

The Areopagus

Jan / Feb 2014

UPDATE

Centers for Substantive Education

by Jeffrey Breshears

“The church should always be more than a school; but the church should never be less than a school.” – Jaroslav Pellikan

“If we want to change the culture in America, we will first need to change the culture in the church.”

– Jeffrey D. Breshears, “The Ministry of the Watchman”

All informed Christians know that major universities are essentially secular/liberal indoctrination centers in which traditional Christian beliefs and values are not simply ignored but often ridiculed. However, the common assumption is that many smaller universities and colleges are different, and that they tend more to reflect the values of the communities in which they are located. But this simply isn't true. The faculty and staff of even a local community college are drawn from the same pool of academic scholars and professional administrators as one would find at Harvard, Emory, or the University of Georgia, and most of them share a similar worldview.

A case in point is Amarillo College in Amarillo, Texas. Although not as prestigious as Baylor or the University of Texas, AC promotes the same secular/liberal agenda. Early in 2013 Stanley Wilson, a biology instructor at AC, proposed a non-credit course through the adult continuing education program entitled “Evolution vs. Intelligent Design” in which he envisioned using I.D. concepts to analyze and critique the standard Darwinian evolutionary dogma that permeates most all education from elementary school to graduate school. But when a low-level staff member at the college, the leader of the local chapter of the “Freethought Oasis” group, read about the proposed course, he and his fellow-FO's went ballistic, threatening to pack the course and disrupt the seminar – all in the name of academic integrity, of course. And once the FO's joined forces with the equally-misnamed Texas Freedom Network (a group dedicated to denying freedom of speech to groups and individuals with whom they disagree) and the pro-Darwinian National Center for Science Education, it was only a matter of time before the college

administrators cancelled the course.

None of this should be too surprising. After all, it has become standard operating procedure on most college and university campuses for professors and administrators to demonstrate their commitment to tolerance and diversity by excluding not only Christian but also conservative socio/political views that they deem “offensive.” These same secular values prevail in the entertainment business and the corporate giants that own our major media outlets, as exemplified by the recent controversy over the *Duck Dynasty* TV show. The result is a kind of ideological tyranny and coercive conformity regulated by a rigid code of Political Correctness as defined and dictated by the secular liberals who control the commanding heights of American culture.

So where do Christians go for thoughtful and honest engagement and discussion of the great issues of life? The answer should be obvious. The fact that Christians have so little influence in our major cultural institutions makes it imperative that churches become centers

(Continued on the back side)

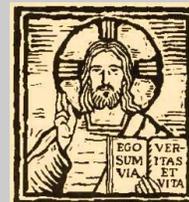


The Areopagus Calendar

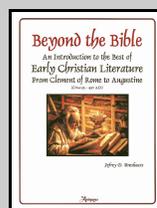
Seminars

Christianity Thru the Centuries From Jesus To the Reformation

Sundays
11:15 AM
Johnson Ferry
Baptist Church
Loft A



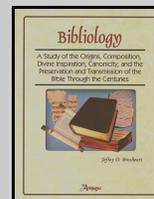
Beyond the Bible: An Introduction To Early Christian Literature from Clement of Rome to Augustine



What was happening in Christian history, and what was being written, after the close of the New Testament? This course examines the best in early Christian literature from circa 95 - 430 A.D.

Tuesdays – Beginning Jan. 14th
7:15 PM
Perimeter Church / Midtown Auditorium

Bibliology A Study of the Origins, Composition, Divine Inspiration, Canonicity, Preservation and Transmission of the Bible Through the Centuries



Why should we believe the Bible was divinely-inspired, and how do we know it has been accurately preserved and transmitted through the centuries?

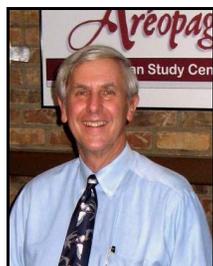
Wednesdays – Beginning Jan. 15th
7:00 PM
Johnson Ferry Baptist Church / Room 105

Areopagus Profiles

Areopagus board members and associates

Dave Ott

I have lived in Sandy Springs for most of my life, and after graduating from Sandy Springs High School I attended Wake Forest University,



where I earned a B.A. in history. Over the years I have also earned Continuing Education credits through the Lay Institute of Theology.

For over 50 years I have been a member of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Atlanta, and as a serious student of the Bible, theology and church history I have taught adult education courses in my church for more than 30 years. I also served for several years as a founding member of the Board of Trustees for Whitefield Academy, a college preparatory school in the Atlanta area.

My wife, Susan, and I have lived in Sandy Springs for 45 years, and we

have four daughters – two of whom are married – and four grandchildren. Our youngest child (and our only son) passed away in February of 2013.

I worked in the automobile business for 41 years and most recently served as Director of Operations at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer for four years. I retired in October of 2013, and I now enjoy spending time with my family and on our farm in Rutledge, Georgia. When not studying or teaching, I enjoy being in the great outdoors, walking for miles, and hunting and fishing.

I have served on the Areopagus board of directors since its inception in 2003, and my involvement with this ministry over the years has truly been life-changing. I continue to look forward every year to our seminar courses and the opportunities they provide for spiritual and intellectual growth, and I'm also grateful for the rich friendships I've developed over the years as a result of my involvement in this unique and innovative ministry.



The Areopagus Calendar

Forums

What If Christianity Is True?
What Are the Implications?

Dr. Mary Poplin

Professor of Education,
Claremont Graduate University,
Director of the Institute for Education
Transformation, and author of
*Finding Calcutta: What Mother Teresa
Taught Me About Meaningful Work*



– Thursday, January 16th –
7:30 PM

Perimeter Church / Fellowship Hall

Centers for Substantive Education
(Continued)

BEST BOOKS of 2013

— PHILOSOPHY & APOLOGETICS —

Stephen C. Meyer, *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design* (HarperOne)

Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (Oxford University Press)

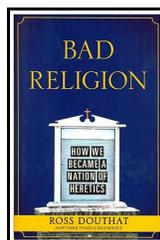
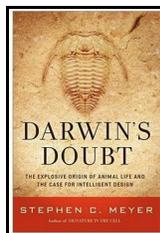
— CHRISTIAN HISTORY —

Alister Chapman, *Godly Ambition: John Stott and the Evangelical Movement* (Oxford University Press)

Thomas E. Bergler, *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* (Wm. B. Eerdmans)

— SOCIETY & CULTURE —

Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (Free Press)



for substantive education. But in fact, serious education is just about the last thing that comes to mind when most people think of church culture. Granted, a few churches do provide quality adult education, but it is no exaggeration to say that 95% do not. In fact, many prominent evangelical megachurches offer no real adult education whatsoever, opting instead to sponsor home-based small group meetings that are usually little more than social gatherings. This anti-education mentality is indefensible, and it is a major reason why the church has so little cultural influence. But many church leaders seem oblivious to the fact that a commitment to wholistic discipleship demands that we honor God with our mind as well as our heart.

From the outset this has been the mission of the Areopagus – to partner with churches in the metro-Atlanta to provide quality, substantive seminars and forums that stimulate and challenge serious Christians to think deeply about their faith in the context of wholistic Christian discipleship.