

NEW ST. ANDREWS COLLEGE: AMONG THE TOP 40 BIBLE COLLEGES

By Nick Gier

Moscow's New St. Andrews College (NSA) was recently listed among the top 50 conservative Christian schools by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. This institute is supported by the conservative "National Review" and the right wing Heritage Foundation, and its evaluation of schools is based on faculty and student self reports.

NSA President Roy Atwood is now ranking his school with three other colleges on this list: Hope College, Calvin College, and Aquinas College. I submit that there is no comparison between these schools and his.

Hope, Calvin, and Aquinas are accredited by the 1,303-member North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which requires all permanent faculty have PhDs, while NSA is accredited by the 41- member Transnational Association for Christian Colleges and Schools, which allows their colleges to get by with only one third PhDs and the rest MAs.

I have met faculty from Hope, Calvin, and Aquinas at scholarly conferences and I have heard their excellent professional papers. Since 2003 I've extended personal invitations to NSA faculty to attend our annual regional theological meeting, but Atwood has declined saying they have "better things to do."

Calvin College boasts that it is the first evangelical school to have an Asian Studies program. Hope College has three professors who specialize in Asian philosophy and religion. Don't hold your breath for news that NSA will offer any courses on non-Christian thought.

Aquinas College even has a feminist philosopher on its faculty, but NSA founder and senior fellow Douglas Wilson believes that only propertied males should have the vote.

A sign of a good college is whether or not other institutions would hire its faculty. After teaching 30 years at Calvin College, Nicholas Wolterstorff was hired away by Yale Divinity School.

Here are some items where Hope, Calvin, and Aquinas fortunately do not compare:

- Two of NSA's senior fellows, presumably equivalent to full professors, do not have PhDs. Generally, a PhD is required at the lowest rank of assistant professor.
- Wilson's brother, son, and son-in-law are on the NSA faculty.

- NSA has demonstrated disrespect for its big academic neighbor, requesting, for example, that two UI history professors be disciplined for criticizing Wilson's views on slavery.
- Most of NSA faculty's published books are from Canon Press, Wilson's own creation.
- In 1998 Wilson wrote an article entitled "Why Evangelical Colleges Are Not." The hostility displayed against reputable evangelical colleges in this article not only shows blatant disrespect for these fine schools, but it manifests shameful disregard for the entire academic enterprise.

NSA's true peers are not Hope, Calvin, and Aquinas; rather, they are Word of Life Bible Institute, Shasta Bible Institute, the infamous Institute for Creation Research, Messenger College, and Jerry Falwell's Liberty University.