



FRESNO PACIFIC  
UNIVERSITY

FPUScholarWorks

---

**Christian higher education: engaging society and culture.**

Author(s): Ewert, Merrill.

Source: *Direction*, vol. 36, no. 2 (September 2007), pp. 175-191.

Published by: Direction.

Stable URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/11418/564>

---

FPUScholarWorks is an online repository for creative and scholarly works and other resources created by members of the [Fresno Pacific University](#) community. FPUScholarWorks makes these resources freely available on the web and assures their preservation for the future.

# Christian Higher Education: Engaging Society and Culture

*Merrill Ewert*

Higher education in North America stands at a crossroad. Society has become much more urban, stratified, and culturally diverse; students who enroll in college today are more poorly prepared than their parents' generation and more pessimistic about the future. The world is post-Christian, globalized, and fragmented as social, economic, political, religious, and ethnic cleavages widen. Society's trust in higher education is declining and the demand for accountability is increasing.

---

*... although faith-based higher education institutions  
should be vigilant in looking inward, they must invest  
more energy in looking outward  
and speaking into the culture.*

---

The rising concern about the nature and appropriate role of higher education institutions today has spawned a number of books with titles such as: *American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century*,<sup>1</sup> *The Future of Higher Education*,<sup>2</sup> *The Future of Religious Colleges*,<sup>3</sup> *Conceiving the Christian College*,<sup>4</sup> and *Models for Christian Higher Education*.<sup>5</sup> America's ambivalent relationship with its higher education institutions can be seen in the increasingly acrimonious political debates over college access, affordability, and accountability. It also raises the question, what we can we reasonably expect of our schools?

Christian institutions are not exempt from discussions about how colleges and universities can help address the challenges posed by this dynamic social context. Like the rest of higher education, faith-based institutions are examining their responsibility for both scholarship and service. That discussion frames this article, which suggests several

---

*Merrill Ewert is president of Fresno Pacific University in Fresno, California.*

ways Christian higher education institutions might conceptualize the intersection of learning and service to society.

### **REACHING OUTWARD: SERVING SOCIETY**

What are the roles and responsibilities of higher education in serving society? Since Plato started his Academy in ancient Greece, teaching and learning have been at the heart of the university's vision and mission. The modern university, however, traces its roots to France and Italy at the end of the twelfth century. In Paris, the teaching and learning process revolved around the professor; at the University of Bologna, the process focused on the student.<sup>6</sup> This original vision for higher education—emphasizing critical thinking and transmitting knowledge—was carried forward into the mid-nineteenth century when another dimension was added. The German state at that time invested its resources in promoting scholarship designed to strengthen the national interest during the Industrial Revolution. This process gave birth to the modern research university.

Colleges and universities have enjoyed a special status in the United States since the first institutions were founded during the colonial period. In keeping with the European penchant for using higher education as a means of socializing the aristocracy, the founders saw the colonial American universities as a training ground for society's elite. The emergence of the research universities in Europe influenced higher education in the new world in another way as well. The European higher education reformers began including knowledge generation as part of the faculty role which had previously been defined more narrowly in terms of teaching and mentoring. This challenged the classical education model, which had disciplining the mind as its stated purpose. "Content," the nineteenth century critics suggested, had been relegated to a secondary role; colleges were attacked for their "obsession" with "dead languages" and for failing to address science and other practical subjects.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the reform movement in United States raised demands that higher education be made more accessible to the average citizen and that faculty scholarship address the practical problems facing society. In 1862, President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, which helped to democratize higher education in the U.S. by establishing public universities in each state for the:

... endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military

tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the State may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life ...<sup>8</sup>

The language of the legislation creating the land-grant institutions framed the task of higher education in terms of the needs of local communities, the nation, and the world. It harnessed the university's scholarly resources in order to further American social and economic development. Altbach calls this nineteenth century higher education's most important innovation.<sup>9</sup>

More recently, the privileged position of higher education has come under sharp attack by critics who argue that colleges and universities have failed to use their scholarship to benefit society. Professors are spending their time on research to further their own career goals at the expense of teaching, some claim. Undergraduate instruction is being sacrificed in order to develop higher-status graduate programs. While failing in their service roles, these critics argue, higher education institutions have become complacent, arrogant, and unresponsive to the needs of those who fund them.

This perceived disconnect between scholarship and service has led policy makers to call for greater transparency and accountability in higher education.<sup>10</sup> It has also sparked calls for renewal, such as the Kellogg Commission's report, aptly called *Renewing the Covenant: Learning, Discovery, and Engagement in a New Age and Different World*.<sup>11</sup> Research universities were criticized for having failed to reach outward. "Society has problems; our institutions of higher education have academic disciplines," the Kellogg Commission suggests. Meanwhile, Christian colleges and universities have been chastised for failing to focus inward and guard their theological centers. In this article, I argue that although faith-based higher education institutions should be vigilant in looking inward, they must invest more energy in looking outward and speaking into the culture.

## **LOOKING INWARD: KEEPING FAITH**

An understanding of the historical context of American higher education helps to explain why Christian colleges and universities have not been more significant players in social transformation. Our first universities were nearly all faith-based institutions developed to prepare people for leadership within the church. Many believers have viewed

Christian universities as safe havens where students can be mentored by Christian faculty.

Mennonites came late to institution building and higher education, Keim suggests, but moved forward vigorously at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>12</sup> Mennonite higher education has played both a conserving function (giving students a place to study in an environment that honored traditional Anabaptist values) and an equipping role (preparing leaders for service in and through the church).

A century ago, S. B. Wenger, wrote:

Our young people will have an education and if we cannot give it to them in well-guarded schools of our own, they will go out into other schools and get it, and according to past experiences we need not expect more than a small percentage of them to return to the church.

This is an age of education. We may stand aloof and oppose it, but it will come just the same. If not through our own schools, our young people will go out into other schools and many of them will be led astray. Many bright young minds have been lost to the church by going out into the world schools to acquire an education.<sup>13</sup>

Though established to preserve Christian values and prepare leaders for the church, some historically religious institutions “slid down the ‘slippery slope,’” becoming secular and sometimes even hostile to people of faith. The great fear of many denominations and alumni of independent faith-based colleges and universities is that their schools will lose their spiritual moorings and Christian identity.

Historian George Marsden’s *The Soul of the American University* (1994) is a *tour de force* that examines how and why American universities are defined with respect to religion.<sup>14</sup> The university builders of the late nineteenth century, Marsden shows, were Protestants who established a virtual cultural hegemony and defined the very nature of higher education in the United States. Built on this foundation of primarily Evangelical Protestant colleges, higher education institutions were usually led by clergy-presidents. Marsden tells the story of the subsequent disestablishment of religion and the secularization of the American university.

Perhaps the most frequently asked question of Christian college and university presidents is some variant of: “Are you still Christian?” “Are

you keeping 'the faith'?" "Are you sliding down the slippery slope like (pick one—Harvard, Princeton, Yale, etc.)?" Many assume that this "slippery slope" is inevitable, or that higher education leaders are unaware of the issue or simply don't care. This concern is extenuated among those institutions with Evangelical traditions whose constituents see Christians as an embattled minority under attack by a hostile world.

While Marsden's analysis focused on the process of disestablishment, Burtchaell studied the disengagement of Christian colleges from their denominational affiliations and original missions. Looking at 17 different cases that represent a range of institutions with different theological origins (Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Catholic, and Evangelical), Burtchaell describes how the links between churches and their schools eroded away:

The church was replaced as a financial patron by alumni, foundations, philanthropists, and the government. The regional accrediting associations, the alumni, and the government replaced the church as the primary authority to whom the college would give an accounting of its stewardship. The study of their faith became academically marginalized, and the understanding of religion was degraded by translation into reductive banalities for promotional use. Presidential hubris found fulfillment in cultivating the colleges to follow the academic pacesetters, which were selective state and independent universities. The faculty transferred their primary loyalties from their college to their disciplines and their guild, and were thereby antagonistic to any competing norms of professional excellence related to the church.<sup>15</sup>

Christian colleges and universities are perhaps more vulnerable to the marketplace than public institutions which receive state and federal support. Tuition-driven, independent schools must compete with each other for students and money. Denominational leaders came to expect their own institutions to compete for students and prestige with their secular counterparts even as they decreased the level of financial support to their own schools. Local congregations often crossed denominational lines to hire pastors who had no personal connection with—and almost no knowledge of—the denomination's own higher education institutions. Not surprisingly, some of these pastors encourage students in their congregations to attend the pastor's alma mater rather than the

denomination's schools. This has forced Christian colleges and universities to aggressively recruit students from outside the denomination. With the growing demand for formal degrees, many denominational and independent Bible institutes evolved into four-year colleges; many added graduate and professional development programs as well. The need for students during the 1980s led Fresno Pacific University to "broaden the base."<sup>16</sup> Small denominations such as the Mennonite Brethren Church lacked the population base to survive without reaching more deeply into the community.

The challenge to Christian institutions came from another direction as well, Benne suggests. Christian college faculty members have usually been trained in graduate schools that reflect the Enlightenment paradigm.<sup>17</sup> Some of these professors-in-training became "secularized" in the process but were nonetheless hired to guard the theological center in Christian institutions. In some cases, exposure to postmodernist thinking and practice fostered this process of secularization, Benne argues. So did the failure of these faith-based institutions to articulate an adequate theological identity and mission. When this is coupled with weak mutual accountability and support, it's hardly surprising that Christian schools might become somewhat disconnected from their denominational bases.

Although denominations and their Christian colleges have an "uneasy partnership," as Cuninggim so aptly refers to it, disengagement is not inevitable. The forces of secularization present a challenge to Christian institutions, but many have retained their commitments and identity, as Hughes and Adrian have clearly shown.

Keim suggests that the studies by Marsden and Burtchaell "put the fear of God into church-related colleges and universities."<sup>18</sup> The confluence of history, economics, the changing demographics of constituents, and the forces of secularization, many believe, have eroded the distinctiveness of Christian institutions. This is certainly reflected in the minds of many constituents and alumni today. An alumnus recently approached me about a possible gift to Fresno Pacific. "First," he said, "I need the answer to just one question. Have you remained true?"

## **REFLECTION AND ACTION**

Litfin suggests that there are two different ways Christian universities have defined themselves: one offers a Christian umbrella under which a diverse range of voices can be expressed as long as they reflect and support the broad educational mission of the school. The second seeks "... to make Christian thinking systemic throughout the institu-

tion, root, branch, and leaf.”<sup>19</sup>

This study examines the intersection of reflection and action in the Christian college and university agenda. To what extent do they foster critical reflection on their basic faith assumptions, and to what extent do their faith commitments drive a particular view of service to humankind? As noted earlier, one of the contentious issues facing research universities today relates to the position of “service” in the institutional reward system. An examination of how Christian colleges and universities frame the relationship between thinking and doing, reflection and action, may clarify the role of service in faith-based higher education institutions today. The following matrix suggests one way of looking at Christian institutions based on the extent to which they foster reflection on their underlying faith-claims, and the extent to which they engage with the culture in uniquely Christian ways on the basis of those core values.<sup>20</sup>

<i>High</i>	<b>Cloister</b>	<b>Engaged</b>
	<b>Minimalist</b>	<b>Activist</b>
<i>Low</i>		
	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
	Action	

### **MINIMALIST**

Some institutions maintain the pretense of being Christian but fail to engage their students in examining their core faith commitments. Nor do they reach out in service in ways that explicitly reflect their founding values. Comparatively, these colleges and universities that are “Low” on reflection and “Low” on action might be referred to as “Minimalist.”

These are the higher education institutions that Burtchaell suggests have disengaged from their denominational, cultural, and spiritual roots. Their faith claims are historical artifacts rather than guiding principles for decisions and action. Their acts of service are indistinguishable from

those carried out by nonreligious institutions. Though reflecting a faith-based culture and label, they are neither explicitly reflective of their founding values nor purposively Christian in how they reach out in service to society.

In the final chapter of *The Dying of the Light*, Burtchaell summarizes the “story within the story” of disengagement, suggesting a number of contributing factors: access to independent funding apart from the denomination, the marginalization of theological discourse, and presidents who felt that their institutions were confined or trivialized by denominational oversight. The faculty, Burtchaell suggests, also became disassociated from their responsibility for moral discipline and lost interest in their colleges’ denominational connections, focusing instead on their own personal scholarship. Some institutions consciously chose to expand the intellectual diversity of their campuses in response to a driving, pluralistic vision. Disclaiming any distinctive Christian vision, Burtchaell suggests, the resulting alienation

... has produced colleges and universities that, in their otherwise successful pursuit of intellectual sophistication and competence, have accepted one great change. It is a change they might not, on reflection, have intended. As we have seen, however, reflection was lacking and was nervously replaced with rhetoric.<sup>21</sup>

## **CLOISTER**

Other institutions have focused primarily on reflection. Plato located his Academy and Aristotle his Lyceum on the outskirts of Athens; close enough to reach the town easily but far enough removed to foster contemplation. The Medieval universities were places to which one retreated in order to study, think, and learn. They were Cloisters—long on reflection (“High” in this heuristic) but not specifically involved in promoting service or outreach (“Low” on this heuristic) to the society of its day. Some Christian colleges and universities have fostered a “Cloister” mindset, focusing their energies on preparing students for the future through biblical and theological reflection. They have focused their attention primarily on promoting right belief, celebrating core values, and maintaining their religious and cultural identities—disconnected from the broader, socio-cultural context. They help students examine their core values, reshape their worldviews, and celebrate the institutions’ (or the founding denominations’) cultural foundations. However, they give little attention to engaging their faculty or

students in programs of outreach or service. They're preparing students intellectually, culturally, and spiritually for the "real world" which they will encounter after graduation.

Just as some Christian institutions define their agendas in preservationist terms, many view research universities as battlegrounds between the forces of secular humanism and people of faith. When visiting an Evangelical church on our first Sunday morning in a university town, an usher asked, "Are you visiting?" No, I explained, I would be assuming a faculty position the next morning at the Ivy League university down the street. Instead of offering words of congratulations or welcome, she responded: "I'm so sorry! You poor man!" She continued: "It's terrible that you have to teach in that godless place!" She was shocked to learn that I had left a well-known Evangelical college to assume this new position.

She and others like her view the contemporary university as a lethal synthesis of postmodernism, cultural relativism, and political correctness—all perceived as antithetical to belief. Therefore, the argument goes, Christians should develop higher education institutions that view the world through the lens of faith. The task is promoting orthodoxy, not orthopraxy. These institutions are places of retreat where students deepen their faith or celebrate their cultural identities. While some view Christian colleges and universities as safe havens for fostering belief, others view them as denominational conservators of traditional values and cultural identity. Keim suggests: "We seem to ask incessantly about our identities as Mennonite colleges; what makes a college, university, or seminary Mennonite? What are the defining characteristics of Anabaptist-Mennonite institutions of higher education?"<sup>22</sup>

## ACTIVIST

Some religious traditions promote the life of the mind more (or less) than others. Some faith-based higher education institutions are very active in outreach and service but not particularly reflective about their Christian orientations. In this "Low" reflection and "High" action category, faculty and students are deeply involved in "outreach" and "ministry" but spent little time examining the core Christian values and commitments within which that service is grounded. In *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, historian Mark Noll describes the decline of Evangelical thought.<sup>23</sup> In spite of their growing wealth, political influence, and educational achievement, he argues, Evangelicals have contributed little to first-order public discourse in the academy. Noll also points to the false disjunctions that often characterize their world views:

To make room for Christian thought, evangelicals must also abandon the false disjunctions that their distinctives have historically encouraged. The cultivation of the mind for Christian reasons does not deny the appropriateness of activism, for example, but it does require activism to make room for study.<sup>24</sup>

A group of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender activists recently visited Fresno Pacific to express their concerns about the university's position on homosexuality. Though we had not invited them, they had informed us that they were coming anyway so we planned a day of conversation about their concerns and the university's position on human sexuality. We prepared the campus community for the visit with special seminars, chapel presentations, Bible studies, and small group discussions on the topic. In a letter to alumni, I explained the context of this visit and outlined our preparations. One angry alumnus wrote back to say that as president, I should have "told those students what to think" and "sent them off to class!"

Critical thinking and thoughtful reflection are not characteristic of activist institutions. Instead of being taught how to think, students are told what to think. Activist colleges and universities are characterized by mission trips and outreach programs, disseminating their core values, and extending their reach. Confident of their own values, these institutions extend their belief systems to others but leave their own faith claims largely unexamined. These Christian activists want to transmit their own theological understandings, extend their influence, and expand their cultural boundaries.

## **ENGAGED**

In this reflection/action framework, a fourth category of institutions examine their own basic values and faith commitments, but then are also purposeful in promoting service and outreach in uniquely Christian ways. They are both "High" on reflection and "High" on action. Borrowing the language of the Kellogg Commission, they are "engaged," not simply providing solutions or delivering services. Drawing on their own intellectual resources, they build partnerships with people, communities, and institutions in ways that promote student learning while also solving real-world problems. Professors draw on their disciplinary scholarship not only to teach students in the classroom but also to address the needs of society.

This synthesis of Word and deed is articulated in the *Fresno Pacific*

*Idea*,<sup>25</sup> which lays out the university's vision, mission, and values. It affirms the institution's basic Christian commitment, drawn from I Corinthians 3:11 and stated on the university's logo: "Founded on Christ." The *Idea* also underscores Fresno Pacific's "position" as a learning community but also its goal of speaking and acting prophetically. "Service" is clearly a characteristic of Anabaptist churches and their higher education institutions. This commitment to the integration of faith and learning, reflection and action, however, is not unique. Benne refers to Wheaton College's "evangelical tradition of activism," suggesting its commitment to forming students so deeply that they affect the world. He quotes Professor Roger Lundin, who writes in an unpublished paper:

Wheaton College exists to help build the church and improve society worldwide by promoting the development of whole and effective Christians through excellence in programs of Christian higher education. This mission expresses our commitment to do all things, 'For Christ and His Kingdom.'<sup>26</sup>

Engaged Christian universities not only promote thinking "Christianly" about the problems of society, but go beyond offering services to actually channeling their intellectual resources in ways that help solve society's problems. They promote applied research, model building, experimentation, and testing. Some universities have built their agendas for outreach around the problems facing their own communities. Members of the faculty carry out research that is not only published in scholarly journals, but also benefits their own communities. Engaged Christian universities do more than protect their own place in a hostile social and cultural environment. They seek to transform the public square through the strategic application of their intellectual and human resources.

### **SPEAKING INTO THE CULTURE**

Hughes and Adrian suggest that Christian higher education institutions can nurture their faith commitments and develop into higher education institutions of the first order. They review how institutions from seven different faith traditions (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Mennonite, Evangelical/Interdenominational, Wesleyan/Holiness, and Baptist/Restorationist) engage the culture.<sup>27</sup> They found that these institutions broadened their scope and vision, both academically and reli-

giously. All evolved into full-blown universities with a commitment to excellence. Though all had strong counter-cultural characteristics, they engaged the culture at personal and practical levels. All learned to relate their faith experience to the world around them. Instead of focusing their attention on avoiding a slide down some “slippery slope,” they developed outreach programs that reflected their core values and strengthened their faith claims.

A sectarian strategy on the other hand, Noll suggests, has its limits. He points out that Bob Jones University has a wonderful art gallery, but no one outside the university constituency looks to the institution for leadership in art history or representation. Regent University boasts a state-of-the-art media center, but nobody outside of Pat Robertson’s influence looks to the institution for guidance on communication theory or for help in understanding the cultural nature of television. Brigham Young University has a number of young faculty working in Semitic Studies, Noll points out, but few outside the Latter-day Saints look to the university for leadership in hermeneutical theory or Scriptural interpretation.<sup>28</sup>

Though contemporary universities are sometimes criticized for disproportionately rewarding research, teaching and service are integral parts of a faculty member’s role. This integration does not happen by accident, but rather in response to a defining vision for the institution. In the case of Fresno Pacific University, it’s the *Fresno Pacific Idea*. It positions the university to look at the world through the lens of faith, fostering community in ways that promote learning and speak to—and help transform—the culture.

## **LEARNING AND THE CIVIC MISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

The growing movement to strengthen the civic mission of higher education<sup>29</sup> has focused on the link between engagement and student learning. In reviewing the literature examining the role of youth in community-building, Camino summarizes a number of studies that found that being involved in meaningful participation in communities helps young people withstand the negative impacts of neglect, poverty, and other problems.<sup>30</sup> Having a new and meaningful experience is not sufficient; carefully guided reflection is what makes experiential learning transformative.

Engaging in reflective practice fosters social awareness and conscience in students, and exposes them to community and justice issues.<sup>31</sup> A study of more than twenty-two thousand students conducted

by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA found that participation in service positively affects academic performance, critical thinking skills, leadership, racial understanding, and student commitment to activism.<sup>32</sup> The study also found that the most significant effect is on the student's decision to pursue a service field rather than a non-service career. These and other studies clearly show the power of reflection in producing meaningful learning by connecting the service experience with the academic content. Not only does this process increase the students' sense of civic responsibility and personal effectiveness; the same thing happens to the faculty in this process.

Research shows that service-learning in K-12 institutions positively affects social development (increase in civility, greater sense of responsibility, increased self-esteem, etc.) in younger students as well. Students who engage in service are more likely to avoid high-risk behaviors and more likely to know how to function appropriately in a diverse society. They develop a greater sense of civic responsibility and better citizenship skills. They are also more likely to be motivated in school and develop their academic skills. Service learning improves the school climate and increases the level of mutual respect between students and faculty. At the same time, community members who participate with students involved in service learning develop more positive perceptions of students and schools.<sup>33</sup>

Although the demands for accountability and engagement with society are being felt the most keenly in the public sector, faith-based institutions must also connect more closely with the needs of society. The *2005 National Study of Student Engagement* found that students in faith-based schools spend more time in worship and report more deepening of their sense of spirituality than those attending non-religious institutions. That's hardly surprising. Of concern, however, is that students attending faith-based institutions have many fewer serious conversations with others whose values and beliefs differ from their own.<sup>34</sup> Engagement is a significant alternative to the Cloister, which focuses on protecting the ideological center. Engaging faculty and students in addressing the problems of communities takes activism and service to another level. Reflective practice can both help students learn to live as people of faith in a post-Christian world and position faith-based institutions to participate in social and cultural transformation.

What does the engaged university look like? At Fresno Pacific, it's the university's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies helping to develop Fresno County's Victim-Offender Restoration Program (VORP). It reflects the university's core values that deal with peace,

justice, and reconciliation. It looks like a student mentor program for children living in apartments near the campus. Another program provides technologically savvy student consultants to residents of a senior citizen village near the campus. Other students are involved in a reading program at two nearby elementary schools called "Read Fresno." Another initiative involves FPU faculty in writing newspaper and magazine articles, based on their scholarship, that address some issue of concern in this region.

## CONCLUSION

In examining the future of religious colleges, Noll suggests that there are two pertinent questions as we move into the twenty-first century. The first is whether religious colleges will be able to maintain a sharp and distinct identity. The second is whether they will be able to do so while also contributing meaningfully to intellectual and cultural life.<sup>35</sup> The answers to these questions frame four different views regarding the intersection of theory and practice, reflection and action.

Some faith-based institutions may have retained the outward manifestation of their Christian heritages but they have lost their theological moorings and the commitment to outreach and service based on their founding values. These Minimalists retain the cultural accoutrements and perhaps denominational affiliations of Christian institutions but little more. Among the Christian universities that function as Cloisters, the commitment to critical reflection and learning tends to divorce theory from practice, thinking from doing. Unlike the Minimalists, they have retained their theological centers and cultural foundations. They have not, however, connected their intellectual resources to the needs of society in transformative ways.

Meanwhile, the Activists teach skills, promote outreach, transmit knowledge, and deliver services. Students are encouraged to accept the analyses of others as authoritative without engaging in the rigorous and self-reflective thinking that is characteristic of the Cloister. By contrast, some higher education institutions purposively promote the interaction of reflection and action. Students learn to think Christianly but are also engaged with their faculty mentors in solving society's problems.

The current challenges facing higher education provide an enormous opportunity for Christian colleges and universities to speak into the culture. Though guarding our core values and commitments, we can help provide research-based answers to society's most vexing problems. The door is wide open to develop programs that provide opportunities for scholarship and foster student learning. Ernest Boyer defined the

scholarship of engagement as: "... connecting the rich resources of the university to the most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, and to our cities ..."36

This process of engagement could help strengthen society's trust in our faith-based higher education institutions and help transform the culture. ✨

## NOTES

1. Philip G. Altbach, Robert O. Berdahl, and Patricia J. Gumpert, *American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Social, Political, and Economic Challenges* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).
2. Frank Newman, Lara Couturier, and Jamie Scurry, *The Future of Higher Education: Rhetoric, Reality, and the Risks of the Market* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass by John Wiley and Sons, 2004).
3. *The Future of Religious Colleges*, ed. Paul Dovre (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).
4. Duane Litfin, *Conceiving the Christian College* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).
5. Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian, *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997).
6. Philip Altbach, "Patterns in Higher Education Development," in Altbach, *American Higher Education*, 16.
7. Geiger, "Ten Generations of American Higher Education," in Altbach, *American Higher Education*, 38-70.
8. The Morrill Act of 1862, Section 4. These institutions came to be known as The Land Grant System because these new colleges were built using monies from the sale of public lands given to states as "grants."
9. Altbach, "Patterns in Higher Education Development," in Altbach, *American Higher Education*, 18.
10. *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2006).
11. Kellogg Commission, *Returning to Our Roots* (Washington, D.C.: The National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, 2001).
12. "The Ethos of Anabaptist-Mennonite Colleges," in *The Future of Religious Colleges*, 264-80.
13. *Ibid.*, 267.

14. George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
15. James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 837.
16. Paul Toews, *Mennonite Idealism and Higher Education: The Story of the Fresno Pacific College Idea* (Fresno, CA: Fresno Pacific University, 1995).
17. Robert Benne, *Quality With Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).
18. Paul Keim, "The Ethos of Anabaptist-Mennonite Colleges," in *The Future of Religious Colleges*, 264.
19. Litfin, 18.
20. Almost half a century ago, H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* laid down a useful framework for conceptualizing the relationship of Christ and culture: Christ against culture, Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox, and Christ transforming culture. For a helpful critique of Niebuhr, see Bruce Guenther's article, "The 'Enduring Problem' of Christ and Culture," *Direction* 34, no. 2 (2005): 215-37.
21. Burtchaell, 850.
22. Keim, 271.
23. Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994).
24. *Ibid*, 245.
25. This document can be accessed at [http://www.fresno.edu/about/fpu\\_idea.asp](http://www.fresno.edu/about/fpu_idea.asp).
26. Benne, 107.
27. "The Christian University: Maintaining Distinctions in a Pluralistic Culture," in Hughes, *Models for Christian Higher Education*, 445-55.
28. Mark Noll, "The Future of the Religious College," in *The Future of Religious Colleges*, 90.
29. See Harry Boyte and Elizabeth Hollander, *Wingspread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University* (Educational Resources Information Center, HE 032 593).
30. Linda Camino, "Youth-Led Community Building: Promising Practices from Two Communities Using Community-based Service Learning," *Journal of Extension* 34 (February 2005).
31. Lee Frazer, Michelle Raasch, Diane Pertzborn, and Fred Bradley,

- “The Impact of Community Clients on Student Learning: The Case of a University Service Learning Course,” *The Journal of Experiential Education* 29, no. 3 (2007): 407-12.
32. Alexander W. Astin, Lori J. Vogelgesang, Elaine K. Ileda, and Jennifer A. Yee, *How Service Learning Affects Students* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 2000).
  33. The Learning-in-Deed website summarizes studies that document how service-learning affects students, schools, and institutions. Though they specifically address K-12 institutions, these are likely to be comparable for universities as well. See: <http://www.learningindeed.org/research/slresearch/slrsrchsy.html>
  34. National Survey of Student Engagement. See: <http://nsse.iub.edu/index.cfm>.
  35. Noll, “The Future of the Religious College,” 73.
  36. Ernest L. Boyer, “The Scholarship of Engagement,” *Journal of Public Service and Outreach* 1, no. 1 (1996): 21.