



ARTICLES

[The Antidote to the Undermining of Faith in our Youth](#)

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

Last month, I addressed the desperate need for good interpretation of the Bible. Inaccurate interpretation is dangerous and destructive to the church. Falling on your sword or gouging your eye out is not good interpretation. (Read last month's article).

The best preventative to bad interpretation is solid, biblical theology, and this is the next essential qualification for pastoral ordination in the Alliance of Reformed Churches and an essential for every Christian.

Unfortunately, theology has largely been abandoned outside the walls of the church and too often inside the walls of the church. R.C. Sproul addresses this in his introduction to "Everyone's a Theologian," where he notes the shift in Christian colleges to rename the Theology Department the Religion Department.

"Religion" or "theology"—what difference does it make? In the academic world, the study of religion has traditionally come under the broader context of either sociology [study of society] or anthropology [study of man], because religion has to do with the worship practices of human beings in particular environments. **Theology, by contrast, is the study of God.** There is a big difference between studying human apprehensions of religion and studying the nature and character of God Himself... After explaining this in my lecture to the faculty, I added that a true Christian college or university is committed to the premise that the ultimate truth is the truth of God,

and that He is the foundation and source of all other truth... We have replaced theology with religion.” (R. C. Sproul, [Everyone’s a Theologian: An Introduction to Systematic Theology](#) (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2014), 3–4.)

I would argue that we have now replaced religion with liberal/progressive ideology, CRT and DEI in particular. These ideologies now reign in public colleges, and even the vast majority of private and self-proclaimed Christian colleges. If you doubt this, I urge you to read “Surviving Religion 101: Letters to a Christian Student on Keeping the Faith in College” by Michael Kruger. While this book gets heavy in philosophy, it rightly addresses the false teaching which is undermining the faith of our youth.

The influence of liberal ideology is also driving a mass exodus from the public schools into private, Christian schools and homeschooling. The exodus continues even post-pandemic shutdowns, online schooling, and masking requirements. As well, teachers are seeing the approaching storm and heading to safer ground where they won’t be forced to teach against their own convictions.

(See <https://www.dailysignal.com/2022/08/09/public-school-system-in-need-of-major-reforms-or-burial/> & <https://nypost.com/2023/11/09/news/conservative-parents-say-public-school-exodus-will-continue/>.)

NOTE: I am not anti-public school. We are fortunate to be in a community with some strong conservative influences on the board and in the classroom, not to mention the bold students who are standing for truth. I am grateful for these influencers who are standing strong when culture is demanding compromise. We need to be a light in the world, yet we must realize the power of darkness is strong and is happy to prey on the innocence of our youth.

This liberal ideology is coming for foster parents like Steph and I as well. The training is packed with demands to affirm liberal ideology and silence our Christian faith. No doubt, if the nation continues to support the left, policies will be made to prevent Christians from fostering at all.

(<https://www.dailysignal.com/2023/11/23/new-biden-rule-reveals-transgender-movements-endgame-no-dissenting-parents-allowed/>)

So, what’s the antidote to the undermining of faith in our youth? Theology. That is, thoroughly understanding what the Bible teaches us about God and every other issue.

“...theology is collecting and integrating all of the critical passages relating to a topic so as to gain not only a full, but also a balanced, systematic understanding of all that the Bible has to say about it.” (Jay E. Adams, [“Theology,”](#) *The Practical Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling* (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 178–179.)

In seminary, I took three semesters of Systematic Theology and then had to write a 60-page paper on my beliefs/theology. The courses were presented with a complete history of each theological point and overloaded my brain quickly. I wish they had given me R.C. Sproul’s book mentioned above, Wayne Grudem’s “Christian Beliefs”, or Greg Ogden’s “Discipleship Essentials” which we used for a sermon series 2 years ago. These resources help build a foundation to build on. From there, I recommend Michael Horton’s “Pilgrim Theology” or John Frame’s “Systematic Theology.”

Theology is not just for pastors! Everyone is a theologian. Some are terrible (Hitler) and some are amazing (Calvin), and the rest of us are somewhere in-between. Scripture demands that *“we must progress beyond the elementary instructions about Christ and move on to maturity...”* (Hebrews 6:1 (NET 2nd ed.) God is calling men and women, young and old to step up and build a solid theological foundation that can withstand our culture’s deception and rightly present the gospel.

As a church we must be equipped to equip our youth to face the challenges coming at them. We cannot become content in theological mediocrity. So, join me in building a solid theological foundation and equipping others.

PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS:

I’ve already mentioned some great books above, but I am guessing some of you would prefer video or audio. So, here are some more options which increase in depth and difficulty from basic to more advanced...

1. Doctrine by Francis Chan. <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/581>
2. The Five Solas of the Reformation by Ranjit David <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/747428>
3. THE 101 - Christian Basics on Christian Leaders
Institute <https://study.christianleaders.org/mod/url/view.php?id=78736>.

4. Systematic Theology lectures by Wayne

Grudem <https://www.waynegrudem.com/category/audio/systematic-theology>.

Not sure what would be best for you? I'd be happy to talk with you about it.

MY PRAYER

May God give you a deep desire to learn the truth and establish a solid theological foundation "that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured."
(Colossians 4:12)

Equipping Children & Families Update

By Lynnae Loomans

As we start the month of December thinking of all the presents to buy and our schedules getting busy with family gatherings and sports there are a couple reminders:

- Dec 13th - No bible class (there is K-5th grade Sunday School Christmas program practice 6-7:30pm)
- Dec 17th is the Christmas Program at 6:30pm

Reverse Offering Stories

A few weeks ago the Deacons left ten \$100 bills in the pews for people to use to bless others. Here are a few stories of how those gifts were used:

- A couple who was a guest in our church received the money and used it to give to the Senior Class during the Thanksgiving Food Scavenger Hunt.
- Another family used the money to purchase hats & mittens to donate to Rock River Intermediate School. There is always a need for warm winter gear for the students.
- A couple brought the money to the Waupun Food Pantry to inquire about needs. A lady was there who had gotten behind on her rent so the money was given to her and she used it to pay her landlord.

MESSAGES

I'd like to thank everyone for their thoughtfulness through calls ,prayers,cards, food

brought in, visits from Pastor Kevin & elders with communion. I appreciated everthing so much. Wonderful to be part of such a great church community.

-Sharon DeMotts

Brandon and Waupun food pantries are VERY thankful and happy with all of the donated items they received.

Thank you from Terry and Denise

Thank you for all the prayers, cards and support during Paul's hospitalization. He is home now, on oxygen 24/7 and has several months of recovery ahead. Your thoughts, calls & rides to Madison were greatly appreciated.

-Paul and Deb Bruins

Thank you for the box of candy. I'll be enjoying one piece for the next 15 days.

-Joyce Van Buren

EVENTS

December Events

Dec
08

Friday, 6:30pm

Steps to Freedom in Christ Workshop

This workshop will give you practical tools and biblical principles for you and your children to overcome negative thoughts, irrational feelings, habitual sins, and spiritual struggles.

Dec
10

Sunday, 5:00pm

Caroling in Alto

Spread the joy of Christmas with us as we walk around Alto singing carols and delivering cookies to our neighbors.

Dec
10

Sunday, 6:00pm

Christmas in Alto

Join us for a neighborhood party any time between 6-8pm at the Old Feed Mill in Alto. We'll have refreshments, share the Christmas story, do kids crafts, and fellowship.

Dec
17

Sunday, 9:30am

Mixed Choir Cantata

Join us as the Mixed Choir presents "The Love of God at Christmas".

Dec
17

Sunday, 6:30pm

Sunday School Christmas Program

You're invited to "A Super Christmas" where the 3 year olds - 5th graders will share the story of Jesus' birth.

Dec
24

Sunday, 4:00pm

Christmas Eve Service

Join us as we celebrate the birth of our King!



NEWS

Baptism:

11/5/23 - Sadie Hibicki

Covenant Partnership:

11/12/23 - Cameron Jahn

11/12/23 - Jensen Jahn

11/12/23 - Tehya VanLoo

UPDATES

Alliance (Global) Update

Asking for feedback and suggestions on Organizational Convictions/Unifying Beliefs

Working with Chemistry Staffing (regarding finding pastors) and Northwestern College (regarding Pathways).

Pray for international churches that are facing persecution.

Check out their thanks giving message

here... <https://mailchi.mp/allianceofreformedchurches/save-the-date-for-the-first-alliance-gathering-15639233?e=1adb09d309>

Check out the quarterly financial report here...

https://mcusercontent.com/837d36eb773c13416d30e1d16/files/de19f861-3a9c-22e5-a19b-5de3b9b45cee/November_2023_letter_to_Alliance_partners.pdf

Midwest Network Update

The Upper Mississippi Network (eastern Iowa and western Illinois) is launching out of the Midwest Network on Jan. 1. Seth will continue to keep the relationship healthy and mutually beneficial.

Midwest Network Prayer

We pray for the churches that are without pastors right now.

We pray for the churches and leaders in the Ordination Pathways.

We pray for the Upper Mississippi Valley Network being worked on in the Network.

We pray for the staff and leaders of our Network.

We pray for the November Network meeting in Worthington.

We pray for God to be with the various ways prayer will be present at the Network Meeting.

We pray for prayer movements to start and grow throughout our Network and the UMV.

We pray for the nominations for Vice President.

We pray for the people coming to the Network Meeting.

We pray for the breakout sessions at the Network meeting.

We pray for our Admin team and the things they are working on.

We pray for trust and accountability to be built in the relationships of our Network.

We pray for Chemistry Staffing to help churches find pastors.

We pray for the pastors and leaders facing struggles right now.

We pray for the churches transitioning into our Network and the Alliance.

We praise God for raising up leaders in our Network.

We praise God that he is on the move.

We praise God for filling vacant churches.

We pray that God will raise up a CEO to lead the Alliance.