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AWARD-WINNING TEACHER AIMS FOR ETERNAL IMPACT

Ryan Churchward '07, M.Ed. '16 Combines Tech Savvy With Love for Christ and Kids

by Michele (Cummings) Solomon '91



As a classroom teacher, Ryan Churchward '07, M.Ed. '16 has been recognized for his efforts using technology as a tool for learning. But it's his love for his students and servant's heart that really set him apart. He would quickly tell you that his greatest accomplishment is using his teaching as a tool to shine the light of Christ to a darkened world.

PATH ORDAINED

Churchward's path since he left Cedarville in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in secondary education has been varied, yet God-ordained. He began his career teaching social studies at Mexico City Christian Academy in Mexico City, Mexico. There he met his wife, Kathryn, a fellow teacher. The couple moved to Fort Worth, Texas, where Churchward began as a substitute teacher and eventually became an English/language arts teacher at Kerr Middle School.

For the past four years he has taught world cultures at Kerr, and last year he was recognized for his use of technology in the classroom. He received the 2016 Classroom Teacher of the Year award from the Texas

Computer Educators Association and was also honored as the Classroom Teacher of the Year from both Kerr and the Burleson Independent School District.

This fall, he began teaching global studies at the prestigious Trinity Valley School in Fort Worth. There, he is continuing to reach students not just through technology, but through his passion to make a difference wherever God places him. It's a passion that has its roots in Cedarville's Master of Education (M.Ed.) program.

CULTURE IMPACTED

"Our program is crafted in a way that improves our teachers' ability to facilitate learning to make an impact on the culture," explained Jeremy Ervin, Dean of

the School of Education. “And we do it with biblical integration that makes it for God’s impact and His glory.”

The M.Ed. was Cedarville’s first graduate program, introduced in spring 2000 under the direction of Stephen Gruber ’74, Professor of Education. Cedarville has awarded M.Ed. degrees since 2002, sending qualified, Christ-honoring educators across the country and around the globe.

According to Ruth Sylvester, Assistant Dean of the School of Education and Director of the M.Ed., Cedarville’s M.Ed. program trains Christian educators for service in all classroom environments — public, Christian, and international. “We equip our students to teach through the lens of God’s Word, in tandem with skills and pedagogy to increase their professional effectiveness,” said Sylvester. “We want to reach the diverse needs within the classroom and potentially change our nation’s schools.”

GOD GLORIFIED

It is this philosophy that helped form Churchward as an educator. “Living out your faith is important for all Christians living in the real world,” he explained. “But it’s even more important when you’re working with impressionable young people.

“My entire philosophy of education was crafted by the men and women who led me through the education program at Cedarville, both as an undergraduate and in the M.Ed.,” he shared. “I may not be allowed to outwardly share my Christian faith, but I am able to model how that looks through my actions, words, and motives.”

That’s exactly what Eddie Baumann, Senior Professor of Education, who teaches philosophy of education courses for both undergraduate and graduate students at Cedarville, hopes for each of Cedarville’s M.Ed. graduates. “I want our students to understand that you don’t have to leave your faith in the parking lot before you enter the school doors,” he explained. “We may not be able to teach the Bible in a public school setting, but we can certainly teach biblical concepts.” Baumann cites stewardship as an example. For a Christian, the idea of stewardship — using your time, talent, and resources for God’s glory — is rooted in

Scripture, but public school students can still be taught that they can use their time and talents wisely and for the good of others.

“We challenge our students to ask themselves, ‘How does my faith inform what I do in an environment that is sometimes hostile to Christians?’” he stated, “and then guide them to integrate Christian principles as they develop lessons, structure curriculum, and teach character traits.”

“Educators have an ideal platform to be change agents in our culture and share our faith, though primarily in a covert manner within a secular context,” Sylvester explained.

LIVES CHANGED

It’s a lesson Churchward learned well. “One of my strong suits is a service-driven desire to love others,” he explained. “Cedarville helped build that in me in a way that I can bring to the classroom and beyond. I attempt to bring that service mindset into my classroom every day.”

Churchward sees his educator role as more of a “facilitator of learning” rather than simply imparting knowledge. He thrives on those moments when he sees a student discover a love for the subject matter or when a student who previously struggled discovers a desire to learn. “I feel it is my duty to empower my students to explore, discover, and learn for themselves,” he said. “I look for those ‘a-ha’ moments every day.”

“I’m not in it for the money or the glory or the fame,” Churchward concluded. Rather, through modeling Christlike servanthood and love, he wants to help “create a better tomorrow by crafting students today who are motivated and respectful and who, above all, hold in high esteem the values of respect, care, and service to others.” As they engage these character qualities, he hopes they will be turned toward Christ as the source of that change.

That kind of transformative thinking makes high-tech learning a high calling.

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Michele (Cummings) Solomon ’91 is the Copy Editor for Cedarville University Marketing.

Program Highlights

M.Ed.

- **Biblical worldview**, experienced faculty, and practical approach
- Focused on enhancing classroom effectiveness, professional leadership, and **Kingdom influence**
- **Convenient** eight-week, **all-online classes**
- Program completion **flexibility** for part-time students
- **Supportive** advising team committed to your academic success
- Affordable tuition with **scholarships** for alumni and Christian school teachers

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Ryan Churchward ’07, M.Ed. ’16



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