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## The Cresset (Vol. LXV, No. 7, Trinity)

Valparaiso University

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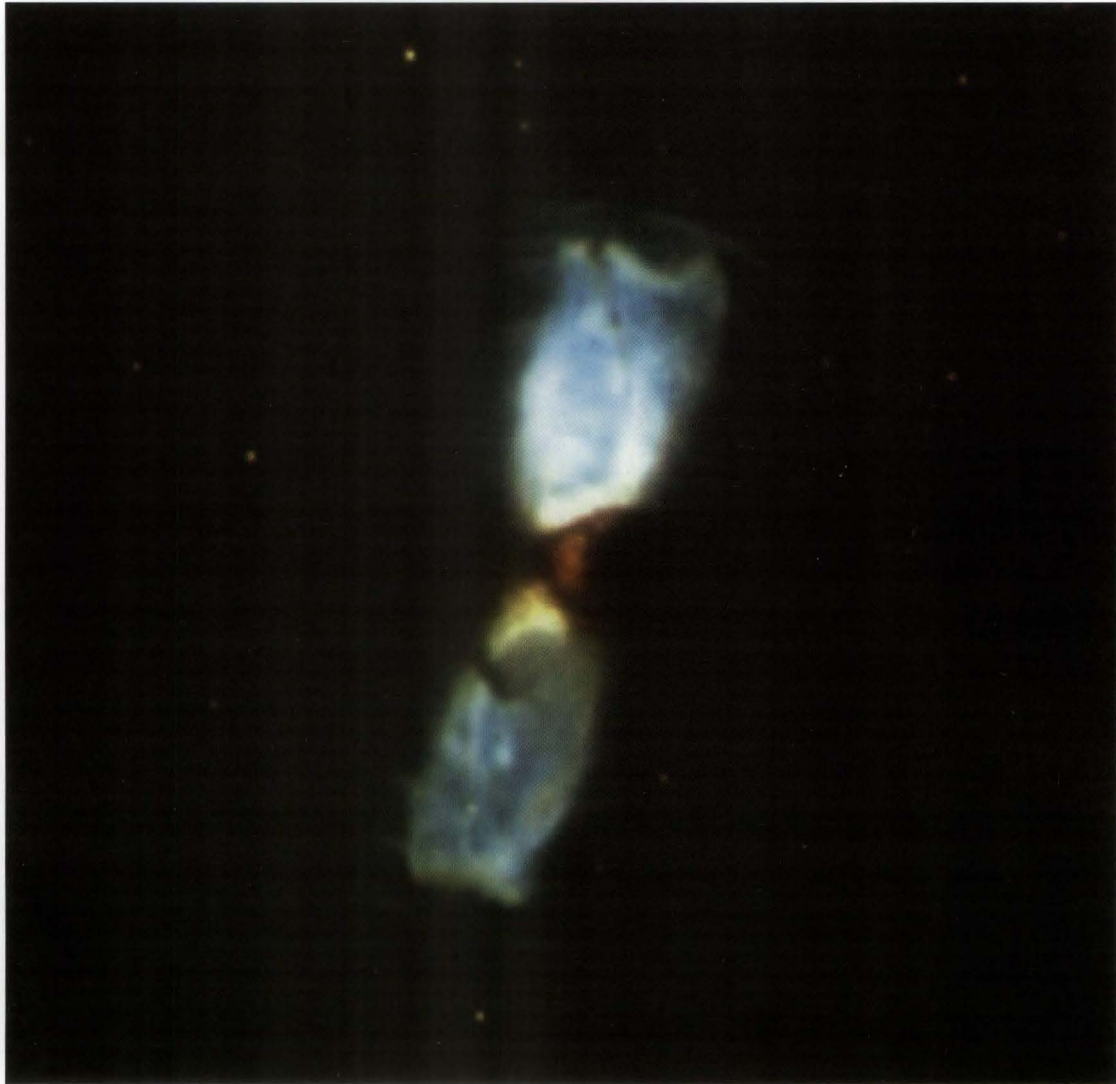
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# THE CRESSET

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE, THE ARTS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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# THE CRESSET

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# In Luce Tua

keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side, keep on the sunny side of life

**E**ach issue of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* includes an updated “Doomsday Clock,” a symbol of the nuclear danger currently before us, as assessed by their board. (The clock was moved forward to seven minutes before midnight at the end of February, when tensions between India and Pakistan were not quite so high as they have since become.) Perhaps in our annual Lilly Network issue *The Cresset*, with due respect to James Burtchaell’s *The Dying of the Light*, should introduce a “Flickering Cresset.” The cresset’s flame burning nearer, or less near, to extinction, would indicate our assessment of the current health of church-related colleges and universities.

Alan Wolfe, director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College would have the current cresset burning brightly, as is clear from his recent “The Intellectual Advantages of a Roman Catholic Education” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 31, 2002). Having experienced a Catholic college first-hand for several years now, he finds Burtchaell’s assessment of the health of Roman Catholic colleges and universities unwarranted. The light hasn’t gone out and it isn’t dying. Burtchaell has mistaken the diffusion of the light for its extinction. The presence of non-Catholic students and faculty, of even non-believing Jews like Wolfe himself, indicates not that the light has gone out, but that Catholic wisdom has spread beyond the Catholic world. “Perhaps it takes a religion that has produced its share of tortured martyrs to look at the position of Catholic colleges and universities today, compared with their state in the 1940s and ‘50s, to conclude that something has gone wrong. If such success constitutes failure, I would hate to know what failure itself must be.”

It’s good to know that Mother Maybelle Carter’s advice is finally being taken seriously by those rather gloomy Boston academics. (It is a long road from Bristol to Boston, after all.) Burtchaell’s assessment is grim, and one does hope for sunnier prospects, so we should be grateful to Professor Wolfe. Ordinarily, one might expect social scientists to be only a little more cheerful than philosophers, but cheerfulness seems to come pretty easily to Wolfe. Why is this man smiling?

Well, he tells us several times that post-modernism is now passé in the academy which I must admit, if true, would certainly improve the dispositions of many of the philosophers I know. Better yet for him and his associates at Roman Catholic colleges and universities, postmodernism, as well as many of the other problems that have beset higher education in the last quarter of a century, have hardly gotten to first base at Catholic institutions. The Catholic tradition, whatever its defects, has preserved Catholic colleges and universities from the most irritating of contemporary academic diseases.

The most important academic resource of Catholicism, Wolfe believes, has been the natural law tradition of Catholicism. Never mind that, as Wolfe knows, the natural-law tradition pre-dates Catholicism. A belief in the Christian God does, in fact, entail the belief that there is a reality that can be known (at least partially) by us, that there are (in some sense) universal moral norms, etc. (Note the philosopher’s qualifications.) If “the truth of God’s existence” doesn’t lead quite so directly to “the truth of man’s reason, art’s beauty, and morality’s universality” as Wolfe suggests—and it doesn’t—it is nevertheless true that Christians and other theists have difficulty embracing the post-modern views that there is not much to the world beyond our constructions. If the Catholic natural law tradition, or the underpinning of the Catholic understanding of natural law, that is to say, Christian theism, has enabled Catholic colleges to withstand the assault upon the humanities, (and, following Mother Maybelle’s advice, let us assume Wolfe is right about the success of Catholic schools in withstanding this assault) that is as it should be. Ideas about God should have academic consequences.

The Catholic natural law tradition has not only forestalled the excesses of postmodernism at Catholic educational institutions, Wolfe contends, it has shored up a healthy liberalism (in the classical sense of a respect for human liberty) in a climate in which public universities are attracted to speech codes and other restrictions upon the free-speech of individuals.

Readers up to this point might be excused for thinking that Wolfe is not really so interested in the Catholic natural law tradition as in a philosophical realism assumed by Catholic natural law theorists, as well as most other theists. But that is not the only advantage Catholic universities and colleges offer students. A concern for social justice is an essential component of the mission of most Catholic schools. These institutions have provided students valuable service opportunities often, I might add, without promising them course credit for their service.

If nuance is wholly absent in Wolfe's discussion of Catholic natural law, this is not the case in his discussion of social justice. Students (and faculty) at Catholic schools all too often fail to recognize that discerning exactly what social justice demands is not simple and straightforward. The tendency is too much towards unreflective activism. It ought not to be assumed that political liberals, Wolfe seems to suggest, have an exclusive claim to social justice. We're better off with a liberalism enlivened by a "vibrant conservatism."

A final valuable contribution of the Catholic tradition to education is the "Catholic imagination," an "appreciation of the symbolic, interpretive, and meaning-creating aspects of the human species," a way of seeing persons as multi-faceted and complex and not mere calculators of self-interest. Catholic or not, you do political science (and any other discipline, we may assume) in a Catholic way if in your studies you refuse to reduce humans to mere rational egoists.

The advantages of a Roman Catholic education, then, lie in the tradition bequeathed to Catholic colleges and universities—"commitments to natural-law truths, social justice, and their distinct view of human nature." Evidence that Catholic colleges are successful in their mission as Catholic institutions is that non-Catholics, even non-theists like Wolfe, can be found in significant numbers on Catholic campuses appreciating and appropriating these commitments.

#### **impressionistic social science**

The problem with impressionistic social science is that it is, well, impressionistic. Round up a half-dozen political scientists, each of whom teaches at a Catholic institution, ask them what they think of rational-choice theory, collect their negative responses, and then you can conclude that Catholic colleges and universities effectively educate their students that reductionist views of the human are untenable. To my mind, this inference is not much more warranted than the conclusion that Lutheran colleges and universities do better work of career preparation, education in values, and encouraging community involvement than public universities based on a survey of several thousand students at more than eight hundred U.S. colleges and universities in which the students at Lutheran schools offered a more positive assessment of their college experience in these areas. Wouldn't one expect students at private universities, whatever the religious identity of the institution, to be more positive about that experience given the cost and the prestige of the private institution? Wouldn't one expect a political scientist hostile to rational choice theory to more frequently come across those similarly suspicious? But Mother Maybelle is wise; Wolfe is probably right about the common practice of Catholic scholarship by non-Catholics and non-theists at Catholic universities. The light isn't dying, it's diffused.

But is he right about what the practice of Catholic scholarship is? That question, of course, is better left to Catholic scholars. Suffice it to say that it seems a strange notion of Catholic scholarship that is inclusive of Aristotle and the early Scottish enlightenment thinkers, many of them Calvinists of one sort or another, as well as Aquinas and Alan (Wolfe).

Two questions remain: To what extents do other Christian traditions share enough of the riches of the Catholic tradition to offer students at their colleges and universities intellectual advantages? Wolfe's Catholic tradition is, after all, Catholicism denuded and diffused, the very definition of Protestantism according to some. Ironically, would Wolfe find in Protestant church-related colleges

the very best of the advantages of a Catholic education? Perhaps postmodernism isn't dead! And if the Catholic tradition diffused is, roughly, the vision of the Stoics or, perhaps better, the early Scottish and American enlightenment, is that tradition sufficiently robust, theologically speaking, to forestall the educational diseases Wolfe rightly fears? History would seem to suggest otherwise.

### belonging and mission

Wolfe frames his discussion of the advantages of a Catholic education in the context of Burtchaell's dying light, a decline for which, oddly enough, Wolfe presumes some might hold him responsible. His cheerful gloss, however, is that the light hasn't died, rather people like Burtchaell are mistaken about exactly what the light is. Wolfe, an apparent outsider, turns out to be an insider once one understands what the light really is. Perhaps that is so, but even if so there will be outsiders in Wolfe's Catholic university, individuals who believe that moral norms are but constructions of the powerful, or that a commitment to social justice is foolishness, or that human beings aren't sufficiently free to act in anything other than a self-interested way. Individuals who, like Wolfe, wish to belong. What is their role, how can they be enlisted in the mission of a Catholic or some other church-related university? Caroline Simon and Tom Landy helpfully address this question in their essays in this issue. Bruce Hrivnak, a Presbyterian teaching in a Lutheran university, offers his own story of belonging, of a person finding his calling within his discipline, as well as his university. These essays, along with James Nuechterlein's insightful reflections upon the importance of universities and their journals belonging to a particular tradition, lead us to a mildly glowing *Cresset*, not nearly so bright as Wolfe would have it but, nevertheless, far from quenched.

TDK

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## LAST JUDGMENT

When Jesus comes again on clouds,  
I will be at the Barnes and Noble megastore  
eating a two dollar cookie, looking down  
on the balding, middle-aged man who drifts  
from Special Diet Cookbooks to Exercise and Fitness.  
Outside Volvos and Camrys will burst into flames,  
while mothers run screaming through the parking lot  
pushing children in six hundred dollar baby carriages.

All of us—the ones in Web Design, New Fiction,  
in Fantasy, Personal Finances and Self-help—will wait,  
the way I did when my mother's heart monitor  
burned into the room with green, oscillating fire,  
and literature turned unsure for me, the way paper does,  
the way words now fly up from pages in green flames.  
When Jesus comes again, his face will be on fire.  
There will be no dark places, not even the ink on pages.

Steve Rhodes

# Intimations

simul excellent et general

James Nuechterlein

*This is the sixth piece in a series commissioned for this year's Cresset concerning the question, "what and how should the church-related university publish in the 21st century?" Participants have all been editors of Valparaiso University publications. James Nuechterlein was Editor of The Torch (1959-60) and The Cresset (1981-88).*

—The Editor

In a world of niche marketing, Christian universities have learned to promote themselves as institutions that will preserve religious identity without sacrificing educational quality. Most of them sell themselves, therefore, with minor variations on the generic theme: "Pursuing academic excellence in the (Catholic, Lutheran, Moravian, Whatever) tradition." I offer that comment as observation, not criticism. The ad byte is a cliché, but for Christian universities serious about their enterprise, it's an unavoidable one. And it suggests the necessary answer to the question, "What should church-related universities be publishing in the twenty-first century?" They should be publishing material of the highest possible intellectual and literary quality that reflects their particular understanding of the Christian reality as it takes part in conversation with the general culture. That's easily said; the doing of it is something else.

Start with particularity. Denominational specificity is frequently an embarrassment, or at least a matter of indifference, among Christian academics. Not entirely without reason: in an intellectual culture reluctant to offer admission to the Christian proposition in general, it seems burdensome or supererogatory to insist that one's precise frame of reference is Christianity as understood in the Lutheran Christian tradition. And I recall from my teaching days at Valparaiso that there's also an exhaustion factor: when you're reading your fourth task force report on how the university can maintain its Lutheran identity, it's difficult to maintain the intensity of attention you know the subject deserves. But again, there's no way around the problem. The subject is important and needs perpetually to be at the forefront of the university's concerns.

Critics complain about parochialism, but that misses the point. All identity is parochial, and religious universities not determined to remain universities from somewhere in particular will sooner or later become universities from nowhere at all. There is what C.S. Lewis called mere Christianity, that set of core beliefs shared by all orthodox adherents of the Great Tradition. But there are not, he went on to insist, mere Christians. Christian universities, like Christian individuals, are not Christian-in-general, or at least not for very long. Christianity-in-general is a way station on the road to secularity. It follows, then, that a journal of ideas and opinion produced by a Lutheran university will in some ways read differently—have a different slant, a different angle of vision—than its Catholic or Baptist counterparts. Not completely and not in every item, of course, but still in a manner apparent overall to the discerning reader.

Take politics, for example. The Lutheran principle of Two Kingdoms, which distinguishes between God's left-hand realm of justice and His right-hand realm of grace, gives to its understanding of the political world a distinctive cast. Luther's argument that it is neither necessary nor possible to run the state by the gospel sets him and his successors apart from other traditions of Christian thought. This is not the occasion to argue whether that understanding is better or worse than possible alternatives (though I would defend it strongly), but there can be no doubt that embracing it makes a significant analytical difference. So also with the Lutheran analysis of the individual Christian's condition before God as *simul iustus et peccator* (the believer is at once saint and

*Christianity-in-general  
is a way station  
on the road  
to secularity.*

sinner): those who hold to that doctrine may wind up as either liberals or conservatives, but they will never be utopians. Other theological traditions will have their own distinctive political implications. And what is true for politics will, I think, also be true, if perhaps less obviously so, in nonpolitical realms of inquiry.

Particularity, then, is essential—but it is not enough. As noted above, Christian universities should also publish material “of the highest possible intellectual and literary quality.” In one sense, that is, or should be, easy. Any university worthy of the name has lots of bright people on its faculty. But bright people do not necessarily have the qualities necessary to engage in “conversation with the general culture.” (Of course Christian universities may choose to address a specialized academic audience, but that would normally imply establishing a university press, something that few such universities have the resources to undertake.) Conversation with the general culture requires of its participants that they address their audience—an audience that can be presumed to be intelligent but cannot be presumed to possess specialized knowledge—in prose marked by clarity and at least a modicum of grace. And therein lies a very large rub.

In two decades’ experience as an editor of journals of ideas, I have learned the melancholy lesson that precious few academics are good writers. And those few with natural talent often have it ruined by their graduate school experience, which tends to socialize them out of writing with anything like clarity or grace. Instead they learn the jargon of their academic disciplines, jargon penetrable only by the initiated. Clarity becomes suspect: it is too often the prejudice that if anyone of reasonable intelligence can follow an academic’s argument in his area of specialization, the argument must lack depth or complexity. Obscurity, on the other hand, is frequently taken to imply sophistication. And if clarity among academics is in short supply, literary grace is vanishingly rare. (I exaggerate to a degree—and not all disciplines are equally guilty of the academic assault on the English language—but the general problem is a commonplace of conversations among editors.)

The problem is compounded by the reward system common within universities. Faculty members receive credit for publishing in “peer-reviewed” journals, and journals of ideas and opinion do not fall in that category. So even those relatively few academics who know how to write for general audiences have little incentive to do so, since such writings carry minimal weight in the annual reports that faculty members prepare for deans and provosts and that are used to award merit raises and promotions in rank. And financial incentives exist almost not at all. No VU faculty member has ever been able to take early retirement based on income derived from writing for *The Cresset*.

All this makes for a sober, if not gloomy, analysis concerning the future of the kind of Christian university publishing that I have been talking about. (Alternative forms of publishing do not come readily to mind—or at least not to my mind.) But sobriety is necessary in these matters. If the university cannot do well what it wants to do in publishing, it should not do it at all. Then, too, there is the matter of potential audience. Any university’s resources are limited, and no university should allow itself the indulgence of publishing material for which there is no discernible demand. To paraphrase (and question) the message of the movie *Field of Dreams*: if you print it, they may come—but then again, they may well not. Supply-side publishing seems to me at least as controversial a proposition as supply-side economics.

But I do not wish to conclude on so negative a note. The fact that it is difficult to sustain the kind of publishing I am interested in for the Christian university does not mean that it is not possible—and I do not hesitate to offer the history of *The Cresset* as evidence. And to counter the negative indicators I have marshaled above, there is at least one potentially significant sign of hope in the present moment. One need not be an advocate of postmodernism (on most counts I am an inveterate opponent) to see in it the possibility for Christians to get a cultural word in edgewise, and maybe even more than a word. The Enlightenment rationalist model of discourse no longer dominates cultural conversation, and in the resulting babel of voices (which, to be sure, has problems of its own) people of faith may find themselves not quite so marginalized as they were under the modernist dispensation. It is my impression—though it is no more than that—that fashionable circles of opinion are more willing of late to offer Christian truth claims an at least semi-respectful hearing.



James Nuechterlein  
is editor of  
First Things.

If it is the case that Christians have something of a teachable moment, what use shall we make of it? Our responses to current cultural conditions will no doubt—and quite understandably—be as varied as have been Christian responses in the past. We will say our yea's and nay's, we will alternate between hope and alarm, in no cohesive pattern. The National Council of Churches is not the National Association of Evangelicals is not the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops is not. . .and so on virtually ad infinitum. What one can hope for in the midst of this Christian babel is that all voices will speak in terms faithful to and reflective of their own understanding of the Christian tradition, and will not attempt, either out of lack of conviction or lack of courage, to retreat to a kind of linguistic or moral Esperanto behind which to hide their embarrassment at what they are. Christians need to translate where possible, but not all moral propositions are translatable.

Not that believers should leap to proclaiming, over every controverted public issue, "Thus saith the Lord." Christians need to distinguish between when they are speaking as Christians out of specifically Christian imperatives (as best they understand them) and when they are speaking simply as people of good will offering prudential judgments about which people can reasonably disagree. They need to distinguish, in other words, between what is legitimately up for grabs and what is not.

That process of discernment is perpetually in progress, and Christians, to be faithful to their calling, must forever participate with humble urgency to that sorting out until our Lord returns in glory to set everyone, and everything, straight. ✠

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## QUARRY

What an abandoned quarry  
loves best is the way  
water replaces stone as if  
to erase an emptiness:

today, a town graced  
with granite faces  
at this particular bend  
in the river because

of stone a thousand feet  
below. We could walk  
the precipice left  
behind and talk:

what can come of  
moving on like water  
forever descending or  
stone's exalted silence;

we could pocket shards  
as hard and beautiful  
as any monument  
to what is finally gone.

Christian Knoeller

# Glorious Are the Works of the Lord:

## Studying the Heavens

*Bruce J. Hrivnak*

**T**he Psalmist writes, "The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out to the ends of the world" (Ps 19:1-4a). Despite these words, one might think it to be just the opposite, that those who spend the most time studying the heavens and nature appear least inclined to be religious. There is a perception that a person who is a scientist lives according to logic, data, and a detached objectivity, and that, by contrast, a person who is religious lives by faith, feelings, and a personal subjectivity. Facts versus faith. This idea of science and religion as two divergent approaches to life in this world is pretty pervasive. I find that people are often surprised to find out that I am both a scientist and a Christian.

Science has answered so many questions about our world and, with more time, it may seem that it will answer almost all. In the past, things that were attributed to God we now attribute to gravity, germs, plate tectonics, etc. Science, due to its technological prowess and the benefits it has provided, has risen in prestige. As science has increased our knowledge, it appears that God has been pushed to the edges or completely out of the picture.

How has the Christian church responded? In a variety of ways, but often defensively. In an effort to uphold the supernatural teachings of the Bible, including miracles, the incarnation of God in Jesus, his virgin birth, and the bodily resurrection of Jesus, the church has often responded by emphasizing the importance of faith and encouraging a suspicion of science. Often, scientists have been cast as atheists with a hidden agenda to disrupt belief in God and to turn young people from the faith of their fathers and mothers. While this contrast between faith and science may not be the experience of all, it is still a common strain. Controversy over the teaching of biological evolution and "creation science" and the evidence regarding the "big bang" beginning for the cosmos appear frequently in the popular news. At least in the area of origins, there still seems to be a "warfare" between science and religion. Before examining this apparent conflict between religion and science, let me tell you some things about my own particular background, and then I will interweave my reflections on science and the Christian faith with my own life story.

### **my beginnings as a Christian and scientist**

My development as a Christian and as a scientist initially followed two separate paths.

I grew up attending church regularly, learning Bible stories and God's commandments. I thought of God as holy and distant. When I was young, I remember having a vivid sense of God as a judge with a balance scale. I was basically a good kid, and would feel on some days that my good actions and thoughts outweighed the bad; however, that was not always the case, and who knows what tomorrow might bring? What if on the judgement day the scales were tipped against me? I had a clear sense of God's righteous law.

My coming to understand and embrace the gospel, God's good news, was strongly influenced by my mother. When I was in elementary school she began reading the Bible regularly, and attending Christian meetings, and began taking my brother and me with her to a small chapel on Sunday evenings. Some changes were occurring in my mother's life. It appeared that she was able to show love beyond the call of duty in the midst of some challenging situations. This I attributed to God's

*The Warren Rubel  
Lecture in Christianity  
and Higher Learning,  
delivered on  
15 February 2001*

work in her life. What I heard from the Bible at this time also made sense to me. First that no one is good enough to please God. We all fall short. The Bible says that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” and that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 3:23, 6:23). Then, that God provided the remedy for our failure to measure up. He sent His righteous son. Furthermore, that through faith in Jesus we are saved, on the basis of his righteous life and his substitutionary death. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). Finally that we can have assurance of this salvation. “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 Jn 5:13). What would earlier have seemed like arrogant presumption I now saw as a gracious gift.

This was good news to me! It meant that there was a way for me to be right with God, in spite of the fact that I personally could not live up to his standards, or even my own. It was as I was beginning junior high school that I made a faith commitment to God, trusting in what Jesus did to atone for my sins before a holy and loving God. I came to see God as my heavenly Father who personally cared for me. Not only did this remove my fear of God’s judgement and lead me to trust in God, but it gave me a growing sense of purpose for my life. I began to see God working in my life to help me begin to be less self-centered and more loving, although these are areas in which I continue to need growth.

In the meantime, I found that I was good in math and was interested in science. I was a serious student and loved to read. My parents, both immigrants from Czechoslovakia, worked hard and had a very strong desire that their children graduate from college. The manned space program was just getting started at this time. A career as an astronaut was appealing, but my need for glasses and my motion sickness on carnival rides clearly disqualified me! Nevertheless, science and space, in particular, had an appeal for me as it did for many others, and my high school yearbook lists my career goal as “physicist.”

During my junior high school and high school days, my family joined a growing Baptist church that I would classify as evangelical and somewhat fundamentalist. In this context, I developed several impressions about faith and science as I went away to college. One was that young people who were committed Christians went to Bible college in order to serve on the mission field or to become pastors or other “full-time” Christian workers. (I did not feel that committed and probably wasn’t at that time.) Another impression was that in going to a major secular university one opened oneself to attacks on the faith and to the ridicule of atheistic professors, and that not “losing the faith” would be a real challenge. (I think that there is some truth to that perception of universities; for example, I saw some evidence of that in my first-year philosophy class.) I also sensed that in the church there existed simultaneously a deep suspicion as well as a high regard for science. A deep suspicion of science because science ignores God and often comes to conclusions seemingly contrary to the Bible, particularly epitomized by the theory of evolution of man from lower life forms. On the other hand, the accomplishments of science were highly valued. If some scientific discovery seemed to be harmonious with the Bible, or rather let me say with an interpretation of the Bible, it was frequently noted in a bulletin insert or a sermon illustration as being consistent with or even “confirming” the Bible. The fact that science had not yet found the bottom of the ocean was highlighted when Micah 7:19 was read, “You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.” I found such references to science distracting (I didn’t think that the forgiveness of my sins depended upon the bottom of the ocean remaining beyond discovery) and sometimes distressing. I wondered how I would be regarded as a scientist in the church.

I don’t want to imply that this was the background of every young person growing up with an interest in science in a conservative church in the sixties. On the other hand, I don’t think that this was simply my perception or only the way things were in my particular church. There clearly was a deep-rooted suspicion of science and the universities in many conservative churches, and in some cases this may have been well-founded. This can lead one to wonder if the church and science have always been in opposition.

## Christianity and science: a look at the historic background

How did we arrive at the supposed opposition, or even warfare, between science and religion? Some may be surprised to learn that many of the founders of modern science and many of their successors have been deeply committed Christians. These include: Johannes Kepler, who determined the shape of the orbits that the planets follow around the sun; Galileo, who first turned the newly invented telescope towards the heavens for study; Isaac Newton, the brilliant physicist who, among other things, formulated the basic laws of motion and gravity; Michael Faraday, the great experimenter in electricity; and James Clerk Maxwell, who formulated the laws relating electricity and magnetism. Listen to the following words from the notebooks of Johannes Kepler: "I give you thanks, Creator and God, that you have given me this joy in thy creation, and I rejoice in the works of your hands. See, I have now completed the work to which I was called. In it I have used all the talents you have lent to my spirit." Modern science and the scientific method of systematic inquiry arose in Western Europe. Some historians say that it was Christianity, with its belief in one God with a definite character and, thus, the expectation of an orderly and knowable universe, that provided a foundation for modern science. From the Bible one can derive a worldview in which nature is both real (not an illusion) and has value since it was created by God. Thus, it is worthy of study. The Creation is good; the material world is not evil. Furthermore, an outcome of the Protestant Reformation and its doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers," was a widespread view that not just religious vocations, but all lawful secular vocations can be callings from God.

This expansive Christian worldview valuing, as it does, the study of God's creation, disposed many Christians towards involvement in early modern science. A majority of the initial members of the Royal Society of London, one of the first scientific societies, were Puritans who saw the study of nature as a way of glorifying God. I list the names above not to imply that we should believe what they believed because they were important people or scientific heroes, but rather to show that at the origins of modern science, scientific study and Christian faith were understood not only to be compatible, but mutually encouraging.

Even the situation with Galileo, which is often cast as a proto-typical case of the church opposing science, turns out to be more complicated than that. Apparently Galileo had many enemies at the universities among those who staunchly supported the Aristotelian views he attacked. Also, Galileo's personality seemed to antagonize others and in controversy his attacks were biting. Envy of his rising status may also have been involved in opposition to him. The point to be made is that the trial and condemnation of Galileo by the Catholic church was more complex than simply a case of the church seeking to maintain its authority and so restraining scientific inquiry.

When we consider this background, why is the situation so different today? Several factors appear to have been at work during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that help to explain the apparent contemporary opposition. These include rationalism, anti-traditionalism, the "God of the gaps" view of God which invokes God to explain the gaps in our knowledge, the efforts in some circles to remove the supernatural from the Bible, Darwinian evolution and the ensuing controversies, and an increasingly naturalistic viewpoint. Some, among them Thomas Huxley at the end of the nineteenth century, consciously attempted to overthrow the cultural dominance of Christianity, to replace a "Christian worldview with scientific materialism." The warfare image was initially spread primarily by opponents of Christianity like Andrew D. White, then president of Cornell, who wrote *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology* (1896), which helped to lead to the popular impression of a past and lasting opposition. However, as we have seen, there was no such opposition as modern science developed.

In the second quarter of the twentieth century, as conservative Christians saw themselves as a minority within or, in some cases as separatists from many of the major church denominations, a fortress mentality seems to have set in. Modernism and liberalism in theology and naturalism in science seemed to be carrying the day. A tightly defined circle of orthodoxy was established, one which often included a commitment to a literal interpretation of the Bible. The public fallout of the Scopes trial (1925) concerning the teaching of evolution in public schools further put conservative Chris-

tians on the defensive. Committed to the belief that true science, which deals with facts, was not in contradiction to the Bible, they concluded that scientific ideas which seemed to contradict the Bible must be false or biased science. This led to a retreat from the scientific laboratories and in many cases from engagement in the world and to the safety of Bible colleges for the study of the Bible and practical skills. In some cases, anti-intellectualism carried the day in practice, if not in principle. Of course, this exacerbated the problem, for the result was fewer Christians in science and fewer Christian role models for students.

### **my time in college and some changing views**

That was the setting in which I went to college interested, as I was, in the study of science. I majored in Physics as an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, and kept busy with studies and running on the track team. I continued in my life as a private Christian, reading the Bible and attending a local church for an hour on Sunday, but with very little Christian engagement beyond that. Each semester in college, believing group Bible study and Christian fellowship were good things to do, I'd plan to get more involved with Penn's InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF). However, I actually participated little because it was not a high priority among the several things competing for my time.

During my last semester as an undergraduate, my life changed. Over Christmas break I attended a large Christian conference sponsored by IVCF at the University of Illinois. I was encouraged and challenged as I saw a basketball arena filled with 16,000 fellow college students who were serious about living a Christian life. Over spring break I went to a smaller conference featuring Francis Schaeffer, a Christian apologist who encouraged Christians to engage the world rather than retreat from it. I then realized that I tended to confine my faith internally and did not have confidence that it fit with the real world. Reading Schaeffer's books, such as *The God Who Is There*, gave me confidence to face the world as a Christian, with the sense that all truth is God's truth. A Christian worldview would really fit with the real world that God made, and in fact was the only worldview that would. One can get the idea, with all of the various philosophies that have arisen in the world, that Christianity has been tried and found wanting and that these others fit better with the real world. But I came to see that these different worldviews developed from the presuppositions and choices that people made as to how they would respond to life in this fallen world. The idea that the teachings of the Bible and a Christian worldview actually made sense of the world was exciting and liberating for me.

Related to this, that same spring, I felt particularly challenged to trust God more in all of my life. Inwardly, I had a personal, private faith that God cared for me. Way out there, I believed that God had created the stars, but my life and faith were compartmentalized. In terms of my day-to-day life, how I spent my time and set priorities, I felt that I was struggling, all on my own. I sensed that I was leading a basically self-centered life, filtering things through the grid of what they would do for me. I didn't feel good about this; this was not the way that I wanted to live the rest of my life. I wanted to live as an integrated, whole person. I remember sitting down on a street curb, reflecting on this and the illogical nature of my believing that God was involved in the big picture of the universe out there, yet not feeling that I could trust him for how I should live my life down here. At that time I remember making a specific commitment to begin seeking God's involvement in every area of my life.

As these things were coming together in my life, I graduated with a degree in Physics. I had applied to several graduate schools in Astronomy, and in God's providence I stayed in Philadelphia and entered the Astronomy Department at the University of Pennsylvania. This turned out to be an exciting and challenging chapter in my life. I became an active part of a small church that had just been started by some recent seminary graduates who desired to minister to students and present a Christian witness to the campus community. Several of us were graduate students in the physical sciences, and the pastor had been a physics major as an undergraduate. I met and married my wife Lucy. I consciously determined to set some priorities for my time and not to let my studies be the focus of my whole life, as they had been as an undergraduate. This was a time of digging into the Bible and theology with a group of fellow believers, and of seeking to consciously live in Christian community. Now, I had found kindred souls.

### my research: studying the stars

Along with my graduate studies I also did some teaching at Penn in their summer school and at nearby LaSalle College. I enjoyed teaching and seemed to do well at it, however, my thesis research was going slowly. By that time I could see myself enjoying a career of teaching. Success and enthusiasm in research came more slowly, but they have come to be an integral part of my professional life.

My early research as a graduate student and in the years immediately after focussed on the basic properties of stars. These properties can be determined most accurately when a star has a companion star. By studying the orbital and light variations of such binary stars, one can deduce the mass, size, and luminosity of each. Stars, however, also change or evolve with time due to changes in their internal structures. Stars like the sun will expand and eventually become large red giant stars. Such stars can have the diameter of a hundred suns. After a period of stability, the star will again expand and begin to lose its outer layers. These then drift away, producing a huge shell of gas around the star and leaving in the center a hot core. This is called a planetary nebula, which is a misnomer since it is not related to planets. The gas shell eventually dissipates into space and the core cools to become a white dwarf. This is the cycle that we think stars like the sun go through.

The particular research I have been engaged in is studying the transition from the red giant, the large red star, to the planetary nebula, when one sees the glowing shell of gas around the hot core. What goes on in between? It turns out that the intermediate stage has been hard to study partly because it takes place rapidly, astronomically speaking, over a few thousand years, and partly because the star is often obscured by the gas and dust it is losing. The opportunity to study stars in this stage arose in 1983 with the IRAS satellite. It orbited the earth with a telescope sensitive to infrared emission, and by surveying the entire sky, it found a quarter of a million sources. Infrared emission is given off by objects that are warm, not hot like stars such as the sun. This is what one would expect for stars surrounded by gas and dust, which would absorb the light from the star and then warm up and shine in the infrared.

When the IRAS data became available, I was at the University of Calgary in a postdoctoral position. It was fortunate timing that during the year before coming to Valparaiso, I had the opportunity to begin interacting with Dr. Sun Kwok, who had just joined the faculty at Calgary and who was already recognized as an expert in the study of planetary nebulae. We began collaborating on some research during that last year and we have continued doing so for seventeen years now. The satellite data showed where in the sky these infrared sources were located. Using some of the largest telescopes in the world, located in Hawaii, we had the opportunity to look for these objects and to see whether the star in the center was visible. In many cases the star was completely obscured, but in some cases we could actually see the central star. We were quite excited when we found the first case of a bright star that corresponded to the infrared source. When we observed the spectrum of it we saw that, indeed, it was a red supergiant. Thus we had begun to find some of these transitional objects. We continued finding additional ones, a few dozen in total.

At the same time, my colleagues at the University of Calgary began looking at some spectral data from the IRAS satellite. A large peak at twenty-one microns in the infrared spectrum indicated some new molecular feature that had not previously been studied or recognized here on the earth, arising from the gas and dust around the star. This was exciting and in a way got us going on a bit of a detective story. We initially found four such objects, and later a dozen, and all the ones that showed the signature of this new chemistry in space were stars in the transitional phase between red giant and planetary nebula. Something in that stage or that environment caused this molecule to form. We found that a common trait in all the objects with the twenty-one micron emission feature was that they possess an unusually large abundance of carbon. After some more recent satellite data and a lot of work in laboratories, the source of this emission peak likely has been identified as titanium carbide around the star. However, that may not be the end of the story as there have more recently been some other suggested identifications of the source. It has been exciting to participate in the discovery of some new molecules in space. This identification of titanium carbide could set limits on how titanium is formed in stars, and so it gets us into the subject of nucleosynthesis and the formation of elements.

We are also interested in studying how the gas was ejected from the star. The red giant stars are spherical in shape, yet planetary nebula gas shells have a variety of shapes, appearing round, elliptical, and even bipolar. Using the telescopes in Hawaii we were able to take pictures of these transitional objects, but they were just too small to see details of the shapes of the gas shells. However, that changed when we had the opportunity to use the Hubble Space Telescope. With its great improvement in resolution, much more detail is seen. One of the first ones that we observed with the Hubble showed spectacular bipolar lobes and eight faint circumstellar arcs (see the front cover). We have found this bipolar structure to be common, with light scattered from the lobes towards us and with a dark lane across the middle (see back cover; note that these are false color pictures, with colors used to bring out enhancements in the bright regions). To explain this bipolar structure, a theoretical model had been constructed assuming there must be a torus or donut-shaped region of dust around the central star that prevents the light and gas from expanding in those directions. Thus the gas expands in opposite directions through the hole in the torus and scatters the light towards us producing such bipolar shapes. In one of our most recent Hubble images (see back cover) we are able, for the first time, to directly see this obscuring torus. In three additional cases we have been able to discover surrounding circular arcs. These arcs are seen by light reflected from the gas. The presence of both circular arcs and bipolar lobes in the same objects suggests that the gas was initially ejected from the star in a spherical process, producing the circular arcs, and then later changed to produce gas moving off in opposite directions. We are presently investigating why this would occur. I am also carrying out some research with students using the modest but modern facilities of the Valparaiso University Observatory to study how the brighter of these stars vary in light due to pulsation. This can tell us something about the internal structure of the stars.

This is only one small taste of what we are learning about the cosmos. The stars that I have been studying are all found in our Milky Way Galaxy. As we move beyond our own galaxy, we find a universe consisting of galaxies each containing billions of stars. One of the special projects done with the Hubble Space Telescope was to focus the cameras for ten days on one region of the sky, taking hundreds of photographs that were then superimposed on one another to build up an image of the faint light. Each one of the objects in the resulting picture is a galaxy, except for a few nearby foreground stars. (A view of this image can be found on the Hubble website: <http://opposite.stsci.edu/pubinfo/PR/96/01/PRC9601a.jpg>) There are 1500 galaxies in the image. Now, just to put it in perspective, this picture has the angular size of a grain of sand held at arm's length. This region was picked because it seemed to be an empty region in space. If we assume that it is typical of the whole universe, that implies that there are a total of fifty billion galaxies, each containing a billion stars. Truly, this is an awesome and beautiful universe!

#### **my life as a Christian and a scientist**

This glorious universe was created by God, and I consider it a privilege to be able to study it and teach others about it. One can ask what difference it makes to me as an astronomer that I have a Christian faith. Has it affected the kind of work I do or how I carry it out?

Has my faith affected my choice of research topics? No, not significantly. The Earth is the Lord's and the heavens are his handiwork; thus they are appropriate areas of study. (In principle, being a Christian could certainly affect the subject of one's scholarly research—certain experiments on humans or animals would be inappropriate, and some areas have more immediate benefit or usefulness than others.) Basically, I have carried out my research in areas of interest and opportunity. Perhaps I have been less enthusiastic than some in the search for extraterrestrial life, partly because I believe that life did not arise by random chance and partly because I don't believe that the existence of extraterrestrial life is such an ultimate question. The question of whether we are alone in the universe has been answered by God.

Has my faith affected the way I carry out my scholarly work? Yes, I believe that it has. I have benefited recently from reading Mark Schwehn's book *Exiles from Eden* (and wish that I had read it earlier). I appreciated his illustration of several spiritual virtues that can influence the way one goes

about his/her scholarly work. Here are some virtues he discusses that elicited personal responses from me: Humility: being humble before other scholars and working to try to understand what they are saying. A more senior scholar can either take time for younger colleagues in his field and can try to learn from them, or he can simply dismiss their differing views out of laziness, busyness, or a view that he already knows anything they have to say. Self-denial: not putting myself first. I have certain ideas, theories that I favor. It is not hard to promote these if I look primarily at supportive data and stress how the data fits with my hypothesis, or if I look primarily at the weaknesses of competing theories, without acknowledging and dealing adequately with their strengths. It takes more effort to charitably and sincerely deal with the competing ideas of a colleague than to minimize or simply ignore his or her contributions. Yet we can be tempted to do this, if not for self-promotion, at least as a response to the pressure of time and the desire to complete a project as soon as possible and have it published. (In fact, after reading this section of Schwehn's book, I felt that I had to go back and do some more work on a paper I was preparing, to see that I was fair to another viewpoint.) I want to "do unto others as [I] would have them do unto [me]" (Matt 7:12). One can also consider honesty and integrity. Honesty is, of course, expected in reporting data and experimental results. It is an implicit assumption in scientific research. Being honest and presenting realistic expectations also comes into play in writing grant proposals. Do I really expect to carry out all of the great research that I propose within the specified time period? I find that I struggle constantly with setting unrealistic expectations of what I will get done and then so often feeling the pressure of being behind schedule.

It is easy to get caught up in self-promotion and even to exaggerate the importance of a scholarly project. We hear it said, "If you don't promote your own work, who will? If others don't know about the good work that you're doing, then you are less likely to get your research proposals approved and funded. And this affects not only you, but also support for your students and even the presentation of the university in a more favorable light." So there is a balance here. I find that I need to be self-conscious about this so that I am fair and don't get caught up in self-promotion. I also believe that it is important that I do good work. My summer research students each year hear me stress the importance of working diligently and carefully and doing the job right, and if we later find that we have not been sufficiently careful, then going back and correcting our work. For me, this follows because it is the Lord whom I serve and his handiwork that I am describing. This means working whole-heartedly and carefully.

As a teacher, my faith motivates me to deal with students as whole people, who feel the ups and downs of life in a fallen world. I set high standards for them, because I want them to learn about the cosmos and also to learn to think carefully and critically. God made a very interesting world, and he gave us the ability to inquire into it and learn much about it. I encourage students to work at integrating their learning with their religious beliefs. In the astronomy survey course, the question of origins comes up as we discuss the history of the earth and cosmology. Almost all Valparaiso University students have some religious beliefs and most come from a background of Christianity. As an assignment near the end of the semester in Astronomy 101, I present the students with three basic approaches on how the biblical language on origins can be understood. Please realize that this is oversimplified, but I think that it is representative. One is a literal approach, which considers the biblical discussion of origins and especially Genesis chapters 1 and 2 as being literal. This is the approach taken by "young-earth creationists," who interpret the six creation days in Genesis as consecutive twenty-four-hour days and conclude that the Earth is young, a few thousand years old. On the other side is the figurative interpretation, in which the different genres of writing found in the Bible are noted and the creation account in Genesis is interpreted figuratively. A third approach is to see a harmony between the creation accounts in the Bible and the findings of science. All three views start with the basic idea that God is the creator. The figurative view avoids conflict with science by assuming that the Bible does not make scientific statements. The literal view believes that the Bible does make scientific statements and that the scientific evidence for billions of year ages for the Earth and stars and the evidence for evolution in the cosmos is simply wrong. The harmony



view advocates a correspondence between the description and the order of creation in the Bible and the modern scientific picture. In this view, for example, God's initial creation of light corresponds to the big bang. My goal is not to persuade students to one particular view, but to have them read and discuss the various views in order to see how others approach these questions. I desire for them to begin to integrate rather than to compartmentalize their faith and learning. Some of them are doing this. I am glad to be at a place like Valparaiso where encouraging such examination and integration is not seen as out of place but rather encouraged.

In two particular areas, I confess, I feel like I walk a bit of a tightrope regarding my work as a scientist and my Christian commitment. I have encountered many devoted Christians who believe that the Bible teaches that God made the sun and stars just as they are within six twenty-four-hour days not so very long ago. They have been taught to believe that is what the Bible teaches and that any other view is unbiblical and simply an accommodation to modern science. This view can even be made a test of Christian orthodoxy. I have usually avoided being controversial on this issue. I have been content to talk one-on-one with people and to express my opinion that the evidence of nature does not support the view that the Earth and the cosmos are only thousands of years old; rather they appear to be billions of years old and show evidence of change by processes in nature. Of course, that in itself does not settle the issue, for I do not wish to imply that the scientific viewpoint should simply decide it. But I think that we need to take seriously the evidence in nature as being part of God's general revelation to mankind. Since it has the same author, the general revelation we see in nature should be consistent with the special revelation that we find in the Bible.

How then do we deal with apparent differences between them? Perhaps the arguments about whether the sun moves around the earth or vice versa are instructive here. I have adopted the principle summarized by the nineteenth-century Princeton theologian Charles Hodge, "if [the ordinary] sense brings the Mosaic account into conflict with facts, and another sense would avoid such conflict, then it is obligatory on us to adopt the other [i.e., the non-conflicting sense]." Thus, I look for an alternate interpretation of the biblical text that would fit with the data of astronomy or archeology or history without doing violence to the context or the overall biblical thrust on the topic. Those of us with a strong view of God's providence in human affairs should not have difficulty in accepting His providence in cosmic affairs. I think that one can understand the Genesis account of the days of creation as being concerned with presenting God as the Creator, with the order of these days indicating not the actual order of creation (which would imply that plant life was created on day three and the sun on day four), but perhaps how the order would have appeared to an observer on earth (had one been present). I am pleased that my own denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America, a conservative church, has recently adopted a statement which, while affirming the historicity of the early chapters of Genesis, has also affirmed that ministers may have divergent views on the length of the creation days. At the end of the nineteenth century J.H. Pratt wrote these helpful words, "The Book of Nature and the Word of God emanate from the same infallible Author, and therefore cannot be at variance. But man is a fallible interpreter, and by mistaking one or both of these Divine Records he forces them too often into unnatural conflict." While I do not believe that the age of the universe is a central issue of Christian doctrine that should divide believers, I do feel that I should become more aggressive at times and not let uncritical thinking in this area go unchallenged. There is an issue of truth and the integrity of God's creation involved. In fact, the "young-earth" view may set an unnecessary hurdle in the way of scientists and other educated people coming to faith in Christ and to trust in the reliability of the Christian Scriptures. As an aside, I have been pleased recently to meet several younger Christian astronomers who are just getting started in their careers. At their initiative, several of us have been getting together at the annual meeting of the American Astronomical Society and encouraging one another in our callings. A healthy exchange of e-mail circulates among us on various issues. I am delighted to see this.

The other area where I feel that I walk a tightrope is that of time and priorities. Doing my work well as a teacher and scholar requires a lot of time. Here at Valparaiso University, we place a high commitment on teaching and mentoring our students well. Given the time this takes, it is difficult to

maintain an active scholarly research program on a national or international level. I struggle with issues of time and balance, not balance between teaching and scholarship, but between academic work and the rest of my life. Being an astronomer is my vocation, not my life. In the larger picture I am called to not only be a scholar-teacher, but also a husband, father, churchman, and neighbor. I am to do all of these things in the context of serving God, by his grace, and as one who is accountable to him. As my brother has reminded me on more than one occasion, on our deathbeds it is unlikely that we will regret that we had not spent more time at our work. I very much appreciate the patience of my wife and children and Lucy's gentle nudges when things get too out of balance with my work.

I have described the path that I have taken to and in my vocation as an astronomer, and also how my Christian commitment has impacted this. As I mentioned earlier, I carry out this work with a sense that I understand my vocation as both a privilege and a responsibility. It is a privilege to study the heavens and their development by processes that God has created and to see God's handiwork there. It is a privilege to tell others of how awesome the creation is, to tell professional colleagues through papers and conferences, students in the classroom, and the community at the public nights at the observatory. I also consider it a responsibility to serve God with the abilities that he has given me and to love and serve him with my heart and soul and strength and mind. This calling has been exciting and fulfilling, and the reflection that the preparation for this lecture entailed has been helpful in self-consciously refreshing my vision. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* opens, in seventeenth century English, with "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." That answer continues to sound good to me today. ✝

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## TEXTS

scientists say that today they can read  
the text of the human genome—

that now the hieroglyphics of bone  
and blood can be transcribed

and letters that were only letters  
once are whole words now—

coherent messages that speak  
of histories proclivities longevity  
disease the shapes of lobes  
of tints and tendencies  
toward allergies intelligence  
quotients lengths of toes

faint but legible  
passages of prose  
laid out like so  
much typeface simply  
human font

so what do we make of the text?

what is its tone and  
texture

does it  
interpret itself  
insert itself into the body  
of great texts?

does it ever begin  
*it was the best of times*  
*now is the winter of our discontent*  
*call me Ishmael*  
*or in the beginning God?*

Mary M. Brown

# A Faculty View on Developing Faculty for Mission

Carol Simon

**I**n late July of 1988 I drove through the state of Iowa, following my husband, Steve, who drove a U-Haul truck that contained everything we owned as well as our two sons, ages six and three. We were on our way to Holland, Michigan, a place my husband had never been and that I had seen only once. My one visit to Holland had been during an ugly late-January thaw. The most vivid visual memory I had of Holland was seeing ice-fishing shacks bobbing up and down in a lake of breaking ice. On this much different day in July, as we made our way from Bellingham, Washington, to the shores of Lake Michigan, it was Steve's turn to drive the boys, and my turn for respite, so I listened to a book-on-tape that I had picked up just before we left Bellingham. The story I was listening to as I drove was Isak Dinesen's *Babette's Feast*, a major theme of which is the consequence of choice and commitment—of roads taken and not taken. In the story, Babette prepares a feast for the community and at the feast one of the characters speaks to the assembly. His words have stuck with me since I first heard them because they seemed to be the words I most needed to hear on my journey to Holland and our new life there. Here is what he said:

Man, my friends, is frail and foolish. We have all of us been told that grace is to be found in the universe. But in our human foolishness and short-sightedness we imagine divine grace to be finite. For this reason we tremble. We tremble before making our choice in life and after having made it again tremble in fear of having chosen wrong. But the moment comes when our eyes are opened, and we see and realize that grace is infinite.

I needed to hear those words that day because I was carrying a load of very mixed reactions as we made our way to Holland and Hope College. I was grateful to have been offered a tenure-track job at what looked like a good college, and was excited to undertake a new adventure. But I also had some major apprehensions: Would my husband who, bless him, was moving for my sake, be able to find a position he wanted in the area? If he could not find something that was a good fit, would I be happy enough at Hope to make his sacrifice something more than pointless? Would Holland be a good place to raise my children? Would faculty duties at a liberal arts college allow enough family time to sustain a marriage and help my children thrive? Could I stand living without mountains? Could I survive winters with ninety-six inches of snow? Maybe I was making a terrible mistake. So I trembled, and I thanked God and Isak Dinesen for reminding me that grace was infinite.

Among the many apprehensions I carried with me to Hope were apprehensions about Hope College's religious connections. Their hiring process had addressed these issues to a certain extent; and I had also done some homework. I had, for example, looked up in the *Handbook of American Denominations* the Reformed Church in America, with which Hope College is affiliated. I wanted to understand Hope College before I agreed to teach there. I knew enough about the landscape of higher education to know that there are many Christian colleges at which I would not be welcome as a teacher and at which I would not want to teach. I consider myself an orthodox Christian, and I am in quite a few ways theologically conservative. But I knew that orthodoxy is in the eye of the

*The mission of a college is like a perennial border, with many zones, but no center, with numerous ways of being part of the whole.*

beholder and that by some people's lights I do not qualify. I did not want to feel as if I'd be under continuing scrutiny to see how I measured up against an unfolding list of more and more specific and idiosyncratic doctrines. On the other hand, I knew that as an orthodox Christian, I would be viewed with suspicion in some colleges that prided themselves on their broadmindedness. During my campus interview at Wesleyan University, folks there were startled to hear that my husband was preparing to be a minister. At least Wesleyan, at that point in their history, was clear-headedly formerly church-related. I thought I would be more comfortable teaching there than at a place that mouthed Christian platitudes when it served its fundraising or recruiting purposes but had no interest in Christianity as more than useful window dressing.

Though Hope College had sent me materials about its church connection and the chair of the philosophy department and others had talked to me about this subject during the interviewing and recruiting stages, I felt a long way from knowing what I was getting into. I had read Hope College's documents, but I knew that texts (especially when crafted within an academic community) have unwritten subtexts. Hope said of itself that it was a liberal arts college "in the context of the historic Christian faith." What did that mean? Did it mean knowing what Nestorianism was and being opposed to it? Did it mean reading Genesis as a history and science textbook? Did it mean seeing process theology as heresy? Did it mean just appearing Christian enough to keep the donor-base happy? "Moral turpitude," to take another example, was listed as a possible condition for dismissal at Hope. What is that at Hope, I wondered. At some Christian colleges moral turpitude might include drinking alcohol, dancing, or divorcing; at others it might include nothing short of being convicted of a major felony. Other questions I had concerned the relationship of my discipline to the "Christian context" of the college. As a philosopher, I knew that many philosophical questions strike some Christians as dangerous. Would I be able to be a philosopher at Hope without getting poor student evaluations or being viewed as subversive by the administration?

I have indulged in this piece of autobiography in order to create empathy with the situation of new faculty members. All new faculty members know that they were chosen out of a pool of applicants as, in some sense of "best," the best available candidate. Each new faculty member has chosen to accept the offered position as, all things considered, the best option he or she has. If the recruiting and hiring process has been well-conducted, questions of "fit" will have been effectively addressed. But even a well-conducted hiring process will leave many questions unanswered. One part of what faculty development for mission can do in their early years is help new faculty understand "what they have gotten themselves into." It can help them grasp the institutional story behind the institutional buzzwords and to see themselves as part of that story. While I will address faculty development at all stages of professional life, these orientation aspects of faculty development can, if done well, help (or, if done badly, hamper) faculty attitudes toward all stages of programs in development for mission.

Another reason for reflecting on my beginnings at Hope is to remind ourselves of the great risks and the great stakes involved for new faculty as they commit to a new college. The issue of "faculty retention" has large financial implications for a college or university. Administrators know that if faculty members leave and need to be replaced, the cost of running additional searches is high. We are all aware, as well, of the drag on an institution caused by faculty members who stay at an institution even though they have become alienated, unmotivated or bitter. I think it is helpful to remember that the human cost of reconsidering a commitment to an institution is also high for many faculty members. Relocating, uprooting and re-rooting a family, and re-acclimating to a new institution are stressful, time-consuming and sap at one's productivity as teacher and scholar. Faculty members who have chosen to come to a particular institution want that choice to work out; they do not want to relocate again; they do not want to become alienated and bitter. Good faculty development programs can tap into this mutual good will to ensure that both faculty members and the institution have made the right choice.

Before turning to discuss strategies and program design, some additional ground clearing is in order. First, a comment on how I am going to be using the phrase "faculty development for mission." I am going to be using the term "mission" as a short way of pointing at the church-related nature of an institution and its Christian context, that is, those elements of an institution's identity that would set it apart from schools that would not be interested in church-relatedness for anything

other than, say, financial reasons. I will be using the term this way as a verbal convenience, but I think its usage has drawbacks. Most—perhaps all—liberal arts institutions aspire to be in the business of educating “the whole person.” For church-related liberal arts colleges and universities that will mean that academic programs, student life, all of the college’s support systems, and the Christian context of the college all aim at a unified mission. The institution does not have just a Christian mission or just an academic mission, nor can these be usefully seen as two modules that coordinate and run in tandem. Reality is much more organic than that. At times, this verbal shorthand may make it sound as if I think that the academic mission is not central, but that is not what I believe. One other verbal simplification is that I will often use “college” to mean “university or college” as a way of avoiding having to use the longer and more precise expression. Keeping these terminological issues in mind, let us turn to our main subject.

Faculty development for mission is aimed at furthering the Christian mission of the institution, but it needs to be more than goal-oriented. It should also be reflective about its vision and about appropriate means to reaching its goals. Faculty development for mission needs to shape its view of faculty and the means it selects for faculty development in accord with Christian values rather than the values of the marketplace. The first elementary point I want to make is that faculty development in a Christian context should avoid seeing faculty members as “human resources” in the reductive sense deplored by Martin Buber. If people are viewed as resources in the same way that the college’s real estate or capital equipment are seen as resources, Buber would accuse us of seeing them “not as bearers of a Thou but as centers of work and effort” to be utilized for institutional purposes. (*To Hallow This Life*, p.119). To see someone as a “center of work and effort,” and not as a “Thou,” is to see that person in a sub-Christian way. This is a sub-Christian view even if the work and effort they are being seen as centers of is supposed to have a Christian goal. If faculty development in church-related colleges and universities seeks to avoid using sub-Christian means to supposedly Christian ends, these development programs must acknowledge both the unique, unfolding individuality of each new faculty member and the distinctive mission of the institution. Faculty development for mission will seek to pass on the vision of the founding tradition of the institution and cultivate ownership of the mission of the college or university. At the same time, it will seek to help each new faculty member think clearly and creatively about what her specific strengths, gifts and interests are and how these can best be cultivated within the context of the institution’s mission. Faculty development programs in a Christian context should not seek to manufacture clones. Rather, they should help each faculty person discern how to be her best self as she “grows where she is planted” in her particular institution.

In striving to think in a fully Christian way about faculty development, it is helpful to call on two theologically informed organic metaphors that come out of the Christian tradition, one from the Apostle Paul and one from St. Therese of Lisieux. Church-related colleges and universities need to understand that they are not the Church, and thus are not themselves the Body of Christ, though the Christians who work within those colleges and universities are members of Christ’s body. Although Christian colleges are not churches, the Pauline passages about the nature of the universal Church as the Body of Christ can remind us of a helpful metaphor in thinking about the nature of our college faculties. Paul tells us that “as in one body we have many members, and not all members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body” (Rom 12:4-5). In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul emphasizes that those who have a particular function within the Body must not look down on others who have a different function.

In another organic metaphor for reflecting on variety among persons, St. Therese of Lisieux compares humanity to a garden. She says,

I saw that all the flowers [God] has created are lovely. The splendor of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not rob the little violet of its scent nor the daisy of its simple charm. I realized that if every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness and there would be no wild flowers to make the meadows gay.

It is the same in the world of souls—which is the garden of Jesus. “He has created the great saints who are like the lilies and the roses, but He has also created much lesser saints and they must

be content to be the daisies or the violets which rejoice His eyes whenever He glances down. Perfection consists in doing His will, in being that which He wants us to be" (*Story of a Soul* p.20). This nineteenth-century Roman Catholic saint is often called "St. Therese of the Little Flower" because she saw herself as more like a violet than a rose. This metaphor of faculty development for mission as "gardening" can lead us to ask such questions as: How can we create the conditions that are optimal for growth of the differently gifted and varied individuals that make up our faculties? How can we cultivate a faculty culture in which all sorts of different ways of participating in the mission of the college are valued?

What practical difference would this gardening metaphor make as we think about designing and implementing faculty development for mission? One very natural way of thinking about faculty development for mission views faculty members at an institution as distributed among zones which represent differing degrees of commitment to and effectiveness for contributing to the Christian or church-related mission of the college. At the center are those who are fully committed to that mission and contribute effectively to it. Further from the center are those who are committed to the mission but under-equipped to contribute effectively to the mission. Still further out are those who are comfortable being on the faculty of a church-related college but who assume that the Christian mission of the college is someone else's job. At the margins of the faculty are those who are alienated from, and perhaps even bitter and hostile toward, the church-related or Christian aspects of the mission of the college.

If one thinks about faculty development for mission with this kind of picture in mind, it is natural to think that the goal of faculty development is to move people from the outer rings of this circle toward the center. The ultimate goal of faculty development for mission on this view would be to reach a point where every faculty member was fully committed and effectively contributing to the church-related mission of the college. Perhaps this goal is an unattainable ideal but, on this view, it is still worth striving for this ideal.

While there is something true about this picture, it is not without drawbacks. Jane Smiley's comic novel about university life, *Moo*, contains a chapter called "The Common Wisdom." This chapter sketches what different groups at Moo University "know." Among the things that are "well known" by the faculty at Moo are that

it was only a matter of time before all classes would be taught as lectures, all exams given as computer-graded multiple choice, all subscriptions to professional journals at the library stopped, and all research time given up to committee work and administrative red tape. It was [also] well known to all members of the campus population that other, unnamed groups reaped unimagined monetary advantages in comparison to the monetary disadvantages of one's own group, and that if funds were distributed fairly, according to real merit, for once, some people would have another think coming. (20-21)

Church-related colleges and universities often have an unhelpful "common wisdom" relative to how the administration views mission and faculty development for mission. Among the things that may be "well known" by many faculty members at a church-related institution is that some groups of which they are not part are the only ones viewed by the administration as making the preferred kind of contributions to the Christian mission of the college. Another piece of common wisdom may be that the administration has a very simple-minded and narrow view of the Christian mission of the college and that one can only be in the inner circle of the institution if one shares that simple-minded and narrow view. Given what we know about faculty, if the administration thinks and talks as though there is an "inner circle" of the college, will that make it more likely that most faculty members will aspire to be in that circle? Hardly!

Gerald Gibson, in his book, *Good Start: A Guidebook for New Faculty in Liberal Arts Colleges*, characterizes faculty as original thinkers with lots of drive, but drive that is used only when they genuinely believe in what they are doing. In work they consider valuable, faculty will organize themselves and see their projects through. In addition to being self-directed, faculty are also people "who can never be driven, [and can] seldom be led." One of the challenges facing any program of faculty development is that it is very difficult to make faculty members do anything in which they do not personally see value. You may require them to participate even if they do not recognize the

value of the event or program, but you cannot make unconvinced faculty participate in a way that will be effective toward institutional goals in faculty development. Because of this, it is important to use good judgment about what to make optional and what to make an expected part of campus-wide faculty expectations. Reinhold Niebuhr once observed that stressing duty only compels people to maintain minimal standards, but that people must be charmed into righteousness. Faculty members need to be charmed into caring deeply about the mission of their institutions. No faculty person that I have ever met will cheerfully sit still for being "enhanced" or "developed" into a kind of person that he or she does not aspire to be.

For all of these reasons, the way of thinking about faculty development for mission represented by the quest to move faculty towards the inner circle of commitment is likely to make the alienated even more alienated and the fence-sitters among the faculty more likely to jump off the fence on the side away from where the administration would like them to be. It is also likely to make those who think the Christian aspects of the mission of the college are someone else's business more entrenched in this view. To talk in St. Therese's language, many faculty members will say to themselves, "Those whom the administration sees at the center are the roses, but I am not a rose and never will be." Or, to use Paul's language, "The so-called 'full contributors' to the Christian mission at this institution are eyes, but I am not an eye." The language of aspiration will only create anger, guilt or despair if what is held up as the norm or goal is something that not all faculty members believe they can and should become.

There are advantages, then, to changing our thinking about faculty development for mission, to having our thinking be informed by something more like a picture one might see in a gardening book as a guide to planting a perennial border. The perennial border has many zones, but no center. It discloses numerous ways of being part of a whole that is more valuable than the mere sum of its parts. In this way of thinking, the "big picture" of faculty development involves convincing faculty that the institution values a variety of ways of contributing to its mission, presenting the institution's history and mission in a truthful yet winsome way, and helping faculty members explore how their particular gifts and histories equip them for a unique and valuable contribution to that mission.

By this point, you may be tiring of metaphors and wanting to get down to some specifics. You may also be suspecting that the view of faculty development that I am advocating is more suitable for what Robert Benne, in his recent book, *Quality with Soul*, calls "intentionally pluralistic" institutions, or for what he calls "critical mass" institutions. If your own institution is closer to what he calls an "orthodox" institution, that is, you have a hiring policy that requires all faculty to be Christians who subscribe to the same set of foundational beliefs, you may think that what I am saying has little relevance to you. But I think that this impression is misleading. I would be willing to bet that no matter what the hiring policy is at a school, the "common wisdom's" scuttlebutt about the administration's view is that some subgroup of the faculty constitutes the more valued inner circle of contributors to the mission of the college. There will be, and should be, variety within orthodox institutions, though it will be of a different degree and along different parameters than the variety within critical mass and pluralist schools. There is nothing inherently wrong with a rose garden or a tulip garden, though there would be something odd and lacking about such a garden if it had no variety within it, no range of early, middle and late bloomers, no range of colors, no mix of hybrids. Similarly, even before a school like Calvin College allowed the hiring of members who were not Christian Reformed, there was variety among its faculty—some, perhaps, wincing more than others at the anti-Catholic and anti-Anabaptist sentiments sprinkled through the Reformed Standards of Faith; some, perhaps, being great fans of Dooyeweerd; some thinking that nothing very profound had been added to theology since the days of Calvin. Analogous things about variety within relative homogeneity could be said of other orthodox institutions.

The bottom line I want to draw about theory before I move to practice is this: the boundaries of an institution should be drawn by its hiring policy and the hiring policy should be dictated by the institution's conception of its mission. Whatever the hiring policy is, the philosophy underlying faculty development should be that variety within the recognized boundaries is a highly valued institutional good. The goal of faculty development for mission will not be to increase the homogeneity of the faculty, but to help each faculty person optimally contribute in his or her own unique way to the mission of the college or university.



Turning to the practical, I will begin the discussion of program design by discussing program design at Hope College and how that design has grown out of Hope College's nature and mission. Similarly, other programs should be responsive to and expressive of their own college's nature and mission. Hope College is affiliated with the Reformed Church in America. While it has many of the characteristics that Robert Benne attributes to what he calls "critical mass" institutions, its official hiring policy has, for at least the last two decades, been what I would call "purist ecumenical." Hope strives to hire faculty who are committed Christians, but outside of the upper administration and the religion department, it does not officially exercise a preference for Reformed Christians. We have no statement of faith to which faculty are asked to subscribe, but there is institutional accountability on the issue of commitment to the Christian mission. Faculty are asked to address how they see themselves contributing to the mission of the college as part of their evaluation for tenure and promotion to associate professor. The mission of Hope College is to be a residential liberal arts college of recognized excellence in the context of the historic Christian faith. The latest Vision of Hope College statement describes Hope as "ecumenical in character while rooted in the Reformed tradition."

That is what Hope officially is. Alongside this official story is the "common wisdom" of Hope's faculty. The "common wisdom" of Hope suspects that there is an inner circle, a preferred subset of the faculty who are Protestant evangelicals who strive to present an easy-to-delineate Christian worldview within which their discipline and all other disciplines should be seen. The preferred subset, according to the "common wisdom," uses language like "Jesus is my personal savior" and sprinkles scripture references throughout lectures on any subject whatsoever. The preferred subset's Christian worldview, so the "common wisdom" goes, entails no views on controversial social matters that would irritate conservative Republican donors to Hope College. The preferred subset does not swear; members of the subset go to Chapel regularly. The preferred subset's members are adept at extemporaneous public prayer and, if not abstainers, feel squeamish about smoking and alcohol consumption in public.

My goal in designing faculty development programs for mission at Hope College has been to take what Hope officially says about itself seriously. It is not enough just to say that the official story is true and that the "common wisdom" is false. It is how life is lived out at the college that will determine which of these is a more truthful narrative. So, I use acting in accord with the official story as a way of countering the "common wisdom." I want to counter the "common wisdom" both because I hope that it is false and because the "common wisdom" gives too many of our faculty a rationale for translating calls to "contribute to the mission of the College" into calls to "think and act like conservative evangelical Protestants," an agenda in which they have little interest. I will sketch some aspects of two programs I have designed and implemented as examples of what this taking the college at its word has looked like in practice.

Several years ago, Hope's Provost asked me to modify a workshop that I had done for Lilly Fellows applicants and run it as a summer faculty development seminar at Hope. The Provost's perception of my work was running a workshop on "integrating faith and learning." I, however, avoided using this language, because this phrase is perceived by many of our faculty to be Reformed and evangelical and, as such, foreign to their own ways of proceeding. It is language which tends to reinforce the "common wisdom" about the preferred subset, so I avoided it.

I put out a general invitation to apply to participate in the workshop. As part of that general invitation, I stated that if the number of applicants exceeded capacity I would give preference to people who had not previously participated in workshops connected to the Christian context of the college. Suspecting that I would receive more response to the general invitation from evangelical and Reformed faculty than from others, I actively encouraged individuals on the faculty who were from other denominations and at various places on the theological spectrum to apply. Knowing that in the past faculty in the Science Division and in the Arts Division at Hope had participated in fewer numbers in this kind of faculty development opportunity, I also cultivated potential applicants from those areas. In recruiting participants, I did not indicate that the people I talked to should participate because they had a special need for development in this area; instead I urged them to participate because I really wanted a voice like theirs in the conversation on these matters. In making the final selection from the applicant pool, I sought to get as much variety along disciplinary, denomi-

national, and theological lines as I could. My goal was to have the seminar embody the principle that Hope is ecumenical while Reformed, and to undercut the idea that there is a privileged inner circle at Hope. I wanted to widen the circle of those who participate in faith-related faculty development opportunities at the college.

I will describe two assignments and discussions from this seminar and sketch their rationale. One of the first things that participants were asked to do was to read short excerpts from John Henry Newman and Jimmy Carter, two people of faith who are significantly different from one another. To begin our discussion, I drew an axis with "community" at the top and "individualism" at the bottom; "reason" on the left and "experience" on the right. We first discussed where Newman and Carter seemed to be located within the space created by these axes in light of what we had read. This opened up a discussion of what we had read and allowed us to voice the various meanings that we ascribed to the four terms that defined the space. It also got two very different examples up on the board. I then asked each of the participants to go up and mark their initials within the space where they would locate themselves, and to explain why they would put themselves there. This had several beneficial outcomes. It allowed each participant to talk about how he or she conceived of the spiritual life and to do it in his or her own terms. They could be as self-revealing or as elliptical as they chose. It also became apparent that there was an enormous variety among us. People ended up all over the map. People found their differences interesting. This also gave us some context for understanding where people were "coming from" in our subsequent discussions.

A second example of an activity was an assignment dealing with the book *Models for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian. I asked each participant to read three sections of the book. Everyone was to read the section on the Reformed Tradition, because of the college's Reformed identity. Each person was to read the section on the tradition in which he or she had been raised or currently most identified with, and each was to select and read a section on the tradition about which he or she knew least. Then, we discussed their reactions to what they had read and also whether they thought that what had been said about higher education in the Reformed tradition had seemed to be applicable to what they saw around them at Hope College. Many participants indicated that they had learned things that were new to them in reading the section on their own tradition. During discussion, they had a chance to say more about their own experience of their various traditions and how these colored how they conducted themselves as teacher/scholars. They also had a chance to talk about their perceptions and experience of Hope College and how they saw themselves fitting into the college's mission. Structuring the reading and discussion in this way embodied Hope's Reformed, yet ecumenical, nature.

I will give one more brief example of faculty development from a somewhat different kind of program. This was a yearlong series of conversations and public events co-sponsored by the Rhodes Regional Consultation on the Future of Church Related Colleges and Hope's Provost's Office. The program had several components, and I will describe only one. This was a series of conversations among twelve participants and me (as facilitator) along with four public panel discussions called "Faculty Perspectives on Hope." I recruited the twelve participants in a way similar to that used in the earlier summer workshop. I strove to get as much variety as I could along disciplinary, denominational and theological lines. In this case I also strove for a spread of junior to senior faculty and ended up with a group that included two third-year faculty and two faculty within two-years of retirement, as well as many points in between. We met several times as a group of thirteen. Among the subjects of our discussion was the Covenant of Mutual Responsibilities, which is a one-page statement of the responsibilities of the denomination towards its colleges and of the responsibilities of the colleges toward the denomination. Examples of responsibilities of the denomination are to give the colleges full freedom to pursue truth and to urge their children to attend the church's colleges. Examples of responsibilities of the colleges are to fearlessly examine the words and works of God and humanity while recognizing that all truth is God's truth, and inspiring students to lives of reflection and service. Although this document was approved by both Hope College and the Reformed Church in America in the mid-sixties, most of the faculty in the group had not seen it and did not even know that it existed. Many of them found in it an interesting and exciting conception of what a church-related liberal arts college should be.

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*Developing Faculty  
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After several discussions among all thirteen of us, I divided the group into three task groups to plan and staff three panel discussions on topics relevant to the Christian context of the college. In setting up these subgroups, I tried to get the same kind of range and variety that the whole group displayed, so that each panel would include voices that a wide range of our faculty could identify with and so that there would be interestingly differing perspectives presented. One example of a topic for the panels was the question of whether there was a tension among all the roles that Hope College faculty are expected to play as Christian scholar/teachers. These panel discussions modeled in front of the College community as a whole that variety among faculty is an institutionally valued good.

As I reflect upon these programs, here are some of the principles that underlay and informed them: Design faculty development programs that not only contribute to, but embody, the official mission of the College. Design faculty development programs that counter unhelpful aspects of our campus's "common wisdom." In promoting faculty development opportunities in this area of mission, avoid institutional buzzwords that may make some members of the faculty feel that they are not part of the "inner circle." Strike an appropriate balance between bringing people "up to speed" on the institutional and denominational story and allowing people to say who they are and share their experiences. Design faculty development opportunities that widen the circle of voluntary participation in conversations about the mission of the College.

Using these principles can help us to design settings where people can be charmed into loyalty to our institutions as we give them the time (and the institutional permission to use this time) to listen and learn from one another. William Willimon and Thomas Naylor in their book, *The Abandoned Generation: Rethinking Higher Education*, remind us that

Real communities are concerned with being—not having. Their members are committed to sharing, caring, and participating rather than owning, manipulating, controlling, and possessing. Open communication and commitment to the shared values and common purposes of individual members are critical to the stability of learning communities. If we want friendship to be the basis of our life together we must foster those settings and opportunities where there can be much conversation and conviviality. (148-149)

College administrators have the privilege of using the resources at their disposal to make that friendship of community happen. What a great gift that would be, most directly to faculty but also, indirectly, to our students.

Let me conclude with a final postscript about organic metaphors for faculty development. Some may be thinking that these metaphors as I have discussed them paint too idealistic a picture to be useful. Perhaps you are thinking of some particular faculty members at your institution who seem to have a negative relationship to the mission of the college. Isn't part of gardening dealing with the weeds as well as cultivating a wide variety of flowers? I do not want to discount the fact that there may be extremely difficult situations that administrators need to deal with in which a particular faculty member just is not "working out." But, especially in the context of faculty development, it is best to remember Jesus' parable of the weeds and wheat. The parable teaches that weeding can do more damage than leaving the weeds and the wheat to grow together (Matt. 13:24-29). One reason that some faculty members become bitter is that they suspect that they are viewed as weeds by their administration. What if a faculty culture could be cultivated in which each of those faculty saw themselves as valued for being the particular kind of flower that they are? One person's weed is, after all, another person's wildflower. Maybe their kind of flower needs the PH of its soil adjusted, or to be moved to a more sunny location. Faculty development for mission involves attention to what each variety among our faculty members needs to flourish at his or her own institution. ♣

# Many Disciplines, Various Faiths:

faculty diversity and mission

Tom Landy

**T**he best way to begin a conversation on faculty diversity and mission in an ecumenical setting is to acknowledge that ecumenism poses real challenges, even as it provides a source of hope. The particular challenge of this audience of *Cresset* readers is that a wide variety of schools which all aspire to particular Christian identities are represented. We share a gospel common faith, and similar hopes and challenges. Yet the institutions we represent have shaped their vision according to a wide variety of ways of understanding the church, which make a big difference in the way we come to think about Christian higher education. Within the Lilly Network there are a variety of views about the desirability of non-Christian or non-religious faculty on church-related campuses; that makes addressing the question of institutional mission and religious diversity on campus in a manner that would be helpful to everyone especially difficult.

Just as importantly, and perhaps just as limiting in terms of usefulness for some readers, the work that I do through Collegium [Collegium, founded in 1991, is a consortium of sixty-five Catholic colleges and universities which sponsors week long summer colloquies on faith and intellectual life for faculty of all faiths from its member schools, and for twenty to twenty-five graduate students.] and at Holy Cross is quite clearly based on Roman Catholic understandings of ecclesiology and mission. Catholic understandings of ecclesiology and mission, like many other aspects of Catholic faith, are often highly contested, too, and those differences are always apparent at Collegium conferences. But in a primarily Catholic context, I always feel much more prepared to make statements about what a Catholic college or university ought to be. At an ecumenical gathering, that task is a bit more difficult, because I know that other deeply held ecclesiologies lead these churches to sponsor different types of institutions.

This little *apologia* is germane, I think, because I have chosen to focus a large part of this talk on how to lead faculty development for mission for persons who are from religious traditions other than the founding or sponsoring church. I am even interested in talking about how to work on mission-relatedness with faculty who espouse no religious belief, whether they are new to the campus and uncertain about what all these religious identity questions mean or veteran faculty leaders who want the mission discussions to have nothing to do with them. The campuses I work with—the sixty-two Collegium member schools, including Holy Cross, where I am full-time—are all comprised of large numbers of faculty with no strong affiliation with the Catholic tradition of the campus. In fact, a good number of the faculty who are most attached to “the mission” and who do the most to give of themselves towards it are not Catholic and often not Christian.

Without trying to preach to those who are from schools that emphasize only hiring faculty from within a particular denomination, or only Christians, I’ll need to say a lot here about my own attitude with respect to the importance of religious pluralism on campus. The reason is fairly simple: I don’t believe that you can do faculty development for mission with persons from outside your school’s religious tradition or from non-theological disciplines unless you have at least a nascent theological, pastoral, and pedagogical rationale about why these other faculty are *important* to the life and mission of the institution. I want to highlight the word “important.” If the college or university is a pluralistic one, yet committed to a particular religious mission, mission and identity efforts will fail if the consistent message is, “If you would only become Catholic, Christian, or a theologian (I’ll return to this latter point later), you’d really be able to help with the mission and be most fully part of this place.” Of course, we do want to have some number of faculty who are at least one of these, but even as a person with training in several disciplines, including theology, I know that we can’t expect that all of the faculty would or should be so thoroughly grounded in one religious tradition.

*The most successful schools seem to have mastered the art of telling their story.*

Let me hasten to add here that I'm making the case for the importance of having persons from a wide variety of traditions and expertise despite the fact that a good deal of Collegium's work is to encourage what we commonly call "hiring for mission." I know our schools absolutely need to do that. But at least for our Catholic schools, I'd never advocate exclusively hiring for mission in the narrower sense we usually mean.

Turning to the faculty who are not from our founding religious tradition, I try to begin my work grounded in the faith that God is good enough to us to send these faculty to us for a reason, and that they bring with them their own specific individual gifts and skills that can be nurtured to help institutions fulfill their mission. If we take that seriously, we'll see that our responsibility in terms of faculty development for mission is most of all to help nurture those gifts and provide opportunities for their use and development.

So, as you can see, inevitably I find myself offering parts of an *apologia* for pluralism in Christian—or at least Catholic—higher education. It is grounded in my understanding of ecclesiology—the church's mission to the world. As a Catholic Christian, that understanding grows especially from the theology of the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution, *The Church in the Modern World*. Whether that argument should apply to all Christian colleges I leave to you. Let me note, too, that I won't presume to use many examples from mainline Protestant and evangelical traditions, but trust that you can fill them in comparatively.

My experience is that conversations about mission and identity work best when at some point they turn away from the abstraction of "mission" and back towards statements that begin with "I." So you might treat what I say here, and the Catholic examples that I use, as an "I" statement and feel free to mentally fill in your own examples and perspectives from your own ecclesiological position. In terms of what works best in my experience of faculty development for mission, let me turn to a few general comments that will constitute the heart of the matter. I'll even take the liberty of phrasing the first of these as a "you" statement: I would suggest first and foremost that if you want to work on mission and identity with faculty, it is important to make that process seem more like a slight foretaste of the kingdom to come than a day in purgatory (to borrow an old Catholic phrase). I don't mean to suggest that there is not work involved, but I have seen too often how readily mission and identity can be defined as problematic and turned into committee work, and how it can drain the energy of even the most dedicated people. Consider first what faculty enjoy: reading books, talking about ideas, doing research. Think of doing these things before turning "the mission" into committee work. I would argue that faculty development for mission really has to include opportunities for camaraderie and human interaction. Faculty really do enjoy getting to know each other in some way that counts. At times the program should include events that allow faculty to step out of their usual roles and to see themselves as more than their roles. (I am reminded here of Jakob Burkhardt's reported comment that academic conferences are most akin to "dogs sniffing at one another.") We need settings where people don't have to present themselves as experts. Retreats and liturgical events can provide that opportunity; any means from time to time will help. If you are in mission-and-identity work, sponsor a social event with no agenda occasionally and point out that such moments together are really part of the mission. Fostering such community really is godly work.

Secondly, of course, there is a socializing function of faculty development for mission that involves inviting faculty to know, and over time to participate more deeply in, the "story" behind the institution. Story is a great place to start, and stories, memories of the past and promises of the future, are central religious elements. These stories, and the specific references we make—the code-language of our tradition, can cement a communal tradition together. On the other hand, we should be aware that stories can also serve to set boundaries that help identify who's in and who's out.

The most successful schools seem to have mastered this art of telling their story. The University of Notre Dame, for example, does it well. On my first visit, I was there only a very short time before I learned the story of Fr. Sorin, who trekked across the plains and stopped there to follow up on the offer of land to start a school. Other great figures strove to make Notre Dame better and better. At a football game—a ritual that embodies and reenacts many other aspects of Notre Dame history and legend—I was startled to see that the plastic cup containing my soda had an image of Father

Julius A. Nieuwland, C.S.C., the discoverer of the formulae for synthetic rubber. ("We want them to think of Notre Dame as more than a football school," the provost reminded me.)

Many other schools do this work of telling their stories nearly as well, especially when Jesuit schools talk about Ignatius, or Mercy schools talk about Mother Catherine McAuley, etc. So much of religion and its transmission across generations is caught up in storytelling. The difference between a good story and a poor story, I'd suggest, has to do with whether the story is a living story, capable of expressing who we are and who we aspire to become. It is not a story that is exclusive. We know that the Exodus story is told and interpreted in ways such that an extraordinary number of people who are not exiles from Egyptian slavery can participate in it. If told well, stories can invite an important kind of participation in an institution even when faculty feel they cannot subscribe to the confessional or doctrinal identity of the institution.

The story isn't just transmitted in one telling, of course. It has to be told repeatedly and invoked at key moments when it seems relevant. I've heard lots of Jesuit schools tell a familiar story about Saint Ignatius—the courtier, a cannonball through the leg, conversion, etc.—all without any way of helping the faculty imagine connections between that founding story and what the schools do today. We have to tell our stories, a variety of them told often enough, to give new faculty from many disciplines and traditions ways of locating themselves in the stories.

Every strong community has its own terminology and language, which it uses at times like mere jargon and at other times as a means of specifying complex ideas with greater precision. Jesuit schools have code language like "GC34, the magis, the Exercises, the Ratio, Manresa," etc. Benedictines could refer to "lectio, compline, Monte Cassino," or common elements of their life and history. Theologians and philosophers have an even broader array of names and terms that are presumed to be understood without a need for explanation—Barth, Rahner, Newman, Pelagianism, "the Council," and more.

But there's a catch. Such language (here's the sociologist in me) often has a latent function in terms of the way it is used which can readily turn into a method of excluding and setting boundaries. This is often the nub of the challenge when dealing with faculty who are not from the founding religious tradition or who are not theologians. It is often rather difficult to grasp all of the terms and symbols that some of us might take for granted. Some of us might expect that at a college, all faculty need to have a college-level grasp of the terms and symbols of the founding religious tradition. For example, some argue, "Shouldn't all the faculty in economics, politics, and sociology at a Catholic college have a deep grasp of Catholic social thought?"

At Collegium, I know that among the young faculty who participate, I am going to encounter someone who tells me at the end of the day that he or she is happy to have learned what Vatican II is. (For those readers who aren't Catholics, this is perhaps as basic a realization as saying that you just came to realize that the Pentateuch was not written by the early church, but as Jewish scripture). The point is, practically no religious knowledge can be assumed.

For people who worry about the future state of Catholic higher education, this recognition can be taken as a sign of the problem: "If faculty don't know that, what hope does Catholic higher education have?" But the problem from a faculty development point of view is that when this happens, even in minor ways, when we assume too high a level of religious sophistication and understanding on the part of our faculty, the non-Catholic or non-theologically-oriented faculty will come to recognize this for the put-down that it is, rather than as a means for moving forward. Individual faculty quickly come to recognize that they themselves are being defined as a problem. I've seen this exclusion of others due to their ignorance of the tradition happen too many times, even by theologians I respect and count as friends. Making it so dangerous for others to learn will close down many faculty to the discussion and make it difficult to work with them again. It doesn't send a very good signal that we want to welcome them in.

One of the most important things that those of us in faculty development for mission can do is to communicate this concern about inadvertent exclusion to the other faculty who are most forcefully concerned about encouraging "the mission." We also have to be careful that the people leading faculty development, particularly the theologians, don't feel threatened that scholars from other traditions and other disciplines have not paid any attention to the concerns and key figures they consider important. It takes thought and care to make sure that presentations about a church's ways

of thinking about the world and about specific problems manage to show the richness and complexity of that thought without sending the message that the listener is somehow flawed for his or her lack of knowledge in theology and philosophy. I hear faculty in the sciences in particular—Catholic, Protestant, and unchurched—complain to me that they too often end up feeling put down for what they don't know by theologians who know nothing of their scientific field.

The images we use to describe faculty formation for mission also have to be considered carefully. When we suggest that we need a core group of faculty, or when we use visual images that put members of the sponsoring religious community at the center, surrounded by other Christians, finally surrounded by other faculty, you send messages that these other faculty are never meant to share in the central mission of the institution, that they are relegated to peripheral status.

To belabor the point a little, questions about mission and identity are fundamentally questions about belonging. As a sociologist, one of the things I've most clearly been able to observe is how readily discussion about mission raises fears about belonging, even among faculty whom we regard highly and think of as so integral to the college that we couldn't imagine excluding them. At Collegium, I always tell the mentors that one of the most important issues worked out in the first few days of the conference is the "belonging question." A significant proportion of the participants who are not Catholic inevitably wonder if all this talk about mission implies that they were only hired because a Catholic candidate couldn't be found. When we introduce mission and identity questions to an already pluralistic faculty, many of those faculty steel themselves for a message that they will never fully have a place in their own home institution. I try to keep mentors from using "us-them" language and try to make it clear publicly that I assume that all faculty I encounter have some particular gift to offer Catholic higher education.

A bad start on the belonging question, and unfortunately I've seen them happen many a time, means that we'll encounter a good deal of resistance to learning and engagement thereafter. That bad start occurs not only when someone literally sends signals that only Catholics or Christians have a real place at the table, but also occurs whenever speakers, participants, and others manipulate the conversation in ways that make heavy use of "insider" language that ends up doing just as good a job at making some participants feel left out. This does not occur only for non-Catholics or non-Christians. It occurs when theologians, philosophers, and others assume that all educated persons know or ought to know about the person, place, or term they mention.

Some people suggest that since the language and stories are so possibly exclusionary, we ought to skip over most, if not all, of the particular religious language. I reject that suggestion on two counts: one, it leaves the problem intact because the faculty from the other traditions or disciplines remain unable to fathom much of what's going on—some Catholic faculty will still use these terms to some extent (conversations will still come up about *Ex Corde* or something else), but the non-Catholic faculty will not know where to enter the conversation; or two, it deprives the religious tradition of the specific language and symbols that are part of its richness and its power. Colleges, of all places, should not deracinate religion to make it accessible, but should introduce people to as much as possible of what our traditions have to offer.

What needs to change about language is the way we use it to enhance our ability to bring faculty, to whatever degree they desire, to grasp the language and stories and symbols that help us see the world as we do. Without some access to that language and those symbols, especially if the language and symbols are important to the students, non-Catholic faculty at times will be left unable to be fully privy to a conversation taking place around them. I think we're most successful at mission and ministry work with faculty who are not from the founding religious tradition, or who work in non-theological disciplines, when we help faculty to imagine the religious mission as broader and more full of possibilities than they might assume it to be and when we reinforce in appropriate ways the potential holiness and value of the work that faculty do everyday. Catholic and other Christian colleges will, of course, teach theology and even sponsor courses in other disciplines that integrate theological learning with these disciplines. But such is not the whole of the work we are called to do if we are to be a healing, even evangelizing, force in the world.

We should consider, as we work with faculty, what their fears are about what "mission and identity"-related work means and begin to help them imagine new ways to engage that mission,

ways that start from their own talents and gifts. The best work that we can do is to open their imaginations. I do believe that working to understand the created world and coming to grips with the good and evil in humankind is central to the mission of an educational institution that calls itself Christian. We can't simply co-opt "the mission" narrowly, however important the specific concerns for mission charged to our care may be. The "Christian part," or what we keep calling "mission," really isn't only the add-on or supplement that we give to "secular" education. To take one kind of example, faculty who help students understand the horrors of the last century—Pol Pot, Leopold of Belgium, Mao, Stalin, the Nazi Final Solution, Christian anti-Semitism, Armenian, Bosnian, Rwandan and other genocides, Apartheid, Latin American death squads, ravishing diseases from smallpox to AIDS—should see their teaching as germane not only to the educational mission of the college, but also to the Christian mission. An important part of our Christian mission, for example, is to shed light on such things. The fact that faculty teach, study, and raise questions about these things contributes to "the mission," and they ought to be commended for it.

I could add any number of other examples, from how disease takes control of the body to the movement of the heavens or the functioning of a healthy ecosystem. All of these things pose inherently religious questions, but most of us need to be taught to see them as such when it comes to our mission-talk. My friend, Jody Ziegler, in a fine chapter in *As Leaven for the World*, talks about how she teaches the students in her course to "see" in a painting far more than they would ordinarily let themselves see. She sends them to the Worcester Art Museum ten times in a semester to spend time contemplating a single painting, to try to see it more deeply each time. She models this assignment after Benedictine *lectio divina*, and the religious *practice* of repetition and contemplation. We need to teach students to "see" migrant workers in American agricultural fields or in sweatshops all over the world, or to see into the cosmos, and we need faculty who will be devoted to accomplishing this task.

I found my faculty development work for mission on the premise that all faculty can have a role to play in it, and that the role is not best pre-determined by me. Rather, it depends on the willingness of the faculty to look at their gifts and talents, their own faith and beliefs, and to consider how those are best put to use in the place where they've been sent. I think that my job is to enable such discernment.

Earlier I discussed the extent to which story is used to communicate religious meaning and suggested the importance of using an institution's stories to invite people into the mission of the institution. I'd like to turn very briefly to another important communicator of religious values—practice. My ideas are less well developed when I try to apply this to a wide variety of examples, but I am impressed by several circumstances wherein institutional religious values seem to be more clearly communicated as practice than as doctrine. Here I think especially of the Benedictines, where lived experience—the hours of prayer throughout the day, the method of reading and contemplation known as *lectio divina*, the tradition of welcome, and other cultural practices are essential. Quaker practices of silence can translate much the same way. This theme deserves to be developed more deeply than I can do now—my own thought is still developing as well, but I hope the mention of it will stir you to make your own connections.

Finally, involve the faculty as active partners. It's never a good idea, for example, to have faculty simply learning from theological and religious experts. Not long ago a friend who wanted to start a faculty study group on the *Ratio Studiorum*, the original description of the goals, methods and structure of a Jesuit education, asked me for advice about his proposal. He had obtained money for a summer stipend for a seminar to end the process, and the participants were a widely diverse group of faculty. I suggested to him that in addition to having the participants listen to some of the great speakers he had in mind, he might consider having the group use its summer seminar time to fashion what they think would be a great "updated" ratio, faithful to the inspiration of the early Jesuits, and updated to a different social and cultural situation. This revised ratio didn't have to have any official function, but it seemed to me that it would be an excellent way to get participants to claim their own way of taking up the mission of the ratio.

Rather than suggest any more points, let me offer a few concrete examples of preparing faculty for institutional mission from my own recent experience. At the College of the Holy Cross, where David O'Brien and I have been trying to launch a new Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture,



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we've been working particularly hard to find ways to include faculty from all or no religious traditions in the work of the Center. The Holy Cross student body is overwhelmingly comprised of students who self-identify as Catholic (we estimate it is over 85%). There are about ten Muslim students, no Jewish students that we know of. Ten or so percent of the students are Protestant or Orthodox. The faculty, on the other hand, is a much broader mix. The most notable difference is that we have a significant contingent of Jewish faculty, including a chair in Judaic studies. Faculty who are not Catholic, or Christian, play an especially important, positive role in the life of the College. There are about a dozen Jesuit priests on the faculty, and a core group of twenty to twenty-five faculty whose Catholicism leads them to regularly participate in mission-related activities on campus.

The Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture's responsibility is to enhance the religious mission of the College in a number of realms, particularly in the academic division. Only a few days after the September-eleven attack we sponsored a long-planned conference, "Toward a Deeper Understanding of Forgiveness," that tried to fulfill a few of the aims I have discussed here. Forgiveness, I think you'll all agree, is a central Christian virtue. We asked Holy Cross and visiting scholars from a wide variety of disciplines to consider questions such as whether the American legal system fosters or thwarts forgiveness; whether forgiveness really means forgetting; how post-conflict societies like South Africa or Guatemala can forgive and heal; whether—and if so, how?—forgiveness should take place in instances of sexual abuse; what kinds of developmental phases there might be to forgiveness. We began with Don Shriver, a great Virginia Presbyterian speaker from Union Theological Seminary in New York, and ended with an extraordinary, and timely, interfaith panel on how Muslims, Christians, and Jews understand the importance and conditions of forgiveness.

When we announced the conference, faculty volunteers from on campus did not jump out of the woodwork, although they were generally supportive. More often, we used the conference as an occasion to try to engage their own work, to say, for example, "I know that you do work on memory, narrative and the construction of the self. I bet that has a lot to say about forgiveness." Or "Would you be willing to help us see how forgiveness was understood in the classical world?" Connecting in such fashion to faculty interests, knowing their work and their passions, is invaluable for mission-and-identity kind of work. Another example of faculty events that have proven particularly successful are our faculty discussions using books like Mark Salzman's *Lying Awake*, or Dava Sobell's *Galileo's Daughter*. These discussions have given faculty a chance to enjoy one another's company over dinner, and later to talk about an accessible, interesting book that touches on religious and other interests. These book discussions draw in many faculty who are not usually involved in "mission" discussions, and have enriched intellectual life and community on campus.

Let me summarize by asking and answering the question, What would a good pastoral strategy for working with faculty from religious traditions other than our institution's look like? Fundamentally it would be about building relationships. It would be welcoming—showing people they are welcome, rather than telling them—and would avoid using language or images that marginalize some faculty. It would be sensitive to the "belonging question." It would explore in greater depth the stories and practices that shape our traditions and communities.

What I've tried to foster here, however briefly, is a two-pronged approach that continues to highlight some of the specific needs we all associate with "mission-and-identity," and also builds upon and nurtures the variety of gifts that faculty from many backgrounds bring to us. Robert Benne, in his recent book, *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions*, points out that a pluralistic situation means that time has to be spent convincing the faculty of the goodness of the Christian identity of a college. I understand his point, but also want to take exception to it. We do have to take time to convince many people of this, and that does take time. Looked at one way, it is a burden. Looked at another way—the way I'd like to stress—it is a great opportunity, a chance to be leaven and to fulfill our mission as Christians in this place. I'm happy to be part of it. ✚

## NORDIC FEST

Always the hottest week of the year,  
with air heavy and wet,  
waiting, exhausted, to watch the parade,  
shirts soaked with sweat,  
numbing heat wavering from the tar,  
no relief for days to come,  
when this town celebrates,  
in the northeast Iowa hills,  
its forbears  
from the deep pine forests of Norway  
from steep valleys with fast streams  
high summer farms, flowered meadows;

who came to this place of unforgiving heat  
and merciless cold  
where they cut out homes from iron-hard oak,  
not sweet-soft pine,  
and cleared land, pulling out those roots  
that seemed to grip the earth's own limestone core  
to plow fields without rocks (without rocks!)  
and raise their families,  
children of another tongue  
with whom they could not share a past,

who now with home-built floats and the high-school band  
with lefse stands and rømmegrøt,  
heavy bridal dresses and rosemaling,  
celebrate their people,  
and a past imagined from fragments,  
a few objects and phrases,  
and the feel of the summer heat  
in the body, now as then.

Nicholas Preus

# The Nation

## the play's the thing

*Robert Benne*

One does not have to be a sociologist of sport to know that sport looms large in American culture. As we have become more affluent, the role of entertainment has expanded to satisfy all the leisure desires of millions of customers. Indeed, our greatest export is entertainment, which should give us some pause. Certainly sport makes up the largest slice of entertainment in America. Signaling that fact, the market rewards professional athletes with salaries that one could never have been imagined a generation ago. Sport has taken on idolatrous proportions in America.

I am guilty of participating in this idolatry. I came from a family that loved sports; my father was a semi-professional baseball player and coach. I grew up playing the mainstream American sports in a small Nebraska town, and went on to letter in four different sports at a small Midwestern Lutheran college. But I left those sports behind to concentrate on tennis, which I love too much. Playing all those sports has given me deep appreciation of those who play them very well. I played them well enough to know how many levels of excellence ascend above me. Besides playing tennis, I continue my interest by watching many sports on TV.

I must say, though, that it is becoming more difficult for me to watch sports on TV without becoming angry about the behavior of the players. They just don't seem to want to be players in a single-minded way. They want to take on all sorts of other roles. And, unfortunately, the media, sports writers, and fans often egg them on.

A good player performs certain athletic activities well. He or she has mastered the practices of a sport over time. He or she has matched great talent with hard work. When we watch athletic activities performed with great excellence we delight in

them and the athletes that perform them. Some of them are so good they become "immortal" in our human memories. Moreover, when they perform in a competitive context another thrill is added to the performance. Not only are the athletes summoned to their highest performance, but we get involved in the competition, hoping for our favorite athlete or team to win.

From ancient times, though, it has been recognized that there is a certain integrity to the role of athlete, just as there is to that of a coach. We expect players to play well, coaches to coach well. But in recent times the integrity of these roles has been violated by athletes taking on roles extraneous to the main role of playing. This violation irritates me, and perhaps many other folks. Let me be more concrete.

Most outrageously, athletes have taken on the role of the onlookers by giving themselves honor. It is not their role to congratulate themselves; others are to do that. They pound their chests, hold up their fists in triumph, do war dances after an ordinary tackle, and prance into the end-zone, watch in admiration as their home runs disappear into the stands, and shout that they are the greatest. (Mohammed Ali was one of the pioneers of self-congratulation, for which I've never quite forgiven him. Neither was he gracious to his opponents, especially Joe Frazier.) What is really the role of the fans—the offering of plaudits—has been taken over by the athletes themselves. I'd rather athletes let us do the applauding.

We now have athletes taking on the role of referee. After making a first down, football players beat the referee to the punch by signaling the first down. Further, they take on the role of chums with the referee, patting them on the behind or back. (If I were a referee I would hiss

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Roanoke College.*

at the first player that patted me, "Next time you do that it's a technical!") Players and referees are not supposed to be chums.

Athletes take on the role of entertainer beyond the role of entertaining us by playing well. They do dances after a touchdown, wear striking clothing, sing jingles, exhibit wild and wooly tattoos, invent rituals that call attention to themselves. In hockey they fight. I'd rather be entertained by their play.

Athletes and even coaches now commonly take on the role of cheerleader, summoning the crowd to make a lot of noise at crucial times. Besides the dubious sportsmanship of the practice, it seems that their primary roles should demand full concentration on playing or coaching, not cheerleading. Let us—led by real cheerleaders—decide when to cheer.

Many athletes become their own therapists. They—McEnroe was the pioneer—maintain that they have to "let it all hang out" in order to perform well. Screams, grunts, stunts, shouts of triumph, and outbursts of anger are all justified by players as therapeutically necessary venting. Maybe the old days of complete suppression of emotions was too much, but at least the players acted like they had been in the end zone or had put one in the stands before. Besides, adulthood means the control of raw emotional expression. I for one find it much more dramatic for the baseball player who pitched a great game or hit a winning home run modestly to doff his cap and offer a grin. After all, the play's the thing, not the self-expression.

Another extraneous role to which I will devote my next Nation column is the role of evangelist. Religion as an account of all of life certainly has a role in sport. But religious prac-

tices interjected into the flow of the game also violate the integrity of the athlete's role. Baseball players cross themselves before they bat, football players kneel in prayer after they score a touchdown, and basketball players point upward to thank God for a particularly good shot. I have very ambivalent feelings about such behavior. On the one hand, I am happy to know that the athletes are Christians and much prefer their giving thanks to God rather than to themselves. They no doubt get a good message across to the many kids watching them. But such behavior is extraneous to what the athlete is supposed to be doing. Religionizing athletic performance is as bad as politicizing it. Such behavior also exhibits what may be a very immature theology, but that is a topic for a later time.

Added to this accretion of extraneous roles is poor sportsmanship—the brattish and boorish behavior of a McEnroe or Connors (poor Pete Sampras has always gotten bad press for his good behavior), the trash talking, the taunting, the dirty play, and the putdowns of the opponent. All these things make it less and less appealing to watch big time college and professional sports. And the oddest thing is that professional football seems to have the worst record. One would think that grown men in a dangerous sport would have more dignity and maturity.

But there is good news. Golf and baseball have not succumbed to the most irritating of these role confusions. Tennis has finally gotten over McEnroe. College sports are getting their acts together by more stringent rules. Maybe the NBA and NFL will catch on before too long. Maybe players will just play well. I'd like to be a happier camper when I watch them on TV. ♣

# Letters from Dogwood

## Absalom, Absalom!

Charles Vandersee

Dear Editor:

Moebie and I had not run into each other for several weeks, and when she saw me she stopped and looked me up and down. Then she stepped close and patted me up and down, vigorously, attentively. It was mid-spring, unusually warm; I was wearing a T-shirt and shorts. There was not much suspicious to pat, but she patted.

"Where do you carry your cellphone?" she finally asked. Moebie is a student of contemporary cultural practices, and there are things she needs to know.

"I'm waiting for the wave after next," I explained. This was a way of saying the unsayable: not yet have I gone to the cellphone store and looked over the cellphones and selected one, and its access. Some people I know have several in the household, also instruments named for trees and berries. Some are frequently "upgrading," buying newer and more capable instruments as their needs massively expand.

We in the U.S. are in a need-rich era. I myself, last fall, with 5,500 frequent-flyer miles about to expire, found I needed several magazines, the only way to salvage these miles. The mailman now stuffs the box with *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *Wired*, and *Boston*; he and the neighbor lady who meets him at the truck doubtless envy lottery success or legacy. In the house, on the stairs, is just enough room to stack these magazines. Waves of urgent renewal requests crash in.

The concept of waves is important to Moebie, since culture as well as technology seems to travel in that mode, and so do people. Right now," she said, examining her palms, "you are riding the post-evasive wave." "You have jet-tisoned," she said, "resistance, and accepted the inevitable." The next wave, she explained, is grudging embrace, and then follows the balloon wave, which is fully-inflated affirmation. This is the wave you ride forever.

Only two waves away from my first cellphone, I was to her mind getting more serious about life itself, since cellphones save mountain-climbers' lives. Were I on a mountain right now, I would not be saved.

Standing below the embrace of future salvation, it occurred to me that pedagogy often moves in waves. It was midsemester, and one of my courses I had announced as an experiment. Secretly, though, I thought it partook of an older wave, though camouflaged as new, and told her that. The title, as transcripts will show, is "More Depth Than Usual," and the idea is that major writers are oceanic, in both ambition and accomplishment. This course consists of just three novelists rather than the usual large passel.

"I'm tired of passels," I told Moebie. "This present wave of survey courses, everywhere, on everything, may be a wave weakening. Surfers in U.S. colleges and universities are seeking waves they can sink their teeth into."

Moebie as scrutinizer of waves thinks in a grand sense-world-historical waves, as it were, as with huge telephone companies lately embedding secret charges on their bills in rampant and inscrutable fashion. She had not been thinking about local waves, such as one new and exciting course, so her response was understandable. "A new wave can't be an old wave," she said.

Well, of course, this could get us into metaphysics, but metaphysics is not one of our needs anymore. Suffice it to say that as we went on talking I was able to interest her in my kind of wave, students immersed in Henry James (b.1843) from an older era and also two novelists from later eras, Willa Cather (b.1873) and William Faulkner (b.1897). With these three you have the real depth of American fiction up to about 1950; others, like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway, are in a sense playing on shore, almost alert enough not to get wet.

Charles Vandersee

has returned to

Dogwood, Virginia,

from Barcelona,

Grand Rapids,

and Long Beach.

To students at least there was something new on the syllabus. There I pointed to the immense ambitions of these writers, and to dip into these asked them to begin the semester reading statements by each one, as to what each one was up to, and what they thought novels should be up to. Each of the three novelists had sought a new wave and a perfect wave, knew what it would look like, and was determined to ride it all the way.

Students loved this. One and all, mostly third-year undergraduates, they told me that in no previous course had such waves crashed against their shores. No teacher had asked them to read essays, manifestoes, testimonies, statements of craft. Lecturers had either ignored them or summarized them, leaving students dry and ignorant as the telephone bill.

Henry James in his famous fresshet "The Art of Fiction" had showered disdain on mere "story"; from this, students emerged wet and dripping, since after all aren't novels *stories*? Well, not for the Master. That was what the *old* wave had done—Victor Hugo, Sir Walter Scott. They assumed readers wanted only to lie on the strand stultified, so they plopped them into some creaky old chaise of a *story*, a plot. James, by contrast, was entirely animated by what individuals inside themselves *know*, and thought they *knew*, or needed to *know*. His characters monitor their own and everyone else's smallest changes in *knowledge*. Would that cellphones had come along a century ago, people fine-tuning each other by the moment—how gleefully he would have waved them into his project!

Willa Cather, who kept knocking three years off her age, also bashed earlier narratists. In her short essay "The Novel D meubl " she throws cluttered furniture out of the house of fiction—all that smothering detail supplied by know-it-all authors. Today's Micheners still keep producing it—interminable historical and sociological plop! Furthermore, why did you need one thing meticulously happening after another, as if a stern chronicle—why couldn't you write in episodes, leaving huge gaps? You could, and she did—part six of *The Song of the Lark* is titled "Ten Years Later"—and readers didn't drown.

William Faulkner in northern Mississippi created the biggest wave of the three, with his famous insistence that the past is not only not past but present. No wave fully retreats. At least if you lived among descendants of feckless and self-deceiving Rebels, who kept trying, like Rosa Coldfield in *Absalom, Absalom!*, to figure out

why God let the South lose the War, ignoring slavery as a possible explanation. Insight from Faulkner on his long river-like sentences: "[A] character in a story at any moment of action is not just himself as he is then, he is all that made him, and the long sentence is an attempt to get his past and possibly his future into the instant in which he does something."

Moebie was hearing all this for the first time, and when this happens her chin glistens and trembles, like one of those moving bands of data at the bottom of your television screen. You know she has something to say, but you hold up the palm of your hand, to stymie. Whatever she has will be off, like the wave you're sure will wipe out the sand castle, and a good thing, so you can go home, but stops way short.

"I find this absorbing," she confessed finally, at my allowing. "A course made of waves, but not the usual waves, which historians call periods or eras." This was indeed off, since all three novelists just mentioned belonged to the wave called Modernism, though in the case of Cather the extent of her involvement has been argued, and in the case of Faulkner it is only method and not content that makes him modern. He deploys, after all, customized Calvinism and glib atavism, not at all modern. Only James is undisputed.

"What you find absorbing without knowing it," I said, "is the graceful submission by students to these waves." "They kept getting knocked down, but then they would rise up and be borne along, sea-changed." "Because," I said, "I arranged cross currents."

That is, we did not read all through first one writer and then the next and then the next, as if some shore's monotonous rhythmic behavior governs reading. Instead, after the set of manifestoes we read some James tales. Then we read his long novel *The Portrait of Lady*, about poor Isabel Archer from Albany, who thinks she knows herself so well and thus is sucked under by a diabolic suitor (think John Malkovich), a selfish and "sterile dilettante," in the happy phrase of a sworn enemy.

Then we abandoned poor Isabel and rejoiced in the triumph of Cather's Thea Kronborg, American goddess, who rides a career wave from landlocked Colorado all the way to Chicago, New York, and Germany, a wave ever larger until it throws her up on stage at the Metropolitan Opera as Wagner's Sieglinde. Then we fell into a sawmill and a decayed old house in Mississippi,

with Faulkner's *Light in August*. Then, of all things, we went to Paris with Henry James again, *The Ambassadors*, oceanic with the failures and successes of *knowing*, where the mere story, of the wan American Lambert Strether, concerns what philosopher Stanley Cavell has called "the trauma of the birth of culture in oneself."

Moebie was getting the point. No sooner did we see how one of these great waves worked, any of these three ambitious authors, then another wave struck obliquely from the side. After James's *Ambassadors* we went to Nebraska for Cather's *A Lost Lady*; then back to haunted Mississippi, with *Absalom, Absalom!* The semester continued with a certain tidal or tidy logic, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* following directly on *Absalom, Absalom!*, exposing the doomed Quentin Compson in his miserable first and only year at Harvard, following his last miserable summer in Mississippi.

There really is such weighty doom in Faulkner's ruined Compsons and Coldfields and Sutpens and Burdens, a suffocating undertow, that it was brilliantly right to end the semester with Cather's luminous *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. Its desert story largely concerns cultural imperialism, the Roman Catholic church convinced of its everlasting rightness and hegemonic destiny, but (as noted) we had been trained by James to look at matters other than story. What delighted us, in and about Santa Fe, New Mexico, was language, scenery, and civility. Simply watch the homesick French archbishop absorbed in gardening and friendships, eventually developing a small cathedral project.

"These waves then against waves," queried Moebie, who is not of a literary bent: "Each author is a wave of a particular sort, but then you made these waves break into each other, not just march to shore." "You were not," she inquired, "studying the growth and development of these three writers, but getting a sense of them in relation to one another and the larger water mass." "As if," she went on, "in the electronic world you were not moving from one cellphone advance to the next, but touching down here and there, like a fastidious seagull, among various devices of communication, unworried about what led to what?"

This was obliquely accurate, and indeed when I asked students at the end of the semester what they thought of the experiment, one said that we had not studied the "development" of these writers. She was not objecting, only noting, and her acute observation evoked from me an

unplanned five-minute tsunami interrogating "development," that mindless metaphysical assumption, in a survey course, about the working lives of writers and artists.

James develops only in style, more complexity; he was born knowing everything he needed, about society with its surface civilities, and about the depths of human consciousness. Faulkner learned early everything about Yoknapatawpha County that he needed, from listening to his torrentially talkative elders; he too does not "develop" but instead tries various experiments for exposing the subsurface darknesses of knowledge and history. Cather, after one misstep (trying to imitate James), likewise did not "develop," but she did like to move around geographically in her novels—Nebraska, Quebec, Michigan, Virginia, New Mexico—rather than stay in one county or (as James) on one modest-sized continent, Europe.

"It's true," said Moebie; "waves do not develop, and therefore—" I had to shut her down. She was going to be off. "Waves *do* develop," I pointed out. How else could we talk about two waves hence of cellphones, better ones? Mixed strategies of modernism were one coast my "More Depths" course had investigated; the shoreline of American fiction was hardly the same with the death of Faulkner in 1962 as it was with the death of Henry James in 1916, much less the death of Hawthorne in 1863. The water level has definitely been rising.

"So," said Moebie, still concerned, "your students don't try to reach you by cellphone?" How would I know? They seem comfortable with e-mail, and unlike generalizations to the contrary, about e-mail encouraging slovenliness, I find the opposite, and have for years. Their questions and comments are succinct, clear, and pertinent. There is no new wave of inarticulacy.

And, as I went on to explain, one can conceive of wave-tasks more difficult than sailing with three novelists. Next fall, "More Depth Than Usual" will consider four American poets, Dickinson, Eliot, Frost, and Stevens. Poetry generally, for some students, will venture too near the devouring Bermuda Triangle. I as captain will need to keep them in sight of the sky, pursuing for example Eliot's mermaids (in "Prufrock") "riding seaward on the waves," rather than dangerously lingering "in the chambers of the sea."

From Dogwood, yours faithfully,  
C.V.

# Books

## booklines

"Even youths grow weary and stumble," says the prophet, "but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Of course, even the track coaches and church camp speakers who like to keep this verse handy know that "waiting" on the Lord isn't enough to get on in life. As the next verse puts it, "They will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint." Waiting on the Lord doesn't imply passivity. The Lord helps those who wait on him and who get their fannies in gear.

Whether Soren Kierkegaard and Abraham Lincoln, the subjects of recent significant biographies, ever personally "waited" upon the Lord (in the evangelical sense) is unclear, though it is evident that both thought deeply about God and human existence. (Consider, for example, Lincoln's *Second Inaugural Address* and Kierkegaard's musings on the individual and faith within Christendom.) What's also clear is that these two physically awkward and, in Lincoln's case, "gawky" youngsters grew into men whose ideas changed, albeit in fundamentally different ways, the western world. The Library of Congress possesses several thousand published documents on Lincoln (books, pamphlets, poems, speeches, etc.). And though Kierkegaard, proto-existentialist, called by Reinhold Niebuhr "the profoundest interpreter of the psychology of the religious life since St. Augustine," may not be as trendy now as he was in the 1960s, his books and commentaries on them are still allotted hefty shelf space in bookstores.

Obviously, there's no real point to a sustained "comparison" of Lin-

coln (1809-1865) and Kierkegaard (1813-1855). The former, whom William Lee Miller capably engages in *Lincoln's Virtues* (2002), grew up on a humble farm near the American frontier; the latter, the subject of a biography by Alastair Hannay published last year, was raised in urban Denmark, the son of a wealthy man. Lincoln was largely self-taught and was a less than competent speller throughout his life. By his early twenties Kierkegaard knew, among other tongues, Latin, Hebrew and Greek. The young Lincoln, owner of a "humorous imagination," was liked by most who knew him personally. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, was remembered by childhood friends as something of a "cheeky brat and loner" who was "feared rather than disliked." Lincoln, political savior of his nation, was transfigured into a near Christ figure upon his assassination on Good Friday in 1865; "Kierkegaard's story ended," Hannay writes, "when, self-cast in the role of martyr, and having deliberately worked himself into a cultural corner, he fell ill and died."

But, for all these differences, did the two men share traits that might help partly to explain their success—traits that teachers and ministers might look for in young people in their charge? Perhaps the point to focus on is that place, uncomfortable for leaders, where independent youth assert themselves and, in culturally acceptable though sometimes unpleasant ways, buck the system. "Lincoln's intense desire that he leave a scar upon the earth with his name attached would be one source of his greatness," writes Miller. Hannay makes a similar claim for Kierkegaard: "The main thing [for the young philoso-

pher] was to get something worthwhile done and quickly. To do that, and at whatever personal cost, he had to make the most of his talents." It's true, as Hannay writes, that one finds in Kierkegaard a glib self-protection: Kierkegaard liked to throw literary bombs but not always to stick around to help clean up the mess. ("Postscript for readers who might possibly be worse off for reading [my] preface," he writes: "they could of course skip it, and skip so far that they skipped over the dissertation too, which wouldn't matter.")

Yet one also finds in Kierkegaard a powerful self-awareness and self-assertiveness. Here he is taking on a former teacher. There he is trashing the works of Hans Christian Andersen, whom he knew. And there he is attacking a newspaper's editorial slant. It isn't that Kierkegaard sought fame outright: much of what he wrote was published pseudonymously. And while his self-absorption was vast—"the thought of my considerable mental talents was my only consolation," he wrote in his journal—he, like most writers, genuinely wanted to alter the world according to his vision. Or at least he wanted to improve the thinking of his contemporaries. For good and bad, Kierkegaard stood against the world, including what he saw as the spiritually empty cultural Christianity that pervaded early nineteenth-century Danish society.

Lincoln, too, stood out, though not as brashly as his brooding Nordic contemporary. Lincoln grew up among farmers but preferred books to the plow, and he left agricultural work as soon as he could. Miller notes that Lincoln didn't share the unquestioned contempt western Americans had for



Indians. He grew up in a culture unopposed to slavery, yet he disliked the institution from his youth. He was raised among Democrats but joined the Whig and Republican parties. His peers abused animals, but he protested against that. He spent his life among hunters but didn't like to hunt. The young Lincoln, that is to say, accomplished "a remarkable work of independent self-definition, a rare sequence of self-initiated projects in reading, study, and self-education, [and] a striking series of rejections and disengagements from what others around him did and thought and believed."

It isn't that Lincoln and Kierkegaard were left to shape themselves completely. They were directed by adults, and they lived within definite frameworks provided them by parents and culture. Certainly, they weren't like the sort of pseudo-artists, ubiquitous in fashionable circles, who aggress against cultural standards chiefly for the sake of aggression. But, within general bounds, Lincoln and Kierkegaard followed their own lights. And their experiences may have something to teach twenty-first century Christian teachers, preachers and leaders.

Lincoln and Kierkegaard remind teachers and ministers that real leaders sometimes spring from genuine nonconformists (as opposed to the "I gotta be me" poseurs on MTV). "The funny thing about teenagers," writes Caitlin Flanagan in the September 2001 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, "is that very often the best of them, the most interesting and curious, are rather lousy high school students."

They have other things on their minds than geeking out every single point on the [Advanced Placement] U.S. history exam. They are often readers, and preparation for elite-college admission does not allow one to be a reader; it's far too time consuming. These "lousy" students were often among my favorites [in

class], and I never feared that they were going to lose a chance at a great education because they didn't have the stuff of an "elite" admission. They themselves were smart. They didn't need some Ferrari of a college nudging them along the path to a great education; they were going to get one wherever they went. In Flanagan's terms, Kierkegaard gained a "great education"; Lincoln didn't. In the end, the latter was more influential.

Most parents would be pleased to see their sons grow into Lincolns (minus the grisly expiration). Few would voluntarily opt to raise little Kierkegaards—troubled, brooding, polemical, self-absorbed. And, anyway, not everyone can be great—which is OK since few really want to be great, and, of those who do, only a few would likely use their greatness to good ends.

But one never knows the future that lurks in a child's keen (or wild) eyes. Maybe that's one reason St. Paul urges believers not to exasperate their children, and why one supplication in the *Common Book of Prayer* asks God to give parents "calm strength and patient wisdom," a prayer teachers, as well, ought daily to pray.

Preston Jones

Michael L. Peterson. *With All Your Mind: A Christian Philosophy of Education*. University of Notre Dame Press, 2001.

Some books are worthy of attention because of their creativity and imagination. They present a vision others may have missed seeing; they peek into crannies of whose existence we were unaware. They see a problem or resolve a problem, with clarity, grace, and imagination. They give us something new. Other books are worthy of attention not because they introduce us to the new, but because they clarify and sharpen our view of the

known. Michael Peterson's *With All Your Mind* falls into this latter class.

Peterson, a professor of philosophy at Asbury College, a small evangelical and Wesleyan school near Lexington, Kentucky, draws upon several decades of experience of reading and teaching to present the outlines of a coherent philosophy of education from a Christian point of view. He writes as an evangelical, greatly enriched by and appreciative of the broader Christian tradition, perhaps especially the Thomistic philosophical tradition.

If there are central Christian affirmations, then these beliefs are part of, and have implications for other parts of, a Christian world and life view. A Christian world and life view will include beliefs that bear specifically upon educational philosophy. Educational practice, when thoughtful, is related to educational policy, which ought to be derived, in large part, from educational philosophy. Thus, in principle, the rudiments of a Christian world and life view ought to make a noticeable difference all the way down to educational practice.

And not just a Christian world and life view. Peterson examines three classical philosophies of education—idealism, naturalism, and Thomistic realism—and four contemporary philosophies that have influenced educational policy and practice—experimentalism, existentialism, philosophical analysis, and postmodernism—and traces the implications of these philosophical world and life views for educational issues. In each case, having shown the bearing of a philosophical theory upon educational practice, he subjects the world and life view to a careful critique. Throughout this exercise, Peterson is clear, rigorous, critical, and fair.

In the second half of his book he presents an outline of a Christian world and life view and the metaphysical, epistemic, and axiological commitments entailed by a coherent body of Christian beliefs.

Following this, he discusses some of the broader issues of educational policy, e.g., the relationship between liberal learning and general education, the relationship between liberal education and professional training, the integration of faith and learning, ethics and values education, and the nature of pedagogy. Five issues of educational practice are discussed in his penultimate chapter: public versus private education, academic freedom, multiculturalism, the "new generation of student learners," and the impact of high tech upon educational practice. Peterson's discussion is, in every case, clear and sane.

In his final chapter, "Christianity and the Pursuit of Excellence," Peterson helpfully discusses the very possibility of a "Christian Mind," of Christians who, in their scholarship, think as Christians. Part of what it means to have a Christian mind, according to Peterson, is to have "a mind marked by the very way it processes information—its fundamental perspective, its guiding ideas, its overall aims." Such minds can make a difference not only to the scholarly world, or the church, but also in addressing perennial social problems. Insightfully, Peterson notes that the Christian mind is not merely an individual phenomenon, but may be collective, "a pool of discourse among thinkers operating within a shared frame of reference."

This is a valuable book, not only for students at church-related colleges who may need an introduction to the special educational contributions of their institutions and students in philosophy of education courses, but also as a reminder that Christian faith is not just a set of affections or a collection of virtues, but a confession. That confession, as Michael Peterson so ably points out, ought to make a difference in what we understand education to be for and how we go about educating.

TDK

Conrad Cherry, Betty A. DeBerg, and Amanda Porterfield. *Religion on Campus*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Motivated by a suspicion of the claims of recent studies of religion and higher education conducted by Douglas Sloan, James Burtchaell, George Marsden, and Philip Gleason, the researchers of this study are driven "by a desire to test the adequacy of these secularization theories as measures of the importance of religion on the contemporary campus" (4). Their cumulative experience as faculty in eight public and private universities seemed contrary to the secularization theories, with only one case of the study of religion weakened, and no cases of the religious practices of students disadvantaged.

Another reason for their suspicion of the secularization theories is the tendency to "[judge] the present by the past without due attention to the changing shape of religion," which they assert "can obscure new forms of religious vitality in the present" (4). Moreover, they contend these studies, which report the declining influence of religion—especially forms of historic Christianity—on the substantive academic practices in American colleges and universities, lack "firsthand, on-site examinations of religion on college campuses" (6).

To achieve a more accurate picture of the health of religion on campus they have examined the presence and pervasiveness of religion at four universities—a Roman Catholic university in the East, a Lutheran liberal arts college in the North, a historically black university in the South and a state university in the West. Rather than identifying these universities, they refer to them by their region. Conrad Cherry was the main researcher for South University, where he visited during the 1996-97 academic year, and North College, 1997-98. Amanda Porterfield studied East

University in 1996-97, and Betty DeBerg studied West University that same year. In effect, then, this is a study of four campuses in America, mainly employing the methods of ethnography; it is not intended to be an assessment of the overall state of affairs of religion and higher education in America.

Interestingly, the primary focus of the authors is upon the religious practices and attitudes of undergraduates. Approaches taken by professors of religion with respect to the formal study of religion on these campuses also receive considerable attention, as does "the extent to which the study and the practice of religion are made available to undergraduate students" (7). The historical backgrounds of these schools were studied only "on occasion" (7); most of the conclusions of the study come from interviews, observation, informants, and field notes. In attempting to assess secularization and the health of religion on university campuses, the authors ask such questions as: How do American undergraduates practice religion during their college or university years? How widely does this population practice religion? How do students understand and discuss their religious or nonreligious postures? What opportunities exist for undergraduates to practice and study religion on campus? What approaches to the study of religion do the professors take? Important questions, to be sure, but one might wonder how answering these questions provides evidence to support their thesis that Burtchaell, Marsden, et. al., have overstated their now familiar thesis about the secularization of American higher education. More on this question later.

Regarding the vitality of religious practice, they suggest that "If the definition of religion includes spirituality as well as the more traditional, denominationally based forms of religious expression, we can say with utter confidence that opportunities for undergraduates to

practice religion were widely available at all four schools" (275). They report that many undergraduates prefer to call themselves "spiritual" instead of "religious." "Religion" implies an authoritarian institution, whereas "spirituality" implies a personal experience of God or an orientation toward ultimate values. Also, the latter term (for many undergraduates) "connoted a quest, a journey, something not yet completed, whereas 'religion' and 'religious' signified something completed, fixed, handed down" (275-76). The authors imply that this student preference for "spirituality" over "religion" represents insight, even progress, on their parts.

To their credit, the authors point out that, although there are trends common to all four campuses, the context of each school alters the shape of the students' religious practices. For example, West University, which is a state university, allows some thirty religious organizations a presence on campus. The practical result is that religion is practiced by students in a variety of ways, from 1200 students in attendance at Newman Center masses to the gathering of a handful of students in the Christian Science group. Interservice Fellowship groups and Shabbat services sponsored by the Hillel Jewish Student Center are also available.

At South University, whose student body is predominantly African-American, religious practice is homogenous in comparison. Student spirituality takes place mostly in the form of African-American Christianity, although students are exposed to diverse religious practices during Religious Emphasis Week. North College, a Lutheran institution, has a fairly clear Lutheran identity according to the authors. The variety of religious practice comes mostly from parachurch groups and student-initiated Bible study groups. Regarding North College's religious commitment, one student said, "Everyone who comes here eventually knows

the school is rooted in Christianity" (278). Similarly, Porterfield contends that as a Catholic institution, East University is unmistakably shaped by Jesuit theology and practice because, for example, many students who come from Catholic upbringings claim that their commitment to "Catholicism was deepened by the Jesuit ideal of the integration of academic study, personal formation, and service in the world" (278-9).

Although the authors of *Religion on Campus* have provided an interesting study of religious practices on four campuses, their study fails to address what are perhaps the most fundamental ways in which religion and American higher education may relate. Namely, they exclude any analysis of the way in which religious assumptions might shape higher education in a pervasive and meaningful way. Indeed, they imply that such efforts are "simplistic and grandiose," having been made intellectually implausible by "new advances in research" and by an "increased appreciation of the religions of the world." In short, they dismiss the "making of one religious perspective a unifying campus principle" (2). Perhaps these researchers view this historic approach to Christian higher education as a form of wishful thinking or harmful nostalgia, but they provide no arguments for these important claims.

The questions they ask and the data they cite do not, to my mind, go very far to establish their thesis. It is good news, of course, that the researchers "found the academic study of religion to be as vital and appealing to undergraduates as religious practice on all four campuses" (283). Even if the formal study and practice of religion appears to be "vital and appealing" (283) to undergraduates and to a faculty interested in inclusivity and diversity as first principles, it is by no means clear that this "evidence" undermines the conventional secularization thesis that traditional forms of Christianity,

Judaism, and the Muslim faith are marginalized in the major, culture-shaping universities and colleges.

It seems not to have occurred to Cherry, for example, that the "Progressives'" concerns about secularization at East University, despite the popularity of EU's service-learning course, and its commitment to sacramentalism and personal piety, was their own recognition that these were rear-guard actions against the corrosive acids of secularization at EU, acids it was not likely to resist in the next decade. The authors' conclusion that "religion has become more optional and pluralistic" (294) among faculty and students is no doubt true, but how is that incompatible with the notion that American higher education has become increasingly secular in the sense that the American academy is not only resistant, but opposed to considering as academically legitimate those institutions that develop academic practices in light of their faith as a unifying principle? No doubt the worries of the Progressives at EU may be connected to the loss of Catholicism as a unifying principle in its core curriculum and across all schools and disciplines. Indeed, then, the kind of secularization Marsden, et. al., worry about happens, in no small measure, by way of its core religious convictions becoming more "optional" and "pluralistic," contrary to what these authors attempt to show.

Furthermore, the authors have precious little to say about the substance of religion on these four campuses. Although they provide numerous descriptions of on-campus religious organizations (e.g., activities, attendance, etc.), their analysis is, in the end, inadequate because "religion" for these researchers includes far too much. Questions such as "What are core beliefs of the religion?" and what is problematic about "pick and choose religion?" go unanswered.

Finally, these researchers have a biased view on what makes a reli-

gious organization healthy. The greater degree to which religious organizations are diverse and non-coercive is the greater degree to which they are healthy and legitimate, not only in the academy but also in the larger society. Indeed, the not so subtle implication is that as long as religion is available on campus, and as long as there is "a commitment to honoring religious diversity and a refusal to coerce students to adopt any particular religious perspective or practice"

(281), then religion on campus is alive and well.

In short, the overly optimistic tone of the book gives the reader the impression that the future for religion in the American academy is especially rosy. Perhaps that is so. But what many of us wonder is whether the future is bright for institutions that aim to have their religious identity provide their academic practices with a unifying principle. The conclusion that can be inferred from this book is that there

is an obvious advantage to universities and colleges that have no such commitments. As long as their view dominates in the academy and is accepted even by those who work in religiously-identified colleges and universities, then the future for Christian universities of that sort, for example, is not bright. And that was the view initially propounded by the authors' antagonists.

Michael Beaty

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#### on covers—

Images of the expelled gas around dying stars. Note that the gas forms a bipolar rather than spherical nebula. In some cases a dark lane is seen between the lobes, which is attributed to obscuration of starlight by a circumstellar disk. In the last image such a disk can be seen directly. These pictures were all taken using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope. The two orange images on the back cover are in false color, with the colors used to enhance the bright regions.

#### on reviewers—

Preston Jones

is a contributing editor to *Books & Culture*. His essay "History, Discernment and the Christian Life" is published in *Best Christian Writing, 2001* (Harper San Francisco).

Michael Beaty

formerly directed the Institute for Faith and Learning at Baylor University and has recently been appointed Vice Provost for Faculty Development.

#### on poets—

J. Stephen Rhodes

writes and lives on a farm near Berea, Kentucky. He is a Presbyterian minister and a theological educator.

Christian Knoeller

teaches at Purdue and has published poetry in *The Nebraska Review* and *Flint Hills Review*.

Mary M. Brown

teaches literature and writing at Indiana Wesleyan University. *First Things*, *Christian Century* and *Mars Hill Review* have all published her poetry.

Nicholas Preus

has been a resident of Decorah, off and on, for thirty years and currently teaches at Luther College.

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