

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE QUESTION

It is mid-morning on a weekday, on the campus of a North American Christian university. As students emerge from classrooms across the campus, chimes ring out the tune of a familiar hymn, heralding that Chapel is about to start. One by one, two by two, the students, along with some staff and faculty, begin to make their way across the campus toward the gathering place for Chapel. Perhaps they will sing the cherished hymns of their faith tradition to a music instructor's skillful piano accompaniment; or perhaps it will be a contemporary student band that will lead the congregation in a rousing series of praise choruses. Following the music, the campus chaplain will offer a brief prayer for the various needs of the community, followed by a concise nugget of biblically-based teaching. There will be a brief opportunity to respond – in song, or perhaps in prayer with the campus ministry staff. Then, with a brief benediction, the Chapel is over, and the gathering disperses to the far reaches of the campus, once again immersed in the hectic and demanding life of Christian scholarship in the twenty-first century. Numerous times a week this ritual is repeated in the campus's communal life.

Chapel services like the one just described are a unique feature of the Christian university in North America. In the public university, where faith is deemed to be a private affair, such gatherings may occur under the impartial facilitation of a “non-denominational” chaplain, but more often are left to unaffiliated campus ministries. But in the Christian university, a very specific position has been declared about education and religious convictions, and Chapel reflects this commitment. Since the Christian university emerged in

North America, a gathering of scholars for corporate worship has been seen as an important practice in Christian higher education.

In fact, in *Quality with Soul*, Robert Benne's study on the vitality of faith and Christian practice in six key Christian universities, the author argues that "the diminishing role of Chapel" in the life of an institution is one of the signs of its spiritual decline and of its disengagement from its founding faith tradition.<sup>1</sup> Benne illustrates that campuses have been able to maintain a distinctive and unified vision, ethos, and sense of connection to those people who most embody that vision and ethos when Chapel services are preserved as a regular, required, public event, offered on behalf of the whole community, in a prominent campus venue.<sup>2</sup> For those institutions, Chapel is a "collegiate way of life," a rehearsal of their founders' convictions about mission, education, and impact in the world around.<sup>3</sup> Other writers have given varied comments on Chapel's neglected role in many institutions. In one of his essays, Nicholas Wolterstorff offers a brief and subtle parable in which a visitor to a Christian campus is able to find a place to make change and buy lunch, but only after persistent inquiry is he able to locate a place for prayer, which is, unfortunately, locked.<sup>4</sup> Wolterstorff implies that this experience is unacceptable. Those who look to the Christian university for leadership and scholarship expect that its participants will be gathered in regular times of worship.

Both the Old and New Testaments command the people of God to gather together for worship. Psalm 95 declares: "Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Benne, *Quality with Soul*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Educating For Shalom*, eds. Clarence W. Joldersma & Gloria Goris Stronks. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 133-134.

music and song.”<sup>5</sup> The New Testament exhorts the people of God to “speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>6</sup> Yet, is it valid to apply these commands to the common life of Christian scholars in the university? Is the presence or absence of common spiritual practices outside the classroom a valid measurement of the faith-based university’s spiritual vitality?

The purpose of this paper is to answer the question, *what is the role of Chapel in Christian higher education?* This question is intertwined with a number of key issues: the purpose of Christian higher education, in particular, its role in relation to the mission of the church in the world; the nature of Christian vocation, including scholarship; and the role of corporate worship in the pursuit of that vocation. These discussions will help to determine the ways in which Chapel fosters and expresses the mission of Christian higher education, and the various structures, resources, and practices that could contribute to Chapel’s mandate. They will help to answer questions such as, Should Chapel be understood to be for the whole community, or just for students? Should it be required or voluntary, and what means should be employed to promote it? What content and practices should be incorporated into this gathering?

Rather than adopting models of education that capitulate to radical individualism, consumer economics, and secular humanism, the Christian university must embrace its identity as an intentional missional academic community that both announces and demonstrates the kingdom of God. As such, it will incorporate practices within itself that are

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<sup>5</sup> Psalm 95:1-2. All Scriptural quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985).

<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 5:19-20.

similar to those employed by the local church to form its missional identity. One of those key practices is the corporate worship practiced in Chapel. This paper argues that Chapel is *the unifying spiritual discipline and the wellspring, garden, and climax of the ongoing spiritual, intellectual, and missional formation that occurs in a Christian university community*. Chapel keeps the Christian narrative and its major theological and ethical themes, particularly the kingdom of God, consistently in view for the whole community. Especially when it draws from the full spectrum of Christian tradition, Chapels become an important piece in the larger task of nurturing disciples of Christ, and of nurturing the whole community's identity as they live, work and study in community. By extension, Chapel becomes a context wherein a missional approach to worship is exemplified and shaped by participation for those who will lead in the missional church of the coming century.

To set the foundation for Chapel's role in the Christian university, the second chapter will begin by critiquing views of higher education that should be considered inadequate for the Christian university. In contrast to these inadequate models, this chapter will locate Christian higher education within the notion of the Kingdom of God and the resultant mission of the church. Writers such as Al Wolters, Michael Goheen, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Philip Eaton, Arthur Holmes, and the documents of a few key educational institutions will assist in setting this foundation. Additionally, writers on young adult faith development such as Sharon Daloz Parks, Thomas Droege, Craig Dykstra, and Steven Garber enlarge the purview of Christian higher education to embrace both intellectual understanding and "missional conviction" (a term that will be defined). Finally, this chapter will survey those who have discussed Chapel in their writings on Christian higher education: Norm Klassen and Jens Zimmerman, Arthur Holmes, Todd Brady, Alexander Miller, Alison Boden, Robert

Benne, Claude Pressnell, and Steve Moore. The goal of this chapter is twofold: to establish the missional foundation for Christian higher education, and to demonstrate that Christian educators are in agreement that Chapel has a role to play in the intellectual and spiritual formation that occurs within that educational endeavor.

The third chapter of this paper will demonstrate the connection between missional conviction, vocation, and a lifestyle of worship, and apply them to Chapel in a more conscious and systematic approach. First, Chapel is an important *unifying practice*; in Chapel the whole community has the opportunity to consistently center its life in Christ above all other motivations and loyalties, pursuing reconciliation and cooperation as it participates in the kingdom of God. Second, Chapel is a *well* of motivation, inspiration, and vision for Christian scholarship, prophetic witness, and vibrant piety. By consistently participating in the Christian narrative's witness to the purposes of God, the community remembers that all of its life, work and scholarship is ultimately a lived response to God's self-revelation. Third, Chapel is a *garden* of missional formation, where the community embodies in ever deeper ways the vocabulary, postures, voices, and battles of the Christian faith, with particular attention to nurturing the educational vocation. Finally, Chapel functions as the *climax* of Christian scholarly vocation - responsive love and submission to the Lordship of Christ, gratitude for and celebration of His creation, and longing and intercession for the ways in which the kingdom is "not yet."

The final chapter of this paper will raise a series of issues that deserve further discussion both within and between universities if Chapel is to reach its full potential as the unifying practice, well, garden, and climax of missional conviction. It will address four

potential threats to Chapel, and three main areas for further development: leadership, content, and attendance expectations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SETTING A SOLID FOUNDATION

The purpose of this chapter is to situate the discussion of Chapel practices within the overall framework of Christian higher education. It will begin with a brief analysis of five educational trends or orientations that are inadequate for a Christian approach to education, and how they affect the practice of worship.

#### Inadequate Trends in Christian Higher Education

##### Scientific Rationalism

Scientific rationalism is the first educational orientation that is inadequate for Christian higher education. This is the modern Enlightenment notion that reason and empirical analysis are the only reliable means for humanity to know anything, and the only legitimate method of advancing beyond present limitations to a better way of being.

Scientific rationalism would hold suspect any form of knowledge that has *not* been attained by human reason. In the university ruled by scientific rationalism, all subject matter, including religion, becomes something to be placed on the table for detached observation, dissection, and definition. Anything that does not fit in the realm of empiricism is deemed private and subjective.

University education guided by scientific rationalism does not acknowledge the impact of sin on the capabilities of human reason, nor does it acknowledge that there are truths that are beyond the capacity of human reason to understand. Even more, history has demonstrated how, corrupted by sin, scientific rationalism has simply increased the capacity

and creativity of humans for good *and* evil. The Christian university cannot agree with the modernist claim that Reason is supreme.

Scientific rationalism sees worship as a subjective, private religious experience, not to be imposed on others. One's particular beliefs and practices must be placed beside those of other traditions, for the purpose of finding the "universal truths" that under gird them all. In this context, acceptable worship is the worship of a new god formed in the image of what Reason has ascertained to be "universal," that is, agreeable with its "scientific" way of looking at the world. Biblical worship must confront the scientific rationalist perspective of reality.

### The Multiversity

A second unsatisfactory trend in higher education is the fruit of the first – the "multiversity." Because scientific rationalism provides no overarching story to tie together the many subjects of study, the university becomes no more than a geographical center where various topics can be explored, according to the interest or occupational needs of the scholar. It is a loose conglomeration of resources, individuals, and disciplines, from which the student must form his or her education. Unfortunately, because the overarching purpose for the education is not clear, a student will likely encounter frequent contradictions between competing agendas and interpretations of reality.

The multiversity does not acknowledge the unity of all things in the Lordship of Christ. It situates the locus of human meaning within the individual's choices of what is interesting, true, or important. However, individuals will always make choices on the basis of what they perceive as most beneficial, or least threatening, to them. In the absence of an overarching story, the chance of education leading to more responsible, focused, trustworthy

character depends on the character and ability for integration which that student brought to the experience already, or on the good fortune to have professors with a concern in that regard.

The multiversity will only describe worship as one experience among the many available to the student. It may applaud students if they are able to find a source of meaning within worship, but it will hesitate to endorse one kind of worship as being superior to the many other ways in which one might seek to find meaning within the multiversity. Christian worshipers will always combat the tendency for people to say, with regard to worship, “whatever works for you.”

### Consumerism

Free market consumerism is a third trend affecting higher education that is inadequate for Christian higher education. This trend has two prongs. First, the university functions as a tool of free market consumerism by emphasizing its role as the provider of an educational product. In seeking a degree, a student is looking for a means to achieve what he or she wants out of life, and the university claims to offer that product. Unfortunately, this places the university at the mercy of what the consumer deems as important, which may or may not include the deeper inquiry and reflection that contributes to the development of a just society. The university is placed in service to the consumer’s personal goals, whether or not they are legitimate.

The second prong is much more subtle, because it holds power over both the consumer and the university. Universities who only offer education as a way for students to develop the skills that will give them a place in the modern economy will not necessarily

provide the prophetic challenge to the limitations and injustices of the global free market. As such, they perpetuate the enslaving nature of consumerism over the consumer.

In a context where the consumer's interests and felt needs are the final values, it will be increasingly difficult for corporate worship to be faithful to the prophetic, transforming vision of worship that is depicted in Scripture. Consumers believe they are transformed by the renewing of their closet, their hair line, their educational credentials, even their "worship experiences." True worshipers have their minds transformed by the power of truths that make demands of them. Unfortunately, North American Christianity has often allowed its worship to be formed by consumerist priorities rather than by a biblical vision for worship.

#### Incarnational Humanism/Liberal Arts Education

Taken by itself, the "liberal arts" curriculum is another inadequate educational orientation in the Christian university. This approach emphasizes high culture – history's best literature, philosophy, art and reflection – as the means to preserving and enriching human civilization. Sometimes called "humanism," this approach suggests that the world's greatest thinkers, mystics, artists, scientists, and historians might help us find a common human endeavor which our scholarship, technology, and economies might serve. The humanities, it is believed, help to connect the functional work of science and professional life to the transcendent endeavor of being human, to give it meaning.

Christians find humanism attractive because of its openness to raising ultimate questions about the origin and the goal of life. Humanism helps students see that life is more than just the meeting of felt needs through the sciences or through professional life in the global economy. For example, Klassen and Zimmerman have advocated what they call "incarnational humanism." This approach to education would say that because God affirmed

the value of human endeavor by becoming human, the study of the humanities is worthwhile and essential. In their words, the liberal arts university's goal is for "the student to integrate acquired skills towards a *universally acknowledged goal* of character formation and growth into a greater understanding of what it means to be human."<sup>7</sup> However, on its own this educational process of enriching the functional with the deep and the beautiful is only a more elaborate way of enhancing the "product" for the consumer.

Also, the liberal arts' vision is not as "universal" or motivating as their advocates would claim. Nicholas Wolterstorff, a Christian philosopher and writer on education, says that exalting the enrichment of students thinking through "high culture" is naïve: "By introducing students to high culture, we inculcate them in habits and tendencies relevant to engaging high culture; there is no evidence that we also, coincidentally, shape what they tend to do in life in society."<sup>8</sup> There must be a deeper, more coherent centre, one that incorporates the humanities, the sciences, professional preparation, and the rest of life's realities in an overall vision for the world and history.

It is unclear where worship would fit within the educational philosophy of such a university. An educational paradigm that compartmentalizes studies into those that Christians can "use" to accomplish God's purposes (such as sciences and professional studies) and those that are enriching and humanizing (such as the humanities) will not easily integrate with a biblical understanding of worship. Often this difficulty leads to a functional dualism, where the enrichment of the mind is given to the liberal arts and Christian piety and devotion is thought to be cultivated in other ministry contexts such as Chapel.

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<sup>7</sup> Norm Klassen and Jens Zimmerman. *Faith Seeking Understanding: Incarnational Humanism and the Modern University*. (Langley: Trinity Western University, 2005), 104. Emphasis mine.

<sup>8</sup> Wolterstorff. *Educating for Shalom*, 98.

## Any “Two-Realm” Approach

Finally, any educational paradigm that divides the scope of scholarship and study into a sacred/secular dichotomy is inadequate. In his presentation of a Christian reformational worldview, Wolters suggests four ways that this dualism surfaces in Christian thinking. The sacred/secular dichotomy may be expressed as pietism, in which “Christian” education is that pertaining to “the inner life of the soul,”<sup>9</sup> while other realms are, at best, utilitarian, and at worst, “worldly” or “sinful.” Schools where “Christian” education is identified with preparation for roles in the institutional church also reflect this dualism.<sup>10</sup> Dispensational dualism would identify “Christian” education as the development of correct eschatological understandings and of a zeal for evangelism; those activities that must be done in the time before Christ returns being are, for the most part, necessary evils. “Christian” education that is based “classical liberal Protestantism” would focus on the social aspects of Scriptural ethics, ignoring the fact that social corruption and renewal cannot be separated from the corruption and renewal of the human soul. All of these approaches adopt a “two-realm” approach to understanding the world, in which certain realms of creation are deemed “worldly” or “secular,” and others are considered “Christian.”

On the contrary, as Wolters suggests in his presentation of a Christian reformational worldview, every realm of creation is founded on an order established by God, is tainted through and through with sin and worldliness, and is in the scope of God’s redemptive purposes. Therefore, there is no such thing as a sacred/secular distinction. Every realm of creation should be within the scope of “Christian” education.

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<sup>9</sup> Albert Wolters. *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*. Second Edition. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 78.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

Many Christian colleges and universities are under the influence of one or more of these five inadequate trends in higher education. While they may be integrating “Christian values” and worthy attempts at character development at various points in the educational process, often the overarching principles of scientific rationalism, the multiversity, consumerism, humanism, or a sacred/secular dualism remain primary. Integrating Christian values into inadequate approaches to education will not make them adequate or Christian. Doing so compromises the biblical integrity of Christian practices such as worship, and complicates the issue of what it means to practice them within the context of Christian higher education. For this reason, in order to position worship correctly within the life of the Christian university, it is necessary to understand where the university itself fits into the purposes of God in the world. It is to this issue that we now turn.

### The Kingdom That Shapes Christian Scholarship

Christian universities should operate from a fundamentally different understanding of reality than the non-Christian university. In contrast to notions of scientific rationalism, free market economy, a mistrust of metanarratives, and various other vestiges of modern and post-modern thought, the Christian university should be shaped by a vision of *the unfolding kingdom of God*. It is this vision that allows higher education to reach its full potential, and sets a strong foundation for incorporating worship as a shared communal practice within the university.

The kingdom of God is central to the message of the Bible, beginning with the Creation Mandate: “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and *subdue it*. *Rule over* the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on

the ground.”<sup>11</sup> As Sovereign over the creation He has made, the LORD entrusted His rule to Adam and Eve, mandating them to not only steward what exists, but to cultivate and enculturate it to its full potential. Wolters describes the assignment eloquently: “We are called to participate in the ongoing creational work of God, to be God’s helper in executing to the end the blueprint for his masterpiece.”<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, sin entered the creation through an act of insurrection – an attempt by the created humanity to dethrone the Creator, to become “like God.”<sup>13</sup> This act of rebellion severely compromised humanity’s cooperation with God’s rule, from the most personal dominions – childbearing, marriage, vocation, brotherhood<sup>14</sup> - to the most global and cosmic dominions.<sup>15</sup>

Such compromised responsibility extends through history, even to undermine the attempts of the university (itself a product of human culture) to “fill” and “subdue” the earth. Nevertheless, Scripture records how God set into motion a process of re-creation, that is, the re-establishment of his kingdom authority among humanity. This time, instead of creating out of formlessness and emptiness, He created His kingdom and His “kings” out of the rubble of a broken world, establishing covenants of dominion and “kingship” with Noah, Abraham, Moses and Joshua, and David. Isaiah foretold of the coming of a Davidic King who would establish a kingdom of *shalom*, characterized by justice, mercy, restoration and the full flowering of all of creation in proper relationship with the Sovereign Creator.<sup>16</sup> It is this kingdom of which Jesus declared: “Repent, for the *kingdom of heaven* is near.”<sup>17</sup> It was this kingdom authority which Jesus embodied as he healed the sick and the lame; freed the

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<sup>11</sup> Genesis 1:28, emphasis mine.

<sup>12</sup> Wolters. *Creation Regained*, 44.

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 3:5

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 3:16,17; 4:8.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 6:2,5; Ephesians 6:12.

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 11:6-9.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15, emphasis mine.

demon-possessed from their bondage; proclaimed the nature of the kingdom in sermons, parables and conversations; unmasked the illusory powers of His day with His own humble, yet unmistakable authority; and in His resurrection, asserted his power over death, the most unforgiving taskmaster of all. The power of God displayed in Jesus' resurrection has now "seated him at God's right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come,"<sup>18</sup> and has "rescued us from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of the Son He loves."<sup>19</sup> At Christ's return, His kingship and the kingship of His people will be completely revealed.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, in Christ the university is freed from the bondage of Adam and Eve's rebellion. It lives within the relentless unfolding of God's original intention: a kingdom, declared in Jesus Christ, and sealed by the Holy Spirit, in which humanity would have a role in God's ever-expanding work of caring for and enculturating the cosmos. Yet Scripture is very clear about how that participation is to take place: through the Church: "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms."<sup>21</sup> The church's "Great Commission" is a renewed Creation Mandate. On the basis of Jesus' kingly authority and his presence, his disciples are to invite all nations to participate in His kingdom.<sup>22</sup> Baptism is a public statement of changed allegiance; Jesus' teaching, now entrusted to the disciples, is orientation to the kingdom through participation, observation, story-telling, and instruction. These kingdom dispatches are sent by the authority and power of the King himself, as given

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<sup>18</sup> Ephesians 1:20b-21.

<sup>19</sup> Colossians 1:13.

<sup>20</sup> Revelation 12:10; 5:10.

<sup>21</sup> Ephesians 3:10;

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 28:18-20.

in the Spirit.<sup>23</sup> “This is an era of witness and mission,” say Goheen and Wolters. They continue:

The very shape of our lives needs to be a legible letter speaking of Christ and his rule.... It is in the richly textured glory of created human life restored... that God wants to be glorified by our service and witness to him so that all the world can see what redeemed human life is like, despite the scars and scourges of sin and death.<sup>24</sup>

### The Kingdom Task of the Christian University

#### Serviceable Kingdom Insight

The Spirit-empowered calling of the church to orient the world to the unfolding kingdom of God is where the Christian university must find its calling. Today’s world is even more complex than the world of Jesus and the apostles. The kingdoms that compete for allegiance are multifarious, cunning, and insidious. Our awareness of the vastness, intricacy and mystery of the universe multiplies at a rapid pace. Today, the church faces the intimidating task of articulating how the kingdom of God exerts its reign in the realms of science and technology, education, politics, economics, international diplomacy, health care, the many forms of “family”, the arts, multinational corporations, war and peace, exploration and research, and many other spheres as well. The Christian university helps the church implement a faithful witness and prophetic declaration within these diverse realms, both in its teaching of students, and in its pursuit of research.

In other words, the *Christian* university is the church seeking, in an academic way, an ever-deepening understanding of how to witness more faithfully to the Kingdom of God in the whole of life. It is the church’s focused attempt to take seriously the “unbearable

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<sup>23</sup> Acts 1:8.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Goheen and Al Wolters. “Worldview Between Story and Mission.” Postscript to Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 131.

tension” between two realities: the Lordship of Christ, and the “communal idolatry” within the culture of the world.<sup>25</sup> The Christian university is the church’s scholarly tool of contextualization, where it is equipped to “take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ.”<sup>26</sup>

Wolterstorff has called this “educating for shalom.” He says, “The goal of the Christian college... is to promote the mode of human flourishing which is shalom.”<sup>27</sup>

Educating for shalom is

a more comprehensive model . . . that incorporates the arts, the sciences, the professions, and yes, the worship and piety of humanity, along with humanity’s wounds, and brings them together into one coherent whole rather than setting them at loggerheads with each other.<sup>28</sup>

Wolterstorff is unapologetic in stating that the Christian College is “a project of and for the Christian community,” in which its young members receive “an education pointed toward equipping them to contribute to that calling [of the church as witness, servant, and evidence of the reign of God].”<sup>29</sup>

J. Harry Fernhout, President of The King’s University College, has embraced this vision of education, stating in his inaugural address, “Our particular calling is to equip a new generation for participation in this drama, readying them to be responsible contributors to society, shaping life in the direction of the healing and shalom which our story promises.”<sup>30</sup>

In its defining documents, Trinity Western University identifies with this perspective in its statement regarding its identity as “an arm of the church”: “Ultimately, our goal is that TWU

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>26</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:5

<sup>27</sup> Wolterstorff. *Educating for Shalom*, 171.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>30</sup> J. Harry Fernhout. “Restless Delight: Educating for Shalom.” Inaugural Address. September 24, 2005. (Edmonton, AB: The King’s University College), 4.

graduates would become the arms and legs of God’s church as it strives to penetrate ‘the various marketplaces of life’ with the influence and message of the gospel.”<sup>31</sup> In essence, the Christian university is not just church-related, but “church-expressive”<sup>32</sup>; whether students are being educated for leadership roles in the church (i.e. pastors) or in the many “marketplaces” of the world, they are being educated *for the sake of the church’s mission* to be salt and light in the world.<sup>33</sup>

Dordt College provides a helpful phrase for articulating this task: “It is the educational task of Dordt College to provide genuinely Christian, that is, truly serviceable insight.”<sup>34</sup> This “serviceable insight,” another way of saying “wisdom according to the mind of Christ,”<sup>35</sup> is embodied in:

kingdom citizens aware of the demands of the cultural mandate, equipped to take their place and carry out their tasks within the community of believers, able to discern the spiritual direction of our civilization, and prepared to advance, in loving service, the claims of Christ over all areas of life.<sup>36</sup>

Redeemer University College articulates this kingdom mission similarly:

...to equip young men and women to serve as witnesses to Christ’s victory in the various vocations they will take up in society. They are to be witnesses not solely by using the opportunities for evangelism that their positions may afford, but by testifying to the transforming power of Christ in every aspect of their professional or vocational conduct.<sup>37</sup>

Christian higher education must go beyond simply asking, “How can faith be included in, inform, or be integrated into our scholarship and teaching?” Rather, the question is, “What would a university and its disciplines be like if the kingdom of God was the air they breathed,

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<sup>31</sup> “TWU as an ‘Arm of the Church.’” *Developing Leaders Together: The Principles Behind Our Learning Community*. (Langley, BC: Trinity Western University, 2002), 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew 5:13-16.

<sup>34</sup> *The Educational Task of Dordt College*. (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt College, 1979.), 13.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 16.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>37</sup> *The Cross and Our Calling*. (Ancaster, ON: Redeemer University College, 2004), 9-10.

the lifeblood that pulsed through their veins, and the scent that emanated from them? What would their teachers and graduates and ongoing scholarship be like?” The Christian university’s task is, in Goheen’s words, “the call to witness to this gospel in the university and in our scholarship.”<sup>38</sup> The Christian university is the church’s prototype of what a life of investigation, discovery, wisdom, and prophetic witness is like in light of the unfolding kingdom of God.

Wolters’ categories of Creation, Fall, and Redemption<sup>39</sup> are helpful in articulating what such kingdom scholarship might look like. Kingdom scholars ask questions like:

- How does the fact that God has created the world and declared it good affect my whole life, in particular my discipline? How has God revealed Himself within the creation?
- How deeply has sin affected my whole reality, in particular my discipline?
- How deeply does the announcement of the dawning reign of God in Christ affect my whole life, in particular my discipline?
- How can the church faithfully witness to this difference? How has it failed to do so?

Answers to these questions are pursued in dialogue with Scripture as the authoritative witness to the Kingdom; with other Christians, living and dead, who have reflected on these questions; and with non-Christians, to both glean from and challenge their answers in light of the Kingdom of God. The goal, as Dordt College recognized, is “serviceable insight” – the capability to discern the errors and idolatries that resist the Kingdom of God, and to recognize the opportunities that exist for the Kingdom of God to be brought to a greater fullness through the witness of the church in the world. The Christian university is the church’s academic endeavor in kingdom witness for the whole of life.

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<sup>38</sup> Michael Goheen. “The Power of the Gospel and the Renewal of Scholarship.” Inaugural Lamblight Lecture, October 6, 2005. (Langley, BC: Trinity Western University), 2.

<sup>39</sup> As articulated throughout *Creation Regained*.

Will Christian higher education so described be irrelevant to the larger academic community? Goheen answers this objection by describing the challenge as “living at the crossroads of the biblical and cultural story.”<sup>40</sup> He summarizes the task in this way:

Theories uprooted from idolatrous soil and replanted in the soil of the gospel, respecting the good in theories and bending it around from an idolatrous direction to move toward Christ, filling the insight or longing with new content from the gospel, appreciatively embracing the creational insight by redirecting it in the power of the gospel.<sup>41</sup>

Goheen (with a nod to Newbigin) suggests that the gospel of John, with its use of terms such as *logos*, is one example of how a Christian allowed the Kingdom of God to intersect with the cultural story of his day.<sup>42</sup>

Ecclesiastes is another example of how a person of faith (in this case, Jewish monotheist) could articulate relevant public insight without compromising his faith. In this book, the Teacher wrestled profoundly with the significance of marriage, parenting, companionship, economic gain, aging, beauty and fashion, and other gritty human realities from a careful “secular” standpoint. Yet his ability to see life from the perspective of the hopeless seeker makes his concluding kingdom exhortation so compelling:

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.<sup>43</sup>

His firm foundation within a God-centred worldview gave the Teacher the ability to provide deeply profound insight into human realities; anyone, Christian or non-Christian, who reads Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or the Song of Songs will have difficulty denying his ability to capture, in even the most organic realms of life, what it means to be human. Similarly,

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<sup>40</sup> Goheen, “The Power of the Gospel...”, 13.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

students and teachers who are developing serviceable Kingdom insights into the opportunities and dilemmas of contemporary human existence should be able to speak with tremendous relevance into the spheres in which they are placed.

### Developing Missional Conviction

However, Kingdom insight is only part of the task of the Christian university. Dordt College expresses this realization in this way: “inherent in all Dordt’s educational activity, whether curricular or extracurricular, is the goal of developing *a desire* to serviceable insight.”<sup>44</sup> The Christian university must embrace its role of helping students compose a committed and *personal* faith. The university years are, for young adults, what Sharon Parks called “the critical years.”<sup>45</sup> These years are critical because, “To become a young adult in faith is to discover the limits of one’s assumptions about how ‘life will always be’ – and to recompose a meaningful sense of self and world on the other side of that discovery.”<sup>46</sup> Faith consists of more than an institutional faith statement; it is, according to Parks, “the activity of seeking and composing meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of our experience.”<sup>47</sup> Or, as the Scriptures say, “Now faith is *being sure* of what we hope for, and *certain* of what we do not see.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, the Christian university must resist the temptation to view Christian education purely as the development of an intellectual kingdom orientation; the ability to articulate a kingdom insight does not automatically translate into genuine kingdom participation.

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<sup>44</sup> *The Educational Task of Dordt College*, 16. Emphasis mine.

<sup>45</sup> Sharon Parks, *The Critical Years*. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986.)

<sup>46</sup> Park, *The Critical Years*, xii.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>48</sup> Hebrews 11:6. Emphasis mine.

In his seminal work on the Christian college, Arthur Holmes states, “Faith is neither a way of knowing nor a source of knowledge. Faith is rather an openness and wholehearted response to God’s self-revelation.”<sup>49</sup> Openness and response have to do with trust. As Parks observes, “We act according to our actual, most powerful centers of trust (or mistrust). Thus our acts, powered by a deeper faith, often belie what we say – or even think – we believe.”<sup>50</sup>

At the same time, developing a kingdom orientation is more than what might be called a “spiritual” process, in which students are given the tools for ongoing piety. Associating kingdom citizenship purely with the devotional life will not inevitably lead to genuine kingdom participation either. As Parks has observed above, the question of developing faith asks “Can I be *sure* that this way of looking at the world provides a structure on which I can place the weight of my life and my actions, with the *certainty* that it will not crumble?”

Trust is ultimately imaginative. Droege echoes Parks: “Faith, which at its deepest level is an experience of trust and loyalty in relation to God, seeks images, stories, and concepts that will express, within the limits of human reason, an understanding of this relationship.”<sup>51</sup> The development of this faith is a process of “imagining the real.”<sup>52</sup> In particular, “higher education serves as the primary mediator of the images by which they will reimagine self, world, and God.”<sup>53</sup> This process of imagination involves both the

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<sup>49</sup> Arthur Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*. Rev. Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987.), 18.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas A. Droege, “Adult Faith Development and Ministry.” *Christian Perspectives on Human Development*, eds. Leroy Aden, David G. Benner and J. Harold Ellens. 35-64. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992.), 37.

<sup>52</sup> Sharon Parks, “Imagination and Spirit in Faith Development: A Way Past the Structure-Content Dichotomy.” *Faith Development and Fowler*, eds. Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks. 137-156. (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1986.), 146.

<sup>53</sup> Parks, *The Critical Years*, 130.

dismantling of insufficient images, and the recomposition of newer, more adequate ones. It happens by reading textbooks and great works of literature, by writing papers and exams, and in class discussion, yes. But it also occurs in lunchtime conversations, in vigorous late-night dorm discussions, in a meaningful Chapel service, in the inner wrestling of the spirit as a student lays on the bed, alone. The betrayal of a friend or a mentor, watching the news, or the sudden, spontaneous realization of one's humanity can spark this crisis of imagination just as much as the traditional academic disciplines. It is a fragile process with many possible outcomes, many of them inadequate to the development of meaningful, enduring faith. The university is not only living at the crossroads between biblical faith and the cultural story; in the lives of its students, it is the time and place where, in the words of Levine and Cureton, "hope and fear are colliding."<sup>54</sup>

Thus, when Dordt College says its goal is to develop the *desire* for serviceable insight, it is speaking of something greater than a well-articulated expression of kingdom realities. It is speaking of *conviction*, of the deep-seated confidence that a kingdom orientation can be trusted as the ground and goal of all action – that participating in God's kingdom mission in the world is worthwhile and essential to the character of the Christian. Therefore, the goal of Christian education is the development of *missional conviction*: an ongoing, personal commitment to participating in the unfolding reign of God in every realm of inquiry and action. "Missional" articulates that "in Christ," Christians are sent as Jesus was to announce the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God in every realm of life. "Conviction" ties together the intellectual (knowledge/understanding) and the volitional (trust/action).

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<sup>54</sup> Arthur Levine and Jeanette C. Cureton. *When Hope and Fear Collide*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.), 17.

Christian higher education has as its goal *imagination* leading to *commitment* leading to *action*: missional conviction.

What elements or experiences contribute to the formation of missional conviction? Speaking of moral formation, Craig Dykstra argues that a detached presentation of options will not necessarily lead students to adopt a meaningful faith. Genuine formation involves participation in what Dykstra calls “communities of conviction”: “peoples who are intersubjectively related to one another across time and space by a body of convictions, language patterns, and practices that they hold in common.”<sup>55</sup> He continues with language that echoes Parks and Droege: “Particularly important here are the key images, metaphors, and symbolic actions that give a community’s language and ritual life its particular distinctiveness.”<sup>56</sup> For the Christian university, this community of conviction is held together by worthy mentors whose individual and communal lives embody a Kingdom orientation.

Parks argues this point persuasively:

The development of faith is a communal process dependent, not only upon the capacities and yearnings of the self, but also upon teachers, friends, mentors, colleagues, and neighbors who together form the social context that nourishes and enhances or diminishes and blocks the cultivation of the life of faith.<sup>57</sup>

In particular, if Christian mentors are to compel students with a vision of the kingdom, students must see them revealing “the power of their Story and Vision in the forms of their common everyday life.”<sup>58</sup> Students do not develop missional conviction through exposure to ideas, though these may plant the seeds; enduring confidence comes from participating meaningfully alongside those who are already living out missional conviction in all the

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<sup>55</sup> Craig Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices*, ( Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1999.), 133.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Parks, *The Critical Years*, 69-70.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 204.

rhythms of personal and communal existence. What students need, says Parks, is “an image of the future – the Commonwealth of God and a vocation within it – that is demonstrated in the lives of faithful and committed adults.”<sup>59</sup> Steven Garber echoes this when he argues that students need access to *conviction* (that is, a worldview that is sufficient for the world’s challenges), to *character* (that is, mentors who are faithfully embodying that worldview), and to *community* (that is, others who are willing to co-labour in the lifelong challenge of embodying that worldview in their own lives). “Woven together,” he says, these three resources “nourish a vision of moral meaning which can stand against the most destructive forces of modern consciousness.”<sup>60</sup>

Concerning communities of conviction, Dykstra is speaking about greater cooperation between the public university and religious communities. The Christian university has the luxury of forming its own community of conviction. However, communal practices of conviction must go beyond classroom interactions, though these are very important mentoring opportunities. Students must witness ongoing, public practices of community that are able to unify the many realms of inquiry and activity under one ultimate goal. It will be difficult to persuade students that the university’s kingdom vision is truly the overarching explanation for life that it claims to be if students are not able to participate with their mentors and fellow students in a common life together. To state it another way: Students must see the Creation Mandate and its foundation in the love of God and the love of neighbor as not only applicable to “the world out there” or to the local church, but to the present life and practice of the university community that is playing such a vital part in their formation as believing adults.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Steven Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1996.), 37-38.

Where does such a community of conviction find the content for its vision of reality? As Wolterstorff correctly identifies, “Central in the whole network of authority which characterizes the community are the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.”<sup>61</sup> In Goheen and Wolters’ words, these texts are not just “a book of religious or theological or even worldview truths,”<sup>62</sup> but rather “public truth,” the story that “tells us the way the world really is.”<sup>63</sup> If this is true, then a Christian university community should *together* be immersed in the Scriptures. It is not enough to embed a Scriptural perspective in lectures and textbooks. The Scriptures must act, in regular corporate practices, as the formative story by which the whole community finds its significance and direction. Neglect of the Scriptures in communal practice communicates that there are parts of life in which the Scriptures’ explanation for reality is inapplicable, in which Scripture is purely a private issue. By example this undermines the very purpose of the education the Christian university claims to provide. In this case, it will be far more difficult to challenge the reigning cultural stories of consumerism and individualism.

A critical element in the formation of missional conviction is the student’s encounter with people and contexts that stretch her or his understanding of self, others, the world, and God. Usually this involves cross-cultural experiences, and especially encounters with the wounds of the world in places of disaster, poverty, conflict and injustice. Often discussions of justice or poverty remain theoretical until a student comes face to face with them, and is forced to deal with his or her reaction. These experiences of the Other are most meaningful

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<sup>61</sup> Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 123.

<sup>62</sup> Goheen and Wolters, “Worldview Between Story and Mission,” 125.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

when a community of conviction experiences, studies, reflects, and prays *together* for ways in which the kingdom of God can be brought to its fullness in those places.

## Chapel's Role: Current Discussion

This leads us to a discussion of the role of Chapel in forming students with missional conviction. Very few detailed agendas exist for Chapel in the current literature. However, many writers, in their general reflections on Christian higher education, have included extensive commentary on the role that Chapel has played, is playing, or should play within higher education.

In their book on Incarnational Humanism, Klassen and Zimmerman criticize Chapel and other “spiritual” activities as often being “completely severed from the academic branch of the university.”<sup>64</sup> If Chapel is positioned as the locus of spiritual development, whereas intellectual development is said to be developed in the classroom, then a flawed dualism between sacred and secular exists. The criticism is valid as far as such a dichotomy exists, and those who promote Chapel as campus activity should be careful not to use language that would communicate, albeit unintentionally, that academic and spiritual development are unconnected and perhaps even at odds with one another. However, in their criticism Klassen and Zimmerman appear to suggest that corporate practices of worship, prayer, and Scriptural teaching are at best peripheral to the academic enterprise. They have named the church as an important source of dialogue in their vision of education,<sup>65</sup> but suggest that, at least in the university, the intellectual encounter in the classroom is sufficient (even superior) for deep-rooted spiritual formation. In so doing, Klassen and Zimmerman underestimate the power of a community of conviction, expressing itself not only in the classroom but in many other practices, to form personal missional conviction in students’ lives. Such communities must work to create what student affairs specialists Bliming and Whitt call “seamless learning

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<sup>64</sup> Klassen and Zimmerman, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 104.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 19-20.

environments,”<sup>66</sup> where the classroom and the community’s other communal practices all work *together* to form missional conviction. According to Bliming and Whitt, this “...requires high levels of collaboration so that organizational arrangements and processes can be linked and aligned appropriately.”<sup>67</sup> Such collaboration for seamlessness might help diminish the perception that Chapel’s contribution to the overall educational endeavor of the institution fails to be co-curricular. However, such collaboration will require the whole university to come to consensus about the overall purpose of its educational endeavor.

Arthur Holmes, reflecting on community in his book, *The Idea of a Christian College*, also addresses the role of Chapel. Chapel, he argues, must be protected from “the unthinking disjunction that is all too frequent between faith and devotion on the one hand and what goes on in the classroom on the other,” instead exemplifying the overall attitude of “eager expectancy” that should characterize the Christian learning environment.<sup>68</sup> Chapel should “renew the vision of a Christian mind” to cultivate “a climate of faith and learning.”<sup>69</sup> Chapel “is the college community at worship, cultivating Christian devotion, dedicating all its activities to the glory of God, seeking biblical instruction that will guide its life and thought, and reflecting on its God-given calling.”<sup>70</sup>

Whereas Holmes would emphasize Chapel’s role in nurturing the educational endeavor of the institution, Todd Brady would argue that Chapel itself, along with all other “campus ministry” activities, should consider themselves part of the educational process for students: “In addition to classroom work, all activities on the college campus should be

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<sup>66</sup> Gregory S. Bliming and Elizabeth J. Whitt and Associates. *Good Practice in Student Affairs*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.), 136. See also “Growing as Disciples in Community.” *Developing Leaders Together*, 19.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Holmes. *The Idea of a Christian College*, 49.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 83-84.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 84.

opportunities designed to serve as catalysts, propelling students to reflect on and integrate the truths of Christianity into their learning and life.”<sup>71</sup> He expresses the concern that students might be encouraged to participate in “ministry activities” such as worship, Bible studies, and outreach and missions activities, without being intentional about how those activities educate and mold them into the likeness of Christ.<sup>72</sup> These activities are most fruitful, says Brady, when they serve “as a bridge that allows real and tangible connections to be made between the reality and implications of truth and the manner in which students look at and live their lives.”<sup>73</sup> Chapel is one of the contexts where, under the preaching of God’s Word, and in God-centred worship, students are led “to worship God and to integrate their faith with every aspect of their lives.”<sup>74</sup> An important part of this worshipful integration is the opportunity to hear their mentors – both campus ministers and faculty – express their own journey of faith integration.<sup>75</sup> Brady’s observations help, in part, to address Klassen and Zimmerman’s critique of Chapel.

Alexander Miller is particularly insistent of how such a community is to be fostered. He argues that Christian education should not be seen as a way of saving vulnerable students from the poisoning of their minds. Rather, the community of faith must

make the reality of Christian community visible within the university, to bring the whole scholarly enterprise under the devoted scrutiny of Christian faith and Christian truth, and to assert both by word and life the claim of Christ to the service of all men’s minds.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Todd Brady, “Christian Worldview and Campus Ministry,” *Shaping a Christian Worldview: The Foundations of Christian Higher Education*, eds. David S. Dockery and Gregory Alan Thornbury. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2002.), 362.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 368-369.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>76</sup> Alexander Miller, “The Community of Faith in the Community of Learning.” Chapter 6 in *Faith and Learning: Recovering Direction and Dynamic in Higher Education*. (New York: Association Press (YMCA), 1960.), 152.

Worship, doctrine and discipline are the tools that the community of faith should use in service to this goal.<sup>77</sup> In order to contribute to a genuine formation of Christian community, Miller argues that the practice of worship should draw “upon the whole liturgical wealth of Christendom to dramatize the relation of God to man and man to man in its range and depth.”<sup>78</sup> Therefore, Miller argues, the right people must give leadership – those with the maturity and humility to submit their leadership to the longstanding witness of the church’s worship, so that the university can “breathe the high, pure air of Christian devotion.”<sup>79</sup> Miller is not clear as to how to determine what constitutes this “high, pure air.” Because of his high standards regarding content, Miller is doubtful that students might be capable of giving such leadership.

The challenges Alison Boden faces in her leadership at the secular University of Chicago are present in the Christian institution as well. The students with whom Boden interacts reflect a “religious rootlessness” based in “anti-institutionalism and individualism.”<sup>80</sup> These attitudes are only perpetuated by the “non-religious” university, which emphasizes competition and individual responsibility.<sup>81</sup> In this context, says Boden, chaplaincies play the role of conscience, both calling attention to a university’s behavior (*vis à vis* its policies, investments etc.), and challenging the university and its members “to name the belief systems by which they operate.”<sup>82</sup> In the Christian university, this role is both complicated, because the Chapel is an instrument of the university, and softened, because the

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 157.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 158.

<sup>80</sup> Alison Boden. “The View from the University Chapel.” *Religion, Education and the University Experience*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer. 186-202. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002.), 187.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 194.

Christian community has, at least in principle, submitted itself to the Word of God, and thus should be willing to be held accountable to the community as it seeks to live by God's Word. The potential is there, at least, for Chapel to be a place where the whole institution and its members find themselves not only *asking* questions, but *being questioned by* the Person and vision of Jesus. According to Boden, the second role that Chapel plays is "to keep the practice of religion a critical category of self-reflection in academic communities."<sup>83</sup> That is, a chaplaincy should not just promote people "vacationing" or dabbling in religion, but rather should "invite persons to come and stay awhile, long enough to understand the lens through which the tradition understands the self and the self-in-relation."<sup>84</sup> This observation is not unique to secular institutions where religion is a private affair. Even in a Christian institution, there is a risk that students will not go beyond dabbling in spiritual activity. It is important for practices such as Chapel to have integrity and deep connection to the rich tradition of reflection and contemplation that is part of the Christian heritage, so that students can get a real sense of what it has meant throughout history to be a Christian. At its heart, says Boden, the goals of chaplaincy are still "spiritual meaning, rootedness, connectedness, and self-understanding" through "accompaniment."<sup>85</sup>

This connectedness is not only important for the individual student, however. The institution itself needs ways of remaining connected to the Christian tradition. In *Quality With Soul*, Robert Benne notes a correlation between Chapel's prominence as a campus activity, and a school's commitment to the Christian vision and its sponsoring

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 201.

denomination.<sup>86</sup> For the six schools that, in Benne's estimation, exhibited "educational quality with real religious soul,"<sup>87</sup> he observed the following characteristics of vibrant Chapel programs:

- Public endorsement of Chapel as an official activity of the institution.
- Provision of prominent place, time, staffing, and support.
- Relatively lavish resources
- Staff/leaders play distinguished roles both as players in institutional decision-making, and as pastors to the community, with a demonstration of significant intellectual gifts.<sup>88</sup>

Why the correlation between Chapel and an institution's Christian identity? "Christianity is more than intellectual," argues Benne:

The account it gives of reality is also lived, embodied, and expressed in an ethos, a way of life.... First and foremost among those practices is worship – the public praise, reading, prayer, and sacramental acts performed in response to the actions of God recorded in the Christian narrative.<sup>89</sup>

Unfortunately, argued Benne, as secularization has become a dominant influence even in Christian colleges, "the sense of being part of an ongoing communal history has waned."<sup>90</sup>

In such a context, common worship, being part of a living tradition, and participating in a covenantal common life come to be viewed as "arbitrary, irrational, bothersome demands, or even oppressive ones. Such attitudes often undercut not only religious traditions, but attempts at coherent liberal arts curricula as well."<sup>91</sup> Benne's study highlights the role of Chapel in keeping a Christian ethos of education in the collective consciousness. For this reason, he concludes, "Leaders who believe in the paradigmatic character of the Christian

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<sup>86</sup> Benne, *Quality with Soul*, 49 (chart)

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 193-194.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

account for their schools find public time and space for worship.”<sup>92</sup> Those leaders should include, among others, the faculty of the institution.<sup>93</sup>

Pressnell emphasizes even more the importance of worship within the university context. For Pressnell, it is essential that Christian scholars nurture not just doctrine and intellectual articulation of the faith, but also “training of the inner life,” proposing that to do so might even awaken “unrealized potential for our scholarship.”<sup>94</sup> Such a pursuit speaks loudly to students: “Students can quickly perceive the shallowness of those who intellectually claim to be Christians yet live lives of atheists.”<sup>95</sup> And conversely, “There is nothing more encouraging for our students than to know that someone they respect as an intellectual giant kneels daily to seek God.”<sup>96</sup> On this basis, he exhorts all involved in Christian higher education: “The future of Christian higher education is dependent on our ability to sustain community in Christ.” Worshipping, serving, praying, fellowship together – all these things nurture a community in its common journey of faith. Perhaps here, too, there is unrealized potential for scholarship, where scholars, practitioners, and students together find new vistas of discovery, insight and witness, not just through the strength of individual human scholarship, but through attentiveness to God and to one another.

Steve Moore provides a greater elaboration of the relationship between education and worship. He warns against the dualism that says that spiritual formation is the exclusive responsibility of the church, and not something in which the university should engage. In the

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 193.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 194.

<sup>94</sup> Claude O. Pressnell, Jr. “The Spiritual Life of the Christian Scholar: Practicing the Presence of Christ,” *The Future of Christian Higher Education*, eds. David S. Dockery & David P. Gushee. 121-136. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999.), 122.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 133.

Christian university, this too often leads to a “*deformation professionelle*”<sup>97</sup> that is particular to those educational communities that study about God and His world, without ever addressing God or inquiring of Him to know what response is appropriate to what has been discovered. This is the “danger of having the very words we use about God separate us from God, the most damning deformation of all.”<sup>98</sup> Although the university does not have all the resources of the local church for spiritual formation, thought must be brought:

vigorously, regularly and devoutly before the living God in prayerful obedience... in the midst of a university community that worships, plays, studies, questions, argues and encourages one another in the practice of allowing the Word to become flesh in our lives.<sup>99</sup>

According to Moore, the interplay between knowledge and prayer helps to ensure that academic endeavor does not, practically speaking, take the place of the supremacy of God.

To summarize, these writers have raised a number of significant exhortations and warnings regarding the role of Chapel within higher education. It is important to emphasize, first of all, that Chapel cannot claim to be the exclusive “spiritual” expression of the university; this reflects a dualism that is not appropriate for those who proclaim the Lordship of Christ. Rather, it has been argued, Chapel should help renew the vision of the Christian mind, preserve the Christian ethos of the institution, and protect the academic enterprise from the demonic power of knowledge divorced from a relationship with God. To do so in a way that is on par with the level of intellectual engagement taking place in the university, Chapel should be careful to draw from the richest traditions of Christian worship, inviting students into a genuine (not a superficial) engagement with what it means to be part of the kingdom of God. In particular, Christian university faculty have a significant role in exemplifying to

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<sup>97</sup> Steve Moore. “The University as a Place of Spiritual Formation,” *The University Through the Eyes of Faith*, ed. Steve Moore. (Indianapolis, IN: Light and Life Communications, 1998.), 26-27.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

students how scholarship and fellowship with God are linked, particularly in their participation in communal spirituality such as Chapel.

The following chapter will seek to expand and develop these insights to consider more fully how the educational goal of developing missional conviction leads to vocation, how vocation is tied to worship, and thus how worship fits into the task of the Christian university.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### SETTING A DIRECTION

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate more fully the relevance and contribution of Chapel to the development of missional conviction and kingdom scholarship. As described above, the goal of the Christian university is to equip the church, through scholarship, for kingdom faithfulness in all the realms of human activity, with particular attention to the development of missional conviction in the lives of its students.

#### Missional Conviction Leads to Vocation

Missional conviction is an ongoing, personal commitment to participating in the unfolding reign of God in the every realm of inquiry and action. It must be lived out in the life of the student in concrete ways, in particular places through particular skills and gifts and passions. Missional conviction will manifest itself in infinitely varied ways in the lives of every student. Missional conviction manifests itself in vocation.

Vocation is more than a job, as in “when I grow up I want to be a doctor.” It is certainly more than one’s feelings of obligation toward a religious occupation. Vocation is a person’s uniquely focused answer to God’s call to participate in His unfolding kingdom.

God's call comes, first, in the invitation to life: "Come unto me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."<sup>100</sup> Out of the joy of being released from sin's bondage, a redeemed sinner offers her life to God in response, and discovers the command, "Freely you have received; freely give."<sup>101</sup> How one responds to this command is embodied in the words of Frederick Buechner: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."<sup>102</sup> In other words, one's vocation can be found at the intersection between the kingdom of God as it has transformed the individual, and the place where "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near!" has yet to be proclaimed and embodied.

Students must be given the opportunity to ask the questions, "How can I offer all that I am to God, in response to the transformation He has wrought in me? What places of need excite or grieve me the most? What do I feel most alive doing? What gifts and skills do I have to contribute to the unfolding kingdom of God? How might God use me to witness to His unfolding reign, today and beyond today? Who will participate with me, and how might God use *us* to witness to His unfolding reign?" Vocation is about far more than a choice of study, a desired occupation, or a socio-economic goal. Vocation is about living out missional conviction in the unique specifics of the whole of life, including occupation, marriage or singleness, family life, leisure time and volunteer work, contribution in the local church, solitude and prayer life, even the daily habits of consumption.

## Vocation and Worship

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<sup>100</sup> Matthew 11:28-29.

<sup>101</sup> Matthew 10:8.

<sup>102</sup> Frederick Buechner, quoted in Sharon Parks, *The Critical Years*, 200.

In this way, the pursuit of one's vocation is tied, in a biblical sense, to the nature of worship. Romans 12 offers the Bible's most profound definition of worship: "Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."<sup>103</sup> "God's mercy," in this case, very briefly describes the mission of God to redeem the world as Paul has described in the first eleven chapters of Romans. This "spiritual act of worship" occurs as you "do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but [are] transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."<sup>104</sup> In light of God's amazing, merciful, and ultimately mysterious mission to redeem the cosmos, offer your whole being to God to be changed into conformity with God's will. Harold Best defines this directional aspect of worship as "continuous outpouring."<sup>105</sup> Continuous outpouring, Best says, characterizes the nature of the Triune God; Father, Son, and Spirit are continuously outpouring love and delight toward one another, and now pour that love and delight into the creation.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, the creation is "pouring forth" wordless speech, declaring the glory of God.<sup>107</sup> Made in the image of God, human beings are also continuous outpourers, directing their love and delight either toward the source of their life, or, because of sin, toward some other idolatrous source.<sup>108</sup> Every thought, attitude, word, or action, including religious activity, is part of that continuous outpouring toward God or toward some other god.

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<sup>103</sup>Romans 12:1

<sup>104</sup> Romans 12:2

<sup>105</sup> Harold Best. *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts*. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2003.), 18.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

<sup>107</sup> Psalm 19:1-4.

<sup>108</sup> Best, *Unceasing Worship*, 36-37.

Thus the pursuit of one's vocation is really of the same fabric as the "spiritual act of worship" in Romans 12. On the basis of missional conviction, vocation is the offering of one's whole being in its personal uniqueness to be redirected into full devotion to God's will in one's unique circumstances. In this sense, Best says, continuous outpouring (or in the Romans 12 sense, the spiritual act of worship) is about "a world full of redeemed *imago Deis* individually thinking up and doing things, walking on the ground, bound to their hours and their days, exulting in the richness and cleaning up the shards around them, worshipping continuously."<sup>109</sup>

Where does corporate worship – praise, prayer, preaching, and the celebration of Communion – fit within this directional understanding of worship? According to Best, "We do not go to church to worship. But as continuing worshipers, we gather ourselves together to continue our worship, but now in the company of brothers and sisters."<sup>110</sup> Best does not mean to underplay the importance or uniqueness of congregational worship. Rather, he is saying that worship as a communal religious practice does not carry a greater or lesser requirement in terms of its orientation toward the Triune God.

Though worship in the directional sense is exercised with every breath, word, and deed, Scripture still places a priority on this continuation of worship with brothers and sisters. According to Scripture, this gathering is where continuous outpourers allow their orientation toward God to be cultivated. The letter to the Ephesians (echoed in Colossians) says that one of the ways in which the people of God develop missional conviction<sup>111</sup> is to: "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your heart to

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<sup>109</sup> Best, *Unceasing Worship*, 58.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>111</sup> I am equating the commands to "find out what pleases the Lord," (Ephesians 5:10) "make the most of every opportunity," (5:16) and "understand what the Lord's will is" (5:17) with developing missional conviction.

the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>112</sup> Recognizing that their obedience to their missional calling would provoke the opposition of spiritual forces beyond their perception, the Ephesians were exhorted to: “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”<sup>113</sup> Similarly, Paul told the Philippians, “In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”<sup>114</sup> And the Colossians were told, “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”<sup>115</sup> Even the timid Hebrew believers were encouraged to embrace their identity as those saved for “love and good deeds,” and to “not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but ... encourage one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching.”<sup>116</sup> In other words, gathering for worship through singing, instruction, and prayer, first pursued by the early church in Acts 2:42, continued into the life of the church throughout the world, as important contexts for the nurturing their missional conviction and vocation in the world. Corporate worship is a commanded practice for those living within the vision of the kingdom of God in Christ.

### The Role of Chapel in Christian Higher Education

We have established that Christian higher education is the church in mission, developing a vision of the kingdom of God in the whole of life and cultivating missional conviction and a sense of vocation in the lives of students. We have demonstrated that Scripture commands the church to participate in corporate worship to nourish its missional

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<sup>112</sup> Ephesians 5:19-20, Colossians 3:16.

<sup>113</sup> Ephesians 6:18.

<sup>114</sup> Philippians 4:6.

<sup>115</sup> Colossians 4:2.

<sup>116</sup> Hebrews 10:25.

identity. It is time to determine the particular gifts that Chapel offers to Christian higher education.

In the context of this essay, Chapel is understood to be the university's regular (often daily) service wherein the university community participates in corporate worship. Corporate worship is understood to mean all the communal actions, words and postures used by the community to express its allegiance to, love for and dependence on God: singing, spontaneous and written liturgy, silence, the reading and preaching of Scripture, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the artistic accoutrements that might be incorporated to facilitate all these actions. Each university community will have different practices and styles of practice in this regard.

### Chapel as a Unifying Practice

The Hospitality of Worship In his book, *Reaching Out*, Henri Nouwen argues that the modern university is not "hospitable," referring to the way that competition, ambition, and evaluation often undermine the development of authentic community. He observes: "One of the greatest tragedies of our culture is that millions of young people spend many hours, days, week, and years listening to lectures, reading books and writing papers with a constantly increasing resistance."<sup>117</sup> This resistance, says Nouwen, is because: "Practically every student perceives his education as a long endless row of obligations to be fulfilled,"<sup>118</sup> rather than a personal connection with others. Nouwen's observations could equally describe the situation of many participants in the university community. Faculty live with the obligation to both teach and to be serious contributors to their discipline; Christian faculty live with the

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<sup>117</sup> Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. (New York: Image, 1975.), 84.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

additional obligation to be seen as credible contributors to their discipline in spite of their faith commitment. Staff and administrators live with the obligations they have toward one another, constituents and the wider public. The modern university is often a political quagmire, a complex network of relationships and competing power structures that have the potential of promoting alienation rather than hospitality – that is, openness and reciprocity between persons. The problem is, says Nouwen, “in a hostile climate nobody wants to become vulnerable and make it known to himself, his fellow students or his teacher that some of the most central questions of life are still untouched.”<sup>119</sup> Not even the Christian university is immune to the influence of this alienating politic.

In such a challenging situation, it is difficult not to become cynical, losing hope that the university is capable of finding unity. Yet all who come to the university, and especially the students, are yearning to experience a community that is unified around a common vision of the future, one in which their lives might find significance. Park challenges the university: “If [young adults] are going to have the courage to take the road less traveled because it represents a more worthy truth, then they must discover that in doing so they will encounter a new sociality: a trustworthy network of belonging.”<sup>120</sup> This network depends on its mentors to be hosts, as Nouwen argues:

Teaching ... asks first of all the creation of a space where students and teachers can enter into a fearless communication with each other and allow their respective life experiences to be their primary and most valuable source of growth and maturation.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>120</sup> Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.), 134.

<sup>121</sup> Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 86.

According to Nouwen, “A good host is the one who believes that his guest is carrying a promise he wants to reveal to anyone who shows genuine interest.”<sup>122</sup> However, the creation of the space to see and hear the promise in the student depends on more than the individual teacher’s ability to “host” the journey; it depends on the whole community’s ability to model an overall atmosphere of hospitality, of mutual faith in the promise *each member* brings to the enterprise. A student will be more willing to believe that Christian community is hospitable to her deepest questions if she sees her instructor doing the hard work of developing true Christian fellowship with a university administrator; conversely, a student will have difficulty believing that Christian community is hospitable to his vulnerability when he witnesses an administrator cutting down another member of the community. What Nouwen says of students is true of everyone who works and teaches in the university: they are “guests who honor the house with their visit and will not leave it without having made their own convictions.”<sup>123</sup> For this reason, it is critical that the members of the Christian university resist cynicism, and pursue true Christian community. In this way, the promise will be awakened – not only in student’s lives, but also in the lives of all who work and teach within the university.

The pursuit of Christian community is arduous and sometimes discouraging. Yet Dietrich Bonhoeffer argues that the “hour of disillusionment” with the community is the door to true biblical community, “because it so thoroughly teaches me that neither of us can ever live by our own words and deeds, but only by that one Word and Deed which really binds us together – the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ.”<sup>124</sup> For the Christian university, as for the

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>124</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*. Tr. John W. Doberstein. (New York: Harper, 1954.), 28-29.

church, it is important to realize that “Christian brotherhood is not an ideal which we must realize; it is rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate.”<sup>125</sup> In this sense, then, the feeling of community is not a prerequisite for interaction and common life; rather, the present reality of union “in Christ” should motivate the members of a Christian university to seek to express the reality of who they are through a common life together.

Bonhoeffer says it strongly:

If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith, and difficulty; if, on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so paltry and petty, so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ.<sup>126</sup>

Among these riches could be the witness to a new generation of kingdom disciples – the students – of an essential aspect of God’s kingdom: reconciliation. It is this “ministry of reconciliation” that the church is calling them to undertake in the many realms of life; where better to witness it than in the place that so fundamentally shapes their kingdom vision?

Communities of Practice According to Sharon Parks, there are three main “communities of practice” where students can experience this trustworthy network of belonging: hearth, table, and commons. The *Hearth* is the place for “pause, reflection, and conversation,” where persons can not just talk, but “talk through,” where “conversation ... begins as it happens and concludes whenever.”<sup>127</sup> This may be in the dorm lounge, the coffee shop, on a park bench, or in a mentor’s living room. *Table* is similar to the hearth, but involves more intentionality and even ritual; it is “a place where you know there will be a place for you,

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>127</sup> Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 154.

where what is on the table will be shared, and where you will be placed under obligation.”<sup>128</sup> It speaks not only of meals together (though this rare event may be deeply meaningful) but of other formal opportunities for dialogue, mutual respect, laughter, and nourishment of body, soul and mind. *Commons* is “a place within which to confirm a common, connected life, and in combination with various forms of story and ritual it can become the center of shared faith and grounded hope.”<sup>129</sup> The practices of Table and Commons have particular application to the role of Chapel in creating a hospitable, “trustworthy network of belonging.”

Communion is the most obvious link between Christian tradition and the practice of the Table. All three names commonly used for the practice of Table in Christian tradition demonstrate that its significance extends far beyond the individual believer’s reconciliation with God, as it has been commonly understood in many evangelical circles. It is an imaginative participation in the kingdom of God. The Table is *Communion*, or what Harold Best calls “mutual indwelling”<sup>130</sup>: an actual experience of being “in Christ” as well as “in one another” as we are “in the Spirit,” rehearsed through the receiving of the body and blood of Jesus. This fellowship is not based on what is brought to the Table – our academic achievements or failures, our skills and popularity, the amount of power that we wield by virtue of our role – but on the grace of God that has invited us to “participate in the divine nature,”<sup>131</sup> the eternal love of the Triune God. The Table is the *Lord’s Supper*, not convened to promote anyone as the greatest (as the disciples sought to do<sup>132</sup>), but as an expression of the gracious hospitality of God, who invites the child,<sup>133</sup> the poor in spirit<sup>134</sup> and the least<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Best, *Unceasing Worship*, 58.

<sup>131</sup> 2 Peter 1:4.

<sup>132</sup> Luke 22:24.

<sup>133</sup> Luke 9:48; 18:16-17.

into His kingdom. It is the *Eucharist*: the Thanksgiving Feast, in which, in the words of Newbigin, the community “acknowledges that it lives by the amazing grace of a boundless kindness.”<sup>136</sup> The Table so described is, as Murphy argues, “a paradigm through which Christians interpret the church and the world . . . , a pattern marked by habits (generosity, hospitality, thanksgiving) that govern the lives of its members.”<sup>137</sup>

The Christian university should embrace the practice of the Table as an imaginative and formative witness to a kingdom that is “not of this world.”<sup>138</sup> Even those schools whose ecclesiological tradition has not permitted the celebration of the Lord’s Table outside of the local church may benefit from reconsidering its permissibility, given its role in shaping missional conviction. As Murphy argues, “it is possible to understand the Eucharist as an imaginative, strategic negation of the power structures everywhere taken for granted”<sup>139</sup>: powers such as *consumerism* (wherein the value of something is measured by its ability to satiate human appetites), *nationalism* (wherein the state and its interests are equated with religious commitments),<sup>140</sup> *scientific rationalism* (which would deny mystery) and *relativism* (which would deny the uniqueness of the Christian invitation to the Table). For the Christian university the regular practice of the Lord’s Table, embraced in all its depth and mystery, could nurture kingdom politics of spiritual union, generosity, hospitality, and gratitude, characteristics that are so easily undermined by the common reality of academic life.

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<sup>134</sup> Matthew 5:3.

<sup>135</sup> Matthew 22:1-14.

<sup>136</sup> Lesslie Newbigin. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.), 228.

<sup>137</sup> Debra Dean Murphy. *Teaching that Transforms: Worship as the Heart of Christian Education*. (Grand Rapids: Brazos Publishing, 2004.), 188.

<sup>138</sup> Luke 18:36.

<sup>139</sup> Murphy, *Teaching That Transforms*, 193.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 119-120.

In providing regular opportunities for a campus to be nourished by the person of Christ at the Table, Chapel helps to nurture the trustworthy network of belonging that is required to nurture missional conviction in the lives of students. Chapel immerses students, alongside their mentors and leaders, in the images and symbols that have nourished a vision of the kingdom throughout history.

The practice of Commons is also central to the missional church. Luke records of the early church that “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.”<sup>141</sup> The early church gathered together because gathering was central to its identity; it was the *ekklesia*, a called-out assembly of kingdom citizens. Particularly in its early days, when its ranks were filled with people from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth, it witnessed in its very existence to the fact that God’s kingdom was altogether different from the kingdoms of this world – a kingdom in which Christ had “made the two one and ... destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” between Jew and Gentile, giving them both “access to the Father by one Spirit.”<sup>142</sup> It was this community which, even in its gathering, was to be the witness to the power of the gospel to transform life. As Newbigin states, “Jesus...did not write a book but formed a community.”<sup>143</sup>

This meeting together cannot be seen in light of the producer-consumer model that has infected the church in recent decades. Students and faculty alike often apply this model to their choices regarding communal practices within the university. This is demonstrated in a common excuse for not attending Chapel: “I don’t get anything out of it” (read: “I’m not

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<sup>141</sup> Acts 2:46.

<sup>142</sup> Ephesians 2:14,18.

<sup>143</sup> Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. bb227.

sold on your product”). Guder’s observation regarding the church applies equally to the Christian university community:

This producer-consumer model separates its notion of church (a religious firm producing and marketing religious products and services) from its members (potential and hopefully committed customers consuming those products and services). Members are ultimately distanced in this model from their own communal calling to be a body of people sent on a mission.<sup>144</sup>

In other words, in the missional church, worship is not just about what one gets out of it. Worship is a shared, communal activity whereby each member brings something to offer to God and each member submits to the Lordship of Christ. Worship is meaningful because each member contributes, not because a few members produce a consumable experience for the rest of the community.

What does this have to do with worship in the Christian university? Benne has observed that secularization has led the members of many university communities to “see themselves as individuals with their own academic purposes joined to the school by more of a contractual calculus than anything else.”<sup>145</sup> Similarly, Wolterstorff observes the way that Western society has lost the capacity to deal with ethical questions, particularly because it has embraced a contractual model of community, and exhorts the Christian university: “to reflect on how to nourish those forms of community life in which openness to the ethical is developed. *It must itself try to be such a community.*”<sup>146</sup>

Chapel functions as one significant Commons – a place “within which to confirm a common, connected life, and in combination with various forms of story and ritual it can

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<sup>144</sup> *Missional Church: A Vision of the Sending of the Church in North America*, ed. Darrell L. Guder. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.), 85.

<sup>145</sup> Benne, *Quality with Soul*, 12.

<sup>146</sup> Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 132. Emphasis mine.

become the center of shared faith and grounded hope.”<sup>147</sup> The gathering of students, faculty, and university administrators to affirm a common testimony of the gospel in all its richness and mystery helps to ground the whole university community in a common missional conviction. Together, the community renews its submission to the Lordship of Christ. Together, the community stands accountable to the searching Word of God as it is preached in the power of the Spirit. Together, the community is commissioned to live out its missional conviction in its corporate and individual vocations. Together, the community learns how to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”<sup>148</sup> When it gathers together, the community renews its covenantal identity with the Triune God and with one another, and is reminded, especially in times of scarcity, that God is abundant in provision and lavish in grace.<sup>149</sup>

Corporate worship holds great potential for unifying a complex community like the university. However, if (or when) members of the community participate as consumers then corporate worship holds great potential for dividing and ultimately alienating the community from one another. For this reason, Murphy warns, it is important that “the ways in which we are malformed and misshapen by a consumeristic culture of excess must be acknowledged, named, and confronted.”<sup>150</sup> If the university is to maintain its visible unity in testimony and in mission, it must, by mutual encouragement and the personal example of its leadership,

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<sup>147</sup> Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 156.

<sup>148</sup> Ephesians 5:21.

<sup>149</sup> Murphy, *Teaching that Transforms*, 127: “While consumerism is premised on the ‘myth of scarcity’ (there is not enough to go around, so we grab what we can when we can), the church’s liturgy assumes an economy of plenty, where bread is taken, blessed, broken, and given, where we find ourselves the undeserving recipients of God’s extravagant goodness.” In seasons of scarcity and uncertainty, this “grab what we can” attitude can plague the various divisions within a Christian university too; in these situations, this testimony in worship of “extravagant goodness” is critical to opening the community up to one another again.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

continually invite its members back to worship as covenantal partners in God's redemptive work.

### Chapel as a Well of Missional Conviction

Orientation to the Kingdom Some Christian universities have a course that orients first-year students to a Christian worldview, providing the theological scaffolding on which to build a lifetime of inquiry and Christian scholarship. More than an Introduction to the Old or New Testament - courses which typically major on details and hermeneutical issues - this course should invite the student to embrace his or her part in the story witnessed to in Scripture and to embrace the development of missional conviction as a key part of his or her education. Similarly, some Christian universities will crown a student's educational experience with an "integration" course, where they are challenged to tie all their studies together under the Christian worldview. While such courses can be deeply meaningful to students, Newbigin argues that "living *in* the biblical story as part of the community whose story it is" provides the impetus for that community and its members to "carry the story forward."<sup>151</sup> This story, of course, is the gospel: "that the power of God to renew the entire creation is now present in Jesus by the Spirit."<sup>152</sup> Ongoing reflection on the gospel helps to ensure that this story will become and remain the defining framework of the students' and their instructors' lives and particularly of their scholarship.

In his inaugural Lamblight lecture at Trinity Western University, Goheen has articulated four ways that worldview studies help the Christian university ensure that "the gospel will be the renewing power that animates, directs, and liberates from the constricting

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<sup>151</sup> Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 99.

<sup>152</sup> Goheen and Wolters, "Worldview Between Story and Mission," 120.

and debilitating power of idols that plague scholarship in our culture.”<sup>153</sup> Chapel can act as a partner with worldview studies in accomplishing at least three of Goheen’s four objectives in worldview studies; as such, it becomes the well from which Christian scholarship and missional conviction will pour.<sup>154</sup>

Lifting Up the Story First, Chapel, as with worldview studies, “can hold before the Christian academic community the story of Scripture as the true story by which faithful Christian scholarship” – and missional conviction – “should be shaped.”<sup>155</sup> The holiness and covenantal love of the Triune God; His amazing work in creating and in upholding creation; the devastating impact of sin on all of creation; God’s faithful interactions with and righteous judgment of His chosen people; His great power demonstrated throughout history; and the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ – these are the realities that animate Christian worship. As Plantinga Jr. and Roseboom state, “Worship is *narrative engagement* with the triune God.”<sup>156</sup> As such, these realities are more than theological facts to be considered for academic credit or scholarly reflection. As Goheen observes, they are not just unrelated “bits” that can be “accommodated to the more comprehensive cultural story.”<sup>157</sup> For the Christian scholar, as for all Christians, these realities are the details of the story that is engulfing all of history. Chapel offers the opportunity to relight the fire of passion for discovery, insight, obedience and mission by once again placing one’s smoldering wick near the fire of the gospel. Repeatedly and rhythmically it can shape the narrative and theological

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<sup>153</sup> Goheen, “The Power of the Gospel and the Renewal of Scholarship,” 2.

<sup>154</sup> Goheen’s humble recognition that his focus on worldview studies is one small part in the overall task applies equally to corporate worship. Ibid., 3.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>156</sup> Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., and Sue A. Rozeboom, *Discerning the Spirits: A Guide to Thinking About Worship Today*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.), 126.

<sup>157</sup> Goheen, “The Power of the Gospel and the Renewal of Scholarship,” 6.

realities of those foundational worldview courses into the language of praise and longing. In so doing it can help to transform all of scholarship, indeed all of life into such expressions.

Such transformation is important, not just for students whose missional conviction is only embryonic, but also for the university's teachers, mentors and administrators. All people experience those times of disorientation to God's purposes, when their vision blurs, their motivation slackens, their ego is bruised or inflated, and their wonder fizzles. When the majesty of the King and His kingdom as displayed in history are repeatedly lifted up in Chapel, the missional conviction of war-weary veterans *and* fresh recruits is strengthened for the battle ahead.

Elaborating Biblical Beliefs Secondly, Chapel can intentionally work with worldview studies to “elaborate the most basic beliefs of the Biblical story so they can be brought to bear on scholarship”<sup>158</sup> and on life as it is opening up before the Christian student. In worldview scholarship, this elaboration happens in an academic way – that is, through the disciplined study of Scripture, tradition, and theologians throughout Christian history, and the resulting scholarly papers, books, and curriculum. In worldview scholarship, one seeks to provide reasons, cite sources, and articulate in detail the fundamental beliefs of the Biblical story. In worship at its best, these beliefs are expressed “with an economy of words and gestures in ritual speech”<sup>159</sup>: words that are pithy, poetic, creedal, memorable, and most importantly, embodied, through the engagement of the senses and the participation of the voice, the hands, the knees, and the presence of others. The psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, the spontaneous and written liturgy, and the preaching of the Word must be more than

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Murphy, *Teaching That Transforms*, 105.

randomly organized theological adjectives, spiritual clichés, and moralisms. They must be saturated with the Christian worldview as it is found in the Bible and in Christian testimony throughout history. As such, Chapel becomes a well for ongoing perspective and context for the missional contribution student-scholar-seekers will make in the course of their lives.

Living at the Intersection of Faith and Culture

Thirdly, worldview studies is strengthened when Chapel explores “ways Christian academic community can be faithful to the gospel in its scholarship while living at the intersection of the Biblical and the cultural stories.”<sup>160</sup> Alongside the scholarly endeavor in the life of every student (and even of his or her instructors) runs a personal journey of deepening faith, one that occurs in constant conversation and conflict with the Biblical and the cultural stories. Especially through the regular preaching of the Word under the power of the Spirit, Chapel can be the place where the key points of intersection are identified even as the community enters into its scholarly and faith-deepening journey. By repeatedly shining the revelation of Scripture – particularly its overall framework and story – on the cultural story that also shapes them, student-scholar-seekers are equipped to enter into their endeavors with both Scriptural wisdom and spiritual alertness.

The notion of Chapel as a well can be summarized as follows. In the consistent personal engagement with the Christian testimony of God’s character and purposes in history, the Christian university community receives its true motivation for scholarship, for the deepening of faith, and for all forms of creational stewardship and incarnational ministry. If not for the Will and Word of the Father, there would be no universe to discover, and no

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<sup>160</sup> Goheen, “The Power of the Gospel and the Renewal of Scholarship,” 11.

humanity to discover it.<sup>161</sup> If not for God’s ongoing sustaining of creation, there would be no order to study, and no breath with which to speak of it.<sup>162</sup> If not for the grace of God, all of humanity would be lost in its depravity, wherein the creation is revered as god, and the worshiper becomes spiritually insane.<sup>163</sup> If not for the cross and the empty tomb; if not for the reign of Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father, who even now is bringing “all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ;” if not for the hope of Christ’s return and renewal of all creation, all scholarship and moral transformation would be ultimately meaningless.<sup>164</sup> If not for the revealing power of the Holy Spirit, there would be no insight into what is true, only conjecture.<sup>165</sup> Even more, without the Spirit, there would be no mission at all, scholarly or otherwise. Newbigin’s argument regarding the church’s mission applies equally to Christian scholarship:

A Christian congregation is thus a body of people with gratitude to spare, a gratitude that can spill over into care for the neighbor. And it is of the essence of the matter that this concern for the neighbor is the overflow of a great gift of grace and not, primarily, the expression of a commitment to a moral crusade.<sup>166</sup>

Christian scholarship, as with all of life, is an expression of life “in Christ,” and a response to the gift of life as it comes to us in Christ. A university that places worship at the center of its common life will preserve its commitment to the mission of God in declaring the kingdom of God over all realms of life. In this way, worship ensures that “the lure of shalom will direct and energize” the task of the Christian university.<sup>167</sup>

### Chapel as a Garden for Missional Conviction

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<sup>161</sup> John 1:3; Colossians 1:16.

<sup>162</sup> Genesis 2:7.

<sup>163</sup> Romans 1:21.

<sup>164</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:19; Ephesians 1:10;

<sup>165</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

<sup>166</sup> Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 228.

<sup>167</sup> Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 171.

The Formative and Volitional Impact of Worship Often, when one asks for a student's perspective on the role of Chapel in her life (either in conversation or in formal surveys), one gets responses such as, "Chapel is a time of spiritual refreshment and rest," "Chapel is an opportunity to praise God," or "Chapel helps me stay close to Jesus in the midst of my day." These statements unconsciously imply that life outside of Chapel is ambivalent or even adversarial to spiritual refreshment, praise, and closeness to Jesus. Conversely, they imply that Chapel is not necessarily educational. Unfortunately, this misunderstanding eventually undermines the perceived relevance of Chapel to the community's life and work together. If Chapel is ultimately a non-educational extra, an escape from scholarly endeavor, then a failure to provide what community members envision as an adequate retreat will encourage them to abandon it for more personally engaging pursuits.

In *Teaching That Transforms*, Debra Dean Murphy critiques three influential scholars of religious education – Gabriel Moran, Thomas Groome, and Mary Boys. In brief, these three scholars envision religious education that provides "objective" analysis of all religious traditions; that articulates a generalized and common morality; and that has as its goal the persuasion of the larger secular culture that morality and religion are worthy, even necessary, for the thriving of society. In Murphy's view, "the projects of Moran, Groome, and Boys ... remain caught up in and indebted to the very modern, liberal, capitalist order that their work strives to overcome."<sup>168</sup>

Murphy's critique highlights a potential flaw in approaches to Christian higher education. In order to appear credible to the larger secular academic establishment, it can be tempting for Christian scholars to adopt this goal of "objective" analysis, generalized

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 94.

morality, and social persuasion. This, according to Murphy, concedes too much authority to a secular view of religion and morality. In contrast, says Murphy, true Christian catechesis finds its home in “the ‘school of the church’: the liturgical assembly of Christians gathered in praise and worship of the Triune God.”<sup>169</sup>

Because of the way that the secular academy typically approaches religious ideas, Chris Anderson is led to argue that “the university shows the options, the church chooses one. The university uncovers the fact of interpretation, the church chooses its interpretation all over again.”<sup>170</sup> Anderson concedes that in the secular academy, his advocacy for and articulation of the superiority of his Christian worldview over others is inappropriate; for this reason he chooses to take his conviction “across the line,” from university to church, from reason to faith. His point is well taken, even for Christian instruction – in order for true conviction to form in the lives of students, there must be a degree of freedom to commit, once the options have been presented. Yet should the Christian university concede to the secular approach to religious formation? When the Christian university downplays the role of worship in its life together, it compromises its formational potential.

Murphy, appealing to Augustine, argues that the understanding of learning as detached observation and the mastery of data is a modern fiction, especially when applied to understanding the Christian faith. She states, “To learn, to know, is to be *transformed* – it is to implicate our selves, our very bodies, in the actions and practices of learning and coming to know.”<sup>171</sup> For this reason, says Murphy, worship is inseparable from learning: “we are habituated to and in the knowledge of the Christian faith by the ritual performance that is

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>170</sup> Chris Anderson, *Teaching as Believing: Faith in the University*. (Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2004.), 148.

<sup>171</sup> Murphy, *Teaching That Transforms*, 101.

worship, so that a deep unity between doctrine and practice is taken for granted.”<sup>172</sup> When it comes to Christian knowing, genuine learning is not about mastering information, but about being mastered by it; it is about “being known, . . . participating in the very life of God in and through the practices that constitute the church’s worship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>173</sup> Murphy’s book is a detailed articulation of the many aspects of Christian liturgy, and how the people of God are formed through performance of these habits of knowing and being known.

William Willimon applies this same approach to the study of ethical formation. For Willimon, “The moral life is not merely a matter of deciding on the basis of either rules or situations what ought to be done. The moral life is woven from the way I learn to see and what I want to see in my world.”<sup>174</sup> Parker Palmer agrees: “We often think of the gospel in terms of an ethic, or a way of living. Yet, at its deepest reaches, the gospel is a way of knowing.”<sup>175</sup> This “learning to see” occurs, in large part, in Christian worship: though it is ultimately about, to and for God, in practicing the embodied habits of biblical worship “we are acquiring, as a kind of by-product, a vision of who we are and who we are meant to be.”<sup>176</sup> This, in turn, provides the attentiveness to God that is the impetus for the total moral life.<sup>177</sup>

On the basis of Murphy’s and Willimon’s observations, the Christian university’s commitment to the development or provision of serviceable kingdom insight and missional conviction compels it to make the leap from options to commitment, from reason to faith,

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>174</sup> William Willimon, *The Service of God: How Worship and Ethics are Related*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983.), 34.

<sup>175</sup> Parker Palmer, “Toward a Spirituality of Christian Education.” *Faithful Learning and the Scholarly Vocation*, eds. Douglas V. Henry and Bob Agee. 75-84. (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003.), 81.

<sup>176</sup> Willimon, *The Service of God*, 42-43.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 68.

from analyzing to responding, especially in its common life together. This leap must be made not only because it marks the community as Christian; it must be made because knowledge will not be complete until it flows from and is nurtured in an ongoing love relationship with the living God who is the source of knowing, and yet is beyond knowing. “I am the vine; you are the branches,” says Jesus. “If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”<sup>178</sup> Goheen, summarizing the thoughts of Newbigin on this point, states, “Any understanding of the church that neglects the centrality of the living Christ present in its midst through the gospel has seriously compromised a Biblical understanding of the church.”<sup>179</sup> Chapel makes this leap of decision in five interwoven ways as it nurtures the developmental task of the Christian university.

A Vocabulary for Christian Spirituality First, Chapel provides what Jane Rogers Vann calls “a vocabulary for naming the many dimensions of the Christian spiritual life.”<sup>180</sup> In his apocalyptic novel, *1984*, George Orwell described how the state kept its people subservient by systematically purging the people’s vocabulary of abstract concepts that would question the absolute authority and worldview of the Party.<sup>181</sup> Often popular contemporary worship inadvertently falls prey to this tendency, reducing the language of worship to a few well-used phrases and clichés. This reduction of language must not be permitted in worship, especially in the Christian university. The more vocabulary a people has to name its reality, the more a

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<sup>178</sup> John 15:5.

<sup>179</sup> Michael Goheen, “‘As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You’: J.E. Lesslie Newbigin’s Missionary Ecclesiology”. Ph.D. Diss. (Uitgeverig Boekencentrum, 2000.), 262.

<sup>180</sup> Jane Rogers Vann, *Gathered Before God: Worship-Centered Church Renewal*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.), 58.

<sup>181</sup> George Orwell, *1984*. (New York: Penguin Putnam Ltd., 1950.), 246-247: “The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible.... Quite apart from the suppression of definitely heretical words, reduction of vocabulary was regarded as an end itself, and no word that could be dispensed with was allowed to survive. Newspeak was designed not to extend but to diminish the range of thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum.”

world of biblical freedom, love and justice can be envisioned. This vocabulary is not something a person that the student is required to coin, as Willimon observes:

Each individual Christian is not forced to invent a new language to meet each new situation, or new symbols and metaphors with which to grasp the nature of reality. These gifts are part of the substantive vision of the Christian community.<sup>182</sup>

In other words, as it has participated in the unfolding kingdom of God, the Christian community has developed distinctive symbols and words that help to name reality, and they are learned, not by detachedly studying lexicons and dictionaries, but by being immersed in a culture of people who find this language meaningful. Similarly, without consistent immersion in the culture that uses this language, an individual will lose his or her ability to see the world through the lenses it provides. Therefore, worship in the university community can be a garden for kingdom language, which in turn equips the members of the community to articulate “serviceable kingdom insight” in ways that have been tested by time and by the larger Christian community.

It takes a fair degree of intentionality to prepare and lead in a way that expresses worship’s full potential to nurture kingdom language, however. Chapel should not thoughtlessly adopt worship models that cater to market trends and ministry fads, which often show a degree of historical amnesia, Scriptural shallowness, and linguistic mediocrity. Instead, Chapel should focus on discovering, using, and even crafting worship practices that are faithful to the witness of the past and that provide rich linguistic resources for “naming” God’s purposes as they reveal themselves in the contemporary milieu. The repertoire of musical texts, readings and dramatic arts, prepared and spontaneous prayers, teaching and

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<sup>182</sup> Willimon, *The Service of God*, 35.

preaching should be mined from and nurtured by the richest possible sources, both contemporary and historical. Earl Palmer contends:

Christian colleges must not assume that the students from churches have any sense of our great Christian heritage. We must seek to share that heritage, to acquaint them with the great history of our faith and to remember God's faithfulness throughout the generations.<sup>183</sup>

This does not necessarily mean that the university should adopt a "high church" approach to worship. The challenge in crafting and leading worship is to discern the Spirit's leading for this time and place in history, *with reference to* His leading in previous generations, so that the language of worship is both continuous to what God has done, and anticipatory of what He intends to do in the present and maturing generation.

Embodied Attitudes for Life Before God      Second, Chapel forms postures or attitudes before God and one another that should influence the whole of life, including academic pursuits. As Willimon observes:

The rituals that exercise power over us may be Christian or not, but they will have their way with us. They may be the rituals of chauvinistic nationalism, communism, egocentrism, atavism, or some other secular faith. We are formed in countless ways by these secular 'liturgies.' The only way the church will remain distinctive and lively in this world is through close attention to her identity-forming liturgies and rites.<sup>184</sup>

Scholars who habitually and meaningfully gather in the name of Jesus, confess their sins, exalt the Triune God in their singing, listen to the Word of God as it is read and taught, partake in the nourishing presence of Christ at the Table, and turn their attention outward toward the world (as occurs in the classical structure of Gathering, Word, Table, and Sending) find that the virtues which these actions represent - love for God and neighbor,

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<sup>183</sup> Earl Palmer. "Education as Sabbath," [based on Deut. 5:12-15] *The University Through the Eyes of Faith*, ed. Steve Moore. (Indianapolis, IN: Light and Life Communications, 1998.), 55.

<sup>184</sup> Willimon, *The Service of God*, 50.

humility, awareness of sin, attentiveness to God, gratitude, and missional conviction – are actually formed and nurtured through participation in these actions.

Again, as with the language of worship, the actions of worship should be adopted thoughtfully rather than accidentally, consistently rather than haphazardly. In any worshipping community, traditions will form (i.e. lifting hands, kneeling, certain ways of celebrating the Lord's Table). It is up to the leaders, under the Holy Spirit's direction, by the counsel of Scripture and the historic Christian witness, and in ongoing consultation with the community, to consider how those traditions can best be adopted or adapted in a particular community to shape biblical attitudes toward life and scholarship.

The Living Voice of the Church Third, Chapel places the community in contact with the “living voice” of the church as it has lived its life under the Lordship of Christ. In his classic work, *The Idea of a University*, John Henry Newman emphasizes the unique opportunity the university provides to learn, not just through books and writings, but through personal contact with those who have gone before in the learning process. He says:

It is the living voice, the breathing form, the expressive countenance, which preaches, which catechizes. Truth, a subtle, invisible, manifold spirit, is poured into the mind of the scholar by his eyes and ears, through his affections, imagination, and reason; it is poured into his mind and is sealed up there in perpetuity, by propounding and repeating it, by questioning and requestioning, by correcting and explaining, by progressing and then recurring to first principles, by all those ways which are implied in the word "catechizing." In the first ages, it was a work of long time; months, sometimes years, were devoted to the arduous task of disabusing the mind of the incipient Christian of its pagan errors, and of moulding it upon the Christian faith.<sup>185</sup>

However, with reference to Christian worship, this “living voice” is not restricted to the interaction with professors, mentors and colleagues in the present moment. Particularly “in

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<sup>185</sup> John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 1854, accessed online at the Modern History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/newman/newman-university.html>, on November 15, 2005.

the first ages,” the process of “disabusing the mind of the incipient Christian of its pagan errors, and of moulding it upon the Christian faith” had, at its centre, participation in worship. For example, the climax of the catechumens’ journey into full participation in the community was not a graduation in the modern sense, with a diploma and gowns and tassels. It was the Paschal Vigil – a six hour worship service in which the story of redemption and God’s covenants (the “living voice” of the great cloud of witnesses) was recounted in songs and Scripture and material signs, climaxing on at sunrise on Easter morning as the catechumens were baptized and the whole community identified again with their own baptismal identity.<sup>186</sup> In doing so, the church was acknowledging that the formation of its identity was fundamentally linked to the work of God in previous generations – that these catechumens were not just autonomous individuals who could form the world to their liking, but were heirs of a promise that is bigger and more far reaching than them.

The Eastern Orthodox tradition also reminds the university that the congregation’s flesh-and-blood, sound and sight experience participates mysteriously and mystically in the everlasting worship of heaven, in which living creatures, elders, billions of angels, and “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them”<sup>187</sup> offers their praise to God. Similarly, as the university community participates in worship that incorporates historic worship resources (creeds, hymns, liturgical texts, biographies, etc.), contemporary global music, preaching and testimony from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds, along with popular contemporary resources, it integrates its formational mission with the ever-living voice of the church’s allegiance to Christ throughout time and space. In a culture in which market trends and stylistic fads are often the measure

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<sup>186</sup> Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Time*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.), 137-138.

<sup>187</sup> Revelation 5, esp. v 13.

of the relevance of a church's worship, the Christian university has the unique opportunity, even a special responsibility, to model and participate in worship that gives full welcome to the living voice of the church's worship throughout history. This will enhance the possibilities of worship to shape the community, and the individuals within it, in the manner described above by Murphy and Willimon. In addition, it will form a fuller, richer commitment to such worship in the hearts and minds of the people who are or will be pastors and worship leaders, church board members, and lay participants in the 21<sup>st</sup> century missional church.<sup>188</sup>

A Cosmic Perspective Fourth, Chapel sets the Christian university's academic and formational endeavors within their cosmic context.<sup>189</sup> Scripture often describes the challenge of obtaining wisdom, of thinking in light of Christ's Lordship, in terms of spiritual conflict. In obtaining wisdom, says Solomon, "above all else, *guard* your heart."<sup>190</sup> Jesus warned the Pharisees that their inability to accept His teaching was rooted in their allegiance to their father, the devil.<sup>191</sup> Paul states:

For though we live in the world, we do not *wage war* as the world does. The *weapons* we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to *demolish strongholds*. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we *take captive* every thought to *make it obedient* to Christ.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> By this I mean to emphasize that it is not only students who need to be stretched and challenged to embrace a fuller, richer, more historically rooted worship. The idolatries of consumerism and "relevance" affect us all. Adult faculty and staff can also be transformed by ongoing exposure to the living voice of the church's worship, and in being willing to be so transformed, will add even more impact to their own living voice in the lives of students.

<sup>189</sup> This paragraph is indebted to a personal conversation with Michael Goheen.

<sup>190</sup> Proverbs 4:23. Emphasis mine.

<sup>191</sup> John 8:44.

<sup>192</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Emphases mine.

Similarly, Peter warns that “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”<sup>193</sup> This is true even in the Christian university. The devil is seeking to consume the thoughts and efforts of students and professors, administrators and workers, with idolatrous and lesser thoughts. The formation of kingdom insight and missional conviction is a spiritual power encounter, a conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness, a confrontation between idolatrous traditions and the ongoing reflection of the people of God on their traditions and practices in light of the gospel. This battle can and should lead to humility and a realization of weakness – two virtues that come to their own in worship. In its very language, worship renews allegiance to the Lordship of Christ. In repeatedly reflecting on the gospel, worship helps the community and its members be “alert and self-controlled,”<sup>194</sup> “watchful and thankful”<sup>195</sup>; and it provides the language for a life of dependent prayer, which is essential to such alertness. Stutzman and Hunsburger state, “In worship, there is something of a contest going on. A worshiping community places itself in the middle of that. Whose story do we take to be the true picture of how things are? *Under what regime will we live?*”<sup>196</sup> Because of its powerful influence on the hearts and minds of society’s leaders, the Christian university will continue to be a key target of the “rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”<sup>197</sup> Therefore, it is critical that the Christian university make the renewal of its allegiance to Christ in worship and prayer an ongoing priority. One might recall the prayer of Peter for boldness in the face of opposition, for signs and wonders and power encounters

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<sup>193</sup> 1 Peter 5:18.

<sup>194</sup> 1 Peter 5:18.

<sup>195</sup> Colossians 4:2.

<sup>196</sup> Linford L. Stutzman, and George R. Hunsburger, “The Public Witness of Worship.” *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, eds. Lois Y. Barrett et al. 100-116. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.), 109. Emphasis mine.

<sup>197</sup> Ephesians 5:12.

with demonic forces. The result: “The place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”<sup>198</sup> As Goheen summarizes Newbigin’s conviction:

Prayer is not a distraction from the missionary calling of the church, but integral and essential to it. ...If we are not bound to Jesus Christ “by a multitude of hidden channels through which the life-giving sap can flow” – including public and private prayer – then “it may add up to zero”.<sup>199</sup>

How desperately the Christian university needs this kind of power in today’s post-Christian context!

A Liturgy for Learning      Finally, Chapel provides the opportunity to develop what Spykman calls “a liturgy for learning.”<sup>200</sup> When the early church devoted themselves “to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer,”<sup>201</sup> it was not as people escaping to another reality – one disconnected from their everyday lives in the marketplace, synagogue, family dwelling, and entertainment of their culture. They were wrestling with what the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus, and the coming of the Spirit, meant for them in those very contexts. Similarly, the gospels and epistles which now comprise the New Testament, most likely read in the worship services of the early church, were intended to speak very directly and relevantly to the challenges of being a Christian in a particular cultural, geographical, religious, historical climate. Worship must play a similar

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<sup>198</sup> Acts 4:31.

<sup>199</sup> Goheen, “*As the Father Has Sent Me...*”, 269.

<sup>200</sup> Gordon J. Spykman, “The Place and Role of the Bible in the School,” *Shaping School Curriculum: A Biblical View*, eds. Geraldine J. Steensma and Harro Van Brummelen. pp 1-3. (Terre, Haute, IN: Signal Publishing, 1977), 1.

<sup>201</sup> Acts 2:42

role in the university. As Goheen stated with regard to Chapel worship at Redeemer University College, the community “must be nourished for the tasks that confront them.”<sup>202</sup>

The primary task is, as has been argued, the formation of serviceable kingdom insight and missional conviction across every realm of life. However, it must be emphasized again that such formation is not exclusively academic in nature. The tasks of the Christian university include fostering healthy personal relationships at every level of interaction; honesty and integrity in scholarship; the keeping of commitments; stewardship and the just disbursement of resources; and many other issues. All of these require the “liturgy” of the community’s worship to be deeply integrated with the community’s life, using language and addressing needs that mean something to its communal journey, always rooting these reflections in the unchanging reality of the kingdom of God as declared in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just as the first believers wrestled with the gospel’s impact on family, employer/employee relationships, legal conflicts, food regulations and other laws, sexual morality, etc., so the university must be asking its own questions with reference to the paradigm of the gospel: What choices for life or death might be before the community as the gospel intersects with its calling? What tensions might be addressed by the reconciling message of the gospel? What attitudes might hinder the community’s ability to participate in God’s purposes in its calling as a university? What challenges are typical to the developmental stage of students, in which the whole community can come alongside them with the message of the gospel? What present opportunities might the gospel help to prioritize? What idolatries are creeping into our work, our relationships, even our recreation that must come under the searchlight of the gospel? What does, “Your kingdom

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<sup>202</sup> Michael Goheen, “Philosophy of Chapel 2,” an unpublished draft position statement on the role of Chapel at Redeemer University College. Forwarded to this author as a personal computer file.

come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” mean for the Christian university? These are the kinds of questions for which the university’s worship should provide a language.

In summary, Chapel functions as a garden for the formation of missional conviction by fostering a language, a posture, an encounter with “living voice” of the church, a cosmic orientation, and a liturgy for transformational living within the kingdom of God. It helps to fulfill what Wolterstorff calls “Christian learning”: “Learning faithful to faith in the triune God, learning faithful to the Christian community and its tradition, learning faithful to the Christian scriptures.”<sup>203</sup>

### Chapel as a Climax

Responding to God’s Self-Revelation According to Miroslav Volf, “authentic Christian worship takes place in a rhythm of adoration and action.”<sup>204</sup> As has been argued already, “Adoration is the well-spring of action.”<sup>205</sup> At the same time, “Christian action in the world leads to adoration of God.”<sup>206</sup> These statements lead to the final way in which Chapel plays a role in Christian higher education. Chapel can be a climactic adoring response to God’s self-revelation. Brad Green reminds us: “Since the whole created order reveals the triune God, we are forced to say that ultimately, *all* objects of our knowledge are pervaded with the self-revelation of God.”<sup>207</sup> All of the university’s realms of investigation – biology, physics, chemistry, history, literature, art, music, business and economics, philosophy, theatre, politics, ethics, theology, and all the unique and myriad ways in which

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<sup>203</sup> Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 256-257.

<sup>204</sup> Miroslav Volf, “Worship as Adoration and Action: Reflections on a Christian Way of Being-in-the-World.” *Worship: Adoration and Action*, ed. D.A. Carson. 203-211. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993.), 207.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>207</sup> Brad Green, “Theological and Philosophical Foundations,” *Shaping a Christian Worldview: The Foundations of Christian Higher Education*, eds. David S. Dockery and Gregory Alan Thornbury. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2002.), 75.

these disciplines intersect – are ultimately spheres of God’s personal giving of Himself. As Paul asserted in Athens, God’s creation of heaven and earth, His placement of people in certain times and places, His gift of life and breath and everything else, were undertaken “so that people would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”<sup>208</sup> So, “the knowledge of God that surrounds us makes us accountable to God. To suppress such knowledge, and to refuse to honor God and give him thanks in light of such knowledge (Rom. 1:21) is to store up wrath for one’s self.”<sup>209</sup>

Therefore, there are at least five ways that Chapel can be responsive to God’s self-revelation within the Christian university: celebration, gratitude, intercession, confession, and lament.

Celebration The first way that Chapel responds to God’s self-revelation is in celebration. The Christian university has the unique opportunity to be on the leading edge of discovery and insight, to document the incredible order and intricacy of the cosmos, to tell the story of history from a uniquely hopeful perspective. Yet in the competitive, critical context of academic life, an attitude of celebration is not easy to cultivate. Often the ever-present demands of work and scholarship, administration of the organization, and the ongoing academic pressures of reading and assignments can cloud a person’s ability to see the incredible endeavor in which he or she is participating. As Wolterstorff emphasizes, as we participate in God’s unfolding kingdom of shalom, “we are invited to savor, to enjoy, to celebrate such traces of shalom as come our way – not just grimly rushing on in joyless dutiful activism.”<sup>210</sup> This celebration is rooted in a few central truths: the dignity of creation; the sovereignty and eternal love of God; the Incarnation’s affirmation of material things,

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<sup>208</sup> Acts 17:27.

<sup>209</sup> Green, “Theological and Philosophical Foundations,” 75-76.

<sup>210</sup> Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 143-144.

particularly the body; the victory over sin, death and satanic powers declared in the cross and the empty tomb; the purifying, empowering and unifying presence of the Holy Spirit; and the exaltation and return of Christ. These must always be present in the ongoing celebration of the community. However, because of these truths, Christians can always lift their eyes above their particular engagements with the world to delight in the subtle yet unmistakable marks of God's handiwork around them. Chapel provides one context where the university can contemplate Christian hope and divine love; recount God's faithfulness throughout the institution's history; enjoy the gifts, talents and passions that are represented within the community; and savor the manifold beauty of creation and creativity, the commitment, freedom and mystery of human relationships, and the hilarity and joy that exists at the core of God's being. In so doing, the Christian university expresses its childlikeness before the God who is vastly more intelligent, strategic, loving, just, and humorous than any person or organization. "Rejoice in the Lord always,"<sup>211</sup> Paul commands. The Christian university is privileged to do as Paul commands, because of the self-revelation of God.

Gratitude      The second response to God's self-revelation is related to the first. If both general and special revelation are gifts of God, as Green asserts, then the appropriate response is always gratitude. "All truth is God's truth," it is said. Often this is used in reference to the usefulness of insight that is true, regardless of its source. However, this statement also implies that truth does not belong to the scholar; it belongs to God. Whether reached by a pagan or a Christian, in a secular university or a Christian university, insight and purpose for life are a trust, a gift of God. Idolatry occurs when, in receiving those

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<sup>211</sup> Philippians 4:4.

insights, people “neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him.”<sup>212</sup> The Christian university has the opportunity and responsibility to exemplify that fitting response of thanks.

As Anderson reminds us, thanks is only thanks when it is expressed:

We are given a gift – not the idea of a gift but an actual gift, in a package, wrapped up. We respond with thanks, not the idea of thanks but the fact of it, in words and music and candles and heavy wooden crosses, two oaken beams, 6 x 12. We don’t say to our spouse or our child: I thought of you on your birthday. We throw a party, with balloons.<sup>213</sup>

A new discovery in the laboratory; the identification of a unique species; the rescue of a young girl from sexual slavery; the flowering of one’s gifts and talents within the community and in the larger society; emotional healing from the wounds of the past; God’s timely provision for the university; moments of light within places of poverty, injustice, and disaster – these, and many other moments, are all opportunities to offer thanksgiving to God. Chapel ensures that gratitude remains at the core of the university’s endeavors for discovery, relevance, impact, and activism. As Isaiah grasped, “All that we have accomplished You have done for us.”<sup>214</sup>

Lament        The posture of lament is a surprising counterpart to celebration and gratitude that should be included in the regular responses of worship offered in Chapel. The Christian university spends its efforts seeking to discover more about God and His purposes.

However, the more one becomes aware of God’s purposes, the more one realizes that the kingdom of God is not yet present in its fullness. Injustice, exploitation, misunderstanding, natural disasters, sickness, and a myriad other burdens continue to plague humanity and the earth on which it lives. Whereas in many secular contexts people allow these realities to

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<sup>212</sup> Romans 1:21.

<sup>213</sup> Anderson, *Teaching as Believing*, 165-166.

<sup>214</sup> Isaiah 26:12.

alienate them from God (“How could a good God allow all this suffering?”), the Christian university understands that it is because of who God is that these issues can be raised with Him. “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?”<sup>215</sup> David cried. How long, O Lord, will you allow conflict to destroy Afghanistan or Iraq? How long, O Lord, will children be exploited for perverted appetites? How long, O Lord, will Your church be divided? How long, O Lord, will my academic goals be undermined by my mental illness? How long, O Lord, will I feel like I’m losing my faith? These are not the questions of cynics, but the questions of those who trust the God to whom they appeal: “But I trust in Your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in Your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.”<sup>216</sup> As Wolterstorff reminds us:

We are invited to mourn the shortfall of shalom in our world. We weep, we cry, in the realization that our Lord has pronounced his blessing on those who mourn. We ache; for we realize that the messianic age in its fullness is not yet here.<sup>217</sup>

For the sake of the world and for the sake of all those confronting these deep questions, Chapel must model what it means to respond to life’s deepest challenges with honesty, sobriety, and trust before the face of God.<sup>218</sup>

Confession Closely related to lament is Chapel’s fourth response to the university’s endeavours: confession. One cannot study the many problems and challenges of the world without coming face to face with the reality of sin. But this realization of the impact of sin

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<sup>215</sup> Psalm 13:1.

<sup>216</sup> Psalm 13:5-6.

<sup>217</sup> Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 143-144.

<sup>218</sup> Recently I was reminded with how this need is not just restricted to the faith journey of young adult students. A much-loved faculty member who was asked to share personally in Chapel was brutally honest with how he was struggling to make sense of the seemingly senseless suicide of one of his favourite students. Here was a professor of theology crying out to God, “Where were you? Why didn’t you do anything?” How many in the university community walk around with these cries lying dormant in their hearts, with no outlet in which to express them?

on God's purposes on earth must not simply lead to judgmentalism, as if it was only the world "out there" that has the problem. As Psalm 90 admits, "You have set *our* iniquities before you, *our* secret sins in the light of your presence."<sup>219</sup> The Christian university must respond to the acknowledgment of sin by owning, corporately and personally, its own complicity in the problems of the world. Its members must confess the idolatries of consumerism, nationalism, legalism, personal and corporate ambition, and vengeance. They must admit the thousand different ways that justice, mercy, peace, trust, acceptance, dignity and stewardship are neglected within the personal and corporate spheres of their lives. However, confession is more than a simple admitting of faults. Murphy writes that in the church:

To confess our sins... is to locate our sins and our sinfulness within the gospel's story of estrangement and loss, forgiveness and restoration – to recognize ourselves as creatures separated from our Creator and to seek renewal of relationship and communion.<sup>220</sup>

Thus confession restores the community's ability and authority to be witnesses to God's reconciling work in the sin-infested places of the world. When repentance and the reminder of God's redeeming grace are integral to the university's worship, Chapel becomes a living testimony to the transformation to which it endeavors to witness.

Intercession The university fully engages with God's purposes by responding to God's revelation in intercession. Wolterstorff emphasizes that to respond to the vision of shalom, "...we are called to pray for shalom, as in the prayer 'Thy kingdom come.' For we confess that the coming of God's Reign of peace is far from entirely in our own hands; we confess

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<sup>219</sup> Psalm 90:8.

<sup>220</sup> Murphy, *Teaching That Transforms*, 181.

vulnerability and incapacity.”<sup>221</sup> The complexities of international and national politics, media culture and corporate business, church polity and epidemic diseases, or the more basic challenge of writing that first English paper, solving a challenging engineering problem, providing fresh and original insight within one’s field, getting along with one’s roommate, or discerning a career direction – all are worthy subject matter to bring before the Lord in “prayer and petition.”<sup>222</sup> There is no question that the Designer of the universe, the Word Himself, the enthroned Ruler “above all rule and authority, power and dominion” has fresh and “serviceable insight” in the realms of science, literature, and politics, as in all realms of life.<sup>223</sup> Chapel can provide opportunities for the community to support one another as it prays for these insights. Moreover, there are many times when the reality of the world’s problems seems beyond one’s ability to respond. Intercession allows even the most powerless of communities to participate in God’s redeeming work in the needy, broken, and wicked places of the world, and makes them available to hear God’s direction for a meaningful and practical response. In Chapel, the Christian university can model this responsive participation in the kingdom of God by setting aside regular times for intercessory prayer.

### The Glory of God

The unifying, inspiring, cultivating, and expressive roles of Chapel in the formation of serviceable kingdom insight and missional conviction are intricately interwoven, and each

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<sup>221</sup> Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 143-144.

<sup>222</sup> Philippians 4:6.

<sup>223</sup> For this insight, I am indebted to my friend Norbert Kott, an engineer with a large wood manufacturing company, who has told me about times when he and his assistants have faced seemingly unsolvable engineering conundrums. In those times, he encourages them to join him in asking the Supreme Engineer for help, by praying for a solution. God has often honoured those prayers, not with miracles, but with genuine scientific insight that led to a solution.

one flows from the other. In summary it can be said that the work of the university is an act of witness to the kingdom of God. In this sense, Harold Best's description of worship and witness is apt: "Continuing worship pours out to God, and continuing witness pours out toward humankind as to the things of God."<sup>224</sup> Thus he concludes:

Serving Christ while participating in culture in an elegant and reforming way can mean a thousand things in as many places.... washed in the blood and carrying the sweet savor of Jesus' love. It is, above all, the seamless garment of worship and witness.<sup>225</sup>

As part of this seamless garment, Chapel embodies an eschatological reality:

In that day when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; every diploma will be thrown at his feet; every graduation will have been a preliminary to his coronation, and all knowledge shall focus on the Lord of all.<sup>226</sup>

Therefore, Chapel unifies the community around this acknowledgment, keeps this vision as its source of motivation, incorporates practices that form students and leaders whose lives reflect this vision, and becomes the practice ground for that day in which the diplomas, academic accolades, and historic contributions are finally laid at His feet.

However, one can never forget that the opportunity for corporate worship that Chapel provides is an incredible gift. It is the gift of security, for in worship we remember God's unfathomable, unrelenting, unconditional, reconciling Father-love. It is the gift of significance, for in worship we recall that God, through the gospel, has joyfully invited us into communion with Him and into participation with His incredible redemptive and creative work in the world. Worship is the inheritance of God's children, an invitation into delight and joy, dependence and cleansing, friendship and partnership with God.

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 77-78.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

<sup>226</sup> James T. Draper, Jr. "A Vision for a Christian Baptist University," In *The Future of Christian Higher Education*, eds. David S. Dockery & David P. Gushee. 17-23. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999.), 19.

Therefore, overarching these philosophical foundations for Chapel is, in Tricia Rhodes' words, God's "preposterous love," which is really a passion for His own glory: "his desire and determination to display His glory in us, to us, and through us, for His exaltation and our joy."<sup>227</sup> For the mission of the Christian university in the twenty-first century to endure, and for Chapel to play a significant role within that mission, the university community and its members must grasp God's uncompromising commitment to His own glory, and embrace it as their driving passion as well. This is the foundation for true cultural, global, and cosmic renewal, for the enduring witness of the church to the reign of Christ. Ultimately we must pray for this spiritual renewal to sweep through the hearts of all who are involved in Christian higher education. Perhaps a new "mission" movement will be birthed, not only to the remote tribes of the earth, but to the governments, corporations, film and music studios, oil fields, lumber mills, families, and every other realm of creational activity – fueled not just by insightful Christian perspectives or purposeful commitments to make a difference, but by the Holy Spirit's work of exalting Jesus Christ as the first love of all who profess Him as Lord. May Chapel be one place where the Holy Spirit is free to fuel that first love, for the glory of God.

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<sup>227</sup> Tricia McCrary Rhodes, "The Preposterous Love of God," Plenary Message, Let Your Glory Fall: Worship Together Conference. Waterloo, ON: June 1, 2000.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IMPLICATIONS FOR BIBLICAL WORSHIP IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

This paper has argued that models of higher education that capitulate to radical individualism, consumer economics, and secular humanism are inadequate for a Christian approach to higher education. Rather, the Christian university is mandated by the church to form scholars' ability to form serviceable kingdom insight for all realms of life and culture, and even more, to cultivate personal missional conviction in the lives of students that will help them to live faithfully and to endure as missional disciples for their entire lives. Such formation includes the activities of the classroom, numerous co-curricular activities, and common spiritual disciplines that are adopted by the entire community. Chapel is one of those key spiritual disciplines. As a context for the practices of Table and Commons, Chapel functions as *the unifying spiritual discipline* that creates a "trustworthy network of belonging" in which students (and their teachers) can thrive. Chapel functions as a *well for missional conviction* by keeping the Christian testimony of God's character and purposes in history at the forefront of the community's attention. By nurturing the language and postures of missional identity, by keeping present the "living voice" of the church as it has lived out that identity, by helping the community see its endeavors within the cosmic context of spiritual warfare, and in liturgy and Scripture that specifically addresses the university's endeavors, Chapel becomes a *garden* for the ongoing development of meaningful faith. Finally, Chapel is a *climax*, providing the opportunity for a worthy response to the ongoing revelation of God in the university's endeavors, whether that response is celebration, thanksgiving, lament, confession, or intercession.

This chapter will outline a few key threats to Chapel's impact in the university, and some key areas in which further development should occur if Chapel is to reach its full potential in the twenty-first century Christian university.

### Threats to the Relevance of Chapel

Obviously the vision outlined above for Chapel is the ideal. In reality, there are roadblocks to the relevance of Chapel as a unifying practice, well, garden, and climax of Christian higher education.

#### Lack of Foundational Consensus

The first roadblock is a lack of consensus about the educational task of the Christian university. Without a common vision for the educational task, rooted in a biblical vision of the mission of the church in the world, it is very difficult to form communal practices that support that endeavor. Therefore, it is important for the Christian university to strive for unity in its concept of Christian higher education. Any educational vision should be measured against, among other things, its implications with regard to a biblical understanding of worship, vocation, and community. For this reason the ongoing dialogue regarding an educational vision must include, as much as possible, those responsible for forming these practices.

#### Lack of Connection to the Academic Task

Second, Chapel is sometimes viewed by the larger campus culture as an extraneous activity, only remotely related in practice or in content to the ongoing academic task of the university. Christian universities must consider how Chapel is positioned or marketed within the institution's programming. Since it is important for faculty and staff to participate

together in worship with the students, the university must be careful not to describe Chapel as a purely student-oriented activity, nor should Chapel's content be so directed to the student "niche market" that faculty or staff would feel unduly excluded. If Chapel is to be a unifying practice, then it needs to acknowledge the presence of all parts of the university community in its worship. Those who are overseeing Chapel must be diligent in engaging the larger campus culture in conversation about how to become more relevant to the university's ongoing endeavors. This might take the form of surveys or an opportunity for dialogue about Chapel in an online forum. A Planning Advisory Committee made up of student leaders, staff, and faculty could also be formed, in which ongoing dialogue about the task of Christian higher education and the role of worship within it could be sponsored. In particular, the highest levels of institutional leadership must consider the priority of Chapel in their own practice, and the power of their example and voice in promoting it throughout the whole university.

### Complex Campus Realities

A third threat to the priority of Chapel in the life of the institution is the increasing complexity of campus rhythms, schedules, and other resource issues. If Chapel time is not officially endorsed as a protected time, then the interventions that are employed to meet these complexities will often affect Chapel attendance in detrimental ways. For example, at this author's school, times that were historically left open for eating lunch or scheduling meetings more recently have been used to schedule classes in order to deal with classroom space shortages. This has made it so that Chapel is the only scheduled break wherein some students or faculty can eat their lunch or have a meeting. In time, these pressures dominate the decision on whether or not to attend Chapel, and Chapel becomes neglected by more and

more people in the community. Similarly, in some universities Chapel takes place in a facility that must be used for other purposes. In these situations, it must be clear what events have priority in the use of such a venue. There must be ongoing communication between departments so that the implications of operational decisions on the priority of Chapel can be part of the conversation.

### Consumer Attitudes

A fourth threat is the ongoing influence of consumerist attitudes, combined with the relative transience of the university. In other words, in speaking of Chapel as a corporate spiritual discipline rather than as an experience to be consumed, the Christian university is balking the overall ethos of North American society, both outside and inside the church. Therefore, even if students ideally graduate having adopted a more biblical view of worship, they will be replaced by a new generation of students who are likely enculturated with consumerist attitudes. Thus it is imperative that the less transient members of the community – the staff and faculty – make extra efforts to demonstrate what it means to participate in worship as a corporate discipline, and to live accountably to one another regarding this practice.

### Areas of Further Development

Three key issues deserve further development if Chapel is to fulfill effectively the role that has been described in this paper: issues of leadership, of content, and of expectation. Such development could occur internally, by employing the expertise and resources of relevant faculty and practitioners, and externally, by gathering those across North America

with similar roles of leadership in Christian university Chapels for ongoing discussion and the development and compilation of resources for greater effectiveness.

### Leadership

First, Christian universities must wrestle with issues of leadership. For example, if Chapel is a unifying event for the whole community, where should it be positioned hierarchically? What structures of leadership or oversight are most effective or appropriate, given this vision? What competencies and training are most important for those who are leaders and planners of Chapel, given this vision? What are the advantages and disadvantages of involving students in the leadership of Chapel, both for the university community as a whole, and for those student leaders? How can those responsible for Chapel initiate the needed conversations that can raise or preserve the priority of Chapel within a particular community? What, in particular, is the role of faculty in promoting, guiding, or contributing to Chapel, and how can that be encouraged? These are important questions that deserve significant discussion on and across Christian campuses.

### Content

Second, Christian universities must be intentional in the content of their corporate worship. This means, of course, careful choices in the teaching content of Chapel.

Worship Formed by the Biblical Narrative First, the Christian university must take seriously the power of the Christian narrative as it is embodied in worship to form the character and identity of the community. There may be significant educational value in structuring the ongoing rhythms of the university community – and the Chapel schedule in

particular -- around some form of liturgical calendar. In most cases, the academic calendar does not allow for a wholesale adoption of a traditional church lectionary. For example, the educational community is typically dispersed during the traditional celebrations of Christmas, Pentecost, and much of Ordinary Time. Nevertheless, it may be possible to develop a cycle of reflection on the gospel that is drawn from the traditional calendar, but is sensitive to the uniqueness of academic rhythms. This reflection would include thematic and biblical preaching, as well as Scripture readings, relevant musical and liturgical resources, and even the opportunity for communal discussion. Many engaging topics and themes could become even more significant when they are experienced within the overarching context of the Christian narrative as it is reflected upon, week to week.

Styles, Forms and Sources    Worship styles, forms, and sources are part of a second issue with regard to content in worship. What style of worship should be adopted? How much should the university's worship reflect already existing cultural trends, and how much should it seek to set or combat those trends? How closely tied should a Christian university be to its founding worship tradition, and how much will it draw from other sources? In particular, does the ecclesiology of the sponsoring tradition allow for the practice of the Lord's Supper within the university community (as opposed to the local church)? In answering these questions, one must always return to the fourfold purpose of Chapel in the university. How will the university's choices regarding style and form assist in unifying the campus in worship? How will they contribute to Chapel's role as a well of missional formation rooted in the Christian worldview? How do these choices help to form a faithful Christian language and posture, to connect the community to the living voice of the past, to prayerfully set the educational task within its cosmic context, to provide a liturgy for learning? Do these

choices form a pattern in which the full range of worthy responses to God's revelation is included in the community's life together?

The choices regarding worship styles, forms, and sources must not be made haphazardly or thoughtlessly. Particularly because of its envisioning, innovating role in the mission of the church, the Christian university must model careful leadership in corporate worship. It must not just follow pop culture trends or denominational traditions, but should seek to evaluate both in light of solid theological and educational considerations. In light of those reflections it should practice creativity, innovation and cultural leadership. Ongoing evaluation should go on among Chapel leadership; at the same time, students should be included in the conversation for their own educational benefit. Even more, Christian educators across North America with a heart for worship on the Christian campus should compose, compare, and compile liturgical resources and repertoire that will best nurture the Christian university's task while remaining true to a biblical vision for worship.

Financial Resources A third content-related issue is that of financial resources. If Chapel is going to reach its full potential as part of the Christian university's educational task, the institution must provide enough financial freedom to be discriminating in the choice of, and ability to give direction to, those who teach in Chapel. The desired amount of money will vary according to the frequency and length of each institution's Chapel. Nevertheless, it is critical that financial resources be available to allow staff (such as a campus pastor) or faculty to dedicate adequate time to preparation, and to invite speakers whose messages are appropriate to the emphases, rhythms, and practices of the community at particular times in the semester and who teach at an intellectual and spiritual level that is appropriate to a university community.

## Attendance Expectations

Finally, Christian universities should dialogue regarding their expectations about Chapel attendance. An institution's expectations regarding Chapel can communicate the priority placed on this event in the community's life together. In many institutions Chapel attendance is mandatory for students, and is strictly monitored through a complex system of card-swiping, credit-earning, and Chapel committees. In some cases at these institutions there are opportunities to earn "Chapel credit" by participating in other similar spiritual activities. It may be reasoned that in these contexts, there is a greater likelihood of a spiritual message getting through to even the most uninterested student if he continues to be exposed to it week after week. Yet there are disadvantages to such a stringent approach. The main disadvantage of mandating Chapel attendance is the natural resistance felt by anyone when she is "forced" to do something, whether or not it is beneficial.

Other Christian universities prefer to make Chapel attendance voluntary, reasoning that when a person chooses to be present at Chapel, he will be more likely to engage meaningfully with what is happening there. As with the mandatory approach, a voluntary Chapel carries its own disadvantages. For example, a voluntary Chapel is more significantly affected by the complexity of rhythms, schedules, and resources. Also, in the case of a voluntary Chapel it is tempting to "lure" students to come to Chapel on the basis of their preferences or felt needs. This reinforces a consumeristic view of worship, and misses the opportunity to widen the community's vision of God's kingdom.

It would be valuable for Chapel organizers to engage in ongoing discussion about the possibilities, advantages and disadvantages along the spectrum between mandatory and voluntary Chapel. Though there may not be a uniform approach for all universities, it may

be possible to identify an institutionally appropriate approach that elevates the priority of Chapel according to the roles outlined in this paper without falling into rigid legalism.

### Conclusion

The goal of this paper has been to envision a meaningful role for Chapel in the task of Christian higher education, in light of theological, missional, and educational considerations. Doubtless there are many considerations that have been neglected that could provide an even clearer picture of how Chapel contributes to the formation of kingdom citizens. There are also many significant challenges faced by those who lead Chapel programs that are part of larger cultural and historical realities – realities that are even now in the midst of tremendous flux and transition. For this reason alone, discussions regarding Christian higher education and Chapel’s role within it have significant ground to cover. Nevertheless, it is clear that Chapel is still relevant – even essential – to the missional task of Christian higher education. A university community that does not preserve corporate worship as a valued element of its common life will struggle to remain anchored to its Christian commitment over time. Therefore, let the Christian university do all it can to embrace Chapel as the unifying practice, wellspring, garden, and climax of its educational task. Even more, let the Holy Spirit renew the Christian university as a community that is enflamed with passion for the glory of God in every realm of life.

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