

Christian Community; Beyond Appearances

By Bob Graham
- Guest Commentary

As you view this issue of the Whetstone, do you find that there is something missing? Does the newspaper somehow seem more secular this week? Can't figure out what is different? Read on... From its inception the vision of the Whetstone has been to serve as a vehicle by which we sharpen each other spiritually as well as intellectually just as iron sharpens iron. The mission statement of this paper is Proverbs 27:17 and it is clearly noted on every issue. The challenge of this commentary to us all is to examine ourselves!

As the 18th century philosopher, Voltaire once stated, "if you would converse with me, you must first define your terms" When you think about it; to begin any dissertation, we must create a logical and agreeable starting point. Therefore, for the sake of this commentary let us define two terms: Christian and Community.

The dictionary defines Christian as "one who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ" If we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and have a personal relationship with him that is true, but there needs to be action on our part too! We are called to be salt and light to the world. To avoid a long treatise, we will use this definition of "Christian" here. "Community," the dictionary

defines as, "a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society". Put these two words together and you have a reasonably good definition for what Christian Community should be at Montreat College.

So, is Christian community merely the way we appear to others? Let us consider two questions; first, without scripture or religious articles in the Whetstone, would it still be a 'Christian' newspaper? As you contemplate that one, let's take that one step further; if we didn't have 'Christian' t-shirts, or a fish on our car and our music wasn't 'Christian' are we still good Christians? The title of the song, "They will know we are Christians by our love" I think is the answer to both questions. The proof comes from within us through the Holy Spirit! It should be as involuntary as breathing.

What was missing in the Whetstone? You probably didn't even notice, but the verse of the week and the segment Living Waters have been intentionally excluded from this issue. Why? to help make the point that we must all be personally involved and not rest on the appearance that we are Christians or a Christian college. It's deeper than looks!

For years I have heard the term apathetic (having or showing little or no feeling or emotion) used to describe our college community. In light of the above definition of Christian community, how can this be true? I never thought I was apathetic

but I find myself convicted. I often want to just do my job and go home and forget about Montreat. I know students who feel similarly who just want to go to class, do their homework and forget about Montreat. Search yourself and answer truthfully, are you ever guilty of being apathetic? Guess what? We are ALL missing the big picture. It's not about US and what we want! It's about HIM! Staff and faculty; we are called to be salt and light to the students and the community. Students; you are called to be salt and light to the staff and faculty and the community. Christians; we should be anything but apathetic! We have the most exciting news in the world to share!

As we prepare to give thanks this month for God's many blessings and next month to give thanks for His great gift to us all, I urge you to search your hearts and ask how you can share this excitement with others. If as a college community we reached out in Christ and embraced those around us during the holidays what an eternal impact we could have! Opportunities for sharing Christ's love and redemption are great both here and beyond the gate. We could reach out to the orphans at the Presbyterian Home who have no family for the holidays, help with Operation Christmas Child to reach children around the globe, minister to the homeless at the shelters in Asheville, or just be there for a roommate or colleague who could use a real friend. Look around; the world is desperate for what we have to offer in Christ!

SGA Minutes

By Kaylin Fisher

November 4, 2002

Called to order at 7:37 p.m. absent Sarah Hicks (unexcused) Toney, Graham (excused) Ashley Presson became the official treasurer and Toney Johnson became the official Secretary

7:40 Vince arranged for a coffee house with President Lindberg Dec. 5th

7:43 Recycling Convo speaker, Don Yelton, made copies of Montreat/Black Mountain recycling proposal. Don Yelton volunteered his time. SGA discussed possible work-study position for next semester focusing solely on recycling. McGregor girls will start putting out recycling bins and bags. Other dorm reps will investigate what can be done in their dorms. Lindsay King mentioned driving recyclables in a big run to the Asheville recycling center.

8:03 Graham Otley will arrange

Martin Luther King, Jr. convo for next year.

8:04 Service project with Alan Edwards and possibly with the Montreat Church and Howerton cafeteria involved discussed. Need date. Four activities: leaves, mulching, washing signs, clean up.

8:08 Lyndsay Mayer and Ashley Presson will work on a possible alternate use for food that is unused at the cafeteria.

8:09 Christmas Dance, Saturday December 7. Benefit for kids (Lindsay)

8:12 Open forum technology convo will be held Tuesday November 12 during regular convo time. Organized by Vince Norfleet.

8:13 New business: George White has presented idea for starting a coffee shop at school as a sleep deprivation solution. Belk is a possible location. Tim Tyson will work with him and make a proposal.

Meeting adjourned 8:27

Letters to the President

As someone who has taken many youth groups to Montreat Youth Conferences in the summer, I have wondered why a stronger appeal is not made to youth at those conferences. It seemed to me a wonderful opportunity for Montreat professors and leaders to make a visible invitation on stage and around during the week to thousands of high school youth who love Montreat. The college could be seen as a way to live out the youth conference in a learning college environment. It seems the opportunity is so obvious that it is intentionally skipped.

David Jones, Pastor
Harpeth Presbyterian Church
Brentwood, Tennessee

David:

Thanks for your question, and your keen insight into the great potential, which exists between the summer youth conferences of the Mountain Retreat Association and Montreat College. Please understand that, as a newcomer to the valley, my response will reflect only a limited understanding of what the practice and policies of the past have been.

Just this last week I was invited to bring greetings to the Board of Directors of the Mountain Retreat Association. During that time I was able to share with the Board that one of the very first phone calls I received after I accepted the presidency of the college was from Mr. Emile Dieth, president of the Conference Center. Mr. Dieth and I continue to have conversations on a regular basis, discussing ways in which the MRA and the College can work together, supporting each other's objectives and goals.

It is my understanding that during the summer conference season, six weeks are dedicated to youth conferences by the MRA. During those six weeks, over seven thousand high school youth converge upon Montreat for a time of recreation, study, reflection and spiritual renewal. As I have said in many venues this fall, I cannot imagine a college or university in the nation that would not be ecstatic to have that type of exposure!

I have suggested to Mr. Dieth that Montreat College hold a "College Fair" during the free time each Wednesday afternoon of those weeks. I will personally send letters of invitation to the presidents of Presbyterian Church (USA) affiliated colleges in the region. A college fair will only be successful if the students can learn about several colleges, understanding each school's unique mission and distinctives. If the other schools believe there is value in contacting seven thousand Presbyterian youth during the summer weeks, then this will be a great boost to the success of the youth conferences, to the recruiting work of the Presbyterian schools, and to the specific goals and objectives of Montreat College.

John S. Lindberg
Questions for the President can be submitted to whetstone@montreat.edu

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