

Proposal for Presentation  
“Teaching Agape Love to Law Students”

*Love and Law:*

“What would law be like if we organized it around the value of Christian love [agape]?”

Pepperdine University School of Law  
February 7-8, 2014

Submitted by

L.O. Natt Gantt, II  
Professor and Co-Director, Center for Ethical Formation and Legal Education Reform  
Regent University School of Law

Benjamin V. Madison  
Professor and Co-Director, Center for Ethical Formation and Legal Education Reform  
Regent University School of Law

---

Law schools are not known for helping their students achieve balance in their lives. As research has shown, law schools instead lead students to disconnect from their values, become more extrinsically motivated, and leave law school less personally satisfied and service-oriented than when they entered.<sup>1</sup>

*Love* is a term that is often misunderstood, but the richness of the biblical principle of *agape* love underscores that love is more than an emotion. It is an internal drive that leads people to be other-centered and serve others.<sup>2</sup> Lasting changes in human behavior are more likely to occur when the individual changes his or her attitudes about the purpose behind the action as opposed just to changing the action itself.<sup>3</sup> Helping law students understand agape love can be a catalyst towards helping them avoid the institutional pressures of legal education noted above.

We propose to deliver a presentation focusing on how educators, particularly legal educators, can discuss agape love principles with students in a way that motivates them towards other-centeredness and service. We will discuss select studies on the attitudinal and values shifts that often occur in law school and in the legal profession and will discuss techniques instructors can use to counter those shifts in the law school context and promote agape love among students.

---

<sup>1</sup> See ROY STUCKEY, ET AL., BEST PRACTICES FOR LEGAL EDUCATION 29-36, 90-91 (2007).

<sup>2</sup> MILLARD J. ERICKSON, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY 319 (2d ed. 1998).

<sup>3</sup> See Lawrence S. Krieger, *The Inseparability of Professionalism and Personal Satisfaction: Perspectives on Values Integrity and Happiness*, 11 CLINICAL L. REV. 425, 426-29 (Spring 2005).

## Submitters' Biographies

L.O. Natt Gantt, II is Professor and Co-Director of the Center for Ethical Formation and Legal Education Reform at Regent University School of Law. He received his A.B. in psychology and political science, *summa cum laude*, from Duke University; his Juris Doctor, *cum laude*, from Harvard Law School; and his Master of Divinity, *summa cum laude*, from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He teaches Professional Responsibility and has spoken on various topics related to legal education and legal ethics. He is the author of the several ethics-related articles, including *Integration as Integrity: Postmodernism, Psychology, and Religion on the Role of Moral Counseling in the Attorney-Client Relationship*, 16 REGENT U. L. REV. 233 (2003-2004); *More Than Lawyers: The Legal and Ethical Implications of Counseling Clients on Nonlegal Considerations*, 18 GEO. J. LEGAL ETHICS 365 (2005); and *Professional Responsibility and the Christian Attorney: Comparing the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct and Biblical Virtues*, 19 REGENT U. L. REV. 1 (2006-2007). He also is a former faculty member for the Virginia State Bar Harry L. Carrico Professionalism Course.

Benjamin V. Madison, III is Professor and Co-Director of the Center for Ethical Formation and Legal Education Reform at Regent University School of Law. He received his B.A. in English from Randolph-Macon College; his M.A. in English from the College of William & Mary; and his J.D. from the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary. He teaches Civil Procedure and pretrial practice courses at Regent. He recently published *Civil Procedure for All States: A Context and Practice Casebook* (2010 Carolina Academic Press). Professor Madison's book is among the first to integrate throughout a doctrinal casebook moral and ethical questions to assist students in developing the ability to examine their values and work through questions in the gray area between clear violations of the Model Rules of Professional Conduct and the discretion allowed to lawyers to follow their personal conscience and consider moral values not addressed in the Model Rules. He has spoken on various topics related to legal education, legal ethics, and professional identity formation. He is the author of several articles related to both legal education and the manner in which theological and philosophical principles inform legal principles, including *The Elephant in Law School Classrooms: Overuse of the Socratic Method as an Obstacle to Teaching Modern Law Students*, 85 U. DET. MERCY L. REV. 2008), *Color-Blind: Procedure's Quiet But Crucial Role in Achieving Racial Justice*, 78 U.M.K.C. L. REV. 617 (Spring 2010). He is also a Fellow of Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers, part of the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System. Professor Madison received Regent's Faculty Excellence Award in 2009. He formerly was a partner at Hunton & Williams and handled commercial litigation in federal and state courts nationwide.

Professor Gantt and Professor Madison are co-authoring the section on *Best Practices for Teaching Professional Identity Formation* in the forthcoming book, BUILDING ON BEST PRACTICES IN LEGAL EDUCATION, the sequel to the 2007 BEST PRACTICES IN LEGAL EDUCATION.