WITNESS MAGAZINE

The Witness

THE POWERS *and academia*

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Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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Distorted report on depleted uranium?

In your May 2000 issue, Jeff Nelson writes of "depleted uranium weapons used by the U.S. during the Gulf War." I have investigated this serious charge and found it to be a distortion. The bombs used in the war were exclusively high explosives. The only depleted uranium was in our tanks. It seems that depleted uranium makes very tough armor plate.

I hope you ask Mr. Nelson to check the accuracy of his sources.

A. Wayne Schwab
Essex, NY

Ed. note: Here is Jeff Nelson's reply to Wayne Schwab's letter, as requested:

Thank you for forwarding me Wayne Schwab's letter and giving me a chance to answer some of his concerns about the use of depleted uranium [DU] during the Gulf War.

The use of DU has become very popular in the last decade of weapons manufacturing. It is used in tanks and also to coat armor-piercing munitions which can then be fired out of tanks or A-10 Warthog fighter planes. According to the Gulf War Research Center, allied troops fired almost one million rounds containing an estimated 300 tons of DU. Most of those hit Iraqi tanks or fell on Iraqi soil. U.S. soldiers were also exposed, either wounded by "friendly fire" or from inhaling contaminated dust as they clambered over Iraqi tanks at war's end. In the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses' final report in December 1996 they concurred that, "U.S. service personnel also could have been exposed to DU if they inhaled or ingested DU dust particles during incidental contact with vehicles destroyed by DU munitions, or if they lived or worked in areas contaminated with DU dust from accidental munitions fires. Thus, unnecessary exposure of many individuals could have occurred." Many veterans now believe that DU exposure has been a contributing factor to Gulf War illnesses. DU is the by-product of the process for converting ("enriching") natural uranium for use as nuclear fuel or nuclear weapons. DU is approximately 40 percent less radioactive than natural uranium. The DU used in armor-piercing munitions is also widely used in civilian industry, primarily for stabilizers in airplanes and boats. DU poses an extremely low radiological threat as long as it remains outside the body. Internalized in sufficient quantity, however, via metal fragments or dust-like particles and oxides, depleted uranium may pose a long-term health hazard.

Three years ago, researchers from the National Cancer Institute and other agencies exposed human cells to depleted uranium and injected them into mice. They developed tumors within four weeks. In the U.S., DU is considered enough of a risk that the Environmental Protection Agency requires detailed plans for protecting people and the environment at the three sites where the material is stored. No such precautions exist in southern Iraq. Children still play near burned-out tanks and farmers still grow tomatoes — albeit stunted ones — in fields they say were hit with missiles. Although some residents have been moved out of the area, the Iraqi government says it has neither the resources nor the responsibility to clean up any uranium. There has been a 262 percent jump in leukemia and other cancers nationwide since the Gulf War, the Iraqi Ministry of Health reports.

The use of DU is an issue that must be further studied and understood by the public. I would encourage all readers to take it upon themselves to discover the realities of these weapons that have become a staple of the U.S. arsenal. A good place to start is the recent article by Susan Taylor Martin that was published in the June 5, 2000 edition of the St. Petersburg Times *entitled, "Children and War" (http://www.ngwrc.org/Dulink/children_and_war.htm). — J.N.*

'Plowshares Eight' 20th anniversary

September 9, 2000 is the 20th anniversary of the "Plowshares Eight" action in King of Prussia, Penn. It was the first in which an

actual nuclear weapon was damaged: the nose of the Mark 12A 337-kiloton nuclear bomb. It was a symbolic exposure of what most U.S. citizenry accepted: the need for total destruction of an "enemy country" by using nuclear genocide in defiance both of God's law and international law, even when its cost is beggaring our nation's social and international responsibilities.

The Plowshares Eight startled the American public by exposing the consequences of our Mutually Assured Destruction military policy. Over 60 Plowshares actions have happened since 1980.

This year is also my 20th anniversary of resigning from General Electric for providing arms for nuclear war. As a "new" resister, I'd like to tell you of certain "Acts of Grace" that happened during their witness time and trial:

In the Fall of 1980, when five resisters were in the Norristown prison, some 200 Indians on their "Long Walk of Survival" to the U.N. stayed in nearby Abington Friends Meeting. At an evening meeting I asked their medicine man to visit our friends in prison. He said it would be a community decision: The community directed that a delegation should visit. They were refused admittance at the prison. Imagine my surprise the next day to see the whole Indian community marching and drumming, surrounding the Norristown prison. Was it an act of grace that these two like-minded communities' paths crossed in Norristown that day?

The Plowshares Eight trial opened on Ash Wednesday 1981. As the trial opened and the courtroom filled, music started from a nearby church: "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" Supporters first started humming, then singing — at which point the judge cleared the courtroom! Who chose that music? Why was it playing at that particular moment?

Following many Plowshares actions and trials, I was struck by the unexpected, unexplained happenings that transpired. These insights made me a believer in the rightness of their actions.

These simple examples are not meant to overshadow the Plowshares actions. Plowshares actions continue because the need has accelerated. Even today, there are those who believe that nuclear genocide is morally justifiable if our country is "threatened militarily." Our country still places their security in a nuclear god, not in the One God of us all.

Bill Stuart-Whistler
Co-chair, Episcopal Peace Fellowship
Nuclear Issues Group
Gwynedd, PA

Unmasking the powers in higher education

by Andrew W. McThenia

We are grateful to Uncas McThenia (Andrew is his real name, but anyone who knows him goes by the nickname he's had since childhood), an Episcopalian of the Willliam Stringfellow sort who has taught law at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va. for more than 25 years, for helping us develop this issue on the powers and higher education. In it we have sought to probe the ways the academy has become captive to the powers and how people who harbor a faith in the biblical promise of "a new heavens and a new earth" are able to witness to that faith as they work and study in its bosom. The topic is of special interest to those of us who have been conditioned to believe that a formal education, particularly undergraduate and graduate education, is the key to a better life for both the individual and society. This might often be true, but after reading this issue I think readers will have a better sense of the ways in which that knee-jerk presumption needs to be qualified.

— Julie A. Wortman, editor and publisher

INITIALLY THIS ISSUE WAS CONCEIVED as one exploring religion in the academy. However, it morphed as we went along. The major focus remains religion in the academy, but American higher education itself is undergoing extraordinary changes. The university as we have known it is, in many ways, a thing of the past. Corporate underwriting of research is bringing in a sea change in the culture of higher education. Traditionally, universities regarded ownership claims to research efforts as inconsistent with their obligation to disseminate knowledge in the broadest possible manner. Today, most research universities have technology licensing offices which commercialize discoveries and manage patent portfolios. At many institutions traditional academic types are being replaced with entrepreneurial people. That commercialization continues downstream from the elite research universities throughout higher education. It is felt on the community college level with technological changes such as online courses.

But first things first. How does religion fare in the academy? The answer seems to be that it is tolerated, as has been the case for at least the last 250 years. Peter Gomes, writing about the religious history of Harvard, points out that when Harvard was founded in 1637 it was assumed that Christ was "the only foundation of all social knowledge and learning." However, by the time of its 200th birthday in 1836, "*Veritas* [was] no longer necessarily understood as the comprehensive and revealed truth of the Christian religion, but as a truth which stood at the end of scientific discovery and verification."

Since that time the struggle for people of

"You're kidding! You count S.A.T.s?"

faith in higher education has been to be both reasonable and faithful, discerning and doubting. By 1915 the hegemony of the enlightenment project had become such that the American Association of University Professors, in its declaration of principles, denied to religiously based institutions the name "university" because "they do not, at least as regards one particular subject, accept the principle of freedom and inquiry."

The uneasy compromise is that religion as a point of view is welcome in the academy so long as it offers itself with reserve and diffidence appropriate to liberal decorum. Academic freedom in a real sense means that religion can be a part of the university so long as it renounces its claim to have a privileged claim on the truth, which is, of course, what religion is all about — knowing the truth. While religion is tolerated, if it ever seriously challenged the ruling paradigm, it would find itself in exile.

While there are many conservative Christians who believe that the world of the academy has shut them out, there is little evidence that Christianity has been driven underground. Early this year a study sponsored by the Lilly Endowment was made public. The study concludes that religion is thriving on college campuses. It may not look like the campus ministry of yesteryear — most students are likely to consider themselves as spiritual rather than religious and denominational allegiance is pretty rare. However, religious classes are extremely popular and students often use the intellectual study of religion to sort out their own beliefs. The study found widespread tolerance on university campuses. And, as this month's profile of Michael Levinson points out, spirituality and social service are often strongly connected.

In this issue, Robert Wuthnow of Princeton, writing on "Pursuing the sacred in the academy's 'hallowed halls,'" accepts the reality of the uneasy perch of religion in the academy and suggests that the proper inquiry for academics is what kind of contribution colleges and universities can make to the public expression of religion. Among these, he points out, is the academy's promotion of tolerance for cultural pluralism.

But one of the dangers with our unquestioning acceptance of the tolerance pervading the academy is that religious folk will be lulled into forgetting our very real differences with the academy. We will forget that we really are strangers in a strange land. The principalities and powers are very seductive and turn self-evidently good, noble virtues against the Kingdom. Tolerance is an example. It is wonderful to live in an atmosphere of civility, and with all the religious strife throughout the world there is a good deal to be said for the peace treaty of liberal tolerance. But when tolerance leads to religious folk forgetting who, and most importantly whose, they are, then the powers have prevailed.

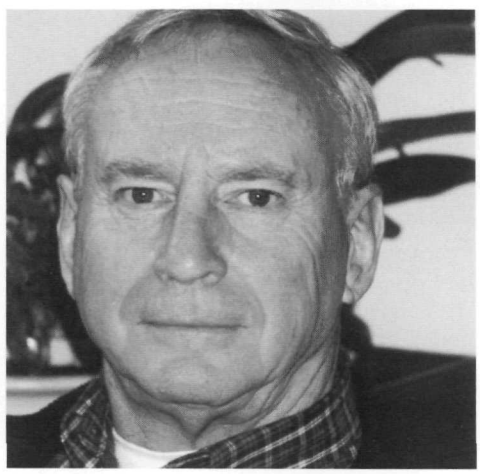
Corporate power, in particular, has subtly, and sometimes not so subtly, changed the historic mission of the university in America. At one time we worried about the military-industrial complex as a threat to our way of life. It was and remains so. But still below the radar is a powerful academic-industrial complex in which universities and researchers own equity positions in companies that support their work and online teaching threatens to diminish face-to-face contact with tenured professors and to increase the "franchising" of education.

Darryl Brown, a professor of law, describes the subtle ways in which corporate power influences the mission of legal education. While law schools don't have the sorts of research budgets that places like M.I.T. have, there are plenty of opportunities for law professors to sign on as consultants to corporate America. The history of private consultation is such that the law school accrediting authority, The American Association of Law Schools, has seen fit to warn against excessive private practice while encouraging law professors to provide more legal assistance to those who can't afford high private-practice fees. Indeed, corporate funding incentives seem to account for a large body of research critical of punitive damages — which is a major worry for corporate America — but a paucity of research on many topics critical to social justice, such as access to the legal system by the poor.

And as corporate culture's technocratic bias renames university students as either "inventory" or "product," another insidious principality, the standardized test, determines who enters the hallowed halls. The granddaddy of them all, the SAT, begun 50 years ago as a utopian experiment so that the Ivies could expand their base beyond the offspring of the WASP elite, has become such a powerful symbol that it stops almost all attempts at genuine discussion about education. Now the son of SAT, called the standards movement, is sweeping the country.

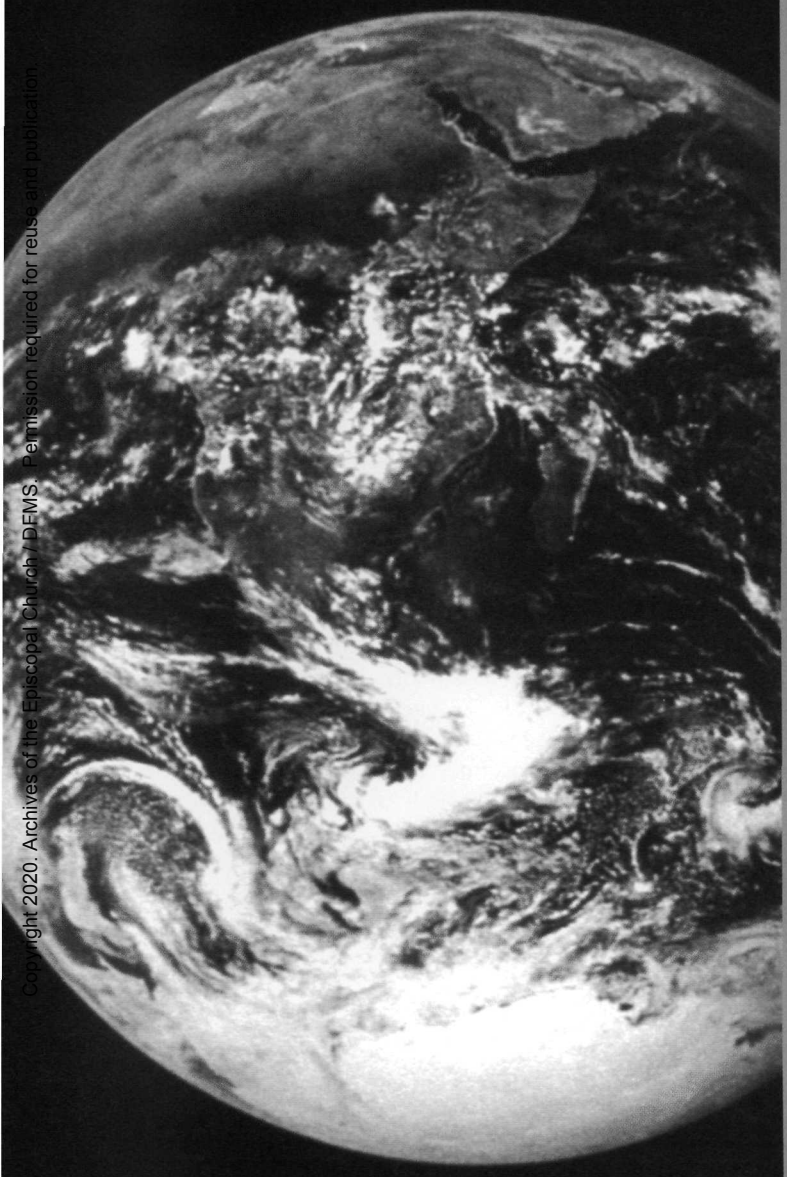
All this is to say that theologian William Stringfellow was right a quarter century ago when he argued that the powers are legion in the academy. But the articles in this issue also carry the message that there are important pockets of resistance on American campuses. William Willimon reports that the Christian community at Duke University provides a pretty constant reminder to him that life is different if one is religious. And Michael Levinson's efforts at Georgetown University began in an interfaith prayer service. In fact, the Georgetown Solidarity Committee was able to call Georgetown back to its own history by appealing to the strong tradition of Catholicism for a living wage, for just working conditions, and for a preferential option for the poor.

We people of faith must not forget that the cultivation of the mind — as Stringfellow would put it, "the exercise of definitely human faculties" — can lead not only to the cultivation of human originality and creativity, but also to the cultivation of conscience. And that is an important form of resistance. ●



Andrew W. McThenia, a former contributing editor of The Witness, teaches law at Washington & Lee University in Lexington, Va.

The words of the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.



Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun?

A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.

The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises.

The wind blows to the south, and goes around to the north;

Round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns.

All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full;

To the place where the streams flow, there they continue to flow.

All things are wearisome; more than one can express;

The eye is not satisfied with seeing, or the ear filled with hearing.

What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun.

Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new?"

It has already been, in the ages before us.

The people of long ago are not remembered, nor will there be any remembrance

Of people yet to come by those who come after them.

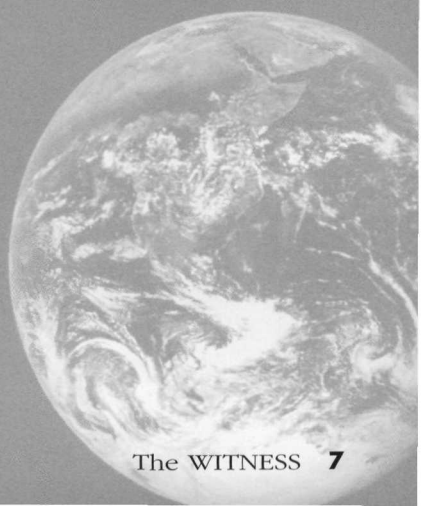
I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with. I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

What is crooked cannot be made straight and what is lacking cannot be counted.

I said to myself, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a chasing after wind.

For in much wisdom is much vexation, and those who increase knowledge increase sorrow.

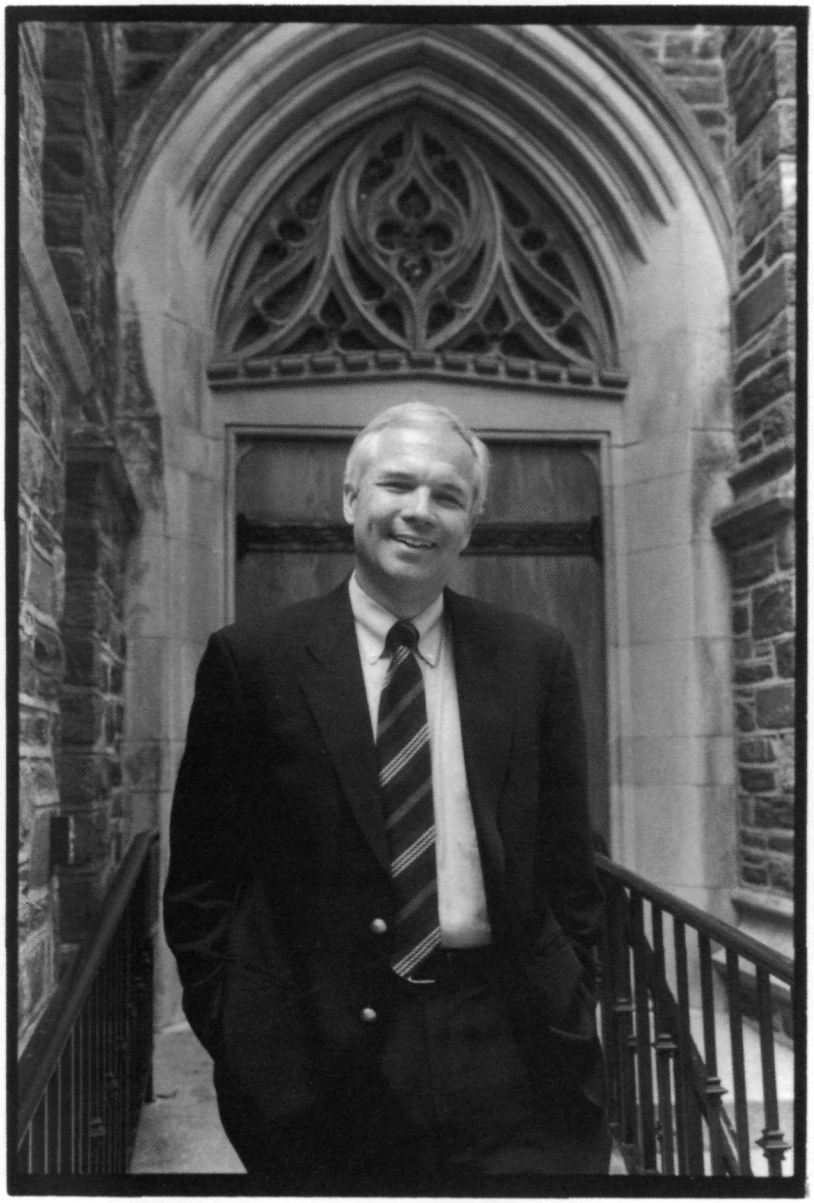
— Ecclesiastes 1
(New Revised Standard Version)



A MISSIONARY

In the strange land of the modern university: an interview with William Willimon

by Andrew W. McThenia



©Duke University Photography, Photo by Les Todd

WILLIAM WILLIMON has been Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry at Duke University for the past 16 years. His 1995 book, *The Abandoned Generation*, is one of the most thoughtful books on campus ministry written in the last decade; and his William Belden Noble lecture given on the 25th anniversary of Peter Gome's ministry at Harvard University, "Athens is a Long Way from Jerusalem but Cambridge is Even Farther," is a classic engagement of the powers at that institution. In addition to preaching each Sunday at the Duke Chapel, Willimon serves as a professor at the Divinity School. For the last several years he has taught a popular undergraduate seminar entitled "The Search for Meaning," which challenges the entire enterprise of the academy in this postmodern age.

In preparation for this interview I read, and in some cases reread, several of Willimon's books, including *The Abandoned Generation, Resident Aliens: Life in a Christian Colony* and *Reading with Deeper Eyes*. I also found copies of many sermons and lectures. I discerned a couple of important strains running through most of his writing. First, Willimon has spent a good deal of time thinking and writing about the arrogance of the modern university. For instance, at Harvard he argued that the modern university has such a limited view of the intellectual that it is no longer able to say who the God is it no longer believes in. "Indeed, when I read the purpose of this William Belden Noble Lecture, to lift up to Harvard Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, I was reminded of just how odd ... we Christians are. For us, the truth, that truth which the modern university is so touchingly inept in discussing, is a person, personal, a Jew from Nazareth named Jesus. ... That Harvard may not recognize our thinking as thinking is not surprising to us, considering the limits of today's flaccid secularists." Or on another occasion he said, "The modern world thinks of itself as open, broad-minded, enjoying unlimited vistas, when, in reality, it is a very closed, narrow way of living and looking. Many modern people have there-

fore come to believe that, in modernity, our world did not grow as was promised. Rather it shrank."

Second, he continues to insist that the church be the church and not be seduced by the tolerance of civic republicanism. He worries that the church has become too much like the Rotary Club, giving no theological rationale for people's lives. "We have replaced the intensity for religious experience with reasoned civility."

I was ready — or so I thought.

The problem with trying to conduct an interview with Will Willimon is that his natural language is the parable. Although he is certainly capable of linear discourse, he refuses to engage in it. I think his manner of speaking reflects a continual engagement with the powers in the academy. To listen to an interview with Will is akin to hearing Seamus Heaney read his new translation of Beowulf. Between episodes of Beowulf's exploits, the action awaits the telling of an even more ancient story which looks backward to an even more distant past. When asked a question that seemingly might be answered in 25 words or less, I generally got a wonderful five- to 10-minute story which wove through the lives of his students, his own upbringing, circled around to include the questioner and finally, after gently challenging the premise of the question, he would stop to breathe. If one reads or listens carefully to this conversation, she is likely to conclude that the world has shifted a few degrees. Where you stand now is not quite so comfortable as it was before Will started speaking.

The competing ways of knowing in the modern university have, as much as possible, banished the notion of promise from the world. Willimon's vocation has been to find, nourish, and celebrate those small islands within the university which insist that the promises of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures are real and important. And that is what keeps hope alive. — *AWM*

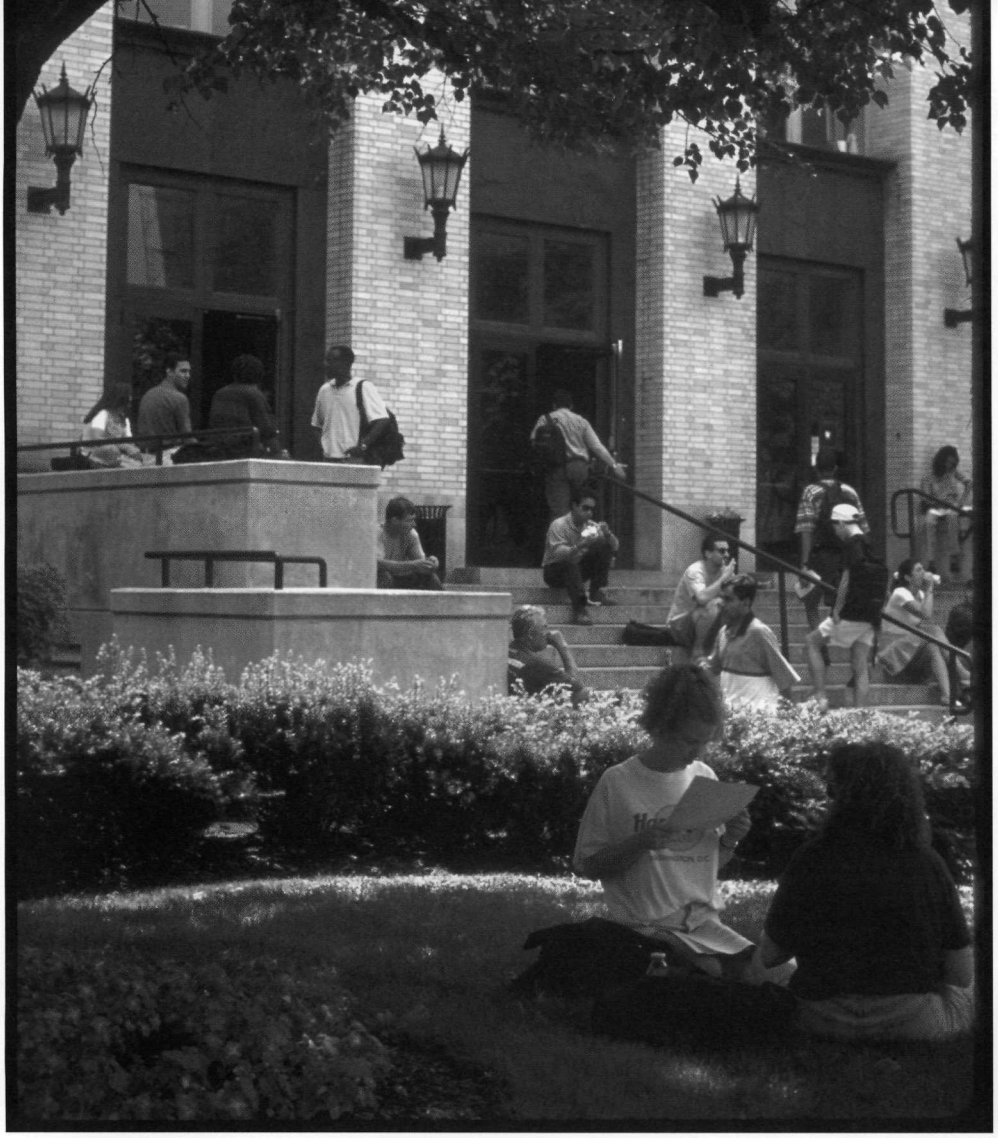
ONE THING I ENJOY IN WORKING IN THE UNIVERSITY IS THAT YOU GET CLOSE PROXIMITY TO A NEW GENERATION. ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS GENERATION IS THAT THEY'VE NEVER KNOWN ANYTHING BUT THE AMERICAN DREAM THAT THEIR PARENTS THOUGHT THEY HAD TO HAVE, SO THAT MEANS THAT SOME OF THEM OFFER A GOOD CRITIQUE OF THAT.

Were you raised as a Methodist?

Yes, my family lived on the same land in South Carolina since 1740 and we have a Methodist church that our family built and were patrons of over the years. By the time I came along we had moved into the church in Greenville. It looked like a First Methodist bank downtown. I have that background, but my family were farmers, school teachers, etc. I think probably a bigger factor in my life was that my father was in prison for embezzlement at the bank before I was born and, evidently, when he was paroled or let out, that was when I was conceived. My mother was 40 when I was born, my brother and sister were both in junior high and high school.

This is real Southern gothic. They had a family meeting and it was decided that it would be good for my father to just leave, that he had embarrassed the family. My mother was from North Dakota, they had met at college. His family told my mother, we'll look after you and your children. You will now be written into the will and Robert (my father) will be written out. And we will never mention his name again. And so he went away and I didn't meet him until I was a senior in college. So it's Faulknerian — or probably closer to Flannery O'Conner.

I once spoke to Charles Colson's group in Washington and said, when I was asked to come up here I was thinking I don't know prisons, but then I thought, wait a minute, your daddy was in one, and then your savior was in one, and by my count at least maybe a third to half of the New Testament was written in jail. In fact I heard Paul telling me if you never had anybody in jail or you've never been in jail, you gonna miss a lot of the Gospel. There may be stuff you are going to miss because you don't know Greek, but you just won't get it when I say to you, I write this letter to you in chains. If you have never been in chains you are just



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gonna miss a lot of the letter and I'm prepared to say that there is something about our faith that goes together with jail.

I also remember in college meeting Carlisle Marney, who was a great Baptist prophet at Myers Park Baptist in Charlotte. We started talking and I said, I have this interest in religion, in God, and I've often wondered if Freud is right, am I projecting, is this my need for a father? And Marney said, "You are goddamn right it is! I've never met a preacher that was worth a damn that didn't have a bad daddy problem." And I said, don't you have problems with that? And he said, "God will use any handle he can get." I remember that being a moment of permission to pursue a religious vocation.

So, I went to Yale Divinity School and thought, I'll never come home again, this is great! I had moved to Nirvana. To hell with the South. I had a couple of experiences there, worked in the inner city on a mission project and I realized sin abounds everywhere, it's not just southerners. But I was a southerner and a child of the Vietnam era and somehow that has affected me. I just always believe the establishment is the problem. It's simple. And now, in the Methodist church the people who have power think of themselves as liberals. They think they are avant garde. They think themselves radicals. But they are in power. And it's my job to throw rocks at them and say terrible things about them.

I thought God had called me to spend my life in Methodist churches in South Carolina. And coming back to South Carolina, I really felt this great sense about coming home. They may be bastards but they are my bastards. They may be sinners but they are my sinners and it just felt good.

I loved being a parish pastor, but somebody from Duke showed up at my church one day saying, we need someone to teach worship. My bishop said, go on up there, you can stay a few years, and I did. But I didn't like teaching full-time, so I went back to South Carolina in an inner-city parish for four years of real hard work. While I was down there I got a call from Terry Sanford (the President of Duke) saying, we're looking for a chaplain up here. When he hired me, he said, "There are some things I like about you." I said what do you like? He said, "You've got your doctorate." And I said, well, how is that necessary for the job? He said, "It's not a damn bit, in one sense, but on the other hand you have a union card. You can stand toe-to-toe with these people." It turned out that Sanford was right.

[During a lunch break, as we walked the 200 yards from Willimon's office in the Chapel to the dining hall, he was stopped numerous times by students. It took us at least 15 minutes to make what would normally be a two- to three-minute amble.]

It is obvious that you have some rather close relationships with what appears to be a varied cross section of the Duke student community. What do you learn from the student community?

One thing I enjoy in working in the university is that you get close proximity to a new generation. One of the characteristics of this generation is that they've never known anything but the American dream that their parents thought they had to have, so that means that some of them offer a good critique of that. They've all had a car since they were 16, so they can say, why give your life to getting another car? And with 50 percent of them coming from separated homes, I find many saying, "I'm going to find somebody and I'm going to make it work. And I'm not going to be like my Dad, who blew his marriage for the company."

There are also some great moments, like when some young Christian is doing a critique of your discipleship and doesn't even

intend to. One Sunday after church I had a group of graduate students to my house for a kind of picnic, and to play basketball, etc. One student says, "You realize I've been here seven years and I've never been in a faculty home until today?" And I said, that is outrageous. That is disgusting, that is wrong. I believe in having students over. And then he said, "You've got a great house here with the woods and everything," and I said, thank you. He said, "Let me ask you something, as a Christian do you feel at all uneasy to be living in this nice a house?" And I said, now I'm remembering why we don't have you people over here that much! Now, it's coming back to me. He said, "Oh gosh! I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable." I said, you know, that even makes it more devastating, you're not even intending to hurt me. You people, you all might make a Christian out of me yet, I don't know.

Everyone's always lamenting how apolitical students are. Now, this is a prejudiced Christian comment, but I say that if some of them don't believe that Bill and Hillary are gods, that's okay with me — I don't have a problem with that. And if some of them are cynical about Caesar, well, sometimes it takes Christians years to learn that. If they figure that out so early in life, forgive me for being kind of pleased, because my generation was told there is only one way to a better world.

Tony Compolo was speaking here and somebody asked about abortion. He said, "I'm sick of talking about abortion with you short-haired evangelicals. There are 980 verses in the Bible on the evils of money and you can't name one good one on abortion. Let's talk about what Jesus wanted to talk about and if we have time we will talk about what you want to talk about."

There really is built into the Christian faith a kind of prejudice about some subjects. I started a sermon once quoting G. K. Chesterson, how we can have a good debate, an interesting discussion, over whether or not Jesus believed in fairies. That would be worth discussing. But, he said, unfortunately we cannot have a debate over whether or not he believed rich people were in terrible trouble. There is too much evidence there — there are just too many texts.

How do you characterize your role at Duke?

When I came here, I asked my predecessor, how do you see yourself, and he said, well, I like to think of myself as kind of the conscience of the university. I said, whoa, I'm not that good! Instead, the work of Lesslie Newbigin and others led me to the conclusion that the primary metaphor for my work ought to be that I was a missionary. Some of the skills that you learn in cross-cultural work are important. Newbigin said Christianity has had difficulty, and has collided with every culture in which it found itself, including the very first culture in which it found itself. I think Christians ought to remember that the tension we feel is often a tension of speaking French when everybody else speaks English. It is a tension of being a stranger in a strange land.

YOUNG CHRISTIANS IN A COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT REALLY IMPRESS ME. THESE KIDS FEEL LIKE THEY ARE UNDER ASSAULT. THEY FEEL LIKE "WE ARE THE LAST CHRISTIANS LEFT, IT'S US AGAINST THEM."

Everybody serves something and I think one of the missions that Christians may have in the modern university is to at times point out what people are giving their lives to and just to say, "Is it worth it? Do you actually think this will give you a reason to get out of bed in the morning?"

What are some of the tensions and excitement you experience in the University?

In writing *Resident Aliens*, (a book coauthored with Stanley Hauerwas) people sometimes asked me what the important influences in my life were. Often people thought it was the Mennonite church, but I said no, Stanley knows the Mennonites. For me the influence was the college campus. Young Christians in a college environment really impress me. These kids feel like they are under assault. They feel like "we are the last Christians left, it's us against them."

Recently the student newspaper had an editorial against me on the same-sex union policy. We just don't do same-sex unions in the Chapel and this upsets a lot of people. [When asked about the policy, Willimon said, "The policy on same-sex unions at the Chapel was made by me and the president for a variety of factors: They are not legal in North Carolina, the United Methodist Church prohibits them, and our sense that we are not yet ready to make this move. It's all under discussion."] Afterwards, I had several e-mails from students saying, "Doc Willimon, you don't know me, but I'm a Christian, keep up the good fight, don't lose heart, I will pray for you tonight, if you need to talk to me you can call here, etc."

Well, I probably disagree theologically with most of those kids, who tend to be conservative evangelicals, but these students offer me support and urge me to keep the faith. That is exciting.

Last year I preached Proverbs from the lectionary, the little Proverb that goes: "Better than silver or gold is a good reputation, a good name is better than riches." I told the congregation, I don't as a rule do Proverbs. I let Bill Bennett do Proverbs or that idiot that wrote *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and all that other crap. I never liked Proverbs because there was no God in Proverbs. The book of Proverbs is like a long road trip with your mother, just pick up your socks, and be polite to people. But here's one, "A good name is better than silver or gold." Get this one out and talk to

Don Trump or Ted Turner. Ask them about that. I think they'll say go for the gold. Worry about your name later. Put this on a t-shirt and wear it on campus for about a week, and let me know how you do at fraternity rush.

After chapel, this kid comes up to me and said, "That was really comforting." I said, what? Comforting? He said, "I'm going to call my old man tonight and I'm going to tell him I'm not going to go to law school and he can go to hell." And I said, well don't mention my name when you call him! And I said to myself, isn't that curious? Proverbs is the establishmentarian wisdom for holding the world together. But if you're in the right context, it becomes a bombshell. It will blow something up.

I love those moments of being at the university. I think, isn't it fascinating that something like this will happen. Thank you, God, for letting me be here. So, I say, our modern university has restored the fun of being a disciple.

Is there a sense in which more conservative Christian students feel pretty beleaguered and sometimes unable to live into the tensions that are inherent in a university?

Perhaps. Some of them might say, "We don't have a belief that the world is bad, we haven't started out to withdraw from the world, it is just that when we became Christians the world shoved us out, or the world started treating us like we were weirdos, but that is the world, it is not us." Stanley Hauerwas always says Anabaptists didn't withdraw from the world, they just didn't like their children being killed. And if Christians don't get along with the world, a lot of the time it is a matter of the world, not so much the Christians. So I try not to be that judgmental when I encounter these people.

Touché! What about your relationships with the faculty and administration at Duke?

I work at Duke University, it's not a monastery. We don't want to withdraw from the world. Where the heck would we withdraw to? I say it is all God's world and the university just doesn't yet know that. But that is our problem. The Gospel means that God is going to get back what belongs to him and he's going to do whatever is necessary to get it. There have been times when I've talked about this university as some kind of godless, secular place. Well, there have been wonderful moments when I have been embarrassed to find out that people are asking tough, searching questions. I realize that God is unthreading all this facade we erect.

Tell me about some of your encounters with the principalities and powers at Duke.

Obviously the powers are legion here, as they are at any other institution. My thought on the powers is that they are always good, they are often self-evidently good, noble virtues, that are being used against the Kingdom of God.

I think the honor system at Washington and Lee is like that. To be honorable and to live in a community of trust is a wonderful thing. But so often we fetishize the honor system and it becomes an idol. Any system that defines one's goodness by another's lack of it, cannot be sacred. Jesus died because he was erasing lines, not building systems based on a neighbor's lack of goodness.

I led a discussion of the Duke Honor Code and religion. The students were organizing it and I was supposed to be the moderator. The question was, does your religion teach you that you should turn somebody in that you observe doing wrong? It is interesting. Are you willing to mess up your neighbor over this? I was so pleased that the Christians said things like, "Well, in Matthew, Jesus said, that's something between me and my neighbor. I wouldn't worry so much about turning a person in as I would talking to them." And they said, "My problem probably is that I don't care enough about most people to confront, it wouldn't be that I was afraid that they wouldn't like me. I have to confess that I just probably don't love people enough to even confront them."

Well, you know, truth, knowledge, wisdom, excellence, all of these things get in our hands, and get perverted.

Right after I came here I was telling somebody at the Divinity School that I was speaking to some military chaplains, and he said, "What in the world would you be saying to military chaplains?" I told him that I feel a kinship with a lot of these guys, we have a lot of stuff we can talk about because we are in similar lines of work. And he said, "You are at a university. How could you possibly compare the U.S. military, which is in the killing business, with the university?" Here we were standing there in front of our research labs and I pointed and asked, who do you think is paying for all of those labs over there? That's the Pentagon. I said, we're training people to be the sort of people who are willing to kill for Ronald Reagan, if he ever asked them to do that. And I said, the thing I find that I like about military chaplains is that they are very up-front, the best of them that is, about the deep ethical dilemmas involved in their work. I'm not.

I said, when I put on this suit in the morning I don't think a thing. But I know military chaplains who, when they put on what they wear to work, have a deep twinge of conscience at least. And I said, I ought to worry about the way I'm dressed. And what is that in service of?

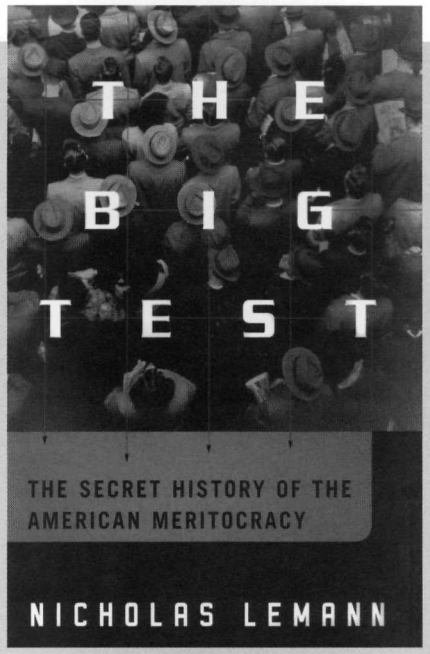
What about the culture wars and post-modernism at Duke?

I think post-modernism has been useful. I found a lot of their observations truthful. But what to do beyond that? I like the unmasking they've done. It's great to see that a lot that we call the intellectual life around here, is called working for the Pentagon or Wall Street. It's odd how I feel at times closer to some of the radical fire-breathing feminists than I do to some of the mainline Christian types, because these people at least know everybody is standing somewhere. Everybody is caught by something. Christians, I say, are special, because we can name what we are subservient to. ●

Former Witness *contributing editor* ***Andrew McThenia*** *is a law professor at Washington & Lee University in Lexington, Va.*

The Big Test

by Gloria House



The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy by Nicolas Lemann, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999. 406pp.

THE DREAM of a nation led by persons who have won their rank by virtue of merit rather than wealth inspired the men whose lives were dedicated to the development, canonization and marketing of the Big Test, known to us all as the SAT, the arbiter of university entrance and subsequent life status. They dreamed that a meritocracy based on intellectual competence would lead to greater democratization of American society.

Nicolas Lemann tells the "secret history" of this movement through detailed narratives on the major players such as Henry Chauncey, whose passion for tests of all kinds evolved into his life's mission, the founding of the Educational Testing Service and the promotion of the SAT; James Bryant Conant, Harvard president, whose vision was that education should become "the repository of opportunity," replacing class privilege as the means to mobility and power; Clark Kerr, president of U.C. Berkeley, who envisioned a university attended by only the top eighth of high school graduates.

The author also relates the life trajectories of representative figures who found their way into the test-based meritocracy — for example, he introduces us to some of the first women to enter Yale Law School and some of the first Asians, including Bill Lann Lee, whom he depicts as a somewhat reluctant organizer of Asian student unity. Later, in 1997, President Clinton would call Lee to the post of Assistant Attorney General.

While detailing the historic activities of major and minor figures in the history of testing, the author also discusses at length many issues related to the tests controversy — such as the highly disputed policy of draft deferment for young men who scored high on the SAT, and the struggles between the proponents of affirmative action and the promoters of California's Proposition 209. The book is chock-full, spanning six decades of America's wrestling over how to separate the wheat from the chaff, to find and educate its most talented and deserving.

The weave of so much detail is sometimes intriguing, sometimes tedious. One feels at points that *The Big Test* might have been a nifty little book, for the moral of the stories is quite simply that the meritocracy movement, based on the use of exams which measured intelligence very narrowly and with culturally/racially biased items, succeeded only in creating a somewhat different kind of power elite, not in democratizing opportunity in American society.

What does the author recommend as an alternative for equalizing educational opportunity in the U.S.? Lemann proposes a national high school curriculum upon which all students would be examined. Those who master the curriculum and excel on the tests would be eligible for university. The author's idea rests on the assumption that every youngster would have access to quality instruction and systematic preparation for the examination. If facilities, teaching competence and learning resources were equal in our schools across the country, this might be the case; however, we know the inequities of our school system. So we have come full circle.

Perhaps what is missing here is the Big Picture. Equal educational opportunity — the freedom to move through society, discovering and fulfilling one's own potential — would accompany a more equitable distribution of other essential goods: adequate employment, food, shelter, health care. Can we devise measures to equalize educational opportunity and subsequent quality of life without first striving to meet such basic human needs of all citizens? Tests exclude systematically the majority of children of color and the poor from opportunities to develop their abilities, and many feel hopeless about their future. They attend dilapidated schools with frustrated teachers, many of whom have long ago ceased striving for excellence in disorganized bureaucratic systems. The children are often hungry and hence less capable of focusing their attention. Few have parents or relatives who are available to coach them and encourage them to study. They do not speak or write the language of the dominant culture, and would have to make intense effort to master it under the guidance of someone who really cared. Into this terrain interject the concept of meritocracy and apply the Big Test. We cannot miss the obvious contradictions for a society that aspires to democracy. ●

Gloria House is The Witness' *poetry editor and a longtime Detroit activist and educator.*

OF PATENTS AND

The corporate takeover of the university

by Camille Colatosti

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"The past role of the university to serve the public has been hopelessly compromised."

Leonard Minsky, co-founder with Ralph Nader of the National Coalition for Universities in the Public Interest, laments that "universities, once proud defenders of academic freedom and critical thought, are now ever more exclusively the cradle of industrial invention."

According to Minsky, "The past role of the university to serve the public has been hopelessly compromised." This compromise came when universities began to conduct research on behalf of corporations, and to teach curricula that corporations design.

Eyal Press and Jennifer Washburn, authors of "The Kept University" (*The Atlantic Monthly*, March 2000), agree. Both are fellows at the Open Society Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to building an open society in countries that are transitioning toward democracy, and to "correcting the deficiencies of the essentially open society of the U.S." Key to the mission of the Open Society Institute is challenging "the intrusion of the marketplace into inappropriate areas." Echoing Minsky's pessimistic view of academia, Press and Washburn write, "Commercially sponsored research is putting at risk the paramount value of higher education disinterested inquiry."

In *The University in Ruins* (Harvard Uni-

versity Press, 1998), Bill Readings, a professor of comparative literature at the University of Montreal, states these concerns even more starkly: "The university is now an autonomous bureaucratic corporation responsive to the idea that what really matters in today's world is economic management rather than cultural conflict." The university, says Readings, "is simply a market for the production, exchange and consumption of useful information — useful, that is, to corporations, governments, and their prospective employees."

University mission

Are these dire assessments of academia correct? Has the mission of universities really changed? In his September 1998 *Witness* article "Hire Education: the Rise of Corporate Curricula," Christopher Cook reminds us that "the needs of industry have long been a driving force in defining education. The federal Morrill Act of 1862, for example, established land-grant colleges and universities which focused on agricultural technology as part of national economic policy and which hastened the mechanization of training." But the relationship between the university and the corporation is now tighter than ever and is intensifying at an unprecedented rate.

The campus itself, as David Noble, professor of history at Toronto's York University and author of *Digital Diploma Mills*, explains, has become "a significant site of capital accumulation, a change in social perception which has resulted in the systematic conversion of intellectual activity into intellectual capital and, hence, intellectual property." The university, then, has been reconfigured in market terms.

According to Noble, this reconfiguration has occurred in two phases. First, there was "the commoditization of the research function of the university." This transformed "scientific and engineering knowledge into commercially viable proprietary products that can be owned and bought and sold in the market."

Second, says Noble, is the "commoditization of the educational function of the university." In this phase, which has intensified with online education, courses are transformed "into courseware, the activity of instruction itself into commercially viable proprietary products that can be owned and bought and sold in the market."

Research becomes product

Lawrence Soley, the Colnik professor of communication and professor of journalism at Marquette University, discusses this first transformation thoroughly in his book *Leasing the Ivory Tower: The Corporate Takeover of the University* (South End Press, 1995). He argues that the university's research function has been sold to corporate America: "The ivory towers of America have been leased by corporations. Being 'politically correct' in academia today means having an endowed chair or a lucrative consulting contract." Below are some examples of the university/corporate marriage, what Soley calls "corporate easy chairs":

- *Lego Professor of Learning Research, MIT*
- *Dow Chemical Co. Research Professor of Economics, Chicago*
- *Sears Roebuck Professor of Economics, Chicago*
- *Nissan Professor of Economics, Chicago*
- *Federal Express Chair of Excellence in Information Technology, Memphis*
- *Fuyo Bank Professor of Japanese Law, Columbia*
- *Hanes Corp. Foundation Professorship, Duke*
- *Bell South Professor of Education through Telecommunications, South Carolina*
- *Coca-Cola Professor of Marketing, Georgia*
- *McLamore/Burger King Chair in American Enterprise, Miami*
- *Foley's Federated Professor in Retailing, Texas*
- *United Parcel Service Foundation Professor of Logistics, Stanford*

The way university research is conducted today, Soley explains, is also fundamentally different from the way research was treated in the past. Then, it was treated as knowledge to be shared in the public forum, among scholars who would build on each other's work.

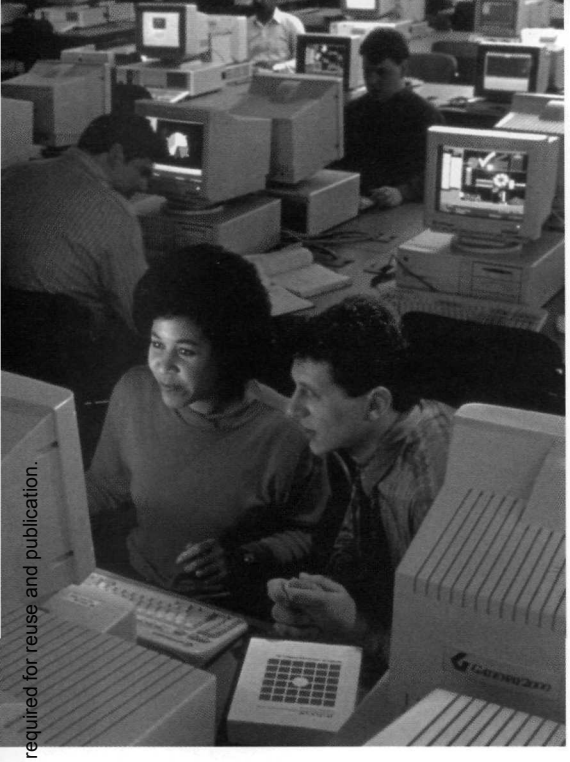
The transformation of research from public good to private product was not a gradual or natural change but the work of a deliberate lobbying effort. In the mid-1970s, corporations and universities, fearing increased international competition, joined to form the Business-Higher Education Forum. The goal was to increase U.S. competitiveness by changing the way universities conduct research and strengthening the relationship between academia and private business.

In 1980, directly as a result of these lobbying efforts, a new law called the Bayh-Dole Act, or the University and Small Business Patent Procedures Act, was passed. A 1983 executive order extended the legislation to large corporations, and the 1981 Recovery Tax Act increased the tax deductions corporations could claim for donations made to universities.

Prior to the Bayh-Dole Act, the results of university research funded by the federal government were considered public and could not be sold exclusively to one corporation or another.

The 1980 law changed this by making it possible for universities to own the patents, trademarks and licenses that might result from their research, even though the majority of university research — about $14 billion worth a year — is still federally funded.

This means that universities can now make deals with companies to give them exclusive rights to research. And universities are making deal after deal, as evidenced by the number of patents they are requesting. Before the 1980 law, universities produced roughly 250 patents a year. In 1998, 18 years



Loren Santow / IMPACT VISUALS

after the passage of the Act, universities in the U.S. generated nearly 4,800 patents.

The Bayh-Dole Act transformed research from knowledge for the public good into "property" that is "owned" by a company and that cannot be shared easily with other scientists.

In instance after instance, universities agree to delay publication of research for up to one year in order to allow corporations to patent results. A 1994 Massachusetts General Hospital survey of 210 life-science companies found that 58 percent of those sponsoring research require delays of more than six months. In a second survey of 2,167 university scientists, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 1997, nearly one in five researchers admitted to delaying publication for more than six months to protect proprietary information.

These delays concern Steven Rosenberg of the National Cancer Institute, one of the country's leading cancer researchers. "There's been a shift toward confidentiality that is severely inhibiting the interchange of information," says Rosenberg, who believes that "the ethics of business and the ethics of science do not mix well." The university ethical system, which promotes knowledge for the public good, is in direct contradiction with the corporate ethical system that emphasizes ownership and protection of trade secrets.

Soley presents an instructive example from Berkeley. Novartis, Inc. gave Berkeley $25 million to fund basic research in the department of plant and microbial biology. In exchange, Berkeley gave Novartis first right to all licenses on one-third of the department's discoveries, including research funded by federal sources. Novartis also has two seats on the department's research advisory committee. In addition, and far worse, Novartis has the right to require the university to delay publication of its discoveries for four months. This delay gives Novartis a chance to license discoveries but it also interferes with the development of new scientific discoveries.

Even worse than delaying research results, in some cases corporations have demanded that universities never publish the results at all, especially if the company considers results unfavorable. David Kern, formerly the director of occupational medicine at Brown University's Memorial Hospital, worked on research funded by Microfibres, a Rhode Island company that produced nylon flock. When Kern discovered evidence of a new lung disease among the company's employees, the company threatened to sue if Kern published his findings. Kern published the results anyway. Soon after, his position at Brown was eliminated.

Not surprisingly, this emphasis on corporate or commercial research affects other aspects of university life as well. While corporate grants may pay part of professors' salaries, explains Soley, researchers are not taken off the university payroll. Yet, these professors may be released from some or all of their teaching responsibilities. They are often senior scholars, showcase professors whose reputations are supposed to attract graduate and undergraduate students. Undergraduate students can rarely take their classes, however, since these professors rarely teach. And to fill the teaching slots vacated by these faculty members, the university may hire low-paid adjunct instructors or graduate student teaching assistants. In this way, says Soley, the adjunct, the graduate student and the undergraduate student are exploited, and education suffers.

Because contracts with corporations are complicated and because universities have added licensing and grant-seeking departments, the union of corporation and campus does not really bring additional moneys to universities. Instead, this union adds administrative costs while shifting the focus of universities from teaching to research. As York University's David Noble explains, between 1976 and 1994, expenditures on research increased 21.7 percent at public research universities, while expenditures on instruction decreased 9.5 percent. During this time, tuition continued to rise at unprecedented rates, sometimes as much as four times the rate of inflation. College students are supplementing the costs of research while the quality of education declines.

Courses become 'courseware'

Along with transforming the research that universities conduct, the union of corporation and campus has also changed teaching. Many define this change as the commercialization of classes in which training for a profession replaces education.

Peter Radecki, director of corporate services at Michigan Technological University, sees this shift as positive. "What's driving everything," he explains, "is the accelerating rate of technological developments. It used to be that you could get an education, a degree and a job. But, now, in some areas, as much as half of what a student learns as a freshman is obsolete by the time he graduates. For corporations to be competitive and for the university to be satisfying a real need, we have to change the education process. We have to amalgamate technological development, education, and corporate development and infuse technology into education. We need those corporate partners to verify that what we are teaching does not become obsolete."

Radecki points to a number of benefits in the marriage of corporation and university: 1) a high placement rate ("we train the workers corporations need"); 2) faculty development ("faculty go on sabbaticals and work for some of our corporate sponsors"); 3) industry advisory boards for every department ("these are populated by corporate

folks who make sure work is appropriate for their needs").

Radecki does believe, however, that the university also needs "to have some places that challenge us to think about other [non-corporate] models. What are other routes to happiness? I think an academic environment should provide a certain amount of that diversity."

But this distinction, according to David Noble, is not necessarily so easy to make because there is a real difference between "training" and "education."

"In essence, training involves the honing of a person's mind so that the mind can be used for the purposes of someone other than that person," Noble says. "Training thus typically entails a radical divorce between knowledge and the self. Here knowledge is usually defined as a set of skills or a body of information designed to be put to use, to become operational."

On the other hand, Noble argues, education entails "the utter integration of knowledge and the self, in a word, self-knowledge. Education is a process that necessarily entails an interpersonal (not merely interactive) relationship between people — student and teacher (and student and student) — that aims at individual and collective self-knowledge. Whenever people recall their educational experiences they tend to remember above all not courses or subjects or the information imparted but people, people who changed their minds or their lives, people who made a difference in their developing sense of themselves. Education is a process of becoming for all parties, based upon mutual recognition and validation and centering upon the formation and evolution of identity. The actual content of the educational experience is defined by this relationship between people and the chief determinant of quality education is the establishment and enrichment of this relationship."

College campuses are not factories that produce knowledge or stores that sell education. Yet, says Noble, the educational process is being divided into discrete and saleable items. The onset of online education makes this transformation even clearer. For online, the human interaction between teacher and student is removed.

As Noble describes the transformation, "In the first step toward commodification, attention is shifted from the experience of the people involved in the educational process to the production and inventorying of an assortment of fragmented 'course materials': syllabi, lectures, lessons, exams (now referred to in the aggregate as 'content').

"Second, these fragments are removed or 'alienated' from their original context, the actual educational process itself, and from their producers, the teachers, and are assembled as 'course,' in which they take on an existence independent of and apart from those who created and gave flesh to them.

"Finally, the assembled 'courses' are exchanged for profit on the market, which determines their value."

Instruction is therefore transformed into a set of deliverable commodities and "the end of education has become not self-knowledge but the making of money," says Noble.

He concludes, "In the wake of this transformation, teachers become commodity producers and deliverers, subject to the familiar regime of commodity production in any other industry, and students become consumers of yet more commodities. The relationship between teacher and student is thus re-established, in an alienated mode, through the medium of the market, and the buying and selling of commodities takes on the appearance of education. But it is, in reality, only a shadow of education, an assemblage of pieces without the whole."

Hope for the future

Still, there remains hope for the future of education. Noble sees the potential to combat the commercialization of education when faculty members remember why they entered academia in the first place: to teach, to help students become the adults they can be. Faculty, especially unionized faculty, says Noble, can act as campus leaders who refocus the university's attention on education.

Noble points to the example of his own faculty union at York University. By taking control of online education, faculty challenged some of the "in-corporation" of the campus. As Noble explains, "In 1997, faculty secured a new contract containing unique and unprecedented provisions which give faculty members direct control over all decisions relating to the automation of instruction. According to the contract, all decisions regarding the use of technology as a supplement to classroom instruction or as a means of alternative delivery 'shall be consistent with the pedagogic and academic judgements and principles of the faculty member employees as to the appropriateness of the use of technology in the circumstances.'"

Changes to instruction, then, will be made only when they "contribute to a genuine enhancement rather than a degradation of the quality of education," says Noble.

In March 1998, this attempt to refocus the university on education spread to other campuses including Berkeley, the University of Wisconsin, Harvard, and Cornell, which held teach-ins on the corporate influence on academia.

In May 1999, the American Association of University Professors likewise held a special conference to protest the corporate influence on academia. According to a June 1999 report in the *Philanthropy News Digest*, professors "spoke out about what they see as unacceptable corporate intrusion into research at their institutions." Professors also protested pressure they feel from their schools to pursue corporate funding at all costs, regardless of "the strings attached." Physicist Irving Lerch began an effort of the American Association for the Advancement of Science to protest "the commercialization of science."

Ultimately, as Leonard Minsky states, "The university should not be pursuing the goal of profit." The university is "one of the two institutions we look to for ethics," the other being the nation's religious organizations. It is time for everyone to take universities back and to provide professors and students with the freedom they need to learn and grow. "Democracy," Minsky says, "requires education free from corporate interest — free from any special interest." ●

***Camille Colatosti** is a professor of English and* The Witness' *staff writer.*

Money's power to shape ideas and opinions

by Darryl K. Brown

AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES have always had closer connections with industry and business than their European counterparts. The mission of land-grant colleges, for example, was to train students for agriculture and industry. Law schools, the training ground for professional lawyers, have also always had a clear goal of preparing students for traditional practice rather than transforming a flawed legal system. But business-university linkages are transforming many sectors of the academy once again, particularly in the sciences, as research leads to patentable products and processes with potentially huge commercial potential. Increasingly, in exchange for funding and even shares of the profits, professors and schools enter partnerships with industry, such as agreements not to share research results, that compromise critical parts of the university teaching and research tradition.

Compared to the sciences, law schools face relatively few of those sorts of blatant temptations. Legal analysis and arguments can have considerable value, but they cannot be patented, nor are they marketable in the usual sense. But law schools face temptations of corporate influence and threats to academic integrity of a different sort. Interestingly, it is a threat that bears strong resemblance to the current hot topic of campaign finance, because both problems hinge on how money subtly shapes ideas and opinions short of outright bribery. And both of those problems echo the lessons of the Gospels on the dangers that wealth poses to the Christian heart.

Law professors often have opportunities to work for the private sector. Maintaining some modest involvement in law practice and related endeavors can be beneficial for teacher, student and school, because the faculty member's teaching will remain informed by the experience of practice that she is training students to enter. While the most lucrative of those sorts of opportunities go to professors whose skills can benefit profit-making companies, there are also plenty of examples of law teachers who engage in some form public service practice as well. It is important to balance the former with the latter, for the direct benefit of the service and the example it sets. Such practice can influence a professor's thinking more broadly, and thus affect the teaching mission and law school structure — experience, after all, is key to shaping perspectives. Although The American Association of Law Schools discourages excessive private practice by full-time faculty members (so faculty don't short-change their teaching duties for more lucrative practice opportunities), it actively encourages pro bono activities. Still, a recent survey by the association found a third of law school deans lamented their faculties' inadequate commitment to *pro bono* service, and half could not say that "many of [my] faculty provide good role models to the students by engaging in uncompensated public service work themselves" — and that's only the deans willing to speak ill of their colleagues in a survey.

Corporate funding incentives seem to explain why we now have a large body of empirical studies and theoretical arguments critical of punitive damages — which corporate interests worry about and fund research on — but a paucity of information about an array of topics critical to social justice that don't interest corporations, such as studies on the harms caused to poor families due to lack of access to legal services.

The currency of lawyers is ultimately ideas and analysis: Lawyers can argue how current laws ought to be interpreted and applied and how they ought to be changed. Underlying those arguments are analyses of how the world is working under current rules — whether the worthy people and causes are being helped or hurt. One way that currency gets spent on behalf of monied interests is through consulting and lobbying fees paid to law professors who work for corporate interests.

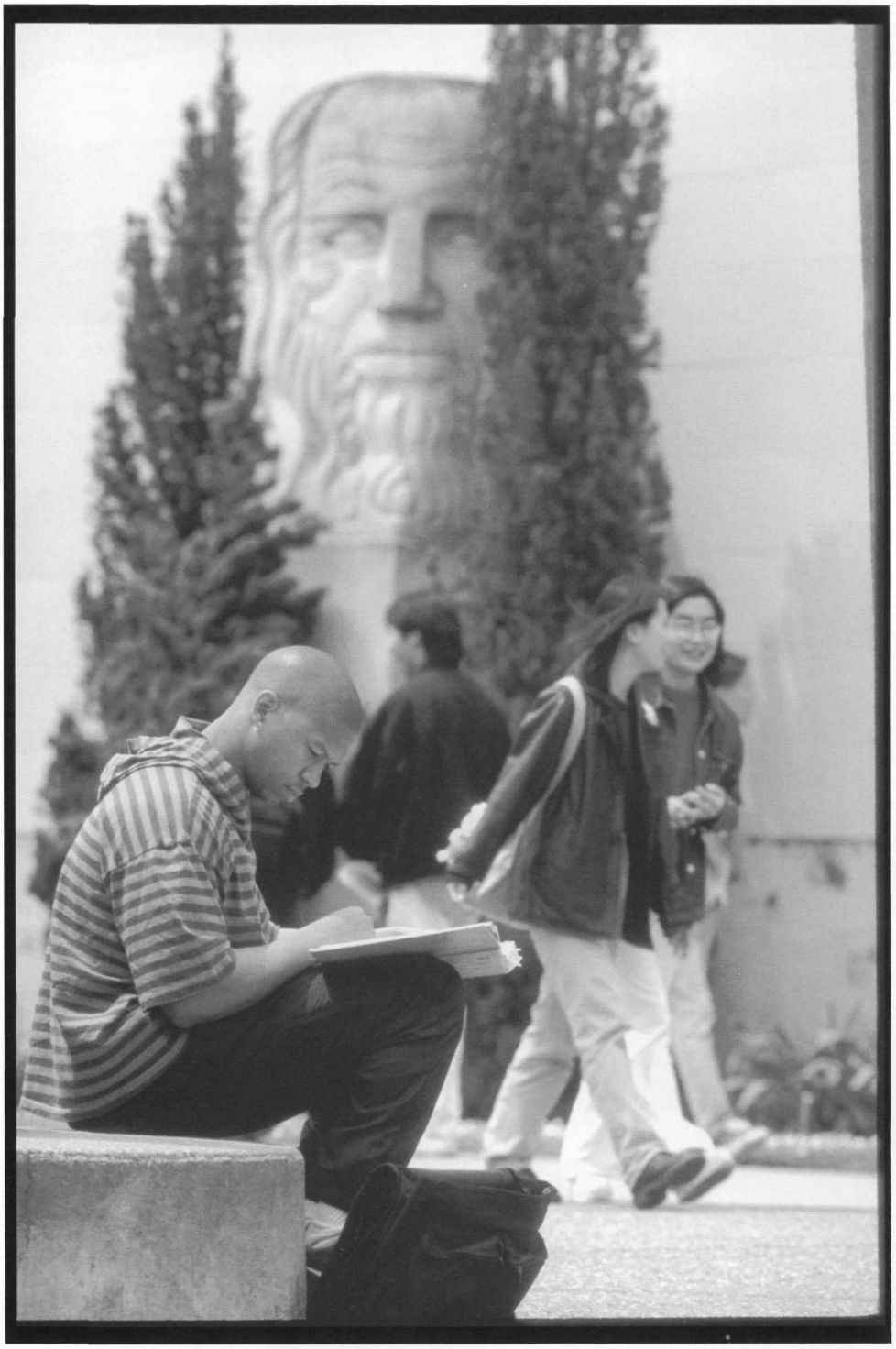
An example is that of GAF Corporation, which formerly produced asbestos and now faces liability from workers and others who suffered cancer and other injuries from asbestos exposure, the workers having not been informed of the risks. GAF hired Harvard law professor Christopher Edley to draft legislation the firm pushed in Congress, which would drastically reduce

RPORATE INFLUENCE:

its liability to asbestos claimants — in other words, limit the ability of asbestos victims to recover from the firm in court. GAF also hired Cardozo law school dean Paul Verkuil to testify before Congress about the benefits of the legislation; GAF's CEO donated $1 million to Verkuil's law school, which then named a Center for Corporate Governance after him.

On a smaller scale, corporate interests aim their resources directly at students. For example, the International Association of Defense Counsel annually sponsors a writing contest for law students. IADC entices students to engage in sympathetic research with prizes up to $2,000 for winning essays. Essays must be "on a subject of practical concern to lawyers engaged in the defense or management of civil litigation," that is, to IADC members, who represent corporations and their insurers. In this way, groups like IADC can influence the development of ideas that support their interests. Students writing on an IADC topic will not be spending scarce law school time studying other topics. If understanding tends often to breed empathy, students researching such topics will likely develop some sympathy for the interests of IADC's client base which is, in the end, often in conflict with the interests of tort victims.

Less blatantly — but sometimes only slightly so — corporations and corporate-oriented foundations fund research on issues in which they have particular interest. Here law schools face similar



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risks to scientific research. Corporate funding at least provides a strong incentive to define research agendas. Scholars choosing among several possible research topics are naturally tempted by the option for which someone is offering a large research grant. In this way, some topics get addressed and enter the public policy debate while others are overlooked. The most prominent example of a funder's effort to influence research agendas is the John M. Olin Foundation, a politically conservative firm that funds "law and economics" programs at most top law schools and many others. Another example is Harvard law professor Kip Vicusi, who has turned much of his attention in recent years to punitive damages in tort law (which includes products liability), and in many prominent articles he turned out to be a strong opponent of punitive damages. Vicusi has received substantial sponsorship of his research from corporations such as Exxon.

Such funding incentives seem to explain why we now have a large body of empirical studies and theoretical arguments critical of punitive damages — which corporate interests worry about and fund research on — but a paucity of information about an array of topics critical to social justice that don't interest corporations, such as studies on the harms caused to poor families due to lack of access to legal services, or the portion of convicted felons whose claims of innocence could have been tested with DNA analysis but weren't. The American Association of Law Schools is sufficiently concerned that it is urging a policy of legal scholars disclosing all funding sources and financial interests they have for their research.

My own suspicion is that blatant manipulation of data occurs relatively rarely, in large part because such things can be caught by other scholars who scrutinize the research. But much research, in law probably more than the sciences, requires interpretation of data and analysis based on value-laden premises and policy priorities; few important questions are easily answered objective ones. I suspect rather that corporate funding works much like corporate political contributions — the money finds people who are already predisposed to a corporate agenda. Even without corporate funding, Vicusi would not likely have a pro-consumer, pro-tort plaintiff, pro-corporate-regulation perspective. Compare Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell, the leading opponent of campaign finance reform and major recipient of corporate donations: His views on most issues probably would not change drastically if corporate money dried up. But well-healed "buyers" of research and political influence manage to find willing "sellers" of policy viewpoints that match their interests. With political campaign contributions, one can rarely identify a clear quid-pro-quo, a direct changing of one's views and votes in exchange for money. Yet we nonetheless have the strong sense that money corrupts politics. What corporate funding tends to influence the most, then, in law schools as elsewhere, is what issues get paid attention to, how many resources support attention to those issues, and how effectively and publicly research on these issues is spread. More subtly, it may affect individual scholars' views as they work on sponsored research and are influenced by others' sponsored research.

Peter Gomes, in his *The Good Book: Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart*, summarizes the New Testament's teaching on material riches in a way that is relevant to understanding the risks of corporate funding in academic research. For Christians, "wealth is not a sin," Gomes notes, "but it is a problem." The rich need not necessarily forsake their wealth to follow Christ; Jesus did not require Zaccheaus to give away all his wealth. Nonetheless, Jesus did ask the rich young ruler of Mark 10:17-27 to give away his worldly wealth despite his faithfulness to moral laws, a request the ruler was unable to meet. Here we learn "how hard it will be for those with riches to enter the kingdom of God," which is echoed in 1 Timothy 6:9-10, where we are warned "those who desire to be rich fall into temptation" that may lead to "ruin and destruction." Wealth itself is not a sin, but the temptations and distractions it poses from life choices in accord with Christian love and charity are formidable.

Gomes' reading of Christ's message about wealth applies as well to corporate funding for the academy. Accepting corporate funding doesn't necessarily mean one is corrupted by it, but it is a temptation whose strength is increased by its subtlety. Law schools, like the legal profession more broadly, continually face their own version of the tension between material wealth and charity or (much the same thing) pursuit of justice. Corporate funding with an implicit agenda of serving commercial interests can lead one's heart as well as use of talents from a commitment to and effort for justice in the legal system for those least likely to obtain it due to material wealth imbalances.

There are signs of hope. At the same school whose dean was hired by GAF Corporation as a lobbyist, the Innocence Project thrives in its work for the wrongfully convicted. A model of justice work in legal education, it has also proved to be prime mover in destabilizing death penalty support and in bringing high profile praise to the law school. Across the country, law schools are showing an incremental but real commitment to clinical education that engages students in specifically serving the needs of the poor. And there are some foundations that fund such social justice causes; George Soros' Open Society Institute is a good example.

Nonetheless, the temptations of private funding seem to be with us indefinitely. Law schools, especially the elite ones, are now in an almost perpetual mode of capital-campaign fund raising, and the competitive pressure is to use funds for institution-building rather than public-spirited projects like legal clinics, public-interest scholarships, and loan forgiveness for poverty lawyers. My alma mater, the University of Virginia, for example, recently exceeded its $100 million capital campaign goal and decided to keep on fund-raising; it now has a palatial set of buildings named for rich donors but still a paucity of law clinics. Harvard, which raises much more, declines to lend the aid of its fund-raising apparatus to the Appleseed Foundation, a group led by Harvard law alumni to support public interest legal practice. Those sorts of pressures will continually pose the challenge that wealth always poses for commitments to charity and justice. ●

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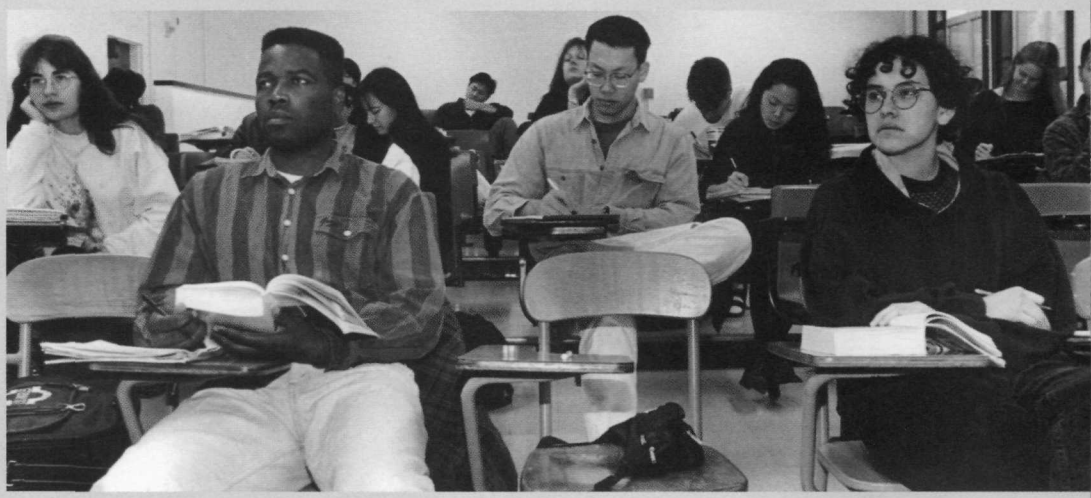
Hip-Hop campus activism

by Johnny Temple

"YOU HAVE NO IDEA how much love I got for this," says David Jamil Muhammad, referring to his role as a student organizer of "Hip-Hop Generation — Hip-Hop as a Movement." The conference was held April 14-16 at the University of Wisconsin and brought together activists, scholars and entertainers to examine hip-hop as force for social change. Muhammad's interest in music has drawn him into the campus anti-sweatshop movement: "When I found out that some hip-hop gear was being made in prisons, I was furious." Muhammad later teamed up with a broad range of students, including some of the key organizers of the successful anti-sweatshop campaign at the university, to put together an event, which featured hip-hop trailblazers Africa Bambaataa and Chuck D of Public Enemy.

Forging multiracial, multi-issue coalitions continues to be a daunting task for student organizers, including Muhammad, who feels that "white paternalism" has been a major disincentive for students of color to become involved in progressive causes on college campuses. But according to professor Craig Werner, a faculty liaison to the UW conference, today's student activists are "smarter" than those in the recent past: "During the 1980s, all too often, the white left was willing to pursue ideological purity at the expense of ground-level realities of what things meant for black students. Interracial coalitions became very, very difficult. It is much better now. ... For a change, we've got the feminists, the Nation of Islam and the lefties all working together. And Lord knows, we need it."

While Rudy Giuliani's ongoing police assault on black men in New York City and the alarming victory of Proposition 21 [prescribing more prison time for juveniles] at the California ballot box have provided obvious targets for hip-hop-related political protests, much of the activism on college campuses is tied to a wider economic picture. Take, for example, the Prison Moratorium Project's "No More Prisons" hip-hop tour, which is designed to recruit and train prison activists. "We're linking the sweatshop issue, private-prison investments and the treatment of workers on campus," says PMP's Kevin Pranis. Sodexho-Marriott Services, a major investor in the private-prison industry and a focal point of the No More Prisons tour, managed to prevent a No More Prisons pretour event from taking place on February 15 at American University in Washington, D.C., because the company operates the venue where the event was supposed to be held. But the 40-city "raptivist" tour was aimed at college campuses and other locations with political visions delineated on the recent No More Prisons CD, a benefit compilation featuring hip-hop luminaries Dead Prez, The Coup and others, many of whom would be performing on the tour.



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Hip-hop music has a more diverse audience — racially and economically — than any other popular genre, and some campus organizers are finding that it can help to provide a common ground on which to unify disparate groups. Oberlin College senior Mie Anton, one of the coordinators of "Six Million Ways to Speak: Oberlin Community Hip-Hop Conference 2000," says, "When you look at our committee, there are so many different types of people from everywhere in the world. You realize that hip-hop has taken itself to a different level. Especially with our generation, we really grew up with it." At the University of Wisconsin, student organizer David Muhammad reflects on the purpose of his school's hip-hop forum: "We need jobs in urban America. ... The poor whites of this nation need jobs. Let's talk about the economy." ●

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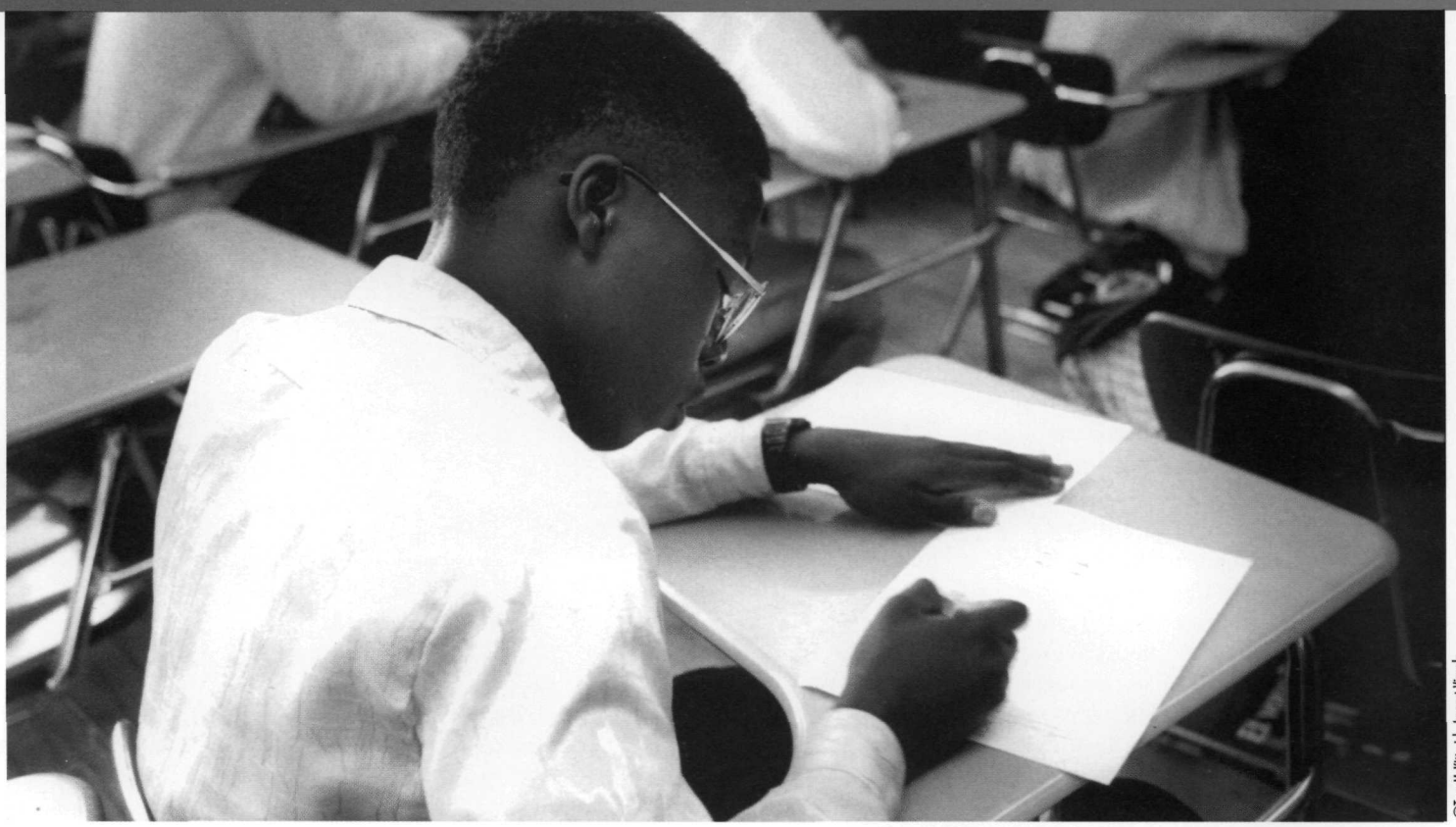
HIGH-STAKES



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Scapegoating the nation's young

by Jane Slaughter

HIGH-STAKES TESTS are on the rise across the country, as politicians of both parties seek to look tough on society's newest scapegoat, the young. It's called the "standards movement," and it's caused legislatures to mandate one-shot tests that determine whether a child will be held back a year in elementary school, or whether she will graduate from high school.

At the same time, a growing movement of parents and educators is resisting test mania, calling for schools that teach children to think, not to fill in the blanks.

"Testing is a cover for not dealing with the real problems of public education," says Joel Jordan, a 23-year high school teacher in east Los Angeles. "It makes the kids and the teachers a scapegoat rather than the politicians who set the conditions where teachers teach and students learn."

Jordan is a founder of the Coalition for Educational Justice, which brings teachers and parents together against high-stakes testing and in favor of smaller classes and better-prepared teachers. "The focus on tests forces teachers to narrow their curriculum, to fragment it into rote learning," says Jordan. Gil Leaf, head of a Quaker-run private school in downtown Detroit, agrees: "The movement for 'school reform' is going 180 degrees the wrong way. True reform would be to have more freedom for creative teachers, not less."

All the evidence shows that reliance on standardized testing does not improve learning. "The case against standardized mental testing is as intellectually and ethically rigorous as any argument about social policy in the past 20 years," says Peter Sacks, author of *Standardized Minds: The High Price of America's Testing Culture and What We Can Do To Change It*. "And yet such testing continues to dominate the education system ... bolstered in recent years by a conservative backlash advocating advancement by 'merit.'"

In 1980, says Sacks, just about half of the states had mandatory testing programs; by 1998, all but

two did. In 18 states, high school seniors perform well on a multiple-choice test or they don't graduate; that number is expected to rise to 26 by 2003. Parents put so much stock in tests that real estate agents advertise a neighborhood school's scores to prospective home-buyers.

With so much at stake, the pressure is on to raise scores at all costs. So school systems re-gear curricula to "teach to the test," parents pay for after-school test prep courses, and legislators allocate money to teach children how to beat the test that they themselves have mandated.

In his State of the Union speech this year, President Clinton advocated that all schools institute programs that teach students how to take tests. Massachusetts and California are spending $20 million and $10 million, respectively, on test prep courses. In the words of Michigan State Board of Education President Dorothy Beardmore, "The test has become the tail that wags the dog."

What the tests measure

Test furor continues despite universal acknowledgment, among those who have studied tests, that their predictive ability is meager. In response to a request from Congress, the National Academy of Sciences last year issued a recommendation: "High-stakes decisions such as tracking, promotion, and graduation should not automatically be made on the basis of a single test score but should be buttressed by other relevant information about the student's knowledge and skill, such as grades, teacher recommendations, and extenuating circumstances."

Even the makers of the SAT, the college entrance exam, say that their scores should not be treated as precise measures; they admit that two students' scores must differ by at least 125 points before they can reliably be said to be different.

In any case, differences in SAT scores can predict only 16 percent of the difference among freshman grades in college. Monty Neill, director of the National Organization for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest), a clearinghouse for anti-test activism, points out that the single best predictor of college grades is which courses the student took in high school. Those who took tougher courses will make higher marks in college. Grades are the second best predictor, and test scores are a poor third.

Of course, the real kicker is that even college grades have almost nothing to do with success later in life; ask George Bush.

Yet administrators and politicians are anxious for hard numbers. Thus tests are promoted despite their irrelevance.

High income, high scores

The Bush syndrome enters in when you seek a predictor of students' test scores. There is one; it's money.

SAT scores for college-bound seniors increase consistently with family income, an average of 29 points for each $10,000. Those with family income under $10,000 a year average 871; those with incomes over $100,000 average 1130. The ACT, another college entrance test, shows the same trend.

The U.S. Department of Education looked at the backgrounds of students who made at least 1,100 (out of 1,600) on the SAT, which tends to be the cut-off for highly selective colleges such as those in the Ivy League. One-third came from the upper-income brackets and less than a tenth from low-income families.

Referring to a Michigan statewide test, Rich Gibson of Wayne State University says, "What MEAP measures is, first, class, next, race, and third, whether the teacher did nothing but teach to the exam."

Sacks notes, "The nation's elites now perpetuate their class privilege with rules of their own making ... legitimated and protected by a pseudo-scientific objectivity."

One reason the better-off kids make higher scores is that many take expensive test preparation courses. Hundreds of thousands of students go through test prep every year, generating over $100 million for the companies that coach them. Princeton Review guarantees to lift SAT scores by 100 points and ACT scores by 4 (out of a possible 36). The cost: $749 for 35 hours of instruction.

No dumbing down

The opponents of over-reliance on testing are not for dumbing down the curriculum. Quite the contrary. Gil Leaf notes, "Everybody agrees that by fourth grade kids should know two-place multiplication. That's a standard. But there are different ways to get there. Certainly that's true of history and literature, where the worst thing is to be a slave to the textbook and the testing process.

"In the name of standards, the curriculum is being designed to take the creative process away from the teacher. What that does is guarantee that those kinds of people we want to attract to teaching will not go, because of the lack of freedom."

And Joel Jordan says teaching to the test "takes time away from critical thinking, from projects, from enrichment activities that actually interest kids, as opposed to the mind-numbing test preparation exercises. And that widens the gap between better-off schools and inner-city schools. The schools that have middle and upper incomes, where scores already tend to be high, have no pressure to dumb down the curriculum this way."

Alfie Kohn, author of *The Schools Our Children Deserve*, notes that research shows that students rated by numbers "tend to lose interest in learning, they tend to pick the easiest possible task, and they tend to think less deeply and creatively."

The result, says Judy Depew, a social studies teacher in a Detroit suburb, is that "students are being trained not to be creative, critical thinkers, but cooperative, unthinking employees and citizens." ●

Jane Slaughter is a Detroit freelance writer.

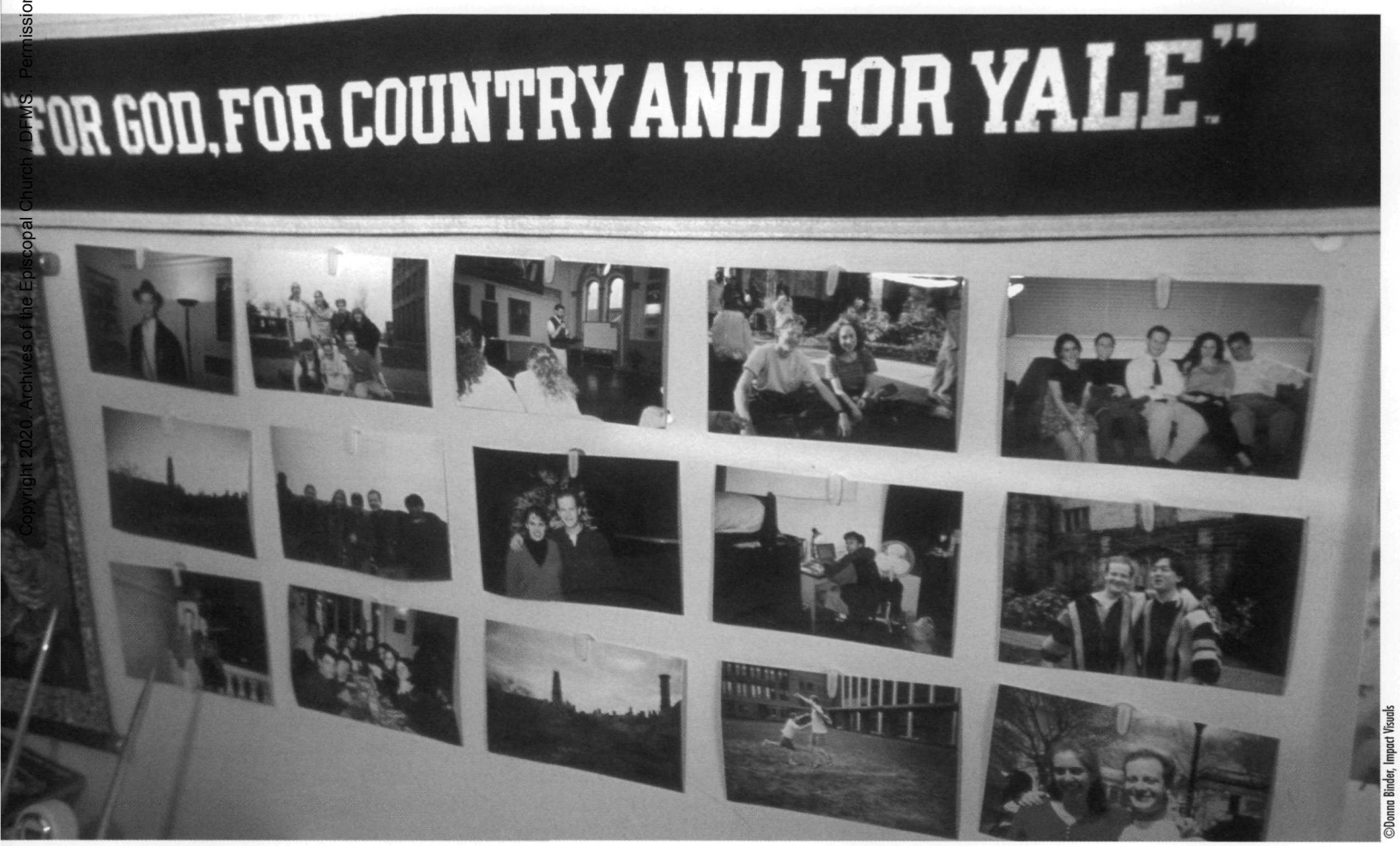
PURSUING THE

In the academy's 'hallowed halls'

by Robert Wuthnow

THE SEPARATION of reason from emotion and from action that generally characterizes institutions of higher learning reflects the lingering dualistic epistemology of the Enlightenment that presumes knowledge to be gained best by objectifying the world, viewing it as an externality, instead of attempting to appropriate it subjectively (or internally) through the counsels of feeling or through wisdom gained from direct action. While there have been significant philosophical challenges in the 20th century to this perspective, it certainly prevails in secular and church-related colleges and universities alike. Passion, trust, conviction, faith, and devotion are all subordinated to dispassionate statements about the facts or truths of a world viewed from outside. It is little wonder, then, that some have argued that scholarly approaches to religion contribute in subtle ways to the larger processes of secularization.

A second but related reason for believing that higher



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education is at odds with the sacred derives from the tension between what might be called creation, on the one hand, and discovery, on the other hand. Creation implies invention, novelty, the development of something new that in a deep sense reflects the talents and insights of the creator. Discovery, in contrast, implies paying close attention to the external world, grasping it as a given reality, so that what is new is only a description of what has always been there. Western religion has always distinguished the two by attributing creation to a divine being who is the author or originator of all reality, whereas discovery is more likely to be described as a human activity, such as learning to understand better the nature of created reality or gaining insight into the darker recesses of one's own nature.

Valuing discovery or invention?

At the dawn of the scientific revolution the work of scientists was well described as an act of discovery. Natural laws inscribed in the world by its creator were there for the finding, just as new continents had been there a century earlier for the explorers. Academic work was in fact likened to reading a text — in one case the text might still be the written Bible; in other cases it was the word of God written in nature. Reportage of academic discoveries was thus largely a matter of communicating knowledge of a sacred realm that was already in place. This congruity between academic work and the sacred served well to legitimate the religious sponsorship of higher learning in church-related academies and the close connections that were drawn between moral philosophy and natural philosophy in secular institutions.

The present understanding of academic work, however, has shifted decidedly away from discovery toward creation itself. Artistic expression, in which a product is created that reflects the moods and interests of the artist, is perhaps the clearest model of this understanding. Increasingly, science imitates art in this respect, as measuring devices are known to alter the very realities they seek to measure, and as theoretical inventions are understood to alter the very possibilities of perceiving reality. The most highly valued academic work, therefore, is the creative process by which new ideas, new theories, or even new ways of expressing ideas are invented; by comparison, discovery is increasingly relegated to the realm of empiricism, fact-mongering, and technical specialization.

The limitation that this conception of academic work presents for the discussion of religion is that God remains fundamentally an entity to be discovered rather than one to be invented. Scriptural exegesis becomes a process of discovering insights within a closely circumscribed field of textual meanings and applying these insights to changing circumstances. Going beyond discovery to create an entirely new conception of God is, however, to move beyond the pale of most confessional traditions. The resultant strain between these two modes of understanding reveals itself, therefore, either as heterodoxy confronting orthodoxy or as more highly valued creative expressions confronting the less highly valued processes of textual interpretation.

The main consequence of these two limitations — depersonalized reason and the devaluation of discovery — for the public expression of religion through academic organizations is that academicians tend to talk about religion in ways that are seldom valued highly within their institutions themselves, while the most creative contributions to spirituality come largely from outside these institutions. What a typical layperson might read in the newspapers would thus be a report of an academic study of the religious beliefs of the American population, but this reader would not expect to learn that a fundamental new theory of God had been produced or that the authors of such a report had won a Nobel Prize for their efforts. Nor would this reader be likely to rely on such a report for guidance in his or her own attempts to seek God. Higher credence would be given to a playwright who wrote from the deep anguish of having been imprisoned by a totalitarian government, a recovering alcoholic who had struggled with the depths of personal pain, or in the rare instance an academic marginal to any specific department or discipline who wrote from personal reflection more than from systematic empirical inquiry.

Separating knowledge and moral discourse

Part of the reason why public discourse about the sacred would be shaped more deeply by nonacademics than by academics is that higher learning has erected a boundary not only between reason and emotion but also between knowledge and moral discourse. The public pronouncements of academicians are more likely to take the form of descriptive statements than that of normative prescriptions, in part because of the way in which the role of the academy has come to be understood in modern societies. This role involves a deliberate retreat from active engagement in public life to protect the purity of scholarship itself. It also grants ultimate authority for the manipulation of social structures to government organizations, taking only a detached advisory role in policy-making. The fact that government in democratic societies generally refrains from intruding on the private decisions of individuals, however, leaves a large realm untutored either by government or by the academy. This realm, often described as personal morality, has always been subject to the pronouncements of religious institutions, either at the level of congregations or hierarchies. When these organizations functioned with cultural authority and higher education consisted mainly of church-related organizations, a natural division of labor existed that allowed the academies to focus (in the best circumstances) on moral philos-

ophy rather than on concrete moral prescriptions. With the erosion of the churches' authority over the lives of many people in modern societies, however, a gap has been created in moral discourse that seems to be filled by common sense, ad hoc and situational reasoning, television, and other purveyors of moral fiction more than by institutions of higher learning.

Instead of simply attributing this failure on the part of academicians to address moral issues to a lack of nerve or shortsightedness of vision, however, we must try to understand it in terms of the kind of authority modern culture confers on academicians. Their authority as culture producers inheres mainly in the special advantages assumed to derive from specialized, critical reflection. The point of academic institutions is, after all, to provide opportunities for such reflection, and the fact that resources flow to these institutions both reinforces and attests to the legitimacy such reflection has acquired. Scholars interested in religious and moral questions are thus most likely to be given credence for analytic and critical studies. Taking their cue from the natural sciences, they may try to understand how the sacred functions — why it works or does not work — but in analyzing the divine in this way, they are more likely to recognize that they are examining human assumptions about God instead of observing God directly. Their authority as dispassionate scholars is also likely to encourage critical orientations rather than the sort of celebrations of the divine one might expect from a liturgist or a poet.

Scholars' views of nature also suggest another limitation on the kind of authoritative knowledge they may be able to produce about the sacred. These views are heavily oriented toward technical mastery and manipulation. The rationale for much of the funding that goes toward applied research, and even for basic science, is that the knowledge gained will help us better control the physical environment. The prospect of government's being able to engage in social engineering has encouraged a similar technical orientation in the social sciences, and even in the humanities much of what passes for historical studies and literary criticism has a manipulative orientation either in the sense of better mastering the future by knowing the past or in discovering the techniques by which meaning can be created and deciphered in literature. At one time, of course, the shamans who preceded modern academicians concerned themselves largely with the technical manipulation of the gods, but in modern societies this technical orientation is largely in disrepute. Scholars may legitimately concern themselves with manipulating nature but not God. That function has thus been given over to the various television preachers, prayer warriors, and mediums who claim specialized talents in influencing the divine.

Symbolizing the navel of the world

One other limitation of the academy deserving mention is that the secular knowledge it produces is often shrouded in such sacred conceptions that this knowledge — as well as its pursuit — takes the place of religious conviction. Anyone familiar with the capital fund-raising drives and alumni relations of colleges and universities will immediately grasp this point. Institutions of higher learning symbolize a sacred space — the navel of the world — where truth is closer, where the mundane concerns of business and family can be bracketed from view, where athletic prowess and physical beauty are at their peak, and where the youthfulness even of aging professors and alumni can safely be preserved. If the pursuit of knowledge is in some way a sacred quest, it is all the more so because of the special places (we call them "hallowed halls") in which learning takes place. Religious congregations have an advantage over these institutions insofar as they are able to lay down the foundation values learned in early childhood, but higher education enjoys an enormous competitive advantage over congregations in being able to capture the full attention of young people just when they are questioning their childhood values and adopting the ideas they will carry into adulthood. When religious ideas are fully integrated into the formal and hidden curricula of the campus, this advantage can work to the benefit of public religion. Studies documenting negative relations between the attainment of higher education and the retention of religious convictions suggest a different pattern, however. Campuses may delegitimate religion by subjecting it to critical reason and sanctifying alternative values, such as relativism, the pursuit of secular knowledge for its own sake, or even raw careerism, narrow professionalism and crass materialism.

These limitations notwithstanding, the campus environment also enjoys certain features that contribute positively to the public expression of the sacred. One of the most important of these is the atmosphere of open, unrestrained intellectual inquiry that is often associated with higher education. Just how open this atmosphere actually is has been questioned in recent years, especially by critics who argue that higher education is dominated by a subtle, but powerful, liberal ideology that prevents genuine consideration of politically or religiously conservative perspectives. Compared with many other institutional settings, the academic environment has a relatively strong norm against imposing explicit ideological tests on the activities of those engaged in serious intellectual pursuits. The upshot is that students and faculty often find the academy a more conducive setting in which to engage in frank explorations of religious values than virtually anyplace else. In contrast, the same person may feel uncomfortable in the congregational setting because certain answers are assumed to be precluded from the outset or because clergy function not only as spiritual guides but as commandeers of volunteer labor and charitable donations. Secular campuses probably convey the image of being most open to exploring issues, including religious ones, from all angles with nothing other than genuine intellectual integrity at stake, although this image often does fall short of reality because of ingrained prejudices against the value of faith or the wisdom of religious traditions themselves. Church-related campuses may preclude some of the freedom to explore from all possible angles because of their loyalty to particular traditions, yet this limitation may be more than compensated for by the seriousness with which the religious life itself is taken.

In attempting to communicate the results of these explorations to the wider public, scholars in these various settings are also

likely to experience similar advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage accruing to the scholar in a secular academic setting is that whatever conclusions the scholar chooses to publicize may be accorded the respect that comes with a presumably objective approach. The disadvantage is that a deeply impassioned plea framed in confessional language by such a scholar is likely to earn trouble for that person within the academy itself. For scholars at church-related colleges, the obverse is likely to pertain: Trust may be granted only by an audience sharing the same confessional tradition, but speaking passionately from this tradition is less likely to be regarded as a breech of academic norms.

The technical or applied knowledge mentioned earlier also gives institutions of higher learning some clear advantages in influencing the shape of religious institutions. Scholars may find it beyond their legitimate roles to invent new gods or manipulate existing gods, but they can produce knowledge that the leaders of religious hierarchies take seriously enough to influence the direction of these hierarchies. Studies of how the churches promoted anti-Semitism were at one point influential in encouraging church leaders to adopt different official policies toward Jews. Studies in more recent years documenting that congregations were able to accept women in clergy roles have been instrumental in encouraging denominational leaders to champion gender equality in the churches.

The academy's best roles

If we ask what kind of contribution colleges and universities can make to the public expression of religion, one obvious answer is that academic knowledge can play a valuable technical role. Such knowledge will probably not capture the imaginations and hearts of pious individuals, but it will be of interest to the leaders of institutions who shape the goals of churches or public policy toward the churches. Knowledge of this kind is unlikely to earn the high respect that more creative contributions in the natural sciences and the arts are likely to receive, but its social and cultural impact may be considerable. The reason for this is that conceptions of the sacred are very much a function of the institutions that produce them. These conceptions, in short, are cultural products and, unlike the weather or some feature of physical geography, are therefore subject to the shaping power of cultural institutions. Academic knowledge helps, in turn, to guide these institutions. It plays an archival role, if nothing else, preserving the past so that religious institutions can know more easily if they have strayed from or remained true to this past. Academic knowledge also functions as a mirror in which religious leaders can view themselves and their activities. It may not tell them what to do, but it can help them correct their course should they so desire.

The greatest challenge in public religion to which academic knowledge can respond positively is the growing level of religious and cultural pluralism in modern societies. Although pluralism has sometimes been thought to lead inevitably to greater secularity, the future of religion in pluralistic societies is probably more indeterminate than that view would suggest. Pluralism can stimulate competition among religious traditions, and it can be layered into deeper personal religious convictions as well. Academic knowledge has for several centuries advanced the cause of cultural pluralism, claiming to present a more enlightened vantage point than that available in any particular tradition and championing egalitarianism, mutual respect, and the search for shared values among pluralistic subcultures. Academic knowledge has continuously been put forth in universalistic terms said to be relevant and applicable in the wide variety of settings.

Arguments couched in universalistic language serve a vital function in public discourse about collective values. Indeed, it might be argued that the chief role academics can play in expressing public religion is that of arbiter or translator, framing arguments in detached, externalist terms so they can be understood and debated across a wide spectrum of confessional traditions. Congregations, denominational hierarchies, and religious special interest groups may also do this in their efforts to reach pluralistic audiences, but academies are in a better position to do so because they do not have to speak from the perspective of any particular religious tradition. Church-related colleges are of course somewhat more constrained in this than are secular institutions of higher learning, but many church- related colleges have been able to devise charters giving themselves sufficient autonomy from host denominations that faculty and students still have relatively wide latitude in exploring intellectual questions. Academicians in both types of settings have the cultural authority to raise critical questions and to pose religious issues in broader — historical, cross-cultural, and cross-confessional — terms so that these issues can genuinely become part of the wider public culture. Being able to speak about religious language, instead of having to speak in religious language itself, is of special value when competing religious arguments are at issue.

On balance, then, the view that colleges and universities necessarily are subject to, and contributors to, a secularized public culture seems mistaken, as does the view that colleges and universities must tighten their ties to sponsoring religious bodies if they are going to resist these secularizing pressures. Secularization misconstrues the question because it suggests a linear trend away from something definably religious toward something patently nonreligious. A more compelling view of the changes taking place in modern societies is one that recognizes the simultaneous interplay of the sacred and the secular. Colleges and universities have contributed significantly — and will continue to contribute — to this interplay. They are among the chief producers of secular knowledge, but they also provide valuable enclaves in which special types of religious knowledge can be produced and preserved. ●

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Religious leaders challenge war on drugs

A coalition of "Religious Leaders for a More Just and Compassionate Drug Policy" is challenging the way faith communities are being drawn into the "war on drugs." In a recent press release they explained their concerns.

"On May 10, the U.S. Drug Czar stood with Dr. James Dobson and his Young Life Christian Ministry and applauded this program for its fight against drugs. General McCaffrey claimed that religious institutions are the most effective vehicles for keeping youth off drugs. McCaffrey also cited the Fellowship of Christian Athlete's 'One Way 2 Play' program, The Salvation Army's drug treatment programs, and various church, mosque and synagogue involvement in 'drug-blighted areas.' The General concluded that 'for all of us, remaining drug-free is a matter of faith.'

"McCaffrey's co-optation of faith-based language to lend support to his 'war on drugs' is particularly offensive to one group of rabbis, imams, priests and ministers who have joined together in an organization called Religious Leaders for a More Just and Compassionate Drug Policy.

"The Rev. Howard Moody, coordinator of the organization, responded to McCaffrey's enlistment of religious groups by noting that the General's war on drugs is in fact a 'war on our youth' who are addicted to illicit drugs. 'Instead of giving them help and treatment, we send them to prison for long terms,' he explained. 'Our own kids are the "prisoners of war" in this immoral and unwinnable conflict. Its victims and casualties, especially African-Americans and Latinos, grow every year, filling our newly built prisons.'"

Religious Leaders recently issued a "manifesto of conscience" calling for "a more equitable and humane way for treating those who abuse licit and illicit drugs," and are gathering signatures. The text is available at <http://religious leaders.home.mindspring.com>.

Granny D links ecology, finance reform

Granny D (Doris Haddock), the 90-year-old woman who walked across the country speaking for campaign finance reform, was arrested April 21 in the Capitol Rotunda with the John Muir Democracy Brigade, a group merging finance reformers with environmental activists (*The Nation*, 5/15/00).

"At a press conference Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*, said a broad consensus is developing about the menace of global warming. 'The only people that seem not to get it work in that building behind us, [which] may have something to do with the millions and millions of dollars that flow into that building from the interests that do not want to change the status quo.' After telling the group, 'We must declare our independence from big money,' Granny D led the 32 demonstrators into the Rotunda, bearing large banners proclaiming CAMPAIGN FINANCE CORRUPTION LEADS TO ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION."

Earlier this year, the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund newsletter printed excerpts from Granny D's 90th birthday speech:

"For those of you who have lived a long life and think you are finished with it, I tell you that, if you will pray for courage and look to the needs of your community rather than yourself, a great energy and happiness will come to you. Indeed, your community needs your wisdom and your patience.

"In a time when people are so stressed in their lives and are so unaware of what it means to truly live well, to live free, to live with enough leisure and confidence to be the stewards of their own lives and communities, in this time, we strangely find ourselves having to explain why it is a bad thing if multinational corporations control our elections, and why it is a bad thing if our elected leaders no longer represent the interests of the people.

"Where do we march to make a fight of this? Not against our government, but against those inside and outside of it who have set up their cash registers in our temples of democracy."

Anti-Indian groups

Honor Digest recently published a listing of organizations working against Indian interests.

"A national umbrella group called Citizens for Equal Rights Alliance ... has its own newspaper, website, email, and congressional spokespersons. Senator Slade Gorton

(R-WA) is an unabashed mouthpiece for these groups.

"Connecting with other right-wing groups into a coalition called the 'Alliance for Freedom,' the anti-Indian groups meet in Washington, D.C. once or twice a year to converge on Congress They urge that reservations and sovereignty be terminated, and legal precedents are overturned. CERA recently formed a non-profit charitable organization called Citizens for Equal Rights Foundation (CERF), so that people can get a tax deduction for contributing to the hate agenda and messages.

"It's not just Congress that is a focus for these groups. They frequent the halls of state legislatures and actively field candidates for election at every level of government.

"Preying on the ignorance of mainstream press and Americans in general, CERA and its cohorts are able to gain airing of false information. One example is the 'all Indians are now rich from gaming' myth. This makes good press copy. The fact that tribes are using some of the gaming revenue to reacquire homelands is especially galling to the anti-Indian forces.

"Here are some of the groups targeting the sovereignty, treaty rights, human rights, land interests and survival of American Indian tribes: Citizens for Equal Rights Alliance (CERA), All Citizens Equal (ACE), Protect American Rights and Resources (PARR), United Property Owners of Washington (UPOW), Upstate Citizens for Equality (UCE), Proper Economic Resource Management (PERM), Hunting & Angling Club, Arizona Coalition for Public Lands, American Citizens Together, Seneca County Liberation Organization, and, in Canada, the Organization of Fishermen & Hunters (OFAH)."

Prisoners counted out

Census rules for counting prison inmates will drain federal assistance from urban areas most in need of it, Tracy Huling and Marc Mauer write in *The Chicago Tribune* (3/29/00).

"The census counts inmates, mostly residents of inner-city communities, as part of the populations of towns where they are incarcerated. The combined impact of this regulation and the near doubling of the prison population since 1990 could yield a substantial shift in government dollars and political power from urban to rural areas.

"Prisons have become a growth industry in rural America and the majority of new prisons are now built in rural communities.

"Not surprisingly, the benefits that rural communities derive from the census count come at the expense of urban neighborhoods, whose members represent a substantial portion of the inmates in rural prisons. In New York State, for example, while 89 percent of prisoners are housed in rural areas, three-quarters of the inmate population come from just seven neighborhoods in New York City. These neighborhoods, and prisoners generally, are disproportionately composed of low-income minorities — half of all inmates are African-American and one-sixth Latino. Thus, the urban communities hardest hit by both crime and criminal justice policies are now similarly disadvantaged by losing funding and political influence through the reapportionment process." ●

Jim West

Locked-out workers at the Detroit News *and* Free Press *marked the fifth anniversary of their strike against the papers July 13, 2000 with rallies at the* Detroit News *building and at the papers' printing plant in suburban Sterling Heights (shown here). It was at the printing plant five years ago that thousands of unionists defied police, blocking the gates to keep Sunday papers from being delivered.* The Witness' *Jeanie and Bill Wylie-Kellermann became involved in the controversy when they organized a group of religious and civic leaders called Readers United in an effort — sometimes involving civil disobedience — to bring both sides to the bargaining table. With a recent ruling by a three-judge federal appeals court that the strike was not caused by management's unfair labor practices (saving management from owing workers as much as $100 million in back pay), the unions are renewing their call for a boycott of the papers.*

Connecting 'ivory-tower' and real-world realities

by Marianne Arbogast

WHEN MICHAEL LEVINSON was a freshman at Georgetown University, he heard a Honduran factory worker near his own age speak on campus.

"She was 20 years old, she was a single mother with two kids, and her wages were not enough for her to even provide food and shelter and clothes for them," Levinson, now a junior, recalls.

Moved by her story, Levinson and another student organized an interfaith prayer service, asking students from different faith traditions to speak about what their tradition taught on labor rights. He was soon drawn into the Georgetown Solidarity Committee, the anti-sweatshop group which had sponsored the Honduran woman's visit.

As a business school student majoring in finance and international business, Levinson says he is unique among his fellow activists. With a minor in theology, he is unique in the business school as well. But the combination has served Levinson well in the students' campaign to address the forces that exploit workers who produce Georgetown logo apparel.

The campaign began with an investigation into the factory code of conduct required by the Collegiate Licensing Committee (CLC), which handles licensing for Georgetown and other universities.

"There was nothing about a living wage, nothing about women's rights, and the document said that the companies only had to abide by the laws of the country where the factories were located — or whatever the prevailing industry standard was," Levinson says. "The other thing which was not in the CLC was full public disclosure of factory locations, and that was considered key by us and by the larger student movement. So we tried to get meetings with our administration, to ask them to sign off the CLC and require full public disclosure."

When their request went unheeded, the Solidarity Committee began educating and organizing on campus.

"We did a fashion show, having students dressed up in Georgetown sweatshirts strutting around, and someone with a bullhorn saying, 'This student is sporting the new Georgetown sweatshirt, only $12.99 at the Georgetown book store, made by 13-year-old girls in Honduras who make 56 cents an hour.' We were trying to connect the two worlds — what the students know, with what the actual conditions were."

After collecting 1,000 student signatures on a petition, representatives from the Solidarity Committee met with the dean of students. They were told that they could not ask companies for full disclosure, because it would force them to reveal trade secrets.

"That was not true," Levinson says, "because often one factory will subcontract with several different corporations, so you have Nike, Reebok and Jansport items being made side by side in the same factory. Also, there's a difference between developing super-computers and t-shirts — it's not exactly rocket science."

They were also told that, since Georgetown had over 200 licensees — producing everything from sweatshirts to Barbie dolls — and Georgetown contracts were insignificant within each company's budget, the students' demand was unrealistic.

In January of 1999, the Solidarity Committee organized a forum at which an ethicist, an economist and a labor rights expert from the Georgetown faculty all endorsed the students' position. When the administration still failed to respond, the students held a sit-in in the office of Georgetown president Leo O'Donovan.

"Thirty-two of us committed to participate in civil disobedience," Levinson says. "We figured out some very specific goals. At this point, we knew that we couldn't just ask them to drop the CLC, because Georgetown does not have the capacity to handle our own licensing. But we knew the CLC could ask companies to give us full public disclosure and abide by a code of conduct that Georgetown would develop on its own. So we went in the office on a Thursday and sat down and, after a little tense negotiation, the administration allowed us to be there without calling the police. We also had people on the outside organizing rallies and a prayer vigil."

On Tuesday afternoon, 85 hours into the sit-in, the administration agreed to the students' demands.

"They agreed to require full public disclosure, to adopt a code of conduct that we had developed in negotiations, and to give students a decision-making voice in the process," Levinson says. Levinson was one of four students elected to a new Licensing Implementation Committee.

"Once I got on the Committee, I started learning about all the business aspects of implementing real-world activist policies," he says. "We sent out a letter to all of our licensees saying that we would require them to publicly disclose, and we set up a deadline six months later — which was this past January. As of now, 70 percent of our licensees have complied. We have a big stack of papers and we're trying to put on the Internet thousands of factory locations where Georgetown stuff is made."

The next step — a plan for monitoring the factories — was complicated by the emergence of the Fair Labor Association

(FLA), an industry-based monitoring organization, in May of 1999.

"Then it was only a charter, and we didn't really know what was going on," Levinson says. "I remember poring through an 80-page document, spending hours upon hours analyzing it."

When it became apparent that the FLA would offer no significant challenge to industry practices, the students tried to prevent Georgetown from signing on. They were unsuccessful, since they were unable to propose an alternative. So, along with student activists throughout the country, they set about creating one.

"Students, in conjunction with workers, in conjunction with nonprofit groups and labor groups and religious groups, began to develop the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC)," Levinson says. "This was an alternative monitoring plan that would be worker-friendly, and would work with worker groups in the producing regions, to provide the space for workers to organize for themselves. And the WRC would be a means by which they would have access to millions of dollars of licensing leverage here in the U.S."

In December of 1999, the Licensing Implementation Committee formally recommended that Georgetown withdraw from the FLA. The request was turned down.

"At this point we realized that there were several levels of inertia we would have to work through," Levinson says. "Besides being the bureaucracy that the university is, which is hard to move, most universities have corporate ties. At Georgetown, Fr. O'Donovan is on Disney's board of directors — which happens to be one of our licensees. The CEO of Levi Straus is on our board of directors. It was never that Fr. O'Donovan said, 'My good buddy Philip Merino, who's the CEO of Levi Strauss, told me that if we signed off the FLA there would be hell to pay.' But there have been blocks that should not have been there."

While Levinson reports "amazing support" from the Georgetown faculty and Jesuit community, he believes that, in university policy, corporate influence has often outweighed spiritual values.

"Georgetown is traditionally a Catholic university, and there's a strong tradition within Catholicism for a living wage, for just working conditions, for a preferential option for the poor and oppressed," he says. "But Georgetown was profiting off the labor of the poor and oppressed and not doing anything about it."

His contacts with student groups elsewhere have convinced him that "in terms of accomplishing goals, the religious orientation of the university matters less than its size and the amount of revenue it receives from licensees, and the depth of the economic ties it has with corporations."

As the WRC took shape, the Solidarity Committee focused on increasing student support, enlisting a wide array of student organizations to lobby the administration. They also made it known that they were planning a second sit-in. On April 4, the week before the sit-in was to take place, the university agreed to pull out of the FLA and join the WRC.

WE'RE THE ONES WHO PAY TUITION, AND WE'RE THE ONES WHO LIVE ON CAMPUS, SO WE FEEL THAT IT IS OUR UNIVERSITY.

The following week Levinson, along with another student and the dean of students, traveled to New York to attend the WRC founding conference, which included representatives from 45 universities, advisory council members, human rights groups and representatives from several of the producing regions.

"We started to hash out the structure of the organization," Levinson says. "It's not a group of idealistic students talking about things that they don't know. It's being done very intelligently and very thoroughly, with all of the voices that need to be heard at the table."

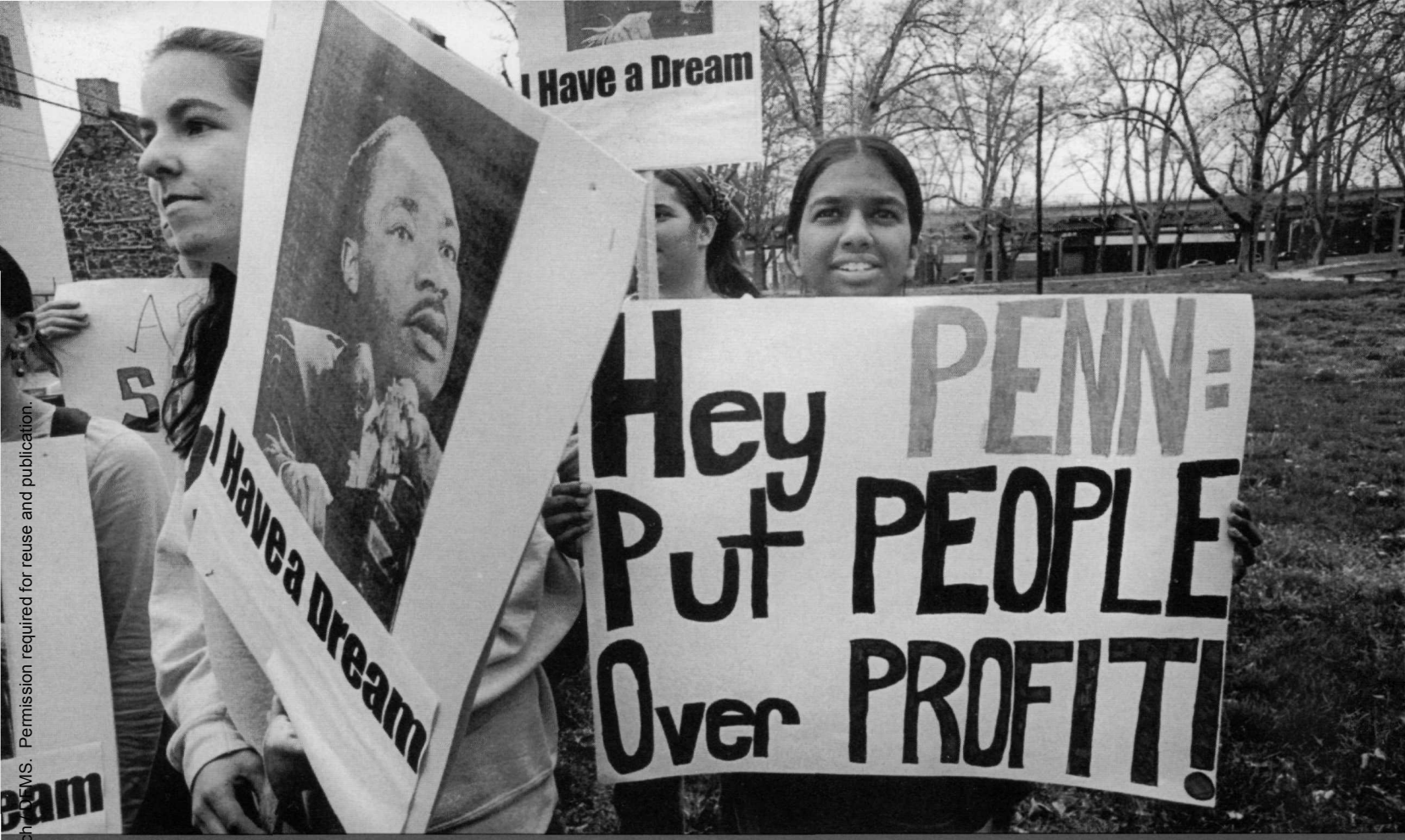
Despite the major commitment he has made to this effort, Levinson finds time to play in Georgetown's jazz band, give trumpet lessons to children at the YMCA, and volunteer weekly at a soup kitchen. He also leads music at a Catholic Mass (his own tradition) and sings with the African-American Protestant Gospel Choir.

This year, he hopes to start an organization focusing on business and social responsibility. "Within the business school you have a vocabulary that you learn, and a mode of thinking that you enter into, and within that vocabulary there is no place for human rights," he says. "We have a course on social responsibility that we are required to take, but most of it deals with ethical accounting issues and such, not really justice issues."

Levinson says his experience with the anti-sweatshop movement has opened his eyes to larger issues of corporate influence at Georgetown.

"Student voice has been amazingly limited," he says. "If you look at any real decision-making process, there are no students represented. And if you look at the 15 most active directors on our board, 10 of those are CEOs of corporations. We're a Coca-Cola campus, we've signed a lease that says only Coca-Cola can be sold. We just lost our post office and postal workers were fired because of a contract with Mailboxes, Etc. Slowly, our university is being compromised. But so far, we've been able to put student pressure, because students are the primary stakeholders within a university. We're the ones who pay tuition, and we're the ones who live on campus, so we feel that it is our university. And if you can organize and mobilize that student voice, then you can accomplish change." ●

Marianne Arbogast is associate editor of The Witness.



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