

2002

## Full Issue, Number 13, Winter 2002

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 THIRTEEN

WINTER 2002

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How many Lutherans does it take to change a light bulb?

An auto mechanic explained to his employer that he'd need a few days off from work because he'd won second prize at a Lutheran wedding...

Did you hear about the Lutheran congregation that decided to celebrate Mardi Gras?

St. Francis, the Buddha, and Martin Luther all meet in heaven...

There's this town in Wisconsin, population 600, that has three Lutheran churches...

You know you're at a real Lutheran college when...

# INTERSECTIONS

faith + life + learning

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INTERSECTIONS

WINTER 2002

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*Sponsored by the*



LUTHERAN  
BROTHERHOOD  
FOUNDATION

**Editorial Board:** Timothy A. Bennett, Wittenberg Univ.; Karla Bohmbach, Susquehanna Univ.; DeAne Lagerquist, St. Olaf College; Victoria Horst, Newberry College.

**Cover:** "Opening Lines." Please send us the rest of these stories, real or made up. We'll publish the best submissions in some future issue.

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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 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

INTERSECTIONS remains an important way for the higher education community to engage ideas about and reflections on the characteristics of Lutheran higher education: what is, what was, what should be, what could be, and why. We hope each issue stimulates discussion on the campuses of Lutheran institutions, and that it keeps church leaders informed about the ideas that circulate on campus. It is designed to reach faculty, college administrators and church leaders. If you have ideas for how the journal can be more effective or better reach it's audience, please send them to the editor, Tom Christenson, or to me.

But as an academic journal INTERSECTIONS can only do a good job with one audience by leaving other audiences untouched. So the Executive Director for the Division for Higher Education and Schools within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Leonard Schulze, challenged his staff to think through all the different target groups we have for our communications, and to develop a comprehensive communications plan. How do we communicate with high school students, with college students, with parents, with pastors, with journalists and media people? The more we do, the more we realize that we should do. It is clear that we have not done a good enough job of communication through the years because there is widespread ignorance about Lutheran colleges and what they stand for. Again, we welcome your input, please send us your ideas.

But before you do that, review what we are doing. Check our website at <[www.elcacolleges.org](http://www.elcacolleges.org)>, it is much improved in the last year, thanks to our webmaster Tom Witt and the Assistant Director for Colleges and

Universities, Sue Edison-Swift. Push the button for FREE STUFF to get copies of our brochures. Look at our advertisements in *The Lutheran*, *Lutheran Partners*, *Seeds for the Parish* and the ELCA Yearbook. If you have not already done so, read the book by Professor Ernie Simmons that we had Augsburg-Fortress publish: *Lutheran Higher Education - An Introduction*. Check the higher education stories in the ELCA video magazine - *Mosaic*.

You can also help us by telling us what works well. If you notice an ad or a story about Lutheran colleges or universities, tell us where you spotted it, and what made it catch your eyes. And if you hear a presentation that you think deserve a wider audience among one or more of our constituencies bring it to our attention, or have the author submit it to Tom for his consideration.

Arne Selbyg  
Director for Colleges and Universities

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## FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *Intersections* was fun to put together because of the diversity of pieces that it contains. It includes Darrel Jodock's inaugural lecture as he assumed the Bernhardson chair at Gustavus Adolphus College. His lecture raises for me the question, "What would a religious tradition be like that had no sense of humor?" I'm sure that such exist, but I'm very happy to say that I do not personally know them. I had a returning student (I think she was in her mid-fifties) in a class a few years ago. One day I discovered that the traditional aged students in the class referred to her among themselves as "the church lady from hell." She condemned everyone she encountered in that class: the authors of the texts, me, her fellow students. She went on to point out in detail what was wrong with our views, prefacing each sentence with the words, "God and I think..." When I challenged her condemnations she said, "Don't you believe in the absoluteness of God?" I said I did, and that this was why I did not consider any human version of the truth as absolute. Not hers, not even my own. When I told her that Luther referred to his own theology as "a bag of farts," she was not amused. Sad.

Ernie Simmons' article follows. This was a talk he gave at last summer's Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference which I thought would be of interest to faculty at all our institutions because it researches so thoroughly what our current crop of students are like and what the difficulties and opportunities are that they present to us. This is followed by two short pieces that came out of a travel-study opportunity for faculty and students in South Africa. These pieces by Brian Wallace and Corin Wesner demonstrate what a soul-opening opportunity such cultural relocation can occasion. I thought it made very good sense to publish them together with some of the photographs they brought back. Finally there are two reviews of important books that came out this year. I was very happy to review Richard Hughes' book. I had heard him deliver some of it's chapters as public addresses and wanted to see how he fit them together into a larger argument. Joy Schroeder's review of Robert Benne's book concludes this issue. It is a book that deserves a discussion on each of our campuses.

If any of you are interested in reviewing books for future issues please let me know.

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# THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL TRADITION AND RECRUITING LUTHERAN STUDENTS

*Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference: Valparaiso University, August 2, 2001*

Ernest L. Simmons, Ph.D.

I was fortunate enough to have a new computer installed in my campus office this fall. As I sat staring at the CRT screen and trying to figure out the new procedures for "Windows 98" I was reminded of what happened when Abraham tried to install "Windows 98" on his old 486 computer. As he too sat there staring at his CRT screen reading the install directions, somewhat like a cow staring at a new gate, Isaac walked by and with the presumption of youth quickly sized up what his father was doing. He observed, "Oh Dad! That old computer of yours does not have enough memory to run 'Windows 98!'" Abraham's countenance became crestfallen and as his chin fell to his chest he began to shake his head slowly back and forth and to mutter "Isaac, Isaac, Isaac!" under his breath. "Have you still not learned? **Do you not yet know that God will provide the Ram!**"

I like this joke for two reasons; first that I think it is a funny joke but also because it is a humorous example of the interaction of faith and learning. It is an example of the need to connect faith and learning because one needs **BOTH** some knowledge of computer science, e.g. nature of computers, RAM, windows, etc. **AND** the biblical tradition of Abraham and Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. The question is—How many of our students or their parents would get this joke? I am sure most of them know about "random access memory" but how many of them would know the story of Abraham and Isaac? The joke is a dialogue, a dialectical relating of the realms of faith and learning. For this dialog to work, however, there must be persons on our campuses willing and able to engage in the dialogue. It is toward the sustaining of such a dialogue that my remarks will be addressed.

I would like us to reflect on just two questions this evening; What are the attitudes and issues of our students and their parents regarding Lutheran Higher Education, and what theological resources are there in the Lutheran tradition with which to respond? **The central point of my reflection this evening is that today mission and marketing go together. In this new market era of limited religious background, the more intentional we are about our identity and mission the clearer we will stand out to future students and their parents. The**

**most important task before all of us is to keep the questions of faith and learning alive on our campuses as a clear expression of the church in mission in higher education. To the degree that we intentionally embody our mission we will address many of the concerns of our future students and their parents.** I have broken this presentation down into two basic parts. The first is a brief overview of current students and parents regarding their differing needs and hopes. For this section I will draw upon two books. With regard to current students, I will draw upon the fine book *When Hope and Fear Collide: A Portrait of Today's College Student* by Arthur Levine and Jeanette Cureton<sup>1</sup>. With regard to their Generation X parents and their religiosity, I will use the intriguing book *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X* by Tom Beaudoin<sup>2</sup>. Both books were published in 1998. In the second section I will address three areas from the Reclaiming Survey which I believe are relevant to the Lutheran Higher Education Tradition: a sense of community, cultivating mentoring relationships and finally the relationship of faith and values in higher education. I will then bring these concerns into relationship with some of the material from my book. In closing I will raise a few questions which I hope will stimulate some discussion for us during our time together.

## PART I: STUDENT/PARENT OVERVIEW

First, let me give a brief caveat. I am a theologian, not a social scientist, so what I will be summarizing about these generations is from a non-specialist perspective. Also, in light of this research I do have some concern about what may be a basic assumption expressed in the survey title. I am not sure that the title "Reclaim" is relevant. If we mean by reclaim, making a new claim on students over whom we have had no prior claim, to reclaim some of our "market share," then certainly the title is appropriate. But if we mean to restake a claim on students and parents over whom we have had a prior claim then we are probably far from the mark. It is to the first understanding that my remarks will be addressed this afternoon. I believe all bets are off in terms of prior claims on these future students and their parents. It is in this context that I will address the question of theological resources in the Lutheran tradition. There is

room for optimism, however, because I believe that the Lutheran Model of Higher Education is particularly suited to the open-ended, spiritual searching and yearning that typifies both this current student generation and their GenX parents.

## STUDENTS

Let's begin by taking a brief look at our current students. Traditional age students who began college last fall were born in the year 1982. They are the first born of what Howe and Strauss in their book *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* refer to as the "Millennial Generation," those who graduate high school starting in the year 2000.<sup>3</sup> Let me give you a few examples of what these students have or have not experienced.

They were 4 when the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded. They were only 7 when the Berlin Wall came down.

They were 9 when the Soviet Union broke apart, and do not remember the Cold War.

There has only been one Pope.

They never had a Polio shot, and likely, do not know what one is.

Their lifetime has always included AIDS, being born the year after AIDS was identified.

They have always known MTV and the Compact Disc because both made their debuts in the year before they were born.

There have always been VCR's, but they have no idea what Beta is.

The Vietnam War is as ancient history to them as WWI, WWII or even the Civil War.

They do not care who shot J.R. and have no idea who J.R. is.

Michael Jackson has always been white.

Kansas, Chicago, Boston, America, and Alabama are places, not bands.

McDonald's food never came in Styrofoam containers.

Turning to a more systematic overview of the current student generation, Levine and Cureton indicate that a significant change occurred in student attitudes and values starting in about 1990. They view our current students as much more hopeful and socially concerned than their counterparts were in the late 70's and 80's but also deeply troubled. They are very comfortable with the Internet and global connections, being part of what Don Tapscott calls the "Net Generation."<sup>4</sup> But there is widespread suspicion of all institutions and a sense of victimization and being overwhelmed. They see politics and social involvement as

primarily local where they can be involved and make a difference. Levine and Cureton conclude that students of the late 90's are more socially active than at any time since the 1960's. (p. xiv)

There has also been a significant shift in social and academic life. Many of the social activities such as drinking, parties, sports, music and movies remain but most students are working more and longer hours with much less time for socializing. Levine and Cureton observe, "Undergraduates are also coming to college more damaged psychologically. Binge drinking is on the rise, and traditional dating has all but disappeared from social life. Students are more socially isolated, have little time for social life, and are afraid of getting hurt." (p. xv) Sleep is even listed as a form of recreation. (97) Academically they are still career oriented with more students saying they work hard but there is a tendency to confuse working hard with being intellectual, "Time spent means achievement attained." (124) More remedial education is now required than for their predecessors. There also seems to be a growing gap between the ways in which faculty teach and students best learn, with faculty preferring the global and theoretical and students the direct and concrete. Yet students still report a high degree of satisfaction with their academic experience. (128-131)

With regard to hopes and dreams Levine and Cureton observe that, "Belief in the American Dream is stronger than ever students want good jobs, financial success, meaningful relationships, and a family. Although they are optimistic, they are also scared—everything seems to be falling apart. They worry that they will be unable to find jobs, afford a family, be able to pay back their student loans, or even avoid moving back home with their parents." (p. xv) This student generation is not easily described and seems to involve a number of tensions if not outright contradictions. Levine and Cureton describe them as "deeply ambivalent" (127) and for that reason understand them as a "transitional generation" coming during a time of social and historical discontinuity. (151-6) There is a new world aborning and these students know it and, like we, do not know what it is going to look like. Unlike us, however, they are not yet professionally established so as to hope to be able to ride it out and this frightens them. Much of this can be seen indirectly through the Reclaiming Survey, especially the desire for community and mentoring relationships as well as the need for faith and values to guide them through such a transitional period. Peggy Wehmeyer, religion reporter for ABC News, reported on January 28, 2000, that there is serious interest in spirituality

among today's young people and a deep yearning for meaning beyond materialistic consumption. She reported that college religion courses nationwide are overflowing. Our colleges are strategically placed to offer responses to these needs if we can be conscious and intentional about addressing them. We will come to that in Part II but first I would like to briefly turn to some reflections about their Generation X parents and their religious attitudes.

## PARENTS

By the widest sociological definition of a generation, twenty years, last year's entering class is the very last that could possibly be considered part of generation X. Many sociologists would close off generation X much earlier, around 1977 or before. What this means, of course, is that Generation X is no longer our students. They are the parents of our students. Certainly most of the parents of 9-10 grade students surveyed in the Reclaiming Lutheran Students Study are. In his interesting book on Generation X religiosity, *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Religiosity of Generation X*, Tom Beaudoin states the very clear difference in fundamental questions comparing Generation X with their "Baby Boomer" parents. Baby boomers he argues fundamentally are interested in personal existential issues. Their question is, "What is the meaning of life, particularly, my life?" We see this expressed in boomer's drive for success but also in flagrant boomer consumption. X'rs, Beaudoin argues, ask a different question, "Will you be there for me?" (140) There is a frailty that pervades the Xer experience of relationships and moves them to constantly ask this question. A common thread of Xer experience is the sense of abandonment, the "latchkey generation" who came home from school to an often divorced and empty home where T.V. and later computers became the main relationship. Beaudoin argues that Xers thus grew up with remotes in their hands so that popular culture became the main way in which to express their values and, as such, their religiosity.

There is a tremendous suspicion of governmental institutions. He observes, "A generation born during Watergate, nourished on the stories of baby boomer protest against "the war," and exposed to Iran-Contra hearings in the 1980's, had little trust left in the possibility of a benevolent government." (11). Because of the sense of abandonment and betrayal this suspicion also carries over to religious institutions as well. Beaudoin quotes Michael Cohen (1993, p.97) in his book *The Twentysomething American Dream* as seeing a common Xer response voiced by "Suzanne" when she explains,

"one of the reasons I do not go to church like I should [is that] they're just hypocritical." Beaudoin adds, "This common attitude affects the value Xers place on "religious" practice and is the most common charge I have heard from Xers about religion. The perception of hypocrisy is one reason religion is not a security blanket but a wet blanket to so many." (25) Howe and Strauss in their work, *Thirteenth Generation*, report that, "religion ranks behind friends, home, school, music and TV as factors [Xers] believe are having the greatest influence in their generation." (1993, p. 187) Is it any wonder that the TV show "Friends" is one of the most popular shows with this demographic group? Beaudoin observes, "For my peers, (He was born in 1969.) this distancing from religion often wasn't new at all, because their families had treated religion as a disposable accessory. Many baby boomers had kept institutional religion at arm's length until midlife. For their children, GenXers, the step from religion-as-accessory to religion-as-unnecessary was a slight shuffle, not a long leap." (13)

The news is not all bad however. He goes on to add, "What intrigued me by the late 1980s was the way the Xers remained ambivalent or hostile to "religion" in general but still claimed a sense of "spirituality" in their lives." (Ibid.) Beaudoin, among others, indicates that while there is a suspicion of institutional religion, there is also a deep spiritual hunger and that spiritual and ethical values are something deeply sought by this generation even if it is quite a hodgepodge. Just go to your local Barnes and Noble or Borders bookstore and look at the spirituality and inspiration holdings, not to mention the proliferating websites for spirituality and spiritual growth. This also partly explains the phenomenal attention given to the book *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom. Beaudoin understands Xers as having a sense of ambiguity as central to faith and that suffering has a religious dimension to it. *Indeed this generation may be well positioned to appreciate a theology of the cross.* While Xers are comfortable living in media driven virtual realities, they know the difference and are particularly attracted to the concrete expressions of service and faith. Beaudoin sees this generation as more interested in Jesus than in the church. He observes, "They [Xers] know that if religion doesn't go into the streets, the streets will overtake religion. I have personally known dozens of Xers who have been spiritually kickstarted by working in soup kitchens and food pantries for the poor." (79) It is no wonder that service-learning experiences appeal strongly.

Beaudoin concludes his analysis of GenX religiosity with a double look at both what the Church can do for

Generation X and what Generation X can do for the Church. One of the most important things that Generation X can learn from the church is Tradition, with a capital "T". Drawing upon Jaroslav Pelikan's famous insight that, "Tradition" is the "living faith of the dead" while "Traditionalism" is the "dead faith of the living." Beaudoin points out that Generation Xers are looking for foundations and a creative way to reclaim religious traditions. Virtual faith needs to be grounded in historical reality and community. As Gadamer observes, "To be situated within a tradition does not limit freedom of knowledge but makes it possible." (52) Tradition can be presented as active preservation and not mindless repetition.

Tradition functions as an ongoing, identity forming process. To lose or forget one's past is to disconnect from the previous identity forming process. It is also to leave oneself contextless in addressing the future. To know who we are is to know from where we have come. The understandings, experiences, histories and conceptualities that have formed us need to be shared and transmitted. Not as a harness by which to plow or a straightjacket to limit diversity, but as windows upon reality to allow us a vision by means of which to venture forth and return. Tradition at its best gives perspective from which to engage the novel. At its worst tradition can refuse change and court irrelevance, by retreating to some nostalgically perceived halcyon past. The challenge for both the church and the colleges, if they are to connect with the concerns of Generation X, is to maintain tradition as a compass by which to approach the future and not a lock by which to close it out!

Finally, Generation X also has something to tell the church. As Beaudoin approaches the matter, there is a renewed call to humility and the liberation of Jesus, for the churches to stop domesticating their core message. There is scandal in the cross and the church would do well to affirm the intrinsic tension between the way of Jesus and the way of the world. This would also take seriously the religious dimensions of suffering and the role of ambiguity in faith. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is seen as representative of such an understanding of the Christian faith by Beaudoin, who is himself a Roman Catholic.

## **PART II: RECLAIMING LUTHERAN STUDENTS**

I hope this brief overview of current students and Generation X religiosity has been helpful in contextualizing some of the survey responses. We will

have another presentation on the survey so I will not deal with issues like the importance of critical thinking skills but rather simply take them for granted. Instead I would like to turn to several salient points in the survey results which relate specifically to theological resources. I would like to address three areas where I think Lutheran colleges are particularly well situated given the theological and educational resources of the tradition. These are the areas of a strong sense of community, cultivating mentoring relationships, and finally integrating faith and values in the college experience.

### **COMMUNITY**

The survey indicates not only that students have a sense that our colleges are safe but 86% indicated that there was a strong sense of community among students and 82% indicated that faculty were interested in students personally as well as academically. This is in contrast to flagship publics where the percentages were 54% and 35% respectively. This is wonderful news and indicates that we are living up to our claims about the importance of community in a learning environment.

The noted Lutheran theologian George Forell who spent virtually his entire professional life teaching in a public university setting (The University of Iowa) when asked what should be the distinguishing characteristic of the church college replied without hesitation "community".<sup>5</sup> One can study the Christian faith at a public university but one cannot have the faith tradition inform the life of the academic community and bind it together. At a college of the church the faith tradition can provide a basis for care and grace among its members. Church-relatedness can support a community ethos in which faith can be encountered without being imposed. This is a movement from below where the interactions of persons in the community can become windows of transcendence, windows of witness, to others as they mentor them in their faith journey. This is not just the responsibility of the religion department or the campus pastors office. Community is built by the full participation of all of its members, diverse though they may be, including those of differing faith traditions.

Community resides in trust and in the willingness to transcend self-interest for the sake of the other. It is empowered by that around which the community gathers, indeed what it has in "common" to form the *communio*, the community. At this time in American society community is in short supply. Many of our students have not experienced community even at the family level much less

at the larger institutional and societal levels. When a child does not experience trustworthy care-giving their vision of life and of the world can develop into one of mistrust and fragmentation governed by survival instincts. Church colleges can provide a nurturing and supportive vision of community. One which will allow all its participants to grow and develop their potential.

Yes, this is somewhat idealistic but that is the point about vision. If one never has their vision elevated from the street all they will ever see, like Plato's cave dwellers, is the surface in front of them with its cracks and two-dimensionality. We have an obligation to lift our students vision higher and may well find our own elevated in the process. The function of the ideal, as Plato taught us, is to create a measuring rod, a canon, by which to understand our own position and from which growth can be measured. It is a form of "management by objective" if you will. If we do not have clear goals for ourselves and our community we will not achieve anything more than self-maintenance, and even that will deteriorate over time. Our students and their families are looking for clear alternatives beyond anonymous mass production in education. The community we can nurture on our campuses is a clear alternative and while valuable in itself is also helpful in representing the college to others. There is thus both an intrinsic and a pragmatic rationale for the cultivation of community on our campuses. How then can we achieve it?

While all persons on campus participate in and contribute to community, it is the faculty who must take the lead in its establishment and maintenance. Community cannot be assumed or taken for granted. It must be worked at continually. Faculty must be permitted enough discretionary time to allow free contact with their colleagues so that trust levels may be built up. To support community, faculty must trust one another enough to be willing to openly discuss community values, commitments, and faith traditions without fear of reprisal or rebuke. Community is built upon trust and trust requires time for interpersonal contact, caring, mutual respect and cooperation to develop. Community requires personal self-transcendence in order to serve the common good both in and out of the classroom. Perhaps our mission as academic communities has not so much changed, as it needs creative new articulations of the common good on our campuses.

### **MENTORING AND VOCATION**

The survey indicates that 61% of our alumni had developed a mentoring relationship with a faculty member. In contrast, flagship publics indicated 39% with

a mentoring relationship and a sobering 48% said that they had **NO ONE** who served as a mentor. To journey through higher education with no one to serve as a mentor is a tragic occurrence and makes the task of finding one's vocation extremely difficult.

We are most affected in life by those persons who have embodied genuine humanity and faith for us and opened up our own possibilities to do the same. Spirituality comes through embodiment. It is in the encounter of individual lives as they are given for the needs of others that spiritual mentoring occurs. Spirituality comes in lecturing, writing, questioning, listening and serving...in sojourning with others in the community of inquiry which is academic life. It means "being there" for others as one incarnates one's own faith in life. It is through personal encounter and experience that education and understanding are born as the mentors we meet assist us in giving rise to thought. Faith frees the mind for open inquiry and creative reflection for we are not saved by our own understanding but by the grace of God. From the survey results we see that our students and their parents seek colleges that will provide such personal mentoring opportunities in spirituality.

The human question of why always hangs suspended between the finite and the infinite. Juxtaposed between time and eternity, humanity seeks meaning before its own beginnings and after its demise. Part of the grandeur of being created in the image of God, of humus (soil) become spirit-breathed and self-conscious, is the ability to ask why. Human beings are meaning-seeking creatures. We are a form of incarnation where the spiritual is made manifest in the material precisely in the transcending of self-interest. Spirituality is opening up to the needs of the other, to transcendence of the self and to possibilities of meaning beyond materialistic consumption alone. The study of the liberal arts assists one in opening up to the transcendent dimensions of life and in so doing equips faith for meaningful expression in service to the other. That is why there has always been a close connection between liberal arts education and the Christian faith.

The purpose of Christian higher education is to conduct education in the context of the Christian faith, faith seeking understanding. But what is the Lutheran difference in higher education? **Luther's answer is vocation.** We are called by God to incarnate faith through vocation as loving service in the midst of the world. Christian vocation is the living out of baptismal faith in the midst of the creation as one seeks to be a "little Christ" to one's neighbor. It is through our work in the world that we incarnate faith and

by so doing help sustain the creation. Vocation rejects the separation of the material from the spiritual, of nature from grace, insisting that they be kept together. Vocation is for the earth and the world of today so that as Swedish theologian Gustaf Wingren summarizes "Human action is a medium for God's love to others." The world of today is not a neutral place, but rather one of competing and conflicting powers in which struggle is a daily experience. It is for this reason Luther argued against leaving the world for the cloister, for this would be to abdicate one's calling to serve God against the forces of destruction present in the world.

In Luther's view the fundamental purpose of Christian education was the preserving of the evangelical message and the equipping of the priesthood of all believers for service in the church and the world. For Luther and his colleague, Philip Melancthon, one of the direct results of the theological doctrine of justification by grace through faith was public education. For Lutheran higher education that purpose has not changed, but the manner in which it is carried out must reflect our contemporary context of meaning. The task is to bring into creative interaction relationships of faith and learning as those relationships encounter an increasingly global and multicultural society. 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 persons are important and contribute to the character of a community of inquiry including persons of other faith traditions.

Finally, of course, it is not institutions per se that are religious but individual believers. It is people who embody mission and incarnate their faith through their vocation. In so doing, alternative possibilities may be envisioned that will constructively critique the present and provide a source for hopeful change in the future. **It is in light of what might be that one can become empowered to critique and change what is.** Our society desperately needs informed and reasonable discussion of religious beliefs and our students bring that same need with them when they come to our campuses. In a culture where public discourse, especially about matters of religion, is not encouraged or even welcome, colleges of the church may offer one of the most effective venues for such deliberations. Our students, our society and our religious institutions need such reflection.

## INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND VALUES

There are a number of elements in the survey pertaining to

the Integration of faith and values into the college experience. Let me select on a couple. First 60% of Lutheran college students said that they learned more about their faith during college, including 38% who found spiritual life models in faculty or staff while only 14% at flagship publics, with only 8% finding models. In addition, 65% of Lutheran college alumni reported experiencing the integration of values and ethics in the classroom as opposed to only 25% at flagship publics. This should not surprise us given the way the separation of church and state is currently interpreted in public higher education. Going on to the Gen. X parents part of the survey, 88% of them said that an emphasis on personal values and ethics was important, the highest concern in the survey. There may be suspicion of religious institutions but the interest in spiritual values comes through strongly here, especially for their children. The connection between faith and values is at the heart of our mission and it is what our students and their parents would be looking to us to provide. In much of higher education there has occurred a separation between these two. How and why has such a separation occurred?

Ever since the Enlightenment, higher education has sought meaning through the ideal of pure reason. Pure, neutral, objective and rational analysis has been a goal not only in the natural and life sciences but also in many other disciplines of the liberal arts. This emphasis upon reason has produced great success in many ways and the gains of this effort must not be lost. But as the Twentieth Century comes to a close it becomes all too apparent that this inordinant rationalism has come at a cost. Too often "objectivity" was interpreted as "value free" with the consequent separation of fact and value and, of course, reason and faith. At the end of a century that has seen brutality on a massive scale, often technologically exacerbated, it becomes increasingly apparent that the life of the mind must be connected with the life of value and of faith as George Marsden and Glenn Johnson have argued before you on previous occasions.

Educator Parker Palmer observes that, "Ways of knowing are not neutral but rather have moral trajectories that are morally directive." Ways of knowing necessarily include ways of valuing so a complete separation of fact and value is not possible. All "facts" are contextual truths, which arise through an interpretive context that is value laden. It is the interpretive process that translates raw data into meaningful fact and it is here that values are imbedded in the process. Technology is a prime example of the intentional connecting of fact and value. The values intrinsic in scientific knowledge are given embodied

expression through the technological application of that knowledge.

The Lutheran Tradition in higher education has always insisted upon such a connection between fact and value, between reason and faith. Luther referred to the rule of God as occurring in two kingdoms or realms. There is the world of today in which God rules indirectly through the order in nature and the human extension of that order into civil law for a just society. In this realm, what Luther referred to as the "Left Hand of God," reason is the most critical faculty. Reason reigns supreme in discerning the order of creation and the natural law God has placed within it. Education must involve the use of reason to discover the beauty, complexity and glory of God within the creation, in everything from music to mathematics. Reason, for Luther, only becomes prostituted, misused, when it attempts to determine one's relationship with God. In all things under human influence, reason is to exercise its full sway. But in the economy of God, allowance must be made not only for the grace of creation but that of salvation and the faith which receives it. This is the world to come, the "Right Hand of God," the realm of faith.

For Luther, these two realms converge in the life of the individual Christian in the everyday world as they seek to live out their faith in loving service to others. This is the calling of the Christian to actualize their Christian freedom in vocational service. For Luther, education must necessarily involve both reason and faith, both the left and the right hands of God because education is preparation of the priesthood of all believers to make their faith active in love. During the Enlightenment, however, this dynamic, dialectical, vision of education became lost in the desire to emphasize reason to correct the perceived religious fanaticism that had led to the Thirty Year's War. With it, however, education became conducted with one hand tied behind itself.

One can image public higher education as being conducted using only the "left hand," the hand of reason, and the "right hand," the hand of faith, being tied behind it. One can function this way but clearly it is a disadvantage. It is difficult, if not impossible, to pick up heavy objects, express appreciation, and live a balanced life. The metaphor that the body has two arms but only one head, indicating two methods of activity proceeding from a common source, is lost. Public education affirms academic freedom at the cost of Christian freedom.

Conversely, but to a lesser extent, the church can

sometimes be imaged as so preoccupied with the role of faith as to de-emphasize, if not neglect, the role of reason and the intellectual life. It moves with its "left hand" tied behind itself. This too leads to disadvantages, particularly in relating faith to contemporary life and thought. Too frequently the church can be found encouraging a rather facile faith that borders on emotionalism rather than reflective judgment and commitment. It affirms Christian freedom but perhaps at the cost of academic, intellectual freedom.

Obviously, the Lutheran Tradition envisions higher education as employing both hands to relate faith and reason, values and reflection. For this to occur, however, academic freedom, which is a product of the "Critical Current" (Ahlstrom) in the Lutheran Tradition must be honored as well as Christian freedom. Academic freedom does *not* mean absolute neutrality in learning and reflection but rather the free and open debate and dialog between various perspectives of learning, the various personal and social contexts in which knowing takes place. **Academic freedom assures an open playing field, not that there are no teams on the field.** The Lutheran Tradition in higher education therefore demands that both freedoms be present on our campuses. To have only the "left hand" is to lose Christian freedom. To have only the "right hand" is to lose academic freedom. Public universities often embody the former and many Christian colleges only the latter. The Lutheran difference in higher education is to insist on the dialectical relationship of both freedoms, of both hands, as they serve the will and grace of the one God as their head. Two handed education is capable of bearing the heavy load of value reflective inquiry and informed ethical service. But for this to occur there must be persons on our campus who are willing to engage in such a dialectic and are interested in and committed to both freedoms.

**If we do not do this, who will?** The Church is not equipped for such an educational task and, because of the separation of church and state, we cannot expect the public universities to do it. We must do it, or it will not get done. Nothing less than the continued engagement of the Christian Tradition with contemporary life and thought is at stake. The public sector is not obliged and congregations do not have the resources. As Steven Carter has pointed out, it is difficult to discuss religion in public education and even in the public square in a reasoned and responsible way. It is seen either as fanatical or dismissed as a hobby. Our campuses and our sister institutions in the Christian tradition may be some of the few places within our society where a responsible discussion of religion can take place

today. The Reclaiming Students Survey indicates that both students and parents are critically interested in such connections. If we hold true to our educational tradition and mission such connecting of faith and values will take place on our campuses.

## CONCLUSION

To stimulate discussion I would like to close by briefly listing a series of questions we might want to explore in the time we have together. There are questions of an overall nature such as the "Why we are here?" variety. What distinguishes our own institutions from public education institutions? From other Christian institutions? From other sister Lutheran institutions? Should there even be differences? There are also questions of a more specific nature such as: What is the Lutheran understanding of academic freedom? What is the role of other faith traditions on campus? How does a theological heritage inform academic life? What is the particular contribution to the understanding of vocation that this institution can make? What do you think of the different models of Christian Higher Education? Should there be more than one model on campus? What is the faculty's role in the faith development of students? Is it a faculty responsibility to assist them? What is the role of one's own faith development in one's work at the university? In the midst of congested campus calendars and lives is there time for community?

In light of the survey data and the theological resources just discussed, there are three final questions I would like to raise.

**How do we recruit and retain mentoring faculty?** This involves not only the cultivation of community on our campuses but also of nurturing loyalty and service beyond mere contractual obligations. Faculty development is key here since most graduate programs at research universities do not connect faith and learning. Programs like the

Vocation of a Lutheran College Conferences and the Lutheran Academy of Scholars or individual college initiatives such as the Dovre Center for Faith and Learning are beginning to address these needs but more is needed.

**How do we get church leaders to know more about us and advocate for us more?** This is one of the more disturbing pieces of information from the survey, that so many of our "thought leaders" seem **not** to know who we are. This is a critical area for work.

**Finally, how do we educate potential students and parents about the value of liberal arts education at colleges of the church?** It is the most effective form of higher education to accomplish their goal of connecting faith and values in a meaningful career path. We do have many sympathetic listeners among parents and students which would not be typical of their generations as a whole.

**There is no one way to respond to these challenges.** The most critical process is to be willing to constructively undertake them, and keep the dialog of faith and learning open and growing. That is at the heart of the Lutheran Tradition in Higher Education and also at the heart of the life of faith. The life of faith has always involved courage and risk and that includes the academic life of faith as well. Will we be as courageous and riskful as our predecessors whose positions we now occupy? Will we be as faithful? Our times call for new expressions and creative responses, not mere repetitions and redundancies. We do stand on the threshold of a new age for church related higher education and the mantle is now upon our shoulders. Undertaken in humility and faith our tasks are achievable for we have the same spiritual resources at our disposal as Luther and Melancthon, Muhlenberg and Schmucker, Hauge and Walther. We are simply called to go and do likewise for our time.

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Levine and Jeanette S. Cureton, *When Hope and Fear Collide: A Portrait of Today's College Student*, Jossey-Bass, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X*, Jossey-Bass, 1998

<sup>3</sup> Howe, Neil and Strauss, William. *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, Vintage, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Don Tapscott, *Growing up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation*, McGraw-Hill, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> In reply to a question at a public lecture "The Vocation of a Lutheran College," at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, April 8, 1997.

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# “FREEDOM, HUMOR, AND COMMUNITY: A LUTHERAN VISION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION”

*Inaugural Lecture, Bernhardson chair, Gustavus Adolphus College, 9/21/99*

Darrell Jodock

Thank you all for coming this evening. You come from different places and have different sorts of connections with me. I am glad each of you is here.

It is also a pleasure for me to be here. I am grateful to the Bernhardsons for their vision and generosity in creating this chair. It is such a good idea. And I am grateful to members of the search committee, the Dean, and the President for inviting me to fill it. Not only am I grateful, I am humbled by the task ahead, and a little fearful that the expectations may be larger than I can fulfill. I will give it my very best, but I can't, after all, do miracles or walk on water!

The assertion that will undergird everything I say tonight is that the Lutheran tradition, properly understood, provides a profound and challenging underpinning for the best ideals of contemporary higher education—more profound and challenging than that other source from which we can draw our identity—the assumptions and values of contemporary American society.

I intend to treat this topic selectively rather than exhaustively. To that end I have chosen three themes.

The first is a sense of humor.

I beg the indulgence of anyone here who may have heard me tell this story before, but it is one of my favorites, and in this new setting I can risk telling it again. Back in 1969 or 70, when I was fresh out of graduate school and had just started teaching, a fellow faculty member came up to me in the hallway and asked, “Do you know anything about John Deere tractors?” Amid my surprise, I stammered out some sort of “yes, a little, why do you ask?” “Well,” he said, I have a small Christmas tree farm 40 miles north of town, and on it I have a John Deere B (that’s a tractor from the 1940s, back when they were still simple), and it isn’t working, can you fix it?” I asked what was wrong, he told me, and I said, “Yes, I think I can help you.” A week or two later, we drove to his little plot of land, I repaired his tractor, he drove it around, hopped off, looked me in the eye and said, “Jodock, you’re the first person with a Ph.D. I ever met who *knew* anything!”

Whenever I am tempted to take academia too seriously—or even the honor of being selected for this position too seriously, I remember that reaction—and recognize that life is larger than the academic world and that education is only one of the many needs that humans have.

This observation leads directly into the first theme, because one contribution made by the Lutheran tradition is that it does not take *too* seriously many of the things it values.

I will discuss the theme of humor in two steps. First, its theological basis. The central religious issue for Luther was that he had experienced the religion of his day as a demand. The practices he had encountered and the theology he had been taught both seemed to require that he take the first steps toward God. If he did what he could and worked diligently toward the goal of salvation, then God would do the rest. Luther tried and tried but could not manage to make any progress. After intense religious and intellectual struggles, he broke open this system by discovering in the Bible, as well as in Augustine and others, a different message: the message that God takes the initiative. Instead of requiring that we move toward God, God moves toward us and adopts us, not because we have met any prerequisites but only out of God’s generosity and mercy. If God takes the initiative and saves even the ungodly, then we humans have no control over God’s generosity—whether toward us or toward others. And if we have no control, we can take no credit. If God’s favor really is undeserved, then we cannot take ourselves too seriously, or our morality too seriously, or even our theology too seriously. All of these are important but not ultimate. And Luther himself, though willing to stand before Emperor and Princes and say “I cannot and will not recant,” could also laugh at himself. Among his last words, he called himself a beggar still; he did not want his followers to be named after him, as if he were all that important, and be called Lutherans; and when given credit for the Reformation, he once responded that he deserved none at all, because while he and his friend Philip had sat drinking good Wittenberg beer, the Word of God had done it all.

Step two. One implication of this sense of humor for the persons in a college is broader perspective. We ought to be

able to laugh about our degrees and about that carefully gained body of knowledge each of us has accumulated and (dare I say it?) even about our departmental and disciplinary boundaries. In 28 years of teaching, I have noticed from time to time that academics tend to overrate the importance of some things. We can fight at length about the number of credits allowed in a major, as if the whole world depended on allowing that extra course, or argue at length over a single word in a proposal. Whenever our own departmental turf is challenged, we tend quite quickly to lose our perspective and our sense of humor. But we ought to be able to laugh, not because degrees and knowledge and disciplines are unimportant but because they are not of ultimate importance—to laugh, not because we don't value them but because we have a larger vision of life within which they fit. Theology is part of the world; colleges and universities are part of the world; neither is itself the whole.

A second implication of the theme of humor and a larger perspective is freedom of inquiry. As some of you know, the novelist John Updike, who now belongs to an Episcopal church was raised a Lutheran in Shillington, Pennsylvania. In his memoir, *Self-Consciousness*, he has given voice to the connection between God's generosity and an unfettered search for the truth.

*God is the God of the living, though his priests and executors, to keep order and to force the world into a convenient mould, will always want to make Him the God of the dead, the God who chastises life and forbids and says No. What I felt, in that basement Sunday School of Grace Lutheran Church in Shillington, was a clumsy attempt to extend a Yes, a blessing, and I accepted that blessing. . . .*

*. . . Having accepted the old Shillington blessing, I have felt free to describe life as accurately as I could, with especial attention to human erosions and betrayals. What small faith I have has given me what artistic courage I have. My theory was that God already knows everything and cannot be shocked. And only truth is useful. Only truth can be built upon (p. 243).*

As we all know, Luther valued the Bible very highly, so highly that his followers have usually included it in their list of "alone's"—"Grace alone, Christ alone, faith alone, Scripture alone." Yet Luther could laugh even about the Bible. He could playfully suggest that the epistle of James be removed from the canon and replaced by a work from his colleague Melancthon, his *Loci Communes*. Luther

was comfortable with all sorts of critical questions, ready to say that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, even though it carried the title "The Books of Moses," and that the sayings in Isaiah were mixed up, coming from different times in the history of Israel. He was ready to acknowledge the individuality of authors and the uneven value of their writings. For Luther, not even the Bible was to be taken *too* seriously. It was not exempt from inquiry and criticism. A college related to the Roman Catholic Church may perhaps get nervous if criticism gets too close to the teaching authority of that denomination. A Baptist college may get nervous if one criticizes the Bible or congregational autonomy, but there is no issue in a Lutheran college that is immune from analysis and criticism, no boundary beyond which freedom of inquiry is halted. Any idea, any program, any realm of human life, including politics, science, business, and even religion, can be critiqued.

However, this brings us to our second theme, because, having affirmed a basic sense of humor, we need to distinguish this view from cultural tendencies that say, "okay, anything goes; one person's opinion is as good as another; everything can be criticized because nothing matters; it's all relative." But ideas do matter. It was, after all, an idea that prompted Stalin to starve out three million peasants in the Ukraine during the 1930s. It was an idea that prompted Dr. King to work for racial equality. And an idea is what prompts a white supremacist to open fire in a Jewish community center. Unlike relativism, a sense of humor respects the importance and the consequences of ideas. It does so because it is intimately connected to the second theme: the centrality of community.

At this point, a discussion of Luther's distinction between the two kingdoms would be appropriate, but instead of starting on that general a theological level, allow me to go directly to what he says about the purpose of education. In 1524 he wrote an open letter to the city councils of Germany in which he urged them to support at public expense schools for both young men *and* young women. In that open letter Luther stated clearly that the primary reason for doing so was that the schools would benefit the community as a whole. In order to make wise decisions, the citizenry needed to understand the whole scope of human history and decision-making, to learn the results of earlier decisions and decisions made elsewhere in the world and thereby see what kinds of things turned out to be beneficial or which had consequences detrimental to themselves and other human beings. In order to make wise decisions, they needed to be educated. Yes, Luther was

anxious that young men and women learn to read the Scriptures and learn more about Christianity, but even if the Scriptures and God were left out and the citizens had no souls, education would still be important, because the communities needed wise and able decision-makers. The city councils could not depend on parents to do this, because the students needed a broader perspective than could be provided by the experience of their parents or even that one generation. If schooling were left to their parents, "the net result is little more than a certain enforced outward respectability; underneath they are nothing but the same old blockheads."

The implication of Luther's advice is that the primary purpose of a college related to the Lutheran church is to educate wise leaders for the good of society as a whole. Yes, we believe that an appreciation for and understanding of Christianity can enhance their wisdom and service, but our primary purpose is not to make people religious but to equip them to make wise decisions. Our primary purpose is to inspire in them such a passion for justice and human welfare that they will provide moral leadership in their neighborhoods and help the nation as a whole to make wiser decisions.

I said earlier that we needed to hold together our sense of humor and this primary purpose of education. We need to do so, because freedom of inquiry and unrestricted criticism are not ends in themselves. When correctly used, they serve and benefit the larger community. A misplaced loyalty undermines wise decisions, so it needs to be uncovered. Ignorance jeopardizes wise decisions, so it needs to be corrected. Programs, proposals, ideas all need to be critiqued *for the sake of* the community, because a better insight will benefit its members. Here too, I admit, we academics aren't always at our best. We may, for example, glory in identifying inconsistency in an author without acknowledging the profundity of that person's thought. We delight in deconstructing but profess no better alternative. We dissect the truth into pieces and leave our students on their own to try to put those pieces together in some insightful way.

So freedom of inquiry goes hand in hand with a commitment to educate for the benefit of the community, to educate wise leaders to serve that larger community.

Up to this point I have used the word "community" to refer to the larger human community in which and for which a college does its work. Now I use it in a second sense, to refer to the college itself as a community of discourse and

deliberation.

If I may step back into the theological tradition for a moment, Luther was very clear that the church is primarily a community of believers. Even in the Garden of Eden, he could say, there was a church, because Adam and Eve formed a community of faith. In 1530 at Augsburg, when the task fell to Melancthon to explain the Lutheran position to the assembled princes of the Holy Roman Empire, he would pen the words that have become normative for Lutherans:

*The church is the assembly of saints [or gathering of believers] in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. For the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions or rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be alike everywhere (Article VII, Augsburg Confession).*

As envisioned by Luther, this community is free to decide what structure it should have, what pattern of worship it should adopt, what social program it should endorse. No particular pattern of organization or set of ceremonies is needed. What is needed for the church to be the church are human beings deliberating together about the best way to embody the good news they have received and affirmed. That is to say, the church is a community of discourse.

Similarly, a college campus should be a community of discourse, because our purpose is not simply to uncover knowledge and transmit it, our purpose is not simply to provide training, our purpose is to seek wisdom—the kind of wisdom needed to make good decisions, decisions that benefit the whole community. As a college student I used to return to my home to work every summer. My father was a wise and intelligent man, respected in his community, but not well educated. He quit school in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and in some ways regretted that decision the rest of his life, transforming his regret into a personal crusade to encourage younger neighbors and relatives and anyone who would listen into staying in school. Having overheard my father talking to others, it never occurred to me (or to my sister or to my brother, for that matter) not to go on to college. Once this small town farm boy got there, college was an exciting adventure—and sooner or later, as my father and I worked together, a topic would come up where I could apply something of what I had learned. I'd wax eloquent—or so it seemed to my 18 year old ears—with my proposal, and my father would listen, think a little, and then

ask, “but have you thought about ....?” And suddenly the flaw in what I had been saying would be evident—a flaw usually regarding some aspect of human nature or human behavior. My new knowledge did not translate quickly or easily into wisdom. Wisdom, after all, cannot be found quickly and cannot be found alone. It grows slowly, haltingly, and sometimes even painfully amid the give-and-take within a community of discourse. In my case, my father was but an extension of that community, which should at minimum include all people on campus. All of us who have listened to campus conversations recognize that wisdom may not *automatically* arise from the interaction of students, faculty, and staff, but we can also be certain that it will not come at all if these encounters do not occur, if we are so isolated from one another that we do not talk together about deep and important things. If we are content to generate knowledge without wisdom, we will all simply become what my father liked to call “educated fools”—or Luther described so vividly as “the same old blockheads.”

So far we have discussed a sense of humor and community. The third theme is freedom. Here too I think the Lutheran tradition has something to offer higher education.

Let me begin in this case with Luther himself. Strangely enough, he was criticized in his own day both for giving humans *too much* freedom and for giving them *too little*. He gave them too little, some contemporaries argued, because he said that humans were not able to take the initiative and on their own generate a good relationship with God. The first step must be taken by God. In reply to a *Discourse on Free Will* in which Erasmus objected to his views, Luther wrote a book entitled *The Bondage of the Will*. There he complimented Erasmus for having tackled the central issue. Unlike others who wearied him with “extraneous issues about the Papacy, purgatory, indulgences and the like,” Erasmus had tackled the crucial issue; he had aimed for the jugular vein. And later he said that *The Bondage of the Will* was one of only two of his many, many writings that he regarded to be worth preserving. For Luther everything depended on recognizing human un-freedom vis-à-vis God.

At the same time Luther was criticized for giving humans too much freedom. Believers, he thought, were free to make up their own minds about which religious practices were beneficial—and not obligated to submit to the authority of any church leader regarding fasting or other religious practices. In matters of religion persuasion was the appropriate tool, not coercion, for if God took the

initiative, no one else could be in control of one’s own God-human relationship.

But the second kind of freedom was also highly nuanced. He put it into a two-sentence paradox:

*The Christian is the free lord of all, subject to none*  
*The Christian is the dutiful servant of all, subject to all.*

The meaning is this: the freedom to decide is not a license for self-indulgence. The freedom to decide is simultaneously a freedom *from* coercion and a freedom *for* service to others.

Let me shift from theology to higher education. The traditional goal of the liberal arts has been to engage students in studies that set them free. If, as an institution of higher education, we were to follow the promptings of our society, we would assume that the kind of freedom envisioned is “freedom from”—freedom from ignorance, freedom from prejudice, freedom from subservience to anyone else. And if we were to follow the promptings of our society we would assume that the kind of freedom envisioned is individual—the kind a person has in isolation from others.

But if we were to reaffirm the insights of the Lutheran tradition, we would adopt a different goal—a more nuanced and, I believe, more profound understanding of freedom. The freedom for which we would then aim is, yes, liberation from ignorance, prejudice, and subservience, but it is also *freedom for* service and wise community leadership.

The best way to illustrate this is to call to mind the rescuers during the Holocaust: namely, those individuals who risked their lives to help would-be victims in one or another of the groups targeted by the Nazis. A person in one of those groups would often go to a friend or acquaintance, ask for help, and be turned down. Then he or she would turn to a perfect stranger, make the same request, and be given shelter or aid. Both the person who refused and the person who said “yes” had been subjected to the same propaganda, both had been threatened with the same punishment (of death), but the rescuer would come through, offer a place to hide, provide food, and do whatever else he or she could. When now asked why they did it, rescuers are not very helpful. They shrug their shoulders and say, “so and so was in need, what else could I do?” However unsatisfying, their answer reveals a deeper freedom—what I am calling a “freedom for.” Not only did the rescuer refuse to have

his or her own identity defined by Nazi propaganda, not only did the rescuer refuse to allow the Nazis to define the "other" as non-human, the rescuer also had a positive commitment to the well being of those other human beings. The rescuers had, what Nechama Tec has called a universalistic sense of caring (one not limited by the color of a uniform or the ethnicity or religious identity of the other), an independence of moral judgment (the willingness to take a stand different from the rest of society), and a history of care-giving. In no case, for any of the Polish rescuers she examined, was a rescuer providing aid for the first time. They had developed a habit of helping others; they were practiced at exercising their "freedom for" others. And that is why they shrug and say, "what else could I do?"

What the Lutheran tradition suggests to me is that the goal of liberal arts education includes the kind of freedom exhibited by the rescuers. It is a profound freedom *for* courageous moral action, for action that benefits others even at expense to oneself. This makes "freedom for" not at all something an individual has in isolation; it is evident only in that person's behavior toward others, only in that person's commitment to the well being of one's neighbors, only in that person's deep engagement in the social fabric of our nation and the world.

I confess that I find this to be a most daunting task. How do we educate so that among our graduates there are more rescuers and fewer bystanders or, God forbid, perpetrators? However challenging this question may be, should we not affirm this tradition and ponder how we enable students to learn, value, and practice care-giving (without boundaries) so that they are free to do it whenever and wherever the need arises?

I've said that the concept of freedom is nuanced. It's "freedom for" as well as "freedom from," but it's nuanced in yet another way—in its understanding of the depth of un-freedom with which we contend, the depth of the challenge facing us as a liberal arts college.

The usual image of freedom is that of a person standing at the fork of a road. The individual who is free is able to choose one path or the other without constraint or coercion.

The flaw in this image is that it ignores our individual and social histories. Those histories so influence our decision-making that the choices are seldom equally easy or even equally possible. I am not a downhill skier, so an alternative image comes to mind. Freedom is like an

unskilled skier whizzing down a steep slope, deciding whether to make a sharp turn at some particular marker along the path. All of the momentum is on the side of *not* turning. Trying to turn runs the risk of falling or crashing into something. Our individual and societal histories propel us in certain directions. Once the depth of our un-freedom is acknowledged, then genuine freedom involves a clear sense of what is at stake and the willingness to risk. It is the willingness to risk doing something new or out of step with society *for the sake of* justice or protecting the dignity of another.

This suggests another form of the same question. How do we educate so that people are free enough to try the turn? Free enough even in the face of social pressure to take risks, free enough to know what's important in life and to understand what is reason enough to risk falling or crashing? Once, halfway through a course on the Holocaust, after the students knew well what the camps were like, I asked them to pretend that they were the board of directors of a corporation. The corporation had been offered the chance to build a factory in one of the camps. If they said yes, their company would benefit from the lower overhead of cheaper labor and either reap higher profits or sell their goods more cheaply than their competitors. If they said no, they would face no retaliation. They would not be arrested; they would only need to explain their actions to the stockholders. After a period of discussion, the students voted. They voted to build the factory. When the role-play was over, they explained. We knew what you would have preferred, they said, but you asked us to pretend we were really on the board, and when we did so, we realized that we did not have the courage to face losing our place on that board. Even with stakes so relatively low, they were not willing to risk the turn.

When asked what I wish for every graduate of a Lutheran college I have said "a passion for justice." This is a Lutheran answer. It is but another way of saying "freedom for" others—the freedom to risk in the face of the momentum that impedes it.

So, we've identified three interlocking themes—sense of humor, community, and freedom. They are by no means the only important ones that can be drawn from the reservoir of Lutheran tradition or that can help ground & inform & inspire higher education. These three are but a tantalizing sample.

Following Luther himself, the Lutheran tradition lives with paradoxes and unresolved tensions. It does so because it is more interested in people than in the consistency of its

abstract ideas. One such tension for a college related to the Lutheran church is between rootedness and engagement with the world. To choose tradition alone would leave that religious tradition uncritiqued. To choose immersion in the society alone would leave the assumption of that society uncritiqued. The Lutheran heritage summons the college to work out the tension inherent in a “both . . . and,” both an affirmation of its own tradition and an engagement with today’s world. Its underlying conviction is that such tension is productive of insights that actually serve society, of insights that foster societal justice and develop courageous individuals. However, at any given moment in history, one side or the other may need greater emphasis. Fifty or 75 years ago, when our colleges were emerging from their ethnic ghettos, engagement needed to be emphasized. Now (in the face of the homogenizing tendencies in that culture) reaffirming our tradition is a higher priority—not because we’re nostalgic, but because such a reaffirmation will make us a better college.

What I hope is apparent is that the resulting view, although very much in support of the best ideals of liberal arts education, is also out of step with many contemporary American societal attitudes.

For example, Americans tend to define freedom only as “freedom from.” I’ve suggested it needs to be supplemented by “freedom for.”

Americans also tend to define it in individualistic terms. I’ve called for a communal dimension.

Furthermore, Americans tend to assume that healthy individuals can be whole and complete in themselves, rather than needing to be deeply embedded in a community. I’ve suggested that community is central to their vocation and identity.

To cite another example, Americans tend to practice the kind of tolerance that leaves unchecked and unchallenged their own private opinions and ideology and then, thinking it is their right to believe whatever they want, become quite uncivil whenever those opinions or beliefs are challenged. By contrast, I’ve said that wisdom emerges from a mutual critique and engagement in a community of discourse.

Moreover, Americans tend to be so co-opted by the technological glamour of our society as to be paralyzed and unable to risk. As they choose between brands, they have the illusion of freedom while in actuality being radically unfree to consider alternatives to consumption as the path to the good life. I’ve advocated a deeper understanding of our un-freedom and thereby the possibility as well of a deeper freedom.

And finally, Americans tend to narrow their sense of responsibility to the point where it includes only success in one’s individual career and then to settle for an impoverished life that endangers our children, our neighborhoods, and themselves. The larger perspective I’ve tried to affirm includes a more fully developed sense of vocation, which includes one’s career but is primarily a calling to serve the community.

My contention (I repeat) is that the Lutheran perspective on life provides a deeper, more profound grounding for the liberal arts college than do the ordinary conceptions available in our society.

Therefore I think we should reclaim it and let it inform our endeavors. It has the potential to help a college like Gustavus become even more fully what it already claims to be: a college dedicated to service and leadership.

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*Darrel Jodock holds the Bernhardson Chair at Gustavus Adolphus College.*

# TRUTH, RECONCILIATION, AND REDEMPTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Brian Forry Wallace

This summer I spent several thousand dollars and five weeks to learn about the process of truth and reconciliation set up in post-apartheid South Africa. And I did. But I learned so much more. I learned why I chose to be a teacher, and in particular why I remain a teacher at a faith-based college. I learned about the nature of students who come to colleges like ours.

It all began uneventfully enough. I was asked to be on an interview team to select three out of five applicants from Capital who would attend a workshop on peace building in South Africa. I looked at the proposed schedule of the workshop—peacemaking, reconciliation, truth, forgiveness; sounds interesting, I thought. We had thirty minutes to interview each of the five students. After listening to them each explain their background and interest in the area I came to two very clear decisions. First, we had to send all five students. Second, I wanted to go with them. Eventually our group was to include my wife (a kindergarten teacher in Columbus), two students from other Lutheran colleges, and a college health director and her 14 year old son.

We didn't have a lot in common. The students had different majors, ages, religions, hobbies, and quite distinct personalities. But they exemplified the type of student who I have become familiar with in 24 years as a college teacher. They shared an openness to the world, a commitment to understand and to help others, and an unconventional view of what it means to live a good life.

We spent our time living with families in a city ten miles south of Cape Town. We visited churches, poor townships, schools, day care centers. We spent two days working in a children's AIDS hospital. We delivered Christmas packages to schools (yes, in July). We saw Nelson Mandela's cell. We listened to a political prisoner who spent eight years on Robben island. We saw penguins and seals, street children and beautiful flowers, we squished our way through the coldest and rainiest Cape Town winter in 44 years. We shopped. We walked. We listened. We listened to each other. I became just as interested in how these students absorbed the experience here as I was with what I saw about South Africa. We became close, dropping the masks we had brought with us from the U.S. I've taught at Capital for 20 years, and if I hear one more administrator talk about the "Capital family" I will jump

out of my office window. Luckily, I am on the first floor. But in this case "family" is the only word I know to describe the experience. These are people I have grown to care about in a deep and personal way. These were my students, but they were my teachers too. They taught me how to open my soul and encounter the world with god's eyes. I admire them. I want to be like them. I wanted them not to be disappointed in me. I wanted them not to see my shortcomings: my need for too much sleep and time alone, and my grouchiness when I don't get it. I teach International Relations. I know lots about the world, but the truth is I don't get it. I don't know why people are sick and poor. I don't know why others are indifferent. I don't know how to fix it. I know only that this stuff is important and that I care about it. I feared this wouldn't be enough for these students. They wanted *real* answers and I felt powerless when all I can do is sit down beside them and cry because it hurts so bad to see the world this way.

These students are so different from one another, yet they have something in common. Amy sees this place through a camera lens. I watch her lips as she tries to make sense of it all. There's a half-smile, a frown for uncertainty; I like it best when her mouth drops open in awe with some surprise she sees. Brian called me Dr. Wallace so now I call him Dr. Murphy. I think he will be one someday. I see him as a teacher like me one day. He will teach his students with care and grace when he finds the right words to describe this place, and himself. There is Meghan who is constantly processing out loud the love she feels for this world, "well what about this" and "I saw that" and "what does this mean?" and "who am I and what am I supposed to do now that I know this stuff?"

Karrie is sometimes lost inside her own feelings, wondering how she can best use her talents to help the world. She is moved by what she has seen here, down to the center of her soul. I am amazed by her eyes. She will not look away from what she sees here, no matter how painful. Her eyes may be filled with tears, but they are open, focused. Patrick at 14 is the youngest and maybe the smartest of our group. He is a drummer. He pretends not to let any of this sink in, but it does. I admire him for his risk taking, that and the fact that his drum teacher once toured with Van Morrison. Meredith is quiet but she processes every thought and feeling out in the open, in the worry lines on her forehead. I watch her thinking, trying so

hard to makes sense of this place, and I lose my breath. I see what it is to have a soul--to look at the world around you and wonder how to respond.

Cheryl is my soul mate. Sharing five weeks in South Africa has brought us closer than I thought possible after 15 years of marriage. She sees the children here; she sees them everywhere. She was the one who taught me children are real and they are people, and she will take what she has learned here back to open the hearts and eyes of her inner-city kindergartners. Corin is the most childlike person here except for me. Her face is a constant smile, ready to burst from all the joy inside her. I like to be near her when I am sad, which is much of the time. She is the one most likely to put her foot in her mouth, and also the one most likely to notice if one of us needs a hug, and to give it.

Debbie is our leader, but she wants to be one of the group too. She has so many hats to wear and has to switch them at a moment's notice. I watch her swing back and forth from world to world, trying to get students to see the wonder of this place and also checking to make sure the vans get here on time to pick us up, and I am reminded of what it is to be a teacher. April is a nurse. She carries with her Noah's pharmacy: two of every medicine ever made. But I understand. She wants to heal all the hurt that is in the world. I see some of it in her eyes. Audra walks through this country like she is walking on air, suspended a few inches above the ground. She takes everything in with her listening heart. Something here has touched her deep inside. I look at her and I feel I am seeing Jesus, heartsick and weeping over lost Jerusalem.

We live in a cynical age, or so says Jerry McGuire. I work in a cynical occupation. No one can be as skeptical as college teachers. We've seen it all before. We know *everything*. And students today aren't as smart, as hard-working, or clever, or insightful, or as original as when we were in college. The world is going to hell in a handbasket, and we know why. It's students these days. They aren't like they used to be. I used to say that stuff. Even worse, I used to believe it. Not anymore. I see that wide-eyed gazes, the ears that listen to the voices of the world, the mouths smiling in awe and wonder, and the tears, all the tears shed here, and I have no worries about the future.

It is in the presence of these people that I am reminded why I became a teacher, in particular at a faith-based college. I want to be like these students. I want to share my life with them, and have them share their lives with me. I am with them not because they are the smartest (although they are smart) or most creative. They are not likely to be titans of industry or winners of Nobel prizes. I am with them because they teach me how to be human.

They are honest, caring, and open. They are atheists and agnostics and Buddhists and Methodists and Baptists, but at their core they are searching for the truth about God's existence in the world. They don't want easy answers. They certainly don't want doctrine. They want truth. They are not likely to be future billionaires (I hope they don't read this part) or sports stars or supermodels. I have chosen to be with them because they want to be social workers, nurses, teachers, pastors, mission workers, parents, friends. I know this because they have told me, but also because I have seen them be all these things for each other, and for me.

They understand that the truth about God, whatever it is, has something to do with who they are and how they choose to act in the world. They embody vocation. Unlike many of us who teach higher education, these students are not compulsive achievers. They have no desire to build themselves up in the eyes of this world. Rather, they have responded to a voice which has called them out of their selves and asked them to be present in this world. They are certainly of this world. They laugh raucously and dance wildly and sing loudly and even tell dirty jokes. They get cranky and smelly and let me tell you, we all have bad hair days. But there is also something sacred about them. In how they see the world, let it touch them, and touch it back. God is here. They will not leave college to be the powerful, wealthy, or famous. They will walk quietly in the world, binding its wounds, holdings its hands, listening to its voices. They will be its healers. This is why I want to be with them. This is why I hope to be worthy of them. This is why I love them. They are my link to the reconstruction of this lost and broken world, the redemption of my lost and broken soul.

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## SWEET ON MY LIPS

*Passage from a Travel Journal*

Corin Wesner

Africa, the sound is sweet on my lips. The name is like a song, a kind word, warm and deep. It is quite something to learn from these people and see that they are so much like me. I went to church this morning. The building was a wood and tin shack, the seats a mixture of pews and wooden chairs. As I walked in I saw the raindrops of water fall from the ceiling and further dampen an already soaked carpet. The sound of the wind hitting the walls of the church, the way the ceiling creaked and the wood bent as if it were going to crack made me shiver as much as the cold inside did.

I remember a Sunday only months ago when I entered my home church. The look of the new walls, painted, the carpet fresh. Everything so warm and beautiful. My mind goes back to the conditions at hand and I wonder what I will see at this church...this tin shack with an altar and borrowed pews. I wonder how I will last the cold three hours that lie ahead. People start to arrive and I am conscious of their dress in comparison with my carefree ensemble. I am reminded of my childhood, an argument I had with my mother in early adolescence. She wants me to wear a dress but I tell her God doesn't care if I wear a dress. I think of these women in their tin shacks as they pull out their best for worship. If only they had as many choices as I did.

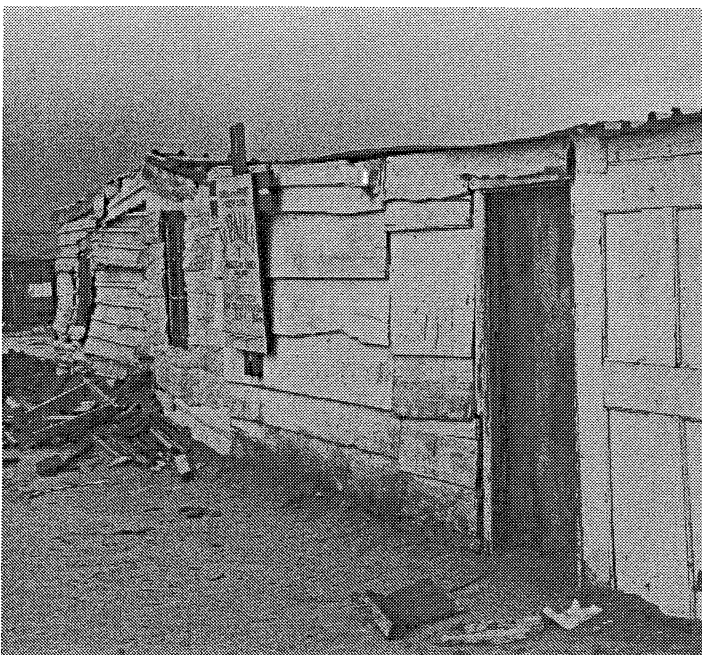
The service is in Xhosa...I wonder how I will know what is going on. As the voices of the few who have come to sing fill the church I am engulfed in warmth. I see a life greater than any I have ever seen before. I am again taken back to my childhood. I stand in the church, singing. I am engulfed by the music, but I am not a part of it like these women are here in Africa. Their voices are like a perfect day. I am reminded of my love for people and the need for music, joy, beauty in my life.

As I stand, not sure of how to participate, I catch someone's eye. We smile. I know I have been welcomed, so I try to listen, be there, and I am opened up. The wind howls outside, it is wet and cold inside, but I am more safe and warmed than ever before.

I have a lot to learn from this place.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Richard T. Hughes, *How Christian Faith Can Sustain the Life of the Mind*. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI; 2001.

Tom Christenson

Richard Hughes' book addresses a number of vital and engaging questions, questions about pedagogy, about the difference between preaching and teaching, about the place of tragedy and death in the learning / teaching context, etc. But the main thrust of the book is to argue that the Christian faith is not only compatible with an open pursuit of the truth, but that faith is a means to such a pursuit, that faith can sustain the life of the mind. Hughes begins, rightly I think, by addressing what he calls a "stereotypical assumption" about faith; that it is dogmatic, close-minded and inclined to thinking of teaching as indoctrination. I think Hughes would have done well to talk more about the sources of this stereotype and why, in spite of many of our best efforts, it is so common. I frequently hear people talk about our Lutheran institutions saying things like this: "They are faith-based, but surprisingly open to diverse points of view." "They require religion courses, but don't try to convert you to a particular religious point of view." "They have chapel, but don't require attendance, and they actually encourage people to practice their own religions even when they are not Christians." The unspoken text of all such comments is "Contrary to normal expectation here are religious people and institutions that are open-minded, questioning, and who create an open, non-coercive space for learning. Certainly they can't be very serious about their faith claims!"

Hughes locates this requisite openness in what, quoting Tillich, he identifies as "religion breaking through its own particularity." Using as example, the Bible, Hughes explains:

*The Bible points us not to itself, but rather to the infinite God whose understanding no human being can fathom and who stands in judgement on all our claims that somehow we have captured ultimate truth. .... Can the Bible, viewed in these terms, sustain the life of the mind? It can indeed, for if the Bible points beyond itself to the infinite God, we have no choice but to search for truth. ...when we view ourselves in relation to God, we understand how abysmally ignorant we really are. [34-35]*

For Lutherans, of course, this should not be a new argument. How else, we might ask, should a tradition grounded in reformation, i.e. in an act of faithful criticism, be related to the truth? How else should the call "*semper reformanda*" be understood if not as the claim that all our forms and formulations are in need of continual critique and rethinking? Yet Lutherans have been dogmatic and close-minded. Luther himself, at the same time that he plead for an open hearing and debate of his views, condemned most unsympathetically the views of many of his contemporaries including fellow reformers. So this temptation, to argue from the absoluteness of God to the absoluteness of our own view of God, is not just something that has beset others.

Hughes raises the issue whether openness and a commitment to hearing a diversity of voices doesn't lead to relativism. He asserts that it does not, that we needn't end up accepting every view on the grounds of universal toleration, but he does not map out that border territory very clearly. Perhaps another chapter was needed, one in which he could explain or model the difference between a commitment to an absolute truth that transcends (and relativizes?) all human truths, and a post-modern abandonment of the idea of truth altogether. Even better, it would be interesting to have seen what the difference would be between the community of discourse in two institutions focused on these differing paradigms. My guess is that most Lutheran institutions currently find themselves navigating that border, and not the border between affirmation and dogmatism, that may be more focal in other traditions.

While Hughes does not just address institutions like ours, he does raise issues which we need to be talking about. At the November meeting of academic officers of North American Lutheran colleges and universities, Hughes' book was the one most frequently cited. So we know that such conversation has already begun, and we hope that it will continue and be broadened.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Robert Benne, *Quality With Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith With Their Religious Traditions*. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI; 2001

Joy Schroeder

Individuals concerned with strengthening or recovering their college or university's denominational connections and heritage will welcome Robert Benne's recent book, *Quality With Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2001). Benne, who serves as professor of religion and director for the Center for Religion and Society at Roanoke College, not only offers a general indictment of church-related schools for whom religious heritage has become merely "a flavor in the mix, a social ornament, or a fragile grace note" (p. 35), but he also provides strategies for reconnecting institutions with their sponsoring church bodies.

The first section of the book consists of Benne's assessment of the current situation at church-related colleges and universities. Drawing in large part from other recent analyses, especially James T. Burtchaell's *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), Benne describes schools' have lost their religious moorings and have become detached from their denomination's intellectual traditions. He cites the decreasing numbers of students, faculty, administrators, and board members who belong to the school's sponsoring religious tradition. Benne also notes that in the past "members of the academic community were part of an ongoing narrative that was sharply etched in communal memory," but now colleges no longer endeavor to "imprint their story" on faculty and students through celebration of the institution's founders or retellings of the institutional history (p. 12). He laments the diminished role of chapel services. Once a public event that "defined the rhythm of life for the institution" and attended by most or all of the community, the chapel service is now only one among many voluntary activities (p. 11).

Benne identifies a number of factors for the erosion of institutions' religious identity. Reaction to "market forces" and the competition for students brought about the tendency to dilute religious language in mission statements and other public discourse—out of fear (a *mistaken* fear, Benne believes) that fewer students will enroll if the school articulates a specific theological and religious vision. (Benne is highly critical of schools whose mission

statements limit themselves to "first article"--Creator and creation--language, ignoring the second and third persons of the Trinity--Christ and the Holy Spirit.) For most faculty members, allegiance to the various professional guilds shaped by an Enlightenment paradigm takes priority over maintaining the school's religious heritage or articulating a Christian intellectual position. Benne says that the roots of the problem can be found several generations in the past, as many schools in the middle decades of the twentieth century relied upon a "critical mass" of members of the denomination to carry the tradition. Instead, institutional leaders should have worked to shape and give voice to a theological vision arising from their respective traditions. In many cases, the fostering denominations share the blame because "the sponsoring traditions have to produce enough persons who intensely believe that the Christian account is pervasively relevant to the life of a college or university" (p. 179).

Benne names six institutions from differing religious traditions which he considers to be "bright lights" in an ever darkening landscape: Calvin College (Christian Reformed), Wheaton University (evangelical), Baylor University (Southern Baptist), the University of Notre Dame (Roman Catholic), Valparaiso University (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod), and St. Olaf College (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). These schools embody academic excellence (demonstrated by a high quality faculty and bright, engaged students) while maintaining faithfulness to the religious traditions that fostered the institutions.

Each of these institutions has a "critical mass" of community members who are adherents of the sponsoring religious body. Several of these schools (Calvin, Wheaton and Baylor) have maintained church connections through imposing certain confessional and/or behavioral requirements on their faculty and students. But these factors alone are not the reason for the institutions' successes. Benne argues that each of these schools has benefited from visionary leaders who have had "enough confidence in the Christian account of life and reality to insist that it be the organizing paradigm for the identity and mission of the college" (p. 97). Mission statements, sometimes explicitly Trinitarian, reflect and embody the

schools' theological heritage. Required courses in religion, theology, and philosophy send strong signals about the schools' commitments. Worship occupies a central place in the life of each school. In these schools "the Christian account of life and reality [is] made visible and relevant in all facets of each school's activities—academic, extra-curricular, music and the arts, worship, atmosphere, and self-definition" (p. 95).

The book's most compelling claim is that the *specific intellectual content* of an institution's own denominational tradition should permeate public discourse and serve as a strong voice in the classroom and chapel. Benne insists that piety alone, or a "generic Christianity," is not sufficient for conveying an institution's religious identity. Within most denominational traditions there are intellectual and theological resources which should shape and invigorate the entire academic endeavor.

Benne's penultimate chapter provides strategies for schools that desire to "keep the faith." He counsels mutual accountability between institutions and their sponsoring religious traditions. He argues that there should be a "critical mass" of faculty, administrators, board members, and students who identify strongly with the college's mission, with the ability to articulate this vision and provide leadership. There should also be "willing followers"—individuals sympathetic to the school's mission even if they do not carry the banner. Both of these groups are acquired and maintained through a careful selection or hiring process monitored by the appropriate authority (president, provost, dean, board, etc.). Benne believes that faculty members hostile, unsympathetic, or indifferent toward the college's theological tradition and vision may have some helpful things to offer (e.g., expertise in research, a critical counter voice, etc.), but should be outnumbered two to one by faculty who are firm proponents of or sympathetic toward the college's religious tradition (p. 187).

Benne says that the schools' vision should be inculcated in new members of the community, especially the faculty (p. 204). This can take place in faculty orientation and "faith and learning groups." Crucial leaders are the president, chaplain, board members, and the theology department. Regarding the latter, Benne argues that "the animating vision has to be borne by a first-rate theology department willing to take up that burden. The theology department has to be the trustworthy guardian of the school's particular

tradition of thought" (p. 204).

Benne's final chapter, a mere seven and a half pages, contains counsel for individuals at those schools which have experienced an too much of the "darkening trends" of secularization. He says that a handful of "true believers"—especially among the faculty—can begin to educate others about the institution's traditions. The goal in this case may be to give the tradition an *assured voice* in the institution: "If the Christian account is not and cannot be the organizing paradigm, it can at least provide one voice in the larger array of voices that inhabit any college or university. Furthermore, that voice can be assured a role by intentionally placing it amid the key facets of the school's life—faculty, administration, board, and student body" (p. 210).

One weakness in Benne's study is the under-representation of student and faculty voices. In his description of the six premier institutions, Benne quotes extensively from mission statements, college catalogs, administrators' speeches, and institutional websites. We do learn of chapel attendance figures and the numbers of Bible study groups in the dorms; however, missing are firsthand accounts from alumni and students. If students are the primary focus of educational efforts, quotes and anecdotal accounts from the student perspective could strengthen his arguments, demonstrating how students experience the results of the "top-down" approach enjoined by Benne. Furthermore, since Benne argues the need for integrating the school's theological vision into its academic life, it would be helpful to hear about some specific instances where he has actually observed this occurring in the classroom.

This book should be required reading for all presidents and board members of church-related colleges and universities. It would also make for lively discussions at faculty seminars. Not all readers will agree with Benne's approach to the faculty hiring process, such as his contention that at least one-third of the faculty should be communicant members of the sponsoring denomination. Many readers will certainly recognize in their own institutions the trends Benne describes, such as the move to let rhetoric about generic "values" and "service" carry most of the institution's religious freight. Those who care about providing a quality education "with soul" will find much value in Benne's challenging and provocative book.

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# ELCA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



**Augsburg College**  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Luther College**  
Decorah, Iowa

**Augustana College**  
Rock Island, Illinois

**Midland Lutheran College**  
Fremont, Nebraska

**Augustana College**  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

**Muhlenberg College**  
Allentown, Pennsylvania

**Bethany College**  
Linsborg, Kansas

**Newberry College**  
Newberry, South Carolina

**California Lutheran University**  
Thousand Oaks, California

**Pacific Lutheran University**  
Tacoma, Washington

**Capital University**  
Columbus, Ohio

**Roanoke College**  
Salem, Virginia

**Carthage College**  
Kenosha, Wisconsin

**St. Olaf College**  
Northfield, Minnesota

**Concordia College**  
Moorhead, Minnesota

**Susquehanna University**  
Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

**Dana College**  
Blair, Nebraska

**Texas Lutheran University**  
Seguin, Texas

**Finlandia University**  
Hancock, Michigan

**Thiel College**  
Greenville, Pennsylvania

**Gettysburg College**  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

**Wagner College**  
Staten Island, New York

**Grand View College**  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Waldorf College**  
Forest City, Iowa

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

**Wartburg College**  
Waverly, Iowa

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

**Wittenberg University**  
Springfield, Ohio