

DEFINING EVANGELICALISM'S BOUNDARIES IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER  
EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN  
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

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by

James A. Patterson, Ph.D.

Professor and Associate Dean

School of Christian Studies

Union University

Jackson, Tennessee 38305

One of the principal sticking points in defining evangelicalism's boundaries is the transparent diversity that has characterized the movement in the United States. Perhaps no historian has celebrated evangelical pluralism more than the late Nazarene pastor and Johns Hopkins professor, Timothy Smith. In fact, at the Evangelical Theological Society's national meeting in 1984, Smith's plenary session paper proposed the kaleidoscope as one of the most appropriate images for understanding evangelicalism's rich and deep-rooted variety. Two years

later, he made this metaphor the centerpiece of an article on potential evangelical contributions to ecumenism, contending that the history of the evangelical enterprise unmistakably reveals an energetic pattern of shifting alliances among at least a dozen "intertwined" subcultures.<sup>1</sup> Joel Carpenter, one of Smith's former students, more recently evoked his mentor's kaleidoscopic imagery as an essential interpretive component of his own work on twentieth-century conservative Protestantism:

Over time the pieces overlap, change position, and form new patterns, and new colors can emerge to cast their hues across the rest. To insist that one paradigmatic viewpoint can make sense of the whole career of modern evangelicalism is to neglect the repeated twists and turns of that kaleidoscope.<sup>2</sup>

While Smith offered the kaleidoscope to counter a post-fundamentalist historiography that he construed as too monolithically Reformed, apparently his illustration has

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<sup>1</sup>Timothy L. Smith, "Evangelical Pluralism in Young America" (paper presented at the national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Chicago, Illinois, 11 December 1984); and idem, "The Evangelical Kaleidoscope and the Call to Christian Unity," *Christian Scholar's Review* 15, no. 2 (1986): 125-40. Smith's ETS paper was read by historian Richard V. Pierard.

<sup>2</sup>Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford, 1997), 238. Smith's emphasis on evangelical pluralism also is reflected in Donald W. Dayton, and Robert K. Johnston, eds., *The*

become widely accepted, even by those who do not share his Wesleyan-Holiness orientation.

Smith's kaleidoscope, as opposed to a still portrait, helps to underline the dynamic nature and shape of American evangelicalism as a whole. In addition, this model provides an excellent vantage point for illuminating evangelical identity and boundaries in the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, which currently functions as the primary professional association for Christian higher education in the United States. Many of the CCCU's aims, in fact, virtually demand that the organization hold together a kaleidoscopic constituency. It is no accident, for instance, that the CCCU originally called itself a "coalition," suggesting an alliance of disparate components that cooperates for a common cause.<sup>3</sup> From its roots within the Christian College Consortium, the CCCU has developed as an increasingly variegated agency that represents evangelical schools of different sizes, organizational structures, lifestyles, denominational traditions, and doctrinal allegiances. In that multi-

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*Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, and Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1991).

<sup>3</sup>The CCCU was known as the Christian College Coalition from 1976 to 1995, when it was renamed the Coalition for Christian Colleges & Universities. It became the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities in 1999.

faceted context, evangelical boundaries sometimes have appeared to be opaque and even movable.

#### A PARENTING BODY: THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CONSORTIUM

Organized in 1971, the Christian College Consortium initially sought to generate greater collaboration among evangelical colleges, in part to address the financial, enrollment, and identity issues that many of them were facing in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At the instigation of leaders like theologian Carl Henry, David McKenna of Seattle Pacific College, and Hudson Armerding of Wheaton College, the Consortium boldly aimed at cooperative educational programs, the most ambitious of which was the dream of an evangelical Christian university.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Consortium certainly recognized many shared concerns in evangelical higher education, the organizers staked out some distinct boundary markers for their fledgling association. The primary criteria that guided early membership invitations called for each participating institution to demonstrate adequate financial resources, a commitment to the integration of faith and

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<sup>4</sup>James Carl Hendrix, "The Christian College Consortium: 1971-1991," (Ph.D. diss., Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1992), 46-67.

learning, the stature of the school's president in Christian higher education, and a location that would aid the Consortium in attaining a balanced regional mix.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, as supporters of the new evangelical resurgence after World War II, the founders desired to distance the Consortium from fundamentalism. Thus they employed a statement of faith from the National Association of Evangelicals to serve as a doctrinal yardstick for their new educational venture. This statement, which was first adopted in 1943 and still guides the NAE today, affirms many standard evangelical convictions, including the inspiration, infallibility, and authority of the Bible; the Trinity; the deity, virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension, and personal return of Jesus Christ; the regenerative work and present ministry of the Holy Spirit; the resurrection of the saved to eternal life and the damnation of the lost; and the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.<sup>6</sup> Hence the Consortium relied on both theological and other tests in demarcating its boundaries.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 108.

<sup>6</sup>See *ibid.*, 113; and "NAE Statement of Faith," <http://www.nae.net/about-mission/>; Internet; accessed 5 June 2001.

At the same time, the Consortium respected evangelical pluralism in reaching decisions about what colleges should be admitted. Four of the charter members were independent or nondenominational (Gordon, Taylor, Westmont, and Wheaton). The other six original joiners represented five different denominational traditions: Baptist General Conference (Bethel in Minnesota), Mennonite (Eastern Mennonite), Free Methodist (Greenville and Seattle Pacific), Evangelical Friends (Malone), and Brethren in Christ (Messiah). Four additions between 1973 and 1976 either reinforced or further enhanced the Consortium's denominational diversity; new members included George Fox (Evangelical Friends), Houghton (Wesleyan), Asbury (independent), and Trinity (Evangelical Free). The only institution to leave was Eastern Mennonite, which cited a financial concern about membership fees when it withdrew from the Consortium in 1978.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the Consortium's membership stability and conservative growth rate indicate that Smith's kaleidoscope metaphor falters some as an explanatory tool. At best, the Consortium kaleidoscope lacked some of the colors, pieces, and turns that Smith noticed in the broader

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evangelical movement. In fact, excluded colleges apparently sensed that the Consortium had drawn evangelical (and other) boundaries too restrictively, openly complaining that the leaders of Consortium schools had created an elitist president's club. For his part, Hudson Armerding actively lobbied to maintain distinct doctrinal and behavioral standards for membership, even if this meant keeping the Consortium small. In particular, the Wheaton president opposed allowing colleges into the Consortium that admitted non-Christian students as an evangelistic strategy. Like several of his colleagues, Armerding also had come to enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie that were part of Consortium meetings.<sup>8</sup> Thus both theological and sociological dynamics limited the kaleidoscopic character of the Consortium.

The Consortium's fairly explicit fences put the organization in an awkward position for responding to what David McKenna terms the "threat factor" that confronted evangelical higher education in the 1970s. Christian colleges legitimately feared that some landmark court decisions on church-state matters would either jeopardize

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<sup>7</sup>On membership, see Hendrix, "Consortium: 1971-1991," 120 and 126-27.

<sup>8</sup>Hudson T. Armerding, telephone interview by author, 17 February 2000.

federal aid to students in religious institutions or magnify governmental regulation of the Christian higher educational enterprise.<sup>9</sup> To respond more effectively to these challenges and to defend its interests in Washington, the Christian college movement required more clout than could be generated by the then fourteen members of the Christian College Consortium. Further, as Bethel (Minnesota) president George Brushaber observed, the Consortium had not really spelled out its objectives with a public policy role in mind.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in terms of both size and mission, the Consortium was not disposed to assume significant lobbying activities in the nation's capital.

Both the desire to stay small and the threat factor motivated the Consortium to consider launching a larger, subsidiary association to be known as the Christian College Coalition. According to a plan put forth by Consortium president Gordon Werkema, the Coalition's agenda would include a heavy emphasis on preserving "the freedom of

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<sup>9</sup>David L. McKenna, telephone interview by author, 1 March 2000. See also David K. Winter, "Rendering unto Caesar: The Dilemma of College-Government Relations," in *Making Higher Education Christian: The History and Mission of Evangelical Colleges in America*, eds. Joel A. Carpenter and Kenneth W. Shipps (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press/Eerdmans, 1987), 244-56.

<sup>10</sup>George K. Brushaber, interview by author, 1 February 2000, Washington, D.C.

Christian colleges to function educationally and religiously."<sup>11</sup> While this role anticipated significant public advocacy, Werkema's Reformed background also predisposed him to link this task with the Consortium's already well-defined commitment to the integration of faith and learning. As he continued to articulate his vision for the Coalition's "unified voice," he remarked during the organizing phase that the primary motive for institutions joining the new entity was "to participate in a group which will help preserve their educational distinctives and protect the right of [each] college to develop, administer, and implement its own Christian philosophy."<sup>12</sup> Throughout his Consortium/Coalition presidency, Werkema seemed especially sensitive to the danger of governmental coercion aimed at colleges whose Christian values permeated their entire approach to education.

Under Werkema's Washington-based leadership, the Christian College Coalition was founded in September of 1976. In addition to the fourteen members of the

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<sup>11</sup>Gordon R. Werkema, "Report of the President to the Board of Directors of the Christian College Consortium," 10 October 1975, 5. This and all succeeding citations of Consortium reports and minutes come from photocopies of originals in Consortium archives, Dunbarton, N.H.

Consortium, several other evangelical colleges joined, either at the first meeting or over the next several months. Not surprisingly, Coalition membership mirrored the denominational pluralism of the evangelical movement; indeed, it quickly displayed a more kaleidoscopic makeup than its parent organization, the Consortium. Among early joiners that were not in the Consortium and have maintained continuous Coalition/CCCU membership since 1976, the following denominations were represented: American Baptist (Eastern and Judson); Southern Baptist (Campbellville); Presbyterian Church in America (Covenant); Reformed Presbyterian (Geneva); Grace Brethren (Grace); Wesleyan (Marion, since renamed Indiana Wesleyan); Assemblies of God (Evangel); and Christian and Missionary Alliance (Nyack and Simpson). Like the Consortium, the nascent Coalition included several independent colleges (Azusa Pacific, Biola, Bryan, and John Brown).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Werkema, "Semi-Annual Report to the Board of Directors of the Christian College Consortium," 3 March 1977, 3.

<sup>13</sup>None of the available Coalition documents specify exactly what colleges gathered at the initial meeting in 1976. In fact, early records are fuzzy on the membership question. The identity of the earliest members has to be inferred from items in the *Christian College News Service* and from other unpublished materials. A further complication is that some early Coalition members dropped out in the first few years, including Anderson (Church of God, Anderson, Ind.), Barrington (an independent school

As the Coalition expanded both in membership and its scope of programs, it ultimately overshadowed the Consortium and, in fact, formally separated from the founding association in 1982.<sup>14</sup> The Consortium remained small and, aided by some grants from Pew Charitable Trusts, focused its attention on faculty development and new interdisciplinary initiatives in the humanities.<sup>15</sup> In the meantime, steady growth precipitated fresh questions about identity and boundaries in the Coalition.

#### THE CRITICAL MASS

John Dellenback, who presided over the Consortium/Coalition from 1977 to 1981 and then the Coalition by itself from 1981 to 1988, visibly relished the opportunity to render leadership and expertise on governmental and legal matters. A former congressman from Oregon (1967-75) and Peace Corps director (1975-77), he labored vigorously

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that later merged with Gordon), Grand Canyon (Southern Baptist), Grove City (Presbyterian), King (Presbyterian), Mid-America Nazarene (Church of the Nazarene), Mississippi (Southern Baptist), North Park (Evangelical Covenant), and Tennessee Temple (independent). Many of these eventually rejoined. Another previous member, King's College in New York, is now operated by Campus Crusade for Christ and is not affiliated with the CCCU.

<sup>14</sup>James A. Patterson, *Shining Lights: A History of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 50-53.

<sup>15</sup>Hendrix, "Consortium: 1971-1991," 103-6 and 157-65.

to enlarge the Coalition's base. Dellenback firmly believed that the association needed to build a "critical mass" of Christian colleges before it could be effective in Washington. The seriousness with which he pursued this mission is evident in the extensive typewritten lists that he maintained in a file. One list was even color-coded with markers to help distinguish potential member schools from others that were unlikely to join. Dellenback also traveled to the campuses of at least a dozen institutions that he hoped might join the Coalition.<sup>16</sup>

With the Coalition poised to expand, the issue of membership standards inevitably emerged. Gordon Werkema, Dellenback's predecessor, generally referred to "orthodox, Protestant, and conservative criteria" when projecting the Coalition's potential size, evidently expecting a commitment from new members to "the tenets and spirit of evangelical Christianity as represented in the NAE statement of faith."<sup>17</sup> As institutions were admitted to the

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<sup>16</sup>John R. Dellenback, telephone interview by author, 29 January 2000; and "Early Coalition Growth-Prospects," file folder in CCCU archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>17</sup>Werkema, "Report of the President to the Board of Directors of the Christian College Consortium," 10 October 1975, 10. For the expectation that Coalition members would meet many of the same criteria as colleges in the Consortium, including the NAE statement, cf. Werkema, "Proposals for 1975-1980," 5-6 February 1975, and Minutes

Coalition in the late 1970s and 1980s, there is no direct evidence that Dellenback applied the NAE statement as a test for membership, although he expressed concern that some Christian colleges might not be a good fit for the organization. During his presidency, moreover, the Coalition settled on the following criteria for membership: (1) accreditation as a four-year liberal arts college; (2) institutional commitment to Christ; (3) a policy of hiring well-qualified faculty and administrators who were committed Christians; (4) commitment to the integration of faith, learning, and living; and (5) commitment to excellence.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Dellenback consistently described Coalition schools as "Christ-centered" in that they saw "God in Christ as the Center of all truth and knowledge."<sup>19</sup> Thus, the desire to enlarge the Coalition did not override the importance of maintaining genuinely Christian distinctives, even if doctrinal standards became more ambiguous.

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of the Board of Directors of the Christian College Consortium, 26 March 1975.

<sup>18</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, Christian College Coalition, 28 October 1980, 1-2. This and all succeeding citations of Coalition minutes come from photocopies of originals in CCCU archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>19</sup>"'Christ-Centeredness' Distinguishes Christian Colleges from Other Schools," *Christian College News Service*, 21 April 1978, 5.

Under Dellenback's tutelage, the Coalition more than doubled its membership, surging from thirty-one in 1977 to seventy-seven in 1988. As the organization expanded, it continued to be marked by denominational diversity. Members that joined for the first time during the Dellenback years represented several Protestant traditions: Bartlesville Wesleyan and Southern Wesleyan (Wesleyan); Roberts Wesleyan and Spring Arbor (Free Methodist); Eastern Nazarene, Mount Vernon Nazarene, Northwest Nazarene, Olivet Nazarene, Point Loma Nazarene, Southern Nazarene, and Trevecca Nazarene (Church of the Nazarene); Sioux Falls (American Baptist); Dallas Baptist, Campbell, and Palm Beach Atlantic (Southern Baptist); Belhaven, Sterling, and Whitworth (Presbyterian); Calvin and Dordt (Christian Reformed); Northwestern of Iowa (Reformed Church of America); Goshen (Mennonite); Fresno Pacific and Tabor (Mennonite Brethren); Bethel of Kansas (General Conference Mennonite); Warner Pacific and Warner Southern (Church of God, Anderson, Indiana); Milligan (Christian Church/Churches of Christ); Northwest Christian (Disciples of Christ); Vanguard, then Southern California College (Assemblies of God); Lee (Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee); Huntington (United Brethren in Christ); and Bethel of Indiana (Missionary Church). The Coalition also

embraced additional independent schools like Colorado Christian, LeTourneau, the Master's College (then Los Angeles Baptist College), Northwestern of Minnesota, Oral Roberts, and Trinity Christian, some of which had informal denominational ties. Finally, the first Canadian institutions were accepted in the mid-1980s: Redeemer of Ontario (independent); Trinity Western of British Columbia (Evangelical Free); and the King's University College of Alberta (also independent).<sup>20</sup> Since some of these denominations had not previously been part of the Coalition, the growth mode under Dellenback definitely contributed to a richer, more intricate kaleidoscopic pattern that helped to define the organization in the 1980s.

Although expansion clearly was integral to strengthening the Coalition's presence in Washington, certain boundaries remained in effect that left some institutions out in the cold. For instance, applications from Liberty and Oral Roberts universities generated extensive debate in Coalition board meetings, not so much over doctrine but because of their founders' notoriety and fundraising techniques. For all practical purposes, the

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<sup>20</sup>Membership data was gathered from selected issues of the *Christian College News Service* and the *Christian*

Coalition adopted additional membership criteria in 1981 for dealing with Liberty and Oral Roberts, including (1) "the promotion of personal, responsible growth in student development"; (2) the centrality of the liberal arts and the necessity for academic integrity"; and (3) "the importance of compatibility with the missions and general operations of the existing membership." Furthermore, the Coalition board passed a motion proposing the development of a code of conduct in advertising that all members would agree to follow.<sup>21</sup> While Liberty was never admitted to the Coalition/CCCU, Oral Roberts came in for a period, was asked to withdraw, and later rejoined.<sup>22</sup> These exercises in boundary-setting may strike some observers as ironic, directed as they were against the Christian "right"; nonetheless, they suggest that the Coalition carefully sought to shape a public image that would not interfere with its goals for Christian higher education.

As Dellenback worked to achieve a critical mass, his non-sectarian and ecumenical spirit certainly helped his cause. He discovered, however, that colleges representing

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*College News* between 1978 and 1987.

<sup>21</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, Christian College Coalition, 30 November 1981, 3-4.

<sup>22</sup>For follow-up, see Minutes of the Board of Directors, Christian College Coalition, 31 January-1 February 1988, 1-3.

some conservative denominational traditions were not eager to jump on the Coalition bandwagon. In particular, he attempted unsuccessfully to recruit Missouri Synod Lutheran and Churches of Christ (non-instrumental) institutions.<sup>23</sup> Even though the boundaries of the Coalition had been stretched under Dellenback's guidance, its kaleidoscope still did not incorporate the full range of colors and hues that Timothy Smith viewed in his panorama of evangelical America.<sup>24</sup>

#### THE CALL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Following John Dellenback's retirement from the Coalition in 1988, theologian and former Eastern Mennonite president Myron Augsburger succeeded him as the association's executive. Augsburger, who continued to serve as Minister of the Word at Washington Community Fellowship, shaped much of his mission at the Coalition around social justice themes that began to emanate from

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<sup>23</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, Christian College Coalition, 29-30 September 1986, 2-3; and 20-21 April 1987, 1. Some Church of Christ schools eventually came in during the 1990s.

<sup>24</sup>Timothy L. Smith, "Introduction: Christian Colleges and American Culture," in *Making Higher Education Christian*, 2-3.

some evangelical circles in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>25</sup> At the time that his appointment to the Coalition presidency was announced, Augsburg pointed to the need for curricular materials that would grapple with "human rights and justice issues"; he also spoke forcefully of moving beyond American parochialism "to help our nation find a place of compassion in the global community."<sup>26</sup> Toward the end of his presidency he delivered an address at a Coalition annual meeting on "Our Mission in Higher Education," in which he spelled out an understanding of the social and cultural task of Christian schools that had been motivating him for years:

Christian colleges should act in society as agents of social justice. The Christian liberal arts college does not combat racism, sexism, materialism and violence by the singular message of the gospel alone, but by the breadth of cultural values of equity, love and justice as they are enriched by Christian dialogue.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>See Robert Booth Fowler, *A New Engagement: Evangelical Political Thought, 1966-1976* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982). Augsburg's vision for Christian higher education at many points resonated with the agenda proposed by philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff, who headed the editorial team for the Coalition's *Through the Eyes of Faith* supplemental textbook series. See Wolterstorff, "The Mission of the Christian College at the End of the Twentieth Century," *Reformed Journal* 33 (June 1983): 14-18.

<sup>26</sup>"Myron Augsburg Appointed Coalition President," *The News*, March 1988, 1.

The Anabaptist theologian thus positioned himself as the prophet of a servant organization. His commitments to peace, social justice, and a global vision influenced both the continuing Coalition programs as well as new initiatives that he helped to inaugurate between 1988 and 1994. Some presidents of Coalition schools, sensing that Augsburger was attempting to shift the organization's boundaries to the left, questioned his agenda on issues like pacifism and multiculturalism.<sup>28</sup>

Augsburger likewise raised some eyebrows with his critique of evangelicalism, which he presented at the Coalition's annual meeting in 1994. Although the Coalition was a product of the post-fundamentalist, new evangelical resurgence following World War II, Augsburger argued that the movement had become a "sub-culture" or an "ethnicity" that betrayed some serious limitations. He specifically cited individualism, pietism, privatism, nationalism, inerrancy of word (versus inerrancy of meaning), a Greek view of personality, and Aristotelianism as the besetting sins of many American evangelicals.<sup>29</sup> Augsburger clearly

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<sup>27</sup>"Presidents Gather for 1993 Annual Meeting," *The News*, March 1993, 3.

<sup>28</sup>Alvin O. Austin, interview by author, 31 January 2000, Washington, D.C.

identified himself as an evangelical, yet as a socially conscious Mennonite he often chose to swim against prevailing evangelical currents. In short, his understanding of evangelical identity differed from those who might have felt that the kaleidoscope was being twisted too frequently.

To his credit, Augsburg's social justice agenda had little if any effect on decisions about new Coalition members. Indeed, with Dellenback's "critical mass" apparently in place, Augsburg concentrated on tweaking membership criteria and strengthening the relationships of member institutions. Only eleven schools that are still members of the CCCU today joined during the Augsburg era. In keeping with previous trends, new members once again magnified the Coalition's denominational diversity. They represented the following traditions: General Conference Mennonite (Bluffton); Southern Baptist (California Baptist, Oklahoma Baptist, and Union); General Association of Regular Baptist (Cedarville and Grand Rapids Baptist, which has since been renamed Cornerstone University); Independent Baptist (Western Baptist); Associate Reformed Presbyterian (Erskine); Presbyterian (Montreat); Christian Church/

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<sup>29</sup>Myron S. Augsburg, "Beyond Evangelicalism: Seven Observations," *Perspectives*, n.d., 1-4. The Coalition

Churches of Christ (Pacific Christian, which was later renamed Hope International University); and Assemblies of God (Northwest College).<sup>30</sup> In light of Augsburg's concerns about some features of contemporary evangelicalism, it is interesting that most of the new members would have been classified as conservative evangelical or, in a few cases, fundamentalist. In fact, unlike the Consortium, which consciously distanced itself from fundamentalism, the Coalition welcomed fundamentalist institutions that met membership standards (and whose presidents and/or chancellors refrained from undue time in the public spotlight).

Since denominational pluralism was well established in the Coalition before the Augsburg presidency, the Mennonite educator's main significance cannot be found there. Instead, his boundary stretching centered on a controversial social and cultural agenda that ultimately proved to be too divisive to survive intact in the Coalition. Evangelicals certainly enjoyed the right to raise peace and justice issues in a number of venues; some Coalition constituents, however, questioned whether the aggressive promotion of such concerns distracted the

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published *Perspectives* on an occasional basis.

association from its role as a advocate for Christian higher education in the public arena.

#### A COMMON MISSION

For the past seven years, the Coalition/CCCU has blossomed into a full-fledged professional association under the presidential leadership of Robert Andringa, who came to the Coalition in 1994 with experience as a congressional staffer, advisor to a governor, educational agency executive, and head of a consulting firm. He quickly employed his organizational and leadership skills to restructure the governance of the Coalition, in the process shifting the locus of power from the staff to himself and the board. Like John Dellenback, Andringa walked confidently in Washington's governmental corridors; he also enhanced the CCCU's strategic presence in the nation's capital when the association received an invitation in 1998 to join the prestigious Washington Higher Education Secretariat.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to enhancing the CCCU's traditional activities in student programs, professional development,

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<sup>30</sup>Membership data was gathered from selected issues of *The News* between 1988 and 1994.

<sup>31</sup>On Andringa's CCCU role, see Patterson, *Shining Lights*, 79-84.

and publications, the Andringa team also sparked new initiatives in the areas of institutional assessment, retention, spiritual formation, technology, and the overall promotion of Christian higher education. Further, some of Augsburg's social justice agenda, particularly as it related to racial diversity, was retained; it was sounded, however, in a different key and channeled in less controversial ways. During the Andringa years, the CCCU has manifestly enlarged its scope, developing into a complex organization with over ninety distinct programs and projects, all supported by an annual budget that is now close to \$8 million. Former CCCU vice president Karen Longman refers to Andringa as "the consummate networker" and "maximizer," terms that aptly describe how he has managed the association since 1994.<sup>32</sup>

For the most part, Andringa's modus operandi has been to stress a common mission and to shape a consensus around it. His own spiritual nurture in parachurch groups like Campus Crusade for Christ and the National Prayer Breakfast movement has disposed him to play down denominational

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<sup>32</sup>Karen A. Longman, "Celebrating Twenty Years of Service, 1976-1996," unpublished manuscript, 8, CCCU archives, Washington, D.C.; and idem, interview by author, 25 March 2000, Greenville, Ill. On the CCCU programs during the Andringa presidency, see Patterson, *Shining Lights*, 84-95.

differences and encourage unity in the essentials of the faith as the best way to keep the CCCU focused on the cause of Christ-centered higher education.<sup>33</sup> Like Dellenback and Augsburgers before him, he recognizes that if evangelical boundaries are too circumscribed, the CCCU will not be able to function effectively as an interest group representing Christian higher education. Thus, like his predecessors, Andringa has exemplified an evangelical ecumenism in keeping the CCCU centered on the common goals of its members; if anything, he probably has been more vocal than the previous two presidents on the need for unity.

Moreover, Andringa has followed the tracks of Dellenback and Augsburgers in expanding the CCCU's base, which at the same time has heightened denominational diversity. As of 2001, several schools joined for the first time from the following ecclesiastical traditions: Churches of Christ (Abilene Christian, David Lipscomb, and Oklahoma Christian); Christian Church/Churches of Christ (Kentucky Christian); Southern Baptist (Cumberland of Kentucky, East Texas Baptist, Houston Baptist, Howard Payne, Judson of Alabama, North Greenville, Southwest

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<sup>33</sup>Robert C. Andringa, "Relevance, Quality and Unity—Our Three Guiding Themes," *The News*, September 1994, 2. On his parachurch background, see Patterson, *Shining Lights*, 80.

Baptist, and Williams Baptist); Presbyterian (College of the Ozarks); and independent (Crichton and William Tyndale). These additions brought the first Church of Christ institutions into the CCCU and raised the number of Southern Baptist colleges and universities to sixteen, making the SBC the largest denominational grouping in the CCCU.<sup>34</sup>

Denominational pluralism in the CCCU likewise was augmented when Andringa picked up on an earlier Augsburgers proposal to create a special affiliate category for institutions that could not meet membership criteria but were nonetheless committed to distinctly Christian higher education. Since the board ratified this concept in 1995, over fifty affiliates have come under the CCCU umbrella, including historically African American colleges like Bethune-Cookman, theological seminaries like Dallas, Bible colleges like Reformed in Michigan, and international institutions like Universidad Evangélica Boliviana. Furthermore, the CCCU accepted into affiliate status a Roman Catholic school, the Franciscan University of

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<sup>34</sup>Information on membership came from various issues of *The News* from 1994 to 2001. SBC colleges are most directly linked to state conventions, not the national SBC. Some CCCU schools like Grand Canyon and Palm Beach Atlantic now have little or no connection to a state convention affiliated with the SBC.

Steubenville, Ohio (1996), and a Seventh-day Adventist college, Walla Walla (2001).<sup>35</sup> Affiliate members pay reduced dues, attend the national meetings, and enjoy some opportunities to participate in CCCU programs. Overall, their involvement not only has extended the denominational and theological diversity of the association; affiliate growth also has served to enhance the CCCU's global outlook, an Augsburg theme that Andringa has continued to reinforce.

The CCCU now has positioned itself as the primary voice in higher education circles for the over one hundred and fifty Christian institutions that take part as members or affiliates. By utilizing a flexible, irenic approach to evangelical boundaries and applying a truly ecumenical spirit, the CCCU has successfully united a kaleidoscopic group of schools in the pursuit of a common cause. At a time when evangelicalism, particularly in America, seems increasingly fragmented, collaboration in the CCCU has created some enduring bonds that might suggest some direction for the wider evangelical community as what George Brushaber labels the "Graham consensus" weakens.<sup>36</sup> By bringing its disparate constituents together, the CCCU

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<sup>35</sup>See various issues of *The News* between 1995 and 2001.

has assisted them in achieving far more than would have been the case if they labored separately or in narrowly denominational enclaves.

A good illustration of the benefits of collaborative efforts can be found in a report recently prepared by a CCCU task force on human sexuality. Responding in part to religious freedom issues that some CCCU members are facing because of their biblical stands on homosexual practice, the task force developed a sensitively written statement that faithfully reflects an orthodox Christian consensus on a controversial moral question. The document, primarily authored by Wheaton provost Stanton Jones, should prove to be a helpful resource for CCCU institutions in thinking Christianly about moral principles.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, there is evidence that the CCCU has tended to blur evangelical boundaries in the interest of keeping the coalition intact. The main problem surrounds the use of some beloved terms that have infused CCCU publications for many years. For example, both the current

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<sup>36</sup>Brushaber, interview.

<sup>37</sup>"Report of the Task Force on Human Sexuality," 16 August 2001, available at <http://www.cccu.org/resources/humansexuality>; Internet.

CCCU mission statement and membership criteria highlight the "Christ-centered" character of CCCU schools.<sup>38</sup> This nomenclature, which has been used for many years in the CCCU, probably means for most members what it meant to John Dellenback when he was first building the "critical mass." In the absence, however, of even general doctrinal guidelines in official CCCU materials, the notion of being "Christ-centered" can either be taken for granted or adjoined to a suspect Christology. At the practical level, the dangers might appear to be insignificant; nevertheless, the CCCU has not bestowed on "Christ-centered" any substantial content. A similar criticism can be leveled at the criterion that full members require of "each full-time faculty member and administrator a personal faith in Jesus Christ."<sup>39</sup> Apart from some theological parameters, a CCCU leader evaluating "Christ-centered" and "personal faith" is reduced to the perspective of the Supreme Court justice weighing what is pornographic: "I know it when I see it."

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<sup>38</sup>Kevin S. Trowbridge, "Board Meets, Evaluates Priorities for Council," <http://www.cccu.org/news/01.08.01B/>; Internet; accessed 14 August 2001; and "About the CCCU," <http://www.cccu.org/about/>; Internet; accessed 14 August 2001.

<sup>39</sup>"About the CCCU."

Another illustration of ambiguous boundaries can be seen in the terminology of "integration." Since the founding of the Consortium, the integration of faith and learning has been held up as one of the key distinctives of Christian higher education. One of the CCCU's present membership criteria calls for schools to demonstrate "how faith is integrated with the institution's academic and student life programs."<sup>40</sup> The pursuit of such integration is commendable; unhappily, the reality on many Christian campuses does not match the ideal. There seems to be little consensus on what integration is and how it should be accomplished. Andringa wrote to this author in early 2000 that his management team had discussed "the increasing number of presidents [of CCCU institutions] who question whether the 'integration' of faith and learning really reflects what we are about. . . . Some feel there is no inconsistency between the two and so to 'integrate' them is not the best way to reflect what we do."<sup>41</sup> This apparent lack of appreciation for or understanding of integrative approaches may have been behind the recent revision of the CCCU mission statement. It formerly addressed the need "to help our institutions to effectively integrate biblical

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

faith, scholarship and service." The revised statement, adopted by the board in July of 2001, now speaks of helping "our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth."<sup>42</sup> In light of the CCCU's long-term encouragement of intellectual and cultural engagement through faculty workshops, student programs, and scholarly publications, "faithfully relating" will surely strike some observers as an unfortunate retreat.

Like other evangelical agencies and institutions, the CCCU is not a church nor a confessional body. It has done an admirable job seeking to build consensus and to shape an evangelical "center" for Christian higher education. Given its purposes, the organization certainly needs to be careful in drawing boundaries and to exemplify what theologian Stanley Grenz calls "a generous orthodoxy."<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, as the evangelical kaleidoscope continues to turn, revealing new and more complex configurations, the CCCU might well need to consider some more definitive

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<sup>41</sup>Andringa, email to author, 23 February 2000.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. "About the CCCU" and Trowbridge, "Board Meets." Integration language has been retained in the membership criteria.

<sup>43</sup>Stanley Grenz, interview by Robert Hosack in "CT Book Awards," *Baker Academic E-Notes*, 3 May 2001, 3.

doctrinal anchors for its mission statement and membership criteria.