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Winter 2009

Koinonia

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The President's Corner

Barry Loy

Dunkin' Donuts and Student Development

Okay. I confess. I like coffee —in moderation, of course—with extra cream, two Equals and two sugars. I especially like Dunkin' Donuts coffee and visit one almost daily. Recently, I invited a 2008 Gordon College graduate along—he wanted to talk about student development as a career. At one point he asked, "What is at the core of student development?" As I pondered the question and took a gulp of my coffee, the first thought to enter my mind was "Challenge and Support." At first, I was a little disappointed with myself for coming up with such a shopworn concept —one coined by Nevitt Sanford in the late 1960's—but a quick review of recent literature shows that the concept continues to be discussed and expanded (Dalton & Crosby, 2008). But, as I reflected more, I realized that for me, the heart of student development was exactly what I was doing with this recent alum—meeting face to face and touching life to life. Sure, good student affairs professionals will stay acquainted with the theories and research of our profession (e.g. challenge and support), but if we don't develop authentic relationships with our students our work will lack the power and impact that comes through incarnational ministry. So, thank you for the hundreds of hours that you spend face to face with students and may God strengthen you as you continue to prepare your students to learn, serve, and lead to the glory of God.

To close, I'd like to mention three prayer requests. First, we need to keep Westmont College in our prayers as they continue to clean up and recover from a fire that swept through campus, destroying eight buildings and 15 faculty homes. Second, please remember the Letourneau University conference planning staff as they prepare for the ACSD conference in June. Finally, I ask that you pray for the ongoing work of our diversity task team headed by Jane Higa from Westmont College. The diversity task team advises the ACSD Executive Committee on matters of race and ethnicity and is also helping us evaluate the Salter/McNeil Diversity Audit of ACSD. The members of the team are Jane Higa (Chair), Westmont College; Rodney Sisco, Wheaton College; Julie DeGraw, College of Lake County; Jacque Rhodes, Calvin College; and Joe Gonzales, Moody Bible Institute.

God Bless,

Barry Loy
President, ACSD
Vice President for Student Development
and Dean of Students Gordon College

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From the Editor's (very messy) Desk

As I sit down to write this piece, I realize that I am still wrestling with *how* to share. It's not that I am unsure of what to share. Trust me, I have plenty of ideas; it's just that many of them are probably best kept to myself or, at the very least, saved for those who have to bear with me. For example, I am using all of my restraint to not write on "Kung Fu Ragamuffin: The Gospel for all of us Fat, Flabby Pandas." I admit, I fell in love with the movie *Kung Fu Panda* this summer and just recently woke up early on "Black Friday" to buy it for my son as one of his Christmas gifts. At least, I keep telling myself it's for him. Anyway, that is just a peek as to what I am keeping at bay in my mind with Christmas break, the promise of the advent season, and some much needed rest approaching.

So, what is it I want to share with you all, given this little corner of textual real estate and 3 minutes of your attention span? While perhaps a little uncomfortable or exuberant, fearful or hopeful, or still smarting or still celebrating, I want to ask us to revisit, however briefly, the Presidential Election of 2008. Sure, I just lost a few of you who see no reason to "go there" while several more now feel cheated out of a potentially humorous piece on "Flabby Pandas." It's okay, I was a hall director once and I am used to being a buzz kill when necessary —and I do believe this is necessary.

If you are still with me, I don't really want to discuss whether your candidate won or lost or whether your party won or lost. Not that those things aren't important to your current mindset (i.e. how much you celebrated or cringed when I even mentioned the election); those things are important to each of us. However, I am more curious about how we, as Christ's image bearers, educators, mentors, and community members, did during and following the election. How well did we do with relating to the political "other"? Were we Christ-like in word and deed? Did we struggle with our own words matching our hearts? Did we judge other's Christianity on how they were or were not voting? Were we intentional in educating students in teachable moments? Did we add people to our "enemies" or "bad people" list because of politics during the last year? Did we firmly and lovingly confront inappropriate behavior, racist comments, and outright false statements? Did we match up our election programming with our institutional missions? Did we seek solutions to issues in an effort to find common good?

From my interactions with students, friends, and family over the past year, I would say that there appears to be a huge temptation to dismiss our words, thoughts, and deeds when it comes to politics. Some correlations can be found in church league basketball or Christian college intramurals where Christian folks (us) set out with good intentions, but when challenged or "lost in the moment" we think, say, and do things we slightly regret, but generally ignore as we huddle in a closing prayer with those we have just elbowed, wished torn ACLs upon, and cursed (under our breath, if we're lucky). After all, it's just competition… or just politics. God knows we're kind of sorry. Sorry, indeed.

This is no revelation, or at least it shouldn't be. Anytime we let our identity in Christ become secondary to our identity in something else (be it Democrat, Republican, First Baptist Church League Team, 2nd Floor Smith Hall Intramurals, etc.) the slope is not just slippery, it can be downright icy. One of the most convicting Biblical examples of this comes when Peter, in Galatians 2, chooses his Jewish identity over his identity in Christ and, subsequently, treats his Gentile brothers in Christ as "less than" and "other." Ouch! Every time I read this story I am convicted in some way.

This fall, I worked with some faculty and staff on programming attempting to focus students on engaging politics with civility and the "common good" in mind. I was feeling ecstatic after we had over 400 students attend a panel discussion on politics with professors and local pastors representing a broad political spectrum. The panelists were gracious, thoughtful, and found common ground as well as humbly disagreed as they answered students' hard questions about the war in Iraq, key election issues, and how they each interpret politics through Christian faith. In our coffee shop afterwards, I talked to two very thoughtful students who attended the panel. When I asked one of them what they thought of the discussion, she responded "I thought it was good, but I know they were holding back from what they really wanted to say. I mean, they didn't really get after one another, so it was kind of disappointing from that aspect." Now this is a really thoughtful student and she was expressing cynicism over civil and respectable behavior, cynicism that people who disagree politically can actually listen and admit that the other "makes a good point", cynicism that the respectfulness might have been just for show. I pushed her on this point, but I don't think she had seen political disagreement modeled in such a way before. Should this worry us? Do we want our students taking cues about political behavior from 24-hour news networks that care more about cheap shots and snarky sound bytes? I hope not. That would be like us taking our students to a church league basketball game to help them see how we should play and compete as Christians. (Okay, now who's being cynical?) If only there were less conversation about whether Christians can be Democrats or Republicans and more conversation on Christians acting, well… more Christ-like when it comes to politics, play, and in all aspects of life.

If we expect our students to be "salt and light" and advance the Kingdom of God to a world in need, teachable moments like the Presidential Election of 2008 should not pass us by. So, how did you do personally? How did you do as a Christian educator? How did your institution do? How are you doing even now, as we prepare for a historical Presidential Inauguration in the midst of so many global crises? Let's not fool ourselves into thinking that it's only politics and that makes any and all behavior (words, thoughts, and deeds) acceptable. Our students are counting on us to model and educate them better than Fox News, MSNBC, and CNN. Or ESPN, for that matter.

Cheers,
Steve Austin
Editor of *Koinonia*

Submitting for Publication in Koinonia

Each issue of Koinonia is open for members of ACSD and others associated with higher education to submit pieces for publication. Some issues are themed while other issues may be quite general in nature. The Editor of Koinonia reserves the right to edit each submitted piece and select the best combination of articles received for each issue. The next issue will examine "Student Culture", however, articles on other topics are welcome and needed. The deadline for submission is March 1st, 2009.

General Guidelines

1) **Submit feature articles, original research, reviews, interviews, reflection pieces, and other creative pieces that are timely and thoughtfully engage and inform our ACSD readership.**
2) **Submit pieces in APA style and documentation, in Microsoft Word format, and on or before submission deadlines for each issue.**
3) **Limit submissions to suggested lengths: feature articles, original research, interviews, and reflective and creative pieces (800–2,500 words) and resource reviews (700–1,200 words).**
4) **Articles should be submitted to the Koinonia Editor via e-mail at staustin@taylor.edu.**

Writing for Koinonia is a great way to process and share what you are learning, encourage and challenge others, and stay involved in ongoing higher education professional development. We hope you will consider writing and submitting a piece in the future.

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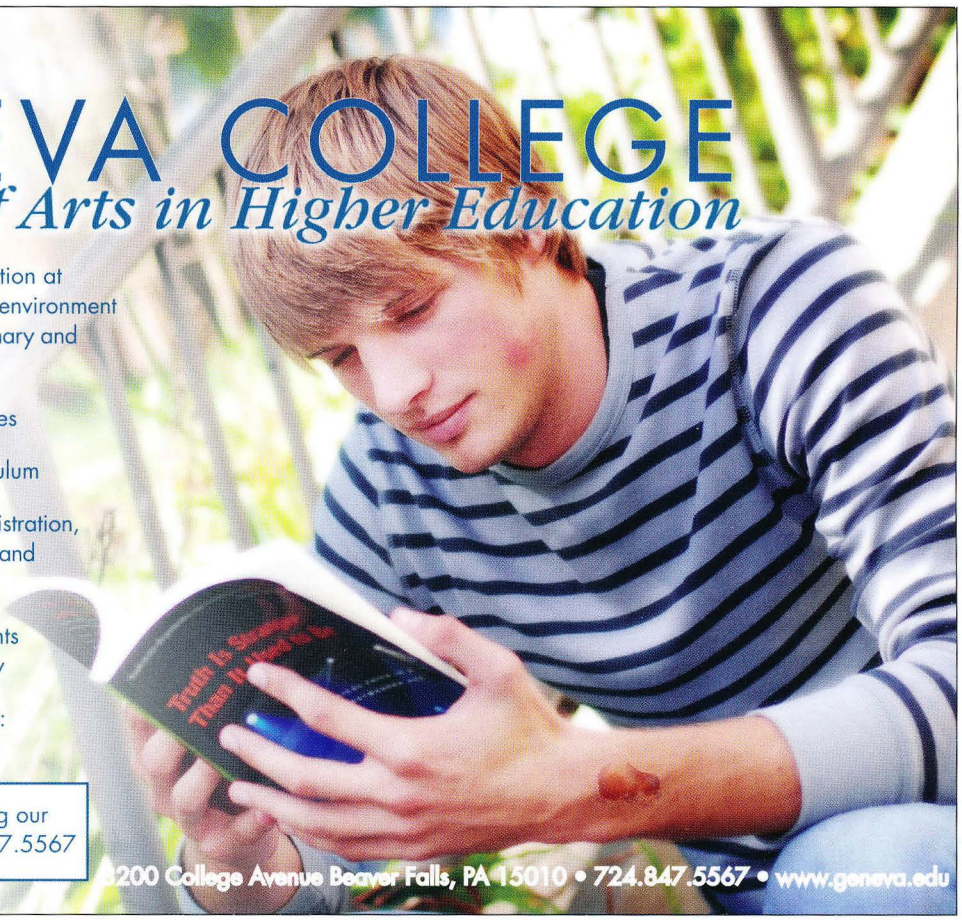

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Sovereign Stumbling:
My Life Journey to Date

By Dr. Larry Crabb

If I ever publish my autobiography, I'll call it *Sovereign Stumbling*. My life journey to date is a series of how I have stumbled and how God has consistently guided me in His sovereign ways.

I stumbled into psychology in college and didn't like it at all until I started taking abnormal psychology courses and personality theory. That's when my juices started to flow. I realized that I liked thinking in these areas. When I finished, I earned a Ph.D. because I didn't know what else to do. During my graduate career, I figured that being a Christian psychologist was not different from being a psychologist who happened to be a Christian.

In graduate school, I made a decision to give up Christianity that lasted about two years. I thought, I will not buy Christianity simply because it's my heritage. I decided that I would not buy anything that I didn't deeply believe. I started reading the writings of Francis Schaeffer and C.S. Lewis. They were the two mentors who brought me back to the faith. In my third year of graduate school, I came back gung ho and decided if Christianity was true, it's got to control everything.

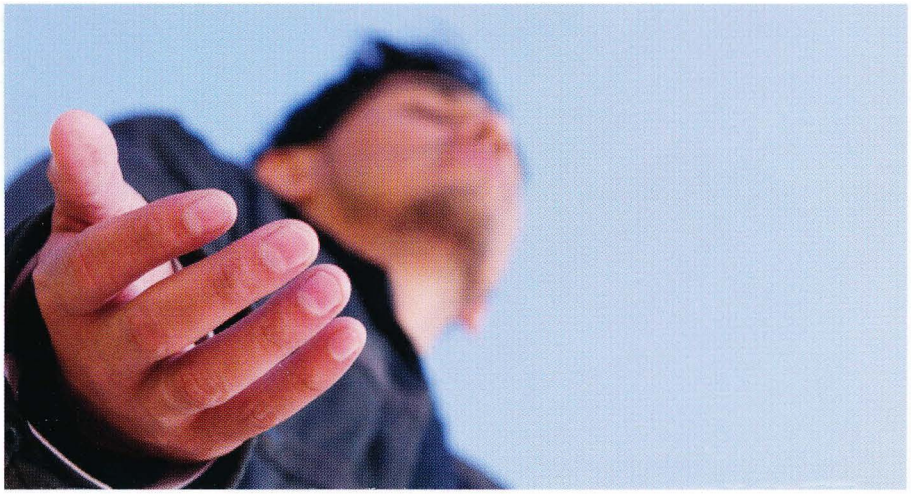
After teaching in the psychology department at the University of Illinois for two years and after encountering battles at a state university in Florida that I didn't want to fight, I made a decision to go into private practice. I wanted freedom to think without having to be accountable to people with a totally different philosophical mindset from mine. I wanted the freedom to pursue what I felt was Christian counseling. No longer was I a psychologist who happened to be a Christian. I was now a Christian who happened to be a psychologist; and I was sold out to discovering what this would mean for my life, both personally and professionally. Once again, I stumbled; and God was sovereign.

In my 10 years of private practice, I became persuaded that the community of God's people was meant to be the place where the deepest healing takes place. I came to the conclusion that real healing has less to do with technical intervention and more to do with profound relational engagement. I realized that the context for this engagement needs to be in the community of God's people—and that's the church. I thought that if healing belongs in church, then I'd like to be involved in somehow strengthening churches.

Years later, a comment from noted author and teacher Dr. James Houston significantly impacted my thinking and message. He said, "If the church is going to experience a second reformation, this one dealing with sanctification as the first dealt with justification, then we'll need to recover the doctrine of the Trinity and understand its implications for human community." I began to ponder what the Trinity and community have to do with sanctification in counseling. I discovered the transforming power that is released when people learn to enter the kind of community that God has enjoyed in the Trinity. And I realized we can develop that kind of community with the resources provided by the New Covenant. What needs to happen to people happens in community. When I began to understand that, I thought, I'll begin to focus on the resources that are inherent in the community of people who are in "new covenant" relationship with God.

My journey has led to the conclusion that real community happens when the energy of Christ within believers pours out into another person with the wisdom that the Bible provides, with the wisdom that only suffering can teach, and with the wisdom of the Spirit working through the resources He has given us through the New Covenant. I believe that this dynamic should define the church and the efforts of all those who want to help other people, including spiritual leaders, counselors and psychotherapists, and lay folks in the body of Christ.

This article, originally posted at *http://www.newwayministries.org/sovstumbling.php*, was reprinted with express written permission from New Way Ministries and Dr. Larry Crabb.



Dr. Larry Crabb is a well-known psychologist, conference and seminar speaker, Bible teacher, popular author, and founder/director of NewWay Ministries. He currently is the Scholar in Residence at Colorado Christian University in Colorado and serves as Spiritual Director for the American Association of Christian Counselors. Dr. Crabb will be a keynote speaker at our ACSD National Conference, hosted by LeTourneau University this June in 2009.

Conversations About Racism

By Jesse Brown

I sometimes visualize the ongoing cycle of racism today as a moving walkway at the airport. Active racist behavior is equivalent to walking fast on the conveyor belt. The person engaged in active racist behavior has identified with the ideology of White supremacy and is moving with it. Passive racist behavior is equivalent to standing still on the walkway. No overt effort is being made, but the conveyor belt moves the bystanders along to the same destination as those who are actively walking. Some of the bystanders may feel the motion of the conveyor belt, see the active racists ahead of them, and choose to turn around, unwilling to go to the same destination as the White supremacists. But unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt—unless they are actively antiracist—they will find themselves carried along with the others. (Tatum, 1997)

The conversation about diversity has been active during the past several years at Huntington University. Huntington is a liberal arts institution in northeastern Indiana with an enrollment of 1100 students. For the past 10 years, the percentage of non-white students has fluctuated between 3%-5%. For the upcoming year, Huntington launched an urban student recruitment and leadership program that will increase the number of non-white students on campus. The conversation about racial diversity has taken place with the presence of focused strategic goals, a diversity task force, campus diversity audit, a review of the Teacher Education Program by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, academic courses that encourage students to increase their perspectives, convocations, and challenging speakers such as Edward Gilbreath (2006), author of *Reconciliation Blues: A Black Evangelical's Inside View of White Christianity.*

While the above courses and venues were helpful in the campus dialogue about racism, a formal semester-long conversation that focused on racism and was taken for academic credit was necessary. Tatum's words above were a challenge to me and I wanted to invite some students to consider her words, as well. Where was Huntington University's activity on the moving walkway? What were students' views about active and passive racism? How did we perceive ourselves in the conversation about racism? How will our campus respond to increasing numbers of non-white students? How will our campus culture change with increasing numbers of non-white students in leadership positions? Perhaps, most importantly, what education needs to take place so that racial reconciliation will be possible?

During the year of 2007, the strategic goals and campus discussions made it possible for a "Conversations About Racism" course. With the collaborative effort of a sympathetic faculty member, we taught a 1-credit course on black/white relationships and racism. The purpose of the course was to provide readings, discussions, and personal experiences to help students explore the topic of race, their own racial identity, and what race means in relationships. This was to be done in a safe environment where questions or dissent were to be respected, welcomed, and learned from. We also studied personal and institutional racism and how it affects individuals and groups in our society. Special consideration was given to the connections that exist between Christian faith and race in American society.

There were three major course assignments. The first was annotated reading of the two course text books: *Being White* (Harris & Schaupp, 2004) and *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race* (Tatum, 1997). This accounted for 30% of the students' grade. They were required to read and were graded for the number of comments made in the books' margins. Tatum's book was an invaluable resource for the course because her scholarly comments generated such fruitful conversation. She also has a lengthy annotated bibliography in the back of the book for further study. Harris and Schaupp's book was useful to describe a series of stages that white people might encounter on their journey towards greater multiethnic relationships. Additional readings included *A Torturous Journey: The Condition of Black America* (Stapleford, 2008) and *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (McIntosh, 1988).

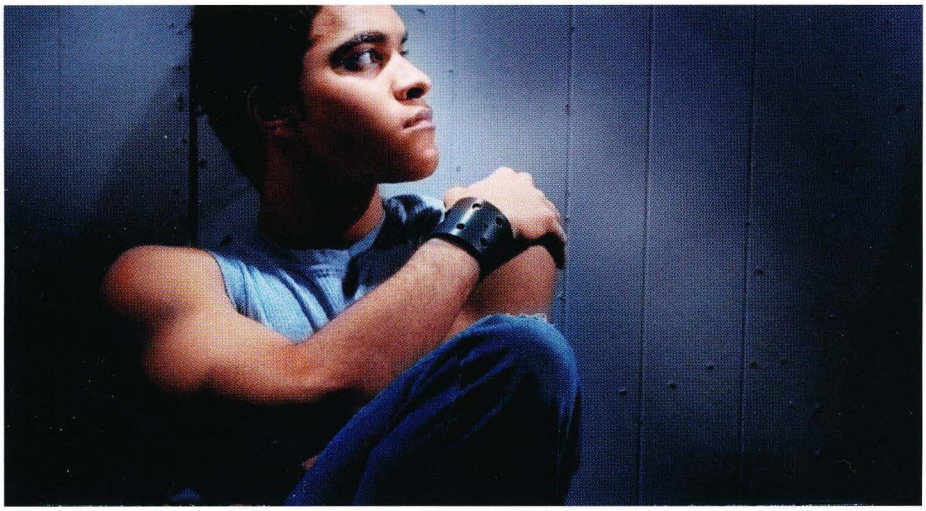
The second assignment was attendance at four approved churches. This accounted for 30% of their grade. The students were

expected to be a racial minority, attend Sunday School, morning worship, and after church dinners if they were offered. This was an opportunity for students to encounter other racial groups and experience an African-American worship service. We pre-selected a number of churches and students were to make contact with the respective church office ahead of time to verify service time and details.

Many observations were made by the students about their church visits. The appearance and attire of the church members was formal. There was a tremendous sense of pride in belonging to the church and the church building itself. Tithes were paid row by row at the altar instead of using offering plates passed through the pews. The worship and singing was exciting. The Preaching styles were interactive, offering give and take. Affection was expressed physically for one another by hugging. Current events and social issues were a distinct part of church conversation. Some light moments were also experienced by students. During one after church meal, a child became fond of one of the female students from the class. As they talked over lunch, the child suggested that the student, "Go to a tanning bed so that you can become black and marry my uncle." The student was flattered that the child had liked her so much that she was invited into the family.

Students also noted many distractions during their church visits. During the spring of 2008, the Democratic candidacy for President was still being decided and Indiana had a significant part to play in the election. Several groups of students were mistakenly identified by church members as campaign workers for Barack Obama because they were unfamiliar to the church. The students were also distracted by many of their personal fears. What if they offended someone on accident? What if they stood, sat, or clapped at an inappropriate time? What if they sat in someone's seat? Should they give in the offering? What if they did not know the words of the songs? Many students were too self-conscious and their feelings were intensified because of a desire to be sensitive. In the future, we will intentionally debrief student experiences earlier in the semester to help process some of their fears and anxieties. One last distraction was that many students got caught up in theological criticism or mistook some of the service differences that were based upon Pentecostal theology more than racial identity. Instead of enjoying the experience, some students found the theological differences too distracting.

The third and final assignment was a reflection essay of church visits which totaled 40% of their final grade. Through this assignment, students cited both textbooks as well as *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* by Michael Emerson and Christian Smith (2000). The essay described experiences, emotions, and interactions from their visits to the church as well as some of the topics explored in class.



Weekly discussion topics were found everywhere, especially during the times of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birth on January 15, Black History Month in February, and the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King in April. Many articles were found online or in newspapers. Some of the topics discussed were:

- Racism and Barak Obama's presidential campaign (Merida, 2008)
- Reverend Jeremiah Wright's comments from the pulpit (Ross & El-Buri, 2008)
- Sexism vs. racism (Kaye, 2008)
- The definitions associated with "black" and "white" using a chapter from Spike Lee's (1992) film *Malcolm X*
- Early student experiences of race/racism ("When was the first time that you remember meeting someone of another race?")
- Affirmative action (Tatum, 1997, pp. 114-128)
- The concept of colorblindness
- Historical instances of racism such as red-lining. "Redlining is the practice of arbitrarily denying or limiting financial services to specific neighborhoods, generally because its residents are people of color or are poor" (Hunt, 2005). Redlining limited financial equity gains for many blacks during the 20th century while preserving the best pieces of real estate for whites.

One of the more fruitful conversations revolved around the telling of racial jokes. This seemingly harmless activity had a way of perpetuating racist ideas and was one of the more prevalent racist encounters of students. Students often heard racist jokes but did not know how to confront their friends. After all, they were only joking, right?

We used several DVDs and corresponding websites for discussion. The DVD series was *Unnatural Causes... Is Inequality Making Us Sick?* (Fortier, 2008). The opening 60-minute segment, "In Sickness and In Wealth" offers a big picture scan of the problems of race and wealth in America: health is correlated with social-economic status and people of color have additional health

burdens not experienced by whites. A second segment, "When the Bough Breaks" is a 30-minute video discussing infant mortality rates among African Americans that are twice as high as their white counterparts. This series is well-researched and will leave students strongly considering the issues of racism and social justice.

There are many additional resources available for discussion. Some of them include:

- *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible* (Butler & Butler, 2006): a 60-minute DVD that offers thoughts on white identity from such people as Peggy McIntosh and Tim Wise
- *Race—The Power of an Illusion* (Adelman, 2003): a DVD divided into three sections of 60-minute segments exploring the biological beliefs associated with race
- *Briars in the Cotton Patch* (Fuller, 2003): this 60-minute DVD tells the story of Millard Fuller and the early years of an interracial community in Georgia called Koinonia Farms
- *This Far by Faith* (Cross, 2003): a DVD divided into six sections of 60-minute segments exploring the past 300 years of African-American religious experience
- *America Beyond the Color Line* (Crisp & Percival, 2004): Henry Louis Gates, Jr. interviews many individuals to better understand past, present and future racial relations
- *Crossing the Racial Divide: America's Struggle for Justice and Reconciliation* (Sojourners, 2000): this collection of articles offers thoughts written by authors like Jim Wallis, Chris Rice and Spencer Perkins and were originally published in Sojourners magazine.

For future classes, some changes will take place. We may replace the Harris and Schaupp text (Being White: Finding Our Place in a Multiethnic World, 2004) with another text. One idea is to instead use White Like Me (Wise, 2007). The DVDs and other resources that we used offered a good list of scholarly articles that would also be beneficial for discussion. Regarding the church visits, we will intentionally debrief student experiences earlier in the semester to help process some of their fears and anxieties. At least one of their visits will be completed before spring break (which will also prevent students from cramming in their visits at the end of the school year) and students will be expected to only attend morning services. Lastly, the subject of racism may need to be focused even more than the course is structured for (i.e. racism and housing, racism and employment, racism and healthcare). It was difficult to get too deep in any of the subjects above because of the short time limit of the course.

Along with the short time limit of the course, there was another limitation to the course: no empirical data to demonstrate that students' racial attitudes have changed as a result of the course. Anecdotally speaking, I would offer that many students' views toward racism were changed for the better: language became more sensitive, feelings toward African-American students changed and interest in having a greater number of non-white students on campus became greater. Finding a racial attitude scale to be given before and after the course would be helpful in determining if and how students have changed from their exposure to the ideas presented in class. Ultimately, I would like to research how white students are changed empathically through encounters with black students and black culture. This research seems to have application beyond racial relationships and could lead to creative educational opportunities for academic institutions.

Jesse Brown serves as the Assistant Dean of Students for Huntington University, located in Huntington, Indiana. He also serves as the Co-Chair of the Diversity Collaborative for ACSD. To learn more about the Conversations on Racism course or the Diversity Collaborative contact Jesse via e-mail, jbrown@huntington.edu, or join in on the conversation at http://www.huntington.edu/diversitycollaborative.

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Anxiety:
A Growing Problem in College Students

By Steven M. Conn

It is quite common to hear today's undergraduate complain about stress. And it is just as common to brush off those complaints as nothing more than a generation of students that need to grow thicker skin. After all, college is a time of comparatively few responsibilities, scheduled breaks, independence, and a number of safety nets in place to make sure that one succeeds at school. If only the rest of life was that easy.

But that easily adopted attitude of "just grow up" is turning a blind eye to a world of compounding anxiety and pressure. And whether it is internal, external, deserved or undeserved, it is real. We, as educators and student affairs professionals, must recognize, understand, and address the growing problem of anxiety among college students.

Jean Twenge (2006), in *Generation Me*, has done extensive research on the topic as it relates to the larger picture of generational trends in today's youth. She states, "Anxiety increased so much that the average college student in the 1990s was more anxious than 85% of students in the 1950s and 71% of students in the 1970s" (p. 105). But that is just the beginning. In 1995, twice as many people reported having symptoms of panic attacks as did in 1980, and in the same time period the number of college freshmen who claimed to be "frequently overwhelmed" more than doubled, while the number of students who claimed that "life is a strain" quadrupled between 1950 and 1989 (p. 107). The number of children on mood altering drugs has tripled between 1987 and 2006 and the lifetime rate of depression has increased 1,000% since 1915.

A more emotionally aware culture, increased accessibility to mental health care, and the proliferation in both quality and quantity of mood altering drugs on the market can probably account for some of this change; but not a change as significant as this.

The freedom to do anything creates the pressure to be everything and guilt for not doing so.

Twenge (2006) theorizes that part of the cause lies in the fact that students live in an increasingly competitive and self-focused world. The freedom to do anything creates the pressure *to be everything* and guilt for not doing so. Some argue that too much freedom can be stifling as all the different choices for one's future overwhelm a student and paralyze him/her into inaction (Schwartz, 2000).

And, despite the fact that students have grown up being told that they can accomplish anything if they put their mind to it, as they enter young adulthood they are confronted with an expanding, fast-paced, impersonal world that is beyond their control. Students currently assert an unprecedented amount of control over all the small options that make up their daily lives, but with this increase in control comes the increased expectation of control. It is no longer enough to find a job, but it is necessary to find the dream job that is fulfilling *and* lucrative, *and* flexible. Paradoxically, with our greater emphasis on and ability to control events we are left with anxiety, guilt, and a feeling of being entirely out of control

(Schwartz, 2000). This feeling, called learned helplessness, is linked with many mental complications including anxiety and clinical depression (Alloy & Abramson, 1982).

As educators, this isn't our fault, but it is ours to deal with. College is a very important time in the development of behavior patterns throughout adulthood. Mental health in early adulthood has been demonstrated to have future implications on alcohol and substance abuse, academic success, future employment, and future relationships (Eisenberg, Gollust, Golberstein, & Hefner, 2007). Eisenberg et al., goes on to say that most lifetime mental disorders are first manifested during or shortly following the college years, and that stressors typically found in the college life (irregular sleep patterns, changing personal relationships, academic pressure, etc.) can exacerbate the problem.

In fact, college students are now being diagnosed with entirely new categories of anxiety. Psychological literature is beginning to lend credence to the idea of Adult Separation Anxiety Disorder. New research suggests that college freshmen with previously unexplained symptoms might be suffering from the same separation anxiety that we generally associate with infants and young children. The causes for this phenomenon are unknown, but its prevalence is growing on college campuses (Seligman & Wuyek, 2007).

Eisenberg challenges colleges to use their high level of influence and contact to help control the environment of the student and steer it in a more healthy direction. This is in keeping with research that shows that this greater propensity towards stress is environmental and has more to do with society at large than with the family of origin. More specifically, the same research found that anxiety was most strongly linked to low social connectedness and a high level of perceived environmental threat (Twenge, 2000).

Social anxiety, in particular, seems to be inexorably linked to isolation and is gaining a lot of attention from researchers. This is unfortunate considering our culture, though better connected, is arguably more isolated than ever. "We're malnourished from eating a junk-food diet of instant messages, e-mail, and phone calls, rather than the healthy food of live, in-person interaction" (Twenge, 2006, p. 110).

Heavy internet usage has been shown to correlate with increased levels of loneliness, depression, and a withdrawal from social activities. To add perspective to that: internet usage has increased 102% between the years of 2000 and 2007 (Morris & Stevens, 2007). The researchers go on to explore the trend of online dating and how many young people are now using their computers as an alternative to personal interaction. For example: their findings show that web cam usage is over nine times more likely for individuals with high levels of social anxiety. However, they aren't able to establish the direction of causality. Is isolation caused by anxiety, or is anxiety a product of isolation?

That is the same question that Burger, Calsyn, and Winter tried to answer in 2005. They found that social anxiety was correlated with avoidance of others, decreased verbal and non-verbal communications, negative thoughts, negative evaluations, irrational beliefs, and evaluation apprehension. What they could not find was the cause. Although they were unable to make a definitive statement, their conflicting research results led them to support the theory that isolation and anxiety are in a relationship of reciprocal influence. That translates to bad news for the student affairs professional, because it means the situation is complicated and difficult to fix.

That is assuming that we, as student development professionals, make a priority of this issue. Maybe we would be more motivated when considering that anxious college students and particularly socially anxious students are more likely to drink and more likely to develop alcohol related problems (Lewis, Hove, Whiteside, Lee, Kirkeby, Oster-Aaland, Neighbors, & Larimer, 2007).

Stewart, Mellings, Morris, and Komar (2006) identified four major drinking motivations among college students, three of which pertain to anxiety. Anxiety-related drinking motivations include: achieving a positive social outcome, employing a coping mechanism, and conforming to social expectations. Students often use alcohol

Students currently assert an unprecedented amount of control over all the small options that make up their daily lives, but with this increase in control comes the increased expectation of control.

What, then, can be done to help? When society teaches students to be anxious long before they reach college, it seems like there is little left but to try to offer safety and security. Twenge (2000) states, "Until people feel both safe and connected to others, anxiety is likely to remain high (p. 1018)." If, in fact, this problem is both societal and generational, it will take time to change; however, something must be done for anxious college students now.

Students have been trained and encouraged to be independent and take care of themselves. Though rarely does anyone

Retraining students to value and build community may stave off isolation and, therefore, anxiety and the array of associated difficulties.

as a temporary escape from anxiety or depression. The brief calm they feel acts as negative reinforcement. As isolation and anxiety are intertwined, it is easy to see how both might play a role in a student's desire to be accepted among peers or to try to achieve a particular social outcome. Alcohol has been reported to be beneficial to the developmental task of forming relationships in a college setting (Lewis et al., 2007), and students seemed to have figured that out without reading the research.

Not only are these students more likely to drink, but they are more likely to become problem drinkers. Students with social phobias (such as an anxiety disorder) are two to three times more likely to develop an alcohol use disorder than those who do not (Stewart et al., 2006). And, that is not all. Those students high in social evaluation anxiety (fear that one will be negatively evaluated by one's peers) are more susceptible to negative body image and, in women, fear of intimacy in a romantic relationship; both of which are highly correlated with bulimic eating disorders (Annis, Cash, & Theriault, 2004).

encourage isolation, the habits and values that will eventually lead to isolation and disengagement are daily reinforced in our youth. Reversing this trend will be difficult, but may be possible. Retraining students to value and build community may stave off isolation and, therefore, anxiety and the array of associated difficulties. Modeling and providing community for students is a great step in this direction, but is there anything that colleges can do to place a greater emphasis on teaching students how to create and sustain community for themselves after they graduate? Or, are they doomed to an increasingly impersonal and anxious future?

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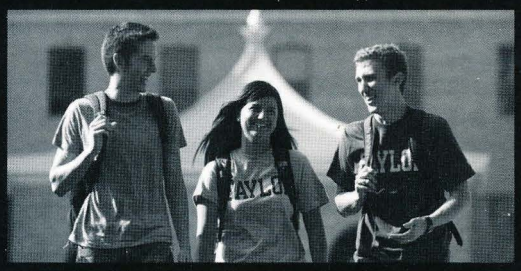

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Teaching the Truth

By Michael and Stephanie Santarosa

1. **True or False?** Student development educators play a significant role in helping their institutions stay (or become) faithful to Jesus Christ.
2. **True or False?** Thinking you know the truth is arrogant and intolerant.
3. **True or False?** The important thing in life isn't having truth, but searching for it.
4. **True or False?** There isn't any truth (yes, this is a trick question...and we hope that's obvious!).
5. **True or False?** Maybe truth exists, but we can't find it.
6. **True or False?** Truth is whatever you sincerely believe.
7. **True or False?** The truth is out there (cue *The X-Files* theme music).

If you said "True" to question number one, we hope our last column equipped you with some ideas, language, motivation, and practical ways to articulate clearly the role of student development educators and to approach this task with earnestness and urgency. Given the history of so many Christian institutions abandoning their faith commitments and succumbing to secular paradigms, it behooves us all to continually reexamine and redirect our work as needed to ensure the light entrusted to us does not diminish. In that last column, we described one practical way to guard our own and our institution's faithfulness —keeping Christ and his Kingdom, rather than students, the center and target of our work. Doing so provides the vision necessary to propel students beyond themselves and to see their time in college as preparation for greater service to God and neighbor throughout their lives. When we focus on students themselves it becomes too easy to feed their appetite for comfort and leisure as well as lose sight of the larger purpose and goals of higher education. And, when this happens to us, we should not be surprised when students follow our example and also begin to (or continue to) focus on themselves and their goals as the end point of their education rather than ways that they, too, can serve something and someone greater—the Kingdom of God and its King—by seeking to discover at every turn what His goals are for them and following in willing obedience.

Our goal in this column is to continue building on our prior discussion, as referenced above, by focusing on ways to avoid the second of the three changes in orientation that Joel Tom Tate (2004), author of "Pass-Fail 101: Three Ways to Make or Break a Christian College," urges us to avoid as we seek to remain faithful to our Christian missions. Tate suggests that we must make sure that we are "teaching the truth" rather than "teaching the range of alternatives." At first glance, this seems obvious. Of course, we would not want to teach falsehood and none of us would set out to do so. But again, in our current cultural context, this is something that cannot be taken for granted. Colson and Fickett (2008), in their recent book *The Faith*, state that "the question of truth—of a common and knowable reality that exists independently of our perception—is the great fault line of Western culture today. The dominant point of view dismisses the idea" (p. 59). Even if we're working at Christian institutions, both we and our students are immersed daily in a culture where truth claims and the very existence of truth are called into question. Questions two through six of our pop quiz are myths (falsehoods) debunked by J.Budziszewski (1999), as he writes to high school seniors about to start college. But surely none of us would have to look very hard to find students who would answer "True" to at least one or two of these five statements (in fact, that might be an interesting experiment to do in response to this article) and, if we did encounter such students, how prepared and effective would we be at teaching

them the truth about truth?

Last semester a student wanted to know if I (Michael) was "one of those adults who hated postmodernism." "Uh," I began stammering. "While postmodernism might be helpful at correcting some of the problems with modernism, we shouldn't confuse it with the gospel," I went on trying to sound both engaging and informed. I had never thought of myself as someone who "hated" postmodernism though I do find it an interesting, but troubling concept. Apparently, the student identified herself as "pomo" (postmodern) and proclaimed that she loved everything postmodern. Believing the essence of postmodern thought to be the suspicion that truth claims are merely assertions of power, I inquired how she could be both Christian and postmodern. She responded that she didn't know if Christianity was true and frankly stated that such questions didn't matter to her anyway. What?! Yes, this young follower of Christ wasn't concerned if Christianity was true. I pressed on to try to find what did matter to her. Clearly compassion, love, and justice mattered to her, but, probing deeper, I found she was deeply uncertain if she could really do anything to further these things. She believed she couldn't know if she was truly helping people or merely manipulating the system to serve her own ends. To her, such doubt must have ensured humility. To me, her lack of confidence in the truth was devastating.

Equally devastating is the meaninglessness that comes from trading teaching truth for teaching the range of alternatives. Although, I (Stephanie) learned a great deal while working on my Master's degree in College Student Personnel at a large state university, one of the greatest lessons I learned is how dismissing the reality of knowable truth leads in very real ways to meaninglessness. For every one of the classes in my program, we pulled our desks into a circle and proceeded to exchange opinions about the topic of the day. Fresh out of my Christian undergraduate education, I found this interesting but continued to have a vague and nagging feeling that something was missing. Looking back several years later, I can see that that "something" was the acknowledgement that truth exists and we could know it, the acknowledgement that our task in the classroom was not merely to examine the range of alternative viewpoints on a topic but to search for truth, in humble reliance on the Truth incarnate, in order to identify truth, embrace it, and find ways to live it out and make it real to a world desperate for it. And, it occurred to me one day as I drove my little Geo Metro the hour-long drive back to my assistantship site, that if there wasn't any idea or opinion that was better than another because it more closely resembled truth or reality, that I and the students I interacted with each day had no real reason to enroll at an institution of higher education, many incurring large amounts of student loan debt to do so.

A range of alternative viewpoints could be found in any number of less expensive ways and places. Without truth, education itself is meaningless and higher education can easily become simply a "ticket to a middle class lifestyle," another commodity to be consumed, or the "thing you do after high school." I can think of few views of education more bankrupt, meaningless, and, unfortunately, widespread than these.

The reality is that we immediately succumb to teaching the range of alternatives when we lose a firm grip on the truth ourselves. That grip is loosened by some very real pressures—desire for credibility, desire for autonomy, or desire to take the more convenient path of least resistance, to name a few. Knowing and taking a firm stand for truth may set us at odds with the mainstream academic or student cultures and we may find ourselves misunderstood or alone. Moreover, once understood, truth requires a response of obedience, that is, the alignment of our words, actions, and attitudes to match it and this may require us to give up bad habits, pet viewpoints, or comfortable thought patterns. And discerning truth and living truthfully is hard work. We must daily present ourselves to the Truth himself, and be renewed in our ways of thinking and acting. We need to critically approach every movie we see, every article we read, every speech we listen to, and every conversation we have and sift every claim for its reliability and truthfulness.

But, how do we hold on to truth and faithfully teach it to others? That's where we, as student development educators, can play a crucial role in the life of our institutions. Our co-curricular programs should and can be permeated with a love for the beauty, treasure, and reality of truth. Our enthusiasm for life can reignite and fuel curiosity in students for all aspects of creation. Of critical importance, however, is that we fully utilize our out-of-the-classroom laboratories to engage students in developing reliable skills in discernment: asking tough questions, questioning faulty logic, and exposing every form of idolatry especially given the propensity for the offspring of Adam and Eve to "trade the truth of God for a lie" (Romans 1:25).

Finally, how about that final entry on our true/false quiz? Is the truth out there? Yes. But the point is that we must not leave it out there as one option among many, hoping our students will happen upon it. We can take Tate's warning to heart:

> When a college loses confidence in the educational value of the truth, and teaches ideas that are not true, even if it is trying to ensure the students' confidence in the truth, it is doing its students a disservice and is, in the end, undermining its own faith identity. (Tate, 2004)

Our hope and goal each day must be that the Truth and all truths are pursued in such a way that they go from "out there" to "in here," in the hearts, in the minds, and embodied in the daily lives of ourselves and our students.

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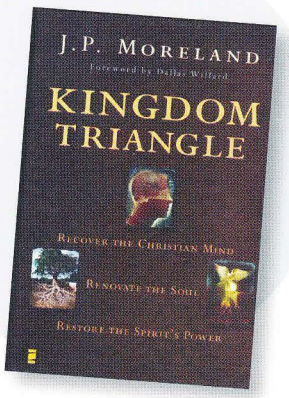
Book Review

Kingdom Triangle:
Recover the Christian Mind, Renovate the Soul, Restore the Spirit's Power

by J.P. Moreland



Reviewed by Steve Ivester

Readers of *Kingdom Triangle* have found in its pages a wealth of discussion on "Christian teaching as a source of knowledge" (p. 35). Dr. J.P. Moreland, a leading evangelical thinker and distinguished professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, has prompted this discussion with a passionate, academic, deeply biblical, and timely treatise on how to "recover the Christian mind, renovate the soul and restore the spirit's power." It is inspiring to read a book written by a Christian scholar who has reflected so profoundly on the foundational issues of knowledge and how the task of developing a Christian mind relates to spiritual formation, in particular, and Kingdom power, at large.

Before summarizing the indispensable ideas that Moreland addresses, I must highlight that his book takes one on an intellectual adventure. Appropriately, each chapter concludes with thought provoking questions that encourage deeper reflection and insight into the topic at hand. This book will not only inform but will also inspire those called to be teachers and scholars for the church and an unbelieving world. This element of the book is rooted in a salient feature of Moreland's approach: an enthusiastic vision for shedding light on the health and future of the Western church (p. 14). Although the book is deeply academic and does not shy away from in-depth analysis of various philosophical terms, appropriate biblical scholarship, and credible authorities on social science, theological, and cultural issues, it never treads wearily through the tedious; it's equally practical. The writing is crisp, clear, and compelling from beginning to end.

The book is divided into two parts: "Assessing the Crisis of Our Age", which describes the current state of Western culture through the naturalist and postmodernist stories and "Charting a Way Out: The Kingdom Triangle", which describes his vision for spiritual formation and Spirit-led power. The entire book is bound by a mantra for western churches to "band together" as Christians today have lost intellectual ground. As Moreland says, "Both in and out of the Church, Jesus has been lost as an intellectual authority" (p. 77). In short, Christians must learn to think.

Moreland begins chapter one by discussing the "hunger for drama" (p. 17). He says we long for experiences that energize us. This excitement gives pangs to all; however, it is weighted by a feeling of boredom with our own lives. The addiction for drama is never quite satisfied and Moreland goes on to explain how the pursuit of happiness becomes the goal most people set for themselves. Because this focus on life is not what God intended, people lose sight of a greater purpose. He describes this as a "thin world" – a world where there is no objective value, purpose, or meaning. Alternatively, Moreland describes the "thick world". "A thick world is one in which there is such a thing as objective value, purpose, and meaning. In a thick world, some things really matter and other things don't. Some things are right and others are wrong" (p. 29). It is this world, that Moreland charges Christians to claim.

Moreland explains that we live in a "sensate" culture. In contrast, Moreland describes an alternative view of reality: an "ideational" culture – one that embraces the sensory world yet values an extra-empirical immaterial world. Because of the prevailing sensate culture, Moreland says, "the only knowledge we can have about reality is empirical knowledge gained by the hard sciences" (p. 22). Out of this belief comes a view that any non-empirical claims are items of knowledge relegated to matters of private feelings.

Moreland also asserts that a "three-way worldview struggle rages in our culture: between ethical monotheism, postmodernism, and scientific naturalism" (p. 22). This, of course, leads Moreland to unpack scientific naturalism and postmodernism, concluding that "scientific naturalism is exposed as the shallow destructive fraud that it really is" (p. 59) and that "postmodernism is a form of intellectual pacifism" (p. 88). To combat these or any other worldviews, Moreland offers five crucial questions that can be used as a tool for analyzing them: (1) What is real? (2) What are the nature and limits of knowledge? (3) Who is well off? What is the good life? (4) Who is a really good person? (5) How does one become a really good person? (59).

The fourth chapter, "From Drama to Deadness", gives careful analysis to five shifts that Western culture has

undergone: knowledge to faith; human flourishing to satisfaction of desire; duty and virtue to minimalist ethics; classic freedom to contemporary freedom; and classic tolerance to contemporary tolerance (pp. 91-100). Moreland not only addresses key aspects of these shifts, but also displays a sense of yearning for something better.

In the next chapter, given the crisis of knowledge in our culture, Moreland explores how Christians must "recover knowledge," and argues for a deeply biblical "ground for faith." Moreland poignantly writes:

It is crucial that the church recover her confidence that she is in possession of spiritual and ethical knowledge in Holy Scripture primarily, but also in the history of her thought about God, moral issues, the spiritual life, and other important topics. (p. 114)

Movement within Your Soul.

After reflecting on Moreland's suggested practice for growth as a disciple, few will disagree that cultivating the soul brings authenticity and real intimacy with God.

Chapter 7 culminates Moreland's purpose in writing this book: "to mobilize, inspire, envision, and instruct an army of men and women for a revolution on behalf of Christ" (p. 14). This vision is concluded through Moreland's discussion about miraculous powers.

Space forbids adequate praise for the piercing, descriptive, and challenging illustrations throughout the book. The host of insights they bring to bear on the development of the life of the mind, cultivation of an inner life and especially learning to live in and use the Spirit's power will have to be explored on your own. Additionally, the helpful

The Western Evangelical must be courageous in developing knowledge, disciplined in how they grow, and confident in leading the surrounding society out of an increasingly secularized culture.

A primary value of this chapter is the plethora of passages, both from the Old and New Testament, presenting how much more Scripture has to say about knowledge than faith.

After a brief discussion on traits of the empty-self that undermine authentic spiritual formation, chapter six engages three areas for personal growth toward "renovation of the soul". In hopes of enticing the reader to investigate Moreland's suggestions, they are listed without comment: (1) Growing in the Art of Christian Self-denial, (2) Fostering Spiritual Disciplines in Ourselves, and (3) Cultivating Emotional Sensitivity to the

assessment of scientific naturalism and postmodernism, the punchy and pregnant comments on where culture is currently at, and the selectively annotated bibliography (which is organized according to chapters and classified in association to varying degrees of readership) are resourceful ingredients to the book.

Despite the fact that Moreland is committed to Evangelical Protestantism of a supernatural kind (third wave), he is deeply aware of and respectful toward other traditions. Even when he defends cessationism, he addresses the issue in a non-defensive manner that attempts to vindicate all evangelicals that believe different than he does. Moreland strikes the balance in challenging Christians to consider the spectrum carefully and charts a way forward through the naturalist/postmodern thicket.

While many Christians are embracing postmodernism today, neglecting the life of the mind and living empty lives, Moreland's book offers excellent insight as to why Christians should recover knowledge, renovate their soul, and restore the Spirit's power. The Western Evangelical must be courageous in developing knowledge, disciplined in how they grow, and confident in leading the surrounding society out of an increasingly secularized culture. Moreland successfully provides a vision for that challenge. His practical steps, profound analysis, and provocative stories provide a helpful road map for the journey. Grab the book and a few good friends and consider taking a long hard walk.

Steve Ivester serves as the Director of Student Activities at Wheaton College, located in Wheaton, Illinois.

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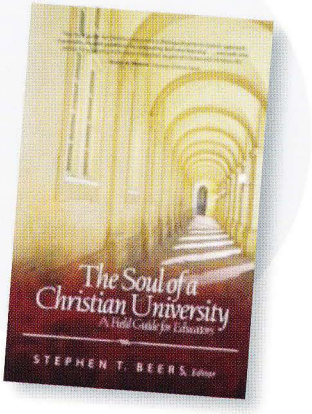
Book Review

The Soul of a Christian University:
A Field Guide for Educators



Edited by Stephen T. Beers

Reviewed by Kyle Lantz

In *The Soul of a Christian University: A Field Guide for Educators*, editor Stephen Beers and a group of 15 veteran Christian college faculty and administrative leaders explore the ultimate role of the Christian university. They seek to provide a guide for those who have the unique calling of working in a Christian higher educational setting.

Why is there a specific need for Christian institutions of higher learning? What makes a Christian college unique in her role? How can a person excel in his or her service to students and the academy as a follower of Christ? How does my Christianity affect the way one relates with colleagues, students, and peers? These are the types of questions that are addressed throughout this book. Although reading this book straight through may lack unity, its layout offers readers the option to choose and focus on that which is most applicable.

Beginning with perhaps the central-most question, Darryl Tippens challenges Christian institutions to understand and embrace the unique role they have in the broader spectrum of higher education today. Tippens implores Christian colleges to more clearly articulate their compelling purpose and emphasizes the importance of unity in order to achieve maximum effectiveness stating that "we will best sustain our heritage if the members of our community are shaped by a singular, compelling 'vision'" (p. 27).

Speaking directly to this heritage, Rick Ostrander goes on to address the historical perspective and significance of the Christian college. Ostrander does a commendable job of covering almost 400 years of history in less than 20 pages. His focus on the secularization that began in the latter half of the 19th century notes the importance of this period and its continued influence. Ostrander comments that this dark period occurred, in part, because of "a lack of clear, intentional, rigorous Christian thinking applied to the wide range of emerging academic disciplines that led institutions to see Christianity as basically irrelevant to their mission" (p. 27). His discussion about the revival of these colleges over the past several decades is one that could be debated and discussed and leaves the reader asking how and if this "revival" is actually occurring or even desired by some schools.

Stephen and Jane Beers begin the process of clarifying the now catchphrase idea of the "integration of faith and learning" by addressing common misconceptions such as the assumption that a spiritual formation program meets the faith aspect of this integration. They propose a holistic approach to integration and broaden the focus of what true integration can and should be. Beers and Beers provide practical tools for integrating faith and learning successfully, both in and out of the classroom.

Tim Herrmann, in his essay on "Relevant Pedagogy for a New Generation," encourages all educators to "feed [their] students by speaking to their souls" while also attempting "to nurture their minds" (p. 75). He challenges long held standards in teaching and begins a conversation that would benefit greatly by continued dialogue and creativity as student culture is changing. Confronting changes that are prevalent in the contemporary student, Herrmann

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stresses the importance of focusing on student learning and fostering a high level of student engagement, which can get lost if students' learning is not prioritized. While some would dispute the benefits offered by his arguments, he counters these concerns by stating that "the potential of deepening students' understandings, enabling them to apply their knowledge to new situations, and helping them become independent, self-directed learners clearly outweighs these perceived drawbacks" (p. 65).

Tom Jones and Skip Trudeau model academic and student affairs collaboration in their discussion of the importance of Christian scholarship. Jones and Trudeau state that "Christian liberal arts universities must place greater emphasis on activities that challenge academic and student affairs educators to think more deeply and work more collaboratively" (p. 78). They emphasize collaborative scholarship as well as offer a model that can help Christian professionals gain credibility in the academy.

The unfortunate disunity that is prevalent in the world can also be found in Christian higher education. Friesen and Soderquist-Togami focus on this problem by presenting obstacles and benefits to collaboration and they state that "it is important for both the academic and student development professions to provide challenge and support to students in order to maximize success" (p. 95). In other words, they challenge the existence of the invisible wall between academic and student affairs, imploring the academic community to embrace a more holistic approach to students' learning.

The last four chapters address practical actions and principles that professionals at Christian colleges can apply in order to be most effective, balanced, and fulfilled in their work with college students. Mallard and Sargent provide many practical tips for the new members of the Christian academy where embracing both the challenges and joys are keys to success. Ream and Clark emphasize spiritual formation in the form of a "Sabbath existence" as a healthy lifestyle in relation to the biblical commandment to rest and create margin in one's life. Troyer follows with a discussion of leadership from a biblical perspective, stating that "being intentional about your own spiritual growth, about critically examining how you operate in the context of your institution, and about putting tools in your and others toolboxes goes a long way in facilitating God's work" (p. 159). Hulme and Kaak, in the last chapter, use Jesus as an example of one who did not run away from the difficult questions that the world was asking and they provide many practical ways that Christians can and must effectively engage the culture, lest they be viewed as "a fringe element of higher education and thus only recognized by those who are of the same belief" (p. 162).

This book presents an exceptional collection of insights from a diverse group of professionals within Christian higher education. It directly confronts issues critical to meaningful understanding of the Christian university. The relevance of the issues addressed is valuable to all Christian educators. While there may be some disconnect between some sections, there is beneficial information for a variety of readers. In fact, this book may contain even more of a well-represented, balanced example of the lives of all Christians working in the Academy. It provides practical points of challenge that should enhance the effectiveness of anyone who takes his or her profession seriously. Overall, there is an underlying theme in this book calling Christians in higher education to pursue excellence in their vocational calling. Colossians 3:23 calls Christians to work at whatever they do with all their might. At a time when Christians and the relevance of their values are often not taken seriously, the Christian university has a great opportunity to be a starting place to regain a voice in a world desperately needing quality examples of the truth found in Jesus Christ. *The Soul of a Christian University* will provide a foundational and biblically based approach to any professional interested in maximizing their potential as a Christian professional in higher education.

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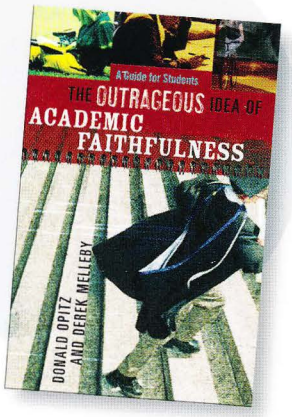
Book Review



The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfullness

by Donald Opitz and Derek Melleby

Reviewed by Nathan Geer

When I first picked up *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness*, by Donald Opitz and Derek Melleby (2007), and held it next to the typical large academic text, "very readable" was the first thing that came to mind. Finally, I thought, an academic text that millennial students just coming into the higher educational arena will not only be able to read, but also willing to read! Read, mind you, not just glance through in order to pass a test.

Visually, with its thin spine and generous spacing between relatively short chapters, this book is written, "primarily for Christian students, specifically those that are at the tail end of high school or early in their college experience" (p. 10). As a former first-year student myself, I remember numerous textbooks in college that I judged by their covers. This is one of those I would have judged and read, yet, it is not just the look of the book that inspires reading.

Opitz and Melleby have done a remarkable job of relating what first year students need to understand in order to make it in the academe. These two authors stand on the shoulders of great academics such as George Marsden (1998) and Arthur Holmes (1975), who have both written key works regarding faith-based higher education. But in all fairness, Marsden and Holmes relate their ideas to those brilliant minds that live at stratospheric elevations. Opitz and Melleby have brought such thoughts down to sea level and the beaches where most students hang out most of the time.

By opening each chapter with a brief story of personal experience, the authors immediately capture the reader's attention and make one feel understood. At the end of each chapter are a few discussion questions which provide an opportunity for readers to offer their own feedback on how the material relates to them personally. This quickly captures the interest of students who have grown up with the privilege of television that personally appeals to them in shows such as *American Idol* or *So You Think You Can Dance,* and even those who were spoon-fed on *Dora the Explorer* and *Blue's Clues*.

Opitz and Melleby jump right into their faith-based focus by challenging readers that "spotting and despising idols is an important part of faithful Christian living" (p. 19). Their focus is clear from the start: helping readers not only achieve academic success, but apply that success to a life of faithfulness in Jesus Christ. Chapter Two incorporates lessons from the life of Daniel to help show the importance of remaining faithful even while being influenced by ideas and culture that are not necessarily Christian. The authors are even so bold as to proclaim "to the degree that your mind is not renewed by the gospel and your life is not transformed by the power of Christ, you will conform to the dominant culture" (p. 30).

From story-based education and discussions on worldview to church attendance, prayer, and writing papers through the eyes of faith, Opitz and Melleby handle numerous facets of one's educational experience. They have succeeded in writing a book that is interesting, challenging, engaging, and meaningful for students at any point in their educational experience. This book may be most helpful for incoming students, but it is a great resource for all who are interested in remaining faithful to Christ as learners. After all, "success isn't our mission, faithfulness is" (p. 127).

Nathan Geer serves as a Resident Hall Director at Huntington University, located in Huntington, Indiana.

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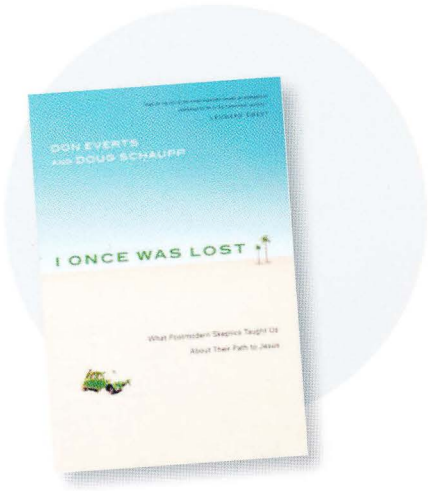

I Once Was Lost:
What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us About Their Path to Jesus

by Don Everts and Doug Schaupp

Reviewed by Andrew D. Rowell

Don Everts and Doug Schaupp's new book, *I Once Was Lost: What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us About Their Path to Jesus*, is based on their experiences doing campus ministry with college students in Colorado and California for the last twenty years. They describe the spiritual journeys of these students and how they have tried to help.

This book is particularly illuminating and encouraging for those who work with college students or want to better understand college students as it describes the pressures, thought processes, and friendship dynamics of this age group. Everts and Schaupp help the reader become sensitive to the typical stages college students move through when they become Christians. *I Once Was Lost* would also be helpful for those who ask the question, "Does anyone today convert to Christianity as a thinking adult?" Indeed they do. Everts and Schaupp try to find patterns in the journeys of the people they have observed moving through this process.

They identify the following as key thresholds that people move through in the faith process: Trusting a Christian, Becoming Curious, Opening Up to Change, Seeking After God, Entering the Kingdom, and Living in the Kingdom.

The book is nice and concise, containing only 134 pages, and reads quickly. Everts and Schaupp are not trying to make an argument that these are the thresholds all Christians need to work through. Rather, it is sociological or anthropological work—similar to the famous Kubler-Ross (1969) stages of loss (i.e. denial, anger, acceptance, etc.) or Christian Smith (2005) finding the phenomenon of "moralistic therapeutic deism" in teens.

Everts and Schaupp essentially share their experiences and then ask if this resonates with others. This is not to denigrate their experiences—they have conducted a significant number of interviews and they are in as good a position as anyone with their experiences in college ministry with InterVarsity to make these kind of observations. Does their model have explanatory power? I think it does.

If they are right that college students (and perhaps teenagers and adults as well —who knows?) who become Christians, move through these thresholds, what are the implications for how college ministry and church ministry should change if they want to see more people become Christians? The essential point is that these students who have moved through these thresholds certainly did not do so because of one event or program. Someone needed to listen to them, give them advice, challenge them, and encourage them. Though Everts and Schaupp sketch a process, they explode the idea that some specially-designed program would be able to mass-produce followers of Jesus. This book is much more about how to do spiritual directing than how to do evangelistic programming.

I Once Was Lost does not contain much formal theological language. In my reading, I do not remember a reference, for example, to the Holy Spirit or to baptism. Their goal is not to reflect theologically on conversion. Similarly, they do not engage developmental psychology or other sociological research and draw parallels between that research and their conclusions. An academic researcher would want to do interviews with a representative sample of people who became Christians in college to test Everts' and Schaupp's tentative conclusions.

While the book has in its subtitle the controversial word "postmodern", I would simply say that this word plays almost no role in the book. It is not a book that views postmodernity positively, nor one that views postmodernity negatively. The book describes students at colleges in California and Colorado in the last twenty years and that is all the authors mean by "postmodern."

In conclusion, I would highly recommend the book as insightful, brief, hopeful, and stimulating. College students will be loved better by people who read this book.

Andrew Rowell is a Doctor of Theology (Th.D.) student at Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina. His areas of concentration are "The Practice of Leading Christian Communities and Institutions" and "New Testament." Andy blogs at Church Leadership Conversations (www.andyrowell.net).

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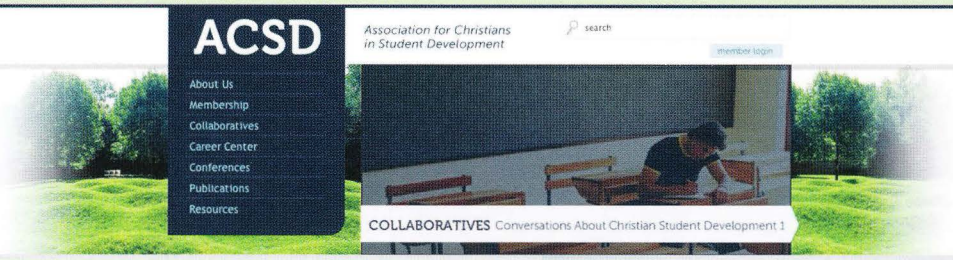

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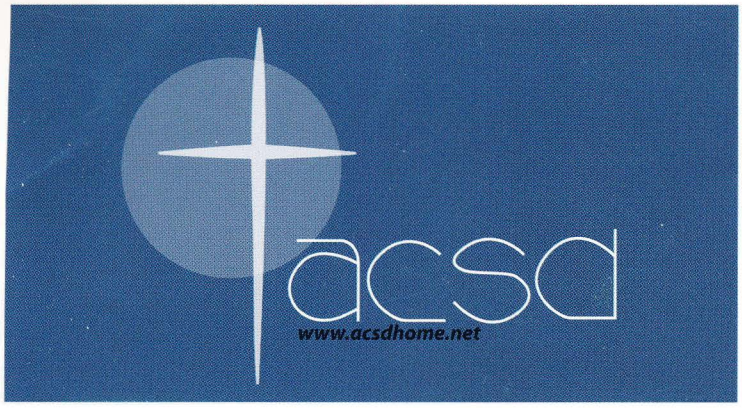

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