How to Engage in a University Context: Ohio State

Part 1 of 2: Social Challenges Students Face at Ohio State
with
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Dr. Darrell Bock  
So when you meet with students – you’ve got the events and you’ve got the conversations. A normal meeting would be what? Taking on an issue and talking your way through it? How would that work?

Eric Chabot  
Well, what I do is we put out the topic every week and I will come, generally, and do a little lecture maybe about half an hour, 45 minutes. I may have a guest speaker if it’s a guest topic, or, you know, topic I want to bring a guest in, and then we have a, yeah, we have an interaction. We have a discussion.

I will say the meetings are pretty flexible. I do allow interaction if I’m speaking, you know? Someone can talk, obviously, if either something I say they want to interact on, that’s fine. It’s pretty casual, but then I bring, like, a PowerPoint or pdf or handout and I give that to them as well; but that’s what it is.

It’s more of an interactive meeting and, you know, I have had some skeptics come. I’ve have some agnostics come and some atheists come over the years, but most of them are Christians that are trying to be more equipped, you know, in what they believe and there’s issues they’re wrestling with others, you know, their own.

You know, questions they are wrestling with. But mostly the questions are all apologetically related such as God’s existence, reliability of the Bible, New Testament reliability, you know, questions of the culture maybe about Islam or something like that. I’ve even done Skype lectures.

I’ve brought in people to lecture on Skype such as I had Rob Bowman on, you know, I had Robert Bowman. I’ve had Tim McGrew on, you know, different scholars, different backgrounds to lecture on things. So we’ve got a lot of options this year.

Dr. Darrell Bock  
Yeah, I’ve done that for the University of North Carolina, I think it was Greensboro campus and we did one of those, and I actually, I did it from my home in the evening because, of course, the students are meeting in the evenings, so I’m not in the office. It’s an interesting – I take it there’s a lot of one-on-one stuff, too, and one on small, you know, two or three, that kind of thing.
Right. Yeah, that happens a lot. I mean, I find myself interacting a lot of one-on-one and, you know, the biggest challenge you have in doing any ministry in a campus especially apologetic ministry is just getting students to slow down in the busyness of what they’re doing for 10 or 15 minutes.

I’m just finding that more and more over the years that with all these internships students are trying to do to get a job and all the pressures they have trying to finish school, it’s a real challenge to get them to slow down and have the time, you know, to consider these things. So, we’re fighting an uphill battle, you know, in that area.

Ok. Well, that’s the intellectual background. Let’s move on to the other questions I told you we were going to discuss. The social pressures of campus? This, and I’ve done a handful of these interviews, in fact I think you’re the 5th or 6th campus that we’ve done.

We’ve done UCLA, UC Irvine, California, San Diego, A&M and Princeton, and the interesting thing is that as we move from campus to campus and I go to social issues, that – those kind of are more varied than the intellectual stuff. The intellectual stuff seems to be pretty consistent from campus to campus.

But the social challenges really are a reflection of the environment of the campus itself and certain emphasis are tied to certain campuses. So, what are the social challenges that students face in terms of their walk at Ohio State?

Well, I would say, you know, if you’re talking about Christians – you’re talking about Christians on the campus and what they face, right?

Yeah, right.

I would say the, that some of the big social issues of the day that they’re challenged with, the number one issue today, of course, is the same-sex marriage homosexuality issue. I think a lot of Christians on the campus simply don’t know what to do with that. They don’t know where they stand on that.
Now, I’ve taught on it twice at meetings. I’ve tried my best, but I find that students just simply are either going to be carried away, you know, by the culture on the campus or the Christian students are simply – what they do is a lot of times they just ignore it, you know? It’s like I don’t want to deal with it. It’s too confrontational.

It’s too, you know, it’s a fiery topic and I’ve tried to tell students that, “Look, you really need to deal with this issue. It’s not going away. It’s going to be there for the years to come and it’s at the forefront.” So I’d say that’s a big issue.

I would say the other issues are generally trickle down into a – I think politics is always an issue, you know? Students, not Christian students, not knowing, you know, kind of what to do with the big political issues of the day. What party to deal with, you know, how does politics mix with my faith, you know?

How do I, how’s my worldview impact that? The third issue I would say maybe just has to do with, you know, some of the social justice issues, you know, what social issues do Christians want to get involved in, you know? They’re trying to figure out do I want to work on a human trafficking issue?

Do I want to get involved with poverty more or whatever? InterVarsity is a ministry that has a big focus on social justice issues and that’s always been an issue that Christians seem to kind of be drawn towards. But I would say the two biggest challenges to them are the same-sex marriage homosexuality issue and then just maybe trying to figure out how politics mix with their faith. They’re not sure what to do with that. That’s what I think.

Dr. Darrell Bock

Now, on the same-sex issues? How do you guys try and handle that, because that’s obviously – that’s one of – that literally is – it doesn’t matter who I’m talking to. If I’m talking to pastors or campus ministers or whatever, I would say that is the most dominating issue.

In fact, our table podcast inevitably when we do one on that topic, it, they’re among the most watched. So, obviously people are wrestling with this.
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Eric Chabot  Yeah, I – my biggest exhortation to Christians is the following: get educated. I just don’t find a lot of Christians are really educated about the topic and I’m – I think that, you know, I tell them like, “Look, if you want to be a Christian in this culture, you need to educate yourself about this and not just pull out and kind of just let it go away. You’re going to need to know what you believe and why you believe and where you stand on the issue.”

So that’s one of my first exhortations of them is that they need to get involved. Now, approaching on campus, you know, I’ve never done any kind of outreach as far as like where we’ve targeted that issue, you know, where I’ve had a table that says, you know, “Let’s talk about same-sex marriage.” Now, I’ve handed out books, you know?

I’ve had – Frank Turek has written a book on the topic, I’ve handed out some of his books. I’ve lectured on it twice in meetings I’ve offered it, but my biggest challenge is just getting Christian students to be willing to engage in it and to be serious about it.

And I tell them, “Look, if you want to crack this topic, I know more than enough resources that you can go to and I can provide those, we can provide those for you.” So, the question becomes whether the Christians are willing to engage it, but to pull out of it, you know, is just not the wise thing.

Now here’s the other thing I tell them: listen, this isn’t the, you know, homosexuality, you know, once again is not the most pressing – I mean, yeah, it’s a pressing issue, but biblically we know it’s a sin among other sins.

Yes, it’s a big sin, but we all have faults, you know, so I try to get them to address it with graciousness and compassion, you know, that we need to realize we want to have the right attitude and not walk around, you know, condemning people on the campus like this is the number one sin out there and this is all God cares about.

But the legal aspect of same-sex marriage is the biggest issue. I think students don’t – there are two different issues. I’m talking about the biblical issue theologically and then the legal aspect. That, those are, that’s what we have to separate. How do you approach the legal issue and how do you approach the biblical issue?
And a lot of people aren’t gonna listen to your biblical answers because they don’t think the Bible’s reliable, and so then you gotta figure out how do I bridge the gap to talk to them about the issue; and that’s where I use like maybe like a natural law argument or something like that, you know, to talk about, you know, the issues of homosexuality.

Dr. Darrell Bock

How much of it do you think is hesitation of doing – you’ve dealt with two of the issues. When I talk about this, I talk about three conversations: what the Bible has to say about it morally; what is going on civically in our laws, which is the legal category that you mentioned; now the third category is a pastoral category, which is how do you actually have a conversation with someone who’s there? You know, who is in that place and you’re trying to engage them.

How do you have that conversation? What kind of conversation do you have? What kind of tone do you bring to it? All those kinds of things. What we call, what I call the, it’s the pastoral area in many ways. It’s the relational area.

And though, and you’ve got this challenge between what I call the moral challenge of where the Bible is with the other commitment that you have in mission which is to always extend a hand of invitation for people to participate in the gospel, and the opportunity for forgiveness that comes with it.

So that sets some parameters for how you deal with the pastoral problem, and I feel a lot of students in some ways have a hesitation to go there because they don’t know how to go into that relational dimension of it. They know it’s awkward. They know it’s difficult, and so I’m just rather not even put my foot in the water, you know, and go there at all.

Eric Chabot

Right. Exactly. You mentioned a third item, the pastoral issue. That’s very true. I didn’t think of that. I had the two and then – but there is a relational aspect that is extremely important and I think that we have to be very, very delicate with people in when we’re talking to them about it, you know?
I’m talking about engaging someone that’s in that. And so there is a very relational issue that you have to learn how to do it. And I just tell students, “Look, this is part of relational building. You have to be compassionate. You have to learn how to do this. I mean, this person needs you, you know? At least you can be their friend and be there for them and explain to them where you stand on it in a gentle way.”

But you’re right. You have to build that relationship. Now, I will say this. I had encouraged, something encouraging a couple years ago. I had a student walk up to me and she walked up to a table once we had on campus and she said, “You know, I was involved in that and I went to a Bible study on campus and God ministered to me. I allowed God to change my heart and the gospel penetrated me, and I’m not in that anymore. I’m not doing that.”

But she said, “The biggest challenge I see in my peers who are in that, they won’t allow God to work in their heart. They resist it and they won’t allow God to change them because they’ve been told they can’t change.” And so, she, but she was very forefront with me. She said, you know, “I allow God to work in my heart and he has transformed my life.”

And that’s the kind of thing we have to be talking about, you know, can the gospel change you and how it can. I think that’s what we have to get to with students. How to bridge that gap right there, and that’s the challenge.

**Dr. Darrell Bock**

Yeah, I take it the politics issues is just sorting through the conflicting tensions that one feels in the political realm of the kinds of choices between – I’m not sure which issue to pick, you know? In immigration, you’ve got the tension between secure borders and dealing with the people who are already here.

On gun control, you’ve got the tension of, you know, do I have the right to self-protection on the one hand, but then what about violence and what the Bible has to say about that on the other? There are tensions that are involved in political choices that sometimes I think particularly young students are slow to see.

They might grab on to one part of it but the not the other, and that makes the conversation more difficult.
Yeah, I – what I would say about politics, I think part of the problem is that, with Christians, is that we have a hard time figuring out which comes first. Does our worldview impact our politics or does the politics impact our worldview?

And I think a lot of, I tell a lot of Christian students, you know, you – it’s good to be politically educated. Yes. You have to know the positions in both and, of course, that’s a privilege, but you don’t want to let your politics be kind of become as we call – you know, we don’t want to fall into political idolatry.

And I see a, I do see some of that with students, you know, that they seem to be absolutely convinced that, you know, if they, you know, get wrapped up on a candidate, he’s going to fix the problems of our country, and I try to pull them back and say, “Look, you know, no politician can fix all these problems. These are enormous problems.”

And so, my challenge to them is trying to get them to see how they can build their worldview first and how their worldview impacts their politics versus vice versa. And that’s kind of where the challenge I see is before us in that area. Because students seem to be interested in those topics.

I mean, I find over, you know, some of my experiences they seem to be following some of those issues, and so, we’ve gotta work on it with the Christians, you know, how they get their worldview to impact their politics versus vice versa, in my opinion. That’s what I see.

Yeah. Fair enough. The third area is an interesting one because I do think that the, particularly the generation, they’ve been labeled the millennials – people love or hate that title – but anyway, tend to be more sensitive on social justice in some ways than previous generations.

Really giving some time, effort, energy and thinking to, you know, making the world a better place in some of the areas where, I mean, you know, we’ve had, I mean, we’ve been trying to deal with poverty since the Peace Corps in the ‘60’s and that kind of thing, but still there seems to be a general interest and draw.
Students who are consciously making the choice to go there versus perhaps going in directions where they might be able to make more money and do things that might give them a, you know, better social stability in the world; that kind of thing. They seem to be consciously drawn to those kinds of choices.

How does the ministry help people or how does the campus deal with those kinds of concerns?

**Eric Chabot**

Well, I think that Ratio Christi with our ministry on the campus, I would say that we don’t, we’re not – we’re different from like InterVarsity. I find that InterVarsity over the years has a huge emphasis on social justice. They still do to this day. When I go on the campus, I see them with their outreaches. They’ll have like a topic like racism or immigration or something, you know, then they’ll have students walk up and they’ll talk about it. Whereas, it’s not that Ratio Christi doesn’t care about those issues, but I would say our ministry doesn’t have a robust focus on social justice issues like InterVarsity does.

Now, I always tell people, you know – you know, in apologetics, you know, certainly you can merge the two. I mean, you’ve gotta know – this is the way I bridge the gap is like why are we so interested in social justice issues because we feel we have some sort of moral obligation to engage these issues, right?

To do something about it. Then I talk about where the moral obligation comes from, you know, and then that builds the bridge to talk about God. Obviously because I think he gives us those moral obligations. He’s given us that moral law in our hearts.

But, I would say that as far as like cracking all the social justice issues that we don’t have as a big an emphasis on it as like an InterVarsity or something. I think the students have a big interest in it, though, and I, like you just said they do, I think that’s because they do want to make a difference in this world.

And that leads me to the point, you know, to say that I think a lot of students aren’t necessarily thinking about the next life as much, you know? We, you know, Christianity has the focus on the next life.
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Of course we care about this world, but a lot of students are wondering how they make an impact in the here and now, and that’s where I try to balance the bridge with the gospel. Talk about how the gospel does impact your life right now and you can make a difference in this world, but it does carry on to the next life.

So I kind of make it a both/and. But, I think a lot of students are thinking about how they can impact the world. You know, now to make a difference and that’s why they’re drawn to some of those things, so, we try to do the best we can with it, but I don’t think that’s our, you know, number one focus.

Dr. Darrell Bock  Yeah. I mean, you said you’re an apologetics organization. IVP has taken on that mantel, which raises another question as we talk about the environment on Ohio State as a whole and that is, you know, I found that at least when I was in college and this was a long time ago, dinosaurs were walking the earth, but, still.

You know, you did have your different campus ministries that had different reputations, you know? Navigators was discipleship and Crusade, now Cru, was evangelism; that kind of thing. So what other organizations exist besides you all and InterVarsity? You mentioned those two on the campus. And what would you say is the Christian environment as a whole on the campus?

Eric Chabot  Well, the challenge with Ohio State is that it’s about 60,000 students, so that’s a pretty large campus. And so, with that, we have so many Christian ministries. Yes, Cru is here. They have a very large ministry. I’d say they are probably the largest ministry we have. And Cru is kind of like the church away from home for a lot of students, you know? They go to a weekly meeting.

It’s a, you know, it’s almost a service to certain extents on Sundays and that’s, they serve a very large need there. As I said, InterVarsity is here. And then we have a ton of just other ministries. We have a lot of churches on campus. We have a ministry called H2O. That’s a church.

A friend of mine runs a church on campus called Awaken Church. We have little churches planted around the campus. They’re actual churches. Now, Ratio Christi is a para-church ministry, just like Cru is and just like InterVarsity is, but then you have all the little churches around us that I send people to if they want to go to a church.
But, I would say the Christian environment is one that because the campus is so big, a lot of Christian ministries are very, very busy. Very, you know, of their own agendas for the year and I try to spread the word about what we do and I try to invite people to events, and, you know, certainly promote that as an outreach to them if they want to send their students. Sometimes they do.

And so we try to work together to the best of our ability, but I would just say it’s a challenge. It’s a pretty big challenge on a very large campus. It provides some challenges.

**Dr. Darrell Bock**

But for the student who comes to Ohio State, there actually is a lot of opportunity to get plugged in? They don’t have to be – have a sense of being isolated because there are lots of potential places for them to land?

**Eric Chabot**

Oh, yes. There’s more than enough. The question is if they just want to do it, so, there’s more than enough on the board to offer.

**Dr. Darrell Bock**

Ok. Well, let’s turn our attention to the final two questions that I want to be sure and get through, and that is you’re giving advice – let’s start with parents – you’re giving advice to parents. They’re thinking about, you know, sending their kid to Ohio State.

What do you regard as the, as keys for the preparation of that student that a parent should be thinking about? Perhaps in particular, thinking about their junior and senior years, they’re getting ready to think about college and the way you prepare a student for college and the choices and the freedom that they’re gonna fall into. How do you, what advice would you give to parents?

**Eric Chabot**

Well, I think that a few issues come to play. I think first and foremost as a parent, you’ve got to be realizing you’re the first equipper of your kids. It’s not the local church. You’re the first ones, you know? The church matters, but you’re the one that really has to play the role here.

And so, I would say first and foremost, you need to be cultivating that relationship with your kids to know that they can come to you during those college years if they have issues. They can trust you and come to you with issues still while they’re at college.
Secondly, watch where they’re at with their relationship with God and see, do they really have a passion for God and for Christ? Is this something they kind of just inherited from you as parents? Are they owning their own faith? Are they starting to own their own faith?

And then thirdly, of course, I would say you need to give them some sort of background, you know, hopefully they’re interested in the worldview and the apologetic stuff. You can give them some of the Lee Strobel materials or something to go over with them. Watch them.

You need to cultivate a worldview with them and help them to know that they’re going to an environment that has a multi – just a very, very large diverse view of beliefs. And so, they’re going to be coming out of their comfort zones. And so, I think you have to give them the materials and equip them yourself as parents, and then also you want to encourage them to stay in community when they’re on campus.

Be involved in Christian community. They need to not be lone rangers and isolate themselves. That’s something I would try my best to instill with them as well. But the thing is, so the three things are: passion for God, seeing they’re at with that; equipping them with the apologetic stuff; and then, thirdly, cultivating the issue of community.

Being in relationships with other Christians while they’re on the campus. I’d say that would be the three things I would focus on.

Dr. Darrell Bock

And I take it that the ministries on campus make a pretty hard effort as students are arriving, particularly the first year and they’re kind of setting their patterns for life on campus and the way they’re gonna handle it. Often times, campuses have a lot of dorm space particularly for first year students.

That kind of thing where they kind of locate them on campus to get them socially acclimated to the campus at large. I don’t know if Ohio State’s just so large that that can’t happen, but anyway.
I take it that ministries will make a pretty hard effort to grab students early on so that they get into certain patterns so that if they want to pursue, you know, being engaged with a Christian campus ministry early on, that they can get there.

Right. The very beginning of the year at Ohio State, we have what’s called a student involvement fair, and that’s where all the student groups are laid out on the campus in what we call the oval. It’s an outside area and pretty much students walk through. They can pick from any group they want.

We have a spirituality section where they can go by any table, find out about every Christian ministry that’s there and really get plugged in. And so that’s the goal is at the beginning of the year, we try to find those students to help them kind of lay their schedule out for the year.

Try to see what they want to be involved in and set their parameters. So, yes, we’re there for them and that’s what we do, and a lot of ministries offer themselves to students very early on in the beginning of the year.

Ok. This may seem like a related question, but I do think the demands are slightly different and that is what advice do you give to youth leaders and to pastors as they are preparing kids who are going through their church programs for university?

And here, I sorta have in mind what kinds of things would you hope a youth leader who’s dealing with high school students, what kinds of issues do you hope that they’re dealing with and treating so that the student is prepared for the campus experience?

If I was a youth leader – well, I mean, I have been, but – I would say that for student, youth leaders, I would like to see them address more than just simply a Bible study with students. I mean, you know, teaching them just going through the Bible. That’s important. I think they need that, but I would like to see youth leaders go through a curriculum or something on the existence of God, or the historic reliability of the Bible.
They need to realize that students are going into an environment where a lot of people don’t rely – think the Bible is authoritative anymore; and actually they haven’t for a long time, you know? So they need to know that they’re equipping students to go out into the world in a culture that is largely post-Christian now, and that they need to give them the resources.

So I’d like to see them go through those materials that we have provided with their students early on in high school and to crack those issues and not be afraid, you know? Some of the parents come, you know, you hear complaints about youth leaders and things.

They parents will say, “Well, you don’t need to get too deep, you know, with students. You know, they’re not that deep. Just keep it simple.” Well, let me tell you something. If we keep dumbing down the church and we keep doing that year after year, we’ll keep getting the results.

You and I will be getting emails from students in college or later on that will say, “You know, I had these questions or I had things I didn’t understand. I went on the internet and I watched a YouTube clip and now I’m an atheist.” You know, that’s because we weren’t willing to crack the big questions with them early on, and that’s what we need to be doing.

Not be afraid to do that. I just find a lot of, you know, youth leaders don’t want to do that and I think that we need to be doing it.

Dr. Darrell Bock: Yeah. It kind of runs against the element of keeping the kids entertained that some programs try and engage in and it really doesn’t pay off in the long run. You dumb the church down, you take the church down in the long run.

Eric Chabot: Exactly. I, you couldn’t have said it better.

Dr. Darrell Bock: That, you’ve raised something a couple of times that I want to come back and kind of wrap up with and it’s this: you say that there are all kinds of things on the internet where people see things and it raises questions for them. Are there particular internet presentations that seem to draw a lot of attention?
I know that years ago, I don’t know if this is still the case, there’s a very famous one called Zeitgeist that went around that compared, you know, the origins of Christianity to all these ancient Pagan religions that say Christianity really just borrowed all this combination of stuff and that’s really where Christianity came from.

The Center for Public Christianity in Australia has a long, has a great five minute video picking apart the Zeitgeist video, which is – which has gone viral and has been seen by millions of people. What else is there that student’s get their hands on that you end up having to deal with?

Well, sadly, I think that a lot of students are still on-line looking at these clips on Jesus and become, you know, that Jesus, what we call the mythicism stuff, which, you know, says that Jesus never really existed as an historical figure. There’s not one particular clip they watch.

It seems to be this, these four or five guys, these atheists that put this stuff out and these students seem to latch on to in their college years, you know? You probably know some of the names out there, you know? I know you did a book on this, but, Robert Price is one, you know, Richard Carrier.

These are atheist apologists I call them. And they seem to get on the internet and watch some of their clips and, you know, just kind of what I call parrot them in their arguments, you know? I hear a lot of the same arguments that they’re putting out, and so, I don’t know if it’s just one clip, but, yeah, you mentioned the one that that has been a big one.

But, I see a lot of these students reading and listening to that stuff, you know, kind of the Jesus myther kind of historical stuff on-line, and then I’d say, of course, the, it goes to without saying. Some of the scientific guys, you know, they seem to, they’ve latched on to the series they did on the cosmos thing last year with – the scientist guy who’s an atheist, you know?

Carl Sagan?
Yeah, Carl Sagan. And then, of course, you know, the same old stuff is out with the Sam Harris and the, you know, Richard Dawkins. Sometimes they still listen to some of that stuff, but a lot of it I see just a mix. A combination of video clips they’re watching. They’re picking up these arguments.

They, you know, they’re saying things over and over these arguments against Christianity, and so you just seem to get it rehashed over and over. Like what caused God, you know, the Bible’s not reliable. Jesus never existed. Things like that. They just get kind of rehashed over and over on the internet, and that’s where they’re picking them up on.

You know? The interesting thing about the Jesus myther group is that if you go even to the early Christianity classes that are on university campuses, that is, that category is more dismissed than almost anything.

I mean, even the early Christianity classes say there was a Jesus who walked the earth, who impacted people, you know, and then we’ll debate what the content of that impact is. But the idea that Jesus didn’t exist from all and that all, you know, the Christian movement basically, I call it creation ex nihilo, you know?

Christianity ex nihilo came out of nothing. That’s one of the least credible positions at all. In fact, I remember I did a book on the variety of views of the historical Jesus in which Robert Price was one of the presenters, and Jimmy Dunn, a well-known British New Testament scholar, and his response to him opened up by saying in effect, I can’t believe, you know, this category even exists, you know?

The nature of the evidence for Jesus’s existence is so compelling and so overwhelming that the idea that he’s completely made up, you know, in some senses the irony is probably the myth. And in that sense, you’ve got a problem in dealing with that.

Much harder to deal with are the kinds of arguments that atheists, the new atheism puts forward, particularly problems related to evil and that kind of thing. And also the kinds of questions that get raised about the contents of the scripture. Those are much more substantive it seems to me.
Yeah. I think the Bible where it’s really getting hit, taking a hit, is a couple issues. I think the ethics of the Bible, people are asking, you know, does the Bible speak to today? Can it relate to today? And so, is it outdated, you know, about issues of homosexuality and, you know, other ethical issues of the Bible?

Can we really trust this book to give us guidelines for today? The genocide in the Bible is still an issue, you know, the Canaanites. Of course there’s been plenty written on that by Christian apologists, but, that still seems to be an issue. But, I would say the homosexuality issue is probably the biggest one in the Bible. That seems to be one of the big hot topics still where the Bible seems to take a hit.

Yeah. I agree with you. I mean, I think that it’s, the genocide issue we did a chapel on that topic for the table to get something out there on video that people can watch. We had our Old Testament people talk about that. And then, as you mentioned, the challenges to scripture in one way or another that are raised, those are the topics that are harder and they require some detail.

That’s the thing to respond to them, which makes them a little harder to deal with because you’re not dealing in the generic conversation anymore. You’re really getting down to some nitty gritty.

Yeah. I, and I did want to mention one last thing about the Bible. The biggest challenge still is Genesis. It’s still one of the bigger, the most pressing issue that students just seem to have to wrestle with throughout their college degree is what does Genesis teach about, you know, where we came from? Is it reliable?

You know, the age of the earth, those kinds of issues are still out there and that still seems to be a big headache for students and Christian students to wrestle with. And, that just seems to never end. I never stop having to deal with that issue year after year after year. So –

So that is a part, is that part of your apologize program to deal with some of those questions?
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Eric Chabot

Yeah. We wrestle, we’ll deal with any question that is out there. I mean, we, I mean, I want to say that we’re specifically geared towards a – we’re not a creation ministry, like we’re not, you know, whatever, some of those creation groups out there. But we will wrestle with it.

Like I’ve had speakers come in and lecture on the different views of Genesis and then we talk about creation or things like that, but that seems to be still a big topic. People just not able to wrestle – and let me say one last thing about the Genesis issue. I always tell people, “Look, the number one issue is whether God created.”

Second issue is the age of the earth. That’s the secondary issue. Students seem to be caught up on the age of the earth instead of, you know, whether God created.

Dr. Darrell Bock

That’s right. Yeah, that’s, we’re exactly on the same page. If God created and we’re creatures, then we’re into the conversations that we need to be having about being related to him. Well, Eric, I really appreciate your taking your time to kind of walk us through the environment at Ohio State. It’s interesting.

As we do more of these, you know, the certain themes that come through consistently that campuses share but also the distinctive features of different campuses, I mean, Ohio State is obviously one of the largest state universities in the country.

I don’t know – there was a time I thought when it had more students than any other university in the country. I don’t know if it’s still the largest, but it’s certainly among them.

Eric Chabot

Right. It’s two or three. Somewhere around there.

Dr. Darrell Bock

Yeah. And so, you know, just the sheer scale of the campus is in one level a social challenge to students just managing coming into such a large community, but the other thing I think that’s encouraging here is that there are places for students to land when they hit campus if they’ll just take advantage of them; and that gives an opportunity for a student to actually to grow in a campus environment.
I find that the challenge of a secular campus for students who are willing to walk through it is that they can come out the other side actually much better equipped to function in the world as a faithful Christian if they’ll take advantage of the resources that are on the campus.

*Eric Chabot* That’s right. I agree. One-hundred percent.

*Dr. Darrell Bock* Well, thank you again for the time, and we appreciate you being with us. And we thank you for being a part of the table where we discuss issues of God and culture and look forward to seeing you again soon.

*Eric Chabot* Thank you so much, Dr. Bock. I appreciate it. It’s been a privilege. Take care.