

Bringing Hope to a Culture of Despair

General Education requirements are a chance to grow.

—Rebecca Winter Lewis

If any student in this class tries to argue that the Bible had any impact on history whatsoever,” warned my Harvard-educated professor, removing the pipe from his mouth as if to emphasize the point, “he will get an automatic F.”

“I lost my faith that year, and did not come back to the Lord until over three years later,” the speaker said sadly. “It took me yet another decade to discover my professor didn’t know what he was talking about.”

The history professor was only teaching what he himself had been taught. *The Atlantic Monthly* (June 2000) calls the General Education courses of our universities (begun back in the ’50s at Harvard), a “culture of despair.” These required classes have taught students that “reason was a liberating force and faith mere superstition ... life had no purpose and morality no justification. ... General Ed. had created at Harvard a culture of despair. This culture of despair was not, of course, confined to Harvard—it was a more generalized phenomenon among intellectuals all over the Western world” (p. 50).

Like a country engulfed in civil conflict, who among us has been spared the loss of a loved one, a cousin, a friend to this social rite of passage? Many sincere, even zealous, young people enter college thinking they are “ready” to tackle the difficult issues of life at the adult level. They’ve barely

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moved into their dorm rooms when they’re shipped off to the front lines, into classes that ignore, disparage, or severely distort the awesome story of God’s gracious and passionate pursuit of all peoples throughout history. Even in good Christian colleges, godly professors who have attended secular universities teach from secular textbooks. God’s story is left out and no one even knows the difference.

One famous person wrote the following at the age of 17, before attending Bible school:

Union with Christ consists in the most intimate communication with him, in having him before our eyes and in our hearts, and being so filled with the highest love for him, at the same time we turn our hearts to our brothers whom he has closely bound to us and for whom also he sacrificed himself ...

Unfortunately, the school had some students and teachers who exposed this student, Karl Marx, to “higher criticism” which stated that the Bible could not be considered historically accurate, especially the “legends” about Jesus. He believed everything his teachers taught him, rejected Christ, and developed his famous revolutionary philosophy, writing the Communist Manifesto.

Finally, the U.S. Center for World Mission has joined with Northwestern College to do something about this tragedy—producing a one-year college-accredited program that will fulfill 30 semester units of Gen. Ed.

requirements at almost any university.

The Global Year of INSIGHT (INtensive Study of Integrated Global History and Theology) provides foundational knowledge, the knowledge every educated Christian needs to know to make a difference in the intellectual climate of today’s global society. Based on the World Christian Foundations Master’s degree program, this integrated Christian worldview honors program replaces the “culture of despair” with the “culture of hope.”

By the end of the year, students will understand more than 95 percent of university professors do about how God has worked in history and is working today. INSIGHT accomplishes this by re-integrating Bible, history, missions, anthropology,

“It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way” (Prov 19:2).

science, religions, secular worldviews, apologetics and the most influential writings in history, the majority of which are Christian. (Did you know that the best-selling author during the century following the invention of the printing press was Martin Luther?)

Best of all, INSIGHT is structured for maximum flexibility. During the fall 2001 pilot year, students begin by studying in mentored Socratic-style learning groups on the campus of William Carey International University. They’ll read widely, dialogue and debate, and listen to exciting lectures from visiting experts. Then they can arrange to study overseas or at home while keeping up with the class on-line.

Whether students are longing to win their friends to Christ, preparing to go into full-time ministry, or desiring to take a stand against the myths of the academic world, INSIGHT will give them the “knowledge and depth of insight” they need to be rooted and grounded in their faith and ready for every good work. ☉

For further information: www.uscwm.org/insight