

***A Free University and Professional Formation:  
Principles for Organisational Integrity***

Presented at

The Sixth Annual *NCICE* Scholarly Conference

for Post-Graduate Students and Academics

"Shaping the Christian Mind" Merroo Conference Centre, Sydney

18-20 July 1996

***HISTORICAL BACKGROUND***

This paper was prepared at the request of the ACHEA Board for **the Sixth Annual NCICE Scholarly Conference for Post-Graduate Students and Academics** "Shaping the Christian Mind" at the Merroo Conference Centre, NSW, 18-20 July 1996. ACHEA defines itself in terms of the reformed Christian world-view and promotes the "free university principle" in the arena of tertiary education. This principle gives ACHEA a special relationship with parent-controlled Christian education in primary and secondary schools. Therefore it was appropriate that ACHEA would respond positively when invited by NCICE conference organisers to participate. The ACHEA Board was all the more happy to do so since the intention to publish the paper was part of the original invitation and acceptance.

The ACHEA Board asked its General Secretary to write a paper which would advance the public debate among reformed and evangelical Christians in Australia about the principles upon which Christian post-secondary education should be based. The debate had already been given impetus by the publication of Dr Jan Dengerink's paper "The Necessity of Christian Universities" (Research Press, Parkville 1995). Moreover Keith Sewell's paper "The Idea of a Free Christian University" had also been made available (it is to be published along with other contributions) after **The Idea of an Australian Christian University** conference held on 25th March 1995, at Macquarie University.

A brief word about that 1995 conference is in order here. The Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity had called that conference after Professor Edwin Judge, a prominent evangelical, had issued a statement in the **ISCAST**

**Bulletin** explicitly controverting Jan Dengerink's paper and unequivocally declared "The undesirability of Christian universities". The ACHEA Board was glad of that a further opportunity to contribute to ongoing debate about the future form of Christian post-secondary education in Australia had arrived with the NCICE 1996 Conference invitation. It was thought that a contribution discussing the same principles in relation to professional education would be appropriate.

ACHEA's commitment to the "free university principle" implies a particular vision of all tertiary education even if ACHEA limits itself to education of the university type. ACHEA is keen to argue that **all** Christian professional training - of ministers, teachers, health workers and social workers, but also in time of doctors, engineers and lawyers - should be unashamedly and unambiguously Christian. Such a training should be based on a commitment to the principle that the distinctive integrity of all professions is best safeguarded when social policy is formed according to the direction given us in the scriptures, the Word of God our guiding principle for all of public life. We need to have professional training which respects these professions as God-given means of serving our neighbours. All Christians in our society have an interest in ensuring that such training is built on a firm foundation. Principle not pragmatism is to be our rule. This paper then re-articulates "the free university principle" for professional training, on the assumption that this principle is entirely consistent with the reformed understanding of the Christian religion which undergirds the "parent-controlled Christian school".

The paper is re-published here in the knowledge that things have moved on since July 1996 although public discussion about the form of Christian tertiary education has not always developed in a direction consistent with ACHEA's vision. Attempts to pragmatically establish Christian professional training - whether for ministers, teachers or health workers - by building institutions which accommodate powerful social forces in the interests of short-term institutional survival is not conducive to the ongoing reform of the Christian way of life. Rather it threatens to wreck spiritual havoc on fragile Christian endeavour in schooling and post-secondary educational initiatives, and will not leave churches unaffected.

Recently, the Committee convened by Mr Roderick West has issued its report **Learning for Life** (May 1998). This report takes the pragmatic re-shaping of higher education another step further, advocating a change in the basis of government funding for higher education. Moreover, and more to the point of this paper, Christian Parent Controlled Schools Ltd have joined Christian Community Schools and Robert Menzies College in a consortium aiming at the training of Christian teachers and health workers, granting them Macquarie University qualifications. This development will provoke debate in parent-controlled Christian schools around the nation, and those who believe that Christian education should advance in terms of principle not pragmatism will likewise be very concerned at placing Christian teacher-training within the ambit of the State controlled secular university. ACHEA believes that the principles undergirding “parent-controlled Christian schools” and “a free Christian university” point unequivocally in another direction, a direction which does not seek to have Christian tertiary qualifications promoted under the aegis of State universities in the national-unified State system.

This paper argues that Christian tertiary education is a task which cannot be approached in an eclectic and piece-meal fashion, despite the limitedness of our resources and the large amount of work that is to be done. Christians wanting to see Christian tertiary institutions emerge in this country - universities, teachers’ colleges, nursing colleges, business colleges, law schools and medical schools and hospitals - would do well to reappraise the relevance of the reformed Christian principles undergirding the inception of parent-controlled Christian schools for higher education and give support to the work which ACHEA is constituted to develop - namely a free Christian university in Australia. The first step is the establishment of a Christian Studies Centre, and this is a most important task to which Christian people should no longer withhold their support.

[This paper was published by the **ACHEA Publications Committee June 29th 1998** but since then the ACHEA Board has changed its policies quite drastically. I have strong doubts as to whether it is now capable of holding the views expressed in this paper.]

**Introduction:**

Twenty years ago any discussion about industrial relations in the University was usually about what was happening 'out there' in the economy. Industrial Relations (IR) was one thing; the polite endeavour of the academy another. The academic work-place was not usually located within the circle of IR. But things have changed. These days any academic discussion of industrial change is in danger of *only* talking about how IR has come home to roost in the academy. The far-reaching transformation of Australian industrial relations continues in all sectors showing no signs of abating.

Traditional ideas about industry and labour relations have been superseded. Previously, the salaries and career paths for academics were set by a Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC). CTEC set general standards and combined staff associations put their case for adjustments to this statutory body. At a local University/College level the individual academic applied for advancement through a complicated set of negotiations at Department, Faculty and University levels. The local negotiation implied that an academic belonged to that particular institution. But when Labor implemented its radically de-regulated market economy in the mid 80s, the system of commissions and statutory bodies was revamped and many were abolished. CTEC went and the way was open to reform the Universities by applying policies and laws applicable to all other industrial and corporate sectors. And the academic community at a local level was severely eroded. The changes involved a re-definition of the University itself. It is here that we begin our search to understand the current predicament. In effect, the Labor Government's industrial relations policy included the assumption that Universities can be treated as State-funded academic **factories**. Universities had to bargain for Government funds as one player in a wider **industrial** landscape. And the rules were such that within the education sector Universities competed with each other, and even within their own multi-campus operations faculties and departments try to outdo each other in the fund scramble. *Quality of performance* becomes the basis for ongoing funding; *productivity goals* now are the focus.

### **The Valuable Idea of a Free Christian University:**

But is the University a *factory*? If not, what is it? Are we to say that Universities should function according to their own distinctive *productivity goals*? Or are we to say that the idea of *productivity goals* is inappropriate in a University since the inner purpose of its organisation is not that of a business (or factory), where the marketing of its products is central to its operation. How are we to respect Science and Scholarship as the *work* of the University? What is its **work** and by what criteria should the State provide financial support?

In this paper Universities are viewed as *institutions dedicated to training in science*. This view has much support throughout our society, both inside and outside the University. But even so we still have to determine how this definition points in a direction by which the University's 'internal economy' should be ordered. How should the University maintain its own public accountability and fiscal responsibility within its own sphere of operations?

These are big questions. Not all are explored in this paper, but I will illustrate how current views of the State's role in the economy has led to serious misunderstanding of the purpose of the University. When such misunderstanding is basic to social life a fundamental 'de-construction' takes place in which the inner purpose and character of the University as a social institution is denied.

In this paper I appeal to what I call the *free university principle*. Scholarship upon this basis can find a distinctive, clarifying and imaginative vocation. The *free university principle*<sup>1</sup> affirms that science and scholarship, like all other human endeavour, comes into its own *Coram Deo*. The principle derives from our acknowledgment that science is a gift from God, part of our God-given vocation to serve Jesus Christ and our neighbour. Science and scholarship finds the freedom to do its work in obedience to its God-given mandate. Just as parent-controlled schooling acknowledges God as the One before Whom our educational responsibilities are played out - neither State nor Church nor

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1. As set out in the *Constitution of the **Association for Christian Higher Education in Australia*** (ACHEA) which has been incorporated since mid 1995. For a copy of the Constitution write to : The General Secretary ACHEA, 358 Mountain Highway, **Wantirna**, Victoria 3152.

business should have the social priority in schooling - so a *free Christian university* seeks to reckon with the fact that science is undertaken *Coram Deo*. This means of course that State, Church and business must also play their peculiar parts in the educative realms of social life adjacent to their own immediate purposes. But the scientific task finds its locus of meaning as a task given by God - not by State, not by Church, not by business, or any other human agency. The *free university principle* does not rule out State-funded support *a priori*, but it reckons with the principle that the authority to do the work of the University is for the University itself and is not derived from what other social institutions say it should be or do.

This, of course, raises important questions alongside the urgent matter of fiscal accountability : How should such a University be built? How should it contribute to the common-weal? How should Universities contribute to professional education? How do they avoid being swallowed up in large mega-corporate empires of 'job training' (as they are now)? How can they contribute without imposing themselves and their scholarship upon the various professions in an inappropriate manner? How indeed can Universities find the sovereignty appropriate to their own sphere?

### **The University and Public Funding**

The recent republication of Jan Dengerink's paper **The Necessity of Christian Universities** (1993) provoked some reaction among evangelicals in late 1994 and culminated in a conference at Robert Menzies College on *The Idea of an Australian Christian University*. That conference brought Catholic, Pentecostal, Reformed and Anglican scholars together to discuss the issue. This paper builds on that discussion, and also applies the insight of Van Riessen's **The University and its Basis**<sup>2</sup>. This seminal work, also recently re-published in an Australian edition, shows that the Calvinistic idea of a *free university* is of immediate relevance to us. The context is still dominated by

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2 Hendrik van Riessen **The University and its Basis** ACHEA Press, Wantirna, Victoria 1997. It was originally delivered at the Unionville Conferences of 1963, in Ontario, Canada, and published by Guardian Publishing Co. for the Association for Reformed Scientific Studies.

the Dawkins' reforms, subject to budget cuts and the much heralded public audit.

Public sector funding since the early 1970s has been structured by various forms of 'cost benefit analysis'. Governments try to rein in public debt and every so often new theories about Government funding, new approaches to the public audit and new appeals to the principle of public accountability and rectitude are announced to 'put the nation's house in order.' Governments have hitherto recognised that commodities and services integral to our social life need to be supported by provision of public funds. But as much as this provision might prove popular, they still have to reckon with the fact that Government policy is not the same as party platform, that any provision for State support in the Government's budget needs to be established within a system of legal accountability. 'State support' is not without legal and fiscal strings attached; the value of the service provided needs to be measured, in some way or other, against all other possible recipients. Government support for non-Government activities, whatever they may be, has an enormous impact upon the manner in which such activities are viewed, upon the kind of society within which we live.

It is not a matter of **how much or whether**, it is a matter of **how** the Government forms its public-legal involvement in these non-Government activities. As Government, it must preserve its own mandate as the custodian and enforcer of public justice. Those with responsibility for managing funds given by the State for particular purposes are legally and morally accountable for their stewardship. Yet accountability and accounting are not the same thing<sup>3</sup>.

The actual logic of political argument concerning budgetary matters needs careful scrutiny. It is the assumptions about the accountability of public auditing that are crucial. The full development cannot be discussed here; suffice it to say that an important change has taken place. The former 'cost benefit' analysis of public finance, has progressively given way to an audit

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3 See James W Skillen ***Recharging the American Experiment : Principled Pluralism for Genuine Civic Community*** CPJ/Baker Book House, Washington and Grand Rapids 1994.

based upon 'profit accounting'. The approach seems to be something like this : before any cuts are made the Government commissions an independent audit. The terms of reference are broad but specific. Departments and services are to be considered not only as cost centres but also as centres which *should be able* to generate their own capital through efficiency savings and capital raising of their own. So the resultant audit, as a basis for a budget debate, sets targets for savings and capital generation, and suggests the base-line for the *Government* share. It is assumed that the audit embodies the norm for economic management over the entirety of government operations. Make no mistake; the ramifications of this revolution in the national audit will be felt in the nooks and crannies of everyday life, universities not excluded<sup>4</sup>. But to understand how it makes an impact is more than just developing a rhetoric about Government budgets. It requires structural analysis.

So we confront a serious dilemma. To articulate the Christian principles for a 'free university' we also need an ongoing economic assessment of the situation we confront. But it is hard to see how such an assessment can be made, maintained and developed without the kind of university in place which could facilitate, encourage and extend such research. That is the kind of problem confronting us. A Christian view of the university's place within the public-legal order, *must also include the articulated view of how science and scholarship are **stewardship, part of our responsibility to form our public life in a political and economic way.***

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4 The Federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, in announcing the audit proclaimed that the report of Professor Bob Officer and his commission had changed the basis of political debate in this country 'for ever.' Those who think that politics is and should be religiously neutral should ponder the fact that Mr Costello is a professing Christian. The power of the 'post-modern' motif in public debate seems to allow him to assert such things without facing the incongruity with the article of the Apostle's creed: 'he shall come again with glory to judge ...' The assertion of Christian principles for public life must be done with a 'pastoral' concern for those trapped in the dilemmas of post-modernism.



The idea of a *free university* is more relevant to our current situation and the preservation of our intellectual heritage than many have thought<sup>5</sup>. But just because there is a common term does not mean that the idea of a *free university* is consonant with the ideology of the *free market*. What is the difference? The dominant idea of the free market - which comes from the Enlightenment economics of Adam Smith - is that society runs best when the market is granted *autonomy* allowing it to function unrestrained by any legal and *State-imposed impedimenta*. When that idea is promoted alongside of that other Enlightenment idea that theory is autonomous, then economics becomes central to all modes of science, and basic for the formulation of a world-view. On the other hand the idea of a free university is motivated by the conviction that science must develop freely *Coram Deo* (before God). Only when science is free to honour the Creator does it truly express its integrity in its own God-given vocation.

There is no contrast greater than the spiritual difference manifest by these two approaches to public life. It follows that one of the most important tasks for a *free Christian university* will be the development of the history and systematics of economic theory itself, in relation to public policy. Much work remains in this area.

### **The University and the Educational Sphere**

We also need to place the university's calling in science alongside of other organisations and institutions with similar and contrasting vocations. To do this satisfactorily requires a Christian theory of social organisations. Let me

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<sup>5</sup> A recent edition of ***Sociological Theory***, the leading scholarly journal in its field, advanced the remarkable thesis of Wilhelm Hennis that Kuyper's idea of a *free university* was an important plank upon which Max Weber built his doctrine of *value freedom* (Hennis W 1994). The application of Max Weber's doctrine has been a basic tenet of North American social and behavioural science for close on 75 years, and we might ask about the Christian response to Weber's *Wissenschaftslehre*. If Hennis is correct, then this insight could throw light upon efforts to develop Christian scholarship in this century. But whether he is right or wrong those who now engage in scholarship from a neo-Calvinist standpoint must reckon that they have been catapulted into the limelight of contemporary social theory.

list a few of the basic principles of a Christian sociology of organisations that should be noted here :

1. *The doctrine of self-limitation* - a social organisation or institution should operate according to the principle that its programmes and policies are to be formed according to its own special purpose. Knowledge of this can only come with an appreciation of what a University is and what it is not.
2. *The doctrine of social inter-dependence* - social structures and institutions are necessarily inter-dependent in a social sense. Thus social organisations develop their **special** tasks in a social milieu shaped by other institutions and organisations which should also be contributing to the social network of inter-dependence according to their **special** competence.
3. *Social organisations are linked internally and externally to other organisations and institutions in a variety of ways.* They function fully in all aspects of human society, and are amenable to diverse analytical investigation. 'Organisation theory' must be built upon a general theory of society and an empirical investigation of the social structuring of organisations in their diverse vocations.
4. We are not born into social organisations *as such*, although our life from birth to maturity to death may involve constant and repeated contact with forms of social organisation. Usually organisational membership is *achieved* by voluntary choice, but it can also be *ascribed* through the choices made for us by others at different stages of our life. Social organisations do not usually require us to actively form all of our extant societal offices through organisational means.
5. Organisations are historically formed and insight into organisational operations implies theoretical understanding of the historical formation processes.

What then is the current situation in Australia's universities? Scholarship to be truly free as *scholarship* must be free to serve God and God alone. That is the starting point for our Christian scholarship as we contribute to the renewed

social scientific discussion about the basis for a university. We need to understand why the university in Australia is *not* free.

### **The Current Panic :**

Firstly, our situation can be viewed in **social-psychological** terms. As Tertiary Education is adjusting to a new regime in Canberra, various campuses throughout the country experience a sense of panic as the August budget looms. Why?

The panic derives from the fact that many feel very vulnerable. Universities have no effective protection from Government imposition and the proposed 10-12% cuts in income. Not only are jobs on the line. Many academics have been involved in their fields over decades and sense that their life's work is being put at risk by Government ministers driven by ideology, who simply do not understand the character of the academic careers. Liberal ministers, more than the former regime, deal in outmoded stereotypes for the purpose of gaining public respect for their 'cuts'. Not a few academics take up lower-ranking positions after considerable sacrifice to the scientific vocation over many years. This sacrifice has brought a lowered reward already and the new round of 're-structuring' simply attacks a morale that is already very low. The threat of more cuts are an attack upon academics' *vocational* commitment. Ms Vanstone's approach threatens to wipe many academics' decades-long, unromantic scholarly labour.

But how did we get to this situation? **Historically** speaking, the complicated negotiation process between Government and University is part of our scientific cultural baggage. We cannot simply look at what Government, Vice-Chancellors, academics and students perceive; we need to see the panic *in situ*, as part of a social process that since the mid-1980s has orchestrated a radical restructure of University in its organisation and in its goals.

The major structural outline is this : Government has assumed that Universities need to be fundamentally restructured in their **organisation** to make them more efficient. In the process the goals of the University *as such* have been displaced by Government imposition! A sense of *anomie* prevails; the academy is dominated by a sense of normlessness particularly in relation to the way ahead in the fulfilling of its own task.

## **The Historical Restructuring :**

This historical change occurred **politically**. When the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) was abolished, Universities no longer had a statutory body standing between Higher Education and the Government.

Since then they have been formed as one large diffuse industrial sector. The various Accords between the Government and the ACTU were the 'functional equivalent' of CTEC and offered a semblance of public protection for the entire system, and in particular areas of study which were not able to easily generate capital. So when the Government in Canberra changes, and the Accord process no longer functions as part of the wider system of public administration for Universities and its employees, what happens?

We are still waiting to find out. But now the Coalition with Government responsibility, shows no signs of having developed a critical and structural appraisal of this situation. Instead, the ground rules are the same<sup>6</sup>.

Government views Universities as part of the national economy - in the business of buying and selling their education 'products'. According to this way of thinking Universities should be accorded the same respect which other 'public sector' institutions receive. They need large Government grants to maintain programmes, so therefore they should be subjected to the same audit principles which are applied throughout all industrial sectors. With the abolition of CTEC, some 'red tape' was abolished, but Universities have also become extensions of the Department of Employment, Education and Training. CTEC was also symbolic of the doctrine of self-limitation **applied to Government**. But now with a new regime the ideology of **small Government** has moved to further entrench the invasive process.

We might be prompted to ask : Is this not Prussianisation? Our answer is : Yes, this is indeed what we are confronted with; the State flagrantly over-reaching its proper authority. Over against this we need to assert the

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<sup>6</sup> The Governing coalition in Canberra is caught out by its decade-long unwillingness to function as an Opposition to the Dawkins' reforms. Careful reflection reveals that such neglect has left it with no choice other than adopting the *same* approach to Universities. This indeed is a lesson in how 'sloth' (a term used by the new treasurer) has unintended consequences.

capstone of the 'free university principle' - that science can only be science *Coram Deo*, and that the University can only be university as it sticks to its God-given vocation. Such a view can be applied positively and formatively now to the benefit of the Universities of this country. Universities must be allowed to get on with what they do best; being places for training in science. But the best way to publicly assert the 'free university principle' is to support the establishment of such a Christian university. As a normative standard which can be applied to the 'Higher Education sector' it has the potential to point in the way of genuine national benefit. It will also mean that advocates of such a university will recognise the limits of the structure they are establishing; in this context a deepened understanding of the 'free university principle' will have immediate relevance to aspects of 'higher education' which have been squashed into the one mega-structure<sup>7</sup>.

### **University as Prime Institution in the Higher Education Industrial Sector**

Our concern is not only with politics and the politics of Government budgets. The 'free university principle' has an immediate relevance to our understanding of the **economy** of 'higher learning' *Coram Deo*. Economy means stewardship and hence we need to identify basic ideas about the apportionment of responsibility, the distribution of resources, decision-making, the management of policy. The problem with re-structuring Universities *as if* they are factories rests upon a doubtful view that 'traditional' ideas are 'elitist', and that the 'market model' is the way to ensure the openness of these institutions to all sections of society. Large-scale amalgamations, with AUSSTUDY and the HECS scheme, were John Dawkins' way of making the university available to all classes. But it was the *market* principle through which such traditional Labor egalitarianism was put into effect. In time,

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7 There are at least three different types of Tertiary Education : University (for science and scholarship, foundational research and general philosophical education); Professional Education (controlled by Professions in symbiosis with Universities and Industry - law, medicine, nursing, teaching, social work, engineering, journalism, arts, agriculture and horticulture, etc); Higher Technical Training (for training in technologies - trades, hospitality, secretarial etc).

however, such a principle has become the cornerstone of a new and virulent elitism<sup>8</sup>.

Now that the system of Accords has been abolished we confront a new situation which has not yet been adequately addressed. Previously, the Universities, with all industries, were required in terms of their **sectoral** character to conform to the requirements of the Industrial Relations Commission. All sectors had to have **employers** and **unions**. So who was the employer in the University sector? The **corporatisation** of the Vice-Chancellors allowed them to play the university 'boss' role. These new CEOs promoted the reforms with great enthusiasm and considerable increases in salary, power and political prestige. These reforms were the crowning achievements of their academic careers. The Vice-Chancellors also locked the Universities into the Department of Foreign Affairs, and their academies became central building blocks in the push into Asia and the South Pacific. The 'education industry' has become one of Australia's major overseas capital earners. The reforms were viewed as successful, and in terms of the 'bottom line' that means they have been able to generate income<sup>9</sup>.

Yet in terms of **industrial relations** the Universities have augmented their foreign affairs and ambassadorial role by becoming an integral part of the empire building of the Department of Employment, Education and Training. And for this to happen it was necessary for one National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) to integrate existing Academic Staff Associations into one Unionised framework and represent the 'workers'. So the Universities, at the Union-industrial level, are now subject to Ms Vanstone in her DEETYA (YA for

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8 The so-called 'Group of Eight' have claimed through their VCs that as elite research universities they deserve a special package.

9 This is the conclusion of an article by Don Aitkin, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canberra "The Astonishing Rise of Higher Education" **Quadrant** January-February 1996 77-82. Aitkin, a political scientist, and former head of the ARC Grants Commission is notorious for his view of Arts Faculties being filled with people who are self-indulgent.

Youth Affairs<sup>10</sup>) role, and at the senior executive level are powerful players in Mr Downer's diplomatic revamp of Australia's role in the region.

But it is not just politics, economics and industrial relations; these changes have had a dramatic impact upon the internal **social** life of Campuses, Faculties and Departments. The NTEU emerged as a result of the demise of local Staff Associations, putting the capstone in place for Labor's transformation of the Universities. Since then the NTEU has seen itself as **the** voice of academic staff opinion (the major competition being **Campus Review**) within a framework of Universities as work-places for job-training, subject to audits and checks like any assembly line. Despite this fact, the Union is sometimes loudest in denying their complicity. Keep in mind that the Labor Government maintained programmes in subject areas not directly transferable to the market-place, assuming that indirect 'down-stream' implications of a theoretical education are needed for a healthy economy. But that was the previous view. What now?<sup>11</sup>

Previously, the Government, through Labor's ACTU link, could at least hear an attenuated version of that 'academic staff opinion' dissenting from the elitist and grandiose versions of the Vice-Chancellors. Now the Coalition is structured to listen only to the Vice-Chancellors and token 'student groups'.

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10 A similar *ideology* is at work in Churches when *youth work* is viewed as a competence to advise and direct *students*. The change from DEET to DEETYA (Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth) involves a similar train of thought; industrial policy implies an ideology of control.

11 Consider the surreal activities of Professional Development Centres, Personnel, Teaching Evaluation Units, and the setting up of special committees to monitor what are called 'transition problems'. The generation of such 'transition discourse' in the University is another side of the industrialising process; a model developed in large-scale corporations is applied within the University - academics are supposed to be grateful for such 'assistance'. These developments assume that as a body *academics* are neither interested in, nor worried about, what happens to, students. The fact is that just because academics are interested in students *qua students* does not mean that they are not interested in them *as people*. The internal organisational 'reforms' are a big part of the problem, even while they are promoted with glossy publications claiming to be absolutely necessary for the running of the University.

With the dissolution of the Accord process Academics, as a group, have lost an (in)effective *political* voice. What now is to stop Government from withdrawing funding from 'non-productive' academic areas, requiring these faculties to find their own capital sponsorship?

In Victoria, the State Government has closed down student political dissent through legislation which prevents student amenities fees being used for the production of student newspapers. The stated legislative grounds are that non-politically motivated students should not be forced to pay for the dissemination of political opinions with which they may disagree. But on this ground what is to stop the Government from closing down Politics, Women's Studies, Sociology and Religious Departments? Is the rationale going to be : students who want education in 'values' will have to pay for it?! Since the mid-1980s Arts Faculties have adopted the 'selling strategy' that a BA is a 'good education which gives you a peculiar set of skills in report writing and analysis which employers are looking for'. Such an appeal had selling power when the public service was on a growth curve. But who now is going to advocate a large public service so that Arts Faculties can be retained?

Student life on Campus has had to adjust to significant changes and there has been no effective opposition to the *structural* changes. The view widely held is that to spend time in *discussion* with other students is really a waste of time<sup>12</sup>. Clarification of one's world-view may be all very well, but the national economy cannot fund such recreation! There is something *deep-down* wrong with this view, and we must learn how to defend students, and the student vocation, from the onslaught of the market guilt trip, particularly given the need for adequate intellectual therapy after the madness of the final year of high school<sup>13</sup>.

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12 Many students seem to view the student union as providing would-be Liberal or Labor party apparatchiks with a start on their career path to one of the major national electoral machines.

13 Christian schools must consider how they support their alumni after graduation, particularly at those times, like the end of VCE, when students ask : "Now what was **that** all about?" Since they cannot do this job on their own, Christian schools should consider ways of supporting associations which are providing Christian support for students. Traditionally, I suspect, Christian schools and churches have



### **Lack of Genuine Debate about Structural Weakness :**

The structural weaknesses of the Unified National System need to be faced : there is now no statutory body standing between Government and the Universities; the Vice-Chancellors are no longer part of the academic community, tragically remote from day to day academic life; there are now no effective local staff associations, since the rise of the NTEU. The Vice-Chancellors develop their job profiles as emissaries of the Department of Foreign Affairs, seeking funds from foreign full fee paying students. The Federal Government continues to acknowledge the importance of research through the Australian Research Council, but it is the projects which have already attracted big money which have marketing potential and gain priority in the intricate accounting models which are now the intellectual preoccupation of the academy. Research which shows its immediate capital pay-off is best placed to receive funding. And student associations, as venues for the development of critical views, are sidelined.

We should not assume that those who hold to the free university principle are the only ones actively seeking alternative structures. There will indeed be talk and debate about a variety of non-State Universities as this process unfolds, particularly since the new auditing principles are going to mean more of a squeeze for sectors which can ill afford it<sup>14</sup>.

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thought that their tasks were to point students in the direction of 'Christian clubs'. The analysis of the evangelical contribution to Australia's universities in Stuart Piggin's recent publication is somewhat sketchy (Piggin S 1996), but he notes the fragmentation among Christian 'student work'. But is **more** evangelising, **more** bible studies, and **more** fellowship going to address this issue? When the 'common school' ideal of Universities were in place, AFES and other evangelical groups, found an important *niche*, but now the **structure and direction** of State Universities has changed and young Christian students have very few avenues for *Christian intellectual encouragement*.

14 There has been the Australian Catholic University (a part of the National Unified System), but also Notre Dame University launched in Western Australia, Bond University, the Tasman Institute (headed by a former board member of MLC, Melbourne) and the proposed Asia-Pacific University also in Melbourne. There are some renewed efforts among Christian groups.

Work has to be done on many different fronts simultaneously : advocacy of a free Christian university must go hand-in-hand with the development of a cogent and penetrating interpretation of what is unfolding in the State dominated Universities of this country as well as the various business-based university ventures that are emerging<sup>15</sup>. It is the Christian view of the student vocation which needs articulation; particularly in relation to the Christian task of contributing to civil society. As inferred above 'the free university principle' is not only applicable to Christians and Christian institutions. It must guide us in our current work with students in the universities in which they are now located. Our vision must be lifted to see that the building and development of a Christian University is one of the necessary tasks for a Christian public contribution in the early years of the 21st century.

John Dawkins was *Minister of Trade and Industry* before he was in charge of DEET. In that portfolio he sent representatives of the ACTU and the Trade Development Commission (TDC) on a trip to countries of comparable size with a mandate to investigate options for national development.

The results are itemised in ***Australia Reconstructed***<sup>16</sup>. Dawkins reckoned with the traditional insularity of debate about public sector reform. But the **reductionism** of his approach is seen in the resultant policy formation process. The principles derived from business and corporate experience overseas, were applied to all spheres of society, including hospitals and

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15 Under Dawkins' reforms the universities were internally subjected to a concerted organised effort to turn them into State-funded business schools. Now that this experiment has run its course by the de-gutting of the universities by 'business within' it is to be expected that a new wave of competition with State-universities unfolds in the market.

16 ACTU/TDC Mission to Western Europe ***Australia Reconstructed : A Report by the Mission Members to the ACTU and the TDC*** AGPS 1987. This volume was commissioned by Dawkins as Minister for Trade and Minister assisting the prime Minister for Youth Affairs. It is noteworthy, and important, that he moved to Employment, Education and Training after this. It certainly helps to explain Government treatment of students as "youth" (in need of training for jobs) rather than as students. Other relevant commentary includes : ***Employer perspectives on the ACTU/TDC Report "Australia Reconstructed"*** Confederation of Australian Industry 1988 and ***Rebirth of the Lucky Country? : An Employer Critique of the Union Document "Australia Reconstructed"*** VEF 1988.

universities, *as if* all spheres of society are *spheres of industry*. This could only be achieved by the suppression of structural insight about the distinctive purposes of these *essentially non-industrial* institutions. Their distinctive characteristics had to be overlooked, or re-invented, in conformity with the overall assumptions, assumptions of a materialistic world-view.

There have been long-term consequences; the seriousness of this situation is compounded by the fact that the reform-package in its entirety was viewed as change in the national interest<sup>17</sup>.

But if a Government-appointed team of University academics was to be sent to investigate the 'University sector' in other countries, we suspect that their brief would have been couched in identical terms. The assumption is that for the purpose of Government policy the university has to be treated as **basically** an *industrial* organisation; the corollary is that if we deepen insight into industrial relations we will deepen insight into organisations *as such*. As far as we know Dr Blewett, as Minister of Health, did not seek to balance the restructuring of industry and science with a comparable investigation for the restructuring of the health care system.<sup>18</sup> And the Australian Government fell into a default position by treating health care, along with higher education, as *essentially* market place and industrial matters<sup>19</sup>. Serious structural insight is lacking into the character of their own administration in these non-State spheres of public life. At least for political purposes, they wish to treat them as extensions of State authority. The Coalition is seriously deficient in this

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17 John S Dawkins ***Higher Education: A Policy Discussion Paper 1987; Higher Education: A Policy Statement 1988 and Research for Australia: Higher Education's Contribution 1989.***

18 The reforms between 1983 and 1996 to Federal and State Government administration simply assumed that hospitals and universities are types of industrial organisation - if we gain insight into the market (ie the large-scale arena of industrial corporations), then the insights are directly and immediately applicable across the board.

19 The word *essentially* refers to fact that advocates of the post-modern critique of *essentialism* have been remarkably quiet on this front. Economic rationalism and post-modernist anti-essentialism are not two philosophies, but two sides of the one religious world-view which is nihilistic and fatalistic.

regard, and its practice in policy is in sharp contradistinction to its liberal *facade*.

### **The Temptations of Organisational Polyglots:**

Public life over the past 15 years has been characterised by large-scale takeovers and amalgamations. Businesses and other public organisations have sought competitive edge via ‘re-structuring’; they seek to broaden their market coverage by bringing together a ‘package’ of diverse products and services<sup>20</sup>. This approach to public life has been advocated very loudly throughout our culture; its rhetoric is mantra-like.

Because we all live in a social context dominated by this mantra our own higher educational efforts need close examination. How does professional education relate to the project of a free Christian university? To gain clarity about the relation between university and professions we also need a critical examination of the structure of professional training as such. What we probably need next to a ‘free Christian University’ in this country is a Christian ‘College of Advanced Professional Education’ (CCAPE) in which a number of *bona fide* professional training ventures co-operate with shared library, building and campus. I say “probably need” because this is indeed one good thing we can aim at. But before that can become a possibility we need to have distinct Christian professional activity which is organised as such, and is not just a spin-off of churches, and then the professional training must be organised consonant with this.

Such a commitment to establishing a CCAPE might, when the structural matters have been dealt with appropriately, attract other Christian social welfare agencies as well as other evangelistic and mission bodies for the purposes of sharing facilities. A CCAPE, operating with other Christian groups, would indeed be helped in a federated and planned reduction of

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20 Consider the advertising framework for the football : AFL’s centenary season brought to you by BP (then its corporate byline), Gillette (another catchy line), Mitsubishi (another) and so on ... a package of different products bringing another package. Indeed it would seem to be possible to adopt this marketing style in promoting Christian higher education.

overheads, sharing of support staff, and keeping the budgets of the co-operating ventures viable. Such a venture will in time need a generation of university-trained educators with PhDs, to give the necessary CCAPE professional leadership. Such academics with a general grounding and expertise in inter-disciplinary and inter-professional studies are no soft option. But such professional leadership will require adequate Christian training of the *university* type. The training that can be achieved through networks, consultancies, Councils of Adult Education and so forth is good and to be welcomed. But it is not the training for professional academic leadership that will be needed for a Christian college of advanced professional education.

By contrast, the scientific task of building a University in which students are engaged in the study of the foundations of knowledge though not exclusively **for** professional training or welfare provision, will be necessary for those involved in the professional and vocational training of such Christian students. It is worth saying that though the free Christian university will also have to contribute to a CCAPE in its own way, a university is not a substitute for a College of Advanced Professional Education and vice versa. But if we were following the trends set by John Dawkins we might well be tempted to call such a CCAPE a university. Then we would be in danger of setting aside our commitment to the *principle* for the pragmatic reasons of getting something up and running. Then we would be setting aside our commitment to the principle for the appearance that we were taking more people with us. Such is the nature of specialised professional formation, which has to be built upon a foundation provided by scientific and philosophic knowledge, we cannot afford the intrusion of this pragmatism into the basis of our initial deliberations of these necessary ventures.

The foundation of professional formation, in contrast with professional training *as such*, is the task of a 'higher learning', the contribution which a free university must make. This does not mean that any 'joint venture' is only valid as an adjunct to the university project. The tasks are different and require distinct organised efforts. The planning and setting up of professional training might begin without a Christian University being established, but for its ongoing viability as a professionally-oriented college it is going to require

*university*-trained professionals. Without such it cannot become more than an extension of projects already established, or programmes under other mandates<sup>21</sup>.

Training in science<sup>22</sup>, which is the task of the University, is not the professional formation of church office-bearers, counsellors, social workers and teachers, no matter how much we might want to say that professional formation should be based within a Christian world-and-life-view. Nor is it a matter of simply trying to augment all possible professional education together in one campus conglomerate. There may be good arguments about where *professional training* should be located, either close to universities or close to other institutions (eg in proximity to schools and hospitals). But however these matters are eventually decided, *professional training* which is induction into the particular profession should be distinguished (if not totally separated) from the university's task which is *training in science*.

It is beyond question that Christian professional training is needful and should be established in this country. The question is how this is to be done. This is no option, and teacher training, education in medicine and nursing, professional business courses, induction into the practise of law, socialisation in the arts and music, accreditation in engineering, are also all needed. All need to be tackled but it is not from one or other profession or training, or a combination of these, that the scientific and philosophical vocation finds its locus of meaning. It is that vocation which has to be developed in the ongoing work of a University, which must be the seed-bed for any ongoing work in Christian professional training in this country. Otherwise, as has happened so often in the past, a mode of social formation is undertaken in which carts are put before horses<sup>23</sup>.

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21 Christian groups who co-operate to share resources to enhance long-term viability for their own separate enterprises may be tempted to present themselves as something more. But such worthwhile attempts to re-configure Christian stewardship are not constituted to establish a Christian College of Professional Education.

22 to use the helpful term of Hendrik Van Riessen (1997).

23 We can expect that churches and other groups, particularly those groups that have implied a Christian interpretation of the 'common

The foundational work of a Christian University, developing insight into the philosophic encyclopaedia of the sciences, should not be confused with these particular professional tasks, but scientific insight into these professional areas is scarcely possible without insight of the former kind. No matter how necessary a CCAPE campus may be, advance in ***Christian professional formation*** is not going to be made by trying to politically augment the free university principle onto a proposal to share the resources of two (or more) endeavours in Christian professional training. Sharing *as such* is a good thing. Co-operation in a 'joint venture' for the purpose of finding a confessional *modus operandi* cannot adhere to the 'free university principle' *as such*. To try and suggest that a conglomerate of similarly located ventures should be accepted in anticipation as 'our' University, or 'our Christian contribution to higher education' simply sails too close to the view that a University is a matter of advertising, publicly announcing one's adoption of a new nomenclature. A distinctive *market niche* is not our first concern. We do not seek a Christian icing on the Dawkins' industrial cum marketing cake.

We do need CCAPEs in this country. But we do not need CCAPEs which try to operate and plan *as if* they are 'our Christian universities', or are set up in competition when principle becomes too difficult to combat a natural tendency to pragmatism. A university is not made simply by the declaration that it be so<sup>24</sup>. Such an approach to the marketing of a CCAPE assumes that the 'free

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school' principle in their evangelistic and educational work (AFES, SU, ISCF and others), develop 'professionally oriented' courses and programmes. These should not be judged as inappropriate *a priori*. But the authority of Bishops, Church councils, Bible Colleges, and other Christian organisation is not *as such* the kind of professional, academic and educative authority which should be giving leadership to a 'free' College of Advanced Professional Education. Another way is suggested by the principle enunciated here.

24 The principle does not just apply to individuals and groups acting unilaterally in their own market interest; it also applies to Governments. A University is not a university just because a Government says so. In the Netherlands in the 1980s Theological and other Hogeschoolen (eg at Kampen) were required by law to change their name and status to include University in their title. That process is comparable to the Dawkins' amalgamations in which CAEs and Teachers Colleges were forced into becoming 'units' of larger multi-campus universities.

university principle' can be set aside for the time being<sup>25</sup>. Apart from the fact that the different professional training ventures might view such nomenclature in different ways, presaging severe political disturbance, there is the question of how such an endeavour would deal with the *structural* questions involved as *one unified organisation*. As a federation of separate professional colleges, with differing links to their respective professions, or Christian networks in the professions, such a CCAPE is structurally dissimilar to the University with its internal organisation of faculties and departments.

A CCAPE which for marketing purposes postured itself as a 'university' would continually tempt the founding professional group to view itself as more than its own profession's college. And when additional educators from other professional groups are added the presence of the original group might not be relativised until a genuine 'constitutional arrangement' was put in place. In the arena of academic intrigue it is conceivable that the power of the founding professional group over the entire college teaching programme might increase rather than diminish. And the ongoing viability of professional training in the initial field(s) might come to rely upon, or even demand, the willingness of newly added professionals to make concessions to the 'peculiar character' of the 'college' as it had developed under the founding professional group. There might be an attempt to balance 'professional praxis' education with a campus-wide emphasis upon a Christian world-view. But even if some kind of Christian philosophy classes (and/or chapel?) were not required parts of every student's course, the need for such a balancing act indicates a campus which was not a university *as such*. It might become one one day but not without sustained development and structural change of what it had already established - a 'federated campus' for the support of professional training which had set aside its principle<sup>26</sup>.

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25 As has been suggested by the actions of the ACTE Board in December 1994 in response to the carefully formulated and well-researched recommendations of its own 'Action Group'.

26 Even Calvin College, in USA, which in time has become somewhat separate from Calvin Seminary does not now view itself as a University. And the 'free university principle' might operate more or less strongly in the some sections of the reformed Christian Colleges in America and Canada, but an historical investigation of their



Such educational pragmatism based upon a reductionist organisational theory has ruled tertiary education for the last decade. The temptation in this kind of discussion comes from the sceptic who, on hearing the discussion, will say : “This is all very well in *theory*; but what about the *practical* issue of financing a University. All this theoretical talk is not going to get us very far if we have not decided how we are to finance it, whatever we might say it is in *theory*.” Among Christians the *pious* sceptic is a very formidable presence. And the pious sceptic is a matter for deep pastoral concern.

### **The Cornerstone of Pragmatist Organisational Theory:**

But such practical advice is not as purely *practical* as the sceptic likes to suggest. Keep in mind that bringing the CAEs and Teachers’ Colleges together with Universities, in large multi-campus operations, did not just change the administrative structure of the amalgamated bodies by enlarging the University by the incorporation of new administrative units; it actually changed the nature of the beast. Goals were not just augmented; goals were displaced and replaced by new goals, and the overall goal, the national ‘bottom line’ has become none other than ‘job training’ in a variety of professional and quasi-professional modes. Business logic with its strategies of fiscal modelling has become the new Queen of the Sciences. The ‘free university principle’ by contrast has rejected the secularised and materialist criterion for the University. As important as job training is, it is not the special task of the University.

The *theoretical and sociological* assumption here is that in their everyday operations all organisations are basically the same. As institutions they might have differing mandates, but in essence they are the same. This reduces structural diversity for the purposes of centralised and unified planning. But at the centre of such planning there is always a planner or operator who stands to benefit from such a construction of the organisational reality. This kind of sociological thinking is the mind of pragmatic administrators who see their own career path as the development of expertise in general organisational

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contribution in terms of *reformatorische grondslag* also reveals an ongoing struggle against the culture of educational pragmatism.

processes and delivery, even if they do not specialise in any **one** kind of organisation. Contrary to any anti-theoretical impression which this view presents, it actually demands one theory, and one theory only, to be the guide of our *practice*. Or one self-styled *practitioner* to be the central point of reference for all social involvement.

The theory dominates the teaching from business schools throughout the land. It is called 'organisational theory' and its practical results are devastating, as illustrated above in the case of State control of Universities. But not only there. Such a mind is also found in schools and churches, and is especially evident in the rising class of consultants - those whose *market niche* depends upon posturing themselves **between** the client and the (so-called) real world. Such sociological thinking invites the new breed of consultants and management gurus to 'do their thing' around the frayed fringes of our fragile public institutions. The consultant is a derivative from that mode of intellectual engagement which searches for its place as an interpreter of a common-sense reality. This is also a common feature of the Australian social philosophical tradition<sup>27</sup>.

But it is an ongoing irony that economic rationalism coincides so strongly with the critical nihilistic perspectives of post-modernism. The post-structuralist emphasis upon 'discourse' and 'metaphor' injects a strident nominalist theme<sup>28</sup> which meshes well with this 'organisational theory'. The connection is found in the presumption that any organisation can call itself what it wants to call itself, and can justify the maintenance of this *facade* by developing a discourse within which the organisation and the policies thereof, are formed by a constant metaphoric allusion to whatever it is the discussants want it to be. Let us have no illusions here. A CCAPE or even a 'free Christian

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27 The social theory of Sol Encel, Hugh Stretton, F W Eggleston, and even the contribution of Manning Clark, the doyen of Australia's historians, can be seen in these terms. It is a form of intellectual lobbying. Among Christian thinkers this is a common way of setting forth one's argument. Hugh MacKay, Keith Suter of the Club of Rome and other Christian consultants adopt this approach. The scholarship that is promoted is also an ongoing interaction between various facets of one person's public involvements.

28 ie you can be whatever you say you are.

university' could indeed be set up with a post-modern impulse hidden within it. This would involve structuring the venture, through its funding and federating agreements, under the metaphoric rubric of 'university'. There is a problem with this pragmatic and nihilistic approach; it renders all other university projects in precisely the same manner. It simply assumes that forming a social institution is a matter of 'bluffing it out'<sup>29</sup>.

### **The Metaphor of Economic Rationalism**

Pusey (1991) explains the priority of the economic metaphor in policy-making by analysing it as a social process<sup>30</sup>. **Economic rationalism** is the commitment to think in the language of the market place. The market metaphor becomes a touch-stone for reality.

Language is social, and an analysis of predominant metaphors can highlight the historical direction of organisational discourse. Discursive analysis uncovers the transformation of political decision-making. The metaphor forms the reality and social re-construction re-confirms the metaphor as central to the discourse. The process of social reconstruction continues. There are two sides. The power of the Federal bureaucrats in Canberra is linked to **economic rationalism**. The power of **economic rationalism** is linked to the empowering discourse of Federal bureaucrats. The interplay is the effective control of policy.

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29 see fn 11 above. The 'bluff' under the absolutised market metaphor assumes that university is basically capital, ignoring whether any other preconditions have been met. Dawkins' 'bluff' was a legalistic one; if legislation is passed to consider CAEs **as if** they are parts of universities then they are. Some in Reformed and Presbyterian circles might be tempted to appeal to the 'free university principle' in a similar 'bluff', when justifying the nomenclature of theological college 'Professors'. I am critically aware that reference to a 'Reformed world-and-life-view' and 'Christian Philosophy' can also try to control discussion to keep its 'bluff' pre-eminent. See also J Ellul ***The Technological Bluff*** (Trans G W Bromiley) Grand Rapids. Eerdmans. 1990.

30 Michael Pusey ***Economic Rationalism in Canberra : A National Building State Changes its Mind*** CUP Melbourne 1991

Pusey identifies the *mind* which engineered an administrative revolution via an economically-dominated reality. He argues **as if**<sup>31</sup>. The Canberra public officials are viewed as having acted as **one**. His structuralist approach is that this revolution in social vision was an idealistic attempt to implement a full and consistent rationality in the 'economy'. His historical sociology describes how the revolutionary mind took hold. As we stand and ponder what has happened we are left aghast at how human culture can be shaped by the **absolutisation** of a theoretical, socially constructed concept. How did the market metaphor, a construct by which we can discuss society **as if**, gain such a hold?

It is the question of **absolutisation** that needs theoretic investigation. The **structure** of theorising *as such* is not negated by metaphoric allusions in scientific discourse. But how is it possible for scientific discourse to come under the influence of an **absolutised** concept. An appeal to the concept of *ideology* does not do the trick here because such a concept is built upon assumptions about the structure of the theoretical frame of mind. The contrast between theory and ideology is a theoretical distinction after all, and *as such* helps to explain why Marxism cannot transcend its own dogmatism. If we are to escape from the dogmatic frame of mind we cannot avoid the critical inquiry into the conditions which alone make theoretical thought possible<sup>32</sup>. To get at the structure of the theoretical frame of mind we need to logically distinguish the theoretical mode from non-theoretical thinking, and that includes distinguishing analogies from metaphors.

It is only possible to explain the **absolutisation** of social metaphors on the basis of a normative view of how social metaphors (should) function in our social theory, in our sociological analysis, our structural analysis of society. Then having explained how they take on such formative significance in scientific discussion (in the development of various 'discourses') we can begin

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31 Recall that I have indicated above that for its own policy purposes Government now views Universities **as if** they are industries (see discussion above).

32 Herman Dooyeweerd *In the Twilight of Western Thought - Studies in the Autonomy of Theoretical Thought* Craig Press, Nutley NJ 1960.

to develop a theoretical account of how science itself contributes to cultural life, private and public. And then we can discern the implications of the over-extension of the scientific frame of mind. But this order of analysis is crucial, as Herman Dooyeweerd was prone to point out repeatedly.

But however the post-modern approach makes its appeal we should understand that it takes us down the road, away from the ***critical inquiry of the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought***, to a world dominated by 'knowledges' (or abstract 'centres') from which we can never escape the absolutisation of one metaphor or another. There will be no way to distinguish metaphor and analogy; there will be no way to distinguish theory from professional practice. All knowledge is power; and all power is to the knower. All distinctions become arbitrary, only ever really referring to what we want them to refer to, and that which we deny that they refer to.

This is the disclosure of a religious route. It might proclaim itself as post-Enlightenment; it also diverges radically from any Christian view that reality is creation. At root it denies that we confront ourselves, thinking with and about our own responsibility, in theoretical reflection. It denies that thinking, scientific and non-scientific, takes place within the created Order which finds its Origin in the Creator. Post-modernist reflection claims to dispense with the notion of an Origin, even a radically this-worldly (Enlightened) origin. But post-modern perspectives cannot avoid the fact that this approach functions ***as if*** it is an origin-al insight. That is the root of the post-modern dilemma. The approach is attractive (in a post-modern sense). It might sound plausible in a more than post-modern sense. After all reality ***is*** related to objectivity, and objectivity cannot be given a theoretical explanation without reference to subjectivity. It is in our theorising that ***philosophical notions*** such as these can be identified, examined and critically assessed. As we do so the structure of theorising is disclosed by our ***words***.

We can hardly disclose the logic of our view without also talking about it, putting these ideas into words. Abstract thought separates logically and conceptually that which coheres in the one creation order. But though abstract ***thought*** may be distinguished from conceptual ***language*** they can hardly be separated. This also makes theory very hard work. Spending years as a

Christian scholar, trying to put one's Christian critique of post-modernism into words which communicate in a powerful way, may be denigrated. It may not make much money. Non-Christians and Christians are often sceptical about such work. It is spoken about **as if** it is an intellectually sterile activity. But ***Coram Deo*** all our human activity is thrown into the light of God's Word. Theoretical reflection becomes a necessary and very interesting aspect of human endeavour, helping to develop our understanding in ways that express our creaturely dependence upon the Creator.

### **Conclusion :**

As a nation, we have re-entered a period of struggle for insight about just what a university or a hospital is. There is a serious problem if this struggle only takes place outside the University (or eg the hospital), where politicians and political party apparatchiks decide that the time has come in the fiscal calendar to re-define these institutions, and promulgate the 'bluff' of new nomenclature.

The spiritual struggle which needs to be re-kindled must seek to serve God with Christian universities and hospitals, must take place within the institutions we have inherited in our public-civil arena, but through a variety of projects to build a Christian culture of such institutions. Many associations and organisations are needed, in politics and industry, in publishing, literature and the full range of professional engagement. Despite the levelling of materialism there is much diversity and cultural potential in our social mosaic. Our task is to find ways of marshalling this as we develop our discussion of our historical vocation. But first, we need ongoing critique of the contemporary 'mind'.

The 'free university principle' is congruent with the 'parent-controlled schooling' principle - State, Church<sup>33</sup> and business have their tasks to fulfil but

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33 Stuart Piggin erroneously states that it was the Reformed Church which opened the first parent-controlled school in 1958 (Piggin 1996). While this might run things together which should be kept apart, it avoids discussion of the actual legal and social situation. The term 'parent-controlled', as O J Hofman of Tasmania pointed out indicated neither church- nor state-control. The principle means that Christian education can not afford to be business-controlled if it is to retain its

it is not to run educational institutions. Education, whether schooling, professional or university training in science, should be freely developed in its own sphere, according to its own integrity, to make its contribution to the mandated cultural development of creation restored by Jesus Christ<sup>34</sup>.

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spiritual character as *schooling*. Yet such schools embrace their 'public service' character.

34 See Genesis 1:28-31;2:15; Matthew 28:18-20.

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