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# CONTACT

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## Conference 2000: "The Challenge of Christian Higher Education in the 21st Century"

As announced in the fall 1998 issue of Contact, IAPCHE has scheduled an **international conference**, primarily for its institutional membership, for August 12-16, 2000 on the campus of Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa, USA. The theme for the conference is "The Challenge of Christian Higher Education in the 21st Century."

In recent years the conferences sponsored by IAPCHE have been **regional conferences**, primarily for individual scholars to focus on particular academic disciplines, special issues and problems, regional concerns, and topics that are relevant to particular persons or institutions. Just this year, 1999, there will be three such conferences: in Nigeria, Costa Rica, and Russia. Not since 1987, in Lusaka, Zambia, has there been an international conference.

While all of the IAPCHE conferences have been important, none is or will be more important than the one scheduled for the year 2000—for at least two reasons, in addition to the fact that 2000 marks the beginning of a new millennium. First, the **conference theme** is significant, because it will confront us with issues that all face as individuals and as institutions of Christian higher education. Second, 2000 is the year that will mark the end of a **three-year interim** during which we have been evaluating the Association, its mission, its significance, and the commitment of the membership to its basis, purpose, and program. In light of this evaluation the conference will be called upon to recommend to the board whether or not the Association should continue. If the decision is made to continue—and we certainly hope and pray that that will be the decision—further decisions will be required regarding such matters as constitution, organization, finances, membership, program, and long-range plans.

As concerns **long-range plans**, assuming a positive decision regarding continuation, the Executive Committee has already begun consideration of what it envisions the Association could/should be by the year 2010. Doing so, it has come to the following tentative conclusions:

A. Membership

1. Institutional: aim to have 50 members in 2005 and 70 members in 2010.
2. Individual: aim to have 500 members in 2005 and 1000 members in 2010.
3. Associate: aim to have annual contributions of \$50,000 by 2005 and \$100,000 by 2010.
4. Affiliate: aim to have 20 members in 2005 and 40 members in 2010.

B. Organization

1. Regions: presently there are five regions (Europe, Oceania/Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America), which can and will be adjusted in terms of membership development.
2. Regional Committees: to be organized in a way that is appropriate to the needs and challenges of each particular region.
3. International Board:
  - a. to be constituted of two members from each region; to meet every five years.
  - b. to be elected by the members in each region, with one of the two members designated as the regional coordinator.

C. Programs

1. Conferences
  - a. Regional&mdash;one conference per year in each region.
  - b. International  
¥ for individual members every five years  
¥ for institutional members every ten years
2. Publications
  - a. Contact, quarterly newsletter
  - b. International academic journal, published biannually
  - c. Conference proceedings

D. Projects/Initiatives - provide assistance with such as

1. 1. ICS bibliography and delivery system
2. 2. International Reformed University
3. 3. Channeling of special needs/requests

Obviously these plans and proposals, which are now in the process of development, may look much different when finally presented. But they do indicate the discussions taking place in the Executive Committee, and some of the issues that will be placed before the participants of the Conference 2000.

After polling the institutional members, it was decided to ask Dordt College to host the conference. We are pleased that the administration of Dordt has willingly accepted this request. A hosting committee, chaired by Dr. John C. Vanderstelt (also chairman of the IAPCHE Executive Committee), has been working for some time already to arrange a conference that will, we trust, prepare IAPCHE to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

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## Editorial--Keeping the Light Alive

### EDITORIAL

In this issue of CONTACT, in the section titled "Books," the reader will find a reference to and a brief description of *The Dying of the Light*, by James Tunstead Burtchaell (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, /Cambridge, U.K. 1998). The subtitle, *The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches*, describes precisely what this book is about, and clearly implies that the Light died in "countless colleges and universities . . . Founded under some sort of Christian patronage" because they no longer claimed or acknowledged "any relationship with a church or denomination"

(p. ix).

The book has been well-received, also in evangelical academic circles. It has been recommended as a "must read" for presidents, administrative cabinets, and boards of colleges and universities concerned to maintain the Christian distinctiveness of their campuses and their academic programs. In my judgment, these recommendations are well-deserved. The *Dying of the Light* should be read and taken seriously for what the author intended it to be, i.e., a "supplement" (p. ix) to what George Marsden wrote in *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford University Press, New York/Oxford, 1994).

At the same time, however, I have some reservations about what Burtchaell has written. Let me explain. The *Dying of the Light* is a very large book of 868 pages. Therefore, Burtchaell suggests that "most readers will and probably should begin with stories of the denomination they know best, and then browse through other chapters of special personal interest. Most will want to go to my overview chapter, 'The Story with the Stories,' . . ." (p. xi). Following this suggestion, I began my reading with Chapter 7 "The Evangelicals" and the story about Dordt College -- a college with which I have been associated from its beginning, at which I taught, and which I served for 14 years (1982-1996) as president. Frankly I was surprised, puzzled that the author included Dordt as one of the colleges in which the Light is dying, because I know of no college that is more concerned to maintain its distinctive Christian character and its connection with its founding church community than Dordt College.

It is remarkable what has already been accomplished through this network. For example, it has been used to bring together a working group of those who are interested in the study of the writings of Herman Dooyeweerd. In a number of instances, it has helped Christian colleges and academic associations find people qualified to teach from a biblical perspective in a particular discipline. And it has alerted the membership to specific instances in which they could help one another.

Third, IAPCHE provides its membership with opportunities to **help people** serve the Lord Jesus Christ in an integral way. This, of course, is the stated purpose of all Christian higher education. It is kingdom activity that is designed to prepare people for integral service in the various spheres of life, i.e., for the wide "variety of cultural tasks which require education and scholarship" (IAPCHE Basis Statement). However, as those involved in Christian academic work well know, this purpose is difficult to fulfill and it requires hard, ongoing academic work and activity. Membership in IAPCHE enables us, with academicians throughout the world, to do this hard work together.

The above is a brief response to the question: "How does membership in IAPCHE benefit me?" However, I want to raise another question: "**How does membership in IAPCHE benefit others?**" And I want to address that question especially to those who are already part of a Christian academic community as teachers in a Christian institution of higher education. Your membership in IAPCHE enables you to be of help to individual members teaching in secular institutions and also to those working in developing countries. Indeed, these isolated and needy brothers and sisters have much to contribute; but they obviously need the support and encouragement of the entire world-wide IAPCHE community of scholars and institutions if they, with us, are going to fulfill their academic calling from the Lord.

Allow me to give one example of how we can benefit others. In connection with my work on behalf of IAPCHE, I have had the opportunity to speak at a number of conferences. Invariably I leave those meetings with requests from a number of people asking to be put in contact with Christian scholars in their particular fields to share research and ways in which they can approach their study and teaching from a biblical perspective. I welcome such requests and, in many instances, have been able to bring the appropriate people together in a beneficial working relationship.

To summarize my response to the questions about membership in IAPCHE, we should be part of IAPCHE because **we need each other**, as individuals and institutions—and it's wrong for us to think that we do not need each other! Although IAPCHE is not the only way in which we can respond to that need, it is the best way that I know of. Which is another way of saying that we should be or become members of IAPCHE, not only because of the **benefits we can receive** but also because of the **blessings we can share**. And all of us have so many blessings to share!

J.B. Hulst

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## "Christian Worldview and Scholarship"; Western Africa regional conference, January 10-16, 1999, Mkar, Nigeria

*(Report submitted by Dr. Ponti Venter, a member of Hilltop conference planning committee.)*

The primary aim of the conference was capacity building for the staff of proposed Hilltop University, supporting them in understanding and realizing the essence of Christian higher education in their situation. A secondary aim was spreading the message of the need for free Christian higher education in God's kingdom. Thirdly, it was the intention that the conference should have enough local input that it could be called "co-operative."

The first two aims were realized to a satisfactory extent. Seventeen members of Hilltop's staff participated, as well as a number of persons from other professions, notably pastors of the NKST church, who can carry the message further. Regarding the third objective, some presentations were offered by local persons, but there could have been more. In general the discussions were intense, and local problems rightly dominated them, but at some occasions the discussions wandered far away from the central theme of the conference.

Apart from the local participants, the conference had strong support from speakers from elsewhere. From Potchefstroom University Professor Christopher Rabali, Bennie van der Walt, and Ponti Venter read papers; from Dordt College, Dr. John Kok; from Calvin College, Dr. George Monsma; from the Reformed Ecumenical Council, Rev. James Lont; and from the Friends of Hilltop, Dr. Dirk Vander Steen. All these papers contributed to the high standard of the conference, and the participants should be thanked for their hard work. The keynote address of Dr. John B. Hulst of IAPCHE (who could not be present due to a car accident) was read and was a real inspiration. The paper of Dr. Robert Fortner of Calvin College (who also could not attend) was also read, and contributed to good discussions. We missed the valuable contributions which could have been made by Dr. Godfrey Nguru of the United Theological Seminary at Limuru, Kenya, who was down with serious flu and could not attend.

It was the opinion of the Provost of Hilltop, Dr. Nyiakura, that the publicity campaign was not what it should have been, and that many more persons could have attended. Daily attendance was between 40 and 50 persons. It has also to be accepted that the organizers did not have previous experience of conferences of this size and nature.

The program was densely packed with papers, some more focused on the main theme of the conference, others moving a bit wider. Although these latter sometimes had the effect of leading discussions away from the central theme, they did contribute to showing the "applications" of Christian scholarship, as well as giving opportunities for local problems to surface. The speakers were faced with a difficulty: producing papers of a high academic quality and yet getting through to an audience of which the academic capacities were

unknown. The group discussions indicated that most speakers succeeded.

The conference venue and living quarters were of good quality, yet the circumstances under which the conference took place were not easy. Infrastructure, such as printing and duplicating facilities, were minimal, and the overhead projector did not function well. Due to a lack of water, some other important facilities did not work either.

In general the infrastructure at Hilltop is dilapidated, and upgrading will be needed if Hilltop is to function as a university.

It was not easy for the foreign participants to reach Mkar, since it is far from the larger centers, and the traveling inside Nigeria is neither safe nor comfortable.

Support for institutions like Hilltop is needed, and ought to be continued. It may be necessary to rethink the way in which this support is provided. A conference might reach a high point, but afterwards everything might go back to the old struggles, and the effect may not be what we want it to be. This is not intended to say that conferences should not be held anymore, but rather that it is necessary to determine what functions conferences may fulfill.

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## **"Educating as Christians in the 21st Century" &mdash; Latin America regional conference, January 18-20, 1999, San Jose, Costa Rica**

*(Report submitted by Dr. Sidney Rooy, a member of IAPCHE's Executive Committee and of Latin America conference planning committee)*

Christian university professors from seventeen countries of Latin America discussed and reflected upon their commitment to Jesus Christ and its significance for their respective vocations in San Jose, Costa Rica, from January 18 to 22. In this first ever encounter for our region, 112 educators from most of the disciplines of study listened and dialogued with five main speakers, and sought help from one another in two of the eight workshops offered during the conference. The theme, "Educating as Christians in the 21st Century," served to challenge each and all of the participants to plan and teach their subjects with an integral faith approach.

Both the keynote and the closing speakers, Samuel Escobar and Daniel Schipani, respectively, had written and published the quid of their doctoral dissertations on the pedagogy of Pablo Freire. Both reflected a note of Christian hope as the starting point for defining the meaning of educating as Christians for the new century. Bob Goudzwaard, especially, stressed this theme as he addressed the question of poverty in the third world and elsewhere and the existential challenge that each teacher has to read in the concrete situation of her or his students. How do you teach when those you face in the classroom consider the reality of the declining market for their services, especially in the area of the human sciences, and the effects of present global economic problems? "In the openness to the coming of another Kingdom," he affirmed, "various trees can begin to blossom again."

Literature and the arts provide a window on our present reality. Through the images and symbols which they offer, we can begin to understand the underlying cultural and historical forces with which we have to deal. The three Bible studies led by Irene Foulkes showed how the pedagogical practice of Jesus used the signs and narratives of the common people to challenge them to reflection and change. These same instruments are available to us in the art and literature of our contexts, affirmed Nelly Garcia and José Alcantara in their

lectures, and are essential if we are to be relevant to the times in which we live. Carmen Julia Pagan, from her Afro-American experience, showed us how the multiple cultures of our lands challenge the Christian educator to take seriously each student without discrimination and with deep respect for his/her cultural formation.

The workshops opened windows to several of the disciplines represented by the participants: biotechnology, sustainable economies, communication media and the classroom, art and cultural renovation, counseling in family and social crises, end-of-century philosophical currents, spirituality in the pedagogy of Paul Freire. For in-depth consideration, each met twice in order to identify the issues of concern to the participants and to spend time together searching for meaningful educational approaches in the classroom situation. In this way, each person could choose the two workshops of most interest to his/her field of study.

One exceptional experience was "Re-Creation and Education," a day-long field trip to the humid tropical forest with biologist Rolando Mendoza and his assistants for small group trail work. By bus we traveled first to a coffee farm to observe the dozens of tropical plants surrounding the coffee bushes in an eco-conscious form of conservation and respect for the beauty and self-renewable forces of creation. One hour farther brought us into the heart of the tropical humid forest, where again the awesomeness, the mystery, and the beauty inspired a poet in our group to write a moving and sensitive poem which accompanies the letter to our colleagues who were not able to attend.

During the conference a committee of six with Samuel Escobar as coordinator received copies of the main lectures, the Bible studies and the workshop reports, in order to digest and sort out some of the significant lines of thought. They wrote a two-page letter, whose translation appears elsewhere in this issue of Contact and which is being widely distributed in Latin America in order to communicate to our fellow Protestant university professors some of the concerns that we dealt with in the meetings, and to awake interest in the continuation of the work begun in Costa Rica.

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## **Transfer interrupted!**

conference folders a translated article by John Vanderstelt on the history of IAPCHE, its basis and goals, had been included. On one night he spoke briefly to the gathering, underlining the main purposes and plans for the future. The assembly responded by naming a five-person committee, representative of the following geographical areas of Latin America: Brazil, the Southern Cone, the Andean region, the Caribbean, and Central America with Mexico. Its mandate is to consider the possibility of creating a bulletin of communication, and planning a future meeting, perhaps at the time of the continental gathering of the Latin American Theological Fraternity on September 2-8, 2000. The Fraternity, together with the International Fellowship of Christian Students, co-sponsored the conference.

The morning devotional periods were carefully planned with the use of responsive readings, Latin American poetry, spontaneous participation, and music both from the rich religious tradition and from our own context. One night we bussed delegates to the University of Costa Rica for a theatre performance of "Latinoamericanisima" which portrayed some of the richness of our varied cultures in music, poetry and dance. We closed the week of intensive sharing with a banquet whose prelude was a classical guitar and violin duo by two of Costa Rica's best artists. Spontaneous testimony preceded the closing address and reading of the final document. In typical Latin American style, the program stretched towards midnight with singing, poetry and drama presented by each national group.

On Saturday morning, January 23, nearly all participants left. For the most part, the evaluations they left

behind were enthusiastically positive. The picking up, returning equipment, working out the financial accounts, the letters of gratitude, and the tabulation of the evaluations are still in process. It is now hard to believe that four years of preparations have come to an end. In 1994 and 1995 we mailed questionnaires to selected professors across Latin America to ask for advice and recommendations. We held a meeting of ten regional representatives in Lima, Peru, in May of 1996 to lay the groundwork for the conference which was set for July of 1998. When we needed more time to prepare, both for administrative and financial reasons, the January 1999 date was chosen.

During the day before the conference began, 21 Christian university rectors (presidents) and directors from eight countries met to share their questions and insights into what is a relatively new experience in Latin America. Most were from universities already organized; some were from institutions where attempts are being made to achieve their establishment. Recognition was made of an existing organization of Christian universities called CONDUCE, established in July of 1996. Another meeting of that organization is scheduled for August of this year in Lima, Peru. Its purpose differs from that of IAPCHE in that its concern is the relationship and mutual help which can be given on an institutional level. Most of the Protestant university professors in Latin America teach in state, Catholic and private universities. We made a special effort to reach this group through the San Jose conference while at the same time extending a warm welcome to those from Christian universities.

Several lessons were learned along the way. First, with respect to the choice of meeting place: though we considered both Brazil and Ecuador as hosting lands, Brazil was too costly, and in Ecuador there were insufficient university professors to provide a base from which to work. In Costa Rica there must be a hundred Christian professors, and we were able to organize a small key committee of eight to do the basic planning over a period of 15 months. However, we had many more to help us carry out the project in the last weeks and during the conference.

Second, we gave out travel help to only two groups. In order to assure attendance from Brazil and the Southern Cone countries, where the airline tickets cost a thousand dollars or more, we gave some help to two delegates from each country. Then, to assure that minority groups would be represented, such as Indian, Afro-American or very poor lands, we created a special fund of \$5000. Mostly through diaconal funds, this made possible the participation of some representatives of these groups. We learned that for the other countries, where there was interest the participants paid their own way, or they received help in a few cases from their own institutions.

Third, we confirmed the deep thirst of the educators for fellowship and accompaniment on their pedagogical journey. Many of the professors are relatively alone as Protestants teaching in secular universities. We made our first and strongest appeal to them to attend. One professor of law confessed on the last night how alone he felt in his vocation in Colombia, and urged the group to provide means of continued mutual contact and the continuance of these encounters. In many cases the professors feel alone because their conservative churches do not support their teaching at secular institutions. However, with the organization of a growing number of Christian universities in Latin America we discovered their strong interest also in the kind of opportunity for networking that IAPCHE provides.

Fourth, in Latin America we cannot consider denominational groupings as definitive of interest levels. We have not yet established how many such groups were represented; however, that would give us only an insignificant number. Our concern is to meet the need where it is and in the context in which it arises. So, the basic question does not seem to be, do you teach in a Christian or a secular university? This is clear because until recently Christian universities found it difficult to achieve accreditation, which here must come from the government. Most teachers do educate in secular schools, at least part-time, and now give part of their time to

the newly established and small Christian university. Moreover, most of these new universities offer only two or three fields of study at this moment.

Fifth, IAPCHE was nearly unknown in Latin America. Some individuals have, and others will, become members on the international level. Not many Christian institutions are fully expanded and accredited, but a limited number may seek institutional recognition. Time will tell. There is clearly a favorable disposition toward the organization and its objectives. We must give time for the Spirit of the Lord to lead in the coming months. Some of the participants expressed deep appreciation to IAPCHE for providing this opportunity of encounter. The presence of Bob Goudzwaard as a speaker and workshop advisor, and of John Vanderstelt as the international representative, provided the broader link to the cultures of the West.

Lastly, it is clear that each world region faces the universal problems posed by the forces of globalization, communication, technology and the structural systems being implemented in most of the world. But, it is just as clear that these problems are experienced and viewed differently in the wide cultural and economic disparities that exist in our little world. Thus, each region needs room to respond to these global challenges and to define ways of knowing and action to help them find their way through the maze of conflicts and crises that they face. We know that the long road to the Father's house will be found by all who are faithful and obedient to the Master's will, also in the educational task. Following the instruction of the Word and the guidance of the Spirit, every culture and people do discover what education means in their own context.

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## **"Following Christ/Shaping Our World"; An InterVarsity conference for graduate students, December 29-January 2, 1998-99, Chicago, Illinois, USA**

*(submitted by Jim Skillen, director of the Center for Public Justice)*

This first-of-a-kind conference was really first rate. Organizers expected 750 attendees; 1150 came. Highly diverse in character, the gathering proved to be better than I expected.

Compared to 10 or 20 years ago, InterVarsity is working much harder to come to grips with the deep intellectual challenges Christian students face. The post-modern world no longer allows Christian students to make an easy, comfortable, and uncritical divide between a common "secular" discipline and their Christian calling in Christ. Christian graduate students sense this strongly, especially in the social sciences and humanities, and they want answers.

Plenary speakers, led by the amazing British New Testament scholar N.T. (Tom) Wright, were excellent and encouraging. Wright offered four highly compact and dense summaries of his books on Jesus and the New Testament era. Before the first day was out, all his books had been purchased. Hundreds were disappointed not to get copies.

Beyond plenary sessions, the conference was organized in blocks to focus on personal callings, academic challenges, and prayerful fellowship. And, as one would expect, late evenings (for those young enough--not me) there were musical concerts and other special events.

What brought me to the event was an invitation from the organizers to serve as the "Dean" of the "Government, Public Policy, and Development" track. This was one of 14 different academic concentrations students could choose from. My "associate deans"--Jeff Barneson of Harvard and Dan Philpott of the

University of California at Santa Barbara--did all the hard work of organizing each track session (about 2 hours on each of 5 days). Approximately 65 people joined our track, which included discussions of political philosophy, urban community development, the policy issues of welfare reform and gay rights, and much more. My final presentation sought to establish the relationship between a Christian understanding of political life and the biblical theological studies that Tom Wright was delivering.

Other tracks were headed by such well-known scholars as Cal DeWitt, Phillip Johnson, David Lyle Jeffrey, Bill Dyrness, Paul Vitz, and many others.

Tapes are available of many plenary sessions. One of the most impressive to me was offered by Jeremy Begbie, the British musician/theologian who has remarkable insight into the meaning of creation because of his love for music. Those in the Reformed tradition would have been encouraged by significant evidence everywhere in the conference of the search for a biblically guided world and life view, and by the extent to which fundamental attention to creation and Christ's lordship over all of life was alive and serious.

I heard only laudatory comments from others and the organizers indicated that plans would be considered for another one. For more information about the Chicago grad conference that ended with one of the greatest snow storms in history, contact the graduate and faculty ministries division of:

InterVarsity,  
PO Box 7895  
Madison, WI 53707;  
ph. 608-274-9001;  
e-mail: grad98@ivcf.org.

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You are invited to the third  
**With Heart and Mind**

A biennial conversation about the work of Christian in public and Christian higher education

May 13-14, 1999  
Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia, CANADA

for more information contact:

Dr. H. Van Brummelen - vanbrumm@twu.ca

or

Dr. Ken Badley - kbadley@connect.ab.ca

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## 1st National Christian Teachers Conference

--Korea

*(Report submitted by Dr. Yung Han Kim, Dean of the Graduate School of Christian Studies, Soongsil*

*University.)*

Last August 10-13, 1998, the first National Christian Teachers Conference was held at Kangweon National University. About 1000 Christian teachers took part in this conference.

All 13 groups of Christian teachers have prepared this conference for three years. (The first international education conference, which was held in Australia three years ago, was helpful.)

At the conference, all the teachers experienced God's great grace and were filled with the Holy Spirit. In addition, we shared a vision, as Christian teachers, to take responsibility for the next generation.

Throughout the conference, conferees were encourage to support the following visions:

- ▶ to organize local teachers' groups in every city (all together 78) in Korea within two years.
- ▶ to prepare teachers to set up a Christian curriculum in every subject.
- ▶ to let teachers prepare to organize Christian schools.
- ▶ to change all the teachers and students with the Gospel.

This conference is the first step for this vision.

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## **NEWS FROM INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS**

### **Bishop Appasamy College of Arts & Science, Coimbitore, INDIA--**

Bishop Appasamy College in Coimbatore began in the year 1995 with lofty ambitions, is catering to the needs of the community with a significant vision of making education relevant to the individual and the community. This institution has creatively adapted the curriculum, taking into consideration the changes in social, economical, political and spiritual conditions in our society.

A weekend Seminar on Leadership was organized for the staff members, August 14-16, 1998, with an emphasis on the following subjects: Christian Leadership, Biblical Basis for Mission, Interpersonal Relationships, Counseling, and Stewardship.

The social work department prepared a syllabus for an intensive six-month course in social work and conducted the training from July to December for the social workers who were incorporated. The feedback we've received is encouraging.

The Women's Cell of the college organized a protest meeting on September 28, 1998, condemning the violence against women&mdash;especially the violence against the nuns in Madhya Pradesh. Various women's organizations, schools, and colleges were represented. The women's cell functions with a laudable objective of networking the women's organizations in the district.

The year 1999 has been specified as "The Year of the Aged." The Visual Communication Department identified from the Coimbatore Diocese five senior citizens, age 85-98, and collected their memoirs. Their narrations accentuate the 50-year period of independence and the 50-year period of existence of the Church of South India. All five have recorded their experiences vividly and their contribution to the Christian community is significant and noteworthy. The department will be documenting them and later on may consider publishing

the same as a book.

A Christian writer's workshop was held from January 25-27, 1999, by the language departments, both Tamil and English. The resource persons were Mr. Brian Michael from Gifts of India, Bombay, and Mrs. Anita Lazarus from Christian Mission Society of Coonoor.

## **Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA-- Calvin Seminary Designs Theological Program for High School Youth**

Calvin Seminary has received a \$452,000 grant from the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment, Inc. to engage high school youth in biblical, theological and ministry studies. The seminary was one of only 12 theological U.S. and Canadian based institutions that received this three-year grant.

The program designed by the seminary will include three phases: Phase One includes studies on the campus of Calvin Seminary. Phase Two consists of a study trip to the Holy Land with assistance from the Jerusalem University College. Phase three consists of a mentorship relationship that the participant is involved in through their years of college study.

The first offering of this program will be from July 5 to August 2, 1999. The program is being limited to 35 high school juniors and seniors who have been nominated by their pastors, church councils, high school administrators, or religion teachers. The seminary will fund this unique experience.

As a result of this program, called "Facing Your Future," the seminary hopes that 90 percent of the participants will attend one of the six Christian Reformed-related colleges for undergraduate work and that at least 40 percent will go on to Calvin Seminary for ministry preparation, said Rev. Daniel Devadatta, director of recruitment and financial aid at Calvin Theological Seminary.

### **Special Lectures and Conferences**

**March 11, 1999** - Conference on Expository Preaching, 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in Seminary Auditorium. Speaker: Dr. William H. Willimon, Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry at Duke University.

**April 15, 1999** - The Challenge of Bible Translation, 10:00 a.m. in Seminary Auditorium. Speaker: Professor John Stek, Associate Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Editor of the NIV Study Bible.

**May 6, 1999** - Conflict in the CRC and the Gospel of Mark, 10:00 a.m. in Seminary Auditorium. Speaker: Professor Dean Deppe, Assistant Professor of New Testament, Calvin Theological Seminary.

### **New Books**

Members of the Calvin Seminary faculty recently produced at least three books that will be of interest to those in the Reformed community involved in theological education.

The first book is the result of extensive discussions by the Calvin Seminary faculty on an integrated curriculum for a contemporary Reformed seminary. John Bolt has focused our thoughts and added his own ideas in writing *Stewards of the Word: Challenges in Reformed Theological Education Today* (Grand Rapids:

Calvin Theological Seminary, 1998).

The second book is a "festschrift" to which many current faculty members of Calvin Seminary as well as former students and friends contributed. Edited by Arie C. Leder, its title is *Reading and Hearing the Word: From Text to Sermon: Essays in Honor of John H. Stek* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1998).

The third book was written to serve as a textbook for an advanced homiletics, biblical hermeneutics, or Old Testament class. Written by Sidney Greidanus, its title is *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Summer 1999).

## **The Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA-- 1998 Convocation: A Gala Event**

The ICS annual academic convocation held on November 13 drew the largest attendance of recent years. The evening featured an inaugural address by Carroll Guen Hart, the celebration of two completed Ph.D. degrees, and the conferral of three master's degrees. The convocation followed a dinner to celebrate and give thanks for many years of effective service by Robert VanderVennen and Paul Marshall.

Vander Vennen was thanked for 24 years of service, starting as executive director of the non-academic services of ICS, known then as AACCS. Hendrik Hart's tribute on behalf of ICS highlighted his attitude as a "servant leader" and his development of the ICS publishing program with University Press of America. VanderVennen continues to work for ICS on a limited part-time basis.

George Vandervelde spoke for the Institute in thanking Paul Marshall for his long and especially effective service, unique and special in many ways. Vandervelde read a letter from Brian Stiller identifying Marshall's special strengths and insights. Both Marshall and VanderVennen were presented with gifts of soapstone carvings, and both responded with words of appreciation.

At the convocation special recognition was given to Julius Taniguchi and to Jeffrey Dudiak for receiving the doctor's degree in Amsterdam for their work in the ICS program. Anthony Lai, Ruth Kerkham and Timoteo Gener were granted the master of philosophical foundations degree.

Carrol Guen Hart gave her inaugural address under the title "Shades of Darkness, Points of Light: Calling, Professionalism, and Shalom." She explained that the original meaning of professionalism was "to profess" something with one's whole life. Behind modern understandings of professionalism is the principle that God calls us to our task in the world.

Guen Hart's focus on professionalism arose from her service as director of the Worldview Program at ICS. In that program people come for a one-year master's degree that helps them struggle with issues relevant to their chosen profession. Participants usually do not have an academic career in mind, but seek to develop deeper insights into the biblical perspectives that can help them grow in their vocation as Christians. Guen Hart therefore addressed the most relevant and important aspect of her appointment, namely, how Christians deal with their own membership in a profession.

Guen Hart made clear that professionalism has both its dark sides and its points of light. She showed how both of these were present from the very beginning of professionalism in monastic orders, later in the figure of the gentleman, and in our times in the notions of the expert. She developed the idea that our way to shalom as professionals in God's kingdom is to focus communally on our own identity and calling in the confession that our world belongs to God. She ended by offering her program as a home for reflecting on these themes.

## **Kampen Theological University, Kampen, THE NETHERLANDS-- Kampen Seminary Moved to the Vrije Universiteit**

*(The following is an excerpt of a letter received from Dr. Klaas Runia, dated December 7, 1998.)*

A few weeks ago the three synods of the uniting churches in Holland (the Dutch Reformed [Hervormde] Church, the Reformed [Gereformeerde] Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church) took a decision concerning the location of the theological faculties for the future United Church. The decision implies that the Theological University of Kampen is moved to Amsterdam!

Up till now the Dutch Reformed Church had four faculties (in the state universities of Leyden, Utrecht, Groningen and Amsterdam) and the Reformed Churches had two: Kampen (since 1854) and the Free University in Amsterdam (since 1880). The Lutherans had a small seminary in Amsterdam, which was related to the University of Amsterdam. All seven faculties are fully subsidized by the government. For some years the number of students in each faculty has been decreasing. It was therefore no surprise to hear from the Minister of Education that the churches had to give up some of these faculties. There were two possibilities: to keep Leyden, Utrecht and Kampen, or to establish an institute of theology in Amsterdam and to keep Utrecht and Groningen. The real problem was the two faculties of Kampen and the Free University. Kampen is the seminary (now university) of the churches themselves, who govern it by a board of curators. The theological faculty of the Free University is governed by the board of the university. But a solution was found. The Free University decided to disconnect its theological faculty, and the curators of Kampen agreed to move its university to Amsterdam. Together they will form a new institute of theology that is governed by curators appointed by the churches. The opening of the new institute is scheduled for the autumn of 2000.

You will understand how sad we are. This afternoon we celebrated the 144th Dies Natalis of the University. It is unimaginable what Kampen will be without the university.

## **Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga, INDONESIA--**

Universities in Indonesia, state or privately owned, are obliged to be accredited by the National Board of Accreditation. In 1998, Satya Wacana has been awarded accredited status for twelve departments, consisting of A status for two departments, B status for eight departments, and C status for two other departments. A means excellent, B, good, and C, fair. This means that these departments have full autonomy to manage and conduct the programs—the A and B status valid for five years and C status for three years.

We have been able to develop academic cooperation with a number of Christian-based organizations in Indonesia and abroad. We invite cooperation from more organizations.

Indonesia has been suffering from severe economic, social, cultural, and political turmoil for the last two years. This situation affects our university and the life of our people, including our students and staff. We would like to ask member institutions to pray for us.

## **Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario, CANADA-- Redeemer Plans Hermeneutics Conference**

Redeemer College, in conjunction with the Pascal Centre and the Dooyeweerd Centre, is hosting a conference from July 7 to 10, 1999, at its campus in Ancaster, Ontario, Canada.

The theme of the conference is "Christian Scholarship in the Light of Scripture: Hermeneutical Issues." The

aim is to explore the ways in which different Christian traditions attempt to understand Scripture and its bearing upon the endeavors of different areas of scholarship.

It is the goal of the organizing committee to have a number of different Christian traditions represented, so that the participants can benefit from the reflection on Scripture in the various traditions (Reformed, Evangelical, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, etc.). The format of the conference consists of plenary presentations by keynote speakers, and a series of six workshops. The workshops consist of three or four papers, with time for discussion and exchange amongst the participants.

The conference will include the following workshops:

- ▶ Contextualization and Cultural Hermeneutics: contextualization in missiology as it bears upon the interaction between Western culture and the Christian faith.
- ▶ Hermeneutical Issues in Biblical Studies: worldview and philosophy in their connection with the critical study of Scripture.
- ▶ Postmodern Literature: a Christian literary criticism that engages the challenges of the "smorgasbord" of postmodern literature.
- ▶ The Natural Sciences: the interaction between historical-philosophical and biblical interpretations as related to Christian exploration of natural phenomena.
- ▶ The Social Sciences: the influence of historical & philosophical assumptions concerning human agency & mind-body relationships on interpretations of human nature.
- ▶ Tradition-Shaped Hermeneutics of Ethical Norms: exploration of the ways in which traditions shape our understanding and appropriation of ethical norms.
- ▶ The Hermeneutics of Reading: fundamental assumptions at work in theories concerning reading, especially in the teaching of reading as hermeneutical activity.

Plenary Speakers:

- ▶ Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff (Philosophy & Aesthetics), Yale Divinity School, U.S.A.
- ▶ Dr. Wim Ouweneel (Biology, Theology, & Philosophy), The Netherlands
- ▶ Dr. Craig Bartholomew (Biblical Studies), Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, UK
- ▶ Dr. Danie Strauss (Philosophy), University of Orange Free State, South Africa
- ▶ Dr. Leo Mos (Psychiatry), University of Alberta, Canada
- ▶ Dr. Roy Clouser (Philosophy), Trenton State College, U.S.A.
- ▶ Dr. Ken Howell (Theology and Philosophy of Science), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.

For further information, please contact:

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## **Soongsil University, Seoul, KOREA--**

### **The 6th International Symposium on Christian Culture and Theology Held Successfully**

The Graduate School of Christian Studies and Korea Institute for Christian Culture Studies held the 6th International Symposium on Christian Culture and Theology with the topic "Science and Faith in the Christian University Preparing for the 21st Century," at the Han Kyung Chik Memorial Hall,

August 31-September 2, 1998. Especially, due to the occasion of the 101st anniversary of the foundation of Soongsil University, outstanding evangelical theologians from overseas and Korean scholars were invited.

The lecturers and titles were as follows:

### August 31

- ▶ Rev. Professor Dr. Kim, Yung Han (Dean of the Graduate School of Christian Studies), keynote lecture, "The 21st Century and the Idea of a Christian University"
- ▶ Professor Dr. Christian Link (Bochum University, Germany), "The 21st Century and the Philosophy of the Christian University"
- ▶ Professor Dr. Robert M. Kingdon (University of Wisconsin-Madison), "Soongsil's Founding Spirit and its Direction in the 21st Century"
- ▶ Professor Dr. Yong Gil Maeng (Presbyterian Theological Seminary), "Christian University and Social Service in the 21st Century"

### September 1

- ▶ Professor Dr. David Wright (University of Edinburgh, Scotland), "Christian University and Scientific Excellence"
- ▶ Professor Dr. Helmut Esser (Muenster University, Germany), "Reformed Piety in the German University"
- ▶ Dr. Won Sul Lee (Christian University Association), "Faith and Science in the Christian University in Asia"
- ▶ Professor Dr. Tsutomu Haga (Tokyo Union Theological Seminary), "Reformed Faith and Science in the Christian University in Japan"

### September 2

- ▶ Professor Dr. F. Pieter von Stam (Amsterdam University), "Reformed Faith and Academic Tradition in the Dutch University"
- ▶ President Dr. Chong Ik Lee (Chonju University), "Administration of the Christian University in the 21st Century"
- ▶ Professor Dr. Emidio Campi (Zurich University, Switzerland), "Cultural and Political Aspects of the Reformation in Zurich"
- ▶ Professor Dr. Christian Link (Bochum University, Germany), "How Are Christian Studies Possible?"

In this symposium, scholars and pastors studied and discussed the Christian idea of academism from the perspective of the postmodern age, and the direction of the Christian university in the 21st century. Therefore, the symposium provided the opportunity to respond to the problem of Christian identity and the issues of relationship between faith and science from the viewpoint of evangelical theology.

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## Books

1. *Signposts of God's Liberating Kingdom: Perspective for the 21st Century*, Volume 1, a collection of essays edited by Dr. B. J. van der Walt; Institute for Reformational Studies, PUCHE, Potchefstroom 2520, South Africa

The aim of this volume is to give to its readers a glimpse of the different areas of God's all-encompassing kingdom. It emphasizes the fact that God's kingdom is much wider than the institutional church. By doing so, we hope to inspire its readers to follow in the footsteps of the contributors in erecting signposts of God's liberating kingdom in the way in which they think and act in the different areas of life the world over.

With the word "kingdom", we have the following central biblical ideas in mind: (1) that God is the sovereign ruler (2) over his entire creation, which (3) results in all kinds of blessings, such as redemption, salvation, liberation, peace, etc. In using the word erecting (signposts) we do not subscribe to the modernist myth of progress.

It should also be remembered that, according to Scripture, we are now living in the time between the "already" (the kingdom arrived with the coming of Christ, the King and his Holy Spirit) and the "not yet" (its final coming upon Christ's glorious return). Thinking and acting between the kingdom come and the kingdom to come, we are called to erect signposts pointing in the direction of the kingdom to come.

Jesus himself invited the followers not only to wait for, but also to enter his kingdom. We cannot "establish" it on earth, but neither can we sit "waiting" for it passively. We have to inscribe its dynamism (love to God and our neighbor) in the way we run the present world. Our word "kingdom" (translation of the original Greek word "basileia") is perhaps a too fixed, static, spatial concept. It could probably be better translated as God's reign, which indicates dynamic power in the present and also a powerful movement towards the future.

This volume, as a whole, wants to be a clear signpost erected by different writers with a kingdom vision. Each in their own area or field of interest are struggling to give shape to a Christian worldview, to help others who are traveling the same road. It is not done in the spirit of "we have the answers" or "we have attained our goal," but in humility. At the same time, however, it is done with sincerity because it is part of our calling, one way to give substance to our daily prayer: "Thy kingdom come." For information on purchasing the book, write Institute for Reformational Studies, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom 2520, South Africa.

2. *Patterns of the Western Mind*, by John Kok; Dordt College Press, Sioux Center, Iowa, USA; ISBN 0-932914-41-1

Dr. John Kok originally wrote *Patterns of the Western Mind* as a text for an introductory college class in philosophical world views at Dordt College, where Kok is professor of philosophy. The book is divided into two main sections. In the first, Kok brings his Reformed perspective to a survey of Western philosophy from the Greeks to the present. In part two, Kok describes some thought patterns that have been developed in the Reformed community, especially in the tradition of Abraham Kuyper, Dirk H. Th. Vollenhoven, and Herman Dooyeweerd. Throughout are guide questions useful for either individual or classroom study.

The author has been a member of the Dordt College philosophy department since 1983, and, since 1996, has served as dean of the humanities division. He is an undergraduate of Trinity Christian College and holds the Ph.D. from the Free University, Amsterdam. His doctoral dissertation, *Vollenhoven: His Early Development*, was published by the Dordt College Press in 1992.

*Patterns of the Western Mind* (initially published by the Institute for Reformational Studies, PUCHE, Potchefstroom 2520, South Africa) is published by the Dordt College Press, 498 4th Avenue NE, Sioux Center, Iowa, 51250. Retail price is \$12.50 (U.S.).

3. *Worldviews: The Challenge of Choice*, by Ken Badley; Irwin Publishing, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA; ISBN: 0-7725-2143-0

*Worldviews: The Challenge of Choice*, is written to provide a textbook for use in religious education and Christian ethics classes at the senior secondary or perhaps first-year college levels. Each chapter in *Worldviews* explores how followers of at least one world religion other than Christianity approach such questions as sexual ethics, bio-medical ethics and environmental ethics. Every chapter treats how Christians approach the respective issue.

*Worldviews* is also intended to introduce the world religions. Individual chapters were each edited by leaders of the relevant faiths composing a multi-faith editing committee. Despite all the editing, a Reformed vision of life remains clearly in evidence throughout the book.

Ken Badley is an independent scholar and educator in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Copies are available from Irwin Publishing, 2nd Fl - 325 Humber College Blvd., Toronto, ON, M9W 7C3, (905) 660-0611, (800) 387-0172, (800) 263-7824. They can also be order from ICS, 229 College Street, Toronto, ON, M5T 1R4.

4. *Knowing with the Heart*, by Roy Clouser; InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, USA; ISBN: 0-8308-1507-4

The famous scientist and philosopher Blaise Pascal memorably said that "the heart has its reasons the mind will never know." But too often it's forgotten that Pascal, in referring to the heart's "reasons," was not talking about hunches or cozy feelings. Instead, he had in mind our intuitive knowledge of "the first principles of number, time, space, and motion." And he believed God can be known in the same way, so that belief in God has the same justification as scientific and mathematical principles.

Was he right? In *Knowing with the Heart*, Roy Clouser develops a broad, compelling case for Pascal's position. Against the current climate of religious relativism, Clouser concludes that Christians are entitled to say they know God is real.

Written in clear and non-technical language, *Knowing with the Heart* is intended for believers concerned with the credentials of their faith—and those who don't believe in God but are willing to investigate and reconsider.

Roy Clouser is professor of philosophy at the College of New Jersey in Ewing, New Jersey. He is also the author of *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*.

For information on purchasing the book, contact InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL, 60515, USA.

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## "Christian Identity and Religious Instruction"

By Botond Gaál, Professor of Christian Dogmatics, University of Reformed Theology, Debrecen, HUNGARY

(from the first INTERCOM Conference in Debrecen, October 1-6, 1997)

### **Introduction**

First of all, I would like to express my delight on being invited by the first Intercom Conference in Debrecen to deliver a lecture about "Christian Identity and Religious Instruction." I was a student, a teacher, and the headmaster of this high school which was the only church-school in Hungary belonging to the Reformed Church between 1952-1989. Somehow I have been united to this institution with my life and identity. Since being in that extraordinary situation, may I be permitted to enlighten you a little as to the work, history, and spirituality of my former school? I am sure it helps to understand our special circumstances and to give an answer to the question of many people: Why do we need our own church-school?

The town of Debrecen lies in the centre of Eastern Hungary. This region is known as the Transtibiscan Church District which comprises almost half of Hungary's Reformed population of two million. There are altogether about three million Reformed people in Hungary, Transylvania, Carpathia, Slovakia, and the former Yugoslavia. It is the largest Eastern European Protestant block which even the violent thrust of the Counter-Reformation, while reducing the once predominantly (95%) Protestant population of the country to a minority, failed appreciably to dissolve.

In the 16th century five Reformed colleges were established representing the higher educational standards of the Reformed Church. These colleges created a new school system in Hungary by founding hundreds of primary and secondary schools in the rural areas, e.g., during its history the College of Debrecen established 584 schools throughout the country. The fact is that in the last centuries a general school system was established in Hungary by the Protestant churches, mainly by the Reformed Church. That is the reason why our church could survive the bloody and cruel Counter-Reformation in this area. The College of Debrecen

remained the centre of confessional orthodoxy, although it had absorbed enough of the Puritan heritage and of the refreshing influences of the Pietistic trends. Its biblical and prayerful piety continually made the college the greatest spiritual and intellectual centre of the Reformed population of Eastern Hungary. It presently comprises three educational institutions: the University of Reformed Theology, the Reformed Secondary School, and the Reformed Primary School.

### **General Approach to Religious Instruction**

From the Christian point of view we must emphasize that education is always more than the acquiring of knowledge—although the acquiring of knowledge certainly may not be neglected. Christians are open-minded persons, receptive to all kinds of knowledge: self-knowledge, knowledge of the world, and knowledge of God. They confess that humans are creatures destined for community, and that it is in terms of their relationship to God and others that they discover themselves. They know that, in the sight of God, they are creatures and sinful creatures at the same time. From the Word of God they know that they are in need of knowledge of the world. They even have a command to acquire such knowledge in the so-called "command of culture" (Genesis 1:28). For to "have dominion" over the world of nature would be impossible without knowledge of the world. An ever-growing knowledge of the macrocosm and microcosm, and of life, is not only a possibility but is also an obligation. Hence biblical Christianity can never turn against or away from civilization and culture. Being very close to the 21st century, which will be the "Century of Human Knowledge," Christians must attach great value to the sciences for they enable us to have a better knowledge and understanding of the world.

In spite of all this, the acquiring of knowledge alone is not enough to educate us for full personhood. It is in Christ Jesus that we may have full knowledge of God and may become fully human. This is, however, also a continuous task. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Jesus Christ, according to the Apostle Paul (Colossians 2:3). We must not only keep this knowledge, but we must also grow and make progress in it so that we may "stop thinking like children," but in our "thinking be adults" (I Corinthians 14:20).

Christian instruction is never a simple implementation of principles, acceptance and transmitting of doctrines, or pressing home of norms; but it is always an integration into a community as well. Primarily it is coming into contact with a person, being placed in the magnetic field of Christ and, therefore, also in the fellowship with Christ's disciples. Christian existence involves fellowship in both relationships: in our relationship with Christ and in our relationships with other men and women. This is another aspect of Christian instruction, for our Lord Jesus Christ wants us to follow and imitate him. It is in this following of Jesus that the Christian is educated. As he did among his disciples, so we must do among our fellow disciples. It is in this way that Christ teaches us the lifestyle of ministry. Just as he made a sacrifice for his friends, even the supreme sacrifice of his life, in the same way his disciples must unreservedly love their fellows and are barred from the way of self-seeking, self-centeredness, and selfish living.

One of the decisive factors in Christian education is a living hope. While doing his work on earth, Jesus saw possibilities from the perspective of forgiveness and grace, also in people who had been abandoned by others. Even after the utter failure of his disciples, he did not give up his hope on them. With the same hope the Apostle Paul confesses that his work "is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58). Christian parents, grandparents, godparents, pastors and educators are always hopeful people. By our faith in Jesus Christ we are freed from all superfluous pessimism, fear, dogmatic encumbrances, dejection, and hopelessness concerning our educational work. At the same time, we as pedagogues are not isolated from one another; but in the fellowship of our Lord we, too, are educated for and become instruments of education for community. This encourages us in a task which, by itself and relying only on human resources, is hopeless and impossible; but

by the grace of God and with his help it is a hopeful enterprise. This also is a basic cornerstone of religious instruction.

Further mention is to be made of another aspect of religious instruction. Especially today, we must prepare the members of the rising generation for a situation in which they, as Christians, will not be isolated but will usually live among people of various beliefs, ideologies, cultural backgrounds, opinions and convictions. Such people will be part of the same community in which they live. This situation involves all human relationships—the family, the neighborhood, the society of our country—and it even has its continental and global dimensions. In this respect we have had sad experiences in this country, when the so-called "political change" recently took place, and we thought that freedom of religious instruction would play a very important role in the life and future vision of our society. But now we see that the former Marxist attitudes have come up again in the field of secular education—in the conscious and sub-conscious spheres as well. Therefore, even today, the difference between the secular and Christian educational perspectives causes many problems, especially from a Christian point of view. A materialistic way of thinking and an egoistic ethics have deeply penetrated the whole society. Thus the basic differences between the two kinds of education, as they manifest themselves in matters of faith and basic tenets of ideology, are clearly in evidence today. That is why it is helpful and important to remember the ideas according to which many people were instructed during the last few decades.

Marxist education has its atheistic aspect, while Christian education, of course, reckons always with the living God. Marxist education is pledged solely to immanence, while Christian education knows also of transcendence. Marxist education is wholly concerned with this world, while Christian education views the fullness of life in the perspective of eternity. Marxist education wants to exploit the resources of humanity, while Christian education reckons also with the power of Christ. Marxist education has an autonomous character, while Christian education is conceived in terms of our relationship to and dependence upon God. We could go on enumerating the differences which would all point to a difference in the basics, the foundations. However, we must not ignore these differences, because they are very influential in the field of education today.

This means that our children partake not only of the entire tradition of our people, but they are also influenced by the movements, spirits, problems, successes, and difficulties of the contemporary society. Thus Christian youngsters should be brought up in such a manner that they do not feel like strangers in their original community; but, keeping their identity, they will be able to work with and for people of other religions or ideologies and will become useful citizens of their present country, while not losing the vision of their eternal home. It is important that our children do not leave their own faith but are able, taking seriously the convictions of other people, to give an account of their hope: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15).

### **Biblical Approach to Christian Education**

To arrive at a right understanding of Christian education, we have to start from the biblical meaning of education. This approach to the topic comes from my experiences in this Reformed Secondary School and from cultivating a disciplined theology influenced by my Reformed heritage.

In the Old Testament education and provident care are expressed by one verb. God brings up his people by "nourishing" them: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isaiah 1:2). Education includes instruction as well: "Attend, my son, to your father's instruction and do not reject the teaching of your mother; for they are a garland of grace on your head and a chain of honor around your neck" (Proverbs 1:8, 9). (See also, for

example, Proverbs 1:1-10; 17:10; 30:17; Ecclesiastes 11:9; and Psalm 119:10-12.) One of the greatest physicists of the 19th century, James Clerk Maxwell, when he was nine years old, could cite by heart the very long text of Psalm 119, which includes the following two verses: "With my whole heart have I sought thee; O let me not wander from thy commandments. . . . Blessed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy statutes" (Psalm 119: 10, 12). It is the witnessing and narrating commemoration of the liberation wrought by God that stands in the centre of the education of the rising generation, as we read in Exodus 12:17: "And you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as an ordinance forever."

In the New Testament also, education means both nourishment and instruction: "If you put these instructions before the brethren, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have followed" (I Timothy 4:6). As to the children in the family, the Apostle Paul asks the fathers to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Education in the Christian family is not only intellectual instruction but the presentation of the words of faith as well. The basis for Christian education is found in the family (Ephesians 3:18; 4:1; 5:22; 6:9; I Timothy 4:6; II Timothy 1:5). The family as a congregation provides a suitable educational context in which admonition and liberating forgiveness both have their place. The family as a school educates for community, freeing persons from their innate selfishness and leading them into the freedom of love. In the Christian family-at-large, personal influence and example are decisive educational factors.

### **Christian Understanding of Education**

According to the biblical witnesses a person is part of the created world of God and lives under the providential care of the Creator. In this light, I shall now try to answer the questions having to do with the aim and method of Christian education.

I think we can affirm the teaching of the Scriptures that a person is a creature of God and his/her value is not in the self but in what the Creator wants him/her to be. So a person cannot be called "good" in an ultimate sense. A person is good only to the extent that God declares him/her as a creature to be: "And God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31), i.e., good in the sense that he/she is a creature of God. The Bible also calls persons sinners, and this fact should be considered in all pedagogical approaches—otherwise these approaches will be accompanied by grave disappointment and cause irreparable damage. Christian anthropology does not recognize extremes about good or bad people; it just recognizes people as equally loved by God. He so loves people that he died for them, redeemed them, corrected and sanctified them in Jesus Christ. God chose people for himself. After all, that is how we understand the "goodness" of people in the creational sense, too. That's why our case is a matter of Christ for us.

As a result of the above, the possibility and the success of Christian educational work are provided not only by the development of the student's inherent talent but, first of all, by the fact that in educating our young people we can rely upon what their Redeemer Jesus Christ has done for them. Before everything else, the true, authentic nature of the student is his/her being a child of God. It is not our task absolutely and finally to decide to what extent a student is good or bad, or what is good or bad in a student's faith. The standard of measurement is always to be found in the Word of God.

Putting it in a different way, in the process of Christian education, we are not to shape our children, our young men and women, in the image and likeness of ourselves; but we are to allow and encourage them to be what they really are in all aspects of their individual personalities and unique characteristics. In fact, carrying on our educational work under the auspices of the gospel received in Christ, we declare—in connection with

their education&mdash;that young people should skillfully shape and develop themselves in everything that has been given them by the creative wisdom of God. So, it should be far from us to think of performing some sort of "personality transplant" on our young people; and we must also rid ourselves of the urge to make our students think and feel in the same way that we do. Thus we can keep ourselves from the spirit of ideological teaching which could be a source of great frustration, both for ourselves and for our students. As we have learned from Karl Barth, a good teacher never expects echoes but answers from the students! Why? Because, when we hear the answer, the person and personality of the teacher is pushed into the background; the student does not, first of all, answer the teacher but, in blessed freedom and obedience, responds confessionally to the call of Jesus Christ: "Follow me! Come after me!" (Matthew 8:22; 9:9; Mark 1:17; John 1:43).

Christian education and freedom are in a mutual and interdependent relationship. It is here that the real calling of the Word is understood. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Corinthians 3:17). Christian educational activity represents the infinite freedom gained in Christ, as opposed to all sorts of ideological ties or bindings. It does not represent libertinism, but the liberation of a devoted life in obedience to the Word. It was not by chance that John Calvin emphasized, when explaining and interpreting Christ's "doctrine" of God (John 7:17), that "*omnis recta cognito ab obedientia nascitur*," i.e., all true knowledge is born out of obedience.

It is the manifold problem of obedience that raises the most serious question for the educator, the teacher of religion. How do we apply the law and the gospel alike? What does it mean to educate in the Christian sense of the Word? It means that we make young people understand who they are, that they are unique in character. It also means that we help them understand what they should achieve, as image-bearers of God who possess unsurpassed gifts of grace. The same holds true when they discover the secrets and laws of the world.

According to the Reformed, biblical way of thinking, the image of God represents a predisposition in three dimensions of human life. First, God's will concerning persons, that we hear, understand, and respond to the message addressed to us by God. Second, God's making us to serve our fellows as comparable companions and obligating us to accept responsibility for the human community. Living according to this active kind of love is another sign of the image of God. Third, God entrusted us with guarding and cultivating the Garden of Eden. This means a responsible obligation regarding the creation, its nature and environment, i.e., the exploration of its laws&mdash;incorporated in the world by God&mdash;through the cultivation of the sciences. These three dimensions of human life make up the image and likeness of God in us. This is the miracle and the uniqueness of humanity: we should serve God through our faith; we should be loving friends of our fellows; and we should be lords and guardians of the world in fulfilling our responsibilities to God's creation.

Christian education is not limited to religious instruction and attendance at church services; but the various fields of knowledge must be regarded as opportunities for pointing to God's creation, his "theatre of glory"&mdash;as John Calvin describes it&mdash;and for witnessing to his love and wisdom. This is how the schools of the Reformation were formed in Hungary and how the Reformed heritage was represented by them. This is to explain and make us understand what it meant for Peter J. Melius in the 16th century to earn the honorable name of "Hungarian Calvin," and also the meaning of Melius' passion-filled words in the Debrecen School about the importance of the Word: "Making church-buildings into schools!"&mdash;which, although exaggerated, were words describing reality. In other words, he meant to say, we should enforce the biblical principles of education in the spirit of the gospel. It was in these principles that our reforming ancestors found the freedom for training, the free unfolding of individual character, and the deepest truth and reality of the Christian life, recognized in obedience according to the will of God.

As to the Reformed College of Debrecen, let me conclude my lecture with a personal testimony: The "spirituality" I have described was always maintained in this school; and it was in its very atmosphere that I, with my unique personality, was allowed to be made into what God created me to be.

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