



GROWING LEADERS FOR A GROWING MOVEMENT

A 21st century biblical higher
education movement for
global gospel impact . . .
growing in scale, scope
and significance



RESEARCH REVERBERATIONS . . . DIFFERENTIATION

Barna

I have invested a great deal of time, thought, and prayer during 2016 seeking to digest findings of ABHE's extensive marketing and messaging research project undertaken in partnership with the Barna Group. Beginning at our February 2016 annual meeting and in several subsequent gatherings, small and large, Barna Group President David Kinnaman and his team have sought to report and help us interpret the research. Among the many useful insights we have gained and are seeking to exploit, two major takeaways have arrested my attention and will continue to occupy my leadership energies. Both have to do with differentiation:

Biblical higher education has a differentiation problem. Despite our efforts to establish a distinctive identity for Bible colleges or, as some prefer, institutions of biblical higher education, the research makes it clear that the presence and particularity of our sector is largely invisible and, in any case, indistinguishable from other sectors of Christian higher education. In my judgment, our way forward is to concentrate less on distinguishing ourselves from other sectors of Christian higher education and instead seek to distinguish ourselves among the variety of players that comprise North America's Christian higher education landscape. Simply put, **we have work to do on branding.** What is our essential promise to students and parents? How can we distill and disseminate that promise distinctively and convincingly? I think we need professional help answering those questions and I anticipate we will devote leadership and financial resources toward that effort in the coming year. But we confront an even more troubling and daunting differentiation problem . . .

Christian students and parents have a differentiation problem. Barna research findings make it clear that when it comes to the primary nature and purpose of college, Christian students and parents overwhelmingly mirror the view of their secular contemporaries that a college education must, above all, ensure future employment and economic security. As Barna Group President, David Kinnaman, puts it: Christian students and parents are shouting, *Career! Career! Career!* While I believe our messaging and marketing efforts must take into account these well-substantiated perceptions and, with discernment, craft responses to these felt needs in terms of message design and evidence of educational program effectiveness, I also believe we have a prophetic responsibility to the emerging generation. Occupational education and economic security are, at best, secondary issues. College is about capacity-building, about character-formation-in-community, about cultivating vocational clarity in light of a biblical, gospel-centered cosmology that transcends mere "gainful employment." We cannot simply sell out to the spirit of the age. The price is too high. We dare not sell our souls in an effort to sell more credit hours.

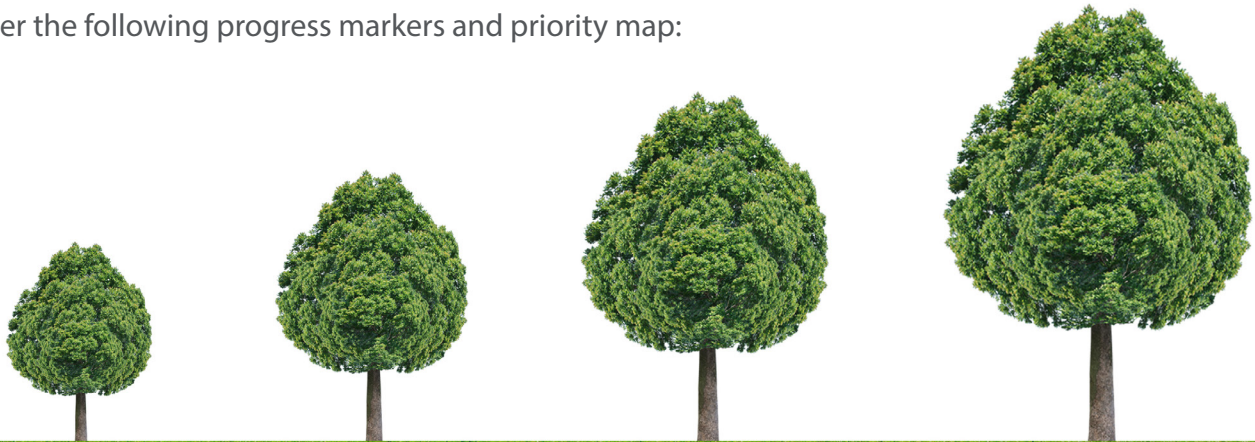
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A COMPELLING VISION . . . WITH MOMENTUM

While fully acknowledging that we live in challenging days and that we are engaged in a highly disrupted enterprise, I remain encouraged about our movement's overall vitality, momentum, and progress. I and our ABHE Board and leadership team remain passionately committed to increasing realization of our Rising Tide vision.

We envision a future in which ABHE members will comprise a spiritually robust, culturally relevant, and professionally respected 21st century North American biblical higher education movement whose contributions to global Gospel impact are multiplying in their scale, scope, and significance.

Consider the following progress markers and priority map:



Flourishing

Leadership — Under the leadership of Executive Vice President, David Medders, the range and quality of professional development training via our annual meeting and other conferences continues to expand. Aggregate enrollment of 104 in our four Fall 2016 Leadership Development training events eclipsed previous totals. Participant accolades regarding program content, faculty, efficiency, and exemplary hospitality consistently register in the superlative range. One participant in our October 27-28 *Presidential Summit* wrote, "It occurred to me that you might have added a workshop session on how to make excellence a hallmark of all your endeavors. But then I realized we didn't need a workshop because we had actually observed and experienced how to do things with memorable excellence by means of the ABHE's team's conference planning, execution, and hospitality."

Our sponsor/exhibitor program has reached unprecedented scope, and our blogs and other media once again experienced giant leaps forward. Dave Medders also reports that, to date, 13 ABHE leaders have engaged in our executive coaching program, 12 of whom have received scholarship assistance totaling of \$23,000. We are profoundly grateful for the willingness of Sherrill Babb, Larry McKinney, and Peter Teague to invest themselves in developing ABHE leaders through executive coaching.

Institutional Focus

I remain insistent that the true benchmarks of ABHE flourishing are measured in terms of our members, not our association operations. We are intensifying our focus on defining and documenting the metrics of institutional flourishing and targeting our resources toward members who show the most promise for growth in excellence, enrollment, and impact.

Association Capacity

Even as we measure ourselves by our members, we continue the work of association capacity building. With the addition of Steve Whitaker and Luder Whitlock to the Board of Directors, our board roster stands at 16 persons as we move toward our recently-expanded capacity of 18 members. The board has adopted 5-year financial reserve targets and is considering additional capital fund raising initiatives in order to strengthen further our association's long term sustainability.



Steve Whitaker
Headmaster
The First Academy | Orlando



Luder Whitlock
President
Excelsis | Orlando

Presence/Priorities

Following significant personal reflection and the solicitation of wise counsel during my brief 2016 sabbatical, I have concluded that a greater share of my personal time and attention must shift away from day-to-day operations (which are most capably handled by Executive VP David Medders and our senior leadership team) to the work of encouraging and shepherding our member presidents and writing to educate and edify ABHE leaders. In keeping with this conviction, I anticipate making as many as 50 campus visits per year in the future.

Commission on Accreditation (COA)

With the 2016 addition of Associate COA Director, Shane Wood, the Commission has achieved significant operational efficiency gains while also ensuring that COA professional staff now accompany evaluation visit teams. The COA's US Department of Education recognition faces 5-year renewal in 2017. A comprehensive renewal petition and accompanying exhibits was submitted in January 2017 in view of preliminary staff review by April 2017 and National Advisory Council on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) public review and recommendation proceedings in June 2017.

Web/Communications

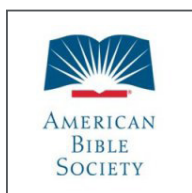
Director of Communications and Events, Carol Dibble, with the collaborative guidance of Bart Caylor and his Caylor Solutions team, has yet again raised the bar in terms of ABHE's website and social media capacities. In addition to adding 3 new blogs [*nexleader idea portal*; *High Performance HR & Strategic Insurance Solutions*] to our existing offerings, Carol oversaw the redesign and relaunch of ABHE's *Job Board* which serves both ABHE member colleges seeking key personnel and individuals seeking to serve our member colleges.

Scope/Partnership Set Expansion ...

No thoughtful observer could fail to realize that the cost of postsecondary education and its Siamese twin, student debt; challenges to religious liberty and freedom of conscience; the shift from credits and degrees to competency; low-cost alternative delivery modalities; and many other factors threaten our stability and continuity as a postsecondary education enterprise. Will colleges as we know them exist in five to twenty years? Who knows? Will some of our institutions fail, or merge? No doubt. We better be nimble. Regardless of the institutional forms our work will take in an increasingly foggy future, we nevertheless have a future when we recognize that our fundamental calling remains as it has ever been: Bible engagement, and Bible-centered leader development. With that in mind, ABHE is positioning itself to partner with a variety of formal, non-formal, informal, and virtual church and parachurch endeavors that share our passion for Bible engagement and Bible-centered leader development. Here are just a few examples:



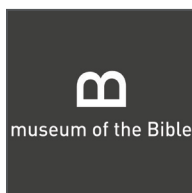
Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) — Our reciprocation of associate membership with accredited EE-12 institutions and approved teacher education programs continues and the avenues of collaboration are expanding.



American Bible Society — Research consistently shows that Bible engagement correlates positively with almost every aspect of personal spiritual health and church growth. ABHE has been invited to join a *Project Magellan* coalition of Christian organizations and individuals seeking to reverse the precipitous decline in Bible engagement such that Bible engagement doubles by 2025.



FaithLife — ABHE is working with leaders of *FaithLife*, creators of *Logos* Bible software, to develop a basic ABHE digital library.



Museum of the Bible — I have signed on as a *Founding Advocate* of the incredible *Museum of the Bible*, scheduled to open in Washington, DC in 2017 and I will continue working with ABHE Board member Michael McAfee and other MoTB colleagues to publicize the museum and explore avenues of collaboration.



nexleader — ABHE had the providential privilege of working with Steve Moore over the past year to incubate the nexleader journey and the development of Identity Profile Self-Awareness Tool (IPSAT). We anticipate continuing to cooperate with Steve in the years to come in hopes that many ABHE member college students may benefit this incredible leader development opportunity.

Differentiation

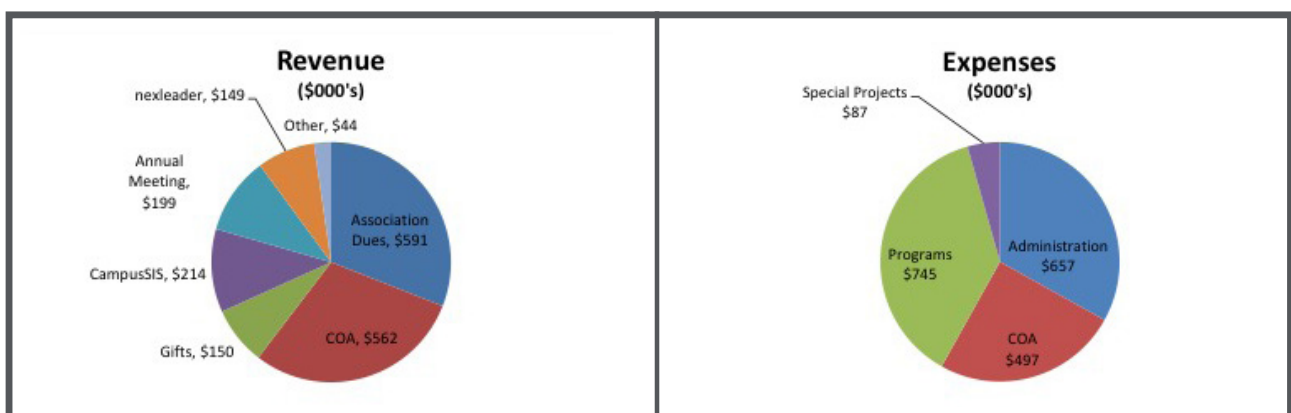
Jesus' so-called Sermon on the Mount is a discourse about *difference*. True kingdom citizens differ radically from pagans (Mt. 5:13-16). They differ radically from the religious elite whose apparent sincerity is actually superficial pseudo-virtue (Mt. 6:1-18). Righteousness that evokes the pleasure of God averts the notice of men. True citizens' piety will be characterized by the privacy of their charitable giving, fasting, and praying. Prayers will be devoid of manipulative, self-gratifying incantations addressed to a distant deity and instead will comprise simple, childlike petitions revolving around the glory and goodness of a benevolent Father.

Another major Sermon on the Mount theme is *reward*. The concept of reward is explicitly mentioned seven times and alluded to even more frequently. What kind of living pays off? Now or then? Here or there? Above all, says Jesus, true kingdom citizens live according to a value system with rewards that differ radically from those anticipated by both the pagans and the pseudo-pious (Mt. 6:19-33).

This embrace of a different value system is evidenced by abandonment of an anxiety-dominated, acquisitive existence. For the true kingdom citizen, anxiety about present supply and future security will be increasingly supplanted by serene awareness of earthly sufficiency and of heavenly storehouses for those who embrace kingdom priorities.

How *different* can you get? That is a difference to which we must commit ourselves and toward which we must call our prospective students.

Financial Report



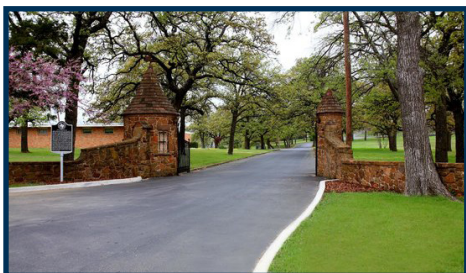
Notes from the field

Highlights from 2016 Presidential Visits



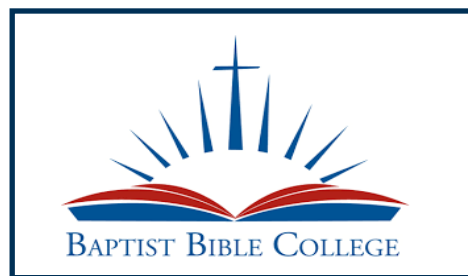
American Baptist College, TN (Forrest Harris) – The campus, situated on the banks of Nashville's Cumberland River just across from the NFL's Tennessee Titan home stadium, is replete with symbols highlighting the college's rallying cry: *light a flame for justice*. ABC's civil rights movement legacy is long and distinguished, including not one, but **two** US Presidential *Medal of Freedom* honorees.

Appalachian Bible College, WV (Dan Anderson) – Dan Anderson is likely our longest serving ABHE president. Having led ABC since 1983, he is only the second president in ABC's 76-year history. The college is home to a state-of-the-art outdoor recreation, training, retreat lodging, and camping facility that hosts 15,000+ guests annually, including an impressive registry of corporate and military teams.



Arlington Baptist College, TX (D.L. Moody) – ABC President D.L. Moody (yes, you read that correctly) informed me that in 2016-17 he would be leading the college community in exploring together the scriptural theme, *My sheep hear my voice* (Jn. 10) by, among other things, delivering a series of chapel messages on that theme. When President Moody graciously invited me to address students, faculty & staff at an ABC chapel service, I was privileged to offer a message related to that theme from Psalm 95, entitled *The Best Hearing Aid Ever*.

Baptist Bible College and Graduate School, MO (Mark Milioni) – I visited this 76-year old member institution located in Springfield, MO, aka *Queen City of the Ozarks*, in September 2016. The campus of *Life Change U* — as they refer to themselves — is festooned with massive, colorful banners and is abuzz with youthful energy and campus improvement projects. Perhaps most famous among BBC-MO alumni is the late Dr. Jerry Fallwell.





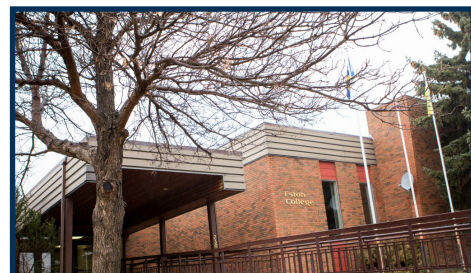
BH Carroll Theological Institute, TX (Gene Wilkes) – I toured BH Carroll’s beautiful new and strategically located facility in Irving, TX. President Wilkes informed me that they anticipate the entire cost of the building mortgage will be offset by tenant revenue when the building reaches full occupancy in the near future.

Briercrest College and Seminary, SK (Michael Pawelke) – I had the privilege of spending an entire day addressing the Briercrest board in a retreat setting. Talks and lively discussion revolved around biblical higher education distinctives, strategic challenges and opportunities, and board governance principles and best practices. It was exciting to observe Briercrest’s top board and administrative leadership poised and preparing together for a strong future.



Calvary University, MO (Christopher Cone) – While representing ABHE at the inauguration of Calvary’s new president, Dr. Christopher Cone, I was deeply moved and gratified by his stirring inaugural address affirming his vision for leading the institution into expanded scope while maintaining its historic biblical higher education identity.

Eston College (Brian Fuller) – Under Brian Fuller’s leadership, this 75-year old institution has been blessed with encouraging enrollment growth and greater financial health. Their passion burns stronger than ever to *make disciples who make disciples*.



Grace Bible College, MI (Ken Kemper) – I and Lancaster Bible College’s Dr. Penny Clawson facilitated a 3-day ABHE *Faculty LIFE* workshop. Congratulations are in order as the college closes in on achieving its ambitious enrollment growth target of 1,000 students (600 online, 300 resident undergraduate, 50 graduate).

Heartland Christian College, MO (Kris Palmer) – Kris hosted the September 2016 Midwest Presidents Fellowship gathering attended by approximately a dozen ABHE member presidents. The college is part of a multi-faceted recovery community supported by \$40M dairy operation that employs persons who are experiencing dramatic spiritual and life rehabilitation. What a beautiful expression of Christ’s healing ministry!



Horizon College & Seminary, SK (Jeromy Martini) – Under the leadership of President Martini and chief academic officer Rob Lindeman, Horizon is transitioning its entire curricular program to the Competency Based Education model. They have replaced their traditional campus food service operation with a community kitchen in which each individual student is allocated food storage and meal preparation capacity—a remarkably innovative solution.

Johnson University, TN (Gary Weedman) – JohnsonU, whose footprint continues to expand in terms of curricular programs and international presence, will celebrate its 125th anniversary in 2017-18. During my visit, I was also privileged to greet Johnson’s beloved President Emeritus and ABHE *Biblical Higher Education Award* honoree Dr. David Eubanks.



Lancaster Bible College, PA (Peter Teague) – My visit included a tour of LBC’s impressive new \$12M *Frey Academic Center*. ABHE Executive Vice President, David Medders, was privileged to represent ABHE at the *Frey Center’s dedication* in March 2016 attended by over 1,600 guests, including dedication speaker Ravi Zacharias.

Lincoln Christian University, IL (Don Green) – David Medders and I dined with LCU president, Don Green—new to the presidency but a trusted LCU veteran of long tenure—in the Lincoln dining room on LCU’s campus, replete with Abraham Lincoln memorabilia. Having successfully navigated institutional accreditation reaffirmations with ABHE, ATS, and HLC, the institution is turning its focus to Competency Based Education (CBE). It is one of two ATS-accredited seminaries granted permission to pioneer the implementation of CBE as the association works to develop appropriate CBE standards and best practices for seminary education.





Moody Bible Institute, (IL) (Paul Nyquist) – Dr. Nyquist, who exercises strategic biblical higher education influence through his membership on the National Association of Evangelicals board, reported on the progress of Moody’s ongoing capital campaign that included the \$10M **Chapman Center** facility. Enabled by a generous gift from Moody alumnus, Dr. Gary Chapman (of *The Five Love Languages* fame), the facility was dedicated in November 2016.

Northpoint Bible College, MA (David Arnett) – I once again partnered with Lancaster Bible College’s Penny Clawson in facilitating a lively 3-day ABHE **Faculty LIFE** workshop. Northpoint relocated in 2008 to Haverhill, MA, situated near the Merrimack River just 45 minutes North Boston. The campus encompasses 297,000 square feet and nine major buildings comprising the former campus of 200-year old Bradford College, which closed in 2000. Extensive renovations and infrastructure upgrades are ongoing.



Ozark Christian College, MO (Matt Proctor) – The college’s commitment to preparing laborers for the harvest pervades the institution’s people and campus. An OCC alumna who serves as **artist-in-residence** has created an arresting and memorable painting depicting Jesus in the middle of a field of ripened grain with a city skyline in the background and captioned with the words of Matthew 9:38-39 (the college’s theme verse). A closer look reveals faces of various peoples of the world imbedded in the stalks of grain.

Providence University College, MB (David Johnson) – I had the privilege of speaking at the April 24, 2016 University College commencement exercises in an address entitled, *A Call to Eucharistic Altruistic Theism*. The \$10M Impact 2020 capital campaign, largest in Providence history, includes provision for a new facility which opened in Fall 2016 that houses the new **Buller School of Business, Science classrooms, and a Welcome Centre**.



Welch College, TN (Matthew Pinson) – I accompanied Dr. Pinson, a fellow Peabody College of Vanderbilt University doctoral program graduate, on a tour of the college’s new campus. In February 2017, the college will realize its decade-long vision and quest to relocate from an aging, land-locked venue to its new 60-acre Gallatin campus. Welch College alumni and other supporters responded so generously to their initial capital campaign challenges that they were led to double the campaign goal.

As your president, I have the humbling opportunity to visit with many presidents and hear their vision and heartbeat. I witness many flourishing biblical higher education institutions of varying scope and scale, tangible results from the labor of committed faculty, staff, boards, alumni, and friends . . . and most especially the favor of our God. I celebrate with you these signs of flourishing, true expression and first fruits of our compelling vision to be a *21st century North American biblical higher education movement whose contributions to global Gospel impact are multiplying in their scale, scope, and significance*. By God's grace and our partnership together, may it be true now, more than ever.



Ralph E. Enlow, Jr.
ABHE President
February 2017



Biblical

An ABHE education involves extensive and rigorous study of the **biblical** text—its nature, narrative, interpretation, and teaching—aimed at building a coherent worldview framework for thinking and living flowing from the dispositions of both student and disciple.



Transformational

An ABHE education is intentionally **transformational** as students engage the life-changing Word of God and form authentic relationships with godly faculty and student peers—learning what it means to live out Kingdom values and Gospel priorities before a watching world.



Experiential

An ABHE education is **experiential**—involving hands-on ministry, service learning, and intercultural study opportunities that help students to discover their unique God-given gifts, passions, and sense of calling and to exercise and grow the life, ministry, and leadership skills required for passionate and proficient service.



Missional

An ABHE education is **missional**—because an authentically biblical worldview compels all believers, regardless of present or future occupation—to understand their personal vocation within the context of history's destiny: the day when all peoples have heard the Good News and the kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ.