



General Superintendents Greathouse and Stowe, Chairman Benefiel and members of the Board of Trustees, distinguished guests, administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, students, and friends of the Thomas Nazarene College.

**The Reaffirmation of Christian Liberal Arts Amid the Challenges of the Eighties**

Two years ago I came from a small, rural, native Texas town to enroll as a freshman at Pasadena College. I arrived, incomparably naive about higher education. College was perceived as a proper thing to do at that stage of life. My motivation probably tilted slightly more toward an opportunity to participate in intercollegiate athletics than to immerse myself in the liberal arts process. Somewhere in the midst of my college years, most imperceptibly I got turned around intellectually. As a consequence I grew to realize that in a true sense I am a Christian higher education shaped person. Reflecting on my life the impact of the godly dedicated instructors who by their example and instruction positively impacted my life and those of my students, and I have a strong suspicion that my days may have been spent outside the classroom. I would probably have lived out my life languishing in some quiet, comfortable, unchangeable complacency and mediocrity.

And so to you, PLNC—institution of my deep affection—to you I say, "I am debtor." And if in some way, small or great, I shall be able to repay you in part for your incomparable investment in my life, may God grant me grace not to squander the opportunity.

Never in my wildest dreams have I imagined that I would be afforded such an



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■ General Superintendents Greathouse and Stowe, Chairman Benefiel and members of the Board of Trustees, distinguished guests, administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, students, and friends of Point Loma Nazarene College:

Twenty-nine years ago this fall I left my native Texas to enroll as a freshman at Pasadena College. I arrived, incomparably naive about higher education. College was perceived as the proper thing to do at that stage of life, though the motivation probably tilted slightly more toward an opportunity to participate in intercollegiate athletics than to immerse myself in the liberal arts process. Somewhere in the midst of my college years, almost imperceptibly I got turned on intellectually. As a consequence I gladly testify that in a true sense I am a Christian higher education shaped person. Remove from my life the impact of the godly dedicated instructors who by precept and example impacted positively my life and thought, and I suspect that my days may have been spent outside life's mainstream. I would probably have lived out my life languishing in some quiet eddy of unchallengeable complacency and mediocrity.

And so to you, PLNC—institution of my deep affection—to you I say, "I am debtor." And if in some way, small or great, I shall be able to repay you in part for your incomparable investment in my life, may God grant me grace not to squander the opportunity.

Never in my wildest dreams have I imagined that I would be afforded such an



incredible opportunity to serve my alma mater. I am a man most richly honored to be the leader of this College and to follow in the train of those leaders who have made this institution great, some of whom are here today—Dr. W. T. Purkiser, president of Pasadena College from 1949-1957; Dr. O. J. Finch, president from 1960-1964; Mrs. Lois Brown, wife of the highly esteemed Dr. W. Shelburne Brown, president from 1964-1978; and Mrs. Frances Draper, wife of our late, much loved president, Dr. Bill Draper, who served from 1978-1983.

To you who led this College in other days and countless unnamed others who have invested so largely to make this a College of such enormous strength, we are debtors. I humbly pledge to follow in your footsteps and to stand alongside our present trustees, faculty, and staff to make this College even greater in her tomorrows.

#### THE CHALLENGES TO PRIVATE EDUCATION IN THE '80s

Ladies and gentlemen, we are standing slightly more than knee deep in the decade of the eighties. Authorities in significant numbers have made bleak gloomy predictions for private higher education in this decade. To lift out one illustration: In the final report of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education entitled, *Three Thousand Futures, the Next Twenty Years for Higher Education*, it is rather tersely stated that many experts foresee serious difficulties for the independent colleges: "The private sector of higher education will be decimated because it

cannot compete owing to its higher tuition; meanwhile, public controls and public financial support make it only quasi-private reducing its rationale for continuation." That expresses an attitude generally held by many educational authorities.

Of necessity, our interest is more narrow than the broad private sector. We focus particularly upon that segment called private Christian higher education. Being Christian does not exclude us from the same issues confronting our sister independent schools. Being Christian does insert some unique factors into the scenario. In his current highly acclaimed book, *The Search for Excellence, the Christian College in an Age of Competition*, Robert Sandin quotes Jerald Brauer as saying in 1958 that "The next quarter century might well determine whether the Christian college can or should continue in American higher education." "The Christian college movement," he declared, "is reaching the point of no return. *Either the Christian college should play the creative and distinctive role in American higher education it once played, or it should cease to exist.* By 'cease to exist' it is not implied that such institutions go out of existence, only that they become transformed into institutions that do not pretend to be what they are not. There are many Christian colleges which will manage to demonstrate, in the next quarter century, that they *can* continue to exist; the question may remain, however, whether those colleges *should* continue to exist."

There is little doubt in my mind that



PLNC *can* and will continue to exist. On such an occasion as this, perhaps it is right to ask ourselves, *Should PLNC continue* to exist? Does she have a valid reason for being? That question must be faced within the context of a broader issue—is there a place in higher education today for Christian liberal arts? What is Christian liberal arts?

### TOWARD UNDERSTANDING LIBERAL ARTS

Let us first go back to the basics and review the liberal arts concept. Liberal arts has its roots in the ancient world where it was first associated with grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Subsequently, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy were added. As the concept evolved over the centuries, it eventually was viewed in close alliance with the classics. Even during the last century a liberal education was classical history and classical literature and classical philosophy, meaning generous portions of Greek and Latin. This view prevailed even in our own country though there was gradual movement toward a higher degree of practicality. Changes have accelerated during the knowledge explosion of the twentieth century.

Today the liberal arts is usually equated with a general education that exposes the student to the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. However, the desired goal is not to produce an individual who has digested a given body of knowledge and upon notice can regurgitate certain important facts. *It is not so much a*

*common core of knowledge as it is a common core of thought processes with which the liberal arts equips a person.* The static storing of inert facts is not the end of one's liberal education. To the contrary, the end focuses in the sharpening of one's mental tools to react—to react in external settings outside the classroom with intelligence, imagination, and resourcefulness. Liberal arts does not purport to prepare people to cope effectively and live responsibly by assimilating and supplying given formulas to specific situations. *Its task is to prepare men and women to walk out into their world with their heads held high and meet critically, creatively, and courageously the challenges of their times.*

And how do the liberal arts develop such qualities within a person? It can be an exceedingly difficult and often painful experience. To examine and to question are never easy and yet these are essential to education. As one has put it, "To ask the right questions, to examine premises, to analyze problems, to define terms, to delineate alternatives, to weigh evidence, to confront contradictions, to discuss issues, to reach decisions, to affirm and reaffirm principles, and to make commitments to action—these indeed are at once the ends and the means of education. These are the liberal arts or skills . . ."

Such a process has proven to be very unsettling for some. Many young people come to college with a dogmatic certainty about many facts, theories, and principles. Most of their opinions have been inherited from their families and friends or their



pastors and teachers. Seldom have their thoughts been tested or critically examined. The simple question "Why?" can be shattering to individuals. What it does to the individual students can be equally shattering to their parents. But the process is necessary. ***One must submit beliefs and opinions to scrutiny if he/she is to develop a solid foundation upon which to build a life.*** A state of honest inquiry coupled with a desire to know provides the best starting point for real learning.

In the liberal arts process one need not be embarrassed about showing ignorance for consciousness of ignorance is the gateway to learning. We are all seeking to know and knowledge comes through inquiry. We must be prepared to utterly forsake our prejudices and preconceptions if our inquiry proves them wrong. Who wants to build his/her life upon the sands of false premises? That is why we must be willing to submit to the process of hard scrutiny.

There is no reason to fear inquiry for in education we are in pursuit of truth. ***Inquiry leads to the discovery of truth, and that is what liberal education is all about.*** It is precisely at this point where Christian liberal arts takes on a distinctiveness.

#### THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERAL ARTS

Christian colleges often speak of their uniqueness. Are we unique and, if so, what distinguishes us from secular liberal arts colleges? Many answers given to this question are superficial. We often talk about

religious origins and denominational sponsorship, a department of religion, required chapel thrice weekly, prayer before class, social benefits, and such things as indicators of our uniqueness.

That is untenable because the items mentioned are effects and do not address the cause. Why do we do what we do? Why are we as we are in contradistinction to secular institutions?

The difference between Christian and secular institutions rests in the fundamental commitment at the very heart of things. ***For the Christian liberal arts college there is an unquestionable, unapologetic, and all-consuming commitment to Jesus Christ who is acknowledged as Lord over the total life of the institution.*** Everything that happens on campus comes under the umbrella of His Lordship. He is at the Center!

This does not mean that the college becomes a church, requiring an affirmation of the historic faith from its students. Nor does it mean that the college's role is defined as pastoral and protective of its students. Neither does the classroom become the place to press for conversion, even though conversion may happen in a classroom. A college—even a Christian college—traffics in ideas; intellectual content is its commodity. That role must be kept intact especially on a Christian college campus. It must be guarded carefully to protect academic freedom.

***Trafficking in ideas is "part and parcel" of the liberal arts; trafficking in ideas with Jesus at the center is unique to Christian***



**liberal arts.** On our campus we do not lock Jesus outside the lab. He is as vital to the classroom and the curriculum as He is to the chapel.

We are in pursuit of truth! We believe with the ancient church fathers that all truth is God's truth, wherever it be found. Isaac Watts said, "Seize upon truth, wherever it is found, amongst your friends, amongst your foes, on Christian or on heathen ground; the flower's divine where'er it grows." To be sure, it can be found among the secular as well as the Christian institutions. Because truth is truth, wherever it is discovered, those of us in Christian liberal arts are at home among the world's artists, writers, historians, philosophers, and scientists. We are mining for truth wherever we can find it. One must blast through much false thinking if he/she would discover the precious jewels of truth.

Arthur Holmes suggests that we must be willing to subject our students to this process. "Christian education should not blindfold the student's eyes to all the world has to offer, but it should open them to truth wherever it may be found, truth that is ultimately unified in and derived from God. It should be a liberating experience that enlarges horizons, deepens insight, sharpens the mind, exposes new areas of inquiry, and sensitizes our ability to appreciate the good and the beautiful as well as the true."

Let it be understood then that *we in Christian liberal arts are in pursuit of truth wherever it may be found.* Let it also be crystal clear that the Christian

liberal arts imposes the given divine revelation of God in Jesus Christ as the final touchstone of all truth. A. A. Hodge puts it this way: "No one truth is rightly held till it is clearly conceived and stated, and no single truth is adequately comprehended till it is viewed in harmonious relations to all the other truths of the system of which Christ is the center."

All truth focuses then upon that historic man from ancient Nazareth named Jesus "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). Holmes addresses the implications of this for Christian liberal arts: "Jesus Christ is God Incarnate, the Creator and Lord of every created thing. All our knowledge of anything comes into focus around that fact. We see nature, man, society, and the arts and sciences in proper relationship to their divine Creator and Lord. This facilitates an overall philosophy that accords not with pagan principles but with Christ (Col. 2:8). The truth is a coherent whole by virtue of the common focus that ties it all into one. The Christian college explores truth focused in that way."

In the search for truth on our campus, Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the process. He is the beginning point. Unlike the secular schools, we do not, for example, view Christ through philosophy as one of many great thinkers and teachers who made a contribution to religious thought. We view philosophy through Christ. *All the disciplines are seen through that One in whom God has revealed Himself*—that



One who stated with divine authority, "I am the Truth" (John 14:6).

Some may contend that this is bias—and you cannot bring bias to the liberal arts. *To the degree that we contend that all truth in this universe focuses in Jesus, to that degree we are biased—and that without apology!* In typical secular institutions it is fashionable to bring objectivity toward every issue. Many a professor is unwilling to take a position of his own. He merely reports where everybody else stands on the issue. Trueblood takes issue with this attitude on a Christian college campus. He contends that the "Christian scholar is not merely trying to tell what is the case, though he is trying to tell what is the case; he is also trying to make a kind of life prevail. A Christian is one who is seeking to make the cause of Christ prevail in all of life. Therefore, cool detachment or mere objectivity can never be sufficient for him."

Some object that you cannot bring prejudice of any sort to the liberal learning process. I received some help at this point from the *Handbook of Accreditation* published by the Accrediting Commission for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. In the section entitled, "Commitment to Academic Freedom," it is stated: "By definition an institution of higher education is dedicated to the search for truth and its dissemination. Trustees, administrators, and faculty demonstrate that facts and truth are the primary concern, rather than the particular judgments of institutional benefactors, concerns of

churchmen, public opinion, social or economic pressures, or political proscription. *Academic freedom does not require neutrality. Rather, it is consistent with earnest and declared efforts to advance a point of view based on sound scholarship.*"

Ladies and gentlemen, Christian liberal arts has a point of view which we are endeavoring to advance with sound scholarship. *We are not neutral about Jesus* for we believe that in Him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3).

#### IMPACTING SOCIETY WITH CHRISTIAN LIBERAL ARTS

*Thus, it is our unique mission in this splendid Point Loma setting to provide the finest in a liberal education experience that is centered in Jesus Christ.* It is my deep personal conviction that the desired product of our type of education—men and women who have sharpened their tools to utilize knowledge and who take Jesus seriously—address positively and significantly the cultural dilemmas of our times.

Too long has the Christian liberal arts college been content to exist in splendid spiritual isolation—an island of intellectual piety surrounded by an ocean of human need. Such mentality is not only unchristian, it is unthinkable and almost criminal. Such mentality violates the spirit of God's great incarnational act in Jesus Christ who because of His eternal caring could not live divorced from hurting humanity. Neither can those who claim to be His live in isolation! To His own Jesus said: "You are the



light of the world." "You are the salt of the earth." Interpret these sayings as you will, but the bottom line clearly denotes that *Christians have inherited a role of significance in shaping society*. If changes for the better come to our world, Christians will likely be the ones to start the process.

Let us be done then with our emphasis upon a separation that isolates. Karl Barth has a stimulating concept that the Christian community does not withdraw itself but through Jesus Christ acknowledges a solidarity with the world and accepts a responsibility for humanity. To expand that concept will lead one to begin thinking about the common good and how the Christian community can contribute. Such thinking is imperative! We can no longer be content to pull Jesus out of the world where we can have Him for our own private consumption; we must endeavor to insert Him into every aspect of our culture and thereby Christianize society.

Such an understanding brings Christian higher education into clear focus. *The kind of young people produced by Christian liberal arts is of the sort who can change the world*. John Wesley purportedly said, "Give me one hundred people who love nothing but God and fear nothing but sin and I will change the world." In essence his statement still rings true though it is probably too simplistic for our complex pluralistic society.

Benevolent world changers in our times will be those who love God and fear sin, but who have also stretched their minds through the sciences and philosophy and

sociology and psychology and literature and theology. They are razor sharp mentally and have begun to think Christianly about their world. Infiltrate and infest society at all levels with these kind of people and you have the seeds of a renaissance.

I have a growing sense of conviction that *Christian liberal arts colleges are the last best hope for a world that appears to be rushing headlong toward a rendezvous with self-destruction*. The Christian colleges must not view each other as competitors, but comrades who are networking to precipitate renewal within society.

Perhaps the Christian liberal arts colleges "have come to the kingdom for such a time as this." What an absolutely divine thing it would be for God to so endow the Christian colleges by His grace and power so that amid predictions of our demise, we should rise up in Jesus' name and not merely survive but strike a telling blow for God and righteousness in our times. Cultural conditions are incredibly ripe for renewal. How like God it would be to breathe new life into our world—and to begin it on Christian college campuses!

It is not without precedent. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, is credited with saving England from the throes of revolution through the changes Methodism produced in the nation's life. The course of human history was changed by Wesley and his Methodists. Wesley stated that "the first rise of Methodism was in November 1729 when four of us met together at Oxford." This is a reference to what came to be



called the "Holy Club" at Oxford. This began when four men agreed to spend three or four evenings per week together. They studied classical literature and on Sunday, they read from religious classics. They worked regularly out of the Greek New Testament. Though they did not experience any extraordinary spiritual happenings at this time, Wesley regarded the Holy Club to be the first phase of Methodism. Thus the initial preparation for the world-changing Methodist revival occurred on a college campus. It can happen again! Pray God it shall!

## CONCLUSION

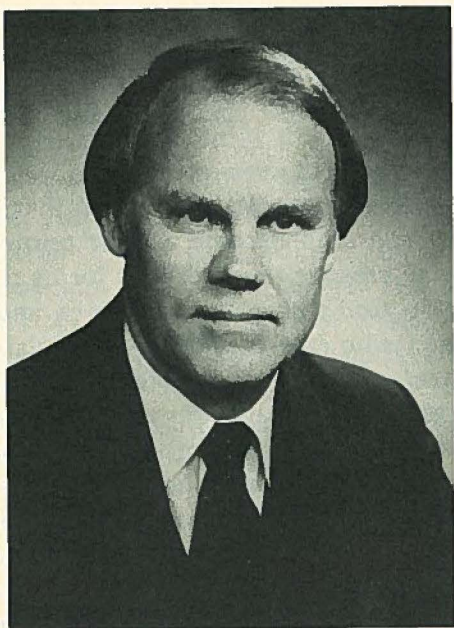
To accomplish these goals we must continue to *pursue excellence in liberal learning*, but do it within the context of a *climate that will warm the heart as well as shape the thought*. May God grant that this institution shall become a *great center of vital, creative renewal*. It is for us to develop *God's change agents*—men and women who can penetrate the social structures, function competently in their professions, approach the great cultural dilemmas with innovative thoughts, who are possessed with an inner drive to discover truth, and who permeate everything they touch with the life and spirit of Jesus. Such people on such a purposeful mission will *elevate the moral and spiritual climate* around them, and given enough of those kinds of Christian higher education shaped people, it can precipitate a new day for our nation and our world. It must happen! I make bold to state that I believe it can happen. To this end I commit "All my being's ransomed powers, All my thoughts and words and doings, All my days and all my hours."

*Point Loma Nazarene College—equipping youth to make a difference.* May God enable us to put fabric to the dream!

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Inaugural Address  
Jim Bond, President  
November 18, 1983, 2 p.m.





■ Jim L. Bond received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Pasadena College in 1959 and his Master of Divinity degree from Nazarene Theological Seminary in 1962. He has pastored churches in Kansas, Wyoming, Idaho, Oklahoma, and Colorado, and served as a missionary in Brazil. He held the office of General President of Nazarene Youth International and served as Chaplain and Professor of Practical Theology at Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs. In 1981 he became Assistant to the President of Point Loma Nazarene College.

Jim and Sally Bond have two children: James Clifton, 21, and Cristina Lynn, 19.