

Staff Publications

Fall 2015

Core Values Built on the Solid Rock

Clem Boyd

Cedarville University, clemboyd@cedarville.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/staff_publications



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Boyd, Clem, "Core Values Built on the Solid Rock" (2015). *Staff Publications*. 58.
http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/staff_publications/58

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Cedarville, a service of the Centennial Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Cedarville. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@cedarville.edu.

CORE VALUES BUILT ON THE SOLID ROCK

by Clem Boyd



LOVE FOR GOD · INTEGRITY IN CONDUCT
EXCELLENCE IN EFFORT · LOVE FOR OTHERS

The foundational truths that guide Cedarville University are clearly on display between DeVries Theatre and the dining hall in Stevens Student Center: LG, LO, IC, and EE.

“This covenant is in everything we do: Love for God (LG), Love for Others (LO), Integrity in Conduct (IC), Excellence in Effort (EE),” noted Jon Wood, Vice President for Student Life and Christian Ministries. “Those are our core values.”

“Those core values have been the bedrock of what we’ve tried to do and what Cedarville has always done in the lives of students,” observed Brian Burns ’95, Director of Student Life Programs.

“I remember Dick Walker ’74 talking about your commitment to love the Savior; Paul Dixon asking how we love others and if we were serving; that you were doing what you said you would do, your integrity; saying everything done in the name of Christ should have quality stamped all over it — excellence.”

Such values have always been important because of their biblical underpinning in the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37–40) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20). In a day when rapid change is the norm, these values are more important than ever.

“We stand in the great tradition that higher education is built on the foundational truth that God is the Creator of the universe,” Wood said. “And the study of all knowledge is worship and pursuit of Him.”

“We define leadership with three key words: stewardship, influence, and service.”

There’s always been spiritual darkness, Wood affirmed, but over the last two centuries there’s been a deepening antagonism to a Christian worldview in Western culture. “This is our opportunity to equip students to stand as those who speak to the culture around us with the specific truth of the Gospel and the general truth of human origins and marriage and sexuality,” he said.

“This isn’t just about wanting to be right, but it’s the way God designed life. Human flourishing depends on society living according to His truth. The more culture deviates from this into darkness, the more it will ultimately break down the flourishing of our society and the people around us. It’s really a matter of love that, as the darkness increases, we take seriously our stewardship to equip students to engage the world around them.”

MAKING STUDENTS BETTER

Student Life and Christian Ministries (SLCM) is a large umbrella at Cedarville, capturing just about every aspect of a student’s nonacademic experience, from living in a residence hall, to growing in a discipleship group, to singing with HeartSong. It encompasses nine different departments: Student Development, Student Life Programs, Career Services, Church Relations, University Medical Services, Campus Recreation, Production Services, Global Outreach (GO), and Discipleship Ministries.

“They all fill one of three functions,” said Wood. “They provide campus services to students, they equip students, or they provide opportunities for students to reach out and impact the world.”

In today’s higher education terminology, SLCM is responsible for the cocurricular side of the Yellow Jacket learning environment.

“We come alongside the academic foundation of the University to help students grow in their spiritual depth, moral character, and professional and

intellectual capability so they fulfill God’s mission in their lives,” Wood said. “We start with clarifying the Gospel, making sure they understand the Gospel and are able to share it with someone else. We want to make sure they have truly come to a point in life where they have been converted as Jesus’ disciples.

“We’re building into students’ lives a deep spiritual commitment, a walk with

God that is day in and day out, where they’re engaging in a prayer life and have a mindset of service and discipleship.”

It’s really the big picture of Christian education — helping shape minds and hearts transformed by the Word of God. “They will be able to know and approve what God’s good, pleasing, and perfect will is,” Wood said, citing Romans 12:2. “He wrote a book for us to know Him and know the world He created from His perspective. When we pursue that, we can think rightly and develop professionally in a way that will glorify Him, whether we go out as nurses, accountants, or missionaries.”

The tagline of a familiar ad campaign expresses SLCM’s mission well — we don’t make the products you use, but we make them better. “The core of accomplishing this is the faculty, who model a Christian commitment and deep walk with God and exhibit professional excellence in a particular field,” said Wood. “Our job is to augment and enhance what they do.”

LEADERSHIP DEFINED BY GOD

Part of that enhancement is helping Cedarville students know and live out the Bible’s view of leadership. “Leadership is discipleship,” Wood said. “Leadership is not just tied to being in front of people, or even having an obvious title. We define leadership with three key words: stewardship, influence, and service.”

Burns added, “Leadership is the stewardship of one’s God-given gifts, abilities, and opportunities in seeking to influence and serve others.”

That definition is rolled out, explained, and discussed during Getting Started Weekend. “If you wait till they’re sophomores, you’ve missed it,” Burns said. “When they’re with their Resident Assistants (RA) and they hear, ‘We need to be good stewards,’ there will be that connector right from the beginning.”

Not all Cedarville students will hold leadership positions, but it’s hoped that by beginning the discussion early on, they’ll retain a stewardship-influence-service definition of leadership by graduation. “The University’s mission is to create lifelong learners,” Burns said. “We better make

sure everyone has heard a good definition of leadership.”

Regardless of your role in life, you can exercise biblical leadership, Wood affirmed. “An average person has a sphere of 40 people,” he said. “In that sphere, however humble it may seem, think of yourself as a leader pursuing influence and providing an example. It’s not about speaking on stage, or being a boss, but about seeking to influence others for their good, their maturity in Christ, and their flourishing.”

A right view of leadership begins with stewardship. “It’s the idea that everything is from God,” Burns said. “Students usually think they’re going to earn positions. Yes, that’s part of it. But the employer or the board is the one that says, ‘Yes, I want you to be the CEO.’ Every position we will ever have in life has been given to us by humans and by God.”

For Rachael Tague ’16, who serves on the Executive Board for the Stevens Student Center information desk, that idea has been revolutionary.

“I was class president for three years and I enjoy being able to have a say,” Tague said with a smile. “God gave me this position to honor and glorify Him. It’s not something I should take lightly. The people around me have also been given their positions by God. I need to respect where they’re coming from.”

The Student Life definition of leadership, and all of its ramifications, is discussed by each organization on campus as it trains leaders for the coming school year, whether the leaders be tour guides, club leaders, RAs, HeartSong team members, or Discipleship Council participants. Then in January, Student Life puts on a two-day CU LEADership Conference where the biblical message about leadership is emphasized through plenary speakers and workshops. The 2016 conference will be January 22–23 (cedarville.edu/culead).

“I went to a conference session last year led by Dr. [Jeremy] Kimble [Assistant Professor of Theology] where he talked about Jesus as a leader,” noted Carly Conley ’17. “He showed different aspects of Jesus’ leadership, as a shepherd, as a king, and as a humble servant. Then he broke that down to how we should lead

if we’re working at the help desk, or as an organization adviser, or as a barista at Rinnova.”

Rodrigo Reis ’16 led a group of nine leaders last school year as part of Discipleship Council. “I learned from CU LEAD that discipleship is supposed to happen everywhere at any time,” he said. “It is a lifestyle that requires the leader to walk close to Christ, filled with His Spirit. That pushed me to cultivate with Christ a life of prayer and daily meditation on the Word of God. I knew and still know that I need to be filled in order to pour in the lives of others.”

Abigail Hile ’16, an RA in Printy Hall, said the January conference challenged her to reflect on the outcome of her influence.

“Paul tells people to ‘imitate me as I imitate Christ,’ and that was a difficult question to process in my own heart,” Hile said. “If the girls I was leading were to imitate me and follow my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith [as in 2 Tim. 3:10], would that make them look more like Christ? Or more like sinful Abigail?”

Before the end of each academic year, nearly 1,000 student leaders meet for a brief session in their respective organizations to pray for people they will influence during the next school year. This is meant to propel them to pray throughout the summer.

“Leadership begins with prayer, because prayer is the first and most important way you can serve other people,” Wood explained. “We urge our student leaders to humbly get before the Lord and seek His direction and guidance about how to really steward, influence, and serve. He’s the one who taught us how to do it, so we need to rely on Him to make it happen.”

“Equipping students to lead in a way that stands on the four core values and emphasizes prayerful serving will set them up to make a lasting impact in the world,” he stated.

And that’s the kind of change that could shore up the foundations of a society that keeps slipping into sinking sand. 🙏

Clem Boyd is Managing Editor of Cedarville Magazine.

MATCH YOUR GIFT

Did you know that your gift to Cedarville University could be doubled?

Many companies will match every gift made by their employees to Cedarville University. Go to cedarville.edu/matchyourgift to see if your company will match gifts to Cedarville.

Find out the following:

- Amount they will match
- Programs they will support
- Process you need to follow

Thank you for taking advantage of this program and advancing the cause of Cedarville even more!

