

THE CRESSSET

A review of literature, the arts, and public affairs

Michaelmas 2008

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Forty Years of Christ College

Forty years ago, Valparaiso University began a promising experiment in undergraduate education. In 1961, Valparaiso had created its first honors program, Directed Studies. Six years later, that program was succeeded by a more ambitious, free-standing honors college, Christ College, which has proved to be a remarkable success. Over the next forty years, Christ College's leaders, faculty, and students worked together to establish an innovative curriculum and create a vibrant community that honors learning, faith, and social engagement.

From the very beginning, Christ College and *The Cresset* have enjoyed a close relationship. The motivating vision for Christ College came from our founder O. P. Kretzmann. *Cresset* editors Jaroslav Pelikan, John Streitmeier, and Richard Lee played key roles in imagining and planning the college, and Lee served as a longtime member of its faculty. Year after year, CC faculty members and alumni contributed countless essays, columns, poems, and reviews to our pages. And CC students often serve as assistant editors and office managers for the journal. It is only fitting for *The Cresset* to take advantage of the occasion by offering the current issue as a commemoration of Christ College's fortieth anniversary.

Three features of this issue figure especially in our commemoration. The first is the fascinating set of interviews conducted by former CC Dean Mark Schwehn collected together under the heading, "Liberal Education in the Twenty-First Century." Schwehn leads an important discussion with seven leading scholars of higher education in the United States. The interviews were conducted while each scholar was visiting campus to participate in a faculty seminar on liberal education.

Second, Christ College's founding dean, Richard Baepler, describes "The Beginnings of Christ College" through the eyes of someone who not only was there to see it happen but who also played an important role in creating the college that exists today. Baepler starts from the program's early days as a Directed Studies program, similar to those at many other schools, and then chronicles its development into the unique, comprehensive honors college that exists today.

Finally, among the columnists and reviewers in the current issue, readers will find an unusually large Christ College contingent. Among this issue's columnists are four CC alumni, including Charles Andrews (Film), Paul Koch (Pulpit and Pew), Andrew Fields (Being Lutheran), and James Brandt (Law). Two current faculty members, Profs. Joe Creech and Scott Huelin, have contributed book reviews. Additionally, a poem by CC graduate Steven Schroeder appears in the issue. These contributions span topics from the arts, to religion, and public affairs, and in this breadth the authors give testament to Christ College's success in its mission to inspire the love of learning and enrich Christian moral and intellectual life.

Many thanks are due to everyone who made this issue possible: including the visiting scholars to the faculty seminar who graciously agreed to be interviewed, to Prof. Schwehn who conducted and edited the interviews, and to all of the other contributors to the issue. All of us who enjoy reading the interviews owe thanks to recent CC graduate Robert Pampel who, as Schwehn's research assistant, put in hours of work transcribing them. Additionally, Christ College has partially underwritten publication of this issue.

Finally, thanks must be said to one last CC graduate, Joshua Messner, who for many years has acted as a sort of unofficial editor-at-large of *The Cresset*. After many years of invaluable (and largely volunteer) service to the journal, he has decided that the time has come to leave the "official" editors to fend for themselves. He will be sorely missed. †

—JPO

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