A Concept to Keep

A *Concept* for Christian Higher Education in the Wesleyan Tradition

Spring Arbor University is a community of learners distinguished by our lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts, total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning, and critical participation in the contemporary world.

Featuring the writings of:

John Wesley
Benjamin T. Roberts
Edward P. Hart

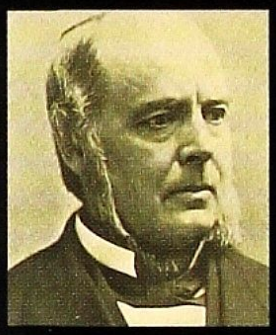
with special chapters by:

David L. McKenna
Gayle D. Beebe

SPRING ARBOR UNIVERSITY
FIDES VIVENS DISCENS
1873

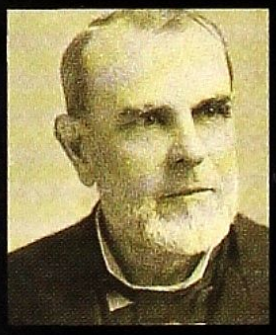
John Wesley

(1703-1791) Rev. John Wesley was born into the parsonage home of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, in Epworth, England, on June 17, 1703. His life and ministry spanning almost the entire 18th Century, significantly impacted the religious, political and social landscape of that country. With the world as his parish, and a very keen sense that "God is with us," Rev. Wesley's methodical approach to "truth" through the light of Scripture, reason, tradition and experience, has caused him to emerge as one of the central ecclesiastical figures in Protestant Church history.



Benjamin Titus Roberts

(1823-1893) Expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church for his open opposition to slavery, membership within secret societies, and for preaching the "old-time" Methodist doctrine of holiness, Rev. Benjamin Titus Roberts founded the Free Methodist Church in 1860. Characterized by simplicity of spirit and manner, he had the power of saying much in few words. He called all Christians, and especially his preachers, to educate themselves broadly, devote themselves to the discipline of study, and pursue truth in all its forms, knowing that all truth belonged to God. Through his efforts and those who followed after him, many Free Methodist schools were established to promote a well-trained clergy, an educated laity, and an "enlightened land."



Edward Payson Hart

(1835-1919) In the fall of 1862, Rev. Roberts requested of Rev. Hart to leave his home in Illinois, and travel to Michigan and investigate the possibilities of establishing a Free Methodist work. His reply was from the heart of a fully committed servant, "If you say go and I can get there, I will go to the North Pole." As part of that labor, and "in the interest of Christian education," Rev. Hart founded Spring Arbor Seminary, which today has grown to become Spring Arbor University. With the exception of its founder, Rev. B.T. Roberts, no other man perhaps exerted a greater influence in the making of the Free Methodist Church than Rev. Edward Payson Hart.

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A Concept for Christian Higher Education in the Wesleyan Tradition

Featuring

Concept for the Christian College,

by

DAVID L. MCKENNA

With primary sources for the philosophy
of higher education at Spring Arbor University
drawn from the writings of:

JOHN WESLEY

BENJAMIN T. ROBERTS

EDWARD P. HART

GAYLE D. BEEBE

Edited by:

GAYLE D. BEEBE

JON S. KULAGA

"And you shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" -- Mark 12:30

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Pamela S. Beebe,
whose call and commitment to Spring Arbor University is as strong as my own, and who continues to encourage me in my love of God, my enjoyment of learning and my engagement with life. Her enduring confidence in the goodness of God has bolstered my faith in the dark times and continues to propel me to follow the light of Christ and the strength of my convictions as I seek to lead and guide the University.

Gayle D. Beebe

To my father, Dr. Joseph K. Kulaga,
who instilled within me a passion for Christ and education, and modeled a lifelong commitment to Jesus Christ as his perspective for learning.

Jon S. Kulaga

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Spring Arbor University Concept

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PREFACE

The idea for republishing David McKenna's original monograph series, *Concept for the Christian College,* was first discussed in President Beebe's office at Spring Arbor University as a means of honoring the legacy of Dr. McKenna and the lifelong contribution he has made to the mission and vision of the institution. As many who are familiar with the University know, it was this monograph series that formed the foundation of what has become the mission statement of the institution, known as the Spring Arbor University Concept.

As our work progressed, however, it became increasingly apparent that the republishing of the series was also an opportunity to place the Concept within the broader context of our Wesleyan heritage. While the Concept is a mission statement unique to Spring Arbor University, it is also perhaps the most articulate and suscinct

philosophy of Christian higher education in the Wesleyan tradition ever penned. Consider that over 40 years have transpired since its original unveiling, and yet it still "shapes a curriculum, builds a campus and develops a climate for learning."

And so it is, that we begin this work with Charles Wesley's call to action, *A Charge to Keep*, with these "Concept-like" words:

"To serve the present age
My calling to fulfill
May it all my powers engage,
To do my Master's will"

The founder of Methodism, Reverend John Wesley, introduces the reader to a Wesleyan *Concept for Truth*, as all knowledge is to be brought under the examining light of Scripture, tradition, reason and experience. In more recent times, his unique approach to a theological understanding of life has become known as the "Wesleyan Quadrilateral." It is this theological

understanding that continues to shape, and is also the foundation upon which the entire mission of Spring Arbor University rests.

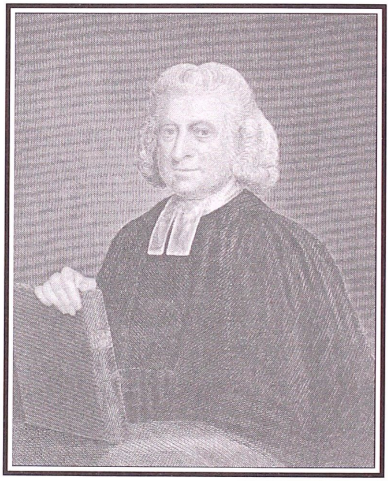
Next, the founder of Free Methodism, Reverend Benjamin T. Roberts, discusses a *Concept of Education* in various writings as he instructs his readers to commit to the discipline of study, a broad and liberally based education, and it's practical application to the affairs of everyday life. The reader is next brought to the writings of Spring Arbor University's founder, Reverend Edward Payson Hart. Rev. Hart's passion to establish both the work of Free Methodism and an educational institution in Michigan demonstrates the institution's place within a *Concept of Christian Education.*

The central focus of this book then follows, with the republishing of Dr. McKenna's series, which has been described as a "thorough-going philosophy" and a *Concept of Christian Higher Education*. Finally, Dr. Gayle D. Beebe, current president of Spring Arbor University, sums up the nature and thrust of the University's mission as

he articulates the relevance of the Christian liberal arts, the vitality of our Christian faith, and the call to critical engagement in every age, with *A Concept to Keep.*

It is our sincere wish that this volume will develop within the reader a greater appreciation for Spring Arbor University, its place in higher education, and the Wesleyan heritage that it continues to represent.

Gayle D. Beebe
Jon S. Kulaga
Spring Arbor, Michigan
April 29, 2003

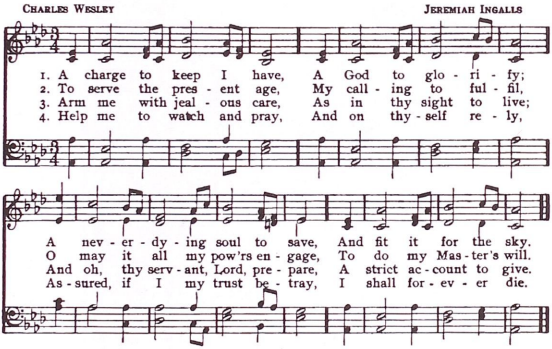


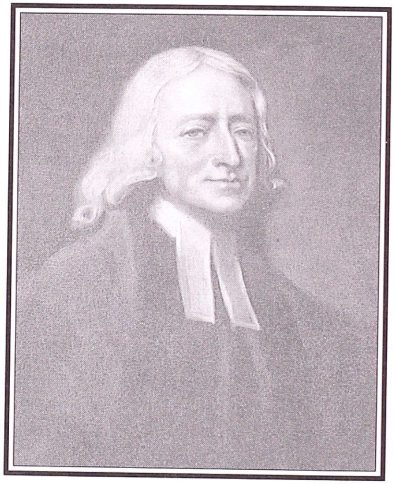
C. Wesley

1707-1788

A Charge to Keep

by Charles Wesley





John Wesley

1703-1791

A Concept of Truth

Introduction

John Wesley was born into the parsonage home of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, in Epworth, England, on June 17, 1703. His life and ministry spanned almost the entire 18th century, and as a result, he had a significant impact on the religious and political life of that country. During the time of John Wesley, and his brother Charles, disrespect for the Bible and the Christian religion prevailed across the land, with the Church being held open to public ridicule and scorn.

Spiritual indifference had taken hold of the pew as well as the pulpit. The established church of the day, to which John and Charles belonged, was more concerned with its political power and prestige than its piety. Much like Luther before him, into this void stepped the life and labors of John Wesley. In 1738, after his heart warming experience at Aldersgate, Wesley's message of personal piety, methodical accountability, and Christian perfection brought a great spiritual awakening to an entire nation through his passion for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

From a lifetime of writings, both in sermons and personal correspondence, a common thread of instruction on how to discern "truth" emerges from the pen of John Wesley. In the 20th century, Sandy Outler from Southern Methodist University coined the phrase, "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral," as a summary statement of John Wesley's theological system.

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral emphasizes the way in which we gain theological knowledge through Scripture, tradition, reason and

experience. It begins and ends with the primacy of Scripture. It then enters into conversation with our rich Christian tradition as the accompanying witness of the great saints of the church that has preserved the faith throughout the millennia. The quadrilateral uses human reason and logic as a guide in theological understanding and then moves to the vibrancy of spiritual experiences as a final source of theological knowledge. Encompassed in this quadrilateral are the powerful interplay of God's revelation and the dramatic unfolding of human faith.

As we set the stage for a more comprehensive philosophy of Christian higher education in the Wesleyan tradition, it is fitting that we begin with the writings of John Wesley. For any philosophy concerned with concepts of education must ultimately, and therefore initially, begin with a Concept of Truth.

A Concept of Truth

Scripture

"Possible Motivations in Writing Scripture and How it Makes Logical Sense to Believe that God Inspired the Word"

I beg leave to propose a short, clear, and strong argument to prove the divine inspiration for the Holy Scriptures. The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, "Thus saith the Lord," when it was their own invention.
2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; they would not make a book which

commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity.

3. Therefore, I draw this conclusion, that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration.[1]

Notes Upon the Old Testament

Tis not enough to [just] have Bibles, but we must use them, yea, use them daily. Our souls must have constant meals of that manna, which if well digested, will afford them true nourishment and strength.[2]

Notes Upon the New Testament

All Scripture is inspired of God – The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote it, but continually inspires, supernaturally assists, those that read it with earnest prayer. Hence it is so profitable for doctrine, for instruction of

1. *Journal* (Curnock ed.), 1:471-72, 24 May 1738.
2. Commentary on Dueteronomy 17:19, Notes upon the Old Testament, 1:638n.

ignorant, for the reproof or conviction of them that are in error or sin, for the correction or amendment of whatever is amiss, and for instruction or training up the children of God in all righteousness.[3]

On Corrupting Scripture

Any passage is easily perverted, by being recited singly, without any of the preceding or following verses. By this means, it may often seem to have one sense, when it will be plain, by observing what goes before and what follows after, that it really has the direct contrary.[4]

On Studying Scripture

If you desire to read the Scriptures in such a manner as may most effectually answer this end (to understand the things of God), would it not be advisable (1) to set apart a little time, if you can,

3. 2 Tim. 3:16, *Notes upon the New Testament*, 794.
4. "On Corrupting the Word of God" (1727, Sermon 137), Works (Jackson ed.) 7:740.

every morning and evening for this purpose? (2) at each time, if you have leisure, to read a chapter out of the Old, and one out of the New Testament; if you cannot do this, to take a single chapter, or a part of one? (3) to read this with a single eye to know the whole will of God, and a fixed resolution to do it? In order to know His will, you should (4) have a constant eye to the analogy of faith, the connexion of harmony there is between those grand, fundamental doctrines, original sin, justification by faith, the new birth, inward and outward holiness. (5) Serious and earnest prayer should be constantly used before we consult the oracles of God, seeing "Scripture can only be understood through the same Spirit whereby it was given…" (6) It might also be of use, if while we read we were frequently to pause and examine ourselves by what we read.[5]

5. Preface, Notes upon the Old Testament, 1

Ongoing Faith of the Methodist

What I nightly wish is that you all keep close to the Bible. Be not wise above what is written. Enjoin nothing that the Bible does not clearly enjoin. Forbid nothing that it does not clearly forbid.[6]

Although Wesley felt willing to learn from other people and even other religious traditions, they needed to demonstrate it "by plain proof of Scripture."[7] Not only did Scripture, as the "oracles of God," serve as the "foundation of true religion,"[8] it also functioned as a kind of epistemological safeguard for the boundaries of true, experimental religion.

The foundation of true religion stands upon the oracles of God. It is built upon the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.[9]

6. "To Johan Dickins," 26 December 1789, *Letters* (Telford ed.), 8:192.
7. Preface, "Sermons on Several Occasions," *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:105.
8. "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered" (1781, sermon 70), I.6, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 2:591.
9. Ibid., 2:591-92.

Rule of Scripture

But some may say I have mistaken the way myself, although I take upon me to teach it to others. It is probable many will think this; and it is very possible that I have. But I trust, whereinsoever I have mistaken, my mind is open to conviction. I sincerely desire to be better informed. I say to God and man, "What I know not, teach thou me." [10]

"I allow no other rule, whether of faith or practice, than the Holy Scriptures." [11]

On Faith

The faith of Protestants, in general, embraces only those truths as necessary to salvation, which are clearly revealed in the oracles of God… They believe neither more nor less than what is manifestly contained in, and provable by,

10. Preface, "Sermons on Several Occasions," *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:107.
11. "To James Hervey," 20 March 1739, *Letters* (Telford ed.), 1:285.

the Holy Scriptures... The written word is the whole and sole rule of their faith, as well as practice. [12]

Wesley interpreted *solus* to mean "primarily," rather than "solely" or exclusively.[13]

Scripture and Other Writings

This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. "Bring the books," says he, "but especially the parchments," those wrote on parchment. "But I have no taste for reading." Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade. [14]

When I met Peter Bohler again, he consented to put the dispute upon the issue which I desired, namely, Scripture and experience. I first consulted the Scripture. But when I set aside the

12. "On Faith, Heb. 11:6" (1788, sermon 106), I.8, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 3:496.
13. Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press,1980), 28n101.
14. "Minutes of Several Conversations," Q. 32, *Works* (Jackson ed.), 8:315.

glosses of men, and simply considered the words of God, comparing them together, endeavouring to illustrate the obscure by the plainer passages, I found they all made against me, and was forced to retreat to my last hold, "that experience would never agree with the literal interpretation of those Scriptures." Nor could I therefore, consider all of it to be true, till I found some living witnesses to it. [15]

15. *Journal* (Curnock ed.), 1:471-72, 24 May 1738.

Tradition

Respect for Early Church Fathers

If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God, and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach.[16]

I exceedingly reverence them as well as their writings, and esteem them very highly in love. I reverence them, because they were Christians… And I reverence them because they describe true, genuine Christianity, and direct us to the strongest evidence of the Christian doctrine. [17]

Respect for Other Traditions

As we not thus far agreed [concerning "true, primitive Christianity"] let us thank God for this, and receive it as a fresh token of his love. But if God still loveth us, we ought also to love

16. Preface, "Sermons on Several Occasions," *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:106.
17. "To Dr. Conyers Middleton," 4 January 1749, III.11 *Letters* (Telford ed.), 2:387.

one another. We ought, without this endless jangling about opinions, to provoke one another to love and to good works. Let the points wherein we differ stand aside; here are enough where in we agree, enough to be the ground of every Christian temper, and of every Christian action. [18]

And in order to their union with us, we require no unity in opinions, or in modes of worship, but barely that they "fear God and work righteousness," as was observed. Now, this is utterly a new thing, unheard of in any other Christian community. In what Church or congregation beside, throughout the Christian world, can members be admitted upon these terms, without conditions? Point any such out, who ever can: I know none in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America! This is the glory of the Methodists, and of them alone![19]

18. "A Letter to a Roman Catholic," *Works* (Jackson ed.), 10:85.
19. "Prophets and Priests" (1789, sermon 121), *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 4:83-84.

The Grand Principle of Christianity

I lay this down as an undoubted truth: The more the doctrine of any Church agrees with the Scripture, the more readily ought it to be received. And, on the other hand, the more the doctrine of any Church differs from Scripture, the greater cause we have to doubt it. [20]

20. "The Advantage of the Members of the Church of England, Over Those of the Church of Rome," *Works* (Jackson ed.), 10:133.

Reason/Logic

Proper Use of Reason

If indeed God had stamped (as some have maintained) an idea of himself on every human soul, we must certainly have understood something of these, as well as his other attributes; for we cannot suppose he would have impressed upon us either a false or imperfect idea of himself. But the truth is, no man ever did, or does now find any such idea stamped upon his soul. The little which we do know of God (except what we receive by the inspiration of the Holy One) we do not gather from an inward impression, but gradually acquire from without. "The invisible things of God," if they are known at all, "are known from the things that are made" not from what God hath written in our hearts but from what he hath written in all his works. [21]

21. "The Imperfection of Human Knowledge" (1784 sermon 118), II.8, *Works* (Jackson ed.), 2:571.

Reason and the Discovery of God

But to all that is or can be said of the omnipresence of God, the world has one grand objection: They cannot see him. And this is really at the root of all their other objections. This our blessed Lord observed long ago: "Whom the world cannot receive, because they see him not." But is it not easy to reply, "Can you see the wind?" You cannot. But do you therefore deny its existence, or its presence? You say, "No; for I can perceive it by my other senses." But by which of your senses do you perceive your soul? Surely you do not deny either the existence or the presence of this! And yet it is not the object of your sight, or of any of your other senses. Suffice it then to consider that God is a Spirit, as is your soul also. Consequently, "him no man hath seen, or can see," with eyes or flesh and blood. [22]

22. "One the Omnipresence of God" (1788, sermon 118), II.8, *Works* (Jackson ed.), 7:242.

Yet this is no excuse for those who continue in sin, and lay the blame upon their Maker by saying: "It is God only that must quicken us; for we cannot quicken our own souls." For allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called "natural conscience." But this is not natural; it is more properly termed "preventing grace." [23]

Reason and Creation

Wesley argued that "the whole creation speaks that there is a God" [24] and " together with his existence, all his attributes or perfections…

23. "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" (1785 sermon 85), III.4, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 3:199.

24 "A Farther Appeal," III.21 *Works* (Oxford ed) 11:268

are clearly deduced from the things that are seen, from the goodly order of the universe". [25]

Address to the Clergy

Some knowledge of the sciences also, is, to say the least, equally expedient [as history]. Nay, may we not say, that the knowledge of one, (whether art or science) although now quite unfashionable, is even necessary next, and in order to, the knowledge of the Scripture itself? I mean logic. For what is this, if rightly understood, but the art of good sense? Of apprehending things clearly, judging truly, and reasoning conclusively?[26]

Now, of what excellent use is reason, if we would either understand ourselves, or explain to others, those living oracles! And how impossible

25 "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, VI" (1748, sermon 26), III.7, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.) 1:580-81

26. "Address to Clergy," I.2, *Works* (Jackson ed.), 10:483.

without it to understand the essential truths contained therein? [27]

The Imperfection of Human Knowledge and the Case of Reason Impartially Considered

Let reason do all that reason can; Employ it as far as it will go. But, at the same time, acknowledge it is utterly incapable of giving either faith, or hope, or love; and, consequently, of producing either real virtue, or substantial happiness. Expect these from a higher source, even from the Father of spirits of all flesh.[28]

Trustworthiness of Reason

In all these respects, and in all the duties of common life, God has given us our reason for a guide. And it is only by acting up to the dictates of

27. "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered" (1781 sermon 70), I.6, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 2:592.
28. "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered" (1781 sermon 70), I.8, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 2:600.

it, by using all the understanding which God hath given us, that we can have a conscience void of offense towards God and towards man. [29]

As such, Christians should not "despise or lightly esteem reason, knowledge, or human learning." [30]

29. Ibid.
30. "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," *Works* (Jackson ed.), 11:429.

Experience

A Farther Appeal

From these passages it may sufficiently appear for what purpose every Christian, according to the doctrine of the Church of England, does not "receive the Holy Ghost." But this will be still more clear from those that follow; wherein the reader may likewise observe a plain, rational sense of God's revealing himself to us, of the inspiration of the Holy working of the Spirit of Christ. [31]

The Witness of the Spirit, I

But what is that testimony of God's Spirit, which is superadded to, and conjoined with, this [testimony of our own spirit]? How does he "bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God?" It is hard to find words in the language of men to explain "the deep things of God." Indeed,

31. "A Farther Appeal, I," V.24, *Works* (Oxford ed.), 11:167.

there are none that will adequately express what the children of God experience. But perhaps one might say (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, to soften, or strengthen the expression), the testimony of the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God. [32]

Now this is properly the testimony of our own spirit; even the testimony of our conscience, that God hath given us to be holy of heart, and holy in outward conversation. It is a consciousness of our having received, in and by the Spirit of adoption, the tempers mentioned in the word of God, as belonging to his adopted children; even a loving heart toward God, and toward all humankind; having with childlike confidence in God our Father, desiring nothing but him, casting all our care upon him, embracing every child of

32. "The Witness of the Spirit, I" (1746, sermon 10), I.7, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:219-313.

man with earnest, tender affection – a consciousness that we are inwardly conformed by the Spirit of God, to the image of his Son, and that we walk before him in justice, mercy, and truth, doing the things which are pleasing in his sight. [33]

Heart Strangely Warmed

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle of the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change in which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. [34]

33. "The Witness of the Spirit, I" (1746, sermon 10), I.6, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:273-74.
34. *Journal* (Curnock ed.), 1:475, 24 May 1738.

The Witness of the Spirit, II

Christians "cannot be satisfied with any thing less than a direct testimony from his Spirit, that he is 'merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembers their sins and iniquities no more.'" [35] Such experience is the privilege of all believers. [36] It occurs before "the witness of our own spirit," but is attendant with "the fruit of the Spirit." [37] The witness of our own spirit or consciousness plus the actual change that occurs in our lives – the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit – provides added evidence of the reality of God, of his salvation, and of all his truth as revealed to us through Scripture. [38]

35. "The Witness of the Spirit, II" (1746, sermon 11), III.7, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:291.
36. See "The Marks of the New Birth" (1748, sermon 18), II.3, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:423.
37. See "The Witness of the Spirit, I" (1746, sermon 10), I.6-7, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:273, and "The Witness of the Spirit, II" (1767, sermon 11), III.5, V.3, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 3:289-90, 297-98.
38. "The Philosophy of Enthusiasm, 209.

Experience and Assurance

I now am assured that these things are so: I experience them in my own breast. What Christianity (considered as a doctrine) promised is accomplished in my own soul. And Christianity, considered as an inward principle, is the completion of those promises. It is holiness and happiness, the image of God impressed on a created spirit, a fountain of peace and love springing up into everlasting life. [39]

39. "To Dr. Conyers Middleton," 4 January 1749, II.12, *Letters* (Telford ed.), 2:383.
Note: Some of the selected quotes from the writings of John Wesley were taken from Don Thorsen's secondary resource, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990).

Conclusion

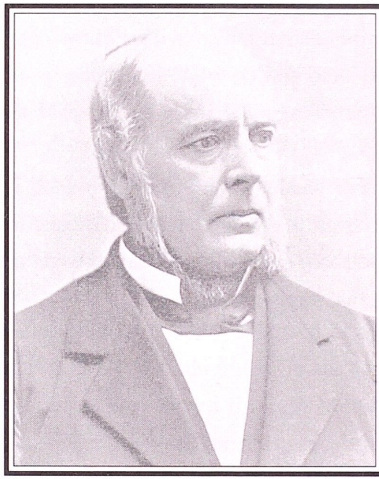
The preceding passages are just a few selections from Wesley's vast writings that demonstrate his fourfold approach to comprehending spiritual truth. As such, his approach reflects an openness to other traditions, the usefulness of a broad, liberal education and the personal experience of the believer. Yet, in the end, the standard by which these other contributors were to be valued and judged, were their conformity to the doctrine and discipline of Scripture.

Wesley's desire for a balanced approach to the Christian life is highlighted by an incident that has been passed down through Methodist tradition. Shortly before he died, Wesley was asked how to keep Methodism alive and well after he was gone. John Wesley was said to have replied,

> "Preach our doctrine (scripture), inculcate experience, urge practice, enforce discipline. If you preach doctrine only, the people will become antinomians; if you

> preach experience only, they will become enthusiasts; if you preach practice only, they will become pharisees; and if you preach all these things and do not enforce discipline, Methodism will be like a highly cultivated garden without a fence, posed to the ravages of the wild boar of the forest."

For Wesley, and those who would follow his teachings, this was the best and most effective way to discern truth, to gain heaven, and "to land safe on that happy shore."



B. F. Roberts

1823-1893

A Concept of Education

Introduction

The richest heritage of nations, organizations or movements is the men they produce and give to the world... what are all the glories of Methodism measured by her vast number of adherents, her wealth, her college and universities compared with such names as John and Charles Wesley, John Fletcher, Adam Clarke and Francis Asbury? Free Methodism... is rich in that she has given to the world, both among her ministry and laity, men and women who are worthy to stand side by side with the uncrowned

kings of any period in the history of the church.

Around one man, Rev. Benjamin Titus Roberts, as a storm center, the forces opposing the work of Free Methodism gathered. He was characterized by simplicity of spirit and manner. He had the power of saying much in few words. His editorials, his books and his sermons, were all models of brevity and conciseness in stating the truth. He possessed the faculty of going directly to the heart of the mattter in hand. He could say more in half an hour than most men in twice that time. Capable of exalted conception, sublime thought, and expression, he usually spoke in language so simple that a child could understand. His experience as a Christian was marked by the same directness and simplicity, which characterized him as a man. He sought for himself continually a definite experience in saving grace [and a] conscious personal communion with God in the Holy Spirit.

Rev. Roberts maintained a strong and steady bent toward the opinion that "there is more

to Christianity than can be gathered from books or teachers." In fact, in many places he made the point clear that knowledge of science, history and oratory, without the Spirit, may make one an amusing speaker, but such a person will not be able to convict men of sin or awaken the conscience.

However, because he was broadly educated and saw the benefits of such an education, Rev. Roberts also called Christians, and especially preachers, to educate themselves broadly, devote themselves to the discipline of study, and pursue truth in all its forms, knowing that all truth belonged to God. Through his efforts and those who followed after him, schools were established, many in order to promote a well-trained clergy, an educated laity, and an "enlightened land."

-based on the work by John S. McGeary,
Outline History of the Free Methodist Church

A Concept of Education

Advertisement in the ***Earnest Christian,***
April, 1873

"We desire to call attention of all lovers of mental culture, as it appears, and as it really is, when combined with practical piety, to the fact that the Michigan Conference of the Free Methodist Church, is now putting forth a vigorous effort to plant a Seminary of learning at Spring Arbor, Mich., where such training can be had as will fit young persons to be ornaments, godly ornaments, in an enlightened land; and that, too, without hazarding so much as must be the case in our popular schools. We are fully convinced that a mental and moral culture can and should go hand and hand, and that no other culture, at least that nothing less than this, can possibly produce a

symmetrical development of so noble a being man should be."

From his work, ***Fishers of Men***

How to Succeed – Soundness of Faith

Fishermen are not generally regarded as a cultivated class. Yet in their calling they are men of science. They go for fish where fish may be found. They use such instruments to catch them as experience shows are the best.... So he who would catch men must adopt proper measures to catch men. It is not enough that he desire success. He must use the means to secure it. He has to deal with the conscience and the will.

It is one of the heresies of the age that "It does not matter what a man's doctrines are, if his heart is right." But here is the difficulty. If salvation comes through belief of the truth, how can the heart become right through belief of fundamental errors?

Without a firm and intelligent belief in the

doctrines of God, you will, if you attempt to reform others, be as likely to be yourself perverted from the truths as you will to convert them.

Study

He then who would do the will of God, and teach that will to others, must study the Bible, that he may understand what that will is, and how it should be properly applied to all the various relations in life. "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." – John 5:39. If you would win souls, whatever else you may know, or may not know, you must know "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ." – II Tim. 3:15. For this knowledge there can be no substitute. No familiarity with works of history, or philosophy, or science, or even theology, can take the place of a thorough acquaintance with the word of God. One may be a graduate of a college and of a

Theological Seminary, and yet not know how to wield "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."– Eph. 6:17. If so, he will be overmatched in the conflict with error, by men of much less general knowledge but who are familiar with the Bible. Few can appreciate the force of metaphysical arguments, but God's word carries authority. A mechanic fails to do his work properly unless he knows what tools to use, how to use them, and where to find them when needed. So, to build up others in faith and holiness, you must know what portion of God's word is adapted to their case. To do this you must become familiar with every book of the Bible. For almost every chapter contains some new illustration or application of the truth. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the world of truth."– II Tim. 2:15. To divide the word and truth rightly, you must be well acquainted with it as a whole, and in all its parts. Suppose you had given directions to one who was working for you; would

you be pleased if he neglected to acquaint himself with these directions, for the study of anything else, however important? So he who would be "approved unto God" must study the word of God.

But though divine knowledge is greatly to be preferred, where no other may be had, save at its expense, yet human learning is by no means to be lightly esteemed. It aids greatly in understanding the Scriptures, to have a knowledge of natural science. The beauty and force of many allusions and illustrations of Scripture cannot be seen by one who is ignorant of natural philosophy. The candid student of nature and of the Bible can hardly fail to see that the same God is the Author of both. As Bishop Butler says, "The whole of religion is throughout credible; nor is there, I think, anything relating to the revealed dispensation of things, more different from the experienced constitution and course of nature, than some parts of the constitution of nature are from other parts of it." Those men of science who reject the Bible are not at the pains to carefully and candidly study

it, or they would see that it is in harmony with science. Hugh Miller says of geology, a science in which he was well versed, "It is truly wonderful how thoroughly, in its general scope, the revealed pieces [fit] on to the geological record."

"By piecing the two records together – that revealed in Scripture and that revealed in the rocks – records which, however widely geologists may mistake the one, or commentators misunderstand the other, have emanated from the same great Author; we learn that in slow and solemn majesty has period succeeded period, each in succession ushering in a higher and yet higher scene of existence – that fish, reptiles, mammiferous quadrupeds, have reigned in turn – that responsible man, 'made in the image of God,' and with dominion over all creatures, ultimately entered into a world ripened for his reception; but farther that this passing scene, in which he forms the prominent figure, is not the final one in the long series, but merely the last in the preliminary scenes; and that that period to which bygone ages,

incalculable in amount, with all their well-proportioned gradation of being, form the imposing vestibule shall have perfection for its occupant, and eternity for its duration."

History also should be studied as time and opportunity permit. The hand of God can be seen in the history of our race. A thorough acquaintance with it, and with the prophecies of the Bible, will demonstrate that these predictions must have come from the inspiration of an omniscient Being. We do not know where a more faithful and comprehensive epitome of the history of the world can be found than in the seventh chapter of the prophecies of Daniel. A devout mind can find in the history of any nation, reasons for loving and serving God.

Literature, mathematics, in short every branch or human knowledge can be used to advantage in the work of winning souls to God. The Gospel has always been the friend of learning, and they who would labor with success to diffuse its blessings, must avail themselves of their

opportunities to acquire useful knowledge. "Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom." — Prov. 18.1.

But as all rivers run into the sea, from which unseen they came, so should all knowledge lead the soul back to God, its Author."

John Wesley was a man of varied learning. Yet he says: "I want to know one thing, the way to Heaven. He hath written it down in a book! Oh, give me that book! At any price give me the book of God! I have it, here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri* — a man of one book. Here then I am far from the busy ways of man, I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read this book; for this end, to find the way to Heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift my heart up to the Father

of the light – Lord, is it not thy word? If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God. Thou 'givest liberally and upbraidest not.' Thou hast said, 'If any be willing to do thy will, he shall know.' I am willing to do; let me know thy will. I then search after, and consider parallel passages of Scripture, 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual.' I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then, the witnesses whereby, being dead they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach."

If you study much you will have to set yourself about it with determination. There is so much to interest, so much to occupy the mind, that unless you set certain hours in the day for your books, and under ordinary circumstances insist upon having them free from interruption, you will accomplish but little in the way of study. Whatever your natural talents may be, if you neglect to study, you will become intellectually indolent, and

incapable of any great mental exertion. Though it may at first be hard to study, yet the mind, like the body, grows strong by exercise, and what was in the beginning difficult, by practice becomes easy. To be a student requires industry and perseverance. If he is wholly consecrated to God, while he is daily laboring for the salvation of souls, he may each day add to his stock of learning, so as to become in time an accurate scholar, and a useful man of God.

From ***Benjamin Titus Roberts: A Biography*** by his son, Benson Howard Roberts, 1900

The Object of Studying

"…For, as I told father; I am resolved to make the interest of my soul of first importance, my bodily health of second, and the improvement

of my mind the third....This then was the rule of his college life, and subsequently of his whole life. The interests of the soul of first importance; second, bodily health; intellectual advancement third. No one of these was afterwards neglected. In the midst of cares his soul must have needed care; in the midst of toils and studies his body must have rest. Regular sleep and care in eating were the rules where practicable. The mind too, must be fed, and daily was the Bible studied. History, finance, and science, were made the ministers to his pleasure and power "...let your design be to glorify God with your learning as well as with your body and spirit, all of which are His."

"I have become convinced from experience, that our true advancement is not measured by the rapidity with which we pass over an author, but by our thoroughness in completely mastering whatever we undertake. Our object in studying is not so much the acquisition of useful, practical knowledge, as to fit ourselves for skillfully culling that knowledge in the future not

only from books, but from common occurances of every-day life."

From ***Pungent Truths***
A compilation of writings by
Benjamin Titus Roberts, 1912

96. Forms

All efforts to so spiritualize Christianity as to dispense with reforms, have been utter failures. This earth is too material for the long-continued abode of anything wholly spiritual. When a human being takes the spirit form, he leaves this world. All our senses demand something tangible, though it be but a medium thorough which that which is intangible may work. Electricity diffused is unrecognized; but

concentrated, it carries our messages with lightning's speed, illuminates our streets, and propels our cars. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." – I Cor. 4: 20. But still it is a kingdom, regularly organized, and not anarchy. Spiritual life, embodied in proper forms, multiplies and perpetuates itself, and is made a blessing to others; but disembodied, it disappears and, as far as can be seen, accomplishes little good. If, as we say, the arm goes to sleep, we do not cut it off, but move it about and restore the circulation; so, if any of the forms of religion which Christ has established seem dry and dead, put new life into them, and they will again become of service to you. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus." – II Tim. 1:13.

135. Doing or Doubting

Many are in doubt about their inward experience, because they are doing too little for

others. If a living body does not have food from without, it feeds upon itself. So, if a truly converted person is not doing for others, he is troubled about himself. The reason why he feels that he is lacking in grace is because he has not used the grace he had. As water is drawn from a well, water from unseen sources comes running in. So, as grace is dispensed to others, grace multiplies, like the barley loaves which the disciples handed out to the multitude. In helping others we help ourselves. In bearing one another's burdens our own grow lighter. Any one of Christ's disciples who needs our help stands to us in the place of Christ. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these by brethren, ye have done it unto me." – Matt. 25:40.

405. Preachers, Education

Dr. Ormiston, one of the most able and learned preachers of New York says, "A thorough

acquaintance with the Scriptures, an experimental knowledge of the power of the gospel, and a ready command of the English language, will enable a man to become a minister and a successful preacher of the gospel.

406. Preachers, Must Study

No matter what may be the talent, and learning, and piety of a preacher, he will cease to be useful if he ceases to study. Wesley preached incessantly; but he was a hard student. Adam Clarke, while preaching more sermons in a year than the most active of our preachers, became one of the first scholars of his day.

Dr. Stephen Olin says: "It may be laid down as a first principle, that he can not long continue a useful, nor even a popular, preacher, who has ceased to be a student....it is quite as practicable to be a good preacher of the gospel without praying as without studying."

409. Preachers, Young, Should Pursue a Course of Study

Young preachers should pursue a course of study. This will teach them order and system and give them thoughts...They should write sermons, not for the purpose of reading them to their congregations, but for the purpose of acquiring the power to express themselves correctly and to arrange their thoughts systematically. A desultory style of preaching may be tolerated in the fervor and enthusiasm of youth; but when these wear away, the people soon get tired of it.

410. Preachers, Young, Should Read

Make no apologies. You have not as hard a circuit as Timothy had. Books were much scarcer and more costly then, than now. It took a small fortune then to buy a Bible. Few had one. You have a Bible to study and you can readily procure other good books to read, if you desire to. A few

good books, carefully read, understood and remembered, will do you more good than many will, read in a cursory manner. A man who likes to fish may not like to dig, but he will not neglect to dig the necessary bait. If you love souls, you will not be averse to reading those books that will help you in winning souls.

Every preacher is a teacher. But we cannot teach what we do not know. To lead others in the way of life we must ourselves be in the way of life. To instruct others we must ourselves receive instruction…Follow the Spirit and He will lead you into all truth. But it will often be through study, and by searching out the revelations which God has made to others. If you would grow, you must love the truth.

411. Preachers, Study and Labor Not in Conflict

Whoever is called of God to preach is called of God to study. Nor, if he works with God

will his studies interfere with his preaching. Adam Clarke was one of the greatest scholars of his day, and his immense fund of learning was acquired while in the active work of the ministry. He preached incessantly. We doubt if there is one among us who preaches as many sermons in a year as he did while pursuing those studies, and gaining the knowledge which made him famous for his learning among the learned men of the world.

522. Schools, Salvation

No agency among us is doing more for the permanence and spread of the work of God in the earth than our salvation schools. They are raising up well-trained, valiant soldiers who will carry on the truth when we who have been longest on the field shall have been called from the scenes of conflict. The good effects of these schools have been already seen in all quarters of the globe. Then take hold and help sustain them. If you have children to send away to school, send them to our

schools. If you have money to leave for the cause of God, when you are through with it, leave a legacy for one of our schools. We would like to see each of them endowed with a liberal sum, the interest to be devoted to the support of the principal and teachers.

562. Study

If a preacher would be permanently useful, he *must* study. This is imperative. No natural gifts can render study unnecessary. The most brilliant speaker will soon loose interest in what he says, if he keeps on, year after year, repeating his old discourses. And if a speaker is not himself interested in what he says, he will fail to interest others. Such persons, finding their usefulness gone, themselves a burden, and their ministry a drudgery, are apt to forsake their divine calling at a time of life when they should be capable of doing the most good.

Years ago we said to the most original genius we ever knew, "You ought to study more."

"What shall I study?" was the sublime reply, with special emphasis on "I." For many years, when the church has received his services most, and when his influence might have been most widely felt, he has been hid away, buried out of sight. The ocean keeps full by being fed by thousands of rivers; the richest soil maintains its productiveness by absorbing fertility from earth and water and air; and so the mind most richly endowed by nature must take in new supplies of mental food, or it will gradually lose its grasp and power.

Conclusion

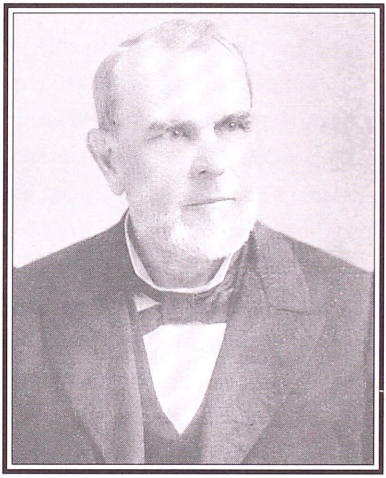
The demands that Rev. Roberts placed on his ministers, and on those to whom he ministered, were demands that he willingly first placed on himself. One of his co-laborers commented,

> "He possessed and exhibited many qualities of the mind and heart rarely found in one man. Providence seems to have made special molds in which to cast him, and to have broken them once he was cast, so that a duplicate is impossible."

He was often praised for his humility and simplicity inspite of possessing an extensive and thorough education. Having graduated with honors from a selective university, he continued to be a lifelong student of both men and books. His mind was not only replete with the lore of the schools, but abundantly stored with that practical knowledge of human affairs without which all scholarship is of little worth.

In the person of Benjamin Titus Roberts, the Free Methodist Church was blessed with a

founder who, like John Wesley before him, was marked by a desire to use all that human reason, logic and education could offer, under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures.



Edward S. Hart

1835-1919

A Concept of Christian Education

Introduction

One day in the winter of 1859, a young man in Marengo, Illinois, who decided to make the law his profession, went into the office of a lawyer who was a personal friend. The young man had been carrying a spiritual burden for some time and on this day he was on the verge of desperation. His friend noticing his agitation inquired the cause. The reply was, "Henry it has come to this. I can go on as I am..., or I can give my heart to

God, live to some purpose, die happy and gain heaven, and," after a pause, "Henry, I shall do just as you say." The friend said, "Why, get religion of course." That evening he sought and found God. The decisions of that day gave to the Free Methodist Church and the cause of Bible religion, the life, labors and influence of Edward Payson Hart.

His manner in the pulpit is dignified, easy, pleasing, never descending to harsh invective, his polished shafts of keen sarcasm hurled at sin and the weaknesses and foibles of popular religion cut to the quick. When a young man, the writer [John S. McGeary] considered him the greatest preacher he ever heard, and has not materially changed his opinion yet. In 1874, Rev. Hart was elected General Superintendent and has filled the position with ability ever since. With the exception of B.T. Roberts, no other man perhaps exerted a greater influence in the making of the Free Methodist Church.

-from the work of John S. McGeary,
Outline History of the Free Methodist Church

In the fall of 1862, B.T. Roberts requested of E.P. Hart, ordained deacon only one year prior, to leave his appointment in Marengo, Illinois, and go to Michigan and investigate the possiblities of establishing a Free Methodist work in Michigan. His reply to Superintendent Roberts was from the heart of a fully committed servant, "If you say go and I can get there, I will go to the North Pole."

After establishing a work in Ida, Michigan, it was Rev. and Mrs. Hart's full expectation to return to their work and friends in Illinois. However, at the beckoning of their new friends in the faith in Michigan, they returned to Marengo to pack up their belongings and commit full-time to the work in Michigan.

E.P. Hart wrote about his various appointments throughout the Midwest in his work, Reminiscences of Early Free Methodism. *In that volume, Chapter XIX is devoted to establishing the Free Methodist Church in Southern Michigan, and the founding of Spring Arbor Seminary in 1873, "in the interest of Christian education."*

A Concept of Christian Education

Reminiscences of Early Free Methodism
Chapter XIX

The eighth annual session of the Michigan conference convened at Delta, Ohio, Wednesday, September 25, 1872. Brother Roberts had not arrived and I was elected president pro tem. This was the first time I had been called upon to preside at an annual conference session, and I very keenly realized the responsibility. Rev. L. J. Francisco was elected secretary and Rev. J. A. Wilson assistant. On Friday afternoon Brother Roberts arrived and took the chair. Rev. Lewis Bailey, at that time editor of the *Free Methodist*, was present at this session of the conference. He laughingly remarked as to my expeditious way of transacting the business. I suppose I was quite nervous and

perhaps rushed the work through with unseemly haste.

The school question came up again and the committee presented the following report, which was adopted:

> "We still feel the need of a school devoted to the promotion of earnest Christianity and sound, solid learning. The effort to establish such a school at Spring Arbor last year was not prosecuted to success owing to various causes. There is still, we understand, a good opening there, and we recommend the appointment of a committee to establish such a school as we need, either there or in any other place which may offer in their judgment superior advantages and inducements. This committee shall consist of the following persons: E.P. Hart, L.J. Francisco, C.S. Gitchell, J. Ellison, Charles Mattice, I.B. Allen, J.T. Gates. This committee shall have full power to establish the school, secure an incorporation and employ

> teachers, provided they shall proceed no farther nor faster than the means placed at their disposal, or secured by good subscriptions, will warrant, so as not to bring the conference in debt. In case the committee proceed to establish a school we pledge to them our earnest and hearty co-operation."

The same chairmen were re-elected and appointed to the same districts they had traveled the previous year. After the conference adjourned the committee visited Spring Arbor and informed the people there that we were about to establish a school at some point, and wanted an immediate decision as to their acceptance of our offer of the year before. With one or two other members of the committee I went to Leoni, a station just east of Jackson, where the Wesleyan Methodists had formerly conducted a school, and looked over the vacated school property there. When we returned we found the citizens of Spring Arbor in a stir of excitement raising the funds for the purchase of the property at that place. By night their different

soliciting committees came in and reported that they had the required amount pledged.

We decided to locate the school at Spring Arbor, signed the articles of agreement, and the property was purchased and deeded to me in trust until an incorporation could be effected and trustees elected. I saw at once that the burden of the enterprise would rest on me, and decided to sellout at Delta and remove to Spring Arbor. Having disposed of our property, I purchased a lot and in the early spring commenced to build at Spring Arbor. In the meeting held by Doctor Redfield at Marengo, Illinois, among the large number saved was one Stephen Ransom, who had removed to Lawrence, Michigan. Knowing him to be a first-class carpenter and a thoroughly religious and reliable man, I at once opened correspondence with him with reference to his coming to Spring Arbor to reconstruct and put the school buildings in suitable repair. Brother Ransom came on and the two buildings, one for chapel and recitation rooms and the other for a boarding hall, were put in condition, and Brothers

Roberts and LaDue formally dedicated the property to the Lord in the interest of Christian education.

We had removed to Spring Arbor and rented a house while our house was in process of erection. Needing some lumber, I engaged a man with a team to go to Jackson and haul it for me to Spring Arbor. I went with the man and team to Jackson, where I was to take the train to attend one of my quarterly meetings. Going to the lumber yard, I selected the lumber, saw it loaded on to the wagon, when the horses, being frightened by the blowing of the noon whistle of the planing mill, started to run. Springing to the head of the off horse I grasped him by the bit and undertook to stop the team, but they were running with such force that I was dashed into a pile of stones. My head was badly cut and two wheels of the heavily-loaded wagon passed over my right leg breaking both bones just above the ankle. For a short time I was unconscious, and when consciousness returned I found myself bolstered up in a chair in the office of the lumber yard. Looking across the street I saw

a hotel, and told them to take me over there. A surgeon was summoned, who soon reduced the fractures and said if I wished to reach Spring Arbor I had better go at once. A two-seated carriage was secured, and encased in cushions, with my broken limb resting on the front seat, I was taken to my home, where, placed on the bed, I was made comfortable as the circumstances would allow.

Before leaving home that morning I told my wife that I had so many quarterly meetings to hold and so many camp-meetings to attend, besides looking after the repairs on the school buildings, that I did not know how I was to get through with it all; but before sundown I found myself providentially called aside to rest awhile.

We had but recently moved into the house we were occupying and were hardly settled, but that morning the children had put up some scripture mottoes on the wall. Lying there on the bed, I began to muse on my condition. My expenses at the hotel and carriage hire had taken all my money but a little loose change in my pocket. I said to my wife, "Here we are, living in a

rented house with no fuel and but little provision and I flat on my back with a broken leg." Just then I looked up to the motto on my right and read: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." – I Tim. 6:6; 7:8. Then as my mind went back over the work I could think of a good many who would sympathize with me in my affliction and of some who, on account of our radical principles, might rejoice; when, turning my eyes to the wall on the left, I read: "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." – Matt 5:43,44.

Before the day closed an infidel brought a load of wood, and neighbors who, to designate me from other elders who had moved in, already began to speak of me with special emphasis on the article as the elder, saw that all our needs were supplied. For three months the Lord very clearly demonstrated that he could carry on the work

without my assistance, and further, that he could support me and mine just as easily as though I were bustling around loaded down with care and anxiety. Every mail brought remittances, and I told those who came in to see me that I was lying flat on my back receiving the pay of a congressman.

For several months I was confined to my bed. Money came from parties of whom I had never before heard, one of these being a wealthy coal-dealer living near Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. I afterwards entered into correspondence with him, and opened for an extensive revival in the city where this gentleman resided.

Our little house completed, we moved in being carried on a litter. At the dedication of the school buildings, being anxious to attend, four or five of the brethren took me on a lounge to the Sunday dedication service. It was a high day. Rev. B.T. Roberts, Rev. Thomas S. LaDue. and Rev. Bailey were present and took part in the exercises. I paid rather dearly, however, for the pleasure of attending these exercises, for I took a severe cold, which brought on neuralgia of the heart, and for a

time I stood in the very gates of death. At times the pain became so severe that I could not lie in bed but had to be lifted out into a sitting posture in a chair. By leaning forward in the paroxysms of pain the pressure on my wounded limb turned the sole of my foot completely up to one side. The surgeon had to be called to wrench my foot back into position, which proved to be a painful operation. I became so feeble that the physician could give no hope of my recovery. Sister Hart called mightily on the Lord, and a company of saints, Brother and Sister Gitchell among them, besieged the throne of grace and by prayer and faith prevailed.

One night when I was at the very lowest I had, to me, a remarkable vision. I seemed to be in the eternal world, when all at once I was surrounded by clouds, which formed a vast amphitheater. The clouds were arched above, and below was a deep, dark pit in which demons were raging in boisterous strife. It seemed to me that no power could quell them. Just then I heard the words, "I am the high and holy one who inhabiteth

eternity." Looking up to the arched clouds, I saw a bright being whom I at once recognized as the Son of God. As I gazed upon him, with an air of authority he waved his hand and the demons seemed to skulk away in sullen wrath. The vision so impressed my mind that I could never after doubt the authority and controlling power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The next morning when the doctor came in I told him how wonderfully the Lord had blessed me and how much better I felt in soul and body. The dear old man was so affected he was at a loss to know what to do, but seemed disposed to leave the case in the Lord's hands. From that time my recovery was quite rapid.

The conference in the fall of 1873 was held at Saint Johns, Michigan. I was not able to attend, the only instance in all my work as a Free Methodist minister that I have not attended the session of an annual conference. My father, who had built and stocked a store at Spring Arbor, was sent as delegate and informed the conference of my critical condition, but that the Lord had wonderfully blessed me, so the brethren ventured

to elect me to the chairmanship once more.

Judge Gridley, of Jackson, drew up the articles of association, the incorporation was duly formed and trustees elected, and we were ready for the selection of teachers and session of school. I had the general oversight of the institution, the burden of finances, securing teachers, etc., all devolving upon me. Joseph Jones, the well-to-do farmer who greeted Mrs. Hart and myself so cordially on our first visit to Michigan, had a family of four or five sons and three daughters. The chief characteristic with most of these was an all-prevailing determination for a higher education. Clark and Frank at the time of our advent were devoting their time to study preparing themselves to enter the state university at Ann Arbor. During our first winter in the state we held a series of evening meetings in the schoolhouse in the Jones' neighborhood. Our afternoon meetings were held in the spacious kitchen of the Jones' residence.

During one afternoon meeting we were startled by a loud knock. Father Jones opened the door, when one of his sons, who was standing

there, said excitedly, "A man is lying in the old deserted log house over by the railroad track, and he says this is the ninth day he has been there without food or water, and I have come for help to get him away." Several of the brethren went with him and found the poor man nearly exhausted from cold and hunger. They knew by the snow, which had fallen, that the man must have been there for at least nine days. Bringing the man over to the house of Brother Jones a bed was prepared for him near the kitchen stove, and we began to administer to his needs. He begged piteously for water. I told him we were giving it to him as we thought he could bear it. Looking up in my face he said, "Don't you know that three-fourths of the human system is fluid? I could take a gallon of water into my stomach and it would immediately be diffused through my body and would do harm; give me water." We gave him nourishment and as he gained strength I inquired how he came to go into the old deserted log house. He replied, "I had a school of young men, but the war breaking out, my pupils enlisted and my occupation was gone,

and I started out to tramp through the country. Walking down the railroad track I became thoroughly discouraged, and turned into the old log house to die." I asked him what his sensations were while there. He answered, "For the first few days I was very hungry, but this passed off, and there came on intolerable thirst. Water was the thought both in my sleeping and waking dreams. When I was awake, I would build air castles, and I thought if I were rich I would build me a mansion, lay out my grounds, and in the midst I would have a fountain of pure sparkling water bubbling up. And I thought I would sit with a cup in my hand and drink, and forever drink." I thought how true to nature were the words of the blessed Master when he said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." – Matt. 5:6. First there comes the hunger, and as this passes off there comes on an intolerable thirst, expressive of a desire which in its intensity overtops every other desire; then comes the filling.

The poor man's feet were so badly frozen that they had to be partly amputated. This man

remained with Brother Jones and became tutor to his two sons, Clark and Frank. Clark soon entered the university, was graduated with honors, and when Brother Roberts wrote requesting him to act as principal of Chili seminary I wrote Brother Roberts that Brother Jones was only loaned. So when we were ready to open our seminary Brother Jones came on and took charge. As assistants he had Miss Johnson, Miss Davenport, Miss Shepard, with D.S. Arnold as professor of music. Miss Johnson died some years ago in Illinois. Miss Davenport is now Mrs. J. Craig, her husband being a former student of the seminary and for several years a successful traveling preacher. At this writing he is pastor of our church at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Miss Shepard became the wife of a missionary to Bulgaria. They spent several years in the foreign field, but at present I believe are laboring in the Michigan conference of the Methodist Episcopal church.

Brother Jones labored successfully for years as principal of the seminary, but finally gave up the position and turned his attention to farming.

After the death of his estimable companion he engaged in teaching in Wisconsin. At this writing he is professor of languages in the Spring Arbor seminary. Brother Arnold spent several years in "The Arnold School of Music," in Chicago, but at this time is a successful professor of music in the Holiness college at Greenville, Texas.

Clark Jones held the position of principal of the school until he saw a fine three-story brick building erected; then resigned and left the work to others. The seminary has proved a great blessing. Scores of young people in the immediate vicinity have received a liberal education and been fitted for positions of honor and profit who, had it not been for the school, could never have had these advantages. I call to mind a notable case. A lady in San Francisco, California, who with her husband had been a missionary, the husband having died, she had an intense desire to do the best she could for her boys. She wanted to save them from being thrown into the class which on the coast are denominated "hoodlums." Consulting with Rev. W.D. Bishop, of the Seamen's Bethel, he advised

her to send them to Spring Arbor, Michigan. The good woman brought them on and placed them in the seminary, at that time under the supervision of Professor Calland. The boys were a little wild at first, but were soon brought to the recognition of proper authority and obedience to wholesome discipline.

We finally removed to Alameda, California. We had entirely lost track of these boys, and for twenty years had heard nothing of them, when one day we saw a very fine painting on exhibition in the window of one of the drug stores of our city. Down in the corner we noticed A. Cederholme as the name of the artist, and upon inquiry learned that this was Adolph Cederholme, a son of the widow mentioned above. As soon as he heard of our whereabouts he gave us a call. He was delighted to recall the experiences of his school days at the seminary. He said he never should cease to be thankful for the principles inculcated, and for the training he received while there. He informed us that he and his brothers had contracted no bad habits, that he was a member of

the Presbyterian church, and that his elder brother had died in holy triumph and gone to heaven. He laughed heartily as he recalled the lively meetings and the earnest testimonies of some of the more enthusiastic brethren. One brother would exclaim, "I was born on the field of battle," and another, "I like my spiritual provender warm," and one old brother was ever calling on the Lord for "the 'rale' fire."

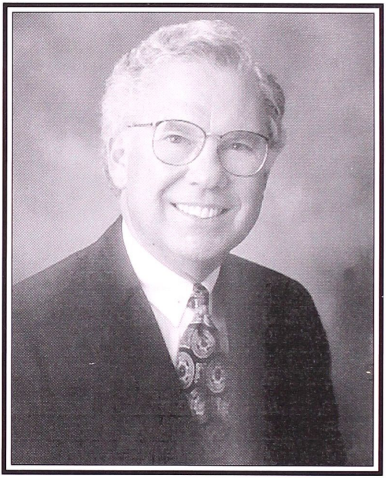
Our schools are doing a grand work. These early impressions are lasting impressions, and these hallowed influences are moving out in ever-widening circles for truth and righteousness.

Conclusion

In Bishop Wilson T. Hogue's comprehensive two-volume *History of the Free Methodist Church,* published in 1918, he concludes the summary of Spring Arbor Seminary with these words:

> "Hundreds of young people of both sexes, under the influences brought to bear upon them in this excellent school, have become experimental Christians, and have developed strong and vigorous Christian characters, with which to go forth wisely and successfully to meet and solve the problems of life, and so to prove a blessing to their generation. Among its alumni are many who have distinguished themselves as ministers, missionaries, teachers, physicians, lawyers, and in various other honorable callings. Such an institution is a valuable asset to the Church, and is worthy of ever increasing growth and prosperity."

No finer legacy to the life and labors of Rev. E.P. Hart could ever be written, than that which continues to be written on the minds and hearts of Spring Arbor University students, and her alumni.



David L. McKenna

1929-

A Concept of Christian Higher Education

Introduction

David Loren McKenna forthrightly presents in this series of monographs a thorough-going philosophy for Christian higher education. Dr. McKenna came to Spring Arbor from the Ohio State University, where he was director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education. Prior to that time, he was dean and vice president of Spring Arbor College. During his tenure as academic dean he directed the faculty in its self

evaluation study, which was the basis for accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Dr. McKenna earned the Ph.D. and M.A. degrees at the University of Michigan, the B.D. from Asbury Theological Seminary and the B.A. from Western Michigan University, and the A.A. from Spring Arbor Junior College.

In 1961 Spring Arbor Junior College stood poised to become a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution. To justify this move and to propel the school toward greatness, Dr. McKenna articulated the philosophy of Christian higher education that has shaped the educational mission of Spring Arbor University ever since.

What follows is a reprint of Dr. McKenna's original expansion of the philosophy of Christian higher education, its importance to society and its role in the life of the church.

A Concept of Christian Higher Education

CONCEPT FOR THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Monograph No. 1

CHANGE OR PERISH
The Crisis in the Small Christian College

The small Christian college is living on borrowed time. In 1900, William Rainey Harper surveyed the prospects for the numerous denomination colleges which dotted the Midwestern landscape and predicted that only 25 percent of them had good chances for survival.

For the other 75 percent, he foresaw adjustment to lower level programs or death.[1]

Harper's appraisal of the tenuous future for the small church college was based upon several factors:

First, he saw the rapid development of the public high school. As the number of high schools increased and their programs were refined, the curriculum of these new "people's colleges" duplicated the offerings of the smaller college. In many cases, the instruction and facilities of the high schools were even superior to the professed college level programs.

Second, the increasing demand for specialization at the turn of the century was requiring that vocational preparation be included in the student's education during his undergraduate years. The accompanying pressures for the elective principle, specialized courses and professional fields of concentration were trends that worked against the prescriptive and selective liberal arts curriculum of the small college.

Third, Harper saw the trend away from the narrow sectarian spirit in religion as a menace to the small college church. Many of the colleges were supported by religious sects which maintained that the purpose of the college was to perpetuate the faith one delivered to the denomination. Consequently, the trustees, faculty, students and supporting publics were made up almost exclusively of the members of the denomination. As this sectarian attitude, however, gave way to a broader, ecumenical outlook, Harper foresaw that the *raison d'etre* of college would be lost. For those colleges which were unable to make the adjustment to a broader outlook, he said, "Death in these cases is of course a blessing – not only to the institutions that have died, but to the world about them."[2]

Fourth, the public university was predicted to grow rapidly at the expense of the small, church college. Because the constituency of the expanding, urban university was to be a new constituency, Harper was of the opinion that the students for these institutions would be drawn

directly from the field of the small college. The prestige of the large institution, the urban opportunities, the quality of the faculty and the superior facilities were all seen as factors which would strengthen the new public university and weaken the small college.

Fifth, the competition between the larger and smaller institutions for qualified faculty members was envisioned as a major obstacle to the continued development of the denominational college. Pessimistically, Harper limited the faculty recruiting base to young, vigorous instructors who would use the college as a stepping stone or to older second, third and fourth rate faculty members. The first alternative would provide quality, but not continuity; the latter continuity, but not quality.

The sixth and most serious difficulty which Harper saw to be facing the small church college was the lack of financial means to compete in program, personnel and facilities with the larger, state-supported institutions. With the reality of spiraling costs of operation and needed capital

expansion, the small college was economically hampered by limited enrollments and insufficient endowments. For the future, Harper did not envision new sources of financial aid to solve the economic dilemma.

Because of these problems, Harper predicted a life and death struggle for the small Christian college against mounting odds. He thought that about 25 percent of these colleges would come through the struggle as stronger institutions; another 25 percent would accept reality and make adjustments to high school or junior college programs. The remaining 50 percent were not mentioned – undoubtedly assumed to be a gesture of mercy.

For many of the small Christian colleges, Harper's prediction for death came true. Others continued to live by nurturing their limitations under the guise of an evangelistic fervor. But for others, the prediction became an alarm for action. The purposes of these colleges were subjected to critical scrutiny, experimental ideas were injected into staid curriculums, cooperative arrangements

were made among colleges and programs were merged or changed. To the credit of this latter group of colleges, they found new life and have continued to have an important influence in American higher education in spite of the fact that they are living on borrowed time.

The Prediction of the 60s

In recent years, the future of the small church college has again become open to serious question in the minds of many educators. Riesman, in *Constraint and Variety in American Education*, places the small church college in the tail of his serpentine organization of higher education. At the head of the procession are the *avant-garde* institutions which move with an uncertain twisting and turning action as they respond to the latest educational ideas. Following the leadership of these prestige colleges is the body of the procession – made up of the majority of institutions in higher education. This middle section represents those colleges which are vainly trying to make the

necessary shifts in direction and purpose to keep up with the vacillating head. In the tail of this loosely organized creature, however are the small church colleges which sluggishly contribute to the "topor of the tail."[1] Reisman classifies these institutions as those which have "students whose morals are more actively monitored than their minds" and as those which are named "...college only by the grace of semantic generosity."[2] For the small church college, he predicts that

> ...as the colleges "above" them and the high schools "below" them improve, they must also *change or perish*, though for a time they may hang on by catering to even lower intellectual levels and aspirations.[3]

In the same line of thought, but without the sense of futility, Davis writes,

> Already we have the prediction of a trenchant trustee of Dartmouth College that by 1970 only twenty private colleges will be significant. Agreeing with this drastic line of thinking, a director of a large foundation increases the estimate to fifty.

> Less pessimistic prognosticators forecast one hundred. But whatever the number (which will always be in dispute), the fact remains that a substatial number of thoughtful observers foretell that within ten years only a relatively few independent colleges will be of consequence.[4]

On the basis of these kinds of observations, Davis concludes his article by saying, "Some institutions will change and successfully meet the challenge. They will be 'significant.' Some will decline change, refuse to move and will perish."

Riesman's prediction was made on the basis of his judgment of the inferior academic quality of the small church college. Davis' prognosis was supported by his analysis of the financial problems of the private college. Another side of the picture is developed by McGrath in an article entitled "The Future of the Church-Related College." He locates the source of the problem in the dilution of both the Christian emphasis and the liberal educational tradition of the church college.

> All but those who view these institutions with a deceiving sentimentalism and nostalgia must conclude that in the absence of a rededication to undergraduate liberal education within the Christian tradition, the Protestant college as such is as near extinction as the whooping crane. [5]

In the same article, McGrath refers to a statement by Brauer in his paper, "The Christian College and American Education." The thesis of this latter writing is directed both to the crisis and the responsibility of the church college. Brauer states that the point had not yet

> ...been reached where the Christian college no longer can play a distinctive and creative role in American higher education. It is dangerously close to the point of no return, but has not yet reached it. The contemporary situation, like most historical situations, provides opportunities to move in either direction. The next quarter century might well determine whether the Christian college

can or should continue to exist in American higher education. [6]

A New Age – Old Problems

These predictions and warnings, like President Harper's, are made on rational grounds. In spite of the revised interest in the conservatism, idealism, and individualism which are supposed to characterize the small church college, the perennial problems of competition for students, faculty and funds are becoming more critical each year. Also, as in Harper's day, these problems can be clearly identified.

First is the fact that state-supported higher education is expected to not only absorb the bulk of the coming enrollment increases, but also to serve a larger proportion of the students in college than it has in the past. In California and Michigan, for example, over 80 percent of the college age youth enrolled in higher education are in state-supported colleges and universities. Even in such strong private colleges states as New York and

Ohio, the planning for the future predicts a solid majority of the students in state-supported institutions. In the melee of competition for students between the public and private institutions (as well as among the church colleges) there is no wonder that the future of the small church college is threatened.

A second problem which is related to the doubtful predictions about the future of the small church college *is the present lack of academic quality and the limited potential for improvement.* A review of the 1960-61 Directory of Higher Education published by the United States Office of Education shows that there were 126 non-accredited institutions which grant the Bachelor's degree. Of this number, 72 percent were church related and 89 percent were non-tax supported. Seventy-five percent of these colleges had enrolled enrollments under 400. The threats, then, that President Harper mentioned in 1900 are still present in revised form. Rather than being challenged by the rapid development of the high school, the small church college today is now

concerned with the prolific growth of higher education at the local level, primarily the public community college. More and more, the student is being forced to decide between the advantages of convenience and cost in the local college and the assets of atmosphere and association which are attributed to the church college.

Third, the small church college is still under the pressure of increasing the number of specialized offerings in the undergraduate curriculum. Yet, the nature of the dilemma has changed somewhat. Many small church colleges have already succumbed to the curricular demands of professional interest groups. In place of the former pressure from the ministerial profession for specialized theological training, business and alumni groups are now vocally expressing their interest in certain kinds of professional offerings without considering the total educational and economic impact upon the curriculum.

Furthermore, curriculum revision is hindered in many of these colleges because of the fear of losing the financial support from these

pressure groups if the number of specialized courses were reduced. The total result is the curriculum in many small church colleges has been proliferated beyond economy and purpose. Experience in working with small church colleges has revealed such examples as the college which included 700 courses in the catalog for a total yearly enrollment of 1300 students. A check of the schedule of this college showed that over 500 of these courses were offered in one quarter. In another case, the college catalog listed 416 courses for less than 450 students! Regretably, there is no assurance that these colleges are exceptions among the small church colleges.

Fourth, the problem of the breakdown of narrow sectarian attitudes is still evident at various stages of transition in church colleges across the country. Some colleges are still the educational extension of the sectarian group. Others are in the throes of change and are struggling with the kinds of social problems, which represent the shift of emphasis from morals to minds. Another group of colleges retains only a

nominal relationship to the denomination. Harper said that the change to a broader religious concept was necessary for the survival of the small church college. To make this change, however, introduces a new set of problems. It is not uncommon to visit small colleges with a nominal religious affiliation and find them grasping for a clear sense of purpose. Some have achieved unifying motivation through selective admissions and a strong liberal arts curriculum. Many others are struggling with the dilemma of needing increased enrollments for economic survival, but finding that student resources from the supporting denominations are already saturated. To extend the recruiting base to students of diverse backgrounds and abilities frequently dilutes rather than strengthens the avowed purpose of the college.

The additional problems of competition for qualified faculty and adequate financial resources which were present in 1900 have changed only in intensity. The fact that the quality of the state-supported colleges and universities is threatened by the ever-widening gap between the supply and

demand for college teachers only accentuates the prominence of the faculty shortage problem for the small church college. Even in public education the facts show that the number of faculty members with the Ph.D. degree is steadily declining. Furthermore, a realistic look into the future presents the harsh alternative of an inadequate number or an inferior quality of potential faculty members. In the light of this critical shortage it is not unusual to hear a university president personally pledge to double faculty salaries in the next decade in order to attract top personnel. This means that the gap between faculty salaries in the private college and the public university will be widened rather than closed. If the small church college loses its ability to compete for qualified professors, it will also have lost its unique academic appeal – the teaching ministry of competent faculties who conceive their work to be the communion of soul with soul.

It is the intensified and expanding force of these problems which provokes the present sense of crisis about the future of many small church

colleges. Their position cannot and will not be static. Riesman's words seem to repeat themselves, "...as the college 'above' them and the high schools 'below' them improve, they must also change or perish."

[1] William Rainey Harper. *The Trend of Higher Education*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1905. pp. 349.
[2] Ibid., p. 367.
[3] David Riesman. *Constraint and Variety In American Education*. Doubleday and Co., Inc., New York: 1958. p. 60.
[4] Ibid., pp. 61-62.
[5] Loc. cit.
[6] Paul H. Davis. Reprint from "Memo to the Board".
[7] Earl J. McGrath. "The Future of the Protestant College," *Liberal Education*. March, 1961, Vol. XLVII, No. 1. p. 45.
[8] Ibid.

Monograph No. 2

ALERNATIVES FOR ACTION

The Role of the Small Christian College in American Higher Education

The small Christian college is faced with the harsh alternative of "change or perish." This limited choice is the result of the increasing pressures on the private college for an educational excellence which implies a distinctive purpose, adequate facilities, a qualified faculty and stable financing. Undoubtedly, the pressures to produce and the decisiveness of the alternative will provoke different responses from different colleges. Some will capitalize on an attitude of institutional martyrdom, which reaffirms the "blessed mediocrity" of the college. Others will re-emphasize the traditional qualities of "a Christian atmosphere, personal interest in the student and rolling hills." While these responses may have been meaningful distinctions for the small Christian college in the past, it is doubtful that

they will be the saving features for the future.

The remaining alternative – other than death – is a purposeful change, which may be as simple as a redefinition of purpose or as drastic as a merger of colleges. In any case, the public relations façade must be dropped in favor of an objective analysis of the present and future problems confronting the small church college. Then, there must be the creative spark for activating those purposes and programs, which are historically meaningful to the Christian ethic and relevant to the issues of the present day. Not only that, but there must be established and maintained the intellectual integrity in the faculty and curriculum which justifies the existence of these institutions as colleges. Change, in this reference, will be the dynamic movement of the college in a direction, which will strengthen the moral and intellectual qualities, which are inherent in the purpose of the small church college. McGrath has said,

> "Church-related colleges will determine their own future position in American

> higher education by the resoluteness with which they reaffirm their religious dedication and re-establish their collegiate character."[1]

The accomplishment of meaningful change will require the continuous analysis of: (a) the role of small church colleges as an educational institution; (b) the relationship of the small church college to the total complex of Christian higher education; and (c) the responsibility of the small church college to American higher education. For each of these phases, there are specific steps that can be taken. The role of the small church college as an educational institution will be accomplished by a planned program of institutional self-study. The relationship of the small church college to the total complex of Christian higher education will be realized by the development of new levels of interinstitutional cooperation, research and planning. The responsibility of the small church college to American higher education will be discovered by the analysis, interpretation and

anticipation of significant trends in the purposes, structure and program of American higher education.

A. Internal Relationships

Institutional self-study is one of the most readily available means for improving the quality of the small church college. Developed on the premise that the purposes of the college are clearly defined, the self-study has the potential for producing the kind of institutional integrity, which is reserved for the college with consistent purposes, programs, and products. Furthermore, a self-study conducted by the faculty may have the motivating force to unite the personnel of the college in support of the institutional purpose. The results of this kind of purposeful analysis then give direction for student recruitment, curriculum planning, faculty recruitment, campus development and fund-raising. For immediate improvement and long range planning, the continuing program of institutional self-study is

the beginning of quality in Christian purpose and educational integrity for the small church college.

B. Relationships with Other Christian Colleges

The relationship of the small church college to other church colleges and to Christian higher education is the second area of development, which will contribute to survival for the individual college. A significant trend in higher education is the establishment of voluntary coordination agencies at interinstitutional, state and regional levels. In contrast, with the exception of a few loosely-organized associations, the church colleges have maintained their competitive individuality. There are even instances in which colleges supported by the same denomination are still having squabbles over "territorial rights." Survival and quality in the future, however, will require some fresh thinking about the interrelationship of church colleges denominationally and interdenominationally. At the present time, the voice of the small church

college is diffused and uncertain. Several movements are perceptible, however, which hold promise for the future. Some of the denominations are sponsoring studies of their colleges. After an analysis of the present and future needs and resources of the colleges, the studies may recommend plans for cooperative planning, coordination of programs, and even consolidation. For example, among the Presbyterian colleges in North Carolina, a thorough study of the problems and prospects for three small colleges resulted in the recommendation for consolidation into one larger institution. In spite of the ingrained sentiment, which surrounds the small church college and the denominational hope, which rests with its sectarian orientation, many other colleges may find merger the alternative to mediocrity.

The kind of thinking that is going on in some denominations should also be initiated among colleges of different denominations. Although it is unlikely that denominational leaders of similar theological persuasions will consent to an inter-denominational college or university, there

should be no hesitation to cooperate for the purpose of research, specialized program planning and consultation. The newly established Great Lakes College Association among several mid-western church colleges is an example of this kind of organization.

At the national level, The Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges has taken the lead in expressing the needs and potential for the small college. Although this corporation has a specialized interest in upgrading non-accredited institutions, the name of CASC has become affiliated with the respectable voice of the small college. An extension of this idea at an interdenominational level would seem to be an important step in evaluating and improving the task of the small church college in higher education.

C. Relationship to Public Higher Education

The third avenue for understanding the future role of the small church colleges may be

found in an analysis of the purposes and programs of the larger, state-supported institutions of higher education. These institutions, and particularly the expanding state university, are confronted with their own dilemmas. For instance, the public college or university struggles with these major problems:

1. Finding a unity of purpose for the institution while facing the multiple pressure to be "everything to every man."
2. Serving larger numbers of students who have a wide range of interests and abilities while maintaining the traditional standards of academic quality in the institution.
3. Developing a superior level of teaching (particularly for undergraduates) when promotion and prestige in the institution are based upon research and publication.
4. Determining its own responsibility for

> the value education and moral development of the student when it is historically committed to critical analysis and objectivity.

At each of these points, public higher education has had to take a stance even though it may be more the result of pressure than purpose. Many state-supported colleges and universities have been committed to serve all the students who can profit from some program of higher education. They have accepted the multiplicity of purposes and are now trying to make some loosely-coordinated sense out of the variety of educational aims which characterize their programs. Furthermore, public higher education has had to accept within the framework of "higher education" a diversity of courses ranging from cosmology to cosmetology.

The teaching versus research dilemma is at a stalemate in public higher education (and in other large prestige universities). Lip service is given to the value and primacy of the teaching

function, but promotion and prestige continue to be judged by research. It also seems clear from the concern of many writers that public higher education has had to forfeit the responsibility for formal value education to other institutions and agencies. The other side of academic freedom, liberal education and scholarly analysis, seems to suggest that the public college or university is limited in its impact upon the values of the individual student.

D. Guidelines for Action

In public higher education, then, the issues of quality in its purpose, clientele, curriculum, instruction and outcome are paramount. While vigorous attempts are being made to study and resolve these issues, a vacuum still exists at each point, which has not yet been filled by new institutions or revised programs. The future of the small church college may rest upon its ability and flexibility to fill these vacuums. If the guidelines for survival were spelled out in purposes and

programs designed to take up where public higher education leaves off, the plans for the small church college would include:

1. *An integrated sense of institutional purpose* which can be stated in operational terms, implemented in function and used for the continuous evaluation and development of the college.
2. *The selective admission of students* whose academic, personal and social abilities and achievements are compatible with the purpose of the institution.
3. *A continuing plan for curriculum development* which reaffirms the liberal arts, encourages experimentation for the integration of the Christian philosophy with liberal education and limits specialization in the curriculum to select programs which are purposeful and economical.

4. *An emphasis upon the primacy of the teaching function* with experimentation in teaching methods and action research on the teaching-learning process as an attraction, retention and contribution base for the faculty.
5. *An integrated program for the analysis, discussion, and choice of value positions* which would permeate the total curricular and co-curricular life of the college.

These proposed guidelines for the future of the small church college are not all-inclusive. They do not directly give consideration to the problems of finance, faculty and facilities, which occupy much of the administrator's time. However, it may be possible that the attention has been focused on the wrong issues. If the educational quality and contribution of the small church college were clearly established, it might change the focus of fundraising and faculty-recruiting from "begging" to "selling," and from

"defending" to "attracting."

Survival for the small church college, then, is essentially a quest for quality. It is a fact that the impending explosion of student enrollments will mean that there will be the need for all kinds of colleges in the future. Consequently, it may be expected that many colleges will seek survival in terms of quantity. Some colleges are already defending their existence by the number of students who need to be served by higher education. The question, however, is not whether these colleges will survive, but whether or not they will justify their survival. On this basis, it might be better for some institutions to "perish" literally rather than to exist among the walking dead.

The quest for quality, on the other hand, is a daring program of planned change with implications for the purpose, organization and curriculum of the college. It will mean the reaffirmation of the Christian tradition and restoration of liberal education as McGrath has suggested. It will also mean taking the offensive in determining the unique role of the small church

college in American higher education rather than adjusting to the backwash of the tidal wave in public colleges and universities. Because the small church college is still living on borrowed time, it will be the development of such bold plans for self-study, experimentation and action which will determine whether these colleges "can or should continue to make a significant contribution to American higher education."

[1] Earl J. McGrath, "The Future of the Protestant College." Liberal Education. March, 1961. Vol. XLVII. No. 1. p. 45.

Monograph No. 3

CHRIST AND THE COLLEGE

The Integration of Faith and Learning

The Christian college is a continuing experiment in the task of bringing together the world of the mind and the world of spirit into a common purpose. Its goal is the integration of the continuity of revealed Truth with the contingency of social and educational change. As an institution, which places at the heart of its existence the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, the Christian college has the advantage of a historically present purpose, which gives unity and stability to its program. At the same time, however, it is an educational institution, which is subject to the influences and pressures of the social order, which affect any college or university. Thus, purpose in the Christian college is in a state of constant tension between the diverse philosophies, commitments and revelations of mind and spirit. This tension may reproduce either the dynamic or the dilemma

of the Christian college. If the academic and spiritual objectives are uniquely interrelated in a singleness of purpose, the Christian college has found its distinctive. If the academic and spiritual objectives are antagonistically opposed in a conflict of purpose, or if they are passively independent in parallel purposes, the Christian college is confronted with its dilemma.

The history of the Christian college in American higher education suggests that the unity of spiritual and educational objectives is a delicate relationship which is difficult to define and more difficult to maintain. Too often the sense of balance between these objectives is best compared to the drunk man who gets on one side of the horse only to fall off the other. In fact, there seems to be a common historical pattern for the Christian college as it evolves from a sectarian institution, which is founded for the evangelistic self-perpetuation of a denominational species to a non-sectarian college with a diluted, if distinguishable, religious purpose. It is said that the watchword of the student body in an eastern college changed from "Are you

saved?" to "Beat Yale" in one generation.

In between the extreme emphasis upon evangelism or academics is the situation in which there is conflict of purposes characterized by separate spiritual and academic camps among the faculty and the constituency. Usually, the two groups co-exist in an armed truce until some minor incident touches off open hostility. Or more commonly, there is the situation in which the conflict is avoided by placing the spiritual and academic objectives on independent, but parallel tracks. The spiritual purpose is maintained by certain social regulations, a required course in Bible, daily chapel and religious emphasis week. The academic purpose is centered in the formal curriculum, which is adaptable to any form of educational change or pressure, which captures the mode for the moment. The regulations or religious procedures change, the spiritual purpose is lost and the college makes the shift from "monitoring morals to monitoring minds."

Whatever may be the cause for the defection of the Christian college from its historic

purpose in the past, the present crisis demands that its contribution to higher education be meaningfully defined in terms of both its spiritual and academic motives. Christianity cannot be confined to extra-curricular affairs. Neither can the intellectual life of the college simply be a doormat for evangelism. Rather, there is a need to come to grips with the problem of making a Christian "college" and a college "Christian." Jerusalem must find some affinity with Athens in a fresh approach to the concept of the Christian college.

Obligations of the Christian College

The concept of the Christian college must be constructed against the background of its theological, educational and social obligations. *First of all, the Christian college has a theological obligation to the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.* As noted earlier, it is this obligation which can give the college its distinctive purpose. *Second, there is the obligation of the institution to the philosophy of higher learning.* As the spiritual

obligation provides a frame of reference for integrating the purpose of the institution, the philosophy of higher learning will provide guidelines for academic content and quality. *Third, the Christian college has an obligation to the persons whom it serves*. This responsibility gives emphasis to the place of the student in Christian higher education as an individual with certain needs and expectations, which the Christian college can fulfill. *Fourth, the Christian college has an obligation to the culture of which it is a part*. The role that the college assumes in its society and the impact of its graduates on the social order will ultimately determine the outcomes of the college.

While one might start with any one of these obligations and proceed to unfold the larger purpose of the Christian college the thesis of this paper is that the concept for the Christian college must begin with the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. Having developed some basic premises about Christ and His relationship to the affairs of men, an integrating purpose can be defined for the

Christian college. Then, the nature and content of the educational experience can be spelled out in philosophical and personal terms in order to arrive at the end product of Christian higher education in its social responsibility.

Jesus Christ – Focus for the Christian College

Christ-centered education is a claim among church colleges, which frequently goes unchallenged. The appellation is a hidden persuader, which immediately implies educational mayhem tolerated in the name of Christ and spiritual blackmail permitted in the name of education. Too frequently, the Christian college is trying to exist on outmoded claims. In the past, these colleges have relied on their claim for academic excellence, which is fostered by individual attention to students. Also, they have claimed exclusive rights to Christian higher education in opposition to the secular university.

Today, however, the lines of excellence, attention and spirituality among private and public

colleges and universities have become blurred so that the former claims of the Christian college may be passé. If so, these colleges need to re-evaluate the purpose for which they exist in order to establish rightful claims or cease to exist. This requires a review of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ as the integrating purpose in Christian higher education.

The meaningfulness of the Person of Jesus Christ rests with the fact that He is the incarnate Son of God in whom is revealed all Truth. From this perspective, the involvement of Jesus Christ in the existence and affairs of men may be summed up in His creative, redemptive and sanctitive works. As the totality of the plan of God is revealed in these completed works, so is man's responsibility to Jesus Christ as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. Likewise, if higher education is to be Christian, it must build into its philosophy and purpose a similar responsibility to Christ.

Creation and Involvement

The creative work of Jesus Christ is concerned with every phase of matter and life from the inorganic to the superorganic. Creation itself may be primary or secondary. Primary creation is an act or process reserved for God Himself as "something" is made out of "nothing" by divine fiat. Secondary creation, on the other hand, is an act or process, which utilizes the products of primary creation in order to accomplish the miraculous result of a refined product. Secondary creation may be a solitary act or process of God alone or it may be a mutual act or process of God and man. If this conception of creation is placed in the context of Jesus Christ, the primary creator, and the Christian college, a secondary creation, the implications are far reaching.

First, reason is a product of the primary creation of God. Hence, the separation of reason and faith is a fallacy, which is responsible for the relativism of humanism on one extreme and the imperialism of Phariseeism on the other. Dichotomized thinking makes reason the

humanistic, sophisticated and logical part of man's nature and faith the theistic, naïve and illogical response. Yet in the primary creative work of Jesus Christ, intellect, mind and reason are inseparably linked with the mind of God. As a characteristic of His image, reason itself becomes an act of faith. Thus, militant humanism, rationalism, pragmatism, materialism and scientism are world views of the rational nature of man, which are incompatible with the creative work of Jesus Christ. Rather, the Christian scholar holds reason as an element of human personality, which stimulates intellectual inquiry and investigation in every realm but always with the perspective of appreciation for the full scope of man's potential through the creative work of Jesus Christ.

Second, the Christian scholar has the responsibility to investigate all fields of human knowledge because the self-realization of intellect is a function which cannot be separated from the creative work of Jesus Christ. Yet, his inquiry in the world of the mind is approached with the humility, the perspective and the reverence, which

grows out of the recognition and the faith that intellect is a creative gift of God and the realm of the intellect is the creative domain of God. From this outlook Christian higher education becomes "faith seeking understanding" and "the educated Christian mind becomes the most free even as it is under the greatest debt and possessed of the greatest responsibility." In action, the Christian college is a community of scholars reverently exploring all areas of human knowledge from the perspective of the Christian worldview.

Redemption and Commitment

The redemptive work of Jesus Christ is usually confined to the formal functions of the church. While it is agreed that the primary function of the Christian college is educational rather than evangelistic, redemption cannot be excluded from its program. The point of emphasis is that redemption is a prerequisite for the life of learning in the Christian college. It is fallacious to assume that one can be redeemed by the intellectual

assent to the creative work of Jesus Christ in the realm of reason alone. While intellectual insight may precede emotional insight, nevertheless, redemption is an effective act which is based on an affective need. Hence, while human acceptance of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ transcends intellect, it frees the intellect and gives it an outlook for participation in the larger learning.

For Christian higher education, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ means the commitment on the part of faculty and students to the regeneration of redeeming love in order that they may together proceed with the investigation of the fields of human knowledge. There would be no areas of black-out or alternatives unexplored because the efficacy of redemption through Jesus Christ is perspective based on the human need which is inadequately satisfied by lesser redemptions. The combination of the creative and redemptive forces, which are released in the work of Christ, then, becomes the point of involvement for a community of committed Christian scholars who explore the areas of human

knowledge from the perspective of the Christian worldview.

Sanctification and Participation

The third prominent work of Jesus is His sanctitive relationship to the world and men. This work is described as the hallowing of human endeavor through the agency of the Holy Spirit and the separation of hallowed lives for the responsibility of Christian vocation. Although the term "sanctification" carries the wound of corrupted meaning because of misuse, the sanctitive work of Jesus Christ is still the means for the preparation and application of human resources to kingdom tasks. As redemption requires the commitment of the affective life of the recipient as expressed in love, sanctification requires the commitment of the volitional life as expressed in will. Redemption is an act of initial belief, whereas sanctification is a continuing act of faith. The implication of this work for Christian higher education is twofold.

First, there is the divine sanction for the decision to participate in the life of learning as it is carried on in the Christian college. Education itself, in the Christian context, is a sanctified task with a holy purpose. It should not be conceived as a necessary evil before one can really make a contribution to the Kingdom of God. It *is* the kingdom of God. Nor should the Christian college experience be considered a romantic interlude between the carefree days of high school and the security of a home, a job and a family. Martin Luther said that it was more spiritual for the shoemaker to use good leather and a firm stitch than it was to pass out tracts. The life of learning and devotion to study is a sanctified call to the committed student in the Christian college.

Second, the sanctitive work of Jesus Christ implies a moral responsibility to make the outcomes of Christian higher education applicable to the needs of the world. The sanctitive work of Jesus Christ makes no provision for ivory towers, monastic cells or suburban security. The Christian college must produce "critical participants" for its

culture. Commitment to redemption and involvement in creation are only prerequisites to the responsibility for participation and penetration. Each student should be instilled with the sense of Christian vocation, which recognized the spiritual dignity of every vocation and the specific obligation to participate "critically" as a Christian in the ongoing life of the community.

An Evangelical Christian College

This concept of the Christian college may be summed up, then in a statement which is derived from the cognitive, affective, and volitional responses to the creative, redemptive and sanctitive works of Jesus Christ. Christian higher education is a process of involvement in a community of scholars who investigate the areas of human knowledge from the perspective of the Christian worldview. The prerequisite for this perspective is a commitment to the redeeming love of Jesus Christ in order that mind and spirit may be freed for the life of learning and that the

achieved knowledge may be integrated by the Christian commitment. From an enlightened reason and regenerated love, the student of Christian higher education will align himself with the on-going responsibility of the Christian in modern society. By exercising the continuing faith of a sanctified will, the outcome will be participation in the social order as a mature Christian who has an active sense of spiritual responsibility for his vocation, whatever that may be. (See "Concept for the Christian College" chart on page 143, which outlines the interrelationship between the work of Jesus Christ and the outcomes for Christian higher education).

In the final analysis, the Person and Work of Jesus Christ also provide the basis for defining an evangelical Christian college. It is a *college* because its primary interest is given to a process of involvement in – and appreciation for – the life of learning. It is a *Christian college* because the prerequisite for purposeful involvement in the life of learning is commitment to the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. It is an *evangelical*

Christian college because its end and purpose is to accomplish sanctified participation in the affairs of life through the Christian vocation and social responsibility.

CONCEPT FOR THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

The Work of Jesus Christ	Premise	Individual Responsibility	Spiritual Outcome	Outcome for the Evangelical Christian College
1.The Creative Work	Reason is a gift of God in creation	Inquiry	Enlightened Reason	Involvement in a community of scholars who investigate the areas of human knowledge from the perspective of the Christian world view.
2. The Redemptive Work	Love is the highest order of integration in human experience	Initial Belief	Regenerated Love	Commitment to Jesus Christ as the prerequisite for freeing the mind and integrating learning.
3. The Sanctitive Work	Will is the action point for decision and responsibility	Continuing Faith	Consecrated Will	Participation in the social order with the preparation and responsibility for the Christian vocation.

Monograph No. 4

CURRICULUM FOR COMMITMENT

General Education in the Small Christian College

General Education is an educational cliché, which suffers from ambiguity, overwork and misuse. Paul Dressel has said,

General Education's defined
In phrases both trite and refined
But no matter how stated
It always is fated
To describe the speaker's mind.

This limerick takes on added meaning when you consider the fact that the term may be associated with the prescribed studies of the liberal arts in the medieval university, with the "prescription and election" plan of the Harvard Report, or the broad interdepartmental survey courses, which are offered in the General College of the University of Minnesota. The only common

element among these variations of general education is the fact that they represent attempts to provide a core of learning, which is assumed to be necessary to meet the needs of the educated men of the particular era. If so, then general education for the Christian college should be defined as a prescribed range of knowledge which is uniquely integrated by the purpose of the college in order to prepare individuals for their task as enlightened Christians. This means that the general education program would be: (1) required of all students; (2) organized to include the major fields of human knowledge; (3) integrated by the Christian purpose of the institution; and (4) directed to the end result of producing intelligent and responsible Christians.

Furthermore, a program of general education should incorporate the new ideas, which advance general education and avoid the pitfalls, which encumber other programs. By analysis, these problems are both philosophical and organizational in nature. Some of the philosophical problems are:

1. There is a lack of unity in the purpose of the Christian college because its spiritual and academic elements are separated in philosophy and practice.
2. The Christian college has frequently failed to present the alternatives in moral issues and philosophical commitments in the setting of the Christian college classroom.
3. There is a lack of clarity in the minds of students regarding the moral and philosophical issues, which differentiate between the Christian and other commitments.
4. The educational process in the Christian college has frequently short-circuited the process of mature moral development by moving from indoctrination to decision without adequate provision for discrimination.

These basic faults in the educational process of the Christian college are joined by certain organizational criticisms:

1. The curriculum of the Christian college has

frequently been proliferated by the lack of a clear planning purpose for curriculum development.

2. There is a lack of experimentation with the teaching-learning process in all of higher education, but the Christian college has not capitalized upon its unique laboratory feature of small classes, freedom of exploration, and dedicated teachers.
3. The teaching of the Christian college is frequently routine and non-imaginative. Again, this a criticism which could be made about all of higher education, but the Christian college is a teaching institution and thus is pledged to imaginative teaching.
4. The curriculum of the Christian college is repetitious of the secondary school methods and courses. Students lack motivation or are dulled by repeat procedures and content.
5. The courses of the Christian college are most frequently textbook courses which

make inadequate use of the library resources, evaluative discussions, and student responsibilities for independent study.

6. Even though the Christian college has the nominal purpose of integration in its Christian position, it has not been effective in restricting course splintering nor has it provided the integration that is needed in general education.

With these criticisms of the philosophy and organization of general education in the Christian college in mind, this paper will initiate some thinking toward a philosophy of general education with a distinctive Christian emphasis.

Some of the factors which must be kept in mind in the development of a philosophy of education are the: (1) purpose of the institution; (2) nature of knowledge; (3) nature of the learner; (4) nature of learning; and (5) outcomes of learning. If the factors are rephrased in alliterative form, they become the *purpose*, *plan*, *person*,

process, and *product* of learning. Because complete treatment of any one of these phases is impossible at this time, the alliterative outline will be followed and developed according to some basic premises.

Purpose

On the basis of the results of the paper, "Concept for the Christian College," Christian higher education is

> ...a process of involvement in a community of scholars who investigate the areas of human knowledge from the perspective of the Christian worldview. The prerequisite for this perspective is a commitment to the redeeming love of Jesus Christ in order that the mind and spirit may be freed for the life of learning and in order that the knowledge gained may be integrated by the Christian commitment. From an enlightened reason and a regenerated love, the student of

> Christian higher education will align himself with the ongoing responsibility of the Christian in modern society. By exercising the continuing faith of a consecrated will, the outcome will be participation in the social order as a mature Christian who has an active sense of responsibility for his Christian vocation, whatever that may be.

Within this statement there are guiding definitions for developing a philosophy of general education. The *plan* is identified as major fields of human knowledge, the *person* is described as a committed Christian, the *process* is defined as involvement in a community of scholars, and the *product* is designated as a responsible participant in society. Each of these factors is considered in the following analysis.

Plan

The ultimate source and objective of knowledge is Jesus Christ who is the creator of all Truth. Within this reference there are three

categories of revelation: (1) knowledge concerning God which is divinely revealed through the Word of God; (2) knowledge concerning man which is revealed through discoveries of human culture and interrelationships; and (3) knowledge concerning the universe which is revealed through empirical science. While these three areas of knowledge are frequently separated into theism, humanism and scientism, the Christian college has the responsibility for integrating them with the perspective of the Christian world view, which sees each phase as a part of all Truth. This means that the content of the curriculum of the Christian college may be organized about the great questions, which refer to these areas of knowledge, namely, "What is the nature of God?", "What is the nature of man?" and "What is the nature of the universe?"

In the investigation of these questions, there will be theological and philosophical content concerned with the nature of God. There will be literary, historical, psychological and sociological content concerned with the nature of man. And,

there will be biological and physical science content concerned with the nature of the universe. These areas conform to the liberal arts curriculum, which is traditionally offered in the church college and in individual colleges of the university.

The distinctive element in the Christian college, however, is framed in the axiological question, which provides the outlook for investigation in the liberal arts. It is, classically speaking, "What is the nature of the good life?" At this point, the commitment of the Christian scholar to the redemptive influence of the love of Jesus Christ comes into focus. This position has several implications. First, the Christian scholar is a committed learner. He has the academic freedom of fearless exploration in every field of human knowledge because he or she has personally discovered the source and objective of all Truth. Second, the Christian scholar will be dealing with alternatives. Having assumed that the value position of the committed Christian is central to one's outlook on knowledge, the focal point of Christian higher education will be dealing with

other commitments and the bases upon which they stand. Third, although the application of divine Truth will vary with the different fields of knowledge, yet there are issues and questions relating to each field, which must be considered within the perspective of the larger Truth. For instance, the Christian college is pledged to participate in the scientific quest for new fact. While it will not be a research institution because of its limitations of purpose and resources, there will be no hesitation to evaluate the results of the scientific quest. In other words, there is a philosophy of science, which needs the perspective of humane and Christian values. Certainly, the graduates of the Christian college should so understand this interrelationship of values that they will not fall victim to the cults of scientism and technocracy.

Person

The learner in Christian Higher Education is an individual who has committed the totality of his being to Jesus Christ. His response places him

in the position of commitment to an enlightened reason, a regenerated love and a consecrated will. This commitment does not circumscribe his interest or his need for knowledge, but rather frees him for a continuing intellectual self-realization, which is meaningfully integrated by the Christian worldview. Also, the commitment does not limit his potential as an individual who is a dynamic organism with unique characteristics motivated toward the goal of self-realization. Thus, Christian higher education places a premium upon the combination of spiritual and personal factors in the individual so that the learning experience of the institution are directed to the maturity of the individual's relationship of God, himself and other persons.

Having completed the cycle of adolescence with its physical and emotional storm and stress, the young adult in college is now ready to give his attention to a philosophy of life. Prior to coming to the Christian college it is assumed that most of the students will have made a commitment to Jesus Christ. The very nature of conversion and the

adolescent period, however, suggests that this experience is primarily affective or emotional. Christian maturity will mean the involvement of the intellectual and volitional aspects of personality into the spiritual reference points for a philosophy of life. In the Christian college, this means that the learner must have the opportunity to substantiate his faith intellectually and to activate his faith volitionally. If so, the purpose of the Christian college in the life of the college age learner should be the refinement and confirmation of his commitment in theory and in action. This will be accomplished as the learner has the opportunity to balance his Christian position against other commitments and to test his faith in action.

The understanding of alternatives to the Christian commitment should be a part of the unique role of the Christian college, it should not be assumed that these alternatives have already been faced successfully or that they should be avoided as threatening experiences which are reserved for post-college maturity. Critical issues

and realistic alternatives should be confronted within the environment of a community of Christian scholars where there is mutual involvement in commitment as well as in the discussion of alternatives. The warm personal commitment of senior learners (faculty) will be the most effective means of guidance and direction for junior learners (students) as they make their own decisions.

Process

Learning is a process, which proceeds from readiness to learn to the application of learning in novel situations. Between this point of initiation and completion there are the factors of motivation, simple fact learning, principle learning, problem solving, induction and deduction. Too frequently, college learning is limited to the fact and principle learning without the experience of application in problem solving, induction and deduction. As the Christian college, however, has the declared purpose of integrating the Christian philosophy of

life in the learning experiences, it proceeds naturally to the point of seeing interrelationships between the fields of knowledge and the Christian position as well as between disciplines. This integration takes place primarily at the point of understanding the assumptions and the value issues, which support the several liberal arts disciplines.

The precise development of a value position in an individual usually involves three steps: (1) the awarness of a right; (2) the differentiation between the right and the wrong; (3) the choice of the right. The awareness of the right implies indoctrination to a position. The step from differentiation between the right and the wrong implies discrimination among alternative positions. The choice of the right is primarily decisional. A complaint, which is frequently leveled at the Christian college is that it short-circuits the value learning process because it proceeds from indoctrination to decision without adequate provision for discrimination.

If the Christian college is to emphasize the

totality of the learning experience in moral development, then the method of learning should include a strong emphasis upon the discrimination of alternatives, moral issues, "isms," philosophies, commitments and doctrines. This method requires a curriculum, which is integrated by this purpose, students who are motivated to participate in this type of learning, faculty members who are fully committed to the Christian alternatives, and classes which are organized for the involvement and integration of moral issues.

Product

The outcomes of general education in the Christian college have a dual reference. There is the outcome for the individual and the outcome for society. For the individual, the product of general education in the Christian context should include a full appreciation of intellectual endeavor in order to provide a continuing basis for life-long learning. A noble result would be an individual who has the motivation and the level of

achievement to become absorbed with the process of self-learning through books, the arts, discussion and meditation. Again, this is a process which requires the purposeful effort of the community of scholars to make this the "ethos" of their society.

An equally important outcome of general education in the Christian college is the influence of the individual product upon society. This reflects back to the relationship of the Christian college to one of the four attitudes toward human culture. [1] First, the college may *reject* human culture as "an immoderate, hydroptic lust" (Donne), which distorts and displaces the Truth and the Life. Second, the college may take the opposite position of *immersion* in human culture in order to alter or enhance it with cultural Christianity. Third, the college may assume the stance of *split adaptation* by which the educational phase conforms to the prevailing culture and educational philosophy, but the spiritual phase is retained in integrity by "religion courses and chapel." The fourth possibility, however, is the position of critical *participation* by which the college maintains a

level of tension between critical transcendence and concerned cultural participation. This latter relationship is the level of outcome, which is most closely associated with the sanctitive work of Jesus Christ. Through the consecration of will which hallows the life and the continuation of faith which hallows his action, the participant

> ...sees the Christian life as a dual citizenship in the City of God and in the City of Man. The two are not the same, and yet ultimately the God of Creation and of time is the God of salvation who enters into daily life where nothing is finished... With the peace which passes comprehension, the Christian and the Christian community live out the Christian ethic in the world which knows little peace even of its own kind. [2]

The involvement of the individual in the process of learning within the community of scholars in the Christian college, then, lays the groundwork for critical participation in society. He takes the commitment with which he began his

education, uses it as the liberalizing and integrating factor for exploration in the intellectually creative world, and then puts it into effect as an informed and active Christian in human culture. Post-college life, for the Christian learner, is a continuation of creative intellectual interest and activity. The scholar actively seeks to understand and criticize within the context of the creative, redemptive and sanctitive works of Jesus Christ.

[1] *Integration in the Christian Liberal Arts College*, St. Olaf College Self-Study Committee, Nothfield, Minnesota: St. Olaf College Press, 1956.
[2] Op. cit.

1959-

A Concept to Keep

Introduction

In this chapter, President Gayle Beebe demonstrates the enduring relevance and importance of "The Concept" as it sets the tone and pace for the university's mission. Additionally, the guiding impact of Wesley's Quadrilateral on the scope and influence of "The Concept" offers a key anchor-point in making a compelling response to the crisis of our contemporary world.

Gayle D. Beebe came to Spring Arbor University in July 2000 from Azusa Pacific University (1992-2000), where he served as dean of the School of Theology, overseeing the undergraduate department of religion and philosophy, as well as the graduate seminary. Prior to this, Dr. Beebe served in pastoral ministry in the Evangelical Friends (Quaker) Church.

Dr. Beebe earned the Ph.D. and M.A. degrees in philosophy of religion and theology from Claremont Graduate University (Claremont, CA); the M.B.A. from the Drucker School of Management, Claremont Graduate University; the M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary (Princeton, NJ); and the B.A. from George Fox University (Newberg, OR).

In April of 2001, Spring Arbor College became Spring Arbor University. As part of this development, the University developed a new five-year strategic plan that has guided the school during its period of greatest growth and expansion. The centerpiece of this five-year plan continues to be the enduring strength of "The Concept."

A Concept to Keep

PART I: THE CONCEPT CONSIDERED

As we look to the future, the relevance of the Concept remains its enduring ability to set the tone and pace for our mission as a university. As such, it provides an outstanding definition of the mission and purpose of Christian higher education. It also highlights the way in which each person must undergo a spiritual and intellectual awakening in order to realize God's total purpose for life in the world. In this way, a transcendent ideal that provides unity and purpose for our learning and our life is identified, articulated and embraced.

The Contemporary Crisis

The idea of a grand, overarching transcendent ideal that provides meaning and understanding for life and creative direction for our curriculum has been lost from our contemporary world. In fact, a growing body of literature produced by distinguished thinkers from various disciplines uncovers this loss. Further, it demonstrates that this crisis has arisen as a result of being cut off from the rich cultural resources that provide meaning, direction, and purpose for all we do. According to these writers, we have arrived at a serious spiritual and intellectual crisis that is making it impossible to sustain any meaningful vision of the nature and destiny of human life.

This literature includes Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart* and *The Good Society*; Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*; Basil Mitchell's *Morality: Religious and Secular*; Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self*; Leszek Kolakowski's *Modernity on Endless Trial*; John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory*; and Allan Bloom's

The Closing of the American Mind. Each of these works recognizes the loss of both a grand ideal and the absolute values that accompany it, while demonstrating the pernicious effect this loss continues to have on our society. Bloom, in particular, notes the effects of this loss on our nation's colleges and universities while highlighting the disastrous consequences this has had on American thought and culture.

In the past, universities in America were the place where society produced great citizens by raising the significant questions of life and then provided the atmosphere within which one could both consider and pursue answers to these questions. Today, however, this is simply not the case. Instead, the typical university has capitulated to the avalanche of moral relativism and now offers a carnival of titillating options with no unifying ideal. As a result, education no longer focuses on producing great human beings, but instead has focused the preponderance of its resources on producing technicians limited in their educational scope to the mastery of particular skills and

techniques.

This capitulation has forfeited the mission of today's colleges and universities and is destroying the soul of the students and faculties who inhabit them. If the original motive of education was the pursuit of the highest aspirations of the human soul, it is now simply the pursuit of a set of professional skills that ensure access to a life of continuous consumption. We have become intellectual prodigals, squandering our inheritance on wanton pleasures without finding any meaning or sustaining purpose for our life.

The Christian Liberal Arts

By comparison, the goal of a Christian liberal arts education is to break the shackles of our brute existence in order to discover an ultimate purpose in life anchored to God. This pursuit of the highest good requires the total commitment of an individual's life. We must believe that life is not just "nasty, brutish and short," but instead, is filled with possibilities and responsibilities that bring meaning and purpose to all we do. Then, we

must be committed to finding this life.

Unfortunately, our contemporary world continues to carry an excessive preoccupation with the here and now. As a result, an unbridled lust for instant gratification continues to break the moral will of our society. We are not better educated, as some claim, but simply have more options to distract us from the nature of our life. This in turn has produced a vast wasteland of curricular options with no governing purpose and no sustaining ideal.

What, then, do we mean when we say a student is educated? The absence of a good answer to this question reflects the loss of a grand, unifying ideal guiding most university curriculums. As a result, educators have become more concerned with packaging degrees than with creating a curriculum that transforms a life. Thus, many schools no longer strive to guide students in addressing the great questions that confront us in life, but are in fact multiplying the questions while simultaneously reducing the number of available answers.

Nevertheless, there remain good reasons for our hope. Many of the concerns that mark the demise of modern university education are being addressed at Spring Arbor University with a curriculum guided by our Concept. With deliberate effort we have created a curriculum that cultivates knowledge of the liberal arts, prepares a person for professional service in the world, and deepens one's love and knowledge of God. Despite contemporary skepticism of meta-narratives and transcultural moralities, there is a growing awareness that our contingent experiences of life only make sense when connected to universal ideals that provide meaning and direction for our life. Thus, a primary responsibility of a Christian liberal arts education is to create a curriculum that educates the mind, motivates the will, and quickens the conscience while relating the historical and cultural experiences of our life to a transcendent value system anchored to God.

Clearly, as we look to the future we face enormous obstacles in promoting this perspective. Our culture has lost confidence in the concept of

a universal, unifying moral ideal. In fact, as many of the great writers previously cited note, the only universal moral ideal within our culture is that there are no universal moral ideals. Yet, a Christian liberal arts education provides the opportunity to develop intellectually, mature emotionally, and grow spiritually within a community of learners committed to these principles.

A Personal Testimony

My own life is a testament to the development, maturity and growth that one can undergo in the context of an educational community dedicated to the Christian liberal arts. During high school, I took all the hard classes, loved competing in the classroom and graduated near the top of my class. But I was not really intellectually curious. My motivations for study were to get good grades, qualify for college scholarships and stay eligible for sports. I remember being asked by a friend what I would read over the summer and replying, "…you mean besides *Sports Illustrated*?"

But then it happened. During the early part of my college experience, I had an intellectual awakening that has forever changed me. Through a variety of courses and a mix of professors—and especially the influence of a few key friends—I began to read everything I could get my hands on. I studied history, literature and poetry; art history, music theory and physics; communication theory, astronomy and ceramics; world civilization, church history and theology; and of course philosophy of religion. The list goes on, but you get the point. I could not get enough of this learning. The overwhelming sense of excitement lay in the opportunity to study all of these books in intimate quarters with interesting friends. The idea of God's grandeur, spread across this vast expanse of human learning, riveted me to the majesty of our Creator.

Since that awakening, my life in very real and tangible ways has been a living commitment to the mission and purpose of the Christian liberal arts. We know of the long and storied history of the liberal arts. And we also know of the unique

and dramatic turn that was taken by the Early Church in adopting the liberal arts curriculum as its own.

To Christianize the liberal arts is to construct a Christian theology of learning. It is to embody the profound understanding that, "...all truth is God's truth." It is to take Augustine at his word when he exclaims, "I believe in order that I might understand." Understanding—full understanding of life, of work, and of life's ultimate questions—is impossible without belief, commitment and confidence in the enduring reality of God and dedication to a mastery of all fields of study created and revealed by Him.

PART II: THE CONCEPT APPLIED

At the rise of our transition to a four-year baccalaureate degree granting college, Dr. David McKenna penned the Spring Arbor University Concept and the four-part series of monographs featured previously. The "Spring Arbor University Concept" reads,

> *"Spring Arbor University is a community of learners distinguished by our lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts, total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning, and critical participation in the contemporary world."*

Community of Learners

The first plank of our Concept calls for the formation of a comprehensive community. Since the 17th and 18th centuries, the rise of the Enlightenment Project has elevated the individual over the community. With Descartes' famous maxim, "I think, therefore I am," the human

individual vanquished all responsibilities in the unbridled pursuit of personal freedom. Many of the resulting consequences have been simply disastrous.

As a result, for the Christian it is not, "I think, therefore I am," but rather "We are, therefore I am." Under the tutelage of Jesus Christ and the teachings of Scripture, God defines each one of us by the broader network of social relationships. We exist not simply as individuals, but as members of families, citizens of towns, and active members of communities.

What, then, does it mean to belong to a community? Communities form around shared understandings. Communities provide the context for understanding human life. A community embodies a particular way of seeing the world and reflects the way in which specific experiences are understood based on the interpretation provided by a community. Additionally, it is within a community that values are identified, common purposes articulated, and the role each community will play in the affairs of the world is determined.

Inevitably, communities form cultures and cultures shape the individuals who embody communities.

In the early part of the 20th century, Ludwig Wittgenstein defined the culture-forming role of community as that of "... a big organization that assigns every person a place to work in the spirit of the whole."[1] Earlier, at the turn of the 20th century, Jacob Burkhardt had defined culture as the sum of all that spontaneously arises for the advancement of material life, and as an expression of spiritual and moral life. A culture is the total way of life of a community. It forms a way of thinking, feeling and believing that is unique to each community. Clifford Geertz, the noted cultural anthropologist of our own time, extends this definition when he notes that a culture forms the "...context within which social events, behaviors, institutions or processes can be intelligibly understood."[2] Geertz goes on to highlight the way in which cultures form the communal context that makes human achievement possible while providing the framework that makes human understanding achievable.

American culture has always had a powerful commitment to community. Despite our individualism, we have also been great proponents of the corporate nature of our country. In 1986, Robert Bellah penned *Habits of the Heart*, a book that seeks to identify the temperament of American thought and culture. It is here that Bellah coins his famous phrase, "lifestyle enclaves," to describe the way in which individuals at the end of the 20th century were retreating into sub-communities. These sub-communities were defined by the emerging tendency for people to live, work, and eat with others who look like them, smell like them and exhibit the same cultural tendencies as everyone else in their sub-culture.

But this is not the historic genius of American culture, nor is it the enduring witness of the Christian church. American society is forward-looking, expansive-oriented, and grand in both scope and scale. While we are interested in particularity—whom particular groups are and where they are from—our interest is beyond sub-cultures. We are motivated by the greater concern

for how the particular will fit within the greater scheme of the whole.

To accomplish this purpose, the educational community at Spring Arbor University, built on The Concept and seeking to embody it, strives to cultivate a student-focused, teaching-oriented, concept-driven community. By design, the faculty and staff are closely involved in the lives of our students. Additionally, our programs are designed not only to prepare one for a meaningful career, but also to provide a learning community that shapes one's spiritual, moral and intellectual life.

Study of the Liberal Arts

The second plank of our Concept goes to the heart of our mission as a university. By anchoring our mission to the liberal arts, we connect with a 2,500-year history dating back to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. In the ancient world, the liberal arts were meant to provide a graduated curriculum that mirrored human development. One began by mastering the verbal arts of

grammar, logic and rhetoric. Then, after mastering the verbal arts, one could turn to mastering the mathematical arts of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music.

The goal of the liberal arts in the ancient world was never study just for knowledge itself, but always as a means to something else. In this way, one's mind was trained in particular subjects in order to transfer this intellectual training to addressing the great questions of life.

Beginning with Clement of Alexandria (150–215 AD), Christians considered the role and value of the liberal arts to be central in cultivating one's understanding of, and relationship to, God. How do they help one learn to love God? Could they make one wise unto salvation? Could they help one answer "who am I," "why am I here," and "what is my responsibility to God, others, and my community?"

These and other questions were openly debated in the ancient world and the Early Church. Over time, Christians refined the liberal arts into a four-fold progression: first, one must acquire

language skill; second, one must master math skills; third, one must be able to consider the right nature of ethics, the proper role of politics, and how to subjugate our unruly passions; and finally, after the mind had been trained and the passions guided, one could turn to a proper study of God.

This is how it worked then and suggests a progressive curriculum that continues to work today. In the classical scheme of the liberal arts, the *Trivium*, or the verbal arts, is concerned with the ordering of experience and the means of giving expression to our knowledge of human experience. In the *Trivium*, *grammar* is the discipline that trains the mind and hones the spirit so that one can both discern and express our knowledge of human nature. Subsequently, *dialectic* establishes a regular and coherent frame for thinking, while *rhetoric* presents models and methods of expression and ultimately of persuasion.

The *Quadrivium*, which follows the *Trivium*, expresses the mathematical arts. Here, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music complete the ways in which the form and content

of the human mind develops.[3] Music, for example, forms the linchpin of the *Quadrivium* and provides the necessary links between the senses, the mind, and philosophical speculation.

Earlier, Aristotle had emphasized that one should not look for the same measure of precision in all things, but for the level of precision appropriate to each discipline. In this manner, the liberal arts illustrate the way in which one learns the measure of truth appropriate to each category. Later, in the 11th and early 12th century, Hugh of St. Victor amplified this understanding by showing the way in which an individual can work out their salvation by combining a high view of the liberal arts with productive labor.

In the *Didascalican*, Hugh argues that the technological improvement of life on earth is part of our restoration from the Fall. For Hugh, technology and commerce help restore us to our proper relationship to God and creation by improving our earthly life so that we can move closer to our original condition in paradise. In this fashion, Hugh expands the original Greek and

Early Church notion of the liberal arts beyond the *Philosophic Arts* of Plato and Augustine and the *Practical Arts* of Cicero by adding a third component: the *Productive Arts*. [4]

The *Productive Arts*, consist of fabric making, armaments, commerce, agriculture, hunting, medicine, theatrics and architecture, and mirror God's creative activity because they endure, and continue to show the "industrious intelligence" of the human person. Further, the *Productive Arts* help lead us to God since they require a training and discipline that focuses our mind and controls our passions. Thus, the *Productive Arts* teach us to love God, to discipline the self and to gain mastery of particular skills so that we can make a creative contribution to God's will for our world. From the earliest days of its formation, the Christian liberal arts tradition has prepared students for the mastery of human learning as well as the highest form of study, which is the study of God. Clement of Alexandria was one of the earliest to recognize that if one could be trained to think properly in any area of human knowledge, then

one's mind could be trained to think rightly about God.

From its beginning, Spring Arbor University has maintained a robust commitment to the liberal arts. We continue to believe that a core value of the liberal arts is its ability to pose the great questions of life and then provide guidance in addressing these questions. In addition, the liberal arts continue to provide the best training for our mind. The reasoning capacities and moral judgments called forth by the liberal arts lay a foundation for critical participation in the contemporary world. As a result, the liberal arts continue to be woven into the fabric of each degree program, reflecting our enduring confidence that a lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts remains the most excellent way to prepare for a meaningful life and a satisfying career.

Total Commitment to Jesus Christ

The third plank of our Concept focuses on the centrality of our commitment to Christ for

proper learning. Earlier, Dr. McKenna argued persuasively and beautifully for the comprehensive role our Christian commitment plays in our curriculum. Today, the anchor point of our entire mission as a university is fixed by our total commitment to Jesus Christ. In this brief phrase, the entire mission of Spring Arbor University finds its foundation.

Everyone needs a fixed point by which to approach life. We all have met people who exhibit situational integrity. They mean well in the moment, but lack any capacity to make commitments that endure for a day, let alone a lifetime. Yet, for the Christian, Jesus Christ forms the only sure point from which we can navigate life's journey.

The single most significant decision we make in life is the decision to give our life fully and completely to God, and to be conformed to the teachings and life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels. Yet, this simple and profound decision is not the end of our intellectual and spiritual search, but the beginning. Our deepest conviction

as Christians is that to follow Jesus is right, and to embrace His life and teaching is the only sure way to find the meaning and significance we all seek.

As people of God who emphasize the central importance of conversion, we sometimes fail to move beyond conversion to the role of learning in our life with God. We believe in sanctification, in the ongoing process of discipleship that deepens our understanding and obedience to God. Yet, we do not always recognize the role that learning plays in this process. Learning is the lifeblood of discipleship. To become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ requires that we learn to understand life in a new way. Learning is the process of overcoming distortion and seeing reality accurately. It is the completing process of our life with God. For the Christian, our commitment to Christ allows us to focus our attention on learning the way in which every area of knowledge reveals a God's will for the world. Each area of knowledge, in turn, helps to form the sacred mosaic of Christian understanding and evokes in us the deepest and most enduring

commitments of our life.

During the final week of my seminary education (1985), the president of our school invited several of us to his home for a farewell reception. During this time, a question arose as to what he thought would be the single most important theological question to face the church as we moved toward the 21st century. He replied, *"What will we make of Christ today?"*

So what will we make of Christ today? Throughout the 2,000-year history of the Church the person and work of Jesus Christ has been the central defining element for the Christian believer. The birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ create the foundation for Christian living and learning. The accounts of Christ's life and the interpretations of these events throughout the New Testament define the way in which one measures progress in their own spiritual and intellectual journey. As the first Christian communities formed around Jesus Christ, they effectively presented His life and teachings to all subsequent generations. In this way, they demonstrate how Jesus' life, His

teachings and their subsequent recording in Scripture provide the theological framework for Christian knowledge and understanding.

The Concept and the Quadrilateral

The foundation for our Concept and the guiding principles of our curriculum are anchored to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, which emphasizes the way in which we gain knowledge of God, understanding of Jesus Christ and purposive engagement with the world through Scripture, tradition, reason and experience. The quadrilateral forms a dynamic system in which one learns to think theologically. It begins and ends with the primacy of Scripture. It then enters into conversation with our rich Christian tradition as the accompanying witness of the great saints of the church that has preserved the faith throughout the millennia. Then, the quadrilateral uses human reason and logic as a guide in theological understanding and finally moves to the vibrancy of spiritual experiences to confirm our theological understanding. Encompassed in this quadrilateral

are the powerful interplay of God's revelation and the dramatic unfolding of human faith.

Scripture. While each of these resources nurtures our love and understanding for the role of Jesus Christ in our life, the beginning and ending point is always Scripture. For example, in the writings of the earliest New Testament texts, Peter, Paul, and John begin to interpret the meaning of Christ's life to the first Christians. The commitment of the first Christians to model their life after Christ's gave shape and force to the earliest Christian understandings of our life with God. Combining ecclesiastical concerns and sacramental practices, the first Christians used Scripture as the touchstone for all reflection and guidance in the Christian life.

Although recent historical and literary developments have attempted to undermine the reliability of Scripture, legitimate guidance is still found in Wesley's three-fold approach to Scripture. At the first level, one begins by reading Scripture literally. This is to learn the scope and flow of the Old and New Testaments. Frequently, however, a

literal reading of Scripture does not provide the ultimate guidance and knowledge we seek for our life. Subsequently, Scripture is to be read in context. By reading Scripture in context we see what comes before and after and avoid the careless proof-texting that often stalks a literal reading of Scripture. Finally, Scripture is to be read in conversation with itself. In this way, the plainer passages help interpret the more obscure ones and higher principles of revelation interpret lower ones. This three-fold approach to Scripture allows us to recognize a deeper, more complete guide to our Christian life, and bring us into contact with the broadest knowledge and understanding of God.

Tradition. After establishing the foundation in Scripture, Wesley then urges participation in the great traditions and faith communities of the church. The great saints of the church fortify the relevance of tradition as they articulate their understanding of Jesus' person and work throughout history.

Such works as Jaroslav Pelikan's, *Jesus Through the Centuries* illuminates the significance

of tradition to our life with God.[5] In this text, Pelikan creates a kaleidoscope of insight into the life of Jesus when he identifies several key understandings that reflect the way in which Jesus has been understood across time.

In the first century, Jesus is depicted as a rabbi, and the center point of all history. Later, Jewish ideas combine with Greek ideals to offer a creative synthesis of Jesus as the light of the Gentiles, the King of Kings, and the Cosmic Christ. These later understandings reflect the dominant ways in which the emerging church envisioned Christ's role in history. During this time, Socrates and Virgil became a pagan foreshadowing of Jesus. Many Greek Christians expressed a loyalty to Christ as Lord over Caesar, and found in Christ the eternal *logos* that enters the world. In each case, these transitions from Greek contemplative language to the person and work of Jesus Christ helped provide cultural understanding of Jesus' role in the world.

During the time of St. Augustine, Jesus as the Son of Man reaches its fullest expression. Here,

Jesus is seen as simultaneously expressing the highest possibilities of human life while also doing battle with the strongest forces of demonic evil. In the Middle Ages, Christ is understood as the inspiration of art and architecture, as well as the "ideal monk" who seeks to do the right thing, for the right reason, at the right time, in the right way. In this fashion, the fusion of artistic expression with monastic literature distills the greatest expression of Jesus' impact in the 9th through 12th centuries. Toward the end of this period, Jesus is depicted as the bridegroom of the soul and represents the biblical ideal of eternal communion with God through prayer.

The rediscovery of the biblical Jesus in the 13th century begins with the writings of St. Francis, as Jesus is seen as the transformer of the world. The highest expressions of Western culture are fused with the most poignant teaching of Christian faith during the Renaissance and Reformation. Here, the emphasis moves from focusing on the wisdom of Christ and on Christ's life, which is made manifest in reform and renewal,

to Jesus as the Prince of Peace who gives hope to the world. Prominence to the original biblical witness is restored as the church emphasizes Jesus' work in the world.

In each example, we are reminded of the role tradition plays in producing an understanding of Jesus' redemptive work in the world. Throughout the history of Christianity, the influence of Jesus is always tied to one's participation in the life of the church. Christian teaching consistently emphasizes that it is impossible to come into sustaining contact with Jesus Christ without identifying with the Christian church. Without the church, no redemptive activity can occur in the life of the individual. And without the redemptive activity in the life of the individual, it is impossible to sustain the mission and ministry of the church. Our commitment to Jesus Christ and to a theological understanding of him has given us the foundation we need to build a life-changing curriculum for our students.

Reason. The third aspect of Wesley's quadrilateral, the role of reason addresses the need

for our theological reflections to make sense. As humans, our God-like capacity to reason allows the construction of doctrines and theologies that place our individual experiences of God in a broader framework of meaning and understanding. Throughout the history of the church, the role of reason has played a central and primary role in our theological understanding. The great 17th century philosopher and social critic, Pascal writes, "...if we submit everything to reason, our religion will be left with nothing mysterious or supernatural. If we offend the principles of reason our religion will be absurd and ridiculous."[6] Earlier and later writers echo this sentiment including the fine words of John Wesley, who writes, "Reason...constitutes a precious gift of God...it is the candle of the Lord, which he hath fixed in our soul for excellent purposes."[7]

Experience. Though mentioned last in the quadrilateral, it is worthy to note that Wesley believed spiritual experiences confirm the teachings of Scripture as the Holy Spirit bears witness with our own spirit. Additionally, Wesley's

methodology assumes that only a person of faith can read the Bible accurately and come to a reliable understanding of truth. At the heart of this assumption is the belief that the only appropriate reading of Scripture can occur in the context of prayer. It is through an active life of prayer that one engages in dynamic interaction with the Holy Spirit providing illumination and understanding to all areas of life.[8]

Establishing our foundation in Scripture, understanding the role of Christ in the believer throughout history, and employing our God-given capacity for reason, the believer is now able to seek understanding through individual and corporate experiences of God. The nature of our experience of God is vast, but at its core is guided by Jesus Christ. As H.P. Owen has noted, "…Christian experiences of God have always been Christocentric…[our] Christian experience is meant to lead to the perfection of Christian love."[9] Both individual and corporate experiences of God help bolster our confidence in the truth and

goodness of the Christian life. But these experiences, in and of themselves, are not enough to sustain our spiritual life. The balancing perspectives of Scripture, tradition and reason, provide a reasonable foundation for our experiences, enabling them to give insight and understanding.

Critical Participation in the World

The fourth plank of our Concept reflects the heart of Free Methodist tradition—critical participation in the contemporary world. Look across the landscape of Michigan, the great efforts made to guarantee free pews and human freedom for all came at an enormous price to these pioneering Christians. Across the street from our main campus stands a building with a history dating back to the dramatic time of the Underground Railroad. On this site, E.P. Hart's father built a store fit with a false basement in order to hide African-Americans fleeing slavery. This symbol of Christian conviction and courage is at the heart of our commitment as a university to send

graduates into the world as change agents in our culture.

However, to become effective critical participants in the world, we must learn to exegete a culture and develop an ability to understand cultural nuances as we interface with the global community. In a landmark study, *Communities of Discourse*, Robert Wuthnow identifies the eight primary spheres that shape every society and culture[10]:

1. Social conditions
2. Economic conditions
3. Political systems and ideologies
4. Religious systems and ideologies
5. Attitudes and definitions of deviance
6. Cultural and intellectual productivity
7. Military—their role and responsibility
8. Legal and judicial institutions

Beyond the enormous detail, Wuthnow weaves an interpretive framework, which has as its centerpiece the definition and description of *communities of discourse*. Communities of

discourse is a general term used to describe the way in which communities use language to originate, change, and perpetuate the dynamics of renewal within cultures. Anything that communicates between persons including verbal, written and nonverbal communication, as well as reflection on past experiences, is considered "discourse."

The first sphere is the social setting constituted by two primary factors: environmental conditions and institutional structures. Environmental conditions include the impact of population changes due to birth, immigration or plague, as well as disruptions due to war or economic depression. Institutional factors include what is embedded in society and what is displaced. A primary concern is the way in which government works to institutionalize the values of the community.

The second sphere, economics, includes a review of the production capacities within the society, the selection processes by which goods and services are pursued or denied, and the way

in which the society institutionalizes these decisions. Many of the most significant economic changes in world history are tied to rapid technological change. Because mercantile and manufacturing activities emerged as viable and necessary economic pursuits, social displacement began to occur as people from rural areas migrated to emerging urban centers. When indigent populations could not supply enough labor to meet demand, then subsequent pressure was placed on the government to provide immigrant labor for specific industries.

Additional economic concerns include the management of scarce natural resources, the coordination of distribution channels and the capacity to establish necessary plant capacities. Finally, economic concerns include the development of a central bank, the coordination of capital accumulation and the governance of money supply. Inevitably, a perennial tension between monetary policy and fiscal policy must be addressed and a well-run, coordinated economy must address both aspects of economic policy.

The third sphere, the political dimension, is concerned with the massive responsibility of integrating and maintaining a diverse population. Relevant documents from America's founding, including the *Articles of Confederation* and the *Bill of Rights*, consider how one integrates immigrants into the fabric of American life.[11] Additionally, the political system must coordinate fair and equitable taxation, establish institutions that support and reinforce self-governance, and answer and address issues concerned with the overall maintenance and stability of a society.

The fourth sphere, the religious sphere, focuses on how religion is institutionalized within a culture, including whether religion is a part of society or is ostracized, or even forbidden. The involvement the state plays in its regulation and whether its context is urban, suburban or rural is also considered significant. Additionally, the different religious expressions found in the use of text and liturgy either reinforce or clash with the prevailing culture. These practices in turn legitimate or undermine the credibility of religion

in each society.

The fifth sphere is the way in which a culture defines and responds to deviance. Every social group suffers violation of its governing norms. The way in which this deviance is perceived and punished will reflect broader social forces at work then simply the individual act itself. Was the deviant act primarily a religious, moral, political, legal or economic violation? Each of these areas and each of these elements play a role in how defiance is defined and handled.

The cultural sub-themes of art, education, entertainment and leisure that help determine and articulate cultural values are the sixth sphere. The way in which cultural change occurs, in an abrupt or gradual fashion, and how these disruptions are perceived as being progressive or repressive, are all essential elements of the cultural sphere. Also included in this area is the way in which a particular society articulates their interpretive frameworks and collective commitments, and how the cultural products of a society assist individuals during times of upheaval and change.

The seventh sphere is the role of the military and the police. Of particular concern is what role the military plays in the implementation of state policy and what role the military plays as economic expansion takes an individual country's concerns beyond its national borders.

The eighth sphere is the way in which the judicial and legal institutions of a society are coordinated and supervised. Of particular importance is whether or not they enjoy autonomy from state control, their rationalization of formal law and their interpretation and application of their constitution and defining documents.

Withnow's eight primary spheres provide insight into how a culture functions and how we can understand the dynamic interplay of its many parts. By integrating these different spheres into a meaningful whole, we gain insight into why countries and civilizations differ so dramatically throughout history. As societies migrated in increasing numbers to the cities of Europe and then America, urbanization, immigration and industrialization played an increasingly interactive

role in producing the social and cultural changes that remain to this day. By assisting our students in their understanding of these elements, we are able to prepare our students to be critical participants in the contemporary world.

Conclusion

The stories that surround the history of Spring Arbor University are all threads of the same great story of God's enduring influence on individual human lives. As this saga continues to unfold, new stories of sacrifice, perseverance and vision will arise to shape and inspire new generations of students. And, like the stories that have come before, they will remind us of God's continued interest and care for Spring Arbor University. As a result, we are filled with hope and are reminded of the responsibility we carry to live a life of contagious joy while maintaining Jesus Christ as the perspective for our own life.

Finally, these stories remind us of our central passion, our core mission and our guiding Concept. As we look to the future, "The Concept" remains the backbone of who we are and what we strive to accomplish in the lives of our students. Charles Wesley reminded his generation that to "serve the present age" was both a charge to keep and a calling to fulfill. Over 200 years later, that truth still remains. It is our confident hope that

the enduring influence of the Concept will continue to form the central thrust of Spring Arbor University for generations to come, and will remain not only a concept to teach, but also *A Concept to Keep*.

1 Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), pp. 31—32.
2 Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Book Publishers, 1973), p. 223.
3 Wagner, David. *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983).
4 Hugh of St. Victor. *The Didascalican: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*. Translated by Jerome Taylor (New York: Scribner's, 1961).
5 Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Jesus Through the Centuries* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1985).
6 Pascal, Blaise. *Pensees*. Translated by Thomas Krailsheimer. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1966, p. 83, Fragment #173.
7 Wesley, John. *The Works of John Wesley*. Oxford, Eng.: Clarendon Press, 1975—1983 (Bicentennial ed.), 2:599.
8 For further consideration see Don Thorsen's excellent secondary resource, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990).
9 H. P. Owen, "Christian Mysticism," *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*. Edited by Steven T. Katz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 63.
10 Wuthnow, Robert. *Communities of Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
11 See, for example, Paper #10, *The Federalist Papers*, where Madison articulates the great challenges facing American democracy as it seeks to integrate people from all walks of life into a nation governed by the "rule of law."

Appendix 1

KEEPERS OF THE CONCEPT

Founder: Edward Payson Hart

Presidents

Clark Jones	1873-1875
Walter Sellew	1875-1877
Clark Jones	1877-1883
Albert Stilwell	1883-1893
David Warner	1893-1905
Burton Vincent	1905-1909
Harold Millican	1909-1912
Henry Stewart	1912-1917
Paul Helsel	1917-1919
Verne Damon	1919-1920
Henry Stewart	1920-1924
William Miller	1924-1926
Merlin Smith	1926-1934
Clarence Nystrom	1934-1935
LeRoy Lowell	1935-1944

James Gregory	1944-1950
Charlie Moon	1950-1955
LeRoy Lowell	1955-1957
Roderick Smith	1957-1961
David McKenna	1961-1968
Ellwood Voller	1968-1979
Kenneth Coffman	1979-1987
Dorsey Brause	1987-1991
Allen Carden	1991-1997
James Chapman	1997-2000
Gayle Beebe	2000-

Appendix 2

KEEPERS OF THE CONCEPT

Chair, Board of Trustees*

1873-1874	Edward P. Hart (Founder)
1874-1877	Amos Bradford
1877-1881	No Records Available
1881-1885	Chester S. Gitchell
1885-1897	John Mains
1897-1903	William B. Olmstead
1903-1912	Burton R. Jones
1912-1928	David S. Warner
1928-1932	Samuel H. Porterfield
1932-1954	Walter A. Sayre
1954-1957	Mark. D. Ormston
1957-1985	Hugh A. White
1985-1998	Glenn E. White
1998-2003	David L. McKenna
2003-	Leslie E. Dietzman

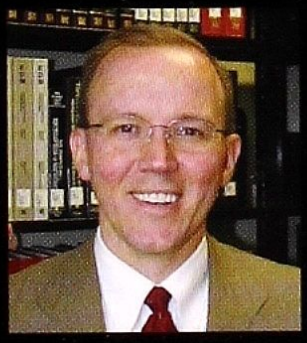
*Documents from the early years are incomplete. While careful consideration has been made to reconstruct an accurate history, errors may exist in the timeline.

Dr. David L. McKenna

(1929-) Graduating from Spring Arbor Junior College in 1953, Dr. McKenna returned to his alma mater to serve as the 21st president from 1961-1968. During his tenure as president, he led the institution through a transition from junior college status to full accreditation as a four-year college. His *Concept for a College* re-printed in its entirety within this volume, was crucial to achieving the initial accreditation and formed the basis for the institution's guiding mission statement, known affectionately as, "The Concept."

Dr. Gayle D. Beebe

(1959-) Born in Oregon of Quaker parents, Dr. Beebe first gained recognition as an all-state football and baseball player. As a student he experienced his "intellectual awakening," which heightened his pursuit for academic excellence, steering him on the path toward Christian higher education. Pastor, professor, administrator, author and lifelong student, Dr. Beebe states that when he first read the Spring Arbor University Concept it "perfectly expressed that to which I want to devote my professional life" – the life of study and the life of devotion to Jesus Christ. Dr. Beebe currently serves as the 27th president of Spring Arbor University.



Jon S. Kulaga

(1962-) A 1984 graduate of Spring Arbor University, Jon Kulaga has spent most of his professional career in Christian higher education. An ordained elder in the Free Methodist Church, he has worked in both private and state universities serving in such areas as student affairs, advancement and marketing. Currently, he is a member of Spring Arbor University's School of Education faculty and is in the dissertation phase of his doctoral studies in university administration from Kansas State University.

Design by Butch Dashner, Spring Arbor, MI

The development of Spring Arbor University's unique mission and philosophy dates back to the original writing and thinking of its founder, E.P. Hart. However, it came into special focus when, under the guidance and direction of then-president Dr. David L. McKenna, the decision was made to expand Spring Arbor Junior College into a fully accredited, baccalaureate degree granting liberal arts college.

In 1961–in order to more clearly define the mission of the institution in its new role and maximize the impact of this important transition–Dr. McKenna pulled together a host of scholars and crafted the Spring Arbor Concept. Since its creation, The Concept has been the primary guiding light in defining the educational and spiritual initiatives of the school. As its creators had hoped, The Concept has demanded a "design that shapes a curriculum, builds a campus and develops a climate for learning."

SPRING ARBOR
UNIVERSITY