

EDITORIAL

WE SPEAK WHAT WE KNOW

Recently, I drove deep into the forest near Mackinaw City, Michigan, with my family. The sun had set and stars were beginning to come out as we parked our car at the International Dark Sky Park. With small flashlights and blankets in hand, we moved quietly to the shore of Lake Michigan and settled in to watch the night sky slowly appear. We were in one of eight certified dark sky parks in the United States and one of 11 in the world. These parks are places protected from artificial light so the night sky can be more visible (International Dark-Sky Association, n.d.).

Fifteen minutes passed and we began to identify our favorite constellations: the Big Dipper, Cassiopeia, the Northern Cross, Scorpius, and the Little Dipper. Thirty minutes passed and the Milky Way became visible as thousands and thousands of stars lit up the whole sky from horizon to horizon. We were seeing many, many stars we had not identified previously. In fact, our favorite constellations began to get lost among the many stars that surrounded them. We became very quiet. Only a few whispers could be heard among the rather large crowd of people who had gathered. There is something awe inspiring about a sky filled with stars and planets when there is limited competing light from surrounding cities.

My mind wandered into Bible texts that compare light with darkness: “And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:5, NKJV). “The light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19, NKJV). “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12, NKJV). “Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you” (John 12:35, NKJV).

We have a clear indication in God’s Word that light is contrasted with darkness and that we will not always have the Light with us.

But here I am, on a dark night, surrounded by light—really bright light! Analogies between light and truth pop into my mind. We live in a culture and time of earth’s history in which light (truth) is sought after in many different forms. Spirituality is “in,” but does it bring light and truth? Is truth “in”? What is truth? Ravi Zacharias, in his penetrating description of the current state of spirituality, says that “the greatest and most notable casualty of our times in which we are inundated with spiritual terminology is, unquestionably, *truth*” (Zacharias, 2012).

But what is truth? What does it mean to be spiritual? What is spiritual leadership? These are some of the questions raised by the authors in this issue of *JACL*. Stan Patterson opens the conversation in his article “Up the Down Path: Power, Ambition, and Spiritual Leadership.” This is followed by an interview with Richard Blackaby, who co-authored the book *Spiritual Leadership* with his father, Henry Blackaby.

The three feature articles portray spirituality as lived out by Christian educators. Quietly, without much notice, Christian teachers, principals and students are defining spirituality by the way they experience a relationship with Jesus that sustains their daily challenges. Janet Ledesma’s research of school principals who stay in one school for more than 10 years highlights the importance of calling and supportive environments. Vincent Montoro found that Christian teachers with limited resources grew as professionals by walking close to Christ and receiving His wisdom and strength. Jeff McMaster talked with leaders who attended Christian schools for their elementary and secondary education to understand how they believed Christian education has influenced their leadership.

In the “Leadership Lived” section there are four short articles: Peter Burch describes how he integrates community outreach into his history classes, Tom Decker opens our eyes to student response when one of their classmates dies, David Morgan reflects on how we discipline students, and in an interview Roo McKenzie shares his understanding of what spiritual leadership is. Finally, in the “Dialogue” section, Duane Covrig, Janet Ledesma and Gary Gifford hone in on religion and spirituality, asking how both can be meaningful when grounded in Scripture and how both can be meaningless without Christ.

Which brings us back to the question: What is truth? In this issue, Christian educators have spoken. They have spoken of what they know and have experienced.

In the darkness of night, Jesus spoke to Nicodemus: “Are you the

teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen” (John 3:10-11, NKJV). Our authors have done the only thing any of us can do; they have spoken of what they know. Now you, the reader, must decide whether their words shine light into the darkness of your surroundings. Our prayer is that they will lighten your pathway today.

References

- International Dark-Sky Association. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.darksky.org/night-sky-conservation/dark-sky-parks>
- Zacharias, Ravi. (2012). *Why Jesus?: Rediscovering his truth in an age of mass marketed spirituality* [Kindle edition]. New York, NY: Faith Words.