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Interacting With Culture to **Glorify God**

by Thomas White



The first six chapters of Daniel record men of God responding to the culture around them with wisdom and conviction in order to glorify God. At times, this meant taking a stand, but at other times, the text indicates that they studied well, did their assignments well, and, for Daniel in particular, led well and displayed an excellent spirit, distinguishing him above all others. Daniel's excellent work led his enemies to declare "they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him" (Dan. 6:4).

As we stand for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ at Cedarville University, we want our friends, as well as those who may hold a different worldview, to speak similarly about us. For that reason, our student life core values are Love for God, Love for Others, Excellence in Effort, and Integrity in Conduct.

We believe that wherever God calls people to serve, He expects them to work with excellence, to serve as a light to the Gospel in word and deed, and to demonstrate compassionate conviction as they engage in God's great plan of redemption wherever He sends them. We ground our education in this vision by combining academic excellence in every major with a Bible minor, equipping students to understand every calling as equally important in God's plan. From political science to engineering, from nursing to media, and, whether our graduates are behind a computer or camera lens or in face-to-face interaction, all of us work to bring glory to God using the skills He has given us to create a God-glorifying culture.

We stand for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ in current events. Cedarville alumna Paula Faris '97 eloquently and persuasively communicates biblical responses to culture on the television show *The View*. Cedarville professor Mark Caleb Smith and others speak to current events through media interviews, blog posts, and presentations.

We stand for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ by creating culture. Our excellent music faculty composes and conducts musical works, bringing individual talents together to display a symphony of beauty that delights the ear, brings joy to the heart, and gives glory to God. In cinematography, Cedarville alumni Parker '14 and Kara (West) Adams '14 and Ben Bailey '09 helped produce the movie *Woodlawn*. With diligence and excellence, these alumni worked to display a story that ultimately tells God's Gospel story.

Just as Paul traveled the highways constructed by Rome and used poetry and philosophy to reach the culture of his day, now Christ-followers travel the information superhighways using modern-day

analogies to convey the message of Christ crucified and risen. The methods of presentation may change, but the message remains the same.

We stand for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ in the academic world. Cedarville professors John Whitmore and Steven Gollmer have produced one of the few modern science textbooks from a young-earth perspective. Their work provides a needed resource for homeschoolers, private schools, and others to present a thorough, biblical worldview in science curriculum. By using their academic gifts, they have provided a resource for many that will glorify God. Our Vice President for Academics (Interim), Loren Reno '70, has published a book on leadership titled *10 Leadership Maneuvers*. In this practical yet academic book, Reno defends a biblical view of leadership that begins with service and ends with leading. These academic contributions provide biblical resources that influence the minds of today and tomorrow. These titles are just a sampling of the books and other academic media produced by our faculty, which you'll see later in the magazine.

I hope as you read this magazine, you will enjoy learning more about the many ways that Cedarville University is engaging culture. More importantly, I hope that you will think and pray about ways that you can use your gifts and the place of ministry God has given you to engage the culture with compassionate conviction. At times, when you feel like the minority, the temptation may be to withdraw rather than engage, but we have the truth and hope that the world so desperately needs. As we build friendships and winsomely counsel and provide biblical advice to others, we can redirect culture to glorify God as we make disciples one soul at a time.

In moments of crisis or times of questioning, those in your area of influence will recognize the depth of your faith. Through a willingness to serve others and be a good steward of the gifts and assignment God has provided, you too can interact with the culture around you to glorify God. It is my prayer that all of us will be found faithful to stand for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ.

Thomas White became Cedarville's 10th President in 2013. He received his B.A. from Anderson University (South Carolina) and both his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. 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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