

Is This a Real University?

Christian Universities Need to be Centers of Scholarship

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Good evening, colleagues and friends of IAPCHE, brothers and sisters in the Lord. I trust you had a good dinner this evening. As an after-dinner speaker, I feel an extra burden to keep you alert and engaged. I hope that I will not let you down, or if I do, that you have a good nap. The title and theme of my talk comes from some dialogues that I have had with some of you over the years.

I remember very vividly, for example, the sixth international IAPCHE conference, held in 2000 at Dordt College, USA. I had just finished responding to Harry Fernhout on issues of how to advance Christian scholarship in North America. A question came from high up in the seats, near the back. My dear friend, Godfrey Nguru, then at Daystar University in Kenya, asked in his robust voice: “When is Calvin College going to become a real university?” By that he meant, I presume, when would Calvin sponsor advanced, postgraduate degrees? The need is urgent, he said, and Calvin College has a strong institutional base and an outstanding faculty. So why do you hold back? It felt as though the whole world of Christian higher education was putting the question to me and my college. I basically repeated what I had been saying to Harry: it’s very competitive in the U.S. Quality is the name of the game, and you might get run off the court before you could develop your program and earn some respect. But I felt bad for saying it, knowing that the audience was full of pioneering university founders who had braved all sorts of difficulties.

Two or three years later I had a visit from Youngsup Kim, the academic vice president of Handong Global University. He was telling me of Handong’s latest adventures, including a campus in China, and he too asked the question: “When is Calvin College going to become a real university?” What I wanted to say, but didn’t, was that Calvin was too risk-averse and too enamored of bringing yet more excellence to its already strong undergraduate programs to launch out in advanced studies. By contrast, some of you here today have accomplished great feats. You follow the Lord’s bidding, acknowledging that He has set before you open doors (Rev. 3:8). We in the United States, it seems, are more intent on strengthening “the things which remain” (Rev. 3:2).

By the standards of many nations, Calvin and indeed most of our U.S. Christian colleges are already universities simply because they offer university degrees. But real universities, my friends were implying, do not merely teach received wisdom. They discover and create new understanding and insights through advanced inquiry. If God is calling Christians to higher learning, why would the call stop with undergraduate instruction? Yet American evangelical Protestants seem largely content with sponsoring undergraduate colleges, not “real universities.”

The call to engage in research and scholarship that is intentionally Christian in purpose, perspective and practice¹ has been on IAPCHE’s agenda for forty years and is deeply woven into IAPCHE’s identity. Some of you longtime members thus might be wondering why I am belaboring the obvious: *Of course*, you say, Christian universities need to be centers of original scholarship. I do not want to revisit old questions tonight, such as why American evangelical Protestants have had such difficulties in supporting advanced intellectual work.² I want to dwell with you tonight on a more global plane. There are trends afoot in higher education worldwide that push us away from research and scholarship. If we are going to remain faithful to the ancient and deeply strategic calling of original Christian thinking and inquiry, we need to know the signs of the times and think creatively about how to address them, because it would be inexcusable for the only intellectual centers that the church has to fail to pursue advanced studies.

I. Massification: How to Meet the Huge Demand?

There are two major signs of our times in higher education today: the first is what many observers call “massification.” Over the past 30 years, the number and percentages of students in higher education worldwide has skyrocketed, and the main issue in most places is how to meet the huge and growing demand with anything resembling university-quality teaching and learning. The growth of Christian higher education in many nations has come in response to this great outpouring of social need for higher education.

The second major trend follows closely on the first; it is a major change in how people view the aims and purposes of higher education. What is it for? What are its main tasks? The forces driving the first global crisis and the second one are remarkably similar.

Today we are witnessing a historic shift in higher education’s social role. According to the authors of a sociological study a decade ago, “In 1900, roughly 500,000 students were enrolled in higher education institutions worldwide,

representing a tiny fraction of 1 percent of college age people....By 2000, the number of tertiary students had grown two-hundredfold to approximately 100 million people [and] ... about 20 percent of the [university enrollment age] cohort worldwide.”³ According to the latest UNESCO statistics, worldwide tertiary enrollments now near 200 million with an enrollment rate of 33 percent.⁴

Why this growth? Tertiary education is no longer just for elites; it is becoming necessary for much ordinary work today. The expansion of higher education thus reflects a radical change in the way the world is structured. A world once "dominated by more traditional elites," such as "landowners, business owners and [the heads of] political and military machines," is being replaced by one featuring new elites, whose status and authority comes from higher education.⁵ Indeed, says a noted Indian educational expert, “Today knowledge is key to development, and a lack of it is a major constraint to economic and social progress.”⁶

As societies and economies become more knowledge-driven, demand for access to higher education continues to grow. Because higher education has traditionally been charged to serve broad public purposes, governments have felt obliged to provide it. But most of the world’s governments cannot expand higher education fast enough to meet the demand.⁷ University systems in Africa, Asia and Latin America have been strained and damaged as campuses are being forced to accommodate more and more students. Even in rich countries with mature higher education systems, government support for higher education is contracting, while enrollments continue to expand.

So massification has brought huge challenges to higher education. One American educator puts it succinctly: “The simple truth is that the masses want and need higher education.... The only way to provide education to most people is to bring down the costs without reducing the quality.”⁸ He argues that better attention to pedagogy and a cleverer use of new communications technology should maintain the quality of instruction, even in massive lecture halls and in pre-packaged online modules. Even so, states a UNESCO report, the rapid expansion of higher education has brought a decline in quality of instruction and a host of other problems. “These trends, the report states, “especially in lower income nations, have generally led to overcrowded lecture halls; outdated library holdings, less support for faculty research, deterioration of buildings, [and] loss of secure faculty positions.”⁹

2. Narrowing Aims and Purposes

At the same time that higher education is under huge pressure to accommodate more students, it is experiencing a sea change in values. Since ancient times, higher education has been a craft, plied by highly skilled intellectual artisans and delivered highly personal ways. It is a process of formation, not just the processing of information. But now this longtime pattern of teaching and inquiry is under assault for being too inefficient. It is craft work in an age that needs mass production.

Since the early years of the university two basic sets of aims and values have driven the enterprise. On the one hand have been the "liberal" or liberating values gained from studying the arts and sciences. We study them for the sake of making fresh discoveries and creations, for discerning what is true and worthy and what is not, and for inheriting humanity's store of wisdom and cultural achievement. On the other hand, there are the more concretely "practical" values driving studies in the professions and technological fields: for attaining the knowledge and skill needed to start off as a competent practitioner, and for engaging in practices that make society flourish. Both sets of values were put into a larger frame: universities equipped graduates to serve the public good, or in more explicitly Christian terms, for the glory of God and the welfare of the earthly city.

In recent decades, however, policy makers and many educators too are constructing ever narrower and frankly economic understandings of the purpose and value of higher education. Basic research is fine, they say, if it relates directly to boosting the economy. And what one needs to know to be a competent professional or a technician is being pushed toward skills only. The need to teach professionals and technicians to engage in critical thinking, or to see life's dimensions beyond the job, or to do what is right and do no harm, is being downplayed while claims grow that learning the technical aspects of the job demand all of one's educational time. Higher education is being thought of as a product, something capable of being rationalized and streamlined in production and marketed like other commodities.¹⁰ Hand-crafted models of higher education are inefficient, we hear. What we need in this day of massification is mass production, we are told, narrowly focused on job skills.

The logic of this process points to higher education as something that individuals acquire for their own benefit. If higher education is as much a private benefit as a public good, why should its support come so heavily from public funding? In times when even wealthy nations face pressures to control spending, this economic approach has gained political support. Under this narrowing of vision and values, the humanities and social sciences are now endangered species all over

Asia. And in the United States, their enrollments are in a virtual free fall. The traditional "public good" that these fields provided—such as "cultural analysis and critique, the interrogation of science and culture, and the preservation of knowledge--have been largely pushed aside."¹¹

So we see the values of higher education shifting from public good to private gain, from formation to information, and from perspective and judgment to skills and techniques. As much as I care about seeing more and more people acquire an education, It is clear to me that the result of these changes is a hollowing out of what an education means. It brings to mind T.S. Eliot's famous lament in his poem, *Choruses from the Rock* (1934):

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?¹²

3. Christian Universities: Pressure to Privatize.

Christian universities are quite vulnerable to the pressures driving higher education. Many in the United States belong to the rather uniquely American species called the liberal arts college, which focuses on high-quality instruction for undergraduate students in the traditional humanities, arts, natural sciences and social sciences. All over the U.S., enrollments in liberal arts colleges are declining. Liberal arts programs provide an education that addresses life's many dimensions, not just a job, but increasingly, American families are see that approach as a luxury they cannot afford. So American Christian universities are faced with the dilemma of trying ever harder to convince their potential clients that they offer the best kind of education when many no longer believe it, or reinventing themselves as something closer to the economic model of a university.

Christian universities outside of the U.S. are equally if not more vulnerable to the pressures of massification and commodification. Their vulnerability centers on one very powerful reason: they are chartered and regulated and monitored by the state. The state is the one great, ever-present, defining and shaping force. For reasons we have already discussed, nation-states are pushing for Christian universities to get in line the state's agenda: to provide technical competency to more of the masses. So these new Christian universities have to do what they are told. Becoming centers of excellence in research and critical and creative thinking are not on the state's agenda for them. Christian universities, it is implied if not said, should know their place.

Their place, it appears, is in the rapidly emerging realm of private education. In response to these pressures and demands, we are seeing all around the world, or at least outside of Western Europe, the rapid growth of private higher education. Faced with surging demand for access to higher education and their inability to build the capacity to meet it, governments increasingly rely on private education to fill the gap. By 2009, privately chartered higher education provided some 30 percent of higher education enrollments worldwide. In China, for example, where there was no nongovernmental higher education from 1950 to the 1980s, about 20 percent of total enrollments were in that sector by 2008;¹³ and in Latin America, the regional average for private higher education is about 47 percent of total enrollment. Africa had a tiny percentage of nongovernmental higher education before 1990, but today, in a number of African nations, notably Kenya, the enrollment percentage is about 20 percent.¹⁴

Private higher education is a varied field, but the most rapidly growing sector is the for-profit university. Here are seven prominent traits of the new private universities:¹⁵

1. Addressing Access Needs: the new private higher education exists, by and large to broaden the access to higher education. They often are the fallback options when students don't get into state institutions.
2. Offering Little Research or Postgraduate Study: The new private institutions focus on the delivery of courses only. They don't sponsor research.
3. Courses that are Cheap to Deliver and Focused on Jobs: The new private colleges tend to feature courses that are most in demand for immediate transfer into jobs. These schools offer various business majors, information technology services, and other commercial fields. These programs are cheap to offer and they do not demand elaborate facilities like science or engineering labs or studios and extensive libraries, like the arts and humanities.
4. Going Light on Culture and Social Service: The new private higher education tends not to feature programs such as social work, nursing or teacher education, which require internship sites and provide community service. Likewise, they tend not to create culture and share it with the community, via art galleries, orchestras or drama programs.
5. Part-timing Professors: Private for-profit institutions tend not to retain full-time professors. Instead, part-timers use pre-developed materials and have no responsibilities outside of the classroom, such as research or service.
6. Corporate governance and structure: The governance structure in the new privates tends to be managerial and authoritarian. Faculty co-governance and student input in governance are not likely.

7. Narrowing the Mission: In sum, the new private universities tend to depart from the traditional higher educational aims, such as preserving a cultural legacy, engaging in moral character formation, learning critical analysis and inquiry, or developing an ethic of service. Their aims reduce down to this: equip the student with the knowledge and skills required to be certified into a particular line of work. Doing anything more, claim its advocates, costs too much, and is irrelevant to the main mission.

So as Perry, Nick and did our research, we needed to ask how different were the new Christian universities? Are they aiming at Christian purposes, such as to deepen Christian thinking and living and to extend a positive Christian influence? Do new Christian universities apply their faith to their educational work or do they follow the "privatization" of purpose and values that drives the new secular private universities? How different are they?

We did find some differences. Recall that the new secular privates don't teach much basic science, music or philosophy. But in Chile, five new Catholic institutions had more comprehensive course offerings than the secular private universities, and they communicated a broader humanitarian purpose.¹⁶ A researcher in Thailand found a similar pattern among Catholic and Protestant universities there.¹⁷

Another point of concern: the new private higher education relies on part-time instructors rather than developing professors of its own. In Kenya, however, the two older Christian higher education institutions, Daystar University and the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, have higher percentages of full-time professors than do the state universities Yet some of the more recently founded Kenyan Christian universities rely heavily on part-timers.¹⁸

How about degree programs--do Christian universities mainly just supply more business workers and computer technicians? Perry Glanzer found that of the 44 African Christian universities in our study, all but five did provide degrees in business and most of them also provide degrees in information technology. But many of the Christian institutions also serve other professions. A dozen of them offer teacher education degrees, ten offer degrees in the health sciences or nursing, ten offer degrees in agriculture and nine offer law degrees. Another 21 of them provide majors in theology. More surprisingly, more than half of them (23) have some sort of science major, and 17 have arts, social science or humanities majors beyond theology. In many places worldwide, governments put pressure on Christian universities to serve narrower ends, but we found that the broader and

nobler aims of higher education are still alive in most of these new Christian universities.¹⁹

Even so, it appears that the most fully developed curricular areas, and presumably, those most heavily enrolled in many of the new Christian universities are the commercial fields. All of the new African Christian universities offer these fields but only a few offer a fully comprehensive array of programs across the arts, sciences, social sciences and humanities. The new Christian universities, like the new secular privates, tend to be rather authoritarian in governance. Many of them rely quite heavily on part-time instruction. And frequently their libraries and laboratories are scantily equipped. As a result, they show very little evidence of a research emphasis. So while the idealism, courage and energy of these new Christian communities is heartening, there are worrisome issues as well. And governments relentlessly push for business and technology education over all else.²⁰ Christian movements often arise out on the margins of society, and it is a matter of social justice for them to equip people to prosper. The Bible's vision of prospering, however, includes far more than commercial work and the creation of wealth. It is a whole-life vision that demands a holistic approach to higher education. How we develop and sustain that approach, so that our Christian universities become "real universities," is one of the central questions of our times. All of the winds seem to be blowing in the other direction.

4. Bucking the Trend: Real Christian Universities Do Scholarship

About now, you might be thinking that this talk is a good lead-up to a call for preserving a holistic curriculum. I do believe in that, and I see an urgent need for it. But advancing scholarship is even more urgent because we are already weak at it. I have to return to what Godfrey Nguru and Youngsup Kim prodded me to work on: developing real universities that are centers of creative culture making, critical thinking, and pioneering discoveries. So why should we make pursuing scholarship a priority? And how do we make scholarship a priority?

These are classic IAPCHE questions, the stuff of longtime discussions of what Christian scholarship is, how to go about it, and what it ought to yield. With my apologies to those in our midst who have worked on these ideas for many years, here is my brief for why we ought to make pursuing scholarship a priority. I will speak out of the Reformed tradition, if you don't mind!

4.1 Why Do Advanced Scholarly Work? A Reformed Perspective. From John Calvin forward, Reformed theologians have started their theology with the nature of God. They ascribe to God the greatest glory and majesty imaginable, seeing the

Almighty as the great creator and governor of the universe. Everything comes into being by means of God's decrees and owes its continued existence to the Creator's governance. Exploring the marvels of nature, therefore, is an act of praise to the Creator. As my colleague James Bratt puts it, "Searching out every domain of being, plumbing its beauties and mystery, means no less than serving the Most High God with the due honor of delight, awe and gratitude."²¹ Exploring God's creation, then, is an act of praise.

Furthermore, we glorify our Maker when we use our intellectual and artistic gifts. In that wonderful old movie, "Chariots of Fire," a young Scottish missionary candidate, Eric Lyddell, who is an Olympian runner, is scolded by his sister for running schoolboy races when the world needs to be reached for Christ. Lyddell replies: "God made me fast, and I feel his pleasure when I run." Likewise, God gave us minds to analyze and create, and he is pleased when we use them for his glory.

The problem with that, however, is that we are fallen creatures, and our human civilizations are corrupted by sin. People in their fallen condition insult God by their deceit, pride, violence, and distortions of truth, beauty and justice. Christians might want to turn their backs on all that sinful humanity has created. Can there be any honest and pure delight to be found in human culture, given the world's rebellion against the Lord?

Again, Reformed theology provides an answer: God continues to govern, sustain and protect this fallen world and to accomplish divine purposes in and through it. God graciously enables sinful people to express some genuine knowledge and wisdom, some true virtue and beauty, even if they do not know God's saving grace. By God's common grace, they are allowed to retain a vestige of that created goodness and order. Common grace will not save them, but it does protect people from the worst that they could do and enables them to do some good things.²²

Common grace has serious implications for Christian scholars. First, it cautions them not to turn their backs self-righteously on the rest of the world. The world and its works are still vessels of God's grace. This doctrine stands against Christian intellectual arrogance, and it validates Christians' experience of seeing some truth, beauty and goodness in the broader reaches of humanity. God takes delight in the good they do and it benefits us as well. We should study their works carefully and even enjoy them.

Studying humanity, however, is not a simple matter. Christian scholars need to be

discerning of the spirits at work in human endeavor. We know of our own frailties and flaws, and we know of the fallen character of humanity more generally, but we also know that God has not departed the scene, that his image and attributes have not been fully destroyed. So the Christian scholar has some sensitive discerning work to do. There is a battle going on, but the battle lines run not between groups of people but through us all. One can be saddened, for example, by the grim view of life in a Hemingway short story at the same time one admires the author's gift as a story teller. And one can glory in the wisdom of John Calvin even while wishing he had been more gracious toward those who disagreed with him.

In the great biblical drama, after the creation, then the fall, comes the story of God's plan of redemption and reconciliation. To save the world, God entered humanity in Jesus, to free us from bondage to sin and ultimately to restore creation to its unblemished glory. God's plan of salvation involves society, nature, and indeed the entire cosmos. That is the message of Colossians chapter one, which proclaims that Jesus is both the messiah of humanity and the lord and savior of the universe. In Christ, says the apostle Paul, “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3).

Some faiths are inward-looking and mystical, but Christianity is world-engaging. People whom God has redeemed are called to be divine agents in the great drama of redemption. They serve God's redeeming purpose when their work anticipates the restoration of God's reign of holiness, justice, peace and the full flourishing of nature and humanity-what the Hebrew prophets called God's shalom. Such work in the world, to which Christians are called, requires much knowledge-of the natural world itself, the human civilizations that dwell therein, and of God's purposes for them. It demands research, theorizing, and critical inquiry.

There are strong mandates for Christian scholarship in other traditions too, such as the incarnational and sacramental worldview in Catholic thought, the deeply Christocentric path that the evangelical historian Mark Noll has laid out; and Mennonites' radical discipleship and communal witness.

Working from all these traditions, Christian theologians, philosophers, humanists and scientists have thought long and hard about this Christian mandate for scholarship, and they have made many strong contributions that have been recognized in mainstream academe.²³ The problem lurking behind these attainments, however, is that they have come from individuals, informal cadres, and some fairly fragile associational networks. They do not have much institutional staying power.²⁴

4.2 Where to do Christian Scholarship? The Need for Institutional Staying Power.

The larger problem, it seems, then, is how to encourage and sustain research and scholarship that is Christian in purpose, perspective and practice within Christian universities. In the U.S., the majority of them are aimed principally at undergraduate teaching, and in much of the rest of the world, they are relatively young, with resources stretched thin, and with pressing mandates from the government to meet national objectives. And beyond these particular conditions are the trends we see today in higher education, which amount to something like an industrial revolution. The once-seamless arts and crafts of teaching, learning and doing scholarship are being de-constructed and segregated into separate processes. What this means for most IAPCHE institutions, old or new, is that there is tremendous pressure to focus their efforts on teaching alone, since that is what the “private sector” of higher education is now assigned to do. We are pressured to exclude or marginalize other tasks. Indeed, we often feel inadequate to the task of pursuing advanced scholarship. But if we are devoted to pursuing God’s ways and will, it is imperative that we not give up the task of being front-line thinkers and inquirers.

4.3 Scholarship for What? The Church Needs It. As I’ve outlined it above, this calling is a noble one, but in more concrete terms, the church desperately needs us to be productive communities of learning. Four Christian thinkers that I admire are worth hearing at this point.

C.S. Lewis, the famous British professor and patron saint of many Christian intellectuals, was keen to see the church engage the culture intellectually:

“A cultural life will exist outside the Church whether it exists inside or not. To be ignorant and simple now -- not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground -- would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.”²⁵

J. Gresham Machen, the Princeton Seminary professor, was keen to see the church better armed with good ideas. “We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer,” he said, “and succeed only in winning a straggler here and there if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the relentless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.” Ideas matter, he insisted: “What is today

a matter of academic speculation begins tomorrow to move armies and pull down empires.”²⁶

One might think that seminaries would carry the church’s intellectual burden, and they should, but their range of thought is not comprehensive enough. Nicholas Wolterstorff insists that

“the Christian college and university should be a place where the Christian community does its thinking about the major social formations of contemporary society—its normative and strategic thinking.”²⁷

And in order to do that, he insists, Christian higher education must have more generative capacity and power than what liberal arts colleges can manage. We need real universities.

This mandate has particular point and urgency for new Christian universities in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Andrew Walls, the eminent Scottish historian of world Christianity, is eager to see them make greater progress in what he calls “cultural conversion,” working the Gospel down deep into the very roots of cultural identity. He identifies this work as a long-term and deeply scholarly task, and he calls today’s Christian thinkers to take it up. Believing scholars in these new heartlands of the faith need to engage “the thought processes of a whole civilization,” he insists.²⁸ While Walls lays this task first at the feet of theology, he recognizes that it is the proper work of Christian thinkers in every field.²⁹

Professor Walls certainly sees the formidable pressures at work in higher education, especially the pervasive degrading of higher education's nobler ideals in favor of private interest, and he calls for Christians to “return to the ideal of scholarship for the glory of God, a return to the ideal of the academic life as a liberating search for truth.” Walls voiced little hope that this renewal would come from within the Western academy, but perhaps, he said, “it will be in the non-Western world that the scholarly vocation will begin anew and a new breed of scholars arise who, working in community, will break the chains of Mammon and throw off the impediments of careerism.”³⁰

4.4 How to Make Strides: Some Practical Measures. Whether we live in the Majority World or in the North Atlantic realms, our next question is how do we do it? We might look with admiration, for example, at Catholic institutions which have been built to last, and which have a strong presumption of being the places where the Christian community does its thinking. We do well to emulate them, but we have to make a start from where we are. So let me make a few suggestions.

- a. Build a scholarly community on your campus. What does your university do to encourage incisive thinking and productive research? Campuses that value scholarship use language that celebrates advanced inquiry. When faculty candidates interview, the university officers demonstrate by the questions they ask that they are interested in research and scholarship. They stress how much their campus admires it and needs it. Deans and department chairs carve out time and a little money, at least for tea and cookies, and set agendas for faculty to present their working drafts or to read and critique an important new book. When a faculty member publishes a book or an important research article, again the tea and cookies, after a short talk. The best and brightest students assist in the projects, and they get exposure too, including annual research poster days or even co-publishing. None of these things cost much, my friends. The point is building the expectations, the disciplined routines and encouragement for the work of scholarship. This is not just the work of rich institutions. My dear friend, Professor Katho, the president of Shalom University in the troubled Eastern Congo, is sold on this idea of building a culture of scholarship.
- b. Carve out some budget niches for supporting research and scholarship. It is easy, I know, to look at a well-resourced institution down the road, see what it is able to accomplish, and despair of making any progress in this realm. So start somewhere. If you don't have a sabbatical program, or if it is not built to support scholarship, get started. If you have one, fight to increase it. If you don't offer internal course-release grants for faculty research projects, start with a few. If you don't encourage and support profs to write research grant applications, start doing it. As many deans and provosts know, a tenacious budgetary campaigner can get things moved up the university's list of priorities.
- c. Build a more concerted and focused scholarly center on your campus. Through my years as a grant maker, provost and twice now a founder of an institute, I have seen great generative power for Christian thinking coming from centers or institutes that feature focused work on a strategic line of inquiry and service. The idea is to infuse the Christian scholarly life with a more disciplined, collegial, and pioneering spirit, not dependent on large institutional frames or big money, and free to pursue focused lines of inquiry.
- d. Do not give up on the broader vision of a Christian university. An institute can do one thing well, but great things can be done in two dozen fields at

once at a comprehensive university that is devoted to bringing "every trend of existing philosophy and science into Christian service."³¹ There is still vision for that, I hope, at Calvin College, where I work. And it is the dream of many a new university, serving under much more adverse conditions. It is daunting, I know, to think of how far there is to go to achieve these visions. Too often we let our worries about excellence and the competition crowd out a more visionary and entrepreneurial spirit. Last month I was visiting Mark Noll at the University of Notre Dame, and we walked past a construction site. Mark said that it was for a school of international relations. A devoted Catholic scholar will be its new dean. Calvin has been toying with the idea of starting a master's program in public policy, but some of my colleagues complain: how would we ever attain what Notre Dame is able to do, not to mention the Ivy League schools? But Regent University, the Pentecostal institution founded by Pat Robertson, has a thriving public policy program, even though chronically underfunded and modestly staffed. At least they have made a start. We should not be ruled by a spirit of timidity, the Apostle Paul tells us.

Andrew Walls thinks that the system of higher education in the West is too shot through with corruption and boredom to ever be re-formed in Christian directions. He may be right about that. In my darker moods, I really worry about the fate of the intellectual apostolate in Western evangelical Christian universities, where caution and conservatism seem to have the upper hand. We should be reaching for the stars, but so often we reach instead for the small potatoes. And you who are pioneering the new Christian university movement worldwide do not need to be reminded of the fragility and vulnerability of your situations. But whatever the relative strengths and weaknesses you experience as Christian universities, you have made a start.

So now what? Do you want to be real Christian universities? Despite the daunting structural problems you face, it is difficult to believe that the Lord has enabled so many of these remarkable places to spring up, only to see them fail. How might you be transformed and be transforming, then, by the renewing of your minds? My main advice, my friends, is seek a vision, make a plan, and take definite steps in the right direction. Then may the Lord give you the courage, persistence and power you need for the task, and may He do for you "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" on the way to becoming a real university.

NOTES

¹ I borrow this apt phrase from my colleague, Susan Felch, director of the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship.

² See, e.g., Nathan O. Hatch, "Evangelical Colleges and the Challenge of Christian Thinking" in *Making Higher Education Christian: The History and Mission of Evangelical Colleges in America*, ed. Joel A. Carpenter and Kenneth W. Shipps (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1987), 155-171. George M. Marsden also treats this topic well in his essay in the same book: Marsden, "Why No Major Evangelical University? The Loss and Recovery of Evangelical Advanced Scholarship," 294-304. Probably the best known analysis and lament on this front came from Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994). But see also Noll's "Postscript: How Fares the Evangelical Mind?" in Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 151-167, in which he notes the progress that evangelicals had made in promoting advanced scholarship.

³ Evan Schofer and John W. Meyer, "The Worldwide Expansion of Higher Education in the Twentieth Century," *American Sociological Review* 70:6 (December 2005): 898.

⁴ UNESCO Institute of Statistics, "Enrollment by level of education," <http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=130> Accessed online 25 May 2016.

⁵ Schofer and Meyer, "Worldwide Expansion," 917.

⁶ N.V. Varghese, *Globalization of Higher Education and Cross-Border Student Mobility* (Paris: UNESCO, 2008), 9.

⁷ Philip G. Altbach and Jane Knight, "The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities," *Journal of Studies in Higher Education* 11:3/4 (Fall/Winter 2007): 290-305.

⁸ Alexander M. Sidorkin, "Mad Hatters, Jackbooted Managers, and the Massification of Higher Education," *Educational Theory* 62:4 (2012): 497.

⁹ Altbach, Resienberg, and Rumbley, *Trends in Global Higher Education*, xiii.

¹⁰ Some of the most incisive thinking on trends in higher education come from the radical margins of today's social thought. See, e.g., David Noble, "Technology and the Commodification of Higher Education," *Monthly Review* 53:10 (March 2002): 26-40. The *Monthly Review* has a fairly predictable left-of-center social and political stance.

¹¹ Philip G. Altbach, "Globalization and Forces for Change in Higher Education," *International Higher Education* no. 50 (Winter 2008). *International Higher Education* is published online at http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/

¹² http://courseweb.lis.illinois.edu/~katewill/spring2011-502/502%20and%20other%20readings/eliot%20choruses_from_the_rock.pdf Accessed online 25 May 2016.

¹³ Yuzhuo Cai and Fengqiao Yan, "Organizational Diversity in Chinese Private Higher Education," PROPHE Working Paper Series no. 17, March 2011, 7. <http://www.prophe.org/en/working-papers/organizational-diversity-in-chinese-private-higher-education/> Accessed online 26 May 2016.

¹⁴Daniel Levy, "Growth and Typology," in Svava Bjarnason, Kai-Ming Cheng, John Fielden, Maria-Jose Lemaitre, Daniel Levy, and N.V.Varghese, *A New Dynamic: Private Higher Education* (Paris: UNESCO 2009), 8.

¹⁵ Daniel C. Levy, "The Unanticipated Explosion: Private Higher Education's Global Surge," *Comparative Education Review* 50:2 (2006): 217-240.

¹⁶ Andrés Bernasconi, "Does the Affiliation of Universities to External Organizations Foster Diversity in Private Higher Education? Chile in Comparative Perspective," *Higher Education* 52:2 (2006): 303-342.

¹⁷Prachayani Praphamontripong, "Inside Thai Private Higher Education: Exploring Private Growth in International Context," PROPHE Working Paper #12, Program for Research in Private Higher Education, University at Albany, State University of New York, September 2008.

¹⁸ Otieno and Levy, "Public Disorder, Private Boon?" cited above, p. 4.

¹⁹ Glanzer, "Dispersing the Light," 24-26.

²⁰ In some ways, South Africa, with its relentless drive for economic growth, epitomizes this trend today. See, e.g., Christine Winburg, "Undisciplining Knowledge Production: Development Driven Higher Education in South Africa," *Higher Education* 51:2 (March 2006): 159-172.

²¹ I am indebted to James Bratt for this description of the links between Reformed theology and the Reformed people's drive for education. See his nuanced and detailed discussion, "What Can the Reformed Tradition Contribute to Christian Higher Education?" in *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 125-140; quote, 128.

²² Richard J. Mouw, *He Shines in All That's Fair: Culture and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

²³ D.Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), chapter four, "The Life of the Mind," 94-1113.

²⁴James Davison Hunter makes this point compellingly in *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁵ C. S. Lewis, "Learning in War-Time," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), .

²⁶ J. Gresham Machen, "Christianity and Culture," *Princeton Review* 11 (1913): 7.

²⁷ Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, "Should the Work of Our Hands Have Standing in the Christian College?" in *Keeping Faith: Embracing the Tensions in Christian Higher Education*, ed. Ronald A. Wells (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 135-136.

²⁸ Andrew F. Walls, "Christian Scholarship and the Demographic Transformation of the Church," in *Theological Literacy for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Rodney L. Petersen, with Nancy M. Rourke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 172.

²⁹ Walls, "Christian Scholarship," 166.

³⁰ Walls, "Christian Scholarship," 174-175.

³¹ *Walls*, "Christian Scholarship," 167; he quotes Origen of Alexandria.