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## Postings from the Inter-webs

Furman University

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## Postings from the Inter-webs

*What don't people know about Furman, but should?*

**SEMSOPRANO:**

*That students are not simply taught facts but how to reason.*

**JGRUES:**

*It's a wonderful institution for veterans. Served 2006-2015, now a full-time student.*

**MEREDITHMDANGEL:**

*People think it's still so conservative and Baptist-oriented. Not true. I was introduced to so many different viewpoints and walks of life.*

**JEFF O'SHIELDS:**

*Furman has an excellent financial aid office. Prospective students should never allow tuition cost to "scare" them.*

**CHRISTY ALLEN:**

*I may be a little biased, but we have phenomenal libraries.*

**FRAN SEVIER BROWN:**

*After your kids graduate, you miss FU almost as much as they do!*

**ELLAINE HERSCHDE:**

*Oh my gosh, I felt the same! Almost as sad on the way home from graduation as from freshman drop-off.*

**GINGER MAYBERRY GRAVES:**

*Our son has received tremendous support and encouragement from his professors. They have gone above and beyond in assisting him in and out of the classroom.*

**KATY MUHLHAUSEN HULLER:**

*Beautiful, safe campus... and easy to get involved in activities and clubs.*

→ not you personally condemning a person to hell?

How do you handle that?

**KJ:** It's a really difficult nuance, and the reality is feelings are still hurt. We've gotten to a place [historically] that certain things are just not tolerated. The "n" word is not going to be printed in Furman's newspaper. That's about protecting people who have had the word used against them. There are times when the referee comes in and says, yes, you have a freedom of speech, but we have a higher responsibility of loving and caring for all the people in our community. I want to protect the people who have been the oppressed group, but without honest dialogue, we don't get to a place where people understand where each other comes from.

Do you think politically correct speech achieves the opposite of its intent—meaning it censors or makes difficult conversations less honest?

**KJ:** When we start talking about race, these are deeply personal issues. It's hard for people to have these conversations without feeling personally implicated. It's asking a lot of people who have experienced hurt and oppression to be vulnerable to talk about that honestly, especially in spaces where they're not sure they're going to be heard or respected.

How do you do it then?

**KJ:** I'm teaching this class on race with a congregation that is 75 percent white and 25 percent people of color. I walk into the room and I say to them, here's one of my own stories of experiencing something that was hurtful. I'm being carefully vulnerable with my own story

**"ALL OF US BREATHE THIS POLLUTED AIR. EVEN I AS A BLACK PERSON HAVE FOUND MYSELF SAYING SOMETHING THAT WAS INAPPROPRIATE TO, OR ABOUT, A BLACK PERSON."**

and that helps open up some honest dialogue.

There's a powerful sermon you gave in which you describe how even Jesus occasionally ignored those who wanted his intervention. You propose that we may not be aware of what needs our intervention because it's not visible to us. How do we make the invisible visible when it doesn't affect us personally?

**KJ:** Harvey Milk, the gay activist, told people who were gay, hey, you gotta come out of the closet. Everybody come out now and make your parents look you in the face. Make your colleagues—make the nation—see you. And change happened. Storytelling—that's where things are being made visible.

That's interesting—

**KJ:** All of us breathe in this polluted air. So, all of us are caught up in this system of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Even I as a black person have found myself saying something that was inappropriate

to, or about, a black person. [But] by naming it, I'm not just looking at the white, straight man across the altar from me and saying 'you, you, you.' I'm looking at him and he's looking at me and we're recognizing we're all caught up in this.

When it comes to solving something as large as 400 years of racism, is there a "win" whereby the movement would be able to say, we have achieved our goal?

**KJ:** The preacher in me wants to say that we are such a sin-filled country at this point that the end would look like the coming of the kingdom of God. That's sort of a despairing response, though. On a more here-and-now note, I would say for me—black children growing up in a world where they aren't afraid of being mistreated, that they have a level playing field, and that they never live with a fear that they aren't receiving opportunities because of the color of their skin or 'accident' of birth—that's the win. ●