

INAUGURATION CEREMONY TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY



Inaugural Response

Dr. Jonathan S. Raymond
President, Trinity Western University

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Dear friends, all, thank you for being here today, to celebrate not Jonathan and Irene Raymond, but to celebrate Trinity Western University and God's faithfulness over the years. Thank you, inauguration committee, for inviting Dr. Rader, and thank you for that wonderful address.

Forty years ago I was a first-year student at Asbury College, and in the first semester I was invited to go onto a youth retreat at a camp about an hour north of Cincinnati, Ohio – a camp called SWONEKY – which stood for southwest Ohio, northeast Kentucky – SWONEKY. And I went along to have some fun, not knowing what God had in store. God brought to Camp SWONEK not the general of the Salvation Army over 111 countries, not Dr. Rader, but a young Captain Rader, who then the wonderful crown of white hair we see today was dark without a single white hair. He doesn't even know the story I'm telling right now, but he was the special speaker that weekend. And God moved in my life, and I recommitted my life to Jesus Christ, and that made all the difference for the next four years and for the years thereafter. So I am indebted to God but to the means of grace that is Paul Rader.

I shared with the board today, "I wasn't told everything when I was interviewed." And I meant that in the most positive way. I was not told the full depth of the excellence of the people that make up this community – the world class faculty, the incredible staff, the remarkable students. I've come to the conclusion that the string of miracles which makes up Trinity Western University over, now approaching, 45 years is remarkable, as the university is deep in its adolescence. We are not a fully mature university, but we're well on our way. We're about where universities are when they are about 100, not when they're 45.

I shared with them that I'm grateful for the essence of the University, because while it was a junior

college, it had certain forms, and as it became a college those forms changed and there was a complexity that developed. And then as it continued to grow through its early childhood years and into its pre-adolescence and deeply into its adolescence, the forms changed and complexity continued to build. And yet, its essence has remained the same.

It's not unlike a compass – not one that shows north, but a compass with the point and the pencil, and as a junior college the circle that it drew was rather limited. As a college it got wider, and now as a university its sphere of influence, in Jesus' name, is even wider. And yet, as at the end of John Wesley's days, we embrace his words, "the best is yet to come." Because that pencil will stretch out even farther and the sphere of the university continues to be not just provincial and not just national but increasingly a global sphere of influence, in Jesus' name.

But the stewardship, not the custodianship, but the stewardship of the university has been in the hands of two men. My testimony of what I've discovered in my first 100 days is that the point of the compass has not moved. The point of the compass remains, 45 years later, at the still point of the universe, Jesus Christ. What a privilege we have, to be the beneficiaries of a stewardship over the past which has maintained that point and the essence of the university. And as we move out of a proud past toward a promising future, it's our privilege and our faith that we are not just a people of faith, but also a people of hope and love who, knowing that God is Emmanuel, God with us, will answer prayer and be faithful. It is our privilege to be faithful to him and make sure that the point on the compass stays put.

I want to honour Dr. Cal Hanson and Dr. Neil Snider by passing on a good word. But before sharing that good word with you, I'd like them to join me at the podium – Dr. Cal Hanson, our first

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president and Dr. Neil Snider, whose wonderful stewardship over 32 years maintained what Dr. Hanson started. These gentlemen have preserved the essence which is deeply rooted in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in and through Trinity Western University.

It's my privilege to share with you that the Board of Governors of the University acted recently to designate that these two good and great men will go forward with the designation of President Emeritus. And for that we praise God.