

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF VIEWS AT BETHANY COLLEGE ON  
EDUCATION, MORALITY, AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Christianity and education have been closely related forces in western civilization. Most colleges in America were founded by religious organizations. Bethany College was no exception to this tradition of church-related education. The institution which was to become Bethany College was "born" in October, 1881, in the "bosom" of the Bethany Lutheran Church of Lindsborg, Kansas.<sup>1</sup> The founder, Dr. Carl Aaron Swensson, was the pastor of Bethany Church. The first classes of Bethany Academy were held in the Bethany Church. Thus, Bethany College was literally in the church from its inception, and it was not long after the founding that the College officially became a part of the Augustana Lutheran Church.<sup>2</sup> The College asked for the church's support, and the church conference, meeting at Mariadahl in 1884, resolved that it "adopt Bethany as its own and that its charter be changed in accordance therewith."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Problems of Church Colleges

The trend of church colleges has been away from original religious orientation and church control. The question is now asked, "Can the

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<sup>1</sup>Ernst William Olson, Olof Olsson: The Man, His Work, and His Thought (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1941), p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>In 1962 the Augustana Lutheran Church became part of the new Lutheran Church in America.

<sup>3</sup>Emory Kempton Lindquist, Smoky Valley People: A History of Lindsborg, Kansas (Lindsborg: Bethany College, 1953), p. 89.

Christian College Survive?" Even more vitally: "Should the Christian college survive?"<sup>4</sup>

The problem of finances has been perennial. Recently it has become critical. Because there is so much competition from state and community colleges which have lower tuition, church colleges are finding it difficult to keep qualified teachers. Even the most dedicated teachers find it too great a sacrifice to stay at a church college if they can receive a much greater salary at a state institution. The church colleges are, therefore, facing a crisis. If they could use their financial resources more effectively for religious programs at tax-supported colleges, should the smaller church colleges be closed or turned over to the public? According to a Bethany senior, writing for the Salina Journal, "If we need the schools, let's know why and be benevolent. On the other hand, a study might show we don't want them. If that's so, let's quit wasting the effort."<sup>5</sup>

Church colleges were founded not just to provide training for future ministers; they also purported to graduate persons morally superior to the product of the secular colleges. Is their claim justified? A popular answer is "no." More authoritatively, from a study conducted by the Methodist Church:

Studies which have attempted to measure the changing value structures of college students show no evidence that church-related colleges are any more effective generally on this

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<sup>4</sup>Ralph Cooper Hutchison, "Can the Christian College Survive?" Christianity Today, X (Feb. 18, 1966), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>John Ballard, "Do We Need These Private Colleges?" The Salina [Kansas] Journal, June 24, 1966, p. 2.

point [of improving the moral character of the students] than other types of institutions. The well-known summary by Philip E. Jacob in Changing Values in College gives no comfort at all to church colleges.<sup>6</sup>

Did Bethany students become better persons because they attended a church college? What was the opinion at Bethany of the correlation of education at a church college and morality?

Another problem is the accusation that many of the church colleges were narrowly sectarian and that they substituted religious enthusiasm for academic standards.<sup>7</sup> As stated by Hofstadter and Metzger in The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States, the period of the wildest proliferation of colleges in America was "The Great Retrogression." The two major reasons for this step backwards were local pride and denominational zeal.<sup>8</sup>

During the decade in which Bethany was founded, at least eleven other denominational colleges were founded in Kansas. Not only was Bethany founded during this educationally fertile decade, it was also founded with its share of provincialism and sectarianism. This was because Lindsborg, home of Bethany College, became a haven for pietistic<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Myron F. Wicke, The Church-Related College (Washington, D. C.: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1964), p. 45.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>9</sup>Pietism originated in fifteenth century Europe as a reaction to formalism and intellectualism. It stressed Bible study and personal religious experience. Despite its opposition to the formalism of the church, it tended to adopt a sort of reverse legalism, i.e., it tended to endorse a morality based on rules against such "evils" as smoking, drinking, dancing, and card playing.

refugees from the formal state church of Sweden. Bethany was founded in "The Great American Desert" by visionaries with a purpose and faith in their future and in the education of their children. This vision was the motivation which would provide the courage to establish an ideal community in what was a forbidding setting when compared to their homeland. Bethany cherished its uniqueness and importance. Its founders would have liked to have paraphrased Thomas Paine, and say that Bethany's mission was for all mankind for all time. But at its origin, it was an exclusive and sectarian academic community.

Bethany was founded with a strong religious bias. Has this meant that she sacrificed academic freedom for sectarianism? Indeed, is academic freedom possible at a church college?

### The Purpose of This Study

This study might provide a basis for answering some of the previous questions. The primary purpose of this study, however, is simply to trace the progressive development of the interrelationship of religion and education at Bethany. This is a historical study of religious aspects of Bethany's educational philosophy. The two major themes are the correlation of education and morality as expressed at Bethany, and academic freedom as opposed to religious commitment.

### The Religious and Educational Heritages of Bethany College

A look into the causes of immigration, especially the religious causes, will give a clue as to what type of people came to Lindsborg to found Bethany and to begin a distinctive religious and educational tradition. Wealthy and staid Swedes had no reason for leaving their Swedish

homesteads. It was the adventurous and dissatisfied who were willing to "lengthen their tent-ropes," and to sail for America. The men, women, and children who came to Lindsborg were not ordinary Swedes; they were the malcontents of a decadent state church and of economic stagnation. They were the adventurers and visionaries, those who were looking for something better.

The predominant religious attitude which was transplanted to Lindsborg was pietism. During the middle of the nineteenth century, a pietistic awakening was sweeping over Sweden. This movement called believers to live on a holy plane, apart from the vices of the world. It was also called the Lasare or Bible-reading movement. Consequently, the two common articles in the immigrants' meager possessions were the Bible and Psalm Book.<sup>10</sup>

Pietism in Sweden caused such a religious ferment that the state church restricted ministers who attempted to conduct prayer meetings and worship services in a spirit of religious spontaneity. One such restricted minister was Olof Olsson. He migrated to the "land of the future" to found a pure church. Lindsborg and the Bethany Lutheran Church, which gave birth to Bethany College, were the fruit of his pioneer missionary zeal.

Many of the Swedes who came to the New World for the sake of religious freedom soon became as intolerant as the state church officials whom they were attempting to escape. For example, Bethany Church's

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<sup>10</sup>Emory K. Lindquist, "Resources that Abide," a baccalaureate address at Bethany College, May 30, 1948, Lindquist Papers.



Board of Deacons held three hearings before they granted their own pastor's wife membership in the church.<sup>11</sup> Dogmatic factionalism over the true meaning of the Atonement was so severe that during an illness of Pastor Olsson, some of his parishioners prayed aloud that he might be taken from this world.<sup>12</sup> According to one of that generation, the settlers of Lindsborg were "awfully religious and very stubborn."<sup>13</sup>

Other evidence of the religious character of the founders of Bethany's setting was that all meetings of the First Swedish Land Company, which was responsible for the settling of Lindsborg and the granting of land for Bethany College, were opened and closed with prayer.<sup>14</sup> Their simple faith was exemplified in a remark of the chairman of the company that "if God is going to let us settle in Kansas, he will give us rain."<sup>15</sup> An exclusive attitude was illustrated by the fact that the company limited membership to those who held to the Evangelical Lutheran doctrine.<sup>16</sup> This sectarianism was later reflected in the denominational requirements for Bethany's teachers, board of directors, and president. The first Lutherans in Lindsborg were trying to found an ideal Lutheran

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<sup>11</sup>C. Terence Pihlblad, "The Kansas Swedes," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XIII (June, 1932), p. 40.

<sup>12</sup>Olson, Olof Olsson, p. 75.

<sup>13</sup>Alfred Bergin, The Story of Lindsborg (Lindsborg: Bethany Printing Company, 1929), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>Pihlblad, Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XIII, p. 40.

<sup>15</sup>Bergin, The Story of Lindsborg, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Ruth Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture in Central Kansas (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1965), p. 24.

community and a pure church. They were not beyond excluding those whom they considered undesirable in such a settlement. Because of their background, the Swedes who founded Lindsborg were unusually pious and sectarian. A traveller once described Lindsborg as having "a most one-sided, fanatic, and narrow view-point on many questions." For example, even violin playing was considered a sin.<sup>17</sup> Such was the religious heritage of Bethany College.

It was said that when the Swedes invaded a country, they did not leave as much desolation as some other conquerors. They instead imparted a rich culture to the settled territory.<sup>18</sup> Kansas was no exception to this rule. When the Swedes came to the Kansas prairies, they brought the highest literacy rate in the world into what was only a short time previously terra incognita.

The Swedes also brought a strong sense of religious commitment in connection with their ideas on education. This was to be expected, since the purpose of the public schools in Sweden was to train the young for membership in the state church.<sup>19</sup> Education and Christianity were characteristically the first thoughts of the migrating Swedes. Bethany College was a natural fruit of such hard-working, literate, God-fearing people.

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<sup>17</sup>Pihlblad, Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XIII, p. 40.

<sup>18</sup>Amandus Johnson, Swedish Contributions to American National Life, 1638-1921 (New York: Committee of the Swedish Section of America's Making, 1921), p. 9.

<sup>19</sup>G. Kenneth Andeen, "Trends in the Development of the Program of Higher Education in the Augustana Lutheran Church" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1952), p. 16, as cited in Adolph B. Benson and Naboth Hedin, Americans from Sweden (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1950), p. 229.

Although the Swedes liked to pride themselves on their intellectual prowess and love of learning, they did not produce very many great thinkers, and particularly not in theology. Embarrassing for Bethany and the American Lutherans is the accusation of William Sweet:

Of the major religious and theological currents which have influenced America, the Lutheran has been the least important. . . . Although there are numerous Lutheran colleges in America, American Lutheranism has not made any large contribution to theological scholarship.<sup>20</sup>

One reason for this dearth of scholarship on the part of the American Lutheran Swedes was the prolonged use of the Swedish language, thus tending to isolate the Lutherans from the main currents of American thought.<sup>21</sup> Bethany, however, was not retarded by any extended use of a foreign tongue; it used English from its origins.

In addition to the ethnic factors from which the Swedes forged a college on the plains of Kansas, the methods of education used by Luther were beneficial. As Swensson noted, Luther was a pioneer in coeducation.<sup>22</sup> Thus Bethany became a leader of coeducation in Kansas. Besides, the Augustana Lutheran Church chose education rather than revivalism as

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<sup>20</sup>William Warren Sweet, The American Churches (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), p. 136, as quoted by Emmet Eklund, "A Study of Bethany College and Its Educational Objectives as Interpreted by Its Founder, Dr. Carl Aaron Swensson from 1881 to 1904" (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1958), p. 98, hereafter cited as Eklund, "A Study of Bethany."

<sup>21</sup>Sweet, The American Churches, p. 136, in Eklund, "A Study of Bethany," p. 98.

<sup>22</sup>Carl A. Swensson, "Address at the Dedication of the New Building of Augustana," delivered June 12, 1889 (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1889), p. 6.

the means of awakening and nurturing Christian faith.<sup>23</sup> These were some of the ingredients which went into the making of a Christian college in pioneer America. True believers said that such a college could not have materialized if it had not been for God and the faith and stature of the founder.

### Criticisms of the Christian College Rationale

Is there any reason why a church college, like Bethany, is justified in the claim of being a Christian college? Is it possible that a college can be a true center of learning and at the same time be called "Christian"? According to theologian Harvey Cox in The Secular City, "The whole idea of a 'Christian' college or university after the breaking apart of the medieval synthesis has little meaning."<sup>24</sup> This is because of the inherent conflict between the rationale of a university, i. e., to pursue truth wherever it might lead, and the traditional Christian view which is avowedly totalitarian and admits no truth save the truth found in Jesus Christ.

Bethany may, by virtue of its churchly origins, be justified in calling itself a Christian college. But if it does so, it can be accused of being an institution which does not have as its purpose the opening of narrow minds to the broadest ways of wisdom and enlightenment. Bethany could then justifiably be called a metaphysical anomaly; it would have a

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<sup>23</sup>Emmet Eklund, "Faith and Education," in Centennial Essays, ed. Emmer Engberg (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Press, 1959), p. 79.

<sup>24</sup>Harvey Cox, The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 221.

total view of the world and a closed system of education that would place it in the same category as the medieval church. This medieval perspective would not be an education in the modern sense, but indoctrination.

A modern theologian of the secular city, such as Cox, is not the only one who questions the rationale and very existence of the Christian college. The Danforth Foundation's study on higher education also casts a critical eye on the worthiness of the Christian college.<sup>25</sup> The study says that not only are the religious bases of the private colleges on sinking sand, but their programs of liberal arts, for which they purportedly exist, are in a state of disrepair.<sup>26</sup>

It does not require the extensive research and elaborate surveys of a Danforth Study or of the other critics to ascertain that the student religious organizations on the church college campuses are generally weak and struggling. All that is required is an open ear to the older generation or a visit to one of the religious programs. That the religious life on the campus of Bethany was once more active than today is attested to by the observations of parents of the present students and by a survey of the religious news in the school newspaper. For example, recent issues have no religious news. In a September 18, 1964 issue of the Bethany Messenger, thirteen campus organizations were listed, and none of them

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<sup>25</sup>Manning M. Patillo, Jr. and Donald M. Mackenzie, Eight Hundred Colleges Face the Future, A Preliminary Report of the Danforth Commission on Church Colleges and Universities (St. Louis: The Danforth Foundation, 1965), p. 42.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

were religious. This is in contrast with some earlier issues in which most of the organizations with news in the paper were religious.<sup>27</sup>

In defense of the religious life at Bethany, however, it must be emphasized that the outward signs of life are not always an accurate indication of the inward spiritual conditions. Pietism, emphasizing spiritual and devotional practices, is not a sure sign of spiritual and social welfare. Furthermore, there was recently a unification of the various religious organizations into the Bethany Student Christian Movement (BSCM). It may be, then, something of an illusion that the students do not take as much interest in religious matters as before simply because there is not such a multiplicity of religious organizations. Nevertheless, the indictment is made that the denominational clubs, such as the Wesley Foundation and the Lutheran Student Association, may be stronger on state university campuses than on church-related campuses.<sup>28</sup>

There is another accusation of the Danforth study against the church-related colleges.

The intellectual presuppositions which really guide the activities of most church colleges are heavily weighted in the secular direction. In other words, religion as a world view or explanation of existence is not penetrating college education. As has been mentioned, many academic people think of religion not as embodying truth about ultimate reality but as a moral code, as a set of ideals, or as quaint and antiquated ideas which educated people are supposed to have outgrown.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>See, e. g., Bethany Messenger, Oct. 28, 1952.

<sup>28</sup>Pattillo and Mackenzie, Eight Hundred Colleges Face the Future, p. 45.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 45-46.

There has been a secularization of society, and theologians are grappling with the significance of their systems of belief. As one of Bethany's professors stated, the church today is in the throes of a revolution and it cannot turn back; we cannot put "new wine into old wineskins."<sup>30</sup> We are in the midst of a religious revolution, even if a reluctant one.<sup>31</sup> This rethinking of the forms of our religious beliefs is evidenced by the "God is dead" movement. Church colleges are a part of the secularization prevalent today.

Church colleges have been accused of looking chiefly to the past. These colleges have not been organs of innovation. They have not ventured into new areas of religious or educational interest.<sup>32</sup> Even for his time, which was conservative, the founder of Bethany was extremely conservative.<sup>33</sup>

Church colleges have not been molders of society except in the sense that they have produced a large number of teachers, ministers, and others who have wielded no small influence on the world. This preaching-teaching mission of Bethany has been oriented towards the past. Not only is Bethany's "future in her past" in the sense that the College had a great founder and dedicated teachers, but it has looked to the past for its intellectual nourishment and reason for existence. It has always been officially orthodox. This means that it has looked back to the Fall,

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<sup>30</sup>Wilford Paul, "Lenten Devotion," Bethany Messenger, March 6, 1959, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup>John A. T. Robinson, Honest to God (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), chapter one is entitled "Reluctant Revolution."

<sup>32</sup>Andeen, "Trends in Higher Education in the Augustana Lutheran Church," p. 68.

<sup>33</sup>Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, p. 135.

to the Cross, and to the church's creeds which it claims must not change. The presidents have all remained true to Bethany's tradition. Despite criticism of being too liberal or too conservative, they were all evangelical. For example, President Lund, who stepped out of office in 1965, was accused of being "hopelessly liberal." He said that there were those who criticized him for being too broad-minded as well as those who thought that he was narrow-minded.<sup>34</sup> However, he believed that there had been a resurgence of orthodoxy in Christian theology and that this was the only defensible position. Liberalism rightly suffered its demise, he said.<sup>35</sup> President Lindquist may have been under suspicion at times as well. After all, he was the first philosopher, layman, and Democrat to hold the post of chief administrator of Bethany College. He firmly believed, however, that we cannot have a Christian civilization without a belief in Jesus Christ.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, pietism revived during his administration.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the College has officially remained orthodox, but some of the faculty members are revolutionizing the "mind of Bethany" and students are asserting their academic freedom. They are openly questioning the role of the church college. These factors may be an indication that, as

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<sup>34</sup>L. Dale Lund, "State of the College," Bethany College Alumni News (Lindsborg: Bethany College, April, 1963), p. 8.

<sup>35</sup>"Lund Opens Last Session of Seminar," Bethany Messenger, Feb. 6, 1959, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup>Lindquist, "Three Contexts of Christian Education," a baccalaureate address, McPherson College, May 30, 1965, Lindquist Papers.

<sup>37</sup>Wayne L. Wheeler, "An Analysis of Social Change in a Swedish-Immigrant Community: The Case of Lindsborg, Kansas," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missouri, 1959), p. 267.



to the Cross, and to the church's creeds which it claims must not change. The presidents have all remained true to Bethany's tradition. Despite criticism of being too liberal or too conservative, they were all evangelical. For example, President Lund, who stepped out of office in 1965, was accused of being "hopelessly liberal." He said that there were those who criticized him for being too broad-minded as well as those who thought that he was narrow-minded.<sup>34</sup> However, he believed that there had been a resurgence of orthodoxy in Christian theology and that this was the only defensible position. Liberalism rightly suffered its demise, he said.<sup>35</sup> President Lindquist may have been under suspicion at times as well. After all, he was the first philosopher, layman, and Democrat to hold the post of chief administrator of Bethany College. He firmly believed, however, that we cannot have a Christian civilization without a belief in Jesus Christ.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, pietism revived during his administration.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the College has officially remained orthodox, but some of the faculty members are revolutionizing the "mind of Bethany" and students are asserting their academic freedom. They are openly questioning the role of the church college. These factors may be an indication that, as

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former chaplain Emmet Eklund wrote, there is room for defining the Lutheran philosophy of education and expressing this within Bethany's program.<sup>38</sup>

### The Purpose of Bethany and Its Fulfillment

How did Dr. Carl A. Swensson, the founder, feel about the religious rationale of the College? His statement, repeated so many times but varying considerably with numerous translations, was:

After the meeting of the Synod at Lindsborg during the summer of 1881, I could not rid myself of the thought that the right time was at hand to make an attempt toward the upbuilding of a Lutheran high school, or 'air-castle' as many called it. I saw how God had blessed our settlements in this beautiful, flourishing and liberty-loving state. But how our children and youth should obtain the necessary Christian education was a question not easily answered. Without the elevating influence exerted by a good school, to mould the character of students and people, we would evidently be in danger of sinking into the worship of the almighty dollar and materialism. In addition, among our youth how many gifts that would otherwise be hidden and rust, would not such a school disclose--gifts to benefit and gladden the community and the Church of God.<sup>39</sup>

First and foremost in Swensson's statement of purpose is the religious basis of the College. This was what Eklund called the pietistic purpose: to try to steer the children away from the vices of the world and into prayer meetings and other holy endeavors.<sup>40</sup> More broadly interpreted, however, it is simply that Swensson wanted a college which offered an education under the influence, or even integral to the experience of Christianity. This meant the Lutheran Church, but there

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<sup>38</sup>Eklund, "A Study of Bethany," p. 99.

<sup>39</sup>Swensson, Kansas-Konferensens Protokoll, 1884, pp. 35-36, in Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, p. 86.

<sup>40</sup>Eklund, "A Study of Bethany," pp. 48-53.

was nothing narrow about Swensson's attitudes toward other denominations, and today the ecumenical spirit is flourishing at Bethany as well as in other sectors of the church.

Second, from the preceding statement by the founder of Bethany, one can see that Swensson truly desired the self-realization of every student; he wished each individual to maximize his potentialities. He undoubtedly felt that these qualities were of value in and of themselves. Nevertheless, in the next sentence he stated that man is not an island unto himself. Talents are of little worth either to the individual or to society unless they are shared. It is implied that the talents are to be developed for what Swensson spoke of in the last sentence of the quotation: service to the community in general and to the church of Christ in particular.

Other motives for founding Bethany were perpetrating the Swedish heritage, producing better-educated women, developing the body as the "temple of God" through the physical education program, training in American patriotism and citizenship, preparing students to make a living in the world through the commercial arts, and making better individuals by the teaching of a higher morality.

If one wished, each of the educational objectives of Swensson could be analysed and measured against the present standards of the College. There is little Swedish culture, patriotism, or pietism as originally conceived.<sup>41</sup> But Bethany has graduated a great number of teachers, ministers, musicians, artists, and others who are serving

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 96-99.

mankind. Swensson's idea for an "air castle" has born fruit largely in the development-of-talent aspect and service to mankind and to the church.

On the opposite side of the ledger, there may be some question as to how effective the College has been in preventing its young ones from sinking into mammonism and materialism. Theft, drunkenness, smoking, dancing, card-playing, and gambling are to be found at Bethany as at many other colleges. This does not require intense investigation to establish. Bethany is not, nor does it claim to be, a haven of angels or a monastery on the Great Plains. It is true that St. Paul said to "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (II Corinthians 6:17), but now Bethany either permits or has the "things of the world" as do most other originally pious colleges. Just because a college, like Bethany, has listed in its catalog the desire to foster a spiritual outlook on life, or because it has required chapel attendance, this is no valid reason for calling it a Christian college.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Cox, The Secular City, p. 221.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CORRELATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND MORALITY

Whether there is a positive correlation between religious training and morality is a debatable question. It would appear that if the church college is to have any apology for its existence, it would have to show the fruit of its spirit. Faith without works is dead (James 2:17).

As a Bethany chaplain explained, the unique belief which distinguishes Christianity from all the other great religions of the world is that in this faith there is no such thing as good works causing a person to climb up an ethical ladder to seventh heaven or however high he wants to go.<sup>1</sup> However, an earlier Bethany College pastor, the Rev. Emmet Eklund, in one of his last chapel talks, was more critical of the Lutheran emphasis on faith alone. More of a happy mean was expressed by a pastor at a Lutheran retreat held on the Bethany campus in May, 1965. He said in a dinner conversation that although we are saved by faith, we are most certainly rewarded according to our works. The pendulum appears to be swinging towards the works end of the arc.<sup>2</sup> Bethany may be going the same way as much of contemporary Christianity. No longer does it emphasize individual salvation as much as service to mankind. According to this new emphasis, then, it is a Christian institution when it not

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley H. Swanson, last lecture to World Religions class, May 22, 1959.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, the 1964 Christmas issue of Time, "The Servant Church," Time, LXXXIV (Dec. 25, 1964), p. 49. This raises a fundamental doctrinal question for Lutherans, "What is the place of salvation by faith in a Christianity devoted to good works?"

only produces men of Christian faith, but those who aid their fellow men in a functional way.

In producing better citizens and servants of mankind, are Bethany and other church colleges fulfilling their mission any more than the purely secular schools? This, regardless of such statements of purpose in the catalogs, is questionable. Such was the indictment previously cited. There appears to be very little if any correlation between education at a religious institution and morality. That there is a correlation between a general liberal education and morality is more tenable. Not only did Socrates and the secular writer of an occasional textbook<sup>3</sup> believe that man can become better and does so by an opening of his mind to the realm of great thinkers throughout the whole world, but this was partly accepted by those at Bethany who spoke on the meaning of true education.

One approach to answers for these questions is through the opinions of Bethany's presidents, students, and others. Their views are analysed to determine how well they thought the College was fulfilling its function as a church college and to what degree there is a correlation between education and morality.

#### President Edward James Nelander (1882-1889)

The first president of Bethany College, Edward Nelander, was appointed by Swensson, then president of the board of directors. He

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<sup>3</sup>E. g., Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1958), p. 851. "Various polls have consistently shown that the lower one goes down the educational scale . . . one finds more provincialism . . . race prejudice. . . . Narrowness, intolerance, bigotry, witch-hunting, and demagoguery fatten on ignorance."

may have become in his own right as outstanding a man as Swensson.<sup>4</sup> But because he did not practice what he preached about the correlation of education and physical fitness, Nelander became ill and had to retire from the Bethany scene,<sup>5</sup> making room for Swensson's rising star. Consequently he is barely known around Lindsborg, whereas his charismatic colleague is a hero.

Although Nelander was the first president of Bethany, he did not have much to say about the value of a Christian education. It seems that most of his emphasis was on the physical fitness program. He believed that there is a correlation between education and morality. Education takes the conceit out of a man. "Ignorance and conceit are synonymous terms," he said. Education creates an openness of mind and heart--a fair and unbiased appreciation of and sympathy for mankind. Bethany's first president said that self-made men are apt to be narrow-minded and unsympathetic, while a college-bred man should by virtue of his training be warm-hearted. Although Nelander believed that education builds Christian faith, he showed more faith in the power of liberal education to change human nature than did his successors.<sup>6</sup>

#### President Carl Aaron Swensson (1889-1904)

As stated, Swensson's purpose for founding Bethany was to give a Christian orientation to education as well as training for a life of

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<sup>4</sup>Dorothy Friedorff Diehl (a daughter of Nelander), "The Life and Work of Dr. Edward James Nelander" (unpublished paper, Bethany Archives).

<sup>5</sup>Edward J. Nelander, Address to the Students, in a collection of Alba Malm, Lindsborg.

<sup>6</sup>Edward J. Nelander, "Remarks," Commencement (Bethany, 1891), p. 50.

self-realization and service. In a baccalaureate sermon at Bethany, he further elaborated on his concept of the role of religion in education when he made the liberal comment:

Knowledge is an attribute of God. . . . To know is to ascend the ladder of heaven. To advance in true knowledge is to grow God-like. . . . The destruction of learning brings with it the ruin of everything that is good--religion, morals, and all things human and divine. The better a man is, the greater his ardor in the preservation of learning.<sup>7</sup>

Swensson's speech indicates a belief in the correlation of both religious and secular education with morals or character. Swensson wrote as though man is capable of achieving divinity by means of education. In this respect Swensson was more liberal and optimistic than his successors. Man could change his nature through education--a kind of "operation bootstrap." Swensson was conservative in politics and religion, but even for his time which exuded faith in man's capabilities, he was an optimist and progressive in education. He still emphasized the classics, but in other ways from the instigation of coeducation and football to this belief in practically divine destiny through education, he was not behind his times.

Although Swensson believed in the power of any education, he was emphatic about the superiority of Christian education over that of the secular. After hearing a Swedish pastor support Christian education, Swensson agreed, saying that anybody is able to see that education without Christianity and the fear of God is nothing more than refined heathenism. But Swensson was also good-humored in observing that not everybody saw it

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<sup>7</sup>Carl A. Swensson, "The Humility of True Knowledge," Salina Daily Republican, May 26, 1892, no page given, clipping, Bethany College Archives.



that way, for otherwise there would have been more students enrolled in the Christian schools.<sup>8</sup>

Swensson was convinced that no price was too high for a Christian college.<sup>9</sup> He explained that each of us is accountable to God; therefore, it behooves each one of us to make full use of his talents, to maximize his potentialities. But, of course, Christ is central; the education is for Him, first, last, and all the time.<sup>10</sup> Quoting Swensson:

Thus higher Christian education is an outpouring of light to flood a world from which the light of God has receded. Open up yet more and more . . . that the whole world may be enlightened and behold the glory of the sun of righteousness rising with healing in his wings.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Swensson believed that Christian education builds beautiful Christian character, and it is better than secular education because it develops the heart as well as the head.<sup>12</sup> Swensson was optimistic about the possibility of building a better person as well as a better world through Christian higher education although he did not say very much about social engineering. He was not an advocate of the Social Gospel, that is, he did not support the liberal reform movement of the church which took direct action to solve the problems of the day.

Besides being a builder of character, Swensson believed that the church college was the bulwark of our civil liberties.<sup>13</sup> As Emmet Eklund

<sup>8</sup>Carl A. Swensson, Again in Sweden (Chicago: Swedish Book Company, 1898), p. 630.

<sup>9</sup>Swensson, "The Value of Higher Christian Education," Forget-Me Not (Salina, Kansas: Central Kansas Publishing Company, 1902), p. 25.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>13</sup>Swensson, "Cheering News!" (in a promotional pamphlet, "A Conditional Donation of Nearly \$30,000," Oct. 20, 1897, Bethany Archives).

wrote, American citizenship was an objective of Bethany's founder.<sup>14</sup> Swensson had something in common with the modern day social science advocates when they give citizenship as a reason for the social studies.

President Ernst Pihlblad (1904-1941)

President Pihlblad carried on much in the same tradition as his illustrious predecessor except that he was not as revered. This may have been partly because Swensson died in his prime, while Pihlblad continued as president even after he became old and disabled from an automobile accident. Pihlblad eulogized Swensson for having influenced his life more than any one else.<sup>15</sup> Pihlblad was a student, teacher, and vice-president under the guiding hand of his intellectual mentor, so one may be expected to discern similarities in the thought patterns of the two great ideological leaders of the Kansas Swedes.

Pihlblad became president when Swensson died suddenly on a promotional trip in California. In his inaugural address, Pihlblad stated that the purpose of a college is to provide man with a liberal arts education which prepares one for complete living:

To develop the individual physically, mentally, morally and spiritually; to teach him his proper place in the universe, his relations and his duties to himself, his fellowmen, and his Maker; and to impart to human life that indescribable charm of ripeness and maturity that we call culture.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Eklund, "A Study of Bethany," pp. 82-95.

<sup>15</sup>Pihlblad, Interview over radio station KSAL, Salina, July 9, 1939, script in the president's office, Bethany College.

<sup>16</sup>Pihlblad, Inaugural Address, Bethany College, May 31, 1904, pp. 5-6, notes, Bethany Archives.

In his inaugural address Pihlblad did not have much to say about the correlation of religious education and goodness; he simply expounded a view of liberal education as would be expected from the president of a liberal arts college. He did not elaborate much on the virtues of the church college in that original address, but later during the First World War, he was like many other pastors and educators. They despaired and were not so optimistic about man's potentialities for raising himself through education. Still later, in his old age, Pihlblad took a much more conservative view of the role of education in general and the church function in particular. He stated that the only way to have morality was through Jesus Christ. This was the purpose behind the founding of Bethany College, and he and the faculty were not to breach this commitment.

During the First World War, Pihlblad observed that when one places knowledge and power in the hands of a man, he is endowing him with a dangerous possession, unless there go with them moral restraint and the light of God's spirit. "An educated scoundrel is the worst enemy of society. In giving its youth merely a secular education, society is laying the mine that will finally blow it to atoms."<sup>17</sup> Here it can be seen that Pihlblad did not take to heart the Socratic dictum that "knowledge is virtue." He was not as optimistic as his predecessor. Account must be taken, however, that it was wartime and even the former liberals, such as the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, despaired during the war, giving up hope in man's ability to extricate himself from his predicament by his own effort.

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<sup>17</sup>Pihlblad, "The Candles of the Lord," a baccalaureate sermon, Bethany College, May 30, 1915, p. 14, notes, Bethany Archives.

President Pihlblad endeavored to provide the proper atmosphere for Christian growth. As put by the College catalog,

Bethany maintains that there can be no education without the development of spiritual with the physical and mental. It further believes that spiritual growth shall be prompted under the influence of the church that stands for positive Christian truth. Bethany endeavors to cast about the students a wholesome religious atmosphere.<sup>18</sup>

This statement contains a strong evangelical rationale for the College. Bethany was to provide the proper environment for the wholesome nurture of Christian character, and the students were strongly encouraged to participate in the religious program. The catalog did not state explicitly that there is a correlation between religiously-oriented education and morality, but that is implied in the assertion that without the religious basis, education is of no avail.

In his presidential reports to the Kansas Conference of the Augustana Lutheran Church, Pihlblad stressed the difference which Christian education makes. He said that the church enters into the field of higher education with the feeling that the only real education is that permeated by the spirit of Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup> Later, Pihlblad stated that the most important as well as the most exacting department of the College was the Christianity department. Although Bethany was not spiritually perfect, there was a receptive attitude towards Christianity; the religion classes were popular and the largest classes on

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<sup>18</sup>Bethany College Catalogue: 1923, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup>Pihlblad, "President's Report," in Kansas Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod, Minutes of the Sixty-First Annual Convention (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1931), p. 36, hereafter cited as Kansas Conference Minutes.

campus.<sup>20</sup> Pihlblad believed that education without Christ would be of little profit to either man or society. He had seen one world conflagration, and he said that the second was impending due to the communism of Russia and the fascism of Germany and Italy.<sup>21</sup>

President Pihlblad broadcast that the origin of Bethany College was in the sacristy of the Bethany Lutheran Church. The name was taken from Bethany of old, where the Master loved to be with his friends.<sup>22</sup> The advantage of a Christian education is that only this kind of an education is complete. Pihlblad said that the Bethany motto could well be inspired by the motto of one of the oldest universities in the world, Oxford: "The Lord is my light."<sup>23</sup> In his promotional addresses over radio station KSAL, which were virtually advertisements, Dr. Pihlblad often pleaded with the prospective student to consider the Christian influence first in selecting a college: "Secular education cannot provide the idealism necessary, for 'where there is no vision the people perish.'"<sup>24</sup>

As President Pihlblad expounded so fervently, Bethany must retain the ideals of the founders of the College; it was in the first place a

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<sup>20</sup>Pihlblad, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1932, p. 36.

<sup>21</sup>Pihlblad, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1935, p. 29.

<sup>22</sup>Pihlblad, Speech over KSAL (Salina, Kansas), August 21, 1938, unpublished, in president's office.

<sup>23</sup>Pihlblad, Speech over KSAL, August 20, 1938, unpublished, in president's office.

<sup>24</sup>Pihlblad, Speech over KSAL, no date given, in president's office.

Christian college. The old pioneers firmly believed that an education without morals might become a greater vice to society than it would be a power for good. Pihlblad was not as optimistic about the positive correlation between education and morality as were Nelander and Swenson, but belief in the progress of man was not as common in the twentieth century as it was in the late nineteenth century when Bethany was founded.

President Emory K. Lindquist (1941-1953)

Emory K. Lindquist was a student and teacher at Bethany during the Pihlblad administration, but he did not have the close affinity to his predecessor's views that Pihlblad had to his predecessor. President Lindquist was more liberal than Pihlblad. Nevertheless, he believed just as strongly in the value of Christian higher education. He believed that an environment of Christian concern would surely produce a better individual. Also, he was no demythologizer,<sup>25</sup> and he did not approve of the trend towards secularization. He believed that the Christian faith was much more than a mere creed. Belief in Christ had to make a difference in the quality of life. This emphasis on the spirit was illustrated by his history of Lindsborg which sought to convey a sense of the "unique combination of cultural and spiritual values in a friendly small town setting."<sup>26</sup> The tribute of Rev. Emmet Eklund to Dr. Lindquist upon the latter's retirement from the Bethany

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<sup>25</sup>Lindquist, "Three Contexts of Christian Education."

<sup>26</sup>Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, p. viii.

presidency was indicative of the relationship of creeds and character. To Dr. Lindquist, Christian faith was not only a profession of belief, but it was a faith which demonstrated itself through Christian character.<sup>27</sup>

Although Lindquist firmly believed in the efficacy of Christian higher education, he did not emphasize as much as Swensson the change in character wrought by such education. This may have been because he did not want to show false humility; he would rather leave the judgment to God. The power of Christian living was clearly evident in his speeches, but his manner of presentation was more philosophic than dogmatic. This calm reasoned approach may have given the illusion that he was not so evangelical.

In reviewing the history of Bethany, Lindquist stated that the church had realized the importance of Christian education for strengthening Christian faith and life in the extension of the kingdom of God. If this statement was true, there was reason for Bethany.<sup>28</sup>

Dr. Lindquist believed that there must be fruit of the spirit from Christian education, that is, there is a strong correlation between true education and goodness. He stated that there must be an emphasis upon Christian faith and life if the new knowledge and information is to

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<sup>27</sup>Emmet Eklund, "Tribute to Dr. Lindquist," Kansas Conference Lutheran, Dec., 1952, reprinted in the Bethany Messenger, Jan. 13, 1953, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup>Emory K. Lindquist, "Bethany College," A Century of Education for Christ, Victor E. Beck, ed. (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1946), p. 30.

result in abundant living and constructive social action.<sup>29</sup> His social concern was illustrated by serving on the social problems committee of the Augustana Lutheran Church.<sup>30</sup>

Most of Lindquist's statements were about the transformations brought by the religious emphasis of the church college, but he also spoke of secular education improving a student. In a chapel talk, he told his students: "In a college experience a person should improve. If a change for the better does not take place in a college experience, the person has not grown up."<sup>31</sup>

In a baccalaureate sermon at Bethany, Lindquist stated that Christ's contacts with men were for the purpose of changing them. Lindquist challenged his audience to become like that which they idealized and understood, because as the noblest imperatives are understood, the person becomes like them. As one understands the spirit of Christ, he becomes Christ-like. Through proper understanding and setting of goals, human natures can be changed and purposes achieved.<sup>32</sup> This address of Lindquist showed optimism despite the uncertain times, the height of World War II.

A catalog statement of the purpose of the College indicates official belief during the Lindquist administration:

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>30</sup>Emory K. Lindquist, "Report of Committee on Moral and Social Questions," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1947, pp. 48-49.

<sup>31</sup>"Taking Your Measurement," Bethany Messenger, May 5, 1942, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup>"Lindquist Speaks at Baccalaureate," Lindsborg News-Record, May 28, 1942, p. 4.



The ideal of Bethany College is to serve young men and women who are seeking a liberal education under Christian influence. The college aims to promote cultural development in forming a sound philosophy of life. An attempt is made to guide the student in interpreting the problems of his own world in the light of past experience and to encourage a sense of balance in all things.<sup>33</sup>

This statement still advertised a strong religious emphasis. There was no change to the purely secular, but less space was given to the religious nature and nurture of the College than twenty years before during the Pihlblad administration. Instead of underlining the necessity of a religious basis for true education, the statement omitted completely any reference to the thought that the religiously-educated individual was better in any sense of the word than the secularly-educated. It must not be forgotten, however, that the school was there to serve the individual who was seeking a liberal education under Christian influence. This indicates belief in Christian education, and that there may be a correlation between such religiously-oriented education and morality, but the implication is more liberal and philosophic than fundamentalistic.

President Robert Mortvedt (1953-1958)

President Robert Mortvedt, like Lindquist, did not dwell on the exclusiveness of Christianity although he was an orthodox Augustana Lutheran and he thoroughly believed in the value of Christian higher education. He stated:

The purpose of the colleges is to evangelize the world through the Church. . . . The Church must be in the business

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<sup>33</sup>Bethany College Catalog: 1943, p. 12.

of education to set the standards of true education, to save souls, and to help evangelize the world. To see our task in lesser terms is to sin or, literally, to miss the mark.<sup>34</sup>

President Mortvedt believed that education and religion were unlike oil and water; they did blend naturally. "In the last analysis, it is doubtful that anyone can secure a truly liberal education unless the educational process embraces religion."<sup>35</sup> It can be seen that although he was not a minister, Mortvedt was thoroughly evangelical and did not belittle the value of Christian higher education. One might have asked that Mortvedt and others like him who eulogized the merits of Christian education should have spent more time in defining and explaining their philosophy.

As for man improving himself by education, Mortvedt, like the other evangelicals, was not quite so definite about the correlation of education and morality as he was of the transforming power of the life of Christ on the individual. He stated that "if we really believe that man was created in the image of God, we must do all in our power to develop these qualities which are most God-like in mind, heart, and spirit."<sup>36</sup>

Writing to his students, President Mortvedt explained that the aim of education is "to improve man as man."<sup>37</sup> Later, he reviewed

<sup>34</sup>Robert Mortvedt, "Mission Fields in the Continent of Learning," speech given in Jamestown, New York, June 18, 1958, copy in files of the president's office, pp. 2-3.

<sup>35</sup>Mortvedt, "From the President's Desk," Bethany Messenger, Sept. 13, 1957, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup>Mortvedt, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1953, p. 82.

<sup>37</sup>Mortvedt, "From the President's Desk," Bethany Messenger, Feb. 9, 1954, p. 2.

The Conflict in Education, by Robert Hutchins, former president of the University of Chicago, and took a quote which included the above statement as to the aim of education.<sup>38</sup> Finally, besides improving man as man, education must serve to strengthen the state. This followed the citizenship-training tradition propounded by Swensson as one of the original objectives of Bethany. Mortvedt stated that "the future, in the last analysis, will belong to the nation whose commitment to education is the greatest and most sustained."<sup>39</sup> Mortvedt was referring to more of a humanitarian nationalism whereas Swensson tended towards chauvinism.

#### President L. Dale Lund (1958-1965)

President Lund spent more time and effort explaining what true education is rather than simply stating that there is a correlation of church education and morality, and that we must, therefore, have church-supported colleges. In short, he had more of a philosophy of education. He was, nevertheless, evangelical and believed that only the Christian college is prepared and equipped to accomplish what the church wants.<sup>40</sup>

President Lund believed that even though learning does not automatically make people better,<sup>41</sup> education is something that happens not

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<sup>38</sup>Mortvedt, "From the President's Desk," Bethany Messenger, March 9, 1954, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup>Mortvedt, "It Is High Time to Awake," The Lutheran Companion, July 29, 1959, p. 10.

<sup>40</sup>L. Dale Lund, "Our Teaching Stewardship," The Lutheran Companion, Nov. 11, 1959, p. 13.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

to the mind only, but to the whole man.<sup>42</sup> Lund was an existentialist; he used the term favorably in his speeches, and believed that action is decisive: Man must get involved and do something rather than simply sit and cogitate. In this sense, education does not automatically create better individuals. Rather, whether or not there is any improvement in the quality of living of the educated man depends largely on the will of the individual. This philosophy tends towards the pragmatic belief that "God's work is our work." Lund was modern and relevant in his educational philosophy.

President G. Kenneth Andeen (1965 to Present)

Of course the new president, Dr. G. Kenneth Andeen, is also convinced of the importance of Christian education. In his doctoral dissertation he offered the view: "That the church is a pioneer and inspiration in the educational movement of western civilization is clearly documented in history."<sup>43</sup> He quoted from Howard Lowry, The Mind's Adventure, stating that the church colleges' "influence in American life is out of all proportion to their size."<sup>44</sup> As to any correlation between education and morality, Dr. Andeen at least inferred that there was some, or that the church college was achieving a degree of success, because there was not a spirit of lawlessness and rebellion

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<sup>42</sup>L. Dale Lund, "Wrestling, Humility, and Proclamation" (Inaugural Address, Bethany College, Fall, 1958), p. 4. Printed and available in the president's office.

<sup>43</sup>Andeen, "Trends in Higher Education in the Augustana Lutheran Church," p. 1.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

manifest on the Bethany campus as on so many other campuses throughout the nation.<sup>45</sup> Dr. Andeen takes a vibrant, optimistic view towards the kind of Christian higher education offered at Bethany.

Church Officials and Alumni Speak about Bethany

Presidents were not the only spokesmen of Christian higher education. Alumni and church officials also spoke of Bethany's purpose and its fulfillment. In 1938 this positive review of the Christian emphasis at Bethany was made:

Again Bethany College reaffirms its belief that a sense of the vital is found in the pages of the Holy Writ and in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. . . . No education is complete which does not develop the spiritual life of youth. At Bethany every attempt is made to develop this spiritual life. . . . Bethany students study the Bible as the basis for a valid and eternal philosophy of life. . . . This first emphasis places the Christian imperative at the center of the student's thinking.<sup>46</sup>

Again, in 1943 there was no criticism of the activity of Bethany in promoting religion and in serving the church: "The Christian faith and conviction is not belittled or undermined in the class rooms of secular subjects. It is of vital importance for the spiritual safeguarding of our youths that the Church is engaged in this activity."<sup>47</sup>

At the Bethany commencement in 1944, the graduating class heard that the difference between church and non-church institutions was very

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<sup>45</sup>"Remarks" by Dr. Andeen at the Alumni Banquet, Bethany College, May 28, 1966, attended by the author.

<sup>46</sup>"Finding a Sense of the Vital," The Kansas Conference Lutheran, July, 1938, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup>G. A. Dorf, ed., "Editorials," The Kansas Conference Lutheran, July, 1943, p. 4.

great. Church colleges are more open-minded. Besides, church colleges must prove that their democratic way of life is worth working and studying for if they are to survive.<sup>48</sup>

President N. Everett Hedeon, of the Kansas Conference, which controlled Bethany, believed in the value of church-related education. He said that the students at a Christian college not only learn to earn a living, but learn how to live. At Bethany, students have learned a skill of life in the Christian framework.<sup>49</sup>

Bethany alumni, especially in recent years, were cautious about affirming a correlation of education and morality. Whether Bethany lived up to its aims depended largely on personal views. For instance, older alumni, who were distracted by changes, would categorically deny the fulfillment of the College's pietistic religious aims. However, the more modern and liberal would laud the development away from such "reverse legalism" and sectarianism as true progress.

#### Student Views on Bethany's Religious Status

As for student opinion on the purpose of the College and the improvement, if any, in the moral fiber of the students as a result of this church-related education, the student paper during the first decade of the century had some lucid and zealous articles. In 1906 the following opinion was expressed:

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<sup>48</sup>"Joshua Odin Speaks at Commencement," Lindsborg News Record, May 25, 1944, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup>N. Everett Hedeon, "Bethany's Contributions to the Churches," Bethany Reporter, April, 1952, p. 3.

Education should invest life with a religious power as a foundation for character and manhood. No education is complete that does not develop the moral and spiritual part of man. An authority has well said that "familiarity with the Bible is a liberal education and without it there is no education."<sup>50</sup>

This entire article overflowed with a strong sense of the religious commitment and purpose to education at Bethany. The author did not claim that there is inevitable improvement with education, but he implied that something is awry if there is not improvement in the moral fiber, the "moral germs," of the individual who received a true education.<sup>51</sup> After all, religious training, properly directed, makes men.<sup>52</sup> Two years later, a similar view was expressed. This student took pride that Bethany was known far and wide for its moral and religious education. Definitely, he said, all education is to make us better people and more fit for life.<sup>53</sup>

In 1922 the opinion was expressed that the religion of Christ was the cornerstone of Bethany; attendance at church at least once on Sunday was required. Great men have always been religious,<sup>54</sup> so Bethany graduates have a greater chance for success. Another student stated in the same issue of the Messenger:

No student can attend this college for four years and leave without the conviction that there is a God in the universe

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<sup>50</sup>Frank Nelson, "A Few Suggestions," Bethany Messenger, March, 1906, p. 5, hereafter cited as Messenger.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>53</sup>"Our Religious Work," Messenger, Oct. 2, 1908, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup>Editorial, W. M. Ostenberg, editor-in-chief, Messenger, Sept. 9, 1922, p. 2.

and that he must be recognized if each individual is to contribute to society and attain the highest culture.<sup>55</sup>

It appears that early in Bethany's history the students were not so bashful about claiming that there was a noticeable improvement in the quality of character through the Christian commitment which was strengthened at a Christian college. Later, the students may have believed that Christ was still relevant to the modern world, but they were careful not to be overly proud in claiming that they were better than someone who came from a secular school.

An example of later thought was during the New Deal when a "social engineer" expressed his opinion. He claimed that man has been given the power of creation. Man can change the social order if he will only think the right thoughts and then make these manifest through actions.<sup>56</sup> This writer was an ardent advocate of the New Deal.

In 1946 Harold Palm, later to become an educational secretary and then the principal of a church-supported teachers college,<sup>57</sup> noted that the primary purpose of Bethany was the preparation for Christian service and that this had borne much fruit.<sup>58</sup> The latter point is a typical advertisement of church colleges. It is not surprising that

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<sup>55</sup>W. H. Skinner, "The Bethany Spirit," Messenger, Sept. 9, 1922, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup>Paul Engstrand, Jr., ed., "Many Leaders: The Garb of Man with Social Philosophy of Beast," Messenger, Oct. 17, 1939, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup>Secretary of the Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika; Principal at Marangu, Tanganyika.

<sup>58</sup>Harold Palm, "Realizing Bethany's Purposes," Messenger, Sept. 24, 1946, p. 2.



most church workers come from church schools. That is the reason they attend such schools, and often they could not receive the proper training at a secular institution.

Palm believed that Bethany's purpose was more than service to mankind. He wrote that the founders "recognized that unless higher education has its roots in Christian faith, it very largely fails." This is because knowledge without the fruits of the Christian spirit can be very dangerous.<sup>59</sup> Palm may have been affected by the despair of man as a result of the Second World War. He was realistic about the correlation of godless education and goodness.

It was not until 1952 that evidence was encountered that students strongly questioned whether Bethany was holding true to its purposes.

Bethany College is a Christian institution. Its founders were individuals with firm Christian convictions. . . . It was their hope that Bethany would continue to operate on such a basis.

Have the Christian principles on which this college was founded been forgotten? Have they ceased to be operative on the Bethany campus of today? There are various indications that this is true. One of these indications is the activity of the fraternities and sororities on the campus.<sup>60</sup>

This was the first outright questioning in the Messenger of the Bethany tradition and its fulfillment. Since the indication cited was the rather barbarous initiation rites of the Greek organizations, however, not much alarm was raised. More reaction would have resulted if the critic had hit directly at the students and faculty, questioning

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Phil Youngquist, "Food for Thought," Messenger, Feb. 19, 1952, p. 2.

whether they were Christians. This kind of frontal assault came some seven years later. In an unsigned guest editorial, the alarmist lamented the fact that he

was sold on the idea that Bethany was a "church college"--a place of "Christian higher education." Upon arrival, the truth was revealed. Deists, "spiritual inerts," and sincere Christians comprised the faculty. These were Bethany's instructors for a program of Christian higher education.

Bethany is living in the past years when one considers its program of Christian higher education. . . . Why not reinforce what the College Catalog states: "Bethany offers a liberal education under Christian influence"?<sup>61</sup>

An answer to the above accusation was made by the editor, who became a pastor, and in 1966, instructor of philosophy at Bethany. He entitled his reply, "Christian Snobs," sermonizing that Bethany would be defeating its purpose if it admitted only strong Christians. It "would become a sort of isolated 'monastery' of prudish Christians, who try to withdraw from reality behind the walls built up by their Christian snobbishness."<sup>62</sup> Bethany would act as a stronger leaven when there was more work to do on the campus.

In 1961 editorials revealed the view of at least one student towards the religious state of affairs on the College campus.

We would all make good Hindus; not that we are so proficient in the practice of yoga, but that we embrace certain fundamental attitudes of the Hindu religion. Two of these attitudes, particularly popular on the college campus, are in direct contradiction to the Biblical concept of Christianity: They are . . . . [that] All religions are paths

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<sup>61</sup>"Campus Comments," Messenger, Feb. 27, 1959, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup>Carl Hansen, "Christian Snobs," Messenger, March 6, 1959, p. 2.

toward the same Ultimate Goal . . . . [and] The Hindus have no solid convictions in their religion and allow their numerous gods to swarm about in spiritual abandon, . . . The college is a hot-bed for these two attitudes.<sup>63</sup>

In another editorial it was observed that the college student "is the aspiring atheist who nevertheless bows his head at mealtime" and "is the professed Christian who is learning to be embarrassed by fundamental Christian doctrine."<sup>64</sup>

In 1962 a cynic and jokester made his attack upon the religious condition of the College. In a letter, supposedly found in the gutter and addressed "Russia," the alleged Communist wrote that he purposely

came to a "Christian" college to see the power of Christianity at its zenith in order to know better how to cope with it in the homeland. But comrades, you have nothing to fear if this is the epitome of the Christian life. . . . The students here are afraid to be Christian. Some years ago there were many religious organizations. They've been, however, dissolved into an organization called BSCM which is dying fast.<sup>65</sup>

The tone of any comment about the state of religion on the Bethany campus depended largely upon the religious orientation of the viewer. If he was fundamentalistic, the student viewed with alarm the seemingly inevitable sweep towards a more secular than religious campus; but if he relished change, he favored the new outlook which put God in the background, and relegated the religious activities to an early stage in man's development and later to a pietistic few.

There was a letter to the editor, however, after alarm was expressed over the sad religious state of affairs, lauding Bethany's

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<sup>63</sup>"Editorial: L. C. D.," Messenger, March 3, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup>"Editorial: L. C. D.," Messenger, Feb. 24, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup>"Dear Alioshka, from Nicklai," Messenger, Feb. 2, 1962, p. 2.

Christian atmosphere. The writer, a Jew, said that Bethany's Christian education and atmosphere were a definite plus factor and feature in his life, and he claimed that "there is no such thing as hearing enough about God that nothing more suffices."<sup>66</sup> Just one year later the opinion was on the negative side: "The Bethany atmosphere is one more of frustration than challenge."<sup>67</sup> Apparently the state of religion on a college campus is much in the eye of the beholder.

The most recent student comment is critical. The present generation of Bethany students is not silent. The College was accused of being paternalistic, not just in the sense of trying to give guidance in an "experimental, intellectual, and perceptive" way, but in a "dogmatic, insensitive, cruel, self-pitying, and unimaginative" way.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the cry was raised for "experimentation and liberality." Major complaints were the compulsory chapel attendance and the class attendance policy that allowed few cuts.<sup>69</sup> The editor of the same issue of the Messenger described the semester as the one of "holy chapel cards," disappointment when dreams of physical expansion failed to materialize, and a relocation scare. But "Bethany weathered the threats of doom, defeat and despair." Then in a vein which is indicative of how the

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<sup>66</sup>Alan Hoffman, "Letter to the Editor," Messenger, May 18, 1962, p. 2.

<sup>67</sup>"Low Student Morale," Messenger, May 3, 1963, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup>Brian Palecek, "Notes on 'Paternalism,'" Messenger, May 13, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup>Andy Salmon, "The Need for Experimentation and Liberality," Messenger, May 13, 1966, p. 3.

most recent editor of the school paper felt about the trend at Bethany, it was observed:

Bethany has come of age and no longer carries the connotation of a place for Lutheran parents to send their children to be protected from dancing, drinking, "God is Dead" and other evils found in the big, bad, secular world.<sup>70</sup>

Another student recently stated that the "morale is low and inefficiency is rampant." This, he said, was because of inadequate communication among students, faculty and administration. While students all over the country are seeking "participatory democracy," Bethany College was offering very little of this opportunity for its students to "structure and order their own world."<sup>71</sup>

An editorial, slightly revised from the Baker Orange (Baldwin, Kansas), showed that Bethany was not the only "B-Tech" with problems. Paraphrasing from the Baker University paper, the Messenger stated: "I am a tired Bethany student . . . tired of the anti-intellectual, oblivious-to-world-affairs attitude prevalent in our student body."<sup>72</sup> It would seem that a few international students on the church campus might help stimulate a more cosmopolitan view of life.

Most of the early comment in the student paper was on the correlation of the straight liberal arts education and morality and the efficacy of Christian higher education. More recently in Bethany's

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<sup>70</sup>Paula Carlson, ed., "The Messenger Speaks," Messenger, May 13, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup>Eric B. Richstein, "Richstein's Ramblings on Morale," Messenger, April 29, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup>"I Am a Tired B-Techer," Messenger, May 6, 1966, p. 2.

history, students were either lamenting the paucity of religious activity on the campus or else they were giving a defense, an apology, or a plea for the religious and educational atmosphere. There were no major upheavals as on larger campuses. This may be due, despite student comment to the contrary, to the intimate relationship among the faculty, administration, and students that a small college affords compared to the multiversities. Also, the absence of at least open rebellion may have been an indication of the correlation of education at a church school and morality.

The negative expressions by students in most recent years might be due to restlessness and insecurity and the apparent failure of the church college to lead the students into the kind of commitment which gives purpose and direction to life. On the other hand, such questioning of Bethany's status is a sign of progressive thinking rather than apathetic fossilization. Judgment depends largely upon the liberalism or conservatism of the critic. There has been a secularization of most of society, including the majority of the church colleges as Bethany, but whether one thinks that Bethany still has a role to play in Christian higher education and how well the College has fulfilled her purpose to date, depends on whether the viewer is fundamentalistic or tending towards modernism especially in his religious beliefs.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE TRAVAIL OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM VERSUS RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Can a Christian college be committed to both free inquiry and at the same time remain true to its Christian faith? As the Danforth study put the dilemma:

How can a college do justice to its avowed purpose as a Christian institution, a purpose which carries with it commitment to a set of beliefs, and at the same time maintain the freedom of inquiry which most academic people think is necessary for good education?<sup>1</sup>

This query hits hardest at the vital core of the church-related college rationale. The question has already been asked: Does the Christian have more of an open mind because he has a rudder by which to steer himself, or is his mind closed because he is already committed to a certain world outlook?

There is also the issue of science versus religion. Each has at times taken an exclusive view which is contrary to its true spirit. More crucial to the college community, however, than any direct conflict between science and religion is the area of academic freedom itself. Just how much should the professor try to open the mind of the young student? To what extent should a faculty member be forced to adhere to a former conservatism? Acceptable beliefs change significantly in one generation. For example, a generation ago at Bethany there was a Christian conference at which the most literal interpretation of

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<sup>1</sup>Pattillo and Mackenzie, Eight Hundred Colleges Face the Future, p. 54.

miracles was given,<sup>2</sup> whereas now even in the Lutheran Sunday School book, The Mighty Acts of God, the teaching is more spiritual and allegorical than literal; faith was a prerequisite to miracles, as Christ taught.<sup>3</sup>

Gradually this generation of Lutherans has begun to believe or to be taught that much of the Bible is more meaningful if understood as mythical or figurative. This is a common view now at Bethany and was the one favored by the Christianity teacher, Rev. Emmet Eklund, in the middle 1950's. But of course the Bethany chaplains did not accept unconditionally Bultmann<sup>4</sup> or Robinson, and most Lutherans are still of the old literal-interpretation school. A recent survey printed in Christianity Today showed that only 31 per cent of the Lutherans polled did not believe that the biblical miracles actually happened, compared to 72 per cent of the Congregationalists and 63 per cent of the Methodists.<sup>5</sup> However, this mythological view is creeping rather hastily into the seminaries and colleges of the more fundamentalist churches, including the officially orthodox Bethany. The members of the old school believe that the new modes of thought are heretical, but the

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<sup>2</sup>Frank R. Carlson, "Youth's Perplexities," Conference Echo, Carl Segerhammar, ed. (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1929), p. 107.

<sup>3</sup>Robert J. Marshall, The Mighty Acts of God (Philadelphia: Lutheran Church Press, 1964), p. 169.

<sup>4</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology (New York: Charles Scribners, 1958).

<sup>5</sup>Carl Henry, ed., "Are the Churches Coddling Atheists?" Christianity Today, IX (Nov. 20, 1964), p. 31.



followers of the new school quite naturally claim that their new perspective is much more meaningful and of earlier Christian vintage than is the professedly conservative mood.

There was a conflict from the founding of the College to the present over how much the professor should try to open the mind of the student, and since the Christian is avowedly not afraid of truth, should anyone be allowed to teach on the staff? Progressively more freedom was allowed and used; nevertheless, the standard answer to the question as to whether any man may parade any belief before the formative minds of the students was, in effect, an absolute no. This did not mean in the eyes of the administrators and board of directors that there was an infringement of academic freedom; rather it signified to them that since Bethany had a definite Christian commitment and was supported by the church, its teachers were obligated to show a loyalty to this purpose for which Bethany was founded.

It would be expected that the founder of the "air castle," which had as one purpose the protection of the youth of the community from mammonism and materialism, would be the most selective in his teachers, that he would be careful to choose colleagues who were at precisely the correct location on the political-religious spectrum. Even the non-minister, President Mortvedt, stated that it is proper and just for the College to exclude those like the Oxford don who said "religion is a nuisance in a university," and the hard-boiled positivists who "will not admit the right of a Christian to earn the title of being liberal or objective."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Robert Mortvedt, "Mission Fields in the Continent of Learning," p. 11.

If President Mortvedt was so careful about the selection of a Christian college faculty, and another former Bethany president, Dr. Emory K. Lindquist, who is now president of Wichita State University, believed that the church college was much superior to the state school because the president could be more selective of his teachers, how paradoxical it is that Swensson, who was allegedly conservative and careful in selecting his colleagues, should have chosen an opposite-minded man to come to "his town."<sup>7</sup> Moreover, during the Pihlblad administration, a Socialist Party candidate, Dr. G. W. Kleihege, was a professor of sociology. But these are mainly examples of academic freedom in the political area. In the spiritual realm there was less room for diversity.

Academic freedom was in the forefront in one of President Pihlblad's reports to the Kansas Conference of the Augustana Synod. There were no Scopes Trials at Bethany; there were no incriminating indictments against professors for teaching the violent overthrow of our present political system; the American Civil Liberties Union did not have to rush to the scene, but the question did arise as to whether the College was justified in discriminatingly selecting its personnel, and what restrictions must be laid upon them even if they did not have to swear the oath, or confess the creed of Christian faith as required of pastors of the Lutheran Church before they are ordained. The atmosphere was religious enough, though, in that the Bethany teachers

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<sup>7</sup>Alba Malm, Lindsborg, personal interview with the author, June 18, 1965. The liberal individual invited to Lindsborg was her father, G. N. Malm.

were inducted into their duties by a religious service<sup>8</sup> and the offer to a teacher of a position on the faculty was referred to as the "call."<sup>9</sup>

It was during the Pihlblad administration that the Committee Report on the Revision of Standards of the North Central Association, whose accreditation Bethany longed for and cherished so deeply, stated:

Since society permits and encourages certain groups such as religious organizations to found colleges that are intended to render service to a particular group, it is permissible and right for the sponsors of such colleges to define appropriate limitations on instructional freedom.<sup>10</sup>

The guardian and promoter of academic freedom, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), basically agrees with the above limitation. It specified: "Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment."<sup>11</sup> Academic freedom did not exist in church colleges, especially in their early years, except with the above limitation. But normally the teacher was screened before he was hired, so that the possibility of him over-stepping his academic freedom was decreased. For example, President Pihlblad made it clear that he investigated as carefully as possible the religious background of each prospective teacher.<sup>12</sup> This has definitely been an issue at

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<sup>8</sup>Pihlblad, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1938, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>11</sup>"Academic Freedom and Tenure: 1940 Statement on Principles," AAUP Bulletin, XLIX (June, 1963), p. 193.

<sup>12</sup>Pihlblad, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1938, p. 33.

Bethany--must all the teachers be Christian, and more particularly, Lutheran? Must they propagate the faith? Most often the conflict was simply between conservatives and liberals who were both within the Christian framework. But there were those who liked to exercise academic freedom in a way critical of Christianity itself. For example, during the debates on the predicament of modern man,<sup>13</sup> a teacher offered this story with which he was sympathetic: There was an artist who said he was looking for beauty, a mathematician who said he sought truth, a theologian who said he was searching for God. When these three individuals got together, they discovered that they were all looking for the same thing. The moral was that all religions and honest pursuits end with the same ultimate. This attitude was similar to that expressed by an influential student: There are different ways to nirvana. Furthermore, he stated, pragmatically: God exists if you believe he does.

There was the philosophy teacher who was also committed to a free pursuit of knowledge. In his first chapel talk he read from Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra, including the "God is dead" passage.<sup>14</sup> The "God is dead" movement did not strike the popular press until 1966. It was said that this teacher, as would not be too unusual for a philosophy teacher at a church school, noticed a slight restriction on academic freedom. Generally, teachers and students expressed their opinions, though sometimes confidentially if the views were not orthodox.

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<sup>13</sup>This was the Senior Seminar, spring, 1959, attended by the author, a 1959 graduate of Bethany. Other examples of teachers and students who were not afraid of expressing unorthodox views could be given.

<sup>14</sup>Attended by the author. The philosophy teacher was Robert Heffley.

In the following analysis of the presidents' views on academic freedom, a key statement from Bethany's Christian tradition should be kept in mind. Paraphrased by Dr. Pihlblad in 1926, the statement was first made by a high school teacher who was a member of a seminar taught by Dr. Pihlblad.

You can teach no subject without danger to faith, if the personality of the teacher is wrong; you can teach any subject with impunity, if the personality of the teacher is right.<sup>15</sup>

The advocates of this statement apparently believed that certain areas of knowledge are touchy, if not dangerous, especially to immature minds. This is a restrictive attitude towards academic freedom and a disparaging view of the students' rationality.

Edward James Nelander

For President Edward J. Nelander, education

creates an openness of mind and heart . . . fosters an intelligent and strong Christian faith. It is one of the wide-spread fallacies of the age that learning begets infidelity. Out upon such a belief! Should a study of the works of God cause estrangement from the Creator?<sup>16</sup>

From this rare statement of Nelander, one could draw the conclusion that the first president of Bethany was not afraid to follow the truth, for honest pursuit would not lead one astray. It will be seen that Nelander was no more reluctant to allow academic freedom than were his successors.

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<sup>15</sup>Pihlblad, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1926, p. 37.

<sup>16</sup>Nelander, "Remarks," Commencement (Bethany, 1891), p. 50.

Carl Aaron Swensson and the Open View

Bethany's illustrious founder believed thoroughly in John 14:6 (Christ being the truth), but this did not make him bigoted, narrow-minded, or intolerant of other ways of thought. Swensson's constant theme was that the educated man is open-minded and tolerant, and the Christian may attain the status of an educated man even if he has a child-like faith. For example, Swensson said that "we dare not be one-sided."<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, "Bigotry and narrow-mindedness of every kind belong to the times of the old covenant."<sup>18</sup> Later on, Swensson wrote, "Be broad. You cannot afford to be narrow."<sup>19</sup>

At the same time that Swensson asked for broadmindedness, he pleaded for a return to a "beautiful, child-like simplicity of faith and assurance."<sup>20</sup> These traits were eulogized by President Swensson's daughter, Annie T. Swensson. She wrote that there was nothing narrow or bigoted about him; he was a man with an "implicit, childlike faith in God and his fellowmen." Furthermore:

He was often criticized for being too liberal. Perhaps he was for his time, but I think his critics confused progress and liberalism. He was progressive and ahead of his time. But he was fearless and always the true, sincere Christian, working for his Master and the Kingdom of God.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Swensson, "The Humility of True Knowledge."

<sup>18</sup>Swensson, "Address at the Dedication of the New Building," p. 5.

<sup>19</sup>Swensson, "Does It Pay to Go to College?" Forget-Me-Not, p. 79.

<sup>20</sup>Swensson, "Gustavus Adolphus," The Lutheran Observer, Dec. 7, 1894, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup>Annie T. Swensson, Thousand Oaks, California, letter to the author, May 25, 1965.

In his sermon on humility, Swensson showed a slight anti-intellectual, fundamentalistic bent. After surveying the world of philosophy with insightful criticism, he belittled, "All philosophy ends with: 'I do not know, how can I know?' What is after all knowable, what can be proven by a truly philosophical argument?" On the other hand, Swensson advocated Christ as the truth, for believing in Him we have no need to fear nor doubt in these philosophical realms.<sup>22</sup>

Swensson saw no conflict in true science and religion. This was given as the reason for absence of controversy over the teaching of science and religion during his administration. Dr. Emil Deere, long-time teacher of science at Bethany and an admirer of Swensson, said that there was no eruption over evolution during the Swensson era, and Swensson himself had no strong opinions on the issue.<sup>23</sup>

Liberally, Swensson criticized the seminaries for lacking something to be desired--independent study with its incentive and stimulation. Furthermore, stated Swensson, there was too much suspicion of the doctrinal soundness of the universities on the part of the seminary of the church. Thus, although Swensson was conservative in politics and religion--and aggressive, boyish, and deficient in tact, reason, and consideration, especially in his newspapers--his educational philosophy did merit praise.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Swensson, "The Humility of True Knowledge."

<sup>23</sup>Emil Deere, personal interview with the author, Lindsborg, May 28, 1965.

<sup>24</sup>George M. Stephenson, The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932), p. 384.

There were other liberal aspects to Carl Swensson's philosophy, such as his advocacy of anti-trust legislation<sup>25</sup> and his desire for savings banks where the workers' money was backed by the government,<sup>26</sup> but education was where he was the most liberal and made his greatest contribution. He did not want to stifle the free academic atmosphere of inquiry, but as an orthodox Christian he gave due place to Christ as the source of truth and inspiration of all true learning. His motto and that of the College could have been, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalms 111:10).

There were a few statements to tally on the negative side of the ledger, however, as far as Swensson's commitment to free inquiry and education wherever-it-may-lead philosophy was concerned. For example, there is a word about Christian higher education opening up all nature to see nature's God. This does not necessarily indicate narrow-mindedness, but the next sentence could be taken as an encroachment on academic freedom. It is that this Christian education produces "correct thinking along God-given lines."<sup>27</sup> This may be remindful of certain totalitarian systems.

President Swensson may be considered an ardent supporter of the fallacious appeal to authority. He constantly claimed that because the Bible, the Constitution, or the church creeds asserted something, it was categorically true. He said that "we need creeds; they are the

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<sup>25</sup>Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, p. 138.

<sup>26</sup>Swensson, Again in Sweden, p. 532.

<sup>27</sup>Swensson, "The Value of Higher Christian Education," p. 28.



exponents of God's presence in the history of the Church and of its own growth, development and conception of revealed truth."<sup>28</sup> It may be argued on this point that Swensson not only believed in adhering to a set of beliefs simply because they were set down by some authorities, but that he was no man of the scientific spirit when it came to receiving or gaining new knowledge. He acted as though knowledge comes to the individual on wings from above rather than by the careful analytical investigation of the scientist. Before too much criticism is leveled at Swensson for his appeal to the authority of creeds, however, the quote should be completed: "A man without creeds and confessions is at best a child, a new beginner."<sup>29</sup> When a creed is professed because it gives a certain substance of belief which the individual can stand upon, it may be a sign that he is practical and uses devices which free his mind for delving into the more important areas of thought and for pushing back the frontiers of knowledge. But, on the other hand, if Swensson used creeds because he believed that they were infallible and that they were true for all time and all places, then he was academically limited. As the liberal would say, education is a process leading out, and if one is to be really educated, he must be ready to abandon old beliefs when they become untenable; he must keep an open mind and not adhere to any idols of man's systems of belief.

Swensson was a confirmed Lutheran, and in describing the beliefs of his church, he quite naturally praised the conservatism of his

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<sup>28</sup>Swensson, "Gustavus Adolphus," The Lutheran Observer, Dec. 7, 1894, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

spiritual home. Here again is the paradox: The man was called liberal by his daughter and others, but at the same time he praised the conservatism of the church whose faith he desired to propagate by founding Bethany. The church is also an agency of reform, claimed Swensson, and so was he. Swensson was a reformer at least in that he was an admirer and personal friend of the Progressive, Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>30</sup> In praising the conservatism of the Lutheran Church, Swensson rejoiced in how it followed the Word of God as the supreme and only infallible rule of life and doctrine.<sup>31</sup> Later, in a speech about the Swedes in general rather than about his hero-king Gustavus Adolphus in particular, Swensson announced again that the Bible is singularly infallible, and that the Swedish Lutherans thankfully put the Bible above the Confessions.<sup>32</sup> In his devotional book, Swensson elaborated on his insistence that the Bible was the sole authority.<sup>33</sup>

The Bethany College Catalog description of the Christianity courses indicates the stress on the Bible during Swensson's administration. But again, such emphasis was typical for that time.

The courses in this study, including Catechism, Sacred History, Dogmatics, and Church History, extend through all

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<sup>30</sup>President Roosevelt stopped in Lindsborg during his campaign in 1904, and the first telegram of congratulations he received for his nomination was from Carl Swensson (Annie T. Swensson to the author, May 25, 1965).

<sup>31</sup>Swensson, Lutheran Observer, Dec. 7, 1894, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup>Carl A. Swensson, "The Swedes in America" (a lecture delivered in Chautauqua, New York, Aug. 2, 1888), Lindsborg News Record, Aug. 17, 1888, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup>Carl A. Swensson, In the Morning Hour (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1927), p. 11.

the classes, twice a week. The Bible, the common foundation of all Christian religion, is considered as the only true and absolute Rule of Faith, and we deem it of the greatest importance, that The Book itself be attentively studied.<sup>34</sup>

In his appeal to faith and the Christian outlook on life, Rev. Swensson naturally admonished, "Believe." He was liberal and a reader of St. John<sup>35</sup> in this instance, though, in that he asked men to believe in man, then the next step to believe in God would be an easy one. But then he went on to use God as a sentimental resource: "With God to fall back on, as your chief business-partner, your trusted, loving friend, failure and disappointment are next to impossible."<sup>36</sup>

Swensson was relatively humanistic and optimistic about the potentialities of man. He was no existentialist, however, who would say that man is all there is and man must create, act, decide for himself in this lonely and despairing world; nor was he a scientist who would say that you are responsible for your own experiments. Nevertheless, Swensson was a strong man even though he said that we should believe in God so that we have something to "fall back on." He was a giant in stature and spirit, as his eulogizers so thoroughly document.<sup>37</sup> It took no small measure of faith to found a college on the plains of Kansas

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<sup>34</sup>Bethany College Catalog: 1890-1891, p. 20.

<sup>35</sup>I John 4:20 (How can a man love God if he does not love his brother first?)

<sup>36</sup>Swensson, "The President's Charge to the Graduates," Commencement (Bethany, 1891), p. 46.

<sup>37</sup>In Memoriam. Dr. Carl Swensson, Special issue, Bethany Messenger, March, 1904. Dr. Swensson was also eulogized at Annie T. Swensson's funeral, Lindsborg, June 25, 1966.

with only "fifteen cents" in his pocket. A man of lesser stature could not have been successful in such an educational venture; a man who did not believe in education and opening the minds of his parishioners would not found an institution of higher learning. Swensson, then, was no anti-intellectual in one American sense<sup>38</sup> even though he was an orthodox Christian, believing in a closed system of doctrines set forth by his forbears. The fundamentalists have been accused of being anti-intellectual. In fact the case has been made that Christianity and the Bible belittle human knowledge. But praise must be given to Swensson that his faith was not so narrow that he looked with distrust at higher learning. He simply believed in learning that would do the most good for humanity, and he believed that this was Christian education.

Swensson was praised as a man who lived and loved "evolution, progress, and action."<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, "He had faith in the capacity of man to grow, to become better, and to make progress."<sup>40</sup> For his day and for the Swedish Lutherans, Swensson was not very conservative in his philosophy of education and in certain futuristic ideas. He prophesied an invention which would bring instant transformation of sound into print.<sup>41</sup> More euthenically than technically, he believed that man would eventually control his environment so that he could improve the quality

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<sup>38</sup>E. g., Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

<sup>39</sup>C. A. Malm, "Lest We Forget," Lindsborg News Record, Feb. 11, 1926, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup>C. F. Carlbert, "Dr. Carl Swensson," In Memoriam, p. 143.

<sup>41</sup>Swensson, Again in Sweden, p. 13.

of civilization.<sup>42</sup> Swensson definitely believed in progress, and was not adverse to using the unpopular word "evolution"<sup>43</sup> in at least the sense that there is development in a definite direction.

As to faith in Christ and God, Swensson wrote that it does not do much good to philosophize about its value. After all, noted the pastor college president, we are all lost, and if we do not take hold of the hand of God, we will surely go down in the annals of history as opposed to the trend of events. There is no time to philosophize about the various merits of faith when we are in this situation. It seems that Swensson's faith had its irrational elements: It is not our prerogative to question why but simply to accept, since our feeble minds are not capable of fathoming the profundities of this existence.<sup>44</sup> Swensson wrote that faith is a simple thing. In the Bible we read of faith not in complex philosophic terms, but as child-like belief. Therefore, why must we consider faith such a complex thing that in our speculations and philosophizing we too often scare away the would-be believer?<sup>45</sup> This point of view shows a slight aversion to the truly philosophic, but for his day and church, it was not narrow. The text for the following day's devotional, however, is "I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24),<sup>46</sup> which is not a spirit of free thinking.

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<sup>42</sup>Emil Deere, personal interview with the author, Lindsborg, May 28, 1965.

<sup>43</sup>Swensson, "Regularity," Lindsborg News Record, June 3, 1904, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup>Swensson, In the Morning Hour, p. 27.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

Ernst Pihlblad, Science, and Religion

Dr. Ernst Pihlblad was also a great preacher and educator, as was his noted predecessor, even though he was a bit more meek and mild. He was not so sure and egotistical that he was, like Swensson, a "bull in a china shop," willing to take on all comers to the point of being boorish and snobbish. Pihlblad was softer spoken; he was not so prone to antagonize anyone though he was harsh in classroom discipline and a terror for any student who did not know his lesson.<sup>47</sup> In the essence of his words, he was just as strong as Swensson for a Christian education and an extirpation of all heresies. For Pihlblad there was no middle ground between Christ and godlessness.

Either accept Christ or wander off into the wastes of agnosticism, which must eventually bring about our personal undoing and the disintegration of society with the extinction of its most cherished ideals.<sup>48</sup>

The question of religion was settled in the mind of Rev. Pihlblad. He was not receptive to the idea of allowing any skeptic to parade his wares before the formative minds of his students. In a presidential report, Pihlblad quoted a Dr. William Smyser as saying that we need to maintain a positive Christian influence which will fight the cynicism and skepticism of our day, its materialism, worldliness, love of pleasure, Nietzschean denials and revolts.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Emil Deere, personal interview with the author, May 13, 1965.

<sup>48</sup>Ernst Pihlblad, "Yokes of Wood and Iron," a baccalaureate sermon, June 1, 1919, p. 16, notes, Bethany Archives.

<sup>49</sup>Pihlblad, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1939, p. 31.

President Pihlblad asked the students to "take upon you the yoke of Christ as your best protection against the foes that are seeking your enslavement."<sup>50</sup> He believed that there is greater freedom when one takes upon himself the fixed system of belief or commitment to a cause.

Liberal thinking on science occurred during the administration of President Pihlblad. It may be deduced that Pihlblad did not confine his science teachers to the teaching of the truth from what he considered to be his Christian point of view. Bethany, then, was not as Wheaton College and others remained until at least into the early 1950's-- strictly anti-evolution. Bethany College had an open-minded atmosphere in the area of science and religion, and the credit must be given to the open and democratic administration of Pihlblad as well as to the controlling Augustana Synod of the Lutheran Church. This does not mean that President Pihlblad was as permissive in the teaching of political and religious views as he was in science. He would not allow a "Red" to be on the faculty,<sup>51</sup> and he was extremely particular when it came to hiring a Christianity teacher. He did not go for the modernists.

President Pihlblad observed that there has obviously been a dispute between science and religion, but this is because both sides have been at fault; they have over-stepped their bounds. "Theology has not always been Christianity. . . . Nor is scientific opinion pure science."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Pihlblad, "Yokes of Wood and Iron," p. 20.

<sup>51</sup>Emil Deere, personal interview with the author, July 29, 1965.

<sup>52</sup>Ernst Pihlblad, "Is Our Civilization Christian?" (Talk over KMBC, Kansas City, April 21, 1940; copy in president's office), p. 1.

This may be a neat way of evading the issue and avoiding commitment to either side, but it was a diplomatic maneuver; Pihlblad was tactful enough to win and keep more disciples. He continued, "Christianity and science are not in conflict. The attempt to learn, to find out, and to apply knowledge is inherent in the very Christian spirit."<sup>53</sup> True, some advocates of Christianity have not always been in the avant-garde of learning, advocating the latest ideas on the frontiers of knowledge, but this does not detract from Pihlblad's religious basis for seeking true knowledge. In fact he may have taken an approach to learning about God's creation which the Puritans of New England advocated--that it was up to the Christian to find out all he could about the marvelous works of God.

Pihlblad was not only favorable to true science, but he gave credit to Christianity for being responsible for the rise of science. In one presidential report, however, Pihlblad was not quite so favorable toward certain aspects of science. This was before he made the more favorable comments, which is paradoxical, because in other respects Pihlblad became more conservative as he grew older. In the report, Pihlblad quoted Darrow as saying: "I view death neither with fear nor pleasant anticipation. I have arrived at the conviction that there is no hereafter." Then Pihlblad added: "That utterance is the logical conclusion of the materialistic thinking so widely prevalent in the world today."<sup>54</sup> President Pihlblad was obviously keeping up his

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Pihlblad, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1935, p. 29.



predecessor's fight against "materialism." Pihlblad then lamented that the much-lauded and frequently misunderstood scientific point of view with its overemphasis on matter and blind force had caused men to cast out God, the soul, and eternity.<sup>55</sup> Two points, one for science and the other against, are evident in the preceding preachment. One is that science overemphasizes materialism, that is, matter in motion by blind force. The other is that science itself is often misunderstood. The former statement is definitely against the materialism of the scientific view as so often understood or misunderstood, but the latter could be said to favor true science in that Pihlblad recognized that true science is often misunderstood.

The conflict of science versus religion has been central in the history of the church and university.<sup>56</sup> All through the ages there has been a "travail of religious liberty"<sup>57</sup> and an antagonism between the two modes of thought. As will be documented further in the following discussion of Professor Deere and evolution, it is a credit to Bethany and especially President Pihlblad that this conflict has not been evident in Bethany's religious-intellectual history. This was because although Bethany has always been officially orthodox and evangelical, at the same time it has not officially taken the side of the fundamentalists in the science-religion debate.

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Bertrand Russell, Religion and Science (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961).

<sup>57</sup>Roland H. Bainton, The Travail of Religious Liberty (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).

### Professor Emil Deere and Evolution

During the Pihlblad years there could have been an academic freedom struggle over evolution. These were the years when the conflict between science and religion came to a head in Tennessee. The year of the Scopes or Monkey Trial came about the midpoint of President Pihlblad's long administration. To trace the science-religion issue and teaching of evolution at Bethany, it is appropriate to begin with the first science teacher of the College. Rev. Carl A. Swensson, then pastor of the Bethany Lutheran Church, selected a young graduate from Augustana College to become the first faculty of Bethany Academy which became Bethany College. This was J. A. Udden, who was to become nationally known as a scientist and was instrumental in discovering the value of the Texas oil fields. A better science department, or entire faculty, except for the Christianity classes which Rev. Swensson taught, would have been hard to find.

Because Professor Udden became a celebrated scientist, this did not mean that he was on the side of science against religion. There were eminent scientists of Udden's generation, such as Agassiz, who were strictly against evolution as long as they lived. There are lesser figures today<sup>58</sup> who put the teaching of evolution and science strictly in the camp of the atheists. However, it must not be assumed that the

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<sup>58</sup>Examples are Alfred Rehwinkel, who attributes to Noah's Flood the work of glaciers and geological ages, The Flood in the Light of the Bible, Geology, and Archaeology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951) and Henry Morris, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, head of the Civil Engineering who, from the scientist's perspective, demolishes "evolution," reviewed in "Current Religious Thought," Christianity Today, VIII (Sept. 25, 1964), p. 62.

atmosphere at Bethany College was adverse to science. The longest-lived teacher of Bethany, Dr. Emil Deere, was a man of science who received his training under Professor Arvid Walin, a student of J. A. Udden. He was wholly in sympathy with the cause of evolution and science, though not uncritically or obnoxiously so. He would not alienate the minds of those innocents who did not think that a day necessarily meant a period of time and not only twenty-four hours as we know them on earth. His views were such that once a girl was pleasantly surprised to find that the expounder of science and evolution did not have long hair and a tail like his arboreal forbears.<sup>59</sup>

The science teacher during the Pihlblad era, Dr. Emil Deere, was a scientist par excellence. To him, the scientist was not a blind follower of materialism. Instead of a "cold-hearted, fact-finding, materialistic being," the scientist was a "sensitive" person, "responsive to harmony and beauty." To Professor Deere, the scientist certainly had nothing against moral values; he was at worst neutral, for science was an objective method of seeking the truth. Neither was the world of science capricious, since "every result has a cause; every action has a reaction."<sup>60</sup>

From the preceding address, it can be seen that the chief scientist during the Pihlblad years liked to label himself as a scientist.

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<sup>59</sup>Emil Deere, to the author, May 13, 1965, indicating not only his sympathy with evolution, but also his good sense of humor even during the last year (1965) of his life.

<sup>60</sup>Emil Deere, "Crowding and Its Effect on Organisms" (President's Address to the Kansas Academy of Science), Kansas Academy of Science, Transactions, XLIV (1941), p. 29.

On an earlier occasion, at the Bethany Christian Brotherhood, Dr. Deere said that church and science do not conflict. He went on to elaborate liberal ideas and optimism that man could achieve universal brotherhood and peace, and he hoped for total eradication of stubborn opposition, intolerance, and prejudice.<sup>61</sup>

Dr. Deere also said that man has definite potentialities for improving his lot. Man is like a gardener; God put man in this world, and if he wishes to play the role of gardener to clean up and improve the place in which he lives, more power to him. He will in effect be lifting himself by his own bootstraps. Before man appeared on the scene it was God alone, but now with a flourishing garden instead of a jungle of weeds, it is God with my help.<sup>62</sup>

President Pihlblad did not speak on evolution in a way which would reveal more of his views on the subject, and there was virtually no comment in the school paper on the great debate between science and religion. But there was a program of the Linnean Society, celebrating the 100 year anniversary of the birth of Darwin. This program indicated the beliefs of Professor Deere.

Mr. Deere, under "Darwinism of Today," endeavored to show that many of the theories so conclusively expounded by Darwin are being substantiated daily by discoveries and researches in biographical sciences. In this he was entirely successful. . . . Professor Deere showed that the great opposition to Darwin comes mostly from those who are not thoroughly familiar with his writings, but who attribute to Darwin many of the extreme principles expounded by his immediate followers.

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<sup>61</sup>"Church and Science Do Not Conflict Says Professor Deere," Messenger, Oct. 26, 1923, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup>Emil Deere, personal interview with the author, May 13, 1965.

Although there is the statement that Darwinism is a "dead issue"; and that Darwinism has been disproven by modern biologists, Mr. Deere proved that the majority of these statements are incorrect. Except in a few conclusions which Darwin himself repudiated, his works are now more generally accepted than ever before.<sup>63</sup>

At the same meeting of the Linnean Society, Professor Walin showed that not only was biological science completely revised, but every other branch of science was also affected by this wonderful naturalist, Darwin, and Darwinism did not conflict with religion to the degree generally believed.<sup>64</sup> Thus we see that at least the science department was steeped in the true spirit of science and Darwinism. The Bethany teachers were exultant in the virtues and applications of Darwinism to all sciences.

The question could justly be asked, "Why, then, was it that there were students who graduated from Bethany during Dr. Deere's years at Bethany, and students who even belonged to the Linnean Society, but who nevertheless acted as though science should be equated with materialism and atheism, and that Darwin should be deported to the lowest level of Inferno along with the other infidels and underminers of the faith of young believers?" An answer may be that the church and family can be more influential in the forming of attitudes than the college in causing the student to reject old worn out ideas and to adopt new ones. As Wheeler put it, the College had trouble when the theory of evolution was brought up in classes. This problem of looking at education with

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<sup>63</sup>"Darwin Centennial Program," Messenger, Feb. 19, 1909, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

a jaundiced eye was inherent in the puritanism of Lindsborg.<sup>65</sup> Organizations and individuals antagonistic toward evolutionists, such as Dr. Deere, were more influential for some students than the professor and laboratory. A church conference, the Radiant Life Conference, held at Bethany in 1929, may have been more of an education than the science lectures. At this conference the most fundamentalistic position against science was expressed to the youth of the church by ministers of the Lutheran Church.<sup>66</sup> Such a conference may have retarded the dialogue between science and religion because "man is basically conservative," and once young supple minds are inculcated with doctrinaire beliefs, it may take an extremely open mind to be willing to accept a different view at a later date.

The conclusion can be drawn that the presidents of Bethany and the science department, especially Professor Deere, were not against the open pursuit of knowledge, but there were some students who followed a less learned approach, putting faith and the old-time religion over science and evolution.

#### Emory K. Lindquist

Dr. Emory K. Lindquist, historian, philosopher, educator, made it his profession to pursue the truth. He was not afraid to allow a free exchange on the open marketplace of ideas. As he described the dilemma of academic freedom at a church college:

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<sup>65</sup>Wheeler, "An Analysis of Social Change," p. 119.

<sup>66</sup>E. g., Frank Carlson, in "Youth's Perplexities," Conference Echo, Carl Segerhammar, ed., p. 106, took the side of William Jennings Bryan in the science-religion dispute; and, p. 107, presented a literal interpretation of miracles.

Aspects of Christian life on a college campus postulate interesting and important problems. There is always the possibility of a certain type of indoctrination, or of an attempt to place before students the challenge of a reasonable view of life and destiny as set forth in basic elements of Christian doctrine and the Word of God. It must be remembered that one of the tenets of liberal education is to induce students to make intelligent choices based upon valid authority and experience, and the church college is uniquely qualified to do so as students are confronted with the truths of Holy Writ and with the testimony of Christian experience. A wide range of understanding is possible within the liberating boundaries of the Christian view of man.<sup>67</sup>

Lindquist's statement was not explicit as to the proper balance between the authority of tried traditions and willingness to allow the student to follow the truth wherever it might lead, but he did make clear that he believed there was room for a wide range of understanding in Christianity and that the Christian view of man was one with liberating boundaries. The view of the Christian scholar should be a wide one not only because he is committed to objective pursuit of truth, but because the experience of Christianity itself should be a liberating one, freeing man from all the biases and ethnocentricities of a lesser religion. Lindquist believed that the Christian Church had the greatest claim upon the allegiance of mankind for the building of a new world because it had a system of ethics and morals, a universal basis, and an international membership.<sup>68</sup>

President Lindquist advocated academic freedom which was based upon Christian character and good judgment. Since the atmosphere and

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<sup>67</sup>Lindquist, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1946, p. 42.

<sup>68</sup>Lindquist, "Thoughts from Chapel," Messenger, April 6, 1943, p. 3.

teachers may be more effectively administered there, a Christian college should be able to build Christian character better than a large state school. And because the teachers in a Christian college were called to teach in a way which would "expand the rich legacy of the past, 'perpetually rediscovered and renewed,' and to help keep the Church on the line of discovery for greater service to man and to God,"<sup>69</sup> they are inherently bound by certain commitments which are best self-imposed. In this sense there is not as much academic freedom at a church college as at a state university.

Lindquist was a symbol of a new open spirit at Bethany. He did not enter the presidency by the standard route. The College constitution had to be changed to allow him officially to become president since he was a layman and not a minister as the constitution required. The church was not going to bypass a Rhodes scholar who stepped in as acting president when President Pihlblad was injured in an automobile accident. Although Lindquist was a Democrat and more liberal on academic freedom than his predecessors, he may have compensated for this area of potential friction with his traditionally Republican and conservative Swedes by his vibrant evangelical propagation of the gospel and by his enthusiastic and competent spiritual leadership of Bethany.

#### Robert Mortvedt, the Constitution, and Academic Freedom

Another step away from a sectarian policy was taken during the administration of Lindquist's successor, President Robert Mortvedt.

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<sup>69</sup>Lindquist, "Three Contexts of Christian Education."



A change was made in the College constitution, revising section one of article five from, "No person shall be elected as permanent professor unless he is a member of the Lutheran Church" to, "To obtain the status of permanent tenure on the Bethany College faculty, an instructor (one who teaches) must fulfill the conditions prescribed by the Board of Directors of the college."<sup>70</sup>

A second constitutional change the same year was that the board of directors was allowed to have as many as four non-Lutherans as members. These changes were made because it was evident that there was a discrepancy between the constitution and actuality; several teachers and many students were not Lutherans.<sup>71</sup> After 1930, about half of Bethany's students were Lutheran,<sup>72</sup> whereas in early years nearly all of them were members of the church which tried to support the College financially.

Although he was not a minister, Mortvedt used the language of the church. He constantly sought "divine guidance" for Bethany, and he believed that "God still reveals His will to those who seek to know it." However, despite Mortvedt's theological terminology, emphasis on faith, and elevation of the spiritual aspect of man above the intellectual, he stressed that Bethany must always seek to be "open-minded and

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<sup>70</sup>Mortvedt, "President's Report," Kansas Conference Minutes, 1955, p. 59.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Andeen, "Trends in Higher Education in the Augustana Lutheran Church," p. 121.

self-critical."<sup>73</sup> This was the same position which was espoused by Swensson, but Mortvedt was not as forceful in his preachments.

Quoting Howard Lowry, college president and author of The Mind's Adventure: Religion and Higher Education, cited by Dr. Andeen, Dr. Mortvedt lamented the rise of secularism and rampant humanism that say life is only an affair of nature, man, and society.<sup>74</sup> Yet, although Mortvedt disliked the secular humanists, as was becoming a church college mentor, he did not shy away from intellectual pursuit wherever it might lead. He claimed that the Christian college is scholarly and that it accepts the whole world of learning for investigation.<sup>75</sup> But on the other hand, he believed that the church college must be careful to choose thoroughly dedicated Christian teachers if it is to not only have a religious program but also be a religious program.<sup>76</sup> Mortvedt recognized that by virtue of a Christian college's commitment, it had a certain orientation, but this did not limit it intellectually.

#### L. Dale Lund

It has been pointed out that President Lund put himself in the same category as Professor Heffley, who was accused of being "hopelessly liberal."<sup>77</sup> But, as reported from his talk to the senior seminar on the

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<sup>73</sup>Mortvedt, "From the President's Desk," Messenger, May 20, 1955, p. 2.

<sup>74</sup>Mortvedt, "Mission Fields in the Continent of Learning," p. 3.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>77</sup>Supra, p. 13. Robert Heffley was a professor of philosophy at Bethany from 1959 to 1966. He was noted as a liberal.

predicament of modern man, Lund was no advocate of the "antiquated liberalism" of the early twentieth century theologians. Instead, he was orthodox Lutheran and did not bemoan the passing of the Social Gospel. He was optimistic about the inevitable triumph of good, but this was none of man's own doing; it was by the hand and will of an omnipotent God.<sup>78</sup>

President Lund was no liberal of the Deere variety, nor was he even as optimistic about the inevitable progress of man as was Swensson. There was, however, an exuberant optimism in Lund, the modern-day Lutheran. This may have been due to his theological training: a doctorate. He recognized the quick-sands of man accumulating so many merits and so much hubris that he would ascend into heaven under the locomotion of his own ballooning pride. It may be, then, that Lund was as liberal as any of his predecessors, but he had the orthodox custom of placing all the merit on a transcendent Being and leaving the coming of the Kingdom of God up to the eschatological workings of the Omnipotent. This type of optimism places the arrival of heaven on earth up to God, not upon the work of mortal man.

Lund was open-minded and humble about his Christianity. He recognized in a liberal vein that "we must speak to today's people, answering today's questions in today's language."<sup>79</sup> He explained his concept of the church college:

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<sup>78</sup>"Lund Opens Last Session of Seminar," Messenger, Feb. 6, 1959, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup>"Excerpts from the President's Report to Synod," The Central States Lutheran, June, 1965, p. 3.

Contrary to recent impolite and misspelled inscriptions on the steps of Old Main, colleges like Bethany do not prohibit free thought. They are, ultimately and when properly run, the only institutions which allow it. Any kind of thinking, be it free or disciplined, is believed contributory to the friction of intellects which lights the torch of truth.<sup>80</sup>

In this instance, Lund was academically liberal in that he advocated free thinking, but he might have been a bit subjective in averring that only the church colleges can achieve this ideal. He was not of the same mind as John Stuart Mill or Bertrand Russell who are "free thinkers." As stated by a commission on higher education, the Christian college interprets the Christian faith as a total allegiance,<sup>81</sup> but at the same time "the Christian faith shares with the classic tradition a belief in the primacy of truth and accepts the obligation to seek truth wherever it may be found and proclaim it with integrity."<sup>82</sup> Lund was not quite so strong in his statement as this, but that may simply be because he was more humble and open-minded. He said that the Christian faith is both a legitimate and true philosophy of life, and that all life and learning should be interpreted from this position, but with humility.<sup>83</sup> This use of a instead of the is reminiscent of the catalog statement of the purpose of Bethany during Lund's presidency:

Bethany considers the Christian faith to be the unifying factor of all knowledge and believes its special educational

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<sup>80</sup>"State of the College," Alumni News, April, 1963, p. 8.

<sup>81</sup>David B. Sageser, ed., What Is a Christian College? (New York: Commission on Higher Education of the National Council of Churches, 1958), p. 5.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>83</sup>"State of the College," Alumni News, April, 1963, p. 8.

mission to be the bringing of Christian insight to bear upon all human knowledge, philosophy and work. This special function is performed in an honest effort to show the Christian faith as an intellectually tenable option as well as humbly and thoughtfully to seek scholarly answers to new and baffling problems.<sup>84</sup>

In 1966 the last sentence of the catalog statement was changed to: "This special function is performed by showing that the Christian faith is intellectually tenable and by seeking scholarly answers to new problems."<sup>85</sup> The original statement of "the Christian faith as an intellectually tenable option" is liberally universalistic rather than exclusivistic. The first part of the statement is not as liberal as the latter, for it tends in the direction of postulating that Christian mathematics, chemistry, or physics would be different from secular teaching of the same courses. The manner of teaching might be more Christian depending on the teacher, but the critic would say that having a Christian mathematics or psychology tends toward a limitation of academic freedom. Compared to early catalog statements on the purpose of the College, the first part of the 1959 statement is evangelistic. Even though there is no plea for the Bible and the Constitution, the statement of purpose is evangelistic enough to agree with the founder of the College. Catalog statements did not change as much as the pronouncements of the presidents and the atmosphere of the College in general.

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<sup>84</sup>Bethany College Bulletin: 1959, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup>Bethany College Bulletin: 1966-67, p. 7.

Seeking to reconcile the dilemma of academic freedom in a Christian college, the question is: How can a truly open-minded seeker after the truth be both committed totally to a certain outlook and at the same time claim that he believes in no preconceived notions and favors no restrictions on the true scholar? An answer could be that since Christ is the truth, if one is both committed wholly to Him and pursues the truth wherever it may lead, he will always end up with Him, since by definition He is the truth (John 14:6).

It is true that Lund believed the scholar should pursue truth wherever it might lead and that Christ is the truth, but he nevertheless stated restrictively for academic freedom:

New knowledge can be destructive of tender and youthful faith. Exciting and impelling ideas can appear, on the surface, to contradict biblical faith, especially when taught by an eager and immature young instructor fresh out of graduate school who is more happy to shock his "naive" students than he is anxious to guide them. While the Christian college does not avoid discussing difficult ideas which are intrinsically disturbing to religious faith, it never handles such concepts as if faith were not more important than they are.<sup>86</sup>

Dr. G. Kenneth Andeen

Because Dr. Andeen just began his administration, it might be improper to comment on his beliefs even if he had written extensively on academic freedom. Neither can a few quotations do justice to a man's beliefs on an institution as important as a Christian college or on a concept so significant as academic freedom. Nevertheless, excerpts from Dr. Andeen's inaugural response might provide representative

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<sup>86</sup>L. Dale Lund, "Our Teaching Stewardship," The Lutheran Companion, Nov. 11, 1959, p. 13.

statements. "The task and purpose of Bethany College stated simply, is 'Bethany is a Christian community at study.'" As for the guidelines provided by a Christian college, Dr. Andeen said that students will continue "to probe deeply the meaning of life with direction given by One who is the truth and the life."<sup>87</sup> In an interview, Dr. Andeen stated that some students "are asking for personal liberties that have nothing to do with academic freedom."<sup>88</sup> But he was unequivocal about the essentiality and intellectuality of Christian higher education: Only in Christ is there complete freedom, and there is no problem of academic freedom at a church college.<sup>89</sup> Dr. Andeen was referring more to political than religious academic freedom and he was comparing the church college with the state university; nevertheless, as will be discussed later, he had a valid basis for his assertion.

#### Preacher and Teacher Opinion on the Faith Issue

Official opinion stated by teachers at Bethany and other persons concerned with the spiritual welfare of the church college affirms the legitimacy of pursuing truth wherever it may lead, but at the same time retaining an evangelical faith. At a convention in 1962, a Lutheran pastor said that although some teachers at Bethany had been criticized for instilling doubt or for questioning, this was acceptable. No one is perfect, but all of the Bethany teachers are devout Christians.

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<sup>87</sup>"Dr. Andeen Inaugurated in Colorful Ceremony," The Bethany Magazine, Fall, 1965, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup>Jack Kennedy, Wichita Eagle Education Writer, "Build on What's Here," The Bethany Magazine, Fall, 1965, inside front cover.

<sup>89</sup>G. Kenneth Andeen, Talk at the "B" Club Luncheon, Homecoming, Bethany College, Oct. 15, 1966, attended by the author.

They are not trying to undermine the faith of students. Faith is not a work but a gift of God, and it is a lively relationship. Faith is helped, not hindered, by careful biblical scholarship.<sup>90</sup>

The same question of faith arose during the year of teaching by Wilford Paul, philosophy professor, and former Congregational minister. He said that he was accused of arousing doubt in the minds of his students, but he could see no reason for such misunderstanding. For one thing, his chapel talks were dynamic, asking the student to take the leap of faith--somewhat in a Jamesian pragmatic "will to believe" sense, however. He said that he had never tried to inculcate doubt into the minds of his students. After all, he continued, who ever accomplished anything by not believing that it could be done?

This religious debate goes on at other colleges too. For example, the articulate conservative, William Buckley, in God and Man at Yale, decried the demise of God on the campus. Then there is Paul Tillich who, in Dynamics of Faith, further elucidated the problem of what or how to believe. For him, "faith is doubt."<sup>91</sup> If this is the case, the Bethany educators who instill much doubt and praise agnosticism are doing the will of God and are bringing more true faith and religion to the College than are the avowed indoctrinators.

The 1966 statement of purpose by the Department of Religion and Philosophy indicated a more academically or religiously free attitude,

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<sup>90</sup>"Overcoming Ignorance and Innocence" (a sermon delivered at the West Central Conference Convention, Lindsborg, 1962, no author given, Bethany Archives), p. 7.

<sup>91</sup>Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 22.



particularly on the part of the philosophy instructor. First, the several courses in religion are mentioned, without the underlining or emphasis on the Bible as in the early catalogs. Then the offerings in philosophy are described much as a non-church college might: "The philosophy department endeavors to teach the student the philosophy, ethics, and logic of other nations and cultures. This knowledge enables him to form his own beliefs and opinions."<sup>92</sup> Here was not indoctrination, but academic freedom.

#### Student Views on Liberal Academic-Religious Freedom

Not as much has been written and spoken about academic freedom as on whether Bethany was accomplishing its primary purpose of being a Christian institution. This was largely because Bethany's teachers have usually been orthodox enough so that they were not questioned as to whether they were fulfilling their calling as teachers at a church college. It seemed to be taken for granted that the teacher at Bethany would be Christian, but at the same time there was the attitude that "an unexamined faith is not worth living." As a general premise, it may be postulated that Bethany, as a Lutheran institution, placed more emphasis on education than on revivalism in awakening and nurturing Christian faith.<sup>93</sup> Chapel speakers who tried to Christianize the students were not popularly received. With typical Lutheran reserve, Bethany favored Christian education as did the Puritans, and did not sacrifice academic standards for religious fervor.

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<sup>92</sup>Bethanian: 1966 (Bethany College: Student Body, 1966), p. 59.

<sup>93</sup>Eklund, "Faith and Education," Centennial Essays, ed. Engberg, p. 79.

Both liberal and conservative beliefs were stated by students at Bethany. Some students felt that a cautious approach should be used by the teacher, while others felt that the teacher in college should be given practically free reign to teach from whatever perspective he chose.

On the free-thinking side, some of the best opinion was taken from other school papers. This opinion is not as valid for a representative view of Bethany student opinion, of course, as is an editorial written by a student of the College itself, but it shows that the editor was at least willing to publish the liberal opinion if he was not sympathetic to the borrowed editorial. The first of these borrowed-but-indicative editorials was from the Southwestern Collegian and appeared in 1924. The opinion was that if we mean "liberal" by the term "irreligious," this is fine, for truth is not confined to the narrow bounds of any creed. Truth is truth wherever it be found, and as such the modern college student is busily delving away, sifting the false from the true, and not blindly accepting things as they appear on the surface.<sup>94</sup> The author was not bound by any dogmas, but sought academic freedom. In the same issue of the Bethany Messenger, there was a report on a convention attended by several Bethany students. In this article the writer noted liberally:

The era of blind, unreasoning faith and emotionalism in regard to religion is slowly waning. It is being replaced by an age recognizing the right and duty of individual freedom and expression of thought and looking toward future progress and development.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>"Concerning Religion," Messenger, Feb. 23, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>95</sup>"Conventional Spirit," Messenger, Feb. 23, 1924, p. 2.

This article showed an open-minded attitude on the part of at least one student. One editorialized report, it is true, does not represent a consensus of student body opinion. But if there had been strong opposition to the writing, surely some vociferous student would have protested or commented in a letter to the editor. Although an editor wields the balance of power in a school paper, the climate of opinion of the student body and the administration is nevertheless reflected in that organ of the college.

In 1928 there was another liberal editorial, but again this most radical viewpoint was taken from another student paper. A plea was made for more radicalism and less acceptance of the status quo with all of its prejudices. Further:

Suppression of ideas and intolerance of viewpoints can have no part in a genuine search for truth. To assume that we cannot open-mindedly hear the presentation of the honest convictions of any man, whoever he may be, or whatever his views, is to deny our common humanity, or presuppose that we have found our Utopia, and fear that it cannot last.<sup>96</sup>

Here for the first time, even though the plea was not native to Bethany, was an advocacy of complete toleration of all viewpoints and the willingness, even desirability, for their propagation. This is analogous to John Stuart Mill's view that an idea is better expressed than not, even if it is wrong. This advocacy of teachers having any philosophical orientation was not the attitude of the administrators of Bethany nor of its board of directors.

Four years after the above borrowed editorial, a Bethany student divulged her opinion on how far criticism should go. The Messenger

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<sup>96</sup>"Utopia" (from the Union Daily), Messenger, Feb. 28, 1925, p. 2.

editor insisted that a college education should broaden the individual. One should be open-minded, but not to such an extent that one is critical in the destructive sense.<sup>97</sup> In a way, this editor took the position of Paul when he wrote to always be edifying, thinking of only those things which are pure, just, of good report (Philippians 4:8).

During the 1930's there were editorials of a political nature showing some liberalism,<sup>98</sup> and in the next decade a strong belief in a progressive evolution of man was expressed.<sup>99</sup> As for the open-minded view about education, in 1948 one student expressed the opinion that

One thing that can never be overemphasized in education is the necessity of seeing the other fellow's point of view. You who have a firm conviction can never even hope to convert your opponent unless you really understand why he believes as he does. Open-mindedness is not gullibility; it is not compromise. The world needs people who can face society in complete fairness and live lives consistent with the sense of values they profess.<sup>100</sup>

In the more secular political area of academic freedom there was an editor at the beginning of the "silent '50's" and the McCarthy era, who pleaded for academic freedom. He wrote in a liberal vein:

Now it may not seem so serious if teachers are asked not to affiliate with an organization which is dedicated to the purpose of overthrow of our present institutions. The dangerous thing is that such a policy is an attempt to limit the right to think and speak. If the right to believe in

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<sup>97</sup>Marie James, ed., "The Student--Too Critical?" Messenger, May 2, 1931, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup>E. g., Milton Christian, "Youth Is Radical," Messenger, Jan. 14, 1936, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup>Shirley Peterson, "Thought for the Morrow," Messenger, Dec. 18, 1945, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup>Norman Johnson, "Values," Messenger, Oct. 26, 1948, p. 2.

the Marxian concept of history is limited, why could not not also the right to be a Republican be limited? After all, there are no Republican love ties with the Democratic welfare state.<sup>101</sup>

This was among the most liberal opinion yet expressed in the Messenger. In a democratic tradition, the author did not praise the communists, but he nevertheless saw the wisdom of allowing them to express their opinion, especially in a college. Because of their financial difficulties and because of their attempt to provide a Christian atmosphere, church colleges have not provided the same platform for minority opinion speakers as have state universities. Bethany College had lecture series, but the speakers were not of any radical opinion or organization, though the trend was to widen the range of such programs and to substitute them for the regular chapel worship services.

At the beginning of the sixties there was another liberal plea to be broad-minded, to "break out of the bonds placed upon you by the stigma of narrowness."<sup>102</sup> And as indicated by the topic at the Bethany College Founder's Day Oratory Contest, the issue of faith and education was in the thinking of some of the students.<sup>103</sup> Recently, academic freedom itself has been discussed among the more perceptive students and teachers, but the issue as such did not make the school paper; the term "academic freedom" did not appear.

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<sup>101</sup>Paul Olson, "Freedom through Chains," Messenger, Oct. 28, 1950, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup>Carl Hansen and Ron Johnson, eds., "The Stigma of Narrowness," Messenger, Feb. 5, 1960, p. 2.

<sup>103</sup>"Faith and Education at Bethany," Messenger, Oct. 27, 1961, p. 1.

Evidently there was an inherent conflict in the thinking of students at the church college even though "academic freedom" itself was not discussed in the literature of the College. Part of the ambiguity of the relationship between faith and academic freedom at Bethany may be because "most church college campuses are evasive at the point that needs most clearly to be articulated--namely whether the Christian religion is true."<sup>104</sup>

Academic freedom at a church college is a dilemma to which only a tautological solution is offered in the answer that the Christian college can pursue truth wherever it may lead because by definition Christ is the truth. Otherwise the compromising admission has to be made that the church college actually has a double function. The one function of liberal education is common to all colleges. The second function is particular and paramount at the church college, and to fulfill its Christian commitment, a certain limitation must be placed on academic freedom.<sup>105</sup> Thus the church college is restricted, and "we know that if the life of the mind is to flourish, then it must be free."<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, the church college can defend itself with one of its authorities: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Moreover, it can be claimed, as did President Andeen, that there is no problem of academic freedom

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<sup>104</sup>Carl F. Henry, ed., "The Plight of the Church College," Christianity Today, IX (May 21, 1965), p. 19.

<sup>105</sup>Robert M. MacIver, director, Academic Freedom in Our Time (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 287.

<sup>106</sup>David Fellman, "The Association's Agenda," AAUP Bulletin, LII (June, 1966), p. 110.

at a church college. It stands to reason that the church college would have more academic freedom in the realm of political loyalty than the state university, for when the state controls the finances of an institution, it can more readily control the teaching. While it is true that, historically, Christian colleges have had less academic freedom than secular and public schools, there are those who say that it is time for a change.<sup>107</sup> Recent presidents of Bethany have not called for a change; they have simply, but unequivocally, stated that there is already academic freedom at Christian colleges. There is freedom in Christ. As put by the Christian Century writer, the Christian college should excel in academic freedom because it is independent and both the college and church support the college's goal of "the pursuit of truth in the company of friends."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Warren Bryan Martin, "Freedom and Restraint in the Christian College," Christian Century, LXXXIII (Nov. 9, 1966), p. 1372.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 1373.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

#### Trends at Bethany

Ever since the breaking of the medieval synthesis, the trend of the world has been from the sacred to the secular. Colleges have customarily taken the same route, and Bethany is no exception. This does not mean that it has cut its relationship with the church, but the general atmosphere is directed more toward this world than a future one. Religious organizations, such as the Missionary Society, YMCA, or presently the BSCM, no longer dominate the student's activities, and what religion is practiced is not so evangelical. Salvation is more of a social adjustment than a commitment to the only way, the unique truth, and the true life.

Along with the shift from a personal faith to more of a nominal Christianity was a demise of the pietism which characterized the community in which Bethany is located and to which it is closely related. No longer can or would the College advertise that it is situated in a town with no beer halls. Nor would the College care that it could no longer state that it is free from dancing. The latter "worldliness" has been promoted on the campus since 1955. Apparently the pietism of the founding fathers has vanished from the College which was founded partly to protect the youth from the "evils of the world."

Bethany has changed at about the same rate as the society which it reflects. But because the founder became such a mythological hero and his loyal successor served such a long term, Bethany conserved its



unique cultural origins, especially pietism, longer than some other colleges. This is not to claim that Bethany today has a more pietistic atmosphere than some other Kansas colleges; however, pietism was longer-lived in the Lutheran Church, representing Bethany, than might have been expected for such a confessional church. Reasons for the prolongation were (1) that the sectarians always attacked Lutherans as being lax on morality and so they tried to compensate for this deficiency; (2) the Lutherans are strong on belief in original sin, believing that man is weak, therefore there is a need to defend him from vice; and (3) man, especially in the Lutheran Church, seems to have a natural codifying tendency.<sup>1</sup>

Along with the decline of the more evangelical aspects of pietism was the trend from legalism to self-discipline. As students still complain, there are too many rules and regulations,<sup>2</sup> however, legalism was formerly much stronger. Not only was there a law that the students had to attend church on Sundays,<sup>3</sup> but the attitude on morals has changed from pristine discussion of "aesthetic culture"<sup>4</sup> to printing articles on the new morality<sup>5</sup> in which love is more important than law.

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<sup>1</sup>Emmer Engberg, "Augustana and Code Morality," Centennial Essays, ed. Engberg, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup>E. g., Russ Bellew, "Alma Pater, Etc.," Messenger, May 6, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>This was one of many such regulations stated in the Kansas Conference Minutes and cited by Elmer Nelson, "Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas. Its Early Background and Development" (unpublished M. A. thesis, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado, ca. 1946), p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>"Aesthetic Culture," Messenger, Feb., 1896, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>"The Morals Revolution on the U. S. Campus" (reprinted from Newsweek), Messenger, April 24, 1964, p. 3.

Sociological terminology that applies to an institution like Bethany is August Comte's observation that the trend has been from the "theological" to the "positive," Herbert Spencer's "incoherent homogeneity" to the "coherent heterogeneity," Max Weber's "traditional" to the "rational," Robert Redfield's "folk" to "urban" and David Riesman's "traditional direction" to "other direction."<sup>6</sup> The "folk" to "urban" analogy is illustrated by Swensson's belief that "the farmers live nearest to God and to heaven,"<sup>7</sup> contrasted with a teacher of the present generation who wrote, "and there is the myth of those who argue that a farmer who daily grubs in his own (albeit mortgaged) soil is more virtuous and egalitarian than a longshoreman."<sup>8</sup> Bethany was praised for its rural setting away from the "evils of the cities," whereas now the fact is recognized that one of the problems in raising adequate finances for the College is its location away from potential students and financial support. As for Wheeler's usage, he says that "change in Lindsborg is generally away from a communal-type social order in which local identity is important toward an associational-type social order which is embedded in the matrix of American society."<sup>9</sup>

Trends in the Augustana Lutheran Church, now a part of the Lutheran Church in America, that could be applied to Bethany include

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<sup>6</sup>Wheeler, "An Analysis of Social Change," pp. 19-20.

<sup>7</sup>Carl A. Swensson, "The Farmer's Boy, the Prince of the Twentieth Century," The Kansas Farmer, Jan. 25, 1900, p. 67.

<sup>8</sup>William E. Unrau, "Partisan Politics--Road or Gateway?" Bethany College Alumni News, June, 1964, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup>Wheeler, "An Analysis of Social Change," p. 1.

the change from isolation to integration. This observation could pertain not only to the associations of the College itself, but to the racial situation at Bethany as well.<sup>10</sup> The church has changed from separateness to corporateness. At first Bethany was independent and sectarian, whereas now it is a member of the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas, a six-college federation of church-related colleges. The church has changed from a one-man administration to a highly developed organization. At Bethany this trend was evidenced by the Swensson rule compared to the present well-oiled administrative and fund-raising machinery of the College. Finally, the church has changed from a second to a third-generation psychology if one accepts the idea that the second generation rejects and the third develops the particular traditions.<sup>11</sup> At Bethany there was a movement to change the name of the "Swedes" and there has been some debunking of the legend surrounding the founder of the College.

All of the above changes, and especially a trend from "emphasis on conserving heritage to emphasis on creative response to need,"<sup>12</sup> are good or bad depending on the degree of the trend and the perspective of the viewer. Typically, there is a gulf between the old and the new generations. Eminent figures have said that this is the way it should

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<sup>10</sup>The first Negro was admitted to Bethany in 1949 and only after the question was brought before the board of directors. Andeen, "Trends in Higher Education in the Augustana Lutheran Church," p. 126.

<sup>11</sup>Carl Segerhammar, "Developing Patterns of Evangelism," Centennial Essays, ed. Engberg, p. 120.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

be if we are to progress. Nevertheless, much of the older generation think that Bethany is going the way of the world, that it has been losing its original religious nature. It can be seen that there were secularizing trends from puritanism to liberalism, from a pietistic concern for the future life to more of a humanitarian stress on adjustment to society here and now. But compared to some of the secularizing tendencies noted by one authority,<sup>13</sup> Bethany holds firmly to the essential core of its faith: There was no modernistic trend in the theology of the presidents; there was no withdrawal from religious affiliation or even consideration of such a move; and there is not really less emphasis on religion and philosophy in the curriculum in that eight hours are still required as compared to the nine in 1900. Yet the trend was toward fewer chapel services, general secularization, and toward changing with the society in which the College exists.

### Summary

Bethany has been moderately conservative. The administrations have all been evangelical. Swensson founded the evangelical and conservative tradition at Bethany. Pihlblad, his protege and disciple, continued in an even more conservative vein. Lindquist was still as evangelical, but not parochial. Mortvedt and Lund continued the faith, but were more open-minded, and the latter, more existential, than the founder. The College catalog statements of purpose changed from the provincial "Constitution and the Bible" type to a more tolerant view,

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<sup>13</sup>C. A. Holbrook, "What Is a Christian College?" Social Action, Sept. 15, 1949, p. 9, quoted by Andeen, "Trends in Higher Education in the Augustana Lutheran Church," p. 52.

but they still retain a belief in the efficacy of Christian education. Church official and alumni opinion varied from the belief in a negative correlation between education, without Christ, and morality to a constant affirmation of the value of a church school education. Students have not expressed much opinion about the improvement of man through education without Christ, but early in its history there was strong support for the religious basis of the College. In the last decade there has been some doubt expressed as to whether Bethany has held to and is fulfilling its Christian function.

Although there were no open conflicts over academic freedom, it was a constant consideration. Teachers were hired because they were expected to teach and live with a respect for the Christian commitment of Bethany. They knew that they would be risking their spiritual reputations if they became too free in a heretical way. All of the presidents believed in a free pursuit of knowledge, yet they realized that a problem existed. They believed in academic freedom, but a freedom bounded by commitment to Christ. None of them solved the dilemma of being closed on Christ as the truth, but otherwise being free-thinking. There was simply a slight restriction on the freedom of the teacher, because the College was and is dedicated to a particular point of view. However, the presidents must be praised for following a policy which generally did not elevate sheer religiosity over academic concentration. They were all scholarly and open-minded about the science-religion conflict. This objectivity was evidenced especially during the Pihlblad administration in the teaching of Professor Deere on evolution. Students did not use the term "academic freedom" in print; nevertheless, the issue

arose as to just how free-thinking teachers and students should be. As was typical over the nation generally, students became progressively concerned about such issues. The trend was toward allowing a greater diversity of teachers and more freedom of expression by teachers and students.

### Implications

Because Bethany reflects current society, the illusion might exist that the original faith has been abandoned. In this adaptable sense, Bethany is keeping abreast of the times, wrestling with the issues of the day, trying to understand the world and be relevant to this generation. Bethany finds itself in a responsible and critical position. It must be relevant if it is to remain a vital center of learning and more of an innovator than a monument to the past. Only by constantly revising its modes of rapport with society can it help create new men and a new society.

The time may come when the church will turn over more of its educational role to the state. Other changes may come about by ecumenical moves within the church. More effective use of church resources might be achieved by letting the state or a more universal church carry the burden of finances in higher education. Then the church could concentrate greater effort on the spiritual welfare of students through pastoral ministry. Yet, Bethany, as a church college, still has a noble and holy purpose, which if humbly defined and diligently pursued, fulfills a definite need in our Christian society. Although "one of the primary criticisms aimed at the denominational college is that it

turns out graduates who have been alienated from the church,"<sup>14</sup> Bethany has been successful enough in fulfilling her contradictory rationale to merit her "glory and fame" and Christian name, and to look forward to a "bright," but more secular, "future."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Frederick, Religion on the College Campus, p. 148, quoted in Andeen, "Trends in Higher Education in the Augustana Lutheran Church," p. 51.

<sup>15</sup>"Glory and fame" and "bright future" are from Bethany's alma mater song.

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