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We Believe

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We Believe

by Thomas White



Beliefs matter. As final decisions for colleges and universities are being made by seniors all around the world, beliefs are rarely at the forefront of what higher education has to offer. "See our astronomical job placement rate," says one well-regarded state university. "Look at how many graduates we have enrolled in the Ivy Leagues," entices another liberal arts school. "Our dorm life and campus experience are second to none," offers a school along its campus tour. Of course, these aspects of university life are not bad things. As far as I can tell, many schools rightly strive to maintain what they perceive to be the highest academic standards, paired with excellent campus facilities, to equip students successfully for a competitive job market.

I would contend that while these are significant facets of higher education, they certainly are not the most important. Abundantly more critical than job placement rates, graduate school reputations, or residence hall offerings is what a school believes. To be sure, every university believes something, regardless of whether they advertise it or not. Beliefs govern what type of faculty an institution chooses. Beliefs direct what academic programs are created and developed. Beliefs shape the campus experience. In short, beliefs matter at every level of an institution of higher education, big or small, urban or rural, secular or Christian.

At Cedarville University, we make our beliefs clear from the initial postcard you might receive in the mail, during your tour on our beautiful campus, on the first day of Getting Started Weekend, and throughout a student's entire education. Before anything else, we want our entire constituency, whether you're a student, parent of a student, alumni, faculty or staff member, or just a friend of the institution, to know that we exist "For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ." It's this purpose that defines and directs every aspect of our University.

Ultimately, we are a school that believes in biblical authority, because it is in the Bible that God has made Himself known to His creation. As such, everything we do at Cedarville University is guided by our commitment to biblical fidelity. This reality is seen most clearly in our Doctrinal Statement and our Community Covenant, which our Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff annually affirm to teach and abide by. We do this not only to remain faithful to our mission as a University but also to stay true to who we are. Far too often, universities and colleges play the marketing game where they say they believe one thing, while in practice they teach and guide their students in a completely opposite direction. At Cedarville, we seek to maintain absolute mission clarity in all we do, which is why we have a clear, deliberate Doctrinal Statement.

From our doctrinal commitments come the Cedarville experience, which encapsulates every aspect of student life, from the classroom to the residence hall. In class, you will find professors committed to teaching their disciplines from a biblical worldview, which results in an academically excellent classroom experience. In chapel, you will see students, faculty, and staff gather five days a week to worship around the Word of God with some of the best Bible teachers in the world. And in student life, you will discover our students guided by four biblical core values — Love for God, Love for Others, Integrity in Conduct, and Excellence in Effort.

Inside this magazine, you will see how our beliefs shape different aspects of campus life at Cedarville. For instance, we will show you how our commitment to biblical authority works on the ground, expressing itself in a daily Bible reading plan for students, which unites the campus as we read through God's Word together. You will see how our conviction that God created all things drives our commitment that children, including preborn children, are a blessing from the Lord. Because of this faithfulness to uphold what God has made, we will also demonstrate why we believe marriage is a covenant relationship between a man and woman, which pictures the Gospel of Christ, and why that belief matters for an institution of higher learning. Moreover, you will discover how our commitment to

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the exclusivity of the Gospel — that Jesus Christ is the only name under which any man can be saved — fuels our efforts toward getting that Gospel to the nations.

Beliefs do indeed matter. Regardless of the college or university, each directs a student on a particular trajectory. And as Scripture makes clear, it is either toward or away from God. As the Proverbs extol us, "How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver" (Prov. 16:16). At Cedarville, we stand unapologetically "For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ," because it is only in God's Word that one finds true wisdom. While we certainly have high job placement rates, students in prestigious graduate schools, and an excellent campus life experience, our fundamental goal and purpose is to shepherd students toward wisdom from the Lord God Almighty. That's what we believe.

Thomas White became Cedarville's 10th President in 2013. He earned his Ph.D. in systematic theology. He is the author and editor of numerous publications and is a contributor to *Baptist Foundations: Church Government for an Anti-Institutional Age*, released June 15, 2015.

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