



pray
disciple
fellowship
stand

LightBEARer

Newsletter of the Lighting Crew

psalm 119:105
thy word is
a lamp to
my feet



LightBEARer
October 2017 Issue

ED - Keith Evan Schubert

Matthew 5:1-16 (NASB)

¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Lighting Crew Plan

- 1. Pray.** Prayer is our lifeline to God, who cannot fail. Pray for our students. Pray for each other. Pray for the course of our university. Pray for our country and world. Pray that we are good witnesses. Pray without ceasing.
- 2. Disciple.** Discipleship is a yoking of two lives to pass on the wisdom of God and how to live for His glory. We need to be intentional in discipling more people at every level on and off campus.
- 3. Fellowship.** Fellowship is the coming together to celebrate God and mutually encourage. Iron sharpens iron. A tripple braided cord isn't easily broken.
- 4. Stand.** Support truth and oppose compromise at every level. God placed you where you need to be, and has the resources and support you will need. Put on the armor and stand firm.

Next Meeting: Oct 31 at
12:30-1:30 pm in Rogers 210.
Come and bring a friend.

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What's the Problem With our Students?

BY Robert J. Marks

Ministry needs for Baylor students is shifting. Although evangelizing remains important, students raised in Christian homes are now coming to college and walking away from their faith. How can we as faculty help? Here's my take.

The New Exodus

Students are coming to college and leaving the church in droves [2]. Alex McFarland, who puts the number at 70%, writes [3]

“The stunning exodus of young people from the church has reached the level of a national spiritual crisis. The college years can be particularly trying for young people”

Although I don't have detailed statistics for our campus, I am aware from personal experience and anecdotes from colleagues that this is also happening at Baylor. There is a perceived disconnect between the student's church experience and certain teachings adopted from the infected Academy. When the students ask about reconciliation of what they perceive as conflict, they are answered identically by both new-atheist table pounders and Bible thumpers:

“The resolution of the conflict is to believe what I believe and think the way I think. And if you don't, you are wrong!”

More often than not, the topics of the argument are peripheral to mere Christianity and have nothing to do with knowing and following Christ. As the adults in authority yell at each other and become more polarized, the students shake their heads and walk away & leave the church.

Using polling from the Barna Group [1], David Kimmerman confirms the student mass exodus from the church is relatively new. Here are the six top reasons students cite for leaving the church.

- Reason #1 - Churches seem overprotective.
- Reason #2 - Teens' and twentysomethings' experience of Christianity is shallow.
- Reason #3 - Churches come across as antagonistic to science.
- Reason #4 - Young Christians' church experiences related to sexuality are often simplistic, judgmental.
- Reason #5 - They wrestle with the exclusive nature of Christianity.
- Reason #6 - The church feels unfriendly to those who doubt.'

As Christian faculty at Baylor, we cannot directly confront the problems of the Church in general. Our greatest impact comes from addressing misconceptions about Christianity, specifically Reasons #2, #3 and #5. How do we open doors and do this?

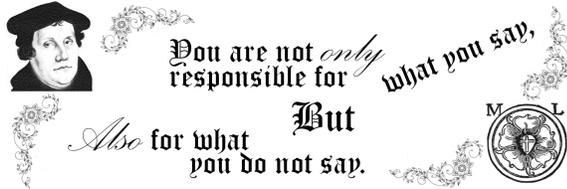
Opening Doors

First there is the obvious. Self identifying as a follower of Christ is a start. Some churches demonize the Academy because “knowledge puffeth up.” Practitioners of Scientism dismiss Christians as stupid and uneducated. Students subject to shallowness from both the church and the Academy are pleasantly surprised that a learned and respected professor will boldly declare themselves to be followers of Christ. And yes, even at Baylor.

Here's some thoughts from my limited experience.

Because the term "Christian" means different things to different people, I prefer to call myself a "follower of Christ." The description has less a chance of being misinterpreted. If the situation permits, I follow this with a brief explanation of what this means. I often offer such a statement on the first day of class followed by a prayer asking God to bless both the students as they learn and me as the instructor. For those like me, it takes guts to do this. So if I chicken out the first day, I'll try to make the declaration the second or even third day of class. Next I announce my availability to talk about Christ and the Gospel to anyone who wants. I rarely have many takers based on this blanket invitation. Student interaction I have found takes a more proactive interactive approach.

There is a sensitivity about professors talking to students about Christ. On one hand, we have a vertical relationship of authority over our students that we must not abuse. Some cultures place a high value on authority. An announcement of believing in Christ can result from submission to the authority rather than because of a change of the heart. Even when this is not the case, there are few - including me - that welcome being preached at while a captive audience. Us doing so to students is an obvious misuse of authority. Sharing the reasons for our faith and the Gospel requires more of a horizontal relationship. The only resolution of the vertical-horizontal conflict I have found is getting students to ask sincere questions. The stage can be set for this to happen.



Some Ways to Set the Stage

There are many ways to get students to begin asking questions. Here are a few.

- *Apologetics.* Students leaving the church often have questions they are afraid to ask. Often these questions can be answered by Christian apologetics.
 - My ECE colleague Ian Gravagne and Math Prof John Davis took a number of students to A&M to hear Christian apologist William Lane Craig speak. In route to A&M, most of the conversation was small talk. After hearing Dr. Craig speak, a fire hose of questions gushed on the return trip from College Station back to Waco. Typical questions include:
 - * God created man. Who created God?
 - * How can you believe in both science and Christianity? Aren't the two mutually exclusive? Hasn't science removed the need for religion?
 - * Why is there evil? Why doesn't God make everyone nice?
 - * Is it fair for members of a remote tribe who have never heard of Christ to go to hell?

* Why is Christianity exclusive? Don't other religions also lead to God?

These and similar unasked and therefore unanswered questions are a major component of the student exodus from the Church. Simply realizing there exists intelligent responses defending the Christian faith can encourage voice to the lingering doubts that are afraid to be shared.

- Sharing apologetics can provide an spiritual epiphany to Christians not strong in their faith. I have even seen transformations in colleagues exposed to the intellectually deep ministries of those like William Lane Craig and Ravi Zacharias.
- Baylor now has a student led apologetics group named Oso Logos. The current student President is Ryan Crews (Ryan_Crews@Baylor.edu). He loves to hear from new interested students. I'm happy to make the connection also.
- *Movie Night.* When working with Campus Crusade, Walter Bradley popularized hosting *movie night* at his home. Four to eight students are invited. Popcorn is popped, buttered and salted and all settle in to watch an intriguing movie. The movies are chosen to provoke discussion afterward. Walter's favorite is Woody Allen's "Crimes and Misdemeanours."¹ I like the riveting "Sophie Scholl: The Final Days." A more obvious choice is the more recent well acted "The Case for Christ." The movies are chosen to allow discussion afterwards that leads to discussions about God and Christ. The faculty host typically prepares some thoughtful questions to get the ball rolling.
- *Food.* Students are honored to be asked to free meals. Baylor lets us buy students meals for cheap at the dining halls. One on one discussions can be steered to talking about matters of faith. I've found it's a good investment.
- *One-on-one Student Evangelism: How's Your Soul?* My favorite question to ask to get someone talking about themselves is "What do you do for fun?" Everyone likes to talk about themselves. When the time is right, I like to ask "How are you doing spiritually?" If they answer something like "Great!" I move on. If they begin expressing any disdain or hesitance, I listen. When the time is right again, I'll say something like "As you know, I'm a follower of Christ. I believe He might be the answer you are looking for. If you like, we can get together once a week for a month and read what the Bible says about Christ. If you'd like to do this, let me know." If the student changes the subject, I let it go.

The last time I got a positive response to my offer, the student and I went through the Gospel of John in four meetings. At the end of the last meeting, I told the student that the period for dating was over and that he either needed to get married or break up. He left without a commitment either way. A few months later, we met by chance in the Rogers parking lot. He said he had accepted Christ. When he went home to

¹Warning: there is a brief description of a crass act in the film.

China, he found out his aunt was a closet Christian who was silent because of political fears. His parents were now considering the case for Christ. There is no greater blessing than learning you have been used by God to lead someone to Christ!

This is not a typical story for me. I do not minister as much as I should. When things like this happen, I wonder why I don't.

Takeaway

When I first started teaching, students were curious about God. Later students asked why should they care about God. Today, many students raised in Christian homes who come to college question both the existence and relevance of God. This is due to the increasing antagonism against God in government, media, politics and the Academy. Sharing the Gospel with seekers remains important, but the young men and women students abandoning the church is an ever growing concern.

As faculty who follow Christ, we are in a unique position to minister to this troubling exodus.

References

- [1] The Barna Group, "Six Reasons Young Christians Leave Church," September 28, 2011, <https://www.barna.com/research/six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church/>
- [2] e.g. Drew Dyck, "The Leavers: Young Doubters Exit the Church," Christianity Today, November 19, 2010, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/november/27.40.html>
- [3] A. McFarland, "70 Percent of Young Adults Drop out of Church. What Can We Do about It?" Hamilton Strategies, <http://www.hamiltonstrategies.com/news/70-percent-of-young-adults-drop-out-of-church-what-can-we-do-about-it-1>

Into the Word - Matthew 28:16-20

BY Keith Evan Schubert

¹⁶ But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. ¹⁷ When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. ¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:16-20 (NASB)

These are the last verses of Matthew's Gospel. Jesus has been raised and has appeared to the eleven in the upper room on the first and eighth day after the resurrection. Verse 16 starts with the eleven travelling to a mountain Jesus had designated. This is likely connected with the meeting by the Sea of Tiberias recorded in John 21, and might also be the time when Jesus appeared to the 500 recorded in I Corinthians, as Jesus had often before used the mountains in Galilee to teach a multitude. This comes to my mind because Jesus designated that they travel to this site. They started the 50 days from Passover to Pentecost in Jerusalem and ended there too, so Jesus had to have a reason for taking the disciples on a trip to Galilee in the middle. I think Jesus is using the places to remind them of important things He had taught, done, and commanded in His earthly ministry.

For instance, Jesus uses a bountiful catch after an unsuccessful night of fishing (John 21) to remind John then Peter of a similar event around three years earlier at the start of Jesus's ministry (Luke 5), when Peter powerfully realized Jesus was Holy. In this case, by taking them to a mountain in Galilee, The Sermon on the Mount, the feedings of the thousands, and the Mount of Transfiguration would all have been brought to the disciples minds right as Jesus is transitioning them from disciple to apostle. Jesus later tells them in verse 20 to disciple those who come after all that Jesus commanded them. The reminder of all the lessons Jesus had taught and commanded on the mountains of Galilee would have been a powerful lesson taking all that they had learned and applying it to training the next generation. They were to disciple the next generation as they had been disciplined. They would have remembered how Jesus had taught them. How He had lived amongst the disciples. They had an example of exactly how to fulfil Jesus's commission in discipling. They were to do it the same way He did.

We are now the generation that must pass on all that Jesus commanded. We have the example of how Jesus and the disciples took the gospel out and how they grew the faith of others. Our students need us to show the same care Jesus did.

It is also worth noting that

- Jesus sent them, and thus us, to all the nations, which we are in a unique position to do.
- In Luke's account (Luke 24:45-47), Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Old Testament at that point) showing all that happened, including the Great Commission, was prophesied (such as - Genesis 12:2-3, Psalm 2:8, 22:27, 67:5-7, 98:2-3, Isaiah 52:10, Jeremiah 16:19, Zechariah 9:10).
- Jesus didn't suggest, He commanded; just as Jesus designated where to go, he didn't ask opinions. Jesus states in verse 18 that all authority in heaven and earth are His. He commands and we obey.

Wit & Wisdom - Martin Luther

BY Keith Evan Schubert

In honor of the 500 year anniversary of the Reformation, here are some quotes of Martin Luther.

1. To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.
2. To gather with God's people in united adoration of the Father is as necessary to the Christian life as prayer.
3. I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.
4. Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.
5. I know not the way God leads me, but well do I know my guide.
6. I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.
7. Whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is really your God.
8. The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.
9. If you want to interpret well and confidently, set Christ before you, for He is the man to whom it all applies, every bit of it.
10. The gospel cannot be truly preached without offense and tumult.
11. Those speak foolishly who ascribe their anger or their impatience to such as offend them or to tribulation. Tribulation does not make people impatient, but proves that they are impatient. So everyone may learn from tribulation how his heart is constituted.
12. God writes the Gospel not in the Bible alone, but also on trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars.
13. For in the true nature of things, if we rightly consider, every green tree is far more glorious than if it were made of gold and silver.
14. Grant that I may not pray alone with the mouth; help me that I may pray from the depths of my heart.
15. The fewer the words, the better the prayer.
16. God wants us to pray, and he wants to hear our prayers - not because we are worthy, but because he is merciful.
17. When schools flourish, all flourishes.
18. I am much afraid that the universities will prove to be the great gates of hell, unless they diligently labour in explaining the Holy Scriptures, and engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt.
19. If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write.
20. There never yet have been, nor are there now, too many good books.
21. If there is anything in us, it is not our own; it is a gift of God. But if it is a gift of God, then it is entirely a debt one owes to love, that is, to the law of Christ.
22. And if it is a debt owed to love, then I must serve others with it, not myself. Thus my learning is not my own; it belongs to the unlearned and is the debt I owe them. My wisdom belongs to the foolish, my power to the oppressed. Thus my wealth belongs to the poor, my righteousness to the sinners.
23. Since your majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns or teeth. Unless I am convinced by Scripture and by plain reason (I do not believe in the authority of either popes or councils by themselves, for it is plain that they have often erred and contradicted each other) in those Scriptures that I have presented, for my conscience is captive to the Word of God, I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me. Amen.
24. I more fear what is within me than what comes from without.
25. You should not believe your conscience and your feelings more than the word which the Lord who receives sinners preaches to you.
26. So when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this: "I admit that I deserve death and hell, what of it? For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!"
27. We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.
28. We need to hear the Gospel every day, because we forget it every day.
29. God created the world out of nothing, and so long as we are nothing, He can make something out of us.
30. A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing.
31. Lord Jesus, You are my righteousness, I am your sin. You took on you what was mine; yet set on me what was yours. You became what you were not, that I might become what I was not.
32. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished ...
33. There are some of us who think to ourselves, "If I had only been there! How quick I would have been to help the Baby. I would have washed His linen. How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger!" Why don't we do it now? We have Christ in our neighbor.
34. Peace if possible, truth at all costs.
35. Nothing good ever comes of violence.
36. The heart overflows with gladness, and leaps and dances for the joy it has found in God. In this experience the Holy Spirit is active, and has taught us in the flash of a moment the deep secret of joy. You will have as much joy and laughter in life as you have faith in God.
37. True humility does not know that it is humble. If it did, it would be proud from the contemplation of so fine a virtue.
38. No great saint lived without errors