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The Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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# INTERSECTIONS

faith + life + learning

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NUMBER EIGHT

WINTER 2000

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MILLENNIUM BUG HOAX? CENTURY OF WAR OR CENTURY OF PEACE? WILL HUMANS DESTROY THE PLANET? HAVE ALIENS KIDNAPPED BILLY GRAHAM? MILITARY BUDGET: WHO'S THE ENEMY? WILL BRITS DIS-ESTABLISH ROYALS? WHO ISN'T A POTENTIAL TERRORIST? WHAT, BESIDES MONEY, DO CANDIDATES HAVE TO OFFER? WHY DO I FEEL REAL ONLY WHEN I'M VIOLENT? ARE COMPUTERS NOW PROGRAMMING HUMANS? HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW TO RELAX? WILL NEW 'SMART GUNS' SOLVE THE PROBLEM? IS FLU EPIDEMIC MILLENIAL JUDGMENT? ARE THERE DAYS WHEN YOU JUST WANT TO CRY?

HEADLINE QUESTIONS, DECEMBER 1999, JANUARY 2000

# INTERSECTIONS

faith + life + learning

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NUMBER 8

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INTERSECTIONS

WINTER 2000

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## **Purpose Statement**

This publication is by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-eight colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is published by the Division for Higher Education and Schools of the ELCA. The publication presently has its home at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio which has generously offered leadership, physical and The financial support as an institutional sponsor for the inauguration of the publication.

The ELCA has frequently sponsored conferences for faculty and administrators which have addressed the church - college/university partnership. Recently the ELCA has sponsored an annual Vocation of the Lutheran College conference. The primary purpose of INTERSECTIONS is to enhance and continue such dialogue. It will do so by:

- \* Lifting up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities
- \* Encouraging thoughtful dialogue about the partnership of colleges and universities with the church
- \* Offering a forum for concerns and interests of faculty at the intersection of faith, learning and teaching
- \* Raising for debate issues about institutional missions, goals, objectives and learning priorities
- \* Encouraging critical and productive discussion on our campuses of issues focal to the life of the church
- \* Serving as a bulletin board for communications among institutions and faculties
- \* Publishing papers presented at conferences sponsored by the ELCA and its institutions
- \* Raising the level of awareness among faculty about the Lutheran heritage and connectedness of their institutions, realizing a sense of being part of a larger family with common interests and concerns.

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## **From the Publisher**

This journal, INTERSECTIONS, was started because of a concern that general awareness of the philosophy and theology behind Lutheran higher education was not high, and could become lost due to retirements and preoccupation with other issues. The Division for Higher Education and Schools in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and some administrators and faculty members at colleges and universities related to the ELCA thought that the issues that had been debated through the years needed to be revisited and brought forward. New deliberations needed to take place, and the arguments that were put forth needed to be published so that many of us could learn from the arguments and continue the discussion.

Among the key people behind the resumption of that debate were two people who now have retired or soon will be retired: Paul Dovre, the former president of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and Robert Sorensen, the Executive Director of the ELCA Division for Higher Education and Schools. I know that it gives them great pleasure and satisfaction to see how active the discussion has become over the last few years, and how many people now contribute to it. Not only does "The Vocation of a Lutheran College," the conference on which this journal is based, continue to draw more than a hundred participants each year, most of whom leave it highly enthusiastic, and charged up to take the discussion of the issues to their individual campuses. Not only has the discussion become active on many of the ELCA college and university campuses, but over the last two years three new books were published that added to the debate: Ernest Simmons, *Lutheran Higher Education- An Introduction for Faculty*, Augsburg Fortress, 1998; Paul Contino and David Morgan (eds), *The Lutheran Reader*, Valparaiso University, 1999; and Pamela Schwandt (ed), *Called to Serve- St. Olaf and the Vocation of a Church College*, St. Olaf College, 1999. The Simmons book has been used so widely that it quickly sold out. Now it is being represented as simply *-An Introduction*, not meant for faculty use only.

More publications can be expected, based on the parallel initiative started in 1999, The Lutheran Academy for Scholars in Higher Education. And as you can see from this issue of *Intersections*, the debate continued last year at the "Vocation" conference at Susquehanna University. Next August the conference will take place at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, just outside of Omaha. The focus will be on what differentiates Lutheran colleges and universities within American higher education, in educational philosophy, in teaching and learning, in research and scholarly endeavors, and in service activities. Welcome to that event.

December 1999  
Arne Selbyg  
Director for Colleges and Universities  
ELCA-DHES

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### **From the Editor**

This is the eighth edition of *INTERSECTIONS*. When Bob Sorenson, at the ELCA Division for Higher Education and Schools endorsed the idea of such a publication a few years ago, there had been no Vocation of a Lutheran College Conferences and no Lutheran Academy of Scholars either. Bob, together with his staff, made a commitment to move forward with all of these efforts. Each of them has made a substantive contribution to the dialogue regarding the connection of church relatedness and academic calling at our institutions of higher learning. I think the conversations are livelier, the issues more fully informed and the voices in the discussion more diverse because of these developments. For all of these things we express our gratefulness to the DHES staff and especially to Bob Sorenson, since he has now announced his imminent retirement.

This issue of *INTERSECTIONS* is a good example of the kind of discussion that these efforts have generated. It includes analyses and arguments from people who are insiders to Lutheran theology and from those who are outside, from those who have spent many years at our institutions as well as those recently arrived. All of these voices are valuable, for they point out to us what we ought to be about, what we claim we are about, and what we are actually, in practice, about. What we discover is that these are not always the same thing. What I conclude from reading these essays is that what is can do well to be informed by what ought to be, *and* that what ought to be needs to be informed by what is. The livelier the dialogue between such voices, the better for all of us.

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## INTEGRITY AND FRAGMENTATION: CAN THE LUTHERAN CENTER HOLD?

Robert Benne

The question posed for this conference is a very important one, but which makes the optimistic assumption that a Lutheran center is currently holding in many of our colleges. The question then suggests that the center may be endangered.

My view, on the contrary, is more pessimistic, and, I think, more accurate and realistic. My short answer to the question is: No. The Lutheran center cannot hold in many, if not most of our colleges, because it was never there in an articulated form in the first place. To paraphrase the words of James Burtchaell, "How can those colleges miss what they never had?" How can they hold now what they never held in the first place. But such a hard and stark answer needs some nuances, which I will give in a few moments.

A few of our colleges have been able to articulate and hold a Lutheran center that has shaped and organized their lives as colleges. Though that center may be under constant discussion, it still provides the identity and mission of the college as a whole. Whether it can remain the organizing paradigm for the college of the future is an open question. But the fact that it is under intense public discussion is a good sign.

Mere discussion is not enough though. Discussion can lead to chaos or paralysis. (The whole faculty of Calvin Seminary was once dismissed by its Board because they had argued themselves to an impasse. The good Calvinist pastors on the Board held the quaint thought that the seminary should have a clear position on important matters of faith.) Ongoing discussion can also lead to notions of a center that in fact will marginalize or subvert any persisting Lutheran identity. That nuance, too, will have to be unpacked.

In the following I wish to: 1. give a brief account of those colleges that had no articulated center.  
**Dr. Robert Benne is Jordan/Trexler Professor of Religion at Roanoke College. He is teaching this year at Valparaiso University.**

by another brief account of those who had. 2. Then I want to make a stab at articulating what I think the Lutheran center is. 3. Finally, I will close with suggestions for those colleges who have a center that roughly corresponds with my definition and then some suggestions for those that don't have a Lutheran center at all.

But before I move on to those tasks, it is important to define at least provisionally and formally what I mean by "center." I would argue that the center for Lutheran liberal arts colleges ought to be religiously defined. That is, a religious vision of Christian higher education should be at their center. This religious vision, which like the Christian faith is comprehensive, would have within it an interpretation of the role and nature of human learning. (This provision of course eliminates a lot of our colleges who would currently find it quite embarrassing to admit that their mission was religiously defined.)

The religious vision comes from a living religious tradition. Alasdair MacIntyre has famously argued that a living tradition is "an historically extended, socially embodied argument about the goods which constitute that tradition." Traditions extend through many generations. Lutheranism is such a tradition--or better, such a constellation of traditions--and it has sponsored the colleges and universities from which we come.

In giving a rationale for its involvement in higher education, Lutheranism has never exhibited unanimity. But its religious commitments led it to establish colleges that had an educational purpose consonant with its perceived mission. Something in these Lutheran bodies impelled them to establish colleges.

I.

Now, the problem for many of our colleges is that they were not conceptually clear about what they were doing. The impulse was there but the sharp

rationale--particularly a theological rationale--was not. These colleges were "Christ of culture" colleges.

What do I mean by that? H. Richard Niebuhr, in his renowned book, *Christ and Culture*, identified five classic ways that Christian traditions have related Christ (the Christian vision) to culture. One of those, the Christ of Culture tradition, identifies Christianity with the best of high culture. For example, during the Enlightenment many of the elite identified Christ as a sublime teacher of morality. He was a hero of culture along the lines of a Socrates. The way I am using the Christ of culture category is a bit different. I mean that for many Lutheran groups that established colleges, the Christian vision was deeply and unconsciously entwined with their particular ethno-religious culture. They were fairly homogenous groups that wanted their young to be educated within the ethno-religious culture that they prized. They wanted their laity-to-be to be immersed in the "atmosphere" of their culture. Moreover, they wanted that culture to encourage candidates for the ordained ministry who would then go on to seminaries of that tradition.

The Midland Lutheran College of my college days was such a college. We were children of the German and Scandinavian Lutheran immigrations to the Midwest. Most of us had parents who hadn't gone to college but were encouraged by them and our local parishes to go to "our" school. We were taught by faculty generally of that same ethno-religious culture. Ninety-some percent of us were from those backgrounds. How could such education not be Lutheran? Almost every one at the college was Lutheran. Similar statements could be made about a Gettysburg and a Muhlenberg a generation or so earlier. Many of our colleges exhibited these characteristics.

But was there anything more specifically Lutheran about that Midland of yore? Not a whole lot. Religion was a pretty inward, non-intellectual matter. We had pietist behavioral standards that prohibited premarital sex and alcohol. We had Bible courses offered at a low level of sophistication. We had required chapel of a distinctly non-liturgical sort. We had faculty who had committed their lives

to the college and who now and then would connect their Christian perspective with their teaching. By and large the faculty and administration encouraged us as young Christians.

But there was no articulated center that sharply delineated the mission of the college. The theological acuity to do that was simply absent, or was felt not to be needed. Lutheran theology and ethics were not taught. Lutheran history was nowhere to be found. The Lutheran idea of the calling was not explicitly taught to young people who had had it bred into them in their parishes. There was no concerted intellectual effort to interrelate the Christian vision with other fields of learning. We were simply Lutheran by ethos. We were immersed in a Christ of culture educational enterprise.

When the colleges expanded their student bodies and faculties in the late 50s and 60s, students and faculties were recruited who were no longer part of that ethos. Indeed, the ethos itself was melting into the general American culture. Since the colleges had no articulated center, the colleges lost whatever integrity and unity they had. Soon faculty appeared who were not only apathetic about the tradition that originally sponsored them, but actually hostile. Raising any question about a religious center disturbed and offended them. The culture that was friendly to Christ became one that either ignored or rejected him...and the college went with that culture.

Now the loss of such a religious, Christ-of-culture, orientation did not mean death for the colleges. Some of them found new ways to define themselves. Some, like Gettysburg, went for high quality and high selectivity pre-professional education. They have a certain kind of integrity and unity, but it is not religiously defined. At most, religion is a grace note, a flavor in the mix, a social ornament. But certainly not the organizing center. It remains to be seen whether such an identity is satisfying enough to either college or church to maintain it.

Other Lutheran colleges, which Burtchaell calls the "confessional colleges," did have a more articulated

center. That is, the religious vision that sprang from their religious tradition was more specific, often theologically stated. They didn't mind being viewed as "sectarian," an appellation from which the Christ of culture colleges fled. This theological distillation of the religious vision served as the paradigm around which was organized the whole life of the college--its academic, social, organizational and extracurricular facets.

These colleges exemplified a Lutheran version of Christian humanism. Their theology departments taught Lutheran theology and ethics as well as bible and church history. Their faculty made a point of inter-relating the Christian vision and other fields of secular learning. Often this was strongest in the fields of literature and the arts. The notion of the calling was explicitly taught as a way to shape one's life before God. The moral ethos of the campus was guided by explicitly Christian principles. Lutheran worship was provided in an impressive chapel at a set-apart time.

All this was led by people who had a clear rationale for what they were doing. And it sprang from their religious tradition and was theologically articulated. It was supported by a board that explicitly supported and prized that tradition. Above all, the college had the courage to select faculty who supported such a notion of Lutheran humanism.

Such Lutheran colleges still exist, I believe, but have an uphill battle to maintain themselves. Some had a clear rationale but are losing it. A number of reasons for that are obvious. Some colleges fight for survival and are willing to adopt to market conditions even if it means giving up their religious center. Others are seduced to give up their religious center by a glorious worldly success that goes far beyond mere survival. Some have increasing numbers of administrators and faculty who simply do not see the point in trying to operate from a religious center. They do not believe that the Christian vision is any longer an adequate vision for organizing the life of a college. For many of those administrators and faculty, religion is a private, interior matter that should not be publicly relevant to the educational enterprise. Some colleges can no longer agree on the center and fall into a kind of

chaotic pluralism. Then they cannot summon either the clarity and courage to hire faculty that support Lutheran humanism in higher education.

A number of our colleges fall between these two depictions. They are a bit more intentional than the Christ of culture types but less defined than the Lutheran humanist types. I do not wish to set up exclusive categories. But it does us no good to go on congratulating ourselves about our fidelity to a Lutheran center when so many of us have little or no semblance of one.

## II.

Well, that brings us to the question: What is an adequate Lutheran "center?" Let me say that a Lutheran center is first of all a Christian center. We share with other major Christian traditions a common Christian narrative--the Bible and the long history of the church. From those narratives emerged early on what we could call the apostolic or trinitarian faith, defined in the classic ecumenical creeds. In the long history of the church much theological reflection took place; a Christian intellectual tradition was shaped. This intellectual tradition conveyed a Christian view of the origin and destiny of the world, of nature and history, of human nature and its predicament, of human salvation and of a Christian way of life. This larger Christian tradition also bore Christian practices such as worship, marriage, hospitality, charity, etc.

The Lutheran Reformation and its ensuing history arose from and expressed a Lutheran construal of this general Christian tradition. Many of the facets of that construal are enshrined in the Lutheran Confessions. Some of the more particular elements of that Lutheran construal will be discussed a bit later as I further delineate the Lutheran center for Christian higher education.

This Lutheran Christian vision of reality, particularly in its intellectual form, constitutes the center. But how will it work out in the life of a college? How will it provide the organizing paradigm for the identity and mission of a college? How will it make a difference? What difference will it make?

Mark Schwehn, in a recent address at the University of Chicago (*First Things*, May, 1999, p. 25-31.) gives us a wonderful starting point. In it he attempts to define the characteristics of a Christian university, one that, as I put it, employs the Christian vision as the organizing paradigm for its life and mission. Schwehn talks generically about "Christian" institutions but I will transpose his language for specifically Lutheran colleges. Also, I will abbreviate the rich elaboration of each of his characteristics.

First, Schwehn lists what he calls "constitutional requirements." A Lutheran college must have a board of trustees composed of a substantial majority of Lutheran persons, clergy and lay, whose primary task is to ensure the continuity of its Lutheran Christian character. This will mean appointing a majority of Lutheran leaders who are committed to the idea of a Lutheran Christian college.

These leaders will in turn see to it that all of the following things are present within the life of the institution. First, a department of theology that offers courses required of all students in both biblical studies and the Christian intellectual tradition; second, an active chapel ministry that offers worship services in the tradition of the faith community that supports the school (Lutheran) but also makes provision for worship by those of other faiths; third, a critical mass of faculty members who, in addition to being excellent teacher-scholars, carry in and among themselves the DNA of the school, care for the perpetuation of its mission as a Christian community of inquiry, and understand their own callings as importantly bound up with the well-being of the immediate community; and fourth, a curriculum that includes a large number of courses, required of all students, that are compellingly construed as parts of a larger whole and that taken together constitute a liberal education (26-27).

Second, Schwehn develops three qualities that ought to be present in a Lutheran Christian college that flow directly from its theological commitments. The first is *unity*. By that he means the conviction that since God is One and Creator, all reality and all truth finally cohere in him. Thus, the Christian

college quests for the unity that follows from this theological principle. The second quality is *universality*, that all humans are beloved of the God who has created and redeemed them. All humans must be treated with dignity and respect. The third is *integrity*, which involves the belief "that there is an integral connection among the intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions of human life, and that these therefore ought where possible to be addressed concurrently within a single institution rather than parceled out into separate and often conflicting realms." (28) While these qualities may be grounded in other views of life, they are thoroughly grounded for a Christian college in trinitarian theological principles.

His fourth principle deserves more attention because it gets at, at least for this essay, the particularly Lutheran qualities of a Christian college. Schwehn argues that a "Christian university privileges and seeks to transmit, through its theology department, its official rhetoric, the corporate worship it sponsors, and in myriad other ways, a particular tradition of thought, feeling, and practice." (29)

While one could spend a good deal of time on a Lutheran college's "feeling"--its aesthetic tone--and "practices"--its worship, its arts, its sense of corporate and institutional calling, I would rather focus on its tradition of thought, its approach to higher learning. This is shaped by the particular way that Lutherans relate Christ and culture, Gospel and Law, the Right-hand Kingdom and the Left. And since the Lutheran approach is complex and dialectical, it is highly vulnerable to distortion.

The first thing to say is that Lutheran colleges respect the independence, creativity and contributions of the many "worldly" ways of knowing. The disciplines are prized in their full splendor. Luther roared: "How dare you not know what you can know!" He also argued that Christians have to be competent in their secular callings; a Christian cobbler makes good shoes, not poor shoes with little crosses on them. Lutheran teacher-scholars teach and write well; their piety will not excuse incompetence.

However, the disciplines are not given idolatrous autonomy, for they, too, are under the dominion of finitude and sin, and they often claim too much for themselves. Rather, the disciplines are to be engaged from the point of the view of the Gospel, and here "Gospel" is meant to refer to the whole trinitarian perspective on the world, not just the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. That is, a Lutheran college aims at an ongoing dialogue between the Christian intellectual tradition--Lutheranly construed--and the secular disciplines. This is what is meant by a lively tension and interaction between Christ and culture, the Gospel and the Law, and the two ways that God reigns in the world.

A genuinely Lutheran college will aim at such an engagement, rejoicing in the areas of overlap and agreement that may take place, continuing a mutual critique where there are divergences and disagreements, anticipating that in the eschaton these differing views will come together in God's own truth, but in the meantime being willing to live with many questions unresolved. Thus, in some areas of inquiry, a Lutheran college will recognize paradox, ambiguity and irresolvability. But this recognition takes place at the end of a creative process of engagement, not at the beginning, where some of the proponents of "paradox" would like to put it. Those proponents then simply avoid real engagement by declaring "paradox" at the very beginning, essentially allowing everyone to go their own way and do their own thing.

Let me enter a caveat here. This sort of engagement does not go on all the time and by everyone in every classroom. A good deal of the time of a Lutheran college is given over to transmitting the "normal knowledge" of the field or the freight of the liberal arts core. But in probing the depths of every discipline, in addressing perennial and contemporary issues, in shaping a curriculum, in the kind of teaching and scholarship it prizes, and, above all, in the kind of faculty it hires, it nurtures this ongoing engagement between the Christian intellectual tradition and other ways of knowing.

Contrary to the Reformed approach, it does not give an automatic privilege to the Christian world view

which in the end can "trump" the other ways of knowing. Contrary to the Catholic approach, which sees all knowledge rising to a synthesis organized by Catholic wisdom, it lives with more messiness. But it respects those models of Christian humanism and finds itself closer to them than to the modern secular tendency to marginalize and then sequester into irrelevancy the Christian view of life and reality.

This genuine Lutheran approach also guards against its own Lutheran distortions, the prime one being the separation of Christ and culture, Gospel and Law and of the two ways that God reigns. This separation takes place in this way. The Gospel is narrowly defined as the doctrine of justification. This Gospel is preached in the chapel and taught by the theology department. But it is not the full-blown, comprehensive vision of life explicit in the trinitarian faith. It does not have the intellectual content of the full Christian vision.

In this flawed view, the Law (culture or the left hand of God) embraces everything else. All disciplines are under the Law and reason is the instrument for understanding them. Indeed, Luther's understanding of reason is often appealed to. His understanding sounds like an affirmation of autonomous reason set free from Christian assumptions. If that is the case, then a Lutheran college simply allows all inquiries shaped by reason to proceed freely. The results of these inquiries are respected and left pretty much unchallenged. The best available faculty can be hired for this exercise of autonomous reason without regard to their religious convictions or their interest in the theological dialog I outlined above. A Lutheran college, in this view, is simply one that encourages the exercise of autonomous reason. Or, in Postmodern terms, it respects the various perspectives that people bring to learning from their social locations.

There are enormous problems with this approach. For one thing, it assumes that Luther meant the same thing by reason that we do. On the contrary, the reason that Luther respected was thoroughly ensconced in a Christian worldview. It was a reason that could affirm the Good, the True and the

Beautiful in a way that was consistent with Christian presuppositions. But such a view of reason is long gone. Reason has been removed from the religious traditions within which it worked and now operates from very different assumptions, usually characterized by a pervasive philosophical naturalism (the modern) or by an arbitrary epistemological tribalism (the postmodern).

Allowing such an exercise of reason to go unchallenged in a Lutheran school is irresponsible. It leads to bifurcations of the minds of students and faculty alike. Christian faculty who worship God on Sunday teach a view of the world that shuts out God and human freedom on Monday. Students live their faith and intellectual lives in two separate compartments. To combat this unhappy situation, the disciplines must be engaged by the Gospel, i.e. the Christian vision with its comprehensive claims to truth. However, the Christian vision is not immune to challenge itself. The disciplines engage the Christian vision. In any genuine conversation there is the chance that both conversation partners' views may be changed. What's more, Christian claims are often of high generality; the claims of discipline more detailed and concrete. One often needs the other. Engagement is not always conflictual; it is often complementary.

The distorted Lutheran approach I have depicted above splits Christ (the Christian vision) and culture (the academic enterprise), the Gospel (in its full elaboration) from the Law (the exercise of reason). This separation of the Christian intellectual tradition from secular learning is as dangerous to Lutheran colleges as the separation of the Gospel and politics was to the Germany of Nazi times. Certainly the stakes are quite different, but such a separation will lead to a realm of secular education unchallenged by the Christian vision, just like it led in Germany to a political movement unchecked by that same Christian vision.

Such an approach, which often is used as a rationalization to disguise the prior lapse into secularization, can then well appeal to paradox, ambiguity and uncertainty since it will have nothing but a cacophony of voices each claiming their little corner of the college. Such a condition, which is not

too far from the one prevailing at many of our colleges, led one of our graduate students who attended this summer conference a few years back to say: "Gee, from what I gathered there, a Lutheran college is a wonderful place because everyone can think and do whatever they wish. It's a free-for-all."

In summary, a Lutheran college fosters a genuine engagement of Christ and culture. It encourages a creative dialectic between Gospel and Law by giving the Gospel in its fullest sense intellectual standing. Such a college stands at the lively junction between the two ways that God reigns. All of this flows from the Lutheran Christian center that guides the college. Such a college is willing to make the hard institutional decisions that ensure that such a vision lives on. It will hire an administration and faculty who not only tolerate such a vision, but support and participate in it. Indeed, they will feel called to it. Such a college will recruit students who are open to such an enterprise. And if it executes such an enterprise well, it will have something special to offer the church and world. It will become more than just a pretty good generic liberal arts college.

### III.

Those colleges that approximate such a view of Lutheran higher education--Lutheran humanism, if you will--will have a good idea of what to aim at. The practical aspects of that task will be difficult and challenging, but the principles are pretty clear. In actual fact, a few of our colleges have a fighting chance to move closer to the ideal. I wish them well and godspeed.

But what of the many colleges who have long lost a Lutheran center, a religious vision that shapes the life of the college? What of the many of you here that find my ideal Lutheran vision simply impossible. You say: We can't put Humpty-Dumpty together again. We can't unscramble the eggs in our omelette. We simply have little chance of regaining such a robust center. Some of you might be saying silently: We shouldn't do that even if we could.

To you--and I include myself in this group--I say that we should aim at an *intentional, robust*

*pluralism*, a pluralism in which the college guarantees that the perspectives of Lutheran Christianity are represented in all the departments and divisions of the college. The Lutheran vision may no longer be the paradigm that organizes the college's life, if it ever was, but it can be intentionally represented among the many voices representing other perspectives.

Could we not insure that Christian public intellectuals--those who in their teaching and scholarship embody the dialogical model I elaborated above--are intentionally sprinkled among the departments? Could we not insure that the Christian perspective on our life together be represented in student affairs along with the more secular ones? Could our leaders not articulate a Christian rationale for our involvement in service as well as the more generic ones?

It seems only honest to press for such an intentional pluralism--affirmative action for Christians

generally and Lutherans specifically--in a college that still claims a relationship to the Lutheran tradition. If we would make provision for such a pluralism, our appeal to Lutheran donors and Lutheran students would have more plausibility. We would avoid the kind of hypocrisy which takes AAL money for projects that lead to further secularization of the college. We could at least guarantee to our Lutheran constituencies that we have made provision for the Lutheran voice to be heard, even if it is part of a small minority.

Certainly boards of trustees, presidents, deans, department heads and faculty could be persuaded to see the cogency of such a proposal. If being related to a religious tradition means anything significant, it must mean that tradition can speak within its "own" institution. If we can't muster at least that commitment, why in heavens name should we continue the relationship?

## From Pietism to Paradox: The Development of a Lutheran Philosophy of Education"

Philip Nordquist

I became interested in questions related to the identity and educational mission of Lutheran colleges and universities in the mid 1950s while I attended Pacific Lutheran University. I didn't get much help in my quest from either the institutional ethos or from what I read, however. The institutional ethos was largely composed of the Protestant triumphalism that was booming at the time, an aggressive moralism that was orchestrated by the incumbent president, S.C. Eastvold, and a defensiveness that wanted little or nothing to do with the complicated intellectual and moral questions that were being raised left and right. The institution was a fortress--a "defender of the faith"--in the language of a future Danforth Foundation study. I read Soren Kierkegaard and Reinhold Niebuhr and they helped me personally and politically, but I got no significant help with Athens-Jerusalem questions.

My long discussions with friends and my sometimes smart-alecky, reform-minded columns in the student newspaper, consequently, were never sharply focused, though sharp responses were sometimes evoked. The situation was quite a lot like that described by James Neuchterlein in his 1988 reflection about his collegiate experience at Valparaiso University:

We received educations suitable to our ambitions. The faculty in those years was overworked and underpaid, competent but undistinguished. They were predominantly Lutheran and deeply committed to the idea of Christian higher education, though, with some notable exceptions, that commitment consisted more of tribal loyalty and devotion than of any very clear idea of the difference a Christian education should make. We were without a doubt a Christian community, but what made us, or should make us, a Christian *intellectual* community remained uncertain.

I liked graduate school very much, but I didn't have

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much time for questions about Lutheran college identity. Neither was there encouragement for such questions. Professionalism, specialization, and research talk dominated. What George Marsden calls "methodological secularization" also loomed over the whole enterprise. I didn't discover the Harold H. Ditmanson, Howard Hong, and Warren Quanbeck edited book *The Christian Faith and the Liberal Arts* (1960) where contributors tried to discover whether there was a Lutheran philosophy of education until later and then decided it was too narrowly focused on the liberal arts and mirrored too much of the 1950s to be especially relevant.

Indeed, the committee which represented the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) colleges that had put the book together concluded it "would not be disposed to claim that what is set forth is distinctively Lutheran position." The last two paragraphs of Warren Quanbeck's chapter, "The Theological Basis of Christian Higher Education," began to spell that out, however, and in my view it was unfortunate that much of the rest of the study did not begin to work out the details of the themes that were introduced there.

When I joined the PLU faculty in 1963 academic life was much more interesting and explosive than it had been a few years earlier. Ecumenical activity, secularism, pluralism, violence, and revolutionary change all had to be addressed. It was hard to find time to deal with institutional identity and purpose in that milieu, as institutions tried to hold on to the important and authentic parts of the past in the midst of the passions and wrenching changes taking place on all sides. We tried, however, and as I taught my courses dealing with the Reformation I discovered that Luther's dialectical theology had remarkable relevance to educational philosophy and what was going on. It was not as retrograde as I had thought as an undergraduate. It was a wonderful discovery for me. I have been trying to work out the details ever since.

The need for an appropriate theological foundation for higher education--and an overdue move away from moralism or pietism as that foundation--became clearer at PLU in the early 70s. The new university president appointed a "Commission on Academic Excellence" in 1971 to prepare an educational road map to guide the institution into the future. The quite detailed final report appeared in 1973 and was introduced by a paragraph taken from a speech to university donors written a year earlier by university pastor, Gordon Lathrop. The statement was grounded in dialectical or two kingdoms theology and emphasized the necessity of dialogue between Christ and culture at a Lutheran institution. The statement was a revelation to some and helpful for many others, but it was controversial as well. It was opposed by the Humanities Division with the Religion Department taking the lead. Past formulations about the role of chapel, religion classes, and a religious atmosphere, as well as the residue of pietism, still had purchase on many members of the faculty. Lathrop had written:

For the Lutheran University, culture must not be subsumed under faith--that only leads to legalism and to the religious pretense which is the greatest enemy of the Gospel. The Lutheran conception of "civil righteousness" and the "two kingdoms" ought to allow us to rejoice in goodness found in the culture and in the creativity and reflection of men, *without* christianizing. But neither must the Word of God be subsumed under culture--in the midst of the University and its pluralistic involvements the Word must freely stand forth in its purity, as the Law and Gospel of God.... But then it seems to me that the Lutheran University must be a place dedicated to the full confrontation and dialogue between Christ and culture. It seems to me that the only religious test we ought to ask professors and students to submit to before they come here is whether or not *they are actually willing to engage in this dialogue.*

From the mid-1970s onward the American Lutheran Church (ALC) also got into this search and held a series of workshops devoted to "The Context and Mission of Lutheran Higher Education." A more adequate theological and educational foundation for the ALC colleges and universities needed to be

found so they could deal more effectively with their increasingly diverse student bodies and constituencies, as well as the changes and problems that had exploded out of the previous decade. The first and most helpful of these workshops was held at Concordia College organized by the college Dean, Paul Dovre, and the newly appointed Director of Institutional Research, Loren Anderson. Many of the institutional representatives present were intent on finding a justification for Lutheran higher education that focused on religious atmosphere or community--expressed in rather saccharin ways I thought--and dialectical theology as articulated by Gordon Lathrop (I had distributed his speech) was looked at with some suspicion. The workshop's presenters were not interested in simplistic or saccharin formulas, however.

They were an impressive group and included Bill Narum of St. Olaf College (who had been involved in the writing of the *Christian Faith and the Liberal Arts* volume); Bob Bertram of Seminex; Harris Kaasa of Luther College; and the Yale Professor of American religious history, Sydney Ahlstrom. He lectured nightly, focusing on "What's Lutheran About Higher Education?," and drew very important distinctions between the three traditions that flowed out of the post-Reformation educational experience of Lutherans, the scholastic, the pietistic, and the critical. It was quite clear by the end of the week that he thought Lutheran institutions should be guided by the critical tradition. Ahlstrom's distinctions and descriptions helped place the Lutheran educational enterprise in a much richer and more sophisticated context than earlier studies provided.

I reviewed Harris Kaasa's paper "Faith and Learning: An Old Question Revisited." It was a thoughtful and sometimes autobiographical survey of the topic from a Lutheran perspective. It described the influence of pietism on educational views and also described the theological and educational importance of Warren Quanbeck at Luther Seminary:

But I remember what a revelation it was to me when in my senior year at Seminary Warren Quanbeck expounded for us Luther's doctrine of

the two kingdoms. Eureka! Here at last was a conceptual scheme by which I could live by faith and come to terms with "the world," a scheme by which I could relate faith to secular learning and indeed all human culture in a positive way. I discovered that it was not necessary to fear or shun learning. It was not only unnecessary but downright heretical to abandon the world to the devil. For *both kingdoms* were God's kingdoms, though he ruled over each by a different word: over the world by law, and over the true church, the communion of saints, by the gospel and grace. Today, I see no reason to abandon this scheme. It remains for me the scheme which best does justice to both Scripture and my own experience.

By the time the workshop at Concordia concluded Luther's two kingdoms theology was more firmly in place for a number of the participants, but it had been an emotional battle. ALC workshops and discussions continued at Luther College in 1975 and Luther Seminary in 1978 where Herman Diers of Wartburg College continued the Quanbeck-Lathrop-Kaasa foundational argument with a paper entitled "Implications of Luther's Dialectical Theology For A College Curriculum." It was a helpful summary by an important player in Lutheran educational circles.

A climax to the search for identity and purpose that marked the 1970s came in presentations at California Lutheran College in 1979. Papers were read by Richard Solberg on "Images and Expectations of LCA Colleges," by Edgar Carlson on "The Future of Church-Related Higher Education" and Franklin D. Fry on "The Basis for Partnership Between Church and College." Fry's paper was a summary of the LCA's statement with that same title approved at the biennial convention held in Boston in 1976. He quoted extensively from Luther's letter to "The Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" and in the section on the theological base for church-college partnership he said: "It is, essentially an explication of the Lutheran understanding of the two areas of God's kingship. We discern that he rules over the world through his Law, and he rules over his church

through his Gospel....Therefore, Lutheran theology does not place the college under God's Gospel, and we do not expect the college to be a conversion center."

The 1976 LCA statement spelled this out more fully, by addressing the meaning of the word "secular," and following the logic of the theological reasoning utilized throughout the statement distinguished between "Christian" and "church-related" education:

"As we carry out the God-given ministries of our ordinary days, we discern that God had woven into the fabric of all he had created his desire and his design that all people work together to tend his unfolding creation and to care for one another....As we live and work with others, we discern the outlines of this design. We are set in families; we establish governments; we take our place in the structures of commerce and industry; we form organizations--colleges among them--to promote the public good. The creator does not intend us to make a lonely way through life; he has provided us with companions and colleagues. It is his will that we ally ourselves with all who are moved by reason and conscience to respond, even if unawares to his law written in their hearts, as they seek to advance and improve the human condition. This association is God-given; this cooperation in the secular is God-pleasing. For the term secular means non-redemptive; it does not mean God-forsaken. This means that education in general, and the church-related college in particular, have an integrity and purpose grounded in the Creed's first Article concerning creation."

A few sentences later the reasons for preferring "church-related" were discussed: "This understanding also makes clear that it is both unbiblical and misleading to speak of 'Christian' higher education or a 'Christian' college. People needing salvation are baptized into Christ; institutions entrusted with a secular task, do not need to be baptized to be faithful servants of God the creator."

By the end of the 1970s the victory of the two kingdoms or dialectical theology model as a

foundation for Lutheran higher education over formulations from the scholastic or pietistic traditions was won. It had taken two difficult decades and perhaps not all were still persuaded. The victory was harder to win in the ALC than in the LCA, perhaps because of the greater proximity to Norwegian Lutheran pietism in the ALC's mid-western heartland. It is, however, now the view being expressed by the Division for Higher Education and Schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). It has been basic to these "Vocation of a Lutheran College" conferences, and it was clearly and effectively summarized by Richard Hughes at the conference held at Carthage College in 1997. It was also articulated by Ernest Simmons in chapter three of his helpful and timely book, *Lutheran Higher Education: An Introduction for Faculty*. I hope that book is being widely used.

The importance of all this hit me in a special way half a dozen years ago when I was a member of a committee drafting a mission statement for PLU. We included dialectical theology as a foundation. But the project where foundational thinking really hit home was when I began writing PLU's centennial history slightly more than a decade ago.

Where should I begin the narrative and what should I include about theology and its intersection with education? I read widely in institutional histories and found that most began just a few years before legal incorporation. I quickly concluded that was not correct for a Lutheran college or university where the question of the Reformation's impact needed to be addressed and the relationship of Christianity and learning carefully reviewed. That relationship was rehearsed in the early church so I went back to the second century and Tertullian who, as you know, saw the radical distinction between Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions and asked: "What has Jerusalem to do with Athens, the Church with the Academy, the Christian with the heretic? I have no use for a stoic or a Platonic or a Dialectical Christianity. After Jesus Christ we have no need of speculation, after the Gospel no need of research." The church turned Tertullian down.

To answer the question of where to begin I should have gone back to the New Testament. The New

Testament was written in Greek, not the Hebrew of the Old Testament or the Aramaic that Christ spoke, so when it was to be understood or translated all the nuances of Greek culture had to be dealt with. Jaroslav Pelikan has written that "It remains one of the most momentous linguistic convergences in the entire history of the human mind and spirit that the New Testament happens to have been written in Greek." If Christianity was to be proclaimed the Greco-Roman intellectual categories and educational structures had to be used. There were no others. The issue was joined. The Christian church committed itself to culture, learning, and education knowing perfectly well that *ârete*, *paideia*, and *sophia* were not religious categories.

The church remained tied to education all through the Middle Ages, first in the monastic schools (where for centuries the only formal education took place) and then in a more dynamic way in universities after they emerged in the twelfth century. It was out of a German university in the sixteenth century that Lutheran history and Lutheran higher education were launched

What was included in the package of materials bequeathed to us by Luther and the Reformation? Is it still relevant?

There are at least five over-arching themes and it seems to me they are still profoundly relevant. First, is the foundational role of dialectical theology to produce the fundamental shape of Lutheran colleges and universities. Second, Christian humanism must continue to play a central (but not exclusive) role in the kind of education provided. Third, Luther's idea of universal compulsory education while perhaps largely accomplished in the United States and western Europe still has revolutionary implications when extended to the rest of the world. Fourth, education should sensitize people to care for the earth and it should enhance the qualities of citizenship and service. Finally, academic freedom should be present in all the activities of a university. Luther wrote: "No science [including theology] should stand in the way of another science, but each should continue to have its own mode of procedure

and its own terms." The modern understanding of academic freedom has its roots in the Reformation and Luther's reforming career.

As I reflected on this journey I decided that I'm sorry I'm such a slow learner, but I'm also sorry that I didn't get better advice along the way and that there weren't better explanations available that would have helped me orient myself as a college student and as a young faculty member. There are now and I hope they are being utilized. I don't know how much wisdom I have acquired through this journey, but I have reached several conclusions about Lutheran higher education.

Dialectical--or two kingdoms--theology is an indispensable foundation for the educational activity of Lutheran colleges and universities. The victory of the critical tradition of Lutheran education accompanied as it was by dialectical theology was difficult to win in the decades after World War II. The formulations of Lutheran scholasticism and the often aggressive moralism of the pietistic tradition were hard to dislodge. The victory must be maintained. Christ and culture in paradox--in H. Richard Niebuhr's phrase--is a better approach to education than that of any other church group I know.

It is also important to describe our institutions as church-related. It is biblically and theologically correct to do so and it helps avoid utopian

expectations and theological triumphalism. We must continue to make it clear that Lutheran educational institutions are not Bible colleges of the contemporary American sort dominated by one expression or another of fundamentalism.

The liberal arts--or Christian humanism as our colleague Bob Benne has described it--needs to continue to be basic to our enterprise, but professional studies and competence need to be equal partners in what we do. They need to be just as much a part of the reason-faith dialogue as are the traditional liberal arts. Perhaps the New American College model is one we should all learn from. At any rate, the larger question we need to address is the relationship of Christianity to all learning, not just some.

If dialectical theology is basic to how we understand and organize our educational efforts then we must be dialectical. Dialogue must take place between singularity and diversity, the liberal arts and professional studies, teaching and research, mind, body, and spirit, and most importantly, faith and reason.

If these foundational emphases are in place then I believe Lutheran higher education will have identity, integrity, and health. The various articulations can be quite diverse, however, as you can see from the 28 institutions represented here.

## Diversity, Integrity, and Lutheran Colleges

Florence Amamoto

When Arne Selbyg asked me to speak at this conference, he told me, "The theme for this year's conference is diversity . . .," at which point I thought, "Oh, so that's why I've been called." But that thought was stopped short by his concluding phrase: "and integrity." The first definition of integrity that comes to mind for me is "uprightness, adherence to a code of values," but I realized Arne was using integrity in its other meaning: "soundness, completeness, unity"—as became even clearer when the letter announcing the conference came out and the title had been refined to "Integrity and Fragmentation: Can the Lutheran Center Hold?" Diversity and integrity were here being opposed whereas I had been thinking of diversity and the integrity of church-related colleges, especially Lutheran church-related colleges, as being intimately connected as will become clear later in this talk.

First, a caveat: Maybe this is my literature background coming out, but I cannot help but be struck by how different this issue looks when you are inside or outside the tradition, which also made me think about how different this issue looks when you are at a college with 60% Lutherans or at a college with 4% or 20% Lutherans. I also realize that I am a sort of "inside outsider" at Gustavus and at these gatherings. I have long been interested in religion, and having grown up a sansei (third generation Japanese-American) Buddhist in California, I have spent many years thinking about the similarities between Buddhism and Christianity. One of my most vivid grammar school memories is anxiously worrying about whether I should say "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance and wondering what would happen to me if I did—or didn't. In addition, my form of Buddhism, Jodo Shin Shu Buddhism, is often called the most "Protestant" of all the branches of Buddhism and, in fact, as I've come to realize, it is very similar to

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Lutheranism in its theology. Given this background, I am probably more comfortable at daily chapel than our Christian African-American students. Although I have talked to a number of people, Lutheran and non-Lutheran, about these issues over the years, I am well aware that it is my background and my experience at Gustavus Adolphus College that shape my perspective. Still I hope you will find something you can use in these remarks on diversity and integrity.

Actually, Gustavus has not had to think much about "integrity," if you use integrity to mean holding on to its Lutheran identity. The student body is still close to 60% Lutheran, and situated in rural southern Minnesota, it is still surrounded by a concentration of its historical constituency: Scandinavian, especially Swedish, Lutherans. Every year, one of my colleagues wiles away the time at graduation counting the numbers of Andersons, Johnsons, and Petersons in the program. Three years ago, perhaps inspired by Brian Johnson becoming our co-chaplain and Craig Johnson becoming our Director of Church Relations, to begin the year, we had almost a full month of Johnson faculty and staff giving homilies at daily chapel.

The chapel itself is a big, beautiful building in the center of campus. In addition, campus activity stops from 10 to 10:30 for daily chapel. Chapel attendance regularly reaches 250 while 400 bulletins are printed for Wednesday's sung morning praise service—and we often run out. The chapel is also the site of many important college functions—convocations, major speakers, Christmas in Christ Chapel, May Day, Honors Day, and Baccalaureate.

The chaplains at Gustavus have made and promise to continue to make Christ Chapel a vibrant, visible, and welcoming place. Richard Elvee, the chaplain of Gustavus for more than 35 years, has been active in making Christ Chapel an inclusive, ecumenical

space. He credits the legendary president of Gustavus, Edgar Carlson, with telling him that the chapel program should be modeled on the Swedish folk church tradition, that is, it should be the church of the community; Elvee made it so. His wide-ranging intellectual curiosity about cutting-edge ideas has also made him the ideal organizer and spokesperson for our prestigious Nobel Conference and a visible symbol of the interpenetration of the religious and intellectual life on campus. Brian Johnson, an '81 Gustavus grad, who returned to campus three years ago as Elvee's co-chaplain, continues this tradition. A gifted liturgist and musician, he also has a talent for outreach and ministry to the whole college community, but especially to the students. Brian too is interested in ecumenical issues. He spent time teaching in China, participated in an ecumenical dialogue at St. John's Ecumenical Institute, and is currently helping to edit the collection of personal statements which came out of that three year effort. He has written on apologies for the Holocaust by church bodies and has taught a First-term Seminar on Biblical stories and their contemporary reflections, in his own way, visibly perpetuating the intersection of the academic and religious. The chapel program is in good hands.

Now, you may be having Gustavus-envy, but there is a downside, I think, to all of this good news. And the downside is this: because of our majority population and strong chapel program, I'm not sure Gustavus has had to think seriously about the question Tom Christenson used to start his keynote address at last year's Vocations Conference on Christian freedom: What is Lutheran about Lutheran higher education? I do not want to minimize the value of having a majority of Lutheran students nor do I want to minimize the importance of having a vibrant, welcoming, and attractive chapel program that makes visible the religious element of the college, thus influencing the ethos and atmosphere of the place. But I agree with Tom that a Lutheran college is on shaky ground if these two elements are the only or essential ways they define their Lutheranness. So if numbers and chapel programs do not make a Lutheran college Lutheran, what does? Christenson argued:

"What makes our institutions Lutheran is a vision of the educational task itself that is informed by a tradition of theological themes or principles as well as embodied in practice . . . . We are Lutheran by means of our educational vision, a theologically informed orientation that manifests itself in what we do as we learn and teach together and our understanding of why we do it . . . . [But] this common theological orientation may not be so obvious to us, who are part of this tradition." (4) I think it is precisely the fact that theological foundation is not visible, perhaps not conscious, that people focus on things like percentage of Lutheran students or faculty or the strength or visibility of the chapel program, and why people worry about Lutheran colleges losing their Lutheranness. And well they might. I think this lack of consciousness may be the real threat to Lutheran institutions losing their Lutheranness as they become more diverse. However, like Tom, I would argue that Lutheranism is lucky, that, in fact, diversity and integrity do go together in Lutheran higher education, perhaps in a way unmatched by other church-related colleges. The rest of this talk will be an exploration of the way they do.

Another way to approach the idea of integrity is to ask what our colleges need to do, teach, or embody, to provide a truly excellent education for our students? There are many elements we could point to, including spiritual and moral development, but I think exposure to diversity must also be one of them.

Social psychologists have found that diversity benefits all students, not just minorities. As psychologist Patricia Gurin notes, college is often the student's "first sustained exposure to an environment other than their home communities"(15). Students learn more and think in deeper, more complex ways in a diverse educational environment because they are confronted by different life experiences, values, and frameworks which not only prompts learning about another's point of view but also increases awareness of their own and critical thinking about both. This is especially important because as Sylvia Hurtado, associate professor of Education at Michigan noted,

segregation in public schools is increasing, and this segregated education means students enter college “with distinct perspectives about the world, hold stereotypical views of different groups, and lack experience interacting with diverse peers”(27). Longitudinal studies have found that encountering diversity in college not only leads to increased cultural awareness, openness to different perspectives and more complex thinking, but is also linked to increased long-term social and civic development (Hurtado 27-28).

As Martha Nussbaum argues in her brilliant *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, the purpose of a liberal education is to encourage students to think critically about their lives and society so they can free themselves from traditions to live more thoughtful, conscious, and moral lives.

As Nussbaum points out, authorities and elders since the time of Socrates have always feared that this learning would lead to rejection of one’s tradition (18). But I have found that this is not true. A Jewish colleague noted in a homily last semester that she had never been more Jewish than since she’s come to Gustavus. In fact, she went to Israel this summer. (And, as chance would have it, I also had the opportunity to go to Japan for the first time this summer. With cheap fares to Norway as well, this has been a real “Roots” summer at Gustavus.) I have never been more Buddhist. Being at Gustavus has prompted me to become more knowledgeable and articulate about my own religion. Ironically, going to daily chapel allows me to practice my religion--with its lack of emphasis on liturgical practice and its emphasis on gratitude, faith, and mindfulness--in a regular way which I had not done since leaving for college. Discussions with Christian friends have deepened my knowledge of their religion, my own religion, and their many similarities, and they have prompted some thinking about the significance of some of the differences. I know they have done the same for my Christian friends. The “mature Christian understanding” and commitment many of our colleges articulate as a goal in their mission statements are more likely to come, I think, not

only in an environment where religious matters are discussed and taken seriously, but also where different systems can prompt broader, deeper, and more complex thought about faith, God, and the purpose of life.

If we want to advertise that we prepare students to take their place in our society and the world, again integrity dictates we pay attention to diversity. Economics and communications systems as well as politics--perhaps even more than politics--have made us very much part of an interconnected global village. But “the global marketplace isn’t just ‘over there.’ It’s right here,” notes Anthony P. Carnevale, in “Diversity in Higher Education Why Corporate American Cares.” He goes on to note that “by 2025, the additional 72 million members of the US population will include 32 million Latinos, 12 million African-Americans, and 7 million Asians” (1).

Carnevale argues that corporate America cares because diversity is good for business. Diversity is especially important for companies that do business overseas. Obviously some minorities are multilingual and many understand their heritage culture. Less obviously, Carnevale notes, “Employees with different values, cultures, and religious beliefs are more likely to appreciate the need to tailor products or sales approaches to foreign customers” (6). Even less obviously but more importantly, Carnevale points to research that shows that “organizations employing diverse work groups tend to be more innovative and flexible by nature,” that diversity “stimulated creativity among all the members [of a workteam] by forcing reexamination of basic assumptions and encouraging more open and frank dialogue,” and “prevented companies from sliding into ‘group think’ and from unwittingly offending potential customers or overlooking market opportunities” (6).

Carnevale ends his article by arguing: “So improving diversity on campus and in the workforce is not just a “nice” social and political goal. It is a necessity—for both social and economic reasons—that must be conveyed to elected leaders and the general public. In the twenty-first century,

the United States is well positioned to continue as the world's preeminent economy, with diversity giving us a unique advantage. To maintain our competitive edge, corporate America needs employees that are increasingly creative and agile. To meet the need, we require a pool of diverse workers with college educations to match" (6).

That last line arises from his observation that although minority enrollment in colleges has increased, it is still not proportionate to the population. America is still not the land of equal opportunity. Although Carnevale focuses on the business world, I agree that improving diversity on campus is a necessity for social as well as economic reasons. W.E. B. DuBois argued at the beginning of the twentieth century that "the problem of the color line would be the problem of the twentieth century." As the deaths of Matthew Shepherd and Isaiah Shoels make clear, discrimination still mars our landscape. Carnevale notes, like Gurin, that "students that are taught in schools with diverse faculties and with diverse students bodies become better critical thinkers, better problem solvers, better communicators, and better team players" (6), qualities he sees as making them more employable and valuable workers. But I would argue that these qualities also potentially make them better citizens, better contributors to a democracy, especially when those qualities are married to what I call an ethical imagination.

This points to what I think makes church-related colleges especially important for the twenty-first century. Many of the problems facing this country and the world—race relations, institutional racism, the environment, the widening gap between haves and have nots both here and abroad—are ethical or moral problems. Even science and technology which we have relied on for so long to provide solutions now raise ethical questions of their own. Where is a student more likely to be encouraged to see and think about the ethnical dimensions of their personal, career, and civic choices than at a church-related college?

And among all the major Christian denominations, Lutheranism, I think, is particularly well placed not

only to embrace the cultural pluralism that is so characteristic of our nation and important for our future, but also to put its support of pluralism in a theological frame. As Richard Hughes explains in his introduction to *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-first Century*:

"Lutherans insist that the Christian lives simultaneously and inevitably in two kingdoms—the kingdom of this world (nature) and the kingdom of God (grace). . . . Lutheranism acknowledges the world as it is—deformed and estranged from God—is nonetheless God's creation and therefore worthy of study and understanding on its own terms. . . . The task of the Christian scholar . . . is not to impose on the world—or on the material he or she studies—a distinctly "Christian worldview." Rather, the Christian scholar's task is to study the world as it is and then to bring that world into dialogue with the Christian vision of redemption and grace. This theological vision is the great strength of Lutheran higher education for it enables Lutherans to take religious and cultural pluralism with a seriousness that often escapes other Christian traditions" (7).

The reason Luther's paradox of the two kingdoms is so supportive of pluralism (and the life of the mind), Hughes explains in more detail in "Our Place in Church-related Higher Education in the United States," an expanded version of a talk he gave at the 1997 Vocations conference (and elsewhere including Gustavus), is not only that we live in both kingdoms simultaneously but God lives in both. To quote Hughes, "In Luther's vision, God employs the finite dimensions of the natural world as vehicles which convey his grace to human beings. As Luther often affirmed *finitum capax infiniti* or, the finite is the bearer of the infinite" (8). But this fosters genuine conversation because of Luther's insistence on human finitude. The understanding that one's knowledge is always fragmentary and incomplete leads to the impossibility of Lutherans absolutizing their perspectives and the need for constant critical rethinking of their own ideas—and to be in dialogue with others. As Richard Solberg in his article in Hughes' *Models* notes:

"All people, both believers and unbelievers, are members of God's secular kingdom and serve as His

agents in ordering and governing it. . . . In the fulfillment of their roles as citizens and servants, entrepreneurs, professionals, or peasants, [Christians] are free to join hands with anyone, Christian or not, who desires to improve and enrich the human condition. . . . [Education's] purpose, grounded in the Creed's first article, is to foster the capacity to learn, to enhance and enrich people's lives, and to equip students to make human society what God intends it to be" (76).

Academic freedom, intellectual inquiry into all areas, the welcoming of all in this task of studying the world and improving the human condition—all of this has a base in Lutheran theology. In fact, Hughes ends this article asserting his view that Lutheran colleges and universities occupy a special niche in the world of Christian higher education in the United States because they can claim:

"To offer a first class education where the life of the mind is nurtured, where all questions are taken seriously, where critical thinking is encouraged, and where a diversity of cultures are valued, and that these virtues all grow from deep and profound commitments to the Christian faith." (9)

However, as both Hughes and Solberg point out, none of this is automatic. Hughes points out the twin pitfalls of rigid codification of Lutheran thought as a result of accentuating Lutheran interpretations of the kingdom of God, on one hand, and rampant relativism and secularism, as a result of accentuating the world at the expense of the Kingdom of God, on the other ("Our Place" 9). Solberg asserts that "the most serious critique one could level at Lutheran higher education in America is that it has failed to fulfill the educational challenges implicit in its own theology," resulting in "quietism with respect to social action" and limitations on free inquiry and critical judgment (80).

At Gustavus the combination of free critical intellectual inquiry, religious welcome, and service and its foundation in Lutheranism has been reinforced by the leadership of key Swedish Lutheran figures in our history like Eric Norelius, our founder; Edgar Carlson, legendary president;

and Herbert Chilstrom, trustee as well as first bishop of the then newly formed ELCA. Learning more about Lutheranism in general and Gustavus's history in particular has helped me feel at home there, to identify and love it in ever deepening and informed ways as I could see that my belief in ideals of critical inquiry, diversity, and service were supported both by Lutheranism and Gustavus's heritage, at least as I understood them. And it has allowed me to be more articulate about what Gustavus is and its value to prospective students and their parents to be able to talk about what makes Gustavus distinctive, including its Lutheranism.

But the learning process has been piecemeal, a result of a bit of luck and my own interest. I was a representative to the first of these ELCA Vocations conferences. I can't tell you how relieved I was to learn more about Lutheran theology and to see how much it supported my own beliefs, values, and educational goals. This Conference has been very effective in generating a group of faculty and administrators, Lutheran and non-Lutheran, who are better informed and excited about working on church-relatedness on campus. My learning about Gustavus's Swedish Lutheran heritage had been even more fragmentary, which is one reason I asked Brian Johnson to make a presentation on it as part of the series I set up as a participant in the Rhodes Regional Consultation on the Future of Church-related Colleges this past year. Not surprisingly, it was the best attended session, drawing twice as many students, faculty, and administrators as the other two presentations. This phenomenon was repeated throughout the Rhodes Consultation. People want to know what makes their institution what it is.

I am trying to get Religion professor Garrett Paul who gave a wonderful presentation on Lutheran concepts and higher education and Brian Johnson to write up their Rhodes talks because I feel it is important for new and prospective faculty to get this information—especially because if there is anywhere where diversity is growing quickly at all of our institutions, I suspect it is in the faculty. Certainly at Gustavus, THIS is the place where Gustavus is in danger of losing its "Lutheranness," at least in

numbers. I suspect that most of the new faculty who are not Lutheran come, as I did, with little knowledge of Lutheranism. They are more likely to be familiar with the Puritans if they remember their American history, or Catholicism or Fundamentalism if they watch the news. So religious means restrictive. No wonder they are a little apprehensive about teaching at a church-related college and don't think of going to chapel. I believe that an introduction to Lutheranism and the history of the college and what that means for the life and values of the college can do much to allay new faculty's fears and integrate them into the college community.

This education and integration is important not just for the new faculty but for the college. Although the regular "chapel crowd" at Gustavus includes a group of Lutheran faculty, administration, and staff, half the core comes from other religious traditions—Catholic, Episcopalian, Moravian--and this Buddhist. The homilists come from an even wider range. This diversity keeps the chapel program vital and stimulating; it contributes to the on-going pursuit of truth and spiritual development on campus. The real enemy is less diversity than indifference. Perhaps church-related colleges, as was suggested at the Rhodes Regional Consultation's final meeting, need to be less apologetic about their church-relatedness in hiring. I don't think this necessarily means hiring Lutherans, but I do think it is important for retaining the institution's Lutheranness to have a core of people who are interested in the college's church-relatedness and who can articulate their understanding of its Lutheran heritage.

The Lutheran understanding of the importance of conversation in intellectual and spiritual development not only supports the mission of our colleges but breaks down the problem I had been having with a hospitality model which was prominently mentioned at the Rhodes Consultation's final meeting. Perhaps I should not have been surprised that it was Mark Schwehn who defined hospitality in a way that emphasized the equality and importance of both host and guest, suggesting that it is possible at times for host and

guest to exchange places and that certainly host and guest are equally apt to learn from each other. That equality of host and guest, the blurring of the dichotomy, the belief that both host and guest have something important to say and that conversation and sharing of views is central are particularly Lutheran and not necessarily shared by other Christian denominations, as I know from experience.

This understanding of Lutheran education and the role of diversity in it and its articulation may be particularly important for those colleges where Lutheran students and faculty are a minority and where the chapel program has been weakened--because the danger of fragmentation and the loss of Lutheran identity is very real in such places. This understanding can place diversity in a context that can build community and create more vital, dynamic educational and spiritual development opportunities by actively encouraging dialogue. However, this understanding of Lutheranism, Lutheran education, and educational excellence also challenges schools like Gustavus, where the percentage of minorities is still low, to make diversity a higher priority.

Can a Lutheran center hold at our colleges as the faculty, student body, and society become increasingly diverse? I hope so—it is certainly something worth working for. Increased diversity does create the risk of fragmentation and loss of Lutheran identity. I think it is important to hold on to that Lutheran identity because too often loss of that identity leads to a loss of the spiritual and moral realm which is part of the "value added" of church-related schools. But the Lutheran theology (in addition to educational excellence) that calls us to value diversity also gives us the theological basis to keep diversity and identity in creative tension—and conversation. I have always felt that comparison was an especially good teaching tool. It not only helps us expand our horizons but also sharpens and deepens our understanding of ourselves by making visible what was invisible through familiarity. I realize that this issue of diversity and identity looks different depending on the historical and theological background of the college and the personal

background of the person viewing. But whatever the situation, the issue of identity and diversity raises the possibility for campus discussions that can revitalize, sharpen, and deepen the vision of our identities and missions as Lutheran colleges.

It is my belief that Lutheran colleges have a special contribution to make to the twenty-first century, producing citizens and leaders with the critical understanding of the complexities and paradoxes of life, with a well developed spiritual and moral dimension, and with an appreciation of the limits of any individual's understanding and the value of different points of view. It is often said that schools reflect the society around them. I think the tension created by diversity and church-relatedness in Lutheran colleges has the potential to stimulate the conversations that will help mold the leaders society will need to create a better tomorrow.

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I recently read Andrew Greeley's *Religion as Poetry*. In that book he describes religion as 1) hope renewing experiences, and 2) the ways we have of preserving such experiences in stories, symbols, rituals, images, etc. Reading that triggered in me the following reflection on the question: "Where do I experience hope?" I decided to start a list. What I generated, I discovered, can be read as a list or as a poem. Someone once complained about Walt Whitman, "His poems are just lists." The companion aptly replied, "Yes, but *what lists!*"

### **Things That Renew Hope**

Lovers kissing in the street.

The first snowfall of each year.

Compost, spring sprouts, Jewish humor.

Kids summer mischief.

A mother nursing her baby on the bus.

Small jazz ensembles.

Two old men. One says to the other. "I never liked you, but now I can't remember why."

An unscheduled gift.

People who sing with their whole breath.

Times we can't help but laugh at ourselves.

A teen alienated from her peers.

The blues; "three chords and the truth."

A child taking me by the hand.

Courage - the discovery that there's a death more fearful than the one everybody fears.

Wonder, awe, mystery, parsnips.

The gray-haired man in a dark blue suit I saw crossing a downtown bridge at mid-day who threw his cellular phone in the river.

Bread, wine, goat cheese, a bowl of beans; all life given and shared life received.

Folks who know they have a lot to learn.

**Sig Rauspern/1999**

## The Diversity Dilemma: Dealing with Difference

Kathy Fritz

Last year when I attended the Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference I was struck by the intense ethnic identity of our sister colleges. I'm afraid I had no idea that it was possible to go to the "wrong" Augustana depending on whether one was Swedish or Norwegian in ancestry. I was impressed to learn that events in Scandinavia that occurred hundreds of years ago were still remembered and celebrated in the American Midwest. As a white Southerner I had often been impatient with fellow Southerners who meant only one war by "the war" and that was only 130 years ago. Apparently that's recent by some cultural reckonings.

In the South there are only two main ethnic groups one composed of descendants of Northern Western Europeans who intermarried decades ago to produce the generic White Southerner and the other composed of descendants of African ancestors. At Newberry College there is little sense of the German roots of our college despite a yearly "Founders Day". By 1856, our founding date, there was probably little German identity anyway. Today the sole remnant of the Germany past is the term "Dutch Fork" for the geographic area that includes Newberry. "Dutch" is a corruption of "Deutsche," meaning German, a reminder of the German settlers of the area. Currently ethnic diversity at Newberry consists of varieties of White Protestants, varieties of African-American Protestants and a few Roman Catholics. The college is 83% Caucasian and 16% African-American. Self-identified Lutherans comprise 22% of the student body, exceeded only by Baptists with 29%.

Just as I was impressed by the awareness of ethnic connections last year, I was intrigued by the revelation in a group discussion that California Lutheran, a relatively new college, was busy discovering, if not inventing, "traditions" such as the celebration of St. Lucia. All this evidence of striving for identity, celebrating traditions, etc.

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caused me to reflect on Newberry and its identity. What held its constituencies together? At the time I could only think of one tradition: the yearly battle for the Bronze Derby, a ludicrous trophy (literally an old hat permanently encased in metal) awarded the victor in the annual football game with Presbyterian College, an institution 20 miles up the interstate. Somehow this did not resonate with the spiritual uplift of a St. Olaf or St. Lucia. Nevertheless, if asked what holds us together one quick and maybe even accurate answer might be the football team. After all, on game days it seems that most of the male student population is suited up on the sidelines. I once counted 100 of them and Newberry only has 700 students total. Newberry has the distinction of being the smallest college in the NCAA to participate in football. Of course as one of my irreverent colleagues has noted, it isn't clear to all of us that this is a distinction to be pursued.

This year as I was forced to think seriously for this conference about the issue of the Lutheran core and factors of diversity and fragmentation, we were in fact going through a year of crisis at Newberry. Cultural diversity or differences in ethnic cultural background are not the only sources for fragmentation. Fragmentation can result from differentiation. Differentiation is normally positive specialization of function and role is necessary for institutions. Colleges can't be run entirely by the faculty, much as some would probably want. Colleges need a financial office, student development office, fund-raising office, a president's office. But differentiation requires effective communication among the constituent parts for the whole institution to work smoothly. At Newberry there developed fractures, splits, and divisions. I thought I'd discuss this a little because it seems to me that there must have been some central core beliefs or commitment that unified people through the difficult months. After looking at a brief case history of fragmentation due to differentiation, I will turn to broader issues of ethnic diversity and fragmentation.

## I. The Newberry Year

According to published media reports and accounts of various participants, in October of 1998 the five member executive committee of the Board of Trustees of Newberry College voted unanimously to ask the President of the College to resign. They were concerned about financial issues and management style. The President rallied support and at a special meeting of the full Board he retained his job when 9 of 16 board members voted to endorse him. That meeting took place on Friday before Halloween. The next Monday morning the President fired the Vice President for Academic Affairs and forced the resignations of the Vice President for Business Affairs and the Vice President for Institutional Advancement. That afternoon the President explained to the assembled Chairs of the academic departments that he couldn't trust the vice presidents and that they had violated policy by meeting without his authorization with members of the board of trustees.

As Chair of Faculty Council I invited faculty to an impromptu meeting to discuss events and possibly formulate some response. The reaction of the majority of the faculty seemed to be stunned disbelief. Some were physically ill. The only vice president not fired was the brand new president for Student Development. He had just replaced a Vice President who resigned in the spring. The Vice President for Academic Affairs who was fired had only been in the position since July when the previous Vice President for Academic Affairs "decided to return to teaching." By faculty count there had been a turnover of five vice presidents within six months. With the appointment of an interim VP for Academic Affairs, we were dealing with the third such VP in four months.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees met with the Faculty Council. He told us that after a recent long meeting with the president he hoped issues could be straightened out. The Board appointed committees on finances and management to work with the President. But apparently some factors could not be resolved. Four members of the Board of Trustees, including the Chair and the Treasurer, resigned before the next Board meeting in December.

Through all this depressing and frightening year there was a group of faculty who conferred often and shared concerns. We were from different disciplines and different religious backgrounds. But we shared a vision of the college and what it should be about. The president had tried to portray the Executive Committee action as part of an effort to loosen or break the ties of the college to the ELCA. Board members have denied this and there does not seem to be any evidence that such a change was seriously contemplated. Faculty members, which include ordained ELCA clergy, children and siblings of ELCA clergy, would I'm sure have resisted any such change. Although occasionally some have grumbled about the amount of financial support from the ELCA, faculty members have long supported efforts to heighten the visibility of the college to its supporting synods and urged recruiting students from ELCA congregations. For many faculty the real concerns with the President came from a divergence in vision of the college that had little if anything to do with our Lutheran connections. That was a long running, but low-key difference of opinion about the mission of the college as a liberal arts college. This perceived difference is one that we should have discussed together and perhaps we could have learned from each other. The faculty realizes that the President of a college must worry about the bottom line. The economic realities are that parents DO want to know what their children will get from going to college. They DO ask what can my child do with that major. They DO expect a marketable degree. But the faculty persists in believing that college is preparation for LIFE, not an entry-level job.

This particular split at Newberry is symbolized I think by the new major the President brought with him when he came in 1995. I believe this is related to the theme for this year's conference as well. When the curriculum becomes more diverse in order to attract students to pay the bills, what then becomes of the college's Lutheran identity?

At the President's urging, Newberry added an invented major called Veterinary Technology, becoming the only 4-year institution in the Southeast with such a degree. It turns out there are good reasons for this. The same degree without all

the fuss of 4-year private college tuition and core curriculum courses can be obtained 100 miles away at a 2-year technical college. This year the accrediting team of veterinarians in fact encouraged Newberry to forget this 4-year stuff and just offer the degree in a one-year certificate program. For faculty who like to think they're engaged in the life of the mind and preparing students for graduate work, this smacked entirely too much of technical school.

Yet, in writing this paper and reflecting on the faculty distaste for "vet tech" and other attempts that the faculty see as the slippery slope toward turning Newberry into a "technical school," I come up against the notion that after all "vocation" is such a key Lutheran concept. Why isn't it valuable to prepare students to help God's creatures by training them to be veterinary assistants? Does it matter that the same course of study is apparently available via correspondence according to a recent cable TV ad? Should a college pick and choose which vocations are more worthy of a liberal arts education? Here's maybe where a discussion of what a Lutheran college is about and how it differs from a Lutheran technical school should occur.

At any rate I found myself consulting Pam Jolicoeur's paper from last year's conference, reprinted in the winter 1999 issue of *Intersections*. She noted, "I think that Lutheran colleges should be vocational schools in both senses of the word. On the one hand, we must prepare students for meaningful work and not eschew that effort as something that is beneath us, as liberal arts colleges, or is someone else's job. (as well) Lutheran colleges should instill in students a sense that they have an obligation to make a meaningful contribution to the world around them." (24)

This seems to have wandered pretty far afield. But it comes around again to what holds faculty or other constituencies together. I think in the case of Newberry College it was our abiding concern for students, for educating in the "liberating arts" as Tom Christenson puts it. But I also came to realize from my conversations with staff, with board members, with students, that there are several constituencies in a college. They each have their

special role, but they must work together, and they all must have the mission of the college as their goal the mission of preparing students for service to the world.

In April the President announced that he would be retiring early, on June 1. A long and difficult academic year ended with public good manners. The epistle for the baccalaureate service I found particularly appropriate. St. Paul understood differentiation and the need for unity. From I Corinthians, chapter 12:

"For just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body Jews or Greeks, slaves or free and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so adjusted the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." (12-26)

I don't think I can improve on Paul. This seems to be the prescription for a healthy institution no

matter what it is. It celebrates differences but they all work together for a single purpose. It means to me in this case that a college is not the president, it is not the faculty, it is not the board, or the students, or the alumni, or the big donors...it is all those members of the body.

## II Ethnic/Cultural Diversity and Identity

Sociologists usually encounter concern with ethnic diversity in terms of pluralism and conflict and how to reduce inter-group conflict, how to produce inter-group co-operation. In adapting this concern to the conference theme, I envision it as how to maintain a cohesive college in times of increasing diversity.

Ernest Simmons in his book *Lutheran Higher Education* affirms the value of diversity. "The Lutheran model of higher education affirms the importance of diversity and the need to dialogue with multiple points of view. This means that all people are important and contribute to the character of a community of inquiry." (8) He continues, "Diversity within the bounds of a common commitment to connecting faith and learning is not only desirable but sought out, for it can yield creative adaptations that assist mutual survival." (8)

This stress on the positive aspects of diversity is sorely needed in a year that saw people slaughtered for their differences. In Kosovo the celebration of ethnic identity has meant centuries of killings, revenge, retaliation. At Columbine High School the formation of cliques, of in-groups and out-groups, resulted in another tragic pattern of retaliation.

The fact is that humans do choose to spend more time with people with whom they feel comfortable. People generally choose friends on the basis of similar interests and ease of interaction. Ease of interaction is of course facilitated by sharing a common language, a large base of shared knowledge, and shared values. It is in fact difficult to enjoy the company of someone who disagrees with us on what we consider to be vital issues. It is "nice" to encourage dialogue and dialectic but outside the classroom it is awkward and unlikely. High schools, colleges, and work places will always produce cliques groups of like-minded individuals.

Migration patterns, marriage and breeding patterns, geographic boundaries have produced a world population that is diverse in physical appearance, religious and cultural practices. The question is how to maintain cooperation and harmony among diverse groups, whatever the basis for the group formation.

It seems to me that there are three basic ways to approach this dilemma of diversity and integrity. One came to me as I sat on my back deck observing the diversity of wildlife in the backyard.

### Approach One: Feed Them All To Reduce Conflict

Our bird feeders attract chickadees, cardinals, titmice, painted buntings and blue jays but also squirrels and raccoons. I used to see my mission as feeding the birds and protecting them from the predatory raids of the larger animals. But lately I've adopted a different strategy. Watching different kinds of birds and the individual squirrels and raccoons I noted the obvious application of a sociological proposition. There are different groups in our backyard and they all want the same scarce resource; sunflower seeds. In human groups and animals competition for the same resource leads to conflict, and if there is a power differential, like physical size, the more powerful will dominate the less powerful, limit access to the desired goodies, and discriminate against the less powerful. But an important variable in this theory of ethnic hierarchy (adapted from Donald Noel) is the competition for scarce and valuable resources. If everyone does not want the same thing or it is not scarce, this should reduce or eliminate competition, conflict and perhaps discrimination. So, in my backyard universe, I adopted a policy of simply "feed them all." I try to provide enough sunflower seeds for all the animals. This has reduced my stress level and resulted in lots of fat birds and tubby squirrels.

One approach then to diversity, if the aim is to reduce conflict, while maintaining diversity, is to feed everyone or in more elegant phrasing nourish everyone. In the college example this would mean providing everyone with a good substantial liberal arts diet. Surely among the reasons our students

choose small church-related colleges is the close and nourishing attention of dedicated faculty who provide stimulating food for thought and the basis for a meaningful post-college life.

Before this metaphor gives us all indigestion, however, I have to point out that providing enough for everyone or even meeting everyone's demands, needs, desires really only reduces conflict. It does not produce co-operation or integrity out of fragmentation. For that I'd like to turn to another sociological/social psychological proposition: to reduce prejudice and discrimination, research has indicated that the most effective method is to bring individuals together, on an equal basis, to work together to reach a common goal (See for instance studies cited by John E. Farley in *Majority-Minority Relations* 37-41).

### **Approach Two: Use The 3 A's To Reduce Differences**

Coming together for a common purpose, or at least, a common shared experience, can be met in several ways at the Lutheran College. For students, surviving the core curriculum together, working on group research together for a class presentation, doing service learning and sharing the experience in reflections sessions should all result in more understanding of the essential things students all have in common. Working together as equals reduces stereotypes, makes us aware of our common humanity. College campuses in fact are the ideal labs for inter-group cooperation working together as an athletic team, sharing the intensity of one's academic major, relying on the artistic talents of others to produce a successful musical or theatrical performance. These three A's--academics, athletics, and the arts--all bring people together for a common purpose or interest. Ethnic background is not relevant to the task at hand. Achievement and ability are.

Note that in this approach the intent is to reduce differences. This approach seeks common ground. Rather than an emphasis on respecting, recognizing, and encouraging cultural, religious and ethnic differences, it tries to create a common identity: a

college athlete, a college student, a college alumnus.

This focus on the common or the community is not really the current politically correct ideology. The current ideology seems to be "cultural diversity" recognition of groups, protection of heritage, pride in ancestry, etc. This is of course an important and necessary corrective to counter the historical and global myopia of evaluating other's culture in light of one's own. It recognizes the value and validity of other cultures and aims at according equality to others.

But this philosophy, which sociologists call "pluralism", has within it potential problems, which I have already mentioned. The pluralist ideal is a society where separate groups are maintained as a source of identity and pride but all the groups are equal in access to economic, political and social rewards. However, the effort to maintain separate groups requires reduced interaction with those outside the in-group and this separatism fosters stereotypes, prejudices, and ultimately perhaps hostility.

A few societies have consciously adopted an official policy of pluralism with constitutions that recognized different religious and language groups. Ironically, when I began teaching race and ethnic relations some 25 years ago the two "successful" examples of pluralism that were cited were Lebanon and Yugoslavia. Today there are none.

Adalberto Aguirre, Jr. and Jonathan H. Turner make this point strongly in their book on *American Ethnicity*. "Some celebrate ethnic diversity, but it should be noted that no large-scale society with highly diverse and entrenched ethnic sub-populations has been stable." (224) They cite a list that includes Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland, hostilities in the Middle East, tensions between Indians and Pakistanis to "illustrate that when ethnicity runs deep, conflict becomes intense." (224) Aguirre and Turner claim that "ethnic pluralism must revolve around relatively weak ethnic identification or otherwise it becomes a focal point for social disintegration." (224).

In speaking of the U.S. they raise the issue of some middle way between diversity on the one hand and rigid conformity to the Anglo cultural core on the other. No society, they claim, has "remained integrated when ethnic identifications are strong, the cultural core has eroded and ethnic conflicts are frequent." (225) A possible solution they propose is to incorporate new elements into the cultural core, elements from the diverse groups that compose the American population. A unique American cultural core combined with strong anti-discrimination laws might provide the basis for a stable society that tolerates some weak ethnic identification.

Although intense ethnic identification and diversity have led to fragmentation and tragedy, some degree of ethnic identification and pluralism are facts of life in the U.S. This has been true throughout our history and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

### **Approach Three: Recognize and Benefit From Diversity**

The third approach I suggest is to welcome diversity in some respects to maintain and benefit from diversity. This is akin to the college model advocated by Simmons, i.e. "an open and free exchange of perspectives" (70) Indeed he later claims that the "need for multiple voices of discourse and exchange is a hallmark of the Lutheran dialectic" (77) (emphasis added)

This approach celebrates diversity not out of some vague "feel good" idea that "variety is good" but because it has positive and verifiable benefits. The workplace we're told is welcoming diversity as a positive thing and they're right. People from different backgrounds bring different perspectives to bear after all that's the model for this conference each year. The hope is that our thinking will jump out of its rut and produce creative and novel ideas.

An optimistic perspective on the increasing emphasis on pluralism in the U.S. is offered by John Farley in his text on racial and ethnic minorities. He claims that there is "growing evidence that over

the long run a more diverse work group is more effective, because it can offer a wider variety of ideas and ways of dealing with issues and problems and because it can often better address the needs of an equally diverse base of potential customers and clients." (415) This seems to be one of those sociology as common sense ideas that so bedevils my field. However although this may be intuitively obvious to some, it is just as intuitively obvious to others that people from different backgrounds would NOT be able to work together. So let's look at some research.

Farley cites findings by Watson, Kumar, and Michaelsen that compared homogeneous work groups with diverse work groups. They found that the diverse groups had more trouble working together initially but as time went on they became more productive than the homogeneous groups. According to the researchers, the diverse groups were more successful because they were better at *considering different viewpoints* and coming up with possible responses. (415) (emphasis added)

I find this research very encouraging. It returns to where I started people are more comfortable with people they think are similar. This makes for easy interaction at first with people who are similar and more difficult interaction with people who perceive each other as different. But with effort, people can find common ground to make interaction work. And in working and cooperating on a common task, they overcome initial misunderstanding and stereotypes. Best of all, their diversity ultimately is positive it produces more flexibility, more options, more ways of looking at a problem.

This suggests that Simmons may be correct when he claims that "diversity can yield creative adaptations that assist mutual survival." (8) The commitment of our Lutheran colleges to creating community out of diversity while welcoming the contributions of all our constituencies is a complex task. But the alternatives would seem to be stagnation on the one hand and conflict on the other. The Lutheran center that holds is the emphasis on open dialogue. Beyond that, my nomination for a central purpose to unite students, faculty and staff is the belief that we

are all preparing the next generation for service to the world.

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## A View From the Other Side

Daiseybelle Thomas-Quinney

This presentation comes from the perspective of a non-Lutheran, and an outsider and novice to the Lutheran community. So it will be colored with my "otherness."

Before 1995, I had heard of the Lutheran Church and its traditional theology, but was not sure what its center or "heart" was. What was and is the Lutheran center raised two distinct questions: (1) Is the contemporary Lutheran center different, or is it the same as at inception? (2) If it is the same, why does the theme imply fragmentation?

After many interviews, reading, and writing this paper, there are still many questions in my mind about what the Lutheran center is supposed to be. It has not been clearly articulated in theory or demonstrated in practice at the church-related school where I am currently employed.

What is the center or "heart" of Thiel College? This is a question that our community is still trying to answer. How do we really promote the "heart" of what we do? We are a long way from consensus. Once we learn how to live out our mission statement in visible ways, the center of the Lutheran tradition can be celebrated by all those who work, learn, and grow in our institutions. It is declared in St. Matthew 6:21: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart (center) be also."

In this presentation, I will talk about the difficulty experienced trying to understand what the Lutheran center is, and thus its integrity and fragmentation. I will share some personal experiences, the historical perspective of Thiel College, theological foundations of the Lutheran tradition, and conclude with some commentary on inclusiveness and diversity. The reality of my presence here today is connected to a long line of predecessors on whose backs I stand, for they bridged this gap for me. The rich oral history -- one of storytelling. I am a

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storyteller.

Now, I believe what will be helpful to begin my presentation is to briefly share with you my story of how I came to be a part of this rich Lutheran tradition: After graduating from a Presbyterian seminary in 1994, as an ordained minister of the Church of God, I found myself in the marketplace seeking employment. I responded to a job announcement for the position of Adjunct Professor in the Department of Religion at Thiel College in Greenville, Pennsylvania. It was the spring semester in 1995. I was hired. In retrospect, I can truly say that those early days at Thiel College were some of the most bittersweet days of my teaching career.

Those days were characterized as bittersweet because I worked alone, isolated from the community. The library staff graciously offered me a quiet place to hang my hat and coat. Among the books in the library archives, I sat down to contemplate about my new job, the students, and this community. What was God saying to me in this "chilly" environment?

In the 1960s, I attended a small church-related college, as a first generation student. That was the era of mandatory chapel attendance, a strong moral and ethical ethos and constant God-talk around the campus.

In my naivete, I looked for some of the same characteristics at Thiel College. That kind of philosophy was not a priority at Thiel. Even with the best efforts, the campus pastor found it difficult to arouse an interest in faculty or students for attendance at regular Sunday worship or the special holiday worship services. This was a church-related school? What specifically distinguished Thiel College from a non-Christian college? I wanted to know.

In the midst of that isolation, there was tremendous opportunity for ministry. That made it sweet!

Upon arriving, I was introduced to my department colleagues. There were no efforts made to introduce me to others in the community. There was no discussion about the Lutheran legacy during my brief orientation. This is not offered as a criticism, but highlights the nature of the adjunct status at most educational institutions. I didn't have any sense of what the rest of the community was like. I was greeted by some with a polite "hello;" by others with a stare. I was the new novelty on campus. My job was to teach a required course in Judeo-Christian Scriptures for that semester.

I had read the college catalog and the mission statement. What I saw in my new surroundings was not congruent with the mission statement.

With the exception of one African American female secretary and one Hispanic professor, there were no other persons of color on the faculty, staff, or administration at Thiel College in 1995.

On the first day of class, just as I was taking my coat off, I heard an unusual bustling sound in the hallway. Out of curiosity, I moved closer to the door to see what was going on. A group of about 15 African American students rushed into the room and surrounded me. The group's spokesperson explained their presence and excitement: "We came here to welcome you. Now, we have somebody here to help us." This unexpected welcome raised several critical questions in my mind. What did these students mean "Somebody here to help up?" It didn't take long for me to find out. Several of the students began to relate problems about the college and told me they were transferring because of the hostile environment. There were few accommodations for these minority students, both at the college or in the surrounding town. The bottom line: the students were depressed, isolated, and let to fend for themselves the best way they could. How could an institution, in the 20th century, recruit these minority students without any representation in administration, faculty or staff?

After several weeks, I conferred with the registrar and learned that there was an enrollment of 38 African American students, most of them males

who were involved in the school's athletic program. Further investigation into their academic standing and conversations with these students revealed that most of them were unprepared for the rigors of college. There were many warning signs that pointed to their failure.

- A hostile environment that had not prepared itself to receive, accept, or nurture these minority students after recruiting them.
- These minority students were recruited for their athletic ability, without serious consideration of their academic deficits.
- The absence of a diverse faculty and administration who could understand the cultural differences these minority students now faced.

"Education is sometimes narrowly conceived to apply to the education of the ind. Thus, colleges and universities typically and appropriately emphasize classroom experiences, teaching, texts, courses, libraries, and the like. Though this constitutes one facet of education, emphasis on this dimension of the education process to the neglect of other factors, can lead a college to cultivate intellectual giants and moral and social dwarfs. Much more goes on at college than the education of mind. Indeed, were students' education measured in increments of time, the business of formal education would not predominate. Learning occurs in the dorm, in the athletic center or on the field, in the music and drama presentations, in the work experience in the community, according to Dr. Rexchenbach in this article, "Mission and Hiring Policies in the Christian College (p. 13 *Intersections/Summer 1997*).

In his scholarly article, "The Wisdom of the True University," Dr. Samuel Hazo made this suggestion: "What students ought to come to a university (college) to experience are what permits them to do better than what they consider their best, which is all that excellence means" (p. 30).

### **The Rich Historical Roots of Thiel College**

To understand the Lutheran center, the history of this institution had to be examined. From the

famous movie "The Sound of Music comes the wisdom: "Let's start at the very beginning."

As an employee of Thiel College, I had not one serious consideration to the historical specifics of the College. However, in preparation for this presentation, it became necessary for me to do some historical research. Thiel College is one of the 28 ECLA colleges and universities in North America. Thiel College was founded in Greenville, Pennsylvania by a German pioneer who came to the western part of the state in the 19th Century.

From its inception, Thiel College has been church-related, with a Bible-based curriculum, which sought to develop the Christian life of the rapidly changing Lutheran population. It has always been a co-educational college; four women were among the first eight graduates in 1875. However, in its evolution the vision of the Lutheran tradition was not nurtured or clearly articulated, a problem that still plagues the college.

Throughout its history, Thiel College has worked to preserve its liberal arts tradition, based on the whole person through extra-curricula programs. Early academic preparation required freshmen students to have a thorough preparation in English, mathematics, German, Latin, and Greek. The College concentrated on classical subjects and later included Bible study, history, and moral philosophy. Seniors added Hebrew and French. By 1880, a Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees were offered (Thiel College Profiles '96, p. 2).

Thiel College has always received strong support from the Lutheran Synod as a church-related, liberal arts college.

### **A Church-Related College**

Thiel College is a church-related college, not a Christian college. What does this really mean? I was hard pressed to find information on the Lutheran tradition or specifics in the college's mission statement. After interviewing the campus pastor, religion department chairperson, and the

director of church relations, I learned that in the Lutheran related colleges and universities, the college president, the campus pastor, and some of the trustees and faculty must come from the Lutheran faith tradition. There are not required church-related activities for students. Instead of requiring its students to attend church services, the Lutheran tradition is open to biblical interpretation and exploration of the history of Scriptures. As such, one must examine how faith and learning takes place at the college. I have difficulty understanding how a college could be related to a Christian tradition without being Christian? A lack of clarity of these differences by students, some faculty and especially the non-Lutheran constituency, has directly impacted and will continue to fragmentize the Lutheran center. Looking for the Lutheran center is a bit like the parable Jesus told in St. Matthew 13:31-33: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the large of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches." He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough" (New International Version).

In my quest to understand the difference between a Lutheran church-related college and Christian colleges, I explored the theological constructs of "Two Kingdoms" and observed specific details about the educational life of the institution.

The "Right Hand Kingdom" in Lutheran traditional thinking asserts that their faith is visible in concessions, such as the Augsburg Confession. Article 4 of the Confession reminds the Lutheran that he/she is made right with the Creator through justification by faith, not by good works. It is God's action in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, on the cross, and through the forgiveness of sin. We cannot earn God's grace; it is a gift, freely given. That is confessional faith and the theological understanding of the "Right Hand Kingdom."

The "Left Hand Kingdom," in Lutheran traditional

theology is personal involvement in the structure and order of society as active participants in politics, family, church, and school. In the "Left Hand Kingdom," education is the work of God. The integrity of the educational institution is revealed through its openness to the issues of life. The curriculum is composed of courses that support theological reflections, exposure to other faith traditions, western culture, and global heritage.

Dr. Samuel Hazo supports this "Right Hand Kingdom" perspective by stating, "Finally, a true university should maintain and preserve a hierarchy of studies. In the church-related universities (colleges) this means a respect for theology as the queen of all studies" (p. 31). Dr. Hazo cautioned church-related institutions to guard against becoming like corporations. In striving to become like a corporation, a university or a college will turn to cost effective courses which become considered as a product. When this transition occurs, we no longer educate--but that has been known, though, and taught in this culture. We simply prepare students for serving in the system. The survival of the academy must not be relegated to cost effective curriculum.

I believe the mission statement can serve as the agent that helps us locate and identify areas of wholeness and areas of fragmentation. Colleges and universities must be willing to acknowledge, name, and critically examine all the areas of student life, personnel, curriculum, resources and vision that are detached from the mission statement. Here is a case in point, as my story continues:

Thiel College's mission is to develop through exemplary education all aspects of the human character--the intellectual, the personal, the moral, and the religious--so that lives inspired by the truth and freedom may be committed to service in the world.

Where was this "exemplary education" in regards to those students, minority and others, in the athletic program with leaning deficits?

My initial observation suggested that these ill-prepared athletic recruits would have difficulty

competing at the same intellectual levels as many of their peers, some of whom were members of academic honor societies and had established themselves as leaders. How could those participating in the athletic program give the required attention and yet keep up with the expected academic rigors of the College? What was the rationale for recruiting this caliber of student? Was it to develop a winning sports team at the cost of academic bankruptcy? Many of the students were barely able to read. This deficit should not have been overlooked when reviewing high school performance records. Was this exemplary education or a "set up" where these students would eventually fail? The mission statement should guide every facet of what we do, how we do our work, and with whom we do our work.

I refer to the explicit claim of Dr. Bruce R. Reichenbach in his article regarding Mission and Hiring Practices in Christian Colleges: "In effect, in defining the purpose of the college as educating the whole person, focus must be placed on every dimension of student life. Hence, the entire college community should be knowledgeably committed to the college's mission as the college attempts in its diverse educational role to assist students in their education" (p. 13). Thiel College was very fragmented in its diversity of "exemplary education" to the total person, in the case of the minority athletic recruits. This very recruiting process created a major retention issue for the College. These students could not compete at the required academic level because of poor preparation. Many were later dismissed or placed on academic probation; others transferred because of what they felt was a lack of support from the faculty and administration.

The faculty was not diverse. The "chilly" environment did not leave these students with alternatives when experiencing difficulty with college life. In her book, "Coloring the Halls of Ivy," Dr. Josephine D. Davis asserts that "Minority administrators play monumental roles in making 'chilly' campus climates more welcoming to students of color. This fact, however, is hardly known and rarely celebrated" (p. 4). I would like to

add that the majority student population also benefits as well from the presence of minority faculty, staff, and administrators.

To illustrate this point, listen to Tom's story. The first semester, my second day on the job, one of the students enrolled in the course I was teaching, came and stood face to face with me. He stared at me from head to feet, then with a disdainful look said, "So, you are the new professor, huh?" "Yes, I am," was my polite response. "Well, I'm not staying. Please sign my registration card so I can withdraw from this class." I granted his request, and as he walked down the hallway it became clear where I had seen and experienced this kind of arrogance before. It was my native Alabama, a segregated state, where racial hatred runs deep like rivers.

During Tom's next three years on campus, I had several opportunities to assist him with problems as well as affirm his progress. In the spring of his senior year at Thiel College, he enrolled in my class, "The African American Worship Experience." Early in the class, each student was asked about their expectations from the course. Tom stated, "I want to learn as much as I can about African American because you are so nice." As you can see from Tom's story, students from the majority population are helped as well as the minorities from faculty of color.

In his discussion on implementing the college's mission, Dr. Reichenbach stated, "If this assessment of education is correct, then the college's mission should inform all aspects of the college's educational endeavors. Its implementation should occur at all levels of college life, to create a particular kind of community. The same holds true for the Christian dimension of church-related colleges' mission statements" (p. 13).

The defining purpose of our institutions should be to educate the whole person, thus encompassing every dimension of a student's life. I believe Tom learned a lot about acceptance, respect, and tolerance from me prior to his enrollment in my class during his last semester at Thiel College.

## **Inclusiveness and Diversity in the Lutheran Tradition**

Given the mission of the Lutheran church-related college and the reality of how it is implemented suggests a major weakness in the Lutheran tradition with regards to inclusiveness and diversity. While cleaning out my desk drawer at Thiel College, I came across a manual for colleges written by the Lutheran Churches of America in 1985. In the book "Inclusiveness and Diversity: Gifts of God" there is a section about commitments of diversity and inclusiveness with simple goals and strategies which apply to colleges and universities. Part of the notion of diversity and inclusiveness was from the traditional mission statement which implied acceptance, respect, tolerance, and yes, hospitality as part of the Lutheran witness to and in the world.

In his instructions on inclusiveness, the presiding Bishop James R. Crumbly advises: "We strive to be a more inclusive community because we believe it is to be God's will and command. To be faithful in carrying out God's mission in a pluralistic society such as ours, we should increasingly reflect in our membership people of all races" (p. 1).

"The colleges and universities related to the Lutheran Church in America, as one expression of the missions of that church, are committed to becoming inclusive communities. Each community needs to be diligent in making this call to inclusiveness and the celebration of diversity of its own" (p. 6). The integrity of the Lutheran church and related colleges and universities must work to apply the wisdom of that document.

National polls reveal strong public support for diversity in higher education, according to Diversity Digest, Fall 1998. Across all demographic groups, American voters support diversity causes and programs and can observe the educational benefits of a diverse campus and classrooms. An added benefit of diverse education is that it allows the learning of critical skills, including: communicating with those from differing backgrounds, teamwork, and problem solving.

To help chart a new course in inclusiveness and diversity on our campuses, researchers have recommended a comprehensive organizational change--in both attitude and structure. To achieve campus cultures that are truly inclusive, institutions must emphasize cooperation, collaboration, community, and establish institutional rewards for contributing to collaboration and community-building activities.

Restructuring of college campuses, for full inclusiveness, required making a real commitment to implementing cultural diversity. This commitment will mean changing the ways in which administrative and faculty searches are conducted; seeking innovative ways in which newly hired, minority faculty will be integrated into the existing system; establishing a network of advising personnel; providing an effective distribution of

resources for minority students.

In conclusion, the theme for this 1999 conference "Integrity and Fragmentation: Can the Lutheran Center Hold" is pregnant with possibilities and fraught with problems. If we define integrity as wholeness and fragmentation as detachment from the whole, I submit that the Lutheran center cannot hold as is, but has great possibility when its mission statement is followed.

The alternative to defragmentizing the Lutheran center as stated by Dr. Josephine D. Davis will happen when "Coloring the Halls of Ivy" includes the courage to lead!". When our identity and mission is clear, it will be easier to restore integrity, to reach out in hospitality to friends and strangers alike. This is a view from the other side.

## ELCA Colleges and Universities

**Augsburg College**  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Augustana College**  
Rock Island, Illinois

**Augustana College**  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

**Bethany College**  
Linsborg, Kansas

**California Lutheran University**  
Thousand Oaks, California

**Capital University**  
Columbus, Ohio

**Carthage College**  
Kenosha, Wisconsin

**Concordia College**  
Moorhead, Minnesota

**Dana College**  
Blair, Nebraska

**Gettysburg College**  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

**Grand View College**  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Gustavus Adolphus College**  
St. Peter, Minnesota

**Lenoir-Rhyne College**  
Hickory, North Carolina

**Luther College**  
Decorah, Iowa

**Midland Lutheran College**  
Fremont, Nebraska

**Muhlenberg College**  
Allentown, Pennsylvania

**Newberry College**  
Newberry, South Carolina

**Pacific Lutheran University**  
Tacoma, Washington

**Roanoke College**  
Salem, Virginia

**St. Olaf College**  
Northfield, Minnesota

**Suomi College**  
Hancock, Michigan

**Susquehanna University**  
Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

**Texas Lutheran University**  
Seguin, Texas

**Thiel College**  
Greenville, Pennsylvania

**Wagner College**  
Staten Island, New York

**Waldorf College**  
Forest City, Iowa

**Wartburg College**  
Waverly, Iowa

**Wittenberg University**  
Springfield, Ohio