POSITION PAPERS
Church Connections

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The Meaning of Church Connections will be discussed on October 10 at 3:30 in the Marshall Room.
Church Connections at Augsburg College: Past, Present, and Future

Mark J. Engebretson

1. Introduction

At a time when every institution in the U. S. is increasingly pressed to justify its existence, we at Augsburg cannot hope to be exempt from scrutiny of our actions and our accomplishments. In part we are concerned with market share, or even survival, in the face of economic changes and challenges. On the more positive side, however, we can use this as a time to clarify our mission and vision, and focus on what is best and most valuable. What can and should be distinctive about Augsburg? What do we have to offer? Can we articulate a mission and/or vision that can bring us together, and tell the Augsburg "story" to prospective students, to their families, to donors, and to employers and graduate/professional schools?

All of us who are faculty members have been trained/educated in graduate schools. By their very nature graduate schools train us in disciplines. In addition to that historical fact about us, however, we are now here as faculty or staff of Augsburg College, a particular institution with a particular mission. I suspect we'd have no trouble being motivated to look after our own disciplines without a College mission/vision statement. But looking toward the big picture, toward that which makes Augsburg unique, requires more than a selected or even congenial set of disciplines. We need to be reminded of Augsburg's mission, and reminded that we are first of all teachers of students, and only secondarily teachers of Physics, or English, or Social Work. Our primary "product" is people.

One of the several factors that has made Augsburg what it is, and has helped it survive despite its history of economic insecurity, has been its connection to the Christian Church. Peter Steinfels, one of the religion editors of the New York Times, was quoted in an issue of this summer's Minneapolis Star Tribune that "No institution in America generates as much social capital as the churches," creating networks that enable people to work for a common good. To networks we must add institutions: Augsburg was founded by Norwegian immigrants through their churches, and the church connection even today provides many of us with social
capital: a shared (although often vague) mission, and a sense of cameraderie. Many of us, faculty, staff, and administrators, are conscious of working together for a multifaceted common good, helping students learn and grow, and building and maintaining an institution where this activity can continue to occur.

In this document I will attempt to provide some information on Augsburg’s past and present church connections, and place them in academic and theological context. As a way of doing this, I will first refer to my own academic discipline of Physics. Second, I will briefly review some bits of Augsburg’s history. Third, as befits an institution whose frequent business is words, Augsburg has generated for itself a multitude of written documents since its founding, and I will review some relevant excerpts from current ones. What do these documents actually say about this institution’s church connections? Do they make sense today? If not, if they are confusing, seemingly irrelevant, or even uncomfortable to some, what does this say -- beyond that we have perhaps done a poor job describing the College to prospective faculty, staff, and/or students? It could be that the knowledge of some about Lutheran Christianity is inadequate and inaccurate, or at least that the asserted deep connection between faith and learning that has characterized the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition throughout most of its history, and is claimed to be carried out at Augsburg, needs to be better explained and understood.

2. An extended analogy

Physicists soon realize that much of what they teach is counter-intuitive. That is, one’s common sense, and most of one’s previous learning (formal and informal) conspire to convince students that the world behaves in ways contrary to what the body of physics knowledge asserts. A major portion of the fall term in General Physics consists of helping students "unlearn" various misconceptions about the way nature seems to work. Add to that, in many cases, students' misconceptions about how to learn science (such as that their job is simply to remember a huge number of factoids and/or mathematical formulas) and harmful attitudes about their own ability (especially regarding mathematics), and one gets some idea why Physics is deemed a "killer" subject. One also gets the impression that what one might call "positive teaching," building on students' experiences, faces some rather formidable barriers! It's not a one-time challenge, either. Even our upper division majors, who for the most part have learned to recognize the limits of their own
experience and have a sense of how to learn in these fields, are challenged by the paradoxes of modern physics and quantum mechanics.

If Physics often seems counter-intuitive to those who do not already know it, and occasionally also to those who do, however, I suggest that Christianity can seem similarly out of place on campus to those who have had only a distant exposure to it -- and unwelcome to many others whose exposure may at times have been far from pleasant, and based far more on authority than on thoughtful investigation. And, just as with Physics and Physics students, there is plenty of difficult material in Christianity for even the committed, far more than fits into a brief, introductory exposure. If a relationship between two humans cannot be considered static, how much more complex and ongoing must be the relation between a person and the Divine? Just as I believe I have a legitimate role as an educator in Physics, not to shield students from difficult new insights but rather to best help them to build on and develop their own ability to think about and work with natural phenomena, so too I find a legitimate role for helping students delve into the realm of religion deeply enough to develop their own ability to think about, and work with, the vital and ultimate issues that religion confronts.

One of my favorite teaching roles at Augsburg is to co-lead a course in Science and Religion. In teaching this course I have found that students often have built up significant personal and intellectual structures regarding both fields, and a surprisingly large number of these structures are simply incorrect. Whether passed on through formal but erroneous instruction in school, or gained informally through exposure to others and to the media, one of our students' challenges in this class is again to "unlearn" some of the basics of science and religion.

Let me use an example from science to illustrate this point. MIT computer scientist Joseph Weizenbaum, in his book *Computer Power and Human Reason*, laments that for many, "... science has become the sole legitimate form of understanding in the common wisdom. When I say that science has been gradually converted into a slow-acting poison, I mean that the attribution of certainty to scientific knowledge by the common wisdom, an attribution now made so nearly universally that it has become a commonsense dogma, has virtually delegitimatized all other ways of understanding. ... We can count, but we are rapidly forgetting how to say what is worth counting and why." (*Computer Power and Human Reason*, San
Weizenbaum's complaint is echoed by many critics of modernism, and reflects a perspective which many of us at Augsburg share -- both students and faculty. But many scientists and nearly all philosophers of science are also among those who agree with Weizenbaum, and the "commonsense dogma" which Weizenbaum describes is simply wrong! Certainty and proof went out of the natural sciences nearly 400 years ago, thanks to Galileo and his opponents. The fact that "scientific proof" is still the bread and butter of advertising, and too often makes its way into newspaper articles about science, is a continuing cause for embarrassment for most practicing researchers and for all of us as educators.

Some students have corresponding misconceptions about Christianity. Although the Lutheran Church was in a sense born in a university, and shares a long Judeo-Christian tradition that has prized learning and stressed the value and responsibility of each of us before God, the Christianity that is most evident in our news media seldom reminds us of that ongoing aspect of its character. At their best the news media do portray the religiously grounded concern for social justice that has always characterized the prophetic strain in this tradition, and funeral services remind us of the deep mysteries of life and suffering. We are seldom reminded by the media, however, of the power of the Gospel to change and/or heal lives, of the importance of lifelong study, reflection, and spiritual growth, or of the intellectual freedom of Lutheran Christianity.

Now, one doesn't have to look very far to find conflicts between academic disciplines and religious points of view (Galileo's trial before the Inquisition is certainly a ready example). But to say that the Christian viewpoint is the source of these conflicts is to misunderstand history, and ultimately the dynamic of the Liberal Arts themselves.

Although the "Seven Liberal Arts" of Medieval times could be said to fit rather comfortably under the umbrella of a Western European appropriation of classical Greek and Roman philosophy, the various components of the Liberal Arts have certainly not been harmonious since at least the "rise" of modern science during the enlightenment. For most of the time since then there has been an uneasy truce between disciplines, and at times their relations have been characterized by open
hostility (for example, C. P. Snow's *The Two Cultures*, published in 1959, and its subsequent controversies). Indeed, debates raged between champions of the trivium (literary or rhetorical disciplines) and quadrivium (formal or mathematical disciplines), and within each of these camps as well, even during the late Middle Ages.

To the extent that Religion is viewed on campus as just another department or discipline, it is not surprising that it fits into the typical scheme of disciplinary rivalries in modern academia. Looking more deeply, however, one can find roots in religion, and especially in the Judeo-Christian-Muslim tradition, that underlie nearly all of today's divisions of the Liberal Arts: The fine and performing arts have been employed for religious purposes for millennia; the orderliness of nature and the idea of law led to the rise of philosophy and the natural and social sciences (and played a major role in mathematics); the presence of God working in and through people in time led to the idea of progress and a sense of history; and the sense of justice and hope (in the Christian tradition rooted in the future coming of the Lord) continues to lead to both religious and secular political and social movements of great variety, including democracy, but also varieties of Christian and non-Christian Socialism, Communism, and Religious Fundamentalism (in Jewish and Muslim faiths as well as in Christianity), and continues to inform those disciplines dealing with the helping professions. The religious influence does not always fit comfortably, but it can hardly be ignored.

This is why Christianity at Augsburg is not, and in my view should not be, circumscribed within a single Department of Religion (although I believe that such a department can and does play a key role). Restricting investigation of the Christian faith, tradition, and values to the province of one department tends to make religion just one more of the several disciplines that compete for the time and attention of our students. I am instead greatly encouraged that, as Augsburg's documents describe it, questions of faith, of purpose, of values, do (at least at times) pervade all aspects of life on campus: in literature and politics, in physics and in social work, on the soccer field and in the Business Center.
3. Some Historical Background

As the Vision Development Report notes, our identity as a College of the Church is clearly not limited to its connection to a particular historical body, the ELCA. In this regard Augsburg has changed significantly. Although the College's early history was associated more with individual leaders than with any one of the still-tiny Lutheran organizations formed by immigrants, by 1900 it was the "crown jewel" of a small Lutheran denomination, the Lutheran Free Church. It can even be said that the institution of Augsburg (College and Seminary) was the raison d'être for the LFC -- witness the group's first name, the "Friends of Augsburg."

Particular historical events led to the merger of much of the LFC in 1963 with a larger Lutheran body with much of the same Norwegian Lutheran constituency (including the institutional descendents of the rival "Friends of St. Olaf" and other groups such as that of my own origin). Following another, larger merger of Lutherans over a decade later, Augsburg is now one of a set of over 20 colleges affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Before 1963, members of the parent denomination showed strong loyalty to Augsburg but they were limited in number. Since 1963, Augsburg has enjoyed affiliation with a much larger denomination, but most of its members have had little or no connection to Augsburg. In fact, a fraction of the LFC, many of whom were Augsburg alumni, chose to remain separate, hence the population of committed Augsburg supporters within the affiliated church body was diminished. (The continuing negative financial impact of these changes on the College's Development efforts can easily be appreciated.)

Former Augsburg History professor Paul Sonnack, in his "Winnowing a Heritage" address (Augsburg's Founder's Day Convocation, November 9, 1977) listed three characteristics of the people of the "old Augsburg" and of the Lutheran Free Church. First, they were Lutheran (although he noted that there were always some other Lutherans who had their doubts about Augsburg's "Lutheranness"). Second, they were also pietists -- they placed great emphasis upon the need for personal religious experience and manifested great concern for the subsequent living out of the Christian life. Although the "Lutheran stress upon the priority of the community to the individual" did not always fit well into this more
individualistic framework, the combination of the two fed into the well-attested development of the "enormous charitable enterprise which the Lutheran churches launched in this country." Third, they were suspicious of the enslaving power of formal structures. This worked its way out in somewhat of an aversion to formal worship, formal theologies, and even formal power structures. (Could it be that some of the curmudgeonly character of our faculty owes a little to the College's heritage in this way?) The LPC was in some aspects separatist, but in others precociously ecumenical: Bernhard Christensen, former President of Augsburg, addressed LPC pastors in 1944 in this way: "The Lutheran Free Church is but one small part of the whole Lutheran household of faith, and relatively an even smaller part of the entire Body of Christ." ("The Idea of the Lutheran Free Church," pp. 33-46, in Freedom and Christian Education, edited by John Houk, Minneapolis: Board of Trustees, Augsburg College and Seminary, 1945.)

To use what I hope is not too distant an analogy, the LPC in some senses had the appearance of "Lutheran Quakers": their strength and distinctiveness was in their beliefs and in the quality of their persons, not in their institutional size (either as College or as denomination). They lived among many other religious groups, often working together with them in common pursuits, yet retaining their own identity and sense of giftedness from God. Augsburg's tradition includes a heritage of no strong outside church influence to require conformity or obedience, and the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, which means that each individual has the right of direct access to and from God, without the need of an intermediary. This was a radical idea nearly 5 centuries ago when Martin Luther articulated it, and one with which most of us are still uncomfortable. I will return to it in a later section.

A description of Augsburg written in 1981, as part of a successful proposal to the Bush Foundation for Augsburg's second Faculty Development Grant, points out several factors relevant to Augsburg's mission and vision: "Augsburg College until 1963 was the only college of the Lutheran Free Church. It saw itself acting in the service of young people with an enormous range of capabilities, yet sharing with the faculty and the College's constituency a common concern for values and a religious tradition. The fact that this tradition was explicitly egalitarian and democratic made it possible to accept average as well as outstanding students without any expectation of equivalent educational outcomes. All students would be challenged on their own terms, yet each found a place at Augsburg and in the church constituency."
Augsburg's ethos also made possible the welcoming of faculty and students from outside the sponsoring religious body, as well as persons with dissenting views on a broad range of social, political, and religious issues. Out of this affirmed breadth came a style of teaching and learning that accepted and cherished diversity and welcomed innovation." (Section V, The Role of Teaching at Augsburg College, p. 1)

Despite the College's transition in denominational affiliation, this has not led to major changes in the College's ethos. The ELCA has moved in recent years toward more official recognition of other Christian bodies, but in a sense this simply endorses what Augsburg has done informally for years -- and a firm policy regarding denominational affiliation for staff and faculty has probably never existed. Augsburg continues to "... embrace a wide range of religious expression and participation," to quote Augsburg's 1996 North Central Self Study document. Its stance in relation to Christianity and issues of religious concern -- that is, the publicly expressed self-understanding of the College's leaders, as opposed to its stance in relation to the institutional church -- also appears to have changed very little over the decades during and since that transition. Augsburg's Presidents were and are clearly aligned with the affiliated denomination, but a significant fraction of its officers and faculty members from Dean on down were and are non-LFC and/or non-Lutheran.

Some significant changes have taken place, however. Since 1963 the perceived importance of hiring those attuned to Augsburg's religiously-based intellectual tradition has been given little emphasis by some departments, with the result that an increasing number of faculty may have little exposure to, much less interest in, this aspect of the College's life and mission. The proposal's summary continues "The growth of the College during the 1960s and 1970s, leading to rapid swelling of faculty ranks, the addition of new majors and departments, and the admission of a student body more diverse in ethnic and religious background, has changed the academic setting at Augsburg. Traditional values and commitments which were predominant in the past are no longer as widely shared among Augsburg faculty." (p. 1) Although this statement referred explicitly only to faculty, we might want to change this statement to now include the entire Augsburg community. How this development is addressed will have a major impact on Augsburg's church connections, and its very nature, in the future.
4. Writings about Augsburg’s Church Connections

What do Augsburg’s own documents tell us about its church connections? The revised Articles of Incorporation of Augsburg College state the College's purpose in this way: "The general purpose and plan of the [college] shall be to maintain a Christian College of Liberal Arts offering higher education opportunities to all qualified persons. Such opportunities shall include regular instruction in the Christian religion, preparing leaders who are committed to truth, excellence and ethical values, both in the Christian Church and the larger community." (Augsburg Faculty Handbook, p. 16.2.1)

The importance of education "shaped by the faith and values of the Christian church" is also clearly reflected in Augsburg's Strategic Plan: "to be a college of the ELCA accepting as a basis for its educational program the doctrines of the Christian faith as revealed in Scripture and the creeds affirmed in the Lutheran Church, affirming that all students should reflect upon Christian scriptures, theological concepts, and ethical values as part of becoming educated." (p. 32) Note the language used: "instruction," "reflection," -- not "indoctrination" (which some may fear, but which reveals an unfamiliarity with the College’s ethos as described above).

We here come to a paradox at least as interesting as any in Physics: A deep appreciation of Christian freedom is part of Augsburg’s tradition, and yet that freedom is clearly within a community that ascribes to specific creedal statements as an expression of its relation to God. How can this be?

Albert Anderson of Lenoir Rhyne College, a sister institution, noted in 1980 that "... when committees to clarify Lutheran college aims are formed, they find it easier to agree on what the tradition is not than on what it is." (Dialog, 19, 115, 1980) This somewhat negative comment exemplifies, in a sense, the considerable freedom inherent in the Lutheran academic and theological tradition, to those who already understand it. However, the lack of a clear statement of Augsburg's religious ethos may in fact have led many in the community, including staff, faculty, and students, to assume that Augsburg has much more narrow, sectarian aims than it in fact has, and to a significant misunderstanding of Augsburg's high valuation of open inquiry.
Anderson goes on to provide his interpretation of the intellectual climate at a Lutheran College, and in so doing works out the academic implications of the principle of the priesthood of all believers: "The intellectual climate encouraged by the Lutheran tension between faith and reflection suggests a model of life-long dialogue between decisiveness and openness. To support it there is the traditional Lutheran principle that Scriptures are their own interpreters; where the context fails to be clear, nothing more concerning the work and will of God is certain. ... For liberal learning this means that a Lutheran can engage openly in the clarification and comparison of religious and ethical claims with matters of all sorts, without undue offense to stances taken by the church. Nor need the Lutheran be indecisive or uncommitted in the process, only right or wrong, either of which possibility he boldly acknowledges." (p. 115) He sums up "Avoiding both conformity and indifference, the Lutheran academic tradition seeks to strike a balance between decisiveness and openness throughout the educational process: acknowledging forthrightly its confessional roots, it presumes no single stance for morality; art, or science which answers all questions. Rather, it preserves and encourages the integrity of differences, but in the spirit of wholeness insists on the right and responsibility to engage them in the interests of clarity and understanding." (p. 116)

The above statement seems to be reflected well in Augsburg's 1996 North Central Self Study: "Augsburg understands and maintains that the Christian faith illuminates intellectual tasks and provides a foundation for investigation and study in all areas of human existence." (p. 3) In a later section dealing with the College's mission, the Self Study continues "Associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Augsburg affirms the truth and relevance of the Christian faith and sees it as a context for the College as a whole -- a context which says that God is the creator, redeemer, and ultimate sustainer of the world, a world entrusted to humans for exploration and care. The College believes that its faith commitment is compatible with the best traditions of academic freedom, and finds in it a truth that unites and informs the entire educational process. Such a faith is expressed in the imprint on the Seal of the College: 'Through Truth to Freedom.'"

Augsburg's purposes related to this part of its mission include "to generate an environment in which the faith and values of the Christian church are exemplified," and "to provide courses which have the goals of students gaining increased knowledge and understanding of the Christian tradition." This
understanding also includes opportunity "for the community to wrestle with issues of faith and values through supporting a classroom environment which makes possible regular questioning, referencing, and reinforcing theological issues in non-Religion classes (since it is possible at a Christian college to unhesitatingly introduce religious themes where appropriate) and which enables students to provide volunteer service opportunities to the community..." (p. 38)

5. The Future of Augsburg

Should Augsburg at this time redefine its mission, its self-understanding as a College of the Church? Perhaps. That decision is inseparably bound up with a decision about what Augsburg will do with its "life." Some faculty and staff, including what might be a surprising number of younger members, believe a vigorous reiteration of Augsburg's calling to be a College of the Church is long overdue. Others find such a reassertion of the College's Christian identity / connection to be unsettling. Based on my reading of the Vision Development Report, some of these may believe that a generalized "spirituality" is preferable to loyalty to any specific religious group, and others may honestly be surprised that so many at Augsburg seem to take this issue seriously, given Augsburg's extremely low-key (at times nonexistent?) emphasis on this issue in matters of recruitment of either students or faculty/staff.

It is also possible that some of the concern about a resurgence of interest in this issue may come from those who legitimately wish to move Augsburg even farther along the road to welcoming and effectively serving all persons. Some such persons may urge a closer tie with Christianity because of the belief that Augsburg's commitment to diversity is grounded in its Christian tradition of God's radical love for all persons. Others may urge a weaker religious tie, because to them any particularity goes against the idea of total diversity, and Lutherans, indeed even Christians, belong to a particular religious community and espouse allegiance to a particular Being. My first response to this latter argument is that, if any one hallmark can be used to describe an educated person, it is the ability to draw helpful distinctions. Those who wish to argue that making no distinctions in any matter is ethically preferable will, if consistent, also have difficulty in defending the Liberal Arts against vocational education, or no education at all. Second, one can easily
show that Augsburg's stance of inclusivity is indeed rooted precisely in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Although some Christian individuals and groups clearly say and do otherwise, throughout my life, from both private and public messages from my Christian mentors, I have been told clearly and repeatedly that God's love extends to all (usually with far more force and efficacy than I would like), and throughout my life I have been challenged to behave similarly. It is true that the LFC was narrowly constituted ethnically, if not economically, and the ELCA can still be characterized as mostly white, mostly European, and with social views running across mostly the middle of the social spectrum. It is not clear, however, that Augsburg's effectiveness or viability in reaching out to diverse populations would in any case benefit, or even be sustained, by jettisoning the church connections that have up to now provided significant moral, financial, and personal support for these activities.

Turning now to the opposite tack, can or should Augsburg aspire to something unique in regard to its Christian character and/or its church connection? I can suggest either of two answers. On the one hand, I could argue that if Augsburg were to be faithful to its calling as a College of the Church, it need not, and perhaps even should not, attempt to be different from other colleges with similar aims. There is no need for one-upmanship in matters of service and faithfulness. It should continue to grow in becoming a welcoming and enabling institution for all humans, but that is simply to fulfill what its leaders have always understood to be its mission. On the other hand, because we do have a distinctive heritage and location, Augsburg can aspire to be a "city set on a hill"; modeling, by its commitment to God's world, to diversity, to the city, and to academic and personal excellence, faithfulness to Christ's calling to each of us as members of this educational institution.

The Augsburg Self Study concludes with these words: "The College is grounded in the Lutheran tradition of higher education, a tradition of faith and intellectual effort, of preparation for useful lives of service, and of honoring the arts, sciences, and humanities. This tradition is person-centered, not institution-centered; it is a tradition of hope and confidence for addressing whatever problems come in the future just as has been done in the past. The College will not ignore the lessons of the past; it will not focus solely on the whims of the present, but it will provide the opportunity for students to stretch their minds, develop physical and mental skills, and address the future with confidence. The College will serve a prophetic role in
its relations with the Church and, in that role, provide insights, expertise and leaders to help the Church carry out its mission of faith. " (p. 329)

The Self Study’s conclusion focuses not so much on God’s attributes or our spirituality, but on God’s call, and is also consistent with a long tradition in Judeo-Christian theology: a cosmic "Hey you! What will you do with your life?" The world into which I try to bring to my students includes a community of scientists that is not only still struggling with the philosophical (and religious) issues spawned by the 20th century revolutions in physical theory (quantum mechanics, relativity, complexity/chaos), but is grappling with ethical questions ranging from the microcosmic (molecular genetics, biomedical ethics) to the macrocosmic (population issues, planetary ecology and stewardship). At a time when scientists themselves are calling for help from outside the scientific community in addressing these questions, and in many cases explicitly from religious communities, how can we not choose to equip our students with the resources of our faith?

The importance of Augsburg’s church connections, then, cannot be seen merely as a matter of nostalgia for a tradition that old-timers remember fondly. Rather, many of us sense the call, and the responsibility, to serve as educators for the good of our students and of their future, and we believe that the Lutheran educational framework is an excellent means to go about that task. Living out a commitment to this calling is a grand challenge. To pretend that it is easy is to seriously mislead ourselves, and especially our students, in part because of the different thrusts and allegiances of various components of the Liberal Arts referred to above. It is certainly difficult enough and important enough to demand of our campus leaders their best efforts and considerable energy for years to come.

It is perhaps appropriate in the context of the Lutheran academic freedom I have described that my final reference to our work at Augsburg is to a non-Lutheran document, the Dutch Catechism.

"God did not create the world long ago. God is in the act of creating the world, and also does it through us.

"It is not of course true that God makes the countryside and humans make the cities. The cities are almost even more God’s creation, because humans,
the climax of God's creation, express their creativity in them. What humans make is God's creation." (A New Catechism: Catholic Faith for Adults, Herder and Herder, p. 427, 1967)

We are to a large extent both the end and the means of God's action in the world. This is the glory and the challenge of the Christian life. We believe that God has created each of us "a little lower than the angels," to cite Psalm 8. God not only loves us but wants to enter into relationship with us; God has a purpose for our lives. We -- you and I -- are God's "Plan A." But although God calls us to serve others and the world ("Plan A"), God always has Plan B, Plan C, Plan D, etc., available in case we mess up. In other words, we (and the world) may depend on God absolutely, but God does not absolutely depend on us. Put another way, we are filled with wonder that God considers us to be so important, but we also remember that our actions and our very being are under judgment.

As I look toward the future, I hope to contribute through my own teaching to Augsburg's mission, namely, to have Augsburg continue to serve its students and the church in the ways its documents have outlined. I will be deeply disappointed if it fails to do so. The important question for us, at this time, is not whether God will continue to provide for humanity, to show love and mercy to a fallen but redeemable world, but whether this institution will take a part in that providing.

I thank Ken Erickson, Stuart Anderson, Bruce Reichenbach, Jennifer Alford, and Lynette Engebretson for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.
CHURCH CONNECTIONS: A Theological Perspective

As a college of the church, our task is to embody the gospel, good news, of Jesus Christ here in this place. By the grace of God which permeates the whole universe, we are called to witness to this gracious presence by the way we teach, the way we schedule our time together, the way we structure the college, the way we relate to our students and the way we relate to each other as faculty and staff.

It is in the realm of relationships that the dualisms which seek to destroy us are the most dangerous. The claim of the gospel is that the most basic dualism, spirit/matter has been shown to be false in the Christ event. For Christ is the key that shows us that the finite contains the infinite. Christ is the key because this is not an isolated instance but an epiphany of the way the world is constituted. What is foundational to the world is the interrelatedness of all that is. We have the freedom to choose to perpetuate the dualisms or to witness to the interrelatedness. As a college of the church, our task is to overcome the dualisms which face us.
There are several dualisms that are remarkably destructive. What is basic is the us vs. them construct. Rising from this understanding is the patriarchal structure we are currently caught in that treats men as us and women as them, the other, the ones who need to be controlled. Racism is also a result of this paradigm so that white is us and any other color is them. Again the assumption is that they need to be controlled but we do not. Currently gay and lesbian persons are treated as them based on the assumption that we are straight. You get the idea. The relational world in which we live is permeated by this affliction to divide the world so that the power is controlled by those who are privileged by these divisions.

In order to witness to interrelatedness as basic, we will need to envision ways to create a community that is not crippled by these divisions. We also need to think constructively about what promotes interrelatedness, what builds up the community. I would like to suggest a few ideas. First we may need to limit the growth of the college, since community such as this is unlikely on a huge scale. Second we need to reduce the teaching load to 5 courses per year with committee assignments spread around so that no one is overburdened. Third, we need to increase full time faculty so that there are faculty to staff com-
mittees, be advisors and participate fully in campus life. Stewardship of faculty time does not seem to be the priority that is necessary for scholarship, teaching creatively and community participation. Fourth, we need to revise the school course schedule so that the faculty can have the privilege of discussing pressing social issues, current research or acting as advisors for the local neighborhood as well as discussions with students outside of class time. Perhaps, all courses could be 1 1/2 hours long and taught on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays with Wednesday for whole college events in the morning and committee meetings in the afternoons. Fifth, we need to develop interdisciplinary majors and reconfigure teaching loads so that team teaching is encouraged. Eventually we may eliminate disciplines and departments and design courses around what needs to happen in the wider community in order to build healthy community relationships.

My concern here is to build into the schedule time for faculty to come together to create a community of moral deliberation. These conversations would include faith concerns. We need to be able to model for our students the ability to discuss controversial (even religious) issues in a civil manner that aims to promote interrelatedness and overcome the dualisms that so trap us.
We also need to create a climate on campus that is safe for all people. It does not seem that gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered people are able to be out on this campus which means that we have work to do in creating a climate which is inviting. Lutherans Concerned Twin Cities could help us with this.

As the culture becomes increasingly fragmented and people become increasingly busy, we can offer a different approach to living and learning. One that values people more than things. One that values time more than money. One that values relatedness more than competition. One that participates in the political arena in a way that seeks justice and peace. One that is not afraid to risk going against the culture in order to provide a healthy environment for learning. One that values an open, safe community, centered in Christ, where scholars (faculty and students) learn together in order to be resources for the community to offer hope for the future.

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Education Shaped by the Faith and Values of the Christian Church

Bruce R. Reichenbach

The Christian college is a visible witness to the presence of God through the ministry of education. Here the Gospel is presented in diverse languages: of free and responsible academic investigation; of worship and witness to the acts of God; of love and caring, honesty and integrity in a community directed toward maturation; of the beauty and wonder of aesthetic appreciation; of service and outreach.

Augsburg has committed itself to a project of mission-clarification and image-building. In what follows I will assume that the College intends to maintain, if not strengthen, its role as a Christian or Church-related college. The discussion in which it is engaged should lead to clarification of its role and consideration of specific ways to implement this dimension of its mission. Augsburg's accomplishment of this task must be integrated with the other dimensions of the College's mission, grounded in the College's unique tradition, and thoughtfully employed with a student body that is diverse and often does not list Church-relatedness as a reason for attending the College.

Elements of Church-Relatedness

In its study of Church-sponsored higher education in the United States, the Danforth Commission used six elements to determine whether a college should be considered Church-related. The first was the composition of the board. In approximately 45% of the colleges identified as Church-connected, at least three-fourths of the board members were required to be Church members. This feature, the study noted, was most typical of Lutheran Colleges. The second was Church ownership of the college. When the study was conducted the Church owned 79.5% of the Lutheran colleges. A third feature was that Church colleges typically received a portion of their funding from a Church body. The
acceptance of denominational standards, or use of a denominational name or a name with distinct religious connotations or connections provided a fourth element. The fifth focused on the college's statement of educational aims or purposes. The final factor involved the college's careful selection of faculty and administrative personnel to meet its educational aims.

Currently Augsburg satisfies many of these conditions. With respect to the first condition, two-thirds of the board members must be members of Lutheran congregations and a simple majority of the board must be members of the ELCA. Second, the College properties belong to the Augsburg Corporation, which is composed of the congregations in the Minneapolis, St. Paul, Southeast Minnesota, and Western Wisconsin Synods. Third, though the amount contributed by the Church is modest -- 1/2 of 1% of Augsburg's annual budget, the ELCA does contribute to the on-going operations of the College. The term "Augsburg," used to refer to the Augsburg Confession presented by Lutherans in Germany in 1530, satisfies the fourth condition. Its mission statement -- that the educational opportunities we offer are "shaped by the faith and values of the Christian Church" -- satisfies the fifth condition. Whether and how it satisfies the sixth condition is a matter of some debate and discussion.

One might consider adding two other conditions also met by Augsburg. One is curricular, namely, that students be required to take courses in religion; the second involves community connections, namely, that the college consciously seek ways to relate to and involve the local churches in its programs. Augsburg currently does the former through its religion requirement and the latter through the operations of Church Relations, which among other things promotes the College's programs in the Churches, provides speakers to the local congregations, and brings clergy and laity on campus for various events.
In what follows I will leave conditions 1-4 and 8 aside and concentrate on what I consider to be those conditions that most directly affect being a college of the Church, namely 5, 6 and 7. It is not that the first four and the eighth factors are unimportant. It has been suggested that factors two and three serve as "some reminder to the college that it was set up originally as an expression of Christian love and a witness to the Christian faith." The composition of the board can significantly determine the direction of an institution, particularly through the selection of its president. At the same time, the financial contributions from the Church have become an increasingly diminished proportion of the overall college budget. Other dimensions, such as student recruiting from within congregations, might provide a more important though indirect line of financial support to institutions that are tuition driven. At the same time, however, conditions 5-7 get to the heart of how Augsburg might deliberately seek to implement its mission.

The Current Mission Statement

According to the current mission statement, the College provides educational opportunities "shaped by the faith and values of the Christian Church." The statement highlights two significant dimensions of its Church-connectedness: the Christian faith and Christian values. I understand this statement to indicate that the mission has both a cognitive and spiritual basis in the articulated, historical faith of the Church and a cognitive and character-forming value concern rooted in the Gospels and life of the Church. Let me comment on these in turn.

Historically Christians have used "faith" in several ways. "Faith" often functions as a noun modified by "Christian;" in such cases Christian faith stands in contrast to other religious faiths, e.g., the Muslim faith or the Bahai faith. A religious faith contains a set of beliefs that adherents to a particular religion affirm. Faith so understood has a distinctly cognitive dimension,
which in Christianity originates in scripture, is formulated in the historic creeds of the Church, and is transmitted through theological and religious writings. "Faith" has also been used to refer to a way of knowing fundamental truths necessary for salvation but generally inaccessible to ordinary reason or sensory experience. It is a divinely given, knowing response to divine revelation. "Faith" can also refer to the volitional and existential dimension of life, to what Tillich calls human ultimate concern. Thus, the words "faith of the Christian Church" provide a rich way of speaking about how Christianity can inform the education of students. Though the usage of "faith" in current mission statement is vague and unclarified, one might hope that it invokes all three of these dimensions: cognitive, revelational, and existential.

Christianity is a revelational religion that has, as its central motif, the claim that God has been and is at work "reconciling the world to himself" through Jesus Christ. This doctrinal component stresses that the revelation of God's intentions, purposes, and actions provides a basis for thinking about human beings and the world. That is, the Christian faith provides a world view or theological-philosophical perspective from which and in terms of which one understands, investigates, and teaches. This world view is formulated in statements that can be believed and implemented in life, affirmed or denied, taught and learned, discussed and debated, and related to statements and ideas found in diverse disciplines and in other religions. This world view can also frame the education of students by providing the intellectual context for the development of their own faith and spirituality.

The current mission statement also emphasizes Christian values. The term "value" is often hopelessly uninformative, for anything that people think is important can be valued by them and hence can constitute one of their values. A value need not be
morally desirable. However, the term is widely used and I will attempt to clarify part of its content in the context of a Christian college. I take the affirmation of Christian values in the mission statement to emphasize the Judeo-Christian moral prescriptions and principles embodied in the Ten Commandments, the teachings of Jesus, and the other New Testament authors. These principles have been clarified and applied to new situations throughout the history of the Church. Above all, the person of Jesus provides the model for developing Christian virtues or qualities of character that are to be valued. Christian values, understood in this sense, flow from the distinctive belief system of Christians and consequently play distinctive roles when Christians, either individually or as a larger college community, affirm ideals and moral obligations, make moral judgments, and stress the moral character that the College desires its students to develop and attempts to nurture.

Emphasis on the integration of values into the curriculum is, I think, widely accepted at Augsburg. Whereas the discussion of values, and in particular, religious values is sometimes restricted in the public university, such discussion is welcome in the Augsburg community. What is perhaps more in dispute is the degree to which faculty and staff should be proactive in encouraging and assisting students to develop Christian qualities of character. Put another way: it is one thing to teach about values and virtue (indeed, about religion itself); it is quite another to encourage students to develop and foster particular values. The latter provides a broader role for education, extending beyond the classroom into dorm life, work, and social relationships.

What the College is About

Augsburg exists for one purpose: to educate those who choose to come here and whom we admit. If we have any reason for existing and correspondingly any way to measure our success, it must be in terms of how successful we are in educating students. The
buildings we erect, the curricula we adopt, the requirements we institute, the social and cultural events we sponsor -- all have their justification precisely in this.

Education is sometimes very narrowly conceived to apply only to the education of the mind. Thus, colleges typically emphasize classroom experiences, teaching, texts, courses, libraries, and the like. It is in this arena that faculty function most comfortably, for they have been trained to contribute through classroom and laboratory. Though surely this constitutes one facet of education, emphasis on this dimension to the neglect of other factors can lead us to cultivate intellectual giants and moral and social pygmies.

Much more goes on at college than the education of the mind. Indeed, were we to measure student education in increments of time, the business of formal education would not predominate. Education goes on in the dorm, in the athletic center or field, in the music and drama presentations, in the work experience in the community.

Hence, if we are to speak about education as the *raison d'être* of Augsburg, we must think about educating the whole person. The mind must be trained to think critically, clearly and creatively; the intellectual skills involved in learning and research must be honed; new ideas and data bases must be introduced so that students can attain knowledge, from which to both deepen their understanding of particular areas and broaden their horizons and perspectives. Moral character must be shaped and strengthened. Students must be taught to think about virtue, about what it is to develop the kind of character that will serve them and society well during their lifetime. Beyond this, students should be encouraged and given opportunity to develop qualities of character. Students should be taught to use, develop, and strengthen their physical attributes, to develop interests and skills that will lead them to patterns of action that favor life-long fitness. They should be taught social and emotional skills that will enable them to get along with
others, and to satisfy their own emotional needs and those of others in ways that foster growth, maturity, and satisfaction.

In effect, in defining the purpose of Augsburg as educating the whole person, focus must be placed on every dimension of student life. Education takes place in many settings. Hence, not only faculty, but college staff and peers function as "educators," though not everyone "educates" in all of the above dimensions. This means that items five and six above, having to do with the mission of the college and the individuals hired to implement it, will apply to all facets of college life, not merely to the faculty. That is, the entire college community should be knowledgeably committed to the College's mission as the College attempts in its diverse educational roles to assist students in their education.

Implementation of Mission

If this assessment of education is correct, then implementation of the mission should occur at all levels of college life, informing all aspects of the college's educational endeavors.

"In higher education this principle [that a college should define its purposes carefully and plan its program in accordance with its announced purposes] means that institutional purposes will determine the qualification for faculty appointments, the policies governing the admission of students, the kind of persons who should be asked to serve as administrative officers and trustees, the curricular requirements to be met by students, the selection of materials for the library, and many other matters."

The mission must flow from the President through the faculty and the staff to create a particular kind of community. It shapes the way the administrators operate the College. It informs the way the faculty educate, both in individual courses and in the overall college curriculum. It governs the way staff interact with students: in counseling, residential life, job and career placement, and social activities. It shapes the extracurricular
dimensions of the College: the worship life, the social, athletic and artistic activities, and the way students work and serve in the community.

This also applies to the Christian dimension of the mission statement. The Christian character of the College cannot be relegated to the chapel worship program, the religion department, required courses in religion, or the Church Relations office. Christian faith and values should permeate every aspect of the College. They should inform the very way the administration operates the college. They should shape the entire curriculum through their integration at relevant points with other subject matter. They should help determine the kinds of outcomes we want for our students when they graduate. They should be a lively topic for educated discussion and civil debate. They should govern how Augsburg community members relate to each other. In effect, they should pervade our study, work, worship, and spiritual life.

Curricular Design

In the past Augsburg's faith element has appeared in at least two curricular dimensions. First, it has found expression in a requirement that students take a particular number of courses in religion, which in Augsburg's context, rightly emphasizes Christianity. Here the faith dimension of the mission is explicitly, conceptually formulated. Religion faculty present students with the opportunity to understand Christian (and to some extent, more specifically Lutheran) perspectives on the world and life and "to see their lives and responsibilities in the context of the Christian faith." If our above assessment of the breadth of education is correct, discussion of religion in such courses should be addressed to the heart as well as to the head.

On the one hand, the goal is to instruct but not proselytize our students. Religion as a subject should be taught in a way that unapologetically presents Christian theological ideas and perspectives, while at the same time respects the genuine freedom
of the student to agree, to disagree, and to develop alternatives. Indeed, the college's commitment to diversity and multiculturalism can be embodied in a curriculum that shows sensitivity to diversity without compromising either the subject matter or the Christian mission. While the majority of courses will reflect a Christian perspective, courses bringing diverse points of view -- Native American religion, Afro-American religion, and feminist theology -- are appropriate.

On the other hand, the goal is not to create a program of religious studies where intellectual content is untethered to human life and moral living. Courses in Christianity should be taught in a way that will inform intellectually and spiritually the students' entire approach to life. In effect, religion courses have the difficult charge of steering a course between Scylla and Charybdis, between indoctrination that takes as its primary end to make disciples, and mere religious studies that debunk students' previous, precritical beliefs and make religion into a mere academic discipline objectively accessible to all. In this middle ground religious claims will not be presented dogmatically or taken uncritically, but proposed as both truth claims subject to investigation and recommendations to be accepted and acted upon, yet from a self-consciously Christian point of view. In this, one might argue, religion courses are not unique; such would constitute proper goals for all liberal arts courses in a Christian college.

The question often arises as to how many general education religion courses the College should require. Obviously no magic number or formula arises. Rather, what must be addressed is the number of courses the community believes is necessary to communicate the faith content of Augsburg's mission to the extent that students come to appreciate and understand the Christian faith and are challenged with respect to developing their own faith structures. In effect, this leaves the matter open to the judgment of the community regarding what it thinks is necessary to achieve
the goal of facilitating students' understanding of the Christian faith and challenging them to formulate reflectively their own religious views.

Beyond specific requirements in religion, the faith-dimension should inform all curricular decisions. This is not to suggest that there is a specific Christian psychology, economics, literature or biology. Rather, commitment to articulating the faith perspective should lead faculty to consider ways in which elements regarding Christian understandings of God, persons and the world can be incorporated as part of relevant discussions in the classroom. The fact that colleges offer such courses as religion and the arts, religion and politics, and religion and science, indicates that certain theses about the Christian faith in the respective disciplines can be integrated with disciplinary discussions in ways that are not prejudicial or detrimental to either religion or the particular discipline, but create situations for positive (though not necessarily tensionless) dialogue.

The second dimension of the Christian mission -- education shaped by values -- should also be integrated into the larger curriculum in a Christian college. Questions about matters of right action and virtue can be introduced in all disciplines, in that students should be prompted to learn not only about what is or has been the case, but also about what ought to be the case. Here Christian values can be used to formulate the context for discussion, allowing and encouraging students to raise, discuss, justify, and implement their own value concerns. The ultimate goal is that our students, when they graduate, are not only better prepared intellectually and professionally, but also better prepared morally and spiritually to face the diversity of future experiences.

Our motto, "Education for Service," provides one such linkage between the educational dimension and the external community. To its credit, this motto often has informed the programs that
Augsburg has implemented. It was this that, in part, justified our adoption of special programs in Nursing, Education, Social Work, the Physicians Assistant program, and Youth and Family Ministry program. One goal might be to create a stronger connection of these programs, where feasible, with the Church.

Service, however, should also be seen more broadly to encompass the diverse ways that students can serve others in the community through the employment of the knowledge and skills they derive from their education. The College, through its faculty and programs, can increase student awareness that in every aspect of life, in every occupation, we are serving others on behalf of God. This is our God-given vocation.

Extracurricular Design

If education is broadly conceived, then the Christian faith should shape extracurricular programs as well. One might suggest that the college environment should nurture students in their growth as persons, and especially in a Christian college, the nurturing will be conducted from the Christian perspective or worldview. It is not that the College "turns out" Christians, for many students will enter and leave as nonchristians. But being Christian will inform the way the College conceives and goes about its task to constructing a community and enriching environment.

The extracurricular dimension will take shape as the College seeks to create a learning context and growing community. The worship experience should form a center for the community. Participation in worship would be an expectation of the faculty and staff of the College, while students of all faiths would be encouraged to attend. The Chapel worship of a Lutheran college would properly, at times, reflect Lutheran styles and concerns. Yet in serving the larger Christian community, it should also reflect the broader Christian dimensions of the community: in worship style, in speakers, in music, in inviting Christians from
diverse cultures to be active in structuring the experience for the rest of the community.

Other kinds of programs will follow from being a college of the Church. The current convocations in spirituality (Christensen Symposium) and practical Christian ethics (Bataelden Seminar) are completely consonant with Augsburg's mission. Arts organizations like the choirs should incorporate Christian themes in their presentations (on campus and in the community, e.g., Advent Vespers and on tour in the churches) as part of a ministry guided by the College's mission.

It properly extends to recruitment as well. Our connections with the Church should provide ways by which we can bring students of high academic ability and moral character to the College. Such students can have a significant, positive influence on the entire college community.

Faculty, Administrators and Staff

Perhaps the most critical factor in the success of the College in fulfilling its mission is the composition of the faculty, administration and staff at the institution. It is this group of individuals that provides direction both to the College as a whole and to the students. Faculty play a direct role in governance and in students' education, both in the classroom and in personal outside contact. They become role models for students, establish departmental and course curricula and set the classroom agenda. The administration hires and oversees the development and direction of programs. Staff play a critical role in counseling and in setting the atmosphere for dorm life and for relationships of students to college offices. Their counseling of students reflects their own values and emphasizes what they think is important in students' own development.

Consequently, it is in the staffing of the institution, more than anywhere else, that the character of the institution and its ability to shape the educational experience of students will be
felt and ultimately effective. And unless the administration, faculty and staff are knowledgeable about the Christian faith, have critically reflected on the integration of faith and learning, and are consciously committed to and affirmative of playing a role in implementing the Christian dimension of the mission, the College cannot succeed in achieving its stated mission.

This is analogous to what occurs within individual departments. Unless the individual members are committed to the departmental educational objectives, those objectives cannot be achieved. One wants more than departmental members who are comfortable with or respect the departmental objectives. One wants members who intentionally work in their own teaching to carry out the department's mission.

Accordingly, it is in hiring faculty, administrators and staff who possess an educated commitment to the mission of providing an education shaped by Christian faith and values that the most critical decisions will be made. The Danforth Commission puts it well. "If a college intends to be a Christian community and to conduct its work within a Christian context, the appointment of faculty members who are sympathetic with this purpose and can make a contribution to such a community is an important factor in selection. From the point of view of academic integrity, it is essential to make the additional qualification explicit to everyone concerned."^{13}

The Commission notes the importance of this and the resulting difficulty. "In the staffing of Church college and universities, one of the difficult problems is that of appointing persons who have the requisite religious commitment... In general, we find that most Church institutions lack firm and well-formulated policies in this respect. Institutions commonly seek some evidence of religious affiliation in prospective teachers, but too often nominal Church membership is regarded as sufficient. What is lacking is the expectation that the faculty member will be an
informed, thoughtful Church[person] and relate his [or her] subject to the Judeo-Christian tradition.... This is one of the most basic problems of Church institutions today."14

Commitment to effectively implementing the mission statement means more than that those hired will be sympathetic to or comfortable working in an environment that makes such a Christian statement. A tragic failure to understand Christian professorship lurks in the view expressed by a religion faculty member at another institution who said that the college's requirement that religion faculty be Christians "never intruded on [his] teaching or scholarship."15 Not only should the nature and mission of the institution be put up front in the hiring process, but prospective employees should be asked to address how they see the integration of Christian faith and values with learning and teaching. This should not be merely an academic exercise, but an opportunity to share how in the past they have integrated Christian faith and learning, and how in the future they would like to contribute to the Christian mission of the College. Since the past is often a harbinger of the future, the way prospective employees have integrated their Christian faith and values with their prior professional lives will provide evidence (though obviously no guarantee) that they will continue such patterns at Augsburg.

Administrators, faculty and staff who come here should choose to teach and work at this institution. This choosing will include participating in a Christian community, fulfilling to the best of their ability a particular task centered around a mission that embodies, among other dimensions, a commitment to conducting education from the perspective of Christian faith and values.

This being said, several caveats must be made. First, commitment to the Christian faith should not replace professional preparation and expertise or pedagogical ability. Sometimes the discussion of hiring qualifications is couched in terms of a radical disjunction: departments hire either persons with academic
expertise or persons who manifest commitment to the Christian faith and are active, knowledgeable Churchpersons. The dichotomy is false. Faculty satisfying both academic and religious criteria generally can be found.

Second, should religious requirements apply to all persons hired to work in the community? The Danforth Commission likewise struggled with the question, "Where the purposes of a college necessitate religious or other special qualification for the faculty, is it wise to expect all members of the teaching staff to meet the qualifications? Should provision be made for what has been called 'ventilation'? In a matter so basic as religion, is the student entitled to some teachers who hold other convictions? Would the appointment of a few such persons promote or obstruct the accomplishment of institutional purposes? These are difficult questions to answer with any degree of certitude, but the importance of freedom in an academic institution would seem to argued for some diversity of faculty outlook even at the risk of reducing the religious impact."16

Suppose one agrees that the matter of diversity argues strongly for "ventilation" on the grounds that a college needs persons who can represent and present nonchristian points of view in ways that provide an opportunity for serious, internal dialogue on these important issues. Such persons should be hired and encouraged to effectively raise the kinds of questions that both Christians and nonchristians have to face. They can challenge the ethos of the institution, raise questions about its integrity and consistency, and provide constructive models for students who themselves are skeptical about the Christian faith.

How, then, would this concern for ventilation and diversity be implemented? George Marsden has introduced the notion of a critical mass. On his view, the Church-related or Christian college would be a place where there is a critical mass of faculty, administrators and staff who maintain strong Christian commitments,
in consonance with the stated mission of the College. Clearly the notion cannot be unpacked simply in terms of definite numbers, as if some given percentage would achieve such a goal. The notion of critical mass is less a matter of pure numbers than a matter of presence, power, and influence in creating a particular kind of community. Thus, administrators and departments, in attempting to maintain a critical mass of those committed to implementing actively the College's mission statement, have to assess the intellectual and governmental milieu of the campus.

The criterion of "critical mass" should apply not only college-wide, but to individual departments as well. The latter is especially important because current hiring is initiated and completed at the department level. Consideration of departmental faculty would insure that the Christian faith is in dialogue with every aspect of the educational curriculum.

Here is one area where some changes could be carefully implemented. Those making hiring decisions could be broadened to include members of the larger college community, so that, in the case of the faculty, more than mere departmental concerns can be addressed. The questions of "campus fit" and "mission fostering" should also play roles in the hiring process. I want to be careful here lest I be misunderstood. By "campus fit" I do not mean homogeneity in politics, gender, race, or outlook. What I do mean is that in addition to diversity issues, the question of how prospective administrators, faculty and staff see their respective roles in actively integrating faith and learning in the community should be an important consideration.

Third, ventilation is not best served by simply ignoring religious commitment or perspectives when hiring administrators, faculty or staff. Not benign neglect but intentionality rules. If the purpose of "ventilation" is to provide diversity of perspectives leading to fruitful and stimulating dialogue, the hiring should be done intentionally in that regard. Further,
ventilation is not achieved simply by hiring persons who identify with Islam, Judaism or atheism, but by hiring persons who are knowledgeable, thoughtful and articulate spokespersons of those positions.

Fourth, since this is a Lutheran college, the matter of intentional hiring might be conceived to apply to being Lutheran rather than simply being Christian. Lutherans have a distinctive theological and social perspective within the Christian community. Since the College is not simply a Christian community but a Lutheran one, Lutheran perspectives should be well represented to make dialogue within and outside the community possible.

At this juncture being a Church-related college and being a Christian college can take on different roles. The first defines a more narrow theological/historical/cultural context; the second participates in the broad Christian community. What is required is an intentional balance between the two, where Lutheran traditions are allowed to enrich the broader Christian community and its spirituality.

Finally, hiring decisions must be supplemented by on-going faculty and staff development programs that foster continued education and thought regarding the incorporation of Christian faith and values into the various dimensions of community life. This can begin for new faculty and staff with orientation programs that feature constructive and educational discussions about ways to integrate concerns about Christian faith and values into various aspects of service to the Augsburg community. These can be tied into on-going programs that upgrade our abilities, and awareness of diverse ways, to integrate faith and learning.

Marsden's warning about the centrality of intentional hiring is clear. "So far as the future is concerned, the most crucial area where these issues [of diversity] play themselves out is in faculty hiring. Once a church-related institution adopts the policy that it will hire simply 'the best qualified candidates,' it
is simply a matter of time until its faculty will have an ideological profile essentially like that of the faculty at every other mainstream university. The first loyalties of faculty members will be to the national cultures of the professions rather than to any local or ecclesiastical traditions. Faculty members become essentially interchangeable parts in a standardized national system. At first, when schools move in the direction of open hiring, they can count on some continuity with their traditions based on informal ties and self-selection of those congenial to their heritage. Within a generation, however, there is bound to be a shift to a majority for whom national professional loyalties are primary. Since departmental faculties typically have virtual autonomy in hiring, it becomes impossible to reverse the trend and the church tradition becomes vestigial. The Protestant experience suggests that once a school begins to move away from the religious heritage as a factor in hiring, the pressures become increasingly greater to continue to move in that direction."

Freedom and Commitment

It goes without saying that what we have suggested creates the possibility of tension between a particular commitment required of a critical mass of faculty and the academic freedom to think, say and do what one believes is true and right. "A carefully-defined institutional purpose is, in the very nature of things, a restriction on freedom. It molds the institution. In effect it precludes some courses of action. ...It demands that certain things be done."20

Academic freedom, the freedom to pursue ideas, is germane to a liberal arts college, which conceives as its task the liberation of students to encounter new or different ideas, methods, cultures and persons in the pursuit of truth. Not only must students be given that freedom, they must be empowered to use it. The faculty responsible for the empowering need that same freedom to investigate for themselves and to open new doors for students.
The debate that rages concerning the tension between faith commitment and freedom often begins with some kind of absolute commitment to one or the other of these, at the expense of the other. An absolute commitment to some faith statement can preclude investigation and can lead to mere dogmatism. An absolute commitment to freedom denies the commitments of the institution and the responsibility one assumes when one joins a community that affirms a shared mission.

The key is not necessarily removing the tension, for tension is not always bad; it can provide the needed catalyst for growth. Rather, the key is realizing that freedom and commitment always are located within a context. The Danforth Commission argues that "a defensible policy for higher education requires that three elements -- freedom, responsibility, and institutional purpose -- be considered an indissoluble cluster of desiderata, no one of which can properly be pursued without reference to the other two."21 There can be no such thing as absolute freedom; freedom to act is conditioned by the circumstances of the agent and the possibilities that exist.

One implication of this is that faculty, once appointed, should have "the intellectual freedom to discharge their educational responsibilities."22 This entails a risk on the part of the institution that those whom it hires will not continue to maintain that original sympathy with and commitment to the goals of the institution. It also entails a responsibility on the part of the faculty and staff to maintain their integrity and the integrity of the institution. At some point, it might even require faculty, administrative, or staff persons of integrity to resign from the College because they can no longer conscientiously support the mission of the College.

In the final analysis, a Christian institution should not be afraid of either truth or freedom. This is particularly appropriate within the Christian context, which has emphasized that
all truth is God's truth. Those committed to Christianity need not fear the exploration of issues. "Through truth to freedom" is an appropriate motto of the College. Rather, within the Church-related college Christian faith and values should be in continual dialogue with all the disciplines, each enriching the other. "When a tradition is in good order it is partially constituted by an argument about the goods the pursuit of which gives the tradition its particular point and purpose. So when an institution -- a university, say ... -- is the bearer of a tradition of practice or practices, its common life will be partly, but in a centrally important way, constituted by a continuous argument as to what a university is and ought to be... A living tradition then is a historically extended socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition."  

Mission Possible

When I was a teenager I was an avid watcher of "Mission Impossible." By means of a tape that self-destructed in 10 seconds, the group was given a seemingly impossible task. Through hard work, creativity, courage and not a little luck they always succeeded in their impossible but exciting mission. Augsburg too has a mission, which given the times its formulation changes, might seem to regularly self-destruct. Yet not so, for each mission statement is rooted in the historical tradition of the College. The College's mission includes the creation of a dialogue between the Christian faith and values and the program of liberal arts and professional studies. The mission includes a commitment to conduct education, understood in the broadest sense, from the perspective of the Christian faith and Christian values, in the context of the liberal arts, which gives the freedom to explore the world as widely and deeply as possible. It is the mission to make God visible in a concrete, fallible, diverse, relational community. It is the mission to assist students to develop their own
intellectual, moral and spiritual life. Possible? I hope so. But only if administrators, faculty and staff undertake the difficult challenge of constructing a community staffed by persons who by their own Christian faith, hard work, creativity, courage, sensitivity and joy work with the mercy and providence of God to change lives.  

Addendum

One persistent worry is whether incorporating knowledgeable commitment to the religious mission of the college as a consideration in hiring is legal. Can a Christian or Church-related college legally give preference to candidates who espouse a particular religious perspective?

The 1964 Civil Rights act exempted religious organizations from its nondiscriminatory provisions regarding religious preference in hiring. "This title shall not apply to ... a religious corporation, association or society with respect to the employment of individuals of a particular religion to perform work connected with the carrying on by such corporation, association or society of its religious activities or to an educational institution with respect to the employment of individuals to perform work connected with the educational activities of such institution." The original draft was strengthened by the inclusion in the act of the Purcell amendment, which allowed religious background as a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ) in the hiring of administrators, faculty, and certain staff (Purcell gave as examples "the dean of students, director of a dormitory, or even the supervisor of library materials"). Both the exemption provision and the BFOQ indicate that administrators, faculty and staff related to the educational enterprise are exempt from the civil rights legislation prohibiting religious discrimination. What was left unclear was the extent to which the nondiscriminatory provisions of the act applied to staff more
tangently connected to the educational enterprise -- groundskeepers, maintenance, secretaries, etc.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act was amended in 1972 to remove many of the loopholes that militated against ending the gender and racial discrimination that continued in educational institutions. However, while gender and racial discrimination was expressly forbidden in educational institutions by the 1972 act, religious institutions were not forbidden to use religious preference in hiring. "This title shall not apply to a religious corporation, association, educational institution, or society with respect to the employment of individuals of a particular religion to perform work connected with the carrying on by such corporation, association, educational institution, or society of its activities." 27

To date, to my knowledge the United States Supreme Court has not taken or heard any case regarding religious preference with respect to hiring by an institution of higher learning. In three cases dealing with the relation between Church colleges and the government -- Tilton v. Richardson, 28 Hunt v. McNair, 29 and Roemer v. Board of Public Works in Maryland 30 -- the issue was whether the government could provide funds for facilities or give noncategorical grants to Church-related colleges. In all three cases the court sided with the institutions, authorizing federal aid to religiously affiliated colleges. The issue of preferential hiring was touched on only tangently in these cases, in each case the emphasis being that religious mission did not hinder the "secular" functions of the institution. In the case of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State v. Blanton, 31 a case granted summary affirmance by the U.S. Supreme Court, a federal court held that students at sectarian colleges, even those "with religious requirements for students and faculty and admittedly permeated with the dogma of the sponsoring religious organization," could receive public funds for student aid. This was further
affirmed in the 1980 Grove City College v. Bell, in which federal student financial aid was considered a loan to the student, and hence in no way was jeopardized by a college's failure to comply with governmental regulations (in this case Title IX). In their survey of the relevant cases, Moots and Gaffney conclude, "A policy of religious preference in the selection of administrators and faculty members which results in a preponderance of these employees belonging to the sponsoring religious body would endanger neither institutional assistance nor aid to students attending that institution. And what may safely be concluded from the Supreme Court's summary affirmance in Blanton is that a policy of 'religious requirements' for faculty members -- the court did not specify whether this meant some or all members of the faculty -- would not endanger the eligibility of students to participate in a generalized program of assistance."³²c

Lower court decisions, Executive orders, and government regulation rulings on issues not directly related to hiring by Church-related colleges have tended to cloud the issue of the extent to which religious insitutions are exempt from Title VII with respect to employment practices.³³ Whereas some circuit courts have interpreted the exemptions in the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1972 amendment narrowly, others have interpreted it broadly.³⁴ The 3rd Circuit Court agreed that exemptions should "enable religious organizations to create and maintain communities composed solely of individuals faithful to their doctrinal practices, whether or not every individual plays a direct role in the organization's religious activities."³⁵ The 9th Circuit Court emphasized consistency with the overall mission when considering matters relating to the nondiscrimination clause of Title VII, while restricting exemptions to cases where governmental interference would conflict with the religious beliefs of the organization.³⁶ In a recent case regarding a Mormon Temple the Supreme Court held that the exemption for religious organizations
in giving religious preference in employment practices extended to employees performing nonreligious functions, in this case a janitor.\textsuperscript{37} What is noteworthy in all these cases is that they have to do with employment practices subsequent to hiring, that is, with issues having to do with wage inequities or termination of employment.

In sum, the consensus position seems to be that Title VII of the Civil Rights Law and its amendments exempt religious organizations in such a way as to permit using considerations of religious preference in hiring administrators, faculty, and staff persons whose activities relate to the educational program and carrying out of the college's mission. Where there is significant unclarity is how far this exemption extends to issues such as the firing of employees (particularly as it impacts matters of gender and racial discrimination) and whether religious preference considerations apply to all employees of the organization. Our emphasis in this article, however, has been on the hiring of individuals who play a more direct role in the educational life of Augsburg's community, and here the legal situation allowing discriminatory hiring based on religious preference seems clearly provided for by Title VII and the relevant court cases.
NOTES


2 In what follows I will use Christian college and Church-related college interchangeably. Though I think one might distinguish between the two, the one being at least more sectarian than the other, delineating differences here will not further the overall discussion of how Augsburg sees and realizes its mission.


4 Interestingly enough, this feature was so broad and vague as to provide little help for the commission in delineating church-related colleges from those not so.

5 Kauper, 32.

6 One Augsburg faculty member has pointed out, correctly I believe, that the current mission statement might be more accurately put: Augsburg provides "educational opportunities which are shaped by the liberal arts and based in the faith and values of the Christian Church." Robert W. Bertram ("What's Lutheran About Higher Education? Theological Presuppositions," What's Lutheran about Higher Education, 17) speaks about the "distinctively Christian ground from which Christian higher education proceeds.

7 This classic view has been held by Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Karl Barth.


9 "The content of [Christian] faith is first and essentially a living relationship with God. For the Christian that relationship is defined in terms of a living historical person, Jesus the
Christ, who is God come to mankind and is also man as God intended him, and is even more, an eternal living Lord in communication with the fellowship of Christians through the Holy Spirit, Scripture, sacraments and preaching. The reference to history, Church and writings indicate embodiments and a tradition to be transmitted. The tradition ... is the element of the faith relationship which provides direction to the understanding of the nature of life as it is and as it ought to be." Robert J. Marshall, "The College, A Place of Dialogue," Whose Institutions? (Washington, D.C.: Lutheran Educational Conference of North America, 1969), 25-6.

10 "The mission of the LCA colleges is to develop through education all aspects of the human character -- e.g., the intellectual, the personal, the moral and the religious -- and to maintain through their concern with all human disciplines the wholeness of the human personality." "Statement of the Council on the Mission of LCA Colleges and Universities," The Mission of LCA Colleges and Universities (New York: Lutheran Church in American, 1969), 7.

11 Pattillo, p. 71.
12 The Mission of LCA Colleges and Universities, 9.
14 Pattillo, pp. 87-8.
15 "Davidson tries to keep Presbyterian heritage while welcoming students of other faiths," The Chronicle of Higher Education 42, n. 44 (July 12, 1996), 15.
16 Pattillo, p. 63.
17 Though he has yet to spell out his notion of critical mass, in a forthcoming book [The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship (New York: Oxford, 1997)], Marsden writes, "Schools that have a Christian heritage must also take some concrete steps to counteract the pressures to conform to the secular standards of the dominant university culture. Historically, the crucial issue has been faculty hiring. Without at least some faculty committed to
integrating faith and learning, no amount of administrative rhetoric can sustain the enterprise. Many church-related schools are so open in their hiring that they have little hope of retaining any aspect of their religious heritage. Once the mass of their faculty are attuned only to the standards of the national academic culture, they will continue to hire people like themselves, thus obliterating loyalties to any distinctive religious heritage. It is just a matter of time."

18 I have been told that such a program is in place at Concordia College.

19 George Marsden, "What Can Catholic Universities Learn from Protestant Examples?" in The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University, ed. by Theodore M. Hesburgh (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

20 Pattillo, p. 71.

21 Pattillo, p. 70.

22 Pattillo, p. 68.


24 I wish to thank John Benson, Jeanne Boeh, Brad Holt, Dale Pederson, Diane Pike and Sharon Reichenbach for their helpful comments and suggestions, and Karen Mateer for her research assistance.

25 Section 702. Section 703(e)(2), which allows for discrimination based on religious preference, applies more narrowly to institutions that are "owned, supported, controlled, or managed by a particular religion or by a particular religious corporation," or that are "directed to the propagation of a particular religion." Whether or not the former applies, the latter would not apply to a religious liberal arts college like Augsburg (though note the disjunct "or"). Moots, pp. 57-60.

2610 Congressional Record 2585 (Feb. 8, 1964).
35 Little v. Wuerl, 929 F.2d 944, 951 (3rd Cir. 1991). Also EEOC v. Mississippi College (5th Cir. 1980).
36 EEOC v. Pacific Press Publishing Ass'n, 676 F.2d at 1279 (9th Cir., 1982).