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Educators Explore Faith and Learning Issues During Annual ASBCS Meeting and Workshops

by Tim Fields

Top administrators from member schools of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS) explored opportunities for integrating faith and learning at 54 member schools during a three-day annual meeting and workshops May 31–June 2 in Franklin, Tenn.

Hester lecturers spoke on faith and learning issues including “The Call and Challenge to be a Distinctively Christian College or University,” “Developing a Theology for Baptist Higher Education,” and “The University, the Church and the Culture.”

In the first Hester lecture Duane Litfin, president of Wheaton College, told ASBCS administrators “Distinctively Christian thinking is inevitably built upon the Trinitarian claim of the Lordship, and therefore the centrality, of Jesus Christ. This leads directly to the awareness that He is the One, the only One who can serve as

the centerpiece of an entire curriculum, the One to whom we must relate everything and without whom no fact, no theory, no subject, no practice can be fully appreciated.”

In the second Hester lecture David Dockery, president of Union University, an ASBCS member school, told administrators “A theology of Baptist higher education rooted in scripture and grounded in the best of our Baptist heritage can equip the work of Baptist higher education for times of duress and trial, whether that comes through means of persecution, whether in the face of faithless scholarship, or in the midst of the church’s internal bickering and divisions.”

Dockery said that a theology for Baptist higher education must include a belief in a triune God, with Christ as mediator between humanity and God, a belief in a totally truthful and authoritative Bible, a belief in the message of God’s justifying

work by grace through faith, a focus on the church and a commitment to a life of prayer, holiness, obedience and growth in Christ.

“This kind of theology can shape Baptist higher education for a promising future,” Dockery asserted.

Tom Corts, president of ASBCS member school Samford University, delivered the third Hester lecture. He challenged school administrators to “Make your peace with the reality that your institution is not like all others; it has a higher and holier calling, no matter the bias of the culture. And make your peace with the reality that the recognition and respect bestowed on other institutions may never be yours in a culture like ours.

“But then, you are not accountable for being popular with the local Chamber of Commerce, he reminded. “When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time

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Bruce Heilman Receives Charles D Johnson Outstanding Educator Award

E. Bruce Heilman, native Kentuckian and Chancellor of the University of Richmond, was presented the Charles D Johnson Outstanding Educator Award during the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS) May 31.

The award, presented by the ASBCS, honors individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to Christian higher education through Baptist-related institutions.

The award was presented at an ASBCS banquet at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee.

For more than 50 years Heilman has been a distinguished higher education leader, scholar and Christian servant. He has served as the chancellor of the University of Richmond since 1988 after serving as president and chief executive officer for approxi-

mately 17 years. Prior to this he served four years in the United States Marine Corps; served as president of Meredith College in Raleigh, North Carolina, and served as senior administrator in several educational institutions.

Heilman was educated at Campbellsville Junior College, now Campbellsville University; the University of Omaha; the University of Kentucky; the University of Tennessee; and George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. He earned master's and doctoral degrees from Peabody College.

Heilman has held teaching positions at Belmont University, Kentucky Wesleyan College and Peabody College and has served as consultant and on the boards of many educational, religious and charitable organizations.

Heilman is married to the former Betty June Dobbins of Louisville, Kentucky. ■



Bill Crouch, right, president of Georgetown College and 2003-04 Board Chair of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, presents the Charles D Johnson Outstanding Educator Award to E. Bruce Heilman, chancellor of the University of Richmond.

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Educators Explore ...

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shall be no more,' you will give an account to the Lord God for your stewardship. Therefore, be certain that, if Baptist colleges were someday, somehow, to be outlawed, we would see one another in jail."

The three-day meeting provided continuing education opportunities for a wide range of administrative disciplines including public relations, financial affairs, legal affairs, academic affairs, student development and denominational relations.

During the meeting, members approved changes in their bylaws to increase the number of board members from 15 to 16 and to increase the rotating terms from three years to four years. Bob Agee, executive director of ASBCS, told members "The bylaw change will increase participation for member schools and will result in more experienced board members."

The Association, founded in 1948, is owned by its 54 member schools in 18 states and exists for the schools to cooperate in promoting the interests of Christian education. Combined enrollment of the member schools is more than 123,000 students.

Members of the association include the chief executive officer and the chief academic officer from each member school. A board of directors manages the business and affairs of the Association.

Members heard reports of a newly formed insurance consortium to help manage the skyrocketing costs for property and casualty insurance at member schools. The consortium has already saved an average of \$100,000 per year for each school that has elected to participate in the joint purchasing program.

Members also approved an annual budget for the association of \$239,292 with expected revenues of \$249,225.

About 55 percent of the revenue comes from annual dues paid by member schools; less than 10 percent comes from state Baptist conventions; and the remainder comes from corporate sponsorships, auxiliary enterprises and annual meeting income.

The budget funds two full-time staff members, a corporate office in Nashville and member services including fellowship and continuing education opportunities

for faculty and administrators; value-added services through corporate sponsors; *The Southern Baptist Educator* (a quarterly scholarly journal); joint promotion of the schools in printed and electronic media; monitoring of legislation affecting Christian education; and a website <www.baptistschools.org> for prospective students and those seeking employment at member schools.

In other action, the ASBCS board of directors voted to deny membership renewal to Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona, because Board members said Grand Canyon no longer meets

membership requirements. Grand Canyon, with a reported enrollment of approximately 3,000 students, was sold

recently to a for-profit corporation, which changes its former status as a "non-profit Baptist-related institution"—two of the requirements for membership in ASBCS.

ASBCS Board Chair Bill Crouch, president of Georgetown College, Georgetown, Ky., said "Grand Canyon is free to reapply for membership in the future if its status changes."

The Board elected as officers for 2004-05: Andy Westmordland, president of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., chair; Ron Ellis, president, California Baptist University, Riverside, Calif., vice chair/chair elect; and Don Good, vice president for academic affairs, Cumberland College, Williamsburg Ky., recording secretary.

New board members elected during the meeting by the full membership include: Mark Brister, president, Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Okla.; Arlen Dykstra, provost and vice president for academic affairs, Missouri Baptist University, St. Louis; David Jeffrey, provost and vice president for academic affairs, Baylor University, Waco, Tex.; Richard Parker, vice president for financial affairs, Houston Baptist University, Houston, Tex.; and Evans Whitaker, president, Anderson College, Anderson, S.C.

The next meeting of the board of directors is 5:30 p.m. Monday, December 6, 2004, at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis during the annual meeting of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The next ASBCS annual meeting and workshops are scheduled for June 5-7, 2005 in San Antonio, Texas. ■

COMMENT: Baptist Education Theology— The Search Continues

Bob R. Agee, Executive Director, ASBCS



This year's meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools was one of our best yet. Even though the meeting began on Memorial Day, the number of registered participants was only a few short of our all-time high.



Bob R. Agee

The three presidents who presented the Hester Lectures were superb, challenging us to think in greater depth about our calling to be intentionally Christian as educational institutions. I want to thank Duane Litfin (Wheaton College), David Dockery (Union University) and Tom Corts (Samford University) for the excellent content and the spirit in which the lectures were presented. You will enjoy reading them in *The Educator* in this issue and in the next two issues.

We have much to ponder as we think about a theological framework for the way we offer education. Dr. Litfin was so correct in his call for us to carry out our task acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord over all we do. Dr. Dockery was on target, calling us to be mindful of what the church has confessed about who God is and how He relates to His world.

Dr. Corts appropriately challenged us to be alert and aware as we engage and challenge our culture with a Christian message and example. But we must continue talking to each other about who we are as Baptists in light of our theological history and heritage.

Years ago, Dr. Morgan Patterson challenged his Baptist history classes to recognize that no single doctrine is unique to Baptists. He pointed out that throughout our history we have held firmly to at least seven critical beliefs and it is the combination of these that form our distinctive theological framework. Those seven principles are:

The Bible is the sole rule of faith and practice. This is the cornerstone of Baptist doctrine. It has been the opening

article in virtually every confession of faith ever adopted by Baptist groups. Because it is the cornerstone doctrine, a strong view of Scripture that acknowledges the authenticity, accuracy, and authority of the Bible, is essential both for the church and for Baptist/Christian higher education. To fail to treat holy Scripture with reverence in the classroom or in life is to deny our roots as Baptists.

Every local congregation is autonomous. No ecclesiastical hierarchy dictates to a Baptist church what it can or cannot do. Every church is free to seek the mind and the will of God in the way it conducts its affairs. Every Baptist church decides for itself when and how it wants to cooperate with fellow believers and what it wants to support. Our schools need to be sure we treat every congregation with appreciation and respect.

Baptists believe in an experiential faith. Every person must experience God for himself or herself. Persons do not inherit being a Christian, they must decide for themselves. According to Scripture, that experience must include believing in the saving grace of Jesus Christ, confession of sin, repentance, and calling on Jesus Christ to forgive and to save. There should be opportunities in the life of our schools where students and others will be encouraged to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We believe in the symbolic meaning of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

According to Scripture, baptism should be by immersion and should be administered under the authority of a local congregation. Neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper imparts grace; they symbolize what Christ did for us to make salvation possible and our observance is a celebration of His love and grace.

Every believer is a priest. The priesthood of the believer was never intended to be license for a believer to believe anything he/she wanted to or do anything he/she wanted to do. Every priest is governed in belief and behavior by what the Bible teaches.

This important conviction highlights the fact that all believers have access to God without a human mediator and that

all believers are accountable to God for what they do. Historically we have believed that an open Bible in the hands of a hungry-hearted believer under the leadership of the Holy Spirit would lead to a right understanding of holy Scripture and of God's will for a life.

We have historically stood for complete religious liberty. From Thomas Helwys in England (1612) to Roger Williams to Isaac Backus and John Leland, Baptists have been the prophetic voice in the cry for all people to be free to worship and serve God without interference or the dictates of government. If it weren't for Baptist voices in the shaping of the U.S. Constitution and the first ten amendments, America likely would not enjoy the religious freedoms we enjoy today. We do not believe that you can coerce people into being right with God.

Baptists have historically stood also for the separation of church and state. Roger Williams and others believed that there should never be a state religion, i.e., a single understanding of Christianity that would be forced upon people or upon government. We have never believed in the separation of religious conviction from life nor have we ever tried to separate religious principle from the affairs of state. We, as Christians, are called to be the voice of conscience in our world, proclaiming and exemplifying the difference that Christ makes in a human life and in human relations.

Whatever theological framework we hammer out for the way we offer education as Baptist colleges and schools will reflect these basic convictions.

There are other pieces of the puzzle but each of these basic understandings is relevant to the way we approach students and the way we deal with knowledge.

I've believed for more than 50 years that these principles are what makes us Baptists and I believe we should take the combination of these seven principles seriously as we carry out our task as Christian educators. Let's keep thinking and talking about the implications of these principles for the way we do our work. ■

The Call to Be a *Distinctively*

by Duane Litfin

Editor's Note: Duane Litfin, president of Wheaton College, Chicago, Ill., delivered the following Hester Lecture during the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools May 31–June 2 at the Cool Springs Marriott Hotel in Franklin, Tenn..

When I was asked to address the topic, “The call to be a distinctively christian university,” I readily accepted the assignment because of its importance.

I want to try to answer two preliminary questions, both prompted by this topic: First, what does the term “distinctively Christian” mean? Second, to what extent should we, or can we, *aspire* to be “distinctively Christian” on our campuses? I offer these thoughts not as a final word on the subject, but as grist for the mill of our thinking about our own institutions.¹ Who are we, and who do we aspire to be?



Duane Litfin

What Does It Mean to Be “Distinctively Christian”?

In his essay on “A Baptist View of the Catholic University,” Thomas Morris, a Baptist philosopher who teaches at Notre Dame, says:

Every university exists both for the discovery of new knowledge and for the transmission of the best of human culture and knowledge. It has always been my assumption that a distinctively Catholic university exists for these reasons as well, but that, in addition, it is intended to be predominantly a community of individuals who approach these tasks from the perspective of the historically important and intellectually powerful worldview that forms the foundation of Catholic thought and life—the worldview of traditional Christian theism.²

While it’s not clear to me how working from a “worldview of traditional Christian theism” can render an institution distinctively Catholic, would not a Baptist university such as Baylor, for example, meet this criterion? Morris’s stipulation of a specifically Christian theism is a useful one. It prompts this question: What is it that marks a theistic worldview as *distinctively* Christian? Many things may be Christian without being *distinctively* so. For example, to be an honest scholar is Christian, but not *distinctively* so. To treat other people with dignity is Christian, but not *distinctively* so. To believe there is a God who created all things is Christian, but not *distinctively* so. Christians share each of these things with many others who are not Christians. So, what is it that makes something *distinctively* Christian?

The answer, I propose, is the doctrine of the Trinity, and more specifically, the claims Christians make for the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The Lordship of Jesus Christ

For some Christians, their understanding of the person and work of Christ scarcely extends beyond the affirmation, “Jesus died for me on the cross.” They willingly celebrate Jesus as their sin-bearer but without appearing to comprehend fully who He is or the colossal scope of what He has done, or even what took place on that cross. But for the purposes of Christian higher education, such a stunted Christology will not do. We require a fuller vision, the vision of *Jesus Christ as Lord*.

From a biblical point of view, human language can scarcely craft a more profound declaration than this one: *Jesus Christ is Lord*. In fact, this affirmation is so heavily freighted with spiritual and intellectual weight that, according to the Apostle Paul, no one can at present even utter it sincerely “except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). In our own time this declaration thus remains the essential confession of the Christian alone (Rom. 10:9), but the Bible teaches that history is marching toward a different day. On that day the acknowledgment that “Jesus Christ is Lord” will escape the lips of every created being. On that day, says the Apostle Paul, “at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-10).

What do we mean by the lordship of Christ? To speak of His lordship may be for some to speak at once of personal matters: *Jesus as Lord of my life*. This is understandable because this surely is the ultimate issue every human being must face. But if we are to think biblically we must remember that the question of one’s personal allegiance to Christ is just that: it is the final issue. It’s not where we must begin. The place to begin is with the person of Jesus himself; that is, we must come to grips with who this One is who makes such all-encompassing claims upon our lives.

In his famous sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter summarized his central point this way: “Let all the house of Israel . . . know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36).

Later, in one of the most elevated passages in all of Scripture, the Apostle Paul elaborates on this same affirmation. Jesus Christ, he says, is:

the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Col. 1:15-17).

The place to begin is with the person of Jesus . . . we must come to grips with who this One is who makes such all-encompassing claims upon our lives.

Christian University

C reator of all things—It is quite impossible to overstate the significance of these affirmations. According to the Bible, God's Son, the Second Person of the Godhead whom we know as Jesus Christ, is the creator of all things. The created order is specifically His handiwork.

But wait. Has not Christ's church always affirmed that God the Father is "maker of heaven and earth." It has, and in this the Church merely echoes the heavenly chorus: "Worthy are you, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created" (Rev. 4:11). But notice that it was apparently the Second Person of the Godhead through whom the Father effected all of His creating activities. Thus the writer to the Hebrews is able to say that "in these last days [the Father] has spoken to us in His Son, . . . through whom also He made the world" (Heb 1:2). Paul says something similar: "In [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him" (Col. 1:15). In fact, the apostle John insists, this was without exception: "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3, 10).

S ustainer of all things—As the world's creator, the Son is not only "before all things," but "in him all things hold together." The one who created the world is also the one who sustains it. It is the Son who "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3). Apart from the presence of sin and its effects, the universe is the way it is because the Son has said it shall be so. By the will of the Father, the Son is the world's composer, and it is the Son's infinite word and will that holds it in the way it is. The entire created order is contingent upon him at every point and in every moment. We may delight to exercise our God-given curiosity in discovering how the world works, and we honor him when we do so. But even when we have done our best and have probed deeply into the workings of the universe, we are forever left with the perplexing question such probing can never answer: Why? This is the way things work, but why do they work this way? The Bible's answer sends us back to the Son. The universe works the way it does because, in the end, the Son has ordained that it shall be so.

G oal of all things—Not only were all things created "by him"; they were also created "for him" (Col. 1:16). The nuances of Paul's language here are striking. We might say, "This gift is for Mrs. Smith" and mean by it only that Mrs. Smith is to be the recipient. What Paul is saying includes this but is also stronger. It has almost a sense of motion to it: The universe is "for Christ" in the sense of being "unto him, toward him." From the beginning it was the Father's purpose that the Son should be appointed "heir of all things" (Heb 1:2). This ultimate purpose—this "summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth" (Eph. 1:9-10)—literally delighted the

Father: it was his "good pleasure" (eudokia), says Paul. Somehow, in ways we can scarcely imagine, the universe is groaning toward its fulfillment in the Son; he is at once its destination and its destiny, its goal and its blessed hope.

R edeemer of all things—To all of this, of course, must be added the Son's role as Redeemer. "When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4:4). The Creation could be salvaged from its sin and brokenness only by God himself becoming part of it, and this task was assigned by the Father to the Second Person of the Godhead. It was the Father's intent, we are told, "to reconcile all things to Himself" through the work of his Son, "whether things on earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1:20). This required the Son to leave the courts of Heaven and take upon himself human flesh. The famous "emptying" (kenosis) passage in Philippians 2 describes the journey:

Though he was in the form of God, [the Son] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:6-8).

This is the incomparable story of Christmas, the account of the Son's incarnation. "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us'" (Matt. 1:23). And thus shall the Son

ever be known: as the God-man. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Charles Wesley's lovely Christmas hymn, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," captures it perfectly: "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see / Hail the incarnate Deity."

J udge of all things—Recall what follows immediately in the above kenosis passage, for it drives us on to another dimension of the Son: having recounted Christ's costly journey from the glories of Heaven to a humiliating and excruciating death on a cross, the Apostle continues:

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9-11).

Because the Son had left nothing undone of his assignment, the Father was able to say yes to one of the Son's last earthly requests. In the upper room Jesus prayed, "I glorified you on the

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earth, having accomplished the work you gave me to do; now Father, will you glorify me together with yourself by re-clothing me with the glory I had with you before the world began" (John 17:5). Because the Son had in fact fulfilled all the Father assigned him, the "emptying" was reversed; the Son was given back the full panoply of glory he'd enjoyed with the Father throughout eternity. He will remain forever the God-man, but today he sits clothed, not in the humble garments of a Galilean peasant but with the inexpressible splendors of heaven. "From thence," the great creeds of the Church tell us, "he shall come to judge the living and the dead."

"Truly, truly, I say to you." It was Jesus' standard way of seizing our attention, of impressing upon us the need to listen:

An hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, even so he gave to the Son also to have life in himself; and He gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. . . . I can do nothing on my own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of him who sent me (John 5:24-30).

"Behold," says John, "he is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him" (Rev. 1:7). On that day history will have reached its denouement. The redeeming work of the Son will be finished. The heavens and the earth will be refashioned and the Son will present to the Father a people for his name and a Creation made new (1 Cor. 15:24).

These are just some of the claims the Bible makes for this One we know as Jesus Christ. We have not even touched on his roles as prophet, priest or "Head of the body, the Church" (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22). To Christians Jesus is indeed "the firstborn from the dead," the one who "loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to his God and Father" (Rev. 1:5). But our focus for the moment has been broader, on the Son's relationship to the entire created order. And what an astounding picture it is.

The Bible's claims for the person of Jesus Christ are quite literally breathtaking. "He is the radiance of [the Father's] glory and the exact representation of His nature" (Heb. 1: 3). "In him all the fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2:9). "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation" (Col 1:15). It is the Father's will that "in all things [the Son] may have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1:18). Indeed, here are the Father's own words to his beloved Son:

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. . . . In the beginning you laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain. They will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak you will fold them up and they will be changed. But you are the same and your years will not fail (Heb. 1:8-12).

The mind reels: Jesus Christ, the divine *Logos*, the central principle and principal of the universe; the Word who "became

flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1). Jesus the "ruler over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5), the centerpiece of human history.

"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18), Jesus said. He could make this claim only because it was true. "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hands" (John 3:35). The Father constituted him "head over all rule and authority" in the universe (Col. 2:10). All life and light, whatever their proximate sources, flow ultimately from him: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. . . . He is the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man" (John 1:4, 9). All understanding has its source in him in whom "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). He is the Way, the Truth, the Life, such that no one can come to the Father except through him (John 14:6). Could such language be more far-reaching? John Stott rightly says:

The highest of all missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission . . . nor love for sinners . . . but rather zeal—burning and passionate zeal—for the glory of Jesus Christ. . . . Only one imperialism is Christian . . . and that is concern for His Imperial Majesty Jesus Christ, and for the glory of his empire or kingdom.³

All authority, all life, all light, all wisdom, all things—all are summed up in the person of Jesus Christ. John Stackhouse, Jr. observes, "The person and work of Christ do not merely crown God's work of revelation and redemption as a sort of splendid ornament or even as the best example of God's activity in the world. The person and work of Christ constitute the defining chapter of the whole narrative, the hinge of history, the basis upon which everything else in creation makes sense."⁴ Jesus Christ stands at the center of all humans can know or experience, and from that exalted center he proclaims: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22:13). The disciples asked, "Who then is this that even wind and sea obey him?" The Bible's answer is: *Jesus Christ the Lord*.

What comes clear from even this cursory review of what revelation teaches about Jesus Christ, and what his Church has always believed and proclaimed, is that the Son is the designated primary agent of the Father for virtually everything concerning the created order. The Son called it into being and he sustains it by his Word. At the behest of his Father he ultimately and permanently joined that Creation in order to redeem it. One day he will return to judge it and to restore it to all that it was intended to be. When John says, "No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (John 1:18), he is speaking of Jesus, and his point is that the Son, the Second Person of the Godhead, preeminently manifests the Father to the world: "No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). He is the unique interface, the central point where the universe and the Godhead meet. He is the Father's appointed mediator for dealing with the world: its formation, its sustenance, its redemption and its restoration.

This biblical understanding of the centrality of the Son is crucial for Christian educators who take seriously the expansiveness of a university curriculum; in other words, for those institutions that are intent upon exposing their students to the full range of human learning and experience, to all the disciplines, to God's

vast created order. For such institutions a truncated Christology—for example, Jesus merely as sin-bearer—will not do. The cross-work of Jesus Christ is properly “crucial”—the very *crux* (from the Latin *cruces*, or “cross”)—to all we can be or know as Christians and I have not the slightest interest in seeing it dislodged from that privileged position; indeed, I will insist as loudly as any upon its centrality. But I also want to insist upon the full weight and sweep of what the biblical revelation tells us about who was hanging on that Roman cross. In fact, without that fuller picture, can we truly understand the cross itself? Can we even begin to identify with the astonishment of the Apostle John when he informs us that the Second Person of the Godhead “was in the world, and the world was made by him—*yet the world did not know him!*” (John 1:10)? Or the outrage of Peter, and the dumbfounded grief of his Pentecostal listeners, when he proclaimed to them the shocking news that, “God has made him both Lord and Christ, *this Jesus whom you crucified!*” (Acts 2:36). “Do you have any idea,” Peter in effect asks, “whom you executed on that cross? You have *killed* the Lord of Glory!”

This fuller account of “the Lord of Glory” is what Paul has in mind when he informs us that the central affirmation of the Christian is, “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor. 12:3). It is simply an outrageous claim—unless it’s true. But if it is true, as Christians do affirm, then it means that the person of Jesus is utterly central to all that humans can know or experience. There is nothing imaginable that is irrelevant to him or to which he is irrelevant. There is no quarter of human learning in which he is not the central figure. Without him humans will never make full sense of either their world or themselves. That’s why Paul says that in Jesus Christ are found “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). In the end he is the key (cf. Luke 11:52) to all we can know and nothing can be fully grasped without reference to him.

A Potential Objection

One response to all of this might be to suspect that such a Christ-centered focus poses a theological problem. There are those who hold a modalistic “Jesus only” theology that constitutes a denial of the Trinity. But the Bible teaches no such thing and the church long ago branded such an idea heretical. Since the earliest church councils every major branch of Christendom has held that the Trinity consists of three eternal, co-equal Persons, one in substance but distinct in subsistence.

But if the three Persons of the Trinity are co-equal, does not a Christ-centered focus constitute an imbalanced emphasis and thus an insult to the Father and Spirit? Not according to the Bible. It was precisely the Father’s design that the Son should play this central role in the created order; it was his delight that his Son should have “preeminence” in everything. Nothing gladdens the Father more than to see his Son receive this kind of prominence. To confess the magnificent Lordship of Jesus Christ is not to slight the Father; it is to glorify him (Phil. 2:11).

The notion of the Father being slighted by our focus on the Son represents a grotesque misunderstanding of the relationships among the members of the Godhead. It foists upon the triune God a sinful, human pattern by presuming there could exist a breach of envy or jealousy within the Trinity. But such a rupture is impossible. The Father and Son are One (John 10:30). This was Jesus’s point to the disciples when, despite the years they’d spent with him, they still pressed him to “show them the Father.” For this Jesus rebuked them: “Have I been so long with you and yet you do not know me?” asked Jesus. “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9-10). To honor the Son is to honor

the Father; to believe in the Jesus of the Bible is to believe in God. As Jesus said, “He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And he who sees me sees him who sent me” (John 12:44-45). The Apostle Peter sums it up this way: “Through [Jesus Christ] you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God” (1 Peter 1:21).

The apostolic witness is clear: “Whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also” (1 John 2:23). Conversely, as Jesus also said, “He who rejects me, rejects the One who sent me” (Luke 10:16). The Father allows no possibility of a stance that says, “I will accept you, the Father, but I reject your Son.” On the contrary, “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (John 5:23). To repudiate the Son is by definition to repudiate the Father (cf. 1 John 5:1, 10-12).

But what of the Holy Spirit? Does a Christocentric focus slight the Third Person of the Trinity? In a similar way we may be certain that it does not. The Spirit’s assignment in the world is multi-faceted—regenerating, indwelling, sanctifying, revealing, empowering, even creating (Gen. 1:2, Psalm 104:30)—and is worthy of fuller understanding in its own right. But there can be no rupture here either. Whatever else the Father assigned to the Spirit, his role in the world is explicitly Christ-centered, as Jesus himself pointed out:

When the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me. . . . He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you (John 15:26-16:15).

As John Stackhouse, Jr. says, “the Holy Spirit remains . . . a relatively minor, shadowy figure in the New Testament compared with the center stage, fully lit person of Jesus.”⁵ But that is by design. The central aim of the Spirit is not to draw attention to himself; it is to show us the Son, to “glorify” him. Stackhouse’s reference to the “fully lit person of Jesus” suggests the image of perhaps a floodlight shining on a church steeple at night. The floodlight is not designed to draw attention to itself but to display the steeple. So also, the Father-assigned role of the Spirit is not to garner attention to himself but to reveal and glorify the Son. The Spirit is scarcely slighted when we look to the Son; it is his essential purpose in the world to help us do precisely that.

For Christians, it can be a serious theological mistake to try to replace the centrality of the Son with the centrality of the Holy Spirit. For example, “Dominus Jesus, a Declaration of the Roman Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith” (August 6, 2000), strongly challenges those who, embarrassed by the exclusivity inherent in such strong Christocentric claims, have argued for an “economy of the Holy Spirit with a more universal breadth than that of the Incarnate Word” (II.12). In such a scheme Jesus Christ is subsumed under the Holy Spirit and taken to be merely one of the many ways the Holy Spirit is active in the world. Such a move displaces the Son from the center and renders the work of the Holy Spirit central. “Dominus Jesus” rightly repudiates this idea, insisting instead upon the historically orthodox Christ-centered focus which, when understood in its biblical fullness, shows itself to be fully Trinitarian.

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This Son-centered focus represents the historic stance of all three branches of the Christian Church. It has marked the Church's worship from the most ancient times. All the great Councils and Creeds give it testimony. Here is not the place to attempt an historical survey, but by way of simple illustration consider the two most ancient and widely used creeds of the Church, the Nicene and the Apostles' Creeds. The Nicene Creed is twice as long as the Apostles' Creed, but the proportion both statements allocate to the Persons of the Trinity remains relatively uniform. By word count the Father receives 5 percent and 12 percent of the attention respectively, and the Spirit 16 percent and 6 percent. But the Son receives 59 percent and 64 percent. This is not because these creeds, or historic Christianity for that matter, ever considered the Son more important than the Father or the Spirit. All Christians worship one God who subsists in three co-equal Persons. It is due rather to the biblical emphasis we have cited above. It was the Father's design that not only the Christian faith, but the entire Cosmos be profoundly Son-centered. This is the message of the Scriptures, a truth the Church has recognized from the beginning.

Distinctively Christian thinking, then, involves an exploration of the Trinitarian implications of what we're studying, and in particular the Christ-centeredness of things. Until we arrive at this level of thinking, what we're doing may be factually sound and even generically theistic, and therefore truly within the circle of what a Christian does think. But it will not yet be *distinctively* Christian.

To engage in *distinctively* Christian thinking is to go beyond. *Distinctively* Christian thinking is inevitably built upon the Trinitarian claim of the Lordship, and therefore the centrality, of Jesus Christ. This leads directly to the awareness that He is the One, the only One, who can serve as the centerpiece of an entire curriculum, the One to whom we must relate everything and without whom no fact, no theory, no subject, no practice can be fully appreciated. As Pascal said, "Not only do we only know God through Jesus Christ, we can only know ourselves through Jesus Christ." *Distinctively* Christian thinking takes place at the level of the Trinity, where the person of Jesus Christ stands for us at the Father-ordained center.

Three Circles of Discourse

To grasp what is unique about "distinctively Christian" thinking, envision with me a Christian scholar involved in three different conversations about some particular discipline—say, history or philosophy, or biology. The first conversation is with a secular colleague; the second is with, say, a colleague who is a Muslim; the third is with a colleague who is a committed Christian. Let us stipulate that the conversations we have in mind are not those in which the Christian is attempting to give witness to her non-Christian colleagues about her Christian faith; the exchanges are simply discussions of the subject matter of the discipline these three scholars share in common.

With her secular colleague our Christian thinker experiences a fundamental level of intellectual commonality. With the sec-

ond, her Muslim friend, she shares an additional theistic dimension—a belief in a personal God who created all things. But with the third she shares the full complement of her Christ-centered convictions. How might these three conversations differ?

We should think of this trio of conversations as three concentric circles of discourse, the largest of which is the third. The first circle of discourse fits within the second, and both of these fit within the third.

Notice that due to a lack of shared presuppositions, what our Christian thinker is able to discuss in the first two conversations may be something more circumscribed, something less than, but not something other than, what she will say in the third. Both of these circles exist within the third. But conversely, the third conversation includes all that our Christian scholar can say in the first two, but more beside. Because she is working from a fully integrated, Christ-centered worldview, all of the circles surely represent

"Christian" thinking—that is, they contain things a Christian does in fact think—but it is not until we arrive at the unique Christ-centered dimensions of the subject found in the largest circle, yet outside the other two, that we arrive at *distinctively* Christian ideas. *Distinctively* Christian thinking involves an exploration of the full

Trinitarian implications of what we're studying, and the Christ-centeredness of things in particular, for as Karl Barth says, "the doctrine of the Trinity is what basically distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God as Christian . . . in contrast to all other possible doctrines of God."⁶ Quoting C. J. Nitsch, Barth argues that without the Trinity, theism "only distinguishes God and the world and never God from God." Until we arrive at Trinitarian thinking, what we're doing may be factually sound and even generically theistic, and therefore truly within the circle of what a Christian thinks, but it will not yet be *distinctively* Christian.

The image of the three circles is imperfect because in practice what is *distinctively* Christian about our thought may (or may not) entail differences within all three circles; that is, the *distinctively* Christian dimensions of our thought often color in a variety of ways the rest of what a Christian thinks. Genuine Christian thought is more than a mere add-on. Yet our larger point is this: to engage in *distinctive* Christian thinking is to go beyond. It does not settle for merely "faith-informed" scholarship. George Marsden uses this term but also rightly points out its potential insipidness: "the only disadvantage with that term is that it can be *too* general. 'Faith-informed' has to be qualified by reference to a particular faith."⁷ And the particular faith in this instance is the Trinitarian claim of the Lordship, and therefore centrality, of Jesus Christ.

Transposition

Notice that the *distinctively* Christian, then, is not the more restricted realm, but the fuller, richer, larger realm. The most restricted thinking is that of the inner circle, thinking which is restricted to the purely secular. Even the next circle, the theistic, represents a smaller discourse. The fullest possible thinking takes place in the larger circle, which subsumes the other two. This is a point we often miss, and with which we should pause. To grasp it more clearly, let me draw upon the concept of *transposition*, and the argument of C. S. Lewis in his essay of the same title.

In communicating with his or her secular colleagues, what the Christian scholar is about, to use Lewis's terms, is a "kind of transposition or adaptation from a richer to a poorer medium,"⁸ that is, a transposition from a fuller Christ-centered understanding that is charged with meaning, to the secularist's more circumscribed understanding that may be strong on facts but weak on meaning. "The strength of such a critic," says Lewis, "lies in the words 'merely' or 'nothing but.' He sees all the facts but not the meaning. Quite truly, therefore, he claims to have seen all the facts. There is nothing else there; except the meaning."⁹

To illustrate the principle of transposition Lewis introduces the familiar example of drawing. "The problem here is to represent a three-dimensional world on a flat sheet of paper."¹⁰ The Christian scholar's challenge in communicating with an unbelieving audience is akin to one who lives in a three-dimensional world trying to communicate with an imaginary figure who lives in only two dimensions:

If we can imagine a creature who perceived only two dimensions and yet could somehow be aware of the lines as he crawled over them on the paper, we shall easily see how impossible it would be for him to understand. At first he might be prepared to accept on authority our assurance that there was a world in three dimensions. But when we pointed to the lines on the paper and tried to explain, say, that "this is a road," would he not reply that the shape which we were asking him to accept as a revelation of our mysterious other world was the very same shape which, on our own showing, elsewhere meant nothing but a triangle. And soon I think, he would say, "You keep on telling me of this other world and its unimaginable shapes which you call solid. But isn't it very suspicious that all the shapes which you offer me as images or reflections of the solid ones turn out on inspection to be simply the old two-dimensional shapes of my own world as I have always known it? Is it not obvious that your vaunted other world, so far from being the archetype, is a dream which borrows all its elements from this one?"¹¹

For the purposes of communication, Christians in purely secular venues often restrict themselves, temporarily and in an *ad hoc* way, to a flatlander's perspective. Such adaptations are justifiable and by no means useless. Within their limited purposes and as far as they go, these can be wonderfully rewarding academic conversations. After all, three-dimensional characters live not just in the third dimension but in the other two as well. To learn all we can of these two dimensions, and in fact to contribute fruitfully to that body of knowledge ourselves, is not only legitimate for the Christian but important.

There is something sad, however, and dangerous too, about watching Christian scholars sanitize, not merely their communication, but their thought processes to satisfy the demands of their secular guild. Writing of Christian philosophers, Ralph McInerny says, "Many believers, under the influence of the current prejudices of the profession, accept the judgment that they are somehow suspect and anomalous. . . . This leads to the distressing spectacle of believers proceeding as if they did not believe, taking a working skepticism to be a condition of doing philosophy. But a faith thus set aside may not be there when one goes back for it."¹² Along with Lewis, McInerny holds that the Christian thinker actually holds a "tremendous advantage" over

his secular colleagues. Why? "The reason is that his antecedent attitude is not based on hearsay, the idols of the tribe, what the most respected thinkers hold, etc., but on the Word of God. The believer holds as true what God has revealed to be true and has the sanction of God himself for them. Collective human wisdom may be fallible, but God is not."¹³

Distinctively Christian thinking is thus "large circle" thinking, three-dimensional, Christ-centered thinking, thinking that is richer, fuller and more substantial than that of flatlanders. Because the person of Jesus is radically central to all we can know or experience, there is nothing imaginable that is irrelevant to him or to which he is irrelevant. He inhabits and enlivens everything we can study, which is why distinctively Christian thinking and living refuses to bracket him out.

To What Extent Should We Aspire to Be "Distinctively Christian" on Our Campuses?

If this is what we mean by the *distinctively* Christian, to what extent can or should we aspire to it on our campuses? Here I want to return to a subject I addressed with this group a number of years ago in a previous talk—the two archetypes of Christian institutions—because our aspirations for the distinctively Christian will vary depending upon which of these two types we understand ourselves to be. Let me summarize the two types and then touch upon those aspirations.

The Umbrella Model—Umbrella institutions seek to provide a Christian "umbrella" or canopy under which a variety of voices can thrive. Typically a certain "critical mass" represents the voice of a sponsoring Christian tradition, so that sponsoring voice remains a privileged one. But the institution will nonetheless demonstrate genuine diversity. Some campus voices may be unhesitatingly secular, others open but searching, while still others may represent competing religious perspectives. Yet all are welcome under the umbrella so long as they can at least support the broad educational mission of the school. The institution has made room for them; they are asked only to make room for the institution.

In such institutions the sponsoring perspective will typically be kept more or less discernable. It may show itself in such things as the school's architecture, its traditions, its curriculum and extracurricular activities, as well as in the make-up of its governing board, faculty and student body. Yet non-Christian voices, groups and activities may also be found and the institution makes a genuine effort to keep the campus hospitable to them. The result is a relatively non-sectarian environment which can encourage rigorous Christian thinking even while serving as a venue where that thinking can engage other ideas in full.

Religious colleges and universities from various traditions have designed themselves after some variant of this Umbrella Model. For example, in an article in *America*, a Jesuit publication which bills itself as "a magazine for thinking Catholics and those who want to know what Catholics are thinking," David Carlin described what a Roman Catholic version of the Umbrella Model might look like.¹⁴ Carlin addresses the concerns of those who worry that Catholic institutions are becoming so non-sectarian that they cease to be Catholic. How can such institutions maintain their Umbrella character without sacrificing the sponsoring voice of the Catholic Church?

First, Carlin says, make sure that the campus retains a critical

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mass of committed Catholics, or as he puts it, “persons with high CQs (Catholic Quotient).” When it comes to personnel decisions, “hire as many Catholic priests, nuns and brothers as possible; where these are not available, hire committed Catholic lay-persons; and where these are not available, hire non-Catholics (preferably committed Protestants) who have a genuine respect for the Catholic mission of the college.” In addition to hiring practices, keep high CQs “in key power positions: on the board of trustees, in the higher administration, especially the presidency, in the deanships.”

What about the student body? “Recruit a student body among which Catholics have a very decided predominance,” and then make available to them on campus “a variety of extracurricular activities having a Catholic or at least a generalized Christian flavor about them.” Such things as “concerts of Christian sacred music (defining ‘sacred music’ broadly)” should be frequent, all served up in a decidedly Catholic physical environment: “There should always be a church building, handsome inside and out, and the campus should be well stocked with religious statues, paintings and crucifixes.”

On the academic side Carlin considers the most important issue to be the curriculum. Says he, “Design a curriculum that, while not skimping on secular subjects, has a distinctively Catholic character to it. Some of the ‘Catholic courses’ will be required for all students, but a generous offering of others should be available on an elective basis.” More broadly, “invite the larger Catholic world onto the campus for lectures by prominent Catholic intellectuals, novelists, politicians, bishops and the like.” Create special academic centers, “unique repositories for the study of subjects distinctively Catholic.” And where feasible, “publish books and periodicals, both academic and popular of subjects having special Catholic interest.”

“In short,” Carlin says, “an institution will be Catholic if it is run and taught by high-CQ people, is attended mainly by Catholic students, deals with a variety of Catholic topics on both a curricular and extra-curricular basis and in general forms a focal point at which people can come into contact with Catholic ideas and experiences.”

Not all Roman Catholic educators would agree with Carlin’s vision for Catholic schools. Some would find it too sectarian, others might find it insufficiently so, but that debate is not for us. However one decides the question of how “Catholic” Catholic institutions must be to be considered truly Catholic, the debate largely revolves around a core Umbrella Model.¹⁵

Yet the Umbrella Model is by no means limited to Roman Catholic institutions. In an article in *First Things* entitled “a Christian University,” Mark Schwehn, Dean of the Honors College at Valparaiso University and author of the widely-read *Exiles from Eden*, offers a similar vision, one generic enough to be implemented in many different faith traditions. According to Schwehn, the minimal constitutional requirements of a Christian university are as follows: It must have a board of trustees composed of a substantial majority of Christian men and women, clergy and lay, whose primary task is to attend to the Christian character of the institution. They will do this primarily but not exclusively by appointing to the major leadership positions of the school persons who are actively committed to the ideal of a Christian university. These leaders will in turn see to it that all of the following things are present within the life of

the institution: a department of theology that offers courses required of all students in both biblical studies and the Christian intellectual tradition; an active chapel ministry that offers worship services in the tradition of the faith community that supports the school but that also makes provision for worship by

those of other faiths; a critical mass of faculty members who, in addition to being excellent teacher-scholars carrying in and among themselves the DNA of the school, are for the perpetuation of its mission as a

Christian community of inquiry; and a curriculum that includes a large number of courses, required of all students, that are compellingly construed as parts of a larger whole that taken together constitute a liberal education.¹⁶

In short, despite the fact that such a model “privileges and seeks to transmit, through its theology department, its official rhetoric, the corporate worship it sponsors, and in myriad other ways, a particular tradition of thought, feeling and practice,” the voices of this tradition on campus are joined by others as well.

The Umbrella Model, then, seeks to house a variety of perspectives without sacrificing its sponsoring perspective. Unlike many secular settings that strike a neutral pose but are in fact hostile to genuine Christian thought, Umbrella institutions create an environment which is, so to speak, congenial to Christian thinking, but without expecting it of everyone.

The Systemic Model—Systemic institutions reach for more, but in another sense settle for less. As the name suggests, they seek to make Christian thinking systemic throughout the institution—root, branch and leaf. Their curriculum is typically all-encompassing. Their goal is to engage any and all ideas from every perspective, but they attempt to do so from a particular intellectual location, that of the sponsoring Christian tradition. Thus they draw their faculty exclusively from those who know what it means to live and work from that tradition—indeed, from those who embody it. What is true of the critical mass in the Umbrella Model is to be true of all of the scholars in the Systemic Model. They seek to live and work as Christians.

At purely secular institutions these days, Christian ideas are often quarantined to the realm of the personal. If they show up at all in the public forum, it’s more than likely in their being discredited. Christian truth may be refuted in the classrooms of such institutions but not propounded. By contrast, with the Umbrella Model Christian ideas are not only allowed on campus, they are encouraged; they may even enjoy a privileged position. But with the Systemic Model, these ideas are the institution’s *raison d’être*.

Systemic institutions may range from the generic to the sectarian. The common faith tradition at their core may be defined as broadly as, say, the Apostle’s Creed, or as narrowly as a denomination’s full panoply of theological and ecclesiastical markers, or anything in between. What marks off Systemic institutions from their Umbrella counterparts is that all of their faculty are drawn from those who embody the institution’s

Unlike many secular settings that strike a neutral pose but are in fact hostile to genuine Christian thought, Umbrella institutions create an environment which is, so to speak, congenial to Christian thinking, but without expecting it of everyone.

sponsoring faith tradition, however broadly or narrowly it may be defined. In this way that sponsoring faith tradition permeates the institution. Anthony Diekema, former President of Calvin College, describes such institutions as follows: Christian colleges, he says, must “give constant attention to institutional mission and its extensive articulation. And then by logical extension that mission must permeate everything we do, giving internal consistency to teaching, scholarship, student life, administration, community relations . . . everything. We need to daily strive toward that end. I am persuaded that a truly Christian college is distinguished by a mission statement that articulates a Christian worldview and implements it throughout the curriculum, and by a faculty whose scholarship is anchored in that same worldview.”¹⁷

The variety of Systemic institutions may be gauged by examining the membership of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). Of the approximately 4,200 degree-granting institutions of higher learning in the United States, about 1,600 are private. Of these private institutions approximately 900 define themselves as “religiously affiliated.” And of these religiously affiliated institutions, a few more than a hundred belong to the CCCU.¹⁸ These CCCU schools represent a wide variety of denominations and faith traditions. Some define themselves generically, others more specifically. But all share at least two things in common, for these are two of the criteria for CCCU membership:

A Christ-centered mission: A public mission based upon the centrality of Jesus Christ and evidence of how faith is integrated with the institution’s academic and student life programs.

An employment policy: A current hiring policy that requires of each full-time faculty member and administrator a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Each of the CCCU institutions are thus designed along the lines of the Systemic Model. All of their professors are to be scholars who embody the Christian commitments of the institution, with the expected result that genuinely Christian thinking will permeate the school’s academic and student life programs.” This is what renders these institutions “systemically” Christian.

It seems to me that the degree to which we can aspire to be distinctively Christian must vary with these two models. With the umbrella model, we could aspire to be *distinctively* Christian only among that critical mass who make up the *distinctively* Christian portion of the institution. Among the rest—whether students, faculty, or other employees—we must settle for the generically theistic at most, or the absence of the anti-Christian at the least. But it would not do to expect of these non-Christians anything *distinctively* Christian.

By contrast, systemic institutions can legitimately aspire to be distinctively Christian throughout the institution. This is particularly the case for those systemic institutions all of whose students are professing Christians. In such institutions, the aspiration of being “distinctively Christian” may be unlimited, extending to all of the curriculum and co-curriculum—from the classroom to the residence hall, from the chapel to the athletic field.

Conclusion

I conclude by returning to our two questions: What does it mean to be “distinctively Christian,” and to what extent should or can we aspire to it? Here is my best answer: The “*distinctively*

Christian” is that which is specifically shaped by our Trinitarian convictions, and our specifically Christocentric convictions in particular. The degree to which we can or should aspire to it will vary with the type of institution we are attempting to be. To the extent our academic communities are made up of *distinctively* Christian people, to that extent we can aspire to be *distinctively* Christian communities. To the extent that our communities are made up of those who do not identify themselves as Christians, to that extent we shall have to settle for something less.

Endnotes

1. Much of the material for this lecture is adapted from my forthcoming book, *Conceiving the Christian College* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Fall, 2004).
2. In *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University*, ed. by Theodore Hesburgh (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), p. 226.
3. *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), p. 53; cf. John Stott, *Basic Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), p. 37.
4. *Evangelical Landscapes: Facing Critical Issues of the Day* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), p. 166.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-69.
6. *Church Dogmatics*, I-1, “The Doctrine of the Word of God,” tran. by G. W. Bromiley, ed. by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), p. 301.
7. “Beyond Progressive Scientific Humanism,” in *The Future of Religious Colleges*, ed. by Paul J. Dovre (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 44.
8. “Transposition,” in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1980), p. 60.
9. P. 71.
10. P. 60.
11. Pp. 61-62.
12. *Characters in Search of Their Author*, The Gifford Lectures, 1999–2000 (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 2001), p. 11.
13. P. 12
14. “What Future for Catholic Higher Education?” *America*, February 24, 1996, pp. 15-17.
15. See, for example, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: The Application to the United States*, United States Conference of Bishops; or Joseph Herlihy’s analysis in “Reflections on *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*,” in *The Future of Religious Colleges*, ed. by Paul J. Dovre (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 283-303; or the various essays in *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University*, ed. by Theodore M. Hesburgh (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1994); or George Dennis O’Brien, *The Idea of a Catholic University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
16. May 1999, pp. 26-27.
17. *Academic Freedom and Christian Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 57.
18. It is worth noting that this sector of the educational market is growing dramatically. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, from 1990-99, the last year for which there is available data, the composite of all U.S. educational institutions grew by 7.04 percent, the public sector grew by 4.28 percent, the private sector grew by 17.08 percent, religiously affiliated schools grew by 16.78 percent, but CCCU institutions grew by 41.89 percent. When the CCCU figures are updated to 2002, the numbers show that during the period 1990-2002, CCCU institutions grew by 60 percent. (“the State of Christian Higher Education: Thriving,” November, 2003, published by the CCCU). ■

'Distinctively Christian' Higher Education for a Higher Purpose

By Mark Foley
President, University of Mobile

What does it mean to be a distinctively Christian university in modern society?

I recently asked the University of Mobile Board of Trustees to consider key actions related to more clearly defining the university's Christian identity. Specifically, the board adopted a statement of Christian affirmation and directed that the notion of a Christian worldview be incorporated at all levels of our institutional culture. Related to those two actions were two others: renaming of the School of Religion to the School of Christian Studies and the reformation of student chapel. I will appoint a faculty/staff committee to explore new ways to integrate faith and learning.

These actions represent a significant step beyond the common traditions of Christian higher education.



Mark Foley

The Proper Model

Typically, two models are represented among Christian colleges and universities in the United States. The first and most common is the "environment" model. Through the latter half of the twentieth century, generally, if a college employed a minister as its president, required chapel, and did not condone drinking, dancing, or sex outside marriage—thus the environment—it was considered a Christian college. Not much was said about the philosophical position from which curricular instruction was conducted.

I am not satisfied with Christian definition by environment—in my life or in our university. That kind of definition provides no sense of depth or fidelity. It must go deeper.

The second and less common model—the model we are embracing at the University of Mobile—may be termed the "core concept" model. Core concept implies a foundational theological position which guides a foundational philosophical position. Thus, the institutional operations flow from and are guided by those foundations. That kind of foundation is what I mean by Christian worldview.

A Christian Worldview

A "worldview" is essentially a paradigm of intellectual, moral, and ethical presuppositions through which one processes and interprets the experiences of life and by which one reaches conclusions and forms opinions. Each of us has a worldview. Some are formally and thoughtfully constructed systems of thought, but, for most of us, our worldview tends to be an accumulation of influences we have gathered along the way.

A Christian worldview is a systematic and intentional way of thinking—about everything—from the perspective that all understanding and values are defined in terms of the relation-

ship of human beings to Christ as He is revealed in Holy Scripture. The University of Mobile Board of Trustees action created the framework for that systematic and intentional way of thinking by the adoption of a theologically based statement which affirms the nature, ethic, mission, and revelation of Christ, and then directed the incorporation of such thinking into all aspects of the university system.

Intentional Influence

Why is this important? In my opinion, the mission and responsibility of an intentionally, distinctively Christian higher education goes beyond traditional education to include intentional influence upon the lives of men and women who study at the university. Do I mean to overtly exert influence related to the Christian faith? You bet I do.

Why? Because the culture of our fine nation is rapidly abandoning the foundations of Christian faith in favor of moral indifference. We regularly witness the mockery of Judeo-Christian values and the labeling of those who promote such values as intolerant or bigots. Yes, the term "Christian" is still used frequently, but it is increasingly used without any clear relationship to a scriptural definition.

I intend that the University of Mobile place graduates into the marketplace who are recognized as Christian men and women of high moral and ethical character who demonstrate high proficiency in their discipline or work, who know how to think, who know what they believe and why they believe it, who have the courage and discipline to live according to their belief, and who have the ability and skill to use their influence in appropriate and effective ways to change the world around them.

In order to produce that kind of graduate, the university itself must continually engage with the notion of "being Christian." When I use the word "Christian" to describe the university, I have immediately entered theological territory. It is a dangerous and common error in our culture to use the term socially or culturally without theological underpinning.

Making It Real

There is just no way around it—the term "Christian" requires association with and definition by Jesus Christ, his nature, his ethic, his mission, and the Scripture which reveals him. These are theological concepts, but each with clear implications on philosophical and social application. So, Christian faith and life is first a matter of core theological beliefs accepted by faith. Action flows from and is directed by those core concepts of faith and belief. So it is with a university which seeks to be Christian.

How does all this relate to the mission and responsibility of a Christian university? Take the reformation of student chapel as an example. Until now we have required one hour of chapel per week over five semesters as a graduation requirement. The experience was designed as a worship and Bible teaching experience. There was no accountability other than showing up. And, no, I don't think required worship is an effective model.

So, we reformed the model to include an aggressive and

comprehensive set of large and small group Bible studies, worship experiences, personal ministry, and discipleship training opportunities for students, faculty, and staff with voluntary attendance. Additionally, we now require enrollment of all students in a semester-length course in Christian worldview with an additional semester of supervised community service, plus a thesis on Christian worldview applied to their field of study. The new approach will engage students over more than one semester in the areas of community service, volunteerism, marriage, parenting, family, citizenship, and others from a distinctively Christian perspective, thus more effectively fulfilling the university mission.

But, this notion of Christian worldview cannot be limited to one special course. It must extend into and guide the exploration of truth in each discipline of study, never to limit the exploration but to guide its conclusions. Thus, business, health care, education, arts, literature, natural science, history, math, social and behavioral science, ministry, and athletics all start and end with the premise that God is truth; that he is the beginning and end of all things;

that he created all that is; and that we are caretakers of his property. So, the education and research process becomes a discipline-specific discovery of truth—the truth of God's work.

Distinctively Christian

At the end of the day, the mission and opportunity of a Christian university is simply about being Christian. It is about a foundational philosophy, a specific definition, and a distinction which has as its end the production of highly qualified college graduates who are as able to articulate what they believe as they are what they think and who have the willingness to live and think according to their belief.

(*Mark Foley is president of the University of Mobile, a private Baptist-affiliated university with more than 1,900 students. He is an ordained minister, a former professional counselor, and a graduate-level professor. The statement of Christian affirmation is on the university's website at www.umobile.edu. You may contact Dr. Foley at markfoley@worldnet.att.net.*) ■

Legal Notes: Federal Legislation Doesn't Prevent Anti-Spam Efforts by Institutions



J. Terry Price

According to some estimates, unsolicited commercial email (or spam) will cost corporate America \$133 billion a year by 2007. Many businesses are trying new procedural and technological tools to reduce the burden on computer systems caused by the overwhelming volume of spam. Now some spammers are arguing that federal legislation prohibits the use of anti-spam tools.

On January 1, 2003, a federal law known as the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003 ("CAN-SPAM Act") went into effect. Through the CAN-SPAM Act, Congress (1) prohibited those wishing to send out spam, from deceiving email recipients and Internet Service Providers regarding the source or subject of the unsolicited commercial email messages; outlawed commercial email (or spam) containing deceptive source or subject information; (2) required "spammers" to give recipients an opportunity to decline to receive further emails and to honor any such requests; (3) required "spammers" to include a valid physical address in the email; and (4) outlawed promoting a business through false or misleading spam.

In April 2003, an online dating service obtained a list of email addresses from

the University of Texas at Austin (UT) and proceeded to send approximately 55,000 unsolicited commercial emails to members of the UT community. UT contacted the dating service and asked the company to stop spamming all utexas.edu addresses. The dating service promptly declined, so UT blocked all inbound email traffic from that particular sender.

The dating service filed suit against UT in federal court claiming that since it had complied with the CAN-SPAM Act, the university could not block its unsolicited commercial email to the UT community. UT agreed that the dating service had complied with CAN-SPAM, but maintained that, regardless of compliance, nothing in the Act prevented the university from blocking this or any other spam.

In its opinion entered March 25th, 2004, the federal district court found:

1. UT has a general anti-solicitation policy which prohibits solicitations at and on UT facilities subject to certain exceptions. This policy regulates all forms of solicitation using university facilities and isn't limited to just electronic mail.

2. UT also has a specific anti-spam policy under which the university blocks the transmission of unsolicited commercial email, whether detected by system

alarms, filters, or by UT user complaints. Prior to receiving spam from this dating service, UT had blocked more than 1000 spam senders for failing to comply with one or both of the above policies.

3. The policies of UT do not block emails based on content; rather they block them because they are spam, or unsolicited commercial email.

Ultimately the court held that UT's policy to block spam is not preempted by the federal CAN-SPAM Act. The court went on to say that the intent of the Act was to give email users and providers some control over spam. It was never intended to provide a safe harbor for spammers to continue their emailings.

So what's the lesson here? According to this federal court, anti-solicitation and anti-spam policies, filters and alarms are legal and can be used with the federal law to help universities combat the ever increasing amount of unsolicited, unwanted commercial email. Such measures can help to increase the usefulness and efficiency of legitimate email as a communications tool, while helping to reduce the strain on institutional resources. ■

J. Terry Price is a partner in the law firm of Guenther, Jordan & Price, P.C. in Nashville, Tennessee, (615) 329-2100.

Names & Faces



People

Campbell University: James Martin, chair of the Department of Government, History, and Justice was awarded a Director's Fellowship by the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, OH. **Thomas P. Anderson**, a professor at the Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law, received the Charles L. Becton Award for Outstanding Teaching in Trial Advocacy. The award was given by the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers.

Hardin-Simmons University: Three Logsdon School of Theology professors contributed to the Fall 2003 issue of *Review and Expositor* titled "Postmodernity in Theology. **Dan Stiver**, professor of theology wrote the editorial introduction, "Baptists: Modern or Postmodern?"; **Robert Sellers**, Connally professor of missions, wrote an article titled, "A Baptist View of Missions for Postmodernity"; and **Robert Ellis**, professor of Old Testament and Logsdon's associate dean for graduate studies, edited the book reviews.

Robert C. Barnes, A.B. Shelton professor and head of the department of counseling and human development for the Irvin School of Education, continues as president of the International Board of Directors of the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy. He is the only HSU faculty or staff member at present to head a worldwide organization.

Houston Baptist University: Larry Ruddell, assistant professor of business, released his

book *Business Ethics: Faith That Works*. The book shows how faith forms the foundation for the theory and practice of business ethics and how ethical leadership leads to long term success in business.

Melissa Wiseman, associate professor of economics, was named the 2004 Christa McAuliffe Post-Secondary Teacher of the Year by the Houston West Chamber of Commerce. **Donald Loosier**, vice president for academic affairs and **Mary Ellen Spore**, secretary for the department of music, were recently named the recipients of the HBU Mayfield Outstanding Staff Award. **Robert Towery**, assistant professor of chemistry, will present results from research done at HBU at the World Congress of Biosensors in Granada, Spain.

Judson College (Illinois): John Huelskotter was awarded the "Paul and Mary Gibson Thompson Award for Excellence in Classroom Teaching" at the college's Honors Convocation.

William Jewell College: Kevin Shaffstall, assistant professor and associate director of the Pryor Leadership Studies Program was awarded the President's Volunteer Service Award from the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

Missouri Baptist University: Cordell Schulten, associate academic dean and chair of the social/behavioral sciences, is published in *College Faith 2*, released by Andrews University Press in July 2004. His testimony entitled, "The Three Longest Years," will join 149 other Christian leaders and educators as they tell of when they were students in higher

education and how their trials as students brought them closer in their faith with Christ. ■

Transitions

Charleston Southern University: Sue Mitchell was promoted to vice president for business affairs.

Louisiana College: Bud Taylor, interim president, announced that Lori Thames, current dean of students, was named the interim vice president for student life; Don Sprawl, chair of the Division of Mathematics and Computer Science, was named interim vice president for academic affairs; and Byron McGee, director of alumni, was named director of enrollment.

Palm Beach Atlantic University: Linda Green Miller was appointed the new dean and professor of the School of Nursing.

Samford University: J. Mark Bateman of Baylor University was named Associate Provost and Associate Professor of Education effective August 16. He will have broad responsibilities providing administrative support to Provost Brad Creed, Samford's chief academic officer. Bateman has been Executive Associate Dean of the Baylor School of Education since 2001 and a member of the Baylor education school faculty and administration since 1997.

William Carey College: Mary Stewart of Hattiesburg was recently named dean of the Joseph and Nancy Fail School of Nursing. ■

Campus Report



Louisiana College Trustee Chair Resigns; Board Elects New Chair in Closed Door Meeting

Trustees of Louisiana College, faced with the resignation of their chairman and the school's president, elected a new trustee leader in a closed-door, off-campus meeting July 9.

Bill Hudson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Rayne, La., announced his election as trustee chair after the meeting, which was closed to reporters and visitors, according to the *Town Talk* newspaper. No

vote count was announced.

Hudson succeeds another pastor, Joe Nesom of First Baptist Church in Jackson, La., who resigned June 27, claiming trustees were making decisions intended to "humiliate and punish those that they despise." A majority of the trustees already had agreed to call a special meeting to remove Nesom, who attended the meeting as a regular trustee.

The Louisiana Baptist college has been torn by controversy between the conservative majority and a moderate minority on the board. In June former President Rory

Lee resigned amid controversy over new policies that require new faculty members to submit a statement outlining their "worldviews," as well as a policy forcing faculty members to have all classroom materials approved by the academic dean.

The school also is under investigation by its accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Hudson said the investigation is "not the end of the world."

A search committee is seeking Lee's successor. Trustee John Traylor serves as the interim president. ■



Highlights of CGE: REPORT TO ASBCS

by Carolyn Bishop, *International Director*

From September 1, 2003 to May 31, 2004, CGE has accomplished the following tasks:

- investigated new opportunities overseas for building educational relationships with colleges and universities in Vietnam, Poland, France, Iraq, Indonesia and Lebanon
- Established and enhanced educational programs overseas through assisting seven member schools and supported 45 member school international programs and invited eight visiting scholars on J-1 visas for 10 CGE schools;
- Conducted workshops for building global understanding and partnership with universities in the Middle East at a higher education conference in Lebanon and a three-university coalition in Iraq.
- Cooperated with 62 international workers located in 43 countries;
- Facilitated research programs and publications with International Centers for Ethnographic Studies in Mumbai, India and Istanbul, Turkey.

Projections for growing "World Conscious" programs for 2004-05 include:

- CGE annual meeting September 26-27, 2004 at Wingate University, Wingate, NC. The guest speaker will be Harvey Thomas, former public relations director for former prime minister of England Margaret Thatcher;
- Co-hosting a Higher Education Conference in Indonesia, March 2005,
- Creating opportunities for new partnerships with Vietnam, Poland, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Libya;
- Sponsoring an international conference with the Minister of Education in China, Shandong Province officials, and Qingdao University for March 2006;
- Coordinating an American and Arab Studies Forum to discuss educational issues and leadership skills with administrators and faculty from institutions in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Turkey, UAE, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco;
- Developing IT and professional development projects with partnering schools in

Indonesia, China, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tunisia, and Morocco;

- Researching an early Christian heritage landmark for a brochure requested by an Islamic university.

CGE has continued to develop strategic networks with Ministries of Education in many nations, government offices, the U.S. Embassies and private businesses. CGE has gained a solid base of contacts and a voice in educational development in nations critical to global stability. As global issues force a close look at international participation, CGE is well-positioned to gather reliable information and make wise choices for mutually beneficial partnerships. ■

Carolyn Bishop, international director of the Consortium for Global Education, can be contacted at 1503 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite 100, Marietta, GA 30062, phone 770-321-4897, fax 770-321-4910, e-mail: <info@cgedu.org>.

Gifts & Grants



Judson Receives \$7.5 million for Library, Academic Center

Congressman and House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert has secured \$7.5 million in federal funding to help build a new library and academic center at Judson College in Elgin, IL.

The funding is included in the annual Energy and Water Appropriations bill. Coupled with capital campaign funding, the dollars will be used to build the Harm A. Weber Library/ Academic Center, an 80,000-squarefoot "green" structure that will house the college's library and division of art, design and architecture.

According to President Jerry B. Cain, within the building, the department of architecture will continue to involve undergraduate and graduate students in environmentally-significant community projects. Construction is expected to cost \$16 million.

Samford University Receives \$2.5 Million in Estate Gifts

Samford University received two gifts totaling more than \$2.5 million.

The first gift is from the estate of Enos Cuthrell, whose company did the flooring work when Samford built its new campus in the 1950s and '60s. Cuthrell, a Baptist, was a self-made business success who lived near the site when Samford's present campus was begun in 1954. He bid on the flooring work and got the job.

"He was thrilled by the confidence the school showed in awarding him the contract," said his niece, Mrs. Bobbie Smith of Chattanooga, Tenn.

Cuthrell died in 1976. He arranged through his will for his estate to go to his widow Ginny for her lifetime, then to Samford. When Ginny Cuthrell died in 2003, the estate had grown to nearly \$2 million.

The second gift is for \$655,000 from the estate of Joe Shear, who retired from the company founded by Frank Samford, for whom the university is named.

The money will be used for academic scholarships. Shear died in September, 2003 at 97.

Belmont Meets Challenge to Receive \$800,000 Grant

Belmont University successfully met the Kresge Challenge, raising \$2.9 million in donations and pledges required to receive an \$800,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation.

The Kresge funding will help pay for the new multipurpose complex that includes the Beaman Student Life Center, Curb Event Center and Maddox Grand Atrium.

According to Belmont President Robert Fisher, a "significant portion needed to complete the challenge was received from faculty, staff and trustees." ■

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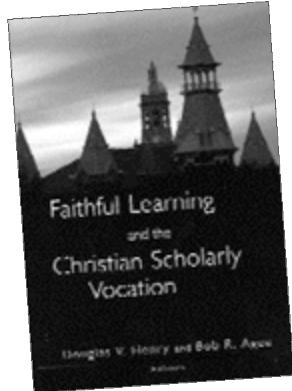
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