It seems in the past few years I have been confronted by a growing dichotomy which seems to be taking shape within our Christian Church. Set up between two frontlines, the missional and emergent tribes seem to call for radical reformation while the more streamline and orthodox seem to take this as a personal attack claiming these thoughts as being a loss of accountability at best and at worst, borderline heresy. So which is it and where do we find God at work within it all? Most importantly…where does politics give way to Kingdom love?

Not that long ago a friend of mine quoted Kevin Deyoung from a blog post called ‘The Glory of Plodding’. He said, “What we need are fewer revolutionaries and a few more plodding visionaries. That’s my dream for the church — a multitude of faithful,
What is the Direction of Biblical Higher Education?

By Rob Pittman, President

Every year Bible colleges across Canada are closing their doors — permanently. These schools that were created to train church leaders of the future are disappearing from the educational landscape. Right now we are at a defining moment in the life of Christian Biblical education. Alberta Bible College (ABC) has the ability to stand out as a leader among colleges. This is a moment in time when we can partner together to make a profound and lasting difference to the current and future generations of church leaders.

The Challenge

I am proud to say that Alberta Bible College is an accredited institution through the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) who is the accrediting board for undergraduate education in North America. To receive accreditation a school must go through a long and detailed process to prove their academic and institutional strength. The school must also have a thorough process of assessment and planning. In addition to fulfilling all these requirements, ABHE spreads out the initial accreditation application and assessment over an eight-year period. Accreditation is not a simple process and is not something that a school is quickly awarded.

I tell this background information on ABHE for two reasons; first I am very proud that ABC is a fully accredited school with ABHE, second, understanding the ABHE process helps us to better know the dire situation of Bible colleges in Canada. From 1960 to today, 60 schools in Canada have been accredited with ABHE or been in the process of accreditation. In the past 20 years, 22 of these schools have closed and several more have merged together because they could not afford to continue their operations. These statistics don’t include the countless schools that did not apply for accreditation who have ceased operations. And I am sad to say that I consistently hear stories of Bible colleges that are having fiscal problems and are laying off staff or planning to close their schools. Some of these schools are even supported

“This is a moment in time when we can partner together to make a profound and lasting difference to the current and future generations of church leaders.”
by larger denominations who have removed their funding.

There are several factors that have caused this tough environment for Bible colleges. Among these reasons is the costs of operating a college have increased substantially over the past 20 years while the cost of tuition has not increased at the same rate. This is further exacerbated with the fact that private religious colleges do not receive government funding for students like the public universities. In order to receive government funding some Bible colleges have become public liberal arts colleges or universities and have moved away from specializing in Biblical studies. Student enrolment has shown a steady decline as the educational environment has become more competitive each year with the myriad of options available to potential students. Some churches have pulled their funding of Bible colleges in favour of operating their own discipleship schools as larger churches become increasingly self-sufficient.

“...our graduates are leading churches and missions that are making a positive global impact to demonstrate the love of God to a desperate and broken world.”

While we are operating in a tough environment there is still hope and a great future for ABC. ABC has a wonderful history of partnering together with our churches and church members to support functions of the school and maintain one of the lowest tuition rates for Bible colleges and even lower tuition than some public universities. What is even better is that our graduates are leading churches and missions that are making a positive global impact to demonstrate the love of God to a desperate and broken world. The world must be evangelized and healed, our churches must be taught and encouraged and the tradition of training church leaders must continue.

ABC is also in a unique position to partner together with other colleges and discipleship schools to ensure Christian education will continue into the future. This is a defining moment where ABC can help lead Christian education in Western Canada through this tough season. There are opportunities to open new campuses where there are no Bible colleges, research and start new degrees that are on the forefront of urban ministries, and enhance our support to local congregations. In the truest fashion of the Restoration Movement we can all be unified to achieve the common cause of Christ in living according to the Word of God. This duty does not belong to just one party; this is a responsibility that all Christians equally share.

ABC is supported by people just like you and me who are faithful to give a monthly contribution or a one-time gift. We can make all these dreams a reality but we need faithful partners who are willing to offer their financial and spiritual support. I would ask that with prayer you would consider how you may join with the rest of the community in supporting Alberta Bible College. The future leaders of our churches need your support. Together we can leave a legacy that will continue for generations to come. Most importantly we can fulfill the mission of Jesus to make faithful followers who will take the hope of the gospel to our communities and to the ends of the earth until our Lord returns.

...our graduates are leading churches and missions that are making a positive global impact to demonstrate the love of God to a desperate and broken world.”

THE GOOD NEWS

Alberta Bible College is a member of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities. We uphold their standards of financial accountability. Audited financial statements are available upon request. All donations are used for the purpose stated by the donor in Board recognized and approved programs and projects. In the event that the need for such programs or projects has been met, the remaining funds will be used “where needed most” in the College’s ministry. We honour donor confidentiality and do not buy or sell mailing list information. If you have any questions on this, or any other matter, please contact the President at 403.282.2994 or email: rpittman@abc-ca.org.
There were two opportunities to present the text Ephesians 5:22-33. This passage includes the concept of a wife submitting to her husband which, of course, controversial in contemporary discussions.

I presented it first at Alberta Bible College and the discussion was engaged, animated, controversial and serious — about knowing what this text meant. This group intended to apply the text to their lives so it made a big difference.

This same information was later presented at a university class called “Women and Families in the Graeco-Roman World.” I assumed there would be much more controversy (and was frankly a little nervous about it) but, in fact, the opposite was true. It seemed that the text meant little to the 59 women listening to one male presenter.

To them, what they heard were simply historical facts about the ideals for marriage in primitive Christianity. It had no bearing on their lives.

A faith context affects the way students seek information. Values are important here. They do not need to limit the research but could shape it. Bible college students do not just want to know the information. They want to understand what difference it might make in their lives and the lives of those in their churches. Furthermore, they are looking for resources to help them with the practical implications of their theology, resources for preaching, worship and pastoral care.

As a librarian, my job is to organize information and help students find that information. This summer I am using a study leave to investigate data I have gathered on the role of faith in theological research. With this information, I hope to better help our students use the plethora of resources available to them in our library and beyond.
Reflection transforms experience into genuine learning. It helps us connect who we are with how we live. Our daily living, whether it feels mundane or not, is filled with meaning; reflection can provide a lens through which to interpret meaning.

Reflection is a practice that involves making space in your mind and schedule to spend short amounts of time purposefully thinking of God throughout your day. In that space you slow down and rest, and from a place of stillness you begin to ask God questions about your day or about a specific event. Pay attention to feelings, challenges or difficulties you encountered. What were your strategies to better the situation and were they fruitful? Look at the positives and what contributed to making this a good outcome. What beliefs were revealed in how you live your life and how does it line up with the Word of God? Include God in your reflective thinking, and allow Him because the purpose is to learn and change inwardly and outwardly so we may ultimately reflect Christ.

Reflecting on everything is not necessary, but it will do us good to be more reflective. Looking in a mirror reflects one’s physical image. In the same way, the practice of reflection holds a mirror up to one’s social, emotional and spiritual image. It carries the idea of being conscious of what one is doing in order to gain meaning and understanding. This goes below the surface stuff of analyzing what physically just happened to focus on receiving “how” it impacted me and “why” it did in the manner it did.

Reflection is a way of stepping back and getting off of the merry-go-round in order to get a broader and truer view. Experiences can become more meaningful and deeper truths are exposed. Our immediate response or understanding may not be totally accurate. It’s usually when we pull back and get a more panoramic view that greater insight comes and a more balanced position arises.

The benefits that come with reflecting are less stress, less striving, fresh perspective, and renewed focus and energy. By far the greatest benefit though is entering into a more intimate relationship with God. Times of reflection can enhance both your self-awareness and your relationship with God and others.

The psalmist urges, “Be still and know that I am God.” (Ps 46:10) Reflection is a way to enter into that stillness. Ultimately, reflection will give us a picture of where God is at work and prompt us to become intentional about being on the same page with what He is doing. God is all about having us reflect Him so that others will know through our words and actions the message of hope and love through Christ. He continues to draw us to Himself; reflection helps us to grasp this.
In the last issue of the Evangel we highlighted the ten graduates in the degree program but wanted to list the other accomplishments which were celebrated over the graduation weekend.

**AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS 2010**

**AWARDS PRESENTATION**

Boyd Lammiman Scholarship ........................................... Steph Lazerte
Dorothy Chapman Scholarship ........................................... Ariane Pedersen
Fine Arts Award .................................................................. Kristy Winter
Service Award ..................................................................... Alannah Siemens
Outstanding Student Award ............................................... Laura McKenzie
Student Body Leader Award ............................................... Kristy Winter
Faculty Award .................................................................... Cory Pytlarz
Beyond Borders Award ..................................................... Erika Pacheco

**REGULAR PROGRAM GRADUATE AWARDS**

Church Growth Award ..................................................... William Proudfoot
Outstanding Promise in Christian Education Award ................. Charlotte Nyrose
Graduating Senior Award ................................................ William Proudfoot
Christian Scholar Award ................................................ Marnie Hira
Valedictorian ....................................................................... Marnie Hira

**PACE GRADUATE AWARDS**

Academic Excellence Award ........................................ Sandra Lumsden
Christian Service Award ................................................ Janice Berard
Achievement Award ........................................................ Alex Legesse
PACE Graduate Reflection ................................................ Anne Perkins

**DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES 2010**

Diploma In Christian Ministries Performing Arts
Kristy Winter

Diploma in Leadership and Ministry
Janice Berard
Amanda Anderson

Diploma in Counseling & Ministry
Sandra Lumsden
Robyn Resler

Certificate in Christian Foundations
Rebekah Bourdeau
Jennifer Campbell
Andrea Elliott
Bergen Galts
Trudy Grysutch
Felicia Kroeker
Michael Mitchell
Matthew Scrivens
Alannah Siemens
Luis Salazar

Grad Class 2010

Bachelor of Theology
Ministerial
William Proudfoot
Aaron Patton

Bachelor of Religious Education
Counselling
Jean Dume

Bachelor of Religious Education
General Studies
Charlotte Nyrose
Sun Sim

Bachelor of Sacred Literature
Marnie Hira

Bachelor of Arts
Leadership & Ministry
Alex Legesse
Donald Lloyd

Bachelor of Arts
Counselling & Ministry
Pamela Cameron
Anne Perkins

Alberta Bible College 78th Commencement Weekend
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 “CHRISTIAN PLODDING…”

risk taking plodders.” What an inspiring deliberation and yet I wonder; can you be a faithful, risk-taking plodder without running the risk of cultural revolutionary reactions?

The Apostle Peter was a plodder too and while he stood before thousands of people he spoke from his heart, “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17) Much like Peter, perhaps the plodders of our time have a dream in uncharted waters; and our visionaries are leading us towards a revolution — one which is counter cultural not counter Christological!

The dangers of consumeristic church are most definitely rooted in a lack of commitment and the spiritual cannibalistic practices of ‘what’s in it for me?’ My fear is that this reality has become not just individualistic in practice but also corporately expressed through the ideological expectations of set ecclesiological mandates. Let’s face it, Christian accountability is something which is centered not on maintaining an existing ecclesiology but upon the commitment to the missionary plodding of sending all of Christ’s followers into the world united with an impassioned vision for God’s Kingdom drawing near to every fabric of life.

So what of love for God’s Kingdom? Richard Neuhaus once said, “It is easy to think that we love an abstract, spiritualized, de-historicized Church just as it is easy to love abstract, spiritualized, de-historicized people. In truth to love abstractions is not to love at all; it is but a sentimental attachment to our own whimsies.”

In truth I can say I love God’s Kingdom but in so doing I am in love with God’s people; in all places, forms, traditions, and diversities. To not recognize the riches of this virtue brings heed to Jesus’ warning that, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls.” (Matt. 11:17)

Does the dichotomy between missional/emergent and main stream church demand revolutionary mentality? I do not know but, in the words of Martin Luther King I’ve been hearing a lot lately… “I have a dream today!”

Maybe the church itself should spend some time dreaming too.

Erik and his wife Bonnie have lived in the city of Calgary for the majority of their lives. They both have seen the many challenges and changes that have taken shape within the communities of Calgary and feel a deep calling to making a difference as Christ’s followers. Their dream is in planting and developing the community of Expressions as a missional outreach to the people of SE Calgary and the surrounding areas. The vision is for Expressions to be a place where people can seek, encounter, experience, and cultivate deeper relational expressions of Jesus in the midst of their passions and full lives and to be a place where all can feel welcome to explore, create, celebrate, and find acceptance regardless of their differences, diversity or own unique contexts.
Alumni Dinner and Meeting

Thanks to everyone who was able to join us for the Alumni dinner at Terry Spratt’s place. We had over thirty people in attendance.

A special thanks to Jason Komar, Monica Slobogean, John Nicholson, Ryan Scruggs, Ryan McCulloch, Cam Pelham and Matthew Morris for being prepared to discuss the impact ABC has had on their lives. And also a huge thank you to Al Unsworth of ABPro Photo for recording the discussion. Once the video is edited it will be posted on our new Alumni page.

Also thanks to everyone who joined in on the discussion about the new Alumni project and the Alumni portion of the ABC website.

With the prior project being successfully completed we thought it would be good if the Alumni worked on a project that would look at enhancing the appearance of the College. Our new project involves two areas. The first is completing the prayer room and the second is to replace the lower level of the library carpeting (which has become frayed with all the foot traffic) in the library with tiles and carpeting. The Prayer Room is intended to be a quiet place where students and staff can retreat to spend some quiet time with our Lord.

The total cost for both areas is ball parked to cost about $8,000. The prayer room must be completed before the library is worked on. All donations are greatly appreciated. Simply forward all donations to the finance department at the College with a note indicating it is for the Alumni project.

There were also some excellent suggestions for the Alumni webpage and now the challenge for us is to put it all together. If all goes well our new site will be available in August so please feel free to visit and check it out.

Alumni Profile

Matthew Morris (BRE 2006)

Apparently, I’m unusual. I’m a Christian biologist, currently doing my Masters at the University of Calgary after completing an honours degree in marine biology at Dalhousie University in Halifax. But I also completed my Bachelor of Religious Education at ABC. Many scientists here at the university seem rather amazed when I tell them my history, and many Christians wonder why I would bother. Personally, I think there is nothing more normal than for a Christian to be engaged in biology: discovery is a creative act, bringing us closer to what it means to be made in the image of God; the amazing complexity of the biological world enhances our wonder and praise of the Logos who fashioned it; and the first command recorded in Scripture is to care for the fish of the seas, giving all Christians the moral responsibility to be environmentalists and stewards of the environment. I spent two years after ABC working with Atlantic salmon, trying to discern the impact of salmon farming on wild salmon stocks, and I was able to meet and work with some of the top experts in the fisheries field. Their outlook was bleak; we have done an abhorrent job following God’s command, and the world is currently suffering. I don’t think the groans of creation have ever been as loud as they are now. Christianity needs to raise a united voice when it comes to environmental concerns, and I consider my time at ABC training to be one of those voices.