



Remembering the 1992 Christ College SILVER ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

As the accompanying stories indicate, the Christ College Twenty-fifth Anniversary celebration was a wonderful occasion. The variety of activities and formats resembled the many different learning contexts offered by the CC Freshman Program: homilies, improvisational drama, lectures, master classes, banquets, symposia, dedications, and much more. As with all enterprises that appear spontaneous and relaxed, this one required a great deal of advanced planning. The College owes special thanks to the dean's office staff of Margaret Franson and Elene Amundsen. Sue Zillman and Dan Friedrich, both members of the CC Alumni Advisory Board, also deserve a special commendation from all of us. Sue, the chair of the planning committee, assembled and mounted, with great support from Elene, the memorabilia that graced the Christ College Commons. Dan contributed many creative ideas. Some of his wit appears in the present issue.

As part of our silver anniversary, we paid special tribute to Warren Rubel who was the first tenured appointment made to Christ College and whose career spans our entire history. Thanks to the generosity of CC alums, Warren will be forever remembered through the living legacy of the annual Warren G. Rubel Lecture on Christianity and Higher Learning. Monies raised to endow this commemorative lectureship exceeded the college's goal of \$15,000.

Most alums who were here will remember most fondly the "master class" that Warren offered as part of the anniversary celebration. He entitled it "Sceptical Hope: Anticipating Spike Lee's Malcolm X." By presenting excerpts from Malcolm's autobiography, Warren invited all of us to think of Spike Lee's film interpretation as one more installment in the continuing response to the complexity and humanity of Malcolm X as a person in continual change. As one CC alum

quipped, this was an ideal topic to elicit discussion among former CC students, since no one, including Warren, had seen the film. ++

A Brief History of Christ College

Christ College was founded by Valparaiso University President O.P. Kretzmann as the successor to the University's Directed Studies Program. Directed Studies had been created in 1961 in response to the growing number of exceptionally gifted students coming to the University from the nation's high schools which were being sharply upgraded as a matter of national policy in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's successful Sputnik earth satellite project.

In the charter for Christ College, Kretzmann instructed the faculty committee to create an honors college, but *more* than an honors college. It would be a place where students would be challenged to develop their gifts to the highest possibility, to combat the fragmentation of knowledge through interdisciplinary approaches to learning, and to catch a vision of a better world that might be created under the grace of God and the exertion of human will and intelligence.

The College took its name from respected colleges established centuries ago. In the tradition of those colleges, Christ College was dedicated to the cultivation of intellectual, moral, and spiritual virtues. The College's name also suggests its compatibility with Valparaiso University's definition of itself as a university in the Christian intellectual tradition. Three deans have served the College: Founding Dean Richard P. Baepler (1966-78), Arlin G. Meyer (1978-90), and Mark R. Schwehn ('67) (1990-present).

The Christ College building, later named Mueller Hall in honor of its principal benefactor, the late Reverend Ewald H. Mueller, longtime pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Ridgewood, New Jersey, was dedicated in April, 1970.

Today, Christ College is one of fewer than a dozen undergraduate honors colleges in the United States. The curriculum emphasizes liberal arts and the humanities—history, literature, art, philosophy, religion—and the social sciences. Small discussion-centered classes offer stimulating, honors-level interdisciplinary study with master teacher-scholars. Approximately 65 academically talented freshmen are admitted each fall. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors number about 175. Christ College students are concurrently enrolled in one of VU's other Colleges—Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Engineering, or Nursing—where they earn their bachelor's degrees.

Viewed by the National Collegiate Honors Council as one of the most distinctive, imaginative, and well-designed honors programs in the country, Christ College seeks to prepare students for rich and thoughtful lives, responsible vocations, and leadership roles in society and in the Christian community. Many graduates go on to distinguished professional or graduate schools; others immediately launch careers in business, industry, science, the arts, engineering, health care, education, church work, and other fields; still others serve in the Peace Corps, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, and other organizations.

Morning Prayer

At Homecoming, Professor Richard Lee marked 25 years of service to Christ College, having joined the faculty in 1967. He delivered the following homily during a morning prayer service led by Pastor Daniel C. Brockopp and President Alan F. Harre. Joe Bognar ('94) served as organist, beginning the service with JS Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in G Major*. Nate Bachman ('93) led a choir of Christ College students. Tiffany Oelschlaeger ('96) read the lesson.

What Has Christ To Do with College?

Homilist: Richard Lee ('60)
Professor of Humanities

[Jesus said] "Whoever is not with me is against me." Matthew 12:30a

[Jesus said] "Whoever is not against us is for us." Mark 9:40

Good Morning. Happy Homecoming and Happy Anniversary. We meet today to celebrate two wonderful paradoxes. The first is the paradox of alumni at Homecoming, and the second is the paradox of Christ College.

I begin the celebration by observing that one lesson a teacher could learn at Homecoming is "many alumni are nicer to know *now* than when they were students."

This aging of prickly students into gentle alumni hardly startles a teacher until he considers the corollaries. The first corollary is "a teacher may teach many of his students at the most perplexing time of their lives, and thus he may know many of them best—at their worst." The second corollary is "without Homecoming, he might never get to know them any better—or at their best."

Of course, even vintage alumni continue to perplex their teachers. Perhaps the oddest paradox they offer is their apparent need to have *their* student years at the University affirmed as the University's Golden Age—and at the same time they also need the University

affirmed as never better than it is today.

How many alumni conversations are premised on their curiously crossed expectations that the University will obviously have gone to hell since they graduated and that, of course, *their* University only goes from glory unto glory?

Now, it's not easy for the University to regress and progress at once just to pleasure its alumni. And their teachers cannot without serious contradiction assure them that the University was at its very best when they were students—and at the same time assure them that the university is more excellent, and obviously their degrees are far more worthy, today.

Fortunately, most alumni live easily with this paradox. Possibly it's partly because, for alumni, the University is a place where, for a moment, they are *forever* young. The present is *always* their years at the University. It is, we might say, an *eternal* present. Valpo is "always Valpo as I remember Valpo."

To students here today, I say: Be ready—a certain kind of memory and hope can do that to you.

The second wonderful paradox we celebrate today is the paradox of Christ College. And here our texts from Matthew and Mark speak to us: One Word is spoken, and our Lord assures the faithful that whoever and whatever is not against him is *for* him. And another Word is spoken, and our Lord alerts the faithful that whoever or whatever is not with him is *against* him.

Christ College, in its better—perhaps more blessed—moments, has lived those paradoxical Words during much of its twenty-five years. Here and there we have even fulfilled their promise.

For you see, when Christians found a college, as some of us did twenty-five years ago, Christ admonishes them that whoever and whatever is not against Christ is for Christ. That means the College is not Church, faith is not requisite, and that every point of view and every work of culture, including every religion, may be considered, questioned, contemplated, and enjoyed.

There may be some, for example, who find faith denied them but do admire Christian virtues and values.

Or there may be others, equally uncommitted, who may find Christian

virtues and values questionable, but admire the Christian intellectual tradition which supports the very questioning of those virtues and values.

There may even be some who are neither able to give themselves to the Christian faith nor assent to the Christian intellectual tradition, but like a serious and caring place to think and feel while they are making up their hearts and minds.

For all these people and all these points of view—and more, our Lord reminds the faithful that whoever and whatever is not against him is for him. Christ always includes a great deal more than Christianity. Our first good Word today—whatever is not against Christ is for Christ—is very much what Christ has to do with college, certainly Christ College.

Of course, the other side of the paradox is also what Christ has to do with college. When our Lord alerts the faithful that whoever or whatever is not for him is against him, we are reminded that every point of view and every work of culture is grounded in one faith or another. Perhaps most are open to Christ, but some are not.

The uncomfortable truth in our second good Word today is that Christ opens every viewpoint and every work of culture to the question of faith, when we might rather split our world into what concerns faith on one hand and what is innocuous or indifferent to faith on the other. Faith always includes the world, but faith also cleanses what it includes.

And so Christ College must be as critical as it is inclusive. And its studies of every subject and viewpoint must go to the depths of the faith that informs them. Not least, that means the mutual criticism of the points of view of the students and faculty, all of which makes life in the College so exhausting—and exhilarating.

The College, of course, is still very young in its work and play. Yet, already our alumni return, students arrive, Warren retires, the College remains, and the paradox stands. Even these slender achievements of a mere quarter century are worth celebrating, for they *may* be the first fruits of a larger promise.

A particular memory and hope can do that for you, too.

Amen. ✠✠

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Homecoming Symposium

Dedications

Two dedications introduced Christ College's twenty-fifth anniversary homecoming symposium. Founding Dean Richard Baepler presided at the dedication of the late Ewald H. Mueller Memorial Bible, and Dean Schwehn dedicated the Steinway and Sons piano, which is a gift to Christ College from the Valparaiso University Guild and friends of Christ College. Both dedications took place in the Mueller Hall Refectory.

In his introductory remarks to the dedication of the Mueller Bible, Baepler reviewed Reverend Mueller's pilgrimage from the farmlands of Iowa to "centers of power and influence in New York and New Jersey." He lauded Mueller's rare generosity of spirit, which enabled him to support many philanthropic enterprises without attaching disabling conditions to any of them. Baepler remembered Reverend Mueller's close relationship to former President O.P. Kretzmann's visions and dreams. "Students were always foremost in Ewald's mind," Baepler recalled. As evidence for this, Baepler cited Reverend Mueller's support for residence halls, recreation facilities, and, of course, the Christ College building. Baepler formally dedicated the Mueller Bible by reading the passage in Ephesians 3:14-19 that was used by Reverend Mueller as the text for the sermon he had preached over twenty years before as part of the dedication services for Christ College.

Dean Schwehn began the dedication of the Steinway piano by recognizing and thanking Janie Lichtfuss, the Executive Director of the Valparaiso University Guild. The Guild had matched gifts from Christ College alumni to make the purchase of the piano possible. Christ College junior Joseph Bognar played the hymn "Let All Things Now Living." The entire assembly then sang that stirring anthem to conclude the dedication ceremonies.

Recollections and Reflections by Three CC Deans

After the dedications the symposium continued with presentations by each of the three deans who have served the College during its first quarter-century. Professor Mel Piehl set the tone for the occasion when, in his introductory remarks, he compared the three—Baepler, Meyer, and Schwehn—to other famous threesomes such as Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln; Peter, James, and John; and Larry, Curly, and Moe. Many observers later suggested that, on the basis of their performance that afternoon, the deans most resembled the last trio that Piehl mentioned.

Founding Dean Baepler began by debunking some of the myths of origins. The College did not begin either as a special effort to recruit students like Piehl or as "Boniface College," named after Pope Boniface VIII, "to Christianize and civilize

Recollections and Reflections, Continued

German barbarians." Instead, the College grew from the collaborative genius of several individuals as a place where students could "get more of the kind of education they were already getting at VU."

Baepler spoke of several of the earliest challenges he faced and surmounted. "Elitism was a problem in the 60's," he recalled, "and it was therefore probably fortunate that inflation prevented our building separate residence halls for CC students." Instead, former President Huegli suggested that classrooms that would serve the entire campus should be built in a sub-story of the Christ College building. Baepler explained the CC curriculum as a process of tearing down unexamined assumptions in the first year, introducing constructive systems in the second and third years, and empowering students to formulate their own systems of belief in their senior years. He praised the use of theatre in the college by stating that "there is nothing more empowering than theatre as an integrating and community-building force." He urged the College to maintain its central mission to form young people, to teach them how to formulate and ask the toughest questions, and to help them face those questions, not necessarily to answer them.

Former dean Meyer noted that it was appropriate that Baepler's remarks had taken twice the appointed amount of time. "I spent twelve years adjusting to the miscalculations of my predecessor," Meyer quipped. He more seriously insisted that Baepler's retirement from the deanship in 1978 had suddenly given the college a past and a foundation.

CC Alumni Board member Dan Friedrich ('80) reports that the reviews are still coming in for the 25th Anniversary Homecoming Symposium talks, affectionately known as *We Three Deans*. Here's a sampling of the opinions he's collected:

*I found Baepler, Meyer, and Schwehn's performances especially convincing. While I was watching *We Three Deans* I believed they actually were deans. They were characters I cared about.* —Roger Ebert

More believable than JFK—Oliver Stone

No mere talking heads, this moved me. —Ted Koppel

**We Three Deans* is in my Top 10 List. I've been trying to get them as guests for years.* —David Letterman

The three deans prove Americans can still compete. —President Bill Clinton

Wow! Obviously, I attended the wrong Indiana college! —Former Vice-President Dan Quayle

These are the kind of guys you want speaking in a polis. —Plato

Recollections and Reflections, Continued

He viewed his own twelve years as a period of consolidation. Meyer said, "The College always was and still remains an enigma to me. It is honors, experimental, interdisciplinary, collaborative, linking learning and faith....It was, to me, an inheritance but not a clear idea." Meyer noted how he had been fortunately prepared, during the two years he spent as director of VU's overseas study center in Cambridge, to appreciate the value of community. "The best teaching and learning go on within a context that is communal, collaborative, rigorous, and integrated," Meyer said. He pointed to the "vertical integration" of the CC curriculum beyond the freshman year as one of the major achievements of his era. And he concluded by speaking about the College's effect upon him. "By watching and talking with students through the course of their four years in CC, I was able for the first time to see a wholeness to the college years. I guess I most miss student recruitment, the process of first getting to know students and their parents."

Dean Schwehn concluded the symposium by showing that it was indeed possible for a Christ College dean to speak for less than twenty minutes. He cited the conversations that led to the creation of the Lilly Fellows Program and the internationalization of the Christ College curriculum as the two most important developments of the past three years. Finally, he mentioned three themes that will inform the future development of the college: the dialogue between Christianity and other religions, the cultivation of the spiritual virtues necessary for inquiry and for creative diversity, and a renewed emphasis upon vocation as a way of giving meaning to human work.

As is fitting for Christ College, alums will not remember the three lectures as much as they will their own creative responses to the lectures. For many, the high point of the symposium will be the dramatic interpretations of the deans' presentations that groups of alumni prepared under the direction of former professor Van C. Kussrow, Jr. ❖❖

Christ College Silver Anniversary Reception and Dinner

Nearly 180 Christ College alumni/æ, faculty, and friends attended the Silver Anniversary reception and dinner at Strongbow Inn. Highlights of the evening included the announcement of the establishment of the Warren G. Rubel Annual Lecture on Christianity and Higher Learning and "surprise" musical entertainment by a group of CC alums led by Jim Looman ('74) and David Orner ('74).

The assembly sang "Happy Birthday" to Elene Amundsen, Administrative Assistant to the Dean, and presented her with a birthday gift. Dean Schwehn congratulated and thanked her for having survived the rigors of life at Christ College longer than any other staff member.

Valparaiso University President Emeritus Albert G. Huegli delivered a splendid after-dinner talk. We print the opening section here for your enjoyment.

The Founding of Christ College

Albert G. Huegli, Valparaiso University President Emeritus

Albert G. Huegli became 15th President of Valparaiso University in 1968 following six years of service as the University's Vice-President for Academic Affairs and a short term as Acting President. He retired from the presidency in 1978. From 1982 through 1988 Dr. Huegli was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Michigan. A recognized authority on private higher education, he serves today as a consultant to church-related colleges. Dr. Huegli was named an honorary alumnus of VU in 1969.

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 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 pre-eminent 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. ❖❖