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Michael L. Budde and John Wright (eds.), *Conflicting Allegiances: The Church-Based University in a Liberal Democratic Society* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004), pp. 272. \$19.99.

The central idea of this set of essays (which grew out of a 2002 conference at Point Loma Nazarene University) is that all modern Christian university education has been distorted and truncated by the constraints placed on it by liberal democratic society. According to the editors, the reason that conventional discussions of Christian higher education have been uniformly unproductive is that they have taken as unquestionable givens the categories of classic liberalism, and have then asked how the church can carry out its mission within those categories. This book undertakes the thought experiment of imagining a new kind of Christian university which inverts that order. What if the starting point were 'a robust notion of the church – as a distinctive people called into being by the Holy Spirit to continue the priorities and practices of Jesus Christ in the world', and the project were 'to imagine new practices of scholarship, teaching and formation appropriate to the service of this discipleship-based vision of the church?' Although the subtitle refers to a university that is 'church-based', these essays prefer the stronger term 'ecclesially based', using it 'as an alarm bell meant to keep writer and reader awake and alive to very different possibilities than we now encounter'.

Before they can imagine this not-yet-existing alternative Christian university, the authors of *Conflicting Allegiances* must undertake a preliminary task. They believe that the ethos of the modern liberal democratic state is so pervasive that it has become invisible to all who live within it. It is simply presupposed as our given context, but it needs to be named, described and called into question for the sake of the church's own ethos. Mainly using tools from the toolbox of Alasdair MacIntyre (whose education? which university?), but also from disciplines like women's studies (recovering marginalised stories, questioning the putative neutrality of the dominant story), most of the essays undertake this task in their own ways, especially those in the section (II) entitled 'Liberal Democratic Objections to the Ecclesially Based University and a Christian Response'. John W. Wright's important introduction (section I) begins by unmasking one American university's claim that it teaches no particular morality. That claim, Wright points out, is itself a particular morality, easily recognised as the liberal ethos of individual self-determination and strictly privatised religion. The result is an 'education [that will] serve the sovereignty of the liberal nation-state'. The place left for Christian witness is a retreat to character formation and a weak form of chaplaincy within the existing system.

For its combination of pointed critique and crisp theological principles, the ablest chapter in the book is William T. Cavanaugh's essay on academic freedom, 'Sailing under True Colors'. Cavanaugh traces the discussion of academic freedom in the United States, which has placed Christian higher education in a strangely marginal situation. It is really alarming to see in cold print the grudging terms on which this discourse has allowed churches to be involved in higher education: only on the condition that such institutions do not try to claim seriously that they sponsor true academic freedom. 'Underlying those documents', says Cavanaugh, 'are two fundamental assumptions that make life difficult for an ecclesially based university. The first such assumption is that the subject of academic freedom is the individual professor. The second is that freedom is constituted by the relative absence of limitations.' Cavanaugh's deft handling of this topic is worth the price of admission, and this chapter is the best showpiece for the project the editors proposed.

Turning to the positive task of describing this as-yet imaginary institution, *Conflicting Allegiances* devotes five chapters to 'The Curriculum of an Ecclesially Based University' (section III). These essays, with varying success, attempt to locate the sciences and humanities within a church university. There are provocations: Scott Moore argues for the legitimacy of Great Books education, recommending an alternative to Leo Strauss' paradigm. Robert Brimlow's chapter on professional education, entitled 'Who Invited Mammon', probes the whole phenomenon of professionalisation and concludes that 'the church has no business maintaining business schools or any other professional program'. Compared to these shots across the bow, Stephen Fowl's essay on 'The Role of Scripture in an Ecclesially Based University' seems quite docile, while both chapters on the sciences raise interesting issues but end up somewhat muddled.

After far-ranging chapters on vocation and chaplaincy, the chapter on the place of theology in the university is handled by John Milbank in vintage Milbankian fashion ('High medievalism needs to be supplemented by a Christian socialism, conceived in the widest sense'). Finally, editor Michael L. Budde somehow manages the impossible task of crafting an interesting chapter on the subject of academic assessment for a nonexistent institution.

In the vast literature on Christian higher education, it is hard to say anything new or unique. This book, however, with its Hauerwasian angle and ecumenical scope, repeatedly breaks through to insights, analysis and recommendations which have not been offered elsewhere. Whether *Conflicting Allegiances* is useful to you depends largely on what you identify as the main danger facing Christian higher education. Readers worried about tribalism

will find precious little here to allay their fears. These authors seem to converge on the judgement that the truncating of Christian witness by the pervasive liberal democratic ethos is the main danger, so their goal is to be first of all ecclesially based, and only after that to ask about how to be 'liberally related'.

In 1992, Stanley Hauerwas asked, 'Why have we left it to fundamentalists to challenge the reigning assumption that our world makes sense even though all acknowledgment of the universe's created status is excluded?'. *Conflicting Allegiances* is a sign of an ecclesial movement that intends to stop leaving such tasks to the fundamentalists.

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David F. Ford, Ben Quash and Janet Martin Soskice (eds), *Fields of Faith: Theology and Religious Studies for the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. xvii + 230. £50.00; \$80.00.

Published conference proceedings come in two general varieties. Some offer a documentary record of a particular scholarly gathering. In this case, editors are primarily collectors of manuscripts. Proceedings of the second type are more than the sum of their parts. Their editors select and organise contributions with an eye towards ensuring that the published collection possesses thematic unity; they may even encourage contributors to respond to one another, so that the dialogue which began at the conference can continue in print. Proceedings of this type have as their primary goal not a record of the original gathering but a coherent contribution to an ongoing debate.

*Fields of Faith: Theology and Religious Studies for the Twenty-First Century* is of the second variety. The book emerged from a four-day international consultation on 'The Future of the Study of Theology and Religions' held at the University of Cambridge in September 2000, 'where initial drafts of some of the chapters were intensively discussed by a group of sixty invited academics' (p. xv). By that time the topic had already been a focus for seminars and conferences in the Cambridge Faculty of Divinity for three years. The gradual genesis of the project contributes to a breadth and depth of scholarly engagement that far exceeds what one typically expects from volumes of conference proceedings.

As the conjunction 'theology and religions' suggests, the book's focus is the British academic context, in which theology and religious studies