

# **JOURNEYS**



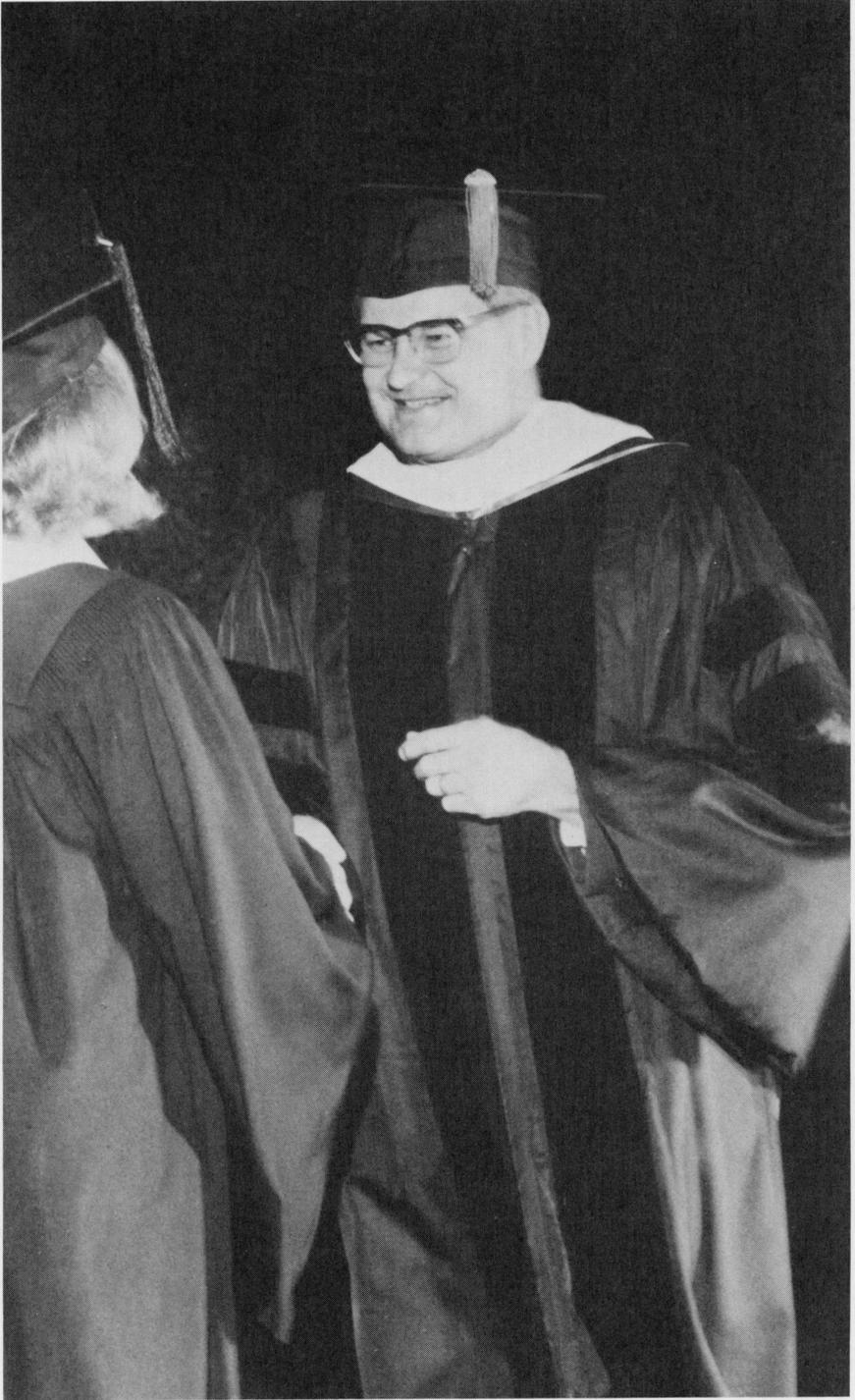
**Dr. Arthur J. Wiebe**  
**President, Pacific College**  
**1960 - 1975**

1976  
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# **JOURNEYS**

**A Collection of Convocation Addresses  
Delivered by Dr. Arthur J. Wiebe**

**PACIFIC COLLEGE  
Fresno, California  
1976**



## CONTENTS

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Preface .....	4
From Captain to Crew Member.....	6
Education for the Global Village.....	10
The Academic World and Social Responsibility.....	13
The Nature of Community.....	17
To Preserve or to Share.....	20
Retrospect and Prospect.....	22
Responding to Crisis.....	25
A Quest for Truth.....	28
The Process of Becoming.....	31
Responding to Love.....	33

## PREFACE

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AS ANY institution develops a history, there comes a time when a new vision is required. At such a time imaginative leadership is crucial. Like a weathervane, a dedicated leader must remain firmly grounded, yet respond to the shifting breezes and point out a direction to follow. Dr. Arthur J. Wiebe has served as a distinguished leader during his tenure as president of Pacific College.

In 1959 Dr. Wiebe was called by the Board of Education to assume leadership during a time when Pacific College was in a transitional stage. The idea of providing young people with Christian higher education began in 1944 with a group of concerned people who established Pacific Bible Institute for the purpose of training young people to share their faith and live as effective disciples in a world of change. After several years, however, the pressures for alternative approaches to Christian higher education increased. The demands of the church and of society for professional training and a broader educational experience were keenly felt.

In response, Dr. Wiebe retained the strong biblical foundation begun with Pacific Bible Institute and emphasized the centrality of strong biblical studies as an integral part of a liberal arts curriculum. Without the liberal arts emphasis, the Bible Institute may not have survived. But without the biblical studies emphasis, the liberal arts college may not have survived. The time was right for the synthesis of the two. That synthesis has proved to be a significant distinctive of Pacific College.

In addition to providing an educational vision, Dr. Wiebe has been a man of courage. He was willing to take risks when he felt that such risks were to the advantage of the young people and, ultimately, to the church. He has shown courage in building a faculty which has a commitment to Christ as well as to academic excellence. Young men and women, most of them inexperienced and untested in the arena of Christian higher education but committed to the vision of Pacific College, were invited to join the team. Dr. Wiebe has shown courage in providing leadership in a unique approach to the training of leaders for the church. The Contemporary Christian Ministries program has grown dramatically since its inception in 1971.

But vision and courage do not stand alone. They rest upon faith. Dr. Wiebe has maintained an abiding faith in young people. During a time when administrators across the nation faced the confrontations of students, when hostilities on college and university campuses resulted in demonstrations and strikes, Dr. Wiebe was constantly available to share and pray and reason with young people. Reconciliation rather than merely resolution of tension was his mode. His faith in faculty, board, parents, churches seldom waivered, even during periods of crisis and doubt.

But faith is incomplete if merely rooted in a human community. It is apparent that Dr. Wiebe's faith is rooted in a personal relationship with Christ. His Christian commitment has been an example to many, particularly to those within the Pacific College community.

Because of Dr. Wiebe's vision, and in appreciation of his fifteen years of service as president of Pacific College, we extend to him our sincere gratitude. This compilation of his annual convocation addresses, in which his vision of Christian higher education is expressed, is a symbol of our appreciation and gratitude.

The Faculty

The Board of Education

*These comments were presented  
at the commencement ceremonies  
on June 8, 1975.*

## FROM CAPTAIN TO CREW MEMBER

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Convocation Address — September 24, 1974

WELCOME, each of you, to the adventures of another year. The anchor has been hoisted, and we are underway. Seas around the world are choppy these days, but we can remind ourselves that the same wind which stirs up these crashing waves also fills the sails that power us to our chosen destination. Adversity is the twin of opportunity, the opposite side of the coin, and we can choose which side shall be up. Life is filled with times when we need to sort things out for ourselves. No properly "grandmothered" grandchild can forget that box at grandma's place filled with loved and battered toys, loved and battered by more than one generation. It always offered a sorting out experience in search of that favored tattered doll or those thoroughly worn building blocks.

Today I want to share some thoughts with you about sorting out. We often remind ourselves at Pacific College that this is a community of learners in pursuit of truth and wisdom. Our only difference is that some of us have sailed this sea longer than others. But age alone does not guarantee wisdom. Wisdom, like cheese, needs time to mature, and here we have some of that time.

Wisdom is idealism tempered by realism. Both are essential. Idealism is that glorious dream in which everything comes out right. That dream is ordered and good, without imperfections. School is perfect, then the children come. The recipe is perfect, then the cake collapses in the oven. The job is great, just what I wanted, then the boss shows up. Realism is the spoiler. It pounds and dashes idealism against the hard facts of life. That which survives can be wisdom. The wise man therefore carries two marks: that far-away look which gives evidence that idealism is very much alive and well, and those scars that are the slash marks of experience in the real world.

This is our journey together. We dare to dream and have visions. We dare to test them in the crucible of life and face the consequences. This is the journey in which we are joined, the journey in which it is my prayer that we may walk together in the spirit of sharing, understanding, and good will.

There is a significant and meaningful experience which underlies and permeates my sharing with you this day. I, like anyone else here, must engage in this process of sorting out. It all began in 1960, when I accepted the invitation to become president of Pacific College. Idealism had to be the motivation, because realism said that the student body numbered a mere fifty, the program was ill-defined, and the campus consisted of one lonely building mercifully protected by a twenty foot strip of grass from the surrounding plowed fields.

I had come to the conviction that Pacific had a future that was not the dream of man but the plan of God, and that conviction led me here. My dream was soon shared by other visionaries who joined the

crew. The hard facts of life have tempered many of our ideals. We can take the buffetings with less fear and greater benefit by now, for we have learned the valuable lessons they can teach if we are willing to learn. But our dreams are stronger than ever, and our vision is clearer as God has clarified it and revealed to us new insights and new ways.

When this cruise reaches port next June 30, I will have completed fifteen years at the helm. My wife Evelyn and I have chosen to leave the captain's quarters in order to join the crew. This is my last fall President's Convocation address. Two weeks ago this decision was shared with the faculty because it is my conviction that the faculty, possibly more than any other single part of the college family, carries the responsibility for this program. A week ago I shared this decision with the Board. Members of our Board unselfishly give many hours of concern and love to this work, and it was to them that I officially tendered my resignation. Today we share this decision with you, the students, because you are what it is really all about, and we are sharing this decision before we make it public. It is your potential for the Kingdom of God that forms the reason for our goals and efforts.

We look forward to being a member of the crew. That is where the work gets done, and rumor has it that there is more time for fishing. A change of captain is good, not only for the captain, but for the ship. Pacific College is well-acknowledged as a significant institution. It is ready for a new captain to take it on more daring journeys, to more distant ports, and through greater adversities. The change in command is designed to be smooth, unhurried, and an act of faith; for there is a greater Pilot on board than any of us, and he remains ever present and alert. This is God's work, not ours. It must be his plan, not ours. In the meantime, good and adequate provisions have been made for the governance of the college. Curriculum has always been my basic interest. Shortly, I will focus most of my attention to that field, both in the mathematics project and in the forthcoming master's program.

All of this has meant much sorting out for my wife and myself and my colleagues. In this sorting out we have sought to implement certain truths that Jesus taught and which I now want to share with you. Confusion and uncertainty are the basic ingredients of the mixture to which the sorting out process particularly applies. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Master of the process, and we are wise if we listen to him.

We are walking now on the rocky shore of a beautiful sea. The water that laps the shore occasionally delivers sharp slaps against the side of the ship that lies ahead. Jesus calls to the suntanned fishermen in the boat. He seems to know them. "Follow Me," he says, "and I will make you fishers of men." Please do not underrate the trauma of that sorting out experience which these gnarled fishermen faced because the narrative in which scripture records it is so brief.

Peter, as far back as he could remember, knew what he wanted to be when he grew up. His eyes had always been focused on this sea. "Some day," he dreamed, "I'll have a big boat all my own and strong nets enough." "Grow big and lurk deep," he commanded the small

fish at water's edge, "and then when I'm grown I'll come to outwit you. My fish will be the envy of all the fishermen, caught in the deepest part of the sea, commanding premium prices on the market."

There he sits now with Andrew. His dream has become reality. The nets are in his hands. The boat is below him. Here is tangible success. Here is security. "Under those waves grows the crop that will provide all the needs for all the days of my life," Peter says. "Leave all of this?" he muses. "Who dares ask me that?" It is the Master's order. He looks beyond all this to higher values. The Master Sorter says there is something more important than fish and the art of fishing. People are more important than fish. Discipling people is more important than fishing. Peter and Andrew and James and John respond to this sorting out process. They learn that there are pursuits in this world that are more valuable than others. They leave the fish world to enter the people world.

We continue along the dusty road to a Galilean village. Our sandals kick up small swirls of dust that coat our sweaty feet. There is the customs house, and there sits Matthew counting out the day's tax receipts. A smug smile spreads over his face as the last coin disappears into the leather pouch. Life is good these days, and secure. Except for the people, it would be pleasant enough. "The people always seem to grumble," Matthew says to himself.

"Follow me," Jesus says.

"What, what is this? Leave all of this to follow you? What can you offer?"

Yes, people are more important even than taxes, and their need for help just as inevitable. So Matthew experiences the sorting out process, and he chooses people over taxes.

Now the Master Sorter walks on a beautiful carpet, a carpet of deep red that runs down the center of this sanctuary, and he looks us straight in the eye, and he says, "Follow me. I want you to follow me into a life in which people are the first priority."

Now it is our turn to answer. But the sorting out process needs refinement. It is not sufficient simply to choose people over all else.

Jesus is walking through a massive throng of people on the outskirts of Jericho. In all that large and great multitude he spots a single small man sitting in a tree. Ignoring all the others, he calls to this curious gentleman and invites himself over to his home. The crowd contained a man in need, and Jesus spotted that one man and asked that both of them be separated from the crowd in order to be alone.

We walk into a beautiful temple, resplendent in the early morning sun. Jesus sits down to teach the eager people who have gathered around him. Self-styled and self-promoted holy men and leaders in things religious interrupt that peace, dragging a woman with them. "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act." They are bristling with judgment and anger and vengeance. False pretense, like a foul odor, fills the air.

The Master Sorter knows them. He knows this type very well.

Quietly he stoops down to write on the ground, pretending not to notice. They chatter and they babble. Finally Jesus raises himself to his full height, faces them calmly, and says, "Go ahead with your game, but under one rule. Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." And he returns to his writing on the ground. A quick glance around quickly pinpoints those who are the most righteous. With an embarrassed blush they turn away, having just remembered that some of their cohorts know all too well that they are not without sin. Quickly and quietly others follow until all have slunk away. Only one person is left. That person has been separated from the crowd. It is the person who has the greatest need. By his question Jesus has separated this needy woman from the crowd so that he can minister to her.

Thus, we see a second level of sorting. In the first, people are given priority over things. In the second, the individual is given priority over the crowd. How often the Gospels show Jesus exercising this second stage of sorting, separating people from the crowds, picking out the neediest. Jesus demonstrates that the greatest ministry is the ministry to the person at the bottom of the totem pole.

Night is falling over Jerusalem. A knock on the door breaks the evening silence. Jesus rises and opens the latch. Nicodemus slips into the room. He starts with some casual general remarks, but Jesus quickly sorts out his problem. "Nicodemus," he seems to say, "cut out the preliminaries. What you must learn and learn quickly is that your real need is to be born again."

A rich young ruler met Jesus one day to ask about eternal life. He had an outstanding record of obedience to the commandments, a veritable Eagle Scout of the Old Testament. The record of good behavior kept unraveling deed by deed and line by line. Then it came to a sharp halt. Jesus suggested that a line was missing. "One more line," he said. "Sell your goods and give them to the poor, and follow me." Quickly the cut had been made to the heart of the problem. In this instance, that step proved to be too big, and all the rest of that life, that good life, crumbled into one heap. But the Master Sorter had found the basic problem.

Thus, we see a third level of sorting. In the first, people are given priority over things; in the second, the individual in need is given priority over the crowd; and in the third, the individual's basic spiritual need is given priority over all other needs that he may have. It is when we reach this bedrock of ultimate need that we find the foundation for our life.

Sorting it all out is our basic concern at Pacific College. People are more important than things. The individual in need is our first concern. The basic problem in each one of us must have the highest priority. We need each other in this sorting out process. We affirm each other as we share one another's burdens. We grow in Christ as we follow His example. Let us pray.

Our Father, by your example you have taught us, and you continue to teach us, a way that so often seems difficult and odd and terribly uncomfortable. But when we follow it

unique. Your configuration of talents and potential has no exact counterpart. While your potential may not be boundless, neither is it severely restricted. None of us will ever reach our full potential and therefore none of us has anything to complain about. We become educated as we grow toward the bounds of our capacity. This is often a painful process. It is always a disciplined one. We stretch, push, and pull against painful resistance. The nagging temptation to ease up dogs our heels.

A fertile egg, nudged on by the warmth of the mother bird, begins a gradual but precise process of transformation. At a given stage, the shell no longer has the capacity to contain the potential of its contents and the young fledgling bursts through that limitation. It has broken through a significant barrier into a new life of hunger and eating, chirping and growing. The nest which once received it now becomes a prison, a new object of conquest. First, there is the tentative step onto its edge. Finally, this fledgling feels the irresistible urge to leave this perch, only to flutter uncertainly to earth, thoroughly embarrassed. There follows a short respite to soothe hurt feelings and gather new courage and then another attempt to fly. A series of short, awkward hops, then longer ones. A flight into a nearby tree, then flights from tree to tree. The exhilaration of flight becomes intoxicating, pushing it to longer and higher paths. With practice comes skill and the desire to experience the new freedom now beckoning.

Such is the process of education: to learn, to test, to know, and to learn some more. Man becomes truly educated, not when he has accumulated a given amount of knowledge, but when he has developed an insatiable appetite for knowledge and wisdom.

Educators have the responsibility to help each student move toward this goal. As we view our global village, we must perceive it as a sea of boundless potential in which God has invested innumerable abilities, each to be nurtured and cultivated with conscientious care, all to be forged into a useful purpose. This can be accomplished only when we concentrate on individuals and on their special needs.

The second process of education consists of transmitting the culture. We are all a part of the past. Much of our early acquisition was by imitation. We asked no questions as we eagerly sought to be like the adults around us, unconsciously absorbing the fundamentals of our culture. But the process becomes more complex, and suddenly we begin to question what is happening. We try our hand at rebellion, testing out the consequences of violating that which is accepted in our culture. This process is the seed from which either wisdom or stupidity can grow: wisdom, if we ask the right questions for the right purposes; stupidity, if we ask the wrong questions for the wrong purposes.

We must recognize that simple truth often cuts tradition to shreds. To most, this is unnerving. But to the perceptive person, moral support is derived from the knowledge that truth discovered is worth more than cultural practices perpetuated. Truth bears its own testimony and its own reward. Discover truth at all costs and cherish it

with all your being. It is an axiom that truth is always simple enough for everyone to apprehend, and profound enough for none to fully comprehend.

If we are to carry out our task of education in the global village, we must learn truth so well that we can transmit it in the simplest terms. Dr. Edna Ferber, one of America's leading mathematicians, is one of my valued friends. We worked together on a writing project for the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics in the early sixties. She constantly reminded us that until we could explain a concept to a student with below average ability, we did not understand it well ourselves. Great ideas well understood are expressible in utterly simple terms.

In the late 1950's, Dr. Suppes and Dr. Hawley experimented with teaching geometry in the first and second grades. They found that second grade students loved to call a box by its geometric name: a rectangular parallelepiped. Dr. George Polya of Stanford is recognized as one of the leading mathematicians of all time. That which these second graders liked to refer to as a rectangular parallelepiped, he constantly refers to as a box.

It is not abstract and sophisticated oratory which marks the educated man, though some imitators subscribe to such a fallacy; it is the ability to communicate truth in simple terms. It is the special characteristic of proverbs to be both simple and profound. Our task for educating the global village can be distilled to a few such proverbs:

Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom;  
and with all thy getting, get understanding.

Let us resolve to nurture our understanding until we can  
transmit truth in pure and simple terms.

Let us resolve to view man as God views him: a creature  
of great worth, an individual of unique potential, a being  
with an eternal destiny.

Let us develop a spirit of compassion that compels us  
to transmit God's truth to God's creatures in our global  
village.

But what is wisdom? There is so much knowledge available today. What knowledge is of greatest worth? And how shall we find the courage to begin to teach in this, our global village?

Our plight would indeed be desperate except for one fact: there exists a solution. One Man in history, more than all others, had a global orientation. One Man in history had a global curriculum. One Man in history gave us a charge to educate this global village.

What is truly remarkable is that this Man was not a world traveler. It is likely that after childhood he never ventured much more than a hundred miles from home. Humanly speaking, it does not seem possible that he would develop a vision that would encompass a world which, in his day, stretched far into imagination and was only sketchily mapped, and that more by superstition than by fact. While

it does not make sense, it is true, and stands as a testimony to his divine nature.

He had a clear perception of what knowledge was of greatest worth. When asked to condense the entire Old Testament Scriptures and to give it a comprehensive interpretation, he replied that everything was said with the statement, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your being . . . and your neighbor as yourself." If today we could all be transported to the composite of the great libraries of Harvard, Yale, Berkeley, and Stanford and walk with Jesus through the miles and miles of stacks, and if we could then emerge and ask him to summarize the meaning of all that knowledge, we would likely hear him say, "The meaning of all the wisdom in these books is that you shall love the Lord your God with all your being . . . and your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus emerged from the disdained hinterland of Nazareth to implant indelibly upon the minds and spirits of his disciples that he had THE message for the global village. His curriculum for this educative process was succinct and simple: "Go forth and make all nations my disciples." Its effectiveness was unprecedented in human history. "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And be assured, I am with you always, to the end of time." With this foundation and this assurance of his presence, we can courageously begin.

## **THE ACADEMIC WORLD AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**Convocation Address — January 7, 1975**

IT IS always a challenge to speak to the college family at Pacific simply because here are people of high ideals, high goals, and great ambition; and one is always afraid of wasting time just by saying words. It is my hope and prayer that something we say this morning is going to be relevant to your particular situation.

Academic institutions have two primary roles in our society. This is true of elementary schools, of secondary schools, of universities and colleges. The first of those roles is to transmit the culture, the culture that has built up over a period of time and in which new citizens, young citizens, find themselves. In our complex culture, there is obviously a great deal that must be transmitted to those who are to become part of our cultural body.

But there are ultimate questions to be asked. What do we *really* want to transmit out of all the choices that we have? What is our social responsibility in this particular area?

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John Gardner, who is one of the leading thinkers of our day, says

in his book *Self Renewal*, "Many moderns would rather walk barefoot over hot coals than utter an outright expression of moral concern." But embarrassment over moral consciousness is a disease of people far gone in affectation and over-sophistication. Unaffected people will recognize it as normal to consult their deepest values and to exhibit an allegiance to those values.

Now it is just to such a moral standard that we need to go in order to determine our responsibility to society. And I suggest that Paul, writing in the book of Philippians, has a screening device for the transmission of culture which we might well ponder and which we might well make the model for the screening that we do. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me do." Those are just about all of the ways in which we receive culture. And we demonstrate that we have received a culture when we do it, when we participate actively in it.

If there is any concern that I would have for graduates of the Pacific College community, it is that each one would be rooted firmly in values and be thoroughly committed to creative activities within a Christian commitment.

The most effective use of our time in college, I would suggest, is to reflect, to take time to focus upon those values which we want to transmit; and to imitate those values that Jesus transmitted to us as we find them recorded in Holy Scripture.

Now the second function of an academic institution is to promote cultural change. And immediately there is a conflict. Obviously, there are places where these two functions are going to rub, and there will be friction. But there is a climate that exists in America today for change. A politician can even get elected by running on a simple slogan like "It's time for a change." Somehow there is a desperate desire to get out of the now and the here because of the desperation with which our citizenry views certain conditions in our country.

I would like to suggest that when there is a climate for change, there is also the best opportunity for creativity. It is in these circumstances that we can refocus and redirect our culture. Times of social upheaval are times of great opportunity, and we as Christians need to make use of these periods of time in order to affect the direction of change.

Jesus came to introduce change. His teaching was revolutionary and quickly raised the opposition of the status quo. "Ye have heard that it hath been said," he frequently said, followed by, "but I say unto you." There was a change, but it was a change that had a specific goal, and it was that new focus that justified the change.

Now again we look for guideposts for change, and we look for those guideposts in the Scriptures. I think that the validity of looking to Scripture for guideposts for change increases and becomes more

acceptable as one analyzes the current social disorders. Change is always focused on a particular problem; it is not some vacuous disembodied concept. It has to have a focus, so let us look at some problems.

The problem of hunger and poverty, for example, is one that we are not going to cure, and I realize that that is a pessimistic view. Jesus said, "The poor ye have with you always." We are going to have the poor with us regardless of how often we have to change the definition of poverty (and we keep changing it every year, you know, in the United States). But the poor we will always have with us, and the reason for that is simply that regardless of how much you shake up society, when it all settles back down, there are going to be some people farther up the ladder than others.

Look, for example, at what has happened in the last twelve months with respect to the shifting of the world's wealth due to the abundant oil resources in certain sparsely populated countries. These "small" countries now are almost on par with the major powers of the world in terms of economic resources. This shift has caused tremendous change in many ways which we are going to feel and which will have a very obvious impact on us. The world is going to experience greater interrelationships, greater interdependence, and will be more and more affected by any kind of dislocation which happens anywhere in any part of the world. And we cannot look to a world government to correct injustices. The oppressed, like the poor, we will always have with us.

Jesus always associated very freely with the oppressed. It is remarkable how often he sat at meat with those who were oppressed and who were outcast. His way of combating the evil of oppression was to relate to people in a significant way; and there is the key, I think, for how we are to deal with oppression. We cannot always relieve oppression and we cannot always remove the cause of oppression, but we can associate with and give worth to the people who are oppressed.

A fundamental problem, more fundamental even than oppression, is the lack of purpose, the hopelessness, the sense of worthlessness that pervades much of our society. This is a crisis of the spirit; and the remedy is not psychiatry, the remedy is not escapism, and the remedy is not in false hopes. I think the remedy is the one that gives man a new dignity, a sense of self worth.

One of the particular concerns that Jesus had was to give worth to man, because people with dignity and worth and faith can endure poverty and oppression and have endured it. People with dignity and worth and faith can face the inevitable tragedies of life. And people with worth and dignity and faith can overcome adversity.

Jesus confirmed this, and he came to give dignity and worth to us. And so John speaks of the consequence of Jesus having come as the following: "Beloved, now are ye the sons of God." What worth can be greater than that? But that is how John perceived what had happened to him because of the coming of Christ. "And it doth not

yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." There is an abundance of hope and worth and dignity for those who are the sons of God because they are the disciples of Jesus.

And so where we cannot eliminate the problems of society, we have to learn how to live with them. If we cannot solve the problems, then our social responsibility is to help people to live with those problems and to be victorious with them. And I think that this biblical realism and idealism helps us to go beyond those who do not claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

Now, we must do everything possible to alleviate problems on the most permanent basis possible. I would suggest that your education is not going to be complete until you spend six months, a year, two years, in service — voluntary service of some form or another with agencies dealing with the very, very real physical and spiritual problems of mankind. And I would hope that you will not be in too much of a rush to get a job, because going to work is very much like a youngster going to school. You will not wiggle much after you get in that job. So do a little wiggling before that time. I think that all of us who had that kind of interlude — no, a prelude — to a meaningful life, would recommend it because of what it has done for us. So, do not be too much in a hurry. Do educate yourself in a first-hand way to some of the very real problems of people in this world.

But wherever we are, we as Christians have a tremendous duty to help people get a proper perspective on the circumstances in which they find themselves. By filtering our transmitted culture through the sieve of Scriptural values and by promoting change according to the example that Christ gave us, we can distill those elements that are needed in our culture. And, having done that, we will have made the greatest contribution in meeting our social responsibility.

## THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY

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Convocation Address — September 25, 1973

I TRUST it would be superfluous for me to say "welcome". I hope you have already felt welcome. We certainly want you to.

All wise men and all wise women do much more than live from day to day. They rise above the fog of mere existence to ponder the meaning of life and their relationship to it. They ask penetrating questions that pierce through the routine of the passing days. Each searches his universe for order, for permanence, for meaning, and for truth. No truly wise person asks that the sunlight be dimmed or the lights turned low upon these things. No truly wise person can escape these basic questions, and no truly wise person will want to flee from the agony that accompanies this search.

Out of this search there emerge convictions that life is governed by unalterable and fundamental principles. These convictions grow, and they become the cornerstone for the building of a personal philosophy of life which operates as a fountain from which decisions and actions flow.

But recognizing the limitations of man, encompassed as he is with his own great ignorance and small wisdom, we acknowledge with the Apostle Paul that "now we see through a glass darkly," and we humbly submit ourselves to the changes that greater revelations of wisdom must bring. As new light illumines our path, we choose to accept its revelations so that we may grow. And so our personal philosophy operates as a hypothesis, as our statement of truth as we see it today.

Hypotheses are essentially statements of faith to which we pledge our allegiance by saying, "We believe." Hypotheses are constantly in need of confirmation. "Come and prove me," "Come and see that the Lord is good," are divine invitations to test for confirmation. Those hypotheses that stand the test of life emerge as truth, and our trust in them grows.

The Pacific College community is built on three important hypotheses which, through the experience of many concerned and sincere members of this community through the years, have demonstrated themselves to be true — verified as much by confirming experiences as by logic, though they pass that test as well. Today we confirm our faith in them.

First, we members of the Pacific College community assert and affirm that the center of all life is a Person. This person is not the exclusive possession of any of our separate heritages, but he stands tall in the Christian heritage of which all of us can be a part, and most of us are. The person who is the focus of all life is Jesus Christ. We confidently believe that through him our lives take on meaning and purpose. We are not like the grass of the fields, which is here today and forgotten tomorrow. Because of him we are sons of God:

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth<sup>h</sup> not yet appear what we shall be.”

This undeserved but high station has a profound effect on how we think about ourselves, our actions, our thoughts, our work, and our goals. He gives to our lives dignity, worth, purpose, and immortality. Our time and our talents become precious. They are no longer to be wasted. He is the source of our wisdom. His life is the model for our life. His purposes become our purposes. His will becomes ours even though we wrestle against it through the night. He is on center stage.

A good hypothesis begs to be tested to verify its truthfulness. It states the condition and then it predicts an outcome. “Believe,” he says, “and thou shalt be saved.” “Come unto me,” he says, “and I will give you rest.” These are just a few of his invitations for us to discover truth. “Come and see that the Lord is good,” is his tender suggestion to make each day a better day and each hour a more satisfying one. There are many in our community here who have experienced the validity of these promises. There are many of us here who today, tomorrow, and through the precious minutes of this year will experience the reality of this person. If this has not been your good fortune, do not envy us. Come and share with us.

Second, we members of the Pacific College community affirm that each life has a purpose. This affirmation arises out of our conviction about the person of whom we spoke. From the moment you were conceived, you became a being with great potential for a useful and fruitful life.

Genuine purpose must come from a person, the person Jesus Christ. It is he who holds the key that can unlock your treasure chest. To know that the chest stands there and even that it belongs to you is not enough so long as it remains closed. Each of us needs to unlock our narrow vision and our limited purpose so that we can explore the wealth with which God has endowed us as individuals and the time that he gives to each one of us to use.

Our community, then, is a purposeful community. There is a goal revealed by that Person, and this goal will neither tarnish nor melt away. It has eternity engraved upon it, and our purpose is to be the disciples of Jesus Christ. Discipleship means allegiance, unwavering and pure. Discipleship means probing for truth. Discipleship means discipline and self-denial. Discipleship also means breaking bread together, walking the fields together, facing tragedies together, accepting challenges together, and celebrating victories together. In this purposeful community we seek to minimize secondary things and to maximize primary considerations, and we assign these relative ratings through reference to the Person and his revelation through his word and his direct communication to us as he speaks to us.

We are motivated to share because what we share is not of our own making but of his. We are motivated to polish our talents and to expand our understandings because he has a plan to make our life both unique and indispensable. We become conscious that real life

does not begin after college or at some future point in time, but that it is here today. As I look back, and as many of my colleagues look back to our college years, we have to say, "Those were good years." That is why some of us came back. And I think you are going to look back the rest of your life and say that the college years were among the greatest years of your life. Today is the time of salvation, today is the time to share, today is the time to grow, today is the time to tackle and finish a major task, today is the time to live a full life.

Third, we members of the Pacific College community assert that Pacific College is people, individual people. Just as God has ordained that salvation shall be an individual matter, just as Christ constantly associated himself so much with individuals, so it is that we are a community of individuals. The saying, "Pacific College is people," is not a vacuous slogan or a publicity gimmick. It is a conviction. There is real concern here about each of us as a person because we are created in the image of God. Each of you is precious to each one of us. The faculty is here because we are challenged by your potential as persons, as individuals, and we thrill at each sign of growth. Our commitment is that our time shall be available to engage in sharing with you. Our commitment is that whatever our intellectual resources may be, you are welcome to probe them. Our commitment is that we shall do the best we can to help to bring out the best and noblest that is in you.

Pacific College is a caring community. We consider your brief college years as only the beginning of a life-long relationship; our interest in you will never die. We care about your participation in our community and welcome your thoughtful suggestions on how to help our community grow.

Pacific College is a sharing community. We gather two by two and share our struggles, joys, and victories. We share as the two's grow to three's and to four's and finally to scores. It is a sharing community during a retreat at Hume Lake, a hike in Yosemite, a field trip gathering in a Navaho hut, or on a plane winging its way to Israel. It is a sharing community with two roommates in the residence halls or two friends relaxing under the shade of a campus tree. We share with one another.

You are an important member of our community. Yes, it is true that we have given each student a number. We use that number for easy reference in lunch lines or at registration or chapel checks. But when we pass those trivial events and reach the significant ones, we forget about any numbers because you are a person to us. We care about you. And we suspect you care about us. And so, almost without knowing, in our caring we become disciples of Jesus. For it was in his caring about our destiny and in God's sharing of his Son that we catch a glimpse of the nature of God. It is in our sharing and in our caring in Christian love that we grow to be like him.

## TO PRESERVE OR TO SHARE

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Convocation Address — October 30, 1973

A FEW WEEKS ago I was on the East coast in the nation's capital to attend a board session of the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges. Coming from one of the board's sessions, I was greeted by my wife with the question, "Have you heard what's happened today?" The news she was referring to was that Vice President Agnew had resigned. Obviously, this was a matter that was of great importance to that particular locale, but despite the fact that I was probably only three miles from the Justice Department at that time, I had to get my news exactly the way I would have gotten it here in Fresno, via TV. In looking at that entire incident, I was impressed with one thing, that what I was viewing was the destruction of a way of life. A person who had just a few months before seemed destined to be considered as a candidate for President of the United States, stood facing a shattered life.

During that same trip, we visited a little town called Bird-in-Hand in Pennsylvania. Now Bird-in-Hand is in the middle of the Amish country in Pennsylvania. Here you see Amish buggies crowded between ten cars, another Amish buggy, another 20 cars — twenty cars of tourists gawking and photographing the Amish buggy. It is estimated that in that particular area some two million visitors come to observe these people and their strange ways.

There were certain things that struck me. Here are people who long ago answered the question of ecology. Here are people who contribute absolutely nothing to the smog problem. Here are people who have no welfare problems because they take care of their own. Here is a way of life, a stability, a character, a strength that seeks to preserve itself amidst all of the turbulence that surrounds it. And in contrast to that first picture of the destruction of a way of life, here there was a desperate attempt to preserve a way of life.

Last September, in the northwest part of our nation, in Blaine, Washington, I visited a rural Mennonite Brethren church. It was of great significance to me because I have an uncle who helped to pioneer that area, to cut down trees and grub out roots in order to convert it into farm land. On Sunday I saw all types of people come to that church. I saw a retired officer who had been at the nearby base who, together with his wife, decided that this was the place they wanted to come because they had found meaning in this rural church. I saw many neighbors from that community. I saw a vital ministry right in that rural community, three women's Bible study groups in which space was absolutely at a premium. Here, unnoticed, without any great fanfare, I saw a third picture: not simply the preservation of a way of life but, more than that, a sharing of a way of life.

These three pictures stood in contrast. One was the destruction of a way of life, the second was an attempt to preserve a way of life,

and the third was an attempt to share a way of life.

The fourth picture occurred earlier. There were two partnerships, each composed of just a few individuals. Each of the partnerships was engaged in the business of fishing, probably in friendly competition with one another. They had thoroughly prepared themselves to be the best fishermen. They knew well the body of water in which they were fishing. They knew all of its characteristics, they knew how and when to cast into the sea for fish. Peter and Andrew were the first partnership; James and John were in the second.

And then one day something happened to both of these groups. Someone walked on the shore of that particular body of water and said, "I want you to come and join me." And he said, "If you do come and follow me, you are going to become fishers of men."

Now this posed a very difficult decision. These people had never thought of that particular kind of thing, and it is the same kind of thing that you and I face every once in a while, I am sure, in our own Christian pilgrimage. We know fairly well what we want to do. We have prepared ourselves, our hands are gnarled and worn by accustomed tasks. We have briefed ourselves precisely as to the path that lies immediately ahead, and then suddenly a greater opportunity opens up to us, not to preserve our way of life, but to share it, and to share it because we are disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is not an immediate process. Those early fishermen went through a lot of arguments, they went through a lot of problems, they had to face a lot of questions that they never anticipated facing, but ultimately that is precisely what happened to them. They became people who reproduced their discipleship in others — the highest goal that can come to us.

If we take the first step of discipleship, we are not going to be concerned about the fact that we have to face the destruction of our way of life. We are not going to be confined simply to preserving our way of life, but we are going to break out in a very natural way and become fishers of men because we will find it desirable and challenging. And so we go into discipleship with open eyes because the consequence of discipleship is to share, and to share is to find the highest values in life.

These experiences have had a profound influence upon my life. While we might be satisfied with the second stage, preserving our way of life, that is really not what it is all about. Only when we come to the third, sharing our life, do we reach the greatest meaning. This life of sharing does not have to be flamboyant; it can be unnoticed and have no obvious structure. It simply takes place because it is the natural thing for Christians to do.

## RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

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Convocation Address — May, 1973

THIS is a period of reflection and evaluation. Already, some of our seniors have shared their thoughts with us. The end of this school year reminds all of us of our plans and hopes for this year and invites a review.

For me, such an evaluation is made even more meaningful because of the death of a personal friend and a key figure in the history of Pacific College, the long-time chairman of the board, Mr. E. J. Peters. Mr. Peters was a man of unusual stature, a Christian whose life continuously interpreted the meaning of Christianity. He practiced good race relations before the idea became popular. He was a man who could effectively encourage others because he was so genuine. He was a powerful force in establishing Pacific as a senior college.

His death reminded me of the time I was appointed to the presidency of Pacific. While a graduate student at Stanford, I had been asked to make a careful study of Pacific College in late 1959. It was then Pacific Bible Institute and Junior College with some 50 students and a very uncertain future. When that study was completed and a course of direction outlined for the period 1960-1970, I made the report to the Board of Education in a vacant apartment somewhere in Fresno.

I remember that it was cold and the wall furnace refused to work. As I read the report, the room became progressively colder, helping, no doubt, to keep my board audience awake. One board member tried the heating controls but nothing worked. I have lived with much cantankerous equipment, and I decided to give the furnace a kick, since that tactic worked on one with which I was familiar. Immediately, the furnace went on and Mr. Peters responded, "You're hired." Several weeks later I accepted the responsibility.

I became president in April, 1960, although I was still at Stanford during this first year of responsibility. Enrollment stood at fifty-seven with seventeen in the Bible Institute program and forty in the junior college course. Forty students were freshmen and one-half of the students ranked in the bottom quartile on national junior college norms. Pacific College was, for the most part, located in the downtown facility. Only the first classroom wing stood in stark loneliness on this campus. Keeping 95% of the campus disced was the major maintenance problem. Students commuted to this campus daily, utilizing car pools subsidized by the college. Classes were conducted only in the morning, since so many students worked in the afternoon. The library staff was processing up to 150 books per year with an annual budget of \$500.

None of the Mennonite Brethren institutions were then accredited, and the Board was concentrating its resources on the accreditation of Tabor College. One hardly need wonder that the Board was surprised

when we informed them in April, 1960, that we were ready to seek junior college accreditation. With their consent, we had the preliminary visit that next month and the final visit that fall. Accreditation came the following January. Much later we were informed, confidentially, that accreditation was an expression of confidence in our planning and initial steps of implementation rather than the current status of the program.

Because the Bible Institute was potentially a three-year program — though few students lasted that long — and because we needed the stability of students who had been with the college in previous years, the Bible Institute program received the most emphasis in the early publicity. Even though the staff in that area was augmented and the program expanded, enrollment in it dropped to eleven the next year — a clear indication that there was little demand in our constituency for this program. Total enrollment, however, rose to 88.

Most important, a new spirit was building at Pacific. This spirit was based on hope for the future, anticipation that steps were being taken to implement a new program based on a definite course of action, and definitive results such as accreditation. This new spirit sparked a new dedication and unstinted devotion on the part of the faculty and the administration. Faculty members were added and each contributed to the spirit that marked those early years. Buildings, books, and equipment were added.

Of course, financial stresses were great. The top salary was \$4,200 per year. The construction of the first residence halls almost came to a stop at the 70% completion level because there seemed to be no way to raise the necessary funds. I well remember that board meeting with Dr. Menno Gaede, a board member, pacing the floor and commenting, "It's dark now and it'll get a lot darker before it gets better!" But the board took action that surpassed even my enthusiasm. They decided to go right ahead and complete the project. And they did!

I remember well the call I received from Hillsboro in the spring of 1961. I was asked whether we would be able to raise \$8,000 a year on an annuity-arrangement by which the Hiebert Library could be built. While the annual payment seemed prodigious, the facility seemed God-sent.

Many other projects have been undertaken since then. The faculty has grown from a total of six faculty and administrators (and almost every one of the six was both) to the present faculty and administration. We have gone from no doctorates to a percentage which ranks Pacific among the top 20% of all colleges and universities, from a library of 6,000 volumes (many of which have since been discarded) to one of over 50,000 and ranking in the top half of all colleges and universities, from a student body of fifty with no state scholars to one of 400 with more than 12% state scholars, from one long building with twenty feet of grass in the front to a campus with a value of well over two million dollars, and from a program that was seriously restricted and very traditional to one that is capable of providing a broad liberal arts experience that surpasses that available in many

institutions which are much larger. Very few other campuses offer the freedom you students have to chart independent study and research. Our accreditation team views with highest respect the academic opportunities and climate that students experience here.

We are pleased that with all this there seems to be a strong interest in a genuine Christian experience. Such an experience will take place in many ways at many levels and in many forms when many people are involved. But each level, it seems, is making progress. It is exciting to watch the interest in the Contemporary Christian Ministries program. Enrollment in Biblical Studies courses continues to mount well beyond those levels which are required. Interest in Christian service is increasingly manifesting itself. Personal Christian experiences of great significance have taken place this year. Members of the college family have been born into the Kingdom of God. Many have clarified their "hangups" and caught the meaning of what it means to be a Christian.

The plan launched in that cold apartment in 1959 was a major departure from the past. As Mr. Peters said then, and frequently thereafter, Pacific must become a Christian institution whose influence is not to be circumscribed by any physical boundary. It must draw from all parts of the world, and place back into all parts of the world, men and women who have had a common, meaningful, and fruitful Christian experience.

I was talking with Mr. Peters just a few minutes after my father's sudden passing from a heart attack. One of his comments registered strongly. "This is really what Christian higher education is all about, that at the close of life on this earth, one can look back and see that truth has been found and followed, Christ has been Lord of all, and eternity with God is the fulfillment of the Christian life." It is our prayer that Pacific College will foster an appropriate climate so that this kind of Christian experience will be shared by many.

## RESPONDING TO CRISIS

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Convocation Address — June 6, 1974

I WOULD like to speak this morning about something that concerns us at the conclusion of our school year because this is a time when there is a great deal of decision making and there is a great deal of change. There are two elements that tend to offer us the opportunity for a tremendous amount of leadership and creativity. One of these is change, and the second is crisis. Both of these tend to bring out the best that is in us, and both of these are currently available in abundance. Therefore, we have the climate in which creativity and leadership can emerge more effectively than at times when things are stable and well regulated.

Historically, times of stability have been times of security. We find probably the greatest security when we study primitive tribes in which the culture is well defined. People know precisely what is expected of them, and the traditions hold steady from generation to generation with very little change. However, we do not live in that kind of setting any more. We live in a setting where there is a great deal of change. And change is unsettling; it encourages insecurity, apprehension, uncertainties. It brings crisis. Crises are really to be welcomed in a certain sense. Crisis can bring out the best in us. But crisis demands response.

One of my university assignments was to make a study of a particular primitive Eskimo tribe — not first hand, just by original documents. However, that tribe had to plan its annual activities with extreme care because there were only certain times when food was available. Therefore, that food had to be captured at those times, it had to be preserved in some manner, and the tribe had to move about a great deal. Within that culture there arose certain customs to respond to that crisis. Because the tribe had to move on from one place that provided a source of food to another, and those trips during the year had to be made at precise times lest that narrow limit of time would be missed and they would all perish, they had to face the question of what happens in the case of someone who becomes too ill or too old to travel. If an elderly man or an elderly woman became too ill to continue on the journey, they would stop for a short time to build an igloo and then place into that igloo some of the shares of food which they possessed. They placed this person into that igloo and sealed the entrance and continued on. That was living farewell which corresponds to the funeral in our society. It was the last time they would see that particular person. To do anything else, to stop and keep everyone from the source of food, would have been tribal suicide. To move on would have meant an uncomfortable death for the individual and, as a result, the culture made that kind of adaptation. That is a response to a very cruel environment, and to us it seems traumatic. But a crisis calls for response, and sometimes the response is very, very different.

I would like to suggest that in current American society we are seeing some values being very seriously challenged, and I am not now speaking of spiritual values. Those have constantly been challenged. I am speaking of some rather well accepted values in society. One of those values that our society rightly or wrongly cherishes is prestige. It is a recognized virtue in our society, though once achieved, it rarely is satisfying.

I remember the overnight change that came when suddenly we discovered that the Russians could orbit a satellite before we could. I was teaching high school students at the time. The one thing that we were discouraged from doing in this wealthy suburban school was to assign homework. Two weeks later, parents demanded, "Give them all the homework you can possibly give them. We've got to catch up with the Russians!" And there was almost a fanatic demand for an absolute national race, headed by President Kennedy at that time, who said that we must marshal all our resources and have a man on the moon by 1970, come what may. And our nation geared itself for that, and I suppose all of us thrilled to the challenge.

And now we find that in that whole pursuit we forgot all about the fact that we had a very, very unstable society developing underneath. Our inner cities were deteriorating, racial strife was rampant, and the real things that counted had been neglected because we were trying to pursue something that would regain prestige in the world. And I suggest that today the value of prestige is being very, very severely questioned because it leads us into those traps of false pursuit.

We can turn to the value of power. There has been in our history in this nation, and I am sure this is true of all nations, a pursuit of power. The easiest dollar that can get appropriated in Congress is not for social welfare, it is not for the aged, it is not for health, it is not for education — it is for guns. We can appropriate 85 billion dollars, and yet the people who appropriate it have very little detailed knowledge of what it buys. But the one thing that still grips us is the fact that we need to pursue power. And yet this pursuit led us to Vietnam and all its consequences. Finally, I think we are beginning to see that when we become aware of the fact that all people need to be recognized in this world, we make progress that could never be measured and could never be bought in terms of power. I suggest that the idea of power is outdated.

We are also a nation that cherishes money a great deal, and many of the questions that are asked have to do with money. We have become a nation of conspicuous consumers, as one of the writers calls us, and it has distorted us. It has made us Americans very, very peculiar creatures on the face of this earth.

Here we are, a small part of the world's population, consuming energy at a rate that no one else dreams of. Ron Claassen was telling me that in his work in Nigeria he became very conscious of our wasteful society. He said they had a waste paper basket that held about two cubic feet, and they put everything that they threw away into it, and they emptied it once every three months. The amount of

garbage that we daily haul off this campus — and that goes out of our houses — is truly appalling. We have learned to live really obscenely in terms of wasting our natural resources. But we have the money to do it, and therefore we do it.

Neither the pursuit of prestige, power, or money have taught us to live. It is very dangerous, therefore, when we transplant these into our own preparation for living, and I speak of higher education. There is a cry across the country now, promoted even by the U.S. Office of Education, for strictly vocational education. There are those in this country who would like to focus preparation for life on only vocational objectives. I do not propose that we ignore those, but I propose that we keep our focus on something that is much greater, especially during the present cry for change in education.

Even if one looks at the vocations, what is it that really constitutes preparation? I suppose that if you were to manage a large department store, you would say that you need to have many, many courses in business management. But I talked to the manager of such a large department store frequently, and he says that 95% of what he has to do, and 95% of his success, is determined by his ability to relate to people and to speak to people about their problems. And that has absolutely nothing to do with accounting, or salesmanship, or buying, or any of those other factors which constitute vocational education. I would like to suggest that this is true of all the emerging services and occupations in this country, that even for these a truly liberal arts education with a Christian perspective is going to be absolutely the best preparation possible.

But beyond these practical considerations is the larger question. How does one prepare to have "abundant life"? For that we turn to the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the Sermon on the Mount, which is both very lofty and very demanding, Jesus questioned this world's values, teaching not wealth but poverty, not prestige but humility and servanthood. And instead of looking at society as a whole, he talked to individuals, and he gave that message to individuals. And it was through the Sermon on the Mount, and others like it, that he charted the course to this abundant life, an abundance that is found quite apart from any considerations of wealth, or security, or prestige, or the other values that have permeated our society. Unless we can unhook ourselves from the goals of our society, we will not find the abundant life. We will only have existed from birth to death, and the world will be no better off for our having been here.

The test of a Christian college, therefore, is whether it gives the Christian view, whether students coming out of it have a Christian view of life. We were talking the other day, another faculty member and I, with an alumnus of ours, and he was telling us what had happened in the two years that he has been out of college. He is now selling life insurance, and I said to him, "And we didn't do anything to prepare you to sell life insurance," thinking of our vocational responsibility to him.

He responded, "That doesn't matter. I want to tell you something

that Pacific College did for me." He continued, "I learned here what life is all about and what its meaning is . . . It only takes a few short weeks to get the kind of training I need for my profession, but it takes a long while, and it takes a lot of reflection, and it takes a lot of interaction with people to know what life is all about."

Our prayer is that Pacific College will be the kind of place where you can learn more of what the abundant life is all about.

## A QUEST FOR TRUTH

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Convocation Address — September 26, 1972

WELCOME to each one of you. We feel a holy anticipation of this year. I am sure that it is the revelation of the Holy Spirit to us of great things that lie ahead.

I am here to be educated, you say. Getting educated has been my occupation for more than a dozen years, and the end seems far away. What have these years done for me? What will the year ahead add to what has gone on before? Sometimes I wonder. Education, you magic carpet, you demanding task master, you endless journey. What are you, and where are we going?

Test tubes filled with carefully measured ingredients, beakers filled with boiling water busily shedding bubbles, Bunsen burner hissing softly in seeming derision. The eternal acrid odor. I must confess that I think that all true chemists must have callouses in their noses. Where, amidst all of this confusion, do I find an education?

I change rooms and odors. I dissect flat worms, I dissect round worms, I dissect segmented worms. I dissect the lamprey, the shark, the perch, and the frog. Still to be dissected is the cat. I glance across these tattered and tormented carcasses, and there between me and a medical career are other bodies to be dissected, including a human cadaver. Death, death, death! And at the end of it the promising rainbow of a life-preserving ministry. It is hard to understand that after all this smell and this feel of death the path leads to the delivery of a newborn babe with all its life and potential. Is it here among these carcasses that I find an education?

I change rooms, and now the odors disappear. In their place I see equations, the quadratic kind says someone, graphs, differentials, integrals, functions, parameters, tangents, and, fortunately, answers to odd-numbered problems. Unfortunately, none to the even-numbered ones. Solving all these problems that others have solved so often before, is this where I find an education?

Communication. Proudly I tell you the word has five syllables.

You see what I have learned. This experience too has its ruins from countless forgotten battles. Dangling participles neatly snipped from ambitious sentences, surplus footnotes belonging to no body of writing in particular, speech outlines so shaky with fear as not to be legible. I wonder who are the victors? Who are the vanquished here? Did they find an education? Will I?

How can all of this be placed into something that makes sense? Is there a niche into which all of this fits so that the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts? What must I do to find that framework? How does this all relate to the real questions, the much bigger questions that I am asking? My questions are as big as life itself. I must have answers to my big questions. I must find the whole to make sense out of these parts.

I search for peace. Who can guide me to it? I covet a good character. Where is the way? I desire a rewarding relationship with others. What must I do? I wish to live for a purpose. Can I find it? I want to be useful and productive. Please show me how.

Ah, my good friend, you seek that which is noble and eternal. You have lifted your eyes from the immediate and asked for the meaning of the journey. You search for foundations upon which to build. You desire an anchor firmly imbedded in the ocean floor. You deserve an honest answer.

A universal truth in all knowledge is that fundamental truths have two characteristics: they are utterly simple, and unbelievably complex. Take, for example, the formula  $E=MC^2$ . It relates mass and energy in sparkling simplicity. The relationship is so simple, so elegant, that it testifies to its own truth. Yet, it is terribly complex. Only a magnificent mind such as that of Einstein was able to assemble the endless segmented phenomena and put them together into a whole and come up with a universal law. Simple? Yes! Complex? Terribly!

The massive documentation of human history in the Old Testament, the countless preachings of prophet, king, and hero, what is their essence? This question was high on the list for the contemporaries of Jesus, and they asked him to explain what all of it meant. To this Jesus gave a very simple answer. All of it, when boiled down to its essence, he said, is simply to love your God with all that you have and your neighbor as yourself. Simple? Yes! Complex? Terribly! But what power flows from truth. What blessing comes from this universal law. What joy derives from its testing. The test of any experience, any essay, any lecture, any experiment, any problem solved is this: does it lead me to foundation truth?

We have tarried long enough. Your questions cry for an answer, but we needed this guidepost to tell us the way. Follow me back into history, through the centuries, past the Civil War, past Independence, past the Middle Ages, to the shores of an inland sea guarded on the west by tall cliffs. Whipped by unpredictable winds, this sea has a wealth of history, part of which unfolds for us now. Step with me through the shallow water into this fishing vessel. Meet my good friend, the fisherman, who owns this boat and who knows every mood

of this sea. Many are the fish outwitted by him, but he has more important things to do today than to catch those fish. He has become a fisher of men. He may surprise you with his literary talent and deep perception. And in your surprise you may forget that he spent years wresting a livelihood from these waters. Just keep your eyes on his calloused and gnarled hands to remind you of who he was and from where he came. But listen carefully to what he has to say, for he is speaking to the great questions with clarity and with truth.

All of you who have our kind of faith, to you I address these comments. The faith I speak of is the kind that Jesus Christ our God and Savior gives to us. How precious it is and how just and good He is to give this same faith to each of us. Do you want to know more and more of God's kingdom, His kindness, and peace? Then learn to know Him better and better. For as you know Him better, He will give you through His great power everything you need for living a truly good life. He even shares His own glory and His own goodness with us. And by that same mighty power He has given all the other rich and wonderful blessings He promised, for instance, the promise to save us from the lust and rottenness all around us and to give us His own character. But, to obtain these gifts, you need more than faith. You must also work hard to be good. And even that is not enough. For then you must learn to know God better and discover what He wants you to do. Next, learn to put aside your own desires so that you will become patient and godly, gladly letting God have His way with you. This will make possible the next step, which is for you to enjoy other people and to like them. And finally, you will grow to love them deeply. The more you go on in this way, the more you will grow strong spiritually and become fruitful and useful to our Lord Jesus Christ. (Paraphrase of II Peter 1:1-8)

We should pause in silence after hearing these words of the fisherman. Here in these few paragraphs lie the answers to those worthy and important questions that you said were as big as life itself. You say you are searching for peace? The fisherman tells us that you will find it by learning to know Jesus better and better. And how do you learn to know him better? By listening to his word, by trying his promises, by following his example. Peace comes from knowing one who is truth, Jesus Christ. It comes from the assurance that here is the right way, that the end of this journey is glorious and right and rewarding.

You said you wanted to grow in character? The fisherman says that you will receive Jesus' own character as you learn to know him better and to love him. Here is knowledge that bears fruit that transforms.

You say you are searching for purpose in your life? The fisherman gives you the key. Faith is the first step, but you need more than faith.

You must also work hard to be good, he says. Even that is not enough. You must learn to know God better. Then you will discover your unique purpose in history and in life.

You want a rewarding relationship with people? The fisherman says you rise to that goal by three steps. One, you learn to put aside your own desires so that you will become patient and godly. Second, you enjoy other people, and that's hard work. Third, you learn to like other people, and that is hard work. But then comes the reward. You grow to love them deeply, and that is a rewarding experience.

You want to be fruitful? The fisherman says that as you go on in these experiences, you will grow strong and become fruitful and useful. Build your life upon all these stepping stones so carefully outlined in so short a passage.

## **THE PROCESS OF BECOMING**

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**Commencement, 1972**

YOU have chosen this to be a "Celebration of Becoming." That choice indicates to us that this marks a milestone in a process, rather than the completion or the beginning of an event. It defines a goal that is greater than anything achievable during the past few years. Your goal, as defined by our own commitment to Jesus Christ and illustrated in your concluding chorus, is found in your identification with the cause of Jesus Christ.

Thus you enter into a tradition that finds its roots in the first graduating class from what was essentially the first Christian college. The forms of celebration have varied through the years, but the basic thrust in that tradition remains the same. Eleven imperfect men participated on that occasion. There were not as many robes as there are here tonight. These men had been recruited from among the disadvantaged. They had demonstrated great persistence. They had confounded those who had low expectations of them. Many others had dropped by the wayside, and a twelfth had deserted just a few hours before.

Taught by a master teacher, a faculty of one, they had seen the demonstration of love working in misery, righteousness challenging hypocrisy, mercy healing injustice, comfort ministering in sorrow, truth replacing falsity and vaunted imagination, and hope arising from despair. Their training was relevant, realistic, and strenuous. It promised no security. No jobs were awaiting them except the task outlined by their teacher.

Their teacher spoke to them of pruning for greater service. "My

true disciples produce bountiful harvests, and this brings glory to God." "I demand that you love each other." "The greatest love is shown when you lay down your life for your friends." "The people of this world will persecute you. I have told you these things so you will not be staggered by all that lies ahead."

Speaking to his father, the master teacher said, "I have given them your commands, and the world hates them because they don't fit in with it. My prayer for them is that they will be of one heart and mind in us." Knowing the imperfections still present among the eleven, he prayed, "Make them pure and holy through teaching them your words of truth." There was little ceremony on that occasion, but the command was given to undertake an earth-shaking mission.

Even today, contrary to the conception of some, a college education and a college degree should not be seen as a passport to ease, position, and wealth. If it has any meaning at all, it is the certification of a mission, a difficult mission, a mission defined by being in the world but not of the world. Therefore the call is not to rest and relaxation, but to battle. You enter upon no easy path, but a long, hard, sweaty climb. The pursuit of truth and meaning will grow more demanding the more you "become."

Welcome then, my friends, into the common cause of sharing with mankind the love of God. Let us covenant together to serve without reservation, to love without hesitation, to give without limitation, and to be faithful without blemish. We share the promise of the teacher of that first class when he said, "As you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world, and I consecrate myself to meet their need for growth in truth and in holiness."

Continue, then, in the process of "becoming." Remember that those eleven men from unpromising backgrounds, with uncertain talents and uncertain commitments, shook the world of their day and made their influence felt even to this time because they allied themselves with truth and with God. Consider the potential you possess — there are a hundred and four of you instead of just eleven — if you elect that same allegiance with Jesus Christ and his mission. Our prayers and our thoughts go with you. We wish for you a rich and abundant life. God bless you!

## RESPONDING TO LOVE

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Convocation Address — September 28, 1971

FOR SOME of you there is in this gathering someone whom you love or will love more than any other person. Some of you have met, and are convinced you recognize, this person. Others will meet for the first time in the months ahead. We recognize that for many this is a perfectly natural, inevitable, and appropriate function of life in the Pacific College community.

Others of you will not have this experience. Instead, there may be disappointment and heartache. It may be that you love someone but the love is not returned. It may be that you do not find the person to whom you wish to give your love.

Whatever your particular experience in this matter, I can assure you of the possibility of a love affair which each of us can have, one that holds unlimited potential for a rich life. I am not speaking of the love of knowledge or the love for learning. We trust, of course, that these are present in all of us in a reasonable degree. But I am speaking of a love affair that is person-centered. That Person is here in our midst today. This is a love that can be cultivated every moment of this year without the usual interruptions of temporary farewells. It brings with it comfort, satisfaction, and fulfillment. Thoroughly tested, it has shown itself to be uniquely free of disappointment and disillusionment. In sharing the great questions of life, this relationship promises to lead to right and meaningful answers. From it flows strength for the toughest struggles, courage for the most difficult assignments, and meaning for the most confused situations.

There is a basic thread that ties two people together in love. It is the thread of mutual acceptance and trust. Without it all efforts, regardless of how well-reasoned they may be, are impotent. With it, all deterring factors become insignificant.

Jesus Christ is the person of whom I speak. As is normal, one lover often loves first and woos the person loved. It is no different here. Jesus spotted you long ago and it was love at first sight. Certainly, he knows your peculiarities and problems. But his acceptance is so strong that he loves you in spite of them. The question you must answer is whether you will return his love. If you will, a beautiful and lasting relationship will be your reward.

The first step in this relationship is mutual acceptance. Since Jesus has already expressed his love to you, it remains for you to respond. When you respond, significant transformations follow. Before, without a personal relationship to Jesus Christ, you had only a burdensome, boring, and meaningless religious form foisted on you either by someone else or by yourself because of a sense of obligation. There was a form and ritual to be sure. But there was no life or meaning. However, once the spark of love is fanned because you know Jesus personally, a living, exciting faith relationship emerges. A sense of

genuine freedom and purpose grips your life. Without a personal relationship to Jesus Christ all exercise of religion gives you the uneasy feeling of hypocrisy. You know you cannot be truly honest with yourself or about yourself. When you fall in love with Jesus, you can bare your innermost thoughts and problems, knowing that they will be viewed in the light of a great love and a real solution found.

In the early stages of a love relationship there is the desire to learn to know as much about your lover as possible. So it is that Jesus is ready to share with us his innermost secrets, desires, and goals. He has revealed himself in his word. We, in our quest to learn to know him, become avid students of this revelation and so discover the greatness of his love. These meditations have the power to transform our lives. As we experience this transformation we develop a strong desire to share him with all the world. Many people who fall in love can think or talk of little else than their beloved. There is a total absorption in the relationship. So it is when we begin to comprehend the meaning of our relationship to Jesus Christ. There are, then, three steps. First, we respond to his love, completing a love relationship; second, we learn to know him as we study his word and listen to his Spirit; third, we share him with others. Let us trace these phenomena in the life of a person in history.

Paul hated Jesus. He was convinced that Jesus was bringing ruin to the people and destroying religion. Paul sought in every way possible to block Jesus' influence and to stem the tide of acceptance he was gaining among the people. Paul had a hate relationship to Jesus Christ.

But one day, much to his surprise, he met Jesus. It was a traumatic experience. The foundations of his well-thought-through philosophy were shaken and his temple of learning lay in shambles around him. He realized he had not known the real Jesus. That time of loss and blindness became a time when a new relationship was born, a relationship with the very person he had hated so violently. Slowly there dawned the realization that out of this unexpected dark night a new light was glowing, visible even in his state of physical blindness.

He had met a person with unusual depth. Paul was intelligent enough to entertain a new thought and a new truth and to permit that truth to grow. For several years, isolated from the world, Paul engaged in an intensive exploration and cultivation of his new relationship with Jesus Christ. From that time of fellowship there emerged a powerful crusader for the Gospel. Undaunted, he faced potential death in many forms in order to share Christ with others. And as he shared, he grew in his understanding of, and love for, Christ and became more Christ-like in his being. He had returned Christ's love, learned to know him, and was moved to share him with others. Paul's words help us catch a glimpse of this transformed man:

Is there any such thing as Christians cheering each other up? Do you love me enough to want to help me? Does it mean anything to you that we are brothers in the

Lord, sharing the same Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic at all? *Then make me truly happy by loving each other*, agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, working together with one heart and mind and purpose. Do not be selfish; do not live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Do not just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and in what they are doing. Your attitude should be the kind that was shown us by Jesus Christ, Who, though He was God, did not demand and cling to His rights as God, but laid aside His mighty power and glory, taking the form of a slave and becoming like men. And He humbled Himself *even further*, going so far as actually to die a criminal's death on a cross. Yet it was because of this that God raised Him up to the heights of heaven and gave Him a name which is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father! (Paraphrase of Philippians 2:1-11)

Paul shared with us his greatest purpose in his life, the summation of all his learning, the goal of all his zeal: *That every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!*

This year at Pacific we want to rally around Paul's statement of the highest goal in life. We have chosen as the theme for the year this expression of our love for Christ: Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

This is a call to commitment, a commitment to Jesus Christ. This is a call to a relationship, a relationship with Jesus Christ. This is a call for learning, learning to know a person, Jesus Christ. This is a call for sharing, proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord. We at Pacific firmly believe that this is the apex of all knowledge, the true purpose for all learning, the right person for total allegiance. We believe that true academic freedom finds its fulfillment in commitment.

We are free to respond negatively or positively to this relationship to Jesus Christ. That freedom cannot be removed by anyone here at Pacific College or anywhere else. The freedom of choice is a freedom that God insists must remain. Some will choose negatively and forfeit this richness of life. But I pray that all of us will choose positively.

Assuming a positive choice, we can expect great things from God. We will undergo a continuing transformation, growing in love one to another. Our resolve to share Christ will pyramid, fed by the mutual joy that such sharing brings. As we learn to know Christ better and share this knowledge, we shall grow in courage. Even the obstacles in our lives will become opportunities. Let us listen to Paul once more as he illustrates this fact:

And I want you to know this, dear brothers: Everything that has happened to me here has been a great boost in

getting out the Good News concerning Christ. For everyone around here, including all the soldiers over at the barracks, knows that I am in chains simply because I am a Christian. And because of my imprisonment many of the Christians here seem to have lost their fear of chains! Somehow my patience has encouraged them and they have become more and more bold in telling others about Christ! Whatever the motive for doing it, the fact remains that the Good News about Christ is being preached and I am glad! (Philippians 1:12-18)

The doors for such experiences are open wide at Pacific. Learning to know Christ is a major objective of faculty and students and is encouraged throughout the curriculum and community life. As in making any acquaintance, the initiative must rest with you. Just as in Paul's experience, there is nothing more effective than your personal study of the Word illuminated by the Holy Spirit. David expressed his satisfaction in this exercise when he spoke of the fact that he meditated on God's Word day and night. For him it was no chore, no obligation. Just unadulterated joy. Life was worth living because of these experiences.

Analysts have characterized our present age as the age of pessimism. This pessimism has gripped our national consciousness to a marked degree. It is reflected in the literature and other mass media. It is reflected in the press. It is reflected in the polls.

You can make your mark on these times with a message that is intrinsically optimistic and brings genuine joy.

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