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ASBCS Member Schools Listed Among Nation's Best in U.S. News National Survey

by Bob R. Agee, Executive Director

Nashville, Tenn. (BP)—*U.S. News and World Report* magazine recently listed 45 member colleges and universities of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS) among the nation's best educational institutions.

The magazine analyzed information on more than 1,400 U.S. schools before publishing their annual rankings.

In this year's report, colleges and universities were ranked in four categories: Best National Universities; Best Liberal Arts Colleges; Best Universities—Master's; and Best Comprehensive Colleges—Bachelor's. The magazine numerically ranked the top half of the schools in each category, combining the top two tiers of institutions. The ranking then continued alphabetically in third and fourth tiers.

Twenty-three ASBCS member schools were ranked in the top two tiers, sixteen schools were ranked in the third tier in their respective categories, and six member institutions were ranked in the fourth tier. Several schools ranked higher this year than in last year's report.

The magazine's 2005 edition also included a listing of schools in four other categories. They ranked schools as to the best education for the price paid, which schools' graduates had the worst and least debt load when they finished, which schools had the highest proportion of minority students, and which schools had the best programs in business and engineering. ASBCS member schools were listed in each of these rankings with only one appearing in the worst debt load among its graduates.

The national news magazine gathered data from more than 1,400 institutions scattered across the U.S. and solicited opinions from peer institutions as to their perception of quality. Using a weighting

system based on what the editors believe to be indicators of quality, their ranking is determined by analyzing data gathered on the following categories of information: peer assessment; average graduation rate; average freshman retention rate; faculty resources; percentage of classes under 20; percentage of classes over 50; student/faculty ratio; percentage of full-time faculty; SAT/ACT scores of students; freshmen in top 25 percent of high school class; acceptance rate of applying students; financial resources and alumni giving.

The 23 ASBCS member schools ranked in the top two tiers were listed in Best National Universities, Best Universities—Master's and in Best Comprehensive Colleges—Bachelor's. Baylor University achieved the rank of being tied for 84th among the Best National Universities. The magazine analyzed data on 248 major universities throughout the United States in developing the rankings. Baylor's undergraduate engineering program was ranked among the best achieving the rank of 14th. The Best National Universities group included 162 public institutions and 87 private institutions.

Twelve member schools were ranked in the top tiers in the Best Universities—Master's category. In the South, Samford University (5th), Mercer University (tied for 8th), Belmont University (tied for 19th), Mississippi College (tied for 26th), Union University (tied for 33rd), Carson-Newman College (36th), Campbell University (tied for 55th), Cumberland College (tied for 60th), and Campbellsville

University (tied for 64th) were ranked in the top tier of Best Universities—Master's in the South. Hardin-Simmons University (tied for 41st), University of Mary Hardin Baylor (tied for 47th) and Houston Baptist University (58th) were ranked in the top

tier of Best Universities—Master's in the West. Mercer, Mississippi College and Carson-Newman College were listed among the schools identified as a "Great School at a Great Price" in this category. Mercer's undergraduate engineering program was ranked

39th in the listing of best undergraduate engineering programs. The Best Universities—Master's category looked at 572 schools that the magazine determined

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Twenty-three ASBCS member schools were ranked in the top two tiers, sixteen schools were ranked in the third tier in their respective categories, and six member institutions were ranked in the fourth tier.

ASBCS Board Meeting and Reception Set for December 6, 2004 at SACS

The December meeting of the board of directors of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools and a reception for members and friends of the ASBCS are scheduled for Monday December 6 at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia.

The two ASBCS meetings are held each year in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The dinner meeting of the ASBCS board of directors is set for 5:30 p.m. in the Shangri-La Room on the Garden Level of the hotel and the reception is scheduled from 8-9 p.m. in the Champagne Room on the lobby level. ■

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“Legal Notes” is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information on legal issues facing Southern Baptist-related higher education. It is provided with the understanding that the publisher and editors are not engaged in rendering legal counsel. “Legal Notes” is not intended as a substitute for the services of a legal professional. If your institution needs legal counsel, a competent attorney should be consulted.

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Nation's Best Schools...

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fit into this group. These schools provide a full range of undergraduate and master's level programs but offer few if any doctoral programs.

Among institutions ranked in the category Best Comprehensive Colleges—Bachelor's, 10 ASBCS member schools made the top tier. In the West, Oklahoma Baptist University (2nd), East Texas Baptist University (13th), and Howard Payne University (17th) were listed. In the South, Ouachita Baptist University (5th), Shorter College (17th), Louisiana College (tied for 25th), Bluefield College and Mars Hill (tied for 45th), and Blue Mountain College (tied for 48th) were listed among the best in this category. In the Midwest region, Judson College in Illinois was ranked (tied for 53rd). Oklahoma Baptist University, Howard Payne University and East Texas Baptist University were also ranked in the listing of schools considered to be “Great Schools at a Great Price” among the Best Comprehensive Colleges—Bachelor's. The category includes 324 institutions that were evaluated by *U.S. News* and includes those schools that offer a wide range of undergraduate degrees in liberal arts and professional disciplines.

Schools ranked in the third tier in their respective categories included sixteen ASBCS member schools. Georgetown College and William Jewell College were listed in the third tier among the Best Liberal Arts Colleges. Among the Best Universities—Master's; Averett University, Charleston Southern, Gardner Webb University, Palm Beach Atlantic University, University of Mobile, and William Carey College were listed in the third tier among the schools in the South. California Baptist University, Dallas Baptist University, and Wayland Baptist University were listed in the third tier among the schools located in the West.

Within the category of Best Comprehensive Colleges—Bachelor's five member schools were ranked in the third tier. Anderson College, North Greenville College, Virginia Intermont College, and Williams Baptist College were listed from the South. Hannibal-LaGrange College ranked in the third tier among the schools listed in the Midwest region.

Six ASBCS member schools were ranked in the fourth tier of their respective categories. Those listed included: Judson College (Alabama) among the Best Liberal Arts Colleges; Southwest Baptist University among the Best Universities—Master's; Brewton-Parker College, Chowan College, Mid-Continent College, and Missouri Baptist University among Best Comprehensive Colleges—Bachelor's.

In this year's analysis, *U.S. News & World Report* listed schools whose graduates accumulated the worst and least debt load. Six ASBCS member schools were listed among the schools with the least debt load. Gardner-Webb and Belmont Universities were listed among the Best Universities—Master's category. Louisiana College, Mid-Continent College, Judson College in Illinois, and East Texas Baptist University were listed among the Best Comprehensive Colleges—Bachelor's schools.

The magazine also ranked schools according to their effectiveness in reaching a higher proportion of minority students (not including international students). They identified three ASBCS member schools that were doing a commendable job in this area of work. Mercer University, Houston Baptist University, and Howard Payne University were listed among the schools that were achieving a higher level of campus diversity in the student population.

ASBCS member schools ranked high in all categories except for alumni giving, which in many cases lowered the ranking score. ■

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COMMENT: Exciting Success Stories Abound Among Member Schools



Bob R. Agee, Executive Director, ASBCS

One of the great privileges that accompanies my work with the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools is the opportunity to visit campuses and see some of the exciting things taking place among our schools. There are some really remarkable stories of growth and development among our members that inspire and challenge us all.



Bob R. Agee

One of the most remarkable stories I know of is the dramatic turnaround at North Greenville College. A few weeks ago I had the privilege of visiting with the president, Jimmy Epting, and as we toured the campus he told me the inside story.

In 1991, during a meeting in that part of the country, I drove by the campus just to see where it was. The president had just resigned, the enrollment had dropped at the school, which was a junior college at the time, and the word on the street was that the South Carolina Baptist Convention was looking for a way to close the school. The Board asked for another chance to make the school survive. It was at that time that they hired Jimmy Epting as the president.

Enrollment at the school was at 329 and declining when he took the job. They had a significant long-term debt and a \$700,000 operating debt that had accumulated. The campus was in terrible shape due to deferred maintenance. The new president's first challenge was to balance the budget, which called for numerous lay-

offs and other belt-tightening measures. To make matters worse, the campus is located in a remote rural area outside of Greenville, South Carolina, in the village of Tigerville, a village with one store and a post office. There was nothing there that would indicate that a college should survive.

Among Jimmy Epting's first steps was the bold step of leading the Board to change the school to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution. He is an experienced leader who had served at major colleges in the areas of admissions, development, and business. Also, he had taught in the classroom. Drawing on his wealth of experience, he set about the task of leading the school (Board and campus family) to dream of a better future.

Over the past 12 years, North Greenville College has grown to an on-campus enrollment of 1,759 with 1,682 of that FTE. Almost 1,200 students now live on campus. All of the school's enrollment is on campus and they are now talking about developing other degree programs that will be offered in off-campus or distance learning format. They have spent more than \$30 million on construction and campus improvements and have raised the money to pay for the facilities as they were built. There are three major construction projects going on currently, and the president is confident that they will have the funds in hand by the time the construction is complete. In addition to raising over \$30 million for construction and campus improvements, they have raised an additional \$10 million for endowment. The campus is beautiful and impressive. The buildings reflect quality

and thoughtful design. As we walked around the campus, meeting students and faculty as they moved to and from classes, it was evident that there is a tremendous positive spirit on the campus. Watching the president interact with the campus family was a genuine pleasure.

When you ask Jimmy Epting to explain what has happened in this remarkable turnaround, he will talk about the "God-thing" that has occurred in Tigerville, SC. He tells one story after another of top-

Miracles still occur at Christian colleges and universities.

notch students who have been attracted to attend college in the middle of rural America where the nearest store is four miles away and the nearest shopping center is

about thirteen miles away. One begins to believe that God has indeed chosen to work a miracle in that place.

While Jimmy won't take any credit, you have to know that here is a man with a superb professional background who made all that he is and has available for God to use. Jimmy is an experienced educator with the knowledge and skills to tackle the task He has a vision for what could be when others couldn't see the vision, and he has an amazing work-ethic that drives him to live the vision and the dream. Jimmy has a dedication to the cause of Christian higher education in that place, and the ability to surround himself with capable people who will share the dream. This results in a remarkable testimony.

Exciting things are happening in many of the ASBCS member schools. We need to take pride in one another and rejoice when the great things are happening. Miracles still occur at Christian colleges and universities. ■

Special Thanks For Making the ASBCS 2003-2004 Fiscal Year A Success!

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And Especially to Our 53 ASBCS Member Schools!

Toward a Theology for

by David S. Dockery

Editor's Note: David S. Dockery, president of Union University, Jackson, Tenn., 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.

Clearly this is a critical time to redefine the meaning and mission of Christian Higher Education to understand the distinctive reason for our existence. What role does learning play in the Christian life? How does faith in God enhance an unfettered quest for truth? Our need now is not for a general philosophy of education, but for an explicit theology of education rooted in the imperatives of the Christian Gospel. In a time of spiritual confusion and moral anarchy, Baptists have been driven back to the Bible and to their core confessions of faith, which is where the church always goes when under furious attack." With these words, William E. Hull, then provost of Samford University, concluded the Hester Lectures on Southern Baptist Higher Education in 1996. I was asked to address the subject "Toward a Theology of and for Baptist Higher Education." In doing so, I hope to advance the conversation and the challenge issued by Dr. Hull nearly a decade ago. My focus is not a discussion about a general philosophy of education, but is indeed a call for an explicit theology of and for Baptist higher education rooted in the imperatives of the Christian gospel.



David S. Dockery

What Is Theology?

The term "theology" scares many people. It sounds formidable, esoteric, abstract, and technical. Many people are suspicious of the word "theology"—thinking it is irrelevant to our life with God or even worse, a sort of human presumption. I have found the suspicion of theology to be present among many people, not just academics, but pastors and numerous laypeople alike. The suspicions are often justified, at least in part, because theology often has been studied in the wrong way, which has led to faulty thinking, or even hurtful thinking at many places.

Theology is not simply an attempt to articulate our feelings about our dependence on God as the influential German Lutheran theologian, Friederich Schleiermacher said over 200 years ago. On the other hand it's not merely an attempt to state the objective truth, to put the truth in proper order as the great Presbyterian theologian, Charles Hodge, suggested when he attempted to articulate theology in 19th Century scientific terms. It seems best to me as a Baptist to think of theology in a twofold way: 1) as *developing a mind for truth* so that we can indeed "articulate the faith once for all delivered to the saints," and 2) as *developing a heart for God* so that our lives are built up in the faith. Ultimately, a distinctive Baptist theology will have Christ at its center, the church as its focus, and the influencing of culture as a key element of its vision.

I believe theology can render service to Baptist higher education in many ways. It satisfies the mind so that we can know God, so that we can know the living Christ. Theology is vitally important for both the teaching and culture engaging task (1 Peter 3:15). Theology is neces-

sary as a touchstone for understanding what we believe and for recognizing the principles by which our lives are to be shaped. Such beliefs and practices come from serious theological reflection. Baptist theology therefore also points to ethics. Certainly it is possible to act one way and to think another, but it is not logically possible for us to do so for long, for even the biblical writer has admonished us, "as a person thinks in his heart, so he is." Since the goal of Baptist higher education is to help our students live in the world with a lifestyle that issues in glory to God, then we must think—and think deeply—not only of personal ethics, but of the implications of the Biblical faith for social, economic and political ethics as well. Such necessities touch the heart of the life and mission of Baptist higher education. I certainly believe that represents the best of our heritage.

Before moving further into this topic, it might be helpful to reflect upon the significance of that heritage. Baptist higher education can be traced in this country to the first Baptist institution in Rhode Island in 1764. These were followed by schools like Colby (1813), Colgate (1819), and others that began shortly thereafter.

Baptist Shaping Traditions

Several Baptist historians have tried to understand the shaping traditions that have influenced us as Southern Baptists. These would include the Charleston tradition, the Sandy Creek influence, the importance of the Landmark tradition, and the Texas revivalist tradition. Each of these has had a substantial stamp upon the life and work of Baptists across the South and throughout our country. However, if we are looking for the birthplace of Southern Baptist scholarship, looking for serious interest in higher education, it is to the Charleston tradition that we can readily turn. That is not to say that some educational influences are absent from the others, for certainly Union University where I serve had the Landmark stamp on it in the middle of the 19th Century (and I might add that the shadow continues to extend over West Tennessee and other parts of the Mid-South region). The Texas revivalist tradition birthed Baylor University and the new work edited by Donald Schmeltekopf and others on the Baptist and Christian character of Baylor University points to some of those early shaping influences.

Out of these various geographical trajectories we can further point to important theological traditions in our 160-year history as Southern Baptists. At this point I would list at least 10. We are heirs of: 1) the British heritage, 2) the Princeton influence, 3) the importance of pietism, 4) Revivalism, 5) the confessional tradition so identified with Charleston and the founding of Southern Seminary, 6) the role of experience as identified in E. Y. Mullins and W. T. Conner, 7) the church-based theology so well exemplified in the middle of the 20th Century by H. H. Hobbs and W. A. Criswell, 8) the many influences of contemporary European theology, 9) the North American evangelical trajectories, and 10) what many would identify in Southern Baptist life today as the Conservative Resurgence.

Theology is necessary as a touchstone for understanding what we believe and for recognizing the principles by which our lives are to be shaped.

Baptist Higher Education

There is great diversity in the heritage that has shaped us. Out of these I think we find pointers to the struggles to which most of us live on a day to day basis. Thus some wonder if there is a way to identify what it means to be a Baptist in moving toward a theology of/for Baptist higher education.

Timothy George, taking an insider's perspective, has said that the Baptist heritage is formed by orthodox Christian convictions, by the influence of the evangelical tradition, by a connection to the 16th Century Reformation, and by a consistent use of the great historic confessions. From these four overarching markers he suggests we can connect Baptists with other Christians. In addition he has identified four key Baptist distinctives that include the regenerate church, Baptism by immersion, religious liberty, and church-state issues.

Viewing the Baptist heritage from an outsider's perspective, Mark Noll has suggested six distinctives of Baptist life: 1) believer's baptism instead of infant baptism, 2) voluntary ecclesiology instead of inherited/parish ecclesiology, 3) local organization of church life instead of state control or even denominational control, 4) biblical authority as priority over tradition, 5) populist biblical interpretation instead of interpretation by bishops or academics, and 6) Christian ordinances practiced as matters of obedience instead of sacraments practiced as means of grace.

When we think about our particular challenges flowing from our heritage and tradition to engage the culture, to carry on the great Christian intellectual tradition, and to develop a theology of Baptist higher education, we recognize at least six challenges with which we must come to grips: 1) The first of these is the emphasis on localism, populism, and voluntarism, all of which have frequently acted to spur renewal and mobilization for ministry, but often carry with them a lack of appreciation for formal intellectual life. 2) Second, the stress on conversion and piety has sometimes stood in the way of sanctified intellectual development and cultural engagement. 3) Third, the influence of Landmarkism has often kept us from appreciating the breadth of the Christian intellectual tradition through the centuries. 4) Fourth, we must acknowledge that the general culture of the South has sometimes carried with it an imbedded anti-intellectualism. 5) Fifth, the challenge of avoiding the pitfalls of liberalism while seeking to address the previous four challenges, which together often grow out of our populist revivalistic, pietistic heritage. 6) And sixth, the challenge of avoiding the pitfalls of fundamentalism associated with some aspects of the current conservative resurgence in the SBC. With Bill Leonard in his *Baptist Ways*, we recognize the great variety in our heritage, yet we want to focus in on the core or center of our Baptist heritage and beliefs that can help us move forward in this project. Thus, we must take a good look at who we are and where we are, in order to think about developing a theology of and for Baptist higher education. I believe this will call for us: 1) to re-appropriate the best of our Baptist heritage, 2) to clarify our confessional commitments, and 3) to engage the broader evangelical movement in Britain and North America.

Basic Baptist Beliefs

In 1994 the Southern Baptist Convention unanimously adopted a resolution acknowledging that "Southern Baptists have historically

confessed with all true Christians everywhere belief in the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the full deity and perfect humanity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, sinless life, His substitutionary atonement for sins, His resurrection from the dead, His exultation to the right hand of God, and His triumphal return; and we recognize that born again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ may be found in all Christian denominations." I was privileged to serve on that resolution committee and to help author that particular resolution. The resolution recognizes common Christian convictions shared by Baptists with other orthodox Christians who stand in continuity with the consensus of the early church on matters such as the truthfulness of Holy Scripture, the doctrine of God, and the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Leon McBeth was most likely right when he observed that Baptists have often used confessions not only to proclaim Baptist distinctives, but also to show how similar Baptists were to other orthodox Christians. Thus the Orthodox Confession of 1678 incorporated the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, in Article 38, declaring that: "all three ought thoroughly to be received and believed. For we believe that they must be proved, by undoubted authority of Holy Scripture and are necessary to be understood of all

Christians." It should not be ignored that when Baptists gathered in London for the inaugural meeting of the Baptist World Alliance in 1905, they stood in that assembly and recited in unison the Apostles' Creed, which is certainly a foundational framework for developing a theology of and for Christian higher education in general, if not for Baptist higher education as well.

Thus our first steps involve the need to cultivate a holistic orthodoxy, based on a

high view of scripture and congruent with the Trinitarian and Christological consensus of the early church. Only in this way will we avoid the dangers of fundamentalist reductionism on the one hand, and liberal revisionism on the other. I would suggest that our shared Baptist work cannot move forward without confessional convictions or confessional boundaries. This, however, does not mean we should expect or demand uniformity of belief or conviction. Inherent in an historically informed understanding of orthodoxy is the need for some flexibility and variety lest we place straightjackets around our community and literally around scripture itself. The world in which we live with its emphasis on diversity and plurality may well be a creative setting for us to once again pray for a far-reaching renewal of Baptist higher education.

Connections to Orthodox Christianity

We must ground our unity not only in the biblical confession that Jesus is Lord, but in the great tradition flowing from the Apostles' Creed to the confessions of Nicea in 325 and Chalcedon in 451. Likewise, we must claim the best of our Baptist confessional heritage as well, beginning with the standard confession of 1660 and the London confessions of the 17th Century to the Baptist Faith and Message in all of its editions throughout the 20th Century. Such historic confessions, though neither infallible nor completely sufficient for all contemporary challenges, can provide guidance in seeking to

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Toward a Theology...

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balance the mandates for right Christian thinking, right Christian believing, and right Christian living.

Such historically grounded confessions can also help us think rightly about faith and how we relate to one another in love, pointing out for us the important differences between primary and secondary and tertiary issues in Christian theology and practice. Although it is not always clear in distinguishing these, a useful guide is that the truths of scripture and the consensus of the Christian tradition as shared by Christians at all times and all places are to be considered essentials as primary doctrines. Secondary matters tend to be those things which are distinctive to a particular denomination, as well as those matters which biblical Christians equally anxious to interpret and follow scripture reach different conclusions. These secondary or tertiary matters are certainly important and are matters about which we should have beliefs or convictions, but they are not likely to be the broad foundational matters on which we can build a theology of and for Baptist higher education. For example, a bedrock primary doctrine essential for us to confess is that salvation is by grace alone, but the different Calvinistic or Arminian expressions of that truth are secondary and are not primary. Confessing that Christ will return is a primary doctrine, but defining the nature of the millennium is a secondary or probably even a tertiary matter. The great confessional tradition, though not the final authoritative word, can serve as a tremendously helpful resource for us in distinguishing primary issues from second and third order doctrines.

These examples perhaps help us understand that in essentials, faith and truth are primary and we may not appeal to love or grace as an excuse to deny any essential aspect of Christian teaching. In secondary matters then, love is primary, and we may not appeal to personal conviction or zeal as an excuse for failure to exercise grace or demonstrate love. Faith instructs our conscience. Love respects the conscience of others. Faith shapes our liberty; love and a concern for others in the context of Christian community limits its exercise. At the heart of our exploration for a theology of Baptist higher education we must find an affirmation of the Bible's truthfulness.

As we take the next step in thinking about a theology of Baptist higher education, it is important not only to affirm these central consensus beliefs of the Christian faith, but we must also exclude errors on the right and the left. Errors on the right, such as a dictation view of scripture or fundamentalist separatism or legalism, must be recognized as faulty thinking in the same way that Paul called out the Judaizers in the book of Galatians. On the other hand, views of so-called Christian existentialism, liberation, or process thought, as well as other thinking less faithful to scripture must also be excluded. In our day we must reclaim such bedrock convictions in the midst of a growing secularized academy. This will call for us to swim upstream, but I believe for us to be faithful to the Christian and Baptist character of our institutions that we can do no other.

Thinking Theologically

I'm sure some are at this time asking, "does this mean that all involved in Baptist higher education are to be theologians in the sense of being uniquely summoned to the task of leading in theological thought?" Certainly I would like to encourage all faculty and staff at our Baptist institutions to be theologians, but not theologians in the technical sense of that term. What I believe is needed today is for administrators, trustees, faculty, and staff to once again think lofty thoughts about God and to live accordingly, that is to live according to God's Word and Holy Scripture. Some theologians suggest that essentially theology is thinking about God. If they are right, and I believe they basically are, then to abdicate the theological domain to specialists alone either because of a lack of interest or because of the techni-

calities involved is not only harmful to the work of Baptist higher education, but I believe also that it displeasing to God. The truth is that every believer in the world of Baptist higher education is in some sense a theologian, for all believers who know God have the responsibility to see and understand the revelation of God for their foundational beliefs, while integrating these beliefs into their calling as academics.

Theology is certainly not the whole of academic life, but there must be a place for the true intellectual love of God, for Jesus has told us to love God with our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love our neighbor as well. This should not lead to some cold intellectual approach to the faith unaccompanied by affection. For too many, theology is a kind of intellectual aloofness or uncommitted intellectual curiosity. But before we can develop a theology of and for Baptist higher education, I would suggest that we think about the relationship of theology to Baptist life or to the church, and also to understand the responsibility of higher education in preparing future church and denominational leaders.

We need to understand history for what is distinctive about Baptists theologically, which understood historically is our contribution to the understanding of the church. For Baptists the church is central to God's working in history. The church is not only central to history, but to the Gospel and Christian living as well. Thus theology is more than God's words for me as an individual—theology is God's words for us—the community of faith. It is vitally important that we understand theology not merely in individualistic terms. We need to move to a corporate and community understanding of these ideas. For these reasons the early years of Baptist higher education placed their focus first in terms of service for the Church and then more broadly for society.

We need to acknowledge that the contemporary discipline-specific separation or fragmentation in which we find ourselves in today's academy often results in a two-fold problem: 1) a kind of lone ranger individuality, and 2) a suspicion and hostility of the theological enterprise. Certainly the academy at large, and sometimes even the Baptist academy, does not encourage, and in fact at times seemingly discourages, the need for creative and collaborative efforts of theologians. Unfortunately, there is seldom sufficient cross fertilization between serious theological thinking and the rest of the academy. These groups read different books, listen to different experts, identify different problems, consider different issues, contribute to different journals, and congregate in different groupings as they pursue diverse and sometimes competing agendas.

My concern today is not to be another sour voice on the contemporary scene. There are too many people today looking at these issues and seeing the glass half empty. What we need is a renewed eschatological vision for the people of God, with a recognition of the important place that Baptist higher education can have in God's overall plan and a fresh appreciation for the significance of a theological foundation for this work. Granted that the lack of theological acumen on the part of many in the academy is due to many factors beyond the control of professional theologians, nevertheless, it is important that we recognize the relationship between faithful theology and faithful Baptist academics.

Despite the fact that academic theology has produced vast amounts of materials requiring technical specialization, as in the case in other areas of knowledge, theology, if it is to serve the various disciplines across the academy, cannot afford to become some sort of esoteric endeavor done only for the initiated few. It is germane and important to have theological societies in serious theological debate, but unless Baptist theology operates consciously as the servant of both the church and the academy, little long-term value is forthcoming. One is reminded somewhat facetiously of the ghost of the cultured voice as C. S. Lewis describes him in his work, *The Great Divorce*. Upon refusing to repent of his snobbish spirit, of open-ended intellectual inquiry in order to enter the heavenly city the ghost cuts off conversation with his host to return to the gray city by saying, "Bless my soul. I'd nearly

forgotten, of course I can't come with you, I have to be back next Friday to read a paper. We have a little theological society down here."

The responsibility of making theology helpful to the academy rests both with the professional theologian and with other thinkers across the disciplines as well. Theology must be understandable to non-professional theologians. Too often what theologians write is unintelligible for many outside the discipline. Although I think that serious theological

Theology can help us recover the awareness that God is more important than we are, that the future life is more important than this one, and that a right view of God gives genuine significance to our calling as academics.

research and investigation must continue, that can't be the end of the theological enterprise. In the past, theologians of the church wrote so that literate people could understand, and it must be acknowledged that Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley are often much easier to read and understand than many contemporary theologians. Today we need theologians who can write in ways that are sharp, powerful, and right on target. In this vein the reformers and early Baptists frequently commended the

biblical writers for their clarity, simplicity, and brevity, and sought to emulate them in their own writings. If theology is to impact the church and inform others in the world of Baptist higher education, theologians must learn to communicate in understandable ways, for as someone has humorously said, "It may be impressive to say scintillate, scintillate, globule divific, feign would I fathom thy nature specific, loftily poised in the ether capacious, strongly resembling a gem carbonaceous." But it is much more understandable to say, "twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are, up above the world so high, like a diamond in the sky."

Likewise, theology in the academy must be relevant and applicable to other disciplines. Yale theologian, Miroslav Wolf, in his recent work, *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in the Christian Life*, has encouraged us to think of theology as "a way" in the manner the early church thought of the Christian life as the way of life. This is not in any way to downplay or denigrate the importance of serious Christian scholarship. We recognize that the various disciplines of theology are indeed indispensable to an accurate understanding of truth. Without the scholarship of experts in philosophy, archaeology, history, languages, and other related fields— theological study itself would be seriously impoverished. Yet, when these specializations are pursued as an end in themselves and not molded into a unified view of truth, they can possibly get lost in the cacophonous voices across the academy. I am not suggesting that we should subvert the validity and importance of scholarly disciplines. Quite the contrary! But such scholarship does not finally touch the higher function of theology nor inform the work of Baptist higher education unless it sets forth a perspective that depends upon the regenerated mind and exposes the radical difference between Christianity and the competing philosophies within the broader academy.

We must admit that some theologians unduly complicate the Christian faith or distract us from aspects of helpful Christian thinking and living. Similarly theology can enable all aspects of Baptist higher education to recover a true understanding of human life. In this sense faculty, staff and students can once again gain a greatness of the soul. Theology can help us recover the awareness that God is more important than we are, that the future life is more important than this one, and that a right view of God gives genuine significance to our calling as academics.

Theology can help those called to serve in Baptist higher education

to better understand what we believe and why we believe it. We can appreciate our heritage and enliven our future hope. When this takes place, I believe Baptist colleges and universities can be strengthened. The Gospel in its fullness can be proclaimed. Without the foundation of solid theology there can be no effective long-term educational efforts that are truly and distinctively Baptist—much less truly and distinctively Christian.

Our fundamental assumption in this task is that there is truth available to us and it is found in God's revelation of Himself in creation, history, experience, and ultimately in Christ as made known to us in Holy Scriptures. While we unhesitatingly affirm these truths, a warning needs to be voiced. No single group, church, or denomination, however orthodox or evangelical (not even Baptists), strictly and faithfully follows this revelation from God. While the church has characteristically sought to be faithful to scripture, the depth of meaning in the biblical text is rarely fully understood at any one moment in history. Theology in any tradition is often the art of establishing central and classic texts, which may mean that the other texts unfortunately are ignored or not given significant weight. No single theologian, church, or denomination has escaped or can escape this frailty, though there is certainly continuity throughout the centuries, particularly in the teachings concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, which I believe provides the ultimate foundation for our work in Baptist higher education.

Christian Intellectual Tradition in History

Thus understanding theology in the context of the great Christian intellectual tradition of the church at large and within the stream of Baptist life can provide insight for today and guidance for the future. In this way theology can help us engage the wrong-headed thinking often evident in today's academy. Knowledge of the past keeps us from confusing what is merely a contemporary expression from that which is enduringly relevant. Theology helps present to the church and the academy a valuable accumulation of enduring insights along with numerous lessons and warnings—both positive and negative. Thus theology done with the focus on the church and done for the good of the academy, will always have one eye on the historical past of the Christian tradition.

Such awareness of the church's history provides a bulwark against the pride and arrogance that would suggest that "we" yes, even we as Baptists, are the only group or tradition that carries on the orthodoxy of the Apostles. Knowledge of such continuities and discontinuities in the past will help us focus on those areas of truth that are timeless and enduring, while encouraging authenticity and humility as well as a dependency on God's Spirit. Hopefully this awareness will cause us not just to accept things in accordance with our tradition or do things in accordance with our own "comfort zones," but will again and again drive us back to the source of our theology in the New Testament with fresh eyes and receptive hearts and help us both understand the distinctives of Baptist higher education and help us relate constructively to those outside the Baptist and Christian tradition. Some might be asking, "do these theological commitments stifle honest intellectual exploration?" Our challenge then is to faithfully preserve and pass on the Christian tradition while encouraging honest intellectual inquiry. I believe these two things can co-exist, even if in tension, in an enriching dialectical dependence.

So our choice is not an unquestioning acceptance of Baptist tradition or open-ended inquiry. The unquestioning acceptance of tradition can degenerate into traditionalism. To quote the brilliant Yale scholar Jaroslav Pelikan, "If tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism becomes the dead faith of the living." Such traditionalism is often characterized by inflexible and at times anti-intellectual dogma at every point and in every discipline. This approach fails to engage our society or to influence our culture.

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Toward a Theology...

(continued from page 7)

On the other hand, free inquiry unanchored to theology and tradition often results in unbelieving skepticism, advancing the directionless state that characterizes so much of higher education today. Such an approach cannot sustain the Baptist tradition and its truth claims. I believe we have a better option. Within the world of higher education in general, Christian higher education has something different, even distinctive to offer which will help engage our culture—will strengthen our love for God and our love for study, by emphasizing both tradition and honest intellectual inquiry. As C. S. Lewis says, “All serious study begins with the genuinely critical question: ‘Why and how should this text be read?’” Thus in the words of T. S. Eliot, “We shall not cease from exploration.”

I believe guidance and balance in these matters will come as we are faithful in integrating an informed theological foundation with all areas of learning. For Baptist academics to address these matters we must hear afresh the words of Jesus from what is called the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40). Here we are told not only to love God whole-heartedly with our hearts and souls, but also our minds as well. Jesus’ words refer to a whole-hearted devotion to God with every aspect of our being, from whatever angle we choose to consider it, emotionally, volitionally or cognitively. This kind of love for God results in taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ (II Corinthians 10:5), a whole-hearted devotion to distinctively Christian thinking (or as T. S. Eliot put it, “to think in Christian categories”). This means being able to see life from a Christian vantage point; it means thinking theologically across the curriculum.

Beginning Steps

The beginning point for such a task is the confession that we believe in God the Father, maker of heaven and earth. We recognize “in Him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15-18), for all true knowledge flows from the one creator to His one creation.

A theologically informed approach to Baptist higher education must offer a way to live that is consistent with reality by offering a comprehensive understanding of all areas of life and thought, every aspect of creation. The starting point begins with God and brings us into the presence of God without delay. The central affirmation of scripture is not only that there is a God, but that God has acted and spoken in history. God is Lord and King over this world, ruling all things for His own glory, displaying His perfections in all that He does in order that humans and angels may worship and adore Him. Such thinking provides a coherent way of seeing life, of seeing the world distinct from deism, naturalism, and materialism, existentialism, polytheism, pantheism, mysticism, or deconstructionist postmodernism. Such a theistic perspective provides bearings and direction when confronted with secularistic and pluralistic approaches to truth and morality. Fear about the future, suffering, disease and poverty are informed by Christian thinking grounded in the redemptive work of Christ and the grandeur of God. What is needed among those of us who serve in Baptist higher education in the 21st Century is a renewed commitment to Holy Scripture and to our confessional heritage. But not only this, we need to renew our commitment to relate to one another in love and humility, bringing about true fellowship and community, resulting not only in a rebirth of orthodox foundations, but also a rebirth of Baptist orthopraxy before a watching world.

If Baptists lived in the kind of love and unity which the Lord Jesus Christ called for, it would do wonders for converting sinners and enlarging the church of Jesus Christ. So the choice is not between

truth or piety, orthodoxy or orthopraxy. Someone recently asked me if I would prefer a person with a warm heart and a mushy head, or a straight thinking orthodox person with a cold heart. My answer was that I would prefer neither. In that sense we need to think of the call for a theology of Baptist higher education, not just as an attempt to articulate our feelings about our dependence on God as the pietists might say, or to describe the great truths of the faith in proper order as the rationalist might say. Rather as we have said at the beginning of this presentation, it is an attempt to *develop a mind for truth* so that we can articulate the faith once for all delivered to the Saints and to *develop a heart for God* so that our lives are built up in the faith.

I’m sure that some may be thinking that such commitments as described in this presentation are potentially divisive and thus should be de-emphasized in their importance. But these theological commitments are the very backbone, the underpinnings, of Baptist higher education, the very essence of what it means to be both orthodox and Baptist. Without healthy theology, those of us in the church and the academy are prone to be tossed back and forth by waves, blown here

and there by every wind of teaching (as Paul describes in Ephesians 4:14). A healthy understanding of theology for Baptist higher education will help mature the head and heart, enabling believers to move toward spiritual health, resulting in the praise and exaltation of God.

Rightly understood then, theologically informed Baptist higher education is not contrary to either faithful teaching or Christian piety.

Those who teach and study in Baptist institutions must take to heart the words of the Apostle Paul: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds” (Romans 12:2). What is being called for this morning is intellectually challenging. It is not the easiest road for us to travel, but it is one faithful to the best of our heritage and maintains that there is no room for mere anti-intellectual piety, much less some vague spirituality, in Baptist higher education. We are to have the mind of Christ, this certainly requires us to think and wrestle with the challenging ideas of history in the issues of our day. For to do otherwise will result in a generation of God’s people ill-equipped for faithful thinking and service in this new century. Christian thinking is needed to confront an ever-changing culture. Instead of allowing our thoughts to be captive to culture, we must take every thought captive to Jesus Christ.

This calls for serious theological thinking as we have indicated, affirming our love for God and our love for study, the place of devotion and the place of research, the priority of affirming and passing on the great Christian traditions and the significance of honest exploration, reflection, and intellectual wrestling. These matters are in tension, but not in contradiction and are framed by faith-informed commitments. Rightly understood then, theologically informed Baptist higher education is not contrary to either faithful teaching or Christian piety. It provides a foundation for a new discovery and creative teaching as well as the framework for passing on the coherent truth essential to the advancement of the Christian faith.

Concluding Considerations

In summary, I would suggest that a theology of/for Baptist higher education can help us develop connecting and unifying principles for Christian thinking, grounded in the truth that God is creator and redeemer. A call for a theology of and for Baptist higher education will encourage curious exploration and serious wrestling with the foundational questions of human existence. I believe such a commitment to a theology of Baptist higher education will help us develop a comprehensive and historically informed view of what it means to be a part of the great Christian intellectual tradition as we shape the Christian educational enterprise for this new century. A theology of Baptist higher education will help us be aware of contemporary cultural, social, and religious trends. What we are suggesting will require us to live in ten-

sion, reflecting a theological outlook while simultaneously having particular discipline-specific emphases across the curriculum. This living in tension will not entirely please those who see truth as a battle in which it is perfectly clear who stands with the forces of light or darkness. Sometimes the issues with which we wrestle are filled with ambiguities. For at this time as the Apostle Paul reminds us, even with the help of Holy Scripture and Christian tradition we are finite humans who still see as through a glass darkly. Ultimately a theology of Baptist higher education grows out of a commitment to sphere-sovereignty whether in the arts, the sciences, the humanities, education, business, healthcare, or social arenas. Thus a theologically informed Baptist higher education must surely subordinate all other endeavors to the improvement of the mind in pursuit of truth, taking every thought captive to the Lordship of Jesus the Christ. We would be naïve not to recognize the times in which we live and the context and culture for which our students are preparing to serve. 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. What is needed is a bedrock, non-negotiable commitment to a belief in a triune God; in one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus, who was God incarnate; it represents a belief in a totally truthful and authoritative Bible, and the message of God's justifying work by grace through faith revealed therein; it is rooted in a focus on the church, and lives in hope of the return of Christ; resulting in 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. It is built on a center of bedrock truths that are not culturally confined or easily expunged without great peril. What I believe is needed for this time is an ancient kind of orthodoxy, a primitive but passionate core of theological truths that nurtured persecuted believers in the past, and will be the only thing to comfort once the flames of suffering are stoked again. If persecution is coming back, then our orthodox commitments must also return; commitments that are firm but loving, clear but gracious, ready to respond to issues and challenges that the culture and world present to Christ-followers, but not necessarily responding to every contextual skirmish or intramural squabble.

As Bill Hull said almost a decade ago, the best time to advance is when our backs are to the wall. These commitments as Dr. Hull claimed are based on the intuition that our cultural exhaustion may signal the beginning of a new humility, that our moral frustration may be the harbinger of a new seriousness—in other words, that our desperate alienation from the roots of our humanity may itself provoke the advent of a new *Kairos*, that this explosive yet empty age may indeed become the incubator of a new era when the search for wholeness can begin all over again. May God renew His church, renew our Baptist life, and renew Baptist higher education as we seek to develop a theology of and for Baptist higher education even as we pray for one another at the beginning of this century. May these commitments not be easily lost or forgotten, but may they remain firmly rooted in our minds and hearts for years and decades to come for the glory of God.

Soli Deo Gloria. ■



CGE Educational Connections: A Membership of Nations

by Carolyn Bishop, *International Director*

Nations that have connections with other countries interchange both tangible and intangible commodities. Citizens and leaders compare laws and rights, trade between businesses, and share innovative ideas through education.

Countries that have connected through strength in security, economics, and a system of law are called Core according to Thomas Barnett, author of a stimulating book, *The Pentagon's New Map*. Countries that are struggling with those three connection areas are referred to as the Gap countries.

CGE currently reported a network of educators in 35 Core and 47 Gap countries. For CGE interests, it appears that in addition to looking at the systems of security, law, and economics there is a viable highway of connection to every nation through higher education. Educators from Gap countries, which have little diplomacy or trade with many Core countries, are requesting partners to help develop educational systems. The past year's list of countries with a CGE-wide focus included 12 Gap nations: Vietnam, China,

Myanmar, Bhutan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Libya. Can CGE be a nation connector?

CGE has engaged educational partnerships in countries that in every other arena find themselves separated by the barriers of the Core and Gap differences. CGE has found appropriate ways to move forward in establishing mutually beneficial partnerships to develop the skills of faculty, strengthen the systems of higher education and curriculum, and develop ways that students can learn from each other's diverse experiences. How does CGE connect the dots when obviously there are significant differences in values, levels of freedom, customary practices, and patterns of work and life?

C.S. Lewis wrote that the word "membership" in the first century meant united together not as individually good yet united together for doing good and helping one another. Membership meant not only people massing together like pennies or counters but being members like players in a band. Leaders in many Gap countries choose to work together with CGE as members in an

educational partnership because they respect the values of learning and that connects the disconnected. CGE colleagues can first show commitment and concern rather than comparisons. Can connecting the nations make a difference?

Yes. CGE has the privilege to eliminate the gaps of misunderstanding and mistrust as we find ways to cooperate amidst the diversities. Join CGE in rewarding educational projects across the Middle East, Northern Africa, the Pacific Rim, and Eastern Europe. Let us work together with faculty from many nations and allow students to connect and uncover opportunities to build a reasoned and respected worldview. Contact CGE at <info@cgedu.org> if you want to be a Connector in Gap nations. ■

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Faith, Fortitude and the Future of

David L. Jeffrey
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George Bernard Shaw once delivered himself of the opinion that “A Catholic university is a contradiction in terms.” I cannot presume to know what this particular dictum of Shaw’s conjures up for others; in my case it makes me wonder, if Shaw found the conjunction “Catholic” and “university” oxymoronic, how he would have reacted to “Baptist university” or even “Christian university” for that matter.

The historic facts are, nevertheless, that even the secular university both as Shaw knew it and as we have inherited it, is a Catholic foundation. A secondary tributary for us in America is an educational tradition most surely to be aligned with evangelical or reformed Protestants. There would have been no Oxford or Cambridge without the first, no Harvard or Princeton without the second stream (nor, if we consider Baptists, University of Chicago, Brown, or Rochester either).

But Shaw’s quip is no mere laughing matter. It goes right to the heart of the question as we all now have to deal with it, and perhaps most precisely in its explicit attack on association with the term “Catholic.” What Shaw was thinking about was authority—*Magister*. *Magisterium*—the teaching authority of the Church as a constraint upon inquiry and indeed the question of authority in relation to higher learning in general. In my view, Shaw’s opposition to Catholic higher education identifies an issue with which we all have to wrestle. We (especially Protestant Christians) have not dealt with this issue well, and if we want to talk coherently about the possibility of a *university*—which really is that—and which is also, in any meaningful sense *Christian*, we will have to find ways of addressing Shaw’s representative objection straight-on instead of ducking away from it. Shaw spoke—and still speaks—for secularist resistance to the existence of higher learning that dares to presuppose God. His barb—aimed at J.H. Cardinal Newman, among others—was that Christians couldn’t make the case for God, intellectually, and that all they really wished to do was to establish a sub-cultural enclave in which they could evade their accountability to the pressing needs of a wider society. As so often happens in the Christian life, our adversaries may have seen more clearly than we ourselves where both our duty—and our temptation—lies.

Shaw’s aphoristic critique is, after all, a precis of many principled voices of resistance to us, at least since the early 18th century. In response to these pressures, whether from those candidly outside orthodox Christian affiliation, or those extremely uncomfortable and only nominally within it, two dominant Christian educational strategies have been developed.

The first of these was in fact a strategy of separation—religious retreat and a construal of higher education as a dictate of the needs of the church. It is still one pole of Christian educational practice. It lies behind many Christian colleges, both Catholic and Protestant. It is invoked often in critiques of Christian higher education, even by those who would actually like it better if this allegation of separatism was entirely true and we Christians did just hole up with our co-religionists and stay there—self-marginalized.

A second strategy has been that of selective participation—an openness to secular learning and its fashions, to dialogue on generous terms. This involves an implicit acceptance of post-enlightenment liberalism except for an additional emphasis on faith as a qualitative enrichment, a dividend in good citizenship. More than the first option, this strategy lies behind universities of a Protestant heritage in particular. Yet increasingly, these qualities have become identified with Catholic universities too. When thoughtful secularists observe this model, especially in our own time, they sometimes begin to wonder if,

from such an accommodating stance, we are really making any distinctive contribution that grows out of our religious worldview. Are we, perhaps, just secularists with an archaic hint of, say, Methodist DNA or with filial obligations to rich founding families who were Baptists?

This broad brush sets up our question again: What is—or rather, what would be—a “Christian university” and how could such a university form a worthwhile, even distinctive, intellectual community?

Perspective

We should preface this question, as many good scholars have, by asking first: “What *was* the Christian university?” By now we have at least some sense of our history (e.g., Haskins, Harbison, Marsden). This conference needs no rehearsal of the impressive intellectual and spiritual foundation we share, the commitment of Christians to truths for the sake of Truth, the redemptive view of all the treasures of wisdom that Ambrose and Augustine found hidden in Christ. We recognize the enormous productivity of the intellectual energies of later medieval academics such as Anselm, Albert, Aquinas, Bonaventure, and Wyclif, who in their intellectual inquiries knew no trepidation because they were confident, as Wyclif succinctly put it, that “God cannot contradict himself.” To this lineage we could add the probing educational philosophies of Comenius, of Isaac Watts, of John Locke.

But that was then, and this is now. These mighty voices of our tradition have faded out of currency among us; the soul of the American university, some argue, has been sucked dry, and only a few scattered evangelical scholars, a handful of colleges, and a few hard-headed, breast-beating Catholics are left alive to tell each other how once it was, or ought to have been.

Maybe it is almost that apocalyptic—though in my view our situation is much more positive. There are, after all, many excellent Christian institutions of higher learning. Most, it is true, are colleges, but they are hardly negligible. There still are in the world what may without hyperbole be called Christian universities—Notre Dame, Pepperdine, Baylor perhaps among them. At least that is a vision that some of us share.

But our question remains, still imperfectly answered. For while we know something of what we mean by “university,” we know less—or at least we are disinclined very specifically to declare ourselves—about what we mean by “Christian.”

What Is a University?

Because, for the guilds to which we belong, it is much easier to say what is a university than to say what is a Christian, let us dispense with the apparently easier item first. Again, I resort to the broad brush. I will simply list, without elaboration or defense, six characteristics that secular reflection on the university more or less concurs are *sine qua non* of the term. All are continuous with their medieval prototype, and all have been present whenever the university has itself attained excellence:

- **Independence**—freedom from micro-management by its supporting institutions or the civil order;
- **Judicious impartiality**—what the 18th century called “disinterestedness”—not a lack of interest but a resistance to raw advocacies so that the faculty of discernment might apply itself to understanding and the truth of things, an effort that has in the end practical civic value outweighing the swings of party spirit. It is what makes synthesis and reconciliation possible.
- **Bookishness**—scholarly pursuit that makes reflective intellectual activity the essence of the university’s work-to-do, rather than, for example, the making of machines or money.

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- **Commitment to the advancement of knowledge**—Not simply archival or antiquarian in its commitment to tradition, the university builds upon its reflective and mnemonic resources by questioning and, in principled fashion, pursuing answers to questions that may not have been asked before.

- **Commitment to pass on the deposit of learning**—critically, much as the Church has traditionally been committed to pass on the deposit of faith. In order that intellectual richness be maximized, as little as possible of value should be lost by the corporate body.

- **Centering culture**—Since the Middle Ages, when culture was fundamentally religious, to the 20th century, when it has been fundamentally secular, the university has, both by design and by effect, been at the center of culture—articulating, shaping, debating options and prerogatives. Here is the sphere in which intellectual freedom, essential to academic work, interacts with oral obligation and social responsibility. It is the sphere in which the Humanities and Arts disciplines has traditionally staged the key debates and offered leadership, but from which they have, for a complex variety of reasons, recently pulled back to the detriment of all concerned.

If you accept, at least as a crude outline, this notion of what a university is, perhaps we can go forward to our qualifier, “Christian.”

What Is a Christian?

Strictly speaking, as many have observed, the word “Christian” suffers diminishment when it is not used as a noun. To be a Christian, strictly speaking, is to be a person under obedience to Christ. To be under obedience to Christ is to have heard the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, the Sermon on the Mount and even the prayers of Jesus for his followers, and taken them seriously enough that a certain clarity about first-order obligations is more or less reflexive. When we say of someone—even a fellow academic—“That person is a Christian,” what we are saying, or should be, is that she is one for whom the claims of Christ have a greater hold upon her reflective intelligence than any other claims, including those of her academic guild. For after all, “no one can serve two masters” (Mt. 6:24).

I suspect, however, that in the academic setting, few of us often use the term “Christian” in this clear-minded way, as a primary and denoting noun. As in the context of our discussion here, we use it as a modifier, an adjective, ostensibly to qualify some other noun. When we do that, of course, the term “Christian” itself inevitably is qualified, for in the conjunction of terms, the noun takes precedence, and we all know it. Many parallels—Italian-American, Polish-American, etc.—come to mind. However, to the degree that there is real and vibrant life in the first term, there is a subtle but real sense in which the weight of emphasis shifts away from the second, so that it also is being “modified.” Terms such as “Mexican-American” and “African-American” still have the force of meaningfully referring back to the realities denominated by the first noun in the pair. Others exhibit little or no fruitful tension: if I should say to you that I, too, am a hyphenated citizen, a “Canadian-American,” you might laugh. There are some institutions in America whose name includes the term “Christian” with as little or less modifying force.

If my examples invoke the concept of dual citizenship, it is because I sense here an instructive analogy. “Christian” / “University”; “Christian” / “philosopher”; “Christian” / “intellectual”—are these not evocations of two realms now, two citizenships? For Albert, Aquinas, Bonaventure, it was not so; for us it is so. Thus our topic and thus our task: if there is to be real meaning in the conjunction “Christian University,” there must remain such authority in the first term—cultural, intellectual, moral authority—that it is not altogether modified

out of relevance by the second.

“In Him all the treasures of wisdom are hidden” (Col. 1:17). Do we really believe that? If so, our sense of what a university is will arise from that confidence, that first order of intellectual affection.

Citizenship in the Guilds

Apprenticeship in our era, apprenticeship in our respective guilds, is overwhelmingly an induction into a narrower and technical, not merely secularized understanding of the university’s multifold tasks. Hypertrophy in the disciplines, the fragmentary and even atomizing character of their development, accentuates a general modern movement away from integration of any kind. The result, as now countless academic jeremiads have made more or less public, is a crisis of moment for the secular university itself (Jeffrey, Manganiello, Marsden). Our own version of it, which is only the deeper for its necessarily more direct resistance to the separation of intellectual freedom from community responsibility, of the pursuit of private enterprise from the claims of public vision, has actually a bearing upon and should be of direct value to resolution of this wider intellectual crisis in the Western university.

Why is it that I say that *necessarily* Christian academics must more directly confront the increasingly general separation of intellectual or academic freedom from the mutual obligations of intellectual community? Well, because we are members, all of us, of the Body of Christ. Yes, we are also members of some academic guild, perhaps one that more or less self-consciously offers us (unlike St. Paul, I speak only metaphorically) the inducements of a harlot. We find it rather too easy to rationalize a preoccupation with these inducements; like our Master, we have no aversion to ministry to harlots. We engage them, like He did, by a certain will, in deep and reflective conversation. We will gladly bear the brunt of our Pharisaical co-religionists’ scorn as we tittle and convivially dine with these folk, and even more scurrilous publicans, for we do it all on impeccable authority. There is, of course, a line there somewhere.

Early on, few of us find that our doctoral programs engage the “Christian,” even in fields where it is central to the discipline, in any nuanced, discerning or mature fashion (cf. Agee, 130). Typically the opposite occurs: we are expected to see the rectitude of Shaw’s oxymoron, and quickly to shed our interest in these matters. Moreover, motives for matriculation regularly get mixed up with mammon. Quickly enough we learn that for survival’s sake we should fashion our professional self-image so as to make it appear to our superiors and peers that loyalty to our guild outweighs loyalty to our university, as also to the Gospel. We are inclined to suspect that we will have “academic freedom” to the degree that we keep in mind what, as Al Plantinga says, our peers will let us get away with saying (Hesburgh, 281). We learn to rankle no Romans; we confront few Pharisees. In such a case academic freedom has been sadly corrupted, and that on several counts. For the Christian, in whose mind academic freedom should seek its roots in the second clause of the Great Commandment as much as the first, the “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:28; 2:8) is an outwardly directed freedom—as the text makes plain, it is a freedom to love the neighbor as one’sself. In a Christian context there can be no virtuous practice of academic freedom that does not seek the common good, the “commune profit” as John Gower put it, of the whole Body of Christ. But this view—like most other communitarian convictions—

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has fallen on hard individualistic times, in which academic neighbors may regard as truest charity a firm commitment to leave each other alone.

For Christians in the University, what Michael Beaty, Todd Buras, Larry Lyon and others have called the “Two Spheres” approach is for many a sensible survival strategy (Beaty, Buras, Lyons). For others, even in nominally Christian universities, it seems that the only way to make progress, either with personal intellectual life or with corporate academic development, is by a diplomatic management of divided loyalties. Rationalizations, often with the best of intentions, abound.

This two-sphere approach, pragmatically speaking, has served many purposes, including the would-be tolerant purposes, I think, of our non-Christian colleagues. Many of these colleagues would be willing almost indefinitely for the spheres of Faith and Reason to coexist as long as we more or less continuously and therapeutically assure them that it will be on terms dictated by what counts as reason—that the norms of the secular University will determine what shall be the acceptable intellectual and social implications of the term “Christian.”

That is why I agree with those who think that for the purposes of granting “Christian” its necessarily authoritative stature in the Christian university, the two spheres approach will, whatever its transitional value, no longer do. The “add-on” defense for religion, as Beaty, Buras, and Lyon have shown, is in fact often a version of me-tooism, a hyper-reflex of fashion-conscious American Christianity in the twentieth century, but it can involve such an extreme rejection of separateness from the mainstream culture as to deny the Christian obligation to be counter-cultural. On the other hand, the faith/knowledge separation, so easy for anti-authoritarian Protestants, can be at the core of that disobedience to Christ that the Church must address. In the two spheres model, the second term has almost always eventually overcome the first. David Solomon’s prediction that institutions like Notre Dame and Baylor must inevitably also succumb to it is not, on the evidence of past examples, unwarranted (Solomon, 19).

Indifference to the drift, as though these were matters merely of taste or the market, is in fact already a *de facto* choice. As Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, recently put it, “If you think you are being neutral about the moral and spiritual ethos of a school, you are in fact generating an ethos of individualism, functionalism, and ultimately fragmentation.”¹

In other words, intellectual neutrality kills; in particular, it is fatal to Christian academic community.

Where we Christians might have suggested alternative models for development, we have, too often I fear, been content simply to show that we too, despite our somewhat awkward subcultural peculiarities, can move in solidarity with the general herd. The neutral or broad way, we imply, is our way too. We have often failed, as Charles Habib Malik has suggested, even to provide a useful Christian critique of the general fate of the University (Malik). Even now, when our minds as a community (thanks to Marsden, Plantinga, Pelikan, Schwehn, Wolterstorff, Carpenter, Noll, Holmes, et al) are working better on this than two decades ago, are we ready yet to say what a truly Christian university would be like—that is, what would be *distinctive* about it intellectually? I am not sure. What I am sure about is that others are now listening to see what, if anything, we might have to say.

Constructive Criticism from Outside

In a sense, neighbors not of our community may even be said to have joined our conversation, at least temporarily. This is, I think, something to be welcomed. Insofar as their attention does not move us either to defensiveness—or to what is more to be pitied, a fawning insipidity that leads us to play up to their camera rather than really put our minds to the issue—we should be grateful. Whatever is distinctive and whatever may hope to be worthy in our identity cannot

but profit from intelligent questions. Our identity, not simply as academics, or as citizens, but rather our identity as credible adherents, followers, students of the teaching of Jesus, demands of us careful attention to those who have tried to understand us in something at least akin to our own terms.

Many of you will remember, about four years ago, an issue of *Atlantic Monthly* (October 2000, pp. 55-76) that focused upon our topic. Alan Wolfe makes three apparent criticisms of evangelical higher education. (In effect, they boil down substantially to one criticism.) Though he is talking mostly about evangelical colleges, what he says certainly applies to the possibility a credible Christian university such as Baylor, among others, aspires to be.

Wolfe finds that evangelicals in particular “have created institutions as sensitive and caring as any in America,” but often at the cost of moral and intellectual discernment, to the degree that they have “no adequate way of distinguishing between ideas that are path-breaking and those that are gibberish.” One for instance: If Scott Peck is talk-show popular, he becomes an authority more compelling than Moses; no matter how new-agey and incoherent he remains even to his exponents, he “works” for us because above all we want to be “with it.”

Wolfe asserts that therapeutic culture comes too easily to evangelicals, precisely because, if I follow him, therapeutic culture is a safely secularized version of the good news and therefore entails little scandal or social stigma. This me-tooism, he notes, creates an oddly un-evangelical political correctness, and it leads to intellectual flaccidity:

a therapeutic sensibility and a culture of nonjudgmentalism are inappropriate for hiring new faculty members, evaluating them for tenure, developing a syllabus, grading undergraduates, mentoring graduate students, writing books, or conducting experiments. All these tasks involve making judgments about who or what does or does not achieve a certain threshold of validity or excellence.

To the degree that our incapacity for the discernment of excellence pertains, needless to say, it cripples ambitions for the development of any kind of serious university.

Wolfe finally reflects an old view—one that Catholics and Jews as well as 18th-century dissenters agreed firmly upon, that “When it comes to the life of the mind, democratic sensibilities aren’t always a help. Once sentenced to intellectual mediocrity because they kept too many ideas out,” he says, “conservative Christian institutions face the prospect of returning to mediocrity because they let too many in.” The odd attraction of postmodernism for many evangelicals, he goes on to suggest, owes more than anything to their legacy of anti-authoritarianism, their resistance to authority of any kind. Wolfe’s imperious rhetoric aside, I have come to think there is some truth in this; as in so many other matters, we may sometimes have shown ourselves more interested in relevance than in coherence.

Now we see how it is that all of Wolfe’s points resolve into one. Our problem, much like that of Adam and Eve as Milton so shrewdly presents them in the primal garden, is that we will go to pretty much any option that leads us away from thinking clearly about authority above the self—about, for example, the biblical imperative to make connections between love and obedience. Wolfe does not say it, but the widely shared Western suspicion of any and all authority [“Question authority”] is now usually regarded as the secularized legacy of an intellectually shop-worn Protestantism; it is also the reason, as Wolfe does not perhaps fully understand, that evangelicals tend to reject (or at the least steer away from) Catholics, even transparently saintly Catholics, as full partners in the intellectual work to do. Catholics who have had more of value to say—forever, really—than anyone on the integration of faith and learning, whose vision of *fides quarens intellectum* originated the university in the Middle Ages and still undergirds many of the most compelling products of such integration that evangelicals

study today, are not trusted. To some fundamental degree, this is not because of this or that doctrinal difference, but rather, I think, because Catholics have insisted upon the necessity of transpersonal authority, both in matters of faith and in matters of reason. It may also be because they are viewed as having too strong a sense of community: they are not dependable enough as populists, or to invert the point, are insufficiently individualistic in matters of mind and heart. (We want to say 'I believe' or 'I think that'—they tend to want to say 'The Church teaches', and we find that disturbing.) We tend to prefer and even more to trust a more radical individualism. Yet all the while many of us who call ourselves Baptists or evangelicals—and Wolfe is right about this, isn't he?—are obliged to put enormous amounts of energy into educating donors, Boards of Regents and wider communities of church-based support away from that reflexive anti-intellectualism which is, after all, quite precisely a function of *their* radical individualism.

The Issue

Another way to describe our quandary—and I do so because, for consistency's sake and the sake of our unity both, it follows here—is to say that to some degree we Protestants have naturalized our resistance to Christ. We say we are accountable to the Scriptures, but we insist that only our own personal, anarchic, and subjective interpretations of the Bible, malleable and protean according to our current prejudices, will do. Currently, for example, we are happy to quote the Great Commission, less happy to remember the Great Commandment; much of the Sermon on the Mount is cliché for us, some of it, like the bit about not serving two masters, goes unremarked. As for the Great High-priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17, that we all be made one, even as he and the Father are one, that prayer we do not much like to think about, let alone pray with Him.

In the Middle Ages, the word "Uni-Versity" implied, as was often noted, the many turning toward the One, the diversity of human labors and vocations returning for reference, communion, corporate self-understanding, community and common sense of purpose, to that One in whom all our wisdoms are hidden, and whose members, like wheel-spokes, we are to be as the world turns.

What is needed, for the Church as for any cultural extension of it which would be meaningfully Christian, is a reestablishment, in reflective tranquility and deep study, of the teaching authority of Jesus at the hub. If we can somehow find a way to deal appropriately with this issue, I believe, then (and probably only then), we will make a coherent address to the question: Can there be such a thing as a Christian university that functions as an intellectual community?

The Experiment

Since there is, by my reckoning at least, still no fully satisfactory exemplar of the Christian university in America today, we must imagine the task of helping to build one in purely experimental terms. Here are some hypotheses on which I would like to see experiments:

That theology—a truly rigorous philosophical theology, be built up over a generation or two to the point where it could once again and

more credibly become "queen of the arts" (cf. Carson, Harink). For this to happen, theology would need to acquire our brightest and best, apprenticeship in theology would need to require counter-cultural and truly radically higher standards than now prevail, and a commensurate prestige would need to be granted the discipline. (I would love to think that some visionary Christian philanthropist would help fund a program in which brilliant practitioners of one of the major intellectual disciplines, say about 45–50 years of age, could be identified and supported at full academic salary for about five years of top-level theological training, then turned loose to practice a theology informed by and grounded in the intellectual disciplines for the benefit of the wider Church.)

In the interim, philosophy, including philosophy of education, philosophy of history, history of philosophy, philosophy of science, epistemology and philosophy of religion would need both to become crackerjack good and capable of much more than technical preoccupations—capable, in short, of giving leadership to intellectual and spiritual self-definition in the Christian university. This will require faculty members who have the stature and independence of mind to be able to critique the norms and prejudices of their academic guilds as well as the conventional secular pieties of our wider academic culture.

All other disciplines must be built up in a similar fashion, cultured, with faculty who possess and continue to acquire the highest possible levels of (a) commitment to Christ; and (b) disciplinary excellence. Without intellectual integrity, piety in the university soon becomes odious—and perhaps has become odious, on these grounds, to many.

Further, a communing community must be formed, a faculty that commits to common worship and prays to common purpose. Any idea that this may be accomplished simply by having all faculty members from a single denomination or general category of Christians is delusory in my view. There is more divergence among Baptists, for example, on everything I have talked about today, or among Catholics or Methodists or Lutherans, than between Christ-directed intellectuals and lay people across and beyond these two traditions. Part of the counter-cultural courage we need is to experiment obediently toward fulfilling the will of Christ so clearly expressed in John 17.

It may be that our tacit question ought not to be "Can there be a Christian University?" but rather, "Can there be a Christian university that lacks the conviction to put its theology at the core?" I don't think so—at least not for long. I believe protestant evangelical educators need to find their own versions of a mission statement for the Christian university that allows for it to be a place where "...aided by the specific contribution of philosophy and theology, university scholars will be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel, and therefore by a faith in Christ, the *Logos*, as the center of creation and of human history."

These are the words of John Paul II, from his *Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities* (14-15), but they surely have a contribution to make to all our conversations.

A Christian Faculty

One cannot build a Christian university without a Christian faculty, and such a faculty's real and ongoing needs must be met. In a measure not now that widely evident:

We need *understanding of a scriptural worldview* and loyalty to it. We need to know and love the Christian metanarrative;

We need *theological leadership*: intellectually and spiritually authoritative they are because continually earning that authority. There needs to be a level of theological inquiry that is capable of reminding us fruitfully of the ultimate unity of truth, and of teaching us repeatedly how it is a requisite of the search for truth that the enterprise be a corporate, communal endeavor.

(continued on page 16)

Legal Notes:

Academic Freedom: The Stuff of Constitutions, Contracts and Confusion



by Jim Guenther

Who has “academic freedom,” what is it, where did they get it, and from whose interference is the freedom claimed?

In academia, academic freedom is defined, more or less, in institutional policies and faculty handbooks, in pronouncements from AAUP and in criteria of accrediting agencies. In the law, academic freedom is defined by the constitution (perhaps), in a tradition of judicial deference to institutions of higher education (to an extent), and in faculty contracts (but the definitions vary).

When it comes to the constitution's definition, the courts explain the meaning; yet, those definitions are not always the same. J. Peter Byrne, in a *Yale Law Journal* article on academic freedom as a constitutional right, wrote, “lacking definition or guiding principle, the doctrine of academic freedom floats in the law, picking up decisions as a hull does barnacles.”

The opinion in one case said academic freedom is “a special concern” of the first amendment. Justice Douglas said its source lies in the “penumbra” of the first amendment's right to free speech, free press, and free association. A penumbra is a space of partial illumination, a surrounding region in which something exists in a lesser degree.

The first amendment protects citizens from government in regard to religion, speech, the press, assembly, and petition to government for redress of grievances. Where is academic freedom in that?

In the beginning, Justice Frankfurter said there are “four essential freedoms of a university” but he may not have meant that they emanated from the first amendment. He may have been offering his opinion of good public policy, the wisdom of judicial deference to the academy, perhaps more than an opinion of binding constitutional authority.

These four freedoms came to be referred

to by the courts as “academic freedom.” In Frankfurter's words in *Sweezy v. New Hampshire*, these rights are said to be the institution's right “to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study.”

But that sounds like academic freedom is something only the institution enjoys. What about teachers? Are teachers only third party beneficiaries of this institutional freedom from government? And, if so, how does academic freedom insulate the state employed teacher from the state which employs her?

AAUP insists that academic freedom is a right enjoyed by teachers. Or, at least, it is a right which teachers ought to enjoy by contract. AAUP defines academic freedom in terms of the right to be free in research and publication of the results, free in the classroom in discussing the subject; and when teachers speak as citizens, academic freedom means they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline.

Is anything clear? One thing is. The first amendment is only a protection from government. So, a faculty member in a private institution cannot assert the first amendment as a shield from the institution. As against the private institution, the faculty member only has the academic freedom described in the employment contract.

If faculty enjoy “academic freedom” only because of contract, then one must look to the definition of the term in the contract to understand exactly what has been promised. So, academic freedom may mean one thing in one contract, and something different in another. And, academic freedom in a contract may mean the same as or something different from academic freedom in the constitution, if one sees academic freedom in the constitution's penumbra.

All that being said, a 2000 decision of the

Fourth Circuit United States Court of Appeals was noteworthy. The case was *Urofsky* and other faculty members at public colleges and universities in Virginia versus the Governor. At issue was whether the faculty members' first amendment free speech right was violated by a Virginia law which forbade them from using state-owned or leased computers to access sexually explicit material.

The plaintiffs said they needed that access to fulfill their teaching and research roles, as teachers. The plaintiffs claimed to have a right of academic freedom which was being transgressed by government. AAUP weighed in on the plaintiffs' side.

The court ruled against the plaintiffs. The court said the state may restrict speech rights of its employees in ways the state may not restrict the speech of the citizenry at large. And, the court said, faculty members at state schools had no more first amendment protection than any other state employee. Finally, the decision declared for good measure that any constitutional right of academic freedom which truly exists, belongs to the institution, not to individual faculty members. The freedom is the institution's right of self governance. The AAUP's attorney deplored the decision in an article she titled “Academic Freedom Bites the Dust.” The hope she expressed in the article was that the United States Supreme Court would reverse the decision. That did not happen. *Urofsky v. Gilmore* is at least the present authoritative barnacle in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and North and South Carolina.

We leave for another day a discussion of a religious school's freedom under the religion clauses of the first amendment. ■

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Gifts & Grants

Gifts to MC Exceed \$2 million

Mississippi College alumnus, H. Henry Hederman, has left the School of Business \$1,000,000 from his estate. Other recent gifts include: Estate of Max L. Pharr—\$258,000 to the Department of Biology; estate of Vivian

Smit—\$138,000 in unrestricted funds; estate of Morris D. Ferguson—\$99,960 for School of Nursing scholarships; trust from the estate of Mrs. Helen Latimer—\$68,500; trustee gifts: Leland R. Speed—\$73,000; Robbie S. Cross—\$100,000 for Building Renovation; other gifts: Frank Pajerski—\$133,500 Gift-in-Kind to the Department of Art; Jewell Longabaugh—\$78,600 to construction of the new soccer fields; Martha Ann Klaus—\$54,000 for scholarships; Ray Eugene Hannah—\$71,600 for Department of Chemistry;

Robert M. Hearin Foundation—\$200,000 for Mississippi College School of Law Scholarships and The Fountain Family Foundation—\$75,000 capital gift.

Campbellsville Receives Kresge Challenge Grant for \$1 Million

Campbellsville University has received her first challenge grant from The Kresge Foundation for \$1 million that will be used for the E. Bruce Heilman Student Center Complex. ■



Names & Faces

Malcolm Yarnell Accepts Louisiana College Presidency

by Michele Trice, Louisiana College

Malcolm Yarnell of Fort Worth, Texas, has accepted the Louisiana College Board of Trustees' offer to become the school's eighth president, according to Bill Hudson, chairman of the Louisiana College Board of Trustees. Yarnell will assume the position of president in January.



Malcolm Yarnell

The Board of Trustees met September 24 to interview Yarnell and to vote on his candidacy. John Traylor has served as interim president since June when Rory Lee resigned as the College's seventh president. Traylor will remain in office until Yarnell able assumes his presidential duties.

Coming to Louisiana College from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS), Yarnell holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Oxford University, a Master of Theology degree from Duke Divinity School at Duke University, a Master of Divinity with Biblical Languages degree from SWBTS, and a Bachelor of Science from Louisiana State University in Shreveport.

"I anticipate a bright future for this Louisiana Baptist Christian liberal arts college," Yarnell says. "The Trustees have an innovative vision for the school which combines orthodox theology with academic excellence, and I fully support that vision."

At SWBTS, Yarnell is the director of the Center for Theological Research, assistant dean for Theological Studies with the responsibility of overseeing numerous faculty members and more than 3,000 students, and serves as associate professor of Systematic Theology.

He teaches a range of courses including Historical and Systematic Theology with specialties in British Reformers, Pneumatology and Baptist Heritage.

Yarnell has served as dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs and associate professor of Historical Theology at Midwestern Theological Seminary; and as pastor of churches in

North Carolina, Louisiana, and Texas.

He was a private financial consultant for Beryl Consultants for 15 years and served as chief financial officer of Bossier Crossroads, Inc., in Bossier City, La. He served as a staff sergeant in the United States Air Force Reserves for six years.

"It is my belief that the local churches have established Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries for the task of building the Kingdom of God through the

spiritual and intellectual formation of their students, and that those higher education institutions should be responsible to the churches through democratically elected trustees," he says.

"All of these tasks should be done within a New Testament doctrinal and moral framework, and solely for the glory of the Trinitarian God," he says. He is married to the former Karen Annette Searcy, and they have four children. ■

White Inaugurated as 22nd President of Chowan College

by Sarah Ward, Chowan College

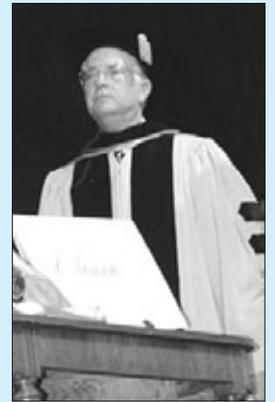
Martin Christopher White was inaugurated as the 22nd President of Chowan College September 9.

White accepted a permanent contract as president in May 2004 and has been at the helm of the college since July 1, 2003. As an experienced college president, White states, "The best days for Chowan lie in the future. I ask that you join me as we write the future of our great college that has stood strong for more than 156 years."

During President White's Inaugural Address, he recognized Chowan College's founders and sustainers that have had a positive impact on the College for over 150 years. Even though there was a "widespread perception that there was no need for women to have access to higher

education," the founding fathers of Chowan College "represented open-minded, forward thinking," said White.

President White continued by stating that even though Chowan College may have closed its doors from 1943 to 1949, the spirit of the College continued. This spirit was seen through persons who insisted that Chowan College reopen. ■



Chris White

Schrader Resigns at Shorter College to Lead Brenau University

Shorter College President Ed L. Schrader, who led the attempt to sever the college's ties with the Georgia Baptist Convention, resigned on Sept. 16 to accept the presidency of Brenau University, a women's college in Gainesville, Ga.

Schrader will begin his new position at Brenau on Jan. 1, four years to the day from when he took the helm of Shorter, based in Rome, Ga.

In an e-mail resignation to Shorter's board of trustees, faculty and staff, Schrader acknowledged that his ability to range far and wide with potential constituents, student recruits, and donors "is dramatically hampered by the battle scars from our struggle. There are simply many churches, families, and groups into which I will never be welcomed."

Schrader suggested that the board initiate a search process in the spring while

employing an interim president who would not seek the presidency.

Brenau University was founded in 1878 as a privately owned institution of women. Though never directly supported by or affiliated with Baptists, Brenau was originally named the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary.

Though primarily a women's university, it does admit males to its evening and weekend college as well as to its online college.

The case between the college and the Georgia convention is slated to be heard by the Georgia Supreme Court in January.

In March, the college lost in the Georgia Court of Appeals, which ruled in favor of the Georgia convention's position that Shorter had acted illegally in April 2003 in dissolving itself and transferring all its assets to a new corporation with a self-perpetuating board of trustees. (BP) ■

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Christian Intellectual Community...

(continued from page 13)

Therefore we need a community of faith. As Mark Schwehn says, and Doug Harink says, we cannot be Christian without it. We need to be the gathered church, even as we research, teach, and think. We need to share spiritual focus much more than we do. We need worship as this focus, not just fellowship.

As members of such a community, we need obedience in Nietzsche's sense—"a long obedience in the same direction"—to our intellectual vocation as an outworking of our spiritual vocation, our share in responding to the authority of Christ and the Church (cf. Schwehn, 454)

We need freedom in the biblical and not the Nietzschean sense, freedom that is self-effacing and generous, a 'free spirit', freely therefore to obey and freely to give. May it be said of us, as Chaucer said of his 14th-century Oxford academic, "gladly would we learn and gladly teach!"

We need to be able to pursue research

that is pure; also, we need to do research that is targeted, focused, as Harold Attridge has said, toward answering the big (and often therefore theologically laden) questions (Hesburgh, 21).

We need, to a degree almost all universities in the 20th century have neglected to their peril, "translators"—accomplished polymathic scholars whose mature share in the community task is to bridge the disciplines and to help set them in conversation with each other and with the philosophers and theologians.

Much of this is counter-cultural. But if the experiment, or even parts of it, should work, it may contribute, as no mere conformity to the imperatives of the multiversity ever could, to the collective good of human intellectuality and culture—including the minds and culture of many who will not ever be "Christian," even in the most nominal sense of the word.

So then, at last, to the implicit question in my title: Is there a future for Christian intellectual community among the colleges and universities of America? My answer is

strongly yes, but with these provisions: as long as there are communities of scholars who make it their business to give pre-eminence to faith that seeks understanding over professional self-interest looking to find some vestigial reason to believe, then there will be a future.

As long as there are institutions in which the practice of academic freedom is not merely a protection for narrow agendas and advocacies, but is richly grounded in that larger Christian principle of love of the neighbor—then what the Apostle calls "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25) may grace our learning with sufficient self-effacement and charity toward the common good of the wider church we serve. As long, that is, as we do not permit ourselves to become double-minded and hence unstable in all our ways, and our faith is unwavering, accompanied by fortitude and perseverance, we may yet fulfill our calling and actually be the Christian intellectual communities our denominational sponsors and forebears prayed, however unwittingly, we would become. ■



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