



# Distinctly CEDARVILLE

by Thomas White

I thank God for all Christian universities, and I pray for their success. Yet, the landscape of Christian higher education across America is not an even playing field. As anyone surveying universities is most likely aware, choosing what school to attend is a critical decision. Higher education, or any type of education for that matter, is a high-stakes game. Regardless of where young men or women go for their undergraduate training, they are entering an institution that exists to influence the way they think and, consequently, places students on a particular trajectory at a time when they are making significant life choices.

I encourage prospective students and parents to ask several questions of the Christian institutions they are considering. First, does the school have a clear doctrinal statement? If so, do all professors sign it as part of their contract that they completely concur with the doctrinal statement and will teach geology, history, biology, and sociology in a manner consistent with the school's doctrinal statement? Second, what steps does the university take to encourage spiritual growth, and is chapel a key component of its strategy? Third, does

the university provide a truly Christian education with a biblical worldview present in every classroom, with theology serving as the foundation of the student's learning experience? I believe these questions will reveal whether an institution truly desires to be a Christian institution or merely uses the label "Christian" as a marketing technique to recruit students.

Many good institutions answer the questions above in acceptable ways. At Cedarville, we call these items the Cedarville distinctives. In the pages of this magazine, we attempt to show you a glimpse of what we do and why we do it. We don't shy away from our ultimate mission of combining academic excellence with a passion for the Gospel. We accomplish the spiritual side of this mission in several ways.

**First, all faculty and staff sign our doctrinal statement.** It is important to do more than have a doctrinal statement that guides the institution. You must have professors and staff members that concur completely with the statement and teach according to it. A true biblical education will not include advocating evolution in science classes, postmodernism in

philosophy classes, or secular humanism in the social and behavioral sciences. At Cedarville, students will learn the arguments of these respective belief systems and be taught why they are bankrupt in light of Scripture.

As students leave home for college, they take critical steps into adulthood, choosing their life course. Will the faith of my parents be my faith? What is God calling me to do vocationally? Will I marry, and if so, then whom? No longer riding the coattails of their parents' faith, students need to be able to ask the tough questions, but they need to be able to do so in a safe environment. They need well-read teachers who can walk them through the answers to life's great questions and put them on a trajectory to glorify God with their life.

I call the guarantee of a Christian education in every classroom "truth in advertising." At Cedarville, parents can trust that we are who we say we are. A student will be taught from a biblical worldview in every class. We also have our staff sign the doctrinal statement to ensure that every facet of campus life at Cedarville is based on the same foundational principles that undergird the classroom.

**Second, we have campuswide chapel five days a week.** I find it amazing and overwhelming as I look around at more than 3,000 students worshipping God each day. They passionately sing songs of praise to God and diligently listen to the Word of God preached, taking notes during the sermons. The realization that we will give account before God of the stewardship that He has entrusted to us is a little intimidating and yet exhilarating. We bring in chapel speakers like David Jeremiah, Chip Ingram, Paige Patterson, Al Mohler, and other nationally known Bible teachers. Our students regularly benefit from the best communicators while also hearing from me and having student-led chapels once a week.

Chapel is the heartbeat for the campus. It anchors everything we do at Cedarville in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and steers the future course of the institution. We praise God together, we grow spiritually together, and we gain a sense of family unity when we come together.

**Third, every undergraduate student receives a Bible minor.** In addition to being academically equipped for their chosen field, students receive theological training so they may articulately present a biblical

worldview in a secular culture. The minor includes five classes: Spiritual Formation, Old Testament Literature, New Testament Literature, Systematic Theology I, and Systematic Theology II. The idea is to begin by teaching them to love the Word of God and to allow the Spirit who lives within them to guide their lives.

In Spiritual Formation, students learn how to interpret the Bible and the proper spiritual disciplines of a Christian life. In Old and New Testament Literature, we teach the Bible, not higher critical theories about the Bible. We want students to know God's Word and apply it to their lives through the power of the Spirit. In theology courses, we teach the student why we believe what we believe from a biblical foundation. This teaching includes a true education and not indoctrination as we discuss the tough questions and errors of the day, leading back to the Bible and landing within the bounds of our doctrinal statement.

Cedarville holds the local church high, requiring local church membership and encouraging service. We prepare students to see their future occupation as a calling from God to serve Him with excellence and a Gospel mission.

**Fourth, we integrate a biblical worldview in every classroom.** In the School of Biblical and Theological Studies, we teach the Bible and theology. All other courses apply that biblical knowledge practically to the various disciplines. Cedarville professors reveal the Ultimate Designer in engineering, the Great Physician in nursing and pharmacy, the Master Storyteller in literature, and on and on it goes. They diligently pray for students, walking with them inside and outside of the classroom.

**Fifth, we have a voluntary discipleship program that involves more than one-third of our student body.** In our Student Life and Christian Ministries Division, students sign up for discipleship groups. As students grow in discipleship, many find themselves in a leadership role discipling others. These small groups allow for transparency as students share struggles and overcome them as they walk through life together.

These groups also prepare our students to be small-group leaders in their local churches. Many of our athletes' schedules do not allow them to participate, so additional small groups, Bible studies, and other intentional means of discipleship take place in athletics. Our team chaplains

and coaches know that life skills and spiritual development matter more than a win-loss record.

**Sixth, we have a Student Life and Christian Ministries Division dedicated to emphasizing missions and evangelism on campus.** I want every student to go overseas on a missions trip before they graduate. Short-term missions trips do more for the traveler than for the destination, and seeing the poverty and lostness across the globe gives students a heart for the nations. They will pray differently. They will give differently, and ultimately, the spiritual and educational development of a missions trip will do more than just sending money ever could. We are all called to be Great Commission Christians, and our Student Life and Christian Ministries Division keeps evangelism and missions at the forefront of all we do at Cedarville.

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We have a bold vision to change Ohio, the Midwest, and ultimately the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I would ask that you support us through prayer, financial support, or sending students our way as we try to accomplish a bold, God-sized vision in southwest Ohio. We train students for personal and professional excellence with a Gospel purpose. We combine a high academic standard with a conservative theological position all aimed at the goal of reaching the world with the Gospel. At Cedarville University, we will continue to stand "For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ." 🙏

**Thomas White** became Cedarville's 10th President in 2013. He received his B.A. from Anderson University (South Carolina) and both his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. White is co-author of *Franchising McChurch: Feeding Our Obsession with Easy Christianity*, and he served as editor of *First Freedom: The Baptist Perspective on Religious Liberty; Restoring Integrity in Baptist Churches; and Upon This Rock*. Connect with him at [facebook.com/drthomaswhite](https://www.facebook.com/drthomaswhite) and on Twitter @DrThomasWhite.