

News and Notes

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Janice Ruffner - Roelf Ruffner's wife, Columbia, TN. Blood clots, Fibromyalgia, Lung problems.

Pat Miller - Wife of Jim Miller, Gray, Maine preacher. In therapy from auto accident.

Nancy Reed - Various health issues.

Patrick King - Hemiplegic Migraine.

Sandy Craig - Ongoing kidney problems.

Jo Ann McLerran - COPD.

Glenda Marble - Lexington, Okla. - Heart problems.

Debbie Post - Wife of Salisbury, Maryland preacher Doug Post - Cancer.

Sissy Craig - For spiritual and emotional strength.

Charles and Linda Pogue - Congestive heart failure.

Nancy Verkist - Ellensburg, Washington. Von Hippel Lindau disease.

Chuck Verkist - Ellensburg, Washington. Undergoing treatment for Prostate Cancer.


Don Smith - Faithful brother in Christ persecuted for teaching fellow inmates in an Ohio prison.

FLU TAKING A TOLL - The flu season is here with a vengeance. Landry and Erin and their family will not be in worship this week, due to the flu. Bible classes have been cancelled for this Sunday morning.

KENYA REPORT - Contributing this week to the Kenya fund were, the Eastside church of Christ, Lexington, Okla.; Charles and Nancy Verkist, Ellesburg, Wash.; Larry D. Davis, Audubon, Penn.; the Berea church of Christ, Rives, Tenn.; Harold and Ruth Tydings, Broken Arrow, Okla.; and the Morton Street church of Christ, Denison, Texas. We are grateful to all of our generous brethren who aid us in this great work. We have lost 40 percent of the monthly support we send to Kenya. Any additional support will be more than welcomed.

ANNUAL CFTF LECTURESHIP - The annual Contending For The Faith Lectureship will be held Feb. 23-25 at Spring, Texas. The theme is "The 'I Am' Statements of Jesus." Jerry and Sherlene will attend and he will speak Saturday, Feb. 24 on the topic, "I Am The Alpha And Omega." Feb. 25 is the fourth Sunday, so Earl will preach at Northeast in Jerry's absence.

Website - www.necocelkcity.com Face Book - www.facebook.com/nechurchofchristecok You Tube - www.youtube.com/channel/UCjd5rSEV1vXCNx52ouOrXoQ	
Those Who Serve Sunday Morning, Feb. 18, 2018 First Prayer -Earl Reed Closing Prayer - Dylan Brewer Communion - Landry Brewer Offering - Jerry Brewer Sunday Afternoon, Feb. 18, 2018 First Prayer - Patrick King Closing Prayer - Jerry Brewer	Records - Feb. 11 Bible Class.....N/A Morning Worship.....N/A Afternoon Worship.....N/A Contribution.....N/A
Weekly Meeting Times Sunday Morning Bible Classes.....9:30 Sunday Morning Worship.....10:30 Sunday Afternoon Worship.....5:00	



Sound Doctrine

“But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1)

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Freed-Hardeman Doubles Down On Nudity

Gary W. Summers

Last week we apprised brethren who may not have known about Freed-Hardeman University's use of nudity in both their Art and Photography Departments. Because of Brother Sword's website (<https://kteam1981.wixsite.com/fhu-uncovered>) and perhaps criticism from others, the new president of Freed-Hardeman, David Shannon, felt compelled to respond by making a statement in chapel on Ground Hog's Day. Below is his speech in its entirety, transcribed by your congenial columnist.

“Students, you are the reason Freed-Hardeman exists, and your faculty and staff are dedicated to helping you develop your God-given talents for His glory. We realize the responsibility and privilege we have of empowering you with an education that integrates Christian faith, scholarship, and service. This is the core as you grow in the ways to serve God and your community.

“Recently the university and some faculty and staff, alumni, and students have been publically challenged and at times attacked regarding the study of nude and semi-nude human forms in sculptures, paintings, pictures within the art program. Your confidence in the academic and spiritual integrity of the program is critically important. Your instructors continually assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of curriculum and even use opportunities such as this one to again review your degree program in light of FHU's mission.

“Following these recent challenges, faculty, staff, and administration have again concluded that these studies of the human form are necessary and appropriate in a large number of academic disciplines, programs, and courses at this university, including the art program. It is crucial for an Art graduate from a liberal arts university to be able to draw the human and therefore understand the body. It is believed that Michelangelo even autopsied bodies because he wanted to see layers of muscle, veins, and bone structure.

“While FHU students do study the human form, FHU art students do not and never will work with nude, live models. Perhaps drawing the human form or studying semi-nude or nude art violates your conscience. If so, you have informal and formal mechanisms available to request modifications to your curriculum. Your request will be evaluated based on its reasonableness and its impact on the academic integrity of your studies.

“Several allegations made recently have been disappointing, including intimidating students, faculty, and staff over personal convictions and falsely using the word pornography, erotica, to describe art that is studied here. No instructor will ever seek to incite vulgarity or lack respect for God’s creation—the human body.

“This is a good opportunity to discuss roles in all of our careers as we decide daily if we will walk with the Lord or follow the world. Part of our role as FHU faculty, staff, and administration is to make you aware of the challenges you will face in your career, provide you with guidance, instruction, and encouragement to reflect Christ within your career. Our goal is to provide you with Christian instructors, mentors, and even a safety net as you consider choices that you will face in your journey after college. We are called to honor our Creator with how we live in our bodies and how we interact with others and their bodies. With respect for others, a pure heart and God-seeking actions, your work will bless those around you.

“Thank you for making spiritual, intellectual, and social choices that will honor our God today and in the future. If you would like to see me about any of this, I would be glad to visit with you.”

Crossing the Rubicon

Is it really necessary to respond to this weak attempt to justify nudity? Probably not, but let us call attention to crucial points. In making this statement, Freed-Hardeman has crossed the Rubicon. This matter no longer remains what an Art teacher or Department Head has done in the classroom. It has now become a matter of what the entire faculty, staff, and administration at Freed-Hardeman believes.

Paragraph 3 says that all three groups have concluded that “studies of the human form are necessary and appropriate.” Unless one of these (and that includes the Bible department) says he disagrees, it should be assumed that he backs up what the president said.

Even if Freed-Hardeman should ever come to its senses and (due to pressure) change its policies regarding nudity, how can brethren ever trust their young people to them again, knowing that this is the way they truly feel about it? Frankly, they have shown themselves unworthy of either students or financial support, and even though we have highly recommended them in time past, that day is finished.

They have made it clear that they will continue to require that students study “nude and semi-nude forms in sculptures, paintings, pictures within the art program.” How is that possible in a “Christian” university? And the president is disappointed that brethren find fault with this? Really? It would be grievously disappointing if Christians were not appalled.

“Feel Good” Statements

The speech contains several statements calculated to make students and all others feel good about the school—that they are looking out for the students’ interests. But this is window dressing—to cover up the nakedness. In the very next sentence, after saying students will continue to study nudity, he has the temerity to talk about the academic and spiritual integrity of their art program. Dr. Shannon apparently does not see the conflict between the spirit and the flesh (Gal. 5:19-23). He avers that it is absolutely crucial (an odd choice of words since it refers to the cross) for their graduates to be able to draw the human form. Many who have majored in art disagree. And since when is Michelangelo a greater authority than the Word of God? Readers, have you noticed that Shannon did not use one Scripture to justify students studying nudity? The reason is that none exists! Lack of Scripture to justify what they are doing should have told him that no Biblical principle can justify this curriculum.

...So is it a sin and a shame to remove one’s clothes to pose nude? Does that honor God? “Oh, but we wouldn’t do that,” Shannon protests. Good, but is it right for you to look upon and draw the body

of someone else who has shamed himself or herself? Adam and Eve experienced shame when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They covered themselves (Gen. 3:7). Had a Freed-Hardeman art teacher been present, she might have suggested they draw each other’s perfect bodies for future art students to use before covering up! Would this be respecting “God’s creation—the human body”?

Yes, God did create the human body—but not for public display—either in sculpture, paintings, or photographs. Respect for one’s privacy is lauded in the Scriptures. Ham did not honor his father when he lay drunk within his tent. “But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both of their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness” (Gen. 9:23). Oh, but at Freed-Hardeman it is crucial for students to study “nude and semi-nude human forms in sculptures, paintings, pictures within the art program.”

What is Sin?

Have none of the instructors in the Bible department ever preached Matthew 5:28: “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart”? If so, how can they reconcile the philosophy of the Art Department with what Jesus said? Don’t they want the young men who attend Freed-Hardeman to be pure in their thoughts toward women? Don’t they want young men to treat young women with respect? Then why are they in agreement with the faculty, the staff, and the administration that young men taking art must view nude and nearly nude bodies? Can they explain that Scripturally to anyone? If not, they should refrain from preaching against what they will not oppose. What a terrible position to be in. Worse yet will be having to justify this position to a holy God on the Day of Judgment.

Here are the facts made as simply as they can be put. First, it is wrong to uncover oneself and pose naked or nearly naked in front of others. Second, it is wrong to view such a person naked or nearly naked. Third, it is wrong to draw a person who is naked or nearly naked. “Oh, but you don’t understand, Brother Summers. That’s art.” No, that is sin! And I defy anyone at Freed-Hardeman or the Henderson Church to prove that this is righteous behavior. David was one of the most godly and spiritual of men, a man after God’s own heart. Yet he was drawn into sin by viewing a naked woman bathing. How can those in the Bible Department not recognize the destructive nature of this sin?

Attacks

President Shannon slanted the situation just a bit. Neither Brother Sword nor myself have attacked anyone personally. He and I have challenged only the issue itself. Shannon has stated he is disappointed that the words pornography and erotica were used. I am not sure that they are incorrect terminology—especially since one of the textbooks uses the word erotica, but just for his benefit, we omitted their use from this article and only used his own description of what is being done.

In 1 Kings 15:13, King Asa removed “an obscene image of Asherah” and burned it in the fire. Why? Why was this sculpture not regarded as “art” and maintained so that art students could draw the human form with accuracy? Was it that it was a statue of a pagan deity, or one that displayed nudity? What made it obscene?

Brethren, we need a healthy dose of sanity when discussing this subject. We cannot continue to turn away our eyes and conclude that nakedness is all right because it is “art.” Someone at Freed-Hardeman needs to step forward and say, as in the story of “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” that the pictures are of naked people. Should we not all “cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1)? Should we not try to be holy, as God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16)? Brethren should compare the Scriptures with Shannon’s speech. What think ye?