

Christian Reconstruction

Isaiah 61:4

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A LOW-BUDGET CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

There is no doubt that over the past decade, the major area of Christian victory has been the creation of an independent, generally consistent Christian day-school movement. Unlike the schools that were built prior to the upheavals of the 1960's, these schools have been constructed in terms of a more thoroughgoing opposition to secularism, including public school textbooks. There is virtually no market for consistent Christian school books and materials in the independent Christian schools prior to 1965. Now there is a growing demand, and slowly — very slowly — alternative curricula are being developed in terms of a creationist, biblical viewpoint.

Despite the successes we have seen in the day-school movement, there have been no comparable successes in Christian higher education. We still face the grim reality of the fact that there is almost no place to send our better-trained graduates of the Christian day schools. There are colleges that claim to be Christian, but the tiny handful that are seriously trying to begin to revamp the curricula to conform to Christian standards are struggling, small, and practically bankrupt financially. Those that are prospering — by Christian college standards — are practically bankrupt theologically and academically. We can say in all honesty that the world must not need a consistently Christian college, since God provides what we need, and God hasn't provided one.

What do I have in mind? I am thinking about a school which conforms to the following criteria. **First**, it hires and fires (especially fires) in terms of an orthodox creed, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Philadelphia Confession, the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church, or some similar statement of faith. **Second**, a school which does not use secular college textbooks except when accompanied by line-by-line critical analyses, preferably printed, which students can use to avoid the inescapable theoretical and factual errors of all secular scholarship. **Third**, a faculty which is constantly rethinking, rewriting, and revamping all academic disciplines to conform to biblical revelation. **Fourth**, a school that accepts no government aid, Federal or state, and can therefore preach the gospel in every classroom building on campus. **Fifth**, a college which has not adopted some sort of so-called "Christian stewardship" program of selling interest-paying investment contracts to Christians, thereby making usurers out of them. (On this point, see my article, "Stewardship, Investment, Usury: Financing the Kingdom of God," which appears in my book, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* and also as an appendix in R.J. Rushdoony's *Institutes of Biblical Law*.) **Sixth**,

a college that offers a full liberal arts program. A Bible college is another sort of institution meeting other academic needs. **Seventh**, a college which hires the best teachers for the job, whether or not they are officially certified by some state university or other secular institution. Berkeley, Harvard, and other top-rated universities have special posts for unaccredited experts in the arts and sciences, but less prestigious schools have academic inferiority complexes and are afraid to adopt this approach.

Obviously, no such college now exists. There is little likelihood that a conventional school like this will be created. The trouble is, most of the little Christian denominations already have a compromised college which offers warmed-over secularism (properly baptized daily with a morning prayer or compulsory chapel) in the name of "relevant Christianity." Any attempt to start a new, thoroughly Christian college is understood, quite accurately, as a slap in the face of the administrators and staffs of the existing, intellectually compromised academic institutions. It means that there are those in the Christian community who understand that the already established schools have sold their creedal birthrights for a pot of accreditation. These schools have undermined the faith for the sake of acceptability, meaning acceptability within the world of secular scholarship. Yet that world is the camp of the enemy, the very reason why parents are shelling out thousands of dollars each year for their children to avoid. The result is that the defenders of second-rate Christian scholarship (meaning third-rate secular scholarship) resent the intrusion of new, completely independent, consistently Christian academic institutions.

If a serious academic alternative is to be built, it will have to be built by laymen, a handful of pastors, and a few Christian scholars who have the vision to challenge the existing compromises in Christian education. They will get little assistance from the denominational colleges. But they have an incentive to construct an alternative, or even several alternatives.

In my opinion, the obvious people to start such a project in any denomination or association are the headmasters of Christian day schools who do not want to see their graduates sent into the wasteland of baptized secularism. Why bother training up a new generation, at considerable sacrifice, if graduates are then sent off to compromising academic institutions that were built prior to 1965 in terms of the pre-1965 standards of academic respectability, and which hired the then-acceptable graduates of secular universities, who now are the senior professors with tenure? You cannot get rid of them now, or at least those in charge of

these schools think they can't. (For a fine critique of the whole idea of tenure, see the essay of the distinguished American sociologist, Robert Nisbet: "The Permanent Professors: A Modest Proposal," in his book, *Tradition and Revolt*.) It must be painful to see your life's work dribble away through the cracks in the Christian educational edifice, namely, Christian colleges, yet this is the pain which every Christian day-school headmaster must bear at the present time. He trains up young people, only to see their faith short-circuited by their sophomore year in the denominational college.

A Low-Cost Alternative

The largest cost of establishing a Christian college is the plant. The second largest cost is salaries. The third largest cost is the library. My plan avoids all three.

The college I am proposing initially will be a headmaster with a filing cabinet. It will take students who want to study with a professor who is co-operating with the college. A list of co-operating faculty members will be published in an inexpensive catalogue, for which the student will pay \$2.00 to cover costs. The faculty members will be selected in terms of their creedal statement, their commitment to a revamped educational program based on that creed, and their competence within the discipline involved. For instance, a successful teacher in a Christian day school could be a professor of education in the college, whether or not he or she has a Ph.D., an M.A., or a B.A. Competence in performance, not competence in secularism's academic gymnastics, is the only criterion that matters, once the teacher's orthodoxy has been established.

Students will pick those teachers who will provide them with what they need. They will go to the town where that teacher is presently teaching. The student will serve as a kind of apprentice for a semester or a year, or even two years, with that professor. The professor will work in his free time. He will assign readings, papers, or other tasks. The student will report back to that professor when he completes the assignment. The professor will grade his achievement, and the grades will be sent back to the college (filing cabinet).

Who will pay the professor? The college. Who will pay the college? The student. How much will it cost? Compared to other schools, not that much. It will be sufficient to buy the professor's time. Overhead is minimal — a tiny fraction of what administration-heavy, debt-heavy, respectability-heavy colleges shell out for normal operations.

The student who works directly with a professor will probably be an upper division student. What about freshmen and sophomores? They can be adequately instructed by videotape in the local day school (after hours) or in a local church, under the supervision of the pastor and/or headmaster. The videotape revolution is upon us. Units can be purchased for about \$800-\$1000. Tapes are inexpensive. Students could rent the tapes from the college (filing

cabinet). The tapes would be produced by each professor who is co-operating. What is his incentive? He will be paid a royalty for every student who takes his course. He has an incentive to produce a first-rate course. The market will reward him, not a captive administration and the administration's unknowing financial supporters. At the end of the course, the student will take an exam prepared by the professor, who will be paid by the college to grade it or other assignments.

The best men in each field can teach in the college program. They can do so without taking much time out of their normal academic year. They can earn extra income, which will be increasingly important as inflation continues (and salaries become frozen). They can train up students who would otherwise have to run the gauntlet of baptized secularism thrown down by the professor's intellectually compromised colleagues.

If videotape costs too much, then the college can use simple audio cassettes. Let businessmen or housewives rent or buy them, but for no credit (lower rental fee and no exam grading to pay for). Let the whole church get an education. More important, let the whole church listen to what is being taught in the name of Christ by the professors. If that were the case with today's intellectually schizophrenic academics, there might be a revolution within lay circles — a most beneficial one for the kingdom, but exceedingly costly for the baptizing secularists. (Any denominational college that refuses on principle to tape record the lectures of its faculty for student use and lay or pastoral scrutiny has adopted a secular view of academic freedom and is probably teaching heresy on a massive scale — at the expense of the compliant sheep who continue to finance the deception.)

To implement this plan, it will take a full-time administrator a year or two to set up, or a lot of work by several dedicated church or school officials. After the first year, the school will sink or swim on its own merits. The financial risk is minimized: no fixed faculty salaries (future royalties instead), no buildings, no libraries, no pensions, no vice presidents in charge of anything, no academic deans, no Federal forms to fill out. Tenure is no stronger than the magnet used to erase the tapes.

Does anyone out there have a used filing cabinet?

Gary North

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Suggestions concerning this project, or volunteers to help make it a reality, are needed. Mail them directly to: "College Project," I.C.E., 713 W. Cornwallis Rd., Durham, N.C. 27707.

For a book presenting the kind of scholarship I am talking about, see Gary North (editor), *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*. Order from Fairfax Christian Books, 11121 Pope's Head Rd., Fairfax, VA 22030: \$5.00.

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