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BELIEVING DOUBT AND DOUBTING BELIEF: CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS WORKING AND SUCCEEDING IN THE SECULAR ACADEMY

By

D. Scott Dixon

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

BELIEVING DOUBT AND DOUBTING BELIEF: CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS WORKING AND SUCCEEDING IN THE SECULAR ACADEMY

By

D. Scott Dixon

Is it possible for religiously oriented scholars to accommodate to the demands of mainstream academia without compromising their faith? Can a Christian professor working in a secular academy be devout to his or her religion and considered an intellectual at the same time? How do the disciplines of science and theology relate to each other? Are they competing ways of thinking, or can they be integrated into a common search for understanding? Are the spirit and the mind at odds?

Exploration of these concerns raises two primary questions. First, what are the working conditions on today's secular campus for Christian faculty? What types of external barriers and conflicts, if any, do they face? Second, how do Christian scholars earn acceptance as intellectually capable without compromising their religious convictions? How do they cope internally with the tensions and ambivalences which result from a choice between what are sometimes perceived as "alternative inauthenticities"? (Gates, 1997).

In order to address these potential tensions, this study profiles three Christian professors who work in secular universities. Michael Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, reflects the recent animosity between science and religion as well as revealing the potential power and control of the academic discipline in the faculty life

(Becher, 1989). As a professor of education at Claremont Graduate University in Pomona, California, and a woman who converted to Christianity in mid-career, Mary Poplin sheds light on the role of one's vocational identity in faculty life (Hansen, 1995). Finally, through his success as a conservative voice in the midst of the liberal elite, Robert George, the Cyrus Hall McCormick Professorship of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, demonstrates the power of a transformative ethical stance (Niebuhr, 1956).

A discussion of common themes and possible implications for practice and research follows these three faculty profiles. Some of those themes include: (a) a description of the prejudice on campus toward Christian faculty as a lack of respect rather than a lack of tolerance; (b) the importance for Christian academics to use their talents and convictions to create a space for their voice; (c) the difficulty of bringing potentially exclusive theories into an inclusive academic context; (d) the consideration of how academic culture itself can actually aid Christian scholars in integrating their faith and work via the university's high allegiance to academic freedom as well as the "loose coupling" of faculty self-governance.

Dedicated to my loving family who patiently endured the dissertation process with me: To Drew, Ben, Claire, Seth, and Ellie whose boundless enthusiasm for life continually put this project in the proper perspective; and to my wife, Sara, whose unconditional love and unwavering encouragement made the completion of this dissertation possible.

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Many friends have been of special encouragement along the way: Mike Stone, a fellow student from MSU whose words of wisdom helped me set a course to navigate the dissertation mountain; Eric Mounts, whose 20-year friendship has continually reaffirmed the high value of a faithful friend; and special thanks to my Cedarville University colleagues, Phil Bassett and Chris Miller, whose barks turned out to be much worse than their bites. They helped me believe the project was doable.

Expressions of appreciation would be incomplete without recognizing the significant partnership of my family in the completion of this project: Bob and Ellen Beattie whose faithful love to each other, their children, and grandchildren has been an inspiration to me; Karen Beattie who shared with me her editor's eyes and artist's heart; my father and mother, Paul and Pat Dixon, whose 40-year investment in my life has been one of modeling excellence and gracious living. The greatest single contributor has been my wife. This research project exists as a testimony to her encouragement, love, and support. Thank you, Sara, for your partnership in life and ministry.

Most importantly, I commit this entire project to Jesus Christ. His grace has

sustained me, and His love has inspired me. My desire to do this type of study grew from my desire to serve Christ. My hope is that this dissertation will motivate and inspire other Christian faculty to integrate their faith and work into a doxological whole.

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CHAPTER ONE

LIVING BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Strolling across the campus of Michigan State University during the middle of the Fall semester, I basked in the beauty of the October day--the vivid colors of the changing leaves clinging to the large, stately oak trees, the relaxing melody of the nearby Red Cedar River as its current flowed noisily downstream, and the tingly embrace of the autumn wind.

In order to walk from the main library to my graduate assistant office on the fourth floor of Erickson Hall, I had to cross a pedestrian bridge near a large classroom building named Wells Hall. As the Red Cedar meandered its way through the middle of MSU, it left only a few crossing points to advance from one half of campus to the other. Always busy with student traffic, the Wells Hall bridge and surrounding sidewalks were no less crowded this afternoon.

A group of 30 to 50 people were clustered together on the west end of the bridge near the entrance to Wells Hall. Because of this concrete intersection's strategic location on a campus of close to 40,000 students, salespeople and recruiters would set up shop to hawk their wares and push their causes. On any given day, I might be offered a free T-shirt for changing my long-distance carrier or promised a life full of challenge and adventure if only I would give four years to Uncle Sam. Today's salesman offered no freebies and made no outlandish promises. Today, the salesman offered only Jesus.

I had read letters to the editor in *The State News*, the student newspaper, complaining about the "Wells Hall Preacher"--a generic name given to the sidewalk

evangelists who would periodically show up and proclaim their version of the gospel to all who would listen. Evidently, some students did not appreciate being shouted at and told to repent on their way to calculus class. As a part-time pastor at a local Baptist church who had spent five years of his life in seminary, I was intrigued and disturbed by all this commotion surrounding the "Wells Hall Preacher." This afternoon would be our first encounter.

As I slowly made my way across the bridge, I could see the crowd and hear the muffled shouting. I also saw that the one doing most of the yelling was holding up a large sign with bold, colorful lettering. The first words readable from a distance were placed in the middle of this hand-held poster. Larger than any of the other words above and below them and printed in all capital letters, this three-word message became clearer as I approached the murmuring mob: "GO TO HELL." "This is an interesting way to draw a crowd," I thought.

Edging closer to the group, not more than 15 feet away, I began to recognize the beginning words of the placard which were placed directly above the previous message and written in a slightly smaller font: "REPENT (or you will)." There was one more set of words on this overcrowded communique, and they were the smallest yet. Now at the back of the crowd, I had to stand on my tip-toes to see over the head of the person in front of me. Scribbled underneath this not so gentle warning of fire and brimstone was the following coda: "Jesus Loves You."

My looming first convergence with the "Wells Hall Preacher" suddenly grew into a close encounter of the worst kind. The mass of students was not receiving the preacher's rather direct message with passive restraint. They were not buying what he

was selling, and I don't think he cared because he was more into telling than selling anyway. Both sides showed more anger than tact as each raised its decibel level in order to be heard above the other. This was not a place for reasoned debate, nor was anyone abiding by *Robert's Rules of Order.*

The only situation matching the verbal mayhem taking place outside of Wells Hall was the cacophony of voices striving to be heard inside my head. What does this "wacko" preacher think he is doing? Do these students equate all preachers with this guy? Couldn't he have picked a little less controversial and more loving message to broadcast on a sophisticated university campus? What would the students think of me if they knew I was a preacher? More important, what would my professors and student colleagues in the College of Education think if they were standing here beside me?

As a conservative religious person, I went back to my office that day evaluating my place in the secular university. Not that I agreed with the stance of the "Wells Hall Preacher"--far from it. I thought he did more harm than good, and I questioned his true intentions. Still, was the emotional interchange between a religious voice (granted, an extreme one) and a university audience representative in any way of American higher education's receptivity to "God-talk"? And were my own conflicting emotions of anger, embarrassment, and fear typical for a person with strong religious convictions anticipating a presence in the secular academy?

Living With Contradiction

In her book *I've Known Rivers*, Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994) presents six portraits of highly successful African-American professionals. Lawrence-Lightfoot has

chosen these six stories to answer a foundational question that has gnawed at her for over twenty years: "What does it mean to be black and successful?" As an African-American woman who grew up in an upper-middle-class home and who now holds an influential position as a professor of education at Harvard, Lawrence-Lightfoot has searched for a portrayal of lives that would "capture" (p. 5) her own experience. Having found similar books wanting, she decided to do her own research.

Caught between the two worlds of their African-American heritage and a professional world composed almost entirely of white, western-Europeans, these six have survived, according to Lawrence-Lightfoot, due to "their ability to embrace and live with contradiction" (p. 10). Because of their birth in the former culture, they may never be fully accepted by those in the latter; but, due to their large amount of success in the second sphere, they feel they can never fully return to their roots in the first.

As I listened to these six voices, I heard echoes of the Christian scholar's[1] experience within a secular academy. As the six described a life "of double consciousness" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, p. 644), I sensed the same central tension expressed by Christian academics who ask, "How does the religiously committed scholar accommodate to the demands of the mainstream academic profession without compromising her faith?" (Marsden, 1997, p. 11). As I read Lawrence-Lightfoot's work, I remembered some of my own struggles as a Christian scholar in training. Having grown up in church, the son of a preacher, I was fairly sure I knew what it means to be a

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[1]See the "Glossary" in Appendix A for definitions of key terms.

Christian. I knew how to think, how to act, how to speak, even how to dress. I knew what was expected.

I was not so sure about the scholar part. Every other college and graduate school I had attended identified itself as a Christian institution of higher learning and privileged the religious point of view. In the pluralistic context of Michigan State, I knew what used to be assumed now had to be defended. My conservative religious identity moved me from insider to outsider.

Values cherished in the one place were shunned in the other. Beliefs held closely in the former were "bracketed" in the latter. The motto of my seminary in Texas was "Preach the Word." One of my constant fears at MSU when I wrote a paper or made a comment in class was to be accused of "sounding like a preacher." What would I have to change in order to be accepted as a full-fledged scholar? What part of my religious identity might I be asked to sacrifice?

Two Questions

"What hath Athens to do with Jerusalem?" Tertullian, the venerable theologian, asked this question in the second century to gauge the relationship between earthly knowledge and divine wisdom. How would the philosophers of ancient Greece interact with the religious leaders seated in Jerusalem? How open would Athens be to the influence of Jerusalem, and how closely could Jerusalem assimilate itself to Athens without compromising its theological convictions?

How do the two worlds of reason and faith relate? Or, to put the question in a more contemporary fashion, how does the scientific method fit with the notion of divine

revelation? Higher education has spent centuries grappling with this pivotal question. The American university has mirrored the changing fortunes of faith in relationship to reason within the world of scholarship. Also a perceived dichotomy between reason and faith has become more and more manifest within the academy since the latter half of the nineteenth century.

For the Christian faculty member working in today's secular university, these questions are more than rhetorical; they have become deeply personal. The answers to this question can have career-altering ramifications for those religious scholars who are, according to Robert Wuthnow (1988), "living the question" by continually asking what the relationship of their faith is to their scholarship and how their scholarly work potentially affects their religious devotion.

This study seeks to describe the precariousness of living in two worlds: two worlds that often have trouble accepting the other without qualification. Two primary questions present themselves. First, what are the working conditions on the secular campus today for a Christian professor? If Boston University scholar and self-proclaimed secularist Alan Wolfe (1996) is correct when he describes the current academic climate as "so secular" that it leaves "little room for religious expression" (p. B4), what types of external barriers and conflicts, if any, do Christian faculty face?

Second, if Marsden (1997) is right when he writes that "the norm for people to be fully accepted in academic culture is to act as though their religious beliefs had nothing to do with education" (p. 24), how do Christian scholars earn acceptance as intellectuals without compromising their religious convictions? How do they cope internally with the

tensions, uncertainties, and ambivalences that result from a choice between what Henry Gates (1997) calls (in another context) "alternative inauthenticities"?

One Method [2]

In John Lahr's (2000) introduction to his collection of show business profiles, *Show and Tell*, he reveals the controlling mental template that shapes his literary craft: "If you find the pulse of the artist, you find the pulse of the art" (p. xii). Whether it be playwright David Mamet's masterful use of unexpected dialogue and his childhood experience filled with fear and abuse, or Woody Allen's pessimistic and anxious psyche resulting in almost autocratic control of each of his film projects, Lahr shows the artist and the art to be inextricably linked.

This study profiles three Christian professors in order to capture a valid picture of today's academy.[3] These faculty narratives provide the time and space required to uncover the pulse of the academic scholar and offer a deeper and more nuanced comprehension of the scholarly enterprise: its participants, fields of study, and institutions. Looking beyond the practice of scholarship to the motivations for and tension within professorial work holds the academy up to the light of examination and introspection where close observation can lead to insightful analysis.

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[2]A more detailed explanation of the method used in this project can be found in Appendix B.

[3]Other profiles exist of Christian academics, including philosophers in *Philosophers Who Believe* (Clark, 1993) and *God and the Philosopher* (Morris, 1997), as well as professors from various disciplines in *Professors Who Believe* (Anderson, 1998). These books are brief first-person narratives written primarily for a Christian audience.

Before we use these faculty lives to help us address the potential tensions Christian academics face (both externally and internally) within today's secular academy, we need to contextualize their stories within the ongoing conversation taking place within the literature. Before we focus on this trio of voices, it will be helpful to listen to other Christian scholars who have written about their perceptions of the current situation. They have, in fact, themselves borrowed the rhetoric of others who have studied the culture of American higher education--two sets of vocabulary, in particular.

First, Christian academics have used what I call the "voice of the oppressed" to describe perceived discrimination on campus. Commenting on the tendency of the academy to "normalize" all those who enter its gates, Christian scholars begin to sound like other groups of difference who do not necessarily fit the "one size fits all" approach of academia.

Christian professors also have borrowed a second rhetoric from the language of the philosophers. Pointing out the difficulties religious scholars face in trying to establish disciplinary arguments based on reason and faith, researchers and commentators have discussed in detail potential epistemological tensions. How does divine revelation co-exist with the scientific method? Is that even a valid option? These two sets of language will help us contextualize the possible tensions of Christian faculty in today's university.

Voice of the Oppressed

"One of the great achievements of science has been, if not to make it impossible for intelligent people to be religious, then at least to make it possible for them not to be religious" (Weinberg, 1999, p. 48). This quotation, taken from a speech given by

University of Texas physicist Steven Weinberg during a 1999 conference for the American Association for the Advancement of Science, communicates the anti-religious passion among a portion of the academic community today.

A 1979 Nobel Laureate as well as a member of the National Academy of Sciences, Weinberg leaves little ambiguity in his conviction that scholarship and religious belief do not mix. To call a religious person intelligent has become an oxymoron. Making no pretense toward open-mindedness or reconsideration, Weinberg ends his talk with a declaration of victory: "We should not retreat from this accomplishment" (p. 48).

Does this statement from a leading physicist within the American scientific establishment represent the opinion of the whole, or is it just the biased, unreflective ranting of an eccentric professor speaking outside his field of expertise? Is Weinberg's denigration of religious belief typical of the response Christian scientists or scholars can expect if they were to invoke a religious idea or theological deduction within a scholarly argument? In the eyes of their disciplinary brethren, is it possible for Christian academics to be considered religious and smart at the same time? Or has religion been trivialized and marginalized to the anti-intellectual outskirts of the academy?

Ghettos and Monasteries

Christian scholars like Notre Dame professor George Marsden and Stephen Carter of Yale have not been shy in accusing the academy of prejudice, discrimination, and religious bigotry. Whereas the historian, Marsden (1994), takes the more measured tone when he describes higher education's relatively recent history of "perpetuating . . . strong prejudices against traditional religious viewpoints" (p. 429), Carter (2000), a law

professor, adopts a more argumentative stance in his recent text on religion and politics, *God's Name in Vain*, when he decries the "anti-religious slurs" that have become commonplace within intellectual discourse:

> On America's elite campuses, today, it is perfectly acceptable for professors to use their classrooms to attack religion, to mock it, to trivialize it, and to refer to those to whom faith truly matters as dupes, and dangerous fanatics on top of it. I have heard some of the wisest scholars in the country deride religious beliefs and religious believers in terms so full of stereotype and of - let us say the word - bigotry that we would be appalled were they to say similar things about just any other group. (p. 187)

Both external pressure from secular academic powers and choices made by Christian professors themselves have contributed to the marginalization of the Christian voice. On the one hand, religion has been relegated to separate campus ministries and "ghettoized" into separate religion departments with little influence on the intellectual life of the larger campus. Mark Schwehn (as cited in Marsden, 1997) has suggested that "Christians are now treated in a manner rather like women were treated in the pre-feminist era. Women could be hired, promoted, and retained, so long as their feminism did not figure prominently in their research interests, their scholarly perspectives, and their manner of life generally" (p. 145). And, while no one would deny the existence of many Christian professors within the secular academy, some still ask whether they feel the freedom to integrate their scholarship with their faith.

In an academic universe replete with feminist schools of thought, Marxist economics, and queer theory, among others, where are the avowedly Christian theories? Is religion seen only as "a meddling patron" to be avoided at all costs (Burtchaell, 1998,

p. 850)? Often, Christian academics feel the emotions expressed by political scientist John C. Greene in a *New York Times* article:

> If a professor talks about studying something from a Marxist point of view, others might disagree but not dismiss the notion. But if a professor proposed to study something from a Catholic or Protestant point of view, it would be treated like proposing something from a Martian point of view. (Steinfels, 1993)

But external pressure from academic powers cannot be solely blamed for choices made by the Christian professors who contribute to the problem. Some religious faculty who desire a more explicit connection between their faith and scholarship have chosen to retreat into the subculture of Christian higher education--an academic monastery that has existed for centuries (and from which many of today's elite, private universities originated). As Alan Wolfe (2000) has remarked, many Christian scholars have been content to marginalize themselves and have created their own subculture "complete with journals, conferences, and publishing houses." He adds, "If the price of academic respectability is the modern research university . . . most evangelical scholars would rather not pay it" (p. 72).

Other professors have chosen to remain in the secular academy but they have bowed to the pressure by hiding differences in order to fit in with the majority. As Carter (1993) explains, the religiously faithfully have continually been tempted "to be other than themselves" among the cultural and academic elite (p. 3). "As easily shrugged off as a favorite color" (p. 56), one's faith carries no intellectual weight. At best, religion is treated as a hobby ("like building a model airplane") fit only for private consumption. And, at worst, the religious voice is considered irrational and unsuitable for public discourse.

This separation of the private and public selves begins to mirror the metaphoric use of "closet" by other outsider groups. Working-class faculty have written of the "class closet" and the "don't ask, don't tell" policy taken by the academic powers-that-be in order to "erase" a vital part of the working-class professor's intellectual biography (Dews & Law, 1995, p. 334). Women academics find themselves in the place of "intellectual detachment" as they "must actively suppress that part of [their] experience that differs from that of men" in the university (Simeone, 1987, p. 152). And, writing from the perspective of queer theory, William Tierney (1997) speculates on the consequences of keeping "professional personae distinct . . . from private lives" and ultimately rejects the notion the two selves can ever be fully separated (p. xviii).

The Able Seducer

Reading the literature of the Christian scholar, it becomes clear that most writers are not claiming victimization or a conspiracy on the part of American higher education. Rather, the academy is presented as an "able seducer" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 850) that requires people of faith to adopt "the academic motif of intellectual freedom, patient research, evidence-based judgment, and rational argument" (p. 859) to the exclusion of faith-based assumptions.

Like many students of the American university, Christian scholars recognize this able seducer as highly resistant to change and a strongly normative influence on those who seek to enter its halls. Ironically, this institution "run by and for a group that has been dubbed 'tenured radicals' may be the most conservative institution in American society" (Wolfe, 1996, p. 1). Columbia professor David Damrosch (1995) has borrowed

a term from Mikhail Bakhtin and labeled higher education as a "heterocosm" that functions as a "universe obeying its own laws and deriving from its own history, intimately linked to current social realities at some points but bafflingly distant from them at others" (p. 18).

"One of the remaining guild-like groups in American society" (Kerr, 1995, p. 168), the academic culture's true strength may be seen in the manner in which it socializes its members. Also called "monastic guilds" (Karabell, 1998), the disciplines offer professors the role of medieval monk within a university monastery. Living in a compound cut off from the outside world, obeying the rules of the monastic life established by the founding fathers, meditating in the company of like-minded souls, and with a pointed mission to preserve knowledge through the transcription of ancient texts, this monks' world leaves little room for improvisation.

Apprenticed through the crucible of graduate school, young scholars are encouraged to withdraw from society and asked "to exchange the workaday life of most Americans for the rarefied world of scholarship" (Karabell, 1998, p. 59). With the promise of eventual membership within the guild, these apprentices learn to practice their scholarly craft according to the preordained rules passed down from the full professors "on high." These mentors not only guard the entry gate into the profession through the granting of the Ph.D. but also possess the power to award promotion and establish one's reputation through refereed publications and eventual lifetime membership through the granting of tenure.

Considered a "process of acculturation" (Damrosch, 1995, p. 153), graduate school becomes a place where the habits of the mind are learned and enforced.

Borrowing from the work of French post-structuralist Michel Foucault (1979), whose studies of prisons, hospitals, and asylums illustrated how strongly normative cultures marginalize and "imprison" outsiders, cultural theorists such as Peter McLaren (1989) have indicted institutions like universities as "colonizer[s]" that "provide the terms and frames of reference" for those on their margins (p. 52).

What some have called the power of acculturation, others have designated the "price of acculturation" (Marsden, 1997, p. 7), which is required of all who desire full acceptance in the academic community--a "hegemony" where those who are different can be welcome as long as "they think more-or-less alike" (Marsden, 1994, p. 432). Working-class professor Carolyn Law has renamed the socialization of the academy a re-creation: "Education has destroyed something even while it has been re-creating me in its own image" (Dews & Law, 1995, p. 2).

When Richard Rodriguez (1982) describes his own educational journey from the outside in as a "laddering [his] way up the rungs," he highlights the hierarchical nature of the institution (p. 73). Along with British nobility and the Westminster Kennel Club, the university may be one of the most highly stratified places on earth, where titles and pedigrees are everything. To be at the wrong end of the hierarchy puts one at a competitive disadvantage. In a place where everyone is supposed to be color blind, few miss the institutional seal on the diploma or the bibliography on the vita sheet. The academy is a Darwinian world where it is not the survival of the fittest, but the "survival of the most footnoted" (Damrosch, 1995, p. 29). The scholars who survive are those who conform to the expectations of the gatekeepers located within a very small but powerful segment of elite universities.

Many titles and tags are affixed to determine pecking order within the university, and outsiders have long found the academy to be "a part of the ideological apparatus that sustains the myth of meritocractic placement, and in fact provides crucial certification of who is 'somebody' and who is 'nobody'" (Simeone, 1987, p. 3). In a place where labels matter, those who affix the labels have much power over those who receive them. The most powerful and historic institutions have determined the narrative of many of the lesser known universities and colleges, and the fact that many of these same elite institutions long ago renounced their strong religious roots is not lost on the Christian academic.[4]

This power over the "other" is only magnified through the monopoly held by American higher education over the scholarly enterprise within the western world. "The plain fact is that most of the capital society allocates to the support of intellectual inquiry and writing is allocated to the academy" (Simeone, 1987, p. 143). The elite universities function "as the *mind* of the western culture" as they "define what is important" by setting the agendas, providing the vocabulary, and producing the books (Noll, 1994, p. 51). Serving as the "engine of economic growth and the source for technological and scientific progress" (Finn & Manno, 1996, p. 1) and THE credentialing institution of society, "higher education . . . is woven into our lives" (Kennedy, 1997, p. 3).

In addition, many of those foundational scholars whose theories have established the intellectual conventions of the academic disciplines claimed no religious affiliation.

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[4]A number of Christian historians have written texts tracing the history of American higher education and its strong religious roots, including *The Soul of the American University* (Marsden, 1994), *The Secularization of the Academy* (Marsden, 1992), and *The Dying of the Light* (Burtchaell, 1998).

For example, the founders of the modern social sciences- Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Freud - "all abandoned any personal commitment to Christianity (or Judaism) long before they embarked on the intellectual journey that produced their contribution to the formation of the social sciences" (Wuthnow, 1989, pp. 159-160). The intellectual canon of the secular academy (including the elite institutions and foundational theorists) that has formed the deep structures of the modern mind has experienced a paucity of religious influence within the last century.

It should be noted that most of these Christian academics are not arguing for a re-establishment or reinstatement of Christianity to a privileged position within the academy. In the name of pluralism and diversity, no one religious viewpoint ought to dominate. As Marsden (2000) argues:

> At Harvard, for instance, there ought to be room for professors who are orthodox Jews, traditional Christians, Muslims, etc., to relate their religious faiths to their teaching and scholarship, so long as they do not violate any essential rules of academia or public life . . . . They should be free to openly relate their faith to their scholarship, but they must do so in a way that respects the diversity of the community and especially of the student body (paragraph 6).

Christian scholars have recognized the dangers of privileging one approach to scholarship. Wolfe (2000) quotes one such opinion: "Naturalism becomes dangerous when, like the dogmatists of old, it declares its way of knowing to be the only legitimate one and then seeking to disenfranchise other voices"(p. 71). Rather than create another hegemony to replace naturalism, Christian faculty simply want to create a space for their religious voices. They just want to be accepted "on equal terms" within everyday academic discourse (Marsden, 1997, p. 4).

Like women faculty who are "carving out a space for themselves in an unwelcoming, nonsupportive, and frequently hostile environment" (Simeone, 1987, p. 4), religious academics understand how their very presence in the university argues for progress; but they desire more. As Carter (2000) relates his own place as a professor at Yale, "One of Yale's virtues is that it has a place for somebody like me - not me in particular, but somebody *like* me. But not a lot of spaces" (p. 188).

Insiders on the Outside?

Objections and counter-arguments have arisen about the appropriateness of Christian professors using the language of the oppressed. In a review of *God's Name in Vain* written in the *New York Times Book Review*, Brent Staples (2000) calls Carter's claim of intellectual bigotry "implausible" and expresses significant doubts that "in an age of speech codes" and "rigidly enforced tolerance," a university professor could trash a student's beliefs without being subject "to institutional ridicule." (pp. 13-14).

An intellectual historian, Thomas Bender (1994), wonders how Christian historians like Marsden can claim a history of religious prejudice within the academy when so many academics themselves are religious. How can religious scholars depict marginalization within the academy when, in fact, the country as a whole remains so religious?[5] How can a Christian academic assert the status of the underprivileged when

[5]A 1997 Gallup poll revealed that 84% of American adults believe in God, with another 10% trusting in a "higher power." Forty-four percent of the American public trust in the literal truth of the Genesis creation story, whereas another 39% hold that evolution was guided by God.

"no group has a history of more privilege"? How can a group of insiders claim to be on the outside looking in?

While sociological studies have been conducted demonstrating that the religious majority of the American public has not necessarily transferred to the rooms of the Ivory Tower,[6] there still exist doubts about the use of outsider rhetoric. Although similarities exist between the vocabulary of Christian academics describing their own perceived marginalization within the university and other oppressed groups, it would still be less than accurate and possibly even offensive to equate all "outsiders" without qualification.

Whereas affinities of language do reflect a common experience, there remain differences of degree. Whether it be race, gender, class, or sexual orientation, each community claiming to be silenced differs from other groups in meaningful ways. Some groups (gender, race) have no choice but to announce their difference everywhere they go, whereas others (sexual orientation, class) may avoid the more overt acts of discrimination by choosing to hide portions of their identity. Yet, those who are able to hide often experience the intense loneliness that comes from the often incorrect impression that they are "dining at the table of the norm" (Tierney, 1997, p.56) all alone.

Another irony of the rhetoric of oppression rests in the fact that one may be both oppressed and oppressor simultaneously. As Tierney (1997) observes, most people "exist in relation to dominant norms, and at the same time, we also often reside within a

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[6]Robert Wuthnow (1989), writing in *The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals, and Secularism*, has examined such studies from the last 50 years and concluded that the evidence documents the "irregliosity" of the academy in general and scientists in particular. And a recent study by Larson and Witham found only 7% of the members of the National Academy of Sciences claim to believe in a personal God (see Angier, 2001).

dominant norm" (p. 75). Gay, white males may experience discrimination for personal lifestyle choices while at the same time enjoying the privilege that comes from financial wealth. So, too, a Christian physicist may feel that her faith has marginalized her within her profession while enjoying all the perks offered by her professional status.

Rightly or wrongly, some Christian scholars have co-opted the rhetoric of other oppressed groups--marginalized subcultures coping with the normalizing power of the academy. By studying the individual lives of Christian faculty, we will begin to see whether this claim of victim status is accurate. We will seek an honest rendering of the current status of Christian academics on campus. Is there subtle or not-so-subtle prejudice against them? If so, in what forms would this prejudice appear? And what countermeasures allow the Christian professor to withstand such pressure?

Another set of voices seeks to be heard within this scholarly conversation--the voice of the philosophers who ask about the relationship of reason to faith from an epistemological point of view. In an enterprise whose mission is to discover and transmit knowledge, questions about the nature of truth and the criteria used for justifying knowledge claims become all important. Are reason and faith compatible in this mission?

To complicate matters even further, how does the current post-Enlightenment epistemological revolution on campus affect this relationship? When disciplinary brethren cannot even agree about the validity of the scientific method or any other proposed research method, how are they going to respond to religious arguments? To paraphrase Tertullian, what is the relationship of Athens to Jerusalem when both are forced to answer to Berkeley?

Voice of the Philosophers

The emotions felt by those students toward the Wells Hall Preacher were almost matched by my own passionate response to a discussion held one evening in a graduate class in MSU's College of Education. In this class, located (ironically) in a Wells Hall classroom, a dozen Ph.D. and master's level students were studying current curricular issues in American higher education. We had been asked to read a number of articles, including one by William Tierney (1990) on "Cultural Politics and the Curriculum in Postsecondary Education."

Our professor asked us to respond to Tierney's critical framework for approaching what he considered to be a dynamic curriculum, which functions as one expression of an organization's culture and ideology. When I read the article the night before, one comment had caught my eye: "There is no one single, simple unilinear rationality; there are multiple, competing rationalities" (p. 43). Being a novice to the study of education and curricular studies, I found it curious that the author appeared to be denying the existence of objective truth. Chalking it up as a minority opinion, I quickly moved on to the rest of the required readings.

Now, we as a class were being asked to critique Tierney's premise. I eagerly anticipated my fellow students' reactions to what I believed to be a spurious argument. I was startled, however, to hear murmurs of assent among the group. Some thought Tierney's observations rang true with their own educational experience, and others agreed with his description of the curriculum as "a set of filters through which we define and choose what counts as knowledge" (p. 41).

"This can't be happening," I thought. How could educated people be questioning the existence of truth? Surely, the professor leading the discussion would speak up, stamp out these heretical brush fires, and defend the honor of truth.

Again, my expectations were not met. Rather than challenge students' comments, this professor asked follow-up questions to contextualize the isolated thoughts. Rather than make evaluative judgments, she sought clarification. Whatever personal thoughts she had were effectively hidden behind her desire to make sure all viewpoints would be expressed and heard.

Finally, I had to speak up. I do not remember the words I used to express my thoughts that night, but I vividly recall the emotions behind those words. I was incredulous, and I was angry. How could we ever harbor doubts about truth's existence? Had not Descartes settled the possibility of epistemic certainty centuries ago? Even the most rudimentary use of logical analysis proved the denial of absolute truth to be a self-defeating claim.

Sitting in a chair that faced our small semi-circle of desks, the professor listened patiently to my mini-tirade. When I was finished, she asked a series of gentle, prodding questions designed to help me see both sides of the issue. I did not want to see both sides of the issue. I was right, and Tierney was wrong. From my limited perspective, it was obvious.

I had spent four years at a college and five years at a seminary where absolute truth was assumed. God exists, and He has communicated to us through his revelation. Sure, we spent hours in class debating and discussing the exact interpretation of that

revelation. But we worked under the assumption that metanarratives could exist and that the Bible was the most important metanarrative ever written.

Now, Bill Tierney along with his fellow constructivists wanted to do away with the very possibility of such a "rationality." Theology was just one other "fiction" open to interpretation and contextualization with no pretense of generalization. I felt like Tierney had just told me the last ten years of my life were a waste of time and the misuse of a good mind.

Recognizing my internal distress, the professor tried to ease my mental anguish by distinguishing capital "T" Truth and lower case "t" truth. Constructivists were simply focused on little "t" truth--an interpretation of reality that still held out the possibility of capital "T" Truth's actuality. Although I appreciated her explanation and hesitantly agreed with her proposal, I still had my doubts that she could ever get Bill Tierney to agree. He seemed absolute and resolute in his doubt of "Truth's" existence.

This was my second class in the second course of my Ph.D. program, and I began to realize I was on foreign epistemological turf. Not only were there differing philosophical assumptions about the nature of knowledge at play here, but also the rules of evidence were shifting as well. Coming into a pluralistic, secular institution, I knew God and revelation would be granted no special authority. However, I had not fully anticipated how those rule changes might affect my own ability to take part in the ongoing scholarly conversation. I came to realize that I was not the first Christian academic to think these thoughts.

A Forbidden Epistemology

A number of Christian scholars writing within the literature have claimed a minority epistemological status. Referred to as an "alternative mode of cognition" (Graham, 1981, pp. 312-314), an "alien way of knowing" (Carter, 1993, p. 43), and a "forbidden epistemology" (p. 58), the use of religious beliefs to justify truth claims is on shaky epistemological ground within today's post-Enlightenment world. Describing the current academic environment for people of strongly religious persuasions, Kelly Monroe (1996), a graduate school chaplain at Harvard, suggests that religious academics "feel safer as doubters than as believers, and as personal seekers rather than eventual finders" (p. 15).

Are reason and faith compatible? Is religion the "antipathy of reason" (Marsden, 1997, p. 21), or can traditional religious points of view "be just as hospitable to scientifically sound investigations as [any] other viewpoints, all of which are ultimately grounded in some faith or other" (p. 45)? Do religious ideas extend beyond the accepted canons of proof within the university?

George Marsden (1997) quotes one common sentiment within the academy when he cites a professor's comments in The Ohio State University's alumni magazine: "Evidence should meet the standard of profession. But faith is by definition a belief in that for which there is no proof" (p. 25). Do religious truth claims break the rules of shared dialogue within scholarship by beginning at inaccessible starting points and reasoning through inaccessible methods? Or does a religious point of view have as much right to exist as a Marxist or feminist perspective?

These philosophical concerns become even more complicated for Christian scholars when they are situated within the current knowledge revolution on campus. "The gyroscope at the center of any educational system, if it is not to be just a gymnasium or a fraternity row, is its dominant conception of knowledge" (Kernan, 1999, p. 297). Yet, the university's concept of knowledge can be difficult to ascertain when preceded by adjectives like "postmodern," which has been defined as "so new it's out of date already" (Scrivenor, 1989).

In a business whose historic mission revolves around the dissemination of knowledge, any attempt to redefine the nature of knowledge itself will have serious repercussions. Linda Ray Pratt (1996), former president of the American Association of University Professors, has suggested that this epistemological paradigm shift has led to "significant intellectual and methodological transformations in the ways scholars think about knowledge, language, and truth - changes that have altered assumptions about teaching, writing, and education itself" (p. viii). The arguments of scholars like William Tierney represent this type of transformation.

Prone to doubt rather than to believe, the current educational trends are challenging the university's centuries-old Enlightenment foundation. Suspicious of any proposed overarching framework to reality, any claim of neutral descriptive language, and any attempt to build a permanent standard of rationality, this "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 40) has created a context for scholarly exploration in which "epistemological confusion reigns" (Phillips, 1987, p. 80).

The philosophical debate between epistemologies has a historical precedent. More than a debate over the nature of rationality, it has historically been a conversation

about the nature of reality itself. In the last 2000 years we have seen two major shifts in Western thought: providence to progress and progress to nihilism (Lyon, 1994). Before the onset of the Enlightenment existed the "premodern," in which scholars viewed history in providential terms. Championed by writers such as fourth-century apologist Augustine of Hippo, history moves forward under the direction of God toward a specific goal, and truth is found through revelation.

Early Enlightenment thought took this generally positive outlook on history and strengthened it through an emphasis on progress, although Enlightenment thinkers emphasized the role of reason while downplaying divine intervention. As David Lyon (1994), a scholar on the history of Western thought, has described this Cartesian move: "The certainty of our senses supplanted certainty in God's law and paved the way for the rise of the modern scientific world view" (p. 5).

Yet, Lyon cautions, "Autonomous reason would always have its doubts" (p. 5) As early as the nineteenth century, Friedreich Nietzsche prefigured today's postmodern push by exposing the hollowness of Enlightenment hopes. Philosophers in the early twentieth century began to question whether truth revealed by reason alone was nothing more than the opinion of various social groups. The advent of two world wars shook the inherent belief in progress, and the cynicism of the 1960's dealt it an almost mortal blow. The Enlightenment quest for a rationalized world was coming up empty, and the postmodern was born. Increasingly, the possibility of absolute truth was now seen as a relic from the past.

This debate between the old and new paradigms within the academy penetrates deeper than a simple epistemological change of mind; it goes to our ontological core.

Questions surrounding research methods and pedagogical approaches become more than devices to solve epistemological problems. Some of the most perplexing questions that trouble us as human beings form the center of the debate. "What are we, and what can we know, what norms ought to bind us, and what are our grounds for hope?" (Bernstein, 1983, p. 4).

The recent epistemic shift continues the historic discussion about what some scholars have called "the quest for certainty." This quest seeks more than just "the nature and scope of human rationality" (Bernstein, 1983, p. 2); it also desires to work out one's own ontological presuppositions. Questions on the nature of rationality contain implicit references to the nature of reality itself. Epistemology and ontology go hand-in-hand. Philosopher Richard Bernstein (1983) offers this consideration:

> The primary reason the *agon* between objectivism and relativism has become so intense today is the growing apprehension that there may be nothing - not God, reason, philosophy, science, or poetry - that answers to and satisfies our longing for ultimate constraints, for a stable and reliable rock upon which we can secure our thoughts and actions. (p. 13)

When we ask how a person defines knowledge or truth and the criteria for justifying knowledge, we also ask how that person undertakes building Pascal's "tower reaching to the infinite" and where he or she finds Bernstein's "stable and reliable rock" upon which to base his or her quest for certainty. We are asking the very same questions addressed by religious points of view. Academic scholars no longer have the luxury of staying on one side of the Kantian divide and leaving the metaphysical disputes to the philosophers and theologians.

Pulled in Two Directions, Awkwardly

Nearing the end of my course of study at MSU, I had grown more accustomed to life and work within the post-Enlightenment world of educational scholarship. From John Dewey to Paulo Freire, post-positivism to critical theory, William Perry to Mary Belenky, and Karl Popper to Jaque Derrida via Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerberand, the names, theories, and vocabulary required constant adjustment.

Since my own initial confrontation with the postmodern leanings of the constructivists, I had become more fluent in the scholarly language required in the academic world to which I hoped to belong; however, at times, my religious accent would suddenly reappear and I would be reminded that I might never fully belong. As Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994) observes, "Our outsider status becomes clearer as we work to claim our insider's place" (p. 10).

This insider-outsider paradox was exemplified in one of my final classes, in which I spent five summer weeks studying the methods, challenges, and validity of using qualitative research. Already harboring doubts concerning the use of what I perceived to be cold, sterile statistics alone to describe the richness of people's lives, I was quickly enamored with the opportunity as a fledgling educational researcher to steal the best that anthropology, psychology, and the other more "human sciences" had to offer. Searching for Geertz's (1997)"thick description" of a particular educational culture or career sounded much more inviting and informative to me than using some computer program to generate the confirmation of a hypothesis by means of statistical significance.

Challenged to read the field work of various qualitative researchers, I had a scholarly inclination to accept without reservation the gospel of qualitative methodology.

However, when I read the theory and the epistemological assumptions that propped up the method, I began to experience renewed theological doubts.

Postmodern Paradox

For the academic who embraces a religious identity, post-Enlightenment epistemology introduces an interesting paradox. On the one hand, postmodernism can be seen as a friend of religion as it has helped qualify modernism's almost total reliance on reason as the sole source of truth. Religion has often been at odds with science. Postmodernism's emphasis on multiple ways of knowing has reopened the door to faith as a possible way of finding meaning in reality. (Yet, some current Christian scholars complain that these same discredited Enlightenment arguments are pulled out of the "epistemological closet" when religious ideas come on line.)

On the other hand, postmodernism taken to its logical extreme also becomes a form of relativistic subjectivism where whatever a person wants to believe is acceptable. Any attempt to comprehend reality from a "God's-eye point of view" is strongly resisted. As postmodern educator Henry Giroux (1988) explains:

> All claims to universal reason and impartial competence are rejected in favor of the partiality and specifity of discourse. General abstractions that deny the specifity and particularity of everyday life, that generalize out of existence the particular and the local, that smother difference under the banner of universalizing categories are rejected as totalitarian and terroristic. (p. 14)

Thomas Nagel (1986) has condescendingly called the "God's-eye point of view" the "view from nowhere."

Said another way, postmodern epistemology is a double-edged sword for the Christian academic. If we must acknowledge the situatedness of all knowledge claims,

then there is little reason to exclude religious voices a priori because "everyone's intellectual inquiry takes place in a framework of communities that shape prior commitments" (Marsden, 1994, p. 149). As the implicit is now made explicit, there is room on campus for Marxist economics, feminist political science, and queer theory. Furthermore, religious intellectuals now want to claim a place for the Christian world view as "one of several acceptable interpretations of human behavior" (Wuthnow, 1989, p. 163).

Yet, if all knowledge is accepted as situated and socially constructed, then no possibility exists for truth grounded in metanarratives and applicable to all. The God who offers universal guidance and direction becomes a God who merely provides personal inspiration.

How could I square the claim of qualitative researchers Lincoln and Guba (1994), that "there is in this [post-Enlightenment] ontological position, always an infinite number of constructions that might be made and hence there are multiple realities" (1994) with Jesus' claim to be "*the* way, *the* truth, and *the* life" (italics added) (John 14:6)? If all knowledge were socially constructed and all truth claims equally valid, then questions of right and wrong would only be questions of perspective and the Ten Commandments would become nothing more than the 10 opinions. If there is no clear foundation upon which basic judgments about truth, reality, and knowledge can be made, then beliefs in a transcendent God quickly become irrelevant.

Christian Schizophrenia

Could I be a Christian scholar with integrity, or was I in danger of developing what George Marsden (1997) calls "Christian schizophrenia"where I advocate a religious world view on Sunday while "playing by [scholarly] rules that are not consistently Christian" on Monday through Friday (p. 55)? Like Nancy Lapaglia, a working-class faculty member, I was now being pulled "in two directions awkwardly" (Dews & Law, 1995, p. 7).

Should a Christian professor even expect to be fully accepted within the mainstream academy without theological accommodations? Former Duke professor Stanley Fish (1996), a post-Enlightenment partisan and not one who is known for his religious loyalties, states unequivocally that Christian scholars cannot remain consistent to their theological convictions and beliefs while accepting the liberal establishment's epistemological premises within the academy's rules of intellectual engagement:

> A person of religious conviction should not want to enter the marketplace of ideas, but to shut it down, at least insofar as it presumes to determine matters that he believes have been determined by God and faith. The religious person should not seek an accommodation with liberalism; he should seek to rout it from the field, to extirpate it, root and branch. (p. 21)

A study of the Christian academic within the secular university is more than a description of what it takes for Christian faculty to get along within the academy, more than an external story relating possible prejudice and conflict. It also is a portrait of the Christian scholars themselves. To be accepted as scholars, are they forced to become less connected to their Christianity? Could I want to belong so badly to the group that I subtly or not so subtly adjust my own personal convictions? How would I even know it if

it happened? As Dews and Law (1995) have asked, will I feel able and free to "integrate my background with my foreground" (p. 333)?

Other circles of academics who live between "two worlds"--the academy and a specific subculture of faculty--have experienced these internal tensions. Working-class scholars communicate a profound sense of guilt mingled with fear as they have felt forced to learn "to lie with conviction in two contexts at once and fearing expulsion from both" (Dews & Law, 1995, p. 4). With a strategy of "silence and lies," they worry that they have betrayed a part of self "in order to gain acceptance within the academic community" (p. 2).

Women faculty have asked "whether women must remain outside the institution in order to remain true to their own convictions and knowledge" (Simeone, 1987, p. 148). Also, Tierney (1997) portrays a potential compromise for the gay professor so severe that his consuming desire "to fit within the norm" of the university may cause him to hide his true identity even from himself--what Tierney calls "masquerading" (p. 78).

How difficult is it to be a *Christian* and a *scholar* in today's secular university? One of the ironies of living within two worlds concurrently is how each can affect the other. Change and influence are not always one-way streets. Our study of Christian faculty is not just an investigation of how one's faith affects his or her scholarship--how one's religious beliefs alter the individual's academic work. It is also a study of how a life of scholarship influences one's religious identity.

As shown in Lawrence-Lightfoot's (1994) study of successful African-American professionals, living in two worlds includes the notion of "trade-offs" where one lives continually on the border between being "too black" or "too white," depending on the

context in which one currently resides (p. 9). For the Christian scholar, the life of the mind is not always respectful of the life of the spirit, and the life of the spirit is too often distrustful of the life of the mind.

There have always been those religious academic types who have thought that secular institutions ask too much from the Christian scholar and have withdrawn into distinctively Christian colleges and universities. Is the simplicity of faith at odds with the complexity of the mind? What did Jesus mean when he praised the "Father" for hiding certain truths "from the wise and learned" while at the same time revealing them "to little children" (Matt. 11:25)?

Conversely, there also are Christian academics who bemoan the tendency of Christian scholarship toward pietism and the mystical at the expense of solid research (see Noll, 1994; Wolfe, 2000). They believe that even those working within Christian higher education must interact with the academic establishment through their respective disciplines. To paraphrase Jesus' quotation of the Old Testament "Shema" (Deuteronomy 6:4), they seek to live out the life of a Christian scholar by loving God with all of their heart and all of their mind, without sacrificing a part of either one.

Looking for Places of Unease

Living in two worlds described by two sets of voices has led us to two primary questions. What are the external circumstances on the secular campus for Christian scholars, and how are they able internally to negotiate the sometimes competing allegiances between the world of their religion and the world of academia?

Because of the complexity of these tensions, we need more than a general description of how various Christian faculty get along in a university context that may be largely indifferent or even hostile to their religious beliefs. There also are internal tensions that demand exploration, and the use of individual narratives has the potential to add a "qualitative depth" to the more common quantitative breadth (Tierney, 1997, p. 96). Complex issues need to be situated within life context in order to reveal nuance and better resist reductionist tendencies to oversimplify and overgeneralize the part for the whole. A Christian scholar's work is located within the exceedingly strong culture of the academy; a Christian scholar's life is complicated by his or her desire to succeed at work while remaining faithful to his or her faith.

Yet, it is these internal tensions that offer the most interesting and insightful places for study. Dreams fulfilled and dreams unfulfilled tell the story of one's career, with the latter group of unsatisfied aspirations often providing the most fruitful spaces for research. Lahr (2000) gives a methodological clue to his own biographical chase when he writes: "I have to listen hard to find that place in them [the artists] which is not at ease" (p. xii). Those places of unease, those locations of discontent are the cracks in the narrative through which the complicated identity of the person shines through. The often-ironic disconnect between someone's personal dreams and current life circumstances reveals itself through a career's presenting tensions.

Three Interesting Lives

Introducing her collection of stories about women intellectuals, Mary Catherine Bateson (1989) admits that her choice of subjects is "not a statistical sample - only, [she]

hope[s], an interesting one" (p. 16). I make no pretense to generalizability through the following three faculty narratives. Yet, they hold the potential to offer three interesting snapshots to the presenting problem.

Michael Behe is a biochemist working at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Mary Poplin teaches education at Claremont Graduate University in Pomona, California; holding the McCormick Chair of Jurisprudence at Princeton University is Robert George. Although all of these professors are white and part of the professional class, they offer us a variety of experience, including different genders, disciplinary fields, institutional types, and geographical locations. Each has taken a slightly different focus on the academic profession: Behe, the scientist, has spent most of his time in the lab, the study, and lecture circuit; Poplin has concentrated on the roles of teacher, advisor, and administrator; and George has used much of his career to write and to teach.

All three of these professors have definitely remained out of the closet--they have worn their religious identity on their sleeves. Yet, all three are what Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994) labels "narratives of ascent." They have negotiated the academic journey with some degree of success and achieved tenure and the rank of full professor. Each of them, in his or her own way, has earned acclaim beyond the norm in his or her field and institution.

Most important, each of the three has the ability to communicate a reflective glance back on his or her journey through the academic gauntlet. All have made it to middle-age, which Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994) describes as "a time to pause" (p. 11) and consider where they have been and where they are headed. Sharing their successes and

struggles, they are able to speak of the benefits and distractions posed by their religious identity within the secular university. They have all agreed to appear under their own name.

As I present three very different stories of professors who have struggled with similar tensions, I sometimes sew a quilt and at other times weave a tapestry. Because Behe, Poplin, and George are three individual people working in separate disciplines within unique institutions, like the individual squares of a quilt, their stories need to stand alone. With Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994), I want to construct "a more authentic and complicated narrative about . . . lives" (p. 118). To do this, I must resist the temptation toward over-simplification by forcing a tapestry's seamless presentation where it does not belong.

All three lives bring a unique and powerful angle from which to view the problem. Reflecting the recent animosity between science and religion, Behe will reveal the potential power and control of the discipline within a faculty life. As a woman who converted to Christianity in mid-career, Poplin sheds light on the role of one's vocational identity and her motivation for working in a difficult context. Finally, through his success as a conservative voice in the midst of the liberal elite, Robert George demonstrates the power of a transformative ethical stance.

Yet, while certain mini-themes will manifest themselves within the individual lives, there still remains the possibility of meta-themes that are shared by all three. There will be strands weaving in and out of each story that begin to form patterns and help us to see a more colorful and instructive image of faculty life in general and the career of a Christian scholar in particular. We will learn lessons that can teach us all.

Portraits and Conversations

When Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994) presents her portraits of successful African-Americans, she seeks more than an authentic rendering of African-American privilege. She is searching for an accurate self-portrait, for, as she uncovers the layers of these six journeys, she ultimately is making known her own life story.

I, too, write as an insider. My story is intertwined throughout the three you will read in these pages. Woven throughout these lives are themes I have contemplated as a Christian graduate student and now as a faculty member. This closeness to the topic and personal investment in the outcome will, I hope, bring an urgency and seriousness to the project and a balanced and authentic treatment of the subject.

When Henry Gates (1997) introduces his book about the modern American "black man" and the seven celebrities he profiles, he refuses to label them as portraits, but rather calls them "a series of conversations, unresolved and unconcluded" (p. xxvii). Long after Gates turned off his tape recorder and finished typing his own recollections of the lives he had observed, the conversation continues every time a new reader picks up Gates' work and interprets those lives through the lens of his or her own experience.

This study about the life of a Christian scholar is more than a series of portraits, more than a group of four voices, when I include my own. This project actually involves five stories as you, the reader, interpret the following narratives from your own pre-understandings. As Gates so eloquently reminds those of us who read biography, "Listen, and you will hear all the tensions and uncertainties and ambivalences that shaped [the subjects], that shaped me, and that - just maybe - shaped you, too" (p. xxvii).

CHAPTER TWO

GOD AS RIVAL

Studying the Relationship of Science and Religion Through a Disciplinary Lens

Michael Behe, Professor of Biochemistry, Lehigh University

Charles Darwin didn't want to murder God, as he once put it. But he did. (*Time*, 1999)

Introduction

Describing a recent conference in Sweden of some of the leading physicists and cosmologists of the twentieth century, science journalist John Horgan (1996) relates the following scene:

> Toward the end of the meeting . . . [the] cosmologists piled into a bus and drove to a nearby village to hear a concert. When they entered the Lutheran church where the concert was to be held, it was already filled. The orchestra . . .was already seated at the front of the church. Their neighbors jammed the balconies and the seats at the rear of the church. As the scientists filed down the center aisle to the pews at the front reserved for them, [Stephen] Hawking leading the way in his motorized wheelchair, the townspeople started to clap, tentatively at first, then passionately, for almost a full minute. The symbolism was perfect: for this moment, at least, in this place and for these people, science had usurped the role of religion as the source of truth about the universe. (p. 97)

Such is the intertwined and contested relationship between religion and a century of emerging scientific exploration. In a series of editorials reflecting on the major events of the past millennium, the editors of *The New York Times* wrote an article entitled "New Directions in the March of Science" in the twentieth century (1999). Calling the swift pace of change in science and technology in the last 500 years "overwhelming," the

editors hailed science as the "dominant intellectual force, displacing religion and philosophy as the chief explanation of the natural world" (p. 14).

Tellingly, they did not stop with science's domination of nature as the editorial ends with the authors' plea for science to be careful of its priorities and "concentrate on human welfare and quell the urge to produce germonic weapons" (p. 14). Not only have they placed the world of natural laws on the shoulders of science, but they also have empowered scientists to police their own ethical boundaries.

Horgan (1996) echoes the *Times*'s accolade of science:

> The power of science cannot be denied: it has given us computers and jets, vaccines and thermonuclear bombs, technologies that, for better or worse, have altered the course of history. Science, more than any other mode of knowledge - literary criticism, philosophy, and religion - yields durable insights into the nature of things. It gets us somewhere. (p. 4)

Yet, even as editors, authors, and scientists are trumpeting the triumph of the scientific method as <u>the</u> means to understand reality, other scholars wonder what place disciplines like philosophy and theology have in the search for truth. More specifically, when the study of physics bleeds over into the study of metaphysics, how are science and religion to relate? Are they "competing ways of thinking" (Gilbert, 1997, p. 9), or do the scientific and theological methods exist in a "cousinly relationship" (Polkinghorne, 1998, p. xii)?

Two hundred years ago, scholars considered science and religion partners in the common quest for understanding, as science and philosophy were often described as "handmaidens" of theology. Then, with the advent of the Enlightenment and Darwinism, a pluralistic (even pugilistic) language was adopted with the publishing of books like *The*

History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science (J. W. Draper, 1875) and *A History of the Warfare of Science and Theology in Christendom* (White, 1876).

Today, a reexamination of this relationship gains momentum. *Newsweek*'s recent cover (Begley, 1998) announces the revelation: "Science Finds God." And reporters in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ask, "Can Science and Theology Find Common Ground?" (Kiernan, 1999). "The intersection of religion and science is a topic gaining increased currency" (Kiernan, 1999, p. A17) as the academic world wonders whether scientists and theologians can - and should - learn from each other.

Maybe this surge of interest should not be so surprising because both science and religion address the most basic questions we ask about life and reality. As cultural historian James Gilbert (1997) summarizes:

> It is apparent that the dialogue between science and religion in America expresses essential ideas and deep-seated structures of culture. It reveals a theological problem and a profound concern of philosophy; it also shapes a significant portion of everyday popular culture. It provides categories for thinking about modern existence: to structure the world as divided between science and religion, or to imagine it united with their convergence. (p. 322)

For researchers of American higher education, the dialogue (or competing monologues) between science and theology provides a unique angle for the study of faculty and the influence of the disciplines within their lives and work. How do the respective disciplines relate to each other? How do they maintain their own intellectual and social boundaries? And how much control do the disciplines exert over their individual faculty members? The life and career of Michael Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, will give insight into how these issues affect one

faculty member who has both a tremendous stake in the study of science and a passionate attachment to religion.

Disciplines: The "Inner Faith" of Faculty

To understand Mike Behe's story, one must first understand the landscape and the culture in which it unfolds. To get beyond the surface and study the inner life of a professor requires a study of his or her academic specialty because the culture of the disciplines has become the "central source for a faculty member's identity"(Austin, 1990, p. 64). Burton Clark (1987), a long-time student of American higher education, has written that the disciplines serve as the "primary units of scholarship and identification within the academic profession" (p. 7). Also labeled the "basic organizational element" in the American university, the disciplines remain a "major cultural force affecting faculty today" (Austin, 1990, p. 63).

Certainly, changing views of knowledge have had their effect on individual faculty members. In certain disciplines, postmodernism's entrance into the academy has altered epistemological boundaries (Rosenau, 1992), and concern over "disciplinary parochialism" (Weiland, 1995, p. 266) has pushed some educators to a de-emphasis of the disciplinary citizenship of faculty. Yet, disciplinary identity "will probably never be abandoned" (p. 288) because, once internalized by faculty, the discipline becomes what Burton Clark (1987) has called an "inner faith" that guides their academic vocation.

A discipline's controlling presence begins with the socialization process of students in graduate school, where future professors learn the language, rhetorical style, folklore, traditions, and artifacts of their disciplinary culture. This influence increases

with time as the discipline enculturates the work habits and rituals common to the respective field of study. Ultimately, academic fields can control the trajectory of a career because faculty reward systems are so dependent on publication channels which are refereed by the disciplinary brethren.

British scholar Tony Becher (1989) has taken a thorough look at the influence of disciplines within faculty lives and careers. Trying to avoid generalizations, he has used a grounded study of more than 200 faculty from across 12 disciplines and 2 continents to research the interconnectedness between the nature of disciplines and academic culture.

His work has provided a helpful theoretical lens through which to view this often-complicated interaction. According to Becher, academic specialties carry out a two-fold role as they not only impose intellectual order through their epistemological function, but also they impart a social order through their institutional capacity. These two roles fit "hand-in-glove" as the "ideals and practices of academic communities are intimately bound up with the nature of the knowledge they pursue" (p. 169). Even Becher's title, *Academic Tribes and Territories*, reinforces his frame, for the "ways in which particular groups of academics organize their professional lives (social tribes) are intimately related to the intellectual tasks on which they are engaged (epistemological territories)" (p. 1).

Thus, the often-tempestuous relationship between religion and the scientific disciplines, specifically the hard sciences, becomes a compelling context for considering the degree to which a discipline can influence or even control an individual faculty member, both socially and epistemologically. Becher's particular viewpoint provides an appropriate lens to look at the unique tensions faced by faculty caught on the firing lines in the battle between science and religion. More to the point, following the life and

career of a distinctly Christian scientist, Mike Behe, will provide a rich resource for studying faculty careers, disciplinary culture, and the unique pressure placed on a person with religious convictions who happens to work within a discipline that is often "allergic" to the supernatural.

Any Room at the Inn?

In fall 1996, Pope John Paul II released a document stating that evolution was "more than a hypothesis" and that scientists should feel free to investigate the theory as long as they remembered the soul is still a direct creation of God. Seeking a qualified person to comment on the Pope's controversial position, the editors of *The New York Times* contacted Professor Michael Behe of Lehigh University, who not only is a scientist teaching biological issues at a major university but also is a lifelong, practicing Roman Catholic. The *Times* published his response in an editorial on October 25 the same year (Behe, 1996a).

In his 1000-word essay, Dr. Behe states that the popular argument about the theory of evolution is more than an evaluation of the scientific data. Rather, the central question is the working relationship between the disciplines of the hard sciences and religion. The Vatican's statement had stunned many in the media who had assumed religion had no time for scientifically produced ideas like evolution. Behe turns that misleading assumption around by asking how much time science actually has for religiously fueled ideas like an intelligent Designer.

Commenting on the Pope's endorsement of theistic evolution, Behe makes it clear that this is "old news" to a Roman Catholic scientist who had been taught throughout

parochial school that God could use evolution's natural processes to produce life. "Contrary to conventional wisdom, religion has made room for science for a long time." Since the time of Darwin there have existed theologians who have adapted their interpretation of Genesis to fit what they perceived to be the scientific evidence. In contemporary academic culture, religious accommodation of science is not necessarily the problem. Rather, the tension, according to Professor Behe, is found in science's disregard for any evidence pointing to the supernatural. Or, as he so starkedly asks, "As biology uncovers startling complexity in life, the question becomes, can science make room for religion?"

Can science make room for religion? This question forms a central vocational tension for any Christian scholar working within the scientific disciplines today. In the nineteenth century, the immediate reaction to Darwin and *Origin of Species* was to ask how religion could ever make room for evolutionary science. In popular American culture and education, the question simmered until exploding on the national scene during the Scopes Trail of 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee. And while the controversy continues in American politics (i.e., The Kansas state school board's decision to exclude evolution from state proficiency tests in summer of 1999), the scientific community has long since made its decision.

Can science make room for religion? Since the day Mike Behe, as a young assistant professor of biochemistry at Lehigh, sat in his office reading scientific journals and began to notice a repeated use of evolutionary theory to support agnostic beliefs, this question of religion's place within science has been the burning issue within his professional life. He had long ago adapted his theological beliefs, without any argument,

to accommodate prevailing scientific wisdom. Now, he was startled to discover his chosen discipline had no inclination to give his religious beliefs even a hearing. If he wanted to participate in the ongoing theoretical discussions within science and biochemistry, he was expected to leave his theological assumptions at the door because they were construed as something less valid and less valued than "pure" naturalistic, scientific arguments. Behe resisted this externally imposed condition upon his vocation and has continued to resist it until this day. It is this defiant stance that, in his own words, has "provoked [him] to stake out a distinctly minority view among scientists" and earned him the widespread reputation ("for good or ill") he possesses today.

Can science make room for religion? A faculty career built to answer this question has the potential to inform us about the current relationship between science and religion within academia. A faculty life focused on this issue can teach us about the true influence of the disciplines on American higher education and faculty careers. And finally, a narrative that traces one faculty person's principled journey to demand an answer from the scientific establishment dramatically reveals the particular tensions Christian faculty face in a secular academy.

Overview

In the following narrative, we will begin by getting to know Michael Behe the person through a brief biographical sketch highlighting formative influences in his life and career, as well as his influential position in today's current debate between science and religion. Then, I will recount a recent presentation he made at Ohio State University to gain some understanding of his argument for irreducible complexity and intelligent

design. In the second major section of the narrative I will trace his religious, intellectual, and career development, which has brought him to his current front-line stance. Finally, I will reflect on particular disciplinary themes recurring in Behe's life that reveal the pressing tensions he feels as a Christian scientist.

By viewing Professor Behe's life as a religious scientist through a disciplinary lens, emphasizing the social pressures and intellectual boundaries of his chosen academic community, and placing that narrative up against the backdrop of the intellectual battle between science and religion, certain questions and themes will begin to surface. These questions and their answers will provide us with an intellectual thread with which to weave a portrait of a Christian working within the twenty-first century academy.

Working on the Edge

Michael Behe's office sits at the end of a narrow winding road on one of eastern Pennsylvania's foothills at the Mountaintop Campus of Lehigh University. In topography that resembles a state park more than a modern university campus, research facilities appear almost out of nowhere amidst the densely wooden terrain. The only landmark hinting at the true identity of the property would be a piece of modern art guarding the entrance to the campus. Consisting of three 10-foot-high metal balls resting precariously atop each other, this postmodern snowman suggests the presence of intellectual activities more complicated than choosing an ideal campsite.

As a school whose reputation rests primarily on its engineering program, Lehigh's naming of Iacocca Hall reminds visitors of the school's most famous alumnus. Within this huge, modern complex Michael Behe plies his trade. As a professor of biochemistry,

it is not surprising to find his office amidst a catacomb of chemistry labs. An article hanging prominently by the door to his neat, sterile office announces a feat accomplished by two of Behe's eight children. "Amazon.com" had sponsored a children's invention contest and his two oldest kids were among in the top 40 prize winners. Evidently, the scientific genes run deep in this family.

Dressed casually in jeans, loafers, and green polo shirt, Behe seems much more comfortable in a white lab coat than in a suit and tie. He speaks softly and thoughtfully, responding to questions gingerly and without a hint of the sermonic. Yet, as he begins to comment on a topic he feels passionately about, Behe's words begin to leave his mouth with increasing speed. While his tone belies deep thought and reflection, Behe's kinetic body movement complete with moving hands, elbows and knees beneath the voice reveals an energetic approach to life that stimulates a deep curiosity to get beyond surface issues.

Dr. Behe's office reveals three immediate impressions: One, he loves his family; two, he has an orderly approach to life; and three, he is proud of his influential voice for intelligent design. His office walls immediately reveal his place on the front lines of today's battles between science and theology in general and his important place in the debate over intelligent design in particular.

To the side of his computer hangs a large poster replicating the jacket cover for his 1995 best-selling book, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, as well as a copy of *The New York Times*' best seller list, which displays *Black Box* in the top 20 nonfiction titles for that respective week. And directly above his work desk hangs one of two recent op-ed pieces he has written for the *Times*.

The Evolution of a Scientist

A professor since 1985 in the Department of Biological Sciences at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Mike Behe has "liked science" since he was a child growing up in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. His father was an educated man with a degree in Business Administration. The first in his family to go to college, the elder Behe worked his whole career in a loan company. Behe, along with his seven siblings was encouraged to do well in school, but there was no undue pressure to excel or make academia a career. As he describes his home life, "We didn't have pictures of Einstein on the wall or anything like that." Nevertheless, describing himself as a "science enthusiast" (Woodward, 1997, p. 8), Behe excelled in school, graduating in the top 10 of his high school class as well as being elected senior class president.

He left home at 18 to attend Drexel University in Philadelphia where he majored in chemistry. Having graduated from Drexel in 1974, Behe "went across the street" to the University of Pennsylvania for his graduate education, eventually earning a Ph.D. in biochemistry in spring 1978. His dissertation research focused on "the mechanism of aggregation for sickle cell hemoglobin."

After spending four years doing postdoctoral work at the Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, he received his first academic appointment at Queens College in New York City, where the highlight of his tenure was his introduction to a bright, attractive young woman named Celeste who, like Behe, had grown up in an Italian Catholic family. After dating for three months, they were engaged and married the

following year. Wanting to raise their family in a more rural setting, the young Behe took a position at Lehigh in 1985, where he received tenure two years later.

The Behes have eight children, ranging in age from 2 years of age to 16. They have an active household with an emphasis on learning and fun. Mrs. Behe home schools the school-age kids, and their extracurricular activities include piano, karate, and singing in the church choir. They traded in the television a number of years ago for an extensive collection of children's books and classics. When Dad comes home from the office or the lab, he joins in on the fun and games. You might find him playing frisbee on the front lawn with the older children or reading to the younger ones in their reading room.

Behe's love of his family and extensive time with them results in numerous "homey" illustrations that appear throughout his writings and lectures. He may use Tinkertoys to describe how organic molecules are built or use his daughter's toy wagon to explain how the human body's antibodies fight off infectious invaders. Obviously, his family has affected the rhetorical manner in which he communicates his message.

Maybe the most intriguing clue to the intersection between Behe's love of family and his contentious position within his discipline comes from a hand-drawn card on a wall of his small office. The color illustration represents his oldest daughter's depiction of a trial between proponents of intelligent design theory and followers of Darwinian evolution. Two attorneys stand before a judge's bench. Richard Dawkins, an arch proponent of Darwin and natural selection, acts as one attorney, while the earth itself represents the other side. The judge, whom she has labeled "science," asks the earth: "Mr. Earth, do you have <u>proof</u> that what Mr. Dawkins is telling you is not <u>true</u>?" Inside the card is "Mr. Earth's" response: a replica of *Black Box*'s cover jacket.

An Important Voice in an Ongoing Debate

Behe's daughter's cartoon illustrates the unique position in which Behe now finds himself. He's caught in the middle of a debate between Darwinian theory and intelligent design that has gone on for decades, and an even bigger argument over the relationship between science and religion that has lasted for centuries.

Science and religion have possessed a long-standing, but often contrary relationship throughout intellectual history. Through the work of scientists like Galileo, Newton, and Bacon (all avowedly religious), science was able to connect God's world with God's Word (Scripture) and thus be considered a "handmaiden" to theology.

As late as the nineteenth century, established through Scottish Common Sense philosophy, the Baconian inductive method, and the argument from divine design, intellectuals perceived science as consistent with the biblical account of creation and history. Science and religion were seen as "siblings - feeding off and sparring with each other" (K. L. Woodward, 1998, p. 52). Scientists and theologians could pursue parallel and complementary paths of discovery and be assured of reaching the same doxological destination.

After the Enlightenment, as reason began to replace revelation as the source for understanding, science and religion began to "drift into separate ideological camps" (K. L. Woodward, 1998, p. 52). And with the advent of Darwin in the nineteenth century, the two "camps" established increasingly irreconcilable positions. Science began to explain God and not the other way around. As science became more and more fixed on purely

natural and material causation, God was demoted into a "God of the gaps" who inhabited "whatever dark corner science had not yet brought to rational light" (p. 52).

The twentieth century eventually brought an end to this "search for concordance" (Gilbert, 1997, p. 8) between science and religion as science became more secularized and connected to the prosperity and security of America. An increased reliance on an ateological evolutionary thesis, combined with the re-emergence of religious fundamentalism and its tendency to reduce religion to issues of salvation and morals, caused scientists to regard religion as irrelevant to their intellectual pursuits. As the advent of Sputnik forced the country to be serious about science, "the scientific community pointed out that getting serious about science included getting serious about evolution" (Toumey, 1994, p. 8).

Darwinism and its late-nineteenth-century scientific revolution stand as prime examples of how science and religion evolved from compatible pursuits into contradictory methodologies. "Like many great ideas," Darwin's theory is "elegantly simple" (Behe, 1996b, p. 3). First, Darwin suggested that there is more life produced in a geographical area than there is food to support it. Second, no two living organisms are alike, and this random variation is transmitted through heredity. Third, as these organisms struggle for existence, their differences give some an advantage over others. Finally, the "winner" transmits these advantages by heredity and will over time create a whole new species.

What set Darwin apart was not his theory of evolution, which echoed the work of earlier nineteenth-century evolutionists such as Lamarch and Chambers. What distinguished Darwin as a revolutionary was his method. His naturalistic approach

regarded science as man's only legitimate means to interpret reality and began what some have called "the main source of agnosticism in the nineteenth century" (Greene, 1981, p. 153). Darwin's theory of natural selection contradicted religion's teological design of nature as evidence for the existence of a loving and sovereign God and challenged the Christian world view by positing that "beneficial variation was random and natural selection was cruel" (Larson, 1997, p. 17).

Citing natural selection as the mechanism for humanity's descent directly contradicted the biblical account of creation. Not only did Darwin challenge the age of the earth (which many theologians were able to reconcile to the biblical account in Genesis), but also, more important, his theory of a common ancestor for all living organisms had devastating implications for the core Christian tenet: that man, being created in the "image of God," stood as the centerpiece of all creation. "If humans were not the center of the universe, then they had, in their hubris, constructed a complex mythology to justify the ransom of nature and ward off the night of self-doubt" (Gilbert, 1997, p. 9).

Such long-lasting implications of Darwin's views were forecast soon after publication of *Origin*. One reviewer of Darwin's 1871 follow-up volume, *The Descent of Man*, worried in the *Edinburgh Review* that "if these views be true, a revolutionary thought is immanent, which will shake society to its very foundation by destroying the sanctity of the conscience and the religious sense" (as cited in Wright, 1994, p. 328). As John Horgan (1996) comments, by the end of the nineteenth century such prophecies had been fulfilled and Nietzsche had proclaimed, "God is dead."

Even philosophers of science (Kuhn, 1970) have attributed Darwin's revolutionary idea to his focus on natural processes rather than to his work on evolution. Darwin's natural and undirected process of variation directly contradicted the "Newtonian model" which explained nature's laws through the prism of a benevolent and omnipotent Creator. A good God would seek to ensure that all created organisms could survive and a powerful God would not be subject to the whim and variation of chance. "The spirit of the scientific method initiated by Bacon and Newton had reached its ruition with Darwinian theory" (Wilkins, 1987, p. 32).

Thus, the Evangelical response to Darwin and his compatriots was not based solely on evolution, for evolutionary theories had existed for some time. Nor was this anti-Darwin sentiment directed to Darwin's denial of a literal interpretation of Genesis because nineteenth-century geologists had argued for a much older earth for almost a century. Rather, Evangelicals were disturbed by Darwin's ateological view of history, his philosophical materialism and anti-supernatural tendencies, and his dethroning of man as the centerpiece of creation. Evangelical theologians like Princeton seminary professor Charles Hodge (1874), accused Darwin of out and out atheism: "It (Darwinism) is atheism [and] utterly inconsistent with the Scripture . . . [a] denial of design in nature is virtually the denial of God" (p. 173).

The centrality of Darwin's thesis to the debate between science and religion continues today. Called by the *London Times* the "Newton of biology" at the centennial of *Origin*'s publication, Charles Darwin and his theory of natural evolution continue to retain a "central organizing status in biological studies" (Wilkins, 1987, p. 13). In a recent issue of the *New York Times Book Review*, John Durant (1999) claimed that

Darwin "has never been more popular than today" and that, more than 100 years after his death, "he is widely revered as the greatest biological genius since Aristotle" (p. 28).

Darwin's answer for the wide diversity of life on earth remains "the" answer in the scientific and popular literature. Daniel Dennett (1995) argues in *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* that evolution via natural selection is "the single best idea anyone has ever had," and Behe (1996) writes "there is nothing--no organ or idea, no sense or thought--that has not been the subject of evolutionary rumination" (p. 4).

Today, Darwin's influence extends far beyond biology as some writers (Wilkins, 1987) refer to a "modern synthesis" in which Darwinian theory serves as the "core" around which all other sciences are interpreted. From geology to behavioral psychology, many sciences are linked by "the continuous thread of evolution by natural selection" (p. 25).

Making His Case

The auditorium on the campus of The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, is packed with more than 500 people including university students, faculty, and outside guests. They have come to attend a panel discussion hosted by the Veritas Forum carrying the ponderous title, "Exploring the Implications of the Frontier Findings of Science and the Religious Significance of Scientific Knowledge." The Veritas Forum is a Christian organization of faculty and students started at Harvard and now located on various university campuses across the U.S. The forum's goal is to provide "a place to discuss issues of truth and faith within the university."

Behe is the featured speaker of the evening. Along with a panel of respondents, he will be discussing the viability of his attack on Darwinian theory as espoused in his book, *Darwin's Black Box*. Behe shares the scarlet-clothed dais with two theologians, one from Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis and the other from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. A philosophy professor from Ohio State serves as the master of ceremonies for the evening's proceedings.

As the first presenter, Behe takes center stage behind the smallish, wooden podium emblazoned with the red and white crest of the Veritas Forum. He has his work cut out for him. First, he is facing an audience of complete strangers, many of whom are present only to see him get his intellectual comeuppance for daring to challenge a sacred theory like Darwinism. For the professional scientists in the crowd, Darwinian evolution and natural selection have served as foundational tenets in their own work as scientists. For the students, Darwin has provided one of the basic theories used in their studies as they prepare for a life in science.

A second obstacle facing the speaker is his time limitations. He has only 15 minutes to explain a complex scientific argument that has taken him more than 300 pages to present in *Black Box*. And this explanation has to be simple enough to communicate at the level of the scientific laymen in the group, as well as deep enough to anticipate the objections of the experts in the crowd.

As a scientist and as a communicator, Behe has the ability to simplify complicated topics without sounding condescending. He speaks with a concise rhetorical style and a vocabulary free of scientific jargon. Even when forced to explain complex biochemical systems, Behe uses everyday analogies. With *Far Side* and *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoons

as illustrations and transitions, humor becomes a tool to keep his audience's attention, as well as a means to put them at ease. And maybe most strategically, he is able, potentially, to disarm even his toughest critic with sly, self-deprecating bits of humor.

Dressed in a navy blue suit, starched white shirt, and red tie with white stripes, this average-sized biochemist with thinning hair presents a distinguished yet non-threatening pose before his audience. He will spend the first half of his 15 minutes outlining his basic argument for irreducible complexity and intelligent design, and then take the last part of his allotted time to answer some of his critics.

Behe jumps right into the core of his argument. Following the line of reasoning he uses in *Black Box*, he begins by putting up a transparency with a direct quote from the man himself, Charles Darwin (1872):

> If it can be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down. (p. 151)

For Darwin, natural selection required gradualism because any change that happened too quickly sounded suspiciously miraculous or supernatural. Behe then proceeds to attempt to hang Darwin with his own noose.

If there existed a system or organism with a number of discrete, interacting parts, the removal of any of which, would cause the total breakdown of the machine, then it would be impossible, Behe suggests, for that system or organism to evolve gradually. Behe calls that type of organism, system, or machine "irreducibly complex." He describes irreducible complexity as a "fancy phrase which I made up to make people think that I'm smart" but says the phrase actually describes "a pretty simple concept." And, Behe adds, if such a machine exists in the natural world, then natural selection

would be found wanting. This would then become a "big headache" for Darwinian science because natural selection is the "engine" that drives the rest of his theory of origins.

Having sufficiently baited the intellectual hook, Behe now begins to reel in his audience by giving three examples of irreducibly complex machines, one man-made and two from nature. With what some have referred to as "his characteristically impish grin" (Woodward, 1997, p. 3) appearing through his beard, Behe now puts up another transparency containing the pencil drawing of a simple mousetrap. In what has become his "pedagogic paradigm of irreducible complexity" (Shapiro, 1996), he uses this everyday household item to simplify for his audience a sometimes difficult concept.

An average mousetrap has five essential parts, including a wooden platform, a spring, and a hammer, among others. For a mousetrap to function, all five parts are necessary. One of the five by itself or even four of the five could not effectively catch mice. How then could a mousetrap evolve through natural selection? Could a wooden platform catch a few mice? And with the addition of a spring, could it catch more mice, and so on? Of course not; all five parts need to be present before the machine can perform its intended function. A mousetrap is "irreducibly complex."

Having explained the concept with an example from the mechanical world, Behe now poses a rhetorical question: "Are there any examples of irreducible complexity within the biological world?" He answers immediately, "Yes, tons of them." At this point in his talk, Michael Behe, Ph.D. in biochemistry, emerges to give his class a hurried journey into the universe of biochemical systems. He gives us two examples, complete with transparencies, in fewer than four minutes.

For the second example, the bacterial flagellum, Behe uses another analogy easily identifiable by his audience: an outboard motor. Flagellum serve as the outboard motors that bacteria use to swim through liquid. These microscopic transportation devices contain parts similar to the machine that might transport your boat: a propeller, drive shaft, rotor, and so on. More than 40 proteins are required for the bacterial flagellum to operate. Without all of these parts interacting, the flagellum would cease to function. Thus, it becomes difficult to explain this biochemical system in Darwinian terms.

At this point, Behe pauses and admits that what he has just communicated is not necessarily new or controversial. Other scientists, including Lynn Margulis, Distinguished University Professor of Biology at the University of Massachusetts, have also cited such weaknesses in Darwinian theory. She writes that the "proponents of standard evolutionary theory cannot name a single unambiguous example of the formation of a new species by the accumulation of mutation" (as cited in Mann, 1991, p. 378). Other renowned scholars such as Steven J. Gould of Harvard have tried to account for the lack of evidence by positing other theories such as "punctuated equilibrium," where the development of species came in rapid and concentrated populations which then make it difficult to find evidence in the fossil record (Gould, 1992).

What makes discussion about Behe's argument so heated is what he does next. He offers an alternative explanation to Darwin: "If you look at this [the evidence from biochemical systems], they look like they were purposefully designed by an intelligent agent." Not only has he offered an alternative to Darwin, his alternative is one that many scientists consider to be nothing more than religious ideas disguised as science.

Behe then spends the last seven and a half minutes allotted to him to address this dominant critique. He dryly notes that his argument for intelligent design has attracted "a bit of attention." As the audience knowingly chuckles, he then lays out what he perceives to be the primary line of argument for many of his critics through the use of droll, hyperbolic role playing:

> You know, this Behe fellow is a known Christian. He has been seen entering and leaving church. Therefore, the idea of irreducible complexity is a religious idea. It is not a scientific one and [he's] letting [his] religion interfere with his scientific work.

Behe has hit at the heart of the historic, epistemological skirmish between science and religion. He is once again asking in clear terms whether science can make room for religious ideas even if those ideas are the consequence of scientific investigation.

Behe "appreciates" the concern of his yet unnamed critics, but he is in total disagreement with their premise. He defends his idea of irreducible complexity and postulation of intelligent design as "completely empirical," based "totally on the physical evidence." In other words, his argument is a scientific one that may have theological implications. For a quick demonstration, he puts up another transparency with a *Far Side* cartoon. A troop of explorers are walking through the jungle, and the lead explorer has been strung up and skewered for all to see. The guy who is next-to-last in line turns to the fellow behind him and says, "See, that's why I never walk in front." After the audience laughs at the joke, Behe asks them if they thought the cartoon had been designed. If so, how do they know? Was this a religious conclusion or an empirical one?

Behe then displays for the audience some of the wide-ranging reactions his book and argument have provoked. He puts up a list of the various publications that have

reviewed *Black Box* including the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Washington Post* and the *Allentown Morning Call*, Behe's hometown newspaper. He then quotes some of the reviewers' opinions that more or less agreed with Behe's biological premise, the concept of irreducible complexity, and pointed out the difficulty Darwinian theories had in explaining the existence of such complex biological systems.

Behe then shows another page of quotations from reviewers who regard his conclusion of intelligent design with utter skepticism. He suggests that these critiques are not necessarily scientific ones but rather philosophical and even aesthetic objections. Why, he wonders, is this the case? He answers his own question with another cartoon, a red "no crossing symbol" superimposed on the outline of a white ghost, a replica of the trademark from the old "Ghostbusters" movie. As Behe explains in *Black Box*, many scientists "just don't *want* there to be anything beyond nature. . . In other words, like young earth creationists, they bring an a priori commitment to their science that restricts what kinds of explanations they will accept about the physical world" (p. 243).

Many scientists are uncomfortable with the argument for intelligent design because they are uncomfortable with religion, whereas others think religion and science need to be kept in separate intellectual categories. Behe admits he does not know how to answer the first group, but he ends his presentation with an answer for those in the second category.

Using the illustration of the "Big Bang" theory, he shows how a good scientific theory can have philosophical and theological ramifications. Reading from a 1989 editorial in *Nature*, Behe demonstrates that some in the scientific community objected 10 years ago to the Big Bang as an accurate description of the universe's origins because

some theologians were using it as a description of Genesis' account of a created universe. The editor wrote, "Creationists and those of similar persuasion seeking support of their opinion have ample proof in the doctrine of the Big Bang"(Maddox, 1989). Maybe that is why the editorial had the following subheading: "Apart from being philosophically unacceptable, the Big Bang is an oversimplified view of how the universe began."

Although Behe leaves the debate concerning the Big Bang's validity as a scientific argument to the physicists, he uses the example to demonstrate how the discussion of irreducible complexity and origins needs to be a scientific one as "we follow the investigation wherever it leads," regardless of the theological implications. With this final plea, the professor thanks his audience for their attention and sits down.

The Unlikely Crusader

Whether talking about his career path or his stance as a scholar/scientist, Michael Behe does not currently reside where he once begun. Referring to the trajectory of his own career as "strange," "absurd," and "utterly amazing," Behe never would have imagined back at the University of Pennsylvania chemistry laboratory that his career would lead him to his current high-profile position in an often contentious debate. The only way to understand the evolution of Behe's scholarly life is to examine both his religious and academic journeys.

Religious Journey

Influential physicist Richard Feynman (1998) has described the core intellectual stance of a scientist as one of doubt. According to Feynman, when one does science properly, "It is necessary to doubt [and] it is valuable to doubt" (p. 35). His bold

proclamation is supported by a cursory examination of scientific revolutions down through the centuries. From Aristotle to Newton and then from Bacon to Einstein, scientists who have succeeded in challenging long-held beliefs concerning the cosmos have been those scientists who felt no obligation to cling to the traditional dogma about nature. Therefore, they were free to doubt their way to new and more accurate ways of describing our world. Without doubt, scientists have no freedom or impetus for discovery.

Behe presents, at times, a paradox in doubt. As a biochemist his doubts about Watson and Crick's research into DNA have guided his own study of the various structural forms found in DNA besides the double helix. As a questioner of the adequacy of Darwin's model to describe life's origins, Behe's doubts have freed him to confront directly some of the most fundamental doctrines of science. Yet, as a Roman Catholic, Behe expresses few, if any, doubts within his own theological world view, declaring, "I've always believed in God."

At least a third-generation Christian, Behe was born to "devout" Roman Catholic parents who themselves had grown up in Catholic homes. He attended parochial school through the twelfth grade. And, although he acknowledges a "drift(ing) away" during his four undergraduate years at Drexel, Behe remains to this day a committed religious person: "I've always been a Roman Catholic." Jokingly, he expresses regret that he lacks the dramatic conversion story of his Protestant Evangelical acquaintances.

Although Behe does present his own religious development as almost doubt-free, he does express being "disturbed" as he faced various atheistic arguments against Christianity for the first time during his college days. "I might have wondered how to

justify things," he says, but goes on to clarify, "I don't think I ever doubted that God existed or that Christ was who he said he is." He even describes the brief phase of religious disinterest in college as an issue of "neglect" rather than a genuine crisis of faith. "Religious concerns were not very prominent in the fraternity . . . . [Our main question in life was] 'Where is the party tonight?'" Why would a man whose profession requires a skeptical mind and whose present notoriety has been achieved through unyielding questioning of scientific doctrines be so conditioned to accept without question a tradition-bound faith in God?

Surprised by the Silence

For a man who apparently enjoys his frontline position in an often contentious debate, Behe describes an educational and intellectual journey that, for the longest time, gave little thought to possible conflicts between his academic discipline and religious beliefs. From his own testimony, the idea that Darwin and Genesis might be difficult to synthesize intellectually did not enter his mind until he was well into his first academic appointment.

Although Behe has admitted to the lack of sudden transformation in his religious life, when he begins to describe his intellectual journey away from Darwinian theory and toward intelligent design, the story has a striking resemblance to a conversion experience. His education left him "in the dark" and unaware of possible alternatives to the received explanation of life's beginnings: Darwinian evolution via natural selection. Even in parochial school, "Nobody had anything against evolution . . . we assumed that . . . God

can make life however He wants to. And if He wants to make it by evolution, well, who are we to question Him?"

Not until his tenure as a postdoctoral researcher at the National Institutes of Health did Behe begin to question the scientific establishment's orthodox story. He shared a lab with another "postdoc" student named Joann Nicholls, who also happened to be Roman Catholic. One day they were chatting and the issue of origins arose. He recounts the conversation: "Well, let's see, what would we need to start an organism? Well, you need DNA. You need protein, and you need a membrane. And you need an energy system." Giving each other incredulous looks, they responded in unison, "Naaaaaah!" None of this would be possible without some type of Designer.

He slowly grew more uncomfortable with Darwin's explanation and increasingly skeptical of the scientific argument that he, his teachers, and fellow students had assumed to be true. "It didn't seem that [chemical] laws as we know them would be sufficient to account for the origin of life." Fueling his skepticism was Behe's realization that people were using Darwinian theory not only as a explanation for the origins of life but also as an argument against the existence of God. As he began his career as a professional biochemist, he began to pay more attention to the primary scientific literature outside his narrow speciality and noticed scientists writing about evolution "couched in terms of . . . God and religion." They used Darwin to show "how it was possible to get life without relying on or invoking a Creator." These unnamed authors were challenging Behe's assumption of compatibility between science and religion. Before this, he "hadn't given much thought" to the ateological and materialist assumptions of Darwinian thought.

Although he had always been able to compartmentalize his belief in God with an acceptance of Darwinian evolution and thereby hold onto both, his reading of these agnostic/atheistic Darwinists began to blur those artificial walls he had once erected. These scientists and philosophers of science created cognitive dissonance for Behe, and he grew increasingly antagonistic about the received scientific wisdom he had once blindly accepted. "These folks were using it [Darwinian theory] as . . . an argument against God [and] that starts to get under your skin . . . and you start to say to yourself, 'This ain't right.'"

What Behe used to see as a thoroughly viable explanation for life's beginnings he now perceived as "a stick to beat God with . . . and a belief in God with." His science and theology were in conflict, and he was slowly transformed from a passive proponent of Darwinian theory into a crusading opponent of evolution's atheistic presuppositions.

Behe's recollections of this transformation are a bit hazy. But a few serendipitous, yet seminal, intellectual encounters remain firmly etched into his memory. In the late 1980s he saw an advertisement in one of his science periodicals for a new book by Michael Denton (1986), entitled *Evolution: Theory in Crisis*. Having become suspicious of evolution's atheistic tendencies, Behe was now more receptive to arguments against evolutionary theory itself.

He picked up Denton's book and was impressed with the author's scientific arguments against natural selection. His previous association with anti-Darwinian arguments had come from "young earth creationists" (one a former girlfriend) who offered what Behe considered to be "naive" and "reductionist" arguments that were even "silly" at times as they questioned how an apple tree could ever evolve to the place where

it might also produce oranges. Denton was different. He was a professionally trained scientist as well as a self-admitted agnostic who had no religiously fueled ulterior motives. And he asked a Darwin type of question:

> Is it really credible that random processes could have constructed a reality, the smallest element of which - a functional protein or gene - is complex beyond our own creative capacities, a reality which is the very antithesis of chance, which excels in every sense anything produced by the intelligence of man?

Denton confirmed for Behe his own theological discomfort with natural selection while at the same time appealing to Behe's scientific disposition. Denton allowed Behe to follow his theological suspicions while staying true to his disciplinary methodology.

Denton's thesis produced in Behe an astonished realization that Darwin's arguments were not as foolproof as Behe had first been taught. And, even more troubling, he became more and more aware of the utter silence in scientific circles concerning Darwin's weaknesses. He reflected on his education and training: "I was then an associate professor at a remotely good school, and I had never heard of any [arguments against Darwinian evolution]."

Along with the surprise he felt, Behe also experienced increased skepticism about the sizable gap in his scientific and academic training. "I became suspicious that I was being led down the primrose path and that my thoughts were being funneled in a particular direction." Skepticism grew into anger as he became convinced he "was being misled--wasn't being given the whole story." The emotions began to alter his intellectual curiosity. Even though evolutionary theory was not necessarily something his academic specialty touched on, he became interested in the subject. His relationship to this foundational theory within his academic discipline began to evolve from a stance of blind

acceptance to a position of active resistance. He began to explore the situation for himself.

Taking Up the Mantle

Behe recounts his conscription into the battle over origins with descriptive phrases like "just kind of falling into it" and "serendipitous." Up to the point of his intellectual discomfort with Darwin, he experienced a career much more concerned with the possible structure of the human DNA than the veracity of Darwinian evolution and natural selection as the foundation to biology and biochemical systems.

In July 1991, a couple of years after reading Denton's book, Behe happened across a recent edition of *Science* magazine in his departmental office at Lehigh. Thumbing through the Table of Contents, he became intrigued to see that this influential periodical within the scientific community carried a small review of Philip Johnson's (1991) new book, *Darwin on Trial.*

An avowed Christian, Philip Johnson was, at the time, a professor at Berkeley's Boalt Law School. Johnson was also the acknowledged leader of the "design movement," an interdisciplinary group of scholars "scattered in colleges and universities from Seattle to Princeton, New Jersey," whose stated mission is "to liberate science from its shackles of naturalistic philosophy so that scientists who probe the origin of nature's wonders will have the freedom to consider all the possible explanations--including design by an intelligent agent" (Woodward, 1997, p. 5). Johnson, through his vocation and avocation, was a leader in the "fight" being waged over science and origins within American academic and popular culture.

He had spent a considerable amount of time and effort researching Darwinian theory from a theistic perspective, and his new book was the result of these efforts. Although writing from a different theological perspective, Johnson was building on the arguments and objections first espoused by Denton and questioning the privileged position currently accorded Darwin and his followers. Behe had previously read *Trial* and was "impressed" with Johnson's arguments. So he eagerly turned to the review in *Science* to see how part of the American scientific establishment would answer what Behe considered to be Johnson's carefully thought-out objections. He was "surprised" by what he read.

The reviewer (Amato, 1991) immediately attempted to connect Johnson and his book with the Institute for Creation Research and other "creationists." He was attempting to find Johnson guilty by association, without even considering his arguments against Darwin. The reviewer also suggested that, as a nonscientist, Johnson's "arguments demonstrate [a] misunderstanding of the scientific process." The brief review concluded with a caution from Eugene Scott of the National Center for Science Education (a sworn opponent of creationism) who "warns" the magazine's readership that Johnson's "academic position (at Berkeley) and his approach will win him a wide following. I hope scientists find out about this. They really need to know [the book] is out there and is confusing the public."

Having read the review, Behe was incredulous that the editors of *Science* used this prime opportunity to dialogue with anti-Darwinian arguments simply as another chance to warn people away from such writings. This only added fuel to Behe's already simmering fire. "I got mad . . . so I wrote a letter to the editors of *Science*." Amazingly, Behe's terse

but witty reply was published by *Science* in August 1991. In the letter, Behe finds fault with the editors' failure to address directly Johnson's argument against evolution. Instead they relied "on *ad hominem* arguments" and failed "to follow [their] own advice about the perennial evolution controversy" with well thought-out responses to reasonable objections devoid of emotional hyperbole. He wrote that "a man like [Johnson] deserved to be argued with, not condescended to."

Behe rejected not only the review's illogical and condescending response but also its paternalistic tone.

> The scientific community would do much better in the long run to patiently list supporting facts and frankly admit when positive evidence is lacking, rather than paternalistically maintaining that an understanding of the theory of evolution is reserved for the priesthood of professional scientists.

Like Martin Luther's 95 theses nailed to the door of Wittenberg's cathedral, Behe used this short but powerful letter to announce to his scientific colleagues loudly and clearly that they had strayed from the path. They had sacrificed their ideals for the sake of "in house" traditions. Now is the time to get back to the empirical method and follow its heading even if it should call into question cherished doctrines. And, like Luther, this initial salvo was only to be a small part of what was to follow.

Although Behe was exceedingly pleased his letter became public, he never dreamed that Philip Johnson, himself, would read it. Johnson did read it and immediately contacted Behe, inviting him to an upcoming conference at Southern Methodist University in Dallas in the coming spring of 1992. Organized by the Foundation for Thought and Ethics, a Dallas think tank, the conference organizers' plan to was to bring in five Darwinists and five proponents of intelligent design to discus *Darwin on Trial* and

its central argument that evolution itself was "fundamentally grounded in philosophical preference, not scientific inference" (Woodward, 1997, p. 11). Behe would be one of the five scientists on the side of intelligent design.

A picture of the SMU conference hangs prominently on a wall in front of Behe's work desk. Behe's fond memories of the conference and its pivotal place in his own professional journey are difficult to miss when, in response to a question, he quickly takes down the photograph, which he describes as "a little picture of me and the gang." He points to Philip Johnson in the middle of the portrait, along with other skeptics and proponents of Darwinian theory who attended the conference. Behe greatly "enjoyed" the opportunity to dialogue with people from both sides of the issue concerning his own newly formed thoughts and concerns. "'There [were] no conversions on either side,' recalls Behe, 'but a genuine spirit of comradery and mutual acceptance grew among us. It was one of the highlights of my life'" (Woodward, 1997, p. 11).

The conference also served to establish Behe as a "player" within the debate itself. Johnson organized another conference in California soon after SMU for almost two hundred scholars devoted to the intelligent design movement. According to Behe, Johnson wanted to take the next step "to show the intellectual bankruptcy of Darwinism." He invited Behe to be a part of this confab as well. It was at this gathering that Behe first "got to rehearse some of the arguments" he had been thinking about with regard to his own research into bio-chemistry. He began to speak openly about his fledgling thoughts on what he would some day label "irreducible complexity."

Today, he has difficulty tracing the morphology of irreducible complexity. All he knows is that Denton had pushed him down the anti-Darwin path, whereas Philip Johnson

and his cohorts helped to supply a positive, intellectual alternative that would also be consistent with Behe's Roman Catholic faith. This intellectual and emotional context, combined with his own biochemical research, provided fertile soil for his developing thesis. "When you study biochemistry, you come upon some fantastically complicated systems, and you are always thinking, 'How in the heck did this ever get itself together?'" He began "casting around" for a phrase to describe what he was seeing and settled on "irreducible complexity" because it "sound[ed] good." Thus, Behe's argument was not only scientifically based and theologically satisfying but also aesthetically pleasing.

Johnson's conference in California became the place where Behe first began publicly to "rehearse some of his arguments" with regard to his own research into irreducible complexity. He began to speak openly about the concept and realized that he "had something to say that nobody else had said before." And it was here that he got the idea (and gained the confidence) to write a book. "I figured if Phil Johnson could write a book, I could write a book, too."

With the encouragement of Johnson, Behe began to look for a publisher. He found an agent who helped him contact about 20 publishers. Ten of them were interested, including a couple of university presses. They held "a competitive bidding for the manuscript," with the Free Press winning the right to publish *Black Box*. Behe still shakes his head when he recounts the story. "I was pretty fortunate with the whole thing--especially having no idea what it was like and just kind of falling into it." "Falling" may provide us with the best metaphor for Behe's sudden transformation from one on the outside looking in to one of the integral players at the center of the debate between Darwin and design. As soon as he took the jump from passive acceptance of disciplinary

theory to active proponent of alternative explanations, it was as if he no longer had control of his own academic career.

Looking at the Walls

Spending any length of time with Mike Behe, one can quickly surmise his consuming vocational passion. The walls of his office, the use of his time, and the current use (or nonuse) of his lab loudly proclaim this man as a scientist who has chosen to use his career as a platform to announce his significant doubts about the legitimacy of Darwinian evolution as a viable theory to account for the origin of the universe.

Behind a face and voice that communicate an authentic concern for people lies a passionate and focused mind that argues its beliefs with a take-no-prisoners rhetoric. This conviction and passion do not come through the voice or the eyes but through the hands that are constantly moving and a kinetic body that never sits still. The closer the conversation steers to the debate over origins, the faster the hands move. Behe is a man who likes people and a scientist who loves the search for truth. He gladly carves out time in his already busy schedule to talk to a total stranger, but he is equally fast to attack a person's argument that exhibits faulty assumptions or logical fallacies.

Behe's passion to argue for the design side has affected the way he conducts his vocation as a university professor. His research and writing have sought to argue the merits of irreducible complexity as a worthy challenger to Darwin. His use of time has been altered drastically. "Now I devote most of my time to this subject [intelligent design], whereas before . . . I spent a lot of time in the lab working on nucleistic structure." Behe spends most of his current work day writing articles, responding to

critics and supporters, and traveling the lecture circuit. His newly found passion has "essentially changed my day-to-day activity."

Behe's approach to the classroom has also been affected. For five or six years he has offered a course at Lehigh called "Popular Arguments on Evolution." Describing it as a "critical thinking type of class," he presents the claims of protagonists and antagonists in the discussion over evolution "side by side." He wants his students to ask the provocative question: "How can these people [authors] look at the same thing and arrive at different conclusions?" Although he freely admits that most students "stick" to the view of evolution they entered the course with, Behe still expresses satisfaction that they can see the issue "as a more complicated question than what they thought coming in." And he adds, "I'm happy with that."

Behe's superiors at Lehigh have not commented about his change in career focus, nor the way he conducts his work. "Nobody has said, 'Boo' to me." This may have more to say about the internal structure of American higher education and the value placed on academic freedom than the scientific opinions of the Lehigh administration. As Behe so succinctly states, "When you're a full professor, you can do whatever you want to."

But Behe is extremely self-conscious about his work and use of time. "I try to be as scrupulous as I can to not miss classes and things." He has even begun to cut back his speaking engagements in order to spend more time in the lab. Because his foray into writing and lecturing has increasingly demanded more of his time, Behe's laboratory work "had kind of petered down." And he expresses sincere regret for that: "I feel a little guilty about that because there are graduate students who are looking for laboratories to join and I'm not able to offer as much as I could before."

Yet, Behe's conviction that he is working on a foundational issue within his discipline keeps him at his task of writing and lecturing. "The issue of evolution is a foundational one in biology, and I think that the discussion that I'm helping to engender actually offsets the other things that I don't have the time to do anymore."

Behe's future career plans continue to focus on intelligent design and irreducible complexity. Hoping "to extend the argument" he has already made, he wants to test his conclusions back in the lab and do some "straightforward science." As he described in *Black Box*, the theory of intelligent design stands on the principle of irreducible complexity as observed in biochemical systems. Now, he wants to present more research results that support the principle and consequently the theory. He wants to get off the lecture circuit, get back in the lab, stay at his desk, and "get some work done."

With a career trajectory that has led him directly into a path of resistance against a cherished doctrine, Behe is able to illustrate the potential hold a scholar's discipline has over his life and work. By using Becher's framework below, we will begin to tease out some of the central tensions for the Christian scientist.

Viewing the Fight

Within today's American university, academic disciplines provide "systems of order" for faculty work as they help to give some structure to the often messy task of intellectual exploration (Weiland, 1995, p. 268). The disciplines then spawn departments within the local institution which provide faculty the community necessary to survive the often intricate, Byzantine labyrinth called academia where "nothing is as simple as it seems" (Becher, 1989, p. 33). Figuring out your own professional identity within a

diverse academy that is pulling you in a myriad of directions becomes tenuous without a disciplinary family to give you some sort of reference point for your work--both how to go about it and how to evaluate it.

Tony Becher (1989) has grouped disciplinary influences under two major headings: intellectual and social. First, the discipline creates for faculty epistemic boundaries that control what questions are to be asked, the manner in which they are to be answered, and finally, the criteria for judging whether or not the answer is satisfactory. Second, the disciplinary community tells the members who they are, where they belong, and who their colleagues are. As Clifford Geertz (1983) writes, the discipline provides "a cultural frame that defines a great part of one's [faculty] life" (p. 83) or as Becher calls it, an "academic fraternity" in which "patriotic feelings run high" (p. 37).

As Michael Behe reflects on his own faculty life and career, his observations and feelings can be classified under Becher's headings. He has been a part of his scientific community for more than 25 years, and he has experienced the "powerful bonds" of his discipline. His career moves have not come without cost. He has struggled intellectually and emotionally in his decision to challenge his academic community.

We will look at these tensions below: first, through an intellectual lens as we seek out the possible epistemic hurdles Behe has faced and second, through a social lens as we rehearse the potential pressures faced within a tightly knit knowledge community. We will then conclude by asking whether Behe's initial question, "Can science make room for religion?" has been answered.

Intellectual Lens

Becher, with help from Biglan (1973) and Kolb (1981), has provided a helpful list of categories to aid us in classifying the respective disciplines. He is careful to recognize the immense diversity that exists among the disciplines and uses his categories to clarify those differences. Becher uses a taxonomy consisting of four major groupings: (a) hard versus soft, (b) pure versus applied, (c) convergent versus divergent, and (d) urban versus rural. The first two deal with the discipline's intellectual influence, whereas the latter two classifications describe the social factors.

Biochemistry: A hard-pure discipline. Behe's chosen discipline, biochemistry, is actually a fusion of two disciplines, biology and chemistry. Becher classifies both of them, as well as biochemistry, as hard-pure disciplines. Hard-pure disciplines carry high prestige both inside and outside the academic world. They are usually intellectually demanding and attract individuals of the highest quality.

Becher uses the descriptor "hard" to characterize the clearly defined intellectual boundaries of the discipline. He also refers to them as "restricted" due to the hard disciplines' focus on quantitative methodology and well developed theoretical structures. Research in the hard disciplines usually consists of a search for causation with an emphasis on universal laws and generalizable findings. For them the research method to be used often determines the problem to be studied.

Pure disciplines, as opposed to applied ones, suggest a resistance of outside influence on the part of the disciplinary hierarchy rather than a lack of application. Hard-pure disciplines often have beneficial applications to society as a whole, and that is one reason they have earned such a glowing reputation. Therefore, they carry with them an

"elitist" mentality, self-regulating in epistemological procedures with uniform standards and procedures and high "intellectual control." Cognitive revolutions, when they do happen, are rare. Therefore, any attempt to interject arguments from outside sources into a hard-pure discipline such as biochemistry or science in general would usually be seen as an unwanted invasion by the disciplinary hierarchy. It is no wonder that religion and science have had difficulty getting along.

Science versus religion--An epistemological skirmish. The lead article of an issue of *Newsweek* in the summer of 1998 ("Science Finds God") described recent attempts by theologians and scientists to revisit the relationship between science and religion: "From Georgetown to Berkeley, theologians who embrace science, and scientists who cannot abide the spiritual emptiness, are establishing institutes integrating the two" (Begley, 1998, p. 48).

Some scientists interviewed for the report spoke of science's influence on their own religiosity. Astronomer Allan Sandage told how, at the age of 50, "he willed himself to accept God" because his "science drove [him] to the conclusion that the world is much more complicated than can be explained by science" (Begley, 1998, p. 46). According to Mark Richardson, "Science may not serve as our eyewitness of God the Creator, but it can serve as a character witness" (p. 50). Other scientists were equally clear in their testimony that science has led them into an entrenched atheism. Steven Weinberg stated, "The more the universe has become comprehensible through cosmology, the more it seems pointless" (p. 48).

Do "science and philosophy [and religion] have a common question" (Begley, 1998, p. 51)? Can their paths be complementary, or are they destined to be contradictory? A *Newsweek* reporter captures the tension felt by religion's faith and science's doubt:

> In one sense, science and religion will never truly be reconciled. Perhaps they shouldn't be. The default setting of science is eternal doubt; the core of religion is faith. Yet, profoundly, religious people and great scientists are both driven to understand the world. Once, science and religion were viewed as two fundamentally different, even antagonistic ways of pursuing the question, and science stood accused of smothering faith and killing God. Now it may strengthen belief. And although it cannot prove God's existence, science might whisper to believers where to seek the divine (p. 51).

Are science and religion two unique models of explanation? Are they two different ways to understand separate parts of reality? Or are they two complementary methods for comprehending the same reality? Could they be two contradictory approaches to understand one world? These types of questions force us toward a philosophical and epistemological examination of the relationship between these two fields of knowledge.

James Gilbert (1997) uses broad intellectual strokes to contrast the two. Science works from a materialistic world view, whereas religion operates from more of an idealist philosophical stance. Religion constructs an anthropocentric world with human beings as central, whereas science remains skeptical of any privileged place for humans. Science proposes a closed universe consisting only of a material world that can be understood through the wonder of technology and human engineering. Religion affirms an open universe and a reality of "sublime otherness" (Gilbert, 1997, p. 12) beyond nature that can be assessed through faith and reason.

Whereas science seeks to understand the knowable, religion responds to the unknowable and the mystical. Science uses experience to generate hypotheses that seek to approximate truth; religion uses experience to confirm that which is already apprehended through faith. Science is seeking answers to nature's mysterious cosmos and uses this wonder and curiosity to fuel its intellectual enterprise; on the other hand, religion has received through divine revelation a narrative behind the world and then seeks to use science to confirm this meta-story.

Before the age of the Enlightenment, scholars used philosophy and theology as primary paths to a rational understanding of the world. Since then, science has grown in intellectual stature and become both an aid and a rival to philosophy and theology. Any historical account of these disciplines' relationship would include periods of mutual support along with instances of bitter enmity. Galileo challenged the received theological categories of his day and was branded a heretic.

For some time now, science and religion have been reconciled as each keeps its separate cognitive sphere: science will answer "what" and "how"; religion will provide the "why." As science has grown in prestige, religion has been increasingly dismissed as irrelevant to the enterprise of knowledge; therefore, astronomer Carl Sagan could conclude there was "nothing for a Creator to do" (as cited in Begley, 1998, p. 38).

Behe's epistemological battles--Challenging the elite. Mike Behe's faculty biography gives no sign that the epistemological skirmish between religion and science is lessening. In April 2000, he participated in a conference at Baylor University hosted by the Michael Polanyi Institute. Entitled "The Nature of Nature," this interdisciplinary

conference brought together leading intellectuals to discuss and debate the merits of philosophical naturalism and its role in science. Proponents of naturalism see the universe as self-contained, without the need for an external entity to account for the world's existence or function. Many scholars closely link this "closed view" of the universe with Darwinian theory (Gilbert, 1997; Kuhn, 1970; Larson, 1997; Wilkins, 1987).

Opponents of naturalism posit the counter notion that matter and energy are not all there is; in fact, nature actually points to something beyond itself. For example, purely natural explanations of the universe cannot account for the existence of individual consciousness, the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics to model the physical world, or the origin of life. Philip Johnson, Michael Behe, and intelligent design proponents would be found within this group.

According to Behe, the Baylor conference brought together "some really top notch intellectuals" from both sides of the discussion in such fields as philosophy, mathematics, history, and science. The group included Nobel Prize winners and members of the National Academy of Sciences. Behe participated in a discussion on biological complexity during the second plenary session. That panel included 1974 Nobel Laureate Christian de Duve from Belgium and Mark Ptashne, member of the National Academy of Sciences and a microbiologist working at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. Asked to reflect on the conference, Behe uses terms like "terrific" and "conviviality." He especially was pleased with the social tone of the event. "It started out a little bit tense [and] by the end everyone was raising glasses of wine to each other,

and there was a real conviviality that I think was progress [from the beginning of the conference]."

The intellectual climate also experienced changes, although none as dramatic as the social environment. Although no one on either side changed positions, "a better understanding of each other developed" and certain misconceptions were corrected. From Behe's vantage point, this was especially true of the naturalists, who he thinks disparage the intelligent design side as "a mindless commitment to certain dogmas." By the end of the meeting, most of the participants realized that this discussion contains "real intellectual arguments" on the part of both sides that deserve to be engaged.

One obvious exception to this increase in understanding and civility was Steven Weinberg, astrophysicist from the University of Texas at Austin. Arguing for the "naturalness" of the naturalist position, Weinberg countered with the contention that all supernatural entities (which he referred to as "fairies"), whether Yahweh or Thor, could not adequately account for reality and especially the existence of evil within that reality. Behe called Weinberg's lecture "antagonistic and disrespectful" and thought Weinberg was "deliberately trying to be provocative." For some reason, Weinberg did not engage the other arguments presented. And so, from Behe's perspective, Weinberg's arguments "were not what you would expect from an intellectual."

Behe considers Weinberg's performance to be an illustration of "the typical sociological forces that one has to deal with when . . . trying to make an argument for intelligent design or other things which have strong theistic implications." Behe's experience has been that "a lot" of scientists "don't believe in God" and that "in science" atheism has "a strong standing." Therefore, to argue for a theistic world view, to talk

about God, or even to talk about the apparent design of nature within a scientific environment can gain you "reproving looks from many of your colleagues." For Behe, this is "certainly enough to give you second thoughts about saying anything like that casually."

Behe is quick to note that not all scientists are atheists or even agnostics. His best guess would be that about 50 % of scientists, including 50 % of biochemists, would actually be atheists. [Data collected by Robert Wuthnow (1989) confirm Behe's assumption and suggest that strongly religious scientists within the academy are a distinct minority.] Therefore, for Behe, "when you get a bunch of scientists together, the presumption, essentially, is materialism [nothing exists beyond matter]" and by extension, naturalism.

Behe goes on to describe how the scientific community's "allergic" reaction to religion affects his own performance and fears as a scientist. "When you have to go up against the reproval of Weinberg and many other elite members of the scientific community, you are going to hesitate, or at least think very hard about saying anything that might be construed to have theistic implications." And if you are indeed arguing for theistic theories like intelligent design, you do so "only at the risk of your reputation."

Behe's epistemological battles--Paging Mr. Spock. Amidst the discussion of science and religion's epistemological relationship, Behe broached the subject of the "scientific method." Somewhat surprisingly, he flatly stated, "There is no scientific method." He considers the traditional use of the phrase as an "ill-defined" concept that is useful only as "something to tell kids when they are taking science class." He would rather describe the scientific search for truth and meaning as a much less rigid procedure:

> You just kind of fly by the seat of your pants. You just look at what worked before [and] try it again. If it doesn't work again, cast around for something reasonable. If nothing reasonable works, then cast around for something unreasonable.

He goes on to describe the search as a "feel"--a "feel for the discipline, a feel for what's likely, a feel for what's unlikely."

Behe carries this search for "reasonableness" to the arena of religion and faith as well. Asked whether or not the naturalist and the supernaturalist were arguing from two different epistemological perspectives, Behe immediately and forcefully argued that reasonableness is just as necessary for religious viewpoints as scientific ones. "You have to have reasons . . . nobody has blind faith." He went on to say, "You have to have reasons for deciding the claim of divinity by Jesus or something like that is in fact true and that the scriptures are true and so on." Even his dependence on the authority of the Bible as the guide for life and practice is not "baseless," but it is grounded in what Behe considers to be sound reasons.

This is the type of epistemological method Behe and his colleagues took into the conference at Baylor. "We started from the premise of the world as we observe it . . . we did not postulate God [and] we did not postulate the authority of scripture." Again, reasonableness became the measuring device for meaning. "We were arguing essentially that the world as it is constructed points to God or points to the supernatural." For example, the philosophers reasoned that rationality itself argues for God's existence, and the biologists argued that the bacterial flagellum points to a Designer. "We did not start from the premise of theism . . . but we were arguing about where [our] common experience points to."

Even with all his talk of reasonable arguments and common experience, Behe recognizes the search for meaning does not happen in an emotional vacuum. He conjectures why brilliant scientists like Weinberg could so cavalierly dismiss evidence that Behe and his distinguished cohorts believed in so passionately. He made a fascinating admission: "From my point of view there is a great deal of nonrational factors influencing people like Weinberg, probably people like me, too. Even scientists, even Nobel Prize-winning scientists are not rational machines. They are not Mr. Spock." Even when he reflected on many of the negative reviews his book had received, Behe was quick to note that it was "more than just the science that they're reacting against." He continued, "One strongly suspects that religious views . . . play a part in their strong opinions."

As evidence, Behe used Weinberg's propensity to justify his dismissive attitude and denial of a supreme deity with Weinberg's seeming inability to rationalize the existence of a good and powerful God with the early loss of his mother to cancer. Interestingly, Weinberg has used that same line of reasoning in other places besides the Baylor conference (see Begley, 1998, and Horgan, 1996). Behe concludes, "So, it is very likely that a loss of someone dear to him and other things influence his thinking about religion a lot more than cold, analytical calculations."

The discussion on epistemology concluded with an observation about ontology. Explaining, once again, the straightforward strategy used by design proponents at Baylor, Behe stated, "We only required the other side to be open to the possibility that [design] can be true--that there can be a God. If they refuse to consider that there might be a God or refuse to allow that conclusion, then we got troubles."

He has drawn the conclusion that one side's epistemological method cannot go beyond the other side's ontological presuppositions. Therefore, it becomes very difficult for a supernaturalist who clings to the presupposition of a universe open to outside intervention to ever cross over into the world of a scientific establishment steeped in a closed universe of nothing more than matter and energy. In *Black Box*, Behe (1996) writes, " . . . many people, including many important and well-respected scientists, just don't *want* there to be anything beyond nature . . . . They bring an a priori physical commitment to their science that restricts what kinds of explanations they will accept about the physical world" (p. 243).

According to Thomas Kuhn (1977), within the sciences there is a "jealous guardianship of the *status quo* (p. 71) or what Merton (1973) has called an "organized skepticism"of anything challenging the entrenched conservatism of the elite gatekeepers. For Behe, the hard-pure disciplines of the natural sciences have established a closed universe as one of their ontological presuppositions, which leaves religious ideas little if any voice within the epistemological conversation.

Social Lens

Not only do disciplines provide the academic world a type of intellectual authority by policing their own boundaries, but also they offer networks of social influence. Disciplines as knowledge properties designate the epistemological forms that control the actual work of research within the community, and they function as a type of knowledge community that contributes social norms that curb relationships within the group as well.

Biochemistry: A convergent-urban discipline. When it comes to the social characterization of disciplines, Becher has used the adjectives "convergent/divergent" and "urban/rural" to isolate their differences. Convergent disciplines have uniform standards and procedures for how faculty go about their work and exert tight intellectual control within a stable elite who exercise power over the rest. Examples of these types would be physics and history. Divergent communities like geography tolerate more academic deviance. Disciplines with an urban social sphere cover a narrow area of intellectual territory and cluster around a limited number of discrete topics with a high ratio of available people for a given problem; the rural types have problems thinly scattered over a broader, more diverse area and solutions are usually much more time consuming. Again, Becher labels physics as an urban discipline with the modern languages examples of rural social communities.

As with most of the hard sciences, Becher considers both biology and chemistry to be convergent, urban disciplines. As convergent-urban disciplines, both biology and chemistry exert a good amount of control over individual members through a class-conscious community with an acknowledged academic elite. This strong social presence within Behe's academic life comes through when he reflects on his interaction with colleagues, as well as the reputation he has earned within the community.

Collegiality. When Behe is asked to reflect on his relationship with colleagues, both locally with faculty at Lehigh and nationally within his discipline, he tells a story of one of his first forays into the "battlefield." A couple of years before *Black Box* was published, he took part in a debate at the State University of New York at Stoney Brook. At the invitation of a student at Stoney Brook, he and two other design proponents

debated three scientists from the Darwinian side. Although Behe calls the five hour debate "a lot of fun," his relationship with at least one of his Lehigh colleagues began to change.

A couple of weeks after the debate, he received an e-mail message from a faculty member in the biology department. Even though Behe was in the chemistry department at the time, this colleague was still in what Behe describes as "high dudgeon" over Behe's appearance at another university to attack Darwinian thought. Behe summarizes the gist of the communique: "Apparently a former student of his [the biology faculty member] was in the audience [at Stoney Brook] and wrote back and said what shame it brought to Lehigh to have one of its faculty arguing for the 'dark side.'" This colleague of Behe's was so heated by this prospect that he even sent a copy of his e-mail to the Dean of the college in order to alert the dean of Behe's "deviant activities."

Behe replied to this outraged colleague in a "friendly" and disarming way to explain his own position. Eventually, after the colleague cooled down emotionally, they were able to meet in Behe's office for more than an hour as he took great pains to explain exactly what he meant by irreducible complexity. After listening to his explanation, the colleague, who happened to be an organic biologist, replied, "Well, you have some points [and] we [as organic biologists] don't worry about these molecular things in my science."

From this episode, Behe began to figure out the best way to deal with his colleagues who did not necessarily share his views. "The lesson I learned from [Stoney Brook] is to try to be as open as possible with this. Don't do any secret letter writing . . . let everybody know your reasons." The dean himself never responded to the colleague's e-mail. When Behe inquired about the dean's thoughts on the whole matter, the dean

responded, "Well, this seems like none of my business, so I don't know why you sent this to my attention."

Behe used the same open approach with his colleagues before the publication of his book. Roughly six months before its release date, he sent out a department-wide e-mail. At the time Hillary Clinton was on a national book tour publicizing *It Takes a Village*, so Behe began his note with the announcement of some "exciting news." Like Hillary, he, too, had written a book and was about to embark on his own book tour and "it's going to be a lot of fun."

Then he went on to give a little synopsis of his book. "It's likely to be a little bit controversial because it's about evolution." (Sometimes, Behe has a mode of communication that can best be described as "casual understatement.") Then he gave a brief explanation of irreducible complexity and intelligent design to his departmental colleagues. He was careful to disavow any connections with religious creationists. "I stressed the fact that I'm not . . . a young earth creationist." He closed the note by informing them that a copy of his manuscript would be placed in the departmental office, and any who desired could read it and come and discuss any questions or thoughts they had with the author any time they wished.

Even though some people were not happy with his general argument in *Black Box*, he was told by departmental friends that his open approach helped to "defuse" potential difficulties. Behe explained, "I'm an amiable type of guy and got along with everybody . . . there was no previous ill will or anything like that toward me." There were no protests concerning the book, and he stayed in the good graces of the department. He was even promoted to the rank of full professor soon after the book's release. Although he

does confess that in the letter from his chairman informing him of his promotion due to his "good" teaching and research, the chair admitted "there was some concern about the book." Evidently one of the eight senior faculty on the promotions committee had voted against the promotion based solely on Behe's book. No matter how much Behe contributed to the department through his laboratory and classroom work and no matter how collegially he might conduct himself, some would still consider his book and its insipid attack on Darwinian theory a strike against him.

Behe's account confirms Becher's (1989) description of convergent disciplines as "fraternal" communities with "tightly knit" ideologies and common values. Departmental politics become an issue in a much larger way within these types of disciplines, and Behe understood this. One reason he survived virtually unscathed was his ability to play the political game.

Even after receiving all the publicity he has in the last five years, Behe still does not make a habit of taking his very public debate into the private environment of Lehigh's faculty lounge. Although a colleague down the hall might mention Behe's previous night's interview on CNN or a recent editorial in the *Times*, a substantive discussion about his position is rare. In this context, his desire for amicable relationships outweighs his passion for arguing intelligent design. "I do not initiate substantive conversations here and very few people initiate them with me. The thing at Lehigh is that I also do not want to rub people's noses in this. This is my place of employment and I have to get along with everybody."

One other disciplinary lesson we learn from both Behe's experience and Becher's study is that a convergent discipline's strong political context can be lessened by its urban

setting. Urban disciplines have a densely concentrated population, with more scholars per area of study than more rural disciplines. Thus, researchers are forced to go deeper and deeper into their speciality to make a contribution to the community, whereas those faculty in more rural areas take the broader approach to a given area of study. So, when Behe made his controversial argument in *Black Box* in areas (natural selection and origins) that have more to do with biology than chemistry, he found his fellow biochemists failed to pay close attention.

Behe recalls little change in his interaction with disciplinary colleagues at national conferences after his book. He recounted a conference held in Albany on the structure of proteins in nucleic acids not long after all the furor over his argument erupted. Walking down a corridor, he heard his name: "Mike, Mike Behe." When he turned around a stranger approached him, "You're Mike Behe." Behe, thinking it would be a question about *Black Box*, said, "Yes, I am." The stranger responded, "I wanted to talk to you about your work on the Histone H4." Behe anticipated this colleague wanted to discuss irreducible complexity, but this fellow biochemist just wanted to talk over some research on acids.

Approximately 500 scientists attended the conference, and by Behe's recollection only one person even mentioned the book. This only confirmed his contention that most scientists in his narrow speciality of biochemistry are "completely oblivious to any of the things I said." Like most scholars in urban disciplines, successful scientists have "got to concentrate on a narrow area and just go full bore on that area, and rarely do people have time to look to the left or to the right."

Reputation. Behe was asked to reflect on his professional journey, including his thoughts and feelings on his own role in the design debate within the scientific discipline. He was quick to express his feelings and slower to explain his thoughts.

The mostly negative reaction to his argument and his book within the scientific establishment has made Behe feel "both good and bad." He explains, "They [reactions of scientific colleagues] make me feel bad because few people want to be called cowardly and lazy and want to be mocked in the professional journal of their discipline." He goes on, "Ah, but it makes me feel good because here's the most prestigious science journal in the whole world and the best they can do is say, 'He's nothing but a Creationist.' And they admit that they can't now answer the arguments that I've put forward."

At this point in the conversation, Behe's words reveal a pivotal tension in the academic profession: the emotional desire to be accepted as part of the disciplinary fraternity and the intellectual drive to push the theoretical boundaries of the discipline itself. The former impetus requires an insider's mentality, whereas the latter necessitates the mind set of an outsider without the emotional ties that might cloud one's judgment. Behe exemplifies this almost schizophrenic stance, "I want to be liked as much as the next guy, but I am kind of stubborn, and so I . . . will not just go away until somebody satisfactorily addresses these questions." His conflicting emotions point out one of the primary motivational forces in faculty careers and one of the more powerful ways disciplines influence faculty lives: the scholar's reputation.

When describing the driving force and motivation behind much of the activity within academic circles, writers have concentrated their attention on reputation, both individually and communally (Becher, 1989; Hardy, 1941; Merton, 1957). Becher

explains this concept through a helpful contrast: "The main currency for the academic is not power as it is for the politician or wealth as it is for the businessman, but reputation" (p. 53). Reif (1961) writes, "The scientist . . . is extraordinarily dependent on the good opinion of others." Many factors contribute to a faculty member's reputation, including where you come from (alma mater), whom you studied with, and the main avenue used to gain recognition from one's peers: publication.

With qualification, Mike Behe agrees that reputation is exceedingly important for the average scientist and that publication becomes the primary means to be noticed. Reflecting on his own career, however, he is careful to view reputation from two vantage points, the localized and the universal. Many scientists in leading universities are able to gain some acclaim within their own specialized field, but that expertise may be known by just a few. "You might be the world's leading expert on nucleic acid and your work is known by [only] 50 other scientists." Before *Black Box*, Behe's own work on DNA structure was an example of this localized reputation. Although it had a "decent reputation" in his small specialty, "hardly anybody outside the field knew or cared about what I did."

With the publication of his book, however, Behe's reputation has blossomed. He has moved onto a more public stage accessible to a wider audience. "The book has of course given me a reputation, for good or ill, far beyond a specialized area, and I'm more widely known that I was before." Behe tells how *Black Box* has been reviewed by "major organs of culture in the United States," including the *New York Times Book Review*, *Newsweek*, and the *Washington Post*. It has been published internationally in China, Holland, France, and Peru. "And so the most satisfying thing to me is that now people

have to address the argument . . . when they talk about evolution. And I think it really has changed the terms of the debate. And that's really what I set out to do."

The desire to protect or promote one's reputation can also involve one's own institution within the academic world. Like Behe's biology colleague who was aghast that he would travel to a neighboring university and argue against Charles Darwin, could other colleagues exist who are concerned that his "deviant" activities might strike Lehigh at the heart of what it values most--its academic reputation? Behe thinks that some would definitely find him guilty by association and attach that guilt to his institution. In their minds, Behe "criticizes evolution, and therefore, he's a crazy fundamentalist and likely to turn our department into a laughingstock and drag our reputation down because of all of this." He understands that, in academia, reputations are not necessarily earned in a vacuum; but his colleagues' "reputations [are] somehow linked to mine."

Yet, interestingly, Behe also notes that this reputation thing can move in two directions. Lehigh's reputation has actually helped Behe gain a wider hearing for his arguments. He believes that he was able to get published by a New York publishing house and not a religious publication arm precisely because he was from Lehigh, a fairly prestigious university in the East and not some nondescript religious college in the south. Even his religious identity as a Roman Catholic and not a fundamentalist Protestant has helped Behe at least gain a first hearing in some circles. Reputation works both ways.

God as Rival

As Behe has stated, his public airing of irreducible complexity and intelligent design has earned him a reputation within the scientific community, and the American

popular culture for that matter, both for good and for ill. This mixed reaction to *Black Box* begins to help us answer his central question about the ultimate relationship between science and religion.

The publication of *Black Box* brought a swift and large response. "Newspapers and magazines from Vancouver to London, including *Newsweek* and the *Wall Street Journal*" (T. Woodward, 1997), published articles and reviews on this "heretical" (Shreeve, 1996) scientist at Lehigh. Some of the leading scientific journals in the field, such as *Nature* and the *American Scientist*, reacted to Behe's argument for intelligent design. Even the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, a weekly paper designed for professors and administrators within the academy, picked up on his provocative stance against the prevailing scientific dogma and commented on the "wide attention" (Wheeler, 1996) his book has received.

Some reviewers did have positive observations to write about Behe and his book. James Shreeve (1996), science writer for *The New York Times Book Review*, commented on Behe's "lively exposition" and "fine prose" (p. 8). Others agreed with Behe's premise that evolution was not able at this time to explain the complexity of biochemical systems. "He has hit the weak point in terms of origin-of-life studies" (Wheeler, 1996, p. A14) and "it is remarkable that Darwinism is accepted as a satisfactory explanation for such a vast subject - evolution - with so little rigorous examination of how well its basic thesis works" (Shapiro, 1996, p. 62).

Although some did think more could be done on traditional science's part to explain the development of these complex systems, no reviewer within the orthodox scientific community could be found who bought Behe's suggested answer to this

problem: intelligent design. Dr. Christopher Wills, a biologist at the University of California at San Diego, was quoted in the *Chronicle*: "It is far too early to give up on a scientific explanation for the precursors of life" (Wheeler, 1996, p. A14). Just because a clear answer was not available now, does not mean a future discovery might not solve the problem. Shreeve ends his review by pleading with Behe to "leave mysteries for our grandchildren to solve"; because "something is beyond our understanding today does not mean it will be beyond theirs" (p. 8).

Then, there were other reviewers with a condescending tone who simply dismissed Behe's entire argument as a "Trojan horse" used by Creationists to introduce theological arguments into America's classrooms. Behe's "ludicrous logic" is not science at all but religion "masquerading as an appeal for truth" (Dorit, 1997, p. 474). His argument is "old," "arrogant," and "deeply unsatisfying" (Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution, 1997, p. 113) and any "serious scientist" would consider the book "poor scholarship" and a "disappointment" (Blackstone, 1997, p. 445).

Certainly, the most damning critique comes from the mouth and pen of Richard Dawkins, Oxford professor, holder of the Charles Simone Chair of Public Understanding, and world-wide spokesperson and defender of Darwinian theory. Interviewed on PBS's *Think Tank* by Ben Wattenberg (1996), Dawkins refers to Behe as a "straightforward creationist" who has "taken an argument which dates back to the nineteenth century" and made it his own. In not-so-gentle terms, Dawkins calls him a lazy coward: "Behe should stop being lazy and should get up and think for himself about how the flagellum evolved instead of this cowardly, lazy copping out by simply saying, 'Oh, I can't think of how it came about, therefore it must have been designed.'" And for the *coup de grace*, Dawkins

is quoted by Behe himself as saying, "If Behe were a real scientist, he'd get off his lazy behind and find a naturalistic explanation for the objects he studies." Dawkins then critiques the American system of higher education: "How can anyone so lazy get tenure at an American university?"

What these critics have done is to provide an answer for Behe's question: "Can science find room for religion?" In one chorus and with perfect harmony, they give us a resounding "No!" His argument for a possible religious alternative to the scientific explanation is taken as a "misguided attempt to bring religion back into biology" (Shapiro, 1996, p. 62). University of Chicago biologist Jerry Coyne (1996) comments with a historical sweep, "If the history of science shows us anything, it is that we get nowhere by labeling our ignorance 'God'" (p. 227). And the *Chronicle* closes its report with this declaration: Behe "has revived a problem that scientists have wrestled with for centuries. Are science and religion compatible? Many would prefer to keep God out of their research" (Wheeler, 1996, p. A14).

When Behe himself tries to explain the relationship between science and religion, he uses the image of a Venn diagram to describe two world views that are paradoxically intertwined with each other and at the same time independent of each other. According to his perspective, theology "provides the underpinnings for science." Tracking the history of science back to the Middle Ages, he finds a strong connection between Christian doctrine of a "Divine Lawgiver" who created a "rational, notable universe--a law-like universe." Without these "fundamental [theological] concepts" of rationality, science could not exist.

Yet, in the actual daily activities of science, scientists do not "have a whole lot of direct dependence on any particular theology." Certain pieces of Christian theology, like the Trinity, have "little day-to-day interaction with whether the P53 protein is localized to [a particular] area of the cell or not." Still, the "foundation of science" as a rational approach to a rational universe depends on theological presuppositions, "whether scientists realize it or not."

As Behe continues to draw his Venn diagram on his hypothetical chalkboard, he highlights two mistakes people make when relating science and theology. Some incorrectly overlap the two circles so that one is identical to the other; different scholars have mistakenly created a clean break between the two. Scientists, especially religiously oriented ones, make the first mistake when they interject supernatural arguments within science itself. He is careful to justify his arguments in *Black Box* with the physical data and not necessarily his own theological convictions. According to Behe's definition of science, "Science cannot study the supernatural; science only studies natural things." Therefore, he does not explicitly invoke the supernatural in his argument for intelligent design. "I don't talk about the supernatural in my book."

According to Behe's argument, design is not a supernatural phenomenon; rather, design is something we apprehend naturally and also something that may have theological implications. As he did at the OSU conference, Behe uses our conversation to draw a parallel between irreducible complexity and the Big Bang. When the Big Bang was first proposed by physicists, many people thought it had theological implications. However that did not stop physicists from using the theory and doing experiments based on its premises. "We postulated the Big Bang from the motion of the galaxies, and not from a

reading of Genesis [and] because it justifies itself with respect to the physical data. It's science--even if it has theological implications." This is how Behe desires to use irreducible complexity. By using scientific observations of complex biochemical systems, we can postulate a universe with design. It is science--science that has overt theological implications. Ironically, as Mike Behe seeks to remain true to his discipline, he also clings fast to his religious presuppositions.

While Behe has resisted drawing too big an overlap between science and theology, he finds that most nonreligious scientists have gone in the opposite direction and completely separated the two. Behe estimates that roughly "80 %" of the National Academy of Sciences would be on "Dawkins's side [of the design debate]." He went on to give a penetrating explanation for this belief: "I think atheism . . . is just a professional hazard in science." He compared this phenomenon to common occupational hazards within other professions. Police struggle with egomania, and lawyers have to guard against cynicism. "I think a professional hazard [for scientists], especially for the elite, is to think that you can explain it all. And not only can you explain it all, but you have to explain it all."

This need to explain our natural world is what "drives" scientists to Darwinian evolution because it gives us a scientific explanation for the diversity of life. And, for Behe, this drive "makes people overlook a large number of problems with [natural selection]." That is why, according to his own point of view, he has, as a "no-name" biochemist, made such a "big splash" by "proposing pretty obvious points" and consequently "become the target of a lot of criticism."

Again, Behe gives a historical perspective. As science has matured over the centuries and become "more confident of its own abilities and its own methods," scientists have acted like adolescents attempting to escape the authority of their parents and "sort of forgotten their obligation to religion and theology." Scientists think they must be able to explain everything from natural premises; therefore, they begin to see supernatural explanations as threats. "You think God is the rival explanation," says Behe. And although "there certainly are a number of scientists who don't fit into that stereotype," there are enough who get the big media exposure to provide such a typecast.

Maybe Behe's best attempt to answer his question about the relationship of science and religion comes in a quotation from *Black Box* (1996):

> Science is a noble pursuit that can engender fierce loyalty. The purpose of science is to explain the physical world - a very serious enterprise. However, other disciplines (principally philosophy and theology) also are in the business of explaining parts of the world. Although most of the time these disciplines stay out of each other's way, sometimes they conflict. When that happens, some dedicated people put their discipline ahead of the goal it is supposed to serve. (p. 254)

Behe is suggesting that the answer to his question is not purely an intellectual one but also one of disciplinary proprietorship. Could it be that science has so little room for religion because it not only has intellectual and epistemological objections, but also because scientists are unwilling to share the power and prestige their discipline's stature affords them? Might this be what Rorty (1999) means when he uses Nietzche and Foucault to "unmask" science and call into question the very notion of scientific objectivity? Surely, this is what Behe (1996b) himself is getting at when he refers to the science establishment's disdain of religious explanations as "scientific chauvinism" (p. 235).

Asking the Right Question in the Right Way

Can science make room for religion? Has Behe answered the question? Can Behe answer the question? Or is posing the question itself good enough? Surely, Christian academics need to ask whether or not their respective disciplines have room for religious ideas and convictions. If not, will they be content to play the game by the rules already provided? Or will they be willing pay the price to try and change the rules?

Mike Behe proves an example of what that price may be. He has risked reputation within the scientific community. He has altered his career and research focus. Nevertheless, in the end, Behe would say his journey has been well worth the effort. He has the conviction, principles, and stubbornness necessary to do what he believes is right, no matter the consequence or what others may think.

Can science make room for religion? Mike Behe has asked the right question and Mike Behe has asked it in the right way. From the beginning, he has backed up his challenging voice with a gentle and kind spirit. He asks potentially offensive questions without putting people on the defensive. He prides himself on his collegiality, and his amicable approach to life has won him the right to speak. Mike Behe has been open and forthright with his colleagues and exhibits a razor-sharp mind. He also possesses the courage to say what he thinks.

Behe is careful not to describe his role as a crusade against some atheistic, evolutionary theory. Rather, he sees his frontline role as a simple vocational choice. "I just view it as my job . . . . I'm a biochemist. I'm supposed to understand how biochemical systems got here . . . . I'm working on a foundational question in my discipline." Clearly, his choice to establish himself as a contentious voice within the

scientific community originates from more than his theological presuppositions. His choice of roles has emerged from his sense of vocational identity--his disciplinary identity--and what it means to be an authentic scientist. For Behe, controversy "is supposed to be what you're [about]." Controversy is something "you should put up with if you're trying to pursue . . . what you think is right and correct."

Mike Behe's faculty narrative is not only about how science has reacted to his questions but also about the manner in which Behe has initiated the discussion. At the end of the day, for the Christian scholar, the question may change from "Can my discipline make room for religion?" to "Do I have the mind, the character, and the conviction necessary to raise the question in the first place?"

CHAPTER THREE

GETTING FROM ONE TO THE OTHER

A Vocational View of Faculty Life

Mary Poplin, Professor of Education, Claremont Graduate University

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

-Frederich Buechner

Introduction

The bookshelves of Mary Poplin, a 20-year professor of education, speak volumes about her research interests, classroom passions, and personal curiosities. Like a mechanic's choice of a family car, the personal choices inherent in an academic's allocation of precious shelf space give insight into a scholar's theoretical convictions and vocational identity. The books that line Professor Poplin's (or "Mary," as her students call her) far office wall, along with their geographical patterns, reveal intriguing clues about her academic and personal journeys. In the bottom left-hand corner of the bookcases she has tucked texts from her former vocational life. With titles like *Special Voices* and *The Myths of the A.D.D. Child*, they serve as reminders of Mary's prior interest in special education and the reason she initially was hired at Claremont Graduate University (CGU) in Pomona, California.

The largest number of books accentuate Mary's previous theoretical focus on feminism, multiculturalism, and issues of power within society and education. Ralph Ellison, bell hooks, Carol Gilligan, Angela Davis, and Peter McClaren, among other authors, raise their voices to the plight of the powerless. Books entitled *Beyond Silent*

Voices, *Democratic Education*, *Race and Culture*, *Unequal Sisters*, and *Class Warfare* give clues to Mary's passion for the disadvantaged and her underlying desire to fight for the underdog. *Critical Theory*, *Culture and Power in the Classroom*, and *Cultural Pedagogy: The State and Cultural Struggle* are remnants from her arsenal in the fight against fundamental injustices within America's schooling and political contexts.

Stacked in the center of this vast array of books stand volumes whose titles communicate a different educational life from all the surrounding texts. These publications, which include treatises on *Knowing God*, *The Holiness of God*, and *Prayer*, vividly portray Mary Poplin's second career--the career of a theological educator.

The books resting on these long, narrow wooden shelves represent more than Mary's reading and research patterns; they symbolize her own vocational journey. Although Mary has tucked books from long-ago educational considerations in the far corners of the intellectual space apart from her current ideas and thoughts, some shelves reveal that her divergent paths cannot be cleanly separated. C. S. Lewis stands alongside Cornell West and a biography of St. Bonaventure rests on a shelf directly below an ethnography of African-American children in inner-city schools.

As an outside observer, I want to sort the books and Mary's intellectual interests into discrete and orderly categories. On closer observation, however, they begin to bleed into each other forming a passionate whole. The integration of the secular and the sacred communicates the story of an academic who is struggling to find a way to unite her sometimes conflicting intellectual passions under one calling. Each of these authors has informed Mary's career and life. Although some volumes currently speak louder than others, they all have played a role in making Mary the person and professor she is today.

As I begin to understand how Mary blends those voices, I will start to catch a glimpse of how she carries out her vocation as a Christian scholar.

Getting From One to the Other

Mary Poplin has lived two separate academic lives in one faculty career. Before 1992, as a professor of education at CGU in Pomona, California, Mary sought to save America's public schools from the inside out through feminist pedagogy, constructivism, and critical theory. Since 1992, when she converted to Christianity, Mary has remained a professor of education at CGU; she still longs to see America's schools and teachers strengthened and empowered. But feminist pedagogy, constructivism, and critical theory have taken an intellectual backseat to Mother Theresa, St. John of the Cross, and the New Testament. Where Mary used to make liberal use of the best secular humanism had to offer, she now informs her career and life with the sacred and the theological

Bridging those two academic lives has become Mary's major professional tension in the last eight years. At a lecture Mary gave at a large conference for women school administrators soon after her return from Calcutta, where she had worked with Mother Theresa for two months, a woman in the audience asked Mary, "Have you had any trouble coming back?" Mary says, "I just started crying right in front of this whole audience of about 200 women." Then, when she had composed herself, Mary went on to tell these professional women (both religious and nonreligious) how much she struggled synthesizing her former work life with her present spiritual commitment.

> Every time I walked into my office, I looked at the things I had written and the things I was teaching and all the books. And then I looked at the truth [Mother Theresa] lived her life by and I couldn't see--I could not see how I could ever get from one to the other.

Getting from one to the other has consumed Mary's vocational attention. How does she bridge the intellectual and spiritual divide between a secular, pluralistic academy that prizes diversity and inclusivity and her own religious faith that preaches an exclusive doctrine that Jesus is the only way to God and true meaning in life? In the name of inclusivity, American higher education has been receptive to spirituality in recent days. Yet, according to Mary, "Education as a field [is] . . . so inclusive in its spirituality that it excludes everything that wouldn't accept Buddha as also [part] of the truth." Ironically, the more inclusive the academy has become the more excluded many Evangelical Christians like Mary have felt. They have discovered that the academy's inclusive pluralism actually excludes any world view that does not share the university's post-enlightenment epistemology and values.

Like the work of Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot, Mary also describes a faculty life struggling to live between two worlds--a life struggling to embrace contradiction. Her struggle is not about race. Mary's internal conflict is about the spirit and the mind. Before 1992, she invested her vocational life in an academy that values the mind and its ability to address the pressing social issues of the day. After 1992, Mary still believes in the value of addressing injustices through the intellect but not without the influencing of the spirit as well. The mind by itself is no longer enough to address the deep problems of our culture. Mary's internal contradiction comes from the inability or unwillingness of those who share her pre-1992 world view to accept her current vocational stance.

How is Mary getting "from one to the other"? Maybe a better question is why Mary is still seeking to bridge the two worlds. She could leave the secular context of

CGU and ply her trade in the more hospitable environment of a Christian university. Yet, she chooses to stay.

Mary feels great disdain for her secular academic culture because, according to Mary, it feeds "all the dark stuff that's going on--all that secular humanist, soulish junk. And [the secular academic world] just never even touch[es] God." It is her belief that the best the academy has to offer can never touch God, which drives Mary away from the secular university.

But it is her equally passionate belief that God can touch the secular university that keeps Mary right where she is. "I do know God has me here. I do know that because I've tried to escape. So, I know I'm supposed to be here. And I know why in a way . . . I know why, period . . . because a lot of my students are in the same pit I was in. And I weep for them." With these words Mary shares a love for the people of the academy that far outweighs her dislike for many of its ideas.

The more I listened to Mary explain her work at CGU and her great love for the students there, the more I realized she was describing something more than just a job. She was relating what she believed to be a divine call to undertake a supernatural mission. Mary Poplin was using the language of "vocation."

Adopting a Rhetoric of Vocation

Serving as an assistant professor in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, David T. Hansen (1995) spent three years in the field studying the everyday working lives of four teachers in urban schools. He wanted to know "why they continue to teach . . . with conviction and success despite the difficulties and challenges

they and their colleagues everywhere face in today's schools" (p. xiii). Yet, when it came time to write up his findings, Hansen struggled to find an appropriate theoretical language that would adequately explain the "animating force" behind these four successful negotiations of what were often trying working conditions. So he went outside traditional educational literature to sociology, philosophy, and religion in order to borrow the rhetoric of vocation.

Hansen had long been fascinated by what he refers to as the "inner life" of teachers. Why did some teachers seem highly motivated, whereas other educators appeared disinterested? Why did some care deeply, and others simply went through the motions of the daily routine? As an educational researcher, Hansen began to look for ways to uncover the answers to these complex questions. Along with two colleagues, he spent two years studying the moral life of schools (Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993). After 400 hours of observing classrooms and conducting interviews, they came to the conclusion that "it is the person *within* the role" who makes the difference with students. Only an understanding of that inner person would provide a complete picture of schooling in America.

Not a systematic research project like Hansen's work, Parker Palmer's (1998) observations, confessions, and suggestions in his book *A Courage to Teach* make similar assumptions about the centrality of a teacher's selfhood. Palmer argues that teaching "emerges from one's inwardness" and "as I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together" (p. 2). The experiences of the classroom are "often no more or no less than the convolutions of [the teacher's] inner life." In this way, Palmer believes that teaching "holds a mirror" to the teacher's soul.

Conversely, Hansen would counter that a teacher's soul holds a mirror to one's teaching. Both would whole-heartedly agree that a "teacher's selfhood" (p. 3) must become a legitimate topic both in education and in the public discourse on educational reform.

In his attempt to describe the person who inhabits the role of teacher, Hansen began to search for a rhetoric adequate to provide a three-dimensional picture of successful teachers. He wanted to highlight "teachers' disposition, attitudes, beliefs and values more than . . . methods of teaching" (p. 131). The complexity of teaching includes the intellectual and the moral, and studying one without the other could "truncate" any description "beyond recognition" (p. 123).

Hansen found the language of "career" and "occupation" often used in the educational literature inadequate to convey the deeply personal aspects of teaching. "A language is needed that recognizes and calls attention to the aims, the vision, and the action of teachers who bring a sense of service to what they do" (p. 147). He was drawn to two major sources as he sought to construct such a language: the work of sociologist/philosopher D.M. Emmet (1958) and the religious notion of vocation. (In many ways, Hansen's study is as much an autobiography of one educational researcher's pursuit for a useful rhetoric as it is the study of teachers' vocational identity.) Thus, Hansen calls his study a "book about teaching as a vocation" (p. xiii). Furthermore, in the mirror of vocation, he has found an adequate reflection of the inner complexity of teaching that mere occupational language could not provide.

The term, "vocation," originates from the Latin *vocare*, which means "to call" or "to summon for service." Used often in religious contexts, vocation has been co-opted by Hansen for an educational context in order to illuminate the working lives of teachers as

"a form of public service that yields enduring personal fulfillment to those who provide it" (xiii). Thus, a strong sense of vocation becomes the "inner incentive" or motivation for successful teachers in even the most difficult educational situations. For Hansen, the usual terms found in this type of study fail to capture the deeply personal aspects of one's vocation and the importance of the individual person inhabiting the role. "The language of vocation brings us closer to what many teachers do, and why they do it, than does the language of job, work, occupation, or profession" (p. 8).

From his extensive study of these effective educators, Hansen has phrased his definition of vocation as a means to highlight what he believes to be the two major motivating factors involved: (a) public service and (b) personal fulfillment. First, teachers who view teaching as a vocation see their work in and outside the classroom as one of service to others. They work for something bigger than self, and potential financial rewards are a by-product of what they do, rather than a primary goal.

Second, they also find deep personal satisfaction in what they do as teaching becomes a primary connection to their own personal identity. "Who I am is what I do and what I do is who I am" (p. 116). Maybe the best description of this twin notion of vocation comes from the thought of Christian novelist Frederick Buechner (1993) who describes vocation as "the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet" (p. 95).

Overview

A helpful way to capture the essence of Mary Poplin's negotiation of her place as a Christian professor in a secular graduate university is to frame her work within the

rhetoric of vocation. Like David Hansen's four inner-city teachers, Mary, too, has faced difficult circumstances that could have easily driven her to a safer place to work out her vocation. But she has chosen to stay at Claremont in order to serve her students, fulfill her own vocational identity, and ultimately to answer what she perceives to be her divine calling.

Using the research of Hansen, the thoughtful comments of Palmer, and the inspiration of Buechner, we begin to construct a helpful framework for making sense of Mary Poplin's vocational narrative. First, we look at the radical change in Mary's own sense of identity since her conversion in 1992. What brings Mary fulfillment, what makes her deeply glad is not the same 20 years after her arrival on Claremont's campus in 1981. Can this new source of joy and fulfillment be expressed in this environment?

Second, we will need to examine the work context itself and how Mary's colleagues, administrators, and students have responded to her changing identity. As Mary seeks some connection between her religious self and secular work place, what are the barriers and what are the opportunities before her? As Mary seeks to serve her world at CGU, can she minister effectively while still remaining faithful to her religious identity?

Finally, we will look at the bridge itself and how Mary has been able to forge a successful career in often trying circumstances. Where at first she struggled even to show up for work each day, she now thrives on the opportunity to make a difference with people she thinks need what she has to offer. She has identified CGU as the place where God has called her to perform the task she believes He has spent some 50 years preparing

her to do. Mary can now traverse "from one to the other" because she believes she is called to give the other the One it so desperately needs.

Filling in the Black Hole

Symbols and icons play a major rhetorical role in Mary's small but orderly office as her religious identity reveals itself in obtrusive ways throughout her work space. From the two small crosses on her desk to the massive cross that fills her long window, it is obvious Mary has no intentions of hiding her faith. No matter where you sit, you find evidence of her spiritual commitment. Bibles rest on almost every desktop and table in the room, and her computer monitor's screen saver is a single word: "FAITH." Mary freely admits she consciously uses her office decor as a means of communication both for herself and anyone who might visit.

Looking out her one window into the color-filled courtyard of CGU, I cannot miss three such symbols placed prominently on the windowsill. Occupying the preeminent position in the middle of the ledge and, in fact, the entire room stands a slender, two-and-a-half-foot teal-colored, wooden cross. Carved in what Mary refers to as a "southwestern style," the black-bordered cross with z-shaped edges not only communicates the centrality of Mary's faith to her life and work but also combines with a small saguaro cactus on its left to remind this "Texas girl" of her southwestern roots.

To the right of the cross rests a 12-inch-high, two-paneled religious that icon Mary discovered in a small Catholic church in France. She and a friend had visited the chapel while waiting for a dinner table in a nearby café. While seated in a pew, Mary's eyes were repeatedly drawn to a picture hanging on the wall. On the right panel stands a blue-

robed Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus. Their faces are pressed together in a loving embrace. The left panel contains a portrait of the adult Jesus with the traditional looking visage of bearded face and long, flowing dark hair.

What catches your gaze in this picture of Jesus are his hands. In the left hand he holds a hard-cover, ornate-looking box, much like the type of box the Jews of Jesus' day might have used to store scrolls of the Torah. Jesus' right hand is held out toward the observer in a demonstrative position, his ring finger lightly touching his thumb as if he were using his hand to communicate some type of blessing.

As Mary looked at this stunning portrait of Jesus and the Virgin Mary, she felt "in [her] spirit the Lord saying, 'Teach my people.'" Knowing nothing about the history of the icon, Mary approached a priest for an explanation. He replied, "Oh, yes. That's entitled 'Christ, the Teacher.'" For a woman as intuitive and mystical as Mary, she took this as one more confirmation of God's leading in her life, and she immediately purchased a replica of "Christ, the Teacher" for her office back in California.

It stands today in her office window as one more reminder of her divine calling and what she believes to be her supernatural vocation. With a tan background and ancient Roman calligraphy written in the upper corners, these two images reflect on Christianity's ancient religious heritage. The two wooden sides of the icon are connected by hinges, allowing the adult Christ and baby Jesus represented to look each other in the eye. Christ the teacher is united to the Christian image of Jesus the redeemer, and together they define for Mary her evangelistic vocation as university professor. As Mary has written, "From the beginning, I knew if I was a Christian it had to do with my work

. . . that I am to share my experience with everyone God puts in my life, from my sisters to my colleagues to [my] students."

Searching for One's Identity

Mary possesses an intense approach to her work and life. She holds nothing back; her strong will allows nothing to stand in the way of her passions. Before 1992, Mary funneled these passions into school reform and empowering the disadvantaged. Since her conversion to Christianity, Mary has experienced no loss of enthusiasm or conviction concerning her life path. "I have to be a radical Christian. There isn't any other choice."

Defining an amorphous and often overused term like "identity" can become a challenging task amidst today's educational literature. It seems every scholar has an idea of what this notion implies. Psychologist Kenneth Gergen (1991) begins to narrow the concept by defining identity's sister term, "self," as "our ways of understanding who we are and what we are about" (p. x). When we write or speak of people's sense of identity, we are simply describing how they delineate who they are and why they choose that particular definition.

Referring to identity as a "mystery," Parker Palmer (1998) tries to communicate the multitude of influences upon our sense of self as "a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am, converging in the irreducible mystery of being human" (p. 13). Some of these forces include our genetic makeup, our family structure, popular culture, and those influential people within our lives who have marked us, for good and bad. Certainly, this sense of identity is never a completed task but rather an

"evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of self" (Palmer, 1998, p. 13).

When Buechner (1993) and Hansen (1995) attach a sense of vocation to our "deep gladness" and sense of fulfillment, they are making a direct connection between what we do and how we perceive the best of who we are. Our work flows from our identity and is integral to our nature. What our work requires of us would never go against who we consider ourselves to be. Or, as Palmer (1998) writes: when vocation connects to identity and self, our work "fits" who we are and literally "gives [us] life" (p. 31).

A narrative of Mary Poplin's developing sense of vocation shows that her own sense of identity has evolved over the last 20 years. She defines herself very differently today than she did in 1981. As we will see, this makes a noticeable difference in her approach to her career.

Wilderness Wanderings

Raised in the relatively small north Texas town of Wichita Falls, Mary Poplin grew up in a stable home where "you already knew what you were supposed to do" when you became an adult. Even though her father had only an eighth-grade education, school was a high priority and teaching was a prized profession.

Beginning as an airplane mechanic at the local air force base, Mary's dad would eventually work his way up in the civil service career ladder until he became a trainer of other jet mechanics. His career, along with Mary's mother's occupation as a teacher in the local school, set the vocational pattern for Mary and her three sisters to follow. "You were supposed to go to school, and you were supposed to complete college . . . become a

teacher, get married, and have children. That's what you were supposed to do." Ultimately, all four girls would earn bachelor's degrees in education.

Mr. Poplin attempted to provide the religious direction within the home although he often sent conflicting messages. Although he often read the Bible to his daughters at night and made sure the girls went to Sunday School every week at the local United Methodist congregation, he, himself, never attended. Mary's mother, on the other hand, "had an aversion . . . to Christianity" and eventually discontinued the nightly Bible readings for the entire family.

Even though there was some attempt by one parent to interject religious instruction and influence, according to Mary's recollection, her father "wasn't strong enough inside to really enforce that in our family." Consequently, all four daughters left home without any religious attachments and "just wandered around in the wilderness for a long time." Ironically, today, three of the four sisters profess a strong belief in Christianity, and one of Mary's siblings attends seminary in Southern California.

Mary will often use a "wilderness" metaphor to describe her pre-conversion life and career. "I wandered around in every wilderness." She goes on to identify intellectual locations within her wilderness excursions: "I tried Buddhism. I tried Transcendental Meditation." This nomadic journey also brought lifestyle repercussions as Mary describes a life attracted to drugs, alcohol, and "everything that people get into." Her love for the party lifestyle was one motivation in coming to CGU in 1981. "I moved here, to California . . . because there was just so much more of it available."

Mary earned her teaching degree at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls and then taught elementary and special education for a number of years. She went to the

University of Texas in Austin to earn her master's degree in special education. While there, she performed so well that one of her professors suggested she stay for a Ph.D. Mary's first faculty position would be at the University of Kansas in the Department of Special Education, where she taught for three years before her move to CGU.

The "wilderness" image not only describes Mary's intellectual and social journey, but also provides an apt analogy for her developing vocational identity. Looking back on her career as an educator, Mary confesses, "I taught the wilderness, too." Trained in behaviorism as a graduate student, Mary developed an early tendency to "think for [herself]." Consequently, she has been on the "cutting edge" of educational theory and practice for the last 20 years. "I would find a new theory, kind of before other people would find it . . . And I'd get it into education. I'd write about it . . . speak about it . . . teach about it."

Continuing an already present tendency to "wander away" from traditional paths, Mary became thoroughly steeped at an early stage in feminism, feminist pedagogy, and critical theory. She interacted closely with some of the intellectual revolutionaries of her day in the educational field, including Peter McClaren, Henry Giroux, Carol Gilligan, and Paulo Freire. "I was an early admirer of their work and believer in their work." Occasionally, Mary would be asked to speak on some of the same panels with these postmodern scholars and contribute chapters in their books.[7] She became good friends

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[7]Some of these titles include: "Alternative Instructional Strategies to Reductionism: Constructive, Critical, Multicultural, and Feminine Pedagogies" (Poplin, 1996); *Alternative Views of Learning Disabilities* (Poplin, 1996); *Methods for Educating the Handicapped: An Individualized Education Program Approach* (Poplin, 1980); "Multicultural, Critical, Feminine, and Constructive Pedagogies Seen Through the Lives of Youth: A Call for the Revisioning of These and Beyond: Toward a Pedagogy for the

with Carol Gilligan and brought Freire to Claremont's campus a number of times before his death in 1997.

When Mary first arrived at Claremont, her lifestyle could not have been more different from what it is today. Described by one long-term colleague at CGU as a "real party girl," Mary was "flamboyant," a "bit outrageous," a "tad raunchy," and "really liked shocking people." She especially enjoyed "taunting" the straight-laced Lutheran dean of the school with her feminist ideology and "bawdy" humor. Each Friday afternoon Mary would host a party at her apartment to end the work week. She called it "The Cantina" and always had a large supply of food and alcoholic beverages on hand.

Mary made a mark on Claremont's campus those first 10 years that extended far beyond her weekly "Cantina," however. She directed the teacher education program, increasing its size more than 300% and raising millions of dollars in financial aid. According to a colleague, Mary did "a wonderful job" by raising the program's reputation to one of the best in the state of California.

Along with another colleague in the department, Mary was instrumental in bringing in a million-dollar grant to create the "Institute for the Transformation of Schools" at Claremont. Focusing on K-12 reform, Mary spent a year bringing in outside sources to the university in order to educate the entire faculty through a year-long discussion on school reform. Stated one colleague: "She was responsible for enriching

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Next Century" (Poplin, 1995); "Paradigm Shifts in Instructional Strategies: From Reductionism to Holistic/Constructivism (Poplin, 1992); and"Writing a Difference in the World: Beyond Ownership and Authorship (DuCharme, 1995).

our intellectual life [on campus] in a very significant way." Mary was a major player at CGU and "a very constructive citizen."

Mary's most important scholarly contribution from those days was a report entitled *Voices From the Inside*. Along with a team of colleagues, Mary spent two years studying four inner-city schools, focusing on "the inside of the classroom." Having been actively involved in the school reform movement, she thought a vital element was missing in the literature--what the people inside the schools actually believed their needs and problems to be. So Mary and her research team wanted to empower the "people inside the schools--children, secretaries, cafeteria workers, teachers, and parents"--to speak for themselves. They wanted "to get them to describe their own problems and to watch how they solved them."

Please, Come and Get Me

It was the end of 1991, and Mary Poplin should have felt like she was on the top of the world. Career-wise, she was. *Voices From the Inside* had just been published, and, according to Mary, "Was a big hit." People "all around the country were happy with the report" and it was receiving very favorable reviews. More than 60,000 copies were distributed.

This success, though, did not necessarily translate into inner peace. Professionally, Mary was "on the top," but internally she knew "there was something wrong inside." Mary was in the midst of a failing marriage with an abusive and chemically dependent husband. She reflects, "He was an alcoholic, and I was becoming one." As Mary realized her success could not fill this inner void, she began to look in

other places. She received direction in her search from two unlikely sources: a graduate student and a dream.

For a woman trained to do research with some degree of attention paid to proper methodology and the value of controlled variables and replicability, Mary has demonstrated an uncommon reliance on her intuition to make major life decisions. In our first session together, she alluded to two different occasions when a dream played a pivotal role in her decision-making process. Mary views dreams as one of God's modes of communication: "I do have dreams every once in a while, and I really feel they are ways God speaks to me."

Around November 1991, in the midst of Mary's conflicting emotions surrounding her career joys and personal discouragements, she had her first significant dream. She was standing in an unending line of people all dressed in gray. This lemming-like string of people were not only dressed alike, but Mary states: "We were all very depressed."

With nervous laughter, Mary recounts for me how the line was filing past a table. The table, along with its occupants, was the only objects in color within this otherwise monochromatic dream. The table "was like the painting of Da Vinci depicting the 'Last Supper.'" Only, in this dream, the occupants of the table were "live." Unlike the painting, Jesus was not content to be at the table with his 12 disciples. Instead, "He was greeting the guests [the line of people] on the other side of the table."

When Mary finally arrived at Christ's side of the table, she "looked upon His face" and "just fell down." "I felt so awful. I fell down . . . and He put His hands on my shoulder and I started weeping in the dream. I was still weeping when I woke up, and I thought, 'Something has happened here.'"

Although the dream left an obvious impression on Mary, at the time she still had little idea what it meant. Even though she had been raised with some nominal religious instruction at home and in the local Methodist church, she "had no idea what Christianity was"; consequently, she could not place the significance of Jesus within her dream. Unsure what to do with the emotions and thoughts her dream had provoked, she looked to one of her graduate students to help fill in the gaps.

Now teaching at San Diego State and San Diego City College, John Rivera was a graduate student of Mary. He worked on a number of research projects with her including *Voices*. John's ethnic heritage includes both Mexican American and Native American roots, and, according to Mary's observations, he is "a very spiritual" person. Mary had long watched him carefully and found herself "attracted to his peace."

Initially, Mary had attributed John's "peace" to his Native American heritage and assumed that native religions were the source of his spirituality. At one point in their relationship, John had told Mary that if she "ever wanted to do anything with [her] spiritual life, he would help." Not long after her dream, Mary gave John a call.

He drove up the freeway from San Diego to meet Mary at a restaurant on the Pacific Coast halfway between his home and Los Angeles. "Why do you think you have to do something about your spiritual life now?" John's initial question surprised Mary. Her graphic answer startled her: "I have a black hole in my chest and something's wrong." John, whose spirituality originated in his Christianity and not Native American religions, gave Mary a simple but direct prescription for her inner ailment. He recommended that she begin reading the Bible: five Psalms and one chapter of Proverbs a day. If she wanted to read more, she could begin reading the New Testament as well.

Returning to Pomona, Mary began to follow John's instructions. She enjoyed reading Proverbs and the New Testament but struggled with the book of Psalms. The violent imagery in this poetic book was an affront to Mary's New Age sensibilities: she could not understand why David was "always calling [on] God to kill his enemies." She "just couldn't deal with" the incongruity of the Psalm's depiction of God as a vengeful despot and the New Testament's portrait of a loving Servant as seen through the life of Jesus. Nevertheless, she continued her daily readings.

Meanwhile, in January 1992, Mary had to take a trip out East in order to help her widowed mother move from Texas to North Carolina. On their final Sunday in this small, rural town, Mary's mom wanted to attend the local Methodist church. This request caught Mary off guard because she remembered her mother as the family member least interested in religious things.

They attended the Sunday morning worship service and found themselves seated near the back of this old, country church. Mary remembers little of the preacher's sermon, but she retains vivid recollections of what he said in the benediction. They were about to conclude the service with the ordinance of communion and the preacher called on anyone who desired to partake of the juice and bread to come down to the front of the sanctuary. All were free to participate, he said, "but you have to believe that Jesus Christ lived and died for your sins, and you have to want Him in your life."

Mary describes those simple words of invitation as the turning point in her spiritual journey, the impetus for her conversion to Christianity. She made her way down to the front. "I actually thought," Mary said, "that [even] if a tornado whips through this building, I'm going to get to the communion rail." When Mary got to the front in all of

her spiritual naivete, she made one simple request of God three successive times: "Please, come and get me. Please, come and get me. Please, come and get me."

Returning to California convinced of God's presence in her life, Mary continued to struggle with the direction of marriage. She began to pray repeatedly for God's guidance. Should she remain in the marriage, or should she leave? The reality of Mary's newly found religious identity began to emerge as God seemed to give her a clear answer through two events. First, Mary received what she thought to be another revelatory dream. Standing alone in the middle of a desert with nothing but sand surrounding her, Jesus suddenly appeared out of nowhere. He walked up to her, looked directly into her eyes, and said, "Don't look back."

At the same time, her husband's alcohol abuse and violent behavior only grew worse. One morning he woke up and, according to Mary, "he attacked me, just attacked me." Shocked and stunned out of her slumber, Mary did not know what to do. In the terror and pain of the moment, all her mind could cling to were the words of the twenty-third Psalm. Mary began to recite the verses out loud: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want . . ." As soon as the words left her lips, her husband's fists stopped their beating.

That agonizing experience not only convinced Mary to leave her husband, but it also revealed the very real existence and power of evil in this world. She began to understand what the psalmist, David, was doing when he called on God to destroy his enemies. David had been dealing with evil people who were undertaking evil deeds. They opposed God, and David was calling for divine retribution.

Reflecting on the senselessness of her husband's actions and the words of David, Mary says, "The scales dropped from [my] eyes . . . I saw that I had never resolved in my life the existence of evil." Her world and culture were not inherently good needing only minor corrections. Rather, at the core, her world, her culture, and yes, even her husband, were evil and therefore needed transformation. In fact, Mary took the pervasiveness of evil the final step. "That's when I saw. That's when I realized. And then, of course, you realize . . . [evil] is in you, too."

While all of this spiritual transformation was taking place in Mary's life, she also was preparing for a major shift at work. She had been working nonstop at Claremont for more than 10 years building the teacher education program and had never bothered to take a scheduled sabbatical. Finally, she was going to take a full year off from her professorial duties and rest. Her plan was to separate from her husband, move back to Austin for a year, and give herself an opportunity to continue her spiritual growth. John Rivera sent her two brochures he thought might help Mary in her spiritual development. One brochure advertised a week-long conference in Dallas with a man named Bill Gothard, who was an extremely conservative fundamentalist Christian minister who focused his teaching on the renewing of the mind through a better understanding of biblical principles. The second pamphlet promoted a charismatic, Catholic monastery located in New Mexico that hosted three-day retreats for "inner healing."

Both proved helpful to Mary's young faith. The monastery experience touched her soul, and the Gothard conference helped to "cleanse" her mind. Mary recounted for me the power of both. At the Catholic retreat, "every time the nuns sang songs that had the word 'soul' in them, I would start uncontrollably weeping." Mary would eventually

make many return trips to the monastery as well as attend eight or nine other Gothard conferences.

These experiences are only two examples of Mary's eclectic religious heritage since her conversion. Where most religious people point to the influence of one particular denomination or religious sect within their lives, Mary lists a host of spiritual influences. Furthermore, this variety of religious traditions has helped Mary appreciate the diversity of the Christian church. "God has sent me Catholics. He sent me charismatics. He sent me Pentecostals, everybody . . . And I began to appreciate what His Body [the Church] looks like." Mary attributes her ability to help students of all religious backgrounds to this diverse influence. "I see a lot of His Body in students that I work with who are Christian and who are struggling . . . from darkest, weirdest backgrounds to Christians who are Evangelical Catholic or Evangelical Protestants."

Even though Mary has been influenced theologically from such a wide array of sources, she would not characterize her own theological beliefs as "elective" but rather as "biblical." Rather than holding to a "mish-mash" of unrelated religious ideas, Mary is able to look at various parts of the Christian church (much like she looked at the varying approaches to educational theory) and take the best each has to offer. "I think I'm just a person who can . . .look at [a particular Christian denomination and] see the biblically based part and appreciate it . . . and then not get hung up on the other stuff they're doing." Mary is her own woman, basing her actions on her conscience. Ultimately, Mary stands on a "common ground" of theological non negotiables, including the foundational Christian belief in Jesus' divinity as well as faith that "He died for [our] sins."

Colleagues expressed to me a number of differing reactions to Mary's conversion. First, describing her new lifestyle requires a whole new vocabulary. Flamboyant, outrageous, and bawdy have been replaced by austere, simple, and solitary. The "party girl" has been supplanted by a type of woman usually found in a convent. As one colleague describes the transformation: "She behaves in many ways the way I would expect a nun to behave," including her plain attire, scarcity of makeup and jewelry, and even the manner in which she carries herself down the office hallway. Replacing her margarita glass with an ever-present bottle of water, Mary has not shown up at a party for years.

As I talked to one long-term faculty member at CGU, I sensed both a deep respect for Mary Poplin and a certain amount of confusion. He has known and observed Mary for almost 20 years and has always been amazed by the "great passion and commitment" she has brought to each of her intellectual pursuits. "Mary has always been a preacher of whatever her current intellectual interest is." The same colleague then broke down Mary's shifting professional interests into four separate phases: Mary "went from special education to feminist psychology to critical pedagogy, and now we are getting New Testament." She would "ardently pursue" the new topic with "everything" she had, including changing her bookshelves, altering her courses, and switching her patterns of behavior such as her use of sabbaticals.

He remains amazed at Mary's chamaeleon-like ability to refocus her vocational pursuits. "There are not that many faculty who change their intellectual commitments in 20 years . . . I haven't. I still preach the same six things I taught 20 years ago." And

because Mary has changed so often and so completely, this self-described "cynical" colleague wonders "what the next one will be."

Still, he cannot conclude the discussion about Mary without expressing his deep respect for her and her work. Even though her academic emphasis has been evolving, there have been "strong threads of continuity throughout her career. What doesn't change is her basic talent, her concern for students, her teaching skills, her commitment to students and this institution." Even though her colleagues are sometimes "confused by her" they continue to "respect her a lot."

Later, I asked Mary to respond to her colleague's observation that her embrace of Christianity was just another intellectual phase--one that may very well be soon replaced by another vocational passion. She readily agreed with the description of her former life as a series of intellectual stages: "I was just an idea wagging around."

In contrast, Mary vehemently disagrees with his doubts about her long-term commitment to her faith. "I've never stayed with anything this long." She concedes how someone viewing her life from the outside over the last 20 years might think this way. "I know externally it might look similar, but internally it wasn't similar at all." Mary, herself, even had doubts about how long her attachment to Christianity would last. But the years have eroded those doubts. Of all the theories and "isms" Mary Poplin has experienced and studied in her intellectual journey, she gives clear testimony to Christianity as the "most intellectually challenging" and the "most consistently stimulating intellectually as well as in every other way." For Mary, "there is no way to plumb the depths of Christianity."

By her own account, Mary has studied in detail behaviorism, constructivism, structuralism, and feminism. None of these intellectually challenging experiences has compared to her relationship to Christianity. "I would always get kind of bored with the [previous] theories." The difference came because Mary found that Christianity was more than just a theory, more than an intellectual exercise. Christianity is a relationship, and the unending challenge of her faith is something Mary is sure will "hold [her] interest for a lifetime."

She goes on to describe how God has "transformed [her] life." She realizes how desperate she was, and Mary's memories of that hopelessness without God have "radicalized" her into a new place in life "where it would be very difficult" for her ever to go back. "You do become another person," and Mary believes it is "almost impossible" to explain that experience to someone on the outside.

When Mary confesses to becoming "another person," she gives witness to her changing identity. Who she is today is different from who she was yesterday. On the other hand, what brings her fulfillment today, what makes her exceedingly glad has changed from what had previously brought her fulfillment. Mary's narrative gives clear testimony to this evolving sense of identity and self. Now, we must ask, can her new sense of identity find fulfillment in her vocational context of CGU? Will the work environment that attracted her in 1981 satisfy her longings of today? Can she adequately fulfill her new calling?

Being Protected; Feeling Watched

By locating the Claremont Colleges in a neighborhood with Harvard, Yale, and Columbia Avenues for street names, Claremont's founders have not hidden their lofty aspirations. James A. Blaidsell, founder of the schools, traveled from the east coast to Southern California in the early twentieth century because he believed the meeting of the East and West within the Claremont Colleges would offer "the best opportunity for a unique educational experience."

Through both their form and function, the seven institutions that comprise the Claremont Colleges have borrowed from the best higher education has to offer. Like Cambridge and Oxford, the seven form a collection of loosely affiliated schools located on contiguous campuses, while at the same time functioning as individual institutions with their own student body, faculty, governance system, curriculum emphasis, style, and institutional mission. With five distinguished undergraduate colleges (Pomona, Scripps, Claremont-McKinna, Harvey Mudd, and Pitzer), one institute (Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Science) and one graduate university (Claremont), these seven institutions serve more than 8,000 students with some 500 faculty.

CGU has been exclusively dedicated to graduate study since 1925. One of the few independent, private graduate institutions in America, CGU awards master's and doctoral degrees in 25 professional and academic disciplines, including the arts, education, organizational and behavioral sciences, politics and economics, the humanities, and management. Some of its more famous faculty include Peter Drucker and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Currently, the school has more than 2,000 graduate students, with some 84 full-time faculty.

Academic Context for Faculty Work

Some writers have been careful to emphasize the importance of a person's institutional context as she seeks to carry out her call. By reflecting on the work of Jaque Ellul (1972) and Mary Douglas (1986), Hansen (1995) foreshadows the often contrary relationship between how one carries out her vocation and the boundaries erected by the institution in which that work takes place. Both Ellul and Douglas have demonstrated an often adversarial relationship between the conservative nature of institutions and the creative impulses of a person possessing a strong sense of vocation. As Hansen summarizes, "The challenge teachers must address is how to balance their personal aims and judgment with the public obligations embodied in the life of their institution" (p. 140). Or, as Parker Palmer (1998) asks, does the "academic culture discourage us [as teachers] from living connected lives?" (p. 35).

Within the faculty narrative of Mary Poplin, the culture of Claremont has a definitive influence. Unlike the institutions Ellul and Douglas had in mind, CGU's liberal culture and strong view of academic freedom provide a helpful context for Mary to carry out her vocational aims. Yet, as we will see, this freedom does not necessarily equate an attitude of respect.

We Will Protect Her to the Death

The culture of academic freedom that permeates CGU makes it possible for Mary Poplin to explore her religious commitment in relation to her work in a depth and detail that probably would not take place at many other secular institutions. Mary is not naive

about the opportunity and freedom CGU's academic culture affords her: "I feel I'm in the best place I can be for what I'm called to be in terms of a secular university classroom."

Mary has described the school as "probably the furthest radical 'grad' program, by far, in the country . . . critical theory, radical multiculturalism . . .transsexual studies . . . all of that stuff you can study here." From the study of Wicca and the Isis religion in the Religion Department to the inclusion of a course on "Immigrants and Lesbianism" in the school of education, Claremont provides a context that values the freedom of its professors to teach courses some might consider on the edge of the traditional curriculum.

No curriculum committee exists at the school, and according to one faculty member, "We have total freedom over what we teach." The same professor lays out the academic philosophy of Claremont's administration: Hire the best faculty you can find, let them teach what they want to teach, and then allow the students to vote with their feet. This complete autonomy has become a point of pride at Claremont and is the reason a colleague of Mary's can defend her right to teach Christianity in the classroom with this vow: "We will protect her to the death."

Other faculty's viewpoints are protected as well. The same professor who vowed to protect Mary's academic freedom also mentioned another professor in the department of education whom he labeled as a "radical" Buddhist, Marxist, lesbian psychotherapist. "It is not as though Mary is the only person who has a strong philosophical point of view and is espousing it publically in her classes and work." Or, as one student poignantly suggested, "There are a number of Evangelicals on campus; they just don't happen to [all] be Christian."

As an institution, Claremont has strong respect for diversity. This pervasive value both helps and hinders Mary's distinctly religious mission. She is given the forum to teach and propagate her views. Yet, there are many on campus who end up being uncomfortable with what Mary communicates into her open microphone.

One faculty member described for me a recent talk Mary gave at the Claremont Reading Conference, the university's annual conference on reading for area school teachers and other guests. Mary's topic, unsurprisingly, was on a Christian approach to teaching. This colleague expressed to me intense discomfort with what he referred to as Mary's "sermon." He mentioned her open Bible on the podium and her continual reference to it as the text for her "sermon." Because of his great respect for diversity, he did not like Mary's "being so explicitly Christian." "I'm uncomfortable when anyone comes in and promotes a particular point of view such as a religious point of view or a political point of view or a racial point of view" as the view.

Freedom Without Respect

It seemed like a natural move for Mary to migrate to CGU in the early 1980s when she sought to define her vocational identity and theoretical approach on the fringes of the established academic culture. With her current religious convictions, Mary once again finds herself outside the mainstream of academe, and she still relies on Claremont's reputation for radicalism to give her the freedom to research, write, and teach about issues other places might not. She clearly understands how "academic freedom is at the top of the value structure here."

Yet, although Mary may feel protected by the school's commitment to academic freedom and diversity, this "covering" does not equal respect. As Mary states with utter conviction, "You could be anything on the university campus and it would be better than being a Christian, anything in the world, you name it."

I asked Mary for an example of this perceived disrespect, and she cited her exclusion from the Women's Studies program at CGU. Not only has she not been asked to teach in this program, but also her courses are not even included on the recommended course list. Ironically, Mary was the first woman hired at Claremont to a full-time, tenure-track position. To add further intrigue, the Women's Studies program is closely linked to the Religion Department. Yet, Mary's courses like "The Still Small Voice: Readings in Spirituality and Education" and "Implications of Judeo-Christian Principles and Practices for Educators in a Diverse Society," which make a direct link among theory, education, and religion, are still excluded from the authorized list.

Mary traces this tension between her and the program to a panel discussion held at a Borders Bookstore in which she once participated along with the woman who heads up the Women's Studies program. The panel was made up of various women who possessed some type of expertise on feminism and spirituality. Mary was invited because of her work with Mother Theresa.

The evening's discussion was arranged so that each participant on the small panel would respond to questions from the audience. At one point in the evening, the subject turned to matriarchal religions. As this issue was close to the heart of the Women's Studies director (who also happens to "chair" the Religion Department), she used the opportunity to recommend some books she herself had written on the topic.

Immediately to her left sat Mary; therefore, Mary was the next person to respond. Mary recollects the evening: "And I said, 'Well, I had gotten into those things in my past, but that, really and truly, I really needed forgiveness for my sins. And, I never found anybody but one person in the world who ever died for me. And it wasn't a woman.'" Mary reports that since that evening, the director "has hardly ever spoken to me."

Rhetorical Tensions

Mary has found that using religious rhetoric can be a precarious proposition within the secular academy. She illustrates this through two examples. First, she explains how many people are much more at ease with calling someone "spiritual" than with referring to them as "religious."

In one of Mary's qualitative research classes, a Christian student was presenting her dissertation research on handicapped children and their parents. In the midst of her presentation, she identified the parents of a particular child as "religious." Right away, another student whom Mary describes as "way out there" corrected the former student by saying, "You mean [the parents] were spiritual." Mary listened to this exchange and recognized the dynamic taking place. "I knew immediately what that was. I knew that spirit because it had been me."

From Mary's previous personal experience, she had found that people who refer to themselves as "spiritual" are often those who have no real connection to a particular religious faith but consider themselves to have a deep personal interest in helping humanity. They usually do not view God as some relational Being but rather see Him as a type of energy or divine Love. From Mary's rhetorical framework, to be "religious"

means that a person is actively involved in an organized religion. That is what the Christian student meant when she described these parents as religious.

The objecting student wondered if it was "wise" to use a descriptor like "religious." Mary answered forcefully, "We're researchers number one, and it's my feeling that you should always be as accurate as you can in describing what you found. And it was less accurate for [the Christian student] to say her population was spiritual than for her to say her population was religious."

The use of the name Jesus is another example Mary cited in regard to the use of religious rhetoric on the secular campus. She describes how difficult it was for her when she first became a Christian to use the name Jesus in the classroom. "It was easy for me to talk about God and hard for me to use the name Jesus." And Mary believes the same is true with people in the academy who call themselves spiritual rather than religious. "Buddhists don't have any trouble talking about God even if they don't believe in Him." But with Jesus, "people get really nervous."

Now that Mary is more comfortable with using strongly religious rhetoric in pluralistic settings such as the classroom or conferences, she looks for avenues to discuss God, Jesus, and scripture. She has found her best entry point to be her experiences with Mother Theresa. "The main place I get away with using scripture is to use Mother Theresa because every secular humanist accepts her." And the name of Jesus will often come up within that context because "that's all [Mother Theresa] ever talked about."

Vulnerable or Misunderstood?

It is apparent, at least from Mary's vantage point, that her colleagues at CGU do not know how to respond to the "new" Mary and her religious approach to work. From

the outside looking in, the reaction is completely understandable. In the space of 20 years, Mary has done a 180-degree turn in her career and the manner in which she conducts her life. Before 1992, Mary spent all her energies and time to build up the teacher education program at Claremont. She was its major architect and its most passionate supporter. She believed that approach to education was the answer to America's problems in schooling. She brought in nationally known speakers to spread the "gospel" of critical theory and feminist pedagogy. She recruited the students and motivated them to take the "word" to the streets.

Mary's colleagues and bosses at the school understood where she was coming from then, even if they all did not necessarily agree with all of her theoretical, intellectual, and political commitments. They knew what she was talking about and could appreciate her passion. They had known, seen, or read other scholars like Mary in other institutions of higher learning or at national conferences. They were familiar with other authors who shared Mary's values. They had a frame of reference for Mary Poplin: radical educator.

Many of these same people have no frame of reference for Mary Poplin: radical Christian educator. Somehow, the gospel according to Paulo Freire is much more accessible to the average educator than the gospel according to Mother Theresa. Discussing school reform in terms of power and the majority's domination of the underprivileged rolls off the tongue much easier for some secular education faculty than describing the same issues as a "sin problem."

Since 1992, Mary and her colleagues can still agree on the symptoms of the problem when it comes to schooling and education. All are able to see the inherent inequalities and the vast gulf between the classes. Where the confusion arises is when

Mary begins to describe the disease in spiritual terms--when she describes prejudice and oppression as a result of humanity's refusal to follow the instructions of God. As a result, where the disagreement ensues is when part of Mary's anecdote includes spiritual healing or the need for men and women to fix the problem through a closer connection to God.

It is no wonder Mary describes her relationship with colleagues in terms of bemused detachment and silent stares. "I feel watched." She knows many of her more "radical" colleagues advise their students not to take her classes and to keep their distance. In faculty meetings, people will sometimes "make nasty little comments" about "right-wing Christians," and then all eyes turn to Mary. Whenever Mary brings up spiritual issues or mentions God as a viable solution, "people will gripe and say, 'You know her.'"

One student reported to me that some of Mary's colleagues, especially those who knew her well before 1992, have felt "abandoned" by Mary after her conversion to Christianity. They have felt "personally hurt" because Mary left her former ideologies which they shared. Rightly or wrongly, these colleagues believe Mary has abandoned them as well.

At one point in her career, Mary was often used by the administration to connect with donors who would come to campus. She had a reputation for being able to bring in the money. Now, she never receives those requests to meet with potential donors. "I'm not ever paraded out there. I used to be all the time." From Mary's perspective, the administration's current policy is "to keep [her] in the closet." When asked to explain the administration's response to her dream of an alternative education program based on Christian principles, Mary simply states, "Silence is a good way to describe it."

Mary does not just feel watched, but she also feels "vulnerable" to possible punitive action. She has heard through the "grapevine" of students who have gone to other faculty and even to the president of the institution complaining about her blatant teaching of Christianity in the classroom. Although she heard no negative reports from her last five year post-tenure review, Mary attributes this more to her chair's non-confrontive leadership style than to her own clean slate. A colleague on the committee had told Mary of a "troubling" letter sent to the committee from a former student expressing dissent with Mary's decidedly religious approach.

It is no stretch to observe that Mary has received mixed signals from her institution regarding her vocational choices the last eight years. Mary's boldness, together with Claremont's liberal view of the curriculum, provides her the opportunity to be true to her mission as a Christian professor. Yet, Mary seems to have a nagging suspicion that her colleagues' disapproval of her message will some day override the protection of her right to teach anything she chooses.

An Engaged Apologetic

Located in the lower bowels of Harper Hall, Mary Poplin's classroom can be found within a maze of hallways and rooms the graduate students knowingly refer to as "the catacombs." As the main classroom used by Mary in a building solely dedicated to the Center for Educational Studies within CGU, this basement room has been referred to by Mary as the "cornerstone" of Harper Hall. The Christian heritage of these labels is not lost on Mary or her students.

On these small, nondescript institutional beige walls hang three long sections of white board. I am not surprised to find the tables and chairs arranged as one large rectangle rather than the more traditional parallel lines of a lecture hall since the room serves as a classroom for small groups of graduate students whose focus is education and teaching. The arrangement encourages discussion and active intellectual interchange rather than a passive acceptance of the authoritative professor. The room's aesthetics match the pedagogical assumptions present--at least in Mary's class.

With only three small windows looking out and up at the outside world, this basement room could be a classroom in any graduate school in America. The only reminder that I am in Southern California is the sign placed above the doorway instructing me what to do in case of an earthquake: "If there is an earthquake . . . duck, cover, and hold on."

Today's class is part of a course entitled "Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding: Similarities and Differences Between Dominant World Views in the Academy and Schools Since the Enlightenment and Judeo-Christianity." Described in the catalogue as a course designed to help students analyze particular world views since the Enlightenment, including existentialism, modernism, humanism, structuralism, and postmodernism, the course is taught with Judeo-Christianity as the primary lens used to critique the above philosophies. Held in the first summer school session at CGU for six hours every Saturday for six weeks, the course is open to any student from any discipline as long as he or she has "a working knowledge of biblical Judeo-Christianity."

When Mary arrives in the room 10 minutes before class begins, four students are present. One student has already filled the whiteboard directly across from the entrance

to the room with dates and names, including information on the birth and history of Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Dostoevsky, as well as a brief summary of existentialism in anticipation of his presentation later in the class.

Mary brings with her a file box full of books and articles, her bottle of water, and a caring visage. She greets each student warmly and immediately inquires about one of the student's health, asking about her prescribed medication for allergies. Not satisfied with the current course of medical action, Mary promises to give the student some of her own allergy medication after break. The student takes out her purse to reimburse Mary for the anticipated medication, but Mary politely and firmly declines: "Don't worry about it."

These types of personal exchanges continue throughout the prelude to class as Mary demonstrates her keen interest in and large awareness of her students' lives outside of the classroom context. Her actions and words with these students only reinforce one student's description of Mary's caring approach as "compassionate," "welcoming," and "embracing." Another student has labeled Mary a "student-centered professor."

Attired in a long, flowing red dress with a white sweater, Mary has her hair pulled back in her trademark bun. Wearing little makeup and only the slightest hint of red lipstick, Mary's only trace of worldly connection is her string of pearls and matching earrings. Tall, with extended features, Mary has long, slender fingers which are only accentuated by their constant use as she communicates as much with her hands as she does her mouth. As Mary continues her pre-class patter with individual students, others slowly file in, taking their place around the rectangle. Mary has staked out a position in

the middle table on the right side of the room. The dozen or so students have filled in the other three sides, men on one half and women on the other.

In front of the students lie open notebooks, legal pads, pens, and various copies of the Bible. The incongruity of students bringing Bibles to class at a secular institution like CGU is matched only by the three books Mary has prominently placed on her table: a *Spirit Filled New King James Bible*, a *Dictionary of Philosophy*, and a newly arrived copy of the *Humanist Manifesto 2000.*

Informally dressed in typical California style of shorts and sandals, the students range in age from the mid-twenties to early fifties, with most of them being in their early thirties. All are educational practitioners of some sort, including middle school teachers, college instructors, and a teacher at a school for delinquent adolescents. Monolithic in occupation, the group does possess a diverse makeup in gender and ethnicity, including Asians and African-Americans.

Mary begins the class session with a straightforward question: "How is the course going for you, and where would you like it to go?" Sensing Mary's "risk-taking" authenticity in her question, the class responds quickly and freely. Although all feedback is uniformly positive, Mary listens intently to each answer, sometimes with a follow-up question and other times with a knowing nod and a murmur of ascent.

Listening to these exchanges, I am reminded of one student's description of Mary's expert listening skills: "I don't think I have met a better listener . . . She is an incredible listener, which testifies to her authenticity." Such listening skills have served well this woman devoted to a career of participatory research. Good research and understanding are as much about listening as they are about asking.

Having given the students an opportunity to respond, Mary shares her own thoughts and feelings about the direction of the course. Her central concern expressed to the class is a worry brought up a couple of times in our conversations the previous two days. Mary believes that a preoccupation with the intellectual principles behind religion, culture, and world view can potentially lead to a neglect of the spiritual side of life. She fears the rational and the logical could drown out the intuitive and the spiritual. Although our approach to education, religion, and life is not irrational, it must be more than rational. In light of the concern, Mary tells her students that she is considering airing a video at the end of class that will "show us out" of that temptation.

The next portion of the class time is given over to a student presentation. One student uses his hour long lecture to give his classmates a rudimentary understanding of existentialism, including its proponents, historical development, and essential philosophical assumptions. He begins with a straightforward question: "What is our basic purpose in life?" Sprinkled throughout the student responses are references to God, the Bible, and even the Westminster catechism. The answers sounded to me more like seminary responses than they did answers given in a graduate course on education. Mary observed from a detached position the presentation and the discussion that resulted. Preferring to allow the students room to figure things out on their own, she would speak up only when asked a direct question.

When she did address the class after the student was finished, Mary spoke to them as if they were all Christian educators as she motivated and challenged them to become more sophisticated in their own arguments with what Mary referred to as an increasingly godless culture. The task of the Christian apologist, according to Mary, is to find the

holes within the non-Christian philosophy and then formulate the questions to ask in order to "awaken them to their errors." She labeled this central task as an "engaged apologetic."

To perform the task, Mary challenged her students to work harder and study deeper. "We have to know the issues of critical theory better than [critical theorists] know them." This includes knowing the "holes" as well as what is true about the theory. Although a secular, educational theory like critical theory has been able to document and describe the misuse of power within America's schools and the domination of the disadvantaged, these same theories, in Mary's opinion, fall short in proposing adequate solutions. This is where an engaged Christian apologist/educator could stand in the gap and offer alternative answers. Mary's enthusiasm was evident as the class began to sound more and more like a revival meeting: "We've got work to do . . . . Isn't it exciting? . . . . You're not nodding enough."

Mary uses this teachable moment to challenge her students to become more knowledgeable about philosophy in general. Noting how the field of education has historically followed the lead of psychology, Mary bemoans how both education and psychology have separated themselves from the discipline of philosophy. According to Mary, as they both have left the deep questions of philosophy and followed the methodologies of the social sciences, they "have lost the ability to ask questions about the meaning of life."

Those who study and practice education in today's academy need to take it upon themselves to be educated in philosophy and the philosophical assumptions of the theories currently in vogue. Agreeing with the postmodernists that knowledge and power

are related and that no theory of knowledge is neutral, Mary calls on the class to help people inside and outside of education to analyze their unexamined assumptions.

Interjecting her own biography into the discussion, Mary shares a little of her own life story and how her pre-conversion life experience strategically prepared her for doing battle with current educational theory. "I sort of know what they think because I was one of them." Or, as she once confessed to me, "I've met the enemy and it's me." This story naturally extends to her dramatic conversion narrative which apparently makes a deep impression on some of the students.

In light of Mary's intensely personal confession, one of the female students speaks up and says "it would be a good idea" if each student shared his or her own conversion story. Recognizing the potential for awkwardness, Mary immediately qualifies the request: "It could be why you are or are not a Christian," and "anyone who doesn't want to share doesn't have to." To my surprise, each student around the table takes his or her turn to explain how he or she was converted. I cannot help but wonder what the class environment would have been like if the student who describes herself as an "agnostic Jew" had been in class that day.

Although the student reaction may have been tempered, I do not think I would see much difference in the way Mary conducts the class. She would be just as open about her Christian views with a class full of Christian students as she would a room of nonreligious students or students of other religious persuasions. First, her experience as a qualitative researcher has taught her to be transparent concerning her own theoretical dispositions. To hide them would be poor scholarship. Second, Mary believes that, in order to teach "truth," she must teach Christianity. "I just say what is on my mind" within

the classroom, she avows. According to Mary, there is no such thing as "neutrality" in the classroom as all proponents of respective theories (religious or secular) advocate their views in some way. Finally, as one called to teach in a secular context, Mary believes her role as a professor is to challenge students to examine their own theoretical positions and discover any weaknesses in their own thinking. Mary is aggressive intellectually in her pedagogical strategy, yet she counters that aggressiveness with a caring demeanor that seems to soften any propensity to offend those students who do not share her Christian presuppositions.

Nearing the middle of the six-hour class, the students and Mary take an hour-long break for a meal. They all travel to a restaurant in downtown Pomona called Walter's, Mary's favorite hangout. Serving as Mary's dining room and office, Walter's provides a casual context outside of the university where she can make a personal connection with her students. Whereas many academics go off campus to find themselves a corner to hide out from the world in order to think and write, Mary uses her "special place" for more intimate personal connections with her students. The more time I spend with Mary, the more I am convinced that, even though she still undertakes research and writing projects, Mary's most cherished academic work is done one-on-one within the lives of her students.

For more than an hour, the class sits on Walter's open-air veranda enjoying food, beverages, conversation, and laughter. When the main course finally arrives, one of the students says the blessing. Observing all of this, I begin to wonder if it is here, away from the classroom and office, where the essence of Mary's vocation is conducted. It is in this informal setting where her spirit is able to make a direct connection to the spirit of her

students. This is where her listening ear, unwavering gaze, and reflective questions can do their best work. Maybe the classroom and office are simply preludes to what happens on this veranda. They till the ground and prepare the soil for what Mary believes to be her life-changing message and favorite academic roles: Mary, "The Evangelist" and Mary, "The Encourager."

Sufficiently filled with food and gab, the students and Mary return to campus for the final section of the day's class. Because of the fatigue factor involved in a six hour class session, Mary will often use a video during the final hour that is relevant to the day's discussion. She often waits until break time to choose the day's selection. Oh she has a few ideas, but she wants to sense the "flow" of the classroom discussion first. Mary also waits on what she calls the "the leading of the Spirit" in order to use this visual medium to reinforce the message of the day.

Mary's pedagogical strategy and style are influenced by both her mystical sensibility and her caring ethic. Her approach to teaching includes copious preparation and continual sensitivity to the "Spirit's leading." A former student and co-teacher suggests that Mary "gears [her] teaching to who is taking the course rather than the subject" being taught. With an approach to the classroom that can best be described as "intuitive," Mary will change a lesson plan at the last minute depending on the mood and reaction of the students.

She takes to class a "ton of material" including articles, books, and videos. Yet, she is honest in admitting that she enters the classroom not totally knowing "where the class is going to go." Mary silently prays through a given class period; consequently, she has what one student calls "amazing spiritual feelers" that enable Mary to say the right

thing at the right time. Another former student, who is himself a college professor describes Mary's educational approach as "different than any prof I have ever had."

Today, Mary "is led" to follow up on a theme from the beginning of class. She is troubled that many American Christian intellectuals focus almost entirely on the mind without considering the spirit. Although Mary is careful to caution against a false dichotomy--Christianity is about both the intellectual and the spiritual - she is increasingly sensitive to those Christians who so emphasize the development of the mind that they neglect the spirit.

Giving all of us a hint of the personal nature of this struggle, Mary reflects on the only direct statement made to her by Mother Theresa when she was in Calcutta. Mary had often seen Mother Theresa, exchanged greetings with her during her two months in India but had never talked with her. One morning, after Mary ran an errand for one of the Sisters at the ministry, she sat on a bench outside of the main office. While Mary sat there, Mother Theresa suddenly walked out the front door, which was only a piece of cloth. She came directly over to Mary, looked her "straight in the eye," and began shaking her finger at Mary "like [she had] done something wrong." Because Mother Theresa was extremely small of stature, her eye level while standing was about the same as Mary's seated. She gave Mary one simple command: "You fall in love with Jesus more every day."

As a faculty person who had long been dependent on her mind, Mary took this as a sign from God Himself. Mary asked the class, "Have you ever had somebody tell you something and every cell in your body comes to attention?" Mary felt Mother Theresa's words were directly from the Holy Spirit. "I immediately knew that this was my

problem--that I'm an intellectual. I like to do Christianity intellectually, and the real issue is loving Jesus." For Mary, Mother Theresa had "read that in [Mary's] spirit," and those words still hound Mary today and consequently her choice of videos.

The video was produced by a religious organization seeking to publicize the transformation of various third-world communities through religious revival. Looking at four different towns located throughout the world, the film's narrator paints a sharp black and white contrast between the villages' conditions before and after a religious awakening. Pointing to various markers like reduced crime rates, closed-down saloons, and increased agricultural production, the producers unabashedly claim spiritual changes as the source for this radical transformation. Not much consideration is given to possible conflicting variables.

Class discussion following the presentation is not spent debating the veracity or methodology of the report. Rather, Mary engages the students in an exercise drawing parallels between third-world communities in the video and first-world locales such as Southern California. Do they know of any such instances of transformation taking place locally? Some students, as well as Mary, answer the question affirmatively with illustrations from their own personal experience.

Mary concludes the discussion and the day's class with a renewed challenge to bring the same type of spiritual renewal to the university culture. She reinforces the day's two major themes. First, students need to work hard intellectually to know the prevailing theories and philosophies better than the theorists themselves in order to sift the valid from the invalid and to be ready to offer alternative solutions when possible. Second, the spirit must not be sacrificed for the mind. For the Christian scholar, loving Jesus is to be

done with all one's mind and all one's soul. There is no dichotomy. To quote one of Mary's favorite maxims: "You cannot do Christianity only in your head, and you can't do it without your head."

Describing Mary's Integrative Bridge

Living in two worlds that seemingly hold differing world-view perspectives, Mary Poplin struggles to erect some type of vocational bridge between them. She related to me her anguish over her own motivation in undertaking such a daunting task: "Some days you just go home and you feel dirty." She adds with a chuckle, "You feel like you've heard so much humanistic psychology and rationalization and dark stuff that you just need a shower or something." Surprised as I was by the intensity of Mary's metaphor, the more I listed to her contrast her current vocational call with her past pursuits, the more I realized her harsh words captured the intensity of Mary's inner beliefs.

Observing Mary Poplin at work in the classroom, I begin to see the architectural design behind her vocational bridge. First, Mary's interface between her religious identity and her work at Claremont consists of two lanes, one intellectual and the other interpersonal. Intellectually, Mary's faith has affected her use of theory in her research and the classroom. Interpersonally, her spirituality has made a decided imprint upon the way she relates to people. Applying her Christianity to her academic work has changed Mary's approach to educational theory as well as had a direct effect on her one-on-one relationships with students and colleagues.

Describing her twin-spanned approach as a unified edifice, Mary is careful to make a strong connection between her relational ministry and her intellectual mission. "It

is a spiritual motivation and also an intellectual drive." God has not called Mary to do her academic work "just in my head." No wonder she has such a thriving student ministry. "He sends me people who are like I was and I know its not an accident."

Definitely not a one-way street, Mary's bridge not only has two integrative lanes, but the traffic across the bridge goes in both directions. Her task as a religious scholar is not just to bring Christian thought to bear on the academy but also to apply the best thinking of the academic world to the Church. For example, Mary believes that critical theory can teach the American church much about issues of race and poverty. Too often, the "body of Christ" separates itself into black, white, and brown without growing together as a unified whole.

Before fleshing out Mary's integrative and holistic strategy in the following pages, I first need to describe its foundation, which originates in her sense of call. Having then articulated the enactment of Mary's call, I would be remiss if I did not end the discussion without reflecting on the influence of Mother Theresa on Mary's own approach to her vocation and her life. If we cannot grasp the essence of Mother Theresa's sense of vocation, we cannot begin to understand Mary Poplin's.

The Call

Historically, vocation has been closely connected to the idea of "call" or the "awakening" (Hansen, 1995, p. 40) of one's vocational sense. Also described by Hansen as a "magnetic pull" (p. 1), one's call impels a scholar toward a particular type of work. Describing a "call" as more than a choice amongst competing job opportunities, Emmett reports that a "called" person believes not only that she should do a particular type of

work but also that she must do it. At some point in their lives, people who have a strong sense of call have followed the advice given by Christian Education professor Howard Hendricks: "You can do many things--find out the one thing you MUST do" (personal correspondence).

The literature consistently depicts a call that originates both internally and externally to the person. "The sense of being impelled to act from within is coterminous with a sense of being called by something without" (Hansen, 1995, p. 6). Carrying a whiff of the mystical, Hansen explanation suggests a person "may feel pressure by a persistent whisper that seems to say 'try teaching'" (p. 125).

Yet, this inner pull is socially rooted. Outside influences like friends, mentors, and even the professional practice itself become part of the calling force. "The practice is the 'caller,' inviting the person to meet its obligations" (Hansen, 1995, p. 124). More specific to the academic, Palmer reminisces on the professor's choice of discipline: "We did not merely find a subject to teach--the subject also found us" (p. 25). Acknowledging the emerging nature of the call, Hansen readily admits one's vocation usually "develops over time" (p. xi) and relates how most careers associated with vocation (medicine, law, clergy, education) usually involve a good amount of time preparing for the profession.

We would be wrong to emphasize the passive side of one's "call" at the expense of a teacher's active participation in the role. Referred to in the literature as personal agency, professionals with a strong sense of vocation and call actively inhabit their roles by giving them "a distinctive personal stamp" (Hansen, 1995, p. 116). With a strong belief and confidence that they have something to offer because they have been called to

their vocation, these professionals actively shape their work and world rather than being shaped by them.

Relying on the descriptor "architect," Hansen explains, "teachers conduct themselves as architects of their learning environments rather than as passive functionaries carrying out the dictates of others" (p. 12). Self-actualized people with a strong sense of call and vocation are not so dependent on or influenced by peer pressure but become their own final critics. Emmet (1958) connects the notion of personal agency to the idea of creativity as she correlates "call" to professionals "who work in original kinds of ways" (p. 6).

Still, these professionals are not some robotons or super heroes who live without doubts, fears, or uncertainties. For them, as with anyone, "doubt and commitment go hand in hand" (Hansen, 1995, p. 11). Rather, "their posture means they will have to deal with, rather than sidestep, the problems and predicaments that accompany serious attempts to teach" (p. 120). They are able to respond to the surprises of life and work with a determined flexibility. As Hansen writes, a vocational response to life's circumstances becomes "not so much ideological [as] temperamental" (p. 12).

There is no doubt in Mary Poplin's mind that her work at Claremont comes from a "sense of call." In fact, a primary way she contrasts her work before and after her conversion to Christianity is to explain that profound sense of call on her life: She believes she is where she is today because this is where God wants her to be. Before 1992, Mary considered her academic career "an accident." As an elementary teacher she had gone on to get her master's degree and, while there, "ended up" in a Ph.D. program because some professor encouraged her to stay. Today, she sees nothing as an accident.

Her perspective on work is not "what are you doing" but rather "what is God calling you to do?" As Mary answers that primary question in her vocational life, she has focused on two integrative avenue, one intellectual and the other relational.

Intellectual Bridge

Mary's two-lane bridge includes her approach to educational theory. As mentioned above, Mary's educational biography reveals a woman on the "cutting edge" of educational theory throughout the last 20 years. She rejected behaviorism for critical theory, constructivism, and feminist theory and traded in quantitative methods for participatory research. As Mary describes her past use of theory, "I would find a new theory, kind of before other people would find it . . . and I'd try to get it into education."

Post-conversion, Mary continues to teach critical theory and feminist pedagogy, but she does it "in a little bit more healthy way." Recounting her struggles with educational theory and her desire to discover what was happening inside American schools, Mary reflects on a lessening reliance on postmodern theory and increasing doubts about its ability to fulfill her expectations. "Inside me, I'd find [critical theory] was a lot weaker than I thought it was and . . . there were a lot of questions that were still unanswered, and it wasn't going to go exactly where I thought it would go."

Later in our conversation, Mary picks up on this destination theme with her critique of critical theory: "It just doesn't go anywhere"(even though she spent years as a proponent of critical theory and like ideas). She explains, "Critical theory is probably one of the best natural explanations of inequality and poverty and racism that there is. There's just no solution there." When Mary uses the descriptor "natural," she is referring

to the theory of "naturalism" and its proponents' convictions that natural laws are sufficient to account for all phenomena.

It is here that Mary's newfound theological understandings of evil and sin begin to influence her view of educational theories. In her thinking, solutions are faulty because the critical theorists fail to recognize the power of evil in the world and humanity's inability to fix these problems they themselves have created. Critical theory, according to Mary, offers "no solutions" because it is at best just a "natural" solution; we live in something more than a "natural," materialistic world. Mary goes on to comment on the anger she has seen in so much of the work in critical theory and attributes that to a fundamental lack of hope in critical theorists' "natural" approach to what is ultimately a supernatural problem.

Mary has consciously chosen to teach Christianity in her classroom, both implicitly and explicitly. She believes that "if I'm going to teach the truth, I have to teach something about Christianity." As she once told me, "A Christian view can complete these [educational] theories in ways they can never [be completed] by themselves."

Mary's faith provides her with an alternative as she seeks to motive her Christian students to take the disciplines of the spiritual life into their work. Believing only a supernatural answer will change the fundamental problems of our schools, Mary urges the Christian teachers who take her classes to apply scripture, prayer, and fasting to their lives as teachers. As they seek to teach students with great needs, interact with colleagues under tremendous stress, and support parents with little means, these teachers need to seek God's guidance first. This strategy will supply them a difference-making approach to education.

Mary still carries an intellectual allegiance, however, to critical theory because she believes it is the secular theory on campus closest to the truth. "If you're talking about 'natural' powers, they have the best explanations of what's going on." Critical theorists have the "most accurate, 'natural' interpretation" of the power struggle taking place in American culture. Mary agrees with their description of American society through the lens of power. Historically, the dominant class has oppressed the lower class in order to achieve more power. "There's a lot of truth to that."

Even with these basic misgivings, Mary still makes qualified use of the theories in her classroom and research. For example, she teaches what she refers to as "critical feminist pedagogy" by using Carol Gilligan's work to demonstrate the different "voices" genders use within education. Highlighting these differences, Mary stresses to her students the need for society "to value these differences."

Mary also makes use of individual pieces of qualitative research that value the opinions and viewpoints of all and not just those in positions of power. Citing Lisa Delpit's (1995) *Other People's Children* as one example, Mary wants to impress on her students that helpful critical research does not have to place the values of the researcher on the people being studied.

One major objection Mary has with the current practice of critical theory is what she believes to be its selective procedure. "What I find is that critical theorists don't ask everybody because the poor don't [always] think like the critical theorists." Mary has found that, sometimes, critical theorists will transpose their own political agendas directly onto their research subjects. For example, she thinks they often downplay the religiosity

of African-Americans in order to emphasize a perceived revolutionary stance already adopted by the researcher.

Mary is concerned that so much of educational theory wants to "bracket out" people's faith in its research. She points to two noteworthy examples: Marie Montessori and Martin Luther King, Jr. Both had strong religious faith, yet many who study their lives and work focus on variables like intellectual principles, psychological explanations, and political causations. For Mary, as a conscientious researcher and as a Christian, no scholar can understand Montessori or King without a thorough appreciation of their faith. "The problem that we have as academics is that we don't understand . . . that faith has an intellectual basis."

Although Mary freely adopts and adapts the authorized educational theory of much of today's academy, she still has serious reservations about the epistemological assumptions undergirding these theories, as well as a pronounced hesitation in following the findings of said research to its ultimate conclusions. "There is no there, there." With this cryptic phrase Mary makes a comment on what she believes to be postmodern theory's shallow epistemological foundation. Often, the postmodern assumptions that undergird qualitative research assume "we're [just] constructing [our own] meaning." Mary is not bashful to disagree. While she does tell her students that "we do construct our own meanings," she is equally forceful in holding on to the idea of absolute truth apart from the knower. "I'll say . . . if there isn't any [absolute] truth, why are you in graduate school? What are you looking for if you don't think there's something you can find that's true?"

Mary models for her students and then attempts to motivate them to bring their Christianity and scholarship together as they explore their discipline in a Christian way. As one student has observed about Mary, "It's not a question of being an outstanding scholar or being an outstanding Christian." This same student confessed, "I used to feel like a schizophrenic," but Mary challenged her to combine her spirituality with her teaching profession and therefore to "glorify God in everything [she] does."

Relational Bridge

"Lord, get this women out of my office." One would not expect this kind of prayer from a woman like Mary Poplin, a professor motivated to reach out to students of all persuasions. But that is exactly what Mary thought when visited by a student from the Women's Studies Program at Claremont. Even though this female graduate student was not an advisee or student of Mary's, she had heard of Mary's skills in participatory research and needed help doing a particular survey in her dissertation research. The student explained to Mary, "I'm doing my research on my coven." This woman sitting in Mary's office then identified herself as a "witch."

It was at this point in the conversation when Mary prayed to be spared this encounter. God did not answer Mary's request in quite the way she expected. It was as if, according to Mary, the Lord told her to "Treat [this student] like I would [treat her]." So Mary continued to ask questions about the woman's research. Immediately, Mary recognized many of the literature sources the student was using in her project--sources about white witchcraft. In an earlier academic life, Mary used to teach courses on the history of feminism and would require readings in feminist theology and the worship of

women deities. These were the very same writings the student was reading. Mary's past had prepared her to enter the conversation and her present spiritual motivation was keeping Mary from avoiding it.

During the initial discussion, the student noticed the screen saver on Mary's computer: "FAITH." She asked Mary about it, and Mary proceeded to share her own spiritual journey. Identifying with the student's spiritual hunger, Mary explained her own search for spiritual truth and how roughly seven years before, she had done "what [she] never thought [she] would ever do" and "became a Christian."

Now, it was time for the student to feel intimidated by the conversation. Mary recounts how "you could just see terror strike" the woman because she had shared with Mary intimate details of the coven, including the name of the high priestess. Yet, she stayed for another half hour as Mary continued to ask her questions about her spiritual needs. This would not be the last conversation between Mary and this particular graduate student, and as Mary reflects today on the incident, "I know [God] didn't send her to me just to help her with her survey."

Every person I interviewed about Mary Poplin, including colleagues and students, painted a portrait of a woman who loves people and has an uncanny ability to forge a friendship with anyone and everyone. As one student offered, "She made me feel like one of her favorite students, and she made everyone feel like that." Due to Mary's interpersonal genius, classes with her are described as a "community" and even a "family."

Mary is the kind of person with whom you intended to spend 60 minutes with, but when the conversation is finished, you find three hours have passed and you wonder

where the time has gone. There is no underestimating the influence of Mary's personality on her uncommon ability to form powerful relationships with students. She is by nature a warm and inviting person. As Mary proudly states, "Texas girls are all friendly."

Words used to describe Mary's relational style of teaching and mentoring include "compassionate," "magnetic," "encouraging," "accepting," "welcoming," and "embracing." One student has labeled Mary a "student-centered professor," and that characterization has been reinforced time and time again as various students would recollect a previous meal with Mary, a prior email from Mary, or a visit with Mary in her office. Even her colleagues commented on Mary's "amazing relationship with students." One fellow faculty member described the restaurant, Walter's, as Mary's "second office," where she habitually meets with students for meals. Mary is "always with a student."

One student in her late twenties had been kept from her course work for a number of weeks due to severe health problems requiring hospitalization. This young woman was so sick she was unable to contact the university administration to explain her lengthy absence. She was concerned what might happen to her course work, her completion of the program, and her scholarships. Finally, when she was well enough to make contact with the administration, she was surprised to hear them say, "Mary already told [us] and we've fixed the situation."

Needless to say, this recovering student was overwhelmed with Mary's proactive act of kindness. She had never even asked Mary for help and was even unsure how Mary had discovered her problem in the first place. From "Good Samaritan" acts like this to calling a student at home just to invite her husband to attend a class, instances of gracious living permeate Mary Poplin's life. Mary is genuinely interested in other people's

welfare, especially her students. She communicates this caring ethic through thoughtful acts, sensitive ears, and insightful questions.

Even students who do not share Mary's Christian stance feel comfortable enough to visit her office, share a meal with her, or send an unsolicited email expressing their dissent or to ask a question. Mary's acceptance of the whole person no matter his or her own viewpoint creates a classroom climate that allows students freedom to express difference.

To assume Mary's caring relationships with her students is done at the expense of a demanding standard for their educational performance would be a mistake. Many of her students concur. As an advisor and mentor, Mary, "at the right moment," can be "very curt" and "hit you over the head" if your thinking skills are not meeting her tough standards, whether it be written or oral arguments. As one advisee said, "If she spots something, she'll nail you."

This low tolerance of shoddy thinking and subpar academic work pushes students to successfully complete their programs. Mary's reputation is that her students finish their degrees. "She tells you how to finish" and "she holds you up to a standard that will push you and help you finish." Many students at CGU vie to get Mary as their advisor because of her excellent mentoring reputation, and this interest is not limited to Christian students. Mary saw four of her students finish their dissertations in 1999, three of them Jewish and one an agnostic. Mary's attractive and caring personality combine with her research expertise to provide an ideal mentor for many Claremont graduate students.

Mary's predisposition to close personal relationships is only intensified by her sense of call and her inner memories of her former life before conversion. Emotionally

identifying with her students, Mary sees it as her "responsibility" to "at least show them there is an alternative." Labeling one of her major vocational roles as an "evangelist," one who shares the love of God with others - Mary says, "I think I'm an evangelist because I realize how empty I was before" and "when I look at these students . . . it makes me hurt."

Mary does wonder, at times, about the context of this risky mission. She asks, "Lord, why did you put me here [CGU] as an evangelist? Why am I not out on the street corner where it's more legal?" Neither Mary nor I miss the irony of the question. First, we both know there is no law explicitly against teaching Christian truth in a secular university, although there are many unstated pressures against bringing one's religious self into the academic community. Furthermore, both of us know such pressures have little effect on Mary in the first place. She quickly confesses, "I'm very bold . . . and I just say what is on my mind in classes." From her early days as a "radical feminist," Mary has never shied away from advocating the minority opinion within a majority context.

I do ask Mary whether she gets worried that colleagues might label her aggressive brand of Christian witness as a type of proselytizing. Mary gives me two somewhat contradictory answers. First, she redefines her mission not as proselytizing but "trying to help [students] get through [life]." She views her students as "bound" by their despair and depression; she believes her Christian message to be their only hope of escaping their predicament.

Still, even after her attempt at redefinition, Mary admits that someone else might interpret her activities as proselytizing. She then lays out her second line of defense: "I

don't proselytize any more [now] than I ever did before." According to her viewpoint, "Everyone does [it]." Secular theories are no more neutral than Christianity and anyone who argues for a particular theoretical perspective does so as an advocate hoping to convince others of his or her position, whether it is behaviorist, feminist, Marxist, or Buddhist.

Recently, Claremont has adopted a new motto for the institution: "The Quiet Revolution." When Mary first heard the motto unveiled, she looked at a friend sitting beside her and nodded knowingly at her. Mary had been claiming that credo long before CGU. At one point after her conversion, Mary had dreamed of writing some grand treatise on education and religion that would change both the Church and the secular academy. She even explored the possibility of starting an "alternative" teacher education program at CGU geared exclusively for Christian teachers.

Now, she thinks God is content to "hide" her away at Claremont and send her students who will eventually change the world "one by one." Many students are coming to CGU from other institutions in order to study with Mary Poplin because they share her Christian faith. Her dream of an alternative teacher education program for Christian teachers is becoming an unofficial reality. As one recent alumnus observed, "I think they [CGU administration] are in denial [about] how many students are coming from a Christian viewpoint." Mary's relational skills, together with her love for students, have only been magnified through her obedience to her divine call to take the teachings of Jesus to every corner of the earth.

Two-Way Street

Mary Poplin's call as a Christian academic works itself out in two opposite but complementary directions. She tries to use her Christian world view to bring "truth" to the academy and its prevailing philosophies. She has spent the last seven years since her conversion being immersed in the Bible in order to understand God's truth. This scriptural focus has created for Mary, however, an "intellectual, academic crisis" because "you have seven years where you're really not doing what the academic world tells you to do."

In contrast, Mary's academic call also extends in the opposite direction as she uses truth found in secular, academic theories to correct what she perceives as problems in the Christian church. Critical theory "helps" Mary aid Christians in "understanding where Christianity [in America] has gone wrong." It points to the "unconscious assumptions that privileged people go around with" and spells out the actual results of those assumptions. Mary believes ideas like social reproduction theory could teach many white middle-class believers that they do live in a divided society and how often they are "unconscious" of their bias and racism against the underprivileged. Secular theories can help the Church understand "how to better equip those [people] out of poverty and into a more abundant life in every way--spiritually, economically, education-wise."

Living between these two worlds has also created a vocational tension in Mary's present career at CGU. She has begun to feel "sort of caught in between" the academic and religious worlds and unsure of which direction she is headed at times. She wonders if she can carry out this twin-pronged mission. For the last five years she has experienced what she refers to as a "writing crisis" where she has struggled with her publication

expectations. She has not produced much in the way of articles or books since her last five-year review at the university, and "it's frightening" for Mary to think about going into that post-tenure evaluation with so little to show for her work.

Knowing what she wants to write, Mary is unsure which audience to write for and what publisher would want to produce such work. The Claremont administration would not be too impressed with work published in religious publications, but Mary questions what secular publisher would want to take her distinctly Christian perspective public. Yet, Mary thinks she would be less than authentic to mute her religious voice in order to get something on the printed page. "I feel like I'm supposed to publish certain things in Christian publications and certain things in secular work. I just kind of have . . . to trust the Lord."

What Mary is describing with her metaphor of two worlds is the historic tension Jesus laid out for His disciples when He commanded them to be "in" the world but not "of" the world. How is the disciple to live simultaneously under God's leading within a culture that does not value God's perspective? For Mary, she has "consciously" kept herself "out of a lot of worldly things" in order to spent time with God and scripture. She does not "do a lot of shopping . . . [or] go to secular movies" so she can find more time to spend with God. However, this conscious separation from the secular world can make it difficult for Mary to bring in her Christian world's message. "I feel a little bit like a foreigner in both worlds in a way. That's O.K. It gives me strength." Although the tension of living in two worlds at the same time may bring Mary spiritual strength, it still creates a vocational tension as she struggles to produce the research and writing expected of a university professor in the American academy.

Mother Theresa

Mary often describes her vocational mission with such integrative phases as "penetrating the university" and "looking at the issues of social justice through the lens of Christianity." Yet, the clearest illustration of what she means by integration comes from her reflections on the life and work of Mother Theresa. Mary used part of a sabbatical in 1996 to work with the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta. Having been exposed to the ministry through books, videos, and speeches, Mary had gone to investigate why Mother Theresa constantly referred to her ministry with the poor as "religious work" and not "social work."

Mary did not yet understand this distinction, but she knew there must be a connection between her own desire for social justice in American schooling and Mother Theresa's view of ministry to the poor in India. So she went to Calcutta for a little more than two months "to try and figure it out." Mary has since published a small article in the Catholic journal *Commonweal* (Poplin, 1997) which reveals some of Mary's most cherished lessons learned at the feet of Mother Theresa. At the same time, these lessons provide for us a glimpse of Mary's own vocational assumptions.

Her thesis is straightforward: An "enormous gulf" exists between the West's approach to helping the poor and disadvantaged and the way Mother Theresa went about her work with the poor in India. (Mary includes a number of professions in her description of the West's "approach," including nursing, social work, and of course, education.) From her two-month experience in India, Mary observed a sharp difference between the western volunteers and the Sisters who belonged to the Order. Although both groups might live in the same time and space attempting to help the same people,

"two different sets of assumptions and beliefs about reality [were] at work" (Poplin, 1996, p. 11).

Motivation becomes a primary difference between the two sets of assumptions. Those of the western mind set are often drawn to serve the disenfranchised "out of empathy or pity" (p. 12); thus, they often help out of guilt, their own energy and manufactured goodness. They are attempting to balance the moral scales of their life by using good works to make up for those things in their past for which they are ashamed. In sharp contrast, Mother Theresa and the other nuns saw their work as obedience to God's call rather than acting out of some "social conscience." They "served the poor not because [the poor] needed them but because God called them to do the work" (p. 12). Serving the poor for the poor's sake is social work; serving the poor for God's sake is a distinctly religious vocation.

Thus, when Mary describes the vocational lives of the Missionaries of Charity, she chooses an adjective of deep spiritual significance: "sacred." They sought to love God through every function of their work, as well as to see Jesus in every person they served. "A firm acceptance of divine providence" shaped their reactions to life's ebbs and flows. Prayer became the primary "technology" used to change the world's circumstances. Choosing to live the lives of the people they served, the Sisters took a vow of poverty both to follow Christ's example and to avoid any materialistic temptations. Furthermore, they chose to see suffering as a "gift from God" (p. 13) to draw them toward holiness rather than as a symptom to avoid.

Mary had gone to Calcutta "hoping to find new methods and procedures that could be applied in schools." She found no new methods. She only found a unique and

"sacred" approach to one's call. Mother Theresa's most famous quote originated with her namesake, Theresa of Lisieux: "While most of us think our lives should be doing great things, we rather are called to do small things with great love" (p. 14).

In the end, the difference between western social work and the Missionaries of Charity is not found in strategy or methodology. The distinction rests in attitude, an attitude which "emanates from a profound faith [that] they are fulfilling God's purpose for their lives through His grace and all their attention is intensely concentrated on this vision" (p. 10). In the same way, as Mary seeks to live out her sacred call, it could be said that she does not "do" education, but rather she does religious work by training teachers to teach and to care for the neediest in America's schools. "My personal fulfillment comes from what God is calling me to do and the degree to which I am obedient to that call."

Reflections

In his book *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer (1998) holds up as his ideal the "undivided life" in which one's "inner" world and "outer" world are in perfect harmony. For a Christian scholar like Mary Poplin, her identity as a woman of deep faith in God would be completely free to interact with a work place she believes needs her message. However, as Palmer warns, in the "human condition" we can never expect such perfect harmony. Therefore, he recommends that the teacher find her "center" for life external to the institutional demands and totally consistent with one's internal convictions. Mary's story has been the search for that center.

Mary makes no secret of the fact that, after her conversion, the last place she wanted to be was CGU. "When I first became a Christian, I wanted [God] to send me to Africa where people didn't know me." He did not oblige Mary's request. Even though Mary's changing value structure developed within her an unease and distaste for what she labels the "darkness" of the secular university, she began to see her own role in creating that darkness. "I got into feminist theory and all the intellectual dark spots, and I taught them." Consequently, Mary began to see her vocational call as one of reclamation and retribution. "I think that's why God wouldn't let me go to Africa after my conversion. He's making me stay . . . in the mess that I created."

Mary remains at CGU to enact her own strategy of engagement with her culture. She believes "you'd better know your enemy better than your friend." Claremont is "a good place to do that." Mary believes a Christian should be an "engaged apologist" who knows as much about the other position as she does her own. She knows the opposition's strengths and weaknesses and is honest about both. Although monasteries have been helpful in Mary's own spiritual growth, she feels no call to work in one because she would lose her ability to participate actively in the spiritual battles taking place all around her. Like Mother Theresa, who eschewed the convent for the gutters, Mary has entered a difficult place to undertake what she believes to be a life-changing vocation. In the language of Frederich Buechner, we might say that by locating the world's deep hunger within the secular academy, Mary has found a place to express her deepest gladness.

CHAPTER FOUR

REBEL WITH A CAUSE

On the Frontline of American Culture Wars
Robert George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, Princeton University

Introduction

Huddled with Robert George, Princeton University professor of politics, in his cramped, cluttered office, I am thoroughly enjoying our 90-minute interview. We begin with the usual pleasantries and immediately explore Professor George's own academic journey that has led to his prestigious position as a full professor on an Ivy League faculty. As a graduate of Swarthmore, Harvard, and Oxford, George is no stranger to the academic elite.

Everywhere I look I see evidence of a scholar at work. Boxes of papers and books cover almost every square inch of office real estate, with only a two-foot-wide carpet trail left to guide a visitor through this researcher's maze to an empty chair. Table space, cluttered with double-parked journal articles and open texts, is at a premium, with only a small square of work area available adjacent to Professor George's computer monitor. The walls are no less crowded with rows and rows of shelves holding books--an academic's most precious commodity.

Absorbing the ambiance around me, I am left with two initial impressions about this youngish-looking 45-year-old professor. First, he does not suffer from claustrophobia; second, he certainly has his finger in many "intellectual pots." Assuring

me he knows the exact location of any item of importance, "Robby" tells me of his wife's fear that he would ever expose a guest to this work space turned natural disaster.

I find Robby easy to converse with and willing to share his own academic encounters and scholarly experience. Words come easily to him, and our interview has few spots of dead air. As the flow of dialogue picks up steam, I get perturbed when our conversation is interrupted by a ringing telephone two times within 15 minutes. Robby has been describing for me what he perceives to be the prejudice against religion on many college campuses, and how that prejudice could become an enormous impediment to a Christian scholar's career. He can only hope that other religious believers who aspire to be professors will experience the same "good luck" he himself has enjoyed at Princeton.

As the professor answers the phone, I begin to feel like an interloper and turn off my tape recorder, attempting to blend in with the books and stacks of paper surrounding my chair. I try not to eavesdrop. But when you are sitting across the desk from someone in an office not much larger than a household bathroom, it becomes difficult not to hear at least half the conversation. I pretend to peruse the bookshelf on the wall directly beside me.

Even trying to be as unobtrusive as possible, I cannot help but be drawn into the conversation taking place over Robby's phone line. By the sudden change in his expression, together with the increased pitch in his voice, I gather the caller is either unexpected or unwanted. Short and powerful, the three-minute conversation transforms Robert George right before my eyes. This erudite Princeton professor, who could communicate with ease in the lecture hall or on the printed page, was now fumbling for words. Flustered by the person on the other end of the line, Robby's answers to the

caller's questions evolve from "Yes, President Shapiro" to "Thank you, thank you, President Shapiro." His body is almost shaking. Is it excitement or fright.

Clearly stunned, he hangs up the phone, stands up at his desk, and stares into space while running his fingers through his short black hair. With a slightly glazed expression, Robby looks at me, someone he had only met the previous hour and the only other person in the room. "Scott," he says, "I don't believe it. That was the president of the university."

Slowly emerging from his shock, Robby now almost bounds over to his bookcase and pulls off the shelf an official-looking book emblazoned with the Princeton seal. Excitedly flipping through the pages, he stops at some sort of list and holds up the page for me to see. It is a list of the endowed professorships held by distinguished faculty at Princeton along with the names and dates of previous holders of the "chairs."

"Scott, look at this." Robby is pointing to one of the few chairs left unfilled--the Cyrus Hall McCormick Professorship of Jurisprudence. In its almost 100-year existence, the McCormick chair had been held by only five people and had not been filled since the 1990's. "Scott," Robby exclaims breathlessly, "President Shapiro has offered me the McCormick chair if I will agree to remain at Princeton." (Robby had been mulling over an offer from Vanderbilt to fill an open, endowed chair there).

Then, with an added note of solemnity, Robby runs his finger down the list to the very first holder of the McCormick professorship. "Look at this," he announces. His finger is resting by the name of Woodrow Wilson. Now I begin to understand how a decision Robby and his wife had been considering for weeks could be settled in a matter of minutes.

Princeton's Reigning Conservative

Referred to by one Princeton student as "Princeton's reigning conservative," Professor Robert George prefers to embrace the description rather than flee such a countercultural identity on an Ivy League campus. Using any scholarly means at his disposal, whether it be a lecture on Griswold v. Connecticut in his course on Constitutional Interpretation, an article for the *Yale Law Review* on the legal viability of the prolife position (1997b), an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* on the "Clinton Puzzle" (2000a), or testimony before a congressional committee on behalf of a bill protecting the life of a child who survives an abortion, Dr. George is more than happy "to serve as a foil against academia's monolithic secular liberal orthodoxy" (Colson, 1999).

An orthodox Catholic and an outspoken defender of a conservative, Christian world view, George does not hide his beliefs as he confronts liberalism "with rational philosophical objections and defends Christian morality with philosophical arguments" (Colson, 1999). Yet, students still consider him to be "an excellent, engaging professor" who teaches some of Princeton's "most challenging and potentially . . . most rewarding" classes.

If, as Professor George himself has stated, there exists "a lot of prejudice against faith" on university campuses, how could a conservative have been awarded one of Princeton's most prestigious professorships? I ask Robby whether the administration knows of his conservative, religious views. "Yes," he answers without hesitation or hint of embarrassment. "I am notorious. I'm the guy around here who defends the Pope . . . I've defended the prolife position in the pages of the *Yale Law Journal*. I've criticized

the idea of same sex-marriage in [other] publications." Commenting on his very public persona on campus, he adds, "I guess [my colleagues] are getting accustomed to me."

It is one thing for people to "grow accustomed" to contrary opinions and dissonant voices; it is quite another thing for these "foils" to be rewarded with promotion by the very targets they seek to oppose. How has Robert George not only survived an often hostile environment for his political and moral views, but actually thrived in it? How has he managed to be so successful in his profession, even reaching what most perceive to be the top of the academic pyramid?

And, to turn the question around, how has Professor George been able keep up his morale and intellectual stamina when faced with such opposition? When Robby begins to describe the tense relationship between the secular academy and a conservative, religious point of view, he uses phrases like "under assault" and words such as "discrimination" and "prejudice." According to George and his 20 years in the most influential sector of the American university, "many principles of Christian morality are under assault from elite opinion and within . . . the academy."

In a study of the interaction between religious people and an academic culture that does not often share their faith-based assumptions, a person like Robert George can help us understand not only the tensions inherent in such situations, but also how people can be successful waging this type of guerilla warfare. Not all religious academics have taken such an "in-your-face" strategy as Robert George. Some would even suggest that his tactics are offensive and ineffective. Others would predict only abject failure for George and urge him to retreat into Christian higher education and protect himself from the temptations that exist in the secular academy.

Christians have long debated the place of religion amid culture. Whereas some theologians and leaders have advised seclusion for the religious voice, others have advocated a complete immersion in the cultural conflict. Each stance holds possible benefits along with potential difficulties. Christian faculty in the secular academy face similar choices with equally conflicting results. Maybe the best place to begin describing the academic life of Robert George is to trace how religious people have sought to do battle with a secular world and the relationship of the Church to culture.

Christ and Culture

One of the most famous Christian models formulated to describe the relationship between religion and culture as a whole originates in the work of twentieth-century theologian H. Richard Niebuhr. A long-time professor at Yale in the early to mid-1900s, Niebuhr taught courses on the history of Christian ethics. Niebuhr's ethics were clearly rooted in his German-American heritage and his own experience during the Great Depression and two world wars. His own struggle of faith within a deeply troubled society motivated Niebuhr to search out how a religious person could influence his or her culture without being consumed by the culture. He recognized that within culture various values compete for people's loyalties in politics, economics, aesthetics, science, and religion, and he felt compelled to establish an ethical position and strategy for the Christian church to deal with those competing values.

Reflecting on Jesus' command to be "in" the world but not "of" the world, Niebuhr questioned how the "other-worldly" and the "this-worldly" could exist in creative tension. How is the world of the Church (God's kingdom) to interface and

interact with the world of culture (man's achievements)? What is the relationship between a sovereign God and what Niebuhr considered to be a sinful and sick society? Niebuhr was searching for a moral stance to make sense of these competing loyalties as well as a strategy to transform the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man into a doxological whole.

At one point, early in his intellectual journey, Niebuhr wrote an essay entitled "Back to Benedict," in which he questioned whether the Church should retreat from a troubled culture into monasticism. But, through his dissertation study at Yale, Niebuhr began to expand his vision and set out to develop a model of how Christians throughout ecclesiastical history have responded to the "Church/world" problem. In his best-known work, *Christ and Culture* (Niebuhr, 1956), Niebuhr was able to delineate five separate positions Christians have developed in response to the relationship between "Christ" (Church) and "culture" (world).

The first two positions are found on opposite poles of the perceived tension. The "exclusivists" (Christ against Culture) believed all culture to be evil and therefore isolated themselves from the world (much like the monks). The "accomodators" (Christ of Culture) sought to make the Church accountable to its society, and thus became a "worldly church." Niebuhr believed the Church's relationship to God and its relationship to the world should not be separate from each other (problem of the "against" position), nor should they be confused with each other (problem with the "of" position).

Between these two poles Niebuhr described three mediating categories that sought to hold Christ and culture in a type of dialectical tension. "Christ above Culture" holds the two together in a hierarchical "synthesis of the realm of the spiritual and the physical"

(p. 57). The two are complementary of each other although still separate from each other. "Christ and Culture in Paradox" relates the two realms together dualistically as both believer and nonbeliever live together "under two distinct moralities though both are exercised under one God" (p. 57). Niebuhr found the former mediating position too institutionalized and the latter too fragmenting.

His fifth position and third mediating motif stood as his own preferred ethical approach: "Christ the Transformer of Culture." In this view, Niebuhr "located the world of man within the world of God," and thus the presence of God within the world through His Church is able to transform a sick and fallen world into a renewed society.

How is the kingdom of man to relate to the kingdom of God? How is the Christian to exercise the Lordship of Christ over all of creation? What is the Church's moral obligation to its society? As Niebuhr developed his model to answer these questions, he made two important provisos. First, none of these categories is exclusive to one historical era, but each is based on significant people, movements, and ideas throughout church history.

Second, these categories should not necessarily be arranged in a linear progression. Rather, the situations described are often present at the same time. And, although Niebuhr did clearly side with the "Christ the Transformer" position, he hesitated in describing any of the five as "the" correct ethical stance but thought each should be held in tension with the others. In Niebuhr's view, each of the five provides a needed voice within the discussion of the relationship between religion and culture. Humans are too unique and God too mysterious for one solution to suffice.

Robert George, however, feels no such hesitation in proclaiming which ethical stance he has chosen. One of the reasons he espouses his faith so boldly in the academic community is Robby's firm conviction in Christ's and the Christian's transforming role within culture. For George, "Christianity is a world view and not simply a faith whose implications are purely personal," and therefore, the Christian has a responsibility to "bring the Gospel values to bear in the culture--all parts of culture - not just politics, but arts [and] communication." Unlike the medieval monks who secluded themselves for the sake of purity, Robby and his confrontational style of interaction seek to transform the outer world as well as the inner person.

Overview

This faculty narrative is about one man's attempt to live out a scholarly life through a transformative ethical strategy. Robert George proudly claims to "wear [his] faith on his sleeve" and take the Gospel into the halls and journals of the secular academy. We can gain much insight from studying his transformative strategy and how he practices his scholarship. Not only do we flesh out possible tensions inherent within this approach, but also we learn more about a successful negotiation of a such a difficult and complex task.

To capture George's story, I first want to describe in detail his scholarly stance. Seen from the religious angle, George's approach can be depicted as a transformative strategy; viewed from the academy's vantage point, Robert George stands out as an isolated, contrarian voice unwilling to espouse the party line. By looking at his vocational calling within three interrelated spheres (classroom, faculty lounge, and public

square), we will learn more about George's academic devotion and scholarly method. Finally, reflecting on Robby's faculty narrative, we will be able to explore why he has achieved prominence. How has Robert George, faculty rebel, become Robert George, distinguished teacher-scholar?

Bizzaro World

In the *Superman* comic book series, the story of Clark Kent is fundamentally changed in one episode when the arch-villain, Lex Luthor, steals a strand of Superman's DNA and tries to clone his own "Superman." Unfortunately for Luthor, the cloning process was unstable, and the Superman clone mutates into a fascinating parody of the Man of Steel, who is dubbed "Bizzaro" by the people of Metropolis. Although the clone is similar to the original in many respects, his actions are sometimes the exact opposite of what the real Superman would do. Strangely familiar in the blue cape and leotards with a big red "S' on his chest, the hero turns out to be the anti-hero and shocks Metropolis.

Sometimes, when I listen to Robert George explain his own intellectual position and academic mission, I think he would be an ideal Clark Kent in a "Bizzaro World" rendition of the university in the 1960s. Not that he is some mutant clone gone bad, but rather, much of what he says and does is strangely familiar, but at the same time certain fundamental tenets have been drastically altered.

Playing the recognizable role of the outspoken, controversial scholar rebelling against the enduring orthodoxy on campus, George wants his students to question authority, think differently, and not be content with the intellectual status quo. Yet, when you listen to or read the doctrine espoused by this radical voice, you quickly realize this

Clark Kent is no Timothy Leary in disguise. Borrowing from the political attitude of an earlier generation's provocateurs, George has completely disavowed their liberal orthodoxy. Robert George is the 1960s' "anti-professor."

George's rebellion against liberalism and what he now refers to as "the prevailing secular orthodoxy" on campus began, like that of many of the sixties' radicals, in his undergraduate years. While at Swarthmore, he "found [himself] rebelling; but rebelling against the liberalism of the college." Even though Robby had been raised a Roman Catholic and educated partly in parochial schools, he entered college having adopted a "liberal interpretation of things," including politics, and to a much lesser extent morals, and his religion. Extremely active in the Democratic party at a young age, he had twice been elected governor of the West Virginia Democratic Youth Conference.

Arriving at a "very" liberal college, Robby quickly thought that his own Christian faith was under attack. Although he had come to college believing liberalism was the appropriate path, the liberal establishment's evident dogmatism and hypocrisy pushed him toward those few conservative voices on campus who did respect his faith. Two of these professors, in particular, fanned Robby's own tendency to think for himself and not be content with the majority opinion.

To gain a more critical perspective on the "dominant world view" at Swarthmore, Robby began a renewed quest to draw on the resources of his Catholic upbringing. Studying the writings of "great Christian thinkers" like Augustine and Aquinas, he became more and more "persuaded" of a conservative, Christian world view and more and more skeptical of the received position within the academic elite. Therefore, he began an intellectual quest he continues to this day: to use Christianity as a resource for

his own critique of "secularist, liberal orthodoxy" and at the same time, to have his own faith "reinforced" by his philosophical critique.

As Robert George continued to work out these intellectual tensions within politics, law, religion, and moral philosophy throughout his educational journey at Swarthmore, Harvard, and Oxford, his liberal sympathies as an 18 year old were converted into an increasingly conservative world view. The more inadequate he found the liberalism of the elite academy, the more compelling he found his own Christian faith. His conservatism and his faith began to exist in a kind of symbiotic relationship.

What George found intellectually disconcerting about the liberal, secular orthodoxy of the cultural left was the prevailing assumption that all "right thinking" intellectuals ought to view and evaluate all alternative world views through the supposedly "neutral lens" of liberalism. Through his study, Robby began to see liberalism, not as a form of moral neutrality, but rather as "just a mask for an alternative world view." He believed the liberal elite were conducting some type of "masquerade" where liberalism as philosophy "gets a lot of mileage out of pretending to be the umpire when it is actually a competitor."

This fundamental inconsistency, this masquerade, within the liberal position began to "undermine" within Robby's own mind any persuasive power of the liberal, secularist critique of Christianity. A few professors at Swarthmore, Harvard, and Oxford who were serious scholars and serious Christians reinforced his belief that Christianity as "a plausible intellectual world view" could withstand any critique offered by liberalism. And, as he subjected the liberal scholars to the same skeptical arguments liberalism once

used on religion, he quickly became convinced this supposedly neutral position could not withstand reason's rigorous examination.

Role models like John Finnis at Oxford, Mary Ann Glendenon of Harvard Law School, and James Kurth at Swarthmore have challenged Robby to be a truly faithful Christian academic and to develop his own views "about [the] fundamental principles of ethics and [the] relationship of philosophy and faith." They have taught him and modeled for him that it was possible to be "a very good Christian" and "a very fine scholar" and also "very public" within the academy about one's faith. It is possible to be a scholar "whose faith clearly influences what [one] does" and also motivates what one teaches.

As Robby explains his "rebellion" against the liberal, secular orthodoxy at Swarthmore, I ask him if he is continuing that rebellion as a faculty member at Princeton. His eyes lighting up and hands channeling his growing intensity, he quickly makes it clear he is not content just to continue his own rebellious stance. "I'm trying to spread it. I tell my students to question authority just like my teachers told me." Trying to clarify, I suggest he means something very different from his radical professors of the counterculture movement in the early seventies. "No," he says, "I mean the same thing." He genuinely wants the students to "question the conventional opinion of the day"--to "subject it" to a "little scrutiny."

What has changed, Robby is quick to add, is the "authority" of the day, the "conventional opinion." Now students enter Princeton assuming the liberal opinion of the "cultural elite" is correct. They have soaked up the "atmosphere of the celebrities" and the liberal biases of the *New York Times* editorial page without subjecting them to rigorous intellectual criticism.

Within his own sphere of influence, Robert George "look(s) for opportunities" to challenge the existing orthodoxy on campus and in American popular culture. Claiming the task is part of his responsibility in fulfilling Jesus' "Great Commission," Robby does his best to "unnerve" people and motivate them to defend the reasonableness of their secular world view. He fulfills his academic calling in three overlapping areas of influence: (1) the classroom, (2) the faculty lounge, and (3) the public square. But, before we attempt a detailed explanation of Robert George's academic call, we need a fuller account of his central academic devotion: a commitment to what Robby refers to as "the truth."

Academic Devotion--To Know the Truth

If Robby's academic calling is best described as a rebellious voice amidst the predominant liberal, secular world view in today's academy, then his academic devotion might best be characterized as a faithful spokesman for the primary goal of scholarly work: "to know the truth." To understand his calling as an academic "rebel," we need first to capture a clear picture of his devotion to truth above all else.

For Robert George, his academic identity and scholarly mission are intertwined with his deep devotion to what he refers to as "the truth." When I asked him to reflect on some of the formative influences in his own intellectual development, he quickly responds by citing a platonic dialogue called "The Gorgias." George's interaction with this piece of ancient political literature as an undergraduate at Swarthmore began to teach him the difference between "true intellectual inquiry" and what he calls "rhetoric." Using the words of Samuel Johnson, Robby draws a further distinction between the two paths

by describing them as "the difference between arguing for victory and arguing for truth." His desire to argue for truth is what ultimately led Robby into academia rather than politics or law.

Anticipating a text or person with more of a religious bent, I am taken aback that George's initial response regarding his most formative intellectual factors focused on an ancient Greek philosopher. But the more I have interacted with Robert George through interviews and his writings, the closer connection I see between his religious commitment and his devotion to "the truth." To treat these twin passions as separate paths in Robby's scholarly journey would be to bifurcate his own academic mission and oversimplify a complex and deeply textured task. To discuss Robert George's Christianity without mentioning his passion for truth would not be a fair representation of the man.

Sitting in his office and discussing possible tensions in the academic life for a deeply religious and very conservative professor, Robby finds utterly contemptible the claim that it is impossible to be both a serious Christian and a serious scholar in today's secular university. "I don't see what the problem is," replies George. "You just go out there and you try to find out what's true." If the research led to a conclusion incompatible with Christianity, "then it is impossible to be a [scholar] and a Christian." But in his own 20 years of searching for truth as a professional scholar, he has "never been led to such a conclusion."

Denying any hint of intellectual tension between his faith and his disciplinary research, George makes explicit his tacit assumption that a scholar's loyalty to the truth will not conflict with his or her devotion to Christianity. We both keep searching for the best way to describe accurately this connection between his twin commitments. Are they

equal in scope, or is one primary? Is it even valid to build a hierarchical model of this relationship? Yet, there are times when Robby seems to do just that: "I want to know the truth. I'm willing to pursue the truth, and I'm willing to even consider the possibility that Christianity is untrue because [and now he is almost shouting] I want to know the truth!"

Considering this piety to truth as "a very Christian attitude to take," Professor George seeks to be "as rigorous as possible" in his intellectual pursuits, including his religious beliefs. "I don't want to be tricked into rejecting Christianity on the basis of some fallacious but attractive argument." Robby's scholarly ideals are in his mind "entirely compatible" with his Christian scruples. "We [Christians] ought to be about the business of truth, let the chips fall where they may." The final arbiter of what is true, according to George, is reason. By the "application of our faculty of reason" we can think carefully about all the data presented to us through our experience, whether it be the study of physics or ethics, and that reasonable search will lead us "to truth in all areas of human inquiry" including religion.

Robby practices what he preaches. His devotion to the truth manifests itself in every area of his scholarly calling. From the lecture hall where he engages his students, to the printed page where he dialogues with peers, George's stated aim is "to show the reasonableness of the Christian position." He engages others on "fundamental questions of truth" and assumes they will "follow the argument where it leads."

Of course, his own experience as a scholar has taught him that engaging others with truth does not always lead to reasonable conclusions. Here, Robby refers to the primary detour on the scholarly path: prejudice. Prejudice, in George's understanding, is simply "prejudging the truth of the matter" and therefore creating an artificial

"impediment to understanding the truth." Prejudice will lead scholars to "tailor our conception of truth to fit our pre-existing views."

One prime example of this prejudice at work in the academy is the classroom. According to Professor George, even the bright and well-informed Princeton undergrad enters class with an often blind acceptance of the liberal view handed down by the secular orthodoxy of the academic elite and media. In Robby's experience, students often do not want to think about the most difficult ideas, and the "great[est] impediment to thinking is that students will simply go on the basis of the opinions they have picked up out of the intellectual ether."

At this point, Robby's academic devotion to the truth, and his academic calling in the classroom, work together to establish his academic strategy: to get people (and his students) to think reasonably about the issue. Therefore, he is not so concerned that his students come up with the "right answer" but that they learn to think through issues critically and reflectively. If he can motivate and challenge them to think through the tough moral dilemmas of the day, Robby is confident the path of reason will lead them down the road to truth.

George's commitment to truth and corresponding antagonism towards prejudice inform his advice to prospective Christian scholars. To "break through the screen of prejudice" against religion in the secular academy, he counsels would-be religious faculty to be "as good a scholar as you can possibly be" so that those in charge will have "no excuse" to dismiss your work. Christian scholars have "to be more rigorous than the standard in the field" and must meet a higher standard of reasonableness in order to break through the screen and receive a hearing.

And, Robby warns, Christian academics, both young and old, must never be tempted to compromise, to "adjust [their] opinions to conform to secular orthodoxy." For Robert George, that would be "an offense against the truth"--the scholar's unpardonable sin--because if one is willing to offend against the truth, he or she has "no business being in this business."

A scholar's goal is to pursue "knowledge of the truth" without fear of repercussions. Preserving the truth is the scholar's "special responsibility" in our society; consequently, loyalty to the truth must be "fierce" and "jealous." Sounding less and less like the politicians he often studies, Robby admonishes academics never to allow their scholarship to "denigrate into ideology" for pragmatic means, but to be careful "to tell the truth . . . the whole truth, and nothing but the truth even when the whole truth might not be as helpful to our cause as only giving the partial truth." This scholarly mission is exemplified throughout Robert George's career as teacher, writer, and colleague.

Rebel in the Classroom

As I make my way across the campus of Princeton University to attend a class taught by Professor Robert George, I am continually reminded of Princeton's long, historic identity as one of America's premier institutions of higher learning. From the stunning array of classic architecture, to buildings with names like Burr, Hamilton, and Madison, as well as residential colleges christened Rockefeller and Forbes, Princeton announces both its distinguished legacy and its highly influential position within our nation's heritage. When *U. S. News and World Report* habitually ranks Princeton along with Harvard and Yale as the top three universities of the country, one wonders whether

the editors are reflecting the institutions' prestigious traditions as much as their present educational achievements.

A large two-story white building with 58 stately white pillars surrounding its exterior walls, Robertson Hall is located on the northeast side of campus adjacent to James Fitzgerald's "Fountain of Freedom." With a cafeteria on the first floor named after George Schultz, former Secretary of State in the Reagan administration, it comes as no surprise to learn that Robertson Hall stands as the primary structure housing the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. The Harold Dobbs Auditorium, located on the first floor of Robertson, serves as the Wilson School's main lecture hall. It is in this vast room where Professor George gives his weekly 90-minute lecture in "Politics 315" or "Constitutional Interpretation."

When I enter through one of the auditorium's two doorways, my eyes take time to adjust to the dimly lit room. If the original namers of the Ivy League schools had focused their attention on the interior walls rather than those on the outside, Columbia, Brown, and Princeton might be called the "Wood Paneling League." The 10 ascending semi-circle rows of deep-brown wooden desks, along with the lush golden carpeting only add to the rich ambiance of the place. A cross between a Wall Street conference room and a local, state park amphitheater, the room and its architects have drawn all eyes to the bottom center of the room, where the CEO-professor will give his weekly presentation.

Obviously doubling as staging ground for university news conferences, Dodds Auditorium's prime real estate at the bottom center of the room contains a large black dais consisting of a tall, thick podium with two tables attached to either side. Never shy about proclaiming its legacy through a little name dropping, Princeton has the school

name emblazoned in large white letters across the front of the granite podium: "Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs." A large 10-by12-foot white screen fills the space directly above the dais on the wood-paneled front wall. Numerous theatrical spotlights hang from the ceiling, ready to highlight any honored guest.

The 100-plus upperclassmen who have filed into Dodds Auditorium are representative of the 5,000 undergraduates enrolled at Princeton. Although I see no noticeable difference in the percentages of men and women present, I do observe a preponderance of white faces in the room. On this fall day near the end of September, these 19 and 20 year olds are dressed in the warm, casual Abercrombie & Fitch fashions of their generation, including jeans, khakis, sweaters, and sweatshirts--all with multiple layers. Water bottles, cappuccino cups, and backward baseball caps are sprinkled throughout the crowd.

Many have arrived early for today's class, toting their ever-present backpacks. With their primary textbook, *American Constitutional Interpretation*, along with an open spiral notebook and ready pen placed on the desktop in front of them, they are prepared for the day's discussion. A few are perusing the *New York Times* as they wait for the professor's appearance; others have laid tape recorders beside their notebooks. I am a little surprised to see no evidence of laptop computers. Evidently, classroom technological culture has yet to catch up with that of the dorm room.

Arriving at 11:01, Professor George places his black cloth briefcase and charcoal-colored umbrella on the front dais and walks over to his three teaching assistants (or preceptors, as they are known at Princeton) sitting in the front row of desks. Consisting of a junior faculty member in the Politics Department, a graduate student, and a local

lawyer, these three white males are dressed more formally than the students surrounding them. They chat amicably with George as they briefly discuss today's lecture and strategize for the follow-up discussion groups (precepts) coming later in the week.

Looking as much like a downtown Philadelphia lawyer on his way to court as a university professor, George wears a dark gray suit with subtle white pinstripes. His light blue shirt is adorned with a traditional-looking red and blue striped tie. Nicely polished burgundy shoes finish off this professional ensemble befitting an Ivy League professor who holds one of the most prestigious chairs on campus. Dr. George's choice of wardrobe is surpassed in its conservativism only by his preferred political stance. In his mid-forties, Robby evidences his transition into middle-age through his lightly graying hair. Wearing large, reddish rimmed glasses on his cleanly shaven face, while still a bit youthful in appearance, George conforms to my stereotypical image of a judicial scholar.

Robby's fit and trim appearance may have more to do with his weekly workout in the lecture hall as it does his diet. He paces back and forth across the front of the room, as well as up and down the two aisles that divide the auditorium. The podium at the front of the room serves merely as an unused backdrop to Professor George's roving pedagogical style. He uses none of the technology at his disposal, choosing instead to rely on his booming voice, pacing feet, and quick mind that dramatizes each question and follow-up response.

If Dodds Auditorium's aesthetics are designed to prepare the students for the teacher's command performance, Robby George does not disappoint. In a scene straight from the movie, Paper Chase, and its depiction of Harvard Law School, Robby eschews the traditional lecture and uses directive questions based on the previous week's 200 to

300 pages of reading to elicit the students' thinking on the topic of the day. Referred to as "a direct descendant of Socrates," by one student, George and his use of class discussion is no less scripted than a pure lecture as each question has a preordained purpose.

Demonstrating the mental agility appropriate to a man who earned his Harvard Law and Harvard Divinity degrees concurrently in four years, Robby uses no notes or prompts during his 90-minute dialogue with the students. Flying solo, George is forced to double-check a date or case name with his assistants down front only a couple of times while exhibiting an encyclopedic grasp of law and American judicial history. From an off-hand quotation of the Federalist Papers to a word-for-word quote from the dissenting opinion in Griswold v. Connecticut, the professor demonstrates to all present who the expert in this auditorium is.

As I watch him teach these hundred undergraduates for an hour and a half, my imagination is drawn to an image of F. Lee Bailey performing at Carnegie Hall. Part lawyer and part conductor, Robert George builds his case before the class, part jury - part orchestra. Nothing happens by accident in the classroom as he carefully and meticulously lays out the evidence. But in this trial he calls no witnesses and gives no summation. Ironically, he uses the jury itself to present the pieces of the case as he interrogatively leads the students toward the final conclusion. Like any good lawyer, he never asks a question without knowing the answer beforehand, and like any world-class conductor, he knows exactly when to ask for a particular note and precisely how long to hold it.

Adding a little more incongruity to the performance, Robby knows before he even enters the classroom that his jury is already biased against his position. Influenced by the liberal elite of the culture, these young, impressionable students enter the auditorium predisposed toward what George refers to as "liberal secularism." But, Robby will unearth the students' uncritical assumptions through his pedagogical strategy and force the students to think their way through the intricate moral and judicial disputes presented in class.

The students. Comprising some of the best and brightest tertiary students in the world, only 10% of those high school seniors who apply to Princeton are accepted. Ninety-two percent of Princeton's incoming freshman class were in the top 10% of their high school classes with some 25% scoring well over 1,500 on their SAT scores. Given the extremely competitive entrance requirements and the cost of a Princeton education (which exceeded $35,000 in the 2000-2001 academic year), I came to this class expecting to see students who take their education and learning seriously. I am not disappointed. Many students contribute to the class discussion, while only two or three struggle to stay awake. And although a few are more eloquent than the rest, most exhibit a reflective understanding of the issues at hand.

Unlike the pressures faced by his colleagues teaching undergraduates at many state universities, Robert George need not worry about his students' reading levels and fundamental learning skills, nor does he have to bother with remedial instruction. Yet, as he later told me, his challenge to his students is no less basic: "I want them to think." The essence of George's pedagogical strategy originates from his fundamental assumption that most people, including the highly intelligent students at Ivy League institutions, resist

thinking critically about the difficult moral issues of the day. "They'll put off thinking as long as possible--even these wonderful Princeton students with their magnificent SAT scores and fabulous high school grades . . . If they had their way, they'll just think whatever 'right-thinking' people think. They'll get it out of the *New York Times* and Hollywood."

In Robby's own terms, his pedagogical plan to promote student thinking is "to pit the student's passions against each other." He is not talking about pitting the passions of one student against those of a fellow student, but rather setting "one set of passions or prejudices that the student has against another set of passions or prejudices" believed by the same student. When the students are shown the inconsistency in holding on to both simultaneously, they have a moral and cognitive dilemma. And "the only way out of the dilemma is for them to think their way out of [it]." Robby concludes, "That's how I try to teach them to think."

The lecture. "Lochner against the state of New York--when is the case handed down?" To Professor George's question comes a student's succinct reply, "1905." Robby pushes the student further down the road of historical contextualization: "Tell me about 1905." After the same student expands on his previous answer, Robby opens the discussion up to the floor, "Everybody agree with this?"

With this opening salvo, George begins to lead his students to the presenting constitutional question of the day's class: "Are courts the appropriate vehicle for settling large-scaled disputes about morality where there is disagreement among apparently reasonable people--at least in the absence of a clear constitutional resolution of the problem one way or another?" How proactive can judges be in setting moral policy for

the country? Has the Supreme Court become some sort of "super legislature" usurping the power of democratically elected officials?

But Robby does not begin by revealing this foundational question to his class. In fact, he does not even raise the question until a full 60 minutes into the class period. Rather, he chooses a serendipitous route through judicial case history to motivate his students to think out the question and potential answers for themselves.

He takes two historic Supreme Court decisions [Lochner v. New York (1905) and Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)] and plays them against each other. In both cases the majority of the Court voted to overturn a state statute they deemed unconstitutional, based primarily on the Fourteenth Amendment. Both cases have garnered their fair share of criticism over the use of the Fourteenth Amendment in this way. However, each case is distinctly different in its political application.

Robby spends the first hour exploring the judicial history and reasoning of Lochner. At the turn of the twentieth century, as the country was moving from an agrarian society to an industrial one, state courts were beginning to enact laws protecting the rights of workers against exploitive employers. One such law in New York mandated that a work week could not exceed 60 hours. Mr. Lochner, a bakery owner, took exception to the law and sued the state of New York. Lochner's lawyers argued that the law infringed on his right to free contract with his employees. He has the right to enter into contract with them without interference of a "big brother" government. If the employees do not like the working conditions, they can choose to work for someone else.

Lawyers for the state argued that the constitution gave state legislatures certain police powers, which allowed them to create laws protecting individual rights--in this

case, employees' rights. In a democratic government, people are able to impose the moral preferences of the majority through their elected officials. And without a clear constitutional conflict or procedural error in enacting the law, the court has no power to overturn such a law. To do so would be to make the Supreme Court some type of "super legislature" and take away the rights of the state legislatures within a representative democracy.

The Court's majority sided with Lochner and voted to overturn the law because they believed the statute did take away the rights of employers. Because there is no "freedom of contract" clause in the constitution, the majority had to take the unusual step of using the "due process" clause located in the Fourteenth Amendment and interpreting it as more than a procedural guarantee. Even if the state used proper procedure in making a law (which New York did), the law must not violate certain substantive liberties. In the Lochner case, the Court decided New York's law had violated employers' substantive liberties.

As the students think their way through the judicial reasoning of the case, Robby uses other cases to help flesh out the thought processes involved. Rehearsing various majority opinions, minority opinions, and dissenting opinions, he lays out all the options. And although Robby never comes out and says it, anyone following his line of questioning can see he does not think too highly of the Lochner decision. In fact, as he later reveals, the decision itself was overturned some 30 years later in 1937.

Just as the class reaches a crescendo of agreement over the weakness of Lochner, George immediately turns the discussion to Griswold v. Connecticut in which the majority would vote to overturn the state's 100-year-old ban against the sale and use of

contraceptives. And where would the lawyers for Griswold and the procontraception groups turn to justify their position--to something uncomfortably like the due process doctrine of Lochner.

Robby has different students read some of the opinions given in the case. Knowing the disrepute of Lochner, Justices Douglas and Goldberg tried to run away from "substantive" due process as fast as they could and establish other means for overturning the law. Yet, Justice Black, writing for the minority, suggested they were (to use Robby's words) just "Lochnerizing by another name." No matter if the law was a good law or a bad law, the Court was guilty of substituting its opinion for that of the elected legislature.

At this point, Robby looks directly at his students and asks a simple question: "Is there a double standard?" Can we have the results of Griswold without the reasoning of Lochner? Or has the court overstepped its constitutional restraints in Griswold much like it did in Lockner? Robby does not attempt to answer the dilemma. Rather, he switches the melody to a minor key by creating cognitive dissonance in his students' minds. As the students leave Dodds Auditorium, Robert George (professor/lawyer/conductor) has his class right where he wants them. He has called into question a leading case at the heart of the "sexual revolution" of the 1960's.

The strategy. Later that day, over lunch at Princeton's faculty dining room in Prospect House, Robby uses the morning's class to illustrate for me how his pedagogical strategy actually works. He could have begun the discussion of the high court's power to overturn state laws with the Griswold case. In this particular instance, the students' liberal passions would have drawn them whole-heartedly behind the court's decision to overturn the ban on consenting adults' right to use contraception. As Robby observes,

"They want it to be right. They think contraception is a great thing - as much sex as possible - sexual liberation." But, he did not begin with Griswold; Robby started with Lochner. Here, the courts did exactly what they would later do in Griswold, "but this time not in a liberal moral cause but in a conservative economic cause."

Reflecting on Lochner, students are quick to denounce what seems to be a "pure judicial usurpation" of the American democratic system of political authority. As George concurs, the Lochner decision was the "imposition" of a political "elite's" moral opinion on the rest of society. Yet, when the students fast forward to Griswold, a decision that fits their own moral biases, they begin to understand the inconsistency of denouncing the court's usurpation of judicial power for a conservative economic cause, while at the same time supporting the same invasive action for a result more to their liking. At this point, as Robby notes, "passions are beginning to stir."

If he had begun the class by asking only their opinion of Griswold, the students would have been overwhelmingly supportive. But by backlighting the case with Lochner, Robby has caused the students to walk out of the auditorium still happy with Griswold's results but wondering how--or even if-- they can justify the decision constitutionally. Robert George has these Princeton undergraduate students right where he wants them: "If you pit [their] passions against one another, you leave them no choice. They have to think, and once you start thinking, the world can look pretty different. It might be that *The New York Times* and the beautiful people aren't always right."

Precept experience. Unique to Princeton, the preceptorial system was begun in 1905 at the suggestion of Woodrow Wilson, who was at that time president of the university. Precepts are small groups consisting of an instructor and approximately a

dozen students. These discussion groups are held in order to promote active discussion of the week's readings and lectures. A typical humanities or social science course at Princeton would include two lectures and one precept each week. Most of the precepts are taught by teaching assistants, otherwise known as preceptors. Usually, the professor will lead only one of the precepts.

Twelve Princeton undergraduates are seated around eight small tables arranged in one large rectangle. Quietly conversing amongst themselves, they await the arrival of their professor/preceptor--Robert George. By the luck of the draw, the students assigned to this precept will be able to interact with one of Princeton's most popular professors in a much more intimate setting.

As evidenced by the computer portals on top of each table, Frist Hall is one of the newest buildings at Princeton. This being the first precept of the semester in a new building, Robby gets lost on the way to class and arrives almost 10 minutes late. Apologizing for his tardiness, Professor George takes his seat at the middle table in the front of the room.

Due as much to a still-adjusting thermostat as the informal air of the gathering, Robby slips off his suit coat and begins to take roll. Throughout the 90 minute precept he will make a concerted effort to attach the right names to the proper students because this 1-on-12 discussion group will be his only opportunity to interact with students on a more personal level. His three teaching assistants will handle the rest of the precepts.

Both the students and the teacher spend the next hour and a half feeling out their respective roles in this unique pedagogical environment. The undergraduates, eight males and four females, are still unsure which of Robby's questions are genuine invitations for a

response and which are simply rhetorical. They want to participate as knowledgeable contributors to the discussion, but, at the same time, they do not want to appear too eager to impress. As professor/preceptor, Robby walks a pedagogical tightrope between a discussion leader eliciting students' observations and analyses, and a teacher who seizes the teachable moments to emphasize points made in the lecture hall earlier in the day.

He begins the discussion by asking if anyone has any questions from the morning's class. One student brings up the notion of substantive due process. Robby then inquires whether another student might be able to explain the concept: "Ok, who thinks they got it? Let's see if somebody can do a better job than I did." One student takes up Robby's offer, and the class begins rehashing the same question discussed earlier: What constrains the authority a judge has to strike down a law enacted by the legislature?

Jumping from case to case and opinion to opinion, George challenges his students to think through these difficult legal issues. From Marbury v. Madison (1803) in the early nineteenth century to a 1989 case labeled Michael H. v. Gerald D., Robby quotes liberally from memory excerpts from majority and minority opinions. He wants his students to grapple with the extent of judicial power and to be able to give a reasonable explanation for their answers.

Sometimes, it seems that Robby's quest for scholarly precision overwhelms his teaching strategy. Although he makes it clear that he wants as much student participation as possible, he also communicates in not-so-subtle ways that student comments should be well considered and accurate. A couple of times he makes open pleas for student involvement: "I don't want anyone to hesitate to speak up." Yet, his own qualifying

rejoinders to student comments warn them to think before speaking: "That's not quite right . . . Fill out Shana's answer . . . I want more precision." Try as he might, Robby cannot hide his own opinion of student answers as the dozen undergrads compete to receive an "excellent" or "exactly, exactly."

As with the morning lecture, his conservative political voice speaks louder than his religious voice. Although Robby does make a point to compare a recent California case regarding a husband's right to his wife's child conceived in an adulterous affair to the Old Testament story of David, Bathsheeba, and Uriah the Hittite, his editorial comments in front of the students focus much more on his conservative views. For example, expressing his disagreement with the Senate's consideration of a mere censure for President Clinton, Robby makes it clear to the class that he was "all for impeachment." Both he and the students respond with knowing laughter.

For 90 minutes, Robby keeps the students on their toes as he pokes and prods their own opinions about the issue at hand. He wants them to feel free to talk, but more important, he wants them to connect their opinions to the facts and to sound, logical reasoning. No one's comments are left unevaluated (however subtly) by the professor; therefore, few students feel free to ask questions that might expose their own ignorance. This is not a discussion whose themes arise from the students' opinions about the reading and lecture; this is another lecture in the guise of a discussion, another opportunity for Robby to build his own case about the rightful use of the courts. Because newly formed notions can rarely compete with ideas that are 20 years old, students choose not to challenge Robby's points but simply seek to use their own learning to concur with his position.

Praying at Princeton. Sometimes conservative religious groups will warn entering college freshmen and their parents about the dangers in the secular university, where some agnostic or atheistic professor might take it as his or her mission to disabuse Christian students of their naive religious faith. Robert George, with some degree of pride, recounts a quotation from a colleague at Princeton who playfully accused Robby of "destroy(ing) the liberal faith" of impressionable Princeton students who hailed from good families and good high schools "where they [were] taught the principles of liberal toleration and pluralism." As Robby reflects on the common concern of conservative religious families about secular professors, he states, "If my colleague's allegations against me are true . . . I am happy to return the favor."

Asked for a specific illustration of how his faith informs his classroom performance, George recounts the day he began his class with a moment of silent prayer. It was the very first lecture in a course on civil liberties. With a lecture hall full of 200 undergraduates, Professor George began by reading lines from the opening paragraph of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness . . ."

Given that these students were about to embark on a study of the American tradition of civil liberties and that the Declaration is America's founding document, Robby suggested to his students that "perhaps it wouldn't be inappropriate if we begin by giving thanks to the Creator for our most cherished rights and liberties." So he encouraged the students to do just that, "according to their own faith tradition." And he added, for those students who were not believers in some form of Creator, they "might

take this opportunity to reflect on the source and origin of [the] liberties that I'm sure you cherish as much as the rest of us."

As Robby reflects on the moment, "I saw a look of terror on the faces of my eight teaching assistants who were senior graduate students and junior members of the faculty." But most of the students seemed to put their heads down and pray some type of prayer. After the moment of silent reflection, Professor George launched into his first lecture on American civil liberties with a discussion of school prayer.

George wondered what might happen in reaction to his creative and potentially controversial introduction to class that day. "I came back to my office and waited for the phone to ring" just in case the president of the ACLU was going to call. Robby even "hung around downstairs" near the department office to see what his colleagues might say. He did run into his chairman, who asked, "Robby, did you begin your course this morning with prayer?" After Robby confirmed the rumor, the chairman asked, "Well, what are we going to do with you?" That was the last Robby heard of the episode, and that was the last time he used such an introduction. Interestingly, as I talked to other people on campus about Processor George, that incident continues to be brought up when discussing his religious identity at Princeton.

Although Robby takes great pride in this story as one way he as a Christian professor has been able to challenge the liberalism of the university in his classroom, I think his most effective tactic has been his constant challenge to his students in the classroom to think for themselves and not just to accept the intellectual status quo (as seen above). In none of his classes, which cover many controversial moral issues including abortion, sexuality, marriage, free speech, church and state relations, and the

place of religion in the public life, does Professor George "privilege the liberal view." On the other hand, he does not "privilege" the Christian view either, preferring to allow it to compete on its own terms.

George might advocate the Christian stance at times on a given topic, but he will also play "devil's advocate" and argue the alternative side so that "the students will have to sort out for themselves where they think they stand on the issues." Robby's Christianity does not necessarily mean that he argues for the religious viewpoint as the correct one, but rather that he posits Christianity as a valid alternative. His goal is not necessarily to convince a student to change his or her liberal viewpoint, but at least to reconsider it and realize "there's a lot more to be said about the other side than I ever imagined." Christianity is to be taken as seriously as the liberal perspective with which it competes. As George proudly states, "There are no free rides in my classroom."

George has found the student response to be largely positive, and he relates to me how religious students, particularly Orthodox Jews and Evangelical students, "enjoy" his classes because there is an openness "to the possibility of there being a Supreme Being and of that mattering to us as individuals." These students find that both "refreshing" and "reassuring." Even those secular students who are "hostile" to religious faith do not create a stir because Robby is careful not "to jam Christianity" down their throats. In the end, according to Robby, "students get more focused on the fact that I'm a hard grader and they complain about that rather than my making them pray."

This same pedagogical perspective carries over into Robby's advising duties as well. In his responsibility as a faculty advisor, George is required to help both undergrads and graduate students work on research projects. He brings the same motivation and

strategy to these tasks. For example, trying to expose a student to the best argument on all sides of an issue, Robby will have a student studying abortion look into the science of embryogenesis and interuterine human development. Although the advisee may continue to hold the same viewpoint, he or she is "going to see that, 'Gee, this is a lot harder to defend than I thought it was.'" Robert George not only seeks to interact with students from his decidedly Christian, conservative world view, but also he makes a concerted effort to take confrontational strategy to the faculty lounge, both through conversation and his writings.

Rebel in the Faculty Lounge - A Dialectical Engagement

I ask Robby to share an incident in which his faith has influenced his interaction with colleagues. He tells me about a student meeting he conducted with a fellow faculty person in the department. They were meeting with all of the junior politics majors in order to explain to them the process of preparing their required junior independent papers (which is required of all Princeton third-year students).

With the advent of the Internet, the potential for plagiarism and cheating has increased, and the two men were careful to warn the students against this possible snare. Robby "warned them to avoid the occasions of sin" and cautioned his students not "to put themselves in the way of temptation." One practical tip offered was to do their work earlier rather than later, when panic might entice them beyond their ability to resist.

Then, effectively taking all the air out of the room, Robby gave them a final caution: Even if cheating students could avoid the prying eyes of their professor and escape undetected, they needed to know that "God would be watching." Immediately,

George's colleague, who was standing beside him at the front of the room, chimed in with his own secularist qualification, "Well, I don't think that." Robby retorted, "Well, I want to make it clear that I do."

I ask Professor George why he felt compelled to bring God into a seemingly innocuous conversation with a group of students. "I wanted the students to see," Robby tells me, "that not every professor is a secularist." He wanted his junior majors and his colleague to know there was at least one professor at Princeton who was willing to say, right in the presence of a fellow faculty member, that "God is in control of this thing" and that we are all "ultimately answerable . . . to Him." Robert George takes seriously his position as a role model on campus. He wants his colleagues and students to see "a smart person who had looked secularism in the face and said, 'I'm not buying this.'"

George's up-front, in-your-face presence as a Christian scholar is bold and confrontational, both within his collegial relationships at Princeton and in his discipline nationally. Unlike a chemist holed up in the lab every day for 80 hours a week, Robby readily admits that his research topics afford him no such insulation. "If you teach constitutional law, it's hard to hide your views on homosexuality or abortion." Therefore, aggressive, mind-to-mind combat comes with the vocational territory. "People want to take me on, but I want to take them on." George adds, "I'm as aggressive toward their liberalism as they are to my Christianity."

Referring to his running dialogue with faculty colleagues as the "dialectical engagement of professional scholars," George is happy to make his argument as best he can, listen to the other side's argument, and then be "willing to follow reason wherever it leads." He confidently adds, "I think it leads to faith. They don't." This combative

approach holds true in his discipline as well. Speaking of his secular fellow scholars in political theory, "We want to argue with you. It's not that we want you to leave us alone. Don't leave us alone. Challenge us . . . we want to debate. We want to have the argument."

In fact, in his own disciplinary field of political theory as well as in philosophy, George finds increased "openness" to the religious point of view. "While one does run into people who are hostile toward Christianity, you might run into many, many people who are either Christian themselves or [believing] Jews, or open to the arguments of believing Christians and Jews." Certainly, the standing of religious ideas in Robby's discipline has been aided by a number of prestigious people who are avowed Christians, including Alasdair McIntyre, Charles Taylor, Mary Ann Glenden, and Jean Bethke Elshtain. According to Robby, these "out of the closet" Christians in the discipline give more credibility to the idea of Christianity as a "plausible intellectual position."

Also, the critique of the secular, liberal position has gained more and more adherents, including scholars who "have come to see that liberalism's putative neutrality is really a kind of mask." Some of these scholars are Michael Sandel at Harvard and the late Christopher Lasch. George credits scholars in the fields of philosophy and political theory like Glendon, Finnis, Stephen Carter of Yale, and Gerard Bradley of Notre Dame, among others, with an effective attack against the "radical, old fashioned ACLU liberalism," which demarcates a sharp break between religious faith and public life. As Robby states with confident anticipation, "It has been brutally, savagely, and I think probably fatally attacked intellectually in the literature of these disciplines."

Thus, for George and other scholars like him, the intellectual climate for the religious scholar has improved in the last 20 years. Critics of liberal secularism, both believers and nonbelievers, have forced people to realize that "they can't just stand up and say mindless, anti-Christian things and not be met with serious intellectual responses." It is no longer so easy to silence the Christian voice in the public square. "Radical, old-fashioned ACLU liberalism" has become tougher to defend.

When Robert George describes his scholarly strategy as a "dialectical engagement," I want to know what intellectual means he uses to engage others in public debate. As seen above, a central tension in the academic career of a Christian scholar is the place of revelation (the Bible) in his or her arguments. So when George recounts his skirmishes with the secular liberalism that controls the American academy, I want to find out more about his favored arsenal, as well as the manner in which he deploys it.

Robby is clear about his objective: "I want to show that the Judeo-Christian tradition is rationally defensible in a way that liberal secularism is not rationally defensible." In the religious journal *First Things*, George (1999) writes, "I shall argue that the Christian moral view is rationally defensible. Indeed, my claim is that the Christian moral teaching can be shown to be rationally superior to orthodox secular moral beliefs" (p. 1). Carrying this fundamental strategy into both religious and nonreligious arenas, Robby uses contentious moral issues to demonstrate what he believes to be the superiority of the Christian world view.

How does George do this? Where does Scripture fit into his strategy? He readily admits that his position on these divisive issues in American culture is biblically informed. Robby believes the Bible to be a "source of tremendous wisdom." For

example, when exploring the concept of marriage, he attempts to show how "the Bible teaches us something important" when it describes marriage as "a one flesh communion of a man and a woman ordained toward their own fulfillment as a couple and as parents of children who came into the world by virtue of their bodily unity and then are raised in context of the family."

Yet, while Robby uses the wisdom of Scripture to form his own position on the issue at hand and believes it "implausible" that a source of such tremendous wisdom could be true "without it being a divinely inspired source," he still refuses "to appeal to biblical revelation" as the final arbiter in the intellectual and moral disputes. "I don't presuppose the authority of biblical faith because that is what is in question; that is what is in dispute." He does not wish to beat secularists "over the head with the Bible," but rather to discourse with them "on the [intellectual] plane where they say they want to have the argument--the plane of rationality."

So, although the Bible might teach us something important about marriage, "we can't simply rely on the Bible's statement that marriage is a one-flesh communion of persons." Rather, Robby's preferred umpire in these arguments remains reason. "By the application of our faculty of reason," scholars can affirm something as valid or invalid. Reason "leads to truth in all areas of human inquiry" according to Robby; therefore, even in the arena of moral philosophy and political theory, "we have to reason our way to the truth."

Now he returns to a reasonable defense of the Christian view of marriage and the role of sexual intimacy. Is marriage, George (1999) asks, simply a social and legal convention which serves as "a purely emotional bond between two persons"? Or are

there reasons to believe otherwise? Without going too deeply into Robby's complex argument, he tries to show the centrality of sex to a person's psychosomatic integrity by going back to the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, the Roman stoic Musonis Rufus, and the Jewish tradition.

Because humans are "embodied" beings and "not simply inhabitors of a suit of flesh," the biological union of spouses "consummates" and "actualizes" their marriage. The union of a man and a woman for reproduction literally makes the two "one flesh" or one organism. As an essential aspect of marriage, the sexual union of husband and wife is "the biological matrix of the multi-level (bodily, emotional, dispositional, spiritual) sharing of life and commitment that marriage is." The whole person is involved. To use sex apart from the holistic commitment of marriage purely for pleasure, feelings of intimacy, or any other extrinsic goal would disrupt the unity of the self and the body and the full relational communion of the two people involved.

Another, more easily accessible illustration of Professor George's "reasonableness" strategy is his exchange with Stanley Fish at the American Political Science Association convention in September 1998. Fish, then of Duke University, and famed proponent of literary deconstructionism and opponent of the idea of absolute truth apart from the knower, was participating on a panel with George. The panel's task was to debate whether or not "moral truth can be attained by reason and whether deep differences of moral opinion can be solved by rational argument" (personal correspondence).

Within Fish's presentation, he had suggested that the pro-choice advocates of abortion rights had used scientific evidence to support their view, whereas the pro-life

side simply relied on religious doctrine. Robby quickly corrected Fish and presented scientific evidence supporting the pro-life side. After listening to George's evidence about exactly "when a new member of homo sapiens comes into existence as a self-integrating organism," Fish "graciously conceded the point" and suggested that abortion supporters needed to "shift tactics" in light of this evidence and go "elsewhere in search of rhetorical weaponry."

It must be noted that even though Fish was persuaded to change his mind on the abortion arguments, he still did not abandon his skepticism about the capacity of moral arguments to resolve moral disagreements. When Robby suggested that many people exist who are "open minded" about such moral issues, Fish insisted that "there is no such thing as an open mind." And, in characteristically witty fashion, Robby has since written, "I don't think [Fish] is right about that; but I'm trying to remain open minded about it."

When he goes on the intellectual and rhetorical attack in his role as a professor of political philosophy and defender of a conservative, religious world view, Robby often deploys two lines of argumentation simultaneously. As he defends the rational superiority of the conservative, religious stance on issues of public morality, he also attacks secular orthodoxy as an inferior, alternative world view that has taken on the disguise of a neutral arbiter. He calls out those who would claim secularism "to be a neutral" doctrine that deserves privileged status as the national, public philosophy.

If liberalism/secularism is itself a "tradition of thought about personal and political morality," then it must compete with the other traditions including the Judeo-Christian tradition. Its proponents must be able to defend secularism's set of metaphysical and moral propositions in the court of reason. To accede to its claims of

neutrality would be, according to Robby, like accepting the claims of a baseball pitcher who during a game takes it upon himself to start calling balls and strikes.

George also uses reason and logic to demonstrate the "massive philosophical problem" of those relativistic secularists who resist the possibility of any absolute moral truth. Relativistic secularism as manifested in liberalism, preaches tolerance, pluralism, and the necessity of respecting the rights of others. But, George asks, "Why on a liberal secular premise should anyone respect the rights of others?" Behind the liberal virtues of tolerance and pluralism lies a moral standard. What is the source of that standard, and how can anyone defend the standard in a completely relativistic world? Thus, Robby, along with the moral philosopher Alasdair McIntyre, labels the relativistic tradition of orthodox secularism a "tradition in crisis."

George is comfortable with reason as his epistemic authority for at least two reasons. First, he believes passionately that the attempt to treat faith and reason as competing adjudicators of truth or even as separate intellectual paths is a false dichotomy. Along with his Swarthmore mentor, James Kurth (1994), Robby claims that orthodox secularism has attempted to marginalize religious judgment as an irrational argument based on a nonrational faith. We have "reasons to believe the authority of the Bible." Religious convictions are not some Kierkegaardian leap of faith, but "an elaborate case has to be made." Therefore, he uses reason to defend the rationality of biblically informed views and to knock secular orthodoxy off its privileged rationalistic pedestal.

Following the thought of his Oxford mentor, John Finnis, Robby then uses the principles of "natural law" and "natural justice" to prove that "religiously informed moral judgment" can be based on and defended "by appeal to publicly accessible reasons." He

wants "to do battle with secularism on the field of rational debate" because he genuinely believes his religiously informed position to be rationally superior.

A second factor George gives in citing reason rather than revelation as his fundamental authority is that most of his audience, including his opponents, does not accept the premise that the Bible is a divinely inspired source of wisdom and truth. Consequently, he chooses to use an authority recognized by most involved: reason and "philosophical analysis." However, George wants to make it clear that he is not denigrating the Bible's identity as an inspired text. "I don't run or hide from the Bible .... On the other hand, for purposes of philosophical argument (because that is what philosophy is) I don't cite it simply as true by virtue of its revealed status."

Even though Robby does not explicitly use Scripture in building his dialectical strategy to debate moral issues, he still possesses an implicit commitment to the Bible as his final authority in all issues of faith and practice. Hence, George's dialectical strategy is not an end in itself but simply a means to an end. Robby is not satisfied just to convince others that a conservative moral stance on abortion or homosexuality is the rationally defensible one. He also wants to point them to the "truth of the Christian tradition" in all areas of life.

If those on the other side begin to credit Christianity with some authority on the controversial moral issues and begin to appreciate how Christians have tenaciously held onto these positions despite tremendous opposition and ridicule, maybe those people agnostic to the faith will give some consideration to other biblical claims, including its identity as a divinely inspired text. Robby begins to describe his use of reason as a type of scholarly proselytization: "I think I have persuaded some people of the falsehood of

the opposing position and, perhaps, even some people to look beyond the conversion of their [moral] views to, perhaps, the conversion of their hearts to faith in Christ."

Even with his dialectical strategy and conviction of the reasonableness of the Christian world view, George has a realistic outlook on his prospects for success. "There's a lot of prejudice against religion," and "that prejudice is an impediment to understanding in this arena just as it is in any other arena."

Given these strong barriers, Robby prefers to define success with a focus on faithfulness. "Our task is to make the argument, put the case before them, listen to what they have to say, engage it, try to think it through with them, try to cooperate in the enterprise of learning [and] coming to know the truth." "And the rest," George adds, "is in God's hands." In the end, this dialectical strategy is a supernatural exercise in which scholars can only be effective as "instruments" in the hands of God. 'If people are going to come to faith, it's going to be God bringing them to faith. We're just . . . screwdrivers and hammers and chisels and wrenches in God's hands."

Rebel in the Public Square

With his recent appointment to the McCormick professorship, Robert George's status as an intellectual voice for conservatism has been elevated both in the university community and in the cultural debate in the public square. Increased visibility has brought more attention to his scholarly work, as well as more invitations to speak. In just the last six months since his appointment he has testified before Congress in support of a bill protecting the lives of babies who survive an abortion procedure, addressed a

conference of judges of the fifth circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals, and lectured to numerous religious and educational groups.

Because there are so few conservatives in the secular academy today, Robby often finds himself called on to represent the conservative side at places like Yale and Cambridge on topics ranging from religious liberty and the sanctity of human life to constitutional interpretation. Interestingly, because there are so many scholars willing to represent the other side, Robby observes, "I very rarely find myself opposite the same person twice." One such example of George's identity as the conservative voice on campus recently took place at Princeton.

Flipping through the cable news channels late one Friday evening, a viewer is caught off guard when Bill O'Reilly of Fox News leads off an interview segment with the words: "Censorship at Princeton University." He then introduces a distinguished professor from the school who is also the director of the James Madison Program of American Ideals and Institutions, none other than Robert George.

Robby had written an article sharply critical of President Bill Clinton and his liberal supporters that was to be run in the Princeton student newspaper on the same day Clinton was to visit the campus to give a major policy address. At the last minute, for reasons still under dispute, the editors of the student paper had pulled George's piece.

Undeterred, George sent his essay to the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* who decided to publish George's article themselves. Here is how the editors of the *Journal* prefaced Robby's article (George, 2000a):

> In advance of Bill Clinton's visit to Princeton University yesterday, the campus newspaper agreed to publish an opinion piece by jurisprudence professor Robert P. George that was critical of the president. When

> conference planners learned of the agreement, they prevailed upon the editors of the *Daily Princetonian* not to publish his piece on the day of the visit. We are pleased to print it here. (A22)

George uses his article, "The Clinton Puzzle: Why Do Liberals Love Him So?" to ask two basic questions. First, why do liberals support a president who has sided with the conservative agenda on quite a few issues including welfare reform, free trade, and various economic policies? Second, Robby also wonders why conservatives still "think so ill of Bill Clinton."

As a self-described "conservative academic," Robby gives his reasons for his own utter contempt for the president: "He is an unprincipled and deeply dishonorable man." Robby then seeks to prove his point by running through the list of "Mr. Clinton's knavery," including his vetoes of congressional acts banning partial-birth abortion, his long record as a "master of prevarication," and his many instances of "reckless sexual immorality."

Given this long list of moral failures, as well as Clinton's frequent conservative policy decisions, George returns to his critical question: "Why do liberals like him so?" How could liberals and feminists adulate a man with such a long history of treating individual women in such a dishonorable way? How could adoring crowds of liberals at Princeton or in Hollywood cheer the man as a conquering hero when, as George writes, this man of "bad character would sell them out in an instant if it would serve his ambitions and his appetites?"

Answering his own question, George gives two possible answers. First, while Clinton has "sold out" the liberal agenda at various points, he still remains true in his protection of basic "lifestyle freedoms" like abortion. And second, the more Clinton is

disliked by those on the right, the more those on the left love him. "The enemy of their enemy must, they suppose, be their friend." From the liberal perspective, Clinton still is, after all, the only barrier between them and "the ayatollahs" of the religious right.

Fox News had picked up on the controversy and was conducting an interview with Robby. After a quick rehearsal of the facts of the case as well as George's basic argument presented in the editorial, O'Reilly asks the professor: "You are rare in that not too many academics criticize the liberal power structure in this country. Do you feel any heat?"

Robby answers quickly and firmly, "Oh, no," and he gives an explanation of the progress he has experienced in his own academic career despite his deeply conservative views. And although he is criticized for his positions, Robby makes it clear to O'Reilly that he welcomes criticism because it promotes debate on the issues, which is one of his major objectives as a scholar: "I'm delighted. I"m all for robust debate."

Clearly, the furor created by the *Wall Street Journal* piece has provided Robert George one more opportunity to create such debate on campus as well as in the public square. Whatever criticism he himself may receive is secondary to the very fact that people are taking the time and energy to discuss the issues, and, he hopes, viewing the conservative religious stance as a viable alternative.

Why a Success?

To be on the conservative side in the academy on many of the moral issues debated today is to be in a distinctly minority position. "I mean, if you're pro-life,"

George explains, "it's not something that is going to do you good to advertise if you are applying for a beginning job in political theory or if you're up for tenure."

Careful to provide some qualification to his explicit claim of discrimination, Robby admits that a more private exercise of one's religious faith would not be something to cause worry. Simply attending church on Sunday is not a problem. But if "they are inferring from that church attendance that you might be pro-life or you might be in favor of traditional marriage, [or] you might have a problem with homosexuality, you can expect harassment."

When pressed for particular illustrations of this charge, Robby refused to name names, only to reassure me he has known faculty to be denied a job, tenure, or promotion based on their conservative, religious stance. He did pass on one piece of heresay evidence he received from a nonbelieving colleague who reported conversations with other nonbelieving faculty who had experienced great joy because they had "stopped so and so from getting a position because he's pro-life."

Still, in his own personal experience in the university, Robby has found "a lot of prejudice against faith." When faced with an argument from a Christian perspective, people have already made up their minds. They have prejudged the truth and automatically discounted a nonsecular position. For George, a scholar who desperately desires to engage people in reasonable arguments and who is convinced of the reasonableness of his own position, this prejudice becomes almost "omnipresent."

Comparing this biased, liberal stance to the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Robby calls it an "apparently impregnable barrier" as it dominates journalism, Hollywood, and certainly the American university. He fears for young Christian scholars

who will face this prejudice. "If they are hired, they still might not be tenured. If they are tenured, they still might not be promoted and . . . given a good salary." Robby worries about encouraging these young academics to pursue academic careers: "I can only hope they have had the good luck that I've had. But I can't guarantee it."

When Robby George refers to his own "good luck," I remember something he had told me earlier in our conversation about the hurdles conservative Christian scholars face. If one has a strong conservative moral view, Robby said, one should not advertise it, although Robby himself had "gotten away with it." How had he gotten away with it? Was it a circumstance based purely on "good luck?" I cannot buy that simplistic answer, and somehow I know Robby does not buy it either.

In Robert George's case at Princeton, a number of variables have converged to provide this conservative, moral voice a unique and prestigious soapbox to make his decidedly anti-liberal argument in the midst of the liberal establishment. For one, Robby himself believes there still exists a type of liberal who is liberal in the best sense of the word. Not only are they appalled at any stream of discrimination, but they also believe it to be of utmost importance to have alternative views present on controversial moral issues. Knowledge itself is advanced by encouraging tolerance of opposing voices.

George believes this old-style liberalism still has some hold in his own department because he would never have been hired if this were not the case. Sometimes, Robby will refer to himself as the token conservative on Princeton's campus: "I think [the administration] probably likes to point to me when they are criticized for liberal bias and say, 'Well, we have one.'"

A second factor contributing to his own successful climb within the secular academy, according to Robby, is his identity as a conservative Catholic scholar rather than as an Evangelical Protestant. Although, "there is certainly prejudice in the academy against Catholics, it's not nearly as severe as the prejudice against Evangelicals."

Through the writings of Augustine, Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, and other Catholic scholars, the Catholic religious tradition has maintained a "distinguished intellectual tradition" that cannot be "waved off as meaningless" by others in the university. But Evangelical Protestants do not carry the same history of intellectual substance in the eyes of the academy. So, although Catholics may be regarded as "misguided and retrograde," unlike the Evangelicals, Catholic professors are not seen as "dumb and ignorant"--Bible bashers on "the side of darkness."

Knowing his strong Catholic sentiments, I asked Robby if he could ever imagine himself at a Catholic university. He told me he had considered an offer from Notre Dame a few years before, but his wife was reluctant to leave the Princeton environment. In addition, his close friends and advisors cautioned him not to throw away the opportunity he had as an "out-of-the-closet Christian" working at a place like Princeton.

During another part of the same conversation, George made a startling observation: He believes he would face "more animosity" at a Catholic institution like Georgetown or Boston College than he does at Princeton. As a conservative Catholic he "would be more threatening to the liberal Catholics who dominate Catholic university faculties" than at a secular Princeton. In George's estimation, the historic Catholic universities have "accommodated" to the secular liberalism of today's academy in order "to be accepted" by the elite institutions like Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. They have

repudiated the conservatism of their forebearers in order to embrace the liberalism of the elite. Anyone who would suggest otherwise, including the Pope, is not welcome.

Revealing his own values and motivation, Robby then comments on these schools' desire to be accepted: "Why? So, they are accepted by Harvard, so what? Is that worth it?" "In the end," he continues, "I don't think that will be what matters." "I never would have made it," Robby exclaims, at a place like Georgetown because "at Princeton, I'm an oddity [while] at a liberal Catholic institution I'm the enemy."

Third, George has been successful because he is exceedingly good at what he does. He is properly credentialed with degrees from all the right places. In an academic aristocracy that sometimes is based as much on location as ideas, you cannot do much better than Harvard and Oxford. He has also been published in many of his discipline's prestigious journals, including the *Harvard Law Review* (1997a), the *Yale Law Journal* (1997b), and the *American Journal of Jurisprudence* (2000b). In an academic universe in which a conservative religious view "does not receive a discount," George has proved (with a scholarly record second to few) time and time again that he belongs.

Last, Robby attributes his "good luck" to his own combative and extremely verbal personality. With Robert George, you never have to wonder where he stands or what he thinks about an issue. Since his youth, he has always found it "difficult to keep [his] mouth shut or hold [his] views to [himself]." If anyone had ever suggested to him as an assistant professor that he keep his Christian faith and conservative world view to himself (at least until tenure), Robby's personality would never have allowed him to follow the advice. "It is not in my nature," explains Robby, "I just can't contain myself."

And, in the end, Robby firmly believes his bombastic, in-your-face style actually helped him. His "very public record of hostility" to the conventional orthodoxy was impossible to miss. And, given his outstanding body of work including his publication and teaching record, for the administration to deny him tenure "could have been viewed [a] very public display of their prejudice." A more quiet, "under the table" Christian could have been rejected for his religious views without anyone on the outside knowing it. As Robby astutely observes, "In a way, my high visibility and high visibility of my faith commitments made it harder for them to practice discrimination."

Or, to put it another way, Robby's scholarly identity as rebel-professor may have actually helped him achieve his current wave of success as an outspoken conservative religious voice within a decidedly secular and liberal academic universe. In the end, his choice of ethical stance, his desire to use Christ to transform culture, has combined with Robby's own combative personality and his immense scholarly talent to provide him a strategic place to carry out his vocational mission.

Professor George could never be content to retreat into some academic monastery to ply his trade in religious isolation, nor would his conscience allow him to become immersed in a secular culture without speaking out. Rather, Robby holds Christ and culture in continual tension. His faith-informed, conservative world view combines with his academically trained approach to scholarship to enable Robby to thrive in an arena in which others have failed even to survive.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE A PARADOX?

Introduction

"When the Word of God says one thing and scholarship says another, scholarship can go to Hell" (Hofstadter, 1963, p. 122). This stark quote from the lips of evangelist Billy Sunday (the Billy Graham of the early twentieth century) is used by historian Richard Hofstadter in his 1963 Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, to identify the conservative religious mind as one source of anti-intellectualism in America. With the likes of Sunday ranting against the "degenerates" in higher education and William Jennings Bryan using the Scopes Trial to denounce the simian-worshiping evolutionary scientists, Hofstadter was simply describing popular fundamentalist religion's increasing detachment from the secular, educational elite.

This pattern was not necessarily new to the 1900s, as Sidney Mead notes in his remarks about the early history of the Evangelical movement since 1800: "Americans have in effect been given the hard choice between being intelligent according to standards prevailing in their intellectual centers, and being religious according to the standards prevailing in their denominations" (as cited in Hofstadter, 1963, p. 119).

Although most conservative Christian faculty would continue to hold Sunday's high view of the Bible as divine revelation, few, if any, would espouse his false dichotomy between scripture and scholarship. The more intriguing question is not whether today's conservative religious scholars side with Billy Sunday; rather, we ask

how many in the academy continue to agree with Richard Hofstadter. Does his indictment still have legs?

Can a professor be a Christian and still be considered an intellectual by his disciplinary brethren? Can she be an outspoken Christian whose faith and theology clearly influence her research and teaching without being accused by the secular academy of bias, which leads to second class scholarship? As Alan Wolfe (2000) has remarked, "Liberals have long assumed that [conservative] Christians cannot sustain disinterested inquiry" (p. 7). Is it possible for the Christian scholar to be smart and devout at the same time?

"How does it feel to be a paradox?" (Gates, 1997, p. xix). In his introduction to *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man*, Henry Gates asks this rhetorical question to highlight the plight of being a successful African-American male in white America. Gates returns to the question three times in fewer than 20 pages in order to stress the "competing impostures" (p. xix) adopted by a group of people who feel forced to live their lives between cultures that are apparently at odds–people asked to don two seemingly contradictory identities.

Are Christian scholars also asked to live lives of paradox? Are they caught between the questioning and sometimes cynical world of the academic intelligentsia and the devout fervor of their religious faith? Are the spirit and the mind at odds? Can faith and reason be complementary paths toward understanding?

"Why, in a culture where so many academics profess to believe in God, do so few reflect on the academic implications of that belief?" (Marsden, 1997, p. 4). When George Marsden asks this paradoxical question, he reveals the schizophrenic tendencies of people

who must continually negotiate between what they perceive to be "alternative inauthenticities" (Gates, 1997). If the two worlds of their existence seem to be antithetical to each other, they abandon any attempt to integrate the two into an authentic whole and adopt a compartmentalized approach to life.

Our three storytellers have encountered the paradox of life in the secular academy. Michael Behe has come face to face with the long and eventful battle between science and religion. From Darwin in the 1860s to Scopes in the 1920s, and now to the Kansas state school board, people from all walks of life struggle to integrate the findings of science and the teaching of scripture. Religious scientists like Behe are forced to synthesize the supernatural assumptions of their faith with the naturalistic world view of their discipline. How can the universe be closed and open at the same time?

Expressed more as an internal tension and personal negotiation than Behe's disciplinary tete-e-tete, Mary Poplin's struggle continues as she attempts to connect the hopefulness of her new found faith with her own pessimistic evaluation of higher education's ability to solve the many societal problems its researchers uncover. Is it possible for her to respond to community illnesses, which have been exposed by critical theorists, with antidotes supplied by the New Testament?

In a very proactive stance, Robert George embraces the incongruity of a conservative ideologue teaching within the lairs of one of the liberal establishment's most cherished academic institutions. Could William F. Buckley be hired at Princeton? What about Rush Limbaugh? George's aggressive confrontation of his career's dual realities begins to answer such outlandish suggestions.

Each of these religious professors has a story to tell and lessons to teach us. In the following pages, we will first look at a recap of those lessons grouped around common themes. Having taken the time to look across the narratives for further observations about life in the academy, we will then offer some words of advice for those involved in the scholarly enterprise. Finally, we will end with the question that began our journey outside of Wells Hall: What does it mean to be a Christian scholar within a secular academy?

Reading Across the Lives

Two men and one woman, each serious academics and all devoted to their faith, have opened the windows to their minds and souls and allowed us a glimpse of life in the academy. By giving each professor the freedom and time to tell his or her story, we have been able to "situate our work in present social contexts," which Tierney (1997) claims is necessary to reveal the institutionalization of a minority group by a more powerful majority (p. 12). Unlike other research approaches, which may give a broad scope without the necessary depth, biography "is a sensitive enough instrument" (Dews & Law, 1995, p. 5) to give voice to oppressed groups in social contexts where such prejudice might otherwise be ignored.

Spending time with these storytellers in their offices as well as observing them at work, I begin to hear and see what Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994) calls the "narrator's central preoccupation" (p. 613). Through the stories and the silence, we can find the "driving current that flows through his or her life story." Through the portal of the single life

(times three) and each traveler's "lifetime of awareness," we can learn intriguing lessons about the academy and gain revealing insights into the life of the religious scholar.

Now we move from a narrative analysis of the individual life to an analysis across the narratives, which begins to inform our understanding with themes common to the three. They help to answer our central questions: (a) externally, what discriminatory barriers have they faced, and (b) internally, what conflicting tensions have they felt? What academic dreams and aspirations cannot be reached, and what religious commitments cannot be expressed? These more universal themes, some broad and others more detailed, will allow us the freedom to generalize some of the experiences of a few to a wider audience.

Merging Doubt and Belief

When a *Newsweek* reporter (Begley, 1998) admits that the profoundly religious and the deeply scientific are both "driven" to understand the same world, yet the writer still questions whether science and religion can ever be reconciled because "the default setting of science is eternal doubt" and "the core of religion is faith," she is acknowledging the central epistemic tension for any religious scholar (p. 51). Are reason and faith at war, as Thomas Hume implied? Can religious orientations exist alongside a set of academic disciplines that originate from largely scientific methodologies? Is there a conflict between what Freeman Dyson (1998) calls "the old fashioned family religion that commands [people] to believe without question" and "the ethics of science that commands them to question everything" (p. 8)?

One of the major tensions that has consistently shown up across all three faculty narratives as well as much of the literature on Christian faculty within the secular academy has been epistemological in nature. How do Christian academics who recognize the Bible as a source of knowledge interact with secular scholars who consider Scripture as nothing more than a nice piece of literature? How do religious faculty who claim allegiance to a supernatural world view relate to scholars who hold to a closed universe with no possibility of divine intervention? Questions about the nature of knowledge and reality can become major points of contention.

Using our three academic journeys, along with some related thoughts from other scholars, we will reflect on these possible epistemological tensions through two interrelated questions: (a) What types of questions are being asked? Can we cleanly separate religion's quest from that of science? Is the one focused on the mystical whereas the latter is concerned only with the empirical? and (b) What methodology is being used in the search for understanding? What is the role of divine revelation for the Christian scholar?

Questions. Religion and the academic sciences, although often operating as polarities in our culture, actually attempt to organize the same material in order to answer similar questions. John Horgan (1996) uses his book *The End of Science* to describe science's quest for what he refers to as "the answer." "The ostensible goal of science, philosophy, religion, and all forms of knowledge," Horgan states, "is to transform the great 'Huh?' of mystical wonder into an even greater 'Aha!' of understanding" (p. 266).

Still, there are those who attempt to contrast the quest of religion with the role of science by relegating the mystical and the ethical to religion while emphasizing science's

search for the empirical and the verifiable. In a type of "Kantian divide" (Kant differentiated the phenomena from the noumena), they seek to protect the intellectual credibility of both science and religion by giving the former the domain of nature and the latter the realm of metaphysics. "Science [is] based on reason and knowledge while religion is based on faith and belief" (Whitney, 1986, pp. 28-29).

Having investigated the work of three religious scholars, however, it becomes increasingly difficult to find a sharp demarcation between the questions asked by scientists and concerns voiced by a person of faith. Michael Behe has shown us how closely the quest of Darwin aligns with the questions of Genesis. As Behe notes, "science . . . has theological implications."

Even scholars without a religious bent have pointed out the overlap between physics and metaphysics. Like theology and philosophy, notes philosopher of science John Greene (1981), the study of science brings you "face to face with the deepest questions human beings can ask" (p. 196). A theory takes in the whole of reality and an academic cannot seek to understand what Greene calls the "facts out there" without also making sense of the "facts in here" (p. 132). Observations about the nature of the physical world go hand in hand with assumptions about one's own existence and sense of moral accountability. Metaphysical and ontological presuppositions stand behind one's stated academic theories as well as the methodologies used to propose those theories.

Methods. Maybe the most perplexing epistemological tension for the Christian professor is the role of revelation in his or her work. Whereas the nonreligious scientist has only the empirical means of the scientific method as his or her guide, the Christian scientist holds to a second epistemic authority: revelation. Scripture becomes a source of

knowledge for the religious academic, which is not shared by everyone. How do we include religious voices in the university's conversation if divine revelation is automatically considered to be out of bounds due to its inaccessible starting points and inaccessible methodologies?

Many Christian scholars serving in the secular academy have chosen to play by the naturalistic rules adopted by the university. Marsden (1997) compares the scholarly conversation to a court of law in which a lawyer cannot argue on the basis of evidence or an authority not acceptable to the court. So, in academic life, "it simply does not advance the discussion to introduce an authority that other people do not accept (p. 48). Robert George concurs with Marsden's plea to play by the academic rules. Even though George freely admits to his belief in the divine origin of the Bible and its formative influence on his moral views, he still chooses to do intellectual battle on the field of rational debate. For George, it would be logically indefensible to begin an argument assuming the authority of the Bible when that premise is already in dispute.

George is also comfortable with reason as his epistemic authority because of his conviction that reason and faith go hand in hand in the search for truth. The false dichotomy between reason and faith that some have proposed originated, according to George, with orthodox secularists' attempt to marginalize religious ideas as nonrational and illegitimate tools in the field of scholarship. As George bluntly states, "We have reasons to believe." He is not content to stop there, however, as he goes on to claim that his conservative, religiously informed world view is "rationally defensible in a way that liberal secularism is not." He harbors no doubts or hesitancy in advancing his intellectual causes within the "plane of rationality."

Behe concurs with George's position: "You have to have reasons," says Behe; "nobody has blind faith." Rationality must be the standard of all viewpoints--religious or scientific. Therefore, Behe is happy to sum up his own research approach with one basic question: "Where does our common experience lead us?"

Behe does take the debate over epistemology into a more postmodern direction when he admits that no one's views, including his own, are acquired in an emotional vacuum. As other scholars have shown, no method is completely neutral or value-free. John Greene (1981) has suggested that no scholar exists "uncontaminated" by the "preconditions of his age and culture" (p. 7). With the work of Kuhn (1970), Merton (1973), and other post-Enlightenment scholars, the supposedly neutral and objective methods of science have been exposed as "frameworks of assumptions" (Marsden, 1997, p. 27) that themselves have not necessarily been established on scientific grounds. Part of the scholarly process is to bring those nonrational factors to the surface and admit them, while submitting them to the light of reasonable debate.

What happens, however, when religiously informed beliefs alter a scholar's position or argument? Granted, in most cases the Bible has little to say regarding many theoretical or factual discussions taking place. Isaiah remains silent about the historical fact of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and Matthew makes no comment on the make-up of a particular nucleic acid. What happens, however, when Michael Behe is willing to contemplate the possibility that there is more to this universe than pure matter? What happens when Robert George argues for marriage as an institution solely for one man and one woman? What happens when Mary Poplin suggests the primary problem of inequitable power structures in American schools is, at root, a sin issue?

At the end of the day, some religious academics wonder if it is not the method that is the problem, but the conclusion. Would an Episcopal political science professor who bases his support for homosexual rights on the religious doctrine that all men are created in God's image be treated the same as a conservative Evangelical in the same department who speaks out against the gay rights movement based on her reading of Scripture?

Exotic or Toxic?

In her book about religion's place in the elite universities, *Finding God at Harvard* (1996), Kelly Monroe recounts a trip she and a friend took to Dartmouth. While visiting its chapel near the center of campus, they were astonished to find some of the beautiful stained glass windows in the building boarded over with plywood. Later, they discovered these widows had not been excluded randomly. With more than a hint of irony, Monroe tries to make sense of why a university whose motto, *Vox Clamantis in Deserto* ("voice crying in the wilderness"), reflects its original mission to take religious instruction to Native Americans would now choose to conceal only those windows featuring Jesus.

"In a place with so many words, we learn by asking what the university is *silent* about" (Monroe, 1996, p. 17). Christian faculty frequently have commented on the academy's reluctance to mention the religious point of view except in the blandest of terms. Sometimes the power of the majority over the minority is felt more with silent stares than verbal rants. The effect of the shrugged shoulders or the diverted glance can be just as powerful as a slap in the face. Dews (1995) describes this as "fac[ing] the

erasure that the academy attempts to impose on those whom it accepts within its ranks but then asks to forget their pasts, to deny their stories" (pp. 334-335). Why do lists of oppressed groups in the American university seldom, if ever, include religious scholars? The silence can be deafening.

When Robert George describes the academy's prejudice against religious ideas as "omnipresent," he is reflecting its subtle pervasiveness more than overt acts of discrimination. Like Mary Poplin's confession of feeling "watched" by her "bemused" colleagues and Mike Behe's account of a loss of face rather than loss of a job, George points us away from accusations of blatant intolerance and toward a university culture of tacit acknowledgment without a commitment to respectful acceptance.

Maybe the reason Stephen Carter's claim of "anti-religious slurs" on the part of the academy are met with such incredulous replies can be found in the muffled nature of the academy's prejudice. Although many of the Christian faculty I interviewed knew of someone who had suffered overt acts of discrimination, such as loss of job or denial of promotion for his or her religious beliefs, very few offered first-person testimonials to blatant bigotry.

Mary Poplin's name was taken off the donor entertainment list, and her classes were never added to the Women's Studies recommended course list. Michael Behe received one negative vote in his promotion review, mostly due to his controversial book. Yet, each of them has earned the rank of full professor and neither of them is in any danger of having his or her tenure revoked. And Robert George, who is never shy about expressing his religiously informed political views, has received one of the highest honors

a university can bestow on a scholar. Maybe in a sophisticated atmosphere like the American university, potential prejudice is not so much seen as it is felt.

Perhaps the issue is not so much tolerance as it is respect. If Becher (1989) is correct when he identifies the academic's fundamental currency as "reputation," then achieving tolerance without respect is never enough. Carter (1993) describes the powerlessness of the "tolerated' when he comments on the arena of political rhetoric: "Tolerance without respect means little--if I tolerate you but do not respect you, the message of my tolerance, day after day, is that it is *my* forbearance, not *your* right . . . that frees you to practice your religion . . . . The language of tolerance is the language of power" (pp. 93-96).

Prejudice against the conservative religious voice in the academy comes in the form of tolerance without respect. To mix metaphors from the civil rights movement, although few Christian faculty have been denied a place at the lunch counter, more than a few have been shunned to the back of the bus. Although "God-talk" may not necessarily be labeled toxic, it certainly qualifies as an exotic loyalty in a post-Enlightenment, naturalistic culture. It is difficult to stop this type of subtle prejudice with rallies or marches. Respect cannot be demanded; respect can only be earned. Of course this begs the question–earned at what price?

Making a Space

What do Christian scholars want from the secular academy? What do they hope to accomplish though their presence? None of the almost 30 faculty I interviewed were lobbying for a return to the eighteenth century, when Christianity exercised a position of

privilege over every other world view in the American college. None wanted to re-establish a religious hegemony to replace the current secular dominance of the university but used rhetoric much like William Tierney (1997) when he comments on the majority-driven dominance he has experienced as a gay man in the academy: "We need to break those structures rather than merely reinvent them for ourselves" (p. 175).

These men and women who wish to have a religious presence in their workplace used more subtle language, such as trying "to unnerve" the other side and motivating the secularists "to defend their view." Robert George repeatedly spoke to his resistance of "forcing" anything on his students or colleagues. Instead, he would allow the conservative, religious world view to "compete on its own terms." If given the opportunity to "engage" the other views on a topic and offered the space to hold up Christianity as a valid alternative, George is confident his position could win the day based on its inherent validity.

When Behe asks if Darwinian science can make room for the religious point of view, he, too, is simply asking for a space in the academy's ongoing theoretical debates. Behe's definition of a healthy scholarly conversation is when "real intellectual arguments" are given on behalf of all sides along with a spirit of "conviviality," "comradery," and "mutual acceptance." Behe reserves his professional disgust, not for someone who rejects his argument, but for the academic who refuses to engage him and his argument without even a hearing, an anti-intellectual attitude Behe considers to be "disrespectful."

Both Behe and George just want a hearing for their arguments. They want to be intellectually engaged by those who hold other perspectives. The ultimate sign of

disrespect is the all too pervasive attitude demonstrated in what Behe (1996b) calls "scientific chauvinism" (p. 235) where one side automatically confers on the other side an inferior identity based on stereotypical conclusions.

Our three storytellers have done more than request a space--they have all set out to create a space by using their bold personalities, deep convictions, and immense talents. They have taken advantage of many fortuitous opportunities to make a dent in the barriers against the religious voice. From Michael Behe's letter to the editor in *Science* to Mary Poplin's offering of a summer course on Christianity and education and Robert George's testimony to a congressional subcommittee on behalf of the unborn, these three have sought to create a space for intellectual engagement by sheer force of will.

Being Exclusive in an Inclusive World

How do Christian faculty respond to objections made by those who fear religious academics will use their position of power in the classroom to proselytize and indoctrinate their students? A close reading of our three narratives reveals scant concern regarding these accusations. Robert George is unequivocal in his belief that the Christian has a responsibility "to bring the Gospel's values to bear in the culture," including "politics, [the] arts, and communication." Referring to herself as an "evangelist," Mary Poplin fervently believes God has called her to share her conversion experience "with everyone [He] puts in [her] life," including family, colleagues, and students.

Although none of these three well-spoken professors argues for a privileged Christian voice in the mainstream academy, all of them are determined to argue forcibly for the correctness of their viewpoints in various disciplinary issues. George proudly

claims to have "persuaded" others of the falseness of their views, and has attempted to "disabuse" students of the "secular, liberal bias" they often bring unthinkingly into the classroom. Is this an improper pedagogical strategy on Professor George's part? Has Mary Poplin overstepped her boundaries in a pluralistic academy?

One of Mary's colleagues certainly thought she had. He related to me an incident in which he grew very uncomfortable with one of Mary's public presentations. Speaking to a large gathering of people of many religious and nonreligious persuasions, Mary gave a direct talk on the application of Christianity's values to teaching. He thought her rhetoric sounded too much like "a sermon," as well as being ill at ease with her use of an open Bible at the podium. As he told me, "I'm uncomfortable when anyone comes in and promotes a particular point of view such as a religious point of view, or a political point of view or a racial point of view as THE view."

If the opinion of this Claremont faculty member is representative of others in the academy, this attitude brings up an important question for any scholar: How are faculty to communicate their points of view on a topic in a campus *weltanschauung* that places such a high value on diversity, multiculturalism, and pluralism? How are religious scholars to communicate potentially exclusive notions in an inclusive context? How do they advocate a religious view that claims truth to the exclusion of other views within a university that often considers such an exclusive approach to be arrogant and condescending? Or, more to the point: How can a professor who has invested great amounts of time, resources, and personal energy in a particular area of study avoid the temptation to persuade others that his or her conclusions carry some degree of merit? Is a faculty member limited to presenting his or her findings as only one of many possible

conclusions? Are we allowed to narrow the options? Can we have pluralism without relativism?

It seems that the elephant sitting in the corner of the classroom is not just the scholar's right to argue for the correctness of his or her position. The sticking point is also the appropriateness of a professor declaring that someone else's position is potentially wrong. This is especially true in an area as sensitive and deeply personal as religion and spirituality.

Journalist Michael Kinsley captures the difficulty of trying to hold a potentially exclusivistic position in an inclusivistic world. As a self-described "ethnically Jewish nonbeliever," Kinsley comments on the current controversy over proselytization between Jewish Americans and conservative Christians. A number of Jewish groups have complained about some Christian organizations trying to convert Jews to Christianity. Kinsley (2001) wonders about the appropriateness of these complaints: "All religions claim to have answers to life's most central questions. Any one of them may be right, but all of them can't be right." He goes on to conclude, "And each one's claim to be right necessarily implies that others are wrong" (p. 43).

Following Kinsley's line of argument, many Christian scholars answer the charge of proselytization, not by denying it, but by suggesting that all scholars do it. As Mary Poplin concedes, "I don't proselytize any more [now] than I ever did [before converting to Christianity]." Mary's Claremont colleague corroborates Mary's admission by referring to her as a "preacher" whose sermon has changed from the glories of critical theory and feminism to the truths of the New Testament. He even refers to himself as a professor who has "preached" the same message for more than 20 years.

When Behe suggests "atheism" as "a professional hazard in science," he is arguing along these same lines. In science's "noble pursuit" to explain the physical world, Behe implies that scientists dismiss other explanations (such as philosophy or theology) that might conflict with their own naturalistic assumptions. In his own discipline, Behe finds little pretense of a hearing for all possible views when it comes to origins.

Often, conservative religious voices get a second-rate scholarly reputation because they hold to exclusivist doctrines. Michael Behe is asking whether these religious arguments are any more dogmatic that those of supporters of Darwin and naturalism. Mary Poplin wonders whether her approach to education is any more confident or imperial than that of a critical theorist. Maybe the foundational question is not whether such exclusive theories should be taught in the American university because they already are in abundance. Maybe the more fundamental concern is <u>how</u> these theories should be taught.

George Marsden (1997) offers some advice in this regard. Although he also questions whether any scholar can hold to a purely pluralistic perspective, he is careful to disavow what he labels "tendentious scholarship" (p. 54), which is a temptation for all groups with strong opinions (witness the uproar on campus in the political-correctness debates). Rather than espousing strict adherence to some doctrinal formula, Marsden recommends that professors practice scholarly rigor, original thinking, and continual self-critique. Willing to listen as well as to speak, scholars should present opposing views with fairness and grace. Addressing Christian faculty, Marsden holds up the scholar's "golden rule" as the standard--religious faculty should carry out their work in the

academy's public square like they would want "scholars holding other strong ideological convictions to act" (p. 53).

Integrating Faith and Work

Referring to Jon Butler's book *Awash in a Sea of Faith* (1990), Stephen Carter (1993) argues, "Most Americans have never drawn a neat line between the religious and secular, either on questions of politics and morality or on questions about the natural world" (p. 160). Tierney (1997) also argues against the notion that faculty can compartmentalize the private and the public: "To argue in this manner rejects the notion that we are able to conduct research in the pristine condition of the laboratory, or to believe that the university itself is in an ivory tower removed from the daily life of society" (p. xviii). This inability and unwillingness to separate the religious and the secular is played out in the lives of our three Christian scholars as they seek to integrate their faith and work. The question changes from "if" they will integrate the two to "how" they choose to incorporate them.

Reflecting on Niebuhr's ethical strategies, we can see why "Christ transforming Culture" has become such an effective strategy for George, Behe, and Poplin. Rather than abdicating their responsibility to influence their scholarship with their faith ("Christ against Culture") or assimilating their faith in their scholarship so completely that it has no noticeable effect ("Christ in Culture"), these three academics have chosen to integrate the two in a holistic yet respectful manner. They have entered the scholarly conversation using the acceptable rules of engagement while still representing their religious identity with authenticity.

They seem to be "Christian scholars" in the fullest sense of the phrase. Each has staked out a visible role as a person of faith in his or her scholarly community. All three faculty roles, including teaching, research, and service, have been affected. Whether it be Robert George's defense of traditional marriage as "Princeton's reigning conservative," Michael Behe's direct assault on Darwin's ateological theory of origins, or Mary Poplin's unofficial establishment of a Christian teacher education program in her private, secular university, their religious faith is being worked out as a significant part of their academic vocation and not solely for personal enrichment.

Yet, they remain true to their scholarly training. George uses reason and philosophy "to just go out and find what's true." Behe's academic journey has been guided all along by his perception of the scientific profession: "I just view it as my job . . . . I'm a biochemist . . . I'm supposed to understand how biochemical systems got here." In the same way, Mary Poplin still uses critical theory and feminism to point out the plight of the powerless and the problems endemic to public education. The difference now rests in her belief that "a Christian view can complete these [educational] theories in ways they can never [be completed] by themselves."

By choosing a transformative stance and full integration of their faith and work, they have recognized that the best defense is a good offense. With boldness of personality and a type of intellectual swagger, they are doing more than asking for a hearing of their religious views, they are proactively creating a space to express those convictions.

Academic Freedom and Loose Couplings

The more I research and write about faculty lives in today's American colleges and universities, the more I think my study may have as much to do with the make-up of modern academic culture as it does individual academic careers. These stories of Christian faculty who are seeking to define their vocational lives often reveal poignant insights into the academic context in which they work. Like a postmodern art critic, I sometimes find it difficult to distinguish the figure from the ground.

Although some of the normative pressures exerted by the academy on Christian faculty have already been discussed in the introduction and demonstrated in the individual stories, it should be acknowledged that parts of the academic culture actually aid religious scholars in their mission to integrate faith and work. At least two of these supportive beams have been present in our three test cases: (a) the university community's fundamental allegiance to academic freedom, and (b) the "loose-coupling" inherent in faculty self-governance.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) published a statement in 1940 that articulated the faculty's view on academic freedom: "Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good . . . not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institutions as a whole," and this "common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free expression" (Hofstadter & Metzger, 1955, p. 487).

Long considered a "bedrock" of the academic profession (Nelson & Watt, 1999) and a "key legitimating concept of the entire enterprise" (Menand, 1996, p. 4), tenure has been offered as security for this "free search for truth." Tenure "protects a treasured

space for intellectual experiment" (Kennedy, 1997, p. 1), and as such, "discussions about changing tenure are as welcome in academia as discussions of women priests are in the Catholic Church" (Karabell, 1998, p. 127).[8]

In the nineteenth century, college presidents (often ministers by training) claimed as one of their essential duties the firing of faculty who failed to conform to the religious ideals of the institution. By the turn of the century, the fight for academic freedom became a central focus for faculty and the granting of tenure became the norm. Now seen as more than a luxury or vocational perk, tenure is described by its defenders as an "article of scholarly faith" (Karabell, 1998, p. 126), and "virtually every practice of academic life that we take granted . . . derives from it" (Menand, 1996, p. 4).

Ironically, the fight for the right of faculty to teach their convictions which was once used against the religious hegemony of the academy is now procured to protect the rights of religious faculty against the predominantly secular university. When one of Mary Poplin's colleagues announces that he and the Claremont community "will protect" Mary's right to teach what she wants "to the death," he is communicating the stronghold of academic freedom on the university. What Robert George refers to as "old-style liberalism" still exists on campus as many scholars assume that knowledge itself is advanced through the tolerance and encouragement of alternative views.

The concept of academic freedom makes universities somewhat different from other workplaces because this latitude allows faculty to be essentially self-regulating.

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[8]Three recommended texts explaining and defending tenure are Walter Metzger's essay, "Academic Freedom in Delocalized Academic Institutions" (Metzger, 1994), Matthew Finkin's *The Case for Tenure* (Finkin, 1996), and Louis Menand's *The Limits of Academic Freedom* (Menand, 1996).

Karl Weick (1976, 1984) describes faculty self-governance as a "loose coupling" where individuals work on their own, as opposed to the "tight coupling" of a factory where co-workers toil hand in hand.

Critics of higher education have wondered whether this system of governance has hurt academic culture. When Tierney (1999) calls the phrase "academic community" an oxymoron, he is reflecting on one of the academy's unstated rules: "I'll let you alone if you let me alone" (Kennedy, 1997, p. x). Alan Wolfe (1996) has questioned whether a "Mafia code" exists in which no one inquires too deeply into the activity of others for fear of making waves over the entire enterprise. Writers use phrases like "internal emigres" (Graff, 1987) and "idiot *savants*" (Nelson & Berube, 1995) to describe how faculty function as "hyper individualists" (Damrosch, 1995) in their vocational communities.

Yet, what some consider a curse, others call a blessing. When Michael Behe comments on how his crusade against Darwin has affected his professional focus and priorities, he also describes his colleagues' underwhelming response: "Nobody has said 'Boo' to me." Behe goes on to explain his colleagues' lack of reaction with an observation of the academy's system of governance: "When you're a full professor, you can do whatever you want." This includes, in the cases of Behe, Poplin, and George, the right to integrate one's religious beliefs into his or her teaching and research. Although we hear some in the academy questioning in the abstract the appropriateness of religious voices in a secular university, when it comes down to specific instances, many respond like Behe's dean reacted to objections to Mike's attack on Darwin: "This seems like none of my business."

If You are Good Enough

Scholarly excellence covers a multitude of sins. When university administrators throw out rhetoric like Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and Total Quality Management (TQM) and announce a desire to run higher education "more like a business" (N. Draper, 1996), we begin to see the enterprise of the academy as a marketplace where basic commodities include knowledge and people. As in many businesses, there are certain pragmatic tendencies in higher education. If a professor brings in enough research dollars, services enough students, or publishes enough articles in the right journals, the powers-that-be are often willing to look past more personal issues that might otherwise not be acceptable.

The achievements of our three professors do nothing to dispel this observation. Each has earned the rank of full professor, and each has been recognized as a scholar in good standing. They are all exceedingly good at their profession. As one of Mary's colleagues has observed, even though her theoretical allegiances have evolved over time, "What hasn't changed is her basic talent."

Scholarly excellence does cover a multitude of sins. Yet, one question still remains: Does the Christian scholar have to be better than the nonreligious scholar in order to earn success? Is Robert George correct when he claims that the conservative religious view "does not receive a discount" within the business of academia? Do holders of minority identities have to work harder to be accepted in a majority driven community? That question might require more comparative studies between similar faculty of both religious and nonreligious persuasions.

Advice From the Panel

If the secular academic culture provides a ripe context for Christian professors who desire both an integrative and a transformative approach to scholarship, what words of advice might our panel of three faculty give other religious academics? Given the potential obstacles and pressures to compromise one's inner beliefs, what suggestions might our narratives of ascent give to those who aspire to a similar vocational path? What can be done to encourage the Christian professor and enlighten the academic community? What are some of the career strategies that have emerged, possible institutional changes suggested, and unexplored avenues of study discovered? Being reminded that no individual life can serve as an authoritative guide for all, the following thoughts are offered:

Finite, Fallible, and Fallen

"I believe in absolute truth, but I don't believe I personally will ever know any truth absolutely." One of my former college professors penned these words in a letter to me, and they begin to capture the essence of what it means to know as finite creatures. The more we know, the more we know we do not know. Yet, these doubts about the extent of our knowledge do not preclude a level of certainty. We do not have to know everything in order to know something.

This quotation also captures the epistemic tension for Christian faculty caught between the Enlightenment's almost arrogant dependence on reason alone for truth, and the postmodern's overcompensation in the direction of relativism. The birth of post-Enlightenment epistemology has helped to bring more humility into the enterprise of

research. Modernism has failed to prove that reason alone can get us to the truth, and now "the dominant temper of our age is fallibilistic" (Bernstein, 1983, p. 12). The postmodern has pointed us back to our own finiteness and fallibility as humans. "Where modernism was a manifesto of human self-confidence and self-congratulation, postmodernism is a confession of modesty, if not despair" (Guinness, 1994, p. 105).

Postmodernism has reminded the Christian academic of the subjectivity involved in the research process. Reason is not "some antiseptic tool that can function simply in terms of itself" (Lintz, 1993, p. 118). As limited, finite humans, we cannot participate in the research process without our fingerprints showing up all over it. Interpretation does not take place in a vacuum as our own historical context and experiences of life will affect our ability to do the job.

Scholars are finite; they cannot know everything. Furthermore, scholars are fallible; many of the things they think they know are wrong. Charles Taylor (1987) illustrates this limited capacity to know:

> As men we are self-defined beings, and we are partly what we are in virtue of the self-definitions which we have accepted, however we have come by them . . . . It is nevertheless hard to deny that we have great difficulty grasping definitions whose terms structure the world in ways that we are utterly different from, incompatible with, our own (p. 77).

The epistemic revolution that has affected many disciplines during the last 20 years has provided a needed dose of humility for many scholars, including religious ones. As Stephen Carter (2000) studies the political spectrum, he notes that conservative religious voices are not immune to tunnel vision: "On the right, too, are religious leaders who believe that they already know all the answers, who want no new arguments, who

refuse to accept the possibility that traditions other than their own might possess a piece of the truth" (p. 192).

If postmodern theorists have reminded us of our finiteness and fallibility, then what hope do we have to find anything worth knowing? If nothing can be known for sure, what point is there in participating in research and scholarship? Maybe the following illustration can demonstrate lessons about knowing for the Christian scholar.

Ten people are at various positions around a busy intersection when two cars collide. What happened? Most likely, 10 different versions of the event will be shared. What "really" happened? Of course, only one collision took place, but now 10 "socially constructed" realities exist to describe it. And so goes the search for truth.

The Enlightenment scholar correctly notes the existence of an actual collision but is so intent on imposing her version of the event on the others that she fails to realize that her sight line to the crash was no better than anyone else's. The post-Enlightenment researcher recognizes the 10 perspectives on the crash but fails to seek a valid consensus in order that no voice grow dominant and thus leaves reality as a collection of private perceptions. One leans toward imperialism, whereas the other comes close to nihilism. Both sides have failed to understand that truth requires that we listen to each other, acknowledge each other's perspective, and then move on to find common ground as finite, limited seekers of the truth.

For the Christian academic, we are not only finite and fallible but also fallen. Our noetic structure has been handicapped by our desire to seek knowledge apart from God. Where Eve desired an ability to know God without need of God (Genesis 3), Solomon wrote that true wisdom begins with a clear understanding of man's dependence on God

(Proverbs 1:7). Adam and Eve's problem did not rest in their desire to know but in their desire to know apart from God. G. K. Chesterton has defined pride as "seeing onself out of proportion to the universe." Pride leads the creature on a search for truth without the Creator. Learning begins with humility's twin admissions of ignorance and dependence. Or, to paraphrase Parker Palmer (1993), we make the move toward truth as we realize that we not only know but are also known. And it is in this being known that we ultimately learn to know.

For the Christian scholar within the academy, we live in a world someplace between Genesis 3 and Proverbs 1. Education's epistemological skirmishes are fought between those who believe in the possibility of an absolute truth worth knowing and those who recognize we cannot find that truth on our own. Ironically, both the Hebrew language of the Old Testament and the Greek words of the New Testament use forms of the verb "to know" to describe the conjugal relations between a man and a woman. Relationships and the search for truth go hand in hand.

For the Christian faculty person, their ability to know truth is dependent on the light of revelation including creation, the written word (Scripture), and the living Word (Christ our *logos*). It is this light, as well as their God-given scholarly abilities and their relationship with their fellow learners, that ultimately informs their practice as researchers. Also, it is on this foundation of revelation, reason, and community that they build their structure of knowledge.

Equal Opportunity?

One marked dissimilarity between Christian faculty and other potentially identified "oppressed" groups remains the largely muted response of the academy to the

religious voice. Although higher education announces its intentions to include all groups through new curriculum, *avant garde* pedagogies, and critical use of theory, few are clamoring for Christian-study programs on secular university campuses. Although the academy uses its many public documents to announce its promise of "equal opportunity," one still wonders whether all groups receive the same chance to express their differences. To locate one's identity within gender, race, ethnicity, social class, or sexual orientation is consistently encouraged, but the same sensitivity is not always present for the Christian academic even though religion often involves "affirmations about reality and values that are far more specific and far ranging than [these other] beliefs" (Marsden, 1997, p. 5).

Whereas Tierney (1997) can cite the existence of texts like *Academic Outlaws* as evidence of his group's forward strides "from shame to pride, from submissive to confrontation, and from a stigma to a source of strength" (p. 166), Christian faculty continue to describe decertification and delegitimization of their own religious point of view. Do the current university ideals of pluralism and academic freedom extend to all parties equally? How much will the academy help those religious academics who desire to create a space for their world view on campus?

There does exist evidence of the secular university doing just this. The fact that Marsden's books were published by a major university press like Oxford is a positive step. The freedom given to do this particular dissertation project in fulfillment of a Ph.D. requirement shows that some in the university are interested in the experiences of Christian faculty. Certainly, the liberty provided to Behe, Poplin, and George by Lehigh, CGU, and Princeton cannot be ignored. Yet, it does not seem out of line to inquire about

the disparity between the attention given to other minority groups and conservative, religious faculty. Could more be done? Should more be done?

Addressing a public institution like the academy, however, one needs to recognize the tension some feel due to the First Amendment and the separation of church and state. If the public university would sponsor, establish, or encourage more interaction between scholarship and religious faculty, would that constitute a breach of the United States Constitution?

Historian Phillip Schaff has called the religious establishment clause in the constitution the "Magna Carta of religious freedom," serving as "the first example in history of a government deliberately depriving itself of all legislative control over religion" (as cited in Carter, 1993, p. 108). Having experienced the religious persecution of Europe, the founding fathers wanted to guarantee a separation of church and state where the government could neither force people into particular religious rules or observances nor punish them for their individual religious beliefs.

The writers of the First Amendment erected a wall between the church and state in order to protect religion from the control of government. Yet, today, there are some religious scholars who complain that the establishment clause has now been transformed "from a guardian of religious liberty into a guarantor of public secularism" (Carter, 1993, pp. 122-123). Rather than guard religion from undue government influence, the concern is that the First Amendment has been used to shield public institutions like the university from any religious influence.

For religious faculty, the separation of church and state has become the "separation of church and self" (Carter, 1993, p. 127). Although a Republican or a

communist is free to use his or her world view to reflect on issues of political or academic interest, a person of faith is taught to keep his or her religious viewpoints private in public conversations. It would be helpful for the university to spend more time and research considering the best application of the First Amendment to public discourse.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Having read an in-depth report on the experiences of our three protagonists, we begin to form one dominant answer to our primary questions about the external and internal tensions faced by Christian scholars: "It depends." Listing only a few of the complex variables involved in a faculty career, including disciplinary field, institutional type, geographical location of campus, particular religious commitment of professor, credentials earned by professor, and the academic's inherent scholarly ability and personality traits, we quickly realize that a one-size-fits-all approach will not suffice.

Not the end but only a small part of the beginning, this particular study toils in a particularly fruitful area of educational research. Those who study the lives of faculty, research academic culture, and investigate the complicated relationship between religion and the academy can find many possible avenues for further exploration. Two or three directions immediately come to mind.

How do the disciplines differ in their response to arguments and ideas based on religious convictions? How do the social constructs and the epistemological assumptions unique to specific fields of study inhibit or advance a religious faculty member's desire to integrate faith and work? In a cursory way, we have used Becher's frame to begin to contrast Behe's experience within a hard/pure and urban/convergent discipline like

biochemistry and George's life in a more soft/applied and rural/divergent area of study like the social sciences. More combinations of disciplines need to be examined, compared, and contrasted. Does Becher's frame hold true to form? Why or why not?

Although quantitative researchers such as Wuthnow (1989) have begun to lay out possible reasons for these differences, there remains a need for qualitative studies that use the individual faculty life to put flesh on the numbers produced by the surveys. By telling the stories of biologists, geographers, historians, and economists, we begin to discover why they are or are not integrating their weekend worship with the activities of their work week. By contextualizing research within life experience, researchers will be able to supply possible causes and motives for already demonstrated differences.

A second territory ripe for further study is different religious traditions. Our three storytellers have already given some insight into possible differences in the Christian tradition--specifically, Catholic and Protestant scholars. One would anticipate even more variety in the experience of Jewish scholars (believing and nonbelieving), Muslim faculty, and Hindu professors. How would the very real social and theological differences among the major world religions interact with the predominantly secular world view in American academic culture?

Finally, who is recording the voices of Christian faculty who have not successfully integrated their religiosity and scholarship? We need more stories than ones that emulate Lawrence-Lightfoot's "narratives of ascent." Where are the stories recorded of junior faculty denied tenure or graduate students refused jobs based explicitly (or, more likely, implicitly) on their religious identity? Where are the narratives of descent?

Who are the religious faculty who have effectively hidden one part of their identity from the other--who would be willing to check the response labeling themselves as religious on some anonymous questionnaire, but whose colleagues would be shocked to discover such self-disclosure? What other tensions present themselves when a person works so hard to separate private devotion from public behavior? Many more subgroups under the heading of "religious scholar" remain to be explored.

Living and Working Without Regret

The pressure to compromise comes at the Christian scholar from both sides. Although the secular university may ask her to sacrifice her theological convictions for larger acceptance, the pietistic faithful can shame her into questioning her scholarly ideals for religious devotion. In response to the former temptation, the religious professor needs to ask, "Is the compromise worth it?" Faced with the second accusation, she needs to determine, "Will my work make a difference beyond a provincialized religious community?" How will the Christian professor deal with what Noll (1994) calls "creeping secularism" on the one hand and "incipient Gnosticism" on the other? (p. 30).

Commenting on the tendency of historic Catholic institutions like Georgetown and Boston College to emulate Harvard and Yale by sacrificing their religious convictions for a more secularist mission, Robert George asks the compelling question: "Is it worth it?" With that penetrating query, George directs all Christian scholars to examine their motivation for the integrative choices they make.

With echos of Niebuhr's "accomodationist" model ("Christ of Culture") ringing in the rhetorical background, George's question points out the danger of "creeping

secularism." What is the religious scholar willing to sacrifice in order to be accepted by the academic elite? How far is too far, and what will serve as the standard for that ethical judgment?

The historic trajectory of the American college and university is helpful in establishing potential pitfalls in the accommodating ethical stance. Historian James Burtchaell (1998) has summarized the compromising choice made by religious academics in this position down through the centuries:

> . . . but if [the religious academics] lose their nerve and are intimidated by their academic colleagues, as is true of most of the characters in these stories, they, too will end up judging the church by the academy and the gospel by the culture. In time, they will probably lose the capacity to tell them apart. (p. 851)

George's and Burtschaell's concerns are reflected in the following counter-question asked of Catholic universities by Riesman and Jencks (1968):

> The important question . . . is not whether a few Catholic universities prove capable of competing with Harvard and Berkeley on the latter's terms, but whether Catholicism can provide an ideology or personnel for developing alternatives to the Harvard-Berkeley model of excellence. (p. 408)

On the other end of potential compromise from "creeping secularism" rests "incipient gnosticism." Rather than accepting wholesale the secular academy's world view at the expense of their faith convictions, these Christian faculty are so fearful of worldly influence they have retreated into the potential academic monastery of the Christian university with no desire to engage the larger academic community and are content to live "on the periphery of responsible intellectual existence" (Noll, 1994, p. 30). What Niebuhr calls the "exclusivists" ("Christ against Culture") Noll labels the "gnostics" because, like the ancient Greek mystics, such Christian professors conducts

their scholarship as if only the religious have the secret codes that lead to true knowledge while they ignore any contribution of the secular academy.

Rather than compromising too much of their religious convictions, these Christian faculty need to inquire whether or not they can still make a difference intellectually within the academy at-large. Mark Noll (1994) quotes a challenge given by Lebanese immigrant and Eastern Orthodox scholar Charles Malik to a group of Christian undergraduates:

> "Who among [today's Christian scholars] . . . is quoted as a normative source of the greatest secular authorities on history or philosophy or psychology or sociology or politics? Does your mode of thinking have the slightest chance of becoming the dominant mode of thinking in the great universities of Europe or America which stamp your civilization with their own spirit and ideals?" (pp. 25-26)

Where are the intellectual heirs of Newton, Bacon, and Edwards? As Noll remarks, "The life of the mind deserves the kind of cultivation that [Christians] regularly bestow upon their other businesses" (p. 55). Or, as Malik warns, "If you win the whole world and lose the mind of the world, you will soon discover you have not won the world" (p. 26).

This tension to compromise from two directions simultaneously must be similar to the tension felt by Jesus' disciples when he instructed them to be "in" the world but not "of" the world (John 17-18). How are Christian faculty to be engaged sufficiently in the scholarly culture and methods that will allow them to make significant contributions to the scholarly community without buying into all of the academy's naturalistic presuppositions? Maybe the most difficult tension of living between two worlds is the constant temptation to ease the pressure, either through accommodation or escape.

Conversely, maybe the most telling danger signal for the religious scholar is not when the tension increases but when it begins to fade.

Looking for the Christian Scholar

Is that all there is? This searching question framed Professor Tracy McKenzie's response to what should have been one of the momentous days in his young career as a historian at the University of Washington. Having only recently received official notice from the board of trustees granting him tenure in the university, Professor McKenzie opened up that afternoon's mail to find the second academic trophy dreamed of by all aspiring scholars--an advance copy of his first book and his first entry into the Library of Congress. Yet he felt strangely empty and now looks back on that day as "one of the most underwhelming experiences" of his life.

He took both awards into his hands and contemplated life and vocation. In his left hand, Dr. McKenzie held the official-looking letter from the board of trustees with the university seal emblazoned at the top. Resting in the other hand, hot off the presses, was a book entitled *One South or Many? Plantation Belt and Upcountry in Civil War-Era Tennessee*, which presented a statistical study of the agriculture of the South during Reconstruction, as well as representing nine years of one man's scholarly work. Taken together, this formal-sounding letter and fresh-smelling hardback announced to the academy-at-large a 34-year-old professor's arrival as a fully sanctioned member of the academic profession. All the hours in the library, all the long nights apart from his family, all the tuition dollars--they had finally borne their fruit. Yet, the predominant

thought entering his mind was one searching refrain: Is this all there is to the scholarly life?

Tracy McKenzie not only possesses a passionate love for American history, he also has an intense devotion to his Christian faith. And although he cherishes his time in the study and the classroom along with the opportunity to share with others his love of history, Professor McKenzie also carries a tremendous loyalty to his religious commitments. These commitments were the source of his searching doubts. What does it mean to be a Christian and a scholar? Is there more to it than promotions and publications?

McKenzie calls that time of his life a "period of personal crisis" as he considered what he wanted to do with the rest of his career. "I had spent nine years writing something my parents couldn't understand - no one in my church could understand." Although the book had won two awards and earned his colleagues' praise, he was not satisfied personally. He wanted to find a better way to bridge his faith and work: to integrate his love for God and love for scholarship. In the words of Professor McKenzie, he wanted to teach and write "in a way that would engage what T. S. Elliot called 'permanent things.'"

What does it mean to be a Christian scholar--in the fullest sense of both words? How can one be true to his or her religious passions and academic loyalties without feeling like an imposter in either place? From the journeys of our three storytellers we have learned that the pursuit of scholarship and the dedication to a religious value system is not an either/or proposition. As one of Mary Poplin's students so eloquently reflected

on Mary's example, "It is possible to be an outstanding Christian and an outstanding scholar."

For a Christian graduate student considering the academic profession, what counsel might our three protagonists offer? From careers spent in the seemingly dual realities of church and academy, what instruction might our three travelers give a young professor like Tracy McKenzie facing the next stage of his career?

First, they teach Christian scholars to prize scholarly excellence. When Robert George defines academic success as "faithfulness," he confesses his daily intention to use his God-given abilities to make the best argument he can make in whatever academic task he is engaged in, in order to pursue the truth.

Second, religious professors learn the significance of an unremitting determination to follow the argument wherever it may lead. Michael Behe's simple but career-altering decision to engage Darwin's theory on origins no matter what disciplinary heat he took illustrates the constant tension a scholar faces between his emotional desire to be accepted and his intellectual drive to push theoretical boundaries. Behe's decision also illustrates the serendipitous trajectory of a career of one who is not afraid to step outside the disciplinary status quo.

Finally, these three faculty narratives remind Christian faculty that they must be sensitive enough to live out their vocational callings with authenticity. Mary Poplin's struggle to connect her new-found faith with her longstanding career proves the unbreakable bond that exists between the quality of one's work in the external world and the freedom to use that work to express her internal call. The life of the Christian scholar is as much about motivation as it is about execution. Through the authentic enactment of

their call, Christian scholars learn to live out their work and faith with integrity. The words of Bernard of Clairvoux capture the seamless connection between scholarship and motive:

> There are many who seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge: that is curiosity. There are others who desire to know in order that they themselves be known: that is vanity. Others seek knowledge in order to sell it: that is dishonorable. But there are some who seek knowledge in order to edify others: that is love. (as cited in Schwehn, 1993, p. 60)

If you are good enough, if you are determined enough, if you love enough--these three qualities are what help Christian scholars succeed in a secular academy in which they learn to believe their doubts without doubting their beliefs.

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Call - both an internal and external pull toward a particular line of work that often develops over time.

Christian Scholar -

Christian - "a tradition of group worship that presupposes the existence of a sentience beyond the human and capable of acting outside of the observed principles and limits of natural science, and further, a tradition that makes demands of some kind on its adherents" (Carter, 1993, p. 17). This project has focused on a conservative segment of Christianity that places "a strong emphasis on the authority of the Bible as a reliable historical record of God's saving work centering in Christ" (Marsden, 1994, p. 9).

Scholar - one who has done advanced study in a special academic field and now plies his or her trade within higher education.

Convergent/Divergent - descriptors of academic disciplines differentiating those fields of study with uniform standards and procedures for how faculty go about their work (convergent) and those disciplines that tolerate more academic deviance (divergent).

Culture - "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz, 1973, p. 89).

Discipline - a department of learning or knowledge. More specifically, "the attitudes, activities, and cognitive styles of groups of academics . . . closely bound up with the characteristics and structures of the knowledge domains with which such groups are professionally concerned" (Becher, 1989, p. 20).

Epistemology - dealing with the nature of knowledge. What can I know, and how can I know it?

Hard/Soft - descriptors of academic disciplines differentiating those fields of study with clearly defined intellectual boundaries and well-developed theoretical structures (hard) and those disciplines with a lack of consensus about such matters (soft).

Integration - the degree to which a Christian scholar's faith influences his or her academic work or "what it means to think like a Christian about the nature and workings of the physical world" (Noll, 1994, p. 7).

Life History - a research method that seeks to give an account of a life by relying on the individual's own life story.

Narrative Cognition - a way of coming to know the world that emphasizes difference, complexity, and context.

Naturalism - a philosophical world view that holds the universe to be self-contained, made up of only matter and energy. Scientific laws are sufficient to describe all phenomena.

Ontology - dealing with the nature of being.

Paradigmatic Cognition - a way of coming to know the world that accentuates sameness, order, and decontextualization.

Portraiture - a type of qualitative research used to portray the experiences and life of an individual or group of individuals, with an emphasis on the use of stories and storytelling to reveal the shape of life's journey.

Postmodernism (also *Post-Enlightenment Epistemology*)- a philosophical perspective with nonfoundationalist epistemological assumptions and corresponding methodological preferences.

Pure/Applied - descriptors of academic disciplines differentiating those fields of study that are resistant to outside influence (pure) and those disciplines that are more receptive to contributions from scholars outside the present academic hierarchy (applied).

Spirituality - often used in higher education as a broad concept of a type of mystical humanism not necessarily attached to any particular religion (Greenstreet, 1999).

Urban/Rural - descriptors of academic disciplines differentiating those fields of study that cover a narrow area of intellectual territory with a high ratio of available people (urban) and those disciplines with thinly scattered problems over a broader, more diverse area of study (rural).

Vocation - describes "work that results in service to others and personal satisfaction in the rendering of that service" (Hansen, 1995, p. 3).

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

These are stories I have used to think with.
-Mary Catherine Bateson (1989, pp. 33-34)

Stories and Qualitative Research

In the *New York Review of Books*, Clifford Geertz (1997) summarizes the message of psychologist Jerome Bruner's latest book, *The Culture of Education* (1996), by underscoring Bruner's linking of narrative and learning:

> "Tales are tools," says Jerome Bruner. Bruner's thesis is that we live "in a sea of stories" and that "learning how to swim in such a sea, how to construct stories, understand stories . . . see through stories and use stories to find out how things work, or what they come to, is what the school and the whole 'culture of education' should be about." (pp. 23-24)

Bruner's thesis, together with the introductory quotation above taken from Mary Catherine Bateson, illustrates the vital connection among biography, learning, and inquiry. To research a life requires that we seek out the stories of a life. A qualitative approach to the research of faculty lives in general and of Christian faculty working in a secular university in particular stands equipped for such a task.

Background

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) write that qualitative research "privileges" no single methodology, but rather the qualitative researcher "works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms" (pp. 2-3). And although no one of these

qualitative methods fits perfectly the goals of this present study, many of the foundational assumptions in qualitative research prove consistent with its aims.

Some of these basic premises include: (a) a focus on first-person accounts to describe experience; (b) concern with the generation of theory rather than the replication or generalization of theory; (c) a recognition of research's dialogical nature, including the researcher's shaping hand as well as the centrality of the relationship between researcher and subject; (d) the search for individual meaning through storytelling rather than measurement and explanation; (e) stress on the holistic value of context in research as it situates actors and action within a meaningful whole; and (f) the representation of life's complexity and fluidity through the inclusion of deviant voices, outliers, and the marginalized while resisting reductionism and abstraction. While working "between and within" these overlapping research perspectives, this study's focus draws us closer to those research projects that have implemented particular kinds of qualitative research, including narratives, life history, and portraiture.

Portraiture and human archeology. In her book *The Good High School*, Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) describes an earlier experience in her life when she sat for a portrait. Lawrence-Lightfoot enjoyed the "glowing sensation" of being fully attended to without distraction, of being the center of another's perpetual gaze. Yet, she also describes how uncomfortable she felt with the finished product. The painting did not match what she saw in the mirror.

> I had the eerie sensation that she [the painter] anticipated my future and echoed my past. . . . Time moved backward and forward through this still and silent woman [on the canvas] . . . The portrait reflects a compelling paradox, of a moment in time and timelessness. (pp. 4-5)

This episode in Lawrence-Lightfoot's life serves to illustrate the potential power of qualitative research to portray the experiences and life of an individual or group of individuals. Echoing her own experience, Lawrence-Lightfoot illustrates how a portrait will often "tell you about parts of yourself about which you are unaware, or to which you haven't attended" (p. 5).

Using metaphors like human archeology, tapestry, and puzzle building, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) describes her own brand of qualitative research as "an eclectic, interdisciplinary approach, shaped by the lenses of history, anthropology, psychology, and sociology." It is a blend of the "curiosity and detective work of a biographer, the literary aesthetic of a novelist, and the systematic scrutiny of a researcher" (p. 15). She calls her research "portraiture."

Influenced by the work of Geertz, Polanyi, and Eisner, as well as the philosophical stance of phenomenology, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) emphasizes the use of stories and storytelling to reveal the shape of life's journey. This search for stories respects the individual story as much as the group while admitting the shaping hand of the artist (researcher). This is what phenomenologists refer to as the "inter-subjectivity" of qualitative research and the need "to experience and reflect upon one's own feelings in order to successfully identify with another's perspective"(p. 370).

Life history. Life history became popular as a research method in the 1930s and 1940s with University of Chicago-trained sociologists. Defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "a written record of the life of an individual," the life history method has gained increasingly widespread support among researchers who desired to record "an anthology of experience in people's own words" (Kotre, 1984, p. 25). Life history

provides a tool to help scholars penetrate subjects' assumptions and their "taken for granted world" (Faraday & Plummer, 1979, p. 776).

A subset of the biographical method, life history has taken on multiple forms and various names, including "life story" (Kotre, 1984) and "life writing" (L.M. Smith, 1994). Whereas the biographer seeks to check the validity of a research subject's story through outside sources, the life writer relies almost exclusively on the subjects themselves in order to produce a record of their own experience through their own words. Norman Denzin (1989b) describes this task as presenting "the experiences and definitions held by one person, one group, or one organization as this person, group, or organization interprets those experiences" (p. 183).

Stories and plot furnish the conceptual scheme of life writing. "Stories are particularly suited as the linguistic form in which human experience as lived can be expressed" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 7). A researcher does not study these life stories event by event, but rather within a larger structure called a plot. As the plot develops within a particular life story, it enables the researcher to delimit the temporal range in the historical context of the life. Because a researcher can never communicate the story of an entire life, plot also provides criteria for selecting which events to include. Plot also aids in ordering events into a movement that culminates in a conclusion. Finally, plot gives a mental construct of what is taking place by making explicit the meaning events have within the story as a whole.

The conviction that human conduct needs to be studied and understood from the perspective of the subject is a major assumption in the life history method. Many researchers (Campbell, 1988; Denzin, 1989a; Faraday & Plummer, 1979) trace this core

belief back to the influence of symbolic interactionism. Herbert Blumer (1969), drawing heavily on the work of Mead, Dewey, and James, posits three basic ideas in symbolic interactionism: (a) humans act on the basis of the meaning that things have for them, (b) these meanings come from the social interaction between the self and others, and (c) meanings are continually modified through interpersonal processes. People develop through relationships with others, or, to put it a more graphic way, "We are cannibals, internalizing the expectations and dreams of others" (Campbell, 1988, p. 197). Life history provides the method for studying these interpersonal relationships within the historical context of life.

Faculty Lives and Qualitative Research

Alice Rossi(1988) has noted the relative ease of using paper trails to chart the intellectual interests of a scholar. Yet, "it is far more difficult to take a retrospective look at the inner development of one's own motivations and thoughts, and to specify what influenced a shift of substantive interest or theoretical perspective" (p. 43). This is more than a study of how Christian faculty get along in a sometimes difficult work context. We want to penetrate the inner life of the person and explore how the university's seemingly a-religious context at best and anti-religious bent at worse has affected religious faculty's own approaches to their work and even to their own belief structure. With their focus on context, nuance, and the dialogical nature of research, qualitative approaches provide the mental ammunition necessary to emulate profile writer John Lahr's stated goal--"to get beyond ballyhoo to something more probing and ironic" (p. xii).

Context. Within the positivist tradition, context can be seen as a source of distortion even resulting in the attempt to isolate unwanted variables in the laboratory environment. Yet, this can result in what Mishler (1979) calls "context stripping," where the researcher risks misinterpretation by "inflicting the researcher's lens and standards on the subject's reality." Faraday and Plummer (1979) suggest that "most social science is involved in a process of amputation" in its attempt to isolate massive amounts of material without regard to a person's life context (p. 177). Stories and the historical context revealed within those life stories help us "to understand the fullness of human existence" (Polkinghorne, 1995). In addition, one has to ask whether or not the laboratory itself can ever be "context free."

Rather than attempting to rid themselves of context, qualitative researchers working within a phenomenological framework find context "crucial to their documentation of human experience and organizational culture" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 41). Using metaphors like "framework," "reference point," "map," and "ecological sphere," writers stress the holistic value of context in research as it situates the actors and the action within a meaningful whole.

Context presents itself on more than one level. A researcher might place the subject within a historical context, an organizational context, a physical context, and a personal context. Within the portraiture tradition, this personal context includes not only the actor but also the researcher. As one begins to study a person or act, the researcher becomes part of the setting and even can disturb the natural rhythm of the environment itself. Acting as an interloper and stranger within the personal context of the subject, the researcher must "sketch herself into the context" as the "place and stance of the

researcher are made visible and audible" to the reader in order to demonstration the researcher's own assumptions and expectations he or she has brought to the scene (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 50). This dynamic framework called context is constantly evolving and changing: "shaping and being shaped by the actors"(p. 59) and the researchers as well. Without context we only have proof-text.

Nuance. Because "small facts will speak to large issues" (Geertz, 1973, p. 23), a primary characteristic of portraiture and life history is attention to detail and subtle description. Having reacted against the supposed "closed systems of thought" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 5) within the positivist spirit, qualitative researchers have sought to represent the "fluidity and complexity of the living world" (p. 7) while at the same time resisting reductionism and abstraction. Educational researchers in this camp protest studying people as "though they were fruit flies"(Featherstone, 1989, p. 376).

Qualitative methods such as life history and portraiture can provide a depth of insight necessary to see "the figure under the carpet" (Edel, 1979) who might escape detection in research methods focused on merely external causation. Freud's use of stories in psychoanalysis exemplifies the ability of stories to help people reflect on the most profound questions of life. To discover one's own ability to handle perceived marginalization or prejudice would seem to call for more than a survey response. The perceptive life writer needs the skills of a Sherlock Holmes and Sigmund Freud in order to find the figure under the carpet, construct it carefully, and then communicate it effectively.

While valuing the single case, the qualitative researcher does not resist totally the urge to generalize from the one to the many. Rather, "a persistent irony . . . is that as one moves closer to the unique characteristics of a person or a place, one discovers the universal" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 14). Resonant, universal themes can be found embedded within the study of the single life. So the search for nuance does not preclude the attainment of universals, but rather the use of individual stories depends on the particular to produce the general. "What discoveries I have made in the process of writing stories, all begin with the particular, never the general" (Geertz, 1997, p. 23).

One way to penetrate the subtleties of one's subjects is to listen for the outliers and the "deviant voice" in the sample rather than isolating the outliers as qualitative studies are wont to do. "The deviant voice is also useful in encouraging the skeptical, counterintuitive stance that the researcher must maintain throughout the course of research" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 193). In this way, the researcher can challenge a too-facile conclusion or present a new lens with which to view the problem at hand and ultimately produce new understandings and insights. Sometimes methods that highlight generalization and prediction can impose order and rationality on experiences that may not be so orderly or rational.

This focus on nuance and possible "outliers" helps the researcher ascertain both paradigmatic and narrative cognition. Bruner (1985) posits these two types of complementary knowledge, with the former concentrating on sameness, order, and decontextualization while the latter highlights difference, complexity, and nuance. "Efforts to reduce one mode to the other or to ignore one at the expense of the other

invariable fails to capture the rich ways in which people 'know' and describe events around them" (Bruner, 1985, p. 97).

A dialogical production.

> Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not the sitter. The sitter is merely an accident, the occasion. It is not who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter, who, on the colored canvas, reveals himself. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my soul. (Wilde, 1906)

Any recording of the subject's experiences in educational research and any type of biography exists as a "dialogical production" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 19) whose stories are presented as a joint construction between the subject and the researcher. "Researchers engaged in narrative analysis need to be attuned to their contributions to the constructive aspects of their research and to acknowledge these in their "write-ups" (p. 19). At the heart of this kind of research rests a conversation between two meaning-makers.

With an intellectual debt to Martin Buber, Carol Gilligan (1982) describes one of the paradoxical truths of human experience--that "we know ourselves as separate only insofar as we live in connection with others and we experience relationship only insofar as we differentiate other from self" (p. 63). Qualitative research acknowledges the central role of relationship building between researcher and subject, including the complex and dynamic process of "navigating the boundaries" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 158) between the self and the other. When ought there to be distance and when intimacy? When should there be acceptance and when skepticism, when receptivity and when challenge; when silence and when talk?

It is through relationship that connections are made, data are revealed, and knowledge is gained. These relationships are not static, but rather dynamic, changing day to day and even hour by hour. Because of their dynamic complexity, these relationships can be shaped by both temporal and temperamental concerns. How much time is spent between researcher and subject and how often they meet make a difference, as does the chemistry between the two with their often differing personalities and temperaments.

The omnipresence of the researcher's self and voice resounds throughout the finished product. Even so-called "objective" researchers cannot avoid the voice of self within the context, language, content, and even orchestration of the study itself. Self and voice need to be acknowledged, evaluated, and even calibrated. Voice actually becomes "a research instrument echoing the self" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 85). This is why Wilde can claim that a portrait ultimately reveals more of the artist than the subject.

Contrary to some researchers' ideals, voice can never be "neutralized out." Voice becomes apparent through the particular research question selected, the study's design, and the collection strategies themselves. Voice needs to be premeditated, restrained, and carefully controlled so that it does not overwhelm the voice of the other, in this case the subject being studied. If the finished product is not to become simply a self-portrait, the researcher needs to be careful to use his or her voice to amplify the subject's story and not to silence it.

Being sensitive to voice and self becomes closely connected to the researcher's stance as an outsider/insider. As a "discerning observer," the researcher can be sufficiently distanced from the subject to see the whole of the situation and perceive

patterns of information that might not be readily available to one so closely connected to the situation. This stance as a "boundary sitter" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 87) gives the researcher the closeness necessary to articulate the details of the situation or the life but also the distance needed to see the situation with a new set of eyes, to be alert to what Malinowski (1938, p. 306) calls the "imponderables," things that are so close to the "natives" that they would never consider reporting them.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994), describing the subjects in her research as "storytellers," captures narrative research's co-conspiratory journey:

> These storytellers do not travel alone. I am with them; we are on this journey together. Their life stories emerge out of our constantly evolving relationship. The subtext here is the narrative of a relationship that is the vehicle through which the life story is remembered and expressed. Rather than being *interviewed* these six people are *collaborators* or *co-creators* of their life stories. The message and meaning of the stories comes from the interaction, our duet, the convergence of our experience. I am both audience and mirror, witness and provocateur, inquirer and scribe. (p. 620)

Epistemological Concerns

In the introduction to *Hard Times*, his biography of people who lived during the Great Depression, Studs Terkel (1970) writes, "This is a memory book rather than one of hard fact and precise statistic" (p. 17). Terkel's statement raises an important concern in the use of first-person stories in research: How do we gauge the epistemological relevance of a research method dependent on bridging the space "between the autobiographical self and the biographical other" (Campbell, 1988, p. 69)? Can we say our subject's story has brought us any closer to the "truth," or must we echo one keynote speaker at an English association who lumped together autobiography and the novel as "two different ways of telling agreeable lies" (Smith, 1994, p. 288)?

One the one hand, researchers in the qualitative tradition admit with Geertz (1983) that research is "the researcher's constructions of other people's constructions of what they are up to" (p. 9). Yet, on the other hand, they still call for a "carefully, systematic, and detailed description developed through watching, listening to, and interacting with the actors over a sustained period of time" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 12). They hold up various types of epistemological warrants like "authenticity" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 12), "plausibility" (Bruner, 1990), and "verisimilitude" (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988) as tests for the appearance of truth or reality in a subject's story.

Polkinghorne (1988) contrasts narrative research with the more quantitative approaches by highlighting narrative's use of the "ideal of a scholarly consensus as the test of verisimilitude rather than the test of logical or mathematical validity" (p. 176). Other qualitative researchers like Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest we go "beyond reliability, validity, and generalizability in narrative research" (p. 7). Van Manen (1990) describes epistemic relevancy for narrative research as "animating evocative descriptions of human actions" (p. 19), whereas Barone (1992) stresses "accessibility, compellingness, and moral persuasiveness" (p. 21).

Philosopher of education D. C. Phillips (1994) raises important questions about these proposed answers of epistemological warrant. Even a false story such as the report of a flat earth may "appear" to be true (p. 18). Clifford Geertz (1983) echoes those concerns about relying on criteria like verisimilitude and plausibility with his description of an adequate, plausible, engaging, and coherent swindler's story. What happens when rival accounts appear that are equally evocative and plausible?

Users of life stories make many decisions that are constituted by ambiguity. How does one account for the rationalization of people and the tendency of subjects to interpret past experience based on present beliefs? Researchers depend on the recollection process and transparency of the subject. A subject may not be fully aware of what occurred in a particular period in the life, or he or she might hide certain issues, thoughts, or actions. "In a sense he [the subject] is sort of a stripper; the suspense of his story lies in guessing how far he will undress" (L.M. Smith, 1994, p. 288). Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994) admits this possibility when she describes her use of stories to reconstruct life's experiences:

> . . . We both (researcher and subject) know that the stories they tell will not be a factual representation of history or experience. Our search is not for a rendering of objective truth or replicable evidence, but for the reconstruction and reinterpretation of experience, which can include perspective taking, projection, distortion, and fantasy. (p. 612)

People act on the basis of what is true to them even if it is not actually true. In the classic sociological text, *The Child in America*, William Thomas and Dorothy Swaine (1928) wrote, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (p. 572). My study was intended to uncover and to understand the conscious beliefs of a person, and so those beliefs are important to me even if they might be seen as unjustifiable or epistemologically irrelevant from another's perspective. Even educational researchers from a more quantitative tradition acknowledge that a researcher's purpose has tremendous bearing on the issue of epistemic relevance (Phillips, 1994). The questions of epistemic relevancy change when one seeks a person's idea of reality rather than some transcendent picture of reality itself.

Biographical stories of a life are a co-construction between the subject and the researcher. Like biographers, researchers using life history and portraiture also attempt to verify their accounts within the primary record. While the biographer goes back to neutral sources and paper trails, life historians go back to the subject himself or herself. Has the story been "justified in terms of the overall truthfulness of a person's life" (Kotre, 1984, p. 32)?

Do the findings make sense to the researcher, the people being studied, and even the readers? Is there what some call a "click of recognition" (Kidder, 1982), a "yes, of course" response when people read the findings? Is there a resonance with the subjects themselves, the audience, and even the researcher? "When all these resonances--the researcher's, the subject's, the audience's--echo through the piece, we speak of the portrait as achieving authenticity. When these forces-- empirical and aesthetic--come together, the work seems both deeply grounded in space and time and timeless" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997 p. 260).

Kotre (1984) proposes three keys to verifying a life story. First, has the subject indicated in the follow-up interviews that he or she has been seen and understood? Having read a preliminary write-up of his or her story, does he or she show an appreciation of coherence (the "click of recognition")? In other qualitative literature, this might be called a "member check." Second, are the reactions of the subject consistent with the story motif presented? Do the subject's reactions parallel what appears in the story? Also, have the events in the subject's life since the initial interviews followed the trajectories forecasted within the story? Third, are the interviews unlocking fresher and

deeper material? Do these revelations "deepen and enrich the plot with color, effect, and texture" (p. 34)?

I would add a fourth key to Kotre's list: praxis. If praxis can be described as beliefs in action, then how a person lives out his or her life can shed much light on his or her inner beliefs. Does the person's life match his or her life story? All of these keys seem to bring some epistemic warrant to the research endeavor.

Ethical Concerns

One of the difficult tasks in doing this kind of research is setting up boundaries that protect both the vulnerability of the subject and the validity of the research. Working with a person's life and the stories of a person's life often becomes an exercise fraught with emotional content. At times these "emotional minefields" can distract and distort one from the central themes of inquiry. The researcher needs to keep focused on the research question and not be diverted. Qualitative research is not therapy and the focus of the work needs to be the chronicling of one's journey and life story rather than locating the traumas of the subject's life in order to offer remedies.

Setting boundaries also requires the researcher to determine the difference between legitimate inquiry and "voyeurism." Studs Terkel (1976) suggests one "never ask anything that is not your business,"whereas Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994) describes certain silences and moments when the conversation stops as "places I dare not tread, the points beyond which--by silent mutual agreement--I must not go"(p. 610).

Setting boundaries can be a difficult task in research because they need to be "distant and close, accepting and skeptical, receptive and challenging, and filled with

silences as telling as talk" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 161). The relationship between subject and research through which these boundaries are formed needs to be authentic in order to inform. It must also be sensitive in order to protect the subject.

At some point this issue becomes one of motivation. Will the product of this research relationship represent an authentic record of a person's life, which might then inform other like lives? Will the boundaries protect the subject from a voyeuristic invasion of a person's personal life, that leaves him or her feeling vulnerable and taken advantage of? Does the research produce something that not only seems genuine to outsiders but "feel(s) legitimate to the participants themselves" (Goetz, 1984, p. 98)?

Using Stories to Describe Christian Faculty in a the Secular University

Little theory has been generated regarding the faculty career of Christian academics who work in the secular academy. Therefore, I need a research method that will function more inductively than deductively. I need a tool to generate ideas rather than to test them. Qualitative research in general and methods that use life stories such as portraiture and life history in particular should prove helpful in this quest, for these methods are at their best "when [they are] being used in an exploratory fashion for generating many concepts, hunches, and ideas" (Faraday & Plummer, 1979, p. 785).

The close connection of qualitative research with symbolic interactionism requires its user to seek out diversity, ambiguity, and negotiation within the construction of the individual life rather than to assume some linear trajectory. By their very structure and purpose, research methods that focus on stories encourage subjects to acknowledge and to explain the importance of historical factors and structural constraints in their lives.

Rather than try to isolate events from their historical context in order to guess at issues of causality, we are able to place these events within "the twists and turns of a lifetime of work and living" (Rossi, 1988, p. 4) in order to gain a rich description of a life. Weiland (1994) calls for research that provides more of a cinematic view of life rather than simply a snapshot. Using life history and portraiture starts the cameras rolling.

Having laid down an exploratory base, we can then begin the process of interpretation. One life writer has defined interpretation as a "method of making connections within and between stories and using them to build and refine theory" (Kotre, 1984, p. 35). In life history and portraiture, interpretation is not necessarily looking for universal laws. Rather, interpretation provides the means for summarizing reoccurring motifs and varieties of experience in the proposed context. Once these motifs are identified in subjects' lives, we can then inspect each transcript for illustrations of this phenomenon. At this point we may be able to draw some conclusions about the field in general and then set the stage for further investigation.

Clifford Geertz (1973) captures the tension between exploration and interpretation as he describes the anthropologist's "need to grasp and the need to analyze" (p. 24). Geertz continues to depict this tension as "both necessarily great and essentially irremovable." At times, the researcher can find it difficult to work with this tension. Here is where Geertz's adaptation of Gilbert Ryle's "thick description" can be of help. Exploration's purpose is not to approach the research deductively in order to codify abstract data and then "subsume them under a governing law" (p. 26). Conversely, we use exploration to understand the nuances of each individual case and then use

interpretation "to place these things in some sort of comprehensible, meaningful frame" (p. 30).

The move from exploration to interpretation harmonizes nicely with Bruner's (1996) suggestion that researchers use both narrative and paradigmatic modes of cognition. Our exploration of Christian faculty in the secular university using stories provides a narrative frame for emphasizing difference, nuance, and context. Yet, when we take those life stories and begin to examine them for degrees of sameness and order, we move into the paradigmatic mode. Narrative alone might lead us to a string of unrelated stories, whereas paradigmatic thought by itself could cause us to lose sight of the differences between individuals.

Method and Protocol

As described above, this is a qualitative study using interviewers to explore a phenomenon as it is played out in the lives of those being studied. My search for life stories and faculty narratives that will reveal career pathways necessitated in-depth interviews in order to contextualize a person's beliefs and actions within a historical, familial, and educational framework.

To begin the first phase of my study, I sought out a variety of faculty in mid-career who had achieved tenure and who considered themselves conservative Christians[9] in theological background. I chose mid-career academics because middle age is typically a developmental point where people tend to look backward and forward with some degree of reflection. People in mid-career have often "successfully" constructed their work and

[9]See Glossary A for further definition of terms.

lives which provides a "propitious moment for reflection and reinterpretation of a life story" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1994, p. 11). In addition, people who have achieved tenure have had to negotiate inherent tensions as perceived "outsiders" with some degree of success.

I chose faculty from fairly conservative, Christian backgrounds because it matches my own personal experience and research interests as a conservative Christian. I also believe that this theological stance, which often has a foundationalist epistemology further heightens the tension felt in today's postmodern, secular academy. Although the study may not necessarily fit less conservative theological categories or the life experience of those from a less conservative religious tradition, I hope that all faculty regardless of religious persuasion can learn about the connection of religious belief and faculty work.

I also sought a sample diverse in gender, ethnicity, and institutional and disciplinary background. By means of various contacts throughout the country, I was able to interview 27 faculty from 15 different institutions and 14 separate disciplinary fields. I included a few faculty from distinctively Christian institutions to gain some means of comparison with those who work in the secular arena. With four women and five minorities represented, I sat down with each of them for face-to-face interviews of between 60 and 90 minutes. The protocol for these interviews is described below.

Presenting Issues. I asked four basic sets of questions. First, I asked the participants to reveal the pressing issues they feel and see when considering how their religious beliefs intersect with their faculty experience. I wanted them to describe their

experience as part of an academic institution and as a participant in a particular academic discipline.

Reconciliation. Second, I examined their basic assumptions about work and faith. As people of faith, what has been the nature of their interaction with a postmodern university that can be hostile to their own epistemological and theological presuppositions? What have been the key issues and central points of tension for them, and how have they attempted to reconcile them? Which ideas and beliefs have been jettisoned and which have been adopted as their own?

Pathways. Third, I wanted to know the key influences in their faculty and intellectual lives. What have been the key formative events in the shaping of their own approaches to their work and their faith? What or who has influenced them to think about the world as they do? In this block of questions I begin to focus on the "pathways" questions as I encourage them to plot out the "chapters" of their work life. Who or what has influenced them within their family, their educational life, their religious training, and their academic discipline?

Praxis. Finally, I wanted to determine the effect that being an "outsider" has had on their academic careers and theological beliefs. How has their reconciliation described above affected their mode of academic inquiry? How has it affected the way they approach pedagogy and curricular decisions? How has it affected the way they function in a collegial setting like a college or university? In addition, how has this reconciliation affected their beliefs about God, and how have their beliefs about God affected the reconciliation process?

Analyzing Informants' Accounts

Drawing on my previous experience with the topic, general knowledge of the field, and literature review, I set up the intellectual framework described above. This framework provided the initial scaffold for gaining a perspective on the field and also for data collection. This starting point, along with the data collection, served to generate theory rather than prove prior theoretical propositions.

In what could best be described as an iterative and generative process, themes emerged from the data, which in turn gave the data collected in the interviews shape and form. Throughout the period of data collection there was what Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) calls the "impressionistic record," where an "ongoing dialectic between data gathering and reflection, between description and analysis," exists (p. 188). I looked for regularities and patterns while beginning to form categories to make meaning of the data. I used what Miles and Huberman (1996) call "coding" to group these similar themes together. Then, using the "constant comparative method" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) I reviewed the transcripts of the interview data in order to gauge how it fit into the overall frame. By breaking down the data into themes and subthemes, I was able to scaffold further the narrative and make sense of underlying patterns.

After my first round of interviews in which I covered all four sets of questions, I then analyzed, compared, and contrasted the data collected. I checked for emerging themes or isolated, unusual experiences. What themes pervade several stories, and which events are quite dissimilar? Further analysis and refinement took place to develop "theory" by reducing them into higher concepts. These "theories" would then be used to develop an overall frame for understanding the questions at hand and also for suggesting

possible ideas for further study. In the spirit of an exploratory story, I commenced my second round of interviews either to confirm or disconfirm these initial themes and findings.

Rather than keep a broad focus, however, I chose to highlight three particular faculty lives as representative of the others. I chose these three for a number of reasons. First, these three offered a variety of experiences with regard to gender, discipline, institutional type, and institutional location. Second, these three people were extremely reflective and articulate about their faculty experience and provided a rich source of understanding. Third, all of them were people of achievement in their respective institution or discipline. Despite (or because of) their religious commitments, they were recognized as outstanding faculty in their own right. Finally, they were more than willing to give me further time and access to their life experience.

In two of the cases I made a return trip to their campus for further, multiple interviews. I also attended either a class or a public lecture in order to observe them at work first hand. In one case, I was able to interview faculty colleagues as well as a few students. Finally, I tried to familiarize myself with their research by reading some primary material.

Advantages and Limitations

A major limitation inherent in the study is its small sample of subjects. Generalization is sacrificed for thick description, and although this aids us in understanding the particular individuals selected, it becomes difficult to generalize the findings to the academy at large. Also, with my sample focused on one type of religious

believer, I cannot say much about the journey of faculty in other types of religious traditions.

My chosen research method carries with it two distinct advantages. First, its focus on individual cases highlights the individual voice rather than muffling the one in the desire to infer to the whole. Nuance and difference are not sacrificed for generalization. Second, this qualitative approach, along with its influence on life stories, allows a more inductive study including perspectives outside of the researcher's expectations and his own theoretical preunderstandings.

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