

“21st Century Realities and Choices for the Christian University”

Ted W. Ward Consultation 2000

Dallas Willard, Guest Facilitator

Throughout his career Ted Ward has and continues to be concerned about matters related to education, human development, national development, mission, and leadership. One significant thread that unites the various themes that have preoccupied his life is renewal in higher education. Though much of his work was conducted under the auspices of Michigan State University, he spoke and wrote frequently about issues affecting Christian higher education. This paper is a synthesis of selections from Ted’s writings and speeches on Christian higher education across a period of 30 years, the earliest dated reference being 1969. The majority of the selections were taken from Faculty Dialogue editorials, articles and speeches during the 1980s. However, because his eye has ever been on the future, his encouragements and admonitions read as freshly as the proverbial “today’s newspaper.”

This paper is not a handbook for the development and management of the Christian university. The selections reflect what Ted has done so well across his career: raising significant issues, asking penetrating questions, pointing the way forward. As you read this paper, you will see several areas that need more extensive development. Perhaps one or more of you will be stimulated to write an article or paper that addresses one or more of the following questions: What are the roles and responsibilities of faculty in the Christian university? What is the nature and scope of curriculum development for the 21st century university? What are the particular tasks of administrative leadership in the university? What particular tasks and questions need to be dealt with as a Bible college or other Christian institution begins its 10 year journey to becoming a university? How do we communicate the importance of education over schooling? How can we integrate formal and nonformal modes of education more effectively? How does the Christian university fulfill the traditional responsibilities of the university: research, teaching, and service?

As we enter the 21st century, Christian higher education is, in many ways, under siege. The church is increasingly critical of the professional programs—especially those oriented to pastoral development—parents and prospective students are more concerned than ever about “will this degree get me a job,” Christian schools are rushing to become “Christian universities”—some almost overnight! Tensions around matters of Christian distinctives, definitions of what constitutes the purpose of “liberal arts education,” and the nature of curriculum and educational systems threaten the viability of the learning community. Further, administrative leadership seems, in many cases, unable to rise to the challenge of managing a changing and complex institution.

Some of the issues addressed in this paper will become matters for discussion at the *Ted Ward Consultation* and we could not have found a better facilitator and provocateur than Dallas Willard. His contribution, the interchange between Dallas and Ted, and the interaction with those of you who come will be rich indeed. As you prepare for your participation in this consultation, this paper and articles identified by Dallas Willard will comprise your reading.

Linda Cannell
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“The Idea of a Christian University: Past Perspectives on Future Decisions”
Compiled and edited by Linda Cannell for the *Ted Ward Consultation*
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A synthesis of selections from Ted Ward’s
writings and speeches on Christian higher education.
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Can there possibly be a better time for Christian higher education to say, “Here are the issues in our society that we must address. Here are values that must be restored if we’re going to have a viable society.” We face a time when the proper stewardship of our resources as Christians within a relatively rich part of the world must derive from more than a mission-sending viewpoint. Christian higher education must address problems and issues in our own society on at least a comparable scale of concern and effort as secular institutions. What is the nature of the positive Christian voice that can be raised from the academic intellectual community? What can we say to people other than “You’re lost, and we have the answer.” What can we say to people that will help them comprehend what “lostness” really is? Christian higher education should speak, not with a strident legislative voice, but with a great upsurge of the kind of moral voice that reminds people clearly that God is not dead and that our Lord lives.

Unfortunately, Christian higher education faculties in general are, of all faculties in higher education, the least communicative across institutions. Typically, in comparison with secular schools, public schools, or different types of private education, the sets of people who tend to be the most out of touch with any other sector are in the Christian schools. Christian faculty and institutions that reach across boundaries cause those fences that divide species of institutions to be treated as they properly are, relatively minor, territorial divisions, certainly not divisions to cause us to divide our efforts and isolate ourselves from one another.

Christian liberal arts colleges talk to each other to some extent but show only slight capacity or interest in being influential in national and international debates of moral issues. One major kingdom assumption underlying much of Christian higher education is thus in default: graduates have not gone forward in substantial numbers to infuse the academic world generally and the political and social sectors of society with biblical standards of truth. The relatively few interactions between public policy and what passes for Christian thought seem largely to be in the hands of exploiters, naive reformers, and theologically illiterate thumpers of simplistic propositions. Perhaps the time has come for evangelical Christian colleges, universities and seminaries to relate theological foundations more explicitly to socio-political and economic reasoning.

Three horrifying assumptions underlie much of the failure of Christian higher education to engage adequately the broader society.

(1) Christian higher education need not be directed toward large-scale issues of human

conflict and the quality of life. Its proper purposes are more narrow and personal. This assumption reveals both a limited understanding of the worth of education and a distortion of the wholeness of the relationship of a Christian to the world. Smallness of vision and smallness of mission usually can be traced to a small view of God, which could be one result of living a half-hearted Christianity in an age of individualistic materialism. A vibrant and warmly alive Christianity cannot be so introverted and withdrawn as to stand aloof from the realities of suffering society. What is the role of education and educators as leaders and purveyors of truth? Should Christian higher education do less than define and defend a courageous and influential role for the people of God?

(2) *Christian higher education represents such a small voice; it seems unreasonable to expect much other than maintenance of the network of little “points of light.”* The self-fulfilling prophecy embedded in this assumption is insidious. Whatever happened to “Expect great things from God? Surely it isn’t overstepping to assume that God’s preferences would be well served by a dozen or so “points of light” that found ways to turn up the wattage. Should Christian higher education accept such an impotent and defensive posture? What would happen if a wave of encouragement and confidence in the Holy Spirit of God should sweep across half or more of the Christian colleges and universities?

(3) *Christian higher education is already doing a very effective job of developing people who can relate to the major needs in the world today.* A charitable response to this claim is hard to find. The evidence is strongly to the contrary. From time to time a Christian college or university will undertake a project or institution-wide theme that promises to address the larger social context, but before long the effort fails. Are constituency-sensitive institutions uneasy with the emphasis on controversial matters? Does a particular view of the gospel exclude involvement in critical issues affecting society? Do Christian institutions lack the skills necessary to engage contemporary issues?

Four Significant Tasks for Christian Higher Education

Among the tasks that confront Christian higher education today, four are of significant importance: First, the institution must identify its specific contributions to a free society. In other words, institutional leadership must encourage a societal focus for Christian higher education in contradistinction to the very individualistic, “our investment is in our student” view that permeates much of Christian higher education. Much of Christian higher education today seems to define its purposes in terms of producing Christian citizens or young people without taking this purpose on to the next step of “we are trying to affect a society.” What is Christian higher education doing for students and for the human condition?

Second, is the identification by faculties and administrators of the larger goals of Christian higher education, and the concerns for those issues that represent the ineffective achievement of those goals. For example, the issue of the faith and learning as a dichotomy or dualism, is one of several that need to be more carefully diagnosed, identified, and named as a barrier or hindrance to the effective contribution to society of the Christian higher educational institutions. Another example relates to the tendency to define the vision of individual faculty largely in terms of teaching classes to students rather than influencing the society through the several things they are doing—among which is teaching students.

The first task is concerned with the defining of a larger mission in terms of its social contribution. The second is the identification of the hindrances in Christian higher education to the accomplishment of the first. The third task is the provision of resources for the stimulation of faculties, boards of directors, and administrator to realign their institutional priorities in such a way that faculty are “rewarded” more precisely for service and for their efforts in publishing and research as ways to serve and inform the Christian community and the larger society.

A fourth task is fostering a more effective communication between Christian institutions and the larger world. As institutions of higher education become more intentional in their relationship to the church, and in their responsibility to the whole of society, service inevitably has to be exemplified by the institution and encouraged or inculcated into the students through the faculty. One of the hazards of formal education is that one can come to believe that one serves simply by teaching school; which then produces students who come to believe that one can serve simply by *going* to school.

When the intellectual gods are served, one runs a terrible risk that human need is heard with deaf ears. Christian liberal arts colleges or universities preoccupied with the production or dissemination of knowledge are prone to reject vocationalism as a legitimate outcome—at their peril. The corpses of the little colleges that resist vocational development as an appropriate outcome are apt to become more numerous.

When a department in a “liberal arts college” derives its sense of accomplishment from those who *enter professions from* the major that defines that department, be it medicine, or clinical psychology, or professional chemistry, or professional music or whatever else, are they not also professional schools? Clearly, the distinction between professional school and liberal arts school is not a useful distinction; while the failure to affirm service as a fundamental responsibility of Christian higher education demeans vocationalism and adversely affects the development of Christians in the professions. When service and vocation are recognized as vital to the mission of Christian higher education, the clusters of values and attitudes that shape the process and that become part of the lives of students and faculty are more nearly what is demanded of a truly Christian ethic of education. Out of this ethic the Christian scholar can speak authentically and forcibly to the whole of society. Further, leaders who enter the professions from these institutions are better able to interact insightfully with the various sectors of society and better able to help congregations understand their identity and responsibilities as the people of God.

The controversy between the values of liberal arts and vocational objectives has hurt the cause of Christian higher education. The presumption that “grounding” is separably pre-vocational has distorted the historic Christian concept of vocation. For the Christian student, heeding the call of God and pursuing appropriate understanding for the fulfilling of that call are central to the educational process. There are no disciplinary taxonomies or academic propositions that can rightly displace this Christ-centered view of vocation. As a consequence of the hangover of pre-reformation distinctions between clergy and laity, there is a different view of *Christian service* for those whose careers are to be

sponsored by institutional church agencies and those whose careers are *secular*. Against this confusion, should Christian higher education provide reformational influence by elevating *service* to a higher level of concern for all Christians?

The mission of higher education is to give students a vision for life—a vision that connects them with the world in which they live and serve. If this vision is to be fulfilled, the Christian university must understand the implications of the *liberal arts philosophy*; articulate *values* and *distinctives* that will enervate its purpose and role in developing people and influencing society, and shape organizational systems in ways that are consistent with these values and distinctives; develop a more holistic understanding of *education* that informs the *meaning and purpose of liberal arts education*; use a more comprehensive sense of vocationalism and professionalism to build bridges of *service* to the larger world; and deal with the *tensions that threaten its future*.

The Liberal Arts Philosophy of Education.

The common rationale for liberal arts education is that it provides a broad base of integrated structures of knowledge on which to build. However, in our society people tend to select their college experiences in terms of things they can use to create employment for themselves, and ultimately to make money. Further, given the high cost of a liberal arts education, parents are justifiably concerned with what their son or daughter will get out of the experience.¹ Given these utilitarian tendencies, the specification of valid aims for liberal arts education is a necessary task. Following is the list that represents the optimism of this paper. The domain of structural development being particularly emphasized in each aim is parenthesized.

1. Development of the power of analysis (moral-intellectual).
2. Development of flexible personality (moral-social-psychological).
3. Stimulation and regulation of self-motivation (moral-psychological).
4. Development of values and skills of democratic interpersonal and societal relations (moral-political).

¹Editor's Note. Many young people are bypassing college altogether finding that they can earn a lucrative salary without a college education. A front page story in a recent Chicago newspaper gives the illustration of a 20 year old man making \$50,000 a year plus stock options right out of high school. "Educators are watching a growing number of promising teens walk out of high school and plunge directly into high-tech jobs, skipping college altogether" ("Leapfrogging Over College" *Tribune*, Wednesday July 5, 2000). In the article, the indicator of success is clearly the high paying job, and a college education is no longer the only pathway to a high paying job. Concerns are expressed about the impact across a lifetime of not having a college degree—but again the concern is expressed in terms of earning potential. Some argue that the alternative training provided for those who will ultimately work in the sponsoring technology company were not college bound anyway and that the training in technology opens doors to those who would never make it to college. This may be a legitimate observation, but if a college education continues to be evaluated exclusively on the basis of whether or not it leads to a good job, then the alternative options (technology training centers, corporate "universities") will continue to make inroads into the traditional university. Either the university recasts itself as a career preparation center, or it more clearly expresses those values and purposes that transcend monetary values—and convinces its constituency that learning is of lifelong importance.

5. Development of values and skills necessary to remain an individual in the mass (moral-sociological).
6. Enhancement of educability and development of vocational skills (economic).
7. Conscientization toward service-custodial-stewardship functions in the world (moral-cultural).

Liberal arts philosophy, in its most worthy expression, connotes that it is not good enough that exposure to or mastery of subjects within teachable arrays of human knowledge (disciplines) are taken to be the substance of being educated. In the era when the liberal arts philosophy of curriculum first gained respectability it was much easier to imagine the possibility of picking just the right core of courses that eager and thoroughly dedicated students could wrap themselves around. Perhaps a more constructive view of curriculum development could prevail if the issues were posed in terms of the values of a liberal education rather than of a liberal arts education. Happily, much of the more significant content of the typical liberal arts curriculum has room within it for the voice of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christianity is no anti-intellectual religion, despite what some of its own sectarians have said. ‘All truth is God’s truth’—more importantly, *truth is because God is*. The starting point for Christian education is not truth in some arbitrary or limited sense of a curricular commitment. The starting point is God. If there is a body of the “right stuff” for the curriculum of Christian higher education it would come from this foundation, not merely from “the great books” or from some other distillation of the intellectual excellences of the past.

A Christian institution seeking to become a Christian university should not adopt uncritically historical values and patterns of liberal arts education; nor should it assume that it can be effective without intentional attention to matters of values, purpose, and the broader context of education. One hazard in the liberal arts approach to higher education is the naïve assumption that exposure to the “right stuff” of human information can result in a proper education. This sort of faith in the “liberal arts philosophy” falls little short of being a religion in itself. For Christians especially, the potentiality for idolatry—worship of the creation instead of the creator—is troublesome. The argument here is not merely between two potentially different educational philosophies—Christian and liberal arts—but rather a commitment to one source of values rather than to another source. For some Christians in higher education, the liberal arts philosophy is both good news and bad news. Though Christian higher education profits much from certain of the dominant themes and convictions represented in the liberal arts approach to education, Christians must insist that the emphases implicit and explicit within any educational philosophy must be brought under the discipline of theological priorities.

That education should be committed to breadth of understanding rather than to narrow specialization is one common ground between the Christian theological roots and the Greco-Roman roots of the liberal arts. There is much to be said for the common ground, especially for the commitment to a high view of the significant role of human beings in the universe, the respect for values of intensive and intentional human inquiry, valuing of the expressive and creative arts, commitment to the value-based and justice seeking disciplines of human society.

All of this is held in high regard by the secularist committed to a nontheistic view of the universe and by

the Christian, as well. But the Christian must wonder about the common liberal arts presupposition that the adequate source of curricular foundation is the accumulated disciplinary lore of the arts and human sciences. Does the liberal arts theme provide appropriate and adequate imagery to ground a worldview that accepts as its basic presupposition the creational and redemptive works of God? Indeed, is there in the liberal arts philosophy a recognition that without divine assistance, human intellect and social justice provide only a faulty basis for coping with the complexities of the modern world?

Three troublesome questions must be raised:

1. Why would Christians, in particular, choose an essentially extra-biblical logic for grounding curricular decisions?
2. What happens to the Christian worldview in classrooms where the dominant values are drawn from the content of the discipline?
3. To what extent do the students put the parts of the curricular experience together around the Christ-center in order to see the wholeness that is presumed to be basic in liberal arts education?

The following six items review the concern that Christian presuppositions should be exemplified in Christian higher education and should inform values and practices in liberal arts education.

1. *Confusing Liberal Arts and Christian Educational Values.* Perhaps more a danger of dubious fusion than of confusion, the tendency among some zealots is to see liberal arts as nothing more nor less than an embodiment of Christian values as they relate to education. As with many another system of human virtues, when measured against the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the liberal arts philosophy is, at best, a partial embodiment.
2. *The Oversimplified Notion of Learning as Filing Information.* The phenomenon of human development and learning is a reflection of the image of God. When learning is reduced to the mechanical imagery of information-processing it is disrespectful—to the student, and to God. Any teacher who is concerned only about the recall and use of information is taking false comfort in a truncated epistemology; there is more to knowledge and wisdom than that.
3. *The Idolatry of Testable Curriculum.* Among the least recognized of the characteristics of contemporary curriculum is the tendency to teach what can be tested. Non-measurable objectives lose ground when knowledge mastery is determined by what can be tested.
4. *The Confusion of Ends and Means.* A common human tendency is to defend what one does, without giving adequate attention or taking full accountability for outcomes. In curricular terms, the endless debates about which way something should be taught could be resolved by evidence about consequences. In any educational system, the worth of the outcomes determines the nature of the various aspects in the process of education.
5. *Faith in Labels.* A recurring symptom of education that enslaves is the emphasis on creating and maintaining dichotomistic systems of classifying, labeling, and dismissing ideas. Learning to reflect on nuance and uniqueness is an important part of the creative process.
- 6.. *Demeaning Vocation (and thus Service).* The importance of a person's life is integral with the call of God upon that life. There is worth in work and rewards for service. To exalt the nonvocational aspects of education runs the risk—no matter how unintended—of suggesting a small worth in one's

calling to productive service in the family and the society.

Values and Distinctives Appropriate for the Christian University.

In truth, education is altogether about the matter of values. At the very heart of the institutionalization of human learning is the realization that what is important for one person or institution will be made available for the next person or generation of persons. If there were no value-based concerns, if there were no commitments, no convictions, and no beliefs, there would be no need for deliberate education. But since the cornerstone of human society is commitment to advancement and “progress,” the matter of education is not left to chance. Deliberate decisions about **what should be taught why, to whom, and under what conditions** are being made, reaffirmed, revised, and acted upon in the name of formal education (schools) as well as in the myriad contexts of nonformal education throughout every society. The assertion of a “value-free curriculum” is nonsense.

The Values of the Gospel

Non-Christian values, especially those of the competitive marketplace where striving for riches and glory, greed, and insensitivity sit in authority, are a special matter of concern for Christian higher education. These values capture the minds and spirits of many, even corrupting the motivations and the decision-making capabilities of Christian young people and their parents. It is the special burden of Christian education—to the extent that it is willing to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit—to confront these conflicting values, to guide the society in godly critique, to speak prophetically against the values that represent a denial of the Gospel, and to help young people relate constructively to their own needs and to the needs of society in ways that are effective and responsible.

Lest the message of the Christian university be hollow, it must be based on a clear image of the values and purposes of the mission of Christian higher education. It is not enough to promote what everyone else promotes: the socioeconomic usefulness of the college degree. Nor is it adequate to join the secular appeal to the superiority of a liberal arts approach to higher education. The effective promoter of Christian higher education must take the time and invest the effort to clarify the very concept of education itself in light of Christ-centered values and biblical foundations. Sadly, many formerly stalwart liberal arts colleges have gone by the wayside, casualties of the quest to become all things to all people. Driven by a market mentality, this specialty and that major have been added to many a college. It has become popular to pursue a sort of will-o-the-wisp quest for uniqueness, often at the cost of serious overextension and a great deal of resultant confusion in the minds of the donor and student-source public. Far from achieving greater uniqueness many have lost their distinctiveness in a sort of collegiate emulsion, becoming like interchangeable parts in a big machine. Ironically, the issue at stake among many North Americans is wanting *the good life* without willingness to define it. Pandering to this craving in unregenerate society, much that passes as education today represents a denial that there

are any moral costs involved in achieving *the good life*.

American society shows signs of recognizing the moral bankruptcy which lies just around the corner if relativism and pragmatism in matters of ethics, morality, and justice are allowed to run their course. What can the Christian liberal arts college offer? Can we define and effectively “market” purposes of higher education which reflect our beliefs? Can we deliver on the promise to produce people who are both religious and rational, committed and concerned, holy and helpful, secure and sensitive?

The question then comes down to what sorts of things do we take pride in, and what are the success-and-excellence emblems? Are they matters about which a Christian rightfully has pride? Or are they matters of self-glorification which are not appropriate for the Christian? What is excellence in education? The nature of excellence is ambiguous and is often nothing but a hollow echo of a distant secular trumpet. Secular society conditions us to respond to that question in ways that are not necessarily consistent with biblical values. Several years ago the chairman of humanities at a Christian college in Kansas wrote that just as the Christian liberal arts college decided to join the secular and private institutions in seeking regional accreditation, they should also join these colleges in seeking to establish chapters of Phi Beta Kappa. Nowhere in the article was the notion of excellence in Christian liberal arts education discussed from a Christian perspective. If the trend toward secularization continues, we will see an increased and subtle secularization of Christian schools in many areas. Particularly subtle is valuing academic standards and accreditation concerns higher than the issue of serving the church and society.

At this point it is well to question the use of “Christian” as a modifier of education. What is a Christian college? Is it a place where Christians go? But there are many Christians—students and faculty—at Michigan State University, as one example. Perhaps a Christian college is a place where it’s only right to be a Christian; and if you’re not a Christian you’re out of place. If that’s the case it does violence to what our Lord taught in terms of what it is to be a Christian as light and salt in a needy world. If we are serious about being Christians, where we ought to be is where we can be in contact with people of the world and be an influence for Jesus Christ. So, what then is a Christian college or university? In the absence of careful thought, it is simply a place that calls itself a Christian college or university!

Distinctives of a Christian University

A Christian college or university could lay claim to several distinctives: A Christian college is a place; but more importantly, a Christian college is a community. After four years in a Christian college or university, graduates should have developed highly refined skills of human cooperation so that they are in a position to build supporting communities themselves. A Christian college is a place where people are more important than things. The exaltation of buildings, resources, trophies, and so on, happens anytime people take such pride in what they have that they become insensitive to who they are. A Christian school is a place where people come together because they want to learn; they want to develop; they want to mature. Learning is a process of developing and what students bring to a learning environment is the blueprint of who they are and what they are becoming. Learning is not just a

matter of gaining information, it is a matter of becoming.

The Christian college is a respecting community—human dignity is a high value. The Christian school is a responsible community. What pleases God is the emergence in the human being of a sense of responsibility, a sense of concern, a sense of awareness of what one is in a community in relationship to others of that community. Matthew 23:1-12 depicts the nature of a Christian community both in terms of leadership responsibilities and in terms of educational standards that embody sharing, respecting, and supporting. People who become educated in a community that is Christian recognize that their great motive in common with others is that they are seekers. There is much in God’s universe and Word that we will never fathom in our lifetime. A Christian learning community seeks, questions, examines, explores, debates, and resists simply packaging truth in 25 propositions to be memorized. A Christian college affirms worship as a central dynamic in learning and development. God should not be reduced to propositions intellectually apprehended in a classroom or on a test.

Feeling and aesthetic sensibility is important in a Christian community. Christianity is not purely an intellectual religion. Our feeling for one another, our feeling for life, our feeling of respect for ourselves, our feeling for art, for music and so on must continue to expand and must continue to develop in its fullness. The Christian college is an empathetic community—a community that must learn to trust and to care. A Christian college or university is a place where there is freedom to make mistakes. The difference between learning and indoctrination is found in the capability to make mistakes and to correct those mistakes. The learning community is a place of redemptive restoration. Admittedly, much that is described as distinctive in a Christian college or university could also be claimed by a secular university. So again, “What does the word ‘Christian’ bring to education that is useful?”

The transcendent values of the Christian worldview are most tersely embraced in three words: *faith*, *hope*, and *love*. These terms and the practical and metaphysical components of life which they connote are indisputably central to the development of fulfilled humanity. Other values and commitments flow from these three. For example, service, accountability in stewardship, and the skills of fulfilling these values with concern for the welfare of others. These are not just rudiments of humanism; more to the point, they are Christian values. They are God-given and grounded in the special revelation, the Bible. Extending the Pauline triad of prime values remains as the core of the mission of the church and of its institutions. In whatever ways its resources and situation permit, Christian higher education must pursue the tasks of 1 Corinthians 13:13 “And now abide in faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

A time-honored distinctive of Christian higher education is its *fidelity to historic faith*. Educational institutions, as most other institutions of society, perform a preserving and conserving function. They hold onto the past, hopefully selecting the best elements of that past as a trustworthy foundation for the unknowns of tomorrow. The function of conserving provides an apt ecology for *conservatism*—but only where the institution is more than a handmaiden of unquestioned tradition. The Christian institution of higher education best serves its roots as it persistently evaluates traditions and traits of contemporary

society. Its intellectual resources demonstrate faithfulness best through reviewing and renewing the timeless message. The prophetic voice is represented in influences which respond to social realities and thus influence the direction of contemporary culture. Fidelity to the faith demands of Christian higher education far more than merely passing on the verbal claims of Christianity to one after another cohort of elite students. What is too easily forgotten is the social role of higher education beyond its classrooms (and sports arenas): the obligation to influence society at large. Of all forms of higher education, the Christian college and university should be most fervently committed to a vision that goes beyond “keeping school.” What is demanded of the institution is that it provide a community of scholarship engaged in reflection and proclamation. The meaning of professor is rooted in this sense of community.

The principle, extremely difficult, on-campus task of Christian higher education is to *develop communities of love*. Sound communities grow from the collective quest for righteousness and the fulfillment of redemptive processes. Under both of these there must be a responsibility to truth. Of all people, Christians have the most whole truth base. Where the institutions of the church tend to fail is in the sharing equitably in the quest for righteousness and in the redemptive process. Christian higher education’s task in producing people of love begins with the involvement of students and faculty within the community processes which reflect, fulfill, and nurture love. In a world groping for justice and peace, the communities formed on campuses for Christian higher education should be exemplary laboratories for the creative application of the principles of the gospel to contemporary humankind. The learning community in higher education is a context for reasoning and reflection on experience; it is a context for experiences and moral dilemmas about which people can reason in common. One of the most valid reasons for going to school is because there are other people there. To what extent do we hinder the benefit of the learning community if all we do is bring people together to hear information?

Paul said that “the greatest of these is love,” but for a world anxious over poised calamities, John Stott’s observation makes sense: *The greatest human need among these three today is for hope*. In higher education, hope is too often invested in a sort of more-of-the-same-is-better philosophy. Few nuances of educational philosophy get beyond the proverbial rearrangement of deckchairs on the *Titanic*. Few new directions for the American or world societies are proposed with any consequent increase in hopefulness. Though its tune may sound trite, the Christian premise was, is, and always shall be “This world is not my home, I’m just passing through.” Responsible servanthood demands that we leave our marks for the better while passing through, but the essence of being is world citizenship for now and Kingdom identity forever. It does make a difference. The anxieties about the morrow can be as Jesus taught: take no thought. The grip on life can be as Paul taught: better in many ways to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. The loss of hope is today’s highest stake. The possibility of meeting human needs in fundamental ways has always been the essence of the Gospel. In the years ahead Christian higher education has the prospect of lifting the burden of hopelessness through a grounded hope in Jesus Christ, providing guidance and counsel for contemporary life, spoken clearly with the authority of God’s Word. Thus will come together the mission of faith, love, and hope, in an eschatological, existential, and prophetic renewal.

The liberal arts tradition has served the church fairly well since it was baptized by Augustine, but its pre-Christian secular approaches to knowledge tend to intensify values which are of special threat to the church today—particularly the issues of competitiveness and individualism which embody the notion of achieving at the expense, ultimately, of putting others down. For example, Holmes’ excellent apologetic for the Christian liberal arts tradition entitled The Idea of a Christian College emphasizes the good side of the liberal arts tradition, but easily avoids the matter of competitiveness to which Jesus himself spoke. (And we need to remember that the liberal arts tradition was in existence at the time of Christ.) Jesus spoke sharply to his disciples when they displayed signs of competitiveness and supported an ethic that would today be described as cooperativeness or collaboration². President Elliott of Harvard is alleged to have said at the end of his series of conversations with beginning students, “Look at the person to your left; look at the person to your right. One of the three of you will succeed.” In 1975 a professor at a prominent Christian liberal arts college said, “It is not the task of Christian higher education to foster Christian community, but to enable Christians to compete successfully in the secular marketplace.” If he’s right, *there is no place* for Christian higher education—secular institutions can do that quite well and at far less cost.

A Holistic Understanding of Education to Undergird the Meaning and Purpose of Liberal Arts Education

Higher education is indeed a commonplace if all it does is to produce *educated people*. This really isn’t hard to do, especially if being educated is only a matter of information-gathering, intellectual reasoning, personal goal-setting, and fitting productively into society. What is it that is different about

²Editor’s Note. Similarly, Paul satirized the arrogance which characterized the professional teachers of his day. Judge observed that “schooling” was not dealt with in the New Testament. Some ministries (e.g., teaching) are described in educational terms—but, he believed that this was not a reason to define education as schooling. In actuality, the form of education was of little concern in the New Testament. Judge avers that Paul emphasized and modeled a different value system. He took commonly understood Greek terms and used them to erase cultural boundaries: Romans 1:14 The “Greeks and barbarians.” The “wise and the foolish.” These phrases were used in culture to distinguish between those who shared the Greek *paideia* and those who couldn’t speak Greek; between those who were educated and those who were not. Therefore, when Paul wrote: “I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. . .” his readers would get the point. Paul took commonly understood educational terms and gave them a new meaning: wisdom (*sophia*), reason (*logos*), knowledge (*gnosis*)—the way to wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ (the *logos*) was through hearts knit together in love (Col. 2:2). It was common knowledge that the way to wisdom for the Greek was through intellectual inquiry and contemplation. When Paul used educational terms such as, “fine-sounding arguments” (Col 2:4) and “philosophy” (2:8) he inserted the descriptors “hollow and deceptive.” The educational terms marked the two divisions of Greek education: rhetoric and philosophical inquiry. Judge suggests that Paul was promoting a new kind of educational goal for adults, and that this often brought him into conflict with many in the churches influenced by Greek culture. For example, in 11 Corinthians 2 and 3, Paul said that he and his companions were not “peddlers of the word.” Paul refused to accept payment from the Corinthian church—even though he accepted it from others. If he took payment in Corinth, he would be expected to perform in much the same way the professional teachers of Greek culture performed. Paul refused to adopt the style of rhetoric and to recommend himself as a professional teacher. In fact, he boasted of his weakness. Paul made the point in a variety of ways that the teaching ministry was not for self display—but was a sharing of the knowledge of God that transforms one’s thinking and lifestyle. (See E.A. Judge. 1983. The reaction against classical education in the New Testament. Journal of Christian Education, Papers 77, July: 7-14.)

Christian higher education?

The answer cannot be that Christian higher education simply adds a spiritual emphasis or perspective to all that the secular mind expects as education. The Christian-perspective-added view concedes the game before the team even gets on the playing field. The crucial differences between Christian and secular definitions and purposes of education are ignored. Nor is it adequate to argue that the essence of Christian higher education is that commonplace education is being provided in an uncommon place where students are surrounded by Christian warm-and-fuzzy support systems. There simply must be an honest intellectual wrestling with the fact that every aspect of the curriculum is different when it starts with the presupposition that God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the universe. The only answer that will hold up is that *the purposes, content, context, and resources of Christian higher education must be carefully defined and designed to work together toward the end of a very uncommon sort of education concerned with the deliberate and redemptive interaction of the biblically grounded value system of the Kingdom of God and the realities of the social context of today's world.*

What is Christian higher education? In what ways is it different from the commonplace ideas, images, and values of education? Answering that question exceedingly well and putting the answers to work in full view of the whole society—indeed, the whole world—is the job to be done. We dare not become so preoccupied with building educational institutions that we fail to ask, “What is learning—what is education?” *When the focus is on institution building, the particular form of institution, which generally devolves to schooling, becomes equated with education.*

The Meaning and Purpose of Education.

The word “education” to many of us is a fairly broad word. However, when most people hear the word education they narrow it down to one word, “school,” and from then on all their meanings of education are drawn from that one idea. “School” is a very narrow word within the whole spectrum of what is involved in education. However, people need to create a species of education. They have to be able to define education in terms of an institutional reality that is familiar to them: elementary or secondary school, college or seminary. Schooling has become substituted for education. As schooling became systematized, learning became utilitarian, designed to increase the marketability of graduates in society. Subjects were to be taught in confined periods of time, place, and method. Testing of cognitive abilities became the sole criterion of achievement and success. Because school success became synonymous with the key to job attainment, it came to be the primary value within the schooling framework. School success was viewed solely in individual terms ignoring the communal or cooperative terms of earlier times. Since schooling was an investment in the human being, this investment should pay off in providing trained workers for the larger economy. The values of conformity, homogeneity, control, and selection based upon standardized success became paramount and normative.

Metaphors of Spiritual Reality: Evaluating Metaphors of Education

What education is and how it can be used properly are matters too important to be left vague. Education suffers from over-popularity. Everyone has experienced it in one or many of its forms. Indeed, everyone “knows” what it is; education is commonplace. Self-appointed experts on education are everywhere. Small wonder then that so many ill-advised assaults on the human spirit are passed off as worthy educational ventures. Three essentially different metaphors of education account for most of the thinking, planning, and operation of formal education. Each of these ways of conceptualizing education should be evaluated in terms of the Christian concern for spiritual development.

Is True Education Merely Intellectual?

Christianity is in large measure a rational religion. Spiritual development does not exclude any of the aspects of human personhood. Even the physical is an object of God’s redemption (Rom. 8:11, 23; Phil 3:21). And surely the intellectual is not rejected, for the Word of God in two ways testifies to God’s valuing of human understanding: (a) it is a readable documentation, and (b) it explicitly says, “I would not have you to be ignorant.” To know God is a matter of experiential fellowship and communion through the special revelation of the written Word. Even the Lord’s self-identification as “the Word made flesh” (John 1:14) is made known to humankind by the explicit information of the written Word. These matters are made “knowable” through the mystery of God, Jesus Christ the Redeemer, whose work on humanity’s behalf can be grasped intellectually as textual information, confirmed within by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and acted out in functional life as believers identify themselves with Christ in walk and conversation (Col. 2:3). Thus it should be seen that education which is concerned only with intellectual development or in which the acquisition of information as compulsive priority is less than Christian.

Contemporary secular society, especially in the Western world, is profoundly influenced by rationalism and its roots in Hellenistic philosophy. The highest view of knowledge is that of clarified information. The devolution of education to schooling is in part a consequence of the tendency of educators to draw their values and metaphors of education more from Aristotelian Greek thought than from the authentic background of Christian philosophy: Hebrew culture.

Hellenistic models of human relationship, human society, organization of government, and education are clearly pre-Christian and in many respects they stand in contrast and conflict with the Hebraic models. There are some very important differences between Hebraic thought about learning and knowledge and Greek learning and knowledge. In the Greek model hierarchy is basic, social distance and its artifacts are characteristic, communication is typically one-way, education is a social privilege and it confers social privilege. In the Hebraic model servanthood is basic, social oneness and the absence of status symbols is emphasized, communication is two-way. Education is a social undertaking and it confers social responsibility.

The handicapping features of Hellenistic education, especially as they affect the church, include (1) a tendency to focus on the intellect without much concern for the holistic development of the person—including emotional, social, spiritual and physical aspects. (2) the assumption of a linkage between knowing and action—to know something is to do it, to know the

right, is to do right.

(3) a hierarchical flow of information, dividing tellers from hearers. There are those who know; there are those who need to know. Those who know are called professors or teachers; those who need to know are called students. This nomenclature is not problematic in itself except where the information and benefit is assumed to be from a teacher who is superior in intellect and knowledge to a student who must simply passively receive the teacher's knowledge.

(4) competitive and independent learning styles which both lead to and are fueled by tendencies to elitism. All human processes are inherently social processes, including learning. Though biblical concepts of community argue for egalitarian and multi-class or non-class affiliation of people, the fact of rising costs and shrinking budgets will tend to make Christian higher education more of an elitist privilege, and competitiveness more pervasive.

(5) the reality that Hellenistic models of education are essentially place- and time-bound. The presumption is that human beings learn better when they are learning several things at once and spending one hour per day in three different subjects rather than spending a block of time on a given subject and immersing themselves in it. There is no research evidence that we learn better this way, but it is an absolutely fixed presupposition.

(6) the tendency of education to be preparatory and something to be completed, generally through the acquisition of knowledge. The educational institutions of the church seem to be stubbornly committed to preparation activity rather than to fostering lifelong learning, reflection on experience, transition, reform and renewal activity. In other words, at the very time when God is moving the church into a time of renewal, most of our educational resources are firmly committed to preparation; and the leadership people needed by a renewing church are trapped in institutions that continue to define themselves in terms of preparation and acquisition.

One key concept emphasized by some aspects of Greek philosophy that is compatible with Hebrew epistemology is the notion of *praxis*. Is it possible to learn truth apart from practice (applied experience)? The notion of *praxis* forces us back to a Hebrew epistemology and to a biblical valuing of knowledge as that which is acted on. However, the Hellenistic satisfaction with static contents of the mind is deeply embedded in Christian education. A whole-person concern for truth-in-action much closer to Jesus' own claim that truth was not defined apart from its incarnation (John 14:6) is a more appropriate posture for Christian higher education.

The Hebrew cultural and religious roots of Christianity point toward true knowledge as that which is acted on. In Hebrew epistemology, the concern about knowledge is far more than the intellectual storage and retrieval of information demonstrated by a well-labeled recall system. The preoccupation of the Bible with obedience is rightly understood as a concern for doing truth—putting truth into action. In the Judeo-Christian views of knowledge and learning, the concern is for nothing less than a discipline of the whole of life that demands a disciplined mind interacting functionally with a disciplined walk. Both John and Paul are sensitive to the tendency to divide creed from deed, which likely entered the early church from Greek philosophy and educational traditions (Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 3; Gal. 5:10-13; Eph. 2:10; 5:2; Phil. 3:12-16; Col. 2:6; 1 Thess. 2:1-12; 1 John 1:6-7; 2 John 6; 3 John 4). Their

warnings are needed today as surely as in the first-century church.

The Christian outcome of education, therefore, should not be the Greek-like satisfaction with clarified concepts. Instead the biblical concern for obedience—acting on truth—should be the central purpose of education and life. It is not enough to argue that obedience requires knowing. The issue is that knowing, in Christianity, cannot be defined apart from doing. Would that all Christian higher education were centered on the Incarnation. Our Lord was the Word made flesh. Education can be the truth made flesh—not just an “encounter with ideas,” not just the passing of tests of recall, not just the abstractions of intellectual debate, but a hands-on intensive learning through action in the walks of life. Our Lord did not lecture about how to relate to blind people and beggars; he taught through example. He showed his disciples a way of life. He walked and talked. He shared. He lived his way of educating. In the service of this Lord, education must help us serve the needs of people. We are to make disciples of his way. His way is nothing less than the way of the Cross: a clear testimony of actions and words that point the observer toward the one who is greater. Our servanthood is not an apprenticeship to prove our humility while we await promotion, but—as was our Lord’s—a servanthood to death, seeking no glory (Phil. 2:5-8).

What is the Place of Educational Institutions?

It is entirely possible that Christianity in North America and Western Europe may have overemphasized formal education. Surely if access to Christian higher education were highly correlated with the development of the church of Jesus Christ, the United States would now be the most Christianized nation in history.

Evangelical Christianity has available today an unprecedented network of institutions of theological education, pastoral development, intellectual stimulation through literature, vocational training, Bible study, and “liberal arts” foundational learning. In the quest for excellence, Christian higher education may have become intoxicated with the intellectual trappings and, in some cases, snobberies of worldly academia. In much of today’s institutional Christian education the service motive is subordinated to intellectual goals. And service, when subordinated to anything, withers and dies. So long as “practical experience” is stultified by treating it as a poor cousin of intellectual learning, so long as “Christian service assignments” are weekend outings divorced from distinct and relevant dialogue with one’s “academic learnings,” and so long as theological education is seen as preparatory to (rather than simultaneous with) ministry, a weak linkage will continue between education and the development of the church. The time has come to raise the question of how much formal education is too much. Many metaphors of “the good life” carry the notion that “more is better.” Surely education, especially formal education, is in this category.

The practice of Christian education, with a few exceptions, is ambivalent, inconsistent, even erratic about what education is. Is it competitive or cooperative? Is it for all God’s people or for an elite? Is it to prepare for future ministry or to facilitate an ongoing ministry? Education means several different things, some of which are contradictory; educational efforts often malfunction. There is no question

about sincerity and hope; the root of the problem lies more in unexamined and unevaluated metaphors of education. Consider two of the most common metaphors: education as filling a container and education as a manufacturing process. These two are closely related, though they use different symbolism. They are both faulty.

The Metaphor of Filling

Many of the problems in education derive from a *tabula rasa* view of childhood. Worse yet, this view of the learner as an empty slate to be written on by “those who know” is even applied to the teaching of adults. The result is high-cost “kiddie-schools” with larger chairs and less interesting teachers. The learner is more acted on than active. The learner, especially in the “filling” metaphor, is essentially a blank page to be written on by those doing the educating. This orientation demeans the image of God shared in each person and it encourages a passive receptivity, ultimately lacking in creativity and skills of evaluation. Teachers who think of education in terms of filling a container are rarely concerned with individual differences of background, interest, or aspiration. The *content* is the thing. Most learning can be reduced to questions and answers; recall of information is the evidence of becoming educated; tests are good indicators of “success” or “failure;” grading can be objective. The more the teacher knows, the better the teacher is. Learning is essentially painful, but it is such good discipline! Such thinking leads to teaching that is little more than cognitive dumping.

The Metaphor of Manufacturing.

In the “manufacturing” metaphor the learner is assumed to have characteristics which the machinery must chip off and grind down. Irregularities and peculiarities in the learner—the “raw material”—are usually regarded as a nuisance. The system could be so much more efficient if everyone were exactly alike, it argues. This metaphor makes a teacher preoccupied with “the system” and its gadgetry. The learner is an object—something to be shaped and molded.

The Metaphor of a Life-Walk

A preferred metaphor of education is to see it as a life-walk to be shared. Some analysts have called it the “travel” metaphor. Such a vision of education does not suggest wandering, though it allows for exploring. It does not imply lack of purpose though it recognizes that *being* is even more important than *going*. This view of teaching and learning suggests a destination, though it implies that the *experiences* of going there are as important as the arrival.

Thus Christians have much to embrace in this metaphor of education. Jesus used it extensively. It fulfills the biblical teachings about human relationship, authority, and the inalienable sovereignty of God. All through the Scriptures, God’s people are seen as strangers and sojourners, walking together with God in the lead. We are pilgrims in a life-walk. Ours is not to “finish our education” and “settle down.” Such inadequate metaphors of human fulfillment distort the richness of learning. Christians are to learn, to develop, to experience the continuing of God’s work begun in them (Phil. 1:6). “Marching to Zion,” yes; their mission, however is along that very line of march. They are not to avoid the needs of fallen humanity to the left and right of the path. Nor should they travel in lock-step. They learn through

encountering life's realities as they discover God providing according to their needs, including the need for knowledge and wisdom.

As companions in the way, Christians have each other; some are gifted to teach and to help. They all interrelate; they are an interdependent community. Having one Teacher, one Father, one Leader, they are all brothers and sisters (Matt. 23:8-10).

A Typology of the Social Purposes of Education

Equating schooling with education necessarily limits our conception of education and puts burdens on the school which it is not able to carry. Is there any education that is not schooling? The answer is obviously yes. In fact, many of the important lessons of life are learned in non-schooling³. The quest

³Editor's note. In 1973, Ward prepared a list of weaknesses of schooling. His much broader context for education and his work in nonformal education had the effect of revealing western educational ethnocentrism to many educators in international contexts, in particular where so many of the post-colonial nations had invested all their educational funds in expanding formal schooling. That which was considered value-neutral in the west was shown to be value-laden in other cultural contexts. For example, grading systems in western culture were seen as non-cooperative and, therefore, inappropriate in an African context. The tendency to assume there is only one way to do education is being challenged in the west as well.

Sources of Weakness in the "Schooling" Approach.

(Adapted from a 1973 study of characteristics of schooling, Institute for Studies of Nonformal Education, Michigan State University.)

1. All learners are assumed to be similar in terms of needs, interests, and abilities.
2. Conforming behavior is preferred over divergent and nonconforming behavior.
3. Learners are increasingly made more competitive at the price of cooperation.
4. Learners are expected to be receptors of learning rather than communicators.
5. The learner's part in curricular decision-making is minimal and tends to be steadily reduced.
6. The responsibility for attitudes and feelings about content and about learning itself is attributed to the student.
7. Formal education is assumed to have greatest value as preparation, setting up an unrealistic expectation of competing as the outcome of schooling.
8. The content to be learned is justified in terms of future needs of the learner.
9. Evaluation is concerned almost exclusively with lower levels of cognitive learning (recall of information and processes). List memorization is thus a major curricular emphasis.
10. Learning experiences are designed or selected on the basis of academic categories and definitions; applications of information to applications are minimally emphasized.
11. Abstractions of experience (in the form of language and symbols) are substituted for realities.
12. Rewards and punishments are assumed to increase learning.
13. Punishment is a virtually sovereign right of the teacher.
14. Rewards are more symbolic than real. Even the satisfactions of seeing oneself develop are subordinated to imposed systems of rewards.
15. The teacher is ascribed authority in matters of truth; thus credibility and veracity are confused with status and rank.
16. The social distance that separates teachers from learners is increased by giving different sets of rights and expectations to each.
17. Learning experiences are designed (and limited) to fit blocks of time.
18. Learning experiences are designed (and limited) to fit standard locations and space.
19. Testing is the determination of success.
20. Success is the supreme value.

These twenty characteristics of schools relate negatively to effective learning. Increasingly people are searching for alternatives. Some of the "alternative schools" are attempts to create alternatives to the schooling approach; so are some of the "extension education" movements. But even here, so often a borrowing of ways and means from the schooling approach limits what can be

for more functional education has led to a worldwide recognition of nonformal education. While not necessarily equivalent to formal education (and thus not a “less costly” substitute for schooling), nonformal education does offer great hope for broad access to functional education. The “nonformal education frame-of-mind accepts health, agriculture, nutrition, family welfare, job skills and virtually all such vital areas of life as appropriate situations through which to develop learning experiences for adults and children alike. Ten years from now we may no longer be talking about formal and nonformal education, but education surely will still be important and our perspectives about education will be larger. Participation may become the key issue.

Learning is a very large idea. Education is a very large idea. For many years, educational activity was described as a continuum between socialization, on one hand, and formal education on the other. However, this continuum could not explain activities such as swimming classes, auto mechanics instruction, and so on. In 1970, Philip Coombs named this sector of activity as “nonformal education,” and instead of thinking of a continuum of educational function, we began to think of a triangle, or a three-lobed model of educational function which could also be described as a typology of the social purposes of education: *Socialization*—the powerful but subtle engine of learning provided through living in family, neighborhood, community, and society in general. *Formal education* (schooling)—the social ladder, designed for efficiency, and assuming value of “full-time” enrolment. *Nonformal education*—the deliberate and structured resources that provide short-term functional learning.

Many of us were concerned that nonformal education was a negative descriptor—that is, naming something by virtue of its not being something else. For example, a duck is a non-zeppelin. As a matter of fact, a zeppelin is a non-bathtub, but it doesn’t help us visualize either a duck or a zeppelin by using those descriptors. Unfortunately, we haven’t yet found a more suitable descriptor than “nonformal.”

What does nonformal education have in common with formal education? Even though nonformal education is typically more concerned with functional learning, both formal and nonformal learning are deliberate, planned, usually staffed, financed; in other words, they are structured in order to get something to happen. The difference is that formal schooling is less concerned with the functional. This does not suggest that there is nothing useful in schools. Schools are one place for teaching the underpinning relationships of ideas—which is valuable if ideas are then worked into a functional form that people can apply and build on. But we do not need to put the whole burden for learning and

accomplished. Sometimes all that happens is a relabelling of the same old bag of tricks. We need to be liberated from seeing schooling at the very center of our concept of education. A liberated viewpoint recognizes schooling (despite its defects) as one of many valid approaches to education. School is one of society’s ways of providing education. Other modes can be as effective and efficient. In the years ahead we will hear more about “non-formal education” and “alternative forms,” and see more attempts to integrate formal and nonformal modes.

development on formal education. Nonformal education and formal education need to work together effectively as part of a strategy for leadership development and for education for the whole people of God. However, the tendency is, wherever nonformal and formal modes coexist, for the formal mode to absorb or overwhelm the nonformal mode. An intentional strategy is needed that acknowledges the worth of multiple modes. We need an academic environment that provides opportunities not only for thought, but also for *praxis*, for reflection on experience. People in the churches and in the schools are needed who deeply value both the *scholarly* and the *experiential* worth of knowledge.

The quest for alternatives inevitably raises the issue of institutionalism. Institutions, even schools, do not serve society well when they become ends in themselves. This was first evident in the guilds of the Middle Ages which became the protective structure for labor and, particularly, for the artisans and the skilled laborers who could protect themselves by creating a social class around their particular craft. One of the consequences of the guilds was that the structure became the *right way* to do things. So if the king wanted a tower built for his castle, he had a hard time finding artisans who would do it the way he wanted it done, because they had to do it the *right way*—their way.

As the free societies emerged, one of the first issues to be dealt with was the restrictive practices of the guilds. Switzerland—the Confederation Helvetica—was the first example of a democracy in modern history and its constitution was written while the guilds were strong. How would the democracy handle them? Wisely, they didn't attack the guilds directly. The Confederation, the new democratic regime, merely insisted that no guild could claim to itself the exclusive door to a given employment category. Any career had to have at least two alternative entry doors. Even today in Switzerland no school or union can claim the exclusive means of qualification. This is often used as an illustration of the importance of alternatives in education. The issue is not nonformal versus formal, rather it is the issue of the multiplicity, the openness to alternative ways of doing education. Over the years, accreditation has worked to standardize ministry education programs in the same way that the guilds worked to limit and to standardize the crafts. The resulting narrowness of educational options and competitiveness between institutions has become a significant problem. Christian higher education leadership for the future needs a greater breadth of consciousness, and a keener sense of the range of alternatives that are available to them and to churches.

The point is that both the church and its educational institutions must face the fact that the issue isn't the importance of truth, but the capacity to operate on the basis of that truth—the fashioning of a substantial connection between the *truth* and a true *life*. Churches tend to dismiss the theological “stuff,” the academic knowledge base, as irrelevant to ministry; and the schooling people say, “That's the very thing we don't dare neglect.” Churches and schools need to hear each other at this point. The response of the church to what they see as the limitations of Christian higher education has to be shepherded in such a way that the *truth* isn't thrown out with the rejection of *the ineffectiveness of the means of learning the truth*. The schools, the serving institutions, must not become so concerned with maintaining their institutional reality that they no longer pay adequate attention to the ways in which they serve the church.

Perspectives on Teaching and Learning

Teaching is not a performance. Teaching is a process that must be assessed in terms of what it causes learners to become. Teachers are accountable for what happens in *learners*, not just for what the teacher knows and has delivered. The teacher-learner relationship in Christian higher education should be patterned on biblical mandates and precedents that include acceptance, giving, love in action, community, and so on. But most in society are conditioned to expect higher education to be in the form of hierarchy, involving social distance and academic class structure. Learners are subordinate to teachers and teachers are the guides to knowledge. This pattern is not consistent with Jesus' own teaching about the nature of learning and development. Jesus' admonition that "You are all brothers; you have one teacher" is lost in the shuffle in higher education.

In certain respects, one's rights as a Christian are suspended for four years while one attends an institution of Christian higher education. The learner-to-learner relationship in Christian higher education should be patterned on biblical mandates and precedents such as sharing, common concerns, and non-competitive community in which people share in one another's learning. But we have been conditioned to see higher education as competitive and characterized by a certain self-seeking aloofness in which learning is a private and lonely experience. In the North American frame of reference, even what we do in the name of Christian education is patterned on scholasticism—knowing as an individual accomplishment. Why are we surprised when we find Christian university students no more responsible than those in the general secular society?

Although it is widely accepted that the basic learning needs of human beings are process skills deriving from fundamental human characteristics and motivated by common human needs, the tendency of institutionalized education has been to define basic learning as a matter of *acquisition*. When defined as acquisition, concepts of learning suffer from four weaknesses: (1) Concepts of basic learning based on acquisition are necessarily time-and-place specific. Since what is needed for effective life in each place is in certain ways unique, notions of what is "basic" are caught in the impossibility of generalization. (2) When seen as a matter of acquisition, the defining of learning becomes an imperialistic task. When any person or group decides for some other person what information or skills are to be imparted, it is being decided also what is to be withheld. Such a view of learning contributes to human dependency and, in turn, control. (3) If learning is seen as acquisition, learning becomes a commodity to be bought and sold—subject to the restrictions of supply and the forces of demand. (4) An acquisitive view plays into the ancient fallacy of learning being concerned with knowledge, and knowledge being a thing apart, having a life and reality of its own. Such a view lies at the heart of the failures of schooling.

Certain *rights to learn* are fundamental and should be guaranteed: (1) The right to be curious and to maintain and extend one's facility to seek and to inquire. (2) The right to solve problems and to positively orient oneself to issues and problems, even to those which have not yet been solved. (3) The right of access to information and to sources of information which, in the view of the learner, are

potentially useful in furthering inquiry or solving a problem.

In light of these rights to learn, any responsible view of education, whether Christian or secular, must deal with four matters. First is *purpose*. What does one assume to be the purpose and outcomes of the educational process or program? The purpose of education cannot be examined apart from the purpose of life. The stimulating and deepening of human development is a whole-person issue. Taken in the largest sense, life-purpose itself must be a foundation of responsible educational planning. The second foundational matter is, therefore, *development*. What one assumes to be the nature of the development and maturational processes determines to a great extent what is and is not appropriate as education. Social accountability requires an institution to accept responsibility for its net effect upon people, not just the well-intended particulars of its major agenda. Thus when the net effect on the graduate is an acquired tendency toward selfish uses of knowledge and the acquisition of personal power through academic meritocracy, something is very wrong. Although the over-commitment of higher education to do anything and everything for students is a valid concern, the student's collegiate experience is far more than an intellectual encounter. It solves no problems to reject two obvious facts in respect to Christian higher education: first, the validity of the institution rests on its service to the church and the kingdom of God; second, no student leaves behind the other-than-intellectual aspects of personhood in order to enter a classroom.

The third and perhaps most obvious matter is how one sees *education* itself. All sorts of things are called "education." It is a commonplace of life. We all learn; we all teach; we all participate in the formal and nonformal institutions of society that serve to educate us. When we deliberately educate or purposefully choose educational experiences, what criteria do we use to decide what should and should not be done?

The fourth matter is perhaps less commonly associated with education, except among curriculum specialists. It is a professional issue with profound implications for the worth of an educational operation: What do we take the *future* to be? Every planned educational outcome reflects a view of the future. A notion of what the future will be like and what the learner will need to know in order to cope competently with the unfolding future is at least implicit in every curricular decision. Thus we cannot talk qualitatively about education without examining assumptions and beliefs about what we cannot yet see. Reflective speculation on the patterns of sociopolitical development in human experience coupled with careful study of the trajectory of human society at large have now become acceptable forms of input to educational decisions.

Experiential Learning and the Intentional Curriculum

For educational institutions the main issue is finding ways to help learners interact with knowledge in such a way that it will be applicable to their own unique situation. How can we help the student experience that which is otherwise abstract content? Putting it another way, how can the learner benefit from others' past experiences? Given the limited scope of any one person's experience, how can we provide that person with a "well-rounded" education that will prepare him or her for future experiences

and needs?

The answers to these questions will be found in an approach to teaching that utilizes the learners' natural inductive (or inquiry) process of learning. The inquiry process can be likened to the scientific method, and the learner likened to the scientist in search of new knowledge. The inquiry process begins with the recognition of a need or problem usually through exposure to a particular experience. As with the scientist, the only information or knowledge that learners see as relevant is knowledge that helps solve problems in which they are interested. The second step in the inquiry process is the formulation of hypotheses. These are educated guesses about the meaning of the problem and some possible solutions. The learner, too, develops hypotheses of a similar kind. Educational processes that encourage these adult-level learning experiences will then include: (1) Instructional tasks that involve higher levels of mental process. (2) A trust environment that will accommodate "judgment-call" measurement, so that the higher levels are more apt to be seen as important. (3) The assessment of products of whole learning experiences rather than assessing components out of context. (4) Giving priority to the development of insights and judgments rather than simple recall and simplistic analysis.

Good educational programming requires a balance and blend among a variety of experiences⁴.

⁴Editor's Note. Ward distinguishes among three categories of curriculum experience as follows.

The Overt Curriculum (Explicit)

The overt curriculum is what an institution claims to be accomplishing. Reasonable basis for the claims can be seen in the intentional educational offerings.

0-1. Intensive emphasis on pre-service education—

- a. reduces attention and resources for in-service education;
- b. tends to restrict theological education curriculum to entry-level basic information;
- c. promises more than is realistic in terms of initial competencies;
- d. prolongs adolescence.

0-2. Preoccupation with span of "coverage" (a prevalent school teacher's ailment) restricts the level of cognitive processing. (See Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives.)

0-3. The goals of academic learning in biblical studies and theology focus extensively on categories of intellectual propositions. The main skills less developed are recognition and classification.

0-4. Convergent teaching, closed-end reasoning, and emphasis on predetermined propositions are apt to lead to mechanistic and traditional ministry with little evidence of creativity.

0-5. Limited academic models of teaching transfer into limited modes of preaching.

0-6. Emulating a one way communication model (as exemplified in academic lecturing) reduces the normal tendency to use interactive communication processes.

0-7. Tool skills (especially biblical languages) are often taught in isolation from the realistic application of their use.

The Hidden Curriculum (Implicit)

The hidden curriculum is a sort of "shadow curriculum" that lurks beneath the surface of what an institution professes to want to achieve. The hidden curriculum consists of those educational outcomes which are plain to see in the implications but less likely to be evident in the statements of intention.

H-1. The presumed priority of convergence on truth suppresses valuable mental processes of divergent (exploratory) reasoning.

H-2. Good answers are held in greater respect than good questions. Students are educated more toward "Jesus is the answer" than toward a grasp of the human condition and the questions for which sociologically responsible answers are needed.

H-3. Compartmentalization of the academic institution tends toward interdisciplinary competitiveness, dissonance, and fractional incoherence. Integrated reasoning and spiritual wholeness suffer.

Although there is essential agreement among professional educators about what sort of educational experiences are valuable, it is no longer popular to search for the “best way” to educate. The real issue in curriculum design is not what experiences are best, but rather, *how much of what kinds of* experiences should be used to achieve the intended objectives. Not just any curriculum concept is adequate to the tasks of Christian higher education. For example, the ordinary strings-of-information approach to courses and programs is seriously deficient. Such experiences simply do not add up. They culminate in some sort of grand examination in which the information is used once—to pass the test—and then it loses most of its residual value.

Another questionable curricular form is the integration-by-perspective routine, in which everything is taught essentially as it would be in a non-Christian school, and somewhere along the line, someone (not always even the main professor) adds a few tidbits about the “Christian perspective” and attempts a sort of belated baptizing of the unredeemed approach. If anything Christian is to be done about the student’s worldview, it must be done persistently and continuously. Every experience must be related to every other experience in the student’s tapestry of learnings. This is not easy, and certainly not every professor is equally competent; but it is the inescapable task of Christian liberal education.

Higher education is a structure of intentional curriculum. And for all our concern about the null curriculum and all of our fear that we may be surreptitiously delivering a hidden curriculum, let us not forget that our first line of attack is in our intentional curriculum. Let us make sure that the intentional curriculum is defined in such terms as to allow us to see the particular contributions of given subjects in

H-4. The devotion to a specific body of academic knowledge can become the professor’s castle of withdrawal from larger contexts of ministry and especially from the emotional, social, and spiritual realities of the students.

H-5. Antipathy for falsehood, error, and heresy elevates the priority of judging the truth of an idea above the task of understanding the idea.

H-6. Reinforcement of culturally based socio-political closures of Christian theology inadvertently occurs whenever the challenging cultural (political and social) presumptions are omitted. In other words, when professors allude to common cultural presumptions and biases held by Christians without exemplifying the Christian task of cultural critique, theological information is often added by the learner in terms of unreasoned biases.

The Null Curriculum

The null curriculum exerts a strong influence on learners. Whatever is omitted from the curriculum for whatever reason, or is given a subordinated emphasis or intention is apt to be perceived by the learner as being of less importance or as unimportant.

N-1. Overlooked values are a “Null curriculum.” For example, competency and commitment to service, if excluded from attention as in academic outcome, causes the student to “learn” that it has less value.

N-2. Insufficient emphasis on personal qualities and social interactions of ministry reduces the spiritual value of education.

N-3. Theological subjects are reduced to informational rationalizations, the “personal pathologies” and “life stories” of students find little place and space within the instructional context. Thus theological knowledge remains extraneous to dominant concerns. Dualism is sure to result.

N-4. The social consequences of the gospel are too commonly sidestepped. Thus the church becomes the legitimizer of the state’s injustice rather than a conscience of the state’s power.

N-5. Theology in general and biblical knowledge in particular are held to be informational contents. Their value as ways of encountering life and reflecting on experience tends to be of less interest.

given fields to those common and grand themes that make the whole educational experience in a given institution worthwhile, and let us see that as a community effort.

An Appeal for Grand Themes and Substantial Information. One way to get the curriculum coordinated and all the subjects working together for truly liberal education purposes is to see every learning experience as an intersection between a grand theme and a certain parcel of substantial information: The curriculum specifications then take the form of a matrix rather than merely a set of lists. The matrix is formed by arraying grand themes down the left or vertical axis and arraying the content specifics of the curriculum, subject by subject, across the top or horizontal axis. Admittedly, the resultant array would be vast, especially in the horizontal dimension; but the effort need not be abandoned. Portions of the curriculum could be depicted in this way since it is not necessary to see the whole curriculum all in one place at the same moment. What is important is that the idea of the matrix should be in the mind of every professor and student.

The substantial information is the familiar stuff of the syllabus and list of intended outcomes—the examinables and the metaphysical intentions of a given learning experience. This horizontal array is the stock-in-trade of the professor. What makes the truly Christian curriculum hold together is the intersections of all these bunches of information and concepts with the significant values of the faith, the grand themes. Rather than leaving these to chance, they should be specified, defined, and deliberately sought out for their points of intersection with the subject matter of the disciplines.

Which grand themes? Here is one more situation where closed lists may be undesirable in the long run; nevertheless, the candidacy of certain items identified should not be overlooked. Consider the importance of identifying faith, hope, love, service, and other of the seminal keystones of the Christian faith as the longitudinal, continuously focused and refocused *warp* of the curricular fabric, with the specifics of substantial and relevant information intersecting and illuminating as the *woof*.

The Christian University: Building Bridges of Service to the Larger World

Higher education has two major orientations: power and service. While of the great institutions of learning are proficient at developing people who will use their education as power—to influence and to control others, the development of a nation is benefitted more by people who use their education to serve. The orientation of the colleges and universities usually makes the difference.

If learning is understood as process toward the purpose of clarifying the mind, then *service* can be simply the consequent behavior of the adequately informed person. In this perspective, the uses of education to serve humankind and thus to serve God are merely matters for life after schooling. Christian higher education would seem more appropriately to understand the end of learning as obedience—the doing of truth. Accordingly, the epistemological bias of Christian higher education should value the doing of the Gospel. The implication is that those who benefit from such education are

to be “thoroughly equipped” in that they must be informed and skilled in matters dealing with the church’s outreach to the world in ministries of helps and relief. Showing the love of Jesus Christ is a matter of far more than words. This basic value should be protected against being overwhelmed by *exclusive* preoccupations with given academic disciplines. At least four kinds of service can be fostered by an academic institution:

1. *Dialogue with the Society* – The most underestimated of all the potential contributions of Christian higher education is its interaction with the larger society—community, state, nation, and world. The contribution of an educational institution to reasoned dialogue is, indeed, one of the historic reasons for higher education. Dialogue requires a setting, and implies a give-and-take process. Thankfully, many Christian colleges are allowing their facilities to be used as a setting for the deliberation of social issues. What is less common is the willingness to serve as host to such discussions and debates without biased and anxious predetermination of the outcomes. At some point, Christian higher education may develop more uniformly a high regard for the power of truth. As it develops, the potential for influencing a wild and erratic society toward reasoned godliness will increase, and service to the society will become an institutional outcome, not just a consequence of individual voices and actions.

2. *Community Participation of the Institution* – The “town and gown” relationships are never settled. Every host community sees the college as a mixed blessing. In terms of demands on municipal and civic services, the college can be a liability; in terms of vitality and level of interest in the community, the college is usually a benefit. Some colleges are aloof, seeming almost to ignore the local community. These colleges exhibit a sort of above-it-all loftiness that is irritating and sometimes insulting to the local community. It is one thing to be a separated saint, it is quite another thing to be an aloof prig. Would that all Christians in higher education could tell the difference! The first line of effective Christian testimony of the institution is in the local community. There should never be a question about the level of interest in civic, welfare, and community issues. Faculty members, as individual citizens, and the college, as a corporate member of the local community, can and should be active and involved. From among the faculty and administrators should come members of the school board, the city council, and service clubs.

3. *Involvement of the Faculty in Professional Service* – Defining the college professor’s role simply in terms of teaching classes omits many of the ancillary activities which make for vitality in the professorial career. Being free to put a certain percentage of one’s time into independent “outside” consultation, lecturing, workshop leadership, and independent scholarly contributions is important. Such activities are constructive and stimulating; they keep the professor involved with “the outside world” beyond the campus and beyond the limited thought world of late adolescents. Perhaps equally important is the example of service that is provided to students and to society at large. The time may come when faculty contracts will encourage the professor to spend time in professional service. Therein lies one significant measure of the social conscience of the faculty and the significance of the institution.

4. *Involvement of the Students in Experiential Learning* – Walk-athons and rock-athons are good news and bad news. On the one hand they suggest the students’ indomitable drive to make a constructive mark on the world in which they live. Yet they are a sort of make-work evidence that many young people cannot find a practical and direct way to attack social issues and problems. So

students resort to substitutional and symbolic events which have no meaning in themselves. While the Christian should be as ready as anyone to demonstrate when demonstration is the only or the best step to foster responsible action, Christian higher education should involve the student in far more substantial encounters with practical service. It is part of being educated. Christian *praxis* depends upon real experiences, not just symbolic gestures.

A service orientation presumes that the school and the society sit in a reciprocal relationship to one another—serving interactively. Service itself is designed as a reciprocal meeting of other people’s needs, not just a one-way, imposed upon, flow of “I will help them.” Education in this model presumes that education is the development of wisdom through the knowledge of experience and service.

The Land Grant University Vision

The Land Grant University vision is “Service Before Power,” in that it distinguishes between those who serve and those who control. The institutionalization of this vision is a worthy model for the Christian university. The Land Grant College legislation was one of the last pieces of legislation signed by Lincoln before his death. When Senator Justin Morrill sponsored the Morrill Act of 1862 which brought the land grant universities into being he said, “We must take education into the context of people.” The government provided grants of land to state colleges, who would teach subjects “related to agriculture and the mechanic arts,” without excluding the sciences and classical studies. What is now called the Land Grant University movement grew out of a dream for a “people’s college,” or a people’s university, that would put its primary attention on the practical, functional problems of the common people in society. This philosophy still lives on in these institutions. The United States is the only nation in the world where ordinary people can, with a local phone call, get information through a system based on “the county extension agent.” The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides the money, and the management is provided through each state’s land grant university. This is a longstanding example of a university primarily providing formal education while sponsoring major nonformal education activities in certain sectors, particularly in agriculture, engineering, and now in urban affairs and urban development.

Is it possible today for other formal education institutions to more adequately embrace the nonformal sector? A major problem is that formal education is not only traditional, but it tends to be very powerful. Formal education institutions, like any other human institution, seem to have one motive that works more extensively, more strongly than any other motive, and that is the motive of self-preservation. Anything that appears a threat is typically resisted and swallowed up to the point where it becomes unrecognizable as something other than formal education.

The Land Grant universities are the only successful blending of formal and nonformal education that we have seen on a long-term historical basis. The approach works despite the classic tension within those institutions between the academic classicist on the one hand and the practical educator, on the other hand. One of the things we can learn from the institutionalization of the “Land Grant philosophy” is that we need educational institutions that have a much larger frame of reference. We need educational institutions that are willing to put a significant part of their earmarked resources into direct affiliation with

practical problems in the field.

Unfortunately, the minds of faculty are often undisciplined by the philosophical claims of a service-oriented institution. The blight upon liberal education is the supposedly “liberal arts” course which is actually taught in such a way that it contributes little more than diverse information. To qualify as “liberal arts” in any rudimentary sense, a course must be taught in such a way as to encourage the student to open up to a larger worldview and to develop a more open attitude toward nuance and variability in the society. What happens far too often is that the narrowly invested professor introduces the student to a discipline with a closedness that reflects more proprietary provincialism than breadth.

The commitment to a broad-based liberal arts curriculum is seen as God-honoring, in that it provides a broad matrix in which God can lead the student with greater flexibility. However, education today, secular and Christian, increasingly demands specialization, especially in relation to vocational preparation. Premature vocational commitments and narrowing of academic interests in relation to that commitment which limit broad exposure to fields of knowledge hinder flexibility in response to God’s leading. Further, there is danger in placing the scholastic filter into the whole scheme of God’s leading. In others words, replacing the church’s calling function in reference to the ministry with the educational institution—putting calling through the filter of educational competency.

Ultimately, the debate about liberal arts versus vocationalism is of less importance than the matter of grounding of the curriculum in biblical values. Can’t we have both? Indeed it may be possible, but the inherent humanism in the liberal arts philosophy cries out for an authority base on which to stand—lest it drift into a culture-reflecting relativism inadequate to the needs of whole persons.

Issues Related to the Future of the Christian University

The contemporary mission of Christian higher education is to create a clearer vision for the contributions of Christian higher education to scholarship and to moral, ethical, and intellectual thought in the whole of society. However, education has gone sour in the last few years in a number of particulars. First, a significant decrease is evident in the willingness of the public in the United States and to a great extent in other parts of the world to assume that education is a valid route to improvement of a society. This assumption, unchallenged for several hundred years, is today being challenged. Second, on the private and individualistic level there is disillusionment about the use of education as a route to vocational competency, vocational rewards, and socio-economic gains. This is happening in the Third World as well, because in the Third World much of socio-economic growth or gain was a matter of whether or not a person could get into the Civil Service. The only way to do this was to go through one of the colonial or post-colonial schools. Now, the Civil Service in almost every developing nation is completely saturated. There is no more money to hire more people; consequently, people are graduating from these stagnant schools with no job, and they are angry.

Where once the school or the schooling establishment was seen as the keeper of the lamp, both in the intellectual and in the moral and ethical sense, there is now growing suspicion that the school has dropped the lamp, and that much of the corruption in high levels is because of the failure of the schooling establishment. Even though some of this is simply scapegoating, there is just enough truth to fan the flames and keep people from trusting again in quite the same way.

If this malaise persists, in the next decade there will be a de-emphasis on formal education. Much of this de-emphasis will be a matter not of doing away with education, but of exploring alternatives. In particular, productive ways will be found to integrate nonformal and formal education modes. These efforts will require educators who are capable of functioning outside the formal or the academic, classroom type environment—educators who are coming to realize that the approaches they have been using are a small part of what is possible in educational process.

There will be a de-emphasis on preparational education. Again, part of the irony of the transformation in overseas education is the recognition that many of the people who shouldn't be doing things because they don't have the educational background *have been doing them!* Then the question becomes, "Well, since they are doing it, how can we help?" This puts formal education in a very different posture.

Within formal education, there will be more institutional cooperation among some institutions—perhaps modules of interchangeable learning blocks. Along with genuine cooperation, however, may come a period of schism of substantial proportions in which the respective cultures of two kinds of institutions—the classical and the contemporary—will be in conflict. These divisions are almost an inevitable outcome of this current surge of re-academicizing formal higher education, and one will have to choose between a culture that encourages elitism in education and a culture that is more egalitarian.

The church will begin to play a much more active role in evaluating higher educational institutions in several areas: the more precise analysis and statement of educational philosophy; the development of a clearer theological basis for evaluating education in and for the church; a more holistic appreciation of the wholeness of the people of God. This wholeness is not only in the ecumenical sense, but more particularly, in the sense of personhood so that the educating of persons is seen in its more holistic function, not only whole psychological and physical, but whole in a sociological sense—whole within community.

Serious questions are being raised whether higher education as we have known it can or should survive for another decade. Reformers point out that the educational establishment has become a grotesque beast, unresponsive to human needs and motivated only by its own self-preservation. Their extreme statements contain disquieting elements of truth. By definition, the sociological value of an institution is to preserve, maintain, and perpetuate; thus in a period of time when the greatest need is for ways and means of helping people cope with post-revolution and postmodern realities, many educational establishments, predictably and irritatingly, are hung up on yesterday's issues. However, it is unlikely

that forced change, or even the cataclysmic change that results from forces that threaten an institution's survival, are productive over the long term.

Change in Formal Education

Institutions tend to resist change and institutional change—especially in higher education—will take time. There are very few good things which happen from accelerated, imposed structural change. The real things of consequence occur because people, over a period of time, deliberate on them carefully, reflect on them evaluatively, and with a high degree of motivation move securely and steadily toward a change process. Institutions are transformed because people within crave, desire, and want change.

Responsible educational development and the reform of an educational institution should begin within the institution. A new vision or an approach seen elsewhere can be a stimulus, but lasting effects will not come from simple program-copying. Only through growth from within will the necessary changes be made in the people who are the institution. Until the faculty decides that something needs to change in themselves, the effects of experiments and apparent “trends” will be short indeed. Perhaps the most important advice to give within the establishment is to pay close attention to the out-front leadership of the establishment and not to be sluggish about making improvement through change, no matter how painful. To assist in this process, sound thinking and careful writing about the needs for improvement of higher education is readily available.

Eight conditions have been identified as being important in fundamental change within an educational institution: (1) ready access to novel ideas; (2) capacity of the faculty to work together as a whole; (3) support of innovativeness from the administrators; (4) consensus on the decisions to innovate followed by renewals of commitment to innovate; (5) desire to work together, as a widespread reality among the faculty; (6) willingness to endure the pains of change; (7) acceptance of ideas from one another, even those ideas that produce anxiety; (8) key leaders of the innovation “on board” for at least two years after the innovations are implemented. Regardless of how needed or how valid a proposed change may be, the lack of one or another of these conditions often explains failure of an innovation.

Higher education, in general, is being challenged to become more effective. It would seem that appropriate attributes of Christian higher education for the next decade, even the next century, could include:

1. Personalized, to develop humane, sensitive people who can counterbalance the depersonalization of complex, cybernetic living and create a sensitivity, to human aspirations, potentialities, and problems.
2. Multicultural and international to educate true pioneers in developing the frontier of human relations.
3. Interdisciplinary, to strengthen the application of any one discipline by relating it to the structures and processes of other disciplines.
4. Dispersed and diversified, in its objectives, methods, instructional resources, and ways of assessing individual performance.
5. Theoretical and, concurrently, clinical—to create conditions where theory and practice interact to enrich each other, where theory provides an adequate conceptualization and understanding of the

processes and practice wherein theory can be tried and tested, interpreted, and made meaningful.

6. Flexible, in terms of entrance and exit, able to accommodate various levels of performance relative to knowledge, skills, processes, and attitudes, but providing appropriate and respectable alternatives to the “whole degree” approach.

7. Self-correcting, through a systems approach to rational decision-making, monitoring and assessment, and incorporation of needed change.

8. Cybernetic and futuristic, to help students prepare for future change, while living effectively today in a manner which enables them to continuously broaden their minds and aspirations through the technological advances of today and projections of tomorrow’s promises, and helps them prepare for productive living today and in the emerging future.

9. Meaning and quality oriented, to develop students who will lead societal efforts to secure:

- a. Quality, rather than quantity;
- b. Person-values rather than a “things” orientation
- c. Understanding and personal meaning, rather than mere knowledge mastery;
- d. Group identity, effectiveness, and productivity, rather than blatant individualism;
- e. Development and wise use of human- natural-manufactured resources, rather than mere consumption and manipulation;
- f. Human and societal efficiency and productivity, rather than mere technical and organizational efficiency—in short, to be concerned with quality of life rather than merely its length and affluence.

Assessment and Educational Alternatives as Modes of Change

Substantial changes in educational institutions can result from a deepened concern of the faculty for its students. In recent years there have been several instances of deeply dedicated faculties being jolted beyond tolerance by the sobering outcomes of follow-up studies on their graduates. After being made complacent for so many years by the “success stories” that travel back to the alma mater with such enthusiasm, a careful look at honest data about the whole graduated body has been shocking. Perhaps Christian colleges, universities and seminaries wouldn’t be sleeping giants if every institution conducted scientifically responsible follow-up studies every five years. (The common procedure of soliciting voluntary feedback on a mailed questionnaire is absurd.)

But students, in many cases, have cause to critique the effectiveness and relevancy of their educational experiences. Students mean at least three things when they talk about lack of relevance and quality. First, they are critical of the lack of opportunity to engage in action based on what they have learned within the course structure. They comment on the fact that they have not been asked to participate in activities which would facilitate the learning of complex material. They want to engage in applications of course work in order to test their understanding and to enhance their application of theories. Second, students sometimes charge a lack of relevance and quality because material is presented primarily at an abstract level. When the professor does not help the student to project plausible applications, the student may not see the value of the material. If the instructor is inclined toward abstract presentation, it may be that he or she is taking for granted that transfer to many specific situations is already clear to the

student. Third, the charge of lack of quality and relevance sometimes reflects frustration with grading which rests entirely on traditional examinations. Command of information in a form which permits one to perform well on examinations does not insure that actions can or will be taken in other contexts in accordance with the information. Observation of behavioral actions taken by students would be a preferable basis for evaluation in many instances.

Year-long courses, involving comprehensive mixes of theory and application, cognitive learnings and field experiences may provide part of the solution for the problems of relevance and quality. In the interests of economy and institutional focus, certain academic areas may need to be eliminated entirely and others severely curtailed. Their roles and missions would be carried out within other schools. That those institutions are spending a considerable portion of those contributed resources to duplicate services which tax dollars are providing elsewhere hardly strengthens the case! In spite of the general assumption that there is a particular Christian perspective for any given study, the particular emphasis that distinguishes a Christian counterpoint from a secular counterpoint is not often clear. Instead of bringing together a highly competent faculty of Christian scholars in all the many fields of human inquiry so that each professor will labor through the basics of his or her field with one little group of beginners after another, why not focus the professors' major efforts on the perspectives and issues?

One possible model could be that of an institution given over to providing the "year away" for hundreds of Christian students who are otherwise enrolled in secular institutions. Such a year would not be concerned with the "basics" of the content fields, but would be concerned with the relationship of Christ and of the Word of God to the several broad fields of human scholarship. Such a year might include a carefully planned six-to-eight week experience at one of the several "field stations for cultural studies" in another country to encourage a global grasp of the issues and the responsibilities of the Christian scholar in today's world. Another viable alternative might be to divert a significant amount of faculty effort to off-campus teaching (for transfer credit), especially the teaching of seminars on the Christian perspectives of science, of social science, of the arts, and so forth, on university campuses.

Effective reform will require isolating a number of areas of concern in Christian higher education other than those of a highly pragmatic, business management (how do we keep the institution afloat) kind. Our purpose is not, somehow, to reform the front office. It is hard to see the possibilities for a more significant social and spiritual contribution while concentrating on the financial and management problems which have become part of each institution's continuing plight. Survival is high on the daily priorities; it is presumed that competition for students and donations is a legitimate and inescapable part of the institution's agenda. Getting the act together—if it means significant cooperation and collaborative public visibility—has two strikes against it from the outset: pragmatic competitiveness and traditionalized anxiety over doctrinal compromise. Whatever case can be made for the legitimacy of these two inhibitions, it pales in the light of the Gospel. The resources and talents concentrated in Christian higher education simply must be displayed more effectively; the Gospel demands it.

Ultimately, our concern is for what goes on in the educational community—what it means to be engaged

as faculty and students in Christian liberal arts education. What of the clichés about liberal arts education need to be critiqued and updated? What of the clichés about Christian higher education need to be critiqued and brought up-to-date and projected into a more productive future? What within our institutions needs to be taken more seriously, because of its effect on the quality of the experience? One major issue that affects the quality of the higher education experience is the “faith and learning” dichotomy.

The Faith and Learning Dialogue

How can the “faith and learning” dialogue be made a more constructive and less of a remedial kind of process? The faith and learning movement never quite came to grips with what caused the problem of its dis-integration. It took for granted that somehow faith and learning are two sorts of things, or at least two facets of life that tend to fall into a dualism. Should not faith and learning be thought of in terms of a unity? When students enter a college or university and leave their Christianity outside promising God to pick it up on the way out, the learning part may be extended, transformed, deepened, enriched, and fundamentally altered. But when they come back out to pick up the Christian part, it no longer fits quite as well; however, they keep busy trying to reconcile faith and learning. Since such persons need help, there is always a market for what is often a band-aid commodity called “the faith and learning workshop.”

Does the *Faith and Learning* movement offer any solution for the problem itself, or is it merely a treatment of symptoms? On many points there is no disagreement:

1. No education is value-free or non-ideological.
2. Even within the public sector of a free society, there is as much or more justification for teaching from a Christian theological perspective as from any ideology.
3. A legitimate claim to the designation Christian higher education must be based on teaching that explicates its presuppositional ground in Christian theology as part of its deliberate content.
4. Although the social sciences and the humanities are especially responsible for carrying an explicitly Christian moral structure into the intellectual marketplace, no discipline is exempt from the responsibility for reflecting and continuously reexamining its theological presuppositions. A

One thing is sure: intellectual dichotomizing has become an earmark of much Christian scholasticism. In one sort of experience and in its special pile of source materials the Christian professor finds academic veracity; in another sort of experience and from its pile of materials he or she finds the precious spiritual propositions. Would that the two piles could once again be stirred together. Or better yet, is it too much to ask that the hallmark of Christian scholarship might be the rejection of this two-pile epistemology? Since *all* truth is God’s truth—a favorite cornerstone of the *Faith and Learning* movement—it is important to keep the “all” integrated.

What lies behind the disintegration and dichotomization? Surely the gap between one’s faith and one’s

reasoning must develop after childhood's simple view of God and before receiving one's first faculty salary check in a Christian college. To point the finger of blame at the secular graduate schools is temptingly logical. But it is a tragic cop-out. How do faith and learning get de-coupled in the first place? The schism between faith and learning tends to be rooted in the environment of the Christian community and its colleges. From experiences as a graduate professor in several state universities, I must testify that most of the professors-to-be who were my graduate students brought a dichotomized worldview into their graduate studies. Like it or not, these graduate students included many "outstanding" graduates of Christian liberal arts colleges. If there were any predictable differences between the Christian graduate students whose baccalaureates were in the Christian liberal arts colleges and those in the so-called secular institutions, they were minimal.

The best students, in terms of my values, were aware of their pilgrimage—they were holding firmly to their faith commitments as the frame-of-reference into which every idea and every 'fact' had to be tested for its fit. For these faculty-in-formation, Christianity was not an option but a given. Its givenness was a matter of faith and its conceptual implications were an emerging and maturing consciousness—not a thing apart. I know of no other way to explain the reality of my own experiences except to conclude that the Christian colleges do not adequately cope with the American Christian habit of dichotomized faith and learning. To be plain about it: the Christian colleges are helping to create the very faith and learning problem for which they are so compulsively discussing remediation. If the *Faith and Learning* movement merely spins a web of self-justifying apologetics for the status quo in Christian higher education, it may already be a fad on its way to extinction.

Key Intellectual Problems in Christian Higher Education

In addition to the faith and learning problem, other key intellectual problems are encountered among many highly educated people which tend to inhibit scholarly pursuits.

The problem of dichotomizing: To search out the extreme posture and to pose oneself at one end or the other of a long continuum and to hold forth as if somehow truth will be found at one extreme or the other. Oversimplifying is a related problem. The problem of oversimplifying is seeking out the easiest possible answer or being satisfied with a pat answer. Why should we be concerned about these intellectual problems? First, the tendency to dichotomize and the tendency to oversimplify will tend over time to put severe limits on one's capacity to understand. If a person is brought up in an educating environment which simply pigeonholes or labels ideas, this in time severely limits human understanding—critical thinking ceases. Second, such an approach to ideas demeans our faith. Ultimately it causes us to trivialize important matters. Matters which are deserving of a much more careful and deliberate process of analysis, reflection, and criticism are quite often reduced to matters of trivia and thrown aside. Faith that simply confronts day by day things that have been trivialized tends to be faith that does not grow. Third, such behavior can turn us into answer people. An answer person is an expert on the answer, but sees no value in new questions. In much classical scholarship there is a tendency to be preoccupied with the right answers to yesterday's questions; while life is a process of the emergence of new questions demanding fresh inquiry. We must be people who honor the validity of

questions not simply people who exalt the validity of answers.

Fourth, dichotomizing and oversimplifying tend to reduce our Christian experience to verbalism. The church of North America in our time does not lack valid theological propositioning and valid doctrine. What is lacking in the contemporary church is acted out doctrine—actualized theological truth. We have become content with the verbal rather than the actual. In the tendency to oversimplify, we oversimplify to words. And then the complexity of behavior which is never as easy is overlooked in the process because it doesn't respond very well to dichotomizing, oversimplification, and trivialization. Fifth, dichotomizing and oversimplifying tends to blind people to truth when it does appear. It tends to cause people to presume that they already have seen the truth, when they have actually seen its shadow. When more complicated realities of truth appear they cannot even recognize it. Sixth, when we dichotomize and when we oversimplify we fragment the life we have in Christ. It is characteristic of sinful humanity that parts of life are fragmented and kept apart. Therefore, issues of morality quite often are kept apart from intellectual issues. Issues of social development are kept apart from issues of person and personality. To develop wholeness we must avoid that use of our minds which is either trivialized through oversimplification or trivialized through dichotomization. Above all, we should avoid fragmenting in terms of sacred and secular, spiritual and material. Finally, minds caught in these intellectual problems can only sustain a small view of God. Though God is at work in our lives, we each are building an image of God. A large view of God is unnecessary if life is dichotomized in many different boxes. A larger view of God is essential and a larger view of God is stimulated in one's consciousness by a grasp of the holism of life.

Dualism, the misguided attempt to separate life into sacred and secular, leads into a downward spiral of intellectual and moral inconsistencies. Especially to be pitied is the Christian who has dealt with the difficult reconciliations of theological understanding and scientific understanding by accepting dualism. Even when that neat but worthless line between sacred and secular becomes the outer boundary of a Christian's knowledge and life, the result is a sort of artificial and impotent spirituality. For a Christian the most crippling line is between "Christian reasoning" and other processes of reasoning.

The human being cannot be divided into natural components and supernatural components. Whenever we distinguish a sociological perspective from a theological perspective, as if the former were inherently godless, we do violence to the wholeness of truth itself. Arthur Holmes (1977) has shown that "All truth is God's truth" is more than a cliché. For the educated Christian, a sociological perspective is informed by theological substance. All so-called perspectives, all information, and all insights, if held in the mind of an integrated Christian, are subject to the same discipline of the whole counsel of God and are capable of being similarly informative. Grappling in a biblical way with the distinctions between "Christ and culture" disallows that the two ever be divorced; it is a creative tension. Sin lies at the root of the dissonances, but redemption means that there is a basis for reconciliation.

The lines people draw. Accelerated by the Industrial Revolution and now exacerbated by the Information Revolution, specialization and compartmentalization are characteristics of our times. In

business, industry, and surely no less in education, we manage our increasingly complex world of ideas and relationships by dividing and labeling. One of the marks of the educated person is the capacity to draw discriminating lines that distinguish one thing from another. As in many another human paradox, the capacity to distinguish can become exaggerated and can work against the grasp of truth. When lines are drawn that separate and isolate the parts of a whole, discrimination becomes a barrier to understanding. If the drawing of academic lines were merely a matter of organizational expediency, it might be easier to justify; but such lines give rise to all sorts of prideful and pompous disgraces. The “professional” disciplines of theological education, practical ministry, Christian education and missions, for example, are seen often as less prestigious than the “academic” disciplines. One must wonder if the ultimate value of erudite theology is assumed to be exclusively in the brain.

In that being educated implies the competency to draw taxonomic and moral lines, the legitimate drawing and using of lines must be understood. First, the proper use of discrimination is to facilitate self-directed discipline. The first application of one’s moral and scientific reasoning should be to one’s own life. A series of encouragements follows from this first principle. One’s discriminatory reasoning and actions should be directed toward the glory of God and not toward self-aggrandizement. The mind of Christ should be sought in matters of human relationships. Taking account of all that we are in God’s grace, we must nevertheless esteem others as highly as ourselves. In all that we are and all that we do, God should receive all glory.

One important mark of the educated person should be an inclination to lean graciously across the lines that divide people—reaching, always reaching. As it was with the Apostle Paul, we learn the distinctives that must be held; we hold them not in pride, but in self-discipline. We acknowledge the line that distinguishes what God has done in our lives through Jesus Christ, not as something that sets us above or apart, but as something profound that changes us into reconciling people—motivated not only by ordinary human appetites and passions, but by the profound awareness that we are called to pass the good news to all (Romans 1:14). Thus we are privileged to point the way among those who lack a moral compass. Ours is a godly alternative, not in the accommodating pandering of a materialistic Christianity, but joined with Christ in the sufferings of the cross, by which we gain the capacity to identify with hurting humanity.

The lines that are really important are those that orient a moral direction in a confused era: not the verbal moralisms and simplistic politics that the world has come to despise in the Christian West, but the radiant embrace of a moral God who cares deeply about people. I am deeply concerned about the way Christians often use the very gift of grace as a barrier. There is something cavalier—even arrogant—about the line we draw between ourselves and others. Within the scholarly traditions we learn to reduce the boundaries of our intellectual territory to some manageable scope so that we can possess it and defend it. Never mind that many important ideas and great concerns are distorted in the process. The tendency to split things along arbitrary lines and to deal with the slivers of important issues that lie on “my side” of these arbitrary lines assures one’s claim on the comfort zone of one’s own narrow expertise.

Further, an institution can be influenced to draw lines where we have people who are “truth advocates” leading institutions. I would feel better about this if I were really sure it was truth they were advocating. I’m afraid that more often it is particular truth and particular views of truth being promoted. Unfortunately, if this sort of “truth advocacy” is the top of our Christian colleges and universities, the church will suffer. A deep commitment to the truth of God’s revelation is needed that carefully avoids particularized truth and pet ideas.

A community of scholarship, that assiduously avoids these intellectual problems, is advantageous for society and for the church so that certain issues can be debated carefully and analyzed critically before they are dumped out on the print market to the consternation and confusion of the church in North America. North American scholarship tends to be irresponsible scholarship when it does not come from communities of scholars, but from hot-headed individuals. Such irresponsible scholarship which airs matters before an unsuspecting public starving for help is not the way to develop strength in the church of Jesus Christ. We need communities of scholars, across the disciplines, who are correcting each other in a mutually accountable sense of Christian responsibility.

What Would it Take for a University to Be a Truly Christian University?

The special mission of the university, historically and in many contemporary instances, is to provide excellence in academics as well as preparation for ministry, the workplace, and the professions; and to uphold knowledge in the service of God and of neighbor. If the church persists in forming and supporting Christian universities it must recognize that the transition from Bible college or Christian college to Christian university is more than simply a structural change, or a legal name change. As the move to become or to form Christian universities escalates, the question of “What does it mean to be a truly Christian university?” becomes more urgent. Can the Christian university be an authentic center of learning and research? Does Christian scholarship need to be done by Christians? What is the purpose of a Christian university? What would a real Christian university look like?

There is no purpose at all in the university except for guidance in life. This unity has been lost over time in higher education because of the loss of any concept of truth that is relevant to life. All we have now are specializations. Certainly, specializations are related to life, but the issue is that specializations are functional—that is they are not linked to knowledge. Charles Malik’s assertion: “It isn’t important what the university thinks of Jesus Christ, it’s important what Christ thinks of the university” is a clear challenge to any contemporary university.

The heart of the matter is the nature of the content and interrelationships of knowledge. The task is to understand the crucial issues so that in the remodeling of institutions the right issues are addressed. In their quest for credibility, developers of Christian universities tend to be too concerned with how the university will appear to those on the outside. They are not as much concerned with reasoning the idea of the university, as they are with structural matters. The transition then becomes largely a structural

transition: retooling programs, restructuring administration, forming new divisions. More vital is the need to return to the nature of the unity of knowledge and the unity of truth and practice. It is not in the contrary philosophies that we find the threats to Christianity, but in the tinkering being done by Christians.

“The Idea of a Christian University”

What is at the heart of the idea? Do we really want a Christian university? What would it take to develop one? The question is legitimately asked: Is the Christian university necessary? Would higher education be better served as Christian students and faculty become integrally involved on secular campuses—effectively calling the university back to its original vision of serving God and neighbor. The ideal of the Christian university—truly Christian and truly university—has proven to be elusive. The ideals and the difficulties require more of faculty, of students, and of supporters than the traditions of evangelical Christianity have been able to sustain. A reasonable concern exists that becoming a university is a step toward losing Christian identity.

Graduate schools are essentially compartmentalized in vocational terms rather than conceptual and theoretical or foundational terms. Theological seminaries are the *de facto* flagships of the fleet, providing images of education, providing leaders for all other Christian higher education. Yet, in many respects, they are among the slowest to assert creative leadership. Christian liberal arts colleges may founder over the “liberal arts versus vocation” issue. Or they will divide into two forms: a) elitist – for the new dilettante class of wealthy Christians, or b) vocational—for high demand occupations, especially business. Bible colleges seem to be on the edge of catastrophe as they move away from their traditional service orientation. They will divide into a) liberal arts colleges or b) become narrowly focused on the “ministry trades.” And from this dubious matrix we think we propose to build a Christian University!

The university as a concept suggests three difficulties in relation to the Christian University.

1. The ideals of university are easiest to postulate in the framework of science, especially of empiricism.
2. The wholeness that “university” implies demands substantial breadth, hence largeness.
3. The spirit of inquiry required is threatened by dogma—even by doctrine. Convergent thinking is more desirable than divergent reasoning.

Further, there are difficulties in the descriptor Christian (as in “Christian” university):

1. Christians in relation to one another are best conceived as families and churches not as schools.
2. For the Christian, intellectual values are not transcendent—they are subordinated to relational and spiritual values.
3. Outcomes of education, for the Christian, must be reclaimed in terms of discipleship (actual behavior as “knowing,” and as service to others).

Difficulties in our faith communities affect the support for a Christian university:

1. Dualism—especially among the more conservative (the separation of sacred and secular)
2. The dis-articulation and dysfunctionality of many Christian fellowships.
3. Ambivalence about the worth of disciplined knowledge, and lack of commitment to the reflective values of quality education.
4. Willingness to support things that appear spectacular.
5. In many issues of lifestyle and values, becoming less distinct (following closely the materialism and power-brokering styles of the general society).

Finally, there are three key reasons why it is sure to be a difficult journey toward becoming a Christian university.

1. Isolation from the broader university and lack of standing in the intellectual marketplace. Evangelicals tend to disown and ignore those of their number who gain stature in the “secular” arena.
2. Tendency to seize on peripheral issues as the focus of Christian scholarship (e.g., school prayer, Science as Creationism).
3. Imputation of academic credibility on the basis of narrow orthodoxy which leads to the related issues of publishing exclusively for a Christian market, rather than participating in the larger scholarly arena; obsession with one’s own issues; protectionist attitudes about young people; and conservatism, with a paranoid twist: not only are we outnumbered, but “they’re out to get us.”

To Build a Christian University: the Grand Task

Three transcendent concerns motivate the development of Christian universities: (1) fidelity to the Word—as to the inspired infallible Scripture and as to the Word alive through Christ in the disciple; (2) voluntary suppression of pride and arrogance, within ourselves and within our institution, through on-going prayer and covenant toward the refining of a true learning community; and (3) knowledgeable mobilization of intellectual and spiritual resources in the persistent, perpetual, and never-to-be-completed building of an institution that exemplifies the ever-fresh, always contemporary, and reliably honest application of the Gospel to matters of human society and life. What is needed is a clear vision, spiritual vitality and a commitment to build on Christian values. Toward this end, we will need workable action plans for boards, administration, and faculty, collegial effort among faculty, administration and boards, and *ten years in development at a minimum*.

When clear models are lacking, social change, especially institutional innovation is profoundly difficult. When the transition requires many years of thought and development, it becomes an unpopular task. And the development of a Christian university can also be a threatening task. Institutions that are established as Christian universities will be seen as striving for the domain previously conceded to others.

There is some comfort in the logical extension of the basic theological maxim: “It’s a fallen world.” All the creation is under the blight of sin. Human institutions are part of the creation. Christian higher education is a configuration of human institutions. Though they are designed to serve the kingdom, more or less, not a single one of these institutions is going to heaven intact! Therefore, they are inherently flawed and in need of tender loving care, evaluation, criticism, and redemptive reconstitution. The one common characteristic of boats and educational institutions is that they leak—and they will leak

throughout their lifespan. We can only hope that the Christian university is a boat worth bailing.

The following chart depicts important distinctives that may help clarify the developmental distinctions between a traditional Bible college or Christian college and a university.

College Implies:

Schooling (patterned leading of learners)
Preparation.
Establishing a foundation to do general education as liberal arts.
Extension of the family's responsibilities.
Students are treated as "older children"
Protection from harm is a duty of the college.

University implies:

Building sustainable habits. Developing on a broad foundation a vocational – professional career competency.
A civic community of accountable persons.
Students as adults.
Exposure to perspectives that may be threatening.
Self-directed inquiry.
Application of knowledge in action and being.

Therefore, the vision for a Christian University would necessarily require:

1. A carefully wrought philosophy of the university, built carefully on theological grounds.
2. Emphasis on quality rather than quantity, but valuing as exemplars of quality those creative and idiosyncratic acts through which the world can be made different.
3. An extensive representation of intellectual disciplines.
4. Valuing variety in educational approaches and experiences.
5. An interactive community of scholars.
6. A deep commitment to inquiry which allows freedom to be wrong, freedom to ask new questions, freedom to ask old questions as if they might have new answers, freedom to bring differing sources into the dialogue, respect for the question as profound as respect for the answer.
7. Concerted efforts across disciplines to identify and strive toward shared rudiments of a Christian worldview.
8. Substitution of the Lordship of Christ for the tyranny of the culturally determined, ethnocentric forms of piety.
9. Valuing and respecting rather than suppressing cultural differences (suggesting an educational community in which highly contrasting lifestyles would be exempted from the "melting pot"). Students (they're out there), more discriminating than ever. Money (if God is honored, resources will follow).

It could be argued that the tasks involved in the development of a truly Christian university have *never* been adequately addressed—most surely not in the twentieth century. The concern for foundational relationships between distinctiveness of institutional mission and the particular academic models is valid, but we are already at the brink of further questions: How to better realize the highest functional values represented by our belief in the degrees already in place? How to craft new degrees, especially new and diverse post-graduate degrees so as to more fully mature the gifts and resources already in place?

The task of the university is to serve the church and to further the cause of Christ in the world he so loved. Four major tasks will demand the very best resources from within and outside the Christian university:

TASK ONE: Defining a workable construct of an appropriate Christian learning community. This is no simple matter for an urban or suburban university site or for a university committed to decentralized operations. Gone are the easy days when the emergence of a learning community could be assumed because people were destined to brush their teeth and store their suitcases together. Even the faculty-student relationships and context needed for optimal learning community seem largely to be beyond us. We can no longer assume that if we are faculty persons of good will and Christian virtue, things will settle into a bucolic reenactment of “The Halls of Ivy.”

TASK TWO: Defining, enunciating, putting in place, and maintaining a profoundly explicit and demonstrable qualification of the sort of faculty person who incarnates Christian servanthood within the scholarly and personal character of the learning teacher. This matter must be more than the declaration of an ideal; it requires some practical and demanding operations: a) the development of the extant faculties into communities that exemplify the chosen ideals of the Christian scholar-teacher, b) the development of assessment criteria and procedures that are defensible, legal, explicit, reliable, and valid for the measurement of the practice of these ideals in the professional behaviors of present and prospective faculty, and c) rigorous and accountable application of these values and assessment processes in all matters of faculty recruitment, hiring, and promotion.

Make no mistake about it: aside from the case of Timothy Dwight at Yale College two hundred years ago, recovery of fundamental Christianness in a defaulted institution of Christian higher education is “an exceptional case.” Degeneration is far more common, especially in recent times as a consequence of fiscal desperation. In many institutions, the quest for more students, more funding, more visibility, and more “relevancy” has driven them to unwise means. They have expanded into market-driven degrees and specializations for which there are too few strong Christian faculty persons available. Compromise on faculty spirituality is the sure doorway to de-Christianization of the college or university.

TASK THREE: Development of a curriculum which is integrated and internally logical from end to end providing the models, skills, experiences, and applications of Christian learning. Such a curriculum, as a holistic and unitary expression of the ethos of the university, should be crafted seamlessly and with a minimum of competitive dissonance arising from proprietary disciplinary categories.

Suggestions about the principled form (shape) of the undergraduate curriculum.

All intentions regarding purpose, means, and outcomes must appropriately represent Christian values. In broad scope each year the curriculum would reflect the following themes.

First Year: *Self-awareness* (Who am I? What difference can I make?) During this year students would acknowledge their gifts, set personal goals, value contract and group learning, experience divergent thinking.

Second Year: *Social Awareness and Responsibility*. Students would demonstrate ethical behavior, an increasing sense of justice, and social accountability. They would explore career options

Third Year: *Service*. Students would examine and cultivate life motives, apply these motives to

service and learn the humility that distinguishes a godly leader. Career choices would be critically examined.

Fourth Year: *Worldview*. Students would encounter different perspectives, how others view issues. They would be led to cope with ethnocentrism. A disciplined life-walk and decision making according to the principles of godliness would be encouraged.

Instructional Design: Learning through curriculum development

The following experiences are a viable part of a university curriculum: Consider a five-year experience: add a year of work experience for practical life experience as an interim year before the third academic year. This year need not be “guided” by onerous requirements and reporting. During seminars and classes students can be encouraged to reflect on their experiences. Provide intercultural experiences. Ethnocentrism (cultural narrowness) is the most insidious form of ignorance. Provide authentic service experiences. People learn about a life of service by serving. Christian epistemology demands emphasis on experience. Life is in the heart and the feet as surely as in the intellect. Integration of “knowing” into “doing” and “being” requires learning through experience.

What is learning? How do you know it when you see it?

Learning is a social activity.

Learning is developmentally fulfilling.

Learning leads toward transformation.

Learning occurs best in supportive environments.

Learning is retained best when acted upon and exercised.

For adults, especially, learning is most rewarding when new data and experiences are immediately processed in combination with previous learns. The result is *insight*.

In developing the curriculum: Phase out every requirement that is justified by traditional categories of curriculum. Instead ask: “What knowledge is essential for effective Christian living in the contemporary world?” Involve the faculty, but do not accept classical answers. Every academic unit thus defines its contributions as components of general education only when and if their nominated contributions are recognized by the faculty as a whole to have essential value toward Christian character. Establish an alumni board of curriculum review. Ask: “In order to do all of this, what sort of academic freedom is needed?” The freedom to slaughter sacred cows. The freedom to replace curricular bankruptcies with bold experiments. The freedom to build a community of seminal scholarship.

Ode to the obvious: Teaching is intended to result in learning. Teaching—or any of the other things that happen because the educational program exists—must stand the test of appropriate outcomes. It is not enough that the educators try. Children can often be convinced that they are learning well from bad teaching. Only sometimes will college students be similarly broad-minded.

The following questions and tasks can be used by a faculty, administrators and board as they envision an instructional design for the university. What do you believe encourages planners to keep Christian values well centered in regard to purpose, means, and outcomes? What needs to be done by administrators in order to encourage creative innovation? How can faculty members be reassured that innovation will not undermine quality? In your experiences, how do you fulfill the following: listening to students, accommodating uniqueness, assuring the worth of learning? Which methodological “hobby-horses” are most tempting today? Most dangerous? What sensitive personal matters are most easily “stumbled into”? How can competitiveness be reduced? In what ways do you hope that your work

with non-traditional adult learners will affect your college as a whole?

TASK FOUR: Communicating effectively with a broad distribution of persons who are capable of becoming interested, intrigued, motivated, and satisfied through their participation in a truly Christian academic learning process. Thus it will be necessary to present a clear, honest, and engaging set of academic degree programs, with a reasonable but minimal set of coherent variations capable of facilitating students' fulfillment of a wide range of callings and the furthering of personal and intellectual development toward an appropriate set of Christ-centered life-goals. We need to be enlightened by the past, but how inadequate would be the university if it were motivated more by resolving the Athens-Jerusalem debates than by a vision for the effective witness of the Word in today's world.

Crucial issues that offer guidance to Christian institutions as they transform into universities.

Intentional relationship with the church. The task of any institution of the church is to serve the church. The essential evaluative issue is how well the institution is serving the church. No other issue of excellence is as important. Today, it is possible for academic criteria to violate good ecclesiology. In Scripture and in any theologically sophisticated view of ecclesiology we have to understand that the position of the church in the assessments and judgments with reference to the aptness of a person for leadership in the church is transcendent. The theological seminary, the Bible school, the Christian college and university can participate in a helping way, but dare not allow themselves to usurp the responsibilities of the church

Discipleship as life-long-learning. Matthew 28:19-20 is often described as the "Great Commission" which is then translated as "to make disciples." The only real command in the original language of this passage is not "Go," but rather "Make disciples." The assumption was that the disciples were going anyway—and while they were going they were to make disciples. This process, "to make disciples" is then fulfilled in two specific tasks: baptizing and teaching to obedience. Baptizing is an induction into the community of the people of God—and in this affiliation discipleship becomes possible. A community of learning can be seen as the outgrowth of the baptism that brings the disciple into community. The other task is not simply "teaching!" Unfortunately, we have seized upon the word teaching, translated it into cognitive learning and carried it over as the task controlling higher education. The text calls for *teaching through obedience*, or "teaching them to obey." Unfortunately, obedience is a word that has two families of meanings: one is authoritarian and control-oriented; and the other is response-oriented in terms of how well one has acquired or fulfilled a particular knowledge. God's people today know that such teaching implies *lifelong learning*. Our Lord is asking for nothing less than lifelong learning. "While you are going make universities?" No, this is not the command. The real goal is to make disciples in the ways that Jesus commanded. If the goal is to be a university apart from the making of disciples, we have the Great Commission upside down.

Knowing-Doing-Being. Christian universities are rightly concerned that students will know certain things when they leave. They may also assume that the provision of a Christian environment will foster Christian moral and ethical behavior in students. However, liberal arts education tends to view the relationship of knowing, doing, and being in the same way as the ancient Greeks—assuming that what is in one's head will carry over into one's heart and actions. Christian liberal arts colleges have a special burden to challenge the notion that the way to change human behavior is to make sure that people

know things. Clearly, the ethical implications of knowing are in the doing; and knowing is manifested in performances that are knowledge related. How does higher education typically assess student learning? Through testing—which is often focused on a limited view knowing.

Liberal arts philosophy for all practical purposes depends on the intellectual accumulation of that which at some subsequent point in time people can go out and put into life. Phrases such as “finishing your education,” “when you’re done,” “when you’re through school” presume that there is a knowing, accumulating, storing, and filling stage in life, followed by an applying stage later in life. This is but one more false dichotomy. Knowing, doing, and being are important. In the Christian context we dare not disassociate knowing, doing, and being. Therefore, the purpose of any educational process can only be described as combinations of concerns about knowing, doing, and being. Educational approaches vary in terms of the relationships among these purposes.

Whatever is asked for in the Great Commission is not going to be fulfilled simply in degree programs on campus. It will require continuing education experiences across life along with a much more holistic notion of education that includes the church, the school, and the everyday experiences of life.

Providing and supporting world wide access to learning. From the Apostle Paul’s writings and from Matthew 28: 19-20, it is impossible to be involved in Christian higher education without also being culturally involved and aware. “Equality of educational opportunities” has become a worldwide political theme. In nations that remember clearly their colonial past, the theme speaks of deliverance and fulfillment. Where recent history has been blighted by elitism and unwarranted privilege, “equality of educational opportunities” has become a motive of those who would correct imbalances and injustices. “Equality of educational opportunities” is an ideal. Perhaps nowhere has it been (nor will it be) fully realized. But to strive for anything less seems beneath the dignity of humanity. To strive toward “equality of educational opportunity” demands an attack on the systems that maintain the privileged few at the expense of poor.

Taking a Lesson from Recent History

Education is more than a product of national development. Indeed, education is the engine of national development. Thus, the extent of educational opportunity will determine the breadth and quality of national development. In the nation that denies educational opportunity to its people, everyone suffers the consequences, rich and poor alike.

Sociologists and historians have observed that education serves the society in two contrasting ways: the educational system contributes to social flexibility while at the same time making the society more stable⁵. National policy decisions can make either of these two qualities (flexibility or stability) dominant. In the interests of political stability, protection of power structures, and its ownership properties, the tendency is to emphasize stability. The appeal for “equality of educational opportunity,” on the other hand, tends toward flexibility—opening up the social system and providing for

⁵See Robert Havighurst and Bernice L. Neugarten. 1957. Society and education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 1957, 270.

“climbing and falling” according to people’s energy and abilities.

Not all education leads to national development. The hope that larger investment in education will result in economic and social development is too simple. Some forms of education maintain existing conditions and thus slow other efforts toward development. Particularly in the post-colonial nations of West Africa, the first expansions of educational opportunity produced relatively little measurable gain in the quality of life. Until the curriculum of education can be converted from colonial models and elitist academic values to become a functional preparation for participation in new developments, the results are disappointing. One of the most serious mistakes is to expand the wrong type of education. Perhaps more people will be educated, but if what they learn is useless to themselves or to the nation, it is largely a waste.

Early in my career in international work, I believed that one of the great contributions America was making in the post-colonial world was institution-building, and I remember writing several articles in praise of this effort. I pointed out why Americans were so good at getting institutions built and getting them to work. We could come in and build a school, technical institute, or university and in a short time it would be operational and functioning rather well. Soon I realized that institution-building was at the crux of what Americans were doing wrong. We were good at coming in and building institutions that we assumed showed concern for local persons, local needs, and local characteristics. But they were molded and framed around the presuppositions and the paradigms that we were most familiar with. What I didn’t realize, at first, was that as hard as we might try to make institutions more uniquely fitted to local need and local circumstances, the very strategies by which an institution was doing its work were typically shaped around the ideas that we transplanted from our own national experience.

The universities of many nations are vulnerable to criticism. Beginning as instruments of colonial culture, many still continue to represent cultural values far removed from the needs of the nation. As a means of assuring the upper classes a way to keep for themselves and their children a superior status and lifestyle, they function all too well. Most Third World universities are still carbon copies of universities in industrial countries remote from the development problems of their own nations. But it is not enough to be educating many people into high skills and academic proficiency. Such people tend to develop disdain for what they perceive as their own “backward” nation and leave it for greener pastures, anyway. To assume that industrialized “modern” societies are no longer confronted by problems of equality of educational opportunity is incorrect. Access to education, the contribution of education to social welfare, and the socio-economic values of learning are persistent issues in any society. They are never solved, though they may be ignored.

Christians in many parts of the world should undertake to develop graduate schools. Perhaps it might be better to call them graduate research centers. Such institutions or organizations would serve three major purposes. First, to affirm and stimulate in-country scholarship; second, to develop and produce locally meaningful literature for the enhancement of theological education, and in turn for the whole people of God—clergy and laity alike; and third, to constitute and exercise a channel of disciplined prophecy—a mutually disciplining community of people through whom God is able to speak. The form of such an institution would be a community of productive scholarship, a community of sharers, who

mutually prod, evaluate, and encourage. Providing access to current library resources is necessary so that scholarship can be something more than rewarming the old stuff. Criteria for faculty should include service, especially pastoral experience, or at least ministerial service without which a person has no place on a faculty of this sort. Service criteria should include at least one substantial resource or book for the church. Another criterion should be demonstrated competency as a mentor of other disciples. The criteria of 1 Timothy 3 should be rigorously applied, especially concerning such things as gentleness, lacking contentiousness and without conceit. The criteria for evaluating students in such a place would de-emphasize assessment by grade point average. Service would be assessed in terms of demonstrated competency in ministry, demonstrated theological understanding, and a demonstrated commitment to writing for the edification of God's people.

The further development of the church in many places depends on contextualized theological materials. A former Executive Secretary of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization, once said, "Where the messengers of the Gospel have failed to show adequate respect for the customs of those to whom they have gone or made no effort to identify with them in their way of life, the Gospel has achieved only superficial penetration of the people and their culture. And the results have been far from satisfactory. The new believers' faith in Christ has remained stunted, weak, lacking in assurance. One of the key ways that this needed cultural sensitivity is shown is through the local indigenization of literature. And if we keep saying they are not ready yet, they never will be ready." An Executive Secretary of Asia Theological Association identified six issues in Theological Education: lack of students, lack of trained teachers, problems of contextualization, the brain drain problem, need in the Asian church for lay training, and the need for a research center. He argued for the creation of research centers where Asians could come, spend time in reflection and study and produce textbooks and materials that deal with Asian issues and questions, Asian religions, missions, church growth, communication. Jonathon Chao suggested that the "third world theological education establishment should be conducted within the context of the church and the local culture. This means that we should emphasize not only doctrinal aspects of the ministry, but the practical. Not only Biblical context, but the cultural contexts. Not only selective adaptation from the West, but selective adaptation from the living situation in culture. We should not swallow everything that is developed in the West . . . Third world theological educators must help their churches free themselves from continuous dependence on the West for ideas and forms of ministry. This means shaking the foundations and a collapse of existing structures and it's going to cost us a great deal."

The development of students who can function with sensitivity, skill, and insight in the whole world, requires that the Christian university produce, within every experience in the learning environment, that which helps to build perspective: the capacity to see things from another point of view. At an institutional level, one of the reasons why Christian higher education institutions don't get very far with their strategies for multicultural faculty and multicultural curriculum, accommodation of international students, and accommodation of ethnic students from the U.S., is that they typically exclude international representation from committees! The biblical precedent (see Acts 6) is to turn to the minority sector and ask them to help you define the problems and issues. This is the only way an institution will learn perspectivism.

The model of ministry education exported from the West shows that it is built on an administrative structure reflecting Roman and Greek mentality rather than on a functional structure of service as found in the New Testament. The administrative structure depends upon the creation of an elitist group of professional clergy whose authority is invested in administrative status. As a power structure of imperial magnitude it basically reflects the secular model. Clergy armed with sacraments and the rights of interpreting the Word, subjugate if not exploit the laity. In the mission fields, Western missionaries usually enjoy these positions of authority over the national helpers. Many of the mission executives in the West who hold the final word of decision in ideology and administration are not immune from practice of exploitation. Vernon Grounds once said,

I am honestly afraid that American evangelicalism is guilty of idolatry, it is bowing down, if I might borrow a biting phrase from the philosopher William James, bowing down before the bitch goddess of success. As disciples of Jesus Christ too many of us are sinfully concerned about size, the size of sanctuaries, the size of salaries, the size of Sunday Schools, too many of us are sinfully preoccupied with statistics about budgets and buildings and buses and baptisms. Our colleges and seminaries are unwittingly inoculating students with the virus of worldly success. The pride of life is nothing other than the selfish desire to be noticeably superior even if our superiority is nothing more than a conspicuous humility.

Concerns Related to the Graduate Divisions (Professional Schools)
of the Christian University (e.g., nursing, psychology, education, business).

As Christian universities form, graduate divisions will follow. Two major difficulties threaten this development. First, universities that have emerged from a preexisting college and seminary combination will find it difficult to sustain a graduate school and a seminary. Further, the seminary may resist becoming a graduate divinity school division of the larger university. Graduate divisions in the Christian university tend to become institutional orphans. They sometimes have difficulty relating to the broader university and, though there are notable exceptions, they tend to have minimal affiliation with the larger community of specialists in their same field. Orphaned divisions often demonstrate an enclave mentality; that is, there is little yearning for interaction with other divisions⁶.

Conclusion

Christian higher education as exemplified by Bible colleges, Christian liberal arts colleges and theological seminaries, provides few examples of fulfilled Christian values. I once said that “Christian education is neither” in that it is so often antithetical to Christian values and antithetical to education.

⁶Editor’s Note. Ward’s interest in professional education, or the development of the professional, began during his doctoral studies at the University of Florida. Over forty years ago, he was on the faculty at the University of Florida in the field of teacher education. He switched from music education to teacher education to better investigate the issue of how people become professional in their own sight and in the sight of others through training and experience. His work in this area resulted in the now familiar monograph: *The Rail Fence* (See Appendix).

We now face the real possibility that the Christian university is neither. Christian higher education, especially Christian liberal arts education, is often so tradition-bound that few motivations for reform can survive. Concerns about survival and competition for students tends toward market-driven programming: adding courses is the prevailing response to convincing pressure. Academic elitism, the exaltation of power over service, and the uncritical assumption of a liberal arts philosophy increase as Christian universities seek greater credibility in the secular arena. Higher education is often lacking in the gospel values of the kingdom and is often simply indoctrination in the name of education. Christian higher education needs to be more Christian than higher education.

The contemporary transition of various forms of Christian educational institutions to Christian universities offers a rare opportunity for fundamental reform. The Christian university has the opportunity to exalt Christ through celebrations of creation and participation in redemption; to focus on spiritual development without intellectualizing it to excess, or excluding it from the major mission; to fulfill the mission of fostering a Christ-centered world-view; to elevate service above power as a central value of the institution and its participants.

The bad news is that it's sure to be hard. The good news? We've got to try. We need first to approach the task in humility. Convictions to guide the processes of development include:

1. Learning is essentially a social process.
2. Spiritually grounded life skills are the bottom-line for any and all forms of valid education.
3. No formal education is adequately preparational. It cannot do everything. It is at its best in the forming of sustainable habits. *Formal education must be integrated into a comprehensive plan of lifelong learning.*
4. Holism demands an operational conception of spirituality.
5. The faculty is the key. Management is important; physical resources are important; students are important; the constituency is important; but all of these things rise and fall with the quality and vision of the faculty.
6. The faculty's main tools are two: a) the integrity of the curriculum, b) their own lifestyle (broadly defined)—relationships with each other, integrity (wholeness, truth commitment, moral discipline), and habits of inquiry.
7. The right questions are every bit as important as the right answers.
8. Promotional images must follow from institutional ideals, not attempt to lead them.
9. The university makes sense and coheres only as all faculty contribute to the vitality of the basic undergraduate experience. A persistent flaw of the university is faculty who want to "escape upward". The result is abandonment of the undergraduates. The gravest threat to quality education comes as the best faculty drift upward. All contracts should specify modes and forms of expected contribution to the basic education curriculum.

Excellence in education for a Christian is that which enables God to use us more effectively as salt and light. A truly Christian education is one which enables one to stand for Christ wherever one is found. In the process of getting an education we have to do more than simply be in classrooms where we are free to pray, where we are free to read a Bible, where we are free to talk to about God as a creator. In fact, sometimes in those environments we are too free to do those things and so do them cheaply or

at no cost. We are free to do that which the Scripture warns us against and that is to promulgate private interpretations of Scripture, and to insist that people subscribe to those private interpretations. We are free sometimes in this sort of an educational environment to indoctrinate in narrow and sectarian ways rather than blowing open the schemes by which we call ourselves peculiarly different stripes and varieties of Christian. And we are unfortunately free to use social pressure to get conformity rather than to firmly and squarely address the issue of individual responsibility before God. So far, Christian higher education has not come up with a winner.

As the devotional center for your Christian university, come together again and again to respond to our Lord's great prayer of John 17: 2-26 "to let the world know." Everyone must feel the historical importance of this task. Everyone must find satisfaction in the changes. Everyone must bear the burdens and pay the price. Realizing the Christian University – it's sure to be hard. We're at a crucial point. May God motivate us to say with one voice, "Let us start rebuilding."

Appendix

Professional Development and the Rail Fence Metaphor

"What brings people into a true professionalism? How do people develop professionalism, and what is the educational contribution to that task? I was assigned to the teacher education unit as a faculty person and I asked for permission to recruit a group of senior students who would go and live in Jacksonville (Duval County). I went to the Duval School Board and asked if they would absorb and pay some of the expenses of this group of university students that we were going to bring over for a substantial part of their senior year. To that point, almost all teacher education had included a laboratory school experience which entailed some form of a short term practicum or internship in neighborhood schools that surrounded the university. However, we were thus creating teachers who quite commonly didn't know what schools were really like. We took this group of students into Duval County and put them into the schools as auxiliary teachers and worked with them over a long period of time. The program was so successful that one of the state's leading counties, Pinellas County (St. Petersburg and Clearwater) asked if we would do the same thing for their schools.

We had taken the formal educative process and many of the pieces that we would ordinarily teach in classrooms, and moved them to a distance and into a context. I insisted that the people teaching those courses not do it the way they taught on campus, and that, I believe, was the secret. This experience convinced me that it is a serious flaw within Christian higher education is in not making better use of the resources in the society, in the community, in the churches, for significant portions of degree programs. We have discovered, at least within the disciplines that I have watched most closely, that there's a vast difference between graduate students who have had experience in the field, and those

who have not.

Earlier in the century, the Carnegie Foundation sponsored a study, directed by Abraham Flexner, which revolutionized medical education. In the United States as recently as 1904 over half the people trained and certified as physicians had never once during their training touched a live, human body in any therapeutic way. The Flexner Report revolutionized the field of medicine by putting out of business within five years over half of the medical training establishments in the United States—those that did not provide contact and liaison with hospitals and other practicing medical centers which would provide a live, human, hands-on experience for medical students.

The notion that we can excerpt people from the functioning environment in order to prepare them adequately to deal with that environment is one of the real absurdities of professional education in several fields today. Christian higher education must embrace and learn to implement educational models that include formal and nonformal, professional and academic.

In a study for the U.S. Office of Education, I developed a model which is now known as “the split rail” or two-rail fence model. The finest sort of education for the professions (whether in medicine, engineering, architecture, theology or teaching) is education that puts three elements in a good balance and structure. These three elements are: cognitive input, field experience, and interactive seminars. Current curriculum developments reflect three characteristics: a) increasing use of field experiences, b) more variety in methods of providing cognitive learning and c) greater articulation between field experience and cognitive learning through seminars, symposia, and other forms of “sharing” experiences. The image of a two-rail fence provides a useful picture of the three major functions of a curriculum for the education of a professional. The fence has three parts: an upper rail, a lower rail, and fence posts. Each part is labeled in the following manner: the upper rail represents the cognitive input, the lower rail represents field experiences, and the fence posts represent the seminars. The seminars are the linkages between cognitive experience and field experience. This suggests a model of education somewhat different from that which gives people four years of training and then sends them out for six weeks of internship.

The Upper Rail: The Cognitive Input

Although the ability to recall information isn't all there is to education, its importance must not be discounted “Cognitive Input” refers to the learning of the informational knowledge. Cognitive input is basic to competence and excellence. What is cognitive (knowable as information) ranges from simple concrete facts up through abstract concepts and problem-solving strategies. Cognitive input, in a sense, concerns the “things to be learned”; but it would be more useful to think of cognitive input as *the information that can be learned by reading, hearing, or looking*. Cognitive input is provided through a wide variety of instructional modes: through textbooks, assigned readings, lectures, recordings, films, computer assisted instruction, and so on. Unfortunately it is often the cognitive input component that is likely to suffer from a learner's low motivation and from rapid obsolescence of the content. A curriculum that over-emphasizes cognitive input is likely to be characterized by high rates of drop-out (premature withdrawal) and by frequent complaints about irrelevancy.

The Lower Rail: Field Experiences

Recognition of field experiences as part of the curriculum of education for the professions is

clearly a trend. For years in the past, internships, apprenticeships, and similar field experiences were suspect as being inferior substitutes for truly scholarly learning. Some said that learning that could not be committed to the form of print should not be recognized as educationally valid. Today many of the problems in the professions are so new that textbook answers are not available. Books alone cannot provide all that is needed for a timely and substantial curriculum. Getting experience “where the action is” seems to be one useful answer for the demand that education be relevant.

Recognition of the validity of field experiences has also had a remarkable impact on the concept of in-service education (sometimes called “continuing education”, to denote its life-long characteristic). The older, and simpler, practice of transplanting the campus-oriented course to some remote point, lock, stock, and barrel (syllabus, text, and professor) is disappearing. The modern extension and continuing education operations capitalize on the fact that in-service professionals are engaged in experiences, day by day, that constitute a rich source of material for valuable learning. Experiences of the practitioner’s world thus become the sources of further knowledge, the motivation to learn, and the basis for evaluation, reconsideration, and planning. When extension education makes effective use of the field experiences that confront the in-service practitioner, it is a worthy competitor to the more formal and classical forms of education. A problem-centered approach to extension teaching is certainly a great improvement over the “transplanted course” approach.

The Fence Posts: Seminars

If a student is to make a solid connection between the cognitive input and his field experiences, he needs someone to talk to—preferably someone who is learning along with him. Perhaps it isn’t quite a matter of magic, but something exciting happens when learners get together to put into *words* how new information relates to their doing an effective job. If left to chance or individual initiative, new information may never result in appropriate changes in the professional practice, Or, worse yet, it can result in incorrect applications to practice. Misunderstandings in the cognitive realm can result in disasters in the realm of practice. The seminar, as an opportunity for reflecting, evaluating and hypothesizing, can reduce the gaps and the misapplications, resulting in more potent and responsible transfers from “theory” to “practice,” and back again to better theory.

“Seminar” is a word carelessly used to mean whatever its user wants it to mean; but until we find a better word, “seminar” will have to suffice to indicate the less structured experiences that lead to integration of cognitive input and field experiences through sharing and discussion. The hallmarks of a good seminar are the occasions and stimulations to reflect upon and evaluate learnings from both the cognitive input and from the field experiences, with a premium on relating the two. The objectives of a seminar, can usually be expressed in terms of applying principles and concepts to problem-solving tasks. What we were trying to do was to differentiate and relate the theoretical and the practical aspects of learning. Theoretical learning is useful to the degree it relates to the practical. The theoretical allows one to reflect on the practical more intelligently and the practical allows one to test and refine theory.