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

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INTERSECTIONS

SUMMER 2003

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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 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. 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.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

This journal grew out of the annual conference on "The Vocation of a Lutheran College" and it usually features presentations made at those conferences. But four years ago the Division for Higher Education and Schools of the ELCA and its Council of College and University Presidents received a grant from the Lutheran Brotherhood Foundation, later on followed by a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment, to start a **Lutheran Academy of Scholars in Higher Education**. Each year since, this academy has gathered about a dozen faculty members to a two week seminar about scholarly issues, the first three years at Harvard University, last summer at the University of California at Berkeley, and then these faculty had reunion conferences in the winter and summer that followed. The first three seminars were led by Dr. Ronald Thiemann, the John Lord O'Brian Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School, and we are very grateful to him for his excellent scholarly guidance.

At the academy, each of the participants worked on scholarly papers in their discipline, and they also participated in scholarly exchanges about the relationships between their faith and their profession, and between religion and society, and they worked on interdisciplinary papers, learning from each other both in topical discussions led by the leader and in critiques of the work each faculty member presented.

The papers presented in this issue of *Intersections* grew out of the discussions among the participants in the first Lutheran Academy. We will present other papers from the same cohort in future issues. The official theme for that academy was "Finding Our Voice – Christian Faith and Critical Vision", but informally the theme became "**What's Faith Got To Do With It?**" The four papers in this issue have answers to that question with reference to teaching and the classroom situation. Can you apply these ideas to your own teaching and learning?

Arne Selbyg
Director, ELCA Colleges and Universities

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *Intersections* features essays by four people whom I got to know as part of the first Lutheran Academy of Scholars. You can begin, I hope, to get a feeling for the quality of conversation we were able to have together from the depth of concern and the variety of viewpoints represented here. We hope to publish more such papers in the future.

Genuine conversation is a gift and an art, particularly when it takes place between people who are each specialists in some particular academic area. We are all tempted to wear our specialist masks and speak only from our lecturers podium. But genuine conversation requires something more than that. It requires that we speak as human beings, and that we listen to what others, who may speak with a slightly different academic accent, are saying. The Lutheran Academy was an opportunity for such genuine conversation. As such it was an extremely valuable experience. I only hope that DHES or the Council of ELCA Presidents finds some way to continue these Academies into the future.

In addition to the four essays from academy members, this issue features an *Intersections* first: A response to a response to a review. That is to say we now have evidence of a continuing conversation, in this case between Baird Tipson and Robert Benne. I am very happy to see this. At some point it might be fun to get these folks at the same table and then see where this extremely important conversation might turn. It's a conversation about something vitally important to us, namely what the paradigm of Lutheran higher education should be. Thanks to both Benne and Tipson for their contributions.

Tom Christenson
Editor
tchrste@capital.edu

'IN, WITH, AND UNDER.' THE TRADITION AND THE TEACHING OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Pamela K. Brubaker

The study of Christian ethics can be a contentious issue at church-related colleges, particularly if students come from diverse religious backgrounds. Does the professor imbue students with the doctrines of the specific Christian tradition of the college, expose them to a variety of Christian traditions, include other religious and philosophical perspectives? What about those students who have no religious background or commitment? These questions about the teaching of ethics are indicative of the debate over the purposes of Christian higher education. Many critics are asking what Christian differences there are in church-related liberal arts colleges.

I suspect that this concern for a strong doctrinal purpose for Christian higher education is related to the belief that society needs a religious basis - usually what is called the Judeo-Christian tradition - to thrive. Citizens need a common identity, history, and purpose, according to this view, which is provided by a shared religion. There are those who claim that a common religion, Christian, civil or otherwise, is not necessary for society to flourish. (There are also constitutional issues at stake, particularly the anti-establishment clause of the First Amendment.) Some claim that a commitment to our democratic process is what binds us together. I affirm this latter position, but I also agree with those who argue that this includes acceptance of at least the "democratic ideals of freedom, equality, and mutual respect." (Thiemann, 173) Beyond this, we seek to develop common ground out of our distinct religious or secular traditions and perspectives in regards to a sense of the common good.

The dialectic of faith and reason

I believe that a primary purpose of liberal arts colleges is to educate for citizenship in a democratic society.¹ Such an education should help develop the skills for participating in the democratic process and contribute to the search for common ground. I think that the dialectic between faith and reason characteristic of the Lutheran tradition is a very useful approach for this task. For Christian higher education, it offers a model that encourages both freedom of inquiry and church-relatedness. For secular higher education, it provides an approach to religious studies which takes seriously faith, along with critical inquiry. (I speak as one who taught religious studies for four years in a public university.) Although I am not Lutheran, I appreciate this tradition and its under girding of the university in which I teach.²

The mission statement of California Lutheran University (CLU), whose liberal arts college I teach in, embraces this dialectic: "Rooted in the Lutheran tradition of Christian faith, the University encourages critical inquiry into matters of both faith and reason." CLU, founded in 1959, is the youngest of the colleges affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). About 30% of its students are Lutheran, with about the same percentage Roman Catholic, and a smattering of students from other Protestant denominations or other world religions. A significant number of students are what some call "unchurched," representatives of the secular southern California culture which seems to think Christian means fundamentalist. About one-fourth of our students are students of color (18% Latino is typical) or international. We also have a significant number of re-entry students.

CLU students are required to take two religion courses as part of their general education requirements. The first is REL 100: Introduction to Christianity. The second is an upper-level elective. Many students choose "Introduction to Christian Ethics," in part because the Schools of Business and Education also encourage their majors to take this particular course. As these are large majors, many of the students will come from these schools. Few are religion majors or minors. This course is my primary teaching responsibility. I want to illustrate and support my position by discussing my approach to teaching Christian ethics.

Some might ask how one can have a dialogue between faith and reason with such a diversity of religious backgrounds and the strong secular representation? I perceive teaching Christian Ethics in this setting as an opportunity. It is more characteristic of the religious diversity of the "real" world than in a college with a religiously homogeneous student population. Those students who come are shaped by a religious tradition, and are able to bring their perspective into dialogue with others both inside and outside the classroom. Students' faith may be strengthened or transformed; in either case there is a maturing. In some cases, common ground is discovered with those from other, or no, tradition. In regards to ethics, some students come to realize that one can follow a personal ethic, while having a wider latitude of behaviors for public policy, and that this is both reasonable and right. Altogether, students learn respect for others different from themselves and commitment to a common good.

An overview of a Christian Ethics course

Although I would be hard pressed to claim that this approach is distinctively or uniquely Lutheran, I believe it certainly resonates with aspects of the Lutheran tradition. In my ethics classes I try to develop communities of moral discourse, in which students develop their ability to reflect on a variety of ethical issues and to articulate a position in conversation with those who may hold different faith commitments and ethical positions. I try to make the classroom a safe space to discuss controversial issues and to hear different points of view. I do this in part by setting ground rules which I ask students to adopt that although we may not agree with someone's ideas, we do not attack them personally. We give each other the benefit of the doubt, that we want our decisions to be moral. Also, I point out that there are not serious consequences to the positions we may take in class, for the sake of argument; we are not acting as legislators or a jury, for instance.

My Christian ethics class, although hopefully a safe space, is a site of critical inquiry into matters of both faith and reason. This is due in part through the diversity of voices in the classroom. (Exposure to a range of positions usually facilitates critical thinking as to the strengths and weaknesses of each.) To some extent, the diversity of contemporary American society is represented in the class. This, along with the fact that students often do not know each other, makes the classroom similar to a "public square." Students tell me that they have not participated in depth discussions on the issues we cover with people of such diverse views. I trust that students who participate in this community of moral discourse for a semester will be both motivated and better equipped to participate in such communities, including public ones, after they leave college.

As stated in the catalogue, the purpose of our upper-level Introduction to Christian Ethics class is "to examine and analyze Christian ethics today, its relationship to the Bible and Christian communities; and its thinking on such important personal and social issues" as human sexuality, bioethics, prejudice and oppression, ecology, economic life, war and peace. Students engage in oral debate and group presentations, prepare several case studies, and participate in a service-learning project. Through these and other activities, such as lecture and discussion, students critically reflect on their moral values and principles in light of Christian faith and various philosophical perspectives. Although I present the two aspects of ethics that Larry Rasmussen and Bruce

Birch call the ethics of being and the ethics of doing, class assignments center on doing, especially decision-making. I believe, though, that asking students to take a stand on tough issues does help strengthen their character.

We engage in ethical reflection from the first day of class, usually with the Bomb Shelter game/simulation. In this activity, students work in small groups to select twelve people (all the shelter can hold) from a list of twenty to be sheltered during a terrorist nuclear attack on our area. Little is known of these people, other than their sex, age, occupation, and in some cases the race/ethnicity and/or religion and family status. They have agreed to accept the decision of the groups, who are themselves in a safe location and acting in an official capacity. The groups have twenty minutes to choose how to make their decision and to complete the activity. They are asked to track the reasons for their choices and the emotions they feel. Although this activity can be emotionally difficult, I like to use it as it quickly gets to the heart of what moral dilemmas are about.

Many issues and feelings surface during the activity, including the question of whether we ever have the right to make decisions about who is to live or die - is that "playing God?" - and if we do make such decisions, how should we proceed. This activity becomes the basis for an introduction to the elements of an ethical decision, beginning with the distinction between deontological (rule-binding) and teleological (goal-oriented) ethics. All students hold to the rule that one does not take innocent life. But are there situations in which one makes an exception to this rule to achieve a worthy goal? Is it better to save twelve lives than to lose twenty? Why, or why not? These questions relate to the evaluative element of an ethical decision: What ought to be done in this case? Questions about whom to include and on what basis - potential fertility, keeping a family together, ethnic or religious diversity - help clarify values and goals. Questions such as "Can the shelter really only support twelve people? If so, what will happen when the pregnant woman gives birth?" or "Can a diabetic survive without insulin?" relate to the empirical element of an ethical decision: What is the case? This involves examining the relevant facts, concepts and theories, drawing on the social and natural sciences. (See Stivers.)

Deepening our understanding of the evaluative element is a primary focus of the course as we explore the moral traditions we draw on in deciding what ought to be done. How do we use scripture in doing ethics? What are the

alternatives in Christian ethics, philosophical ethics? Are Christian and philosophical perspectives compatible? What should be the relationship between the church and politics? Although we discuss these questions separately, all these elements are brought together in assignments, such as case studies. But first, a brief sketch of these elements.

The discussion of scripture and ethics focuses on issues of interpretation and authority. We read about fundamentalist and liberal approaches, often using issues around sexuality as an illustration of the differences. But it is also important to remind students, irregardless of these differences, of the crucial role of scripture - *sola scriptura* - for Martin Luther and the Reformation and thus most Protestant denominations. This discussion of scripture and ethics leads into a presentation of various theological ethical approaches - Roman Catholic, Lutheran, evangelical, liberationist - as well as philosophical approaches - humanism, egoism, utilitarianism, behaviorism - and the relationship between these. (See Crook.)

In keeping with my goal of helping prepare students for citizenship, I argue that it is important to ground one's moral claims/arguments/positions both religiously and philosophically. I use Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" as an excellent model of this approach. King grounds his support/practice of civil disobedience both religiously and philosophically by making distinctions between God's law or the moral law and human law.

The last typology I find useful in developing a framework for doing Christian ethics is how churches relate to social issues, or religion and politics. For this, I use Robert Benne's article, "Hot and Cool Connections." Benne identifies four approaches, differing as to whether they are direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional. The "ethics of character," the shaping of the "deepest inward orientation of persons" through preaching, teaching, worship and discipline, is indirect and unintentional in relating the church to political life. The "ethics of conscience" is also indirect, but intentional in connecting the teachings of the church to politics by activating the conscience of the laity. His third approach is "the church as corporate conscience," in which the church acts directly to affect political life, through Papal encyclicals, bishops' letters, and church social statements. Finally, there is the church with power, in which the church moves from persuasion to "more coercive" actions through its use of its institutional power to affect public

policy. Although we reflect on each of these, we make extensive use of his third approach.

Elizabeth Bettenhausen has described Luther's use of reason to discern justice for his time as a model for how we might do the same. In my judgment, this is what ELCA Social Statements seek to do. These statements are a significant aspect of our course readings and assignments. I use these social statements to honor our university's connection to the ELCA as well as their value as models of ethical reflection and to contribute to ecumenical awareness of the students.

Since most of the students in the class are usually not Lutheran, I explain that these documents are useful case studies in how one church thinks about social issues. I also encourage students to explore the positions of other churches, either through reference books in our library or links on our course web page.

As not even most Lutheran students are familiar with these social statements, a description of the process the ELCA uses in preparing these documents is useful. Students are interested to learn that several of the Lutheran students in one of my classes participated in this process by responding to the study on economic life when it was one of our texts. This also presents an opportunity to compare and contrast this approach with that of other churches - a papal encyclical, for example, or a congregational polity. When we use the statements, we look at the use of scripture, theological claims, social analysis, moral principles, and proposed actions. Each statement reminds us of Luther's conviction that we are justified by grace through faith, that our engagement in ethical action is our response to God's grace.

Course activities

To illustrate the usefulness of these documents as resources for critical inquiry into matters of faith and reason as well as education for citizenship, I will describe three units in the course: 1) Human Sexuality and Marriage, 2) Economic Life, and 3) War and Peace. I usually begin with the unit on sexuality and marriage, as it is the one of most interest to students. It also raises important issues in regards to both empirical and evaluative elements of decision-making. What difference, if any, does what the social sciences have to say about sexuality make to a Christian ethic? Are the teachings of scripture on sexuality culturally bound? As part of our exploration of this topic, we read the Message on Sexuality. I explain about the failed attempts to develop a

social statement on this topic, which I attribute primarily to differences over interpretation of scripture and the use of empirical evidence - facts and theories. Our prior examination of conservative and liberal approaches to scripture comes alive as we discuss marriage and divorce, or homosexuality. Are more liberal churches accommodating to contemporary culture or correcting a sex negative dynamic ethicists such as James Nelson think colored the Christian ethic historically. Should one's personal or churchly ethic become public policy?

The unit on economic life draws on the study on economic life, as well as other materials, to present facts and theories. Students are generally much less informed about economic reality than they are the sexual state of the nation, or what the scriptures say about wealth and poverty. Students read the parables of the vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16) and the talents (Mt. 25:14-30) or the stories of the rich ruler (Lk. 18:18-30) and Zaccheus (Lk. 19:1-10) in small groups and discuss the passages in relation to each other. These passages were chosen to illustrate differences, at least on the surface, and to challenge students to think more deeply. Students are introduced to the principle of "sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all" through reading the Social Statement on Economic Life. They then use this principle to examine relevant issues. A recent focus was on sweatshops, using videos, readings, and a field trip. We concluded the unit with a simulation of a Disney stockholders meeting we read about, which considered an anti-sweatshop resolution. Groups of students represented sweatshop workers in Haiti who made Disney clothing, the National Labor Committee/People of Faith Network, and Disney management and Board of Directors. (Many students in the course were business majors.) They strove to find common ground between enlightened self-interest on the part of stockholders and managers and the concern for human rights and "sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all" by workers and activists.

The unit on War and Peace directly engages the relation of religion and the state. We begin with an examination of historic Christian approaches, crusade, just war, pacifism, and liberation theology, and read the ELCA Social Statement "For Peace in God's World." My most effective case study on this issue has been the School of the Americas. We begin by viewing the film "Romero," which tells the story of Bishop Oscar Romero and his assassination. We then find out more about the School of the Americas from both its critics and the US Army (its sponsor). We learn that Bishop Oscar Romero and many others in Central America were murdered by soldiers

trained at the School of the Americas. Students form groups to research and represent particular positions - relatives of the disappeared and assassinated, human rights and religious groups, US Army and SOA officials, and current Central American political and business leaders - in a mock Congressional hearing on a bill to close the SOA. Is the School responsible for the actions of its students? Should people of conscience support such a program? What is in the interest of our national security? Who decides? It was more difficult in this case to find common ground between the school and its critics, although some students tried. The majority supported closing the school.

Conclusion

Hopefully, this examination of aspects of my Christian ethics courses has supported my position that critical inquiry into matters of faith and reason is a useful approach in educating for citizenship. This aspect of the Lutheran tradition, as well as the dialectic of religion and politics, undergirds discussions, activities, and assignments. We seldom talk directly about vocation after introducing it as an important concept of Lutheran theology. Yet it continues as a theme. "The use of reason for the discerning of justice," Bettenhausen claims, "is effected primarily in the social activity of vocation in the various structures of society." (177) Students think about vocation in this course in terms of how they might act as a citizen, a consumer, a business person or professional, a member of a faith community or nongovernmental organization to put their ethics into practice.

Students are also challenged to question their ethics. For instance, many strongly support the death penalty. Should they maintain this position in light of Lutheran (and Catholic) statements against the death penalty? It is in matters such as this, where one's predisposition is challenged by the teachings of one's faith community, that I see the confessional aspect of the tradition emerging. What does it mean to confess faith in God as creator, redeemer, and sustainer and to think about the death penalty? Or human rights? Or the poor and oppressed? Although I believe that one can be against the death penalty or support human rights or be in solidarity with the poor and oppressed on philosophical humanist grounds, for many of my students it is their faith that nudges them toward these positions. It is a response to the call to neighbor love, no matter how different the neighbor may be.

Although the Lutheran dialectical, confessional tradition may not be explicitly at the center, it is “in, with and under” the elements of the course, freeing and transforming.

Pamela Brubaker is professor of religion at California Lutheran University.

Notes

¹ Liberal arts colleges should also prepare students for living in the rapidly changing global community, but that is beyond the scope of this essay.

² See the discussion of models of Christian higher education in Hughes and Adrian. In this paper I am endorsing a Lutheran model of higher education, yet I acknowledge a place for other models, including Anabaptist, the tradition from which I come.

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IMPELLED TO PLURALISM: THOUGHTS ABOUT TEACHING IN A LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

James L. Huffman

Precisely accurate or not, our childhood images help us craft those personal narratives that, in turn, shape our understandings of life, God, and the world. In one such image, I see myself kneeling beside the living room sofa, Mother on one side and my sister on the other, listening to Dad's prayers and thinking, "I'm so fortunate: born in America, and reared in the one true religion!" Half a century has colored the image: encounters with friends who believe and friends who deny, with personal tragedies and triumphs, with other religious traditions as fervent as my own. Today, when the scene floats into my consciousness, it comes as a point of departure. I remain thankful for the stability and the love I experienced in those morning devotions, but the sense of blessed superiority has vanished. Decades of living have taken away my conviction that Christianity is the best religion. More than that, they have convinced me that religious triumphalism is not only wrong but pernicious, perhaps even un-Christian. In the pages that follow, I will attempt to explain both the ideas that have led me to this conviction and the implications of religious pluralism for my teaching. First, however, a reflection on the personal journey that has led to this place.

The Journey

Life's first two decades found me following what I would call *the comfortable Christ*. I did not see his path as comfortable then, being part of a community that required us to take a stand against prevailing culture: no dancing, no movies, no card playing, no profanity. But the setting provided a secure body of beliefs that made decisions easy. My home exuded the best values of the rural Midwest: hard work; deep love, openly shared; active participation in community life. My school inculcated American values right along with biology and history. And the church offered a clear theology centered in God's sovereignty, the Bible's infallibility, and a direct relationship with the Creator. Thus, I entered adulthood with a full set of beliefs. God existed. *He* was sovereign over all. He had revealed Himself to humanity through his only son, Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, spent the better part of three years preaching and healing, died at the hand of the establishment, rose again the third day, and ascended to heaven as the exclusive lord of all on earth. Those who believed in Christ were saved eternally; those who did not were damned. Like my peers, I questioned some of this at times. Did God really exist? Why, if salvation had to come through Jesus, had so many not encountered him? But the questions were peripheral and occasional; the certainties formed my core.

My undergraduate years did little to challenge this, but by the time I was in graduate school, I had begun to struggle with ideas about a *more complex Christ*. The new setting had much to do with the change. Working on a degree in journalism at Northwestern University, I had professors who sneered (often unfairly, I thought then, as I do now) at absolutes and at my brand of conservatism. Then, as a reporter in Minneapolis, I developed friends who were simultaneously more skeptical about religion and more passionate about social justice than I ever had been; I also began, on the paper's religion beat, to have conversations with Christians of many kinds, from death of God advocates to evangelical apologists, and I found most of them compelling on some points. When I went back to school for a degree in East Asian studies, expecting to become a foreign correspondent, the questions multiplied. And when I went to Japan, with my wife Judith, for two years of study, I began to encounter sincere, even passionate, religious people whose truth search had not brought them even close to faith in Christ. What did it all mean?

Even today I can remember the fear I felt when I wrote in my journal, somewhere on a Tokyo train, that I no longer could assign to the realm of the damned anyone who did not believe in Christ. I still believed in Jesus as the only savior. But my belief had become more nuanced. I came to the conclusion in these years that even if salvation were through Jesus alone, those who pursued truth sincerely would achieve salvation – whether they were conscious or not that they were following Jesus. Christ may have said, "No one comes to the Father but by me"; but he also said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." Years later the evangelical theologian Clark H. Pinnock would argue that "the faith principle is the basis of universal accessibility," even while defending the claim that salvation only is available, ultimately, through Christ. Theologians as orthodox as John Wesley and Ulrich Zwingli, he pointed out, had insisted that God would not condemn those who had not heard of Christ.¹ It was a formula that I found appealing.

But not appealing enough. By the late 1970s when I had settled in as a professor at a Lutheran university, having been lured away from journalism by the delights of Japanese history, I no longer found Pinnock's formula adequate. I found myself moving into a third stage, where I came to see *Christ as the humble teacher*. The better I knew those Japanese friends, the less I was able to conceive that a just God would force them to come through *my* faith alone to

achieve salvation. The more I studied scripture and theology, the more I became convinced that the love described in the gospel precludes superiority complexes (even Christian ones). The more I examined history, the more certain I was that religious triumphalism is evil. Even Pinnock's idea of salvation for all through Christ smacks of arrogance. And arrogance, I decided, merits no place in the theology of the servant Christ. Thus, I became a pluralist—still Christian but no longer willing to claim superiority for my faith over that of my Buddhist or Islamic sisters and brothers. Diane Eck of Harvard has written that “Christians have not only a witness to bear, but also a witness to hear.”² As long as I considered my own tradition superior, I found it difficult to hear what those in other faiths had to say.

The Argument

The only thing unique about my ideas lies in that which is unique for all of us, the path I have taken to get to this position, and the particular combination of reasons that make it compelling to me. Before discussing those reasons, however, I must explain what I mean by pluralism. I use the word not in a formal philosophical sense but more informally, taking it to denote simply a nonjudgmental appreciation of other religions, particularly in matters of faith and revelation.³ Pluralism of this sort does not necessarily regard all religions as equal or identical; nor does it suggest that believers should be less than fully committed to their own traditions. Indeed, it insists that without such commitment, dialogue is meaningless. The core of the pluralism that I envision lies in a radical rejection of triumphalism, a refusal to regard my own faith tradition as superior to others.

1. In explaining my path to pluralism, I will start with the arguments that spring primarily from the realm of human reason. As I noted above, even during the first two stages of my journey, I struggled with several intellectual questions: why a compassionate God would damn people whose truth search had been sincere; how a creative document such as the Bible could be squeezed into neat doctrinal systems. One of the most important of the rational issues, for me, was the contradiction between the universal claims Christian theology makes about God and the particularistic way most Christian writers apply those claims. God's universality lies at the heart of Christian orthodoxy. God is: the creator of heaven and earth, the One by whom and for whom all things are made, the parent of us all. If I take the wings of the morning, God is there; if I descend into the deep at night, God is there. What sense then does it make to limit God's revelation to the Christian scriptures? What of the Chinese sages' writings? The Indians'? The Nigerians'? Why would a

compassionate, all-powerful being hide revelation from three-fourths of earth's people? When I asked that question as a youth, I was told that I was naive. No one ever has answered it for me though. The Sri Lankan Methodist Wesley Ariarajah has written, “All beings live and move and have their being in that God. There is no Christian God, Hindu God or Muslim God; there can only be Christian, Hindu and Muslim understandings of God. . . . The biblical teaching is that there are no two gods, only God.”⁴ If that one being is the God of the Buddhists and Confucianists, their scriptures and teachings surely must emanate from that being too.

Another compelling issue lies in the fact that pride is blinding and corrupting. Once, I thought the proverb's warning that “pride comes before disaster”⁵ was meant personally; arrogance made me careless, liable to grand mistakes. Over time, I have come to see that the writer referred also to systems, to nations, and to faith traditions. When I see Truth as residing in my system alone, I am likely to ignore others' insights—and thus to impoverish myself. As a scholar of Asia, I have seen so often the tendency of self-impressed Europeans and Americans to slight, ignore, and mistreat Asian nations. That same sense of superiority, unconscious though it may be, too often renders Asian religions irrelevant, uninteresting, or just plain backward, in the eyes of Christian triumphalists. When the Bostonian Edward House went to Japan as a reporter for the *New York Tribune* in 1870, he admired Christianity. When he wrote his editor two years later, however, he had decided that missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic, were “extremely mischievous.” The reason? The missionaries' insistence that Christianity alone had anything salutary to offer had become an impediment to “the free progress of ideas and actions,” a block to “freedom of opinion.”⁶ The German novelist Gunter Grass expressed a similar thought in his 1999 Nobel prize acceptance speech, when he lamented the frequency with which church and state authorities attempt to silence writers who allude “to the idea that truth exists only in the plural.”⁷ Convinced that only *their* truth is truly true (or afraid, perhaps, that it really is not true), the triumphalists are uninterested in looking seriously at the riches other traditions have to offer.

Perhaps the most serious of the rational issues, for me, lies in the fact that the step from claiming superior truth to excluding, even oppressing, the people who hold “inferior” beliefs often is a short one. Fewer features of human history are more disheartening than the endless lists of people who have violated others in the name of religious differences: Confucian Chinese who obliterated Buddhists in the ninth century, Tendai Buddhist priests who burned down Shingon temples in fourteenth century Japan; Spanish warriors who

sailed to the Indian Ocean in the fifteenth century with "a spiritual urge to conquer heathen lands for Christ" and a "fanatical zeal to cut at the root of Islam by attacking it from behind,"⁸ Catholic priests who destroyed Filipino village life in the 1700s by forcing people off the farm and "under the bell," Americans who wanted to force change on "polished, intelligent, suave, apt, enterprising, eye-taking" Japanese in the 1800s, simply because these people were "heathen from top to bottom."⁹ And the list continues today: Catholics and Protestants at war in Northern Ireland, Jews and Moslems in the Middle East, Christians and Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Christians and Moslems in southeastern Europe, pro-lifers and pro-choicers in the United States, Hindus, Sikhs and Moslems in India and Pakistan. It would be inaccurate to blame these conflicts on faith issues alone, or to say that religious triumphalism necessarily leads to bigotry; the issues and power relationships are complex. But it would be equally mistaken to ignore the fact that the encouragement of a sense of religious superiority far too often has legitimized, and even empowered, those who are prone to abuse others in the name of faith.

On learning of the death of David Livingstone in 1874, the editor of the *New York Herald* (hardly an extremist paper) wrote that Africa, "assailed by the influences of civilization, . . . must surrender and become a useful, wholesome and prosperous home for many millions now crowded into Europe and America." Did he worry about the fate of the Africans themselves? Not at all. Did he raise moral questions about the coming invasion? No. The fact that the Africans were neither Christian nor "civilized" made this "one of the noblest works of our time."¹⁰ It is tempting to argue that this was another era, but it was little more than a decade ago that a board member of a Lutheran college told me that we should not support divestment in South Africa because Christian companies supporting apartheid were preferable to non-Christian firms of any kind. No matter how vigorously those of us in the center shake off our responsibility for religion-induced intolerance, no matter how easily we blame bigotry on the extremists or the "right wing," the fact is that as long as we accept the tendency to call other faith traditions "wrong," or "heathen," we run the risk of becoming, at the least, complicit in perpetuating religiously based discrimination.

2. None of these "rational" arguments would be wholly convincing to me, as a Christian, if biblical revelation did not say something quite similar. There was a time when the oft-quoted exclusive texts worried me quite deeply: Jesus's claim in John 14:6, for example, that "no one comes to the Father except by me," or Paul's assertion in I Timothy 2:5 that "there is one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus." Such statements remain problematic, I admit. But

beyond the fact that proof texts such as these must be interpreted in the light of broader biblical themes, they need to be understood in the context of their times, as statements made to new Jewish believers from a tradition that had a specific, agreed upon understanding of God's nature. Ariarajah argues that, taken in the light of Christ's other work and teachings, these texts should be seen as "faith statements" that "derive their meaning in the context of faith, and have no meaning outside the community of faith." They were meant to express the special, loving relationship between Christ and his followers, not "to discredit other belief." We are mistaken "when we take these confessions in the language of faith and love and turn them into absolute truths."¹¹

More important to me is the fact that the use of faith confessions to denigrate other religions runs counter to the overall tenor of Christ's approach to truth, to what Steven Schroeder calls "a theology of the cross grounded on the confession that God entered into human form and died." Our Lord's command in the Sermon on the Mount that we avoid judging others is phrased in unambiguous terms, as are several statements about leaving evaluations of others to God, because of the impossibility of discerning the heart.¹² The central characteristic of Jesus's ministry was humility and service, a fact that suggests both the necessity of adopting a learner's stance and the inappropriateness of making ourselves judges of others' traditions. Christ did judge, but only those within his own community who claimed some special hold on truth or twisted Jewish beliefs into self-serving doctrines that perverted their own tradition: the false prophets, the Pharisees, the haughtily pious and learned. Toward others, he was the gentle teacher, the one who "made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave" (Philippians 2:6), the one who washed the disciples' feet, who made innocent children the model for those seeking to enter God's kingdom. One looks in vain in the gospels for condemnation or rejection of other religious traditions; what one finds is a life centered in service and a message focused on hope for hungry, seeking people.

One also finds in Jesus an openness to the unconventional, to those whom the establishment rejected as wrong or unworthy. The theologian John Cobb, arguing that "Christocentrism provides the deepest and fullest reason for openness to others," says that Jesus calls us to take other traditions seriously because his "character is above all love, not only of those like ourselves, but of those we are prone to count as opponents."¹³ Reading Mark and Luke in particular, one cannot miss the constancy with which Jesus reached out to the groups whom Israel's leaders rejected. He did not tell the Roman centurion or the woman from Syro-Phoenicia to get their theology right; he merely praised their faith and

touched their children. When the unorthodox cast out spirits in Jesus's name, it was his disciples he rebuked—for their judgmentalism. He irritated the religious leaders by socializing with prostitutes, tax collectors and all manner of sinners—and acting as if he enjoyed it. He welcomed women as regular members of his entourage. The point is that theological correctness and conventional norms were not a concern of Jesus or his biographers, except to point out that “correctness” was an impediment to salvation. The only commandment that mattered, he reminded the would-be follower, was love: of God, of neighbors, and of self. To use the teachings of that kind of man as an excuse for triumphalism is to miss his spirit.

3. A final reason for eschewing exclusivism lies in the danger that it poses to our own spiritual and intellectual growth. I already have noted the way exclusivism blinds us to what other traditions have to offer; here, I want to discuss specific insights from Asian religions that I would have missed had I persisted in my early tendency simply to reject other traditions. One of my inspirations is Tanaka Shozo, an early environmental activist who drew openly on Confucius's vision of a magnanimous political order and on Buddhism's teachings about how to maintain personal tranquility, even as he found in Christ the model for “living the truth.”¹⁴ Another is the Quaker thinker Nitobe Inazo, a vice president of the League of Nations. For want of space, however, I will focus on the works of Endo Shusaku, twentieth century Japan's most important Christian novelist.

Baptized a Catholic, Endo was indefatigable in his effort to relate Christian experience to Asian faith traditions, and the result was a remarkable outpouring of insights. He is best known for his novel *Silence*, in which Buddhist ideas about quietude and perseverance inform his descriptions of seventeenth century village Christians who ask why God remained silent while they were being tortured, only to be told, “I was not silent. I suffered beside you.”¹⁵ *The Samurai*, set in the same era, posits the arrogance of an ambitious priest against the humanity of several poor samurai-farmers, and brings them to faith only after they have identified with images of Christ's emaciated body on the cross. It is the hurting, empathizing Christ, not the glorious icon of European cathedrals, in whom they discover hope. Asians, Endo often said, are drawn most compellingly to a God who, like a “warm-hearted mother rather than a stern father,” nurtures them, weeps with them and gives them “changeless, enduring companionship.” He pursues this theme most explicitly in his *Life of Jesus*, where he discovers the greatest meaning not in the resurrection but in God's decision at Calvary to cast off power in order to understand human beings. Of the Master, he says: “He was thin; he wasn't much. One thing about him, however—he was never

known to desert other people if they had trouble. When women were in tears, he stayed by their side. When old folks were lonely, he sat with them quietly. . . . The sunken eyes overflowed with love more profound than a miracle.”¹⁶

Endo's ideas are controversial: some of them orthodox, others disturbing. Always, however, he challenges us to see the gospel in new ways. And always he draws on two springs: his own Christian faith, and the Asian religious traditions that surround him. After the protagonist in his last novel, *Deep River*, has indicted Christianity for not regarding “other religions as equal to itself,” for regarding “noble people of other faiths” merely as “Christians driving without a license,” he comments: “I think the real dialogue takes place when you believe that God has many faces, and that he exists in all religions.” He is not saying that all religions are the same, or that he would find himself satisfied in any faith tradition. Indeed, his protagonist concludes, “I can't leave the Church, . . . Jesus has me in his grasp.” But Endo insists that a Christ who “accepted and loved the Samaritan” seeks followers who will study and learn earnestly, openly and without condescension, from other paths toward God.¹⁷

Asian religious truths that have shaped my own religious understandings also include the Shinto appreciation for the sacredness of nature and for the divine spark in all beings, Confucian emphases on the ethical responsibilities of leaders and the necessity of recognizing the goodness in everyone, and the Buddhist belief in the consequences of our actions and in the inability of material things to satisfy. These emphases all resonate with Christian themes, just as Christian ideas have counterparts in Asian religions, but Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism look at these ideas in their own ways; and they put more emphasis on them. When the French priest Jean Sullivan observes that Jesus' ideas were “disconcerting, unclassifiable,” that his “logic was interior,” never “organized according to a rigorous logic,” and that “only commentators and exegetes . . . have transformed his sayings into a system,”¹⁸ I find my spirit resonating, partly because of the power of his argument, but mostly because my encounter with East Asian faiths has readied me to hear him.

There are other arguments for pluralism. Ariarajah contends that the *dialogue* mandated by the gospel is not possible without mutual respect for each other's views, and that mutuality cannot occur among people who consider the other ineligible for salvation. Cobb maintains that Christ's focus on the future, on the coming kingdom of God, requires an openness to change that is possible only when we “listen to the truth and wisdom of others.”¹⁹ Even Luther, I would suggest, gives us clues about the need to move

beyond exclusivism. On the negative side, his shameful anti-Semitism sprang, at least in part, from a proclivity for judging non-Christian people and doctrines intolerantly. On the positive side, his ability to break with orthodoxy stands testament, as does his insistence on the universal priesthood of believers, to a conviction that eternal truth is not chained to a theology approved by the establishment or by tradition. It follows that one must always be a seeker, open to truths and revelations in other traditions as much as in one's own. Space precludes more detailed consideration of these other arguments for pluralism, however. We need to turn now to the effect that the rejection of triumphalism is likely to have on one's teaching.

The Impact

Evaluating teaching is difficult. To ferret out precisely the connections between values and practice is impossible. At the same time, ongoing self-evaluation lies at the core of good teaching. It is for that reason that I will venture, cautiously, into a discussion of the impact my commitment to pluralism has had on my role as a classroom teacher in a Lutheran university. While the areas that might be considered are endless, I will focus on two topics that wend their way with unusual frequency through the history of East Asia: religion and nationalism.

The first thing to be said about the way I present the East Asian religious traditions is that I insist, in classroom discussions, that we use respectful language. Words such as superstitious and weird are not acceptable, especially in discussions of more dramatic topics such as Daoism and shamanism. I make it clear to students that I am not interested in controlling their thoughts, but that fruitful understanding of a practice is impossible when we assign that practice to the "superstition" or "odd" bin. My second rule is to work hard at understanding the East Asian religious systems as fully and sympathetically as possible myself. Religious systems are by nature complex and nebulous. If Christianity seems that way to me, how much more the traditions that are foreign. For that reason, when a doctrine or practice seems counter-intuitive, or irrational, I believe I have a special responsibility to work it through until it no longer baffles me.

The Buddhist doctrine of non-attachment illustrates this process. Central to Buddhist thought, it holds that the source of life's pain is attachment to objects of any sort; the goal of life is to reach a point where one is no longer attached to anything. For years, I taught about this doctrine quite unconvincingly, silently thinking, "This really is nonsense; things *are* real; things bring joy; is it impossible to become wholly unattached." As I have struggled with the doctrine,

however, my understanding of it has grown, and I have come to regard it with deep respect, almost awe. The concept has little, if anything, to do with denying the pleasure that comes from having material or sensual things. It means rather recognizing the ephemeral nature of all worldly phenomena and developing the capacity to give them up effortlessly, instantaneously—*without attachment*. I still have my doubts about whether human beings are capable of such an attitude and I know that my understanding remains incomplete. But as I have come closer to understanding, I have seen student reactions change. Those once likely to dismiss Buddhism with "That's strange!" seem to take it more seriously. As my explanations have come closer to a reality with which students can connect, the discussions have grown livelier. My third rule in teaching East Asian religions is to connect East Asian practices and doctrines, when possible, to similarities in Christianity, and thus to make them seem less exceptional. I never suggest that East Asian religions are not fundamentally different from Christianity; they are, and students remain aware of that fact. But it is striking how much more understandable a tradition can be when similarities are highlighted. When, for example, students read about priests in the pacifist Buddhist tradition fighting viciously with each other, or when they see "non-attached" bonzes flaunting their material wealth, they often react quite skeptically about Buddhist doctrine, until similar doctrine/practice discrepancies in the Christian church are pointed out. The Chinese practice of ancestor veneration calls for a discussion of my own family's practice of placing flowers on the graves of departed loved ones. Even the non-attachment becomes clearer to some students when I discuss Christ's admonitions about the lilies that neither "toil nor spin."

A new point for comparison came to me while I was visiting a series of Buddhist temples in western Japan not long ago. As I was standing in front of one altar, it struck me suddenly that the worshipers' attitudes had little to do with Buddhist theology. People came in great numbers; they prayed; they worshiped; they burned incense. But no one seemed interested in non-attachment; most likely they had never even thought about it. They wanted a good life: healing for sick relatives, better jobs, safety on the highway. That was all. And in that, they reminded me of those who attend my own church every Sunday morning. When I pointed this similarity out to my students, they surprised me by the quickness of their own response; a recognition of the universal contrast between what people want and what theologians say appeared to make it easier for them to take Buddhism itself more seriously.

None of this is meant to suggest that I take a non-critical approach to religion, East Asian or Christian. It is crucial, I think, to apply two criteria to *all* religions. First, do they produce humane behavior; do they call for honesty, justice, compassion? Second, does the tradition exhibit integrity; are its practices consistent with its own standards? I am unembarrassed about applying those questions when I talk about East Asian religions. The hierarchical Confucian structure has led to a kind of male dominance in Chinese history that seems to me both exceptional and abusive. I say just that. We talk too about the power grabbing politics of Buddhist temples in Japan across the centuries, about the willingness of Zen leaders to adapt to the political currents of each era. And we discuss the Christian missionaries' unholy alliance between God and mammon that led to the expulsion of Christianity from Japan in the 1600s. My goal, in short, is for my students to understand the religions of East Asia as fully, as sympathetically, and as honestly as possible--and thus to learn not just what the religious teachers say but how their followers live, and how their traditions can enrich our own understandings of God and life.

One might not expect the teaching of a topic such as nationalism to be affected as much by a commitment to religious pluralism. I would argue, however, that it is--that if the rejection of triumphalism inspires me to look at East Asian religions more sympathetically, it also pushes me to examine the impact of nationalism with more fear and more humility than I otherwise might. The first thing to be said here is that few topics have had more influence on East Asian development in the last two centuries. In peninsular Korea, nationalism has fired independence movements, helped to split the country, and caused endless debate over how to restore unity. In China, it has led to wars, to failed revolutions, to the Communist victory, and to recent efforts to reassert leadership over Asia. And in Japan, nationalism has inspired great social and technological transformations as well as a devastating march to war. It is hardly a stretch to label it the modern era's most dynamic force. The question for us, however, has to do with the way it is taught. How does a commitment to religious pluralism influence the way I handle this secular force in the classroom?

Although the answer is, once again, complex, I will concentrate on two approaches that grow from my belief in openness. First, I find it essential to address *the pernicious effects of nationalism* in the political sphere. If the use of good/bad categories undergirds religious intolerance, it does the same in the world of international relations, just as respect for the Other makes both realms healthier. For that reason, it is important to look rigorously at the negative influence of narrow nationalism when we study East Asian history.

A striking example arises in nineteenth century China, where an unshakable conviction that China was the central kingdom blinded leaders to the threats and opportunities of the western invasion. The brilliance of Chinese civilization in the 1700s is undeniable. No European country had a richer culture, a more educated or sophisticated ruling class, a more extensive network of roads and canals integrating a vast geographical region. When the Chinese emperors sneered at the coarseness of British merchants, they did so with reason. By the end of the 1800s, however, China's system lay in ruins. She had lost several wars; regionalism was pulling the country apart; rebel movements were stirring. An important reason for this collapse was a belief in national superiority that caused officials to underestimate the imperialists. When the British envoy George Macartney requested trading privileges in 1793, the Qianlong emperor rejected them in a response that called China "the hub and centre about which all quarters of the globe revolve" and belittled "the lonely remoteness" of England.²⁰ The resultant history was, for China, tragic.

It also is important for students to think seriously about what nationalism can do *to* others, and for that lesson few stories are more fruitful than Japan's twentieth century, when patriotism helped lead Japan into World War II. Even the most internationalist of Japan's leaders believed in Japanese uniqueness in the 1920s and 1930s; from that belief, it was a short step to the idea that Japan had a special mission to civilize Asia, and thence to support for military aggression as a means of spreading civilization. That was not the whole story, as I will discuss below, but it is an important part of the story. Three quarters of a century ago, before anyone had envisioned much of what would happen in the 1930s, the historian Hans Kohn worried that European nationalism was being "speedily transformed into a destructive principle."²¹ Unfortunately, that transformation proved ominous for East Asia too, as ominous as exclusivism so often is in the religious sphere. It is crucial that this issue be raised in the classroom, since it runs counter to most students' intuitions about patriotism.

Second, the commitment to pluralism compels me to try to *interpret each country's nationalist experiences from that nation's own perspective*. A task of this sort is rendered difficult by the fact that I am an American, reared in an American setting and immersed in American stories and values. But openness demands that I make the effort, and that I help my students make the effort too. The two topics just discussed--China's nineteenth century collapse and Japan's rush toward World War II--should illustrate what I mean.

In the case of China, sensitivity to the Chinese self-understanding requires that I spend at least as much time on Chinese strengths and rationality as I do on the myopia. I have decided, for example, that it is a mistake to begin courses on modern China with the nineteenth century, the period when the decline set in. That makes it too easy for students to conclude that China is "backward," when the truth is that the modern era is the aberration. Unless I spend considerable time on the pre-1800 years, students fail to understand China's historic brilliance. At least as important is the necessity of helping students see that Chinese decisions in the 1800s were quite rational given the context of their times, not much different from the choices American officials probably would have made in similar circumstances. Debate over how to respond to imperialist gunboats was as intense and intelligent as it would be in any society. Some officials advocated a return to traditional morality, some the development of China's own factories and modern armies, some a radical restructuring of the Chinese system. That the chauvinist groups eventually triumphed was a great misfortune, but even they acted in rational ways, and their nationalism was neither greater nor narrower than that of most western leaders. This picture is less satisfying to students than a simplistic picture of China as exotic and wrong-headed, but it is more accurate. And it confronts the triumphalism of so many accounts.

Japan's World War II tale also is more complex than American historians typically have made it. Without excusing the aggressive nationalism, I find it important to lead the class through the steps that led toward the war, steps that shift culpability toward the Europeans and Americans without removing it from Japan. There was western imperialism, which convinced Japanese leaders, early in the modern period, that only an army would gain them respect and security; there was flagrant discrimination against Asian immigrants to Europe and America in the early twentieth century, which triggered calls for the display

of national strength abroad; there was the hypocrisy of Americans criticizing Japan's "Asian Monroe Doctrine," even as U.S. officials strengthened their own authority in Latin America. As one Japanese internationalist wrote during the 1920s: "Most Americans, even so-called liberals, seem so cocksure of the wisdom, the justice, and the humanitarian ideals of their country and government that their inconsistency, so obvious to us, never bothers them."²² By the 1930s and early 1940s, Western culpability also included quite a number of specific policies that encouraged Japan's extremists even as they limited the options of moderate officials. Many students resist this narrative; it is neither as clear-cut nor as America-friendly as they want. But it fills out the picture more honestly, even as it militates against the good/bad syndrome that underlies exclusivist thinking. It also makes it clear that nationalism is a universal phenomenon, and that its European and American forms helped spawn the aggression in Japan that in turn threatened the imperialist powers themselves after 1941.

The soul of this argument is that it is as important to embrace pluralism when I explain the political sphere as it is when I interpret religion. Convinced that triumphalism is pernicious *anywhere*, the teacher must help students both to develop a healthy sense of humility about their own traditions and to nourish understanding and respect for others. The gospel, writes Sullivan, is a "call to inner upheaval, to *awakening*," a fact that he learned after he had seen Christ's teachings filtered through the "wisdom of the Orient."²³ Students should be taught to embrace that inner upheaval as an ongoing process; for new and unsettling ideas make us grow, even as they upset us. They point out new paths, even as they brighten the old ones. It is for this reason that I feel compelled to help my students hear the voices of Asia, both religious and secular, as sympathetically as they do their own.

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Notes

¹Clark H. Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992, pp. 157-158.

²Diana L. Eck, *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993, p. 19.

³I have left largely unaddressed the issue, important to philosophers and theologians like Gavin D'Costa, of the divergent truth claims made by religions. My basic position is that all truth has a historical component; thus, claims about matters of revelation cannot and should not be evaluated as more or less "true," because such judgments involve the application of rational criteria to that which lies beyond the rational. To delve seriously into this issue is beyond the focus and space limits of this essay.

⁴Wesley Ariarajah, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, pp. 9-10.

⁵Proverbs 16:18 (NEV).

⁶Letter from Edward H. House to Whitelaw Reid, July 20, 1872, in Whitelaw Reid Papers, Library of Congress.

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- ⁷Gunter Grass, "To Be Continued . . ." *PMLA Journal*. Vol. CXV, No. 3 (May 2000), p. 296.
- ⁸K. M. Panaikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959, p. 27.
- ⁹Congregationalist missionary J. L. Atkinson, quoted in Akira Iriye, *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967, p. 19.
- ¹⁰Editorial, *New York Herald*, April 20, 1874.
- ¹¹Ariarajah, pp. 23, 26.
- ¹²Matthew 7:1; also see Mark 9:39-41, Matthew 23:27, and John 7:25.
- ¹³John B. Cobb, Jr., "Beyond 'Pluralism,'" in Gavin D'Costa, ed, *Beyond Pluralism, The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*. New York: Orbis Books, 1990, p. 91.
- ¹⁴Tanaka's approach to Christian faith is discussed in Masao Takenaka, *God is Rice: Asian culture and Christian faith*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986, pp. 49-70.
- ¹⁵Shusaku Endo, *Silence*. New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1980, p. 190.
- ¹⁶Endo, *A Life of Jesus*. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1979: "warm-hearted mother," p. 1; "companionship," p. 80; "He was thin," p. 173.
- ¹⁷Endo, *Deep River*. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1994: God's many faces, p. 122; "in his grasp", p. 191.
- ¹⁸Jean Sullivan, *Morning Light The Spiritual Journey of Jean Sullivan*. New York: Paulist Press, 1988, p. 48.
- ¹⁹Cobb, p. 91.
- ²⁰Qianlong, "The Second Edict, September 1793," in Pei-kai Cheng and Michael Lestz, with Jonathan D. Spence, eds. *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999, pp. 106-109.
- ²¹Hans Kohn. *A History of Nationalism in the East*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929, p. 431.
- ²²Karl Kawakami, *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, May 6, 1926; I am indebted for this material to William H. Hoover of the University of Toledo.
- ²³Sullivan, p. 11.

MAKING DRY BONES STAND: LUTHERAN HIGHER EDUCATION AT CENTURY'S END

Diane Scholl

In my course on American literature to 1860, my students consider the implications of American pluralism, a prospect realized only dimly or not at all by John Winthrop when he delivered his famous "A Model of Christian Charity" on board the *Arbella* in 1630. This first text we read suggested a tall order for the American experience. Confident that his seasick and scurvy-ridden fellow passengers would soon unite the dry bones of the Old Testament Book of Ezekiel, he announced that Christian love will turn the human community of fractious political dissenters into the body of Christ, and while mercy and judgment, Gospel and law play their roles in his vision, his emphasis throughout his still-powerful sermon is on the transforming grace of Christ that enables an otherwise turbulent human community to live in peace and harmony.

And to many of my students, the prospect seemed an inviting one. Citizens of the year 2000, they work to establish a peaceful and harmonious community on campus, one that includes Norwegian-Americans and African-Americans, Nepalese and Nigerians, straight and gay, full-payers and the scholarship dependent. If all these elements in our midst represent scattered bones, the students endorse a unifying vision that will bring us together as one body. But their required stipulation is that such a corporate identity still encourages the expression of human individuality and freedom, sometimes to a degree that taxes and strains community norms and the commonality that unites us in a vision of Lutheran higher education.

Almost immediately Winthrop's noble and encouraging model of a Christian society in Massachusetts Bay Colony was put to the test. Antinomians such as Anne Hutchinson took issue with the Puritan clergy, and attracted a considerable following. Hutchinson held meetings in her home, originally for the women she had attended in childbirth with considerable skill and compassion, and later for men as well, including some of the major political leaders of the Colony. Charging that clergymen were preaching a covenant of works rather than the covenant of grace that Protestant dissenters had fought so hard to uphold and articulate, Hutchinson stirred up controversy that threatened the authority of soon-to-be Governor Winthrop. The truth is that the Puritan clergy, while rejecting the covenant of works and bristling at Hutchinson's charge, defended their jurisdiction to interpret the signs of justification exhibited by those colonists in

their congregations. Promoting sanctification as the sign of justification encouraged lawful and orderly behavior, and therefore had a certain utility, in the opinion of Hutchinson's persecutors. If it is true as her followers alleged that she encouraged resistance to the Pequot Wars conducted by the Colony to secure the safety of its citizens, she was all the more a threat to Winthrop's wishful "model of Christian charity."

Consequently, Winthrop's duty was to secure her banishment to Rhode Island, a sentence handed down in a civil hearing in November, 1637, and made final in March of the following year. But in her exiled state, a figurative Hagar in the wilderness, she proceeded to foment controversy among her new neighbors and eventually, a widow, removed her family to Long Island Sound where they suffered death at the hands of the Narragansett Indians. While some Puritan writers did not miss the opportunity to consider the providential nature of her demise, Winthrop tells a different story in his *Journal*. Hutchinson's daughter was taken into captivity by her mother's murderers, and when she was returned several years later to her surviving family, she had forgotten the language of English people. The consequences of Hutchinson's assault on civil order are loss of culture and consignment to a wilderness of depravity and disorder. So much for pluralism in Massachusetts Bay Colony.

My students considered the implications of American diversity through successive texts that chronicle the American experience. There is de Crevecoeur's American farmer, who blithely anticipates the eradication of divisive immigrant and sectarian differences, but is forced to acknowledge the brutal enslavement of Africans in the Deep South, and the lawlessness of American frontiersmen. Native Americans are beyond assimilation in his "melting pot." Olaudah Equiano (transformed as Gustavus Vasa) and Phyllis Wheatley survive the middle passage to adopt the names, the dress and letters of their captors, but hold out from them through the agency of their resistant and subversive voices. And by the middle of the nineteenth century, America awakening to its Renaissance, Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman all extol the unity in diversity implicit in the social fabric as well as in nature, difference subsumed in a vast, cosmic Oversoul, yet maintain a vision as private and individual as Emily Dickinson's white-gowned seclusion.

Strangely, we found the image of Ezekiel's dry bones runs throughout the course of American letters, even as the fragmented nature of American life proves all but beyond remediation. From Winthrop's initial charge, to Emerson's "Nature," to Melville's dark prophecy for race relations in *Benito Cereno*, the story of an unthinkable slave uprising on board a Spanish vessel, the dry, scattered bones appear as relics of a contentious and moribund past due for revitalization inspired by common vision and purpose. Yet each effort at renewal proves as divisive as the previous one, the effort to unite a corporate body an elusive goal. While America's motto "E Pluribus Unum" suggests one nation composed of many nations, creeds and perspectives, the necessary balance is so delicate as to be hard to preserve, and historically our past has been checkered by periods in which clamorous voices and outstretched hands have contended for their due.

On my campus, the students recognize a homogeneous core at the heart of our college's past, an identity that provides us with a powerful history and sense of community both. But their effort, and rightfully so, is to diversify, to make a place for difference, and to enrich the heritage we share. In our required first year course which deals in part with American ethnicity, we refer to America's emerging frontier as an "ethnic checkerboard," and point out the limitations of de Crevecoeur's "melting pot" metaphor, substituting the "salad bowl" or "quilt" concept instead. And the central question has been: How can Americans preserve the richness of our different traditions and resist the tendency to assimilate to a generic American identity? Can we represent ourselves as one nation in which many ethnicities enjoy their separate cultural history without fear of either assimilation or discrimination?

A walk across our campus will assure even the most casual visitor that we are not all Norwegian-Americans, though we might still share the vision of pioneer pastors who founded our college on the gifts of farmers and tradesmen hoping to educate their children in the classics, and enable them to take their place in American professions without losing their heritage and their language. But if our purpose for being has changed, enlarged to include students from more than a dozen nations and many different religious traditions, what is it that makes us still a community of believers, even the body of Christ? In my opinion there are four features to community life we share, and a fifth feature that provides the critical underpinnings to all of the others, without which, in fact, the community represented by a Lutheran college could not survive.

One is the commitment to the liberal arts, to the process of free inquiry and pursuit of knowledge, including important

texts from western and non-western traditions both that shape our sense of the academic enterprise and teach us to value as well as to challenge received opinion. There is a corollary commitment to rigor and the pursuit of excellence that manifests itself in classroom standards and in the public lectures and awards that recognize scholarly and humane contributions and their capacity for expanding human knowledge and solving problems that undermine our human potential. But this feature is shared by other academic institutions, and is, in fact, the reason for their existence. As an agent of community-building it is basic to what we do, yet not in itself sufficient to build a sustaining community.

Another feature is the political process that students, faculty, administration and board members participate in. Representation and participation give the different stakeholders in our corporate life a voice in the college's decision-making and future. Including different vested interests and perspectives opens the door to contention in political life, but also to change and renewal. The result of such a process is mutual "ownership" of the community we shape, but instead of simply "taking possession," each participating member of our constituency learns to "let go" as well, to relinquish self-interest in order to find a larger and more sustaining common good. Even in the disagreements that charge our deliberative life together with contention there is the hope of finding ourselves in a new and stronger body.

The third feature to shared life is the arts. On our campus, music draws us together in evident and remarkable ways, from the recitals that students give, to the concerts that mark Homecoming and Commencement weekend, and the Messiah production that has become a recognized tradition before Christmas, drawing together a massed choir of more than a thousand participants, including alumni and guests of the college. The arts permit us to shed the cloaks of our separate lives, affiliations, creeds and convictions, to enter figuratively and imaginatively a place in which we share aesthetic pleasure and can suspend the "separateness" that otherwise nourishes our identity.

Then there is the community of caring, the mutual concern that expresses a family's regard for all of its members and establishes commonality among people who came from separate places and will find their way in the world separately, but who will also find their way back to an institution that becomes part of their shared past. I recall our daily chapel service's announcement of news in "our life together": a death in someone's family, a new baby, a community program or appeal for help that reminds us of more than the space we inhabit together.

Finally, the fifth feature to community life is the recognition of difference and the right to dissent. Only by acknowledging the freedom of individuals to challenge the norms of community life and by accepting the fact that confrontation will cause some members to leave the community due to irreconcilable differences in perspective, can a community express its commonality. But this feature is highly problematic, since a community of dissenting voices can easily become a powder keg, its volatility not an opportunity for renewal but an agent of self-demolition.

Anne Hutchinson tested the capacity of Massachusetts Bay Colony to tolerate dissent and found a theocracy makes no place for those who testify to private revelation, self-designated prophets who threaten community with a vision as autocratic in its claims as the Puritan clergy who also served as magistrates, and handed down the harsh judgment of banishment. While Winthrop consigns her to the wilderness as a wandering Hagar, using biblical example to support his sentence of banishment, two hundred years later Nathaniel Hawthorne draws on Hutchinson's story in *The Scarlet Letter*. Hester Prynne, an adulteress who refuses to name the father of her baby, is an "Antinomian" of a different stripe to be sure. The "A" emblazoned on her bosom with all the artistry of her needlework is intentionally ambiguous, and all the more so when later generations who note with admiration her faithful work among the sick and needy interpret the scarlet letter to stand for "Able." If such a transformation suggests the change in community standards and judgment over time, it speaks even more strongly of Hester's ability to take command of her situation and free herself from the radical extreme of private will and choice. While she remains obdurate in her silence concerning her child's paternity, the good works she does indicate her important compromise. Rather than seek her fortunes elsewhere, as she is sorely tempted to do when she and Dimmesdale converge in the dark forest where no one can see their shame, and plan their escape together, such a future is not really open to Hester, or to her clergyman lover who dies extolling God's mercy and its evidence in the punishment God exacts. Hester makes amends in the same community whose moral code she violated; in doing so, she suggests Hawthorne's resolution of the controversy engendered by Hutchinson with her radical reliance on grace, an extreme interpretation of the biblical covenant God contracted with Abraham.

It seems that Hawthorne intentionally avoids the sentence of banishment, either adjudicated by a court of law or self-imposed, for Hester Prynne's "crime." Rather, he suggests that faithful service and acknowledgement of community are possible even for a person who violates the community's norms, or sets herself against community

opinion. It is tempting to think that he sets the story of Anne Hutchinson right in comparing Hester Prynne obliquely to her predecessor, and even more tempting to believe that he addresses several radical extremes in his own nineteenth century America when he tells Hester's story.

What does *The Scarlet Letter* have to do with Lutheran colleges today? It underscores the very tension between conformity and diversity that we struggle with as we attempt to define a community fostered by the Lutheran faith that is flexible enough to engage in the creative and redeeming challenge of including difference. Unfortunately diversity has become a kind of "buzz word" on our campuses, a term that often lacks clarity, definition, and cogent reasons for implementing. "I'm sure diversity is a good thing," candid colleagues tell me, "but I have yet to hear compelling arguments for it." Other faculty members react unfavorably to the idea that we should recruit primarily international students and American students of color who are a good "fit" for our institution: "I hear you saying that we want to entice black students who are Christians to come, but not if they're Black Panthers," they complain, pleased at the absurdity and latent discrimination they see in such a position.

What does diversity mean to us, and is it more than an effort to include every variety of color and creed, an attempt to resemble the globe in the proportions with which its colorful people and different faith traditions are represented in our midst? Ernest Simmons in *Lutheran Higher Education: An Introduction for Faculty* addresses the central paradox of Luther's Reformation: that faith and life, Church and world, Christian and "other" be in "simultaneous tension" with one another, a simultaneity "that leads to mutual affirmations in tension" (33). It is this tension central to Lutheran higher education that gives the other features of common life together their meaning and purpose. Bruce Reichenbach in "Lutheran Identity and Diversity in Education" in this volume quotes Gilbert Meilaender as warning against the need to look "for something peculiarly Lutheran in higher education," a self-justification that can blindside us from recognizing the ecumenical implications to Luther's thought and the education we offer, an important consideration to remember. But in a sense every denominational college must justify its character and perspective on education, since without such definition denominational ties become a gratuitous tribute to an outworn past rather than a vital bringing of tradition into the future.

Lutheran colleges walk a tightrope with certain implicit pitfalls, as Simmons warns: "There is, of course, a danger

in this paradoxical or simultaneous view—namely that one can collapse into a form of dogmatic absolutism that does not recognize the integrity of the other, to accentuate the kingdom of God at the expense of the everyday world. Or one can go full speed into the everyday and collapse into some form of radical pluralism or thoroughgoing relativism” (34). Now it seems that if we are beyond the risk of promoting doctrinal orthodoxy at the expense of free intellectual inquiry at our colleges, we do veer toward the extreme of relativism, a valuing of difference for its own sake, without a recognition of how religious and ethnic pluralism on our campuses can ultimately enhance our common mission and fulfill a promise implicit in our Lutheran roots as well. This lack of reflection on our intrinsic regard for difference and commonality both, a regard rooted in the Lutheran tradition, elastic and controversial in its application, has led to serious misunderstandings of our nature and mission and could hasten our loss of core identity and commitment to denominational ties.

In the first-year common course at Luther, students read *The Diary of Elisabeth Koren*, a pioneer pastor's wife's account of settlement at Washington Prairie, Iowa, in 1853. Koren's witness to her “New World” experience demonstrates her eagerness to meet that world head-on; her pages fairly radiate with wonder at the Scots and French settlers, the Native Americans in their unfamiliar dress, the Yankees and Methodists who threaten the Norwegian-American community with assimilation and loss of cultural identity. Koren is curious and resistant both, as she well might be, since her enthusiasm for her at times paradisiacal setting and its new people is tempered by a certain realistic appraisal; she knows the pioneers' effort to establish their culture in a land of “difference” will mean some cultural moorings are severed. How she copes with such “simultaneity” is the story of Luther College, founded by pioneer pastors to bring the Lutheran faith and Norwegian heritage into dynamic tension with the world. While this dynamism makes us a changed place today, it can bring us closer to our theological underpinnings even as it enables us to participate in a global encounter, confronting ideas and experience that might not seem consistent with Lutheran orthodoxy.

When is diversity a threat to the very fabric of our being? “Difference” without a core theology and a set of defining values is doomed to produce a polyglot society that will have trouble functioning as a community, an environment in which respect for the liberal arts and commitment to excellence, shared political processes, life affirmed together through the arts, through mutual concern and support of its members, and through acknowledgment of the right to

dissent, flourish and sustain us. While it could be argued that Winthrop's failure to recognize the right to dissent, and his subsequent banishment of Anne Hutchinson from Massachusetts Bay Colony, signaled the death of the community he tried to make into the body of Christ in his effort to revivify the dry bones of Reformation sects and religious controversy, there is another imperative if community is to serve the needs of its members and function in the corporate sense. Dissenting individuals must respect the framing theological principles and corporate values of community, and their spirit of dissent must be one that nourishes the common good, rather than furthers an extreme of individualism and opposition. It is possible, of course, to speak on behalf of minority needs and still be fostering the idea of community in which different creeds and opinions are valued, indeed safeguarded; this vocalized concern is in fact one of the hallmarks of community life.

When a Pakistani or Somalian student questions Dante's placement of Mohammed in hell with the Sowers of Discord, and asks if other Christians believe that non-Christians are doomed infidels who deserve everlasting torments, a door to fruitful and provocative discussion opens. Such a student is right to name her incredulity and anger, and if the conversation leads to other issues concerning the perception of Islamic students on campus, the class is pushed farther to consider both the allegorical dimension to Dante's work and his medieval world view, and the climate at our college for those who profess other faiths. Why shouldn't a student question why we read the texts we do, and why we might make a case for their enduring value even when the sentiments they seem to express are disturbing to our sense of tolerance and unity? When a faculty member from a denomination making exclusivist claims to truth argues that our campus congregation's identification as “Reconciled in Christ” is unscriptural and flies in the face of biblical indictments of homosexuality, an opportunity arises for other voices to participate in defense of worship that fully includes gays and lesbians. In each case, the conversation runs the risk of becoming heated and alienating individuals; confrontation between those who espouse polarized points of view is a serious and sometimes painful engagement. But if our institutional commitment is to frame provocative questions and allow opposing voices to speak to each other fairly, such receptiveness to difference carries with it a necessary risk, a risk that ultimately strengthens community and revivifies it. Even the documents and position papers of the Lutheran church are open to review and criticism. The necessary stipulation is that the critic must respect the theological foundations of the college and understand the perspective that informs its academic enterprise. Students,

faculty, administration and board members, baptized, confirmed, creed-spouting believers or not, must have their appropriate reasons for accepting the call to community, and honor that call.

In our Lutheran colleges we bring together the scattered bones of a nation and world torn by racial prejudice, ethnic and religious warfare, and fragmented by dissonant opinions and ideologies. What does it take to make those dry bones live?

It takes a theological vision of our place in the Church and the world, a shaping perspective at the core of the education we offer and at the heart of our common enterprise as we live together, nurture and sustain each other. It takes individuals who choose to participate in community because they respect its identity, whether or not they are confessing Lutherans or share a Christian theological perspective. When a community honors "difference" and encourages the freedom to dissent, it empowers itself as well as those dissenting individuals who speak for an insistent number of community members who share in the goals of common life but reserve the right to maintain a position or creed in tension with the prevailing perspective. And when those individuals claim a place for themselves and even challenge the norms of community life, in a way that recognizes and respects the vision inspiring that community, a vision that draws and compels us to the life we share, the common good is fostered.

Is this the recognition with which Hawthorne graces Hester Prynne, as she makes the reparations that earn her a distinguished name? It should not be surprising that Hawthorne imbues Hester's defiant refusal to name her

child's father with silent heroism, or that he underscores her suggested passionate sexuality by giving her sumptuous dark hair that she allows to escape from her restraining cap when she meets Dimmesdale in the forest and urges him to escape with her from a rigid, uncompromising Puritan society. The figure of Hutchinson who shadows Hester's past, culled from Hawthorne's considerable reading in New England history, appears in *The Scarlet Letter* in a similarly ambiguous light, both as self-proclaimed prophetess and dangerous law-breaker, as an agent of grace and mercy and as a radical and dissident influence on a struggling society in need of the restraint that comes from a proper regard for the law. Hawthorne understands and dramatizes the attraction of individualism even as he witnesses to the need for order and submission to corporate identity.

The prophet Ezekiel foresees a community of differences reconciled when he testifies to God's restoring promise. We too can feel the inspiring breath of God on our scattered bones, can stand upon our feet, "an exceeding great host" (Ezekiel 37:10), though not without the necessary tension between individualism (strengthening in its potential to challenge and change community, terrifying in its capacity to dissolve uniting ties in factionalism and mutual recrimination), and the tradition, values, and articulation of common goals. This tension at the very heart of Reformation theology, as it is at the center of Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" and of Hawthorne's compelling novel, is what provides Lutheran higher education with its energy and character; it is our best legacy and our best hope for the future.

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LUTHERAN IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

Bruce Reichenbach

Thirty years ago a non-Lutheran colleague accepted an invitation to teach at my college. In those days--and in many days since--prospective faculty were not asked about their commitment to the mission statement of the college, let alone about how they saw themselves contributing to Lutheran higher education. In fact, my colleague reports that the college officials never even asked the vacuous question whether he/she was sympathetic with the mission of the college. Possessing excellent academic credentials, including a degree from a respected university, my colleague gave evidence of being a competent teacher and was hired. Over the years not only did he/she fulfill that promise by becoming both an outstanding teacher and an active participant in faculty governance, but he/she developed a commitment to the mission of the college. At career's end, my colleague confided that although at the outset he/she could not affirm the mission of the college as a Lutheran institution, at retirement such was possible. This person's diversity, though not initially intentionally engaged, yielded positive results for the institution.

This colleague contrasts in interesting ways with another to whom a previous president proudly points as evidence of his diverse hiring practices. A pleasant colleague, this person was not significantly involved in either faculty governance or campus life. Although representing a different religious tradition, this colleague never engaged the college in intellectual dialogue or practice with that tradition. It is not obvious how this person's lauded diversity contributed significantly to the diversity aspect of the college's mission, except perhaps in some token way.

The contrast between these two colleagues is instructive, especially as it raises the poignant question of the nature and role of diversity within a Lutheran college. Many different stories could be told, for there are multiple ways in which the triad of excellent educators commitment to Lutheran identity, and diversity interact. These stories join creatively where Lutheran colleges propose to be intentionally excellent, intentionally Christian, and intentionally diverse. Of course, colleges can manifest one or more of these traits by choice or happenstance. What is of interest here is how to bring these elements--especially the last two--into rational, creative tension without jeopardizing the institution's Lutheran identity.

For over 20 years theologians and philosophers have employed the taxonomy of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism in discussions of religious diversity.¹ In what

follows I apply these models to understanding issues of identity and diversity in educational institutions. Since Lutheran colleges stand most appropriately within the inclusivist vein, I will tease out the tensions that exist on the inclusivist model.

Taxonomy for Understanding Diversity

According to the exclusivist perspective on diversity, truths central to a given perspective are embodied in particular formulations and need to be guarded against being diluted. Diverse viewpoints are to be appreciated, but either are circumscribed to protect and foster the maintenance of the central truths or are posited to provide positions in respect to which one can distinguish, understand, or defend the central truths. Exclusivist educational institutions hold that their educational program contains dimensions that are not negotiable because they make possible the very discourse in which the institution engages. They constitute the framework on which the curriculum is constructed, affirm the common cultural values to which the community assents, and define the ethic that governs institutional social intercourse. It is not that other perspectives necessarily are mistaken (although this may be affirmed where such perspectives contravene what is espoused) or that other curricula cannot provide desirable educational outcomes. Rather, the institution desires to preserve a particular character and accordingly affirms this in word and, where consistent, in deed. To preserve their *sine qua non*, exclusivist institutions may require that some or all of its members assent to a mission statement that in one way or another affirms central core truths or ideals establishing the institution's identity. Whereas secular exclusivist institutions may tacitly assume its members adhere to this core, religious institutions may require some or all of its members to assent to a core that may assume a doctrinal form, explicated in a more or less detailed statement of faith. When the core is understood behaviorally, an institution may require some or all of its members to participate in certain activities (chapel, courses in religion, service learning) and refrain from others.

The strength of an exclusivist institution is that it often knows what it is about. It has an explicit if not unified educational and social philosophy that seeks to realize its stated mission. It directs (theoretically if not in practice) its activities, both those at its educational foundation and those falling under the broader category of community or support services, to foster this mission.² As a consequence, the

faculty, administration, students, alumni, and donors possess a clear vision of the nature and purpose of the institution and ideally assent to furthering it by their activities.

The alleged weakness of this model is that it fosters insularity. Although students likely encounter on the campus people displaying a wide range of personality types and character traits, colleges intentionally expose students to peers and faculty who espouse a more narrow range of perspectives. What is taught, thought, read, and written about must fit within the parameters stated by the institution. In such a context cross fertilization between intellectual perspectives often occurs only second-hand, as presented not by adherents of other perspectives but in comment or critique by those already committed to a differing perspective. Advocacy of divergent views by members of the community often is limited.

Exclusivists respond that the unity of perspective can be a strength for the institution as it steers its course through society. A unified constituency, both internal and external, helps maintain the course, for the mission of the institution is less threatened when its members adhere conscientiously to what they have pledged. Diverse perspectives are not ignored but are discussed, especially in ways that help students see how they diverge from the primary truths espoused by the institution.

This leads to another worry that frequently surfaces regarding exclusivist institutions, namely, whether its members can maintain freedom of inquiry when their academic position depends upon prior assent. Members of such institutions often defend their freedom of inquiry on the grounds that they have the freedom to explore all ideas; indeed, because their biases already are stated and positions known, they are more honest and open to the community of hearers and readers than other explorers. Critics of such institutions contend that freedom of inquiry is limited in that the outcome of investigation and research already is evaluatively determined, at least with respect to the parameters specified by what is taken to be the *sine qua non* of the institution. From an outsider's perspective, it is difficult to see how inquiry can be open and discussion mutually fruitful if the outcome is to some degree precluded. From an insider's perspective, it is easy for critics to be deluded into thinking that perspective-free, completely objective exploration of ideas is possible anywhere.

In sum, exclusivist institutions maintain their identity through a unified worldview about doctrinal, pedagogical, or behavioral matters, while they face the criticism that they lack the yeast of diversity and the ingredient of freedom. Without these dimensions, it is alleged, the riches of education are not fully theirs.

According to the pluralist perspective, truths are not embodied in a particular mode of understanding but are many, perspectival, probably even contradictory. Indeed, it is possible, if not likely, that truths derive from rather than exist independent of truth-valuers. We apply the label truth to claims that work particularly well for us in understanding, operating within, or manipulating the world. Pluralist educational institutions hold that since diversity constitutes an educational end in itself, all views should be explored, preferably under the guidance of their advocates. Although not necessarily equally legitimate, views can be critiqued properly only by using criteria intrinsic to the perspective from which they are advocated. Externalist critiques result in triumphalist judgmentalism. Such institutions espouse the ideal of open-ended inquiry; there are no sacred cows.

The strength of the pluralist position is its welcoming attitude toward all perspectives. It not only allows but encourages the multitude of ideas to flourish. Intentionally pluralist institutions recruit faculty, administration, staff, and students with an eye to how they can bring diversity into the institution. The result may be a curriculum presenting a rich potpourri of courses and ideas, and a campus populated by individuals representing and espousing diverse life styles, cultural backgrounds, and points of view.

Critics contend that a pluralist institution by nature cannot claim a unique identity, for the advocacy of a common theme around which it is organized or to which it is committed, other than diversity, would be inconsonant with its pluralism. There can be no central theses or ideological mission to which the faculty or students must adhere, for in principle advocacy of such would violate the freedom of those who advocate a different set of ideas or mission to participate in the institution. To exclude such people from the institution contravenes the ideals of diversity and tolerance. Since by definition pluralist institutions have no ideological center or focus, they are not so much universities as diversities.

Defenders of the pluralism may reply that this characterization is inadequate, for pluralist institutions advocate certain core ideals. These ideals, including tolerance and civility, are values propounded by a liberal, civilized society and essential for successfully conducting the educational enterprise. Without tolerance and civility, an institution cannot function harmoniously and freely; harmony and freedom thus constitute additional central ideals.

Yet the more ideals are added and emphasized as indispensable, the more it looks like pluralist institutions possess a central core to which they expect their members to

adhere, at least tacitly. Indeed, one irony of espousing this educational perspective is the temptation to become exclusivist institutions. In the name of these and other liberal ideals, pluralist institutions often exclude contrarian viewpoints from participation in the community. "Persons from a wide variety of races and cultures are welcomed into the university, but only on the condition that they think more-or-less alike.... One of the strongest current motives for discriminating in academia even against traditional religious viewpoints that play within the procedural rules of universities is that many advocates of such viewpoints are prone to be conservative politically and to hold views regarding lifestyle, the family, or sexuality that may be offensive to powerful groups on campuses. Hence in the name of tolerance, pluralism, and diversity academic expressions of such religious perspectives may be discriminated against."³ In particular, political correctness often dominates their culture. Although in theory tolerance is the liberal value of pluralism, in practice tolerance often is offered only to those perspectives deemed consistent with or worthy of liberal recognition.⁴

In sum, pluralism provides for genuine engagement with diverse perspectives. Yet a dilemma results: diversity can lead to lack of focus, the correction of which encourages the tempting tendency to exclude particular positions that conflict with unstated or stated presuppositions about the kind of worldview educators on the pluralist campus should hold.

Employing a third model, inclusivists maintain that the central truths that inform the institution may be expressed in diverse ways. Institutions adhering to this model affirm a non-negotiable aspect, something that shapes the heart and soul of the tradition in which the institution is located. At the same time, inclusivist institutions realize that this non-negotiable core not only may be realized in diverse ways, both in a context of the specific institution and in similar contexts (e.g., within similar institutions), but it can be enriched by bringing diverse perspectives to bear on it.

This position shares the strength of the exclusivist position in affirming a central core that most often is contained in the mission statement. The mission statement, if formulated thoughtfully and taken seriously, provides guidance for inclusivist institutions in directing the curriculum and extracurricular activities, hiring, and presenting the institution to the internal and external community. Inclusivism also shares the strength of the pluralist view in that it welcomes diversity into the community to enrich it. In dialogue with diverse viewpoints, it comes not only to a fuller understanding of itself but also of other points of view.⁵

Obviously a tension exists between maintaining a set of claims or ideals that the institution takes to be true while at the same time claiming to engage in open, learning dialogue with other, perhaps contrary, positions. Inclusivists have to be asked, when they claim that the core can be dialogically challenged, whether the dialogue with the other positions is genuine. Are they willing to question to the point of modifying their foundational mission or abandoning their central core beliefs, when those with whom they dialogue reject those core beliefs and suggest alternative points of view? If dialogue is open to persuasion, and if in dialogue one attempts to persuade others to one's beliefs, then at the same time one runs the risk of being persuaded to another's point of view.⁶

Dialogue is a two-way street. As Richard Hughes points out, inclusivists face the danger of lapsing into relativism.⁷

Inclusivists may reply that indeed dialogue is what they want. The ideas and challenges posed by others in turn enrich their own perspective. The critical point concerns the purpose of dialogue and the role of understanding and persuasion. Since the inclusivist believes that there are truths, the pursuit of truth will lie at the heart of the dialogue.

The inclusivist institution that intentionally creates a diverse college community faces several challenges. First, it may be so focused on diversity that it loses its character as a Christian (Baptist, Lutheran, Catholic) school. It may create an institution that under the weight of new forces assumes a new vision and shape, so that the old remains hardly recognizable. This occurs especially when the administration and staff are hired for their diversity, with little thought to maintaining a critical mass committed to the previous institutional identity. The carrots of diversity, tolerance, and academic excellence can tempt the institution to over-indulge.

Second, it confronts the challenge that in making diversity a goal, the college becomes essentially indistinguishable from its secular counterparts. As Gilbert Meilaender notes, when the talk turns to the importance of diversity, it is "the same kind of diversity ... at which every other college and university is aiming. In the seeking of that elusive goal, in the attempt to be like everyone else, we will in fact do our bit to destroy the possibility that there might be truly diverse institutions of higher education in our society."⁸ Instead, diversity should be a means to further broaden the educational perspectives of students and provide opportunities for growth within the context of a particular community. The curriculum will have a distinctive shape that embodies, dialogues with, and furthers the mission

rather than a smorgasbord curriculum presenting unrelated individual menu items to students. The result will be an inclusive community focused around the central mission.

Third, an inclusive community faces the challenge of integrating the diverse members of the community in ways that avoid polarization of the community and treatment of either non-Christians or Christians as second-class citizens or resident aliens. One danger is that in a Christian inclusivist institution those who are not Christians may either see themselves or be viewed by Christian members of the community as less valuable or significant to the community, not contributing seriously to the on-going life and mission of the college. The correlative danger is that Christians become a defensive, embattled minority on the campus, cowed by political correctness into silence. If either of these occurs, the institution will fragment and the dialogue between faith and learning that is integral to the institution will dissipate into silence or result in carping or suspicion between the two sides.

This can be avoided when each person in the diverse community is able to address thoughtfully how he or she relates to all aspects of the college's mission, including its Christian mission. Those who espouse the Christian emphasis as a matter of their own faith perspective will reflect on how it impacts their teaching, learning and community life. Those who do not espouse it as a matter of personal faith perspective will reflect on how they can creatively dialogue with their colleagues and students, especially with respect to matters of Christian faith and learning, and how they can help inform the core ideals and educate. Here, for example, professional development programs can significantly contribute both to educate the faculty about the mission and to facilitate constructive dialogue about that mission.

In short, a college that espouses an inclusivist mission faces a situation fraught with tension. The task is to turn the tension into creative education, a situation providing potential for growth for both students and faculty, and a context where issues of faith are raised with renewed vibrancy, recognizing the legitimacy of diversity, while at the same time maintaining the integrity and Christian identity of the institution.⁹

Lutheran Identity

It may be asked where Lutheran institutions of higher education fall on this spectrum. Although my surmise is that one can find Lutheran institutions in all three categories and that the movement in the last several decades has been toward pluralism,¹⁰ I don't propose to address all three or

categorize individual Lutheran institutions. Indeed, it is notoriously difficult to place concrete entities in ideal models. Instead, I inquire about institutions that self-consciously desire to be inclusivist.

To begin, if one is going to be inclusivist, what is the non-negotiable core of the Lutheran institution? From the outset, this proves a difficult question. Lutheran writers frequently warn that we should be careful to distinguish identity from distinctiveness.¹¹ "Christians should feel under no particular compunction to say, 'Only that is Christian which is distinctively Christian.' ... Many things characterize Christian existence even though they don't characterize Christian existence alone."¹² Indeed, Meilaender notes that if we start looking "for something peculiarly Lutheran in higher education, we will get talk about how Lutherans appreciate 'paradox.' Or platitudes about freedom and mutual respect ... We will get a misbegotten 'two kingdoms' notion [and] talk about the importance of diversity."¹³ He contends that "it will always be mistaken to try to fashion a purely 'Lutheran' understanding of what Christian higher education ought to be." His contention is that Luther did not intend to remove a segment of the Church from its wider context; instead, Lutherans are truly ecumenical.

However, Meilaender goes on to argue that "if there is a reason for the continued existence of such institutions, they must offer something distinctive and distinctively Christian."¹⁴ Authors writing on the topic seem to concur that not only is there something identifiable and characteristic about the Christian education, but there is something identifiable and characteristic about the Lutheran take on that education. These features provide, in part, the *raison d'être* for being a Church-related or Christian educational institution. Where is that identity to be located? Robert Benne argues that it is a mistake to define this core in terms of a Lutheran ethos culturally understood, for as the cultural identity of Lutheran institutions changes with the employment of a diverse faculty and the admission of an ethnically diverse student body, the cultural ethos evaporates. "The center for Lutheran liberal arts colleges ought to be religiously defined ... This religious vision ... would have within it an interpretation of the role and nature of human learning."¹⁵ This center is a Christian center, incorporating a "Lutheran Christian vision of reality, particularly in its intellectual form."¹⁶

While Lutheran writers often diverge regarding the content of this identity-informing core, some themes repeatedly run through the literature. Richard Hughes works out the inclusivist model in terms of "human finitude and the sovereignty of God."¹⁷

In the educational context, it means that since our reason is impaired, we could always be mistaken. In this way we are freed to investigate critically not only the views and theories of others, but our own as well. Doubt, he says, is the companion of faith. The second trait is the emphasis on paradox "which shatters our rational categories and forces us to our knees as we ponder the mysteries that transcend our understanding." Hughes here recalls the doctrine of the two kingdoms in which we simultaneously reside and that meet, notably, in our educational institutions. The life of the mind "fosters genuine conversation," but without the necessity of "integrating faith and learning around a distinctly Christian perspective." The model is one of sustained dialogue that "brings the secular world and a Christian perspective into conversation with one another."¹⁸

Darrell Jodock presents a more robust position. He suggests five theological themes that help identify Lutheran education: God in the Gospel shows mercy and forgiveness but is also at work "through social structures to bring order and justice to the world," Christianity "is primarily a dynamic set of interpersonal relationships," we experience God's unmerited adoption and Christian freedom, and the incarnational principle sees God as active and present in nature and authoritatively through the Word of God. From these theological themes respectively Jodock draws characteristics of Lutheran educational institutions: educating for service to the community, striving for academic excellence, allowing freedom of inquiry, embracing the liberal or liberating arts, and creating a community of discourse. There is nothing distinctively Lutheran or even Christian about these five characteristics. For Jodock, as for others, the Christian part is their rootedness--the ground from which the education proceeds.¹⁹

Other authors could be cited, but several points become clear from this search for a core around which colleges can construct an identity. First, Lutherans find the identity rooted theologically in the larger Christian Church. There is a desire to be not merely Lutheran but Christian in the broadest sense, of identifying with the entire Christian tradition, consonant with Luther's desire to stay within but reform the Church. Here one finds the emphasis on creation and the theology of the cross. Second, the particularly Lutheran cast comes in locating the theological themes in Luther's theological and educational writings. For example, the theological themes include Luther's "four great solas, or 'alones,' of the Reformation--*Sola Gratia*, *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fide*, and *Solus Christus*."²⁰ In addition to these, five other themes emerge: the difference between the law and Gospel (the doctrine of the two kingdoms), Christian vocation, simultaneously saint and sinner, freedom, and with

particular impact on ritual in the college, the Lutheran confessional heritage. Third, the unity manifested in these theological themes dissipates somewhat when the writers derive from them educational theory and practice. The resulting description is what one would find of any good--should we say excellent--liberal arts college or university: dialogue between views, academic excellence, freedom of inquiry, education for service (vocation), and humility in pursuit of the truth. Because the resulting picture is of a common educational ideal, the danger then becomes that these themes can be pursued quite apart from a Christian theological orientation. Educational institutions thus can tend the fruits without attending to the soil.

Dialogue between Identity and Diversity

We have argued that Christian schools that intentionally seek to be inclusivist rather than pluralist will find their rootedness in the soil of theological themes that in turn are developed in various ways to create institutional identity. The conceptual will be explicitly formulated for both internal and external communities in the mission statement and its supporting documents. It will be realized in forming the undercurrent beneath the institutional structure. The development will not be merely conceptual, as a guiding abstraction. Rather, it must be worked out in structural and concrete formations. It will flourish in constitutional requirements regarding governing boards and major leadership positions, inform the curriculum that addresses not only required religion courses but ways in which courses can more broadly integrate faith and learning, infuse campus social constructs (chaplaincy, convocations, extra-curricular groups, counseling, social life, and community outreach), and perhaps most importantly determine the presence of a "critical mass of faculty members [and staff] who, in addition to being excellent teacher-scholars, carry in and among themselves the DNA of the school, care for the perpetuation of its mission as a Christian community of inquiry, and understand their own callings as importantly bound up with the well being of the immediate community."²¹

This critical mass, not to be measured in numbers, but assessed in terms of the key roles that particular faculty play in teaching, administering, and future hiring, is critical for continuance of the college's mission and identity.

But this brings us to the heart of the problem. If the school's task is in part to transmit a theological rather than a cultural tradition that embodies these themes, how will commitment to identity be balanced with intentional diversity, where students, faculty and staff with different theological perspectives and traditions are not only invited into the

community, but in their faculty and administrative roles eventually assume positions of leadership in the institution, including responsibility for hiring? The exclusivist and pluralist responses to diversity are fairly straightforward. The issue becomes especially difficult for inclusivist institutions, which is perhaps why both exclusivism and pluralism present constant temptations. As we previously noted, the consideration of diversity results in a tension between commitment to the central core and the intentional invitation of those who introduce truths from outside the core, challenge the thinking about the core, or who have new or diverse perspectives on and perhaps wish to change the core to be more in line with their own conceptual framework or educational philosophy.

Clearly there is no easy formula for maintaining the balance between the two dimensions, to not lapse into either excluding or pluralism. This, I take it, is consistent with the Lutheran theology of paradox that holds opposing dimensions in tension. How is the paradox to be worked out in the educational context in large part has to do with the role or purpose of diversity in the inclusivist institution. In contrast to the pluralist perspective, the inclusivist seeks diversity not for its own sake but rather for how it contributes to the three educational objectives of the educational institution: the shaping of the intellect (the head) through free inquiry, the motivational preparation for vocation as service (the hands) in the cause of justice, and the shaping of the human character (the soul or heart). Meilaender notes that it may not be appropriate to mold the heart in the classroom; "it is chiefly a place to shape the intellect." At the same time, he affirms that "vision and virtue--intellectual and moral virtue, mind and heart--can never be entirely separated."²²

Meilaender invokes the education of the student beyond the curriculum or classroom to address the heart or soul dimension. I would suggest, rather, that here we encounter another of those Lutheran paradoxes. On the one hand, the obvious function of the classroom is to educate the head and hands. The professor's function, even in professing, is not to proselytize, convert, or to make disciples, but to challenge, empower, and free.²³

On the other hand, education of the head and hands without educating the heart (the sentiments) leaves us with, to use C.S. Lewis's poignant phrase, "men without chests." Ideas without passion, service without commitment to and love for those served, ethical theory without moral character are an inheritance of the wind. If we educate our constituency, acquainting them with the facts and theories, but leave them less moral and uncommitted to a vision of the truth, we have failed in our mission to the Kingdom of God.

Educators unfortunately have bequeathed an atomistic view of persons, as if head, hand, and heart are not holistically connected. Sometimes the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms reinforces this view, as if the kingdom on the right hand is completely divorced from the kingdom on the left hand. Rather, the two kingdoms, or using our metaphor, head, hands, and heart, belong to the same unified person. Theories without vocation in service, service without the sentiment of love, sentiment without truth, are destructive. The function of Lutheran education is not to bifurcate but to bring them together in a unity that preserves and employs fruitfully the tension.

Given the purpose to educate holistically, the issue is not simply to create an institution with diversity, but to employ diversity throughout the institution (what is sometimes referred to as seamless education) to further the educational goal of educating head, hands, and heart.²⁴

Intentionally introducing diversity is directed toward creating a genuine dialogue that enhances the educational experience on all three fronts. Exposure to those who advocate diverse perspectives will more adequately prepare students for conscientious stewardship and caring service in the real world (the kingdom on the left). But through all this, care must be taken not to lose the institutional core identity. To this end, intentionally hiring faculty and staff who are committed to maintaining both the core components of the identity and who are willing to engage in the dialogue between the two kingdoms is critical.²⁵

Furthermore, the curriculum should be such in Lutheran schools that when students graduate, they too can address intellectually, from whatever perspective they have, the relation between the two kingdoms. In short, not only should colleges educate for service, but the education should be with an awareness both of the theological tradition that informs that education, of the need for dialogue between the Christian faith and other perspectives, and with skills in navigating that dialogue.

In sum, the creation of an intentionally diverse institution within Lutheran tradition calls for implementing the paradox of maintaining the identifying core while at the same time creating an atmosphere of true dialogue, all in the service of education of head, hands, and heart. The temptation in our era is to foster diversity and/or excellence at the cost of identity. Diversity is not pluralism. Freedom of inquiry does not bring abandonment of institutional commitment. Instead, Lutheran colleges should manifest the incarnational motif of God at work in the world through us, motivated by the Gospel, as God's stewards ultimately responding to God's grace.

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Works Cited

- ¹ Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1982).
- ² It is important to understand that in this paper I am discussing ideal models, not necessarily the instantiated reality. That is, many institutions seek to embody the model provided but will realize it only in various degrees. Causes of this may vary from hypocrisy, inadequate leadership, financial contingencies that force institutions to act contrary to their philosophy, weakness of will, arrogance or pride, and the like.
- ³ George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 432. A faculty colleague who strongly espouses diversity once told me that he/she would never hire a person who as a Christian advocated the views of the religious right.
- ⁴ Herbert Marcuse argues that tolerance, though an end in itself when practiced by all, can be appropriately used in a partisan way against those opposed to freedom. "Repressive Tolerance," *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon, 1969).
- ⁵ See Mark Mattes, "Dual Citizenship in Athens and Jerusalem," unpublished paper.
- ⁶ See Gerald McDermott, "Persuasion," unpublished paper.
- ⁷ Richard T. Hughes, "How the Lutheran Heritage Can Sustain the Life of the Mind," 16.
- ⁸ Gilbert Meilaender, "Forming Heart and Mind: Lutheran Thoughts about Higher Education," *The Lutheran Reader*, ed. by Paul Contino and David Morgan (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University, 1999), p. 79. George Marsden makes a similar point that those who encourage diversity within the institution often discourage it among institutions. When pluralist perspectives dominate, as for example in accrediting agencies, all institutions are encouraged if not required to be identical in their diversity. Institutions with a unique mission, with statements about mission and purpose that are not negotiable, are held in contempt as being second-class educational institutions. Pluralism results in a schema designed to make all institutions look very much the same.
- ⁹ It is easy for institutions bent on affirming diversity to confuse diversity with pluralism and consequently advocate a cultural mandate that can lead them to migrate away from their heritage. For this reason it is important not only to distinguish between pluralist and inclusivist models, but to distinguish verbally between "pluralism" and "diversity."
- ¹⁰ James T. Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998).
- ¹¹ Mark R. Schwehn writes that we are to be faithful, not distinctive. "The Idea of a Christian University," in *The Lutheran Reader*. 73. See Meilaender, p. 79. But the question then is what are we to be faithful to, and that will, in part, reflect certain propositions held as a mission.
- ¹² Robert W. Bertram, "What's Lutheran About Higher Education? Theological Presuppositions," *What's Lutheran About Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: LECNA, 1974), p. 22.
- ¹³ Meilaender, p. 79.
- ¹⁴ Meilaender, p. 80. In place of "distinctive," Bertram uses the more helpful term "characteristically."
- ¹⁵ Robert Benne, "Integrity and Fragmentation: Can the Lutheran Center Hold," *Intersections*, Winter 2000, 4.
- ¹⁶ Benne, 6.
- ¹⁷ Hughes, 14. It may be legitimately questioned whether Hughes's position is properly inclusivist. The problem is not with his emphasis on doubt; humility should always be an academic virtue. However, as Aristotle would quickly point out, it should be an appropriate humility: the right kind, in the right way, for the right reason. That is, it should not be a humility that prevents members of the institution from professing that non-negotiable core. Indeed, one can see this in Hughes himself. Despite his argument that "Lutherans can never absolutize their perspectives, even their theological perspectives," human finitude and divine sovereignty, he says, must always be absolutized. Neither does he question the two kingdoms doctrine, or that we are simultaneously sinner and justified. These absolute assertions conflict--appropriately though paradoxically, he might say--with his claim that Lutherans are constantly about the business of questioning their presuppositions, which are nonnegotiable. Should Hughes give up these presuppositions in his quest for the dialogic life of the mind, the Lutheran emphasis would go likewise. Thus, Hughes rightly worries over the Lutheran slippage to relativism.
- ¹⁸ Hughes, 15. Despite his rejection of the Reformed concept of a worldview as informing education, Hughes himself articulates the beginnings of a Lutheran worldview from which education proceeds.
- ¹⁹ Darrell Jodock, "The Lutheran Tradition and the Liberal Arts College: How Are They Related?" in *Called to Serve*, Ed. By Pamela Schwandt, et al, (Northfield: St. Olaf College, 1999). See also Bertram, p. 20 and Thomas Christenson, "Learning and Teaching as an Exercise in Christian Freedom," *Intersections*, (Winter, 1999), 3-11.

²⁰ Ernest Simmons, *Lutheran Higher Education* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), p. 26.

²¹ Schwehn, p. 65.

²² Meilaender, pp. 87, 88.

²³ Bruce R. Reichenbach, "On Being a Professor: The Case of Socrates," in *Should God Get Tenure? Essays on Religion and Higher Education*, ed. by David W. Gill (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 21-5.

²⁴ Richard Baepler, "Toward an Understanding of Lutheran Character in Higher Education," *The Lutheran Reader*, p. 31.

²⁵ I have addressed this in more detail in Bruce R. Reichenbach, "Mission and Hiring in the Christian College," *Intersections* 3 (June 1997), 13-19.

EMILY DICKINSON IN COLUMBUS, OHIO

Caitlin McHugh

When Emily Dickinson woke up on
the COTA, she thought that the world
had ended, and her violets were gone

forever. In a seat, by papers with curled
edges, she strained to see outside
grime and take in the contemporary world.

An old black woman who never showered sat beside
her, and the stench crowded her nostrils. She
tried to move, but the woman refused to provide

ample room. Unladylike, Emily broke free
by trampling over soiled seats and leaping
over grocery bags. People became disagreeable

with her once again, so she irritably pushed aside the sweeping
crowd in a search for Beauty and got off on High
Street. She tried a place with flashing lights and, keeping

an open mind, tasted actual brewed liquor. She said goodbye
to her shell and decided to live it up a little.
She was in charge now — she would tell them all; she could defy

all of society, wait for the world to whittle
away into nothing. She was going to read what she wanted
and say what she wanted — a noncommittal

life to everyone but herself. Undaunted,
she embraced life and ran around town,
quitted the act of reclusive-drama queen-ghost, and haunted

boldly all those who crossed her path. Around
certain streets, she was a legend — her eyes inciting
fear for many, and most keenly avoided her newfound

wrath. She was queen until a woman, exciting
feelings in her once forgotten, offered her a crude
bouquet of violets. Emily recalled the inviting

search for Beauty and smashed the plentitude for rudely
continuing its existence. Beauty had not stopped
for her death, but crawled bravely

onward. Her imaginary bubble was popped,
the safety of her cruel alabaster chambers collapsed,
and, as mankind moved onward, her power was cropped.

Caitlin McHugh is an English literature major at Capital University.

RESPONSE LETTER

I would like to respond to Professor Benne's characteristically generous comments in the last issue of *Intersections* about my review essay of his and the other contributions to *The Future of Religious Colleges*, edited by Paul Dovre. It was certainly not my intention to misrepresent his position, and I am grateful for his clarifications. I believe our disagreements are minor alongside our fundamental agreement that the epistemology of the Enlightenment -- the dominant epistemology throughout higher education -- poses the most serious threat to the continuing vitality of our Lutheran colleges. That is why I began my essay with the arguments of Douglas Sloan that mainstream Protestantism had not succeeded in finding a way by which its truth claims could be adjudicated in the academy -- and returned to those arguments at the conclusion.

Practicing scholars in the academy, who are seldom preoccupied with epistemology, look for a methodology that can place conflicting explanations side-by-side and provide a means of adjudicating the relative power of those explanations. Despite the persuasiveness of many of its critics, the Enlightenment model continues to be the one to which most scholars will default. So long as practicing historians, for example, wish to speak to the larger profession rather than to a particular faith community, the specter of David Hume, even more so than that of Rene Descartes, will continue to hover over historical explanation.

Let me put the threat concretely. If I am lecturing to a class of students on early Mormon history, I do not find a compelling alternative to the Enlightenment model when evaluating the truth claims of The Book of Mormon. I respect, and make the class aware of, the very different interpretation of that text offered by a practicing member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, but as a scholar exercising professional judgment, I do not grant that interpretation equal status as an "historical" account. I agree completely with Benne when he argues that the assumptions of my methodology act as a solvent on Mormon faith claims. The same methodological solvent has acted for two centuries to challenge basic Christian assertions about the "historical Jesus." As I write, Jews and Christians can pick up a popular news magazine and read how "scientific" archeology (as offered, for example, in *Uncovering the Bible*) is disproving their cherished beliefs about David, Solomon, the Exodus, and the entire biblical account of the history of ancient Israel.

In *The Meaning of Revelation*, H. Richard Niebuhr offered one possibility ("inner" and "outer" history) for reconciling faith and Enlightenment history. Walter Brueggemann offers another in *The Theology of the Old Testament* (treat the text as authoritative without concern for its "historicity"). Such approaches may be comforting to believers (personally, I find myself drawn to both), but they do not in my judgment offer an epistemology that can stand alongside of, and command equal respect with, the Enlightenment model in evaluating truth claims in the academy. That, I believe Benne and I agree, continues to be a fundamental challenge for church-related higher education.

Sincerely,

Baird Tipson
Wittenberg University

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