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THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE UNIVERSITY IN THE 1970's

Carl Onofrio

THE UNIVERSITY

The term “sensate” was first coined by sociologist, Pitirim Sorokin. Although Sorokin used the term in a positive sense to describe a society that is mature or ripe, others have suggested that the west has entered a late “sensate” phase — a time that is over-ripe, extreme, sensation-seeking, depraved, faddish, pornographic, sarcastic, debunking, nihilistic and debased. While both descriptions tend to oversimplify, the latter seems to provide a more congruent picture of the 1970's in our society. And if we agree that institutions of higher education primarily reflect the larger social situation, that education's dilemma is but part of a larger problem; some of these adjectives also apply to our colleges and universities.

Consensus about this insight — about the university mirroring society — is really a legacy from the “Turbulent '60's.” For higher education, that era's parameters are marked in North America by the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in 1964 and the Kent State murders of 1971. Many on campus, during these times, sincerely believed that they made up the vanguard, that universities were in the forefront of social change. Re-reading John Kenneth Galbraith's *The New Industrial State*, and noting the hope that he placed in the university centered technostucture to humanize our society, is a nostalgic reminder of the euphoria that prevailed in the late 1960's.

What ensued, of course, was disillusionment. Confronted with the bed-rock reality of a military-industrial complex, idealists quickly discovered who directed the society. The university's place was exposed as marginal to and supportive of the larger system — a trainer of manpower and jobber of research for the corporate structure. Canadian students became increasingly aware of and aroused by the branch-plant nature of their economy and their universities. Not only were they exposed to non-

Canadian texts and methodologies and faculty, but they learned that their schools were often tied into the U.S. war effort through research contracts. Attempts to politicize the campus and cries for relevance in the academic enterprise were widely discussed and reported in the media. However, activist students and faculty soon learned that change within their own institutions, let alone the society, was arduous and often impossible. A lesson was learned — about power and change in the society. For many on campus, it was tragic in its implication and ramification.

Today, emotional involvement is seen by students as a route to disaster. Detachment is the best means of survival. One activist ruefully observed, "In the sixties we were radicals; the seventies we tended our gardens, baked organic bread, and learned that we were OK from paperbacks."¹ If attitude among youth is a culture's best barometer we find clear evidence that we have entered the late "sensate" period. Present concern for security among students does not parallel the 1950's. Rather it reflects an exhaustion, a loss of bearings, a dearth of vision, a keen disillusionment. Herbert Hendin has described this state as the "new anomie". Death, not man or God, is experienced by this generation as the prime mover. According to Hendin, "Death and narcissism are two aspects of the flight toward numbness or sensation."² On campus, one sees this pendulum swinging from apathy toward issues and engagement to a greed for experience and a rapacious consumption of things and people.

In retrospect, one notes that the socially-minded within the academic community were not alone in their vision of the university as the leading shaker and shaper in society. Many from the wider community shared this notion. It had long been inherent in the linking of education with progress. In the late '50's and early '60's it was intensively promoted by educators and politicians alike as they sought to undergird an unprecedented expansion of higher education in North America. During this time 143 new colleges and universities were opened in Canada. Within a decade (1965-1975), full-time enrollment doubled and the number of full-time teachers tripled.³ This country's enormous material investment, therefore, underscored the widely held view that higher education was important for the future and the more of it the better. The public was assured that this investment was for the good of the country and that by sending their children to these fine new and expanded institutions they would guarantee them a prosperous life.

No sooner was the shrubbery of this expansion in place than it was called into question. Less enamoured with the academic institutions, provincial governments have become less willing to extend financial support. Capital grants in many places have been frozen and current budget increases throughout the country have been severely limited. Tuition hikes have been implemented and further increases are slated through the end of the decade. In Alberta and Ontario, political bones were thrown to the public in the form of higher and differential fees for foreign visa students. Perhaps even more important has been a low-keyed but intentional deflation, on the part of the government, of the higher education mythology they had helped to create. In large part, this response has been to cover poor planning and an erroneous projection of

1. Martin Kaplan, "The Ideologies of 'Hard Times' ", *Change Magazine*, November 1976, p. 24.

2. Herbert Hendin, "The New Anomie", *Change*, November 1976, p. 25.

3. See Roger Worth, "Hollow Echoes in the Hallowed Halls", *The Financial Post*, April 16, 1977, p. 1.

the number of college-age youth. Levelling off of enrollments reflect the facts that baby-boom children are leaving the system and that immigration is down. And for universities the matter is exacerbated by the remarkable growth of the less costly community colleges which are more adaptable to provincial manpower needs.

Many young people leaving high schools are displaying more thoughtfulness about the need and prospect of further education. When confronted with higher tuitions, tight loans, and an impossible summer employment situation more are deciding against continuing. Caroline Bird, an American educator, has asked the question, "Is college necessary?"⁴ Economically, it seems less so. Richard Freeman and J. Herbert Holloman in their article entitled, "The Declining Value of College Going"⁵ demonstrated that the income gap between college and high-school graduates has narrowed. It would appear that schooling is and will become less a means of upward mobility. As higher education fails to live up to the extravagant promises of the 1960's, the social turning away from the universities and colleges will increase. Jerry Malzarn, professor at the University of Waterloo, notes and supports this public cynicism when he states: "The familiar public suspicions about falling standards, discrimination against Canadians and their culture, academic mediocrity sometimes bordering on incompetence, the sanctioned use of sabbaticals as paid year-long vacations from academic duties, and the use of public money to recruit students are, in my view, well founded."⁶

While radicals, the public, college-age youth are players in the drama, at the core and heart of the university system in Canada are the faculty. Though many thought their institution influential, most didn't share the high expectations of the activists nor the lofty platitudes of the Public Relations people and administrators. Most were happy to survive the '60's. And survive they did. In some ways academia today is safer though shabbier than those tumultuous times. Contrary to the alarmists who feared the dismemberment of the "fragile" university, some faculty knew it to embody a toughness and inertia akin to the Pentagon! Yet business has not continued as usual. While less dramatic, the threat of the '70's may be more serious. Without the protective myth that more education is better, sheer economics will probably dictate the university's course. Faculty are aware of the declining market for their number. Twenty-five hundred new Ph.D.'s in 1977 competed for between 300-400 openings.⁷ Little turnover in the ranks means a lost opportunity to upgrade the quality of personnel and an increasingly costly senior and tenured staff. In the long-run, many faculty fear that this process of economic decline will undermine the effectiveness of the university and encroach upon its perquisites and privilege.

The decline has already altered the emphasis in higher education. A dramatic shift toward training, toward occupationally related instruction is blatantly evident.⁸

4. See Caroline Bird's book, *The Case Against College*, (New York: David McKay Co. 1975).

5. Richard Freeman and Herbert J. Holloman, "The Declining Value of College Going", *Change*, February 1975.

6. Worth, p. 4.

7. *Ibid.*

8. To put this in perspective, it must be noted that the '60's represent the first time when a significant number attended university for reasons other than economic. In turn, they demanded and got courses and facilities that corresponded to a plethora of special interests (women's studies, "free universities", Afro-American centres, religious studies). With the shift most of it has been phased out or greatly de-emphasized.

Politicians and administrators can sell it to the public, many faculty acquiesce in the hope that this trend somehow will shelter their specialty and students have trampled one another to gain entrance into professional programs. More sensitive faculty have decried this direction. They perceive that a "technological ego" is in control of the institution — a control that uses knowledge for manipulation and understands education in terms of production and consumption. In their view, the eclipse of the liberal arts has made the university a gloomy and abrasive place. Humanities no longer constitute the heart but rather the perimeter of the university. Liberal arts occupy but a decaying rump of the institution.

A sentiment is emerging that is no longer adequate to simply express the concern, voiced by former Yale president, Kingman Brewster, about the "grim professionalism" that pervades the campus. What is happening must be seen as an ethical crisis in education. Warren B. Martin warns, "Uncertainty about an appropriate educational philosophy, disagreement about the desired outcomes of teaching and learning, in sum, confusion about the nature of the enterprise, has led to immobility and a spirit of resignation."¹⁰ Without doubt, a greater consensus on educational goals and purposes is needed in Canadian society in 1970's. We lack a social philosophy, an ethic that is equal to the challenge of obligation, and this is reflected by the university. Boyer and Kaplan in their article, "Educating For Survival," are correct as they underscore this condition:

If much of the content of our education now seems atomistic, 'value free' and without a common centre, it reflects to a large degree the (North) American condition — now culturally dispersive and devoid of shared assumptions.¹¹

While their emphasis upon a core curriculum is too narrow in focus, their insistence that ethical and moral considerations be given priority if man is to survive is a necessary starting point.

Here the Church can play a role; here Christianity can make a needed contribution. The task entails both a critique of university and a vision for its future. And, because of its historic ties with higher education, the Church is credible. It can reasonably and logically be expected to undertake the task.

THE CHURCH IN THE UNIVERSITY

Those who have studied medieval history are aware that the university is an offspring of christian monasteries. These great centres of learning and discipline were keepers of the candle for both classical culture and church tradition. Secondly, they brought the "barbarians", who overwhelmed the Western Roman Empire, under the sway of that culture and tradition. In a sense, the medieval university assumed, on behalf of the church, this role of transmitter and preserver. With the emergence of

9. Brewster coined this phrase in a commencement address at Yale in the early '70's. It has since become common currency in describing North American campus life.

10. Warren B. Martin, "The Ethical Crisis in Education", *Change*, June 1974, p. 32.

11. Ernest Boyer and Martin Kaplan, "Educating for Survival: A Call for a Core Curriculum," *Change*, March 77, p. 22.

science and the nation-state, the continuity was broken and the influence of Christianity waned. Yet, even today these early religious roots are manifest. The theological faculty is still central and important in many of Europe's universities. Architecture of Oxford and Cambridge and elsewhere is reminiscent of the monastery — a reflection of the religious establishment that built it. Countless additional vestiges of an earlier time remain embedded in the ceremonial framework of these ancient institutions.

In the "new world" one finds a landscape dotted with church related and established colleges. Initially, these schools served the needs of their sponsoring bodies by training clergy and teachers. As European immigration into North America snowballed, the plethora of founding groups reflected the ethnic diversity of this influx. Needs related to expansion and industrialization transformed many of these colleges into universities. A source of trained personnel, a bastion for ethnic and linguistic identity, an avenue to upward mobility for their young, and a fount of Christian nurture — these and other reasons (such as strong leadership), provided sufficient rationale for the various denominations to support and capitalize their respective institutions. Christian influence and control, of course, have diminished in the 20th century. However, the fact that the foundation for higher education was laid by the church on this continent is significant and needs noting.

This church involvement is prominent in the history of the Canadian university. While it is perhaps no more so than for its southern counterpart, there are marked differences from the unfolding of higher education in the U.S. Most striking is the sheer number and diversity of sponsoring church bodies. New York State alone boasts more religiously established institutions than all of Canada. The late development of Canadian universities provides another contrast. Most institutions in this country were created or experienced their formative periods in the 20th century. This factor coupled with a small country's limited resources for that development meant that until recently, most candidates for advanced degrees, including theology, studied outside the country.

Finally, and most important, is that in Canada a closer, more reciprocal relationship between the church and the state regarding education existed from the outset. The notion of separation did not enter in. Early architects of the educational system, such as Edgar Ryerson, never questioned that Christianity would and should be an integral part. Therefore, while most church-founded colleges in Canada began independently, provincial control over certain areas was not resisted. Gradually, various types of funding was offered and accepted. With the great post-war expansion, this process of control and funding, of consolidation accelerated. By the early seventies, with but few anomalies, church-related institutions have been integrated or absorbed into provincial systems.

As it became less feasible for churches to be directly involved in higher education, they began funding an indirect presence on campus, in the person of the chaplain. The Lutheran Church, in 1956, was the first Protestant denomination to take this intentional step. In addition to employing a full-time chaplain, they purchased a student centre adjacent to Edmonton's University of Alberta. This centre/chaplain model would characterize Lutheran campus ministry in Canada as it has for the Church's American parent bodies. As with university expansion, the 1960's represented a time of growth for chaplaincy. All of the major denominations in Canada bought a piece of the action. Most, however, did not buy into the student centre concept. Rather, they relied upon university-owned facilities or worked out of related Church colleges.

The 70's, however, brought curtailment in the growth of campus ministry and an

actual cutback in a number of work locations. Reason for decline is largely economic though, in part, it also represents a change in strategy by the churches.¹² Roman Catholics have found it an economic burden, in several cases, to maintain multiple staff; while Lutherans have been forced to eliminate or reduce a number of ministries and to sell several centres. The United Church as a matter of policy, will only participate in ecumenical chaplaincies. Partners have usually been the Anglicans and Presbyterians and this has meant some consolidation. It would appear that an equilibrium has been achieved and will be maintained through the end of the 1970's.¹³

Throughout its relatively brief history, the role of campus ministry has been largely unassessed. By and large, the style of work has reflected a denominational, parish orientation which North American churches transplanted from Europe. University chaplains, often in response to their constituent's expectations, attempted to replicate the parish in the university. Nurture of denominational students has, therefore, been a major focus of chaplaincy. The task has not been an easy one, particularly in the last dozen years. A major factor impeding this approach has been a general decline of youth work in the churches. An editorial in the Spring 1969 issue of "Nimbus", the now defunct publication of the Lutheran Student Movement of Canada (LSMC) spoke darkly of the trend.¹⁴ It lamented the lack of leadership training and interest in religion among incoming students; and worried about the repercussion these things would have on the LSMC. The concern was justified, but the current revitalization of youth work and resurgence among Christian groups on campus, suggest that the mood of the period contributed mightily to the ebb. Nevertheless, throughout these vicissitudes, the posture of the churches in Canada most extensively involved at universities — the Roman Catholics, the Anglicans, the United Church, the Christian Reformed, the Presbyterians, and the Lutherans — has been nurture-oriented and conservative.

A closer look at Lutheran involvement in university ministry can provide greater insight into reasons for this orientation. Our denomination spends a higher per capita amount in higher education than any other church in Canada. In part, this is merely consistent with our tradition. The Reformation was spawned at Wittenburg University and Martin Luther, in addition to teaching, was chaplain to the students. From the beginning of the reform, education was viewed as fundamental to Christian nurture. Luther fought for better-educated clergy and insisted that the laity be informed so they could function as priests of their households. Melancthon, his Wittenburg colleague, shared this struggle for better education and became the chief architect of Germany's school system. Concern for theological training, colleges, and chaplaincies at universities has grown naturally out of Lutheran history.

Lutheran presence on campus can also be explained theologically. The tradition

12. In part, it also represents a change in university policy. After Waterloo Lutheran University became provincial, the administration decided that an institutional chaplain could no longer be afforded. As this writer understands, this may also become a pattern in Quebec where chaplains are salaried by the province.

13. There are exceptions and the Christian Reformed Community is one. It has greatly expanded its involvement in the '70's. Yet, this must be put into perspective. Out of the six field workers, five were instituted in this decade. One might also mention the Mennonite community. They have called a second university chaplain to University of Western Ontario (their first is at University of Waterloo).

14. "Nimbus", Spring 1969, p. 1.

identifies itself as evangelical, as true to the centre of life and truth — the gospel of Jesus Christ. Understood as an evangelical given is the centrality of the ministry of word and sacrament. Because a significant portion of Christ's body, the Church, lives and serves its witness in response to the university, it is considered appropriate to provide occasion and place to gather corporately for celebration. Therefore, it is not surprising that the emphasis of Lutheran Campus Ministry is upon pastoral care for students, teaching and study, and worship. Nor is it difficult to appreciate the seriousness given to higher education by this body.

A significant event aimed at altering this conserving approach to campus work was the publication of *The Church, The University, and Social Policy: The Danforth Study of Campus Ministries*¹⁵ by American social scientist Kenneth Underwood. This massive two volume effort was made available to the public in 1969, and has since been a formidable challenge to the churches' approach to higher education. Underwood found that the denominations had been preoccupied with a particular, limited role which he called the "priestly" and "pastoral". His study recommended a shift in emphasis to a less static and more dynamic interface with the academic community, to a stance concerned with the "prophetic" and "governance". By "prophetic", Underwood meant an incisive and critical presence that unmasked pretentiousness, questioned value assumptions, and demanded justice within and on the part of the institution. "Governance," the author suggests, might mean becoming involved in areas where decisions are made that affect people's lives and trying to influence and humanize the process.

Beyond question, the "Danforth study" has shaped much of the assessment of North American campus ministry in this decade. Perhaps the more important consideration, for this essay, is the impact of the study. Has the church accepted the challenge? Has there been a re-orientation in the kind of ministry done at universities? Yes! and No! In a few places, modest beginnings have been made. Unfortunately, for the most part, the uncertainty in chaplaincy has precluded innovation. Yet, critique and envisioning a new future for the university is imperative for the Church to remain faithful to the Gospel and responsible to the university. Hopefully, in the remaining years of the 1970's, the church's strategy, personnel, and resource can be directed to this end.

THE CHURCH AND THE UNIVERSITY: CRITIQUE AND FUTURE

Our critique must entail both society and education/university. For the one gives birth to the other and the offspring bears the traits of its parent. Furthermore there is a close historical relationship between the University and the Church — a reality that gives the Christian a unique vantage point.

Culturally, seen from that Christian perspective, today's pervasive "new idolatry" or "new religion" is progress. Education functions as the handmaiden to and perpetuator

15. Kenneth Underwood, *The Church, The University, and Social Policy: The Danforth Study of Campus Ministries*, Wesleyan University Press: Middletown, Conn., 1969. (2 vol.)

of this ideology. As social critic Ivan Illich has pointed out:

The myth of universal education, the ritual of compulsory schooling, and a professional structure erected to ensure the *progress* of the technocrat all reinforce one another.¹⁶

Further, Illich contends that we live in the “age of schooling”¹⁷ a time in which the idea holds sway that schooling is a necessary means of becoming a useful member of society; that the process called “education” can increase the value of a human being. From an early age, through our schools, students learn the basic dogma of the “new religion” — more is better and the most consumptive are fittest for survival. It should be noted that churchman Illich rails against the Christian churches complicity in the worship of the idol progress. He warns, “Those who want to follow Jesus must make this choice (to be radical and prophetic), even though the church to which they belong bows the knee to the Baal of ‘progress’.”¹⁸

Within the school system, the university stands as the apex and quintessence. As such, of course, it plays a part in the “new religion”. For it, too, socializes its members into values which are culturally approved. In his book, *Class, Bureaucracy and Schools*, Toronto based educator, Michael Katz demonstrates that bureaucracy quickly became the organizational model for education in North America and it “represented a crystallization of bourgeois social values.”¹⁹ In addition to an underlying faith in progress and emulation of the business model, the system featured class bias and racism. Christopher Jencks and his Harvard colleagues support this indictment in their study, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect and Schooling in America*. Schooling, the authors argue, does little to alter poverty and inequality of opportunity. This reality is vividly portrayed in academia as one reads mean parental income of students at Canada’s universities or as one notes the dismal representation of native people in higher education. Only survivors of the school system reach university. These people, by and large, tend to be the sons and daughters of the privileged. In turn, they assume their places as managers and bureaucrats in our consumerist, materialistic, technocratic society. One Canadian theologian has described the university in our culture as the “kept-woman” functioning as both mistress and governess.²⁰

Along with the nurturing of the ruling class, the universities play a “priestly” role on behalf of the whole society. This role entails the power to legitimate what counts as education, to control what is taught, and to correlate the amount of education consumed with career choices. Early in 1969, Jencks and David Riesman published a book entitled, *The Academic Revolution*. They were not writing about the student unrest of the period. Rather, they were reporting on the odyssey of the university as institution within society. Quite simply, the authors chronicled how the university has quietly made an impact upon all the structures of society. Through its power of certifi-

16. Ivan Illich, “Education: A Consumer Commodity and a Pseudo-Religion”, *Christian Century*, December 15, 1971, p. 1466.

17. Illich makes this suggestion in an essay entitled, “School: The Sacred Cow” published in *Celebration of Awareness*. Also see his writings continued in *Deschooling Society*.

18. Illich, p. 1467.

19. Michael B. Katz, *Class Bureaucracy and Schools*, (New York: Praeger 1974), p. 72.

20. Dr. Terry Anderson, Vancouver School of Theology, made this observation in Calgary at the 1977 Ecumenical Chaplain’s Conference.

cation it has pervaded, influenced and shaped all other institutions (including the church). As arbiter of qualifications, it has attempted to make itself indispensable. While this “priestly” function is the real nexus of university power, it is still used on behalf of the advantaged. The ‘60’s illustrate that it was financially impossible to extend educational opportunities to everyone. Higher education, over the next few years, will be called upon to dampen down expectation, to narrow the access, rigorously to perform its “priestly” function. And those who experience the brunt of this secular equivalent of ex-communication will be the marginal people of our country — the poor, the minorities, the non-white.

Finally, the universities fulfill the more passive role as carrier of modern consciousness. A scientific world-view dominates our campus to the extent that even the humanities are called social sciences. Within this pragmatic and often utilitarian environment there has been a loss of transcendence. This ethos is illustrated in the preface of Peter Berger’s book, *A Rumor of Angels*.²¹ Berger expressed his uneasiness about an earlier work, *The Sacred Canopy — Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, in which, true to his sociological training, he tried to keep his statements “value-free”. But Berger also considers himself a Christian and felt compelled to write this follow-up to deal with the theological implications of the former book’s argument. As an academic he admitted, “I suppose one sticks one’s neck out when it comes to things one deems important.”²² More sociologically descriptive, this ethos has been referred to as an elite, meritocratic world view. And “meritocracy brings with it . . . the national upper-middle class style: cosmopolitan, moderate, universalistic, somewhat legalistic, concerned with equity and fair play, aspiring to neutrality between regions, religions, and ethnic groups.”²³ Within this milieu, the chaplains and the entire university Christian community must swim against a very swift stream of modern consciousness. This role as carrier of a world-view that is at once both scientific and meritocratic makes the university setting one of the most difficult in which to witness and to evangelize.

Turning from analysis to prescription requires the presumption and confidence of a prophet or utopian. While few fit these categories and even fewer are equipped to offer meaningful blueprints, it is incumbent upon the community of faith to agonize over and lift up alternative futures — however incomplete. The following observations, therefore, are shared more from a sense of urgency and concern than from certainty.

First, it seems imperative for the Church to re-commit itself to iconoclasm, to destroying the idols. Lay theologian, William Stringfellow, reminds us that “. . . the Church is always authorized to complain, for the sake of the world, about everything in the world. By the mercy of God, the inherent, invariable, unavoidable, intentional, unrelenting posture of the Church in the world is one of radical and profound dissent towards the prevailing status quo of secular society . . .”²⁴ Today, the idol is progress,

21. Peter Berger, *A Rumor of Angels* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday & Co. 1969).

22. *ibid.*, p. xi.

23. Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday & Co. 1968), p. 12.

24. William Stringfellow, *Dissenter in a Great Society* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press 1966), p. 162.

and it must be broken. Christian iconoclasm, however, is never nihilistic. Rather, it is an insistence that all of our society is subject to the sovereignty of God.

There are signs that the Church is taking its role of “dissenter” seriously. “Baal” is being challenged by Christians at a number of levels. Governments are being encouraged to assume a more responsible stand vis-a-vis the world’s less fortunate. Benefits from such prestigious symbols of progress are roadways and pipelines and nuclear reactors are being seriously questioned. Even big business, the ‘bible-belt’ of the “new religion”, is being called to accountability. Church-sponsored task forces have been created to perform a watchdog function. Their activities range from research into a corporation’s South African investment to dramatically driving home an ethical consideration at the annual shareholders’ meeting. More generally, rank-and-file church members have been admonished to take up a simpler, less consumptive lifestyle. This stance reflects more than a concern for justice and equitable distribution of the world’s resources.²⁵ It denotes a profound realization that today’s materialism — the turning of God’s gifts into possessions — is contrary to the Creator’s will.

Significantly, the education system has escaped the church’s current scrutiny of institutions. With the exception of a few commentators such as Illich, there has been little religiously motivated “dissent”. When it has come, its focus has usually been upon denominational nurture and instruction. Even Kenneth Underwood’s investigation, in the end, was too optimistic about higher education. Campus ministry observer, Myron Bloy has remarked that the “Underwoodian . . . vision pictures Jerusalem and Athens going hand in hand into the sunset of service to mankind, though one suspects that Athens really has Jerusalem in an armlock.”²⁶ Few have inquired into hidden curricula of schooling or its ideological assumptions; very few have asked about the goals or ends of higher education. To do so, and it must, will prompt the Christian community to call for a new orientation, for a posture of letting everything go. God’s hand may be seen in this process through the constricting of economic and social forces already cited (a possibility that should be welcomed).

In the case of the university, it is likely that much will have to go. Here, the church can assist by asking how this can be done responsibly. According to economist Kenneth Boulding, “Education is likely to be the first major segment of the economy to suffer decline, and management of this decline may very well set the tone for the management of the general decline.”²⁷ Skillful and sensitive handling of this “letting go” may mean the difference between a fruitful rechannelling of human energy and chaos. Just as the university has exerted its influence, in the past, to affect other institutions, it may be the only agency able to set the “tone” in a human, non-destructive

25. An example of this concern was manifest on the University of Calgary campus in 1975. A number of groups, including the chaplains, organized an effort called “The Committee on Ten Thousand”. The idea was to encourage each of the 10,000 students on campus to contribute one dollar to be used for hunger projects. While the effort fell short of its goal, the idea was kept alive and the following year students approved a referendum to tax themselves one dollar each year for the Committee. Passage was in no small part due to the active advocacy of the Christian clubs at the University of Calgary.

26. Myron Bloy, “Academic Value and Prophetic Discernment”, *Christian Century*, October 20, 1976, p. 893.

27. Kenneth Boulding, “The Management of Decline”, *Change*, June 1975, p. 8.

way. God's people in the university's midst must stand alongside the courageous, far-sighted administrators who will, in the future, help their institutions to die in order to change.

Of course, this new orientation will be slow in coming. In the meantime, the church must shape a strategy to transform the academic establishment. A proposal such as this is predicated upon the assumption that the university remains a potentially significant moral and cultural force in the society. In other words, it means taking the university seriously. And obviously, the chaplains who bridge the communities will be assigned the task of spearheading the undertaking. Initially, there must be a description of how values actually function in the academy. The fallacious notion still persists that it is a value-free market-place of ideas. Next, academia should be encouraged to become more upfront about its real operational values. In turn, occasions would be structured for the various value commitments to confront one another. Finally, cadres of faithful would be equipped to call the prevailing ideology to account. This is not only possible but consistent with the historical reality that the search for Christian faithfulness in university life has always been among a small minority.

Hopefully, these preliminary moves would undermine the present self-aggrandizement of the academy and prod it to establish public service as its first requisite. Should this occur, should the university begin to matter as a servant to the entire community, much that the university is forced to relinquish will probably be returned.²⁸ A shift of this nature would also help alter the internal institutional make-up. For resources would have to be gathered and strategy developed for the common task. Such recent phenomena as fragmentation of subject matter, over-specialization, breakdown of communication between disciplines, and increased emphasis on technique at the expense of substance — maladies all which have contributed to the university's disintegration and dehumanization could be transcended in a common effort. Economist, Robert Heilbroner has asked in his pessimistic little book, *The Human Prospect*, "Is there hope for man?" Sheer survival has surfaced in the '70's as the top item on mankind's agenda. The choice before our universities is clear. They can accept the challenge and marshal their considerable gifts and resources on behalf of the beleaguered human family. This posture would entail a combination of letting go and transformation. It would also reflect a decisive moral and ethical commitment, a return to earlier liberal and humanistic roots. Conversely, the universities may choose to do nothing in which case, they will revert to their medieval role as keeper of the candle. Perhaps, even this imagery is too positive for the truncated and shrivelled fortress that will remain.

Dying so that new life may occur is something about which the Church can share. Living an institutional life for others is also something to which the church can witness. This is the emphasis that our ministry in the university should have as the '70's close. Prophetic iconoclasm and lobbying for a new service-oriented direction should

28. Should the university move out of its questionable role as society's "super-certifier" to that of serious involvement in the world's problems, it might well become indispensable. There are real advantages of a non-business, non-political approach to the important questions of the day.

constitute the central thrust of our work in these late "sensate" times. Of course, the "priestly" and "pastoral" will continue. The former is necessary to create prophetic imagination and to maintain our identity as biblical people. The latter is needed because many in the academic world will be hurt and wounded over the next few years and a mark of God's people is their caring.

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The Good Samaritan Society

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Community Social Service Projects Owned and Operated by the Society:

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RESIDENCE
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GOOD SAMARITAN NURSING HOME
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10355 - 83rd Avenue

GOOD SAMARITAN NURSING HOME
Stony Plain, Alberta

"The Good Samaritan Cared — so do we"