**Intersections**

Volume 2011 | Number 34 Article 1

2011

# Full Issue, Number 34, Fall 2011

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections

Part of the Higher Education Commons, and the Religion Commons

Augustana Digital Commons Citation

(2011) "Full Issue, Number 34, Fall 2011," *Intersections*: Vol. 2011: No. 34, Article 1.
Available at: http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections/vol2011/iss34/1

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Intersections by an authorized administrator of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

# intersections

Fall 2011

## in this issue

Lutherans on Faith and Learning

## Purpose Statement

| This publication is by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-eight colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is published by the Vocation and Education unit of the ELCA. The publication has its home at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, which has generously offered leadership and physical and financial support as an institutional sponsor for the publication.

The ELCA has frequently sponsored conferences for faculty and administrators that have addressed the church-college/university partnership. The ELCA has sponsored an annual Vocation of the Lutheran College Conference. The primary purpose of *Intersections* is to enhance and continue such dialogue. It will do so by:

- Lifting up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities
- Encouraging thoughtful dialogue about the partnership of colleges and universities with the church
- Offering a forum for concerns and interests of faculty at the intersection of faith, learning, and teaching
- Raising for debate issues about institutional missions, goals, objectives, and learning priorities
- Encouraging critical and productive discussion on our campuses of issues focal to the life of the church
- Serving as a bulletin board for communications among institutions and faculties
- Publishing papers presented at conferences sponsored by the ELCA and its institutions
- Raising the level of awareness among faculty about the Lutheran heritage and connectedness of their institutions, realizing a sense of being part of a larger family with common interests and concerns.

## 2012 Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference

July 30 – August 1

Augsburg College • Minneapolis, Minnesota

*A Calling to Embrace Creation:*
*Lutheran Higher Education, Sustainability, and Stewardship*

## From the Publisher

| I grew up in the state of Ohio. This gives me the right to occasionally issue the Ohio disparaging wisecrack, "Everyone has to do time in Ohio sooner or later!"

It is now Bob Haak's turn to "do time in Ohio," as he begins his appointment as chief academic officer at Hiram College. He will be missed. No one is more deserving of the opportunity to move into senior academic leadership, but I regret that we will no longer have Bob's talents and energy in our community. Bob has done yeoman's work to make "education for vocation" a reality and not just a slogan in ELCA higher education. He has worked tirelessly to integrate the Lutheran concept of vocation into the practices and rhetoric of Augustana College (Illinois) and all of ELCA higher education, especially through his faithful editing of *Intersections* as a tool for promoting our collective conversation about education for vocation.

Sustaining this conversation is vital to a healthy future of *Lutheran* higher education. The concept allows for higher education to occur in a Lutheran key, even if many or most of the people at ELCA-related colleges and universities are not Lutheran themselves. The pages of this journal have helped us all grow in our understanding of the effort. The task of editing *Intersections* now falls to the able gifts of Jason Mahn. I look forward to working with him and moving ahead the conversation about education for vocation. And God bless him as he endures having to work with me!

MARK WILHELM | Program Director for Schools, Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, ELCA

# Contents Number 34 | Fall 2011

4

From the Outgoing and Incoming Editors | ROBERT D. HAAK and JASON A. MAHN

5

A Lutheran Learning Paradigm | PAUL J. DOVRE

9

Endtimes | DAVE HILL

10

Gift and Calling: A Lutheran Perspective on Higher Education | DARRELL JODOCK

17

Lutheran Colleges, the Lutheran Tradition, and the Future of Service-Learning | JOSEPH McDONALD

23

Dreaming God's Dream: A Sermon on Isaiah 56:1-2, 6-8 | STEPHAN K. TURNBULL

25

Fumbling Toward Integrity: A Sermon on Mark 8:34-38, Pastor Kaj Munk, and Father Maximilian Kolbe | DARRELL JODOCK

intersections

Mark Wilhelm | PUBLISHER
Robert D. Haak | EDITOR
Jason A. Mahn | GUEST EDITOR
Angie Williams | SECRETARY

PUBLISHED BY
The Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit | The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

ON THE WEB
www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Education/Colleges-and-Universities/Resources/Intersections.aspx

PUBLISHED AT
Augustana College
639 38th Street
Rock Island, Illinois USA 61201-2296

EDITORIAL BOARD
Timothy A. Bennett | WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY
Karla Bohmbach | SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY
DeAne Lagerquist | ST. OLAF COLLEGE
Victoria Horst | NEWBERRY COLLEGE

ON THE COVER
Richard Caemmerer, *Baptism,* acrylic. From the artist: "This piece reflects the idea that God not only creates, or gives birth to, creation, but also sees fit to *baptize* what has just been born."

# From the Outgoing Editor

Well, it has been a pretty good run.

With some fear, I took over the task of putting together *Intersections* from its founder and long-time editor, Tom Christenson of Capitol University. I remember asking him, "So how do you find the articles to include?" I was worried, I guess, that everything had already been said about the vocation of ELCA colleges and universities and that was why he was leaving the work to me! I remember his response, something like, "Don't worry. The articles will find you." I'm not sure I believed him at the time, but I find myself giving the same advice to Jason Mahn who will be taking over this task from me. And I have found it to be true. Thinking and working on issues of vocation has brought me into contact with a whole host of folks who think this is an important conversation—and who have provided words and wisdom as we have continued to work this out together. Some of these voices have been holding forth for a long time: Dovre, Jodock, Christenson, Simmons, Morgan, Olsen and Wilhelm. Others are new(er) to the conversation: Mahn and Bussie and…and…. As with any list of this sort, the risk of omitting someone who should be on it is great. But the joy of it is to remember the powerful voices that have driven this conversation, and to recognize that fresh (and more articulate?) voices are entering the dialogue. It is clear that the power of these ideas enlivens and refreshes this conversation even as the people involved change. That is surely the work of the Spirit among us.

As I leave the position of editor, I must say that the people with whom I have been brought into contact because of this work has been the greatest delight of this work. I thank each of you.

And the ideas still are important. Who are these Lutherans and what sort of schools are these? Someone (probably someone on the list above—I don't quite remember) said, "Lutherans are the ones who ask those sorts of questions!" How do we take seriously the word of the gospel in this day? How do we see students in ways that treat them as whole persons living in community and in a world that matters? How do we relate to others in conversation about these issues, especially those who don't seem to be like us? And the questions continue—questions that are crucial for our survival today as institutions, but even more crucial for the sort of students we hope to influence in their time with us.

I turn the work over now to Jason—and wait with eagerness the new that springs to life!

ROBERT D. HAAK

# From the Incoming Editor

When I interviewed at Augustana five years ago, it was Bob Haak who picked me up from the airport (in a pickup truck), who walked me around campus (with a gyratory limp—Bob needed hip surgery), and who discussed the need for vocational reflection at every level of our ELCA schools: individual, departmental, and institutional. My learning from Bob continued through the two issues of *Intersections* for which I served as guest editor.

The title of the present issue, "Lutherans on Faith and Learning," is decidedly broad, but it does name central issues that Lutherans are equipped to face: What does religious conviction have to do with public knowledge? How might Christianity and academic disciplines remain in ongoing and open dialogue? The opening essays by Dovre and Jodock remind us that Lutherans do have a clear, if also nuanced, standpoint when it comes to faith and learning. McDonald then pairs that Lutheran approach with tensions surrounding the service-learning movement. Sermons by Turnbull and Jodock call us back to heart of our callings; they remind us that downsizing our dreams (Turnbull) or curtailing our concerns (Jodock) may lead to efficiency and safety but not to lives well lived. Even Hill's short poem pursues the tensed relation between faith and knowledge: "each questing mind / Stands to the Ocean as foam to the wave."

I am thankful to Bob, Mark Wilhelm, and many others for persistently considering the vocation of Lutheran education. I look forward to editing *Intersections* in the time ahead.

JASON A. MAHN

---

ROBERT D. HAAK *has served Augustana College (Rock Island, Illinois) as professor of religion (1983-2005), as Director of the Center for Vocational Reflection and Associate Dean (2005-2011), and as Director of the Community Engagement Center (2011-2012). He has accepted a new position as Vice President and Dean of the College at Hiram College, a small liberal arts school in Ohio, and will be leaving his editorial duties behind as he lives into that new calling. Bob began editing* Intersections *in Spring 2006; the present issue is this thirteenth and last.*

JASON A. MAHN *is Assistant Professor of Religion at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.*

PAUL J. DOVRE

# A Lutheran Learning Paradigm[1]

*This essay identifies some of the distinctive resources of the Lutheran tradition and the ways in which they inform the learning paradigm of Lutheran colleges. This project is prompted by the recent renewal of interest in such matters among Christian colleges in general and Lutheran colleges in particular. For a variety of reasons, many Lutheran colleges are seeking to recover and extend the distinguishing elements of their religious tradition and identity. In most cases, the faculties are religiously diverse and most, including the Lutherans among them, lack an awareness and understanding of the distinctive elements of the Lutheran tradition. This essay is also motivated by the work of others, especially the volume edited by Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian,* Models of Christian Higher Education.

The distinctive connections between particular religious traditions and their learning paradigms are evident from a cursory survey: While Roman Catholic colleges vary from one order to another, they maintain a relatively consistent focus on the social teachings of the church as well as the work of the great philosophers and theologians. In addition, one notes the Thomist and neo-Thomist traditions of the Jesuits and the focus on hospitality and service among the Benedictines. The Mennonite schools have a particular focus on the application of Christian ethics and social justice teachings in domestic and international venues of service. There is the rigorous Kyperian tradition among Dutch Reformed schools with their emphasis on the formulation of a Christian worldview, discipline by discipline, leading to a true integration of faith and learning.

Hughes and Adrian's book (*Models of Christian Higher Education*) was published in 1997. The editors and other contributors characterized, and distinguished among, various learning models (or paradigms) in religious higher education. They noted that Lutherans, out of their culture affirming, two kingdoms dialectical construct, typically seek to establish a dialogue between the Christian vision and the world. Out of their sacramental tradition, Roman Catholic schools seek to bring the presence of Christ into a world in need. On the other hand, out of their convictions about the sovereignty of God, schools in the Reformed tradition seek to approach every discipline from a distinctive Christian perspective. In cryptic expression, schools in the Reformed tradition seek to transform learning by bringing it under the sovereignty of God, Lutherans seek an engagement between faith and learning, and Roman Catholic institutions seek to integrate a Christian vision into the life of the academy. Spurred by the work of Hughes, Adrian, and others, I think it is useful to explore in more detail the resources inherent in the Lutheran tradition and the ways in which they might conceivable shape the learning paradigm—that is, both the program of learning and its execution.

### Five Contemporary Resources

The work of others shapes this paper in a number of ways. In addition to the works of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, I have been informed most recently by the work of five contemporary scholars. They are Ernest Simmons, Darrell Jodock,

---

PAUL J. DOVRE *served as president of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota from 1975 to 1979, and was a visiting scholar at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government from 1999-2000 and 2004-2005. He is the co-director of the Thrivent Leadership Program which is designed to identify and develop leaders for Lutheran colleges and universities.*

Tom Christenson, Robert Benne, and Richard Hughes. In his text designed to introduce faculty to the Lutheran tradition in higher education, Simmons sketches out the history of Lutheran higher education and mines the theological lode of Lutheranism. He identifies the doctrines of justification and the incarnation as formative as well as the Lutheran distinction between law and gospel and the Lutheran teachings on vocation. He describes the Lutheran notion that we are simultaneously saint and sinner, unable to escape human temptation yet capable of righteous acts. He cites the work of K. Glen Johnson describing the Lutheran penchant for paradox and the "tension-filled distinctions such as law and gospel, faith and works, saint and sinner, finite versus infinite, reason and faith."

> "...we live out our vocation with others, that is, in community where together we test ideas, share wisdom and seek divine guidance."

Simmons gives extensive treatment to the notion of vocation as does his friend and colleague, Darrell Jodock. Jodock has written frequently and lectured widely on Lutheran higher education. He places vocation in a Lutheran context and sees it as a response to the grace of God that is lived out in service to our neighbor and the world and for the sake of the common good. Vocation is lived out in the home, church, career, and community and it is inclusive of all honorable callings, both secular and sacred. Drawing on the Lutheran understanding of human nature, living out one's vocation involves struggle, ambiguity, and change. For that reason among others, we live out our vocation with others, that is, in community where together we test ideas, share wisdom, and seek divine guidance. As Jodock and other writers note, Lutherans stand in a tradition of encouraging diligent study in preparation for the living out of vocation in the world. With the encouragement and assistance of the Lilly Endowment, vocation has become a widely employed tool for centering and focusing Christian higher education.

In his well read book, *Quality with Soul*, Robert Benne identifies three defining themes in the Lutheran theological tradition including a strong emphasis on the confessions and confessionally trained pastors, the emphasis on calling or vocation, and the affirmation of "human reason as a guide to earthly, civil life." For Benne, the Christian account of reality should give vision, direction, and content to the academic enterprise of a Christian college in intentional, self-conscious ways. It should be embedded in the faculty and staff, in the course of study, and in the ethos of the community. Benne's assessment of St. Olaf College and Valparaiso University illustrate the dynamics of his template.

A fourth contemporary resource is Tom Christenson and his *The Gift and Promise of Lutheran Higher Education*. In this book Christenson takes into account the significant changes in the Christian academy and seeks to tell the Lutheran story using both new and familiar categories of thought. He is committed to the Lutheran idea of vocation as an organizing principal. He identifies eight theological theses inherent in the Lutheran tradition with fresh language and engaging illustrations. One of the other unique contributions of his book is his discussion of the constituents and dynamics of a Lutheran epistemology. He goes on to identify some of the implications of the Lutheran gift in the formation of the curriculum and its pedagogy.

Especially interesting is the work of Richard Hughes. What makes it interesting is both his perspective as an outsider from the Lutheran tradition and his assessment of both the strengths and weaknesses of our theological resources. He identifies our key resources as Luther's insistence on human finitude, the sovereignty of God, and the notion of paradox that is embedded in Luther's theology of the cross and is expressed in his notion of the two kingdoms. Hughes has great confidence in this tradition to keep questions alive, to live with complexity, to avoid the dogmatic, and to deal with the limits to human understanding gracefully. He also warns of the temptation of paradox thinking to fall off one side or another of the paradox or, alternately, to surrender to a relativism.

To conclude this survey, I note again that my task is to draw on these several insights about the Lutheran tradition in sketching a Lutheran learning paradigm and its implications for both the content and pedagogy of the curriculum. To be sure, while this is the sort of thing that people in, for example, the Dutch Reformed tradition do with discipline and regularity, it is not the sort of thing Lutherans have done for a variety of reasons. So in providing this sketch I mean to be helpful by providing a template and not a formula, a list of possibilities and not a fixed plan. I do so knowing that Lutheran college faculties will, in any case, make their own best judgment on these matters.

### Four Deep Narratives

So to the task at hand: I submit that the Lutheran tradition is shaped by four narratives: the *biblical*, the confessional, the theological, and the vocational.

Luther was an Old Testament scholar and the biblical story was the bedrock of his preaching, teaching, and leadership. Most of his published work was about Biblical resources. He came at his

theology, never systematized, out of his biblical work for the most part. For Luther, "Word alone, grace alone, faith alone" starts there.

The Lutheran *confessional* narrative was shaped by many church leaders over the centuries. It includes the classical creeds of the church including the Apostles, the Nicean, and the Athanasian Creeds, as well as the Augsburg Confession. Each was an attempt to express biblical truths in relationship to the believer and the world. These confessions provide Christians with a paradigm for understanding themselves in relationship to God and the world. Inspired by God's spirit and created by God's people, they are subject to interpretation and reconsideration from age to age. But over the centuries they have proven durable and useful guides to the Christian life.

Lutherans do not claim a unique *theological* system but they do affirm the importance of the human quest to understand the implications of God's revelation for the lives of God's people in the world. Lutherans have sought out and affirmed theological work from many traditions. With strong grounding in the scholastic, pietistic, and critical traditions, Lutherans have been in the first rank of the world's theologians. Lutherans bring to the ecumenical theological conversation certain distinctive motifs including most notably the two kingdoms, the priesthood of all believers, original sin, the theology of the cross, *simul justis et peccator*, the incarnation, and its teaching on justification. Imbedded in the Lutheran theological tradition are some pedagogical proclivities including the dialectic, the paradoxical, the commitment to moral deliberation, and freedom of inquiry. As exemplified by Luther's theology of the cross, "there is a persistent warning…to avoid the facile, the simplistic—to offer easy religious answers to human questions" (Hall).

> "Imbedded in the Lutheran theological tradition are some pedagogical proclivities including the dialectic, the paradoxical, the commitment to moral deliberation, and freedom of inquiry."

The *vocational* narrative is also distinctive in the Lutheran tradition. Luther's passion for the priesthood of all believers, his commitment to love the neighbor, and his sense that all areas of life are avenues for the expression of our love for God constitute substantive elements of the Lutheran vocational narrative. For Luther, vocation was not to be equated with a career or a job or the calling to a holy order. Rather, our vocation comes to us in baptism and is lived out in joyful response to God's gift of love. God frees us to love our neighbor and promote the common good in all of our places of responsibility in daily life—home, congregation, work place, neighborhood, nation, and global society. For Lutherans, vocation is where God's gift and call come together in the concreteness, the humus, of life. In this context, the purpose of Lutheran higher education is to prepare students for vocation, with all that implies.

So if these are the key narratives, what might a Lutheran learning paradigm look like and what would be its implications for curricula and the pedagogical design of academic programs in Lutheran colleges?

### Toward a Paradigm of Lutheran Learning

First of all, the aim of a Lutheran paradigm of learning is the engagement of faith and the secular disciplines. Consistent with its two kingdoms framework and its respect for the secular disciplines of the academy, Lutherans seek to discover what the propositions of faith have to contribute to secular disciplines and vice versa. Since God is a transcendent reality, knowledge of the faith and knowledge of the world is all from God and all about God.

Now in light of the goal and nature of the learning paradigm, what about the curriculum? In view of the centrality of the biblical narrative, the study of sacred scriptures will be *de rigor* in the curriculum. The objective here is both knowledge of the story and knowing how to read it for oneself. This kind of knowledge will be of value to all persons, Christian and other, since it is a cultural and world shaping literature. Given the dismal state of biblical literacy in a world of many faiths and cultures, one could give special priority to this matter in the modern age, especially at Lutheran places.

Studies in theology will be another explicit element in the curriculum. These courses will set up and address both the big issues of meaning and the ordinary issues of living. The study of theology comes in many forms from history to systematic theology to confessional theology to ethics. What used to be thought of as the sole province of professional theologians is now claimed by practitioners in a variety of academic disciplines (e.g. ethics and business, ethics and science, ethics and communication, etc) for the Word has something to do with everything and everyone and theologians are not the only players in this arena. However, at Lutheran schools it would be most desirable to see theologians involved as partners in the "and" curricula.

It is anticipated that the Lutheran confessional narrative may be nested in both the study of scripture and the study of theology. The confessions provide evidence of the way in which human beings have come to understand the truths of the

scripture and the continuing revelation of God. They answer the perennial Lutheran question, "what does this mean?" Such questions are especially germane in the lives of the millennial generation that seeks both significance and status.

> "...the idea of our calling to vocation underlies the whole academic project at Lutheran places. It becomes foundational for the whole enterprise."

The vocational narrative is receiving growing attention in Lutheran and other Christian colleges in America. This development reflects both a response to the initiatives of the Lilly Endowment and the reclaiming of a central theological theme. Not many places will establish courses devoted solely to vocation. Rather, the idea of our calling to vocation underlies the whole academic project at Lutheran places. It becomes foundational for the whole enterprise. But the groundwork, the building blocks, must be established and then reiterated through out the college years. Some schools introduce the idea in the orientation of new students, others include it as an explicit consideration in one or another core courses (sometimes in religion).

Closely related to the unfolding of the Lutheran idea of vocation is the call to serve the neighbor, the common good. Again, in recent years we have seen the advent of service learning in which theory is integrated with practice. In this way, the curriculum and service to the neighbor and the advancement of the common good are of a piece. Lutheran schools are in a unique position in that they may bring to this form of applied learning the rationale of our theological tradition and thus value is added to the experience.

In what ways might the Lutheran tradition inform pedagogical practices? Luther exemplified moral deliberation in his life, ministry, and scholarship. He was especially committed to, and confident in, the moral deliberation of the community. He would say, in effect: "Here is what scripture says and here is the situation we face, so what shall we do?" He felt such deliberation was necessary both because there were not always clear answers in scripture to every situation and because human beings, by nature, distort reality. So he believed deliberation, the give and take of the community, was needed. Luther didn't always get it right and he knew that but he believed in the power of the Spirit working among the people of God as they sought practical solutions in both material and churchly matters. He also had confidence that in graciousness, God would forgive the mistakes. All of which suggests that Lutheran places will, explicitly and self consciously, be places of moral deliberation in which faculty serve as models and students are engaged in the discernment of wisdom.

Closely related to moral deliberation is the dialectic. Dialectic, or dialogue, may be a solo activity or a communal activity. We often speak about the dialogue between faith and learning wherein we attempt to discover what the truth of faith has to contribute to our understanding of a body of knowledge and what that body of knowledge can contribute to our understanding of faith. Such conversation is tinged with the realism of ambiguity, of not knowing all there is to know, of sometimes coming out in the wrong place. Thus there is a necessary humility about it. Mistakes in human judgment and the humility those mistakes engender are among the reasons that many Lutherans (and Protestants) have tended toward quietism and retreat in the face of the inscrutable or imponderable or the merely controversial. But that historic fact is not an excuse for inaction. Indeed, Luther was quite aware of these problems and, in spite of them and in view of God's grace, encouraged his followers to "sin boldly."

> "...the implementation of the tradition must reach to all elements of the curriculum for each provides an opportunity for dialectic, all provide venues for vocational reflection, and many provide challenges in moral discernment."

This approach I have described necessitates a strong faculty commitment to, and literacy about, the tradition I have described. It also implies that the religion faculty will carry a college wide responsibility for instruction in the Lutheran biblical and theological tradition. While there will be some specific courses dedicated to particular areas of narrative content (e.g. Bible, church history, theology, etc), the implementation of the tradition must reach to all elements of the curriculum for each provides an opportunity for dialectic, all provide venues for vocational reflection, and many provide challenges in moral discernment. Some schools are introducing the underlying learning paradigm of the school in early course work, reinforcing key

ideas strategically throughout the college experience and then seeking a comprehensive integration in the form of a capstone course on the eve of graduation.

In an examination of the resources of various religious traditions, Richard T. Hughes observes that "the Lutheran tradition possesses some of the most potent theological resources for sustaining the life of the mind that one can imagine." So while the Lutheran tradition, filled with ambiguities and paradox, is a challenging one to grasp and live out in the academy, it is buttressed by an account of reality that is full of hope. It is a tradition that is appropriate to a world that is both wonder-full and broken.

## Endnotes

1. This essay was previously published as Chapter 14 in Paul J. Dovre, *The Cross and the Academy*, 170-78. Besides small formatting changes, it is reprinted verbatim here with permission by The Dovre Center for Faith and Learning, Concordia College, Moorehead, MN; Ernie Simmons, Director.

## Works Cited


Benne, Robert. *Quality with Soul*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.

Christenson, Tom. *The Gift and Task of Lutheran Higher Education*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004.

Dovre, Paul J. *The Cross and the Academy: Occasional Papers and Addresses* 1975-2009. Minneapolis: Lutheran UP, 2011.

Hall, Douglas John. *The Cross in our Context*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.

Hughes, Richard T. *How Christian Faith Can Sustain the Life of the Mind*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.

Hughes, Richard T. and William B. Adrian. *Models of Christian Higher Education*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.

Jodock, Darrell. "Freedom, Humor, and Community: A Lutheran Vision of Higher Education," *Intersections 13* (Winter 2002).

______."The Lutheran Tradition and the Liberal Arts." *Called to Serve: St. Olaf College and the Vocation of a Church Colleged*. Ed. Pamela Schwandt. Northfield, MN: St. Olaf College, 1999.

______. Unpublished lectures. Thrivent Fellows Leadership Development Program, 2002-2005.

Luther, Martin. "The Christian in Society." *Luther's Works* (American Edition), Vol. 45. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1962.

Simmons, Ernest L. *Lutheran Higher Education: An Introduction for Faculty*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998.


---

# Endtimes

Dave Hill

There will come a day, a last perfect day
When an unblemished Sun makes the cool Ocean roll,
And the great sea beasts cast their perfect white spray
For the very last time with untroubled soul.

It is our conviction that something remain,
Engendering life when our time has passed:
The Sea, the Life-Giver, the clouds and the rain,
Making forms ever new and the drama recast.

For each frail mortal and each questing mind
Stands to the Ocean as foam to the wave.
Before it is scattered, it longs that it find
The pulse of the Deep at the edge of the grave.

When the Sun shall expand, and the great Ocean dies,
When the blues become black and greens become red,
Let it die full of Life! Let its murmurs and sighs
Give the drama a meaning. Let it not, Lord, die dead.


DAVE HILL *is a Professor of Philosophy at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.*

DARRELL JODOCK

# Gift and Calling: A Lutheran Perspective on Higher Education[1]

Were you to listen to me repeatedly, it would become evident that I care very deeply about the Lutheran identity of the colleges related to the ELCA. I want to describe that identity in such a way that it reflects the best of the tradition but even more that it serves the colleges well, serves society well, and serves the church well. I think the case for higher education based on Lutheran principles can be compelling—compelling because these principles correspond so clearly with the best of what a college or university aspires to be.

Why do I care so much about it? I admit that one reason is what it has meant in my own life. I say, "admit," because it would be possible for such reasoning to devolve into sheer nostalgia—not wanting to give up on something that was valuable in another era without regard for its value today. Why do I care? Another reason is its value for others—what I have seen it mean for countless students and graduates over the years. But more important than either of these is what I think an identity built on this tradition has to offer to society. Nothing that this tradition does is completely distinctive, but it mixes the ingredients in a distinctive way to produce a formative college-wide discourse about community service and leadership, about faith and learning, about intellectual caution and moral courage, about rootedness and openness, about suffering and hope, about freedom and responsibility, and about creatureliness and the presence of the divine.

Let us begin with the question: What makes a college Lutheran? Is it the number of students who belong to that denomination? Or the number of faculty who are active in Lutheran congregations? Or the number and size of contributions that come from the Lutheran church and/or Lutheran sources? Without discounting the potential importance of any of these, I'd like to suggest that what makes a university Lutheran is the prominence of Lutheran principles in its mission statement and the degree to which its programs, its decisions, and the priorities of its faculty and staff are informed by those principles.

These principles may come to expression in a variety of ways. Because each school has its own history, its own type of student body, its own regional setting, the vocabulary used may vary. What I want to do here is to discuss ideas bestowed on us by the tradition and explore how they can inform the mission of a university or college. That is, I'm not suggesting language for a mission statement, but identifying underlying ideas.

My remarks will have four sections. Three will identify such underlying ideas, and the fourth will discuss their implications for higher education. Throughout the article I will try to convey these undergirding ideas in non-traditional terminology. I ask your patience because there will be quite a lot to be said before we reach the application to higher education.

## Humans as Gifted

The most basic of these underlying ideas is that we are gifted. Our existence, our abilities, our possessions, our relationship with God—all these are gifts that we have received. I have tried on occasion to think of one thing about who I am that is not a gift. Whenever I have done this, I have failed to find one.

DARRELL JODOCK *is the Drell and Adeline Bernhardson Distinguished Professor of Religion, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota.*

Consider some of the gifts in my own life. There was, for example, parental influence that taught me how to work and how to manage time (in the spring and the fall, I went to school three days a week and worked on my parents' farm three days a week. I knew I had to keep my grades up if I were to continue to do that, so I got done in three days what others had five to finish). There was parental influence that valued learning. (For one thing, my father had quit school in the tenth grade, and I heard him talking others into staying in school, for another he valued ideas and talked about them, for yet another my mother would sit with us and listen to us recite our lessons before we went to sleep. By the way, going to school for seven years after college was a puzzle to some of the neighbors. They would ask my father, "What is he going to be when he is done with school?" My father's favorite reply was "An old man!!") There was parental influence that taught me how to manage money. There was modeling—numerous parental examples of community involvement and frequent conversations about communal responsibility. There was parental mentoring—asking challenging questions and giving me the freedom to figure out my own answers. There were dedicated and encouraging elementary teachers and caring high school teachers. There was an unusually rich array of college professors who inspired and challenged and functioned as role models. There was a Danforth Foundation that opened the doors to a profession that was not yet on my radar screen and provided vocational as well as financial support for six years of graduate school. There have been mentors galore from neighbors who cared about me when I was a child, throughout my school years and into my adult life. Whatever I know about Judaism, for example, came from the generosity and patience of a rabbi who answered question after question. My pastor while I was in grade school and high school was an educated and wise man who modeled a kind of piety and theology that never needed to be undone, no matter how far my education has progressed. There were the people who built and sustained the educational institutions I attended. There were the people who contributed in so many ways to the quality of life in the communities where I have lived. The list can go on and on and on. If any of us is inclined to take credit for something one has done, I challenge that person to think more deeply. *Why* were you able to do that? In the answer, we discover a deeper giftedness.

> "If any of us is inclined to take credit for something one has done, I challenge that person to think more deeply. Why were you able to do that? In the answer, we discover a deeper giftedness."

Acknowledging that we are gifted is contrary to any notion of entitlement, so commonplace in our society, and it is contrary to any notion that the goal of life is to bring it under our own control. By definition, we cannot control the generosity of another. We can only respond to it.

*Responses to this Giftedness*

First, acknowledging giftedness leads to wonder, awe, and gratitude. Though these are not words that Luther himself used, I think they capture much of what he had to say about human life. Wonder is a stance toward the universe. That *anything* exists and that you and I exist are reasons for wonder. The intricacy and the majesty and the beauty of the universe are all sources of wonder. That there is benevolence in the universe is amazing. The length of time that it took before life emerged and the exactitude of the conditions necessary in order for conscious life to appear (explicit in the anthropic principle) are amazing. The presence both of regularity and novelty in the universe is an occasion for wonder, as is the self-creating character of the universe that these make possible.

Second, acknowledging giftedness leads to a sense of humor. I mean by a "sense of humor" not taking something too seriously. That is, if our status in the universe does not depend on us but on the gifts that we have received, then nothing we can control is of ultimate seriousness. Yes, we have work to do, but one does not need to take one's status in society too seriously. One does not need to take one's reputation or one's moral achievements, or even one's own theology too seriously. The result is a sense of humor about oneself and others and even those things that matter most in life.

Third, acknowledging giftedness leads to service and the ability to respond to others. If my status as a human being were to depend on my own accomplishments, then life would be pretty grim. Every failure would be a catastrophe. I would be on a treadmill with a need for one success after another, and every new situation would be a threat. My energy would be focused inward on myself. But if I acknowledge my giftedness, I am free to listen and free to become absorbed in the needs of others.

The word the Lutheran tradition gives to this other-directedness is vocation or calling. Every person is called to serve the larger community. Whatever a person's occupation, this is his or her vocation.

*Giftedness calls forth Wisdom*

In order to serve well, a human being needs wisdom. What I mean by wisdom is the capacity to understand how human beings work. Wisdom is not just the possession of knowledge but the good judgment how to use it. Wisdom understands what makes for a fully human life. It understands what effect a possible action that I contemplate will have on another human. It understands how communities function—how they can be influenced in such a way as to enhance the quality of life for their members. Giftedness opens the door to service. In order to serve effectively, such wisdom is important.

Martin Luther put a lot of confidence in wisdom. In the scriptures he found some general principles of behavior, but he produced no detailed list of do's and don'ts. He placed his confidence instead in human wisdom and recommended that we use it to figure out how to serve our neighbors and the community. Unlike his contemporary, John Calvin, he found no blueprint in the scriptures for how to organize a government and what laws to put in place. Here too he appealed to wisdom. Humans were to use it to decide how to govern and what laws to enact—wisdom regarding what would benefit this particular community in this particular situation. Moreover, he did not want rulers just to apply laws; he recommended that they use their wisdom so that their enforcement was neither too strict nor too lenient.

If I may anticipate section four, the goal for any educational endeavor based on a Lutheran outlook is to enhance wisdom. Wisdom is, of course, not the same as learning. An unlearned person can exhibit a great deal of wisdom. And learned people can be, as my father was wont to call them, "educated fools." But, everything being equal, education enhances wisdom. Luther put it this way, as he argued in favor of the creation of schools in his own day for both young women and young men:

> If children were instructed and trained in schools [as opposed to being trained only by their parents—a practice that would achieve a certain "outward respectability" but underneath leave them "nothing but the same old blockheads"], or wherever learned and well-trained schoolmasters and schoolmistresses were available to teach the languages, the other arts, and history, they would then hear of the doings and sayings of the entire world, and how things went with various cities, kingdoms, princes, men, and women. Thus, they could in a short time set before themselves as in a mirror the character, life, counsels, and purposes—successful and unsuccessful—of the whole world from the beginning; on the basis of which they could then draw the proper inferences and in the fear of God take their own place in the stream of human events. In addition, they could gain from history the knowledge and understanding of what to seek and what to avoid in this outward life, and be able to advise and direct others accordingly. ("To the Councilmen" 368-69).

Knowing "what to seek and what to avoid"—that's wisdom. Luther expects it to come from education. Being able to "advise and direct others accordingly"—that's leadership, and Luther expects it, too, to come from education.

So far I have not been identifying the source of our giftedness. Looked at in one way, it can have multiple sources—other human beings, various institutions, the universe, and so on. But viewed through Lutheran eyes, our giftedness has one source, namely, God. This is explicit in Luther's explanation to each of the three articles of the Apostles Creed, as found in the *Small Catechism*. The idea here is that every human being and every creature who gifts us is a channel or agent of God. In his explanation to the first commandment in the *Large Catechism*, Luther says,

> So, we receive our blessings not from them [neighbors, parents, authorities], but from God through them. Creatures are only the hands, channels, and means through which God bestows all blessings . . . . Therefore, this way of receiving good through God's creatures is not to be disdained, nor are we arrogantly to seek other ways and means than God has commanded, for that would be not receiving our blessings from God but seeking them from ourselves. ("Large Catechism" 368)

This notion that gifts come to us from God through others has a corollary—and this is that God's gifts reach others through us. Not only are others the channels and means whereby we receive gifts, but we are called to be the channels and means whereby gifts reach others. Our giftedness yields a task, a calling.

## A Down to Earth God

We come to a second underlying idea—namely, that the Lutheran tradition affirms a particular kind of God—a God who is down to earth and involved, a God who is at work behind the scenes creating justice for all and fostering human wholeness or peace. Luther appealed to the first chapter of Luke for his vision of God's behind-the-scenes activity. God scatters the proud, brings down the powerful from their thrones, lifts up the lowly, fills the hungry with good things, and send the rich away empty (Luke 1:51-53). This is not a God who causes everything to happen that happens, because much that happens is not God's will. This is a God who struggles with injustice and struggles with human pigheadedness. This

is a God who co-experiences human suffering and even knows the kind of failure that comes when in their freedom humans use their divinely given power for destructive ends. This is a God whose faithfulness is manifest in the regularity of the natural world and whose love is evident in the novelty and freedom of its creatures.

Such a God does not stand above, directing the world, nor does this God micromanage every piece of the world but instead works within it. Everything and anything can be a mask of God's presence and God's activity, and this includes any discipline or area of study.

The presence of such a God provides hope—hope because this is not a God-forsaken world, hope because whatever we do for justice and peace we are not working alone, hope because we are part of a larger story that does not come to an end with a defeat, no matter how significant it may seem to be. It is a hope that can look evil and disappointment in the eye and still go on. As Yitz Greenberg has said, hope is a dream with the discipline to bring it into being—a discipline that extends over lifetimes and generations and even centuries. In one of my first-term seminars, we studied some new religious movements. One of those is Jonestown. Many of you will remember the shocking news of 900 plus persons committing suicide in the jungles of Guyana. One question is what went wrong. I think the most central factor was a loss of any sense of transcendence. Most of the participants were persons who had experienced the worst of American society and had willingly cut their ties with it. They could not go back. Their only hope was this one community. The same was true of their leader, Jim Jones. Neither he nor they had any sense of being part of a larger movement. When they were told this one community was in danger, hope disappeared, and death seemed the only alternative. The presence of hope is the antidote to such a fate.

The ultimate goal is to mend the world—to borrow a phrase from the Jewish tradition—so that (using biblical imagery) the lion can lie down with the lamb, swords can be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, every tear be wiped away, and everyone have God's instruction written in their hearts. For the world to be mended, humans need to participate, because in their freedom they can either foster or undermine the achievement of this goal. Our task is to be "created co-creators" (to use a phrase borrowed from Phil Hefner)—"created," meaning "not God" and "co-creators," meaning we too have responsibility for the care of the world.

### The Two Ways of God and Lutheranism's Third Path

The third underlying idea is a distinction between two modes of God's activity. God is active in all of creation, creating the conditions for life to exist, and God is at the same time active in bringing people to faith. The first mode of activity aims at justice and at the human dignity of all, and it works through social structures that may at times be coercive. For example, it may require the threat of a ticket to keep me from disregarding the stop sign and harming someone in another car, or it may take the threat of arrest to keep someone from lining his or her own pockets at the expense of another. Here God may do an "alien work" involving restraint and coercion. The second mode of activity aims at restoring a God-human relationship. It utilizes love and mercy and forgiveness and aims at transforming individuals and never involves coercion. If this distinction between two modes of divine activity is collapsed, then confusion reigns in society. And if the distinction is made into a separation, then there is no check on totalitarianism. Again to anticipate section four, if the distinction is abandoned, the primary role of the college or university related to a church becomes propagating the faith. But if the distinction is maintained, then it has two

"...a college can be both rooted and inclusive, rooted in the Lutheran tradition and yet inclusive of others."

overlapping purposes that remain in tension with one another: one is to prepare wise, engaged leaders ready to make service to the larger community their priority. The other is to hold up the importance of religion and to provide opportunities for faith to be deepened and to come to maturity. If the distinction is maintained, then a college can be both rooted and inclusive, rooted in the Lutheran tradition and yet inclusive of others.

I have sometimes talked about being both rooted and inclusive as a "third path."[2] What I mean by that is that there are two "default positions" readily available in American society for institutions with religious roots. The first default position is the sectarian. It conceives of an institution as an enclave, a place set apart where people of one religious persuasion can gather. Such an enclave can be very useful in forming identity and in providing mutual support. But it is cut off from the larger society. The second default position is non-sectarian. It aims to include within itself the full range of diversity that exists in the surrounding culture. Rather than an enclave it is a microcosm that mirrors society. This position has advantages as well, because it offers such easy access. People can cross the line from the outside to the inside without noticing much difference. But here too there is a cost. The cost is the loss of rootedness, a loss of depth, because the expectation is for each

group to weaken or suspend its loyalties so as not to be obtrusive. The "third path," the one I find consistent with a Lutheran outlook, is both rooted and inclusive. This approach digs deep roots and draws nourishment and inspiration from a religious tradition, but it does so in such a way as to stay engaged with the larger society, to be welcoming of diversity, and to take seriously inter-religious dialogue.

### Implications for Higher Education

So, what does this all mean for education? Allow me a series of observations.

*First*, since the heart of religion is wonder, awe, and gratitude rather than a particular set of beliefs, this sense of giftedness operates on a different plane than does learning. Not only is there no direct conflict between religion and learning, but much of our learning grows out of wonder and circles around to reinforce it.

Consider science. John Polkinghorne, a theoretical physicist, says the following:

> Like every worthwhile activity, science has its weary routine and the frustrations that come from lines of inquiry that eventually prove fruitless. At the end of the day, the wastepaper basket of a theoretical physicist is likely to contain a lot of crumpled pieces of paper. Why then do we do it? The payoff for all our labor is the sense of wonder at the beautiful order revealed through our investigation.... There is a profound character to the structure revealed, which often greatly exceeds our puny prior expectations. (Polkinghorne 42)

If Polkinghorne is right, wonder is a motivating factor for a scientist. One way this comes to expression is in the weight placed on elegance as a criterion in mathematics and in science.

Consider artistic creation. Much of it grows out of a wonder and an awe that is not expressible in words—or alternatively out of a reflection on the human condition in light of such wonder and awe. Think of great painting and sculpture. Think of great music. Think of dance. Think even of great poetry and literature, which may use words but use them to express what cannot be said directly.

If A.N. Whitehead was correct, then all beauty—beauty in literature and music, elegance in science and mathematics, beauty in religion and philosophy—is a harmony of novelty and order. It is an endeavor to express and encompass both the regularity and the freedom exhibited by life in this universe. It may be more or less intense, depending on how much diversity is included in the harmony. The quest for more intense forms of beauty is one expression of wonder, and this quest is at work in higher education and in religion.

Consider worship as an expression of wonder, awe, and gratitude, utilizing symbols and music and art and architecture and poetry and storytelling and dance to foster memory and hope and to foster a sense of one's place in a mysterious but strangely benevolent universe.

Or consider the importance of wonder for ethics. If I wonder at the inexhaustible depth of another person, I am not likely to abuse that person. If I wonder at the intricacy and complexity of an ancient forest, I am not likely to destroy that forest or to value it only as a source of lumber and economic benefit. An important component in morality is wonder at the connectedness of everything that is. In the end, I cannot harm another person or another part of the created world without also harming myself.

So our first observation is this: wonder, awe, and gratitude are basic to inspired learning and are in turn reinforced by the best learning.

*Second*, a college or university built on a sense of giftedness has a purpose—fostering wisdom for the good of the community as a whole. We have already discussed this point, so let me simply add a comment or two. The conviction of an institution that follows the "third path" is that one finds in the best of the Lutheran, Christian, biblical tradition insights that foster genuine wisdom—insights that contradict the more superficial messages rampant in our society. And the conviction is that affirming one form of rootedness does not close off access to other forms of depth. A community nourished by Lutheran, Christian, biblical roots is also able to draw upon other avenues of depth. I have never met anyone who is engaged in inter-religious dialogue who has not felt as if that experience opened up new, hitherto unnoticed, dimensions of his or her own tradition. Far from destroying the rootedness, inter-religious dialogue enriches and deepens it. Access to other traditions comes not through denying one's own roots but through affirming them and then allowing them to be enriched and challenged.

*Third*, a college or university built on a sense of giftedness exhibits freedom of inquiry because nothing is above critique and because the most careful thought is needed in order to serve people well. Not only does it exhibit freedom of inquiry, but that freedom itself has a purpose. The purpose is to discover truth, in the clear understanding that other people will be well served only if the truth is available. In other words, freedom of inquiry is but one side of the coin; on the other side one finds the pursuit of excellence, the pursuit of truth—and both sides are for the sake of the larger community.

Underlying this point is a basic observation—namely that ideas do matter. A good idea benefits others. A bad idea causes

injury. It was, after all, an idea of manifest destiny that prompted settlers to push the Native Americans off their land, and much later it was a better idea of racial integration that created the civil rights movement. It was an idea of collectivization that caused Stalin to starve to death a million or more Ukrainian peasants during the 1930s. An idea regarding the size of government has caused forty-some million Americans to be without health insurance. Ideas have consequences. Freedom of inquiry is not an end in itself but a way of guaranteeing that ideas are subject to the kind of scrutiny they need in order to serve others.

*Fourth*, a college or university built on a sense of giftedness requires a community of discourse. Were the college oriented only to transmitting knowledge, a community would not be essential, but if the goal is wisdom, then community deliberation is crucial. If wisdom has to do with understanding other humans and understanding communities, then wisdom can be found only in human interaction and in careful reflection about such human interaction. It can be found only as persons ponder together what the learning of their disciplines means when applied to the achievement of dignity, justice, and peace. It can be found only as people with multiple insights and perspectives deliberate together.

Those of us in academia often hear a great deal about the value of diversity, and, yes, it is important, but it is not very important in itself. What is important is engagement with each other. Indeed, one of the unexpected things that Sharon Parks and her colleagues discovered in their study of a hundred persons deeply engaged in community service was the presence of a "common thread" mentioned by everyone. "The single most important pattern we have found in the lives of people committed to the common good is what we have come to call *a constructive, enlarging engagement with the other*" (Daloz et al. 54, 63). The divide, which made someone else "other," could be ethnic or racial. It could be a disability or mental illness or imprisonment or poverty. "But whatever its particular form, the encounter [which often was not a single experience] challenged some earlier boundary and opened the way to a larger sense of self and world" (65-66). As a result, the people in this study had come to feel a connection with the other; "they felt that the 'other' experienced some fundamental aspect of life in the same way as they did" (67). For a college or a university the key is to establish the kind of community in which a constructive, enlarging *engagement* with the other can occur (either on or off campus—e.g. a good study abroad program can put students and faculty in contact with the harsh reality of third-world life) and its deliberations be enhanced as a result.

*Fifth*, a college or university community built on a sense of giftedness will be cautious about its intellectual claims, while at the same time valuing those claims as potential contributions to human well being. It may proclaim those ideas widely and loudly but always with a sense that they can be challenged and never with a sense that they have exhausted the subject. Such a college or university will be wary of ideologies and receptive to paradoxes that point beyond ideas to something still deeper, still more complex, and still not well understood.

*Sixth*, a college or university built on a sense of giftedness will set aside time for worship, that is, for a celebration of wonder, awe, and gratitude and a vision for the future—for a celebration of those things that give vitality to the rest of the enterprise and are easily overlooked if not identified and celebrated.

*Seventh*, a college or university built on a sense of giftedness will itself have a vocation. It will find ways to serve the larger community, whether through the use of its facilities or through the expertise of its faculty and staff or through the involvement of its students.

"…a college or university built on a sense of giftedness will set aside time for worship, that is, for a celebration of wonder, awe, and gratitude and a vision for the future."

In this regard I would like to call attention to one sort of service that is important for a church-related college today. It is not the only one that is important or even the most important, but it is one that needs attention. I am thinking about the need in the church for help with deepening the vocation of believers in their daily lives. In order for church members to be equipped to live their faith seven days a week, they need both instruction in the Christian tradition and assistance negotiating the decisions they need to make at the intersections of their lives—the intersection of faith and business, the intersection of faith and politics, the intersection of faith and family life, the intersection of faith and ecology, and so on. No other institution has the resources that a church-related university has for helping congregations support and clarify the role of Christians in the world. As I say, this is only one form of community service, but is one that the church desperately needs. It needs this, because there are so many centripetal forces that keep pulling congregations inward, just as there are so many centripetal forces that pull colleges inward. The church needs this help because the social location of the church has changed so that clergy can no longer be its public spokespersons. Everything depends now on

the credibility and witness of ordinary Christians in their daily lives. They are the face of the church—the only one most people ever see. I hold up this one form of community service, not only because it is needed, but also because it can strengthen the ties between the church and its colleges. If our colleges become valuable resources for the adults in congregations, as well as for their children, the church-college connection will remain vibrant and healthy. Only then will colleges enjoy a partnership in which church and college benefit each other. The well-known Methodist theologian, John Cobb, gave a talk three or four years ago entitled, "Can the Church Think Again?" A positive answer depends on finding ways for the church colleges and the church to work together.

*Eighth*, a college or university built on a sense of giftedness will be free to explore the religious implications of everything it does. Unlike secular institutions, such colleges and universities can explore the importance of religion and of inter-religious understanding in a setting where that exploration is intimately related to learning and to informed ethical reflection. Given the level of discourse about religion that occurs in public life (most notably on television radio, but even in that form of public life found in our universities), society needs this kind of exploration.

*Ninth*, a college or university built on a sense of giftedness will foster liberal learning—that is, learning oriented toward the freedom of its members—freedom *from* prejudice and ignorance and bigotry and freedom *for* courageous moral action and service to the larger community. What matters for the liberal arts is not just learning but the affect of that learning on the lives of learners. The latter needs to be explored with as much seriousness as the former. Why? Because the job of church-related higher education is to foster wisdom and wise community service, not just learning.

*Tenth*, a college or university built on a sense of giftedness will empower for service—by providing chances to speak, to write, to serve, and to lead. It will supply models and opportunities and a support community for practicing service and practicing leadership.

## Conclusion

We live in a "cut flower" civilization, running on borrowed social patterns and borrowed values with little ability to nourish or replenish them. Just as our society uses up and discards natural resources, so it keeps using up social capital without replenishing it. This happens in part because our civilization is cut off from depth. It is cut off, first of all, from the past and the future. The Enlightenment, so formative in our national consciousness, broke ties with the past, portraying it as a time of ignorance and superstition and portraying contemporary experience as the source of insight and progress. It produced optimism, but such optimism was ended by a mushroom-shaped cloud and an ecological crisis, which closed off the future. The possibility of self-destruction has made the future so frightening that people avoid thinking about it and seem unable to comprehend the changes that need to be made. So we are trapped in the present. Secondly, our civilization is cut off from depth because it has unraveled strong community ties and considered religious faith subjective and private and therefore irrelevant.

I'd like to suggest that a college or university that builds on the Lutheran tradition has access to depth—both the depth of the past stretching off through generations all the way back to Moses and beyond and the depth of a giftedness that makes room for mystery and for wonder, awe, and gratitude. It also has a vision for the future—a vision of justice and wholeness. Any such college or university with access to depth has a source of nourishment for its intellectual pursuit, a source of nourishment for its vocational discernment, and a source of nourishment for its ethical convictions. What better way is there to serve the larger society than by confronting its shallowness and modeling a constructive alternative?

## Endnotes

1. This paper was initially given at the Kenneth H. Sauer Luther Symposium, Wittenberg University, Oct. 24, 2005.

2 See, for example, Darrell Jodock, "Vocation of the Lutheran College and Religious Diversity," *Intersections 33* (Spring 2011), 5-6.

## Works Cited


Daloz, Laurent A., Cheryl H. Keen, James P. Keen, and Sharon D. Parks. *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World.* Boston: Beacon, 1996.

Luther, Martin. "To the Councilmen of the All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools." *Luther's Works*, Vol. 45. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1962. 347-78.

______ . "The Large Catechism." *The Book of Concord*. Ed. Theodore Tappert. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1959. 337-56.

Polkinghorne, John. *Serious Talk: Science and Religion in Dialogue.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995.

JOSEPH McDONALD

# Lutheran Colleges, the Lutheran Tradition, and the Future of Service-Learning

Service-learning's rise to prominence over the last twenty years, which I will refer to as the service-learning movement, has been quite a phenomenon. At colleges all over the country centers for service-learning have blossomed and a tremendous number of courses using service-learning now appear on class schedules. There are national and international organizations devoted to its promotion and to research about its effectiveness, and multiple conferences convene each year to discuss latest practices and model programs. I began using service-learning in my sociology courses in the early 1990s and have worked with service-learning centers at three different colleges. Currently I direct service-learning efforts at Newberry College. It is time to admit, however, that during my years of using and administering it, I have been decidedly ambivalent about its effectiveness and its role in higher education. I have felt that it claims too much and that it claims too little, that it is a transformative pedagogy and that it is just another teaching method, that it prepares students to struggle for social change and that it induces them to conform to the status quo. I have finally reached the conclusion that all of these are correct, that service-learning is paradoxical and contradictory. While this conclusion may be disturbing to some advocates and practitioners, I think that it is good news for Lutheran schools. The Lutheran tradition enables us to embrace the paradoxes and contradictions and use them productively to make our service-learning programs more robust, meaningful, and effective. This paper is my explanation of how I have arrived at these conclusions. I will begin with some history.

## History of Service Learning

### *From a Grass Roots Social Movement…*

The modern-day pioneers of the service-learning movement were people who cut their teeth in the 1960s and so, not surprisingly, came at this notion of combining higher education and community involvement from political perspectives. (A note here, in case it is needed: service-learning is the use of a community service activity as a teaching and learning component of an academic class.) They looked at communities and saw need for change—in race relations, inequality, support for war, gender disparities, or, a little later, the environment. And they looked at colleges and saw the need for educational practices that engage students in social issues and prepare them to address solutions. The community involvement they envisioned meant more than serving up soup or tutoring a child for an hour. They were advocates of empowering the poor and the dispossessed to organize for change and bring about a different distribution of opportunities, resources, and justice. Theirs was a political agenda that was also about making higher education itself more democratic, more about promoting active, assertive citizenship. So, service-learning, in its root formulation, was much more than sending students out into the community to give some help to community agencies while also learning a little more about history or psychology or whatever course it was attached to. It was about the nature of democracy, the proper role of higher education, and social change in the community. I think of Jane Addams and Hull House and its relationship with John Dewey at the

JOSEPH McDONALD *is Director of the Values Based Learning Program at Newberry College, Newberry, South Carolina.*

University of Chicago as a more accurate vision of the pioneers of the 1960s than most service-learning offices that are now a part of so many colleges.

The history of the attempts of these pioneers to find a home for their efforts on campuses is told nicely in the book, *Service- Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on Its Origins, Practice, and Future* by Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (1999). The book contains interviews with 33 pioneers: how they became interested; how they viewed themselves, the community, and the university; how they defined the purposes of service-learning. The interviews are filled with references to social change, justice, and empowerment. Nadinne Cruz, as one example, describes her campus role: "Consistently from then until now, I have seen myself mostly as a political activist whose paid job happens to be by choice in the academy. I see myself as having figured out a niche in academic spaces in order to continue work I started in 1963 as a student volunteer caught up in social change. I see the academy as an organizing base from which to do social change work" (85).

Until the 1980s, service-learning users and advocates were small in number and marginal on their campuses (Stanton et al.: 5) and thus the political and ideological foundations of its birth were not an issue. As long as individual faculty members were driving service-learning, their political motives were confined to individual classes and projects. And even then, practitioners usually were sufficiently committed to the idea of education for democracy that they did not try to force political positions on students. Although they may have hoped that by raising what for most students were alternative ways of viewing issues and by talking in terms of justice they would convince students of the truth as they saw it, most probably realized what most of us realize now—that political proselytizing in class does not automatically produce converts. At any rate, as long as service-learning was what a professor did in her classes, it did not attract a lot of attention (although some of the people interviewed did say their jobs were threatened because of it).

### *...To Institutionalization, Pedagogy, and Citizenship*

By the late 1980s the use of service-learning was expanding dramatically and thus colleges began to create programs and campus offices that took service-learning to a new level of visibility and scrutiny. National organizations (such as Campus Compact) and national and regional conferences sprouted. Campus programs began to fashion mission statements and definitions and best practices. The service-learning movement began bidding for acceptance as a legitimate addition to the higher education establishment and a place at the table. Now, its basic character *was* an issue for discussion. Just what is the vision and the purpose of service-learning? What is its contribution to the university and its relationship to the curriculum? Should it be the vision of the founders or something else? As we saw, the pioneers defined the movement in terms of socio-political ends, as a vehicle for social change and grassroots democracy, preparing students to be advocates with an emphasis on the poor and disposed. They used the language of empowerment and social justice. Secondarily, they also understood that the community work should be connected to higher education by integrating it into classes so that the tools and knowledge of history, psychology, physics, or any other field could illuminate their work for social change.

"The pioneers defined the movement in terms of socio-political ends, as a vehicle for social change and grassroots democracy, preparing students to be advocates with an emphasis on the poor and disposed."

However, with rising use, greater visibility, and institutionalization this founding vision came under scrutiny. Edward Zlotkowski, a prominent service-learning advocate, looked at the state of service-learning and its socio-political emphasis in a 1995 article entitled, "Does Service-Learning Have a Future?" In his words: "As a phenomenon tied to the social and political upheavals of the past 30 years, the movement has, quite often, revealed a fundamental—if not determinant—ideological bias" (124). The result, he says, is that "the movement has remained far less visible—and attractive—to the higher education community than is necessary for its own survival" (126). Unless the movement pays more attention to academic concerns, it likely "can never be more than a fringe phenomenon" (128). In other words, continuing to focus on the socio-political dimension of service-learning would preclude its development into an accepted campus program. Thus, the movement needed to make some decisions.

In looking at the movement today we can say that it has over the last 15 years turned decidedly away from the socio-political emphasis of the pioneers. The classroom learning goal (or pedagogical goal) has become the primary focus of service-learning; it is now first and foremost a form of experiential education, a teaching strategy that uses the community as a kind of text for students to gain deeper knowledge and experience about what they are studying in their classes. In this form it has secured a place at the academic table; few colleges do not have some kind

of service-learning program. Secondarily it is used as a way to bring up citizenship. Empowerment, social change, and justice are less frequently touted.

### The Paradoxical Vision of Service-Learning

Nevertheless, there is still strong support for the earlier socio-political character of service-learning and there are particular programs that use that language and have that emphasis. Thus there are competing visions at work in the movement which causes dissension, sometimes expressed in conferences and essays, about the character of service-learning and its *primary* goal. These competing visions also reveal a paradox for the movement. Using service-learning for its socio-political purpose challenges the status quo; it raises questions about current levels of inequality, the distribution of resources and opportunities, discrimination, and the consequences of poverty. On the other hand, using service-learning as an experiential pedagogy to complement classroom learning places it in the mainstream—as another part of an education that gives students a competitive advantage in income, wealth, and status that comes from a college degree and thus, in the end, preserves the status quo. Thus service-learning has two goals which are in conflict. To state this in a different way, the socio-political goal is partly a critique of dominance and inequality, both in the community *and* within the academy; it is confrontational and critical. The pedagogical goal, on the other hand, is complementary and affirmative, promoting the use of experiential education and greater prominence for service within the existing conditions of academy and community. What does this mean for the movement? Can it promote democratic social change while it is also a pedagogy that focuses on transmission of course knowledge (which as I argued above tends to support the status quo)? And, how important is this debate about the goals of service-learning? Ira Harkavy, historian and the Director of University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships, believes that if service-learning is oriented chiefly toward disciplinary learning then "the service-learning movement will lose its way and result in the inevitable reduction of service-learning to just another technique, method, or field" (5). If this happens the potential of service-learning to be a driving force for more democratic campuses, communities, and nation is lost. In fact, he believes service-learning is our best hope for achieving this goal and that if it fails we are left with little defense against encroaching vocational-technical education in our public universities and even our liberal arts colleges. For him then the stakes are high and the future direction of service-learning is crucial.

Some may want to object and point out that the pedagogical goal of service-learning also contains a sub-goal of teaching about citizenship that can promote elements of the socio-political agenda about social change. However, perhaps as a result of the paradox described above or perhaps as a strategy to further consolidate its legitimacy, we find that as service-learning has evolved more decidedly toward the pedagogical goal, citizenship education as expressed in the socio-political (and democracy-building) goal of the founders has changed shape. Where the founders stressed citizen action for justice and social change, the pedagogical side of service-learning today focuses on citizenship as volunteering, voting, and being a good community member. So, even the citizenship goal has undergone a change as service-learning has focused more on classroom pedagogy and the transmission of disciplinary knowledge. For service-learning today, the goal, whether in connecting the service to the classroom or in education for citizenship, is about learning to take your place in the community. Given the attempt of the service-learning movement for the last 20 years to gain credibility, this may have been inevitable; to be accepted it had to be tamed, to have broad appeal beyond the kinds of people who are cited as its pioneers in the 1960s and 1970s. So, a movement that started out challenging the social structure of communities and campuses has evolved into one that has taken its place within these structures.

"A movement that started out challenging the social structure of communities and campuses has evolved into one that has taken its place within these structures."

Let's look at how this has happened by examining the particular characteristics of the practice of service-learning. What happens in a class that integrates a service-learning component? At the risk of simplification and generalization, I suggest that the following characteristics are typical: we send students into the community for short periods of time that conform to our academic calendar; we send them out to 'serve others'; they tutor, work in soup kitchens and homeless shelters; they engage in various reflection activities (journals, reflection papers, class discussions) about what they have learned, how they felt, how they changed. They are graded for this learning and (hopefully) how the learning connected to course content. Is there anything wrong with these features? Perhaps. For example, some have pointed out that sending students into communities for such short periods of time may reinforce stereotypes and misunderstandings that they sometimes bring with them to

the service experience. Others suggest that sending students out to 'do service' emphasizes a one-way relationship—more privileged college students serving less privileged others which separates server from served instead of promoting understanding, collaboration, and community. Some point to the typical types of service—tutoring, serving at soup kitchen or homeless shelters—as individual charity rather than collective solutions, as teaching students that charity is a synonym of service, thus ignoring issues of justice and social change. Some decry the lack of depth in the reflection, that it focuses on description and feelings more than analysis and explanation, that it fails to incorporate big questions and any real recognition of the tensions raised by the issues of "short-time service" done in "service to others," and that it focuses on individual charity rather than collective solutions. Some note that we do not evaluate what students accomplish for their agency or the people served, that we have no rubric for assessing social change or growing political awareness, outcomes that were part of the original socio-political goal of service-learning (we can imagine the animated argument that would ensue following proposals to grade on the basis of these outcomes). Finally, some surveys find that students who engage in direct service often are dismissive of politics and political action; the service becomes an alternative to politics (see Battistoni 5). So, all in all, there are questions about what kinds of lessons are being imparted through an activity that the pioneers thought would promote social change and political activism. Again, paradoxically, the movement started by pioneers may be helping to maintain what the pioneers were trying to change. By trying so hard to become accepted it altered itself into a mainstream phenomenon.

## Service-Learning in the Lutheran Context

Time now to bring Lutherans into the picture. We have situated the service-learning movement in the context of its pioneers, its internal debates about mission, the paradox of serving the status quo while resting on socio-political foundations, and weaknesses of its current use. While the debates, paradox, and weaknesses of current practice may be problems for the movement in general, my conclusion is that Lutheran higher education can use these productively to support service-learning as a pedagogy while reclaiming the socio-political spirit and concerns of the pioneers. The particular characteristics of the Lutheran tradition and of Lutheran higher education support such a hope. Why do I say this? Because the Lutheran tradition has some strengths that can help us deal with the issues raised above. Let's look at these.

### *Lutherans Know Robust Reflection*

First, the Lutheran tradition supports the kind of serious reflection that is essential for dealing with all of the issues raised. In the very first issue of *Intersections*, Mark Schwehn writes that our Lutheran colleges are "voices in a conversation" and that the principal aim of our colleges, and presumably the conversation, is "the pursuit of the truth of matters" (5). The liberal learning of our Lutheran colleges cultivates "arts and skills of analysis, criticism, and interpretation. It frees students and teachers from unexamined tyrannies that hold dominion over their souls and minds" (7). And he states that "an education that addresses simultaneously the mind and the spirit is the most meaningful" (8). His description of Lutheran education is, of course, echoed in the ELCA document *Our Calling in Education* (2007) which describes Lutheran colleges as places that "nurture an ongoing dialogue between the claims of the Christian faith and the claims of the many academic disciplines as well as explore issues at the crossroads of life" in a setting of academic freedom (30). In Schwehn's and the ELCA's comments we have a prescription for robust reflection: about service-learning's mission, paradoxical use, and classroom use. For example, whereas reflection is often weak and little more than descriptive in many service-learning applications, the Lutheran tradition nurtures a deeper and wider-ranging immersion in matters of meaning, of values, of faith claims and counter claims. Schwehn's comments affirm the Lutheran tradition that sees whole campuses as communities of discourse, so that the search for meaning, for the "truth of matters," is done in interaction with multiple others. Thus, reflection in service-learning is a part of the larger community of discourse and not just peculiar to service-learning. A community of discourse enables powerful service-learning reflection; service-learning reflection augments the community of discourse. Reflection is thus deeply ingrained in the academic culture of a Lutheran college and service-leaning users do not have to cultivate it each time they use service-learning. Jodock describes the powerful presence of the Lutheran tradition in supporting the development of this community of discourse:

> The Lutheran tradition's understanding of freedom, its incarnational principle, and its principle of authority, considered together, suggest that a college founded in that tradition must be a community, a community whose members are engaged with each other and with transcendence. Such mutual engagement involves them in discourse, and such discourse equips them to lead. Participation in the search for truth is open to all member of the community, and no external authority determines in advance the outcome of its engagement with the truth. (31)

And a final thought on reflection as part of the Lutheran college: as part of a community of discourse, reflection brings together the campus community with the larger community outside the college, enlarging the community of discourse. A problem that plagues typical service-learning—"we" from the college serving "them" in the community—should have a different outcome in Lutheran schools: all of us, together, work to figure things out, to search for the truth, to apply knowledge for the good of our neighbors, to learn from this application, to learn in discourse with others whom we may be serving and with whom we may be serving. This is a powerful and broad reflection-environment for service-learning, one not matched by most campuses.

*Lutherans Know Service and Vocation*

Second, Luther's concept of Christian vocation (along with the Lutheran tradition of dialogue between competing claims as part of the search for truth) helps us recapture the spirit of service that characterized the pioneers but that has diminished with the growing use of service-learning as part of mainstream pedagogy. As we use service-learning as pedagogy and benefit from the knowledge gained from reflection on the service in relation to course content, we never forget that the service itself (as Christian vocation) is part of the Lutheran tradition. Service becomes a way to learn how to apply what we learn to being civically engaged, that is, to learn the role of citizen. However, as I stated earlier, the reflection that does occur now in most service-learning uses is often limited to thoughts about volunteering and implies that the role of citizen is a separate role from others we play. Lutherans, through Christian vocation, understand that service to others is not a separate role but is infused in all roles, is transcendent; we do not serve others or serve the community in our spare time, or when there is a disaster, or just because we are part of a service group or service-learning class. Instead we are called, in all we do, to so serve, as human beings living in interdependency with others. As Darrell Jodock has said about serving the community, embracing the Lutheran tradition "offers a more profound understanding of what such service entails than can be found in dance marathons or other less self-involving charitable projects (as beneficial as they may also be)" (31). In others words, service, in the Lutheran conception, becomes connected to the larger socio-political picture and is not limited to narrow conceptions of citizens as volunteers (or just voters). Thus a service-learning that focuses on the use of service as a learning tool for course content can also focus on the big picture: the Lutheran tradition does not differentiate between service-learning as pedagogy and service-learning as socio-political analysis. And thus the paradox of service-learning simultaneously supporting and challenging the status quo, which weakened reflection about civic engagement as the movement gained popularity and which now represents a potential weakening of the entire movement, is for Lutherans a learning opportunity. For Lutherans paradoxes can be negotiated; they do not have to be solved or ignored. More below about Lutherans and paradox.

One additional comment about this second point: in an essay that was also part of the first edition of *Intersections*, Professor Martha Heck writes about dual tasks in a Lutheran education in a way that further explains why the Lutheran tradition can strengthen students' ability to deal with the service part of service-learning in a deeper way. A Lutheran education, she writes, should address mind and spirit (as Schwehn stated), include theological and philosophical and moral reflection, and be a search for truth. She also states that "doing must be given a higher priority" (10), that while we prod students to search for the truth and feed the spirit "it may be more important for them to struggle against what is not true" (10) and for our colleges to include "moral reflection in a dialectic with moral action" (12). She adds that Luther's view of vocation is a "call to moral responsibility" (11) and requires "the moral clarification of how we act out our commitment to those who have less or who are different" (11). Her remarks constitute a clear definition of the value of service-learning and converge seamlessly with the potential for service-learning expressed by the pioneers and in Harkavy's critique. Her call for moral reflection in a dialectic with moral action identifies our Lutheran colleges as places where service-learning can realize the potential that Harkavy believes is being squandered in general by the movement. And, it connects us to the energy, power, and scope of the pioneers.

> "Lutherans, through Christian vocation, understand that service to others is not a separate role but is infused in all roles."

*Lutherans Know Tension and Paradox*

Third, Lutherans do not shy away from tension and paradox. As stated above, these do not need to be avoided or solved. As Jodock, echoing Heck's message, notes, the Lutheran tradition "lives with paradoxes and unresolved tensions" (33). Our use of service-learning can be richer because of this trait. For example, some practitioners use the disorienting dilemmas that Mezirow has written about as a framework for reflection. These dilemmas

occur when students struggle with the service experience, finding that it contradicts their understanding of the subject matter learned in class or their own assumptions. In my experiences and observations, moving reflection to really meaningful levels where paradox and dilemmas animate the dialogue is very difficult and many practitioners are unable to do it.

However, the Lutheran tradition can help us engender in students a more sophisticated understanding of how the search for truth requires peeling back layers of simplistic assumptions many bring with them to college and enables them to understand that something can be, at the same time, good and bad, faith-affirming and faith-threatening, worthy and unworthy. Far from avoiding such situations, the Lutheran tradition encourages us to face them and show students the power of paradox in dealing with the complexities of the world and of their own service-learning experiences. If students reach the conclusion that service to others seems to bring little change, scant justice, and brief comfort to those we serve, this becomes a learning moment, a time for us to ask tough questions about actions that produce unintended results. Though concluding that our service does not accomplish what we might hope is not good news, it is worse if we fail to see it. The Lutheran tradition enables us to learn and grow through the tensions, paradoxes, and disorienting dilemmas that characterize the service-learning movement. One of the richest paradoxes may be that the more students struggle with the disorienting dilemmas and their encounters with the marginalized and disenfranchised, the less certain they will feel that their classroom education alone equips them to deal with them on a personal and societal level. This uncertainty may make students more receptive to community-based knowledge and knowledge based in the experiences of people being served; it may lead to a realization that not all knowledge comes from books and experts. Understanding this is part of the power of service-learning in the Lutheran tradition.

## Conclusion

The Lutheran tradition of reflection, of Christian vocation, and of negotiating paradox supports and nourishes the use of service-learning. At Lutheran schools, service-learning can be both pedagogy and a socio-political program, a contradiction for the service-learning movement as a whole but for Lutherans an opportunity. As pedagogy, it can have a disciplinary focus that makes it a valuable teaching tool, providing experiential learning to complement classroom instruction (while connecting to notions of service and citizenship that are part of most mission statements). But it can and should also be about democracy and socio-political thinking and action. And I think that a service-learning program that embraces both goals, holding them in tension, can become more than a service-learning program. It can become the center of gravity for a campus where the weight of becoming a real discourse community can be borne, where big questions, controversies, and thus real learning can take place. Parker Palmer, in a 2010 essay in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, listed some of the 'habits of the heart' necessary for the preservation of democratic institutions and for sustaining a discourse community—listening to others, seeking out opposing viewpoints, appreciation of ambiguity, exploration of contradictions and paradox—and how these habits could lead to students knowing their own voice and having the confidence and courage to use it. Service-learning in Lutheran schools can nurture these 'habits of the heart.' More than a program it can be the campus movement that Ira Harkavy seeks and the pioneers imagined.

## Works Cited

Battistoni, Richard. *Civic Engagement Across the Curriculum*. Providence RI: Campus Compact, 2002.

Harkavy, Ira. "Service-Learning and the Development of Democratic Universities, Democratic Schools, and Democratic Good Societies in the 21st Century." Eds. Marshall Welch and Shelley Billig. *New Perspectives in Service-Learning: Research to Advance the Field*. Greenwich, CN: Information Age, 2004. 3-22.

Heck, Martha. "Whose Future? or Social Justice and the Lutheran Academy?" *Intersections* 1 (Summer 1996): 10-12.

Jodock, Darrell. "The Lutheran Tradition and the Liberal Arts College: How Are They Related?" *Called to Serve: St. Olaf and the Vocation of a Church College*. Eds. Pamela Schwandt , Gary De Krey, and L. DeAne Lagerquist. Northfield, MN: St. Olaf College, 1999. 13-34

Mezirow, Jack. "Transformation Theory of Adult Learning." *In Defense of the Lifeworld: Critical Perspectives of Adult Learning*. Ed. Michael R. Welton. New York: State University of New York, 1995. 39-70.

Palmer, Parker. "Humility, Chutzpah, and the Future of Democracy." *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* 29 Aug. 2010. Accessed 10 Jan. 2012, http://academiclife.com/article/Humility-Chutzpahthe/124129/

Schwehn, Mark. "The Future of Lutheran Higher Education. *Intersections* 1 (Summer 1996): 3-9.

Stanton, Timothy K., Dwight E. Giles, and Nadinne Cruz. *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on Its Origins, Practice, and Future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Task Force on Education, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. "Our Calling in Education," Aug. 10, 2007. Accessed 10 Jan. 2012, http://archive.elca.org/socialstatements/education/pdf/Our_Calling_in_Education_Web_Version.pdf

Zlotkowski, Edward. "Does Service-Learning Have a Future?" *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* (Fall 1995): 123-33.

STEPHAN K. TURNBULL

# Dreaming God's Dream: A Sermon on Isaiah 56: 1-2, 6-8[1]

Do you have dreams? Dreams for your kids, if you have any? Dreams for your career? The next book you want to write, the problem you want to solve, or the influence you'd like to have? Do you have dreams for your church? For the next hill to climb as an organization? For how you'd like to reach your community with the Gospel? Or maybe other achievements like finishing a marathon or traveling the world or visiting your ancestral home?

Oddly enough, I've always been light on dreams. I'm a pretty driven person, but I have mostly kept my distance from dreams. I'm naturally uneasy with emotion, and not wanting to be disappointed, I think I taught myself not to dream. In fact, I've had to re-learn the art of dreaming as I've gotten older. And probably my greatest teacher in this regard has been the Bible itself. The longer I live as a Christian, the longer I read the Bible, the more opportunity I have to teach the Bible, the more I find myself drawn to dream the dreams that drive the plot of the story that is the Bible.

One articulation of that dream comes from the passage that has been assigned for our worship tonight. The passage is from Isaiah 56: 1-2, 6-8:

> This is what YAHWEH says:
> "Maintain justice
> and do what is right,
> for my salvation is close at hand
> and my righteousness will soon be revealed.
> Blessed are those who do this—
> who hold it fast,
> those who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it,
> and keep their hands from doing any evil.
> And foreigners who bind themselves to YAHWEH
> to minister to him,
> to love the name of YAHWEH,
> and to be his servants,
> all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
> and who hold fast to my covenant—
> these I will bring to my holy mountain
> and give them joy in my house of prayer.
> Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
> will be accepted on my altar;
> for my house will be called
> a house of prayer for all nations."
> YAHWEH the Sovereign one declares—
> he who gathers the exiles of Israel:
> "I will gather still others to them
> besides those already gathered."

There's something beautiful in that dream, isn't there? All the nations of the world, scattered in their rebellion, addicted to their worship of things that are not god, returning to the Living God in worship and obedience. All the peoples of the world, alienated from God by the power of sin, by their injustice and idolatry, are reconciled to God. And God is worshipped in His house, a house of prayer for all nations—a verse which, by the way, was quoted by Jesus and is inscribed in steel on stone on the rear of the sanctuary where I lead worship each Sunday, in case I needed a reminder of God's dream.

There's something beautiful in that dream. God is in his heaven, as my grandmother used to say, and all is right with the world. You could almost say that it's Edenic, if it weren't at the same time so Sinaitic. But table that thought for a minute, if you can, and see what's even more basic here. Isaiah is dreaming God's dream. And God is dreaming of getting his world back. God is dreaming of bringing his creatures home again after their sojourn under the power of sin, after their adultery with false

---

STEPHAN K. TURNBULL *is Senior Pastor at First Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, Minnesota.*

gods of a bewildering variety. God wants his world back, and that is a dream worth dreaming.

I wish I could say that whatever dreams I do have were composed of that dream. But I've got piddly little dreams. Maybe you do, too. I'm a parish pastor now. My heart is constantly pulled toward, tempted by, shadow dreams of a shadow mission. Dreams of balanced budgets that even get met. Dreams of a stable, peaceful congregation. Dreams of going 6 months without navigating some kind of personnel issue.

Many of you are vocational academics. Your heart is analogously tempted. Ah, to read a whole batch of midterm papers written in clear English, arguing a single thesis coherently, citing works properly and plagiarizing none. It's almost too much to hope. Deans who lead clearly, copious opportunity for intellectually stimulating collegial conversations, students whom we can disabuse of one sort of fundamentalism or another. Visions of sugarplums dancing in our heads.

Small dreams. Components of God's dream, perhaps, but often masquerading as the dream itself.

We've got a lot of company, though. Long generations of worshipers of our God have similarly downsized their versions of God's dream to fit within the shrunken parameters of fallen imaginations. Kings of roughly Isaiah's day (no matter which Isaiah you wish to locate chronologically) dreamed of peace in Zion and figured that political alliances with nearby pagan powers would do the trick. That's sure to make the dream come true, don't you think? Pharisees, Essenes, Zealots, and Sadducees of Jesus' day worshiped Yahweh and dreamed of the coming of His Israelite Kingdom and each pursued it according to different strategies: nomistic, separatist, revolutionary, or political-assimilationist. One of those things would have to make the dream come true, right? I guess I'm not the only one who's been a pretty lousy dreamer.

Good thing God's dream wasn't waiting on ours. Who could have dreamed that God getting His world back, that the *birth* of God's reconciled new creation would come when the dying of the old one would be taken up into the dying of God's Messiah? Who could have imagined that seeing this dream become reality would happen in waking up, when Jesus the Messiah woke up again from the dead, the first fruits of the new creation, early in the morning in the garden on the first day of the new week.

I want to wake up into that dream. I want to dream that dream when I lie down and when I rise up. I want to live my life watching that dream come true, knowing that it will come true without my work or even my praying for it. But I also want to participate in the work of seeing it happen in my life.

And you and I are teachers, preachers, and church leaders. We have the unearned and unsurpassed privilege of articulating this dream to others. We have the opportunity to teach them to read the Biblical story of God's mission, of God's unswerving commitment to his post-Eden dream of getting His world back in Christ.

And never in the history of this dream has the need for its telling been any higher. The stakes for us are sky high. The world around us is literally dying to hear this story. They need to hear it on our lips, and they need us to multiply the lips who tell it.

I was talking recently to my colleague who is the director of student ministries at our church, and we were talking about the latest research on youth culture and student-age folks who are walking away from the church and from the God we worship. And he said more and more students are saying that the church just isn't offering them anything that's worth their time, their energy, and their life. The church hasn't offered them a big enough story, an inspiring story for their lives to be caught up into. Now is that just their natural *opinio legis* striving for their own significance or is it a hunger for the God who made them? Or is it a case of the former perverting the latter? Whatever it is, it needs the Gospel.

They have perceived that the church has offered them a gospel that's smaller than the hopelessness and chaos that they see and experience all around them. They've heard a gospel that says, "Believe in Jesus. Wait to die. Go to Heaven." That's not quite the same dream. Yet, we have all preached sermons that small, born of dreams that small. And I think that there is something in their hearts that intuits that that dream is too small to be biblical.

The dying of this world is not news. Most of our world is aware of its degenerative condition. Postmodern hopelessness is alive and well—merely taking the place of modern hopelessness. What is news however is that this dying has been foundationally transformed by the cross. It has been detoured from a road that leads from cross to grave to dead end onto a road that leads from cross to grave to new creation, to the restoration of all things, to the reconciling of the world to God in Christ, in the One who makes all things new.

That is the dream of God, the dream that Isaiah sensed and spoke, but also the dream that God has been dreaming and pursuing even before Sinai shaped the prophetic imagination and the Torah played its custodial role. It is the dream of God that drives the plot of the story of the entire Biblical canon, revolving around the cross, coming true at Easter's dawn, and inviting us to participate in the work of its fruition. And it is the dream into which the world will wake up as we tell it and teach others to the same.

## Endnotes

1 This sermon was preached Aug. 12, 2008, at the "Savvy with Substance" Convocation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN.

DARRELL JODOCK

# Fumbling Toward Integrity:

## A Sermon on Mark 8:34-38, Pastor Kaj Munk, and Father Maximilian Kolbe[1]

This weekend, in our discussions of bio-ethics, we are struggling with many important questions. What does it mean to live as created co-creators? In a fallen world, what does it mean to live in the image of God? What priorities should govern the life of a believer?

Today, following the suggestion of our worship leader, Chaplain Andrew Weisner, we remember two martyrs—one from Poland, Father Maximilian Kolbe, and the other from Denmark, Pastor Kaj Munk. Both were in their 40s when they died at the hands of the Nazis.

Why recall their lives? To honor them? Doing so may be appropriate, but it will not be our purpose. In order to imitate them? Not really, because the circumstances of their lives are not identical to ours. Why then? We recall their lives so they can serve as a mirror. As we look carefully at the priorities of their lives, we can see more clearly the priorities actually at work in our own.

There are, to be sure, religious fanatics who are impetuous and bold. But most of us in this room are not fanatics. The operating priorities in our lives are more likely caution and deliberation. Such qualities are not themselves a problem, but they can so easily be tangled with others. Then caution becomes timidity, and a lack of information becomes an excuse for inaction.

To all of us Maximilian Kolbe is particularly relevant because he was a theologian. What interested him most was the renewal of faith among the people of his nation. He got involved in religious publishing both in Poland and in Japan and started a religious community in Poland that eventually grew to 800. When war came in 1939, his community took in 2,000 refugees, two-thirds of whom were Jewish. As you may recall, the Nazis attacked more than Poland's army. They attacked the nation itself, killing or incarcerating the political and intellectual and religious leaders. In 1941 Father Kolbe was offered German citizenship, refused, was arrested, and imprisoned. In May he was sent to Auschwitz. At this early stage only about 10% of those in Auschwitz were Jews, but the Jews and the priests received the worst treatment. He was beaten by the guards, at one point so badly that he was left for dead. But the calm and non-vindictive way he handled his harsh treatment made an impression on his fellow inmates.

The Nazis practiced "collective retaliation." To discourage opposition, they executed ten prisoners for every one who escaped. Late in July a prisoner managed to get out. Every remaining inmate was made to stand in roll call for hours. Then officer Fritsch started to select the ten who would die. When he reached prisoner #5659 the man broke down and wailed "my poor wife, my poor children." At that point prisoner #16670 stepped forward. "What do you want?" asked Fritsch. "I want to take his place." "Why do you want to do that?" Kolbe chose his words carefully, citing the Nazi principle that "the sick and weak must be liquidated" and continuing, "I am an old man, sir [he was 47!], and good for nothing. My life is no longer any use to anyone." "Who are you?" "A priest." To his assistant, Fritsch said, "Scratch out 5659 and write in 16670" (Royal 194).[2] As a result prisoner #5659 would survive and live for another fifty years. But what awaited Kolbe and the nine others was the starvation bunker—an underground cell with no food and no water. It was a dreadful way to die. The only attention they received

DARRELL JODOCK *is the Drell and Adeline Bernhardson Distinguished Professor of Religion, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota.*

was one visit a day to remove the dead. Kolbe invited the men to pray and sing hymns. At the end of two weeks, he was still alive. After an injection with carbonic acid, he died on August 14, 1941, the day before I was born.

Would we step forward to take another's place? If not, why not? What are the priorities at work in our lives? A need for approval? A paralyzing fear? The impression that what we are doing is too important to be interrupted? A lack of confidence in Jesus' promise that the person who loses his life for the sake of the gospel will save it?

Those who have studied the rescuers (that is, those who risked their lives to hide or assist the victims of Nazi racism) have identified several characteristics not found in the bystanders.[3] Father Kolbe shared those characteristics. The first is a sense of agency—the conviction that one can do something to make a difference, no matter how small. What about us? Do we see ourselves as victims or as persons who can make a difference? The second characteristic is moral independence—the capacity to make a moral judgment and undertake a moral act that is out of step with the surrounding society. What about us? When is the last time we stifled an ethical reservation or recommendation when no one else said anything? The third feature is a universalistic sense of caring—caring for people in need, whatever their nationality or religion. Where does our caring reach its limits? At the edge of the responsible elements of society? At the edge of our country? At the edge of its legal residents? At the edge of "the West"? At the edge of Christianity? The fourth characteristic is a history of care-giving. In no case was the decision to risk one's life to hide another the first instance of care-giving. The best predictor of our response in a potential crisis is what we are doing now. The question is: what sort of pattern of care-giving is evident in our lives?

Kaj Munk was the pastor of a village church and a playwright. These were not two callings but one. "In all his plays," one observer has commented, "he was continuously preaching" (Keigwin 18). His plays were so popular that he considered resigning from his pastoral responsibilities to devote himself to writing, but the members of his parish valued his ministry so much that they petitioned for him to stay and arranged for an assistant to take over some of his tasks.

In his early years he flirted with an admiration for strong men. But Mussolini's campaign in Ethiopia and Hitler's actions against the Jews ended that. After the Nazis took control of Denmark in 1940 and as he encouraged resistance, the themes with which he had wrestled throughout his adulthood came into play—themes such as truth and falsehood, faith and unbelief, courage and caution.

In a sermon on "Christ and John the Baptist" that was later printed and circulated, he said:

> There are people who believe that truth can be salted down. That it can be pickled, to be taken from the jar and used when convenient.
>
> They are mistaken. Truth can not be pickled. It is found only in living form, and it must be used the moment it appears. If not used then it dies and decays, and it soon becomes destructive. The most dangerous of all lies is dead truth." (Munk 11)

When I read this I sense that truth is a way of life, and I wonder: How often have I said—"Not now. There'll be a more opportune time to live or speak the truth." But there never is.

When discussing John's decision to denounce Herod's adultery, Munk continues:

> His majesty, naturally, did not argue with John. He ordered handcuffs. Thus it has always been. Truth has the word at its command; error has sword and chains. And error continues to delude itself, even to believe it is the stronger of the two. (14)

One wonders about our obsession with success—whether in sports or the use of our military power or our own careers. Why do we exhibit such a fascination with power rather than with moral strength?

Once in prison, John is left alone while Herod continues just as he had before. Munk comments:

> The people manifested their cowardice by tamely leaving their hero to languish in prison—as reward for his faithfulness. They cheered the truth lustily so long as there was no price to pay. But when the truth became costly they were discreetly silent—and left John to pay the price. (15)

This seems to describe an almost-universal affliction in our society—a readiness to cheer the truth so long as it is not costly. Let someone else figure out how to end the bloodshed in Iraq. Let someone else reduce $CO_2$ without expecting us to curtail our use of non-renewal energy. We object to paying higher gasoline taxes, but then wring our hands when a bridge goes down. We endorse justice but ignore the pay scale for housekeepers or secretaries in our own institutions.

In the fall of 1943, the Nazis begin their unsuccessful endeavor to round up the Danish Jews. Munk, along with others, helped create the resistance movement that eventually saved 97% of Denmark's Jews. Several of his sermons were circulated underground. Late in 1943 Munk was arrested and then released. In January, on orders from Berlin, he was

picked up, shot through the head, and dumped by the side of the road. Forty-five years of age, he left a widow and five young children.

In another of his sermons, "God and Caesar," preached before the Nazi roundup, he described what he thought should happen:

> It has been made our duty as Christians to render unto Caesar the things that belong to him, and we have obeyed the command….
>
> The Emperor may ask much of us: our money, our labor, our health, the best years of our youth, our lives.
>
> But if he demanded that we should call black white, tyranny liberty, violence justice, we should answer: "It is written, Thou shalt have no other gods but me."…
>
> Let him come with his lions and his tigers, with his gallows and his stakes…. We conquer by our death. We must obey God before man. (34-35)

Calling violence justice. Does that sound familiar in a nation that for years has fought what, by traditional Christian standards, is an unjust war? Calling tyranny liberty—do these words also sound familiar in a nation fudging the definition of torture? As we look into the mirror of Munk's life, we ask: what about the lived priorities of our lives? Have we behaved as if truth could be pickled and stored for another day? Have we stepped back while the faithful endured the consequences of questioning Herod? Have we objected when violence is called justice and tyranny is called liberty? How, I ask myself, could I ever possibly become a martyr if I routinely opt out so early in the process—in the face of even minimal opposition? My seminary roommate was martyred a dozen years after he returned to his native Ethiopia. Was that entirely a matter of differing circumstances, I wonder, or did authentic Christian priorities show forth more clearly in his life, making him all the more dangerous?

The lives of Kolbe and Munk are like mirrors held up for our own self-examination.

Our Gospel text also holds up a mirror. Just prior to it comes the turning point in Mark's Gospel—Jesus' discussion with his disciples. "Who do people say that I am?" Some say John the Baptist. Some Elijah. Some one of the prophets. "But who do you say that I am?" "You are the Messiah." Each of these answers has a different implication for the priorities of a follower. As Jesus sets his face to go to Jerusalem, he begins to point out the priorities for those who call him Messiah.

In today's text, he says to the crowds—yes, to the crowds, because this message is for all his followers, not just the few: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross, and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it" (Mark 8:34-38). All those who expected a *political* Messiah would be disappointed. Following Jesus was not to be a life of triumph but a life of suffering. All those who expected a *spiritual* Messiah would be disappointed. Following Jesus was not to be a life of quiet peace and tranquility. All those who expected an *avenging* Messiah would be disappointed. Following Jesus will not offer an escape from every tragedy or conflict on this side of the eschaton.

Like the lives of Kolbe and Munk, this text is a mirror. It is an invitation to consider our own priorities and our own expectations.

But there is an underlying question: why should we bother to look into the mirror? Why trouble ourselves? Why not follow the all-too-common American pattern of allowing ourselves to be distracted? Because nestled in this text is also a promise: that a full and meaningful life is a gift—a gift from the one who set his face to go to Jerusalem. Every time we taste the inner joy of living the truth, of standing up for another, of finding a way to serve, of bypassing our fretful preoccupation with lesser things, we know—yes, we know—that our calling is the avenue to a richer, fuller life.

The promise to Kolbe, the promise to Munk, and the promise to you is that in all of this fumbling toward integrity you will surely find life—not because of your searching but because *it is finding you.* Abundant life is being given to you. And that gift frees you to risk all. For such a splendid gift, let us rejoice and be glad. Amen.

## Endnotes

1 This sermon was delivered at the ELCA Convocation of Teaching Theologians, Lenoir-Rhyne College, Aug. 13, 2007.

2 Robert Royal is here drawing upon Serguis C. Lorit, *The Last Days of Maximilian Kolbe* (New York: New City Press, 1988), 16-20.

3 See, for example, Samuel Oliner and Pearl Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1988) and Nechama Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986).

## Works Cited

Keigwin, R. P. "Introduction" to Kaj Munk, *Five Plays*. New York: The American Scandinavian Foundation, 1964.

Munk, Kaj. *Four Sermons.* Trans. John M. Jensen. Blair, NE: Lutheran Publishing House, 1944.

Royal, Robert. *The Catholic Martyrs of the Twentieth Century.* New York: Crossroad, 2000.

# intersections

Augustana College
639 38th Street
Rock Island, IL 61201-2296

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
**PAID**
Rock Island, IL
Permit No. 23

## ELCA College & Universities

Augsburg College | MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
Augustana College | ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS
Augustana College | SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA
Bethany College | LINDSBORG, KANSAS
California Lutheran University | THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA
Capital University | COLUMBUS, OHIO
Carthage College | KENOSHA, WISCONSIN
Concordia College | MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA
Finlandia University | HANCOCK, MICHIGAN
Gettysburg College | GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
Grand View College | DES MOINES, IOWA
Gustavus Adolphus College | ST. PETER, MINNESOTA
Lenoir-Rhyne College | HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA
Luther College | DECORAH, IOWA
Midland Lutheran College | FREMONT, NEBRASKA
Muhlenberg College | ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
Newberry College | NEWBERRY, SOUTH CAROLINA
Pacific Lutheran University | TACOMA, WASHINGTON
Roanoke College | SALEM, VIRGINIA
St. Olaf College | NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
Susquehanna University | SELINSGROVE, PENNSYLVANIA
Texas Lutheran University | SEGUIN, TEXAS
Thiel College | GREENVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA
Wagner College | STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK
Wartburg College | WAVERLY, IOWA
Wittenberg University | SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.