

A Call to Papers

By Stan Oakes
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Research is forming the world as we know it. Thoughtful people comprehend that to enact policy, the media, government and education rely upon the enriched information provided by experts, both in and out of the university.

Just over forty years ago, Professor Alfred Kinsey changed forever the way in which homosexuality is understood. Though his study has been discredited in important ways, still the notion that homosexuals comprise 10% of the population lingers on. The Los Angeles school district implemented an entire program based on this faulty premise.

Now, sociological research has taken the place of the Bible as the north star for our culture. In fact, religion is now the "forgotten factor." Not only is the Bible considered a relic for an earlier, more superstitious time, but religion is largely censored from the public square. Fortunately, there is an increasing interest among researchers to explore the role of religious commitment in the health and well-being of individuals. Training to be a psychiatrist, Dr. David B. Larson was taught that religion stunted mental health. So at his career pinnacle, holding top research posts at the National Institutes

of Health and Mental Health, he tested the conventional wisdom against research data. He found that "the one consistent variable against research data. He found that "the one consistent variable, church attendance or religious practice (such as prayer), seemed to help people avoid heart disease and mental disorders." An expert in epidemiology, Dr. Larson's work has since compiled various summaries of clinical research on health and religion.

But who is doing the research on how the "forgotten factor" influences the lives of university professors? Has religion been a help or hindrance in academic pursuits? At minimum, the new interest from secular researchers demonstrates that religion's tarnished reputation is up for review. At best, it's a new avenue of discussing with the deeply secularized colleague the role of faith in their own "language."

With this in mind, Leadership University, the virtual university of Campus Cause for Christ, is issuing a call for papers. Below are topics from various disciplines listed for the stimulation of ideas. Please consider how you can contribute to Leadership U. (see pages 8-9) and then email Christian Leadership at prof@clm.org with your ideas.

Economics

- Economic policy and a Christian role for government.
- Federal charity and the Christian worldview.
- Christ's view of taxation.
- Subjective v. objective economic theory and a Christian response.
- Effects of divorce on personal income.

Finance

- Assessing technology: a cost benefit analysis.

Engineering

- Radioactive wastes and future generations.
- Decentralization and participation in energy resources.

Agriculture

- Biblical stewardship and modern American farm policy.
- Providing for the masses.
- Ethics of the Green Revolution.

Anthropology

- What is known about the earliest hominid?

Astronomy

- Astronomical evidences for a personal, transcendent God.
- How measurements of the universe can tell us about God and His nature.
- The Big Bang: friend or foe?

Biology

- Ethics and implications of genetic engineering.
- Evidence for a mind separate from the brain.

Chemistry

- Current criticisms of the prebiotic soup theory.

Computer Science

- Artificial Intelligence and human nature.
- Computer technology the new social structure.
- Strengths and limitations of computer modeling.
- From concept to consumer; the acceleration of delivery and inherent dangers.

Earth Science

- Stewardship and care of the earth; how much damage has humanity wrought?

Forestry

- A stewardship response to deforestation and reforestation.
- Dehumanizing the environment.

Math/Statistics

- The rise of Chaos and the future of naturalism.
- Discovering the structure of creation.
- Non-Euclidean geometry and the revolution in mathematics.

Meteorology

- Reassessing the early earth and its atmosphere.
- What is known of the "ozone hole"?

Natural Science

- A comparison of contrast between theistic and methodological science.
- Can knowledge about God be gained through studying nature?
- Intelligent Design v. macroevolution.
- Modern secular scientists who doubt the paradigm of evolutionary belief.

Physics

- Will physics uncover a science of consciousness?

- The relation of quantum mechanics and relativity to creation.
- Physics and Eastern Mysticism.

Linguistics

- How the language capacity is unique to humans and evidence of special design.

Counseling

- How parents can shape a child's sexual identity.
- The characteristics of strong families.
- How the belief in a sinful nature affects self-esteem.

Drama

- The theatrical treatment of political correctness.
- The treatment of religion in modern drama.

Education/Curriculum

- Sound ethics in scientific research.
- Radical feminism and Goddess worship in modern curriculum.
- Trends and implications of student teacher evaluations.
- An examination of Gay Studies and other liberal programs.
- A brief history of curriculum; a shift from sacred to secular.
- Student dishonesty and cheating; a ten-year evaluation.
- Special interests and the S.A.T.
- Correlations of religious commitment and women achieving higher education.
- Government/Political Science
- A Christian response to Bosnian policy.
- Building a conservative Christian agenda for Minority policy.
- Christian charity and federal humanitarian aid.

History

- Support and criticism of the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- The Intent of the Founding Fathers.
- Secular v. sacred: the origins of feminism.
- Do we learn from our mistakes? Examining the gap between scholarship and society.
- Religion and the history of science.
- The historicity of the resurrection.

Journalism

- Religious ideas and the history of the American newspaper.

English/Literature

- The influence of Orwell and Huxley on modern literature.
- The origins and trends of deconstruction.
- The abridgment of classical literature.
- Spiritual implications of The Faerie Queene.
- The Bible as literature.
- Teaching truth from the Great Books.

Philosophy

- The concept of original sin in Eastern and Western thought.
- Opening dialogue between the Naturalist and the Theist.
- The morality of passive resistance.
- Can all of reality eventually be explained by the laws of physics?
- Can there be a scientific theory of creation?
- The collapse of the intellectual grounds for holding an atheist position.

Religious Studies

- Absolutism v. relativism.
- Theories surrounding the evolution of religion.
- The problem of evil and suffering.
- Criticism of the world as God's body.

Criminal Justice

- A Christian solution to rehabilitation.

Law

- The origins of the Separation of Church and State.
- Civil rights v. Civil Liberty.
- Pros and cons of pursuing academic litigation.
- Changes in the judiciary; from interpretation of law to dispensing fundamental values for the public?
- Ramifications of the Convention on the Rights of a Child.

Psychology

- Are religious persons more or less likely to suffer psychopathology?
- Are people who experience spiritual forgiveness more or less well-adjusted in family relationships?
- Psychological foundations for rearing masculine boy and feminine girls.
- Divorce and shorter life-spans; correlations between marital separation and longevity.
- The rejection of determinism and materialism in psychology.

Social Work

- Results of tithing on personal community service.
- What environmental factors accompany increased smoking among teenagers?
- Correlations between men with multiple sex partners and condom failure.

Sociology

- Cultural reality v. the sin nature of Man.
- Overpopulation and God's command to "fill the earth."
- How a father's absence affects children's development.
- The effects of cohabitation on an individual's social moree.
- The effects of good relationships between teenagers and their fathers and the values those transmit as adults.
- Correlations between cohabitation and divorce.
- The sociological shift from positivist dogmatism

Health Science

- Divorce rate increase and no-fault divorce laws.

Medicine

- Is religion relevant to coping with illness?
- Correlations between active spiritual life and good physical health.
- Alcohol consumption and the suicide rate.
- Personal religious faith and patient recovery rates.
- Causes of premature death among teenagers and young adults.
- Condom use among sexually active individuals and STD rates.

Psychiatry

- Gender identity disorder in childhood.
- Euthanasia and prenatal genetic screening.
- Prevention of high risk behavior for AIDS transmission.

everything I have them doing on the Web is something I don't mind them sharing with each other. In a sense, I'm saying that I'm using it only for situations when I don't mind if they study together or discuss material with each other anyway. For those things which I think need to be restricted, I do them the old-fashioned way now. It's possible to do encrypted things and all.

REAL ISSUE

What advantages have you seen in incorporating the Web into your courses?

BOULDIN

This is my second year of doing it, which proved to be a real advantage. It's like anything else I do; the next time around I don't have to re-invent it all—I can just make slight changes. But working on the Web carries even more advantages.

For example, there's always a couple of pioneers who do the assignment the day it's assigned. Everyone else waits until the last minute. Well, a couple of the pioneers will work on the assignment and I'll get their feedback on items they don't understand or on flaws they found in the material. So, I could make that change and everybody had an instantly updated copy—and I could make that change any time of the night or day since I have access from home as well.

REAL ISSUE

Has using the Web been beneficial to your effectiveness and efficiency as a teacher?

BOULDIN

The way it has helped me the most is that it essentially allows me to do something only once. In other words I can publish it on the Web and somebody calls me up and says, "I would like to have such and such a paper," or "Do you have some slides on this?" or "What do you do in your course?" Well, I can just send them a link—and I'm through. I don't have to find it in my file, go down to the copy machine, make a copy of it, fill out an address label, put it in the mail, and then they have to wait a week. So in some ways it's improved my productivity for finding my material and making it available.

REAL ISSUE

Do you direct your students to sources of information on the Internet outside of your department and university?

BOULDIN

Yes, and to illustrate how easy and effective it is, I was recently talking to a student in my office and he said, "I need to go to the library," and I replied, "Oh, we can do better than that."

I then turned around, typed in a couple of key search-words and the browser listed the information he was looking for at several universities, libraries and conferences. We looked down the list together and I said, "Now here is a bibliography of one hundred

"I have to type class information on my computer anyway, so I just put it in the html format, place it on the Web, and it's done. It's very little additional effort . . ."

references on this topic and over here is a tutorial." So, in a sense, they're doing the classical library search for citations and information, but they're doing it from their desktop.

REAL ISSUE

Do you personally conduct research on the Internet, then?

BOULDIN

Yes, in fact I also get information there on when to send in proposals and discover broad-agency announcements regarding calls for proposals. I find getting information out of Washington about grants and the like via the Internet is very convenient.

REAL ISSUE

Has this positively or negatively affected your interaction with your students?

BOULDIN

I think it's very positive. They like being in my class because they know they're getting to do things that are a little newer and cutting-edge, and that is very attractive to them.

REAL ISSUE

So, do you find any of them apprehensive or most of them pretty familiar with the Web and excited about trying it out?

BOULDIN

Either my students are brave or they're like my ten year old who surfs the Web and doesn't have a fear of the unknown.

Continued on next page

