

Review Essay

Faith-Based Service-Learning: Back to the Future

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Commitment and Connection: Service-Learning and Christian Higher Education

Gail Gunst Heffner and Claudia DeVries Beversluis (Eds.)
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In the fall of 1959, my Old Testament professor, Roger Carstenson, looked at a group of social activists at faith-based Phillips University in Oklahoma and said, "You talk a lot about walking the second mile, but don't really understand much about walking the 'first mile.'" In 2003, he might have told us to "go get a clue" to understand what service and privilege were really all about. He arranged for us to shave and tend to basic needs of the elderly poor who were "warehoused" at the County Home. As if that were not enough of a challenge, he insisted that we gather each Thursday morning for Bible study and reflect on just what it means to be a servant, or to walk the second mile as Jesus insisted.

In that same year, at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia, John Eby and his peers were challenged to spend summers through the Council of Mennonite Colleges supporting "grass roots" organizations in Appalachia and the South.

Also in 1959, James Lawson, a Methodist pastor, doing graduate work in theology at Vanderbilt met throughout the year with a growing group of students from American Baptist College, as well as a few from Fisk and Tennessee A&I. Lawson equipped this new generation of students, most from faith-based colleges and universities, to initiate the sit-in movement informed by the nonviolent teachings of Jesus and Ghandi. Similarly, from different places in the early 1960s, Kathleen Weigert and a young Notre Dame student, Don McNeil, heard a clear call from Vatican II that linked "action in behalf of justice" and a "preferential option for the poor." In each example, students at faith-based colleges and universities were being challenged and supported to become servant-leaders whose actions were informed to some degree by ongoing reflection and learning.

Commitment and Connection: Service-Learning

and Christian Higher Education focuses on service-learning at faith-based Calvin College. However, Calvin's story has many lessons for those who teach at public K-16 institutions as well. All of us engaged in service-learning need to think long and hard about the *values underlying what we do*, especially how they challenge and sustain us for the "long haul," to use Myles Horton's (1998) Highlander metaphor. In addition, with so much talk these days about "faith-based initiatives," this book provides all of us, whether we are in faith-based institutions or not, with some very thoughtful and challenging examples of service delivered from a faith-based orientation. Even if you are affiliated with a public/secular institution, you will find this collection of essays to be a rich resource. They offer very concrete examples across the curriculum, punctuated by deep philosophical reflection and critique. In addition, the book goes the "second mile" and provides self-critical reflection by faculty committed to service-learning, but often uneasy, even troubled, by their own practice and that of others.

Calvin College and the Reformed Tradition: Particularity and Uniqueness

Building upon the definitions and work of such service-learning forerunners as Sigmon, Stanton, Kendall, Giles, etc., our Calvin colleagues offer tangible and innovative evidence "that service-learning...works as the connecting link between the mission of a college to equip students 'for lives of Christian service' and the actual skills, virtues, knowledge, and passion needed for those lives" (p. x). Heffner, Beversluis and their colleagues offer us solid evidence of how service-learning can assist faculty in connecting scholarship and service, "leading the college [and individual faculty] into a

renewed holistic relationship with its various communities" (p. x) while revitalizing teachers and the quality of their teaching.

Underscoring the diversity of Christian (and faith-based) colleges and universities on the one hand, the editors also emphasize that

most Christian [and Jewish] colleges have a legacy of service and see education for service in the world as central to their educational mission...The biblical injunction to 'let justice roll down like water and mercy like an ever rolling stream' (Amos 5:24) has been a rallying cry for service in the Judeo-Christian tradition since its beginning. (pp. xxviii-xxix)

While there is much that is generic and generalizable about the service-learning expressions described and analyzed in the book, the reader will also be treated to an example of just how a theology, or unique institutional mission, can and should inform and put "flesh and blood" on a localized practice of service-learning. For example, Calvin's mission is to "train young people, by means of a liberal arts curriculum and according to the Reformed tradition, for a life of Christian service in any vocation." But, more specifically,

central to this tradition is the conviction that God created this world, its institutions, and its peoples for joy and delight, for shalom. We do God's work when we delight in the world, study its intricacies, and use our creative gifts. *But the world is not what God intended: human rebellion has corrupted both the natural world and the social world...a distinct lack of shalom. Our central task as a college is to equip students to do God's reconciling, restorative work with people, societies, and the natural world* [italics added] (p. xxv).

These beliefs translate into some critical nuances for service-learning, namely what Calvin calls a "tempered transformational vision" deriving from our "human weakness, weakness that can be found in both servers and the served" (p. xxvii). Even more precisely, Reformed theology is integral to Calvin's General Education philosophy, which I found to be both sobering and educative. Furthermore, this worldview underlies each author's ongoing adventure with service-learning and provides those of us "outside" this perspective with a challenging philosophy of life and dose of realism.

Thus Christians learn to shun what is evil and cling to what is good. In so doing, however, they also learn how often good and evil are twisted around each other, so that each seems to grow out of the other, generating the great ironies and mysteries that fill the history of our

world. They learn how often we deceive ourselves about where real good and evil lie, and how such deception dulls and distorts our grasp of reality. (p. xxvii)

In other words, one does not have to be a Reformed Christian or a believer to find deep insight and a call to humility in this reminder about personal and institutional limitation.

Merger of Service, Learning, and Faith: Putting Legs On Calvin's Synthesis

At least seven chapters offer groundbreaking work and make the price of the book worthwhile: Heffner's reflections on social capital, Weaver's example of participatory action research, Ver Beek's reflections on international service-learning, Hare's critique of Dewey and explication of Kant, Hubbard's insightful applications to performance studies, Brouwer's innovative application to a large engineering class, and Curry's development of the Calvin Environmental Assessment Program with its inter- and multi-disciplinary, ongoing commitment to the natural and social systems in which Calvin is embedded.

The concluding chapter documents and offers a "roadmap" for institutionalization that mirrors, and is a case study for, the principles spelled out in National Society for Experiential Education's (NSEE) *Institutionalizing Experiential Education in Your Institution* (1989). The reader will, I predict, be impressed and deeply moved by a Calvin alum's reflections in which she articulates her vocational journey and how service-learning has nourished and deepened her growth (Cebulski).

"Creating Social Capital Through Service-Learning" [Heffner, chapter 1] reminds us that Putnam did not invent the *social capital* concept and credits the "theory" to Jane Jacobs and James Coleman, among others. She chides (and documents) Putnam's minimizing of the importance of faith-based organizations/congregations as foundational in social capital formation *and* challenges us to see colleges and universities as "a potential source for the generation of social capital within the larger society" (p. 9). Heffner summarizes what Ernest Boyer and Ira Harkavy emphasize, namely that the historic missions of places such as Columbia, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Chicago were to "create a better city and society through advancing and transmitting knowledge...[with] campuses...as staging grounds for action" (p. 9).

In addition, Heffner reminds us how higher education institutions can also contribute to the destruction of social capital by exclusivity, superi-

ority, and the lack of reciprocity, mutual trust, and cooperation that builds the capacity of the community in which it is embedded (a major theme of Ver Beek in chapter 5). Her stress on both “weak ties” and “strong ties” introduces readers to Granovetter’s thesis that “weak ties” may be equally or more important to building and sustaining community cohesion and collective action by linking people and groups who are “different” or “other” (see also Daloz & Associates, 1996). Finally, Heffner cites Zencey who also challenges educators to “live where they work and to work where they live...[and be] willing to take root, willing to cultivate a sense of place” (p. 17).

“Listening to Those Who Remember” (Weaver, chapter 2) is a powerful reminder of how research questions and the intellectual journey can be catalyzed by our own personal experiences. In addition, Weaver masterfully connects the weaknesses of seminal research related to Alzheimer’s dementia to his own research agenda and how “clients,” students, and faculty can become real partners in participatory action research (PAR). He illustrates how service-learning through PAR powerfully engages students in some of the most critical aspects of research, e.g., institutional review boards, continuity and turnover in a research team, and the tension between objectivity and empathy.

After reflecting on “two cultures of psychology,” Weaver shares a poignant reflection by Jill, the student who helped initiate the research, and concludes that “Undergraduate education may aspire not only to communicate theoretical knowledge and develop skills of critical inquiry in students, but also to nurture such qualities of wisdom”(p. 30). Weaver’s chapter was a poignant example of Parker Palmer’s (1987) invitation to educators to embrace the ancient and honorable practice of love:

the love of learning itself... and the love of learners...of those who are in our care, and who—for their sake, ours, and the world’s—deserve all the love that the community of teaching and learning has to offer. (p. 25)

“Historically Speaking” (Miller, chapter 3) reminds us of how useful it is for faculty to remember their own learning journey and just how experiential it was, especially as it related to learning about “otherness” and complex issues. Miller specifies the type and degree of orientation, as well as questions to ask the students being tutored. He offers insights into how he grades and assesses the learning deriving from service-learning, e.g., tutoring and English as a Second Language (ESL) within the Hispanic community as part of a course in Latin American history. His assessment of the chal-

lenges and examples of linkages to other colleagues in and out of the history department are insightful and demonstrate a commitment to his own learning and growing, augmented by his own tutoring alongside the students. Miller’s efforts model collaboration and reciprocity, with a local museum providing training and interviewees whose stories, chronicled by the students, have now become a permanent archive of material on the Hispanic community in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

“International Service-Learning: A Call to Caution” (Ver Beek, chapter 5) provides the reader with a “no holds barred” and cogent overview of literature on community development as it relates to service-learning. Combining this with a solid grasp of Sigmon’s approach to service-learning and Reformed theology, Ver Beek offers us a challenging tour de force argument. He posits that rarely, if ever, can and should international service-learning be undertaken, asserting that the

goal of service-learning in a Christian context goes beyond creating better citizens. Rather it is for us to become what God originally intended—to fulfill our calling by being loving neighbors...fulfilling who we were created to become—loving servants who by giving, receive. (p. 58)

This leads him to join with Ira Harkavy’s call for service to focus on “core community problems” (p. 60). However, Ver Beek builds a strong case that much, even most, service-learning focuses on students using and building their own knowledge, skills, and ideas. He further contends that students’ resources often overwhelm local ones, resulting in an unequal distribution of benefits, and setting in motion processes that cannot be sustained economically, humanly, or environmentally with local resources.

Like Sigmon (1994), Ver Beek challenges us to seriously examine whether the service we render truly empowers and develops those we serve, noting that our students and we are usually “intruding into poor people’s lives” (p. 55). Then, he has the audacity (and insight) to insist that our service-learning “projects” should be reviewed for impact with the same rigor as Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) examine human subject studies. Borrowing from the literature on community development, Ver Beek suggests four demanding criteria that seem relevant to all service-learning: empowerment, capacity building, equity, and sustainability. In a profound way, Ver Beek challenges us to do a much better job of preparation, guidance and reflection, arguing that

listening to the poor, observing, respecting, and dialoguing about their lives before trying to do something sends the right message. It affirms their value, their God-given dignity and their knowledge...[and] once students and their professors are properly prepared and are convinced that serving is appropriate, we need to do so cautiously, asking hard questions and holding ourselves to the highest standards possible. (p. 68-69)

“Kantian Moral Education, Ethics and Service-Learning” (Hare, chapter 6) offers us a “thick” analysis that challenges Dewey’s overly optimistic view that education, even well done, is going to lead to a society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious. Hare introduces us to a perspective on humankind shared by Kant, Niebuhr, Augustine, Luther, and others. The theology underlying the Reform tradition reminds us, for example, that “we are never so easily deceived as in the good opinion that we have of ourselves.” In addition, Kant—a precursor to Reinhold Niebuhr’s (2002) *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, argues that “social institutions (without divine assistance) tend not to remove original sin but merely to express it on a larger scale” (p. 82). One need not even accept the Reformed doctrine of original sin, but only to open our eyes to our communities and what is happening around the globe at this very moment to see evidence of this wisdom. Hare uses Kant and Reformed theology to call upon the service-learning community to be far more humble and realistic in our efforts, much like his colleague Ver Beek. At the same time, Hare strongly advocates service-learning as an occasion where the learner, as a free agent, can humbly “take on Christ’s position of servant” (p. 81) and acquire virtue in the crucible of life itself.

Hare’s gifts to us go even deeper as he explores publicly in his reflections about how to teach ethics and engage students in dialogue about abortion and homosexuality. Tutoring teenagers who were pregnant or new mothers, as well as active dialogue with a Christian homosexual support group, afford Calvin students *occasions* to experience “faces and stories” (p. 86) and the dignity of all human beings. Hare, as teacher, designs his courses carefully to increase the likelihood that his students will use those *occasions* to confront their own “unconsidered feelings of superiority” (p. 88). As you can deduce, Hare does not embrace service-learning lightly or naively. Consequently, his concluding paragraph is all the more remarkable.

What I am convinced about, however, is that this service-learning component that I have described will be remembered and will be helpful to my students’ ethical lives, if they so

choose to use it, long after they have left college. (p. 94)

“Performance Studies and the Staging of Community” (Hubbard, chapter 7) provides the reader with a refreshing, detailed and epistemologically-sophisticated description of how Hubbard has integrated service-learning with the current cross-cultural “creation of empathy” trends in his discipline. He grapples with larger questions related to accountability and positive, substantive contributions to individuals, the community and its institutions. Spelling out four stages in some detail, Hubbard offers us an emerging model for giving voice to people who are volunteers as well as persons who are grappling with poverty, addiction, and unemployment. The final performances he describes illustrate the power of performance ethnography as student performers “speak ‘with’ or ‘beside’ others...[sharing] the stage, giving others equal opportunity to be heard” (Pelias in Hubbard, p. 113). I ended this chapter wishing that I could have been at the performances to experience the convergence of theory and practice *and* the bridge-building and respect that was created among such diverse populations.

“Lessons in Service-Learning: Dilemma of Guilt, Lesson in Reciprocity” (Cebulski, chapter 8) provides the kind of sophisticated testimonial that reflects well upon the questions and challenges posed by Hare, Ver Beek, and the Academically-Based Service-Learning (ABSL) staff. Laura also represents quite well many of the students I have met at places like Azusa Pacific University, Abilene Christian University, Pacific Lutheran University, Notre Dame, Tougaloo, Messiah, Augsburg, and other faith-based institutions. Her richly nuanced range of experiences, built upon her sense that “Jesus gave me that summer—he gave me love and showed me courage,” (p. 118) and, “I want to love people with all that is in me” (p.124), are clearly nourished by Calvin’s faith stance and its insistence that she grapple with fundamental issues. Laura issues a call to herself and the rest of us “to stand up for a more thoughtful form of service or speak out against an improper or misplaced idea of service” (p. 123). I doubt the editors would ever claim that Laura represents all Calvin students or students involved in service-learning, but as an “ideal type” she gives us cause for celebration and an impressive “north star” with which to navigate.

“From Tolerance to M.I.N.D. Renewal... Thinking about Diversity” (Loyd-Page, chapter 9) suggests ways to integrate a service-learning option into the sociology curriculum with “a biblically-based theme of *reconciliation* [that enables]...

students to move from a state of tolerance of diversity to one of engagement [*italics added*]; and from a sense of hopelessness in the face of staggering social inequalities to feelings of empowerment" (p. 125).

Lloyd-Page traces how the sociology course on diversity, stratification, and inequality has evolved from a lecture course, which unsuccessfully sought to address white dominant tendencies toward "distancing" and "color-blind syndromes," and largely resulted in "despair" and paralysis (p. 128). Organized around the "simplicity" and the "complexity" of the *reconciliation* theme, the service-learning engagement catalyzes questions about oneself, why we view the world as we do, and how we can "negotiate multicultural relationships" (p. 129). Lloyd-Page provides extensive student writing samples to illustrate the outcomes of Motivation, Internalization, Normalization, and Determination (M.I.N.D.) along with a sense of empowerment. She offers some insightful criteria for empowerment. Based on Calvin's goal of relating "to others as bearers of God's image," and "bridg[ing] social and economic barriers between people" (p. 126), the students' reflections seem to provide evidence of movement from a "tourist mind-set to one of engagement...[involving] overcoming the distancing behaviors" (p. 138). However, I was left wanting/needing to know more about what students did at their four sites and how they were coached and facilitated along the way to achieve these critically important outcomes and objectives.

"Powerful Paradigms and Community Contexts: Teacher Education" (Hasseler, chapter 10) builds upon insights from the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) monograph *Service-Learning in Teacher Education* as Calvin endeavors to educate "sincere, conscientious, and well intentioned...privileged, homogeneous students who want to be effective teachers and committed Christians," but "are usually completely unprepared for and overwhelmed by the complexities of the urban-school environments in which they serve" (p. 141).

Beginning with an admission that their existing practices simply did not come very close to equipping their students for reality, the essay describes how their emerging curriculum makes fuller use of a general education "cross cultural engagement" and a senior-level integrative seminar that focuses on school contexts and justice issues. In collaboration with the Service-Learning Center, they are developing community partnerships with schools and agencies. As a reader, I was left wanting to know just how close they are to these objectives,

but impressed by the vision and collaborative approach they are taking.

"S-L for First Year Engineering Students" (Brouwer, chapter 11) demonstrates how one can learn from colleagues at other institutions, e.g., Purdue's Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS), and the literature of the service-learning field, e.g., Sigmon's Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), and National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) publications. Building upon students' desire to engage in "real world problems" and the value of cooperative team learning, Brouwer has created an effective process that begins with meeting a client whose challenges and needs have been defined by the professor and staff from Goodwill, Hope Network, and others. Brouwer sees the service-learning project as the one class project that embraces "all aspects of the design process," from problem statement, plans, sketches, creating working devices, to team presentations and peer assessment (p. 158). This helps first-year students understand what engineering is all about and it produces tangible "deliverables," e.g., drinking devices for wheel chair users, a silverware roller for restaurant workers with limited hand control, and spring and gasket assemblies for workers with limited finger and hand strength. Meeting with each design team "once or twice a week" and maintaining partnerships alters his faculty role, but Brouwer offers us ample evidence that underscores his conclusion that service-learning has efficacy for introductory engineering as well as capstone endeavors involving the design and building of appropriate water systems and baby incubators in Central America (much like Messiah College's Dokimoi Ergatai engineering projects in West Africa).

"Developing an Ethic of Service to a Place" (Curry, chapter 12) stretches the boundaries of traditional service-learning by laying out an emerging model that engages the sciences and many other disciplines at Calvin around a "Reformed Christian environmental ethic." Calvin's Environmental Assessment Program (CEAP) is rooted in a faith perspective that

calls those from within this tradition to (1) understand how the creation works, (2) make creation's concerns our concerns, (3) develop ways of living that demand more sacrifice for us and less torture for everything else, and (4) work to redeem creation...Because the earth is God's creation...God requires us to not just preserve, but to restore, bringing wholeness wherever possible. (p. 168-169)

This Calvin merger of "science, place, and faith"

challenges objectivist science, stressing relationships much in the way that Parker Palmer (1987) urges. Revealing a breadth of influences, Curry makes extensive use of Nel Noddings' (1984) *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* and the development of a "competence of caring."

At first blush, the "service" looks a bit self-serving and focused on preserving Calvin's campus as CEAP brings together the Natural Sciences Division and the Academically Based Service-Learning Office. However, CEAP generates data for an ongoing and comprehensive assessment of Calvin's campus and its surrounding neighborhoods, and engages students at all levels and across many disciplines in quality research and the development of "a habit of stewardship based on attentiveness to place" (p. 172). The reader will find the details of the chapter valuable for work with science faculty and a catalyst for interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary endeavors that utilize an enlarged service-learning lens. This reviewer finds it instructive to reflect upon CEAP's crossing

the range of human experience from religion to nature writing to water analysis; exploring the depth and breadth of what it means to glorify God through service to a place—a place that itself, in turn, glorifies God in its wholeness. (p. 179)

"The Assignment of Their Lives" (Walters, chapter 13) offers the reader carefully designed assignments and an example of "experimenting" with a proactive service-learning staff. One brilliant innovation was to have her students do their "unpopular" research paper on an historical period when their elderly partner was the student's age. It not only provided more topics to talk about when they met, but resulted in significantly better research papers for the writing class. Walters' models, as do so many of her colleagues, Schon's (1983) "reflective practitioner," both as a teacher and scholar. She concludes with the observation that their community partners and her students taught me something I

needed to be reminded of: The teacher is not necessarily the most important person in the class. I was the organizer and the director but not the chief player. That role belonged to each of the senior partners. Sometimes the best teaching gets done when the teacher gets out of the way. (p. 188)

"Marketing Service" (Vander Veen, chapter 14) endeavors to link Calvin's theology, its Small Business Institute, and "Mustard Seed Marketing" which "holds that Christians are called to meet the

basic physical and spiritual needs of people—particularly the vulnerable—and advocates working in and through small non- and for-profits" (p. 193).

Vander Veen lays out a way for business and marketing classes to become engaged in service-learning, but undercuts his thesis with the key example doing research for a contractor's association and introducing the idea of charging clients \$200 plus expenses.

"History of the Development of Academically Based Service-Learning at Calvin" (Berg, chapter 15) represents an excellent case study for any campus to use in its strategic planning. Calvin models virtually all the fundamental dimensions of NSEE's *Institutionalizing Experiential Education in Your Institution* (Kendall & Associates, 1989): built on mission, involving faculty, integrated into the curriculum, budget, etc. Building upon its history, strengths, and existing partnerships, Berg stresses that Calvin's success is because "ABSL comes from within the faculty" (p. 211). The only shortcoming of this sterling case study is the author's minimizing of her own role as a "midwife" and "godmother" in the formative years.

A Case Study for Our Times

Overall, this book fills a very important gap in the service-learning literature. Each of the AAHE monographs in the *Service-Learning in the Disciplines* Series focuses on a single discipline with authors from across a broad array of institutions. Edward Zlotkowski's (2001) *Successful Service-Learning Programs: New Models of Excellence in Higher Education* is an excellent companion. Three institutions (Augsburg, Providence, and Santa Clara) have grown their service-learning programs directly out of their faith-based missions and histories, much like Calvin. But Calvin's volume demonstrates in detail how one institution has developed service-learning across the curriculum, with disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary rigor, all grounded in the faith and beliefs of the Reformed tradition.

Further, *Commitment and Connection* is a sophisticated, thought-provoking collection that offers differing, but complementary, lenses to explain and illustrate why service-learning plays a key role across Calvin College's entire curriculum. The book tells a convincing story, not just about Christian higher education, but of a faculty and staff that put flesh and blood on Palmer's (1987) "courage to teach." The book also demonstrates a collegial willingness to share their successes and quandaries before us all, inviting us to celebrate, as well as grow with them. Any college and university would be well served to create a "learning com-

munity” using this book to frame and critique their own endeavors.

In addition, Calvin’s story demonstrates two fundamental principles and realities: the importance of both sufficient staff “infrastructure” and disciplinary and pedagogical sophistication. Calvin built its program organically out of a student volunteer/student life base, cultivating faculty and administration support utilizing the model developed by Jane Kendall, Sharon Rubin, and the NSEE-FIPSE Consulting Corps. Every author gives testimony to the extensive support that they receive from the Service-Learning Center. On a parallel track, Calvin testifies to the value of strong connections to national and regional organizations and resources that have complemented and undergirded their own “home grown” version of academically-based service-learning. Early on, Berg actively participated in NSEE meetings and brought their consultants to campus, preparing Calvin for participation in Campus Compact’s “legitimizing” and informative 1992 summer institute. Calvin has also made extensive use of Compact and CIC resources along with the AAHE disciplinary series. Berg and her colleagues eagerly sought to learn all they could from elsewhere, while carefully cultivating and building upon local knowledge and mission. Calvin is a remarkable “incarnation” of the synergy between global and local infrastructure and wisdom. This book is evidence that they have drunk deeply at local wells and at the many tributaries flowing throughout the service-learning community.

Are there flaws? Of course there are. Nearly every chapter by faculty members could/should have been more current in its bibliography related to service-learning, especially when the author is being critical of the field or of others. For example, Hare’s critique of Giles and Eyer’s research focuses on a 1994 paper and seems oblivious to their national study, *Where’s the Learning in Service-Learning?* (1999) or their complementary work on reflection. But, this is an ever-changing field, and every chapter still reveals to the reader provocative materials and ideas that will add insights and literature to your journey in understanding and practicing service-learning as an experiential and transformative pedagogy.

I especially wish there had been some cross-pollination among and between the authors, indicating in specific terms that they had read each other’s essays or at least talked about them together. I would have enjoyed reading how Ver Beek and Hare compare and contrast their own critiques of service-learning. For example, what does Ver Beek say to his domestically-focused colleagues and the

service-learning staff concerning advance preparation or “human subject” assessment? I am very curious about how Hare might critique Curry’s utilization of Noddings’ feminist approach to ethics and moral education or Loyd-Page’s M.I.N.D. renewal, and vice versa.

From another angle, the book leaves me wanting to participate with Calvin faculty in another dialogue, a follow-up to the time that Cecil Bradfield and I spent there in 1992. This time I want to reverse the roles and hear these 12 faculty members and their colleagues discuss what has happened since they wrote their chapters and how they are evolving and changing. It would be educative and delightful to hear them reflect upon how they see the evolution of “social capital’s strong and weak ties” among themselves and their community partners. And, of course, I want to listen in on the ongoing dialogue concerning their range of understanding, different interpretations, and the nuances among the authors with regard to Reformed theology, Calvin’s mission, and other faith stances.

Postscript and Ponderings: Faith-Based Biases and Basics

In 1985, I attended my first NSEE conference and inherited a set of key mentors, only to discover that many of them, like myself, had not only gone to faith-based colleges and universities, but also had seminary educations, e.g., Bob Sigmon, John Duley, Tom Little, Steve Schultz, Dwight Giles, and others. Similarly, James Lawson, a Methodist minister, went to Vanderbilt to study theology and, supported by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, trained students in nonviolence for the evolving Civil Rights Movement. He was a product of Methodism via his parents and Baldwin-Wallace College, and was encouraged to “come join the movement” by another minister, Martin Luther King, Jr., at a meeting arranged by Harvey Cox, the campus pastor at Oberlin. Three of the core leaders of the sit-in movement, trained by Lawson, were from modest American Baptist College (John Lewis, Bernard Lafayette, and James Bevel), and all went on to play key roles in founding the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and change the face of our nation. Each operated out of a very explicit call to a “ministry” of service and social change/justice (Halberstam, 1998).

This past year, I have visited four faith-based colleges as a Campus Compact/CIC consultant and have been challenged to rethink many of my own stereotypes and biases regarding faith-based service. And all of this catalyzes my social science curiosity regarding the “overlooked” or minimized

variable of religious faith in the research and analysis concerning the sources and consequences of civic engagement. I find it very intriguing that our colleagues at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, who have been so instrumental in the service-learning movement itself, could do a series of books and research such as *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility* (2003) and barely scratch the surface regarding religious faith as a source of resurgence in civic engagement and service-learning. Aside from visiting Messiah College, Alverno, the College of St. Catherine, and having a few references in the index to "Religion" and "Roman Catholic," my reading of their books suggests that they, like most of us, have given little or no systematic attention to the role that religion and religious belief has played and is playing in service-learning's resurgence and prominence in higher education.

Ehrlich and his colleagues gave more attention to religion in *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (2000), with two essays on "A Religious-Based College and University Perspective" and "A Historically Black College Perspective." The authors, Byron and Scott, contend that there is a difference between service-learning in state supported/public institutions and faith-related institutions, as well as those with historically black origins, e.g., Bennett in Greensboro, NC (see Jones, 1998). Similarly, Strain (2002) describes what seems to be happening at his and other faith-based institutions, namely "rediscovery...[and] new articulation of educationally related programs and services 'that will have significant social impact and will give concrete expression to the University's Vincentian Mission'" (p. 4; 30f).

The good news is that this issue is being addressed by UCLA's Spirituality in Higher Education project, led by the Astins and Jennifer Lindholm. The research will begin in the fall of 2004 as a national study of college student's spiritual growth during the college years. On the UCLA Web site, Carnegie's Shulman candidly confesses and is quoted, "How often do we encounter a research program that addresses a set of questions so central, so pivotal, so critical, and in retrospect, so obvious, that we wonder aloud why no one thought to ask these questions before?" (www.spirituality.ucla.edu). This welcome and emerging research endeavor can be followed on at least two other Web sites (www.collegevalues.org and www.fetzer.org/resources) and at a National Conference on "Soul Searching: Trends and Patterns in College Student Spirituality" at Florida

State, February 5-7, 2004. As Shulman notes, we have much to learn here.

Religious Commitment and Social Consequences

So, just how important is religious belief and spirituality to civic engagement and citizenship? Stephen Carter (1998) posits that Civility has two parts: generosity, even when it is costly, and trust, even when there is risk (p. 60). He recounts a very personal story of Sara Kestenbaum who welcomed his African-American family into her previously all-white neighborhood in 1966 in Washington, D.C. as example and context:

But civility—civility as a moral proposition—begins with the assumption that humans matter, that we owe each other respect, and that treating each other well is a moral duty....[But] *Nothing in contemporary secular conversation calls us to give up anything truly valuable for anybody else* [italics added]. No politician would dare run for office asking us to sacrifice for others. *Only religion offers a sacred language of sacrifice-selflessness-awe that enables believers to treat their fellow citizens as...fellow passengers. But even if religion is the engine of civility, it has too few serious practitioners, which is why those who are truly moved by it to love their fellow human beings are so special* [italics added]. I learned that truth in 1966, and, to this day, I can close my eyes and feel on my tongue the smooth, slick sweetness of the cream cheese and jelly sandwiches that I gobbled on that summer afternoon when I discovered how a single act of genuine and unassuming civility can change a life forever. (pp. 60-75)

On a parallel track, Rodney Stark (2001), who has been researching and writing about religion and society for four decades has completed a two volume series on the "historical consequences of monotheism." In his introduction to *One True God*, Stark notes that:

It is widely assumed in scholarly circles that historical inquiries into such matters as the social consequences of monotheism are long outmoded and quite unsuitable...Invincible biases are regrettable...While it obviously isn't necessary that social scientists who want to understand religion be religious, it is necessary that they be able to sufficiently suspend their disbelief so as to gain some sense of the phenomenology of faith and worship. Even Emile Durkheim seems eventually to have accepted this...This was not Durkheim's view when he was a young man, nor was it mine. But just as Durkheim came to a more mature

outlook, so have I. It is in this spirit that I invite you to examine some of the direct consequences of monotheism on our common history. (pp. 4-6)

Please don't misunderstand me. Like Stark, I find much historical evidence that "triumphs as well as disasters" have been committed on behalf of "one true God," e.g., anti-Semitism, Crusades, jihads, lynchings by the Ku Klux Klan. But, as Shulman, Astin, Stark, Carter, Ehrlich, and our Calvin colleagues are positing, it is critically important that we in the service-learning community look much more deeply at the "causes and consequences" of faith, both at the individual and the collective/institutional levels of analysis.

In preparing to write this review essay, I had lengthy conversations with colleagues associated with the Council of Independent Colleges, Jesuit and other Roman Catholic institutions, and historic black colleges and universities to get a better grasp of what they see as major trends and likely futures. It seems fairly clear that there is a "chicken and egg" phenomenon at play. Many of us, like Rhonda Berg and her colleagues at Calvin, were imbued with service and justice themes in childhood, which included involvement in churches and attendance at faith-based colleges.

Similar to many Roman Catholic communities that were reawakened by Vatican II and the call to justice and a "lived faith," there seems to be a qualitatively different base for service-learning and civic engagement at many faith-based institutions. Kathleen Weigert (Georgetown), Ken Bussema (Dordt), Sima Thorpe (Gonzaga), Rosalyn Jones (Johnson C. Smith), Gloria Scott (Bennett), Carol Jeandron (Loyola), Charles Strain (DePaul), and Michelle Gilliard (CIC) all seem to echo Salve Regina's Steve Trainor who suggests that service-learning has brought about a renewed interest in the social teachings that are grounded in, and evolving from, their respective faith traditions. Every chapter in *Commitment and Connection* reveals a faculty and staff member revisiting and deepening her/his understanding of the Reformed tradition and theology. And that same tendency seems to be occurring in many faith-based institutions across the nation.

The Sigmons, Duleys, McNeils, Scotts, and Rubins played key roles in "creating" the service-learning movement, I contend, as a direct outgrowth of their religious beliefs and motivations. At the same time, the emerging service-learning movement has afforded an opportunity for many of us as professionals *and* for our faith-based institutions to reexamine, reaffirm, and deepen our historic missions and personal sense of vocation. The

famous speech by Rev. Hans-Peter Kolvenbach, superior general of the Jesuit Order in 2000, "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in Jesuit Higher Education," and *Commitment and Connection* are transparent and profound illustrations of this dialectic.

So, here is my hypothesis (which I hope is only partly actualized in the years to come): As public funding and attention to service-learning, community service, "civic engagement," and citizenship compete for increasingly scarce resources and the priorities of hard-pressed administrations, I predict that faith-based colleges and universities will be less likely to diminish their commitment to service-learning because it is now seen as intrinsic to their missions/theology and linked to their commitment to effective teaching and learning which is now understood to require experiential, community-based pedagogies. In part, I am suggesting that continuing support will be due in large measure to deeper institutionalization deriving from their faith-based mission.

Will public and secular institutions have a sufficiently deep and nourishing ideological/philosophical well to drink from in the years ahead as funds and the luster of "civic engagement" grow old? Do they have a functional equivalent or counterpart to the missions of faith-based institutions? I certainly hope so, and Campus Compact and this Journal are reasons for some measured optimism. Similarly, will faith-based institutions continue to expand their service-learning commitments beyond charity and "missionary work" to include individual and institutional civic engagement and citizenship that espouses justice, equity, and environmental sustainability? Time and effort will tell.

As Horton and Friere (1991) reminded us in their last book, "we make the road by walking." And it is certainly my hope that both secular and faith-based institutions will find sufficient bedrock and missional footings for the earthquakes, tremors, and scarcities that we are already beginning to feel. *Commitment and Connection* provides us with a lens and case study of the road that Calvin is creating, with evidence for how their faith-based mission provides deep moorings, mission integrity, and long-term commitment.

Carol Leland used to ask us at NSEE, "Well, what did you learn from that?" One answer to my mentor would be that writing this essay was a start, but that the journey has also reconnected me to *The First American* (Brands, 2000) and the way that Benjamin Franklin and the founders perceived religion and citizenship. It has also led me to *The Good Citizen* (Batstone & Mendieta, 1998). Its first two essays by Cornel West and Robert Bellah, with

laser-like clarity and astuteness, address many of the same concerns that are voiced in Calvin's Reformed theology and the paradoxical role and importance of religion to culture and society.

These days we cannot even talk about love the way James Baldwin and Martin Luther King Jr. did...James Baldwin, however, said love is the most dangerous discourse in the world. It is daring and difficult because it makes you vulnerable, but if you experience it, it is the peak of human existence...

To be a part of the democratic tradition is to be a prisoner of hope. And you cannot be a prisoner of hope without engaging in a form of struggle in the present moment that keeps the best of the past alive. To engage in that struggle means that one is always willing to acknowledge that there is no triumph around the corner, but that you persist because you believe it is right and just and moral. As T. S. Eliot said, "Ours is in the trying. The rest is not our business."

We are not going to save each other, ourselves, America, or the world. But we certainly can leave it a little bit better. As my grandmother used to say, "If the Kingdom of God is within you, then everywhere you go, you ought to leave a little bit of Heaven behind." (West, 1999, p. 12)

Thank goodness for Calvin College, for their "commitment and connection," and for colleagues and ideas that challenge and support us as we endeavor to build enterprises in which our individual and collective walking "leave a little bit of Heaven behind."

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