

THE NEED FOR APOLOGETICS ON THE SECULAR UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Stephen J. Bedard¹

For many people, the university is seen as a place where faith goes to die. Excited youth group members graduate from high school and never return to the church. Parents fear to send their children to university because of numerous stories of students leaving the faith after being immersed in a hostile environment.

Such concerns have not gone unnoticed by people in the church. There are answers for the hard questions that students encounter on the university campus. The challenge is to equip those students with the information and resources that are available. That is where Ratio Christi comes in.

Ratio Christi describes its mission in this way: “Ratio Christi is a global movement that equips university students and faculty to give historical, philosophical, and scientific reasons for following Jesus Christ.”

Corey Miller¹ had the opportunity to talk with Dr. Corey Miller, president and CEO of Ratio Christi. Dr. Miller is no stranger to the need for apologetics. He was born as a sixth generation Mormon, his great great great grandfather being a bodyguard of Joseph Smith, Jr., the founder of Mormonism.

Dr. Miller, while not a strict Mormon as a child, accepted the Mormon understanding of God. He encountered the Gospel at a Christian camp, where in his words, “I had the hell scared out of me and heaven into me.” Despite family concerns, this led Dr. Miller on quest for truth that included reading both the Book of Mormon and the Bible. Through such investigation, as well as seeing the love of God in Christians, Dr. Miller became a Christian. Apologetics was an important early factor in his confidence in Christianity.

Dr. Miller strongly believes in the importance of a Christian apologetic presence on campus, having experienced intense secular opposition in his own studies. He describes

¹ Stephen J. Bedard is the senior editor of *Hope's Reason: A Journal of Apologetics*.

Ratio Christi as a “special ops ministry” on the secular campus to defend the faith and to give reasons for Christian truth.

Ratio Christi is not a fully orbed campus ministry, such as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship or Navigators. There is no competition between Ratio Christi and other groups as Ratio Christi seeks to equip Christians in all of the groups in the area of apologetics.

One of the areas that Dr. Miller is very excited about is RC Prof. This is an outreach that is aimed specifically at university professors. There are professors who are timid in their faith or have been pressured by a culture hostile to the Gospel. Ratio Christi is seeking to reach such professors and create missional professors. The hope is that Christian professors would see their work as a vocation and not just a career. If the church can reach the professors, they can influence their entire class for as long as they are at that school.

Not only are they reaching out to the professors, Ratio Christi is now seeking to impact students before they get to university. There is a program called Ratio Christi College Prep that is helping teens become strong in their faith before reaching the campus. There are currently 20-30 College Prep clubs. The clubs meet at nearby churches and present already design apologetics curriculum. This is one of the ways that Ratio Christi attempts to add value to the church.

Dr. Miller states, “Too many people have discounted Christianity as not being intellectually sound.” Unfortunately, the church has often been complicit in this assumption. The truth is that there are very good reasons for being confident in the truth of Christianity. We are in the midst of an apologetics renaissance and never before has there been so much good quality apologetics resources.

Ratio Christi is working on making the connections between resources available and the students and instructors who need it. This is an essential part of the discipleship process that is the core of the Great Commission.

To learn more about the work of Ratio Christi and to discover ways to support their work, go to www.ratiochristi.org.