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## Letters to the Editor

John L. Vaswig

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conceptually. At least for me on my faith journey, this reality has been an infinite help keeping the faith, even if I have sometimes found my belief at an impasse.

Perhaps you are confident in your faith and knowledge of God—perhaps you are not. But no matter who you are, take heart in what we do here today. Seek to experience truth in what you see,

hear, and say. For at its best, this communal experience in which we are engaged has the power to bring us a glimpse of God and of the kingdom. And as we now see in a mirror only dimly, worship has the power to bring us a glimpse of our salvation. Amen.

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*Erik Haaland is a senior at St. Olaf College.*

## LETTERS

### To the Editor:

I am a Lutheran pastor out here in the Pacific northwest struggling to articulate the Gospel in meaningful ways while not abandoning the core convictions we live by. I am also on the Board of Regents at Pacific Lutheran University, where I graduated in religion and history some nineteen years ago. I am writing to you out of a sense of perplexity regarding the current assumptions in the church related institutions. I recently read in the *Christian Century*, a review of a book by James Tunstead Burtchaell titled *The Dying Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches*. Apparently Burtchaell feels we are merely paying lip service to the gospel in the so-called Christian university. He articulates what he believes has been a whole hearted selling out of Christian core assumptions in deference to a watered down, less than offensive language of character building and lives of service for our fellow human beings. As a regent at PLU, I believe I understand some of the perplexities of appealing to a wider spectrum of people under the

guise of openness and tolerance. I wonder, however, if we have lost, amidst the generic language of service and leadership, a compelling word of hope and forgiveness in Jesus Christ? Have we, in an effort to become tolerant, abandoned our core convictions because of the offense? I write to you with these thoughts because I was impressed with the article you wrote for the *Intersections* journal on some of these very issues. I am neither a Christian without sensitivity to the cultural assumptions, nor do I consider myself among the ranks of those who are seemingly appalled when the Gospel is rightly proclaimed and articulated. I write as one convinced of the need for openness and necessary contemplation of varying perspectives and persuasions. Simultaneously, I am concerned for a differentiation between a liberal arts school unaffiliated with the church and one, that at least in theory, still yearns for the connection. I thank you for your consideration in this vital matter.

Pastor John L. Vaswig  
Spokane, Washington