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A Word
from the Editors

This forty-third issue of Carson-Newman Studies reflects a wide range of ideas held by the faculty, staff, and students, as well as a rich variety of ideas presented by various lecturers. An academic community requires both the development of thought on campus and the infusion of ideas from off campus. This diversity of thinking keeps alive the central mission of the college’s academic program—the consideration, development, and refinement of the life of the mind. The academic community withers without such activity.

The academic year 2003-2004 began with the insights and artistry of the recipient of the 2002 Distinguished Faculty Award, Eric A. Thorson, Professor of Music and conductor extraordinary. His address, printed in this issue, cannot communicate the fullness of his participatory presentation. Readers will have to allow their imagination to be directed by the internal notes supplied.

The lectures presented here by Carolyn D. Blevins, J. Brent Walker, and Stanley Hauerwas unfailingly provide new perspectives. Articles by faculty, staff, and alumni present a broad range of interesting and challenging ideas. This range demonstrates the important work going on in disciplines and individual development by members of this academic community.

We thank all the contributors and invite others of the faculty, staff, and alumni to offer their intellectual efforts in future issues of Carson-Newman Studies. The forty-fourth issue of this academic journal will be better still because of such efforts.

Don H. Olive, Editor

Michael Arrington, Managing Editor
Singing Choral Music Expressively

[2003 Distinguished Faculty Award Address]

Eric A. Thorson

Noted composer, arranger, music critic, and conductor Andre Previn once said: “There are a million things in music I know nothing about. I just want to narrow down that figure” (“As You Remember Them,” *Time-Life Records*, 1972). Indeed, the study of music is complicated and involves many aspects of one’s nature, intellect, emotion, mental focus, and psychomotor skill coordination among others.

Early in the life of Carson-Newman College the discipline of music was recognized as being vital to the training of its students. Carson-Newman’s administrators and teachers placed music in the core curriculum, as other colleges across our land had done. I like what Martin Luther (1483-1546) had to say about music education, and perhaps our founding C-N leaders were aware of this quote as well!

I have always loved music; whosoever has skill in this art is of a good temperament, fitted for all things. We must teach music in schools; a schoolmaster ought to have skill in music, or I would not regard him; neither should we ordain young men as preachers unless they have been well exercised in music (*Table Talk*, 1569).

Music is a part of your college curriculum. Not for entertainment sake, although music can be entertaining, but because there is a perceived value in its study. Music study is at the core of the Liberal Arts experience. Remember, the Andre Previn quote? Time certainly will not allow me to teach or even list those million things, so let’s concentrate on one area of musical understanding with which I am well acquainted; and we will narrow down that figure.

**Singing expressively**

One of those million things of which Andre Previn may be speaking about is the ability to be expressive in music. How does the singer produce music that reflects or creates mood, evokes passion,
focuses worship, or brings laughter? One of my assignments at Carson-Newman College is to take students, young musicians, and help train them to be expressive in the art of music.

Singing choral music expressively requires the understanding and utilization of many musical and nonmusical skills. It is my intention in this presentation to demonstrate some of the ways this is done. To be musically expressive as a singer you will need the following:

1) A complete and thorough knowledge of music fundamentals.
   a) Knowledge of the notes and the ability to produce all pitches accurately.
   b) Correctly interpret all the musical symbols on the page. Example: meter, rhythm, tempo, dynamics.
   c) Perform according to historical stylistic guidelines. Example: Bach needs to sound like Bach not Brahms.
   d) Make the music come alive through the animation of all musical elements. Example: notes are not static; they combine to make melodic statements through musical line—music is always going somewhere or coming back—it is never static. Music is measured time, and is composed of a progression of events, just like one’s life.

2) Receive the vocal training to sing properly.
   a) Develop effective voice production. Example: making the sound-vocal cord vibration.
   b) Develop an effective breathing technique. Example: support-control of the diaphragm.
   c) Display proper vowel placement. Example: tongue, soft palate-resonating chamber.
   d) Produce effective consonant articulation. Example: use of lips, glottis, and tongue.

3) Understand the nuances of language.
   a) Understand text meaning. Example: background of the writer, use of devices including repetition, metaphors, and illustrations of text painting in the music.
   b) Master text pronunciation. Example: language, treatment of consonants and vowels, dialect.
   c) Use proper punctuation inflection and sing the natural stress (accent) inherent in the language.
4) In vocal music, we must connect the text to the music in a way that is illustrative of the emotion or feeling found in both the notes and text. Music with text may be only informational, but its attitude might be satirical, poignant, provocative, illusionary or subversive.

Take these vocal skills and now add the additional challenges of singing in a group. Choral Music singing adds these additional challenges:

1) All previously mentioned skills must be perceived and executed in a homogeneous fashion. This is choral music, the blending and balancing of the sound from multiple voices, which makes this art unique.

2) Interpretation of all non-musical elements must be cohesive and supported by all singers. We must not only know when to get louder or softer, but also why we get louder or softer. Important words for vocal stress or meanings need to be collectively amplified.

3) All singers must not only be aware of their own part and their own voice, but must fit their sound into an agreed upon balance of parts determined by the conductor.

Let’s take some of these components and make expressive choral music. I have recruited some singers from among you, and at this time I will ask my special volunteer choir to come to the platform area.

**********

These are your colleagues who have volunteered. I have not rehearsed them or given them the music ahead of time. However, there are two exceptions. Freda Hart has agreed to serve as my piano accompanist, and senior Elissa Thomas has agreed to play flute. I gave each of them the music ahead of time. There are no music faculty members represented in this volunteer choir. I am not stacking the deck with individuals who have honed their skills over years of serious study, so this will be an honest reflection of my teaching and their skill.

I am using sacred choral music for this demonstration because that is the music I use at Carson-Newman almost exclusively. This is a demonstration and will only scratch the surface of an entire teaching process that might take days, weeks or years.
I invite you to listen carefully and to watch both the singers and their conductor and also the computer-generated screen, which will flash the previously discussed musical goals. This will allow you to check on how we, the choir and I, are doing in our choral music creation.

I will now move to where I am more comfortable, in front of a choir and not behind a lecture podium. There will be moments when I will need to be the choir’s director and then moments when I will address you the audience.

**Choral warm-up**

(To the choir)

Let’s start with breathing first. Hands at your sides now and roll your shoulders. Part of being a good singer is being relaxed enough to sing. Choir, do you see where my hands are on the diaphragm? Listen to this breathing example and watch how high or low my hands rise. The first breath was short and stifled and my hands moved very little. The second breath was deep and relaxed and my hands moved very visibly. This is because I pushed the diaphragm and in doing so breathed through the nose and mouth into the stomach. Now, let’s all try.

Second, we must focus on unifying our vowel placement. Let’s sing an easy “oo.” Widening the mouth produces an “eew” sound, so think long and North/South when shaping the mouth for vowels, not wide and East/West. Now, let’s sing an “ee.” Obviously with that sound we have a slight problem. As Charles Jones would say, that “ee” is not in the same family with that “oo.” Take your hands and draw your hands down like you were pulling an imaginary string on that bottom jaw and again sing an “ee.” That was a wonderful improvement, so let’s try to sing “oh.” Now let’s sing “eh” and “ah.” All together, “oo, ee, oh, eh, ah.” A (C) major chord on the piano please; and we will gradually climb the scale.

As we sing higher, I am noticing that the shoulders in my choir are rising as well! Keep your shoulders down choir and your chins level with the floor. All right, let’s sing “Pie Jesu Domine, Dona eis requiem.” Now that the choir has sung this four times each increasing in pitch, let’s focus a moment on that rolled “r” in requiem. English is the only language where there is a hard “R.” All the rest are flipped or turned. So, let’s flip our “r” a little shall we? Very nice!
There are some nice warm-up ideas and some vowels that we are trying to get uniform. A good warm-up always consists of three things. It warms up the vocal mechanism since it is a muscle, it takes and focuses one’s energy and intellect into the activity of singing, and it works or improves upon a musical technique, as in this case; proper vowel placement and the treatment of the consonant (r). Even the addition of some Latin words helps to put a new technique in their book.

If you monitored the computer screen, you should have perceived that we were building ensemble cohesion, agreed upon concepts of sound, tonal placement, and breath support, in other words, a basic singing technique and understanding.

“Poor Wayfarin’ Stranger”

You are probably familiar with this spiritual but since it is newly published this year, I doubt if any of you are familiar with this arrangement. I would like you to simply sing through the first.

Yes, encouragement and positive reinforcement is very important to a singer and they did a great job! Just as in good teaching, the same principals are evident in conducting an ensemble. The younger the student, the more I become a cheerleader when working with a group. The more intellectually involved the singers are, the more I can be a technician. Just as with age in the classroom, the freshman class is a lot different from the senior class.
Music is organized time. Meter gives the stress patterns in music and text.

(To the choir)

The meter and the movement of this piece have direction, and that is called line. We sang the piece as if it were static. The music must grow. The pulse of a half note will be our starting point, and we will try again. Wonderful! You sang more expressively! Now, let’s try it again and this time don’t lose energy but also take your hands and pull the line out to give it direction. Now that the line has progressed you have improved drastically. If sung static, time does not progress. Now, your audience intuitively would say, “Well, that sounds nice.” But, they would not connect with the text unless the direction is added. This is where the line is very important.

Dynamics add interest

Now, what about dynamics? What does loud and soft have to do with music? This is an example of text introspection. The text expresses humbleness and not pride. So, let’s sing it a little more introspectively this time.

Correct notes and matched vowels add to musical line

(To the audience)

At this point we would fix notes, and listen carefully to our vowel sounds to make sure we are all enhancing the musical line of the music. It might be important for you to know that what I try to do as a conductor is to appear to be as the music. A conductor tries to illustrate through his body and musical beat pattern a reflection of what the music itself is expressing. If the music has long flowing lines, the conductor must show a smooth, long pattern etc.

The expressiveness of words

(To the choir)

Think about the expressiveness of words and how they are enhanced through the composition of music. In the hymn, “O God Our Help in Ages Past,” there is a natural stress to the way those notes and words are arranged. The stress is on the beat, and the “O,” a pick-up note, is not stressed. “O God our help” properly expresses the text and
importance of the words. Try it incorrectly and the meaning and the
text nuance are lost. I can illustrate the natural stresses in words
through my conducting as well, by placing the stressed syllables in a
more focused and stronger physical position within the conducting
pattern.

Text painting: “Joy to the World”

(Demonstration choir sings the first phrase of “Joy to the World.”)

(To the audience)

How do we make a text more dramatic? We can do that
through text painting. As we sang the first line of “Joy to the World,”
do you think that the first phrase of music was composed that way be-
cause the author/composer did not know that much about notes so he
just wrote a scale? No, intrinsically it is more complicated than that.
The text painting used by the composer presents how the original mes-
sage was brought to us. In fact, you could even add that it is theological
in that the good news of Christ’s birth originally came from the angels,
on high, to humans, below. Or, that God, as Christ Jesus, deemed to
come to earth as a human being from a perceived position as God on
high. That maybe why the musical line descends and makes sense to
us. It is worth pointing out in the music because a better understanding
of the text’s expression adds to its meaning. Does that make the first
line of the chorus of the resurrection hymn “Low in the Grave He Lay”
any clearer? (Sung—“Up from the grave He arose.”)

Musical drama through text repetition

(To the choir)

Here is a mundane request and let’s see if we can together
make it more dramatic. This, of course, never happens in my house.
Choir, listen carefully. In a moment I will need your help. . . .

Example: (Thorson speaks)—Chris, clean up your room.
    (Loud)—Chris, clean up your room!
    (Chorus helps)—Chris, clean up your room!
    (Thorson speaks)—Chris, PLEASE clean up your room! Or
finally:
    (Thorson speaks)—Christopher Allan Thorson, Clean up
your room!!

(To the audience)
We have all done this; spelled out something in a new way or added varying emphasis. Rarely does music ever duplicate the same thing in exactly the same way. Music makes its point by changing, thus making the music more dramatic. The text, although possibly repeated, has something that is being amplified to a certain status position within the music in order to make a point.

Musical drama through context

(Sung . . . the first two phrases of “Amazing Grace”)

Now, think about the text one of our most popular hymns “Amazing Grace” which was written by John Newton. Can your understanding and emotional connection to the text be embellished by the knowledge of who wrote it and under what circumstances? Can the conductor and singers bring something to the music, extrinsically, making it live? John Newton, the author of this text was an English seaman in the 1700s, was active in the slave trade. As a young man, Newton had several life-changing experiences that turned his life around.

Newton eventually became arguably one of the most powerful evangelical preachers in British history, a powerful foe of slavery, and the author of hundreds of hymns. Indeed, he suffered through many dangers, toils and snares, which through further investigation might help us interpret his strong feelings. But, that is not the only way we can bring something extrinsically to the text. Can we find a personal connection? Well, I am a sinner and there are things in my life I would do differently. I am undeserving of God’s grace, so, for me in my life, that makes God’s grace amazing.

Lest you think all of our hymns are so thoughtfully transparent, there are some that have come down through the ages with texts married to tunes you would probably agree are not very descriptive of the sentiment. For example, the lilting/skipping/bright/major-key melody found in the opening strains of the hymn “Love Lifted Me” by Howard Smith (1863 -1918) and text by James Rowe (1865 -1933)

(Demonstration choir sings)

Notice the happy melody placed with the dire words in this hymn. Somehow those words just do not fit with the tune. Perhaps only now do you recognize this because you are now musically receptive to the connection between the two. Once that connection is established, you will never be quite so naive about the appropriate wedding of text and melody.
This next selection illustrates a stronger connection between the setting of a music text and the music itself and how your conductor’s interpretation is influenced by that connection. Take for instance:

“*When I Survey*” by Fred Mallory

Fred Mallory’s arrangement of “*When I Survey*” truly represents this sentiment expressed by Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971): “The church knew what the Psalmist knew: Music praises God. Music is well or better able to praise Him than the building of the church and all its decoration; it is the Church’s greatest ornament” (*Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, Igor Stravinsky and Robert Kraft, 1958).

(Demonstration choir sings third verse)

The third verse calls to mind something outside the music and text. The text and music is broken up metrically, it is a halted refrain in a minor key. It might be a generalization, but do you remember when you were a little child and someone, it may have been your music teacher, played something in a minor key and they told you it was sad? After which, something was played in a major key and it was labeled happy. Key does affect us, and the minor key for this verse is important because it places the performer and listener in another frame of mind. This is then amplified by the halting rhythmic pattern of the music and words. It paints the picture of Christ, the progression of events that is halting and painful on the journey to the cross.

“See from His head . . . His Hands . . . His Feet . . .”

The movement of the pianist in a downward motion of the scale magnifies the depth and gravity of the situation as it is hammered home descriptive of the drops of blood.

“Sorrow and love flow mingled down”

It brings the drama out of the text and tune. At the end of the verse the performer and singer depart from the minor key to major and the tempo changes from solemn and slow to hopeful and faster which better illustrates the confidence and assurance of the last verse.

(Demonstration choir sings the transition from verse 3 to 4)

(To the audience)
Please take the envelope found on your table and pass out the music to your friends. In our brief time remaining, we are going to make expressive music together. First, the choir and I alone, and then, after we have rehearsed the entire piece, we will begin again at the start of the piece adding the flute and will ask you in the audience to join in singing the last page.

“Pie Jesu” by Tom Shelton

(To the choir)

This is a piece just published in July 2003, so I am confident no one in this volunteer choir has ever seen it. It is written in Latin so we will all practice the pronunciation together. This is a simple song that is written in ABA rounded binary form. That means that the important things in the A section are not repeated in B, that B is another idea which embellishes or adds to the central idea presented in A, and then it goes back to A which reinforces the initial idea. What does Pie Jesu mean? It is a term of endearment. When used by an individual it represents a personal connection and understanding. Do you think this text is a shout or a prayer? It is a prayer. A humble approach to the Lord is intrinsically expressed in the text and musical treatment.

(Demonstration choir rehearses)

(To the audience)

Music is not something that you only experience vicariously through others. If you do not find a way to express your own musical gifts and only let others do it for you, you will never truly experience the beauty of the music. So, this is why I have encouraged you (the audience) to participate with us on the last page.

(The musical demonstration ends with the audience and demonstration choir singing the anthem “Pie Jesu” by Tom Shelton)

Join me in a closing prayer: “Our God, Our inspiration, make the actions of our lives an expression of joy and thanksgiving for our many blessings. Father, as each of us begins this new school year keep us ever in your care. I thank you for bringing me into the family that is Carson-Newman College and I ask today a special blessing on our retired and new faculty and staff. Impress upon us all the great mission of the college and remind us daily of the responsibility and privilege we have in working with students. Allow our lives to reflect the true ex-
expression of love for one another, which was modeled for us in your Son, Jesus. Now help us, as in the words of St. Augustine, to sing with our voices, and with our hearts, and with all our moral convictions, to sing the new songs, not only with our tongues, but also with our lives. Amen.”

“Sing with your voices, and with your hearts, and with all your moral convictions, sing the new songs, not only with your tongue, but with your life” (St. Augustine (354-430))

References


Amazing Grace, p. 330.
Joy to the World, p. 87.
Love Lifted Me, p. 546.
Low in the Grave He Lay, p. 160.
O God, Our Help in Ages Past, p. 74.


Christianity’s Double Message

[2003 Russell Bradley Jones Lecture]

Carolyn D. Blevins

On Valentine morning of my sophomore year in college I received a valentine from Eddie, a guy I was dating. Later in the morning I received another valentine from Eddie. After lunch a third valentine arrived from Eddie. At mid afternoon I got my fourth valentine from Eddie. That evening Eddie and I went out for dinner and movie. We returned to the dorm, said good night, and I went into the dorm to find in the lobby a box. On the lid was written “To Carolyn, From Eddie, Please share with . . .” and the names of eleven girls on my hall were listed. I took the box to my room, opened it, and there in a heart-shaped Whitman candy box was a beautifully decorated heart-shaped chocolate cake, inscribed with “Be Mine, Eddie.”

Following my instructions, I took the cake from room to room down the hall, but had no takers. By this late hour on Valentine day everyone had OD’d on valentine goodies and wanted not even a crumb of my cake. Only my friend Bobbie was interested, so she and I had a piece and declared it delicious.

The next morning I woke up feeling sick and made a dash for the hall bathroom and discovered Bobbie was already there. She said, “You, too?” and I replied, “What do you mean?” She said, “I have been in here all night.” Quickly we decided we had some kind of bug. I was leaving town in an hour to go to a student government convention so I went by the infirmary and got some medicine as I left. Bobbie remained on campus that weekend and continued to enjoy the cake.

When I returned on Sunday evening, I learned that Bobbie was bedded down in the infirmary. Later that evening, I got a call from her. In whispered tones she told me that the campus dietitian and the campus nurse were saying that Eddie had put something in the cake to make us sick. I was incensed! How could they say something like that about a nice guy like Eddie? Bobbie and I quickly concluded that those two biddies needed something else to do besides make gossip about a fine pre-med student.

The next day as I left my campus job (which by the way was student worker for Dr. Russell Bradley Jones), my roommate met me.
As we walked to the dorm, she spelled out the evidence that indeed Eddie and two of his friends had put a substance in the cake designed to make us sick. WHAT? What a double message! The guy who gave me so much attention and affection on Valentine day was at the same time pulling a dirty prank on me? It was whiplash!

For centuries Christianity has created and perpetuated many double messages. Most of them were not created with the intention of maliciously subjecting Christians to serious whiplashes of the faith. Nevertheless, the result has been confused Christians, some suffering from the reeling effects of whiplash. My topic is Christianity’s Double Message. Specifically, I want to focus on two of the double messages that keep us swinging on the pendulum between opposing images of who we are as men and as women. Men struggle to make sense of the “Sin on the Throne” image, while women attempt to see through the fog of the “Sin on the Pedestal” image.

Think of the confusion that young boys must feel as they are nurtured in the Christian faith. The illegal and immoral behavior of older boys and young men is often excused by even church folk with the comment, “Well, boys will be boys” or “He is just sowing his wild oats.” The message seems to be rather clear: a boy really should not sin but everyone knows he will anyway. Besides in an embarrassing kind of way these side trips into sin prove his manhood in our society. He will eventually grow out of its worst stages. And, if he strays in adulthood, we may be heard saying, “That’s just the way men are.”

Sin and maleness are recognized as a given to be lived with and accepted. Fine Christian fathers have even been known to crack a slight smile of pride when their sons have been caught in some mischief common to males. Behind the parental reprimand lurk some male approval and a sense of “that’s my boy!” Goody-goody boys are viewed as sissies, their masculinity called into question, because they have not violated the rules with some regularity. So to the young boy it seems that Christians should try not to sin; but, if you are male, some sin is expected. You just have to learn how much is enough and how much is too much. It is a terrible predicament for a young man who takes both his Christian faith and his masculinity seriously.

While he is trying to figure out the proper sin level, the same young boy also hears that men are best suited to govern in religious matters because women are for various reasons unfit for those tasks. So, while exploring the proper dosage of sin, he also must remain loyal to the faith and its institutions so that he can know how to govern them. He must become an authority in the faith that he is periodically excused from obeying.

Get the picture? The church folk who insist over coffee on Monday that “boys will be boys and sow their wild oats” are the same
folk who insist on Sunday that men are the unquestioned religious authorities. What does the young boy growing up in the church and the everyday world of church folks make of this double message? What image of a Christian man does he develop? The man is the religious leader, and the man is by nature prone to sin. Sin on the Throne is the confusing image with which he must struggle.

This double message is not a recent development in Christianity. It is not biblical. But the confusion of what Christ’s teaching meant to maleness began early in Christianity. Gnostic Christians had a difficult time reconciling their sexual nature and their spiritual nature. The more they were of one; the less they believed they were of the other. This idea of the opposing sexual and spiritual natures within each person shaped the thinking of many of the early church fathers.

Gregory of Nazianzus described a dream in which two beautiful women tried to persuade him to be a celibate and temperate monk. His struggle with what it meant to be a Christian male led him to quickly explain that the beauty of the women was not the kind that stirred passion. During the succeeding centuries of Christian history, there are numerous accounts of the struggle of religious men to bring into tandem their need to prove themselves male and their need to be religious leader.

Constantine, who legalized Christianity, making it the official religion of his realm, waited until he was on his death bed to accept the yoke of the Christian faith, so that he could get as much forgiveness for his sins as possible. Augustine spent years sowing his wild oats before finally settling down to become a primary influence on Christian doctrine for centuries. Augustine, like others, struggled to reconcile his manhood and Christian doctrine. Aquinas went so far as to excuse Adam’s sin by saying that he took the fruit out of love for and solidarity with his wife. Since Aquinas had such a profound impact on the doctrine of the medieval church, perhaps that is where we get the idea that if a woman lures a man into sin, he is to be partially excused.

That is, however, a pitiful picture of manhood, as I understand it. A man who allows his commitment to God to be undermined by a woman has surely made two strong statements, whether he intended to or not: first, his relationship to God is so weak that it can be sabotaged by a luring person; and, second, that a woman’s power over man is stronger than a man can resist even when it competes with his loyalty to God. The men I know who are serious about their commitment to Christianity do not want their actions to reflect those attitudes. It is tough to be male and Christian. It has been for centuries. The Sin on the Throne image presents man with a double message that sends him into whiplash as he tries to discover the answer to the question, “Who am I as man in Christ?”
Young girls face a similar dilemma as they hear the various voices within Christianity. The young female, too, learns of her sinful nature. Because the first woman invited the first man into sin, the young girl is frequently reminded that women are the cause of sin, are weak when it comes to facing temptation, are inferior, and are therefore unfit for some forms of Christian service. Woman caused sin; she remains a reminder of sin. Blaming the woman has been the theme of many a stirring sermon from Christian pulpits. One preacher carried the theme to perhaps its grandest heights when he declared that Bathsheba was solely responsible for the affair with David for, if she had not bathed on her rooftop, David would not have been tempted!

The tension between sexual and spiritual natures that plagued men during the early years of Christianity also had a lingering impact on women. Several of the church fathers were so convinced of the sinful nature of woman that they taught that the image of God was reflected in the male, and the distorted image, or falling away from the image, was reflected in the female. Influential thinkers such as Jerome and Augustine were confident that the sinful nature of woman limited her usefulness in Christianity.

Aquinas went so far as to insist that because woman was so sinful and inferior, she could not be trusted with the teaching of the child she bore. Medieval nuns were instructed to speak as little as possible, for it was reasoned that, if Eve had not spoken, she would not have fallen. One twelfth-century monk reflected the thinking of a significant portion of Christianity when he declared that there were no good women on earth since all delighted in misdeeds, and hankered after the destruction of men. The church’s teachings about woman’s tendency toward evil reached its peak during the medieval witch trials.

The church has a long history of perpetuating the image of woman as sinful. And again the church has in the process made a statement it probably did not intend to make: that woman has a tremendous power, a power so great that it can destroy men and the church. And that is a pitiful picture not only of woman, but also of man and of the church. So, to the young girl it seems that Christians should try not to sin; but, if you are female, you can’t help it, it is your nature. And that is a wretched predicament for a young woman who takes her faith and her femininity seriously.

While the young girl is trying to discover how she can be a good Christian when she was born so sinful, she also begins to discover Christian women are also expected to be saints. And the church folk as they drink their coffee on Monday will talk about the “nice girls” and how important it is for girls to be good. So, the young girl struggles to be good, as good as the lady in her church who everyone
calls a saint. But how can you be a saint if you have such a sinful nature? The image is a confusing double message.

The saintly model appeals to the young girl at first. Saints provoke little gossip but much admiration. The saint seems to epitomize the essence of the Christian faith. The young girl admires her and models her. Then she discovers that relating to a saint for any length of time is a strain for those of us who are more common packages of humanity. She begins to see that being a saint is not what she thought. She discovers that sainthood removes one from the common flow of living. It puts one on a pedestal, apart from others. And how can she reconcile her sinful nature with the kinds of goodness that would exalt her to being saintly—the goal of all good Christian women? She is getting the double message of the church. She does not know what to make of this Sin on a Pedestal image. How can woman who is so irrevocably sinful, be capable of such exalting sainthood?

This double message serves very well to keep women at a distance from church leadership, from men, and from meaningful relationships. Woman as a sinful creature is not an acceptable companion, colleague, or partner. Sinful woman is instead a burden, threat, and a handicap. Woman on a pedestal is not on a level with others and so cannot relate. She must be treated as a fragile treasure to be admired but not smudged. So, whether the church sees woman as the personification of evil or as capable of great holiness, it is placing her at a distance from genuine fellowship. The confusion of this image leaves the woman in our faith puzzled when she attempts to answer the question, “Who am I as a woman in Christ?”

Two double messages: Sin on the Throne is the image for men. Sin on a Pedestal is the image for women. Whatever their origin, they are not consistent with the biblical message. The biblical message is clear in Genesis 1:27 and 31: “God created humankind in his own image; in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them . . . and God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” Man was created by God, and God said man was very good. Woman was created by God, and God said that woman was very good. Goodness, not sin, was God’s design and image for maleness and femaleness. Both male and female were created as image of God. To be God-like is the antithesis of being sinful.

But intent and results are often poles apart. God intended man and woman in his new creation to be good. But the biblical story from Genesis 3 onward is the tragic story of how far and how often God’s treasured creations turned their backs on their creator. By the time that Paul sent a letter to the Romans, he accurately concluded that “all alike have sinned, and are deprived of the divine splendor. . . .” (Romans 3:23). Man had sinned over and over: sinning had become habitual for
many men. Woman had sinned over and over; sinning was a familiar pattern for her also. For Paul it wasn’t a “boys will be boys” or “woman is sinful by nature” attitude. Paul correctly understood the message of Jesus and the prophets before him. That message is a clear biblical theme. The person who sins is held directly responsible; the blame can be placed nowhere else.

Man cannot blame the lure of sinful woman for his sins. Woman cannot blame a doctrine of woman as evil for her sins. Each man and each woman does sin. How much sinning becomes a pattern in that person’s life is up to that person. Sinful acts are not a result of some sinful nature that excuses man or woman from responsibility for his or her behavior. When church folk teach their youth, even indirectly, that it is the irresistible nature of men to be sinful or the predestined nature of women to be sinful, the church has erred greatly in teaching biblical truths. It also gives its youth convenient excuses for irresponsible behavior and programs adults for a lifetime of excuse-making when it comes to living the demands of the gospel.

The images of the throne and pedestal are also distancing. Those who sit on thrones or stand on pedestals are separate from the people, yet depend on the people to admire and adore them. Those images are not the images of the New Testament church. The churches at Ephesus and Colossae were instructed to submit to one another, forgive one another, and learn from one another. All were sinners on the road to perfection. They were not bound by confining images that restricted their service; they were freed by the gospel to spread the good news unhindered.

The impetus for the explosion of activity within and radiating from the early church was explained by Paul as he attempted to lead the early Christians in doing church based on Jesus’ teaching. Ephesians 2:8-10: “For it is by his grace you are saved, through trusting him; it is not your own doing. It is God’s gift, not a reward for work done. There is nothing for anyone to boast of. For, we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to devote ourselves to the good deeds for which God has designed us.” Paul grasped the essence of the gospel, redemption.

The church needs to teach its young men and young women, and its older men and older women that although they were created in God’s image to be very good, they have all sinned. Yet the good news, the heart of the gospel, is that God’s grace is so abundant that he rescues every sinner who accepts him. Nothing sinful man or woman can do will earn this gift. God showers men and women with grace so that they can still become the good images of him that he created and designed them to be.
A gospel that even indirectly condones boys sowing wild oats is not good news. A gospel that limits how women can serve is not good news. A gospel that locks man and woman into permanent states of sin is no gospel at all, for it fails to recognize that redeeming sinful men and women is precisely what the gospel is all about. The truly good news for young people today is that Christianity and manhood are not opposites; they are the fulfillment of God’s creative purpose. Christianity and womanhood are not incompatible extremes; they are the essence of femininity at its best, as God designed it.

It is time for us to become aware of the confusing double messages we impose on each other. We must become aware of the indirect messages that script our boys and girls, our men and women to behave in ways contrary to the gospel we proclaim. It is time for us to preach the exciting gospel that each of us is by design good, by selfish desire sinful, and by God’s grace saved from a life of permanent sinfulness. It is a message of grace, of hope, of challenge, and of unrealized potential. Let us who are men and women saved by grace claim that message, celebrate it, and live it.
Selling C-N:
The Dynamics of Branding and Marketing Carson-Newman College

Thomas M. Huebner, Jr. and David Z. Nowell

“Stakeholders—faculty, staff, administrators and others—are people who work for and support the institution. Customers are the people who pay the bills . . . It is the job of the organization to serve its customers, and by meeting customer needs, it will gather the resources that will support the needs of the stakeholders as well. However, if the institution is preoccupied with keeping stakeholders happy, it is likely that the needs and interests of the customer will be shortchanged.” (Sevier, 2001, p.111)

Dr. Robert Sevier (2001), the General Manager and Vice President for Research and Marketing at Stamats Communications, makes six frightening observations regarding the changing demographics of higher education:

- The number of students electing to attend full-time residential colleges is decreasing dramatically.
- Only four groups of prospective students represent real growth potential for colleges and universities: students of color, part-time students, commuter students, and adult students. These students will require higher debt loads or greater tuition discounts.
- Strong regional public institutions will have a distinct advantage because of price and name recognition.
- Successful institutions will be those that meet the needs of full and part-time students.
- Institutions that successfully accommodate students interested in internet-based as well as traditional classroom education will thrive.
- Private, residential institutions “must develop stronger name recognition across more markets” and “must more consistently demonstrate value” (p. 3).
“The colleges and universities that will likely win this competitive race” Sevier notes, “are those that have deep pockets and are willing to spend it on financial aid or can entice students because they offer truly unique programs of great value to prospective students [and] are tremendous institutional brands” (p. 2). Carson-Newman College arguably offers a wealth of unique, valuable, and relevant degree programs and our historical reputation as an institution of excellence is unquestioned. To meet the challenges of changing demographics and their accompanying educational needs, however, this institution must consider ways in which it can better market its strengths to prospective students and donors, as well as to our various constituencies. These authors hope to generate discussion regarding our institutional strengths and suggest a direction for how we might focus marketing efforts.

Some of Sevier’s points stand in direct conflict with the course that we as a college have chosen to follow. Because we recognize that our greatest strength is the total package which we provide for students, a major emphasis on part-time students is highly problematic. Additionally, because of our location, we will continue to have only limited access to potential part-time students. In the foreseeable future, Carson-Newman is very unlikely to develop a strong presence in the part-time market.

In the same vein, the very hallmark of a C-N education is the close, personal interaction between faculty and students. Such a pedagogical philosophy necessarily precludes the possibility of internet-based instruction. This is not to say that technology cannot play an important and even central role in teaching methodology. However, technology can never be used to replace student-teacher interaction; its use must be to enhance the communicative ability of our professorate.

We are further limited in our ability to enhance our market share because we are essentially at the limits of tuition discount—and would in fact like to see our discount rate even lower. With this said, it then becomes even more important to address the marketing concerns that do fall within the purview of our control. Specifically, we must “offer truly unique programs of great value to prospective students” and present a “tremendous institutional brand.”

A Disclaimer

A few years ago the two authors of this article were at different Baptist colleges. Both institutions had contracted with the same outside marketing consultant who used the same opening remarks to the officials of each college: “Let me tell you about your college. You are distinctly Christian. Your small class size allows you to give the
kind of personal attention that is the hallmark of your classroom. You have an outstanding pre-med program.” For each institution our response was the same: “That’s exactly right! You just described who we are!” The consultant replied, “You and 150 other colleges who look just like you.”

It was eye-opening because he was absolutely correct. Each of our institutions had staked our claim in our Christian mission and the close personal relationships that were nurtured between faculty and students. The problem was that our distinctiveness was not distinctive at all. In fact, many institutions, public and private, claim to encourage close, personal relationships between faculty and students. There are a large variety of colleges and universities that offer a unique Christian experience; and many large and small, public and private, places of higher learning have outstanding pre-med programs. This is an accurate description of virtually every college with which we compete for students. Carson-Newman College, just like our previous institutions is not focusing on the qualities that make us truly unique.

The Basics

Rob Frankel (2004), branding consultant and the author of The Revenge of Brand X: How to Build a Big Time Brand on the Web or Anywhere Else, offers the following advice in his article Frankel’s laws of big time branding: “If you can’t articulate it, neither can anyone else” (p.1). Any institution, educational or otherwise, must know what purpose it serves and must understand its unique strengths or “selling points.” Sevier (2001) proposes that a good first step is to evaluate the marketability of existing academic programs. To do so he suggests that academic institutions utilize the following analytic tools: Determination of distinctive competencies, estimation of product life cycles, and portfolio analysis or marketing evaluation of your curriculum (p. 85). Of particular note is his discussion of the process of uncovering distinctive competencies. He maintains that a successful institution will discover its unique qualities by asking its constituency five essential questions:

☆ What characteristics make us unique?
☆ When you think of us, what words and phrases come to mind?
☆ How are we different from other (local, regional, national) colleges or universities?
☆ If we were to go out of business tomorrow, what would you miss most?
☆ Why have you elected to support us (attend, give money, etc.) in the past? (p. 86)
The ultimate objective, of course, is to identify those attributes for which prospective students will pay and which potential donors will support. Frankel (2004) refers to that type of branding as “branding in the fourth dimension” whereby your distinctiveness is “memorable, compelling and powerful enough to grab your prospects by the lapels, lift them off the floor and tell them they’d be complete dolts for choosing anyone other than you or what you are selling” (p.2). While we would never think of prospective students and donors as “dolts,” Frankel’s point is well taken. An institution that knows what and why it is and can articulate that identity to a specific market has no trouble finding students and supporters.

There are two corollaries to the notion of identifying distinctive competencies: focus and delivery. Oren Harari’s (1999) book Leapfrogging the Competition: Five Steps to Becoming a Market Leader concludes that for an organization to jump, or leapfrog, the competition, five requirements must be met. While all five are noteworthy, two are of particular importance to identifying institutional distinctives. First, a leapfrogging organization must be one that places importance on the desires of the customer. A college should be looking for ways to identify and embrace the needs of students and donors. Sevier (2000) elaborates on this requirement when he says, “do the right things for your customers and you will not have to worry about revenue” (p. 79). If students have a positive experience at Carson-Newman College, they will communicate that experience to their friends. Second, Harari contends that a successful leapfrogging organization will focus on relationships. People are an important resource. Positive relationships between colleagues create opportunities for collaboration; positive relationships with prospects create students and donors.

The second corollary is delivery. Rhodes, Dea, and Hemerling (1999) of the Boston Consulting Group observe that “making a distinctive brand promise is obviously not enough. Companies must also deliver on it” (p.1). When an institution identifies its unique characteristics to a prospective audience, the institution is, essentially, making a commitment to that audience. Accordingly, the audience will then expect the institution to deliver on that promise. If any organization, particularly a college or university, fails to deliver on a promise, the likely result is a lost or unhappy customer.

An Idea

Sevier (2001) encourages colleges and universities to develop a set of “vivid descriptors—or as some call them, points of pride” that are designed to express an institution’s core values. Our mission and
vision statements give us a reasonable approach. Notice in these statements the terms Christian, Liberal arts, small, service, Appalachian, and global. These terms provide for us the basics for the marketing plan. In identifying the vivid descriptors of Carson-Newman College, it might be useful to think in terms of a pyramid with core values at the base, identifiers in the middle, and attributes at the top.

Two of our foundational characteristics were identified in the disclaimer as being non-unique—but still essential—to Carson-Newman College: We are distinctly Christian and we are small, a core characteristic which enables us to develop nurturing relationships. The third facet of our foundation is our commitment to being a liberal arts-focused institution, and, again, this is not unique to C-N.

At the second level of the pyramid are the identifiers, or the multiple facets of our identity which are built upon the foundation. These are the characteristics which, while they may be shared by other colleges and universities, are distinctive to Carson-Newman because of the way they are combined and the manner in which they are approached. We would suggest there are at least four identifiers. First is our focus on undergraduate teaching and the undergraduate experience. Second is the recognition that service is an integral part of that educational experience. Third is our desire to make global awareness and international learning part of the pedagogical environment for Carson-Newman students. Fourth is the rare and genuine sense of place as realized by our setting in the Appalachian region.

Finally, at the third level are the attributes of Carson-Newman College. Attributes tend to be linked to excellence in programs and, accordingly, could be quite long. Sevier (2001) argues that an institution should identify a small set of truly outstanding academic programs to push more aggressively than others. He calls these programs “tall poles” because they stand above all the others (p. 95). These, Sevier notes, are programs which “already offer substantial quality, are under-subscribed by prospective students, are high margin, are of high interest in the marketplace, [and] have an effective champion in place” (p. 95). We can point to excellence throughout our academic program as well as in co-curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities such as what occurs in the Boyer Lab, Appalachian Outreach, the speech and debate program, and athletics. These programs associated with this institution may be flaunted as “tall poles.”

As illustrated earlier, many colleges make the mistake of focusing only on the foundational issues such as personal relationships and Christian mission and neglect the many ways in which that mission is manifest in the programs of the institution. Any marketing plan for Carson-Newman College must include those things which, in combina-
tion, make learning here a unique, desirable, and marketable experience.

We would suggest a marketing presence that is developed along the lines of the inverted pyramid. The foundational characteristics are not explicitly marketed, but are implicit within all marketing materials. We may not overtly tout that we are Christian in a “come to Carson-Newman because it is a Christian college” approach, but a “faith presence” should undergird every marketing piece. Likewise, the fact that we are small with a focus on the liberal arts may not be trumpeted as unique to the institution but indeed will serve as a filter through which the whole of the C-N program will be viewed.

Our marketing design and emphasis will instead be on our identifiers, those things which set us apart from the similar institutions with whom we compete for students and support. These identifiers will provide the effectual branding of our institution. For example, our emphasis on undergraduate instruction and teaching excellence, if properly marketed, should lead us to a place where, when people hear of Carson-Newman, they automatically think “Carson-Newman College—that is the place where they teach.” Likewise, the same type of statement would be true for our commitment to service to Appalachia, and to global learning. When students, donors, and potential faculty members who value these same identifiers look for an institution who shares their values, they should think of C-N. We will then meet Sevier’s criteria of successful colleges in that we offer “unique programs with great value,” and have “tremendous institutional branding.”

Effective branding, however, means more than just good public relations material; it also means an institution-wide commitment to provide resources for these identifiers and to do these identifiers well. Thus, it is requisite that the college community enters into an ongoing conversation about exactly what our identifiers are, how they can be developed to the highest possible level, and how we might go about bringing them brand recognition.

Finally, we will market our attributes to very specific constituencies; our pre-med program to pre-med students, forensic program to prospective debaters, choral music program to high school choirs, etc. Even within the context of the specific marketing of attributes, however, branding which successfully utilizes our identifiers with permeate all we do. For example, good nursing programs abound in Christian liberal arts colleges, but at C-N an excellent nursing program exists within the context of a college that has an emphasis on teaching, service, global awareness, and a genuine sense of place. It is not excellence in a Christian liberal arts context that sets our nursing program apart; rather it is excellence in a Christian liberal arts setting at a college that values teaching, service, global awareness, and a genuine
sense of place. It is the context of the excellence that sets C-N apart, and will become a much stronger selling point than the excellence alone.

Such an approach would allow C-N genuinely to carve a unique market niche by securing brand recognition. In so doing, we position the institution to reach the students and the supporters that will allow us to claim our vision to become “a premier Christian liberal arts college with a worldwide impact.”

Conclusion

In these initial years of the 21st century, colleges and universities are faced with new challenges. Greater competition for fewer traditional residential students forces virtually every institution to re-examine what they do as well as how they do it. Carson-Newman College is no exception. Additionally, for a college to stay viable in the changing market of higher education, it must be able to identify and articulate its uniqueness while keeping in mind the necessity of embracing the needs of its customers as well as underlining the importance of internal and external relationships.

With these concepts in mind, we have proposed one way of looking at the marketing distinctives of Carson-Newman College. We have suggested that the three foundational basics of Christianity, nurturing relationships, and liberal arts focus underscore each program of the institution. Built upon this foundation are the identifying characteristics of undergraduate focus, service, global awareness, and sense of place in southern Appalachia. Finally, we can sell our attributes, or the specific programs-of-excellence that make our institution attractive to our constituents.

Ultimately, this paper is designed to initiate a campus-wide discussion about our distinctive competencies. Such a discussion, coupled with the valuable re-assessment of our core curriculum, will surely be a valuable step in the furtherance of an outstanding, unique, and significant academic institution.

References


Abstract of

Faith, Reason, and Intellectualism: The Spiritual Community of Nursing Education

Patty Kraft and Barbara Hulsman

Historically, nursing education has been linked to religion and spirituality, often associated with denominational church affiliations. The educational trends today favor the movement of nursing and nursing education into medical centers and large academic institutions, respectively. This movement has served to move nursing into a more scholarly light and intellectual environment, facilitating the growth of nursing as a profession. However, during this shift, the totality of the holistic being has been replaced with compartmentalization and technology.

Nursing still views the person as a holistic being. The person’s spirituality, faith, and Christian tradition, as part of the holistic being, are key intellectual concepts addressed from a Christian educational perspective. The struggle exists in the integration of scholarly reasoning, faith-based values, and Christian theological reflection. There is a place for spirituality and intellectual excellence within the community of nursing education.

This presentation will explore definitions of spiritual caring, spirituality, religion, and faith within the context of nursing and nursing higher education. The role of faith in nursing theory, nursing curriculum, and nursing education will be discussed. Lastly, the struggle of living faith in nursing while participating in the intellectual and academic realms will be discussed. Areas of nursing that will be addressed are encouragement and coping, dealing with chronic illness, end of life practices, ethics, and medical missions.

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Roadblock to Peace in the Middle East:  
The Role of Christian Zionists

Earl R. Martin

The Middle East is still burning. Three years ago I tried to delineate the Catch-22 situation in my article, *Crisis in the Middle East: Interreligious Dilemma* that appeared in *Carson-Newman Studies*, Fall 2001. Written four months before the tragic 9-11 catastrophe, it established some of the inflammatory issues inherent in the Israeli-Palestinian conflagration. Most of the issues continue to blaze even though the global context has changed. The interreligious quandary persists.

Developments in the Middle East during the three-year interim call for a renewed examination of the skewed direction of the interreligious dilemma. An upsurge of activity by the American Christian Right presents a formidable deterrent to the peace process. Christian zealots by their strong advocacy for the cause of Jewish Messianic Zionists conspire together to set an obstacle to the cessation of hostilities and to the realization of a separate Palestinian state. It interposes a veritable “roadblock” on President Bush’s “roadmap” to peace in the Middle East (Gorenberg 229).

The Changing Context

In 2001, I characterized the situation as *Undeclared War: Conflict and Cease-fire*. It has since escalated into an accelerated series of suicide bomb attacks by Palestinian terrorists against Israelis – both military personnel and civilians. The attacks call forth endless reprisals by the Israeli military. There are unceasing deadly assaults on Palestinian civilians, massive demolition of Palestinian homes as well as assassinations of terrorists and their principal leaders. Israel uses tanks, helicopter gun ships and bulldozers to execute its violent occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Most of the atrocious killings by Palestinians are attributed to the radical Palestinian resistance organization, Hamas. On March 22, 2004, the Israeli assassination of the Hamas founder and leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, exacerbated hostilities to the unequivocal status of war-
fare (Prusher and Lynfield). His successor, Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi said on the occasion of Yassin’s funeral, “The battle is open and war between us and them is open (BBC NEWS ONLINE). In short order Mr. Rantissi was summarily killed by the Israeli military. The escalation of violence continues.

During the early part of 2004, there had been discreet conversations between Palestinian and Israeli leaders in search of a way to end the spiraling violence and to jump-start the peace process. The assassinations came at a time when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared his plan to disengage the occupation of the Gaza strip and to pull out Israeli settlements from the area. Although it enjoyed the tacit support of the Bush administration, Sharon’s own party, the Likud, has voted it down. Nevertheless, the withdrawal has gained wide popular support of Israelis. It continues to be an option.

Reactivation of the peace process comes at a time when Palestinian leadership is in dangerous disarray. Support for the administration of Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, has seriously eroded. His image has also been damaged. Rivalries within the movement have impeded his popularity and his authority (“Palestine: Who’s in charge?”). Ironically one may wonder that the assassination of Hamas leaders has given a fresh boost to its radical element especially among Palestinian youths. It makes recruitment of suicide bombers that much easier.

The plight of the masses of Palestinians intensifies. Israel’s construction of a concrete wall to shield itself from the Palestinian terrorist attempts envelops certain areas that according to the 1993-2000 Oslo Accords belong to Palestine. It also severely restricts the crossing of Palestinian workers, business personnel and goods to and fro between the two territories. The wall enormously increases the hardships of normal life for Palestinians. It makes for widespread unrest that coalesces with the furor brought about by the assassinations.

At this writing the viability of a lasting peace settlement is in grave doubt (Prusher and Lynfield). Most of the world yearns for genuine peace in the Middle East. The yearning includes the prospect of a full-fledged independent Palestinian state coexisting alongside Israel according to the earlier “road map” to peace proposed by the Bush administration and endorsed by European leaders. A serious engagement in the peace process by the current American administration before the 2004 presidential election is highly unlikely.
Jerusalem: A Triad of Apocalyptic Expectations

The city of Jerusalem is of vital significance for several reasons. The rival claims of Israelis and Palestinians to locate their respective state capitals in the city are a case in point. Moreover, the city is of crucial importance because of the religious expectations of the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. For each religion there are sacred sites within the precincts of Jerusalem that are held in absolute reverence.

For Jews the Temple Mount is the sacred ground on which Solomon built the original temple. The Western “Wailing Wall,” the only remaining portion of the Second Temple, is most hallowed. Tradition suggests that it was the locus of the beginning of creation, the very center of the world. It’s held to be the exact place where Abraham was tested to sacrifice Isaac. It is the location on which the third temple should be built according to the messianic expectation of Jewish Orthodoxy. This hope is reflected in the fervent prayers by the faithful at the Wall.

Jerusalem has been the place of holy pilgrimage for Christians through the centuries. It has been sanctified by gospel accounts of events from the life of Jesus. It was the setting for the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Jerusalem became the destination of successive medieval crusades, when popes spurred Christian armies onward to conquer the Muslim hordes and reclaim the holy city for Christendom.

Muslims regard Jerusalem to be the third holiest site after Mecca and Medina. Tradition locates The Temple Mount, the “Haram as-Sharif,” as the site from which Muhammad was transported mysteriously upward to heaven for a revelatory experience with Allah. The seventh century Dome of the Rock with its shining golden dome is central to the Temple Mount. Within its walls is the revered massive stratum of rock that is held to have been Muhammad’s launching pad for his ascent. The Al Aqsa Mosque on the South end of the Temple Mount is likewise venerated as a holy sanctuary (Gorenberg 70-72).

Jerusalem figures dramatically in the end-time scenarios of all three religions. In Jewish anticipation the Messiah will appear to gather the diaspora to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. His worldwide rule will usher in an era of unprecedented universal love, peace and justice. All humanity will acknowledge the God of Israel as the only true God. All peoples will serve him in righteousness and will turn in gratitude toward Zion, the mountain of the Lord.

Some—**but not all**—evangelical Christians espouse a premillennial eschatology that centers on Jerusalem as the essential scene of a
series of sensational events related to the second coming of Jesus. A particular variety of premillennialism teaches that the fulfillment of biblical prophesy occurs in a progression of divine dispensations, whereby human history is divided into distinct periods. The dispensational interpretation enjoys wide acceptance from the writings of certain evangelical authors. Its immense popularity was launched by Hal Lindsey’s *The Late Great Planet Earth* and has sky-rocketed with the *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. The crucial focus is on the rapture of faithful believers to be caught up with Christ upon his sensational return on the site in Jerusalem from which he had ascended (Gorenberg 31-34).

The apocalyptic vision anticipates first the return of the Jews to the land of Israel, then the establishment of a Jewish state and finally the building of the third temple. Current perception of dispensational evangelicals maintains that all that remains is the building of the temple. When that becomes a reality, the time will be ripe for Jesus’ return. Therefore, the rebuilding of the temple is regarded as an event indispensable to Christ’s return. There are those who want to speed his second coming through active support for the temple’s rebuilding.

Muslims anticipate a spectacular end time scenario that somewhat mirrors the messianic expectations of both Jews and Christians. It is so written in certain traditions of the prophet Muhammad. Jerusalem is central to the drama. Among some of the signals heralding the day of judgment are: increase in immorality, escalation of warfare, the sun will rise in the West, and a false Jewish messiah will appear to conquer the world. The prophet Jesus will return from heaven to lead an army that will defeat the false messiah in a battle near Jerusalem. Islam will be restored as the only true faith. All the dead will rise to judgment in the valley of Jehosofat east of the city toward the Mount of Olives (Gorenberg 44). Faithful Muslims will be delivered to heaven and all infidels sent to their punishment in hell.

Enter Christian Zionists

The varied messianic expectations of the three religions complicate the current struggle for peace in the Middle East. The earnest collaboration of American Christian Zionists with Orthodox Jewish Zionists is a significant deterrent to peace. Bob Abeshouse asserts they are in complete accord in their contention that “all Palestine belongs to Israel” . . .

Christian Friends of Israel is an active alliance between Christian Zionists and settlers in the West Bank – there has arisen an ironical kinship between Christian evangelicals and Jewish
Zionists—the latter have an end time vision far different from that of the Christian Zionists—for some Jews the expectation awaits the appearance of the Messiah other than Jesus.

"The group," Abeshouse continues, “encourages American congregations to adopt a Jewish settlement to render support and moral encouragement. More than fifty American churches have entered the adoption program” (“God and Politics in the Holy Land”).

Leslie C. Allen and Glen Stassen maintain, “Most Zionists claim that God’s eternal covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 12, 15) means that Israel must have undivided political sovereignty over all of the land mentioned there, which stretches from the Nile in Egypt to the Euphrates in what is now Iraq” (par. 7). Christian Zionists concur entirely with Jewish Zionists in this respect. Janet Parshall, an active voice for Christian Zionism, made the strident assertion, God didn’t wake up one morning and say, “I’ve changed my mind and I’ve now decided the land no longer belongs to the chosen people.” If we get that directive from God, then my politics will change. Until then my politics are in line with God’s politics—which is—this is a God who keeps his covenant to the everlasting. He kept his covenant to his chosen people and it will be that way until Messiah comes again (“God and Politics in the Holy Land”).

In autumn 2002 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon spoke to a mass rally of Christian fundamentalists with the words, “Coming here, I heard many people say, ‘We love you, we love Israel.’ I tell you now—we love YOU. . . . You did not come here as ordinary tourists; you came because your souls and your hearts brought you here. And when you come here you don’t need a ‘guide book.’ You have a guide book. . . . the Bible in your hands.” The response of many Christian Zionists was in full support of Sharon calling on him to finish “the job” and “annihilate” Yasir Arafat (Wagner, paragraph 22).

The significant influence of the Christian Right in American politics is unequivocal. In the 2000 election the Bush-Cheney ticket enjoyed overwhelming support from conservative Christians. “Evangelical voters make up close to half of President Bush’s political base” (“God and Politics in the Holy Land”). The current Bush campaign is seeking to garner an even higher volume of votes (Riechmann A11).

In the pre-election months President Bush has been silent about his prior 2002 commitment to a separate Palestinian State. Some critics perceive it as his way of deferring to the Christian Right. The
voices are clear: “Christian evangelical leaders from Pat Robertson to Moral Majority co-founder, Ed McAteer, have as much as warned President Bush not to pursue any Middle East settlement which would create a Palestinian State on the West Bank” (“God and Politics in the Holy Land”).

Christian Zionists cling dogmatically to the end-time program of the Second Coming of Christ that includes the rapture of faithful believers in Jerusalem where the rebuilt temple is in place. It is a scheme that disallows any peace plan that would dislodge Jewish settlements. Not all Christians espouse such a prospect. Abehouse cites the opinion of the Lutheran Bishop of Jerusalem, Dr. Munib Younan, who is himself a Palestinian refugee.

The churchman refutes the expectation of Christian Zionists declaring it to be based on false theology. (“God and Politics in the Holy Land”). Ayelish McGarvey quotes President Jimmy Carter as saying: “That’s [Christian Zionists’ end-time scheme] a completely foolish and erroneous interpretation of the Scriptures. And it has resulted in these last few years with a terrible, very costly, and bloody deterioration in the relationship between Israel and its neighbors.” Most Roman Catholics, mainline Christians and many evangelicals in America disavow the theological and political agenda of Christian Zionism.

Nevertheless, the sacred precincts of Jerusalem continue to pose a crucial threat to the prospects of peace. It has the potential for igniting a larger conflict. Gershom Gorenberg suggests: “The Temple Mount is potentially a detonator of full-scale war, and a few people trying to rush the End could set it off” (15). Toward the end of his book he writes:

The Temple Mount beckons seductively to believers eager to restart redemption. For Christian millennialists and Jewish messianists alike, the Mount represents the prophetic denouement that is maddeningly close and out of reach. The physical place and, most of all, the glowing dome at its center have taken the role of the roadblock to human salvation (Gorenberg 229).

Peace loving peoples from around the globe yearn for just and courageous negotiations that ignore the fallacious counsels of religious extremists. To be sure the Christian roadblock is only one of many obstacles to a Middle East solution. It is one barrier that must be overcome to clear the way toward genuine reconciliation, a viable two-state coexistence and durable peace.
Works Cited


Stephen L. Fisher:  
Radical Academic, Place-based Educator,  
and Winner of the 2003-04 Award for  
Educational Service to Appalachia  

Guy L. Osborne  

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to introduce Stephen L. (Steve) Fisher as the 2003-2004 winner of our annual Award for Educational Service to Appalachia.

I have known Steve for about fifteen years. We met and roomed together at what was to be the last meeting of Appalachian Alliance, one of the many collaborative efforts Steve has been a part of since coming to southwest Virginia to teach thirty-three years ago. In the mid-1990s Steve and I began to work together as members of a faculty Steering Committee on Service Learning pulled together by the Appalachian College Association. That steering committee eventually evolved into JustConnections,¹ the college-community partnership that has sponsored many faculty development workshops, student internships, and research collaborations with community groups for around eight years or so. I know Steve primarily in the context of JustConnections. I have had the pleasure of sharing conversation with him long into the night after board meetings, conferences, and workshops. I consider myself a student of Steve’s, as well as one of his friends and colleagues.

Early on, JustConnections settled on a shared vision for service learning in Appalachia—that it must be pursued in equal partnership with the communities we purport to serve. In this vision, community people learn to think of themselves as teachers; and faculty and students learn to think of ourselves as dwellers on the land and citizens of a place with ties that bind. And the nature of the work is not charity that perpetuates patterns of dominance and dependency but rather emancipatory, social change. I believe part of our recognition of Steve Fisher is also recognition of JustConnections, because Steve’s way of teaching and his commitments and values are so much a part of its unique approach.

Steve is a native of West Virginia. He is married to Nancy Garrett, a very fine artist who works out of Abingdon, who by the way had
some of her amazing weavings featured in an exhibit here at the Appalachian Center several years ago.

Growing up, Steve’s father worked for the Union Carbide plant and held an insurance job on the side. Steve has written about his father’s severely critical approach to parenting and ambivalence about his son going off to college. That relationship, plus Steve’s early working class background that got him beaten up and shunned from time to time at school, provided him with experiences that have proven to be a rich source of insight for a teacher working with the sons and daughters of Appalachia in the mostly middle-class ivory towers of academe. His class consciousness and class anger have served as catalysts to expanded ways of knowing in his field of political science, reminding him how power works and consciousness is structured across the varied realms of human social behavior.

Today, Steve remains in touch with that deep pool of class anger, but he is not only that. An extended interview with him in *Appalachian Journal* in 1999 was entitled “Anger and hope in nearly equal measure.” His students and junior colleagues, in particular, know him as one who embodies hope, humor, encouragement, and nurturance. In psychology we sometimes call this kind of thing, “the wounded healer.”

Steve’s positive persona shows in his teaching. Rather than constantly filling the air with what Paulo Freire calls teacher talk, for example, he encourages students to find their voice, analyze their experiences, and learn to tell their stories. His classes are not sessions for therapy or chatty gossip but space for education as the practice of freedom.

Steve found a way to go to college at Wake Forest, where he now admits he rushed a fraternity and learned how to come out his shell and talk with people. He did his graduate work at Tulane and ended up studying West German politics. He did his dissertation research in Germany on a Fulbright, but most significantly began to read widely on his own. Two of the works he remembers as rattling his worldview at the time were Alex Haley’s *Autobiography of Malcolm X* and especially, *American Power and the New Mandarins* by Noam Chomsky.

After Tulane, Steve hired on for his first and only academic appointment, at Emory & Henry College, a fine Methodist school just north of Abingdon. Much to his surprise, at Emory & Henry Steve found his education was not over but only just beginning. There he encountered the region’s rich store of progressive scholars, activists, movements for social change, and writings that had somehow never been mentioned in graduate school—that taught him a people’s history of the region, of his region—and beyond this region, and how it’s all inter-related. He learned new ways of teaching, and new ways of think-
ing about what it means to work at a church-related, liberal arts college within this fascinating and schizoid region—of bounteous natural resources and environmental calamity, of rich opportunities for community-based entrepreneurship and shameless corporate greed, of a people with deep and abiding ties to the land and people who blight the land without seeing, of profound cultural memory in the form of story and song and deep wounds of structural violence, of heroic grassroots resistance and a people grown weary of fighting back.

I imagine Steve has asked the question, How then shall I teach? a thousand times. He has spent over 30 years developing his answer—observable today as a passion for highly interactive and autobiographical class discussion, critical reading of diverse voices, and action in the form of placed-based education, community-based research, service learning for social justice.

Now Steve is completing his thirty-third year of full time teaching at Emory & Henry. He is Hawthorne Professor of Political Science, and directs the Appalachian Center and the college’s program in Public Policy & Community Service.

As a scholar, Steve’s legacy is assured in a full and important body of work. He has written widely cited articles, book chapters, and reviews; edited influential books and journal volumes; pulled together integrative bibliographies; and presented conference papers, and served on panels, too numerous to mention. As a scholar, he is perhaps best known for editing Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change published by Temple University Press, which I used with great success when I taught the psychology of organizational behavior course last spring. Steve is a regular contributor to Appalachian Journal, including an excellent, recent article describing his approach to teaching, “Making hope practical and despair unconvincing.” Some thoughts on transformational education.

One very important dimension of Steve’s scholarship has been the way he has insightfully connected events and processes of Appalachia with those of the wider world, such as his essay, “National economic renewal programs and their implications for economic development in Appalachia and the South,” in Communities in Economic Crisis edited by John Gaventa and others. Other examples of this kind of ecological scholarship include “The Nicaraguan revolution and the U.S. response: Lessons for Appalachia” and “Land reform and Appalachia: Lessons from the Third World” that appeared in Appalachian Journal. His book chapter on “The dispossessed of the Earth: Land reform and economic development” was published in Barbara Wein’s Peace and World Order Studies by the World Policy Institute.

One of Steve’s more unique contributions has been his role as the most prolific and helpful bibliographer in Appalachian studies. His
documentations of research, theory, and opinion in the field can be accessed in *Appalachian Journal*;\(^{10}\) in the book *Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present* edited by Ergood and Kuhre;\(^{11}\) in his own volume, *Fighting Back*; and in the Appalachian Regional Commission’s study, *Land Ownership Patterns*, published by the University of Kentucky Press as *Who Owns Appalachia*?\(^{12}\) His review essay of John Gaventa’s seminal work on “Power and Powerlessness in Appalachia.”\(^{13}\) is considered one of the must-read classics in any Introduction to Appalachian Studies course.

It would be hard to overstate Steve’s influence on the field of Appalachian Studies. He served as program chair for the very first Appalachian Studies conference at Berea College in 1978; has been vice-president and president of the Appalachian Studies Association; helped co-found JustConnections; is on the board of Appalachian Coalition for Just and Sustainable Communities and Appalachian Community Fund; was co-founder, president, and columnist for *The Plow*; and serves on the editorial board of both *Appalachian Journal* and the *Journal of Appalachian Studies*.

Steve and Nancy live in a unique and beautiful home of wood and stone they designed and built within walking distance of the Emory & Henry campus. Steve is active in his community as member and vice-chair of the Washington County, Virginia, Planning Commission and in the varied work of the Appalachian Peace & Justice Center. For fun he listens to music, may rival the Smithsonian for sheer number of volumes in his own compact disk collection, and (so I have heard) has been known to go a little bit nuts when Emmylou Harris appears in concert in Knoxville.

The award we are giving Steve tonight is not his first. In the past Steve has received, among others, the Cratis Williams Service Award of the Appalachian Studies Association; the Virginia Council of Higher Education Outstanding Faculty Award; the James Still Award for Exceptional Teaching by the University of Kentucky; the Carnegie Foundation Outstanding Baccalaureate Liberal Arts College Professor of the Year award; and, perhaps most noteworthy, the Excellence in Teaching Award at Emory & Henry (twice).

Over the years Steve has had enticing offers to teach elsewhere. The fact he has decided to stay at Emory & Henry, to grow where he was planted, is an important case study for those of us who do our work at small, church-related, liberal arts colleges in Appalachia, a region some academics in the U. S. would consider the minor leagues, the intellectual backwaters of American higher education. As Steve Fisher demonstrates, it ain’t necessarily so!

Listen carefully to Steve’s story. He knows what it is like to feel alienated, isolated, and marginalized. Anger has been a guest in his
house. But it did not nest there. Steve has found a way to grow as a teacher, be productive as a scholar and innovative as a program director; all the while perfecting his craft as a social scientist, albeit, an unconventional one. And he has done it here in Appalachia, at a small school with a dual heritage in the church and the liberal arts.

But be forewarned: Steve will not describe a low-risk journey of the genteel thinker or detached observer, seeking refuge within an enclave of agreeable, like-minded liberals. His working class background wouldn’t let him. He certainly will not describe a journey to job security within a sectarian bureaucracy. What could be more boring? I see Steve’s journey as a quest for wholeness, to define himself as scholar/teacher/citizen/human being; a journey not to individual fame and fortune but to a collectively better place. It’s a quest for human connection, for justice, peace, democracy, saving the Earth—all pursued though the work of teaching, all in collaboration with others and in the context of place.

Such work can naturally lead to essential questions—how to know oneself; who is my neighbor; what constitutes the good life and the good society; what am I here to do? What is truth, beauty, goodness? I don’t expect he will say placed-based education equates to the full enterprise of liberal learning or the liberal arts college. But it does offer a powerful co-curriculum for liberal learning; a way to effectively balance the elitism and status quo bias of higher education; a great companion for the Great Books and the Great Thoughts and the critical reflection needed to understand it all.

Steve calls himself a radical educator. I call him one of the best teachers and faculty role models to be found in higher education anywhere: Stephen L. Fisher.

Notes

1. The JustConnections website contains much helpful information on place-based education, education for social change, and pedagogical approaches to teaching that incorporate community-based research and service-learning; see http://www.justconnections.org/.


Christian Higher Education with Integrity

John W. Wells

In recent years there has been a spate of books and articles dealing with the question of Christian higher education. Generally, the topics discussed have included possible strategies for historically Christian colleges to continue to serve both of their putative roles—providing a liberal arts education while nurturing the spiritual lives of students. Often overlooked in the discussion is the need to establish a firm theoretical justification for Christian liberal arts.

The purpose of this article is to offer just such a justification. The article will begin by arguing that the academic community is actually enriched by the presence of Christian institutions of higher learning. This is not to say, however, that such institutions are not unproblematic. There are genuine points of tension that exist between a confessional mission and the liberal arts. These obstacles will be examined. The paper will conclude with the contention that Christian liberal arts institutions are especially important because they possess the resources to justify the liberal arts project, resources sorely lacking in more secular models.

I. The Need for Christian Liberal Arts

Both the church and the academic community benefit from the vital dialogue between faith and learning. To begin with, the church stands in need of the specific kind of education that Christian liberal arts institutions provide. As John Stuart Mill pointed out in *On Liberty*, when we fail to subject our positions to rational critique, our long-term commitments become weaker and more dogmatic. In other words, when the church refuses to submit its positions to discussion, the result is stagnation and ultimately decline. Christian liberal arts institutions, coming from a confessional position, offer the church's best hope of staging an authentic interrogation of the rational elements of the faith, and they thereby help to secure the church a place in the ongoing public conversation.
If the church fails to enter the national dialogue, then the result will be a necessarily secular public square. From many standpoints, not the least of which is the vantage of democratic pluralism, such a monistic public discourse impoverishes American democracy. Christian liberal arts institutions provide the only real hope of securing effective Christian voices for the discourse, especially in light of the increasingly narrow focus of contemporary secular universities.

As the economy has become more complex and the division of labor more precise, specialization has become the key element of much of higher education. While such an education renders quality workers for the modern economy, it often miserably fails to produce the kinds of critical thinkers needed by both the church and democratic culture.

The more holistic Christian liberal arts approach goes far beyond the myopic goal of generating skilled workers. The recognition that the human soul is not reducible to *homo economicus* is vital if the humanistic goals of the Renaissance, which overlap considerably with the view of Man expressed in much Christian theology, are to prevail.

A second reason why a Christian approach to liberal arts is so important is the cultural prevalence of the nihilistic impulse of postmodernism. A Christian approach to liberal arts helps to confront the ironically dogmatic insistence of post-modernists that reality does not reflect any essential categories and is, in fact, the sole product of human artifice.

Such a position fatally undermines the traditional approach to education in that it denies the possibility that intelligent conversation and rigorous investigation produce *T/truth*, only "truth." While it is unnecessary to claim for Christianity a monopoly on truth, the mere presence of the belief that truth exists, even if it ultimately escapes beyond the horizon of human cognizance, is nevertheless refreshing in a world that is now described as nothing more than a series of floating texts.

For the purposes of ensuring a vibrant church, as well as the need to rescue the academic discourse from its current impasse, a Christian approach to liberal arts is needed. And, yet, the presence of such an approach is not without controversy or tension. Even so, such obstacles are not necessarily fatal to the search for Christian liberal arts with integrity.

**II. Obstacles to Christian Liberal Arts**

To be sure, the relationship between confessional faith and open-ended learning is not free of tension. In fact, the standard argument made by secularists is that the tension is so great as to provide
little or no common ground from which true dialogue might emerge.⁴ According to this narrative, formerly religious colleges and universities found no other option but to interrupt their denominational and sectarian support if they wanted to truly move ahead into academic respectability. Institutions such as Harvard, Princeton, Emory, Duke, the University of Chicago, Brown, etc. are all routinely cited as examples of emancipated institutions now able to investigate the world free from the stultifying effects of religious dogma.⁵

Without surrendering to the secular argument, it is fair to say that the point is not without merit. Dedicated Christian devotion does rest on the idea of a recoverable truth. Religious positions that come to readily equate their particular creedal positions as synonymous with that truth have the very real potential of being unfriendly toward open intellectual inquiry. Their fears are reminiscent of Giambattista Vico who observed that societies tend to fall into chaos and decline when the foundations of their social order, grounded on the heretofore unquestionable tenants of revealed religion, become objects of detached scholarly investigation.⁶ Vico’s fear of the societal fallout from open-ended inquiry presaged the apparent fear on the part of some in the Christian community that sustained investigation and criticism may undermine the church’s position.

In Genesis one is confronted with the initial textual basis of the Christian reluctance to subject otherwise sacred doctrines and assumptions to sustained intellectual critique and inquiry. The Tree of Knowledge, with its attendant capacity to demystify the world and to render Man observant and intellectually curious, represents the Promethean moment in Christian thought. Ecclesiastes continues to raise the concern, inasmuch as wisdom and understanding are linked to misery.⁷

Other examples include the Sinaitic tradition of Moses as law-giver. He descends with the pronouncements of God’s moral law already inscribed on the tablets. The actual delivering of the law itself is shrouded in mystery. From each of these examples we find truth to somehow be just beyond the pale of human comprehension. Further, a commitment to intellectual curiosity is routinely depicted as disastrous. Just as Plato ultimately included the mists of unapproachable mythology to justify his utopian vision in The Republic, the Christian tradition has a pronounced strain that runs counter to Enlightenment concepts of free inquiry and observation.

None of this is to suggest, however, that the arguments of secularists who point to the irreconcilable nature of faith and learning are ultimately correct. But it is to suggest that Christians would do well to admit that the charges are not utterly baseless and not wholly reducible to secular prejudices aimed at communities of faith. Further, those apologists for a faith-based approach to learning must understand that
the resources of the Christian tradition are by no means uniformly supportive of their efforts to preserve both a commitment to liberal arts and to confessions of faith.

Closely related to the obstacle cited above is the problem of "ideas in cages." Are the ideas that are presented in a Christian liberal arts setting truly open, not simply for discussion and reflection but sincerely available for adoption as a means of understanding the world and organizing reality? Christian liberal arts institutions are genuinely faced with a conundrum when such a question is posed. On the one hand, the institutions must find a way to adhere with good faith to their mission of propagating the Gospel but at the same time, this privileging of a specific subject position over all others has the tendency to reduce the availability of all other ideas.

Education is a risky endeavor. Its outcomes cannot be guaranteed and it may, in fact, have acid effects that tend to erode traditional sources of understanding the world. The most salient example of the potentially subversive effects of open-ended inquiry occurred at the foundational moment of Western thought. When Socrates engaged in the elenctic method of systematically bringing what were otherwise settled issues before the tribunal of conversational interrogation, his efforts were regarded as insidious by the established powers. The violent response of the entrenched classes stands as a constant reminder that ideas have consequences and occasionally lethal results.

The potential threat of critical investigation is not lost on some in the Christian community. This goes a long way toward explaining the at times visceral reaction of clergy when ideas are wrenched out of their holy context and subjected to the cold gaze of academic investigation. One model that has, in effect, been adopted by some Christian institutions is to put the ideas in question behind bars or to mummify them and display them only as museum pieces.

To put the ideas behind cages is to present Nietzsche, Freud, Voltaire, Bertrand Russell, and Darwin in cartoon fashion. In other words, while their arguments are presented and students are made aware of their having been part of the academic conversation, they are presented only inasmuch as they are easily defeated foils for Christianity. A fair playing field is not presented. This reverses the admittedly similar practice that characterizes contemporary secular discourse where religious views are easily caricatured and presented as outmoded and not worthy of in-depth discussion. Such practices, whether perpetrated by people of faith or secularists, impoverishes intellectual inquiry and should be rejected as an acceptable approach to rigorous investigation.

A final major obstacle plaguing the presence of Christian higher education is the problem of verification. There is little doubt that
the demand for an inter-subjective approach to truth and knowledge has proved highly useful in avoiding the kinds of conflagrations that plagued Europe during the time of the Wars of Religion. The Enlightenment argument that the individual conscience be given broad latitude has also been useful. When coupled together, the demand for verification of truth claims, as well as the theoretical proposition that each individual is entitled to a rational explanation, has evolved into the broadly accepted norms of the academy and indeed Western civilization.

The suggestion that truth based upon confession and divine revelation be restored to a place in the conversation understandably raises important questions. If verification, based upon rational discussion or empirical observation is no longer to be given the sole responsibility for structuring the academic discourse, then does this not contribute to the ultimate balkanization of the academy? Further, if the broadly shared standards that have governed the academic community continue to be eroded, does this not create the kind of higher education that can be unduly controlled by other heretofore-discouraged standards, such as money, for example? Without dismissing the validity of the objection raised above, the next section will include a brief discussion as to why the fears in this area may be overstated.

The obstacles above are each, in their own way, profound and militate against the entrance of specifically faith grounded voices in the academic conversation. And, yet, as the next section will contend, none of the objections are themselves fatal and in fact, in some of the cases, that which appears to be a drawback to faith-inspired participation may actually turn out to be positive after all.

III. Justificatory Christian Liberal Arts

The postmodern epoch is one where the problem of justification has become amplified. When everything is regarded as contingent, it becomes extraordinarily difficult to effectively contend for the necessity of any one viewpoint. The situation is not totally bleak, however. The modern discourse claimed for itself an epistemological monopoly in that only those approaches that conformed to the scientific method were worthy of being regarded as true knowledge. If nothing else good has come from postmodernism, it is the breaking of this hubristic assertion. And yet, on the other hand, what one hand gives the other takes away. Without the broadly accepted procedures of scientific investigation, social research and intellectual inquiry in general run the very real danger of becoming compromised.

One sign of this crisis in higher education and learning is the view that all pretensions to knowledge are but veiled attempts to gain
power. This view stems from Nietzsche's well-known critique of objectivity. Michel Foucault expounded those themes more fully with his various genealogical and archeological studies that purported to demonstrate the radical contingency of even our most cherished categories, such as sanity, sexuality, and criminality.\textsuperscript{7} Nothing is more deadly to the search for truth than the idea that human interactions are so fatally poisoned by the will to power and that all claims to knowledge are but expressions of ideological distortion.

Given such a philosophical background, the quest for higher learning has become tainted and the "hermeneutics of suspicion" have given way to an open cynicism regarding any effort to justify the academic conversation using any form of objective foundation, no matter how chastened.\textsuperscript{10} Despite this sea of epistemological anarchy, Christianity stands as a possible beacon of hope in that it makes bold claims to knowing the world and the truth of reality. Such pronouncements sound quaint at best and most likely naïve to many in the secular academy, but the irony is that the radical decentering of the modern goal of objectivity via the postmodern critique has made such claims possible again.

The first major element of justification Christianity makes available to the liberal arts project draws on the nature of the individual. A strong argument can be made, drawing from the resources of orthodox Christianity, that human beings are intrinsically valuable. They exist as a singular united subject, as opposed to the Janus-faced self of postmodernity. As such, they are valuable and should be treated accordingly. Liberal arts study with its celebration of human creativity has become increasingly difficult to justify in an overly rationalized world where instrumentality is the order of the day. If we begin with the notion that individuals are intrinsically valuable, we have laid the groundwork for the justification for the liberal arts project.

If the subject is nothing more than the geographic intersection where multiple streams of discourse simply converge to construct the fragile and radically contingent identity of the self, then we have arrived at a post-humanistic reality. If, on the other hand, the individual is regarded as being infinitely full of depth and meaning, a view made possible when one begins from the notion that the individual is created in the image of God, then the creative expressions of each of us takes on a more sacred quality. We can justify the investigation of creative works of art, literature, music, scientific research, historical study, philosophical musings, and dramatic productions due to the fact that such endeavors reflect the creative mind of humanity. Human beings, reflecting God's glory, are worthy of study due to their intrinsic worth. Perhaps the best recent depiction of this somewhat mysterious view of
human depth was provided by George Kateb who referred to the interiority or conscious subjectivity of each person as the “inner ocean.”

Kateb used this description to justify the liberal notion of having to elicit rational consent from the governed. Because human beings are of such infinite value, they must never be treated in a way that denies them their right to conscience. The liberal arts project is premised on a similar basis. Human expression is so valuable it must never be denied exposure to the community of other human beings. This is not to suggest that all expression is of equal merit or equal value. The essentialist notion that human beings are created in the image of God carries with it the implied standards of excellence. The academic virtues of creativity and rationality serve as benchmarks for judging the work produced in the academy.

Without a Christian essentialism grounded on the contention that human beings are made in the image of God, postmodernism and even modernism (whose insistence on verification has the effect of marginalizing talk of normative virtue altogether) leave little space for a free standing system of value. Diversity becomes the sole criteria for judging and the possibility of conversation across linguistic boundaries becomes problematic.

For many postmodern theorists this permanent dissensus is regarded as a normative good. Jean Francois Lyotard, the author of one of the primary texts of the postmodern discussion, goes so far as to celebrate the retreat from metanarratives in favor of micronarratives. To be sure, there is an argument to be made that overarching metanarratives have been used to silence otherwise disparate voices and to impose singular standards on what otherwise would have been pluralistic spaces of conversation. As regards the political philosophy of democracy, such observations are accepted as useful in trying to construct ever more representative institutions. In higher education, however, the need to clear away the obstacles preventing multiple ways of understanding the world needs to be counterbalanced against the competing need to maintain the raison d’être of the university—the search for truth.

A Christian approach to higher education is capable of unifying these two competing goals. On the one hand, the recognition of the radical uniqueness of each individual helps to justify the liberal arts insistence on perspective and multiple voices. On the other hand is the insistence that the search for truth is a united effort and the academy needs not balkanize. As Alasdair MacIntyre has argued, the failure of Western society to adhere to what were once broadly shared values has led to a severe shattering of societal cohesiveness. Dogmatic declarations of radical and incommensurable differences have become the hallmark of contemporary academic culture. Charges of “you just don’t
understand” have discouraged even the most dedicated of those still struggling to lend some coherence to the academic project.

MacIntyre contends that the ultimate result of the rejection of a singular tradition has led to the inevitable collapse of understanding between and among competing groups. In place of what was once a more restrained discourse (one still dedicated to the idea that objectivity was not a mythological construct somehow masking ideology and power) is emotivism. Again, according to MacIntyre, emotivism has become the primary currency of those who describe the ideas of consensus and reconciliation as acts of linguistic violence.

A Christian approach is vital if higher education is to be rescued from this morass. A Christian worldview, contrary to what some within the faith and critics from outside of the faith might contend, need not be dogmatically insistent that all truth is ready-to-hand by benefit of divine revelation. In fact, there is a compelling case to be made that Christianity offers the best of both ideas of truth, inasmuch as it recognizes the difficulty in making truth claims while also holding fast to the idea of the ultimate unity of all knowledge. Even the most hardened partisans of scientism do not make the claim of being able to explain everything. Very often, such areas as aesthetics and the human passions are relegated to positions outside of intellectual inquiry and quarantined in that most desolate of all places—the “private realm.”

Christianity, by contrast, is able to make room for the various expressivist disciplines of the high humanities. Music, art, poetry, and literature should be provided pride of place in Christian liberal arts and should be regarded as possible avenues for understanding the fullness of God. Thus, whereas the contemporary academy has come to bear a remarkable resemblance to Beirut, Christian liberal arts offers the opportunity for a restored wholeness without the demand for rigid conformity or the abandonment of pluralism. Instead of MacIntyre’s emotivism, the Christian liberal arts community is still capable of approaching the vast enterprise of learning as a collaborative effort, solidified by the binding covenant to search for truth.

Conclusion

As the United States enters the twenty-first century, it is experiencing a kind of vertigo as regards the nature of its identity. Higher education is a microcosm of the divisions that characterize the debate. Postmodernism, with its explicit endorsement of permanent ambiguity regarding the nature of truth, has only added to the sense of meaninglessness. If higher education is to play a role in seeing that the current impasse is addressed and indeed bypassed, then there must be space for
those within the academic community who are more positive about the possibilities of achieving genuine human solidarity via the search for knowledge. It is into this breach that a Christian approach to higher education can move.

While the foregoing discussion has not directly spoken to the specific pedagogical reforms that such a dialogue between faith and learning might entail, it has, nevertheless sought to lay the groundwork for a theoretical justification of the entire project. Again, it should be recognized that the hopes of bridging the communities of faith and learning are not without serious impediments. In the interest of bolstering the confessional position of students, the temptation to give short shrift to the more damaging critiques of the faith is an ever-present possibility.

To allow the potentially offensive ideas to be articulated in their strongest terms is to run the risk of exposing students to decidedly non-Christian worldviews whose compelling nature may diminish and may in fact destroy the student’s faith. This article has argued that such a chance must be taken. Christian liberal arts should never become an excuse for a pastoral approach to intellectual inquiry that renders such inquiry but a meek shadow of what it would otherwise have been. In short, Christian higher education must never be an excuse to cage ideas.

Both the church and the academy need the dialogue between faith and learning. The church needs it in order to escape the negative effects of relying exclusively on dogmatic systems that do not allow for any sustained critique. Such an approach infantilizes the faith and ensures that congregants will remain childish instead of the scripturally prescribed “child-like” stance that Christ commanded.

On the other hand, the academy needs the fruits of a Christian worldview in order to counter the corrosive effects of postmodernism. The decentering of the subject, the radical situatedness of all truth claims, and the denial of intersubjective and rational discourse have all contributed to the anemic quality of the current academic conversation. By restoring traditional approaches to the liberal arts, such as the ideas of a unified reality of truth and the possibility of intertextual/intergroup dialogue, coherence is restored to the enterprise of higher education.

Perhaps the most dangerous fallout from postmodernism is the lack of reasonable methods of justifying intellectual endeavors. A Christian worldview stressing the sanctity of the individual as well as the essential excellence that comes from being a child of God helps to resurrect a vocabulary of justification. Accepting for a moment the postmodern contention that all truth claims come from identifiable historicist traditions, Christians are capable of unapologetically embracing
their traditional roots and beginning the search for truth from that tradition. The simultaneous acceptance of perspective and the general unity of all knowledge serve as twin pillars of strength to the Christian liberal arts curriculum. Indeed, nothing could be closer to what we mean by liberal arts.

Endnotes


2It is ironic that secular education, in its embrace of a naturalistic worldview has actually led away from an authentic humanism. In its place has emerged a kind of soul-less modern worldview best critiqued by the Critical Theorists of the Frankfurt school.


6One sees just such a concern arising from Christian traditionalists who fear that the historical critical method desacralizes the Scripture and reduces the once infallible Word of God to the status of just another text.

7Ecclesiastes, chapter 2.
Obviously money has played a crucial role in higher education for a long time. In fact, its effects continue to grow every year. What is being argued here is that the last vestiges of defense against it may fundamentally be eroded should the academic community back away from the verification procedures that they have shared (at least rhetorically) throughout much of modernity. See Steven Toulmin *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (NY: Free Press, 1992) for a discussion of objectivity and its place in the discourse of modernity. Also see Micheal Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (NY: Basic Books, 1983). Walzer contends that the rules governing what is acceptable and what is not must be maintained within the confines of each area of discourse. Failure to do so will lead to the colonization, and thus the corruption, of each field, money being the most likely medium of corruption. If the sincerity of religious confession is given its place at the table, then this will obviously weaken the more broad based allegiance to verification. This then may have the effect of undermining that relative consensus and leading to the demands that other modes be given the right to serve as currency in the debate as well.


I Corinthians 13:12.

This is especially true in the humanities. See Morris Berman *The Twilight of American Culture* (NY: Norton, 2001), and Jeffrey Peter Hart *Smiling through the Cultural Catastrophe: Toward the Re-
On Being a Good American:  
A Christian Meditation

[2003 Carlyle Marney Lecture]

Stanley Hauerwas

The question of loyalty to the government of the United States, particularly after September 11, 2001, is not a theoretical issue for me. For example, a friend wrote me in response to my critical appraisal of the American reaction to September 11, 2001, asking if my refusal to identify with the “war on terrorism” did not require me to disdain all “natural loyalties” that bind us together as human beings. Does my refusal to the “patriotic” mean I am indifferent to the gifts I have received through those that have sacrificed their lives in the wars that have made America such a great country? I had to reply that if “patriotism” is a “natural loyalty,” then I certainly have to disavow being patriotic.¹

So, it seems I do not measure up to being appropriately loyal to America by those who identify themselves with the political right in American politics. But the left is not happy with me either. For example, Jeff Stout claims that “no theologian has done more to inflame Christian resentment of secular political culture” than I have.² Indeed I am a bit taken aback by Stout’s assessment of my influence. He seems to think I have almost single-handedly convinced Christians in America to give up on democracy. I had no idea a theologian could have that kind of impact, particularly on other Christians.

I am not only bemused but also confused by these assessments of my failure to support America. I am far too conventional to be thought to be outside the American mainstream. Taxes are taken out of my salary every month. I do not like the fact my money is used to support the Pentagon, but I do not know what to do about it. It is true I do not take national politics as seriously as I once did. I voted for Ralph Nader in the last two presidential elections. I continue to vote even though I am not all that convinced voting is a good idea. My friend and former student, Father Mike Baxter, C.S.C., says, “Don’t vote—it only encourages them.” Yet, I was raised a yellow-dog democrat in Texas and voting is a hard habit to break.
I also have the problem that I am, at least according to some, a “success.” For example, I have been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In the literature welcoming me to the Academy, I was informed that the Academy was founded in 1780, by a small group of scholar-patriots led by John Adams. They founded the Academy even before the Revolutionary War had ended, believing that the new republic would have need for new knowledge and ideas. Accordingly, they adopted as the purpose of the Academy: “To cultivate every art and science which may tend to advance the interest, honor, dignity, and happiness of a free, independent, and virtuous people.” That I am now a member of the Academy must surely mean I am or should become a good American. To be anything else would make it appear that I am not above biting the hand that feeds me. In truth I do not want to bite the hand that feeds me, but I do not think that means I have to lick the same hand.

The problem is complicated for me because I am a pacifist. For pacifists, questions of allegiance to the nation are not as urgent as questions concerning the implications of our commitment to nonviolence for our relation to those closest to us. Commenting on the work of John Howard Yoder, Grady Scott Davis observes that Yoder’s account of Christian nonviolence asks us to forsake “goods attendant,” not only for our own lives but those that we love. Davis notes that this seems to run contrary to right reason, but he commends Yoder for “his willingness to embrace this conclusion.”

According to Davis, Yoder rightly does not try to argue that his pacifism meets the common-sense meaning of justice and right reason. Rather Yoder argues that Jesus initiated a revolution, an “original revolution,” in which the participants acknowledge God’s call by giving themselves over to His providential will.” Such a giving over was made possible because Yoder believed that through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God instituted a new politics. In Yoder’s own words, Jesus gave his followers

- a new way to deal with offenders—by forgiving them. He gave them a new way to deal with violence—by suffering. He gave them a new way to deal with money—by sharing it.
- He gave them a new way to deal with a corrupt society—by building a new order, not smashing the old.3

I believe Yoder’s understanding of the politics that pacifism requires offers a constructive way to understand how Christians can and should serve our neighbors—including the neighbor who may be our spouse and children—in the world as we find it, that is, a world that seems to assume that violence is unavoidable if we are to care for
ourselves and one another. The challenge before those committed to Christian nonviolence, however, is not peculiar to them because they are pacifist. Rather, pacifist represents the tension between church and world that is inherent in Christian practice.

Nowhere is that tension better seen than in the account Augustine gives in *The City of God* of the relation between the city of God and the city of man. That I call attention to Augustine may seem quite odd, given the assumption by many that he represents the defense of the Christian use of violence. But I hope to convince you that Augustine shares more with John Howard Yoder than is recognized.

In order to make the connection between Augustine and Yoder, I will use Robert Wilken’s account of Augustine’s understanding of the Christian responsibility of the earthly city in his book, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*. I do so because Wilken certainly cannot be counted as someone tempted to identify with Christian nonviolence. Wilken’s careful display of Augustine’s understanding of the two cities and their relation I believe not only to be the ‘real’ Augustine, but also I hope to show his account of Augustine helps Christians discern our peculiar situation in America.

Wilken argues if we are rightly to understand Augustine, we must begin by noting that although Augustine never identifies the city of God with the church, it is nonetheless the case that for Augustine the church must be a “community that occupies space and exists in time, an ordered, purposeful gathering of human beings with a distinctive way of life, institutions, laws, beliefs, memory, and form of worship.” If you lose this sense of the church in Augustine, it is too easy to turn Augustine into an apologist for the liberal regimes that provide a place for the church only to the extent the church is willing to accept it relegation to the “private.”

Wilken argues that in order to understand the relation between the two cities, we must see the significance of Augustine’s contention that peace is the end for the city of man, as well as the city of God. “The peace for which the city of God yearns is a ‘perfectly ordered and harmonious fellowship in the enjoyment of God.’” Such a peace is possible for the church because the church is constituted by right worship, that is, where true sacrifices are made to the One alone worthy of such sacrifices.

Accordingly, the greatest gift the church gives to the worlds in which she finds herself is a glimpse of what the peace of God looks like. Without the church, Augustine doubts whether the politics of the city of man even deserves the description “politics.” Augustine says,

> It is we ourselves—we, his City—who are his best, his most glorious sacrifice. The mystic symbol of this sacrifice we cele-
brate in our oblations, familiar to the faithful. . . . It follows that justice is found where God, the one supreme God, rules an obedient City according to his grace, forbidding sacrifice to any being save himself alone; and where in consequence the soul rules the body in all men who belong to this City and obey God, and the reason faithfully rules the vices in a lawful system of subordination; so that just as the individual righteous man lives on the basis of faith which is active in love, so the association, or people, of righteous men lives on the same basis of faith, active in love, the love with which a man loves God as God ought to be loved, and loves his neighbor as himself. But where this justice does not exist, there is certainly no “association of men united by a common sense of right and by a community of interest.” Therefore there is no commonwealth; for where there is no “people,” there is no “weal of the people.”

Peace, the telos of any city, is not to be had short of the true worship of the true God. Yet, Wilken quite rightly calls our attention to Augustine’s contention that Christians must try to achieve the peace of the city of man, imperfect as it is. Augustine goes so far as to suggest that the Christian may find he must take on the office of the judge. The office of the judge, moreover, may require the torture of innocent people in order to determine guilt or innocence. Wilken notes that, that Augustine could consider that Christians might be judges, a thought Origin could not even entertain, may well have depended on Constantine’s legalization of Christianity. Yet, whatever advantages may have come to the church through the Constantinian settlement, those advantages did not tempt Augustine to be any less insistent that the only true peace to be found in this life would be found in the church.

Accordingly, Wilken’s account of Augustine’s understanding of the relation between the two cities is quite different than that made so prominent by Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr argued that in this time before the end time—when we cannot distinguish between the cities given their mixed character—Christians must take up the work of the earthly city in order to achieve the lesser good. Yet, what a Niebuhrian account ignores is Augustine’s view that the church provides the context for Christian discernment about the Christian role in the earthly cities. To be sure, citizens of the city of God must “make use of earthly and temporal things,” but it is equally true that “the customs and practices of society can be embraced as long as they do not misshape the souls of the faithful or detract them from their ultimate goal of fellowship with God and with one another.”
Augustine says the Heavenly City, the City on Pilgrimage in this world, calls out citizens from all nations and so collects a society of aliens speaking all languages. Accordingly, she takes no account of any differences in customs, laws, and institutions by which earthly peace is achieved and preserved. She does not annul or abolish any of these customs or institutions just to the extent they provide for earthly peace unless (and this is the unless that Niebuhrian interpreters of Augustine so often ignore) these institutions are not a hindrance “to the religion which teaches that the one supreme and true God is to be worshiped.” Wilken observes that Augustine supports this unexpected sentence a few paragraphs later by citing Exodus 22:20, “Whoever sacrifices to any god save to the Lord alone will be destroyed.”

Augustine does not “solve” the problem of how Christians are to negotiate their divided loyalties. Rather, Augustine creates the problem of how Christians are to negotiate the worlds in which we find ourselves. Yet, Augustine does provide an account of how such a negotiation is to be undertaken. He does so, according to Wilken, not, as is often assumed, by offering a theory of political life. Rather, Augustine shows that God can never be relegated to the periphery of a society’s life. That is why the book (The City of God) discusses two cities. He wants to draw a contrast between the life of the city of God, a life that is centered on God and genuinely social, and [the] life that is centered on itself. Augustine wished to redefine the realm of the public to make place for the spiritual, for God. As Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury, has observed, the City of God is a book about the “optimal form of corporate human life” in light of its “last end.” In Augustine’s view, “it is life outside the Christian community which fails to be truly public, authentically political. The opposition is not between public and private, church and world, but between political virtue and political vice. At the end of the day, it is the secular order that will be shown to be ‘atomistic’ in its foundations.” A society that has no place for God will disintegrate into an amoral aggregate of competing, self-aggrandizing interests that are destructive of the commonweal. In the end it will be enveloped in darkness.

But what does all this have to do with the question of divided allegiance for Christians in that state called the United States? At the very least it reminds Christians in fact we have a divided allegiance. For, surely one of the great betrayals of Christians in America to America is that of confusing America with the Kingdom of God. Christians have done so because we assume that America is a democracy and de-
democracies are less coercive than other forms of political organization. Allegedly, democracies are the limited form of government that some claim is incipiently present in Augustine’s understanding of the two cities.

So, Christians now assume that democracies can ask us to make sacrifices that are unproblematic, because they are uncoerced sacrifices. I do not think you need to be a pacifist to think that there are problems about such an assumption. Augustine gives you all you need to recognize that the sacrificial system called democracy remains for Christians problematic just to the extent that we fail to recognize that America names a sacrificial system.

In an article entitled “Is Patriotism a Virtue?” Alasdair MacIntyre observes that there is a deep tension between the dominant account of morality in our culture and patriotism. In order to act morally we believe the agent must as far as possible assume a position abstracted from all social particularity and partiality. My way to put this understanding of morality is to point out that we believe you should have no story except the story you choose when you had no story. We call this “freedom.”

The primary expression of such freedom is to be found in the assumption that we should not be held responsible for decisions we made when we did not know what we were doing. The only problem with this view of the moral life is that it makes marriage and the having of children unintelligible. How could you ever know what you were doing when you promised life-long monogamous fidelity? Moreover, you will never get the children you want.

According to MacIntyre, patriotism is constituted by an alternative moral perspective. Patriotism “requires me to regard such contingent social facts as where I was born and what government that ruled over that place at that time, who my parents were and so on, as deciding for me the question of what virtuous action is—at least insofar as it is the virtue of patriotism that is in question. Hence, the moral standpoint and the patriotic standpoint are systematically incompatible.” It is, therefore, the central contention of a morality of patriotism that a crucial dimension of my ability to live well is lost, “if I do not understand the enacted narrative of my own individual life as embedded in the history of my country.”

MacIntyre observes that liberal social orders, such as the United States, cannot help but regard patriotism so understood as morally problematic. Liberal social orders and the corresponding accounts of moral rationality require me to assume that I act morally not as a parent, farmer, or American, but only when the principles of my action can be justified by my assumed status as a rational agent qua rational agent.
America names that peculiar country in which the cause of America, understood in the language of patriotism, and the cause of morality, understood in liberal terms, came to be identified. MacIntyre observes that the history of this identification would not help but be the history of confusion and incoherence. “For a morality of particularities and solidarities has been conflated with a morality of universal, impersonal, and impartial principles in a way that can never be carried through without incoherence.”

More troubling (at least for me) than incoherence is that such a conflation of patriotism and liberal universalism cannot help but result in violence—a violence all the more virulent because our violence allegedly is not self-interested, but rather perpetrated in the name of ideals that allegedly all people share. Young people in American armed forces may think they are serving in the military as part of their obligations to their families and local communities; but in fact those parochial loyalties are being used in the interest of an empire that lacks the means to acknowledge that it is just that, an empire. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia was fueled by hatreds harbored for centuries, but at least people in Yugoslavia did not kill one another in the name of a universal cause.

The ongoing war in Iraq is an obvious example of American arrogance cloaked in the pretensions of a universal cause. In many ways it would be a moral advance to attack Iraq because America needs and wants their oil. But Americans cannot go to war out of self-interest. We can only go to war for American ideals of freedom and democracy, which makes it all the more difficult to conduct war in accordance with just war commitments. The higher the ideals invoked to justify a war, the more difficult it is to keep war limited.

For example, now that Iraq has been defeated we now think “we,” that is Americans, must make Iraq a democracy. On what possible grounds can that assumption be justified? What could it possibly mean for Iraq to institutionalize a separation between church and state? Islam has no idea it is a church or a religion. To ask an Islamic society to “privatize” religion is to ask Muslims to be something else than Muslims.

The incoherence MacIntyre suggests is at the heart of the American project makes it impossible for Christians to be American patriots. Christians, certainly Catholic Christians, cannot and do not believe that America represents what is truly universal. The Christian word for universal is catholic. Moreover, the universal church is not constituted by ideals such as freedom, but rather for Christians universal names the connection across time and space between real people united by a common story. The office of the church that holds the particular responsibility for sustaining our unity is called “bishop.” That
office, moreover, is only intelligible to the extent that the bishop helps diverse eucharistic assemblies to share their stories with one another so that the church becomes the one mighty prayer for the world. Indeed, it is my view that the reason that our world thinks it has no alternative to war is the disunity between Christians.

Patriotism—at least MacIntyre’s understanding of patriotism—can only be a possibility for Christians if we are determined by a more parochial loyalty than our loyalty to country or people. Christians by being Christian are not asked to deny being Ugandan, Texan, or even American. However, what it means to be Ugandan Christian and what it means to be an American Christian present quiet different challenges.

How those challenges are negotiated, though, requires that a church exists that is at once more parochial and, thereby, more determinative than what it might mean to be Ugandan or American. Christians in Uganda and America rightly want to be of service as a Ugandan or an American. But you have an indication that such service is in tension with our being Christian, if it means being American takes priority to the unity forged between American Christians and Ugandan Christians by the church.

The forging of such connections is peace. That is why I find it odd for pacifists to be criticized for being politically irresponsible or disloyal. To be committed to Christian nonviolence should not prevent those so committed from trying, even in America, to make our relations with one another more just. I think, however, the way Christians committed to nonviolence, as well as Christians not so committed, best serve this land called America is by refusing to be recruits for the furtherance of America ideals.

Let us rather be parochial people. For the only way we will be saved from the temptations to serve the universal ideologies of the empire is through the concrete relations which make our actual lives possible. The lives of the people who worship at Holy Family Episcopal Church in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, have first claim on me. Whatever loyalty that abstraction called the United States may have will need to be tested by the effect it has on what I owe to those that worship at Holy Family and how what I owe to them puts me in contact with Christians around the world.

Finally, I need to return to the criticism made by those on the left and right concerning my alleged failure to support America. I teach and work in a very secular university. I try to be as good a citizen as I can be in the life of the university. I serve on university committees, which means I often work with those who think theology is just a step above witchcraft. Indeed, in the current university witchcraft often is thought to be more interesting and respectable than Christianity. Yet, I
continue to think universities should and do provide the space and time for the rational deliberations necessary to explore the convictions that shape our lives.

The kind of analysis MacIntyre provides of the incoherence of moral and political ethos of America is the kind of work I believe the university can and should make possible. I should like to think that I am serving my Christian and non-Christian neighbor, neighbors who are American, through my work in the university. I try to remember, however, that honest craftsmen and craftswomen are probably doing a more important work for the common good.

I suspect calling attention to my service in the university will not satisfy those who think I am not loyal to America or that I fail to work to make America a more just society. They may be right about that, but at least such a judgment is not above me but about how you understand the role and importance of the university as an institution for the furtherance of our common good. I think the work of the university is crucial for any attempt for our being able to live in peace with one another. I confess I worry that the university too often is willing to sell itself to the interest of the State Department and the Pentagon, but at the very least the university is constituted by commitments that make it possible to criticize such sell-outs.

I have often used the trope of being a Texan to distance myself from the desire for the universal so characteristic of our time. I am well aware that the “Texas” to which I appeal is imaginary, but there are still places in Texas where you can eat a chicken-fried steak. Eating chicken-fried steaks may not be a sufficient form of resistance against the lure of the universal, but you have to start somewhere.

To be a Christian is to be trained to care for one another through the building up of a common life by engaging in the time-consuming and time-creating work of the everyday. The work of the university is often pretentious, promising more than it can deliver. But I also think the university can be an institution that not only helps us live at peace with ourselves and one another, but also is peace. My commitment to the work of the university may not satisfy those who think I am not sufficiently grateful for what I have been given. All I can say is that I am doing what I have been given to do in the hope that I may be able to give back in some small measure the gifts I have received from those that call themselves Americans.

Endnotes

1Stanley Hauerwas, “September 11, 2001: A Pacifist Response,” in Dissent from the Homeland: Essays after September 11,


5Wilken, p. 195.


8Much is made of Augustine’s use of the “power of the state” to suppress the Donatists, but in fact he opposed any use of capital punishment against the Donatists. In his biography of Augustine, Gary Wills calls attention to Augustine’s letters to the Christian tribune, Marcellinus, that counseled patience in dealing with the Donatists. Gary Wills, *Saint Augustine* (New York: Viking, 1999), pp. 99-126.

9Wilken, p. 203.


Political liberalism is not the primary engine that drives the universalist train. Capitalism is the most determinative practice that materially embodies the liberal drive to destroy what from a liberal point of view cannot help but appear as parochial. The American dollar is, therefore, the most determinative form of the universal. For a prescient analysis of the conflict between capitalism and catholicism see Michael Budde, *The Two Churches: Catholicism and Capitalism in the World System* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992).
The Intersection of Church and State:
Directing Traffic in Our Nation’s Capital

[T. B. Maston Lecture, 3-22-04]

J. Brent Walker

Let me start with a couple of words about the Baptist Joint Committee. It is a sixty-eight year old group supported by fourteen different Baptist bodies on matters concerning religious liberty and the separation of church and state. Established to provide a united witness for Baptists in our nation’s capital, the BJC works to defend and extend the religious liberty of all Americans. If anyone’s religious liberty is denied, everyone’s religious liberty is endangered.

What informs our understanding of the proper relationship between church and state is a conviction that religious liberty is a gift from God, not the result of any toleration on the part of government. It has to do with our being created in the image of God and the ability that God gives us to respond as free and competent souls. This is where we get the Baptist notion of voluntary religion and “soul freedom”—a God-infused liberty of conscience—which Baptists have talked so much about for almost 400 years.

Although our religious liberty is a gift from God—not the result of an act of concession by the state—we have nevertheless decided to tailor our political institutions to protect that God-given religious liberty. We do this mainly through the first two provisions of the First Amendment to the Bill of Rights—commonly called the “religion clauses”—no establishment and free exercise. The first sixteen words of the First Amendment provide: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” These two clauses, working together in tandem, require government to be neutral towards religion—neither helping nor hurting religion, but turning it loose to allow people of faith to practice their religion as they see fit, not as government sees fit.

Both of these clauses ensure our religious liberty; both require the separation of church and state. Full religious liberty is a goal; church-state separation is the means of accomplishing that goal.
This concept, the separation of church and state, is relatively modern and distinctively American. Throughout most of the history of Western Civilization, there has been very little enthusiasm for separating the two. But the painful lessons of history teach that as soon as government takes sides in religion—for or against—someone’s religious liberty is denied and everyone’s is threatened at that very point.

The wise architects of our republic had a different vision. The Constitution, a rigorously secular document, mentions religion only once (Article VI) and then to say that there would be no religious test for public office. And, with the adoption of the religion clauses in the First Amendment, our founders made it clear that one’s status in the civil community simply would not depend on one’s willingness to espouse any religious confession.

Yes, history shows that government and religion are both better off when neither tries to do the job of the other. This is especially important in a culture as religiously diverse as ours. The plush pluralism that we see all around us requires a more, not less, robust enforcement of both no establishment and free exercise. An institutional and, to some extent, functional separation of church and state are needed to promote a free state and a healthy church.

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I want to talk for a few minutes about different ways in which we might think about the concept of the separation of church and state and how each gives us a slightly different perspective on how separation protects religious liberty. At the risk of oversimplifying a bit, I want to examine some metaphors or shorthand ways of coming at this topic. And then I want to look at some contemporary threats and current issues.

We generally attribute the expression “separation of church and state” to Thomas Jefferson’s 1802 letter to the Danbury Connecticut Baptist Association. In that letter, he talked about the reverence he had for the act of the American people that created a “wall of separation between church and state.” We know Jefferson was very concerned with the church harming the state. He had fought hard to disestablish the Anglican Church in Virginia. He even went so far as to suggest that clergy should be barred from public office. Jefferson thought that the government ought to be safeguarded “against ecclesiastical corruption and incursions.” He was clearly anti-clerical, if not anti-religious.

Roger Williams, in the 17th century, spoke of a “hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world.” We can tell by the choice of language that Williams was
concerned about the opposite problem: seeing separation largely as a way to protect the “garden of the church” from the “wilderness of the world.” Williams thought that the magistrate had no authority “over the souls of his subjects or any right to meddle in the affairs of the church.”

James Madison spoke of a “line of separation,” and may represent the founder who best blends both of these ideas: Jefferson’s concern for protecting the state and Williams’ desire to insulate the church. Madison was a strong advocate of a separation that would cut both ways. But he also appreciated the tension and complexity built into the religion clauses. Late in life, he noted that “it may not be easy, in every possible case, to trace the line of separation between the rights of Religion and Civil authority, with such distinctness, as to avoid collisions and doubts on unessential points.”

Martin Marty has spoken of a “zone of separation” or a “zone of interaction” between church and state. This metaphor suggests that separation may not be as concrete as a “wall” or as discrete as a “line.” It acknowledges that, in contemporary American life, the church and state often touch, rub up against each other, overlap and cooperate in common enterprises. Marty would say this interaction must be carefully crafted and should not extend to financial partnerships. Marty suggests that there are boundaries here, but within those boundaries there is a zone of permissible interaction.

Former Chief Justice Warren Burger spoke of the “room for play in the joints productive of benevolent neutrality – permitting religious exercise without government sponsorship or interference.” His metaphor suggests that there is some space for accommodation of religion in ways that do not violate the No Establishment principle. Not everything that is not commanded by the Free Exercise Clause is prohibited by the Establishment Clause; not everything that is permitted by the Establishment Clause is required by the Free Exercise Clause. The religion clauses are not that tightly drawn. Moreover, Burger suggests that the posture of government towards religion should not be hostile. There is room for a “benevolent neutrality” that stops short of hostility. Stated differently, separation, properly understood, is good, not bad for religion.

James Dunn has talked about separation in terms of a “guardrail.” This has some of the same idea. It’s as if we are traveling down a highway of neutrality with the separation principle providing guardrails to keep us from falling into the ditches one way or the other. We don’t always travel down the centerline of the road. Sometimes we wander into one lane or the other. But the First Amendment stands as a guardrail against running entirely off the road into the ditch of theocracy or secularism.
Gardner Taylor has talked about the fact that church/state separation is necessary because the church needs some “swinging room.” It’s necessary to insure religions’ prophetic witness. There must be a decent distance from government for the church to swing its prophetic punches at government at the appropriate times. When, in Dr. Taylor’s words, the church and state have one another in a “bear hug,” this prophetic function is impossible. Far from creating a religion-free or naked public square, separation does just the opposite.

Dean Kelly, former counsel or on religious liberty at the National Council on Churches, often spoke about separation in terms of “government needing always to get out of the way of religion, but never to get behind to push.” If government is simply getting out of the way of religion (and sometimes removing obstacles to religion), that’s good; but as soon it gets behind to push, it crosses the line.

Chen Mei Lin, Associate General Secretary of the China Christian Council points to a “flesh and blood” relationship between the Chinese church and the government—her way of describing the Chinese Christians’ desire to be both pious and patriotic. At first, I was disturbed by this metaphor, because I thought that it represented a much too close relationship between church and state. However, it may commend itself to us. If the church is the “blood” and the state is the “flesh”, then they are two separate entities or two separate substances. And if we believe that the church ought to be “salt and light” and, to use Niebuhr’s phrase, “transform culture,” then that is precisely the function that blood performs—penetrating and bringing life to the body. Moreover, if we think of the state as the flesh and believe that the state ought to be engaged in protecting religion, then that is exactly what flesh does for the body.

Finally, David Massengill has come up with the metaphor of a separate “foundation.” He got this from his experience living across the street from the World Trade Center after September 11. He says that one of the reasons that the auxiliary buildings, as well as the Twin Towers, fell (although they were not hit) was that they were all tied into the same foundation. But, the reason that St. Paul’s Chapel across the street, on a far less ample foundation, continued to stand even after September 11 was that it had a separate foundation. And he analyzes this to church and state. When the kingdom of Caesar corrodes, when regimes are ruined, when governments go down, as they all surely will, if the church is tied into that foundation, then the church will be dragged down as well. However, if it is built on a separate foundation, the Kingdom of Christ will continue to survive and thrive, even as earthly kingdoms fail and falter.

Another concept I want to discuss is that of “neutrality.” Almost everybody, who talks about the relationship between church and
state, claims to want the state to be “neutral” towards religion. But they often mean different things. Some mean that the state ought to be neutral by treating religion the same as secular pursuits (sometimes called formal neutrality). Others use it to mean that government is neutral by treating religion differently (often called substantive neutrality). I think religious liberty is usually best served when the government treats religion differently—sometimes giving special concessions, sometimes unique constraints. Religious liberty and church-state separation are threatened when government develops a posture of “religion-blindedness” or not “taking religion into account.”

Those who view neutrality in terms of treating religion equally tend to be “majoritarian” in their thinking. Those who want government to treat religion differently are generally more concerned about minority rights or “counter majoritarian.” Indeed, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor has observed:

> The very purpose of a Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and official and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the Courts. One’s right to life, liberty, and property, to free speech, a free press, freedom of worship and assembly, and other fundamental rights may not be submitted to vote; they depend on the outcome of no elections.

Religion sometimes is and should be extended special concessions when needed to lift governmentally imposed burdens on the exercise of religion. For example, a Baptist church is allowed to employ a Baptist music director instead of a Buddhist; secular corporations cannot discriminate on the basis of religion in hiring. K Street lobbyists in Washington, D.C., must register under the Lobby Disclosure Law; religious lobbies on Capitol Hill are exempt. Secular non-profits, like the United Way, are required to file a Form 990 disclosing information about their operation; religious non-profits, including churches, are generally exempt from this requirement. Houses of worship are exempt from having to install ramps and elevators under the Americans with Disabilities Act; secular public accommodations, like a Holiday Inn, must comply. There are dozens of other such examples of legislative exemptions.

But the Supreme Court has fallen victim to the notion that religion is not entitled to different treatment to accommodate the free exercise of religion. That attitude is precisely what informed the Court’s disastrous 1990 opinion *Employment Division vs. Smith*, the Native American peyote case. The Court’s majority held that religious
claimants had no right to go to court seeking exemptions from neutral, generally applicable laws. Courts must be blind when it comes to religion. Five members of the Court concluded that this is simply an “unavoidable consequence of a democratic government” and a “luxury” we can no longer afford. In effect, the Court told litigants to take their case to the legislative branch – the quintessential majoritarian political institution.

On the other hand, sometimes religion must endure constraints to ensure against the establishment of religion. For example, public school teachers can teach a math or geography lesson, recite the Gettysburg Address, and voice many other things in a classroom, but they may not lead in prayer or lead religious exercises. Public buildings, including post offices, can display a portrait of the President of the United States; but they may not display a picture of Jesus or a Christian cross. Government may fund many things, including the public schools, but it should not directly fund religion. Taking religion into account ensures government neutrality and promotes religious liberty for all, especially religious minorities.

The Supreme Court has slowly chipped away at this principle as well, especially regarding governmental funding of religion. For example, the Court overruled the ban on sending public school teachers into parochial schools to teach remedial subjects, upheld the furnishing of computers and other educational equipment to church schools, and, under certain circumstances, approved the use of school vouchers. Four justices appear poised to approve direct grants to religion. Again, the attitude that has accompanied this march down the primrose path of government-funded religion is the misguided notion that religion should be treated the same as, or equal to, other pursuits.

Yes, the present trend is to defer to the will of political majorities and think in terms of religious equality, even where rights protected by the Bill of Rights are involved. This mindset of religion blindedness demeans religion at every turn and undermines religious freedom. When one “levels the playing field” for religion, no one should be surprised when, in Melissa Rogers’ words, religion gets “leveled.” Religion is unique. Treating it as such best preserves religious liberty.

I want to highlight several issues on the front burner today. I do not have time to discuss each thoroughly, but maybe we can follow up on some in the Q & A. First, let’s look at some Establishment Clause issues. Again, this is the part of the First Amendment that keeps government from trying to help religion. Government often tends to violate the Establishment Clause by what it says in words or symbols— attempts on the part of government to endorse or promote religion.
The posting of the Ten Commandments by government officials is a good example of this. Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, Roy Moore, was absolutely wrong. I can think of little better than for everyone to read and obey the Ten Commandments; I can think of little worse than for government officials to tell us to do it. The question is not whether the Ten Commandments embody the right teachings; the question is who is the right teacher.

Government officials should not pick and choose what the preferred scripture will be! Taking a lesson from the prophet Jeremiah, we should “write the law on our hearts” to ensure that the commandments will never be loaded onto a proverbial hydraulic lift and taken to a less conspicuous place. How strange to create what amounts to a graven image of a document that says we should not have graven images!

Next, is the Pledge of Allegiance with the words “under God.” The United States Supreme Court on March 24 will address the question of the violation of the Establishment Clause in having school children recite the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools everyday. The recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance with the words “under God” inserted by a 1954 act of Congress is probably not unconstitutional—either because it is a mere acknowledgement that Americans are a religious people or because the words have lost their religious significance through repetition.

But what is constitutional is not always helpful or productive of a robust spirit of religious liberty. The vitality of religion is diminished, not improved, by blurring our penultimate allegiance to Caesar with our ultimate allegiance to God. Civil religion tends to trivialize religion, and drains it of its vitality! At worst, it can morph into an idolatry of nationalism.

Another way that government tends to violate the Establishment Clause is through what it does with its checkbook, its money. A good example here is school vouchers. Yes, the Supreme Court has declared in the Zelman case (2002) that vouchers do not violate the Establishment Clause—as much as I disagree. But a razor thin (5/4) Supreme Court decision does not do away with the threats to proper church-state relations. It does not mean vouchers are good public policy. It does not mean that state constitutional provisions cannot provide more protection against spending tax dollars to promote religion.

The Supreme Court recently ruled in Locke v Davey (7-2) that, just because financial aid to a college ministerial student is constitutionally permitted by the federal Establishment Clause, does not make it constitutionally required under the Free Exercise Clause in face of a Washington state constitutional provision that would ban such aid.
The next example of government violating the Establishment Clause is by its spending practices is the faith-based initiatives. The problems with government funding of religion are also clear in faith-based initiatives—proposals that would allow government to fund the social service ministries of pervasively religious organizations (including churches) through direct grants and contracts. These direct funding schemes—sometimes called “charitable choice”—tend to promote religion in ways that are constitutionally suspect. They threaten excessive entanglement of religion with government regulation, tend to dampen the religious prophetic voice in society, breed dependency on government, endorse government-funded employment discrimination, and encourage unhealthy rivalry and competition among religious groups. Other than that, I guess they are OK.

Next, let’s look at several issues dealing with the Free Exercise Clause—that part of the First Amendment that keeps the government from trying to hurt religion. Free Exercise issues are often addressed by state legislation. While many states have constitutional provisions that provide greater protection for the free exercise of religion than the federal constitution, some have adopted legislation, commonly referred to as State Religious Freedom Restoration Acts, which require greater accommodation of religion within their borders. Other states will continue to abate such measures in an effort to further strengthen the free exercise rights of citizens.

Congress is presently considering whether to pass the Workplace Religious Freedom Act (WRFA), a measure designed to increase protection to the rights of employees to exercise their religion in the workplace. It would allow employers to deny such accommodations—such as days off for religious holidays—only if they would suffer a substantial detriment.

Other legislation purports to aid free exercise but, in fact, may undermine religious liberty—such as proposals in Congress to allow churches to endorse candidates in public office from the pulpit without threat to their favorable tax status. Under current tax law, religious organizations, along with other secular nonprofits under Section 501(c)(3), are free to speak out on the social, moral and ethical public policy issues of our day. But they are not allowed to support or oppose candidates for office without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status.

Allowing religious organizations to engage in “electioneering” activities while continuing to disallow secular nonprofits from doing so would be fundamentally unfair. It would also invite a highly divisive element into virtually every congregation, tend to balkanize congregations and engender a corrosive mix of religious and politics that would turn the prophets of our pulpits into puppets of politicians.
Having talked about various Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause issues, let me conclude with a few words about religion and the public schools. A variety of church-state disputes commonly arise in the context of our public schools in ways that require a balancing of both no establishment and free exercise principles. In general, the public schools must refrain from sponsoring religious exercises or otherwise promoting religion. But they should accommodate the rights of students to practice their religion in ways that do not disrupt the education process or interfere with the rights of other students not to participate. Public schools may “teach about religion” in history, social studies, comparative religion, and Bible as literature courses. But school officials should not “teach religion” in ways that would proselytize or promote a religious point of view.

The most recent Supreme Court case involving this issue provides a good example. Santa Fe Independent School District vs. Doe (2000) involved student-delivered prayers at football games in Texas. The Supreme Court, in a 6-3 vote, struck down the practice as unconstitutional. The Court reasoned that the student prayer was so shrouded in government sponsorship that it amounted to a state endorsement of religion. The school district adopted a pro-prayer policy; it conducted and supervised the election of the student to give the prayer; the prayer was delivered in the context of a school-sponsored event (i.e. football game); and the school provided the microphone over which the prayer was to have been broadcast. Finally, the Court reasoned that merely granting the student body the power to elect a speaker that may choose to pray is not acceptable. The very practice of deciding whether to have a prayer before football games, and who the pray-er would be, inevitably favors the majority religion in a given school district.

The focus of much of the current debate and developing case law on school prayer is directed toward defining the proper contours of student-initiated religious speech and exercise. “Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools,” issued by the United States Department of Education in 2003, addresses the issue in the context of school assemblies, athletic events, and graduation. It provides that where students are selected on neutral criteria and retain “primary control” over what they say, that expression will not be attributed to the school and, therefore, cannot be restricted because of its religious content. The guidelines go on to suggest that, in order to avoid misunderstandings, school officials may make “appropriate disclaimers” to clarify that the speech is the student’s and not the schools. The guidelines supplement a more comprehensive set issued by the United States Department of Education (www.ed.gov) in 1995 under the Clinton administration.
In conclusion we must catch the vision of our nation’s founders—religious freedom for all, unaided and unhindered by government, and make it a reality in our day. Two founders succinctly expressed this aspiration. Daniel Carroll, a Catholic from Maryland, captured the pith of the free exercise principle when he said, “The rights of conscience are of particular delicacy and will little bear the gentlest touch of government’s hand.” On the other side of the Potomac, Baptist John Leland expressed the rationale for the no establishment principle when he exclaimed, “The fondness of magistrates to foster Christianity has done it more harm than all the persecutions ever did.”

The stirring words of Carroll and Leland call for governmental neutrality in religion and highlight the importance of protecting the rights of conscience of every human being. They reflect the bookends for a well-balanced view of a free church in a free state.
Greeting

Good Morning! (audience responds with a weak “Good Morning.”) Can we do that again? Where I go to church, we say that and mean it! Good Morning! (audience responds with stronger, “Good Morning.”)

Faith Comes to Us in Context

Miss Winnie Bradford handed me the scroll. It was before I could read. She was my first Sunday school teacher, at least the first I remember, at the First Baptist Church of Decatur, Texas, when I was five years old. I still have this little white New Testament, but I forgot to bring it on this trip. It says in the front: To Billy Leonard, from your Sunday school teacher, Miss Winnie Bradford. Before I could even read, Miss Winnie Bradford gave me the scroll.

She was not the only one. When I was nine, I was in Mr. Johnny Ramey’s Sunday school class of, what was then called, “junior boys.” As you got to be about eight or nine, Southern Baptists wouldn’t let you study the Bible in mixed gatherings of both sexes anymore. So, I was in a boys’ Sunday school class, because it was dangerous to have boys and girls together after the age of eight. Do I have a witness? We all know that’s true, isn’t it? Of course!

So, there I was, on a Sunday with Mr. Johnny Ramey in his Sunday school class on the day he decided to give us the plan of salvation, complete with as colorful a description of hell as I have ever heard: “That’s where you’re going, you know, if you don’t follow the plan.” So, I got worried. I talked to my parents, talked to my pastor, and about two weeks later I walked the aisle of First Baptist Church, trusted Jesus as Savior, and shortly thereafter was baptized into Christ’s body, the church. So, you might say Mr. Johnny Ramey scared “the hell” out of me (speaking theologically, of course, this morning in this holy place).
Miss Winnie Bradford and Mr. Johnny Ramey were my first two liberal arts teachers. Why? One anticipated that I would learn to read. That is the start of a liberal arts education. She gave me a text that I could have, once I learned. The other told me a story, gave me a narrative, and asked me to decide if I should write myself into that narrative or not. Miss Winnie Bradford and Mr. Johnny Ramey were my first two liberal arts teachers. Faith comes to us in context, whether in a room behind the baptistery where my Sunday school class met (I can smell the mildew yet), on the back row of a county church, or in the front seat of a hometown synagogue.

Jesus of Nazareth (the text tells us today) came home to the people who had known him the longest, but knew him the least. He came to a context of hope. No sooner had he gotten in the synagogue filled with women and children on one side and men on the other (or men in the front and women and children in the back, whichever the practice may have been), than they hand him the scroll. He reads out the word of God.

They handed him the scroll. Who did that for you? Who passed you the scroll of the story, ideas, text, and reading? Can you think of them right now? I suspect you can, I also suspect there are some people who did that for you, whom you will never know. They are on the backs of the people, who did something for you, who taught you to think and learn and ask and question and hope and argue and fight and deal with life. That is liberal arts education. It comes to us in context.

There is something else about that context in which I grew up. It was racist to the core. All the white people in the context in which I grew up were racist—every one of us, even if we didn’t want to be. Why? Because, in the context of my church, in the context of my school, and in the context of my society, it was (liberal arts surely taught you about this; thank God, you never experienced it quite this way) separate but equal.

What did that mean? Restrooms, drinking fountains, bus stations, and restaurants carried signs that illustrated the brokenness of a culture. White. Colored. That was our context. And, by virtue of that kind of society, it was racist to the core. It was in a sociology class my freshman year in college, that I confronted that racist context of my society in a way that I have never confronted it before.

My professor, Jess Moore, was a wonderful old warhorse liberal who once ran for governor of Texas (he got beat, but it sure was fun). Jess Moore opened a text that talked about slavery, segregation, and racism; and I have never been the same since. It forced me in the most painful way in that particular time, to confront the context in which I had found safety, nurture, and identity.
There’s a sense in which my ten-year membership in two African American Baptist churches (one in Birmingham, the great Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, and one in Winston-Salem, First Baptist Church of Highland Avenue), that has changed my life and context, began in Dr. Jess Moore’s sociology class. There the liberal arts of that Introduction to Sociology from the mouth of an old warhorse liberal confronted me with the context in which I could no longer find safety and comfort.

Who has done that for you? Carlyle Marney, another old Baptist warhorse (that we just celebrated at Wake Forest) and a graduate of Carson-Newman College said to another generation of undergraduates in a voice two octaves below God, “Who made you what you are?” *Who made you what you are?* That’s the question of context and community.

**Faith Comes to Us out of a Tradition**

The second thing we learn from this text this morning is that faith comes to us out of a tradition. I grew up Baptist in the South and that used to be easy. Sundays meant church, all day church. Off you went to church, as a Baptist in the South, armed with the three great symbols of Baptist faith—a King James Version of the Bible (zipper edition with a zipper all around the sides so none of the word of God would fall out by accident; black for boys, white for girls. You carried it to Sunday school. That was part of the tradition. The year before I went to college I took a razor blade and cut the zipper out of my King James’ Bible. That’s very Freudian; don’t mess with it. I’m just reporting it. You psychology majors are going, “okay you strange person.” I found that Bible at my mother’s recently and actually noticed that I only cut out half of the zipper, which is even stranger. So, don’t go there, see me after.

All right, King James’ Version of the Bible, what was the second thing? A Sunday school quarterly came out every three months. It had your Sunday school lesson in it, and youroughed it up on your way to church so your teacher would think you had studied all week diligently. What was the third thing? Does somebody want to tell me?

Yes, your offering envelope and on that envelope were six little boxes on which you checked your weekly spirituality state for church: brought your Bible, studied lessons, didn’t lie to your mother (no, that’s not on there, but it was sort of like that). Growing up Baptist in the South meant you had that kind of identity; and, if you attended Sunday school and never missed, they gave you a little Sunday school pin. That was the tradition. The next year you got another one, then another one, and another one.
Grady Nutt, rest his soul (wonderful old narrator), used to tell a story about an eighty year old man who had never missed a day of Sunday school in his life. He had a pin that went all the way down to the floor. He got up one Sunday morning, put it on, tripped over it, broke his neck, and died. Terrible story. That was all the reason I knew to get away from perfect attendance at Sunday school. It could kill you! I never worried about missing a Sunday after I heard that story.

A tradition, Jesus had one too. Did you all know Jesus was Jewish? No, there is a study out on that. It is called the New Testament. No, Jesus was a Jew. For years I thought he grew up in West Texas, but, no, he was Jewish. How many of you have ever been to synagogue? (Raise your hand) Next week, next Saturday, everybody is going!

I took some students recently to a Bar Mitzvah, when a thirteen-year-old girl comes of age. My Jewish friends say it’s a wonderful time, because all the adults have to sit down and for thirty minutes listen to a thirteen year old. She’s worked for over a year to study Hebrew. She goes up with the Rabbi to the Torah; and he takes out the scrolls, carries them to the pulpit, and spreads them out before her. With her parents and her grandparents she comes to the pulpit, and with tears streaming down her eyes she reads the text for the day in Hebrew first (because that’s what she’s been studying) and then in English. Then, she draws her thirteen-year-old self up, wipes away the tears, and declares the word of God to the waiting congregation.

That’s the tradition that Jesus knew. That’s what happened the day he came to the synagogue. Tradition shapes us and gives us identity. Liberal arts education helps us understand the tradition we come from and, then, pushes us to learn the traditions that are far away from us.

When I was teaching at Samford University in Birmingham, somebody called me up out of the blue one day and said, “We represent a group of Muslims in Birmingham, and we would like to have the first ever Christian-Muslim dialogue in Birmingham at Samford University. We would like for you to speak for the Christians. We are flying in an Imam from Florida to speak for us. Will you do it?” I said sure. Now, this is before 9/11. This is about 1995.

So, it got in the newspaper. I was sitting in my office one morning in Birmingham, and a guy calls me up and says, “You can’t have that dialogue out there. Don’t you know this is an evil thing for you to do?” I said “Why?” He said, “Those Muslims will come out there and steal the faith of those Baptist men and women.” I got terribly impertinent. I said, “Listen, Jesus ain’t scared of Muslims (you have to talk like that in Alabama). And, if these Baptist young people don’t have anymore faith down inside them that in a two-hour discussion a
Muslim can steal it, you didn’t put very good stuff down inside.” He hung up on me.

But, if I may be more impertinent, I was right. And the university was exactly the place to have the dialogue. Why? Because you’d better know something about the Muslim tradition, even more now than in 1995; and you’d better learn to talk with Muslims, not yell at them. There are six million Muslims in this country. That’s twice as many as there are Presbyterians. And by early in this century there will be more Muslims than Methodists.

Traditions bind us. Still, a liberal arts education is the place where we explore tradition inside the safety of our own hospitable tradition. It is one that listens to the others and learns and teaches, as well. It does not turn inward on itself but allows us to reach out in freedom. There’s one other thing. Faith comes to us; struggle comes to us—in the text.

**Faith Comes to Us in the Text**

Context, tradition, and text. They hand him the word of God, and he reads out the text from Isaiah: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, release to the captive, recovery of sight to the blind, to let the broken victim go free, to declare the year of the Lord’s favor.” He sits down, and they say, “Oh, this is so wonderful; you’re so full of grace.” And then he does something else. He takes the text, turns it, and says: “Oh by the way, this day, this text has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

What does a liberal arts education do for us? It teaches us as David Tracy at the University of Chicago says: “Ancient texts resist domestication.” May I say that again? You all aren’t taking notes, I’m crushed. **Ancient texts resist domestication.** They get scary on us. A part of what liberal arts education should do is to give us the safety of a place to deal with the dangerous text. I know that you all here at Carson-Newman know how dangerous the text can be, or you would sit up close. I could see this morning that you all were scared of me and scared of this text because you cleared out a space, so it wouldn’t get you! You weren’t sure if it was safe. That’s what a text does for us.

Jesus takes this text that they probably read in that synagogue hundreds of times, and then he turns it and applies it to himself. I forgot to have this part read. Can I read to you what happened? “These words roused the whole congregation to fury, they leapt up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the hill on which the synagogue was built, meaning to hurt him and push him over the edge. But he walked straight through the whole crowd and got away.” I’ve been in some liberal arts settings where I didn’t think I was going to get out alive.
Why? Because the text got dangerous, some people got angry, and it got very scary.

You know we use this wonderful word postmodernism. Do you all know that word? Have you ever heard it used here? If you’ve heard the word postmodern raise your hand. What does postmodern mean? We don’t know what it means and that’s why it is postmodern. Whatever postmodern means, it means that we are raising questions about the influence of the Enlightenment on our liberal arts education.

What do I mean by that? Fundamentalism and liberalism are two sides of the same enlightenment coin. They bring the teachings and ideas of rationalism to bear on texts. They can be helpful, but they can also keep the text safe and domesticate it, so that it won’t turn loose on us. Do you know what the worst thing is about the Bible? It’s so scary. Methods of dealing with the text should not hold the text at arm’s length from us, so that it doesn’t come in and mess with our lives.

When I started teaching a long time ago, I was teaching at a seminary where people study for the ministry. No one told me that women weren’t supposed to come. They just started showing up in my class. I only found out later that that was not supposed to happen, that they were not supposed to want to go into the ministry.

But one of the things I’ve learned from teaching women all these years is that, for the most part, those women came to divinity school or seminary because the text of scripture got a hold of them. They grew up in churches with the tradition that said, “Do whatever Jesus tells you to do.” They sang hymns like “Wherever He Leads I’ll Go,” or “I Surrender All.” And nobody ever told them that you were supposed to sing “Wherever He Leads Men Go” or “I Surrender Some.”

They took those words out of the text and applied it to themselves; and, then, when they decided that the words meant moving toward ministry and they got really radical, we said, “Whoops, we didn’t mean to tell you that part of the story.” Those women made me struggle with the text of scripture in ways I had not, and it is still scary to me. In the same way that Jess Moore made me confront racism, those women in my classes (I could name them, some of them you know because they have ministered among you) made me deal with the radical nature of the Christian gospel. “My spirit is poured out on all flesh.”

Context, tradition, text—that’s what a good university, what a good college, what a good liberal arts environment should force us to confront. Miss Winnie Bradford and Mr. Johnny Ramey have been dead for over two decades, but every time I stand and say or sing or pray or lecture a word of God’s good news to the poor, a little piece of them comes tumbling out. By the mid twenty-first century who will

**Benediction**

And now go in peace and as you are going know this: “By the grace of God you have been brought into this world, by the mercy of God you have been sustained to this very moment, and by the love of God, fully revealed in Jesus the Christ, you are being redeemed now and forever more. Amen.”
I first became acquainted with Everett Dean Martin when assigned to survey foundational characters in the adult education movement for a class presentation. My limited experience with the historical figures of this movement resulted in my being assigned a personality with whom I was completely unfamiliar. The professor indicated that I would enjoy this character due to my own background in pastoral ministry. Little did I know the affinity I would feel for this character or the interest his life would evoke in me as I struggle for my own understanding of adult education and its place in an ever-changing world.

In Merriam and Brockett’s (1997) introduction to Adult Education they quote Allison as saying, “The point is that who we are as humans, our very concept of reality, is determined by our histories, by what the past has handed down to us. And those who are most ignorant of their history are the most controlled by it because they are the least likely to understand the sources of their beliefs” (p. 52).

As I began to study the fascinating character of Everett Dean Martin, I began to more fully understand the meaning of this statement. Martin was a man completely committed to the education of adults through what he called “liberal education.” When his book, The Meaning of a Liberal Education, was released in 1926, the president of the Carnegie Corporation proclaimed it as “the most important contribution to the understanding of adult education . . . this far in the United States” (Day & Seckinger, 1987, p. 64). Martin devoted his life to the education of adults. In his thinking, the only hope for humanity was a populace with the ability to think and reason, persons who know not only what they know by why they know it.

Michael Day (1992) conducted a study to investigate the exposure of adult education graduate students to the historical figures of the field’s past. Although half of the students were unfamiliar with many of the contributors to the history of the field, Everett Dean Martin’s book, The Meaning of a Liberal Education, was unknown to 83% of the 187 students who responded to the survey. This book, one
of the first interpretations of adult education, was basically unknown to this audience. When I investigated Malcolm Knowles’ (1977) history of the field, I found one reference to Martin, and that was embedded in a list of presidents of the American Association for Adult Education.

How could this be? Why is this seminal individual virtually ignored amidst the ranks of founders of the adult education movement? Apparently Martin’s wholehearted commitment to liberal education has placed him in juxtaposition with the early proponents of practical education in the eyes of contemporary scholars. Here is an individual virtually dismissed not only in the history of adult education, but also in the contemporary exploration of adult education. The current debate among adult educators as to the direction of our field begs understanding of our past. Martin has a great deal to offer this conversation.

It is the purpose of this paper to investigate Martin’s historical context to understand the influences on his views of adult education. Particular attention will be given to his religious context, something virtually unexplored in the literature. It is my contention that this context directly influences much of Martin’s emphasis on liberal education as a tool in creating a learned populace.

Biographical Sketch

Everett Dean Martin was born July 5, 1880 in Jacksonville, IL. He was the oldest of six children born to Bunker E. and Molly Martin. Although information is scant regarding his early life, Michael Day, the primary historian of Martin’s life, comments that “he was reared in secure and modest, but not affluent, circumstances, in a middle American environment not unlike that of the young Harry Truman” (Day & Seckinger, 1987, p. 65). Martin graduated “Cum Laude” from Illinois College in Jacksonville in 1904 at the age of twenty-four, delivering the salutatory address entitled “College Responsibility.”

Shortly following college Martin entered seminary at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. This was a time of “widespread social, economic, and political upheaval and by the emergence of the ‘Social Gospel’ and the rise of liberalism in the churches” (Day & Seckinger, 1987, p. 65). Martin was ordained by the congregational church and served as pastor of three churches from 1906-1915: First Congregational Church, Lombard, IL (1906-08); People’s Church, Dixon, IL (1908-1910); First Unitarian Church, Des Moines, IA (1911-15). “While serving as a minister, Martin gained regional and national reputation as a thinker and orator” (Day, n.d.,
While serving in Des Moines he also became a columnist for the Des Moines Register and Leader. His popularity and influence on the rise. He was optimistic that society could be transformed through a new kind of person who knows not only what they believe, but how they believe it.

In 1915, his successful life took a radical shift in course. He divorced his wife of eight years and left the professional ministry. He moved to New York and began writing for the New York Globe. Complications stemming from his divorce created a scandal that cost him his position with the Globe and his separation from the professional ministry. He married Persis E. Rowell in New York. The problems of this period had tremendous affect on his health and began a pattern of ill-health that would follow him until his death.

As disastrous as 1915 had been, the following year began a set of new opportunities that would return calm to his life. He began a relationship with the People’s Institute in New York City. This organization, founded by Charles Sprague in 1897, was created with a commitment to societal change through elevation of the working class and immigrant population. This organization was involved in urban improvement through scientific methods of surveys, investigations, social science experiments and urban planning (Stubblefield, 1988). Martin was invited to deliver lectures on modern psychology at the Institute in 1916. In 1917, he was named Assistant to the Acting Director and Secretary of this center for adult education. He became president of the Institute in 1922, and held this position until 1934. During this period (1919-22) he even served as chairman of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures (Rose, 1999).

Throughout his tenure as president Martin often held weekly lectures during the Friday evening lecture series. These lectures, followed with a period of discussion, drew Friday evening crowds in excess of 1000. Here he preached his “secular gospel of adult education” (Day, 1992, p. 24). Martin held lecture series on numerous topics such as: The meaning of an education in the twentieth century; The Jesus story: In light of the science of historical criticism; and Psychology: what it has to teach you about yourself and the world you live in. Harold Stubblefield (1988) says of Martin, “He had the ability to appeal to the lay mind. He used direct and forcible language, and he broke down the subject matter into digestible and interesting forms for persons who had little formal education” (p. 66).

When in 1924 Frederick Keppel of the Carnegie Corporation called a meeting to discuss the direction of the adult education movement, Martin was a key component of that group. Largely due to considerable support of the Carnegie Corporation, the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE) was founded. Martin was an influ-
ential voice in the movement throughout his life, serving the organization as president in 1937. He was best known for his advocacy of the liberal education of adults, which he saw as “an antidote to both the irrationality of the crowd and the power of propaganda” (Rose, 1999, p. 590).

Martin served the People’s Institute until its demise in 1934, due to financial concerns. His commitment to adult education through the People’s Institute focused on the liberal education of the common person through his implementation of numerous lecture series featuring New York’s leading intellectuals, the creation of Reader’s Roundtable Discussion Groups and the School of Philosophy, and his many ventures into the interactive education of the common man to create what he called the “cultured amateur” (Martin, 1926, p. 309).

In 1934 Martin was asked to direct the Department of Social Philosophy at the Cooper Union in New York through a $15,000 per year grant from the Carnegie Corporation through his long-time friend Frederick Keppel. Martin remained in this position until 1936 when he accepted an opportunity to move to California and direct an experimental program in teaching at Claremont Colleges. His move to California was not a successful as expected. His failing health eventually took its toll on Martin and he suffered a fatal heart attack in May 1941 (Day, 1992).

Throughout his life Martin authored twelve books including: The behavior of crowds (1920), The mystery of religion (1924), Psychology, what it has to teach you about yourself and your world (1924), Psychology and its use (1926), The meaning of a liberal education (1926), Liberty (1930), The conflict of the individual and the mass (1932), Civilizing ourselves: Intellectual maturity in the modern world (1932), Farewell to revolution (1935).

The Religious Context
of Martin’s Life

I contend that Martin is misunderstood as a voice for adult education partially because his personal history appears overlooked as a contributing factor to his ideas. Stubblefield (1988) labels Martin an elitist who’s vision was “simply too narrow” (p. 79). Looking back on Martin this might be a simple conclusion, but to more fully understand Martin one must look at his context. In investigating his history I hope to understand the “why” of his seeming elitism.

For the first ten to fifteen years of his adult life Martin was either preparing for, or actively engaged in the work of Pastoral ministry. He was educated in the liberal educational environment of McCormick Theological Seminary and ordained by the Congrega-
tionalist Church, a predominately liberal denomination. He served as pastor of a Unitarian congregation in Des Moines, one of America’s more liberal protestant groups. His education and experience would have trained him to utilize the tools of historical criticism and scientific method as he dealt with theological and practical issues.

The religious world of the early 1900s was a climate of conflict over the basic approaches to the world and especially Christian scripture. Conser (1988) says of this period:

The growth of religious liberalism during the second half of the nineteenth century precipitated an equally vigorous conservative response, a movement that by the 1920s had achieved national prominence. This conservative and evangelical force, in opposing liberalism and especially its modernist wing, drew on a heritage of complaints, including the significance given to historical criticism, the degree of accommodation to cultural change and the relative importance of supernatural faith and religious experience. In the years between 1870 and 1920, a number of heresy trials, forced resignations, and summary firings signaled the growing strength of conservatives in their controversy with religious liberals. (p. 1248)

This surge of conservative response led to a growth of militant fundamentalism in American protestant religious tradition. Fundamentalism is not to be confused with evangelical Christianity, for their tenants are clearly different:

While Fundamentalist-like assumptions can be found in most, if not all, religious traditions, Fundamentalists advanced an absolutist claim to religious truth, and displayed an emphatic intolerance of others that starkly demarcated them from other religiously inspired actors of their era. Fervent, exclusive, religious clarity achieved via an erasure of doubt (justified by the claim that the Bible was the inerrant word of God) was the hallmark trait of religious Fundamentalism. Those who adopted this conviction gradually became referred to within Christian circles as Fundamentalists, due in part to the movement’s close association with a twelve-volume series of essays entitled The Fundamentals (1910-1915). These essays were the initial salvo in a struggle between conservative and liberal Protestant Christians to define the essence of Christianity that endured throughout the twen-
The fundamentalists of Martin’s era were in active “combat” with the liberalism of their day. Marsden calls this identifying trait of fundamentalists a “conspicuous militancy in defending what is regarded as the traditional Protestant Gospel against its major twentieth-century competitors, especially modernism or liberalism in theology, secularism or ‘secular humanism’ in cultural values evolutionary naturalism, Marxism, Socialism, Roman Catholicism, and religious cults” (Marsden, 1988, p. 947). With this large a list of enemies, there were plenty of opportunities for combat.

Fundamentalists insisted that the essential, stable, eternal truths of sacred text were the only fundamentals one could or needed to know. Denying that traditional higher education was necessary to understand biblical texts, they insisted that biblical truths were easily intelligible to any and all. Thus, anti-intellectualism (though not antirationalism) permeated the movement. Higher biblical criticism, Darwin’s theory of evolution, liberalization of gender roles, the suffrage movement, and countless other developments of modernity were targeted by Christian fundamentalists for assault (Brasher, 2001, p. XVI).

The broader appeal of this movement cannot be overstated. “Fundamentalism had a cultural appeal much broader than the number of adherents to its theological manifestos” (Conser, 1988, p. 1248). The movement gained strength among the populace and was part of the social scenery of the day. Billy Sunday a conservative religious icon and one of the leading revivalists of the period spoke of “the bastard theory of evolution” and stated that “science and religion can never be reconciled” (p. 1249).

Two major events occurred in the time prior to Martin’s 1926 release of *The Meaning of a Liberal Education* that are worthy of attention when assessing his influences. The first occurred during his pastoral career and the second the year before the book’s publication. I believe these had direct impact on the ideas formulated in his book and upon his general attitude toward adult education.

*The Fundamentals* (1909–1915) was a series of twelve booklets published with the intention of restating the basic fundamental Christian theological teachings to a world that was believed to be rapidly falling away from such truths. A California oil millionaire named Lyman Stewart (1840–1923) personally funded this project at the cost of $200,000. A total of ninety articles were written by sixty-four different authors from the United States and Europe. The booklets were distributed “free of charge to every pastor, evangelist, mis-
The combative and anti-intellectual attitude that permeates many of the articles is visible in an article entitled “Modern Philosophy” by Philip Mauro (1909). He states:

We may be sure, then, that the persons we find in the professional chairs of our colleges are there by the mandate of the people, who have turned away their ears from the truth and give heed to fables which please their itching ears . . . . Recognizing these facts, which all must admit to be facts, however much they may differ as to the significance of them, it follows that we are living under the dark shadow of the greatest national apostasy that has ever taken place. During all the history of mankind there has never been such a wholesale turning away from the Source of national blessings, in order to take up with the gods of the heathen.

While Martin would have probably concurred on the idea that popular education can be ruined by crowd mentality (Martin, 1920), he would part courses upon the reasoning for the demise of education. Mauro views the repudiation of what he considers classic Christian concepts as being the force that weakens education. Based on this reality education is not to be trusted. Martin, on the other hand, would argue that it is the genuflecting to the status-quo, reinforced by these fundamentalist conceptions, that makes education impotent and incapable of creating intuitive, creative, thinking citizens.

The second event of Martin’s context was the Scopes Trial. The most highly publicized battle in the war between religion and modernism occurred in the small town of Dayton, Tennessee, where John Thomas Scopes was accused of teaching evolution in public school. This was a crime in the state of Tennessee. The trial reached monumental proportions when two high-profile lawyers entered the fray: Clarence Darrow for the defense and William Jennings Bryan for the prosecution. The trial pitted the highly intelligent agnostic Chicago attorney Darrow, hired by the ACLU, against the infamous fundamentalist layman Bryan (Allen, 1959).

In 1922, Bryan had published a book entitled In His Image (Bryan, 1922) where he identified evolution as the “villain of peace” (Allen, 1959). In a 1923, letter to the Chicago Tribune Bryan offered $100 to any university professor who would sign an affidavit that he
was descended from an ape. Darrow responded in the newspaper for Bryan to answer a list of fifty questions concerning the literal account of Biblical creation. Bryan countered by stating, “I decline to turn aside to enter into controversy with those who reject the Bible as Mr. Darrow does” (Stone, 1941, p. 427).

This was a trial for the ages with a self-proclaimed agnostic doing battle for the defense of teaching evolution against a self-confirmed Christian fundamentalist. Allen states, “The Scopes trial, therefore, was a test between two religions, neither of which could feel secure if the other could be demonstrated to have a reasonable basis in fact” (Allen, 1959, p. 40). History has shown that the trial went far beyond the actual litigation concerning Scopes, who was essentially eclipsed by the larger-than-life personalities surrounding him. In the end Scopes was found guilty of breaking the Tennessee statute and fined $100. The verdict was appealed but upheld by the state court.

Martin in Context

I would like to offer that Martin was a product of his environment and in many instances was reacting to the fundamentalism that was growing in popularity in the United States. It is apparent that he held non-intellectual, un-enlightened, non-critical thinking in contempt. In a discussion on the country’s penchant for shortcuts he stated, “People who can read nothing more profound than the tabloid papers are a menace to education. They only retard the progress of any class they enter” (Martin, 1926, p. 17). One can almost visualize the debacle at the Scopes Trial and the media circus that had occurred just months before the publication of Martin’s book. In the midst of this discussion he is arguing that education takes time and the process is a life-long endeavor that distains shortcuts. Martin’s attitude toward those who menace education derives from his basic contention that a liberal education will lead to self-created ideas. Shortcuts presuppose that someone else has done the work and speaks as an authority, something Martin viewed as a growing trend in his post World-War 1, fundamentalist-influenced society.

Martin’s lack of patience was for those who refused to think for themselves, or more correctly, for education that failed to teach students to think for themselves. “Much that passes for adult education serves only to make people more superficial and opinionated than they were before” (p. 19). He saw this as one of the most dangerous issues in society, for this led to the “crowd behavior” he so greatly feared. “Religious propagandists will continue repeating an obsolete
Martin (1926) makes direct reference to the brewing hostility between religion and science in the following discussion:

There is for instance, the controversy now raging in parts of America between science and religion. Many educated persons say there in no conflict between religion and science. In their own thought there may be none, because they do not mean by either of these terms what the man on the street means by them. To him religion is a system of dogma based upon divine revelation. He cannot conceive of religion without belief in the stories related in the Bible or belief in the teachings of his church. By belief he means the firm conviction that alleged historical events and miracles happened just as related. He conceives of science also as a body of doctrine according to which the specific teachings of religion are held to be untrue. Stated in these terms conflict is inevitable, a person who has scientific knowledge cannot be religious, and the issue must be fought to the end (p. 116).

It was Martin’s conviction that the conflict stems from a clash of world-views. For the “thinking mind…science is a method, not primarily a system of doctrine” (p. 116). When the presuppositions of the religious “man on the streets” meet the trained mind, a misunderstanding of world-views is inevitable.

In his section entitled “Education vs. Propaganda,” Martin offers a direct look at this clash of world-views. He speaks directly to the issue of fundamentalist teaching in general, and the Scopes Trial in particular when he states: The hostility in the West and South toward the teaching of any account of origin of man than that contained in the Book of Genesis is not new. It is merely the giving of legislative support to religious dogma which strikes us as new. And that has also happened many times in history. Popular religion has always watched education with jealous eyes.

However, there is one factor in the present fundamentalist attack upon the theory of evolution which seems to have escaped general notice. When those who conceived of teaching as imparting of doctrine—let us say of special creation or the authority of the Bible—found that students were being made acquainted with biological science and its various hypotheses regarding the evolution of species, they could not understand that science could be taught in any other spirit than that of theology. They still thought of teaching as imposing upon the uncritical student mind a system of belief, a rival creed but
still something alleged to be final truth, which must be accepted on authority. People who speak in this manner of teaching do not know what education is. How could a scientist go about teaching evolution in this way? Nobody but a propagandist ever teaches a theory . . . I suspect it was not the doctrine of evolution so much as permitting the student to draw his own conclusions from the facts that most disturbed the advocates of religious dogma . . . most people seem to have accepted without comment the fundamentalist notion of what teaching is. The whole meaning of education is involved in this issue. Education is not the substitution of new creeds for old (pp. 56-57).

Martin’s interesting depiction of fundamentalist teaching as paradigmatic reveals some of the reasoning behind his concern over a liberal education. Clashing paradigms often lead to misunderstanding. What Martin considered an untrained mind is destined to misunderstand the intentions of scientific method. Therefore, the appropriate response is to develop the cultured amateur.

The “Elitist” Claim

The virtual dismissal of Martin by historians of adult education stems from his perceived “extremist views” concerning liberal education. Stubblefield (1988), a vocal critic of Martin, offers a good synopsis of Martin’s intent on making liberal education the aim of adult education. He feared the crowd, and liberal education was the only hope for salvation from crowd mentality and rampant public opinion. To achieve this aim, adult education would have to struggle against standardization and provide teachers methods for working with adults as opposed to children. “Education was for everyone, and there was hope that some—including the college educated—might select for themselves the superior way” (p. 75). The “superior way” manifested itself through: 1) getting rid of delusions and forming one’s own opinions, 2) examining presuppositions, 3) grow in freedom and tolerance, and 4) appreciation of human worth. Overcoming the “delusion of infallibility”, one could achieve “education.”

Stubblefield’s critique of Martin focuses not on his ideas, but on his “openly elitist” attitude and approach to the task of education. He states, “Martin’s attitude toward common people was paradoxical. On the one hand, he worked with them for almost a quarter of a century, and he held out adult education as their hope. On the other hand, he held them in contempt, did not believe them capable of governing themselves, and wanted them governed by an intellectual leadership of the cultured” (p.71).

In 1934 discussion with Lyman Bryson regarding the aims of adult education, Martin argued for utilizing classics like Plato and
Aristotle in the process of education. Bryson questioned the usefulness of these works in addressing the problems of the common person’s daily life, and Martin replied that it is the role of education to broaden the horizon in order that the student might have many tools at his/her disposal. He stated, “I believe that we should bring people’s minds into contact with the greatest and wisest and most independent thinkers of all time” (Bryson & Martin, 1934, p. 397). In this conversation surrounding the classically trained mind Martin said:

. . . if you do not believe that there are a few people whose esthetic, intellectual, and ethical judgments are superior to those of the great multitude, then may I ask you why you are attempting to educate people at all? Don’t we presuppose that education will produce precisely that sort of superiority? (p. 398).

For Martin education is not animal training, propaganda or even book learning. It is the enabling of the student to become what he/she could be if only allowed to utilize the thinking and creative ability found within. The tools for this process needed to be grounded in classic liberal education. But education was not something for the elite as clearly demonstrated in his critique of Scholasticism, it was for everyone. “Adult education is a way of living which should be open to all who care for it for its own sake” (Martin, 1926, p. 3). Martin clearly articulated this when he said:

To me the educated person is not one who can merely do something, whether it is giving a lecture on the poetry of Horace, running a train, trying a lawsuit, or repairing the plumbing. He is one who also knows the significance of what he does, and he is one who cannot and will not do certain things. He has acquired a set of values. He has a ‘yes’ and a ‘no’, and they are his own. He has learned what to prefer, for he has lived in the presence of things that are preferable. I do not mean that he is merely trained in the conventions of polite society or the conformities of crowd morality. He will doubtless depart from both in many things. Whether he conforms or not, he has learned enough about human life on this planet to see his behavior in the light of a body of experience and the relation of his actions to situations as a whole. Such a person has obtained a liberal education and it makes little difference whether he has been trained in philosophy or mechanics. He is being transformed from an automaton to a thinking being (p. 28).
For Martin, this “thinking being” is the end product of true adult education. “Education, the development of people, is not a means, it is itself the true end of civilization. . . . While education is not for anything, indirectly, it improves everything that people do. . . . Animal training may give one the means to make a living; liberal education gives living a meaning” (p. 44). The product of adult education then is what Martin referred to a “liberally educated man: a mellow amateur, competent and well informed, but with all natural and human, wholly at ease with his knowledge and master of his technique; one whose thinking is play and whose mind does not squeak as it runs along” (p. 66).

Conclusion: Martin’s Views and Contemporary Adult Education

It would be difficult to argue against the reality of the growth of conservatism in the United States at the turn of the millennium. Ultra conservative radio hosts maintain the highest ratings of all talk-show hosts (Walley, 2002). More conservative shows like FOX News are growing in popularity (Battiglio, 2003). Along with this shift, Christian fundamentalism is also on the rise. Fundamentalist churches are growing by astounding rates with a vast majority of mega-churches adhering to a fundamentalist viewpoint. At the present time Carson-Newman College is embroiled in debate regarding the teaching of Biblical Creationism and evolution in biology classes! (Clark, 2003). What goes around comes around!

I believe a voice like Martin’s needs to be heard in the midst of the present world situation. Contemporary adult education continues to move toward either radical social change issues or practical technological training (Merriam & Brockett, 1997), and liberal education moves further into the background. Who is going to engage the present reality if no one has the tools to do so? In a recent interview at Carson-Newman College concerning general education requirements a student said, “I don’t think there should be any requirements outside of the major. I understand why there are general requirements, but I don’t think they contribute to the program” (Fike, 2003, p. 6). This monococular vision is the type of thinking Martin feared, for it disregards the liberal education that opens the mind sets the learner free from the uncritical thinking of the crowd.

Intellectual theorists like William Perry (1970) argue that independent thinking is not developed until the young adult years. According to this theory, it is not possible for individuals to entertain thoughts that are uniquely their own until early adulthood. Until that
time it is the role of authority figures to provide “truth.” If this is the case, what other field but adult education can empower the populace with the tools they need to deal with such questions as we encounter today?

Martin would argue that the ends of contemporary adult education movements are only attained through the process of independent thinking. As “outdated” as Martin would appear, his voice is needed as we hurtle into the 21st century with its combating issues. What is needed is Martin’s “educated person”, one who knows not only how to do things but why he/she does them. If the challenges of the future are to be met in light of the pull of popular “thinking” the task must be attacked by people who are not led by “authorities”, ones who can assess the situation and discover their own critically attained answers.

References


Pelagius, Patrick and Paganism:
The Historical Development of Irish Christianity Compared with Kate Horsley’s
Confessions of a Pagan Nun
David N. Goff

Gwynneve, the protagonist in Kate Horsley’s Confessions of a Pagan Nun, is caught in the clash of cultures between the native Irish Druidical religion, Pelagian Christianity, and Roman Catholic Christianity, presented in the novel as introduced into Ireland by Saint Patrick. This conflict works beautifully in Horsley’s novel, and she has clearly done extensive research, bringing to life the people of Ireland at the beginning of the 6th Century.

In Confessions, Gwynneve is a pagan Irish girl who leaves her village after the death of her mother in a quest to become the disciple of the druid Giannon. She travels for a time with a wandering troupe of gleemen where she is exposed to, and learns to admire, the Pelagian Christianity of the troupe’s leader. Eventually she finds Giannon and becomes first his disciple, and then his wife and a druid herself.

Later, after Giannon disappears and is presumed dead, she is converted to Roman Catholic Christianity through the efforts of the monk Mongan. After learning the Christian way from Mongan, she becomes a nun of the monastery of Saint Brigit where she is employed at copying the writings of Saints Augustine and Patrick. While copying manuscripts, Gwynneve also secretly writes her own Confessions in which the story of her life is interwoven and contrasted with her experiences in the monastery of Saint Brigit.

Through Gwynneve’s sufferings, the reader experiences the conflict between the peaceful druids, the gentle Pelagian Christians who live in peace alongside them, and the domineering Augustinian Catholic monks who will accept no deviation from their beliefs or practices. They are willing to use torture or even murder to impose their will upon any who oppose them.

There is, however, a puzzle, and perhaps an anachronism in Horsley’s perspective on the development of Irish Christianity. The problem lies in the fact that centuries later there was a conflict between the so-called “Celtic” Church and its Roman Catholic counterpart over
issues of faith and practice. If Patrick was indeed the emissary of the Roman Church, and its most successful evangelist as the Irish proclaim, why did a style of Christianity develop among the Irish that differed from that of Rome?

Differences in church order, tonsure, calendar, liturgy, the role of women, and the rules, purposes, and nature of monastic life divided the Celtic Church from the Roman Church until the Synod of Whitby in 664. If Patrick was a representative of the Roman Church, could those changes have developed? It is more likely that instead, as depicted in Horsley’s novel, the Roman system would have overthrown the Celtic system much earlier (ca. 500 instead of 664) and that the unique and beautiful style of Christianity that came to be known as “Celtic” may never have developed.

There is a greater possibility of the type of conflict described by Horsley taking place in 5th and 6th century Britain, due to Britain’s long status as a province of Rome. There is in fact historical evidence of Catholic suppression of Pelagianism in Britain. It is questionable, however, in light of the later monastic movement, whether Ireland experienced a significant conflict with the Roman Catholic Church prior to 664, although it is certainly possible that there may have been some compromise reached between the Pelagians and the Augustinians.

It is worth exploring the possibility that early Irish Christianity developed from an interaction or synthesis between druidism and Pelagian and/or Augustinian Christianity, resulting in a faith that exemplified the best of both religions. If there was a historical Saint Patrick, then there remains the possibility that he may have been Pelagian, rather than Augustinian in his theology, or perhaps a Pelagian sympathizer. Although some legends suggest he was a disciple of Saint Germanus who was sent to Britain to oppose the Pelagian heresy, Patrick’s own writings give no indication of this.

The examination of this historical puzzle will involve exploring elements of the beliefs and practices of the druids, the Pelagian Christians, and the Roman (Augustinian) Christians. It will also require an investigation of the historical conflict between Pelagius (probably a Briton or an Irishman) and Augustine (a Roman), a conflict that led to Pelagian theology being declared a heresy by the Roman Catholic Church. Finally, there should be some scrutiny of Patrick’s mission and the later conflict, which was formally settled at the Synod of Whitby in 664, between the Celtic Church and the Roman Church.

The druids were the priesthood of the ancient Celtic religion. Although popular culture (including modern neopaganism, for example) makes many claims about druidic beliefs, since they did not put their beliefs into writing, there is little concrete information available according to the best scholarship on the subject. All the information
available comes from the interpretation of archaeological evidence, writings about them by political enemies, like Julius Caesar, their religious opponents, the Christian priesthood, or traditions recorded by later Irish writers (Piggott 16-33).

Recognizing these limitations, there are some assertions that can be made about the druids, which have a fascinating correlation to the subject of this study. Piggott goes on to describe the druids as “a high-ranking class of learned, non-combatant, respected and holy men” (114). He quotes Caesar as stating that they had the power to excommunicate individuals from participation in religious activities and society as a whole, thus rendering them outcasts (115). They were preservers and teachers of knowledge, they applied that knowledge to law and the administration of justice, and they supervised religious rituals and activities. Does not this description sound fascinatingly similar to the Catholic priesthood or to the Irish monastics of the medieval period?

It would seem that the transition from a druid to a Christian priest or monk would be very much in tune with their training and abilities, and as natural as that of the early Jewish priests who became apostles, bishops, and priests in the early days of the Christian church. Thus Horsley’s Gwynneve and Giannon are certainly believable characters as druid converts to Christianity. Is there any evidence to support this idea of druid converts to Christianity?

Lewis Spence suggests that the ancient British cult of the Culdees is strongly linked to the druids. He states that, “if they practiced a species of Christianity, their doctrine still retained a large measure of the Druidic philosophy, and that, indeed, they were the direct descendants of the Druidic caste” (62). Their practices were very different from the Roman priestly tradition. They married, abbots held office by hereditary right, dwelt in colleges, celebrated Easter at a different time, had a different form of tonsure, baptized infants by immersion, opposed the doctrine of the real presence, denied the worship of saints and angels, condemned the Mass, paid no respect to holy relics, and refused to pray for the dead (62).

Spence further argues that the Culdees flourished longest in areas that had once been Druidic strongholds and that the Druids baptized children and wore a tonsure similar to that later worn by the Culdees (63). The Druids had a great concern for law and justice, as well as being proficient in astronomy and calendrical computations (122). The Culdees were condemned as heretics in 813 at the second Council of Chalons. The elements that link the Druids with the Culdees also are reminiscent of the Pelagians, as will soon be demonstrated. First, however, it would be useful to briefly examine Pelagius and his controversy with Augustine.
Augustine was born in 354 at Thagaste in North Africa. Pelagius was born ca. 352-54, probably somewhere in Britain (Myres 21), although Origen refers to him as a Scot (Irishman). According to Joseph Pohle,

While the most trustworthy witnesses, such as Augustine, Orosius, Prosper, and Marius Mercator, are quite explicit in assigning Britain as his native country, as is apparent from his cognomen of Brito or Britannicus, Jerome (Praef. in Jerem., lib. I and III) ridicules him as a "Scot" (loc. cit., "habet enim progeniem Scoticae gentis de Britannorum vicinia"), who being "stuffed with Scottish porridge" (Scotorum pultibus proe-gravatus) suffers from a weak memory. Rightly arguing that the "Scots" of those days were really the Irish, H. Zimmer ("Pelagius in Ireland", p.20, Berlin, 1901) has advanced weighty reasons for the hypothesis that the true home of Pelagius must be sought in Ireland, and that he journeyed through the southwest of Britain to Rome (par 2).

Pelagius journeyed to Rome circa 380 to study law. Shortly thereafter, Augustine came to Milan to study rhetoric. By 386, Augustine had been baptized by Ambrose and Pelagius was referred to by Jerome as having been transplanted from the marketplace to the church. By 396, Pelagius was referred to as a monk and Augustine was the bishop of the city of Hippo in his native Africa (Myres 22). For the next 15-16 years, each of these powerful leaders developed according to his own particular concerns and interests.

Pelagius was deeply concerned with ethics and obedience; Augustine focused on sin and grace. After the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410, Pelagius went to North Africa and then on to Palestine. Celestius, one of his chief supporters, came into conflict with a group of African bishops who condemned his doctrines in 411-12. Thus began the conflict that came to be known as the Pelagian heresy.

Augustine and Jerome, two of the greatest theologians of their day, wrote against Pelagius, although with different emphases (Myres 23). As Evans explains,

To Augustine he is the enemy of the grace of God; he has made the cross of Christ to no effect; he has introduced novelty and heresy in his denial of original sin. To Jerome he is the continuers of the perfectionism of Origen; his doctrine of sinlessness brings with it the absurd and blasphemous claim that man may be made equal to God (66).
In 412 Augustine wrote a “courteous and cordial note” to Pelagius, which offers no hint of the conflict to come (Evans 80). Yet, the controversy began the next year. Pelagius was condemned as a heretic by African bishops in 413, but was affirmed to be within the faith by two councils of Palestinian bishops in 415, the same year that Augustine made him “a specific target of attack” (Evans 4). Pope Innocent declared him a heretic in 417, but Pope Zosimus, his successor, overturned that decision and declared him to be orthodox later the same year. In 418, under pressure from Augustine and the African bishops, Zosimus reversed his decision and declared Pelagius a heretic, and Emperor Honorius added secular penalties to his spiritual censure. Pelagius died in obscurity, probably in Egypt, sometime between 423-429, and Augustine died in 430 (Myres 23). The controversy that erupted between them, however, continued for many years and remains a subject of theological debate.

Although the issues between Augustine and Pelagius were multi-faceted, they centered upon the issues of freedom versus determinism and grace versus works. Pelagius was a strong advocate of ethical behavior and free will. He believed that human beings are rational creatures, possessed of a natural goodness, as part of God’s creative grace, responsible for their own behavior, and capable therefore of making the choice to behave correctly. Pelagius abhors the notion of original sin, considering it to be unjust. Augustine, on the other hand, believed that mankind is tainted by original sin and is so corrupt that there is no capacity for making a correct moral or ethical choice (Evans 92-96). In light of the importance of the law to the Druids, it is significant that this emphasis on the justice of God was so important to the British (or Irish?) Pelagius.

It is evident that the Pelagian style of Christianity was well established in Britain by the 5th century. In 429, Germanus, a bishop from Gaul, traveled to Britain for the first of two missions to combat the Pelagian heresy (Deanesly 24). Although his mission was deemed successful, he found it necessary to renew the battle and return in 444 or 445 (26). Thus there is solid historical evidence of the interaction in Britain of both Pelagian and Roman (Augustinian) Christianity, as described in Kate Horsley’s *Confessions of a Pagan Nun*.

Furthermore, the Druids were also still a powerful religious force among the British and Irish people in the time of Patrick’s ministry in Ireland (ca. 431-462) and were still extant in the British Isles as late as 563, when the Irish monk Columba who claimed “Christ is my Druid” waged “magical” battles against the Druids of Iona (Spence 65). It is clear, therefore, that there was a distinctive difference in Christianity as practiced by the Celts in Britain (later Wales), Scotland,
and Ireland. Deanesly refers to it as a “sub-Roman Christianity whose defenders were capable of great sacrifices” (32).

Pelagius was undoubtedly the progenitor of at least some of this distinctiveness as noted above. O’Croinin notes “the surprising frequency with which medieval Irish writers referred to the heresiarch Pelagius and the extent to which they borrowed from his works” (505). Here we see Irish Pelagianism is linked in a Papal letter in 640 to the issue of when to celebrate Easter which, along with the question of the proper tonsure (monastic haircut), were among the major points of division between the Roman and Celtic Churches until the Synod of Whitby. It is intriguing that this calendrical issue was so important to the Celtic Church, particularly in light of the importance placed on astronomy and the “considerable competence in calendrical skills” of the Druids (Piggott 123).

Another link between the Pelagians and what has been referred to as the Celtic Church is the relative value of women. The Confessions of Augustine detail his sexual conflicts and his eventual overcoming of the temptations of sexual sin. Roman Catholic monasticism grew out of an emphasis on celibacy for the clergy that was a result of the Augustinian view of original sin. This may be contrasted with the views of Pelagius who, although emphasizing morality, was known as a teacher of women and a supporter of marriage against the antifeminist views of both Jerome and Augustine (Evans 40-42). The Celtic Church, like Pelagius, recognized the worth of women, revering Saint Brigit as “the female counterpart of Patrick” and “an example of the Celtic respect for women’s spiritual gifts and legal rights” (Mulhern par. 4).

The final piece of supporting evidence that links the Druids with the Pelagians in what we have been describing as the Celtic Church is the issue of tonsure. In an excellent article about archaeological studies of the Druids, Natalie Venclova asserts:

> It seems to have escaped attention so far that the “band” hairstyle shows some of the elements of the tonsure of the Irish clericals and monks of the early Christian Church. This tonsure, known to have been different from that of the Roman clericus, is recorded as having been derived from the druidic tonsure (466).

It would seem, therefore, based particularly on the issue of the calendar, the role of women, and the matter of tonsure that both Pelagian and Druidical sympathies were still extant in the Celtic Church and persisted until formally resolved at the Synod at Whitby.
It has been established, therefore, that Kate Horsley’s *Confessions of a Pagan Nun* is a well-researched historical novel, accurately reflecting the religious tensions in Britain between the fifth and seventh centuries. The only question that remains is whether the same tensions existed in Ireland during this period.

Patrick was born in Britain in 390 (Deanesly 8) and is most known for his ministry in Ireland, ca. 431-462. Although his *Confession* is still extant, we know little about his life other than that he was the son of a married clergyman (a Deacon), enslaved for a time by the Irish, regained his freedom, and returned as a missionary to bring them to the knowledge of Christ.

Although he is now claimed by the Catholic Church (Moran), no evidence exists in his *Confession* of his participation in a theological controversy. In fact he calls himself “a sinner, unlearned,” admitting his lack of learning, which he attributes to his enslavement (Hughes 34). What he lacks in learning, however, he seems to make up in energy, tirelessly traveling across the country of Ireland proclaiming his faith. In fact, it would seem that he adapted himself to the Irish ways, as indicated by the following description of his ministry:

Patrick himself was constantly on the move, and he traveled with a retinue of the sons of princes, rather as any important Irishman might have traveled with a retinue suited to his rank. Generosity was essential to prestige in a heroic society, so Patrick made gifts not only to his own retinue but also to rulers and brehons (Hughes 35).

It would seem, therefore, that Patrick himself was the product of a Pelagian (or at least nonRoman) church. Although he may have been trained in Augustinian Christianity, there is no evidence of his concern with combating Pelagianism or any other form of heterodoxy. His concern, rather, was to communicate the message of Christ to the Irish people; and he seems to have done so with a great deal of success and very little controversy. The great Celtic Church, still steeped in many aspects of its Pelagian roots, seems to have captured the evangelical fervor of Patrick as evinced by the later spread of monastic communities throughout Europe.

Kate Horsley’s *Confessions of a Pagan Nun* is a beautifully crafted and well-researched tale that accurately reflects the cultural conflicts that took place between Pelagian Christianity, Druidism, and Augustinian Christianity. The characters are well-rounded and believable representations of Celts who have moved from Druidism to Christianity. The only significant flaw in the novel is that she has set the story in Ireland rather than in Britain.
If she had simply translated the character of Patrick to that of Germanus who came from Gaul to Britain to stamp out Pelagianism, her story would have been not only beautifully written, but also historically accurate. Fortunately for the Irish, but not for Horsley, Patrick’s mission seems to have been a peaceful one. It united the Pelagians with the Christianized Druids and opened the door for a more tolerant style of Christianity in Ireland, which was more readily united with the Roman Church centuries later. Despite this historical flaw, however, it is a fine novel.

Works Cited


V. Laniel Chapman ('57)
2003-2004 Distinguished Alumnus

Honored for the Carson-Newman legacy of excellence and servant leadership he has exhibited in his lifetime professional and public service achievements, his commitment to Christian higher education, and for his deep loyalty and active support of his alma mater.

My decision to attend Carson-Newman College changed my life forever. Carson-Newman is more than an institution of higher education; it is family with a capital F-A-M-I-L-Y. It is a place where the values you learned as a child and one’s faith are reinforced by attending a Christian college where education and religion establish a strong foundation to prepare you for the future.

I was born in Greenville County, South Carolina, and moved to Pelzer when I was six years old. I attended Pelzer High School where I played football, basketball, and baseball. After graduating from high school I attended North Greenville Junior College where I played football and graduated with an Associates Degree in Liberal Arts. In 1953, Roy Harmon, Head Coach of Carson-Newman recruited me to play football at Carson-Newman. In those days as part of recruiting you would scrimmage with the team. The football scrimmages were hard but it taught you how to be a team player. I was preparing myself to attend Carson-Newman, when five days before I was to leave for Tennessee, I received greetings from Uncle Sam telling me the United States Army needed me at that time.

Instead of traveling to the mountains of Tennessee, I went to Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina. From 1953 until 1955 I was in the Army, proudly serving my country as a soldier. My profession at that time was military policeman. Upon being honorably discharged from the Army, I contacted Coach Harmon to see if my scholarship was still available, and he told me it was available, if I could make the team. This required me to go through more scrimmages, and let me assure you that the players of Carson-Newman did not want to give up...
their position on the team.

At that time, I believe, thirteen players from South Carolina were on the traveling squad. I was offered a scholarship to attend Carson-Newman and play football for the Eagles. Two individuals were instrumental in leading my life along the right path—Head Coach Roy Harman and Athletic Director Frosty Holt. These two men helped me turn my program around and make life choices based upon knowledge, teamwork, and faith. They taught me that hard work in conjunction with a strong faith in God is the path to success.

While attending Carson-Newman and playing football I made friends that I could always count on. They are friends who have always been there for me—Dal Shealy, Director of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Charlie King, Former Coach of the Carson Newman Eagles, and others too numerous too mention. After graduating Carson Newman, I attended the University of Georgia working on a Masters Degree with the intention of becoming a teacher and coach.

In the fall of 1957, I was employed as an assistant football coach and taught history at Darlington High School in Darlington, South Carolina. Our record was 10-1 that year. At the end of that year I enrolled in the University of South Carolina School of Law, because I had the GI Bill and had been a military police officer. After graduating from law school, I taught and coached one more year at Summerton High School and then returned to Belton, South Carolina, to practice law.

I met my wife, Vivian, when I attended North Greenville College; and we were married in 1957. We have two wonderful daughters, Lisa and Gina, five grand-daughters, and one grandson that I am very proud of. This is my family and it is my desire to instill in them the values which I learned at Carson-Newman.

We moved to Belton in 1962, and I started my law practice. I had only been practicing law a short time when G. Ross Anderson, Jr., an outstanding trial lawyer, now a United States District Court Judge, made me a partner and educated me in the practice of law on a daily basis. We have been close personal friends throughout my legal career.

I have had a wonderful career in the legal profession and I have been blessed with many opportunities. I have met many people across the United States that have made my life better. My resume spells out the positions that I have held and opportunities I have had to serve my fellow man. I have had the opportunity to practice with numerous attorneys, but one stands out, Bruce A. Byrholdt. He is not only my law partner, he is my best friend. Bruce has made the practice of law most enjoyable for me because he is part of my family.

As I said earlier, attending and graduating from Carson-Newman College made me a member of a truly outstanding family.
Supporting Carson-Newman has made my life better, for the principles it stands for and my association with the people that work here has had a major influence on my life, whether they realize it or not. I want to thank my family members for all of their love and support throughout the years, Vivian, you have always walked next to me in facing life’s problems and celebrating life’s rewards, I thank you. I also want to thank Carson-Newman College for providing me with the Christian education to succeed in my profession but, more importantly, to succeed in life. I challenge the alumni and students of Carson-Newman College to always be part of this FAMILY.

As part of the Carson-Newman family, it is your duty to support this fine institution of Christian education. You have the duty to support our school with financial resources, with your time, but, most importantly, with your commitment to keep Carson-Newman College at the top of all private colleges. First in education, first in athletics, and first in alumni support.

Thank you, Carson-Newman.

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“Two, Maybe Three Cents”

Ronald L. Jenkins ('74)
2003-2004 Distinguished Alumnus

Nominated for his embodiment of Carson-Newman’s mission of scholarship and learning as evidenced by his highly successful pedagogical skills, administrative and professional leadership and his meticulous first-rate and notable scientific research.

Carson-Newman is a special place. It is a unique community. It took me many years to realize this and to fully appreciate my C-NC experience.

As a student C-NC taught me many lessons, some from professors and some from my peers. From my peers I learned to like everyone no matter how different. Debbie Cathy was so beautiful. The eyes of Judy Tarr sparkled like stars. Janie Osborn thought she had bewitching powers. John Chapman was so smart. Greg Sharp was such a nice guy. And Howard Jewell . . . well, he was Howard. The goodness of Jennie Mahoney, who was my date for nearly three years to C-NC functions, helped me to be a better person. The friendships among the C-NC students have been the hallmark of this Christian community.
Comparing the mentors I have had from graduate school and medical centers, the C-N faculty were unique in that they sincerely cared about their students. In English Composition 101, I luckily registered for Henrietta Jenkins’ section. This class was tough for me. I really hated writing and going to that class. At the end of the term, my grade bordered the C/D cutoff.

What kind of future did this kid have if he couldn’t write? Ms. Jenkins pulled me to the side and said, “Ronnie, you are making a D in English. However, I do not want to give you that grade. I’ll make a deal with you. If you come every Wednesday this next semester and write a theme for me and then we grade it together, you can improve this grade.” What did Ms. Jenkins see? Was it our common surname? Was it that she saw some potential in this kid? For whatever reason, thank goodness for her kindness and caring.

My interest in biology was sparked by Joe Chapman’s general biology class. It was his excitement about biology that was so shocking to this freshman business major. I did not know that people got excited about little critters and membrane transport and DNA. Dr. Chapman showed me that it was alright to ponder “life” at every lever.

Then, there was Will Cloyd, esteemed professor of biology. From his class in entomology my passion for the study of the invertebrates was kindled. But he did the same in anatomy and histology. Will Cloyd’s greatest impact on me was something that is never overtly taught. He exercised the creative part of my brain of critically examining and asking the right question. In essence, he taught me the fun of experiments and the fulfillment of discovery.

It started with an independent study in which we examined the effectiveness of a new pesticide on ticks. I have been doing some form of biological research ever since and on an array of topics from endocrine disruptors in the environmental to medicinal botany to jumping spiders.

At the time I did not realize that the open doors of my teachers were so unusual. Even the president’s door was open. During my junior year, THE PRESIDENT called me into his office. I still have that memo. Walking into his office was the most unsettling, if not scariest, thing I had done. It was a relief to find out that I was not in trouble; he only wanted me to serve on a committee to study the status of women.

I don’t remember anything about our discussion of the committee, but I do remember his question “Have you seen any freshwater sponges lately?” and the sponge stories that followed. How did a sponge biologist get to be President? Years later, Dr. Fincher introduced me to Samford University which by fortuitous events eventually became my home. During the years that I chaired the biology depart-
ment there, I routinely sought and received advice from this previous biology chair.

It was C-NC that made me a generalist in the sciences. I now realize that generalists make the best and most creative scientists. I did not realize this for another ten years. My graduate studies turned me into a specialist. My post-doctoral work narrowed me to a dangerously myopic level. For nearly ten years all I knew was denovo purine nucleotide metabolism in diabetic heart!

In 1985, a new technician assisting me in the perfusion of beating rat hearts within a phosphorus-NMR (something I had been doing for more than two years) asked me, “So, Dr. J. there’s a better way of doing this?” The conversation continued but in the end I realized that there are many ways of looking at things. You can get so focused that you can only think and do things one way. I realized then that a scientist has to be holistic. You need to know something about most everything if you are going to really understand a problem. This includes more than science but also logic, philosophy, sociology, religion and more. My teachers at C-NC were right.

Because I am limited to five minutes and Suzanne is giving me the evil eye, I must close in saying that my goal in life was realized at Carson-Newman. I wanted to be like Joe; Chapman that is. Joe was a true mentor with unlimited patience with knuckle-headed students. You could tell that he really liked helping us grow up in every way.

Ohhh, I’m not through yet, Suzanne, I cannot imagine why I have been given this recognition. You know who really deserves this more than I? Helen Jenkins, my mom. Then Marshall Jenkins, my dad. And there are my aunt, Barbara Deal, and uncle, Zack Deal, who deserve it more. And Cousin Becky, too. So, if I accept this recognition, I must share it. Without their commitment to C-NC, I would not have come here. I’m sure Dr. Netherton has already added up the tuition dollars from this family and adjusted for inflation over the last two generations! He needs to sharpen his pencil because the third generation is already here at C-NC.
Words cannot adequately express my gratitude for the role Carson-Newman College’s faculty and students have played in my life, just as words fail in my expressions of appreciation for my family and friends. It is my belief that every blessing comes from God, and God has certainly blessed me by surrounding me with outstanding parents, grandparents and other family, friends and mentors, many of whom are linked in some way with Carson-Newman.

My parents and grandparents were my first and strongest mentors, and they provided me with most of the guidance I needed as a child and teenager. They, along with many teachers and ministers in our local churches and schools, provided me with the knowledge, social skills, and discipline to form the beliefs I have held and currently hold, and the courage to apply those beliefs to my everyday walk with Christ.

Carson-Newman was where I “blossomed.” The environment of growth provided me the opportunity to not only be who I was comfortable being with the upbringing I enjoyed, but it provided me the opportunity to become the person I yearned to be; a stronger servant leader. Through many excellent programs, studies and organizations on campus and off of campus, I was challenged, and frequently challenged myself to be the person I was deciding to become. The Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) helped evolve an enlisted medic into an officer.

The Baptist Student Union (now Baptist Collegiate Ministries) and its many ministries helped evolve a young man called to do mission work into a missionary serving as a mission team leader, and on the first mission team officially allowed inside the Soviet Union in 1990. And, other organizations like Student Government Association, Circle K, Officers Christian Fellowship, the Resident Assistant program, and even intramural athletics provided additional leadership opportunities, the lessons from which I still use today.

Off campus, the Central Heights Baptist Church and my pastors Dr. Earl McCosh and Rev. Carl Ogle mentored me in ministry providing me opportunities to serve in my first church leadership positions outside of a church youth group. The Tennessee Army National
Guard allowed me to serve as a platoon leader and acting company executive officer as a nineteen and twenty year-old ROTC cadet. And, Carson-Newman’s Campus Minister Jim Wilson showed me, and provided me numerous opportunities to serve and lead in off-campus ministries, and mentored me in that servant leadership.

And since graduated from Carson-Newman, the lessons learned there are used daily, whether commanding an Army unit with the mission to search for and destroy weapons of mass destruction, or a government contractor developing terrorism interdiction and warning decision support systems for our intelligence community, or a deacon chairperson serving as a servant leader in a time of great growth and ministry in a local church.

Please, allow me to share the greatest compliment I ever received while a student at Carson-Newman College. It came from a fellow student, Sean Laird, when he pulled me aside and said “If Carson-Newman were a man, he’d be you.” May I ever live up to that compliment and that challenge.

The awarding of the “Outstanding Young Alumnus Award” is accepted as an affirmation that I’ve met the challenge thus far, but I expect that God, the great Dream Giver has many more dreams in store, with many more challenges. And, I know that God will continue to direct my path if I continue to look to Him. That will be my testament to Carson-Newman’s contribution to my life, and to my family’s and friends’ contributions, as well.
Homosexuality: A Christian Perspective

Rebekah McMahan
[Directed by Don H. Olive, Sr.]

Homosexuality is a prevalent and passionate issue in today’s society. With the controversy of ordaining gay bishops in the Episcopal Church and the question of gay marriage on both coasts, churches are compelled to make a faithful response. Silence is not an option. Too many Christians extract a few verses from the Bible referring to homosexual topics and assume the Bible is condemning all homosexual behavior. With that assumption made, they believe homosexuality is wrong, disgusting, and a damning sin.

In interpreting the Bible it is a common practice not to pay enough attention to the cultural and literary context of a text. To comprehend particular verses it is imperative to understand the context in which they are embedded. Being sensitive to context heightens the interpreter’s awareness of multiple layers and angles of meaning.

On Carson-Newman’s campus I have noticed both quick condemnation of homosexuality and the lack of contextual interpretation of the Bible. Walking around campus on a normal day, I hear “gay-jokes,” and the use of disrespectful and offensive words like “fag” or “faggot.” These pronouncements have sparked my interest in discovering what the Bible actually says about homosexuality. Accordingly, after reviewing some of the possible causes of homosexuality, I will examine the major Old Testament and New Testament passages concerning homosexuality. A biblical Christian response will be noted.

The term “homosexual persons” is not as simple to define, as it may seem. One should note that the word “homosexual” in the phrase is not a noun; it is an adjective. It is not a type of person; it is a characteristic of a person, a person who is more complex than his or her sexual orientation. Therefore, in this paper, as in life, I will use the term “homosexual person,” rather than “homosexual.” For the purpose of this paper, a homosexual person is one exclusively oriented towards, although not necessarily participating in, same-gender sexual activity.
Possible Causes of Homosexuality

There are many theories as to what causes homosexuality in people. The renowned psychologist, Sigmund Freud, believed that homosexuality developed from an environment where a young child grew up with a dominant mother figure and a weak father figure. Some thinkers have contended that a person is “seduced” into homosexual acts by other dominant homosexual persons (Bethune 6-7). These two beliefs are not as prevalent as they once were. As scholars have learned more about human behavior, they have identified other factors that more likely contribute to homosexual orientation.

The two most common theories as to what causes homosexuality today are that it is a chosen lifestyle and that it is due to biological/psychological factors. Many people believe that homosexuality is purely a choice. People choose to be gay by their own free will. Professor and minister, the Rev. Dr. Paul Duke, asked one of his friends, a homosexual woman, if it was by choice that she was a lesbian. Her response was simple, “Why would anyone choose this?” She went on to explain that everyday she had to wake up and face a world that hated her because of the person she loved (Duke Tape).

Some persons are drawn toward same-gendered relationships due to emotional trauma that, lacking biological indicators, may seem to point to a chosen lifestyle. For example, a woman who was severely abused by a male at an earlier point in her life may seek love in a woman because the thought of intimacy with a man brings back pains with which she cannot bear to deal, even in a loving relationship. This might appear to be “choosing” to be a homosexual person, but it is not. The woman did not choose to be abused. And it is not her choice to remain traumatized by that event.

Biological/psychological makeup is now thought by most in the medical and psychological fields to be the decisive factor in sexual orientation. Many studies demonstrate a strong correlation between biology and sexual orientation. Extensive studies by Michael Bailey and Richard Pillard comparing monozygotic twins, dizygotic twins and adopted siblings demonstrate that genetic factors are significant in predisposing one to homosexual orientation. The closer the genetic similarities among siblings the more likely they are to share the same gender orientation. “Among MZ (monozygotic) twins of gay men 52% were gay, as compared with 22% of their DZ (dizygotic) twins and 11% of their adoptive brothers” (Bailey 4).

In even more compelling neurological studies, researchers have concluded that
... sexual orientation is largely determined by parental effects of androgens (male hormones) on certain regions of the brain. The theory states that in either sex, when these regions are affected by high levels of androgens at a critical time, they are masculinized, and the person in question is sexually attracted to women as an adult. If the body is not producing enough androgens or the relevant tissue is insensitive to them, these brain regions are not masculinized, and the outcome in adulthood is attraction to men. Obviously, the hormonal activity or brain sensitivity to hormones could have a genetic source (Bailey 5).

While it is not possible to demonstrate that biological factors are the exclusive determiner of sexual orientation, it is widely held that they contribute significantly, if not decisively, in sexual orientation. A personal letter from a practicing Christian psychiatrist of over thirty years, Dr. J. N. McNeil, summarizes his conclusion regarding the origin of homosexual orientation.

My experience working with homosexual (people) has been consistent with the person being that way, not choosing to be that way. They usually fight not to be homosexual. I personally believe it is biological. This opens many theological and ethical issues (Letter).

The Christian scriptures are the origin of any solutions to these issues for most Christians. In looking to the Bible for answers, the first obvious fact is how few and far between the verses are that mention anything about homosexuality. “Homosexuality is not a prominent biblical concern. The earliest ethical codes of the Hebrew make no mention of homosexual behavior. There is nothing about it in the Ten Commandments. The four Gospels record no saying of Jesus on the subject” (Furnish 53).

Thus, while our modern society in general and churches in particular are obsessing on homosexual matters, the Bible does not make a major issue of it. There are only seven verses in the Bible that even remotely refer to it. In fact, the biblical Hebrew and Greek languages have no words with meanings close to the English words “homosexual person” or “homosexuality” (53).
The first passage, which refers to homosexual behavior, is found in the nineteenth chapter of Genesis. This is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Two angels disguised as men came to Sodom and were offered hospitality in Lot’s house. After dinner and before Lot’s guests had retired for the night, all the men of Sodom surrounded the house and shouted, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them to us, that we may know them” (19:5). The Hebrew words “to know” can be used with reference to sexual relations, and it certainly is used so here, despite occasional claims to the contrary. Lot offers his virgin daughters instead (19:8). The men of Sodom decline the daughters, however, and press forward to do violence to Lot as well as to his guests. Their attack is repulsed only when the visitors cause them to be blinded (19:11). Thereupon Lot is advised to leave Sodom because, his visitors tell him, “The Lord is about to destroy the city” (19:4). Thus it was that brimstone and fire rained down from heaven on Sodom and neighboring Gomorrah (19:24-25), so that the next morning only the smoking ruins could be seen (19:27-28) (Furnish 54f).

Some interpreters contend that this passage in Genesis condemns homosexual behavior, arguing that homosexuality was the reason Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. A more careful reading of the text, however, concludes that the sexual immorality of Sodom was not that of homosexuality, but the violence of gang rape. The men were coming to rape these visitors. “The sin of the Sodomites was homosexual rape, carried out by heterosexual intent on humiliating strangers by treating them ‘like women,’ thus demasculinizing them” (Wink 14).

This interpretation is supported by the fact that throughout the remainder of Scripture, Sodom is repeatedly condemned, not for homosexuality, but for pride and for ignoring the plight of the needy (Ezekiel 16:49; Isaiah 59:3; Amos 4:11). The story of Sodom and Gomorrah deals primarily with violent and abusive sexual practices; homosexuality is only a peripheral matter.

A similar passage in the Old Testament is found in Judges 19. In this narrative a traveler stopped in Gibeah for the night. The men of the town came and wanted to “know” him. The host of the visitor did not allow the men to have him but, instead, offered his virgin daughter. The men of the town did not want her, so the host’s concubine was given instead. “They wantonly raped her, and abused her all through the night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her...
go” (Judges 19:25). If homosexuality were the act being condemned in this story, then the rape of the female concubine would not be judged as unacceptable. This rape, however, was judged to be a violation of the covenant among the Israelites (Judges 19:24f). Again, the issue was not homosexuality, but brutal rape.

The last mention of homosexual behavior in the Old Testament is found in Leviticus 18:22. The passage says, “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” The literal rendition of the original Hebrew is: “A man shall not lie with a man with the lyings of a woman.” Bethune notes that

this wording reflects the patriarchal culture of the day. It assumes that the male is the active initiator of sexual contact and that the female is the passive recipient. As feminist theologian Reuther Radford suggests, it also reflects the dread of a man being reduced to the inferior status of a woman in a highly patriarchal culture. Nothing is said here about lesbianism; it does not matter. Men and their behavior matter (8).

Walter Wink, Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York, also comments:

When a man acted like a woman sexually, male dignity was compromised. It was a degradation, not only in regard to himself, but for every other male. The patriarchalism of Hebrew culture shows its hand in the very formulation of the commandment, since no similar stricture was formulated to forbid homosexual acts between females (14).

Thus, those who regard this verse in Leviticus 18:22 and a similar one in 20:13 as an apodictic commandment against homosexuality go beyond what the text asserts. Leviticus 20:13 is a part of what is called the Holiness Code, a code which contain extensive and specific commands meant to set the Israelites apart from their neighbors. It is a mistake to read these verses out of this context, for in so doing one is obligating Christians to the many other requirements of holiness: no wearing of cotton-polyester (Lev. 19:19), no tattoos (Lev. 19:28), and no eating of pork (Lev. 20:25).

It is inconsistent to ignore these commands while selectively enforcing the ones referring to homosexuality. As William Sloane Coffin contends, “...everyone is a selective literalist, especially those who swear by the anti-homosexual laws in the book of Leviticus and then feast on barbecued ribs and delight in Monday night football, for it is
toevah, an abomination, not only to eat pork but merely to touch the skin of a dead pig” (32).

In review of the Old Testament texts concerning homosexuality, the first two, Genesis 19 and Judges 19, are irrelevant to the topic of homosexuality, condemning instead violent, brutal gang rape. The final passage is problematic because of its Jewish exclusivistic context and associated passages. Absent the hermeneutical justifications for enforcing some commands and ignoring others, the prohibition against homosexual activity loses its force.

New Testament

At the time of the writing of the New Testament in the first century, many different views of homosexual practices existed. Some thinkers spoke out against homosexual relationships. The Stoics, for example, viewed homosexuality as unnatural. They described...

. . . same-sex intercourse as “unnatural” for two reasons. First, because they presumed that it was an equally attractive option for everyone, they feared that it could lead to the ultimate extinction of the human race. Second, they regarded any same-sex act as a violation of what they supposed to be the “natural” superiority of males over females. In the case of two females, both would be guilty of usurping the role supposed to be reserved for the male (Furnish 10).

During this period in time, others approved of homosexual relationships. It was also very popular for older men to tutor younger male protégés. While Plato encouraged the mentoring relationship between an older master and his younger male students, he adamantly rejected the intrusion of sexual activity into this relationship. Hence, nonsexual relationships have come to be referred to as platonic (Furnish 59).

Others, however, openly practiced homosexual activity. As Paul Duke explains:

All public [life] was male-oriented. Most men married, but their wives were not relational partners. Beauty became idealized in the male body, especially the young male body, with its more feminine features. . . . Men who were homosexual practiced pederasty (“the love of boys”). The relationships were characterized by inequality and impermanence. . . . There were two other forms of homosexuality widely practiced in the ancient world. The first was sex with slaves. . . . Household
slaves were often called upon for sexual favors. Second was
the effeminate call boy, who sold his services to a variety of
sexual partners. Long hair, rouged faces, lewd, mercenary,
feminine clothing marked out these call boys. . . . The system
was abusive, controlling, lustful, and degrading. It is a wonder
that the New Testament does not have more to say about it
(Tape).

Thus, the homosexuality of the first century was characterized
as unnaturally degrading, being based on the view that homosexuality
forced a man to assume the role of the inferior female. It was seen as an
unequal relationship between a dominant partner and a passive one. It
was abusive and often forced, rather than loving. It was impermanent,
rather than committed.

In the New Testament itself the three references to homosexual
behavior are by the Apostle Paul. All three of these are written from
“within and to Christians living in Hellenistic cities” (Bethune 10). The
first passage is I Corinthians 6:9-11:

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom
of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers,
malakoi and
male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, re-
vilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.
And this is what some of you used to be. But you were
washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of
the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The two terms that refer to homosexuality are “male prosti-
tute” and “sodomites.” In Greek these words are: malakoi and arsena-
koitia. Malakoi means soft or effeminate (Bethune 10). This was a term
given to call boys who exhibited a more feminine look. In the male
dominated society of that day, the role of women and their value as a
person was barely recognized.

The feminine, young male body was seen as the ideal beauty. The
call boys, and even many slaves, made efforts to maintain this
feminine look. They would pluck out their body hair, put on makeup,
grow their hair long and perfume it. Some were castrated to prolong
this youthful ideal (Bethune 10).

The second term, arsenokoitia, means “male lyers” (lying, as
in a bed). Thus, the use of malakoi and arsenokoitia together seems to
indicate that

Paul has in mind the young boys and adult partners of a peder-
astic relationship. In this case he is objecting to a particularly
abusive and destructive expression of homosexuality, as he is objecting in the same passage to destructive heterosexual behavior (Bethune 10).

The interpretive challenge of this text is to discern whether Paul’s critique is targeting all homosexuality or all abusive sexual relationships.

The second of the three passages is found in I Timothy 1:8-11 and reads as follows:

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

In Greek the three important words for this discussion are: pornois, arsenokoitais, and andrapodistais, which are commonly translated as fornicators, sodomites, and slave traders, respectively. Pornois is translated to “pervert.” It is most often used to refer to prostitutes. Arsenokoitais is the dominant partner in a pederastic relationship, as discussed above. The last word, andrapodistais, means kidnappers or slave traders, according to Bethune (11). Again, none of these words refer to a permanent, loving, or committed relationship. Even heterosexual relationships missing these qualities are unacceptable according to both Jesus and Paul (cf. I Corinthians 7:1-16; Mark 10:6-9).

The last set of verses that refer to homosexuality in the New Testament is found in Romans 1:26-27:

For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the only penalty for their error.

This passage is unique among the six passages under consideration. It is the only one that makes any mention of female homosexuality. All other texts referring to homosexual practices speak only of male involvement. If homosexuality, in and of itself, is a religious abomination, then it is reasonable to expect both male and female versions to earn equal condemnation. If, however, Christianity is primarily
opposed to the cultural norms of the first century, that is, the existing “male-dominate/female-subordinate” social structure, then it is expected that male homosexuality is the greater offense, as the text appears to make it to be.

Second, in these verses Paul makes an assumption about homosexual practice. This assumption is founded in the phrases “exchanged” and “giving up.” Walter Wink comments,

No doubt Paul was unaware of the distinction, between sexual orientation, over which one has apparently very little choice, and sexual behavior. He apparently assumes that those whom he condemns are heterosexual, and are acting contrary to nature, “leaving, giving up, or exchanging” their usual sexual orientation (15).

Likewise, Coffin notes, “Saint Paul thought all men were straight. He knew nothing of sexual orientation. He assumed that all homosexual activity was done by heterosexuals” (32).

Perhaps for some this “exchange” may be a matter of choice, as Paul presumes. But, as our previous reference to studies indicates, a strong case can be made for constitutional homosexuality, which would mean that sexual orientation would not be something “exchanged” or “given up,” but something that is innate. Therefore, one may legitimately question the relevance of these verses to modern understanding of homosexuality.

**Christian Response**

However one interprets the biblical texts pertaining to homosexuality, the more pressing matter for the Christian community is how it treats homosexual persons. Amy DeLong, co-editor of *The Loyal Opposition*, describes how Christians have treated homosexual people. She says that she has seen Christians who have held picket signs reading, “Two gay rights: AIDS and Hell.” She once preached a sermon about the need to include all people, even gays and lesbians, in the church. After the service someone said to her, “I think all those homos should be shot.” These are examples of ways that Christians have sinned against homosexual persons (Sample 26).

Dr. Paul Duke, a respected theologian and minister, preached a lecture series in his church on homosexuality. He spoke movingly about the suffering of gays and lesbians. He says:

Whose fault is this? It’s the fault of us all. It’s the fault of any of us who make jokes about gay people, who insult them
with the use of demeaning names. It’s the fault of us who are silent when others do these things or when they publish lies about what homosexuality is. And it’s the fault of us who don’t provide a safe place and a caring response to those of homosexual orientation.

Who knows how many hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost—to violence, to suicide, to drugs, to promiscuity, to AIDS, to shattered self-esteem, to life forever outside the doors of the church—because we have participated in, or by silence colluded with, the demeaning and the ostracizing of homosexual people. In this respect there is blood on the hands of the church. And that’s what has driven me more than anything else to talk with you as I am doing.

I have had a vision of Christ at the judgment asking “Why were you silent?” “Why has the church abandoned these children of God to despair and to death?” When people are lost and dying by the millions, you don’t pontificate about sexual morality, you reach out to them, you give them a safe place, you listen, you talk, and you love with the love of Christ (Tape).

In conclusion, the Bible does not necessarily condemn all homosexual relationships. It does universally condemn both homosexual and heterosexual relationships that are promiscuous, abusive, and non-loving. While heterosexuality is clearly the biblical norm, homosexual relationships that manifest the ideal qualities of love, compassion, and permanency, are not automatically condemned. Even if homosexuality is not countenanced in the text of scripture, the Christian community is not relieved of the burden of redemptive love, which seeks to transform all persons through the outreaching and healing grace of Jesus Christ who said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Works Cited


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