

## Michael Dreher

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**From:** Skip Rutledge [SkipRutledge@pointloma.edu]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 18, 2009 7:51 PM  
**To:** Andrew Jones; Abigail E Rine; Ammon Simon; Amy Jung ; Ann O. Lawson; Bob Derryberry; Brooke Adamson; orionbcm@yahoo.com; Cathy Glenn ; Chip Hall ; christine law; Courtney Edmonds ; Darlene R. Graves; Deborah Dunn; Derrick Green; Dorothy Calley ; Doyle Srader; Erick Roebuck ; Gary Harmon; Gina Lane; Griffith Vertican; Isaiah McPeak ; James Stewart ; James Tallmon ; Jason Hough; Jason Stahl ; Jay Bourne ; Jennifer Talbert ; Jimmy Wittrock; Jon Loging ; Jordan D Cherry; Josh Cangelosi; Julie Welker ; Karen Nishie; Kevin Jones ; Kim Bryant; Konrad Hack; Lawrence LaPlue ; Linda Chapman; Mark Kelton; Mark Walters ; Melissa Lazaro; Michael Dreher; Michael Graves; Mike Marse ; Rebecca Sietman ; Renea Gernant; Ryan Greenwalt; Sally Gary ; Sarah Stone Watt.; Scott, Shannon; Shannon Dyer ; Skip; Steven Jones ; Tiffany Olson; Todd Allen; Tracy Fredrick; William Purcell  
**Subject:** Input Requested  
**Categories:** NCCFA

Welcome Back NCCFA Friends,

As busy as we all are, Konrad Hack, Derrick Green and I are needing to get busy over the next few weeks to set up the National Championship Tournament for next Spring.

Last year, I pestered you pretty heavily for your input on how to make the tournament in Biola even stronger. Many of you provided terrific input and we tried to incorporate all that we could. Many of you have commented on many of the changes that you liked. I have also received some much appreciated recommendations for future considerations that are appreciated. Some of those are items that we can immediately address, and other are things that need to be brought up as potential business items for more formal consideration.

I would like to request that if there are any others of you that have suggestions on how we can better meet your desires with this tournament, or if there are things that you appreciated and would like to see us continue, please take some time in the next few weeks, say by mid September, to let me know via e-mail back channel. While I may not respond to each idea individually, especially if there are a number of them packed into a response I will carefully consider them and pass them around with the other tournament leaders so that we can all three have a sense for your desires.

There is one issue that continually comes up, and that is where we have difficulty finding agreement as a community on whether a particular speech is edifying, or "Christian enough." One note I received recently mentioned that not all of our students are Christians and that judges should try to exercise more grace in their comments and ballot marks on material that might contain some profanity, especially if it is deemed integral to the story or appropriate for the character development. Another commented conversely that because we are a Christian tournament, made up of schools that are Christian in their profession and faith (and profession of faith), that at this one tournament at least we should do all we can as coaches and judges to strongly discourage the use of profanity, which should not be viewed as appropriate at all.

I hold a lot of respect for the coaches and programs representing both sides of this issue, and have been on both sides as perhaps some of you may have been. I have had students driven to despair and some even to tears over what they perceived as insensitive remarks sometimes even remarks calling into question their Christianity, made by well intended judges on positions the students took in a round, often positions assigned by the resolution. And there have been inter rounds that I have wanted to walk out on based on the senseless and gratuitous use of profanity or morally objectionable acts enacted in the performance (not at NCCFA) so I can also relate to those coaches and judges hoping that at least this tournament can be a moment of sanctuary from some of this objectionable material. I found it both objectionable and offensive. The only thing I am confident of is that we will probably never reach agreement on just what that acceptable level or gauge of appropriateness may be at most tournaments, especially this one. My only hope is that we can truthfully try to consider the perspectives of those with whom we honestly and earnestly disagree, and recognize that though we worship the same Lord does not by any means mean that we share the same interpretation of what that means when the rubber hits the road. Our comments and ballot remarks or scores should probably reflect that consideration and grace, and we should be mindful that not all at the tournament might share our same religious views. If we can keep focusing on what we share in common than where we may disagree, it will make those occasional areas of disagreement much easier to cope with.

My apologies for taking so much time on this, but I know that it is a hot button issue with many, on both sides of the issue. Do keep those cards and letters coming folks. While we can't solve all the problems, the only sure bet is we won't even be looking for solutions if we don't know it is a problem. By the way, I will also interpret any complaints about Extemp, Impromptu, or Debate topics as possible interest in serving on those committees. And yes, each has a different committee, and we do have some charges and guidelines in the constitution and by laws posted on our home page that I hope you review with any questions in this area.

God's blessings on your new semester and classes and team of course. Take care of those syllabi in time to pass them out of course, but then feel free to drop me a note if you have some solid suggestions on tournament improvement.

Skip Rutledge, Ph. D.  
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Professor Communication and Theatre  
Point Loma Nazarene University  
e mail: [skiprutledge@pointloma.edu](mailto:skiprutledge@pointloma.edu) <<mailto:skiprutledge@pointloma.edu>>  
<http://www.pointloma.edu/CommunicationTheatre/FacultyStaff/SkipRutledge.htm>  
<<http://www.pointloma.edu/CommunicationTheatre/FacultyStaff/SkipRutledge.htm>>

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education." Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Michael Dreher

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**From:** Nishie, Karen [KNishie@vanguard.edu]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 18, 2009 9:29 PM  
**To:** Skip Rutledge; Andrew Jones; Abigail E Rine; Ammon Simon; Amy Jung ; Ann O. Lawson; Bob Derryberry; Brooke Adamson; orionbcm@yahoo.com; Cathy Glenn ; Chip Hall ; christine law; Courtney Edmonds ; Darlene R. Graves; Deborah Dunn; Derrick Green; Dorothy Calley ; Doyle Srader; Erick Roebuck ; Gary Harmon; Gina Lane; Griffith Vertican; Isaiah McPeak ; James Stewart ; James Tallmon ; Jason Hough; Jason Stahl ; Jay Bourne ; Jennifer Talbert ; Jimmy Wittrock; Jon Loging ; Jordan D Cherry; Josh Cangelosi; Julie Welker ; Kevin Jones ; Kim Bryant; Konrad Hack; Lawrence LaPlue ; Linda Chapman; Mark Kelton; Mark Walters ; Melissa Lazaro; Michael Dreher; Michael Graves; Mike Marse ; Rebecca Sietman ; Renea Gernant; Ryan Greenwalt; Sally Gary ; Sarah Stone Watt.; Scott, Shannon; Shannon Dyer ; Steven Jones ; Tiffany Olson; Todd Allen; Tracy Fredrick; William Purcell  
**Subject:** RE: Input Requested  
**Categories:** NCCFA

Dear Skip,

I want to thank you for your generous spirit, compassion and grace as you try to navigate the rough waters of our discipline. I have actually spoken to both you and Konrad on occasion about staying away from NCCFA tournaments because of comments made (I believe sincerely) by other coaches to my competitors regarding their salvation. To be fair, some comments that I have written on ballots may have been seen as critical, harsh and unsympathetic. However, I believe that a discussion must be engaged in so that we can continue to meet with and be a part of something unique. I get tired of sitting through rape scenes in interp. I am exhausted by the anti-God rhetoric of many state school debaters, so I appreciate the fact that I can sit through most any event at NCCFA knowing that I won't be assaulted verbally or emotionally (even if there is some colorful language thrown in, it has never been excessive at an NCCFA tournament I've attended).

Having said that, I think we must critically evaluate what we are asking of our students, especially in regard to interp pieces and platform pieces that students have worked the year through to perfect. It would be impractical and perhaps unfair (to the competitor, the tournament and the event) to expect our students to have two types of competition worthy material -- one for "regular" competition and a separate piece for "our" tournament. It is difficult to find pieces that proclaim a faith experience that would win in our secular regions (rape is okay, a salvation experience is offensive -- what a world we live in).

It is my hope that we can reach some agreement (maybe even to disagree) on what is quality literature, what are fair sided resolutions, what is a good persuasive topic that allows our competitors to bring their best game forward. I trust that as seasoned coaches, and committed Christian people, we can be mutually beneficial in our approach to judging other students even if they perform pieces that we may have disagreements with; and as we strive to bring our own students into their full potential as forensics competitors.

Thank you for opening what may be a difficult but ultimately important conversation out into the open.

Blessings,

Karen E. Nishie  
Assistant Professor of Communication  
Director of Forensics  
Vanguard University

## Michael Dreher

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**From:** Abigail E Rine [abrine@georgefox.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 19, 2009 1:25 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** RE: Input Requested  
**Categories:** NCCFA

Dear Skip et al,

This is my first year as forensics coach at George Fox University, so – hello! I want to first say that I think this is an extremely important discussion, and I am grateful to see it unfolding. I come at this from the perspective of a young professor (who was not so long ago a student herself) with an abiding love for language, and also, of course, as a woman of faith.

Here are my 2+ cents, which echo some points Skip raised: I think it is crucial to keep in mind that a shared profession of Christian faith does not guarantee a shared perspective on what makes certain material offensive – obviously not, or else we wouldn't be having this discussion. Because this spectrum exists, I think we should expect, as coaches and judges, to see a range of viewpoints reflected in the work of our students. To enforce a rigid standard of appropriateness, such as a complete ban on profanity, overlooks the fact that living out the Christian life looks a bit different from person to person. I think emphasizing the “the spirit versus the letter” might be helpful here; instead of recoiling from a well-placed expletive, perhaps in each case we should ask 1) why the author chose to use strong language and 2) why the student may have felt a connection to the material. If it is obvious a student was merely looking for an excuse to drop the F-bomb and the piece is simply crass and two-dimensional, then yes, the student's ballot should suffer – not because of some moral lapse, but because the interp is simply bad.

I have to admit I am extremely wary of over-enforcing the explicit “Christian-ness” of students' speeches. When I teach literature courses, I avoid using contemporary Christian novels because, frankly, most of them are trite, badly written, and overrun with clichés; they do not typically reflect the tragicomic complexity of the human condition, but instead offer a romanticized and overly simplified version. Good literature, which is the basis for good interp, elicits deep emotions from the reader – and not always positive ones. Take Flannery O'Connor; her Christian faith drives her fiction, but she uses shocking violence to jar the reader out of complacency. Her story “A Good Man is Hard to Find” wrenchingly exposes the heart of the gospel, but the story is definitely R-rated, recounting the senseless murder of an entire family (sorry if I spoiled the ending; don't let that deter you if you haven't read it).

I say, avoid censorship at all costs. If the material is bad, it's bad; if the material is cliché, it's cliché. (And I think gratuitous Christianese can be just as burdensome as gratuitous profanity). We should expect quality and nuanced work from our students, but we shouldn't penalize students for not meeting our specific interpretation of what Christians should or should not say.

Thanks again, Skip, for creating this dialogue. I am grateful to be a part of it.

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## Michael Dreher

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**From:** Jason Stahl [jason.stahl@belmont.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 19, 2009 3:02 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** RE: Input Requested  
**Categories:** NCCFA

NCCFI crew,

Hooray for dialogue! This whole issue is one that our team talks about a lot. Belmont may be one of the more liberal universities in our consortium where in the past few years alone I've had Hindu, Jewish, and non-Christian members alike on my team. Granted, the majority of my students are Christian, but I definitely have the "NCCFI talk" before our tournament every year.

When it comes to language used in interpretation events, it makes sense why this is such a sticky issue. Forget the literature performances, Christians in general have such a wide range of preferences and tolerances. It's no surprise that some NCCFI judges are more easily offended than others. A few years ago I had a lady from my church judge a DI round at our regular season tournament. I chuckled (and felt embarrassed) to see her rationale on a WKU student's ballot state 100% that the competitor's reason for receiving last in the round was his use of language (side note... he received 1st place during the 2nd half of the swing!). So where does that leave us with NCCFI? Is ANY literature fair game at our tournament? Well... I don't think so. I think we all admit that we appreciate not being quite as shocked by some of the perverse lit that we'll see at regular tournaments (there's one rape piece I saw a few years ago where the visuals of the performance I may never be able to erase from memory). On the other hand, does that mean that our performances need to be G rated things that we'd be okay showing to 1st graders? I don't think so. Personally I think Christians need to be challenged, too, with a lot of the issues that our society considers taboo. My home church has seen so much teen pregnancy over the past few years I think that not talking about sex, drugs, etc. in a Christian environment can be detrimental. As in almost any issue where I state my claim, generally my opinion lies in the mid-ground. Sure... allow some language and some graphic nature in the material especially when it is what the character might say or how they might react. When it crosses boundaries, though (which are going to be set at a different level for each judge), you should let the performer know that. I think the key isn't that a judge "hears" curse words and starts some sort of cursing tally marks, but instead that the judge has a hard time judging and getting into the piece because it is too vulgar.

As for challenging a person's faith on a ballot, I'm surprised that other people are seeing this too. I guess I just hoped that our ballots were the only ones that occasionally said things like this (granted, we get maybe 1-2 of these ballots a year). While I can see both sides to the language use in interp debate, I have a hard time seeing both sides on this issue. I'd recommend that we run with the assumption that the students we are judging may or may not be Christians and stating that any policy they would enact, any response in extemp, any literature performed, any DA or Kritik brought up is not something a "Christian" should do should be avoided at all costs. Heck, I don't mind if you're thinking it, just don't write it down on the ballot

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## Michael Dreher

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**From:** Konrad W. Hack [konradhack@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2009 8:18 PM  
**To:** Jason Stahl  
**Cc:** Abigail E Rine; Skip Rutledge; Andrew Jones; Ammon Simon; Amy Jung; Ann O. Lawson; Bob Derryberry; Brooke Adamson; orionbcm@yahoo.com; Cathy Glenn; Chip Hall; christine law; Courtney Edmonds; Darlene R. Graves; Deborah Dunn; Derrick Green; Dorothy Calley; Doyle Srader; Erick Roebuck; Gary Harmon; Gina Lane; Griffith Vertican; Isaiah McPeak; James Stewart; James Tallmon; Jason Hough; Jason Stahl; Jay Bourne; Jennifer Talbert; Jimmy Wittrock; Jon Loging; Jordan D Cherry; Josh Cangelosi; Julie Welker; Karen Nishie; Kevin T Jones; Kim Bryant; Lawrence LaPlue; Linda Chapman; Mark Kelton; Mark Walters; Melissa Lazaro; Michael Dreher; Michael Graves; Mike Marse; Rebecca Sietman; Renea Gernant; Ryan Greenwalt; Sally Gary; Sarah Stone Watt.; Scott, Shannon; Shannon Dyer; Steven Jones; Tiffany Olson; Todd Allen; Tracy Fredrick; William Purcell  
**Subject:** Re: Input Requested  
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Is there some kind of aspirational document that the organization might adopt that outlines to behavior that we find completely unacceptable, and guidelines for areas that are questionable. By making this aspirational, it would have a normative effect without being legalistic. I am thinking about a movie like Shawshank Redemption - a great movie, but completely devoid of meaning if the original text were to be censored.

One guideline I would suggest is regarding redemptive themes in pieces. The church SHOULD talk about difficult topics and engage them, but we need not do it in a taudry way. Perhaps the central theme of scripture could be summarized as redemption.

I offer this as a starting point for moving this discussion forward.

-- Konrad

## Michael Dreher

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**From:** Lawson, Ann [alawson@malone.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 26, 2009 2:48 PM  
**To:** 'Konrad W. Hack'; Jason Stahl  
**Cc:** Abigail E Rine; Skip Rutledge; Andrew Jones; Ammon Simon; Amy Jung; Bob Derryberry; Brooke Adamson; orionbcm@yahoo.com; Cathy Glenn; Chip Hall; christine law; Courtney Edmonds; Darlene R. Graves; Deborah Dunn; Derrick Green; Dorothy Calley; Doyle Srader; Erick Roebuck; Gary Harmon; Gina Lane; Griffith Vertican; Isaiah McPeak; James Stewart; James Tallmon; Jason Hough; Jason Stahl; Jay Bourne; Jennifer Talbert; Jimmy Wittrock; Jon Loging; Jordan D Cherry; Josh Cangelosi; Julie Welker; Karen Nishie; Kevin T Jones; Kim Bryant; Lawrence LaPlue; Linda Chapman; Mark Kelton; Mark Walters; Melissa Lazaro; Michael Dreher; Michael Graves; Mike Marse; Rebecca Sietman; Renea Gernant; Ryan Greenwalt; Sally Gary; Sarah Stone Watt.; Scott, Shannon; Shannon Dyer; Steven Jones; Tiffany Olson; Todd Allen; Tracy Fredrick; William Purcell  
**Subject:** RE: Input Requested  
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Hello Colleagues! I hope your summer was restful and your new school year is starting off well.

It seems as though the comments so far are in basic agreement with this idea: "profanity and controversial subjects are acceptable at the NCCFI provided they have redemptive purpose and are not gratuitous." Is this an accurate summary? If it is, and coaches are in agreement, then perhaps it is hired judges who are offended and mark students down for objectionable material. In that case, the issue for discussion moves to recruitment and training of our judging pool. If this summary is not accurate, and coaches have arguments on the side of more censorship of material selection, then we need that input and perspective voiced here!

I find it disingenuous that we would have students compete with certain pieces or speeches all year and then "clean them up" only for NCCFI. If we represent Christ with our words and actions, then should we not represent Him at all tournaments, not just one? So I find that this discussion should be larger than what is acceptable at Christian Nationals. It should include how we, as member schools, should represent our God, our Christian institutions and our alliance with NCCFI throughout our competitive season. My university welcomes non-Christian students and I have coached students at a variety of places on a faith spectrum. Regardless of their beliefs, students must still adhere to the school's community agreement of personal behaviors and represent the values of the institution. At issue is how represent Christ through our ethics, work ethic, behavior toward team members and competitors, etc. and not just the words we use.

As part of the discussion, I am sharing the Controversial Art and Media Statement that was crafted by Malone University's Communication Arts Department and is included in every course syllabus in our department. Perhaps it will give helpful phrasing for additional agreement or disagreement.

"The Communication Arts Department encourages you, as part of our mission statement, to 'act as agents of truth, reflection, transformation and reconciliation.' We recognize that one of the best opportunities that we have to act as these kinds of agents is by participating in the story-telling in our culture.

In theatre, journalism, public relations and other media production roles, Christians will always feel the rub of our story – the Gospel of God – against the other stories people bring to these contexts. Our goal is not to silence these stories or triumph over them. Instead, through patient listening and engagement, we want to engage others’ stories as a means to embrace the wholeness of the Gospel – joining in the Divine compassion for the human condition.

We want our classrooms, our films, our columns, our PSAs, our theatre productions to engage stories, sometimes even stories that challenge our assumptions and even undermine our core beliefs and values.

We believe a Christian university is the best place to examine such stories. In the hospitable context of a community of faith, we can dialogue and understand more deeply the stories that both affirm our beliefs and those that challenge them.

We will try, whenever possible, to alert you to “controversial” ideas that may be part of some of the stories we choose to engage. Sometimes we will even offer alternative experiences and allow you to “opt out” of the controversial media. But we encourage you in all cases to demonstrate the grace that Christ did when he encountered brokenness. When you feel defensive, try to seize that moment as an opportunity for growth and openness.”

Ann

Ann O. Lawson

Director, Forensics

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**Michael Dreher**

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**From:** Skip Rutledge [SkipRutledge@pointloma.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 26, 2009 6:18 PM  
**To:** Lawson, Ann; Konrad W. Hack; Jason Stahl  
**Cc:** Abigail E Rine; Andrew Jones; Ammon Simon; Amy Jung; Bob Derryberry; Brooke Adamson; orionbcm@yahoo.com; Cathy Glenn; Chip Hall; christine law; Courtney Edmonds; Darlene R. Graves; Deborah Dunn; Derrick Green; Dorothy Calley; Doyle Srader; Erick Roebuck; Gary Harmon; Gina Lane; Griffith Vertican; Isaiah McPeak; James Stewart; James Tallmon; Jason Hough; Jason Stahl; Jay Bourne; Jennifer Talbert; Jimmy Wittrock; Jon Logging; Jordan D Cherry; Josh Cangelosi; Julie Welker; Karen Nishie; Kevin T Jones; Kim Bryant; Lawrence LaPlue; Linda Chapman; Mark Kelton; Mark Walters; Melissa Lazaro; Michael Dreher; Michael Graves; Mike Marse; Rebecca Sietman; Renea Gernant; Ryan Greenwalt; Sally Gary; Sarah Stone Watt,.; Scott, Shannon; Shannon Dyer; Steven Jones; Tiffany Olson; Todd Allen; Tracy Fredrick; William Purcell  
**Subject:** RE: Input Requested  
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Wow, thanks for sharing that Ann. I want to let that percolate awhile to see what I think about it, rather than make a quick blush assessment. As to the beginning of your note, I think it may accurately reflect the comments made by those who have engaged in this conversation thus far, but I would like to point out that not all members of this community may feel comfortable sharing their views in this type of format, or venue. I have heard from people that might not accept the assumption you begin with, and who might draw a harder line on any profanity is unacceptable, no matter how well intended. And though I lean more with the majority expressed view here, I am not sure that I can say they are wrong.

I am reminded of when Tony Campolo, an evangelical Christian leader, professor at Eastern, and writer of some renown, visited a number of Christian campuses on a speaking tour or as separate engagements. Point Loma was one of those. After sharing many statistics on world hunger and how few churches were responding to those needs, he then uttered a profanity. You could have heard a pin drop. That of course was his hope. He continued that it seemed surprising that as loving Christians we should take greater offense at a mere profanity uttered in the name of a good cause, than at the thousands of people literally starving to death in the time frame of that chapel. Effective rhetorical tool? Undoubtedly. But the backlash it created got him bounced from many prestigious speaking engagements of a national scale, where he could have done much good, simply because so many felt these profane utterances were too objectionable. I am pleased to say that we have since invited him back, but it was to a luncheon rather than a large assembly, and many years after this incident occurred. In my opinion he is one of the most powerful Christian voices existing today. But many well intended believers found that rhetorical choice to be very objectionable.

Ann's other points are I think quite strong. And while I agree that objectionable material of a certain stripe should be no more welcome in secular contests than in Christian contests, I also do not think it objectionable to rework a piece for Christian College Nationals, perhaps drawing greater attention to scriptural messages, where as it could be put down elsewhere as being too preachy. Again, everyone will need to mark their own line and hope that critics approve I suppose. Often it is enough to finesse the intro a bit to provide the proper framing. But that is just my view. Got to get back to work. Thanks for the interesting suggestions gang. Be sure to have these discussions with your teams and judges too.

Skip Rutledge, Ph. D. Voice 619.849.2391  
Director of Forensics Fax 619.849.7015  
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## Michael Dreher

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**From:** Kevin T Jones [kevinj@georgefox.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 26, 2009 6:53 PM  
**To:** Skip Rutledge; Lawson, Ann; Konrad W. Hack; Jason Stahl  
**Cc:** Abigail E Rine; Andrew Jones; Ammon Simon; Amy Jung; Bob Derryberry; Brooke Adamson; orionbcm@yahoo.com; Cathy Glenn; Chip Hall; christine law; Courtney Edmonds; Darlene R. Graves; Deborah Dunn; Derrick Green; Dorothy Calley; Doyle Srader; Erick Roebuck; Gary Harmon; Gina Lane; Griffith Vertican; Isaiah McPeak; James Stewart; James Tallmon; Jason Hough; Jason Stahl; Jay Bourne; Jennifer Talbert; Jimmy Wittrock; Jon Logging; Jordan D Cherry; Josh Cangelosi; Julie Welker; Karen Nishie; Kim Bryant; Lawrence LaPlue; Linda Chapman; Mark Kelton; Mark Walters; Melissa Lazaro; Michael Dreher; Michael Graves; Mike Marse; Rebecca Sietman; Renea Gernant; Ryan Greenwalt; Sally Gary; Sarah Stone Watt.; Scott, Shannon; Shannon Dyer; Steven Jones; Tiffany Olson; Todd Allen; Tracy Fredrick; William Purcell  
**Subject:** Re: Input Requested  
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Friends,

I have followed this thread over the years with what I can best describe as a little bit of confusion. When I founded this tournament, one of my primary goals was to create a fellowship where people of faith who loved forensics could practice our craft void of the trappings we often encounter on the circuit.

The genesis for the NCCFA was a duo round in 1986 in Ohio where I left feeling I needed a shower b/c of the junk I just listened to. Dave Robey of Ceaderville was in the round with me and afterward we both remarked "wouldn't it be neat to attend a tnmt and not have this happen?" 12 years later, the NCCFI was born.

The whole reason Faith Lit was created was to provide an outlet for those people who wanted to do pieces that they knew could never survive on the regular circuit.

As the tnmt grew, I saw divisiveness rear its ugly head and I have to admit I was not blameless for some of it.

But it saddens my heart (and in many ways hurts me) when I hear about some of the things that have gone on at the tnmt. I do not blame any of the leadership that followed me, if anything, my exit and their arrival has done nothing but good for the tnmt.

But I just have to say that I never founded and created this tnmt with any intention of creating the need to begin legislating what can and can not be performed. Nor did I want to create a platform where judges could arbitrarily invoke personal theological ideology onto a ballot.

All I wanted was a little place we could all get along (a little Kum-by-ya if you will). :-)

When I coached at Christian schools, my standard I applied to all material was "can you perform this piece/speech to the Board of Trustees and gain their 100% support?" If the answer was "no," then it did not go out. I am not saying that this should be the standard for all programs, but I think the question has merit for Christian college programs.

When the tnmt was founded, I worked hard to get the support and endorsement of the CCCU. That association created an automatic standard of quality and expectation that I wanted the tnmt to have. A CCCU member attended the first tnmt. I know some programs that had no money but merely b/c of the CCCU connection, their board members personally gave them money to attend.

That was the spirit of the creation of this tnmt. That was the kind of reputation and connections I wanted it to have. That was the standard that we wanted it to live up to.

The CCCU has long parted ways, but the ideology of that standard can still live on.

As you dialogue and share ideas, I just ask (and this assumes I have a shard of capital to flex here, which I may not have), but all I ask is that you keep in mind the original spirit, the original intent of this tnmt. Why does it exist? Why do we have it in the first place? The NCCFA webpage has a much longer and detailed history of the program if you need some more info on it (or feel free to write me).

It would just be nice to see what cost me blood, sweat, and tears to create and build not be hurt or destroyed by the exact thing the tnmt was created to get away from.

My musings.....with much love and kum-by-yaing.....

Grace and Peace,

Kevin

Dr. Kevin T. Jones  
Associate Professor  
George Fox University  
Department of Communication Arts  
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(503) 554-2610

“Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do” John Wooden

“We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing.” Anon

## Michael Dreher

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**From:** Loging, Jonathan [Jonathan.Loging@blc.edu]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2009 11:48 AM  
**To:** 'Kevin T Jones'; Skip Rutledge; Lawson, Ann; Konrad W. Hack; Jason Stahl  
**Cc:** Abigail E Rine; Andrew Jones; Ammon Simon; Amy Jung; Bob Derryberry; Brooke Adamson; orionbcm@yahoo.com; Cathy Glenn; Chip Hall; christine law; Courtney Edmonds; Darlene R. Graves; Deborah Dunn; Derrick Green; Dorothy Calley; Doyle Srader; Erick Roebuck; Gary Harmon; Gina Lane; Griffith Vertican; Isaiah McPeak; James Stewart; James Tallmon; Jason Hough; Jason Stahl; Jay Bourne; Jennifer Talbert; Jimmy Wittrock; Jordan D Cherry; Josh Cangelosi; Julie Welker; Karen Nishie; Kim Bryant; Lawrence LaPlue; Linda Chapman; Mark Kelton; Mark Walters; Melissa Lazaro; Michael Dreher; Michael Graves; Mike Marse; Rebecca Sietman; Renea Gernant; Ryan Greenwalt; Sally Gary; Sarah Stone Watt.; Scott, Shannon; Shannon Dyer; Steven Jones; Tiffany Olson; Todd Allen; Tracy Fredrick; William Purcell  
**Subject:** RE: Input Requested  
**Categories:** NCCFA

Greetings to all!

I am enjoying this discussion. As a first-time member last year at Biola, I was very impressed with the level of competition and friendliness of the tournament staff and competitors. I thank Michael Dreher for constantly promoting this tournament to us.

This topic has become more important to me in the last few weeks as you will see below.

I will admit, we "cleaned up" some of our events before we went to NCCFI. By that I mean we modified the events to fit with a more conservative audience that we expected to meet. I like Kevin's comment about not taking a piece out that you wouldn't be willing to show to the trustees. I feel our "uncleansed" events met that criterion. However, we tried to anticipate the audience and adapt to it. That is an integral part of public speaking.

Shortly after NCCFI, our Speech Team put on a performance for the campus as a way to show what we do all year. We highlighted the 3 students who competed at NCCFI and won awards there. We performed the same "sanitized" version of our pieces, including a Faith Lit Interp. I felt safe that our pieces would be well received.

While nearly everyone enjoyed the performance, I recently have had a few snags. Administrators and other co-workers of mine have waited until the beginning of this school year to comment on our performances from last year. They were offended at some of the pieces we did. They said some of the speeches didn't represent the ideas of the college. No one could give me specifics. However, through a little deductive reasoning I think they were offended because a student said the word "vagina" when talking about a woman who had cervical cancer. She also said "vulva", "ovary", and "egg". Nothing sexual at all, just anatomical in nature. Another point of contention was a student who did a POI on stalkers,

looking at it from the stalkers point of view. She had a short humorous section for a teaser and conclusion to bookend a piece of creepy poetry and startling facts. They didn't like that we made light of a serious situation like stalking.

The reason I tell you this long story is to highlight that forensics, even at a Christian tournament, is subjective. I know when I judged Impromptu at NCCFI, I made comments on the ballot when students fell into the IMP pattern of "proving the quotation is true" for a quotation from one of the gospels. I would write, "It's the Bible, of course it is true. I don't need human logic to prove the Bible true." I felt empowered at the time because it was a Christian tournament. However, after some reflecting outside of my standpoint, I understand that certain denominations may have different interpretations of the Bible. They still believe that Jesus died for our sins, but also interpret other portions of the Bible differently than I do.

However, I am the judge. I am the audience. I have a right to accept or reject a message because of my views. That is a key element in public speaking. There are very few places where an audience will amend their beliefs in order to fit with the speaker. Competitive speech is one, which does a disservice to the student. Students seem to feel the need to push the envelop in order to compete well. They feel shock is more effective than quality, which rarely works outside of forensics.

I like Skip's example of Tony Campolo. Great speakers with plenty of Ethos and Logos can destroy their message by using the wrong Pathos for an audience. I do not know about the situation personally, but I assume he was, from that point on, referred to as "the guy who swore at Pt. Loma." While the memory of that event faded, his choice of material hurt the message he was trying to get out.

I look at it this way and I teach my students this: why insult/offend your audience? It is hard enough to get an audience to pay attention and even harder to get them to accept your message. Why would you want to give them a good reason to reject you outright? Tony Campolo had a great point and message, but distracted his audience by bringing in a profanity. My students remember all the horrible/shocking/despicable pieces they here, but do not remember the reason why the speaker used that material.

Audience's are subjective. They always will be. I can't have students perform pieces that won awards at a national Christian tournament without offending someone at my own school. That is the truth about public speaking.

You can have students bring "profanity and controversial subjects". However, if I am in the back of the room, tell them to expect me to reject their message at NCCFI or any tournament. It is part of the learning process.

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Jon Loging  
Director of Forensics  
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## Michael Dreher

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**From:** Gernant,Renea [Renea.Gernant@cune.edu]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2009 4:51 PM  
**To:** Skip Rutledge; Lawson, Ann; Konrad W. Hack; Jason Stahl  
**Cc:** Abigail E Rine; Andrew Jones; Ammon Simon; Amy Jung; Bob Derryberry; Brooke Adamson; orionbcm@yahoo.com; Cathy Glenn; Chip Hall; christine law; Courtney Edmonds; Darlene R. Graves; Deborah Dunn; Derrick Green; Dorothy Calley; Doyle Srader; Erick Roebuck; Gary Harmon; Gina Lane; Griffith Vertican; Isaiah McPeak; James Stewart; James Tallmon; Jason Hough; Jason Stahl; Jay Bourne; Jennifer Talbert; Jimmy Wittrock; Jon Loging; Jordan D Cherry; Josh Cangelosi; Julie Welker; Karen Nishie; Kevin T Jones; Kim Bryant; Lawrence LaPlue; Linda Chapman; Mark Kelton; Mark Walters; Melissa Lazaro; Michael Dreher; Michael Graves; Mike Marse; Rebecca Sietman; Renea Gernant; Ryan Greenwalt; Sally Gary; Sarah Stone Watt.; Scott, Shannon; Shannon Dyer; Steven Jones; Tiffany Olson; Todd Allen; Tracy Fredrick; William Purcell  
**Subject:** RE: Input Requested  
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Colleagues,

You are engaged in an important discussion here and one that is challenging to resolve. Our life as Christians is a complicated one. We are in the world, but not of the world. It's very challenging to know what and how to respond as we approach such hard questions. I have no idea the answer to this question. We have talked about it on and off for several years and come to clear consensus. I hope that this discussion will get the organization closer, but it will be hard.

Some things that come to my mind when I think about appropriate fiction and art:

1) Art, literature, theatre, music are expressions of the human condition. Whether "clean" or "cleaned up" or "naughty," none of them is the Word of God. Works of art are critical because in them we see the pain, despair and hurt of humanity AS WELL AS the joy, the wonder and the beauty of that which God has given us. As we read, as we view and as we listen, we see and understand the creator, the beauty of His design, the corruption of the creation, the need for salvation, and the wonder of redemption. There is a time and a place in which to discuss the artifacts of the world and the reality of sin. Artistic expression can take us inside worlds that we do not know and do not understand such that we see the tragic results of sin AND understand our role in a fallen world. It's not always pretty or nice. And these images can help us approach a fallen world with awareness and compassion.

2) This side of heaven the lines between good/bad and good/evil are often challenging to define when we talk about language. The meanings of words change and our understandings of words are subjective. Blasphemy is wrong. Other words are shadier. In my family of origin, the word "piss," for example, was just what it was. We were on the farm—horses did it, cows did it, I did it and so did the pastor and all the other saints in the pews. Yet I recall vividly sitting at the table of a friend (about age 6 and telling someone that I needed to piss). The table went silent and the mom in question quietly explained that "we don't say that word here. It's naughty." About the same time I had a teacher who taught me that "ain't" was a bad word and I was never to use it...even though...again...in my house...we "ainted" everything. When I tried to suggest to my father that he said a dirty word when he reported "I ain't done with my chores" he looked as if I

were about to be spanked. Each of those women believed that they were teaching me right from wrong. In my home dialect, these weren't "wrong." Non-standard but not wrong.

3) The words that we most commonly dislike in our community are most typically those that were for years deemed inappropriate by the TV Standards Boards of the 60's and 70's—largely vulgarities—the seven dirty words so to speak. In Great Britain, the words "bloody" and "shag" are just as inappropriate and yet many Americans think nothing of them. Personally, I think that there are more effective word choices than vulgarities, but I can't say that there is a Biblical mandate against them. Indeed, there are parts of scripture itself that use terms in the original languages which were considered vulgar by their cultures. Again, blasphemy yes, is wrong, but vulgarity is harder. It's not tasteful, and arguably not the reflection of the best of God's children, but I can't say it's a sin.

4) The character of much of the literature on the secular circuit is obscene in my opinion and I detest it. I am pretty sure pieces are cut to be boorish and shocking. I think that there is a line between that level of nasty and something else...but like Justice Potter...I know it when I see it...but I am at a loss to define it.

Bless the discussion.