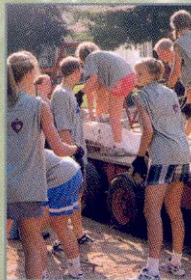


CALVIN

College



Expanded Statement of Mission



*Vision
Purpose
Commitment*

An Expanded Statement
of the Mission of Calvin College:
Vision, Purpose, Commitment

Revised Edition, February 2004

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PREFACE

From its beginning Calvin College has been governed by a clear mission. During its earliest years that mission was to train the youth of the church for callings in the ministry and in education. Soon the mission broadened to training people, by means of a liberal arts curriculum and according to the Reformed tradition, for a life of Christian service in any vocation. Fundamentally, that task remains a primary mission of the college. So stated, it has the apparent elegance of simplicity.

If, in the early years, the college had but one or two wagons hitched to that vision, it now seems to entail a whole caravan of educational programs and objectives. Simplicity has expanded into complexity. The student body and, to a lesser degree, the college faculty have grown increasingly diverse in traditions, perspectives, and talents. Similarly, the programs of study have sprawled from the liberal arts core into an array of professional interests. The dramatic changes of the college over recent decades call now for an expanded statement of mission, one that recognizes the tradition that has shaped Calvin College, one that acknowledges our contemporary position as a comprehensive liberal arts college, and one that guides our engagement with the future.

Without such a mission statement, we as a college community often respond to the mere pressure of needs, adjusting educational vision to pragmatic exigencies. If we have no clear sense of direction, we tend to become victims of new programs and of educational, social, and ethical trends rather than to be the formulators of them. Without such a mission statement, a college stumbles into the future, steered occasionally by accreditation and review agencies but without an internal compass.

After the rapid physical expansion and curricular change in the college that accompanied the move to the Knollcrest campus, the need for a statement of mission has grown more pronounced. While we were once united by a set of stated beliefs and unstated assumptions, that unity itself became more tenuous in the face of rapid change. Since the early 1960s, five major documents approved by the faculty and board have responded to the need for an expanded statement that would unify the college's mission. Christian Liberal Arts Education (1965) provided a vision of the educational mission for our current curriculum. "Professional Education and the Christian Liberal Arts College" (1973) stated our responsibility to professional programs. The "Report of the ad hoc Committee on Adult and Continuing Education" (1977), the report on "Adult and Continuing Education at Calvin" (1983), and "Graduate Education: A Report on Advanced Degrees and Scholarship" (1990) provide guidelines for the college's responsibility to continuing education and to graduate education.

Such statements as we have, however, have occurred in special contexts, all addressing similar themes, all making similar assumptions, but none governed by a larger statement that uniformly directs the efforts of each. The present need, then, is for a statement of mission expansive enough to recognize our particular religious and educational history, to clarify our position as an educational institution in the context of higher education, to direct our tasks of scholarship and education, and to shape our understanding of what it means to be a community.

An expanded statement of mission intends to establish directions, not to implement programs. But it is essential that those directions recognize the fundamental premises that have formed and guided this college from its outset. To promote and follow a transforming vision, one that grants new direction, is not to forsake the heritage that has sustained us. Rather, it is to embrace that tradition, to seek courage and sustenance from it, as we look for new ways to effect our calling as a comprehensive liberal arts college in the Reformed tradition of historic Christianity.

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Note: Following are abbreviations and titles of four major Calvin College documents referenced in this report and cited in the bibliography:

CLAE	<i>Christian Liberal Arts Education</i>
PECLAC	<i>Professional Education in the Christian Liberal Arts College</i>
ACE	<i>Adult and Continuing Education at Calvin College</i>
GRADS	<i>Graduate Education: A Report on Advanced Degrees and Scholarship</i>

PART I

SHAPING A COLLEGE MISSION

Introduction: Bridging Traditions

Calvin College's mission originates in the commitments that have shaped the college's identity since its beginning. These commitments are well expressed in the quotation from John Calvin inscribed on the college seal: "I offer my heart to you, Lord, promptly and sincerely." Our mission begins with faith and the call to serve God.

At Calvin, the Reformed tradition of Christian faith has been and continues to be our guide to hear God's voice and to respond obediently to God's call. It is a living tradition of Christian faith that draws upon historic confessional statements of the Church, both past and present, in a continuing effort to understand God's redeeming purposes toward creation. This confessional identity informs all that we at Calvin seek to do. It shapes our vision of education, scholarship, and community.

Enduring confessional traditions are realized in the faith and practice of specific communities of God's people. The Christian Reformed Church is the community that gave birth to Calvin College. It continues to be the confessing community that immediately supports the college as its covenantal partner in mission. The college and church draw strength from one another as they together engage in the work that God has given them to do.

These two interconnected aspects of the college's identity, our confessional identity as a Reformed Christian college and our covenantal identity as a partner with the Christian Reformed Church,

provide a framework within which decisions about the implementation of mission can be made. Calvin's confessional identity encourages and directs us as we reach out to form ties with those who share the substance of our Reformed Christian commitments and vision. Our covenantal relationship with the church secures our commitments and vision and reminds us to nurture, challenge, and draw wisdom from the people whose history we share.

Calvin College in Relation to the Reformed Tradition

Among the different genres of Christian colleges, Calvin identifies itself as a confessional college related to the Christian Reformed Church. This distinguishes it from many evangelical Christian colleges that historically have developed around theological reactions (e.g., fundamentalism) or approaches to Christian living (e.g., pietism) that cross over confessional traditions. And although a college of the Christian Reformed Church, as a confessional college Calvin is also distinguished from those institutions whose Christian identity lies chiefly in their formal ecclesiastical ties to the denominations of which they are a part.

What does it mean for Calvin to maintain a confessional identity or, more particularly, an identity as a Reformed Christian educational institution? Primarily, it means that our approach to education is set within a tradition of biblical interpretation, worship, and Christian practice expressed in the creeds of the Reformed-Presbyterian churches having their roots in the Protestant Reformation. Calvin embraces the expressions of this tradition in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort as authoritative historic guides to our understanding of scripture and its claims on our lives. A contemporary testimony of this tradition, *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*, demonstrates the continuity and flexibility of these historic faith-claims.

The creeds represent the work of the church as it sought to give obedient witness to God's Word in response to the challenges, sufferings, and opportunities of its day. Confessions, then, are formed by historic actions of a community of faith when it listens to scripture anew and recognizes current cultural realities in order to shape

obedient discipleship. At their best, confessions provide a community of faith with a prophetic voice that the world can hear. Used appropriately, they are guides in a continuing common effort of reexamining the scriptures to hear God's call.

Calvin's confessional identity arises from a specific community of faith, a particular people of God who continue to seek obedient discipleship in this confessional way. This understanding also provides the foundation for Calvin's relationship with the Christian Reformed Church, which gave birth to the college out of its desire to practice Christian discipleship more effectively. As a part of a fellowship of Reformed churches around the world, this denomination forms the confessing community whose life of faith continues to uphold the college in its mission.

Calvin College is a part of a broader Reformed confessional tradition from which it draws strength. The collective experiences of other Reformed and Presbyterian denominations in the United States and abroad provide resources that can enrich, and in some cases constructively challenge, our understanding of the Christian identity we bear. It is with a concern for Calvin's place in all of these communities that we attempt to identify some of the distinctives of a Reformed confession that may guide our understanding of mission today.

Characteristics of a Reformed Christian Confession

It is difficult to try to organize Reformed belief around any single concept or motif. Nevertheless, there are distinctive themes that characterize the Reformed expression of the Christian faith. These include the following. God is sovereign over all of creation. The scope of humanity's rebellion against God is total, affecting every aspect of creation, including every area of human life. In divine grace God acted unconditionally in Jesus Christ to redeem humanity and all creation from sin and evil. Believers receive God's salvation through faith alone, which is a product of divine grace. The Bible is the only infallible guide for faith and practice in the Christian life. All believers stand in direct relationship and communion with God through the Holy Spirit, and are called to experience God's grace regularly conveyed in the preaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments. All

believers are called to serve the Lord as witnesses to Christ's love in every area of life and as agents of renewal in the creation.

These confessional elements may be brought together in the affirmation that, as redeemed people, we live in a covenantal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The concept of covenant implies an agreement between consenting parties. But God's covenant with us has a special character, being initiated by God alone in sovereign grace. We have been formed in relationship with God, and this intimate relationship is upheld by God's promise. Although divinely initiated and upheld, God's covenant requires our grateful response in lives of faith expressed in service to the Lord. Thereby the covenant establishes our relationships with other persons, forming us into a people who practice God's covenantal love with one another.

The Reformed confessional vision identifies this covenant pattern through the four great moments of human history: creation, fall, redemption, and fulfillment. In creation God initiated a relationship of love with everything created, manifested in the very order and pattern of what God made.

Yet humanity is unique among the objects of God's love, having been created to represent God on the earth. Human beings are the stewards of God's whole creation with the responsibility to help the creation flourish while also respecting and preserving what God declared good.

Created to acknowledge God's claims and enact God's purposes in created reality, human beings have an innately religious character. Life cannot be divided into sacred and secular realms. Right human action begins in worship of the covenant Creator; wrong human action begins in ignoring or rejecting God's authority.

The tragedy of human existence is that men and women, created to live in responsible freedom as God's children, exchanged God's truth for a lie, and served created things rather than the creator. Humanity replaced its worship of God with the worship of idols, setting personal desire over devotion to God's revealed will. The effects of this disobedience are total in scope. Since people are covenantally bound to acknowledge God's rule in all areas of life, all of human life suffers

the effects of denying this worship. Sin penetrates the deepest desires of the human heart, affecting the way and the things people believe. Because covenantal responsibilities extend to the physical as well as the human creation, scripture teaches that the entire creation has come under a curse. A universal illness has been unleashed and is directed toward undoing life as God intended it.

The relationship between creation and the Creator was marred, but God's covenant promises were not broken. Throughout history God intervened in human life to redeem it. Finally, God became one with humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus lived in obedient covenant love with God, fully revealing the design of God's image in human life. He fulfilled God's covenant promises in his death, liberating humanity and all of creation from its enslavement to sin. He restored creation's relationship with God in a new covenant by his resurrection victory over death.

Through the Holy Spirit, God in Christ continues this covenant relationship today. In the midst of all creation's brokenness, God continues to uphold the order and pattern of creation, which reveals the divine claims to all humanity. At the same time God chooses a people to receive Christ's forgiveness by faith, live in renewed covenant relationship, and enter into eternal life. God's people are to live as the visible embodiment of the covenant promises. They manifest the universal scope of divine love; drawn from every tribe and language and people and nation, they become one body, one priesthood, one church.

Through this people God declares the restoration and completion of the creation. The church calls men and women to faith in Jesus Christ, and as agents of covenant renewal the people of God work to see God's reign over the whole creation. The redeemed are called to correct the exploitation and oppression of people, to alleviate pain in the world, and expunge evil from themselves. The confessing community forms the principal witness to the awakening reign of God, and provides a vision of spiritual liberation that also requires liberation from injustice and bondage.

Confessional Themes and Calvin's Present Mission

If the preceding is taken as a summary of the major elements of a Reformed confessional vision, then certain themes may be singled out to guide our consideration of Calvin's mission. Remembering that God's calling comes to whole persons in every area of life, we believe that education should explicitly connect the way we think with the way we live. We recognize the importance of leading students to identify their own idols, whether materialistic values, selfish individualism, secular ideologies, racism, or sexism. We encourage them to see the actual faces of human suffering and need.

We view the challenges and opportunities of scholarship confessionally. Remembering that God preserves a creational order that may be witnessed in theories that are not explicitly Christian, we also remember how this is God's world, upheld by divine grace, and revealing of God's will. Therefore, we also recognize the importance of developing theories and programs of research based upon a clear acknowledgment of God's covenantal claims.

We view the challenges and opportunities to develop community relationships at Calvin confessionally. Our life together as students, staff, and faculty needs to be organized within just relationships and situations. It should then promote mutual trust and accountability, responsible freedom, friendship, and Christian love. Christ's church must be characterized by the unity of diverse persons, who contribute different formative experiences to our understanding of the faith. We affirm the goal of seeking, nurturing, and celebrating cultural and ethnic diversity at Calvin. Remembering that the church of Jesus Christ is to live as one people by his power and command, we also encourage the development of greater dialogue and cooperation with individuals and institutions of various Christian denominations.

To place oneself confessionally in the Reformed tradition is far more than to place oneself in a particular church or denomination or even a mode of worship. The uniqueness of the Reformed understanding of the institutional church inheres in its assertion that the church is a living organism comprised of believers with Christ as their head. As we form alliances with other expressions of the Christian faith, we do so as a living body of God's agency, knit together with other believers on the basis of our common confession.

Calvin College in Relation to the Christian Reformed Church

While Calvin College is allied confessionally with other educational institutions and ecclesiastical bodies in the Reformed tradition of the Christian faith, it maintains a special relationship within that tradition with the Christian Reformed Church. As it looks toward its future, the college affirms its continuing relationship with the denomination that formed and governs it. Especially when seen in terms of a covenantal relationship for mutual service in God's kingdom, the benefits of this historically-proven relationship guide the future mission both of the college and of the church.

In a piece of ecclesiastical committee work cautiously labeled "Pre-advice," the Christian Reformed Synod of 1898 considered the "endeavor to organize a College in conjunction with the Literary Department of our Theological School, so that our young people, who received advanced education, no longer have to wander in various institutions outside our circles, but can be molded by our own reformed interests" (Acts of Synod, 1898, p. 57). The supporting rationale registered arguments familiar to nearly any Christian college today: the need for a "well-rounded" or liberal arts education, and the need for training in a particular tradition of the Christian faith. The notable distinction lay in the explicit sense, appearing often in random qualifications, that such training was ultimately directed toward seminary training and eventual service in the ministry of the denomination. Nonetheless, the concept of a liberal arts education from a Reformed perspective lay there in embryonic form.

Financial quotas were established and paid, buildings acquired and erected. The college itself matured as a Reformed institution of the liberal arts. Issues concerning ownership or privatization seemed to disappear into the background; as long as they stayed there, all seemed well. The world of Calvin College and the Christian Reformed Church prospered apace, despite upheavals in both American society and American higher education. Until 1957.

The considerations of the 1957 Synod on the state of the college occurred at a crucial moment in the college's history, for they were tied

to the purchase of and move to the Knollcrest campus. As the physical plant of the college underwent change, the very foundation of the college's relationship to the church came into question. If separation were to occur, surely this seemed the propitious moment. The heady excitement of change charges nearly every word of the 1957 Synod's dealings with college matters. That this same synod saw fit to affirm a bedrock relationship during such momentous change seemed to strengthen the foundation of church-college unity. It recognized a living relationship between two separate parties interested in a mutual mission in God's kingdom.

Showing the influence of Kuyprian* thinking, yet without a compelling warrant for complete separation of the two spheres, the study committee of the 1957 Synod distinguished between the proper tasks of church and college. The tasks of the church, for example, include 1) training of young people, 2) preparing members for Christian service, and 3) bringing the truth of Scripture to bear upon learning and Christian living. The tasks of the college are 1) to provide a liberal arts education, 2) to engage in Christian scholarship, and 3) to apply the truth to "the present situation," or the world at large.

Church and college, then, constitute distinct spheres of kingdom service with their separate and largely autonomous tasks. Yet, the college is also a ministry of the church, effecting a mission in the world by means of higher education that the church in its specialized ministry is not equipped to do. Despite their separate identities and functions in God's kingdom, a covenantal relationship unites them. Under the dispensation of grace, this covenantal relationship should be construed as a mutual pledge of fidelity, service, and support between partners, in which the distinct activities of each work for the betterment of both.

*After Abraham Kuypier, the Dutch church and political leader (1837-1920), whose ideas and vision of the cosmic lordship of Jesus Christ shaped Christian thinking in the Netherlands and beyond.

Why the Church Needs the College

To state that the Christian Reformed Church and Calvin College hold a covenantal relationship is not to suggest that the relationship is therefore always harmonious. Church and college are both, after all, human institutions and have at times exhibited the fallenness of their humanity in uncongenial ways. While it seems inevitable that tensions might arise between two closely allied parties, pursuing different means to a common end, such tensions are not necessarily bad. Indeed, tensions often provide opportunity for reassessment and growth; a lack of tension may simply signal decay.

In an arena of potential conflicts, the questions of why the college needs the church and why the church needs the college acquire renewed urgency. Either for principial or for pragmatic reasons, it would appear to some to be a fairly painless procedure to sever the church from the business of ownership and the college from ecclesiastical control. To do so, however, would also risk stripping the college of a vital tradition and the church of an agency of mission. The benefits of maintaining the relationship may be understood by asking why the church needs the college and why the college needs the church.

Reformed Higher Education

The Christian Reformed denomination does not locate itself in a posture of separation from the world, but seeks to be an agent of change in the world. This world belongs to God, so Reformed people confess, and, although fraught with evil, this world may be reclaimed under the dominion of Christ. Thus the task of Reformed believers is to bring a redemptive message to bear everywhere and in all things of this world.

Under this principle of a vigorous redemptive mission, the Christian Reformed Church has committed itself to Christian education, believing that in all areas of education the task of God's people is to engage the world in order to change and redeem it. Thus, Reformed believers see education as a ministry, a means through one particular channel of appropriating, forming, and redeeming knowledge and culture. Out of such a vision Calvin College was born.

Calvin College continues to be the capstone in the denomination's commitment to higher education. Here the Christian Reformed Church says that Christian higher education is important to its mission, its tradition, and its faith. The college is a living organism effecting a historically tested vision.

The church declared that the college was to be a training ground in doctrine and faith. This was not to abrogate the task of the church to train in doctrine and faith, but to expand the task that the church begins. The college trains in doctrine and faith by engaging the world, by educating Christians beyond simple belief to effective belief, by equipping Christians to transform the world in their individual areas of calling.

Intrinsic to the Reformed tradition has been the sense of the significance of each calling—Christians called to serve God in their vocations. The college shapes that calling by finding areas of integration between faith and vocation, an effort that remains a primary educational objective of the college. Through the college the church demonstrates that the life of the mind is important to Christian living.

Outreach to Academic Communities

Calvin College has always been gifted with inventive scholars and creative intellectuals as well as fine teachers. As such, the college has achieved a position of respect, both in the community of Christian colleges and also in the larger academic world.

Whereas once the faculty saw its primary task in scholarship as educating the church, largely through such avenues as denominationally allied journals, over the last twenty years the faculty has increasingly turned its scholarship toward the broader academic community. Faculty members have served in influential leadership positions in learned societies. They have conducted seminars and presented scholarly work in diverse ways that reach all levels of academia. They have served in editorial positions on numerous journals. Research publications have become valued in the general academy as in the Christian community.

In view of its contribution to scholarship, the college represents one powerful branch of mission of the church. The church requires an

academic community to effect this ministry and to build bridges to the intellectual community of North America and beyond. This ministry best occurs from the college, where scholarship is kindled daily in the classroom, and where new generations of scholars are being formed.

Mediator of Heritage

While scholarship that has influence upon the larger academy has become a mainstay of the college's mission, that task is not accomplished at the expense of a scholarly mission to the church. One area that has always distinguished Calvin College from other colleges related to the denomination has been this special task of serving as the curator of the denominational heritage. Traditions are seldom lost through tension; they are easily lost through neglect. The scholarly work at Calvin College and the teaching that derives from it provide a lively interchange with the cultural and theological legacy of the denomination. Through the teaching and scholarship of Calvin faculty, that legacy is both assembled and interpreted for the church.

Calvin College is equipped to do so in special ways. The agencies of the church are designed to do the business of the denomination, but not to maintain its curatorship. The college, on the other hand, has established specific centers of scholarly research devoted to the denominational heritage—the Meeter Center and Heritage Hall collections in particular. Furthermore, the college provides the scholarly activity of assembling, analyzing, and assessing such materials through the labor of librarians, archivists, and professional directors.

Such materials are intrinsically worthy of sustained scholarly interest. In the present case the college and church work in concert for the preservation of a special but common heritage, with the recognition of the clear gifts of the college to administer and enact that preservation.

Preparing Church Leaders

This special relationship is supported, furthermore, by the fact that a primary task of the college has been and remains today the education of people of the Christian Reformed Church. That relationship between church and college is affirmed by the fact that the sons and

daughters of the denomination constitute the greatest percentage of students at the college. While respecting the broader mission of the college to higher education and society in general, there exists a special relationship between denomination and college.

That fact implies certain things about the education students receive. While it is no longer possible to assume that all Calvin students enter with a fundamental knowledge of Reformed traditions and creeds, it remains the task of the college to educate in the context of those traditions and creeds. A specific, rather than general, shaping of theological contexts and Christian beliefs influences the teaching of instructors at the college.

The college thereby provides training in leadership for the church. It instructs people in ways of analysis and in forming a vision for Christian living. It guides people toward vocations by instruction in decision-making processes and by providing the acquisition of a base of knowledge that will enable a person to act wisely and well in a chosen profession.

Christian Leadership in Culture

Calvin College also provides a training ground where believers are becoming Christian leaders of society. The college serves the church by developing the Christian mind, one that investigates freely, analyzes carefully, and judges by biblical standards. The Christian mind grapples with the world at large; the Christian college trains that mind to do so.

Especially important in this regard, for example, is training students to engage modern cultures. The classroom is a context for looking outward, for equipping students with an understanding of the world in which they live and for bringing a redemptive message to that world. The college thereby serves as a mission by the church to modern culture.

That training also, however, informs the church itself. If the college is a bridge between the church and culture, the traffic on the bridge is two-way. In the classroom, students also achieve an understanding of the way God is at work in the world generally. Through the college's semesters and interims abroad, for example,

students may experience first-hand the religious activity in other cultures and various expressions of faith. As they bring these different expressions from a world community of believers to bear upon their own religious experience, the effect is often a revitalizing one for the local congregation.

The college serves as a kind of window both to modern culture and to the larger Christian church. Through this window, the denomination may observe an entire dimension of life not readily observable simply in the context of the local church. Thereby the denomination itself can grow spiritually in its understanding of the modern age, its mission to modern culture, and its partnerships with other Christian communities that share in the task.

Calvin College, then, remains a necessary and effective instrument of mission for the Christian Reformed Church. To the church the college represents not merely support for, but a deeply-rooted commitment to, Christian higher education. By means of the college, the Christian Reformed Church reaches out to other academic communities, establishing relationships impossible apart from the college. Moreover, as it values its own heritage, so too should the denomination value its college, for the college functions significantly as a curator of that heritage. Finally, the Christian Reformed Church needs the college for its important role in forming leaders, inspired by Christian belief, nurtured in a Reformed world and life view, tutored in intellectual practices, both for the church and for the larger culture.

Why the College Needs the Church

The close relationship historically maintained between Calvin College and the Christian Reformed Church has bestowed a sense of special identity upon the college that is enjoyed by few other Christian colleges. Calvin College is not simply one more Christian college. While Calvin College maintains a leadership position in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, and while the college maintains ties with a larger network of Christian colleges, the college also cherishes a distinctiveness based to a large degree upon its being the college of the Christian Reformed Church. This relationship with that denomination provides specific benefits to the college.

A Community of Faith in the Reformed Tradition

In an age of spiritual relativism, the Christian Reformed Church links the college to a community of faith that is larger than the college itself. Any Christian college may have its own confessional standards, guiding values, and lists of prescribed and proscribed activities to effect its beliefs and values. The denomination provides an orderly community for establishing the expression of the historic faith in the contemporary world. While Calvin College is an educational community, albeit one in which faith may be enacted in curricular pursuits, the Christian Reformed Church provides the core of a religious community of faith that supports the educational ministry of the college.

In reflection on the value of the Reformed tradition to educational pursuits, Nicholas Wolterstorff observes in *Keeping Faith* that “What ultimately binds us together is not allegiance to a certain hierarchy, as in the Orthodox and Roman churches; nor adherence to liturgical prescriptions, as in the Anglican Church. What binds us together is the declaration: This we do confess” (p. 17). The value of the Christian Reformed Church to the college lies precisely within the pale of an orderly, unified community that provides the basis of “This we do confess.”

A Community of Values

College students find themselves at a critical point in shaping and confirming the values that will guide the rest of their lives. The avowed purpose of Calvin College is to educate in such a way that those values will be Christian ones, in accordance with biblical revelation. Such a view provides both the coherence of our curriculum and a goal for our curriculum. Its relationship with the denomination provides the college with moral authority.

Over the years the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church has enacted many such decisions that guide the teaching, scholarship, and daily living at the college. For example, Synod investigated and established a position on life issues well before the landmark *Roe v. Wade* case of 1973. Synod established decisive moral views on how we are to consider people of other cultures and racial backgrounds, and thereby has identified and condemned the racism prevalent in our

culture. Synod adopted a resolution on pornography and sexuality that addresses a major moral concern in society. These positions grant a common reference point for the frequently more pluralistic views found at the college. Thereby Synod has established a structure for the college within which further debate may occur.

A Community of Loyalty

The college needs the special base of loyalty, support, and direction from a dedicated constituency that the Christian Reformed Church provides. While the tensions that exist between both parties often receive the greater share of attention, the loyal support evidenced by so many members of the denomination should be nurtured.

The tasks of the college are education and scholarship—revealing and investigating. Frequently that two-fold task is a daunting, even lonely, one. It is less so when it is done in the context of a loyal, supportive constituency, one committed to spiritual intercession for the college. In an age of increasingly pragmatic considerations about the work of the college educator, that common bond of spiritual support becomes ever more precious.

As in the past, Calvin College continues to rely upon a common vision and a common spirit to effect its calling. The dominant historical pattern has been the Pauline concept that believers are members of one body, each performing special tasks, united in a common purpose. In contrast with the specialization and fragmentation that marks higher education generally, the spiritual unity that the Christian Reformed Church and Calvin College have enjoyed in the past has been a blessing and a formidable witness.

That unity has received special emphasis under the covenantal relationship of church ownership. To the church, the college is one part of its body, one requiring devotional intercession and spiritual support.

The Christian Reformed Church, then, provides the college with a definitive Reformed legacy, an articulation of one tradition in the exercise of Christian faith. It provides a theological heritage that antedates the founding of the college, that has shaped the history of the college, and that continues to provide a framework for the activities of

the college. Moreover, within biblical authority and in its interpretation of Reformed distinctiveness, the Christian Reformed Church supplies the college with a moral framework for Christian living and ethical decision-making. Above all, perhaps, the denomination supplies the college with a supportive community of faith, a sense that the college is not alone in its high mission of Reformed education but is nurtured by the prayers of its constituency, by the grace of God, and by the vigorous direction of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

While noting the benefits of covenantal relationship between church and college, Calvin College also bears a responsibility to its broadened constituency and its changing educational mandate. In this case, the sense of tradition upheld and valued must also be flexible enough to permit the college a certain latitude in meeting the challenges of the future. Calvin College now draws a substantial proportion of its student body and faculty from various Christian constituencies. Similarly, its sphere of influence extends far beyond the parameters of the Christian Reformed Church to other Christian and educational communities. Having a well-defined place to stand in its own religious tradition, Calvin College bears the responsibility to join with these allied communities to achieve its primary objective of reclaiming and transforming all creation in service to Christ and under the guidance of scripture. Our task is not to transform the world to our view, but to engage partners to transform the world to God's intent.

In a history of higher education in America replete with dissolved church-college relationships, the legacy of the Christian Reformed Church and Calvin College is a powerful and enviable one. That unity has served, and will continue to serve, both parties well.

PART II

ENACTING A COLLEGE MISSION

Introduction

In the coming years, Calvin College must continue to live by the best features that have marked it from the start. Maintaining its character in changing times might require altering various policies, but its salient ends and means continue. Several such traits have characterized the college from the outset and remain guiding principles for engaging the future.

From the start, Calvin has aspired to provide formal education marked by rigor and excellence, infused in whole and in every part by a vital Reformed Christian vision. The guiding commitment and the quality of education are not regarded as options, as separate, or as being subordinated one to the other. Calvin's religious commitment undergirds its dedication to uncompromising quality of teaching, learning, and scholarship.

From the start, Calvin College has combined liberal arts and pre-professional education. It has not layered these two nor run them along parallel tracks, but so thoroughly intertwined them that education in the broader, fundamental issues of human endeavor culminates in an enriched, responsible, Christian understanding of work and vocation. Education at Calvin College aims at developing that Christian wisdom that envelops knowing and doing, that compels perspective and praxis to enrich each other.

Calvin College has long been egalitarian in its culture, faculty-run in its governance, and communal in its sociology. Calvin promotes a structure and atmosphere that equitably divide burdens and

opportunities, that encourage the development of gifts of individuals and groups, and that make mutuality in service of God and to neighbor the means as well as the end of its education.

Calvin College has always participated in broader trends in higher education, yet it also serves communities of faith that are critical of many North American cultural values. For its own well-being and the fulfillment of its calling, Calvin maintains both sides of this tension. It genuinely responds to—also learns from—cultural demands and social needs but out of its own loyalties to a sovereign Lord who is calling forth a people from around the world. It maintains a critical distance that arises from a clear identity, kindles keen education, and empowers true Christian service.

While different constituencies expect different qualities from the same college, and while different cultural pressures place their demands upon the college, Calvin College continues to testify particularly to Christian education based upon a liberal arts curriculum, to scholarship that shapes a Christian mind and that demonstrates the engagement of that mind with the world, and to a life of community that acknowledges each person as made in the image of God.

The Mission of Calvin College in Education

Firm convictions about the task of Christian education lie at the heart of learning and teaching at Calvin College. As stated in CLAE (pp. 27-38) and reaffirmed in this report, three convictions have special status among us. First, the aim of Christian education is to let faith find expression throughout culture and society. Second, the life of faith, and education as part of that life, find their fulfillment only in a genuine community. Third, the Christian community, including its schools, is called to engage, transform, and redeem contemporary society and culture.

Accordingly, the college sees higher education as a God-given vocation, to be enacted on behalf of the Christian community, for the benefit of contemporary society, and to the praise of God's name. Christian learning and teaching at the college level are not optional frills but essential contributions to Christ's work in the world. Without Christian higher education, the body of Christ would lack much of the

careful reflection it needs to be a thoughtful and effective agent of renewal.

Calvin College seeks to engage in vigorous liberal arts education that promotes lives of Christian service. This mission in education affects the goals that the college sets for its programs, the contexts in which various fields are studied, and the pedagogical techniques used to fulfill those goals and to examine those fields.

Educational Goals

To ask about the goals of education is also to ask how we should live. As Christians we offer our hearts to the Lord. In so doing, we recognize purposes and goals for education that go beyond simply knowing about reality or simply acquiring competence in some academic or professional field. Knowing entails responsibility, and competence includes caring. Accordingly, we acknowledge several interlocking educational goals at Calvin College.

At the heart of our programs lies the pursuit of knowledge of our triune God as revealed in scripture and creation, and as expressed through religious traditions in general and the Reformed Christian tradition in particular. Along with such knowledge come an understanding of God's world and critical inquiry into its problems and potential. We need to understand the structure and integrity of nature, discern the cultural and social forces that shape our world, and address the needs and issues of contemporary life. We also need to know ourselves—our nature, gifts, and callings—as we engage this world.

So that such knowledge responsibly guides Christian living, the college's programs encourage insightful and creative participation in society. We aim to foster sensitivity to the working of God and creation and respect for the variety of gifts that are offered by people of different genders, races, ages, and abilities. We strive to learn the demands of justice, an appreciation for diverse cultures, an attentiveness to the religious meaning of life's events, and an awareness of ways to renew the world for God's glory.

Our educational goals include the development of abilities and competencies that enable people to be effective in the tasks of knowing and caring. Gaining competencies, however, is not enough; they

should be used in ways that honor God in the tasks for which they are intended. Competence is not only a skill; there is a moral purpose as well as a technical purpose for the competence. Competencies that are emphasized at Calvin College include reading and writing Standard English well, listening and speaking effectively, employing graphic and numeric forms of communication, exercising valid and sound reasoning, making discerning use of technology and popular culture, and maintaining personal health.

In order for knowing to include responsibility and for competence to include caring, the mind and heart must be one. To do this in a way that is faithful to Jesus Christ, we need to foster commitments. A goal, then, of education at Calvin College is to foster a thoughtful and compassionate commitment to Christian faith and to such values as stewardship, justice, truth, and gratitude. These commitments include a joyful trust in the triune God, an attachment to a Christian worldview, a strong desire to connect theoretical understanding with Christian conduct, a readiness to contend against evil and oppression, a willingness to work for the common good and the Body of Christ, and a dedication to the cause of Christ's renewal of the earth and human life.

Christian education at the college level needs to be seen as a dynamic process in which all of its participants continually try to get their deepest commitments, educational activities, and life practices headed in the same direction. Goals, however, remain abstractions until fulfilled by someone, and fulfilled in a particular program rather than by educational accident. Our educational goals carry certain implications about students at Calvin College, about the academic programs offered to them, and about pedagogical methods used to educate them.

Students at Calvin

Students at Calvin College are engaged in the mission of the college. They participate in the mission of pursuing vigorous liberal arts education for lives of Christian service, producing solid works of art and scholarship, and caring for one another in the performance of tasks. For this reason the college seeks students who are eager to learn, value learning as a gift of God, are curious about creation and culture, and strive to develop individual and communal gifts for leadership and

service. Given its mission, the college seeks to serve any student interested in higher education that is shaped by the Christian faith.

While the qualities common to all students at Calvin College are important, both the nature of the church and the nature of education require that the college serve a diverse student body. The guiding premise for Calvin's educational program is that God's revelation is not restricted to one people or worship form, nor indeed to one curriculum or pedagogical method.

The college wishes to serve persons from Christian traditions beyond that of the Christian Reformed Church. Affirming its confessional commitments, Calvin recognizes that Christian traditions are gifts that strengthen the church and build up its members in the full image of Christ. Students from other Christian traditions will enrich the community and enhance education at Calvin through their contributions.

Finally, the college strives for ethnic and racial justice and reconciliation, without forgetting its own ethnic roots. The goal of an ethnically and racially inclusive college community is to recognize that the Christian community transcends cultural and geographical boundaries. Yet we live in a world that erects and enforces such boundaries in ways that grant privilege and power to some and disempower others. A commitment to overcome racism will assist in the educational goals of appreciating different cultures and promoting justice and reconciliation among people.

Similarly, the college also seeks to serve students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, from a range of intellectual abilities, and those with disabilities that do not prevent them from the task of learning. Not only does this honor our commitment to being a diverse community, but it also recognizes the diverse educational needs that the body of Christ must meet and the diverse ways in which leadership in society occurs. Our academic programs should enable people with different intellectual abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and gifts to prepare for positions of leadership and lives of service.

Moreover, because of its strategic position among Christian institutions of higher education, the college wishes to serve students of

diverse ages and walks of life. It does not restrict its mission to undergraduate students of traditional college age, but seeks to attract and benefit adult learners and graduate students.

The commitment to cultural, social, and academic diversity constitutes an important part of the future mission of the college. The college is not content simply to confirm students in their traditions and prejudices. In order to achieve its goal of leadership, the college desires graduates who make a difference in their cities, countries, churches, and places of work. This challenge, moreover, bears implications for the academic programs and curriculum of the college.

Academic Programs

Calvin College currently offers three types of programs: undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education. The oldest, best established, and most heavily enrolled is the undergraduate program, which divides into either disciplinary or professional degree programs. About half the undergraduates pursue disciplinary majors in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. The other half are enrolled in professional programs, with over a third of these students being in education. All undergraduates take a liberal arts core.

Graduate programs and continuing education are relative newcomers at Calvin. The college has stated three purposes for its graduate programs (GRADS 21-50). First, these programs are to train Christian leaders at the graduate level, with particular emphasis on the areas of public service, church work, and education. Second, graduate programs should enhance the teaching, scholarship, and alumni support of Calvin's undergraduate programs. Third, Calvin's graduate programs should serve to develop advanced Christian scholarship aimed at academic, professional, or public audiences.

The purpose of the continuing education program at Calvin is to help adult learners understand and address issues of the Christian life in society (ACE 13-15). The primary audience is alumni of the college's undergraduate programs who wish to deepen their reflection on cultural and social issues and become more effective agents of renewal. By serving these students, the college not only recognizes their continuing part in Calvin's mission and community but also seeks

to benefit from the insights they gain through engagement with contemporary society.

With such a wide range of programs and students, questions inevitably arise regarding the unity, balance, and character of programs. Unity comes from the conviction that in creation and in Christ all of reality coheres and finds meaning. Unity in curriculum and community in education also require a balance in programs offered; a few programs with many students and faculty should not dominate the college curriculum. A full range of disciplinary courses is necessary, and enrollment levels should not serve as the sole guide to whether a course remains in the curriculum. While we affirm the conviction with Abraham Kuyper that “every square inch in the entire cosmos Christ claims as His own” and, as a result, that all of creation is worthy of investigation, the liberal arts, with emphasis upon contextual study, remain central to education at Calvin College. Since the liberal arts are basic to all the college programs, they should also be the most prominent feature of a Calvin College education. Professional programs, graduate programs, and continuing education as well as undergraduate programs should reflect an emphasis on contextual study in the liberal arts.

Contextual Education

The fundamental premise of a contextual view of education is that objects and events do not appear randomly or independently, but rather that they exist and occur within such contexts as the natural, cultural, societal, and spiritual. Moreover, information and ideas about objects and events should be understood within their larger contexts. The aim of such education is to capture a living heritage of information and ideas, rather than seeing them as isolated events stripped of contextual implications and ultimately of contextual reference.

Contextual education seems particularly well-suited for a Christian college. Such education helps one see the working out of God's revelation and redemptive plan in creation, in culture and in the patterns of society. Furthermore, the contextual approach provides a practical means of integrating faith and learning as one discerns the revelation of God in all areas of life and learning and begins to employ Christian beliefs in the relevant contexts of one's own time.

To call attention to contexts requires both an appropriate curriculum and effective pedagogy. The contextual approach should not be relegated to certain disciplines or courses, but should permeate the entire curriculum, at every level, whether undergraduate, graduate, or continuing education, and in every type of program, whether disciplinary, professional, or practical. At the same time, the core courses in Calvin's academic programs should be those that best enable all students to study and understand the wider contexts of their lives and learning.

With the adoption of CLAE in the 1960s, Calvin's curriculum focused especially on religious, historical, and cultural contexts. To be more precise, it has emphasized Reformed Christianity, Western civilization, and the academic disciplines. Since the 1980s the college has also directed attention to the study of world religions and other Christian traditions, internationalizing the curriculum, and addressing additional areas of culture such as popular art and entertainment. Furthermore, the societal context requires greater attention to such issues as poverty, sexism, racism, and the destruction of the environment. Such emphases affect both the core curriculum and the design of majors.

Core Curriculum

The challenges confronting Calvin College in the area of core curriculum resemble those facing most other colleges and universities in North America: fostering common learning, promoting upper-level engagement in the academic disciplines, engaging current world issues, and addressing interdisciplinary subject matter including non-Western or minority cultures. In order to meet these challenges appropriately, the college must achieve as much clarity as possible about the character and role of its core curriculum and must not let departmental interests and professional certification requirements set its curricular agenda. Every proposal for revision of the core curriculum must demonstrate in detail how it will serve the college's educational goals and give renewed vigor to contextual education.

In contrast to the major, study in the core will usually be more general than study in the major, and the competences learned will be those basic to the life of an educated person generally rather than for a specific vocation. The goals of the core curriculum extend beyond

those for the individual student; they are goals that help shape the educational community of the college. Calvin College students should be part of a vibrant Christian educational community, and they should be prepared for a Christian life in society. The core curriculum, while directing individual students toward the educational goals of the college, contributes significantly to shaping the character of the educational community in both its practices and commitments. It prepares students for a life of Christian citizenship in the world.

Majors

The CLAE document recommends major concentrations and group concentrations, but provides little rationale for this recommendation and leaves the details of concentrations to various departments. PECLAC gives even fewer aims and guidelines for concentrations in professional programs, choosing instead to argue broadly for the legitimacy of professional programs and for their recommended relation to general education requirements. Presumably there was not sufficient debate about the character and role of disciplinary and professional majors to warrant more detailed discussions in CLAE and PECLAC.

Since the adoption of CLAE and PECLAC, two developments have made such discussions more urgent. One is the proliferation of undergraduate majors. The other is the growing conflict between careerism, or the use of an education as a springboard to a career, and vocationalism, or the discovery of one's life calling through education, as the goals of a Christian college education. Taken together, these developments often result in the nature of the academic major being dictated by external forces—professional concerns and accrediting agencies, for example—rather than being shaped by the internal mission of the college. With increasing external demands upon a major, one finds a very real danger of the unifying educational goals of the college paling in significance.

These developments affect Calvin College no less than they affect other North American colleges. Indeed, careerism is not restricted to students and departments with professional majors. It also prevails in attitudes toward majors in the disciplines, which in the past were seen as preparations for graduate study leading to academic or learned professions, and now are often measured as training grounds for

potentially lucrative careers. The danger in this kind of thinking is that colleges lose sight of their educational goals as various majors are pitted against each other in terms of their potential payoffs. One corrective approach is for all majors, whether professional or disciplinary, to place their fields of study in the larger contexts of culture, society, history, and religion. This approach recognizes the importance of proficiency in a field, but gives equal importance to the way in which one achieves, holds, examines, and assumes such a proficiency.

General education, anchored in the core curriculum, serves to equip all students to live the Christian life in contemporary society. The major should do the same, but equips students to assume specific positions in society and to show expertise in shaping contemporary culture and social institutions. The major is a study in depth: its later courses build on previous courses, and it gives preparation for service with expertise. Through such cumulative and preparatory study in depth, students gain more detailed and complete understanding of a particular field; they come to terms with a definite range of traditions and institutions; they learn to make creative use of specialized methods and techniques; and they gain a concrete vision of how to serve the church and society in a vocation. Since the body of Christ needs many different members to accomplish its work, the major should enable people to respond to Christ's calling by finding suitable vocations through which they can make contributions to the church and society.

As well-educated members of Christ's body, students need specialized expertise, but they also need to serve the body with discernment regarding the place of that expertise in the contexts of life. Calvin's commitment to contextual education calls for innovative approaches to the entire curriculum, together with appropriate strategies of instruction.

Pedagogy

One of the hallmarks of Calvin College has been its steadfast and enduring commitment to excellence in teaching. In accordance with the assertion of the Faculty Handbook that "effective teaching is expected of all faculty members" (3.6.3), and in order to maintain and further that excellence, the college appointed a Committee on Faculty Teaching (1987) to examine all areas of pedagogical concern, from

methods of instruction to peer and student evaluations of those methods. The mandate to the committee, furthermore, is to provide careful training of new instructors and ongoing assistance to regular faculty to develop pedagogical effectiveness.

Pedagogical techniques are often closely associated with an instructor's subject matter, the number of students in a given environment, and the tasks at hand. Instruction techniques will probably differ between a laboratory and a lab theater. They will likely differ between a survey course and a seminar, and may well differ in response to students' cultural frames of reference. Similarly, pedagogical techniques will differ according to an instructor's personality, prior models, and training. Even the traditional mode of college-level pedagogy—the lecture method—will vary widely depending upon how an instructor delivers the material.

While respecting these variables, Calvin College challenges its teachers to employ pedagogical techniques that quicken the interest of students, recognizing the varying backgrounds, learning styles, and capabilities of students to actively engage them in learning. The teachers also aim to make the subject matter of the disciplines relevant to the lives of students and encourage students to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers are also encouraged to reflect systematically on their pedagogy and to ask whether it achieves the college's purposes.

The college also supports the use of instructional materials and technologies that are appropriate to learning and are within the available resources of the college. Such materials and technologies enhance learning and prepare students to use new approaches in their chosen vocation. The employment of technology should contribute to the pedagogical pluralism that is important to effective teaching and learning.

Faculty members, therefore, are encouraged to a pedagogical pluralism, a willingness to employ a variety of pedagogical methods befitting subject matter, classroom setting, cultural context, and student abilities. One such variation, for example, is the concept of collaborative learning whereby an instructor outlines a problem or question and organizes the students into groups to find solutions or

answers. The concept involves several types of peer tutoring and evaluation, as well as group discussions, student-run group presentations, and team projects. Collaborative learning requires students to participate actively in the educational process and to appropriate the materials as their own.

Flexibility of pedagogical methods can also encourage and strengthen connections between the curriculum and co-curriculum. The co-curriculum includes a wide range of events, programs, and organizations outside the classroom setting. This larger network plays a crucial part in the learning of students. It has great potential for helping students test the personal, social, and religious implications of their education.

The most desirable institutional culture at Calvin is one that best accords with our deepest shared convictions about the task of Christian education: that Christian education should let faith find full expression; that genuine community is essential to such faith and education; and that Christian colleges are called to help transform contemporary society and culture. Taken together, these convictions point toward an institutional culture where students take wide-ranging responsibility for their learning, experience their learning as part of a communal undertaking, and direct their learning toward the renewal of contemporary society and culture.

The Mission of Calvin College in Scholarship

The Historical Development of Scholarship at Calvin College

The emphasis upon excellence of teaching at Calvin College should not diminish the importance of scholarship in the college environment. Indeed, this very emphasis, which sees research informing teaching, which sees the classroom as a stimulating arena for the interchange of ideas, and which sees the college as a whole engaged in a communal search for knowledge and in a committed effort to bring knowledge to bear redemptively upon this world, has proven an invigorating stimulus to scholarship.

The scholarship practiced at the college has, nonetheless, undergone substantial change during the college's history. From the 1930s to 1960, it spoke by and large through elite but non-technical

journals to educators and the educated laity in conservative Reformed circles, and in critique of the secularistic worldviews that dominated American culture. This effort aimed at establishing, reaffirming, and legitimating the cardinal premises of a “Christian mind” in contradistinction to those of “secular minds.” Such efforts were generally undertaken by gifted faculty members on their own time and at their own initiative.

In the past thirty years, without closing off those channels, scholarship among faculty members has turned to more conventional academic and artistic outlets and has taken up issues within the academic disciplines, including both the theoretical foundations in the disciplines, and applied, thematic, or specific case analyses within disciplinary parameters.

During the 1970s and 1980s in particular, a concerted effort has been made by the college to nurture faculty scholarship, particularly as it accords with such objectives of the college as the investigation of religion and culture, faith and learning, the history of the Reformed tradition, and the nature of creation. This emphasis has resulted in several documents to guide and to support scholarly research. The first is the “Constitution of the Calvin Center of Christian Scholarship” (1975; revised 1978 and 1992), which established a center to study a variety of practical and theoretical topics in Christian perspective. The second and third, “Proposal for the Establishment of a Program of Faculty Development Seminars” (1977), and “On the Promotion of Scholarship at Calvin College” (1980), expanded programs of institutionally supported study and research opportunities for the faculty. The fourth, “Report of the Calvin and Calvinism Center Study Committee” (1981), established a study center with opportunities to do advanced research in the history and character of Calvinism. Additionally, the GRADS document (1988, revised 1990) defined certain expectations in scholarship of Calvin faculty. Such documents constitute a serious commitment by the college to fulfill its mission to scholarship.

This time of growth and transition, during which Calvin College scholars have increasingly reached out to a larger audience, has also necessitated attention to issues of academic freedom. In its respect for scholarly and creative work, Calvin College follows a more generous

definition of academic freedom than do many Christian colleges (see Faculty Handbook, section 3.6.4). Essentially faculty members are free to exercise their talents with only three restraints: the confessional standards of the college, the professional standards of the discipline, and the prohibition of propagandizing in the classroom for causes unrelated to their profession as Christian teachers of a discipline. These restraints are not without risk and may be enforced only via due process and by communally accepted standards. Still, they are and should continue to be required in order to maintain the confessional, professional, and educational integrity of Calvin as a college in the Reformed Christian tradition.

At the same time, this very integrity demands a positive, supportive, expansive vision of academic freedom. The integrity of any educational institution resides in a process of free postulation, inquiry, interpretation, and conclusion. While the task of scholars at any college is to keep alive, develop, and pass along the root ideas of a culture, and while the task of scholars at a Christian college is to engage those ideas, to examine them, and to challenge or affirm them as consequential for the Christian faith, the Reformed Christian academic especially feels obligated to engage alternative points of view in order to learn from them, to be challenged by them, and to bring a Reformed and Christian witness to bear upon them.

The Current Situation

Two items in particular mark the history and current context of scholarship at Calvin College. First, the college has attempted to be egalitarian in its faculty structure. Seeing each member as of equal value, the college strives for equality in terms of rank, compensation, and teaching and advising responsibilities. Moreover, each member has an equal voice in running the affairs of the college. Within this egalitarian structure, scholarship has been seen as an individual gift among many other gifts necessary to the profession of education and the intellectual life of the college. This structure has fostered a rare collegiality and sense of communal purpose at the college. But, second, in its communal purpose to examine ideas, to exercise the life of the mind, and to engage modern culture in all its manifestations, Calvin College has also acquired and supported a faculty that does a considerable amount of scholarship. The life of the mind that is cherished in the classroom frequently expands beyond the classroom in

articles, books, workshops, conferences, and performances for larger audiences.

Scholarship at Calvin College is expressed primarily through four avenues of effort and production. First, individual faculty members have developed their areas of professional expertise through publications and presentations. Many such efforts have achieved prominence on the national academic stage, and bear evidence of an individual's engagement of, mastery over, and contribution to an academic discipline or professional field. Second, Calvin faculty have also assumed leadership in national affiliations of committed Christian scholars and artists within various fields. Such faculty have brought a direct influence to bear upon national and international organizations, some of them specifically concerned with the challenges of integrating faith with learning, others of them predominantly secular organizations dedicated to a certain field. Third, in-house support of individual projects by means of a sabbatical system and Calvin Research Fellowships encourages individual projects of faculty, broadening their professional expertise, providing time for concentrated research yielding significant results, and contributing to classroom teaching. Finally, ventures through the CCCS and the Meeter Center have established ties with other communities by bringing their representatives to our campus. Thereby, we benefit as a college by receiving fresh points of view, by stimulating classroom teaching and lectureship opportunities, and by testing our particular premises in the company of others.

Calvin now faces new challenges to continue its achievement and new opportunities to broaden its leadership role in scholarship. For example, other evangelical colleges are joining with Calvin in pursuing perspectival issues. We now work in a spirit of communal scholarship with many institutions, particularly those in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. As a result of Calvin's recognition in the broader academic world, some of its scholars have been hired at major research universities. We welcome the extended range of influence that these scholars have had, but we are also challenged to maintain the scholarly excellence of our institution. Furthermore, increased interaction with broader evangelical and secular networks may begin to erode communal loyalty on the part of present and potential faculty members and on the part of the college's supporting constituency.

While we welcome diversity and aggressively seek scholarly partnerships with other institutions, we cannot risk losing the clearly identifiable voice of the Reformed tradition.

Before outlining how Calvin might work to meet these challenges and opportunities, we need to define the nature and proper role of scholarship in our Christian academy.

The Nature of Scholarship

Scholarship is not needed in the Christian academic community just for intellectual vitality, prestige, or adornment, but it is needed for that community to do its part in the church's larger mission of being God's agent of witness and reconciliation in the world. Preserving the beauty of the world and redressing its pain do not proceed from scholarship alone; neither do they proceed far without it. Scholarship is not just a registering or responsive activity but a shaping, driving force, particularly over the long run and in the echelons of power and authority. Without seeking to dominate the world coercively, Christians must work persistently, intensively, and communally to make their voice heard in the world: as a witness against secularistic pretensions and idolatries, as a witness against their own perversions of the faith, and as a witness for that reconciliation among the peoples and between God and humanity that is offered in Jesus Christ. Committed Christian scholarship is vital to forming, guiding, correcting, and forwarding that witness.

Purposes of Scholarship

Within the Christian community, scholarship may be considered to serve three purposes: conserving, transforming, and enriching.

Conserving scholarship promotes understanding of the various Christian traditions in order to provide the Christian community with the integrity, vision, and wisdom needed both to frame and to energize its ongoing work. From caring for historic documents to recovering voices of the faithful who have lived long ago or far away, Christian scholarship serves the community with a fuller appreciation of its heritage. Fundamental to conserving scholarship are the research skills of ordering materials, observing significant patterns, and interpreting patterns for the community.

Transforming scholarship may establish Christian criteria for knowledge or for its application, or may implement those criteria in a particular field in such a way as to challenge the wisdom prevailing there or to show the critical, redemptive, or reconciling power of the Christian faith. Transforming scholarship brings to research materials a method for applying analytic skills to a given body of material, theorizing about the significance of that material, and interpreting a body of knowledge under such ethical rubrics as justice and reconciliation.

Enriching scholarship brings the insights or methods of the arts and sciences to bear on Christian thought and the understanding of creation and culture. Such scholarship can enhance appreciation for God's creation and human experience, expand the fund of human knowledge and wisdom, help Christians engage in proper self-criticism or self-understanding, and enrich the testimony of the Christian message. The primary focus here is the scholar's engagement of materials of his or her discipline, or the expression of a creative gift. It includes a range of scholarly endeavor from scientific work in the laboratory, to the writing of a book on a literary figure, to the presentation of a creative performance. Such work is marked by its originality and by its contribution and significance to a field of study.

Definition by Audience

Scholarship, which for our purposes we define as concerted, persistent intellectual reflection in a field of study or of creative endeavor, the results of which are communicated to an audience within appropriate conventions, appears in different forms among Calvin College faculty. And while faculty members are called to be scholars, it is nonetheless clear that not all members will fulfill all categories of scholarly endeavor. While we are all members of one body of Christ, we prize the fact that we are highly diverse members, gifted in different ways for different callings. As there is no superiority of gifts in the biblical analogy of the body of Christ, so too no superiority is implied by these categories. Their purpose is to clarify the ways in which research and scholarship are carried out.

By the criterion of audience, scholarship may qualify as *personal, applied, or advanced*.

Calvin College currently requires *personal scholarship* of all its faculty and defines it to be “that active life of the mind . . . in which the faculty members are engaged as they continue to learn” (Faculty Development Task Force, July 1987, p. 7). This includes staying current in one's field, remaining inquisitive about the world, and interlinking those two qualities in creative and challenging ways. The primary audience of such scholarship is for the professional integrity and improvement of oneself, though it will be communicated quickly to others in—and remains absolutely necessary to—the college community as well; for only through the vibrant intellectual life of individual faculty does teaching stay fresh, collegiality exciting, and community service distinguished.

Applied scholarship is that intellectual reflection which is communicated beyond the college or beyond one's academic-professional circle strictly defined. It can include such work as consulting, counseling, advising, or speaking on topics of extra-collegiate or -academic interest to the extent that these draw from or are informed by one's reading, research, and reflection.

Advanced scholarship can be defined as the generation, interpretation, and evaluation of knowledge or of performance/creative activity for and before one's professional peers, whether these be within or without one's special field of endeavor. Advanced scholarship receives detailed analysis in the GRADS report as a foundation for graduate study (p. 58 f.).

Commitments

To fulfill its mission in scholarship, Calvin College should take concerted and innovative measures to improve scholarly research and exchange within its own house and in broader academic networks. The priorities in this mission may be viewed according to the purposes and audience for scholarship.

Calvin should encourage scholarship to achieve the three purposes of scholarship outlined above. These three feed, correct, and drive one another, and thus go forward best together. They seem to be equally needed for the construction of Christian scholarship and for its address to the broader academic world.

In terms of the criterion of audience, however, different categories need different measures.

As indicated above, *personal* scholarship is already required of Calvin faculty but does not seem to be practiced equally or adequately throughout the faculty. The canons of personal scholarship must be clearly noted at the time of hiring and more strictly enforced at the time of promotion and at subsequent reviews. Every faculty member must be held accountable to the standard of *personal* scholarship, as each member diligently engages the intellectual life of a discipline and brings it to bear upon the classroom and the larger college environment.

Any glimpse at faculty activity will find the practical area of *applied* scholarship in abundance. These efforts should continue to be encouraged in order to reduce the risk of scholars losing touch with the broader audiences that also need their insight; the risk of the college losing some vital, nurturing ties with its constituency; and the risk of scholarship losing “real world” insights and stimulation for its own projects. In particular, the college must make sure to maintain its historic strength in serving the denominational community while broadening the scope of that service to include more civic, professional, and other religious organizations. Applied scholarship is the readiest avenue for such service. To qualify as scholarship, it must reflect persistent intellectual engagement with the substance of the arts and sciences; to qualify as service, it must challenge, instruct, and learn from its audience.

For the next few decades, the promotion of *advanced* scholarship deserves particular attention and new initiatives on the part of the college. The college should provide material, moral, and structural support to those conducting advanced scholarship. This can take any number of forms from flexible contracts (which might reduce teaching or advising loads in exchange for clearly accountable scholarly work), to stipends for summer research equal to those awarded for summer teaching, to the creation of new institutes for Christian scholarship or the re-tooling of current institutes toward advanced rather than only applied research, and to the development of new graduate programs.

In all areas of its scholarship, finally, Calvin must give keen attention to nurturing the resources that have helped distinguish its efforts thus far. These include the concern for forthrightly Christian scholarship that has set Calvin apart from most other institutions. While scholarship is often an individual enterprise, it becomes communal in that Christian scholarship depends fundamentally on the collegial solidarity of purpose and perspective that has marked Calvin historically. This collegiality has been manifested at the college in many ways: departmental seminars, collaborative research among colleagues, student research participation, lectures by fellows of the CCCS, lectures given by faculty on the occasion of publishing a book. Such mutual support certainly merits continued encouragement and should include the support and exchange of scholarly research across disciplinary and departmental boundaries on campus. Colleagues within and across departments should stimulate, encourage, and hold one another accountable for scholarship.

Such collegiality, however, extends beyond the campus environment as well. One of the foremost means of bringing together scholars in like-minded pursuit of knowledge and direction is through conferences. In recent years individual departments have sponsored conferences that have drawn national and international participation. As Calvin College's leadership in scholarship increases, some administrative channel must be established at the college for the encouragement and conduct of such conferences.

All these efforts require patience and perseverance over the long term, concern for quality above quantity, and conviction of the importance of knowledge and ideas—all of which good scholarship requires and all of which Calvin, by confessional and ethnic heritage alike, has manifested in the past.

The Mission of Calvin College in Community

To have a sense of community is a laudable goal for nearly all groups of people working and living together; to state precisely what constitutes a particular community, however, may well be the most challenging and divisive task for the members of any community. The very elusiveness of the term poses dangers for including the building of

community as a mission of the college. The danger is heightened by the dramatic transformation of Calvin College from a small institution serving almost exclusively the sons and daughters of the Christian Reformed Church to a large and complex institution involving a diverse student population, an increasingly diverse faculty, and a multiplicity of concerns extending beyond the classroom. That diversity renders earlier assumptions about community inadequate.

At Calvin College we seek to be a specific kind of community—a learning community. The nature of community should grow out of our educational task as well as the principle that learning is done communally. Students and faculty together acquire knowledge and insight. Members should help one another cultivate aspirations, nurture commitments, and practice what we profess. The college as a whole, in its structures and its ethos, should have the same aims. In this community learning goes well beyond the classroom, making it possible and necessary that all campus life promote the educational tasks.

The Making of Communities

The college's commitment to community affects its internal life—the way in which students, staff, and faculty work together—and its external relationships with other institutions—the way in which it forms partnerships to work with others toward common goals.

The making of an internal community has an obvious point of departure. People gather in different capacities at Calvin College because of a common commitment to educational aims, spiritual values, and religious beliefs. These define the needs of community as larger than any one individual's personal satisfaction of needs. Community therefore consists of more than just being together or knowing everyone, more than simply harmonious co-existence, more than gratification of individual needs for companionship. Similarly, community is more than simple like-mindedness on issues of moral values, more than spiritual gratification through modes of worship that the individual finds personally satisfying.

Community properly understood is also more than a collection of individuals who agree to work together. As a community the whole of Calvin College is greater than the sum of its parts, and its structures,

ethos, and institutional weight must meet the following ideals which it sets for its members. The college is particularly called to embody justice, compassion, and self-discipline in repenting of such sins as racism; in so doing, we can show forth the redemption which is God's purpose to forge.

A Purposeful Community

The fundamental principle for community resides first of all in a cohesive purpose. However like-minded or diverse its members may be, the community exists to enact a purpose; in the case of Calvin College that purpose is to shape hearts and minds through higher learning for Christian living. Therefore, the end of individuals working in community is always larger than any individual self-interest. Purpose, moreover, consists of more than tasks; purpose entails the mutual holding of common confessions that direct individual tasks. In this sense, the purpose of all participants in Calvin College's mission arises from our sense of being agents of God's plan. The particular expression of that agency is the individual task to which we are called. Purpose, then, consists of being called to a task: to realize God's reign as we implement the mission of the college.

A Just Community

This purposeful community, moreover, will be a just community. The community recognizes the worth of each member, because each person is made in the image of God. The college has affirmed that "we must try to make the student aware both of the Christian tradition and of contemporary Christian thought and activity. But also we shall seek to develop that which is unique in each student. We shall not seek to turn out every student from a common mold" (CLAE 35). This commitment to the unique individuality and giftedness in persons unified by a common purpose remains foundational to our sense of community. So is the commitment to embody justice in the college's institutional arrangements and to call students and faculty to pursue the demands of justice, on campus and off. Such a task-oriented vision of community insists that we all employ our gifts in responsible service.

A Compassionate Community

Purposeful and just, the kingdom community will also be compassionate. Community depends on its members being in

concerted sympathy with the tasks and gifts of others, mutually supporting and encouraging one another, and recognizing the worth, dignity, and needs of others engaged in communal tasks.

Properly understood, compassion is a liberating force, for it consists of how we see ourselves in relation to others. Compassion enables one to admit to individual limitations; to confess the need for support, and to acknowledge that, no matter how stellar the contributions of one individual, such achievement could not occur without the labor and caring support of others. Moreover, compassion allows us to recognize that we are, finally, fallen and fragile creatures, and that even in our inability to achieve desired tasks or goals we are nonetheless worthy as image-bearers of God.

A Disciplined Community

Finally, compassion is tempered by discipline. The Christian community will be an orderly community. Genuine compassion requires discipline, including the orderly pursuit of the college's mission. A sense of disciplined order bears profound implications for the very governance of the college and the manner in which we conduct our daily affairs. At no time may the community permit a tyrannical exercise of will in lieu of leadership, nor may it tolerate imposition in lieu of the informed discussion and decision of all members of that community.

Having described these elements of community, we must identify what keeps a community centered on its purpose and vitally committed to its principles of justice, compassion, and discipline. Clearly, working and learning together keep us focused. But it is more than that. Maintaining community requires rituals, celebrations, worship, traditions, and experiences in which the members of the community remember the past, honor the present, and give promise to the future. They will be a people both of memory and hope, learning and living in community.

The college's mission in community must be true to its Reformed tradition, mindful of its rich heritage, welcoming of new partnerships, and growing in its sense of God's global community. Therefore, community must be understood both internally—that is, who we are and what we are about as a body of people upon this one campus—and

also externally—that is, in light of the relationships we forge with other communities.

The Qualities of Internal Community

Our common calling at Calvin College is to do our Lord's work. Our roles vary widely, but each person fills an important and necessary role in the mosaic of people that form Calvin's community. Despite the complexity and multiplicity of tasks in the college, despite what seems at times to be fragmentation into departments for teachers, majors for students, specialties for staff, the intrinsic and irreducible unity of the Calvin College community inheres in the fact that all these diverse tasks are directed to one fundamental mission of the college.

The tasks of our daily life together are guided by faithfulness to the Word. We aim to be conformed more and more to the likeness of God incarnate, willing to receive the mind and heart of Jesus. We also aim to be agents of reclamation, reconciliation, and renewal. We believe that we are, as individuals, as groups, and as a whole gifted by God to be such agents of a common aim.

Most in the Calvin community readily affirm these givens. Yet, because we are also broken, not-yet-completely-whole human beings, we are vulnerable to forces that erode our community's strength and stability. Threats to community are manifold, but in a college setting, certain unique pressures appear, from the secular values that permeate higher education generally to the pressures of the academic calendar with its swings between the demands of teaching, advising, and grading. Nonetheless, there appears much to encourage one in the college's commitment to community, even as that communal life is being redefined. First of all, the communal effects of scholarship and teaching have been in evidence through seminars and colloquia, as well as a myriad of student groups. Calvin's vitality as an academic community is also promoted through the college's approach to service learning that engages students and faculty in addressing the needs of those in the larger community. Informal Bible studies and prayer support groups have grown in numbers and presence on the campus. Cultural, religious, and athletic events extend our campus community into the surrounding community and provide opportunity for members from the college to cooperate with and support one another in common

projects. Increasingly, then, members of the college have seized opportunities to serve, learn, and worship together in varying forms.

Mission to Community Beyond the College

Particularly important to Calvin's internal community is the way college members work together to serve communities beyond the college campus. The Reformed vision of the Christian faith moves outward to engage, to learn, to transform, and to redeem. Community at Calvin College is not an end in itself, but a threshold for enacting in the world the *purpose, justice, sympathy, and discipline* that serve as the basis for our community. *Christian Liberal Arts Education* forthrightly asserts this fundamental conviction of Christian community: "Christian education . . . must not be based on those withdrawal tendencies which have so often invaded the church. Equally, it must not be based on accommodation tendencies. Rather, it must be of service to the community of believers as it seeks to implement its Christian vision in the midst of society. It must aim at preparing the student to live a life of faith in contemporary society" (p. 37). The college, then, does not see the world as a malevolent structure to be avoided; rather, it sees the world as God's creation and as a community of which we are a part even as we work to reclaim it for Christ. By so doing, the college has both benefited its geographical community and benefited from its involvement with other, external organizations.

The college has established significant academic relationships with both geographical and professional communities. A commitment to offering evening courses and a Continuing Education program brings the primary *purpose* in Calvin's mission—shaping the hearts and minds of people for Christian living—to bear upon the greater Grand Rapids community. The work of educating, however, extends far beyond course work available in a limited geographical area. In recent decades the college has, through education and scholarship, forged partnerships whose scope is international.

The outreach to an external community, moreover, will be marked by an insistence upon justice, identifying clearly the injustice in this world, refusing to tolerate it, and working to eradicate it. The college has engaged remarkable efforts to effect this transformation, to let justice roll down like a river upon a needy world. In the face of

spiritual relativism or the rejection of the spiritual, we proclaim the authority of scripture as the foundation for justice itself and the mandate to make amends for our own accommodation to injustice and inequity.

The college's involvement in society will not be motivated by solipsistic concerns, but out of a genuine compassion toward a needy world, even toward those who profess to have no need. Here, perhaps, lies one of the greatest challenges to the college's mission in the future, to shape in all its members hearts of servanthood. Concerted efforts must be made to inform this community of such needs and to work to address them.

Finally, the college's mission to the communities beyond the campus will be marked by discipline. On the one hand, that discipline will be an internal one as we discipline our hearts to move away from personal satisfactions and to the needs of others. Such discipline requires a spiritual reordering, an evaluation of who we are as God's people, what we do as Christ's disciples, and to whom we answer for our own attitudes and practices. On the other hand, that discipline will require the commitment to go out into the world to help rectify the errors marring it and to engage with those being gathered from every people and nation to bear faithful witness to God's name and glory.

CONCLUSION

To approve a statement of mission, to envision new directions and commitments, is to affirm the rich spiritual, cultural, and educational tradition of Calvin College. The college was born of a noble vision: to shape hearts and minds for Christian living and to send out agents of redemptive transformation in God's kingdom. The enacting of that vision has, moreover, ennobled those who have participated in it. This new mission statement recognizes the value of the college's past, affirms its moorings, and applauds all our forebears who have selflessly and often sacrificially dedicated their talents and gifts to the enactment of that vision.

Even when dissension has entered, the people of this college have not lost sight of that vision. In times of disappointment or retrenchment, they have dedicated themselves anew to kingdom service. In times of development and growth, they have given joyful thanks to the God who rules all our ways and works, and to whom we dedicate our service. Throughout all such transitions, the people of this college have been blessed by an understanding that all our work is secondary to, but redeemed by, the eternal love of Christ, in whose community we are but servants, and by whose headship we are willingly guided.

On the basis of this heartfelt affirmation, this mission statement nonetheless presents an uncompromising challenge. We cannot rest upon the legacy of the past. We find there, instead, a place to stand, and a place from which to initiate new ventures and new partnerships. The spirit of this mission statement, then, is to employ such new partnerships and ventures in avenues of continued kingdom service.

We at Calvin commit ourselves to doing even better those things that we are already doing well. We seek a more vital educational

program, one that meets in our studies the challenges of understanding and addressing the pressing needs of our time. We seek truly outstanding art and scholarship, in which Calvin College becomes a directing leader in forming and engaging the Christian mind. We seek partnerships in community that are more than mere relationships, but become means to transform society itself, to let justice roll down like rivers, to make amends for sin and wrongdoing, to further, in all instances, the kingdom of God until Christ returns.

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