

**THE BELL TOWER INTERVIEW:**

**Dr. Anthony Aretz, CBU academic vice president**

*Tony Aretz came to CBU in August as vice president for academic affairs, replacing Brother Louis Althaus who retired from this position and moved over to be executive assistant to the president. An Ohio native, Aretz recently retired from the United States Air Force as a lieutenant colonel and previously served as the director of academic planning at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO.*

*Aretz holds a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, a master's degree from Wright State University and a bachelor's degree from the United States Air Force Academy. He has extensive teaching experience at both the undergraduate level and in non-traditional educational settings.*

*CBU communications and marketing director JOHN KERR recently sat down with Aretz and had a few questions in mind.*

**What was it about CBU that made you want to become academic vice president?**

The main reason was the people. When I

came to Memphis for my interviews it was obvious that CBU had a dedicated and passionate community. There also seemed to be a great need for someone to come in and help facilitate some change. The Catholic and Lasallian missions were also important to me. I think it's important to help protect those traditions, especially with the secularization going on in higher education. When I finished my first visit here, I knew it would be a good fit.

**How different is it to go from the Air Force Academy and that background to a small, private university?**

The biggest difference for me has been putting on a suit and tie everyday! I was used to wearing a uniform. Getting ready every morning has become a different process. I had to go buy some suits. Seriously, though, in some ways it's more difficult, but in some ways it's more fun. It's more challenging because procedures and policies are not as clear as they are in the mili-

tary academy setting. Things tend to happen more by word of mouth. At the same time, that can make it fun because you get to deal with people on a more intimate level. And, the people here have been great.

**What direction do you see the university moving in as far as academic offerings and aspirations?**

Higher education will continue to get more competitive, so we need to offer innovative programs—ideally to be able to offer something that no one else does. To be competitive, a university also has to have new products and needs to be innovative and entrepreneurial and know what its market needs and wants. CBU is the only faith-based institution in this part of the country that seems to me to be poised to take advantage of an opportunity to provide programs that have a solid focus on moral leadership. We should focus on that.

*continued on next page*



**"To be competitive, a university also has to have new products and needs to be innovative and entrepreneurial and know what its market needs and wants."**



**"CBU can be a leader in providing the kind of education that makes the development of moral and ethical leaders part of all students' academic lives."**



**"Getting ready [for work] every morning has become a different process. I had to go buy some suits."**

*continued from previous page*

**What are the best things CBU has going for it?**

CBU has an excellent reputation, particularly for academic quality and programs. That's a strength that we've capitalized on. I think the passion and dedication of the faculty and staff has been and is something special. What is untapped, I think, is a great potential for initiative and innovation and how to foster the courage to do new and different things. As I mentioned, one of the very foundations of our Catholic heritage and Lasallian mission is moral leadership and responsibility. Even with the recent presidential election polls and surveys, one of the most talked about needs people talk about in this country is the need for ethical leadership. There is a thirst for it. I think CBU can be a leader in providing the kind of education that makes the development of moral and ethical leaders part of all students' academic lives while they are here. We can be more intentional on being Catholic and Lasallian.

**What does the University need strengthen or improve upon?**

The most important thing we need to do right now is to make the transition from being primarily enrollment-driven regarding resource allocation. You can't effectively do long-term planning with that model and when you don't know what the long-term budget picture might be. We need to develop some alternative revenue sources and explore ways to grow those sources. Long-term financial stability is a key, certainly a key. There are tremendous untapped possibilities. CBU could become very focused and a center for certain programs that could be highly attractive to traditional and non-traditional students. We're looking at some proposals for a center for ethical leadership, for example.

**What kind of leader do you believe yourself to be?**

The whole concept of being a servant-leader has always been important to me. To work with others and for others and to do the right thing. There is nothing more important than integrity. You have to be willing to listen and to appreciate and be concerned about many points of view.

**What about higher education's challenges in general. What do schools need to be focused on?**

As educators and leaders we have to focus on ways we can help with the challenges being faced in grades K-12. We may not always be able to attract the *best* students, but we do have to ensure the success of those we do enroll. It's the responsibility of higher education to basically preserve our culture and our democracy.

**Who are your heroes?**

George Washington. Abraham Lincoln. Both men had to make difficult choices and difficult moral choices. They placed principles over their personal or even professional needs. ■