include a few board members with good relationships within the Democratic Party. A good trustee reflects most of these: Work, Wisdom, Wealth, Witness, and Wallop (influence).

RISK MANAGEMENT

COVID-19 was a wake-up call. Risk management is now center stage. COVID-19-related decisions will lead to survival, dissolution, or merger. Similarly, there are other external disruptions that require advance thinking and new strategies, such as online learning, the potential loss of government funding, and new regulations related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

GOVERNANCE

I like smaller boards than the current Christian college average of 20-21. Smaller boards can and should involve more non-trustees in governance. Committee charters need to be reviewed every year and allow a minority of non-trustees on some committees. Ad hoc task forces should be used more, where external experts can be appointed for short-term, very focused study and recommendations. Other task forces could include trustees, staff, and outside friends of the institution. Advisory groups bring ongoing fresh thinking to governance and administration.

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PRESIDENTS

Board-oriented presidents are critical to governance. Every year, a dozen or more new CCCU presidents are selected. All boards should have succession policies in place. Recruitment should be assisted by search experts. When a vacancy is sudden, an interim presidency often allows the campus time for reflection, prayer, and a better selection process. The transition process for the outgoing and the incoming presidents needs creative board guidance. Every incumbent needs ongoing encouragement, annual performance reviews, fair compensation, maybe an outside coach, and the benefits of two executive sessions at every board meeting (a short one at the beginning without the president, and the second at the end with the president). All this keeps the president and board in alignment and allows trust to grow.

BOARD EVALUATIONS

Boards develop habits and attitudes that resist change and keep them from improving. Every few years, the entire board structure and process, including board and committee meetings, need evaluation. Every trustee whose term is coming up should be evaluated by fellow trustees before the too-frequent "automatic" election to another term. Overall, a culture of evidence, including spiritual development, is critical for high-performing boards.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Spiritual discernment by a group requires intentional prayer and practice. The chair needs to lead in this, not allowing just a token nod to the spiritual calling of the institution. Jesus' analogy of the vine in John 15:5 is the key: Our culture challenges us to be in the world but not of the world. Without board leadership to keep Christ at the center of mission, culture will eat away at what makes CCCU institutions so special — and vulnerable.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Boards spend way too much time listening to reports and drifting into administrative issues. Boards must govern well so administrators can lead well. Agendas, policy development, and reporting should be guided by board leaders. When the president and cabinet want advice, they should ask anyone — whether individual trustees or outside experts — but they should do that outside of board and committee meetings.

BOARD POLICIES

Board Policy Manuals are common now, but to keep all ongoing policies in one organized document the manual needs attention at every meeting. Presidents should make recommendations in advance. Current policies clarify roles, keep the board focused, the administration guided, and accountability clear. 🗣️

DR. BOB ANDRINGA was CCCU president from 1994 to 2006. Since 1986, he has trained or consulted with more than 500 ministry CEOs and boards. Bob and his wife, Sue, live in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Restoring a Broken Nation

How CCCU institutions can help heal a deeply divided society.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID FRENCH

THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL discourse over the past few years in the United States has reached new levels of animosity and division. Arguments on the value and role of education, religion, free speech, free expression, and moral character are but a few of the topics that dominate headlines and political debates. Because of their religious character and convictions as well as their work in higher education, Christian colleges and universities are at a unique crossroads of these conversations, and navigating them is increasingly tricky when the divisions are ever deepening.

As someone who has spent the majority of his career focusing on religious rights issues, and as a CCCU graduate himself (of Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee), David French is very familiar with the challenges facing Christian higher education and American society more broadly. French's professional experience includes serving at the American Center for Law and Justice, the Alliance Defending Freedom, and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), as well as working for many years as a political and cultural commentator for *National Review*, *TIME*, and *The Dispatch*. His newest book, *Divided We Fall: America's Secession Threat and How to Restore Our Nation*, was released in September 2020 and explores the threat our current division poses to the very unity of the United States.

Barry Corey, president of Biola University (La Mirada, California), talked with French about the book and what Christian college and university leaders can do to combat the current divides, particularly when it comes to training up the next generation of leaders. The conversation has been edited for length.



David French is a religious freedom advocate, cultural commentator, and author of *Divided We Fall*.



Barry Corey is president of Biola University (La Mirada, CA) and author of *Love Kindness*.

For the benefit of those who haven't read the book yet, provide a quick summary.

Essentially, the whole thesis is in the first paragraph, and it makes two declarations. One is we cannot guarantee the continued unity of the United States. Why? Because there is no single truly important social, cultural, political, or religious force that is pulling Americans together more than it is pushing us apart.

Whether it's the concept of negative polarization, where we join a political party not so much because we love that party's positions but because we despise or fear of the other side, or it's the big sort, where we are clustering into like-minded communities, when you cluster with people of like-mind, you tend to become more extreme. [In the book,] I walked through all of these big, sweeping cultural developments and showed that they're pulling us apart to the point where our divisions and our animosity are growing so great that we are going to put strains on our union.

I think nothing illustrates the combination of animosity and division more than what happened on January 6th, which was unthinkable even as recently as January 5th. If you had said that the Capitol was going to be overrun and invaded on January 5th, someone would have said, "You're an alarmist. You're pearl-clutching. It's absurd. It's ridiculous." What happened on January 6th was the product — and hopefully the end, but it may not be — of years of accumulated animosity and division and, often, just outright hatred.



Great diagnostic. Let's talk about prescription. What are some of the suggestions you offer in the book to combat these troubling trends of division?

There's a necessity of a heart change, and there's a necessity of some policy changes. The heart change has to proceed the policy changes. Otherwise, there's no will for the policy changes.

So what are the heart changes? Well, one of the things that we have seen is that amongst hyper-partisans — those individuals who are truly driving American political discourse — there's an increasing desire to shun accommodation in favor of domination. [Their] goal is not to just defeat somebody politically or to slowly but steadily create cultural change, but to crush, to destroy, to annihilate, and to eradicate [their opponents] from the public square.

You see some of this in cancel culture, properly understood. Now, that's a very fraught term because cancel culture is not any criticism you receive; cancel culture is not the same as consequences for bad acts. More properly understood, cancel culture is an extremely, excessively punitive action against speech that is relatively mainstream within what is called the Overton window of American pop culture and political discourse. That kind of cancel culture mentality, properly understood, is evidence of this desire to dominate rather than accommodate.

One of the things that I try to do in the book is say, "We have to rediscover what actual tolerance is." What is actual tolerance? There's a person who writes under the pseudonym Scott Alexander, a psychologist living in Deep Blue America, and he writes about how he talks to his progressive friends. He says, "Are you tolerant?" They'll say, "Yeah, absolutely tolerant. I love people regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity." Then Scott says, "Well, what's wrong with those people?" Their response is, "Well, nothing. Of course, nothing is wrong with them."

His response is, "Well, what are you tolerating then?"

Tolerance is not a synonym for affection; it is something you're overlooking to accept somebody into the body politic. So my book is not a call for kumbaya for everybody to love each other. We have to have a basic commitment that says, "Each one of us is entitled to build our own home within this land," and I connect it to Micah 4:4, a verse that Lin-Manuel Miranda re-popularized through George Washington [in *Hamilton*]. In reality, George Washington used this verse almost 50 times in his writings in describing the new nation that he was leading: "Every man shall sit under his own vine and his own fig tree, and no

one shall make him afraid." It's a beautiful depiction of a pluralistic society that cuts against the grain of our current thinking, which seems to be, "You can't have your vine or fig tree unless you agree with me, unless you're part of my tribe or my coalition."

At Biola, I talk about living a life with what I call a firm center and soft edges. By firm center, I really mean a commitment to that which is true, and above all, God's truth. Soft edges means hospitality and kindness, especially towards those we don't think like, or vote like, or believe like. So, considering the role of the Christian college in this, and reflecting on your own formation at Lipscomb, unpack the importance of a winsome conviction — the winsomeness being the soft edges, the conviction being the firm center.

When we're talking about how does the United States — this unique nation, this unique culture — function best and how is it designed to function, one of the things that I think is a really important concept that we don't talk about enough is ordered liberty. This is a concept that you could write books on, but let me just oversimplify [it] for a minute through two Founding Fathers' quotes.

One is the famous declaration in the Declaration of Independence that we're "endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Jefferson goes on to say, essentially, this is why governments were instituted among men; the primary role of the government is to protect this liberty. That's like the mission statement of the United States of America. Aspirational — it was not lived up to, we know, and is still not fully lived up to. But that was the aspiration. ...



WATCH THE FULL VIDEO CONVERSATION

Visit the CCCU's YouTube account at www.youtube.com/CCCUVideo.

Photos courtesy of David French and Biola University

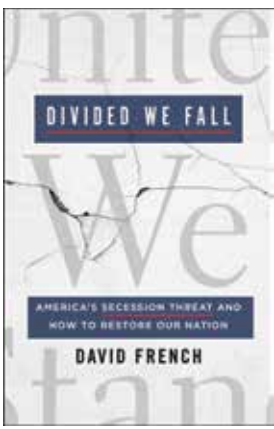
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But then John Adams turns around and says in a letter to the Massachusetts Militia, basically, look, this Constitution provides us with liberty that if we exercise it and if we're libertine with it, we would turn the United States into a miserable habitation. He has these famous words: "Our Constitution was made for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

So, when I look at my [educational experience], Lipscomb possessed liberty for a purpose. The purpose was to teach citizens of this country not just obedience to Jesus Christ, but also Christian citizenship within this community. In my mind, when you look at each one of these CCCU universities as its own vine and its own fig tree, a lot of times, we think, "Well, how could we make sure that vine and fig tree is completely safe from outside attack?" That is important, but [we] also [need to ask,] "What do we do within that vine, and what do we do within that fig tree?" Each Christian institution in this country has their different theologies, their different purposes, their different mission statements, but it's that exercising of liberty for a virtuous purpose when these universities are at their best.

One of my concerns is when our rising generation of students — and this is not new — see in leaders a less-than-virtuous way of living even though [those leaders] are proclaiming virtuous truths of how they live. It's a terrible model for Christians, and this hypocrisy happens on the left and the right. Any thoughts to encourage our students on what they're seeing right now?

There are a couple of categories of hypocrisy that we've seen over the last several decades. There is what you could call the "old-school hypocrisy" that has plagued a lot of religious institutions — the philandering pastor, for example, or the ministry leader who commits fraud. ... The fact that people were often able



Divided We Fall: America's Secession Threat and How to Restore Our Nation

By David French
(St. Martin's Press)

THE PURPOSE [OF
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to thrive as charlatans for so long, that was dispiriting. But when the charlatans were discovered, nobody was saying that ... [what they were doing] was actually okay. Once they were found out, then there was accountability.

We have a different kind of hypocrisy now. We have a kind of hypocrisy where people either lie or defend lies, are abusive or defend abusers, so long as what they are accomplishing is deemed to be virtuous. This is specifically in politics often. So, essentially, what we've said to a lot of rising Christian generations is, if you're a Christian in politics, your focus is on issues, okay? Is religious liberty being protected? Is abortion being opposed? Then we don't talk about means to those ends.

Now, think about how different that is from almost every other area of life. If you're looking at a young Christian businessman, would you say, "Your purpose, Christian businessman, is to make money"? No. You would say, "There's a holistic gospel-centered approach in your presence in your company." ...

"Well, your purpose, Christian in politics, is to pass laws." Hmm, no. That is a purpose, but what we've often said about politics is we define ourselves by the issues and not by our conduct, not by our alliances. So we have created a kind of persistent hypocrisy that we don't even defend because we have defined the object of our engagement as issue-focused — almost to the exclusion of everything else, which has allowed us to engage and defend an awful lot of godless behavior, so long as it has a godly goal.

So what do you have to say to these students and leaders at Christian colleges about being characterized by the way we interact about politics and issues, and not just known by our own policy differences? How do you suggest CCCU institutions can help educate the next generation of politically engaged students who, in your words, avoid the partisan mind?


I spoke at John Brown University [in Siloam Springs, Arkansas] early in 2020, and I said those words — "Avoid the partisan mind." I did not mean don't vote for partisans. I did not even mean don't run for office as a Republican or Democrat. What I meant was a mindset that [is like] being a lawyer. When you're a lawyer for a client, you amplify your client's virtues and minimize your client's flaws. That's your day-to-day reality in litigation — my job is to make my client look better than he is, and my opponent's job is to make my client look worse than he is, and a jury sorts it all out. But when you adopt the partisan mind, you essentially become an unpaid lawyer for one party or the other party. You're always looking at ways to amplify what's good about your side and minimize what's bad, and then flip it around on the other side.

Now, that works in a criminal justice system that has been set up as an adversarial system with rules, ethical boundaries, and rules of evidence. When you're a Christian interacting with a culture, any sort of exaggeration or rationalization comes across as inherently deceptive. See the truth and respond to the truth for what it is. One of the things that I urge students to do is reconnect with Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with the Lord your God."


In this highly polarized moment, all of us get the act justly part — "I know what's right. I know what's right, and I'm going to pursue what is right" — but these are three interlocking obligations. We forget the love of mercy — or depending on the translation, love kindness — and we absolutely forget walking humbly. In the political context, I think

what walking humbly often means is when you look at any given huge issue — abortion, racism, economic inequality, you name it — and you begin with these two statements: "This is really hard," and, "I don't have all the answers." If you just begin like that, it can be quite transformational in your interactions with your fellow men.

I want to talk about the mind for a minute. It's a goal of Christian discipleship, within the framework of the Christian academy, to learn to love the Lord with the mind. I was just recently listening to Ed Stetzer, who's at Wheaton College [in Wheaton, Illinois], on NPR, where he said, "I think the scandal of the evangelical mind today is the gullibility that so many have been brought into conspiracy theories, false reports,



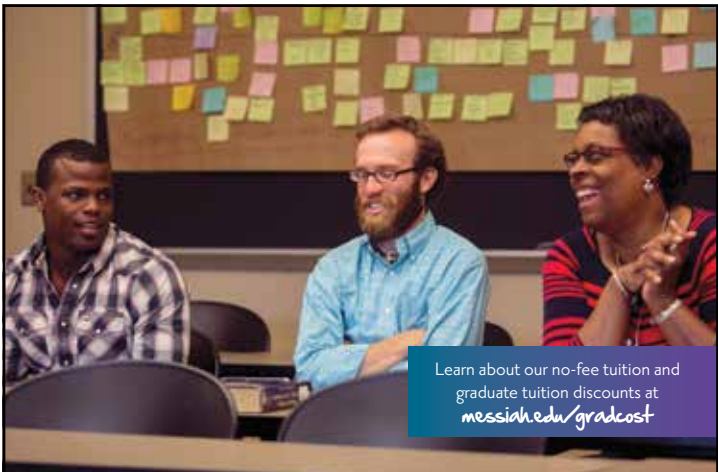
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and more. ... If there ever should be people who care about the truth, it should be people who call themselves followers of Jesus. I think pulpits and Christian colleges and universities need to ask the question, 'How are we going to disciple our people so that they engage the world around them in robust and Christ-like ways?'" How would you respond to that?

The gullibility point there is tied also to two other issues: fear and anger. These issues are huge, and I think a lot of people who are intellectual Christians on Twitter are missing what is happening at the grassroots in some of the wildest and most bizarre conspiracy theories held closely to the heart by evangelicals. Also, a lot of people are missing this sense of "we have been disrespected, we have been shamed, we've been held in con-

tempt, and we're sick of it." The fact of the matter is there have been an awful lot of people who have disrespected Christians unfairly. Absolutely, you can find that. But the problem with that is that our response should not be deep-seated anger and grievance — that is totally wiping out the "walk humbly and loving kindness" parts of Micah 6:8. ...

What I'm beginning to find is that it is becoming increasingly difficult to speak to Christian audiences unless you first walk into the conversation and say, "You're good people. You're awesome people. The Left is bad. Okay. I have this nit to pick." So there's this sense in which you first have to meet the grievance. The difficulty with that is there needs to be some repenting from the anger and the grievance before we can break through and really dive into discipling. It's very hard to do that, because a lot of that

grievance has been empowered by an awful lot of lies. It's been empowered by a lot of people who are quite self-interested in hyping your fear, and your concern, and your anger, and your rage. It provides these other people with money. It provides them with power, and all of these lies make you vulnerable to more lies.

I'll give you a perfect example. If your belief is that, for example, the Left hates you — not that individuals on the Left hate you, but that the whole Left hates you — it is a short trip from there to believing that the Left would steal an election. So if you have this background level of anger and suspicion of hostility, the next turn of the screw is easy. Each layer of animosity breeds the next layer, and so we have a lot of work to do, because this is the product of decades of stoking of anger and range, and there is just an ocean of grievance out there.

You [said] earlier that a byproduct of our polarized age is a cancel culture. We feel this tension at Christian college campuses where we want to champion viewpoint diversity from a biblically faithful perspective but also be careful of what's being said. What would you say is the way forward on Christian college campuses as it relates to the delicate nature of what should be said and what shouldn't be said?

I went to Lipscomb University from '87 to '91. At the time, Lipscomb was a much more socially and politically conservative place. ... But I had a much healthier free speech environment at Lipscomb University than I had at Harvard Law School, where people were shouting you down if they disagreed with you. ... The interesting thing about Lipscomb was that we didn't really even have a speech code other than, "Don't curse." We questioned all the tenants of the faith. We had healthy robust discussions of politics, of faith, of culture — all with basically clean language. So essentially, Lipscomb welcomed viewpoint diversity even though there was still an overwhelming ideological and religious point of view. ...

Twenty years ago, it was much more common for free speech to be inhibited top-down. By that, I mean actual laws and regulations passed by public universities, called speech codes, that violated the Constitution. ... Beginning in about 2014, 2015, the demand for censorship began to bubble from the bottom up. So what once was a dean of students saying, "You can't say that," became 200 students in the quad saying, "You can't say that," which is a very different free speech challenge. ... That's very difficult.

I think what we have to do is go back to first principles of teaching people that free speech has value. It's not just that good speech has value; free speech has value. A lot of the efforts to censor now come from people who are

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AND DIALOGUE.

hoping to protect historically marginalized communities. Yet it's the historically marginalized communities that have led the battle for free speech. ... I remember talking to Reverend Walter Fauntroy, who was one of the people who helped found the Congressional Black Caucus, instrumental in the Civil Rights Movement, asking him, "Why was there such progress in civil rights in such a short amount of time relatively historically speaking in the late '50s moving into the early and mid '60s?" His answer was really interesting: "Almighty God and the First Amendment." He said, "The First Amendment gave us the ability to speak, and Almighty God softened men's hearts."

So one of the things that I try to do is I try to teach people that free speech has value by itself. That doesn't mean that there shouldn't be rules against defamation, threats, or obscenity, but free speech has value. I think that Christian universities by and large should not just model the protection of speech but should model the virtuous exercise of speech. Going back to ordered liberty, that's hand in hand: the liberty for virtuous purpose, and to model that discussion. When I go to a Christian college, I often feel more free to speak than almost anywhere else. Not because I'm a Christian there — I'm often disagreeing completely with an awful lot of people — but I think CCCU universities have done, by and large, a pretty good job at cultivating an atmosphere of real debate, disagreement, and dialogue. ...

One thing real quick about that "walk humbly" aspect [of Micah 6:8]. I think if you're in leadership, fostering an atmosphere of free speech is a manifestation of walking humbly, because what does that do? It provides a permission structure for criticizing authority. Scripture says we see through a glass darkly; we know in part. When we're permitting a structure of free speech, it's a very tangible way of saying, "I don't have all the answers. I need to hear more." 🙏



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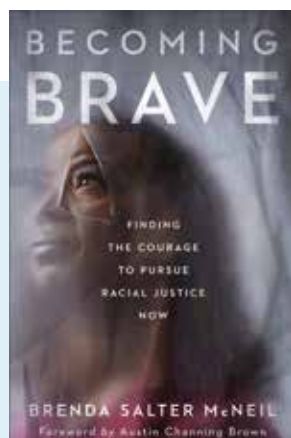
Becoming Brave Witnesses

Two new books offer important insight for biblical justice in this moment.

BY SANDRA MAYO

JUST AS HIGHER EDUCATION was adjusting to the uncertainty that had resulted from COVID-19 in 2020, the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery prompted a national reckoning with racism and a global outcry. Then, on Jan. 6, 2021, the world watched as rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol with symbols of white supremacy on full display. It was another painful and visible reminder of how far we are as a society from eliminating racial injustice. In this context, Brenda Salter McNeil's *Becoming Brave: Finding the Courage to Pursue Racial Justice Now* and Drew Hart's *Who Will Be A Witness: Igniting Activism for God's Justice, Love, and Deliverance* offer a prophetic call to faith-formed social activism.

McNeil's book combines autobiographical and biblical narratives to cast a vision for courageous action in such a time as this. With humility and honesty, she describes the question, asked at the end of a multiday workshop on racial reconciliation where she spoke, that spurred her to move beyond comfortable conversations about racial reconciliation: "When are you going to start talking about justice?" As McNeil allowed this question to sink into her heart, God began to reveal new insights about what the work of racial reconciliation looks like on the ground.



Becoming Brave: Finding the Courage to Pursue Racial Justice Now

By Brenda Salter McNeil
(Brazos Press)

Becoming Brave shares McNeil's evolution as a practitioner of racial reconciliation. It also shares the biblical narrative of Esther, a young Jewish woman who was orphaned at an early age, lived in exile in Persia with her cousin, Mordecai, and became an agent of God's justice in the world. As an immigrant in a foreign land, Esther had to conceal her true identity to ensure her safety. She had to learn a new language. She had to navigate an unfamiliar cultural context. Among the most vulnerable in society, she was also among the most unlikely to replace the King of Persia's former queen. But that's exactly what happened: Esther's journey from exile to palace living was part of God's divine plan for deliverance for the Jews in exile.

In following the journey of Esther, *Becoming Brave* reveals how God wants to use each of us for faithful action in the world. McNeil argues that we are all "unlikely activists," but we are called to respond to what God is doing in the world as Christians. *Becoming Brave* is an encouragement to those who don't feel ready or qualified. It is a charge to the church to be active participants in the work of justice. But McNeil doesn't leave readers without direction; she provides a Gospel-inspired path to eradicating systemic racism that requires not only bold action but even bolder hope.

At a time when such audacious hope is needed for sustained social action and change, Hart's *Who Will Be a Witness?* is providential, inspiring, and instructive. It offers a call to the church to rediscover its ecclesial vocation of justice and to restore its public witness in the world. The book begins with analysis of the 1963 Birmingham Campaign, one of the most important desegregation campaigns of the Civil Rights Movement. Hart focuses on the significance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s decision to move forward and violate a state circuit court injunction against the protests, which led to his arrest on April 12 — Good Friday. Hart draws a parallel between King's civil disobedience on Passover and Easter weekend and Jesus' revolutionary action on the first Good Friday. Both provided a revolutionary public witness. Both demonstrated strategic disruption against an established order that served to oppress. Both modeled nonviolent resistance. Both joined in God's delivering presence and, in so doing, provided a model for discovering the ecclesial vocation of justice.

In *Who Will Be a Witness?* Hart is not simply calling the church to action in the public square. Living out the call of Jesus requires a complete reorientation of our lives. No longer can we carry out our faith in the cloistered safety of church walls. Nor can we participate in a "domesticated" faith that prioritizes individual salvation over a holistic journey towards God's deliverance, justice, and shalom.

Hart asks, "Who will be a witness?" not as a rhetorical device, but as an invitation to ignite Christian activism. For Hart, direct involvement in the work of justice is a necessary part of the church's vocation.

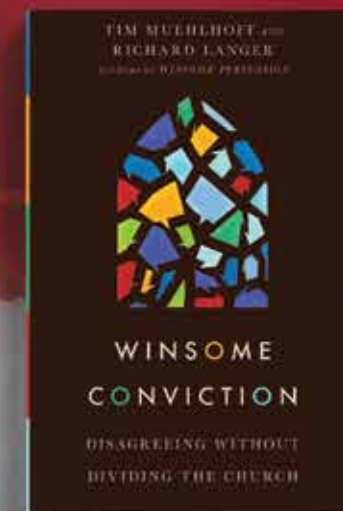
But to fully live into its ecclesial vocation, Hart argues, the church must also remember its "troubled history" and identify the roots of Christendom and colonialism. Hart exposes how supremacist mindsets have been woven into American Christianity and "mangled" the church's sense of vocation. For example, he traces Christian nationalism's origins back to Constantine the Great, the first Roman emperor to claim Christianity. During his reign, Constantine offered financial support to the church and promoted Christians into office, thereby giving the church more political power and, for the first time, conflating Christianity with the Empire's interests.

Who Will Be a Witness? is a call for the church to grapple with the set of myths that continue to fuse Christianity with power, politics, and patriotism. It is also a call for the church to follow in the way of Jesus and to fulfill the greatest commandment — to love God and one's neighbor as yourself. In the tradition of Howard Thurman, Hart reminds readers that love is not theoretical; nor is it sentimental. For Hart, love must seek to restore full human dignity. It must also be rooted in an understanding that our liberation is bound together and that there is an inherent oneness designed in creation. If we are to love God and our neighbors, our faith must be enacted through a Jesus-shaped grassroots participation in God's work of deliverance. This is the mission and vocation of the church.

Like McNeil, Hart provides a way forward for the church to live into its justice-oriented mission and vocation. It is this vision for the church that also provides important lessons for Christian higher education:

The greatest threat to the Church today is division.

How can Christians disagree without fighting?



In today's polarized context, Christians often have committed, biblical rationales for very different positions. How can Christians navigate disagreements with both truth and love? Tim Muehlhoff and Rick Langer provide lessons from communication studies, conflict theory, and church history on how to negotiate differing biblical convictions in order to move toward Christian unity.



Tim Muehlhoff is a professor of communication at Biola University and a speaker and research consultant for the Center for Marriage and Relationships.



Richard Langer is a professor at Talbot School of Theology and director of the Office for the Integration of Faith and Learning at Biola University.

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**Who Will Be A Witness:
Igniting Activism for
God's Justice, Love,
and Deliverance**

By Drew G.I. Hart
(Herald Press)

Leveraging the educational benefits of activism can help us fulfill the mission of Christian higher education. The college campus provides an ideal space for students to ask difficult questions, reflect on the social conditions around them, and become spirited critical thinkers who will make their faith active in the world. How can we help students put their education into practice? When students ask for advice or support, what does our response say about our commitment to equity and justice? As campus leaders, how might we leverage our educational mission to help students develop a holistic, active discipleship that makes explicit the connections between their inner spiritual lives and their public witness? Above all else, how might we help students establish right motives for their activism by providing tools to galvanize their faith toward shalom?

Restoring a common memory is essential to the work of reconciliation and justice. To be good stewards of the past and agents of change in the present, colleges and universities can begin by examining the role of activism in the life, history, and faith commitments of

TOGETHER, THEY OFFER TIMELY GUIDANCE FOR THOSE WITHIN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION TO FIND APPLICATION FOR THEIR GOSPEL HOPE. THEIR WORDS ARE A STEADY VOICE AND NEEDED SALVE IN A TIME OF DISRUPTION AND FEAR.

the institution. Where might campuses find opportunities to repent and deepen their institutional commitments to justice? What is the collective response to lessons learned? How can institutions face the past, recognizing moments where God was at work? How can this discovery process serve as a reminder of Christian higher education's essential purpose and provide hope for the future?

Spiritual and vocational discernment are the work of equipping students for shalom. Hart and McNeil both articulate the need to cultivate a Jesus-formed discipleship that helps students understand that the larger purpose of their faith is for participation in a broken world. In this time, how must Christian colleges and universities think differently about preparing students for vocation that includes a picture of shalom? How can Christian higher education lay out a vision of biblical shalom that invites students into the work of racial equity and justice? Hart suggests a three-pronged framework:

Orthodoxy. We must teach basic doctrines and practices of historic Christianity as a foundation for an activated life and faith.

Orthopraxy. We must provide opportunities for students to align their everyday lives and actions so they

can faithfully participate in bringing real, tangible justice on earth.

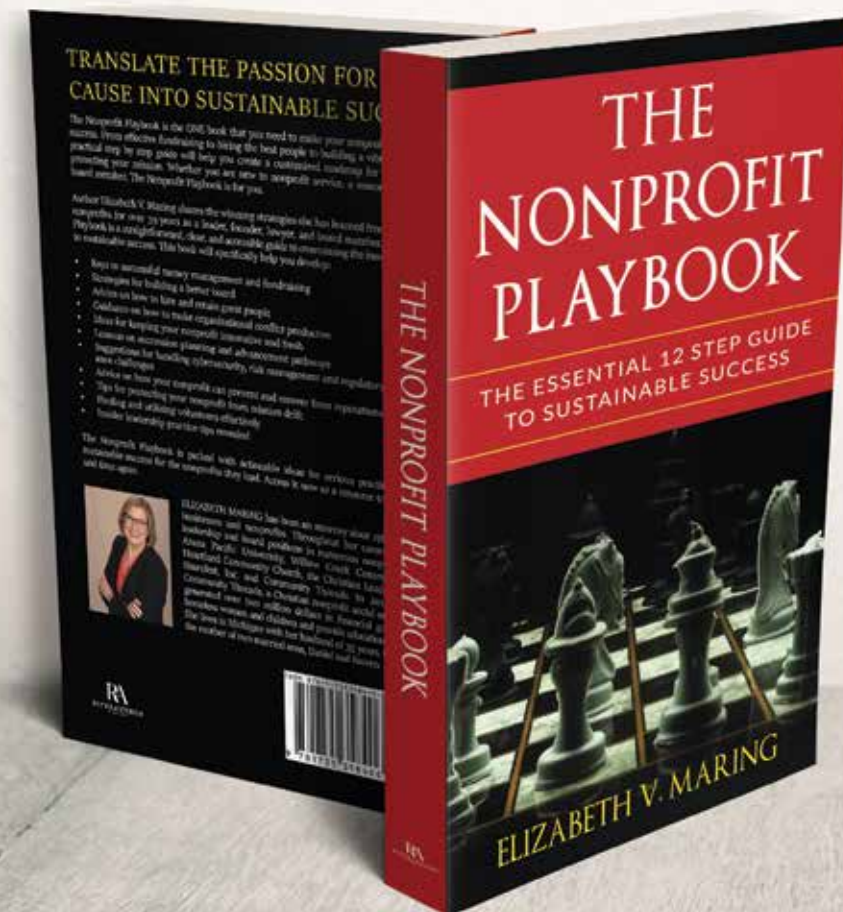
Orthopathy. We must rethink our discipleship practices with an understanding that helping students move toward shalom is also about drawing their hearts to God's heart for reconciliation and justice.

This is the picture of a holistic love that forms the essential link between Christ's work of deliverance and the church's vocation in the world.

Both McNeil and Hart help to expand our imagination of what can be different coming out of this time. They remind us that this moment requires courageous leadership, an honest reckoning with Christian nationalism and supremacist mindsets, and restoration of the church's true vocation. In their call to activism, McNeil and Hart provide valuable lessons for reorienting institutional life toward justice and shalom, providing a revolutionary response that bears witness to Jesus. Together, they offer timely guidance for those within Christian higher education to find application for their Gospel hope. Their words are a steady voice and needed salve in a time of disruption and fear. 🙏

SANDRA MAYO is vice provost of inclusive excellence at Seattle Pacific University (Seattle, WA) and chair of the CCCU's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion.

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Helping Faculty Pursue Vocation

Administrators can help faculty flourish, even in a pandemic.

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINA BIEBER LAKE

FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGE and university faculty who are called to train up students to be the next generation of leaders in their field, it has been a difficult season. But in many ways, the pandemic has only compounded existing stresses of academic life. Christina Bieber Lake, the Clyde S. Kilby Professor of English at Wheaton College (Wheaton, IL), hopes to help her fellow faculty rediscover their passion for their vocation and to thrive in it, no matter the season. That’s why she wrote *The Flourishing Teacher: Vocational Renewal for a Sacred Profession*.

Katie Dillon, the CCCU’s government relations fellow, interviewed Lake about the book and how CCCU administrators can support their faculty during the pandemic and generally as they pursue their calling. The interview has been edited for length. For more information, resources, or to connect with Lake, visit christinabieberlake.com.



Christina Bieber Lake is the Clyde S. Kilby Professor of English at Wheaton College (Wheaton, IL)



Katie Dillon is the CCCU’s government relations fellow and a graduate of Pepperdine University (Malibu, CA).

Could you provide a quick summary of your book?

I wrote the book arranged around the calendar year for academics. It starts with August and it ends with July, because the seasons of a teacher’s life are very different from the seasons of many other jobs. There’s a lot of energy in the fall, so teachers have different needs and desires in this season, whereas you’re exhausted in the spring, especially March or April. The point of the book is to help teachers get encouragement and inspiration as well as ideas that fit those particular seasons of their career. It’s the book that I was hoping I could read as a younger professor that would contain practical help as well as spiritual inspiration.

Obviously, this year of teaching is a lot different than most, and I’m sure when you wrote your book, you were not expecting to be writing to a crowd reading it during a global pandemic. In this season, have you seen ways that your teaching liturgy has changed or adapted?

I have been asked this a lot because of the way that it happened right at the same time as my book was released. I think for me, the pandemic has actually been better for some things. Teaching on Zoom is not great. But it has been helpful when it comes to things like meetings.

For instance, we would have our department meetings on Tuesdays at 10:30. Well, Tuesdays and Thursdays are the days that I work from home, and I need to have that time for my research. Before the pandemic, I would drive out to Wheaton for a 35-minute meeting. It is not far, but after getting dressed, driving out, and coming back, my whole morning is impacted. So I feel like the strategies I’m trying to teach in this book — about making sure that you don’t prep too much, making sure that you don’t let this job take over your life, making sure you have time to focus on your scholarly work and the things that are important to you in terms of advancing your career — are in some ways easier because of the pandemic.

Now that is offset, of course, by all the stress of the pandemic. The stress and daily anxiety make it very hard to focus on scholarly writing. But I write about this in the book — teachers need a clear sense of the need to focus and to clear away distractions.

Yes, I think the pandemic opened up a space that allows us to focus more on a rhythm of life that you talk about in the book. Do you think you have more time now to put thought into what your rituals and habits are when it comes to teaching?



AdobeStock; Photos courtesy of Christina Bieber Lake and Katie Dillon

Yes. I always had cleared out that space because that was a high priority to me. I’m hoping that the pandemic did that for others. In the book, I mention it is important for people to know which of Gretchen Rubin’s four personality types they are — obliger, upholder, questioner, or rebel. Those who are obligers or upholders, they’re the ones who either do everything because they’ve been asked to do it or because they feel a strong internal and external sense to do the things that they’ve been asked to do. Faculty with these two personalities learned during the pandemic that so much of the stuff that they do is really not worth their time.

For example, I go to campus to complete some tasks because I feel like it is important for me to complete them there. I don’t actually need to be there, and I’m happier when I’m not. The “no” to the unspoken request for faculty to be at the office all the time was in a sense said *for* the obligers because of the pandemic, and they learned the power of that no — that they don’t need to say “yes” all the time, because it takes away from their own energy and their own centeredness. I hope those lessons will stick for people, because what if we don’t actually learn that lesson? Then we’ll just

get right back on the hamster wheel. And the hamster wheel does not help you to be a better scholar or teacher, and certainly not a better person.

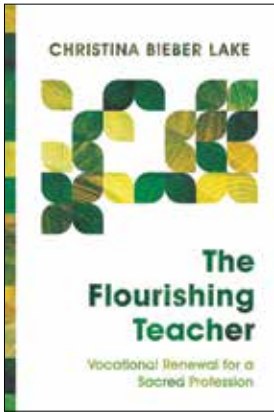
In the book, you speak frequently of spiritual practices that have taught you a specific lesson in a specific season. Which of those practices would you encourage CCCU faculty and administrators to focus on in the coming year?

Definitely taking the Sabbath. I have stressed it with fellow faculty, but I also spend time in class teaching students the importance of Sabbath because of what we were just talking about — the constant work. Just because you *can* work all the time does not mean you *should*. There is a false belief that more time spent working is going to make a better product in the end. Sabbath-keeping forces you to let go of the lawnmower handle, as I say in my book, and realize how loud and vibrating it is when you’re mowing the lawn. It’s only when you let go that quiet comes in. You are allowed to say to yourself, “I’m not going to do that right now, and for this 24-hour period, I’m not going to be thinking about that.” The release that provides for peo-

ple once they actually try to practice it is life-changing; it is career-changing. It changes your perspective.

Right now, a lot of professors are teaching from home, the space where they would usually find rest. Are there ways that you have found helpful to separate the work and the rest, since it’s all happening in the same area now?

I have to say that I got lucky on two counts. My son is in high school and he is able to do his Zoom classes on his own, without as much help from us. In addition, we have a large enough house that I have my own study. For people who aren’t in that situation, you just have to be more intentional and more creative in separating the two, and there’s just no other way to do it. By intentionality, this means you have to talk to everybody involved, primarily your spouse, and explain what you need and why you need it. “I need to have this time by myself to work, even though I’m working from home — how can we trade off to make that happen?” A little creativity and intentionality with regard to protecting those spaces goes a long way.



The Flourishing Teacher: Vocational Renewal for a Sacred Profession

By Christina Bieber Lake
(IVP Academic)

Thinking more broadly, now, how do you think administrators can help faculty narrow the gap between their teaching and research responsibilities and generally help them pursue both productivity and their God-given calling at the same time?

I would say that the first thing is making sure the granting of sabbaticals is protected. It's becoming increasingly challenging to have sabbaticals, with finances being the way they are, but sabbaticals are essential to productivity for faculty. It is a renewal.

Related to that is providing opportunities for release time for your faculty in any way that you can. I would not be the scholar that I am today if it were not for a resource provided by Wheaton College, which is giving release time to faculty members to be in

faith and learning seminars with other colleagues. The release time is essential, but so is cross-disciplinary time with other colleagues about a topic that will help you to focus your research. If administrators can prioritize this in your budget, it will pay off multiple-fold, because if you want your faculty to be productive, they need to have some release from the heavy load of teaching, especially at small liberal arts colleges. We're not at research institutions where the load is two-two, two courses per semester. Wheaton's load is three-three, but most people have a four-four load or even more. I can't even imagine doing scholarly work with that many classes. So you cannot expect your faculty members with a four-four load to do reasonable scholarly work and be good teachers. You have to acknowledge that release

time is required, because thinking takes mental space and time; it is not always something you can measure.

That's the thing that's hard for the administration sometimes to understand, because thinking is not something that the faculty member can "deliver." I spent the first three months of my sabbatical reading and thinking. I cannot "deliver" that. However, what I ended up writing was a much better book than if I had just tried to rush in and write the book right away. I'm not saying that administrators should not hold faculty accountable. Of course they should. But giving space to think, to read, to meet with other faculty in events like faith and learning seminars, or other forms of release time from teaching, is essential. 🙏

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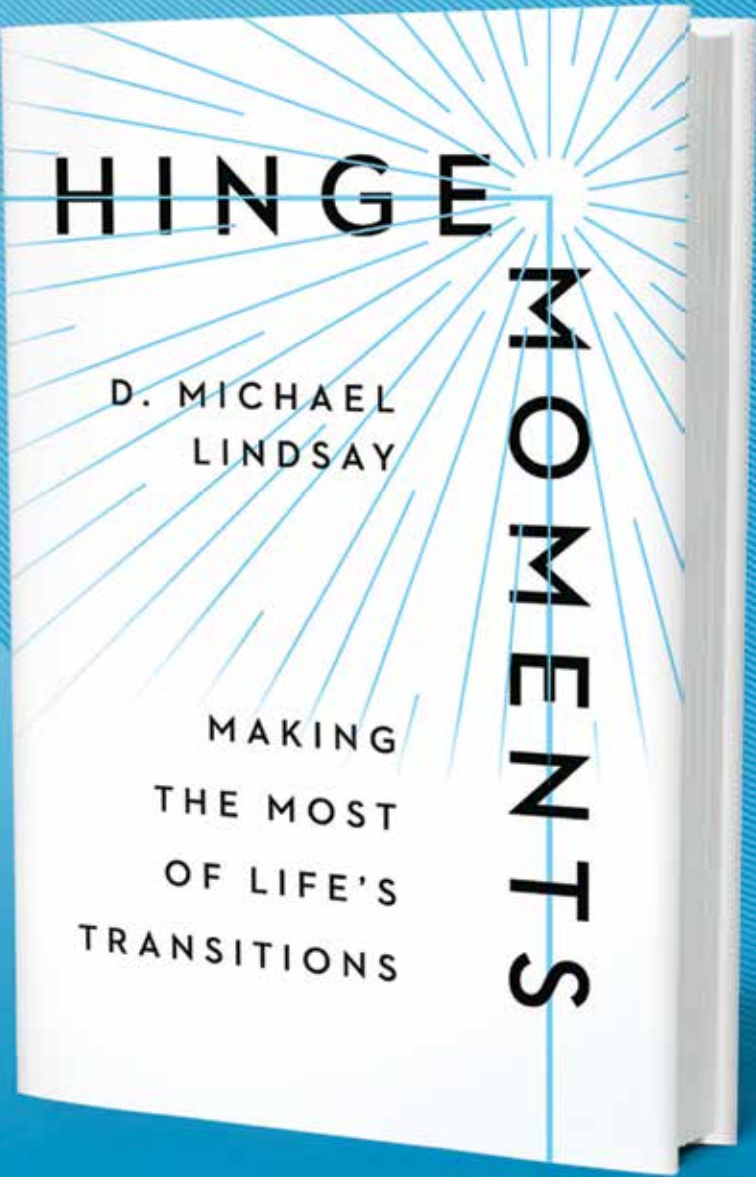


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on Life's Most Important Choices

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Have We Forgotten the “Least of These”?

BY EMMANUEL L. MCNEELY

IMAGINE THIS: You, a young teenager, are filled with unparalleled excitement from an acceptance letter from your dream school. You imagine your upcoming life at that dream school, where you will “find yourself,” pursue academic goals, experience new opportunities, and develop lifelong relationships, all with the hope of leaving an indelible mark on society during a complex time in history.

Now picture yourself with that enthusiasm while also arriving to a new environment where you are in the racial or ethnic minority, wondering how your experience may differ from those of majority-culture students. You walk into a sea of educational opportunities with a freedom to both express yourself and boldly exercise your faith, yet there is a strong trepidation about the lack of minority representation within your school’s student body, faculty, and leadership.

This is the reality for many underrepresented minority (URM) students attending colleges and universities around the globe. Particularly, this burden may be amplified at some Christian academic institutions. One may question, what responsibility do colleges and universities have to recruit, engage, and enhance the overall experience of URM students on their campuses? Let us pause here.

Some will criticize that any “special” attention given to URM students is wrong and that resources must be evenly applied to *all* students on campus. Although it is true that all students deserve a safe and equitable college experience, the dearth in racial diversity on many college campuses suggests that special attention must be brought those who are, numerically speaking, the “least of these.” Christian colleges

and universities must be led by biblical principles to provide special attention to their students who may suffer microaggressions, macroaggressions, and racial tension taking place on and off campus grounds during their time as a student.

The seemingly never-ending trend of unarmed Black men being murdered by police, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on minority communities, and the lack of representation for URM students and faculty all highlight systemic racism in America. It is impossible to understand and address the issues of URM students, let alone provide solutions, without first acknowledging both the existence and detrimental effects of systemic racism. If there is hope for creating lasting change and bolstering diversity on Christian campuses, there must be a resolve to diversify student bodies, faculty, and leadership.

To achieve this goal, many colleges and universities must first attain a “critical mass.” This concept of critical mass refers to reaching a minimum threshold of URM students and faculty to effectively recruit and retain more racially diverse students. We all know that generating diversity within an organization is no small task. Yet we must consider the current lack of diversity on campuses as a threat to the educational experience of all students, whether from minority or non-minority backgrounds. Christian universities and colleges have a responsibility to help cultivate and challenge the worldview of students. We must also acknowledge it is impossible to facilitate this process responsibly without diversity of thought, experiences, and racial backgrounds.

The unsettling feeling that most Americans experienced in witnessing

the protests, both peaceful and violent, of 2020 and 2021 must drive us to action. Racial reconciliation and harmony are foundational pillars in our Christian faith, so they must remain priorities within our academic institutions.

But the question remains: “When will we see positive change?” Ultimately, the answer depends on when a lack of diversity will be recognized as an imminent threat to educational institutions. Moreover, if Christian colleges and universities are unable to increase the critical mass of URM students and faculty, there is a strong possibility that URM students and faculty may only experience equitable representation in non-Christian, secular academic institutions. Frankly, this is a perilous reality that all Christian educators must aggressively contend with.

In Matthew 25:40, Jesus states, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” As Christian colleges and universities, we must ask, “Who are the ‘least of these?’” Numerically speaking, the “least of these” are URM students on our campuses whose voices and perspectives are muffled due to the lack of representation. Thus, a renewed emphasis and concerted effort to implement new strategies and programs to engage, recruit, and support URMs must become the focus of Christ-centered education. 🙏

EMMANUEL L. MCNEELY is co-founder of the Dr. M.D. Project, an effort to increase the number of underrepresented minorities practicing medicine, and the 2021 CCCU Young Alumni Award winner. He is pursuing his doctorate in medicine at Florida Atlantic University’s Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine.



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