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Charles D. Dolph

Charles D. Dolph
Cedarville University, dolphc@cedarville.edu

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Dr. Charles Dolph

March 24, 2014

- Jewerll Maxwell: Welcome to the Dr. J. Murray Murdoch Legacy Lecture Series. This was something that Pi Sigma Alpha, the Omega Mu chapter here at Cedarville started last spring. The idea was to reach out to really the campus community. Pi Sigma Alpha is the national political science honorary organization, and really what the idea was, so since it was a smaller organization, and there are significant obstacles to getting into the organization, it's a very highly-selective group, and so we typically have about seven to 10 individuals on campus that are part of that organization. So they just brainstormed last year and really wanted to come up with something that looked at something distinct about Cedarville that would open it up to the campus community.
- Jewerll Maxwell: And so, what they decided to do was start a lecture series named after Dr. Murdoch because of his service here to Cedarville and the connection with the department, since history and political science are in the same department. So, last spring, we had Dr. Murdoch give the first installment of this lecture series, and then last fall, we invited Dr. Lyle Anderson to give his lecture. And that was one of the difficulty that we had right now is the library has supported this, and we are putting the lectures up on line. Unfortunately, the two microphones did not want to work together tonight, so that was our difficulty. But the library will have this up online.
- Jewerll Maxwell: So, I just want to welcome you all. Thank you, again, for coming tonight, and I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Murdoch as he opens us up in prayer.
- Murray Murdoch: Shall we go to the Lord in prayer? Heavenly Father, thank You for this wonderful opportunity to share together. Thank You for Dr. Dolph and his life and his ministry here at Cedarville. We look forward tonight to hearing that ministry and rejoicing together in what You have accomplished through his life. We commit our hour to You in Jesus' name. Amen.
- Murray Murdoch: I've been asked to introduce Dr. Dolph to you, but if I may, I'd like to begin by introducing his wife, Teresa. Would you stand for us and let everybody see who you are? Thank you. It was in 1970 that this young man hit campus as a student and as a part of our student body. We got acquainted with him at that time through the various activities and things that were going on. 35 years ago he became a faculty member. Through the 35 years of sharing together, fellowshiping together, I've come to appreciate Dr. Chuck Dolph in a very deep manner, not only for his wisdom, for his academic leadership, for his commitment to the cause of Christ, for his commitment to Cedarville, just a litany of things, and now he's my Sunday school teacher, too. He teaches the old folks. We really enjoy his teaching. It's a real blessing and stimulating.

Murray Murdoch: God has blessed him with wonderful talent and marvelous ministry here at Cedarville, and I want you to join me in welcoming Dr. Charles Dolph.

Charles Dolph: Yes, Dr. Murdoch, I actually came to Cedarville in 1970 as a freshman here. That's the year that I learned to play tennis. I learned to play my freshman year here. Dr. Murdoch was so kind that he let me join the tennis team my sophomore year, and he let me hang around the fringes of the tennis team, and so I played through my college career here, having learned in my freshman year. Then I went away and I came back, and when I came back, Cliff Johnson and Jim Greer invited me to play in their tennis league at Kettering and so I've been connected tennis-wise with these old guys for a long time.

Charles Dolph: But down to business. You are my community. As I said, I came here in 1970, so I've been here 44 years. I keep saying that number over and over again, because I can scarcely believe it myself. But, I am a product of the Cedarville University community. So, thank you for coming to hear me tonight. I'm supposed to talk about my faith journey, and that's what I'm going to do. Actually, if I can figure out how to advance the PowerPoint.

Charles Dolph: So, as I was thinking about my 44 years here and my faith journey, it dawned on me that all I need is love. That's all that I need. Oh wait, and accountability. So that's my title. All I need is love and accountability. My spiritual journey has consisted of four quests, four quests. John Stott helped me to understand this. I've actually read a lot of developmental psychologists, but John Stott put it in perspective for me more clearly than any of them. I'd like to share with you my four quests tonight.

Charles Dolph: The first quest, for me, in searching for what's the most important Christian virtue, what should I be doing as a Christian? What should I be pursuing? Well, my first quest was truth. It was actually the quest for truth that brought me to Cedarville as a student. I was kind of a messed up high schooler, and I was going down the wrong path, and I was going to go to a state school. I just felt like I need to get my head together. Remember this is the '60s and the '70s. And I knew that I was not right, and I needed to figure things out. There was simply one person in my town that went to Cedarville. I went in and talked to her, and she said, "Oh, this is a Christian college." She liked it. So, I thought I'm going to come to Cedarville. Came on the testimony of one person, and I've been here 44 years since.

Charles Dolph: But, I wanted to get my head together. I wanted to know the truth. I always believed that I should have correct beliefs. I always wanted to be orthodox. I did want to be loyal to the Scripture. I believed that knowledge is power, truth is sacred, and doctrine is vital. So, I applied myself to finding The Truth. I wanted to have correct beliefs. And here's some of the things. I listed the things that I did in this quest. My quest for truth brought me to Cedarville. I studied Greek to understand the Bible better. I took three years of Greek here as Dr. Gromacki's grading assistant, so I graded all his Greek papers. I cried nearly every single day in George Lawlor's Bible classes. George Lawlor taught here, and he was a very

passionate, emotional, sick, physically ill, old man, but he preached the Word of God with such conviction that the whole class would be crying in there, me, too. One semester we only got through 12 verses of Hebrews, but it was still a great class, and I was moved by that.

Charles Dolph: I had an aha moment in Jack Riggs class. I took eschatology from Jack Riggs, and one day I was sitting there just in the middle of that class. It hit me. For the first time, I understood how the whole Bible fit together and what the intent and the purpose of the Bible was. It just came to me in the middle of class, and it changed my life. My life's been different ever since that one moment in Jack Riggs' class.

Charles Dolph: I went to a Christian graduate program so I could continue theological studies. I studied psychology so I could distinguish between natural and spiritual realities. I studied comparative religions. My main doctoral advisor was a Buddhist and I worked for him for four years. I studied and tracked Christian denominations even to this day trying to discern which one's true. I pray to know God as He really is. I mean, I want to know the real and true God as He is. But, in this quest for truth, do you know what I've realized? I've realized that in trying to have truth and correct beliefs, that if I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge but do not have love, I am nothing.

Charles Dolph: My second quest was for faith. First I wanted to know truth, then I pursued faith. Faith is really, really important. The reformation reasserted the importance of faith. We're justified by faith. Solus fides, faith alone. We read in the scripture that without faith it's impossible to please God. It's really, really an important thing. Faith is critical. It's crucial. And so, I saw it, faith. I scoured empirical studies and the power of prayer in faith. I've studied faith healing. I personally have been in faith healing meetings with Benny Hinn, Ernest Angley, Leroy Jenkins, and others. I've studied Oral Roberts and Kathryn Kuhlman. I've explored faith as a cure for cancer with the Simontons. I got training in using faith to help people overcome catastrophic illnesses. I've sat with dying people, who to their very last breath, believed that they would be healed. I've gone to exorcisms. I've studied faith promises, faith pledges, and seed faith. And I have fervently prayed for more faith for myself. But, do you know what I read in the Scripture? If I have faith that can move mountains but do not have love, I'm nothing.

Charles Dolph: Well, my third quest was religious experience. Those who know me know that I want to feel things. I only trust my mind so far. I want to feel something in my heart and my gut. So, when I'm trying to study things, I want to feel it as well as know it. And so, I studied religious experience and sought religious experiences. In my quest for religious experience, I knew from the scripture that it's important to have a personal relationship with God. Have you ever said that to someone? "You need to have a personal relationship." We mean something inside your own self, or inside your own heart. I read that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we're children of God. You know, I want to feel something in my spirit that tells me that God's Spirit is communicating with me.

We're promised that we'll be able to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. What is joy unspeakable and full of glory? I've sought that experience, and I've sought it diligently.

Charles Dolph: Some of the ways that I've sought it are these. I've gone to revivals, Jesus festivals. I've gone to meetings that touted signs, wonders, and miracles nightly. I've watched people speak in tongues, interpret, helicopter, dance, laugh, and prophesy. I've had people try to teach me to speak in tongues. I've been in meetings so intense that I fainted. I was wandering through Okefenokee Swamp one night and came upon a revival meeting on the St. Marys River that was straight out of O Brother, Where Art Thou? If you've ever seen that movie, the revival scene, I stumbled on one of those at the St. Marys River. To this day, it seems like a dream to me that I was there.

Charles Dolph: I would drive anywhere to hear Ian North speak because when Ian North spoke my heart broke. The conviction of God fell on me, and I would listen to that guy wherever he was. And a worship led by a clown ... I was in a worship service where the clown was the worship leader. I mean, a clown, in costume. It was at the Amway Hotel in Grand Rapids, and I can still taste the carpet because in that service, led by a clown, I was so overwhelmed by the beauty and the love of Christ that I was face down on the carpet crying. I don't know for how long, but I can still remember the feeling of the carpet on my face and on my lips. I felt the very presence of God in Taizé worship. And I've earnestly sought the witness of the Holy Spirit in my spirit. But, do you know what the Bible says about religious experience? It says, "If I speak with tongues of men and of angels and have the gift of prophecy, I'm like sounding brass or tinkling cymbals. I'm nothing."

Charles Dolph: Well, you might be able to guess my last quest. I'm old but I try to keep up with the times, and I've gotten into social justice and service, too. Sometimes I tease about them, but I believe that they're really, really important, because the Bible says that without works, faith is dead. We know that Jesus came not to be served but to serve. And Jesus was certainly a champion of the poor. In trying to make sure that I'm right or I'm good in the area of service and social justice, I can say that my wife and I support medical missions for the indigent both here, like in Springfield, and abroad. We support the Kossoye Project, an agricultural mission to improve the nutrition of Ethiopians. We support a Compassion International child. We lived in South Springfield for 10 years. Our kids went to the Springfield City Schools there. I worked for the civil rights of the mentally ill through deinstitutionalization and the extension of Medicare benefits for psychological services.

Charles Dolph: I worked in the vocational rehabilitation of prisoners. Teresa and I visit the sick and the elderly. I'm on the board at church. I'm an advocate for conservation and sustainability. I'm on the board of the Tecumseh Land Trust. I try to save the people and the environment around me. But, do you know what the Scripture says about that? The Scripture says that if I give all that I have to the poor and surrender my body to the flames but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Charles Dolph: As I read the Scripture, Paul's priority in 1 Corinthians 13 is very clear. Love's the greatest thing in the world. It's the cardinal virtue of a Christian. Love is the greatest thing. There's nothing greater. There's no higher virtue than love. And my four other quests, if they get separated from love, if they're not pursued in love, count for nothing.

Charles Dolph: It's not a coincidence that the first and greatest commandments are to love the Lord our God with all of our being, and then to love our neighbor as ourself. God is love. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, united eternally in holy self-giving, reciprocal love. Moreover, God has set His love upon us and has come in the person of His Son and given Himself in love, even to death on the cross. God poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He's given us, and he demonstrates His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, He died for us. I've learned in my faith journey at Cedarville that all four of my quests are important and valuable, but if they get separated from love, they count for nothing. They must be pursued in love. Galatians 5:6 says that, "In Christ, neither circumcision or uncircumcision count for anything, only faith working through love."

Charles Dolph: My final spiritual quest, as I get near the end of my life, will be love. I have been the recipient of so much love, far more than I ever deserved. It's only fitting that I try to love the way that I've been loved. I really like the quip by Ashleigh Brilliant. Are any of you Ashleigh Brilliant fans? Do any of you read his stuff? Okay. You should. Here's one of his sayings, "I don't need a lot of love. I just need a steady supply." So, remember that if you interact with me.

Charles Dolph: All right. John Stott helped me to understand my spiritual quests. David Myers, the outstanding psychologist, helped me to understand myself. Myers helped me to understand the way that I think and relate to others. He has wisely pointed out that I'm prone to certain cognitive biases, or you could call them thinking errors. Here's a partial list of the thinking errors. If you're interested in them, take my social psych class. You'll study them in depth there. But these are thinking errors that I make consistently. They're self-serving, cognitive biases. Here are just a few. I accept more responsibility for success than I do for failure. I believe I'm better than average. My students laugh at that because for 30 years, I've surveyed my students and all my students believe that they're above average. When I survey my students each year, less than 5% think that they're average or less than average. Everyone thinks that they're above average.

Charles Dolph: I'm gullible. I'll believe practically anything. What happened to the Malaysian flight, I've believed at least 10 different theories about that so far. I distort my past experience to support my ego. Students know that my past is not the same as my history. Actually, my wife is here. I told my wife to feel free to speak up and correct me on anything because when I tell what happened, it's never accurate. And I'm sure that that's due to my cognitive bias. I judge others more harshly than I judge myself. I'm unrealistically optimistic about my own future. I'm never going to get sick. I'm never going to die. I'm going to be healthy and vital up to the very end, and then the very end will be the rapture, I'm sure.

Charles Dolph: I believe I'll behave virtuously no matter what the social pressure. I'm a good guy, and I'm a Christian, and I'll always act like that no matter what. Right? Nod yes. Yeah, sure I will. I'm self-serving, always give myself the benefit of the doubt, and I can justify just about anything that I do. I have good reasons for everything, and even if it seems like a bad thing to you, I really had a good motive and a good reason for doing it.

Charles Dolph: Well, I think you can see that social psychology teaches us that these biases contribute to pride and self-deception. Now, the good thing is this. I've had a chance to study these things for 30 years, so I'm confident that my self-deceptions are not as bad as your self-deceptions because you've not had a chance to study these, so I can see and understand things that you can't. Or then maybe I'm just ... I think maybe I'm deceived about my own self-deceptions. Do you think that's possible? I think I am. Well, this is straight from social psychology, but do you see anything that reminds you there of Scripture? How about this? Do you know that we're told in the Bible that the heart is deceitful above all things? The heart wins first prize when it comes to self-deception and pride.

Charles Dolph: So, the question is this. How can I escape my own pride and self-deception? How can I escape? These are the ways that I think, and I also know these are the ways that you think. But, how do we ever get away from those things? I very much like what Crabb and Houston wrote. Crabb and Houston said, "The central function of community is to lift self-deception." I need loving people to come alongside me and hold me accountable. I depend on you, and I mean that, I depend on you, literally, every person in this room. I depend on you, my community, to help me see myself as I am, and to know my place. I need your feedback. I need your love, but I also need your confrontation. I need your love, but I need your confrontation, as well, because I hate ... I hate the exposure of my sin. I will deny, justify, blame, or do whatever I have to do to escape responsibility for it.

Charles Dolph: But the Bible's clear. Sin is the worst thing in the world, not exposure, not getting caught, not even the loss of all things. Sin is the worst thing in the world. Read Diane Langberg. She writes about this extensively. It's beautiful and it's poignant, and it's true. But, I need help. I need a community. I need you because of these self-deceptions and because I hate exposure so much.

Charles Dolph: Let me just flash some verses up here. You know these verse. I won't belabor them. But just a few supports. Galatians 6, "Brothers, if anyone's caught in a transgression, you, who are spiritual, should restore him in a spirit of gentleness." James 5, "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power." "My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death, cover a multiple of sins." "Iron sharpens iron as one man sharpens another." "If two of you agree on Earth

about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in Heaven. Where two or three are gathered together, there I am among them."

Charles Dolph: I like Malachi 3. "Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them." "David saw that Saul had come to seek his life. David was in the wilderness. Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh and strengthened his hand in God." I think all of us who work in an organization or institution can say, "Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity." And, "Let's stir one another up to love and good works." There are many, many, many passages. These are just a few. But they underscore the necessity of people coming together and gently confronting one another and holding one another accountable.

Charles Dolph: I passed out a sheet. Did you get your sheet? Look at that for a moment. We need accountability. I need accountability. I need accountability partners. I'm stunned when I ran across this a few years. This is from John Wesley. The book's actually in the library. You can look it up online, as well. But, John Wesley went around the country in England and America establishing prayer bands. These were going to be the forerunners of the Methodist Church. But he would go around the countrysides and find people who felt the conviction of God and wanted to be faithful to God, and he pulled them together in little bands, just we'd call them today prayer meetings or prayer groups. He called them bands. But, he got the people together in prayer bands, and then he set down some guidelines for them to follow. This is why the Methodists are called Methodists, because John Wesley was a very detailed methodical sort of person, and so he always laid out methods for Christians to follow as they worshiped God.

Charles Dolph: Look down this quickly. He first gives ... Well, "The design of our meeting is to obey the command of God to confess your faults to one another, pray for one another that you may be healed." And then he says that you should come together weekly. You should come punctually. Begin on time, that you speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults that we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting, to end every meeting with prayer. But look on down there in the middle it says, "Some of the questions proposed to everyone before he's admitted among us may be to this effect." So to be in this prayer band, you had to ask and answer these questions. "Do you have the forgiveness of your sins? Do you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ? Have you the witness of God's Spirit with your spirit that you're a child of God? Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you? Do you desire to be told of your faults? Do you desire to be told of all our faults and that plain and home?" It goes on.

Charles Dolph: And this is amazing to me. In 1738, this was normative. Do you know anywhere today, anywhere in any church, in any religious gathering where this is normative? No. I don't either. I actually use this a lot in counseling, in therapy. If you drop down to the last four questions, I've found over the years that as I deal with people that are deep in some sin, you could say they're addicted to some

sin, it might be pornography or some other sexual addiction. It could be a substance addiction. It could be anger. It could be eating. But when people are deeply addicted, they usually need accountability to get out of that addiction. I work with them to help them find accountability partners who, with them, will follow these guidelines, and the last four questions, especially.

Charles Dolph: Every time they get together, these people must ask one another, "What known sins have you committed since our last meeting? What temptations have you met with? How were you delivered? And what have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?" And then, if they're married, I add one more question, which is, "How are you caring for your spouse and your children?" And every single time they get together, they are to ask and answer those questions honestly. Because of my long tenure here, I've had some persons I've worked with 15 and 20 years ago. And I can say that the majority of people who have overcome some addictive sin have been able to do that because they got into an accountability group and they asked these questions to one another time after time after time after time.

Charles Dolph: The real problem, the real difficulty is finding someone to do this with. And actually, the more people you do this with, the better. In fact, I'm so encouraged, because one of my students is here, who's in an internship, asked one of her supervisors what she should do to stay strong in trauma ministry. One of our graduates, who is her supervisor now, told her, "Get into accountability," and gave you very, very good guidelines for that. Notice, they're very similar to these.

Charles Dolph: Only the old people here will remember Promise Keepers. Do you remember Promise Keepers? Promise Keepers was a great men's movement that flourished for a few years and then sort of died away. But, Promise Keepers got guys into small groups, accountability groups and prayer groups, but most of those groups have died away, and I know why. Guys would get together and they would talk, but they would talk about March Madness. They'd talk about sports, politics, anything else. They would really enjoy the social time together. But, what happened is many of those groups became good, fun social times, but they got away from the accountability part of the group, and as a result, they become more and more superficial. And they're good friendship groups, but eventually people are too busy to just go to a friendship group. Accountability is really, really important.

Charles Dolph: Accountability leads not just to holiness and freedom from sin, but also to knowing and being known. Knowing and being known may be the greatest joy that this earthly life affords. Intimate relationships, I'm not talking about sexual relationships necessarily, although they could be included, but emotional, intimate relationships are characterized by six qualities. Those six qualities are these: knowledge, caring, interdependence, mutuality, trust, and commitment. The more intimate a relationship is, the more of these six qualities that it has. But, I'm convinced, and if any of you have taken my intimate relationship course as some of you have, you know that knowing and being known are the greatest

of all the delights. To have someone know you for who and what you are with all your problems and to still value you, to still hang around with you, to still love you, that is an incredible thing. And of course, it's modeled on the fact that God in His omniscience knows you and still loves you. That's what accountability can lead us to.

Charles Dolph: Knowledge, knowing and being known, eases our loneliness. It allays our fears. We can only be known when we drop our walls, our defensiveness, our self righteousness, and our self-deceptions. My accountability partner must confront me in love. This is crucial. Back to love again. Accountability and confrontation only works with love. Without love, nothing works. Josh McDowell said it best. I love his saying. "Rules without relationship equals rebellion." When you try to tell me what to do, when you try to help me manage my behavior, when you tell me where I'm wrong, or what I've done wrong, when you point out a sin to me, that doesn't really stick with me unless you love me.

Charles Dolph: Rules without relationship is also the pathway into legalism. What is legalism? Legalism is rules without relationship, rules where we don't know if the people laying the rules down on us love us. It's true. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care, anyone who's a therapist or a counselor, those of you who are going into psychology. I think early in your career, you go in thinking I've learned all this stuff, I know all these therapeutic techniques, I know the answers to things. Bring me some clients so I can tell them what these truths and answers are. If you stay with that for very long, you don't get to be an old therapist. You switch professions. Because people take your advice. People take your counsel. People seriously consider what you tell them when they know that you care for them. That's a critical component.

Charles Dolph: But not just with clients, that's true with children. That's true in institutions and organizations. You've got to believe that the people that are laying down the rules love you and have your best interest at heart. Many rebels do not feel loved. Think about it. The people that are rebelling, whether it's against a family, whether it's against a school, whether it's against an institution or an organization, or maybe even a government, generally doesn't feel loved by that organization or that group.

Charles Dolph: Accountability also prevents the equal and opposite danger. The equal and opposite danger is this. Love without limits, love without limits. Love without limits equals enabling. When we love and affirm a person but fail to confront misbehavior, we are enabling that misbehavior. When we allow a person to continue their sin without confronting them on it, they will come to disrespect and ultimately loathe their enabler while continuing on in their sin.

Charles Dolph: So, I need accountability. I need confrontation. I need someone who loves me and will come alongside me and show me what I'm doing wrong, where I'm making mistakes, and where I've fallen into sin. But, not only do I need my accountability partner to love me, hold me accountable, they need to extend

me grace, as well. Grace is vital to my recovery, but grace is often misunderstood in our current culture. Psychologists Langberg and Monroe make it clear that grace is not the lack of restrictions. Grace does not mean letting people do whatever they want. It does not mean easing their bad feelings. It does not mean not pursuing the hard questions. Grace is not the lack of restrictions.

Charles Dolph: Sometimes the most grace-filled thing is a restriction. When God says, "Do not murder. Do not commit adultery," He's being full of grace, because He's trying to prevent you from doing something that will destroy your soul from the inside out. Those are gracious restrictions. When a parent says to a kid, "Don't play in the street," that's not being mean. That's being gracious.

Charles Dolph: Well, I need your love. I need your accountability. And I need your grace. For 44 years, I've received all three at Cedarville. That's why I'm still here at Cedarville. My colleagues, on several notable occasions, have kept me from self-destructing. There have been times at Cedarville when I have done or almost done things that were most unwise. I've done things that could get me fired. I've done things that hurt and alienated other people. I've been guilty of gossiping and maligning others. I mean, I've done all of those things. But, thanks be to God, my colleagues, who were caring and loving enough, confronted me and brought me back in. They literally saved me, the ones who were brave enough to speak up and confront me and point out what I was doing wrong.

Charles Dolph: You know? At Cedarville, it's a strange ... Well, maybe it's not so strange. Maybe other organizations are like this, too. Do you know, at Cedarville, it's easier for me to get affirmation than it is for me to confrontation. It seems like people are pretty willing to pat me on the back, but people are less willing to say, "Chuck, you're off base there. You need to get back in line." I've, on several very important occasions, needed confrontation. They helped me through very difficult times. And I'm at Cedarville, one, because some of my colleagues have saved me. My students have saved me. Some students have confronted me in ways that were most painful to me, but the students were right. And so, students, please do not underestimate your impact. When you voice displeasure to a faculty member, it has an impact, at least on me. Now, I wish you would do it politely, and I wish you wouldn't do it anonymously, and I wish you wouldn't do it on the internet. There are some limits there. But, when you think I'm doing something wrong, when you think I'm off base, please tell me. My life has been enriched and improved by a student's confrontation, as well. Although I might just send you to my graders and ask you talk with them. No, not really.

Charles Dolph: The other reason I'm still at Cedarville after 44 years is I have had some other job opportunities, and the reason I didn't go to those jobs was because the love that I experienced at Cedarville was greater than the promises of those other jobs. When I considered the money that I would make or the advancement that I might be able to have at those other schools, the thought of leaving this, my community, did not seem worth it to me, frankly. It's the love, the care, the confrontation, the grace that kept me here.

Charles Dolph: Let me add one more benefit that the Cedarville community's love, accountability, and grace have made possible. Because of my loving and gracious accountability partners at Cedarville, I've been able to learn so much from my ideological adversaries. Got it? My ideological adversaries. My beliefs seem so true to me that I wonder how anyone could believe the opposite of what I believe. My beliefs just seem so clear and apparent and good and true and right and beautiful, I struggle to understand that people could believe anything else.

Charles Dolph: Now, I study other views in books, and to some degree, I understand them. But that's not nearly as compelling as talking to a person who actually believes the opposite. If I talk to the Republican candidate, I want to talk to the Democratic candidate, as well. If I talk to the Right to Life chairwoman, I want to talk to the Planned Parenthood chairwoman. If I talk to someone from Exodus, I want to talk to someone from Equality Ohio. That's how I learn, and that's how I make sense of the fact that other people believe things differently than I do. When I do that, it amazes me. It amazes me that surprising numbers of people who hold beliefs contrary to mine are smarter, more gracious, work harder, have more compassion, are more generous, and are more loving than I am.

Charles Dolph: Now, I go around in my Christian bubble here, thinking that I'm good and righteous and true and orthodox and gracious and generous, and then I go out and meet people who believe just the opposite of me, and I look at their lives, and some of their lives are much better than mine. I recently worked with a group who came into a large amount of money and I thought that they would just spend the money on their organizational needs. But they put that money in trust for the benefit of future generations. This is not a Christian organization at all. And I thought, whoa, would I have done that? I was humbled by what they did.

Charles Dolph: It is enlightening, humbling, and enriching to learn from my ideological adversaries. But, but, it can be a bit risky visiting my opponents' camp. What if I'm overwhelmed by their views or their influences? What if I get confused or doubt while I'm talking to my adversaries? Could I be swayed from my own beliefs? My loving, gracious accountability partners reel me in. They reassure me. They examine the truth claims with me, and they help me to set some boundaries. My accountability partners, my colleagues, do not isolate me from the world, rather they equip me for my trek through the world.

Charles Dolph: This community's my life. This community is my ecosystem. If the ecosystem is healthy, the organisms in it will thrive. For 44 years, Cedarville has provided me with love, accountability, grace, and the freedom to learn, the freedom to pursue truth. These are the values that I want to pass on to you. In your quest for academic excellence, professional advancement, and expanded influence, remember the values that make us a healthy community. Love one another. Hold each other accountable. Be firmly gracious. Enjoy the freedom to learn and do all for the glory of God. Thank you.

Jewerll Maxwell: Thank you. Thank you very much for that thoughtful, challenging presentation. I did want to just recognize the students, the technological issues at the beginning threw me off a little bit, but the members of Omega Mu are John Berg, Andrew Travis, Daniel Nelson, Elizabeth Ewart, John Adams, and Amanda David, who is actually overseas right now. And then we just inducted four new members, Kenny Sterner, John Cores, Spencer Woody, and Ben Saxe, who is also overseas right now. That also gives you a little bit of insight as to why the org, oftentimes is smaller. We have very active individuals, many who either travel overseas or go to the D.C. semester.

Jewerll Maxwell: I do want to thank Dr. Dolph, again, for his thoughtful and challenging presentation. Thank you for your service to Cedarville over the last 35 years. And just want to thank Dr. Murdoch, as well. Thank you to all of you who support this lecture series. Thank you for coming out tonight. Thank you for all the members of Omega Mu. And just wanted to close us in prayer, so let's go to prayer.

Jewerll Maxwell: Heavenly Father, we thank You that You just brought us out here tonight and heard this presentation from Dr. Dolph, and just the challenge that it brings to all of us. Thank You for allowing us to be a part of this community where we do have fellow believers who will walk with us, who will love us, who will hold us accountable. We continue to be thankful for individuals, like Dr. Dolph, like Dr. Murdoch, who just challenge us on a daily basis, and just allow You to work through them. We're thankful for the lessons that we can learn from them, and we're just thankful that You choose to use believers to draw us closer to You. We pray that You just will allow us to think about what was said tonight, continue to pray and meditate on some of the lessons that were brought forth and allow it to be a time that we can truly draw closer to you. We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.