

## CREDOS OF THE ACADEMY

### College Presidents' Inaugural Addresses as an indicator of Religious Positions in and of Higher Learning

JAMES W. WHITE

One of the most satirical treatments of the university is found in John Barth's novel *Giles Goat-Boy, or the Revised New Syllabus*. In his midnight wanderings the goat-boy, Billy Bockfuss, overhears two students doing a "climatic" poetry recitation about "The University":

The fellow turned her face deliberately to his and intoned: "*These lecture-hallss do like a garment wear the beauty of the nighttime . . .*" "Was it for pain or joy she closed her eyes, bit her lip?" "*Labs, towers, dorms, and classrooms lie all bright and glittering in the smokeless air . . .*" She clutched at the wool of his sleeves, fighting as must all nannies against what passionately now she craved; and at length in a hoarse surrender, whispered: "*Ne'er saw I, never felt, surge so deep! The Tower Clock moves on its sweet will . . .*"

But surely with no pause in the rhythm of his woo, her buck pressed home: "*Dear Founder! See the Library-glowing keep of all thy mighty mind-resplendent still!*"

At that penultimate hiss the female made a little cry and wrenched away. For some seconds she lay as if stricken, while he mate, hard respiring, drained off his drink and flung away the can. I too felt emptied.<sup>1</sup>

In satirical humor such as the above, in advocative seriousness,<sup>2</sup> or in scathing critique,<sup>3</sup> writers have examined the notion of higher education as a source of ultimate meaning. They have pointed to the presence of an "academic religion"<sup>4</sup> or suggested that the university is a surrogate church for today's youth.<sup>5</sup> Most of the analysis on this

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<sup>1</sup>John Barth, *Giles Goat-Boy, or The Revised New Syllabus* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1966), pp. 31-32.

<sup>2</sup>Hazel E. Barnes, *The University as the New Church* (London: C.A. Watts & Co., 1970), p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup>J. Jefferson Gros, "Is There an 'Academic Religion' in America?" (paper read at the American Academy of Religion meeting, Chicago, IL., November, 1973).

<sup>5</sup>Warren Bryan Martin, *Conformity: Standards and Change in Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1969), p. 10.

topic of academia-as-religion has been literary, impressionistic, or theoretical, based upon the writer's insights, biases, and/or extrapolations. While not denigrating these approaches to the topic, let me suggest that a more empirical study also is needed. This paper reports such an investigation using college and university presidents' inaugural addresses as the primary source of information. It attempts to delineate basic beliefs, commitments, and goals of higher education as religious positions.

The original and primary study was a dissertation research project in the field of Higher Education, aimed at ascertaining difference or similarity in presidential views on institutional goals.<sup>6</sup> As a secondary or fall-out consequence of the study of institutional goals, basic religious and/or philosophical conceptions of presidents relative to the institutions they served also became evident.

Robert Bellah's now-classic 1967 article on "The Civil Religion in America" stands as the initiating idea for the higher education goals study.<sup>7</sup> Following Bellah's model, it seemed that if the inaugural addresses of Presidents of the United States were a key to understanding deep-seated values of the American society, so might the inaugural addresses of presidents of colleges and universities be a key to an understanding of the basic commitments and beliefs of persons (at least, presidents) in academia.

The methodological procedures involved in the inaugural address study included, first, the drawing of a stratified random sample of college and university presidents. The stratification included "type of institution" (research universities, doctoral-granting universities, comprehensive schools I and II, and liberal arts colleges I and II as defined and listed by the Carnegie Commission on higher Education).<sup>8</sup> The stratification also included "type of institutional control" (public, independent, and church-related schools). Once the speeches were collected, they were further classified according to "date of delivery" (pre-1966, 1966 to 1970, and post-1970), as well as by "academic background of presidents" (humanities, physical sciences, social sciences, and education).

Seventy-two speeches, representing a wide cross-section of higher education presidential population, were selected for use in study.

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<sup>6</sup>James W. White, "Homogeneity and Diversity in Institutional Goals: A Content Analysis of Contemporary College and University Presidents' Inaugural Addresses" (unpublished doctor's dissertation, University of Denver, 1974).

<sup>7</sup>Robert N. Bellah, "The Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* XCVI, 1 (Winter, 1967), 1-21. Cf. also, Robert N. Bellah, "American Civil Religion in the 1970's," *Angelic Theological Review*, 1 (July, 1973), 8-20.

<sup>8</sup>Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *A Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973).

Once collected, the speeches were content analysed. The content analysis included .70 reliability checks to determine the ability of the researcher to (1) identify goal themes according to specified coding rules and (2) place those themes consistently in an "Institutional Goals Classification." Once reliability (inter-subject agreement) was established, the researcher proceeded to the task of reading the speeches and identifying goal themes. Eventually 2608 goal themes were identified and classified by 25 institutional goal categories. Themes-per-goal were counted for both the total group of 72 speeches and for each sub-group in the above-mentioned classification variables (type of institution, date of delivery, etc.) From 10 to 32 speeches per classification group were used in analysis. In this report, the most important findings concern what was learned about goals for the "total group of speeches," but occasional references are made to findings for the classification groups (e.g., presidents of research universities, presidents speaking prior to 1966, presidents having a social science background, etc.)

Listed in Table 1 are the 25 institutional goals. They are arranged by rank order of goal theme emphasis given by the total group of speakers. In addition to the rank order presentation, the goals are also shown as being either "outcome" or "process" goals by type. The table provides the basis for most of the discussion of findings which follow.

In this paper, I will discuss the goal findings in terms of four major categories: (I) Traditional Religion, (II) Civil Religion, (III) Academic Religion, and (IV) Inferred Religion. Quotations from the speeches of the presidents are used to illustrate concepts of each category.

## I. TRADITIONAL RELIGION

The first thing to be said about the religious/educational beliefs of some college and university presidents for the institutions they serve is that those beliefs are quite traditional. Several presidents may be classified as orthodox--even fundamentalist--Christian. One president said, for example, "... the *main purpose* of life is to glorify God . . . Since this is the *chief purpose* of life, it is also the *chief purpose of education*" (Clark, Geneva C.).<sup>9</sup> Other presidents of similar mind said:

The Christian college is intended to help mothers and fathers bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of God."

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<sup>9</sup>In this and other quotations only the last name of the president and an abbreviated title for his or her institution are given. The italicized words in this quote were stressed by the speaker.

TABLE 1

Rank Order\* of 25 Institutional Goals for the Total Group of College and University Presidents (N Speeches =72), Showing Goals by Outcome or Process Classification.

Rank*	Outcome Goals	Process Goals
1		Program/Teaching
2		Funds/Personal
3		Community
4	Academic Development	
5		Innovation
6	Individual Personal Development	
7		Character/Goals
8	Public Service	
9	Humanism/Altruism	
10	Religiousness	
11		Accountability/Efficiency
12	Research	
13	Intellectual Orientation	
14	Meeting Local Needs	
15		Position/Prestige
16		Democratic Governance
17	Social Egalitarianism	
18	Citizenship	
19		Intellectual Environment
20		Freedom
21	Vocational Preparation	
22	Advanced Training	
23	Social Criticism/Activism	
24		Off- Campus Learning
25	Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	

\*Rank order was determined by "mean percentage scores." Mean percentage scores were calculated by converting theme frequencies in individual speeches for each goal into percentages, adding percentages by groups, and dividing the cumulative of percentages by the total number of speeches in the group.

This includes opposition to digression, to modernism, to premillennialism, to any form of personal ungodliness or impiety, or to any other unscriptural doctrine or practice that may arise in the years to come (Pullias, Lipscomb C.).

The mind of Christ can help us realize the meaning and purpose of our learning (Huegli, Valparaíso).

A few other quotations along these lines may be found in some of the speeches, especially by presidents of sectarian institutions. What these presidents suggest is that the higher learning exists to forward prescribed denominational and/or doctrinal purposes.

Most of the presidents of the church-related colleges (mainline Protestant and Catholic) do not present their views on the religious purposes of the school in quite the dogmatic manner as illustrated above. They speak more often of general Judaeo-Christian religious purposes which the school may serve for its students and/or its supporting denomination. Here are some examples:

Our reason for being is to be a university. But our reason for *being a university* is to encourage and prepare young men and women to rise to their full spiritual potential as sons and daughters of God (Oaks, BYU).

And, over all, there is the recognition that the college motto is true and vital—Dulce—God is leader (Wolverton, College Mt. St. Joseph).

Then let us “press on toward the high calling of god in Christ Jesus” (Skiles, Hardin-Simmons).

One president spoke in favor of an “environment saturated with Christian-Humanism.” As a consequence of these general religious statements in the speeches, the goal of Religiousness is tenth in rank order for the total group of presidents (cf. Table 1). Considering *only* the presidents of church-related colleges, Religiousness as an institutional goal is first in rank order.<sup>10</sup> The study of inaugural addresses also found that Religiousness is often spoken of by presidents serving liberal arts colleges II, by presidents who spoke prior to 1966,<sup>11</sup> and by presidents whose academic background is in the social sciences.

For part of the higher education presidential total group, then, the religious/educational point of view appears to be consistent with traditional, conservative, or older perspectives about religion and education. For the most cogent explications of this position, the writ-

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<sup>10</sup>Other studies of presidents have different findings about the high rank order of the Religiousness goal. Cf. the studies by Zimmerman, Magill and Friedman, and Peterson (listed in the Bibliography) for a somewhat different rank ordering of goals for chief administrators of church-related colleges. In terms of this study's findings for presidents of church-related colleges there were more themes on Religiousness than for any other single goal of the 25. The 21 speeches by presidents of church-related schools had 91 total themes on this goal.

<sup>11</sup>Another earlier study of inaugural speeches found evidence of a decline in religious emphasis over the last 100 years, indicative, the researcher said, of increasing secularization. Cf. Daniel Lee Towler, “The Secularization of Higher Education in the United States as Reflected in the Inaugural Addresses of Selected College and University Presidents” (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 1973).

ings of John Henry Cardinal Newman or Alexander Miller are classic.<sup>12</sup> The presidents of this religious persuasion may share with other presidents viewpoints to be discussed in subsequent pages, but their predominant perspective is one of adherence to traditional Christian concepts.

## II. CIVIL RELIGION

There is another portion of college and university presidents who are not as explicit about their religious beliefs per se but who acknowledge a Supreme Being in whose providential care they and their institutions reside. These are persons who fit the description of beliefs which Robert Bellah calls America's "civil religion." No mention, for example, is made of Moses or Jesus, but a "God" is spoken of.

Of the 72 speeches examined in this study, 21 contained "God-talk" in some measure. Some of these remarks, of course, are attributable to presidents identified in the previous section, but others are not. With this group of presidents, reference to God usually came in the opening or closing paragraphs of the speeches.<sup>13</sup> Here are some examples from the addresses:

... with God's help, and with the loyalty of those who stand here with me today, I pledge my best (McDowell, T. Texas St.).

I could never close today without a prayer to God for the blessing this college has received (Mansour, Mercy C.).

My ultimate prayer on this occasion is that God may bless and keep all of you and this university too (Hesburgh, Notre Dame).

... each of us must assume a three-fold responsibility--to ourselves, to others, and to God (Kamm, Oklahoma St.).

... total reliance on God's grace and help ... (Hahn, Bethany C.).

I ask God's help and yours (Seymour, Wabash C.).

I ask divine guidance in this task (Kline, Bard C.).

Neither am I too proud to request from all of you your help, your confidence, and your prayers (Sample, Lebanon C.).

Two of the statements encountered were reminiscent of remarks made by John Kennedy:

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<sup>12</sup>John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964); and Alexander Miller, *Faith and Learning: Christian Faith and Higher Education in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Association Press, 1960).

<sup>13</sup>To have mentioned "God" in a speech did not necessarily imply support for the institutional goal of Religiousness.

... asking God's blessing and God's help but knowing that on earth God's work must truly be our own (Schultz, Albright C.).

We are here to do God's work and so with His help we will get it done, if He so wills (Kilburn, Kings C.).

Many of the men and women who made comments such as the above may be quite orthodox in their private (probably Christian) faith. But on this occasion they espouse only a generalized God-concept. The God of these academics in their inaugural addresses sounds like the God of Washington, Lincoln, and Carter in their presidential inaugural speeches. Without mentioning the name of God one president (Mullen, Jersey City St.) spoke of the "greater intelligence" in much the same way which the first American presidents spoke of the "Creator" and "divine Providence."<sup>14</sup>

One question that can be raised here has to do with whether or not these presidents see higher education as the catechetical arm of the civil religion. Do they suggest that a responsibility of colleges and universities is to nurture students in the national faith? Evidence in this study for such a conclusion was mostly in the negative. Only a few of the presidents ever made any explicit connection between God and country:

Our principles of government... have their roots in our Judaeo-Christian heritage... (Taylor, Louisiana Tech.).

... opportunity to serve—for Christ and Country (Clark, Geneva C.).

Though a number of authorities have suggested that the schools are or should be a source of induction into the national faith,<sup>15</sup> this study observed that presidents of colleges and universities do *not* give the notion a high explicit priority. Further evidence of this conclusion is suggested in Table 1 where it will be noted that the goals of Democratic Governance and Citizenship are quite low in the total group's rank order (16th and 18th out of 25 goals).

Presidents, then, do mention God. This God appears to be a generalized God, akin to the God of the nation's founding fathers often without specific content. But presidents do not suggest by their

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Bellah, "Civil Religion," p. 6

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Wm. A. Glebsch, *From Sacred to Profane America: The Role of Religion in American History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 120; Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 68; Conrad Cherry, "Two American Sacred Ceremonies: Their Implications for the Study of Religion in America," *American Quarterly* (Winter, 1970) p 750; Robert Michaelson, *Piety in the Public School* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p 62; and J. Paul Williams, *What Americans Believe and How They Worship* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952), p. 488.

inaugural remarks that colleges and universities ought to be promotional or indoctrinating agents of the civil religion. If they do promote such a perspective, it is only indirectly, as suggested in the fourth section of this paper.

### III. ACADEMIC RELIGION

If 21 of the 72 speakers made some explicit reference to God and/or other religious concepts, some 51 others did not. These 51 other presidents were not without statements about the purpose of higher education--as witnessed by the average of 35 goal themes per speech in the study. The question to be asked, then, is whether some of their statements elevate or treat academic values or concepts in such a way as to suggest that they are metaphysical categories or something like first principles. Do presidents speak of "truth," for example, in such a way as to suggest it should be capitalized and is, in fact, operating as a functional equivalent to the word "God"?

In the speeches, there was some evidence pointing in this direction. Academic and scientific concepts such as "pursuit of truth," "value-free objectivity" and others were occasionally mentioned. But these phrases were not often used in a transcendent way. The few examples which approach such an elaboration are given below:

An institution of higher education is by its nature dedicated to the humane values and also to rationality... (Brown, Cal. Tech.).

... virtues which from the beginning and until now have characterized our institution: a willingness to experiment, a commitment to the intellectual search for truth, freedom of inquiry, and a concern for educational process as though the freedom of man depended on it (Levi, U. of Chicago).

The university must live by reason; it is too fragile to live by force. The American University is a unique kind of community, unique in the value it places on reason and academic freedom (Baumhart, Loyola).

... there exists a Truth beyond fear which may be pursued through intellectual discipline (Trabent, U. Delaware).

... man's reason is the most significant attribute of his nature (Imholte, U. MN, Morris).

Though one might have expected presidents to be more eloquent along these lines, they are not. Little evidence can be found in the study which suggests that they treated "reason" the way the French did in the late eighteenth century or in the way that some philosophers of



science and education have been characterized as doing with the German *Wissenschaft* idea. The presentation of very lofty ideals and transcendent non-theistic concepts was simply not that prevalent in the inaugural addresses.

Table 1 suggests, though, that certain reason-related goals are highly ranked by the total group of presidents. Academic Development of students, for example, is ranked fourth with the total group. It is the highest in rank order of the outcome type goals.<sup>16</sup> (In some speeches the goal of Academic Development was joined with the outcome goals of Public Service (ranked 8th) and Research (ranked 12th). To the reader this suggested that there might be a kind of "academic trinity" operative for many presidents: "teaching/service/research--one higher learning." But this could be pushing the formation further than the evidence allows.)

Overall, if presidents think that the "orders of creation decree that the university's essential nature is for Truth," then they are not able to talk about it very well. Presidents--as the high priests for an academic religion--are mostly inchoate. The one exception to this appraisal is the sub-group of twelve presidents classified in the "research universities" category. Research universities are usually larger in enrollment, offer many degrees and programs, are more prestigious, "secular," and research-oriented. Their presidents spoke more often than did other presidents of humanism, objectivity, and rationality as principles of the first order. (Check the quotations in the second paragraph above.) The phrases and language of their speeches were somewhat more philosophical--but not theological in the traditional sense of that term. They spoke of non-theistic high ideals. If it is true that other institutions tend to follow the lead of the major universities, then a decline in God-talk and an increase in humanism/scientism talk may be observed in inaugural addresses.<sup>17</sup> Presidents from public institutions, presidents speaking after 1971, and presidents having an academic background in the physical sciences, tend to be the chief

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<sup>16</sup>Using a questionnaire to sample presidents' viewpoints, Richard E. Peterson found that the goal of "Intellectual Orientation" (ranked 13th in this study) was also a foremost goal. Cf. *Goals for California Higher Education: A Survey of 116 College Communities* (Berkeley: Educational Testing Service, 1973), p. 139ff.

<sup>17</sup>It may be of some interest to the reader to know that while the presidents of research universities were the most inclined to speak on nontheistic values of humanism and science, the most scathing attack on such a position was also given by a president of a major research university. John Silber of Boston University said, "The problem of our universities must therefore be to instruct students in the importance of time and in the way which scientism—a secular religion developed by over-extrapolation from science, a religion of which our ablest scientists have never been votaries—has corrupted time by treating it as a mere 'independent variable.'"

executives most likely to speak of virtues, principles and values which might be associated with an academic religion.

#### IV. INFERRED RELIGION

It will be observed from the data in table 1 that no mention has yet been made of the highest ranked goals for the total group of presidents. This is so because these highest ranked goals are not associated as easily with philosophical and theological concepts. They look like practical, institutional- maintenance concerns rather than telos matters. Such goals are called "process" or "means" goals rather than "ends" or "outcome" goals in this study. They are instrumental and adaptive by type. They were included as goals in the study of presidential speeches, however, because the literature in the sociology of institutions has long observed that "means" activities often become "ends" for persons in an organization.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, when concerns such as Program/Teaching, Funds/Personal, Community, Innovation, Character/Goals, and Accountability/Efficiency (as listed in Table 1) become real, operative goals, then a statement is being made that is philosophical and/or theological in nature. Reflection upon these means-concerns become- outcome- goals suggests that behind them there are some religious operating principles which need identification. These principles may be inferred by analysis.

First of all, is there a meaning for the frequent mention (high rank order) of process goals shown in Table 1? If there is, it may well be in the reminder that Americans have never been very comfortable in formulating abstract ideas. We are a practical, doing people. College and university presidents share this proclivity. Especially this seems to be so for presidents who have spoken since 1970 and who have an academic background in education. They stress "means" activities hoping, perhaps, that "ends" goals (generally unspecified or "given") will somehow be reached. The subscription to process goals in general may imply an adherence to process itself. Presidents likely would not or could not put a name like process theology or philosophy on what they believe, but by inference that may be an accurate label. In reticence to speak of ultimate ends, presidents may be closer in beliefs to Dewey and Whitehead than they realize. Neither philosopher, however, was quoted in the speeches.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Cf. Edward Gross and Paul V. Grambsch, *University Goals and Academic Power* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1968) pp. 6-9; and, also, Charles Perrow, "Organizational Goals," *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, David L. Sills (ed.) (New York: Macmillan and The Free Press, 1968), IX, p: 309.

<sup>19</sup>Presidents' favorite sources for quotations were the Bible and John Gardner. For a discussion of Dewey's "common faith" idea and its impact on education, cf. Chapter 2 of the Michaelson book; also the Gross article, *op. cit.*

The second thing to be suggested about the process goals emphasis is that a kind of salvation-by-doing or works-righteousness may lie behind the thoughts of presidents. When Program/Teaching is the highest ranked goal and Fund/Personnel the second highest, there is the implication that colleges and universities justify themselves if they *do enough* (offer sufficient programs) and *grow enough* (raise more money and build more buildings). Jacques Barzun has suggested that the modern American University, by adding programs and by continually expanding, has become similar to the medieval guild-doing everything the society asks of it, except, he notes, saying masses for the dead.<sup>20</sup> One president said much the same thing in his inaugural speech: "The university in the twentieth century in the United States has approximately the place in society the Church had during the Middle Ages" (Harlow, West Virginia). The medieval church, it will be remembered, was heavily influenced by Aristotelian/Thomistic thought which often is characterized by a "Justification by works" world view. Speaking historically, the universities of the West took shape at the same time and under the shadow of the European cathedrals. The possibility of a mutual molding à la a works righteousness is certainly present. In America the origin of "academic doing" probably stems from an inherited Protestant work ethic as well.<sup>21</sup>

In Table 1, the fifth ranked goal of Innovation is one of the most interesting goals on the list. Those who are familiar with the literature on the development of the American national character will recognize another historical association. The goal of Innovation echoes back to colonial times with emphasis on the "new" (New World, New Jerusalem, New Haven, New Deal, etc.). William Clebsch says, "The characteristic of American common life that was earliest and most profoundly stamped by religion is the spirit of novelty."<sup>22</sup> That spirit shows up contemporaneously, it is suggested, when college and university presidents speak of "keeping up-to-date," "being relevant," "experimenting," and "attempting the untried." Innovation may not initially look like a goal--much less a religious commitment-- but by inference a religious perspective may well stand behind the many themes given to this goal.

A fourth thing which may be noted about the less theologically

<sup>20</sup>Jacques Barzun, *The American University, How It Runs, Where It is Going* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 10-11.

<sup>21</sup>Warren Martin, for example, notes, "The substance of socialization has been determined by what one may call an American value orthodoxy, usually associated with the Protestant work ethic, a complex set of values revolving around a concept of work and competition that has been shared by most Catholics, Jews, agnostics, and atheists in this country as well as Protestants," *Conformity*, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup>Clebsch, *Sacred to Profane*, p. 30.

explicit inaugural speeches is that presidents often indicate a belief in the institution itself. Part of this "belief in the organization" is suggested by the high rank order of the goals Community and Character/Goals. Certain quotations in the speeches point in this general direction. The higher learning, education, and the institution have become ends in themselves. Presidents speak as follows:

But education in all its facets, the out-of-school forms coupled with the in-school programs, has emerged as society's chief instrument for its own survival (Elliot, Geo. Washington).

. . . and a faith in education have enriched our western world . . . (Haines, Franklin C.).

(The university is an ) . . . instrument of infinite worth in service to humanity . . . (Elliot, Geo. Washington).

Certainly at the vanguard of change stands education, particularly higher education, and most particularly the university (Shriver, Miami of Ohio).

The inference drawn from these statements and other findings is that for some presidents the vehicle of human salvation may be higher education itself. It is the visible yet invisible institution in which they believe.

Overall, the most prevalent belief statements of college and university presidents are these in which beliefs about over-arching purpose must be ascertained by inference. Presidents believe, seemingly, in process, doing, the new, and the institution. If they believe in (1) Christian ideals (as many presidents may do personally), (2) American civil religion, or (3) some form of academic first principles, it does not show up in the majority of their speeches as much as does this inferred religious stance.

### *Conclusion*

This report has identified four categories of religious belief which seem to be operative in American higher education. The positions include orthodox Christian, general American civil religion, academic first principles, and operative inferred religious values. The identification of these four has been made by an examination of findings on institutional goals from a content analysis of inaugural addresses by contemporary college and university presidents. Statements in the speeches have been used to develop and illustrate the positions. In summary form the four positions are as follows:

1. Traditional Christian (and, presumably Jewish) faith is still a part of many presidents' beliefs for the institutions they

serve. In effect, "Jesus is alive and well in Athens"--at least on smaller church-related campuses.

2. The most overtly religious position to be taken by presidents is the set of beliefs associated with the generalized God-concept of the civil religion. The evidence is not conclusive, however, that presidents conceive of higher education as an agency to actively promulgate the American civil religion.

3. If anything like an academic religion (which adheres to humanistic/scientific first principles) is present among presidents, it is found most often in the speeches of presidents from large, publically supported, research universities. These presidents could be trend-setters for others.

4. Presidents may be characterized as generally inarticulate when it comes to stating abstract philosophical/theological beliefs for themselves and the institutions they serve. By inference from the process or "means" goals they espouse, they do, however, believe in process itself, good and many works, novelty, and the institution of higher education.

Religion in America (or anywhere else) is not phenomenon restricted to operation in churches, mosques, and temples. Fundamental religious faiths are operative in all collectivities, and, higher education is certainly one. Hopefully, this paper helps our understanding of the religious dimensions operative in colleges and universities. Most especially, since colleges and universities are the "homes" in which so many influential people operate, where many people prepare for their lifework, and where so much of American society turns for expertise and assistance, it seems all the more important that the credos and principles of this essential complex collectivity be understood. From an improved understanding of the operative religions therein, there can flow support, critique, and even change.

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