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Dr. J. Murray Murdoch

March 19, 2013

Murray Murdoch: Thank you so much. It's a real privilege to be here. And I want to thank Dr. Maxwell and members of Omega Mu for inviting me. And I want to greet all of you colleagues who are here. I look out and see several colleagues, and thank you for coming, appreciate it. And to students, you're the reason we're all here, so we're delighted to see you. I wanted not to take too long so I brought some notes. If I don't I'm liable to wander all over the place and tell your stories all night.

Murray Murdoch: So I thought I'd begin by just giving you a brief outline of my spiritual journey and what really prepared me to come to Cedarville. I went to a private high school, and today we would call it a Christian school. We didn't have such a name as that in the days when I was growing up, there were a couple Christian academies, there were no Christian Day schools anywhere in the country, and so I attended one of those.

Murray Murdoch: And it was a very formative time in my life because it was a school in the south, and it introduced me to the raw reality of racism. And I'd been saved as a child at the age of five, I can still remember kneeling between mom and dad at their bedside and receiving Christ as my personal savior. But that experience in a Christian setting shook me a good bit. And then I went on, in my seven or eight years, I was working in a factory, and so I was there year round, and the summer before I got married, by the way, if you let me take a moment, I found my wife ... This is my wife Ruth, would you wave to everybody, hon? And if the Lord tarries, and we tarry, we'll celebrate our 55th anniversary in the summer. I tell people she's going to get a congressional medal for putting up with me all that time.

Murray Murdoch: But that, when I got to seminary, we had a lot of time when we weren't working in the factory and weren't taking classes in the summer, and New York University had just opened a branch in Binghamton, New York. And we began to get into significant dialogue with some of the students there, and began to question some other things about our faith. Is it reasonable to be a believer? How much sense does it make? And that sent me on a journey into epistemology and to worldview that, and that too was something that was relatively new in the Christian community in the 1950s. So I began to study, reading church fathers, and reading everything I could get my hands on, formulating my worldview, formulating, is Christianity a reasonable faith?

Murray Murdoch: And it was a real crisis of faith between my concern over racism and my concern over the reasonableness of my faith. I went through a time of real trial, I even said to God with racism, "God, if it's your will, if it's okay with you that people do this to each other, I'm not sure you and I belong together at all." And so it was a guy in seminary, studying for the ministry, who was really having a crisis

of faith. And I thank the Lord for all the books that have been written, and all the journeys we can take, and all the people that we can have built into our lives. Because over that journey I became very committed to two things, breaking down racial barriers, and more importantly, the framework in which that took place was developing a Christian worldview, learning to integrate scripture knowledge.

Murray Murdoch: So when it came time for me to take the journey out of grad school and into the real world, after spending almost the first three decades of my life in academe, just learning from elementary to high school to seminary and to grad school and all of that. And so then the decision was where to come to work. And the year before I was ready to go into the job market. a visiting professor came to Northwestern by the name of Joe France, and he was from the University of Texas. And he told me, "Now when you're done, we'll have a job waiting for you." See I can ... How do they do that? is it like that? I've been doing that all my life, but I really felt committed when I was in seminary, I wanted to go to a Christian school and teach. That was my passion.

Murray Murdoch: I phrase it this way, I want to teach what I want to teach, the way I want to teach it, to the people I want to teach it. And that's what it is to be a professor at Cedarville, to have the opportunity of ministering to young people who know the Lord Jesus Christ as personal savior, who are eager to learn a worldview, who are eager to pick up on the kinds of things that make Cedarville special and unique.

Murray Murdoch: And so we began the journey in 1965 when Northwestern told me, "You can't go to that place. It's unaccredited. No decent students will go there. You'll never have the opportunity to work with a real healthy, excitable mind. You can't go to a place like that." So I came to Cedarville, not convinced that they were right, and taught US History, and taught a couple of advanced level classes, one of which was a seminar in Early American history. I can still tell you who was in the class, Dr. Frank Jenista was in that class, and a man who became his brother-in-law, a man by the name of Richard Pettitt, who was also a doctor who taught at Miami University ... And Frank, where did he retire from there, as assistant provost?

Frank: Yeah, as assistant provost.

Murray Murdoch: Assistant provost. And then there was Dr. Deborah Haffey . Some of you have taken her classes, and her husband who was an attorney. And then there was the real brains in the Rohm family. Mrs. Rohm was in that class. She's an awful good student, awful good student. And then there was one other person, I won't name them, he ended up a used car salesman. He finished Cedarville, loves the Lord, had a great testimony, his kids came to Cedarville, we enjoyed him too. But there were a bunch of minds, great minds to work with, and it was a joy to see God work in their lives and see them go on. And I think one of the most delightful things for a professor is to see his students moving on and doing things for God, and having great careers, and really pursuing their education

beyond the level of what we had here at Cedarville in an undergraduate program.

Murray Murdoch: And as we began to experience some of those things, one of the things that happens in a small school, to give you an idea how small Cedarville was, this wasn't here, the lake wasn't here, none of the buildings around the lake were here. Maddox Hall was here, Williams Hall was the next building, and the soccer field was right behind Williams Hall, and where Tyler is now were a row of older trailers that married students would buy and then sell to the next generation. And that was it for campus. Chapel was in Alford Auditorium. My first office was in the back of what was the bookstore at that time, that's where campus safety was. Guess what, at the end of the year we're moving back to the campus safely, rare books.

Murray Murdoch: But in those early days, there were four of us in a big room, and we had our desks and we had a bookcase that separated us from each other. So it wasn't a great place for concentration, but it was a great place for fellowship, and it was a good time. And since then I've had offices up in the third floor of Founders Hall. And I pause when I say Founders Hall because it's gone through several name changes, and it wasn't as fancy as it is now. In fact, Dr. Monroe and I were up there, and every morning when we went in, we always took a rag with us so he could scrape the flies off our desks. And it was a rather primitive place, but it was a place where we could call our, that we could call our own. And so we enjoyed it, and the two of us were up there for some time, the radio station was up there for awhile also.

Murray Murdoch: But one of the things that happens when you're in a small campus like that, 500 students all together, the faculty would fit on the stage of Alford Auditorium. In fact, they did because Alford was full, the faculty had to sit on the stage and the students took attendance. Where is he today? And kept track of us all pretty effectively. We had one though that always wore his sunglasses, and there's no sun in Alford like there is right here, right now. But there was no sun in Alford but he had his glasses on and the students, he'd fall asleep. And when the head went down you'd hear the students, "There it is." They sat and watched him waiting for the head to go down, so they'd know he wouldn't notice who's gone for the rest of the hour.

Murray Murdoch: But in that kind of a situation, I hadn't been on campus very long when the athletic director said, "Hey, you want to coach something?" "Where do you want me to coach?" He said, "Baseball, golf or tennis. I'm doing all three, take your pick." Well I said, "Maybe I'll try tennis." So I started coaching tennis, a few months later some guys came and said, "Would you help us restart Alpha Chi?" Which was a men's organization. I only mention these two because they become involved. Extracurricular activities have a way of giving unique teaching and learning opportunities with a group of people you're working with. Not always related to the sport.

Murray Murdoch: So I started coaching tennis, and I started working with Alpha Chi. And I said to the guys in Alpha Chi, "Well if you want to have an organization, then I'm not sure you want me for an advisor." And they said, "Well why not?" And I said, "Well, because I don't believe in initiations. So if you're going to have an organization instead of an initiation, you have to have some positive project that each person did to earn their way into the organization." And so that became our motto.

Murray Murdoch: Now those days with the campus small, we all, every organization ... There were four, two men's two women's, and they all put on a banquet. So we had four banquets a year put on by the organizations. And you keep trying to find different things, different ways to have a banquet. I can remember several of them, but one of the things that I thought about was, "Boy, this is going to get burdensome, to be that creative all the time." So I looked for ideas that we could repeat, and one of the ideas that we could repeat was a mock election. And so we started something called Cedar What?. I don't know whether any of you have heard of Cedar What?, But it was a curious and enigmatic creation that found faculty members and students, and all kinds of people, doing very strange things and doing them willingly. So I'll come back to that in a little bit. But those Cedar What? elections were very timely.

Murray Murdoch: So when we got into these things, here I am looking at these extracurricular activities, looking at my teaching opportunities with a couple of axes to grind, worldview, racism. And it seemed to me that those were burning issues because 11 o'clock Sunday morning was, and probably still today is, the most segregated out of the week, and that's to our shame. That's not something we should be proud of. And at that point in time, Cedarville was locked in to some racist attitudes. Now that doesn't make Cedarville any worse than any other Christian school, that was kind of typical of the day, to our shame and to the Bible believing community's shame.

Murray Murdoch: And you see what happened was, and it sounds like there's great danger, that we all need to guard against. What happens is you begin to allow culture to influence your faith. American culture was racist, didn't have a good track record with Indians, didn't have a good track record with blacks, didn't have a good track record with Japanese when we put them in relocation camps during the war. It was something that didn't resonate, and our churches were segregated. They were segregated largely because of the fear that if my little Johnny or my little Joanie goes to church with a black boy or a black girl, they might get socially intertwined, they might want to date.

Murray Murdoch: And even though the Bible doesn't say anything to the contrary, many people said the Bible doesn't allow you to intermarry. Why? Because our culture didn't like it. And then even when we began to say, "Well maybe the Bible doesn't say anything, but culture dictates." No, culture doesn't dictate, the Bible dictates. And young people, if there's one thing I want to leave you with tonight, you people of the Word take, your views, form your views on the issues of your generation. Long after I'm gone and many of us are gone, you people will be

setting the path for Christianity. And remember we are to influence culture, we're not to be influenced by it. We are to mold culture, we're not to be molded by it. And we need to be willing to take a stand against the things that God clearly takes a stand against.

Murray Murdoch: So what about it, what if a black person wants to date a white person? At Cedarville we had a rule that said if black wants to date a white all four people have to have the permission, all four parents have to give their permission. And I remember the day I asked, "How come? Why? Why is that a rule here? Why is it that any kid on this campus can walk off campus and date a unregenerate member of their own race, and can't date a believer who's a member of another race?" And I got hate mail from faculty members in faculty stationary, so now I want to proceed. Now I have a mission and a message, and I wasn't the only one. I found more and more people who agreed with me, and we talked more and more openly about it. And we sought to bring a biblical view of race to our campus. And it's been a joy to see that change through the years.

Murray Murdoch: Change. Why? Because people realized that it's not biblical. Now the way we crusaded for that was sometimes very different. That's where we can begin to bring in some of the other spirit, for example, Alpha Chi, and we wanted to have a Cedar What? election. And so we began, and one of our members went to the Democratic National Convention, brought all the bunting back from the convention to decorate ... Well, it's not there anymore, but what used to be the gymnasium over on this end of campus. And we decorated it, and we ran a political campaign, and we had one guy who was Polish, and we had another guy who was an Italian, and they campaigned to be president of Cedar What?. We set up a stage outside the post office, which was at that time located where the radio station used to be, right off of a corner of the campus, the north corner of campus across from Founders. And people would come in and get their mail, then come out and listen to campaign speeches.

Murray Murdoch: The week before the election I called Channel Two and Channel Seven and invited them over I said, "There's going to be a little satire on the Cedarville campus. We'd really like you to come and see what's going on, maybe participate in it, and maybe take a few clips." So they came, there was a channel 26 in Springfield at that time, they came. And so our Italian guy made his speech and our Polish guy made his speech, and about in the middle of his speech this guy comes up and he pushes him aside. He's got security guards, they move these other guys out, he comes up and he grabs the microphone. If you remember, 1968 was when George Wallace was running on a third party ticket, and he was racist. And he was proclaiming his racism, seeking to be president of the United States. And he got a pretty good vote, too. Biggest vote in a third party in our history.

Murray Murdoch: And so this guy comes up, grabs the microphone and he begins to shout all of George Wallace's lines, "You've got a Pollock, you got an Italian, there's not a dime's worth of difference. I'm your real American candidate. Are you going to let your campus be dominated by minority groups?" And the kid was black. And

so we got some time on Channel Seven news that night, maybe not as honorable as we get on it now, maybe more honorable at times. But it was a piece of satire that was really, really effective. And we talked about these things on tennis trips. And in 1967 after we'd had a year's coaching, and decided that we were really going to develop the program, we really needed to take it up a step and maybe be able to play some other teams.

Murray Murdoch: And I called a friend in Fisk University nationally, and I asked if we could come, and he said, "Sure, come along." And he said, "Tell you what, I have a house here, your team could stay in the house. I will treat you the supper, I want you to eat supper with our kids." And if you know, Fisk is a black school, and there are a couple of others in Nashville. And so he lined up the other black schools, at that time it was Tennessee A&I, now its Tennessee State, and then we also played a white school. So the first night the match ran long, and we weren't able to get there in time for their supper in their cafeteria. and the AD came over and he said, "Well I going to take you guys out to eat." And so he took us to a place called Ye Little Old Eat Shop, a black restaurant.

Murray Murdoch: And here you got this mix of black and white kids, and they talk about all kinds of things college kids talk about. They're talking about grad school, they're talking about getting into grad school, they're talking about whether the black kids get a break to get in, whether the white kids could get in, and the black kids say, "Yeah, we might get a break that you might not get." So we're talking. All of a sudden there was a crash, and one of the kids leaned over the table where the coach and the athletic director I were sitting and he said, "Coach, Stokely." And a moment later, Stokely Carmichael came striding by our table in obvious anger over the mixture of black and white that he saw there.

Murray Murdoch: So he was becoming more and more militant by this time, he was becoming less and less satisfied with King's pattern of peaceful resistance. He's going to organize the Black Panthers saying, "We're not violent with the people that are not violent with us, but we're violent with people that are violent with us." That night some of the guys said, "Could we go here? Stokely is speaking on campus." I said, "Okay, but be prepared to be a minority." And they went, sat in the back, listened for awhile, got scared and came back to the house.

Murray Murdoch: The next day we played the white school, the next day we went to Tennessee State. And as we're at Tennessee State, we finished the match, we're getting ready to leave, the coach had showed me around the buildings while the guys were showering. And as we were getting ready to pack our station wagon, load all the stuff on the top of it, some of their basketball players who'd been joking with us and talking with us came down and said, "You honkies are too short to get up there, let us fix that for you." So they came and helped us strap things down and get on our way. And we left the Tennessee State campus with about 30 black athletes waving to us, "See you guys next year, look forward to seeing you next year." We got in the car.

Murray Murdoch: On the night before we found a steak house the guys really liked, so we went back to the steak house. And as I turned, it's about 10 minutes, drove past Fisk, right back down, and we turned the signal on to turn into the restaurant. The radio was interrupted, "We interrupt this program to tell you that riots have broken out on the Tennessee State and Fisk University campuses, the area is being cordoned off and National Guard has been called. If you're white, get out and stay out." The guys were like, "How can this be? We just had sweet fellowship with these people. We just had a wonderful time, what happened?" They were beginning to get introduced to the mass hysteria that can be created by a volatile speaker. Undauntedly, we determined to go back the next year. A lot of talk, a lot of education taking place on these road trips when you have these kinds of things to talk about.

Murray Murdoch: And so we're heading back and we got down, roughly in the area of Bowling Green, Kentucky. And as we got to Bowling Green, Kentucky, the college vehicle broke down. You guys have fancy vehicles, we had beat up old station wagons and a breakdown was pretty much par for the course. If you made it both ways without at least one breakdown, you really had done well. So we're getting the car fixed, and as we're getting the car fixed, the news bulletin came that Martin Luther King had been assassinated in Memphis. Again, we gathered in our room at the hotel, we talked, expressed our concern. Dr. Jeremiah was on the phone saying, "Don't go, come back." We assured him that we would.

Murray Murdoch: In that conversation I talked to my friend at Fisk and he said to me, "Murray maybe somewhere in Nashville you could put 12 white kids on a tennis court it'd be all right, but I doubt if you could put 12 colored kids on a tennis court, black kids get killed." He said, "I'll tell you something, if we put six black kids and six white kids on a tennis court they'll all be dead, there's no question in my mind. Go home" So we did. The guys spent the evening there, had the conversations again. In the morning I was very troubled by the whole thing obviously, and so I was up early, went down, got a cup of coffee in the coffee shop, came back with my coffee.

Murray Murdoch: As when I returned there was a small area there, a seating area, maybe 15, 20 people could fit into that lounge. At the front there were three guys. I moved way to the back because the guy in the middle of the front had a big stogie, and I hate cigar smoke. So I got as far away as I could, but as we sat there watching the television, they started to carry King's body out. Don't let me shock you because I'm going to say exactly what I heard. The guy in the middle said, "Now there's a good nigger. You kill a few dozen more of the blankety, blank, blank so-and-sos they'll learn their place.

Murray Murdoch: Now, to be honest, that wasn't terribly shocking because that's the kind of thing you heard in the American south in the fifties and sixties. But the response of his two friends set my teeth on edge. Almost in unison they said, "That's right, Judge. You tell them, Judge." He got up, I went over to the counter where the worker was and said, "Hey, who's the guy with stogie?" He said, "Oh, that's Judge Shelton(?), he's the United States District Court Judge in Bowling Green." I

said, "How'd you like to be black and look for justice in that guys?" He put his hand up like this and started shaking his head before I even finished the sentence. He said, "No way, not going to happen. Everybody around here knows that." So the next time when you hear about judges' rulings in some of these civil rights things in the deep south, understand the mentality of many of those judges. Certainly the state judges, but even some of the federal judges.

Murray Murdoch: I've gotta move along here, but that shows you how some of these things that were important to me began to interweave. I remember Dr. Stan Ballard, and Dr. James Greer and I, did our first lectures on integration and worldview. And I remember the first question that was asked was, "Hey, you guys expect us all to be theologians?" To which I responded, "Yeah. How can you be a professor in a Christian school and try to teach God's thoughts after him, if you can integrate what the scripture says? And how can you get integrate it into your discipline if you don't know what it is?" You gotta know who God is. You've got to know sin. Theology proper, God. Hamartiology, sin. Don't you have to know those things?

Murray Murdoch: Anthropology, the doctrine of man. Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. Which of those do you leave out as a Christian? And not develop your worldview, and on and on we go. It was a new discipline. Now, by the grace of God, every faculty member here writes an integration paper as a part of their tenure process, so that they can teach others integration. Excuse me, I brought a bottle of water just for this occasion. Pardon me.

Murray Murdoch: Maybe I should talk a little bit about accreditation. I going to have to stop soon, to give you time for questions. Accreditation, I told you when I came here, we were unaccredited and we tried to get accreditation, we applied for it. They wouldn't give it to us. They gave us a list of reasons, all of which made infinite sense. We really weren't ready, we didn't didn't have many PhDs on our faculty, we didn't have resources, and we didn't have money and so on and so forth. Some of those were difficult to overcome. Money, a large endowment, that's not something Cedarville had, or ever did have.

Murray Murdoch: But a few years later we tried again and everything went well. Dr. Clifford Johnson, and Dr. Jeremiah, went to Chicago I believe it was, to face the accrediting body to do that last interview. Now by this time we were already being roundly criticized by another Christian college, because we were compromising by trying to get regional accreditation, or compromising and working with the world. So everybody is on pins and needles and they said, "If you really think a stand for God, you can't get accreditation, it's impossible." So now Dr. Johnson and Dr. Jeremiah are sitting with these scholars that are determining our fate.

Murray Murdoch: The story is that everything went pretty well until finally one of the guys said, "Dr. Jeremiah, now what are you going to do if some professor in your school says to you, You know, I've grown intellectually and I can no longer feel comfortable signing your doctoral statement. What do you do?" Dr. Jeremiah said, "We'd fire them." and everything got very quiet. and then the fellow said,

"Yeah, and that's exactly what you ought to do given your mission statement and all the information you've provided us." So you see taking a stand, having that mission statement, knowing who you are and what you're all about, enabled us to get regional accreditation. And taking a firm stand didn't alter that one little bit.

Murray Murdoch: I need to tell you one more story, it's about Dr. Jeremiah. Dr. Jeremiah was a pastor president, I describe him as a, in my first book I wrote at the college, that has been so wonderfully updated by Dr. Mach. We had a controversy here over creation. Now, when I was in seminary, there were, I was taught three views that were acceptable views in Orthodox, bible-believing Christianity. A literal 24 hour day, the gap theory which said there was a big gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, and the day-age theory, and that was the battle. Oh, it was a battle. I think it was nearly every faculty member, and by now we're a little later, we're in the 70s, by now nearly every faculty member wrote a letter to the trustees. About half of them were in favor of saying only the 24 hour day, the other half were opposed.

Murray Murdoch: I've been down all three views. I was a literal 24 hour day person, but to me the key issue was, was creation the direct and instantaneous act of God? So I was on the other side, I was on the side that didn't support going to a literal 24 hour day position, even though I held that view. Maybe if these people who believed the creation was direct and instantaneous actually of God I think we're okay. And it didn't happen that way, and I wasn't happy.

Murray Murdoch: One thing about us academicians, Woodrow Wilson was a lousy president because he's an academician, he didn't have any flexibility, he was an idealist. That's what's wrong with all of us, it's really tough for us to compromise. I had a wrestling match with the Lord. I mean, I remember I laid on my floor wept. I got on my knees and prayed. And when the whole thing was over, I said to my wife "Ruth, we're going to look for a new place." And one of our sister schools at that time invited me to come. And I said, "Well I'd like to come quietly because I haven't told anybody in Cedarville that I'm looking. So I'd like to come quietly." So thinking I was going to go quietly, I got introduced at chapel. And then the last interview was kind of an exit interview with the president. And he said to me, "You know, Cedarville is a good place. And Jim Jeremiah is a friend of mine, but I got to tell you, what a meat head thing to do." And he went on and spent the next 10 minutes just really gearing down Dr. J.

Murray Murdoch: Now Dr. Jeremiah was a gruff guy, he was a Godly man. With all that had happened, I came back, I said to Ruth, "I'm going to have to go in there and let him know where we were, because he's going to find out in no time, and I'd rather he hear it from me." So I went in, sat down with Dr. Jeremiah and I said, "Dr. Jeremiah, you know my frustration. You know that I'm not sure I'm convinced that we did the right thing here. And I want you to know I've interviewed at such and such a school." And he looked at me, he said, "Murray, I don't want you to go. I don't want you to go, but if you decide to go, I'm glad you're going there. That fellow, he's a friend of mine. By the grace of God, God's

gonna use him to do great things in that school. We'll pray for you. Please know I don't want you to go." Do you have any guesses why I'm still here?

Murray Murdoch: That was one easy decision. Who would you rather work for? And that's why I've lasted this long here. I've never questioned leaving again. And I learned a couple of lessons here, I learned a lesson in Godliness from a very Godly man, but I also learned that I really didn't have to have my own way every time. That God did not only speak to me, but to a lot of other people on the trustees board and the administration of the school. And I learned a very valuable lesson there, that's given me great peace as I continue to serve the Lord in this place for all these years. But in the final analysis, you know what means the most to me about Cedarville? It's the people.

Murray Murdoch: It's you students, and it's looking at you students years later as you come back here many times, some of the guys in our own department, Dr. Mach and Dr. Sims, and Dr. Jenista, Dr. Rich. The people that I had the privilege of having in class, Dr. Elliot. So many, Dr. Phipps, Dr. Anderson, Connie, and the list goes on. I'm just glancing around the room and looking at a few. What a privilege. They say the greatest blessing a teacher can ever have is to see his or her students outdo them. And I thank God that I have a lot of students have done a lot of great things for God, and that just gives you the feeling of an extended testimony. People that you love, people that you respect, people that you value. And really, that's why we're all here.

Murray Murdoch: Many years ago a newspaper reporter asked me what I thought of the tennis trophies we'd won as the tennis team? I said, "Trophies don't mean much, the real trophies are my players. they're the people that mean the most to me." Certainly I've got tennis trophies in boxes under my desk, but the real trophies are in this room. Each of you is a trophy to God. And I'm thankful that God gives me the privilege of playing just a tiny part in your lives. As we play that part, I pray that God will use our contributions, and the contributions of dozens of other faculty members, to mold you and make you after God's will. So that long after we're gone, you'll be carrying on the cause of Christ. Thank you very much.