

announcing a
CHRIST COLLEGE SYMPOSIUM
of special interest

Please announce this event to your classes and to others who may be especially interested in this topic.

Thursday, October 8, 1992
6:30-7:30 pm
Mueller Hall Commons
Valparaiso University

THE FOUNDING OF
CHRIST COLLEGE
AN ORAL HISTORY

with guest speaker

Albert G. Huegli
Valparaiso University President Emeritus

As Christ College opens the Homecoming Weekend celebration of the 25th anniversary of its founding in 1967, VU President Emeritus Huegli will recall the events and personalities that shaped the early years of the College.

A colorful exhibit of memorabilia from the 60's, 70's, 80's, and 90's will be on display in the Mueller Hall Commons/Gallery.

For more information,
please call the Christ College Dean's Office at 464-5022.

A.G.Huegli
September 1992

The Founding of Christ College

Christ College was the favorite college of Valparaiso University for President O.P.Kretzmann. It embodied many of his visions and expectations of what a church college ~~was~~ ought to be. As Dr.Richard Baepler, the first dean of Christ College, wrote in The Spillikin, "Christ College was the brainchild of Dr.O.P.Kretzmann, and was probably the last academic unit in American higher education to come into existence by fiat."

Thoughts about the college must have been stirring in O.P.'s mind for a long time before they came together in familiar form. His ideas for such a school were first told to me shortly after I had accepted the appointment as vice president for academic affairs at the University in 1961.

During the spring of that year, Dr.Kretzmann and I, together with our respective wives, were journeying to Europe aboard the Queen Elizabeth I, the largest ocean liner ever to sail the seas. The immense size of the ship, the endless Atlantic waters, and the wide sweep of the skies must have opened up the vistas of his mind concerning the future of the University. We talked about the proposed graduate program; the possibility of setting up a college of business and a college of nursing; and ways in which the University might realize the dreams of the founders. They had wanted to make Valparaiso the preeminent Lutheran institution of higher learning in America, and he believed we had the obligation to fulfill that objective.

In the midst of our discussions, as we strolled the deck and leaned over the rail to gaze at the far horizons, the subject of a special kind of college for gifted students within the University came up. His thoughts about it were vague, but right then I knew that the development of this college, together with the other academic projects, had become my assignment. We even talked about changing the name of the University - we thought "The Lutheran University of America" had a nice ring to it! But since I was not yet even inducted into office, I was ready to leave such a controversial change for other people to worry about. The prospect of

translating academic dreams into some kind of reality was more than enough for me at that point.

The Setting

When we were back on campus, my first undertaking with respect to the idea of Christ College was to become familiar with the Directed Studies Program at the University. This was Valparaiso's response, just getting under way that fall of 1961, to the honors movement in American colleges and universities during the late 1950's.

The influx of large numbers of students onto college campuses following World War II had almost overwhelmed the customary academic patterns and programs. The leisurely pace of learning had given way to new and practical approaches to a degree. Quality in many schools of higher education was being sacrificed to mass education, which, it was hoped, would provide assurance of good jobs for the graduates. The acquaintance with great minds, the opportunity for reflection, and the challenge of learning - all essentials of a good education - were being lost in the process.

The answer to the problem on many campuses was the honors movement. My own first-hand acquaintance with the honors movement was as a member of the political science faculty at Northwestern University in its Bachelor of Arts Honors program. On other campuses; it appeared as a separate honors college. The University of Chicago College, with its "Great Books" emphasis, was such a college. St.Olaf set up a Paracollege for this purpose. The University of the Pacific had its Raymond College. Wayne State developed its Monteith College. Today there are still about a dozen such colleges scattered around the country.

Generally, honors programs and colleges served selected freshmen and sophomores of higher than average abilities. They emphasized the humanities and social sciences. They sought to integrate knowledge, provide intellectual challenge, and offer accelerated courses. Patterned after the Yale University program, the Directed Studies Program began under the aegis of Dr.Allen Tuttle, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, in which the Program's students were enrolled. Its directors were Dr.Ernest Koenker from

1963 to 1965, and Dr. John Deters from 1965 to 1966. With President Kretzmann's blessing, the program admitted about 50 students a year, encouraged a sustained interest in the liberal arts, and provided an opportunity for able students to realize their potential. But the Directed Studies Program did not really satisfy the expectations of O.P. Kretzmann.

The Concept

To understand what O.P. had in mind for Christ College, one has to know something about his own education and experience. He was a child of the parsonage and a product of classical Lutheran theological education for the ministry. After graduating from the St. Louis seminary, he studied literature at the Johns Hopkins University, receiving a master's degree. He was called as a professor of theology at Concordia Seminary, which was then at Springfield, Illinois. He served the church as executive secretary of its youth organization, the Walther League, and as a member of various committees. He became President of Valparaiso University in 1940 and served until 1968.

Dr. Kretzmann understood and appreciated the academic mind. He was also, however, a clergyman who believed in the calling of God. His vision of Christ College was an effort to combine these two interests. His emphasis on the liberal arts and humanities was markedly influenced by his theological insights. To some extent he had attempted to apply what he called "high intelligence and high religion" to the idea of Concordia Senior College, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, when he was a member of the Board for Higher Education which created ^{that} school. The Directed Studies Program, in his opinion, did not go far enough. It needed to be "more and less than an honors college," he said.

Those of us who worked closely with Dr. Kretzmann soon learned that he was a master at turning a phrase, but hard to pin down when it came to defining exactly what he meant. About a year after our shipboard conversation, I sent him a memorandum under date of April 3, 1962 regarding the Christ College concept.

In my memorandum, I said: "Here are some thoughts for the new division of the University to be called Christ College." I then suggested that the proposed college should be patterned after the Oxford model of a college within a university.

It would consist of students planning to enter a variety of vocations, "bound together by a common interest and a common goal." They would be students eligible for acceptance into the Directed Studies Program, selected on the basis of outstanding ability, and taking enriched sections of regular courses, special seminars, and independent study. The current requirements of the Directed Studies Program would be the basis.

With the advice of Dr. John Strietelmeier, I suggested that the administrative structure of the college should be vested in a dean and a faculty committee, whose members would perhaps be designated as "Fellows of Christ College." The Fellows would continue to be professors of their disciplines in other colleges, who would also serve as tutors in Christ College. Since the students would be attending classes in the College of Arts and Sciences or other colleges of the University, I proposed that no new institutional facilities would be required. One of the University-owned houses might well be set aside for the office of the dean, for meeting rooms, and for library purposes. I felt that "the costs of Christ College could be very modest," and, I went on, "If substantial sums become available, they could be used for scholarships for Christ College students."

I concluded the memorandum with the observation that the creation of Christ College could achieve four ends: 1) emphasis on the development and use of God-given talents in the service of God and man; 2) attention to the liberal arts; 3) experiments in higher education which would also be useful in the total program of the University; and 4) exploration of the concept of Christian vocation in the lay callings.

Subsequently, in the V.U. Board of Directors meeting on July 21, 1962, Dr. Kretzmann informed the Board that "a new college should be established on the campus - Christ College. This would be a liberal arts college with very high standards, with certain emphasis on religion, particularly for those who go from the campus to work in the church. The directed studies group... would be a good nucleus." When asked if there should be a motion to authorize this new college, he indicated that "a motion at this time would be premature..."

Have add:
AGH Memo II
11/6/63

The records do not show much activity on the Christ College project for the next two years. The explanation probably is that these were the years of involvement with the introduction of the graduate program in the summer of 1963; the development of the College of Business Administration, which opened in the fall of 1964; and several accreditation team visits which had to be satisfactorily completed. But a Committee on Christ College had been created, consisting largely of the faculty members who had been supervising the Directed Studies Program,

In a meeting of the Christ College Committee on ^{October} ~~December~~ 29, 1964, copies of Memo III of the same date, which I had prepared with the help of Dr. Walter Friedrich and Dean Tuttle, were distributed and discussed. In Memo III, the purposes of Christ College were defined as follows: To challenge students with above-average ability; to help them realize the implications of the Christian stewardship of talent in their vocations; to offer a broader understanding and a deeper penetration of the several disciplines and the relevancy of the Christian message to these fields of knowledge; to encourage creative minds in the evaluation of ideas and their application; and to develop new approaches to teaching and learning which would be of value to the total program of the University. The structure of the new college, as outlined in my previous communication to the President of April 3, 1962, was described in more detail in Memo III.

The Christ College Committee met again on November 23, 1964, and continued the discussion of the proposed college. President Kretzmann was present at this session and stated that Christ College should envision the "wedding of high theology with high learning." Since the next meeting of the Committee was to be held at Dr. Kretzmann's residence on ~~December~~ 2, 1964, it may have been there that he presented his "Blueprint for Christ College." dated simply as of 1964. Unfortunately, the minutes of the December 2 meeting are missing.

The Blueprint was very likely influenced by O.P.'s interest in what makes some schools great, and how a college can be academically outstanding and still represent its theological convictions. His plan called for bringing together selected

juniors and seniors, who would be residential students, and having them concentrate on the humanities, with a minimum concern about credits and quality points. In addition, they were to become acquainted with the "methodology and results of Biblical scholarship," steeped in "classic Protestantism," and knowledgeable about social ethics. The church work vocations were to be stressed, but in any case "christological stewardship" was to be involved in the student's preparation. The new college was to have a special relationship to the Chapel, because the students were to be active in the religious life of the University.

The Reality

The concept of Christ College, as outlined in Dr. Kretzmann's Blueprint, was a lofty, if not mystical, one. It expressed what was at the heart of the project. But it needed some modifications to make the proposed college fit into the academic world it was to serve. Changes would be required to assure recognition of the credentials of Christ College students and to recruit prospective students from conservative homes of middle America interested in securing jobs. My problem as vice president was to tailor the plans to meet reality without losing the vision.

While O.P. would have built Christ College around the two upper years of undergraduate education (similar to the idea of Concordia Senior College, referred to previously), the Christ College Committee felt it was more practical to include freshmen and sophomores as well. This would give the college a solid base and preclude the necessity for limiting its students in their upper two years to a few majors in the humanities. It was also felt to be unwise to "abolish the entire credit and quality point system," as Dr. Kretzmann would have wished, since this would have cut the students adrift in the academic world and created problems for their admission to graduate and professional schools. The rest of the stipulations of the Blueprint were more ideological and could be implemented after the college got under way. Dr. Kretzmann had set the date for the beginning of the college as fall, 1965, but to organize it and secure a dean was to require a year's delay.

Persuading an individual to undertake the position of dean of Christ College was not as simple as had been anticipated. Dr. Tuttle, who had initially been named "dean-designate" of the college, decided to remain as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The search then focused on Dr. Richard Baepler, the chairman of the Department of Theology. When Dr. Baepler accepted the appointment, Dr. Richard Lee was named as the first full-time faculty member, and the appointment of part-time teachers followed. The students in the Directed Studies Program were taken into Christ College, thus giving the college time to prepare for the upper two years of offerings. Christ College began its service in the fall of 1966.

The new college did not have an easy entrance into the Valparaiso academic community. Criticism came from various faculty and student quarters. There was lack of clarity about the nature and need for the college, resentment about the diversion of scarce resources to it, and complaints about some majors being excluded from it. The sciences objected that they were not even considered in the curriculum of Christ College. Behind much of the criticism was a concern about elitism and the burden on the rest of the University for a relatively small number of Christ College students.

In response to these complaints, I attempted to make clear that Christ College stood for four very acceptable objectives which everybody could understand: honors, integration of knowledge, innovation in programs and teaching, and involvement of students and teachers in a broadened learning process. In addition, Dr. Baepler wrote very persuasively about the value and significance of the college to the entire University. In time, the new college became accepted as an integral part of the University's life and work.

The Building

Originally, it had been my thought that the new college would have its offices and serve its students in Elliott House, located on LaPorte Avenue and belonging to the University. A good friend of the University, together with his wife, thought differently.

Dr. Ewald Mueller, a parish pastor, member of the Board of Directors of the University, and frequent benefactor with Mrs. Mueller

in projects for the University, offered to fund the construction of a separate building for Christ College. He wanted it to be a complex consisting of an academic unit and two residence halls for the Christ College students. As he explained, his purpose was to give permanence and visibility to the college, and bring the students together. President Kretzmann was delighted to accept this generous offer.

Some of us appreciated the prospect of having another academic building available. The East Campus was seriously short of such facilities at that time. We were reluctant, however, to see separate dorms constructed for Christ College students. We felt they should be part of the total life of all students on the campus. Dean Baepler, in office for only a few months when the offer was announced, would have preferred that the million dollar gift serve as an endowment for Christ College professorships and scholarships. Nevertheless, he and Dr. Lee buckled down to the task of working with the donor and his architect on developing plans. Altogether they ultimately went through 16 versions of proposed plans for the building.

The donor had reasonable expectations that the University would match funds for the Christ College complex. When it became obvious that such funds would not be forthcoming, and inflation was already eating away at the principal, the plans for residential halls of Christ College were shelved. Instead, at my insistence, the basement of the academic unit was excavated in order to provide some much needed classroom space for both Christ College classes and for other classes of the University still being held in old buildings on the West Campus. The theology courses in particular were in need of classrooms because they were prevented by law from using any buildings for instructional purposes which had been erected with federal money, such as the engineering, foreign languages, and nursing buildings. The new Christ College building, now called Ewald/^HMueller Hall, was dedicated in 1970, and has been put to good use ever since.

The Evaluation

Unlike some of the honors programs and honors colleges which came into existence in the 1950s and 1960s, Christ College has remained essentially what it was expected to become. It was never adequately funded, yet its teachers have been able to make it a school of high quality. Its success may be measured in the numbers of graduates who, year after year, have proceeded to make their mark and contribute significantly to society.

Did Christ College realize the vision which O.P.Kretzmann originally had for it? Probably not. Visionaries learn to live with some disappointments. They are seldom satisfied with what reality imposes on their dreams. Nevertheless, he always remained interested in the activities of Christ College and its students. He was certainly aware of the ^{positive} impact the college had on the intellectual life of the campus. At the same time, he must have been somewhat disappointed that Christ College students were not more involved in the Chapel and the mission of the church. Knowing him, I am sure he was satisfied that when I succeeded him as president of the University in 1968, the new college would be as well supported as the other colleges within the University.

During the quarter century of its existence, Christ College has helped the University focus its attention on the importance of the liberal arts and humanities, on rigorous standards, and on the quest for excellence. It has been an exponent of the concept of "the community of scholars" in search for the integration of knowledge through interdisciplinary studies. It has provided useful patterns of teaching and stimulated innovation and flexibility in the undergraduate curriculum of the entire University.

The contributions of Christ College to the sense of vocation and the relevance of the Christian message to the academic disciplines is less easy to demonstrate. Certainly many Christ College scholars have committed themselves wholeheartedly to church professions. Other alumni in lay occupations continue to live out their convictions that high theology can indeed accompany high learning.

Perhaps the best indication of the success of the Christ College venture is two-fold. First, the college is accepted and respected by its peers on campus and at other colleges and universities. Second, the college continues to attract and challenge gifted students who find their experience here very much worth while. For these two evidences of success, the University is indebted to the wisdom and diplomacy of its faculty, and especially of its deans: Richard Baepler, Arlin Meyer, and Mark Schwehn. In the final analysis, they have been the keepers of the flame, who have held to the vision and helped translate it into an institution which continues to be in the vanguard of Lutheran higher education in America. O.P. would have been pleased about that.

**The Ballad of Warren Rubel
(Tune of Davy Crockett)**

**Our ballad begins back in '52,
Warren was a preacher down in ole St. Lou:
His sermons were so long that they turned your face blue,
But with talkin' and writin' he was hardly thru.**

**Warren, Warren Rubel,
Never at a loss for words!**

**He got another Masters in '61;
Decided that the Renaissance was sort of fun;
His specialties: rhetoric and romantic prose...
But just mention poetry, and his passions rose!**

**Warren, Warren Rubel,
Never pedestrian.**

**After his doctorate in '64,
Warren planned to teach forevermore;
Time to blow off Fort Wayne and so-o-o-o,
He headed down the road to Valparaiso.**

**Warren, Warren Rubel,
Twenty-tree years ago.**

**Christ College was new in '69,
Warren worked to keep the place in line:
Teaching, advising and coordinating,
Interdiscipline was just his thing.**

**Warren, Warren Rubel
A bundle of energy!**

**We read from Dante through Malcom X.
Don't be fooled by the meaning of the text.
He informed our notions of criticism,
With warmth and wisdom and perfection diction!**

**Warren, Warren Rubel,
King of the Faculty!**

If You Only Had a Brain
(To the tune of "If You Only Had a Brain")

Oh they say that in this college
You'll gain a lot of knowledge
And lots of wisdom too
At great books you'd be squintin'
You could be another Clinton
If you only had a brain.

You'll be noetically integrated
The thoughts are complicated
You'll really need a brain.
Oh the words you could spell
You could be another Quayle
If you only had a brain.

Just as sure as death and taxes
You'll be talking Metropraxis
And reading Jacques Ellul.
It would be so very plain
You could be another Schwehn
If you only had a brain.

You might learn a hermeneutic
Think a thought and then dispute it
Create Utopia.
To great thoughts you'd aspire
You could be an Arlin Meyer
If you only had a brain.

You'll be politically correct
And treated with respect
With your double C degree.
You could be much more adept
You could rhyme a word with Baepler
If you only had a brain.