

NEWS & VIEWS

July / August 2016

Vol. 36, No. 6



Where We Are and Whither We Go

by Dr. Chris Swanson
with R. Wesley Hurd and Ron Julian

It has been thirty-seven years since Wes Hurd founded the fledgling organization that became Gutenberg College. Since that time, members of the organization have sought to serve God with their time and talents. Their service has taken a variety of forms and avenues: Tuesday night classes, the School of Exegesis, and the Art Project to name a few. In 1994, David Crabtree with the help of others founded Gutenberg College, which has become the primary locus of our efforts. The faculty, embarking on untried waters, adjusted, changed, enhanced, and readjusted the curriculum in an attempt to provide an outstanding liberal arts education within a Christian framework.

As we prepare for a new year, many of the growing pains associated with the founding of a college have subsided, and we have landed—half by design and half by luck—on a great curriculum. Throughout those changes, however, the goals and desires of the faculty have never wavered. We have joined with others in seeking to develop a mature and well grounded understanding of the biblical worldview and to encourage each other to pursue truth and kindness.

Because of their varying talents and interests, different faculty have emphasized different aspects of these central goals. Some have been particularly interested in pursuing an understanding of what it means to be human through the arts. Others have been specifically interested and gifted in teaching the Bible. We have also sought to

serve students in an undergraduate college. Last but not least, we have sought to provide writings, classes, and seminars to our community of friends.

Gutenberg is currently going through a leadership transition, and so we thought it would be valuable to reaffirm the ongoing mission of the college. To do so, I discuss my understanding of the goals of the undergraduate program; Wes Hurd discusses some of the history of the institution, the role of the arts, and community outreach; and Ron Julian explains his view of the role of the Bible.

The Goals of the Undergraduate Program

The undergraduate program at Gutenberg is directed toward helping students examine and consider a biblical worldview. However, obstacles impede their path. These obstacles are new and potent versions of the timeless problem of the “world,” to use the Apostle John’s language. The world has never smiled upon the truth of God. It has always sought to undermine the truth with Screwtapian lies and deceptions. Now it is publicly and vocally rejecting the truth.

One way of confronting the world, the way that Gutenberg College has chosen to pursue, is to examine our culture’s history of ideas. These ideas have been passed down to us and create the lenses through which we understand our experience. Lenses colored by the world cloud our judgments and create a stumbling block to the truth.



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Gutenberg leads students through the history of ideas from the dawn of civilization to the present. We look at the best arguments and the most persuasive authors. Most of our texts impart important and life-affirming kernels of truth. But they stand side by side with “lies breathed through silver,” as C. S. Lewis would say. Thus we study not just those who have embraced the truth of the Gospel but also those who have not. We examine the arguments of the culture to help separate those that give clarity and light from those that cloud our minds in darkness. Throughout, we give students the freedom to explore, consider, and engage in our culture’s conversation. They are given the opportunity and respect to sort out for themselves the answers to their questions.

Concurrently with studying the great conversation, students develop their skills of



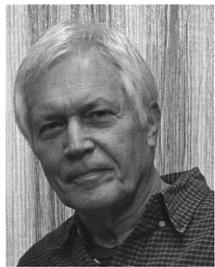
GUTENBERG COLLEGE
McKENZIE STUDY CENTER • ART PROJECT

Where We Are and Whither We Go, cont.

learning. Careful interpretive reading, clear speech, and cogent writing are emphasized throughout. Foreign language, mathematical reasoning, and exegetical practice slowly develop students' abilities to understand, process, and communicate information. The hope is that graduates will be well prepared to continue the lifelong task of growing in wisdom and understanding.

We recognize that no one, neither students nor faculty, operates in a realm of pure intellect. We are driven also by our fears and desires. Our passions encase our souls in a shell that must be gently opened to hear the truth. Love, trust, safety, and kindness are all elements that must be nurtured to allow us to bloom. Gutenberg attempts to address this aspect of our personhood through a residential community in which students interact on a daily basis. As they foster relationships, they slowly become willing to examine the truth about themselves and the culture in which they live.

There are many ways to serve the kingdom of God. It is our hope that Gutenberg does so for students at an important juncture in their intellectual development.



GC History, Arts, and Community Outreach
by Dr. R. Wesley Hurd

My role in the history of this educational ministry has been that of seed planter. In 1979, my wife Carol and I took a leap and threw ourselves into the effort of founding the McKenzie Study Center (MSC). I call myself a seed planter because all that MSC—and Gutenberg College which grew from it—have become over the course of nearly forty years was the fruit of many dedicated people and their sacrificially laborious efforts. These many hands pruned, fertilized, nurtured, and grew the organization's "vine."

In 2012, I retired from the organization to give full attention and energy to working in the arts—particularly contemporary practices in visual art. I have always been an educator. I love ideas and understanding how they impact the world of the personal and social vision

and what it means to be human. My work as an artist has remained closely aligned with mentoring and teaching younger, emerging artists and the public about the powers and role of art in our lives. When I retired, Gutenberg College was blessed to find Eliot Grasso, a wonderfully talented artist, composer, and musician. As I have come to know Eliot, I realize the educative, great-books mission of Gutenberg gained a bright star as Eliot took my place on the faculty.

In the last couple of months, Providence has led the organization to circumstances in which the Gutenberg College Board of Governors wished to put the leadership of the college in new hands. When I heard about this desire on the part of the board to make these changes, I was surprised—but not completely. The life of organizations, including those we love and are close to, inevitably change in time. This fact is clearly evidenced in the history of human endeavors. For me, having been invited by the faculty to help provide energy and labor to an ongoing vision for Gutenberg, surprise turned to enthusiasm and a commitment to help by giving a significant part of my energy and time to the complex and challenging task of moving the college forward under the new leadership.

Having met for weeks now with the emerging leadership for Gutenberg, I am pleased and excited about the continuation of a vision that will continue to "grow the vine." The founding documents upon which the organization and college were originated, its biblical theology, interpretational methodology, and spirit of outreach remain the same.

The leaders and faculty of Gutenberg College want the organization to be centered in a healthy community of students, its graduates, and adults who take part in ongoing biblical teaching and engagement with the ideas that are forming culture and history as we live it. The new leadership for the college is re-committing itself to fostering a thriving community. We will continue to offer a variety of different events, classes, discussions, lectures, and conferences that will provide opportunity for relationships and spiritual support for those who desire it.

Gutenberg will never be a large college. Its core mission and significance, one held in

unity by all the faculty and staff, will continue to offer life-altering education grounded in a biblical vision of life.

By the grace of God, Gutenberg College will send graduates into the world with the biblical and conceptual vocabulary to make a difference.



The Role of the Bible
by Ron Julian

Gutenberg college was founded by people committed to the Bible. Everyone involved believed that the Bible was absolutely authoritative, that careful and principled interpretation was required to understand its message, and that biblical truth was the foundation for understanding all of life. Although Gutenberg is going through a transition to new leadership, that commitment remains unchanged.

When students first come to Gutenberg, how they relate to the Bible varies significantly. Some come with a strong interest in the Bible. Others come from difficult backgrounds that have led them to question where the Bible fits in their lives. And some are reluctant to look at the Bible at all. For many years it has been my belief that the best thing the tutors at Gutenberg do for these students is to model for them a deep commitment to and seriousness about the Bible. They live in a world that is pessimistic about the possibility of discovering truth or finding any ultimate purpose in life. They swim in cultural waters so full of this pessimism that they hardly notice it anymore. As the saying goes, if you want to know about water, don't ask a fish. As we study the historical, philosophical, and theological forces that have shaped their culture, our hope is to provide a positive alternative to our culture's moral and intellectual defeatism.

To be clear, Gutenberg is not a Bible school. It is a Christian college in the sense that we believe the Christian Bible speaks the truth and that it can hold its own in the marketplace of ideas. We do not require the students to believe what we do. We do not have chapel or Bible classes per se. But we try to make it clear that the Bible can take its rightful place in the dialogue that Western Civilization has been having since its beginnings.

So here are some ways that the importance of the Bible is integral to the Gutenberg College experience:

1) All the tutors at Gutenberg are committed to the authority and fundamental importance of the Bible.

2) We believe that each student has the freedom to decide what he or she will do with the God of the Bible—and the necessity of making that decision. Our job is not to coerce; our job is to model and explain.

3) The biblical worldview interweaves itself into every aspect of the studies at Gutenberg. That worldview doesn't need us to defend it; it just needs to be part of the conversation so that the profound nature of its answers to life's questions can be seen.

4) One of the most important skills taught at Gutenberg is that of reading difficult literature with understanding. That emphasis is inspired, not surprisingly, by our desire to learn and teach how to read the difficult literature that is the Bible. Our hope is that our students will want to apply their interpretive skills to the Bible itself.

5) Some classes at Gutenberg do involve actually studying books and passages from the Bible itself. The goal in these classes is to learn to read the Bible intelligently.

6) Since Gutenberg students have more or less the same classmates throughout their four years, and since many of them also live in the Gutenberg residence program, they have many opportunities to apply the biblical worldview, to learn in practice what it means to love their neighbor as themselves. They also have the opportunity to talk and argue with their fellow students about all these things.

7) Some of the tutors at Gutenberg teach about the Bible and the biblical worldview outside the regular Gutenberg curriculum. This has always been true and will continue to be.

This is a time of change at Gutenberg, but the foundational importance of the Bible to what we do here has not changed.

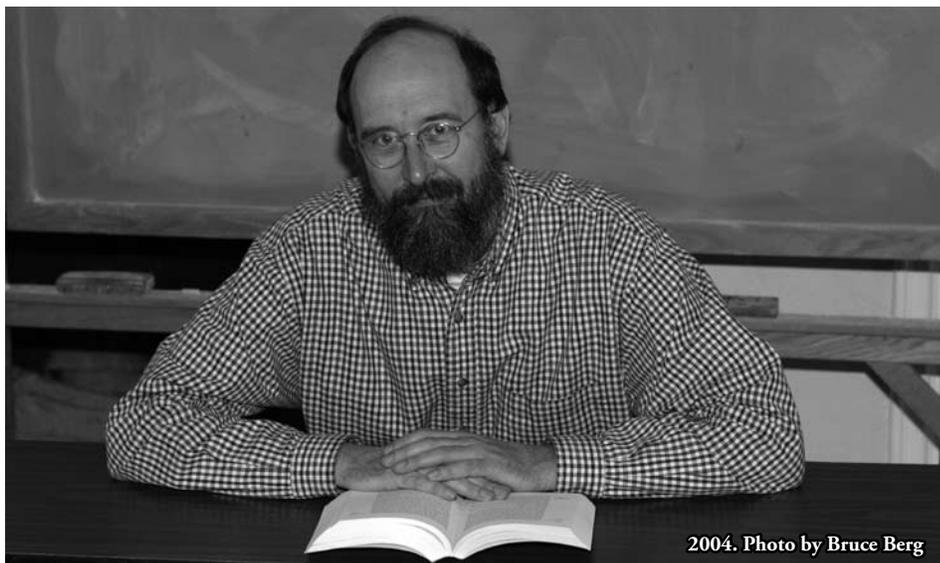
Chris Swanson and **Ron Julian** are tutors at Gutenberg College. **R. Wesley Hurd** (*Wes*) is the founder of MSC, and he retired as a Gutenberg tutor in 2012. All three men are serving on Gutenberg's Transition Committee.

Thank You, David

Dr. David Crabtree has been the president of Gutenberg College since it opened its doors in 1994. After twenty-two years, he is relinquishing this responsibility to pursue other interests. For those who know Gutenberg—and certainly for most of its alumni—David is the face of Gutenberg. He will be sorely missed. At an end-of-year barbecue in June, Gutenberg tutor Chris Swanson thanked David for his years of service:

“I want to take this opportunity to give you all some perspective on the leadership role which David Crabtree has so faithfully played for the last twenty-two years and before.

“Lots of very dedicated and talented people participated in the life of the college.



2004. Photo by Bruce Berg

But David, more than anyone else, has made Gutenberg the unparalleled education that it is today. He was the driving force behind this school. Without his leadership there would be no Gutenberg. His was the vision, the wisdom, the thoughtfulness, the insight to bring us here tonight.

“My first introduction to what was to develop into Gutenberg College started with a class David organized called “Ignoramuses Anonymous.” Typical David name. Charley Dewberry and I were fortunate enough to attend, and we read lots of great books, with David leading discussions for at least two years. In this way, we began our own great-books education, which as a physicist, I sorely needed.

“David had been thinking about a school for some time and was very intrigued at the

great-books style modeled after St. John's College. So David, being David, decided to start one. He put together a proposal to the board of McKenzie Study Center, and when the board gave the green light, David assembled a group to explore the possibilities. After four years of planning, we admitted our first class of four students in 1994. It was an eventful year, and I am sure we learned much more than the students in those early years.

“Since that time, David has had to make millions of decisions, some easy and some agonizing. There have been decisions regarding curriculum, accreditation, personnel, finances, students, and philosophy of education—to name but a few. He worked and

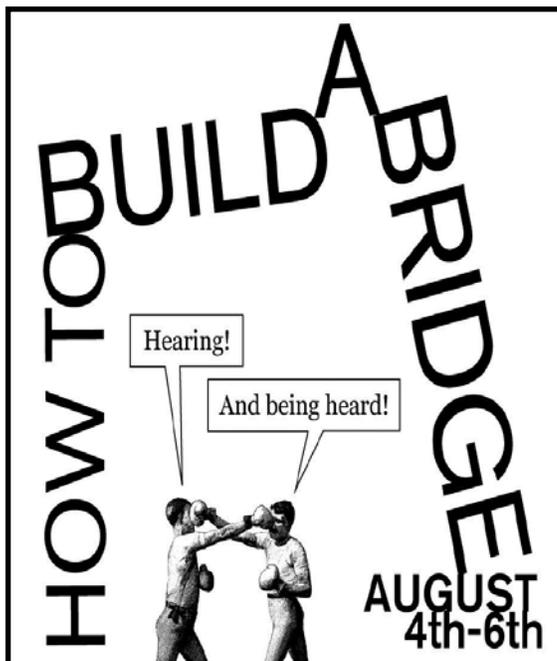
provided leadership to the board, the faculty, the staff, and the students. (And if leading faculty is like herding cats, David is a cat whisperer.) He has borne the weight of this heavy responsibility with integrity, wisdom, and grace. He has maintained the vision of the school in boon and in adversity

“Personally, I have learned a great deal from David. I am sure you all have also learned a great deal from him. I have a debt of gratitude to him that I can never repay. I admire and respect him.

“Thank you, David, for what you have done, and know that you have impacted for the better a great many lives.”

And the faculty, staff, students, and alumni say a hearty, “Amen.” Thank you, David. We will miss you.

GUTENBERG COLLEGE PRESENTS SUMMER INSTITUTE 2016



We all recognize the polarization that plagues our current political and religious discussions. Communication is hard. Christians want to stand for the truth but are often unsure how to obey Paul's command to speak the truth in love. In the end, we all have a lot to learn about speaking as we wish to be spoken to and hearing others as we wish to be heard.

Join us at Gutenberg College to explore the nature of communication within the context of loving our neighbor. Experience a "taste of Gutenberg" through short talks, small-group discussions on selected readings, and a choice of longer lectures.

LECTURES:

Apprenticeship for Today
(Charley Dewberry)

Listening
(Larry Barber)

Socrates on Rhetoric
(Kasey Pilcher Mascenti)

Proof or Dialog: The Role of Knowing in Communication
(Chris Swanson)

Indirect Communication
(Ron Julian)

Bridges From Art to You: How Art Works and its Significance
(R. Wesley Hurd)

READINGS FROM:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Plato, Søren Kierkegaard, and the Apostles Paul, John, and James

COST: \$50 individual; \$70 couple; \$35 student (includes 2 light suppers on Thursday & Friday; continental breakfast, lunch, & dinner on Saturday; and snacks). **REGISTER:** Contact the GC office at the numbers below.



Presenters/Discussion Leaders:

- Larry Barber** (Pastoral Counselor)
- Charley Dewberry** (Gutenberg tutor)
- Eliot Grasso** (Gutenberg tutor)
- R. Wesley Hurd** (Artist, lecturer, and mentor;
Director of Education for Watershed Arts Foundation)
- Ron Julian** (Gutenberg tutor)
- Kasey Pilcher Mascenti** (Gutenberg graduate;
Director of Process Improvement at FDH Velocitel)
- Tim McIntosh** (Gutenberg tutor)
- Chris Swanson** (Gutenberg tutor)

Details
www.gutenberg.edu

News & Views • July/August 2016



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