

How Will Christians Use Media for God in the Future?

The changes in the media world are fast-paced. We hear how terrorists are using media, including social media, to advance their aims. We see examples every day of how the radical left is pushing its social agenda on the nation through media.

I am encouraged when I see examples of Christians rising to the challenge to use media to advance the gospel because it's important for Christians to use media to fulfill the Great Commission, to influence the church and to impact culture.

Last week I had the privilege of attending Celebration 2014 at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, where they dedicated a very impressive Communication Arts Building worth \$10 million. This is where Lee University is educating students to learn to use the media for God. This year they have 400 students, but think of future generations of students that will be educated in this facility.

With 5,104 students and 600 staff, Lee University is one of the largest Pentecostal/charismatic universities in the nation. It is listed as one of "Charisma's Best Christian Universities, Colleges and Schools" and is ranked high by U.S. News & World Report and Princeton Review's "Best Colleges."

I have a long been an admirer of Lee University and Paul Conn, its capable and respected president for the past 28 years. In fact, I knew him before he became president, when he was a successful author who had just finished his doctorate at Emory University.

I feel a bond with Lee University because I am an "alumnus."

In 1995, Lee conferred an honorary doctorate on me. Of all the honors I've received, this is one of the greatest. Journalists don't often use "doctor" in the way a minister

might, but when I'm in an academic setting as I was last week, I'm called "Dr. Strang."

Over the years I have seen the transformation of the Lee University under Conn's leadership; it is truly impressive. I've had other college presidents tell me that they have been inspired by what they've seen at Lee, so their influence is much wider than the Church of God that owns the 96-year-old institution located in Cleveland since 1947.

While at Lee last week, I was impressed with the caliber of students, with the faculty I met and even the high caliber of donors and church leaders who also attended the Celebration 2014 event. Everything was excellent and the attention to detail was impressive.

The Communication Arts Building has 41,000 square feet. It includes a film screening and editing room, a television studio and sound stage, eight video editing suites, a student journalism lab, computer labs with 41 Macs and a black box theater with a capacity of 175. The Communication Arts Building is part of a "Find Us Faithful" campaign to raise \$25 million to also build a chapel, a new men's dormitory, a School of Nursing and much more.

When I spoke to the students, I mentioned that my journalism education at the University of Florida happened before the invention of the personal computer; we learned on manual typewriters. I wanted them to appreciate the high-tech quality that Lee has provided them. I also told them to expect changes in the future even more drastic than I've experienced in my career.

More importantly are the changes that are eminent in society and in the church in the coming decades. These students aren't simply preparing for their first jobs. They are preparing to make a major impact.

Students like the ones at Lee University are the future of the

business of disseminating the news to the general public. I encouraged them to ask the Lord how they can be used to create and use media to further His kingdom on earth.

Indeed the media—social media included—are a powerful tool in our technologically crazed society. Just think about what could be righteously accomplished by future generations if its sole purpose was to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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