

“I Will Not Be Silent”

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Dr. Piper, Dr. Walker, and members of the OWU community, I want to thank you for inviting me to visit your beautiful campus. I especially enjoy speaking on special occasions, and today is a very special one. Exactly 513 years ago today, Christopher Columbus stepped ashore on an island in the Bahamas he called San Salvador (Holy Savior). But I wonder how much our young people know about that historic journey and what those of you who attended public high schools may have been taught about that intrepid explorer. Did they tell you he was a racist, an exploiter, an imperialist who came to the New World to kill Native Americans and steal their gold? I see several heads nodding. Sadly, that’s often what’s being taught about this man. But let me tell you what Columbus said about that journey in his own personal journals. He wrote:

“At a very early age I began to sail upon the ocean. For more than forty years, I have sailed everywhere that people go.

“I prayed to the most merciful Lord about my heart’s great desire, and He gave me the spirit and the intelligence for the task: seafaring, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, skill in drafting spherical maps and placing correctly the cities, rivers, mountains and ports. I also studied cosmology, history, chronology and philosophy.

“It was the Lord who put into my mind (I would feel His hand upon me) to sail from here to the Indies.” (Christopher Columbus, *Book of Prophecies*)

Does that sound like the language of an exploiter? Modern revisionists have tried to say that Columbus was motivated by greed and corruption. They want us to believe that all the founders of our nation were imperialists and marauders. But what motivated this great adventurer was his Christian faith. And the idea of seeking new lands where the Word of God could go forth was a mission placed in his mind, he says, by the Lord.

In the next few minutes I’d like to speak to you about some of the research I’ve done for my new book, but I also want to offer you a perspective on the kind of education you’re getting here at OWU. Many times students in small schools may get the feeling that they’re isolated: that their friends who went off to the big campuses are getting more out of their education. But that isn’t the case at all. So let me tell you what I discovered when I was doing the research for my book.

While I began working on , *Freefall of the American University*, I traveled to colleges from coast to coast — literally from Maine to California — talking to professors and students about what’s happening. I went from Bowdoin College in Maine to Harvard, Yale, MIT, Princeton, and many other Eastern schools, then across the country as far as UCLA, USC, Berkeley, and Stanford, and the story was much the same everywhere I went. On the outside everything looks like it always has. It looks wholesome and safe. After all, those Saturday football games are glamorous and exciting, and they give people the impression that nothing has changed. But it’s a false impression.

On the inside, the cultural revolution that started in the sixties appears to have won. Most students and younger faculty have no basis of comparison, but older faculty and alumni know it’s changed. As I was thinking about these changes, I realized that my own perspective of forty years in and around the university is, in fact, my best qualification for commenting on what’s

been happening on the college campuses. And that's why I decided to write this book. I decided I needed to write about it and then do my best to make sure that the whole world finds out.

The Idea of the University

The idea of the university is a noble one. It's supposed to be a place where the greatest wisdom of the greatest minds can be studied, discussed, debated, and handed down to the next generation. It's a place for learning the values of Western civilization — such as freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and the free exchange of ideas. That's what the university is supposed to be. But on secular university campuses today, that's not happening. What I found in my research was that there's little or no freedom of speech. There's little or no freedom of thought — both students and faculty have to toe the party line or risk being charged with "hate crimes" and sentenced to "sensitivity training." And thanks to grade inflation and the proliferation of junk courses, there's not much learning going on, either.

When I began my college career back in the sixties, the curriculum was clearly prescribed. History, mathematics, English, foreign language, government, physical sciences, physical education, and academically relevant electives were all required. Grading was rigid and competition was intense. In their analysis of graduation requirements for English majors in 1964, the National Association of Scholars found that more than half of all schools in the sixties required survey courses in English and American history. By 1997, however, only a handful still had them. Commenting on this finding, NAS President Stephen Balch said:

“[T]he great majority no longer even try to provide their students with a serious overview of the Anglo-American literary tradition, or a systematic exposure to its greatest writers and works; that is to say, to the literary ‘big picture.’ Instead, they leave their students to wander among a hodgepodge of courses on narrow subjects and esoteric theory, often containing stiff doses of ideology, and frequently preoccupied with sex and cultural controversy.”

The reference to “Great writers and works” is especially interesting: In a conversation with a student at Tufts University in Boston, I asked if he had been exposed to the “Great Books,” and he reacted in utter shock. “Great?!” he exclaimed. “No! We don't talk about anything Great!” I couldn't help but laugh. Cultural and moral relativism are so engrained in the PC environment on campus, that the very idea of thinking of anything as *Great* — whether it's art or literature, or even science and economics — is virtually unthinkable!

Well, it hasn't always been that way. In 1964, 80 percent of colleges demanded that students pass a comprehensive exam of some type before they graduated. By 1997 only two of the top fifty schools in the country still did. In fact, only ten schools in the NAS study had a capstone requirement of any kind. Traditional courses were being tossed out in favor of cultural critique and politically-correct social issues — the politics of race, gender, and class. In the seventies when I was in grad school, the focus was on “rhetoric” and “deconstruction.” Today, it's usually “Women's Studies,” “Ethnic Studies,” “Queer Studies,” “Global Studies,” and some others you wouldn't believe if I told you.

Because of the strong liberal bias and poor leadership at many of our major universities, students are increasingly at the mercy of faculty members who are captivated by the latest Left-wing academic fads. Course catalogs at many schools today are as likely now to offer courses on pop music, pornography, standup comedy, and television sitcoms as anything else. The University of Wisconsin offers a course in Soap Operas. Columbia offers “Issues in Rock Music and Rock Culture.” Duke offers “the Physics, History, and Technique of Juggling.” And the University of Pennsylvania has one called, “Vampires: The Undead.”

And the one that bothers me most of all, is from Wesleyan University (in Connecticut) — a college founded in 1831 to educate Methodist ministers — which offers a course called

“Pornography Writing of Prostitutes” You may also be surprised to know that Wesleyan operates a “naked dorm,” a “transgender dorm,” and has unisex bathrooms in all the campus buildings. But you have to ask, “Why?” How could anyone think such things are part of a university education?

Some of you may be aware of the two big controversies that happened earlier this year at the University of Colorado, with Prof. Ward Churchill, and at Harvard over the comments of Harvard’s president, Dr. Larry Summers. Churchill wrote in an academic paper that the victims of 9/11 were “little Eichmans” who deserved to die. Subsequently, it was shown that Churchill had many skeletons in his own closet. Not long after that, Harvard President Larry Summers was publicly humiliated by his own faculty for suggesting that there might actually be differences between men and women. Imagine that!

In Chapter Four of my book, I included my conversation with Prof. Harvey Mansfield, a well known and highly respected conservative scholar who has been at Harvard for more than fifty years — first as a student and now as a faculty member. In the interview, Dr. Mansfield told me he was optimistic about the situation at Harvard because of the strong leadership of their new president — Dr. Larry Summers! I haven’t spoken to Harvey since the big media flap but I suspect his rosy predictions of change on that campus may need a little adjustment now!

Academic Bias

But here’s my question: How can America produce good leaders, teachers, or voters when professors are filling their students with contempt for their own native land? A recent study by the American Enterprise Institute reveals the imbalance between liberals and conservatives on the secular university faculties today: Just 3 percent of faculty are Republicans — the rest are either Democrats, Greens, or members of parties even farther to the left.

Similarly, 44 percent said the group that best expresses their values is the ACLU. Only 1 percent said they supported the NRA, and Zero percent had anything to do with the Christian Coalition. That study also found that liberals outnumber conservatives 25 to 1 at Harvard, 28 to 1 at Cornell, 16 to 1 at UCLA, and 23 to 1 at (Ward Churchill’s home base) the University of Colorado. And the percentages are much like that in almost all of the large secular colleges.

An important new survey by Stanley Rothman, Robert Lichter, and Neil Nevitte announced in *The Washington Post* in March of this year said that 72 percent of faculty members at American universities today identify themselves as liberals while just 15 percent say they are conservatives. In the Eastern universities, it’s 87 percent liberal to 13 percent conservative. And the most liberal departments are English, Philosophy, Political Science, and Religious Studies — where 80 percent of the faculty are liberals and just 5 percent identify as conservatives.

Okay, you say, professors can vote any way they like, and I agree. But here’s the problem: In a study by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni approximately half of the students surveyed said they only hear one side of controversial issues in the classroom. And they said their professors frequently use class time to push their own left-wing political agenda.

There are several results of this strong liberal bias on campus:

1. Students in these schools are being radicalized
2. Students come to believe that learning doesn’t matter
3. A survey last year showed that recent graduates of American universities have about the same level of knowledge as high school seniors in the 1950s — except that high-schoolers in the fifties had a better knowledge of American history

Another study, commissioned by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni two years ago demonstrates what’s happening in the classrooms: Testing only seniors at the top 55 liberal arts colleges, the poll consisted of questions from a high-school-level exam (or what used to be high-school-level work). Eight-one percent received a grade of D or F. Only one student got every question right. Thirty five percent thought that “From each according to his ability, to

each according to his needs” was from the Constitution — it is, in fact, a principle of Soviet Communism. More than half thought Germany, Italy or Japan was a U.S. ally during World War II — all three were enemies in that war. Only 29 percent knew that Reconstruction refers to post-Civil War political arrangements.

Forty percent could not place the Civil War in the correct half-century. Only 42 percent knew that the words “first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen” refers to George Washington. Fewer than one quarter could identify James Madison as the “father of the Constitution,” and only 22 percent recognized the words “Government of the people, by the people and for the people” as coming from Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address.” Such ignorance is dangerous to America’s future, and it is a direct result of the failure to teach young Americans their history in the college classrooms.

As you know, the First Amendment is has become a battlefield in recent years, and the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights — freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and the right to petition for redress of grievances — are a source of conflict. A survey commissioned by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education found that 25 percent of undergrads in American colleges could not name a single freedom protected by the Bill of Rights. Furthermore, 79 percent of college administrators were unaware that “freedom of religion” is guaranteed by the First Amendment. And just 6 percent of administrators and 2 percent of students knew that “freedom of religion” is *the very first right* protected by the Bill of Rights.

How could this happen? Among the 55 leading schools included in the survey, every one of them requires “sensitivity training” and “sexual indoctrination” for incoming freshmen, but not one of them requires a single course in American history. That’s how it happens. By design, American university students are being denied access to their own history.

Anti-Americanism

The freefall of the American university began with a cultural revolution in the 1960s, and I’m convinced that we’re in the midst of another revolution right now. It began on September 11th, 2001, when two aircraft struck the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, and a third struck the Pentagon in Washington, DC.

I was in my office in Washington that day, and we had a television on the Fox News Channel just outside my door. I was at my desk that beautiful fall morning when the first plane struck. One of my interns glanced at the TV and saw what was happening and called me over. I joined him and several others watching the events unfold and we stood there in stunned silence as the second plane struck the second tower. As I wrote in Chapter Nine of my book:

“The world watched in shock and disbelief as 3,000 men and women died in the deadliest assault to hit these shores in nearly 400 years of history. It was the face of multiculturalism gone awry, a sobering moment for every American as we considered the carnage, the prospect that this unprovoked attack was but a prelude to something worse, and the even more disquieting feeling that something awful was about to happen and we were powerless to stop it. It was the fear that, in one terrible moment of unspeakable horror, the world had changed forever.”

At first, there was a period of adjustment, getting used to the idea that America had been attacked, and a time of posturing and planning of what to say. We witnessed the bravery of the police and fire fighters, and even office workers and priests, who sacrificed their own lives trying to save others. We wept at the scene of men and women leaping from 100 stories in the sky to their death rather than be burned alive. And we all struggled to make sense of what had happened. But the avalanche from the universities didn’t take long to begin:

At Columbia University, in New York City (of all places), Prof. Nicholas de Genova told an audience that “The only true heroes are those who find ways to help defeat the U. S. military.”

At the University of New Mexico, Prof. Richard Berthold told students that, “Anyone who can blow up the Pentagon gets my vote.”

At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Prof. Jennie Traschen said that the American flag is “a symbol of terrorism and death and fear and destruction and oppression.”

And, of course, there were many others. But here’s the good news: A large number of students on campuses all across America were having none of it. As many of them told me in the interviews for my book, 9/11 was a watershed moment. One young woman at Yale told me, “I think 9/11 was really important, because it allowed conservative students to see what it’s really all about. I think it made a lot of us more outspoken.” And a student in medical school at the University of Texas told me it was the arrogance and one-sided indoctrination of his professors that drove him to look for truth in other places — a search that eventually led him to become a conservative, a Republican, and a Christian.

Things like this are happening everywhere I’ve traveled the past two years. Students are beginning to realize that they’ve been defrauded and tricked. They do love their country. They do want it to succeed. They do respect and admire the brave young soldiers who volunteered to take the war to the terrorists rather than waiting for the terrorists to bring it to us ... and lessons of envy and hatred are being rejected. Many have decided — just like all of you — to go to colleges where they can hear the truth and be taught in a wholesome Christian environment.

A study from the Department of Education reported that enrollment at the 130 schools in the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (of which Oklahoma Wesleyan is a member) increased by 67 percent between 1992 and 2002. That tells us that a lot of people are looking for better answers than the ones they’re getting from the secular schools.

The Good News

A study at UCLA by the Higher Education Research Institute in 2004 reported that four of five incoming students are “interested in spirituality.” Three-quarters said they were “searching for meaning or purpose in life” and 79 percent said they believe in God. As you might guess, there are faculty members and administrators at many of these universities who want to silence this interest in spirituality, or to direct it toward dangerous ideas such as the New Age. Many schools have tried to force Christian clubs to allow homosexuals and non-Christians to hold elected offices and influence activities and events. But when they’re challenged in the courts, they always lose.

Well, as I bring this to a close, I realize that this look at the freefall of the American university could easily be a depressing story. It’s true that a lot of bad stuff is happening out there. But it’s also an upbeat story for you because your options are so much better. I have to say that I’m very impressed with your generation. You have so much spirit, and you are tired of all the garbage the popular culture has been throwing at you. Just a few moments ago, I read the words of the song you were singing on the screen overhead. They said, “I will not be quiet; I will not be silent anymore.” What a wonderful message for a time like this. I hope that really is your message today. *Do not be silent* in the face of what the secular culture is trying to force on you. I hope you all have the courage to stand your ground, wherever you are, and demand the whole Truth (with a capital “T”).

You’re here in a great university with godly teachers who want you to know the truth. I’m impressed with what I’ve seen on this visit. What you have here is a good education, faculty members who know and teach the truth, a Christian worldview, and a chapel service each week where you can praise the Lord and discover new things. And best of all, it’s a place that helps you find God’s purpose for your life. Now what could be better than that?

Thank you, and God bless you.