
UPDATE FROM THE COOKS

An interesting thing happened...



...we are off to a good start with Christian faculty getting organized and holding their campus Fellowship meetings. **That's one of things I wanted to tell you about**, we had an *unusual* startup meeting at Colorado State University—however, unusual **in a good way**.

We did have our typical twenty-plus Christian faculty attending, and you would expect a “typically” good meeting, because so many of those meetings are. It starts with each of us introducing ourselves to the group (again), good fellowship, and is almost always followed by an interesting talk relevant for Christian faculty who work at a secular school. They started this time with one of the leaders of our faculty group, Bryan Dik. He involved us

Bryan Dik, one of the four Christian faculty fellowship leaders at Colorado State University.

in a discussion of what it means and what it looks like to **be a faithful follower** of Christ this year—as a professor at CSU.

Bryan, who teaches in the psychology department, and who does research on how virtue and character can be built in a person, started by helping our group define what they thought the word “faithfulness” meant, and especially as it is used in the New Testament. The most suggested idea was to think of faithfulness in terms of reliability and dependability.

Our discussion ranged beyond that, to think through how that virtue is formed into our character by God. Here's the unusual part: there was a level of personal sharing from the individual faculty in attendance **that you don't always see**.

As I sat through the meeting, contributing where I could, I began thinking that God was doing something that one hopes for on campus. **Everyone seemed to notice it, too**. Many shared how tough things were for them and the pressures they were feeling...already at the beginning of the year. It's a crazy time in so many ways in academe and in our world just now. One faculty member shared how he felt pressured to tow the secular line on campus. The other faculty began sharing how they had a similar experience and how they coped.

I just thought you'd like to know that your prayers are being answered, because we don't want to merely accomplish what we can do through wisdom and hard work.

“We desperately need to have God meet us because...”

We desperately need to have God meet us because when He does come (though He is already here), even better things begin to happen. We'll keep an eye on this and report back what we see.

Other happenings:

- I should have mentioned following the meeting one of the faculty members that attended sent me an email to ask how he could better respond to the spiritual issues and perspectives that are being raised on campus. The good news is that our website has numerous videos and articles we've produced or written to address just



Typical CSU faculty fellowship meeting

the spiritual issues he faces, so he is reading them and we are continuing the conversation!

- Two important conferences are coming soon to our area of the country. The **Society of Christian Philosophers** are having a regional meeting at the Air Force Academy in October of this year, and the conference director and main organizer is a Christian faculty member, Dr. Adam Pelsler. **He attends our fellowship meetings at the Academy**, and this is a great way to keep Christ in the market place of ideas. Another conference, for the **Evangelical Philosophical Society**, is scheduled for Denver in November. I attend these kinds of conferences to network with Christians around the country to broaden our network and find out ways we can do joint projects. For instance, from these types of meetings and the people I've met, I was able in the past to organize a conference on *Christian Scholarship: Knowledge, Reality and Method*, at the University of Colorado. More than 100 Christian scholars attended, and it opened doors to many other opportunities. Believe it or not, the conference was co-sponsored by the the Philosophy Department at CU, Boulder.
- This Thursday, **October 13th**, we have a Fellowship meeting at CSU. Here's more information from the circulated email about that:

Presenter: Dr. John Macdonald, Associate Professor of Supply Chain Management and Logistics, Department of Management

Title: "Making an impact: My students didn't read the syllabus and my research only has 17 cites in Google Scholar, so why am I at CFN today?"

Description: We all desire to make an impact in our research, our teaching, our relationships, and our service. How does our Christian worldview impact these different areas, and especially our scholarship? How can these areas lead to the eternal impact God has asked us to make?

[Bryan J. Dik, Ph.D.](#)

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Wrapping up: More and more through the years as I research and write, I realize the enormous power that university faculty hold by deciding which ideas are honored and celebrated and which ones are to be considered bogus and unworthy of reflection.

They are the gatekeepers of the big ideas that influence our culture, and these big ideas that they hold play an important role in **how our world hears the gospel**. It is an indirect but important power, in that they educate, through curriculums they develop, the leaders and future thought leaders in societies. They not only teach them how to think, but also what to think—and those they teach are our best, brightest and most articulate. That trickles down into nearly every profession, every discipline and to us generally.

As I see it, **the main stranglehold they possess** is by exercising their powers to undermine confidence in ideas that are friendly to Christianity—and Christianity itself—and at the same time strongly and explicitly support secular perspective on the ideas that shape our lives and fortunes. In the process, they often repress Christian freedom of expression. That power is expressed in a myriad of subtle and straight-forward ways, and I believe you can say that the devil is literally (and figuratively) in the details.

It is quite difficult to explain these subtleties briefly and precisely, so let me explain it in somewhat imprecise terms, which perhaps might be more understandable.

Since the collapse of medieval Christian consensus beginning in the fourteenth century, and especially because of the so-called period of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century in Europe, the intellectual spirit of the age has favored naturalism (in its various forms). That is, the natural physical world is all that there is, no spirits or ghosts, no minds (only brains), no God, no after-life, and no basis in the natural world for objective ethics.

While the articulation of this point of view changes over time, it excludes any thoughtful Christian theistic contribution to understanding nature's relationship to God, what a human being really is (robot or agent), and whether humanity has objective freedom and dignity or not. They are left to speculate as to what it all is and means outside the boundaries of the Christian faith. This has had practical ramifications in understanding what the human condition is and how to about "fixing" it. And, as I said earlier, the exclusion of Christian ideas and the attack on its credibility has a huge affect on how people hear what the gospel means.

Those secular perspectives have had a long march (more of a gallop) through the academic disciplines and through the leadership it produces. It **took centuries to get where we are**, and unless there is some sort of Christian awakening—something historically we've seen in places before—we are left to slug this spiritual battle one idea and often one person at a time. It's a worthwhile fight I've been fighting for a long time.

Thanks for joining with us in fighting this battle and for your prayers for getting Christian faculty at secular educational institutions **involved** as well. Your prayers are extremely important to the long term success of the cause of Christ.

Best regards, Jim