

Called to a Higher Purpose

ESSENCE & ENDS IN CANADA'S CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Jonathan S. Raymond

Dr. Raymond's lifelong faith journey together with his in-depth educational experience are reflected in this collection of essays. They bring a unique missional force for good in young people's lives. This book is a good read for anyone who believes that a Christian university can play a significant role in the life of the church, society and the Kingdom of God by helping to mould Christian leaders committed to following Jesus and be effective in all walks of life.

Arthur Block |
TWU Board of Governors

This book clearly sets forth the purpose of a Christian University in the twenty-first century by someone who has been both a participant and an observer of higher education in general and of Christian higher education in particular throughout many years. The author brings his vast experience to bear on the various subjects of this book, and clearly understands the Christian University as a community of believers who thrive by serving each other and the wider world. He challenges the reader to face the world realistically and lead compassionately, all in the name of Christ. If ever there is a time for clarity of thought on the nature and mission of the Christian University this is it. And Dr. Raymond leads the way as his challenges in this book aptly demonstrate.

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Called to a Higher Purpose is the culmination of Jonathan Raymond's mature thinking about Christian higher education as intrinsically purposed to nurture human flourishing understood as transformation through divine grace. An educational leader for several decades, Dr. Raymond explains from long experience how the Christian university has a calling just as individuals are called. Every activity and every transaction in the Christian university, then, is strategic toward fulfilling this high calling which could not even be envisioned by its secular university counterparts. This capacity to connect the lives of people to that Life which is the True Life found in Jesus Christ-within a robust educational setting whose social conscience is awake and sensitive-makes the immeasurable value and profound significance of the Christian University undeniable.

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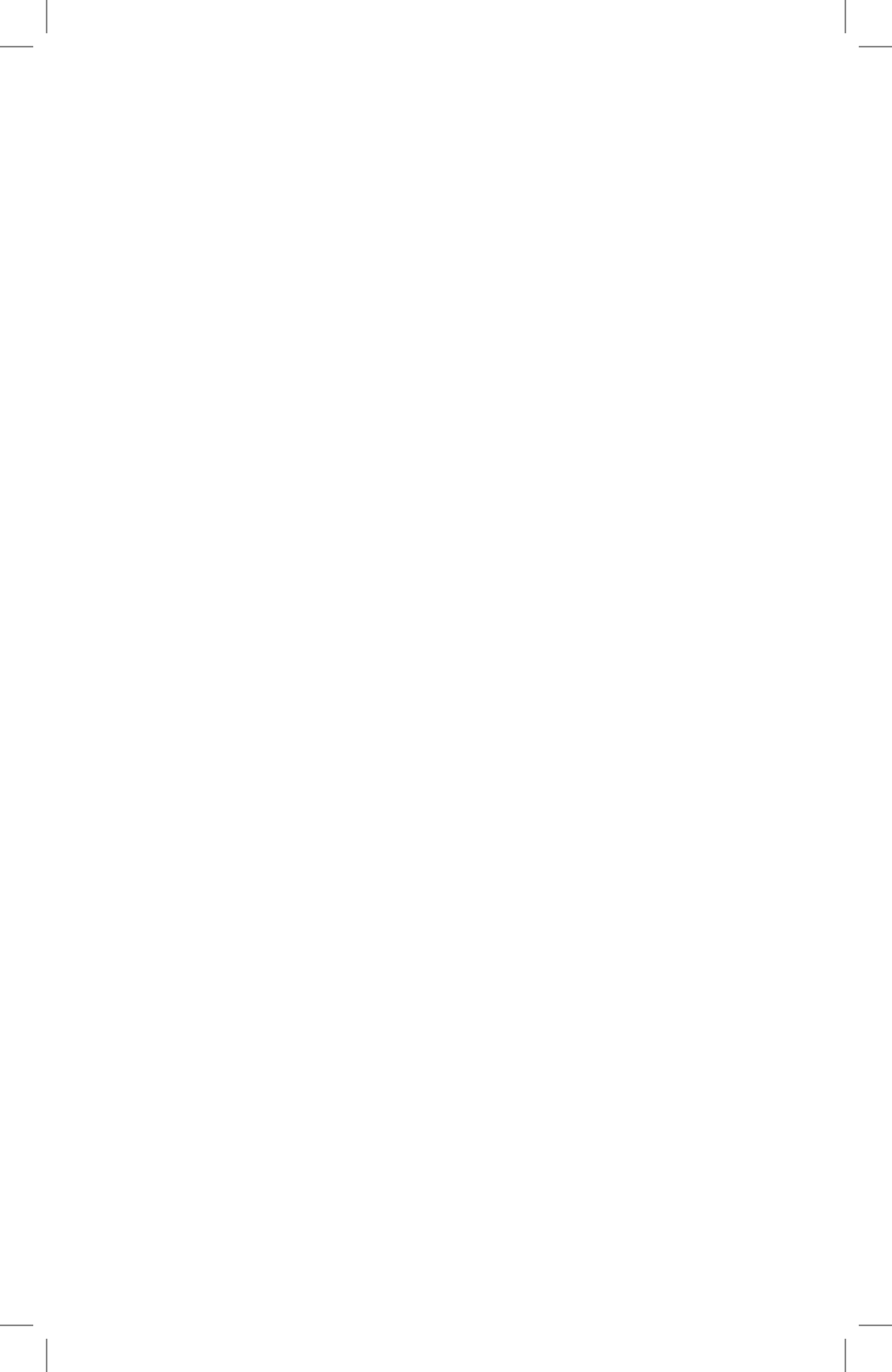
Society of Christian Philosophers

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This book is dedicated to the remarkable faculty and staff of Trinity Western University, who daily make the essence of the University a reality in the ends that they pursue with passion, wisdom, and character, for the glory of God.



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Foreword

THIS RICH FOLIO OF ADDRESSES AND ESSAYS IS A GIFT to all who care deeply about the future of Christian Higher Education. It is a clarion call—an awakening call to the lofty ideal of the university as pervaded by the presence of the living Christ, in whom alone are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3).

‘Mission drift’ is endemic to all institutions. Universities, given the breadth of their purpose and the diversity of influences that shape their life, are peculiarly susceptible to ‘drift’. For schools that draw their life from an intentionally Christian identity and purpose, the erosion of distinctives, the drift in direction, the befogging of perspective are potentially disastrous. The consequences are not just dire for the institution. In compromising the transformative outcomes intended in the lives of the students it purports to serve, the issues may be eternal.

This is an anchoring document. Taken seriously, reflected upon continuously, it will hold the institution to its missional moorings. It merits far more than a cursory glance. There is much to be internalized and fleshed out in the daily communal ‘ecology’ (to use Dr. Raymond’s unique concept) of institutional life.

One is encouraged to realize that these are essays delivered in the course of the institution's normal flow of events. They reflect the best thinking of the president as he defines the uniqueness of the university he leads. They have been born out of engagement with the demands and potentials of the university to shape the future through the contribution of students informed by their experience at Trinity Western University.

Learning in community is an immersive experience. Much is gained in the intentional program of instruction and facilitated learning. Perhaps more is to be gained from immersion in the life of the institution and exposure to the example and influence of faculty and staff, as well as interactions with students who share the journey. Unquestionably, significant learning is possible at a distance with only occasional exposure to the vital life of the community. That said, however, extended immersion in the life of an intentional community of faith and learning provides an incomparable plus to Christian higher education. Dr. Raymond explores the contribution of community to learning with unusual insight. His perspective affords an exciting prospect for students and a continuing challenge to faculty and staff to unite in common purpose to sustain the environment within which the growth, discovery, and transformation of students can best occur through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

These pages explore with fresh clarity the essence of the university as committed to what the author describes as *higher* higher education. But its focus throughout is on the ends to be sought in the process, the outcomes to be expected as a result of all the investment of resources, and the profligate outpouring of dedicated giftedness on students

who arrive with their cups, large or small, expectantly upturned. What is to be anticipated in the way of enlarged capacities of students as they emerge with diploma in hand? What do we hope for in the clarity of their sense of vocation, in the vitality of their experience of Christ, in their will to make a difference for Christ and the Kingdom as they engage the urgent cries of our desperately needy world? How does the institution ensure that students move out into their world from the incubation of campus life with new light in their eyes, oil on their brows, and a flame in their hearts? What mysteries will they plumb? What creative tasks will they embrace? What gifts of mind and spirit will they one day provide to us all? What hope will they proffer to their own and future generations?

Dr. Raymond's paradigm for a distinctively Christ-centered institution of higher learning is cruciform. It takes seriously the call of the Cross. Christian higher education seriously pursued is a costly business in many ways. There is no attempt here to evade the tough demands of holding to the course, sustaining the mission, recruiting those who share the vision, and being available to students who may bring a far heavier load of issues to the learning process than in times past.

It is the end in view that draws the institution and all who make up its life forward to the fulfillment of God's intention. Ultimately, Christian higher education is about the Kingdom of God and its realization now in anticipation of its final coming in the end of the age at the return of our Lord Christ. This is God's project informed by His creative Spirit. It therefore calls us all to prayer—all who care about the mission of Christ, the future of our culture, the flourishing

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of our youth and the realization of their full potential in Him
in whom alone we are made complete (Colossians 2:10).

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MARCH 2009

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Introduction

PEOPLE CHOOSE A UNIVERSITY FOR VARYING REASONS. Students differ from their parents and from each other. Alumni and friends differ in why they financially support a university. Not all faculty are unanimous in why they are attracted to a particular place of vocation. This is because universities serve a diversity of purposes. Among universities, there is variance in the opportunities and possible purposes to which people are attracted. This collection of speeches and essays underscores the idea of a Christian university. It represents an effort to describe the particular *essence* and *ends* of a Christian university as *a calling to a higher purpose*.

The starting point and enduring theme of these writings is not the usual apologetic for Christian universities that focuses on faith and reason. The special synergism of faith and reason that makes Christian higher education superior to all other forms of university has been well articulated ever since St. Anselm (1033-1109) first wrote his well known treatise on “*fides quaerens intellectum*,” faith seeking understanding. The perspective I am speaking of here is rather a discussion of Christian university education as *higher* higher education, grounded in particular attributes that go beyond faith

and reason. This book is about something rarely discussed, but often the basis of the attraction of students, parents, and friends to the Christian university as they invest time and resources in the life of the university for specific purposes. The university draws them into a sphere of participation and occasions hope that, in the participation, desired ENDS will be realized. Those special characteristics, commitments, and promises of an authentically Christian university have a kind of “calling” upon people to become engaged in the very organic, dynamic life of the university because it is different and holds the promise of achieving ends that could never be fully realized in secular university settings.

What is it that makes a Christian university distinctive and worth the investment of time and resources? What is at the heart of its promise to serve powerful purposes beyond what other universities can deliver? What is it about a Christian university that exercises a pull and a calling upon many who are attracted to a Christian university above all others? What is it about its essence that is so compelling? The answer lies not in the what, but rather in the who! The distinctiveness, promise, essence, and calling is Jesus Christ! In the authentic Christian university, Christ is at the centre and from the centre Christ’s presence permeates the university. By the outworking and inworking of the Holy Spirit, the resurrected, glorified, living Christ is the spiritual DNA of the university as a faith community.

The essence of the university is the Body of Christ gathered for special purposes: 1) to discover *truth*, knowing that “all truth is God’s truth”; finding *discovered* truth through scientific inquiry, *propositional* truth in theories and hypotheses, and *revealed* truth through scripture, witness, and per-

sonal experience; 2) to experience and express *compassion* within the university and beyond the university in the local community and in the larger market places of the world; 3) to experience and promote *reconciliation* within one's circle of friends, across the university community, and out in society; and 4) to experience and communicate *hope*. When the essence of the university is Jesus Christ, the ends of the university are God's grace in forms that occasion truth known, compassion lived-out, reconciliation realized, and hope manifested. When the essence is Jesus Christ, the university becomes a special, particular means of God's transformational grace in the world. Its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends become the agents of God's grace engaged toward Kingdom ends in a world of tremendous opportunities, and yet in and for a world which has profound needs.

This series of addresses and essays is about the essence and ends of a Christian university and what makes it a particular university with a vision that is different and necessary in today's world. The writing here unpacks a vision of a Christian university first and foremost as a people not only of faith, but of hope and love. When a university is not merely an aggregation or collection of academic guilds, not merely an exercise in running the gauntlet of courses and requirements, not merely a transaction of tuition for degrees, it is free to be something more. The university is free to go beyond transaction to transformation. When students are transformed by the permeating presence of Christ in every facet of their university experience, they become agents of transformation in the world.

When the university is truly Christian, it is a community of people and a special place that is a social-spiritual "ecology"

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of holiness. As a Holy Spirit-filled, Christ-permeated university, it is a place where a living God, in Christ Jesus, does truly miraculous things in and through the lives of students, faculty, and staff as each one responds daily to God's call to a higher purpose.

Jonathan S. Raymond
Langley, British Columbia
MARCH 2009



Part

I

The Essence of a
Christian University

Essence and Ends

[Beginning with the End in Mind]

“Essence is the heart and soul of the University—its spirit.”

ENVISION THE CENTURY: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS,
TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY, 2008

THE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR TRINITY WESTERN University are grounded in the essence and ends statements of the University outlined in the *Envision the Century* document. These statements can serve as a model to any and all Christian universities and are the inspiration for this essay, *Essence and Ends: Beginning with the End in Mind*.

In regard to the essence of the University,

The essence of Trinity Western University is Jesus Christ. In its essence, the University exercises a deep commitment to education in the liberal arts, as informed by the rich Christian understandings and traditions that frame the study of the humanities, sciences, and professions as interdisciplinary, complementary, and integrative.

Consistent with its mission and core values, Trinity Western University will continue to be grounded in the

triune God, pursuing truth with grace and assertiveness, promoting self-criticism and showing generosity to others, treating all ideas with charity and respect, holding a confident place in the diverse intellectual life of society, and promoting a holistic and interpretive role for understanding truth, worldview, and faith.

In regard to the ends of the University,

In aspiring to become a world-class Christian university, a place of exceptional discovery, learning, and engagement, Trinity Western University exists so that, through its students, alumni/ae, faculty, and staff, the world may experience Christ's truth, compassion, reconciliation, and hope.

IDENTITY, MISSION, & ENDS

By virtue of being a particular university, a Christian university has a particular identity, mission, and set of ends in mind. This is the intentional being, doing, and achieving for which the university exists. Out of the being—the university's identity and core distinctive nature expressed in its design and composition—comes the university's mission, the ways and means by which it expresses its identity. When the university's identity and mission are optimally aligned, we can expect that its *raison d'être*, the reason for its existence, may be fulfilled.

Christian universities and colleges can benefit by a check on the alignment of these three interrelated realities: identity, mission, and ends; or being, doing, and achieving. A truism in organizational development literature is that all organizations, if unattended to and left without assessment, critique,

and adjustment, will drift, unravel, rust, and otherwise experience atrophy. Organizations are pulled away from their central purposes by external forces and pushed off-centre by internal factors. Organizations as a rule must be renewed, refreshed, and reinvented, if they are to remain faithful to their core identity, mission, and ends. This is especially true of universities.

At least in North America, the history of universities is one of enormous drift in identity, mission, and ends. On both sides of the Canada/USA border, there is a long list of major universities that began as Christian institutions and drifted off course in their identities and mission. As a result, they are not achieving the ends for which they were established. In the USA, the list is very long with both small and large, elite universities: Harvard, Brown, Cornell, Dartmouth, Princeton, Yale, Duke, Emory, Vanderbilt, Bowdoin, Otterbein, Ohio Wesleyan, Illinois Wesleyan, Iowa Wesleyan, Texas Christian, and many other institutions. These institutions began with an authentically Christian identity, mission, and purpose, but drifted off centre into secularism. In most cases, one can still find a divinity school here and there embedded in the structure of the university. However, such accommodations to faith are now commonly pluralistic in their foci and nature, presenting the Christian worldview as merely one option among a litany of alternatives. The American Catholic universities have perhaps done a better job in retaining a Catholic identity and mission, but few would argue that they have not drifted in their nature and capacities to achieve Catholic-informed ends and fulfill Catholic, faith-based purposes.

Canadian higher education looks much the same in terms

of its drift, but is quite different in the kinds of universities that have evolved. In the late nineteen fifties, McGill, Carleton, McMaster, Wilfred Laurier, the University of Winnipeg, St. Francis Xavier, and many other Canadian institutions were still Christian in their identity and mission, albeit weak in their intentions to achieve originally conceived ends. Within a much briefer period of time than it took for universities in the USA, Canadian universities and colleges of Christian origins and purposes experienced rapid drift into secularism with a radical collapse of identity, mission, and purpose. Today, higher education in Canada differs from that in the US in that it is nearly completely secular. Paradoxically, a country that prides itself on pluralism has drifted rapidly into a posture in which the aggregate of its universities represents anything but pluralism. Instead, Canadian higher education may be characterized as nearly 100% large, secular, and public. In contrast, fifty years ago there was still a mix of faith-based and secular, large and small, public and private. The system that offered a greater array of options for Canadians in identity, mission, and ends, no longer does so.

In the 2008 annual publication of *U.S. News and World Report* that ranks universities and colleges, of the twenty-five top ranked universities, twenty-two are private universities. Half of them are relatively smaller in size, holding enrolments of less than 12,000 students. Two of the top five are both private and hold enrolment of less than 8,000 students. One of these is Princeton University, which ranks number two of the twenty-five listed. Though largely secular in its identity today, Princeton retains one of the healthier, more vibrant divinity schools in the country. One interpretation of this recent national ranking may be that private institutions provide

better education and that smaller institutions do as well and often better than the largest institutions. Nearly all private institutions (88%) enrolled less than 20,000 students in contrast to the three public universities that enrolled nearly twice as many students. One may conclude that smaller, private institutions provide a higher quality of education, at least in the USA.

USA TRENDS IN CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

If one follows the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings over the past twenty-five years, as I have, you see two additional trends. The most astounding trend is the ascendancy of Christian universities and colleges in the rankings. Christian higher education in the USA is the fastest growing segment of higher education over the past twenty-five years and the increasing quality of Christian higher education documented in the ranking trends is undeniable. The sun continues to rise on American Christian higher education. An accompanying question is this: Will success spoil them? Will Christian universities and colleges go the way of their predecessors: Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Syracuse, Texas Christian, or Ohio Wesleyan? Will American Christian universities and colleges inevitably drift away from being Christ-centered in their identity, mission and achievement of ends? This is an old, well-traveled pathway in the both the USA and Canada.

Three factors may be at work in pulling and pushing Christian universities and colleges off-centre and into the vortex of public institutional identity and secularism: pride, size, and undercapitalization. What happens to institutions that aspire to be like their secular counterparts and pursue

the idea that bigger is better? Enrolment growth becomes the dominant means by which the institution can afford upward mobility in recognition, reputation, and legitimacy. Enrolment growth becomes more important than intentional design toward mission fulfillment and achievement of ends. Size becomes so important that it becomes the end in itself. The financial rewards of growing enrolment, to achieve tuition-driven surplus capital, are so powerful that they dictate any sense of strategic planning. New programs and initiatives are driven by how much tuition they will generate rather than how well they support the mission and ends of the institution. Pride and size go hand in hand to pull the Christian university away from its identity, mission, and ends.

The third factor is inevitable in the context of the economic ebb and flow of enrolment. At some point along the way of experiencing enrolment growth, Christian universities are subject to the same forces all universities are exposed to, the downturn in enrolment. The long history of universities dependent on tuition revenues is a sad one. For public universities, their existence is not threatened because provincial and state legislatures ensure their continued existence. For private Christian universities and colleges, it is a different matter. Three to four years of enrolment losses can put a private university, faith-based or otherwise, in the tank. Without other sources of revenue, the tuition-dependent university or college can not survive even a modest period of enrolment loss. The shift and drift away from identity, mission, and ends is a gradual one achieved through step-by-step compromise. The markets engaged for enrolment become less aligned with identity. The profiling of the university or college's identity becomes blurred in order to attract a

broader, more diverse constituency. Rather than becoming more selective, the university becomes less selective, hoping to boost enrolment with a broader appeal to a broader market. In the process, the messaging of identity, mission, and ends becomes watered down. In reality, a loss of its clear distinctives is self-defeating. The institution becomes like so many others that it seems invisible and loses the loyalty of its originally intended market. It becomes more vulnerable than ever, especially in light of the all too common status of being undercapitalized.

Undercapitalized private universities and colleges with declining enrolments are at enormous risk. They are institutions with too little endowment. Without their own resources in the way of endowments, they are not only vulnerable to the perceived appeal of a broader constituency, but also to the perceived solution of government support. When tuition does not provide enough revenue to keep the institution afloat, the institution turns to the government for help. The government rarely comes to the rescue without strings attached, strings that may change the identity, mission, and ends of the university unless great care is taken.

What is the antidote to government dependency driving institutional drift and compromise? The answer is capitalization and deeper pockets within the university, and the way this is achieved is through a healthy endowment.

In the USA, these three factors (pride, size, and capitalization or lack thereof) explain much of the forces pulling and pushing Christian universities and colleges away from their original identity, mission, and ends. I believe a look at the relatively recent history of the drift and demise of Christian higher education in Canada will reveal the same factors

and forces at work. It is exceedingly difficult for a Christian university to achieve fidelity to its identity, mission, and ends—especially in Canada—but it is not impossible. The good news is that there are concrete actions which, if taken on a regular basis, may equip and empower a Christian university to go from strength to Strength and glory to Glory, while giving God the glory!

FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH & GLORY TO GLORY!

There are five things a Christian university can do to retain momentum toward excellence in its identity, mission, and ends.

- 1 It can remain smaller and not be tempted into thinking that bigger is always better and that enrolment growth is the way to economic viability.

- 2 It can stabilize its financial viability by avoiding dependency on public funding and achieving a high degree of capitalization through raising its endowments to the highest possible level.

- 3 It can make character, calling, commitment, and competence the central and essential framework for recruiting and retaining faculty and staff.

- 4 It can work to remain Christ-centered, Christ-led, and Christ-honouring one hire, one tenure, and one syllabus at a time.

- 5 It can work to develop the university as a people and a place where, as a social-spiritual ecology of holiness, the university pursues a “tabernacling” of the presence of Christ.

Bigger is not always better

Smaller behaviour settings, in the research literature of envi-

ronmental psychology, underscore this reality. Smaller settings are more engaging, exert a greater pull on the individual, and are more optimal in promoting a dynamic interactionism between participants, whether they are faculty and students, faculty and faculty, staff and students, or any other groups within the university. Christian universities that maintain a discipline of fostering small classes (20 or less to a class), small group exposures in campus life, and small, intimate places, which are conducive to informal discourse and participation, are more likely to have the impact they desire. This is a matter of intentional design for optimal engagement and positive influence.

In the mid-nineteen eighties, the us Congress voted for significant funding to be given to scientific equipment in undergraduate universities and colleges. The intention was to strengthen undergraduate science competency across the nation. The administrative problem was to decide in which universities and colleges to best invest. Should Congress identify the largest public and or private universities with the premier doctoral studies programs? Should they invest in institutions with the largest and best-funded faculty research projects or those with strong academic-corporate partnerships? To answer these questions, Congress turned to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for help. The NSF, in turn, reduced these questions to one: Where do Nobel Prize winners in the sciences come from? The answer may surprise you. It was not the big research universities with large doctoral programs. It was not the Ivy League universities nor the well-funded public universities. The undergraduate programs that overwhelmingly produced the greatest yield of Nobel Prize winners in science came out of

small, liberal arts institutions. It was the small universities and colleges with small classes; small laboratory settings with high faculty-student engagement; and small campuses with intentionally small, informal settings of dialogue and discourse whose students went on to do great things in science—things with worldwide impact. That's where Congress put their investment in the national future of science competency. Smaller universities and colleges are a good investment. They deliver on their mission and ends.

Universities can be like a computer chip. They do not need to be big to have an impact and get the job done. A computer chip is wonderfully designed. Design is not everything, but it is very important, and it is continually being improved. The computer chip, when designed well, has optimal position, connectivity, and resources (power); it does remarkable things far beyond its weight and size. Universities are like that. They can be small, well-designed, positioned, connected, and empowered to accomplish amazing things. Look at Princeton University or the California Institute of Technology. They are powerful for their small size. They are world class in their quality. They have impact and they are small, private, independent institutions with ample endowments (capitalization).

Avoiding over-dependency on government funding

Governments benefit by fostering a system of public and private universities. The public is given options and choices. Pluralism of worldviews permits a richness of dialogue and perspective. The public coffers, supporting public institutions as much as 75 to 80 per cent of their budgets, are stretched

and complemented by the capacity of private institutions to provide the public with quality higher education through alternative means. For these reasons, there remains a place for the private, faith-based university and college at the Canadian higher education table.

How does a Christ-centered university stay the course and still benefit from government support? Two rules of thumb are helpful: engage government support in projects like infrastructure (research projects, laboratory equipment, road ways and bridges, water systems) that have community and public benefit, and never accept more direct financial support (for example, 10% of the overall operational budget) than an institution can walk away from, if the strings threaten to pull the institution away from first principles and first commitments. Government support is not a mistake, but over-dependency by private, faith-based universities and colleges on government support is.

Successful universities and colleges can avoid over-dependency on government funding. Accepting government support for Christian universities and colleges that serve the public, that are clear in communicating their identity and mission, and are open to the public, is not inappropriate. But it can occasion an erosion of the Christian university's autonomy and independence. It can undermine the university's freedom to live out its identity and pursue its mission and ends. Government strings can be so strongly attached to the institution that when the government pulls on the strings, the essence of the university or college changes irrevocably.

Is the historical demise of Canadian private, independent, faith-based universities and colleges in the past fifty years due to Canadian antipathy toward Christian institutions? I am

inclined to think not. Instead, it may well be that Christian institutions did not receive the strategic, long-range support necessary to prevent them from looking to government for rescue in times of financial difficulty. In short, their constituencies did not get behind them to create a foundation of capitalization. Their endowments (if they had such) were so small that they precluded fiscal stability in the inevitable storm that comes with the ebb and flow of the economic times. They drifted out of necessity, safeguarding their survival even at the expense of losing their initial identity, meaning, and purpose. They failed to establish in the hearts and minds of their Christian constituencies the value-added benefit of Christian higher education. They failed to underscore the importance of Christian universities and colleges as means of grace toward Kingdom ends. They failed to embed in the Christian church and business leaders the compelling idea and reality that to invest in Christian universities and colleges is to invest in the Kingdom of God.

Competence amplified by character commitment, & calling

The essentials for a Christian university go beyond competence. All universities strive for competence. They hire the most competent faculty and staff. They work to attract highly competent students. They equip the university with the best possible infrastructure to ensure competent performance. What university would work to achieve incompetence? The Christian university does the same, but does more. Christian higher education is devoted to the promotion of character, and the standard is Christ. It acknowledges that competence and character are essential to its mission fulfillment.

Character after the likeness of Christ means that the teaching and the teachers, the research and the researchers, and the service and those who serve are committed to more than competence. It means that achieving quality of the education is more than achieving some normative standard of competence. There is an institutional capacity to integrate a perspective and a code of values and ethics. There is a desire to develop in students integrity and sensitivity to the needs and dignity of others, and there is the belief that education must be more than a transaction. It must serve the purpose of encouraging the pursuit of noble ends and laudable outcomes, not only for oneself, but for others.

In the milieu of a Christian university, it is a desirable outcome when faculty and students experience a sense of calling. When Christ is present, He calls us to mission and Kingdom ends. When there is the daily Emmaus Road walk, that journey with Christ toward intimacy, maturity, and personal, spiritual integration, Christ will speak the same words He spoke to Peter by the Sea of Galilee: "Follow me." When the response to the grace of Christ's calling is one of sustained obedience, there is sustained commitment to follow, to make disciples, and to pursue Christ's plan and His vocational calling. This is the root meaning of vocation from the Latin *vocare*, "to call." It is a calling in a prescribed direction, the direction Christ is going. The milieu of the Christian university and college is the context, the social-spiritual ecology, that promotes the condition for calling and commitment. This context for Christian vocation provides the conditions in which they may not only be heard, but also lived out in the daily, life-long response, "Where He leads me, I will follow."

Christ at the centre

The essence of the Christian university is Jesus Christ. Christ permeates the university, because He is at the centre. His presence is central and at the same time radiant and ubiquitous. His grace is available to all who participate in the life of Christ through the life of the university. Grace is not merely the gift of unmerited love; the love of Christ we do not deserve. Grace is the gift of God in Christ; it is His very self through the Holy Spirit. Christ at the centre is like the compass—not the magnetic compass that points north, but the drafting compass that has a point and a pencil. The point remains centred in Christ, while the sphere of influence of the university, like the pencil, spreads out further and further to encompass more and more of life.

The historical problem with Christian universities is not so much the presumed antipathy of the higher education system, but rather the forces that pull and push the compass point, hindering its ability to remain centred in Christ. Many of the forces that push the point off-centre are internal. They stem from insecurity and low collective self-esteem of Christians within the university, who aspire to be like their secular counterparts. They desire to be acceptable and not embarrassed by their secular peers in their guilds and seek to model and emulate secular forms of higher education that leave Christ out of the picture. External forces that pull the university off-centre are incentives in funding by donors and government officials who believe that a Christian university is something other than a particular university, making the university into an aberration where ‘Christian university’ is an oxymoron and, therefore, less of a university. Their argument is that in a pluralistic society, a diversity of values and

ethical perspectives may be tolerated, but actual faith, revealed truth, and a Christian worldview that has settled convictions have no place in higher education. Sometimes the incentives are blatant and at times subtle. Because the blatant incentives look too much like what they are—discrimination—the subtle incentive is more common. This takes the form of omission from fora and tangible opportunities that could advance the institution. To gain entry into these fora and benefit from opportunities, especially for funding and fiscal support, the Christian university or college is tempted to compromise and acquiesce. These pressures pull the university centredness in Christ off point. The university drifts until its centre is no longer Christ, but rather a Christian perspective. The focus on Christ-inspired ends is replaced by a focus on Christian values and the university's role as an arm of the church, flexing on behalf of the church and society. Eventually the university finds that it has completely lost its centre. The continuing existence of the university as a particular Christian university becomes pointless.

Christ at the centre is everything. If a Christian university does not work hard every day in every conceivable way to stay centred in Christ, dependent on Christ, led by Christ, glorifying Christ, and being pleasing to Christ, it will inevitably drift into being something different and something less. Everything that makes it distinctively a Christian university, a particular university, will dissipate, rust, and atrophy. However, in the words of the Apostle Paul, "In Christ, all things are possible!" The university can remain viable rather than vulnerable. Serious Christian investors in the Kingdom of God can invest in a strong means of grace, a remarkable community of human agency, through which

God is at work redeeming, reconciling, and restoring the world to Himself. The university can remain a tremendous resource to the world, responding to the world's greatest opportunities for human flourishing (*shalom*) and addressing the world's greatest needs. The university can go from strength to Strength and from glory to Glory, giving glory to God.

Developing as a people and a place

The Christian university can work to develop itself as a people and a place. It can thrive as a social-spiritual ecology of holiness by pursuing a “tabernacling” of the presence of Christ in everyone and every place. Every classroom, every seminar room, the dining commons, each office, each residence lounge, the soccer pitch, basketball and volleyball court, and the locker rooms can become places where the permeating presence of Christ is an appreciated reality. Every interaction, every gathering, every lecture and conversation, every e-mail, every use of the internet can be filled with the acknowledged and appreciated presence of Christ.

If the essence of the university is truly Jesus Christ, if He then, through human agency, is allowed to not only be Rabbi (teacher), but also Lord, as the Apostle John tells us, the mission of the Christian university stands a chance of succeeding. What the university strives to do in the lives of others will succeed. Its identity and mission will be empowered and Kingdom ends will be achieved. The university will live out its destiny as a people of faith seeking understanding, a people of hope for a world that is so often in despair, and a people of love who, in Jesus' name, participate with Christ in the transforming love of Christ

for the world and, in the end, are part of the redemption, reconciliation, and restoration that God intended since the beginning of time.

ENDS: TRUTH, COMPASSION, RECONCILIATION, & HOPE

The Christian university aspires to be a place of exceptional discovery, learning, and engagement and, therefore, exists so that, through its students, alumni/ae, faculty, and staff, the world may experience Christ's truth, compassion, reconciliation, and hope. Without a doubt, universities are places of discovery, learning, and engagement, but not necessarily exceptionally so. They pursue truth without acknowledging it as such, without acknowledging that all truth is Christ's truth. They may offer examples of compassion but not compassion compelled purposefully as the love of Christ. They may seek reconciliation, but without the power of Christ to make it a lasting reality. They may be hopeful, but not occasion hope beyond the hope of career advancement and personal success. And all these things—truth, compassion, reconciliation, and hope—are not a part of a typical university's mission, intentional design, and desire for the world. For the Christian university, they are the *raison d'être*, the driving motivation and reason for existence.

Truth

There was a time when universities pursued truth. Today they only aspire to produce knowledge. For many, truth is a relative concept and an artificial construct. The Christian university aspires to produce knowledge with the hope that knowledge can be transformed and engaged in wis-

dom. Wisdom is the domain of truth engaged in reality. The Christian university embraces truth in two forms: discovered truth and revealed truth. Truth discovered is that which we understand to be true and real through the faculties and gifts of logic and reason. The research biologist, psychologist, and physicist engage the scientific method, empirical observation, logic, and reasoning to attain a limited grasp of what is real and true. We discover that which is hidden and made known through the application of the higher order gifts, abilities, and intelligence that distinguish us as humans. In the social, behavioural, and natural sciences, truth is a discovery framed as a construct derived from observation. Then there is revealed truth, truth that cannot be discovered, but must be revealed. It must be disclosed and given away because it is beyond human efforts of discovery. While discovered truth involves human effort and ingenuity, unraveling mysteries and uncovering hidden realities, revealed truth comes to us from a God who delights in making Himself known. Discovered truth is about the world that we can directly experience. Revealed truth is about the God who we can directly experience, and who is separate and beyond. In the Christian university, there is a unity of belief that Jesus Christ is the perfect, intentional revelation of God Himself, the God who as Himself comes, dwells, and moves among us, the God of relationship who seeks fellowship and intimacy. Jesus is the truth that puts a face on God the Father, the truth that is self-evident in His grace, love, mercy, and blessing.

In the Christian university, through the panoply of exposures and encounters, the truth of the living Christ is seen in the people of Christ who make up the university. Christ is seen in the care of the faculty for the students. He

is made known in the diligence in which staff members do their part to promote an environment that ensures student development and success. He is present in the spirit of love, compassion, and accountability all people in the university have for one another. When faculty and staff invite students home for a meal, when staff take-up a collection to send an international student home for the funeral of a loved one, when the students in a residence hall gather to pray for a student's father who has cancer, or when a faculty member takes the time to come alongside a failing student and become a mentor and a friend, there is the truth that God is love and He is at work through others.

Compassion

The first chapter of the Gospel of John says that God is love and love is embodied in Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. John says that God had so much love and compassion for the world that He took on to Him, through His revelation in Christ, the punishment for the sins in the world for all people at all times. That compassion continues to be at work in the world. Just as the work of Christ continued in and through the Apostles and early followers of Christ by the Holy Spirit to the world, His compassionate, salvific work of love continues today. The Christian university is part of the continuing compassion of Jesus Christ in and to the world. It is expressed especially through God's love for the poor, the vulnerable, the dispossessed, and the marginalized. By showing the impact of compassion, the Christian university teaches both discovered and revealed truth.

The Christian university teaches compassion when its students go off campus to rake leaves and wash windows

for senior members of the community, when teams fan out across North America during spring break to partner with Habitat for Humanity to build houses for the poor, when student teams travel internationally to work with women and children caught-up in the slavery of human trafficking, addiction and poverty, when nursing students travel to Zambia to work for free in a Salvation Army hospital caring for HIV/AIDS patients and their children, and when business students and their fathers travel to Thailand to promote micro-economic development, lending their own money to start new micro-businesses. In the teaching, there are exposures and encounters that are transformational, because engagement in acts of love and compassion in the name of Jesus Christ transforms and creates a lasting impact on the character of all involved.

Reconciliation

Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross not only paid the price for the sin of the world but also bridged the divide between God and man caused by sin. What was a broken relationship was bridged. What was separation and death became reconciliation, reunion, and life. What was made possible between God and man is possible between mankind with each other. The Christian university teaches the importance of reconciliation and is the catalyst for the transformation and impact that can be found when and where there is truth and reconciliation.

The university teaches reconciliation when it sponsors and conducts programs of interfaith dialogue, when it brings students and faculties together from a great diversity of nations and ethnic groups, and when it sponsors discourse

and common ground for persons of differing political views and convictions. The university teaches reconciliation when its faculty and staff model ways and means by which disagreement and disparate views may be moved to productive resolution and consensus on the essentials. The university teaches reconciliation when it brings together in worship and practice people from a diversity of faith communities and denominations, including Baptists, Mennonites, Pentecostals, Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Salvation Army, and Alliance.

Hope

Where there is truth, compassion, and reconciliation, there is hope for *shalom*, for human flourishing. Hope is the message of the Gospel. It is at the heart of the Gospel narrative, the story of a loving God and the people He loves. Hope is the promise of a faithful God that the best is yet to come, that there are Kingdom ends, and that in the end we shall be like Christ, united with Him, and flourishing in the life He has called us to, a life for which He created us in the very beginning. A Christian university teaches hope. It is forward-looking and anticipating the day when wisdom, truth, grace, love, and peace shall reign.

While many universities dwell on the despairing teachings of Nietzsche and Marx, the Christian university studies them in a context of hope. While many universities teach and propound the hopelessness of the human condition and the flawed nature of man, the Christian university emphasizes the promises of God to do new things and His ability to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, as the Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians. The Christian

university teaches the presence, power, and providence of God in every situation and in every circumstance in life. Teaching in the Christian university is informed by people's direct experience of God's mercy and grace and His answers to prayers and petitions. Christian universities are communities of faith, hope, and love in action.

A Christian university teaches from a position of faith, hope, and love. It looks to the ends of all of its endeavours and embraces Kingdom ends of truth, compassion, reconciliation, and hope. Its research and discovery, teaching and learning, and service and engagement with the larger community and the world is carried out in fidelity to its essence, Jesus Christ, toward the fulfillment of Kingdom ends.

Higher Higher Education

[Engage Your World]

Convocation Address to Students, Faculty, & Staff

*DAVID ENARSON GYMNASIUM AT TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY,
SEPTEMBER 7th, 2006*

BY GOD'S GRACE THIS IS A GREAT UNIVERSITY — A uni-versity—and possibly the only uni-versity in Canada, where universities really are multi-versities. That is to say they are multiversities in that they are each a collection of schools and departments connected, as someone once quipped, “only by a central-heating system.” I've served in some universities like that. In contrast, we must be a uni-versity connected by a single passion that unifies students, faculty, and staff in a single mission. That passion must be faith seeking or, in the words of Anselm, “faith seeking understanding.” Arthur F. Holmes, in his essay, “The Idea of a Christian College”, provides the following answer to the question of the value and the role of Christian higher education. According to Holmes, we need:

education that cultivates the creative and active integration of faith and learning, of faith and culture.

This is its unique task in higher education today. While the reality is often more like an interaction of faith and learning, a dialog [and I might add a great conversation] than a completely ideal integration, it must under no circumstance become a disjunction between piety and scholarship, faith and reason, religion and science, Christianity and the arts, theology, and philosophy or whatever the differing points of reference may be. The Christian [university] will not settle for a militant polemic against secular learning and science and culture, as if there were a great gulf fixed between the secular and the sacred. All truth is God's truth, no matter where it is found, and we can thank him for it all. . . . What we need is not Christians who are also scholars, but Christian scholars, not Christianity alongside education, but Christian education.

I want to speak for a just few moments, perhaps ten minutes, on *higher* higher education as preparation for you to engage your world and lead—and lead in a certain way. *Higher* higher education has everything to do with quality, excellence, integrity, professionalism, and discipline, which are the kind of values you see well evidenced at McGill, Harvard, Oxford, Stanford, Notre Dame, Johns Hopkins, and McMaster. No doubt, when we say those names, we immediately think *higher* higher education by reputation. But what I mean by *higher* higher education is something more than that.

I mean a kind of *higher* higher education that has everything to do with the social-spiritual ecology of the campus, a dynamic between people and the divine. By higher

education, I mean covenant, not just contract; transformation, not just transaction; and deep theologically grounded curriculum, not just philosophical assumptions. By *higher* higher education, I mean a single vocation. Whether you go into medicine or engineering, become a teacher or musician, go into international business or play professional volleyball, *higher* higher education promotes a single vocation that we all share: to love the Lord our God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves. *Higher* higher education means that the paradigm for education—of exposure, reflection, and dialogue—is grounded in exposure to God’s word.

Higher higher education means that the liberal arts and sciences are truly liberating. It means that study and scholarship are acts of worship. It means that learning has everything to do with moral vision, moral purpose, and moral courage to address the world’s deepest needs.

“Engage your world and lead” is our theme for the 2006 academic year, but it’s my hope that out of this place, moving out into the future, there will be *servant* leaders who address the world’s deepest needs. First and foremost, this means promoting *shalom* throughout the world. I think it was Nicholas Wolterstorff who described *shalom* as human flourishing. Where there is an absence of *shalom*—of human flourishing—there is injustice.

It is my hope that *servant* leaders, who have had a profound educational experience here at Trinity Western, will bring *shalom* to the world by doing very simple things, like making clean water available to those who have none. Do you know that as we are gathered here together this morning, two thirds of the world has only fecal contaminated water? This reality is a large part of the reason why approximately

28,000 children between the ages of birth and five years old, between this time yesterday and today, died of preventable causes. That's approximately 12 million a year. It's a staggering statistic, but if you get on the UNICEF website, you can track this year after year. When I was working in international public health in the 1980s, the annual infant mortality statistic was 14 million; it's fallen to now 12 million a year, from 32,000 to around 28,000 children a day. Where are the *servant* leaders who will respond to the deepest needs of the world and address the clean water issue or the infant mortality issue—these issues which are unacceptable in *shalom*?

It is my hope that through *higher* higher education there are students in this room who will go out and address the scourge of human trafficking, which largely impacts women throughout the world, but also young men. Human trafficking is likely the worst form of sexual exploitation. Who in this room will act on that deep human need that is a worldwide issue?

Who in this room will rise to be a hero and take Stephen Lewis's place? Stephen Lewis has been Canada's U.N. Special Ambassador for AIDS. He was just on television a few weeks ago at the international AIDS conference in Toronto. He is the most articulate, passionate spokesperson and advocate for those suffering from AIDS today. He is retiring to McMaster University in the next few weeks to become a scholar in residence. Are you someone who will take Lewis's place in the years to come because of *higher* higher education here at Trinity Western University?

We need more Stephen Lewises. We need more C. Evert Koops. We need more *servant* leaders who will promote *shalom*. Not leaders who serve, but servants who lead. Men and

women of faith who, all their lives, seek understanding, addressing the world's greatest needs in order to bring about human flourishing and *shalom* for all God's children.

God knows the great potential of everyone in this room. He knows the desires of each heart and He has a plan for each life. My prayer is that His plan will be for you to live out the lives of *servant* leaders, some as scholars and researchers and teachers, some as activists, some as policy makers back in Ottawa or in Washington. I pray God will be glorified because of your consecration, knowing that what we consecrate, God will sanctify and use.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your presence. We thank you that you are a God who makes Himself known. We thank you that you are a God who calls us to shalom in a world of deep needs. Bless this academic year. May it be the finest yet in the history of Trinity Western because of our fidelity to your calling. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Christian University as a Place

[An Ecology of Holiness]

WHEN PARENTS THINK OF PACKING THEIR SON OR daughter off to university or college, it is customary to think of the prestige of the university and what kind of clout a degree from that university might afford, what kind of doors it may open, and what kind of advantage it may provide in life. Many parents think very deeply. They reflect long and hard about what kind of place the university might be and the kind of resources and influences to which their dear child might be exposed.

Universities are social contexts, interpersonal environments with particular intellectual, social, and spiritual climates. They differ in the kind of intellectual, social, and spiritual climates they provide and the difference can make all the difference. When students and their parents think about universities and choice, too often the focus and discussion is on the size of the university. The student asks, Will I be lost in a large university? Will I be just a number? Will anyone really care whether I succeed or fail? What will my roommate be like? And will I like my professors? What kind of friends will I make and will they like me? Will I succeed?

Universities differ as environments for people's success. They differ in how big or small they are, how many study

options and degrees they can provide, how well prepared or how committed the faculty are to student success, how well stocked the library is with the right resources, or how well endowed the university is in its information technology capacity. The list goes on and on describing any one of 10,000 ways in which universities may provide differing environments to get the job done. Too often, universities are conceived as a static collection of things gathered up into an aggregate, which makes up the totality of its resources and defines the university as an environment. Rather than a static profile, universities may also be conceived as dynamic and organic, as an intellectual, social, spiritual ecology.

I like the idea of universities as ecologies; some are healthy and nutrient balanced and others toxic. Some are more socially receptive and some more marginalizing. Some universities are more intellectually and or faith affirming, while others are anything but. Some are conducive to spiritual awakening and growth, while others are just the opposite. While all universities strive to be intellectual hotbeds and provide a rich context for competence, not all look to develop the whole person, including the social-spiritual nature of each student.

When I was seventeen, I had my heart set on going to a large eastern university. My father saw it differently. My two older brothers had left home a few years earlier to study at a large university, though not the same one that I had picked out. Millions of students do well in large university settings. My brothers' experiences, however, were far from positive. They were just numbers in a large system. Their professors did not connect with them on a personal level. Their social lives were not enriching, and their spiritual development was

completely disconnected from the university experience. After one semester, they transferred to separate, smaller Christian liberal arts colleges where they thrived. Both are physicians today, having built strong, positive lives on the foundation of their subsequent undergraduate experiences. From observing my older brothers' experiences, both within Christian higher education contexts, my father quickly developed settled views about what kind of environment was optimal for my future. In his mind, a smaller Christian setting was a "best buy." While I was tremendously unhappy about his choice, it turned out that he was right. The small Christian liberal arts college was a healthier, more caring, more engaging context for my holistic development through my undergraduate years. Besides, I found the love of my life there and married her. This alone had lasting social-spiritual impact.

The Christian college is a place to grow by God's grace in many ways. It is a place to grow "in grace" as the Apostle Paul encourages. The little word "in" suggests that holistic growth and development is ecological. We thrive in an ecological context that addresses our needs and potentialities.

Ecology deals with relationships. It is the field within the sciences that studies the relationship between an organism and its environment. Every living thing is immersed in a context or environment. Some organisms may develop in qualitatively different forms over the course of their lifetimes, depending on the characteristics of the environments in which they are immersed. Simple examples are tadpoles, caterpillars and salmon, though humans qualify as well.

For example, my family and I are blessed with a history of living in several different places including, but not limited to, Hawai'i, New England, southern Illinois, Winnipeg, and

now British Columbia. Each place had a different physical, social, and cultural ecology. In Hawai'i, where my children were born, we lived within little more than a block from beautiful Kailua beach in a home with a swimming pool in the backyard and the full attention of a stay-at-home mom in the early years. It was a great context designed and devoted to raising our children. Then living on the north shore of Boston afforded other ecological contexts. Trips to the mountains of New Hampshire, Old Orchard Beach in Maine, and to the grandparent's home were great blessings to our family. Southern Illinois and Winnipeg were yet totally different contexts with environmental, cultural, social, and spiritual diversities that were both healthy in some ways and toxic in others.

Prior to the arrival of children, my wife and I had ten years of living in other settings and contexts both in the USA—Arizona, Georgia, Kentucky—and abroad in Germany and Peru. We always enjoyed seeing and being in the mountains, each with differing ecologies from the dry, arid mountains of Arizona to the wet rain forests of Hawai'i. One of my most enjoyable memories of mountains was the tremendous time I had with my daughter and son when they were twelve and ten years old, respectively. We spent time hiking and camping in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. In four short days, we did things together that we had never done before; we walked across wires and logs suspended thirty feet above the ground, climbed two mountains over 4,000 feet above sea level, swam in mountain streams, repelled down the face of a massive rock, and hiked with full packs until we were aware of every muscle in our bodies. We saw moose, bear tracks, and wild flowers we had never seen be-

fore. We had fellowship with three other fathers and their sons and daughters. We ate simple but delicious meals and drank gallons of purified mountain stream water. We slept on soft, mountain forest beds of peat and grew closer to each other in quiet, unforeseen ways that now, upon reflection, speak clearly to the presence of God in all that we did.

This time together was by design. It was intentionally an “experience” in exposures to a radically different ecology, physically, socially, and spiritually. It was all organized by staff of the college in which I was employed. The careful planning and professional performance of the staff made it possible for us to spend four transforming days together as father with daughter and son. In addition to all of the physical activity one might expect of a wilderness experience, we were also able to experience deep, penetrating spiritual times together. In fact, the rigorous challenging physical and social experiences for the entire group, and of each family group, was the powerful context—the well designed, intentional social-spiritual ecology for God to work in the hearts of each one.

We arrived home tired, but excited. My children continued to share with their mother all that we had seen and done. Their excitement was lasting and unabated. Their wholesome sense of accomplishment, of family, and of God with them in their every undertaking was pervasive in their words and memories as they recounted their experiences of those four wonderful days. Even today, nearly fifteen years later, there is a satisfaction that, for those four special days we had together, God was with us in special ways as well.

I share this story from my children’s early years for a good reason. I think the powerful ecology at the heart of this story,

a story that took place over four days, is absolutely relevant to the powerful ecology of a Christian university over four years. The best way I can describe the highly impacting context of a Christian university is through the concept of ecology, a “social-spiritual ecology of holiness.”

Ecologies exist in many forms and at many levels. We are most familiar with physical, biological ecologies made globally salient of late because of the environmental impact of climate change. It is also possible to think of cultures as ecologies of shared perceptions, values, customs, and worldviews. For purposes of this writing, I find it helpful to think of the Christian university in terms of social-spiritual ecologies, wherein individuals are immersed in social-spiritual environments and actively interact with others.

It is common for an individual to be in and out of more than one ecology in the course of a given day. For example, a married student living off-campus and working part-time may interact with the ecology of the home and marriage, the work place, the supermarket, the classroom, and a Bible study that evening. These are all unique social ecological contexts that impact the student immersed in them. Ecologies influence and are influenced by their participants. For example, I am particularly in love with Christian summer camps. My wife and I ran programs at two camps in the nineteen seventies for five summers. They are terrific examples of social-spiritual ecologies. Such settings can provide a rich array of nutrient-appropriate exposures for the holistic development of campers physically, socially, and spiritually.

On the other hand, human ecologies may also be toxic. They can be like a river filled with industrial waste that so pollutes the water that nothing immersed in it can survive.

This literally describes how, in the nineteen sixties, I found the Cuyahoga River. The Cuyahoga empties out into Lake Erie at Cleveland, Ohio. For years and years, the heavy industry along the river belched out a never ending vomit of the most deadly toxic waste imaginable. The summer that I worked on a ship in the merchant marine, I witnessed the cesspool the river had become. One night I saw the river literally light on fire when a seaman from a ship across the river from mine threw a lit cigarette into the oily, flammable water. The river became ablaze, and I watched in awe as the blaze slowly floated out into the mouth of Lake Erie.

Today, forty years later, the Cuyahoga River has been restored to a relatively positive state. The toxins are gone. The businesses along the river are no longer industry. Rather they are shops, restaurants, and other amenities that attract tourism. While no one would suggest drinking the water, the clean-up of the Cuyahoga is a remarkable example of ecological restoration.

Christian universities can be like the Cuyahoga River. They can become toxic as social-spiritual ecologies. They do so one polluting act at a time. Yet they can be preserved and protected from degradation as well. Recently, I read an article that described a well known American university, with roots that go back to earlier days as a Christian university, that had drifted so far as to resemble the Cuyahoga of the nineteen-sixties, toxic and polluted. While it has a divinity school and faculty of theology, at the same time it sponsors a pornography magazine that features its students, and weekend binge-drinking among first- and second-year students has become a major problem on campus. To me it looks like a toxic environment, a grossly unhealthy social-spiritual

ecology, however lofty its academic reputation.

The Apostle Paul speaks ecologically when he admonishes his readers to, “Grow in grace.” As we are immersed in particular environments and settings, we receive nutrient-appropriate exposures and experiences of God’s grace. This happens in the context of God’s loving presence and kindness so often found in and through our relationships with others. The Christian university, by design and by its essence or core nature, is intended to be such a social-spiritual ecology of grace. The Christian university, in contrast to so many toxic university settings, is relatively a “more excellent way,” to quote the Apostle Paul again. In his letter to the Corinthian church, Paul says just that. At the end of chapter 12 as a segue into the well known “Love Chapter”—chapter 13—he states, “and now I show you a more excellent way!” To conceive of the Christian university as a social-spiritual ecology is a more excellent way. The Christian university is not just another university in that it has chapel five times a week or that it has faculty and staff who just happen to be Christians. It is a more excellent way because it is centred in Jesus Christ and seeks to be permeated by Christ’s presence and blessed by God’s grace in every conceivable way: in every social exchange, in every class and class assignment, in every sports event and every interpersonal encounter between faculty and student, between faculty and faculty, student and student, and so on.

The Christian university acknowledges that, as a social-spiritual ecology, it must be grounded in the social context of its relationships with God and each other. We confess that we are created and re-created in God’s image, the essence of which is not only perfect in intellect, but also perfect in love

and, therefore, perfect in being social in nature. The Trinitarian God is social in essence, and we are made in God's social-spiritual image. We were made for fellowship and interaction, for perfect unity and community, and for perfect and intimate communion and communication. So our essence, after the likeness of Christ, is social and relational. We are made so as to be intimate beings seeking and enjoying our relationship(s) with the Triune God, the three distinct persons of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our distinct personalities are created to give and receive from God, from each other and through each other.

The idea of a social-spiritual ecology is that God influences us through others within the social context of relationship with others. God moulds us, and shapes us into His likeness, re-creating and restoring us through the agency of others. And He uses us to do the same with and to others whom He blesses through us as His human agents of grace. The social-spiritual ecology that transforms us into His likeness is our life together within the Christian university community, a special expression of what it means to be the Body of Christ. This is our communal life together: exercising God's means of pouring out grace and blessing into our lives through communal public prayer, the reading of Scripture, singing, testimonies, preaching and teaching, music, theatre, art, community service in Jesus name, and sport, to name a few.

In this sense, all of life is worship and service. All of life in the Christian university is sacramental. In the Christian university, all of life is used by God to increase our awareness that He is present and at work among us. As we become like Him, Christ reveals Himself through us. When those who make up the Christian university come to understand more

and more that He is present, and better and better who it is that actually is present, faith grows. The Christian university is strengthened as a people of faith, hope, and love.

John Wesley had a good grasp of the social-spiritual ecologies and the immersion of the individual into social contexts of God's grace. In his day, the class meetings, bands, and other intimate, small groups served as ecological contexts of personal development. They provided the wholesome settings that promoted growing in grace and spiritual maturity. The social-spiritual ecology of Wesley's Methodist movement was similar to what Luke records in Acts 2:42 that describes the developmental nature of the early church in which people continually devoted themselves to participation in a social ecology of grace and holiness through four types of "means." Those means are good teaching about Christ by the Apostles, fellowship with each other, the breaking of bread (likely both meals together and the sacrament of the Lord's Table), and especially prayer (prayers of thanks, praise, intercession, and petition).

In a Christian university, as in the examples of Wesley and also the early church, God uses a great abundance of means to bring grace into our lives, to shape us into His likeness, and to move us forward with Him in mission, ministry and impact on the world for good. Some means available on a Christian university campus are personal and private. Others are public and social. Others may seem sacred while still others more conventionally secular. Some means help us experience God's presence. Prayer is like that. Other means help us appreciate God's identity. Preaching, teaching, public Scripture reading and the testimonies of others do that for us. Together, the mix of means—God's means of grace—com-

bines and flows into the nutrient-appropriate ecology of grace. The mix of means, the nutrients in the ecology, provides what we need for our development and transformation. The extent to which we, students, faculty, and staff of the university, are open and receptive to God's use of us (human agency), we can contribute to and enrich the social-spiritual ecology we are immersed in for profound transformational, developmental possibilities.

When the Apostle Paul says to the Philippians—chapter four, verse 19—“My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus,” he is speaking ecologically. To be in Christ Jesus, immersed in His presence, makes all the difference. This is why we say the essence of the university is Jesus Christ. The essence is his permeating presence.

All life exists in an ecology of some kind or other. The question we face each day is in what ecology shall we spend the day? For the parents sending their daughter or son off to university, the question becomes, what kind of social-spiritual ecology is best for my dear child? For the student, in what social-spiritual context am I likely to thrive, to develop to my fullest potential, to become transformed into all that God would have me become? For faculty and staff, in what ways might I contribute to the means of grace that make-up the social-spiritual environment to which I am committed and to which I participate as an essential agent of God's grace?

At its very best, the Christian university is an ecology of holiness. It is the interactive and dynamic context in which our relationship with God in Christ Jesus becomes increasingly intimate and in which all members of the university community can participate in life with God together. At its best, the Christian university, as an ecology of holiness (Christ-

likeness and Spirit-infilling), reflects the ongoing process of consecration and sanctification. By participating in the means of grace, personal and social, formal and informal, we consecrate our lives and our way of living together. This is our response to all the grace He has given to us in the first place. God then in return sanctifies that which we have consecrated and, in the process, our faithful God in Jesus Christ by his Holy Spirit blesses, reveals, discloses, cleanses, illumines, restores, equips, edifies, and makes us holy for His service. We are even more prepared to hear his voice, to recognize his calling, to go forward into each day in obedience to love others, to serve others, to make a difference in the lives of others. God then is at work in, among, and through us by his Holy Spirit as a gift to the world. We continue to be a work in progress. Our students continue the momentum of being completed in Christ. The Apostle Paul again says to the Philippians, chapter one, verse 12, “May he who has begun a good work in you complete it,” and in chapter two, verse 12 affirms, “it is God who works in you to will and to do according to his good purpose.”

The Christian university is a social-spiritual ecology of holiness, transformation, and impact. This is what makes Christian university education higher than any other form of higher education as long as its essence is Christ Jesus and it remains faithful to this calling. Such a university will transform students’ lives, will produce scholarship and research results that are inspired and powerful, and will be a university that by design, position, connectivity, and empowerment has a profound impact on the world.

The critic will say that what I have described is not a university and is not even any Christian university that he

or she knows. To this critique, I respond that such a university is not normative. Normatively, universities in general have settled for something less: less demanding, less aspiring, and less impacting. Such a Christian university as described is unusual. It is rare. But with its flaws, blemishes, and deficiencies, it does exist in several places. It is a work in progress; it is God's project. If the Christian university drifts into being something other than Christ-centered and Christ-honouring, and if the university becomes something that only reflects Christian values or becomes merely church related—like so many universities across the landscape—we know by experience that God will raise up new means and new universities to get the job done. God is always doing a new thing. He will continue to do so either through those universities that are faithful to this calling through social-spiritual ecologies of holiness or through new ones that He brings into existence. He is faithful!

THE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY AS A PLACE

Part

II

A Particular People



Envisioning the University as a People

LEADING UP TO THE FALL OF EACH YEAR THROUGHOUT North America and Europe, across the northern hemisphere throughout the world, professors make ready their courses. Six months later, professors in the southern hemisphere do the same. Students make preparations for another academic year. University staff members prepare the campus and facilities. Books and course syllabi are organized. We once again begin a great global enterprise of higher education in all its variations. A grand, glorious, and noble vision of university education, research, and service is launched around the world with the hope of discovery, learning, and engagement. The fulfillment of such hope rests on the adequacy of the vision, the design, and resourcing of thousands of universities toward success. On more than any other factor, the success of a university begins with the vision of the university as a people.

More than a place, a university is a composite of people. The effectiveness of a university depends on the nature of the people who make-up the university, and by nature we mean their competence and potentially, so much more. A university made up of competent people will be successful, but a university made up of people who are more than

that—who are also committed to growing in the likeness of Christ—will be a university that has a life-changing impact in the world.

In Trinity Western University's official strategic direction document, *Envision the Century*, we read these words:

The vision for Trinity Western University's future builds on its identity and essence as a Christian university of the liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies, and on its historical mission to develop people of high competence and exemplary character who distinguish themselves as exceptional leaders in the 'marketplaces of life.'

Within a context of global challenges and opportunities, we envision Trinity Western University as a people, a place, a provision of God, and a priority.

THE UNIVERSITY AS A PEOPLE

Universities are people. They are, by their identity and mission, massive means of social influence. Their greatest means of influence is human agency. They are first and foremost people influencing people; people of competence helping to make others competent. But they are actually more than that. Every person engaged in the work of a university to influence others contributes their skills, but also their character, integrity, and honour. Their potential to positively or negatively impact others comes from more than just their level of competence. They also contribute their character, ethics, sensitivity, and concern—or lack of concern—for the wellbeing of others.

Within the university, faculty members have the privileged position of greatest potential impact on others by the very nature of their work. I remember as an undergraduate student, in a small liberal arts college, how one professor changed my life by his example, his competence in his field, and his character in his relationships with faculty, staff, students, and me. Perhaps most personally impacting was his affirming interest in me when I was not his academically best student at the time. His influence on me was not solitary. My dear professor's impact was amplified by his wonderful wife's care; she also took an interest in me, along with hundreds of other students over the decades, and welcomed me to her kitchen table to enjoy a cup of tea, a scone or muffin, and be a listening ear.

I remember another professor in my first year of doctoral studies. He was the scrooge of the department. While my earlier professor and his good wife were blessings, this graduate school professor was a curse. When he wasn't totally ignoring me, he worked hard to discourage and disparage me. I am confident to this day that his goal was to drive me out of the program believing that I was inferior and not up to his high standards. With time I learned that he was indeed a very unhappy person whose life was a train wreck and whose faith had suffered a similar fate. I was not the only student who served as a target for his anger at life.

Universities are made up of people. They are social ecologies wherein every member of the faculty, staff, and student body brings something to the context. Secondary participants such as parents, siblings, vendors, volunteers, university sport fans, and the like also contribute. Likewise, as social ecologies, universities may have profound impacts

on all who enter the various contexts of their influence. The nature of a university's composition, the aggregation of persons, personalities, competencies, and character, determines the nature of the impact. A university's essence, its core nature found in the collective nature of its people, is what makes it particular and distinct. It is the basis for discriminating between universities. It is the basis on which we say, this is a high quality university; this is a university that will do me the most good in preparing me for the future; or this one is compatible with my core values and aspirations. Universities are more than aggregations of talent and competence. They are particular scholarly, academic communities of people with variance in their composite nature, the quality of which goes beyond their individual and collective competence in their chosen fields.

A PARTICULAR UNIVERSITY

Every year, millions of young people worldwide contemplate university education, desiring the dream of achieving degreed status and the opened doors and quality of life that are a result. More and more, millions of adults are returning to universities to complete a degree that was interrupted by life's circumstances, or returning to universities in pursuit of advanced, graduate education. There is a sobering reality that presents itself to them and which must be addressed if the high cost investment of time and money is to have the optimum return. This reality is that so many universities have such underwhelming vision and weak aspirations for their students. Most universities aspire to be factories of knowledge, hubs of information and research. Envisioning optimum outcomes for students is not a priority. Student

success and benefit paradoxically do not occasion much reflection within the university. The higher a superstar faculty member rises in status, the less involvement he or she has in student outcomes. Universities typically envision the pinnacle of success for students as competence in their field. Even fewer numbers of universities are serious about going beyond that limited vision by intentionally developing graduates who are well educated in the liberal arts and sciences and in a chosen specialty or field of competence. Very few universities and colleges envision more than competence as an outcome and therefore hire on the basis of competence alone. The issue of character and commitment is only negatively defined; universities are content to avoid hiring those whose poor character could cause problems in the future. They structure faculty professional advancement according to a narrow view of competence by weighting research and publishing productivity well above all else. I know this, because I have lived it.

In contrast is the Christian university. The contrast makes the Christian university a particular university. When I use the term “particular university” in reference to faith-based and faith-oriented universities, I am speaking of universities like Notre Dame and Loyola Universities, which are particular in being Catholic institutions, or Brandeis or Yeshiva University, which are intentionally Jewish universities. While my reflections here are true of many Christian universities, I offer Trinity Western as an example of a particular university because of the particularity of its people — people employed as faculty and staff, people who are admitted into the life of the University as students, and people who partner with the University in the missional ful-

fillment of its goals. It is a Christian university that aspires to ends and outcomes of transformation and impact. As a people, the University desires that its graduates will be transformed into people of competence and character, calling and commitment in the likeness of Christ. The University's hope is that they will have a profound, salutary, and beneficial impact on the world throughout their lifetimes.

To develop people for such noble, laudable ends, the Christian university must engage people—faculty, staff, and friends—who exemplify the ends it desires. Its people must model the very outcomes it aspires to promote in others. It must express its identity and exercise its mission through those very people who, though flawed and imperfect, live out competence and character, calling and commitment. The university must engage people who, in their own sphere of influence, are successful in making the world a better place and touching lives in ways that bring life, grace, and human flourishing.

The Christian university is a particular university when its essence is Jesus Christ. Christ's presence permeates Trinity Western University. We find the presence of Christ in beautiful campus settings, which showcase the glory of God as creator. We find Christ permeating the University through the stories of the journeys of God's people, through celebration and difficulty, in community and in solitary, and in remarkable exposures and profound encounters with Christ along the way. We find Christ's presence in the tabernacled of University events and settings: in the praise, thanksgiving, songs, prayers and sacraments of University chapel programs; in one-on-one discussions in offices and cafeterias; in residence halls; and in classrooms. And we find

Christ's presence in the miracles of the University's history and the continuation of those miracles today and, no doubt, in the days ahead. Trinity Western is permeated with the presence of Christ.

It is the presence of Christ that makes the University a particular university. Where He is present, He is then the essence of the University. His nature permeates personalities, discussions, interactions, and events. His essence, His core nature, influences everything and everyone who is exposed to the grace of His presence. He is the essence of the University in its many forms, permeating its programs, projects, proposals, athletics, student papers, faculty publications, coffee breaks, late night study groups, and renditions by choirs. It is the totality of Christ's presence in the life of its people that make the University a particular university. TWU is intentionally working toward particular ends. Higher higher education is Christ within, Christ throughout that makes the University valuable.

AFTER THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST

As a particular university, not more of a university or less but only particular in its essence, the Christian university differentiates itself from others by going beyond ends as merely expressions of competence. It chooses to amplify competence through character, allowing the developmental synthesis of competence and character in every student. By character, the Christian university means character after the likeness of Christ. It means envisioning the university as a people after the likeness of Christ, a people called to be like Him: truth seeking and truth speaking, competent, compassionate, reconciling and restorative, a people of faith, hope, and love.

Notre Dame and Loyola Universities, Brandeis and Yeshiva Universities, Trinity Western and other Christian universities are particular universities largely because they present forms of higher education that are faith-based, faith-informed, and faith-oriented in a particular worldview, in these cases Catholic, Jewish, and Evangelical. To say this is not to embrace a political, economic, or cultural perspective, though each worldview may bring with them nuances and even contemporary baggage of politics, economics, cultures and subcultures. The Christian university is distinctive in its desire to engage and produce persons who have a unity of faith around the person of Jesus Christ, the orthodox belief in the Gospel narrative, the story of the Triune God dynamically making history with His people, and the orthodox practice of living out the Christ-like, Christ-led life for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom. For this reason, those who participate in the life of the Christian university do so as a people of faith, with “faith seeking understanding,” and, therefore, also as a people of hope and love in community together after the likeness of a loving God. This too is what makes the Christian university a particular university.

We envision the Christian university to be a people of faith, hope, and love. For this reason, in what follows, I share two pieces of writing, both very personal in their origins and messaging. The first is an address to the Trinity Western University community in the 2008 Convocation Chapel, which brings the University together for the first chapel of the new academic year, to offer up to God the first fruits of the community’s thanks and praise. This address is on the University as “A People of Hope” in a world of great oppor-

tunity and yet deepening need. The second piece is entitled “A People of Love” and tells a story from nearly sixty years ago that portrays the power of love to address in practical ways the deep needs of others.

Together, they bring focus to what it means for members of a Christian university community (students, faculty, staff, friends, and alumni) to come together as a particular people to make a particular university.

A People of Hope

[Thriving in Wholeness, Seeking Peace]

Convocation Address to Students, Faculty, & Staff

DAVID ENARSON GYMNASIUM AT TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY,
SEPTEMBER 4th, 2008

ONCE A WEEK, *THE ECONOMIST* MAGAZINE ARRIVES IN my mail. It is a highlight of my day. It means another week of helpful reading. Why helpful? *The Economist* magazine is one of the most succinct reviews of what is happening in the world, and I find it informs my prayer life and strengthens my understanding of the world and God's work throughout the world. It helps me to pray for the nearly 20,000 TWU alumni living and working in over 80 countries. It helps me remember to pray for TWU students who are studying abroad and to pray for the families of international students who are among us enriching our lives here at the University.

Through the daily discipline of reading about the world, I am exposed to literary snapshots, a veritable mosaic of the state of a world for which Christ died and for which God has great hopes and plans.

- Over the weeks, months, and years, I better understand:
- the ruthlessness of Robert Mugabe and the oppression of the people of Zimbabwe;
 - the weakness of Thabo Mbeki in South Africa, neglecting to speak out against Mugabe's oppressive, criminal rule;
 - the notable leadership of women heads of state in Liberia, Germany, Chile, and Argentina, while the USA still struggles to get a woman in the top national leadership job;
 - the aspirations of Latin American nations, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil, for a different kind of democracy with a stronger social conscience—the kind of democracy snuffed out in Chile in 1973, along with Chilean President Salvador Allende;
 - the declining state of the African continent, seemingly without hope, drowning in government corruption, with failing nations overwhelmed by AIDS and the sequela of drought and climate change;
 - the economic ascendancy, rising quality of life, and spiritual rebirth of millions of people in China, India, and Brazil;
 - the chilling ambition of Russia to reestablish its empire; and
 - the fact that “The Bottom Billion”, so clearly described in Paul Collier's book by the same title, is actually the bottom 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty on less than \$1.25/day.

The Economist, more than any other means, not only keeps me relatively well informed, but it also informs my prayer life and keeps me thinking daily about how this university—this

remarkable, particular university and its wonderful faculty and staff, superb students, and well-prepared graduates—can impact such a world in Jesus' name.

The University's strategic directions document, *Envision the Century*, embraces the idea that our future together, in the generations to come, is very much a global future and a global opportunity to address the world's greatest needs.

When I am home in the evenings, before turning out the light, I often spend some time reading a book, or two, or three. I love my personal library. On my desk at home are books I am currently reading or have recently read. Here are the titles on my desk right now:

- *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, Paul Collier;
- *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Changing the Global Balance of Power*, David Aikman;
- *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Divine Providence*, John Sanders; and
- *Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Higher Education*, Nicolas Wolterstorff

Together, this brief collection of books helps me reflect on what a TWU Christian liberal arts education is today and what it can continue to develop into in the days and years ahead.

I am reminded that such an education involves strategic reflection on self, family, friends, community, and the world. It involves sustained personal development and growth, and life-long learning toward which TWU provides direction, momentum, and encouragement. A Christian liberal arts education is *fides quaerens intellectum*, or “faith seek-

ing understanding,” faith assisting reason, and faith guiding decision-making.

One of my favourite words, coined by an artist friend of mine, is the word “juxtaposynthesis.” The word means that when you put two things along side each other, like Christmas lights wrapped around Michelangelo’s *Pietà*, something new emerges as synthesis. So, when I see *The Economist* lying on my desk at home alongside my books, I experience a juxtaposynthesis.

I call this juxtaposynthesis hope! I see hope for this wonderful, wretched world: hope for the hopelessness of Africa, hope for so many things I read about in *The Economist* and see in other media. I see hope for tomorrow, for the 1.4 billion people overwhelmed by poverty, oppression, illiteracy, war, civil strife, gender discrimination, caste, tribal oppression, racism, and religious persecution.

I see hope because God’s bias is to bless the world, to pour out His grace and mercy through human agency. And that’s when I see you!

I see hope because of you, first-year undergrad and first-year post-grad students, excited and nervous about finding your place and way.

I see hope because of you, second- and third-year students, wrestling with the inevitable ambivalence, dissonance, and discovery of being midstream in your work here.

I see hope because of you, fourth-year students, worried about what comes next at the end of this last year, worried whether there is life after graduation.

I see hope in graduate students and faculty who start a new semester with excitement, yet sensing already the weight of the work load in the context of your calling.

I see hope in staff because of your selfless service and satisfaction in participating in this grand and Christ-centered university, this great enterprise of Christian higher education.

And I see hope because of you, of us all together, living in covenant community, sensing that we are a people of wholeness, striving for holiness and *shalom*, and responding to God's call on each one of our hearts and lives.

I have hope for the world, for so many others whose lives will be touched forever in the years to come.

I have hope for the world because together we believe in wholeness, peace, and *shalom* as achievable outcomes. We believe these are realities that are possible because we have seen and know wholeness and true peace—true *shalom*. It is something that, by the Holy Spirit, in Jesus name, can be an ever-increasing reality in the world.

Our verse for this academic year is found in the First Epistle of Thessalonians, chapter five, verses 23 and 24:

May God himself, the God of Peace, sanctify you through and through. May your body, soul, and spirit be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Our God is faithful. And he will do it.

God Himself! The God of Peace, of *shalom*, and of human flourishing! He wants to be God Himself more than ever in your life. The God of Peace, of *shalom*, and of human flourishing is for you and in you, working through you and in the world so that He can be the God of human flourishing to the world. Our God delights in using human agency. He

calls you to this missional calling—to wholeness and peace!

In this remarkable university, you will not be merely prepared with excellence in your chosen discipline. Be prepared to be transformed. Your transformation gives hope to the world.

Here at Trinity Western University, you are immersed in a powerful social-spiritual ecology—a context of covenant and commitment with high standards and high expectations. This particular university will give you remarkable, transforming experiences, exposures, and encounters. You will not be the same. You will become the bringer of hope, life, light, and *shalom*. You will become your divine destiny—the *imago dei*—the image of God. The Lord's message of peace, justice, hope, and love to a waiting world is not written on paper but on your hearts.

This is the end we seek. This is the end to which this university is devoted. This is what our board of governors had in mind when they recently crafted their highest-order policy saying:

In aspiring to become a world-class Christian university, a place of exceptional discovery, learning and engagement, Trinity Western University exists so that, through its students, alumni/ae, faculty, and staff, the world may experience Christ's truth, compassion, reconciliation, and hope.

Blessings in Christ to you all as together we seek this end.

A People of Love

THE BEATLES WERE ONE OF HISTORY'S MOST CELEBRATED musical groups. Although they disbanded decades ago, their music is still heard through a multitude of media and remains popular around the world. One of their most remembered phrases from a highly popular tune is "All You Need is Love." While we certainly need more than love, many of us resonate with the profundity of this phrase. In its simple, undefined claim lies its profound capacity to move the listener to deeper meaning. We appreciate the depth of the meaning of love when we see or experience it first-hand. The more desperate, dire, or disturbing the circumstance within which love is given, the more meaningful is the understanding. Someone has rightly said that love is not so much a feeling as an action, and a series of actions, especially actions that come with a cost, with sacrifice, and with a compelling concern for the good and wellbeing of others over oneself.

Universities are not thought of as institutions of love. That is to say they are more often places of transaction where the action is the exchange of roles and resources. Education is a transaction. You take enough courses within given guidelines, pay enough tuition, engage in multiple transactions with a list of professors and litany of course exposures,

and trade tests and papers for grades until you receive your degree. While there may be some admiration involved, there isn't much room or need for love. Of all the actions involved, none could be characterized as love. In reality, to run the gauntlet of university life and succeed in getting a degree—or, if you are faculty, to obtain tenure and promotions—you need a great deal of things other than love.

THE MOTHER & THE MRS. CAPTAIN

Love is action that springs from the unreserved, uncompromising interest and concern for the other. Many stories underscore the true essence of love, but the one that best comes to my mind does not take place in a university, but in the community; and it involves a people renowned around the world for their Christ-like love, The Salvation Army. There is much that can be appropriated as lessons-to-be-learned from this people of love, this organization that exemplifies the phrase “Christianity with its sleeves rolled-up.” The story goes like this:

One bitter-cold, snowy night in mid-winter, a poor beleaguered family, father, mother, and children, drove their dilapidated station wagon along a darkened country road on the way to the next town. The family had skipped out on the overdue rent and was travelling by the cover of night to start a new life. Without warning, the car slowed to a stop. The father, cussing and pounding the steering wheel, yelled at the mother and children, and ordered them to stay put until he returned. He walked back the way they had come. After more than an hour, poorly dressed and beginning to feel the bone chilling cold of the night, the poor mother gathered her

thinly clad children and headed off into the darkness in the other direction, toward the next town.

It was a long while and still dark when they crossed the tracks at the edge of town and, shivering uncontrollably, rang the bell at the local Salvation Army. A light in the building's apartment came on and soon a young lieutenant opened the door to usher the desperate family into the warmth of the building. Anticipating such needs, The Salvation Army there, and in hundreds of towns across the country, had established a warm, clean shelter for such a time.

The lieutenant was new in her appointment, so she called a more experienced captain who lived in a separate quarters. The phone was answered by Mrs. Captain whose turn it was to respond. Mrs. Captain and the young lieutenant helped the mother bathe the children, gave them a warm cup of soup and crackers, and put them to bed in fresh pajamas from the Army's clothing closet. They then helped the mother find her way to bed as well.

The next day, the family slept late. The captain interviewed the mother, notified the police regarding the father, and began making a plan to help the family get back on its feet. The father never showed. The mother and children transitioned from the emergency shelter to their own little place. The Army helped the children settle into a new school and helped the mother land a job as a waitress. With the Army's used clothing supply and food pantry, the family made it through the difficult transition. The Army's youth programs, Sunday school, and congregational life helped to address their social and spiritual needs. The family became a committed Christian family.

Gradually, with the Captains' love in the form of tangible

aid, social and emotional support, and information for decision making, the mother was able to receive further education. The children moved with stability through life, graduating from high school, and pursuing college.

That first night at the Army's door, the family was not the most lovable family. The children were not model kids and the mother's temperament was not the product of a blue-blood education. But the lieutenants, captains, and majors of The Salvation Army have shepherd's hearts and lovingly take care of the sheep. They are often better than many at loving the unlovable.

Many years passed and, although a strong, loving friendship grew between Mrs. Captain and the mother, the Captains became the Majors and were appointed to other places. The mother rose with further education and moved to a large city where she eventually became the executive secretary to the chairman of a large corporation, a businessman she married following the death of his first wife. The mother's children had grown up and become well educated and successful. But, the mother and Mrs. Captain lost track of each other.

Years later, the mother had a heart attack and was admitted to The Cleveland Clinic, a large hospital that is nationally recognized for its work in cardiology. Despite her ability to pay for a private room, there was none available, so the mother shared a room and began to get to know the woman in the other bed who had experienced the same affliction.

One evening, the mother felt comfortable enough with the other patient to begin sharing her life's story, starting with that dark, bitter-cold winter night and the remarkable love and care of Mrs. Captain. While telling her story, the other woman began to softly cry. With tears slowly running

down her cheeks, she left her bed, lay down with the mother and hugged her. They cried together as the mother finished her story.

The other women looked into the mother's eyes and with a smile said to her, "Do you recognize me? Do you know who I am? Do you remember?"

Looking intently into the other patient's eyes, the mother blurted-out "Oh, dear! You are Mrs. Captain." They rejoiced over and over at this most improbable reunion.

The Mrs. Captain had become Mrs. Major. Following the death of her first husband, she married another Salvation Army officer and they were retired.

The great joy of Mrs. Major, expressed to me years later, was the high privilege of seeing the fruit of love's labour. It is not always the case that the fruit gets to be enjoyed again so many years later. Love does bear fruit. Love never fails. Love is not enough. It must be clothed and delivered with hard work, perseverance, and the unremitting and unreserved respect in the dignity and worth of every person. It must be driven by the inspiration and grace of Christ, whose love knows no limit and whose grace has no measure.

I can think of no better story of practical love which, while institutionalized by The Salvation Army, is still given freely, creatively, and without reservation or discrimination in ways that lead to transformation and impact. It is gratifying to share this story of a people of love believing that Christian universities can continue to be such places, such organization, and such people of unconditional, unreserved love for others. It is especially gratifying to share this story, because Mrs. Major is not only the other patient in the story, but also

the other mother—my mother of whom I am so very proud and by whom I am so very blessed!

THE UNIVERSITY AS A PEOPLE OF LOVE

The Christian university exists as a means of God's grace living in faith, seeking understanding, devoted to Christ, and seeking Kingdom ends. Its identity is found in Christ, and its mission is to pursue truth, make disciples, and live in obedience to the great commandments: to love the Lord with all we have within us and to love others as ourselves.

As a Christian university and, therefore, a particular people, we are to love each other, to give of ourselves to each other and for the wellbeing and success of each other. This is the daily bread of the university community. This is our collective, mutual calling and commission. This has profound, exponential implications for all who take their place in the fellowship that the community finds in Christ and in each other. This makes the Christian university a particular people and, in contrast to so many other kinds of universities, this makes us a peculiar people. They shall know us by our love.

To be known as a university of love, of Christ's love lived out and given away beyond each other to the world, is our great privilege. It is to be seen as peculiar, as not normal, but as more than different. We are a peculiar people in our commitment to ends that involve love expressed through sacrifice, to research and scholarship that have others in mind, and to teaching with freshness and passion that moves others to love what we love, see what we see, and do what we do *with others in mind*.

This is not to say that there is not altruism, care, and concern for others at other universities. It is to say that in the Christian university, there is a calling and commitment to reaching higher ground through higher levels of discovery, learning, engagement, and service for ends that truly matter. There is greater interest in seeing every student prosper and greater attention to every student's needs and potential. There is a passion for the work and a willingness to persevere toward ends that truly matter for the world and its deepest challenges and most profound needs.

The Christian university, as a people of love, embraces the profound truth in the old hymn of the church, "He Giveth More Grace":

*He giveth more grace as our burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength as our labours increase,
To added affliction he addeth his mercy,
To multiplied sorrows, he multiplies peace,
His love has no limits, his grace has no measure,
His power no boundaries know unto man,
For out of his infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.*

Love is an action. Often it involves loving the unlovable, loving with faith that love can make a tremendous difference in another's life, and loving with a love that gives glory to God. As a people of love, the Christian university loves in the likeness of Christ. Those who make up the Christian university look to serve in ways that give, and give, and give to others, drawing on the grace of God that provides strength and wisdom to make a difference.

What does love look like in the Christian university? Again, the answer is that love is an action. When we observe the action of professors, we see that they take on a higher work load of teaching in order to preserve small classes that permit them to get to know their students well. This is going the extra mile and is a type of love in action. Like all things, there is a line which can be crossed in which sacrifice spills over into exploitation by the university. Nevertheless, in small classes, faculty can be more sensitive to the potential and to the needs of their students. Professors act in love when they take extra time in their offices to meet with students and engage them on topics with which students wrestle. Professors love students when they take time to encourage the whole student, when they inquire as to their family, their general wellbeing, and their spiritual wellness. Professors love students when they not only pray for them, but pray with them. They love students when they bring them into their laboratories as lab assistants and invite them to coauthor papers, when they invite them home for a home cooked meal, and to join them in church on Sunday. They love students when they get to know them well enough while they are students to write strong, well-crafted letters of recommendation years after they have had them in their classes. This is peculiar action. Love in the Christian university is not normal. It is different, and it makes all the difference. It transforms. It impacts. Love in the university is not all you need, but it goes a long way!

Part

III

The Call of Shalom

The Heart of the University

[Essence and Ends]

Convocation Address to Students, Faculty, & Staff

*DAVID ENARSON GYMNASIUM AT TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY,
SEPTEMBER 7th, 2007*

IT HAS BEEN MY GREAT PRIVILEGE TO BE YOUR PRESIDENT now for a little more than fourteen months. My wife Irene and I are blessed by a warm and affirming university community of colleagues, who are becoming good friends. Our good friends also include the world's greatest students. When kindly greeted across campus and asked the familiar question – “How are you?”, it is easy to say in response, “I am blessed!” I know Irene shares this sentiment with me. Praise God!

I have been engaged in a great conversation these past fourteen months with the people of Trinity Western University. The conversation has been about the University, our identity, and our future. In and through that conversation, I am learning much. Thank you for speaking into that great conversation, voicing what you love about this special university, what you would like to see preserved, and what you would like to see changed. I particularly cherish your helpful

advice, even when, or especially when, it is so cleverly disguised as criticism. Your candor is priceless. Your occasional affirmations have value too. A president's greatest challenge is to not get pumped-up by or addicted to affirmation.

In our brief time together now, I would like to wield a large brush, painting a large stroke onto the canvas of the University's future by suggesting that we interject into the great conversation the idea of *shalom*. This is because I believe *shalom* to be at the heart of the University's essence and ends. I would like us to embrace Nicholas Wolterstorff's idea that *shalom* is human flourishing. We always desire that you flourish. Jesus said, "I come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly." However, where there is a lack of human flourishing, there is injustice. Can you hear the voice of the prophet Micah saying, "What does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God"?

We ask today, at this time in human history, is humanity flourishing? On the one hand, yes! On the other hand, no! We answer yes when we reflect on the unprecedented affluence characterized by the developed world, particularly in the West, and most recently in sectors of India and China. We say yes when we ponder the remarkable achievements of technology, the extent of global travel, and the historically unprecedented degree of church growth, primarily in the southern hemisphere. Closer to home, we say yes when we think of the remarkable experiences, exposures, and achievements of Trinity Western University's students, faculty, staff, and alumni. These achievements include cutting-edge research in biotechnology; student internships in the Prime Minister's office; engagements in hospitals, clinics, and

classrooms in Zambia, Guatemala, China, and Korea; micro-economic development strategies in Thailand; and building schools in Rwanda. The scope and diversity of the opportunities and achievements is astounding.

However, to the question is humanity today flourishing, we must also answer, no! We must say no when we reflect on the past century of war and conflict, increasing poverty on a global scale, the rise of ancient diseases such as malaria and leprosy, the significant failure of food production among the poorest of the poor, and the devastating consequences of climate change that await the most vulnerable of nations, especially on the African continent. A scan of the world's greatest opportunities and deepest needs suggests that the answer to the question regarding the state of human flourishing is mixed in extremes. In the midst of tremendous human flourishing, there is great global suffering and injustice. People need the Lord! They also need clean water, an adequate food supply, housing, meaningful work, and refuge from today's and tomorrow's extreme global changes in weather. This world of ours requires a salvation on two fronts: salvation for the flourishing of the human spirit in response to the love of God in Christ Jesus, and salvation for the flourishing of the human condition, physically, emotionally, and socially in the context of a healthy community. The world, with its 6 billion plus residents, is struggling on both fronts.

We do not have to look far to see this reality. Infomercials and the internet help us see it clearly and pervasively in Africa. The continent of Africa has one billion people, one sixth of the world's population. Yet the Africa Development Bank Group reports that the whole of Africa consumes

only 3% of the world's energy. Most of that 3% is consumed by South Africa and Egypt. We know that two thirds of the world today lacks clean, sanitary water. We know that infant mortality, due to absolutely preventable causes, remains at around 11 million deaths each year. We know that for every death of a child who is age five or under, two children are born physically and/or mentally handicapped. And we know that many governments, who should be seizing the opportunity to address these global challenges, are either corrupt and/or incompetent. One example of leadership incompetence and paralysis is found in the recent, multi-national attempt to lay a giant fibre optic cable down the west coast of Africa. This single initiative promises to bring the revolutionary 21ST century of technology, with the tremendous benefits of the internet, to many African countries. The requisite technology and investment funding to lay the cable is absolutely available. What is lacking is the leadership and political will of all participating nations to make it happen. The petty disagreements about sovereignty and ownership make it impossible to achieve this potential boon to human flourishing.

Look at the enormous world-wide challenge of climate change. Former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, was correct in saying that "the impact of global warming will fall disproportionately upon the world's poorest countries. Poor people already live on the front lines of pollution, disaster and the degradation of resources and land." This includes severe shortages of future water supply, the demise of agriculture and food production, the loss of biodiversity, the increasing incidence and prevalence of disease, degradation of soil and increases in desertification of

whole nations. Kofi Annan places the blame of this sobering future on a “frightening lack of leadership.”

In the face of enormous human achievements in technology, leading to a belief that there has never been such remarkable quality of life for so many, we see another picture, one of the world wherein humanity is not flourishing but suffering. We see human need and desperation are at unprecedented realities in magnitude and impact. It would seem that instead of the grace of *shalom*, we witness, again and again, leadership whose sin is one of callous complacency, omission, and, consequently, inexcusable human suffering and injustice. If Kofi Annan is right, if the world suffers because of a “frightening lack of leadership,” two questions present themselves to us today: What might needed leadership look like? And, where might such leadership come from?

The kind of leadership called for is remarkable leadership to address the world’s greatest opportunities and deepest needs. What then is the essence of such remarkable leadership? How might universities rise to the challenge of developing the requisite leadership for such a time in the world as this? And what would the essence and form of Trinity Western University be like in order to address such a challenge locally, nationally, and globally? How might we respond today and position ourselves as a university for tomorrow?

As a particular university with a remarkable history, are we not called to rise to an even higher calling and commitment to provide remarkable leadership, through Godly servant leaders, who respond to God’s call to an even higher purpose? As a university, are we not called to develop people who are:

- in their deepest being, Christ-centered;
- Spirit-led and Spirit-filled;

- consecrated—fully given over to God and to the flourishing of others;
- a means of *shalom* to one's neighbour;
- desirous of seizing the world's greatest opportunities and addressing the world's deepest needs;
- competent and Christ-like;
- committed to high standards;
- called to a higher purpose and to noble ends;
- determined to do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with their God, and bring light, life, and *shalom* to the world?

Is it possible that such servant leaders might come from Trinity Western University, a university devoted to EDUCATION, TRANSFORMATION, and IMPACT, in Jesus' name and for His sake? It is possible, for Trinity Western is a dynamic university—the essence of which is found in these three distinctives:

Transcendence · rising above and going beyond the ordinary in the case of seeking unprecedented, unparalleled *shalom* for the world.

Ascendence · gaining and moving ever upward in intimacy with God, and in justice, mercy, and solidarity with others.

Presence · personally recognizing and meeting the real needs of the poorest of the poor and loving those who are in need.

Like our Lord Jesus, we are called as a university to develop transcendent, ascendant, and presence-oriented leadership

that will, in the words of Luke's gospel, "proclaim the good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed, proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour."

While we must hold fast to the essential essence and ends of the University, the forms of the University will change and see continuous improvement.

With all this in mind, we face a challenging and exciting academic year.

First year students, we challenge you to:

- get grounded;
- rise to the expectations of your professors and pursue excellence in all things;
- balance your studies with a robust social life; and
- let God reveal Himself to you in personal ways.

Returning students, we challenge you to:

- reignite, realign, and recommit to excellence;
- continue your journey of personal discovery;
- workout your deepening faith and future; and
- listen for your calling.

Faculty and staff, you are challenged to:

- find your balance;
- embrace and pass on to students God's wisdom and grace; and
- rejoice in the privilege of our common calling.

We are together (students, faculty, and staff) a remarkable university, a special faith community, whose true nature and essence is Christ-in-us, and whose greatest achievement and end is *shalom*!

One Life Can Change the World

Commencement Address to Faculty, Students,
& Graduates & their Families

ABBOTSFORD PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLY

APRIL 26th, 2007

ON BEHALF OF ALL THOSE WHO COMPRISE THE TRINITY
Western University community, the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and board of governors, I am pleased to express a tremendously heart-felt congratulations to all graduates.

Graduating students, we are thrilled for you and your soon-to-be-celebrated achievement. Congratulations and God bless you!

We take a few moments to also celebrate our remarkable university. A university is not only a place. It is first and foremost a people—a people with an identity, a mission, and a focus on what they strive to achieve in the end. As students, you have been a vital part of the University as a people. This remarkable community has an identity. We are a Christian university. This means we are Christ-centred, cruci-centric, and intentional in teaching from a privileged position of having Jesus Christ at the centre of all we do. This is our

identity, our very being. It is the heart of who we are and from whence the mission flows.

The University is missional. We are a people with a mission. Unlike other universities, where education is largely a transaction, our mission is to pursue and foster transformation—from adolescence to adulthood; from unfounded and ungrounded idealism to perceptive wisdom and insight; from one's parents' politics and faith commitment to one's own appreciation, commitment, and place in the fabric of the greater faith community. A university with a transforming mission develops not only a high level of competence in its students, but also the highest possible character—character after the likeness of Christ and character that only comes through the work of God's Holy Spirit.

Therefore, in the end, the purpose of our university in its identity and mission is the fulfillment of transformation in students' lives. It is the raising-up of a people to have a profound, lasting impact on the world. In the end, the University's great achievement is the impact in the world of thousands of transformed alumni. It is the full force and the cumulative consequence of their individual commitments. As they live out their identity in Christ, in a world of great opportunity and great need, they change the world.

The message I want you to take with you today is very simple, but powerful: One life can change the world!

Recently, I wrote those words in my TWU President's Blog. There I highlighted the lives of Dr. Paul Farmer, founding director of Partner's in Health; Dr. Dame Jane Goodall, world renowned conservationist and animal and human rights advocate; and Dr. Muhammad Yunus, founder of the

Grameen Bank, Nobel Peace Prize winner, and the micro-economics “Banker to the Poor”. Their lives are exemplary and well worth hearing about. Their stories highlight how one life can change the world.

Today I want to tell you a very special story that underscores how one transformed life can change the world. It is a story about a young man, but also about transformational Christian liberal arts education.

Born in 1900 was a fellow by the name of E. Stanley Jones. At the age of 17, Stanley packed off to a Christian liberal arts college in Kentucky for his undergraduate training. He was bright and a bit of a rascal. As I’ve been told, one morning, the campus awoke to the sound of mooing. A cow was proclaiming incessantly her displeasure at being stuck in the bell tower of the administration building. It did not take long for the leadership of the college to figure out who put the cow in the bell tower. It was Jones. By noon, Stanley Jones had packed both his suitcases and was seated at the town’s rail depot waiting for the 2:00 PM train to take him away. He had been dismissed from the college. Around 1:00 PM, a delegation of college administrators made its way down to the depot to engage Jones in a discussion of how to get the cow out of the administration building’s bell tower. Jones, being not only mischievous but also bright, took the occasion to negotiate his way back into the college. As it turned out, he eventually became the president of the student body and the college’s most famous alumnus.

E. Stanley Jones was a missionary to India for 55 years, 30 of those years were during the national struggle for independence. During his lifetime, he wrote more than 30 books. In every book, there is a mention and often a great deal of

narrative devoted to Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi was a very close, intimate friend of Stanley Jones. The friendship was so close that two realities are worth sharing: first, according to Jones' autobiography, *A Song of Ascents*, Gandhi almost became a Christian; and second, Gandhi's engagement of non-violent strategies and practices of passive protest came from his Christ-focused discussions with Jones and Gandhi's ensuing fascination with the life of Jesus Christ. One life can change the world, often through strategic relationships with others. This is how God relationally works in the world through transformed people who bring transformation to others. Jones influenced Gandhi, and Gandhi impacted India and the whole world.

E. Stanley Jones' impact on the world was not only through his influence on Gandhi, but on another whose name is as well known and revered as Gandhi. I am speaking of Martin Luther King Jr. Jones wrote a book in the early 1940's entitled *Christ of the American Road*. The book was a sequel to his earlier work, *Christ of the Indian Road*. Writing from his Indian experiences with social class, caste discrimination, and prejudice, Jones' *Christ of the American Road* focuses for a few hard-hitting pages on those issues in the American context. Fast forward to the 1950's, and we find a young Boston University Divinity School doctoral student, Martin Luther King Jr. in the divinity school's library reading *Christ of the American Road*. There Jones writes on pages 95 to 98 about America's "hesitation to apply Christian faith to the question of race." Jones' writing made a powerful impact then, and it remains powerful and timely today. He called the racial prejudice that had invaded the church an apostasy and an absurdity. Instead of the church being a

voice against discrimination and prejudice, it had become an echo of society and “the spirit of the surrounding culture.” Imagine what King, as a young divinity student, experienced when he read those words a decade or more after they were written by Jones. Imagine King asking himself, “What else has this fellow Stanley Jones written?” Imagine his discovery of the Jones-Gandhi friendship, the profound influence of Jones and Jesus on Gandhi and, eventually, the influence on Martin Luther King Jr. himself. And witness, ultimately, King’s influence on the world, and the powerful idea of non-violent protest as an effective strategy for social change. It may not be too far a stretch to suggest that all of this had an impact on Nelson Mandela and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa that helped to avoid the blood-bath of retribution the world was anticipating at the end of apartheid.

The reality that strikes me is multi-dimensional: First, as already suggested, the writings of one generation can have a profound impact on another. E. Stanley Jones and Mahatma Gandhi had an impact on Martin Luther King Jr. King had, and continues to have, a world-wide impact on generations of people today and no doubt tomorrow. His small book of sermons entitled *Strength to Love* alone is a powerful influence. The positive events of the present day’s political scene, with Senator Obama, build on the faithfulness of those who have gone before.

Second, the co-leadership influence of Jones and Gandhi and the co-leadership influence of King and President Lyndon Johnson laid successive generational foundations of courage and righteousness. President Johnson was not a paragon of virtue. He was a shrewd Texas politician, skilled at

backroom deals. But he rose to the occasion in championing ground-breaking Civil Rights Legislation and Voters' Rights Legislation that paved the way for progress and advancement of human rights and human dignity of all peoples.

Third, it strikes me that God is at work from one generation to the next, and to the next again, through the writings of heroic, disciplined leaders like Gandhi, Jones, King, Johnson, and so many others whose character, commitment, and courage are sustained through conflict, suffering, and troubles. Their legacy we now see at work in the personage of Senator Barack Obama, and others. God is at work giving insight, ingenuity, and inspiration to those who would act heroically on behalf of those who cannot.

Fourth, heroic leadership often includes articulation, both the written and the spoken word. The writings and public addresses offered-up with conviction are used by God often to reach people not foreseen or known by the author and speaker.

Fifth, I say this especially to those graduating today, you may wonder if your life will count for anything good and noble. *Your life matters*. Listen to the still small voice of God. There is more work to do. Your life can exemplify competence and character, but there is also a calling that will require risk, sacrifice, struggle, pain, and suffering. But such a calling will be blessed and will be a blessing for innumerable others. Your life can change the world.

E. Stanley Jones, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Paul Farmer, Jane Goodall, Muhammad Yunus have all changed the world. So can you. And I know many, perhaps all gathered here today, will. You may be interested to know that the most common topic that E. Stanley Jones wrote and

spoke about his entire adult life, up until his death at the age of 88, was Jesus—Jesus and the Kingdom of God! Jesus was and is the one life that changes everything. He is the source of all life, of all that is right, good, and, in the end, all that is worth looking forward to.

Your life, graduates, can make a difference as you go forward from this graduation to change the world for good in Jesus name!

Amen and Amen!

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