WHY THE CHURCH MUST RECOVER CHRISTIAN COMPASSION IN AN AGE OF INCIVILITY

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The Magazine of Biola University SUMMER 2016
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IT’S ALL ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS WHEN YOU’RE IN THE CIRCLE!

COVER STORY p.24
The Radical Call of Kindness
In an increasingly polarized and mean-spirited culture, too many of us have lost sight of the power of kindness, mistakenly dismissing it as fluff or bland, writes Biola President Barry H. Corey. It’s time for Christians to rediscover this biblical virtue.

FEATURE p.28
Offering Refuge
Amid a worldwide refugee crisis, meet several Biolans who are taking bold action to care for those in need.

FEATURE p.34
20 Years of SCORR
For two decades, Biola’s Student Congress on Racial Reconciliation has challenged and equipped Christian colleges to better serve diverse students.

THINK BIBLICALLY p.17
How Should Christians Engage in the 2016 Election?
plus Faculty Research Focus / Books by Biolans / Defend Your Faith / Latest Resources

ALUMNI LIFE p.40
Meet Mitch Bahr ('96), California Teacher of the Year
plus Class Notes / Alumni Profiles / From the Alumni Office / In Memoriam / Memory Lane

THE LAST WORD p.47
Dirt-Filled Trucks and Spirit-Filled Believers

FROM MY WINDOW IN METZGER HALL, I’ve got a front-and-center view of a massive pit opening up in the ground near Biola’s main entrance. Don’t worry, though: It’s the good kind of pit.

Each day over the past couple of months, I’ve watched a steady procession of trucks descend a dirt slope to haul away loads of freshly excavated earth. Each day, their work has moved further into the ground, getting us a bit closer to construction of the new Alton and Lydia Lim Center for Science, Technology and Health. (Read more about that on page 7.)

And while the view isn’t the prettiest and the tractors’ roars can be distracting — think of the T. rex from Jurassic Park — to me, these are the sights and sounds of God’s faithfulness. When I look out the window, I see his hand at work. In just a matter of months, the classrooms and equipment in this building will begin to prepare future generations of Christians for leadership roles in the ever-expanding and ever-more-important fields of science, technology and health care. I’m excited about what will take place in this building over the coming decades.

More than just anticipation of the future, though, the coming and going of the trucks has also given me a daily reminder of the significance that seemingly small and mundane activities can have for the fulfillment of a greater purpose. When the dust finally settles, the new building will have been built through tens of thousands of actions by thousands of people: paperwork submitted, prayers prayed, donations given, meetings attended, dump trucks filled.

When we look around at the broken state of our world — with its cultural shifts, political disarray, refugee crises, racial strife, spiritual emptiness — it’s natural to want radical, sudden change. But much like a building doesn’t materialize overnight, God doesn’t bring transformation in dramatic, all-at-once moments, at least not usually. Instead, he uses the steady, faithful work of people seeking to be obedient with the callings and vocations he’s given them. He uses the Spirit-produced fruit of his Spirit-filled image-bearers.

As Christians, we’re called to be faithful disciples who are being conformed daily to the character of Christ, trusting that he is at work in ways we don’t always see. One of the ways we do that is by pursuing Christ-like kindness, the subject of this issue’s cover story from President Barry H. Corey (page 24). As he points out, kindness isn’t the same thing as niceness. It’s a courageous, countercultural and sometimes costly posture of heart. A robust understanding of this “forgotten virtue” can have a profound impact on how we as Christians share our faith (page 21), engage in politics (page 17), serve the marginalized (page 28), bridge racial divides (page 34) and go about our day-to-day work.

Throughout this issue, we spotlight alumni and professors who embody such kindness, living with “a firm center and soft edges,” as Corey puts it. Together, they represent untold thousands of Biolans whose steady, faithful work is playing an important role in a much larger mission — not unlike the trucks outside my window.
MAGAZINE EARNS GOLD
Biola Magazine recently earned two awards from CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) District VII in the 2016 Awards of Excellence. The magazine received the top honors (gold) in periodical design for the Summer 2015 special campaign issue. It also received a gold award in illustration for the Fall 2014 cover story, “The Freedom to be a Christian College.” The annual awards program, which recognizes outstanding communication and marketing efforts, covers colleges and universities in Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada and Utah.

Opinions should be a maximum of 200 words and include full name, city and state, and class year (if applicable). They may be edited for length and clarity.
This spring, Biola University’s Center for Christian Thought (CCT) and Center for Marriage and Relationships (CMR) hosted a one-day symposium on campus titled “Love No Matter What: Politics, Sex, Race and the Way of the Cross.” Held shortly before Easter, this event gathered Christian speakers of differing backgrounds to discuss how to navigate contentious conversations in today’s polemical culture. Not everyone in this conversation necessarily agreed with each other.

The event followed a similar symposium at Biola in 2015, CCT’s “Disagree” conference. Writing about why Biola is hosting these sorts of conversations, CCT director Gregg Ten Elshof said this:

Disagreement is an inescapable fact of life. We can’t outrun, outsmart or out-love it. It’s here to stay. And if we learn how to interact with it well, it can be a powerful resource for learning, for love and even for growth into deep and abiding unity.

The self-effacing humility and “love your enemies” sacrifice of Jesus Christ is counterintuitive and countercultural in today’s world, but it is a crucial framework for healthy Christian cultural engagement.

As Christians, we need healthy, “love no matter what”-style disagreement modeled for us like never before, given the vitriol and the fragmentation that seems to be increasing rather than decreasing. How do we winsomely engage with those who may not share our faith in conversations on worldviews, social issues, politics, race, economics, war, immigration, gun control and even the existence of God? We need modelers who show how we can flourish in the context of disagreement.

This takes Christians who embody the virtues of courage, conviction and civility. Conviction is the virtue that binds us to our most cherished and least changing beliefs. It grounds us in biblical truth and forms our core. Courage is the virtue that calls us to bold action, reaching beyond the horizons of possibility. As Christians, we are called to be a present witness within our culture. We do this by melding conviction with courage, guided by civility that bears witness to the gospel. Only with all three do I believe we’ll make progress on the seemingly intractable challenges of our day.

In my nine years as president of Biola University I have become convinced that we need a generation of Christians with deep convictions regarding what is true, grounded in the Word of God. We need a generation of Christians courageous in their faith, empowered by the Spirit of God. And we need a generation of Christians whose demeanor is civil, kind and compassionate, modeled by the Son of God. Even within the church, the days of going it alone or fostering a spirit of competition need to give way to fresh partnerships and collaborations that stretch beyond our theological and denominational differences.

Though we need to speak out against injustices and that which does not glorify God, we also need to consider how to engage our culture with a deep conviction in truth, but in a way that is meek, loving, gracious and fragrant. We engage the culture with temperate tones by serving alongside and not casting stones from pedestals.

How we respond to the shifting of tectonic plates now underway may well test the church as it has throughout the ages. These testing times have been Christians’ finest hours. With a world that is more accessible through technology, with a nation that is more ethnically diverse, with the interreligious dialogue more at our doorstep than ever, with some of the faith’s historic values under siege, Christians are being closely watched.

Amid these changes, the truth of Scripture even more must fortify our deepest convictions, fuel our courage and call us to postures of gentleness and respect (1 Pet. 3:15). This means exercising the virtue of kindness and exorcising the spirit of condescension. May we demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ by our faithful obedience to biblical conviction, by the strength of our Spirit-breathed courage with the tone of Christian civility.

Barry H. Corey is the eighth president of Biola University. Visit his office online at biola.edu/president, on Facebook at facebook.com/presidentcorey and on Twitter at twitter.com/presidentcorey.
BIOALA BROKE GROUND IN FEBRUARY on the most ambitious building project in its history, an expansive new science facility that will serve as a home to some of the university’s fastest-growing and most in-demand programs.

Set to open in early 2018, the Alton and Lydia Lim Center for Science, Technology and Health will triple the amount of space devoted to science education at Biola and provide cutting-edge equipment and research opportunities to students and faculty.

“As we embark today on the building of this significant structure — the largest academic facility in the history of this campus — I am certain of this one thing: This will be a building whose laboratories, and whose microscopes and whose petri dishes, and computers and other offices are all utilized not to deify nature or to declare the achievements of man, but to declare the glory of God,” President Barry H. Corey told a crowd gathered for the Feb. 26 groundbreaking ceremony.

Located along University Drive near the main entrance to campus, directly south of the library, the 91,200-square-foot building will provide 30 laboratories, three classrooms, research spaces, faculty offices and all-new technology.

The building will also serve as the main home for Biola’s new School of Science, Technology and Health, set to officially launch later this summer. The new school will bring together numerous science-related programs that were previously under the umbrella of the School of Arts and Sciences, including: biological science; biochemistry; chemistry; communication sciences and disorders; computer science; engineering physics; environmental science; human biology; kinesiology; mathematics; nursing; physical education and physical science.

University leaders said the building will take Biola to new heights in the sciences and will help to prepare future generations of students for leadership in growing fields.

“We know that this will help us be a much more leading voice in the sciences, technology and health fields, and it will help us to do it from a perspective of our faith, which is often lacking in the sciences,” said Deborah Taylor, Biola’s provost and senior vice president. “We believe that this new building is probably the most dramatic evidence of the way that Biola is advancing our academic reputation for the future.”

With a cost of $63 million, the building is the centerpiece of Biola’s current $180 million fundraising campaign, “A Soul of Conviction, A Voice of Courage: The Campaign for Biola University.” To date, more than $48 million has been committed toward its construction, including a $12 million gift from Alton Lim, for whom the building is named.

-JASON NEWELL
A Big Year for Biola Athletics
Five teams win conference championships; Holmquist gets 900th career victory

BIOLA’S STUDENT-ATHLETES competed their way to one of the most successful years in university history in 2015–16, with five separate teams winning Golden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) championships and dozens of individual competitors earning national and conference-level recognition.

As of March, Biola had the nation's top-ranked athletic program in the Learfield Sports Directors’ Cup standings, sitting in first place atop the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Final standings were expected to be released in mid-June.

**Men’s Basketball**
After being picked to finish in fifth place in the GSAC at the outset of the season, the men’s basketball team shocked the conference in March by winning both the regular season championship and the GSAC championship tournament. The Eagles made it to the NAIA National Championship tournament as the No. 1 seed, but lost in the second round to Mid-America Christian University.

It was the first time in almost 20 years that the men’s team won more than 30 games in a season, finishing with a 30–4 record and remaining undefeated at home with 16 wins. Biola also had the nation’s No. 1 defense, allowing their opponents an average of 60 points in a game.

The season was particularly special for head coach Dave Holmquist, who crossed another major milestone in his storied career by earning his 900th collegiate win on Nov. 24, 2015, becoming just the eighth college basketball coach to reach that mark. He finished the season with a career record of 921–358 and was awarded the title of NCAB NAIA Division I basketball coach of the year.

Senior midfielder Joey O’Keefe was named the conference player of the year, junior forward Leo Contreras was named conference newcomer of the year and head coach Todd Elkins earned his first conference coach of the year honors.

**Men’s Soccer**
The men’s soccer team made program history in November by winning its first-ever outright GSAC championship — claiming both the regular season and tournament championships. The team went on to compete in the NAIA National Championship tournament for the first time since 2011 and made it to the second round before losing in double overtime to Missouri Valley College. The men ended their season with a 15–5–1 record, with three athletes earning NAIA All-American Honors.

Senior midfielder Joey O’Keefe was named the conference player of the year, junior forward Leo Contreras was named conference newcomer of the year and head coach Todd Elkins earned his first conference coach of the year honors.

**Women’s Soccer**
The women’s soccer team finished their season in November tied with Westmont College for the best record in the conference, making them just the second team in program history to earn a GSAC title and the second ever to make it to the NAIA National Championship tournament. Though they ended up losing in the second round of the tournament, the team finished with a 15–4–3 overall record, their most wins in a single season since the 2004 team won 16.

**Women’s Soccer**
Volleyball
The women’s volleyball team advanced to the NAIA National Championship tournament for the 15th time in program history in December, making it to the quarterfinals for the sixth consecutive season before being knocked out. The team ended the season with a 30–4 overall record and a second-place GSAC finish. Seniors Joclyn Kirton, Alyssa Mason and Britta Blaser were honored with both GSAC All-American honors and NAIA All-American honors. Abbie Wright was named NAIA assistant coach of the year by the American Volleyball Coaches’ Association.

Track and Field
For the third time in the past four years, the women’s track and field team claimed the GSAC conference championship in April. The women also won several individual conference championships, including: Anika Gasner in both the 800-meter and 1,500-meter runs; Lyndee Dawson in the 3,000-meter steeplechase; Megan Crumley in the javelin and discus; Amber Nicole Hollinger in the hammer throw; Nicole Falkenstein in the pole vault; and Teddi Wright in the triple jump. The women also won the 4-by-800-meter relay.

Meanwhile, the men’s team earned a fourth-place finish to slide up one slot from last season’s fifth-place mark. Andrew Daedler closed out his career at Biola with the men’s only individual GSAC championship, winning the 1,500-meter run. Both the men’s and women’s teams were scheduled to compete at the NAIA outdoor championships in May (after this issue went to print).

Swimming and Diving
Three Biola swimmers claimed a total of five individual championships at the NAIA National Championships in March. Senior Shane Brinson placed first in the 3-meter dive and 1-meter dive, sophomore Lisa Tixier won in the 100-yard butterfly and 100-yard freestyle, and junior Christina Ali claimed the title in the 200-yard breaststroke. Ali also set new school records in both the 100-yard and 200-yard breaststroke with a time of 1:04.86. Brinson was named the NAIA male diver of the meet, and Biola’s diving coach, Lisa Treguboff, was named NAIA male diving coach of the meet.

Cross Country
The women’s cross country team won its fourth-ever GSAC conference championship in November and went on to finish third in the nation at the NAIA championship. Senior Kellian Hunt finished her season on a high note, winning the individual title for both the NAIA and GSAC meets. Meanwhile, the men’s team placed second at the GSAC conference championship, where senior Kevin Horchler won the men’s individual conference title. At the national meet, Horchler placed seventh to earn his first All-American honors in cross country.

- JASON NEWELL
Square Space

President Barry H. Corey and several other Biolans visited New York on April 2 as part of the Campaign National Tour, hosting around 50 guests inside the hip Lightbox venue in the heart of Manhattan. During the fundraising event — one of many stops across the United States this year — live action videos of Biola’s campus were projected onto the walls, giving guests the temporary sensation of being back on the La Mirada campus.

Photo by Paul Baesel
Updates from the Campaign Trail

In May 2015, the university publicly launched “A Soul of Conviction, A Voice of Courage: The Campaign for Biola University.” The $180 million fundraising effort seeks to make Biola more affordable for students, to provide new facilities that inspire learning, to support new academic initiatives and to extend Biola’s global reach.

As the university’s Office of Advancement continues to raise support for this unprecedented goal, here is a collection of updates from the campaign trail.

**OVERALL CAMPAIGN PROGRESS**

- **$170.6 MILLION** raised
- **$14.7 MILLION** left to raise
- **$180 MILLION** TOTAL GOAL

* As of May 11, 2016

**PROGRESS BY CATEGORY**

- **Improve Student Affordability**
  - $14.7 MILLION
  - $76.2 MILLION

- **Provide Facilities that Inspire Learning**
  - $14.7 MILLION
  - $66.6 MILLION

- **Influence the World of Ideas**
  - $14.7 MILLION
  - $11.7 MILLION

- **Extend Biola’s Global Reach**
  - $14.7 MILLION
  - $8 MILLION

**CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON CENTER FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH**

THANKS TO THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD and the generosity of hundreds of supporters, Biola held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Alton and Lydia Lim Center for Science, Technology and Health on Feb. 26 (read more on page 7). At 91,200 square feet, the building will be the largest academic facility on Biola’s campus. Though construction is underway and on schedule, nearly $15 million still needs to be raised before it opens for use in early 2018.

**CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE**

- **2016**
  - Feb. 29, 2016: Construction Starts

- **2017**
  - Nov. 2017: Construction Ends

- **2018**
  - Jan. 2018: First Classes

**FUNDING PROGRESS**

- **$14.7 MILLION** Balance to be Raised
- **$63 MILLION** Building Cost
- **$48.3 MILLION** Funds Committed to Date

* As of May 11, 2016

Note: An additional $14.8 million has been generously contributed through estate gifts, which are not counted toward the above categories.
124 STUDENTS GET $1,000 SCHOLARSHIPS FROM ONE-DAY ONLINE FUNDRAISER

Last Dec. 1, on Giving Tuesday, Biola supporters generously donated nearly $125,000 to a student scholarship fund in one 24-hour period. It was the most money Biola had ever raised from an online, single-day campaign. Three months later, that money was distributed back to current Biola students in the form of scholarships. More than 300 students filled out applications for the scholarship, which required them to write an essay in response to the prompt, “What does it mean to you to be a Biolan?” or “What has Biola given you the courage to do?” A selection committee evaluated the applicants and chose 124 winners, each awarded a $1,004 scholarship for the 2016–17 academic year.

In addition to raising money for student scholarships, the effort also aimed to creatively utilize social media to engage younger alumni and students and motivate first-time gifts. On this front it was hugely successful. One-third of all gifts on Giving Tuesday were from first-time donors, and 163 alumni under the age of 35 gave gifts, totaling $17,531 (nearly matching the total raised by alumni 36 and older: $20,010).

CAMPAIGN NATIONAL TOUR HITS THE ROAD

Last fall, the campaign for Biola University took the show on the road, beginning a 16-city tour that started in Newport Beach, Calif., in September and is crisscrossing the nation throughout 2016. The tour is designed to give alumni, friends and supporters of Biola a chance to connect with the university and hear about its campaign in their own regions.

Featuring updates from President Barry H. Corey, guest speakers, videos and a time of networking over hors d’oeuvres, these “national tour” events are a crucial component of the fundraising strategy in the final year of the campaign. To date, the tour events have raised more than $700,000 toward the campaign’s goals.
Deborah Taylor Appointed as Provost

DEBORAH L. TAYLOR (’93, M.A. ’01), A LONGTIME Biola University administrator and faculty member, was appointed in May as the university’s new provost and senior vice president. In the role, which she held on an interim basis for nearly a year, she will serve as the university’s second-ranking official and provide key leadership to Biola’s academic programs.

“Deborah Taylor has the ability to lead graciously and wisely in this role, and this has been affirmed by her colleagues both as interim provost and in her previous university capacities,” said President Barry H. Corey. “Her commitment to Christian higher education will help position Biola as a missionally stronger university for the coming years. I am honored to serve alongside such a wise leader who will continue the good momentum that is underway.”

Taylor has served in numerous roles since joining Biola as an education professor in 2001. Prior to her position as interim provost, she most recently served as the associate provost for educational effectiveness, overseeing Biola’s accreditation process with the WASC Senior College and University Commission. Taylor also knows Biola from the perspective of both a student and an alumna, having received both a B.S. in organizational leadership and an M.A. in education from Biola, in addition to a Ph.D. in educational studies from Claremont Graduate University.

“An invitation to step into this role for this season in Biola’s history is an honor, and one I believe God has been shaping me to do over the course of my life and career with the skills and understanding to help the university move forward in concrete, tangible ways,” Taylor said. “I am humbled and incredibly grateful for the increased opportunities to influence good things for Biola.”

As Biola’s chief academic officer, Taylor will work closely with Corey to envision and lead all academic programs as Biola continues to build and strengthen its global presence in Christian higher education. In addition, she will work with academic administrators, deans and faculty on day-to-day academic issues, including: faculty recruitment, promotion and tenure; new academic programming initiatives; and faculty development.

Religious Freedom Scholar Receives 2016 Colson Award

Paul Marshall is the third recipient of Biola’s ‘Conviction and Courage’ award

ON MAY 27, BIOLA UNIVERSITY AWARDED ITS third Charles W. Colson Conviction and Courage Award to Paul Marshall, a religious freedom scholar and journalist who recently co-authored the book Persecuted: The Global Assault on Christians, which highlights the growing problem of religious persecution across the world.

Marshall is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute’s Center for Religious Freedom and the author and editor of more than 20 books on religion and politics, as well as articles in such publications as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post.

Marshall is one of the world’s most outspoken public intellectuals on the importance of religious freedom, not just as a humanitarian matter, but as an idea that is at the core of civil liberties, political liberties and human welfare. The Colson Award was presented to him at Biola’s undergraduate commencement ceremony, where he also delivered the commencement address, “I Make All Things New.”

Inspired by Colson’s legacy of Christian service, discipleship and evangelism, the Colson Conviction and Courage Award is an annual award given by Biola to Christian individuals who embody a demonstrated commitment to the unshakable truths of Scripture and its application in all areas of life (conviction) and a willingness to act on biblical convictions in a bold and yet compassionate manner, however challenging or unfashionable it may be (courage).

Last year’s Colson Award recipient was Baroness Caroline Cox of Queensbury, a British humanitarian and House of Lords member. The inaugural award was delivered posthumously in 2014 to Charles Colson himself.
“Remember that the best thing to fight for is not wealth, not even health, but eternal life. Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life.”

Bishop CHARLES E. BLAKE, presiding bishop of the General Assembly of the Church of God in Christ, speaking at Biola’s fall 2015 commencement in December.

“The sky is not falling, but the ground is clearly shifting, and as the ground is shifting, the question we have to ask is, ‘Will the church in this generation, in the power of the Holy Spirit, join Jesus again on mission?’”

ED STETZER, executive director of LifeWay Research and contributing editor for Christianity Today, speaking on “The Four Commissions of Jesus” in chapel on March 1.

“Image is nothing. Thirst is everything. Let your thirst lead you to encounter Jesus, the living water. He alone freely gives absolute refreshment and complete satisfaction, and invites you into new life and freedom.”

MEGAN FATE MARSHMAN, speaking at the 2016 Missions Conference in March, on John 4 and Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well.
Taylor Stribbling’s final year at Biola also marked a big first. The 2015–16 school year marked the debut of the Student Government Association, and Stribbling served as its first president.

The senior sociology and political science major was elected by her peers last spring to lead the new organization, which reimagined and replaced Associated Students, the organization that formerly represented students and oversaw student programming. In the role, Stribbling was the leading representative of the student body, serving as an advocate to the administration on their behalf. She also led a hired and elected team of students responsible for communicating with the campus and voting on such decisions as how to allocate student fees.

“Knowing that it was the first year of SGA, I wanted to do a lot of internal work to see how the organization is structured, and what changes I could make on the inside that were going to benefit students after the year was done,” she said.

The year taught her some valuable leadership lessons, such as the importance of seeking the Lord’s guidance through consistent prayer, she said. She also realized how important it is for leaders to be people-oriented and confident in how they want to lead so they can boldly take risks that will be beneficial for those who are under their leadership.

“I have learned that when you’re not fully seeking the Lord you depend on people too much,” Stribbling said. “You can’t keep giving and giving if you’re not receiving from someone else. I know that in my leadership I love to be intentional and I oftentimes feel like I can run dry if I’m not coming back to the Lord to rejuvenate and refresh and take care of myself as well.”

As she finished her last semester at Biola and as SGA president, Stribbling said she hoped to continue laying a foundation that would make it easier for student presidents to follow after her. After graduation, she plans on pursuing her passion to defend victims of sex trafficking as an attorney.

- LAURIE BULLOCK
With the 2016 U.S. presidential election well underway and political rhetoric heating up, perennial discussions about evangelicals and politics are ubiquitous in the media. What issues matter to them? Who is their preferred candidate? Are evangelicals as monolithic as the media portray them? And what might this election reveal about healthy and unhealthy intersections of faith and politics?

Joy Qualls, chair and associate professor of communication studies at Biola, thinks about these questions a lot. When it comes to politics, Qualls is an insider (having worked on political campaigns in Washington, D.C.), an academic observer (her research interests include evangelical political rhetoric) and a professed “political junkie.” Biola Magazine sat down with her during the presidential primary season to talk about the 2016 election cycle and her views on the pitfalls and potential of evangelical political engagement. Here is an edited transcript of the conversation.

During an election year the media talk a lot about evangelicals as a voting bloc, but what do they misunderstand about evangelicals in terms of who we are?

One of the challenges of media in general, when you only have so much space and time but you have to create a narrative, is that categories like “evangelical” tend to be portrayed as monolithic. There are misconceptions of what the evangelical community looks like, because it is actually quite dynamic in terms of theology as well as in different regions and cultures. The challenge for us in the evangelical community is to be willing to acknowledge the nuances and to not play into the narrative that we’re a monolithic community.

Do you sense a sort of crumbling consensus in society, as we become more fragmented and coalitions of any sort are hard to build? And has this become especially evident this election cycle for evangelicals? Not that we were ever a monolithic entity, but it does seem that evangelicals in this election have been all over the place in terms of which candidates they’ve favored and which issues matter most.

I’m not one who believes we’re more divided than ever. What I do believe is that we have access to information faster and in more forms, which makes it feel as if things are dramatically different. But if you study political action since the Revolution, and even pre-Revolution in the debates among the founders, there was never a consensus. There was always division. I like to harken back to guys like Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, who I call “the original political enemies.” They knew they needed one another, but they were never, ever going to see eye to eye, and did things to undermine one another. So that said, I really don’t think that we’re living in a different time.

We in the evangelical community are as diverse as the greater American landscape. We’re Democrats, we’re Republicans...
Given the importance of major challenges like 9/11 that just come up, and the need for spontaneous yet wise leadership, is character an important factor to consider in a presidential candidate?

If you’re looking for somebody who is an ideal, they’re going to let you down every time. They’re going to make bad decisions. But I do think character and integrity should be hallmarks of a presidential candidate. How have candidates conducted their business? For those who are currently holding office, have they been only candidates for the next thing, or have they taken their present roles seriously? How do they work with people they disagree with? More than just saying that we should do this, do they do this? Because I think you could be a moral, upstanding citizen who has never broken a law, but if you are somebody who is hostile and degrading, who speaks of other people as if they are our enemies as opposed to our brothers and sisters, I think that’s as much of a character flaw as somebody who outright lies.

The other thing that I think you have to look at is how have people dealt with adversity? When trouble, either by your own hand or that of another, comes into your world, how did you handle it? Did you own your failures, or did you seek to eliminate your responsibility?

If the two-party system remains intact after this election, and evangelicals become more disenfranchised in terms of not really fitting into one or the other party, does that mean evangelicals will simply have to accept being a more muted political force going forward?

I think the church as a whole, not just here in the United States, but across the globe, is at a place where we have to make a decision about what our role in this world is. To American evangelicals, I would say this: I think our role is to stand in prophetic resistance to whatever system we’re faced with. I think every time we try to turn the church into a power broker, the destruction and change comes to the church and not to that which we are trying to influence. So I think our role is to stand in prophetic resistance. It’s not a standing against, because Jesus didn’t do that. Jesus didn’t say to topple the Roman government. Jesus didn’t say to start a revolution. In fact, he said, “Give to Caesar what’s Caesar’s,” and he submitted himself to those authorities, even when it was unjust, to his own detriment, and he suffered an execution that was in and of itself incredibly political.

I think Christians have had such a privileged place in American culture that we’ve lost sight of the fact that this is not our place. America is not the New Jerusalem, but we do have a role to play. And our role may put us outside of power but in a position where the greater message that we have is heard. Christians should vote. They should participate in the process. They should run for office and seek places of influence. But if the goal is power, it will dampen the greater message every single time.

How does a tone of kindness help or hurt Christian political influence? Can evangelicals adopt a more compassionate voice in politics but also remain relevant at a time when rage and yelling gets all the headlines?

I actually think there is no greater time to be a believer than the time we’re living in now, by virtue of exactly what you’ve said. We are living in an era of rage and outrage. We are living in an era of fear. The church of Jesus Christ has a message and a history and a leader who is counter to all of that. How many of us would wash the feet and sit at a table of somebody we know is about to betray us? Rather than looking at this time as a time of hostility, we should see it as an opportunity for the church. This is the greatest opportunity that we have ever had to be an influence — not a power broker, but an influence — in our culture, which means being willing to step outside of the emotion of fear and proclaim a message of hope. When everybody says that we are in crisis, well, we have the answer to crisis. The answer is not a bill or a law or a Supreme Court decision; the answer is a life of dedication to one who is greater and outside of all of this. I think the time for our message is now, and I think that we have an opportunity to really live out the message of Jesus in terms of loving our enemies.
Teaching the Write Way
Professor Christie Curtis’ grammar textbooks are used in classrooms across the U.S.

Christie Curtis (M.A. ’06) loves language. And as the co-author of a widely popular series of grammar textbooks, the Biola education professor gets to share that love each day with countless teachers and students across America.

Since 2009, Curtis’ Grammar and Writing textbooks have sold more than 200,000 copies for use in public, private, charter and homeschool settings, where they’ve earned high praise for giving students a strong foundation in the English language.

“I feel like this was God’s project, and he has blessed this project abundantly,” said Curtis, who serves as chair of the graduate programs in Biola’s School of Education. “We never dreamed that this business would go the way it’s gone [or sell] as many books as it has sold. I fully believe it’s a God thing.”

A teacher since 1974, Curtis has long had an enthusiasm for the written word. After many years of teaching English to junior high school students, she decided to enroll in Biola’s School of Education, graduating in 2006 with a Master of Arts in Education with a concentration in grammar, writing and curriculum.

Five years later, she published the first four textbooks in the Grammar and Writing series, collaborating with Mary Hake of Hake Publishing, Inc., to develop a rigorous, grade-appropriate curriculum. One of the distinct features of the series is its integration of other academic subjects into the material. In developing the curriculum, she intentionally included writing samples and exercises related to such topics as science and social studies in order to reinforce lessons that students are learning within each grade level.

To date, Curtis and Hake have written textbooks for the fourth through eighth grades, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (for the homeschool market) and Hake Publishing (for public, charter and private schools). A third-grade textbook is currently being field tested.

“Our textbooks function on the premise that you have to work on the foundational skills before you allow students to spread their wings and become more creative,” said Curtis, who earned a Ph.D. in higher education from Azusa Pacific University in 2014. “There are some who feel you just let people start writing and hopefully they would learn through just writing and correction. But we have felt that there needs to be some kind of foundation.”

There is no capacity to one’s ability to learn and understand grammar, Curtis said. Nor is there an age limit. Since publishing the textbooks for middle school and elementary students, Curtis and her publishers have received numerous requests for an adult-focused grammar textbook, which is in the process of being written.

“I’m constantly learning, still. Every time I look at a sentence, I try to break it down and see how the words are functioning in a sentence,” Curtis said. “I’m very interested in language ... and I think that enthusiasm spreads to my students.”
Answering Jihad: A Better Way Forward, by Nabeel Qureshi (M.A. ’08), Zondervan, March 2016. San Bernardino was the most lethal terror attack on American soil since 9/11, and it came on the heels of a coordinated assault on Paris. There is no question that innocents were slaughtered in the name of Allah and in the way of jihad, but do the terrorists’ actions actually reflect the religion of Islam? How are we to understand jihad in relation to our Muslim neighbors and friends? Why is there such a surge of Islamist terrorism in the world today, and how are we to respond? In Answering Jihad, bestselling author Nabeel Qureshi answers these questions from the perspective of a former Muslim who is deeply concerned for both his Muslim family and his American homeland.

The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality, by Greg Peters (associate professor, Torrey Honors Institute), Baker Academic, August 2015. Some evangelicals perceive monasticism as a relic from the past, a retreat from the world or a shirking of the call to the Great Commission. At the same time, contemporary evangelical spirituality desires historical Christian manifestations of the faith. In this accessible book, Greg Peters offers a historical survey of monasticism from its origins to current manifestations. He recovers the riches of the monastic tradition for contemporary spiritual formation and devotional practice, explaining why the monastic impulse is a valid and necessary manifestation of the Christian faith for today’s church.

Character Formation in Online Education: A Guide For Instructors, Administrators, And Accrediting Agencies, by Joanne J. Jung (associate professor of biblical and theological studies), Zondervan, October 2015. By replicating, customizing and incorporating the best and most effective practices of what a great professor does in on-campus classes, reimagined for an online delivery system, Jung shows how a higher level of learning and transformation can be achieved through online learning communities. Handy and practical, this user-friendly book provides guidance, helpful tools and effective suggestions for growing learning communities in online courses that are marked by character growth in students — the kind of growth that is central to the mission of Christian higher education.

For All Maternity: What They Didn’t Tell Me About Marriage, Motherhood, and Having a Baby, by Emily Pardy. [’00], Mountain-view Books, May 2015. When should I start a family? Why do I want to become a mother? How will my life change after having a baby? It’s easy for questions like these to plague the mind of an already multitasking woman who just wants to shop for cute onesies. In For All Maternity, writer and professional counselor Emily Pardy encourages newlyweds and would-be parents to ask the hard questions while humorously sharing her own tumultuous journey into motherhood. From sitting awkwardly in marriage counseling to learning how to breast-pump in the middle of the workday, her bumpy road to motherhood encounters lessons about body image, boundaries and belief in a God who is more trustworthy than any baby book around.

Growing Up Social: Raising Relational Kids in a Screen-Driven World, by Arlene Pellicane (’92) and Gary Chapman, Northfield Publishing, September 2014. In this digital age, children are spending more time interacting with a screen and less time playing outside, reading a book or interacting with a parent. While technology can benefit us, it can also erode a sense of togetherness and hinder a child’s emotional and social development. In Growing Up Social, Chapman and Pellicane will empower you with the tools you need to make positive changes starting today and take back your home from an overdependence on screens. You’ll also learn to teach the five skills that every child needs to master: affection, appreciation, anger management, apology and attention.

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Truth Must be Wedded to Grace

DURING A TRIP TO BRECKENRIDGE, a beautiful ski town in the mountains of Colorado, a friend and I decided to get our hair cut at one of the little shops downtown. As we waited our turn, I read another chapter of the book I had brought along with me, a book whose title clearly indicated my interest in spiritual things.

When my turn came and I settled into the chair, the young hairstylist noted that I was reading a Christian book and wondered if it would be okay for her to ask me a question about God that had been on her mind. Of course I said yes, relishing the opportunity to talk about theology. After all, I had been studying apologetics and was ready with all the right answers. Bring it on, I thought, smiling to myself.

“Well,” she started, with just a hint of hesitation, “why does God allow so much evil and suffering in the world?”

Really, that’s all you got? raced through my mind. Why is this such a big problem? It’s one of the most oft-asked questions in apologetics, and I was ready with the classical free-will defense — emphasizing that God desires a relationship with us, which is possible only if we have free will. I made the point that evil can exist only if there is first a standard of objective good and there can be good only if there is a God. In other words, her very question, I pointed out, presupposes the existence of God.

This led to more questions, and I found I could answer each one pretty easily. She’d ask a question, and I had an answer ready at hand.

Things were going extraordinarily well, I thought, until she paused for a long moment, lifted the scissors away from my head, and then began to cry. She stepped back from cutting my hair and said in a quavering voice, “This is a bunch of B.S! You’ve got an answer for everything. It can’t be that easy. You just don’t understand.”

I was speechless (and a bit nervous, since she was clearly upset and had very sharp scissors poised not far from my head). What had just happened? It seemed like we were having a great conversation ... and now this. Well, I quickly changed the topic and made sure to give her a big tip on the way out. Outside the shop, I turned to my friend and asked him why he thought she had been so defensive. He took a deep breath and looked me in the eyes, probably trying to determine if I was ready to hear the truth.

“Well,” he said, as gently as he could manage, “do you have any idea how arrogant you were toward her?”

I was taken aback. But as we walked along the streets of Breckenridge, I thought about the encounter and realized he was absolutely right. Rather than really listening to her, asking questions, and trying to learn from her, I was more interested in scoring points and winning the argument. My replies had come across as prepackaged sound bites rather than compassionate and respectful responses. What I saw, maybe for the first time, is that truth must be wedded to grace, and that what we say is important ... but how we say it is equally critical.

A couple of years ago I visited Canada to record television interviews about my book *Christian Endgame*. Prior to the recording, some of the Christians in the green room told me to be cautious about saying that Christianity is the exclusively true religion. When I inquired why, I was told that it is considered intolerant in Canadian society to claim Christianity is the only way to God. The Christian program executives were concerned about receiving legal reprisals from the Canadian government for broadcasting “intolerant” religious statements.

I don’t know exactly what Canada’s laws are concerning alleged statements of religious intolerance, but it appears the Western world (including America) has allowed political correctness to run amok.

So, how should Christians respond to the challenge that their belief of exclusivity reflects intolerance? Here are five ways to handle this increasingly tricky topic.

1. We can point out that truth exists and that it really matters. Respect and tolerance should never be divorced from truth, especially the concept of ultimate truth. All denials of objective truth are ultimately self-defeating. For example, to claim there is no objective truth would itself constitute an objective truth.

2. We can point out that cold, hard logic requires that contradictory religious truth-claims cannot be simultaneously true. For example, Christianity affirms that Jesus Christ is God incarnate (God in human flesh); but traditional Judaism and Islam both assert that Jesus was not God incarnate. The law of noncontradiction states: A cannot equal A and equal non-A at the same time and in the same way. Based on this law, Jesus Christ cannot be both God incarnate (Christianity) and not God incarnate (Judaism, Islam) at the same time and in the same respect. Affirming the dictates of reason does not violate any acceptable standard of tolerance.

3. We can make an apologetic case for the truthfulness of Christianity. Believers can present persuasive arguments for the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3:15; Jude 3) and point out difficulties in alternative, non-Christian belief systems (2 Cor. 10:5). For example, the Apostle Paul made an affirmative case for Jesus’ resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3–8) and the Apostle John criticized the Docetist heresy that claimed Jesus hadn’t come in the flesh (1 John 4:1–3).

4. We should admit that societies significantly influenced by Christianity have at times promoted or permitted genuine intolerance (e.g., anti-Semitism in 20th century Europe). Christians are forgiven sinners and they should personally and corporately admit their constant struggle against sin. They can, however, point out that Christianity itself affirms genuine tolerance as a virtue via the biblical view that all people are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–27) and are thus deserving of respectful and dignified treatment. Jesus himself set a moral example of treating people with respect and tolerance when he initiated a conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:7–26). Usually rabbis didn’t speak to women in public and Jews avoided interacting with Samaritan people (see John 4:9).

5. Christians are called to witness to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ with both their words (preaching) and their lives (ethical conduct). The world needs to see the power of lived truth. These two things can be accomplished when believers are personally and socially tolerant of people while simultaneously intellectually intolerant of conflicting truth-claims.

At the heart of the Christian faith is the conviction that “Jesus Christ is Lord” (Mark 12:35–37; John 20:28; Rom. 10:9–13; 1 Cor. 8:5–6; 12:3; Phil. 2:11). Remember, the exclusive claims of Christ’s Lordship are no more politically correct today in Canada (or anywhere) than they were 2,000 years ago in the ancient Roman Empire.

THE EXPERT

Kenneth R. Samples (M.A. ’89) is a senior research scholar at Reasons to Believe and an adjunct professor in Biola’s master’s program in Christian apologetics. This article is adapted from a post that originally appeared on his blog at reasons.org.
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NEW

Hispanic Ministry Conference 2016
In this collection from Biola’s 37th annual Hispanic Ministry Conference, missiologist William Taylor unpacks the conference theme, “A Biblical Worldview: How Christ Changes Everything.” He offers two lectures in Spanish: “¿Qué es una Cosmovisión Bíblica?” and “Cómo Practicar una Cosmovisión Bíblica.”

POPULAR

The Intolerance of Tolerance
Greg Koukl (M.A. ’06) explains how the contemporary idea of tolerance is not tolerant at all. Speaking at the Evangelical Philosophical Society’s 10th annual apologetics conference, he explains the logical issues presented by contemporary tolerance and how these issues can be discussed intelligently.

EDITOR’S PICK

Leading With Grace
How can you become more effective and strategic as a leader? In this lecture from Crowell School of Business’ Distinguished Speaker Series, John Townsend (Ph.D. ’84), bestselling author of Boundaries and Leadership Beyond Reason, speaks on the five essential elements that every leader needs.

Highlights of video resources available for free at OPEN.BIOLA.edu

THE MEANING of LOVE
Center for Christian Thought
cct.biola.edu
The CCT hosted a scholarly conference in May on its research theme for the year, “The Meaning of Love.” Visit the CCT’s website for resources from the presenters, including Lynn Underwood and Nicholas Wolterstorff.

OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE
Center for Christianity, Culture & the Arts
ccca.biola.edu
The CCCA hosted its annual arts symposium in March, titled “Openness to Experience: Rethinking Creativity & Aesthetic Intelligence.” Visit the CCCA’s website for a “creativity chapel” featuring several of the presenters.

THE ART OF RELATIONSHIPS
Center for Marriage & Relationships
cmr.biola.edu
The center’s new “Art of Relationships” podcast — featuring professors Chris Grace and Tim Muehlhoff — offers biblical wisdom and scholarly research to help listeners build healthy relationships. Tune in weekly.

Highlights of resources and events from Biola’s academic centers
THE RADICAL CALL OF KINDNESS

WHY THE CHURCH MUST RECOVER CHRISTIAN COMPASSION IN AN AGE OF INCIVILITY

by Barry H. Corey
held the hand of the kindest man I ever knew, sitting by his bedside in silent reverence while he lay shrouded in sheets bleached white.

We were alone in a Boston palliative care room, just the two of us except for a hospice nurse occasionally interrupting the holy to adjust a drip or check a vital. Room 402 was sacred space.

I looked at him that night as he looked at nothing, and I shook my head at the cruelty of cancer. After three years of potent drugs, radiation, wheelchairs, epidurals and horrible pain that drove him to weeping, he never asked, “Why me?” When visitors walked into his room, even during his last days, he made them the honored guests. I thought about his kindness that night as the sounds of his irregular breathing softened.

By morning, my father — the kindhearted reverend — was dead.

Years later, what I recall is not his courage in death. It is his kindness in life. His kindness was the open door for friends and strangers to enter.

I had never given serious thought to the revolutionary power of kindness until my father died. Then I started paying attention to the stories told about him. He wasn’t quickly forgotten. His gentle influence rippled on and continues to ripple on. The stories were neither about his commanding leadership nor about his well-known status. He didn’t start a company, earn much money, make the news, hold public office or write a book. No one would have drafted his Wikipedia page.

The stories were about his spirit of kindness. His influence ran deep and wide, showing up in kindness lavished liberally. He was wildly welcoming, epic in life because he was epic in love.

I’m just now beginning to grasp how uncommon kindness is. My father’s example doesn’t seem to characterize the tone of conversations many Christians are having today in the public square. Kindness has become far too often a forgotten virtue. Christians often bypass kindness to begin a shouting match, or we just talk among ourselves about how awful the other side is. We have ranted before we’ve related, deeming the latter too soft on sin.

Christians — and I’ve seen this especially in American Christians in recent years — have employed the strategy of winning the combative way, and it’s not working. The “culture wars” have done nothing to change our society, and we’ve lost many if not all of these wars. As a result, the church too often is marginalized and mocked, and increasingly people are viewing the Bible as just as intolerable as our aggressive tactics.

To be Christian, however, kindness must shape us and define us. But this powerful virtue seems to be characterizing us less and not more. We have lost an understanding of the power of kindness, mistakenly dismissing it as fluff or bland. Kindness needs to be rediscovered.

Our reflex is to fight those who oppose us. Standing for our dignity and in defense of the truths we hold, we have too often led with harshness toward those antagonistic to the Christian faith. To prove we’re not going soft on our faith (and sometimes understanding that fighting words raise more money), we’re quick to label others from a distance. Leaders have been known to whip their supporters into a frenzy over the antics of their political, media or theological “enemies.”

I wrote Love Kindness out of frustration that those who represent the gospel are often caustic and harsh, picking fights with those whose views are hostile to theirs. In other words, Christians are often starting with unkindness. Unkindness has little effect beyond marshaling other Christians to admire our toughness and raising our own profile. This has gotten us nowhere in the cause of the gospel, our Christian call to be redemptive voices to that which is broken.

Our increasingly shrill sounds in the public square are not strengthening our witness but weakening it. Bullhorns and fist shaking — mustering armies and using war-waging rhetoric — are far less effective than the way of kindness, treating those with whom we disagree with charity and civility.

That doesn’t mean we don’t stand courageously for what we deem right, true and just. But kindness is not incompatible with courage. Kindness embodies courage, although courage does not always embody kindness. Too often our centers are firm on conviction, but our edges are also hard in our tactics. This way is characterized by aggression.

And on the other hand there is the way of “niceness.” Whereas
aggression has a firm center and hard edges, niceness has soft edges and a spongy center. Niceness may be pleasant, but it lacks conviction. It has no soul. Niceness trims its sails to prevailing cultural winds and wanders aimlessly, standing for nothing and thereby failing for everything.

Kindness is certainly not aggression, but it’s also not niceness. Niceness is cosmetic. It’s bland. Niceness is keeping an employee in the job, knowing he’s no longer the right fit but failing him and the company because you don’t have the courage to do the kind thing. Kindness calls you to tell him he’s not the person for the position and then dignify him in the transition.

Kindness is fierce, never to be mistaken for niceness. They’re not the same and never were. Kindness is neither timid nor frail, as niceness can be so easily. Kindness is all over the Bible, plentiful in both Testaments. But you won’t find niceness there once — or nice, for that matter. The ideals of kindness are rooted in Scripture, founded on Christian theology and tested over the millennia by followers of Jesus.

In today’s polarized culture, we are often pulled toward one way or the other, toward the extremes of soft centers or hard edges. I’m proposing a different approach, a third way. Rather than the harshness of firm centers and hard edges, and rather than the weakness of spongy centers and soft edges, why don’t we start with kindness? Kindness is the way of firm centers and soft edges.

Kindness is a biblical way of living. It’s a fruit of the Holy Spirit on Paul’s short list in Galatians 5. It’s not a duty or an act. It’s the natural result of the Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives. We exhale kindness after we inhale what’s been breathed into us by the Spirit. Kindness radiates when we’re earnest about living the way of Christ, the way of the Spirit. Kindness displays the wonder of Christ’s love through us.

Many Christians nowadays tend to talk with bravado and bluster about heroism that impacts the world. I’d rather talk about the power of kindness to change lives, ours and others’. Paul got this when he said to Jesus’ followers in Rome that God’s kindness leads us to repentance (see Romans 2:4). Repentance, more than anything else, changes lives. And kindness leads us there.

Kindness is not a virtue limited to grandmothers or Boy Scouts. We devalue its power when we think of kindness as pampering or random acts. Kindness doesn’t pamper, and it’s not random. It’s radical. It is brave and daring, fearless and courageous, and at times, kindness is dangerous. It has more power to change people than we can imagine. It can break down seemingly impenetrable walls. It can reconcile relationships long thought irreparable. It can empower leaders and break stalemates. It can reconcile nations.

Kindness as Jesus lived it is at the heart of peacemaking and has the muscle to move mountains. It’s authentic and not self-serving.

Don’t sell kindness short. Kindness enables us to negotiate in a time when negotiating is dying and friendly discussions are yielding to rancor. Kindness — the higher ground — helps us find middle ground and common ground.

The greatest leadership influence lies ahead for those who walk the way of kindness in an increasingly fragmented and skeptical society. It’s a path that will help us to be stronger leaders, more winsome neighbors, healthier husbands, better mothers, truer friends, more effective bosses and faithful disciples.

Kindness is strong yet humble. Kindness is honesty and looks like truth with love. The psalmist David believed this, writing, “Let a righteous man strike me — that is a kindness; let him rebuke me — that is oil on my head” (Psalm 141:5).

This is our challenge: living from a Christ-centered core that spills out into a life of kindness. It’s a life with a firm center and soft edges.

For many of us, venturing into
the way of kindness will be hard. It’s countercultural. It’s risky. It’s sometimes unwelcomed and awkward. It’s admitting our own messiness and imperfections on the journey.

The Old Testament prophet Micah once asked on behalf of Israel, “With what shall I come before the Lord?” (Micah 6:6). Micah answers his question with a few hollow suggestions that are in fact external religious rites, each of increasing value. Burnt offerings of calves? One thousand rams? Ten thousand rivers of oil? Our firstborn sons? None of these is sufficient. Rather, the Lord’s sole reply of what he requires is a simple threefold response of obedience: “To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8, ESV).

Love kindness. We don’t “just do” kindness in some Nike-esque way. We are to love kindness. Perhaps the Scriptures so often use the term loving-kindness to make sure we don’t separate love from kindness.

“Love kindness” is the partner of “do justice.” If doing justice is the firm center, then loving kindness is the soft edges. Both are what God expects of us, not one or the other. And we do both of these with equal passion while walking humbly with God.

Love kindness. We need this more than ever. It’s time for us to love kindness and in so doing rediscover the revolutionary force of this fading Christian virtue.

“To love kindness” seems like it should be an easy task for us — who doesn’t love kindness? Kindness is easy to show to the coffee barista when she gets our latte right. Kindness comes naturally to our family so long as there’s harmony. But kindness is much harder to show to those we might have previously ignored, avoided, judged or condemned. Kindness is a tougher road when we live in tension with colleagues or in our marriage. Try walking the way of kindness then. Kindness is not intuitive. But Jesus calls us to demonstrate the power of kindness to everyone we come across. Neighbor or stranger. Wife or son. Colleague or enemy.

More profoundly, kindness calls us to the risk of encountering people with disease, those living outside of grace and even those who would threaten to harm or destroy us. What does kindness look like when we extend it to our enemies or the outcast, the bullied or the lonely, the unsavory or the unlovely? What does it look like to be kind to the persecutors of Christians and not just the persecuted?

Jesus nevertheless calls us to the way of kindness — selfless, humble, vulnerable, open, risky and faithful. He has called us to extraordinary kindness. Kindness opens us to adventurous relationships and the joyful journey we otherwise would miss.

The good news is that kindness has the potential to be contagious. When otherwise inconsequential, indifferent, marginalized, proud, stubborn, condemned individuals receive our genuine kindness, true connection with God can begin. And often they who have received our kindness then pay it forward.

The way of kindness is the revolutionary way Jesus called us to live. The way of selfless risks. The way of staggering hope. The way of authenticity. The way of profound love. The way of becoming the “kind” kind. I’ve got a long way to go, but I want to grasp the power of kindness the way Jesus intended it to be lived.

As a university president, I care about how the rising generation lives out the way of Jesus in an increasingly polarized and mean-spirited culture. So I’m posing the idea of living the way of kindness, a way that is mercy filled, reverent and God fearing. Kindness is a dimension of God’s common grace through us. It’s a civility grounded in gentleness and respect. At the same time, kindness is neither milquetoast nor weak. It is fierce and passionate. The God-authored spirit of kindness in us has the power to upend the enemy and season the world around us for the good. Kindness as Jesus lived it presents the highest hope for a renewal of Christian civility, a renewal needed now more than ever.

As my friend and Biola trustee Bryan Loritts (M.A. ’98) said to me, “We’ve tried legalism, and that has proven inept and unattractive. Some are trying a warped form of love that renders us saltless. The only thing that works is a life that embodies grace and truth lived out in relationship with others.”

I call that kindness — a life with a firm center and soft edges. It’s a life that calls us to risk. A life that calls us to hope. A life that calls us to love. And the life Christ invites us to follow.

OFFERING REFUGE

The people of God have always been refugees. The instant we were banished from Eden, we became wanderers. The minute we fled Egypt, we were displaced. The refugee is a familiar figure in our collective history. And never in history has the plight of the refugee been as visible as it is today.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR)’s 2016–2017 Global Appeal, there are nearly 55 million refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, individuals under the UNHCR’s statelessness mandate and other persons of concern in the world today. In comparison, the 2014–15 report identified 35.8 million individuals in the same marginalized group. The rapid growth of this already massive population is staggering.

Biolans are stepping up to help. Alumni and students have scattered across the globe to alleviate the suffering of physically displaced people groups. Some feel the historical and cultural significance of the Christian’s status as sojourner and exile. Others hear the voice of God calling them to the ends of the earth. However they found their way into this work, these Biolans in Macedonia, North Korea, Greece and Orange County demonstrate the kindness and love of God toward the foreigner.

BY CHARLENE CHOI
In the two years since she graduated from Biola, Olivia Blinn ('14) has been deployed on disaster assistance response teams (DART) with Samaritan’s Purse to Cambodia, Nepal, Ecuador and Greece. In Greece, Blinn has joined hundreds of relief workers who are addressing humanitarian needs accompanying the largest migration of people into Europe since World War II.

Blinn is an information officer for Samaritan’s Purse and executes logistics for internal and external reporting, both by delivering raw content for stories back to Samaritan’s Purse headquarters and also by tracking, monitoring and evaluating systems on the ground as an implementing arm for the UNHCR. This means that she is tracking items distributed by Samaritan’s Purse on the ground as they are daily dispersed to incoming populations. With about 850,000 migrants from Turkey to Greece alone in 2015, monitoring all of this is no small feat.

Refugees are arriving in overwhelming numbers in the Greek Islands, coming off precarious boats that have survived the dangerous Mediterranean journey. They often arrive at these sites dripping wet, with only the clothes on their backs. Many of them lose their bags in the journey at sea, often because of smugglers who throw bags overboard to make room for more people, Blinn said. Once in Greece, refugees are taken to transit sites and registered with the Greek government before continuing on their migratory journey.

Working on the Greek Islands and hearing the stories of people battered by all manner of physical and
DURING HER TIME ON THE GREEK ISLANDS, OLIVIA BLINN MET COUNTLESS REFUGEES AND SOUGHT TO CARE FOR THEIR PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS.
emotional trauma has been a powerful experience for Blinn.

“It felt like for better or for worse, all of us on the ground were standing on the brink,” she said. Being on the front lines of the crisis as it unfolds has left her feeling a great weight and Christian responsibility to actively love people who society tells us are dangerous or “other.” Meeting Syrians and Palestinians who are Christians has challenged her cultural assumptions, and hearing tales of the threats they are fleeing was sobering.

Blinn said the incarnation of Christ motivates her to care for both the spiritual and physical needs of the refugees.

“The fact that we are fragile and we have to sleep, the fact that we are finite, makes us like Jesus,” she said. “It seems small to give someone a bar of soap, but I think it helps to affirm her humanity and dignity.”

In addition to giving them hygiene items and things like sleeping mats and blankets, Blinn and her colleagues, particularly those who speak Arabic and Farsi, sometimes engage refugees in talks about faith.

“We’re finding that there’s an incredible openness to the gospel,” she said. “Hearing the stories from our team working there has reminded me that God is big and is moving in mighty ways. In many of the home countries of these refugees, these conversations would be illegal or punishable by death. As one of my coworkers said, it’s as though the Lord has brought the harvest to us.”

Justin Wheeler (‘07) is the vice president of a nonprofit organization called Liberty in North Korea (LiNK), which helps North Korean refugees escape through a covert route from Northern China into Southeast Asia. In Southeast Asia, fleeing refugees are connected to amnesty-friendly embassies that disperse these individuals to a free life.

How does such an organization even get off the ground?

“The Lord opens doors,” said Wheeler. He and his wife, Kira (‘07), found themselves in China in 2010 and flew across to South Korea on a whim. They had heard that Passion Conferences founder Louie Giglio was in South Korea, and they went to hear him speak.

“Louie probably won’t remember us because we only chatted for 30 minutes,” said Wheeler, but Giglio connected him and his wife with a pastor and his family in South Korea.

This pastor, called “Paul” for the purposes of this article, was actually formerly a spy in China for the North Korean government. Paul’s responsibility was to find fleeing North Koreans in China and repatriate them or send them back to North Korea, where they would be sentenced to a horrific re-education camp. But it was Paul’s job, his livelihood. On one freezing winter night, he fell extremely ill and grew delirious. An underground Chinese church received him and nursed him back to health. Upon receiving such love and care from this church, Paul quit his post in China, went to seminary in South Korea and has since been helping North Koreans escape repatriation. Paul and
Leah Wills (’13) is a case manager for World Relief in Orange County, California, an organization that has empowered the church to serve the most vulnerable since 1944.

Wills works in the Preferred Communities program, which helps serve clients with the greatest needs. For example, when an asylum seeker is newly received, they have three months with an agency to obtain housing, employment and social services benefits, and fulfill many more requirements in order to stay in the U.S. In addition to these administrative hurdles, most clients are suffering from high stress levels and trauma from what they have fled. When they are received by a foreign state such as the U.S., these traumas quickly surface because their hearts and minds have space to process what they could not think about before.

This is when Wills comes in. Her role is to assess what issues the client has and what needs must be met. Refugees come from all over the globe and have different needs. She arranges everything from English classes to job skills training to helping her clients find community in local churches.

Wills once managed the case of a political refugee from Iran who was tortured by the Iranian government and suffered from mental and physical illness. When he came to Wills, she was only three months into her job and she had, in her words, “no idea what [she] was doing.” She had hit the ground running, learning constantly as she went.

Helplessness weighed on her. It dawned on her that she was his only option in life. She felt desperate. She was trying to fill out disability and appeals forms, papers in hand, looking wild-eyed. A co-worker with 25 years of experience in the Department of Immigration looked at her and asked, “Leah, have you even prayed about it yet?”

This was a turning point for her. “All these barriers are barriers and they are hard, but God can do anything and he can equip you to do anything,” she said. “He has to be first. Following his guidance is foremost.”

When she was a student at Biola, Wills remembers that there were refugee families in the apartment complex where she lived. She made it a point to get to know those families, to spark a conversation with her neighbor, to get to know a person who was different from her — to make a friend.

And this is exactly what she encourages other Christians to do. In the midst of a global refugee crisis that means more and more displaced foreigners are seeking asylum in our communities, on our streets and in our churches, there are three simple words that can make a huge difference, she says. “Be a neighbor.”
A small band of seniors from Biola are hunched over a tiny home stove, all four burners burning. Heather Spradley (’16), Sophia Panayiotou, Ian Koh, Katlin Puchalski and Gavin Sweeney are boiling eggs in Spradley’s parents’ home — several thousands of eggs for their journey to Tabanovce on the northern border of Macedonia later that day. The stench is incredible. Heather and her team laugh. They thought they were going to do something about the Syrian refugee crisis — and here they are halfway across the world in a small Macedonian kitchen, boiling eggs.

It’s below freezing out and everyone’s packing their boxes of eggs, bananas and oranges to hand out to the ocean of faces descending from trains, approaching tents of relief workers in waves. During their Interterm trip this past winter, Heather and her friends calculated that they met at least 10,000 people. Ten thousand. Many of them didn’t even know what country they had landed in.

A woman shouts, “Pants!” and points to her son. Panayiotou (’16) rummages through a truckload of clothing but can’t find any. The mother grabs Panayiotou’s arm and says, “No! Look! Pants!” She lifts the blanket from off her son’s body and he is naked from the shirt down. The freezing wind bites his skin.

Eggs and pants. Often this is the reality, the smallness of what we can actually offer as the hands and feet of Christ, Spradley said. But there’s somehow comfort in confronting this smallness, knowing that we are part of something so much more, she said.

The Spradley family arrived in Macedonia with SEND International over 20 years ago. When the refugee crisis began stirring the streets of Skopje, Heather’s parents (Nadine and Andy) began leading volunteer teams from their churches in Skopje to Tabanovce. In Tabanovce, several organizations operate together at the border, distributing enormous truckloads of food and clothing every day. There is a phone-charging station so that individuals can contact their families. Many teams have established Facebook pages to keep in contact and to let passersby know that they are praying for them. Messages of safety flood these pages: “I’ve reached Berlin!”

At Biola last fall, Spradley was moved to begin a campaign to purchase provisions for those crossing the border. The result of her campaign exceeded everyone’s expectations. The recent trip was the result of students responding to the call to pray, donate and be sent to Macedonia.

Spradley, who will begin an M.A. in philosophy this fall at Harvard University, said her time on the Macedonian border reminded her that her Christian faith is not about being settled or having arrived. “We often think, ‘I’ve arrived in my Christianity,’” she said. “But seeing all these people just made me realize how much we haven’t.”

“We’re the same. Our citizenship too is elsewhere — oftentimes we don’t know where we are or what we need. Spradley recalls a man she met who told her, “I ran out the door from the Taliban, and … here I am!” Spradley and her team returned with a strong desire to spread awareness. The people these students met are not just UNHCR statistics; they are individuals with stories and lives.

“[Meeting them] makes everything in the news seem so silly. If you met any one of these people, and exchanged only a few words with them, you wouldn’t be saying ‘keep them out,’” she said. “For many of them, this is the first time they’re in a place of religious freedom of any sort. We’re doing so little for them, but at least we can give them a hard-boiled egg and a banana as they cross into Serbia. And we can pray.”

WAYS YOU CAN HELP REFUGEES

☐ PRAY.
Pray for the refugees and those who are helping them, as well as for the end to the wars and conflicts displacing so many. Consider holding prayer services specifically for refugees.

☐ LEARN.
Educate yourself about the refugee crisis. The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) has good information at www.unhcr.org.

☐ GIVE.
Support Christian organizations such as those mentioned in this article, Samaritan’s Purse (samaritanspurse.org), LiNK (libertyinnorthkorea.org), SEND International (send.org) and World Relief (worldrelief.org).

☐ VOLUNTEER.
It is LiNK’s goal this year to rescue 200 North Korean refugees; volunteer and internship opportunities can be found at libertyinnorthkorea.org. Through World Relief in Orange County, you can start a learning group, a good neighbor team, volunteer, intern or advocate; learn more at worldreliefgardengrove.org.
One SCORR & 20 Years Ago

For 20 years, Biola’s annual Student Congress on Racial Reconciliation has celebrated the beauty and engaged the challenges of diversity on Christian college campuses.

By Brett McCracken | Photos by Austin Bland
Evangelical Colleges’ Diversity Problem.” That was the headline of a January 2016 feature article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, which explored hardships for minority students on Christian college campuses and pondered whether “there is something about evangelical colleges that heightens the challenges facing minority students and professors.”

Though member schools within the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) are seeing record enrollment of students of color (upwards of 50 percent minority enrollment at some schools), the resources and structures to support them are lagging behind.

“They have been promised an equal education, but they are actually experiencing a very different university and college than their white majority colleagues,” said Pete Menjares, the CCCU’s senior fellow for diversity. In contrast to what the viewbooks and website marketing might have led them to believe, most of the faculty, staff, senior administrators and boards of trustees are white, said Menjares, reflecting a homogeneity of leadership that doesn’t mirror the diversity of the student body, nor that of the surrounding culture.

“[Minority students] are asking for change,” said Menjares at a luncheon for faculty and staff at Biola on Feb. 19. “They are asking for their faculty and administrators to know them and teach to their particular contexts, learning styles and frames of reference, so they aren’t constantly having to accommodate to white majority culture.”

Menjares, who worked for 18 years as a professor and administrator at Biola, pointed out that Christian colleges and universities represented the only higher education sector without a president of color.

“We do not currently have a president of color in our movement, and that’s an indictment upon us,” said Menjares.

Addressing the challenges for minority students on Christian college campuses, and raising awareness about the systems that may perpetuate these challenges, is one of the goals of SCORR, the Student Congress on Racial Reconciliation, which gathers hundreds on Biola’s campus each February.

On its 20th anniversary gathering this past Feb. 18-20, nearly 900 attendees from Biola and 15 other CCCU schools reflected on the legacy of SCORR and its ongoing importance in the landscape of Christian higher education.

The Origins of SCORR

In the summer of 1995, Glen Kinoshita, director of multi-ethnic programs and development, was working at Biola and lamented what he saw as a deficiency in diversity programming on campus. Having graduated from Biola as an undergraduate in 1988 and from Talbot School of Theology with an M.Div. in 1991, Kinoshita had experienced “many of the issues that a lack of diversity on a Christian campus brings.”

Compared with other campuses (especially secular campuses) which had conferences, classes, curricula and resources for minority students, Kinoshita perceived Christian colleges like Biola to be far behind.

To help address this deficiency, Kinoshita convened a few of his counterparts from other Christian campuses in the region and pitched to them an idea for an annual gathering that would bring together students and staff at Christian colleges who were interested in diversity work. The conference would be a time to celebrate the theological value of diversity, share stories, support one another and go deeper in the reconciliation conversation. Kinoshita received overwhelming support for the idea, and a few months later, in 1996, the first conference was held.

Originally called the Western Regional Multicultural Leadership Conference, the Friday evening and all-day Saturday event drew about 70 off-campus...
registrants in its inaugural year. For the first couple of years, the conference gathered mainly students from the Southern California region. In 2000, the conference name changed to Student Congress on Racial Reconciliation (SCORR) and began to draw registrants from Christian colleges along the West Coast.

Though originally intended as a refuge for minority students who felt alone or underserved on their campuses, the event gradually expanded to include diversity education and awareness programming. Other departments on Biola’s campus began to participate and some conference sessions were geared specifically to students or faculty/staff who were skeptical about or new to the reconciliation conversation. Another aspect of SCORR that has grown has been the presence of the arts, with drama, graffiti art, spoken word and various styles of worship playing an increasingly prominent role in the conference.

In its 20 years, the conference has experienced steady growth in attendance and reputation, today drawing students from as far away as Seattle Pacific University, Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and Cedarville University in Ohio. The 2015 conference drew 421 off-campus registrants from 15 different colleges and universities.

Over the years, speakers at SCORR have included people like Richard Twiss, Jane Higa (Westmont College), Kenneth Ulmer (Faithful Central Bible Church), Soong Chan Rah (North Park Seminary), Efrem Smith (World Impact) and many others.

And while the scope of SCORR has expanded, its vision has remained the same: to help attendees “develop a greater vision for enhancing diversity, promoting biblical justice and inspiring leadership that results in a lifelong process of building God’s kingdom on earth.”

‘More Needed Than Ever’

At a time when racial incidents have been on the rise in America and college campuses have been sites of race-related protests and incidents of racism, the mission of SCORR is more needed than ever, said Kinoshita. The tumult in culture should serve as a wake-up call to the ongoing wounds and desperate need for reconciliation, though our efforts should go beyond merely reacting to incidents when they arise or responding to tension when it becomes unavoidable, he said.

“We need to think proactively about diversity as a value that defines us, that we want to excel and pursue this in our teaching, scholarship, service, campus activities,” he said. “This is the kingdom of God. It’s the body of Christ, the one new humanity. It’s who we are as believers.”

Kinoshita said that one of the goals of SCORR is to facilitate a paradigm shift from thinking of diversity as a “problem to address,” which he says is “deficit thinking,” to thinking of diversity as an asset, a win for everybody. In addition to its biblical grounding, valuing diversity at a place like Biola better prepares students to thrive in an increasingly diverse nation and world, he said.

SCORR is one way of working toward Aspiration 5 of Biola’s 2012–22 University Plan, said Kinoshita, citing the plan’s call for Biola’s campus to “more closely reflect the demographics of our geographic region” and for students to be prepared “to be intellectually and experientially cross-cultural Christians.”

“Living in a monoculture is not a reality for most of the students you are serving,” said alumna and longtime SCORR attendee Erika Bertling (‘94) at this year’s SCORR faculty/staff luncheon. Learning cross-cultural skills is not a luxury for college students today, she said. “It’s a necessity.”

Menjares echoes this sense of urgency, noting that the future of the evangelical movement “hinges on our success in navigating the seas of diversity. If we fail to do so, our movement will become irrelevant within a generation,” he said.

Alicia Miller Andre (‘10), coordinator of multi-ethnic programs and development at Biola and the conference organizer for SCORR, believes that churches and Christian institutions like Biola have an opportunity to create new narratives and visions for what healthy diversity looks like, at a time when many are discouraged by setbacks or slow progress.

“In the world today we have a dearth of creative imagination,” she said. “We need people of faith to speak into that and to show that there are other ways of living and being and doing in the world.”

Student Government Association president Taylor Stribbling (‘16), who emceed some of the SCORR sessions this year, said the conference is important because it gives Biola students opportunities to acknowledge existing racial and social injustices.

“We can’t truly enact change without first acknowledging the issues at hand,” said Stribbling, who hopes to see more students engaging with one another because of SCORR. “My prayer is that God would smile upon us as we choose to dive deeper into conversations and grow stronger together through his word.”

“Listening to the stories and wisdom from diverse voices has increased my empathy and strengthened my relationships in the Biola community. I consider this annual conference one of Biola’s more significant contributions to the work of advancing the kingdom.”

-Deborah Taylor, Provost and Senior Vice President
Embracing Dialogue about Diversity

The presence of SCORR hasn’t always been comfortable, or understood, by everyone on Biola’s campus. The conference can be particularly challenging for those unaccustomed to these sorts of dialogues, said Kinoshita. For those in the majority there can be a “culture of comfort and being in control,” he said, “and SCORR tends to disrupt that for the purposes of putting us into a growth process that we see is very biblical.”

When SCORR began 20 years ago, Dean of Student Engagement John Back (’89) remembers “recoiling a bit inside.” “I found myself asking, ‘Who do I need to reconcile with?’” said Back, who today sees SCORR as a valuable reminder that reconciliation is a necessary and ongoing process.

“Intentionally calling our students out to focus on how together we can address difficult conversations is not only healthy for our community, but critical to our development as individuals,” Back said. “May we each have the courage to step into the conversation.”

Courageous conversations about reconciliation are indeed crucial, but they can be uncomfortable. That’s why humility and listening are necessary in these discussions, said Andre. “It’s always helpful to acknowledge what we don’t know or what we don’t understand,” she said, noting this involves sitting down and hearing the stories of others.

“This isn’t just about statistics. This is about people’s lives,” she said. “For me to acknowledge that I don’t know what that person’s experience is like, to ask myself, ‘What if we really are interacting in the same world but viewing it completely differently and having completely different experiences?’ That was really helpful for me in my own process of growth.”

Biola staff member Phillip Wallace acknowledges that SCORR can be an uncomfortable experience for his white colleagues and friends, but he urges them to attend anyway, to “be with us, to be uncomfortable for the sake of Christ, even if you feel attacked.”

Wallace, a senior research analyst in Biola’s Office of University Planning, says it can be discouraging that even as many minority students travel across the country to attend SCORR, so many in Biola’s own community are unwilling to cross the campus to attend.

“It’s not communicating reciprocity when you have the opportunity to ‘opt out’ and so often take it,” said Wallace, who is black. “I don’t have the ability to opt out. I live a life of discomfort. You really can’t endure a couple hours of discomfort with me?”

Jamie Whitaker Campbell (‘04), interim dean of humanities and social sciences, first attended
SCORR as a student and said she has been blessed and refined by the relational and conversational focus of the conference.

“I see the deep value of the work, conversations and connections provided by SCORR in making our call to be partners in reconciliation a reality in Christian colleges,” she said. “This work is difficult, requiring relationship. For 20 years, SCORR has been a relationship-forging incubator for this Spirit-led work.”

Alumna Nancy Davong (’14) works as a nurse at Cedars-Sinai hospital in Los Angeles and has attended SCORR for the past six years. For her, the way the conference creates space for conversation and relationship with people who disagree helped prepared her to thrive in a diverse workplace.

“My involvement with SCORR increased my intercultural empathy and equipped me with leadership skills that I use everyday with my diverse coworkers and patients,” she said.

Provost and Senior Vice President Deborah Taylor (’94, M.A.Ed. ’01), who has attended SCORR for the past eight years, also said that her journey toward becoming more culturally competent has been shaped and enhanced by the conference.

“Listening to the stories and wisdom from diverse voices has increased my empathy and strengthened my relationships in the Biola community,” she said. “I consider this annual conference one of Biola’s more significant contributions to the work of advancing the kingdom.”

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

These sorts of testimonies are encouraging to Kinoshita and Andre, who have endeavored through SCORR to increase intercultural competency and raise awareness of the biblical mandate and value of diversity, at Biola and beyond.

Kinoshita said that he has been encouraged to see more and more departments on Biola’s campus become involved in SCORR. He is also heartened to see broader efforts on campus related to diversity, including more chapels featuring diverse speakers and forms of worship, more faculty with passion and awareness of these issues, and this year’s hiring of Pamela Christian as vice provost for inclusion and cross-cultural engagement.

Andre said she has perceived a “cultural shift” on campus as there are more and more people “who understand, or want to understand, or are allies of justice and diversity and making an inclusive campus.”

But there is still a long way to go. Looking forward to the next few decades of SCORR, Andre hopes to see more campuswide ownership of the
“Diversity, inclusion, reconciliation and shalom are all themes that mark the body of Christ, that mark Christ-likeness. There can be a defensiveness when we hear the word diversity. But if we shift and embrace this as a passion to be pursued, one that enriches our lives and those around us, it would be amazing.”

- Glen Kinoshita
FOURTEEN YEARS AGO MITCH BAHR (’96) stepped up to the podium to become music director at a rural Northern California high school and brought harmony to what was deemed by school officials as a program in “complete disarray.”

Now, after building a widely respected and successful program at the school, the state of California is singing his praises: Bahr was recently named a 2016 California Teacher of the Year — an honor given by the California Department of Education to just five teachers in the entire state.

“I obviously feel a great sense of gratitude,” said Bahr, who has been a music teacher for 19 years, 14 of which have been at Foothill High School in Palo Cedro, Calif. “It’s nice to be acknowledged but it’s overwhelming because there are a lot of great teachers in California that have my job.”

The music education program at Biola’s Conservatory of Music helped strengthen Bahr’s passion for teaching and music, he said, giving him the tools necessary to teach in a classroom when he finished his degree. One of Bahr’s professors, Robert Feller, had a great influence on him and the way that he approached music and teaching, he said.

“He had a great way to get the most out of us. He was firm when he needed to be and gave grace when we needed it,” Bahr said. “It’s what I try to do with most of my kids now. I think it was tough to understand initially because I was wide eyed and didn’t understand why he was so hard at first, but now I really appreciate it.”

Bahr works to facilitate an atmosphere where everyone feels like they are a part of a team because it emphasizes that playing music is something bigger than themselves.

“I tell my kids, if you’re thinking ‘I’m nervous’ then you can guarantee that you’re thinking about the wrong pronoun, even if it’s before a solo,” Bahr said. “Music is an extremely selfless ordeal. It’s not about yourself. You’re thinking about the band director, the audience, and the other band members.”

One of the things that Bahr focuses on is making sure that students learn things that they can take out of the classroom as well. He works hard to maintain a healthy and honest environment for the kids.

“I try to capture moments when the kids are real and they know how to deal with the things that come their way in life,” he said.

— LAURIE BULLOCK
James A. Borland (Th. M. ‘71) was re-elected on Nov. 3 to a second four-year term on the Campbell County Board of Supervisors in Virginia, which has over 8,000 constituents. He is also in 39th year as professor of New Testament and theology at Liberty University.

Skip Garmo (’71), founder of Character Solutions International and a former adjunct professor in the Torrey Honors Institute, published The Leader’s SECRET: Asking the Right Questions & Embracing God’s Answers in September 2014. He writes in the book that a leading cause of failure in Christian leadership is falling in love with the process instead of the outcome. Leaders with enough conviction and courage to follow the data in the Scriptures will look away from trendy axioms, foggy vision talk and “secret sauce” for successful leadership, and will instead risk focusing primarily on Christ-like, God-honoring character.

Steve Blount (’72) won a seat on the North Orange County Community College District Board of Trustees in California on Feb. 9, 2016. His Area 3 seat encompasses all of Buena Park and La Palma and parts of Cypress and Anaheim.

Daniel B. Wallace (’74) was named president of the Evangelical Theological Society following the recent presidential terms of two Talbot School of Theology faculty members, Scott Rae and Clinton E. Arnold. Wallace, a senior professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, is in the middle of a two-year project with the institute he founded, the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, which is digitizing 300 New Testament manuscripts at the National Library of Greece in Athens.

Cheryl (Beachler, ’78) Vanick recently completed her reading certificate from the University of Southern California. She has been a literacy specialist at Meadows Elementary School in Manhattan Beach, Calif., for 15 years and recently began an additional position as university supervisor of student teachers for California State University, Dominguez Hills.

Roger (Ph.D. ’92) and Jan (M.A. ’89) Dixon recently published Cross-Cultural Church Planting for Probes. Jan and Roger have been directly or vicariously involved in cross-cultural church planting for nearly 50 years. “Probe” — or probationary — refers to “the new guy on the block,” the rookie. The Dioxons experienced being probes in working among the Sundanese Muslim people for over 30 years. They wrote this book to help others going through similar experiences.

Jennifer (Cowen, ’95) Fitzgerald was recently elected mayor of Fullerton, Calif. She has been on the Fullerton City Council since November 2012. In addition to her public service, she has worked in public relations and public affairs in Orange County for 20 years.

Deborah Price (’99, M.A. ’05) lives in Newark, Ohio, where she and her husband serve as pastor of the WHY Church in Elk River, Minn., while Esther is at home helping Lennox adjust to his new family.

Karynn Holbrook (’06) published her first work of fiction, Group Therapy, in January 2016. The book centers on Rachel London, who after experiencing a mental breakdown at work, is forced between getting fired and getting help. Rachel reluctantly agrees to go to therapy, but when she is greeted by a counselor with a tattoo of an eagle and Isaiah 40:31 on her arm and hears unimaginable experiences from other women, she’s more convinced than ever that she does not need therapy, her family or God. Will Rachel confront her painful past in order to keep her future on track?

Robert ‘Bobb’ Chang (’08) and his wife, Katie, celebrated the birth of their son, Zadok Psalm, in September 2015. He joined them 2-year-old daughter, Prayer Noelle. The Changs live in Burbank, where Bobb continues to receive the Lord’s grace in his family and in his journey in acting and filmmaking. He is currently shooting a web series called “Mr. Student Body President” on Verizon’s Go90, releasing in July.

Lisa Simitl (’08) recently published the book Monday Never Comes, in which she shares how her fight against obesity wasn’t won in the kitchen nor in the gym, but in her mind. Liana, who lost 180 pounds, shares her weight-loss story and the principles learned along the journey to help readers overcome the seemingly impossible. Learn more about her story and the book at lianniss.com.

Becky (Lorge, ‘09) Salazar married Eric Salazar, a current Talbot School of Theology student, on Nov. 6, 2015. The two met in Roseville, Calif., through the young adults group at the church they both attended for four years later they married and moved back to the Biola area, where Eric began attending Talbot in the spring of 2015.

Rick Laib (M.A. ’10) completed an Th. M. in systematic theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., in December 2014.

Jan Maya (’13) started his own film production company called Studio and Cine after graduating. Recently, one of the company’s short documentary films, Lifeline, made it to one of the largest film festivals in the country, the Santa Barbara International Film Festival. The film is about a child soldier from...
Biola University thanks these generous sponsors for supporting our 2015–16 programs and events, including Opening Weekend, the 37th Annual Golf Tournament, Biola Weekend, the Eagles Athletics Association and Grandparents Day.

Big Thanks for a Big Check

EVERY YEAR, I watch with joy as the Alumni Board presents a “big check” to the student body at our annual Alumni Awards and Golden Eagles chapel. This year’s “big check” — presented on Feb. 24 — was both figurative and literal as it totaled over $4.1 million from alumni giving. Wow!

What an amazing blessing and impact your gifts have been to our students and to The Campaign for Biola University. Your gifts are making a difference in so many ways: scholarships; a new science, technology and health building; athletic facilities; several new academic centers; and the extension of our classroom teaching around the world. I want to extend our thanks to all of you who have given on behalf of the future generations that will benefit from the education they will receive in this place.

For those of us who have been around Biola for more than a decade or so (I’m getting ready to enter my fourth decade at Biola!), we are truly amazed at the outpouring of support and participation that we are experiencing from the Biola family through this campaign. As you have been reading about or are experiencing with us, there are some real changes taking place — both to the look of the campus and to the academic programs that are being taught here. And it is the support of our friends and partners in education that are making all of these amazing improvements possible. We are enjoying the opportunity to show those changes to anyone visiting campus and to many of you who are seeing the changes for the first time through a “virtual visit” during our Campaign National Tour events.

Speaking of which, it has also been amazing to meet so many of you as we have taken the campaign on the road throughout the United States. In the coming months, we will be visiting several more cities with President Barry H. Corey and speakers from Biola. At each stop, they’re sharing the exciting news of all that’s happening here and through our alumni around the world. If you live anywhere near Dallas, Portland, Denver, Chicago or Los Angeles, I encourage you to join us later this fall when we come to your town for an evening of fun and excitement. I think you will enjoy the evening and come away with feelings of excitement and gratitude for how God is blessing this place and our faculty and students.

For more information on the campaign or the Campaign National Tour events, go to giving.biola.edu/campaign.

On behalf of all of us in the alumni office, thank you for your faithfulness in service to Christ’s kingdom. We are proud to be, with you, Biola Alumni for Life!

Rick Bee (’79, M.A. ’90, Ph.D. ’01)
Senior Director of Alumni and Parent Relations
rick.bee@biola.edu
In Memoriam

H. Richard Kater \('50\)

passed away on Dec. 27, 2015, in Eugene, Ore. He is survived by his wife, Marion \('49\), three children, eight grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Kater served in many capacities at his church home, Berean Baptist Church, including church treasurer, deacon, Sunday school teacher for both children and adults, and Boys’ Brigade leader.

Leonard Booker \('51\)

passed away on Feb. 3 in Colorado Springs, Colo. After graduating from Biola with a theology degree, Booker served in pastoral ministry in California for nearly a decade before moving to Quito, Ecuador, in 1962 to serve with Reach Beyond. There, he put his music and radio production talents to work, singing together with his wife, Imogene, in various music groups and doing English-language radio programs. After 15 years in Quito, the Bookers moved back to California in 1976, doing mission representation for the next 15 years. Upon their 1992 retirement from Reach Beyond, the Bookers continued to be active in ministry. They moved to Colorado Springs in 2006 to be closer to family and continued working with international students as long as Leonard’s health permitted.

Lillian Thiesen Kliwer \('53\)

passed away on Oct. 28, 2015, in Yucaipa, Calif. She was 83. As a student at Biola, she was active as a cheerleader and played piano in a school quartet. She also met the love of her life and husband of 54 years, the Rev. Robert C. Kliwer \('52, M.A. ‘55\) who preceded her in death in 2006. In her early years, she was a schoolteacher at Culter Academy and Baldwin Park Christian School. She served faithfully as a pastor’s wife with her husband in many Grace Brethren churches in California, including West Covina, Modesto, Seal Beach, Westminster and Cherry Valley, as well as Linfield Christian School in Temecula. She will be remembered for her hospitality and her ability to make hymns come to life on the piano as she so easily played them by ear.

Melinda \(\text{Wilson} \)Robinson \('88\) of Sagle, Idaho, passed away on Dec. 22, 2015, after a sudden battle with cancer at the age of 49. She is survived by her loving husband of 28 years, Todd Robinson; her children, Athena, Alanna, Avalon and Arwyn and Sean Labolle; and brother Guy Wilson of Leesburg, Fla. She was married in 1987, completed her elementary education degree at Biola, then taught fourth grade at Bethany Christian School in Whittier until starting a family. She homeschooled all four of her daughters through high school and declared herself retired when the youngest graduated. She was a woman of strong faith, which carried her through years of spinal pain following a near-fatal car accident. Even as she suffered daily, she was a warm and happy spirit, always bringing joy to those around her, and she spent many happy hours in her garden. She was an extraordinary seamstress and costumer, sewed clothing for the needy and rarely took time to sew for herself. Her brilliant sense of humor, abiding faith and love for others will be sorely missed by all who knew her.

Alumni Profile

Christianity Under a Microscope

Molecular biologist Anjeanette ‘AJ’ Roberts (M.A. ‘15) explores hard questions about faith and science

As a college student, Anjeanette “AJ” Roberts wanted to dig deeper into the unknown. At the time, that meant viruses. While studying chemistry during her undergraduate years at the University of Tulsa, the mystery of viruses captured her fascination and prompted her eventual Ph.D. work in molecular biology and virology at the University of Pennsylvania and her postdoctoral work in viral pathogenesis at Yale University.

“I wanted to participate in work that would help suffering,” Roberts said. “I knew that knowing how viruses work on a biological level helps alleviate pain.”

After completing her graduate work, Roberts worked in Samara, Russia, lecturing on risks and prevention strategies for the HIV and AIDS viruses. She also worked for a time as a staff scientist for the National Institutes of Health and as an assistant professor in microbiology, immunology and cancer biology at the University of Virginia.

A recent graduate of Biola’s master’s program in Christian apologetics, Roberts is intentional about engaging her colleagues in conversations about faith and science.

“I’m with colleagues who are hostile in some cases because they believe that faith hinders science progression and criticism,” she said. “I like to put Christianity under a microscope and tell them to explore the evidence deeper.”

Her interest in apologetics came after attending a national Christian apologetics conference, which she said was her first experience with apologetics that was practiced with an ethos of humility and truth-seeking.

“I realized it was exactly what I wanted to do,” Roberts said. “It was important to know how to address those kinds of questions for everyone, whether they were completely unbelieving or skeptical.”

One of the ways Roberts addresses her colleagues’ questions about Christianity is through the Alpha Course, a program that is designed to answer questions and facilitate conversation with unbelievers and skeptics regarding Christianity. She is also a research scholar for Reasons to Believe and travels frequently to speak on the integration of science and faith.

“One thing I like to emphasize is that both science and faith are trying to gain knowledge and truth,” Roberts said. “We need to maintain humility to encourage people to put that at the front of their conversations. If we are Christ followers, we know that we don’t know everything extraordinary, so we should approach everything with intellectual humility and spiritual humility.”

-Laurie Bullock
With the release of *The Force Awakens* this past December, the building of Star Wars lands at Disney theme parks and the development of at least five more Star Wars-themed movies, the Star Wars galaxy has never been more expansive or interactive. And one Biola graduate is right in the middle of it all.

Rob Bredow ('94), whom *Variety* described as “one of the most respected technologists in Hollywood,” was recently appointed chief technology officer for Lucasfilm. Bredow also runs a new media group called ILMxLab for Lucasfilm and Industrial Light and Magic, a new division devoted to creating virtual reality, augmented reality and other immersive experiences to supplement the cinematic Star Wars world. Bredow’s team combines expertise in story, technology, sound and visuals to make new experiences “that no one has ever made before,” he said.

“Getting to do work at ILMxLab is kind of a dream job,” he said. “Not only is it Star Wars, but it’s also innovative technology, artistic work and story work all combined.”

Bredow says his work in this lab feels like visual effects did 25 years ago, pushing boundaries of what is possible with new technologies. Figuring out how to tell stories in virtual reality worlds is thrilling but challenging, he says, because there is little precedent.

“The truth is we don’t really know exactly how to do it, but we’ve got the best people in the world to figure it out with us, so that’s pretty fun,” he said.

Being on the cutting edge of technology and visual storytelling has characterized Bredow’s professional life for more than two decades. After graduating with a degree in radio/TV/film from Biola in 1994, Bredow worked for a company called VisionArt, writing new programs and creating computer graphics for shows like *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and movies like *Independence Day* and *Godzilla*. He then moved to Sony Imageworks, where for almost 15 years he worked in various roles related to computer graphics and visual effects. At Sony he worked on films like *Stuart Little*, *Castaway* and *Anger Management*. The *Polar Express* in 2004 was his first job as digital effects supervisor, followed by *Surf’s Up* (2007) and *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* (2009), where he served as visual effects supervisor.

Bredow left Sony last year and relocated to the Bay Area to work for Industrial Light and Magic at Lucasfilm. He began as a visual effects supervisor but was soon tapped to head up the advanced development group in the new media business.

Bredow says his time at Biola helped him develop the right priorities that have allowed him to flourish in the entertainment industry.

“I have seen people through my career who live a little bit more in fear, who are worried about saying the wrong thing in the wrong meeting, and maybe don’t say something that needs to be said, because they’re worried about getting fired,” he said. “That’s just never been my focus. I feel like truth has value, which I learned at Biola for sure.”

Bredow said he’s never been afraid of speaking truth reasonably and fairly, and that if it ever caused him to lose his job “then it wasn’t meant to be anyway.”

“It’s kind of remarkable how much you can stand out if you are just looking out for everybody’s best, and if you are speaking without fear,” he said. “It can go a long way.”

-BRETT MCCCRACKEN
Meet the 2016 Alumni Award Winners

The Office of Alumni Relations and Biola’s Alumni Board recognized four alumni for their outstanding accomplishments and service during a special awards chapel on Feb. 24.

**CULTURAL IMPACT AWARD**
Thomas McCarty ('96) has worked as a film industry cameraman and set light technician for more than 20 years. His work includes feature films such as *Interstellar*, *Avengers: Age of Ultron* and *Saving Mr. Banks*, top-rated award-winning television shows such as *CSI: Cyber*, *The Goldbergs*, *Glee*, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* and *Top Chef Masters*, and commercials for Disneyland, Lowe’s and Samsung. McCarty has also served as director of photography for several independent features films. According to those in the industry, Thomas’ artistic brilliance with light and camera is outshined only by his kindness, generosity and servant spirit. One nominator stated, “Tom exemplifies what it means to be Christ-like in a world that often wants very little to do with Christ. I’ve seen him love the unlovable, reach out to the disenfranchised and rejoice with others who received the accolades that he did not receive — but accolades he so richly deserved.” McCarty and his wife, Kristine, live in Orange County, California, with their daughters, Keira and Karise.

**YOUNG ALUMNUS AWARD**
Zach King ('12) is an Instagram, YouTube and overall social media sensation. Fans the world over have enjoyed his hysterical and magical video creations. His work has landed him features on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *Good Morning America*, *Ad*week and *People*, and he recently appeared on *The Amazing Race* with his wife, Rachel (Holm, '13). As a student, King began to grow a worldwide audience with film editing tutorials and fun, energy-filled short films created over the course of many late nights in his Biola dorm room and in the film production center. After several viral hits on YouTube, King began creating content for social platforms Vine and Instagram and found even larger success. His hard work and entrepreneurial spirit have led him to create a successful brand and to launch a media production company that employs multiple Biola cinema and media arts alumni. Together, King and team have continued to expand and create lively content for fans weekly, as well as commercials for companies such as Walt Disney Pictures, Nike, Coca-Cola and Amazon.

**CLYDE COOK MISSIONS AWARD**
Joanne Shetler ('58, '59, M.A. '93) has dedicated her life to making the gospel available to unreached people. Her first 20 years of ministry with Wycliffe Bible Translators were in a remote village in the northern Philippines called Balangao, where she lived with and learned the language of a mountain group of headhunters. Her translation of the New Testament in 1982 gave birth to churches, with a few thousand Balangaos coming to Christ. The village is now sending its second generation of missionaries to preach, evangelize and train Christian leaders. Her experience with the Balangao people is recounted in her book, *And The Word Came With Power*. After returning to the U.S. and completing her M.A. in intercultural studies at age 57, she and colleague Amy West developed the “Culture Meets Scripture” workshop, which walks Christian leaders in ethnic churches through a set of principles that bring God’s Word to the big issues in their culture. Shetler continues to maintain a busy speaking schedule throughout the world. Her home base is Waxhaw, N.C.

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**
G.V. Mathai’s (’67, M.A. ’70) life has been marked primarily by a call to know Christ and to make him known. Since 1966, when he founded India Evangelical Mission, Mathai has devoted his life to training Indian nationals in reaching their own people with the gospel. Through his ministry, Mathai has preached the gospel to thousands of Indians and founded a Bible college to train Indian nationals in evangelism and discipleship. He also created orphanages, Christian reading rooms, a Bible correspondence course and a slum ministry in Mumbai. While a Talbot Theological Seminary student in 1969, he organized an evangelistic banquet at Biola that drew over 800 international students from across Southern California — 57 of whom decided to follow Christ. Today, at 83, Mathai and his wife, Mariamma, still travel to India twice a year, travel domestically to raise support and take new groups on short-term mission trips to India. He also leads evangelistic and discipleship ministries to internationals living in the U.S. The Mathais live in Southern California and have four grown children, three of whom attended Biola.
Eagle Mania in '82
This year, men's basketball coach Dave Holmquist reached the milestone of 921 wins, becoming the seventh-winningest coach in collegiate basketball history (see page 8). Of Holmquist’s many career highlights, one of them was the 1981–82 season, when Biola finished with a 39–1 overall record and advanced to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) championship game. Holmquist was named the NAIA co-Head Coach of the Year. This yearbook photo of that storied team was accompanied with this description: "The year in basketball was characterized by 'Eagle Mania.' Biolans and the community alike joined together to support the most-watched small college team on the West Coast. Biola gained even further recognition through articles published in *Newsweek* and *Sports Illustrated* magazines, along with a variety of television interviews which featured the only undefeated and untied (regular season) team in any division of 1982 college basketball."
ONE OF THE HAZARDS OF OUR AGE IS CYNICISM. The cynic’s posture is a posture of both suspicion and of nihilism. Cynics tend to assume that other people act for motives about which they are not entirely open, and that if a person’s motives can be revealed, his projects can be discredited. Thus, much of our public conversation takes the form of trying to reveal the underlying motives of those we oppose.

Cynicism also involves a general suspicion of all of our cultural institutions. Whether we are discussing the government, entertainment industry or big business, we assume a critical posture. The very language we use in these discussions is revealing. If we add the prefix “big” or the term “industry” to any institution, we render the institution suspicious. Business may be neutral, but “big business” (as in big-oil or big-tobacco) clearly is not. Health care is a great good, but the “health care industry” is part of the problem. Our habit of framing our discussions in such language reveals our deep cultural cynicism.

Cynicism also brings a kind of nihilism with respect to value. We are hesitant to admit that some course of action has value on its own terms. Rather, we tend to exert our energy to undermine or debunk whatever value is being recommended. In public discussions, we see this cynicism with what can be called the “Yes, but…” response. When someone with whom we disagree raises a good or important point, we rarely stop and think about what she contributed to the discussion. Rather, we tend to respond, “Yes, but…” We pretend to acknowledge the other person’s contribution but we race over it to get to our other points of disagreement.

Cynicism is corrosive to my eyesight. It makes it difficult for me to see the true, the good and the beautiful when it is right in front of me. It makes it hard to see even the plausible and the promising and the OK-looking. It makes me quick to dismiss and slow to listen. It allows me to react to other voices rather than to hear them.

I want to propose one practice that can help reverse the development of a cynical mind. This is the practice of affirmation. I can summarize it in a sentence: Affirm before you criticize. Make it a habit to search for what is good and true and beautiful about a position or an idea before you look for what is false or bad or repugnant in it. Decide that you will say what is good before you say what is bad. Talk about what contribution a thinker makes before you talk about your criticisms.

Paul lays out the practice of affirmation in his letter to the Philippians: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil. 4:8).

Paul tells us to think about those things that are commendable, excellent and true. We practice this kind of thinking, first of all, in our relationships with the people with whom we engage. We are to dwell on the honorable, pure, excellent and praiseworthy things about other people, even those who strongly disagree with us. Paul is commending the practice of affirmation. If we approach our conversations with others by searching carefully for those aspects of the work that reflect what is good, true and beautiful, we will affirm before we criticize.

The cynic’s posture can become so comfortable that we forget that it is a particular posture. It becomes like the recliner in my living room. Once I get in it and get settled, it is hard to be motivated to get up. I need a pretty good reason to exert the effort. The seat of scoffers is quite comfortable. If I remember to speak my affirmations out loud, I am prodded to leave my comfortable posture. Practicing affirmation helps me not stay content in the cynic’s seat.

This issue’s Last Word comes from The Good Book Blog, the faculty blog of Biola’s Talbot School of Theology. This article is adapted from a post that first appeared on Feb. 1, 2016.

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