

ARPTalk (Extra4)

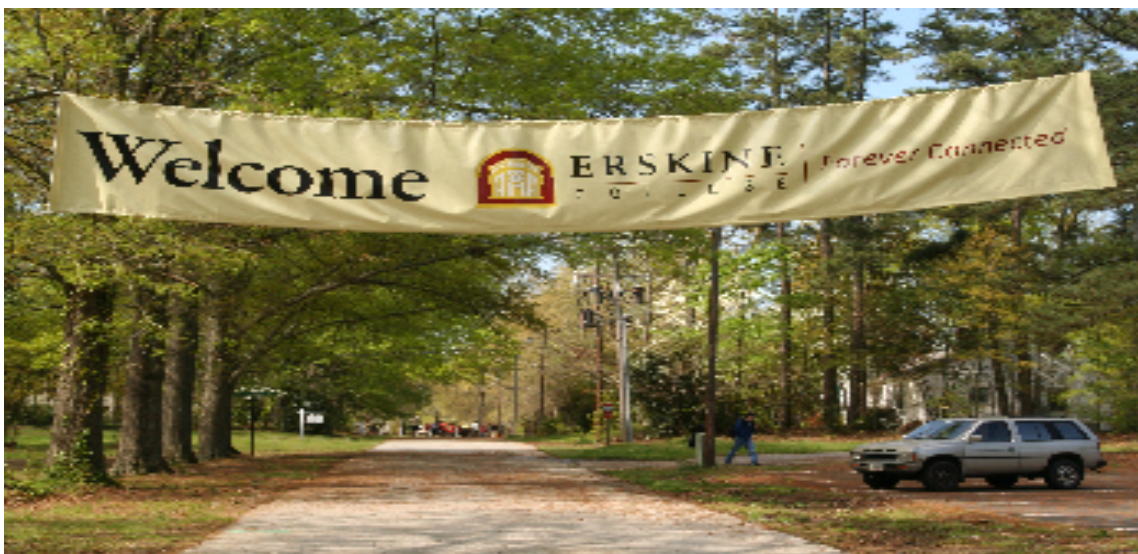
April 28, 2009

EXTRA!

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**MOONLIGHT REVOLUTION
ON ERSKINE CAMPUS
SUBSTANTIATES *ARPTalk*
CONCERNS**



Saturday, April 25, 2009, was "Alumni Day and Accepted Students Day" at Erskine College. The above banner theme, "Forever Connected," got DISCONNECTED by present Erskine students in a "Moonlight Revolution" early Saturday morning that seems to be continuing.

According to sources, the revolution began innocuously at Convocation (something like chapel) a few days ago. The President of Converse College, Dr. Elizabeth A. Fleming, was invited to speak. Dr. R. T. Ruble, President of EC/ETS, introduced Dr. Fleming to the Erskine College student body. At the end of Dr. Ruble's introduction, it is alleged that he remarked that Erskine College is not an "artsy" college, but he was glad to have the President of an artsy college speak to Erskine students.

Somehow Dr. Ruble must have forgotten that Erskine College has an art department. It is reported that art students took Dr. Ruble's remarks as demeaning of them and Professors Jan Walker and Sharon Linnehan.

Later, a student in the art history class set up a project of performance art. In front of the Daniel Moultrie Science Center, sidewalk chalk was provided and students were invited to "Say Something." THEY DID! Very quickly the sidewalk was packed with complaints about Erskine College, ranging from criticism about the high cost of tuition, to the inadequacy of housing, to the continuing evolution vs. creation controversy, to the failure of the Administration to implement the mission of the college as Christian and Evangelical, and many others.

Since this past Saturday (4/25/09) was "Alumni Day and Accepted Students Day," employees were sent to hose down the sidewalk and remove the "students' art." The students took umbrage with these actions. The students hastily put together what the Editor calls "a moonlight revolution" and what they called the "Erskine 95 Theses." Early Saturday morning, from 1:00 AM to about 4:00 AM, the students assembled to rewrite their complaints with sidewalk chalk and to post their "theses" posters on doors and walls.

According to eyewitnesses, the students' conduct in their assembly was quiet, peaceful, and respectful. They assembled to write and post that which they felt had been taken from them. This was not a student protest in the style of 1968.

There were no problems until the campus *gendarme* arrived. The security officer informed the students that the Administration had sent him to break up what the Administration felt was a “malicious” insurrection with sidewalk chalk. Sad! The event was nothing more than a cry for help. Eyewitnesses report that students were harassed and intimidated with threats of arrest. Imagine, students were threatened with arrest because some of them were pointing out the failures of the Erskine Administration to live up to the Erskine College mission as Christian and Evangelical.

It is reported that workers labored diligently through the early morning hours to wash away the sidewalk complaints and to remove posters from doors and walls so that the eyes of the alumni and new students would not be assaulted by the concerns of present students, many who feel that “bait and switch” tactics were used in recruiting them to Erskine College.

What were the students’ complaints? The security officer tried to intimidate students with cameras by threatening to arrest them. So, have the concerns of the students disappeared in the wash water? NO! Providentially, cameras were not confiscated. There is a record for posterity. Below are some of the photographs that were taken. A larger list of photographs is found on the *ARPTalk* blog, www.arptalk.org, if you would like to view them.

The first photograph is representative of the theme of those concerned for a Christian and Evangelical Erskine College.



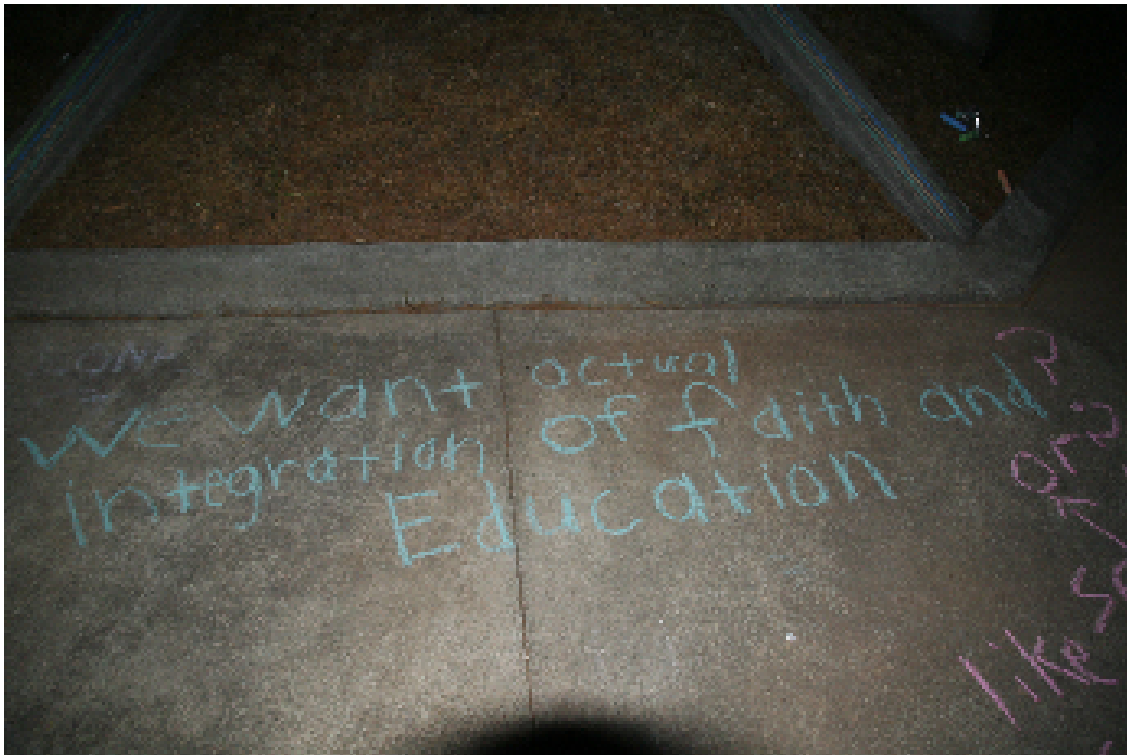
Caption: “What happened to Gospel driven at E[rskine] C[ollege]?”



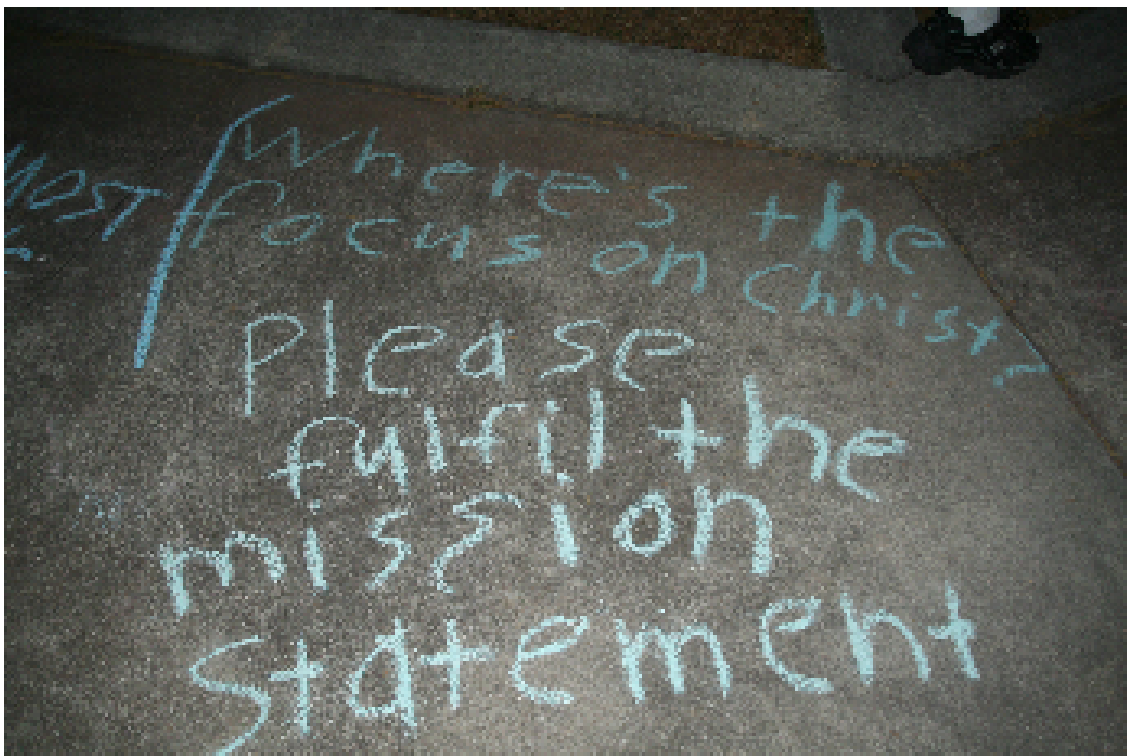
Caption: "If you care, please PRAY FOR ERSKINE."



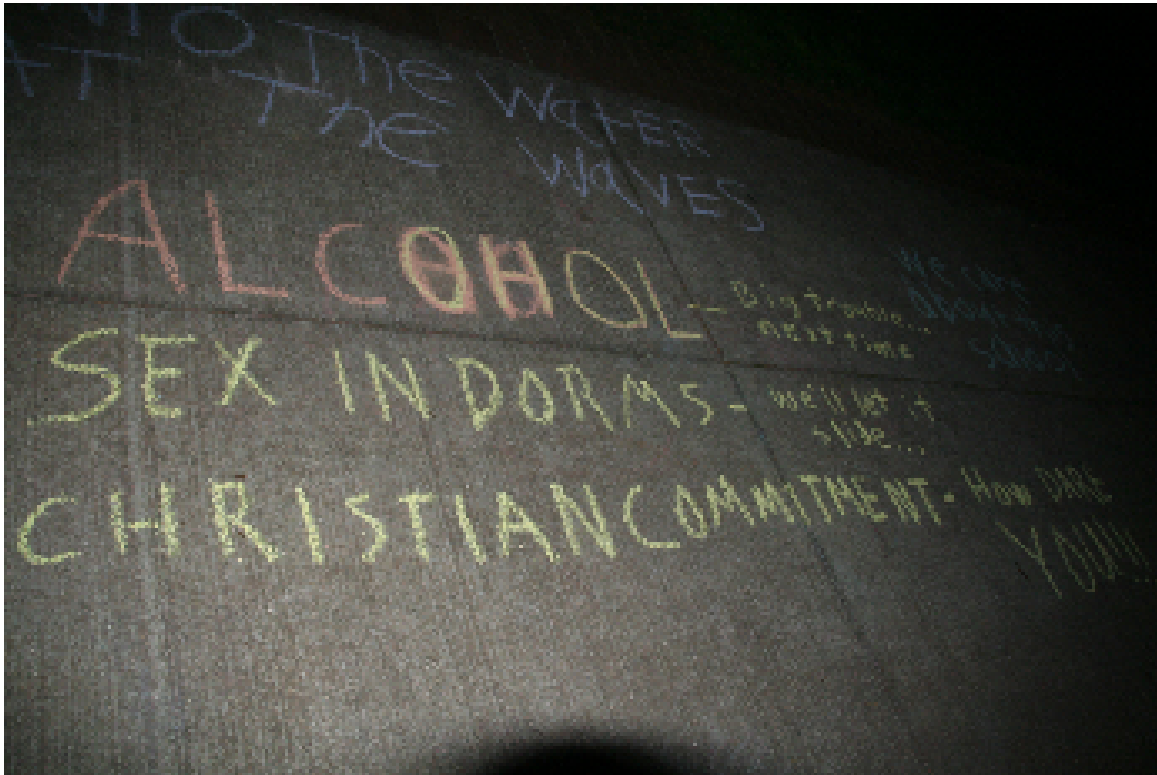
Caption: "Why is Dr. Weatherman leaving Erskine to become president of Lyon [College]?"



Caption: "We want actual integration of Faith and Education."



Caption: "Where's the focus on Christ? Please fulfil [sic] the mission statement."



**Caption: ALCOHOL- Big trouble ... next time;
SEX IN DORMS - We'll let it slide ...;
CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT- HOW DARE YOU!!!"**



Caption: "Why is the Bible ignored at Erskine?"

Below is an example of the students' "Erskine 95 Theses." This list is a compilation of students' postings. Please, note that in this list there are only 35 theses and not 95 and that some of the criticisms are unique to the Erskine College setting and odd to outsiders. The Editor has been informed that this list is representative of the lists that were posted. Students' names have been withheld. The students fear reprisals by the Administration.

Erskine 95 Theses

1. The administration refuses to integrate faith and learning.
2. Dr. Randy Ruble is not willing to take any strong theological positions
3. Dr. Weatherman has been marginalized for his efforts to implement a strong liberal arts program
4. The Drummond Center has few conservative guest speakers
5. The Barn does not receive institutional support
6. Aramark charges us for meals we don't eat
7. The Admissions Office tries to compete head-to-head with larger secular schools like Furman rather than implementing and

selling the mission of Erskine as a distinctively Christian liberal arts college

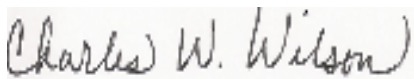
8. **The ARP Church does not support Christian students by demanding accountability of Erskine's leadership [Editor's emphasis]**
9. The school cannot make up its mind whether it should be a wet or dry campus
10. Student organizations are having to jump through hoops to appease Leo Fackler
11. Dr. Ruble makes disparaging remarks about the student body in front of other college presidents
12. Some Professors do not care about core classes
13. Tuition continues to rise every year
14. Scholarships do not
15. Two of our best professors have left within 3 years (Weatherman & Wingard)
16. Aramark controls too much of the campus
17. There is a Culture of Intimidation on campus (fear of reprisal by the administration)
18. Faculty who support the mission statement are afraid to speak about what they believe concerning the mission statement for fear of attack; however, other faculty members have no such fear
19. Many students believe that Erskine does not recruit much outside of a two and a half hour radius of Due West (except for choraleers)
20. Out of state students pay much more
21. Question: Why did the EBK scholarship part ways with Erskine?
22. Question: Why is Erskine a hot button issue at Synod nearly every year?
23. Question: With few exceptions, why are students no longer able to live off campus?
24. Question: Why aren't we allowed to tell anyone when you force us to take a survey?
25. Whenever a student gets a new scholarship, the Erskine scholarship decreases by that amount
26. El Quixote was forced to give up its attempt to apply for an alcohol permit
27. Admissions standards are constantly being lowered
28. Serious retention problems – a very large portion of the 2008 Freshman class is not returning next fall
29. Philosophy and Politics only have (1) uno professor each

30. Erskine spent a great deal of money on a useless courtyard outside of Lesesne
31. We had automatic lights installed in the new building, but many students can't cover tuition
32. The calendar of events is still not useful – many events still happen on the same days
33. SLA's are paid much less than minimum wage
34. Question: Why does the Admissions Office discourage any talk about Christ with prospective students?
35. Question: Why was the original chalk washed away?

It is the opinion of the Editor that the most damning statement is #8 ("The ARP Church does not support Christian students by demanding accountability of Erskine's leadership"). That is the perception of the Erskine students who are Christian and Evangelical. The Editor fears that the students may be correct! How has it come to this in our General Synod?

Finally, one wonders what Dr. Ruble's response will be? Will it be another of his tedious exercises in "Aw shucks!""? Will he seek to lay the blame on a small band of insignificant dissidents? Will he again ask for more time to get a handle on the situation? What will he do? One would hope that the man who has claimed before the General Synod to be "the President of the students" would honor and promote the concerns of Christian students who desire Erskine College to be the Christian and Evangelical college that they were recruited to attend. The Editor does not see this happening. Unfortunately, what the Editor sees is a loss of institutional control and an institutional hardening to the mission of Erskine College as Christian and Evangelical.

These are my thoughts,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles W. Wilson". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

Charles W. Wilson