

## The Director of Development for ACU-USA (cont.)

Michele (29), Ian (28) and Seth (25). Ron and Renee attend Believers Bible Church in Lithopolis, Ohio where he is a teacher.

Ron sees the opportunity to support and develop the ministry of ACU as a great privilege because of the need for Christian education in “a country and continent that desperately needs this Christ-centered world view.”

“I believe that the Lord has gifted me much like Barnabas in the book of Acts through being the ‘son of encouragement’ where I am able to aid and help others who are in the more visible forms of the ministry,” Ron said. “It brings me great joy and pleasure to be able to facilitate the joining of ‘need’ and ‘need provision’, as has been evidenced in my vocation over many years.”

Ron Thomas was drawn to ACU through the “combination of Reformed theology and a fully integrated curriculum.” He also sees the “value and necessity of biblical integration into every discipline, as is to be taught at ACU.” This is something his own university studies focused on, and since then he has “endeavored to integrate biblical priority, values and worldview” into his life and work.

Ron hopes and prays that ACU does not only survive in Zambia but also thrives there and in all of Africa. “I pray also that the Reformed, biblically integrated structure will impact other universities throughout Africa, the US and the world,” Thomas said. “A significant impact can be made with the truths of this Christ-centered approach.”

Ron is looking forward to getting to know the current ACU members so that their “combined team ministry will be used of God to have far reaching impact for the kingdom of God.” He also prays that he and his family “will use every moment of every day to utilize the gifts that the Lord has given to glorify Him.”

Please pray that God will use Ron and Renee as honorable vessels to advance the work of ACU in Zambia. As God calls out individuals like Ron to serve Him, He is also displaying for us that He knows every need and is providing them to bring His kingdom work to fruition. Thank the Lord for His marvelous provision through Ron! May the work of his hands bear fruit for our King of kings.



Seth, Ryan Simmons, Ian, Michele Simmons, Renee & Ron

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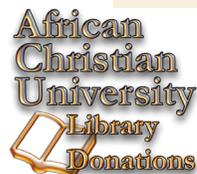
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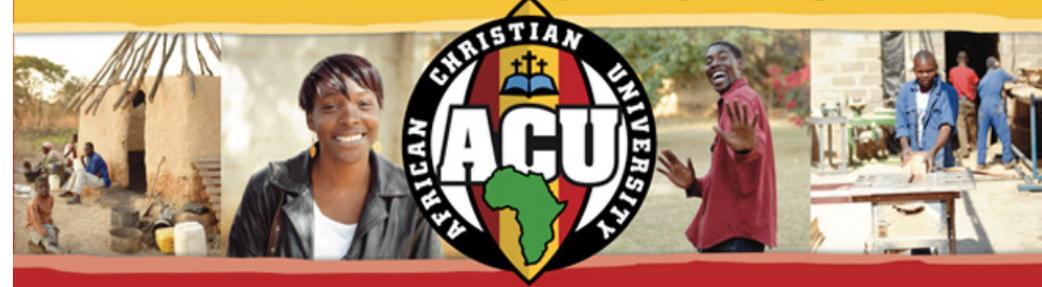


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## The ACU Monthly Prayer Update



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### Principle Over Pragmatism

by Ray Warwick

*The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death. ~ Proverbs 13:14 ~*



Ray Warwick

One of the marks of intellectual maturity is the ability to understand the notion of priorities among legitimate concepts, and one of the marks of ethical consistency is living in accordance with those priorities. Any philosophy of education recognizes this issue of priorities, and Christian education is no exception. Indeed, a hallmark of Christianity is that the metaphysical realm takes priority over the physical realm of existence. The Apostle Paul emphasized this perspective in 2 Corinthians when he argued “...we look not to the things which are seen but to the things which are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (4:18). In this letter to the Corinthians, Paul is making a passionate argument for, among other points, the vast superiority of the unseen spiritual realities which are eternal over the seen but temporary physical realities. We must note that Paul is not saying that the physical realm of existence is not important or irrelevant. He certainly is not saying that the physical realm is evil. He is simply saying that, for the Christian, the metaphysical takes priority over the physical so that “...we walk by faith, not by sight” (5:7).<sup>1</sup>

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### Matters for Prayer

May God help with provision and the challenges of leaving one's home, family and church for those who are seeking to come from North America to assist with the work of ACU in Zambia. While there are several working towards this goal, please pray specifically this month for: Antonio and Sinara Oliveira and their children Nicholas (13) and Anna Lisa (11), Carlos and Dianna Paul and their children Kayley (8), Miguel (6) and Nicolas (5), and for Chris and Keren Hays.

## Principle Over Pragmatism (cont.)

When it comes to education, I would argue for the priority of principle over pragmatics. Christian education surely emphasizes the superiority of spiritual truth over physical/material theory. We know that, of all that matters in this life, the realities that glorify God and bless His people now and prepare us for eternity must take priority in our affections and actions. And, I would add, they must take priority in our thoughts, our knowledge, our discernment. This comes through education. The Christian educator's herald is found in Psalm 34:11, "Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

The problem with pragmatism is that it makes effectiveness the test for truth. That is, if it works, it must be right. But that is very shaky ground on which to stand, for who gets to determine if an idea "works"? According to what standard? Is the standard my personal preference? Is the standard the greatest "good" for the greatest number of people? Is the standard an individual's

"rights"? Is the standard the highest profit margin with the least "risk"? You see, as beings created in the image of God, we must always deal with ethical questions. We must have a final standard and this brings us right back to the matter of principle. Principle over pragmatics. In other words, our practical decisions must be informed by our principles, lest we violate our code of ethics. For the Christian, the test for truth is not "does it work?" For the Christian, the test for truth is "does it align with the final and sufficient authority for all matters of faith and practice, God's Word?"

The worldly wisdom of pragmatism has caused entire cultures to bow prostrate before the god called wealth. Possibly the most devastating impact this cultural materialism has had on education, Christian as well as non-Christian, has been the notion that the purpose for education is to improve one's station in life (i.e., get a better job that pays lots of money). One of the most heart-rending attitudes I regularly hear from parents is that they want their children to get a better education so that they can get a better job to make more money and make me proud! Of course, many of our young people are all too happy to pursue this particular form of idolatry, or else they hate it because they are feeling pressured into preparing for a career they either don't want to go into or are simply not created for and will eventually leave anyway. Then we wonder why so many of our young people are either disinterested in spiritual matters or are lukewarm about the faith, living for personal peace and prosperity. Now I ask you, where do the Scriptures ever exhort us to do what we do in order to pursue wealth or status? The motive to pursue wealth, power, or status is not within the spirit of what we who claim to be disciples of Jesus are called to. Wealth, power, and status are nothing more than tools to attain a higher end. The purpose for education is to prepare oneself to most effectively glorify God and serve and bless



**Wilson Tembo & Ray Warwick**

## Matters of Prayer (cont.)

Pray that the land for the ACU campus would be brought to final resolution very shortly.



**Don Carson & Thabiti Anyabwile**

Pray that the annual Reformed Family Conference with Don Carson and Thabiti Anyabwile in Lusaka would be a great success in drawing believers from across southern Africa. Pray that the ACU project would be a growing passionate prayer for all those who will most benefit from the Biblical-based education in all vocations enhancing the penetrating power of the gospel throughout every sphere of African life.

Please pray for Ray Warwick, ACU's Academic Dean, whose mother's health is deteriorating rapidly and his sister is losing the battle against a very aggressive and rare form of cancer.

Please pray for the safe return of the Turnbull family to Zambia in early September after a very fruitful time in North America promoting and recruiting for ACU. They will be returning with Ian and Andrew, making the difficult separation from their three daughters: Damarise, Hannah and Sarah.

## Matters for Praise

God has been raising up many different individuals in North America to come help with the work of ACU during the

## Principle Over Pragmatism (cont.)

others. We have written extensively defining what that means. But consider these two verses from Proverbs 23. "Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist" (v.4). "Buy truth and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding" (v.23).

Christian parents, do you want to make a wise investment in your children's education? Buy truth and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding. Make educational choices based on principle over pragmatics. I love what Arthur Holmes said in *The Idea of a Christian College*: "The question to ask about education is not 'What can I do with it?' That is the wrong question because it concentrates on instrumental values and reduces everything to a useful art (pragmatism - my comment). The right question is rather 'What can it do to me?'" There it is ... Christian education based on principle over pragmatism will impact the heart, the soul of the student in a righteous way. (See Proverbs 13:14 above.)

Please do not read into this a sacrifice of excellence. Anything less than the absolute highest quality of education possible is not worthy of the name Christian. But every decision about education, from the reason for education to the way education is practiced, must intentionally be based on the priority of principle over pragmatics.<sup>2</sup> *Soli Deo Gloria*

<sup>1</sup>In this letter, Paul is explaining that he does not "lose heart" in the midst of severe trials and afflictions because, as a minister of the new covenant, he has the glories of eternity to look forward to. See Romans 8:18-25.

<sup>2</sup>Another example of pragmatics taking precedence over principle is the administration of numerous so-called Christian colleges and schools. Unfortunately, space prohibits delving into that quagmire at this time.

## The Director of Development for ACU-USA by Heather Adams

Since ACU-USA was established in 2009 to help support the ACU project in Zambia the need for one key person has been the subject of much prayer. That person was needed to function as the Director of Development for ACU-USA, to help raise awareness and financial support for the University. God has answered that repeated prayer after four years! Ron Thomas, a mortgage banker and commercial real estate developer in Carroll, Ohio has stepped forward to fill that role.

"My desire is to use the gifts that God has given to me to further His kingdom where He gives me the opportunity to do so," Ron said.



**Ron Thomas**

Ron is originally from Columbus, Ohio, where he grew up in a Christian home. By the age of eight he realized his need for the Lord at a Billy Graham Crusade. He confessed Christ as his Savior and began his walk with the Lord. Ron went on to attend a Christian university and seminary earning his Master's in Divinity at Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana. He then pastored a Baptist Church, followed by a Bible Church in Ohio. Ron has been married to Renee for 34 years. They have three children,

## Praise & Prayer (cont.)

Turnbull's travels to promote the work. We thank Him for His faithful response to so many prayers. Continue to look for Spotlight articles in the monthly ACU Prayer Update to inform you about those who are assisting the Zambian churches with the ACU work.

## ACU-USA Board



**Dan Pentimone, Ken Bennett, Ron Thomas, Ken Turnbull, Tedd Tripp and Dan Chittock**

The ACU-USA Board meeting on Aug 9 was a great success. Many different issues were addressed and policy and provision for development continues to be made. God has assembled a gifted group of men for the work in supporting the ACU project in Zambia.

There is much gratitude for experienced men whom God is preparing to aid the Board in Zambia in developing a more detailed strategic plan for ACU's development. Dr. Tim Tomlinson, President of Bethlehem College and Seminary (a vision of Dr. John Piper) has agreed to come to Zambia to serve in this way.

We thank God for those who have accepted new appointments with ACU. Pr. Conrad Mbewe has accepted the appointment of Chancellor of ACU and Dr. Ken Turnbull has accepted the appointment of Vice Chancellor of ACU. May God's grace abound in granting wisdom and fruit in their labors.

We are grateful that Ray and Peggy Warwick have located a house to rent in Lusaka.