

Northwest Argue *meants*

Pastor's Communiqué
from President Don Argue
Northwest College

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"Great causes without great character will not last!" This statement is a direct quote from the president of one of the largest religious media agencies in the United States. He has taken unknown evangelists-broadcasting on ten TV stations-and moved them into national prominence with programs carried on 450+ stations. He has also, unfortunately, watched some of these evangelists self-destruct. If I were to list the names of the evangelists, you would know each one.

When I interviewed this media agency president, he made the following comments:

- ◆ "There are at least two parts to character...**personal character** and **organizational character**. Some leaders have moved into areas for which they are not ready. The enemy will attack and the person does not have the character to resist."
- ◆ "Your life is not formed in your public life; your life is formed in your non-public life!"
- ◆ "If you can't take charge of your life, how can you lead others?"

These are some sobering statements!

Aaron and Moses ministered together affectively. Not only did Aaron speak for Moses, but also his staff turned into a snake. On several occasions the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, take your staff and stretch out your hand." As a result, Egypt experienced the plague of blood, the plague of frogs, the plague of flies, etc. Aaron was powerfully used of God! He witnessed the miraculous through his ministry.

Something drastic happened... Aaron also led the people in terrible sin. In Exodus 32:1,2 we find this sobering example, "Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will go before us..." Aaron answered, "Take off your gold earrings...and bring them to me" (Vs. 2). He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf. The result was that the people indulged in such great sin that God's anger burned against them!

What happened to Aaron, the man of the miraculous, that he would publicly go against the God of the miraculous?

William Bennett's *The Book of Virtues* (Simon & Schuster), presents wonderful stories and anecdotes that present **truth, honesty, ethics and other virtues**. Jesus said, "When the Holy Spirit comes He will lead you into all truth." It is time for all in public ministry to do a personal checkup.

What place does truth, honesty and virtue hold in your life?



THIS ISSUE'S FOCUS:

Character to Match our Calling.

POINTS of Argue *meant*

A Passion for Faithfulness,

Packer, J. I. Publisher: Crossway Books, "A wonderful book on leadership. J. I. Packer claims that Nehemiah has been his mentor over the years. I highly recommend this one."

Postmodern Pilgrims,

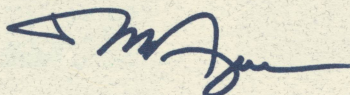
Sweet, Leonard: Publisher: Broadman & Holm "Leonard Sweet gives us a challenging profile of how a Christian would think, relate, live and minister in a postmodern culture. He will be joining us at Northwest College February 7 & 8, 2002."

Philippians, Fee, Gordon D.

Publisher: InterVarsity Press "A practical commentary on Philippians full of insights and principles on building relationships, having realistic expectations, and life coping skills."

Change the World, Quinn, Robert E.

Publisher: Jossey-Bass, "A secular book, but biblically valid in its basic thesis and principles presented. The author is Professor of Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management at the University of Michigan Business School."



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The Nobility of Virtue

It has been said that, "Virtue flows from values and values are the bank of virtue." We live within a culture which espouses knowledge as virtue, as we so often hear, "Knowledge is power." Yet, we may ask, what kind of power? Sir Francis Bacon so aptly wrote, "Knowledge is, indeed, that which next to virtue, truly and essentially raises one man above another." What marvelous book ends, as it were, knowledge and virtue. And in between all the essentials of Christian character so missing in today's virtueless Post-Christian culture.

In 1790 George Washington wrote a letter to his nephew, which illustrates the point, "...the habits contracted at your age are generally indelible, and your conduct here may stamp your character through life. It is therefore highly important that you should endeavor not only to be learned but virtuous."

Webster defines virtue as, "Conformity of one's life and conduct to moral and ethical principles; effective force; power or potency." I have always been fascinated by the encounter of the woman with an "issue of blood," (flowing of blood or hemorrhage) as described by Luke the physician in Luke 8:43-48. As the story reveals, the woman believes that if she simply touches the clothing of Jesus she will be healed. It is a beautiful lesson in faith and mercy. After the woman touches the clothing of Christ he exclaims, "Someone did touch me, for I was aware that power has gone out of me (vs. 46). The KJV uses the Old English word, "virtue", which is only used to describe this encounter and in Luke 6:19, in all of the Gospels.

"It is highly important that you should endeavor not only to be learned but virtuous."

What challenges me in the moral and ethical sense of the definition of virtue, as defined by Webster, is the daily need and opportunities that exist for the world to touch and be touched by our lives, that moral virtue would flow out of us, as did the healing virtue which flowed from Christ.

Adding to Virtue

In Peter's second Epistle he writes these encouraging words in regard to the development of our character and faith, "...giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue, knowledge; ..." (2 Pet. 1:3-10). In all, Peter identifies seven character qualities which must be added to our faith. It is no accident that the first of these is virtue. A proper translation of the word used in these verses is "moral excellence." This moral excellence is perhaps the "habits" that best separate us, and rightly so, from our present culture.

It is these "habits", which Washington speaks of, that either add to or diminish the potency of virtue in our lives. Thomas Jefferson called, "Self-love and Self-gratification...the sole antagonists of virtue." John Adams would later write to Jefferson, "I believe no effort in favor of virtue is lost. It may be said as well, that a man's soul is in danger of being lost, which fails to put forth effort in the cultivation of virtue!"

It was John Henry Jowett who wrote in speaking of this adding of virtue, "Therefore I must cultivate a virtue if I would eradicate a vice. If there be some immoral habit in my life, the best way to destroy it would be to cultivate a good one."

The subject of our mind then should not be sin, but moral excellence. We add to our virtue by making the goodness of God our pursuit and passion and not the vulgarity of evil. Paul said it this way to the Philippians, "...whatever is morally excellent or praise-worthy, think about such things" (Phil. 4: 8).

Oswald Chambers (**My Utmost for His Highest**, 12/4) expressed it well when he said, "Anything that does not strengthen me morally is the enemy of virtue within me. Whether I overcome, there by producing virtue, depends on the moral excellence in my life. But we must fight to be moral. Morality does not happen by accident; moral virtue is acquired."

Perhaps this is what the writer of Proverbs had in mind when he said, "Buy the truth and sell it not (Pr. 23:23). If King Solomon is the author of this Proverb, then no one more than he would understand the painful price of selling moral truth and virtue for the pleasures of this present life. Paul said to the young pastor he was mentoring "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 1:18). Fighting the good fight of faith is the minute-by-minute pursuit to deny "self-love," as Jefferson said, in order to acquire a higher moral virtue as we buy the truth through that denial of self.

Robert Bork wrote in his powerful book, **Slouching Toward**

Gomorra, "Perhaps a society...cannot retain its virtue when religion has lapsed." Religion, specifically that which is founded upon the Judeo-Christian ethic, is the reservoir for the virtues of moral truth or what we have

"Fighting the good fight of faith is a minute-by-minute pursuit to deny self-love..."

come to call, "moral absolutes." Without these absolutes there are no definitions of right and wrong, good and evil. And if that is the case, there is no longer a need for justice and mercy as well. There would be no truth to buy and none to sell.

Teddy Roosevelt said in a famous 4th of July speech in 1880, "But we must keep in mind that no people were ever yet benefited by their riches if their prosperity corrupted their virtue. It is more important that we should show ourselves honest, brave, truthful and intelligent than we should own all the railroads and grain elevators in the world." Roosevelt was saying that we must constantly buy the truths of honesty, bravery, truthfulness, etc., in order to acquire the moral virtues necessary to endure as a morally sound nation.

Virtue—The Heart's Guardian

C.S. Lewis wrote in the **Abolition of Man**, "We remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst."

Virtue is the stuff that gives us hearts of iron and wills of steel. Virtue makes the heart, "the organ," as Lewis wrote, prevail without compromise in a compromising culture.

- ◆ **Virtue** keeps you doing what is right even during times of temptation.
- ◆ **Virtue** motivates you to help others regardless of your own needs.
- ◆ **Virtue** empowers you to forgive others when wronged rather than seeking revenge.
- ◆ **Virtue** compels you to go the second mile, weep with those who weep, to give expecting nothing in return and to esteem others more important than yourself.
- ◆ **Virtue** holds you accountable to be always true to what is right even when your heart, (emotions, affections, will, etc.) tells you otherwise, and to be able to do this fearlessly whatever the cost or the circumstances.

Thomas Jefferson wrote of Meriwether Lewis, the co-leader of the famous Lewis and Clarke Expedition, that he was, "...so scrupulous that whatever he should report, would be as certain as if seen by ourselves." Meriwether was a virtuous man.

May God help all to rise to that level of nobility of virtue, that when others touch or are touched by our lives, they might say to others, "I perceive that virtue has come into my life."

Rob Vatter, Director for Church Relations, is available to respond to questions and needs related to the local church. He is available to represent Northwest College to churches, missions conventions, and conferences. You can reach him at 425.889.5205 or rob.vatter@ncag.edu



Rasmussens Join the Team June 2001

Phil and Brenda Rasmussen will join Northwest College's leadership team late this summer. Phil will serve as Dean of the Chapel and direct the College's chapel and campus ministry programs. Brenda will serve as a music instructor.

"We are delighted that Phil and Brenda have accepted our invitation," said Dr. Don Argue, President. "They will bring leadership to two vital elements of Northwest College: our worship together as a college community, and our service through student outreach ministries." Phil Rasmussen currently serves as the Assistant National Youth Director for the National Youth Ministries of the Assemblies of God. He also serves as the Director of Student Development, which gives oversight to the areas of Fine Arts, Bible Quiz, and Discipleship. He has been in the denomination's headquarters since December 1997.

Brenda Rasmussen currently serves as the Fine Arts Festival Coordinator at the National Youth Ministries Office. Both Phil and Brenda are Alumni of Northwest College and we welcome them home!

Masters Degree Program Approved June 2001

Officials from the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC), the regional accreditation authority, notified President Don Argue that **Northwest College is now approved to offer a masters degree.** The College will admit the first students into the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology degree program this fall.

"This is another giant step forward for Northwest College," remarked Dr. Argue. "This approval acknowledges the high quality of our academic program at the College. It also prepares the way for additional masters degree programs in the future." "NASC approval was the final step after a great deal of hard work," said Dr. Marshall Flowers, Senior Vice-President. "The Masters of Arts in Counseling Psychology program places significant emphasis on the College's purpose to **graduate culturally knowledgeable, sensitive counselors in an evangelical Christian context and environment.** The program is designed to give students rigorous academic and practical training, as well as emphasize concepts of social and cultural awareness in the counseling setting."

Graduates will be prepared to serve as counselors in a variety of settings including international, multi-cultural, and economically depressed environments.

Northwest Arguemeants

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"When wealth is lost, nothing is lost.
When health is lost, something is lost.
When character is lost, all is lost."

"Tis virtue, and not birth, that makes us noble. Great actions
speak great minds, and such should govern."
John Fletcher

"A society with no other scale but a legal one is also
less than worthy of man."
Alexander Solzhenitsyn

"For the last several hundred years we have enjoyed a freedom
disciplined by morality."
Margaret Thatcher, Former British Prime Minister

THIS ISSUE'S
FOCUS:
Character to
Match our
Calling.

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