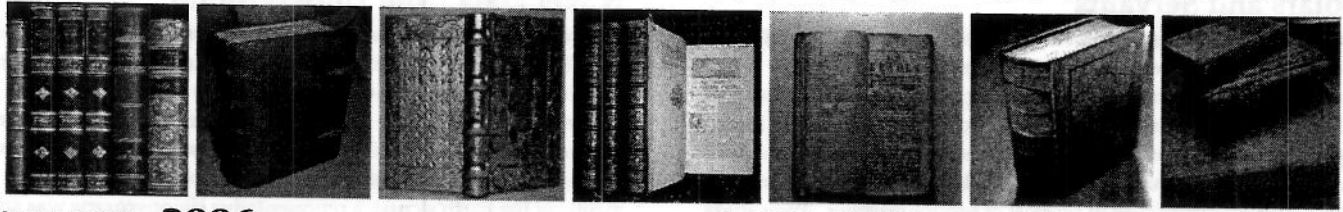


# RESEARCH REPORTER

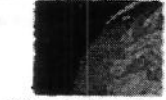


February, 2006

APU Office of Faculty Research

## Finding Foundations in the Moral Montage

### BEYOND BUMPER STICKER ETHICS



An Introduction to Theories  
of Right & Wrong  
STEVE WILKENS

Dr. Steve Wilkens, Professor of Theology and Philosophy, wrote *Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics: An Introduction to Theories of Right and Wrong* (InterVarsity Press, 1995). It not only remains in print but also finds itself on the syllabi of several APU students' courses. Dr. Wilkens clearly and fairly explores "Cultural Relativism," "Ethical Egoism," "Behaviorism," "Utilitarianism," "Kantian Ethics," "Virtue Ethics," "Situation Ethics," "Natural Law Ethics," and "Divine Command Theory." He admits his status as "a Christian author," but then proceeds to briefly present each ethical belief system and to discuss its positive and negative aspects.

He concludes each chapter with "a Christian evaluation" linked to his preceding analyses.

The final chapter challenges the reader to determine his or her own ethical foundation which may include some aspects of the nine systems he has carefully examined. His hypothetical student carefully puts together her personal ethical baseline, eventually determining "that the best approach is a natural law theory with liberal doses of virtue ethics thrown in." This would not be all readers' conclusion, but it does demonstrate how one can arrive at a similar personalized ethical standard.

Dr. Wilkens hopes soon to revise his book for a new edition, replacing the chapters on "Behaviorism" and "Situation Ethics," which he believes to be a bit outdated, with new material. He will be the keynote speaker at the APU Faculty Writers' Retreat in Malibu in May. – Carole Lambert

## English

### Evil Matters in Children's Literature

Dr. Sheryl O'Sullivan writes on the purpose – or sometimes lack of purpose – of evil in contemporary children's literature. While this genre is always devoted to some kind of moral teaching, those who study children's books are often struck by the divergent assumptions about evil and the conflicting ways it is presented to young readers. The most common tendency is to oversimplify depictions of evil to the point of neutralizing the broader complexity of life. The one-dimensionality of ill-willed characters puts them on an equal footing with the good ones, often reducing the story to a mere power-struggle between equal sets of values – a statement of moral philosophy, perhaps, but hardly the real stuff of children's literature. These books are preparation for life; this simply cannot be rooted in ethical theories. It is the moral virtues that matter; wisdom is the basis of good decisions, and this inevitably involves the habit of weighing greater and lesser senses of goodness. Dr. O'Sullivan praises *Messenger* by Lois Lowry, a dystopia that reveals precisely this problem, i.e., that aiming at perfection always leads to misery, and that the tragic falleness of our world is also the very thing that allows for the moral excellence that constitutes happiness. As in all dystopias, evil is found at the end of a human attempt at absolute good; the conquest of nature in all of its ironies inevitably leads to nature's

conquest of us, since the very notion of good can only be drawn from its fallen, distorted versions. The novel lives up to the challenge placed before all children's literature: it keeps things simple and understandable enough, while at the same time, prevents the simplicity from being superimposed on the conditions in the real world. Dr. O'Sullivan's article, "Depictions of Evil in Lois Lowry's *Messenger*," appeared in the Fall, 2005 issue of *The ALAN Review*. – Kevin Walker

## Graduate Psychology

### Love and Relapse Prevention

Dr. Mark Stanton, Chair of the Department of Graduate Psychology, explores in depth the complex process of counseling substance addicts and their spouses in order to bring about the abuser's freedom from alcohol and drug abuse plus the couple's marital reconciliation and harmony. Dr. Stanton cogently and clearly provides a step-by-step process that includes "assistance for the addict's partner designed to help the partner and encourage addict participation in therapy, motivational techniques to engage the addict in the change process, assessment of the addictive behavior to facilitate change, behavioral couples therapy to improve the relationship and reduce or eliminate the addictive behavior, and relapse prevention to maintain change."

Some of the helpful therapies which he discusses are Motivational Interviewing (MI), Harm Reduction, the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI-III), physiological assessment of the substance abuser, Behavioral Couples Therapy (BCT), Twelve-Step (TS) groups, and Relapse Prevention (RP). Dr. Stanton, using "an amalgam of real life cases" personified as "Rich" and "Liz," guides the reader through this process which succeeds in bringing about healing without the "confrontation and challenge" approach traditionally used to engage "addicts in the recovery process."

Motivational Interviewing, for example, emphasizes "exploration and support instead of confrontation or argument." Dr. Stanton adapts it "for use in couples therapy, because research has indicated that inclusion of a partner improves retention in treatment and overall treatment outcomes."

He accompanies Motivational Interviewing with the Harm Reduction approach, and he has found a non-threatening way to administer the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory to both the addict and his wife. Physiological assessment of the abuser's drug abuse, Behavior Couples Therapy which "seeks to improve relationship factors that increase the likelihood of [the addict's] abstinence," and, when the abuser is ready, participation in a Twelve-Step program all move the couple forward in their journey toward health and reconciliation. Dr. Stanton also notes that the "therapist needs to be willing to interact around spirituality with the addict." Finally, Relapse Prevention "seeks to reinforce behavior change and prevents minor lapses in the recovery process from becoming full-blown relapses."

Dr. Stanton's competence as a drug counselor and marital therapist along with his gentle compassion for the addict and his family are communicated between the lines of this fine article which can be appreciated by both professionals in psychology and lay readers. Dr. Stanton's article, entitled "Couples and Addiction," appeared in *The Handbook of Couples Therapy* (Wiley, 2005). – Carole Lambert

## Service Learning Scholars and Servants

Dr. Judy Hutchinson, Ms. Debra Fetterly, and Ms. Kristin Gurrola of the Center for Academic Service-Learning and Research describe their participation in and findings from a day-long preconference session which they designed and co-hosted with Messiah College in June 2004 at Messiah College. This session brought representatives of fourteen faith-based institutions together to share their strategic plans, mission statements, and possible Christian distinctives in support of service learning. Their study reveals the group's "preliminary collective perspective" which was foundational for later, more in-depth discussions: "The purpose [of service learning] was 'academic' and reflected 'our Creator's call.' The desired outcomes had to do with the 'social responsibility' with a 'progression from service learning to civic engagement.' The methods of service learning included 'academic content' of 'course-based' service learning, 'integrated in syllabi,' including 'reflection' and based on 'reciprocal learning.' The focus of service learning was 'community service' and 'community-based research' in a productive 'dialogue' that met a 'community-identified need.'"

Participants agreed that strong faculty support is essential to a successful service learning program along with "placing a centralized service learning office under the chief academic officer." Ultimately, "[i]nstitutionalization of service learning on any campus demands coherence with the mission, stated priorities and actual financial support of the institution as well as faculty and community involvement and support."

Of course, students are key to bringing about the "service" envisioned by the designers of these programs. Dr. Hutchinson and her colleagues wisely note, "Our service learning experience confirms that exposure to homelessness, illiteracy, poverty and other social settings can cause students to reconsider their values, providing a unique learning atmosphere." Obviously, while trying to improve their communities, students may end up bettering themselves. Dr. Hutchinson and her coauthors also note that research exploring the connections between students' growth in leadership skills while participating in service learning projects is currently lacking and should be considered in the future. Also helpful would be "[s]ervice learning scholarships [to students and] release time for service learning faculty."

This fine article, then, presents clearly current service learning practices among several faith-based institutions plus their optimistic hopes and dreams for the future. "Service Learning in Faith-Based Higher Ed.: an Interfaith Dialogue" appeared in *Spirituality, Social Justice, and Service Learning*, ed. J. W. Eby, (Messiah College, 2005). – Carole Lambert

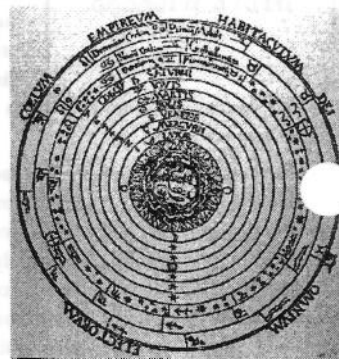
## Physics

### Novel Data from Underground

Dr. Donald Isaak, with Dr. I. Ohno from Ehime University in Japan, and APU Physics Major Pai-Ching Lee, study the mineral composition of the Earth's upper mantle, which includes various properties that are temperature and pressure dependent. The authors investigate the elastic properties of these minerals, particularly the mineral clinopyroxene. Because clinopyroxene is one of the four major minerals found in the upper mantle of the Earth's crust, a representative clinopyroxene was studied, namely diopside (enriched in chromium). Using sophisticated acoustic instrumentation called resonant ultrasound spectroscopy, Isaak et al. studied the elastic parameters of diopsides to 1,300 K. The elasticity data reported in this study represent the first time all 13 elastic constants of any single-crystal monoclinic material, such as clinopyroxene, have been evaluated at elevated temperatures. The study shows some important properties of diopside are similar to those of other minerals in Earth's mantle that have also been studied at high temperature. This result is somewhat surprising since the open, low-symmetry structure of clinopyroxene is decidedly more complex than the structures of other mantle minerals. "The elastic constants of monoclinic single-crystal chrome-diopside to 1,300 K" appeared in the December 2005 issue of *Physics and Chemistry of Minerals*. – Luman Wing

## GUEST LECTURER

Dr. Stephen M. Barr, Professor of Physics at the University of Delaware, will be visiting APU to discuss his book, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2003). Dr. Barr studies a transition in modern physics that in many ways reaffirms the classical view of the cosmos – perhaps not a geocentric solar system, but certainly a universe moved by "mind", which compels all things to a definite purpose. What does this transition



in physics mean? Could it lead to a paradigm shift away from the Newtonian system? What risks do modern scientists run by not following it to its conclusions? The Center for Research in Science invites you and your students to join this fascinating discussion on Wednesday, March 8, at 6pm in the LAPC. – Kevin Walker

## APU FACULTY RESEARCH

The Office of Faculty Research and the Office of Sponsored Research and Grants work to assist APU faculty with their research and dissemination endeavors, provide external research funding, and promote an academic climate that celebrates and strengthens the Azusa Pacific University community of Christian scholars and researchers.

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