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A review of literature, the arts, and public affairs

Special Issue
The Lilly Fellows Program in Humanities and the Arts

Civic Virtue Starts at Home
Patricia McGuire

Inspiring Faith and Engaging Reality
Mark Ravizza, SJ

Purpose, Provender, and Promises
Richard Ray

Leota Loop was an Indiana artist affiliated with the Brown County Art Colony. She studied under such celebrated Hoosier artists as T. C. Steele and William Forsyth. Known primarily for her lovely still lifes, Loop exhibited widely during her lifetime and was a member of a number of regional artists’ associations. She is rumored to have briefly studied at Valparaiso University in 1912. The Brauer Museum of Art is grateful to Bernie and Sue Konrady for their donation of this Loop still life, a fine piece to welcome in the spring.

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whatever is TRUE
whatever is NOBLE
whatever is RIGHT
whatever is PURE
whatever is LOVELY
whatever is ADMIRABLE

if anything is excellent or praiseworthy
—think about such things.

Philippians 4:8
When I teach my class on political theory, I always start with a speech that goes like this: “The texts that I am assigning in this class are difficult. When you read them, you need to find a quiet place, away from television, computers, and cellphones and give these readings your full attention.” The advice is good, but I hope my students never see me reading. When enjoying a book at home, my laptop is usually on the floor at my feet, and my cellphone is close by. Even worse, I do most of my reading on a tablet computer, which means that email alerts occasionally spring up from the bottom of the page. At work, I do better, but I still often am distracted by email or the Internet.

We all know how cellphones, computers, and other technologies distract us. At one level, this is a reality of life today, something we have to get used to and learn to manage. But in the context of education, these distractions are more pernicious. In an age when so much information can be accessed so quickly, students are tempted to move on to the next thing before they give more than a superficial glance to what is already in front of them. Among the greatest challenges teachers face today is to get students to maintain their focus, to study and think patiently, to discover what lies beneath the surface.

This is not just a problem of academic habits. Those who lack the capacity for paying attention are likely also to lack the capacity for empathy and compassion. Genuine human connection is not formed by clicking a “Like” button on a screen. Instead, it takes an effort of attention to come to know and care about others. If we cannot give our attention, then our relationships will be as superficial as our thinking. In an age when our students are being formed by a culture of distraction and self-absorption, teachers must cultivate the capacity for attention and engagement. And teachers and institutions who embrace the various traditions of Christian higher education—united by the devotion to conversation, justice, and the search for truth—can bring a wealth of strategies and practices to the service of these pressing needs of our time.

In October 2013, the Lilly Fellows Program convened its National Conference at the University of Scranton. Representatives from members of the National Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities gathered to consider the topic of “Faith and Academic Freedom in Civic Virtue.” Participants explored how faith-based schools can fulfill their missions through service to the world. Two lectures presented at Scranton are included in this issue. In “Inspiring Faith and Engaging Reality,” Fr. Mark Ravizza, SJ of Santa Clara University shows how by getting students out of the classroom we can help them develop both empathy for others and the imagination to see new possibilities in the world. In “Civic Virtue Starts at Home,” Patricia McGuire, President of Trinity Washington University, recounts how Trinity transformed itself by thinking of its mission as a mandate to serve the world that existed right outside the campus gates. A third essay included here was presented at the Administrator’s Workshop immediately preceding the conference. In “Purpose, Provender, and Promises,” Richard Ray of Hope College describes how faith-based universities offer something both distinctive and relevant to young people raised in this secular age.

These three essays all end by affirming that, above all, students need hope, and they show how Christian schools can cultivate this virtue. A Christian school’s mission is not to be a bulwark against change in the world; it is rather a mandate to embrace and serve the needs of that changing world. These schools can offer their students a freedom formed by faith and guided by hope, a hope that students will discover in the beauty of the world if they embrace it lovingly and attentively, a hope that will lead them to work for justice in that world. As they embrace this restless and distracted world, let us hope that at last their attention will come to rest on the faces of those they meet, and in them on the image of God, the source of hope unfailing.

—JPO

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Inspiring Faith and Engaging Reality
Promoting Civic Virtue in a Secular Age

Mark Ravizza, SJ

For the past eight years, I have taught at the Casa de la Solidaridad in El Salvador and Casa Bayanihan in Manila. The Casa programs are alternative, study-abroad semesters that transform students by immersing them in materially poor communities and then integrating that experience through rigorous academic analysis, spiritual formation, and simple community living.

To illustrate how this pedagogy works, let me begin with a story that a student, Susan, told after spending the weekend with a family in her "praxis community":

The mother of the family, Oti, and I were cooking lunch. The night before, I had been bitten all over by bugs, and as the kitchen grew hotter, my legs started to itch like crazy. The more I scratched, the worse they got. When Oti looked down and saw my legs covered with swollen, red bug bites, she told me that she had a little medicine, a "special ointment," that she had been saving since some visitors had given it to her a few years ago. She went into her bedroom and returned with a small tube of cream half full. I put out my hand expecting that she would give me a bit of the lotion to put on my legs. But instead, Oti squeezed the entire tube into her own two hands, and then got down on her knees and began to massage the cream gently into my burning skin.

As we discussed this story in class, Susan's eyes filled with tears. She asked:

Why did I assume that Oti would just put a drop of lotion in my hand? And why, instead, did she put everything she had into her own hands, and then lavish it so generously on me? The cream was a gift she had been saving for months. She doesn't have the money to buy more. I didn't deserve it or have any right to it, and yet for Oti this was the only natural thing to do. Why do I see the world so differently from how she does?

Earlier in class we had been comparing an "ethic of justice" with an "ethic of care," but our conversation took on a new depth when viewed through the lens of Susan's experience. Students began to contrast the individualistic ways they lived with the more communitarian sense of care they experienced in their praxis sites, and this led to a very different understanding of civic virtue. But the richness of the experience was not limited to intellectual insights. Susan also shared that the moment had been marked by a surprising grace: "As Oti massaged my legs with such care, I felt a tremendous warmth and light around me. It was as if God's love was flowing through Oti's hands, a love I had been seeking for such a long time."

Marie Howe's poem Annunciation beautifully captures the type of moment Susan described:

...it was a tilting within myself
as one turns a mirror to flash the light to
where
it isn't—I was blinded like that—and swam
in what shone at me...
As we think about faith, freedom, and civic virtue, we should keep Susan’s story in mind. I say this for three reasons. First, in a secular age, when the faith of our students is often embattled, discarded, or irrelevant, we need creative, new ways to allow a lived faith to make a claim across the curriculum. A central thesis that I want to propose is that to cultivate civic virtue, we need to get students out of the classroom and have them engage reality in a way that also opens up new horizons of faith.

Second, Susan is, in many ways, emblematic of the type of young person we need to keep in our hearts as we think about faith and virtue. I am sure you know them. They are smart, talented, well-educated but also on a path to lead very self-focused lives filled with distractions. Often they come from no specific faith tradition, or they are questioning their faith, and yet there is something that wants to be at play in their life, something calling them to a different and more expansive way of being in the world. In many ways they are at a crossroads. So many forces in their life are pushing them toward isolation, superficiality, and self-involvement, but a still, quiet, inner voice calls them in a different direction, to a life given in service of others. So much depends on whether we, as educators, can animate that quiet, inner voice and encourage students to follow their deepest and freest desires.

My third reason for beginning with Susan is that I suspect we all have had moments like my conversation with her, moments when what is happening in the classroom blends seamlessly with real life. In these moments, ideas connect powerfully with lived experience. Education becomes transformation. Our work seems to be not so much about our syllabus, but about God’s. We all know those moments, don’t we? It is as if God sits up and exclaims, “This is what I was waiting for. This is where new life is claimed and freedom begins.” If you have had these moments, you know the feelings of confirmation they evoke: “This is why I do what I do. This is why teaching matters.” Let’s call these sorts of moments, “vocational moments.” Educators need to ask themselves, “Where have we encountered such moments, and how might we place ourselves in contexts where we could have more of them?”

Let’s be honest: it can be hard at times to stay connected to such vocational moments, whether they be accompanying a student, or being inspired in our research, or witnessing the fruits of our administrative service. Days can turn into months, and months into years, and slowly we can stop even missing the life that first called us here. We can settle for functional jobs instead of continuing to take risks, instead of continuing to seek that inspiration we once knew.

Vocational Moments and Freedom

Let us heed the poet’s words and tilt toward the light that first illuminated us. So much depends upon the place from which our conversation flows. To speak creatively, insightfully, and productively about issues as complex and well-worn as faith, freedom, and virtue is not easy, but how different might our conversations be if we can center (or re-center) ourselves at the outset in those moments of annunciation?

In my own history, attending to these types of vocational moments has made all the difference, leading me from a fairly traditional academic path to doing things far different than I ever imagined. In many ways, this journey started ten years ago when Santa Clara University was awarded a Lilly Theological Exploration of Vocation Grant. One of the images we used to help students discern their vocation came from a well-known quote by Frederick Buechner:

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VOCATION. It comes from the Latin vocare, to call, and means the work a person is called to by God... The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done.... The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. (Buechner 1993)

The more I pondered this quote with my students, the more I reflected on my own vocation. I had found a comfortable niche: I was tenured, enjoying my teaching and research, directing a residential learning community, advancing toward administrative service. Yet as I read Buechner's quote, I began to wonder, "Is this all there is?"

At the same time, I was seeing students come back from our Casa program in El Salvador on fire, completely transformed. Their faith was stronger; they wanted to reach out in service; they were filled with hope. More was happening in four months in Central America than I could bring about in four years with my residential learning community in California. I had to ask, "Why?" In search of answers, I went to El Salvador to work with the Casa program. That experience changed me and completely changed the way I think about education. A different kind of learning was taking place there, a learning that not only engaged the head, but touched the heart, a learning that called students to live more expansively, and to be in touch with a wider, more interconnected world.

An old truism says, "We cannot give what we do not have:" Similarly, I learned that, "We cannot teach what we do not know and live:" Listening to vocational moments, whether they be in the classroom, or in our research, or service is crucial, because such moments keep us alive as educators. They draw us to where "our deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Yet, following these vocational promptings requires a profound sense of freedom.

How does freedom fit with the promotion of civic virtue? Typically we think of academic freedom in terms of a liberty to seek openly the truth in our teaching and research without unwarranted restrictions. Thought of in this way, it comprises two dimensions: (1) a freedom from negative constraints such as censorship, undue institutional interference, and fear of reprisal; (2) a freedom for positive activities such as self-expression, open conversation, and the discovery and sharing of the true, good, and beautiful.

However, there is a related and perhaps deeper sense of freedom in the academy, one that also bears on how effectively we educate. This concerns how free we are not just in the content of our teaching and inquiry, but also in the very practice of how we educate. In particular, are we free to take risks and to imagine new ways to teach and innovate? The academy's own expectations can constrain us. Pressures of faculty activity reports, US News and World Report rankings, bureaucratic structures, accreditation demands, and professional standing can all exert subtle and not-so-subtle influences that encourage us to maintain the status quo and to ignore that still, small voice that beckons us to break out of the mold, to follow our vocational moments, and to do something creatively that really matters. Can we encourage one another to resist these forces of conformity and dream together of truly innovative ways to foster faith and civic virtue?

Framing the Problem: Civic Blindness and the Need for Communal Care

Let's adopt a roughly Aristotelian approach to virtue, and define it as a disposition of character to act in the right way, at the right time, toward the right objects, with the right feelings. Civic virtue then, might be thought of as that set of virtues that leads one to act in the right way toward the community and, in particular, to promote the common good. Faith-based institutions, in an increasingly secularized world, struggle to know how to promote this common good while simultaneously respecting academic freedom and staying true to their missions. However, before moving too quickly to a single-minded focus on this natural way of framing the problem, I would like to describe two other challenges that today confront any institution dedicated to educating for civic virtue.
Every generation suffers from moral blindness. For example, we find it incomprehensible that a previous generation would have thought it permissible to enslave other human beings because they had darker skin or that it was morally acceptable to deny to certain humans the right to vote simply because they were women. Recognizing such moral blindness in other ages, challenges us to ask, “What moral wrongs don’t we see today?” Reflecting on this at the turn of the century, Richard Rorty anticipated how future generations would look back on our time:

Just as 20th century Americans had trouble imagining how their pre-Civil War ancestors could have stomached slavery, so we at the end of the 21st century have trouble imagining how our great-grandparents could have legally permitted a C.E.O. to get 20 times more than her lowest-paid employees. We cannot understand how Americans a hundred years ago could have tolerated the horrific contrast between a childhood spent in the suburbs and one spent in the ghetto. Such inequalities seem to us evident moral abominations, but the vast majority of our ancestors took them to be regrettable necessities. (Rorty, 155)

Communal care is not just a feeling of goodwill, but a compassion that flows from a lived awareness of how individual selves and community are inextricably interconnected.

Sadly, since Rorty wrote this in 1996, the disparity of wealth has gotten worse, not better. In 2012 the average CEO earned 350 times more than the average worker; in the most egregious case, the CEO of J. C. Penny’s, Ron Johnson, earned 1,795 times more than the average Penny’s employee (Hiltzik 2013). This increasing inequality has given rise to deepening divisions and polarization as evinced in the Occupy Movement that dramatically highlighted the fact that in 2010 the top 20 percent of Americans owned nearly 89 percent of the country’s wealth and the bottom 80 percent of the population owned 11 percent. The richest 1 percent owned 35.4 percent (Domhoff 2013).

Rorty argued that to respond to this disparity of wealth, our society needed to change in the future: “Today [in 1996] morality is thought of neither as a matter of applying the moral law nor as the acquisition of virtues but as fellow feeling, the ability to sympathize with the plight of others” (158). Rorty saw that to correct the growing inequality of our times, we could not simply reinforce traditional accounts of morality and virtue. Rather, we needed to address deeper social conditions and develop a type of “communal care.” Such care is not just a feeling of goodwill, but a compassion that flows from a lived awareness of how individual selves and community are inextricably interconnected. In the Philippines, our students are often introduced to this type of communal care through the Filipino notion of Kapwa. It is a term that defies easy translation, but for our purposes it might be thought of as the “recognition of a shared identity, an inner self shared with others” (de Guia 2008). To illustrate how Kapwa appears in daily life let me share a story.

At the start of this semester, one of our students in Manila, whom I will call Charles, was helping out with a feeding program in a grade school at a relocation settlement. The school has 9,000 students with 1,300 first graders in twenty-six classrooms. As he entered a classroom with his pitcher of warm milk to serve, the children stopped to stare. Charles is about 6’3” of Cuban, African, Norwegian descent, and the wide eyes of the students all clearly signaled that they knew he was not from around the neighborhood. After he finished pouring the milk, one of the smallest girls in the class came forward to offer him the little snack she had been given. Seeing how malnourished she was, Charles naturally tried to...
refuse, but when he noticed a deep sadness filling her eyes, he changed course and gratefully accepted the crackers. Immediately two other first-graders came forward to offer him their food as well. (I imagine they were thinking, “This guy is so big, he probably will need more than one of our little snacks.”) As Charles shared this story in class, he held up his backpack:

I am still carrying those snacks around. I can’t stop thinking about how those girls would rather go hungry than have me, a visitor, feel left out. And I ask myself, “How have I welcomed the stranger?” If I came across a visitor in San Francisco, I would barely take time to give them directions, much less miss a meal so that they would feel at home. I want it to be different next time...

In moments like these there is no need to lecture about civic virtue; reality speaks. My work with students leads me to believe that our “civic blindness” does not stem from intentional malice on the part of the privileged. Rather it is fostered by being insulated and distracted from the lives of those suffering around us. Unfortunately such distraction is encouraged by what Adolfo Nicolas, SJ has termed, a “Globalization of Superficiality” (Nicolas 2011). This is a second challenge I invite us to consider.

Superficiality and the Need for Depth of Imagination

We live in a world of fast food, instant coffee, and instant answers; a world where friendship is a click on Facebook and conversations are reduced to a text or tweet; a world where getting the real thing is as easy as buying a Coke. Instead of grappling with original thought, we “cut and paste.” The technology that connects us also fragments and distracts us. Our heads are buried in iPhones; our consciousness is easily reduced to the images flickering across our screens. We are exporting not just products from the US but an entire superficial way of being in the world. And this is affecting every aspect of our lives.

One afternoon I had been working with some street children in Manila. As I was leaving, a little girl approached me: “Father, can I ask you something?” Clearly she was hungry, so I began digging in my pocket to see if I had any pesos. Then, she finished her request: “Can I friend you on Facebook?” I was at a loss for words. Here was a young girl without enough to eat, and she wanted to spend the little money she had to be on Facebook at the Internet café. What would it really mean to befriend her in this way?

The globalization of superficiality is leading to a different sense of self, one that is guided by what Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster have termed a “Gospel of Authenticity”:

Despite the frequent claim that we are living in a secular age defined by the death of God, many citizens in rich Western democracies have merely switched one notion of God for another—abandoning their singular, omnipotent (Christian or Judaic or whatever) deity reigning over all humankind and replacing it with a weak but all-pervasive idea of spirituality tied to a personal ethic of authenticity and a liturgy of inwardness. (2013)

Critchley and Webster claim that the Gospel of Authenticity is leading to a shallow, individualized sense of vocation: “In the gospel of authenticity, well-being has become the primary goal of human life. Rather than being the by-product of some collective project, some upbuilding of the New Jerusalem, well-being is an end in itself.” As I said before, I don’t believe that our students who lack an understanding of communal care are bad people, but I do think that they are increasingly shaped by a Gospel of Authenticity and a superficial sense of vocation that looks at my own life and asks, “How do I flourish?” but sees that question as disconnected from the needs of others.

In response to this globalization of superficiality, Adolfo Nicolás has argued that we must “promote in creative new ways [a] depth of thought and imagination” (2). At first blush, this emphasis on imagination can seem strange to
academics, because often at universities we think of reason as the engine that drives the academic train, and the imagination is, at best, a creative interior decorator that brightens up the passenger cars. In contrast, Nicolás is suggesting that the imagination has a far more central role to play, and to see why, consider this story:

Years ago, when I was first teaching at Santa Clara University, I lived in a first-year residence hall. During the first weekend of orientation, a young man, Joe, came into my room and exclaimed, “I love Santa Clara University; I love being a Bronco; I love my classes; I love my professors; and I just met the girl I am going to marry. She was at orientation. I looked across the room, our eyes met, and I knew that she was the one.” Well, you know how these things go. Within a week Joe and his beloved, Julie, were inseparable. Then another few weeks passed, and Joe came into my room completely heartbroken. He looked like the “Underground Man.” Between tears he told me, “I just don’t know how I can go on. Julie broke my heart. I can’t eat. I can’t sleep. I can’t bear to go to class for fear of running into her.” This grief continued for a few weeks, until one day the dark clouds suddenly lifted. Joe was a new person. Excitedly he told me, “You will never believe it. I now realize that I needed to suffer through my breakup with Julie to prepare me for Veronica. She is everything Julie was not. Now I finally know who is the one for me.” Once again the pattern repeated itself: for a few weeks Joe and his Veronica were inseparable; then he ended up in my room, worse than before. He was despondent. He couldn’t study; he was thinking about transferring; he wanted to know if it was hard to become a Jesuit. And the truly puzzling thing was that this pattern repeated itself not once, not twice, not three times, but four times in the first two quarters of his freshman year. As a young philosopher, I tried to use the Socratic method to help him learn from his mistakes, but nothing worked. Then one day I had a breakthrough. We were talking about movies, and I asked him about his favorite films. He listed the most sentimental, romantic movies you can imagine: Say Anything, Serendipity, The Notebook. These are not bad movies. They are fine on a Friday night if you want some diversion. Still most of us don’t take them literally. But Joe did. He was the only son of a single mother, and the only images he had of married life and romantic commitment came from what he saw on the silver screen. Given the movies he watched, no amount of heartbreak or experience would ever teach him. For him all those disastrous relationships were just evidence that he hadn’t met “the one” yet. But he knew what it would be like when he did meet her. It would look just like the movies.

Nothing is more important than our imagination. Joe couldn’t learn from his own experience, because the images that informed that experience trapped him in a world of fantasy. In contrast, what makes an imagination deep is that it provides images that enable us to see beyond surface illusions and to penetrate reality more fully. Appreciating the importance of the imagination prompts us to ask, “What are the images we are giving our students? Are we resisting the flight into fantasy that so much of our popular culture is encouraging? If so, what images are we offering in their place?”

**Fostering Care and Depth by Engaging Reality**

Thus far I have touched on two challenges to civic virtue. The first is “civic blindness” that stems from a lack of “fellow feeling” and a missing empathy for the plight of others. The second is a “globalization of superficiality” that fosters a shallow sense of self and vocation, and engenders an impoverished imagination of how one might be in the world. To combat civic blindness, we need to cultivate communal care. To respond to the globalization of superficiality, we need to promote
depth of thought and imagination. Fortunately, these two projects are not unrelated. Civic virtue flows from the development of communal care and depth of imagination, and the same type of educational experiences can foster both of these. According to Adolfo Nicolás this process begins when students fully engage the reality of our suffering world:

Depth of thought and imagination... involves a profound engagement with the real, a refusal to let go until one goes beneath the surface.... The starting point, then, will always be what is real: what is materially, concretely thought to be there: The world as we encounter it; the world of the senses so vividly described in the Gospels themselves; a world of suffering and need, a broken world with many broken people in need of healing. We start there. We don't run away from there. (4)

This initial engagement with profound suffering leads to transformation, Nicolás suggests, if we can help students encounter the activity of grace amidst the brokenness:

[We begin with] a world of suffering and need, a broken world with many broken people in need of healing... And then Ignatius guides us... as he did his retreatants, to enter into the depths of that reality. Beyond what can be perceived most immediately, he leads one to see the hidden presence and action of God in what is seen, touched, smelt, felt. And that encounter with what is deepest changes the person. (4)

Naturally, this pedagogy of transformation varies greatly from student to student. And though there is no single recipe, I would like to flesh out its dynamics (which we touched on in our opening story of Susan) by describing a quite different case.

Erin was a Casa student in the Philippines, and her praxis site was Sitio Payong, a community of informal settlers surrounded by some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Manila. The community is separated from its affluent neighbors by a gated fence that is locked each night from 8 PM to 6 AM, effectively making people prisoners in their own homes. Lacking both electricity and running water, the families of Sitio Payong must carry buckets of water into their homes from a faucet outside the gate. When Erin first visited the community she was overwhelmed:

I can still remember the fear I felt. I remember thinking to myself, I shouldn't be here. This place is not for someone like me. I am not strong enough to look [at] all of this death, disease, injustice.... I was still separate from this reality, an outsider coming in. I could not feel their pain or know their reality. It was like they were inside a snow globe that I was able to hold in my hand and see but never actually touch, the glass a physical representation of the very real barrier I saw between my lives and theirs.

Gradually, however, as Erin befriended the community and became part of the rhythm of their daily lives, her perceptions changed. As so often happens, profound transformation began in a most ordinary way: one day a group of young girls asked Erin to teach them ballet. They had always dreamed of dancing, but never had the money for lessons. Their request was simple, but for Erin it proved to be one of those vocational moments that we spoke of earlier.

As she taught the girls to dance, Erin entered more fully into their lives. She learned how hard they worked, and the sacrifices they made to carve out time to practice. As a sign of respect, they would bathe before every lesson, even though that meant carrying in more water by hand. Erin was humbled by their dedication. During the lessons, she would tell them, “OK, one more time and then we will take a break.” And the girls would reply, “No. Not one more time. Five more times. Ten more times. A hundred more times.” One afternoon as we watched these young girls dance in a rice field, Erin pointed out their expressions: “I
always wanted to teach dancers in Boston to have that look—a gaze of concentrated beauty—but I never succeeded till now.”

As Adolfo Nicolás predicts, as Erin engaged the reality of Sitio Payong more deeply, God’s presence also was revealed there in new ways. Erin wrote in her journal:

I was walking up the path in front of Ate Fe’s house, her garden was to the right of me and to the left was the barren land of Sitio Payong Area 2, where the Philippine Heart Center who owned the land had destroyed all of the houses a few years earlier. I turned the corner past her garden and I was stopped in my steps by something bigger, a wonder and connection I had never felt before. At this place in the path the trees cleared and I was able to see out over the fields of Sitio Payong spreading out into the Tumana River, the Muslim village across the river with the gold top of the mosque peeking over the small crumbling homes. Then in the background were the mountains, green and huge with grand villas and estates nestled within their shade. And behind that was the big, big, sky, hazy near the mountains, but then a deep blue; and it was holding everything, all of the beauty, the suffering, the inequality, the fraternity. I didn’t see everything individually though like I am describing it now. It was this big sense of something holding me and me being connected to it, involved with everything around me and I could not separate myself from it. I felt that the world was so much bigger than I had ever known before but also I felt an overwhelming sense of peace that it was all held together but not by me.

By the end of the semester, Sitio Payong had completely changed for Erin, and it had changed her. What once was a place of fear had become not only a second home, but also a sanctuary, a place filled with grace. Erin’s time in the community helped her to develop civic virtue, to enliven her faith, and to reimagine how she might live. In a final paper, she reflected on her emerging sense of vocation:

My [own] self will is based in nothing but what I think I should be doing, making decisions regarding where I think I should be going but in reality, I have no idea. When I am able to bypass this self-will for a bigger will I can say yes to things that are filled with mystery, and in opening myself to the presence of this bigness I am more susceptible to grace. This feels like such a radical movement [to come] from just teaching a ballet class to seven girls twice a week but it helped to free me in a deep sense and took me back to that first image of the sky holding all of the pain and beauty in one.

Something bigger than me is present with me and if I can be present to it, it can lead me to myself... I need to continue to say yes to things like this ballet, to be present to the people and relations [like these]. It is hard to know which things lead me here, but having touched this feeling... in Sitio Payong I now know what to look for... The people of Sitio Payong have taught me how to love, how to hope, how to find freedom and most importantly how none of these things are possible without standing in relation with one another, walking together, laughing together, struggling together, and having our realities bound up as one.
In one sense, Erin’s story is unique, but in another it is completely emblematic of what happens when students have sustained contact with the poor. Erin came to see their world with new eyes. Her faith deepened. She began to imagine their world and her life in a deeper more interconnected way, and this naturally led her to want to care for those she had been given to love. Most importantly, she came to know the feeling that could guide her discernment as she continued to seek a life shaped by civic virtue and a quest for the common good.

How Do We Bring this Pedagogy Back to Our Campuses?

It is so hard in our contemporary world to talk about faith, to talk about God, to talk about service. Yet over and over again, I have seen the truth of the old adage that God is especially present with those who suffer most. When we invite our students to go to those difficult places, they touch that grace, and that grace changes them. Fortunately, we do not need to travel to Asia or Central America to encounter such moments. They can be found around all of our campuses. However, we must bear in mind that experiences of immersion are only a first step. If they are to produce civic virtue, they must be processed and integrated with three other aspects of university life that all too often remain disconnected.

1. **Academic Analysis.** Direct contact with serious human suffering can leave students confused and off-balance. It also can elicit their own brokenness and invite them to grapple with issues that had long been buried. Thus we cannot responsibly insert students into the world’s pain if we don’t also bring these experiences into the classroom where they can be integrated, analyzed, and processed in a holistic way. This demands a style of teaching that departs sharply from traditional lecture halls. The lived experience of students must itself become a central text of our classes, and this requires us to be free enough to follow where that experience leads, even when it does not neatly fit with what is planned on a syllabus.

2. **Spiritual Formation.** When we bring authentic experience into the classroom, learning takes on a new life. But these experiences are never just about ideas. They touch the heart as well as the head, and they raise large, existential questions about vocation, the meaning of life, and the nature of God. If we have the courage to ask, often we will find that immersion experiences open students up not just to new ways of thinking, but also to new senses of transcendence, or grace, or even God. For this reason, academic analysis must be supplemented with a spiritual formation that provides spaces of silence, prayer, and discernment.

3. **Community.** Lastly, all these experiences of direct contact, academic analysis, and spiritual formation need to be integrated and held together in community. One of the best places for students to begin to learn the value of civic virtue and the common good is through their own experience of community living. Although on many campuses it is not feasible to return to the integrated living and learning of small, residential colleges, we can nevertheless continue to challenge ourselves to create communal structures that give students a chance to process their experiences with peers, to learn together, and to inhabit the civic virtues and communal care that we are trying to teach.

An Experience of Wonder

I would like to close with one last story. Willie, a student of mine in Manila was spending the weekend in a community of street vendors that sells *taho* (a tofu custard served with sweet syrup). He had risen early, at 5 AM, to prepare the *taho* with the father of the family, Tatay Fermin. Then they had spent hours walking through the streets, selling in the hot sun. At the end of the day, after paying off bills and expenses, they had earned only about fifty-five pesos—a little more than a dollar. Realizing how this shortfall would hurt the family, Willie found himself recalling his own family’s struggles when he was a boy, and he fell into a dark silence as he angrily reflected on the injustice of the situation and Tatay Fermin’s plight. Although Willie said nothing about his darkening mood, Tatay Fermin seemed not only to perceive it, but also to understand. He suggested that Willie join him for a Bible study followed by
a gathering at one of the church members' homes. Willie shares what happened next:

So I step into this lady's house. And I see a whole bunch of people. They are sitting around laughing and eating. There is food everywhere. And they are saying, "Come in. Come in," and I am super excited. And I start munching and mingling. When we leave, we are walking down the street, me, Tatay Fermin and his wife, Nanay Thelma. It is about 9 o'clock at night. And he just grabs my hand... just casual... just walking down the street... holding my hand. Then Nanay Thelma moves on this side and she grabs my hand too. And we are just walking down the street and I'm like, "Oh, my goodness, this is the most magical night ever." When we get to his house, we are standing outside and I'm just telling him, "This was a GREAT night... tonight was so beautiful. Thank you so much." And he just kind of smiles and looks at me. And then he puts his hand on me, almost like, you've been living in America all this time and you haven't figured this out yet. And he just looks at me and says: "Willie... every night is beautiful!"

Every night is beautiful. In many ways the transformation that our community partners experience is as profound as that experienced by our students. Once at the end of a semester, Tatay Fermin said to me, "Please send us more students. I will always be glad to welcome them into my home. Before your students came I sold taho; now I am also a teacher." Willie had lost hope. But Tatay Fermin knew what Willie needed to learn: every night is beautiful. And Tatay Fermin could teach this because he had stayed in touch with the shining moments of annunciation all around him.

We began with annunciations, and with those I would like to close. Like Tatay Fermin, we need to be the kind of educators who can give our students hope. We need to be the kind of professors who can call people to something bigger. We need to be the kind of people who can tell young students, "Go to what is real, engage it, and don't be afraid of the suffering because you will find grace there and you will find life." But we cannot be those kinds of educators unless we ourselves stay in touch with that same reality, unless we ourselves keep tilting toward that light, even in those moments when we do not feel it. For, as Marie Howe says, "if once it hailed me, it ever does." ♦

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Endnote

1. I am grateful to my students who have allowed me to share their stories for this essay. Their stories are adapted from formal entries and papers, as well as conversations inside and outside the classroom. In all cases, I have changed some names and details to respect the privacy of those involved. I have discussed Susan's story in Ravizza 2010.
Civic Virtue Starts at Home

Faith and Freedom for Institutional Transformation

Patricia McGuire
President, Trinity Washington University

"W E D O N’T M I N D A L L T H I S D I V E R S I T Y. But are they Catholic?"

The Trinity College alumna who challenged me with this question gave voice to what many other alumnae were thinking in the early 1990s as Trinity’s student body underwent a dramatic demographic paradigm shift.

Historically hailing mostly from traditional, white, Catholic families in the middle- and upper-middle-class parishes of the East Coast and Midwest, Trinity students in the first seven decades of the college’s life emerged as smart, strong leaders of families, communities, and corporations with deep devotion to their Trinity friendships and traditions. Their memories of alma mater were infused with the deep longing of nostalgia, a recollection of experiences enjoyed in the hazy days of youth: the Well Sings and Class Days and smoker sings; the well-scrubbed young men from Georgetown waiting for their dates in the Grail Parlor under the benevolent gaze of Sister Ann Francis; memories of daily Mass in the big chapel, with long years of instruction in Catholic theology and moral philosophy.

The thought of hundreds of young women of different races and ethnicities chilling to rap music on their iPods in the courtyard or calling out to friends in street vernacular on the hallowed Marble Corridor of Main Hall sent shivers through the ranks.

Diversity is fine, but are they Catholic? Well, no, they’re mostly Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal with a few Muslims for good measure.

Good heavens, does that mean that Trinity has lost its faith?

The question masked profound discomfort with the shifting cultural landscape not only at Trinity but throughout society. Blue jeans had long proliferated on the Marble Corridor, and even when they were still coming around, Georgetown boys no longer wore ties on first dates. Besides, dates had long given way to simply hanging out.

Framing the change question in terms of Catholicism was like clinging to a plank from the ship that had already exploded on the reef. With everything in the social ecosystem turned on its head, could we still count on faith to be the stable center holding fast to our values, helping us continue to find meaning in the chaos of change?

In a way that our alumnae did not expect, the answer was clearly, "Yes!" Trinity’s faith center imbued the decades of change with meaning and purpose, but not in the narrowly doctrinal, ritualistic ways that some expected. Rather, the vibrancy of a truly contemporary understanding of our faith made it possible for Trinity to articulate mission in extraordinary new ways to new populations of students. The faith is stronger than ever, but everything looks different.

The pushback was hard.

The idea that we do what we do not because our students are Catholic but because we are Catholic had not yet taken root. The understanding of our faith as a source of true freedom to embrace a new form of institutional expression was alien. For Trinity’s historic constituencies, as was true for many Catholics nationwide, a Catholic institution was defined by the religion, rituals, and rules of its population, not by the idea of mission and ministry in service to others.
Mission as ministry, rather than mission as characteristics, was a whole new idea. We understood our faith as a source of constraint and restriction, not of liberation to embrace the world as we found it. Quite frankly, I wish twenty-five years ago I had heard the words that Pope Francis recently proclaimed in Rio: "We need to proclaim the Gospel on every street corner..." (2013).

Our Catholicism is manifest in our ministry to the world, not only to Catholics but to all who seek God's grace.

Sometimes, the campus itself is precisely the place that needs evangelization and transformation, a conversion process that turns the community inside-out.

We typically think about how we can use the leverage of our faith values and free voices to teach our students how to engage the great issues of building the Good Society beyond the borders of the campus.

But, sometimes, the campus itself is precisely the place that needs such evangelization and transformation, a conversion process that turns the community inside-out, that unclocks the security of history and tradition, exposing the institution to the risk of a large paradigm shift in the articulation of mission, to new constituencies who hunger and thirst for the liberating power of education, to students who need new and different programs and pedagogies, to human beings who are changing the course of history for their children and families by being the first ever to enroll in college.

In this paradigm shift, civic virtue is not simply an extrinsic good we share with the world—noblese obligé—but rather, an intrinsic imperative shaping institutional characteristics, choices, and commitments. In this model, the institution is the society we seek to change as a Gospel imperative, and through such transformation we are better able to evangelize and serve the needs of the world beyond the campus community.

This is Trinity's story.

1897: Radical Sparks of Life

When the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur founded Trinity in 1897 as one of the nation's first Catholic colleges for women, they had a then-radical view that women had the same right as men to go to college. They founded Trinity in direct response to the fact that women were being barred from admission at the newly-established Catholic University of America. By the way, the Sisters of Notre Dame (SNDs) did not impose any religious test on students from the start; students of all faiths were always welcome at Trinity.

The leading bishop in Washington then was the progressive Cardinal Gibbons, who wrote to Trinity founder Sr. Julia McGroarty that it was "an embarrassment" (Letter to Sister Julia McGroarty, SND, June 21, 1897. Reprinted in Mullaly 1987, xiii) that Catholic women were denied admission to the new university, so he supported the founding of Trinity. However, then as now, the extreme right-wing in the Church had a very dim view of women and women's education, and raised quite a ruckus about Trinity's founding, going so far as to suggest it was part of a heresy called "Americanism." But the nuns prevailed, and from the fire of the founding struggles a college emerged whose soul was imbued with the passionate commitment of the SNDs to work in service to the world, to live by the social justice imperative of the Gospel.

The idea of academic and intellectual freedom was embedded in Trinity's sense of mission and purpose from the start. In the founding years, the Sisters of Notre Dame received support and encouragement from Bishop John Lancaster Spalding of Peoria, whose influential work Means and Ends of Education extolled the importance of a college education for women, a radical idea at the end of the nineteenth century. He wrote,

There is not a religion, a philosophy, a science, an art for man and another for woman. Consequently, there is not, in its essential elements at least, an education for man and another for woman. In souls, in minds, in consciences, in hearts, there is no sex. What is the best education
for woman? That which will best help her to become a perfect human being, wise, loving and strong. What is her work? Whatever may help her to become herself. What is forbidden her? Nothing but what degrades or narrows or warps. What has she the right to do? Any good and beautiful and useful think she is able to do without hurt to her dignity and worth as a human being. (Spalding 1895, 101)

Spalding's statement was ahead of its time, a prophetic call to liberate women from the ignorance imposed by cultural constraints on women's education. The Sisters of Notre Dame used this statement and Spalding's great work to justify the founding of Trinity in the face of severe right-wing criticism. A century later, we would return to this statement to justify liberating Trinity from the cultural constraints that had threatened to diminish or destroy the transformative imperative at the end of the twentieth century.

Trinity at Mid-Century: Growing Influence

By the middle of the twentieth century, Trinity was widely regarded as an intellectual powerhouse, "the Catholic Wellesley" in the phrase used by some admirers, the college of choice for influential Catholic families.

Trinity drew its students over the first seventy years largely from Catholic girls' high schools in the major eastern cities: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Our alumnae over the years became famous for their broadly ecumenical devotion to service to our nation and world, exhibiting a fierce intellectual prowess that made our graduates able to lead the way as "the first women" in many fields of endeavor.

Because of Trinity's location in the nation's capital, many daughters of Catholic politicians attended Trinity, and following in their fathers' footsteps became a grand tradition. Trinity became the first college or university in America to have two female graduates serving in Congress at the same time when Nancy Pelosi, Class of 1962, joined Barbara Kennelly, Class of 1958. Congresswoman Kennelly, the first woman ever to serve on the House Intelligence Committee, blazed the trail for Pelosi's ascent into party leadership. Congresswoman Pelosi ultimately became Speaker of the House, the first woman to do so in American history, and she now continues in Congress as Democratic Leader.

When Kathleen Gilligan Sebelius, Class of 1970, the former governor of Kansas who became Secretary of Health and Human Services, stood alongside Speaker Pelosi as President Obama signed the Affordable Healthcare Act into law, they became famous as the "Trinity Sisters" (Carey 2011). Beyond those famous faces are thousands of women across the generations since 1900 serving the greatest needs of their communities, teaching and healing and raising children, and advocating for justice in myriad ways around the world.

From its founding through the heady days of the 1960s, Trinity's enrollment grew to nearly 1,000 young Catholic women preparing for future roles as mothers and wives, corporate executives and public officials, teachers and writers, doctors and lawyers (Figure 1). Trinity's proud, progressive soul soared through the 1960s with a view to the future as almost an unlimited horizon for a college devoted to women's leadership and advancement in society.

So high was Trinity's arc, so far was its vision, that it could not foresee the swift-rising threats that rose like dangerous wind shears to suck the institution back to earth with a long, thudding, thumping, crashing skid through the 1970s and 1980s.

Years of Challenge

Vatican II led to the rapid evaporation of the free labor of the nuns who floated so much of Trinity's financial boat for the first eight decades. The Cold War, the Space Race, and the rise of the National Science Foundation built the men's university campuses and laboratories beyond any previous imagination, but largely skipped over the women's colleges. So after coeducation swept the land, followed by the effects of Title IX and the NCAA, the women's colleges were left with outmoded facilities and suddenly seemingly irrelevant missions in a world that had changed so
very quickly from 1965 to 1985. From a high of nearly three hundred women's colleges in 1960, nearly 190 of which were Catholic, today fewer than fifty institutions identify as women's colleges, and fewer than fifteen of those as Catholic women's colleges. Some merged, some went coed, many simply closed.

**Trinity Transformed**

Trinity remains, not merely surviving, but flourishing; not merely a recovery operation, but a true triumph of institutional renaissance and transformation.

![Figure 1: Trinity University Student Headcounts 1900-1992](image)

We didn’t “go coed” but we do have men in many programs today, since we have come to a view that a women's college is not about exclusion but about inclusion, not about isolation from men but engagement with issues of equality that include gender, race, class, and other characteristics.

We stuck firmly with our traditional mission to women in the daytime, undergraduate program, now called the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), because we realized that new populations of women needed precisely this kind of education that focused on their learning needs, but almost everything had to change to make this mission work in a new age. We breathed new life into the liberal arts by embracing professional studies. We learned that the true soul of a Catholic college is not in educating Catholics alone but in opening the power of our educational mission to the students of the world who need us the most, those who might not have had other opportunities but for our work.

**How Did Trinity Do It?**

Strategic planning became the backbone for managing the kind of change that Trinity had to embrace if we were to have a future. In the early 1990s, our discussions about our strategic future were a tug-of-war between the most radical traditionalists who preferred to die rather than consider any change and those whose idea of change was to consider coeducation as a way to safeguard our Catholicism, a bulwark against a perceived rising tide of feminism, diversity, and, in their view, mediocrity.

Fortunately, the Sisters of Notre Dame, while increasingly few in number on the faculty and staff, still had moral authority and presence on our board. “Why are we trying so hard to reclaim the past,” declared one such nun at a board meeting, “when there are thousands of women at Trinity’s doorstep who could profit from this education? We founded Trinity to make higher education accessible to women, and countless women still find barriers to achievement. Trinity should be open to them.”

In a real sense, the SNDs on the board gave us permission to exercise our freedom to create dramatic, even radical change; we felt a sense of freedom as vibrant and urgent as the freedom our founders exercised in creating this institution in the face of so much opposition in 1897. Like them, we had to create options for Trinity’s future that were not constrained by history, tradition, or cultural objections from people who viewed any change as a subversive rejection of Catholic values. Quite the contrary, we had to educate our many constituencies about the real meaning of
our Catholic identity as a source of freedom to design a future for Trinity more clearly rooted in the call to action for social justice as a central tenet of our faith.

Trinity's transformation has included dramatic changes in institutional organization, curricula and programs, and populations served. Recognizing the fact that new populations of historically marginalized students would need or desire different educational programs, and also anticipating the increasing demand for graduate and professional education, Trinity reorganized out of the uni-dimensional liberal arts collegiate model into a complex university model with four academic schools designed to meet the needs of different student population, while also providing a more logical organizational form for faculty and programs in remarkably different disciplines and degree levels.

Through a decade of strategic planning, benchmarking, and market analysis, Trinity discerned that the mission to women should continue as a strong central commitment, but that a woman-centered identity must also include and welcome male students in many more programs. Additionally, while remaining steadfast in the belief that a strong liberal arts platform is essential for a true higher education, Trinity recognized the need to build stronger and more affirmative links with professional studies.

From all of this discussion, a new mission statement emerged and was adopted in 2000:

Trinity is a comprehensive institution offering a broad range of educational programs that prepare students across the lifespan for the intellectual, ethical and spiritual dimensions of contemporary work, civic and family life. Trinity's core mission values and characteristics emphasize:

**Commitment to the Education of Women** in a particular way through the design and pedagogy of the historic undergraduate women's college, and by advancing principles of equity, justice and honor in the education of women and men in all other programs;

**Foundation for Learning in the Liberal Arts** through the curriculum design in all undergraduate degree programs and through emphasis on the knowledge, skills and values of liberal learning in all graduate and professional programs;

**Integration of Liberal Learning with Professional Preparation** through applied and experiential learning opportunities in all programs;

**Grounding in the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur** and the Catholic tradition, welcoming persons of all faiths, in order to achieve the larger purposes of learning in the human search for meaning and fulfillment.

At the same time, Trinity at long last adopted the organizational form of the diversified university model that would give all programs the opportunity to grow with the right academic framework and administrative support. Trinity evolved from a single-college focus—the historic women's college—to a multi-unit university with multiple revenue streams and a framework for governance that recognizes the ability of faculty within the units to make their own curricular decisions.

This complex form of organization made it possible for Trinity to design and deliver programs suited to many different populations. The coeducational School of Education (EDU), begun in 1966 as a Master of Arts in Teaching program, now offers a range of education-related masters degrees. The School of Professional Studies (SPS), started in 1985 as a Weekend College for adult, working women, now offers women and men a full range of degrees from associates through bachelors and masters. The School of Nursing and Health Professions (NHP), also coeducational, fulfills a great workforce need in the Washington region (Figure 2).

**The Paradigm Shift**

“Paradigm Shift” is the phrase used in Trinity’s 1996 Middle States Self-Study to describe the
demographic changes sweeping the student body. Those changes occurred because of new programs and drove additional programmatic innovation.

Even as the nuns urged us to open wide the doors of opportunity in our full-time undergraduate college, the adult women who were coming in larger numbers to our Weekend College began to see Trinity as a great option for their daughters. Predominantly African-American, many of them single mothers, working full-time while studying Shakespeare on weekends, these were and are the women who run Washington, the mid-level federal workers managing the administrative affairs of the big agencies, the secretaries and office managers of the law firms and private businesses managing government contracts. They came to Trinity to predominantly Catholic to predominantly Baptist and other Christian denominations, from middle class to low income. The changes in race and social class also illustrate the fact that Trinity was fast becoming a preferred institution for students from the District of Columbia and nearby Prince Georges County (see: Trinity Washington University 2011).

More than half of Trinity’s full-time undergraduates today are from DC, and about 50 percent of our total student body are DC residents. About one-third of these students are from the “east of the river” neighborhoods that are among the lowest income places in the city. DC has one of the highest poverty rates among major metropolitan areas, along with one of the highest median family incomes. DC also has a staggering adult illiteracy rate, about 35 percent, even though it also boasts the highest percentage of earned degrees in the country. DC is a city divided, and that divide runs down the center of the map; Trinity serves most of the city on the eastern side of the map.

These changes in race, religion, social class, and geographic service required Trinity to be bold and unafraid: bold in stating our belief that mission is not about characteristics but service; unafraid of the inevitable criticism and resistance that comes with changing demographics. We also had to be creative with our limited resources and savvy about building margin while affirming mission. We managed the conflict in ways that kept everyone at the table, and some of the most ardent critics became our best supporters.

By 2006, our Middle States visiting team was able to tell us:

The team has experienced in Trinity, at every turn, a mission-driven institution…. The team recognizes the impressive congruence of Trinity in 2006 with the original vision of Trinity’s founders in 1897. The team admires and
commends the University’s rejection of the notion that paradigm shift means abandonment of historic mission. Rather, we discover in the work and vitality of Trinity of 2006, a most obvious continuity with Trinity’s 110-year-old mission expressed with a renewed relevance and vigor. … (5)

There is breathtaking achievement chronicled in the self-study… Above all, perhaps, is the success of Trinity faculty in curricular and pedagogical change serving the students of the “paradigm shift.” (Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 2006)

Catholic Mission in a Transformed University

As Trinity developed through the last two decades, we have remained mindful of the foundation of our mission in Catholic values and religious beliefs, even as we have welcomed people of all faiths. In many ways, our lived experience as an institution serving a remarkably underserved population of students is the best sign of our fidelity to the Gospel imperatives of our faith in social justice.

To engage this transformation, we also had to understand the power of academic freedom and to use that freedom effectively to create the change we desired. We learned that issues of faith, freedom, and civic engagement are not just about outcomes of curricular and co-curricular programs, but in fact are deeply entwined with choices about the students we choose to serve, the academic programs we offer, and the entire structure and organization of the university, choices that will ensure success for students who bring tremendous needs onto the campus. Our civic engagement with the greatest needs of our city as a matter of social justice is not about sending our students out to feed the hungry, but rather, figuring out how to serve the hungry students who come to campus each day.

Our students bring with them characteristics of severe poverty, educational deprivation, domestic violence, and the results of chronic marginalization and real oppression:

- 75 percent of entering first-year students in Fall 2012 were Pell eligible.
- The approximate median family income of first-year students is $25,000.
- 25 percent of first-year students estimate their family income at $10,000 or less.
- More than 75 percent identify as African American; close to 20 percent as Hispanic.
- The majority are self-supporting.
- Most work more than twenty hours per week; many work forty or more hours.
- About 15 percent of first-year young women already have children.
- About 40 percent of first-year students have health issues that can impede academic progress.
- Many of these health issues are previously undiagnosed or untreated.
- The majority of entering students require some level of developmental math instruction.
- Students’ critical reading and writing skills are deficient.
- Their knowledge of “the academic vocabulary” and culture is limited.
- Few, if any, have adults in their lives who can be good supports for academic success.

Many of our students come to Trinity with astonishing stories about their lives. Each year, I read the admissions essays of the students who enroll, and I find myself stunned, appalled, amazed, and humbled by their words. These are women who, at very young ages, have had to figure out how to prevail over circumstances that would
make most of us tremble and collapse. Mothers shot. Fathers incarcerated. Siblings abused. Death, sickness, violence, hunger, homelessness, refugee status, genocidal war, oppressive regimes, flights across the border seeking safety and security in a new land. Our students have known all of this before age eighteen.

We have reflected on what the Church might expect of us as a powerfully transformed university rooted in the Catholic tradition and charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame. To understand our freedom and responsibilities, we return from time to time to the essential text of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and particularly to these paragraphs:

32. A Catholic University, as any University, is immersed in human society; as an extension of its service to the Church, and always within its proper competence, it is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society. Included among its research activities, therefore, will be a study of serious contemporary problems in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world's resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at a national and international level. University research will seek to discover the roots and causes of the serious problems of our time, paying special attention to their ethical and religious dimensions. If need be, a Catholic University must have the courage to speak uncomfortable truths which do not please public opinion, but which are necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society.

33. A specific priority is the need to examine and evaluate the predominant values and norms of modern society and culture in a Christian perspective, and the responsibility to try to communicate to society those ethical and religious principles which give full meaning to human life....

34. The Christian spirit of service to others for the promotion of social justice is of particular importance for each Catholic University, to be shared by its teachers and developed in its students. The Church is firmly committed to the integral growth of all men and women (32). The Gospel, interpreted in the social teachings of the Church, is an urgent call to promote "the development of those peoples who are striving to escape from hunger, misery, endemic diseases and ignorance; of those who are looking for a wider share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are aiming purposefully at their complete fulfillment" (33). Every Catholic University feels responsible to contribute concretely to the progress of the society within which it works: for example it will be capable of searching for ways to make university education accessible to all those who are able to benefit from it, especially the poor or members of minority groups who customarily have been deprived of it.... (John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*).

How does Trinity interpret and apply these principles in the modern diverse university we have become?

**Trinity's Model of Civic and Faith Engagement**

Throughout our history, Trinity has been a deeply pragmatic institution with a strong impulse for education that inspires our graduates to engage the idea of service to the community in both professional and volunteer capacities. This characteristic arises from the mission and charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, whose founder St. Julie Billiart was famous for instructing her sisters to give their students the tools for
success, to “Teach them what they need to know” to be productive in life.

Trinity has taken an intentional, multi-dimensional, and multi-disciplinary approach to ensuring our pervasive witness to Gospel values at institutional, curricular, and co-curricular levels. Institutionally, Trinity clearly has taken the “option for the poor” in developing contemporary ways to articulate its historic mission to marginalized populations. The institutional choice to accept students with large financial and academic needs into our programs means that we also accept the consequences of this choice.

I often say that poverty is one of our grand traditions, and in many ways Trinity and its personnel reflect the material poverty of our students. We live and work in somewhat austere conditions. While we do routine upgrades for safety and functionality, I don't think anyone would say that our facilities are lavish. Most of our furniture has come from donations from downtown corporations: great stuff, hardly used, why not recycle it at Trinity? Our salaries are modest; we lay people cannot do “contributed services” in the grand scale of the nuns, but in smaller ways each of us who works at Trinity makes a contribution in wages foregone because we choose Trinity. We speak of our work as a ministry; regardless of the religious persuasion of our staff, each one feels called in some way to be part of Trinity’s mission.

We exemplify the institutional embrace of social justice in some of the work we do in the public square on the issues of higher education today. We are relentless advocates for access to higher education, for ensuring the strength of the federal financial aid system, for reducing the cost of higher education, and for ensuring that even the most marginal student has access to the learning resources she needs for success.

Institutionally, we also take care in our policies and practices to create a campus culture that places respect for human dignity at the center of our work. We emphasize the foundational importance of caring for our students regardless of the issues that walk through the front door each day. Someone new to Trinity recently remarked that if a student sneezes ten doors open along the faculty corridor. A dean told me that a student needed meal tickets because she had spent her last dollar on materials needed for a class and had not eaten for quite some time. We have created a food pantry with faculty and staff donations to help out students in need. We keep supplies of Metro passes on hand to help those with no money to commute. There are, of course, similar examples across all types of universities, public and private, Catholic and secular, and we also take care to say that we don’t have a corner on the market for development of an academic community with

Trinity has taken the “option for the poor” in developing contemporary ways to articulate its historic mission to marginalized populations.
kind of personal transformation that will make them able to serve their families and communities effectively.

Beyond the typical requirements for courses in religion and philosophy, Trinity's curriculum emphasizes service, engagement, and ethics throughout the disciplines. Examples of the ways in which Trinity's curriculum and academic programs teach our faith values include:

- **Dreamers**: Trinity is partnering with a new organization in development of a scholarship program to support undocumented students in college.

- **Community Support**: Trinity extends a broad range of services and hospitality upon request to local community residents and civic leaders; Trinity students, faculty, and staff donate on average more than 50,000 hours of service to the community each year.

- **Peacebuilding**: Trinity faculty and students participate each year in programs of the Capital Area Association of Peace Studies (CAAPS), and Trinity students, faculty, and staff also engaged actively with the Fiftieth Anniversary of Pacem in Terris conferences.

- **Environmental Stewardship**: Trinity participates routinely in recycling and environmental stewardship planning for campus facilities; students actively pursue environmental action on campus; Dr. Diana Watts of the Business Administration faculty emphasizes sustainability and "green business," while Dr. Shizuki Hsieh in Chemistry pursues research on pollution in Ivy City.

**Billiart Center for Social Justice**

Named for St. Julie Billiart, founder of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, the Billiart Center for Social Justice rests on four pillars: scholarship, spirituality, religiosity, and service—pillars on which the identity of Trinity rests as well. The Center explores contemporary local, national, and international social and economic issues that affect the lives of women, particularly in the religious and political spheres. The programs offered by the Billiart Center build on the many ways in which these themes already are explored in Trinity's curricula and extracurricular activities. This Center is a central place that gathers and encourages what is already being done and offers assistance in developing more programs and ideas.

Programs offered through the Billiart Center in Fall 2013 include:

- **The Sociology of the Papacy, Pope Francis's Transformative Role**: Sr. Mary Johnson, SND, Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies.

- **Poverty in the United States**: Sr. Marge Clark, NETWORK.


- **Soup with the Sisters**: A periodic gathering of students, faculty, and staff with the SND community on campus to reflect on women's spirituality and issues of concern to women.

**Campus Ministry Initiatives**

With the leadership of Sr. Mary Ellen Dow, SND, the Campus Ministry program offers a wide range of opportunities for prayer and worship, spiritual development, and active engagement with social justice through community service. Some of the programs conducted through Campus Ministry include:

- **Alternative Spring Break in Selma**: A select group of Trinity students spend the spring semester studying issues of justice and leadership, with a capstone experience during spring break in Selma, Alabama working with the Blackbelt Housing
Coalition on housing rehab, and also tracing the historic steps of civil rights leaders.

- **Cunneen Fellowship**: Trinity students receive generous fellowships for summer work in community service sites, with academic preparation and required summative papers to ensure the full learning experience.

- **Sower's Seed Lecture**: Supported by a generous gift from an alumna, the Sower's Seed lecture is an annual program to engage an alumna leader involved with in-service and justice work for a week long exploration of issues related to her work including a lecture for the campus community.

- **Weekly Service Programs**: Students, faculty, and staff have weekly opportunities to perform needed service with community organizations such as the Capital Area Food Bank and Christ House.

**Science and Mathematics**

Trinity's faculty and students in the sciences and mathematics are engaging with critical issues in the Washington community in numerous ways:

- **Ivy City Air Quality Study**: Dr. Shizuka Hsieh of Chemistry is conducting research with colleagues at area universities to collect data on air pollution in Ivy City, an impoverished section of northeast DC with significant bus traffic. This project also presents undergraduate research opportunities for Trinity students. Dr. Hsieh also focuses on environmental justice in her CHEM 101 courses, and her approach takes the students through a global view of environmental challenges from air pollution in China to lead poisoning in Senegal.

- **Dr. Sita Ramamurti**, Professor of Mathematics, is spending her sabbatical year at the Maya Angelou Public Charter School working with teachers on a model program to enhance their capacity to teach to the mathematics expectations in the Common Core curriculum. Maya Angelou serves acutely low-income students in the most impoverished section of DC; Maya Angelou students have often been unsuccessful in other schools. The school is part of the larger network of schools and programs organized through the See Forever Foundation.

- **Access to the STEM disciplines** for low-income African-American and Latina women in DC is a clear emphasis of Trinity's entire science and mathematics curriculum and co-curricular programming.

**Sociology**

Courses in Sociology typically embed a broad range of social justice considerations, and many of these courses also require service learning. Some examples include:

- **Understanding AIDS**: Students created a poster project for display on campus presenting data on prevalence, transmission, testing, affected populations, and other dimensions of HIV/AIDS.

- **Inequality and Society**: This course examines issues of income and wealth distribution, poverty, and the effects of social class, gender, and race/ethnicity on social inequality in the United States.

- **Senior Seminar Requirements**: Students engage with community organizations focused on issues of economic, ethnic, and gender inequality, working with organizations such as Bread for the City, N Street Village serving low-income women, My Sister's Place, Beacon House and other organizations serving critical needs in the city.
School of Education

Students and faculty in Trinity’s School of Education are actively engaged in projects, curricula, and programs designed for urban communities that have high levels of poverty, educational marginalization, a prevalence of students with disabilities needing specific services, immigrant populations, and issues related to race, gender, sexual orientation, language, national origin, and religion, among others.

Topics in the Spring 2013 Research Colloquium presenting student and faculty papers illustrate this engagement:

- **Secondary Education:**
  - The effect of black male teachers on the behavior and performance of black male students in Prince Georges County High Schools.

- **Counseling Program:**
  - Counseling El Salvadorian adolescents
  - Striving To Achieve Real-World Success (STARS): a career development program for high school students with and without disabilities

- **Curriculum and Instruction, Educating for Change:**
  - Human consumption and a changing earth

Dr. Deborah Haskins, Program Director and Assistant Professor of Counseling, co-authored an article on “Human Flourishing: A Natural Home for Spirituality” in the *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* (Volume 15, Issue No. 3).

School of Nursing and Health Professions

Trinity’s faculty and students in Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Health Sciences, Exercise Science, and related disciplines are engaged with a range of issues for healthcare in DC and the surrounding region.

- Dr. Nancie Bruce, director of the RN-BSN program, is a member of the DC Action Coalition that seeks to address problems with disparity in access to excellent healthcare in the Washington region, particularly for impoverished populations.

- Two Nursing courses (320: Policy and Politics in Nursing; 325: Contemporary Issues in Nursing and Health Care) specifically focus on problems in healthcare delivery and public policy issues.

Minding the Church’s Call

In all of this, at Trinity we are mindful of the call to family, community, and participation that emanates from the social justice teachings of the Church. We strive to create a community of learners who understand that the entire point of education is to work toward the improvement of the human condition, not simply for the sake of good secular aims but truly as a means of salvation.

We have recently been so inspired in this work by the magnificent example and words of Pope Francis who gives life to the idea of “mercy” at the heart of the social justice teachings. In his interview published in *America* and other Jesuit magazines, he said many things worth contemplating, but this one thought leapt out as the apt description of all that we are trying to do at Trinity:

“No one is saved alone, as an isolated individual, but God attracts us looking at the complex web of relationships that take place in the human community. God enters into this dynamic, this participation in the web of human relationships....”

“I see the holiness,” the pope continues, “in the patience of the people of God: a woman who is raising children, a man who works to bring home the bread, the sick, the elderly priests who have so many wounds but have a smile on their
faces because they served the Lord, the sisters who work hard and live a hidden sanctity. This is for me the common sanctity...

"How are we treating the people of God? I dream of a church that is a mother and shepherdess. The church's ministers must be merciful, take responsibility for the people and accompany them like the good Samaritan, who washes, cleans and raises up his neighbor. This is pure Gospel... The ministers of the Gospel must be people who can warm the hearts of the people, who walk through the dark night with them, who know how to dialogue and to descend themselves into their people's night, into the darkness, but without getting lost." (Pope Francis, 2013).

This is the faith we strive to live at Trinity each day. Through the awesome power of an education formed by the deep faith of women driven by the Gospel, we are able to offer the best kind of freedom to our students, the freedom that comes from hope and empowerment. With these gifts of education, our students can truly engage the world with a passion for justice and creative zeal to make permanent change for good.

There is no greater purpose in higher education than to embed the virtue of hope and the power of change in the lives of people who have previously had scant acquaintance with either hope or true empowerment. This is our faith at Trinity; this is how we leverage our freedom. This is our contribution to civic virtue.

Patricia McGuire is the fourteenth president of Trinity Washington University in Washington, DC.

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Purpose, Provender, and Promises

Church-Related Colleges in a Secular Age

Richard Ray

Church-related colleges today face a difficult challenge: they must address pressures to increase revenue and enrollment in unique and dynamic ways that are true to their intrinsic values. Stated differently, they must find mission-based ideas and practices that will enable them to increase revenue, resources, and enrollment while remaining faithful to their historic missions.

My perspective in thinking about these questions and in framing this message is as one who serves as provost of an institution dedicated solely to 3,300 undergraduates, a college ecumenical in character while rooted in the Reformed tradition of our founders and the Reformed Church in America, the denomination with whom we enjoy a covenantal relationship. Hope College’s commitment to educating students in that sure and steady formula for learning we call the liberal arts extends as well to such professional programs as engineering, nursing, education, social work, and athletic training. I also have the special privilege and unusual challenge of serving a robustly Protestant institution as a cradle Catholic, a fact that has sharpened my religious translation skills to an extent I never could have anticipated.

Promises

It may be helpful to begin where our students begin, with the promises we make to them when we ask them to form their imaginations for what they could become at one of our colleges. We sometimes call these “distinctives” or “qualities.” But at the most basic level they are promises. When we enroll a student at Hope College, for example:

- We promise them that they will receive an education that is simultaneously of high academic quality while being distinctly Christian in its orientation.

- We promise them an education characterized by a certain intimacy that allows—even requires—relationships between students and their professors, an intimacy that transforms education from mere information transfer to the formation of students who are prepared to lead integrated lives.

- We promise them an education that is broad in its offerings yet deeply rooted in the liberal arts: an education that prepares nurses who will one day run the hospital; an education that prepares teachers and social workers with the intellectual acumen and leadership capacity to influence public policy; an education that prepares engineers and business professionals whose entrepreneurial instincts serve the needs of the least among us as easily, naturally, and eagerly as they do the cause of capital.

- We also promise our students an education that helps them develop a sense of professional confidence and identity through experiences that extend the
classroom into the world through student-faculty collaborative research, internships, fieldwork, and service-learning.

Leaders of church-related colleges are subject to a desire to convey a sense of quality—of excellence—to the students to whom we make these promises, but we would do well to regard Seth Godin's (2013) admonition to avoid fooling ourselves about what quality and excellence mean in the higher education context. Kodak and Polaroid both fooled themselves into thinking that quality meant better film stock. Once they figured out that the promise their customers really wanted them to make involved the cheap and easy sharing of photos on a massive scale, well, you know how the story ended. Quality, it turns out, is a slippery fish, often without absolute measures. In Godin's words, "It doesn't mean 'deluxeness' or 'perfection'. It means keeping the promise the customer wants you to make."

One more thing about excellence. Careful attention to brand and effective marketing are important, but so is careful attention to outcomes. One example I can share from our experience at Hope College involves the relationship between academic performance and engagement in college activities intended to enhance students' spiritual formation. Students on our campus who report frequent engagement in these activities not only academically outperform students who are either unengaged or infrequently engaged, they actually perform better than their incoming ACT and high school GPAs would predict. This is a powerful source of evidence for effectiveness in the heart of our mission, academic excellence, being enhanced by the very thing that separates us from the vast array of secular options our students could have chosen.

Before we can tap our missions for resources that will provide hope for the work we feel called to do, we must first and foremost identify why we exist at all. qualitatively different than an online course on the same subject offered by any of the leading universities whose cart is increasingly hitched to the horse named MOOC.

Furthermore, we should ask if our students' increasingly digital engagement will exacerbate what the Jesuit's Superior General, Adolfo Nicolás (2010), has called the globalization of superficiality. Can we offer a kind of embodied education with disembodied technologies? Will the medium of digital technology prove to be a message antithetical to our purpose, another in a long line of what James K. A. Smith (2009) calls secular liturgies? Will we lament with T. S. Eliot (1937) by asking "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" Jonathan Malesic (2013) has a point when he encourages us to consider the possibility that:

If, in a few decades, the number of Catholic colleges in the United States amounts to only a handful of mega-universities, with
most students taking classes online, in physical isolation from their professors and peers, then the project of Catholic higher education will have failed. Not only will it have abandoned personal and local education, but it will have elevated the market principles of competition and consolidation above the Catholic social-justice principles of solidarity (making decisions that benefit the common good) and subsidiarity (making decisions at the lowest and most local possible level).

In thinking about what our missions offer in an increasingly bracketed economic environment, we should at least be cognizant of innovations that might be useful in helping us fulfill our promises to our students. And of these innovations there is no shortage. A Google search for "innovation in higher education" results in 28,000,000 hits. But in few of these predictions of potentially useful innovations can one find either attention to the basics or a focus on those things that each of our institutions can do better than any other in the world. It seems that innovations make for better media copy, but I suspect that a focus on fundamental distinctives—to the extent that they exist and are well-discerned—is the tried and true approach. Jim Collins (2001) reminds us that the niche where we will flourish is in doing the things no other organization can do as well as we can. If our missions call us to form students for integrated lives as whole persons—mind, body, and spirit—then perhaps we have all the resources we need, though we might imagine that those resources require some polishing.

Before going any further in defending this thesis, it is important to be precise about why the promises we make to students matter. There is a rather obvious moral dimension of course, but there is a practical aspect as well. Put simply, students who are unable to discern a fulfillable promise in what we have to offer will enroll elsewhere. Very few church-related colleges can afford to draw on substantial endowments to balance their annual operating statements. Such colleges are tuition dependent, which is to say student dependent, which is to say promise dependent. Seventy-eight percent of all private four-year college revenue comes from tuition and fees (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2011). Our institutional nourishment—our provender—is inexorably yoked to our ability to deliver on the promises inherent in our missions.

A Christian College in a Secular Age

And this brings me to the central question: What is the function—the special purpose—of a church-related college in a secular age? What these colleges each have in common is the quest to understand better and live into their own particular species of church-relatedness, how that ought to define their approach to the intellectual and spiritual formation of their students, and how all of this resonates as excellence in the minds of their students. This is the question around which those who lead these colleges ought to pivot as they consider how to make the hundreds or even thousands of decisions they face on the patches of ground given to them by their founders. It is perhaps ironic that these founders took for granted the question of their special purpose. Today those who lead these colleges do not have that luxury, for it is in this special purpose that we find our primary resource. Embedded in this question is a second, more fundamental question: do we matter? And if so, how? Does the world need church-related colleges? Perhaps more to the point, do prospective students think they need such colleges? It is admittedly a sobering question, but it is also one that offers the possibility of hope.

In speaking of a secular age I do not mean a time in history where belief is absent from the world. I use the term secular age in the same sense that Charles Taylor (2007) does, that is, an age when belief is simply one option among many, and when it is not only possible, but common, to move through life with goals that are purely immanent, in a way that takes no account of the transcendent.

As we have learned from the work of Christian Smith (2009) and others, the depth of theological understanding among young people in our day and age—to the extent that there is any under-
standing at all, and to say nothing of true religious commitment—is, to use language from a bygone day, "a mile wide and an inch deep." In my tradition, we would say that they are poorly catechized. This has significant consequences not only for programming at church-related colleges, but also for hiring practices, and ultimately for the way we convey a sense of excellence to those who would consider our colleges for the most significant investment of their lives.

The purposes of a church-related college ought to be different in 2013 than in 1513, 1713, or even 1913. The ancient European universities and early North American colleges were church-related by default, in part because the societies in which they developed were much more homogeneously Christian. All of the cultural artifacts attendant to those institutions bespoke the presumption of Christian belief and purpose. Protecting, preserving, and strengthening belief was a function taken for granted by colleges in those days. It wasn't the only function, but it would have been unusual to find a college or university in those times whose purposes did not include building the next generation of leadership for the Church, both clerical and lay. What should the role of a church-related college be in a time when belief in God—to say nothing of active worship and enthusiasm for the witness of the Gospel—is one choice among many? And how does this role serve as a resource for flourishing?

Perhaps a good place to start in framing an answer to these questions can be found in the work of John Henry Cardinal Newman who, being dispatched to found the Catholic University of Ireland—now University College, Dublin—set out his vision for the special purposes of such an institution in a series of nine discourses now collected in his book, *The Idea of a University* (1852). Newman claimed that the Church—and by extension, Christian belief—is necessary for the integrity of a university and its principal function of teaching what he called *universal knowledge*. He claimed that knowledge and reason are, "sure ministers to Faith" (a theme more lately articulated by Benedict XVI in his Regensburg address of 2006). Said Newman:

> When the Church founds a university she is not cherishing talent, genius, or knowledge for their own sake, but for the sake of her children with a view to their religious influence and usefulness, *with the object of training them to fill their respective posts in life better, and of making them more intelligent, capable, active members of society.* (xix, emphasis added)

This, it seems to me, is entirely compatible with the purposes of church-related colleges as they were originally established and very much in keeping with their special purpose in the contemporary landscape of American higher education. Indeed, the global landscape as well, for the world is a shrinking place.

Even in Newman's time there was a recognition that the secular age was proceeding apace in all areas of life, including higher education. Thus he calls for a Christian form of university education, a call that would not have been required before, because the need for this kind of education would have simply been assumed.

Newman—perhaps as a mild rebuke to Seneca in his eighty-eighth epistle (oft quoted by our friends in secular independent colleges as a defense of the liberal arts)—warns against knowledge for its own sake, as it "exerts a subtle influence in throwing us back on ourselves, and making us our own center, and our minds the measure of all things." This, he warns, was the observed tendency of universities even as early as the 1850s. Newman claims that religious truth is not only a portion, but a *condition* of general knowledge. To blot it out is nothing short of unravelling the web of university teaching. If the need for a special kind of college was
so obvious to one such as John Henry Cardinal Newman even as early as 1850, how much more is it required in 2013?

**The Orientation of a Christian College**

But let us turn now to the next question. If the church-related college in a secular age has a special purpose, what are the implications for those of us who lead such institutions and serve as professors there? How can we account for our vocations given the special purpose we assert for our communities of learners? In what ways should our work be distinguishable from colleges and universities inconveniently bereft of anything at all that could reasonably be thought of as a charism? How does the Christian virtue of hope orient us?

I ought to assert here—and quickly, lest you think I’ve fallen headlong into the deep end of the pool—that each professor at my college or any other college so oriented should be, first and foremost, an expert in his or her field. Students want to learn from the best, and part of their conception of what the best includes are professors who are deeply steeped in their little section of the body of knowledge. Our biologists need to be the best biologists. Our sociologists the best sociologists. Our artists the best artists.

Church-related colleges are—of course—primarily colleges. They should help students learn, in depth as well as breadth. Which brings me to the second orientation that we ought to embody. One of the functions of church-related colleges—at least for that part of our work devoted to undergraduates—is to teach what Newman called *universal knowledge*: to help students see the broad landscape of what is known and to be able to make connections between seemingly disparate trivialities in that landscape. Undergraduates need broadening, and it would be a mistake for any single professor to imagine that it was some other professor’s duty to do the broadening. Indeed, the more professors who, being deeply invested in their own subjects, are also committed to this broadening, the more likely it is to take hold among students.

So too with the third distinguishing characteristic we require of ourselves as professors and leaders in a church-related college in a secular age: a commitment to the spiritual formation of each student. A commitment that is just as strong and practically employed as our commitment to specialized and universal knowledge. And is this not the part of our special purpose in a secular age that perhaps seems most daunting to our professors? “Who am I,” they might ask of themselves “to help a student along the path to an imagination for God, and a love for Jesus Christ?” They probably feel like they missed that class in graduate school.

There are two principal—even essential—qualities required of us for effective engagement in the spiritual formation of our students. The first is a commitment to our own continuing formation with a living faith that includes a real openness to the work of the Spirit. Professors wouldn’t expect to be of much use to their students in helping them develop a lively imagination—much less a discerned vocation—for any of their particular academic disciplines unless they themselves were deeply and actively engaged in continuous learning in their respective fields. So too with the spiritual formation of their students. If the only spiritual resources professors have to offer are those they developed in high school, college, or—heaven forbid!—graduate school, then it shouldn’t come as a surprise when students find them lacking in the depth necessary to serve as compelling role models at those times when they need someone who can help them as they seek to know the light and life of Jesus Christ which serves as the very source of our distinctiveness.

The second quality our professors must develop to foster their students’ spiritual formation is a capacity for pastoral engagement. Few of our professors are trained, and none should feel compelled, to serve as pastors to their students. With few exceptions, they are not qualified for such work. That being said, each should have the capacity to be pastoral in his or her work with students. A capacity for pastoral engagement with students is not limited to seminary graduates. In the spiritual formation of young adults, the necessity for pastoral engagement is a broader landscape than mere ordination can traverse. For being in a pastoral relationship with students in formation requires two things: spiritual care (or put differ-
ently, care about the Spirit) and a willingness to
guide. Professors can care. Professors—assuming
that they are active in their own formation—can
guide. Being in a pastoral relationship with a stu-
dent is much more than being "nice" or a "source
of comfort," though these are surely essential.
Professors at secular colleges can do as much.
And increasingly college students of every stripe,
including those who attend both public and pri-
ivate colleges, whether secular or religious, show
substantial increases in what Astin (2010) terms
"Spiritual Quest" when their professors encour-
age them to explore questions of meaning and
purpose or otherwise show support for their spiri-
tual development. Sadly, Astin's study of student
spirituality demonstrates that most professors,
including professors at church-related colleges,
ever discuss spiritual matters with their students.
Church-related colleges should be the outliers in
this regard, for this is the great untapped potential
of colleges in this tradition. Perhaps untapped is
too strong a descriptor. Insufficiently tapped may
be a better fit. In any case, as Pope John Paul II
(1988) reminded us, "It is not permissible for any
to remain idle."

We should be honest with ourselves when
it comes to the kinds of professors that ought to
inhabit church-related colleges. Even at these
schools, too many professors are visible only to
their students as experts in history or the sciences
or in literature. How many professors are really
engaged in the kind of integrating work that is the
primary resource our missions provide in an age
when faith is an option and education is increas-
ingly a commodity? Too few, I'm afraid.

This is a disappointing revelation, for there
is a kind of freedom in our missions: freedom of
inquiry, freedom of dialogue, and a freedom to go
beyond mere development of faculty and
students and instead to put out
into the deep water of formation.

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professors aren't that much older than the oldest
of undergraduates. Their catechesis is likely to be a
pretty thin garment when they arrive on campus,
no matter the degree of their eagerness or ear-
nestness. It is necessary to provide programs that
shape a culture for their continuing formation. A
receptive ecumenism (Howard 2013) friendly to
most church-related college missions can serve
as a resource for lowering the boundaries for
tension points between various campus constitu-
cencies. Indeed, we are reminded that on the day
of Pentecost through the power of the Holy Spirit
all those gathered heard of the wonderful works of
God in their own language (Acts 2:1–12). So can it
be on our campuses if we can commit to long suf-
fering patience with each other while avoiding the
false irenicism (Pope John Paul II, 1995) that is the
product of settling for a "least common denomi-
nator" kind of mushy spirituality.

Some may be wondering if I am insisting on
a "Christians only" hiring policy as the only way
to deliver on the promise of our missions. Though my instincts and the formational needs of our students tilt me toward such a practice, I'm humble enough to recognize that this is controversial, and that experience with a more inter-religious approach might lead others to believe that they can keep the faith-related promises of their institutions without insisting on such uniformity. A recent article in AAC&U's *Liberal Education* by Larson and Shady (2013) seems to offer a helpful model for an exclusivist hiring policy successfully augmented by authentic interfaith dialogue and service. My sense of things is that an inter-religious hiring approach is likely to work best at those institutions whose students are most robustly formed in their own faith. Well catechized students will be best prepared to investigate the truth claims of other faiths precisely because they understand the underpinnings of their own faith.

I mention this with the caution provided by Christian Smith (2009), whose concept of "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism" describes well the shallowness of the typical American young person's religious belief. If you have a student body filled with well catechized young people whose upbringing, family structure, and religious formation has helped them avoid the seemingly ubiquitous snares of MTD, then an inter-religious hiring policy might be appropriate; however, a student body so oriented is the rare countercultural phenomenon.

While some colleges have religiously-exclusivist policies and others take more of a critical mass approach, we would do well to recognize that colleges are essentially analog in their nature. They exist along a continuum across a wide variety of characteristics, including the faith commitment of their students and faculty. It is perhaps ironic that prospective students are asked to make decisions about enrolling in colleges that are essentially digital, which is to say binary: enroll or do not enroll. The challenge is convincing these seventeen-year old emotives that we will keep the mission-related promises we make to them, regardless of our hiring policies and practices. No matter a college's practices in this important area, they all must take an approach to hiring that avoids finding virtues that do not exist in applicants for our faculty positions. A deeply religious member of our faculty recently told me that he would rather have Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu colleagues who were committed to the Christian formation of our students than lukewarm Christian faculty members who leave this duty to others. If we fail in this vital area, we should expect no more than professors whose faith, according to Robert Louis Wilken (2008), "...is a private and personal thing, an affair of piety and practice, divorced from the intellectual enterprise that is the business of the university."

These three qualities, then, are the elements of church-related colleges’ special purpose in a secular age: deep engagement on the part of our professors with their disciplinary vocations, a broadening engagement sufficient to impart universal knowledge, and an active role in the spiritual formation of our students. And without this last quality, church-related colleges will simply be another group of independent colleges among many.

**Conclusion: Hope as an Orienting Virtue**

I am employed by a college named for one of the Christian virtues, and what a convenience it is in times such as these. Hope—both the college and the virtue—is a source of daily comfort as I sip my morning coffee while the *Chronicle* screams out anathemas on the present system on the slow days and announces the end of days the rest of the time. Each of us could use a regular jolt of hope as we straddle the growing divide between what we thought was permanent and what we fear isn't anymore, lest we slip into that state of error G. K. Chesterton calls the *blasphemy of pessimism*. Former office furniture company CEO and chair of Hope College's Board of Trustees, Max DePree (2004), reminds us that the first duty of a leader is to define reality. The second is to provide hope. My first address to the Hope College faculty—eighteen months or so into the recent recession—was focused almost completely on defining reality: the reality of the present and worsening challenges to the higher education model, rising costs, diminishing yields and revenues, demographic facts robed.
in righteousness. As I think back on it, I have an image of a wild-eyed John the Baptist crying out “Make straight the crooked paths!” (Luke 3:4). Even though our leadership team had foreseen the coming challenges and was at that point in the fifth year of an aggressive stewardship mode regarding all things financial, this had never been explained to the faculty in a way that they could truly understand. So I took that opportunity—my first opportunity—and explained it with the scientific and actuarial certainty of one on fire. Hope (the virtue) could wait until the next year. How I wish I could turn back the hands of time on that decision. The faculty members, having been educated utterly as to the facts of the present circumstance, were sobered, but not fed. To borrow from the noted Confederate General, J. E. B. Stuart, “I have regretted it only once, but that has been continuously.”

I mention this because the Christian virtue of hope is one of the most powerful resources we have in creating the kind of campus culture that can stand as a bulwark to the insistent individualism (Bennett, 2003) that is one of modernity’s principal features and is part and parcel of an increasingly commoditized higher education landscape. And by hope I do not mean simple optimism, wishful thinking, or even universal longing. I mean the hope of the Gospel. A hope based on evidence of things seen and unseen, of things promised by the God who made each of our students and who knows them all by name. A hope that allows us to lean into our work with a transcendent confidence. A hope that gives us the courage to utter what Wendell Berry (2000) calls “the terrible prayer” Thy will be done. A hope that, as Eugene Peterson (2000) characterized it, is “imagination put in the harness of faith.”

Near the end of the last school year my wife and I shed ourselves of most of our worldly possessions, left the suburbs behind, and took up residence in the cozy world of a downtown apartment very near our campus. I now have the somewhat strange circumstance of having the college—always a kind of family to me—as a neighbor. I’m told that families who are also neighbors can be a tricky thing: we’ll see. So far I am enjoying it unreservedly. Every morning I roam about the neighborhood. I tell myself and others that this is for healthful exercise, but lately I’ve come to realize that my walks have less to do with exercise and more to do with the care and feeding of an inner life.

As I walk through my own neighborhood—the campus of Hope College—I marvel at what has been built there over the course of 150 years. But I’ve also come to realize that the stately buildings, the lovely gardens, and the winding paths—indeed, the overwhelming sense of Dutch tidiness—these things are only a kind of shimmering mirage in the long sweep of time and history. This thought came to me one morning as I, for reasons I still cannot explain to you or myself, left the known world of the sidewalk near our football stadium and ventured down into the terra incognita of the creek that flows almost invisibly, sheltered by woods, between the soccer and softball fields. And there amidst the willows, I came across small bits and pieces of our founder’s homestead, demolished in the 1960s as a nod to progress. There’s not much there, a few bricks, glimmers of glass, and various shards of green tile. As I stood over this patch of detritus it came to me that most of the physical things—the things of this world—that Albertus Van Raalte thought he had given to posterity back in 1866 have either been swept away or transformed beyond what he would recognize. Everything, that is, except for the one gift that is impermeable to

The Christian virtue of hope is one of the most powerful resources we have in creating the kind of campus culture that can stand as a bulwark to the insistent individualism that is one of modernity’s principal features.
bulldozer and crane. Impermeable to progress as the world usually understands it.

Van Raalte's principle gift to my neighborhood has been hope. Hope that our college could serve as a kind of shining city on a hill (Matthew 5:14), filling students with both the discovered and the revealed truth, and having done so, sending them forth as agents of that hope unto the whole of the Earth. I don't imagine I'll have to go too far out on the proverbial limb to suggest that what was true for Albertus Van Raalte in 1866 is likely true for those who founded other church-related colleges as well. And this is the primary resource our missions provide in a changing world. No other group of colleges I know is better positioned to convey hope to a world of young adults in desperate need of it than those with a robust connection to the church. I have hope—and, by the way, faith—that we can help those students presently maturing in a secular age they neither understand nor even perceive. Hope that we can help them give voice to their hopes, those already named and those yet to be discerned. Hope that we can help them shape their lives in such a way that they are oriented to the One True Hope who does not disappoint (Romans 5:5).

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EASTER SONNET

The cat is not here.
She has risen
from the cushion
of her favorite chair
where fur lies in clumps
like grave clothes,
the cushion now a reliquary
I cannot revere
and also hope to please
a persnickety spouse.
I know I know,
this ought not be
even a minor crisis.
But the cat is not here.

Brad Davis
public affairs  ethics

The Enchanted Poor

Geoffrey C. Bowden

The director of a local homeless shelter in my town (Savannah, Georgia) once told me that Savannah is one of the best cities in America to be homeless. She was speaking partially about the level of social services available through shelters, churches, and other organizations, but she was also suggesting that Savannah affords the homeless a significant amount of space in which to live. Literal space. So as I drove through the city in the normal course of business, I began looking for these “spaces,” and it turns out that places I had driven by hundreds of times were the “homes” of the homeless. Densely wooded areas that appear to beautify public spaces are shelters and blinders for tents, tarps, garbage heaps, and nightly fires to cook and warm. I never saw them before. I see them every time I drive by them now. They are unmistakable to the seeing eye. A city with a decent amount of walking traffic masks the disheveled walking to and from their hidden abodes.

After locating several of these hidden residences for the homeless, I began having more frequent encounters with the homeless while in the heart of the city. This happened not because I sought them out in an effort to help. They found me. And, yes, they were asking me for money. I am not sure why the frequency of my encounters with the homeless increased after I located their hideouts, but I took it as an opportunity to think more critically about my responsibility to the poor from a biblical perspective. The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, never shies away from social issues, and the sheer number of times that it mentions the poor, the needy, and those in need of financial assistance is mind-numbing. John the Baptist exhorts his followers concerning the needy: “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise” (Luke 3:11, ESV). The prophet Ezekiel warns those who fail to assist the needy: “Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy” (Ezekiel 16:49, ESV). These are just two of the hundreds of instances in the biblical narrative where God’s concern for the poor is expressed and God’s teaching for His people is unmistakable: financial blessings generate a responsibility to the poor, and failure to meet that responsibility is an injustice.

A closer reading of these passages (and the many like them) suggests that something much more important is going on in our giving to the poor than fulfilling our side of the just bargain, more important than meeting our dispassionate “Kantian” duties. Gary Anderson argues in his recent book Charity (2013) that both Second Temple Judaism (the theological context of the New Testament) and the New Testament attest to the sacramental character of charitable giving. Drawing heavily on Proverbs 19:17 as the backdrop to the New Testament period, and specifically to Matthew 25:31ff, Anderson posits that charity effectuates the enormous power to open the doors to the Kingdom of God: “charity acquires such power because one meets Christ through this concrete action of showing mercy” (6). Anderson encourages us to put the “efficiency and effectiveness” of our modern social programs in a secondary role and to recover “the promise that scripture provides that one could meet God in the face of the poor. Charity was, to put it briefly, a sacramental act” (7). Matthew 25 puts the scenario best: when Christ returns for the Last Judgment, He will separate the sheep from the goats, and the sheep will inherit the kingdom because they gave Christ food, drink,
hospitality, clothes, and comfort during sickness and imprisonment. Those who inherit the kingdom will query as to when they did these things for Christ. And he will answer: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:40). The goats, because they did not feed, clothe, etc., will suffer eternal punishment. The upshot, for Anderson, is that Christ is present in charitable acts. The poor, needy, and imprisoned constitute a powerful contact point between the disciple and God. We don't simply feed the poor because it is an altruistic sacrificing of our own resources that provides a just balance to the universe; we feed the poor because it is a way to see God, and we should want that more than anything.

But that never really crosses my mind when I see the homeless in my town. Instead, I usually ask one or a combination of the following questions: Do I feel like being bothered by this person right now? Do I have anything to give them? How can I act like I don't see them? Is this person going to take advantage of me? How will they lie? Am I in physical danger? When the Bible says I should help the needy, do I have to take that literally? Haven't I done enough already? Almost never does it occur to me that I am about to meet God face-to-face (without being bludgeoned to death). Why does the biblical/theological framework of charity escape us? And how can we recover it?

The work of Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor may offer an intellectual framework for understanding why we have lost the notion of the sacramentality of charitable giving. Taylor contends that over the last five hundred years or so, the world has moved from "the enchanted world, the world of spirits, demons, moral forces which our predecessors acknowledged" to the disenchanted world "in which the only locus of thoughts, feelings, spiritual clan is what we call minds; the only minds in the cosmos are those of humans; and these minds are bounded, so that these thoughts, feelings, etc. are situated 'within' them" (Taylor, 29–30). When encountering the homeless, the disenchanted world restricts us to thinking that the only meaning emanating from this encounter is in our own minds. We generate the meaning of the experience. There is no meaning outside of that which my mind generates. In the world of the New Testament, a person would have expected the world around him to be imbued with meaning, irrespective of the views of the individual subject. The world all around had not only the ability to possess meaning independently of our minds, but it was "endowed with sacramental power" and a "power to impose a certain meaning on us" (Taylor, 32, 33).

A helpful way to understand the distinction between the enchanted and the disenchanted world is to perceive the conceptions of the self therein. Taylor refers to the self of the enchanted world as the "porous self" that is extremely vulnerable to forces external to the self. The fate of the "porous self" is connected to the fate of that which is external to the self. The mind is not shielded from those external forces, as "[t]hings and agencies which are clearly extra-human could alter or shape our spiritual and emotional condition, and not just our physical state....These agencies didn't simply operate from outside the 'mind', they helped to constitute us emotionally and spiritually" (40).

Conversely, the disenchanted self is the "bounded self" that can distance itself from externalities, because they don't really have meaning. More importantly for our purposes in thinking about homelessness, "[a]s a bounded self I can see the boundary as a buffer, such that the things beyond don't need to 'get to me', to use the contemporary expression" (38). In other words, I can "buffer" my mind from the homeless in my community, because I live in a world (and share its 'worldview' to a large extent) where no
meaning exists outside of my mind and the experiences it has. My fate is not bound up with the fate of the homeless. There may exist a technocratic solution to large-scale social problems, but these solutions have no bearing on my emotional or spiritual existence. Essentially, the homeless mean nothing to me from within this worldview.

If I am to locate myself with the sheep and not the goats, is it necessary to have an enchanted view of the world, and particularly an enchanted view of my relationship to the needy? Is it even possible to recover an enchanted view of the world? The answer to the first question is not clear, but the answer to the second question is “yes.” It would entail rejecting the “bounded self” in favor of a view of the world in which God meets us through the world around us, and not simply as a result of our confessing doctrine. Anderson points in this direction: “The charitable deed lost, in the sixteenth century, its central role making God present to the believer and became simply a sign of the underlying personal faith of the believer. Bereft of this sacramental sensibility the donor no longer had any reason to meet the beggar in person” (8). Further, “[f]aith... is not reducible to mere intellectual assent, it is also a specific way of enacting one’s life in the world” (37). So it appears that one way to recover an enchanted view of the world is simply to do what God has commanded us to do, not merely as a duty to fulfill, but with the expectation that God has called us there because He Himself is there waiting on us. Meeting God in the face of the poor seems like a reasonable way to begin to believe that God exists outside of our minds and that He wants us to engage (and be vulnerable to) the rest of the world. God can overcome our disenchanted view of the world.

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CONFIRMATION SONNET

It's hard to believe, my thriving Beatrice, 
that your years have moved from bimba and "Tink" 
to scenes of awkward, teen-aged rinkydink, 
and arriving soon, young womanhood's riches.

Never forget what the great Dante teaches: 
storm winds await all those who are mindless, 
whereas kind ones enjoy wisdom's reminders. 
So the poet writes: In His will is our peace.

I wish you, dear one, God's own present ear— 
your ear, I mean, with heart that hears Him, too, 
a little studio for entertaining Him.

It's an accommodation that never fears 
regrets nor fails to bear life's weight that finds you. 
On this memorable day, accept my simple theme.

Brett Foster
Ken Ham, Bill Nye, and Me

Harold K. Bush

On February 4, 2014, the Creation Museum in Kentucky held a well-advertised and highly awaited debate between Ken Ham, the very well-known, Young Earth creationist who founded the museum, and Bill Nye, the very well-known media figure who has helped explain principles of science to millions of Americans. This “debate,” as it were, was streamed over the Internet and followed in real time by millions of people worldwide. It was two and a half hours long, modeled on rather strict debate principles and protocols, more or less, and represented a new kind of spectacle unheard of just a couple of decades ago. For me, it represented a chance to think about American attitudes toward learning in general, but more specifically it was a telling moment that revealed a great deal about how we currently package crucial issues of science.

On the one hand, I have become very weary of the steadfast defenders of Young Earth creationism. Debates like this one, in which a recognized scientist participates, actually further its appearance of legitimacy, which is precisely why most serious scientists refuse to debate Young Earth creationists anymore. And yet, perhaps surprisingly at this late date (although maybe not so late as we may think?), Young Earth creationism continues to appeal to many Christians, often including highly educated believers. Its appeal is strongest among persons who believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, and who are committed to the simple idea that we should read the Bible “literally,” whatever that might mean. As an English professor, I can suggest first that the idea of “reading the Bible literally” does not mean very much; it is a bewitching phrase that is clearly a very large part of the problem. More alarming is that this resistance is getting worse: polling data by Gallup suggests that among certain groups, the percentage of Christians who accept a Young Earth model is actually growing (Newport 2012).

Such a blind spot among church members needs to be spotlighted and addressed, but how? Many pastors and church leaders avoid discussing the sacred cow of inerrancy with any sort of precision or detail, partly for fear of undermining the faith of members of the fold. And to some extent, a certain ignorance is understandable. I’ve always been interested in science and religion debates, but it does require time and effort for non-scientists to keep up with everything. I’d like to take scientists’ word for it when it comes to things like molecular biology and genetics, things about which I know almost nothing. The questions I’m trying to answer here are not about the age of the earth or the common origins of life, including humans. Rather than scientific questions like that, I’m wondering about other issues. For instance, why are so many American Christians obsessed with defending a Young Earth creationism? What does this say about our collective view of Scripture? And what does the debate at the Creation Museum tell us about the American church and its views of science and learning, and about its view of the life of the mind in general?

I think the Creation Museum debate can actually help Christian leaders and educators wrestle with these deeper issues. The debate is symptomatic of a widespread anti-intellectualism rampant in American culture, and more specifically, of a deep disrespect for science and learning. This is reflected in several major problems with the debate’s format. For one thing, this event broaches important topics in the form of what Fr. Walter Ong (1981), and later Deborah Tannen (1995), described as the “argument culture” of our day:
a simplistic formula whereby complex issues are discussed in a polarized, winner-take-all competition. This model assumes that there are two legitimate sides to every question (and only two), and that even the most verifiably wacko views deserve a fair hearing in the court of public appeal. But in fact, complex issues are rarely if ever so easily framed as pro and con, and frankly, wacko opinions do not always deserve a serious hearing. The honoring of wackiness as needing to be heard lends itself to a paranoid, conspiracy-theory account of power and knowledge.

As a result, perhaps the main problem with the debate was that it featured two polarized debaters, with almost nothing in common, both of whom have been labeled showmen and entertainers more often than they have been celebrated for their research skills. What it represents, in other words, is a fairly dumbed down presentation for the masses, and it is that aspect of the debate that I find most repulsive. Even worse, both Ham and Nye are considered rank amateurs by the guild of credentialed biologists; neither has recognized expertise in the field of evolutionary biology, and neither proposed any reasonable alternatives to their own ossified positions. In such a misguided contest, listeners who consider themselves theistic believers in scientific evolution had no one to root for.

More generally, the form of the debate pitted religion against science. Thus the debate embodied a classic false dilemma, one evidently engineered by the organizers in hopes of achieving a stronger possibility of the illusion of victory. Their choice of Nye is also self-explanatory: they agreed to include another amateur who also is not a specialist in evolutionary biology. Furthermore, Nye is an agnostic, which makes him an easier target for religious listeners, already deeply skeptical of anyone not sharing their faith. It would have been much less polarizing to feature a theistic believer as a key witness for science. To be genuinely interested in an enlightened conversation, the organizers could have chosen some spokes persons in the middle: a theistic evolutionist.

That said, even in such a dubious format, science clearly won the night. The most striking weakness of Ham's account (among many very serious weaknesses) surely is regarding the age of the earth. The process of determining the earth's age was easily explained by Nye through commonplace appeals to radiometric readings, layers of ice, and fossils in the Grand Canyon. Overall, despite the fact that the debate offered some legitimacy to Young Earth creationism for non-scientists, Nye obviously presented the best arguments, and certainly won the debate for anyone who is not committed to a literal six-day reading of Genesis.

The entire Young Earth creationist account may simply be attributable to a very poor hermeneutics of Genesis. As such, conservative Christians are going to have to face the facts about the limits of inerrancy, because if one believes that the book of Genesis was written to be a kind of scientific/journalistic blow-by-blow account of the creation sequence, then of course one will be forced to believe just as Ken Ham and his followers do. In the past, when science discovered new ideas about the universe, biblical interpretation evolved in view of those developments. The “two books” version of God’s creation is well described, for example, in Mark Noll’s excellent volume, The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind (1994). But this debate was set up to peddle disinformation, making the good information largely a smoke screen for very bad premises. The arrangement constitutes a major problem we have been facing for decades: the lie that science and religion must always be virulently at odds with each other. “It is this huge stereotype that all Christians reject science and an event like this reinforces that stereotype,” said Deborah Haarsma, president of the BioLogos Foundation, an organization whose motto is “science and faith in harmony.” “It looks like science versus Christianity and it ignores the people who have accepted the science of evolution and have not let go of their faith” (Winston 2013)

I find the belligerent hatred of true science by members of churches nationwide shocking. And as a literary critic and a cultural historian, I have run up against nasty skepticism and disrespect for my own learning scores of times over the years. Often it has to do with questions about America as a Christian nation, for instance, or with the purported Christian beliefs of some author or another. In The Anointed (2011) Randall
Stephens and Karl Giberson describe the powerful influence certain “Christian” experts hold over grassroots Evangelical believers. The spirit of The Anointed is precisely correct: Led by “experts” like Ken Dew, Evangelicals and other conservative Christians have set up a parallel universe of learning on all kinds of subjects. And their fearfulness toward Darwin and evolution is very much fostered by their fearfulness about America’s decline as a nation. Social decline, according to these conservatives, is founded on an errant view of humans as having been evolved from lower forms like apes; to them evolutionary theory is without a doubt a satanic lie. So the hatred of evolution is linked, again, to the jeremiads of the political right, and our decline as a nation is linked to Darwin and his followers. Meanwhile, our best scientists insist that evolution is the foundation of everything we know about biology today.

Anti-intellectualism is still mainstream in much of the church, and if Christians wish to talk science, we’ll need to get more serious about it than the debate put on by the Creation Museum, which was pitched pretty low. We will need to take seriously, and read carefully, the work of the Christian intellectuals who embrace both a theistic evolutionary model and a theological fluency: experts who are recognized and credentialed, people like John Polkinghorne, Owen Gingrich, Francis Collins, Kenneth Miller, Alister McGrath, John Haught, and so on.

Haught, in particular, has made a career out of calling for a theology of evolution, and he makes a strong case for it. Drawing upon such theorists as Teilhard de Chardin and Alfred North Whitehead, Haught paints a marvelous picture of our need to move away from a mundane “design” model and to embrace a creative, yet messy, vision of how God works, and how evolutionary findings actually expand and transform our views of God in powerful ways. Haught’s work contains some potentially mind-blowing insights into the creative and fertile workings of our God, insights that speak of a universe shot through with hope and life.

And so I would echo Haught’s call for a deeper encounter with the facts of evolutionary biology by religious thinkers, as well as by the pastors, educators, and others who read The Cresset. This encounter, at the present time, is not for the faint of heart. Thankfully, we do have the Holy Spirit, and the Gospel of John tells us that the Spirit will lead us into all the truth. As such, there is still hope that as history proceeds, the church can move closer to its calling as the “pillar and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15), for scientists, literary critics, pastors, and everyone else. 🖤

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ECSTASIS

Rustle and gleam in the understory,
a breeze lifts the little lanterns of columbine,

lit scarlet like tongues by the fire
they lick up through marl and leafrot.

Lanterns. And tongues. Stamen
and tendril sieving the wind, an ache

for the right turn of air, for the word
that will burn the words away,

a spray of yellow pollen.

And the same shine everywhere—
on the segmented back of the five-inch,

purple-black millipede on the path, pedaling
crazy bright panic as he arcs up

and over a fallen, wet twig of birch.

James Owens
I AM COMPOSING THESE LINES IN THE MIDST OF
the Ukrainian crisis, shortly after Russian
troops have occupied Crimea in a brazen act
of aggression reminiscent of Hitler’s annexa-
tion of the Sudetenland. To be sure, Putin is not
a totalitarian Führer, and Western powers have
not blessed the land grab with a Munich agree-
ment touted to ensure “peace in our time,” but the
geopolitical parallels with 1938 are nonetheless
disturbing. In 1938, Hitler used the legitimate but
greatly exaggerated grievances of Czechoslovakia’s
German minorities as a pretext for grabbing ter-
ritory, thereby clearing the way to launch a world
war less than a year later. Today, Putin has exag-
gerated the threat Ukrainian nationalism poses to
Russian minorities in order to justify occupying
the Crimean peninsula, a maneuver which threat-
ens to alter the post Cold War political order in
Europe so as to align more closely with Russia’s
imperialist interests. In 1938, Hitler was embold-
ened to take the Sudetenland, something his own
generals thought was crazy, because of Europe’s
timid response to the Anschluss, and then
emboldened to invade Poland because of Europe’s
response to the Sudetenland. Today, Putin has
ventured to act aggressively because he believes
the American president is weak and he sees the
European Union as bogged down in crisis.

Like a shot from the blue, Putin’s Crimean
gambit left the statesmen of Europe and America
dazed and confused. They simply couldn’t believe
Vladimir would do such a thing, since his misbe-
havior would evoke international condemnation
and even possibly, maybe, economic sanctions.
After an unproductive conversation with the
Russian dictator, an exasperated Angela Merkel
reportedly told Obama that Putin has lost touch
with reality. Meanwhile, paper columns and opin-
ion pieces accused Putin of being irrational, even
a little mad. However, to describe a dictator as
crazy may simply mean his actions are unintelli-
gible to us, because we are too unimaginative to
discern his purpose. Putin’s actions are imme-
diately intelligible, if we dare to imagine that he
has imperialist designs on Eastern Europe. In the
mind of this “madman,” the collapse of the Soviet
Union was a tragedy. He knows that empire can-
not be recovered, but he hopes to restore Russia’s
historic position in Europe as a hegemonic power.

Toward that end, Putin recently announced
plans to establish in 2015 a so-called Eurasian
Union, which will mirror the economic and polit-
ical structure of the EU. Putin’s planned union
therefore aims to compete with, and ultimately
undermine, the project of European integra-
tion. Initially, the Eurasian Union will consist of
Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, but the intention
is to entice Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine to
join as well (perhaps by manipulating the price
and availability of Russian-supplied natural gas).
Clearly, Ukraine’s membership is key. The largest
country in Eastern Europe after Russia, roughly
the size of Texas, Ukraine has a population of
45 million and is a major producer of grain. A
Eurasian Union centered in Russia with a secure
Ukrainian satellite would be a European force to
reckon with. Such a union would exert inexorable
influence on the economic development of the
Baltic States, Moldova, and Romania, and poten-
tially affect Poland and Hungary as well. Yet a
Eurasian Union without Ukraine is a feeble joke.
That makes Ukraine important to Putin.

US foreign policy, however, has stopped
attending closely to Russian intentions in Europe.
President Obama, after a naïvely conceived and
unsuccessful “reset” with Russia, threw up his
arms, and left Europe to take care of itself while
he “pivoted” to Asia, made liberal use of drone
strikes, responded tentatively to the Arab Spring, and drew red lines he never wanted to keep. Even so, the problems with US European policy run deeper. American disengagement with the continent began in the Bush Administration, which

Putin's ambitions for a Eurasian Union have received little to no attention in the West, most probably because no one (other than Putin) takes them seriously.

focused so exclusively on the "War on Terror" that it adopted an adversarial relationship with Europe before ignoring it completely. That cavalier attitude toward Europe was reinforced at a deeper level by a naïve American confidence in the inevitable advance of democracy. American policy makers, caught up in a kind of triumphalist democratic group think, took Europe for granted. Anyone who opposes democracy, they seemed to think, must be a madman, a figure with no grip on reality, soon to be trammeled under the forward march of history.

Thus Putin's ambitions for a Eurasian Union have received little to no attention in the West, most probably because no one (other than Putin) takes them seriously. The group think says that democracy is inevitable. If Putin opposes the tide of progress he is bound to fail, no matter how incompetent Western leaders are. In this spirit, New York Times columnist Ross Douthat offered his own Pollyannaish interpretation of events in Ukraine:

[In a world] where liberal democracy has few intellectually-credible challengers, the stakes of geopolitics are considerably lower than they used to be... and so our policymakers drift into a kind of laziness that empowers figures like Putin on the margins... but only on the margins....

[F]rom the West's perspective, the stakes in these disputes are relatively low. The struggle for influence is taking place on Russia's very doorstep, and there's no real possibility that a Putinist victory in Kiev or the Caucasus would inspire copycat right-wing movements to seize power in, say, Italy or France or Germany, the way Communist movements nearly did in the early 20th century.

This unsophisticated view of the world, among many other things, grossly exaggerates the significance of ideology in history. The bedrock of geopolitics is, and always has been, power and its pursuit of interest. Absolutism was already an outdated and unappealing idea by the time of Catherine the Great and Maria Theresa, but that didn't prevent the partition of Poland. The notion that conflicts of power only matter when they overlap with an easily grasped ideology is a naïve fallacy committed by Americans who believe people the world over are reading the Declaration of Independence. Even without ideological packaging, the stability and integration of Europe remains a high stakes game.

If the prophets of progress end up being correct, it will be only because democratic forces recognize the challenges they face and respond appropriately. The important question is not what Putin ought to be doing in an age of enlightenment, but what he is actually doing in the realm of power politics. Hegemonic Russian ambitions in Eastern Europe are not historically new. In the past, however, those ambitions were balanced by other European powers (e.g., the French, the Prussians, the Habsburgs, the British). During the Cold War, the surrogate for those powers was the United States, because only an American superpower could counterbalance the enormous Russian empire (i.e., the Soviet Union and its satellite states) which emerged in the wake of World War II. The real novelty, therefore, is not Russia, but Western and Central Europe, bound together as they are in the European Union. That union is not the product of historical necessity, but the achievement of statesmen who recognized that integrating Europe was the best way to end centuries of increasingly destructive wars.
But Europe has been integrated in such a way that it lacks an organizing power able to riposte Russian advances. The United States, meanwhile, has been disengaged from Europe for fourteen years. On top of that, the European Union is suffering from a severe economic crisis related to the premature introduction of its common currency, which is causing member states to doubt the wisdom of Brussels and to chafe at questionable austerity measures. To a man like Putin all of this looks less like what Francis Fukuyama called the “end of history” and more like a power vacuum. Why wouldn’t he take advantage of a historical opportunity to enhance Russia’s position in Europe? Nor should one assume, if Russian troops have not advanced beyond Crimea, that Putin has abandoned his designs on Ukraine proper. Ukraine is on the brink of default. Were Putin to occupy all of Ukraine, he would not only encounter popular resistance in large sections of the country, but also take ownership of the crippled economy. By staying back in Crimea, Putin can let the West assume that economic burden while simultaneously working to undermine the situation in Ukraine by manipulating natural gas prices and generating political unrest in the eastern part of the country. Hanging back in Crimea, he can also size up the reaction and resolve of Europe and the United States.

Unfortunately, Europe’s leaders appear reluctant to draw necessary conclusions, at least at the time of this writing. They have resisted suggestions to impose stiff sanctions on Russia, threatening to do so only if things get even worse. The one clear advantage dictators have over democracies is a higher threshold for pain. Europe and Russia are economically interdependent. Thus any sanctions regime, even while inflicting heavy costs on Russia’s weak economy, would also inflict lesser but real costs on Europe. This consideration should prompt Europe’s leaders to reread Churchill, who warned “the belief that security can be obtained by throwing a small State to the wolves is a fatal delusion.” World War II, Churchill believed, was a tragedy that could have been avoided, if “the malice of the wicked” had not been “reinforced by the weakness of the virtuous” (16).

Whether or not President Obama has the resolve to face down Putin is also an open question. Much of Obama’s foreign policy, in particular his approach to Syria and Iran, has been premised on cooperation with Russia. Now that Putin has displayed his true colors, the prospects of such cooperation seem next to untenable. Thus Putin’s aggression has not only precipitated a European crisis, but also shattered several premises of Obama’s strategy in the Middle East. Responding to Russia effectively will require Obama to tack to a dramatically different course in foreign policy. Time will tell whether the President has the flexibility required to do that. One thing does seem clear: in the absence of US leadership, things in Europe are going to get worse.

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Works Cited


SPIRAL BOTTLE

April, someone sent me a plastic Virgin Mary full of water, and I am thinking perhaps, there is such a darkness one cannot avoid going through.

Otherwise, why does her blue crown as a kitschy lid make me almost weep in the middle of Tennessee?

Back in my home country, early spring I would harvest wet, sheathed shoots in the forest of statuesque bamboos rustling their blades in unison.

I can't bottle the shadow of this evening like Lourdes water, though it fills the hollow stem of every living bamboo section by section, its distinct compartments as if to say: You will fear no more falling to the level of the previous night that kept you blindfolded from within.

As if each joint is inevitable, no matter how much it hurts to ascend and keep building itself into a divided column without flowering at least for another century.

Miho Nonaka
Trust is the basis for friendship. Trust increases through mutual self-disclosures. As friends get to know each other better, their mutual understanding increases along with their self-understanding. "Until I said those things to you, I hadn't realized just how I had felt about the whole subject." In a perfect world, the growth of trust and understanding would continue indefinitely, but the world is not perfect and neither are we. So misunderstandings occur and, with them, trust is broken or reduced or at least altered in some important way. "I hadn't known how much you loathed Picasso or I wouldn't have sent you the poster." The nature of trust, however, is that it implies a certain resilience. Otherwise, the friendship is simply a coincidence of shared and probably temporary interests. "Thanks for the help. I can do it on my own now." Deeper and more durable friendship rests on a different foundation, one that might be called a shared view of something really significant, be it a profession, calling, faith, or commitment. Here the risk of friendship becomes apparent, because a loss of trust in these circumstances is experienced like a threat to what one finds most valuable, most worth living for. When my musical composition is rejected by the National Endowment for the Arts, I may feel outraged or depressed, but at some level I won't take it personally. When my friend finds it obnoxious and silly, however, it is hard not to feel betrayed or ashamed. The friend, unlike the NEA judges, will know or guess how much toil and tears went into the composition; accordingly, her dismissal feels like a rejection of my core being.

Clearly, friendship involves such risks and often calls for great discretion when it comes to truth-telling. "Should I just blurt it out? Won't it be easier in the long run if I just tell her this piece is garbage instead of pussyfooting around the truth?" Friends sometimes unwittingly put each other on the horns of such dilemmas and, seeking reassurance, seem to be inviting the friend to pass a judgment that might better be withheld. Pressures like this can build up in a friendship and lead to angry outbursts. "Your habit of ending every letter with 'wish you were here' drives me crazy. It's an annoying cliché that sounds like a secret rebuke." This is a trivial example, but more profound ones are easy to come by. The more we know about each other, the more likely we are to see not only the lovely but the ugly sides of our personalities, the weaknesses as well as the strengths of our characters. How ought a friend respond to our imperfections as they manifest themselves in our words or actions?

Current wisdom tells us that such communications must be done in a non-judgmental way. "I felt uncomfortable when you called the waiter an idiot" is softer than "You really threw your weight around when you bullied the waiter, but you embarrassed me and made a fool of yourself." The friend should focus on his own feelings instead of our bad behavior. Such is the doxa, but living up to it is more challenging when the friend has offended us directly, has mocked or rebuked us while claiming a higher moral ground for himself. His anger is wholly justified; our bad attitudes are wholly blameworthy. And yet it is just this kind of one-sided confrontation that occurs when feelings run deepest, when some closely held value or belief or dream has been challenged, intentionally or not, by the friend. Obviously there has been a good deal of ignorance or blindness on my part, because I would not have told a joke about Polish cleaning
ladies if I had known your granny was from Warsaw. And you would be right to insist that it was not just the ethnic humor that offended but the sudden realization that I, your friend, liked to mock those who don’t share my class and ethnicity. End of the line or a chance to reorient and redefine the friendship?

Experience tells us that breaches of trust in friendship are not always repaired. When I discover that you have been pilfering money from my house, that you have tried to seduce my wife,

We can accept correction from our friends because we trust them; we can endure their anger because we know they love us; we can wait a long time to hear from them; we can believe that they will accept our apologies and help us to be better.

that you lied to me about the recommendation I asked for, such matters are hard to accommodate to friendship. But smaller offenses can be fatal as well, provided that they somehow manage to put serious cracks in the idealized images and self-images that are often a part of friendship. “I thought you would at least call me if you happened to be in town; I thought you would at least talk to me for a few minutes after the meeting; I thought you would send me a Christmas card, etc.” As the wisdom of Al-Anon and other twelve-step programs reminds us, however, expectations lead to resentment. And not just when we are dealing with alcoholics, because we do expect that friends, unlike alcoholics, will have some love to give us, that they will be there for us, that they will make themselves available to us. Accordingly, we can accept correction from our friends because we trust them; we can endure their anger because we know they love us; we can wait a long time to hear from them; we can believe that they will accept our apologies and help us to be better. Why? Because in order to become friends in the first place, we needed to establish trust by risking the loss of self-esteem and the security of secrecy through a series of self-disclosures, a gamble that the friend also took.

Consequently, the death of a friendship involves a loss as great or even greater than an actual death. Some part of our being has gone. And while we can say of the dead, “May his memory be a blessing,” the death of a friendship challenges the very foundations of our good, trusting outlook on other persons. When friendship dies, it becomes harder to believe in the benefits of trust and the whole project of community with others. “He wasn’t really interested in my research on Hispano-Arabic poetry; he only wanted to have sex.” Such an end to friendship can have catastrophic effects that go beyond the injury to self-esteem and the radical depreciation of trust to include a loss of interest in poetry, a discounting of intellectual companionship, suspicion of positive initial impressions, and so on. Are such potential costs worth the risk of friendship? Friends must answer such questions themselves. No one else can speak authoritatively to such important matters.

Again, the deepest friendships are those where there is an intersection of core values, no matter how sharp other dissimilarities may be. Your passion for volleyball or squash has no echo in my stamp collecting, but our love of poetry has brought us together every Tuesday night for years. And in these discussions of Yeats, Donne, Dickinson, and others, we have not merely shared our literary opinions but have struggled together to understand poetry’s capacity to touch and elevate the soul. Yet for all that I realize that you are a Republican! How can this difference not destroy the pleasure we share in reading poetry together? Obviously, one needs a sense of boundaries, a recognition that friendship and the strong connection it affords are not unlimited: don’t go there, Bill, if you want to stay friends. When we are young, such advice sounds contradictory to the very notion of friendship
and its Three Musketeers' motto, all for one and one for all. But we are older now, so we are more likely to accept the fact that friendship thrives in certain rooms, so to speak, but does well to stay out of others. And when we blunder into one of these rooms that ought to have been off-limits, we can only apologize for our tactlessness and ask the friend's forgiveness. Should he withhold it, we are indeed facing a terrible prospect in which trust gives way to shaming and blaming, warmth and affection replaced by fury and disgust.

Sometimes it takes all of our strength not to yield to the anger that an apparent betrayal of friendship calls up in us. We want to annihilate the source of pain, to restore our self-esteem at any cost by striking back and "getting even." But even a friendship that has imploded even its day, a friendship, and so revenge must seem like a retroactive cancellation of that past, the injured party's misguided effort to make the whole thing go away. And then there is the inextinguishable spark of hope. No matter how deeply we have been injured by a friend's anger or disgust or silence, the last remnant of friendship is the hope that, sometime and somehow and God willing, the friend will be restored to us.

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Author's Note: I found much to inspire this reflection in the following:


Story of Ruth and Naomi, in Ruth 1: 15–17.


Michel de Montaigne, "Of Friendship." In Essays (1580).
UP,

up, up from the dead, the crocus resurrect themselves, unscroll their tiny prayer flags—purple, white, and gold—thumb their noses at winter’s drab. Here we are, they announce, just when you thought we weren’t coming. Their striped leaves pierce the ground, a corona of nails. And how the bees love them, bumbling into their hearts, their egg-yolk stamens. Soon, the daffodils will ring their yellow chimes, and hyacinths will cense the air. But right now, there’s only one flower, and it’s going for broke, spilling its jar of wet paint in the perennial border, sending up road flares, breaking out in song.

Barbara Crooker
A Season for Change

Jennifer L. Miller

It is the time of year when we long for change. As I write this, I look out the window at snow swirling around in mini-tornados, caught in the nooks and crannies of buildings on campus. By the time this piece is published, the weather will have changed. Most of the snow will be melted, and the change to spring will be well underway. The Christian church, too, celebrates perhaps the biggest change of all in this season, the shift from the mourning and repentance of Lent to the joy and exhilaration of Easter.

This season of change is an appropriate time to reflect on the changes facing higher education. There is no question that higher education in the United States is changing, a change that is seen in everything from the kinds of colleges that students attend to what they study to how they pay for their classes. In his book The Marketplace of Ideas (2010), Louis Menand, an English professor at Harvard, examines the tension between the nineteenth-century model of the American university and the realities of twenty-first century life. He writes, “The American university is a product of the nineteenth century, and it has changed very little structurally since the time of the First World War. It has changed in many other ways—demographically, intellectually, financially, technologically, and in terms of its missions, its stakeholders, and its scale—and these changes have affected the substance of teaching and research” (17). Menand’s analysis situates the university between change and constancy and highlights how it is vital for institutions of higher learning to recognize and respond to these conflicting forces.

Given the changes facing American higher education as a whole, it should come as no surprise then, that the relationship between religion and higher education is changing as well. In fact, all of the finalists for the 2013 Lilly Fellows Program Book Award have the theme of change at their heart. This change manifests itself in different ways in each volume; while some of the books consider personal transitions, others document global shifts in philosophy.
and theology. Yet the idea of change itself remains a constant, a reminder that we all perhaps are, in the words of Christian Smith and Patricia Snell, "souls in transition."

One of the most apparent and immediately recognizable changes these volumes address is the shift in the way religion both is treated by and affects institutions of higher learning. In *No Longer Invisible: Religion in University Education*, Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen argue not only that religion is playing a more prominent role in American higher education in the twenty-first century, but also that the role it plays today is more complex than it once was. As a result, they claim, we need to ask better questions than simply, "[H]ow does religion connect to higher education?" (46). After laying the groundwork for these initial claims, the Jacobsens proceed to highlight key intersections between religion and higher education that have the potential to provide those involved in American higher education with the foundation for asking more thoughtful questions and, as a result, uncovering more nuanced answers.

Using a series of anecdotes from their survey of a wide variety of colleges and universities, the Jacobsens identify six sites of overlap between higher education and religion: religious literacy, interfaith etiquette, the framing of knowledge, civic engagement, conviction, and vocation. With its broad examination of these issues, *No Longer Invisible* functions as a survey of many of the interesting and provocative trends seen in higher education and provides a helpful introduction to the current state of religion in higher education. Furthermore, the Jacobsens' study points not only to ways in which those involved in higher education can ask more thoughtful questions, but also to possible areas of future inquiry. For instance, in the chapter on religious literacy, the Jacobsens provide the example of how some white male Christian professors felt they did such a good job of presenting various religions that "their students became convinced they were followers of those religions." Women scholars and scholars of color, however, "questioned whether anyone could be quite so neutral or convincing when teaching about another religion" (67). This anecdote highlights religious literacy as a way to enable students and faculty to engage more completely with others' religious beliefs, but also points to relationships between religion, education, and forms of difference such as race and gender as valuable avenues of future inquiry. *No Longer Invisible* succeeds in its goals of offering up new questions about religion in higher education that are sensitive to the complexities of the twenty-first century and providing a valuable foundation for future works that will examine similar trends.

*The Cresset*

**Religion is not only playing a more prominent role in American higher education in the twenty-first century, but the role it plays today is more complex than it once was.**

Susan VanZanten's book, *Joining the Mission: A Guide for (Mainly) New College Faculty*, examines the theme of change and transition but focuses on the individual faculty member, rather than on the American university writ large. VanZanten's book joins the crowd of recent publications for new faculty members; however, her guide is more specifically targeted to faculty beginning work at mission-driven institutions. Even with this focus, much of VanZanten's advice would be useful for any new faculty member. Her second chapter, for example, provides a very useful "brief history of Western higher education;" and she makes a number of very specific suggestions about incorporating group work into the classroom, both of which would be helpful for graduate students and new faculty members at any institution.

Yet what truly sets VanZanten's volume apart from other new faculty guides is its exploration of vocation. In the final chapter, entitled "Composing a Life: Balance and Improvisation," VanZanten writes, "One of the most pressing concerns I regularly hear from emerging faculty is how they can lead a balanced life.... How can you
be a superb teacher, a productive scholar, and an involved academic citizen, and maintain your sanity? How can you balance your personal and your professional life? (190). In the rest of the chapter, VanZanten's advice calls to mind Abraham Joshua Heschel's *The Sabbath* (1951) as she offers suggestions for creating rhythm within life that can help faculty resist becoming overwhelmed by the tasks of everyday life. By giving her readers room at the end of the volume to breathe and consider the framework for understanding their chosen careers, VanZanten creates a volume that can be useful both for those faculty members just embarking upon their careers, as well as those who are pausing mid-stream to consider the trajectory of their lives and their vocations.

While VanZanten's work focuses on the process of change within an individual faculty member upon arriving at a mission-driven institution, Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* moves in the opposite direction, examining how the Reformation affected change in nearly every aspect of society. Gregory's analysis of how the Reformation shaped and continues to influence today's society is a tour de force of both religious and intellectual history. He makes fascinating and well-supported claims about how the worldview introduced by the Reformation affects a wide range of social forces and issues, including capitalism, higher education, and even global warming.

Gregory adopts a genealogical approach in which he traces the shift in thinking throughout the history of six particular aspects of society. In Chapter 1, "Excluding God," Gregory makes the claim that the Reformation, rather than science, is what eventually led to the exclusion of God from the examination of the natural world. He writes, "[T]he intractable doctrinal disagreements among Protestants and especially between Catholics and Protestants, as we shall see, had the unintended effect of sidelining explicitly Christian claims about God in relationship to the natural world. This left only empirical observation and philosophical speculation as supra-confessional means of investigating and theorizing that relationship" (40). Gregory then traces the effects of this doctrinal fragmentation and marginalization of Christian doctrine in the sciences "through deism to Weberian disenchantment and modern atheism" (41), showing how such a shift continues to affect society today.

In later chapters, Gregory examines how similar transformations took place in the academy as well as in politics, noting:

"The doctrinal disagreements of the Reformation era precipitated the confessionalization of universities and thus comprised a critical shift in higher education that led to the eventual secularization of knowledge, and to the modern exclusion of all religious truth claims not only from the natural sciences, but also from the social sciences and humanities. A separation of religion from academic disciplines in secular universities was constructed that now parallels the institutional separation of church and state. (297)

Here, Gregory is making a similar claim to his argument about the shift in thinking about the natural world. While he leads his readers through a dizzying thread of examples that support such claims, Gregory maintains a tight overall focus. Given the scope of this study, *The Unintended Reformation* will be appealing to a wide range of scholars, even though Gregory's methodology is clearly that of a historian. And while he incorporates ideas from thinkers ranging from Machiavelli to Foucault, he takes care to make these more theoretical concepts understandable to those outside the academy. As a result, the threads of change that are traced throughout *The Unintended Reformation* are easy to connect to contemporary life, providing a useful paradigm for understanding the fragmentation of knowledge, power, and morality in the twenty-first century.

While Gregory's study of change is by far the largest in scope out of these four volumes, Mark Noll's *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*, the winner of the 2013 Lilly Fellows Program Book Award, examines a shift that is perhaps the most hopeful for those in Christian higher education. Twenty years ago, Noll's *The Scandal of
the Evangelical Mind (1994) provocatively began, “The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind” (3). In this most recent work, Noll opens very differently: “Christianity is defined by the person and work of Jesus Christ” (ix). The shift in focus here is immediately clear. While both works examine aspects of the Christian intellectual tradition, The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind looks at the intellectual tra-

dition of the Evangelical community, while Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind is centered on the teachings and work of Christ himself. This shift in focus reflects Noll’s overall change in attitude toward the relationship between the Evangelical mind and intellectual life. As he himself notes, if had had written The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind today, “it would have a different tone—more hopeful than despairing, more attuned to possibilities than to problems, more concerned with theological resources than with theological deficiencies” (153). Noll’s turn toward a more faith-based approach to Christian scholarship is accompanied then, by a turn toward hope as well.

Throughout Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind, Noll focuses on the actual beliefs and practices of Christianity. Rather than turning to scholars of intellectual history, philosophy, or higher education to make his claims, Noll instead turns to the Bible, along with theological writings and the major creeds. When making a claim about how the doctrine of Jesus as both human and God makes Christian scholars “predisposed to seek knowledge about particular matters from more than one angle,” Noll turns to Acts 2:23, Nehemiah 2:8, and Psalms 77:19 to illustrate the “wisdom of that expectation” (46). He then examines the writings of four theologians—Anselm of Canterbury, Benjamin Warfield, Gabriel Fackre, and Michael Polanyi—to support the idea that while “the natural human urge moves to adjudicate competition among overarching claims,” for the Christian scholar who is used to the tension between Christ as God and Christ as human, “it will be a smaller step... to seek the harmonious acceptance of [some dichotomous intellectual problems]” (49). Noll maintains his focus on “the person and work of Jesus Christ” in the development of both particular claims and his overall argument throughout the volume.

Noll’s argument in Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind might, initially, seem like something that has been said before. “The great hope for Christian learning,” he writes, “is to delve deeper into the Christian faith itself” (22). At first, this claim might not seem to offer anything new. In fact, it could seem rather limiting: how can one be a Christian scholar of modernist literature, for instance, if one is focused on the teachings of Christianity?

As it turns out, Noll advocates delving deeper into the Christian faith to inform the process of scholarship, rather than the subject. In his discussion of “contingency” in Chapter 3 (and later in Chapter 6), for example, Noll takes Jesus’ charge to “come and see” as a call not just for the original disciples, but also for academic scholars: “It provides an especially strong counter to the tendency of academics to trust their own conclusions instead of letting their ideas be challenged by contact with the world beyond their own minds” (55). He also identifies Christian faith as an antidote for the many temptations that come with an academic vocation: “pride to be cultivated in degrees earned, books published, honors bestowed, or interviews granted” and “callousness toward people of ordinary intelligence” to name two (61). Because of the emphasis on mystery in the Christian faith, however, Christian scholars “should be doubly aware of how limited their own wisdom is” (62).
Noll's charge to "delve deeper into the Christian faith" is not because key elements of the Christian faith are what Christian scholars should research, but rather, because they inform how Christian scholars can engage with their respective disciplines.

After examining how the Christian faith can encourage virtues such as contingency and self-denial that are beneficial to scholarship, Noll then spends several chapters demonstrating how this process would work in particular academic disciplines. In Chapter 5, he begins with his own discipline—history—arguing that the limits of knowledge within Christian thought “provide some reassurance about the potential for grasping actual historical fact” (84). He expands his discussion of the importance of “coming and seeing” in Chapter 6 in his discussion of scientific disciplines, pointing out how a Christ-centered approach to scholarship can be useful in “humbly” and “non-defensively” tackling difficult questions such as those about evolution and the origins of the universe (121). Finally, in Chapter 7, Noll approaches Biblical studies, arguing that “[f]or a truly biblical view of the Bible, it is important not to treat the Bible as a storehouse of information sufficient in itself for all things but to embrace, rather, the Bible's own perspective that leads its readers to a God-ordained openness to all things” (129-130). These case studies leave much room for academics outside of these three disciplines to engage with his ideas and consider how their own particular disciplines might be affected by a Christ-centered approach to scholarship. In this way, by exploring how Jesus' teachings can be applied to several disciplines, Noll makes a strong case for defining Christian scholarship as an attitude and approach that can inform the study of nearly anything.

As a result, Noll's book is an extremely useful answer to the question, “What does it mean to be a Christian scholar?” Not only does it provide a concrete answer to this oft-discussed but seldom answered question, but it makes a strong argument for why being a Christian scholar can actually strengthen the quality of research and inquiry, rather than limit it. The fact that this book is addressed to individual scholars, rather than addressing larger issues of the university or society, adds further value to Noll's claims. It provides concrete suggestions for Christian scholarship that can be acted upon immediately, rather than pointing to larger trends that seem out of reach for individuals to address.

Ultimately, in Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind, Noll does more than describe changes seen in society or in the academy. He provides his readers, whether they are Christian scholars, scholars at faith-based universities, or engaged readers outside the academy, with ways of understanding how they fit into these larger patterns of change, and even more importantly, with ways of making this change their own.

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EASTER, GOOD LORD, AGAIN

A wing-shot hawk, silent, stood
on a small rise, its eyes slanted skyward.
A wounded wing hung heavy at its side.
Panting, it died.

A hawk of the same color
cuts and cries above the same small hill.
Will you, this year, have me contrive
a resurrecting from a bird watcher’s tale?
You will, as before. You did, Good Lord,
seize me, mute and cold, in your talons,
take bone-bent me aloft with a leap
and cry, “Now rise with me and sing!”
No lovelier song than sung by You, high
wheeling Hawk, raptured, and satisfied.

Kevin Hadduck
Submission Guidelines

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On The Poets

Brad Davis is a teacher and counselor at Pomfret School in Connecticut. His most recent book is Sunken Garden Poetry (Wesleyan University Press, 2012). He has taught creative writing at the College of the Holy Cross and Eastern Connecticut State University.

Brett Foster’s writing has recently appeared or is forthcoming in Books & Culture, Image, Kenyon Review, Sewanee Theological Review, and Raritan. He teaches Renaissance literature and creative writing at Wheaton College.

James Owens divides his time between central Indiana and northern Ontario. Two books of his poems have been published, and his poems, translations, and photographs appear widely in literary journals, including The Cortland Review, Poetry Ireland Review, and Flycatcher.

Miho Nonaka is a bilingual writer from Tokyo and Associate Professor of English at Wheaton College. Her poems and essays have appeared in Ploughshares and Cimarron Review, among others. Her translation of works by twentieth and twenty-first century Japanese female poets is scheduled to appear in a two-volume anthology from UC Berkeley.


Kevin Hadduck and his wife live in Helena, Montana. He serves as Director of the Academic Resource Center at Carroll College. He has published poems in more than two dozen journals, including JAMA, Theology Today, The Christian Century, and Wisconsin Review.
LILLY FELLOWS PROGRAM
BOOK AWARD

The biennial Lilly Fellows Program Book Award honors an original and imaginative work from any academic discipline that best exemplifies the central ideas and principles animating the Lilly Fellows Program. These include faith and learning in the Christian intellectual tradition, the vocation of teaching and scholarship, and the history, theory, or practice of the university as the site of religious inquiry and culture.

WINNER OF THE
2013 LILLY FELLOWS PROGRAM BOOK AWARD

Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind
By Mark A. Noll
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011

In Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind, Mark A. Noll draws on the resources of Christian thought not only to defend but to promote the pursuit of truth and beauty in the liberal arts. Building on and extending his arguments in The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind, Noll demonstrates that thoughtful understandings of Christology and the Atonement not only justify passionate and precise academic work but offer specific guidance in the way scholars and teachers approach their subjects. Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind—a book for scholarly and general audiences—is required reading for people of faith who are interested in the purposes of education and the vocation of the teacher/scholar.

FINALISTS

The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society
By Brad S. Gregory
Harvard University Press, 2012

No Longer Invisible: Religion in University Education
By Douglas Jacobson and Rhonda Husted Jacobsen
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