



OVERCOMING DARKNESS WITH LIGHT

**NEW ACADEMIC CENTER WILL EQUIP GRADUATES TO
BOLDLY ENGAGE AT THE CROSSROADS OF CULTURE**

BY THOMAS WHITE

We are praying and planning for a new academic center that will potentially house five disciplines that stand at the crossroads of a post-Christian culture and a commitment to biblical truth. While all academic content must be evaluated through the lens of biblical authority, these disciplines are on the front lines, and the opportunity for impact is significant, but so, too, is the opposition.

These areas include history and government; psychology; English, literature, and modern languages; education; and social work. I am convinced that these disciplines, taught from a biblical worldview, are crucial for Christian cultural engagement.

Almost every discipline has something that contradicts a biblical worldview. At Cedarville, our faculty sign our doctrinal statement every year. I interview all potential full-time faculty members, listening to their testimonies, asking about their personal Bible reading, hearing about their local church involvement, and questioning their adherence to our doctrinal statement. At tenure, each faculty member writes a paper that expresses a biblical worldview and demonstrates how that worldview affects his or her discipline. The author illustrates subject matter that must be rejected, affirmed, or redeemed. Cedarville faculty members provide our students with an education, allowing informed decisions for personal convictions. In short, Cedarville University transforms lives through excellent education and intentional discipleship in submission to biblical authority.

HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT: EQUIPPING GRADUATES WITH CHARACTER AND BOLDNESS FOR THE PUBLIC SQUARE

America needs character combined with conservative values. We need historians that will accurately tell the truth without bending the facts to fit a political agenda. We need criminal justice professionals who personify Micah 6:8 by doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God. We need politicians who desire to serve the people, abide by a strict interpretation of the Constitution, and pursue American exceptionalism. Too many politicians lack character and virtue, seeking selfish gain rather than serving others to advocate for human flourishing.

At Cedarville, we equip our students to live out their faith in the public sector. We teach our students to affirm life from conception, that marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman for life, that we should tell the truth, and that we should conduct ourselves to be above reproach. We introduce students to various worldviews, teaching how these worldviews fall short of the truth presented in Scripture.

Envision with me a new generation of politicians who could be trusted to tell the truth, treat others (even enemies) with respect, legislate for human flourishing, and seek to do what is right in all situations. These politicians would help our nation and its citizens grow and thrive. Our historians would accurately diagnose Marxism or socialistic influences and teach accurately about their historic failures.

We graduate students prepared to stand and share the light of the Gospel into the darkness of hearts and souls.

Students who will one day walk the halls of Congress should be educated in a building of similar excellence.

PSYCHOLOGY: BRINGING THE SCALPEL OF BIBLICAL PRECISION AND THE HEART OF CHRISTIAN COMPASSION

Every one of our faculty members personally affirms the authority, inerrancy, and sufficiency of Scripture. That alone makes Cedarville a unique place. When it comes to psychology, many Christian schools have either compromised or completely abandoned the discipline altogether.

Cedarville has chosen to take a scalpel of biblical precision to the discipline of psychology and with prayer and humility teach our students what must be rejected, affirmed, and redeemed. We need more people in the field of psychology committed to the authority of Scripture, and I fear that we have defaulted to abandoning the area rather than seeking to redeem it.

For example, Christians agree that all people have sin issues, but rather than take that understanding from influential authors in the field of psychology, we redeem the principle and place it in the proper context of Genesis 3.

Rejecting the notion of self-esteem, we instruct our students to find value and worth from being created in the image of God. The *imago dei* creates equality among the one human race and every ethnos or tongue. We know we are loved and valued because God sent His only Son to die in our place and for our sakes. God showed His love in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Repentance of sin and faith in Christ results in justification, redemption, adoption, and new life in Christ. This world with its tribulation is not our final home. We are citizens of heaven and ambassadors of Christ to this world, awaiting our heavenly home and taking joy in the fact that Christ has ultimately overcome the world. We all experience problems in this life, but a biblical worldview communicates genuine worth, that we are truly loved, and that

we have a future hope. Genuine, lasting mental health flows from a biblical understanding of the world. We graduate students prepared to stand and share the light of the Gospel into the darkness of our hearts and souls.

ENGLISH, LITERATURE, AND MODERN LANGUAGES (ELML): SHARING THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

Words matter. We communicate the greatest truth ever told through words – whether spoken or written. An English degree helps students understand the power of the written word. It equips them to write fiction, poetry, and perhaps even sermons that use the power of words and stories to point people to Christ.

In our modern world, a place that affirms universal truth, rejects postmodernism, and seeks authorial intent is rare. Cedarville is that place. Think about the implications beyond English, literature, or composition classes.

We have foreign language professors training students to speak other languages with excellence, equipping them to build relationships and share the Gospel internationally. At Cedarville, we desire for every student to take a Global Outreach (GO) missions trip before graduation. For those learning Spanish, French, or another language, they can put those skills into practice immediately by sharing the Gospel on these trips.

And what about those who have never heard the Gospel or don't have the Bible in their heart language? Cedarville teaches linguistics. In fact, one of our French and linguistic professors served as a missionary overseas for 25 years and translated the Bible into one of those languages.

ELML has the opportunity to make a huge impact on the Kingdom of God and to help finish the task of global evangelization in our lifetime.

EDUCATION: TRAINING TEACHERS TO LOVE GOD AND OTHERS

Speaking of missions, there may be no greater mission field than the public

school system. At Cedarville, we train teachers to love God and love others. We cast a vision for our teacher candidates to pour their lives out for others, whether that comes through homeschooling, private schooling, or public schooling.

Imagine the impact if God called a generation of Christian teachers to serve in public schools among the least church-ed populations in America. Even in Ohio, we have cities where the vast majority do not believe in Christ or attend church on a regular basis.

What if teachers considered their occupation a God-called vocation, using their platform as a place to love their students well and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ whenever possible? Their ministry would reach into places where local church pastors may never go and reach people who may never visit a Sunday service. These teachers serve as missionaries at Kingdom outposts for the advancement of the Gospel message. What if their excellence, diligence, compassion, and faithfulness provided a living witness to their commitment of doing everything as unto the Lord? What if their excellent education provided opportunities for students to read the Bible for themselves or to advance their influence through additional educational opportunities?

Whether serving in inner-city schools, private Christian schools, or homeschool, our teachers can reach people for Jesus.

SOCIAL WORK: MINISTRY TO HURTING CHILDREN AND VICTIMS

Our country desperately needs more social workers. There may be no greater area of ministry in society. Social workers go into horrible situations where unspeakable acts have occurred. They advocate for and minister to children and victims. They bring love and hope into situations often devoid of both.

Social workers have a calling that requires them to give and give without having their own cups replenished. Reliance upon a deeper well of spiritual

faith allows them to serve without burning out.

Having completed victim advocacy training myself, I have learned more about the depravity of mankind and the need for this ministry. This has resulted in a profound appreciation for the heart and ministry of our social work professionals and victim advocates.

A CALL TO SHINE THE LIGHT

In each of these disciplines, Cedarville alumni are doing exactly as I described, but they need reinforcements. We need to train thousands more, and we need the right spaces to provide that training. We need to prevent another generation from being lost to educational systems proselytizing for secular humanism, evolutionary theory, and a Godless atheism.

If we want to attract the best and the brightest to come to Cedarville and study for such purposes, then we must construct a facility that indicates the importance of the task. A space where life transformation can occur as faculty pour into the lives of students and where students learn with excellence to take the good news to the ends of the earth.

Currently, our space does not demonstrate excellence. Williams Hall served as a residence hall for many years. It was converted into academic space and is the only building on our campus that civil engineers determined should not be renovated any further but should be torn down. The hallways are not wide enough for two people to walk side by side, and the ceiling in those hallways is about 7 feet high.

The faculty members for these areas are spread all over campus. They lack the opportunity for strategic collaboration and the collegiality that we desire. Students desiring to visit two professors who teach in the same area must travel to different parts of campus. For generations, Cedarville has desired to have “quality stamped all over it,” and excellence is one of our core values. We must do better to provide a quality facility and environment

for these programs.

We need your help. We can’t do this alone. First, and most importantly, would you pray for us? Unless God builds, we labor in vain. We want wisdom from above to serve as faithful stewards.

Second, would you send students to visit our campus? When students arrive on campus, they frequently understand the Cedarville difference and decide to study with us.

Third, we constantly need new faculty and staff brought into our vision and mission. We need excellent team members who want to make a difference for eternity and an impact on students’ lives. Perhaps God is calling you or someone you know to join us.

Finally, you can have a part in helping us build a new academic center where we will intentionally equip graduates with a biblical worldview and passion for the Gospel in the fields of history and government; psychology; English, literature, and modern languages; education; and social work. For this facility to be built and for this need to be met, we need an army of regular people – just like you and me – who care about our culture, our nation, and the Gospel to come alongside us. You can join me in making an investment that will pay eternal dividends as we store up treasures in Heaven.

WE STAND BOLDLY

Friends, we have the light, and the light overcomes the darkness. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against us. Our chaotic culture has questions, anxiety, victims, and depression. We have the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and hope for tomorrow. Now is not the time to shrink back, but the time to be bold. Join us as we stand firm for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ.

We need to prevent another generation from being lost to educational systems proselytizing for secular humanism, evolutionary theory, and a God-less atheism.

As we plan for a world-class facility that will house these critical areas of study, would you pray for and consider supporting Cedarville so that we can provide the offices, classrooms, and collaboration spaces that match the caliber of these programs and faculty?



Thomas White is President of Cedarville University. He earned his PhD in systematic theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.